

From Literal to Spiritual Soldiers of Christ: Disputed Episcopal Elections and the Advent of Christian Processions in Late Antique Rome

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There were at least five disputed episcopal elections in the fourth through the sixth centuries. This intra-Christian competition did not, however, lead to the contestation of space in the form of processions as it did, for example, in Constantinople. At Rome, intra-Christian competition took the form, at least rhetorically, of siege and occupation. Instead of conquering urban space through processions—impossible as the Roman aristocracy and their patronage of traditional spectacles still dominated and defined the public sphere—Roman Christians resorted to warfare, until the mid-sixth century C.E. when an impoverished aristocracy ceased to lavish its diminished wealth on traditional forms of public display.

Throughout all of these electoral disputes a number of elements consistently emerge: one, the use of martial language to describe the events; two, the concentration on a few contested sites; and three, internal divisions among Roman Christians. A strategy of militaristic occupation of centrally important churches clearly marked these schisms, as each side marched upon and occupied the principal churches of Rome, invading and expelling their enemies from other principal churches when they could. The martial language in the descriptions of these conflicts often veered close to the religious, indicating, hinting, that the origins of Christian processions lie in conflict and battle. From the literal soldiers of Christ, armed with clubs, rocks, and swords, emerged spiritual soldiers bearing crosses and singing hymns.

URBAN religious rivalries have often resulted in raucous and competing processions as a means of marking territory. To process through a space serves to claim that very space. One need only consider the

I would like to thank audiences at UCLA, the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the Society of Biblical Literature for their comments and questions which greatly strengthened the essay. I would also like to express my gratitude to H. A. Drake and Michele Salzman, both of whom both read and commented on numerous drafts. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the penetrating comments of the two anonymous reviewers for this journal, which help me to sharpen the argument and to avoid mistakes. Of course, any errors, omissions, and oversights remain my responsibility.

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violence attendant upon the contentious Protestant and Catholic processions in Belfast in Northern Ireland.¹ There was no shortage of religious competition and dissent in late antique Rome. In fact, there were at least five, often hotly, disputed episcopal elections in the fourth through the sixth centuries. However, this intra-Christian competition did not lead to the contestation of space in the form of processions or other public ceremonial, as it did in Alexandria or Constantinople. At Rome, Christian competition took the form, at least rhetorically, of siege and occupation, because the Roman aristocracy and their patronage of traditional forms of public display still dominated and defined the public sphere. Instead of conquering urban space through processions, circumstances specific to Rome compelled rival claimants to the see of Peter to resort to warfare—until the mid-sixth century when an impoverished aristocracy ceased to lavish its diminished wealth on traditional public rituals.²

I. ARISTOCRATIC PUBLIC DISPLAY IN LATE ANTIQUE ROME

The ancient Mediterranean city was replete with processions. Such processions were not mere pomp: public rituals were at the very heart of ancient urban life—as confirmed by the virulent Christian polemic against these traditional spectacles, contemptuously called *pompa diaboli*.³ The entirety of Rome's religious calendar—its games, spectacles, sacrifices, and processions—formed a complex tapestry, into which various Roman identities and histories were

¹Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), esp. 17–45.

²On violence connected to bishops and episcopal elections, see debate among Ramsay MacMullen, “The Historical Role of the Masses in Late Antiquity,” in *Changes in the Roman Empire: Essays in the Ordinary* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 250–76, esp. 265–76 on real, widespread, and novel violence; on rhetorically exaggerated violence that was limited in practice, see Neil McLynn, “Christian Controversy and Violence in the Fourth Century,” *Kodai* 3 (1992), 15–44; on bishops functioning within traditional power structures, see Rita Lizzi Testa, “Discordia in urbe: pagani e cristiani in rivolta,” in *Pagani e cristiani da Giuliano l’Apostata al sacco di Roma*, ed. Franca Ela Consolino (Messina: Rubbettino, 1995), 115–40; and Ramsay MacMullen, “Cultural and Political Changes in the 4th and 5th Centuries,” *Historia* 52 (2003), 465–95, esp. 478–95 for a rebuttal.

³See for example, J. H. Waszink, “Pompa diaboli,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 1 (1947): 13–41; Werner Weisman, *Kirche und Schauspiele: die Schauspiele im Urteil der lateinischen Kirchenväter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustin* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1972); Heiko Jürgens, *Pompa Diaboli: die lateinischen Kirchenväter und das antike Theater* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1972), esp. 216–20; Gerhard Binder, “Pompa diaboli—Das Heidenspektakel und die Christenmoral,” in *Das antike Theater: Aspekte seiner Geschichte, Rezeption und Aktualität*, eds. Gerhard Binder and Bernd Effe (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1998), 115–47; Majastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360–430* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007), 113–36.

woven. For the ancient Roman, processions provided a map of Roman-ness, offered a school of *romanitas*, embodied Roman life and history.⁴

For this reason, after the conversion of Constantine (306–336), the first Christian Roman emperor, churches throughout the Mediterranean developed their own forms of public ceremonial in order to re-imagine civic identity. In early-fourth-century Alexandria, the presbyter Arius (circa 260–336), made famous by the eponymous Arian theological controversy, composed easily memorized slogans which were chanted as his supporters processed through the city.⁵ On the one hand, intra-Christian competition in early-fifth-century Constantinople resulted in dueling processions between later followers of the Arian position and adherents to the Nicene creed.⁶ Similarly, Catholic and Donatist bishops performed competing parades to attract attention and advertise power as the two groups arrived in Carthage for a council at Carthage in 411.⁷ On the other hand, at about the same time also in North Africa, Christians unsuccessfully attempted to put an end to a traditional ritual procession that passed with “unbounded effrontery” in front of a church.⁸ In all three cases,

⁴François Hinard, “Rome dans Rome,” in *Rome: l’espace urbain & ses représentations*, eds. François Hinard and Manuel Royo (Paris: Presse de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1991), 31–54; Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome, Volume 1: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 75.

⁵MacMullen, “Historical Role of Masses,” 272; Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 81–90 on Alexandrine processions generally, 268–77 on Arians and topography, and on 278–330 intra-Christian violence; and Carlos Galvão-Sobrinho, “Embodied Theologies: Christian Identity and Violence in Alexandria in the Early Arian Controversy,” in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. H. A. Drake (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006), 321–31. Even Melitians, a group of Egyptian Christians condemned as schismatic by bishop Athanasius, may have exhumed the bodies of martyrs and then paraded with them to their parish churches, on which see David Brakke, “‘Outside the Places, Within the Truth’: Athanasius of Alexandria and the Localization of the Holy,” in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1998), 445–81, esp. 463–68.

⁶On late ancient Christian public ceremonial in Constantinople see with references, John F. Baldwin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), esp. 205–26; Franz Alto Bauer, “Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity,” *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 15 (2001): 27–59; Leslie Brubaker, “Topography and the Creation of Public Space in Early Medieval Constantinople,” in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, and Carine van Rhijn (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 31–43; Nathanael Andrade, “The Processions of John Chrysostom and the Contested Spaces of Constantinople,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010): 161–89; and on local constituencies that determined Constantinopolitan episcopal elections, see Peter Van Nuffelen, “Episcopal Succession in Constantinople (381–450 C.E.): The Local Dynamics of Power,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010): 425–51.

⁷Augustine, *Ad Donatistas post Collationem* 25.43 and *Gesta Coll. Carth.* 1.14.7–11 and 29.2–4, cited and discussed by Stephen Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire, AD 284–641: The Transformation of the Ancient World* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), 280–82.

⁸Augustine, *Ep.* 91.8 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Volume 1, First Series*, trans. J. G. Cunningham, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, Mass.: Hendriksen, 1994 [orig. 1886]). On violence in North Africa, see with references Brent D. Shaw, “Who were the Circumcellions?,” in *Vandals*,

groups of Christians effected and attempted to alter traditional civic festival and spectacle life. Of course, Alexandria, Carthage, and North Africa also tolerated a fair amount of internecine Christian violence.⁹ But, at least on occasion, public ceremony could substitute for violence, even if such ceremonial also sometimes became an occasion for violence.

Fourth- and fifth-century Rome certainly witnessed its own religious competition, not doctrinal or dogmatic but rather ecclesiastical—that is, electoral contests involving deacons, presbyters, aristocrats, and even other bishops. Yet, strangely, the Roman church did not organize its first procession until 556, nearly 200 years later than elsewhere.¹⁰ What is more, in 408 with Alaric, leader of the Visigoths, menacing the city just before his infamous sack in 410, *haruspices*, diviners, from Tuscany convinced the urban prefect, Pompeianus, who still adhered to the Roman traditional cults, that they could drive off Alaric by means of their traditional arts. Faced with the danger posed by Alaric and under pressure from the urban prefect, bishop Innocent put aside his own sentiments and acquiesced, allowing the Tuscans to perform whatever rites were necessary but only in secret, according to Zosimus. The *haruspices* refused, insisting that traditional public sacrifices needed to be conducted and that the senate must ascend to the Capitol to perform the necessary rites. Though no one would participate in so public a manner, nonetheless the bishop of Rome had still been compelled to concede the (private) performance of Roman traditional rituals.¹¹ While a recognized touchstone of orthodoxy throughout the Mediterranean, the church at Rome was not even master of its own city.¹²

Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa, ed. Andrew. H. Merrills (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 227–58; David Riggs, “Christianizing the Rural Communities of Late Roman Africa: A Process of Coercion or Persuasion?,” in Drake, *Violence in Late Antiquity*, 297–308; and Peter Iver Kaufman, “Donatism Revisited: Moderates and Militants in Late Antique North Africa,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009): 131–42.

⁹See generally, Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

¹⁰Baldovin, *Urban Character of Christian Worship*, 165: “There is simply no hard evidence for such Christian processions prior to the sixth century.” See also appendix to Victor Saxer, “L’utilisation par la liturgie de l’espace urbain et suburbain: L’exemple de Rome dans l’Antiquité et le Haut Moyen Âge,” in *Actes du XIe Congrès international d’archéologie chrétienne: Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève et Aoste (21–28 septembre 1986)*, 3 vols., eds. Noël Duval, Françoise Baritel, and Philippe Pergola (Rome: École française de Rome, 1989): 2:917–1033.

¹¹Zosimus 5.41.1–3; Sozomen 9.6.3–6; and Olympiodorus fr. 6, the original source for both Zosimus and Sozomen. In general, scholars tend to be very skeptical of Zosimus, not only because he was writing well after and at a great distance from the events, but primarily because he was a “pagan” and so considered a hostile witness. In this case, the bishop of Rome comes off rather well, which may argue for the legitimacy of this anecdote.

¹²On the varieties of Christian practices and limitations of episcopal authority, see Harry O. Maier, “The Topography of Heresy and Dissent in Late-Fourth-Century Rome,” *Historia* 44 (1995): 232–49; Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late*

Rome's late antique aristocracy—some of the wealthiest private landowners of all time—still ruled the roost and their continuing adherence to classical Roman ceremonial still defined the city's public sphere.¹³

During the fourth and fifth centuries, the church at Rome, nicely endowed by Constantine in the early fourth century, continued to attract donations and bequests. However, the scale of its wealth could not compete with wealth of some individual aristocratic families, not to mention the aristocracy as a whole, until the later-fifth century.¹⁴ In fact, in the late-fourth century, the bishop of Rome's income may have amounted to just over one fifth of what Symmachus, a Roman aristocrat of merely middling wealth, spent on his son's games. Symmachus, an adherent of the religious tradition formerly known as paganism, spent an incredible sum on the praetorian games of his son in 401, shelling out nearly 2,000 lbs of gold—a short while later the Christian senator Maximus *doubled* that on his son's games—whereas the

Antiquity (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 61–103; Kristina Sessa, “Christianity and the *cubiculum*: Spiritual Politics and Domestic Space in Late Antique,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007): 171–204; and Kate Cooper and Julia Hillner, “Introduction,” Kristina Sessa, “Domestic Conversions: Households and Bishops in the Late Antique ‘Papal Legends,’” Kate Cooper, “Poverty, Obligation, and Inheritance: Roman Heiresses and the Varieties of Senatorial Christianity in Fifth-Century Rome,” and Julia Hillner, “Families, Patronage, and the Titular Churches of Rome, c. 300–c. 600,” in *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900*, eds. Kate Cooper and Julia Hillner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–18, 79–114, 165–89, and 225–61, respectively.

¹³Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages, 400–1000* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 28–30, esp. 29; and, for a brief but incisive treatment of the later Roman elite, Chris Wickham, *Framing the Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 155–68.

¹⁴For the wealth of late Roman aristocracy, see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, 2 vols. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964, repr. 1986), 1.554–57 and, on ecclesiastical wealth, see 2.894–910. John Matthews calculates that the wealthiest senators received annual cash incomes of 300,000 *solidi*, the middle rank 100,000, with an additional third to be added to both to account for surplus produce (*Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court AD 364–425* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975], 384). Betrand Lançon gives 370,000 *solidi* as the annual income for a great family and at 99–101 an annual church income of 30,000 *solidi* (*Rome in Late Antiquity: Everyday Life and Urban Change, AD 312–609*, trans. Antonia Nevill [New York: Routledge, 1995, repr. 2000], 63–5). For Roman ecclesiastical wealth, see C. Pietri, *Roma Christiana* 2 vols. (Rome: École française de Rome, 1976): 1.77–96 on fourth to early-fifth century ecclesial economics; “Evergétisme et richesses ecclésiastiques dans l’Italie du IV^e à la fin du Ve s.: l’exemple romain,” in *Christiana Respublica*, 3 vols (Rome: École française de Rome, 1997): 2.813–33. D. Hunt, “The Church as Public Institution,” in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edition, vol. 13, eds. Av. Cameron and P. Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 261, notes that the wealth of church of Antioch in the mid-4th century equaled that of wealthier but not the wealthiest individuals. Lastly, as Thomas F. X. Noble, “Topography, Celebration, and Power,” in Jong et al., *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, 46–7, put it for the years around 500 C.E., even “[i]f the emperors were gone, the great families were still there, and the popes were not especially prominent.”

bishop of Rome had an annual income of just over 400 lbs.¹⁵ The assets of the super-rich of Rome even far exceeded that of their colleagues in the senate in Constantinople—the sum spent by a praetor in Constantinople was “a bagatelle” compared to what Symmachus spent.¹⁶ Of course, the senate at Constantinople was also newer and less swamped by a deep sea of tradition, for which reason, in part, Christian processions could take place in Constantinople, by contrast to Rome.¹⁷

In the increasingly common absence of the emperor in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Roman aristocracy magnified its public presence—the prominence of which has been long overshadowed by scholarship concerned with the supposedly seamless shift from emperor to pope in late antique Rome.¹⁸ Without imperial oversight or interference, the Roman elite expanded its scope of activity—though its political paths were largely confined to offices in the city of Rome and nearby provinces, a number of aristocrats held illustrious posts at the imperial court.¹⁹ For example, the senator Probus (circa 328–390), a scion of the eminent Anician family, “was summoned from Rome to fill the office of praetorian prefect [at the imperial court], a man known for the distinction of his family, his influence, and his great wealth, throughout the whole Roman world, in almost all parts of which he possessed estates here and there.”²⁰ By and large, however, the aristocracy of Rome exercised an extra-official influence, which far outstripped the constitutional role of the senate, in part due to its immense fortunes, stemming from far-flung landholdings throughout the empire.²¹

¹⁵Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court*, 277, see generally 276–78 and Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 162–63. The annual income of the church at Rome, approx. 30,000 solidi translates to just over 400 lbs of gold (on which see above n14).

¹⁶Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.555.

¹⁷Peter Heather, “New Men for new Constantines? Creating an imperial elite in the eastern Mediterranean,” in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th centuries*, ed. P. Magdalino (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate 1994), 11–33.

¹⁸M. Humphries, “Roman Senators and Absent Emperors in Late Antiquity,” *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 17 n.s. 3 (2003): 27–46 and Cooper and Hillner, “Introduction,” on papal teleology.

¹⁹T. S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy, A.D. 554–800* (London: British School at Rome, 1984), esp. chapter 2, and Peter Heather, “Senators and Senates,” in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edition, vol. 13, eds. Av. Cameron and P. Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 184–210, emphasizing wealth as a counter-balance to restricted political paths in the creation of power and influence. M. T. W. Arnheim, *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) argues for greater aristocratic participations. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court*, 359 aristocrats at court.

²⁰Amm. Marc. 27.11.1: *ad regendam praefecturam praetorianam ab urbe Probus accitus, claritudine generis et potentia et opum amplitudine cognitus orbi Romano, per quem universum paene patrimonia sparsa possedit*, trans. John C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (1939).

²¹S. J. B. Barnish, “Transformation and Survival of the Western Senatorial Aristocracy, c. A.D. 400–700,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 56 (1988): 120–55; Thomas F. X. Noble, “The

The aristocracy of Rome, however, was defined as much by its adherence to tradition as by its staggering wealth. Its massive wealth allowed the aristocracy to pursue power and prestige through very traditional and thoroughly ostentatious means.²² In particular, through the mid-sixth century chariot races in the Circus Maximus continued to attract large crowds of all religious stripes, offering an unparalleled opportunity for public munificence and patronage: first the game-giver conducted a dazzling procession from the temple of Capitoline Jupiter through the Forum to the Circus, where he then presided over the extraordinarily popular races.²³ Similarly, the Colosseum witnessed shows and spectacles, though no longer featuring gladiators, until the early-sixth century.²⁴ In addition to races in the Circus Maximus and shows in the Colosseum, the Roman aristocracy consistently reiterated its claim on the ancient heart of the city—the Forum Romanum—by erecting statues, even ones with “pagan” connotations, and restoring buildings through the early-sixth century.²⁵

The aristocracy also continued to patronize civic religious festivals, maintaining the Roman heritage industry upon which elite identity was

Roman Elite from Constantine to Charlemagne,” *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 17 n.s. 3 (2003): 13–25; and also F. Burgarella, “Il Senato,” in *Roma nell’alto Medioevo* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2001): 121–75.

²²See Mark Humphries, “From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, space, and authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great,” in Cooper and Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage*, 21–58.

²³Richard Lim “People as Power,” in *The Transformation of the Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. V. Harris (Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 265–81 and Jill Harries, “*Favor populi*; pagans, Christians and public entertainment in late Antique Italy,” in *Bread and Circuses: euergetism and municipal patronage in Roman Italy*, eds. Kathryn Lomas and Tim Cornell (New York: Routledge, 2003): 125–41.

²⁴Cassiodorus, *Variae* 5.42 (*venationes* [animal hunt] in 523); Bryan Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy AD 300–850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 111–16; and S. Orlandi, “Le iscrizioni del Colosseo come base documentaria per lo studio del senato tardoantico,” in *Le trasformazioni delle élites in età tardoantica: atti del convegno internazionale, Perugia, 15–16 marzo 2004*, ed. Rita Lizzi Testa (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2006), 311–24.

²⁵*CIL* 6.526 on which see Carlos Machado, “Religion as Antiquarianism: Pagan Dedications in Late Antique Rome,” in *Dediche sacre nel mondo greco-romano: diffusione, funzioni, tipologie*, eds. John Bodel and Mika Kajava (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2009), 331–54 on possible continuity of Roman traditional religion; Gregor Kalas, “Writing and Restoration in Rome: Inscriptions, Statues, and the Late Antique Preservation of Buildings,” in *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks, 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space*, eds. Caroline Goodson, Anne E. Lester, and Carol Symes (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2010), 21–43 emphasizing aesthetic not religious value. See also Carlos Machado, “Building the Past: Monuments and Memory in the *Forum Romanum*,” in *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity*, eds. William Bowden, Adam Gutteridge, and Carlos Machado (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 157–92 and “City as Stage: aristocratic commemorations in late antique Rome,” in *Les frontières du profane dans l’antiquité tardive*, eds. Éric Rebillard and Claire Sotinel (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2010), 287–317.

founded.²⁶ The last known traditional cult ritual performed at Rome, the Lupercalia in which near-naked men ran through the city center whipping women accused of sexual improprieties, was also one of its oldest with a history likely stretching back to the earliest days of archaic Rome. In 495 C.E., bishop Gelasius condemned aristocratic support of this ancient festival with its drunken nudity, bawdy violence, and riotous disorder, insisting that one cannot be a Christian while participating in the pomps of the devil:²⁷

You cannot, indeed, share the table of the Lord and the table of demons at the same time, nor drink from the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of demons; you cannot be a temple of God and a temple of the devil, light and shadow cannot come together at the same time in you.²⁸ (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:21)

In effect, the bishop attempted to polarize a fluid situation, forcing the aristocracy to choose between his episcopal vision of Christianity or its longstanding adherence to Roman traditions. But, even Gelasius himself seemed to recognize the futility of his attack:

I do not dare to accuse my predecessors of negligence, when rather I believe that they perhaps had tried to eliminate this perversity but certain motives and contrary desires impeded their intentions, just as now not even you yourselves want to desist from mad, wild undertakings and considerations.²⁹

²⁶Neil McLynn, "Crying Wolf: The Pope and the Lupercalia," *Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008): 161–75, though these festivals should not be seen as merely heritage. Their meaning would have been largely in the eyes of the participants, who need not be paid actors as McLynn maintains for the Lupercalia, or especially the audience.

²⁷Gelasius I, *Adversum Andromachum* ed. and trans. G. Pomarès, *Lettre contre les Lupercales et dix-huit messes du Sacramentaire Léonien* (Paris: Cerf, 1959). Though I maintain the traditional date and author, some favor bishop Felix III in 491 or earlier, see Y. M. Duval, "Des Lupercales de Constantinople aux Lupercales de Rome," *Revue des études latines* 55 (1977): 222–70; T. P. Wiseman, "The God of the Lupercal," *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 1–22. On the Lupercalia, see additionally C. Ulf, *Das römische Lupercalienfest: Ein Modellfall für Methodenprobleme in der Altertumswissenschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982); Keith Hopkins, "From Violence to Blessing" in *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, eds. A. Molho, K. Raaflaub, and J. Emlen (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 479–98; A. Ziółkowski, "Ritual Cleaning-up of the City: From the Lupercalia to the Argei," *Ancient Society* 29 (1998–9): 191–218; and John North, "Caesar at the Lupercalia," *Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008), 144–60.

²⁸Gelasius I, *Adversum Andromachum* 9: *Non potes enim mensae Domini participare et mensae daemoniorum, nec calicem Domini bibere et calicem daemoniorum, non potes templum Dei esse et templum diaboli, lux simul et tenebrae in te convenire non possunt* (my translation). In the sixth century, Severus of Antioch also cited 1 Corinthians 10:21 to drive a wedge between true Christians and those who attend the games, on which see Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 108–43, esp. 116–17 for a compelling account of violent ascetic Christian boundary maintenance.

²⁹Gelasius, *Adversum Andromachum* 32: *Ego neglegentiam accusare non audeo praecessorum, cum magis credam fortasse temptasse eos ut haec pravitas tolleretur, et quasdam extitisse*

Just as his predecessors failed to put an end to the frenzied Lupercalia, so too Gelasius admitted that there was little hope now. The Roman senate still desired to see the madness continue and so it would—a fact to which Gelasius seems resigned. His attempt to steer Christian aristocrats towards his understanding of Christianity had failed.

In the fourth through sixth century, Roman social, political, and religious life was deeply divided between Roman traditions and ecclesiastical rites, private religions and public cults, aristocratic prerogatives and church demands—a fragmentation that extended into the church itself.³⁰ Christian devotion was dispersed in various forms throughout the city, much of which the bishop could not claim to control. Even the seemingly well-attended martyr festivals held at extramural cemeterial churches lacked both spectacularity and organization, while remaining beyond the grasp of the bishop—the Damasan *elogia*, inscribed poems dedicated to the martyrs and erected at their shrines by bishop Damasus, only represent the beginning of a process of episcopal control.³¹ In short, whether “pagan” or Christian, the result is the same: up through the early-sixth century, aristocratic traditions, their sacred and political rituals, controlled the public sphere, the political core, and monumental center of a still classical city. That is, pagan and Christian aristocrats alike competed for power and prestige in the same classical idiom. In the face of this ritual and spatial domination of Rome,

causas et contrarias voluntates quae eorum intentiones praepedirent, sicut ne nunc quidem vos ipsos absistere insanis conatibus velle perpenditis (my translation).

³⁰This fragmentation even extended to “church” ownership, as Kate Cooper argues in “Christianity, Private Power, and the Law from Decius to Constantine: The Minimalist View,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19 (2011): 327–43, at page 343 Cooper argues: “In fact, the physical spaces that we think of as ‘churches’ seem in many cases to have been under private ownership up to the time of Gelasius” (492–96).

³¹Jerome, *Ep.* 107.1, and Prudentius, *Perist.* 11.199–218, both described large crowds exiting the city to attend festivals at extramural martyr shrines. These crowds knew where to go, but not how to go, and so are perhaps best viewed as quite simply crowds. Additionally, these popular festivals seem to have had no one particular patron in the fourth, even into the early-fifth century. On the cult of martyrs, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Equally, both Jerome and Prudentius exercised a measure of rhetorical license as only a half-century later bishop Leo I, *Sermon* 84.1, trans. J. P. Freeland and A. J. Conway, *St. Leo the Great: Sermons* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), would complain that “more effort is spent on demons than on the apostles, and the wild entertainments draw greater crowds than the shrines of martyrs.” On the *elogia* and Damasan attempts to create ecclesiastical consensus based on control of the cult of martyrs, see below n52. See also Jerome, *Ep.* 77.11, on which see Ann Marie Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 61–69, esp. 62–63, where Jerome, while ensconced in far-off Bethlehem whose social and geographical distance from Rome afforded him creative license, imagined a traditional aristocratic funeral “Christianized” by the replacement of customary laments with Psalms—a scene likely invented from whole cloth.

intra-Christian competition expressed itself in the language, if not also the practice, of siege and occupation.

II. DISPUTED EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS AT ROME 350–530³²

Any history of the institutional development of the Christian church in late antique Rome is inevitably limited by the extant sources, specifically the so-called *Liber Pontificalis*, the Book of Pontiffs, a serial biography of the bishops of Rome first written in the early-sixth century and maintained continuously thereafter until the ninth century, and the *Collectio Avellana*, a compilation of fourth- and fifth-century letters also assembled in the early-sixth century. For the fourth and early-fifth centuries, such a history may also draw upon other sources, like the historian Ammianus Marcellinus or the Christian poet Prudentius, but in the main a late antique history of the Roman episcopacy depends upon sources generated by the episcopacy itself.³³

The *Liber Pontificalis*, likely composed by anonymous members of the papal bureaucracy, presents short episcopal biographies, or *vitae*, arranged in chronological order with a clear emphasis on the institution and administration of the church at Rome. That emphasis seems to have led its various writers to show a marked interest in disputed elections—remarkably not always siding with the winner. The compiler(s) of the *Collectio Avellana* showed an equal interest in schismatic elections, but instead of condensing its sources into a single coherent *vita*, the *Collectio Avellana* presents epistles written during the disputes—epistles which often provide a wider view of the situation, sometimes contradicting the terse *vitae* of the *Liber Pontificalis*. Though both the *Liber Pontificalis* and the *Collectio Avellana* drew material from similar archives in efforts to write a history of episcopal bureaucratic traditions from within, nonetheless, the two often offer contrasting vantages on episcopal history, which allows for a fuller, even if incomplete and distorted, analysis.³⁴

³²For broad consideration of episcopal elections with an emphasis on rules, laws, and procedures, see the synthesis of Peter Norton, *Episcopal Elections 250–600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Roger Gryson, “Les élections épiscopales en Occident au IV^{ème} siècle,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 75 (1980): 257–83, on western electoral customs and regulations; and E. Wirbelauer, “Die Nachfolgerbestimmung im römischen Bistum (3.-6. Jh.): Doppelwahlen und Absetzungen in ihrer herrschaftssoziologischen Bedeutung,” *Klio* 76 (1994): 388–437, on the role of conflict as customary in episcopal successions in relation to a changing self-understanding of the Roman bishops (whereas I am interested in disputed elections in relation to public ceremonial) and esp. 407–21 for the disputed elections to be considered below.

³³Cooper and Hillner, “Introduction,” 7–10.

³⁴For an extended analysis, See above all Kate Blair-Dixon, “Memory and Authority in Sixth-Century Rome: the *Liber Pontificalis* and the *Collectio Avellana*,” in Cooper and Hillner,

In 350 C.E., the emperor Constantius II (337–361) exiled Liberius, the bishop of Rome (352–366), for his refusal to condemn bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (circa 295–373) and his staunch opposition to the emperor's Arian tendencies.³⁵ The archdeacon Felix was then appointed to serve as bishop (and so may be called Felix II though tradition marked him as an anti-pope), despite the fact that he and the entire church had sworn to have no bishop but Liberius. According to the pro-Ursinian (a protagonist in the very next episcopal election) epistle *Quae gesta sunt inter Liberium et Felicem episcopos*, the clergy, contrary to divine law, wickedly perjured themselves by supporting the archdeacon Felix, who was ordained as bishop in place of Liberius. "This act displeased the entire populace and so a procession [or public appearance] of his [Felix] was halted by the people."³⁶ It is remarkable that in the mid-fourth century, the bishop Felix attempted to hold a procession or to make a public appearance by which he could stake a legitimate claim on the city. Equally remarkably, the Roman people would have no such thing in either case.

In 358, after a number of years of exile, Liberius recanted his opposition to imperial demands and so was allowed to return to Rome. At first, Liberius could not enter the city, so he lived at the cemetery of St. Agnese with the emperor's sister (fig. 1.1).³⁷ Subsequently, the emperor Constantius ejected Felix and recalled Liberius, discarding the unwelcome idea of having two

Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage, 59–76 which I follow closely in this paragraph. See also generally Thomas F. X. Noble, "Literacy and the Papal Government in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 82–108. On the *Liber Pontificalis*, see below n37 and Thomas F. X. Noble, "A New Look at the *Liber Pontificalis*," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 23 (1985), 347–58. On the *Collectio Avellana*, see below n36; Lotte Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages (ca. 400–1140): A Bibliographical Guide to the Manuscripts and Literature* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 37–38; and Detlev Jasper and Horst Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters in the Middle Ages* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2001), 83–85.

³⁵On this schism, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.237–68; Maier, "The Topography of Heresy and Dissent," 232–49; John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 129–37; Philippe Levillain, ed., *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2002) sv Liberius and sv Felix II d. 365; J. N. D. Kelly and M. Walsh, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, updated edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), sv Liberius and sv Felix II (anti-pope).

³⁶*Coll. Avell.* 1.2 (= *Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum inde ab a. CCCLXVII usque ad a. DLIII datae Avellana quae dicitur collectio* CSEL 35, ed. Otto Günther (Vindobonae: F. Tempsky, 1895–98) on clerical perjury (*cum summo periurii scelere*) and the quotation: *quod factum uniuerso populo displicuit et se eius ab processione suspendit* (my translation). Susan Twyman (*Papal Ceremonial at Rome in the Twelfth Century* [London: Boydell Press, 2002], 57) says that Damasus later attempted to hold a procession which was also stopped by the people, though I have found only the attempt by Felix. See Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, 72–75 for a persuasive reading of this epistle as a persecution-martyrdom narrative.

³⁷LP 37.4 (= *Le Liber Pontificalis* 3 vols, eds. L. Duchesne and C. Vogel [Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955]); *The Book of Pontiffs* (Liber Pontificalis): *The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety*



Fig. 1. Map of Rome.

bishops. Felix then retired to an estate on the *Via Portuensis*. “Shortly thereafter, at the instigation of the clergy, Felix invaded the city” and seized the basilica Julia in

Roman Bishops to AD 715, revised 2nd edition, trans. R. Davis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

Trastevere (fig. 1.2), which seems to have been the closest basilica inside the walls to the *Porta Portuensis*.³⁸ Once he had successfully seized and occupied the church, Felix “dared to give a station”—the first attestation of the word *statio* to denote a liturgical assembly—after which he was again thrown out of the city.³⁹ More commonly, *statio* meant a staging post on a road or an anchorage at sea as well as an armed post, a military garrison, or a guard-post—though in early Christian Latin usage, it also meant a fast.⁴⁰ In this situation the use of the word *statio* for a liturgical assembly seems particularly apt given the military overtones of the passage, as if Felix had besieged the city, breached its walls, and then occupied the church. The *statio* denoted both a liturgical synax and a kind of Felician beachhead into the city.

This same strategy of occupation may be seen in the other disputed episcopal elections of the fourth through the sixth centuries.⁴¹ Traditional, aristocratic public rituals still dominated the urban image of Rome, which inhibited ecclesiastical processional claims on the city, and so competing claims to the bishop’s throne were fought by a kind of static, occupational strategy rather than a mobile, processional one. This strategy of spatial occupation accords well with the circumstances—the slow growth of monumental Christian buildings (a decidedly static mode of Christianization) in a city whose public spectacles were still almost entirely non-Christian.⁴² In fact, the very next papal election offers another illustration.

After the death of Felix, Liberius and the supporters of Felix managed to forge a short-lived peace until Liberius died in 366, at which point the flames of partisanship flared anew. The supporters of Liberius, or at least those who disliked Felix, gathered at the Julian Basilica on the Via Lata (or perhaps the Julian basilica in Trastevere) (fig. 1.3 or 1.2) to elect the deacon Ursinus who was immediately consecrated by the bishop of Tivoli; while another deacon, Damasus (366–384), supposedly the appointed successor to Liberius, was elected *in Lucinis*, which may refer to a *titulus* in the northern Campus Martius now known as St. Lorenzo in Lucina (fig. 1.4).⁴³ “But when Damasus, who had always canvassed for the episcopacy, found out, he

³⁸*Coll. Avell.* 1.3: *post parum temporis impulsu clericorum . . . inrumpit in urbem*, my trans.

³⁹*Coll. Avell.* 1.3: *stationem in <basilica> Iuli trans Tiberim dare praesumit*, my trans.

⁴⁰Oxford Latin Dictionary sv *statio* and Christine Mohrmann, “Statio,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 7 (1953) 221–45.

⁴¹Cf. the idealized image of later episcopal elections at Rome in the *LP*, see P. Daileader, “One Will, One Voice and Equal Love: Papal Elections and the Liber Pontificalis in the Early Middle Ages,” *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 31 (1993): 11–31. For a discussion of contested elections and attendant violence in the period just after the one under consideration here, see Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 188–205.

⁴²Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values*, 62 on the slow pace of fourth-century church building.

⁴³*Coll. Avell.* 1.5. On this schism, see A. Lippold, “Damasus und Ursinus,” *Historia* 14 (1965) 105–28 sources and geography of dispute; M. R. Green, “The Supporters of the Antipope Ursinus,”

roused all the charioteers and ignorant rabble by bribery. Armed with cudgels, he forced his way into the Julian Basilica and raged without control for three days with a great slaughter of the faithful.”⁴⁴ The siege and slaughter allowed Damasus to gain control of the *episcopium* at the Lateran (fig. 1.5) with the help of “every perjurer and gladiator,” where he was ordained bishop one week after his election.⁴⁵ Once in control of the Lateran, Damasus engaged civic authorities to rid Rome of his adversaries.

Ursinus was ejected from the city, but his partisans, in an effort to gain credibility through an association with Liberius, occupied the newly founded Liberian basilica on the Esquiline, now St. Maria Maggiore (fig. 1.6):

Then Damasus with the perfidious summoned the gladiators, charioteers, gravediggers, and all the clergy. With axes, swords, and cudgels, he besieged the basilica and roused grievous battle at the second hour of the day on the seventh day before the Kalends of November in the consulship of Gratian and Dagalais. Breaking down the doors and setting a fire, having assailed, he invaded. While destroying the roof of the basilica, some of his household was also annihilating the faithful with tiles. Then, as they forced their way into the basilica, all the Damasiani slaughtered a hundred and sixty of the people, both men and even women. They wounded even more, many of whom died. But no one of Damasiani was killed.⁴⁶

Journal of Theological Studies n.s. 22 (1971): 531–38; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 407–18; Wirbelauer, “Die Nachfolgerbestimmung im römischen Bistum (3.-6. Jh.),” 407–10; H. Geertman, *Hic Fecit Basilicam: studi sul Liber Pontificalis and gli edifici ecclesiastici di Roma da Silvestro a Silverio*, ed. Sible de Blaauw (Leuven: Peeters, 2004): “Forze centrifughe e centripete nella Roma Cristiana: il Laterano, la basilica Iulia, e la basilica Liberiana,” 17–44, here 28–30 (whose argument in favor of the Julian basilica near the via Lata I accept); G. De Spirito, “Ursino e Damaso—una nota,” in *Peregrina curiositas: Eine Reise durch den orbis antiquus: zu Ehren von Dirk van Damme*, eds. A. Kessler, T. Ricklin, and G. Wurst (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994), 263–74, 264–66 (locations); Maier, “Topography of Heresy and Dissent”; Curran, *Pagan City and Christianity Capital*, 137–42; Levillain, ed., *The Papacy* sv Damasus and sv Ursinus; Kelly and Walsh, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Popes* sv Damasus I and sv Ursinus (anti-pope); Norton, *Episcopal Elections*, 63–5.

⁴⁴*Coll. Avell.* 1.5: *quod ubi Damasus, qui semper episcopatum ambierat, comperit, omnes quadrigarios et imperitam multitudinem pretio concitat et armatus fustibus ad basilicam Iuli perumpit et magna fidelium caede per triduum debacchatus est*, freely translated. I follow Geertman, “Forze centrifughe e centripete,” who argues that this *basilica Iulii* refers to the one near the Forum of Trajan. Cf. Curran, *Pagan City and Christianity Capital*, 138. Humphries, “From Emperor to Pope?” notes the continuing and increasing importance of the Forum of Trajan in the fourth and fifth centuries, whose prestige may have reflected on nearby churches.

⁴⁵*Coll. Avell.* 1.6: *cum omnibus periuris et arenariis* (my translation).

⁴⁶*Coll. Avell.* 1.7: *tunc Damasus cum perfidis inuitat arenarios quadrigarios et fossores omnemque clerum cum securibus gladiis et fustibus et obsedit basilicam hora diei secunda septimo Kalendarum Nouembrium die Gratiano et Dagalaii cons. et graue proelium concitauit. nam effractus foribus igneque subposito aditum, unde intrumperet, exquirebat; nonnulli quoque de familiaribus eius tectum basilicae destruentes tegulis fidelem populum*

The “pagan” Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus may have described the same incident—if the basilica Sicininus was the Liberian basilica—when he noted, “It is a well-known fact that in the basilica of Sicininus, where the assembly of the Christian sect is held, in a single day a hundred and thirty-seven corpses of the slain were found.”⁴⁷ It is also possible, however, that the *Quae gesta sunt inter Liberium et Felicem episcopos* and Ammianus refer to separate massacres. Despite the many ignominies, the Ursinians may have held out for a year before finally being expelled beyond the walls. Or if the Ursinians did indeed flee the assault, they may have later re-occupied the basilica Sicininus or the Liberian basilica, which seems to have functioned as a kind of Ursinian anti-cathedral for a time.⁴⁸

Once the Ursinians were finally expelled, they occupied the cemetery of St. Agnese, again associating themselves with Liberius who had stayed there with Constantina, where they celebrated a series of *stationes*, meaning, it seems, a prayer-gathering as there was no clergy to offer Mass.⁴⁹ The supporters of Ursinus remained at the tomb of St. Agnese on the Nomentana for about a year, before once again Damasus “armed with his accomplices attacked and destroyed many in a massacre of his ravaging.”⁵⁰ This last act of violence ended the Ursinian opposition—as the Ursinians were banished from the city.⁵¹ Notably, bishop Damasus later included the tomb of Agnese amongst those he enhanced with his *elogia*—one of the rare female martyrs whom Damasus publicized, though his reasons are rather obvious.⁵² After

perimebant. tunc uniuersi Damasiani irruentes in basilicam centum sexaginta de plebe tam uiros quam mulieres occiderunt; uulnerauerunt etiam quam plurimos, ex quibus multi defuncti sunt, freely translated.

⁴⁷Amm. Marc. 27.3.13: *Constatque in basilica Sicinini, ubi ritus Christiani est conuenticulum, uno die centum triginta septem reperta cadavera peremptorum*, trans. Rolfe. Amm. Marc. 27.3.12 speaks of bloodshed on both sides.

⁴⁸Geertman, “Forze centrifughe e centripete,” on the Liberian basilica as Ursinian anti-cathedral and *Coll. Avell.* 1.9 reporting frequent gatherings at the Liberian basilica. *Coll. Avell.* 5 allows the return of Ursinus and his supporters to Rome, while *Coll. Avell.* 6 discusses the return of the Basilica Sicininus to Damasus. McLynn notes that controlling certain buildings was crucial as such control was thought to lead to control over people (“Christian Controversy and Violence,” 16–9).

⁴⁹*Coll. Avell.* 1.12: *per coemeteria martyrum stationes sine clericis celebrabat.*

⁵⁰*Coll. Avell.* 1.12 *armatus cum satellitibus suis Damasus irruit et plurimos uastationis suae strage deiecit*, freely translated; Curran, *Pagan City and Christianity Capital*, 141.

⁵¹*Coll. Avell.* 7.

⁵²On Damasus’ *elogia* and episcopal authority, see recently Marianne Sághy, “Scinditur in Partes Populus: Pope Damasus and the Martyrs of Rome,” *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000): 273–87; Kate Blair-Dixon, “Damasus and the Fiction of Unity: the Urban Shrines of Saint Lawrence,” in *Ecclesiae urbis: Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV-X secolo) Roma, 4–10 settembre 2000*, eds. Federico Guidobaldi and Alessandra Guglia Guidobaldi (Vatican: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2002), 331–52; and Dennis Trout, “Damasus and the Invention of Early Christian Rome,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003): 517–36.

this bloody beginning, Damasus seems to have restored his reputation by his careful cultivation of the saints.

Yet another electoral dispute erupted after the death of bishop Zosimus in 418, resulting in the double election of the archdeacon Eulalius (418–419) and the presbyter Boniface (418–422).⁵³ Upon the death of Zosimus, Eulalius and his supporters hastened to the Lateran, which Eulalius held until he could be properly ordained. The urban prefect Symmachus, who favored Eulalius, simply wrote that the archdeacon lingered at the Constantinian basilica “with great multitudes and the majority of the priests,” whereas a partisan of Boniface insisted that “blockading every entrance entirely, the archdeacon Eulalius, impiously neglecting the funerary rites of so great a priest [bishop Zosimus] occupied the Lateran church with deacons, a very few presbyters, and uproarious hordes of plebs.”⁵⁴ On another day, presumably to allow for a proper funeral for Zosimus, the partisans of Boniface assembled at the church of Theodora—otherwise unknown—to elect the presbyter. Boniface was then consecrated in the church of Marcellus (fig. 1.7), according to the report of the urban prefect, or the nearby Julian basilica, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*.⁵⁵

After his ordination, the supporters of Boniface marched upon St. Peter’s (fig. 1.8). “And with him [Boniface], they advanced upon the basilica of the holy apostle Peter.”⁵⁶ The verb used by the urban prefect, *procedo*, more usually meant to go forward, advance, or proceed, often in military usage, though, interestingly, it is also used for processions.⁵⁷ In these circumstances, the martial meaning seems more apt, for the urban prefect

⁵³LP 44.1–4 and *Coll. Avell.* 14–37; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 452–60; Stuart Cristo, “Some Notes on the Bonifacian-Eulalian Schism,” *Aevum* 51 (1977): 163–67; Wirbelauer, “Die Nachfolgerbestimmung im römischen Bistum (3.-6. Jh.),” 410–15; Geertman, “Forze centrifughe e centripete,” n30; Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*, 101–3; Levillain, ed., *The Papacy sv Boniface I and sv Eulalius*; Kelly and Walsh, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Popes sv Boniface I and sv Eulalius (antipope)*; Norton, *Episcopal Elections*, 65.

⁵⁴*Coll. Avell.* 14.4: *cum maxima multitudine et cum pluribus sacerdotibus remoratus est* (urban prefect Symmachus); *Coll. Avell.* 17.2: “*Lateranensem ecclesiam obrutis paene omnibus ingressibus archidiaconus Eulalius contemptis impie summi sacerdotis exsequiis diaconibus et paucissimis presbyteris ac multitudine turbatae plebis obsederat*” (pro-Boniface), both freely translated. I would like to thank Nicole Hamonic for her help with this passage.

⁵⁵*Coll. Avell.* 14.5: *ad Theodora ecclesiam* and 14.6: *in ecclesia Marcelli*; LP 44.1: *in basilica Juliae*. See above nn43–44 on the location of the Julian basilica.

⁵⁶*Coll. Avell.* 14.6: *atque cum eo ad sancti apostoli Petri basilicam processerunt* (my translation).

⁵⁷*Oxford Latin Dictionary* sv *procedo*: 1. to go or move forward, advance, progress: b. of military forces, c. of processions, d. of things; 2. to proceed to a destination; 3. to come forth from concealment; 4. to step forward for a purpose: as a speaker or b. of troops, to sally forth. In his Latin translation of the Bible (the Vulgate), Jerome used *procedo* with reference to war (along with the more general meaning to go forward): see e.g. *1 Chronicles* 5:18, *Deut.* 24:5, *Jeremiah* 46:3. Thus *procedo* still maintained a martial meaning in the late fourth century, though it could also be used for processions, for example Egeria, *Itinerarium peregrinatio* 25, ed. P. Geyer CSEL 39 (Vindobonae: F. Tempsky, 1898), 74. Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*, 102; Twyman,

Symmachus, who favored Eulalius at this point, would not have wanted to portray Boniface acting piously. Like the word *statio, procedo* may here have a double valence: both a religious and a martial tone were justly used throughout these documents that described the vicissitudes of these disputed elections.

The western emperor Honorius (393–423), having accepted the prefect's version of events, confirmed the election of Eulalius and promptly ordered Boniface to leave the city.⁵⁸ Boniface then established himself temporarily in St. Paul's Outside the Walls (fig. 1.9).⁵⁹ While Eulalius celebrated mass at St. Peter's, the urban prefect sent an agent to Boniface to warn the recalcitrant would-be bishop against any further public display and to bring him to the office of the urban prefecture. "With contempt for the charge, Boniface marched upon [or processed to] (*processit*) the city, turning the prefect's agent over to his followers to be roughed up."⁶⁰ In this incident, the urban prefect again used the verb *procedo*, but in this case its martial overtones are even clearer. Much like Felix just over a half-century earlier, Boniface also attacked the walls of Rome—though he, unlike Felix, was stopped before he could invade the city. After a violent struggle, Boniface was stopped at the very gates and subsequently confined outside the walls under the surveillance of the urban prefect.

As Boniface cooled his heels, his partisans sent a letter of protest to the emperor, who, now better informed, called a synod to decide the matter.⁶¹ While awaiting the synod, both Eulalius and Boniface were to remain outside the city of Rome—Boniface at St. Felicitas (fig. 1.9), while Eulalius waited at St. Hermes in Antium, a nearby town.⁶² In their absence, the bishop of Spoleto would conduct the Easter liturgy.⁶³ The Ravennate synod made little progress before the emperor Honorius convened a larger, more general synod in Spoleto, inviting bishops from Italy and North Africa to attend.⁶⁴ Eulalius, however, contending that the faithful demanded that he

Papal ceremonial, 57; and Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope?," n150, all consider it a procession.

⁵⁸*Coll. Avell.* 15.

⁵⁹*Coll. Avell.* 16.4

⁶⁰*Coll. Avell.* 16.7 (Eulalius) and 16.3: *qui conuentione contempta processit atque eum, quem direxeram, dedit populo uerberandum*, loosely translated. For a quick outline of the schism, see in particular Cristo, "Some Notes on the Bonifacian-Eulalian Schism," 164 on this attack on or procession toward Rome.

⁶¹*Coll. Avell.* 17 (Pro-Boniface petition), *Coll. Avell.* 18 (rescinds decision in favor of Eulalius, calls for a synod at Ravenna), and *Coll. Avell.* 20 (instructions to Ravennate synod).

⁶²*LP* 44.2.

⁶³*Coll. Avell.* 21–24 (letters notifying various parties about Easter celebrant).

⁶⁴*Coll. Avell.* 25–28.

return, re-occupied the Lateran by force accompanied by rioting.⁶⁵ In response, the urban prefect Symmachus expelled the once-favored Eulalius from the Lateran and from Rome with his own forces to avoid further violence and also imperial displeasure. As may be expected, the emperor Honorius then decided in favor of Boniface.⁶⁶

At the end of the fifth century and into the early-sixth (498–506), Symmachus (498–514) and Lawrence (498–499, 501–506) competed at length for the cathedra.⁶⁷ In 498, just four days after the death of bishop Anastasius (496–498), two candidates were elected nearly simultaneously for the episcopal cathedra: the deacon Symmachus with the support of other deacons was elected in the Constantinian basilica, the Lateran; while his opponent, the presbyter Lawrence, favored by the aristocrats and the other presbyters, was elected in the Liberian basilica, St. Maria Maggiore. The Ostrogothic king Theodoric (493–526), also called the Amal, who was the power in Italy by the end of the fifth century, appears to have decided in favor of Symmachus, as he was ordained first with the most supporters, which were the criteria established by Theodoric to decide such contests.⁶⁸ Lawrence was then made bishop of Nuceria, as a consolation perhaps but forcibly according to the Laurentian fragment of the *Liber Pontificalis*—part of an earlier series of episcopal biographies composed between 514–519 written in favor of Lawrence it would seem.⁶⁹ The issue seems to have been

⁶⁵*Coll. Avell.* 29 and 32.

⁶⁶*Coll. Avell.* 30–32.

⁶⁷From an impressive literature I made use of P. A. B. Llewellyn, “The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism: Priests and Senators,” *Church History* 45 (1976): 417–27, and “The Roman Clergy during the Laurentian Schism (498–506): A Preliminary Analysis,” *Ancient Society* 8 (1977): 245–75; Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476–752* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 57–68; J. Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), chapters 4–5 with appendix 1; Eckhard Wirbelauer, *Zwei Päpste in Rom: der Konflikt zwischen Laurentius und Symmachus (498–514): Studien und Texte* (München: Tuduv, 1993); Thomas F. X. Noble, “Theodoric the Great and the Papacy,” in *Theodorico il Grande e i Goti d’Italia: Atti del XIII congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto medioevo*, 2 vols. (Spoleto: CISAM, 1993), 1:395–423; Wirbelauer, “Die Nachfolgerbestimmung im römischen Bistum (3.–6. Jh.),” 415–16; Teresa Sardella, *Società, chiesa e stato nell’età di Teodorico: papa Simmaco e lo scisma laurenziano* (Soveria Mannelli (Catanzaro): Rubbettino, 1996); Teresa Sardella, “Simmaco e lo scisma laurenziano: dalle fonti antiche alla storiografia moderna,” and E. Wirbelauer, “Simmaco e Lorenzo: ragioni del conflitto negli anni 498–506” in *Il papato di San Simmaco, 498–514: atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Oristano, 19–21 novembre 1998*, eds. Giampaolo Mele and Natalino Spaccapelo (Cagliari: Pontificia facoltà teologica della Sardegna, 2000), 11–37 and 39–51, respectively; Hillner, “Families, Patronage and Titular Churches”; Levillain, ed., *The Papacy* sv Symmachus and sv Laurentius; Kelly and Walsh, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Popes* sv Symmachus, St and sv Lawrence (antipope); and Norton, *Episcopal Elections*, 66–7.

⁶⁸*LP* 53.2 has Theodoric actively decide for Symmachus, while *Anonymi Valesiani pars posterior* 65 leaves out Theodoric’s decision.

⁶⁹Laurentian fig. 52.2 (= *LP* p. 44); *Book of Pontiffs*, xiv–xvi on the Laurentian vita and app. 2, p. 103 (date and translation). Cf. *Book of Pontiffs*, app. 3, pp. 110–1 (extracts from epitomes of *LP*).

largely settled until 501/2, when the Laurentians leveled further charges against Symmachus, including celebrating Easter incorrectly and consorting with women of ill repute, in particular with a certain woman named “Spicy.”⁷⁰ Theodoric summoned bishop Symmachus to Ravenna to answer these charges. According to the Laurentian fragment, one morning at Ariminium, where Symmachus was staying awaiting the Ravennate synod, he saw these women with whom he was accused of sinning as he walked along the beach. That night, Symmachus “fled back to Rome and barricaded himself inside the precinct of St. Peter the apostle.”⁷¹

The flight from judgment seems to have aroused suspicion, so Peter of Altinum was appointed as a visitor to conduct the episcopal liturgical services until a synod was convened.⁷² After a number of false starts, a synod was finally convened at the Sessorian palace, now St. Croce (fig. 1.10).⁷³ Again according to the Laurentian fragment, Symmachus long refused to attend this synod, which would have required him to traverse the entire city from St. Peter’s in the Vatican to St. Croce in the southeast, where the synod was housed near the Lateran.⁷⁴ According to the pro-Symmachan entry in the *Liber Pontificalis*, “Those who were rightly in communion with blessed Symmachus and chanced to be at large in the city were killed by the sword.”⁷⁵ The partisans of Lawrence “killed many *sacerdotes*, including Dignissimus and Gordian the priests of St. Peter *ad vincula* and Saints John and Paul; these they killed with clubs and sword. They killed many Christians, so that it was unsafe for any clergy to travel in the city by day or night.”⁷⁶ Throughout, it seems, Symmachus remained at St. Peter’s, from which he refused to leave for fear of violence, despite a second and third warning to attend the synod. After these warnings, the synod convened one last time, during which the assembled bishops threw in the towel, as without the presence of Symmachus they could not perform the service for which they had been gathered—the bishops seem to have simply acquitted Symmachus, decreeing “what they thought would suit Symmachus, and thus left the city in total chaos.”⁷⁷

⁷⁰Laurentian frg. 52.3–4 and 52.14 (= *LP* pp. 44 & 46): *Conditaria* aka “Spice Girl,” trans. Noble, “Theodoric and Papacy,” 406–7 (406 for “spicy”).

⁷¹Laurentian frg. 52.4 (= *LP* p. 44): *fugiens regreditur Romam seque intra beati Petri apostoli septa concludit*, trans. (adapted) Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, app. 2, p. 104.

⁷²Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, 71.

⁷³Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy*, 118, while Noble, “Theodoric and Papacy,” has St. Maria in Trastevere.

⁷⁴Laurentian frg. 52.7–8 (= *LP* p. 45); Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, app. 2, p. 104.

⁷⁵*LP* 53.5, trans. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*.

⁷⁶*LP* 53.5, trans. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*.

⁷⁷Laurentian frg. 52.9 (= *LP* p. 45): *quae sibi utilia visa sunt pro Symmachi persona, constituunt et sic urbem in summa confusione derelinquunt*, trans. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, app. 2, p. 105. Cf. the pro-Symmachan *LP* 53.4 where a synod of 115 bishops convened by Symmachus acquitted him

With the synod gone and Symmachus barricaded in St. Peter's, Lawrence returned to Rome, governing the city as if he were bishop from 501/2–6. In particular, the episcopal authority of Lawrence was founded on his occupation of *tituli* on the Viminal and Esquiline hills (roughly the area around St. Maria Maggiore), where he had once served as a presbyter.⁷⁸ Symmachus, who was not a Roman of Rome, drew support from Trastevere, traditionally, if not always accurately, associated with foreigners, where his sole known senatorial supporter had a palace.⁷⁹ Eventually however, the efforts of Symmachus once again prevailed as Theodoric ordered Lawrence to return control of the churches of Rome and their property to Symmachus, after which Lawrence was compelled to stay on the estates of his aristocratic patron Festus until death.⁸⁰

Finally, in 530 after the death of bishop Felix IV/III (526–530) (according to tradition, Felix II was strictly speaking an anti-pope), the deacon Dioscorus was elected in the Lateran Basilica, after which the supporters of the archdeacon Boniface II (530–532), the appointed successor of Felix, retired to the Julian basilica, where they elected him bishop. It is possible, according to Louis Duchesne, that this basilica *Iulii* was one of the grand halls of the Lateran palace, instead of the Julian basilica in Trastevere.⁸¹ Either way, the supporters of Boniface occupied the basilica for a short while, as the dispute itself was short-lived. According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, “the strife among the clergy and senate lasted 28 days. Then Dioscorus died on 14 October.”⁸² Boniface II then did his best to reconcile the pro-Byzantine party who had favored Dioscorus, though the length of time between his death and the election of his successor indicates that this did not go entirely well.⁸³

of the false charge. The chronology is uncertain and so perhaps the Symmachan synod met after Symmachus' final reinstatement as a gesture of unity.

⁷⁸Laurentian frg. 52.12 (= LP p. 46): *maxime de titulis ecclesiarum quos intra urbem Laurentius optinebat*; Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, app. 2, p. 105. Symmachus was especially concerned about the tituli that Laurentius “was occupying (*optinebat*) in the city.”

⁷⁹Llewellyn, “Roman Church during Laurentian Schism.” Cf. D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (Duckworth with the Classical Press of Wales, 2000) 151 on Trastevere's not always compelling association with eastern foreigners.

⁸⁰Laurentian frg. 52.12–13 (= LP p. 46); Davis, *Books of Pontiffs*, app. 2, p. 105.

⁸¹LP 57 n. 5. On this issue, see Geertman, “Forze centrifughe e centripete,” 30–1. The Julian basilica near the Forum of Trajan had been re-named *SS. Apostoli* by this point.

⁸²LP 57.1, trans. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*; On this scuffle, see Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, 120–35; Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy*, 198; Noble, “Theodoric and Papacy,” 420; Wirbelauer, “Die Nachfolgerbestimmung im römischen Bistum (3.-6. Jh.),” 417–21; Levillain, ed., *The Papacy*, sv Boniface II and sv Dioscorus; Kelly and Walsh, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, sv Boniface II and sv Dioscorus (antipope).

⁸³Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, 125–27.

III. PELAGIUS I AND THE ADVENT OF CHRISTIAN PUBLIC CEREMONIAL

From the fourth to the sixth century, as the Roman aristocracy expended no small portion of its fantastic wealth on traditional forms of public display and as various claimants to the seat of Peter battled in the streets and in ink, the relative positions of the aristocracy and the episcopacy did not, of course, remain stable.⁸⁴ In brief, the power of the aristocracy waned as that of the bishop waxed.⁸⁵ In the fourth and fifth centuries in particular, the vast fortunes of the aristocracy allowed them to purchase symbolic power through the patronage of traditional public ceremony, while the bishops struggled to control Christian aristocratic domestic worship and extramural martyr festivals or shed each other's blood in the streets or in churches. However, starting in the mid-fifth century the foundation of aristocratic power and prestige, its landed wealth which allowed it to finance this expensive and expansive array of public spectacles, eroded as "barbarian" kingdoms slowly appropriated large chunks of the western Roman empire.⁸⁶ The foundation of aristocratic authority was also worn away from another direction—the gradual conversion of the aristocracy to Christianity, which, although it did not prohibit classical ceremonial, slowly channeled aristocratic benefactions in other directions, namely the church.

Roman aristocratic wealth was overwhelmingly based on land ownership. In particular, the wealthiest Roman aristocrats owned lands scattered throughout the empire, though with a notable concentration in Italy, Sicily, and North Africa. In the fifth and sixth centuries, this landed wealth was severely impaired; while that of the church at Rome continued to expand.⁸⁷ First, in the mid-fifth century the Vandals, a group of Germanic speakers fortified by Alans (once nomadic Iranian speakers) conquered North Africa, in particular

⁸⁴See essays collected in A. Barchiesi, J. Rüpke, and S. Stephens, eds., *Rituals in Ink* (Munich: Franz Steiner, 2004) for the phrase "Rituals in Ink" as it pertains to the reality or rhetoric of rituals described in classical texts.

⁸⁵F. Marazzi, "Rome in Transition: Economic and Political Change in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West*, ed. J. H. M. Smith (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2000): 21–41 for the competition with bishops gaining upper hand only around 500. Both S. Gasparri, "The Aristocracy," in *Italy in the Early Middle Ages 476–1000*, ed. C. La Rocca (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 59–84 and Noble, "The Roman Elite," saw the Laurentian schism, which straddled the year 500, as a prime moment in the relations between aristocracy and church.

⁸⁶On which see the well-written Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. part 2.

⁸⁷Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, Barnish, "Transformation and Survival," and now especially Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 163–64 and 203–19 on the relative survival of church property as compared to that of the aristocracy and on the quite different successor aristocracies of the early Middle Ages.

the provinces around Carthage, some of the most productive and profitable regions of the Roman world. A second devastating blow was struck in the mid-sixth century during the reconquest of Italy, when the eastern Roman emperor Justinian (527–565) attempted, and succeeded, in recapturing Italy from the Ostrogoths, who under Theodoric the Amal had taken over Italy in the late-fifth century. The reconquest or Gothic wars dragged on for nearly twenty years, ending just in time to see yet another disaster fall upon the beleaguered peninsula. Just as the eastern Roman empire regained Italy, yet another “barbarian” group, the Lombards, invaded Italy, sparking another thirty years or so of intense fighting, with intermittent fighting continuing long afterwards.⁸⁸ This nearly half-century of continuous warfare completed the work begun by the Vandal conquest—by the end of the sixth century, the super-rich of Rome were dispossessed of much of the property whose incomes had allowed them to patronize a lavish calendar of public ceremonial and traditional festivals.⁸⁹

The gradual conversion of the aristocracy matched the equally gradual, though certainly more dramatic, impoverishment of the Roman aristocracy. However, Christianity was quite compatible with most classical aristocratic values.⁹⁰ As Peter Brown notes, “even after they had become Christian, the senators of Rome remained fiercely loyal to the memories of their city.”⁹¹ The aristocracy may well have largely converted by the end of the fifth century. But at the same time, an elite version of late antique Roman Christianity had largely accommodated classical culture, as aristocratic distinction, regardless of religious affiliation, depended upon a conservative adherence to classical culture, its literature, art, and even norms of deportment.⁹² In 598, even pope Gregory I (590–604) could wonder, “How

⁸⁸On “barbarian” conquests, see Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*; Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, 191–224; and Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, 76–108 for good narratives.

⁸⁹See especially, Michele R. Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) on the vibrant and even overloaded fourth-century civic calendar.

⁹⁰P. R. L. Brown, “Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 51 (1961): 1–11. The Christian adaptation of aristocratic culture made conversion easier, however, I want to highlight that even Christian members of the aristocracy still behaved in rather traditional ways in public ceremonies.

⁹¹Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 2nd edition (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 145.

⁹²On the role of *paideia*, aka culture/refinement/education, in late antiquity, see Robert Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), esp. chapters 1–2; Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), esp. chapters 1–2; and Catherine Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), esp. chapter 1–2. On the continuing attraction of the classical tradition and its use as a medium to attract the aristocracy to

anyone can be seduced by Constantinople, and how anyone can forget Rome, I don't know."⁹³ That is, even the bishops of Rome defended its place and privileges.⁹⁴

During the fourth and early-fifth centuries, Christianity and the Roman aristocracy "met and merged."⁹⁵ But even if conversion should no longer be viewed as a massive change in elite values, nonetheless it had consequences for public ceremonial. Specifically, Christianity offered new opportunities to accrue symbolic capital: almsgiving, the foundation of ascetic communities, and the construction of Christian churches or chapels in particular. Some of the funds which were once freely given to traditional public display were now channeled in other directions. In addition, ascetic versions of Christianity could indeed contradict the *mores* of classical culture: in a spectacular potlatch gesture, Melania the Younger and her husband Pinian renounced their vast properties, causing a panic among their relatives as well as in the real estate market.⁹⁶ Similarly, ascetic impulses compelled men and women from many of Rome's most august families to reject the public sphere and its temptations, withdrawing instead to private devotions in private (but often grand) chapels (sometimes with their own clergy) within the household.⁹⁷

The aristocracy seems to have remained dominant until the end of the fifth century even after the loss of North Africa to the Vandals, when the scale

Christianity, see Michele R. Salzman, "Elite Realities and *Mentalités*: The Making of a Western Christian Aristocracy," *Arethusa* 33 (2000): 347–62. On aristocratic conservatism evidenced by a reluctance to Christianize the Roman Forum and other public spaces, see Siri Sande, "Old and New in Old and New Rome," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 17 n.s. 3 (2003): 101–14.

⁹³Gregory I, *ep.* 8.22, trans. Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 90, which is more poetic than "I do not know what your great delight is in the city of Constantinople, and what your oblivion is of the city of Rome," in Gregory I, Pope, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, 3 vols., trans. J. R. C. Martyn (Toronto: PIMS, 2004). Gregory's comment followed directly on the heels of an image of Rome as the threshold of Saint Peter, highlighting the extent to which Gregory I easily and readily combined the classical with the Christian, on which see J. Richards, *Consul of God* (New York: Routledge, 1980).

⁹⁴M. Humphries, "Italy, A. D. 425–605," in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edition, vol. 14, eds. Av. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins, and M. Whitby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 525–51, here 540–44.

⁹⁵Michele R. Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 3, see also 14–18, and 200–19 on aristocratic influence on Christianity. See also F. E. Consolino, "Tradizionalismo e trasgressione nell'élite senatoria romana: ritratti di signore fra la fine del IV e l'inizio del V secolo," in Testa, *Le trasformazioni delle élites in età tardoantica*, 65–139 on Christianization of aristocracy, in particular aristocratic women.

⁹⁶Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 298–311. On this episode and on more prosaic instances of aristocratic support, see also Cooper, "Poverty, Obligation, and Inheritance" and also Anne Kurdock, "*Demetrias ancilla dei*: Anicia Demetrias and the problem of the missing patron," in Cooper and Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage*, 190–224.

⁹⁷Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values*, esp. 75–99 on private churches and domestic ascetics.

began to tip towards the bishop.⁹⁸ The *adventus*-ceremony which greeted the Ostrogothic king Theodoric upon his arrival at Rome in 500 may best illustrate the turning of the tides. Prior to 500, the *occursus*, the Roman civic group which went to meet the arriving dignitary, had always been described as the senate and the Roman people, SPQR.⁹⁹ In 500, however, “The Pope Symmachus and the entire senate and people of Rome amid general rejoicing met [Theodoric] outside the city”—the very first recorded appearance of the bishop in the *occursus* at Rome.¹⁰⁰ In the midst of the declining power of an increasingly Christian aristocracy, the bishop of Rome had finally managed to insinuate himself into one of the more hallowed rituals of late antiquity.

Given such circumstances, it might elicit little surprise that the first recorded Roman Christian procession took place shortly after the Byzantine re-conquest of Rome—which crippled an already weakened aristocracy, the paramount barrier to Christian public ceremonial—in the midst of a contentious papal election.¹⁰¹ As a deacon under bishop Vigilius (537–555), Pelagius I (556–561) had originally supported his predecessor’s opposition to the condemnation of the Three Chapters.¹⁰² The emperor Justinian, however, offered Pelagius the papal throne in return for his support.¹⁰³ Pelagius accepted, for which, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, “monasteries and a

⁹⁸Hillner and Cooper, “Introduction,” 4: “The sixth century was the ‘tipping point’ connecting two processes: the waning of imperial and aristocratic gestures of ‘conspicuous consumption,’ and the waxing of ecclesiastical institutions as a mechanism through which bishops could establish continuity of culture and historical memory.” See also n85 above.

⁹⁹In general, see Sabine MacCormack, “Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity,” *Historia* 21 (1972), 721–52 and *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 17–89; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 267–84; P. Dufraigne, *Adventus Augusti, Adventus Christi: Recherches sur l’exploitation idéologique d’un cérémoniel dans l’antiquité tardive* (Paris: Institut d’études augustiniennes, 1994); J. Lehnen, *Adventus Principis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997); A. Frascetti, “Venit modo reges Romam,” in *Urbs Roma*, Harris, ed., 235–48 and *La Conversione: Da Roma Pagana a Roma Cristiana* (Bari: Laterza, 1999), 243–69 (“I re vengono a Roma”); Marazzi, “Rome in Transition”; S. Benoist, *Rome, le prince et la Cité: Pouvoir impérial et cérémonies publiques* (Paris: PUF, 2005); M. Vitiello, *Momenti di Roma ostrogota: adventus, feste, politica* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2005); and Humphries, “From Emperor to Pope?”

¹⁰⁰Anon. Val. Pars Post. 65 (=12.65): *Cui papa Symmachus et cunctus senatus vel populus Romanus cum omni gaudio extra urbem occurrentes*, trans. Rolfe. On this first appearance of the bishop of Rome, see Vitiello, *Momenti di Roma ostrogota*, 19–29.

¹⁰¹Saxer, “L’utilisation par la liturgie de l’espace urbain et suburbain,” 2.960.

¹⁰²On the Three Chapters, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine: Volume 1 The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 275–77; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 119–25; and Claire Sotinel, “Mémoire perdue ou mémoire manipulée: le *Liber Pontificalis* et la controverse des Trois Chapitres,” in *L’usage du passé entre Antiquité tardive et haut Moyen Âge: Hommage à Brigitte Beaujard*, eds. Claire Sotinel and Maurice Sartre (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 59–76.

¹⁰³Richards, *Popes and Papacy*, 156–60, on the Three Chapters generally 139–61.

large number of the devout, the prudent, and the nobility withdrew from communion with him saying he had implicated himself in the death of pope Vigilius and so had brought great punishments on himself.”¹⁰⁴ At that moment in 556, Pelagius turned to the Byzantine general Narses, who served, it seems, as the conduit by which a rather long history of Christian public ceremonial from the new Rome, Constantinople, reached the old. Again according to the *Liber Pontificalis*:

Narses and pope Pelagius adopted a plan: when the litany had been given out at St. Pancras’s they processed with hymns and spiritual chants to St. Peter, the apostle. Pelagius, holding the gospels and the cross of the Lord above his head, went up onto the ambo; in this way he satisfied the entire populace and the plebs that he had caused Vigilius no harm.¹⁰⁵

The itinerary is striking. It was entirely extramural, beginning and ending at martyr-shrines, avoiding the monumental core of Rome entirely. To begin at St. Pancras (fig. 1.11), a relatively humble martyr basilica, seems like an odd choice. This martyr first appears only in the fifth-century Hieronymian martyrology.¹⁰⁶ Towards the end of the fifth century, bishop Symmachus built the first church dedicated to Pancras, as part of his battle with the Laurentians for control over the martyrs along the Via Aurelia.¹⁰⁷ In the course of this contest it seems, martyr stories were elaborated or invented, which were eventually recorded by Gregory of Tours. According to Gregory of Tours, “[Pancras’s] harsh punishment publicly distinguishes [oaths], so listeners either believe the truth or they witness the judgment of the blessed martyr against deceit.”¹⁰⁸ In an effort to vindicate himself, Pelagius, after having offered prayers to the martyr, would have sworn that he had had nothing to do with the death of Vigilius. If he had lied, he would have died—or at least been possessed by a demon. The procession, then, in which Pelagius and his entourage made their way down the northern slopes of the

¹⁰⁴LP 62.1, trans. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*.

¹⁰⁵LP 62.2: *Narsis et Pelagius papa consilio inito, data laetania ad sanctum Pancratium, cum hymnis et canticis spiritalibus venerunt ad sanctam Petrum apostolum*, translation adapted from Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*. In this case the verb, *venerunt* from *venio*, simply means went, but the ablative phrase indicating the manner in which Pelagius and his entourage went or processed, “with hymns and spiritual chants,” transformed mere travel into a procession. Cf. Boniface’s march whose verb may mean to process but whose context favors a martial meaning.

¹⁰⁶G. N. Verrando, “Le numerose recensioni della *Passio Pancratii*,” *Vetera Christianorum* 19 (1982): 105–29.

¹⁰⁷LP 53.8 and Joan E. Barclay-Lloyd, “The Church and Monastery of S. Pancrazio, Rome,” in *Pope, Church and City: Essays in Honour of Brenda M. Bolton*, eds. Frances Andrews, Christoph Eggers, and Constance M. Rousseau (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2004), 245–66.

¹⁰⁸Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs* 38 c. 585–88, trans. Ray Van Dam (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 60. On development of stories and cult of Pancratius, see Conrad Leyser, “The Temptations of Cult: Roman Martyr Piety in the Age of Gregory the Great,” *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000): 289–303, esp. 303–05.

Janiculum to St. Peter's below, while singing hymns and chants and carrying crosses and sacred books, functioned as spectacular proof that Pelagius had indeed sworn truthfully.

The choice of St. Peter's as the destination seems obvious, as it is difficult to overestimate its importance.¹⁰⁹ In fact, about forty years after this Pelagian procession, Gregory I would call Rome the threshold of Saint Peter, prince of the Apostles.¹¹⁰ However, the Lateran basilica would have served much the same purpose, in addition to providing a longer and more accessible itinerary through the city center. Perhaps the papacy was still figuring out its place in the city, as Rome's streets and squares might have still been haunted by the memory of traditional Roman spectacles once patronized by an elite that only recently been rent by the ravages of war.

All told, the first known Christian procession at Rome appears to have been rather humble, comprising a rather short, extramural itinerary from the shrine of a martyr who kills perjurers to the apostle Peter. Such a public ritual was made possible primarily by the devastation of the classical Roman aristocracy, whose traditions had previously defined the public space of the city, but also by the presence of Byzantines, like Narses, who acted as channels for the long history of Christian processions in Constantinople.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the fourth and fifth centuries, local church leaders throughout the Mediterranean and even Europe took advantage of the new opportunities afforded by imperial favor and its often-incalculable material support. In the scramble to exploit these new prospects, conflicts developed between competing Christian groups, many of which were settled with violence, but some of which were contested symbolically through public rituals. In many of the major cities of the empire—Alexandria, Carthage, and Constantinople in particular—Christian groups staked their claim to the civic public sphere through processions. On occasion, rivals groups held conflicting processions. Even fifth-century Gaul witnessed the emergence of such public ceremonial.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹See Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor: liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale: Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri*, 2 vols (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994), 2.451–514 on S. Peter's from construction to c. 600 and Victor Saxer, "Le stazioni romane," in *La comunità cristiana di Roma*, eds. Letizia Pani Ermini and Paolo Siniscalco (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), 461–76, who counts 13 stations per year at Saint Peter's c. 800, which made it the most used stational church.

¹¹⁰Gregory I, *Ep.* 8.22: *beati Petri apostolorum principis limina*.

¹¹¹On which, see Geoffrey Nathan, "Rogation Ceremonies of Late Antique Gaul: Creation, Transmission and the Role of the Bishop," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 49 (1998): 275–303. Notably, Spain, whether ruled by Rome or the Visigoths, also witnessed a great deal of intra-Christian violence, see P. Castillo, "*In ecclesia contra ecclesiam*: Algunos ejemplos de disputas, violencias

Rome, however, did not see its first Christian procession until 556, nearly two centuries later than elsewhere. Up until that moment, Rome's public sphere, its streets and *fora*, was still sated with a full calendar of traditional Roman ceremonies and other aristocratic forms of public display. The super-rich of Rome, whose wealth far exceeded that of the church at Rome and even the elite of Constantinople, continued to distinguish itself from the average run of humanity by financing customary ceremonies, erecting statues, and restoring buildings in the Roman Forum. From the fourth until the mid-sixth century, then, the Christian contestation of space among rival Christian groups could only take the form, at least rhetorically if not actually, of bloody conflict. Competing claimants to the seat of Peter repeatedly engaged in acts which were construed as violent. Even acts which may have been rituals were described in military terms.

Throughout all of these electoral disputes three elements consistently emerge: first, the use of martial language to describe the events; second, the concentration on a few contested sites; and third, internal fragmentation among Christians at Rome. Felix, after having been driven out of the city upon the return of Liberius, invaded (*inrumpit*) Rome. He then presumed to hold a station (*stationem . . . dare praesumit*), whose military connotations have already been noted.¹¹² The bloody conflict between Damasus and Ursinus was also aptly described in military terms. Damasus and his armed (*armatus*) charioteers and ignorant mob forced their way (*perrumpit*) into the Julian basilica where they murdered indiscriminately for three days (*per triduum debacchatus est*).¹¹³ Damasus later had his supporters—gladiators, charioteers, and gravediggers—besiege (*obsedit*) and then charge (*inrumperet*) the Ursinians, who were holed up in the Liberian basilica.¹¹⁴ Much the same happened at the cemetery of St. Agnese, where Damasus attacked and massacred (*irruit . . . deiecit*) a group of fearful Ursinians.¹¹⁵ Pointedly, the pro-Ursinian epistle, *Quae gesta sunt inter Liberium et Felicem episcopos*, characterized this Damasan violence as war: "Damasus waged war for a fifth time."¹¹⁶

y facciones clericales en las iglesias tardoantiguas hispanas," *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007): 263–76, arguing that the Visigothic era image of ecclesiastical uniformity elides such instances. But as noted by Wickham (*Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 37–41 and 93–102; and *The Inheritance of Rome*, 130–40) ceremonial played a key role in Visigothic governance, presenting a image of royal unity at the capital in the face of real geographical and economic fragmentation.

¹¹²*Coll. Avell.* 1.3.

¹¹³*Coll. Avell.* 1.5.

¹¹⁴*Coll. Avell.* 1.7.

¹¹⁵*Coll. Avell.* 1.12.

¹¹⁶*Coll. Avell.* 1.9: *quintum iam bellum Damasus fecit*, my translation.

During the struggles between Eulalius and Boniface, the partisans of Boniface advanced (*processerunt*) or marched on St. Peter's, while Eulalius occupied (*obsederat*) the Lateran basilica.¹¹⁷ Later, Boniface marched upon (*processit*) the city—an advance only stopped at the city walls. Even Eulalius forcibly re-occupied the Lateran.¹¹⁸ The Laurentian fragment described the battles between Symmachus and Lawrence as civil wars (*bella civilia*).¹¹⁹ Symmachus, after fleeing Ravenna to avoid charges of sexual impropriety, barricaded (*concludit*) himself within the compound of St. Peter's.¹²⁰ While Symmachus was confined to the Vatican, Lawrence was occupying (*optinebat*) several *tituli*.¹²¹ Finally, the *Liber Pontificalis* characterized the relatively brief conflict (*intentione*) between Boniface II and Dioscorus as strife or discord (*dissensio*) and not violence or war, probably because Dioscorus died before the situation could worsen.¹²²

This overwhelming use of military language suggests that from the mid-fourth to the mid-sixth century, the spatial strategies and behaviors of the Christian church, as represented by its various officials, were best understood as occupation and war. Various protagonists occupied, held, and barricaded themselves in churches or cemeteries, which were advanced upon, charged at, and invaded. Importantly, even movements through space were colored with military tones. Boniface may well have been conducted to St. Peter's by a procession, but the language suggests more strongly that he and his supporters marched upon the church. The religio-military language, as also with the word *statio*, is ambiguous and yet telling, suggesting that Christian religious movement through the city developed metaphorically out of military maneuvers during these schisms. That is, what might have been ecclesiastical public rituals were described as if they were military operations, if they were not actually assaults or invasions. Once an increasingly impoverished aristocracy released its near exclusive hold on the city, such acts were subsequently construed as unambiguously ceremonial—violence and rituals described in ambiguously martial terms eventually yielded to purely symbolic acts of urban conquest.

It is also noteworthy that many of the same sites were occupied again and again: in particular, within the walls, the Basilica *Iulii* on the *via Lata* near the Forum of Trajan—later the basilica *Apostolorum* or *SS Apostolorum*—the Liberian basilica or *St. Maria Maggiore*, and the Constantinian or Lateran

¹¹⁷*Coll. Avell.* 14.6 (*processerunt*) and 17.2 (*obsederat*).

¹¹⁸*Coll. Avell.* 16.4; *processit*; 29 on civil violence attendant upon Eulalius's return to Rome; and 32 on the obstinate Eulalius taking over the Lateran from which he was forcibly ejected.

¹¹⁹Laurentian frg. 52.11 (= *LP* p. 46).

¹²⁰Laurentian frg. 52.4 (= *LP* p. 44).

¹²¹Laurentian frg. 52.12 (= *LP* p. 46).

¹²²*LP* 57.1

basilica. These intramural patriarchal basilicas would also figure prominently in the late sixth-century organization of the stationary liturgy.¹²³ Thus to control these churches, in particular the Lateran, was to hold a strategic site. Very often, the occupation of the Lateran granted the contestant victory—though not always, as the examples of Eulalius and Dioscorus demonstrate. As the seat of the bishop, the Lateran, which would eventually become the traditional home of papal ordinations, conferred a certain degree of legitimacy. The two Lateran extensions, the Liberian and Julian basilicas, functioned similarly, but seem to have been recognized as a consolation prize in lieu of holding the Lateran itself. Other intra-mural churches, like the basilica *Iulii in Transtiberim*, the church in *Lucinis*, the church of Theodora, the church of Marcellus, and unnamed *tituli*, played smaller roles in these electoral contests.

Among the extra-mural sites, St. Peter's, unsurprisingly as one of the three extra-mural patriarchal churches, played a large role in a pair of these disputes, most importantly as the long-term base of Symmachus, while his opponent Lawrence occupied the Lateran and much of the rest of the city. Before Symmachus, Boniface I had tried to make use of the prestige of Peter by marching upon or processing to St. Peter's. Oddly, St. Paul's FLM, the second most prestigious extra-mural church, appeared once, and then only briefly, during these conflicts; while St. Lorenzo FLM, called *maior* in the fourth and fifth centuries, was ignored entirely.¹²⁴ Obviously, the principal intra-mural churches were strategically more important, though if exiled or denied Rome, its martyr-shrines, particularly that of Peter, would suffice. Political concerns, namely the presence of the emperor's sister, dictated that Liberius live at St. Agnese while awaiting a restoration to his see. The Ursinians attempted to make use of this precedent and the continuing appeal of Liberius when they in turn occupied this cemeterial basilica. The later tenure of Boniface I at St. Felicitas goes unexplained by the *Liber Pontificalis*, so perhaps Boniface had some personal attachment to the saint.

Lastly, internal fractures within the institutional church emerge as a third leitmotif—more specifically, many of these disputed elections pitted titular presbyter against papal deacon.¹²⁵ In 418 the archdeacon Eulalius contended

¹²³Herman Geertman, *More veterum: il Liber Pontificalis e gli edifici ecclesiastici di Roma nella tarda antichità e nell'alto medioevo* (Groningen: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1975), 132–42 and “Forze centrifughe e centripete.” Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, chapter 2.1.i and pp. 44–49, confirms the status of these churches, though noting that SS. Apostoli was a second tier patriarchal church.

¹²⁴*Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Rome: Quasar, 1993–1999), sv S. Laurentii Basilica, Balneum, Praetorium, Monasterium, Hospita, Bibliothecae (Simonetta Serra).

¹²⁵Llewellyn, “The Roman Clergy during the Laurentian Schism.” However, Hillner, “Families, Patronage, and Titular Churches,” has rightly contended that Llewellyn's assertions about the so-called college of presbyters and their independence far outstrips the evidence, but her own argument about the foundation of *tituli* from a generic church fund is not entirely convincing.

with the presbyter Boniface, while from 498–506 the deacon Symmachus fought with the presbyter Lawrence. This tension between presbyter and deacon may well have originated with the foundation, endowment, and institutional status of the titular churches in which the presbyters served. In the fourth through sixth centuries, the titular churches seem to have functioned as an odd compromise between the status concerns of the aristocracy, which provided the funds, and the centralizing impetus of the bishop. Thus the titular presbyters were caught in between the centrifugal force of the aristocracy and the centripetal efforts of the episcopate.¹²⁶ In a nutshell, a number of the disputed elections may have served as proxy wars in which the traditional Roman aristocracy and the growing authority of the papal curia battled for the control of the Roman public sphere and the Roman people.

Eventually, however, the failure of the western empire and the conversion of the aristocracy greatly altered the balance of power in Rome. The aristocracy was steadily impoverished even as it began increasingly to direct its remaining wealth towards Christian foundations and the institutional church. Towards the end of the fifth century, the scales began to tip clearly in the direction of the bishop, culminating with the procession of Pelagius in 556, in which the Roman episcopacy finally claimed the very streets of the city without violence. By means of ritual not bloodshed, Pelagius conquered Rome.

In sum, aristocratic domination of the public sphere precluded any simply symbolic appropriation of civic space by the bishop. Limited in this way, episcopal electoral disputes roiled intensely like a tempest in a teapot as a strategy of militaristic occupation of centrally important churches marked these schisms. Each side marched upon and occupied the principal churches of Rome, invading and expelling their enemies from other principal churches when they could. The martial language in the descriptions of these conflicts often veered close to the religious, indicating, hinting, that the origins of Christian processions lie in conflict and battle. From the literal soldiers of Christ, like the thugs of Damasus armed with clubs, rocks, and swords, emerged the spiritual soldiers of Pelagius I bearing crosses and singing hymns.

Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values*, 65–71, persuasively argues that the *tituli* maintained a kind of semi-independence. See also, Kate Cooper, “The Martyr, the *Matrona* and the Bishop,” *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999): 297–317, who argues that intra-Christian competition pitted the aristocracy against the bishop.

¹²⁶Borrowing terms from Geertman, “Forze centrifughe e centripete.” This tension may well have survived into the early Middle Ages, when the titular liturgy still remained distinct from the papal one, a difference which may, however, have resulted from the elaboration of papal ritual, on which see S. J. P. van Dijk, “The Urban and Papal Rites in Seventh and Eighth Century Rome,” *Sacris Erudiri* 12 (1961): 411–87.