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FROM GREGORY THE GREAT TO LEO III: THE KTETOR AND DONOR ACTIVITIES OF THE POPES IN ROME AND THE BASILICAS OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

ABSTRACT: The paper is dedicated to the consideration of the ktetor and donor activities of the popes in Rome from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 9th century in the context of the systematic action of the heads of the Roman Church towards the constitution of the identity of Rome as a *city of the church*, and consequently the building of the authority of its own established institution, mainly on the cults of St. Peter and St. Paul, the princes of the apostles. Accordingly, research has shown that St. Peter's Basilica and Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura stand out as dominant focuses of papal ktetor and donor activities. Keeping memories of the suffering of the two apostles by which the city was sanctified, they functioned as a kind of reliquaries of city-protecting cults. The goal of this paper is to provide a more detailed insight into the nature and dynamics of papal ktetor and donor activities directed towards the aforementioned churches, by which the heads of the Roman Church dominantly determined, visually and ideologically, an entire era in the development and functioning of the city.

KEYWORDS: Rome, St. Peter, San Paolo Fuori le Mura (St. Paul Outside the Walls), popes, ktetorship, donorship.

Despite the signs of the fundamental political marginalization of Rome, especially noticeable in times of crisis after the fall of the Western part of the Roman Empire¹, the idea of the *eternal city* as *caput orbis* and *axis mundi* of the whole Christian ecumene endured. Although all roads no longer led to Rome, as often stated in historiography, in the conceptual and phenomenological, ideological and symbolic sense, Rome remained the central place of a branched network of connectivity, socio-political and cultural-historical

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¹ Among the significant number of titles on the history of Western Europe after the fall of Rome, see KRAUTHEIMER 1980; WICKHAM 1981; COLLINS 1991; PAINTER 1997; HALSALL 2007; BURY 2010; BROWN 2010; MITCHELL 2010.

exchange, within the framework of constantly conflicting micro-regions formed in the European territory. The city owed such a status to the developed, especially martyrological tradition considering that already during the late antique and especially the early medieval era a paradigm was created about Rome as a city of martyrs, sanctified by the suffering of believers in the name of Christ. Among the numerous members of the early Christian congregation who perished in Rome as one of the centers of the most massive and cruel executions, a special place belonged to St. Peter and St. Paul, the princes of the apostles, whose relics and parts of relics were discovered *inter* or *extramuros* and on whose sacrifices directly rested the authority of the city, the Roman Church, and the institution of the papacy.² As the key ktetors and donors, as well as bearers of artistic production in the eternal city, both in the period covered by this paper and beyond, the popes especially sought to stand out as benefactors of two Roman sanctuaries dedicated to Christ's apostles – St. Peter's Basilica and Basilica of St. Paul (St. Paul Outside the Walls). Considering written historical sources and mainly the works of art and visual culture, this paper tries to give an insight, as close as possible, into the nature and dynamics of the papal ktetor and donor activities in the eternal city directed towards the memories of St. Peter and St. Paul, by which the heads of the Roman Church dominantly determined, in the visual and artistic, as well as in the political-ideological sense, an entire era in the development and functioning of the city.³

Since the second quarter of the 4th century, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (Fig. 1) has represented one of the most important temples and pilgrimage centers of the entire Christian world. Built thanks to Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337) and completed by his son and heir Emperor Constans (337–350) (McCLENDON 1989: 63), St. Peter's Basilica, marking the place of martyrdom of the princes of the apostles on Nero's hippodrome, fostered the city-protecting cult as an *axis mundi* during its entire existence, directly incorporating the tomb of St. Peter as the focal point of his cult. In accordance with its importance, the church represented the key reliquary of Christian Rome for centuries, reflecting an exceptional influence on both contemporary and later architecture. In the *Liber pontificalis*, St. Peter's Basilica appears as one of the most frequent references, functioning

² On saint cults and especially cults of martyrs in the name of Christ, see BROWN 1980; BOWERSOCK 1995; BOYARIN 1999; GRIG 2004; MOSS 2010; LAPIDGE 2018. In addition, about the city-protecting cults of St. Peter and St. Paul and their functions in Rome during the late antique and early medieval era, see THACKER 2007: 13–49; 2012: 380–406; 2020: 250–276; DIJKSTRA 2020: 3–25; DRESKEN-WEILAND 2020: 115–134; ROSE 2020: 277–292. For an overview of papal ktetor and donor activities, from the time of Pope Sylvester I to Pope Martin V (1417–1431), see D'ONOFRIO (ed) 2016.

³ Observations on the ktetor and donor activities of the popes directed towards St. Peter's Basilica and Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura presented in this paper are based mainly on the data recorded in the *Liber pontificalis*, a key medieval source on the life and work of the heads of the Roman Catholic Church, translated into English, in the version edited by Raymond Davis, see DAVIS (ed), 1989. Regarding this work and its importance, a lively debate started among scientists which, to put it mildly, has continued to this day, concerning various aspects of knowing the *Liber pontificalis* – its genre definition, the time of its creation, the dynamics of its formation, but also its propaganda role. Among numerous titles on the mentioned topics, see NOBLE 1985: 347–358; Alto BAUER 2004; MCKITERICK 2020.

as a key focus of papal ktetor and donor activities throughout the Middle Ages. Although it was not a papal foundation (ktetoria), St. Peter's Basilica was systematically extended thanks to the heads of the Roman Church, starting from the second half of the 5th century. Due to the efforts of popes Simplicius (468–483) and Symmachus (498–514), the porticos leading to the church, several chapels and fountains, the baptistery, and the atrium were built. During the time of Pope Gregory I (590–604), there were the first significant changes in the interior of the temple, the main

goal of which was to facilitate access to the crypt space (MCKITERICK, OSBORNE, RICHARDSON 2013: 3). Accordingly, a nave was formed around the apse so that the pilgrims, who already began visiting this place during the 320s AD (MCKITERICK, OSBORNE, RICHARDSON 2013: 2), could access the relics of St. Peter. Also, the *Liber pontificalis* testifies to the establishment of a special kind of service performed in the church which, starting from the time of Pope Gregory I, gave an active role to the relics of saints (LP 66.4: 60). Because he included St. Peter in the liturgy, the pope presented the saint's relics with a purple shroud with golden border weighing fifty kilograms, and he gave a pure silver ciborium to the main altar (LP 66.4: 60). With his ktetor activity in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Gregory I gave a significant impetus to the activities of his successors and, throughout the 7th and 8th centuries, the basilica remained the focus of papal interest. Over the centuries, the basilica was renovated several times, chapels and oratories added, and the relics of St. Peter, the main altar, as well as the altars of established chapels and oratories, were presented with holy cups, richly decorated shrouds, candelabra, and other pieces of furniture made of precious metals.

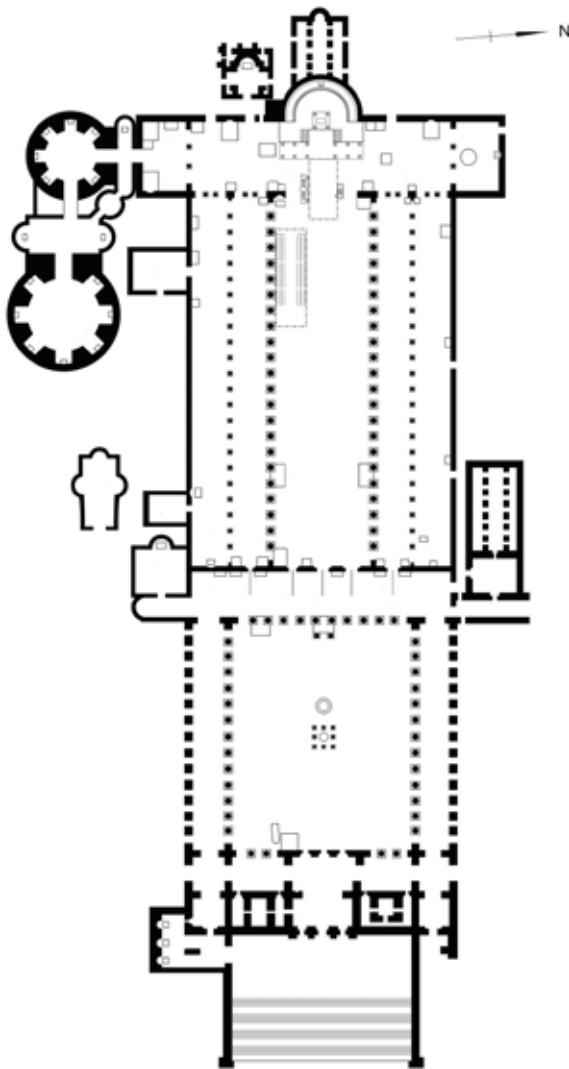


Fig. 1. Floor plan of the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (source: SMITH, O'CONNOR 2019: Fig. A, p. 2)

Thanks to the data from the source, it is possible to reconstruct, at least in the form of a sketch, the history of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome during the early Middle Ages. The information on the papal renovations indicates the course of deterioration, but also the course of repairs and systematic reconstruction of the church. The first documented restoration of the temple was recorded during the pontificate of Pope Honorius I (625–638) related, as it appears, to the restoration of the roof and the covering of the church with second-hand bronze tiles for which the pope requested and received the consent of Emperor Heraclius (610–641) (LP 72.2: 62). The apsidal mosaic of the church also seems to have been significantly damaged at that time and its restoration is documented by a short testimony recorded in the *Liber pontificalis* in which Pope Severus I (638–640) is named as its restorer (LP 73.5: 64; JAMES 2017: 282). However, in the absence of more precise data, the extent of the restoration of the mosaic, as well as the characteristics of the restored one remain unknown. Judging by the data from the source, the next renovation was undertaken in 778/9, during the pontificate of Pope Hadrian I (772–795), and included the replacement of fourteen original roof beams that were gravely damaged, the repair of the entire length of the roof, and intervention on the porticoes (LP 97.64: 152). Also, it is known that thanks to Pope Hadrian I, certain works were carried out in the apse of St. Peter's Basilica in 782/3, which, regarding the description in the *Liber pontificalis*, obviously included interventions on the apsidal mosaic, which was “restored to the likeness of the original” (LP 97.74: 158). In the end, the scope of the restoration works of St. Peter's Basilica during the pontificate of Pope Leo III (795–816), recorded in the sources, is not fully clarified. It is stated that the pope had the whole church covered with a new roof (LP 98.3, 157), which raises the question of the extent to which the roof was renewed in the time of Pope Hadrian I. In the context of the papal ktetor and donor activities related to St. Peter's Basilica, another important undertaking of Pope Hadrian I is worth mentioning, who, among other things, proved to be a great restorer of the ancient aqueducts that supplied Rome with water. The restoration of the Sabatina aqueduct (*Aqua Sabatina*) in 784/5 was particularly important for St. Peter's Basilica. It supplied water to the baptistery, and after this intervention, also to the fountain in the atrium and the bath intended for pilgrims (LP 97.81: 162).

The exterior of St. Peter's Basilica was also a significant focus of papal ktetor activities. It was recorded in the biography of Pope Honorius I that this pope had the main door of St. Peter's Basilica, in the sources referred to as *Mediana*, plated with pure silver (LP 72.2: 62). During the pontificate of Pope Hadrian I, it was ordered to transfer the splendid doors from an ancient building in Perugia and place them at the entrance to the atrium of St. Peter's Basilica (LP 97.96: 168). Thanks to Pope Donus I (676–678), the atrium of the church was entirely paved with marble (LP 80.1: 71). Later, there was built the oldest known campanile, thanks to Pope Stephen II (752–757). According to the sources, the campanile was made of wood that was partly gilded and partly silver-plated and was presented with three bells that called priests and believers to prayer (LP 94.47: 72). Also, as can be read on the pages of the *Liber pontificalis*, in the atrium of St. Peter's Basilica, named as *quadriporticus*, Pope Stephen II “restored eight marble, sculpturally decorated columns of extraordinary

beauty”, “connected them, at the top, with stone blocks” and then “covered them with a bronze roof” (LP 94.52: 74–75). Previous researchers have assumed that the mentioned description refers to the restoration of the fountain which, at the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th century, was placed in the atrium of St. Peter’s Basilica thanks to Pope Symmachus I. Richard Krautheimer believes that the restoration by Pope Stephen II included the addition of four columns to the already existing structure and the formation of a roof (KRAUTHEIMER, CORBETT, FRAZER 1977: 75). One gets the impression that the structures built during the pontificate of Pope Stephen II, the campanile and the restored fountain, were short-lived, given that their restoration is mentioned in the introductory parts of the life of Pope Leo III (LP 98.3: 177). At this point, it is important to mention that data from the life of Pope Gregory III (731–741) indicate that, along St. Peter’s Basilica, there were auxiliary chambers, *pauperibus habitacula*, which functioned as accommodation for the poor. It is stated in the *Liber pontificalis* that these auxiliary chambers, during the pontificate of Pope Gregory III, were considerably damaged and that they were rebuilt from the ground up due to his support (LP 92.13: 26).

Radical changes to the exterior of St. Peter’s Basilica were accompanied by significant papal ktetor and donor activities in the interior of the church. Thus, several significant papal donor activities were recorded within the *Liber pontificalis* that particularly affected the visuality of the interior of the temple. It is known that Euty chius, the Exarch of Ravenna, presented Pope Gregory III with six twisted onyx columns (LP 92.5: 21). Considering the relations between Rome and Ravenna at the dawn of the fall of the Exarchate, the nature of the said gifts is not known. According to the testimonies from the sources, the pope placed them in front of St. Peter’s altar, joining them with “identical” columns from the time of Emperor Constantine the Great, so that they formed an altar partition connected at the top by a silver-plated beam on which there were the images of Christ and the twelve apostles, the Mother of God, and the Holy Virgins (LP 92.5: 21). Also, thanks to Pope Hadrian I, one of the greatest ktetors among the popes who “burned with great love and affection for (the church of) St. Peter”, the church was presented with a massive, cross-shaped candelabrum with 1,365 candles that hung over the presbytery and illuminated the temple four times a year, during the most revered feasts (LP 97.46: 140). An effective accent in the overall visuality of the interior was also the Crucifix made of fine silver, donated by Pope Leo III and placed in the transept (LP 98.39: 194). In addition, the main altar and the relics of St. Peter were the key focuses of papal ktetor and donor activities in the interior of the temple and from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 9th century they were generously presented by popes with various valuables. It is known that Pope Sergius I (687–701) donated to the church a massive censer made of pure gold, in which, during services and other ceremonies, a large amount of incense was placed, the smell of which “rose to the heights and wafted towards the Almighty God” (LP 86.10 : 83). This precious description, recorded on the pages of the *Liber pontificalis*, represents the first written testimony of the olfactory phenomenon in St. Peter’s Basilica and the impression that the smell of incense left on the believers, rising, like their prayers, towards the Savior. A similar gift was

recorded in the *vita* of Pope Leo III, who on several occasions presented the altar of the church with various valuables. In addition to the censer, three silver crowns (LP 98.3: 177), a gospel bound in gold and encrusted with precious stones, a golden chalice, a golden paten, and a gilded icon of Christ are worth mentioning (LP 98.57: 201). Pope Hadrian I, distinguished by similar activities, “decorated” the altar and the door leading to the altar with gold, in which, as it seems, figural representations were engraved, and then presented it with a paten and a chalice for daily use (LP 97.89 : 165). In addition to pieces of furniture made of precious metals, silk or scarlet intercolumnial veils were also frequently donated, as well as altar covers that, quite often, contained a decoration of an ornamental or figural character. Apparently, with the donor activities of Pope Zacharias I (741–752), who presented the altar of St. Peter’s Basilica with a purple shroud with a representation of the Nativity of Christ and silk intercolumnial veils (LP 93.19: 44), a long and extensive series of similar papal donor activities began. Thanks to Pope Hadrian I, the church was given an altar cover with a representation of an angel freeing St. Peter from chains and even sixty-five intercolumnial curtains woven with gold (LP 97.46: 140). Pope Leo III donated to the altar a large number of richly decorated shrouds, one of which was very large, interwoven with gold and with a representation of Christ who gives St. Peter the power of binding and loosing, as well as the representation of the suffering of St. Peter and St. Paul (LP 98.7: 179). Around the main altar, on all four sides, he ordered to be placed crimson veils decorated with figural representations depicted within gilded square fields and medallions, rimmed with roses and gilded stars, and a cross studded with pearls (LP 96.93 : 220).

Pope Honorius I was the first in a series of heads of the Roman Church who bestowed the relics of St. Peter with candelabras made of precious metals and following his example Pope Sergius I donated three pairs of candelabras to the relics of the patron of the temple and the main altar a silver ciborium and eight veils, four of white and four of scarlet linen (LP 86.11: 83), which were, very likely, placed in the intercolumnial spaces in the immediate vicinity of the holy table. Ciboriums made of pure or gold-plated silver are extremely frequent papal gifts but, most often, the fate of old ciboriums is unknown. An exception is the example recorded in the *vita* of Pope Leo III, in which it is stated that in 808/9 the pope ordered the old ciborium from St. Peter’s Basilica to be transferred to the Church of Santa Maria ad Praesepe and replaced by a new one with silver columns and extraordinary decoration (LP 98.86: 217). It is known that the mentioned ciborium was especially presented by a donor thanks to whom the representations of four cherubs made of gilded silver were placed on the capitals of the columns (LP 98.57: 201).

Thanks to papal activities, a significant number of chapels and oratories of various dedications and purposes were built in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome during the early Middle Ages. Among them, there were several confirmed funerary chapels that the popes built in order to be buried after death *ad beatum Petrum apostolum*. At this point, it is important to note that St. Peter’s Basilica, as an imperial endowment, has not always been the usual place for papal burials. As Charles Picard said, *une nouvelle époque* in customs related to papal funerals begins with Leo I (440–461), the first pope buried in St. Peter’s

Basilica (OSBORNE 2020: 24). However, it is important to emphasize that the pope was originally buried outside the sacral space of the church in the secretarium. The evidence indicate that the key step in transferring the grave of Pope Leo I to the nave of the church was made by Pope Sergius I, who prepared a place for him in the south transept of the nave and richly presented it with valuables like a paten encrusted with precious stones and a cross with an ornament of precious stones, hyacinth, and emerald (LP 86.12: 84). After Pope Sergius I, Pope John VII (705–707), *vir eruditissimus et acundus eloquentia* (LP 88.1: 86), was the first in a series of heads of the Roman Church who, during his lifetime, prepared a tomb for himself in St. Peter's Basilica, consecrating the chapel, formed in the eastern end of the northern nave, to the Mother of God (Fig. 2).⁴ Judging by the information from the *Liber pontificalis* and the epitaph documented in the oratory⁵, the pope furnished his endowment with mosaics and lavishly donated pure gold and silver (LP 88.1: 86). However, at the beginning of the



Fig. 2. Ideal reconstruction of the oratory of Pope John VII, the north-eastern corner of the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, 705–707 (source: BALLARDINI, POGLIANI 2013: Fig. 10.11, p. 208)

17th century, during the extensive reconstruction of St. Peter's Basilica, which, by the order of Pope Paul V (1605–1621), was carried out by the architect Carlo Maderno (1556–1629), the oratory was demolished. The significant data necessary for the reconstruction of the architectural articulation and the painted program of the oratory can be found in the materials created during the Renaissance and Baroque. These are, in the first place, the drawings by Giacomo Grimaldi and Domenico Tasseli, collections and albums made at the request of Pope Paul V (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 2733; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio del Capitolo di San Pietro A 64 ter) (OSBORNE 2020: 25), the works of Onofrio Panvini and Tiberius Alfarano, the corpus of fragments of mosaic decoration preserved in grottoes under the floor of the present-day church, as well as those parts

⁴ Among the more recent titles, significant for the reconstruction of the original appearance of the oratory of Pope John VII, see BALLARDINI, POGLIANI 2013, 190–213.

⁵ The epitaph is mentioned in the writings of Venerable Bede (672/3–735). It seems that it was known to him from a copy of the *Liber pontificalis*. When writing about the oratory, the author copied the text of the epitaph to his work *De temporum ratione*, see OSBORNE 2020:24.

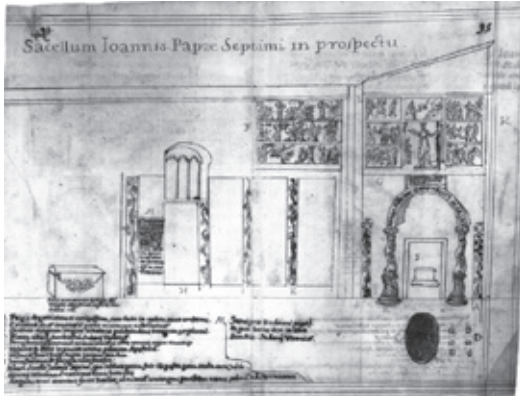


Fig. 3. Layout of the mosaic decoration of the oratory of Pope John VII (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 2733, fols. 94^v–95^r), St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, 705–707 (source: BALLARDINI, POGLIANI 2013: Fig. 10.2, p. 192)



Fig. 4. Fragment of the ktetor portrait of Pope John VII, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, 705–707 (source: OSBORNE 2020: Fig. 2.2, p. 29)

of the painted program found in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Rome, St. Mark's Church in Florence, the Museo d'Arte Sacra di Orte, and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (VAN DIJK 1995: 2–6). The researchers of the oratory have always been especially attracted to the mosaics that were unusually built only in the higher zones of the north and east walls (Fig. 3).⁶ Connecting the cycles dedicated to the life of Christ and the life of St. Peter, the mosaic decoration of the oratory has a kind of culmination in the representation of the Virgin Orante, placed directly above the altar in front of which the pope-ktetor is kneeling. The Virgin is represented in a full, frontal figure, wearing a sumptuous imperial robe, a long, purple dress decorated with gold, pearls, and red and blue precious stones, her feet resting on an equally richly decorated square pedestal. Presented before the Mother of God, Pope John VII is depicted in the vestments of a bishop with the papal pallium that descends from his shoulders and falls over his chest and a square nimbus, while he offers a model of the oratory of patroness (Fig. 4). Following his example, Pope Gregory III built an oratory dedicated to Christ and the Mother of God in the immediate

⁶ It remains unknown what caused such an arrangement and whether certain parts of the original decoration had perished earlier, especially if we take into account the testimony from the *Liber Pontificalis* that Pope John VII decorated the oratory with representations of the Fathers of the Church “on the left and on the right”, see *LP* 88.1: 86

vicinity of the triumphal arch and presented it with “the relics of the holy apostles, all holy martyrs, confessors, and the righteous” (LP 92.6: 22). In the long list of valuables that the pope donated to the newly built oratory, one particular item attracts special attention. Namely, the *Liber pontificalis* states that the pope presented the *imago* of the Mother of God with a golden diadem, a golden necklace with precious stones hanging from it, and earrings studded with six hyacinths (LP 92.6: 22). The description is the only evidence of a possible pictorial program of the oratory with the representation of the Mother of God as the pivotal point, but its position, iconography, and stylistic characteristics cannot be reliably determined. After moving the relics of Pope Leo I to the nave of St. Peter’s Basilica and establishment of the funerary chapels of Pope John VII and Gregory III, Paul I (757–767) was the next pope who prepared for himself a place of eternal rest in the mentioned temple. According to the source, the pope built a chapel dedicated to the Mother of God in the south transept of St. Peter’s Basilica, in the immediate vicinity of the chapel of Pope Leo I, decorating it with mosaics and presented it with numerous valuables (LP 95.6: 83). However, due to the lack of information, it seems that the question of the mosaic decoration of the oratory will remain forever unanswered. But then again, it is important to note the description of the apparently free-standing statue of the Mother of God (*ubiet effigiem sancte Dei genetricis in statu ex argentodeaurat*) (LP 95.6: 83; OSBORNE 2020: 184) which, if this text is properly understood, would represent a unique example of its kind in early medieval Rome. Considering the circumstances of the pontificate of Pope Paul I, amid the Iconoclastic Controversy that shook Constantinople, the representation of the Mother of God in sculpture, in the absence of similar examples, could only be interpreted in the light of the attitude of Rome and the heads of the Roman Church towards the iconoclastic dogma, defending the orthodoxy of the worship of anthropomorphic religious figures.

Besides the funerary chapels, several chapels of other purposes were built next to St. Peter’s Basilica. In the context of increasingly decisive political and dogmatic distance from Constantinople, turning to new allies in the West and the formation of the Papal-Frankish Alliance, Pope Stephen II (752–757), at the end of his pontificate, began the transformation of the mausoleum next to the transept of St. Peter’s Basilica⁷ to the chapel of the Frankish rulers dedicated to the early Christian martyr St. Petronilla⁸ (LP 95.6: 83; OSBORNE 2020: 184) (Fig. 5; Fig. 6). His brother and successor, Pope Paul I, undertook the constituting of the ultimate Frankish cult place in the sacral focus of the city by the act of transferring the sarcophagus of St. Petronilla and by painting the chapel with scenes from the life of

⁷ Research has shown that the chapel of St. Petronilla was formed by rebuilding the already existing rotunda, otherwise known as the mausoleum of Emperor Honorius, which was built at the beginning of the 5th as a tomb of Empress Maria, the wife of Emperor Honorius (395–423), see MCEVOY 2013: 119–123. MACKIE 2003: 53 states the results of the research according to which the so-called Mausoleum of Honorius was built on the site of older buildings whose first phase dates to the beginning of the 3rd century and the second to the reign of Emperor Constantine.

⁸ St. Petronilla, an early Christian martyr, was revered throughout the Middle Ages as the daughter of St. Peter. The details of her life are recorded in the apocrypha, primarily in the writing known as the Acts of Peter, written in Greek and dated around 200 AD, see GOODSON 2014: 168.

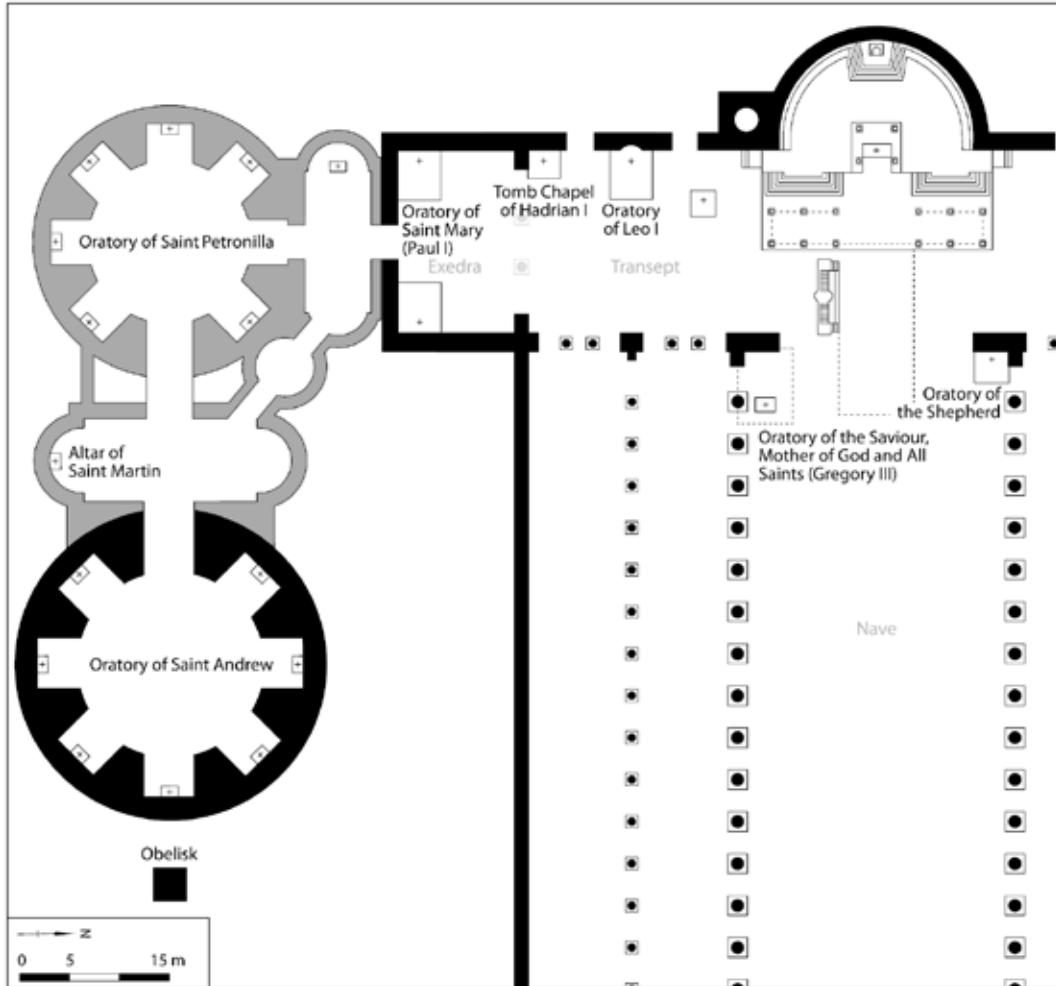


Fig. 5. Detail of the floor plan of the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome with the location of the chapel of St. Petronilla (source: STORY 2013: Fig. 13.1, p. 257)

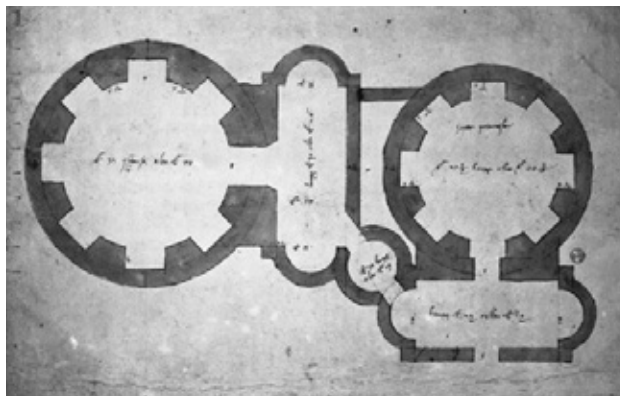


Fig. 6. The floor plan of the chapel of St. Petronilla and rotunda of St. Andrew, drawing by an unknown Florentine, the second half of the 16th century (source: McEVoy 2013: Fig. 6.2, p. 123)



Fig. 7. Anonymous author, Basilica di S. Paolo sulla via Ostiense, the last quarter of the 18th century, Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Rome (source: CAMERLENGHI 2018: Fig. I.8, p. 9)

Constantine the Great (VALENTI 2012: 116), which embodied the paradigm of Frankish rulers, papal allies, as *new Constantines*⁹. In addition, in the atrium named *Paradise*, Pope Paul I built another chapel dedicated to the Mother of God and “decorated it extraordinarily” (LP 95.6: 83). Known as Santa Maria ad Grada or Santa Maria in Turri, the chapel was demolished during the reconstruction of St. Peter’s Basilica in the 17th century when, as a witness of its demolition, G. Grimaldi copied the mosaic from the facade with the representation of Christ in a mandorla supported by angels (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 2733, fols. 152^v–153^r) (OSBORNE 2020: 185). At this point, it is important to emphasize that St. Peter’s Basilica was not a space within which only chapels and oratories were formed but also separate sacral buildings, as evidenced in the *vita* of Pope Gregory III, under whose care, *ad beatum Petrum apostolum*, a church was built with an interesting dedication to two Syrian martyrs, St. Sergius and St. Bacchus (LP 92.13: 25; COATES-STEPHENS 1997: 193).

Along with the ktetor and donor activities directed towards St. Peter’s Basilica, the popes showed great interest in the church dedicated to San Paolo Fuori le Mura (Fig. 7). The original

⁹ On the phenomenon of *new Constantines* among the Frankish rulers, see EMERICK 2016: 133–162.

church was built by Emperor Constantine the Great and his son Constans (CAMERLENGHI 2018: 31–37) at the place of martyrdom of St. Paul where the saint’s relics were transferred at the request of Pope Cornelius (251–253) in the mid-3rd century (MCKITTERICK 2020: 112). The basilica of small dimensions was replaced by a much larger one during the reign of emperors Valentinian II (375–392), Theodosius I (378–395), and Arcadius (395–408) (DOCCI 2008: 30–55; CAMERLENGHI 2018: 41). The discovered inscriptions in the apse of the temple also mention the merits of Pope Siricius (384–399), Emperor Honorius (393–423), Galla Placidia, and Pope Leo I (440–461) who restored this imperial endowment *post ignem divinum* (DOCCI 2008: 56–66; CAMERLENGHI 2018: 83–101). Despite the undoubted imperial character of this endowment, given the city protection cult that it inherited, the church early became a significant focus of the papal ktetor and donor activities that practically “transformed” it into a *deed of the pope*.¹⁰ In the period from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 9th century, together with St. Peter’s Basilica, the church was systematically restored, extended, and richly endowed thanks to numerous heads of the Roman Church. The importance of this temple for early medieval popes is evidenced by the fact that gifts to St. Peter’s Basilica were often accompanied by identical gifts to Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, as the key Roman sanctuaries that inherited the cults of the two saints who sanctified Rome with their suffering. In support of this, there are frequent references to papal ktetor and donor activities in St. Peter’s Basilica accompanied by a statement that “the same was done in Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura”. At the beginning of this discussion and in support of what has been said, an example of the undertaking of Pope Gregory I in St. Peter’s Basilica is given. It comprised the rebuilding of the apse and the donation of the saint’s relics and the ciborium for the main altar, since it is stated in the *Liber pontificalis* that the same was done by the pope in Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura (LP 66.4: 60).

Just as in the case of St. Peter’s Basilica, the sources record the restoration of the temple and the donor activities of the heads of the Roman Church dominantly directed towards the main altar and the relics of St. Paul. After Pope Gregory I, Pope Sergius I also stood out with his ktetor efforts in Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura. According to testimonies from sources, he renovated the temple and donated new roofs to the auxiliary chambers in the immediate vicinity of the basilica, which “had been exposed to a long period of decay” (LP 86.12: 84). The first interventions on the basilica were carried out by order of Pope Gregory II during whose pontificate the roof of the late antique temple collapsed. Thanks to the pope, a large part of the church was covered with new beams brought from Calabria and roof covering. The interventions also included the repair of the altar and the

¹⁰ Contemporary sources indicate that the popes devotedly worked on highlighting their merits for equipping the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, simultaneously omitting any mention of imperial donations for its construction. This is evidenced by the narratives recorded in the *Liber pontificalis* in which the information about the activities of the emperors Valentinian II, Theodosius I, and Arcadius is “overlooked”, which together with the gallery of papal portraits on the side walls of the nave dominantly created an impression of Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura as papal, see MCKITTERICK 2020: 113–114. On the paintings in the church, see ELEEN 1985: 251–259.

silver ciborium that suffered due to the collapse of the roof (LP 91.2: 3–4). It is very likely that the works on the roof of the basilica undertaken by the order of Pope Gregory II included only the transept, considering that during the pontificate of Pope Gregory III there was a work carried out that involved covering the church with a new roof “from the apse to the entrance to the temple”, that is along the entire length of the nave (LP 92.13: 26). Just like in St. Peter’s Basilica, Pope Hadrian I had the roof restored, apparently the parts exempted from the restoration by Popes Gregory II and Gregory III, as well as the portico around the basilica (LP 97.67: 153–154). The source also reveals that there were monasteries next to Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, which were demolished and abandoned at the time of the pontificate of Pope Gregory II. With the care of the pope, the monasteries were restored and monastic communities were founded so that “prayers would be offered to the Lord three times during the day and night” (LP 91.3: 4). At this point, it should be mentioned that certain works were also carried out in the atrium of the basilica. As it was recorded in the *Liber Pontificalis*, the atrium, where “weed grew” and “horses and oxen grazed”, was paved with marble thanks to Pope Hadrian I (LP 97.47: 140). Also, there is the information recorded in the *vita* of Pope Leo III telling about the devastating earthquake that shook the city on April 30, 9th indiction (year 800/801) and destroyed Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, which was restored with the kindness of the pope “so that it looks same as before” (LP 98.31: 191–192).

The source also indicates a significant donor activity of popes to Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura. Among the few activities of Pope John VI (701–705), it is particularly pointed out that this head of the Roman Church presented Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura with white veils adjusted in the intercolumniation around the altar (LP 87.3: 85). Popes Zacharias I and Hadrian I presented Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura with similar gifts, which they also donated to St. Peter’s Basilica – intercolumnial veils of fine silk (LP 93.19: 43; LP 97.47: 140). Nevertheless, Pope Leo III stood out as the greatest benefactor of Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura. It is known that the pope gave generous gifts to the altar of the church on several occasions and that he presented the temple with white veils used on the Feast of Christ’s Resurrection and the Feast of the Apostles (LP 98.8: 179). He presented the altar of the temple, first of all, with four silk, crimson veils and three altar covers with figural decoration, one encrusted with white gold with the representation of the Resurrection, the other interwoven with gold with the representation of the Birth and personality of St. Monk, and the third one of Tyrian purple cloth with a representation of the Healing of the Blind (LP 98.28: 190). After that, he also donated to the altar two figures of angels made of fine silver, four porphyry candlesticks that hung in front of the apse suspended on gold chains, two silver candlesticks, and two silver lanterns with relief decoration (LP 98.58–59: 201). In 804/5, Pope Leo III presented the altar of Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura also with a shroud of extraordinary dimensions with a representation of the Mother of God, Christ, and the apostles, as well as a golden cross of larger dimensions decorated with precious stones (LP 98.60: 202), and then a shroud woven with gold with a representation of the Resurrection encrusted with pearls (LP 98.61: 202). Finally, in 808/9 he had

the holy table of Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura covered with gold and silver and the passage to the saint's relics plated with silver and marked with the symbol of orthodoxy (LP 98.85: 217).

* * *

Researches on the papal ktetor and donor activities in the *eternal city* from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 9th century point to several key focuses in a conceptual and phenomenological sense. The efforts of the heads of the Roman Church towards the systematic reconstruction and furnishing of St. Peter's Basilica and Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura dedicated to the princes of the apostles especially stand out, which is in accordance with the developed martyrological tradition of Rome consecrated by the suffering of a large number of Christians. One gets the impression that the orientation of papal ktetor and donor activities towards the mentioned temples was mainly motivated by the need to establish a paradigm of papal power and authority that rested precisely on the suffering and cults of St. Peter, the first bishop of the city and St. Paul, but also Rome as the center of the entire Christian ecumene. Accordingly, the popes have proven to be significant benefactors in the restoration and expansion of St. Peter's Basilica and Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura and contributors who determined the visual appearance of the exterior and interior of the two temples. Particular attention in research is focused on the reconstruction of the early medieval history of temples, the course of decay and restoration, the changes that took place in them, and the roles they played in contemporary political-ideological and cultural-historical circumstances. Despite the fact of belonging to the Empire, its absence was permanent in the daily life of Rome which functioned *per se*, under the direct patronage of the pope whose ktetor and donor activities directed towards two key churches of the city can be understood as mechanisms of construction of the (visual) identity of the city, and consequently of the authority of the institution of the papacy. Focusing on the key points in the sacral topography of Rome, the popes tried, in the stormy socio-political circumstances of the era, to emphasize the continuity and legitimacy of the city based precisely on the suffering of the princes of the apostles. They systematically reconstructed and bestowed the churches that represented a kind of reliquaries of city-protecting cults. In this sense, the extraordinary importance of art and visual culture in the visualization of the papal programs is revealed, together with the image as a powerful rhetorical weapon that materialized the propaganda activity of the heads of the Roman Church in the easiest and most effective possible way. The focus of papal donor activities, as well as the nature of the gifts, indicate the orientation of the ktetors towards the defining elements of the sacral spaces of the two temples – the altars and the graves of the Holy Apostles. This is an obvious effort, through the most immediate connection to the key points in the space of the temples, to realize the full potential in the creation of a paradigm about Rome as a *city of the church*, a *papal city* where the power of the pope, based on the cult of the princes of the apostles, is absolute and untouchable. In addition to the ideological dimension, emphasized primarily by the donor activities of the heads of the Roman Catholic Church, it is necessary

to emphasize that the papal interventions, especially those aimed at the repairs of the two temples, also pointed to the technical aspects that ensured the functionality of the churches that were, most directly, the overall religious, but also everyday life centers of the city and its inhabitants.

This research, as a special feature, recognized the phenomenon of common, unique, and inseparable donations to St. Peter's Basilica and Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, which meant, obviously, a living custom of equipping temples with the same offerings. So, not infrequently, sources mention the ktetor and donor activities of the heads of the Roman Church in St. Peter's Basilica accompanied by the statement that the same was done in Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura. This significant phenomenon, which could be characterized in the context of a dual ktetorship, is an illustrative testimony of the importance that the two temples, memorials of the princes of the apostles, had in emphasizing the authority of the city and the heads of the Roman Church, and how much they are, in the ktetorship, donorship, and even everyday religious practice, were inseparable like the two saints who, having suffered for Christ, consecrated the city forever.

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Огњен Љ. Тутић

ОД ГРГУРА I ВЕЛИКОГ ДО ЛАВА III:
КТИТОРСКА И ДОНАТОРСКА ДЕЛАТНОСТ ПАПА У РИМУ
И БАЗИЛИКЕ СВ. ПЕТРА И САН ПАОЛО ФУОРИ ЛЕ МУРА

Сажетак

Рад је посвећен разматрању ктиторске и приложничке делатности папа у Риму од краја VI до почетка IX века у контексту систематског деловања поглавара Римске цркве ка конститусању идентитета Рима као града-цркве, а последично и изградњи ауторитета сопствене институције, утемељене на култовима принчева међу апостолима, Св. Петра и Св. Павла. Сходно томе, истраживања су показала да се базилика Св. Петра и Св. Павла Фуори ле Мура истичу као доминантни фокуси папских ктиторских и приложничких активности. Чувајући успомене на двојицу апостола чијим страдањем је град санктификован, базилике су функционисале као својеврсни реликвијари градозаштитних култова. Циљ овог рада је пружање детаљнијег увида у природу и динамику папских ктиторских и приложничких активности усмерених према наведеним црквама, којима су поглавари Римске цркве доминантно, визуелно и идеолошки, одредили читаву епоху у развоју и функционисању града.

Кључне речи: Рим, Свети Петар, Сан Паоло Фуори ле Мура (Свети Павле изван зидина), папе, ктиторство, донаторство.