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Roma Sempiternal:
Porphyry and the Imperialization of the Papacy in Medieval Rome

A dissertation presented

by

Kelsey Eldridge

to

The Department of History of Art and Architecture

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History of Art and Architecture

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

May 1, 2023

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Roma Sempiternal: Porphyry and the Imperialization of the Papacy in Medieval Rome

Abstract

This dissertation explores the role of porphyry in the imperialization of the papacy that took place in Rome between the fourth and twelfth centuries. Porphyry is a purple marble that was quarried in Egypt between approximately the first and fifth century CE. Originally imported to Rome where it was the exclusive prerogative of the emperor, porphyry was later used and reused by rulers throughout the Italian peninsula and wider Mediterranean. This study argues that porphyry was an inherently Roman material, whose symbolism was derived and produced by its inheritance through the chain of rulers of sempiternal Rome. Before the marble was Christianized under Constantine in the fourth century, it was associated with the Roman emperor who also carried the title of *Pontifex Maximus* ("greatest priest"). From the time of its discovery and its earliest uses by first century emperors, porphyry carried a religious and political significance that was necessarily tied to the concept of Roman imperium because, like the Roman emperor, it bridged the worldly and the divine. Following the Christianization and gradual dissolution of the Western Roman Empire, the marble fell into the hands of the pope who – as the new *Pontifex Maximus* – was bishop of Rome and successor to the see of St. Peter. No longer the right of the emperor alone, from 312 onwards porphyry was the inheritance of both the secular and religious rulers of Rome. This project traces the use of porphyry from its discovery by Roman legionaries to its use by the medieval papacy and its rivals, ultimately arguing that the status and symbolism of porphyry were fundamentally linked to the sempiternity

of the Roman Empire, which was the notion that "Rome" would persist in successive iterations until the end of time.

This study addresses the dual religious and political significance and Roman inheritance of porphyry across four chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to porphyry as both a material and symbol of the Roman Empire. The chapter outlines the geological properties of the marble and considers its treatment by historical sources. After detailing the origins of the color purple as a symbol of royalty and imperium, the chapter ends with an explanation of the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 2 aims to establish that porphyry was a specifically Roman rather than Hellenistic material. A reappraisal of the textual and material sources demonstrates that speculation as to whether porphyry was carved or valued in Ptolemaic Alexandria is historically unfounded. Chapter 3 details the use of porphyry in Imperial Rome, and its Christianization under Constantine. By foregrounding the funerary use of porphyry, it is argued that the porphyry sarcophagus was an analogue for the body of the Roman emperor. An examination of passages from the fifth-century *Passio sanctorum quatuor coronatorum* from a new perspective finds that the hagiography portrayed porphyry as a uniquely Christian material. In closing, Chapter 4 considers the presence of porphyry in Roman ecclesiastical spaces and its use by the medieval papacy. Beginning with the history of the Vatican *rota porphryretica*, the significance of porphyry *rotae* (pavement roundels) is explored within the context of polychrome cosmatesque pavements and papal ceremonial. The ninth and twelfth century phases of medieval papal patronage of porphyry are placed into dialogue with the propagandistic texts, the *Actus Silvestri* and *Donation of Constantine*, and tensions between the papacy, Carolingians, and Normans.

From its early usage as a material signifier of the divinized Roman emperor, to its programmatic use in twelfth-century papal patronage, porphyry physically embodied and represented the dual religious and political authority of the Roman ruler, evoking for its audience the genealogy, power, and splendor of the Roman imperium.

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Introduction

> "In the Lateran church, which is the capital of the world, which is a patriarchal or imperial see, there is the pontifical throne of the Apostolic [church], and the principal altar of the same church is the Ark of the Lord's Covenant… the Ark is on the inside, and on the outside it is hidden by an altar… between four columns of red porphyry, beneath certain beautiful canopy, in which indeed, as they say, is a great sanctuary."[1]

John the Deacon's *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae* (Reg. lat. 712) records a first-hand description of the Lateran basilica as it would have appeared around the turn of the twelfth century. More than just a documentary source, the *Descriptio* constructs an argument for the supremacy of the Roman Church and the ascendancy of the Lateran as its physical and spiritual center. John's designation of the Lateran as the "capital of the world" was a reflection of the medieval church's worldview in which the world was understood to be a patriarchal and imperial see, with the pope as its sovereign head. Within such a worldview, the pope occupied a dual religio-politcal role as both universal pontiff and ruler of the world. If the Lateran was the center of the world, the symbolic and ceremonial center of the Lateran was the church's high altar. As John describes, the altar of the twelfth-century basilica was surmounted by a ciborium set atop four porphyry columns. The use of the purple marble within the structure was not incidental, but rather a symbolically significant gesture. Once a material associated with Roman imperial privilege, by the twelfth century porphyry had become a symbol of the pope and his status as emperor and priest of Rome. The presence of porphyry at the center of a space that was thought

[1] John the Deacon, *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae* (Reg. lat. 712), trans. Eivor Anderson Oftestad in *The Lateran Church in Rome and the Ark of the Covenant* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), 227-228. *In ecclesia lateranensi que est caput mundi que patriarchalis vel imperialis est sedis, est apostolice [ecclesie] cathedra pontificalis et eiusdem ecclesie principalis est archa federis domini, vel ut aiunt archa est interius (et altare ad mensuram longitudinis latitudines et altitudinis arche conditum est exterius), inter quatuor colum[p]nas de rubeo p[h]orphirio sub quodam pulchro cyborio in quo quidem ut asserunt multum est sanctuarium, sed quale sit non agnoscuntnam nomen eius nesciunt.*

to be the center of the world, was a reflection of increasing imperialization of the papacy that took shape throughout the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages were witness to the remaking of Rome from capital of the Roman Empire to capital of the Roman see. During this process of Christianization, the symbols, materials, topography and landmarks of imperial Rome were transformed through the mediating influence of Constantine. Marvin Trachtenberg has suggested that medieval Rome may be thought of as a "closed semiotic circle."[2] For Trachtenberg, church building in Rome was a historicist process of "Constantinian semiosis," wherein individual basilicas formed a city-wide array of signs referring back to the force of papal ideology and its Constantinian inheritance. Within the system churches signified continuity and identity between Rome's present and its past, and were in part responsible for the continuous Christianization and remaking of the ancient, pagan city.[3] Porphyry had an important role in this process because like the figure of Constantine, the marble was a conduit between pagan and Christian Rome. Its semiosis paralleled that of the city itself – once a privilege of the emperor, by the twelfth century porphyry had decisively entered the domain of the papacy where its use was conditioned by its Constantinian pedigree.

This dissertation argues that porphyry was an inherently Roman material, whose symbolism was derived and produced by its inheritance through the chain of rulers of sempiternal Rome. Even before the marble was Christianized under Constantine, it was associated with the Roman emperor who also carried the title of *Pontifex Maximus* ("greatest

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[2] Marvin Trachtenberg, "On Brunellschi's Choice: Speculations on Medieval Rome and the Origins of Renaissance Architecture," in *Architectural Studies in Memory of Richard Krautheimer,* ed. Cecil L. Striker (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 169-173.

[3] Ibid., 173.

priest"). This meant that from the time of its discovery and its earliest uses in the first century CE, porphyry carried a religious and political significance that was necessarily tied to the concept of Roman imperium. Like the Roman emperor, porphyry bridged the worldly and the divine. Following the Christianization and gradual dissolution of the Western Roman Empire, the marble fell into the hands of the pope who – as the new *Pontifex Maximus* – was bishop of Rome and successor to the see of St. Peter. No longer the right of the emperor alone, from 312 onwards porphyry was the inheritance of both the secular and religious rulers of Rome. This project traces the use of porphyry from its discovery by Roman legionaries to its use by medieval popes like Innocent II. Ultimately, I argue that the status and symbolism of the marble were fundamentally linked to the *sempiternity* of the Roman Empire, which was the notion that "Rome" would persist in successive iterations until the end of time.

The following study addresses the dual religious and political significance and Roman inheritance of porphyry across four chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to porphyry as both a material and symbol of the Roman Empire. I outline the geological properties of the marble and consider its treatment by historical sources. After detailing the origins of the color purple as a symbol of royalty and imperium, the chapter ends with an explanation of the theoretical framework of the study. The purpose of Chapter 2 is to establish that porphyry was a specifically *Roman* material. Through a reappraisal of the textual and material sources, I aim to put to rest any speculation that porphyry was either carved or prized in Ptolemaic Alexandria. In Chapter 3, my analysis turns to the use of porphyry in Imperial Rome, and its Christianization under Constantine. Foregrounding the funerary use of porphyry, I argue that the porphyry sarcophagus was an analogue for the body of the Roman emperor. By examining passages from the fifth-century *Passio sanctorum quatuor coronatorum* from a new perspective, I argue that the

hagiography portrayed porphyry as a uniquely Christian material. In closing, Chapter 4 considers the presence of porphyry in Roman ecclesiastical spaces and its use by the medieval papacy. Beginning with the history of the Vatican *rota porphryretica*, I explore the significance of porphyry *rotae* (pavement roundels) within the context of polychrome cosmatesque pavements and papal ceremonial. I delineate the two phases of medieval papal patronage of porphyry and their relationship to papal propaganda and the *Actus Silvestri* and *Donation of Constantine*.

Through these lines of inquiry this dissertation thus argues that, from its early uses as a material to represent the newly-divinized Roman emperors, to its twelfth-century strategic placement in the Lateran basilica, porphyry physically embodied and represented the dual religious and political authority of Roman rulers. The material evoked for its audiences the long genealogy of Roman imperial power going back to Constantine and even to the first-century Roman emperors. In its solid physicality, porphyry represented the enduring power of the imperium*;* in its transcendent beauty and almost miraculous color, the material evoked the transcendence of divine power. As a material, porphyry simultaneously symbolized and embodied both religious and political power. It made the authority of the Roman emperors and the Roman popes instantly recognizable—a sign that functioned across multiple centuries.

Chapter 1: A Material History of Porphyry

Porphyry: Materiality

In upper Egypt a swath of desert land extends between the Nile river and Red Sea. Called the Eastern Desert, the arid region is dotted with volcanic mountains formed some 30 million years ago. One of these mountains, called the "smoking mountain" (*Gebel Dokhan*) by Egyptians, has the distinction of being the sole location from which the hard purple stone called "porphyry" can be quarried. Known to Romans by the name, *Mons Porphyrites*, the mountain was first discovered by Roman legionaries in the early first century CE. A stele found at the site commemorates the discovery of the quarries and their dedication. (Fig. 1) The Greek text of the inscription reads,

> Gaios Kominios Leugas, the finder of the quarries of the Porphyrites and Knekites and the black Porphyrites and various stones, has cut a prayer to Pan and Sarapis, the greatest gods, for the wealth of his children. Regnal year 4 of Tiberius, the Holy Kaisar, Epeiph 29 (July 23, 18 CE).[4]

There is some question as to whether quarries existed at *Mons Porphyrites* prior to its Roman discovery.[5] Operations at the quarry continued until approximately the fifth century when the site was abandoned and the export of porphyry into Europe ceased.

Although porphyry is technically an igneous rock, the Romans believed it to be a variety of marble (metamorphic rock). While inaccurate, the misnomer has persisted and porphyry is commonly referred to as a "marble" in humanistic scholarship. Similarly, the name "porphyry," which derives from the Latin *porphyrites* and greek *πορφύριος* ("purple"), does not technically

[4] Valerie Maxfield and David Peacock, *The Roman imperial quarries: Survey and excavation at Mons Porphyrites 1994–1998, Vol. 1: Topography and quarries* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2001), 60-62.

[5] The details of this debate are the subject of Chapter 2.

denote a specific variety of stone, but rather is a generic geological term for a type of igneous rock. What historians call "porphyry" is more specifically known to geologists as "Imperial Porphyry" or by its Italian name, *porfido rosso antico*. For the purpose of clarity and accordance with previous humanistic scholarship, this study will use the terms "porphyry" and "marble" even though they are geologically imprecise.

As a "porphyritic" rock, porphyry is formed volcanically as magma solidifies at or near the surface of the earth. An igneous (or "volcanic") rock is classified as porphyritic if it contains large crystals called "phenocrysts" that are visually distinct from a finer crystalline groundmass.[6] (Fig. 2) Phenocrysts are formed by slow-cooling deep crustal magma, as opposed to the shallow, rapid-cooling magma that forms the groundmass. This two-fold cooling process produces stone that is heterogenous in its appearance and texture. The color of a stone's groundmass is determined by what minerals are present during its cooling process. In the case of porphyry, deposits of hematite give the rock its purple color.[7] Not all of the rock quarried at *Mons Porphyrites* is purple in hue. In addition to the vein of purple "Imperial Porphyry" there are also veins of grey and green "Common Porphyry" which are predominant at the site. (Figs. 3a-b) Thus the rarity of purple porphyry is compounded by the fact that the veins of purple at *Mons Porphyrites* are few in number.

Stones resembling porphyry exist outside of Egypt, but true porphyry is found only at *Mons Porphyrites*. There is rosso antico, known for its burgundy color and the white striations. (Fig. 4) Often mistaken for porphyry by scholars and casual viewers alike, the marble is quarried

[6] Mahrous M. Abu El-Enen and Martin Okrusch, "A new look on Imperial Porphyry: a famous ancient dimension stone from the Eastern Desert of Egypt—petrogenesis and cultural relevance," *International Journal of Earth Sciences, 107*(7), np.

[7] Ibid.

above the village of Agios Kyprianos near the southern tip of Greece. Red granite from Aswan and red sandstone from the Nile Valley are frequently confused for porphyry due to their similar color and Egyptian provenance. (Figs. 5a-b) While these stones were comparable in hue to porphyry and used frequently in Roman sculpture and ornament they did not carry the same allure or cultural cachet. More than its color or provenance, porphyry occupied a position of singular privilege and prestige within Roman visual and material culture. This chapter will argue that porphyry achieved its privileged status on the basis of three interconnected factors: its association with the Roman Empire and imperium, its visual similarity to Tyrian purple and the dual religious political associations that developed around the stone. From the time of its earliest import into Rome, porphyry was associated with the figure of the Roman emperor. A possible reason for this connection was that the discovery of the stone took place on an expedition to Egypt taken under the auspices of the Emperor Tiberius. The remarkable color of porphyry may have been of interest to the Roman legionaries because it is nearly identical in hue to the famed Tyrian purple. Made from murex shells, Tyrian dyed garments were a privilege of Persian and Hellenistic kings dating back to at least the ninth century BCE. (Fig. 6) Some of porphyry's cultural prestige may have stemmed from the fact that offered a uniquely Roman alternative to Tyrian dye. Romans controlled all export of porphyry and could therefore restrict access to the prized purple marble. Finally, as a symbol of Roman imperium, porphyry became closely aligned with the person and office of the Roman emperor. The marble was an extension of the emperor and took on the religious and political connotations of his office.

Porphyry: Natural History

Porphyry enjoyed a level of fame and cultural prestige that was rare for a material in the pre-modern world. In an era before the advent of the printing press or modern news media, it is remarkable that a marble could obtain such broad recognition and appeal. While porphyry certainly stood out for its physical properties, its fame in the pre-modern world grew in part through its inclusion in scientific and literary texts. The earliest known textual reference to porphyry is found in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. The text, which Pliny compiled in the second half of the first century CE was read across Europe from Late Antiquity through the Early Modern period.[8] The last two chapters of the *Natural History*, books XXXVI and XXXVII, discuss minerals and gemstones including porphyry. Of porphyry he wrote,

> In Egypt too there is red porphyry, of which a variety mottled with white dots is known as 'leptopsephos.' The quarries supply masses of any size to be cut away. Statues of this stone were brought from Egypt to the emperor Claudius in Rome by his official agent Vitrasius Pollio, an innovation that did not meet with much approval.[9]

The historical content of this passage will be discussed in turn, but it suffices to say that for Pliny, the history of the natural world and the history of art were inextricably linked. Within this framework art historical modes of inquiry were just as relevant to "natural history" as geological or geographical considerations. Albeit brief, Pliny's account reveals that from the very start, porphyry was associated with the figure of the emperor. The *Natural History* was compiled during the half century that followed the Roman discovery of porphyry in 18 CE. Even if Pliny was not alive to witness the marble's rise to fame, his work provides a point of origin from which to follow the trajectory of porphyry as a both material and symbol of empire.

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[8] Marjorie Chibnal, "Pliny's Natural History and the Middle Ages," in *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II,* ed. T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975), 57-58.

[9] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia (Natural History,* trans. W.H.S. Jones and D.E. Eicholz (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938-1963), XXXVI: 19.

If Pliny's *Natural History* marks the beginning of European interest in porphyry, the work of Giorgio Vasari is witness to its apex. Artist, humanist, Florentine and close confidant of Duke Cosimo I, Vasari is best known for his authorship of *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori*.[10] Written in the mid sixteenth century, *Lives of the Artists* is an encyclopedic collection of biographies of noteworthy artists. While Vasari is often cited as the first historian of art, his work on the *Lives* was heavily indebted to the influence of Pliny. The *Natural History* was popular in the Florentine humanist circles in which Vasari took part.[11] The *Lives* were a departure from the tradition of the *Natural History*, which treated the artistic use of a material as one facet within the spectrum of its physical properties. In contrast, Vasari's *Lives* foregrounded and privileged the material's service to the arts.

In 1568, Vasari published a second edition of the *Lives*, prefaced by chapters on artistic theory, aesthetics and technique.[12] Known as the "technical treatise," the prefatory chapters begin with a section titled "*dell'Architettura*" ("of Architecture") in which Vasari recounts the different types of stones used by architects. Eighteen types of hard stone (*pietre durissime e forti*) are included in total, along with a physical description of each type, the location of where it is

[10] Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (Italy: G. C. Sansoni, 1896); Giorgio Vasari, Jonathan Foster, and Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *Vasari's Lives of the Artists* (New York: Dover Publications, 2012).

[11] Sarah Blake McHam, *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance: The Legacy of the Natural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[12] Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de'piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori,* (Firenze, 1568); Giorgio Vasari, G.V., Brown, and Louisa S. MacLehose, *Vasari on Technique* (New York: Dover Publications, 2012).

quarried, its architectural uses, and a list of notable works made from the stone. The first and longest of the eighteen entries is that of porphyry. [13]

Vasari's description of porphyry is a detailed account of the marble's history, written from a sixteenth-century Tuscan perspective. He begins by describing the physical properties of the marble, its color, texture and hardness, its Egyptian origin, and the types of tools that are needed to work it.[14] Vasari lists several examples of works in porphyry that were known to him including the sarcophagi of Constantina and Helena, the Farnese Apollo, and a fragmentary she-wolf now held in the Uffizi. He laments the technical decline in porphyry carving following antiquity, and remarks that "in our day stone of this sort is never wrought to perfection because our artificers have lost the art of tempering the chisels and other instruments for working them."[15] The entry ends with Vasari's retelling of how the technique for porphyry carving was rediscovered in Florence under the patronage of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (r. 1569-1574). He explains that by the sixteenth century, knowledge of how to work porphyry had been lost. Artisans could make basic cuts in the marble for use in pavements and revetments but even the likes of Michelangelo and Leon Battista Alberti could not succeed in working the stone in the manner of the Romans.[16]

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[13] Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, 25. The stones are: Porphyry, Serpentine, Cipollaccio, Breccia, granites, Paragon or Test-stone, transparent marbles, white marbles, veined marbles, Cipollini, Saligni. Campanini, Travertine, slate, Peperigno, Ischia stone, Pietra Serena and Pietre Forte.

[14] Ibid., 27.

[15] Ibid., 29.

[16] Ibid.

From Vasari's tale of the trials and tribulations of porphyry carving, a heroic figure emerges in the form of Cosimo I de' Medici. Patron and collaborator of Vasari, and the inaugural Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo is credited with discovery of an herbal extract (*un'erbe stillar un'acqua di tanta* virtù) that made porphyry carving possible once again.[17] The extract, apparently discovered by the Grand Duke, was used in the tempering of stone carving tools. When plunged into a bath of the herbal extract the tools became hardened to a degree that was sufficient to precisely and expertly carve porphyry.[18] Vasari's account establishes a link between porphyry and the singular mediating influence of Duke Cosimo. As it will be considered in Chapter 3, the idea that porphyry was a privileged material that could only be wrought by a worthy hand had its origins in the *passio sanctorum quatuor coronatorum*, an early medieval hagiography on the lives of Rome's four crowned martyrs (*Santi Quattro Coronati*).[19] Vasari's narrative participates in a more than millennium long effort to situate porphyry within the exclusive domain of the sovereign ruler. As a means of reifying elite identity and the right to rule, porphyry was an invaluable tool for rulers of the medieval Italian peninsula from Imperial Rome through Grand Ducal Florence. In order to understand how porphyry came to occupy this role within the visual economy, one must first consider the history and symbolic formation of the color purple.

[17] Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, 32

[18] Ibid., 32.

[19] See: pg. 85. Willhelm Wattenbach, *Passio sanctorum IV coronatorum*, in *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaiserheschichte* III (1870), 323-328

From Cloth to Stone: The rise of purple in the Roman world

After its discovery in the first century CE, the marble porphyry experienced a rapid rise in fame that must have been aided in part by the longstanding sociopolitical and cultural importance of purple in the ancient Mediterranean world.[20] Nearly a millennium before Roman legionaries discovered the quarries at Mons Porphyrites, garments made with purple "Tyrian" dye were a symbol of the elite and ruling class. Extracted from purple *murex* mollusks, the dye was named for the ancient Phoenician coastal city of Tyre (Fig. 6).[21] Called *argamannu* in Assyrian, Tyrian dye has a distinct red-purple color that differentiates it from the cheaper to produce blue-purple *takiltu* dye that was also present in the region.[22] During the ninth century BCE when Phoenicia came under Assyrian rule, the quasi-independent city state of Tyre paid tribute to the Assyrian kings in the form of large quantities of murex dyed wool.[23] It has been argued that from the ninth century BCE onward, red-purple clothing had a strict association with kingship in Assyria, as the circulation and consumption of garments made with Tyrian dye was restricted to a small group of ruling elites, which solidified its status as a symbol of social prestige and royal power.[24]

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[20] Meyer Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1970). While purple dye made from murex was found elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Tyre was the historical center of the dye trade.

[21] Lloyd B. Jensen, "Royal Purple of Tyre," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 22, no. 2 (1963): 104-18; John Edmonds, *The Mystery of Imperial Purple Dye*, (Historic Dyes Series No.7, Little Chalfont, 2000).

[22] Shiyanthi Thavapalan, "Purple Fabrics and Garments in Akkadian Documents," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 3, no. 2 (2018): 168-169.

[23] Ibid., 180.

[24] Salvatore Gaspa, *Textiles in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 128.

After the dissolution of the Assyrian Empire, purple transferred into the symbolic domain of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. Beginning in the sixth century BCE, Tyrian dye was institutionalized as the exclusive color of the Persian ruling class.[25] Made with cloth dyed from "purple fish" (i.e. *murex*), the robes were associated with elite status and military might.[26] For the first time, under the influence of Cyrus the Great, legalized restrictions were placed upon the wearing of purple.[27]

At the Achaemenid court under Cyrus, membership in the elite ruling class was both conferred and expressed by the ability to wear purple garments. In the *Cyropaedia*, a novelized account of the life and intellection formation Cyrus the Great, the Athenian philosopher Xenophon detailed Cyrus' fashioning of his own image as well as that of his court. [28] Of Cyrus and his circle Xenophon remarked,

> The magnificence of [Cyrus'] appearance in state seems to us to have been one of the arts that he devised to make his government command respect… he called to him those of the Persians and of the allies who held office, and distributed Median robes among them (and this was the first time that the Persians put on the Median robe).[29]

The "Median robes" Xenophon continues, were bestowed upon members of the Persian elite by Cyrus and were made with no shortage of purple, red, scarlet or crimson.[30] Written more than

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[25] Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol*, 17-18. While purple dye made from murex was found elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Tyre was the historical center of the dye trade.

[26] For example, a Phocaian messenger to Sparta dons a purple cloak in hopes that the novelty and majesty of the cloak will impel Spartans to his audience, Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. A.D. Godley, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), I.152.

[27] Reinhold, Ibid., 18.

[28] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia: Books V-VIII*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

[29] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, VIII.III.1.

[30] Ibid., VIII.III.2.

150 years after the death of Cyrus, the *Cyropaedia* was not a proper historical account, but a work of literature that functioned as a historical paradigm for Greek audiences.[31] Xenophon presented Cyrus as ideal ruler whose actions, comportment and education were intended to be a model for Athenian leaders and elites. The reach of the *Cyropaedia* extended beyond the Greek-speaking world and was read by Roman, medieval and early modern audiences.[32] Beyond its reach as a work of political theory, the *Cyropaedia* was touchstone moment in the sociocultural history of the color purple. Within Xenophon's text, read by Greeks and Romans alike, purple was used in both a real and symbolic sense to demarcate the ruling class.

Before the time of Alexander the Great, there is little indication that the Macedonian aristocracy regarded purple as a status symbol or used it in royal insignia.[33] Historical accounts of the life of Alexander remark on his choice to forgo the traditional Macedonian costume in favor of Persian style dress.[34] Instead of the simple, unadorned style *chiton* and *chlamys* of his homeland, Alexander wore an ornate purple *chlamys* and diadem.[35] It has been suggested that

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[31] Melina Tamiolaki, "Xenophon's Cyropaedia: Tentative Answers to an Enigma," *The Cambridge Companion to* Xenophon, (Princeton, NJ: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 177.

[32] The text was a favorite of later political thinkers such as Cicero and Machiavelli, whose writings on ideal rulership and governance were influenced by the figure of Xenophon's Cyrus; Noreen Humble, "Xenophon and the Instruction of Princes," *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon*, 417, 419-21.

[33] Reinhold, Ibid., 29.

[34] For example: Plutarch, "De Fortuna Alexandri (On the Fortune of Alexander)," in *Moralia vol. IV*, trans. Frank Cole Babbit (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 330.8; Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* Books 5-7, trans. P.A. Brunt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), VII.8.

[35] Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol*, 29.

Alexander's adoption of the Persian royal insignia derived in large part from his admiration and identification with Cyrus the Great.[36] Like Cyrus, Alexander not only wore purple garments dyed from murex, but distributed the garments to his troops and courtiers.[37] Alexander would certainly have known of Cyrus and his achievements from oral legends and histories and likely through the *Cyropaedia*. The young Alexander was the ideal audience for Xenophon's novel, and likely read it while under the tutelage of Aristotle.[38]

Alexander was a transitional figure whose conquests and untimely death precipitated a shift in the seat of power from Argead dynasty in Macedonia to the Ptolemaic in Egypt. Amid the power vacuum created by Alexander's death, Ptolemy I Soter, *satrap* of Egypt, emerged as the dominant figure within Alexander's divided empire.[39] Founder of the dynasty that bears his name, Ptolemy positioned himself and his successors as the rightful heirs of Alexander's political and symbolic legacy. Through means like coinage struck in the image of Alexander and the adoption of purple as a courtly color, the Ptolemies sought to acquire Alexander's image and

[36] Freya Stark, *Alexander's Path: From Caria to Cilicia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958), 203-4.

[37] Reinhold, Ibid., 30. The identification between Alexander's courtiers and the color purple was so strong that centuries later, Latin authors such as Quintus Curtius and Quintilian referred to the courtiers as *purpurati.* See: Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), III.13.14; Quintilian, *The Orator's Education (Institutio Oratoria)*, trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 8.5.24.

[38] Stark, *Alexander's Path*, 203-5; Kieran McGroarty, "Did Alexander the Great Read Xenophon?" *Hermathena* 181 (2006): 107-10.

[39] Ian Worthington, *Ptolemy I: King and Pharaoh of Egypt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) 71-88. On Alexander's death and controversy over successorship see: Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, Book X.

material legacy as their own.[40] By the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283-246 BCE), the color purple had reached a high level of esteem and cultural prestige at the Ptolemaic court.[41] The use of purple in royal insignia was not altogether uncommon in the Hellenistic world, but it was through the mediating influence of the Ptolemies that Alexander's Persian purple became the color of Rome and her heirs.

Garments made with Tyrian dye arrived on the Italian peninsula at some point during the Republican period, but there is controversy over how far back in time the Roman wearing of purple can be traced.[42] The accounts of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Pliny the Elder are considered to be among the most reliable sources on the early history of purple in Rome. Dionysius, a rhetorician active in Rome during the time of the second triumvirate and the reign of Augustus, attests that Romulus donned purple robes for ceremonial processions.[43] Pliny provides a more detailed account of the origins of purple in Rome, but disagrees with Dionysius on the exact nature of Romulus' purple attire,

[40] On images of Alexander on coinage see: Karsten Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (Florence: Routledge, 2007), 48-55.

[41] Reinhold, Ibid., 32. While there is little reason to doubt the credibility of historical accounts that attest to the presence of Tyrian died garments at the Ptolemaic court, more caution is required when it comes to supposed Ptolemaic use of porphyry, although later Roman authors speak of the existence of largescale porphyry carving in Ptolemaic Egypt, evidence of these claims cannot be supplied on the basis of archeological finds.

[42] Many later Roman sources describe purple garments worn in early Republican Rome, however it is unclear how much of this documentation is an interpolation based on later practices; Reinhold, Ibid., 38 no. 2.

[43] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities: Books 1-2*, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), II.34.2.

> I notice that the use of purple at Rome dates from the earliest times, but that Romulus used it only for a cloak; as it is fairly certain that the first of the kings to use the bordered robe and broader purple stripe was Tullus Hostilius, after the conquest of the Etruscans.[44]

The credibility of even Pliny and Dionysius is the subject of debate, with some arguing that they along with later writers sought to invent an "indigenous" Roman origin for purple rather than acknowledge that it was a Hellenistic import.[45]

Sources describing the presence of purple garments in Republican Rome are few and far between.[46] It was not until the time of Augustus and the foundation of the Roman Empire that purple came to be strongly associated with Rome. Ten years before he became Augustus and the solo ruler of the Roman empire, Octavian ordered that no Roman outside of the senatorial ranks would be allowed to wear purple dress.[47] This episode marked the beginning of a direct effort in Rome to bring purple into the domain of the ruling elite and claim it as a royal color. Following the example of Julius Caesar, Augustus had himself installed as Pontifex Maximus, the highest priest within the college of Pontifs. Like Caesar before him, Augustus wore purple robes in his new role as Pontifex and emperor. [48] From this point onward, purple became symbolically tied to

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[44] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History,* IX.136.

[45] On this debate see: Reinhold, Ibid., 38-39.

[46] Cicero discusses purple garments pejoratively as evidence of monarchic sentiments. See: Cicero, *Verrine Orations vol. 2*, trans. L.H.G. Greenwood (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 5.86; Cicero, *In Catilinam 1-4*, trans. C. Macdonald (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 2.5; Cicero, *Orations: Philippics 1-6*, trans. John T. Ramsey and Gesine Manuwald (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 2.85.

[47] According to Cassius Dio the mandate was made in order to curtail the use of purple by "ordinary individuals" who had apparently taken to wearing it; Cassius Dio, *Roman History Books 46-50*, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 49.16.1

[48] Jörg Rüphke, *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 19-2; According to Cicero, Caesar wore purple robes in his dual role as Ponifex Maximus and Dictator; Cicero, *Philippic* 2.85.

the Roman ruler's double role as emperor and priest. Augustus's successors followed his precedent and took on the secondary title of Pontifex Maximus.[49] From the example of Augustus as Pontifex Maximus, emerged the prototypical figure for the bridging of spiritual and temporal power that was fully realized in the rule of the Christian Roman emperors and later Medieval sovereigns. Within this model, purple became a signpost and representation of the union between temporal and divine rule and the color of the "king-priest."

A paradigmatic image of the early Roman emperor as king-priest survives in the form of the so-called *Augustus Labicana*. The life-sized, idealized statue is a representation of the emperor Augustus as Pontifex Maximus (Fig. 7). Augustus wears the veiled toga of the high priest and the soft leather *calcei patricii* sandals of the patrician class. His appearance and comportment connote a tone of dignity and piety. The eternally youthful face of the *princeps* is carved from fine grained Greek Parian marble that is warmly white in hue. His toga is made from Italian Carrara (*Luna*) marble, matte in luster and a crisper, cooler white.[50] Even though care was taken to select the precise shade of white with which to render Augustus' toga, the pure white sculpture we see today is not representative of the original work. According to the excavation report, when the statue was unearthed in 1910 on the Via Labicana in Rome, traces of polychromy (*avanzi di polichromia*) were visible on its surface.[51] The traces of pigment appeared

[49] Over time the title became a mere honorific that was subsumed into the normal duties of the emperor.

[50] On comparative whiteness in Roman art see: Fabio Barry, *Painting in Stone Architecture and the Poetics of Marble from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 41. On the use and meaning of color in antiquity see: Jennifer Stager, *Seeing Color in Classical Art: Theory, Practice, and Reception from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[51] Lucio Mariani, "Statua di Augusto di via Labicana," *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 38, no. 1 (1910): 99.

on the toga and were recorded as purple in color. Rather than using the modern "porpora" or "viola," the report describes the toga as "*purpurea*" (*la toga era* purpurea), the term used in Latin sources to designate the Tyrian dyed garments worn by foreign and domestic elites.[52]

The *Augustus Labicana's* painted toga suggests that at least by the time of Augustus, purple had become a public-facing symbol of the Roman ruler. No longer negatively associated with the figure of the Hellenistic or Persian "tyrant," purple was now an accepted attribute of the Roman king-priest. The rise of purple during this period may have been due to a desire on the part of Augustus and his successors to align themselves with established models of hereditary kingship. As founder of the Roman Principate, it is possible that Augustus was drawn to purple for its association with Alexander the Great. During the Late Republican period Alexander was used more as a foil to the Roman leader than a model. He was seen as an example of an extravagant "oriental" tyrant whose legacy was unbefitting of the Roman ruler.[53] This relationship changed with the ascension of Augustus. After his victory at the battle of Actium, Augustus gained control of the realm once administered by Alexander and his descendants. It is possible that, in light of these territorial gains, Augustus embraced the legacy of Alexander and the hegemonic authority it gave him in the administration of the eastern provinces.[54] By accentuating his similarity to Alexander, Augustus was able to liken himself to the Macedonian

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[52] Lucio Mariani, "Statua di Augusto di via Labicana," 99.

[53] E.S. Gruen, "Rome and the Myth of Alexander," in E. A. Judge and T. Hillard (eds.), *Ancient History in a Modern University 1* (Macquarie: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), 178–191. See also: Livy, *History of Rome Books 8-10*, trans, B.O. Foster (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 9.16-9.19; Cicero, *On Duties (De Officiis)*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 1.90.

[54] Ibid., 191.

while simultaneously declaring the ascendency and moral superiority of Rome.[55] It is here, I argue, that by its association with the priesthood and the figure of Alexander translated through Augustus the color purple was "Romanized." Even if something of the "Hellenistic" remained in Tyrian dye, with the arrival of porphyry the color purple took on a uniquely Roman inflection.

Porphyry as a materia mixta

The discovery of porphyry in the year 18 CE represented a turning point in the use of purple as a status symbol in the pre-modern Mediterranean. The early history of porphyry carving will be fully explored in the proceeding chapter, but it suffices to say that there is no evidence to support that the stone was quarried prior to its "discovery" by Roman legionaries during the reign of Tiberius (r. 14 –37 CE). For the Romans who encountered porphyry for the first time, the marble would have been a remarkable sight to behold. While they may have expected to find exploitable stone within the depths of the remote Gebel Dokhan mountain, it is doubtful that they could have predicted its color. One imagines that the chance discovery must have had the air of a portent, in that by some accident of nature, the marble was nearly identical in warmth, hue and shade to Tyrian purple. It seems almost pre-ordained that representatives of the Roman emperor, exploring his recently acquired Egyptian territory would stumble across such a stone. As the Julio-Claudians replaced the Ptolemies as the rulers of Egypt, so too did Roman porphyry supplant Tyrian dye within the economy of signs.

Porphyry had the ability to invoke the presence of the sovereign and assert his dual religious and political authority in a way that Tyrian purple never could. Due to the nature of

[55] Erich S. Gruen, "Rome and the Myth of Alexander," in T.W. Hillard et al. (eds), *Ancient History in a Modern University* (Grand Rapids, MI: MacQuarie University, 1998), 191.

garments and how they are worn, Tyrian purple required the presence of the ruler to be activated as a sign. This collapse between object and sign meant that Tyrian purple could only operate so long as it maintained a physical connection to the body of the emperor. As porphyry replaced Tyrian dye, the possibilities for representing the emperor's religious and political authority through sculpture increased. With its painted garments, the *Augustus Labicana* was an early effort to project the material significance of purple beyond its bodily connection with the emperor. The use of porphyry as a sculptural material took this projection further, until the body of the emperor and the color purple were united as one. In contrast to typical imperial likenesses carved from white Parian or Carrara marble, sculptures in porphyry contained an added layer of signification. A seated togate statue of the emperor Hadrian found at Caesarea Maritima demonstrates how the addition of purple fortifies an otherwise conventional portrait type with a heightened divine presence (Fig. 8).[56] The more than life-size statue likely stood in a in a temple dedicated to the deified emperor Hadrian.[57] Within the *Hadrianeum*, the choice of porphyry for cult statue emphasized the unique sacral kingship granted to the Roman emperor. He was not merely an emperor, but also something of a god; not only a part of the divine realm, but ruler of the temporal.

The idea that the sovereign is a twinned being made from both human and divine natures is a component of Ernst Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies*. In his foundational study, Kantorowicz argues that in pre-modern political and religious thought the king was understood

[56] Del Bufalo, Ibid., S41, Hans Rupprecht Goette, *Studien zu römischen Togadarstellungen* (Mainz: Zabern, 1990), 154 no. 31

[57] A sixth-century inscription records the existence of a Hadrianeum in Caesarea Maritima. See: Lee I. Levine, "Roman Caesarea: An Archeological-Topographical Study," *Qedem* vol. 2 (1975): 21-22.

to have two bodies united in one: a *body natural* and a *body politic*.[58] The "body natural" is the king's physical body. Subject to passions, illness and death, the body natural is no different in essence than the bodies of his subjects. The king's "body politic" however is not subject to the laws of nature. Void of infancy or old age, it exists apart from the passage of time and is constituted of his royal majesty and governance of the people and political realm.[59] The body politic never dies, it transfers to a new body natural where it is incarnated again and again through a line of anointed successors. Each successive king is an incarnation of a single body politic.

Kantorowicz uses a range of terms to describe the king's dual nature. Citing a twelfth century anonymous Norman source he discusses the king as a type of *persona mixta*, or a "mixed person" within whom the two "seemingly heterogeneous spheres" of the temporal and spiritual are yoked.[60] While the idea of the king as a *persona mixta* can be likened to a model of Christ-like kingship, the concept is not restricted to the office of the king, nor to a necessarily Christian milieu. Like the king or Christ, a bishop can also have a "twin" or *gemina persona*, because he too embodies an office with dual spiritual and temporal roles.[61] Even the Roman emperor was, for Kantorowicz a *genina persona*. Although Tiberius, he explains, was not a Christian, the emperor was nevertheless "divine as the incarnation of Power."[62] That for Kantorowicz this idea

[58] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). 12-13.

[59] Ibid., 7-9.

[60] Ibid., 43.

[61] Ibid., 44-49.

[62] Ibid., 55.

was not incompatible with Christ-centered kingship is a product of what he terms the "sempiternity" of Rome and the Roman Empire. He points to the belief of early modern Europeans in the continuity of the Roman empire *in finem saeculi*.[63] This belief did not preclude pre-Christian Rome, but rather includes it within a continuous unfolding of monarchies that ultimately culminate with the terrestrial Empire of Christ.[64] The immanent continuity of the Roman empire from Augustus to the end of days meant that the symbols and materials of the "pagan" Roman emperor were not necessarily incompatible with the Christian Roman emperor. This continuity is evident architecturally in the transformation of the basilica from imperial audience hall to place of worship, and even more clearly through the medium of porphyry. The materiality of porphyry extends the symbolic properties of the marble beyond the boundaries of Kantorowicz's conception of the king's two bodies. For the initiated, the unique appearance and hue of porphyry establish the stone as an immediately recognizable symbol of sempiternal Rome. Even when fragmented and reused across time and space, porphyry visually retains its connection to the body and office of the ruler.

If the king is a *persona mixta*, porphyry itself could be thought of as a *materia mixta*, constituted of a union between temporal and divine symbolism. From its earliest uses in Imperial Rome, porphyry was the exclusive prerogative of the emperor and signified his uniquely divine status. The divinity of both the emperor and the material is apparent in the statue of Hadrian at Caesarea Maritima and its religious and political messaging. The statue facilitated communion with the divine through a representation of the body of the emperor and stressed the privilege and unction of Hadrian on earth through the color purple. Hadrian's temporal election allowed him to

[63] Ibid., 292.

[64] Ibid., 292-294.

be represented in porphyry, while his divine election placed him within the pantheon, worthy of religious devotion. Purple was not a symbol of Hadrian alone, but made him a link in the sempiternal chain of legitimate sovereigns of Rome. Just as the king's body politic lived eternally, so too did the symbolic associations of porphyry. When one ruler died his successor gained control not only of the empire, but the material language of porphyry. Because porphyry was immanently related to the office of the emperor it was seamlessly inherited along the line of succession. Unlike a portrait bust that needed to be re-carved, or a solidus to be re-issued, objects made from porphyry did not require rededication, they remained eternally in the imperial purview, granting a sense of continuity and legitimacy.

Porphyry: Genealogy and sign value

Porphyry was a signifier of sacral kinship and the geminated nature of the sovereign, but it also operated more broadly within society and visual culture. In places such as Rome and Constantinople where porphyry enjoyed a high cultural prestige, the marble functioned as an index of social membership. Jean Baudrillard proposed that instead of assigning objects a purely functional status one should take into account the *sign exchange value* of any given object.[65] In his theory of objects built upon *social prestations* and *signification*, prestige objects such as porphyry are given a high symbolic exchange value. The value of prestige objects derives not from their utility, but through their futility, superfluousness and non-functionality.[66] They do not accrue their value from their connection to labor or the environment, instead their value comes

[65] Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981), 29.

[66] Ibid., 30-32.

from their proximity and relation to the social rank of their possessor. In the case of porphyry, or its symbolic predecessor Tyian dye, the exchange value of the material was derived from its origins as a privilege of the ruling elite. As time went on and the political order shifted, porphyry lost its one-to-one connection with the emperor. In the power vacuum that followed the "decline" of the Roman Empire, porphyry was at the disposal of rulers who wished to be seen as inheritors of the Roman body politic. Within these successive and imitative uses of porphyry, we see the rise in the *genealogical value* of porphyry, as a reference to the bygone era of Roman Imperial kingship, and all that it accorded.

For Baudrillard, a "taste for the bygone" derives from an obsession with authenticity and the mystique of the past. Of this he writes,

> [The] taste for the bygone is characterized by the desire to transcend the dimension of economic success, to consecrate a social success or a privileged position in a redundant, culturalized symbolic sign. The bygone is, among other things, social success that seeks a legitimacy, a heredity, a "noble" sanction.[67]

The use of porphyry by later medieval rulers and bishops was a call back to its original Roman Imperial use. Its presence in their public and private commissions was a means of acquiring a "noble sanction" for their rule through the citation of a recognized symbol of the legitimate and eternal ruler. The ability to commission works in porphyry was a privilege available only to the highest stratum of society and evidence of social accomplishment.[68] As a mobile signifier of elite status, porphyry was appropriated by rulers who saw it as a conduit to divine unction and temporal hegemony.

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[67] Ibid, 43.

[68] On objects as exhibitors of social status and mobility see: Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* 49-50.

As a prestige object, porphyry maintained its status and high sign value through its inherited genealogical value. Genealogical value, according to Baudrillard is produced by a "sumptuary" operation wherein a transmutation of economic and symbolic value occurs. He explains the operation using the example of the art auction.[69] During an art auction money loses its normal economic exchange value and becomes an instrument of domination. Simultaneously, the art object loses its symbolic value and is transformed into a sign of prestige. The auction institutes a social relation of *aristocratic parity* wherein a community of the privileged compete for ownership of a restricted corpus of signs.[70] Their participation in the production and exchange of sign values reifies their collective class privilege. Within the ecosystem of the auction the allure of the art object, or its "supernatural force" is made in part from its pedigree, genealogy and the cycles of its successive owners.[71] The sumptuary operation of the auction demonstrates that class privilege derives not only from economic or political power, but from the ability to compete for the ownership of restricted and nobly sanctioned prestige objects.

The pedigree and noble sanction of porphyry came directly from the Roman emperor, and inheritance of the material paralleled the inheritance of the body politic. Like the transference of power from one sovereign to the next, "ownership" of porphyry transferred successively between religious and political elites, and in many cases the two went hand in hand. The ability to quarry and transport porphyry from Egypt was always the exclusive right of the Roman emperor, but when the import stopped sometime around the fifth century, its value began to transcend the economic realm even further. Porphyry became something that one could only possess through

[69] Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, 116-117.

[70] Ibid., 117.

[71] Ibid., 118.

genealogical pedigree, political maneuvering, gift-giving, or spolia. In the case of the Normans and Ostrogoths, great lengths were taken by the conquerors to secure quantities of porphyry for their dynastic commissions. This suggests that when rule of the Italian peninsula was taken rather than inherited, the acquisition of porphyry was a seen as a requisite part of the transference of power. Like participants at the art auction rulers competed for access to porphyry, a material whose value surpassed what money could buy.

Chapter 2: The Pre-Roman Origins of Porphyry Carving

There is no agreement between scholars as to when the use of porphyry began or which culture was the first to employ the marble. While Roman sources such as Pliny or the *Mons Porphyrites* stele inscription place the "discovery" of porphyry in the early first century CE, many have proposed an earlier date. Based on dubious material evidence, it has been argued that porphyry carving and quarrying at *Mons Porphyrites* began in Egypt as early as the Ptolemaic or even Pharaonic period. This discrepancy between the textual and (alleged) material record will be addressed through a review of the literature surrounding the history and origins of porphyry carving. Correctly identifying the cultural origin of porphyry carving is important for the broader context of this study. The question as to whether porphyry carving originated in Hellenistic Egypt or Imperial Rome has implications for the material symbolism of the stone, as well as its later medieval and early modern usage. In this chapter I will demonstrate that arguments in favor of the Ptolemaic origins of porphyry carving are predicated on a misreading of literary sources as well as the misattribution of a group of Egyptianizing Roman porphyry objects. By correcting these errors, I aim to establish the status of porphyry as a uniquely Roman material, whose symbolism and use were inherently tied to the paragon of sempiternal Rome.

A review of the most prominent studies on the history of porphyry will illustrate the state of scholarship on the stone and the diversity of approaches to the question of its Ptolemaic use. These works, in order of publication are: Richard Delbrück's *Antike Porphyrwerke* (1932), the catalogue for the exhibition, *Porphyre: La Pierre Pourpre des Ptolémées aux Bonaparte* at the Musée du Louvre (2003), Dario del Bufalo's *Porphyry: Red Imperial Porphyry. Power and Religion* (2012), and Fabio Barry's *Painting in Stone* (2020).

Delbrück's *Antike Porphyrwerke*, is the first and arguably most significant contribution to the history of porphyry carving to date. Though nearing its hundred-year anniversary, Richard Delbrück's volume laid the parameters to which later studies on porphyry have generally adhered. Delbrück credits the ancient Egyptians as the first to carve small objects like beads from porphyry. Although the Egyptians had some degree of access to porphyry, there is no compelling evidence to suggest that the marble was used by the Egyptians as part of any significant architectural or ornamental program, or that it had any special kingly or "majestic" associations.[72] He notes that while references to ancient Egyptian use of Porphyry are found in Philo of Byzantium's *Seven Wonders of the World* and Pliny's *Natural History* the veracity of these sources can be easily discounted. Philo of Byzantium's account of the pyramids likely dates to the fourth of fifth century CE,[73] and the "porphyry" columns mentioned by Pliny were in fact made from red granite.[74]

The "time for porphyry" in Egypt came, according to Delbrück, with the Ptolemaic dynasty for whom purple was a royal color.[75] *Mons Porphyrites* was located along the key Ptolemaic trade route road between Koptos and Myos Homos, which for Delbrück is reason to believe that the mountain and its marble would have been known to the Ptolemies.[76] Citing five

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[72] Richard Delbrück, *Antike Porphyrwerke* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1932), 13.

[73] Centre Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium, *De septem miraculis mundi ab hominibus factis*. Philo of Byzantium, also known as Philo "the Paradoxographer" is often confused with a better-known Philo of Byzantium who lived around the year 200 BCE, see: Stephanie Dalley and John Peter Oleson, "Sennacherib, Archimedes, and the Water Screw," *Technology and Culture* 44.1 (2003): 11 no. 29.

[74] Pliny, *Natural History,* XXXVI, 19.

[75] Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol*, 29-30.

[76] Delbrück, Ibid., 14.

material and textual exempla, he constructs an argument in favor of porphyry's presence and symbolic significance at the Ptolemaic court. The exempla are:

1) A porphyry stele from the Ptolemaic *gymnasion* at Thera (Fig. 9)
2) Lucan's first-century CE *Pharsalia*, in which the author describes porphyry columns in Cleopatra's banquet hall
3) A depiction of a porphyry altar in a Nilotic mosaic at Palestrina
4) The existence in imperial Rome of a type of decorated pavement known as "*opus Alexandrinum*" that was made from red and green porphyry
5) A now-lost Coptic manuscript said to describe the tomb of Alexander the Great, which according to the author was surrounded by eight porphyry sarcophagi.

Whether or not these sources were genuinely Ptolemaic will be discussed in turn, but their inclusion in Delbrück's study is significant because they form the basis of subsequent arguments for and against Ptolemaic use of porphyry.

The catalogue published alongside the 2004 exhibition, *Porphyre: La pierre pourpre des Ptolémées aux Bonaparte,* at the Musée du Louvre both augments and complicates the work of Delbrück. Central to the study is an awareness of the difficulties that are inherent to working with works in porphyry. More often than not, works in porphyry resist attempts at easy categorization. This is the of a myriad of factors which include the marble's rarity and consequent lack of comparanda, its frequent reuse over a period of more than one thousand years, and the antiquitizing impulse of the bulk of post-Roman porphyry carving.[77] A bowl presented in the Louvre catalogue is one of a tiny cohort of porphyry objects that can be attributed with relative certainty to pre-Roman Egypt. Fluted and conical in form, the bowl was found in a tomb during excavations of Early Dynastic Period necropolis (Umm el-Qaab) at

[77] Philippe Malgouyres, *Porphyre: La pierre pourpre des Ptolémées aux Bonaparte* (Paris: Réunion de Musées Nationaux, 2003), 24.

Abydos, Egypt.[78] While the find amounts to near-definitive proof that porphyry objects were carved during the Pharonic period, the author warns against the over interpretation of this detail. Even if porphyry carving took place in Pharonic Egypt, it does not mean that quarrying took place at *Mons Porphyrites*, or that the source of the stone was even known.[79] To the contrary, the extreme rarity of porphyry objects dating to the Pharonic period and their smallness in size suggests that they were carved from so-called "erratic" pebbles and rocks, rather than quarried stones.[80]

The authors of the Louvre catalogue dispute Delbrück's characterization of the status of porphyry at the Ptolemaic court, and disagree with his claim that the marble was a symbol of kingship for the Ptolemies.[81] The volume rejects Delbrück's reading of the literary evidence, but maintains that porphyry was carved by the Ptolemies even if it was not associated with kingship or symbolically significant. Two works within the catalogue are given a Ptolemaic attribution: an Egyptizing torso of a queen and the Thera stele mentioned in Delbrück. (Figs. 9-10) Both held in the Louvre collection, the objects mount a compelling case for Ptolemaic use of porphyry and engagement with its material symbolism; their authenticity and provenance will be addressed later in this chapter.

[78] W.M. Flinders Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the Earliest Dynasties* (London/Boston: The Egypt Exploration Fund, 1900), 43, pl. XLVIII. Fragments of other fluted conical porphyry bowls were also found at the site.

[79] Malgouyres, *Porphyre*, 26.

[80] "Erratic" rocks are rocks that differ in size and type from local rocks. They can be the result of flooding or ice-rafting and can travel as much as 500 km from their source.

[81] Malgouyres, *Porphyre*, 26-27.

In contrast to the Louvre catalogue, which proposed that porphyry was carved by the Ptolemies but had no royal symbolism, Dario del Bufalo's monograph returns to Delbrück's Ptolemaic hypothesis. In *Porphyry: Red Imperial Porphyry. Power and Religion*, del Bufalo positions porphyry at the center of Ptolemaic visual culture. He argues that the Ptolemies assigned a connotation of "royalty and sanctity" to the color purple, and that this symbolism informed their interest in and use of porphyry.[82] Del Bufalo is largely in agreement with Delbrück's characterization of Ptolomaic porphyry carving, but refutes two pieces of evidence cited in the study: the Nilotic altar mosaic from Palestrina and the tradition of "*opus alexandrinum*."[83] The altar in the Palestrina mosaic is not – as Delbrück contends – made from porphyry. The tesserae in the first century BCE mosaic are made from Rosso Antico marble, and there is nothing to suggest that the depiction of the altar is understood to represent porphyry. (Fig. 11) In regards to the term "*opus alexandrinum*," del Bufalo writes that the name was misunderstood by Delbrück. Used to describe pavements made from red and green porphyry, *opus alexandrinum* actually refers to style of ornament popularized by the emperor Alexander Severus, and is not a reference to the city in Egypt.[84]

In his commentary on Ptolemaic porphyry carving, del Bufalo takes Delbrück's hypothesis to an extreme. Much of del Bufalo's argument hinges on the presence of three references to the color purple at the Ptolemaic court in a text by Athenaeus of Naucratis, a third-century CE Greek rhetorician. Known as the *Deipnosophistae*, it is a discourse on banqueting

[82] Dario del Bufalo, *Porphyry: Red Imperial Porphyry. Power and Religion* (Torino: Allemandi & Co), 14.

[83] Ibid., 15.

[84] Ibid., 15-16.

and purports to preserve several otherwise-lost fragments of Ptolemaic era chronicles.[85] The work, which was written over five hundred years after the death of Alexander, does not specifically mention porphyry, but does attest to the presence of purple garments at the Ptolemaic court. Del Bufalo is similarly persuaded by a reference to porphyry columns at Cleopatra's banquet hall in Lucan's *Pharsalia*.[86] Even though the poem was composed in Rome during the first century CE, he argues that Lucan could have been "well informed on Alexandrian matters" through his uncle, the philosopher Seneca.[87] For del Bufalo, these references are enough to suggest that, like Tyrian dye, porphyry was not only present but symbolically significant in Ptolemaic Alexandria.

Having established that porphyry was employed in Ptolemaic royal commissions, del Bufalo ventures an even bolder claim regarding its use. Citing one of Delbrück's exempla, del Bufalo turns his attention to a now-lost Coptic manuscript that was shown to the archeologist Giuseppe Botti during his 1896 excavations in Alexandria.[88] The manuscript, which is discussed later in this chapter, is said to provide an account of the lost tomb of Alexander the Great. According to the source shown to Botti, Alexander was buried in a tomb surrounded by eight

[85] Athenaeus of Naucratis, *The Learned Banqueters,* trans. Olson, S. Douglas, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[86] Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia),* trans. J.D. Duff, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).

[87] Seneca lived in Egypt as a young man and wrote a (now lost) text titled, "On the Land and Religion of the Egyptians" (*De situ et sacris Aegyptiorum*). See: Gareth Williams, "Reading the Waters: Seneca on the Nile in "Natural Questions," Book 4A," *The Classical Quarterly* 58.1 (2008): 218-242; Eleni Manolaraki, *Noscendi Nilum Cupido: Imagining Egypt from Lucan to Philostratus* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013).

[88] Giuseppi Botti, *Fouilles à la colonne théodosienne: Mémoire Présenté a La Société Archéologique* (Imprimerie Générale L. Carrière, 1896), 43f

porphyry sarcophagi that belonged to seven horsemen and Ptolemy I Soter. Finding no reason to doubt the veracity of the lost text, del Bufalo argues that tombs are in fact the very same sarcophagi that stand today in the courtyard of the Istanbul Archeological Museum.[89] (Fig. 12) The monuments which are understood by all to be the early Byzantine imperial sarcophagi from the Church of the Holy Apostles are in fact, according to del Bufalo, the tombs of Alexander's courtiers. He believes that rather than acquiring blocks of porphyry from Roman stone yards, the Byzantines imported the sarcophagi wholesale from Alexander's abandoned tomb. Setting aside the myriad of historical and stylistic problems posed by this theory, del Bufalo's argument has significant implications for the history of pre-Roman porphyry carving. Carving monumental sarcophagi would have required massive blocks of porphyry, the likes of which can only be obtained through quarrying. Unlike other proposed ancient Egyptian or Ptolemaic porphyry objects which are small enough to have been carved from erratic stones, del Bufalo's hypothesis relies on the existence of operational quarries at *Mons Porphyrites* as early as the third century BCE. Not only are del Bufalo's claims a radical re-interpretation of established scholarship but they are, as it will be shown, unsupported by archeological evidence.

One final text of relevance to the literature surrounding the history of porphyry carving remains to be addressed. Although it does not focus heavily on porphyry, Fabio Barry's recent monograph, *Painting in Stone*, contributes to the debate concerning Ptolemaic use of porphyry.[90] The study, which centers on the history and use of polychrome marble from antiquity through the early modern period, argues that the use of porphyry in architectural ornament was a Ptolemaic

[89] Del Bufalo, *Porphyry*, 17-19.

[90] Fabio Barry, *Painting in Stone Architecture and the Poetics of Marble from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

innovation. Like del Bufalo, Barry's argument hinges on Lucan's *Pharsalia,* and the first-century CE Roman poet's claim that porphyry was present in Cleopatra's Alexandrian palace.[91] While Barry allows that Lucan's description of the palace may be "hyperbolic" and therefore historically inaccurate, ultimately he does not discard it as evidence.[92] Barry's later discussions of porphyry in imperial Rome, medieval and early modern Europe are important contributions to the field, however his characterization of Ptolemaic use of the stone and reliance on Lucan fall short. As I will demonstrate in course, the *Pharsalia* should not be taken as an authoritative or documentary source on Ptolemaic Alexandria, let alone Ptolemaic use of porphyry.

An examination of the state of previous scholarship on the history of porphyry carving reveals that while considerable work on the topic has been done, basic questions surrounding its origins and use by the Ptolemies remain unresolved. Following the work of Delbrueck and his successors it can be established with fair certainty that porphyry carving was present but infrequent in pharaonic Egypt. One can then infer that if porphyry was available to the ancient Egyptians – even if only in the form of erratic stones – it must have been similarly known and available to the Ptolemies. What remains unclear however, is the true degree to which the Ptolemies were engaged in the extraction and large-scale carving of porphyry, and what – if any – symbolism the marble held for them culturally. Were porphyry and the color purple, as del Bufalo argues, central the Hellenistic notions of kingship? Or rather, did the symbolic association between ruling privilege and porphyry begin in Imperial Rome? In order to address these fundamental questions this study will now turn to a reevaluation of the written and visual evidence cited in favor of Ptolemaic porphyry carving.

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[91] Barry, *Painting in Stone*,110-111; Lucan, *Pharsalia,* 10.5.113-126.

[92] Barry, *Ibid.,* 111-112.

The Written Evidence

The historic and literary sources normally cited as proof of the existence of Ptolemaic porphyry carving provide insufficient evidence in support of the claim. Few contemporary histories of the Ptolemaic dynasty survive, and all first-generation histories of the life of Alexander are lost.[93] Due to this lacuna, modern studies must rely on later, primarily Roman imperial sources for historical information on the lives of the Ptolemies. Although these later histories may cite now-lost Ptolemaic sources, their primacy is complicated by the distance of time, invention and extrapolation on the part of their Roman authors. Such is the case for the *Pharsalia* (*Civil War*), a work of epic verse attributed to the to the first-century Roman poet Lucan.[94] The poem recounts a battle that took place in 48 BCE between Julius Caesar and Pompey, and references the presence of porphyry columns in Cleopatra's banquet hall. Lucan writes,

> [the hall] was the size of a temple… the panels of the ceiling displayed wealth, and the rafters were hidden beneath a thick coating of gold. The walls shone with marble; nor were they merely overlaid with a thin surface of it; and agate stood there on its own account, no useless ornament, and porphyry.[95]

While it may be tempting to take this as proof that porphyry was used in Ptolemaic architecture, it is important to consider Lucan's description of the hall within the larger context of Neronian Rome. Rather than evidence of porphyry carving in first-century BCE Alexandria, Lucan's description of the hall is better interpreted as a reflection of contemporary imperial tastes.

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[93] Now lost are the first-generation histories of Alexander by Callisthenes, Ptolemy, Aristobulus and Cleitarchus. See: Lionel Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (New York: American Philological Association, 1960).

[94] Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia),* trans. J.D. Duff, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).

[95] Ibid., 10.5.113-126.

The *Pharsalia* recounts the history of the battle between Caesar and Pompey but is a work of epic poetry rather than a history in verse.[96] Lucan's narrative is replete with omissions and ahistorical additions, among which I argue are Cleopatra's porphyry columns.[97] When Lucan began work on the *Pharasalia,* he was a part of Nero's innermost circle, during the time in which the emperor undertook construction on his palace, the *Domus Transitoria*.[98] Nero's palaces, including the *Domus Transitoria,* featured porphyry ornamentation in the form of columns, pavements and wall revetments.[99] (Fig. 13) The use of colored marble in domestic architecture was a novel practice at the time, and it has been suggested that Nero was the first to employ large-scale polychrome marble in a domestic setting.[100] With this in mind, Lucan's insertion of porphyry columns into Cleopatra's palace reads as a reflection of Neronian aesthetics rather than an accurate description of the hall.

A similar projection of contemporary imperial tastes onto the Ptolemaic past appears in Athenaeus of Naucratis' *Deipnosophistae*. Like the *Pharsalia,* the *Deipnosophistae* is not a contemporary history of the Ptolemaic court, but a dialogue on the topic of banqueting.[101]

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[96] Lintott, A. W., "Lucan and the History of the Civil War," *The Classical Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1971): 488.

[97] Ibid., 489.

[98] Suetonius, *Live of the Caesars vol, II,* trans. J.C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), *VI:* XXXI.1.

[99] Nero's Roman palaces the Domus Aurea and Domus Tiberiana also featured porphyry.

[100] Meyboom, P.G.P., Moormann, E.M., and Bragantini, Irene, "The Interplay of Wall Painting and Marble Revetment in Nero's Domus Aurea. Some Remarks on on Taste and Ideology," ed. Irene Bragantini, *Atti Del X Congresso Internazionale. Association Internationale Pour La Peinture Murale Antique (AIPMA),* no. Ed. (2010): 77-81.

[101] Athenaeus of Naucratis, *The Learned Banqueters (The Deipnosophistae),* trans. Olson, S. Douglas, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Written by the Greco-Egyptian Athenaeus in the early third century CE, the text preserves multiple fragments of now-lost Hellenistic sources. One fragment known only through Athenaeus is an account by the historian and contemporary of Alexander the Great, Ephippus of Olynthus.[102] Describing Alexander's taste for luxury, Ephippus notes that the ruler was known to wear purple robes both during parties and in his daily life. Athenaeus' text contains multiple references to purple robes at the Ptolemaic court, but notably does not make any mention of porphyry. While the text supports the idea that purple had a special meaning and association with luxury for the Ptolemies it does not, as Dario del Bufalo has argued, provide proof that the color was a key element of their royal identity and ideology.[103] The status of purple as a royal color in Ptolemaic Alexandria is inherently tied to the question of whether or how porphyry was used by the Ptolemies. Ephippus' account confirms that Tyrian dye was symbolically significant for Alexander, but this detail does not proof that the color occupied the same status in Ptolemaic Alexandria.

In each of their respective monographs, del Bufalo and Delbrueck cite a now-lost Coptic source as further evidence of large-scale Ptolemaic porphyry carving. The source in question is a "Coptic manuscript" that the archeologist Giuseppi Botti alleges was shown to him by locals during the late nineteenth-century excavations of Diocletian's column in Alexandria.[104] The

[102] Ibid., XII, 537d-f.

[103] Del Bufalo, *Porphyry*, 14-15.

[104] Botti, Ibid., 43f.

manuscript was said to have been written by a certain "Khademon" and included a description of the tomb of Alexander the Great.[105] Botti provided a summarized translation of the text writing,

> The tomb of Alexander is decorated with marbles; he lies in a sarcophagus and his name is carved on the cover. Around the coffin of Alexander the Great there are more modest tombs, made of porphyry: they are the tombs of seven horsemen and their leader Ptolemy Soter.[106]

The alleged existence of the manuscript and Botti's translation of its text present a range of issues. No references to the lost Coptic manuscript or to the figure of Khademon exist outside of Botti's report. No other surviving account confirms Khademon's description of the tomb, nor does any additional known source mention porphyry sarcophagi in connection with Alexander. Without the provenance of the manuscript it is impossible to know whether it derives from an ancient Hellenistic source or a later Coptic telling of the life of Alexander. There existed an independent Coptic literary tradition concerning the Alexander story, and surviving fragments date upwards of a millennium after Alexander's death.[107] While the source is more than likely apocryphal, in the absence of any real knowledge of the tomb of Alexander it cannot be

[105] The exact location of the tomb of Alexander the Great is no longer known and the subject of much speculation. Curtius Rufus reports that shortly before his death Alexander requested that his body be buried in Egypt at the temple of Zeus Ammon at the Siwah Oasis, but other sources indicate that his final resting place could have been in Macedon or Alexandria. See: Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander*, trans. John Yardley (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), 10.10.9; Strabo, *Geography*, trans. Duane W. Roller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 17.1.8. Andrew Erskine, "Life After Death: Alexandria and the Body of Alexander," *Greece & Rome* 49, no. 2 (Oct. 2002), 163-179.

[106] Botti, *Fouilles à la Colonne Théodosienne*, 43f. "Le tombeau d'Alexandre est orné de marbres; il gît dans un sarcophage, et son nom est gravé sur le couvercle. Autour du cercueil d'Alexandre-le-Grand il y a des tombeaux plus modestes, en porphyre: ce sont les tombeaux des sept chevaliers (rois) et de leur chef (Ptolémée Sotér)."

[107] Daniel L. Selden, "The Coptic Alexander Romance," in, *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2011), 134.

dismissed outright. There is however little reason to believe, as del Bufalo suggests, that the authority of the lost manuscript is definitive.

For del Bufalo, Khademon's description of the tomb of Alexander confirms that the Ptolemies were engaged in large-scale porphyry carving. His argument hinges upon Khademon's mention of the eight porphyry sarcophagi used for Alexander's horsemen and their leader. Not only does del Bufalo accept the existence of the sarcophagi, he believes that they are the very same monuments that now stand in the courtyard of the Archeological Museum in Istanbul. (Fig. 12) Understood to be the sarcophagi of the earliest Eastern Roman emperors, the tombs once stood on the grounds of the Church of the Holy Apostles.[108] Nine in number, the porphyry sarcophagi are listed in the *Book of Ceremonies* – a Byzantine ceremonial text compiled by the tenth-century emperor Constantine VII.[109] The number of sarcophagi in the *Book of Ceremonies* corresponds to the surviving remains of Byzantine porphyry sarcophagi of which there are also nine.[110] Del Bufalo is the only scholar to ever suggest that the Byzantine imperial sarcophagi might be Alexandrian in origin and his argument, although not well-founded, should nevertheless be addressed. There is no real evidence to support del Bufalo's claim that the Byzantine imperial sarcophagi came from the tomb of Alexander the Great. The *Book of Ceremonies* does not mention a possible Alexandrian origin for the sarcophagi, and in fact describes them as

[108] There were nine porphyry burials in total: Constantine, Constantius II, Julian, Jovian, Theodosius I, Arcadius, Eudoxia (wife of Arcadius), Theodosius II and Marcian.

[109] Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies,* trans Anne Moffat, Maxeme Tall (Leiden: Brill, 2017), II.42.

[110] A. A. Vasiliev, "Imperial Porphyry Sarcophagi in Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 4* (1948): 13-14.

"Roman."[111] This means that at least by the time of the tenth century the Byzantine imperial sarcophagi were associated with the Roman rather than Hellenistic tradition. Arguably the most persuasive evidence against del Bufalo's hypothesis and Ptolemaic porphyry carving in general comes from archeological record at the Mons Porphyrites. Excavations carried out at the abandoned quarries of Mons Porphyrites do not support the theory that the Ptolemies had access to the supply of porphyry required to produce large-scale objects, let alone eight porphyry sarcophagi.

Archeological finds at the quarries of Mons Porphyrites suggest that no pre-Roman activities took place at the site. From 1994-1998, Valerie Maxfield and David Peacock led excavations of the quarry and its surrounding settlements.[112] The results of their survey and excavation confirm Pliny's claims that porphyry was discovered in the first half of the first century CE.[113] While it is possible that the Roman quarries could have obliterated traces of earlier Hellenistic or ancient Egyptian structures, the near total absence of large, reliably datable pre-Roman porphyry objects suggests that purposeful extraction of the marble did not take place before the first century CE.

At present no largescale pre-Roman porphyry works such as columns, sarcophagi or revetments have been identified. There does however exist a small group of porphyry objects that are believed to have originated in Ptolemaic Alexandria. Whether these objects can be

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[111] In the *Book of Ceremonies* the sarcophagi are referred to as being made from "πορφυροῦς Ῥωμαιος." It is unclear whether this identifier refers to the physical provenance of the sarcophagi or rather a symbolic, material connotation.

[112] Maxfield, V., Peacock, D., Bradford, N., Goddard, S., & Egypt Exploration Society, *The Roman imperial quarries: Survey and excavation at Mons Porphyrites 1994-1998* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2001).

[113] Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXVI: 55-61.

proven to be authentically Ptolemaic in origin, or whether they are later productions will be the remaining focus of this chapter. Three of these so-called Ptolemaic porphyry objects deserve special consideration thanks to their prominent inclusion in the Louvre and del Bufalo catalogues:

1- Fragment of an "Egyptian Queen," Louvre Museum (Fig. 10)
2- Egyptian head "Neo-Amarna Style," Rome, Private Collection (Fig. 14)
3- "Bathon Stele," Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles (Fig. 9)

Although these works are not the only porphyry objects with alleged Ptolemaic origins, they are among the best known of the cohort and their problems of attribution are representative of the group overall.

"Egyptian Queen" torso fragment

Part of the Louvre collection, the small highly polished fragment of a porphyry statuette measures just over nine inches in height. (Fig. 10) The figure is missing its head, lower legs and most of its left arm, and a lily scepter is held to its chest with what remains of the left arm. The statue's missing limbs obscure the contours of what, if any, garment it wears, but the original garment was more than likely a tight-fitting sheath. With its scepter and sheath, the fragment iconographically resembles an "Egyptian" queen or goddess. Even if the "Egyptian-ness" of the figure is unmistakable, its place of origin is not. The popularity of Egyptian subject matter across time and place means that it is often difficult to determine whether a given work is pharaonic, Ptolemaic, Roman, or modern. Ptolemaic sculpture combined elements of native Egyptian, Greek and Roman style, iconography and materials, making it hard to define as a distinct category. This means that historically, sculptures with problematic materials or subject matter

have often been lumped in to the catch-all "Ptolemaic" category when they may in fact be Roman or even modern works.[114] I argue that the Louvre torso fragment is one such work.

As a "Ptolemaic" object, the Louvre fragment poses a series of problems. While the provenance of the torso in not well-documented, it came to be regarded as Ptolemaic after its publication in the Louvre's 2003 exhibition catalogue, even though the authors of its catalogue essay decline to state definitively whether the object is Ptolemaic or later in date.[115] They argue that the sculpture's uncertain provenance and atypical use of porphyry support a later date of origin, but note the figure's iconographic fidelity to Ptolemaic royal conventions. In spite of this hesitancy, the catalogue entry's label dates the fragment to the Ptolemaic period without qualification.[116] In his subsequent study del Bufalo indiscriminately repeats the label's Ptolemaic attribution, going so far as to claim that the object was a documented "archeological find."[117] Contrary to del Bufalo's statements, the torso fragment was not found through any known archeological excavation in Alexandria or Rome. In fact, the best account of the statue's provenance is offered by none other than Johann Winckelmann in his seminal history of art in antiquity.[118]

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[114] Paul Edmund Stanwick, *Portraits of the Ptolemies* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 4.

[115] Malgouyres, *Porphyre,* 15.

[116] The label reads: "Égypte, époque ptolémaïque (II-III siècle avant J.-C.)"

[117] Del Bufalo, *Porphyry*, 15. The figure may be an "archeological find" (per Winkelmann, see n. 47), but this label is misleading as the statuette was found in Rome at some point during the 18th century, and its find was not well-documented.

[118] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art* vols. 1-2, trans G. Henry Lodge (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co, 1872), 202-203.

In a rarely cited passage from the text, Winckelmann tries to refute Pliny's assertion that porphyry was quarried in Egypt. His hypothesis, which pre-dates the rediscovery of the quarries at Mons Porphyrites, is factually incorrect but the basis of his argument is sound. Winckelmann calls attention to the near absence of Egyptian works in porphyry writing,

> From the rarity of Egyptian figures in porphyry, it might even be conjectured that it is not an Egyptian stone; for during my residence of more than twelve years in Rome, there has been found only a single piece of a small Egyptian figure, made of red porphyry and characterized by hieroglyphics, and this has been removed from Rome, where it lay in the house of a stone-cutter, into the museum at Paris [musée des Antiques]… This doubt was also confirmed by the statement of the learned traveler, Mr. Wortley Montague, that it was very rare to find a piece of porphyry in lower Egypt… He wrote to me that, in the ruins of almost countless cities, he had seen only here and there a few small pieces of this stone.[119]

The "small Egyptian figure" Winckelmann mentions is the Louvre torso fragment, and his description of its discovery, though brief, appears to suggest that the fragment was excavated in Rome from the house of a stone-cutter. One can only speculate on the circumstances that might have brought the figurine to the dwelling. It could be that the stone cutter was carving or repairing the piece from a workshop in is his home, or it may have been stolen from his place of work. No matter the specifics, if Winckelmann is correct, his account situates the sculpture within the sphere of Roman rather than Ptolemaic production. This detail serves as an important reminder that not all "Egyptian" objects in Rome were geographically Egyptian in origin. An innumerable amount of "Egyptian-looking" works were produced in Rome, for Romans, thanks to the popularity of Egyptian religious and visual culture within the empire.

The Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE brought the Nile Valley, its culture and its mineral resources into the domain of the Roman empire. Soon after, the Egyptian pantheon of

[119] Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art vol. 1*, 202-203. Montague writes that he was only able to visit Lower Egypt, but not Upper Egypt. As Mons Porphyrites is located in Upper Egypt, it makes sense that Montague would have seen no evidence of the mountain during his travels.

gods entered Roman religious and visual culture, where the cults of Serapis, Isis and Harpokrates flourished.[120] Statues of the deities were imported from of Egypt, while others were crafted in Rome. Works from the latter category constitute what Molly Swetnam-Burland has described as "Egyptian-looking" object. [121] Although these statues of Egyptian gods are "foreign seeming," they were produced by and for a Roman audience. As fundamentally Roman imperial cultural products, the works were enmeshed within the framework of Roman cultural hegemony and ideas of empire. Given that many of these Egyptian and Egyptian-looing objects were unearthed as incidental finds during the early modern re-urbanization of Rome, it can be difficult if not impossible to determine their correct place of origin. I argue, that with its uncertain provenance the Louvre torso fragment falls into such a category.

The peculiarities of the Louvre fragment are revealed when the torso is considered alongside statues with similar iconography, but known Egyptian origins. The figurine's pose, its lily scepter and sheath garment are iconographically consistent with depictions of Arsinoe II. The sister-wife of Ptolemy II Philadelphos, Arsinoe was deified upon her death 270 BCE. The cult of the *thea philadephus* (brother loving goddess) enjoyed enduring popularity in Ptolemaic Egypt, and cult images of the Egyptian-Greek goddess proliferated throughout the kingdom.[122] A statue

[120] On Egyptian religious cults in Rome see: Laurent Bricault, Miguel John Versluys, and Paul G.P. Meyboom ed., *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman World* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007); Laurent Bricault and Miguel John Versluys ed., *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014).

[121] Molly Swetnam-Burland, *Egypt in Italy: Visions of Egypt in Roman Imperial Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2.

[122] Elizabeth Donnelly Carney, *Arsinoe of Egypt and Macedon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 106-108; Stefano Caneva, *From Alexander to the Theoi Adelphoi: Foundation and Legitimation of a Dynasty* (Leuven: Peeters, 2014).

of Arsinoe from the Miho Museum in Kyoto more or less represents the typical Egyptian-style cult statue of the goddess.[123] (Fig. 15) Made from a black basalt, the life-size statue depicts the goddess in a striding stance, clad in a sheath garment. Arsinoe holds a lily scepter across her chest and her right arm to her thigh. Atop her head is a tripartite wig with double uraeus. Although the provenance of the piece is unknown its attributes, material, stance and scale follow third-century Ptolemaic conventions.[124] During the Roman Imperial period, a number of sculptures of Arsinoe II were imported from Egypt, while others were made in Rome.[125] This led to variations on the typical Ptolemaic Arsinoe type, that ranged from depictions of the goddess that were indiscernible from Ptolemaic prototypes, to wholly original Roman interpretations. The Louvre fragment, I argue, falls into the latter category.

With its missing head, it is not possible to identify the Louvre torso fragment with Arsinoe or any specific Egyptian goddess or personage. For a point of reference, one may compare the fragment to pair of sculptural depictions of Arsinoe that are known to have been present in imperial Rome. Held in the Vatican museum, the sculptures stand nearly three meters in height and although they depict matching likenesses of the goddess, one was produced in Egypt, the other in Rome.[126](Fig. 16) Both statues are carved from red granite rather than basalt,

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[123] Sally-Ann Ashton, *Ptolemaic Royal Sculpture from Egypt: The Interaction between Greek and Roman Traditions* (Oxford: Archeopress, 2001), 64 no. 2.2. In the Miho Museum catalogue entry for the Arsinoe statue Arielle Kozloff offers an alternative interpretation. Kozloff argues that the Miho Arsinoe is a re-carved 18th Dynasty represenstation of Queen Tiy. Ashton disagrees. See: Arielle P. Kozloff, *Miho Museum: South Wing* (Shigaraki: Miho Museum, 1997), 34-37 no. 13.

[124] Ashton, *Ibid.*

[125] Swetnam-Burland, *Egypt in Italy*, 50-51.

[126] Ibid. The Egyptian Arsinoe is thought to be a known statue brought to Rome from Heliopolis by the emperor Caligula. The statue was erected in the Horti Sallustiani alongside its Roman-

but otherwise repeat the iconography and general posture of the Miho Arsinoe. When compared to the Egyptian-type Arsinoes, the Louvre torso differs in two important areas: its material and its lack of headdress. As a group, Ptolemaic royal images are made almost exclusively from granite, limestone and dark stones such as basalt.[127] There is no archeological or textual evidence that porphyry was employed, let alone valued by the Ptolemies as a royal stone, and documentary sources suggest that black was the most prestigious color for Ptolemaic royal portraiture.[128] The fact that the Louvre torso is made from porphyry does not exclude the possibilitythat the statuette could have been produced in Ptolemaic Egypt, but it does indicate that such an origin would be unlikely.

Setting aside the question as to whether porphyry sculpture was present in pre-Roman Egypt, the presence of further irregularities casts doubt on supposed Ptolemaic provenance of torso fragment. Chief among these is the depicted figure's lack of headdress. Although the statuette is headless, what remains of its shoulders and upper body point to an iconographic problem, as Ptolemaic queens and goddesses were always depicted wearing a headdress. Some variation in form exists, but in general Ptolemaic headdresses are tripartite in form and hang just above the figure's breasts. In contrast, the Louvre torso shows no indication of a headdress even though the majority of the statue's chest and shoulders remain. In this respect the torso differs

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made partner. Musei Vaticani Inv. 22681, 22683. Ashton, no. 35. See also: Kim J. Hartswick, *The Gardens of Sallust: A Changing Landscape* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 130-138.

[127] The primary material used for Ptolemaic royal sculpture varied by city and date. See: Stanwick, Ibid., table 3.1, 27.

[128] The so-called "Karnak decree" preserved from the time of Ptolemy V or VIII specifies that sculptures of Ptolemaic royals should be "made from black stone" (*ek tou melanos lithou*); See: Stanwick, Ibid., 9-10.

from Ptolemaic works with otherwise similar attributes. The absence of a headdress could indicate that the figure had a more conventionally Roman hairstyle modelled either on the imperial fashion of the day or a goddess such as Venus.[129] (Fig. 17) With its bare shoulders, the Louvre fragment better resembles a fragmentary statue of an Egyptian-looking *male* figure at the Palazzo Altemps in Rome. (Fig. 18) The production site of the Altemps torso is unknown, but it was discovered in the remains of the Serapeum at the Iseum Campense in Rome, which was a locus of Roman Imperial – and especially Hadrianic – patronage of and engagement with Egyptian cults.[130] The Louvre torso's porphyry material, atypical coiffure, and alleged discovery in Rome could indicate that the fragment is a pastiche produced in Rome in connection with imperial, possibly Hadrianic, patronage. While it's not possible to determine if the object had any connection to Hadrian or a site like the Iseum Campense, it arguably belongs to the same class of Egyptian-looking objects and cult statues produced for and by Roman imperial patrons.

"Egg Head" Sculpture

This study proposes that when an Egyptian-looking object appears in porphyry and is lacking a clear provenance, it may best be understood to be Roman Imperial in origin. An additional object belonging to this category is a small porphyry head of the so-called "egg head" type. (Fig. 14) Purchased at auction by Dario del Bufalo, the head is said to be a Ptolemaic

[129] On hairstyles in ancient Rome see: Kelly Olson, *Dress and the Roman woman: Self-presentation and society* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 70-76.

[130] Rome, Mus. Naz. 362623. The torso likely belongs to a statue of a priest or other Ptolemaic administrator. Matilde De Angelis d'Ossat ed., *Scultura Antica in Palazzo Altemps* (Milano: Electa, 2002), 276. Katje Lembke, *Das Iseum Campense in Rom: Studie über den Isiskult unter Domitian*, no. 31 (Taf. 41, 3.4) (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 1994), 236.

representation of native Egyptian priest.[131] From the beginning of their rule, the Ptolemies cultivated a relationship with Egypt's native priests, who were instrumental in legitimizing their authority in Egypt.[132] Through a series of priestly decrees, the native clergy helped the Ptolemies establish a cult of kingship that blended Greek and Egyptian religious practices and beliefs. As an important part of the royal apparatus as well as Egyptian society, native priests were frequently depicted in sculpture. The portrait type is known to scholars as the "egg head," due to the characteristically exaggerated heights of their cranium, projecting occiputs and baldness.[133] Images of native priests were produced throughout the Ptolemaic period and in Rome, and varied from highly detailed and veristic, to more generalized and "non-naturalistic."[134] (Figs. 19a-b) Falling into the latter category, the del Bufalo head presents a general rather than specific portrait likeness, distinguished by its deeply carved linear brows and sunken eyes.[135] Like the Louvre torso, the head is a pastiche of Roman and Egyptian attributes, presenting an interpretive challenge thanks to its composite appearance and indeterminate place of origin.

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[131] Del Bufalo, *Porphyry*, 14-15, no. H1, 101.

[132] Stanwick, *Portraits of the Ptolemies*, 6-7. Ian Worthington, *Ptolemy I: King and Pharoh of Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 197-199.

[133] Robert S. Bianchi, "The Egg-Heads: One Type of Generic Portrait from the Egyptian Late Period," in *Römisches Porträt: Wege zur Erforchung eines gesellchaftlichen Phänomens* (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität, 1981), 149-52.

[134] Susan Wood, "Isis, Eggheads, and Roman Portraiture," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 24 (1987): 131.

[135] Ibid., 138-140; Bianchi, "The Egg-Heads," 151. There is some debate surrounding the chronology of the Egg-Heads, with Bianchi arguing that the nonnaturalistic figures reflect an archaic Egyptian prototype, whereas the more veristic portraits reflect later Hellenistic or Roman tastes.

Katje Lembke's model for the classification of Egyptian objects provides a framework that is helpful for addressing the problem of porphyry works dated to the Ptolemaic era. Lembke breaks Egyptian seeming objects (*Aegyptiaca*) into two broad categories: "Egyptian" (*ägyptish*) works produced in Egypt for Egyptians and "Egyptianizing" (*ägyptisierend*) works which were produced both in and outside of Roman Egypt.[136] She further subdivides the category of "Egyptianizing" into categories for Egyptian-Roman and Roman-Egyptian objects.[137] Works classified as Egyptian-Roman were produced after 30 BCE in Roman Egypt by Egyptian craftsmen, while Roman-Egyptian objects were made during the same period, albeit by Roman craftsmen on the Italian peninsula. Within Lembke's model, an object's material plays a central role in determining its classification. Egyptian and Egyptian-Roman objects are more likely to be made from dark, hard stones like basalt and red granite, whereas Roman-Egyptian objects tend to be made from marble and softer stones. Lembke does not discuss red porphyry, but her model can still be applied to objects made from the stone.[138] There is no evidence that porphyry was quarried prior to the Roman conquest of Egypt, thereby under the model works in porphyry would be classified as "Egyptianizing." The question of whether these works are Roman-Egyptian or Egyptian-Roman is not as easily settled. All evidence points to the fact that porphyry was a "Roman" stone, associated in particular with the office and person of the Emperor. With this in mind, the "Egyptian" themes of objects like the Louvre torso and del Bufalo head can be best explained as products of Roman imperial patronage.

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[136] Lembke, Ibid., *33.*

[137] Ibid., 36-42.

[138] Lembke does discuss a "green porphyry" sphinx, which she dates to first century CE, Rome. Ibid., 41, cat. 45.

During the first and second centuries CE, Roman emperors were actively engaged in the promotion of Egyptian and Egyptianizing culture. These activities centered upon the patronage of temples to Isis and Serapis, as well as the commission of Egyptianizing objects and monuments. Cult worship at the Isea and Serapea of Rome originated during the republican period but experienced a surge in popularity and imperial patronage following the Roman conquest of Egypt. The emperor Domitian's rule was distinguished in part by his patronage of the Egyptian cults and broad interest in Egyptianizing culture. Following the destruction of the Iseum and Serapeum Campense by fire in 80 CE, he carried out an extensive reconstruction campaign at the complex, and is further credited with the commission of a monumental obelisk featuring a *de novo* hieroglyphic inscription in honor of the Egyptian sun god Re-Harakhti. [139] (Fig. 20)

Among the ranks of the Roman emperors, Hadrian is perhaps best known for his engagement with Egyptian and Egyptianizing culture. One of only a minority of Roman emperors to visit Egypt, Hadrian travelled extensively through the upper and lower regions of the province.[140] Early in his reign, Hadrian quelled the Jewish Diaspora rebellion in Cyrenaica and Egypt, asserting his power and control over the African colonies.[141] In Rome, he actively promoted cult worship of the Egyptian pantheon, attaching his name to more Isea and Serapea

[139] Ibid., 69-70. The so-called "Obelisk Pamphilj" which now stands at the center of Piazza Navona. Swetnam-Burland, 41-43.

[140] P. J. Sijpesteijn, "A New Document concerning Hadrian's Visit to Egypt," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, (Jan., 1969): 109-118; Wilhelm Weber, *Untersuchungen Zur Geschichte Des Kaisers Hadrianus*, (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1907), 246-263.

[141] William Horbury, *Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

than any other emperor.[142] In the gardens of his personal villa retreat in Tibur Hadrian included references to the Nile, statues of Egyptian deities and motifs, as well as a Serapeum.[143]

Returning to the issue of Roman-Egyptian works in porphyry, a strong case can be made in support of identifying the works as products of Roman imperial patronage. As it has been demonstrated above, surviving evidence overwhelmingly suggests that porphyry originated as a uniquely Roman imperial material. Moreover, Roman imperial involvement in the promotion of the Egyptian cults represents a distinct milieu in which the objects can be situated. It can further be hypothesized that not only do the objects make sense as products of Roman imperial patronage, they may even be specifically Hadrianic in origin. Hadrian's interest in Egypt alongside his documented affinity for porphyry make him a likely candidate for patron. Roman-Egyptian porphyry objects such as the Louvre torso or del Bufalo head could have come from one of the many Isea or Serapea he supported, or even one of his private residences. Without corroborating archeological or literary evidence it is impossible to prove such a theory, but it is compelling nonetheless.

Bathon Stele

One final porphyry work with purported Ptolemaic origins remains to be discussed. The object, an inscribed porphyry stele bearing a Greek inscription is now in the collection of the

[142] Rabun Taylor, "Hadrian's Serapeum in Rome," *American Journal of Archeology* 108.2 (2004): 252; Robert A. Wild, "The known Isis-Serapis Sanctuaries of the Roman Period," *ANRW*2.7.14: 1746-53.

[143] William L. MacDonald, and John A. Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 76-116.

Cabinet des Médailles in Paris.[144] (Fig. 9) The stele is inscribed with a decree honoring a certain "Bathon of Thera" for his acceptance of the title of gymnasiarch, in 150 BCE. Thera, which is the ancient name for the modern island of Santorini, was the site of a Ptolemaic garrison from roughly 276 to 145 BCE.[145] The stele is roughly 40 by 30 cm in size, polished on both sides and is broken along its top edge. Eight lines are missing from the beginning of the decree which was recorded in its entirety by the humanist Ciriaco d'Ancona during his travels to Thera.[146] The circumstances surrounding the discovery of the stele, its inscription and Ciriaco's involvement are far from typical and require further exploration.

Ciriaco d'Ancona was an early humanist, antiquarian and merchant from the city of Ancona.[147] Often credited as the founder of the discipline of archeology, he travelled extensively throughout the Mediterranean world visiting ancient cities and recording their ruins. Ciriaco was particularly interested in Greek and Latin inscriptions, which he meticulously recorded in his travel notebooks and distributed to fellow humanists. He recorded the Louvre stele inscription *in situ* sometime between May 1445 and January 1446, and surviving copies of his inscription

[144] Malgouyres, *Porphyre,* cat. no. 2, 42-43; del Bufalo, *Porphyry*, I1.

[145] Roger Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 123-134.

[146] Malgouyres, Ibid., 43.

[147] Jean Colin, *Cyriaque D'Ancône: Le voyageur, le marchand, l'humaniste* (Paris: Maloine, 1981); Charles Mitchell, Edward W. Bodnar, Clive Foss, Francesco Filelfo, Francesco. Scalamonti, and Ciriaco, *Life and Early Travels*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Edward W. Bodnar, Clive Foss, and Ciriaco, *Later Travels* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

preserve the decree in its original length.[148] A 1588 publication of the text of the inscription reports that in 1540 a marble stele featuring the decree was found "in the port of Ancona."[149] While scholars including Malgouyres, del Bufalo and Delbrück have accepted *sans doute* that the Ancona and Louvre are one and the same and of Ptolemaic origin, there is substantial reason to reject this identification.

A wide array of material, epigraphic and historical issues point to the conclusion that the Louvre stele is not Ptolemaic in origin. To begin with, if the stele is truly Ptolemaic, its production would predate the Roman discovery of Mons Porphyrites by roughly two hundred years. While it is not impossible that an erratic piece of porphyry could have provided the material for the stele, it is strange that the piece would have ended up all the way in Thera. If porphyry, as Delbrück and del Bufalo contend, was in fact a "royal" Ptolemaic stone, it is difficult to understand why it would be used to commemorate the election of a relatively minor functionary in a provincial outpost.

On the basis of historical and epigraphic evidence, Hélène Cuvigny has persuasively argued that the Paris stele is a product of the early modern period. Cuvigny hypothesizes that the porphyry stele is a copy of a now-lost white marble original.[150] The original stele came into the collection of the humanist, antiquarian Cardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi shortly after its discovery

[148] Hélène Cuvigny, "Un "Faux" sur porphyre: Avatars et aventures de la stèle de Théra honorant le gymnasiarque batôn ("IG" XII 3, 331, 153 av. J.-C.)," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* Bd. 151 (2005): 105.

[149] "in portu Anconitano reperta." Martinus Smetius, *Inscriptionum antiquarum quae passim per Europam liber. Accessit auctarium a Justo Lipsio* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1588), fol. xlii.

[150] Cuvigny, Ibid., 115.

in 1540.[151] Following the death of Carpi in 1564, the stele passed into the hands of Fulvio Orsini, the librarian for the Farnese in Rome. After the death of Orsini in 1600, the stele became the possession of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese before eventually finding its way to Verona where its presence was last recorded in 1795. Cuvigny notes that at no point in the detailed chain of correspondence concerning the stele was it described as porphyry (*marmor porphyreticus*) or as being purple in color.[152] While other types of marble mentioned by the authors are given specific names or toponyms, the stele is simply referred to as a "*stela marmorea*" or a "*tavoletta di marmo*." This lack of specificity is revealing, as the humanist circle in which it circulated would have been well-educated on the matter of porphyry, its rarity and material significance. If the stele had been made from porphyry it is doubtful that such an important detail would be omitted. Cuvigny speculates that the porphyry copy of the original stele was made sometime after it arrived in Rome, perhaps in connection with the Cardinal Francesco Maria Del Monte.[153]

Aside from Cuvigny's theory, other potential sources for the porphyry stele can be surmised. It is possible that the stele was produced in the circle of the elder Cosimo de' Medici around the mid fifteenth century. Cosimo was a patron of Ciriaco d'Ancona and commissioned several works made from porphyry slabs similar in form to the slab used for the Paris stele.[154]

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[151] Ibid., 105. It is difficult to say whether this "original" white marble stele was the stele Ciriaco saw and recorded in Thera, or a latter Italian composite.

[152] Ibid., 112.

[153] Ibid., 115-116. In 1596, Del Monte wrote to the court of Ferdinando de' Medici to commission a work in porphyry, asking for "something small, like tablet full of letters" (*"qualche cosa in piccolo, come una tavola piena di lettere"*) Grand Ducal Tuscany was the center of porphyry production in sixteenth-century Europe. See: Suzanne Butters, *The Triumph of Vulcan.*

[154] On the porphyry tombs of the early Medici see: Andrew Butterfield, *The Sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 36-43; Irving Lavin, *Past-Present:*

The stele could also have been produced in Florence during the second, and more wide-ranging phase of Medici porphyry production under Duke Cosimo I and his successors. The Medici were not the only well-connected family with an interest in porphyry and antiquarianism. The Farnese, who also collected ancient works in porphyry, and likewise the Borghese are additional candidates for patron of the stele.[155] Given the numerous possibilities for how and why the stele could have been produced during the early modern period, it becomes increasingly difficult to argue that it was a product of Ptolemaic Thera. No compelling evidence links the stele to either the Ptolemies or to Thera. What evidence does exist overwhelmingly points to the circle of Renaissance humanists as the source of the Paris stele.

Conclusion

In the case of the porphyry objects above, the suggested Ptolemaic origins of the works do not stand up to scrutiny or careful study. In each instance, a re-attribution to the Roman imperial period or later can better account for peculiarities of the objects' provenance, material and form. Re-dating of the objects brings the history of porphyry carving back in line with the material record and archeological evidence found at the quarries of Mons Porphyrites. Since its initiation, the study of porphyry carving has been plagued by uncertainty over whether the royal

Essays on Historicism in Art from Donatello to Picasso (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 17-21.

[155] Throughout the early modern period noble Roman families including the Borghese, Barberini, Farnese and Doria-Pamphilj were involved in the commission of new works in porphyry, as well as the collection of Roman imperial porphyry objects. See: Antonio Nibby, *Monumenti scelti della Villa Borghese* (Roma, 1832), 94, inv. CLXIV; Carlo Gasparri, *La collezione Farnese: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli* (Milano: Electa, 2019), 34, inv. 6281; Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), vol. 2, 432, no. 157; Stefano Pierguidi, "The bronze and porphyry portrait of Pope Urban VIII by Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Tommaso Fedeli," *Burlington Magazine* 157, no. 1347 (2015): 394-397.

symbolism of the stone was Pharaonic, Hellenistic or Roman in origin. By demonstrating that the previous attributions of the objects were made in error it is possible to move towards a resolution of the debate. To affirm the Roman origins of porphyry carving is to assert that porphyry as both a material and symbol was inherently Roman in origin. While the symbolism of purple may have its origins in the Hellenistic and Near Eastern empires, the advent of porphyry added a fundamentally Roman dimension to the imperial color. Central to Roman cultural patrimony, porphyry was the symbolic inheritance of the Roman sovereign, through all his sempiteral iterations. The following chapter will trace the way in which the stone became identified with the figure of the Roman emperor and how – like the office of emperor – it became Christianized through the mediating influence of Constantine.

Chapter 3: Porphyry Sarcophagi and the Body Politic

The name sarcophagus, meaning "flesh-eater" in Greek, alludes to the vessel's role in containing and subsuming the body of the deceased. Björn Ewald explains that the function of the sarcophagus was not to consume the body, but rather "to preserve and protect it while at the same time isolating and 'expelling' it; to shield it from view; and to symbolically substitute decomposition and decay with the impeccable and permanent marble bodies of its figural decoration."[156] In this way, the physical presence of the sarcophagus stood in for that of the departed individual inside. The body of the deceased was not seen to decay, but remained apart from time represented sempiternally by the symbolic body of the sarcophagus. This sempiternity served an important dynastic function especially where royal or imperial sarcophagi were concerned. As a vessel for the king's earthly body, the sarcophagus mirrors the body politic. Like the body politic the sarcophagus has an enduring presence that is not subject to the laws of earthly decay. In dynastic funerary monuments, sarcophagi physically embody and represent the chain of anointed, legitimate rulers, an effect that was heightened by the addition of porphyry. As a privileged material whose use was restricted to the ruling elite, porphyry proclaimed the ascendancy of the departed ruler in both the divine and temporal realm.

Using sarcophagi as a point of entry, this chapter will explore the ways in which rulers used porphyry to promote their claims of dynastic legitimacy and sacral-temporal authority. Porphyry sarcophagi are rarely found in isolation. Instead, when porphyry sarcophagi and other

[156] Björn Ewald, "Paradigms of Personhood and Regimes of Representation: Some Notes on the Transformation of Roman Sarophagi,"*Res* 61/62 (2012): 53.

funerary objects appear they are almost always a part of a larger familial or dynastic monument, or network of monuments. The sarcophagus placed the deceased ruler within the chain of his own family's rule, while the genealogical pedigree of porphyry further oriented him within a succession of rulers extending back to imperial Rome. Within this cosmos porphyry sarcophagi were a self-reinforcing means of generating and fortifying dynastic legitimacy. In the later Middle Ages, for upstart rulers and dynasties that wished to secure their place in the chain, porphyry sarcophagi were an entrée into the symbolic and material legacy of Rome. This chapter will consider the development of the porphyry sarcophagus and the dynastic funerary monument before and after the Christianization of the Roman imperial office. It will assess how porphyry sarcophagi operate within these monuments and what their material symbolized. I argue that porphyry sarcophagi were a manifestation of the Roman emperor's hereditary dual role as emperor and priest. The proliferation of porphyry sarcophagi through their use in funerary monuments was a mutually-reinforcing process that fortified both the sign value of porphyry and the dynastic claims of the mausolea. A visualization of the sempiternity of the imperial body and the succession of power, the porphyry sarcophagus was an enduring symbol of the inheritance of the legacy of Rome.

Porphyry Sarcophagi and the Roman Dynastic Funerary Monument

The Romans were not the first to bury their dead in sarcophagi, that honor belongs to the ancient Egyptians, who used sarcophagi from the third dynasty onward (2650–2575 BCE). In the pre-modern Europe however, the sarcophagus held a strong symbolic association to Rome. Romans employed sarcophagi from at least the time of the Republic but their most active period

of use began in the second century CE.[157] Not all Roman burials took place in sarcophagi. Cremation and inhumation were both possible under Roman law and varied in popularity over time.[158] During the cremation rite, popular in the late republican and early imperial periods, the body was burned on a ceremonial pyre and its remains were deposited into a funerary urn. Inhumation, predominant in the second century and later, involved burying the body in the ground or interring it within a shelf, tomb or free-standing sarcophagus. Although the most famous examples of Roman sarcophagi were made from marble, the high cost of the material meant that its use was restricted to the Roman elite. Wood, lead and softer stones like lime were more commonly employed for sub-elite burials. The most expensive and ornate sarcophagi feature figural and mythological scenes but plain and strigillated sarcophagi were also used.[159]

Beginning with the reign of Augustus, the Roman emperor and certain members of his family attained divine status after their deaths. When granted, these honors elevated the emperor and his family within the divine landscape and reinforced the dynastic imperial power structure.[160] The cult of the imperial family encompassed an array of rituals, priesthoods, temples and sacred spaces that were used for the commemoration and promulgation of their divine

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[157] Guntram Koch, Hellmut Sichtermann, and Freiderike Sinn, *Römische Sarkophage* (München: Beck, 1982), 33.

[158] Valerie Hope, *Roman Death: The Dying and the Dead in Ancient Rome* (London: Continuum, 2009), 81-85.

[159] On figural sarcophagi see: Paul Zanker and Björn C. Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). On Strigillated Sarcophagi: Janet Huskinson, *Roman Strigillated Sarcophagi: Art and Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[160] Gwynaeth McIntyre, *A Family of Gods* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 26.

status.[161] Through their deification, the imperial family gained divinely sanctioned authority and entry into the Roman pantheon and its public cult worship. Temples dedicated to the deified emperor were loci of cult activity, ritual and worship. As the site of the "divine funeral" where the emperor underwent apotheosis and became a *divus* (demigod), the temples monumentalized his divination and incorporation into the realm of the gods.[162] Additionally, they played a role in the creation and definition of the royal family. As relatives and ancestors of the emperor were incorporated into the temple, the royal family was demarcated from the populace and established within the ranks of Rome's heroic past.[163] Overtime the temple of the *divus* gradually transformed into the imperial mausoleum where familial dynastic ambitions were explicitly articulated and constructed.

The origins of the Roman imperial mausoleum begin with the emperor Augustus. Construction of Augustus' mausoleum began on the Campus Martius in the late first century BCE, a location which in Republican times was reserved for the most distinguished burials.[164] The massive tumulus structure was the first of its type and scale, and dominated the surrounding environment. Enclosed within a public garden, the mausoleum was conical in form, made up of

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[161] Ibid., 1.

[162] Gwynaeth McIntyre, *Imperial Cult* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 35.

[163] Ibid., 41-42.

[164] Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars Volume I: Julius. Augustus. Tiberius. Gaius. Caligula,* trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 100; Bernard Frischer, "Monumenta et Arae Honoris Virtutisque Causa," *BullComm* 98 (1984): 51-86. On the Mausoleum of Augustus see: Henner von Hesberg and Silvio Panciera, *Das Mausoleum des Augustus: der Bau und seine Inschriften* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1994); Paul Rehak and John G. Younger, *Imperium and Cosmos: Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 31-61.

five concentric circular walls spanning 89 meters in diameter.[165] (Fig. 21) Even before the emperor's death in 14 CE, the monument had begun to serve a dynastic function as the resting place for members of Augustus' family including his nephew Marcellus and grandsons Gaius and Lucius.[166] In addition to Augustus, the emperors Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and later Nerva were interred in the tumulus, which became a dynastic mausoleum for the Julio-Claudians.[167] While Vespasian and his son and successor Titus were buried in the Julio-Claudian mausoleum, the emperor's second son Domitian set out to build a new dynastic monument for the Flavians. The *Templum Gentis Flaviae* was located on the Quirinal hill on the site of the house where Domitian was born, and may have been constructed by the emperor in imitation of the Julio-Claudians.[168] Although the mausoleum no longer stands evidence suggests that it was circular in plan.[169] Apart from the Flavian and Julio-Claudian mausoleums a third monument, the Mausoleum of Hadrian, completed the ensemble of dynastic funerary monuments in early imperial Rome.

The emperor Hadrian's mausoleum was built as both a response to and departure from the Mausoleum of Augustus. Construction of the monument began around the year 123 and was

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[165] Mark J. Johnson, *The Roman Mausoleum in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 18.

[166] Maria Macciocca, "Mausoleum Augusti: Le Sepolture," *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae, III,* (Rome, 1997), 237.

[167] Ibid., 238-239.

[168] Johnson, *The Roman Mausoleum in Late Antiquity*, 22; Edward Dabrowa, "The Origin of the Templum Gentis Flaviae: A Hypothesis," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 41(1996), 153-161.

[169] Johnson, Ibid., 23-26.

not completed until a year after the emperor's death in 138.[170] Hadrian built the mausoleum on the less developed right bank of the Tiber as well as a bridge (*pons aelius*) that connected the monument to the adjacent Campus Martius. Although not physically a part of the Campus Martius, the location of the mausoleum at a bend in the Tiber and the axial orientation of the *pons aelius* visually orientated the mausoleum as though it were the westernmost point of the Campus.[171] This positioning would have placed the monument in direct dialogue with the Mausoleum of Augustus as well as Hadrian's extensive program of renovations to the field. Later medieval and early modern additions to the site have obscured the contours of the original Roman imperial mausoleum. It is difficult to discern the exact form of the Hadrianic structure, but its rough appearance is known through archeological, numismatic and written evidence.[172] Standing roughly five meters taller than the mausoleum of Augustus, the monument is made up of three main elements: a square base, a central cylindrical core, and a tower. (Fig. 22) There is little interior space within the mausoleum, save for a vaulted hall within the cylinder and two chambers above. Hadrian and his successors up to and including Caracalla were buried in the chambers in an unknown configuration of urns and sarcophagi. While little material evidence pertaining to these burials survives, much more is known about the porphyry sarcophagus that belonged to the emperor Hadrian himself.

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[170] Johnson, Ibid., 30-31.

[171] Mary Taliaferro Boatwright, *Hadrian and the City of Rome*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 178-179.

[172] For a summary of the proposed reconstruction see: Johnson, Ibid., 38-40; Boatwright, Ibid., 174-180.

Likely the first of its kind, Hadrian's porphyry sarcophagus is the paradigmatic example for later royal and elite burials in porphyry. According to medieval sources, the sarcophagus stood in in the center of the mausoleum until at least the 1140s when it was removed by Pope Innocent II to serve as his tomb in the Lateran.[173] Most likely damaged in the Lateran fire of 1308, the sarcophagus no longer survives in its entirety.[174] Only the lid of the sarcophagus, fashioned into a baptismal font in seventeenth century by Carlo Fontana, remains today at St. Peter's in Rome. (Fig. 23a) Preparatory drawings of the lid show that its original shape was reworked by Fontana, but prior to the interventions, the convex lid had an asymmetrical form with one curvilinear and one short end.[175] (Fig. 23b) With its unusual shape, the lid does not find any parallels within the corpus of surviving porphyry sarcophagi, nor is it typical of other second-century Roman burials. The lid's curious form does, however, have parallels in the tradition of contemporary Egyptian hard stone sarcophagi.[176] (Fig. 24) As porphyry was quarried in Egypt, it is reasonable to suppose that the sarcophagus could have been carved according to a local typology before its transport to Rome. In any case, the peculiarity of the sarcophagus may

[173] *Mirabilia urbis* Romae, Maria Accame and Emy Dell'Oro (eds.) (Rome: Tored, 2004), III.4; Barbara Borg, *Roman Tombs and the Art of Commemoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 106-107; Ingo Herklotz, *Sepulcra e Monumenta del Medioevo* (Rome: R. Nantes, 1985) 97, 133 no. 67.

[174] For an account of the medieval after life of the sarcophagus and an alternative reading see: Dale Kinney, "Patronage of Art and Architecture," in *Pope Innocent II: The World vs. the City* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 384-387.

[175] Carlo Fontana, *Descrizzione* della nobilissima cappella del Fonte Battesimale nella Basilica Vaticana (Roma: Gio. Fra. Buagni, 1697), unnumbered plate; Borg, *Roman Tombs and the Art of Commemoration*, 111, fig. 2.15; Delbrück, *Porphyrwerke*, 214 fig. 112.

[176] Guntram Koch, "Östliche Sarkophage in Rom," *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande* 182 (1982): 207, no. 53.

also be attributed to the still emerging practice of imperial inhumation burials and the novelty of porphyry as a material in general.

Before continuing, it is important to address whether or not Hadrian was the first emperor to be buried in a porphyry sarcophagus. As I have argued in the previous chapter, porphyry burials did not take place until the Roman imperial period and were a uniquely Roman innovation. One porphyry burial is however attested in Rome prior to the time of Hadrian. In his *Vita* of Nero, Suetonius reports that the Emperor was buried in a "monimento solium porphyretici marmoris" upon his death in 68 CE.[177] The meaning of the word "solium" here is somewhat unclear, while it is typically translated as "sarcophagus" in the passage, the term more commonly refers to "tubs" and generic burial places. Given this ambiguity and the date of Nero's death, it is unlikely that the container was a "sarcophagus" in the sense that the term is normally used to designate the large free-standings coffins popularized in the second century CE and later. With this and Nero's reputation in mind, it reasonable to infer that even if Hadrian was not technically the first emperor to be *buried* in porphyry, his sarcophagus was the prototypical example for later citations of the form. By combining the noble sanction and elite pedigree of porphyry with the monumentalized dynastic sempiternity of the mausoleum Hadrian's monument became a paradigm for dynastic funerary monuments in pre-modern Europe.

Porphyry and the Tetrarchs

Following the end of the Severan dynasty and until the start of the Tetrarchy in 284, Rome experienced a period of political instability. As a majority of third-century emperors ruled

[177] Suetonius, *Life of Nero*, 50.

for a period of only a few months or less, imperial funerary monuments were few and far between. With dynastic succession disrupted by volatile power transfers, what few monuments are attested from this period were smaller mausolea or tumuli dedicated to solitary emperors.[178] No porphyry burials are recorded. Political stability was restored in the Roman empire in March 293 with the formation of the Tetrarchy.[179] Under the Tetrarchs, the empire was divided in two and each half was ruled by an Augustus and a Caesar. In the east Galerius ruled under Diocletian, while in the west Constantius served as Caesar to Maximian. The dynastic mausoleum was not a feature of early Tetrarchic architecture; the Tetrarchs were buried in individual mausolea. Mark Johnson has argued that the avoidance of dynastic mausolea was a reflection of the political ideology of the day, wherein which rulers were chosen for their capability rather than inherited genealogy.[180] Despite the transition away from the dynastic monument type during this period the use of porphyry was not abandoned. To the contrary, the early Tetrarchy marks a period of expansion and articulation of the political and genealogical symbolism of porphyry.

The mausolea of the early Tetrarchs show a deeper engagement with the sign value of porphyry than other previous funerary monuments. With the exception of Constantius whose burial place is unknown, the monuments of Diocletian, Maximian and Galeruis all featured

[178] See: Johnson, Ibid., 48-57.

[179] Stephen Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (New York: Routeledge, 1997), 61-70; Timothy D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[180] Johnson, Ibid., 58.

porphyry in some way.[181] At Romuliana in modern Serbia, fragments of porphyry columns and revetments have been found at the site associated with the mausoleum of Galerius.[182] No direct evidence of a sarcophagus has been identified, but fragments of the head and a hand of a porphyry statue of Galerius were unearthed in the imperial precinct at Romuliana.[183] In Milan, *opus sectile* porphyry fragments were found during excavations of San Vittore, at the site where the mausoleum of Maximian once stood.[184] A 1533 account by the Milanese priest Bonaventura Castiglioni confirms the presence of porphyry revetments at the mausoleum, which at that time was a chapel dedicated to S. Gregorio.[185] An additional sixteenth-century account, from jurist Andrea Alciato, reports that a large "antique Roman" porphyry sarcophagus once stood inside of S. Gregorio. According to Alciato, the sarcophagus was given by Franceso Sforza to Pandolfo Malatesta and taken to Rimini.[186] Its later whereabouts are unknown.

The best preserved and most programmatically complete early Tetrarchic mausoleum is that of Diocletian in Split. Built around the turn of the fourth century as a part of the emperor's

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[181] On the burial of Constantius see: Mark Johnson, "Where were Constantius I and Helena buried?" *Latomus* T. 51, fasc. 1 (Janvier-Mars 1992): 145-150.

[182] Johnson, *The Roman Imperial Mausoleum*, 77-82; Dragoslav Srejović and Čedomir Vasić, *Imperial Mausolea and Consecration Memorials in Felix Romuliana (Gamzigrad, East Serbia)* (Belgrade: Centre for Archaeological Research, 1994); Bojan Djurić, "The Stones of Felix Romuliana," in *ASMOSIA XI* (Split: University of Split, 2018), 491-492.

[183] Dragoslav Srejović, "The Representations of Tetrarchs in Romuliana," *Antiquité Tardive*, no. 2 (1993): 146-152.

[184] Johnson, Ibid., 73; Mario Mirabella Roberti, *Milano romana* (Milano: Rusconi immagini, 1984).

[185] Cod. Ambrosiano n. 153 sup., p. 30 v.; quoted in Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Note di archeologia lombardia* (Milano: Casa Editrice L.F. Cogliati, 1914), 13.

[186] Ms. Ambrosiano D. 425 inf., 8; Republished as: Andrea Alciato, *Antiquae inscriptiones veteraque monumenta patriae*; ed. G. Barni, (Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1973).

palace complex, the mausoleum is octagonal in plan and surrounded by a columnar portico.[187] (Fig. 25) The structure underwent renovation and rededication into a church for the first time in the seventh century and again in the thirteenth and seventeenth, but much of the medieval and early modern interventions were removed when the building was restored in the late nineteenth century. Although stripped of much of its Tetrarchic era ornamentation, the interior of the mausoleum still features the original porphyry columns on its lower and upper stories. There are no remaining traces of porphyry revetments or pavement in the mausoleum, but a considerable amount of porphyry paving fragments has been found throughout the palace complex as a whole.[188] What is certain is that the marble was at least present in the mausoleum in the form of Diocletian's monumental porphyry sarcophagus. No longer extant in its entirety, the sarcophagus was reportedly destroyed during the seventh century when John of Ravenna, the archbishop of Salona, cast the "idols" out of Diocletian's mausoleum and converted the building into a church.[189] Its existence is confirmed though by a number of large porphyry fragments unearthed in excavations of the site that correspond to the contours of a gabled sarcophagus.[190] (Fig. 26)

[187] Johnson, Ibid., 60-70; Jerko Marasović, *Diocletian Palace* [sic] (Zagreb: Zora, 1970); Emilio Marin, "La tomba di Diocleziano," *RendPontAcc* 78 (2006): 499-526.

[188] Katja Marasović, "Colored Marbles of Diocletian's Palace in Split" *ASMOSIA X* (Roma: l'Erma di Bretschnieder, 2015), 1010-1015.

[189] As reported by Thomas Archidiaconus, quoted in: Frane Bulić, "Il sepolcro di Diocleziano a Split," *Bullettino di archeologia e storia dalmata* 46 (1923): 5-6; Ivan Basić, "Pagan Tomb to Christian Church: The Case of Diocletian's Tomb in Spalatum," in *Pagans and Christians in the Late Roman Empire* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017), 241-272.

[190] Zrinka Buljević, "Diocletian's Porphyry Sarcophagus (?)," *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 44 (2019): 429-441.

Porphyry was a key component of Tetrarchic visual culture and ruling ideology and its use by the Tetrarchs established its status as a royal material. In 301 CE, Diocletian issued an edict establishing the prices for more than 1,200 items.[191] Included in the edict is the price for porphyry, set at 250 *denarii* per cubic foot. For perspective, a one-foot brick cost 4 *denarii*, and a pound of ivory 150. Not only is porphyry the first entry listed for marble, but it is the most expensive type alongside "marble from Laconia."[192] The edict reveals the degree to which the Tetrarchs were involved in establishing porphyry as a prestige material whose use was restricted to a small group of elites. The exorbitantly high cost of porphyry meant by default that monumental, public-facing use of the stone was reserved for the state alone. Wealthy private citizens may have been able to acquire small amounts of porphyry for domestic use in mosaics or opus sectile pavements, but use of the stone for large-scale projects was prohibitively expensive. The ability to commission a monumental work in porphyry relied on one's power to acquire it through the state, gifts or spoils.

During the Tetrarchy porphyry became synonymous with the body of the emperor by way of a group of porphyry statues of the Tetrarchs that were deployed throughout the empire. In the wake of the crisis and upheaval of the third century, Rome lacked an established imperial dynastic portrait type.[193] This meant that the Tetrarchs had the freedom to choose a radically new

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[191] Siegfried Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971); Anthony Kropff, "An English Translation of the Edict on Maximum Prices, Also Known as the Price Edict of Diocletian. (Edictum de Pretiis Rerum Venaliuum)," (Academia.edu, 2016).

[192] Also known as Lapis Lacedaemonius or "green porphyry," from the village of Krokees on the Peloponnese in Greece.

[193] Dietrich Boschung, "Die Tetrarchie als Botschaft der Bildmedien," in *Die Tetrarchie: Ein neues Regierungssystem und seine mediale Präsentation*, ed. Dietrich Boschung and Werner Eck (Wiebaden: Reichert Verlag, 2006), 350-351.

portrait type that reflected their principles of non-hereditary co-rule. The image that emerged was a clear departure from previous imperial types. Physiognomically, there was little to distinguish one Tetrarch from another; all were depicted with short military haircuts, wide staring eyes, flaring nostrils and prominent facial folds.[194] (Fig. 27) The presence or absence of a beard was typically used to differentiate an Augustus from a Caesar, but in general the most variation occurred in the specifics of their garments and ruling implements. The new image of the Roman emperor was consistent across media including coinage, public monuments and most notably porphyry statues.[195] In the absence of the physical body of the emperor, the porphyry Tetrarchs were representatives of and testaments to his dominion. When deployed to a far-flung corner of the empire, the statues established a relationship between porphyry and the presence of the emperor. The widespread association between porphyry and the Tetrarchs marked a decisive move towards bringing porphyry into the personal domain of the emperor. The statues demonstrate that porphyry was an inherited attribute of the *office* of the emperor rather something biologically inherited through a literal genealogical succession. Porphyry was inherited through a figurative genealogy, inextricably linked to the sempiternal body of the emperor, whose rule transcended temporal and physical bounds.

[194] Ibid., 351-353.

[195] On tetrarchic portraiture see: Roger Rees, "Images and Image: A Re-Examination of Tetrarchic Iconography," *Greece & Rome* 40.2 (1993), 181-200; R. R. R. Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 170-202; Tuna Şare Ağrtürk, "A New Tetrarchic Relief from Nicomedia: Embracing Emperors," *American Journal of Archeology* 122.3 (2018): 411-426.

Porphyry and the rise of Christianity

Christian Rome inherited porphyry from the Tetrarchs through its Constantinian lineage. After the death of Constantius in 306, Constantine asserted a claim for his father's title as Augustus of the western Roman empire. The discontinuation of hereditary succession meant that Constantine was not automatically elevated to the office of Augustus or even Caesar upon his father's death.[196] Instead he came to power through a series of appointments, abdications and successful military campaigns, ultimately culminating in his defeat of Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian bridge on 28 October 312. According to Eusebius, on the eve of his battle with Maxentius, Constantine experienced a vision of the cross in the sky; "he saw in the sky with his own eyes a cross-shaped trophy formed from light above the sun with a picture attached which proclaimed: 'by this conquer.' Amazement at the spectacle seized both him and the whole army..."[197] Galvanized by the vision, Constantine and his army rode into battle bearing the standard of the cross (*Labarum*). The significance of this vision and the nature Constantine's "conversion" to Christianity has long been the subject of debate.[198] Whatever the truth may be, when Constantine entered the city of Rome after his victory and elevation to emperor he was, in every practical sense, a decidedly Christian emperor. While the specifics his personal religious

[196] John Vanderspoel, "From Tetrarchy to the Constantinian Dynasty," in *The Sons of Constantine* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 25-26. Timothy Barnes, *Constantine* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 61-74.

[197] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini (Life of Constantine)*, trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1.28; Barnes, *Constantine*, 74-80; Peter Weiss, "The vision of Constantine," *Journal of Roman Archeology* 16 (2003): 237-259.

[198] For a summary of the debate see: Richard Flower, "Review: Visions of Constantine," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 102 (2012): 287-305; Rudolf Leeb, *Konstantin und Christus* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992).

convictions may never be reconstructed, in his outward facing role as emperor Constantine was a promulgator and patron of the Church through his ecclesiastical foundations at sites like St. Peter's, the Lateran and Sant'Agnese. A fundamental change in the character of Roman imperial monuments and foundations took place in the wake of Constantine's "conversion" to Christianity. A clear example of this evolution is found in the changing nature of the Roman dynastic funerary monument after 312. While features such as central plans and porphyry sarcophagi remained, imperial burials received a specifically *Christian* divine sanction through their association with a certain church or the relics of a saint. As the first in a chain of copies, the fourth-century mausolea of Constantine and his family members were the prototype for more than a millennium of subsequent Christian dynastic funerary monuments, from the earliest imperial burials at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rome, to later imitative uses by the Normans in Sicily or Medici in Florence.

The earliest Constantinian funerary monument in Rome was the mausoleum dedicated to Constantine's mother Helena. Located on the Via Labicana on the eastern periphery of the city, the mausoleum was built atop the vast network of catacombs of the early Christian martyrs Saints Marcellinus and Peter.[199] The centrally-planned brick rotunda was once attached to a basilica dedicated to the martyrs, but the early fourth-century church no longer survives.[200] (Fig.

[199] Jean Guyon, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1987), 53-203.

[200] The basilica of Saints Marcellinus and Peter was an imperial endowment built in the 320s, contemporaneously to the construction of the mausoleum. See: Gregory T. Armstrong, "Constantine's Churches: Symbol and Structure," *JSAH* 33.1 (1974): 10-11; Charles Pietri, *Roma Christiana: recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III*, (Rome: École française de Rome, 1976), 29-33; F.W. Deichmann and A. Tschira, "Das Mausoleum der Kaiserin Helena und die Basilika der heiligen Marcellinus und Petrus an der Via Labinicana vor Rom," *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 72 (1957): 83-100.

28) What has survived is a large porphyry sarcophagus that once held Helena's remains. (Fig. 29) The intricately carved sarcophagus depicts a victorious military scene, where Romans on horseback triumph over an enemy humiliated in defeat. Carved almost entirely in the round, the figures represent what is arguably the all-time artistic and technological peak of porphyry carving. There is some disagreement amongst scholars as to whether the mausoleum and sarcophagus were originally intended for the burial of Constantine, but it suffices to say that whatever the identity of its intended owner it was in the end the final resting place for Helena.[201]

In addition to the mausoleum of Helena there exists a second fourth-century Constantinian mausoleum in Rome, that of the emperor's daughter Constantina. Like the mausoleum of Helena, Constantina's monument (*Santa Costanza*) was also attached to a so-called "cemeterial" church, the fourth-century basilica of Saint Agnes.[202] (Fig. 30) Situated on the Via Nomentana, outside the Aurelian gates in the northeast of Rome, the structure is the best-preserved fourth-century monument in the city. Similar in plan to the remains of the Labicana mausoleum, the Nomentana mausoleum consists of a barrel-vaulted ambulatory encircling a central nave, topped with a towering drum and shallow dome. Semi-circular and rectangular niches line the perimeter of the ambulatory where large portions of the original mosaic program remain. (Fig. 31) The mosaic program at Santa Costanza infuses typical late antique dionysiac

[201] Johnson, *The Imperial Mausoleum*, 117-118, no. 35, 236.

[202] The basilica of St Agnes (Sant'Agnese) dates to the period after Constantine's death in 337, but its large size and connection to the mausoleum of Constantina suggest that it was surely imperial. See: Armstrong, "Constantine's Churches: Symbol and Structure," 10-12; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 47-51.

imagery with subtle Christian allegory.[203] In the vault mosaics putti frolic through interlacing vines, harvest grapes and make wine. The fecund vegetal scenes are inflected with traces of Christian iconography and messaging. The vines themselves beckon to Christ's status as the "true vine," while the bacchanalian and vintaging imagery allude to rebirth through the Eucharist.[204] Constantina's porphyry sarcophagus, which stood in the mausoleum until the fifteenth century, repeats the inhabited vine imagery from the mosaic. (Fig. 32) The monumental sarcophagus, like the mosaics, was not explicitly Christian. Dionysiac imagery was common on elite pagan sarcophagi from the third and fourth centuries; aside from the porphyry there was nothing particularly novel or deviant about the sarcophagus iconographically.[205] What is novel however, in the case of both Helena and Constantina's burials, was the joining of their mausolea to cemeterial Churches and the bodies of the Roman martyrs. Here, for the first time, imperial burials were attached to unambiguously Christian spaces. This connection Christianized the burials themselves, as well as the mausolea and porphyry sarcophagi. The Christianization of Roman imperial materials and architectural typologies was a hallmark of the Constantinian

[203] Henri Stern, "Les mosaïques de l'église de Sainte-Constance à Rome," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 12* (1958):160-218; Adele Anna Amadio, *I mosaici di S. Costanza* (Roma: De Luca, 1986).

[204] John 15:1; Sean Leatherbury, "Christian Wall Mosaics and the Creation of Sacred Space," in *The Routledge Handbook of Christian Art* (Milton: Routledge, 2018), 87-88. There are two mosaic depictions of Christ in the apses of S. Costanza, and Old Testament scenes were once depicted in the dome, but it is unclear whether or not these mosaics date to the original Constantinian phase and program. See: Fabrizio Bisconti, "Le absidiole del mausoleo di S. Costanza a Roma," in *Mosaïque gréco-romaine 9* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 67-78.

[205] Jas Elsner, "Some Observations on Dionysiac Sarcophagi," in *Visual Histories of the Classical World : Essays in Honour of R.R.R. Smith*, eds. Catherine M. Draycott, Rubina Raja, Katherine E. Welch, and William T. Wootton (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018), 425-443.

period, when elements that were once the domain of the pagan Roman emperor were brought into the fold of Christianity.

In the Christianization of the city of Rome and the office of the Roman emperor that took place under Constantine and his successors, porphyry was a constant between the new and old *urbes*. When Constantine became sole emperor of the Roman empire, porphyry was already a symbol of the imperial office thanks to its widespread use by the Tetrarchs in their portraiture, residences, mausolea, and public works like the Baths of Diocletian. Whereas for the Tetrarchs, the use of porphyry was a gesture back to the golden age and stability of early imperial Rome, under Constantine and his successors the material took on a specifically Christian character through its prominent inclusion in imperially commissioned churches.

Shortly after his victory at the Milvian bridge, Constantine initiated construction of a large basilica in an area south-east of the center of Rome known as the *Lateranus.*[206] The so-called "Lateran basilica" was Constantine's first act of ecclesiastical patronage and the first foundation of its kind in the city. A year after construction began on the basilica, a free-standing baptistery was built to the northwest of the basilica's apse (Fig. 33). Unlike the basilica which has been greatly modified over time, the Lateran baptistery retains the essential character of its late antique form.[207] This continuity allows one to envision the role that porphyry might have

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[206] Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et décor* (Città del Vaticano : Studi e testi, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1994) 110-136; Richard Krautheimer, Volfango Frankl, and Spencer Corbett, *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae* (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio istituto di archeologia Cristiana, 1937-1977), vol. V: 1-92; Lex Bosman, Ian P. Haynes, Paolo Liverani, *The Basilica of Saint John Lateran to 1600*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[207] The baptistery was renovated by Pope Sixtus III in the 430s, but has otherwise remained mostly unchanged. See: de Blaauw, *Cultus et décor*, 129-130; Olof Brandt, "The Lateran Baptistery in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: New Certainties and Unresolved Questions" in, *The Basilica of Saint John Lateran to 1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 221-238.

played in the original Constantinian structure. Today's baptistery, like the Constantinian structure is centrally planned and octagonal in form.[208] The space centers on a baptismal font that is surrounded by a colonnade of eight porphyry columns (Fig. 34). The present colonnade dates to the fifth-century renovations of Pope Sixtus III who, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, "set up the hard porphyry columns, 8 in number; these had been gathered and left from the time of the emperor Constantine, and he erected them with their marble entablatures and adorned them with verses."[209] There is some disagreement as to where the eight porphyry columns originally stood in the baptistery. Most recently, on the basis of new archeological evidence, Olof Brandt has persuasively argued that the columns were originally positioned in the eight inner corners of the rotunda.[210] The baptistery's Constantinian font is lost, but its appearance is also mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis*. The *vita* of Pope Silvester lists Constantine's ecclesiastic foundations and donations including the Lateran font which is described as "of porphyry stone, covered with finest silver on every side, inside and out… in the middle of the Font, a porphyry column which supports a golden basin…"[211]

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[208] Originally it was believed that the baptistery's octagonal plan was a feature of Sixtus III's fifth-century renovations, but new archeological findings indicate that the structure was octagonal from the beginning. See; Olof Brandt, "Il battistero Laternese," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 84 (2008): 226-231.

[209] *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis),* ed. Raymond Davis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 46:7, pg. 36.

[210] Olof Brandt, "Deer, lambs and water in the Lateran baptistery," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 81 (2005), 149-152.

[211] *Liber Pontificalis,* 34:13, pg. 17. *Fontem sanctum, ubi baptizatus est Augustus Constantinus, ex lapide porfyretico et ex omni parte coopertum intrinsecus et foris et desuper et quantum aquam continet ex argento purissimo. In medio fontis columna porfyritica qui portat fiala aurea ubi candela est, pens. auro purissimo.*

Porphyry featured prominently in another of Constantine's ecclesiastical foundations, the basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican. Like Sant'Agnese and the basilica of Saints Marcellinus and Peter, St. Peter's basilica was a cemeterial church built atop a necropolis on the *ager vaticanus* that was in active use from the first through fourth centuries CE. (Fig. 35) The basilica was dedicated to the Apostle St. Peter, whose shrine was located directly beneath the high altar.[212] The shrine, or "*tropaion*," of St. Peter was an aedicular structure built in the mid second century atop what was believed to be the burial place of Peter.[213] (Fig. 36) To incorporate the *tropaion* into his basilica, Constantine constructed a marble encasement for the shrine. The aedicula was enclosed within a box-like structure made from slabs of white marble and banded with pilaster-like panels of porphyry. The Constantinian enclosure was described in the *Liber Pontificalis* and its remains, which correspond to the description, were found during excavations of the modern Cappella Clementina in the 1940s.[214] The shrine's marble revetments are visible in photos taken by the team of archeologists. (Fig. 37) Other examples of porphyry in Old St. Peter's will be discussed in the following chapter, but for now the use of porphyry in the shrine is more strictly relevant to the discussion at hand.

In the examples of Old St. Peter's and the Lateran baptistery, porphyry was used towards two separate but related ends. In both instances the marble was employed in an imperial

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[212] Krautheimer, *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae V*, 165-279; de Blauuw, *Cultus et décor*, 451-492.

[213] Jocelyn Toynbee and John Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St. Peter* (New York: Pantheon, 1957), 127-182; Robert Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St Peter and St Paul* (New York: St. Martin's, 1957), 51-94; R. Ross Holloway, *Constantine & Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 120-155.

[214] *Liber Pontificalis*, 34:16, pg. 18; Apollonj-Ghetti et al, *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano*, (Città del Vaticano, 1951).

ecclesiastical foundation to demarcate the most sacred spaces in the building. In the Lateran baptistery it forms the baptismal font, while at St. Peters it signals the space of the high altar and the tomb of St. Peter. Both foundations date to the decades immediately following Constantine's vision and the Edict of Milan, and demonstrate the ease with which porphyry was brought into the domain of Christianity. The Constantinian shrine of St. Peter is particularly notable in that it represents a turning point in the symbolic usage of porphyry. Prior to Constantine, the role of the Pontifex was held by the Roman emperor, and porphyry's connotations of priestly kingship were a reflection of his dual role. Under Christianity porphyry kept its dual connotation; however, the role of Pontifex was no longer the exclusive privilege of the emperor. The office of the Christian emperor retained an air of the Roman emperor's sacral-kingship, but ceded its pontifical duties to the successor of St. Peter and the Church. The pope (*pontifex maximus*), much like the Roman emperor inherited his authority and legitimacy through the unbroken chain of papal succession leading back to St. Peter. In the centuries that followed, porphyry would be used by the successors of both Constantine and Peter, becoming a symbol of both the priestly-king and the kingly-priest. In this context, Constantine's shrine to St. Peter can be placed in conversation with the porphyry sarcophagi of Constantine and his family members. Within St. Peter's, the shrine functioned as a sort of sarcophagus or cenotaph – an indexical reminder to churchgoers of the body of St. Peter upon whom the church was founded both literally and figuratively. The use of porphyry in the monument aligned Peter's martyrdom and triumph over death with the sempiternity of the Roman emperor whose heavenly body also triumphed over death.

Porphyry in Constantinople

When the city of Constantinople was consecrated on 8 November 324, its foundation reflected Constantine's growing commitment to Christianity. The creation of a second capital represented a fresh start for the newly Christian empire and allowed Constantine to create a Christian capital on a grand scale without the demands of navigating Rome's pagan elites. Constantinople was not meant to replace Rome in importance, or to serve as a secondary eastern outpost; it was conceived of as an alternative second capital, equal in standing to the old Rome.[215] The Church of the Holy Apostles, or *Apostoleion*, was Constantine's only known ecclesiastical foundation within the walls of the new Roman capital.[216] While the structure functioned as a church dedicated to Christ's apostles, it also served as Constantine's mausoleum. Construction of the monument began in the mid 330s, placing its foundation roughly a decade after the mausoleum of Helena, and at least fifteen years before that of Constantina. Unlike Old St. Peter's or the basilicas of St. Agnes and Sts. Peter and Marcellinus, the Apostoleion was not a cemeterial church, and its location was not associated with the burials of any saints or martyrs.[217] In a further departure from the Roman Christian mausolea which were built outside the Aurelian walls, the Apostoleion was located within the walls of Constantinople, albeit far from the ceremonial center of the city.[218]

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[215] Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 45.

[216] Later sources and modern scholars have claimed that the foundation of the Church of St. Mokios was associated with Constantine, but there is little in the way of concrete evidence.

[217] Mark Johnson, "Constantine's Apostoleion: A Reappraisal," in *The Holy Apostles* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2020), 79-80.

[218] In this way, the location of Apostoleion better resembles Augustus' Mausoleum and Trajan's tomb which were inside of the Aurelian Walls. On the urban topography of early Constantinople

At present, the remains of all phases of the Apostoleion are completely obscured by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II's *Fatih Camii*. Complicated by these circumstances, the appearance of the Constantinian Apostoleion has been the subject of a protracted academic debate. The best account of Constantinian structure is preserved in Eusebius' *Vita Constantini*, which has supplied the basis for modern reconstructions,

> He (Constantine) himself built up the whole shrine to an unimaginable height, and made it glint with stones of every kind, facing it from the ground up to the roof. He divided the ceiling with delicate coffers and plated the whole with gold. Up above this, on the roof itself he provided copper [bronze] instead of [ceramic] tiling to protect the building securely from the rain. Round this too glittered much gold, so that by reflecting back the rays of the sun it sent dazzling light to those who looked from afar. Trellised relief-work wrought in bronze and gold went right around the building.
>
> Such was the eager care the shrine enjoyed as the emperor greatly enriched it. Round it was a spacious court wide open to the fresh air, and round this quadrangle ran porticos which faced the middle of the court where the shrine stood, and official houses, washrooms, and lampstores extended along the porticoes, and a great many other buildings suitably furnished for the custodians of the place. [219]

Later medieval sources and travelers to Constantinople provide a comparative wealth of information on the appearance of Justinianic phase of the Apostoleion, which was a cruciform basilica with at least one mausoleum.[220] In the case of the Constantinian foundation however, there is little more to work from than Eusebius' account.

Proposed reconstructions of the Apostoleion have fallen largely into two camps: proponents of the cruciform basilica after Richard Krautheimer, and those who subscribe to the

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see: Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[219] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 4.58-59. There is a lacuna in the text immediately following Eusebius' account of the Apostoleion, which may have included further descriptions of the church.

[220] For the most recent summary of the sources and a reconstruction of the Justinianic foundations see: Nikolaos Karydis, "Justinian's Church of the Holy Apostles," in *The Holy Apostles* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2020), 99-130.

rotunda hypothesis first proposed by Cyril Mango. In the 1960s, Krautheimer argued that Constantine's original foundation was built as a solitary cruciform basilica. According to Krautheimer, Constantine's foundation was centrally-planned "Greek cross" church, and it was until the rule of his son and successor, Contstantius II, that a separate domed rotunda mausoleum was built at the site.[221] (Fig. 38) A quarter of a century later, Mango offered an alternate reconstruction, proposing instead that the original Constantinian church was not a cruciform basilica, but a circular or octagonal rotunda.[222] (Fig. 39) Later sources describe both a cruciform basilica and a rotunda at the Apostoleion complex, but it is also clear from Eusebius' account that just one building dated to the reign of Constantine.[223] For Mango, this meant that Constantine built either the cruciform basilica or the rotunda mausoleum, but he could not have constructed both.[224] Citing Eusebius, Mango argues that the historian's description appears to describe a rotunda rather than a basilica. Eusebius does not mention columns, aisles or length, but remarks instead on the great height of the building. For Mango this meant that it must be accepted that Constantine built the rotunda rather than the basilica.

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[221] Richard Krautheimer, "On Constantine's Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople," in *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 27-37.

[222] Cyril Mango, "Constantine's Mausoleum and the Translation of Relics," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990): 51-62.

[223] Nikolaos Mesaritēs, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople*, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1957); Constantine of Rhodes, *Constantine of Rhodes, on Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles* (Farnham,Surrey, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

[224] Ibid., 57.

Having settled the question of the basic typology of Constantine's Apostoleion, Mark Johnson provides a studied reconstruction of its plan and interior arrangement. Johnson's proposed Apostoleion is a large rotunda with a dome supported by a fenestrated drum.[225] Either circular or octagonal, the rotunda likely featured an ambulatory and would have been similar in plan to Constantina's mausoleum in Rome. The Apostolein served as both a church and a funerary monument for Constantine, which raises the question of how its interior would have been arranged to satisfy the dual function. Some insight on the purpose and interior arrangement of the Constantinian Apostoleion is given by Eusebius in Contantine's *Vita*,

> All these things the Emperor dedicated to perpetuate for all mankind the memory of our Savior's apostles. But he had another object also in mind when he built, which though secret at first was towards the end surmised by everybody. He had prepared the place for the time when it would be needed on his decease, intending with supreme eagerness of faith that his own remains should after death partake in the invocation of the apostles, so that even after his decease he might benefit from the worship which would be conducted there in honor of the apostles. He therefore gave instructions for services to be held there, setting up a central altar. So he erected twelve repositories like sacred monuments in honor of the memory of the company of the apostles and put his own coffin in the middle with those of the apostles ranged six on either side… So having planned these things in his mind long in advance he dedicated the shrine to the apostles, in the belief that their memorial would become for him a beneficial aide to his soul.[226]

Using the contemporary Anastasis rotunda at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem as a model, Johnson proposes that cenotaphs for the twelve apostles would have been arranged in a circular formation in the double-shell rotunda, enclosing the sarcophagus of Constantine and the high altar. (Fig. 40) Johnson places Constantine's tomb at the center of the rotunda, on axis with the entrance to the mausoleum and the altar. Constantine's sarcophagus was the first in what would become a series of imperial burial at the Apostoleion. His mausoleum was not a personal

[225] Johnson, "Constantine's Apostoleion," 90.

[226] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 4.60.

mausoleum in the tradition of the Tetrarchs, but rather a dynastic monument in the vein of Hadrian or Augustus. The overwhelming majority of Byzantine emperors were buried the Apostoleion complex until the reign of Constantine VIII (d. 1028), at which point there was no longer room for additional burials at the site.[227]

Constantine's burial and those of his immediate successors took place in porphyry sarcophagi. Johnson has recently argued that when Constantius II (r. 337-361) built the first cruciform church at the Apostoleion complex he converted the original Constantinian rotunda into a dynastic mausoleum.[228] All of the Eastern Roman emperors from Constantius to Marcian were buried in porphyry sarcophagi in the Apostoleion.[229] The basic details of the Apostoleion burials are well-documented thanks to the emperor Constantine VII's (d. 959) compilation of a book court ceremonial protocols known as *De ceremoniis* ("Book of Ceremonies").[230] The *Book of Ceremonies* lists nine porphyry sarcophagi: Constantine (d. 337), Constantius (d. 361), Julian (d. 363), Jovian (d. 364), Valens (d. 378), Theodosius I (d. 395), Arcadius (d. 408), Theodosius II (d. 450), Marcian (d. 457).[231] In a remarkable twist of fate, although the Apostoleion was

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[227] Glanville Downey, "The Tombs of the Byzantine Emperors at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79 (1959): 27.

[228] Johnson, "Constantine's Apostoleion," 93-5.

[229] In the early fifth century a structure with a cruciform interior was built on the south side of the Apostoleion and housed the remains of Arcadius and Theodosius II. Johnson, "Constantine's Apostoleion," 95, no. 68.

[230] Moffatt, Ann., Maxeme. Tall, Ann Reiske, Reiske, Johann Jacob, Philotheus, Pseudo-Epiphanius, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Philotheos, *The Book of Ceremonies: with the Greek Edition of the Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn, 1829)* (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2012).

[231] Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, II:42. There is no sarcophagus for Valens (d. 378), whose body was not recovered following his death. A.A. Vasiliev, "Imperial Porphyry Sarcophagi in Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4, (1948): 10.

destroyed in the 1460s, its porphyry sarcophagi were spared. Seven of the nine sarcophagi can still be found in Istanbul today, as well as fragments from at least one other.[232] (Fig. 12) Unlike the sarcophagi of Helena and Constantina, the Constantinopolitan porphyry sarcophagi are relatively plain and unadorned. There is however one exception; a fragment of a sarcophagus found at Hagia Irene that depicts an inhabited vintaging scene and closely parallels the sarcophagus of Constantina. (Fig. 42) It has been argued by Vasiliev and others that on the basis of this similarity and its superb quality, the fragment should be understood as belonging to Constantine's sarcophagus.[233] There have been efforts to identify the owners of each sarcophagus and reconstruct their positions in the Apostoleion.[234] Such reconstruction efforts are less important to the present study however than the mere fact of the material existence of the nine sarcophagi, confirmed by the *Book of Ceremonies* and their quasi miraculous survival today.

The ensemble of porphyry sarcophagi at the Apostoleion complex were a visual testament to the Christianization of the Roman imperial office. Even before his sarcophagus was joined by those of his dynastic successors, Constantine was accompanied in the mausoleum by the cenotaphs of the twelve apostles. At the time of its construction, the Apostoleion was not a

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[232] Phillip Grierson, "The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): 3. Four stand in front of the Archeological Museum, two are on the grounds of Hagia Irene, and one is in the courtyard of the Nuruosmaniye Mosque. There are additional fragments inside the Archeological Museum that could represent one or two sarcophagi.

[233] Vasiliev, Ibid., 21-22. For a summary of the sources surrounding Constantine's burial see: John Wortley, "The Sacred Remains of Constantine and Helena," in *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne: Australian Asociation for Byantine Studies, 2006): 351-367.

[234] Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger and Arne Effenberger, *Die Porphyrsarkophage der oströmischen Kaiser : Versuch einer Bestandserfassung, Zeitbestimmung und Zuordnung* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006); Grierson, "The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors.

cemeterial church and was not associated with the body or relics of any martyr. This changed in the years following the foundation when relics of the apostles Timothy, Andrew and Luke were translated to the mausoleum (ca. 357) under the authority of Constantius.[235] As a cemeterial church *de novo*, enriched by the relics of the Apostles and the burials of the emperor, the Apostoleion was a monument to the burgeoning union of Christianity and the Roman imperial office. The cenotaphs of the apostles represented the Christian Roman emperor's role in the chain of apostolic succession and may have perhaps even likened him to Christ. The imperial sarcophagi, differentiated by their use of porphyry, placed Constantine at the start of his own chain of Christian imperial succession. The emperor's successors are seen to inherit the purple of the now Christian imperial office and in doing so they project the sempiternity of Christian Rome.

The 'passio' and the Christianization of porphyry in medieval Rome

The *passio sanctorum quatuor coronatorum* is a medieval hagiography and a testament to the indelibly Christian character of porphyry following its transformation under Constantine. A close reading of the text will uncover its previously unexplored value as a source on medieval Christian understanding of the symbolic meaning of porphyry and its relationship to the papacy. On its face, the *passio* is a legendary account of the lives and martyrdom of the four crowned saints (*Santi Quattro Coronati*).[236] The reality of the text however is not nearly so

[235] Mango, "Constantine's Mausoleum," 52; Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 19. 317ff.

[236] All references to the *passio's* Latin text are from: Willhelm Wattenbach, *Passio sanctorum IV coronatorum*, in *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaiserheschichte* III (1870), 323-328. English translations from: David Graham, "Passion of the Four Crowned Martyrs According to Porphyrius," in, Dario del Bufalo, *Porphyry: red imperial porphyry: power and religion* (Torino: Allemandi, 2012), 69-79.

straightforward. The *passio* tells the story of a group of five stonecutters who labor in the stone quarries of Pannonia during the reign of Diocletian. The men, renowned for their great artistic skill, are secretly Christian and obtain their prodigious gifts by carving their works in the name of Christ. Their talent earns them the acclaim of Diocletian, who sends the men to the "porphyry mountain" (*monte porfiretico*) to carve capitals and columns for a temple. There they carve porphyry columns, capitals, vases, victories and cupids, but refuse to carve a statue of Asclepius despite Diocletian's persistence. Eventually the stonecutters are brought before a tribunal where, after refusing to make a sacrifice to the sun god *Sol*, they are tortured, enclosed in lead coffins and thrown into a river. The *passio* then flashes forward eleven months to Rome and Diocletion's construction of a temple to Asclepius. Four Roman *cornicularii* (officers of the Roman legion) refuse to make a sacrifice under Diocletian's orders and are killed. After five days St. Sebastian and Pope Miltiades collect the bodies of the *cornicularii* and burry them on the third mile of the Via Labicana. Known as the "Santi Quattro Coronati," the men are the patron saints of a titular church on the Caelian hill, founded by Miltiades in the fourth century.

The text of the *passio* is replete with problems and inconsistencies for which there are no easy explanations.[237] The first and most fundamental issue is the question of the identity of the "Santi Quattro Coronati." Are they the stonecutters, or are they the *cornicularii*? Could the two groups be one and the same? If the Quattro Coronati are the stonecutters, why are there four saints and not five? Throughout the *passio* multiple locations are collapsed into a single narrative. The legend toggles implausibly back and forth between Pannonia (central-eastern

[237] A definitive historiographical overview on the study and transmission of the *passio* is provided by: Maya Maskarinec, "Hagiography as History and the Enigma of the Quattro Coronati," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 93 (2017): 345–409.

Europe) and *Mons Porphyrites* (upper Egypt), only to have its dramatic denouement in Rome. When the final episode of the *passio* begins in Rome, there is no explanation behind the abrupt switch in location or characters. There is also the related question as to how four (or five) foreign saints came to be venerated in Rome at a church that received special papal patronage throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Even the date of the *passio* itself is subject to debate. The author's familiarity with the operations and daily life at the Roman quarries suggests that he may have compiled the account when its events were still fresh in recent memory. A date for the feast of the martyrs "Clementis, Semproniani, Claudi [and] Nicostrati" appears in the Calendar of 354 and confirms that they were venerated in Rome as early as the fourth century, but the date of their feast is one day off from the date given in the *passio*.[238] The earliest extant copy of the *passio* dates to the eighth-century, providing a rough *terminus ante quem* for the hagiography.[239] Determining the origins and authenticity of the legend would be useful, but these particulars are not actually necessary for the discussion at hand. What matters instead is that the *passio* is a genuine medieval text and a source of enormous documentary value on attitudes concerning the symbolism and cultural importance of porphyry in medieval Rome.

At the start of the *passio* four covertly Christian stonecutters, Claudius, Castorius, Sempronianus, and Nicostratus are asked by Diocletian to carve an image of Sol from a block of white Thassos marble. Hesitant to carve a statue of the pagan god, the stonecutters argue over whether they can fulfill the emperor's request. Intervening on behalf of the group, Sempronianus announces,

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[238] The *Depositio Martyrum* lists the feast day as November 9, although the *passio* and the modern feast day of the Santi Quattro Coronatti are November 8. Hans Leitzmann, *Die drei ältesten Martyrologien* (Bonn: 1911), 4.

[239] Paris. lat. 10861. Maskarinec, *Ibid.*, 348.

> 'Please, all of you, have faith in me and I will find a way along with my fellow disciples Claudius, Simplicius, Nicostratus and Castorius.' And, following the vein of the stone, he began to carve the work in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the work went well; and the sculpture of the statue of the Sun measuring twenty-five feet was made according to the emperor's wishes.[240]

From this point forward, the stonecutters always carve in the name of Christ and the sign of the cross.

After the group is sent to *Mons Porphyrites* the Christian Claudius is able to carve a block of porphyry, but the pagan Simplicius is not:

> Claudius, then, did everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the work was a success. But anything done by Simplicius, who was a gentile, never went according to plan. One day Nicostratus said to Simplicius: 'Brother why do your tools break?' And Simplicius: 'Please temper them for me so that they will not break.' Claudius replied and said: 'Give me your whole tool bag." And as he put his tool to the sculpture, Claudius said: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, may this tool be strong and solid to do this work.'[241]

After Claudius' declaration Simplicius is, for a time, able to carve porphyry and his tools do not break. Curious about the new-found strength of his tools, Simplicius asks Sempronianus how their temper works. Sempronianus and Claudius reply, explaining that the temper is fortified by God who creates all things. Simplicius disputes their claim, maintaining instead that it is Jupiter

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[240] Wattenbach, *Passio sanctorum IV coronatorum*, 325; Graham, "Passion of the Four Crowned Martyrs," 69. *Eodem tempore Symphorianus confidens in fidem quam tenebat, dixit ad artifices suos: Fratres rogo vos omnes, date mihi fiduciam et ego inveniam textum lapidis huius cum condiscipulis meis, Claudio, Simplicio, Nicostrato et Castorio. Et quaerens venam metalli, coepit sculpere in nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi artem, et bene consequebatur sculptura secundum praeceptum augusti.*

[241] Wattenbach, *Passio*, 326; Graham, "Passion of the Four Crowned Martyrs,", 69. *Claudius autem omnia quae operabatur in nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi faciebat, et bene sequebatur eum ars. Simplicius autem qui erant gentilis, omnia quaecunque faciebat non erant convenienta. Quodam vero die dixit ad Simplicium Nicostratus: Frater quomodo ferramentum tibi confringitur? Dixit autem ad eum Simplicius: Rogo te, tempera mihi ferramentum ut non confringatur. Dixit ei Claudius: Da mihi omne ingenium artis. Et dum dedissit ei omnem sculpturam ferri, dixit Claudius: In nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi, sit hoc ferrum forte et sanum ad facienda opera.*

who created all things. Later that day, the men are ordered to sculpt porphyry vases and a basin but Simplicius discovers that his tools no longer work and everything he puts to his hands breaks. Startled by the sudden reversal of his abilities, Simplicius turns to Claudius and professes his desire to convert to Christianity;

> Simplicius replied saying: 'I see that you pray I don't know what prayer in secret; tell me clearly about this your god's prayer, so that with you I can also enjoy his fellowship.' Claudius said to him: 'And is there pure fellowship in you? Simplicius replied: 'Truly pure, indeed…' Sempronianus said to him: 'If you are able to believe, we will tell you and you will obtain the art and have eternal life.' Simplicius replied: 'By my desire I want to know your god and I beg this of you.'[242]

Claudius accepts his sincerity and the men find the imprisoned bishop Cyril of Antioch who baptizes Simplicius as a Christian.

For fifteen years, the pagan Simplicius was able to carve white Thassos marble without issue or concern for the temper of his tools. It is only when he is sent to *Mons Porphyrites* and asked to carve porphyry that Simplicius' tools and talents fail him. The fact that the four Christian stonecutters have no issue carving the porphyry suggests that there is something inherently Christian about the stone. Simplicius is at first able to carve with his blessed tools, but when his true allegiance to Jupiter is revealed the temper fails. It is only after Simplicius' baptism and conversion to Christianity that he is able to carve porphyry without issue. Simplicius' narrative arc can be read as a statement on the unique Christian character of porphyry in comparison to other white or colored stones. Unlike Thassos, which can be carved by pagans and Christians alike, the working of porphyry can only be undertaken by craftsmen

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[242] Wattenbach, *Ibid.*, 327; Graham, Ibid., 69. *Respondit Simplicius et dixit: Video, nescio praedicationem quam cottidie praedicatis. Sed quaeso vos declarate mihi hanc praedicationem dei vestri, ut vobiscum fruar amicitia. Dicit ei Claudius: Et es in te pura amicitia? Simplicius dixit: Vere pura. Nam et vos cognovistis ecce intra quindecim annos qualiter vobiscum operates sim. Dicit ei Symphorianus: Si potes credere, dicimus tibi et mox artem consequeris, sed et vitam aeternam habebis. Simplicius dixit: Desiderio desideravi scire deum vestrum et supplico vos.*

who profess sincere Christian beliefs. This association between porphyry and Christianity is further articulated when the men are ordered to carve Diocletian's statue of Asclepius.

Claudius, Sempronianus, Castorius, Nicostratus and Simplicius agree to carve porphyry vases, victories, cupids, lion spouts and animals for Diocletian, but repeatedly refuse to fulfil his requests for a porphyry image of Asclepius. A group of philosophers who are part of Diocletian's circle become enraged by the stonecutters and their refusal to carve the statue because of their Christian beliefs. They go to Diocletian who initially tolerates the stonecutters' Christian practice, but changes his mind when he learns that they refuse to carve the statue of Asclepius. Diocletian then calls the stonecutters to his court;

> And when Claudius, Sempronianus, Castorius, Nicostratus and Simplicius had been called, Diocletian said to them: 'You know with what affection and grace our benevolence has given you and with what godly love I have favored you; for what reason have you not obeyed our orders to sculpt the god Asclepius from Porphyry?' Claudius replied: 'Ever pious Augustus, we have always obeyed your piety and served your splendor; but we will never make the image of a wretched man…'[243]

Diocletian dismisses the stonecutters and orders the philosophers to find a new group of artisans who can make the statue of Asclepius. The philosophers choose new stonecutters who sculpt the statue out of white Proconessian marble. Upon receiving the Proconessian Asclepius, Diocletian sends Claudius, Sempronianus, Castorius, Nicostratus and Simplicius to a tribunal who will decide their fate. The men are given a final chance to be spared if they will make a sacrifice to the sun god, Sol. The stonecutters refuse, proclaiming that Christ is the only genuine source of light, and are condemned to death.

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[243] Wattenbach, *Passio*, 332; Graham, "Passion of the Four Crowned Martyrs,", 71. *Cumque vocati fuissent Claudius, Symphronianus, Castorius, Nicostratus et Simplicius, dixit ad eos imperator: Scitis quod affect et gratia vos diligeret mansuetudo nostra, et pio amore vos foverim. Quare non obedistis praeceptis nostris ut sculperetis de metallo porphyretico deum Asclepium? Respondit Claudius et dixit: Pie semper auguste! Nos semper obedivimus pietati tuae et servivimus claritati tuae; imaginem vero hominis miserrimi numquam faciemus…*

These episodes reveal that, even though the Christian stonecutters can make ordinary porphyry objects for Diocletian, they cannot make sacrilegious pagan images from the stone. That the men were willing and able to carve an image of Sol from Thassos marble underscores the unique and exceptional status of porphyry as a Christian material. It could not be carved by pagans, nor could it be used to depict non-Christian gods or themes.[244] It is significant that when the philosophers find a new group of artisans to carve the image of Asclepius the *passio* specifies that the statue was carved from Proconnesian marble, not porphyry. The implication here is that although Diocletian requested a stature of the god in porphyry, the pagan sculptors could not produce it. Throughout the *passio* there is a juxtaposition between the actions of the state (represented by Diocletian, the philosophers, and the tribunal), and the Church (represented by the bishop Cyril and Pope Miltiades). The state condemns the Christian stonecutters to death, while Pope Miltiades rescues their bodies and builds a monument to their martyrdom, the Basilica Santi Quattro Coronati.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Basilica of the Santi Quattro Coronati was an important site of medieval papal patronage. Located on the Caelian hill, the *passio* claims that original foundations of the basilica date to the fourth century under Miltiades, although the *Liber Pontificalis* records that the church was founded in the seventh under Pope Honorius I.[245] In any case, the most important phase of construction at the site took place during the papacy of Leo IV (r. 847-855), who rebuilt it as a titular basilica and had the relics of the crowned martyrs translated from the catacombs of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter on the third mile of the Via

[244] It is interesting to note that (to my knowledge) porphyry was not used in Islamic art except by the Ottomans after the 1420s.

[245] *Liber Pontificalis,* 72.4.

Labicana.[246](Fig. 23) According to the seventeenth-century canon Decio Memmolo, when Leo installed the bodies of the saints into the church's crypt, he placed them in four sarcophagi, "two of porphyry, one of serpentine, and the other made from metal."[247] The sarcophagi, which are still preserved in the crypt today, are in fact reused tubs that most likely originated from an imperial Roman bath, possibly even the baths of Diocletian.[248] (Fig. 24) Leo had a particularly close connection with the basilica; his *vita* lists 11 instances of patronage of Santi Quattro Coronati to his reign, the most at any one church besides St. Peter's. After the fires of the Norman Robert Guiscard in May 1084, portions of the nave of the Leonine church were destroyed and subsequently rebuilt by Pope Paschal II (r. 1099-1118).[249] Paschal's renovations included the addition of a *cosmatesque* pavement to the nave which features several large porphyry rotae (roundels). (Fig. 45)

When taken alongside the narrative of the *passio* and the martyrdom of its patron saints, the use of porphyry at Santi Quattro Coronati was an instrument of the medieval papacy's larger quest to assert its position in the new medieval European world order. The reign of Leo IV marked a period of tension and mutual dependence between the papacy and the Carolingian emperors. The papacy had a vested interest in propping up the Franks as the true heirs to the

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[246] *Liber Pontificalis,* 105.41-42.

[247] Decio Memmolo, *della vita, chiesa e reliquie de' Santi Quattro Coronati* (Roma: Pagliarini, 1757), 21.

[248] Burial in re-used Roman imperial porphyry tubs was not an uncommon occurrence. See: Theodoric's mausoleum, Peter III of Aragon in Santes Creus, Cardinal Guido of Pisa in the Basilica of Sts. Cosmas and Damian.

[249] Lia Barelli, "Ecclesiam reparare: Pasquale II (1099-1118) e il restauro della basilica dei Ss. Quattro Coronati a Roma," *Palladio* XIX no. 38 (2006): 5-29.

"Latin" Roman empire, in opposition to the claims of the "Greek" emperors and patriarchate based in Constantinople. By affirming the sovereignty of the Carolingians, the papacy could challenge, if not deny, Constantinople and its patriarch's claims for primacy.[250] At the same time, the papacy struggled to persuade the monarchy to show its deference to the Church and grant it the autonomy to appoint its own bishops. Later in the twelfth century, Paschal II was mired in troubles of his own, like his investiture controversy with Henry V of England, and rocky relations with the Normans.[251] Leo and Paschal's renovation campaigns at Santi Quattro Coronati both prominently involved porphyry and both took place during times of strife between church and state. Against this backdrop, Leo's selection of porphyry sarcophagi for the bodies of the martyrs was a particularly daring choice. As the above discussion has shown, porphyry and porphyry sarcophagi were specifically associated with the Roman emperors' sempiternal office and body. Under the medieval papacy however, there was a move to affirm the Christianity of the stone and bring it firmly within the domain of the church. From the twelfth century onwards porphyry was used widely in papal funerary monuments, but at this early date the porphyry sarcophagus was an atypical choice for a monument to the martyrs.[252]

Leo's choice of porphyry sarcophagi for the Santi Quattro Coronati can be interpreted alongside the narrative tension of the *passio*. The legend pits the sacrilegious Diocletian against the righteous martyrs and popes, thereby stressing the inherent Christianity of porphyry, despite the emperor's affinity for the stone. Leo's decision to bury the Santi Quattro Coronati in

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[250] Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 59-60.

[251] *Ibid*., 60-61.

[252] As it will be discussed in the following chapter, Popes Innocent II and Anastasius IV had themselves buried in re-used Roman imperial sarcophagi.

porphyry sarcophagi was an assertion that, as Christians, the martyrs were the rightful beneficiaries of a porphyry burial. Like the emperor they are crowned with immortality, but their crowns are the crowns of martyrdom, bestowed upon them for their righteous sacrifices as foretold by Christ in his Sermon on the Mount,

> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.[253]

Diocletian was a mere man, and his false persecution of the stonecutters led them to receive eternal life through Christ. Within this context the *passio* can be read as an endorsement of porphyry as the cultural patrimony of the Church and the kingdom of heaven, rather than that of the emperor and the terrestrial kingdom of the state. This reading privileges papal over imperial use of porphyry and ultimately the authority of the papacy over the authority of the state.

We are left with the question as to why the basilica of Santi Quattro Coronati played such a central role in the reification of papal supremacy in medieval Rome. Unlike St. Peter's or the Lateran, which were founded by Constantine, Santi Quattro Coronati was founded by a pope (either Miltiades or Honorius I), and the hagiography of its martyrs was a parable on the limits and abuses of imperial authority. After 1247, Santi Quattro Coronati became even more emphatically tied to the promotion of papal supremacy through the addition of the chapel of St. Sylvester. (Fig. 46) Inside the chapel is a cycle of frescos illustrating the life of its namesake Sylvester, a fourth-century pope and contemporary of Constantine. Included in the cycle is an infamous depiction of the "Donation of Constantine," a forged medieval decree which alleges that Constantine transferred authority of Rome to Pope Sylvester and the Church. (Fig. 47) In the following chapter I will argue that papal use of porphyry, like the Donation of Constantine, was

[253] Matthew 5:10-12.

two-fold in ambition: it was a means of bolstering the papacy's claims of supremacy in worldly affairs, and positioned the heirs of Sts. Peter and Sylvester as the true inheritors of Rome in the face of rival claims by the Carolingians, Normans and the Constantinopolitan East.

Chapter 4: *Ubi est papa, ibi est Roma:* Porphyry and the Papacy in Medieval Rome

Ubi est papa, ibi est Roma.

Where there is the pope, there is Rome.[254]

In the late fourth century, as the western half of the Roman Empire wavered and Constantinople grew in strength, the city of Rome was no longer synonymous with the seat of Roman imperial power. Despite this fracture, as the home to the papacy and the see of St. Peter, Rome remained the *sedes apostolica*, or the seat of Roman apostolic power.[255] Within this vacuum the papacy became the dominant ruling body in Rome, and the focus of civic and ceremonial preeminence. Not merely content to serve as spiritual advisors to the rulers and princes of Europe, politically ambitious pontiffs saw themselves as the inheritors of the mantle of sempiternal Rome in its newly Christian form. On the character of the nascent Christian city, Thomas F.X. Noble has observed,

> [There] can be no doubt that by the fifth century a new ideology of the Christian Rome had arisen and found concrete expression. Christian Rome was not pagan Rome Christianized, but a successor to it. Its universality was based on the *sedes apostolica*. Its founders were Peter and Paul, whom Damasus had called "stars" and John Chrysostom "beacons." Its monuments marked it out as different, as a Christian sanctuary. Ambrose applied to Rome ideas of baptism and rebirth: pagan Rome had been bloody and sinful; Christian Rome was washed clean and redeemed.[256]

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[254] Henry of Segusio (Hostiensis), *In secundum decretalium librum commentaria* (Venice, 1581), fol. 126 rb; Michele Maccarrone, "Ubi est papa, ibi est Roma," *Romana Ecclesia Cathedra Petri* (Rome: Herder, 1991), 1137-1156.

[255] On the *sedes apostolica* see: Michele Maccarrone, "Sedes apostolica-vicarius Petri: La perpetuità del primato di Pietro nella sede e nel vescovo di Roma," *Romana Ecclesia Cathedra Petri* (Rome: Herder, 1991), 1-101.

[256] Thomas F.X. Noble, "Review: Michele Maccarrone on the Medieval Papacy," *The Catholic Historical Review* 80, No. 3 (Jul., 1994): 518-533.

As the head of the Church and successor to the see of St. Peter, the papacy sought to consolidate control over Rome's religious and worldly affairs under its singular authority. The early Middle Ages bore witness to the remaking of Rome as a Christian capital *par excellence*. In service of this effort the papacy had at its disposal the urban fabric of the imperial city such as its hills, monuments and building materials.

Foremost amongst the imperial materials available to the papacy was porphyry. As the previous chapter has shown, the Christianization of porphyry paralleled the Christianization of Rome. The inheritance of the marble from pagan to Christian Roman emperors went in tandem with the inheritance of the Roman body politic. Porphyry, like the city itself, did not remain the domain of the Roman emperor. Instead, symbolic "ownership" of porphyry transferred to the papacy. The marble was deeply embedded within the fabric of city, which meant that whoever exerted control over Rome had at their disposal its supply of porphyry columns, slabs, sarcophagi and statues.

Porphyry rotae and the Christianization of Rome

As the new custodians of Rome, the papacy had the authority to dismantle Roman imperial monuments like the baths of Caracalla and Nero's Domus Aurea. Picked apart for their precious marble furnishings, monuments to the bygone pagan Roman empire fell to ruin as their materials were taken to glorify the churches of Christian Rome. Thanks to the Christianization of porphyry under Constantine, the former symbol of imperial dominion could be inserted seamlessly into ecclesiastical settings. Here, porphyry functioned towards the same end, albeit for the pope rather than emperor. Within the new milieu, the *rota* ("roundel") emerged as a means of signifying papal power and ascendancy through porphyry. Placed into the nave and

apsidal pavements of churches, the roundels demarcated episcopal space and dominion within the sanctuary (Fig. 48). When activated through the liturgy and papal ceremonial, rotae were uniquely suited towards the propagation and expression of medieval papal ambitions. Unlike porphyry columns or sarcophagi, rotae did not have a clear imperial Roman antecedent. The ceremonial use and function of porphyry rotae were necessarily tied to Christianity and the papacy.

I argue that porphyry rotae were loci upon which fundamental doctrinal and architectural developments intersected during the Middle Ages. Focusing largely on the origins and symbolism of the rota, this chapter will detail the role played by porphyry in the transformation of the papacy that took place between the fourth and thirteenth centuries. Rotae were not the only format of porphyry propaganda employed by the medieval papacy. This chapter will also consider objects such as porphyry columns and sarcophagi, and the role of porphyry within cosmastesque ornamentation. As I will demonstrate, papal use of porphyry was a material manifestation and supplement to the promulgation of the expanded scope of the papal power enumerated in the *Donation of Constantine.* As a visual companion to the doctrinal expansion of authority over worldly affairs, the presence of porphyry functioned to imperialize the image of papacy to the public and within ecclesiastical spaces. The medieval imperialization of the papacy positioned the pope as not only the successor of St. Peter, but also as the successor of Constantine and legitimate inheritor of sempiternal Rome. So successful was this campaign that by the late thirteenth-century, canonist Henry of Segusio could declare, *Ubi est papa, ibi est Roma*. Where there is the pope, there is Rome.[257]

[257] Henry of Segusio (Hostiensis), *Ibid.*

The origins of the rota

The use of porphyry rotae in early Christian and medieval pavements may owe its inspiration in part to the Roman tradition of *opus sectile*. Unlike the patterns in mosaic pavements, formed by miniscule glass and stone tesserae, *opus sectile* compositions are made from inlaid pieces of polished stone, mother of pearl and glass. The polychrome wall and floor revetments appeared in Rome from approximately the first-century CE and onwards, in structures such as Nero's *domus Tiberiana* and the flooring of Caligula's Nemi ships.[258] (Figs. 13, 49) By the second century, polychrome stone pavements featuring geometric motifs figured prominently in the buildings of the emperor Hadrian.[259] Hadrian's Temple of Venus and Roma is among the earliest sites wherein porphyry rotae were used within a pavement composition. Erected by the emperor on the site of the remains of Nero's palaces, the dual temple to the goddesses Venus and Roma was perched on the Velian ridge overlooking the forum. The original Hadrianic temple burned in 307, and was subsequently rebuilt by the Tetrarch Maxentius.[260] Following the Christianization of Rome, the temple fell into to ruin until the mid-ninth century, when Pope Leo IV built the basilica of Santa Maria Nova atop a portion of the ruins.

[258] For a survey on the use of polychrome marble revetments in Roman world see: Fabio Barry, *Painting in Stone*, 116-128. I take issue with Barry's use of Lucan and Seneca as documentary sources of the so-called "*opus alexandrinum*" tradition of polychrome revetments in Hellenistic Alexandria, and therefore cannot comment on the existence of such a practice.

[259] David M. Jacobson, "Hadrianic Architecture and Geometry." American Journal of Archaeology 90.1 (1986): 69–85;

[260] Mary Taliaferro Boatwright, *Hadrian and the City of Rome*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 124-130.

Photos taken during the 1930s excavations of the Temple of Venus and Roma attest to the presence of a large porphyry disc within the pavement of its nave. (Fig. 50) The disc is one of several rotae of to be found at the site that were of varying sizes and part of its geometrically patterned nave pavement (Fig. 51). Archeologist Andrea Barattolo has attempted to reconstruct the appearance of the Hadrianic and Maxentian pavements despite challenges posed by poor documentation on the part of early twentieth-century excavators. [261] While Barattolo has demonstrated that small porphyry "circles" (*cerchi*) were almost certainly a part of the original Hadrianic pavement, it is impossible to say for certain whether the large rotae belong to the Hadrianic or Tetrarchic phase of the temple.[262] As porphyry was embraced enthusiastically by both Hadrian and the Tetrarchs, it is difficult to make a distinction based on period conventions and tastes. Hadrian was known to favor geometric schemes and arrangements in his building projects,[263] and the Basilica of Maxentius is known to have had a similar opus sectile pavement featuring patterns of circles and squares.[264] While the Temple of Venus and Roma provides evidence that porphyry rotae exited in *opus sectile* pavements pre-dating the reign of Constantine, I argue that they were used towards markedly different ends. In imperial Roman buildings such as Hadrian's temple and the basilica of Maxentius, marble rotae were one

[261] Andrea Barattolo, "Sulla decorazione delle celle del Tempio di Venere e di Roma all'epoca di Adriano," *BullComm* 84 (1974-75): 136-148. Poor documentation of the elevation of the original pavement phases during excavations and their obliteration during the restorations have made it impossible to securely date the chronology of their forms. The modern reconstruction of the pavement carried out during the course of the twentieth century does not accurately replicate the composition of either phase and is an ahistorical imagining on the part of the restorers. (Fig. 50b)

[262] Ibid., 145-147.

[263] David M. Jacobson, "Hadrianic Architecture and Geometry," 69-85.

[264] Anthony Minoprio, "A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine, Rome," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 12 (1932): 9-10.

component of a larger geometrically patterned pavement. In the absence of any evidence to suggest that the patterns had a specific ritual or symbolic significance, their chiefly ornamental function stands in contrast to the way in which porphyry rotae were used in ecclesiastical settings. I maintain that, when used in church pavements, porphyry rotae served a specific function in demarcating privileged episcopal space within the church. The particulars of this function, its historical genesis, symbolic and religio-political significance will be the subject of the following pages.

The Vatican *rota porphyretica*

In order to understand how the porphyry rota came to be a defining symbol of the medieval papacy, one must look to the example of Old Saint Peter's basilica. While the structure of the Constantinian basilica may be lost to history, the centerpiece of it nave, the great Vatican *rota porphyretica*, is not.[265] The ancient rota measured more than eight feet in diameter and is now set in the nave of seventeenth-century church, where it sits near the narthex, on axis with the high altar (Fig. 48). The process of the original setting of the *rota porphyretica* is dependent on medieval and early modern accounts of Old St. Peter's, written in the years prior to the basilica's destruction. Old St. Peter's basilica did not vanish overnight – the piecemeal dismantling of the church began in 1505 and was not completed until 1609 under Pope Paul V. Shortly before the final demolitions, the priest, writer and archivist Giacomo Grimaldi was ordered to document the appearance of the church's east end and nave.[266] His observations and drawings are collected in

[265] Michel Andrieu, "La rota porphyretica de la basilique vaticane," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 66 (1954).

[266] Barb. Lat. 2733; Giacomo Grimaldi, and Reto Niggl, *Descrizione Della Basilica Antica Di S. [i.e. San] Pietro in Vaticano* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1972).

the codex Barberini Lat. 2733, and include descriptions and an illustration of the massive porphyry rota (*rota porphyretica*) that was once a central part of the nave of Old St. Peter's. (Fig. 53) Of the rota and the nave Grimaldi wrote,

> The entire pavement is made from pieces of marble. At some places remains from the first pavement (possibly Constantinian) can be seen… Before the high altar is the large and most beautiful porphyry *rota*, it is whole (*integra*) except it is fractured slightly on its face, in ancient books of ceremonies it is mentioned when discussing the coronation of the emperor.[267]

Grimaldi's description draws attention to the three most salient features of the rota: its remarkable appearance and size, its alleged Constantinian origins, and its use in coronation ceremonies. These attributes, I argue, are what made the Vatican *rota porphyretica* so compelling as a prototype and model for the subsequent porphyry rotae found throughout Rome.

From Grimaldi's drawings, it is apparent that the rota's placement in the modern St. Peter's basilica does not reflect its original location. In Grimaldi's east-facing view of the interior of the church, the rota is visible in the center of the nave, in the vicinity of the altar. (Fig. 53) The rota is drawn on top of the basilica's grid-like floor plan in red ink, which is also used to annotate a description of the rota and its historical and ceremonial significance. Grimaldi's caption for the rota is the longest and most detailed label on the drawing, and stands out from the others which were all written in black ink and are purely appellative in function.[268] What Grimaldi's drawing does not communicate however, is that the great *rota porphyretica* was in fact one of four rotae found in Old St. Peter's, and the larger of two made from porphyry.

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[267] Barb. Lat. 2733, fol. 107r-v, my translation. Pavimentum totum ex fragmentis marmorum. Alicubi cernebantur reliquiae primi pavimenti (et fortasse Constantiniani)… Ante altare sanctissimi Sacramenti Rota porphyretica magna et pulcherrima integra, praeterquam in ora parum fracta in antiquis Caeremoniarum libris adeo nominate dum agitur de coronation Imperatoris…

[268] Barb. Lat. 2733, fol. 104v-105r.

Writing in the mid-sixteenth century, Onofrio Panvinio described the material and placement of the ensemble of Vatican rotae,

> The entire pavement is covered with great slabs of marble. There are four marble roundels; the first, made from porphyry, is in the *portico* before the church door (*ante portam ecclesiae*); the second, of Egyptian marble, is within the threshold (*limen*); the third is made from porphyry and is before the high altar; the fourth is Egyptian marble and before the entrance to the new basilica, above which is written: PAVLVS III PONTIFEX MAXIMVS.[269]

Panvinio's characterization of the "third" roundel corresponds to Grimaldi's drawing and account of the *rota porphyretica*, but his "first" porphyry roundel does not appear in the east-facing view of the church. (Fig. 53) While the four rotae have generally been interpreted as having formed a straight line down the center of the nave, this arrangement may not necessarily be correct.[270] An image of a second porphyry roundel appears elsewhere in Grimaldi's text, in a drawing of the elevation of the oratory of Pope John VII (r. 705-707).

On fols. 94r-95v, Grimaldi illustrates the oratory, its mosaic program, altar and liturgical furnishings. (Fig. 54) On the floor of the space, in front of the altar, a large purple oval shape appears. Labeled "*ovatum… porphyretum*," (porphyry oval) the roundel is thus understood to be ovoid rather than circular. Grimaldi's depiction of the oval is richly detailed, and even reproduces the appearance of the white phenocrysts against the marble's purple ground mass. Although the oratory dates to turn of the eighth century, the precise date and function of the

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[269] Onofrio Panvinio, *De rebus antiquis memorabilibus et praestantia Basilicae sancti Petri apostolorum*. As printed in, Angelo Mai (ed.), *Spicilegium romanum*, tomus IX (Rome: Collegii Urbani, 1843), 370, my translation. Pavimentum totum marmoreis tabulis magnis stratum est. Habet quatuor circulos marmoreos; primum in portica ante portam ecclesiae porphyreticum; secundum intra limen, aegyptiacum; tertium porphyreticum ante aram sacramenti; quartum aegyptiacum ante portam basilicae novae, cui supra scriptum est: PAVLVS III PONTIFEX MAXIMVS.

[270] Michel Andrieu, Ibid., 195; Alexandra Herz, "Cardinal Cesare Baronio's Restoration of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo and S. Cesareo de'Appia," *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 4 (1988): 590-620.

porphyry oval are unknown. The oval may have been a part of the original program of the oratory, but it could also be a later addition.[271] A different version of the fol. 95v drawing appears in another text by Grimaldi, the *Opusculum de sacrosancto Veronicae sudario ac lancea* (*"Opusculum"*).[272] Compiled in 1618, the *Opusculum* is a stand-alone excerpt from Grimaldi's larger volume on St. Peter's that focuses on the oratory and the relics of St. Veronica. Grimaldi reports that when the oratory was destroyed in 1606, the bones of a human body were found in an earthenware tomb beneath the porphyry oval.[273] While Grimaldi accepts that the remains were the relics of St. Veronica, the validity of this claim and the date of the tomb cannot be determined.[274]

Multiple phases of papal patronage and additions took place in the oratory throughout its nine hundred years of existence. With these alterations in mind, it is difficult to pinpoint when exactly the porphyry oval was installed and what its purpose might have been. The oval could date to the original phase of the oratory's construction c. 707, but as it will be addressed later in this chapter, such an early date would be atypical for a roundel of this type.[275] Among other

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[271] It has been proposed that the oval may date to time of John VII on the basis of the existence of another porphyry slab at the tomb of Bishop Maurus of Ravenna (644-673) in S. Apollinare in Classe; Ann van Dijk, "The Oratory of Pope John VII (705-707) in Old St. Peter's," PhD diss., (Johns Hopkins University, 1996), 118-119.

[272] Vat.Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.H.3, fol. 123r; Federico Gallo, "*De sacrosancto sudario Veronicae* by Giacomo Grimaldi," in *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 72-82.

[273] Vat.Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.H.3, fol. 24r.

[274] Ann van Dijk, "The Afterlife of an Early Medieval Chapel: Giovanni Battista Ricci and Perceptions of the Christian Past in Counter-Reformation Rome," *Renaissance Studies* 19 (2005): 697.

[275] The vast majority of porphyry roundels in Roman church pavements date to the ninth or twelfth century.

possible explanations for the origins of the oval two additional candidates emerge. The oval could date to the late twelfth century when Pope Celestine III (r. 1191-1198) constructed a ciborium within the oratory to house the veil of St. Veronica (*Sudarium*).[276] It is also possible that the oval could be related to the installation of the *porta sancta* (holy door) within the oratory that took place in preparation for the Jubilee of 1500.[277] If this is the case, it could explain why Panvinio's "first" roundel is described as being "before the church door." As we will see, porphyry rotae played an important role in papal ceremonial and processions, and therefore could be related to the ceremonial unsealing of the door during the Jubilee.

Like the *ovatum porphyretum*, the date and original purpose of the *rota porphyetica* are unknown. The earliest mention of the rota is found in the *Liber Pontificalis* during the coronation of Henry V by Pope Paschal II in 1111.[278] Even when taking into account this relatively late date, there is reason to believe that the rota dates to an earlier, albeit unknown, period. The *rota porphyretica*, I argue, most likely dates to one of two periods: Constantine's fourth-century foundation of the church, or a later phase of renovations to the nave. If the rota is attributed to Constantine and the original construction of nave, its early date and imperial provenance would account for why it is not mentioned as a part of any phase of papal patronage in the *Liber Pontificalis*. This attribution would also make sense within the broader context of Constantine's use of porphyry in his personal and public-facing monuments. As it has been detailed in the

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[276] Claudia Bolgia, "Celestine III's Relic Policy and Artistic Patronage in Rome," in *Pope Celestine III (1191-1198): diplomat and pastor* (New York: Routlege, 2016), 239-244.

[277] Eva-Maria Jung-Inglessis, "La porta santa," *Studi Romani* 23, no. 4 (Oct., 1973): 473-485.

[278] Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire* (Paris: E. Thorin, 1886-1892), 340.

Chapter 3, Constantine incorporated porphyry not only in his imperial monuments but also his ecclesiastical foundations including the Lateran baptistery and the shrine of St. Peter. The inclusion of the *rota prophyretica* in the nave of St. Peter's, on axis with the Petrine shine, would have placed the two papal-imperial porphyry monuments in dialogue with one another.

There remains the practical question of the material origins of the rota. Such a large and unblemished piece of porphyry would have been difficult to come by after import of the stone to Europe ceased sometime before the mid fifth century. Although some supply of porphyry existed in Rome throughout the Middle Ages, the size of the rota alone may favor an earlier rather than later date.[279]

A second candidate and possible patron of the *rota porphyretica* is Pope Leo III (r. 795-816), who famously crowned Charlemagne as Holy Roman emperor on Christmas day in the year 800. The event took place in St. Peter's basilica, and as legend has it, atop the *rota porphyretica*.[280] If this account is correct, the episode places a *terminus ante quem* for the rota in the year 800. The coronation was a hallmark of Leo's reign and took place shortly after his extensive renovations to the nave of St. Peter's. According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Leo installed new porphyry columns, chancels and steps within the church, as well as a porphyry *triclinium* in the Lateran.[281] Although the *vita* mentions that Leo laid the pavement of St. Peter's using marbles of various colors, the text does not specifically mention porphyry or the *rota*

[279] Suzanne B. Butters, *The Triumph of Vulcan: Sculptors' Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1996), 42.

[280] Michel Andrieu, "La rota porphyretica de la basilique vaticane," 195.

[281] *Liber Pontificalis*, 98: 3-65, 177–203; Dale Kinney, "The Discourse of Columns," in *Rome Across Time and Space*. Ed. Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 196.

porphyretica.[282] As Sible de Blaauw has observed, Leo's *vita* is the first time that porphyry appears in the *Liber Pontificalis* after the fourth century.[283] He argues that Leo's use of porphyry in St. Peter's was an attempt to assert the king-like dignity (*kaisergleiche Würde*) and privileges of his office and to align himself with Constantine.[284] Through his porphyry patronage, Leo emphasized the standing of the papacy alongside ancient Roman and contemporary "Byzantine" emperors who also had a claim to the imperial stone.

Porphyry rotae in Constantinople

Before continuing the present discussion it is necessary to address the use and presence of rotae in Constantinople and the eastern Roman Empire and what if any relationship they had to the rotae in Rome. In the year 1200, the Russian pilgrim and future archbishop Anthony of Novgorod visited the city of Constantinople where he recorded his itinerary and reflections on what he encountered.[285] Of the church of Hagia Sophia Anthony recalled, "on the right near the sanctuary is a piece of red marble, on which they place a golden throne; on this throne the emperor is crowned."[286] Nothing precisely matching the pilgrim's description can be found in

[282] *Liber Pontificalis*, 98:39, 194-195.

[283] Sible de Blaauw, "Papst und Purpur: Porphyr in frühen Kirchenausstattungen in Rom," in *Tesserae: Festschrift für Josef Engemann* (Münster, 1991), 49-50. Porphyry is mentioned in the *vitae* of Sixtus III (r. 432-40) and Hilarius (r. 461-8).

[284] de Blaauw, "Papst und Purpur," 49-50.

[285] Sofiia Petrovna Khitrovo, *Itinéraires russes en Orient* (Genève: Imprimerie J.-G. Fick, 1889); W. Richard Lethaby and Harold Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia Constantinople* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1894); George Majeska, "Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978): 299-308.

[286] Lethaby-Swainson, Ibid., 105.

Hagia Sophia today. Modern scholars however have identified his account with the so-called "*omphalion*," a section of polychrome pavement contained within a square border near the church's southwest exedra.[287] The *omphalion*, which receives its name from a diminutive form of the word *omphalos*, meaning "navel" or "center,"[288] is made up of a large central rota framed by an assemblage of smaller roundels that vary in color and size. (Fig. 55) At present, the central rota is made from a slab of gray granite, but there is reason to believe that it was originally of porphyry.[289] The curious aesthetics of the framing rotae, their geometry, color and form suggest that they may have been later additions of an unknown date, perhaps after Anthony of Novgorod's thirteenth-century encounter. The date of the central rota is similarly uncertain, while it is not mentioned in Paul the Silentiary's ekphrasis on Hagia Sophia, there is nothing else to suggest that it did or did not originate during the Justinianic phase of the church.

The validity of Anthony's description of the function of the *omphalion* remains in question. As Peter Schreiner has noted, the Constantinopolitan coronation ritual did not take

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[287] Peter Schreiner, "Omphalion und Rota Porphyretica: zum Kaiserzeremoniell in Konstantinopel und Rom, " in *Byzance et les Slaves: études de civilisation: mélanges Ivan Dujčev* (Paris: Association des amis des études archéologiques des mondes byzantino-slaves et du christianisme oriental, 1979), 401-410; William Tronzo, "Shield, Cross, and Meadow in the Opus Sectile Pavements of Byzantium, Southern Italy, Rome and Sicily," in *Ho italiōtēs hellēnismos,* ed. Nicolas Oikonomides (Athēna: Ethniko Hidryma Ereunōn, 2001), 241-260; Silvia Pedone, "The Marble *Omphalos* of Saint Sophia in Constantinople," in *XI. Uluslararası Antik Mozaik Sempozyumu, 16–20 Ekim 2009, Bursa Türkiye* (Istanbul: Uludağ Üniversitesi, Mozaik Araştırmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2011), 749-768.

[288] Tronzo, "Shield, Cross, and Meadow," 243.

[289] Schreiner, Ibid., 402; According to Schreiner, it is possible that the original porphyry rota was damaged when the dome of Hagia Sophia partially collapsed in the fourteenth century. Unable to find a piece of porphyry large enough to construct a new rota, gray granite was used instead. I contend that one must also raise the possibility that the porphyry rota may have been removed as spoils either sometime after the events of 1204, or in the wake of the Ottoman conquest and conversion of Hagia Sophia.

place at the site of the *omphalion,* but instead in the ambo of the great church.[290] The *Book of Ceremonies* does mention an *omphalion,* but it is not in connection with imperial coronation.[291] According to the tenth-century ceremonial treatise, an *omphalion* marked the spot where the emperor stood during processionals on feast days including Epiphany and Pentecost. It could be that in his account of the rota's function, Anthony was simply mistaken. It is also possible however that Anthony's description was embellished by his knowledge of contemporary Western practices, such as the 1111 coronation of Henry V by Pope Paschal II on the Vatican rota.[292] This distinction is important, as modern scholars are often quick to label Western coronations on the *rota porphyretica* as owing a symbolic and ceremonial debt to what may in fact be a falsely attributed function of the *omphalion*. In the absence of any other surviving evidence on the relationship between porphyry and the Constantinopolitan coronation ritual there is little basis to support the idea that western coronations were somehow derivative of the "Byzantine" tradition.

Thanks to modern survivals and documentary evidence, one can be reasonably sure that beyond the *omphalion*, at least four other porphyry rotae existed in Constantinople. The *Book of Ceremonies* mentions rota and porphyry slabs that were placed at the entrance to the Great Palace, in the Consistorium and before the Chalke gate.[293] There is also an additional porphyry rota in the nave pavement of Hagia Sophia, south of the *omphalion*. (Fig. 56) The existence of

[290] Schreiner, Ibid., 401.

[291] See: Ann Moffatt, et al, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *The Book of Ceremonies: with the Greek Edition of the Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2012), 15, 63, 73, 130, 163, 181, 290.

[292] Dorothy Glass, "Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements," PhD Thesis, (Oxford, 1980), 51.

[293] Schreiner, Ibid., 402-403.

rotae in medieval Constantinople is further corroborated by the presence of at least three spoliated porphyry roundels that were incorporated into revetments at the Topkapi palace complex. (Fig. 57) It is impossible to say whether these rotae correspond to any of the named rotae in the *Book of Ceremonies*, but their present location suggests that they could have come from the ruins of the imperial Great Palace. In the absence of information concerning when or why the rotae were installed, it is difficult to make any definite conclusions about their relationship to Roman rotae and western ceremonial practice. In any case, it is evident that the western and eastern rotae share a common Constantinian heritage. Constantine was the first to introduce porphyry into the ecclesiastical space, thereby establishing the marble as a symbol of Christian Rome and the imperial office. Rather than trying to affirm which tradition came first, eastern and western rotae can be seen as the product of a shared Constantinian pedigree. In Constantinople the "Byzantine" emperor was the heir to Constantine, whereas in medieval Rome the claim of inheritance was made by the papacy.

Returning to the question of porphyry in the Roman West, I argue that the marble was employed as a part of a broader effort by the papacy to assert its Constantinian lineage and status as inheritor of sempiternal Rome. Due to its strong association with Constantine's patronage and religious foundations, porphyry was an important part of this heritage. De Blaauw has argued that Pope Leo III's porphyry patronage was an expression of the king-like dignity of his office, because it was a privilege accorded only to the emperor and pope.[294] The Lateran and St. Peter's basilica were imperial, Constantinian foundations that by the eighth century had become sites of papal patronage and authority. Each time a pope supplied porphyry furniture or revetments to the complexes, his addition was placed in dialogue with the original Constantinian features in

[294] de Blaauw, "Papst und Purpur," 49-50.

porphyry. For this reason, it was the papacy alone who could claim direct inheritance of the Constantinian medium of porphyry and use of the stone in ecclesiastical foundations. Papal inheritance of porphyry was necessarily tied to the papacy's conviction that it was the true inheritor of Constantine's terrestrial Christian Roman empire. To understand the genesis of this view and how it came to be promoted over time, this chapter will examine textual sources that gave rise to an expanded, imperializing view of papal authority. Through hagiographical sources like the *Actus Silvestri* and *Liber Pontificalis,* and a forged imperial decree known as *The Donation of Constantine,* the papacy crafted an elaborate textual tradition in support of their claims of expanded religio-political authority. A consideration of these texts will provide background on the mechanisms and motivations behind the papacy's interest in and patronage of porphyry. The symbolic and material properties of porphyry meant that the marble was uniquely suited for use by the papacy, and ultimately led it to become a centerpiece of medieval papal symbolism and ceremonial.

The textual tradition

Much of the basis of the papacy's claim that it was the legitimate inheritor of Constantinian Rome centers on the figure of Pope Sylvester I. According to his biography in the *Liber Pontificalis,* Sylvester was born in Rome and held the Roman see from 314 until 335.[295] Aside from his *vita,* few contemporary sources attest to the events of Sylvester's life.[296] The

[295] *Liber Pontificalis,* XXXIV.1.

[296] None of Sylvester's correspondence survives and he only appears briefly in the *Despositio episcoporum*. See: Theodor Mommsen and Johannes Lucas ed., *Chronica minora saec. IV., V., VI., VII.* Vol. t. 9, (Berolini: Weidman, 1961), 2.70; Kristina Sessa, "Constantine and Silvester in the *Actus Silvestri*," in *The Life and Legacy of Constantine,* ed. Shane M. Bjornlie (New York: Routledge, 2017), 80.

pope did not take part in the 314 synod at Arles, and Eusebius records that he was absent for the 325 Council of Nicaea.[297] As Constantine had already left Rome by the time Sylvester became bishop in 314, the two would have had limited opportunities for personal interaction during their lifetimes, beyond Constantine's brief visits to Rome in 315 and 326.[298] One can postulate however that the two would have had at least some degree of regular correspondence concerning at minimum the construction of Constantine's ecclesiastical foundations in Rome.

Even with the paucity of historical evidence that Constantine and Sylvester had any meaningful relationship with one another, the hagiographical tradition casts their dynamic in an entirely different light. Discrepancies between the historical life of Sylvester and his legendary reputation are apparent in the *vita* of the pope found in the *Liber Pontificalis*.[299] The opening lines of Sylvester's *vita* relay episodes from his life that at odds with the established historical record. His biographer writes,

> [Sylvester] was in exile on Mount Syraptim troubled by Constantine's persecution; afterwards he returned in glory and baptized the emperor Constantine, whom the Lord cured from leprosy by baptism, and from whose persecution he is known to have previously fled into exile.[300]

If Constantine's leprosy and miraculous healing through Sylvester's baptismal rite are unfamiliar to readers it is because they are not known to have occurred. The events of Constantine's alleged deathbed conversion to Christianity are recounted differently in his *vita* by Eusebius.[301]

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[297] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3.7.2.

[298] Sessa, *Ibid.*, 79.

[299] *Liber Pontificalis,* XXXIV.

[300] Ibid., XXXIV.2.

[301] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 4.62.

According to Eusebius' account of the baptism it was not Sylvester who performed the rite, but the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia.[302] Also absent from Eusebius' text is any mention of Constantine's affliction with leprosy, which one imagines would have been an episode worth documenting for his biographer. The origin of the *Liber Pontificalis*' apparently ahistorical account of the life of Sylvester and Constantine can be traced back to an apocryphal hagiographic source known as the *Actus Silvestri.*

Compiled more than one hundred years after his death, the *Actus Silvestri* tells a falsified version of the life of Sylvester that promotes an invented relationship between the pope and Constantine. The earliest texts of the *Actus* date from approximately the late fifth to the early sixth century, but the sheer number of surviving manuscript editions of the text attest to its circulation well into the sixteenth century.[303] The narrative of the *Actus* is divided into four parts across two books.[304] Part two is the most famous portion of the text and describes the events surrounding Constantine's legendary baptism by Sylvester. According to the *Actus,* as bishop of Rome, Sylvester was persecuted by Constantine and forced into exile. In divine retribution for his persecution of Christians, Constantine was stricken with leprosy, unable to recover. Eventually, the emperor sought the counsel of pagan priests, who instructed him to bathe in the

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[302] On Constantine's baptism see: Garth Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and their Influence," *The journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994): 146-170.

[303] There is no modern critical edition of the *Actus*, and two main recensions ("A" and "B") of the text exist within the medieval textual tradition, in Latin, Greek and Syriac. Approximately 350 versions of the text have been identified; Tessa Canella, *Gli Actus Silvestri: Genesi di una leggenda su Constatino imperatore* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2006), XIIV-XXIV.

[304] Part I of the *Actus Silvestri* describes Sylvester's youth, his early pastoral activity and ultimate consecration as bishop of Rome, part II Constantine's baptism, part III Sylvester's triumph over twelve rabbis, and part IV Sylvester's taming of a dragon.

blood of children. Unwilling to sacrifice children for the purification ritual, Constantine withdrew and was visited in a dream by Peter and Paul. The martyrs instruct Constantine to find Sylvester, who will heal him of his affliction. Sylvester was then brought back from exile to Rome, where he presented Constantine with two icons of Peter and Paul. Upon seeing the icons, Constantine confirmed that they depicted the same men from his vision and immediately professed his faith to Sylvester. The icons, which were held in the Sancta Sanctorum, still survive in Rome today and provide an element of material corroboration for the legend.[305] (Fig. 58) Following his profession and a weeklong fast, Constantine was baptized by Sylvester at the Lateran palace, whereupon he was immediately healed.

The primary motivation behind the creation of the *Actus Silvestri* and its invented Sylvester-Constantine legend may have been a desire on the part of the church to historically invert Constantine's Arian baptism. As noted above, the historical record holds that Constantine was baptized by the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia. The historical circumstances of Constantine's baptism would have been a liability for the Roman church who sought to capitalize on their role as the inheritors of Christian Rome. That Constantine was baptized under the Arian heresy, by an eastern bishop rather than the orthodoxy of the Roman church complicated the papacy's claim to be the inheritors of Constantine's Christian Roman empire. It will be recalled that at the time that the *Actus* was compiled, Italy was under the rule of the Arian Ostrogothic

[305] The small encaustic icons actually date to the seventh or eighth century, but were thought to the very same icons mentioned in the *Actus*. The icons appear in the fresco cycle at the Cappella San Silvestro, and even a silver pectoral cross though to belong to the Constantinopolitan patriarch Michael Keroularios (Dumbarton Oaks BZ.1964.13); Herbert L. Kessler, *Rome 1300: On the Path of the Pilgrim*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 59.

king, Theodoric the Great (r. 493-526).[306] In order to delegitimize the Ostrogoths' competing claims for the mantle of sempiternal Rome, the papacy had a strong stake in asserting Constantine's orthodoxy and alignment with the Roman church. By promoting the claim that Constantine was baptized by Sylvester, bishop of Rome, rather than a provincial Arian bishop, the *Actus* undercut the Ostrogoths' legitimacy as the Christian rulers of the Italian peninsula.

The *Actus'* Sylvester-Legend had the further effect of elevating the status of Sylvester within the Roman church. Although there is nothing to indicate that Sylvester had a particularly noteworthy or distinguished tenure as pope, his pontificate was important to the church because it coincided with the reign of Constantine. By inventing a new history of the life and acts of Sylvester, the Roman church could better insert itself within the Constantinian history of Rome. Kristina Sessa has argued that the *Actus* and its inverted baptism served to "animate" Sylvester's papacy and papal identity with a unique and special presence. This presence, she writes, was "based not on the passive inheritance of Peter's charge, but on the active performance of supernatural rites to salubrious and productive ends."[307] The baptism marked Sylvester, and consequently his office of bishop of Rome, as a "powerful liturgical agent" and "warrior."[308] Through his baptism of Constantine, Sylvester was the instrument through which the Roman imperial office was Christianized. As pope and representative of the church, Sylvester was seen as the savior of Constantine, who was the emperor and representative of the state. Through this

[306] Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Johnathan J. Arnold et al, *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

[307] Sessa, Ibid., 85.

[308] Ibid.

relation, the *Actus* sets up a framework in which the emperor is beholden to the church. The *Actus Silvestri* became an important text within the medieval Roman church and was officially consecrated by Pope Hadrian I in the last quarter of the eighth century. Not only was the text widely read and disseminated, it formed the basis of the most-famous medieval papal forgery, *The Donation of Constantine*.

Around the time that the *Actus* was officially consecrated by the church, references to a "gift" supposedly given by Constantine to Sylvester began to appear in church rhetoric. In a 788 letter to Charlemagne, Pope Hadrian I alluded to the gift, characterizing it as a "transfer of power;"

> And just as during the time of blessed Pope Sylvester the church of Rome was elevated and exalted by the most pious, great emperor Constantine of holy memory through his liberality and transfer of power over the western regions, thus in your most blessed time and ours may the church spring up, exalt, and continue ever more fully to be exalted so that everyone who hears these things may loudly proclaim, 'Give victory to the king, O Lord, and answer us when we call.' Indeed here this day a new most Christian emperor Constantine (*novus christianissimus Dei Constantinus imperator*) has arisen, through whom God has thought worthy to bestow everything on the holy church of Peter, prince of the apostles.[309]

The goal of Hadrian's appeal to Charlemagne was twofold: he hoped to flatter the king of the Franks by calling him a "new Constantine" (*novus… Constantinius*), while also reminding

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[309] *Et sicut temporibus beati Silvestri Romani pontificis a sanctae recordationis piissimo Contantino, magno imperatore, per eius largitatem sancta Dei catholica et apostolica Romana ecclesia elevata atque exaltata est et potestatem in his Hesperiae partibus largiri dignatus, ita et in his vestris felicissimis temporibus atque nostris sancta Dei ecclesia, id est beati Petri apostoli, germinet atque exultet et amplius quam amplius exaltata permaneat, ut omnes gentes, quae hec audierint, edicere valeant: 'Domine, salvum fac regem, et exaudi nos in die, in qua invocaverimus te'* [Psalm 19:10];*quia ecce novus christianissimus Dei Constantinus imperator his temporibus surrexit, per quem omnia Deus sanctae suae ecclesiae beati apostolorum principis Petri largiri dignatus est. Codex Carolinus*, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, in *MGH Epp. III* (Berlin 1892), no. 60, pg. 585-587; P.D. King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Lambrigg, Kendal, Cumbria, 1987), 287 (English translation).

Charlemagne that he, like Constantine, was obliged to defer to the ruling authority of the papacy over its own lands.[310] Here, once again, the papacy is seen to invoke precedence based on an episode from the lives of Sylvester and Constantine that does not appear in the historical record. In this case, it is Constantine's "gift" to Sylvester, which was the transfer of ruling power over the western Roman empire to the papacy and Roman church. This transfer, which came to be known as the "Donation of Constantine," is a continuation of the narrative events of the *Actus Silvestri*, and the basis of a forged papal decree of the same name.

As a document, *The Donation of Constantine* purports to be a fourth-century edict issued by the emperor Constantine. Addressed to Pope Sylvester, the edict praises Sylvester and credits his singular, mediating influence for Constantine's conversion to Christianity and his attainment of "the perfect faith of Christians, which is the true light and ever-lasting life."[311] The text stresses Sylvester's role as "universal pontiff,' and exhorts others to take part in the baptismal rite so that they can join in the true faith that Sylvester proclaims.[312] Citing liberally from the *Actus*, the edict details the story of Constantine's leprosy and visitation by Saints Peter and Paul. Constantine recounts his miraculous healing at the hand of Sylvester, which he explains is the impetus behind the extraordinary powers and privileges he now grants the pope. His decree to Sylvester reads,

> We have deemed it expedient, in company with all our satraps and the whole senate, of my nobles also, and furthermore the whole Roman populace which is subject to our imperial glory, that just as Saint Peter is seen to have been established as the viceregent

[310] Judson Emerick, "Charlemagne, a new Constantine?" in *The Life and Legacy of Constantine*, ed. Shane M. Bjornlie (New York: Routledge, 2017), 133-134.

[311] Mark Edwards, trans., "The Edict of Constantine to Pope Silvester" (*Donation of Constantine*), in *Constantine and Christendom* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 95.

[312] Ibid., 99.

> of the Son of God on earth, so the pontiffs also who are viceregents to this chief of apostles, should receive by a grant from us and our dominion a power of primacy greater than the mildness of our imperial Serenity is seen to possess on earth; thus we choose this same chief and his viceregents to be our steadfast advocates with God. And, as is the case with our imperial power on earth, so we have decreed that his sacred church in Rome is to be honoured with reverence, and that to a greater degree than our dominion and earthly throne the most sacred chair of the blessed Peter is to be exalted in glory; thus we assign to him power and glory, imperial in dignity, strength and honor.[313]

Through the edict, Constantine bestowed upon the office of Sylvester and his successors the right and ability to rule with the powers of the imperial office. By specifying that the "sacred chair of the blessed Peter" was to be given reverence "to a greater degree" than the "earthly [imperial] throne," the *Donation* placed the authority of the pope over that of the emperor. This inversion represented a radical expansion of the normal scope of the papal office, signaling that the pope should receive primacy above the emperor on the basis of his *Christian* spiritual dominion.

Beyond the expansion of its ruling powers, the Roman bishopric was also granted "primacy above the four pre-eminent sees of Antioch, Alexandra, Constantinople, and Jerusalem."[314] This primacy meant that where matters of the church and its doctrine were concerned, the bishop of Rome had the final authority over the eastern sees. Sylvester and his

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[313] Mark Edwards, trans., "The Edict of Constantine to Pope Silvester," 105-106. *Et dum haec praedicante beato Silvestrio agnoscerem et beneficiis ipsius beati Petri integre me sanitati comperi restitutum, utile iudicavimus una cum omnibus nostris satrapibus et universo senatu, optimatibus etiam et cuncto populo Romano, gloriae imperii nostri subiacenti, ut, sicut in terris vicarius filii dei esse videtur constitutus, etiam et pontifices, qui ipsius principis apostolorum gerunt vices, principatus potestatem amplius, quam terrena imperialis nostrae serenitatis mansuetudo habere videtur concessam, a nobis nostroque imperio obtineant; eligentes nobis ipsum principem apostolorum vel eius vicarios firmos apud deum adesse patronos. Et sicut nostra est terrena imperialis potentia, eius sacrosanctam Romanam ecclesiam decrevimus veneranter honorare et amplius, quam nostrum imperium et terrenum thronum sedem sacratissimam beati Petri gloriose exaltari, tribuentes ei potestatem et gloriae dignitatem atque vigorem et honorificentiam imperialem.*

[314] Mark Edwards, trans., "The Edict of Constantine to Pope Silvester," 106.

successors were furthermore allowed use of the ruling implements and regalia of the Roman emperor. These symbolic attributes included,

> the diadem, that is the crown of our head, and the Phyrgian cap, that is the mitre, not omitting the shoulder piece, that is the collar which is wont to surround the imperial neck: and furthermore the purple mantle (*chlamys*) and russet tunic (*tunica*), and all the imperial vestments… [and] also the imperial scepters, together with all the insignia, the banners also and the divers imperial ornaments, the whole pageantry of the imperial eminence and the glory of our power.[315]

While the *Donation* does not specifically mention porphyry, it does list the Lateran and Lateran baptistery as a part of the universal pontiff's inheritance. As porphyry was used liberally in the Lateran complex, papal inheritance of the marble would follow. Moreover, the granting of the "divers imperial ornaments," and "whole pageantry of the imperial eminence and the glory of [imperial] power," may also be interpreted as Constantine granting the papacy with access to imperial symbols and privileges such as thrones, porphyry burials, court ceremonial, and coronation powers. As the following pages will demonstrate, these inherited privileges would go on to become cornerstones of papal ceremony and identity from the ninth through twelfth centuries.

The powers and privileges granted by the *Donation of Constantine* were freely enjoyed by the papacy despite the absence of any legal or historical basis to support their expression. There is no agreement as to when or by whom the edict was composed, but the consensus is that the forgery appeared sometime between 750 and 800.[316] One likely possibility is that the edict

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[315] Ibid., 109-110. *…deinde diademam videlicet coronam capitis nostri simulque frygium nec non et superhumerale, videlicet lorum, qui imperiale circumdare assolet collum, verum etiam et clamidem purpuream atque tunicam coccineam et omnia imperialia indumenta seu et dignitatem imperialium praesidentium equitum, conferentes etiam et imperialia sceptra simulque et conta atque signa, banda etiam et diversa ornamenta imperialia et omnem processionem imperialis culminis et gloriam potestatis nostrae.*

[316] Thomas F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 135-136; *Constitutum Constantini*, ed.

was conceived of during the reign of Pope Stephen II (r. 752-757), in connection to the negotiations of the so-called "Donation of Pepin." Brokered between Stephen and Pepin the younger, the "Donation" was a treaty that led to the formation of the Papal States, which were to be ruled under the temporal authority of the Pope.[317]

That the *Donation* is a forgery, and not an authentic fourth-century document, became clear in the mid fifteenth century through the investigations of humanists and church reformers. In 1433, the German theologian and philosopher, Nicholas of Cusa, questioned the validity of the edict in his treatise, "On Catholic Concordance" (*De concordantia catholica*).[318] In 1440, through a philological study of its text, humanist Lorenzo Valla demonstrated that the *Donation* could not be an authentic work of the fourth century, but was more likely composed in the eighth.[319] Whatever the true circumstances regarding the origin of the *Donation* may be, it is clear that through its forgery the popes sought to emphasize their "orthodoxy" in matters of doctrine, and expand their temporal power by drawing upon the already fictive relationship between Sylvester and Constantine. At a basic level, the invented Sylvester-Constantine dynamic

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Horst Fuhrman, MGH, *fonts iuris germanici antique* (Hannover, 1968); Johannes Fried, and Wolfram Brandes, *Donation of Constantine and Constitutum Constantini*. Vol. 3. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2007); For a historiographical summary of the arguments concerning the date of the *Donation* see: Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter*, 135, no. 173.

[317] Thomas F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter.*, 93-94; Peter Partner, *The Lands of St. Peter; the Papal State in the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 18-19.

[318] The treatise proposed a revised model of church hierarchy in which generals councils would have primacy over the singular authority of the pope. Nicholas of Cusa, *The Catholic Concordance*, ed. Paul E. Sigmund (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[319] Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine* ed. G.W. Bowersock (Cambridge, MA: I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press, 2007).

was an important tool for the church because it projected onto the historical past a model for a Constantine-sanctioned relationship between Christian emperor and priest.

Papal cultivation of the Sylvester-Constantine legend found its visual analogue through the usage of porphyry rotae within ecclesiastical spaces. In order to appreciate the connection between porphyry and the assertion of papal power, one must consider what was granted to the papacy through the *Donation of Constantine*. Papal use of porphyry then can be seen as a fulfillment of the powers and privileges conferred upon Sylvester by the *Donation*. As porphyry was the exclusive prerogative of the Roman emperor, its use by the papacy was a logical extension of Constantine's gift to the pope. While porphyry was incorporated into Roman ecclesiastical foundations from the fourth-century onwards, it is important to note that the marble is mentioned only selectively in the *Liber Pontificalis*. It appears throughout the *vita* of Sylvester in connection with Constantine's Roman ecclesiastical foundations, and again in the fifth-century *vitae* of Sixtus III and Hilarius. While one imagines that porphyry was used at least occasionally by the papacy after the fifth century, the marble is not mentioned again until the turn of the ninth century and the reign of Leo III. There are several possible explanations for this lacuna.[320] The absence of porphyry from the *vitae* could be attributed to a relative slowing of papal building during the period. It is also possible, however, that references to porphyry in the text are a literary device on the part of biographers, or a result of symbolically motivated building projects.

It should not be seen as coincidental that specific mentions of porphyry appear in the *Liber Pontificalis* contemporaneously to the advent of the Sylvester-Constantine legend in the *Actus Silvestri* and its reprise in the *Donation of Constantine*. In both instances, the legend and

[320] Sible de Blaauw, "Papst und Porphyr," 39.

papal use of porphyry were invoked at a time when the papacy saw its dominance over Rome and the Italian peninsula come under threat by the rise of the Ostragoths and the Carolingians. As Rosamond McKitterick has recently put forward, the *Liber Pontificalis* was an "adaptation" of the imperial tradition of serial biography, in the style of Suetonius and the like.[321] The text, for Mckitterick, implied "that the popes were the successors to the emperors as the rulers of Rome; and it offered an alternative and Christian history of Rome."[322] Within this convention, the *vitae* would have functioned as a sort of literary propaganda that exalted the imperial features of the papal office. Mentions of porphyry in the *Liber Pontificalis* can be read as a strategic device meant to liken the pope to Constantine and the tradition of Roman imperial use of the marble.

Alternatively, the papal revival of porphyry in the ninth and twelfth centuries may also have been a form of religio-political propaganda. The propagandistic function of porphyry when used by the papacy is clear through the example of porphyry rotae. Beginning in the ninth century, the porphyry rota emerged as a symbol of papal privilege and dominion. Papal interest in the rotae can be divided into two phases: an initial revival in the ninth century, and a subsequent flourishing in the twelfth. During the ninth century, porphyry rotae were present but infrequent; their popularity grew during the second phase when they were used extensively as a part of cosmatesque pavements. Like citations of the Sylvester-Constantine legend, porphyry rotae show up during moments in history in which the papacy sought to assert its authority and control over Rome in the face rival secular rulers. Through an analysis of the use of porphyry rotae in the ninth and twelfth centuries, this chapter will propose a reinterpretation of the familiar

[321] Rosamond McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber Pontificalis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 10.

[322] Ibid.

motif, arguing that porphyry rotae were explicitly connected to the idea that the pope was both the religious as well as secular ruler of Rome, and the efforts of the papacy to stake its claim as the heir to Constantine.

Porphyry between "New" and Old Rome

The rise of Charlemagne and the Carolingian empire marked a turning point for the exercise of papal authority on the Italian peninsula. At a time when Rome needed protection from the Lombards, the papacy entered into a complicated alliance with the Franks. When Charlemagne defeated the Lombards in the siege of Pavia in 744, he became ruler of their former kingdom. Perhaps as a result of his entry onto the Italian peninsula and his grand imperial ambitions, Charlemagne began a program of spoliation of Roman imperial antiquities. Epistolary sources indicate that during the late eighth and early ninth centuries, spoliated materials flowed from the Italian peninsula to Charlemagne's capital in Aachen. In a letter dated to the year 787, Pope Hadrian I wrote to Charlemagne, in response to the Frankish ruler's request for antique materials to be sent from Ravenna to Aachen. The letter reads,

> in which it was mentioned that we should assign (*tribuissemus*) to you mosaics and marbles with other items situated on both the floor and on the walls in the palace of the city of Ravenna… We have, with very great love of Your Excellence, given effect to this assignment and we have conceded (*concedimus*) that the mosaics and marbles and other must be taken away (*abstollendum*) from that palace, because the church of your patron, St. Peter, … benefits every day from your many and good and laborious royal efforts…[323]

[323] *Codex Carolinus* no. 81. A.T Hack, *Codex Carolinus: Päpstliche Epistolographie im 8 Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 2006-7); *Codex Epistolaris Carolinus: letters from the popes to the Frankish rulers, 739-791,* ed. Rosamund McKitterick, Dorine van Espelo, Richard Pollard, and Richard Price (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021). English translation: Jinty Nelson, "Charlemagne and Ravenna," in *Ravenna,* ed. Judith Herrin and Jinty Nelson (London: University of London Press, 2017), 248. *Praefulgidos atque nectareos regalis potentiae vestrae per Arvinum ducem suscepimus apices, in quibus referebatur, quod Palatii Ravennatis civitatis musiva, atque marmora, caeteraque exempla tam in strato, quamque in parietibus sita, vobis tribueremus; Nos quippe libenti animo & puro corde, cum nimio amore*

Drawing attention to Hadrian's choice of verbiage, Jinty Nelson observed that the pope's use of verbs like *tribuere, concedere* and *abstollere* communicate his hesitance to fulfil the request.[324] The overall tone of his message suggests that Hadrian capitulated to Charlemagne's order to send Italian antiquities to Aachen only under some degree of compulsion and duress.

Hadrian's letter provides a look into the machinations behind Charlemagne's spoliation of Ravenna. It is well-known that many of the materials used in Charlemagne's Palatine complex came from the ruins of the exarchate palace in Ravenna. Built during the reign of Theodoric, the palace later served as base for Constantinopolitan exarchs until in came under Lombard control in 751.[325] Two decades later, in 774, Charlemagne removed the Lombard king Desiderius from his residence at the palace, taking him as a hostage. Charlemagne did not take up residence in the Ravennate palace but rather, as Hadrian's letter reveals, requested permission from the papacy to transport its marbles and mosaics to his palace complex in Aachen. Today, in the Palatine Chapel at Aachen, examples of this spoliation are visible in the form of columns and other marble plaques.[326] (Fig. 59) Famously, Charlemagne is also known to have taken the equestrian statue of

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vestrae Excellentiae, tribuimus effectum, & tam Marmora, quamque mosivum, caeteraque exempla de eodem palatio vobis concedimus auferenda, quia per vestra laboriosa regalia certamina, multis bonis fautoris vestri B. Petri clavigeri regni coelorum, Ecclesia cotidie fruitur, quatenus merces vestra copiosa adscribatur in coelis.

[324] Nelson, "Charlemagne and Ravenna," 248-49.

[325] Judith Herrin, "The Imperial Palace of Ravenna," in *The Emperor's House*, ed. Michael Featherstone, Jean-Michel Spieser, et al (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 53-62; Andrea Augenti, "The Palace of Theodoric at Ravenna: A New Analysis of the Complex," *Late Antique Archaeology* 3.2 (2006): 425-453; Salvatore Cosentino, "Ravenna from imperial residence to episcopal city: processes of centrality across empires," *Rechtsgeschichte/Legal History* 23 (2015): 54-67.

[326] Dale Kinney, "Roman Architectural Spolia," *Proceedings of the American Philosphical Society* 145.2 (2001): 147-150; Werner Jacobsen, "Spolien in der karolingischen Architektur," in *Antike Spolien in der Architektur des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, ed. Joachim Poeschke

Theodoric from Ravenna to Aachen, where he placed the gilded statue atop a column within his palace complex.[327] The motivation behind Charlemagne's preoccupation with the city of Ravenna has been explained in a myriad of ways. Beat Brenk argued that perhaps the Frankish ruler wanted to imitate Theodoric.[328] It is possible that through the example of Theodoric, Charlemagne saw an analogue for his own conquest and rule of the Italian peninsula. One must also consider the historical and symbolic significance of Ravenna, as a one-time capital of the Roman empire and a city of great strategic importance from the time of Julius Caesar. If Charlemagne, as many have argued, saw himself as a new Constantine and founder of a new Rome, Ravenna was a font for his ambitions.[329]

The idea that Charlemagne had founded a new Rome in Aachen was a popular motif in Carolingian poetry. The court poet Moduin lauded the king's accomplishments in his *Egloga*;

> My palaemon [Charlemagne] looks out from the lofty citadel of the new Rome
> and sees all the kingdoms forged into an empire through his victories.
> Our times are transformed into the civilization of Antiquity.
> Golden Rome is reborn and restored anew to the world![330]

(München: Hirmer, 1996), 155-168; D.P.S. Peacock, "Charlemagne's black stones: the re-use of Roman columns in early medieval Europe" *Antiquity* 71 (1997): 709-715.

[327] Agnellus of Ravenna, *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*, trans. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 78-79, c. 94; H. Hoffman, "Die aachener Theodorichstatue," in *Das erste Jahrtausend* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1964), 318-33.

[328] Beat Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology," *DOP* 41 (1987): 108-9.

[329] Judson Emerick, "Charlemagne, a new Constantine?" 133-154.

[330] *MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini I*, 385-6. English trans: Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), no. 24. *Prospicit alta novae Romae meus arce Palemon/ Cuncta suo imperio consistere regna triumph/ Rursus in antiquos mutataque secula mores/ Aurea Roma iterum renovate renascitur orbi.*

Moduin's verse praises not only Charlemagne, but also the splendor of his capital. Aachen is seen as a reincarnation of antique Rome, and Charlemagne its Augustus.

In the 840s, the poet Florus of Lyons reflected on Charlemagne's glories, and his assumption of the imperial title from the pope in Rome.[331] Lamenting the lost splendor of the Carolingian empire, he wrote,

> And so the Frankish race became celebrated throughout the world…
> Even the race of Romulus yielded before this people
> and Rome, fine mother of kingdoms, gave place;
> there the prince of this realm was crowned
> by the gift of the pope, relying on Christ's protection...[332]

Here, Florus emphasizes the role of pope in "gifting" (*munere*) Charlemagne the right to rule Rome. The statement reads almost as an inversion of the *Donation*, but is also an implicit acknowledgement of the pope's dominion and ruling authority over Rome. While it may have appeared to the Carolingians that Charlemagne had full dominion over Rome and the Italian peninsula, his efforts were not without opposition from the church.

During the Carolingian period, the papacy did not cease to exert its symbolic or political hold over Rome. As Hadrian's letter to Charlemagne demonstrates, even in the wake of the Carolingian conquest the papacy retained some degree of autonomy over local affairs and what materials could be sent to Francia. As far as porphyry was concerned, the relative paucity of the

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[331] Florus of Lyons, *Querela*; Latin edition and English trans: Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, no. 40.

[332] Florus of Lyons, *Querela*, 25-28. *Claruit hinc nimium toto gens Francica mundo/ Famaque virtutum fines penetravit ad imos/ Legatos hinc inde suos procul extera regna/ Barbara, Graeca, simul Latium misere tribunal/ Huic etenim cessit etiam gens Romula genti/ Regnorumque simul mater Roma inclita cessit/ Huius ibi princeps regni diademata sumpsit/ Munere apostolico, Christi munimine fretus.*

marble in Aachen suggests that if it was imported from Ravenna it did not arrive in any significant quantity. Renovation and restoration campaigns over the years have obscured the original appearance of the Palatine Chapel, but there is no evidence to suggest that porphyry was a major component of its Carolingian phase. The upper stories of the chapel feature spoliated columns that are described by scholars as made from "black porphyry," but these should not be confused with red imperial porphyry (*porfido rosso imperiale*).[333] At least some porphyry was likely present in the Carolingian foundation, and can be seen on the second story of the building, where triangular porphyry plaques make up a portion of the polychrome opus sectile pavement that surrounds the throne of Charlemagne. (Fig. 60) The pavement is purported to be original, and its privileged location next to the throne supports the idea that porphyry was a scarce but precious element of the original construction.[334] The idea that the Carolingians sought to acquire porphyry from Rome and Ravenna is further supported by an episode from Agnellus of Ravenna's *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*.

In his telling of the *vita* of the Ravennate bishop Maurus (r. 642-71), the ninth-century historian Agnellus of Ravenna recounted the bishop's death and the appearance of his grave;

> There was a porphyry stone before the said sarcophagus, most precious and very shiny like glass… But almost twelve years ago, in the time of Bishop Petronax, the Emperor Lothar ordered it to be removed, and he enclosed it in a wooden chest on wool and carried it off to France, and places it on the altar of St. Sebastian, as if it were a table. It was commanded me by the bishop, that I go there, lest the workmen should act carelessly and break it; but since my heart was full of grief I withdrew to a different place.[335]

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[333] David Peacock, "Charlemagne's Black Stones: The Re-Use of Roman Columns in Early Medieval Europe," *Antiquity* 71 (1997): 709–15.

[334] On Charlemagne's throne and original pavement see: Allan Doig, "Building, Enacting and Embodying Romanitas: The Throne of Charlemagne," *Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art* 5 (2015): 379.

[335] Agnellus of Ravenna, *The Book of the Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*, ed. Deborah Deliyannis (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), c. 113. *Ibi fuit lapis*

The passage conveys the distaste expressed by Ravenna's establishment at the thought of a prized piece of porphyry entering Frankish hands. Moreover, Agnellus' account is evidence of the idea that the Carolingians tried to acquire porphyry from Ravenna but were met with some degree of pushback. This dynamic could account for the scarcity of porphyry at Aachen, and also provide evidence of the renewed papal interest in the stone that took place in ninth-century Rome.

I contend that ninth-century papal patronage of porphyry can be read as a response to Carolingian spoliation of Rome and Ravenna and Charlemagne's pretensions of Roman imperial renewal. Within this context, papal use of porphyry represented an attempt by the papacy to assert its exclusive inheritance of the marble and the material and symbolic language of imperial Rome. As the Carolingians declared the establishment of a new Rome, and proclaimed Charlemagne the new Constantine, the papacy responded by reiterating its own competing claims. Through measures like the *Donation of Constantine* and reignited interest in porphyry, the papacy mounted a defense of its continued religious and political authority over Rome. One way in which this occurred was through the use of porphyry and porphyry rotae in ecclesiastical architecture. The rotae emphasized the papacy's dual Constantinian and Petrine lineage through the recitation of a motif that bridged the secular and religious dimensions of papal authority.

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pirfireticus ante praedictam arcam, preciosissimus et valde lucidissimus in modum vitri. Et apertis ianuis, quae respiciunt ad ecclesiam beati Severi, intuisset quis illum lapidem, sicut in speculum tam homines quamque animalia sive volatilia vel qualiscunque res inde transissent, enigma quasi [in] speculum videri potuisset. Sed pene annos, tempore Petronacis pontificis Lotharius augustus tollere iussit, et in capsam ligneam super lanam inclausit et Franciam deportavit et super altarium sancti Sebastiani, mensam ut esset, posuit bis Praeceptum mihi a pontifice fuit, ut ego illuc issem, ne caementarii incaute agerent, frangeretur; sed corde dolore pleno in partem aliam secessi.

Porphyry Rotae in Ninth-Century Rome

In the same moment as porphyry made its reappearance in the*vitae* of the *Liber Pontificalis*, porphyry rotae began to appear in the pavements of Roman churches. As has already been discussed, there is some uncertainty as to whether the Vatican *rota porphyretica* was a part of the church's original Constantinian program, or installed by Leo III in connection to the coronation of Charlemagne.[336] Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the turn of the ninth century marked the emergence of a period of increased papal interest in porphyry and porphyry rotae. Destruction, restoration and rebuilding campaigns over the past millennium have made it difficult to perceive the full extent to which rotae were employed in the ninth century. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify at least two Roman churches thought to have featured porphyry rotae during the period: San Giorgio in Velabro and Santa Prassede. Though more churches likely belonged to this cohort, only two can be identified at present.[337]

Paschal's pontificate is distinguished by the pope's extensive program of building and Roman urban renewal. Of special interest to Paschal were Rome's early Christian churches, many of which had become badly dilapidated by the ninth century.[338] His renovation of the basilica of Santa Prassede on the Esquiline hill included the addition of a chapel that held the relics of San Zeno.[339] Inside the small cruciform chapel, before the altar there is a polychrome

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[336] See: pgs. 105-7.

[337] Charles McClendon, "The Revival of Opus Sectile Pavements in Rome and the Vicinity in the Carolingian Period," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 48 (1980): 160.

[338] Caroline J. Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[339] Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I,* 160-172; Gillian Mackie, "The Zeno Chapel: a prayer for salvation," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989): 172-199; Bruno M. Apollonj-

opus sectile pavement featuring a large central porphyry rota. (Fig. 61) The rota measures 1.55 m in diameter and is surrounded by a field of *opus tessellatum* squares made from spoliated porphyry, serpentine, pavonazetto and giallo antico marble.[340] Other portions of the pavement are filled with pieces of white marble spoliated from antique funerary sites.[341] The walls and ceilings of the chapel preserve an almost fully intact ninth-century program of figural, vegetal, geometric and Christological designs.[342]

Through its function, mosaics and spoliated materials, San Zeno calls to mind early Christian chapels from the imperial cities of Ravenna and Milan. With its mosaic decoration and "Roman" materials the chapel recalls early Christian structures like the mausoleum of Gala Placidia and Archiepiscopal chapel in Ravenna, or the chapel of Sant'Aquilino in Milan. Through its resemblance to these early Christian spaces, Paschal's chapel is akin to Charlemagne's Aachen Cathedral which drew upon similar models and late Roman imperial aesthetics. San Zeno served as a funerary chapel for Paschal's mother Theodora, giving the space a familial dynastic function within the larger context of Paschal's reign. A dedicatory inscription found in the church describes Paschal's dedication of the basilica and cites the San Zeno chapel

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Ghetti, *Santa Prassede* (Roma: Marietti, 1961); Anna Maria Affanni, *La chiesa di Santa Prassede: las storia, il rilievo, il restauro* (Vitterbo: BetaGamma, 2006).

[340] Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I,* 161; McClendon, "The Revival of Opus Sectile Pavements," 157.

[341] Some of the stones bear inscriptions and funerary epitaphs, however Goodson maintains that these funerary inscriptions are unrelated to the funerary function of the space. See: Goodson, Ibid., 163, no. 6.

[342] Gillian Mackie, "Abstract and vegetal design in the San Zeno chapel, Rome: The ornamental setting of an early medieval funerary programme," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 63 (1995): 159-182.

as the place "where truly the body of [Paschal's] benign mother, Mistress Theodora Episcopa, rests."[343] Caroline Goodson argues that the title "Episcopa" is here an honorific that denoted Theodora's relation to Paschal. She explains that although it was uncommon for bishops to bury members of their family alongside relics of saints, the practice had an early Christian precedent dating back to Bishop Ambrose of Milan (d. 397).[344] A mosaic depiction of Theodora is set into the chapel's northern niche where she appears alongside the Virgin and Saints Prassede and Pudenziana. (Fig. 62) Instead of a round nimbus against a gold ground, Theodora's portrait features a blue square nimbus.[345] Through the blue nimbus Theodora is visually linked to her son Paschal, who also appears nimbed in blue in the apse mosaic of the basilica. (Fig. 63) As a pope, Paschal did not obtain his power from familial inheritance or lineage, but rather through apostolic succession and Petrine lineage. By including his mother in the San Zeno chapel, Paschal emphasized his familial lineage in addition to his episcopal office. Moreover, his choice to honor his mother places Paschal and Theodora in conversation with another famous mother and son pair, Constantine and Helena.

As a space, San Zeno chapel is an assemblage of early Christian types, aesthetics and materials. Within this setting, Paschal's porphyry rota can be read as a response to the sudden Carolingian interest in Roman imperial spolia and antiquities. By reviving the Constantinian

[343] Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I,* 166, 228-231. The inscription is carved into a stele of pavonazetto marble, and since at least 1450 has been affixed to the northernmost diaphragm arch of the basilica, facing the presbytery.

[344] Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I,* 170.

[345] John Osborne has argued that in medieval Rome, the square nimbus signaled that the nimbed representation was a portrait likeness of a more or less contemporary individual. See: John Osborne, "The portrait of Pope Leo IV in San Clemente, Rome," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 47 (1979): 58-65.

motif, Paschal asserted his papal privilege and inherited legitimacy. While the Carolingians could compel the church to send them objects and materials from Ravenna, the papacy had the ultimate authority over Rome and ready access to its supply of porphyry. The San Zeno rota was symbolically tied to the Vatican *rota porphyretica* and its Constantinian origins, as well as its renewed significance as the site of Leo III's coronation of Charlemagne. Paschal's patronage of porphyry was not exclusive to the San Zeno chapel. Through his *vita* in the *Liber Pontificalis*, at least one other project involving porphyry can be attributed to Paschal's pontificate. According to the *vita*, Paschal installed a screen of "purple columns" in the cathedra of Santa Maria Maggiore as a part of his renovations of the basilica, as well as a polychrome pavement within the apse.[346]

The disc in San Zeno chapel is not the only surviving ninth-century porphyry rota. Located in the Roman *velabrum* near the left bank of the Tiber, the basilica of San Giorgio in Velabro also features the remains of a ninth-century rota in its apse. (Fig. 64) The rota, like the San Zeno example, is set into a square ground of *opus tessellatum* squares of serpentine, porphyry, white and yellow marble.[347] The 80 cm rota is centered on axis with the apse, and set into the pavement of the hemispherical recess between the altar and cathedra. It is flanked by two white marble rotae, equal in size, and also set into a polychrome *opus tessellatum* ground.[348] The rotae and the apsidal pavement date to Pope Gregory IV's (r. 827-844) remodeling of San

[346] Raymond Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes* (*Liber Pontificalis*) (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), no. 100: 30-36.

[347] The rota and its field are damaged. It is difficult to discern how the present arrangement and variety of *opus tessellatum* square relates to the original composition.

[348] At present the white rotae are fractured and irregular and may not reflect the original program.

Giorgio which, according to the *Liber Pontificalis,* included renovation of the apse.[349] In nearby Santa Maria in Cosmedin similar *opus tessellatum* pavements and rotae have been dated by Charles McClendon to the late eighth or early ninth century, but there is not enough documentation to evaluate the attribution.[350]

The abbey church at Farfa is an additional site of interest for the discussion of ninth-century rotae and *opus tessellatum* pavements. Located 50 km northeast of Rome, Farfa was a site of great monastic power and influence. During the eighth and ninth centuries the strategically located monastery was often at the center of complicated relations between the papacy, Lombards and Carolingians.[351] The modern abbey church was built in the late fifteenth century on the site of the medieval basilica, but is rotated ninety degrees from the original foundation.[352] A ninth-century polychrome *opus tessellatum* pavement with a grey stone rota is visible today in the transept of the church. (Fig. 65) While the pavement is now parallel to the transept and its rota off-center from the altar, it was originally on axis with the medieval altar and nave. Unlike the roughly contemporary San Giorgio and San Zeno rotae, the Farfa rota is made from a disc of dark stone instead of porphyry. Keeping in mind that the abbey pavement was the product of monastic rather than papal patronage, it makes sense that its rota could not have been made using the imperial purple stone. Absent other contemporary examples of monastic or

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[349] McClendon, "The Revival of Opus Sectile Pavements," 158; Raymond Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, n. 103:14.

[350] See: McClendon, Ibid., 157-58, pl. XXXb.

[351] On Farfa between the papacy, Lombards and Carolingians see: Marios Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy: Local Society, Italian Politics and the Abbey of Farfa c. 700-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 281-349.

[352] Charles B. McClendon, *The Imperial Abbey of Farfa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 27-28.

secular rotae, the Farfa rota is of limited interpretive value. Its existence is striking nonetheless, as it supports the idea that porphyry rotae had special symbolic and ritual significance for the papacy.

The papacy in the twelfth century

If during the ninth century, porphyry rota were remade as a symbol of papal power and authority, the twelfth century marked their symbolic apex for the papacy. Witness to schism, ecclesiastical controversies and secular threats to their power, the twelfth century represented a period of transformation for the papacy. The time between the last quarter of the eleventh century and the closing of the twelfth has been characterized as a period of papal reform. Beginning with Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085), who in 1075 became embroiled in an "investiture" controversy with emperor Henry IV, the papacy struggled against secular heads of state for the power and autonomy to name its own bishops.[353] In his famous *Dictatus papae*, Gregory affirmed the position of the pope as the highest authority within the church, and proposed an expanded conception of papal authority over secular rulers.[354] Among other privileges, the *Dictatus* declared that the papacy alone had the right to use imperial insignia and had the power to depose emperors. Schism and controversy continued into the twelfth century as the papacy fought to defend its autonomy against European rulers and noble Roman families who persisted

[353] Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

[354] "The Dictates of the Pope" (*Dictatus papae*), *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, trans. Ernest F. Henderson (London: George Bell and Sons, 1910), 366-367.

in naming their own bishops and even popes.[355] The investiture contest came to an end in 1122 with the Concordat of Worms, when Pope Calixtus II conceded that the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V had the power to invest bishops with *secular* authority, while maintaining that *sacred* authority belonged to the church.[356] During the first half of the twelfth century the Roman see dealt with schism and reform, while to the south the power and influence of the Normans grew.[357] The rise of Roger II as king of Sicily posed not only a threat to the papacy's secular authority within the patrimony of St. Peter, but also its symbolic monopoly on porphyry. For the twelfth-century church, porphyry became a centerpiece of papal patronage and imperialization.

Cosmatesque Churches

In twelfth-century Rome, the space of the basilica was the primary venue for papal display and ceremonial use of porphyry. Arguably the most important development of the period as far as porphyry is concerned, was the advent of the so-called "cosmatesque" church. Characterized by their intricate polychrome *opus sectile* pavements, the churches are named for the Cosmati family of marble workers who were responsible for their design.[358] The typical cosmatesque church featured a nave pavement made up of complex designs using inlaid pieces of serpentine, porphyry, white and *giallo antico* marble. (Fig. 66) Central to the design of the

[355] I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy: 1073-1198* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 33-56.

[356] "The Concordat of Worms," *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, 408-409; I.S. Robinson, Ibid., 437-441.

[357] I.S. Robinson, Ibid., 367-397.

[358] Dorothy Glass, "Papal Patronage in the Early Twelfth Century: Notes on the Iconography of Cosmatesque Pavements," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 386.

pavements is a longitudinal axis of porphyry rotae extending from a church's narthex to its altar. Individual rotae are surrounded by interlacing bands of polychrome *opus sectile* patterns set within white marble borders. By combining porphyry rotae with *opus sectile* bands, the cosmatesque pavement presents a more compositionally complex iteration of the ninth-century rota with *opus tessalatum* ground. Within the space of the church, the interlocking rotae form a path of porphyry towards the privileged zone of the altar and presbytery. Cosmatesque pavements were once found in more than sixty-five churches in Rome and central Italy and were the subject of detailed study by Dorothy Glass, and more recently Paloma Pajares-Ayuela.[359] As it is impossible to do justice to such a large corpus of material, this chapter will narrow its focus to two Roman churches: Santi Quattro Coronati and Santa Maria in Trastevere. Theses basilicas and their cosmatesque ornament will be seen through the lens of their respective patrons, Popes Paschal II and Innocent II.

From the moment of his accession to the throne of St. Peter in 1099, Pope Pascal II brought the pomp and symbolism of the Roman emperor to his pontificate. According to his biographer, upon his election Paschal took up the imperial Roman insignia and was clothed by his electors in a royal purple mantle.[360] Paschal's emphasis on the secular dimension of his rule fueled the flames of the investiture contest that was taking place contemporaneously. From the moment of pope's election, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V attempted to extort recognition of his powers of investiture from Paschal until the two reached an agreement in February 1111.[361]

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[359] Dorothy Glass, "Papal Patronage in the Early Twelfth Century;" Dorothy Glass, *Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements* (Oxford: BAR, 1989); Paloma Pajares-Ayuela, *Cosmatesque Ornament* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

[360] Pandulf, *Vita Paschalis II*, in Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis 2de éd.* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1955), 296-310.

Per the "agreement" of Santa Maria in Turri, Henry would renounce his investiture claim in exchange for coronation by Paschal. In the end, however, the agreement never went into effect and although Henry was crowned by Paschal, the practice of lay investiture continued. Henry's coronation took place on April 13 in St. Peter's basilica, where the German king was crowned by Paschal atop the great *rota porphyretica*.[362] Mary Stroll has argued that the 1111 coronation was an important occasion within the history of medieval papal ceremonial, as it served as inspiration for the so-called "*ordo C*," a twelfth-century source detailing papal ritual for imperial coronations.

Beyond its documentary value as a source on papal ceremony, *ordo C* is significant because it provides a specific account of the use of the *rota porphyretica* in the coronation ceremony. In 1192, the papal *camerarius* Cencius compiled the *Liber Censuum*, a compendious text that includes two *ordines* on the topic of imperial coronation.[363] *Ordo C* is the longer of the two sources and, according to Stroll, represents a "carefully crafted delineation of a ceremony designed to shift the balance of papal and imperial dignity to the advantage of the pope."[364] Throughout its description of the coronation ceremony, the *ordo* emphasizes the emperor's subservience to the authority of the pope. Among other displays of deference, the emperor kisses

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[361] MGH, Constitutiones I, 137-138; I.S. Robinson, Ibid., 425.

[362] J.M. Watterich, *Pontificum Romanorum vitae ii* (Leipzig, 1862), 55; Andrieu, "La rota porphyretica," 198-199; Mary Stroll, *Symbols as Power: The Papacy Following the Investiture Contest* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 59-77.

[363] The is no consensus as to when the *ordines* were written. See: Stroll, Ibid., 46 no. 2. Louis Duhesne, *Le Liber censuum de l'Église romaine* (Paris: Fontemoing, Thorin, 1889); Reinhard Elze, *Die Ordines für die Weihe und Krönung des Kaisers und der Kaiserin* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1960).

[364] Stroll, Ibid., 47.

the feet of the pope,[365] and swears his filial loyalty to the church.[366] During the ceremony, the emperor and pope process down the nave of St. Peter's, stopping at the *rota porphyretica.*[367] The pope takes a seat to right of the rota, and the emperor to its left. After a series of questions and answers, the pope dresses in his pontifical garments while a bishop gives a prayer for the emperor from the center of the rota (*in medio rote*).[368] The climax of the ceremony occurs when the emperor and his wife are led to the center of the rota. Here, the pope bestows upon the emperor a ring symbolizing his holy faith and solidarity and a crown in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[369] Within the context of the coronation ritual, the *rota porphyretica* is the locus upon which secular and religious powers converge. It marks the site where, through the agency of the pope, the emperor is transformed into a son and protector of the church.

During the 1111 coronation of Henry V, the *rota porphyretica* functioned as a symbolic endorsement of the authority and inherited privileges of the pope, in the face of his concessions on the issue of investiture. On the heels of his humiliation by the emperor, Paschal's preeminence in the ceremony may have operated as a face-saving measure. The ability of the pope to "crown" the emperor follows directly from the relation established by the *Donation of Constantine*. Through the *Donation*, Constantine bestowed upon Sylvester "a power of primacy

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[365] "Tunc electus imperator cum coniuge et omnibus baronibus suis, clericis et laicis, osculatur peded domini pape." Elze, *Die Ordines*, 2.39-40.

[366] "Tunc surgens dominus papa ter quert ab eo, si velit esse filius ecclesie; et illo ter respondete: *Volo*, dominus papa dicit: *Et ego te recipio et filium ecclesie...*" Elze, Ibid., 7.21-23.

[367] Elze, *Die Ordines*, 11-12.

[368] Elze, *Ibid.*, 16.19.

[369] Elze, *Ibid.*.

greater than the [emperor] is seen to possess on earth."[370] Considering the fraudulence of the document, it is a testament to the powers of papal persuasion that such a coronation ceremony could even occur. The presence of porphyry in the coronation rite points to its status as a papal privilege and concomitant inheritance through the *Donation of Constantine*. As the possessor and inheritor of Constantine's *rota porphyretica*, Paschal could harness its dual religious and political symbolism towards his own ends.

The pope's interest in porphyry rotae was not limited to the 1111 coronation. To the contrary, porphyry and porphyry rotae were central motifs within Paschal's building activities and especially his renovation of the basilica of the Santi Quattro Coronati. In 1084, the Norman adventurer Robert Guiscard was called upon by Pope Gregory VII for aid in banishing the Holy Roman emperor Henry IV and his troops from Rome. Although the Norman forces were successful in pushing the Germans to retreat, they pillaged and burned the already beleaguered city, causing serious damage to the area between the Lateran and Colosseum.[371] Located within this stretch of land, Santi Quattro Coronati caught fire and portions of its apse and nave collapsed.[372] For roughly two decades the church lay in ruin until Paschal sponsored an effort to rebuild it. The renovated church was consecrated by Paschal on 20 January 1110, and featured an intricate cosmatesque pavement within its nave.[373] (Fig. 45) The pavement at Santi Quattro

[370] Edwards, trans., "The Edict of Constantine to Pope Silvester," 105-106.

[371] G.A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 194-233; Louis I. Hamilton, "Memory, Symbol and Arson: Was Rome "Sacked" in 1084?" *Speculum* 78.2 (2003): 378-399.

[372] Lia Barelli, *The Monumental Complex of Santi Quattro Coronati* (Roma: Viella, 2009), 17.

[373] Pandulf, *Vita Paschalis II*, 296.

Coronati consists of two dominant fields of cosmatesque ornament that are linked axially by a band of smaller rotae. Starting from the narthex, five polychrome rotae lead towards a central quatrefoil composition, where four smaller white roundels frame a large central porphyry rota. Following a band of four more white rotae, a rectangular field made up of three rows of three polychrome roundels abuts the high altar. The central row terminates with a porphyry rota and is shorter than the outer two, and seems to suggest that elements of the original twelfth-century liturgical furniture, such as a ciborium, have been lost.[374] While the composition of the altar pavement is unique to Santi Quattro Coronati, the quatrefoil configuration in the nave reflects the most commonly cited form in cosmatesque ornament.[375]

In her work on cosmatesque pavements, Dorothy Glass maintained that the quatrefoil motif, with its large central porphyry rota, was a direct reference to the investiture contest and ceremonial use of the Vatican rota during Pashcal's coronation of Henry V.[376] Although Paschal was certainly the figure most associated with the twelfth-century revival of the porphyry rota and the popularity of cosmatesque ornament in general, I argue that the quatrefoil had a more general, Constantinian and Sylvestrine significance. Glass' argument is immediately complicated by the fact that the consecration of Santi Quattro Coronati took place in January 1110, more than one year before Henry's April 1111 coronation. Assuming that the pavement was complete at the time of the church's consecration, this detail suggests that Paschal's interest in the symbolism and ceremonial potential of the porphyry rota predated the coronation rite. Furthermore, reading

[374] Glass, *Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements*, 276.

[375] Glass, "Papal Patronage in the Early Twelfth Century," 386.

[376] Glass, *Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements*, 126-127; Glass, "Papal Patronage in the Early Twelfth Century," 386-387.

the porphyry rota as specifically tied to eleventh and twelfth century investiture contests ignores the existence and tradition of rotae in ninth-century Rome. It is also essential to pay mind to the significance of the basilica of Santi Quattro Coronati as a locus for papal patronage and the developing symbolism of porphyry.

As shown in chapter three, from the time of its founding, Santi Quattro Coronati was associated with porphyry and special papal interest.[377] The setting and history of the basilica "activated" Paschal's quatrefoil rota by placing it in conversation with the crowned martyrs and the bishops who aided them. The story of the stonecutters, relayed by the *passio* may have resonated with Paschal as a parable on imperial overreach and folly. In the legend, the medium of porphyry is at the center of a collision between imperial abuse and Christian privilege. The fight between Diocletian and the stonecutters offers a parallel to the events of the investiture contest and Paschal's struggle against Henry IV and V. Like the righteous stonecutters who refused to defile the sanctity of porphyry by depicting Diocletian's pagan god, eleventh and twelfth century popes fought to deny the emperor the right to interfere in ecclesiastical self-determination. In this way, the *passio* provides a further layer of symbolism and meaning to Paschal's invocation of porphyry during the investiture contest. Porphyry is not merely a privilege inherited by the pope through the *Donation of Constantine*, it is imbued with un inalienable Christian character that is fundamentally at odds with imperial prerogative. In fact, associations between the *passio* and *Donation* came full circle in the mid-thirteenth century, when Cardinal Stefano Conti commissioned a chapel on the grounds of Santi Quattro Coronati featuring a cycle of frescos with scenes from the *Actus Silvestri.* Among these scenes is a depiction of the donation of Constantine. (Fig. 47)

[377] See: pgs. 91-5.

Twelfth century papal interest in cosmatesque ornament and porphyry was by no means limited to Santi Quattro Coronati or the pontificate of Paschal II. To the contrary, the reign of Pope Innocent II (r. 1130-1143) ushered in what was perhaps an even deeper papal engagement with the material and political symbolism of porphyry. The election of Innocent II marked the beginning of an eight-year schism within the Roman church.[378] On 14 February 1130, both Innocent II and Anacletus II were elected pope following a pair of competing yet equally valid papal elections.[379] Although the majority of Western Christendom supported Innocent's claim, the city of Rome backed Anacletus, and Innocent was forced to flee to France. Most of Europe, including the royal families of Germany, France and England stood with Innocent but notably, Roger II of Sicily declared his allegiance to Anacletus. It wasn't until the 1138 death of Anacletus that the schism was resolved, and Innocent was able to return to Rome. Thanks to his interest in imperial regalia and court ceremonial, Innocent is often credited in scholarship with the "imperialization" of the papacy.[380] The pope's interest in *imitatio imperii* and the majesty of the imperial office may have derived in part from his propaganda campaign against Anacletus.[381] In one notable instance, during a 1131 meeting with Lothar III, Innocent compelled the king to offer himself in the service of a groom to the pope. The imperial ritual, known as the *stratoris*

[378] Boso, *Vita Innocentii II*, in Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis 2de éd.* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1955), 379-380.

[379] John Doran, "Two Popes: The city vs. the world," *Pope Innocent II (1130-43) The World vs. The City* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 5-7; P.F. Palumbo, *Lo Schisma del MCXXX: I precedenti, la vicenda Romana e le ripercussioni europee della lotta tra Anacleto II ed Innocenzo II col registro degli atti di Anacleto II* (Rome, 1942).

[380] In particular Josef Deér, *The Dyanstic Porphyry Tombs of the Norman Period in Sicily* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 152-154.

[381] I.S. Robinson, Ibid., 24.

officum, is recorded in the *Donation of Constantine,* and was performed by Constantine for Sylvester.[382] The imperial ambitions of Innocent II *were further articulated through his program of ecclesiastical patronage, the centerpiece of which was the basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere. (Fig. 67)*

Innocent's renovation of Santa Maria in Trastevere is distinguished by its extensive use of Roman imperial spolia. The former title church of Innocent's rival Anacletus II, Santa Maria traces its founding to the first quarter of the third century and the pontificate of Pope Callixtus I (r. 218-222).[383] The church was restored in the fifth and eighth centuries, but was razed to its foundations by Innocent, who may have wanted to purge any association with Anacletus from the space.[384] The nave colonnade of the re-erected basilica is formed by an assemblage of mismatched antique columns, capitals and bases. (Fig. 68) While its shafts and bases are of uncertain provenance, eight of the nave capitals are known to have originated from the Baths of Caracalla.[385] Dated to the early third century, the ionic capitals feature portrait heads of the Egyptian gods Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates projecting from their abacus and volutes. (Fig. 69) Like porphyry, the Nilotic deities were imported from Egypt during the Roman imperial period and were emblematic of Roman imperium and dominion over its lands.

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[382] I.S. Robinson, Ibid.; Eduard Eichmann, "Das Officium Stratoris et Strepae," *Historische Zeitschrift* 142.1 (1930):16-40.

[383] Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, no.17.4; Dale Kinney, "S. Maria in Trastevere from its Founding to 1215" (PhD diss., New York University, 1975), 2-36.

[384] Stroll, *Symbols as Power*, 164-165; Dale Kinney, "Patronage of art and architecture," *Pope Innocent II (1130-43) The World vs. The City* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 380.

[385] Dale Kinney, "Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla in Sta. Maria in Trastevere," *The Art Bulletin* 68.3 (1987): 387.

Dale Kinney has demonstrated that Innocent II's reuse of imperial capitals at Santa Maria in Trastevere was not done for the sake of convenience, but was rather an exercise of a unique papal prerogative.[386] Under Roman law and the Theodosian Code, responsibility for the upkeep of Roman monuments and their ornament (*ornatus*) fell to the Roman emperor alone.[387] This meant that the emperor had complete authority over Rome's abandoned and decaying monuments and was free to spoliate their materials for his own foundations. The power was retained by the Roman and later "Byzantine" emperor until the termination of the exarchate in the eighth century.[388] As noted above, the 787 letter from Pope Hadrian I to Charlemagne is evidence that by the end of the eighth century, authority over Rome's monuments and *ornatus* was taken up by the papacy.[389] This transfer of power could have been a result of the promotion of the *Donation of Constantine* and the privileges it conferred upon the pope. For Kinney, the use of spolia in Santa Maria in Trastevere was a deliberate demonstration of Innocent's unique papal prerogative, and intended to cultivate an "aura of imperial privilege" within the space.[390] The colonnade was not the only instance of antique spoliation in the church. Other examples include 104 marble fragments fashioned from spoliated cornices and used as modillion supports for the cornice of the nave, and the church's cosmatesque pavement with its porphyry and serpentine

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[386] Kinney, Ibid., 390.

[387] *Codex Theodosianus,* XV, I, 14; XV, I, 19; XV, I, 43, in Mommsen-Meyer, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* (Berlin, Weidemann, 1905).

[388] Kinney, "Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla," 389.

[389] See: pg. 116.

[390] Kinney, "Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla," 390.

rotae.[391] (Fig. 69) Porphyry also appears in the basilica's ciborium in the form of four spoliated columns.[392] (Fig. 70) The prominent positioning of the marble at the high altar of Santa Maria in Trastevere recalls its placement at the Vatican basilica, drawing upon both the imperial and pontifical associations of the stone.

In his most daring and ambitious act of spoliation, Innocent II appropriated an imperial porphyry sarcophagus to be used for his burial. On the circumstances of the burial Innocent's biographer, Cardinal Boso of Santa Pudenziana wrote that the pope "was honourably buried in the Lateran church in a wonderfully made porphyry conch."[393] No ordinary tomb, Innocent's "conch" was none other than the porphyry sarcophagus of the emperor Hadrian, which up until that point had stood in the burial chamber of Castel Sant'Angelo.[394] That Innocent understood the significance of the sarcophagus and the identity of its owner is evident from a twelfth-century account describing the tomb as *Adriani imperatoris sepultura*.[395] Before Innocent's death, the sarcophagus was placed on the field before the Lateran, in front of the covered walk called the

[391] Innocent's patronage of the basilica included the addition of a cosamatesque pavement, however nineteenth century renovations to the nave have made it impossible to reconstruct the original configuration of its design. The twelfth century pavement may have perhaps resembled that found in the neighboring and approximately contemporary church of San Crisogono. See: Dorothy Glass, "Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements," 201-205, 263-264.

[392] The present ciborium is a work of the nineteenth-century renovation, but the porphyry columns are original to Innocent's twelfth-century program. See: Dale Kinney, "S. Maria in Trastevere from its Founding to 1215," 285.

[393] Boso, *Vita Innocentii II*, 385; "in ecclesia Lateranensi honorifice in concha porphiretica miro opera constructa."

[394] Formerly the mausoleum of Hadrian, see: pgs. 62-5. *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*, III.4; Kinney, "Patronage of Art and Architecture," 384-387; Delbrueck, *Antike Porphyrwerke*, 214-216; Deér, *The Dyanstic Porphyry Tombs of the Norman Period in Sicily*, 146-154.

[395] Johannes Diaconus, *Descriptio Lateranenesis*, ed. R. Valentini, G Zucchetti, *Codice Topografico della città di Roma III* (Rome, 1946), 349.

fallonia, which landmarked the ending point for ceremonial processions.[396] With the death of the pope, the tomb was brought inside the Lateran basilica where it stood near the altar until it was destroyed by fire in 1308.[397] The display of the sarcophagus in front of the *follonia* would have served as a living testament to Innocent's *body natural* which ruled sovereignly over the affairs of the church and Rome. Then, when moved to the basilica upon his death, the sepulcher transformed into a monument to the pope's *body politic* and sempiternal rule.

Innocent's porphyry sarcophagus marked a culmination of centuries of papal propaganda and *imitatio imperii.* As the first pope to be buried in porphyry, Innocent took advantage of the privileges granted to him by the *Donation of Constantine*, as well as what had become an established tradition of papal patronage of porphyry. His move however surpassed the typical modes of imperializing propaganda employed by his predecessors. By brazenly appropriating a Roman imperial sarcophagus for his personal use, Innocent put the full scope of his imperial ambitions on display for the populace. The act suggests that the pope saw himself as an inheritor of the mantle of sempiternal Rome to such a degree that he felt emboldened to take from it as though it were his rightful heritage and patrimony. Like sarcophagi, the porphyry rota became a symbol of privilege and imperial ambition for the papacy. Whereas the porphyry sarcophagus traced its material lineage to pagan imperial Rome, the porphyry rota was an inheritance from the Christian Roman emperor. In this way it combined the old *ornatus* of imperial Rome with the Christian legacy of Constantine. As designators of papal space, rotae were visual representations of the powers and privileges granted to the pope by the Donation of Constantine and the papacy's manufactured imperial heritage.

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[396] Stroll, *Symbols as Power*, 185, no. 20.

[397] Deér, *The Dyanstic Porphyry Tombs of the Norman Period in Sicily*, 150-151.

Porphyry Sarcophagi in Norman Sicily

The twelfth-century flourishing of papal patronage of porphyry occurred contemporaneously and adversarially to a wave of interest in the marble in Norman Sicily. In July 1127 William II, Duke of Apulia and Calabria died without an heir. During the period immediately following his death, a contest over the succession of William's duchy broke out between Roger II of Sicily and Pope Honorius II.[398] Roger, who was uncle to the late duke, claimed that his nephew had designated him as successor in the event that he should die without an heir. Honorius, who alone had the power to invest William's successor declined to accept Roger's claim to the duchy. With his call for investiture denied, Roger launched a military campaign to take the lands by force. Under pressure from Roger's army Honorius finally relented and named Roger Duke of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily on 22 August 1128.[399] The episode was significant, as marked the start of Roger's contentious dealings with the papacy, which would last until his death in 1154. Two years later, during the schism between Anacletus II and Innocent II, Roger took the side of the antipope Anacletus in exchange for his coronation as King of Sicily.[400]

Roger's alliance with Anacletus embroiled the Norman king with Innocent II when the latter emerged victorious in the 1130 schism. Following resolution of the schism Roger remained

[398] Houbert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler between East and West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41-47.

[399] Ibid., 46-47.

[400] Anacletus II's privilege to Roger II reproduced in, Josef Deér, *Das Papsttum und die süditalienischen Normannenstaaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 62-4; English translation in, Graham A. Loud, *Roger II and the Creation of the Kingdom of Sicily* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 304-6. See also: Donald Mathew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 33-40.

a faithful ally of Anacletus and in 1134 granted his family, the Pierleoni, with an endowment and protection in the form of an official decree written in golden ink on purple parchment.[401] Innocent refused to formally recognize and invest Roger as King of Sicily, and in April 1139 he went so far as to have Roger and his supporters formally excommunicated.[402] Finally in July 1139 under great military pressure, Innocent granted Roger's investiture, but refused to cave to any of the Norman's further demands concerning the ecclesiastical organization and administration of Sicily. Roger's trials with the papacy reveal the extent to which despite his wealth, connections and military might, he remained reliant on papacy for investiture and formal recognition of his right to the Kingdom of Sicily. At the same time however, while Innocent may have possessed the power to grant or deny investiture, his autonomy was challenged by Roger's ability to place political and military pressure on the exercise of his power.

Competing claims for dominance between the Normans and the papacy extended beyond the political and into the material realm through the medium of porphyry. As it has been detailed above, during his lifetime Pope Innocent II appropriated the Hadrian's porphyry sarcophagus for use in his own burial.[403] It is unknown for exactly how long the sarcophagus stood outside the Lateran, but the gesture of public display suggests that before Innocent's death there would have been at least some wider degree of knowledge of the pope's desire to have an imperial porphyry burial. Two years after Innocent's death, Roger endowed Cefalù Cathedral with two porphyry sarcophagi and declared,

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[401] Roger's issuance of golden bulls (*bulla*) was modelled on the Byzantine tradition and was also practiced by the papacy. For Latin text see: Deér, *Das Papsttum*, 69-71, English translation in, Loud, *Roger II,* 308-10.

[402] Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 70-1.

[403] See: pgs. 145-6.

> We establish indeed two porphyry sarcophagi that will remain a permanent visible sign of my demise in the aforementioned church, in one of which I will be buried beside the choir of psalm-singing canons after my death, and the other we establish both for the remarkable memory of my name as well as the glory of the church itself.[404]

Though Roger was ultimately buried in Palermo rather than Cefalù in a third unmentioned porphyry sarcophagus, the intent of his double monument was clear.[405] One sarcophagus would serve as a vessel for Roger's earthly body, the other a cenotaph in testament to the glory of Cefalù cathedral, a church which owed it bishopric and foundation to Anacletus II.[406] (Figs. 71, 72) In this regard, the choice of Cefalù would have been highly significant because its formation was independent from Innocent II and the papal establishment, and represented Roger's autonomy in the secular and religious affairs of his kingdom. Umberto Bongianino has argued that Roger's endowment of the twin sarcophagi represented, "a significant amplification of the idea of the monarch as 'rex et sacerdos,' and an evident blurring of symbolic boundaries between altar and throne, royal body and holy relics."[407] The choice of the symbolically laden sarcophagi placed Roger's ambitions into direct dialogue with imperial and papal Rome.

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[404] Translation my own. Latin text from, Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 1. Sarcophagos vero duos porphyriticos ad decessus mei signum perpetuum conspicuos in praefata ecclesia stabilimus fore permansuros, in quorum altero iuxta canonicorum psallentium chorum post diei mei obitum conditus requiescam, alterum vero tam ad insignem memoriam mei nominis, quam ad ipsus ecclesiae gloriam stabilimus.

[405] When Roger died in 1154 he was buried in a newly constructed porphyry sarcophagus in Palermo cathedral. It was not until sometime during the reign of Frederick II (r. 1212-50) that the unused Cefalù sarcophagi were transported to Palermo and used in the burials of Henry IV and Frederick II. See: Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 3-23.

[406] Cefalù Cathedral was founded during the schism between Innocent and Anacletus as a special dispensation to Roger in opposition to Innocent's wishes. See: Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 57.

[407] Umberto Bongianino, "The King, His Chapel, His Church. Boundaries and Hybridity in the Religious Visual Culture of the Norman Kingdom," *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 4, no. 1-2 (2017): 33-4.

When read alongside his involvement in the schism of 1130 and contentious relations with Pope Innocent II, the Cefalù sarcophagi speak to Roger's rejection and defiance towards the imperialization of the papacy. Through the invocation of the *Donation of Constantine* and assertion of their powers of investiture, popes such as Innocent sought to curtail the authority and autonomy of secular rulers like Roger. Porphyry was a material flashpoint in the clash between Roger and the papacy. As a counter move to Innocent's appropriation of an imperial sarcophagus, Roger responded with the acquisition of not just one, but two porphyry sarcophagi. There is no clear answer as to exactly how or from where Roger acquired the amount of porphyry required to construct the sarcophagi, but Deér has argued that the marble came from Rome through the dealings of his allies, the Pierleoni.[408]

The pair of Cefalù sarcophagi, later moved to Palermo Cathedral, appear to have been made from the shafts of massive porphyry columns.[409] Both tombs take the form of a semicircular trough with a gabled lid and carved supports. One of the sarcophagi, later reused for the burial of Henry VI, is relatively plain and features a fluted base.[410] (Fig.72) The other of the pair, repurposed by Roger's grandson Frederick II, is more detailed and ornate and was likely intended for the burial of Roger's remains. The sarcophagus shares the same form as its partner

[408] Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*,

[409] Rosa Maria Bacile, "A Porphyry Workshop in Palermo," in *Romanesque and the Mediterranean: Patterns of Exchange Across the Latin, Greek and Islamic Worlds c.1000-c.1250*, ed. Rosa Bacile (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), 129-149.

[410] The lid of the sarcophagus has little ornament aside from a band of egg-and-dart molding, a small rosette on it north end, and a schematic crown its south. The trough features a small, simplified ornamental disk on its south end, and a small *corona vitae* on its north.

but has carved lion supports at its base and six large iconographic roundels on its lid.[411] (Fig. 73) There are three roundels on each side of the lid, with the outer roundels depicting the four evangelist symbols. The central scenes show an image of the Pantokrator on one side and the Virgin and Child on the other.[412] It is not known how or where the sarcophagi were carved, but Deér has argued that they were inspired by a second-century porphyry trough that stood outside of the Pantheon during the twelfth century and may have been known to the Normans.[413] (Fig. 74)

Although the Cefalù sarcophagi were originally intended for Roger's burial, when he died in 1154 his remains were never sent to Cefalù. Instead, Roger's body was placed in a newly constructed porphyry sarcophagus installed in Palermo Cathedral. (Fig. 75) Unlike the carved trough-style Cefalù sarcophagi, Roger's Palermo sarcophagus made from thin, slabs of porphyry joined to form a gabled rectangular casket. The plain, uncarved slabs feature no trace of ornament or iconography. The sarcophagus' simplified, unadorned form suggests that it was made with haste for the purpose of Roger's unplanned Palermo burial.[414] Word of Roger's intent to have a porphyry burial must have made it to Rome, as eight months later Pope Anastasius IV

[411] The lion was a commonly used motif in art of the Norman court. See: William Tronzo, "Mixed media/ Admirabiles mixturae," *Immagine e ideologia: Studi in onore di Arturo Carlo Quintavalle*, ed. A. Calzona, R. Campari and M. Mussini, (Milan, Electa, 2007), 207-12

[412] For a consideration of this iconography see: Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 46-69.

[413] The trough is today in the Lateran basilica, as it was used as a sarcophagus for the burial of Pope Clement XII in 1740. See: Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 70-6.

[414] Deér speculates that by the time of Roger's death Palermo had begun to eclipse Cefalù in prominence and that he may have been buried in the newly created Palermo sarcophagus with the intent that his remains would eventually be transferred to Cefalù. Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 86.

had the porphyry sarcophagus of Helena repurposed upon his death.[415] If Roger's choice of a porphyry burial was a response to Innocent II's appropriation of an imperial sarcophagus, Anastasius' gesture was an escalation of the ongoing rivalry between the Normans and the papacy over the legacy of imperial Rome.

Roger's grandson Frederick II (r. 1212-50) further emboldened Norman claims to the material heritage of porphyry when he had the unused Cefalù sarcophagi transferred to Palermo for the creation of a familial dynastic monument. Already under William II (r. 1166-1211) there was an effort to transform the newly established archiepiscopal church of Monreale into a Norman dynastic burial church.[416] William had the remains of his father William I transferred to Monreale and placed in a newly constructed porphyry sarcophagus modelled on the Cefalù sarcophagi. (Fig. 76) While William was buried alongside his father at Monreale his original sarcophagus is lost and its material and appearance are unknown.[417] William's ambitions to turn Monreale into into a dynastic church were never realized, and the tradition of porphyry burials in the Kingdom of Sicily lapsed until the reign of Frederick II. Frederick's reign saw a significant enlargement of Roger II's kingdom as he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Honorius III in 1220, and ruled over lands that stretched from Italy and north to Germany and Burgundy. Like Roger, Frederick was frequently at odds with the papacy. He was three times

[415] Johannes Diaconus, *Liber de ecclesia Lateranensi*, Migne, *PL*, 194, col. 1553.

[416] Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 15.

[417] The sarcophagus that today holds William's remains is of white marble and was donated by Archbishop Ludovico I de Torres in 1575. Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 15.

excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX, and engaged in open warfare against the papal armies.[418] Gregory's primary charges against Frederick concerned the Sicilian's failure to sufficiently protect the church and its holdings through his role as Holy Roman Emperor.[419] When taken alongside his brazen defiance and conflict with the papacy, Frederick's creation of a dynastic porphyry monument can be seen as an effort to assert the imperial pedigree and supremacy of his family through the medium of porphyry.

Altogether there are four porphyry sarcophagi in the dynastic ensemble at Palermo Cathedral. To Roger's original gabled sarcophagus Frederick added the Cefalù sarcophagi and a third arguably later porphyry sarcophagus.[420] The more ornate of the two Cefalù sarcophagi was used for Frederick's burial, (Fig. 71) and its partner for the burial of Frederick's father Henry VI. (Fig. 72) Constance, daughter of Roger II and mother to Frederick II, was buried in the third sarcophagus, which Deér argues may have originally been intended for someone else.[421] (Fig. 77) Frederick's dynastic monument visually joined the Hohenstaufen line of his father Henry VI,

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[418] G.A. Loud, "The Papal Crusade against Frederick II in 1228-30," in *La Papauté et les croisades / The Papacy and the Crusades,* ed. Michel Balard, (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 91-3.

[419] John Phillip Lomax, "Frederick II, His Saracens, and the Papacy," in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John Victor Tolan, (London/New York: Routledge, 2013), 175-7.

[420] Unlike the Cefalù sarcophagi and the sarcophagus of William I which were made from single porphyry columns or blocks, the Constance sarcophagus is made from an assemblage of 14 pieces glued together, which Deér argues is indicative of the fat that it was made last, and at a time when the court's supply of porphyry had become severely depleted. Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 79-81.

[421] Deér notes that the sarcophagus of Constance bears a *camelaucum* emblem which was a crown reserved for Byzantine male rulers. Some have argued that the sarcophagus could be the lost original tomb of William II, or that it was made for Tancred. Deér argues that it is more likely that it was originally made for the burial of Henry VI before Frederick acquired the Cefalù sarcophagi. Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, 81-85.

with the Norman line of his maternal grandfather Roger II. The ensemble of porphyry sarcophagi proclaimed Frederick's royal lineage and birthright to the marble, a claim that must necessarily be read in the context of his embattlement and rivalry with the papacy. The prominence granted to porphyry in the battle for supremacy between the Normans and the papacy is a testament to degree to which the marble had become emblematic of the papacy by the twelfth century. The Normans sought not only to challenge the pope's control of the secular and ecclesiastical affairs of the Italian peninsula, but also his control of the imperial medium of porphyry. It was clearly important to Roger and Frederick II that their terrestrial authority be sanctioned by the Christian imperial marble and that it serve as a vessel for their earthly bodies, just as it had for Constantine and their rivals Popes Innocent II and Anastasius IV.

Conclusion

When John the Deacon declared the Lateran Basilica to be the capital of the world (*caput mundi*) he placed the pope at its center.[422] John's twelfth century account reflects the effort of the papacy throughout the preceding centuries to assert its inheritance of the mantle of sempiternal Rome. Not content to serve merely as the head of the see of St. Peter, the papacy positioned itself as the chosen successor to the terrestrial dominion of the Roman emperor. Within this setting, the Lateran was not only an apostolic precinct, but an imperial one. Porphyry, which was used to demarcate the most sacred loci within the Lateran occupied an equally privileged position within the symbolic and material language of the medieval papacy. A visual testament to the pope's dual religious and political role, the presence of porphyry in ecclesiastical spaces signaled the successful imperialization of the papacy that took place during the early middle ages. Like the figure of Constantine, porphry was a conduit between the old pagan and new Christian Rome. Its inheritance from Constantine by the papacy proclaimed the ascendancy of the pope, whose office and rule bridged the worldly and the divine realms. In order to understand how porphyry came to function as such an important signifier for the papacy, this dissertation has traced the symbolism and use of the stone from the time of its discovery to the apogee of its papal use in the twelfth century.

By demonstrating that there is little historical or material basis to support the Ptolemaic origins of porphyry carving, it has been argued that the earliest programmatic use of the marble can be attributed to Roman rather than Hellenistic culture. Privileged use of the color purple and Tyrian dye originated in the Persian and Hellenistic kingdoms, but the symbolic associations of

[422] John the Deacon, Ibid., 227-228.

porphyry were born in imperial Rome. The marble analogue to Tyrian dye, from the time of its discovery porphyry became both a privilege and a signifier of Roman imperium. A material expression of his body natural and body politic, porphyry reflected the dual priestly and imperial office of the Roman emperor. As *Pontifex Maximus*, the emperor was the greatest priest in Rome, a privilege which was granted concurrently to his secular and political dominion.

The sphere of the *Pontifex Maximus* changed with the arrival of Christianity in the Roman empire when the title was taken up by the pope in his role as bishop of Rome. When Constantine legalized the practice of Christianity within the Roman empire and initiated a program of ecclesiastical patronage, porphyry played a central role in his new visual vocabulary. This shift was exemplified by the porphyry sarcophagus, an object inherited from the pagan Roman to Christian Roman emperor and ultimately the papacy. A visualization of the sempiternity of the imperial body and the succession of power, the porphyry sarcophagus was an enduring symbol of the inheritance of the legacy of Rome. The transference of porphyry from the old to new *Pontifex Maximus* is attested by the early Christian hagiographical text, the *passio sanctorum quatuor coronatorum*, and its endorsement of the changing character of porphyry. No longer the privilege of the emperor and the terrestrial kingdom of the state, by the time the *passio* was composed the church had actively begun to cultivate the image of porphyry as the right and patrimony of the papacy and the kingdom of heaven.

Unlike the porphyry sarcophagus, porphyry rotae were distinctly Christian in character. Their symbolism drew upon the imperial associations and lineage of porphyry, but their function as markers of privileged papal space meant that they were inextricably situated within the ecclesiastical milieu. In this way, porphyry rotae symbolically and spatially embodied the duality of the pope's role as an emperor and priest. A role that the papacy argued had been bestowed

upon it by a direct and decisive benefaction from Constantine. The so-called "Donation of Constantine" meant that the papacy was the appointed heir to imperial Rome and all its material, political and symbolic trappings.

The value to taking a diachronic approach to the study of porphyry is in the ability to track the constancy of its material symbolism over time. Even as it passed from one ruling sphere to another, porphyry retained its core material connotations and symbolic character. The limited – and later finite – supply of porphyry meant that in imperial as well as medieval Rome, its use was highly regulated and restricted. Only those who had access to the Roman *ornatus* could take part in the prestige and genealogical value of porphyry. Porphyry has been the subject of interest and study on the part of historians dating as far back as Pliny, but its worth as a source and testament to the project of imperialization of the medieval papacy has been markedly under-utilized. When taken alongside contemporary textual sources, porphyry patronage and ornamentation paint a fuller picture of the papacy's imperial aspirations and the steps it took to realize them. Each time it appeared within an ecclesiastical space, the presence of porphyry made a visual argument in support of the papacy's rightful place within the chain of rulers of sempiternal Rome as the heirs of not only St. Peter, but also of Constantine.

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Figure 1:

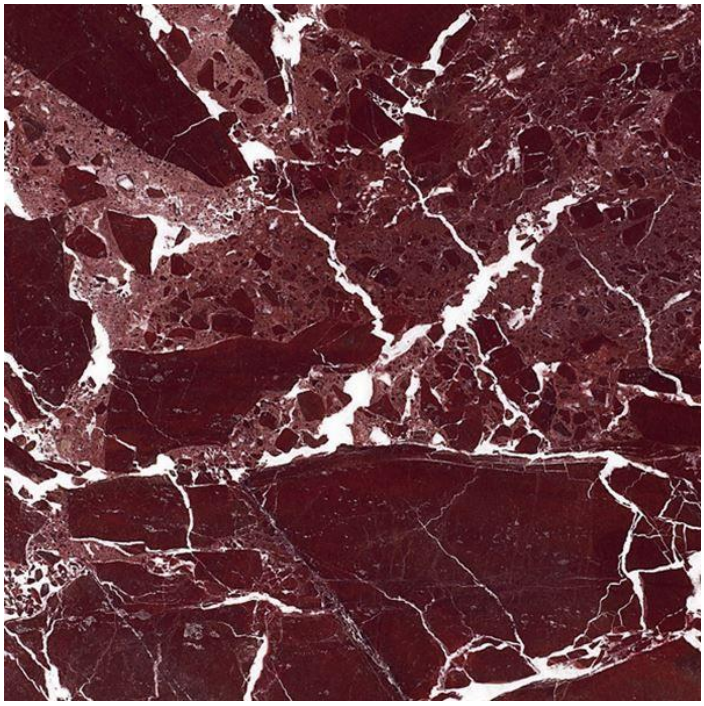


***Fig. 1*:** Rosso Antico Marble

Figure 2:



Fig. 2: Red Imperial Porphyry, Mons Porphyrites, Egypt

Figure 3:

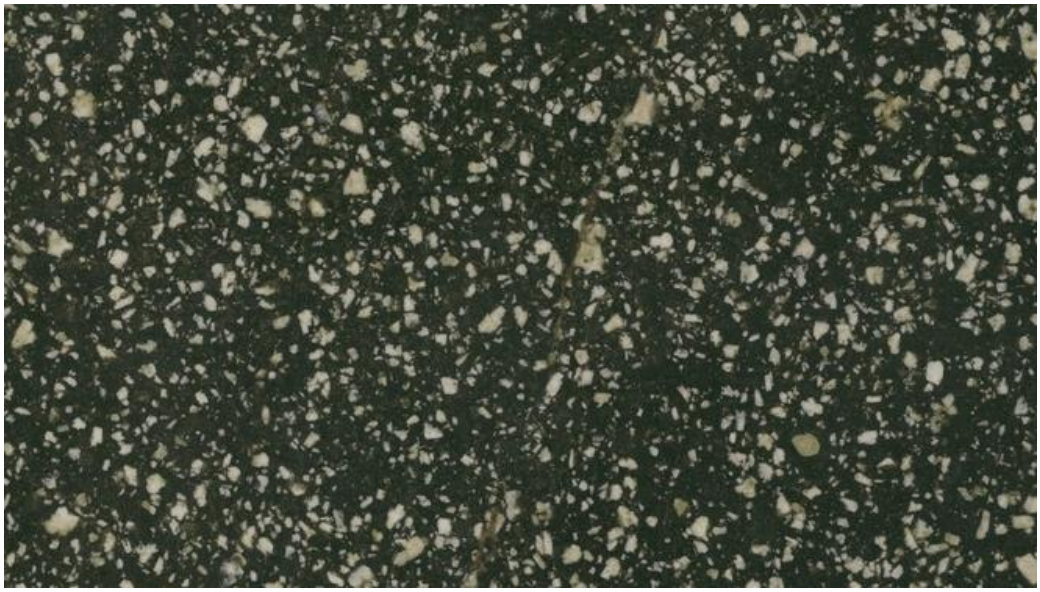


Fig. 3a: Green Porphyry, Mons Porphyrites, Egypt

Figure 3b:



Fig. 3b: Black Porphyry, Mons Porphyrites, Egypt

Figure 5a:



Fig. 5a: Red Granite, Aswan, Egypt

Figure 5b:



Fig. 5b: Red Sandstone, Nile Valle, Egypt

Figure 6:



Fig. 6: Tyrian Purple Dye

Figure 7:



Fig. 7: Augustus Labicana, Roman, After 12 BCE, Museo Nazionale Romano (Photo by Author)

Figure 8:

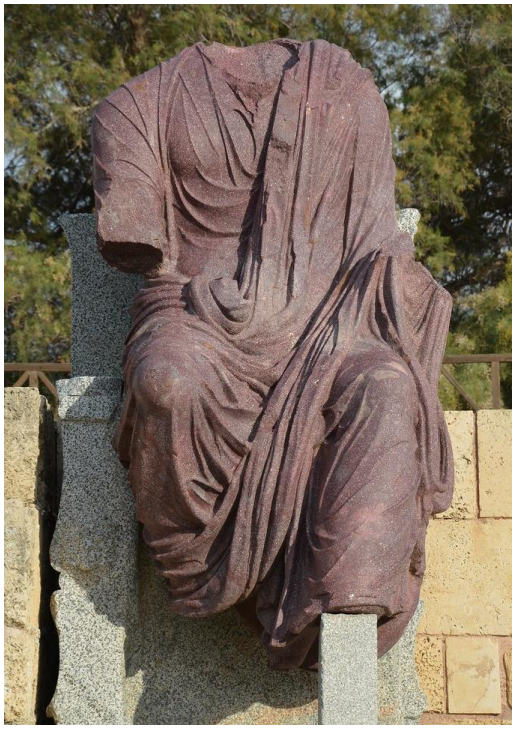


Fig. 8: Togate Statue of Hadrian, Porphyry, 2nd cent. CE, Caesarea Maritima

Figure 9:

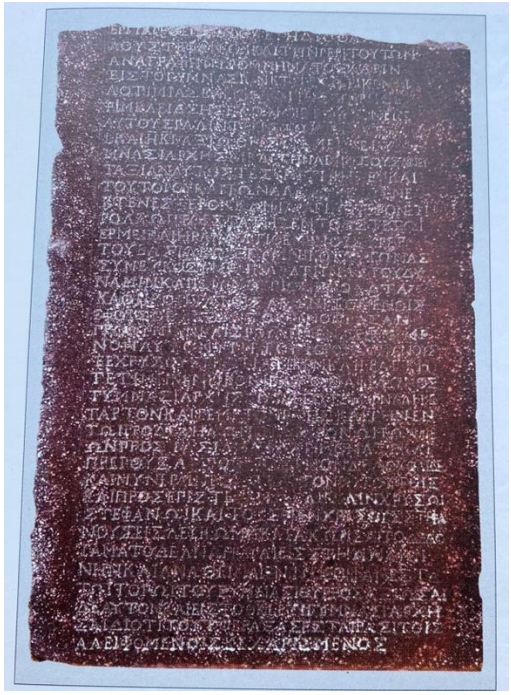


Fig. 9: Bathon Stele, Porphyry, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, (Photo after del Bufalo)

Figure 10:



Fig. 10: "Egyptian Queen" Torso Fragment, Porphyry, Musée du Louvre, Paris (Photo after del Bufalo)

Figure 11:



Fig. 11: Detail, Fish Mosaic, Cave of the Fates, ca. 100 BCE, Palestrina

Figure 12:



Fig. 12: Byzantine Imperial Sarcophagi, Porphyry, 4th-5th cent., Istanbul Archeological Museum

Figure 13:

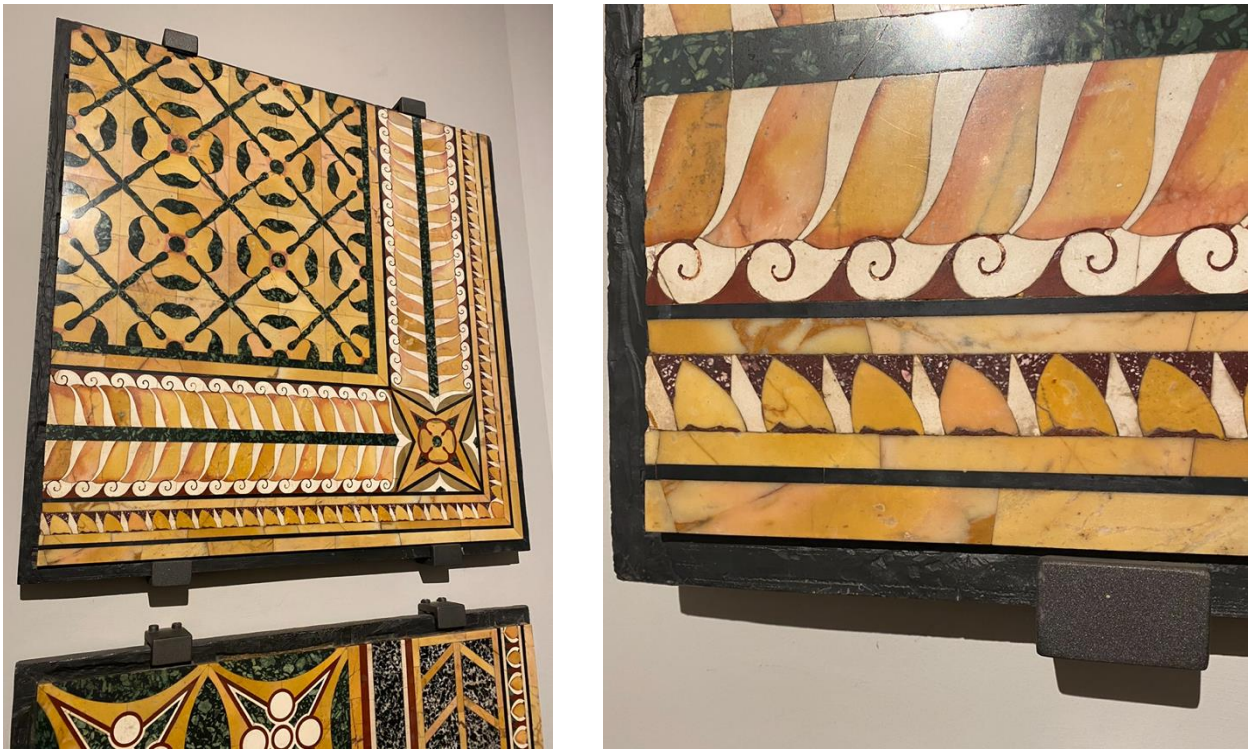


Fig. 13: Opus Sectile Pavement, Domus Tiberiana, 1st cent. CE, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 14:

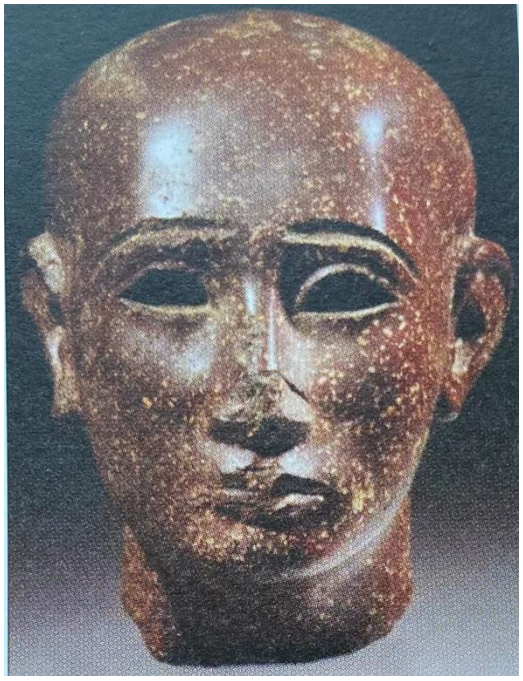


Fig. 14: Porphyry "egg head," Private Collection, Rome (Photo after del Bufalo)

Figure 15:

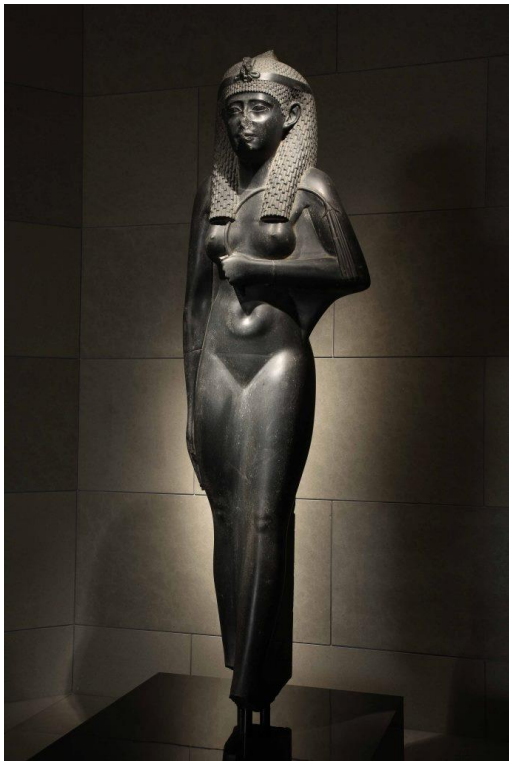


Fig. 15: Arsinoe II, Granodiorite, ca. 270-246 BCE, Miho Museum, Shiga

Figure 16:

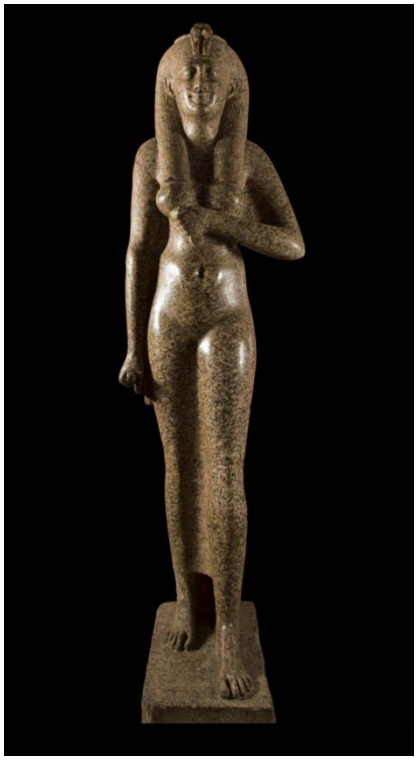


Fig. 16: Statue of Arsinoe, Gardens of Sallust, Musei Vaticani, Rome

Figure 17:



Fig. 17: Capitoline Venus, 1st-2nd cent. CE, Musei Capitolini, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 18:

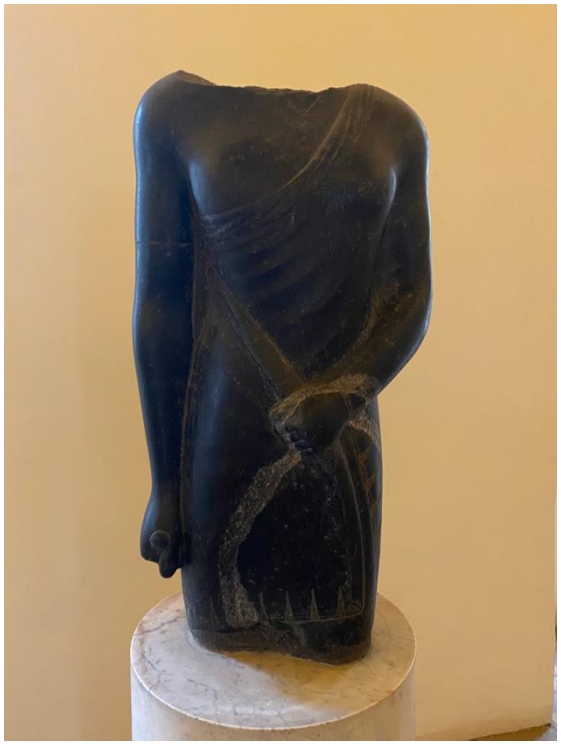


Fig. 18: Male Torso, Granodiorite, Ptolemaic, Iseum Campense, Palazzo Altemps, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 19a:



Fig. 19a: "Veristic" style egg head, Ptolemaic, Agora Museum, Athens

Figure 19b:



Fig. 19b: "Non-naturalistic" Egg Head, Iseum Campense, Palazzo Altemps, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 20:



Fig. 20: Domitian's Obelisk, ca. 81-96 CE, Four Rivers Fountain, Piazza Navona, Rome

Figure 21:

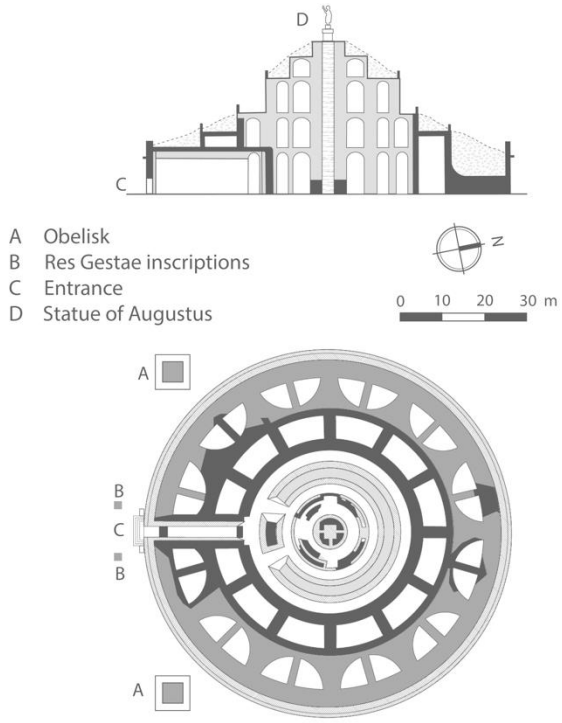


Fig. 21: Mausoleum of Augustus, Plan and Elevation

Figure 22:

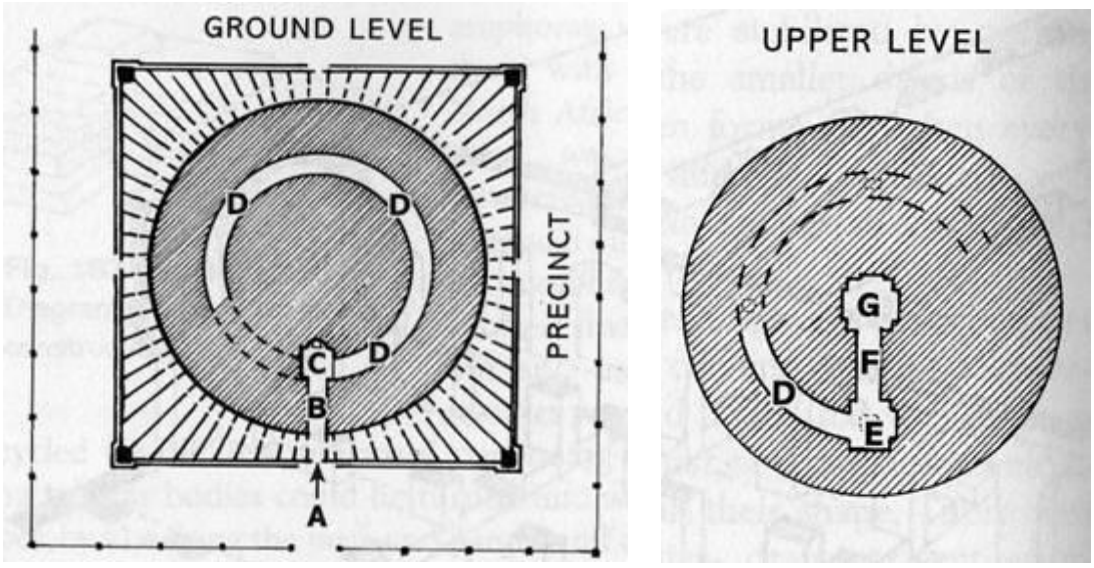


Fig. 22: Mausoleum of Hadrian, Plan

Figure 23a:



Fig. 23a: Hadrian's Sarcophagus, Lid, 2nd cent CE, St. Peter's Basilica, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 23b:

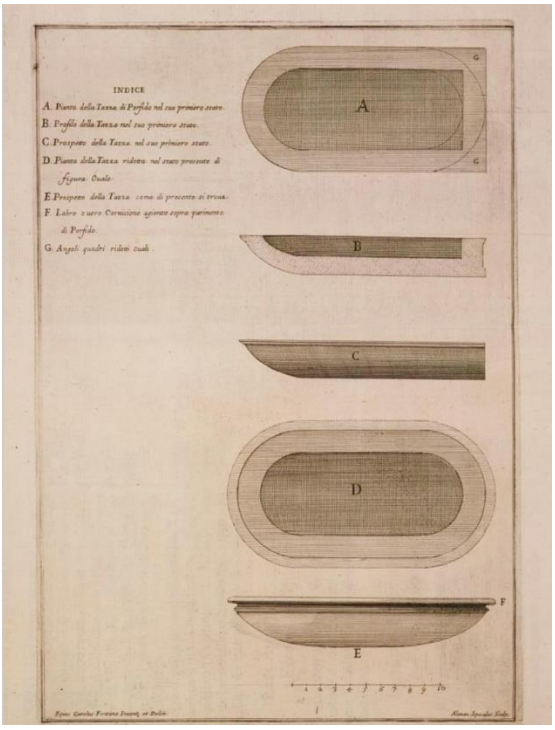


Fig. 23b: Carlo Fontana, Preparatory drawing for Vatican font, *Descrizzione* della nobilissima cappella del Fonte Battesimale nella Basilica Vaticana (Roma: Gio. Fra. Buagni, 1697)

Figure 24:



Fig. 24: Egyptian Sarcophagus, Granite, 2nd cent. CE, Terme di Diocleziano, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 25:

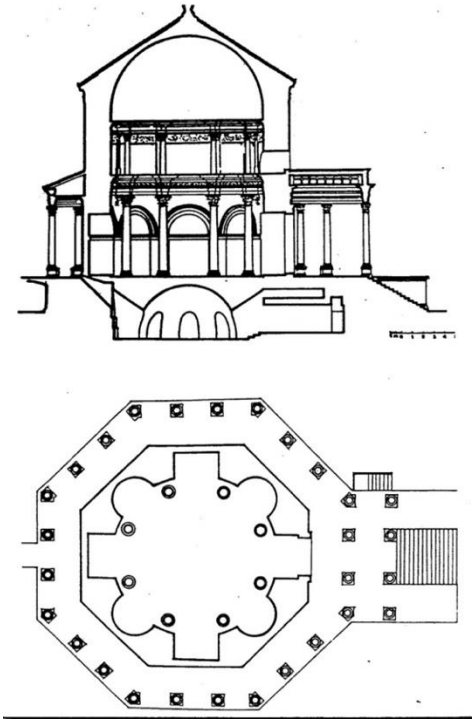


Fig. 25: Mausoleum of Diocletian, Plan and Elevation

Figure 26:



Fig. 26: Sarcophagus of Diocletian, Fragment, Porphyry, Archeological Museum, Split (Photo by Courtney Tomaselli)

Figure 27:



Fig. 27: Tetrarchs, Porphyry, San Marco, Venice (Photo by Author)

Figure 28:

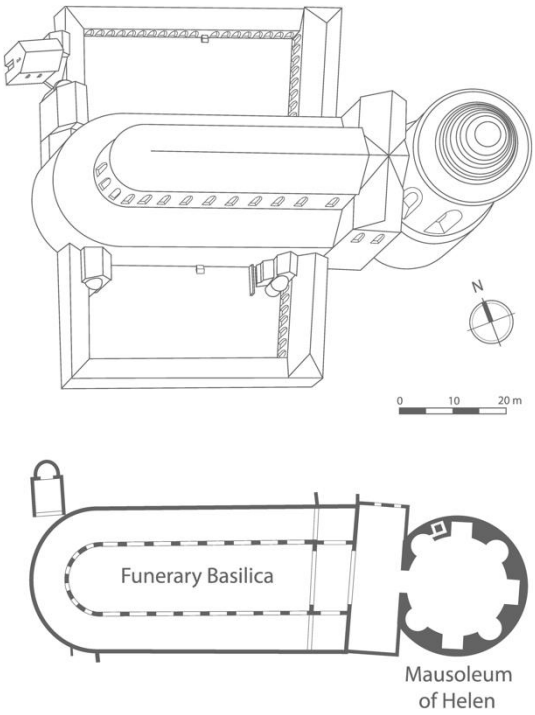


Fig. 28: Mausoleum of Helena and Basilica of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter, Plan

Figure 29:



Fig. 29: Sarcophagus of Helena, Porphyry, 4th cent. CE, Musei Vaticani, Rome

Figure 30:



Fig. 30: Mausoleum of Constantina (Santa Costanza), 4th cent. CE, Rome

Figure 31:

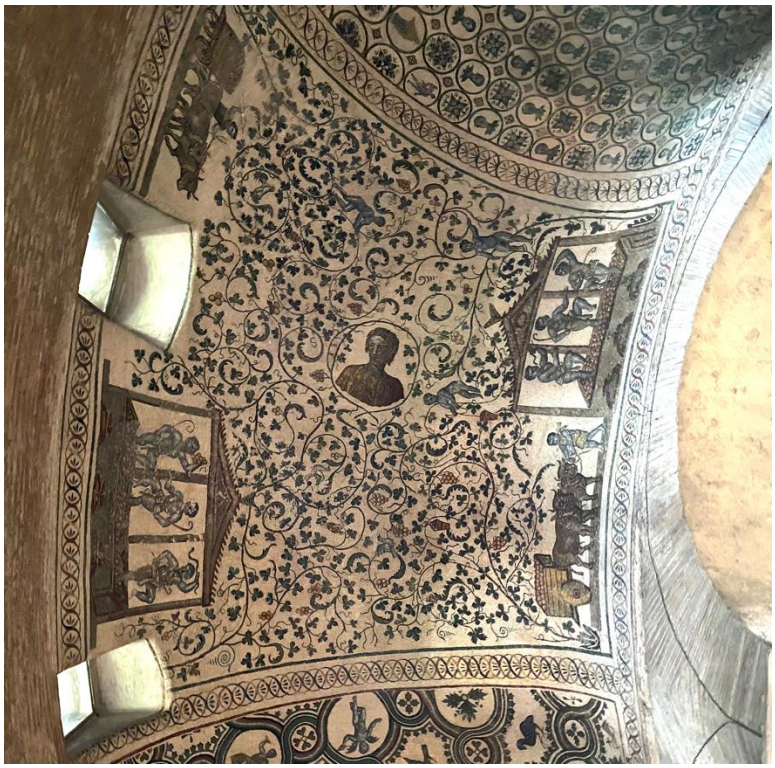


Fig. 31: Mausoleum of Constantina (Santa Costanza), Vault Mosaic, 4th cent. CE, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 32:



Fig. 32: Sarcophagus of Constantina, Porphyry, 4th cent. CE, Musei Vaticani, Rome

Figure 33:

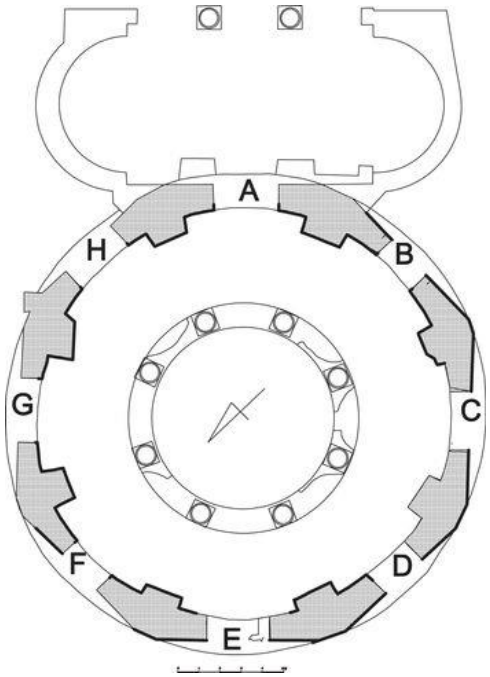


Fig. 33: Lateran Baptistery, Plan, 4th-5th cent. CE, Rome

Figure 34:



Fig. 34: Font, Lateran Baptistery, Constantinian Porphyry Columns, Rome (Photo by Frances St. Amant)

Figure 35:

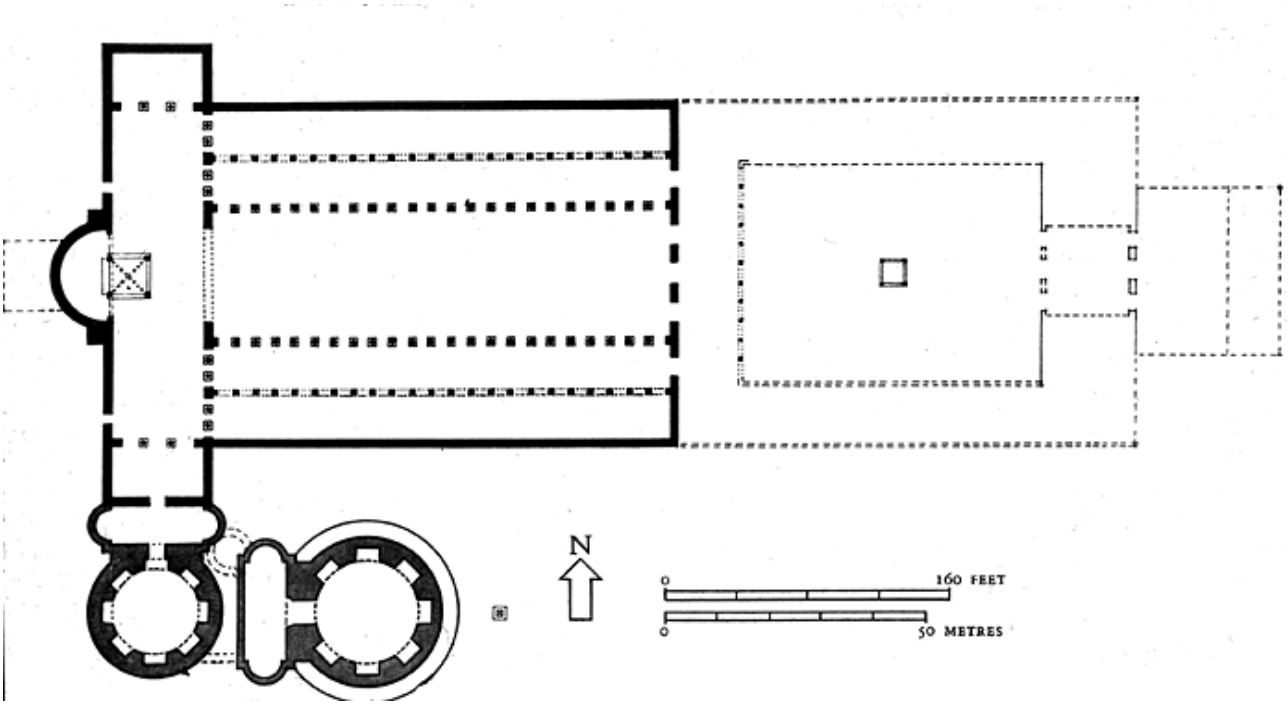


Fig. 35: Old St. Peter's Basilica, Plan

Figure 36:

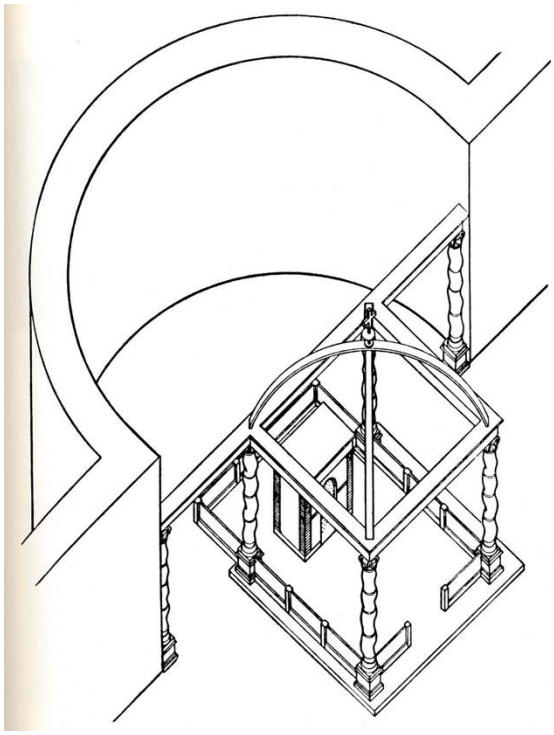


Fig. 36: Constantinian Altar, Old St. Peter's Basilica, Reconstruction, 4th cent CE

Figure 37:

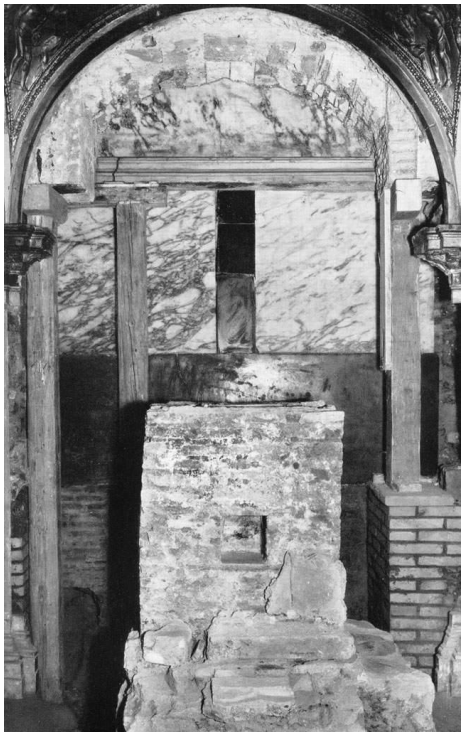


Fig. 37: Constantinian Shrine, Old St. Peter's Basilica, Excavation Photo, 1942

Figure 38:

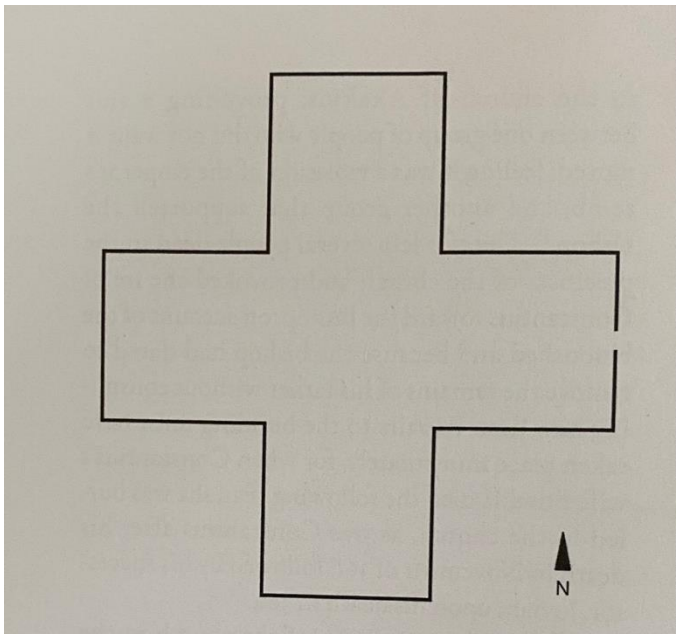


Fig. 38: Constantinian Apostoleion, Plan, ca. 337, After Krautheimer

Figure 39:

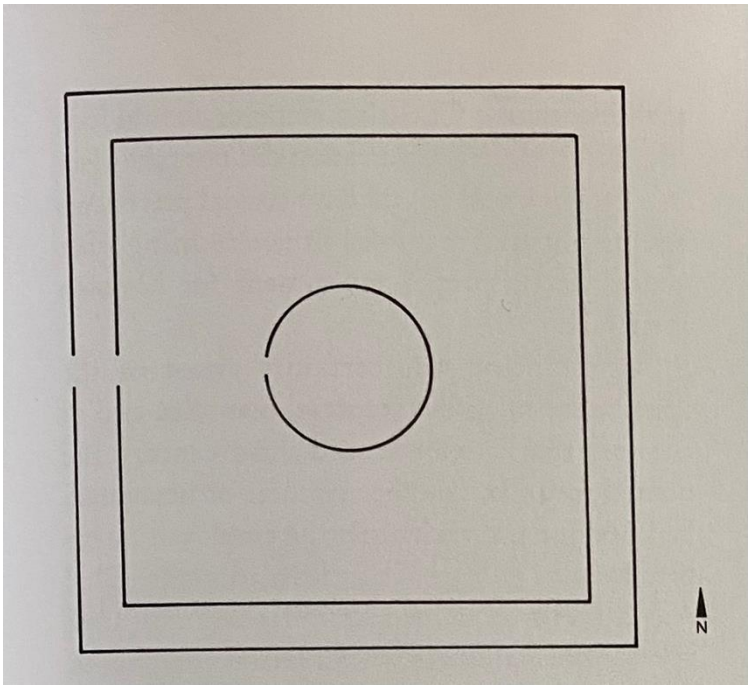


Fig. 39: Constantinian Apostoleion, Plan, ca. 337, After Mango

Figure 40:

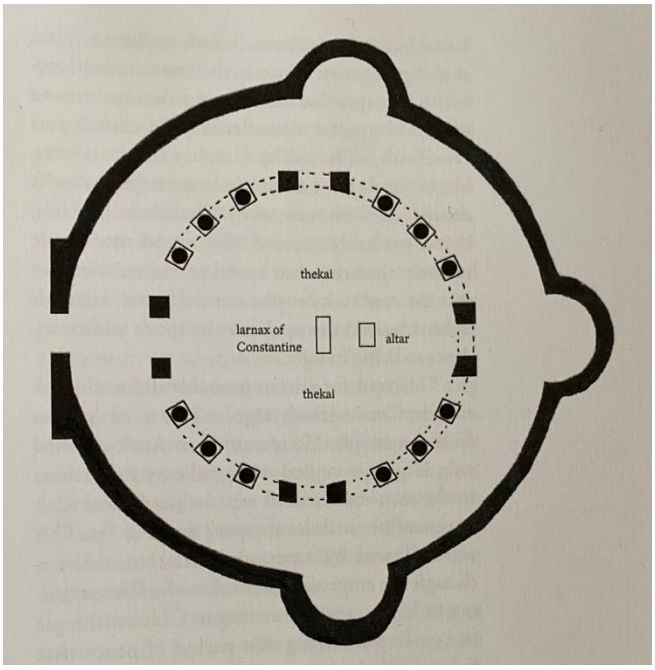


Fig. 40: Constantinian Apostoleion, Plan, ca. 337, After Johnson

Figure 42:



Fig. 42: Fragment of an Imperial Porphyry Sarcophagus, Istanbul Archeological Museum

Figure 43:

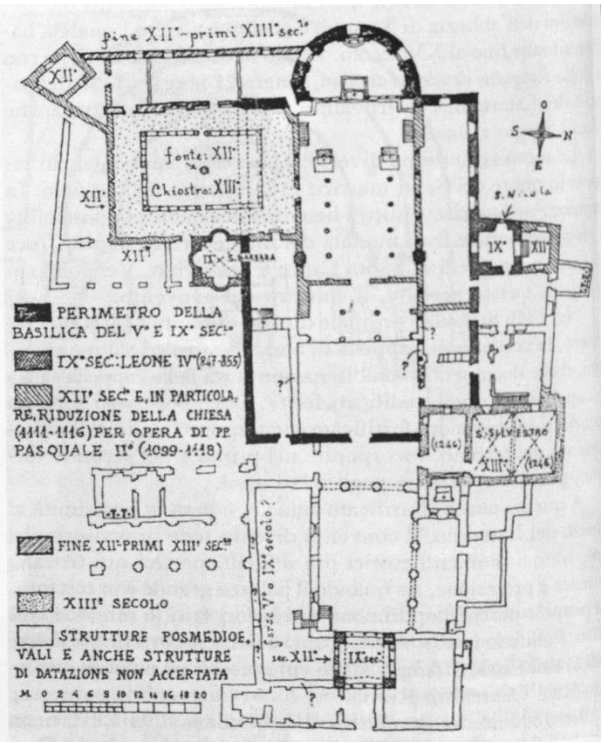


Fig. 43: Basilica of Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome, Plan

Figure 44:



Fig. 44: Green and Red Porphyry Sarcophagi, Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome

Figure 45:



Fig. 45: Cosmatesque Pavement, Nave, Santi Quattro Coronati, 12th cent., Rome

Figure 46:



Fig. 46: Chapel of St. Sylvester, Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome

Figure 47:



Fig. 47: Donation of Constantine, Chapel of St. Sylvester, Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome

Figure 48:

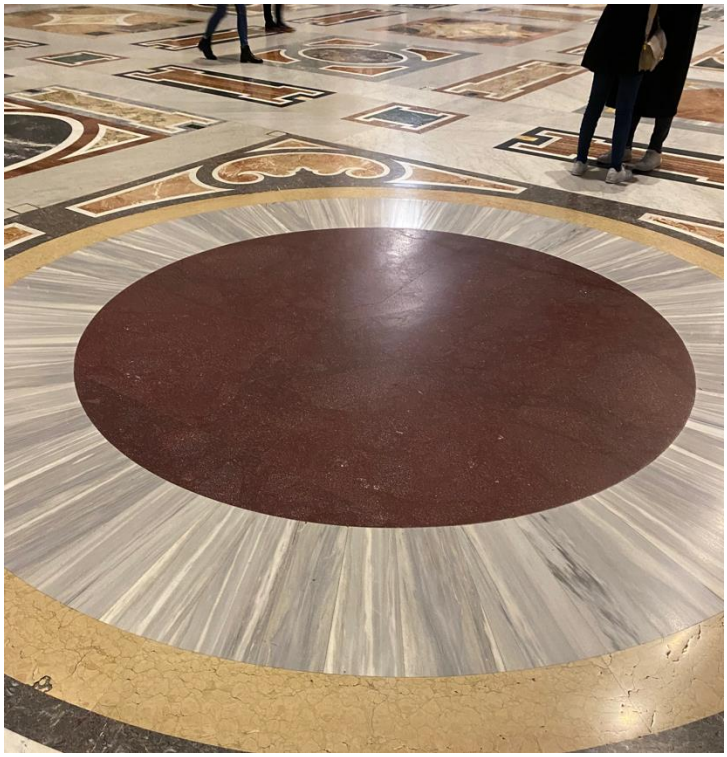


Fig. 48: Rota Porphyretica, St. Peter's Basilica, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 49:



Fig. 49: Opus Sectile Pavement, Nemi Ships, 37-41 CE

Figure 50:

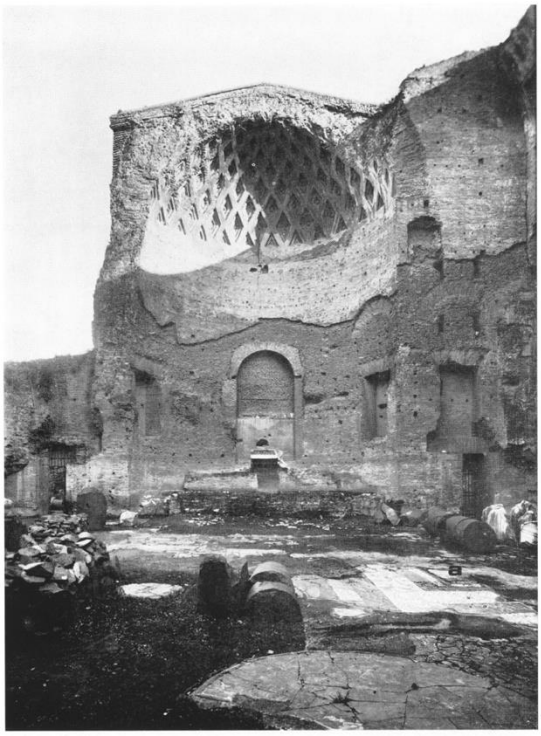


Fig. 50: Temple of Venus and Roma, Pavement before restoration, 1930s

Figure 50b:



Fig. 50b: Temple of Venus and Roma, Pavement after 21st cent. restoration

Figure 51:

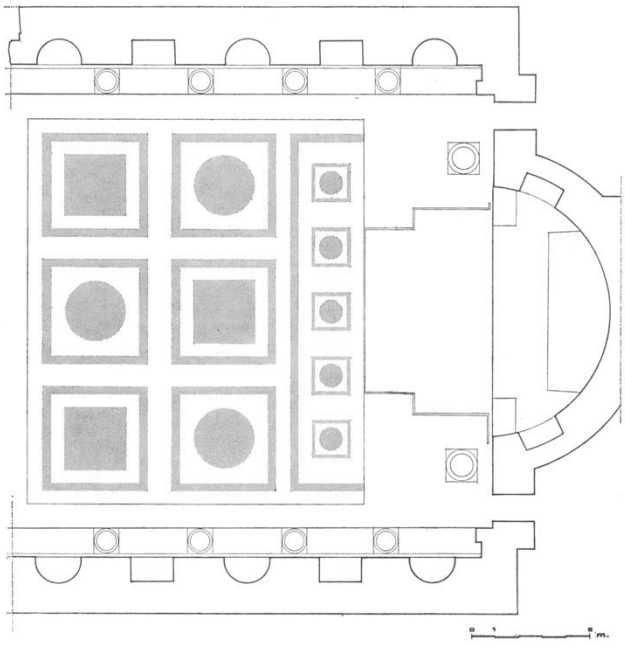


Fig. 51: Temple of Venus and Roma, Proposed Pavement Reconstruction, After Barattolo

Figure 53:

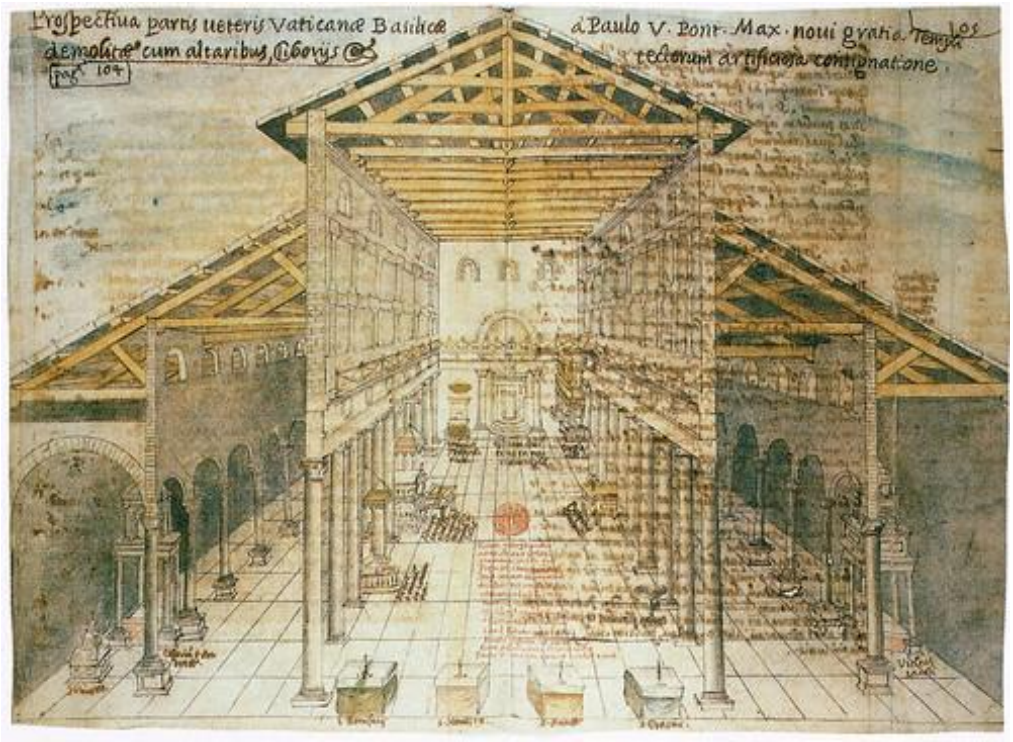


Fig. 53: Giacomo Gimaldi, East-facing view, Old St. Peter's Basilica, 1619, Vat. Barb. Lat. 2733, fols. 104v-105r

Figure 54:

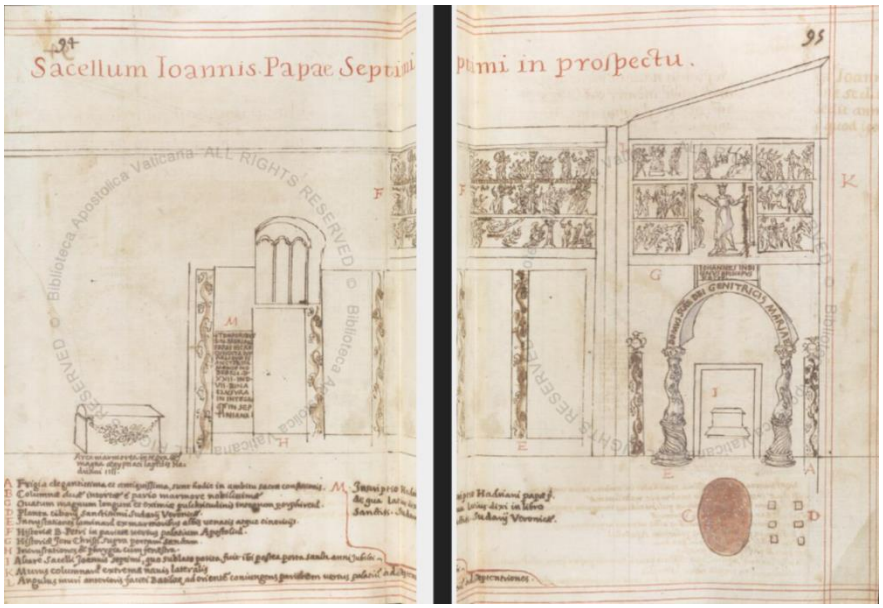


Fig. 54: Giacomo Gimaldi, Oratory of Pope John VII, Old St. Peter's Basilica, 1619, Vat. Barb. Lat. 2733, fols. 94r-95v

Figure 55:



Fig. 55: Omphalion, Hagia Sophia, Southwest Exedera, Constantinople

Figure 56:

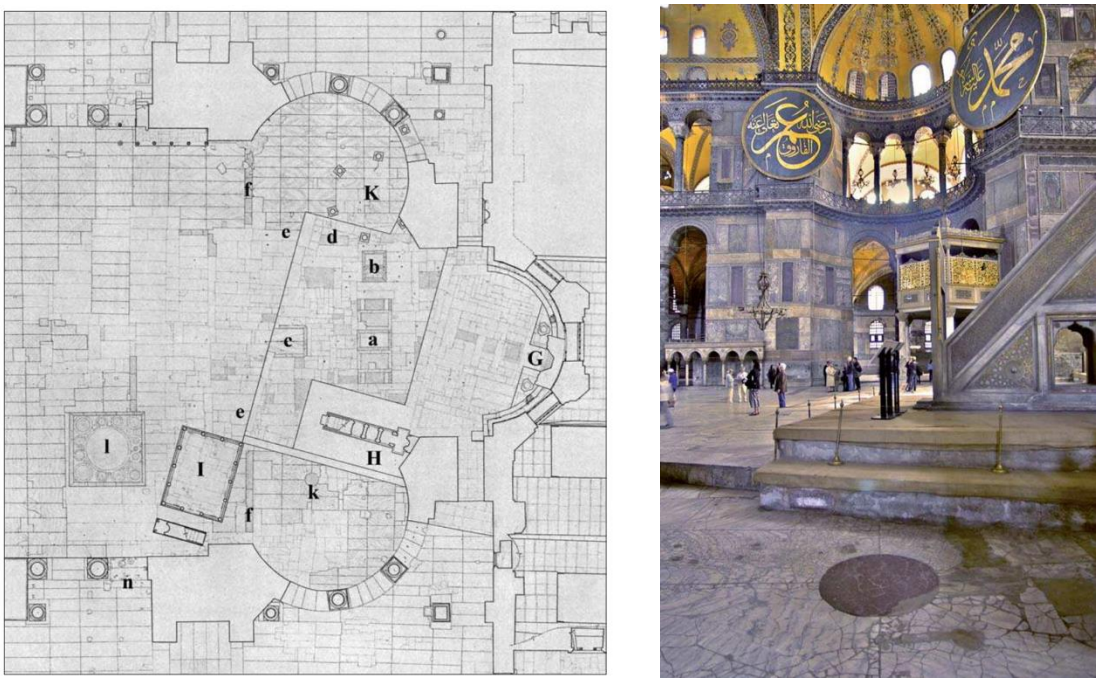


Fig. 56: Porphyry Rota, Hagia Sophia, Nave (position k), Constantinople

Figure 57:

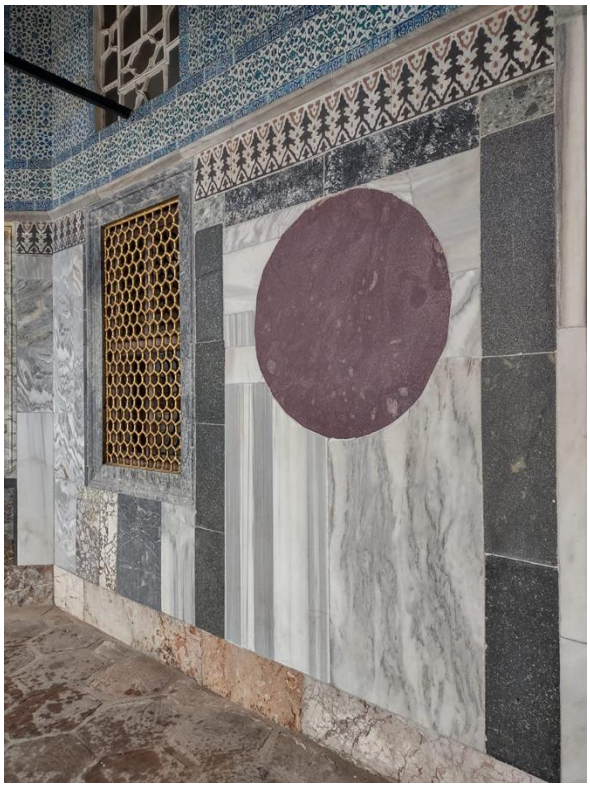


Fig. 57: Porphyry Rotae, Yerevan Kiosk, Topkapı Palace, Istanbul (Photo by Mikael Muehlbauer)

Figure 58:



Fig. 58: Peter and Paul Diptych Icons, Musei Vaticani, Rome

Figure 59:



Fig. 59: Spoliated Columns, Palatine Chapel, Aachen

Figure 60:

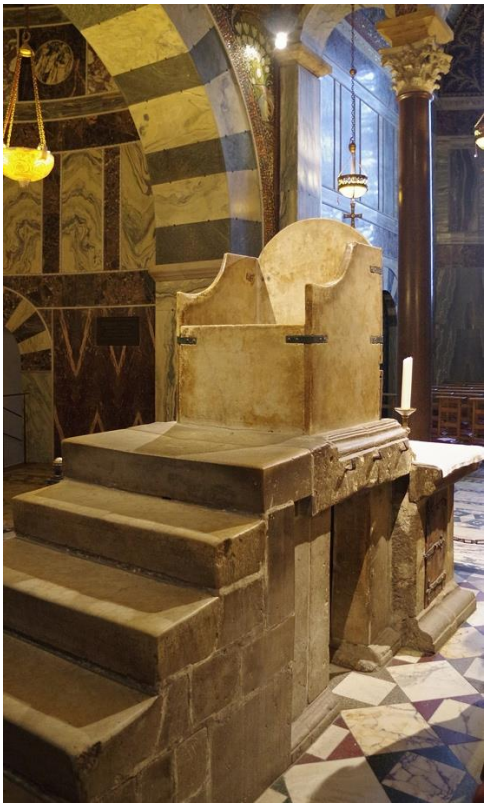


Fig. 60: Throne of Charlemagne, Palatine Chapel, Aachen

Figure 61:



Fig. 61: Porphyry Rota, San Zeno Chapel, Santa Prassede, 9th cent., Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 62:



Fig. 62: Theodora Mosaic, San Zeno Chapel, Santa Prassede, 9th cent., Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 63:



Fig. 63: Apse Mosaic, Santa Prassede, 9th cent., Rome

Figure 64:



Fig. 64: Porphyry Rota, San Giorgio in Velabro, Apse Pavement, 9th cent., Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 65:

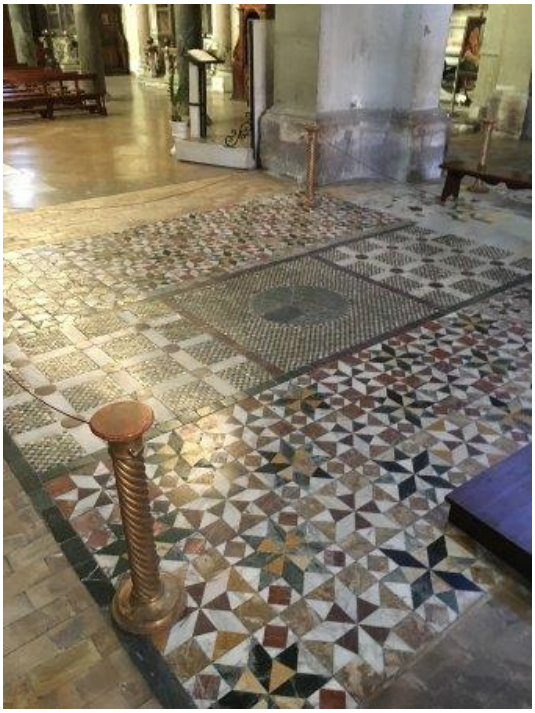


Fig. 65: Remains of Original 9th cent. Opus Sectile Pavement, Abbey of Farfa

Figure 66:



Fig. 66: Cosmatesque Pavement, San Crisogono, 12th cent., Rome

Figure 67:



Fig. 67: Cosmatesque Pavement, Santa Maria in Trastevere, 12th cent., Rome

Figure 68:

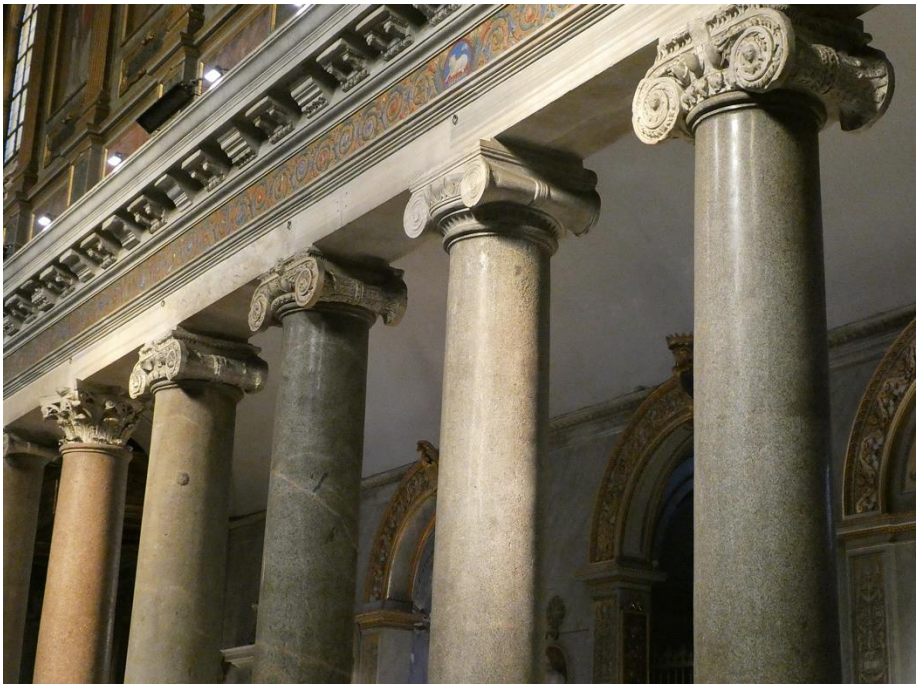


Fig. 68: Nave Colonnade, Santa Maria in Trastevere, 12th cent., Rome

Figure 69:



Fig. 69: Serapis Capital, Nave Colonnade, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome

Figure 70:



Fig. 70: Ciborium, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome (Photo by Author)

Figure 71:



Fig. 71: Sarcophagus of Frederick II (Originally Cefalù), Palermo Cathedral (Photo by Author)

Figure 72:



Fig. 71: Sarcophagus of Henry VI (Originally Cefalù), Palermo Cathedral (Photo by Author)

Figure 73:



Fig. 73: Detail of roundel, Sarcophagus of Frederick II (Originally Cefalù), Palermo Cathedral (Photo by Author)

Figure 74:



Fig. 74: Tomb of Pope Clement XII ("Lateran Trough"), 2nd cent. CE, Capella Corsini, Lateran Basilica, Rome

Figure 75:



Fig. 75: Sarcophagus of Roger II, Palermo Cathedral (Photo by Author)

Figure 76:



Fig. 76: Sarcophagus of William I, Monreale Cathedral (Photo by Author)

Figure 77:



Fig. 77: Sarcophagus of Constance, Palermo Cathedral (Photo by Author)