CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Introduction: Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome
Authors	Ó Carragáin, Éamonn;Neuman de Vegnar, Carol
Publication date	2007
Original Citation	Ó Carragáin, É and Neuman de Vegvar, C. (2007) Introduction, in Ó Carragáin, E. and Neuman de Vegvar. C. (eds)., Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 1-10. isbn: 9780754660965
Type of publication	Book chapter
Link to publisher's version	https://www.routledge.com/Roma-Felix---Formation-and-Reflections-of-Medieval-Rome/Carragain-Vegvar/p/book/9780754660965
Rights	© Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar 2007. Published by Ashgate Publishing
Download date	2026-11-06 16:30:35
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15478



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome



Edited by
Éamonn Ó Carragain and
Carol Neuman de Vegvar

ASHGATE

Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West

Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome

Edited by

ÉAMONN Ó CARRAGÁIN
University College Cork, Ireland

CAROL NEUMAN DE VEGVAR
Ohio Wesleyan University, USA

ASHGATE

© Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar 2007

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar have asserted their moral right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the editors of this work.

Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Gower House
Croft Road
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 3HR
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington, VT 05401-4405
USA

Ashgate website: http://www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Roma Felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome. – (Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West)
1. Rome (Italy) – Religious life and customs. 2. Rome (Italy) – Church history. 3. Rome (Italy) – History – 476–420. I. Ó Carragáin, Éamonn. II. Neuman de Vegvar, Carol L., 1953– .
274.5'63203

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Roma Felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome / edited by Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar.
p. cm. – (Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West)
1. Rome (Italy) – History – 476–1420. 2. Rome (Italy) – Church history. 3. Church history – Middle Ages, 600–1500. I. Ó Carragáin, Éamonn. II. Neuman de Vegvar, Carol L., 1953– .
DG811.R55 2007
945'.63202–dc22 2006038645

ISBN 978-0-7546-6096-5

This book has been printed on acid-free paper.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall.

Contents

List of Figures vii
List of Tables ix
List of Musical Examples xiii

Introduction 1
Carol Neuman de Vegvar and Éamonn Ó Carragáin

PART I
Articulating the City: Communities, Congregations, Cults and Processions 11

1 Rome of the Martyrs: Saints, Cults and Relics, Fourth to Seventh Centuries 13
Alan Thacker

2 Building for Bodies: The Architecture of Saint Veneration in Early Medieval Rome 51
Caroline J. Goodson

3 Life after Death: The Afterlife of Sarcophagi in Medieval Rome and Ravenna 81
Dorothy Verkerk

4 Gendered Spaces: The Placement of Imagery in Santa Maria Maggiore 97
Carol Neuman de Vegvar

5 Roman Processions of the Major Litany (*litaniae maiores*) from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century 113
Joseph Dyer

6 Art and Socio-Cultural Identity in Early Medieval Rome: The Patrons of Santa Maria Antiqua 139
Stephen J. Lucey

7 Sacred Memory and Confraternal Space: The Insignia of the Confraternity of the Santissimo Salvatore (Rome) 159
Kirstin Noreen

PART II
READING THE CITY: ENVISIONING, INTERPRETING AND IMITATING MEDIEVAL ROME 189

8 Dating Medieval Mural Paintings in Rome:
A Case Study from San Lorenzo fuori le mura 191
John Osborne

9 'Ut Domus Tali Ornetur Decore': Metamorphosis of
Ornamental Motifs in Anagni and Rome 207
Martina Bagnoli

10 Fact and Fiction in the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* 235
Dale Kinney

11 Juniors Teaching Elders: Columbanus, Rome and Spiritual Authority 253
Damian Bracken

12 Ireland and Rome in the Seventh Century 277
Charles Doherty

13 Three Coins in a Fountain 287
Anna Gannon

14 Authority and Care: The Significance of Rome in
Twelfth-Century Chester 307
John Doran

Index 333

Introduction

Carol Neuman de Vegvar and Éamonn Ó Carragáin

O Roma felix, quae tantorum principum
es purpurata pretioso sanguine!
Excellis omnem mundi pulchritudinem
non laude tua, sed sanctorum meritis,
quos cruentatis iugulasti gladiis.[1]

O happy Rome, stained purple with the precious blood of so many princes!
You excel all the beauty of the world, not by your own glory,
but by the merits of the saints whose throats you cut with bloody swords.

This book takes its title from a Carolingian hymn, still sung in the Latin liturgy on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June). The hymn encapsulates the ambiguity with which the city of Rome was viewed by medieval Christians. Rome is 'happy', it 'excels all the beauty of the world' neither because of its long-lost military conquests nor because of the remains of its ancient monuments, but from the virtues of the saints who were martyred in the days of Rome's imperial greatness. Once Rome was ruled by a *princeps*, the emperor, and purple was the colour particularly associated with emperors. However, what matters to the Carolingian hymnist is not the imperial purple, but the royal purple of the blood spilt by Peter and Paul, 'such great princes', 'the triumphant soldiers of the hall of heaven' ('cælestis aulæ triumphales milites'), whom Christ has appointed to be princes to the Churches ('Ecclesiarum deputavit principes').[2] It is to Saints Peter and Paul, as the greatest of the martyrs, that Christians may now look for that fruitful prosperity, enlightenment, freedom and eternal security that the old Empire promised in vain. After an emperor had died, the Senate used to proclaim him a god; but now, 'in the presence of the Lord', Peter and Paul can bring to all Christians the assurance of an ascent to Olympus:

1 Stanza 7 of the Carolingian hymn 'Felix per omnes', tentatively attributed to Paulinus II of Aquileia (d. 802 CE). The hymn is sung in the modern Roman liturgy; the opening stanzas during the vigil-Office of Readings, and later stanzas (starting with 'O Roma felix [...]') during second Vespers, on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June): *Liber Hymnarius* (Solesmes, 1983), 390–93; for dating and possible author, see A. Lentini (ed.), *Te Decet Hymnus: L'Innario della 'Liturgia Horarum'* (Vatican, 1984), nos. 173 (p. 178) and 175 (p. 180).

2 *Liber Hymnarius*, 390, 392; Lentini, *Te Decet Hymnus*, 178, 180; on Christian polemical satires on imperial purple, see C. Pietri, *Roma Christiana: Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 224, 2 vols (Rome, 1976), 2:1638.

Hi sunt olivæ duæ coram Domino
et candelabra luce radiantia,
præclara cæli duo luminaria;
fortia solvunt peccatorum vincula
portas Olympi reserant fidelibus.[3]

These are two olive-trees in the presence of the Lord,
and candelabra radiating light: the two brightest
lights of heaven.[4] They break the strong chains of sin,
and open the gates of Olympus to the faithful.

Already in the early Middle Ages, the prestige of Saints Peter and Paul made Rome and its bishop of central importance to places at the ends of the earth, areas which had never formed part of the old Roman Empire. The prestige of the city, and the way in which this prestige was centred on the basilicas of the martyrs, is vividly encapsulated in a seventh-century Irish text. In 631 CE, the Synod of Mag Léne (in Munster, in the south of Ireland) decided to send a delegation to Rome to help them decide on the best practice to be followed when calculating the date of Easter:

> Then it seemed proper to our elders, according to the command, that if disagreement arises between one side and another, and judgement vary between leper and non-leper, they should go to the place which the Lord has chosen; and that 'if the matters are major', according to the synodical decree, 'they should be referred to the chief of cities'. Hence we sent those whom we knew to be wise and humble as children to their mother, and having had a prosperous journey through the will of God, some of them arrived in Rome, and returned to us in the third year. And they saw all things just as they had heard about them, but they found them more certain inasmuch as they were seen rather than heard. And they were in one lodging in the church of St Peter with a Greek, a Hebrew, a Scythian and an Egyptian at the same time at Easter, in which we differed by a whole month. And so they testified to us before the holy relics, saying: 'As far as we know, this Easter is celebrated throughout the whole world'. And we have tested that the power of God is in the relics of the holy martyrs and in the writings which they brought back. We saw with our eyes a totally blind girl opening her eyes at these relics, and a paralytic walking and many demons cast out.[5]

3 For modern liturgical use, Anselmo Lentini smoothed the all-too-pagan-sounding metaphor 'portas Olympi' to the less startling 'portasque caeli': Lentini, *Te Decet Hymnus*, 178; *Liber Hymnarius*, 390.

4 The hymn combines a reminiscence of Genesis 1:14, the creation of the sun and moon ('fecitque Deus duo magna luminaria') with Apocalypse 11:4: 'hii sunt duo olivae et duo candelabra in conspectu Domini terrae stantes'). This comes from the episode of the two witnesses whom the beast, coming forth from the abyss, slays in the streets of the great evil city known as Sodom and Egypt 'in which their lord was crucified'. Later the pair are brought to life again and taken up to heaven in a cloud (Apocalypse 11:1–14); immediately after their apotheosis, the seventh trumpet announces the war in which the beast with seven heads (Babylon, Rome) is destroyed (Apocalypse 11:15 to 13:18). For further references to the 'duo olivae', see J. O'Reilly, 'The Book of Kells, folio 114r: A Mystery Revealed yet Concealed', in R. M. Spearman and J. Higgitt (eds), *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh and Stroud, 1993), 106–14, at 109–10.

5 'Deinde uisum est senioribus nostris iuxta mandatum, ut si diuersitas oborta fuerit inter causam et causam, et uariauerit iudicium inter lepram et non lepram, irent ad locum quem elegit

This passage also encapsulates part of the rationale for the present book: to explore the fascination which Rome had for the rest of Europe: as the 'mother' to which the 'children' should turn for instruction; the city-microcosm which gave a single fatherland to many diverse peoples; the place *par excellence* where the various nations could come together and learn from each other.[6] Cummian did not transcribe his list of nationalities dwelling in a single lodging from the diary of one of the returned Irish pilgrims; his account is not a simple piece of reporting; instead, he chose to paraphrase Colossians 3:9–11:

> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

Cummian saw the lodging at St Peter's as an image of the Christian Church, in which many nations were brought, by conversion, into a new unity. By an increased awareness of their part in this universal Church the Irish, also, could now be renewed, and put off their old provincial ways. But the lodging 'in' St Peter's is, in all probability, not merely a symbolic invention. The lodging assigned to the Irish delegates may have actually stood under the shadow of St Peter's, because we know from the *Liber Pontificalis* that pilgrim-dwellings were clustered so close to the ancient basilica in the late seventh century that some of them were damaged by rain dripping and tiles falling from the roof.[7] Clerics far from Rome, like these Irish, tried in imagination to get as close as possible to the city: as it were, if they could not travel in the body, they travelled in the spirit. On occasion, when travel to Rome was impossible, Rome and the great ceremonies of its basilicas could be seen by means of visions.[8] One way in which travellers to Rome could enable

---

Dominus; ut "si causae fuerint maiores", iuxta decretum sinodicum, "ad capud urbium sint referendae." Inde misimus quos nouimus sapientes et humiles esse, uelut natos ad matrem, et prosperum iter in uoluntate Dei habentes, et ad Romam urbem aliqui ex eis uenientes, tertio anno ad nos usque peruenerunt. Et sic omnia uederunt sicut audierunt, sed et ualde certiora utpote uisa quam audita inuenerunt. Et in uno hospicio cum Greco et Hebreo, Scita et Aegiptiaco in aecclesia sancti Petri simul in pascha, in quo mense integro disiuncti sumus, fuerunt. Et ante sancta sic testati sunt nostris, dicentes: "Per totum orbem terrarum hoc pascha, ut scimus, celebratur." Et nos in reliquiis sanctorum martyrum et scripturis quas attulerunt probauimus inesse uirtutem Dei. Uidimus oculis nostris puellam caecam omnino ad has reliquias oculos aperientem, et paraclitum ambulantem, et multa demonia eiecta': M. Walsh and D. Ó Cróinín (eds), *Cummian's Letter 'De Controversia Paschali' and the 'De Ratione Conputandi'* (Toronto, 1988), 92–4.

6 On Rome as microcosm, see Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, lines 63, 66: 'Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam. [...] Vrbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat'; 'You [Rome] made one homeland for many peoples. [...] You made a city of what formerly belonged to the world': A. van Heck (ed.), *Breviarium Urbis Romae Antiquae Viatorum in Usum*, 2nd edn (Leiden and Boston, 2002), 50.

7 L. Duchesne (ed.), *Le Liber Pontificalis*, 2 vols (Paris, 1886–92), 1:375; see also R. Davis (trans.), *The Book of Pontiffs*, rev. edn (Liverpool, 2000), 88.

8 See C. Plummer (ed.), *Life of St Barach*, in *Bethada Náem nÉrenn; Lives of Irish Saints*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1922), 2:41–42, Ch. XXX; and St Brigid, *Vita Prima*, trans. Seán Connolly, 'Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae: Background and Historical Value', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of*

their native communities to experience the aura of Rome was to bring home books and relics for them: Cummian makes it clear that the messianic promises of sacred scripture came to fulfilment when such Roman treasures reached his Irish community – in their presence, the blind received sight, the lame walked, demons were cast out.[9]

In this book, we begin with aspects of how the city itself was preserved, constructed and understood, and move to ways in which the city made an impact on the imagination of educated people (primarily clerics and monks or nuns, but also the laity) throughout Europe. The book brings together papers from three recent scholarly gatherings which had Rome as a major theme: the Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo in May 2003, the International Medieval Congress at Leeds in July of the same year, and the Medieval Academy of America meetings held in Miami in 2005. We wish to thank the organizers of these congresses, and in particular Kirstin Noreen and John Osborne, the organizers of the three 'Medieval Rome' sessions at Kalamazoo, who consented that some of the papers offered there should be published under the aegis of the present volume.

Alan Thacker fittingly opens the volume with a comprehensive survey of that aspect of Rome which ensured that, for the rest of Europe in the early Middle Ages, it was indeed *Roma felix*, a blessed city: the cult of the martyrs, their basilicas, and their relics. Thacker argues that the physical features of the cult of the martyrs, in particular the great monumental basilicas and the series of monumental inscriptions such as those of Pope Damasus, determined which martyrs would become famous and which would never be 'discovered'. Thacker provides an object lesson on the interaction between the physical topography of Rome, its ecclesiastical politics, and the way Rome was imagined throughout Europe. The interaction between Roman topography, architecture and the cult of the martyrs is further explored in the contribution by Caroline J. Goodson: juxtaposing these two papers serves to emphasize their distinct and independent perspectives on this important subject. Whereas Thacker concentrates on the conceptual development of the earliest cults of the martyrs and the architectural expressions of this cult, Goodson brings the story down to the Carolingian period: she vividly describes how Pope Paschal I ordered the relics of St Caecilia to be brought in procession from the Via Appia to the saint's newly built basilica in Trastevere, and places that event in the context of changing papal policies towards the cult of relics. Dorothy Verkerk focuses on one physical expression of the martyr-cult: the re-use of ancient sarcophagi, not only to house the bodily relics of the saints, but also the bodies of popes, bishops and emperors.

The volume now moves on to how cultic observance was experienced in Rome in the early Middle Ages. Carol Neuman de Vegvar helps us to imagine how the congregation in Santa Maria Maggiore, on a major feast such as the papal stational Mass on Easter Sunday morning or on the mornings of the four major Marian feasts (2 February, 25 March, 15 August, 8 September) could see themselves reflected in the fifth-century Old Testament mosaics above the pillars of the nave. As the congregation faced the altar, the morning sun would have struck in from the southeast (that is, from the left side of the basilica), illuminating the row of mosaics on the right side where the women stood.

Ireland, 119 (1989): 5–49, at 41. These passages are discussed in É. Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede*, Jarrow Lecture 1994 (Jarrow, 1995), 1–2 and 37–8.

9 Cummian refers to gospel passages such as Mark 16:17–18.

The men, standing on the left half of the basilica, could see themselves reflected in the mosaics' opposite side, where male figures predominate; the women, standing on the right half, would have been able to contemplate the mosaic scenes on the left side of the basilica: on that side, men and women of the Old Testament figure together as equal participants in biblical history.

Next, Joseph Dyer shows how penitential processions on the days of Litany, developed in the sixth and early seventh centuries, built on and transformed the ancient classical processions of the Robigalia; and how the differing routes assigned to these annual processions, between the early and later medieval periods, reflected the ambitions of the papal court to assert its political and social control over the city.

Stephen J. Lucey also studies the social and political factors that inspired the ecclesiastical sites which survive even to the present day. He examines the patronage behind the construction and successive campaigns of decoration in Santa Maria Antiqua, a church in the Roman Forum which was clearly used by the Greek colony in Rome: both the church and the nearby Schola Greca, the centre of that colony, stand in the shadow of the Palatine Hill. In the early Middle Ages, the Palatine was still the official residence of the eastern emperors. Santa Maria was initially a Greek church: as this article points out, of the many inscriptions in the building, all are in Greek until the reign of John VII (705–707). The commissioners and community of the church were, therefore, of particular importance in Rome during the political, christological and ecclesiological tensions of the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Lucey also demonstrates that while Santa Maria Antiqna attracted papal and aristocratic patronage, as a *diaconia* the church was commissioned to serve the poor and pilgrims.

If a city is to remain alive, it needs to be continually recreated by the living communities who inhabit it. Kirstin Noreen provides an object lesson in how this principle worked in medieval Rome. Through a detailed survey of the history of the Confraternity of the Santissimo Salvatore, and of their insignia which are still to be seen, in sculpted plaques, in the streets around St John Lateran, she shows how the significance of the two most important early Christian images of Christ in Rome was publicized: that of the icon in the papal chapel of the Lateran palace (the chapel known as the 'Sancta Sanctorum' or 'Holy of Holies') and that at the centre of the great apse-mosaic of the Lateran basilica. The importance of these images was proclaimed, not only through liturgical ceremonies, but eventually through visual insignia which preserved throughout the year, and across the contiguous urban spaces, the memory of these ceremonies. From the twelfth century onwards the confraternity, whose job it was to celebrate and propagate the Lateran cults of the true image of Christ, ensured the continuity of that cult. Noreen shows how, through the work of the confraternity, the two ancient images were closely associated, so that the silver casing which Innocent III provided for the icon made it more closely resemble the bust-portrait in the Lateran apse. She also demonstrates how, during the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation, the ornaments and plaques, still to be seen on the Caelian Hill, kept the liturgical ceremonies of 15 August before the imaginations of Romans throughout the year. Noreen's paper shows the vital connection between surviving visual images and the history of cult practices which expressed the importance of these images in the life of the Medieval and Renaissance city.

The article which opens the second part of the book demonstrates that an awareness of the history of cult is an essential factor in dating works of visual art. Without such awareness, dating by means of notions of style can prove to be very unreliable. John Osborne shows that, in dating the murals of Crescentius in San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, a concentration on stylistic analysis in isolation has led earlier scholars to a completely mistaken dating, which his own examination of the development of the cult of St Catherine enables him to correct. The murals should then be dated not to the eighth century, as earlier scholars had proposed, but to the twelfth. Osborne's messages, concerning the necessary range of data to be applied in the dating of visual images and the revisions that this methodological shift will generate in the chronology of the city's art, together have the potential to change historians' understanding of the impact of such images on the cultic life of the city and the impressions they made on pilgrims and other visitors.

Martina Bagnoli shows that an artistic dialogue existed, in the early thirteenth century, between the work of artists in the city of Rome itself and those working on the crypt of the cathedral at Anagni. She demonstrates that, at Anagni, abstract ornamental patterns are structurally and iconographically significant, guiding the onlooker to an appreciation of the meaning of the iconographic programme. Some of the artists at Anagni formed part of a workshop that also worked on what is now the lower church at San Clemente in Rome. Bagnoli also underlines how traditions formed in Rome could be developed in provincial Italian cities.

Dale Kinney asks the important question, to what extent can we trust the descriptions of Rome in the twelfth-century *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*, the most widely read medieval account of the city? The article begins with a masterly analysis of the procedures employed by the author of the *Mirabilia*: 'he was selective, focusing on sites of power, both pagan and Christian' (p. 237). Kinney then proceeds to make a detailed comparison between the way in which the streets between St Peter's and St Paul's were presented in the *Mirabilia* and in other twelfth-century texts, such as the *Ordo* of Canon Benedict and the *Graphia aureae urbis Romae*, and an earlier text, the Carolingian Itinerary of Einsiedeln. She demonstrates that 'despite its fantastic appearance [...], the *Ordo*'s route is still traceable and still practicable' (p. 245). This article is a model of how an intimate knowledge of the history of the ancient and medieval buildings that still survive in the modern topography of Rome can be used to illuminate and make sense of medieval descriptions of the city, too often dismissed as merely rhetorical exercises.

The final four articles give examples of how Rome was imagined and echoed in the Atlantic Isles: first Ireland and then Britain. Damian Bracken shows how important papal primacy was to two Irish ecclesiastics of the early seventh century, Columbanus and Cummian. They saw Rome as the river from which peripheral churches, such as the Irish who were understood to be at the ends of the earth, imbibed the true faith; and they accepted Rome's role as the touchstone, as well as the source, of orthodoxy: particularism and provinciality were seen as sure paths to heresy. Paradoxically, this acknowledgement of the centrality of the papacy was an important factor in the criticisms Columbanus addressed to Pope Boniface IV in 613 CE. A junior, such as Columbanus, had a filial and fraternal duty to correct the pope when the pope was in error: such honesty testified to the vital purity of the faith that the Irish had originally received, and had faithfully preserved.

Charles Doherty shows us that Irish writers were well able to adapt the Roman model to rewrite the topography of power in their own island. At the same time that Armagh came to be seen as the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, and so the Rome of Ireland, Christian writers increasingly mythologized Tara (by the mid-seventh century a deserted site) as the ancient pagan capital of Ireland. Like Rome, Ireland came to be seen to have two foundations. Pagan Rome had been founded by Romulus and Remus, and Romulus had famously killed his brother Remus; Rome, however, had been refounded by Saints Peter and Paul: this pair of heroes was not fratricidal, but together gave their lives for the salvation of the city.[10] In Christian Rome, power shifted from the ancient Palatine and Capitol Hills to the Caelian (on which stood the pope's cathedral, the *Basilica Salvatoris*) and to the graves of Peter and Paul, outside the boundaries of the city. In Christian Ireland, it was fitting that power and divine favour should shift from the ancient Tara to Armagh, the new centre of the little world that was Ireland. If Irish ecclesiastics imitated Rome, in such imitation there was no slavish subservience. Rome provided the Irish with a blueprint that they could use creatively to rethink and remodel their own island microcosm with its own political and ecclesiastical realities.

Anna Gannon gives another object lesson in how there could be a dialogue of ideas between Rome and the Atlantic Islands to the north. She examines how Roman images, such as the she-wolf with Romulus and Remus, were adapted in Anglo-Saxon coins to develop local political and religious ideologies. As she demonstrates, Anglo-Saxon 'imitations' of Roman objects 'go well beyond the mere copying of prestige items: they are actively engaged in a dialogue with the originals, translating them into an intelligible and sympathetic idiom that carries powerful connotations for their Germanic cultural context' (p. 288); and again, 'Christian iconography feeds on its Classical heritage and effortlessly translates its motifs' (p. 292). Gannon has a particularly valuable examination of Offa's famous gold dinar or mancus which copies an Islamic coin of Caliph Al-Mansur (773–74 CE). It was possibly coined to pay Peter's pence to the Papacy, and seems to have been found, in the nineteenth century, in Rome itself. Gannon ends by examining later Anglo-Saxon coinage, covered in inscriptions: in these coins, she argues, the text may have been construed as a visual image in its own right.

The final paper, the fourth to examine the dialogue between Rome and the Atlantic Islands, takes that dialogue to the end of the twelfth century. John Doran shows the monk Lucian of Chester seeing St Peter as the protector not only of Rome, but also of Chester. Doran shows that at a time when there was intense criticism of the growing ecclesiastical powers of Rome, and of the avarice of the Roman curia, Lucian still held to older ideas of Rome: founded indeed by the fratricidal Romulus and Remus, but refounded by the martyrs Peter and Paul. Although Lucian gives us a valuable insight into the survival, in popular spirituality, of early English attitudes towards papal Rome, there was nevertheless a particular reason why the Benedictines of Chester should idealize St Peter's power and patronage: papal privileges ensured their relative independence from local episcopal interference. In the same way, long before, Wearmouth-Jarrow had taken

10 On this theme of Christian polemic, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2:1571, 1638, 1641.

care to emphasize their dependence on St Peter so as to affirm their independence from local potentates, secular and ecclesiastical.[11]

It is worthwhile, finally, to remark how practical and cotidian was the presence of Rome for any medieval nun, monk or cleric. Every single Mass contained prayers which listed the early popes and the chief basilicas: 'Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian'; 'Lucy, Agnes, Caecilia, Anastasia'.[12] The chants and choice of readings for the yearly Mass-liturgy, particularly during Advent, Lent and Holy Week, but also on major feasts such as the four 'Marian' feasts, could not properly be understood without reference to the Roman papal stational system in which the pope and his retinue solemnly visited particular basilicas on symbolically significant days.[13] As late as the 1450s, the Benedictine John Capgrave, who visited Rome for the holy year of 1450, would provide for his brethren in the monastery at Bury St Edmunds a detailed meditation on the Roman stational basilica for each day in Lent.[14] On Mid-Lent Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent, the papal stational Mass was celebrated at the basilica called *Hierusalem* (later known as Santa Croce in Gerusalemme). *Hierusalem* was the equivalent, at Rome, of Golgotha: before the ninth hour (3 p.m.) on Good Friday, less than three weeks later, the papal court would go there again, in barefoot procession this time, for the service of readings which commemorated Christ's death.[15] The station at *Hierusalem* on the fourth Sunday of Lent was thus in part a preparation for Good Friday; but the atmosphere of that Sunday was very different. The Sunday was known throughout the Middle Ages (and later, in Catholic congregations) as '*Laetare* Sunday', from the Introit or Entrance Psalm, 'Laetare Hierusalem': 'Rejoice, Jerusalem, and gather together, all you who love her: rejoice for joy with her, all you who were in mourning, so that you may exult and be satisfied by the breasts which will console you'.[16] This maternal image looked forward to the Epistle of the Mass on that Sunday, taken from the passage in Galatians (4:22 to 5:1) in which St Paul, using the contrast between the slave-woman Hagar and the freeborn Sarah, contrasts the earthly Jerusalem unfavourably with the heavenly Jerusalem: 'but the other woman [Sarah] corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother' (4:26). The name 'Hierusalem' was interpreted as *visio pacis*, 'the vision of peace': the heavenly Jerusalem symbolized the vision of peace for

11 See P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in G. Bonner (ed.), *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), 141–69.

12 See the Canon of the Roman Mass, the *Communicantes* and *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* prayers. For a detailed commentary on the cults of the saints listed in these prayers, see V. L. Kennedy, *The Saints of the Canon of the Mass*, Studi di Antichità Cristiana 14, 2nd edn (Rome, 1963); their significance for the way in which Insular clerics imagined Rome is discussed by Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede*, 4–5.

13 See J. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 228 (Rome, 1987); É. Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the 'Dream of the Rood' Tradition* (London and Toronto, 2005), 148–50, 183–4, 237–40.

14 C.A. Mills (ed.), John Capgrave, *Ye Solace of Pilgrimes* (Oxford, 1911), 85–156.

15 Baldovin, *Urban Character of Christian Worship*, 148, 153–5; Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 148–50, 192–5.

16 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 149: there the other Mass-chants, which also refer to Jerusalem, are examined.

which Christians long, and of which the Eucharist is a pledge.[17] The theme of joyful refreshment in the midst of a season of fasting was continued in the Gospel for the day, the feeding of the five thousand in the desert (John 6:1–15). *Laetare* Sunday was a day of hope and celebration at mid-Lent: in Rome itself, the joy of that day would, from the eleventh century (if not earlier), be symbolized in the golden rose which the popes blessed on the fourth Sunday, and then used as a chivalrous and diplomatic gift. Adam of Usk, who was in Rome in 1405, tells us that,

> On the Sunday in mid-Lent on which 'Laetare Ierusalem' is sung – for some relief, now that it is half way through Lent – the pope during mass holds up in his hands a very valuable and astonishingly ornate gold and silver rose, which has been rubbed with fresh myrrh and balsam so that it fills the air with a fragrance of the utmost sweetness, and when the mass is over he makes a gift of it to the most noble knight who has been present at Mass; then later that same day this knight, accompanied by his friends, there to honour him, rides about in great state carrying it in his hand.[18]

From the papal tradition of presenting the golden rose, that Sunday is sometimes called *der Rosentag* in German lands.[19] The Roman papal Mass-chants and readings were preserved in the antiphonary and in the Gregorian sacramentary, from which they passed into the Sarum Missal. The readings, though not the chants, were taken into the Anglican Book of Common Prayer: from its Epistle, celebrating the heavenly Jerusalem as 'our mother', the fourth Sunday of Lent came to be known in England as 'mothering Sunday'. This idea inspired a number of English traditional customs.[20] Hence it happens in Britain and Ireland (though not in North America) that 'Mother's Day' is still celebrated on the fourth Sunday in Lent. Even in secularized societies of

---

17 M.L. Gatti Perer (ed.), *'La dimora di Dio con gli uomini' (Ap. 21:3). Immagini della Gerusalemme celeste dal III al XIV secolo* (Milan, 1983), especially 33–47.

18 'Dominica in medio Quadragesime, qua cantatur, "Letare Ierusalem", ad alleuiamen Quadragesime iam mediate, papa in missa unum magni precii rosarium, auro et argento mira arte compositum, ac musta mirra et balsamo ad maximum suauitatis odorem per locum redolentem delinitum, manu sua gerit; ac post missam nobiliori militi misse interessenti elargitur, cum quo et ipse ac amici sui in sui honorem, ipsum in manu gerendo, ipso die postea phallerati equitant': C. Given-Wilson (ed. and trans.), *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377–1421* (Oxford, 1997), 198–9. The editor points out that 'it was musk, not myrrh, that was placed in the cusp of the rose with the balsam; the gold represented the incorruptible divine nature of the son of God, the balsam his soul, and the musk Christ's human nature'. See also C. Burns, *Golden Rose and Blessed Sword* (Glasgow, 1970), 2–10.

19 B. Blackburn and L. Holford-Strevens (eds), *The Oxford Companion to the Year* (Oxford, 1999), 615. They point out that the papal gift of the golden rose was already called 'ancient' by Pope Leo IX in 1049 CE. There is a bittersweet modern variant of the rose as a chivalric gift in the silver rose which, in the hand of the 'knight of the rose', accompanies the marriage-proposal of the aristocratic Baron Ochs to the middle-class Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* (libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, composed by Richard Strauss, 1911): for the origins and plot of that libretto, see D. Murray, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4 vols (London, 1992), 4:43–7.

20 From the gospel, the feeding of the five thousand, one obtains the alternative name of 'Refreshment Sunday' (*Dominica refectionis*), and the custom of bringing simnel cakes to one's mother as a gift: Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year*, 612–15, who give a useful recipe for simnel cake (614).

the twenty-first century, secular ritual, however commercialized, can still unwittingly preserve evidence of how deeply the imagination of Europe was for centuries stamped by the effort to recreate in imagination the symbolic landscape of 'Felix Roma'.