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Altars personified: the cult of the saints and the chapel system in Pope Pascal I's S. Prassede (817-819)

Judson J. Emerick
Pomona College

Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis

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Introduction

Festschriften famously take their shapes from the careers of the busy, long-lived, and successful scholars they honor. Some of these volumes can focus sharply on a theme, while others perforce will range more widely in celebration of their honorees's diverse interests and accomplishments. Cecil L. Striker's Festschrift belongs in this latter group. In a research and teaching career that has so far spanned more than four decades, Striker has worked at the intersection of architecture and archaeology to radically redescribe the history of Byzantine architecture in the eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, and the Balkans. He began his career at the Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul, then took the practice of medieval archaeology to a new, high plateau in his multifaceted, decades-long study of the Kalendarhane Camii, the Ottoman mosque in Istanbul that incorporates a Palaeloganera church, a Latin Crusader church, and a Middle-, and Early-Byzantine church (and before that, a Late Imperial Roman bath!). The momentous discoveries at Kalendarhane of a sixth-century mosaic showing Christ's Presentation in the Temple and some fragments of a mid-thirteenth-century fresco depicting the life of Francis of Assisi, to name only these two, led Striker deeply into art histories implicating both the Christian Greek and Latin Mediterranean/European worlds. In recent years, moreover, Striker has probed oaken beams in medieval buildings from Italy to Anatolia to help date historic structures dendrochronologically: he co-directed the Aegean Dendrochronology Project's Medieval Phase, and directed the Architectural Dendrochronology Project. And finally, Striker has actively fostered archaeological research in the Mediterranean area as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Research Institute in Turkey, as the founding chair and member of the Executive Board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, and as a consultant for the Istanbul Metro and Bosphorous Tube Tunnel Project.

The essays in this book thus take up many of the themes and activities that have particularly engaged Lee Striker during his career. Chronologically, the papers cover the classical period to the nineteenth century. Geographically they range from Gadara in Jordan to Jumièges in northern France, and are almost evenly divided between East and West. Thematically, many focus on archaeology and structure, and particularly, as Striker himself has expressed it, on the recording and analysis of the physical evidence of buildings and their remains using archaeological methods. Others take up issues of art and ceremony, urban religious topography, Byzantine and Ottoman domestic architecture in town and country, architectural proportion, historic construction techniques, dendrochronological approaches in medieval architecture, the history of marbles and building materials in the Mediterranean, even issues of cultural hybridity in the Latin Crusading states, in Byzantine Serbia, and Ottoman Istanbul. Although these topics are not all directly related to Striker's own actual research, all were in some way inspired by his interests, by his methodologies, and by the generous intellectual exchanges he has carried on with a large number of art historians, archaeologists, and historians.

Those of us who have been privileged to be Striker's students are perhaps best placed to appreciate the breadth of his interests and his generosity in assisting us to pursue our own. We are therefore most pleased to be able to pay this tribute to him. We are very grateful too for the enthusiasm and support of all the scholars who have contributed to this volume. The Department of the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania has recognized Lee Striker's years of service by generously contributing to the cost of publishing this volume, through a grant from the James and Nan Farquhar History of Art Fund.

Judson J. Emerick, Pomona College
Deborah M. Deliyannis, Indiana University

Altars Personified: The Cult of the Saints and the Chapel System in Pope Paschal I's S. Prassede (817–819)*

Judson J. Emerick · Pomona College

The City as Stage for Papal Leadership

When Pope Sixtus III built S. Maria Maggiore in the 430s (Figs. 1 and 2),[1] he effectively transformed the monumental Christian topography of Rome. For the first time in the city, a pope built on imperial scale using the full panoply of the scenic Corinthian orders just as emperors had always done,[2] and just as the Emperor Constantine had done so memorably a century previously both at the Lateran basilica[3] and at the Vatican cemetery-basilica.[4] Indeed, Sixtus III's S. Maria Maggiore radically adjusted or modified the meaning of these two leading Constantinian sanctuaries. Since the pope used S. Maria Maggiore as Rome's *second* cathedral – that is, as setting for a number of high masses that he had formerly celebrated only at the Lateran, and among them the central feast of the liturgical year at Easter – he effectively demoted the first cathedral in the hierarchy of Roman churches, and drew it, along with Constantine's complex at the Vatican, into a new network of sanctuaries in the metropolis where he could appear more widely as leader of the faithful in worship.[5]

As popes began to go from church to church in the city to celebrate the temporal liturgy, moving from station to station to mark the great events of Christ's life, not only did the Lateran lose its former status as the principal meeting place for the pope and people in mass, but the Vatican complex also took on new prominence as a proper eucharistic church.[6] Pope Sixtus III almost certainly celebrated masses at

* Lee Striker introduced me to the study of Medieval urban architectural topography in a graduate seminar on Constantinople at the University of Pennsylvania in 1968. Now in gratitude for his teaching, and for friendship over many years, I dedicate this liturgico-topographical study of Early Medieval Rome to him.

1 Richard Krautheimer, Spencer Corbett, Wolfgang. Frankl, and Alfred K. Frazer, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae: The Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV–IX Cent.)* [*CBCR*], 5 vols. (Vatican City, Rome, and New York: 1937–1977), vol. III (1967), 1–60; Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor, Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale*, 2 vols., Studi e Testi 355 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994), 335–367.

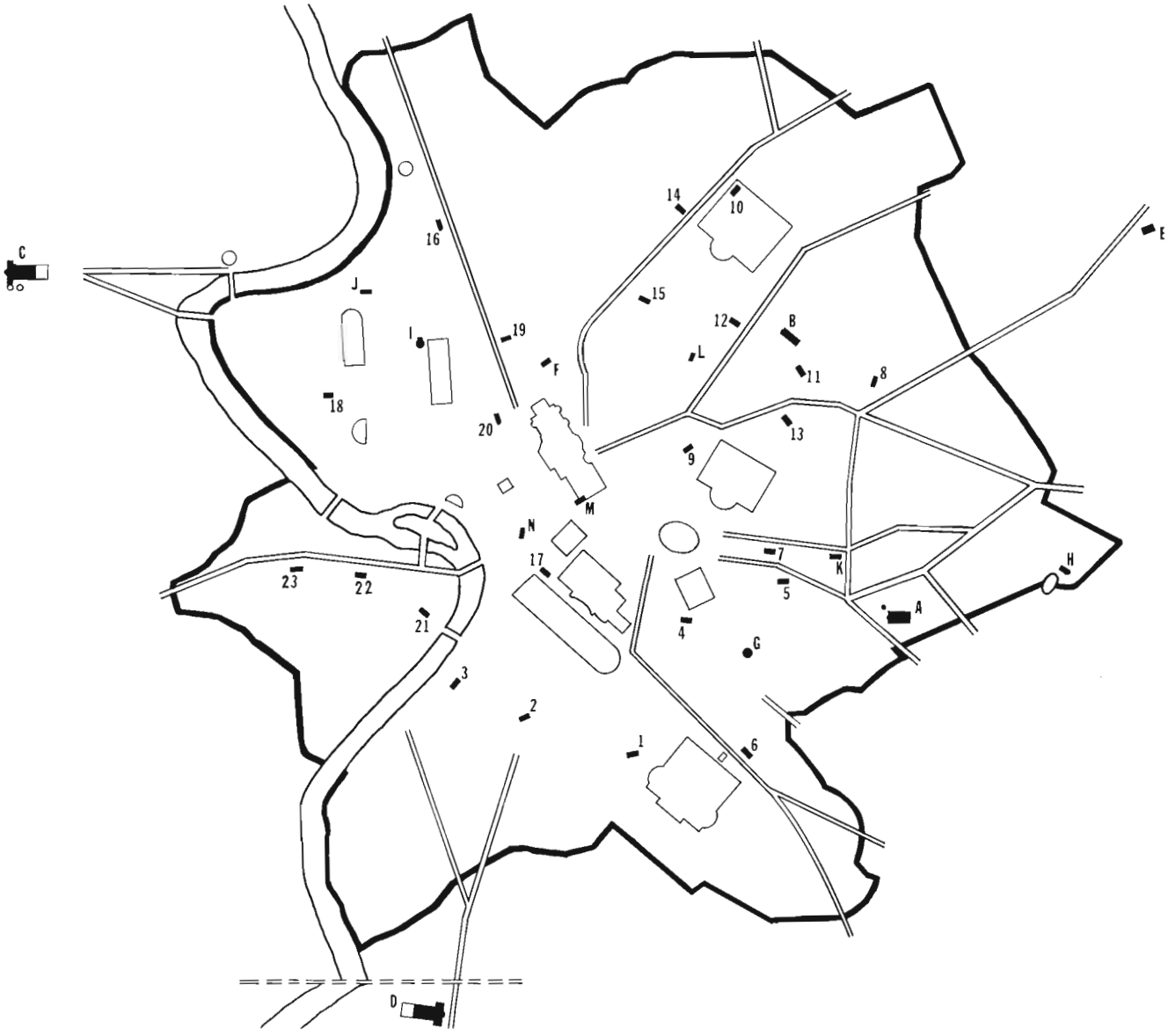
2 S. Maria Maggiore's nave elevations had Ionic columns in the lower story and Corinthian pilasters in the upper, with both orders trabeated, and the lower provided with acanthus vine-scroll ornament (in mosaic in the frieze). In the clerestory a round-headed window originally appeared between each pair of pilasters – with an archivolt supported on either side (in the jambs) by two Corinthian columns with helical shafts stacked one on top of the other(!). Below each window was a Corinthian aedicula to frame the famous scenes in mosaic from the Old Testament. See the reconstruction by Spencer Corbett in *CBCR* vol. III (1967), fig. 53, evidence for which survived the restoration of S. Maria Maggiore's interior that Ferdinando Fuga carried out after 1747. For the mixing of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders in Ancient Roman Imperial architecture, for the prominence there of acanthus vine-scroll ornament, and for the rationale for calling such colorful and scenic décor "Corinthian" see Judson J. Emerick, *The Tempietto del Clitunno near Spoleto* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), chaps. 7 and 8. From the reign of Augustus onward in the Mediterranean world people saw Corinthian orders principally in great public monuments associated with imperial patronage.

3 *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 1–92; de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 109–160. Arcades with Corinthian columns on pedestals divided the aisles, and two tall orders of columns bearing a straight entablature with a mixture of Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite capitals flanked the nave; see *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 77–83. From Constantine's day onward this columnar display focused on a huge free-standing fastigium that was located near the top of the nave and comprised four, tall, bronze, Corinthian columns bearing an entablature in silver-clad wood featuring an arcuated lintel; see now de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 117–127 and fig. 2 (an isometric reconstruction of the basilica with its fastigium).

4 *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 165–279; de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 451–492. Marten van Heemskerck's famous drawing of New St. Peter's under construction in the 1530s shows portions of the impressive Corinthian orders that flanked the Constantinian nave (in the process of being dismantled); see *CBCR* vol. V (1977), fig. 202.

5 On S. Maria Maggiore as "co-cathedral," see Victor Saxer, "L'utilisation par la liturgie de l'espace urbain et suburbain: L'example de Rome dans l'antiquiré et le haut moyen âge," *Actes du XIe Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne, Lyon, Vienna, Grenoble, Geneva, and Aosta, 21–28 September 1986*, 3 vols.(Rome: École française de Rome, 1989), vol. II, 917–1032, esp. 948–949; and now also de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 43, 55–56, 339–340, and 415.

6 At the start the Vatican complex had functioned as a monumental Christian cemetery. But during the second half of the fourth century, the popes moved their Christmas celebrations from the Lateran to the Vatican. By the early fifth century, moreover, the popes were also coming from the Lateran to St. Perer's to celebrate the related feast of Epiphany, newly introduced in Rome from the East. See de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 55 and 434 (with sources). St. Peter's thus appears to have been the first sanctuary in Rome to share papal masses with the Lareran, and clearly, a



Non-Titular

A *Salvatoris q. app. Constantiniana (Lateran basilica)*
B *S. Mariae ad Praesepem/Genetricis ad Praesepem (S. Maria Maggiore)*
C *S. Petri*
D *S. Pauli*
E *S. Laurentii foris murum*
F *SS. Apostolorum in via Lata*
G *S. Stephani in Caelio monte*
H *ecclesia Hierusalem quae in Sussurio est (S. Croce in Gerusalemme)*
I *S. Mariae ad Martyres/Genetricis ad Martyres (S. Maria Rotonda)*
J *S. Apollinaris*
K *SS. Marcellini et Petri*
L *S. Laurentii quae ponitur Formonsis (S. Lorenzo in Panisperna)*
M *SS. Cosmae et Damiani (diaconia)*
N *S. Georgii (diaconia)*

Titular

Regio I
1 *S. Balbinae*
2 *S. Priscae*
3 *S. Sabinae*

Regio II
4 *SS. Johannis et Pauli*
5 *SS. Quattuor Coronatorum*
6 *S. Xysti*

Regio III
7 *S. Clementis*
8 *S. Eusebii*
9 *S. Petri ad Vincula*

Regio IV
10 *S. Cyriaci*
11 *S. Praxedis*
12 *S. Pudentianae*
13 *S. Silvestri (S. Martino ai Monti)*
14 *S. Susannae*
15 *S. Vitalis*

Regio V
16 *S. Laurentii in Lucina*

Regio VI
17 *S. Anastasiae*
18 *S. Laurentii in Damaso*
19 *S. Marcelli*
20 *S. Marci*

Regio VII
21 *S. Ceciliae*
22 *S. Chrysogoni*
23 *S. Maria trans Tiberim*

Fig. 1 Rome's 37 stational churches, titular and non-titular, during the third decade of the ninth century (map: author).

References: Herman Geertman, More Veterum, il Liber Pontificalis e gli edifici ecclesiastici di Roma nella tarda antichità e nell'alto medioevo *(Groningen: 1975); Victor Saxer, "L'utilisation per la liturgie de l'espace urbain et suburbain: l'example de Rome dans l'antiquité et le haut moyen âge,"* Actes du XI[e] congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 1986 *(Vatican: 1989), II, pp. 917-1032; and Sible de Blaauw,* Cultus et decor, liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale *(Vatican: 1994).*

Fig. 2 Rome, S. Maria Maggiore, north nave elevation (photo: author).

the Vatican on Christmas, Epiphany, and Pentecost.[7] And when he did, very likely he stood in front of the tomb of Peter, at a portable altar framed by the Constantinian, Corinthian, columnar shrine there (Fig. 3).[8] Of course, an altar could have been set up anywhere in St. Peter's for a mass. Before the reign of Pope Symmachus (498–504), no documentary evidence survives to show that one was ever set up near the tomb of Peter. Nevertheless, that tomb sat at the sanctuary's architectural focus, and we may presume that a papal station, a mass meant primarily to display the pope to the faithful in all possible pomp, would have occurred there.[9]

Thus Sixtus III's S. Maria Maggiore interrupted people's expectations in Rome. If formerly Roman worshipers had associated splendid Corinthian scenic displays in large halls

papal stational liturgy was already developing toward the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth.

7 And doubtless others too. By Sixtus III's day more than ten stations from the *temporale* took place at St. Peter's; see de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 500–501 and Tabella 1 (stational calendar for Medieval Rome).

8 On Constantine's Petrine shrine, see de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 470–485; more recently also, Vittorio Lanzani, "'Gloriosa confessio,' Lo splendore del sepolcro di Pietro da Costantino al Rinascimento," in *La confessione nella basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano*, ed. Alfredo Maria Pergolizzi (Cinisello Balsamo [Milan]: Silvana Editoriale, 1999), 11–41, esp. 14–19. The carving on the rear of the famous ivory casket from Samagher near Pola in Istria (discovered 1906) provides our best evidence for the appearance of this shrine; see my Fig. 3, also Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Development of the Altar Canopy in Rome," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 50 (1974): 379–414, esp. 379–383.

9 Cf. de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 506–507.

Fig. 3 Pola Casket, ca. 400–430, ivory relief showing Constantine's shrine of Peter at the Vatican with its six-column baldachino (photo: Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, E. 51229).

with the imperial leader, now, more and more, they came to link them with the pope. Sixtus III seems to have built S. Maria Maggiore specifically to transform Constantine's architectural rhetoric, that is, to take over the first Christian emperor's Corinthian stage sets for himself.[10] The new church provided Sixtus III a lever that permitted him to pry out a monumental, Christian, *papal* city from what had formerly been an imperial one.

When, between 817 and 819, Pope Paschal I built the large and imposing church of S. Prassede on the Esquiline in Rome[11] and likewise filled it with scenic Corinthian orders

[10] Please note that throughout this essay when I speak of the popes as "builders," I do not present them as some kind of originating power, as persons, say, whose intentions or ideas were realized by or in their buildings. I rather construe the various forms of authorship associated with a building project (and especially that of a patron whose renown a building may increase) as aspects of that building's representational machinery – on a par, say, with its decorative apparatus, its furniture, or its place in a civic plan. Patronage in a building project is real; but it is constructed for use right along with everything else in that project. The issue has been much discussed in Modern literary criticism; see Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (1968) and Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" (1969) in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 2000²), 146–151 and 174–187 respectively.

Fig. 4 Rome, S. Prassede, nave looking west to the presbytery (photo: Eugenio Monti).

of the kind that Romans had seen chiefly in the city's patriarchal basilicas,[12] one can see him too as attempting to modify the map of the city's Christian monuments (Fig. 4). Certainly the Paschal presented in the *Liber Pontificalis* comes across in that mode – as ambitious builder – and his church of S. Prassede appears there as the first full statement of his program. For Roman worshipers in the early ninth century, however, this church did not just invoke the principal basilicas in the city generally, it called to mind St. Peter's particularly (Figs. 5 and 10).

[11] *Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire* [*LP*], ed. Louis Duchesne, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Thorin, 1886–1892), 100 (V. *Paschalis I*), cc. 8–11. [For the convenience of his readers, Duchesne indicated the chaptet divisions that Giovanni Vignoli (1663–1733) provided in his edition of the *Liber pontificalis* (Rome: J. B. Bernabò and J. Lazzarini, 1724–55). Since these provide a more precise system of reference to the *LP*'s text than do Duschesne's page numbers (his large pages often comprise many of Vignoli's chapters), I refer to the text in question here by giving the number and title of the papal biography, then Vignoli's chapter number(s).] For a convenient summary of Paschal's life in the *LP* highlighting the chronology and dating of his various reported building activities, see now Antonella Ballardini, "Dai *Gesta* di Pasquale I secondo il *Liber Pontificalis* ai *Monumenta* iconografici delle basiliche romane di Santa Prassede, Santa Maria in Domnica e Santa Cecilia in Trastevere (Prima Parte)," *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria* 122 (1999): 5–68, esp. 22–23. During a relatively short reign between 817 and 824, Paschal I erected an elaborate aedicula in St. Peter's dedicated to the martyrs, Popes Sixtus II and Fabian, then constructed a "large chapel" there dedicated to the martyrs Processus and Martinianus (c. 5). Next we hear how he built two other large churches in addition to S. Prassede – one dedicated to S. Maria in Domnica on the Celio (cc. 11–14), and another dedicated to S. Cecilia in Trastevere (cc. 14–21). Finally, in a long passage, we read how he boldly remodeled the patriarchal basilica of S. Maria Maggiore (cc. 31–34).

[12] S. Prassede's nave, it is true, had only eleven pairs of columns, not 19 (like the Lateran), or 20 (like S. Maria Maggiore and S. Paolo *fuori le mura*) or 22 (like St. Peter's), and single, not double aisles at either side.

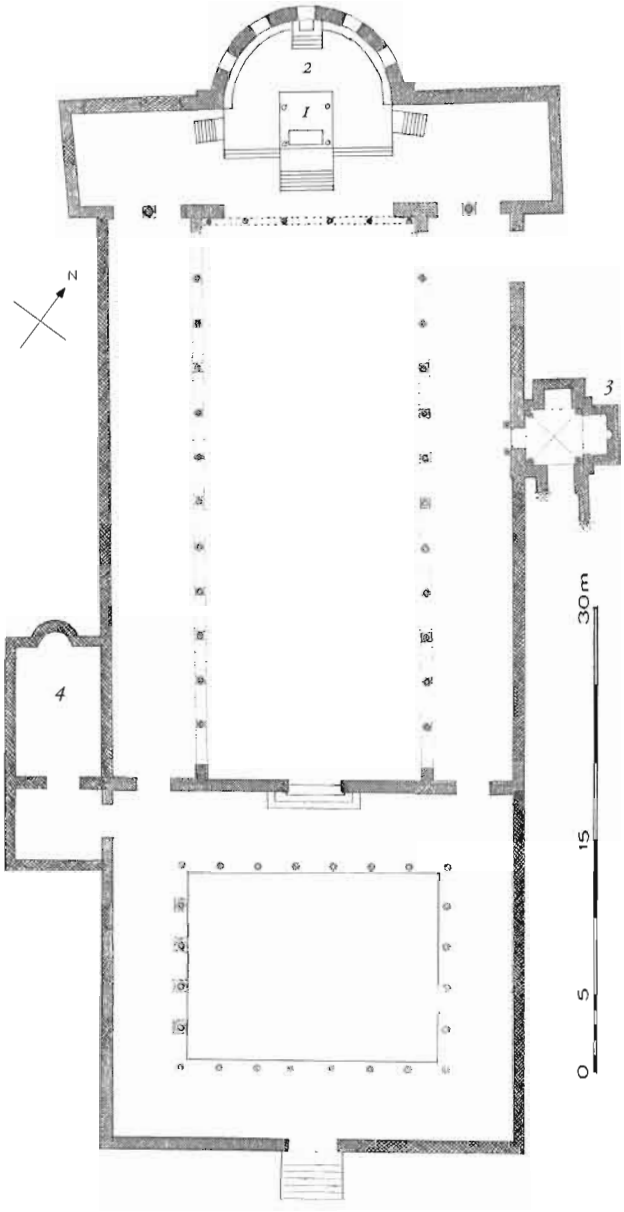


Fig. 5 Rome, S. Prassede, author's reconstruction of Pope Pasckal I's church of 817–819 (adapted from R. Krautheimer, CBCR *III, 1967, pl. XI).*

1. *shrine for the 2,300 saints*
2. *chapel in the crypt's axial corridor for the 2,300 saints*
3. *chapel for Zeno and two other saints*
4. *possible location of the sacristy dedicated to the Baptist with the bodies of Maurus and 40 other saints*

St. Peter's and S. Prassede

Both St. Peter's and S. Prassede had atriums with quadriporticuses reached by stairways from the street; both had trabeated nave colonnades; both had prominent triumphal arches that opened the nave to relatively narrow, continuous transepts whose ends projected beyond the aisle walls, and whose roofs were lower than that of the nave; and both had Corinthian column screens between the aisles and the transept. In both, moreover, the nave colonnades and triumphal arches focused worshipers' attention scenically on apses at the center of the transepts.[13] It is true that S. Paolo *fuori le mura*, begun in 384 or 386 at the behest of Emperor Theodosius I and later modified under Pope Leo I (440–461), had nearly all these same key features, especially the distinctive continuous transept.[14] But at S. Paolo the transept was much wider and taller than that at St. Peter's, and the floor level rose above that of its attached basilica, again in contrast to St. Peter's where floor levels in the transept and basilica were the same. S. Paolo had nave arcades, not colonnades with straight entablatures like St. Peter's, and it had archways with stairs separating the basilica's aisles from the transept, not colonnades as at St Peter's. S. Paolo also had two huge Ionic columns supporting the triumphal arch, while St. Peter's did not.[15]

If S. Paolo was purposely designed to imitate St. Peter's, to become a sister shrine,[16] it nevertheless differed in form from St. Peter's by having, as already mentioned, a much broader, taller transept whose floor level rose above that of the nave.[17] Richard Krautheimer has argued that only at S. Paolo did the grand, Roman, T-shaped basilica with an atrium take on definitive form and become a "normalized type."[18] But, as far as I can see, S. Prassede does not conform to this type. Most

13 The nave entablatures at S. Prassede were fashioned entirely from reused parts, but the fanciest blocks available, the ones with carved ornament, were set up next to the triumphal arch to create a scenic crescendo; see my, "Focusing on the Celebrant: The Column Display inside Santa Prassede," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome, Historical Studies* 59 (2001): 129–159, esp. 133. The orders in St. Peter's nave, moreover, had a rhythmic alternation created in the column shafts, grouped according to marble type. The alternation started out slowly near the entry to the nave, but speeded up toward the triumphal arch. For more, see Emerick, *Tempietto*, 217–219.

14 *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 93–164.

15 Pope Leo I built this triumphal arch in the 440s.

16 Providing similarly grand architectural stages in Rome for the cults of Peter and Paul played into the papally sponsored propaganda campaign to feature Rome as Peter's and Paul's city, that is, to redirect people's attention away from the monuments of the pagan city to those of the Christian one. Damasus (366–384) and Leo I (440–461) both memorably promoted Rome as Christian in this way. See especially Charles Pietri, "Concordia apostolorum et renovatio urbis (culte des martyrs et propaganda pontificale)," *Mélange d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 73 (1961): 275–322. Pietri and others take for granted that the topos played upon political notions of *imperium* in pagan style, but recently debate has opened on this topic; see Emerick, *Tempietto*, 316–327, for a summary.

17 To accommodate both the site's topography and pre-existing Paoline memorial; see now Giorgio Filippi and Sible de Blaauw, "San Paolo fuori le mura: la disposizione liturgica fino a Gregorio Magno," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome, Historical Studies* 59 (2000): 5–25.

18 The type, he said, that builders would imitate both in Rome and north of the Alps during the Middle Ages; see *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 284–285. It could only have taken shape very slowly in memory: the atria at both St. Peter's and S. Paolo, Krautheimer remarked, did not become genuine quadriporticuses until the reign of Pope Symmachus (498–514) at the earliest; *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 159, 267, and 284.

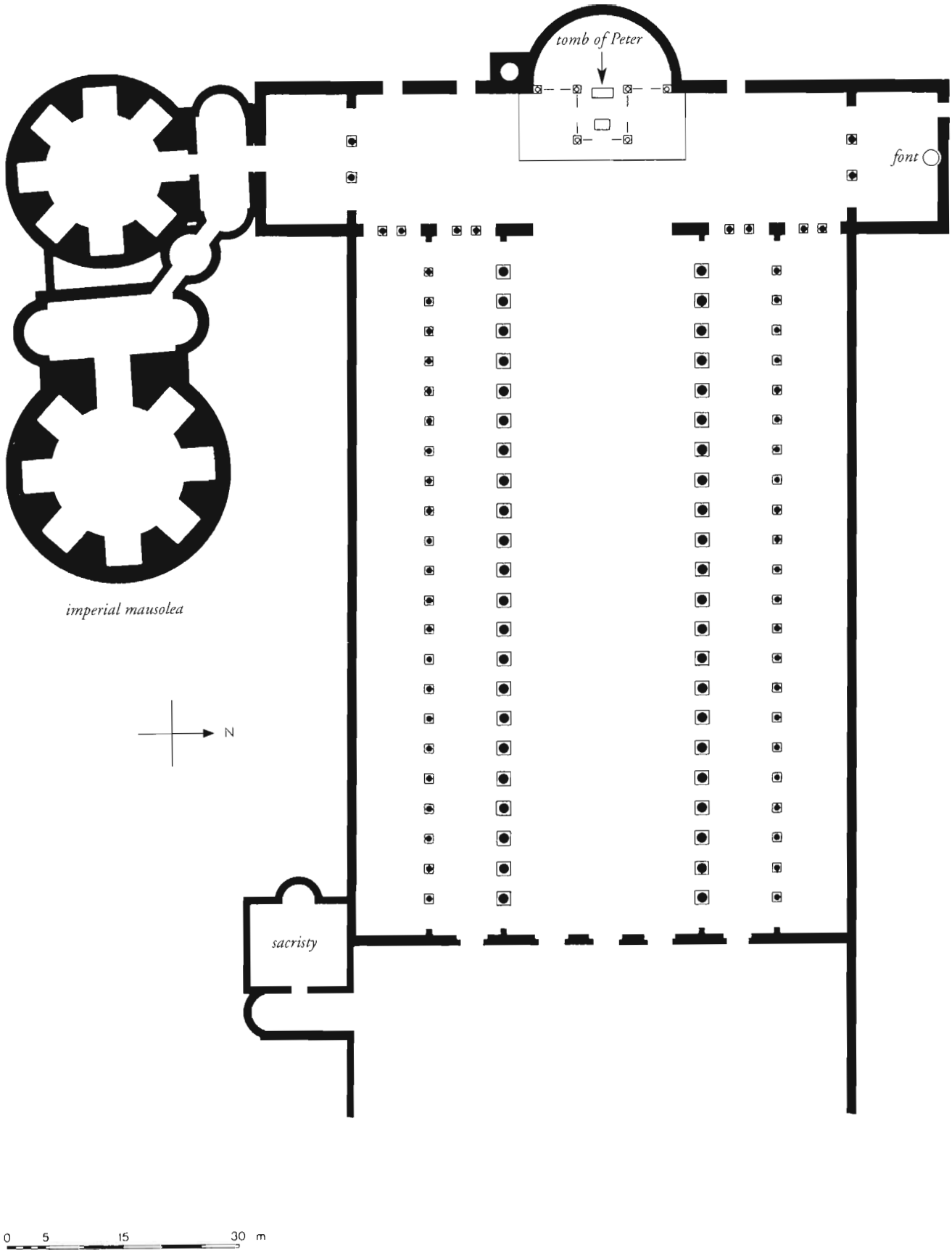


Fig. 6 Plan showing St. Peter's under Pope Sixtus III (432–440) (adapted from S. de Blaauw, Cultus et decor, *1994, Fig. 19).*

of its features go back emphatically to St. Peter's.[19] Such extensive formal correspondence between two monuments in the same city could not have been casual. The builders of S. Prassede must have been harking back directly to St. Peter's, and must have expected users of their new church to understand the reference. But what "St. Peter's" did S. Prassede recall or evoke for Romans in 819? Could it possibly have been the St. Peter's that Pope Sixtus III created?

The Vatican and the Cult of Relics

In the nearly four centuries that had passed between the reigns of Popes Sixtus III and Paschal I, the Roman people's perception of the great church at the Vatican had again changed radically.[20] If in the 430s, Sixtus III had used the temporal liturgy, that is, the papal stational liturgy, to transform Constantine's old cemetery complex into a full-fledged church in a papal system of churches, then a few generations later, in the early sixth century, Pope Symmachus exploited the rapidly growing cult of the saints, that is, the sanctoral liturgy, in a new attempt to remake St. Peter's – to make it over into a cathedral.

Symmachus used the church in his struggle to secure the papal throne from the antipope Lawrence between 498 and 506.[21] Since Lawrence had possession of the regular papal palace and cathedral at the Lateran, Symmachus worked to project his claims from St. Peter's at the Vatican where he built a papal residence in the atrium (some rooms called *episcopia* in the *LP*) and remodeled the late fourth-century baptistery in the north transept's exedra as the double of the one that his rival Lawrence was using at the Lateran. That project required him to set up three separate sacred foci, or confessios (*confessiones*), around the baptistery's font – for John the Baptist and John the Evangelist in the exedra, and then in the north transept arm, another for the Holy Cross (Fig. 7). In the *Liber Pontificalis* we read that the confessios were fashioned of silver and that they were set up under arches and/or ciboria of silver inside *cubicula* or oratories.[22] We would call them chapels.[23] But while Symmachus patterned his *cubicula* on the chapels that Pope Hilarus (461–468) had built at the Lateran Baptistery,[24] Symmachus's stood right out in the basilica of St. Peter's itself, a genuine first in Rome. Moreover, Symmachus converted the easternmost of the two imperial mausolea that had long been attached to St. Peter's into a *basilica Sancti Andreae apostoli*, that is, into a holy place like the church of St. Peter's proper, and then in five of the converted mausoleum's seven exedrae he set up chapels with confessios dedicated to saints, and among them one for Andrew, Peter's brother, at the main exedra opposite the entry.[25]

From the later fifth-century onward, the word *confessio* was often used to designate the *memoria* or tomb of a Christian hero, martyr or other kind of saint.[26] Aediculae and other memorials in honor of the dead, heroic or otherwise, had always punctuated the space in the Vatican complex, which had started out as a Christian cemetery. Though the confessios of the saints that Symmachus erected contained no bones, they probably had contact relics, and could recall for worshipers "real confessios" where one found the actual bones of the honored dead, and at this site, of course, the confessio of Peter at the center of the transept. Symmachus thus exploited the cult of the saints to amplify the solemnity of his cathedral at the Vatican, and by extension to provide a more imposing architectural theater in which to display him-

[19] Except for the atrial quadriporticus; see the previous note.

[20] I frame the question posed by the formal correspondence between S. Prassede and St. Peter's differently from Richard Krautheimer in "The Carolingian Revival of Early Christian Architecture," *The Art Bulletin* 24 (1942): 1–38 (reprinted twice with postscripts dated 1969 and 1987; see R. Krautheimer, *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* [New York: New York University Press, 1969] and *idem, Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur europäischen Kunstgeschichte* [Köln: DuMont Buchverlag, 1988]). Krautheimer presented the popes between Hadrian I (772–795) and Leo IV (844–855) as "Carolingian," that is, as close supporters of the Frankish royal/imperial rulers and their political program to revive Constantine's Christian Empire. S. Prassede in Rome thus referred to *Constantine's* St. Peter's and became for Krautheimer a prime architectural document of a decades-long "Carolingian Renaissance" which had started north of the Alps with the building of two great abbey churches – King Pepin III's and Charlemagne's St.-Denis (754–775) and Abbot Ratgar's St. Bonifatius in Fulda (802–819). Long treated by art historians as foundational, the 1942 argument has only recently come up for review: see *inter alia*, (1) Werner Jacobsen, "Gab es die karolingische 'Renaissance' in der Baukunst," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 51 (1988): 313–347; (2) Charles McClendon, "Louis the Pious, Rome, and Constantinople," *Architectural Studies in Memory of Richard Krautheimer*, ed. Cecil L. Striker (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 103–106; (3) Manfred Luchterhandt, "*Famulus Petri* – Karl der Große in den römischen Mosaikbildern Leos III.," *799, Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit, Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn*, catalog of the exhibition held in Paderborn, 1999, 3 vols., ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1999), III, 55–70; (4) Emerick, "Focusing on the Celebrant"; or (5) Valentino Pace, "La 'felix culpa' di Richard Krautheimer: Roma, Santa Prassede e la 'Rinascenza carolingia,'" in *Ecclesiae urbis: Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV-X secolo), Rome, 4–10 September 2000*, ed. Federico Guidobaldi and Alessandra Guiglia Guidobaldi (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2002), 65–72.

[21] *LP* 53 (*V. Symmachi*); Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476–752* (London: Routledge, 1979), 69–99, 252–254.

[22] *LP* 53 (*V. Symmachi*), c. 7; Johannes H. Emminghaus, "Die Taufanlage ad sellam Petri Confessionis," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde* 57 (1962): 78–103.

[23] I.e., a subordinate place of worship within a larger. Our word, "chapel," derives from the Latin "capella," but comes closest in meaning to the Latin "oratorium"; compare in *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, ed. J. F. Niermeyer and C. Van de Kieft; revised J. W. J. Burgers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002).

[24] *LP* 48 (*V. Hilari*), cc. 2–5.

[25] *LP* 53 (*V. Symmachi*), c. 6; de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 485–487, esp. n. 199 on p. 487.

[26] See "confessio" in *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*. In his or her sacrifice of life, the martyr (= witness in Greek) acknowleges or "confesses" to the truth of the Gospels.

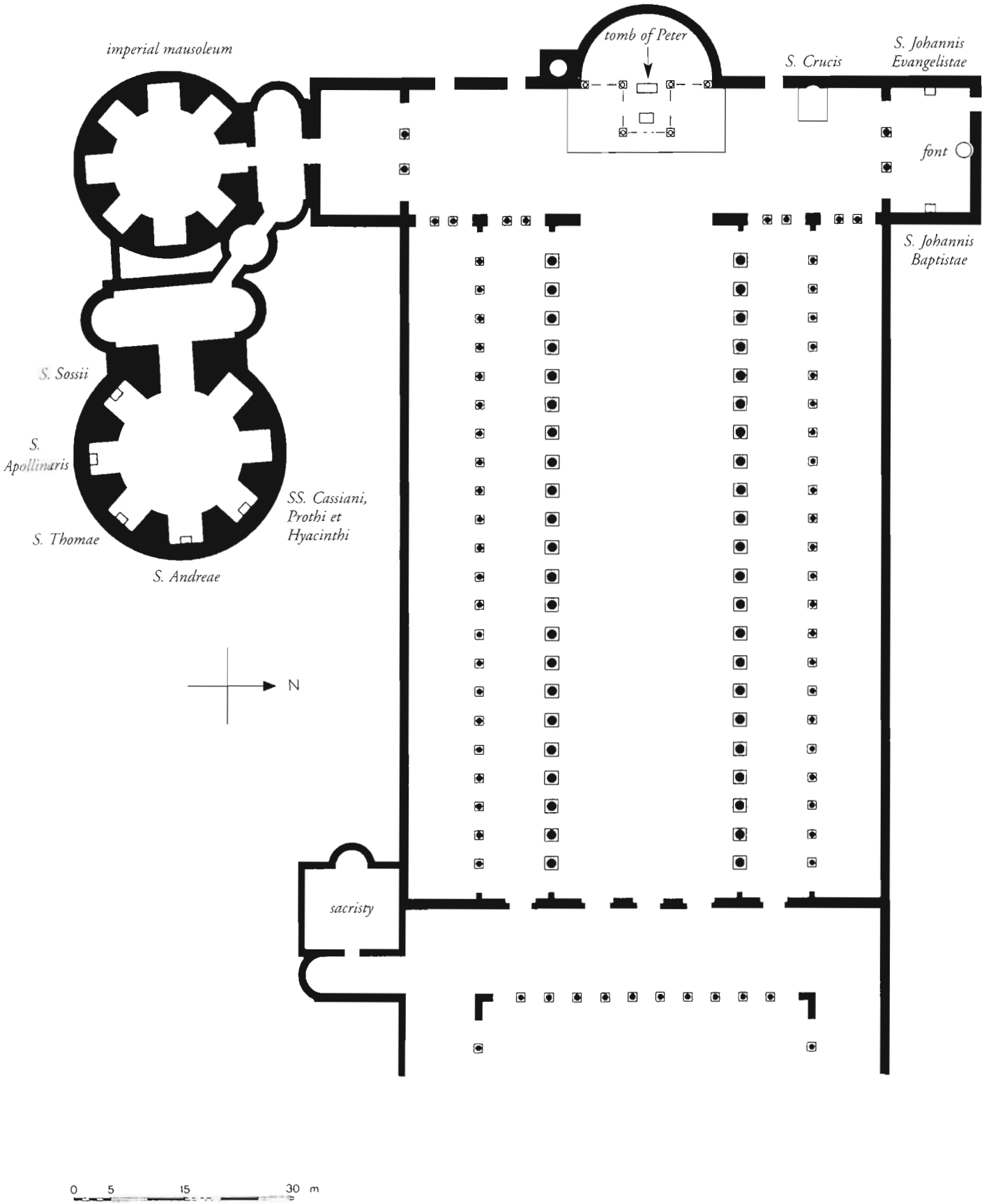


Fig. 7 Plan showing the chapels that Pope Symmachus (498–514) erected in St. Peter's (adapted from S. de Blaauw, Cultus et decor, *1994, Fig. 19).*

self as leader of the Roman people in worship. Of course, a papal mass had long been celebrated at the Vatican on June 29th each year for the *natalicium Petri Apostolorum Principis*.[27] The papal stational liturgy early comprised some important feasts in the sanctoral calendar (not only the moveable feasts of the temporal). By the early fifth century, as we have seen, papal masses on Christmas Day (December 25th) and Epiphany (January 6th) were being celebrated at St Peter's as well.[28] As Pierre Jounel has underlined, Late Antique and Medieval worshipers saw Christ as the church's main and principal martyr, and thus treated the *nativitas Domini nostri Iesu Christi* and the *Epiphania Domini* as feasts in both the temporal and the sanctoral liturgies.[29] To these papal stations at St. Peter's Symmachus very likely established a new one for the *natalicium Beati Andreae Apostoli* on November 30th.[30] Around 500, then, the temporal and sanctoral liturgies intertwined under *papal* leadership most strikingly at St. Peter's.

By distinguishing St. Peter's both architecturally and liturgically as the preeminent sanctuary in Rome for the papal sanctoral liturgy, Symmachus reinforced a developing trend and provided future popes with special opportunities.[31] As the cult of the saints burgeoned in the city during the next centuries, and as popes sought to direct and even control such worship for their own advantage, they turned again and again to St. Peter's for the purpose. And the tool they used there was the altar.[32]

Nowhere in the written record treating Symmachus's chapels at St. Peter's do we read of altars in connection with the saints' confessios. The confessios must have had altars of course, because the masses performed for the saints' *natalicia* required them. But around 500, such altars were secondary items. Roman builders came only slowly to make them the primary focus of a sanctuary by combining the mensa and confessio in one single, sacred, architectural form, that is, in a permanent altar-block made of masonry.[33] Between 588 and 604, Popes Pelagius II and Gregory I took a giant step in this direction when they magnified the grave of Peter at the main focus of the Vatican complex (Figs. 8 and 9).[34] They erected an altar on top of Peter's grave to create a tower-like two-story structure at the chord of the apse. Priests served at the altar above by standing upon a more or less high podium that filled the apse behind the altar-grave. The grave below was accessible in front via a *fenestella confessionis*, and in back via an annular crypt buried in the high podium. A *pergola* of six Corinthian columns standing on the transept floor in front of the altar-grave, and a ciborium with four more such columns rising over the altar, both focused worshipers' attention dramatically during the mass on the celebrants standing at the front of the podium or seated upon the *synthronon* and *cathedra* at the back. This mise-en-scène put the tomb of Peter *beyond* the easy reach of worshipers, forcing them to approach it from in front via a narrow vestibule framed by a column screen, or from behind through a dark and narrow ring-crypt and a somewhat less narrow axial corridor inside the podium. Moreover, during mass this stage set separated and elevated the clergy both actually and figuratively from lay participants gathered on the transept and nave floor.

The axial corridor in its turn had an altar analogous to that visible from outside at the focus of the ensemble. It too was made of solid masonry set up permanently on its site and like the altar-grave out front, combined mensa and confessio, with receptacles for relics in the altar-block itself. This reliquary altar, which historians can confidently date and reconstruct from the data provided by archaeologists, is one of the earliest and best documented such examples in Rome.[35] It

27 De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 509–511. *Natalicium* = a saint's "birthday," that is, the day when his or her death is said to have occurred – to be commemorated each year with a mass (thus the yearly cycle of feasts in the sanctoral calendar).

28 See n. 6 above.

29 Pierre Jounel, *Le culte des saints dans les basiliques du Latran et du Vatican au douzième siècle* (Rome: Collection de l'École Française de Rome, 26, 1977), 106, 212, 326–327. The item, *Natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae*, tops the list of martyrs' birthdays celebrated by the early Roman church recorded in the *Depositio Martyrum* of A.D. 354; see Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti, ed., *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, 4 vols. (Rome: R. Istituto Storico Italiano, 1940–53), vol. II, 17. Of course, the birthday celebrations in question (on December 25th and January 6th) commemorated Christ's actual birth, nor his martyrdom by crucifixion. In the temporal liturgy throughout the Middle Ages, only Christmas and Epiphany had fixed calendar dates.

30 The cult of Andrew was introduced in Rome by Pope Simplicius (468–483) and was celebrated on November 30th throughout the Mediterranean world in the later fifth century (in Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria); see Jounel, *Le culte des saints*, 158. The writer of the *vita* of Pope Leo III (795–816) in the *LP* calls the pope's celebration of Andrew on that day at St. Peter's an "ancient custom" (*LP* 98, cc. 19–20); discussed by de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 601. Was the papal mass in honor of Andrew celebrated in Symmachus's basilica of St. Andrew, or elsewhere in St. Peter's? We do not know.

31 The trend, that is, that began in the later fourth century when popes came to St. Peter's to officiate at the two chief *sanctoral* celebrations of the Roman calendar: Christmas and the Feast of Peter and Paul (June 29th).

32 For the emergence of the reliquary altar in Rome under papal patronage, see Sible de Blaauw, "L'altare nelle chiese di Roma come centro di culto e della committenza papale," *Roma nell'alto medioevo, 27 April – 1 May 2000*, Settimana di studio del Centro Italiano Spoletino dell'Alto Medioevo 48, (Spoleto: Centro Italiano Spoletino dell'Alto Medioevo, 2001), 969–989. Here de Blaauw focuses mainly on the archaeological record; he does not link his account with the rise of the cult of the saints in Rome.

33 Most scholars believe that the combination happened early and spontaneously; see Joseph Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2 vols. (Munich: Guenther Koch, 1924), I, 125 ff; on p. 369, Braun spoke of Symmachus installing "altars" in his *Basilica S. Andreae* at the Vatican. More recently, also de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 485–487; but compare now, *idem*, "L'altare," 982.

34 Bruno M. Apollonj Ghetti, Antonio Ferrua, Enrico Josi, Engelbert Kirschbaum, *Esplorazioni sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano eseguite negli anni 1940–1949* (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1951). For an overview of the archaeological finds and their interpretation since the mid twentieth century, see now de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 530–566; and *idem*, "L'altare," 978–985.

35 Apollonj Ghetti *et al.*, *Esplorazioni*, 178–182. True, the reliquary altar sits on top of the Pelagian/Gregorian pavement in the axial corridor and

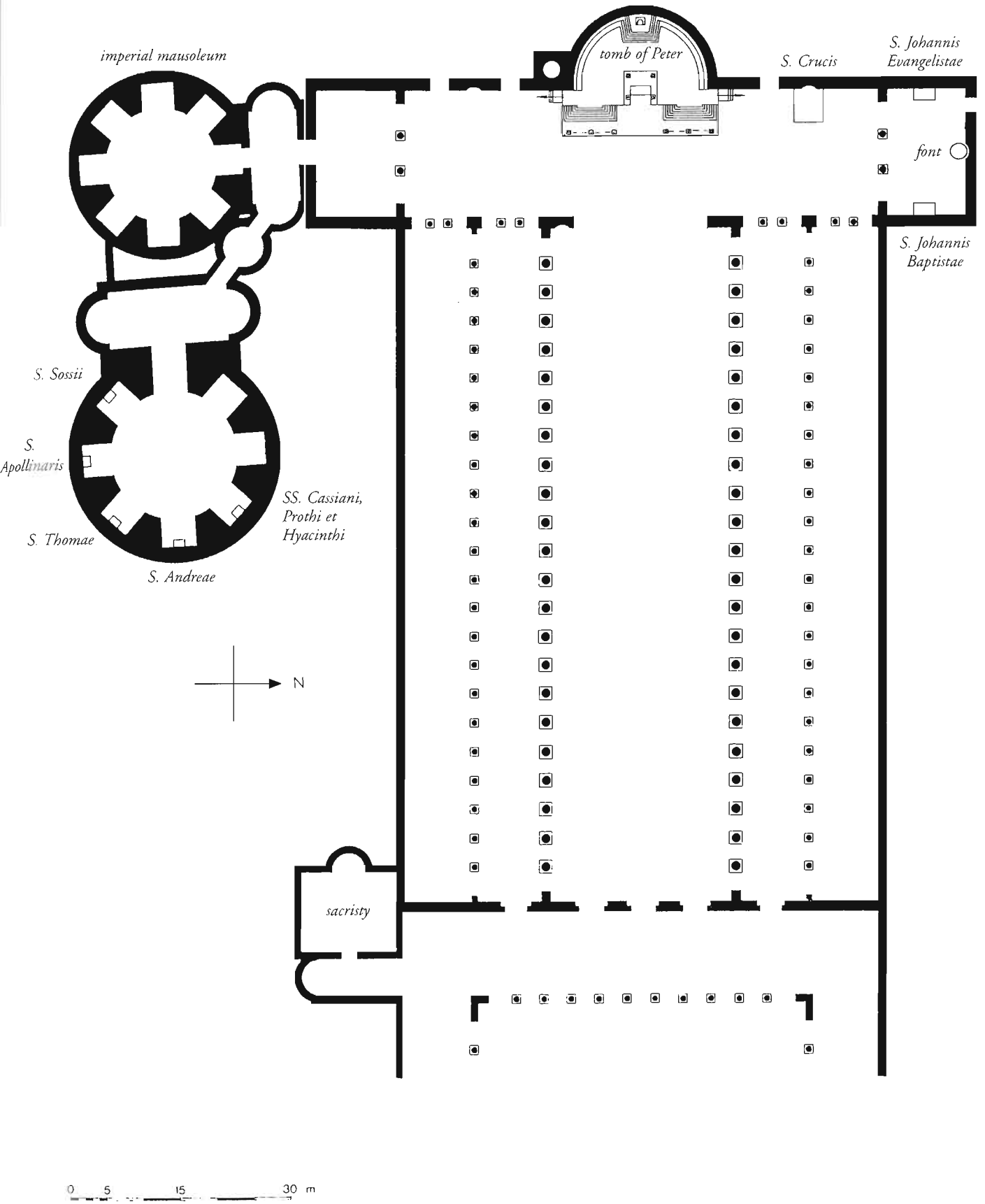


Fig. 8 Plan showing the chapels in St. Peter's under Pope Gregory I (590–604) (adapted from S. de Blaauw, Cultus et decor, *1994, Fig. 19).*

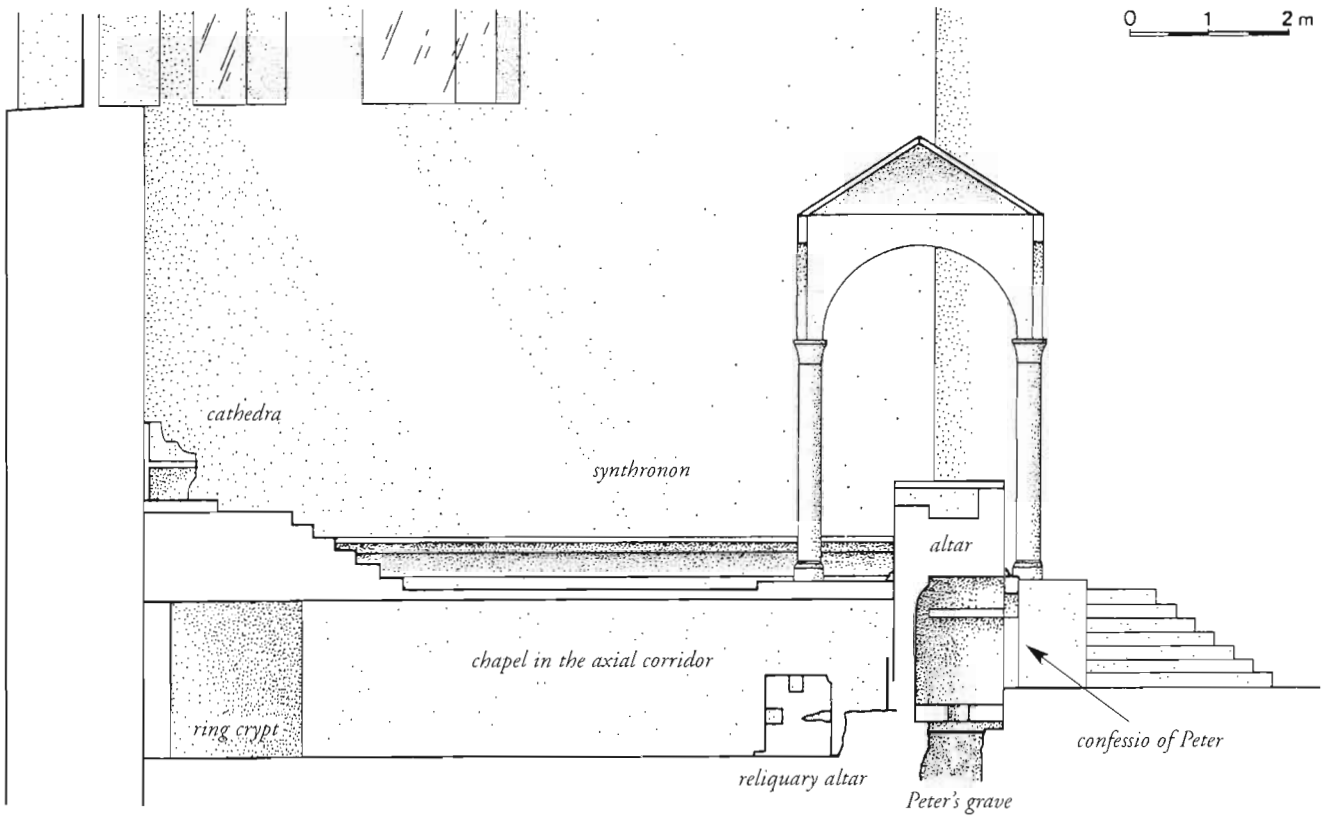


Fig. 9 Longitudinal section of the Pelagian/Gregorian shrine to Peter at the Vatican around 600 (adapted from S. de Blaauw, Cultus et decor, *1994, Fig. 24).*

transformed the axial corridor into a proper chapel, that is, into another autonomous sanctuary focused on relics. Both the famous altar-grave at the focus of the transept and this chapel buried in its apse were devices for the papal/priestly control of the worship of the saints.

Indeed, this entire system with its two special altars responded to a new, radically changed conception of the mass.[36] During the Early Middle Ages, the church, represented by the priest, came to insist on its power to recreate the body and blood of Christ on the altar, and came to present that eucharistic act as its *offering* to the Father. Here a religious image of the gift and counter-gift came into play – an image as old as the northern Getmanic sagas or as ancient as the Roman Republican notion of sacrifice summed up in the phrase, *do ut des* ("I give so that you give").[37] Thus during the mass, the Early Medieval church saw God as receiving a gift or offering that He would be constrained to reciprocate by granting a gift of like value in return. This opened the way for the so-called *votive mass*. Such a *missa specialis*, celebrated ad hoc at the request of an individual who was seeking to intensify his or her plea for some specific hoped-for future outcome, contrasted with the traditional *missa publica* that the faithful celebrated corporately on a regular, predetermined schedule to reconfirm their union with God. Indeed the *missa specialis* took on a definite apotropaic function. Early Medieval sacramentaries are full of votive masses meant

could be either an integral feature of the shrine or a later addition to it. The altar's surviving stump looks very roughly made. It has a trapezoidal, not rectangular plan, and it has irregular courses of reused brick set in high mortar beds (all once stucco clad?). This roughness induced Apollonj Ghetti and the other writers of the *Esplorazioni* to designate it a later addition to the Pelagian/Gregorian shrine (though an Early Medieval one to be sure). In *CBCR* vol. V (1977), 197, Richard Krautheimer pointed out that the altar's masonry was adequate for an architectural element that had no weight-bearing role. Since the Pelagian/Gregorian shrine generally has a rough fabric that incorporates many ill fitting, reused parts – in walls, balustrades, and pavements – the roughness of the reliquary altar from the axial corridor does not really stand out. It could well be an integral part of the original shrine.

36 Albert Häussling, *Mönchskonvent und Eucharistiefeier, Eine Studie über die Messe in der abendländischen Klosterliturgie des frühen Mittelalters und zur Geschichte der Meßhäufigkeit* (Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1973), 226–297 (with the basic bibliography). For an up-to-date summary of the issues, see Arnold Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter, Die abendländische Christenheit von 400 bis 900* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln: W. Kohlhammer, 1990), 331–334 and passim.

37 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, tr. W. D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990).

to protect and/or obtain this-worldly favors for an individual in all possible emergencies. In them, intercession and propitiation came to the fore as the mass's purpose, and this development quickly colored and transformed the meaning of the *missa publica* as well. If in Early Christian times the mass gave concrete form to the idea that God dwells among his people, and if the priest performed at the altar as one among the celebrants, then during the Early Middle Ages as the mass took on a more intercessory aspect, the priest came to the fore as the main focus of the ceremony, as *the* celebrant whom the faithful now followed at a certain distance and no longer quite as equals or as co-celebrants. To join with God in eucharistic celebration, that is, to obtain favors and intercessions from Him or to appease and conciliate Him, the faithful now sought first to join with the priest, the sacrificer who offered the church's greatest gift to God. The mass became a peculiarly clerical affair, the priests sacrificing *for* the faithful and becoming thereby mediators between them (the faithful) and God, or rather, between them and the saints who sponsored them in God's heavenly court.[38]

Thus as Early Medieval pilgrims approached the tomb of Peter in the axial corridor inside St. Peter's apsidal podium, they found the way quite barred by the meter-high reliquary altar which stood out in the space immediately in front of the memorial. Prayers for Peter's intercession at this site, or at least the kind that the votive mass made efficacious, *required* priestly mediation. The Pelagian/Gregorian liturgical stage set at St. Peter's helped put priests, and by extension popes, in control of a worshiper's access to the holy.

The Vatican Complex: Many Churches in One

St. Peter's under Symmachus had already become a church with a main memorial to Peter accompanied by a number of similar, supplementary memorials to other saints. In all of the latter, one may suppose, liturgical furniture was soon installed that permitted strict clerical direction and control of worship. Were the chapels that Symmachus built soon re-equipped with permanent reliquary altars in masonry? We do not know, but in 688, a century after the Pelagian/Gregorian altar-grave was installed, documents show that Pope Sergius I established a new chapel in the transept on the south side of Peter's shrine, where apparently he set up an altar *over a tomb* into which he translated the body of the confessor Pope Leo I from its former resting place at the entry to the sacristy (Fig. 10).[39] In the *Liber Pontificalis*, moreover, we read how, in the 730s, Gregory III established a chapel to the Savior, His Mother, and All the Saints in the southwest corner of St. Peter's nave, and set up a reliquary altar there behind a column-screen or pergola.[40]

In the 750s, Stephen II transformed the imperial mausoleum at the church's southwest corner into a *basilica* for St. Petronilla, Peter's legendary daughter; in the 760s Paul I translated the body of Petronilla there from her tomb on the Via Appia.[41] Since the *Liber Pontificalis* says that Leo III enshrined Petronilla's altar with a silver-clad ciborium on porphyry columns,[42] we may suppose that Paul had already provided it with the requisite liturgical furniture for the display of the celebrant at mass. In 783–4 Pope Hadrian translated relics of some unknown saints into the chapel that Pope John VII (705–707) had erected in honor of Mary which was located at the back of the basilica's north outer aisle. Very likely Hadrian put the relics in question inside the altar that John VII had already provided at the chapel's eastern focus, which stood beneath a deep arch whose west end stood on a pair of fancy helical columns, and whose east end butted against (and was supported by) the chapel's rear east wall. Thus if John VII did not set up a reliquary altar here, Hadrian apparently did.[43] Hadrian also erected a chapel in

[38] Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter*, presented this fourth- through ninth-century process in the Western church in terms of loss and retreat. As the public civic society of the Ancient Roman Empire disappeared, he said, and a ruralized western Europe reverted to a society based on person-to-person bonds secured by oath and by the age-old communal form of the giving and receiving of gifts, religion reverted at the same time to more rigid and "simpler," that is, "archaic" forms. But see the 1979 article by Patrick Geary, "Coercion of Saints in Medieval Religious Practice," reprinted in *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 116–124. Such pejorative assessments of the workings of reciprocity in Medieval forms of piety, he argued, may highlight or even underpin Modern religious values, but they (the pejorative assessments) begged the historical question.

[39] *LP* 86 (*V. Sergii I*), c. 12. De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 568–569, noted that, in 1607, the sarcophagus of Leo I came to light beneath a more recent reliquary and the foundations of an older altar; from their placement in the chapel, the sarcophagus and altar look to go back to the time of Sergius I. In *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), cc. 84 and 87, one reads that Leo III embellished both an altar and a confessio of Leo I in St. Peter's.

[40] *LP* 92 (*V. Gregorii III*), cc. 6–7: "In quo faciens pergolam . . . et faciem altaris et confessionem cum regiolis vestivit argento . . ."

[41] *LP* 94 (*V. Stephani II*), c. 52; and *LP* 95 (*V. Pauli*), c. 3.

[42] *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), c. 60.

[43] See *LP* 88 (*V. Johannis VII*), cc. 1 and 6 for the founding of Pope John VII's chapel; originally the chapel enshrined an icon of Mary, and not, apparently, any relics. But compare de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 573, who noted that the guide for pilgrims to St. Peter's in the *Notitia Ecclesiarum* (in its eighth-century redaction) named John VII's chapel, *ad Praesepe*: Couldn't the chapel, he asked, have enshrined relics of the stable and/or manger of Christ's Nativity? However this may be, an historic inscription, cut crudely in marble, which came from the chapel's north wall, and is now preserved in the Capella di S. Maria delle Febbri (or Partorienti) in the Vatican Grottoes, tells that, during the reign of Pope Hadrian I, "relics of the saints" were stashed in this chapel on November 22 of indiction VII (i.e, in 783–784); the inscription also names a fenced-in vineyard located "in Septimianus," probably to insure that all its revenue, *in integro*, would go to the support of offices in the chapel (possibly for lighting?):
+ TEMPORIBVs
D N HADRIANI
PAPAE HIC RECVN
DITA SVM (sunr) RELIQVi
AS (reliquiae) SANCTOR IN
MESE NOBEBRi
IN D XXII IND SEPTIMA.. BINE

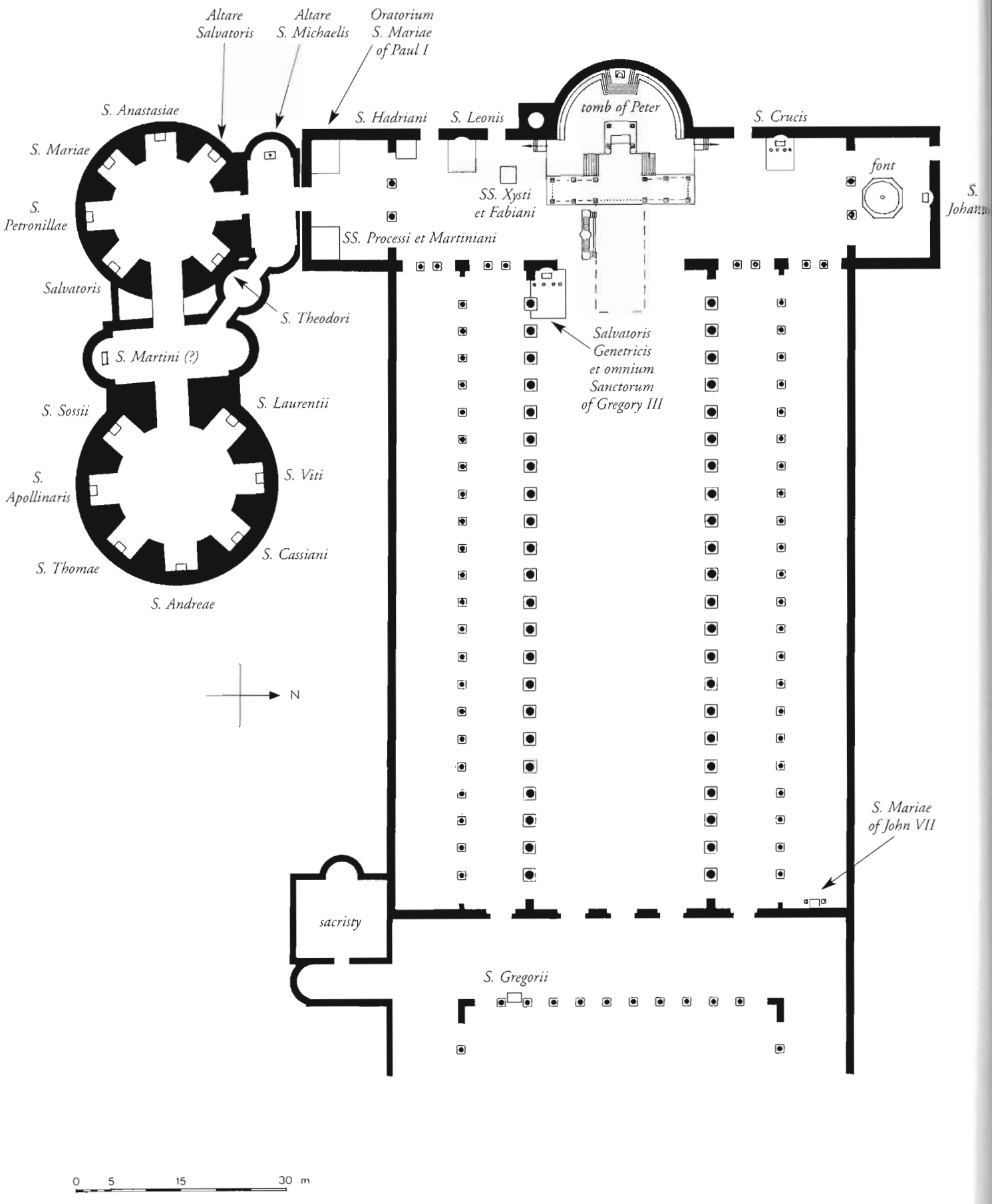


Fig. 10 Plan showing the major chapels in St. Peter's under Pope Paschal I (817–824) (adapted from S. de Blaauw, Cultus et decor, *1994, Fig. 25).*

honor of his patron saint, Hadrian of Nicomedia, in the transept's southwestern corner (next to the exedra) and seems very likely to have focused it on a reliquary altar.[44]

In 805–806, as we can deduce from the report in the *Liber Pontificalis*, Leo III remodeled Symmachus's chapel of the Holy Cross and likewise set up a ciborium over a silver-clad altar provided with many rich decorations. Did this altar contain a cross relic?[45] In 807–808, Leo III clad the tomb of Gregory I in the narthex with silver which shows that it had become a proper "altar."[46] Moreover, in 817, at very nearly the moment that he began work at S. Prassede, Paschal I built two important chapels in St. Peter's transept, one small, and one large. He translated the bodies of the third-century papal martyrs, Sixtus II and Fabian, into the smaller, located just south of the Pettine shrine; and translated the bodies of the Roman protomartyrs Processus and Martinianus, Peter's jailors, into the larger, located in the southeast corner of the transept's south exedra. These too seem to have been outfitted with reliquary altars for the display of the celebrant in the new, Early Medieval fashion.[47]

At the same time that the Early Medieval popes installed all this new liturgical furniture in St. Peter's, they undertook to enhance the Pelagian/Gregorian altar-grave at the church's main focus – that is, they kept remodeling it to bring more dignity and attention to the celebrant there. Thus Pope Honorius I (625–638) embellished Peter's confessio with silver,[48] and Sergius (687–701) lifted a silver ciborium over the *cathedra* at the back of the apse.[49] In the 730s, Gregory III set up a second pergola of six columns in front of the shrine, a column screen that further distanced the celebrant from the faithful while heightening the worshipers' focus upon him (and further dramatizing the celebrant's special status during the mass).[50]

Hadrian (772–795) outdid all his predecessors in dignifying the altar-grave as a special place. He paved the confessio's vestibule with silver, clad the confessio, the front of the altar, and the crypt with hundreds of pounds of gold, put silver railings around the area in front of the podium, and provided many images, in the round and in relief, which glinted in gold.[51] He also suspended a huge cross-shaped lamp with 1365 "candles" over the *presbyterium*.[52] His successor Leo III went even further.[53] He enlarged the apsidal podium to provide more space for liturgical movement, extending it eastward, which required him to suppress the two frontal Pelagian/Gregorian stairways and set up new ones which ran perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the confessio's vestibule. In the process, Leo III took care to preserve and reuse the striking porphyry steps from the Pelagian/Gregorian shrine. The resulting flat, front face of the podium was luxuriously clad with porphyry slabs to match the (reused) steps in the new stairway. Leo III also dismantled the original ciborium over the altar-grave and set up a much larger one clad with gilded silver, raised on four tall porphyry columns, also clad in silver. As for the altar-grave that rose at the center of this composition, Leo III re-clad it in gold from bottom to top, thus improving on his predecessor's effort here. He entirely fenced off the space in front of the podium with railings in silver to restrict the movement of worshipers in front of Peter's shrine. He also covered the entablatures of the two imposing six-column pergolas to the east of the altar-grave with silver sheets. Finally, he set up a huge silver arch over the central intercolumniation of the easternmost pergola in front of the apsidal podium, a focusing device *par excellence*.

Thus during the course of the seventh and eighth century, but mostly in the eighth, the popes used a new liturgical tool, the reliquary altar, to transform St. Peter's into a church focused on the worship of the saints, a church that had a main shrine to Peter and many secondary ones to other important saints in side chapels, and a church in which the people's access to the sacred in *all* the shrines was under clerical, indeed papal, mediation.[54]

A (vinea) CLVSVRA IN i
NTEGRO q P (quae ponitur) In
SEPTIMIANVs

For the location of the inscription, see the drawing by Giacomo Grimaldi (1568–1623) in Barb. Lat. 2733 fols. 94v-95r, which shows the chapel's north wall, reproduced in G. Grimaldi, *Descrizione della basilica antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano: Codice Barberini latino 2733*, ed. Reto Niggl (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1972), 126–127. Grimaldi's Ms. dates 1619–1620; Pope Paul V hired Grimaldi to record the antiquities of the nave of Old St Peter's before it was knocked down to build the nave of New St Peter's. For a photograph of the inscription, see D. Dufresne, *Les cryptes vaticanes* (Paris: Desclée, Lefebvre, 1902), 21. I thank Ann van Dijk for discussing this inscription with me; see A. van Dijk, *The Oratory of Pope John VII (705–707) in Old St. Peter's* (John Hopkins University: Ph.D. diss., 1995), 17f, 27f, and 31–33.

44 De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 570 (with an analysis of the complex documentary record).

45 *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), c. 66. When the chapel was demolished in 1455–1456, a niche with a cross relic was found at the *back of its apse* (covered over with a mosaic representing a cross). Was this the arrangement in Leo III's day? Discussed by de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 568.

46 *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), c. 84.

47 *LP* 100 (*V. Paschalis I*), cc. 5, 6, tells that Paschal set up an "altar" for Sixtus II and Fabian, and "in a similar mode," an "oratorium" for Processus and Martinianis. Concerning the altar in the latter, the *LP*'s compiler wrote that Paschal decorated its *propitiatorium* (its front) and its confessio, inside and out, with sheets of silver. An altar with a confessio = a reliquary altar.

48 *LP* 72 (*V. Honorii*), c. 1.

49 *LP* 86 (*V. Sergii I*), c. 11.

50 *LP* 92 (*V. Gregorii III*), c. 5. The central intercolumniation of both pergolas was wider than the two at either side.

51 *LP* 97 (*V. Hadriani I*), cc. 45, 83, 84, 87, and 93; also *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), c. 3, for activity at the confessio undertaken on Hadrian's behalf by the priest who became Pope Leo III.

52 *LP* 97 (*V. Hadriani I*), c. 46. The lamp was to be lit four times a year, on Christmas, Easter, the feast of Peter and Paul, and the anniversary of Hadrian's elevation to the papal throne.

53 See especially de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 541–545, 550–553, 557–559, for a cogent analysis of the relevant material in *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), cc. 28, 53, 54, 64, 86, and 87.

54 In his stimulating new study, "La frammentazione liturgica nella chiesa romana del primo medioevo," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 75 (1999):

The Petrine Sacred Machinery Put to Work at S. Prassede

In a recent publication I argued that Paschal put exactly the same kind of liturgical furniture into S. Prassede as was found at St. Peter's. The isometric drawing in Fig. 11 summarizes my reconstruction of Paschal I's presbytery, which I based upon an inspection of its remains and on a close reading of both Paschal's *vita* in the *Liber Pontificalis* and an eye-witness account of an eighteenth-century excavation at this site.[55] The pope clearly built an altar-grave in the Early Medieval Petrine mode and put it at the focus of a church that, as I argue above, was planned to recall or evoke St. Peter's (compare Figs. 5 and 10). Moreover, just as at St. Peter's, at S. Prassede a chapel focused on a reliquary altar was set out beneath the apsidal podium in the crypt's axial corridor.[56] The *Liber Pontificalis* says that Paschal translated "many bodies of saints" into his church. Thanks to the contemporary account of that translation inscribed in a marble plaque still preserved at S. Prassede, we know that Paschal specifically distributed these bodies in various memorials there – some 2000 plus bodies in the main shrine at the apse, with its chapel under the apsidal podium, then the body of Zeno and two other saints in a chapel dedicated to Zeno attached to the right aisle, and finally the bodies of Maurus and forty others in the sacristy dedicated to the Baptist "on the left side of the church."[57]

No side altars survive; they, like the main shrine in S. Prassede's apse, have all disappeared during the church's numerous remodeling campaigns. Moreover, from the original array of chapels, only the Zeno Chapel survives (or survives in large part). But by analogy to the reliquary altar that can be reconstructed for the chapel beneath S. Prassede's apsidal podium, we can safely presume that the altars in the Zeno Chapel and the sacristy were similar, and thus also similar to those in the side chapels at St. Peter's.[58] S. Prassede, like St. Peter's, was a church conceived as a "family" of saints' memorials.[59] Goodson has shown how Pope Paschal I re-

385–446, Franz Alto Bauer argued that the reliquary altar made its impact liturgically in two very different ways. On one hand, it helped organize, indeed focus the presbytery in an early medieval Roman church, a site where an ever more solemn and elaborate clerical office unfolded, which lay people could follow only at a great distance. On the other, in a church's various chapels, the reliquary altar also focused the popular cult of relics and provided ordinary worshipers with that more immediate contact with the holy (with the bodies of the saints) that they sought enthusiastically. The *Notitia Ecclesiarum Urbis Romae*, a seventh- and eighth-century pilgrim's guide, provided the chief evidence for Bauer's theory. He cited especially the *Notitia Ecclesiarum's* itinerary for a pilgrim to St. Peter's that dilated on how such a visitor might make direct, individual contact with the saints as he or she passed from one of the great church's side altars to another (including the altar in the axial corridor under the apsidal podium). Nevertheless, I am arguing here that access to the holy *even at the side altars* in St. Peter's was mediated. Häussling, *Mönchskonvent*, chap. VI, pp. 174–297, details the step-by-step process culminating in the period between 600 and 800 when the worship of the saints became linked indissolubly with the celebration of the eucharist: I reason that as long as priests are required for worship of a saint (at his or her confessio understood as a reliquary altar), an individual worshiper has no "direct" contact with that saint. Whether standing in a presbytery or a chapel, the reliquary altar puts a priest in strict control of the people's access to the holy.

[55] Emerick, "Focusing on the Celebrant." S. Prassede's original presbytery furniture, much of which survived down to the early eighteenth century, was destroyed between 1728 and 1734 when the present chancel was constructed. Benigno Aloisi, prior of the monastery at S. Prassede, who participated in this project and in the exploratory excavations at the site that preceded the chancel's remodeling, kept a record of what was found in his "Relazione Della Fabrica del nuovo Altare Maggiore della Venerabile Chiesa di S. Prassede di Roma . . .," 1729. Aloisi's manuscript, once preserved in the monastery at Vallombrosa, was lost in the 1970s. The Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome, has a photocopy (partial) and the monastery library at S. Prassede has a transcription made in 1881 (apparently complete). For a new edition based on both the photocopy and the transcription, see now Caterina-Giovanna Coda, *Duemilatrecento corpi di martiri* (Rome: Miscellanea della Società Romana di Storia Patria, XLVI, 2004), 17–78.

[56] For the altar there, see especially Bruno M. Apollonj Ghetti, *Santa Prassede* (Rome: Le Chiese di Roma Illustrate, 1961), 44–48, who provides a cogent sequel to his earlier pages on the reliquary altar from the Pelagian/Gregorian liturgical stage set at the Vatican (see his *Esplorazioni* cited in n. 34 above). Apollonj Ghetti cited excerpts from Aloisi's manuscript (see previous note) in which Aloisi described the "block altar" he saw inside the chapel below S. Prassede's apsidal podium. Since that altar so closely resembled the Pelagian/Gregorian one that Apollonj Ghetti had found at the Vatican in the 1940s, he judged that the altar that Aloisi saw must have been the one that Paschal had installed there.

[57] See now (1) Coda, *Duemilatrecento corpi di martiri*, Appendix I, and (2) Caroline Goodson, "The Relic Translations of Paschal I (817–824): Transforming Cult and City," a paper read at the conference, *Roman Bodies: Metamorphoses, Mutilation, and Martyrdom*, organized by Andrew Hopkins at the British School at Rome, 29–31 March 2001. I thank Caroline Goodson for generously allowing me to read her paper before its publication in the acts of the conference (forthcoming in a volume from the British School entitled *The Body of Rome* edited by Andrew Hopkins and Maria Wyke). As this paper went to press, Goodson also completed her Ph.D. thesis, *The Basilicas of Pope Paschal I (817–824): Tradition and Transformation in Early Medieval Rome* (Columbia University, 2004).

[58] The Zeno Chapel, oriented to the north, opened off the north aisle about halfway down. The chapel to the 2000 saints, oriented to the east, was located beneath the apsidal podium. But where was S. Prassede's sacristy, the Chapel dedicated to the Baptist (and Maurus and forty others)? I suggest that it was located at the basilica's southeast corner, and that it had a western orientation in a manner similar to the sacristy at St Peter's in Paschal I's day. See my hypothetical reconstruction of S. Prassede's original plan in Fig. 5 (compare Fig. 10; see de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, 469–470, for the location of the original sacristy at St. Peter's). Benigno Davanzati, *Notizie al pellegrino della basilica di Santa Prassede* (Rome: Antonio de' Rossi, 1725), 393–394, judged that the sacristy in Paschal I's S. Prassede must have been located near the altar of S. Carlo Bortomeo in the chapel dedicated to him that stood (and still stands) near the southeast corner of the basilica of S. Prassede. He wrote that vestiges of an old chapel, ruined by the passage of time, were visible there immediately behind the altar: "Ma possiamo credere, che fosse (the sacristy), dove al presente è l'Altare di S. Carlo, poiche dietro appunto al medesimo si vedono le vestigie d'una Cappella rovinata dal tempo . . ." For the location of the chapel of S. Carlo Borromeo see the convenient plan in Apollonj Ghetti, *Santa Prassede* (fold-out plate). Davanzati, p. 237, also recorded that the altar of S.Carlo had been restored in 1710. Were the historic "vestiges" in question observed at that time?

[59] For the concept of the *Memorialkirchenfamilie*, so called, see Häussling,

moved the bodies of saints from cemeteries on every major road leading out from the city, often intervening in places where for hundreds of years previously worshipers had honored their *memoriae*.[60] By gathering all these saints at S. Prassede and by installing their remains in reliquary altars at the focus of ceremonial spaces, Paschal I put them beyond the immediate reach of worshipers and thus made worshipers depend much more on priests for access to them. Paschal I, too, was using the burgeoning cult of the saints to bring more attention and luster to the Roman priesthood.

If by the second decade of the ninth century St. Peter's had made papal control of the sanctoral liturgy real and concrete for worshipers in Rome, why was Paschal putting this Petrine sacred machinery to work at S. Prassede? What was he trying to do besides control people's great interest in the cult of the saints? I will argue here that by shaping or designing S. Prassede as he did, Paschal I could effectively intervene in the city's monumental Christian topography to enhance his role as leader, and in effect, create a "papal city" all his own.

Paschal I's Rome: A City of Martyrs and Confessors

Paschal I translated the wide-flung, Roman, extramural *memoriae* dramatically *inside* the city, to S. Prassede, to make them a feature of regular worship there. But we should not consider this act an entirely new departure. Indeed, Paschal's gesture was the culmination of a process, underway since the seventh century, by which the temporal and sanctoral liturgies came to intertwine upon the *mensae* of the *intramural* churches. This happened notably in the city's twenty plus *tituli* including S. Prassede (Fig. 1). By the early ninth century, these intramural churches had mostly taken over from the extramural *memoriae* as foci for the people's worship of the saints.[61]

We do not usually view the Roman *tituli* in this way. Until a short while ago, scholars saw them principally as witnesses to the city's pre-Constantinian parochial system; they were thought to be Rome's earliest parish churches.[62] But recently Federico Guidobaldi has argued cogently that the city's *tituli* came only very slowly to underpin the parochial organization of the Roman church, say between 400 and 600, and furthermore that, between about 600 and 800, they took on a wholly new life in the city when their users dedicated them to Early Christian martyrs.[63] We do well to heed these startling Roman Early Medieval developments. By Leo III's reign the *tituli* had eclipsed the ancient martyria outside the city's walls as the sites where Romans celebrated the saints' *natalicia*. Or all but eclipsed them.

To be sure, the *tituli* never took over in this way from the extramural martyria of Peter, Paul, and Lawrence. Between 600 and 800, the latter became the leading Roman sanctuaries for the sanctoral liturgy, and St. Peter's chief among them.[64] Moreover, during this time, owing to the rapid development of the papal stational liturgy, St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and S. Lorenzo also became the prime foci, with S. Maria Maggiore and the Lateran, for the temporal liturgy. In other words, if the sanctuaries at the tombs of Peter, Paul, and Lawrence had started out as sites for the sanctoral liturgy and had also become, during the Early Middle Ages "regular churches," the *tituli* in their turn had started out as regular churches and during the Early Middle Ages had become "martyria" of a sort.

As Johann Kirsch has explained, the city's titular priests led worship of the saints from the start both at their *tituli* and at the saints' tombs in the specific extramural cemeteries linked with their intramural *tituli*. The martyrs' shrines in the thirty-six cemeteries outside Rome's walls never had their own regular clergy; the titular priests administered them.[65] As time went on, however, the titular priests lost their immediate links with the cemeteries. The *Liber Pontificalis* says that before his elevation as pope and while he was serving as

Mönchskonvent, 201–213, especially 213. For the idea of the Early Christian and Early Medieval *Kirchenfamilie*, of which the Early Medieval *Memorialkirchenfamilie* is a variety, see the art historian Edgar Lehmann (extensive bibliography in Häussling, *Mönchskonvent*, 201–202). The "perfect example" (*Musterstück*, said Häussling) of the *Memorialkirchenfamilie* in the Latin West was St. Peter's. Some of the reliquary altars that focused worship there, it is true, featured members of an "actual" family, namely Peter and his brother Andrew, and his daughter Petronilla. But St. Peter's many altars also enshrined the relics of Peter's sainted papal successors, his Roman jailors (Processus and Martinianus), the Roman protomartyr Lawrence, and even "All the Saints" in the chapel dedicated by Gregory III (see my Fig. 10). The "family" in question is more spiritual than anything else, something ad hoc at this special site.

60 Goodson, "Relic Translations."

61 But of course they did not take over from the great extramural churches built in honor of Peter, Paul, or Lawrence. I speak more about this key issue just below.

62 Johann P. Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen im Altertum* (Paderborn: Verlag Schöningh, 1918), 127–137, esp. 133.

63 Federico Guidobaldi, "L'inserimento delle chiese titolari di Roma nel tessuto urbano preesistente: osservazioni ed implicazioni," in *Quaeritur inventus colitur, Miscellanea in onore di Padre Umberto Maria Fasola, Barnabita* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1989), 2 vols., I, 383–396; and *idem*, "L'organizzazione dei *tituli* nello spazio romano," in *Christiana Loca, Lo spazio cristiano nella Roma del primo millennio*, 2 vols., ed. Letizia Pani Ermini, Rome, 5 September-15 November 2000, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Complesso di S. Michele (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 2000), I, 123–129. Also F. Guidobaldi, "Spazio urbano e organizzazione ecclesiastica a Roma nel VI e VII secolo," *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Split/Porec, 25 September-1 October 1994* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1998), 29–54, esp. 29–32.

64 Jounel, *Le culte des saints*, 398–399, concluded his study arguing that, already by the end of the eighth century, the popes had made St. Peter's into the "Roman center of the cult of the saints."

65 Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, 200–201 and 208–219; and *idem*, "Die Grabstätten der römischen Märtyrer und ihre Stellung im liturgischen Märtyrkultus," *Römische Quartalschrift* 38 (1930): 107–131; also Charles Pietri, *Roma christiana*, 2 vols. (Rome: École française de Rome, 1976), I, 595–667.

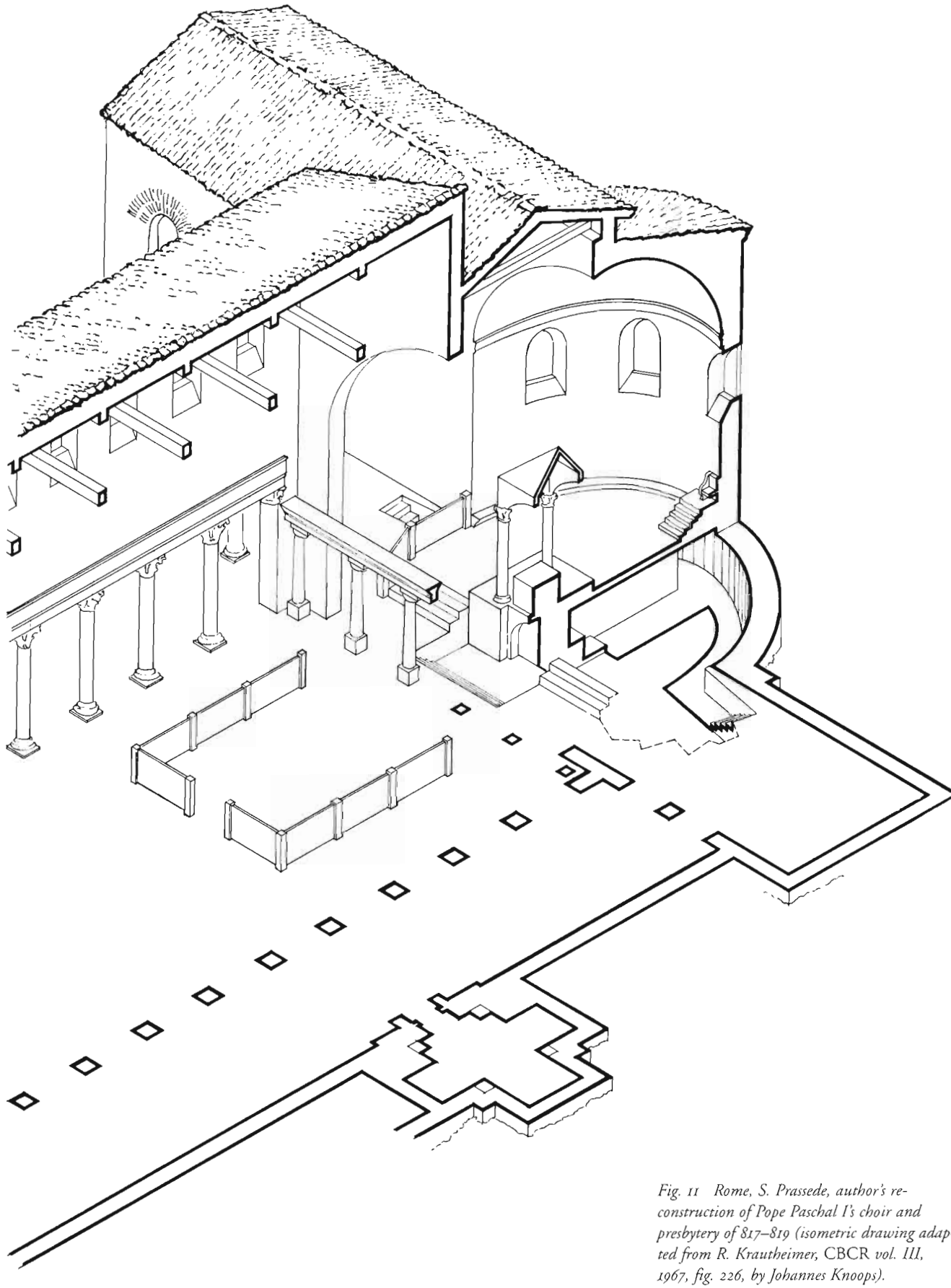


Fig. 11 Rome, S. Prassede, author's reconstruction of Pope Paschal I's choir and presbytery of 817–819 (isometric drawing adapted from R. Krautheimer, CBCR *vol. III, 1967, fig. 226, by Johannes Knoops).*

S. Susanna's titular priest, Sergius I (687–701) had celebrated mass energetically (*impigre*) in the different cemeteries (*per cymiteria diversa*), from which we may deduce that, around 700 in Rome, a titular priest had *no* regularly assigned duties in the cemeteries.[66] Moreover, when Pope Gregory III (731–741) decreed that vigils and masses for the saints' *natalicia* be observed in the extramural cemeteries, he also had to appoint priests to these duties *pro tempore*.[67] Ordinary or regular celebrations of the saints in the cemeteries had clearly lapsed.[68] That the Lateran *curia* had to organize such worship ad hoc in the extramural cemeteries during the later seventh and early eighth centuries probably shows how serious was its (the *curia's*) collapse following Rome's dereliction in the aftermath of Justinian's disastrous Reconquest of Italy.

Nevertheless, as the city recovered in the seventh century, and indeed, burgeoned as capital of the Republic of St. Peter in the eighth, the Lateran did not attempt to bring the extramural shrines into play liturgically in any ordinary way, that is, as they had been prior to the Reconquest. Hadrian I (772–795) and Leo III (795–816) might restore ruined cemetery basilicas, but they gave them few or no liturgical vessels.[69] By the last third of the eighth century and the first decade of the ninth, any regular offices in honor of the saints took place either at the three great extramural basilicas (of Peter, Paul, and Lawrence) or in the intramural churches, especially the *tituli*. Pilgrims still visited the extramural shrines (that is, the other ones besides those of Peter, Paul, and Lawrence), but the translations of the bodies they had long venerated there into churches located *inside* the city's walls greatly lessened the appeal of these cemeteries for pious visitors.[70] If the popes first undertook to mediate worshipers's access to the relics of the saints at St. Peter's in the seventh and eighth centuries by installing reliquary altars in chapels there, at the end of the eighth and in the early ninth centuries they decisively undertook to do the same in the *tituli*.

The *Liber Pontificalis's* report that Pope Paul (757–767) removed the bodies of the saints from the ruined extramural cemeteries and buried them with all honor (*cum condecenti studuit recondi honore*) inside the city, some in the *tituli* and others in the diaconiae, monasteries, and other churches, helps show how the process started.[71] Presumably the bodies in question went into the new reliquary altars. But it was under Leo III (795–816) that the Lateran *curia* seems to have fully understood how to use such altars to good effect in churches inside the city, especially in the *tituli*. That is how I would understand Pope Leo III's building of two imposing new churches at the ancient *tituli* of S. Susanna near the Baths of Diocletian[72] and SS. Nereo e Achilleo near the Baths of Caracalla (Fig 1).[73] While it is true that only S. Susanna among these two sanctuaries retained its full titular status in Leo's day, the other having become, sometime between 600 and 776, a deaconry,[74] and while it is also true that SS. Nereo e Achilleo had lost its place in the papal stational liturgy in the process,[75] the new deaconry could not help but retain for ninth-century worshipers some aura of its old titular status.[76]

Since *ab origine* neither titulus had a large meeting hall, both were soon eclipsed as places for regular worship by other nearby properties or *tituli* that did have that essential amenity and could serve efficiently as parish churches. S. Susanna languished over the centuries while the nearby *titulus Cyriaci* (later *titulus S. Ciriaco in Thermis*) thrived; SS. Nereo e Achilleo sank in importance as the nearby *titulus Crescentiae* (later *titulus S. Xysti*) took over.[77] With Rome's depopulation in the mid-sixth century and slow recovery in the seventh and eighth, worshipers all but abandoned S. Susanna and SS. Nereo e Achilleo. Thus when Leo III rebuilt them, he did so not so much to house parishioners (S. Susanna) or provide charity (SS. Nereo e Achilleo) as to feature the altars inside dedicated to saints. The *Liber Pontificalis* records that at S. Susanna, Leo III "built the altar's confessio of fine silver,"[78] and that at SS. Nereo e Achilleo, he presented "a silver canopy."[79] Clearly at both sanctuaries he set up imposing reliquary altars.[80] In both Leo III worked to further the developing trend that saw important intramural churches and especially *tituli* in Rome take on more and more the aspect

66 *LP* 86 (*V. Sergii I*), c. 1.

67 *LP* 92 (*V. Gregorii III*), c. 17.

68 For analysis of both passages in the *LP*, see Duchesne in *LP*, I, 373, n. 3 (citing G. B. De Rossi); also Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, 211, 218–219.

69 Hermann Geertman, *More veterum, Il Liber Pontificalis e gli edifici ecclesiastici di Roma nella tarda antichità e nell'alto medioevo* (Groningen: H. D. Tjeenk Willink, 1975), 98–99 and 105–106.

70 John Osborne, "The Roman Catacombs in the Middle Ages," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 53 (1985): 278–328.

71 *LP* 95 (*V. Pauli*), c. 4.

72 *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), c. 9; *CBCR*, vol. IV (1970), pp. 254–278. S. Susanna = the former *titulus Gaii*; see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, 70–74. Leo had been titular priest here before his elevation as pope.

73 *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), c. 111; *CBCR* vol. III (1967), 135–152. S. Nereo e Achilleo = the former *titulus Fasciolae*; see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, 90–94.

74 Called *diaconia* in *LP* 98 (*V. Leonis III*), cc. 29, 75, and 112; see Geertmann, *More veterum*, 64, 69, and 106.

75 The papal station for mass on Monday of Holy week each year, which had long occurred at the *titulus SS. Nerei et Achillei* moved to the *titulus Praxedis* on the Esquiline sometime during the eighth century; see Geertman, *More veterum*, 164; also Saxer, "L'utilisation," 1001 and n. 58 on 1004.

76 The redacrors of Leo III's life in the *Liber Pontificalis* credit the pope with various donations to the "deaconry" of SS. Nereo e Achilleo (cc. 25, 75, 112), but when they record Leo's reconstruction of the sanctuary (c. 111), they call it a "church." Did they do so intentionally? To enhance Leo's credit by acknowledging SS. Nereo e Achilleo's ancient role in the city? See Raymond Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (*Liber Pontificalis*)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), p. 230. SS. Nereo e Achilleo was the only titular church in Rome ever to be transformed into a deaconry; Geertman, *More veterum*, 164, n. 2.

77 Guidobaldi, "L'insetimento," esp. 390–396; Guidobaldi, "L'organizzazione dei *tituli*," esp. 128–129.

78 *LP* 98 (*v. Leonis III*), c. 29.

79 *Ibid.*, c. 111.

80 With either actual saints' bodies, or parts of their bodies, or with contact relics.

of martyria. By treating altars as supremely holy objects,[81] by treating them as personifications of the saints,[82] and by enshrining them in "regular churches" inside the city's walls, Leo III hoped to frame, organize, and mediate the sanctoral liturgy in the city.

Paschal took over this project in 817 where Leo III left off and heightened it in every way he could. By rebuilding another of the little-used and minor *tituli*, S. Prassede,[83] in the image of the city's greatest papal shrine to the saints, and filling its multiple memorial altars with thousands of holy bodies, he found an even more effective way to take control of and mediate the Roman people's engagement with the cult of the saints. Like Sixtus III or Symmachus before him, Paschal hoped to conjure with St. Peter's image in Rome. But now the game had become more complex, with much more at stake for those who knew how to manipulate the religious stage machinery. By building S. Prassede, Paschal now appears to have been trying to blur the distinctions Romans usually made between the great patriarchal basilica at the Vatican (the main place where the popes mediated the Roman people's access to the saints) and the city's "regular churches," especially the *tituli* (where Paschal was hoping he might also appear effectively as such a mediator). This is, strikingly, how Leo III had acted just previously when he both enhanced the altar-grave of Peter at the Vatican and set up prominent reliquary altars at the *titulus* of S. Susanna and the former *titulus*, then deaconry of SS. Nereo e Achilleo. Paschal, Leo III's protégé,[84] must have learned early on how the intertwining of the temporal and sanctoral liturgies upon the altars *inside* the city offered new opportunities for creating architectural images.

Federico Marazzi has argued that Paschal's building program all but constituted an attempt to set up a "new papal city" much as Gregory IV would do in the early 840s when he founded *Gregoriopolis* at the mouth of the Tiber, or as Leo IV would do in the early 850s when he set up the *Civitas Leoniana* at the Vatican.[85] Indeed, such ambition, even megalomania, seems to be an earmark of the "Carolingian popes." That Paschal's predecessors Leo III and Hadrian I might seek to put their stamp on the city much as Gregory IV and Leo IV put their names on Roman satellite cities, seems to be the message of the famous Einsiedeln Itinerary, which recent study shows was no pilgrim's guide, but a more curious and subtler monument – a kind of literary portrait of the city concocted during the reign Leo III.[86] By giving equal weight to the pagan, Antique monuments *and* the Christian ones, early and late, the Itinerary "re-wrote" the city as an integral Christian whole. It pictured a "papal city," an entity that in just these years had taken shape politically as well. During the eighth century an autonomous state under papal rule had emerged from the old Byzantine duchy of Rome.[87] Thus I see Paschal's building program as an effort by the ruler of this new theocracy, the Republic of St. Peter, to make "his city" visible, to use the cult of the saints to give it a shape, and in the process, to establish his control over Peter's people there.

But the control that Paschal sought in this way looks now to have also comprised a specific, Christian, dogmatic claim – no less than a claim to papal primacy. Here I would argue we might extend to Paschal's building program the assessment that Erik Thunø has made of Paschal's political imagery in two elaborate cross reliquaries that the pope gave to the Lateran and stashed inside a cypress wood box commissioned by Leo III.[88] Although the reliquaries were hidden away and seen by very few, Thunø found them fascinating nevertheless for the light they threw on the iconography of Paschal's great public art commissions, namely the mosaics in the chancels of S. Prassede, S. Maria in Domnica, and S. Cecilia. All these, he argued, implicated a papal doctrine on the role of images in human salvation that Leo III, Paschal's old protector and papal forbear, had first promoted.

Thunø noted that when the Byzantine Emperor Leo V reinstated Iconoclasm in 815, Pope Leo III (795–816) seized the chance to magnify himself by castigating the emperor as a heretic and presenting himself as Christendom's one true orthodox leader, that is, as an iconodule. The Danish scholar deduced this mainly from study of the iconography of the mosaics that Leo installed in his new church, SS. Nereo e Achilleo, a project datable to about 815 and thus framed by the reopening of the image controversy.[89] The decoration, now lost, can be reconstructed from old records: a gemmed cross loomed in the apse conch, Christ Transfigured appeared on the apsidal arch directly above the cross, and two icons of the Virgin enthroned bracketed the composition in the spandrels. Not only did it explore "issues of God's visibility" as the Greek icondules propounded them, said Thunø, it also summed up a *papal* doctrine on images. Leo claimed to play a role in God's plan to save humankind, that is, to mediate between the terrestial and the heavenly, the material

[81] De Blaauw, "L'altare," 988, observed that from the *vita* of Leo III (c. 4) onward in the *LP*, the compilers called altars "sacred" or "sacrosanct."

[82] Cf. Bauer, "La Frammentazione liturgica," 437.

[83] From the start, the *titulus S. Praxedis* was eclipsed by the better equipped, nearby *titulus Equitii* (later *titulus sancti Silvestri et Martini*, then S. Martino ai Monti); see Guidobaldi, "L'organizzazione dei *tituli*."

[84] *LP* 100 (*V. Paschalis I*), c. 2: Leo III early noticed the priest Paschal and made him abbot of a monastery at the Vatican near St. Peter's.

[85] Federico Marazzi, "Le 'città nuove' pontificie e l'insediamento laziale nel IX secolo" in *La storia dell'Alto Medioevo Italian (VI–X secolo) alla luce dell'archeologia* = acts of the Convegno Inrernazionale at Siena, 2–6 dicembre 1992, ed. Riccardo Francovich and Ghislaine Noyé (Florence: Edizioni all'Insegna del Giglio, 1994), 251–277, esp. 264–265. For Gregoriopolis, see *LP* 103 (*V. Gregorii IV*), cc. 39–40; for the Leonine City, see *LP* 105 (*V. Leonis IV*), cc. 38–40 and 68–74.

[86] Franz Alto Bauer, "Das Bild der Stadt Rom in karolingischer Zeit: Der Anonymus Einsiedlensis," *Römische Quatalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 92 (1997): 190–228.

[87] Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter, The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvnaia Press, 1984).

[88] Erik Thunø, *Image and Relic, Mediating the Sacred in Early Medieval Rome* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2002), 166–171.

[89] *Ibid*, chap. 6.

and the immaterial, as high priest, indeed as Peter's successor, the Christ-appointed binder and looser of matters spiritual on earth. Thus Leo posed, to be sure, as offerer of the eucharist at mass, but also as the main and most efficient provider of other salvific objects, namely the relics of the saints (including the wood of the cross) and images (of Christ and Mary).[90] Thunø concluded that Paschal, Leo's most assiduous successor, restated this theme emphatically in his Lateran cross reliquaries and great public mosaic decorations.[91] As Leo III had done before him, Paschal I sought to display himself as pope as the primary (priestly) mediator of a worshiper's access to sacred objects.

Paschal I did not just find new ways to illustrate this papal dogma (in mosaics, say), he found new ways, first at S. Prassede, to stage it architecturally as well. In this instance too Paschal developed and magnified initiatives of his predecessor, Leo III.

[90] *Ibid.*, 148–149, for a pithy summary. The way, during the Early Middle Ages, that the priest took the leading role in eucharistic celebration as *the* celebrant among celebrants, already discussed, resonates here; see n. 38 above.

[91] *Ibid.*, chap. 7.