

KEEPING THE FAITH:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE CAUSES AND FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO THE LOCATION OF GREEK
MONASTIC COMMUNITIES IN ROME BETWEEN THE
SIXTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES.

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Abstract

The study of Greek ecclesiastical institutions in Rome from the sixth to eleventh centuries has failed to receive the academic attention that it deserves. The Greek monasteries and churches of Rome numbered among the city's most prominent and influential religious houses, and yet the evidence and historical study relating to their development and eventual disappearance by the eleventh century is left wanting. Very little work has been done on the connections between the various Greek ecclesiastical foundations of Rome and the importance of their location in the city. Therefore, to address this lacuna, this thesis aims to identify and examine the topographical patterns of Greek ecclesiastical and monastic settlement in Rome from the sixth to eleventh centuries. By drawing connections between individual Greek ecclesiastical institutions that were located in the same geographical area this thesis aims to demonstrate the importance that location had upon the development, influence and function of these churches and monasteries. This thesis will primarily focus upon two areas in Rome, the first being the Palatine Hill and the second the Esquiline Hill and Campo Marzio. This thesis will examine similarities between ecclesiastical institutions, such as function, patronage, staffing and how these factors were influenced by their location in Rome, as well as what factors had an effect on the location of these institutions. It further aims to determine the role that location had upon the popularity and later decline of the Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome. Consequently was the fate of the Greek monasteries and churches of Rome a case of *location location location*?

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Palatine Group.....	17
<i>Diaconiae</i>	22
Sant'Anastasia.....	52
San Teodoro.....	62
San Giorgio in Velabro.....	70
Santa Maria in Cosmedin.....	79
San Cesareo.....	92
Chapter One Conclusions.....	102
Chapter Two: The Esquiline and Campo Marzio Group.....	105
Santa Prassede.....	106
San Silvestro.....	129
Santa Maria in Campo Marzio.....	139
Chapter Two Conclusions.....	144
Conclusion.....	150
Appendix 1 (table).....	162
Appendix 2 (maps).....	163
Appendix 3 (images).....	165
Bibliography.....	167

Introduction

Throughout the early medieval period religious communities played important and often decisive roles in the political and economic life of societies and cities, as well as significantly influencing religious matters, this is nowhere more evident than medieval Rome. Some religious communities also had specialised functions including the care and preservation of relics, the translation of religious works and the distribution of food stuffs to the poor. In early medieval Rome these functions had great political significance and attracted patronage from the papacy and wealthy laity. Why then were the Greek foundations of Rome, although small in number and practicing a religious rite which was alien to the majority population and the ruling elite, entrusted with many of these prestigious functions? It is interesting to note that these foundations were not isolated or restricted to particular areas and in fact many occupied prominent locations within the city, ranging from the Palatine Hill, the seat of secular authority in Rome, to Aqua Salvias, the site of the beheading of the Apostle Paul.¹ The location of a particular foundation both reflected and contributed to its status in the city as well as its role, i.e. proximity to the Tiber for access to grain shipments or the care of particular relics on a site on a well-travelled pilgrim route. The range of sites around the city also affected the

¹ An example of this are the Latin churches which were located in the 'ethnic quarters' of Constantinople, R. Janin, *Les Églises et les Monastères des Grands Centres Byzantins* (Paris, 1975), 569-575.

changing fortunes of foundations as their fate was tied to that of their surrounding area irrespective of their collective identity as Greek foundations, if this even existed.²

Given the wide range of factors and influences affecting the foundation and history of the Greek churches and monasteries of Rome, this thesis focuses primarily upon identifying topographical patterns related to them, and the effects, if any, that their location in the city had upon their function and development. These correlations between location, function and status may aid in explaining why certain areas in Rome were chosen to house Greek religious communities in the first place, as well as providing some insight into the reasons why the number of churches and monasteries observing the Greek rite in Rome declined so much by the advent of the eleventh century.³

Early medieval power relations were complex and multi-layered with power often being a combination of the political, religious, institutional, social, economic and spiritual.⁴ The manipulation of topography was therefore an extension and expression of power with control and investment in certain spaces being used to display power, as well as create or sustain it. In medieval Rome links between topography and the fostering of power are clear to see with the special relation between the popes and the various *sancti loci* of Rome, which they created, expanded or appropriated.⁵ These places of power could be

² For a discussion on Greek identity and ethnicity in medieval Rome see M. McCormick, 'The Imperial Edge: Italo-Byzantine Identity, Movement and Integration 650-950,' H. Ahrweiler and A.E. Laiou (eds) *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge Mass., 1998), 17-53.

³ Refer to Appendix 1: By the eleventh century only some of the Greek foundations in Rome were definitely still observing the Greek rite in comparison to earlier centuries where the total Greek churches and monasteries may have been as many as a dozen or more.

⁴ M. de Jong and F. C.W.J. Theuvs, 'Topographies of power: Some conclusions,' in M. de Jong and F.C.W.J. Theuvs (eds), *Topographies of power in the early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), 534.

⁵ Jong and Theuvs *Conclusions* 537.

“...constructed, reconstructed and manipulated over time,”⁶ and in the case of Rome this is reflected in the personal church building programmes of the popes. However, the cultivation of power in Rome through the manipulation of the urban topography of the city was not limited to the popes, but extended to the secular authorities of the city, such as the Byzantine administration, the *duces*, Otto III, as well as the native aristocracy. Therefore, with space and location linking to power and prestige in Rome, and with that the authorities of the city manipulating the urban fabric of the city to further certain goals whether spiritual or political, how do the locations of the Greek religious houses in Rome follow this pattern? In all likelihood Greek religious houses were entirely consistent with this pattern and were able to offer something which the Latins could not; for example skills and knowledge in the care of relics, monks who could observe rites and sing psalms in Greek and finally establishing a pool of monastics fluent in the Greek language with familiarity with Byzantine theological discourse. Regardless of whether all or any of these skills were utilised by a patron their investment demonstrated, in the case of the popes, their ecumenical authority and gave them the option to bring these skills to bear in the future.

This thesis will approach the subject of the Greek monasteries and churches of Rome from a new angle. Firstly, it will identify groups of churches and monasteries sharing common elements, i.e. function, geographical location, chronology, as well as a number of other factors which serve to tie individual monasteries and churches together. Through this method this thesis will demonstrate that there are several identifiable clusters of Greek religious foundations in Rome. These clusters will be analysed,

⁶ Jong and Theuws *Conclusions* 541.

identifying patterns and trends in the Greek ecclesiastical topography of Rome, which consequently influenced a number of factors relating to the Greek monasteries and churches.

There are two identifiable topographical patterns regarding the Greek religious foundations of medieval Rome.⁷ The first of these groups was located in close proximity to the Palatine Hill in an area that had come to be known as the *Schola Graeca*,⁸ and even in present day Rome is called the *Via della Greca*. The second group was located in the area around the Esquiline Hill, and also stretching further west to the Campo Marzio. For simplicity these identifiable clusters of Greek monasteries and churches will be referred to as the Palatine and Esquiline groups. Finally, there are a number of other Greek religious foundations which do not fall into these groups and owing to space constraints cannot be examined in this thesis.⁹

⁷ See appendix 2, Map A for locations in Rome to give a greater context.

⁸ B. Hamilton, 'The City of Rome and the Eastern Churches in the Tenth century,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome, 1961), 5-26.

⁹ As part of a wider study into the effects that location had upon the function, status and development of the Greek religious foundations in Rome there are a number of other Greek churches and monasteries that would have to be examined to answer such questions. Although it has been outside the ambit of this thesis to examine in any great detail the Greek foundations beyond the Palatine and Esquiline area, below is a list of the known Greek churches and monasteries in medieval Rome and existing works that examine them.

For all monasteries see Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* (Rome, 1957), Huelsen, *Chiese* (Rome, 1927), M. Webb, *The Churches and Catacombs of Early Christian Rome* (Brighton, 2001), Sansterre, *Les Moines grecs* (Brussels, 1984) and M. Armellini, *Le Chiese* (Rome, 1891).

- 1- San Saba: C. La Bella, *San Saba* (Rome, 2003), and G. Hartman, *Archeologia S. Saba sull'Aventino* (Rome, 1901).
- 2- Sant'Anastasio/Tre Fontane/Aguas Salvas: Messino, *Abbazia delle Tre Fontane* (Rome, 2010), Bernacchio, *Tre Fontane* (Rome, 2007), Barclay-Lloyd, *Ss. Vincenzo e Anastasio* (Rome, 2003).
- 3- Sant'Andreas/San Gregorio in Clivo Scauri: Pedrocchi, *San Gregorio al Celio* (Rome, 1993), Moschini, *San Gregorio al Celio* (Rome, 1925).
- 4- Sant'Erasmo: Rossi, *Monastero di S. Erasmo* (Naples, 1902).
- 5- Sant'Alessio: Hamilton, *Sant'Alessio* (Arizona, 1965), Barbato, *Bonifacio e Alessioi* (Rome, 2004), Degrassi, *S. Alessio* (Rome, 1982), Zambarelli, *SS. Bonifacio e Alessio* (Rome, 1924) and Monaci, *Regesto S. Alessio* (Rome, 1905).

Although this thesis will primarily focus upon the ways that the location of these foundations affected their role and development, it is important to note that there were many other factors affecting how these Greek monastic communities functioned, as well as their final fate. As will be discussed later in this thesis, the Greek clergy most likely possessed a number of skills and attributes that made them desirable for certain roles, for example their use as translators for the papacy in dealings with Byzantium. Therefore, although the location of certain religious foundations played a key role in determining with which duties these houses were mandated and their status within the city, it was also the unique qualities that these Greek clergymen offered Rome that influenced their location, role and importance. Thus, the location of these foundations and the fact that they were Greek are inextricably bound together; both of these features must be taken into account when examining the Greek religious foundations of Rome.

Understanding the history and development of the Greek monasteries and churches of Rome is a complicated and often confusing undertaking. Although there is a general consensus amongst historians that they were disproportionately influential in comparison to their small number, very little evidence exists to substantiate this.¹⁰ In

6- San Renato/SS. Andreas and Lucia: See General Works especially Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 276-80, as well as Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* (New York, 2007), 204-5.

7- San Lorenzo fuori le Mura: Although this monastery was staffed by Latin monks according to Duchesne *Liber Pontificalis* Leo IV Vol. II, CV:XXX, 113 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 105:30, 123. Pope Leo IV established a community of Greek monks there also to praise the martyr San Lorenzo, "In it [San Lorenzo] he [Leo IV] established many monks of Greek race and of holy behaviour who might fulfil day and night the praises to almighty God and that martyr." For further information on the relationship between the monastery and the Greek community it housed see Ferrari, G. Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: notes for the history of the monasteries and convents at Rome from the V through the X century* (Rome, 1957) 191.

¹⁰ For example, B. Hamilton, "Orientale Lumen Et Magistra Latinas: Greek Influences on Western Monasticism (900-1100)" in *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos, 963-1963. Études et mélanges* Vol. 1 (Chevtongue, 1963), 182-215 and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 391.

the past fifty years there have been only a handful of works published that have focused solely upon the Greek monasteries, most notably Ferrari,¹¹ Hamilton¹² and Sansterre.¹³ However, although these works are comprehensive in their coverage of certain elements relating to the location and role of Greek religious houses in Rome they are not without their limitations. Ferrari although providing a comprehensive study of the monasteries of early medieval Rome, does not exclusively focus on those following the Greek rite nor does he include *titular* basilicas or *diaconiae*. As a result Ferrari's in-depth analysis of individual monasteries is limited to cursory overview of their history and does not take into account their wider role in the ecclesiastical life of the city, and by not including *diaconiae* and *tituli* his overview of the Greek presence in Rome is limited. Hamilton and Sansterre however focus intently on the Greek monastic and ecclesiastical presence in Rome. Both historians have comprehensively and diligently studied this topic, yet their views differ based on their interpretation of the limited surviving evidence, for example Hamilton favours the theory that the Greek monks of Rome had a significant influence in the city and in papal affairs, for example the use of Greek monks as advisors and the western respect for Greek spirituality.¹⁴ Sansterre however, suggests that the Greek monasteries were more isolated in Rome and that individual relationships between Greeks and Latins would have been difficult owing to the

¹¹ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries*.

¹² Hamilton, *Oriental Lumen* and Hamilton, *City of Rome*.

¹³ J. Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne milieu du VI^e s.-fin du IX^e* (Paris, 1982).

¹⁴ Hamilton cites the contrition of Otto III towards San Nilo over his punishment of John Philagathos, as well as the Empress Theophano's lamentation over the death of Saint Sabas as examples of western respect towards Greek spirituality Hamilton, *City of Rome* 12. An example of a Greek abbot being used as advisor by a pope is cited by Hamilton in *City of Rome* 12-13, with the abbot of the monastery of Saint Basil assisting Pope Benedict VII at a Placitum in 983.

language barrier.¹⁵ Owing to the limited available evidence and the ambiguity surrounding the role and development of the Greek religious houses in medieval Rome the views of Sansterre and Hamilton, although well informed remain largely speculative. Although there is no definitive answer to the role and influence of the Greek monasteries and churches in Rome, what both historians do not include to its fullest is the archaeological and topographical evidence regarding these religious houses. This is not however a case of Sansterre or Hamilton failing to utilise all available evidence, but rather that the archaeological data when both historians were writing was far more limited than it is today, with several important excavations having taken place over the last several decades.¹⁶

In addition to archaeological evidence this work will utilise the research and findings of several art historians who have studied works and materials related to the Greek churches and monasteries of medieval Rome.¹⁷ Although studying the artistry that

¹⁵ Sansterre, *Moines grecs* 214.

¹⁶ For example David Whitehouse, Graeme Barker, Richard Reece and David Reece, 'The Schola Praeconum I' *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 50 (1982), 53-102, and Whitehouse et al, 'The Schola Praeconum I' *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 53 (1985), 163-211, A. Augenti, *Il Palatino nel Medioevo: archeologia e topografia secoli VI-XIII* (Rome, 1996), R. Valenzani and R. Meneghini, *Roma nell'altomedioevo: topografia e urbanistica della città dal V al X secolo* (Roma, 2004), R. Coates-Stephens, *Buildings in Early Medieval Rome, 500-1000 AD* (Ph.D. diss., University College London, 1995) as well as works focusing on the interaction of space and power such as M. de Jong and F. C.W.J Theuvs, *Topographies of power in the early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001).

¹⁷ For example C. Bolgia, 'Il mosaico absidale di San Teodoro a Roma: problemi storici e restauri attraverso disegni e documenti inediti,' *Papers of the British School at Rome* vol. 69 (2001), 317-51, D. Knipp, 'The Chapel of the Physicians at Santa Maria Antiqua,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* vol. 56 (2002), 2-23, S. Lucey, 'Art and socio-cultural identity in early medieval Rome: The Patrons of Saint Maria Antiqua,' in .E. Ó Carragain and C.L. Neuman de Vegvar (eds.) *Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome* (Aldershot, 2007), 139-59, G. Mackie, *Early Christian chapels in the west: decoration, function and patronage* (Toronto, 2003), G. Mackie, 'The Zeno chapel - a prayer for salvation,' *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 57 (1989), 172-99, P.J. Nordhagen, 'Constantinople on the Tiber: The Byzantines in Rome and the Iconography of their Images,' in J. M. H. Smith (ed), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden, 2000), 113-34, and J. Osborne, *The atrium of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome: a history in art* (Hertford, 1987).

adorns the Greek churches of Rome this approach is not without its limitations or dangers. Firstly, the number of mosaics and other artworks surviving from the medieval period in Rome are extremely few in number, even fewer from known Greek churches. It is unclear if the art work that has survived is a typical example of work produced during the period in question, or if its survival was because it was truly exceptional. For example the mosaics in the chapel of San Zeno in Santa Prassede are one of the few examples that survive from ninth-century Rome. These mosaics contain what has been interpreted as Byzantine influenced iconography.¹⁸ However due to the lack of survival of other mosaics from this period it is difficult to ascertain if this iconography was unique to Santa Prassede and the church's Greek monastic community or if the mosaics in Santa Prassede were merely fortunate enough to have survived. Secondly, it remains unknown if these 'Byzantine' style mosaics were produced by resident Greek artists in Rome, or were the works of Roman artists who were inspired by the mosaics of Rome's past, such as the apse mosaic of SS. Cosma e Damiano rather than contemporary Byzantine artistry.¹⁹ Furthermore, there is a question regarding interpretation, art history can run the risk of applying a complete historical narrative to a piece of art and assign historical or political importance to its production or specific iconography within it. Finally, although art history provides some insight into the decoration and patronage of individual churches it is of limited use when attempting to uncover the staffing, function and its place in the ecclesiastical landscape of Rome.

¹⁸ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 193-6.

¹⁹ P.J. Nordhagen, *The frescoes of John VII 705-707 in Santa Maria Antiqua* (Rome, 1968), 151-6 and Coates-Stephens, *Buildings* 101-4.

The majority of other works concerning this topic are catalogues of the known monasteries and churches over a considerable time-span, such as Huelsen's *Le Chiese di Roma del Medio Evo* (1927).²⁰ Although providing the reader with a work of near encyclopaedic proportions, these works rarely examine individual foundations in any depth or attempt to ascertain the influence, functions or reason behind their location. Even the works that exclusively examine the Greek monasteries of Rome, often neglect Greek religious foundations that were not monastic in nature, such as Sant'Anastasia. In addition the topographical element plays a very minor role in their analysis, focusing instead upon the status and influence of these foundations. Even recent archaeological works such as by Augenti, although providing excellent data on the Palatine, do not attempt to link the Greek religious houses in different areas of Rome with one another or how they fit into the wider picture of Greek ecclesiastical settlement throughout the city.²¹ Therefore, this thesis will attempt to fill some of these gaps in the historical research of this subject by focusing upon topographical patterns relating to the Greek ecclesiastical settlement in Rome and how these groups and individual foundations were interlinked.

It could be supposed that the succession of the 'Greek Popes' (678-752) would have had a significant influence on this subject. While it is true that some popes from this period patronised and supported particular Greek religious houses, for example Zacharias and the basilica of San Giorgio in Velabro, there is no evidence of a consistent policy of

²⁰ C. Huelsen, *Le chiese di Roma nel Medio Evo, Cataloghi ed Appvnti* (Rome, 1927), R. Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308* (Princeton, 1980), M. Armellini, *Le chiese di Roma dal secolo IV al XIX* (Rome, 1891) and M. Webb, *The Churches and Catacombs of Early Christian Rome* (Brighton, 2001).

²¹ A. Augenti, *Il Palatino nel Medioevo: archeologia e topografia secoli VI-XIII* (Rome, 1996) and note 16 of this chapter.

supporting Greek monasticism or indeed that the Greek popes, or any others, viewed Greek monastic houses as a homogenous group.²² While the reintroduction of the Greek liturgy and the use of spoken Greek within the church hierarchy have been attributed to the Greek Popes by, for example Ekonomou, this attribution to the popes fails to take account of the substantial Greek religious influences in Rome both before and after this period.²³ Additionally, Byzantine influence in the city remained through the presence of the imperial administration and the *duces*. The surviving evidence concerning how the Greek Popes viewed themselves and their office in relation to Constantinople was that they were first and foremost Romans, and charged with the defence of orthodoxy.²⁴ This evidence perhaps sheds light on why the Greek Popes did not treat Greek religious houses with special favour, as they neither viewed themselves as primarily Greek nor viewed the Greek religious houses as anything other than one aspect of the responsibility of the See of Saint Peter. Given the number of popes of eastern origins, the dearth of evidence and complexity of the issues involved it is not possible to examine their relationships with the Greek monasteries and churches in Rome in any more detail, and is an area which warrants further academic attention.

There are a number of difficulties when investigating the ecclesiastical history of early medieval Rome, more so those religious foundations which observed the Greek rite. The first problem is the lack of both historical and archaeological evidence. The archaeological data and research undertaken in Rome relating to the medieval churches

²² Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCIII:XXIV, 434 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 93:24, 48.

²³ Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 244-72.

²⁴ Refer to the *Life of Pope Sergius* who refused to ratify the canons of the Quinisext Council owing to primarily their interference in Roman religious practices: Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, LXXXVI: VI, 392 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 86:6, 82.

and monasteries of the city is of highly variable quality. A number of medieval structures are no longer extant or are located in areas which are not accessible for excavation. In addition, the city of Rome underwent significant transformation throughout its long and often turbulent history; many of the medieval basilicas and monasteries were either destroyed or renovated during the Renaissance and early modern period. This loss of physical evidence means that material culture and archaeology cannot be used without support from other research methods. More modern excavations, such as the renewed investigation into the structures on the Palatine Hill have somewhat redressed the situation.²⁵ However, at this juncture archaeology and art history can only provide a partial insight into the Greek religious foundations of Rome.

Therefore, this thesis will primarily utilise the written sources of the period, supplemented by archaeological and art historical research. The written source material is itself not without difficulties, some of which can be compensated for, while other source problems are insurmountable. The source material available, relating to the Roman churches from the sixth to the eleventh centuries is lacking in both quality and quantity. Very few documents produced by individual religious houses, such as foundation charters or archives, survive. Thus, very little is known about the circumstances surrounding the foundation and early history of the Greek churches and monasteries of the city. Also for the period under examination there are very few sources written within Rome's walls, the main exception being the *Liber Pontificalis*. The *LP* (*The Book of the Pontiffs*) is the core source for the study of the churches and monasteries of Rome covering the years from the sixth to late ninth century, as

²⁵ A. Augenti, *Il Palatino nel Medioevo: archeologia e topografia secoli VI-XIII* (Rome, 1996), 30.

recorded by a series of unidentified authors. Unfortunately after the entry for the year 885 the work becomes little more than a catalogue of popes and their pontifical years until the work returns to its detailed biographical format during the pontificate of Leo IX (1049-54).²⁶ However, for most of the period under consideration in this thesis the *LP* is a crucial and essential source; it is sometimes the only source for specific periods or for religious houses that have failed to be recorded elsewhere. Although the work has been the subject of considerable academic attention, most of the debate and uncertainty regarding the *LP* relates to the work's entries before the sixth century.²⁷ Thus, the general consensus is that the *LP* was first written in the sixth century, most likely during the pontificate of Boniface II (530-2), and that the entries from Peter to Felix IV were compiled in the 530s; the authors who compiled the biographies of these earlier popes most likely had access to sources and papal lists that are no longer extant.²⁸ In addition to traditions and legends that aided them in putting together this extensive work.²⁹ The work was again suspended for a substantial period shortly after the pontificate of Pope Silverius (536-7), perhaps as late as the 540s. It was not until the reign of Honorius (625-638) that the work was again continued; and from this time until c.885 the papal biographies recorded in the *LP* were a series of contemporary additions.

Therefore, for the period being considered in this thesis the *LP* offers an unparalleled insight into the ecclesiastical history of the churches of Rome as many of these entries in

²⁶ *Liber Pontificalis, The Book of the Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis)* ed. and trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool, 1989), xiii.

²⁷ L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, Introduction et Commentaire* (Paris, 1955-1957) Vol. I, XXXIV-XLVII and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis*, xi- xix.

²⁸ The primary source used for this venture would have been *The Catalogus Liberianus*, which ends in the life of Pope Liberius (352-66), Davis, *Liber Pontificalis*, xi- xlix.

²⁹ An example of this is the legend surrounding Pope Sylvester curing Constantine I of leprosy, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* XXIV:II, Vol. II, 170, Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 34:2, 14 or Leo IV battling a basilisk, *The Lives of the Ninth Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)* ed. and trans. Raymond (Liverpool, 1995), 105:18, 118.

the source were most likely being written contemporaneously with the events recorded. Although very little is known about the individual authors of the *LP* they were most likely clerks in the Lateran *vestiarium*, however the low level style of grammar and vocabulary indicates they were unlikely to have been members of the literary elite.³⁰ In addition confusion over dates, events and access to important documents also indicates that although the authors of the *LP* were members of the papal court, they were likely neither influential nor important.³¹ Although useful the *LP* has a number of limitations as a source. Firstly, although the *LP* has been studied extensively, as Noble suggests, the context and purpose for which it was written remains unknown. He proposes that the work had three primary purposes: a textbook for young clerics, a reference tool and a textual inventory for the many gifts given by the popes to churches of Rome.³² However, McKitterick suggests that the work had a more political and spiritual purpose. The text records the papal creation in Rome of saints' cults and sacred areas achieved through translations of relics and papal sponsored building programmes. The *LP* does not merely record these actions, but glorifies them. McKitterick advocates that its purpose can be interpreted as the desire of its writers as, "re-orientating the perceptions of Rome and its past."³³ In essence the descriptions in the *LP* were used to propagate the sacral image of Rome and its transition from an imperial to papal city. If this is the case it is clear that the writers of the *LP* would diminish any Byzantine contributions to the city militarily, spiritually and architecturally. Thus, the part of the Byzantine administration in the

³⁰ *The Lives of the Eighth Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)* ed. and trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool, 1992) ix.

³¹ Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* ix.

³² Noble, 'A new look at the Liber Pontificalis,' in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* vol. 23 (1985), 355-6.

³³ R. McKitterick, 'Roman texts and Roman history in the early Middle Ages' in C. Bolgia, R. McKitterick, J. Osborne (eds), *Rome across time and space: cultural transmissions and the exchange of ideas c. 500 – 1400* (Cambridge, 2011), 29–34.

building projects which took place in the sixth and seventh centuries in the city could have been diminished by the writers of the *LP* in order to preserve the papal monopoly on the creation of a sacred and Petrine Rome. Secondly, the *LP* provides a very “parochial history” of Rome, with the writers being, “more interested in their own world than the world around them.”³⁴ Therefore, the *LP* provides a limited insight to the effects that events in Byzantium had upon Rome and its churches. In spite of these limitations the *LP* remains one of the few sources that provides any evidence relating to the Greek religious foundations of Rome and in some cases it is the only source for certain churches and monasteries.

In addition to the *LP*, there are a number of brief references in sources produced outside Rome, which shed some light on Medieval Rome’s Greek churches, such as *Vita di San Nilo* (*Vita Sancti Nilus*).³⁵ When combined with archaeological and art historical evidence, as well as what is contained in the *LP*, it is possible to recreate some form of chronology for these Greek foundations. The chronology for the vast majority of Greek religious foundations is fragmentary at best, with some such as San Teodoro remaining an enigma, owing to its absence from the *LP* and other source materials of the time. However, the approach this thesis has adopted to compensate for this lack of contemporary source material is to use specific case studies and categorise Greek religious foundations in distinct groups; as a number of these foundations share similar chronologies and roles in the city. Groupings of foundations compensate for the limited source material available for individual basilicas or monasteries. Although by no means a

³⁴ Noble, *Liber Pontificalis* 51.

³⁵ *Vita Sancti Nilus* in *Acta Sanctorum*, September vol, VIII (Brussels, 1863).

perfect solution, this approach helps to provide a very general insight into the history of the Greek churches and monasteries of Rome.

The first chapter of this thesis will look at the Greek churches and monasteries that were located in the Palatine region exploring how the Greek religious foundations were labelled or referred to in sources, including the *LP*. It will examine ties to the Byzantine military and administrative presence which centred on the Palatine in the decades following the Gothic Wars. The chapter will highlight common themes shared by the religious foundations in this region, and their changing status in Rome. In addition this chapter will investigate the role of the *diaconiae*, which were, it has been suggested religious houses responsible for the distribution of grain to the poor of the city.

The second chapter will examine the Greek churches and monasteries which were located in the north of Rome centred on the Esquiline Hill and further west towards the Campo Marzio. This chapter will explore the concept that Greek monastic communities possessed certain skills that were not readily available amongst Rome's native clergy, specifically the care for and reverence of relics in an urban setting. In addition, this chapter will examine the role that Iconoclasm had in the Greek churches and monasteries on the Esquiline and how Iconoclasm influenced the papacy's relationship with this group of religious foundations.

This thesis will seek to readdress the lack of historical study relating to the Greek religious foundations in Rome, in particular their functions and location within the city. Through the use of written source material, art history and archaeology this thesis will

attempt to demonstrate a complex, but compelling relationship between the location, status and function of these religious foundations.

Chapter One: The Palatine Group

Figure 1: Breakdown of Greek Religious Houses on the Palatine.

<i>Tituli</i>	<i>Monasteria</i>	<i>Diaconiae</i>
Sant'Anastasia	San Cesareo in Palatio	Santa Maria in Cosmedin
		Santa Maria Antiqua ³⁶
		San Teodoro
		San Giorgio

The greatest concentration of known Greek churches and monasteries found in medieval Rome was located on and around the Palatine Hill.³⁷ The Palatine had been the focus of imperial power from the early Roman Empire onwards; however throughout the Middle Ages its status and purpose underwent several transformations.³⁸ The churches and monasteries that are known to have observed the Greek rite in close proximity to the Palatine were San Giorgio in Velabro, San Teodoro, San Cesareo in Palatio, Sant'Anastasia, Santa Maria in Cosmedin and Santa Maria in Antiqua. This chapter will examine the above monasteries and churches for connections between them, as well as their relationship with the city of Rome and papacy, but, more

³⁶ Although Santa Maria Antiqua can be considered to belong to the Palatine group of Greek religious foundations, the church has been the focus of a number of recent academic works that have covered a number of aspects of the basilica in more depth than can be included in this thesis. Therefore, for the purpose of the thesis Santa Maria Antiqua shall be omitted, owing purely to space constraints and the fact there are already a number of recent comprehensive works on the basilica. Consult the following works regarding the basilica of Santa Maria Antiqua: Nordhagen and Romanelli, *S Maria Antiqua* (Oslo, 1964), Nordhagen, *Frescoes of John VII* (Rome, 1965), Nordhagen, *Adoration of the Cross* (Rome, 1967) Nordhagen, *S. Maria Antiqua revisited* (Rome, 1983), Nordhagen, *Constantinople* (Rome, 2000), 113-34, Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* (2001), 112-22, Knipp, *Chapel of Physicians* (Leiden, 2002), 2-23, Osborne, *Atrium of Santa Maria Antiqua* (London, 1987), 186-223, Osborne, Brandt and Morganti, *Santa Maria Antiqua* (Rome, 2004), Rushford, *Santa Maria Antiqua* (London, 1902), 1-119.

³⁷ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 14-16, also refer to appendices 1 and 2.

importantly, the significance of their location on the Palatine, and how this affected their development and role in medieval Rome.

There are a number of difficulties regarding the research and synthesis of buildings located on the Palatine, as well as charting the development of this symbolically important area in Rome. These difficulties are largely evidentiary in nature, with both archaeological and historical evidence extremely limited when it comes to researching the evolution of the Palatine from late antiquity until the eleventh century. There are a number of difficulties associated with conducting archaeological investigations into medieval settlement in Rome and particularly on the Palatine. The first of these was the destruction and loss of a number of late antique and medieval remains caused by the un-stratigraphic digging campaigns conducted in Rome in the 1880s and 1930s.³⁹ This is nowhere more apparent than on the Palatine where archaeologists Giacomo Boni and Alfonso Bartoli may have inadvertently destroyed medieval remains in pursuit of ancient structures.⁴⁰ This pursuit of uncovering ancient structures was often to the detriment of other layers and the loss of medieval remains. This was combined with a substantial failure to report findings from the medieval era in any detail in their reports. Therefore, the archaeological data concerning the Palatine region has been irrevocably damaged because of these negligent excavations, and some medieval structures existence may never be uncovered as a result, an example of this may be Otto III imperial palace on the Palatine.⁴¹ However, recent excavations have somewhat addressed these problems with the revisitation of older archaeological reports, as well as the conducting stratigraphic

³⁹ C. Goodson, 'Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome,' *Rome: Continuing Encounters between Past and Present* (2011), 17.

⁴⁰ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 659.

⁴¹ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 74.

excavations.⁴² In particular work conducted by Augenti, Meneghini, Valenzani and Whitehouse et al, have contributed new insights into the settlement and evolution of the Palatine area in Rome during the medieval period; an area of research which had been neglected until recent years.⁴³ Furthermore, the written evidence regarding the settlement and evolution of the Palatine is also extremely poor with the late eighth to tenth century lacking any mention in the historical record of the city. Therefore, charting the development of the Palatine and the significance of Greek churches being located in this area is difficult, however I believe there is enough evidence to reach some conclusions regarding the Greek religious houses in the Palatine area.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the role of the Palatine Hill in ancient Rome. Suffice to say that it remained throughout antiquity the seat of imperial and political power in the ancient city.⁴⁴ It was the location of the emperors' palaces during the imperial era, with the palaces of Augustus, Tiberius and Domitian all located on the summit.⁴⁵ The imperial grandeur and legacy of the Palatine would not have been lost on later inhabitants of Rome, with the ruins of imperial residences scattered across the summit and slopes visible for miles around. The significance of the Palatine and its past was also known to those outside Rome, with both Byzantium and likely Otto III wishing to establish a base of power on the ancient hill.⁴⁶

⁴² Goodson, *Roman Archaeology* 17.

⁴³ Augenti, *Il Palatino*, Meneghini and Valenzani, *Rome nell'altomedioevo* and Whitehouse et al, *Scholae Praeconum*.

⁴⁴ For more in depth discussions regarding the Palatine in antiquity refer to, J.C Coulston and H. Dodge, *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City* (Oxford, 2000).

⁴⁵ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 23.

⁴⁶ The relationships between the Byzantines and later the Ottonians with the Palatine Hill will be covered throughout the course of this chapter.

For the purposes of this chapter, the chronology of the history of the Palatine in early medieval Rome can be divided into three phases. The first phase dates from the Byzantine administrative and military settlement in Rome in the sixth century, the second from the end of the imperial Byzantine administrative presence in Rome to the end of the tenth century; and finally the shortest phase encompassing the reign of the young German Emperor Otto III (980-1002) at the turn of the first millennium.

The topographical limit for this chapter is the area of the Palatine Hill itself, but also includes locales in close proximity to the slopes of the hill where a number of basilicas and monasteries were situated. These include the *Foro Romano*, the *Schola Graeca*, the *Velabro* the *Circo Massimo* and the area near the Caelian Hill. These areas, along with the Palatine Hill, made up a distinct topographical, cultural, as well as ecclesiastical unit in the urban landscape of medieval Rome.

So, what then were the elements that made the Palatine noticeably different from the other regions of medieval Rome? The reverence and importance afforded to the Palatine owing to its ancient legacy as the seat of the Roman Emperor has already been discussed briefly, and has been covered in much greater detail in previous studies.⁴⁷ Although this thesis will examine in more detail the nature of these churches in comparison to the other Greek churches of Rome, it is interesting to note at this juncture that the Palatine and surrounding vicinity contained an extremely small number of 'traditional' monasteries in comparison to the number of *titular*⁴⁸ basilicas, as

⁴⁷ Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome* 25 and Augenti, *Il Palatino* 14.

⁴⁸ The title *Titulus* was held by a number of churches in Rome, by 499 there were 25 *tituli* and by the late eighth century there were only 22 as three had been reduced in status. The term *titulus* came to mean a parish church and was under the direction of a permanently appointed presbyter. The title of *titulus* set

well as being the traditional area of Greek settlement as identified by such historians as Hamilton.⁴⁹ However, to understand the association between the Palatine Hill and the Greek community of Rome one must look back to the sixth-century origins of this relationship.

The sixth century marked the first tangible presence of the Byzantine Empire in Rome. It was during the reign of the Emperor Justinian that Rome and Constantinople were once again united in a single Empire, although this *renovatio* was to be short lived. It was in 536 that the Byzantines, under the leadership of the general Belisarius, captured Rome and Naples, defeating the Ostrogoths who had previously held the territories.⁵⁰ According to the *LP*, Belisarius and his administration used the Palatine as their base of command: "...habitavit palatium Pincis."⁵¹ In addition the Byzantine historian Procopius in his *De Bellis*, also describes how the Byzantines while in Rome established themselves in the Palatine region, "...παλάτιον."⁵² Even after Belisarius' return to Constantinople it appears that the Palatine remained the seat of Byzantine administration in Rome, and was used by the subsequent Byzantine general, the eunuch Narses who was charged with the re-conquest of Italy. This interestingly, was not recorded by Procopius, or the *LP*, but rather in Agnellus' ninth-century work the *Book of the Pontiffs of Ravenna*, which described Narses' residence on the Palatine while in Rome.⁵³ This range of authors, from as far apart as Ravenna and Constantinople, who possessed knowledge of the Palatine

these churches apart from the major basilicas, diaconiae and monasteries of Rome, Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 127.

⁴⁹ Hamilton, *City of Rome* 5.

⁵⁰ Procopius, *Gothico* VII.

⁵¹ Duchese, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. 1, LX:V, 291 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis*, 60:5, 53.

⁵² Procopius, *Gothico* VII.

⁵³ Agnellus of Ravenna, *The book of pontiffs of the church of Ravenna* trans. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Washington, 2004), 95 and 339.

and its past demonstrates the hill's importance and fame during this period. The Byzantine occupation of Rome and the war against the Goths was not seen by all Romans as positive, with several sources complaining that the city would have been better serving the Goths than Narses, who was accused of treating the citizens of the city like slaves.⁵⁴ Additionally Procopius records that Rome suffered from famine, starvation and death as a result of the constant warfare and sieges that afflicted the city during the Byzantine military campaign in Italy, creating dissatisfaction among the people.⁵⁵ A significant number of the Roman aristocracy had left the city in favour of Constantinople⁵⁶ which would have had a detrimental effect upon monastic and ecclesiastical patronage in Rome. It is therefore likely that both the papacy and the Byzantine administration took over as patrons from the departing elites, and, in the case of Byzantium, gained favour with the local population.

The archaeological evidence surviving from the Byzantine occupation of the Palatine in sixth century is extremely limited. Although historical accounts such as a Procopius attest to the Palatine being in use during the sixth century there is little archaeological evidence to corroborate this.⁵⁷ Therefore, the Palatine was the likely residence of the Byzantine administration and later the *duces* of Rome as attested to in written sources of the sixth century, unfortunately no archaeological evidence survives which would indicate the location of the this palace on the Palatine, although Augenti favours a

⁵⁴ Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 2.

⁵⁵ Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 4, and Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, VII, xvii. 25, "no splendid and glorious victory but the bringer of tragic irony."

⁵⁶ T.S. Brown, "Transformation and Continuity in Byzantine Italy: Society and Administration 550-650," in V. Varrinek (ed), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium* (Prague, 1985).

⁵⁷ Procopius, *Gothico* VII. Some archaeological evidence does indicate the continued use of the Palatine through the sixth century with the discovery of tiles found in an excavation near the Domus Augustana in the 1930s, Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 376.

location near/in the *Domus Augustana* owing to its use under Theodoric and its position on the hill.⁵⁸ Additionally the church of San Cesario was most likely located within the medieval palace complex and used by the Byzantine administration and *duces* of Rome as a chapel.⁵⁹ In addition the imperial palace on the Palatine would have taken advantage of the symbolism of the hill as a seat of historical power and grandeur, as well as offering it access to the Lateran offering security to the pope during times of war and strife.

The Palatine Hill and the area immediately surrounding functioned as the military and administrative centre of Rome from the mid-sixth to mid-eighth century. The famine and destruction left in the wake of the Byzantine wars against the Goths affected the entire city of Rome, yet the strategic importance of the Palatine suggests that it would have suffered greatly in this conflict.⁶⁰ In fact the Palatine would have been the most likely site for the Byzantine troop barracks in the city, as well as the place where the command and elite would have been housed. Although there is no archaeological evidence to support such a theory, there are a number of parallels that can be drawn between the Byzantine control of Rome and of Naples in the sixth century. Areas around Rome and Naples were strengthened by Narses, who after recapturing Naples installed a garrison in city and at the *Castrum* at Cumae.⁶¹ Therefore if Narses saw fit to install a garrison in Naples he most likely garrisoned Byzantine troops in Rome owing to the symbolic, as well as strategic importance of the city. Narses also enclosed the harbour of

⁵⁸ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 671.

⁵⁹ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 671.

⁶⁰ Procopius, *Gothico* VI, iii 18-21; VII, xvii 7-12.

⁶¹ P. Arthur, *Naples from Roman Town to City State: An Archaeological Perspective* (London, 2002), 15.

Naples within the city walls in addition to fortifying individual buildings within the city limits.⁶² Again a similar development may have occurred in Rome after the pro-longed Gothic Wars in an attempt to secure the city, if this was the case one of the most likely buildings to be fortified would have been the imperial palace, however as previously discussed archaeological evidence from the sixth-century Palatine is severely limited. Therefore, the building projects undertaken by the Byzantine administration while in Rome may have been greater than previously realised and it is more than likely it featured the construction of a Byzantine barracks in the city, perhaps on the Palatine which may have resulted in the construction or influence the dedication of nearby churches.⁶³ Arthur rightly points out that Byzantine garrisons and *castra* must have been served by Greek churches. For example at the *Castrum Cumae*, where Belasarius sent a large garrison force, two temples were converted into churches in the fifth century.⁶⁴ One of these churches contains an inscription mentioning the Greek S. Maximus, while the other was dedicated to the eastern saint S. Giulana.⁶⁵ The presence of these two saints indicate that these churches would have served the Greek population that inhabited the *castrum* owing to the origins of the dedications of the church as well its proximity to the *castrum*. Additionally in Naples, a number churches were dedicated to eastern warrior saints such as SS. Sergio e Baccho, S. Demetrio and S. Teodoro,⁶⁶ this can be viewed as a parallel development to what was happening in the Rome in the sixth

⁶² Arthur, *Naples* 35.

⁶³ Dey suggests that Narses is likely responsible for the rebuilding of the *Porta Appia*, owing to its resemblance to the *Porta Aurea* in Constantinople, see, H.W. Dey, *The Aurelian Wall and the Refashioning of Imperial Rome AD 271-855* (Cambridge, 2011), 54.

⁶⁴ Arthur, *Naples* 76. For Belasarius sending a garrison force to *Cuma* see Procopius, *Gothico* V, XIV.2.

⁶⁵ Arthur, *Naples* 76. The church that was dedicated to S. Giulana was destroyed during an excavation of the classical temple it stood upon demonstrating that the neglect of late antique and medieval structures during archaeological investigations was not limited to Rome.

⁶⁶ Arthur, *Naples* 69.

and seventh centuries with the foundation of S. Giorgio and S. Teodoro. It may be the case that these churches were influenced or even used by the Byzantine military in both Naples and Rome, however without further archaeological or textual evidence this remains speculative.

The importance of the Palatine varied throughout the mediaeval period so much so that after the entry concerning Narses in the *Book of the Pontiffs of Ravenna*, there are no further entries regarding the Byzantine administrative presence on the Palatine Hill. It vanishes from the written historical record. Additionally the archaeological record sheds little light on developments on the Palatine during this period. However, archaeological evidence indicates that from the late sixth century onwards the Palatine was gradually neglected with areas and buildings being abandoned and falling into disrepair.⁶⁷ However, this abandonment of the Palatine was not homogenous, with only some small areas falling into decay rather than a complete desertion. In fact Augenti draws comparisons between the palace complex on the Palatine in Rome, and the palaces of Milan and Split, where areas of these complexes fell into disuse and were abandoned with priority given to the repair and maintenance of the most important areas allowing the functionality of the building to continue.⁶⁸ Therefore, it is possible that the gradual abandonment of areas of the Palatine and the palace complex were a result of early medieval urban evolution rather than a disinterest and eclipsing of the Palatine's role and symbolic authority in Rome. However, it is clear that areas were no longer in use by the seventh century and it is during this period Augenti suggest that the popes were

⁶⁷ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 667.

⁶⁸ A. Augenti, 'Il potere e la memoria: Il Palatino tra IV e VII secolo' *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome, Moyen-Age* Vol. 111 (1999), 200.

forced to act in order to preserve the Palatine.⁶⁹ The construction of churches such as San Teodoro, and San Giorgio in the seventh century mark this turning point as the Christianisation of the Palatine. This process continued throughout the seventh to tenth centuries with various popes building and renovating churches on the Palatine in order to preserve it and to maintain services for people who lived in the area.⁷⁰ Although Augenti presents an interesting hypothesis there is not enough evidence to support that San Giorgio and San Teodoro were founded by popes, nor can their foundation be accurately dated. In addition Augenti perhaps underestimates the role of the *duces* in the preservation of the Palatine in the seventh century, yet without further archaeological evidence it is impossible to say if the popes consciously kept alive the Palatine area through building programmes or if they were in fact making a political statement by extending their power onto the Palatine, the traditional site of secular authority in Rome.

Thus, from the late sixth century onwards the Palatine is seldom mentioned by name in the native source material of Rome although it seems the Byzantine administrative system was still located there. The imperial representatives held the title of *dux* (duke) and likely had strong links to the Exarch of Ravenna, and may have even been appointed by him. Noble suggests that a large number of ranking officials came from the east and settled in the exarchate and likely Rome, as these relatively new administrative frameworks offered advancement for those with ambition.⁷¹ The office of duke survived in Rome till the middle of the eighth century intact, however the power of the duke

⁶⁹ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 676.

⁷⁰ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 676.

⁷¹ Noble, 'The Roman elite from Constantine to Charlemagne,' *Acta Archaeologica et Artim Historia*, Vol. XVII (2003), 21 and Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994, 671.

waned with the ascendancy of the papacy in Rome, thus it remains unknown the role and authority of those who held the ducal office after the sixth century.⁷²

However, as the Byzantine authority waned in Rome, and the authority of the papacy increased other areas were viewed as being of greater significance, such as the Lateran, the Esquiline Hill, the Trastevere and later the Vatican.⁷³ However, sources such as the *LP*, although not directly stating the importance of the Palatine, record a number of gifts and renovations made to churches in the area which will be examined in more detail later in this chapter. Therefore the Palatine area, although no longer the heart of Rome by the end of the seventh century was not completely abandoned, with renovation work carried out on several of the churches, and lavish gifts bestowed on a number of churches by popes until at least the ninth century.⁷⁴ Yet, after the seventh century very few, if any, new monasteries or churches were built in the immediate area. There are no records of the construction of any public buildings in the area or of settlement in any of the religious houses by monastic or lay refugees fleeing from the troubles of the east after the mid-seventh century. Yet churches in the area continued to be patronised and a community must have resided in that area to warrant such patronage and to support a significant number of churches, both Latin and Greek.

There are two periods when the Palatine enjoyed a resurgence of prestige and importance, both when Rome was occupied by a foreign power. These two distinct

⁷² A man by the name of Theodotus, the uncle of Pope Hadrian I, held the title of *consul* and *dux* in the early eighth century and became the *primicerius defensorum* of the church in the 740s. Noble, *Roman Elite* 22.

⁷³ E. Hostetter and R. Brandt., *Palatine East Excavations* (Rome, 2009) 192 and G. Lugli, *The Roman Forum and the Palatine* (Rome, 1964), 40.

⁷⁴ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* Vol. II and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth*.

periods of revival of the Palatine Hill were the Byzantine establishment of an administrative base in the sixth century, as discussed previously, and in the late tenth and early eleventh century Otto III's imperial dreams of having the hill as his seat of power in a restored Western Empire.⁷⁵ However, there is debate whether Otto III did indeed wish to build his palatial residence on the Palatine Hill, with some scholars such as Valenzani favouring a location on the Aventine near to the monastery of Sant'Alessio.⁷⁶ The Palatine would seem to have offered Otto more than a location on the Aventine, as it allowed ease of access to the Lateran enabling Otto to defend the pope in times of conflict. It also offered the prestige of the ancient palace of Augustus which must have appealed to Otto's imperial designs and finally the Palatine offered access to the monastery of San Cesaero, one of the most prominent monasteries in eleventh-century Rome and a powerful asset to the young emperor.⁷⁷

It is thus no coincidence that these episodes of Palatine rejuvenation were brought about by external forces, namely the Byzantines and Ottonians, rather than internal forces in Rome. In addition, the Emperors Justinian and Otto III were attempting to bring about a *renovatio* of the empires of antiquity, with the latter intending Rome to be at the heart of this imperium, thus supporting the view that the Palatine, linked as it was to

⁷⁵ G. Althoff, *Otto III*, (trans), P.G. Jstice (Philadelphia, 2003), 81.

⁷⁶ Valenzani and Meneghini, *Roma nell'altomedioevo* 211.

⁷⁷ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 74. The fact that the Palatine was close to the Lateran would offer the pope the protection of the Emperor, something that Pope Gregory V would have desired after Crescentius' revolt and support of the Anti-Pope John Philagathos, as well as providing papal support for the emperor who himself faced rebellion in Rome in the year 1001. Furthermore, it is not a coincidence that Pope Gregory V's successor Gerbert d'Aurillac chose the name Sylvester, the same name as the pope during the reign of Constantine the Great. Thus it appears that both Otto and Sylvester were attempting to draw parallels between themselves and these two great figures (Constantine and Sylvester) to support their apparent goal of bringing about the *renovatio* of the Christian Roman Empire. Therefore, if Otto truly wanted to mirror the first Christian Emperor it would make sense to build his palace in the symbolic imperial heart of the city.

imperial Rome and the symbolic nature of the antique empire, made it an attractive area in which to establish a seat of secular authority. However, the native ruling classes of Rome, and the papacy did not seem to hold the Palatine Hill in the same high regard as those from outside, instead favouring other areas of the city which they deemed more worthy of greater building projects and patronage after the eighth century.⁷⁸ However, the importance of the Palatine was never forgotten; for example Pope John VII moved the papal residence from the Lateran to the Palatine.⁷⁹ This was most likely owing to his father having served as the *cura palatii urbis Romae*⁸⁰ (Curator of the Palatine Hill) and thus having strong familial ties, as well as perhaps property links to the area. Furthermore, the fact that his father held this post in the mid-seventh century would indicate that Byzantium, if not the Roman native elite, including the papacy, had some interest in preserving and caring for the Palatine Hill. However, thus far it remains unclear what buildings stood on the Palatine at this time. Most likely they were palatial residences as well as military barracks, the size and state of disrepair of which remains indeterminable at this juncture.

These external perceptions regarding the importance of the Palatine Hill seemed to have been held primarily by the secular elements of foreign peoples, as shown by its position

⁷⁸ One notable exception is Pope John VII 705-7 who moved his court to a palace he had built on the Palatine Hill: Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 266-7 and Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, LXXXVIII:II, 385 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 88:2, 86, "He adorned with painting the basilica of the holy mother of God which is called *Antiqua* [Santa Maria Antiqua], and there he built a new ambo and above the same church [Palatine Hill] an Episcopium which he wanted to build for his own use..."

⁷⁹ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 674. No remains of John VII's palace have survived. However in the 19th century two bricks were discovered in the *casa delle Vestali* which were stamped with the name Ιωανν(ησ) yet this is not enough evidence to definitively place the palace in that particular site.

⁸⁰ Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 266-7.

of prominence under Belisarius, Narses, the *duces*⁸¹ and finally Otto III.⁸² There were however also a substantial ecclesiastical and monastic settlements on the Palatine during the Byzantine 'occupation' of Rome in the sixth and seventh centuries.⁸³ Furthermore unlike the Esquiline, Aventine and Caelian Hills, the Palatine, according to surviving evidence, did not benefit greatly from the influx of Greek and other eastern clergy caused by the controversy over Iconoclasm in Byzantium during the mid-eighth to early ninth century, or the Slavic invasions of the Greek mainland, or the later Arab raids on southern Italy.⁸⁴ None of these catalytic events seems to have had any impact on the churches and monasteries that were already established on the Palatine dating from the sixth century. Whether this was a result of the papacy directing where refugee monastic communities should be placed in Rome and the Palatine not fitting this vision, or if it was the choice of these monastics to establish a new house rather than joining an already functioning community has so far remained unanswerable.

Having established the background to the Palatine Hill and its history, the main questions regarding the Palatine and its influence on and place in the ecclesiastical topography of Rome are three-fold: Did the Greek religious houses of Rome service specific functions in the city, and is this reflected in their topography? What was the

⁸¹ For further discussion on the *duces* and the aristocracy of Rome before the ninth century in Rome see Noble, *Roman elite* 20-22.

⁸² For Otto III's occupation of the Palatine see Thietmar of Merseburg, *The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, (trans), D. A. Warner (Manchester, 2001), 4.

⁸³ The Palatine region could boast at least four likely Greek religious establishments in the sixth century, the highest concentration of Greek clerical settlement in Rome during this period.

⁸⁴ Many of the Greek churches and monasteries of Rome have some ties to Greek clergy fleeing from either warfare or religious persecution in the east; tradition holds that the monks that staffed Santa Prassede arrived in Rome as result of the persecution under the Byzantine Iconoclastic regime, while San Saba was founded by Bishop Sergius and his brothers who were fleeing Palestine due to the seventh-century Arab invasions. No such traditions are associated with any of the Greek foundations on the Palatine Hill.

impact of external influences on the site? Finally, how does both the quality and quantity of source material influence our historical reconstruction of the supposed importance, or not, of the Palatine in the earlier medieval Roman ecclesiastical landscape?

The specific function of Greek religious houses has a strong bearing on all the other elements of this study, it is vital to understand the role and function of the *diaconiae* in Rome, whilst attempting to establish their origins, development and fate. Therefore, the function of the Greek *diaconiae* in the Palatine region, which make up more than half of the Greek religious houses in that area, is vital to understanding why this district was chosen to house them. Secondly, the situation of the *diaconiae* dictated how the area developed in relation to the rest of the city's ecclesiastical landscape. In addition, with such a high concentration of Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine, if the function of such houses differed substantially from the more traditional *tituli* and *monasteria*, then this would have had a direct impact on lay patronage and papal favour directed towards these houses,⁸⁵ not to mention the effect that Iconoclasm and the Arab invasions would have had upon them in comparison to the other churches of Rome. Thus, before examining the conclusions that can be drawn from the establishment, development and function of the *diaconiae*, a discussion of the debate surrounding these matters is necessary.

⁸⁵ For further discussion on the topic of general lay patronage in medieval Rome refer to, K. Cooper and J. Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty and Patronage in early Christian Rome 300-900* (Cambridge, 2007). However, for patronage specifically related to the Greek religious foundations in Rome there is not enough evidence to speculate how this would have been influenced by the status of the establishment.

Diaconiae

The term *diaconia* is derived from the Greek noun διακονία which has a range of meanings: servant, δάσννοϋ, deaconship, charity, almsgiving; supply, such as food to the poor, a deacon's place in a church. While the related verb διακονέω meaning to give charity, to be a deacon, to do service or to bid prayers.⁸⁶ Over time the word *diaconia* came to specifically refer to charitable ecclesiastical institutions whose purpose was to serve the poor and less fortunate of society.⁸⁷ By the fourth century the term *Diakonia* appears in Egypt and had come to mean a building that was attached to a church or monastery, whose purpose was to distribute charity, specifically grain and bread to the poor of the area.⁸⁸ From Egypt and the East this notion of charitable institutions run by the clergy in an urban environment spread to southern Italy and then north to Rome, carried by the large number of eastern monks arriving during these periods. However, over time the charitable functions of *diaconiae* seem to have been overshadowed by their religious functions, with the *LP* focusing upon their role as churches rather than charitable institutions. For example the lavish decoration of Santa Maria in Cosmedin by Nicholas I would indicate a move away from the charitable nature of the church towards a more traditional role as a house of worship.⁸⁹

The development of the *diaconiae* is important because of the eighteen *diaconiae* in Rome by the time of Leo III four were staffed by Greek-speaking clergy.⁹⁰ This number

⁸⁶ E.A. Sophocles, *A Glossary of Later and Byzantine Greek* (Cambridge, 1860), 251-2.

⁸⁷ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xendochia* 398.

⁸⁸ T.F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984), 232.

⁸⁹ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCII:LXXII, 20 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 97:72, 159-160.

⁹⁰ There are alternative theories regarding the number of *diaconiae* in Rome according to Birch there were twenty two during this period, Birch, *Pilgrimage* 124.

would have been highly disproportionate to the number of Greeks in Rome, which in all likelihood made up only a small minority of Rome's populace.⁹¹ In addition to the disproportionate number of Greek *diaconiae* present in Rome there is also the matter of their location. Three of them, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Teodoro and San Giorgio in Velabro were all located extremely close to each other and on the southern and south-western slopes of the Palatine Hill, while the fourth Greek *diaconia*, Santa Maria Antiqua, was located only a short distance away in the Foro Romano on the northern slope of the Palatine; a close correlation between the locations of *diaconie* in Rome and centres of population has already been uncovered by Bertolini.⁹² Therefore, this would indicate at the time of their construction the population around the Palatine was in considerable need for their services. Thus, all four Greek *diaconiae* were located in the Palatine region of Rome and it is this concentration of Greek religious houses that gives the first insight into their purpose and significance.

As mentioned above, it is generally accepted that the *diaconiae* of Rome have their origins in the Eastern Church and were introduced to Rome by Byzantine monks arriving in the city between the sixth and seventh centuries.⁹³ This view is however not universal, with some historians favouring other interpretations, such as their establishment by Greek monks fleeing the Arab invasions and Monothelitism of the mid-

⁹¹ There have been no historical works that have been able to suggest a figure for the Greek population of medieval Rome; however the absence of references to a Greek lay population in the sources of the time would indicate that it was not large and made up only a small fraction of the Roman demographic, however this is based on purely conjecture using the limited evidence available.

⁹² O. Bertolini, 'Per la storia delle Diaconie Romane nell'alto medio evo sino alla fine del secolo VIII,' *Archivio della Società Romana di storia patria* vol. 70 (1947), 67-72.

⁹³ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xendochia* 413. Dey draws a comparison with the Rule of S. Basil of Caesarea in Palestine where some monasteries had schools and orphanages attached and which became an increasingly popular concept in the medieval west. See also Bertolini, *Diaconiae* 90-4.

seventh century.⁹⁴ Another possibility is that the *diaconiae* were added onto already established Greek monasteries and churches of the Palatine rather than being founded for a specific purpose. If this was the case it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to determine a date. At this moment there is no consensus amongst historians, with Ekonomou favouring a date in the mid-seventh century for the foundation of the *diaconiae* in Rome, suggesting that this was a result of the large number of Greek-speaking refugees, particularly monastic communities arriving in Rome during this period. This was likely a consequence of the Persian and later Arab conquests in the Byzantine Empire, in addition to the discord caused by the theological controversies of Monoenergism and later Monothelitism. Noble suggests an even later date, stating that although there were *diaconiae* in Naples and Ravenna in the sixth century, the term does not appear in the *LP* until the pontificate of Benedict II, thus, Noble dates their foundation to 684/85.⁹⁵

The recent work by Dey on the matter of the Roman *diaconiae* goes some way to explaining their role and development in the city. Dey is acutely aware of the lack of archaeological evidence regarding the early Roman *diaconiae* and is thus reliant on written evidence to ascertain the role and history of these religious houses.⁹⁶ He correctly suggests that these charitable institutions compensate for a lack of a centralised secular administration in early Rome.⁹⁷ However, there is no discussion regarding the role played by Byzantine officials during their time in Rome from the mid-sixth century onwards. When Dey does examine the role of Byzantine power in Rome,

⁹⁴ Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 207.

⁹⁵ Noble, *Republic* 232.

⁹⁶ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 404.

⁹⁷ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 398-99.

he suggests that it is the weakness of these secular authorities which forces the Roman Church to take responsibility for the needy of Rome and as a result of this the popes were forced to maintain the *diaconiae*.⁹⁸ Although Dey puts forward a convincing argument, there is not enough evidence to theorise about the power of the secular authorities in Rome in the sixth and early seventh centuries. Secondly Dey neglects to examine the Greek aspect to *diaconiae* located on the Palatine, there is no discussion regarding the dedication of these institutions to eastern saints. However, I agree with Dey's theory in principle, but not with his chronology. I believe that the Roman Church did take responsibility for the *diaconiae* in the Palatine region, however I am unconvinced that this was due to the weakness of the secular administration alone during the late sixth or early seventh centuries, as there is no evidence to support such a hypothesis. Instead I would propose that these institutions were constructed during a period when Byzantine secular power in Rome was not in decline and it was only later when secular power in Rome began to wane that the popes stepped in to maintain the charitable mandate of the *diaconiae*, as well as expanding papal influence on the Palatine in what had been and still was the centre of secular authority.

However, I favour an initial founding date sometime after the Byzantine occupation of the Palatine, between the mid-sixth and early seventh century. The reasons for favouring an earlier foundation date are firstly, it is clear from the contemporary source material, primarily the *LP* and Procopius, that during and in the aftermath of the Byzantine-Gothic wars Rome had suffered greatly. Both sources record that the city was

⁹⁸ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 399.

plagued by famine, starvation and death.⁹⁹ Thus, it would have been during this chaotic period that Rome most needed institutions like *diaconiae*, to alleviate the ills visited upon the city, as well as giving the Byzantine elite an opportunity to gain favour with the local populace. Although there are no foundation documents regarding any of the Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine, the tenth-century Italian chronicler Benedict of Soracte claims that the Greek church of Aquas Salvias was founded by the patrician Narses during his occupation of Rome in the late sixth century.¹⁰⁰ Thus, if Benedict is to be believed, and he may have accessed sources that are no longer extant, then it is plausible that while in Rome the Byzantine elite also undertook other church building. The church of Aquas Salvias would therefore not have been an isolated case, and it would have been logical to build churches and other religious houses close to the centre of Byzantine power, i.e. around the Palatine Hill and the *Foro Romano*. Secondly, as will be discussed in each individual case study, although some of the written material regarding the churches in question does not appear till the seventh century, the archaeological and art historical evidence would indicate a sixth rather than seventh-century foundation for the majority of the Greek churches on the Palatine.¹⁰¹ While the *LP* is the primary source for the churches of Rome during the sixth and seventh centuries, it fails to record the foundation of the *diaconiae* in the sixth century, which do not appear in the text until the seventh century. These later entries however are not related to, nor mention the foundation of the *diaconiae*. Hence, the foundation dates logically preceded the first

⁹⁹ Procopius, *Gothico* VI, iii 18-21; VII, xvii 7-12.

¹⁰⁰ Benedict of Soracte, *Chronicon*, ed. A. Zucchetti, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* (1903) 32, reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 35.

¹⁰¹ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994, 576 and Augenti, *Il Palatino*, 132 and Meneghini and Valenzani *Roma*, 208 and Bolgi, *San Teodoro*, 318-9. The foundation dates of these churches will be discussed throughout this chapter in separate case studies.

written entries in the *LP*, by how much remains indeterminable. Thus, surviving archaeological evidence would suggest a likely late sixth or more likely early seventh-century foundation date.¹⁰² Thirdly, contemporary source material shows the Byzantine administration controlled access to and distribution of the city's grain supply, which would logically have been stored near the military and administrative centre which was located on the Palatine.¹⁰³ Recent excavations in the Palatine around the *schola praecorum*, near the church of Sant'Anastasia, conducted by Whitehouse et al, have unearthed pottery shards containing organic residue which indicate long distance trade was taking place between Rome, Africa and the east up until the seventh century.¹⁰⁴ In addition these excavations indicate that the Palatine region was also perhaps an area where foodstuffs such as olive oil and wine were unloaded and stored. However, there is not enough evidence to know if the import of foodstuffs from abroad was tied to the welfare activities of *diaconiae*, or if it was part of a private mercantile venture.¹⁰⁵ Although there is not enough evidence to link the *diaconiae* to long distance trade during this period, it shows the Palatine was an active area during the seventh century and trade was certainly taking place in Rome.

By the eighth and early ninth century the *diaconiae* had become a fully integrated feature of the city, with Rome boasting a number of both Greek and Latin staffed

¹⁰² Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 676 and Christie, *Constantine* 104-5 and Coates-Stephens, *Medieval Rome* 110-4 and 122-6.

¹⁰³ Procopius, *Gothico* VII, ix 1-6; 8-15; VII xvii 10. Procopius recounts a tale of how Bessas, who was one of the commanders of the Byzantine garrison in the city, hoarded some of the grain supply and sold it to the Roman aristocracy at an inflated price, thus indicating it was the Byzantine forces in the city who controlled the grain supply during this period.

¹⁰⁴ Whitehouse et al, *Scholae Praeconum* 53 187.

¹⁰⁵ Whitehouse et al, *Scholae Praeconum* 50 80.

diaconiae, all of which received gifts and patronage from the popes.¹⁰⁶ It is in the seventh century that the term *διακονία* first appears in the *LP*, and is then mentioned in numerous entries and in a limited number of itineraries from the eighth and ninth centuries, yet the exact function and role of the *diaconiae* within the ecclesiastical structure of early medieval Rome is not entirely clear.

Another issue which arises concerning the *diaconiae* and which yet has to produce a consensus amongst historians is their accurate number. Lestocquoy proposes that there were at any given time eighteen functioning *diaconia*.¹⁰⁷ While Niederer lists twenty-four for the eighth century, based primarily on the 806 list of papal gifts recorded in the life of Pope Leo III in the *LP*.¹⁰⁸ Accepting either figure there were still four located in what was a predominantly Greek-speaking area and more than likely staffed by Greek monastics serving a Greek population. The uncertainty is caused by contemporary source material confusing, omitting or adding the term and also changes over time. A conservative estimate would put the number at four: Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Giorgio in Velabro, San Teodoro and Santa Maria Antiqua, all of which were situated in close proximity to one another around the Palatine and close to the *Foro Romano*. Therefore, the number of *diaconiae* in Rome that were 'Greek' was a much higher proportion than would be expected. The fact that such a large proportion of the *diaconiae* of Rome were Greek would indicate that some of the *diaconiae* of Rome had a recognizable 'Greek' character and that the origins of such institutions arguably lay in

¹⁰⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* Vol. II, XCIII:LXX-LXXXI, 19-25 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:70-81, 209-18. The list of gifts of Pope Leo III to the churches of Rome includes all of the Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine Hill as recipients.

¹⁰⁷ J. Lestocquoy, "Administration de Rome et Diaconies du VIIe au IXe siècle," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 7 (Rome, 1930), 262-275 and Birch, *Pilgrimage* 124 and Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 398-421.

¹⁰⁸ F. Niederer., 'The Roman Diaconiae,' (PhD diss., New York University, 1951).

the Eastern Church. Furthermore, it may well indicate that this type of institution, although spreading to other areas of Rome and being embraced by the Latin-speaking church, was still perceived as a Greek institution, as well as perhaps the idea itself being more popular with the Greek clerical and lay community of Rome.

The main matters of debate and continuing uncertainties regarding the *diaconiae* relate to their internal structuring and administration, as well as their functions. The reason for the uncertainty is the absence of source material that is explicit about their function and staffing, for example there is no document such as a *typikon* for any of the Roman *diaconiae*. Furthermore, the term *monachus* in early medieval Rome was extremely fluid until the Carolingian Reforms in the ninth century. Thus, the term *monachus* could mean a group of monastics living life according to a particular rule or even a cloistered group of priests with pastoral responsibilities.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, due to a lack of documentation regarding the *diaconiae* and because no one monastic rule was adopted in Rome until long after the period in question, there is an amount of ambiguity surrounding how these *diaconiae* were structured. Hence, the majority of historical investigation undertaken regarding their functions and staffing has been reliant on partially informed supposition and speculation.

The two simplest possible models for the *diaconiae* are:

1. The popular view: The *diaconiae* functioned as charitable institutions and were staffed by monastics.

¹⁰⁹ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xendochia* 402.

2. The term *diaconia* meant nothing more than that a deacon led the church/monastery, and had no specific charitable mandate.

Both models may appear simple but both have a number of more intricate underlying questions that need to be answered. In the case of the first and most popular model historians such as Noble, Ekonomou and Niederer suggest that the *diaconiae* of Rome were religious charitable foundations. However, where they differ is that Noble and Ekonomou suggest there was a distinctive Byzantine influence on the foundation of the *diaconiae*; Niederer instead argues that they were the successor to the classical Roman grain distributions services such as *frumentum publicum* and the *annona*. She suggests that while no *diaconia* were constructed on the remains of these ancient institutions, some were established in close proximity to the ancient distribution and administrative centres of the Roman food supply network.¹¹⁰ Niederer does not rule out a Greek influence or revitalisation of these institutions in the sixth or seventh centuries, but emphasises that the idea and structure for such institutions already existed in Rome. Brasotti suggests that while nine of the *diaconiae* were indeed installed in ancient public monuments, none of these related to ancient food distribution points and that no direct line can be traced to ancient Roman food distribution services.¹¹¹ Although there are a number of theories regarding the Roman *diaconiae* there is little doubt that they provided *sustentatione et alimoniis* to those in need.¹¹² The mere fact that the *diaconiae* are distinguished by their title in the *LP* marks them as both important and separate from the other churches of Rome.

¹¹⁰ Niederer, *Diaconiae*, 213.

¹¹¹ G. Brasotti, *Diaconie cardinalizie e la diaconia 'S Vitii in Marcello'* (Rome, 1911), 15.

¹¹² Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 405.

What then is the significance of the location of the *diaconiae* of Rome? The locations of the *diaconiae* would not have been the result of a continuous papal planned topographical policy, but was instead dictated by historical, logistical, social and even spiritual reasons.¹¹³ Although the practical reasons for determining the location of the *diaconiae* are important, they must not overshadow the perceived spiritual reasons and functions of their location. The later papal patronage of the *diaconiae* on the Palatine would have created sacred space in what had been traditionally viewed as the seat of secular power in Rome; in essence completing the Christianisation of the city, through the placement and adornment of the *diaconiae* on the Palatine.¹¹⁴ The creation of these *loci sancti* would have been augmented by the instalment of saints' relics, for example the head of San Giorgio in the *diaconiae* of San Giorgio in Velabro.¹¹⁵ In addition to the sacred, the papal control of these *diaconiae* on and around the Palatine essentially created islands of papal power linking the space between the Vatican and Lateran, with the Palatine being essential in the communication between the two centres of papal power in medieval Rome.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, Niederer notes that many of the *diaconiae* were situated along some of the roads most frequented in eighth-century Rome, as well as in areas where settlement of foreigners was evident.¹¹⁷ Niederer does not specifically examine the Palatine in detail, but the *diaconiae* in the region fit this pattern. They are situated along busy roads primarily the Sacra Via, the river Tiber, as well as in an area that has been traditionally viewed as the Greek quarter.¹¹⁸ Furthermore the *diaconiae*

¹¹³ Lestocquoy, *Diaconies* 262.

¹¹⁴ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 686.

¹¹⁵ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCIII:XXIV, 434 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 93:24, 48.

¹¹⁶ C. Wickham, 'Topographies of power: Introduction,' in M. de Jong and F.C.W.J Theuws (eds), *Topographies of power in the early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), 533-46.

¹¹⁷ Neiderer, *Diaconiae* 215.

¹¹⁸ Refer to appendix 2 map B for a topographical view of the *diaconiae* on the Palatine Hill.

were not widely spread throughout Rome, but instead found in particular concentrations around the Palatine Hill, the *Foro Boario* and in the vicinity of San Pietro in Vaticano.¹¹⁹ This overall distribution suggests that the *diaconiae* were more likely to have been established in terms of perceived need and where the ancient grain distributions institutions had been located, rather than following any sort of administrative pattern.

Regarding the exact function of Roman *diaconiae*, opinions differ, especially in understanding monastic influences in both the origin and the running of them. Lestocquoy and Niederer suggest that the monastic influences were limited.¹²⁰ Lestocquoy suggests that until the seventh century the *diaconiae* were lay institutions only supported by monks and that it was during the eighth century, especially during the pontificates of Hadrian I and Leo III, that they were fully absorbed into the institutional structure of the Church in Rome; although they retained a semi-independent status from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Jost however proposes that the *diaconiae* were run by monasteries, thus staffed by monastics, and understands them to be somewhat akin to daughter institutions of individual monastic communities. Although the evidence is limited regarding the staffing and evolution of the *diaconiae* I feel that Dey's most recent work provides the most plausible explanations to these questions, as well as providing further insight into how perhaps the Greek *diaconiae* differed from their Latin

¹¹⁹ L. Schluter, 'The religious and ecclesiastical role of women in the church in the city of Rome in the late eighth and early ninth century,' (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2010), 163.

¹²⁰ Lestocquoy, *Diaconies* 283 suggests that originally the *diaconiae* were founded by lay patrons and it was not until the pontificate of Hadrian I that they were financed and led by the papacy. He does not however discuss the possibility that it was the Byzantine elite, while in Rome during the sixth century, who funded such foundations. Niederer, 'Diaconiae,' 213, proposes that the *diaconiae* were a direct descendent of the ancient food distribution network, which was adopted by the Roman church.

counterparts.¹²¹ As previously discussed before there is no way to identify with any accuracy the *diaconiae's* exact staffing structure and position in the hierarchy of the Roman Church owing primarily to a lack of surviving written evidence and the fluid nature of the terms *monachus* and *monasterium* before the ninth century.¹²² Therefore, according to Dey those who staffed the *diaconiae* may have been cloistered priests with pastoral responsibilities or groups of monastics. However, by drawing parallels between the Rule of S. Basil of Caserea and the monasteries which followed its precept in Palestine and the charitable activities conducted by the *diaconiae* of Rome it is likely that the Greek-speaking *diaconiae* were staffed by Greek monastics following such a rule rather than cloistered priests. Furthermore, this would also tie into Dey's theory regarding the fate of the *diaconiae* in the ninth century. He suggests that the proliferation of the Rule of St Benedict in Rome in the ninth century was the primary reason for the disappearance of the *diaconiae*. The rule was incompatible with the welfare functions of the *diaconiae*, with the rule confining those who followed it to the monastery and whose precepts was not to go out into the secular world and offer aid or promote social wellness.¹²³ It is for this reason that for example in Santa Maria Maggiore the canons take over the day to day activities of the church while the monks' sole responsibilities were prayer and chanting.¹²⁴ However, there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that those monks who staffed the Greek-speaking *diaconiae* could no longer practice their charitable activities. However a combination of the decline of the Greek monastic population of Rome from the ninth century onwards and the

¹²¹ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 398-421.

¹²² Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 402.

¹²³ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 420.

¹²⁴ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 421.

proliferation of the Rule of S. Benedict in the city, may have been the real causes behind the eventual disappearance of the *diaconiae*, with the *scholae* and *hospitalia* taking their place.¹²⁵

According to Ferrari it was Duchesne who first noted that it was the result of growing interest from the papacy in these institutions that caused the change of their title from *monasteria diaconia* which appears several times in the early *LP*, to simply *diaconiae* which becomes the predominant title used later in the same work.¹²⁶ Duchesne suggests that this change in title signifies a loss of their monastic character and thus their closer integration into the ecclesiastical organisation of the Roman Church's charitable work.¹²⁷ Against this Dey suggests a less dramatic development away from the *diaconiae*'s monastic origins. His main argument rests on the fact that the *diaconiae*, even after their assumed integration into the Roman ecclesiastical structure, needed to be managed and staffed; and that this might well have continued to be done through monastic communities.¹²⁸ He suggests that these communities might have been marginalised into a form of 'low' monasticism which was engaged in *diaconal* work and was hidden in the shadow of a 'high' monasticism represented by monastic communities which emphasised the contemplative and primarily spiritual monastic life. With this suggestion he is the only one to address the question of the continued staffing of the *diaconiae* after their apparent name change and integration into the ecclesiastical

¹²⁵ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 421.

¹²⁶ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 356 and Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* 357.

¹²⁷ Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries* 356.

¹²⁸ H.W. Dey, "Diaconiae, xenodochiae, hospitalia and monasteries: 'social security' and the meaning of monasticism in early medieval Rome," in *Early Medieval Europe* Vol. 16 (Chichester, 2008), 418.

system.¹²⁹ However, one must consider that the name change from *monasteria diaconia* to just *diaconiae* did not necessarily affect either the staffing or purpose of the *diaconiae*. However, as stated above a combination of the proliferation of the Rule of S. Benedict in Rome and the waning Greek monastic population associated with the Rule of S. Basil of Caesarea resulted in the loss of the *diaconiae* as charitable institutes with a likely monastic character, and thus their integration into the traditional ecclesiastical hierarchy of Rome.

Thus, the role, development and staffing of the Greek *diaconiae* of Rome from their emergence in antiquity until the eleventh century remains unclear and is the subject of continued debate and speculation. A full understanding of the inner workings of the Roman *diaconiae* and their role in the medieval city will probably never be possible; however informed speculation and logical extrapolations from the available source materials have provided some convincing theories. Yet what does this mean when examining the 'Greek' dimension of these *diaconiae*? Why did such a large proportion of them observe the Greek rite and why were all of these 'Greek' *diaconiae* to be found in the Palatine region of the city? The two primary hypotheses discussed above: 1) The *diaconiae* remained charitable institutions or 2) They evolved into the more traditional *tituli* and *monasteria*, but remained *diaconiae* in name only, a hangover from their charitable past. There are no absolutes when dealing with a subject matter that is so poorly recorded, and therefore there is room for what may be termed a grey area, a hybrid of monastic duties, charitable responsibilities and providing services for a lay congregational community.

¹²⁹ No recent works have attempted to establish how the *diaconiae* of Rome were staffed, let alone if there were any differences between institutions that observed the Latin rite, from the Greek.

It has already been established that the four Greek *diaconiae* in the Palatine region can be dated to the sixth or early seventh century according to archaeological or textual evidence.¹³⁰ Therefore it is likely that the Byzantine administration played some role in their construction as it was the primary secular authority in the city during this period. In addition two of the four *diaconiae* were dedicated to the eastern warrior saints Theodore and George; these dedications may relate to the large Byzantine military presence in Rome at the time of their construction. Thus, these dedications may reflect the background and origins of the initial patrons of these churches or even a link to the Byzantine military with the *diaconiae's* function. Although, the location of the barracks of the Byzantine military forces in Rome has not been established, it is likely that they would have been located on the Palatine, or at least in the general vicinity, because of the strategic position of the hill in the city, and the fact that it was the site of the Byzantine administration and military leadership base. This would have afforded the *diaconiae* and the foodstuffs they stored extra security from the military and secular authority of the city.

Apart from the Byzantine military and imperial presence on the Palatine there were other motivating factors influencing the choice of the Palatine as the area in which to build a large proportion of the *diaconiae* of Rome. The primary mandates for the *diaconiae* were to serve the needs of the poor. This was primarily through grain distribution, as well as almsgiving, and perhaps other charitable services for the needy

¹³⁰ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 676, Christie, *Constantine* 104-5, Meneghini and Valenzani, *Roma nel'IIaltomedieovo* 208.

of city.¹³¹ These factors would have influenced the choice of sites where the *diaconiae* would be built. The 'Greek' *diaconiae* of the Palatine were situated in an ideal location within the city for these purpose. First are the logistical benefits that the Palatine had to offer; extremely close proximity to the west bank of the Tiber.¹³² This would allow the easy transportation of grain up the river, most likely from Ostia or further south.¹³³ The well-travelled road network in this area, as well as its accessibility to the Tiber would have allowed the grain to be transported from the barges only a short distance by land from there it could be stored in the *diaconiae*¹³⁴. The Palatine also offered at least one former ancient granary which became San Teodoro and no shortage of materials from ruins to construct more.¹³⁵ Additionally having at least three of these institutions in extremely close proximity to one another would have allowed the easy transfer of grain between them in case of shortages or emergencies. However, changes in Rome's infrastructure, the source of the city's grain supply, as well as population movements in the city, would all have played a role in the decline of the Palatine's relative importance in the city.¹³⁶

¹³¹ The mechanics of the distribution of grain and foodstuffs by the *diaconiae* to the poor of Rome remains unknown, with no contemporary source material detailing such an activity.

¹³² Refer to appendix 2 map B for topography of this area.

¹³³ Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome* 121.

¹³⁴ See Appendix 2 Map B of Rome for approximate distance from Palatine to the Tiber River.

¹³⁵ San Teodoro was built on the former *Horrea Agrippiana*: Augenti, *Il Palatino* 19.

¹³⁶ Augenti in his work *Il Palatino Nel Medioevo* (1996), 11-41 puts forward the suggestion that the Palatine Hill after the early seventh century declined in status and importance in Rome. He proposes that the ultimate failure of the military and secular authority that had been located on the Palatine, in order to maintain an influential position in Rome, was the primary reason behind this decline. In addition as the authority of the popes increased at the expense of the secular administration in Rome thus patronage and importance shifted from the Palatine to Lateran. However, in the year c.1000 the German Emperor Otto III decided that the Palatine was to be the seat of the power for the young emperor in Rome, which was to be the capital of his new empire. This was most likely due to the symbolic importance of the Palatine as the seat of ancient imperial Rome, as well as the strategic advantage of the hill. Although the Palatine enjoyed a period of renewed importance and renovation in the late tenth and early eleventh century, it

The choice of the Palatine must have also reflected the perceived need of the area for the services offered by these charitable houses. The area around the Palatine would have been more heavily populated in this period than it was in later centuries.¹³⁷ Owing to the size of the population, the protection afforded by the Palatine and the famine and death caused by the recent Gothic wars, it is highly likely that the Palatine area housed a sizeable population of the more vulnerable and poorer sections of Roman society.¹³⁸ Therefore, one possible reason for the location of the Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine may have been supply and demand, or perhaps, more appropriately need, strongly suggesting the Palatine was home to a large number of poorer people. It is however nearly an impossible task to uncover anything about their lives, let alone to ascertain their concentration and movement in a city as large and turbulent as Rome. In addition, as the fabric of the city changed so did the population and the areas in which they settled. The fact that the Palatine may no longer have had a large residential area, thus fewer of the needy to aid, may explain the lack of patronage given to these institutions in later centuries. The exception was the papacy, which may have felt the need to intervene and take responsibility for these religious houses.

It is unlikely that the *diaconiae* could have functioned similarly to a monastery in the traditional sense, given that the work needed to administer to the poor would have

was to be only temporary. With the death of Otto III in 1002 the Palatine suffered a progressive decline, making Otto III's patronage of the Palatine Hill merely a stay of execution.

¹³⁷ From late sixth century onwards parts of the Palatine area became neglected primarily around the periphery. Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 667, and Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 167.

¹³⁸ In Naples at least five of the city's *diaconiae* were located towards the centre of the town. Again the area most likely to be inhabited by those who needed the assistance of the *diaconiae* – thus parallels can be drawn with the location of Rome's *diaconiae* and the presence of those in need. Furthermore, one must consider the added security of the imperial presence in both Naples and Rome in these areas which would have attracted those without means to protect themselves. See Arthur, *Naples* 69.

likely restricted more traditional duties such as uninterrupted prayer or a productive *scriptorium*. Some historians view the *diaconiae* as, “second class” monasteries.¹³⁹ Moreover, it remains unclear how *diaconiae* balanced their charitable duties with their pastoral and spiritual roles. However, it is plausible that the *diaconiae* could perform their charitable duties while undertaking some of the more traditional services offered by churches or monasteries. It remains unclear what the numbers of staff involved in running the *diaconiae* were, owing to a lack of evidence, yet it is possible that the whole community/staff did not engage in the charitable duties of these institutions and were thus free to perform other tasks. In addition, it is unclear if the physical *diaconia* was for example what we know from San Teodoro, or whether it was a no longer extant structure built alongside the monastery or basilica thus not needing adornment and ornamentation owing to its charitable function. If the latter was the case the charitable duties provided by San Giorgio, San Teodoro and Santa Maria in Cosmedin may have been in addition, and not instead of, either monastic or ecclesiastical duties. Yet, the fact that the *LP* records each of these religious houses as a single entry casts doubt on this model.

Another element regarding the staffing of the *diaconiae* of the Palatine is the ethnicity of the monks and clergy who ran them. There is surviving written evidence indicating that at least San Giorgio, Santa Maria Antiqua and Santa Maria in Cosmedin were staffed by Greek-speaking monastics. Although there is no evidence that San Teodoro was staffed by Greek speaking clerics, the likelihood is high because of its similarities with the other Greek churches of the Palatine, as well as its dedication to a popular eastern

¹³⁹ Dey, *Diaconiae* 418.

warrior saint.¹⁴⁰ If the *diaconiae* did provide regular services for the community nearby, in addition to their charitable services, then there are two possibilities about this community, given that the staff of these churches were Greek-speaking. The first is that these *diaconiae* outside their role as charitable institutions served an exclusively Greek-speaking community around the Palatine. The second possibility is that these institutions observed a dual rite (Latin and Greek observance) which was common in Southern Italy, and that these churches served a regular congregation which were both Greek and Latin-speaking.¹⁴¹ However it remains unknown if any performed such services and indeed as outlined these services may have been limited because of their focus on charitable duties. Thus, it is possible that the *diaconiae* did not service a large lay congregation, either Greek or Latin. If this is the case it would imply the Greek population in the Palatine region from the sixth century onwards was not as large as previously thought.

The size of the Greek population is usually calculated by historians on the basis of the large number of supposed Greek-speaking churches in the region. Of the seven religious houses in the greater Palatine area, four were *diaconiae*, two were *monasteria* and only one was a *titular* basilica, that being Santa Anastasia. However, the presence of such a large number of Greek religious houses is not necessarily an indication of a large Greek-speaking lay population in the area. Indeed the hypothesis of a small Greek population on the Palatine is supported by the fact that the only possible 'Greek' *titular* basilica in

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Chapter One of this thesis: Case Studies for Santa Maria In Cosmedin, San Teodoro and San Giorgio in Velabro, which discuss the evidence regarding the staffing of these religious houses.

¹⁴¹ V. Ramseyer, *The Transformation of a Religious Landscape: Medieval Southern Italy 850-1150* (Ithaca, 2006), 85-92.

the area, Sant'Anastasia, fell into disrepair and was in danger of immediate collapse in 792. Thus, if Sant'Anastasia was the only *titular* basilica in the area from the sixth century onwards servicing the needs of a Greek-speaking population, the fact that it was allowed to fall into decay would surely demonstrate that this population was relatively small and could not maintain it themselves or that the community had ceased to exist or that it had moved elsewhere.

Nevertheless the staffing of the Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine remains unknown and therefore it is difficult to determine the size of the lay Greek population in the area and if their presence there had any effect on the location of the *diaconiae*. The above arguments serve to highlight the speculative nature of such an investigation. However, a balanced view is that the *diaconiae* did serve a lay community, but could not provide the services for a large congregation; thus, there was a Greek lay community on the Palatine of some indeterminate size.

The reasons behind the location of the Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine are complex and therefore speculative and sometimes contradictory, and this is due a dearth of historical documentation and archaeological remains. Based on the available evidence and some reasonable deductions, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the charitable duties of the *diaconiae* would have benefited well from their location on the Palatine owing to its accessibility, the protection it offered and its proximity to the secular authority of the city. In addition the Palatine most likely had a sizeable population even in the aftermath of the Gothic Wars owing to the increased protection the area offered by the presence of the Byzantine officials on the Palatine and probably

the Byzantine garrison. A number of people who inhabited the Palatine would have been in need after the ordeals of the Gothic Wars. These were people that the *diaconiae* were charged with aiding, and this may have contributed to their construction on the Palatine. The presence of the Byzantine military, administration and maybe some early Greek churches on the Palatine would have drawn other Greek settlers to the area and created a need for more Greek-speaking religious houses and churches which this local community may have patronised. Hence, the Palatine and the Greek-speaking community present provided a number of motivations and influences that determined that area as the location for the Greek *diaconiae* of Rome.

Sant'Anastasia

The first Greek foundation to be examined is the basilica of Sant'Anastasia, which was the only Greek religious house on the Palatine that was not named either as a *diaconia* or a monastery by contemporary sources. Although the medieval structure of the basilica is no longer extant, an early modern church dedicated to the same patron rests upon the early medieval basilica's foundations.¹⁴² The basilica is located only a short distance from the south-western slope of the Palatine, in close proximity to the ancient *Circo Massimo*, and only a few meters from the more well-known Greek church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin.¹⁴³ The main two sources for the history of the basilica of

¹⁴² Meneghini and Valenzani, *Roma nell'altomedioevo* 208 and Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 188.

¹⁴³ Appendix 2, map B.

Sant'Anastasia, the *LP* and the *L'itinerario di Einsiedeln* date to the eighth century and do not provide much insight into its chronology and function.¹⁴⁴

Little is known regarding the foundation of the antique basilica, although a later tradition claims that the church was commissioned by the younger sister of the emperor Constantine the Great, also named Anastasia.¹⁴⁵ If this was the case it would date the foundation of the first *titulus Anastasia* to the fourth century, after the ascension of Constantine to the throne and the end of the Diocletian persecutions which had plagued the late third century. It is unclear if this tradition is based on historical fact or whether because the *titulus* of the church, *Anastasia*, caused confusion regarding both its patron and founder, between the emperor's sister, the Roman martyr, an eastern saint and a noble woman all sharing the same name of Anastasia and all being linked to the early basilica. There are several possibilities regarding the reasons surrounding which Anastasia was the originally intended dedicatee of this basilica, which has some bearing upon its relationship with the Greek community in Rome, as well as its location.

- Saint Anastasia 'the Roman,' Feast Day 12th October.¹⁴⁶
- Saint Anastasia, 'the Virgin,' Feast Day 28th/29th October, martyred during the reign of the Roman Emperor Decius or Diocletian depending on tradition.¹⁴⁷
- Saint Anastasia, *pharmakolytria* 'poison-curer,' Feast Day 22nd December, martyred sometime between 290 and 304 in Sirmium, along with her companions. It would seem that this cult of Anastasia arrived in Rome no later

¹⁴⁴ Huelsen, *Chiese* 8-10 and Armellini, *Le Chiese* 531-34.

¹⁴⁵ J. Baun, *Tales from another Byzantium: celestial journey and local community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007), 118.

¹⁴⁶ *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, ed. F. Halkin (Brussels, 1957), 24-25.

¹⁴⁷ Baun, *Another Byzantium* 118.

than the sixth century. This Anastasia who was martyred in Sirmium was integrated into the Roman martyr tradition with great zeal. This later untraceable legend states that Saint Chrysogonus was the mentor of Anastasia; he was summoned by the Emperor Diocletian to Aquileia. Meanwhile Anastasia had travelled to Sirmium, but was captured and beheaded on the island of Palmaria.¹⁴⁸

Another possibility that has been suggested is that the basilica was not originally dedicated to a female saint named Anastasia, but rather was originally the church of the *Anastasis* (the resurrection of Christ), and over time instead became known as the *titulus Anastasia*; either through confusion, corruption or a deliberate action to change the name.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, there is no definitive answer regarding the origins and foundations of the early basilica of Sant'Anastasia. However, the likely scenario would have had the original basilica of the late third century dedicated to the Roman martyr Anastasia. However, with the growing popularity of Sant'Anastasia '*pharmakolytria*' in the fifth and sixth century the latter Sant'Anastasia came to replace the original Roman martyr to whom the basilica was initially dedicated. The replacement of the 'Roman' Anastasia in favour of the 'Sirmium' Anastasia was not an isolated incident and would have occurred in a period when several eastern saints, whose cults were brought to Rome by the Byzantines, were taking root in the city and beginning to flourish; these include San

¹⁴⁸ L. Ryden, "A note on some references to the church of St Anastasia in Constantinople in the tenth century" *Byzantion* vol. 44 (Paris, 1974), 199.

¹⁴⁹ Baun, *Another Byzantium* 119.

Giorgio, San Teodoro; later examples include San Saba and Sant'Alessio.¹⁵⁰ However, owing to the lack of primary source material, compounded by the confusion and bias of later sources regarding the basilica of Sant'Anastasia in Rome it is impossible to be certain about the circumstances surrounding the basilica's foundation and early history.

Despite this ambiguity it is clear that Sant'Anastasia had strong ties to Byzantium and the Byzantine presence in Rome in the sixth century, both culturally and politically. The cult of Sant'Anastasia flourished in mid-fifth-century Constantinople, the impetus for which was the translation of the saint's relics from Sirmium to Constantinople during the patriarchate of Gennadius I (458-71).¹⁵¹ Thus, the relics of the saint were interred in the church of the Anastasis in Constantinople near Constantine's Forum.¹⁵² In the time when Theophanes was writing in the ninth century, owing to the church's possession of the martyr Anastasia, it came to be known as Anastasia rather than Anastasis.¹⁵³ A century later in the mid-sixth century the relics of the same martyr were brought to Rome, most likely by someone in the entourage of Belisarius or Narses during their Italian campaigns.¹⁵⁴ The relics were interred in the basilica of Sant'Anastasia for two reasons; firstly, the name of the basilica. Secondly the basilica of Sant'Anastasia was situated on the Palatine Hill which was the area with the highest Greek settlement in Rome, and where the representatives of the Byzantine Court and administration were located in the mid-sixth century. Thus, the relics were placed in a basilica that could be easily

¹⁵⁰ For Sant'Alessio refer to B. Hamilton, 'The Monastery of S. Alessio and the intellectual renaissance in tenth century Rome,' in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance history* vol. 2 (Arizona, 1965), 265-310 and for a discussion on Saint George in the west refer to R. John, *St George in Velabro* (Rome, 1990).

¹⁵¹ *Theodorus Lector, Hist. Eccles.*, II, 65, also recorded in Theophanes, *The chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern history, AD 284-813* (eds and trans) C. Mango and R. Scott (Oxford, 1997), 457/8 AM 169.

¹⁵² Janin, *Eglises* 199.

¹⁵³ Theophanes, *Chronographia* 457/8 AM 169.

¹⁵⁴ Baun, *Another Byzantium* 119.

accessed by the surrounding population. In addition it may have also been an attempt by the Byzantine regime to strengthen its relationship with Rome through the bestowal of a precious relic; in a similar manner to the construction of the *diaconiae* discussed in the previous section. Therefore, the basilica of Sant'Anastasia, unlike San Teodoro and Santa Maria in Cosmedin, was not a *diaconia* but was most likely the primary church that served the needs of the Byzantine administration and military whilst in Rome and which also predates the Byzantine occupation of the Palatine. Sant'Anastasia was indeed the first church in the Palatine area and the only one for almost two centuries, remaining the *titular* church of this district, it can be viewed as the first foothold of Christianity in what had otherwise been a predominantly pagan and secular area of Rome.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, Sant'Anastasia most likely continued in this role serving the local Greek population that remained in the city, with the church maintaining a strong link with its Greek ancestry and culture until at least the eighth century.¹⁵⁶

However, it is not until the middle of the eighth century that there is any further information about Sant'Anastasia. Neither the basilica nor the cult of Sant'Anastasia appears again in the written record until the reign of Leo III in the *LP*.¹⁵⁷ Whilst the *LP* mentions the basilica it makes no reference to the cult of Sant'Anastasia. However, in the early ninth century the cult underwent a revival in Constantinople owing to the

¹⁵⁵ Meneghini and Valenzani, *Roma nell'altomedioevo* 208.

¹⁵⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:IV, 1 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:4, 180 records that Pope Leo III had to repair the basilica as it had fallen into disrepair indicating that the church had not been used or had a very small congregation in the years preceding 792. Thus, with this as the only record regarding the poor state of the church it can be assumed that until around the middle of the eighth century the church was functioning and serving a Greek congregation, as there is no mention of the basilica being handed over to a Latin staff or it being in a poor state before this entry.

¹⁵⁷ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:IV, 1 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:4, 180.

discovery of a new *passio* in Rome which was translated into Greek.¹⁵⁸ The Greek translation was the work of Theodore Krithinos, the *oikonomos* of the Great Church; Krithinos' discovery of this *passio* occurred during his stay in Rome, while on embassy to the pope on behalf of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate.¹⁵⁹ It is unclear where precisely Krithinos acquired this anonymous *passio* of Sant'Anastasia while in Rome. Although possible, it is unlikely that he undertook the task of translating the work himself and may have had aid either from those who came with him from Constantinople, or more likely from a group of Greek clergy resident in Rome, perhaps from the newly founded monasteries of Santa Prassede or San Silvestro.¹⁶⁰ Without further evidence Krithinos' interaction with the Greek monasteries or basilicas of Rome remains purely speculative; however Krithinos would not have been the only Greek staying in Rome who visited one of the Greek monasteries while there.¹⁶¹ The revival of the cult of Sant'Anastasia in Constantinople may have resulted in an increase of eastern pilgrims travelling to Rome to visit the relics of the saint, perhaps contributing to the decision by Leo III to repair and perhaps expand the basilica to capitalise on this increase in pilgrim travel; however there is no evidence to support such theories.

The basilica of Sant'Anastasia throughout the early middle ages and until at least the eighth century remained a prominent church in Rome, owing largely to its location on

¹⁵⁸ Baun, *Another Byzantium* 118.

¹⁵⁹ F. Halkin, *Legendes grecques de "Martyres romaines,"* (Brussels, 1973), 87.

¹⁶⁰ Both monasteries were heavily patronised by Pope Paul and Pope Paschal I. Although it is highly likely that both monasteries had a scriptorium it is impossible to prove its existence owing to a lack of archaeological evidence. However, owing to the substantial number of Greek monasteries in Rome in the ninth century it is extremely likely that the work came from a Greek religious house in the city.

¹⁶¹ For example Saint Saba stayed in the Greek house of San Cesareo in Palatio while in Rome at the end of the tenth century: Orestes, *Historia et Laudes SS. Sabae et Macarii*, ed. J. Cozza-Luzi (Rome, 1893) ch. 49. Also San Nilo visited Rome at a similar time and stayed in the Greek monastery of San Anastasius: *Vita S. Nilus in Acta Sanctorum*, September Vol. VIII (Brussels, 1863), 214.

the *Vicus Tuscus* and close proximity to the *Via Sacra*, thus making it an essential station on several key processional routes.¹⁶² For example the *Via Sacra* was an important through route between the Vatican complex and the Celio Hill, as well as the Lateran Palace. One such procession is first recorded in the ninth century; it began at SS. Cosmas and Damian on 1st November, then passed Sant'Anastasia and ended at San Cesareo.¹⁶³ Sant'Anastasia was also appears in the liturgical processions which took place on Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, the first Tuesday of Lent and Pentecost.¹⁶⁴ The anonymous eighth-century *L'Itinerario di Einsiedeln* records that Sant'Anastasia was also a station on another processional route that went from the *Porticus Maximus* along a road just north of the *Circus Maximus*.¹⁶⁵ That Sant'Anastasia featured in a so many liturgical processions highlights the importance of the church, as processions were used by the popes to link the important churches of Rome together, or to promote churches which the popes deemed important.¹⁶⁶ In addition these processions functioned as elaborate rituals of power and the inclusion of Greek basilica on the route of so many of probably aided in emphasising the papacy's ecumenical nature.

The history of Sant'Anastasia, like the majority of the churches of Rome is highly dependent on a single source, the *LP*; the work primarily records papal gifts, endowments and the repairs made to the church in the ninth century. Even though Sant'Anastasia is mentioned a number of times, the entries concerning the church are extremely brief and contain little information, except to show that it was still extant at

¹⁶² Lugli, *The Roman Forum* 14.

¹⁶³ Lugli, *The Roman Forum* 37.

¹⁶⁴ V. Saxer, 'L'utilisation per la liturgie de l'espace urbain et suburbain: l'exemple de Rome dans l'antiquité et le haut Moyen Âge' *Actes du du Xle Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne* (1989), 1000.

¹⁶⁵ Augenti, *Il Palatino*, 14 and 37-40.

¹⁶⁶ Jong and Theuws *Conclusions* 537.

the time of any one specific entry. Although the *LP* provides some insight into the development of Sant'Anastasia, such as the need for the basilica's repair in the eighth century or the gifts that it received from Pope Leo III, nothing can be extrapolated from the *LP* or any other source that indicates when the observance of the Greek rite ceased. Furthermore, the *LP* provides no details on the staffing of the basilica, what form of congregation it served, or more importantly its function within the wider ecclesiastical community of Rome.

Therefore, what can be gleaned from the entries in the *LP* regarding the basilica of Sant'Anastasia, now that the limitations of the source have already been highlighted? The first comprehensive entry regarding the *titular* church of Sant'Anastasia occurs in the Life of Pope Leo III. The *LP* states that Leo "Sarta tacta vero tituli beate Anastasiae, quae a priscis temporibus per incuriam marcuerant, et pene casure errant, suo almo studio noviter restauravit."¹⁶⁷ The fact that the *LP* mentions that the basilica was in danger of collapse owing "...per incuriam marcuerant"¹⁶⁸ would suggest that the basilica had been abandoned, or at least, given that there seems to have been a long period of decline, that its importance and influence in the city had diminished to the point where it required papal intervention to save it.

That Sant'Anastasia was allowed to fall into such a state of disrepair indicates that there was insufficient support and/or patronage from the local Greek community on the Palatine. It might also suggest that this same Greek community that had once used this

¹⁶⁷ "...freshly restored with loving effort the roofing of Sant'Anastasia's titulus which had decayed for a long time through a lack of care and was about to collapse." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:IV, 1 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:4, 180.

¹⁶⁸ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:IV, 1 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:4, 180.

basilica was by the mid-eighth century too small or poor, or for some other unknown reason, did not wish to support Sant'Anastasia. However another reason for the apparent difficulties may have been the diminishing importance of the Palatine in comparison to other areas of Rome; thereby reducing the amount of patronage which could be attracted. However, the evidence concerning the lay Greek community in Rome for the medieval period, and in particular the seventh and eighth centuries is extremely poor, thus all that can be conclusively stated regarded Sant'Anastasia is that by the middle of the eighth century, the support and importance of this basilica had declined to a point that it was in danger of collapsing, and it was only through papal intervention that the basilica was saved; at this juncture it is impossible to say if this decline suffered by Sant'Anastasia could be applied more generally to the other Greek churches and monasteries of the Palatine.

Sant'Anastasia is mentioned most frequently and in the greatest detail in the *Life of Leo*

III. Below are entries for Sant'Anastasia for his pontificate:

- Leo III: "Et in titulo sanctae Anastasiae fecit vestem de fundato."¹⁶⁹
- Leo III: "Et in titulo beatae Anastasiae fecit coronam ex argento."¹⁷⁰
- Leo III: "Sarta tacta vero tituli beate Anastasiae, quae a priscis temporibus per incuriam marcuerant, et pene casure errant, suo almo studio noviter restauravit."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ "And in Sant'Anastasia's titulus, a cloth with interwoven gold." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:XXXVII, 11 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:37, 197.

¹⁷⁰ "Sant'Anastasia's titulus, silver crown" Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:LXXIV, 21 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:74, 211.

Sant'Anastasia in its early history was one of the most prominent basilicas in Rome with ties to Byzantium, as well as more tenuous ones with Constantine I. However the source material indicates that something changed around the mid eighth century resulting in the decline of the basilica's importance. The entries above show that Leo III not only repaired Sant'Anastasia, but also bestowed several gifts, acts which may have been an attempt to reverse the ailing fortunes of Sant'Anastasia, perhaps because there were no other sources of patronage at the time. This lack of patronage, support or even a Greek speaking clerical staff becomes stranger if we consider that the repairs done to the basilica in the reign of Leo III occurred shortly before 806, thus the basilica must have been in a state of disrepair or even abandonment for a number of years preceding Leo's intervention. The fact that the basilica was allowed to fall into near ruin sometime in the middle of the eighth century is significant, as it was during the same period that Byzantium was embroiled in the Iconoclasm controversy which later Roman traditions and modern academics frequently cite as a period of high immigration of Greeks to Rome. Hence, the date of the refurbishment of the basilica would imply that Sant'Anastasia was not in heavy use during first Iconoclasm, as it was allowed to fall into near ruin, perhaps suggesting that fewer Greek refugees fled to Rome than traditionally thought.¹⁷²

With the centre of papal authority located firmly in the Lateran Palace from the mid-eight century onwards, and the absence of a potent secular authority, the gravity of

¹⁷² "He freshly restored with loving effort the roofing of Sant'Anastasia's titulus which had decayed for a long time through a lack of care and was about to collapse."¹⁷¹ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:IV, 1 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:4, 180.

¹⁷² For discussion regarding Byzantine Iconoclasm and its influence on the Greek monasteries and churches in Rome see *Chapter II The Esquiline and Campo Marzio Group*.

power moved from the Palatine further east to the area around the Lateran.¹⁷³ As suggested by Augenti in his work on the excavations of the Palatine, the importance of the Palatine declined terminally, but had periods of temporary resurgence which is reflected in the fortunes of the various churches in the area.¹⁷⁴ Thus, a shift in the dynamics of the geo-political topography of Rome contributed to the Palatine area becoming subordinate to the Lateran, the result of which, perhaps in conjunction with a diminishing Greek population, was that the basilica of Sant'Anastasia was no longer viewed as one of the more important churches in the city, and was relegated to a lesser role, allowing it to fall into disrepair. This may also be true of several other Greek religious houses based on the Palatine which will be discussed further on in this chapter. However, it is difficult to reconstruct a complete chronology for the basilica of Sant'Anastasia and its apparent lulls in importance may be symptomatic of the fragmentary nature of the source material as well as the changing fortunes of the church. This lack of written evidence is not unique to Sant'Anastasia, as several of the Greek and Latin basilicas and monasteries in the region of the Palatine Hill also suffered from a hiatus in evidentiary records, the worst being the *diaconia* dedicated to San Teodoro.

San Teodoro

The church of San Teodoro is located only a short distance from the basilica of the Sant'Anastasia. Unfortunately, of all the Greek religious establishments on the Palatine,

¹⁷³ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 41.

¹⁷⁴ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 74.

San Teodoro remains the most enigmatic with very little known about its early history, except for its role and status as a *diaconia* which is recorded several times in the *LP*.¹⁷⁵ In addition the name of the church has survived and is recorded in several sources from the eighth century onwards indicating that from at least that period, and most likely from its foundation, the church was dedicated to a Saint Theodore.¹⁷⁶ However, regarding the exact identity of Saint Theodore there are three possibilities. The first is Saint Theodore of Amasea, an eastern martyr of the early fourth century belonging to the increasingly popular pantheon of warrior saints.¹⁷⁷ The second is Saint Theodore Stratelates, a warrior saint, martyred in Heraclea in the early fourth century during the reign of the Emperor Licinius. It is highly likely that Theodore of Amasea and Theodore Stratelates was the same person and shared the same initial cult whose legends later diverged into two separate traditions.¹⁷⁸ Finally the church may have been dedicated to Saint Theodore of Perge, another soldier, who was martyred in the third century.¹⁷⁹ Although it is unknown to which Saint Theodore the church was dedicated, his specific identity is unimportant for this thesis, as all three share a Greek/Eastern origin and all belonged to the cult of warrior saints.

Therefore the fact that the basilica of San Giorgio in Velabro is located only a matter of metres away from San Teodoro is no mere coincidence; San Giorgio of course being the archetypical warrior saint and these commonalities may be indications that the churches had links with the Byzantine army and military elite. Parallels can be drawn with Greek

¹⁷⁵ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:XLV, 12, XCVIII:LXXV, 21 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:45, 200, 98:75, 211 and Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XV, 76 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:15, 57.

¹⁷⁶ Huelsen, *Chiese* 14, and Christie, *Constantine* 105-7.

¹⁷⁷ C. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot, 2003), 59-64.

¹⁷⁸ A. Butler, *Butler's Lives of the Saints* ed. Bernard Bangley (New York, 2005), 354.

¹⁷⁹ Walter, *Warrior Saints* 59.

religious houses founded in Naples in the sixth century where Byzantium also had a strong military presence for example the Greek monasteries dedicated to San Teodoro e Sebastiano, San Demetrio and San Sergio e Bacco.¹⁸⁰ Thus the founding of Greek religious houses dedicated to eastern warrior saints in both Naples and Rome would indicate that the Byzantine military presence in these cities played some role in the foundation or at least the dedication of these houses. In the case of Rome it is uncertain when the cult of San Teodoro arrived in the city; the earliest surviving evidence regarding its presence in the city is a depiction of the saint in the apse mosaic of the basilica of Ss. Cosmas and Damian which has been dated to c.530, which roughly coincides with the initial stages of Justinian's Gothic War (535-540).¹⁸¹ Thus it is likely that the cult of San Teodoro was brought to Rome by the Byzantine army during the Gothic Wars. Yet, if the cult had already been established by this point then the presence of the Byzantine army and imperial administration would likely have bolstered its popularity.

Thus, San Teodoro shared a number of commonalities with other Greek churches in the surrounding area, like San Giorgio it is dedicated to a warrior saint, and like Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Teodoro functioned as a *diaconia* in its early history. Although there is no definitive evidence to prove that San Teodoro observed the Greek rite, and was staffed by Greek clergy, its location, dedication and early function would strongly indicate links to the Greek community of Rome, and its origins in the Byzantine occupation of the city in the sixth century.

¹⁸⁰ Arthur, *Naples*, 69.

¹⁸¹ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 128, Armellini, *Le Chiese* 153 and Christie 104-5.

Very little is certain about the church of San Teodoro's chronology and development; hence a reconstruction of the church's history and role in Rome must be based on informed speculation and comparative studies with other similar churches. There are no sources to corroborate the foundation and early history of San Teodoro, no foundation charter surviving, nor is the church mentioned in the *LP* before the eighth century. However, as already discussed, the *LP* before the eighth century is a rather vague and erratic source regarding the churches of Rome and the fact that there is no foundation charter or that San Teodoro fails to appear in the *LP* does not necessarily mean the church was not extant before the eighth century.

In fact archaeological evidence would put the construction of San Teodoro to sometime in the early seventh century. According to Augenti recently excavated remains in the Horrea Agrippina indicate that there was a building in use until the sixth century when it was later supplanted by San Teodoro. Therefore, Augenti proposes an early seventh-century foundation for San Teodoro which he suggests is a period of renewal in the Palatine with other religious foundations being constructed at this time such as San Giorgio.¹⁸² In addition to the archaeological evidence the survival of a mosaic in San Teodoro has been studied and can help in dating the foundation of the church. The mosaic depicts five figures standing against a gold background; in the centre is Christ, on his left stands Saint Peter and a bearded male saint traditionally identified as Saint Theodore. On the right of Christ stands Saint Paul and an unidentified young male saint with long blonde hair. The mosaic itself has been restored a number of times over its

¹⁸² Augenti, *Il Palatino* 1994 666.

long history and thus it is difficult to ascertain when it was executed.¹⁸³ However suggestions based on the iconography used and style of the mosaic would indicate that it can be dated to late sixth or early seventh century.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, according to Bolgia a similar mosaic can be found in San Lorenzo fuori le mura which can be dated to the reign of Pope Pelagius II (579-90) and therefore the mosaic in San Teodoro may have also been produced at a similar date.¹⁸⁵ In combination, archaeological and artistic evidence would indicate a late sixth or early seventh foundation date which coincides with the construction of the other Greek-speaking *diaconia* on the Palatine San Giorgio. This is an example of how an omission from a source as vital as the *LP* alters our entire understanding of a church's early history in Rome.

Although the earliest written record mentioning San Teodoro is not until the late eighth century, it is entirely possible, even probable that the church was in use by the sixth century; with its location and dedication pointing to it being in use during the time of Byzantine authority in Rome in the mid-sixth century.¹⁸⁶ The fact that San Teodoro does not appear in the historical record until the eighth century, but has clear archaeological roots in the sixth century, begs the question, was San Teodoro less important than other basilicas that appear more frequently in the source material. Is the *LP* reflecting historical reality or is it creating an illusion, a deception caused by a bias in the amount of source content regarding individual churches? There is no way to answer this

¹⁸³ C. Bolgia 'Il mosaic absidale di San Teodoro a Roma: problem storici e restauri attraverso disegni e documenti inediti' *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 69 (2001), 317.

¹⁸⁴ Bolgia, *San Teodoro* 318-9.

¹⁸⁵ Bolgia, *San Teodoro* 344.

¹⁸⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:XLV, 12 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:45, 200, this entry refers to Leo III's gift to the *diaconia* of San Teodoro and is its first appearance in the written historical record dated to 802/3, "Immo et in diaconia sancti Theodori fecit vestem de stauraci cum periclisin de blati." (In St Theodore's deaconry, a cross-adorned silk cloth with a purple fringe).

question without a comparative study of a similar comprehensive source covering the ecclesiastical history of Rome for the period in question, a source which lamentably does not exist.

Furthermore, according to a later tradition, the origins of which cannot be traced, San Teodoro was assigned to a deacon by Pope Agatho sometime in his reign (678-681) and made up one of the seven original deaconries of early medieval Rome.¹⁸⁷ There is no evidence supporting Agatho's involvement, or the status of San Teodoro as one of the seven *diaconiae* of the city and the first appearance of the church in the written historical record is not until the eighth century in the anonymous *L'Itinerario di Einsiedeln*. This work makes brief references to a number of churches in Rome, one of which is the *diaconia* of San Teodoro.¹⁸⁸ San Teodoro's inclusion in this work can be interpreted to indicate its importance in the city at this time, however as the itinerary is a long undetailed list; its inclusion could be arbitrary. Therefore San Teodoro's significance in Rome cannot be deduced purely from its appearance in the eighth-century *L'Itinerario di Einsiedeln*.¹⁸⁹

The next appearance of San Teodoro in the written record is in the early ninth century, in the *Life of Pope Leo III* in the *LP*. In this case San Teodoro is mentioned as one of several *diaconiae* in a list of gifts and endowments made by the Pope to the religious

¹⁸⁷ No mention of Pope Agatho I's connection to San Teodoro is recorded in his lifetime in the *Liber Pontificalis*, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. 1 LXXXI:I-XVIII,350-5 Furthermore, no documentation exists before the ninth century for the history of San Teodoro, making it difficult to validate the tradition that Pope Agatho was responsible for the founding of this church.

¹⁸⁸ Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 175-178 Davis highlights the possibility that Leo III's 806 list of gifts to the churches of Rome is structured in a specific way. It is divided into churches dedicated to the Virgin, Latin monasteries and churches, Greek monasteries and churches, and convents. Although there is no evidence to corroborate the existence of such a structure.

¹⁸⁹ Huelsen, *Chiese* 4.

establishments in Rome: “Immo et in diaconia sancti Theodori fecit vestem de stauraci cum periclisin de blati.”¹⁹⁰ San Teodoro is mentioned again in the same life, this time in the 806 list of papal gifts made by Leo III to the churches of Rome, in which list it is once more categorised as a *diaconia*.¹⁹¹ Later in the pontificate of Pope Gregory IV, San Teodoro is again referred to as, “S. Theodori martyris diaconia.”¹⁹² Therefore, the inclusion of San Teodoro in the *LP* on several occasions demonstrates the continued papal interest in the maintenance of the church and papal gifts hint at its continued relative importance. Furthermore, in the *LP* San Teodoro is always referred to as a *diaconia*, although the source provides no further insight into the function of such an institution. Yet the author of the *LP* feels the need to distinguish it from other titular churches and monasteries. This would indicate that the *diaconiae* were in fact different from these other churches and this was reflected in their different title, which the *LP* consistently used in reference to the four Greek *diaconiae* of the Palatine: San Teodoro, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Giorgio and Santa Maria Antiqua.

Therefore, although there is no solid evidence to corroborate that San Teodoro was Greek from its construction in the sixth century, there is also no evidence to the contrary. Circumstantial evidence, as well as a comparative analysis with other Greek churches and *diaconiae* in the same area would strongly suggest that it was a Greek *diaconia* and that it continued this observance until at least its restoration in the ninth century. If it is accepted that San Teodoro was a church that practised the Greek rite in

¹⁹⁰ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:XLV, 12, and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:45, 200.

¹⁹¹ “...et in diaconiae sancti Georgii fecit eodam modo fect coronam ex argento.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:XXXVII, 11 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:37, 197.

¹⁹² “Simili modo et in diaconia beati Theodori martyris vestem de fundato cum leonatitem, cum periclisin de optabulo.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XV, 76, and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:75, 211.

Rome, and was one of the *diaconiae* of the city, some speculative conclusions can be drawn regarding the development and fate of the monastery by the eleventh century. After the *diaconia*'s appearance in Pope Leo III's 806 list of papal gifts, San Teodoro does not appear again in the written record until the Life of Pope Gregory IV recorded in the *LP*, in year 831/2. There it is stated that Gregory bestowed upon, "Simili modo et in diaconia beati Theodori martyris vestem de fundato cum leonatilem, cum periclisen de optabulo."¹⁹³ Consequently, at least until 831/32 San Teodoro was still viewed as a *diaconia* of Rome, and one of the six *Palatio diaconiae*.¹⁹⁴ A similar sentiment is repeated in John the Deacon's, as well as Peter Mallius's works, both of which were written sometime during the reign of Pope Alexander III (1159-1181).¹⁹⁵ Yet, apart from its topographical placement in Rome, as well as its continued favour by the popes, little more can be concluded about San Teodoro during the period covered by this thesis. However, San Teodoro's known history, dedications and location in the city fit the established pattern of the other Greek churches of the Palatine, in addition to matching the model of the Greek *diaconia* discussed earlier making it possible to speculate with some confidence about the early history and development of San Teodoro as a result of this comparative analysis.

Therefore, the location of San Teodoro was determined by its status as a Greek *diaconia* built during the Byzantine occupation of the Palatine in the sixth century. Its dedication to a warrior saint of Eastern origins may indicate tie between the Byzantine army or

¹⁹³ "... St Theodore the martyr's deaconry, a gold interwoven cloth adorned with lions, with a fringe of eightfold weave." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XV, 76 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 103:15, 57.

¹⁹⁴ Hostetter and Brandt, *Palatine* 273.

¹⁹⁵ Huelsen, *Chiese* 15.

military elite and this *diaconia*, yet there is no evidence at the moment to substantiate such a claim.

Given these conclusions it is clear that the continued support and maintenance of a Greek religious house, fulfilling perhaps both liturgical and charitable functions, close to the geographical centre of power, indicates that the Greek religious houses on the Palatine retained a prominent and necessary position in Rome in the sixth and seventh centuries. However, the poor state of several of these churches by the ninth century, as well as the papacy being the primary patron of these establishments and feeling some kind of responsibility for their upkeep and repair, reveal that by the ninth century there had been a fundamental shift in the patronage, location and purpose of the Greek religious houses of Rome.

San Giorgio in Velabro

Another *diaconia* dedicated to an Eastern warrior saint and located a short distance from the church of San Teodoro is the more renowned and better documented San Giorgio. The church of San Giorgio in Velabro, and the site of the no longer extant adjoining monastery, is less than 100 metres from the basilicas of Sant'Anastasia and San Teodoro, placing it at the heart of the Palatine group of Greek churches and monasteries. Although the church was substantially altered and little is left of the early medieval structure, archaeological evidence has uncovered several features of the

church for the period under investigation in this thesis.¹⁹⁶ Additionally inside the modern church are several inscriptions dating to the ninth century which shed some light on the function and development of San Giorgio during this period. Although San Giorgio seems at first relatively well documented in comparison to San Teodoro, what is striking and makes the reconstruction of an accurate chronology for the church impossible is the complete absence of a foundation charter, or any near contemporary source to establish the circumstances of its construction.

However, archaeological work carried out in the 1920s and later during the restoration of the basilica following a bomb explosion in 1993 uncovered previously unknown details regarding its early history and development.¹⁹⁷ One of the archaeological reports indicated that the basilica was built on the site of a second-century private dwelling, which was incorporated into the right nave of the early medieval structure.¹⁹⁸ Unfortunately, nothing is known about this early site until sometime either in the fifth, or more likely sixth century when this private dwelling was modified and enlarged to be used as one of the early *diaconiae* of Rome.¹⁹⁹ The archaeological remains of this *diaconia* were uncovered in 1924 under the modern floor of the basilica and are discussed by others in more detail than can be explored in this thesis.²⁰⁰

The earliest written evidence concerning the history of the basilica of San Giorgio is the *LP* which records that the building was enlarged by Pope Leo II (682-83) and was initially

¹⁹⁶ Christie, Constantine 105 and Coates-Stephens, 112-3.

¹⁹⁷ John, *San Giorgio* 15 and Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 181.

¹⁹⁸ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 182 and Christie, Constantine 105. For alternate views of the date of foundation for San Giorgio refer to Krautheimer, *Corpus* who favours a ninth-century foundation date owing to a lack of earlier physical evidence, however recent evidence has refuted this suggestion.

¹⁹⁹ John, *San Giorgio* 15.

²⁰⁰ John, *San Giorgio* 15-20, Coates-Stephens, *Buildings* 110-113 and Christie, *Constantine* 104-5.

dedicated to San Sebastian as well as San Giorgio, “Huius almi pontificis iussa aecclesiam iuxta velum auream in honore beati Sebastiani edificata est, nec non honore martiris Georgii.”²⁰¹ Before 682 the history of San Giorgio is open to speculation; however the archaeological evidence would suggest a sixth-century foundation date for the early *diaconia*. This date would place its construction during the period when Rome was under direct Byzantine rule in the wake of the Gothic Wars. This would also place the construction of the *diaconia* in a similar timeframe to the majority of the other Greek religious houses on the Palatine; Sant’Anastasia, San Teodoro and Santa Maria in Cosmedin. Finally, the fact that the church was dedicated to San Giorgio, a warrior saint, as in the case of San Teodoro, may imply some relationship between the Byzantine army and these two *diaconiae*.

The relics of San Giorgio in all probability arrived in Rome sometime in the sixth or seventh centuries, as a consequence of the Persian or later Arab invasions, and the need to keep them safe. The relics were very likely brought to Rome by a monastic community fleeing warfare or persecution in the east; this was not an uncommon tale, with a number of Roman churches citing refugee Greek monks as the source of the relics that they possessed. Whether this is historical fact or later legends can only be determined on an individual basis.²⁰² The first reference to the relics of San Giorgio in Rome appears in the eighth-century *LP*. It states that during the early years of the

²⁰¹ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, LXXXII:V, and 360 Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 82: 5, 76. *On the order of this beloved Pontiff the church close to the Velabrum was built in honour of St Sebastian and the martyr George.*

²⁰² There are a number of churches and monasteries in Rome which have connections, some more tenuously than others with the Iconoclastic controversy in. Examples include Santa Prassede, San Silvestro, Santa Maria in Campo Marzio discussed in the next chapter.

pontificate of Zacharias, the pope discovered the skull of San Giorgio hidden in the somewhat rundown and abandoned Lateran Palace.²⁰³

Huiusdemque temporibus magnum thesaurum dominus Deum noster in hac Romana urbe per eundem almificum pontificem propalare dignatus est. In venerabile itque patriarchio sacratissimum beati Georgii martyris hisdem dñstissimus papa in capsā reconditum repperit capit; in qua et pittacium partier invenit, litteris exaratum grecis, ipsud esse significantes. Qui sanctissimus papa omnino satisfactus, ilico adgregato huius Romane urbis populo, cum hymnis et canticis spiritalibus in venerabili diaconia eius nomini, sitam in hac Romana civitate, regione secunda, ad Velum aureum, illud decuci fecit, ubi immense miracula et beneficia omnipotens Deus ad laudem nominis sui per eundem sacratissimum martyr operare dignatur.²⁰⁴

Pope Zacharias had the cranial bones of San Giorgio translated from the Lateran Palace to the *diaconia* of San Giorgio of Velabro shortly after their discovery. It is no coincidence that it was during this period that the feast of San Giorgio was introduced into the Roman Church's calendar.²⁰⁵ Shortly before the translation of the relics Pope Gregory (715-31) II had established San Giorgio in Velabro as the station church for the Lenten liturgy on the first day after Ash Wednesday in Rome.²⁰⁶ Thus, even before the discovery of the relics the church of San Giorgio, as well as the previously examined Sant'Anastasia, were important stations on several processional routes. That the church San Giorgio was an important processional station and was also presented with the

²⁰³ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCIII:XXIV, 434 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 93:24, 48.

²⁰⁴ "In his time our Lord God saw fit in this city of Rome to disclose a great treasure through his bountiful pontiff. In the venerable patriarchate the holy pope discovered St George the martyr's sacred head, kept safe in a casket; in this he also found a note made of Greek letters, indicating its identity. The Holy Pope, altogether satisfied, immediately convened this city of Rome's people, and caused it to be taken with hymns and spiritual chants to the venerable deaconry which is dedicated to him in this city, in the 2nd region at the Velabrum; and there mighty God sees fit to work infinite miracles and benefits to the praise of his own name through this sacred martyr." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCIII:XXIV, 434 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 93:24, 48.

²⁰⁵ T.F.X. Noble, "Celebration and Power: the making of Papal Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries," *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Boston, 2001), 89.

²⁰⁶ Noble, *Celebration and Power* 89 and Saxer, *Liturgie* 947.

relics of San Giorgio indicates that by the time of the late eighth century the Palatine was not devoid of ecclesiastical activity and standing in Rome, and continued to play an important role in the city's religious life. Moreover the fact that Pope Zacharias chose to house the prestigious relics of San Giorgio in the church of San Giorgio in Velabro would be an indication that at this juncture the church was in a healthy state; unlike the previously examined Sant'Anastasia. Therefore, San Giorgio fared well even after the Byzantine occupation of Rome and remained an important church for the Greek community, as well as the papacy.

The church of San Giorgio, in comparison to the other Greek churches on the Palatine, has been fairly well documented in the historical record. The *LP* is fortunately not the only source, as the church appears in several medieval itineraries.²⁰⁷ However neither of these genres lends itself to providing more than the bare minimum of information; whether this is a brief entry on the subject of a papal gift or merely the name of the church on a long derivative list. However, in the case of San Giorgio several medieval Greek inscriptions have been preserved and are now on display on the church's walls; these epigraphs have been dated to the ninth century, but have become damaged owing to age.²⁰⁸ The inscriptions are on three marble tablets which have been broken at some point and are now in a fragmentary state. Owing to a lack of conservation efforts the Greek script is now extremely worn, making it difficult to decipher and in some parts impossible.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ For example, *L'Itinerario di Einsiedeln* or *Il Catalogo Salisburgense*.

²⁰⁸ John, *San Giorgio* 37-38 and P. Batiffol, "Inscriptions Byzantines de Saint George au Velabre," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* vol. VII (Paris, 1887), 419-31.

²⁰⁹ John, *San Giorgio* 37-38.

The first tablet has been broken into four fragments and can be dated to the ninth century owing to an internal reference to the archpriest John living during the pontificate of Pope John VIII.²¹⁰ The text of this first inscription is extremely disjointed, although there has been conjecture as to what the original script may have been. P. Batiffol believed it to be a lamentation describing the “sorrows of life.”²¹¹ The second and third stones were commissioned as tomb covers for the grave of a certain John the archpriest. The first of these stones contains an acrostic; the initial letter of each line in this second fragment spells out “The Tomb of the Archpriest John” it states that “John the archpriest lived during the pontificate of Pope John VIII” (872-882).²¹² Furthermore, the inscription contains some brief information concerning the life of John and his parentage, stating that John was educated by his father who was a “wise man” and described his mother as a deeply pious woman.²¹³ The writing on the second stone is almost completely illegible and cannot be read with any degree of certainty; only a few words remain decipherable such as faults made during the course of life and a request for prayers for archpriest John.²¹⁴

Although a significant part of this set of inscriptions remains indecipherable, what can be read provides an insight into the history of San Giorgio of Velabro at the end of the ninth century. Firstly, this set of inscriptions provides solid evidence that there was a Greek community in this area close to the Palatine at the end of the ninth century. Furthermore, the presence of archpriest John at the church of San Giorgio in Velabro

²¹⁰ Batiffol, *Inscriptions* 426.

²¹¹ Batiffol, *Inscriptions* 429.

²¹² John, *San Giorgio* 38.

²¹³ John, *San Giorgio* 38 and Batiffol, *Inscriptions* 429. Batiffol came to conclusion that the father of the archpriest John who was his teacher was also a lay professor, however this seems to be based on interpretation of the translation, as well as an amount of speculation on the part of Batiffol.

²¹⁴ John, *San Giorgio* 37-39.

indicates that at least some of the Greek religious population of Rome were secular clergy and were not all monastic, either resident or fleeing persecution, as widely believed.²¹⁵ The inscriptions also describe, however briefly, the parentage of John the archpriest, that his father, who is described as a “wise man,” was responsible for his education.²¹⁶ Given that his son rose to become archpriest we must assume a significant level of learning on the part of both father and son. The evidence is too limited to draw any meaningful conclusions, but this inscription indicates that there may be interesting areas to explore concerning the education of the Greek community in Rome. Were the majority of Greek parents in Rome responsible for the education of their children and did they teach outside the boundaries of the family, for example teaching the Greek language to Romans who wished to learn it? And how did the education ‘systems’ of the Greek community of Rome differ from that of the native inhabitants? Although, this is primarily based on conjecture the inscriptions of John’s tomb show one important thing, which is that Greeks settled in Rome near the Palatine Hill, were capable of sustaining the population level with only some aid from external immigrations and felt the situation secure and prosperous enough to raise a family. The belief that the Greek community of Rome was purely dependent upon immigration of Greeks from the east, in the wake of theological or militarily turmoil, is therefore erroneous.

What then was the status of San Giorgio in Rome by the ninth century and how did it fare in comparison to the other Greek churches on the Palatine? By the ninth century

²¹⁵ Hamilton, *Oriental Lumen* 181-215 emphasises the monastic element of the Greek influence in Roman ecclesiastical affairs, but does not take into account the Greek regular clergy.

²¹⁶ John, *San Giorgio* 37-38, 44.

the church of San Giorgio of Velabro still appears to have been of some importance in the city, as well as to the papacy. The church received several gifts and donations from Pope Gregory IV as recorded in the *LP*.²¹⁷ It would appear, according to the *LP*, that Gregory had to commission significant work to be carried out upon San Giorgio owing to the "...decay from its great antiquity."²¹⁸ This is very similar to what happened to Sant'Anastasia at around the same time. This could have been in response to a disaster such as a fire or earthquake, but no such record appears in the *LP* or any other contemporary source. The state of disrepair of San Giorgio was most likely the result of decreases in staff or patronage. The intervention by Pope Gregory IV demonstrates two things. Firstly, that in a similar fashion to Sant'Anastasia, the pope was forced to intervene to repair a sixth-century Greek foundation, which in all likelihood had previously been funded by the Greek community in Rome or the Byzantine administration on the Palatine. Secondly, it shows that both the official Byzantine presence in Rome and the native Greek community could no longer support large scale repairs to the churches of the Palatine. Yet, Pope Gregory must have viewed San Giorgio as both an important and necessary church to spend so much of the papacy's own finances on.

The commentary contained in the *LP* recording Gregory's repair of San Giorgio in the ninth century, gives the impression that the work undertaken on the church was not as extensive as the archaeological record suggests; as much of the design of San Giorgio's is more typical of ninth-century churches, such as Santa Sabina, rather than those from

²¹⁷ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XIV, 76, CIII:XXVII, 79, CIII:XXX, 79 CIII:XLIII, 82 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:14, 55, 103:27,62, 103:30, 64, 103:43, 69.

²¹⁸ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XIV, 76 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:14, 55.

the seventh century.²¹⁹ The *LP* states that, “Fecit autem in ecclesia beati Christi martyris Georgii magnificus praesul hinc inde porticos, quoas etiam ad decorum ipsius basilicae variis ornavit picturis.”²²⁰ It is unclear why the *LP* includes such a brief description of the reconstruction that took place in San Giorgio. The account lacks any detail regarding the work that took place or the decorative programme that was chosen to adorn the interior of the church. The brevity of the account would seem to oppose one of the primary functions of the *LP*, the glorification of the popes of Rome. The most plausible reason is that the author of *The Life of Gregory IV* did not have access to the full information regarding the restructuring or perhaps that he wrote this passage before the work on San Giorgio was completed, thus only had a limited knowledge of the construction and decoration that was underway. Either way it is doubtful that there was some ulterior motive for playing down the scale of reconstruction of San Giorgio in the ninth century.

Even after the extensive repairs to the church the Pope continued to patronise San Giorgio; Gregory presented the church with, “Immo vero et in diaconia sancti Georgii martyris fecit velum alexandrium, habentem fasanos XII, seu velum anti ianuas lineum plumatum I.”²²¹ This entry in the *LP* dated to 844/5 is the last reference to the basilica of San Giorgio until it passed into Latin hands in the twelfth century.

Therefore, the church of San Giorgio follows a similar pattern to Sant’Anastasia and San Teodoro. Although there is more evidence for the history of San Giorgio than the other Greek churches of the Palatine there are still gaps in its chronology. Again a comparative

²¹⁹ John, *San Giorgio* 15-19.

²²⁰ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XIV, 76 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:14, 56.

²²¹ “...an Alexandrian veil with twelve pheasants and one feathered linen veil in front of the doors.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XLIII, 82 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:43, 69.

study of the other churches on the Palatine has served to redress some of these gaps in the historical narrative. San Giorgio was located on the Palatine for the reasons discussed above concerning the location of the Greek *diaconiae* in Rome. In addition the church of San Giorgio, in a similar manner to that of San Teodoro most likely had some links with the Byzantine military owing to the nature and provenance of San Giorgio to whom the church was dedicated. The church of San Giorgio however was by the mid-ninth century still observing the Greek rite, was led by a Greek Archpriest and remained a prominent church in Rome, despite the relative decline in importance of the Palatine region.

Santa Maria in Cosmedin

The church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin is synonymous in the minds of those who study medieval Rome with the Greek community of the city. Santa Maria's ties with the Greek community most likely date from its foundation during the sixth century Byzantine occupation of the Palatine. The church's relationship with the Greeks of Rome continued throughout the medieval period to such an extent that even as late as 1192 there is evidence it was still referred to as "*Sancta Maria schola graeca*" in the *Il catalogo di Cencio Camerario*.²²²

Throughout its history the church was referred to as either Santa Maria in Schola Graeca or more commonly Santa Maria in Cosmedin; *cosmedin* being derived from the Greek

²²² Huelsen, *Chiese* 9.

adjective κοσμίδιον meaning adorned, or adornment.²²³ An alternative theory regarding the term *cosmedin* is that the word is in some way connected to the district of Constantinople with the same namesake where the renowned church of Saint Cosmas was located.²²⁴ There are several other examples of churches and areas in the medieval west which have been named after a district in Constantinople. An example in Rome is the Aventine Hill which was sometimes referred to as the *Blachernae*, after the famous church of the Virgin and district in Constantinople of the same name. Krautheimer takes this theory one step further, suggesting that there was a church named Santa Maria Cosmedin located somewhere in Byzantium, most likely in Constantinople and the church in Rome was named after this Byzantine basilica.²²⁵ Krautheimer reaches this conclusion through his reading of a particular passage in the eighth-century *LP*, which makes reference to the extension and redecoration of the church by Pope Hadrian I (772-795).²²⁶ Krautheimer suggests that the church was most likely already dedicated to Santa Maria and was given the title *cosmedin* after its lavish decoration and enlargement in order to compete or even supersede any other church of the same name, in particular according to Krautheimer's work, the possible Constantinopolitan Santa Maria in Cosmedin.

Krautheimer suggests that by placing Hadrian's enlargement and adornment of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in the greater historical context it becomes clear that this was an

²²³ G.B. Giovenale, *La Basilica di S. Maria in Cosmedin* (Rome, 1927), 171-2 and Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 175, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVII:LXXII, 20 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 97:72, n.142-143 159-60.

²²⁴ Armellini, *Le Chiese* 600-5, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVII:LXXII, 20 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 97:72, n.142-143 159-60.

²²⁵ R. Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae: the Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV-IX cent.)* Vol. 2 (Vatican, 1967), 277-305.

²²⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVII:LXXII, 20 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 97:72, 159-60.

attempt by the pope to demonstrate his disapproval of Iconoclasm in Byzantium, as well as attempting to portray Rome as the defender of Orthodoxy. That the church was lavishly enlarged and redecorated in the late eighth century, and given the name Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Krautheimer suggests was a move to embarrass Constantinople, and by housing a Greek community in the church this would add insult to injury. Although his is an appealing theory, and when viewed alongside other Roman churches built during the Iconoclast Controversy, such as Santa Maria in Campo Marzio, Santa Prassede and San Silvestro in Capite, Krautheimer's theory could be valid, there is not enough evidence to support his claims.²²⁷ There is no record of a church named Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Constantinople during the period under study, nor does the entry in the *LP* concerning the enlargement of the church say anything that would validate Krautheimer's assertions. In addition, there were churches and areas in the medieval west which were named after Constantinopolitan sites or regions, such as Cosmas and Blachernae, but these were not attempts to compete with the original, rather they paid homage to, or signified some connection to the Constantinopolitan original. Also when studying the purpose and development of Greek churches and monasteries of Rome through the prism of what modern historians know about Iconoclasm, there is an inherent danger of overlaying modern interpretations and reconstructed narratives over historical events and institutions whose relationship with Iconoclasm is uncertain at best. Finally, the simplest and most compelling explanation for the term *cosmedin* is that the word means adorned and was used to describe the splendour of the church after its redecoration in the eighth century.

²²⁷ Krautheimer, *Corpus*, 305.

While in later medieval Rome Santa Maria in Cosmedin was a prominent church in the city its early history and development is poorly documented and its relationship with the Greek community of Rome remains ambiguous at best. As in the cases of so many other Roman churches for the period, defined by the parameters of this thesis, the main source for the study of Santa Maria in Cosmedin is the *LP*; supported by brief entries in several medieval itineraries. These sources do not provide a foundation date, however archaeological evidence would indicate that the smaller church before its enlargement in the eighth century was constructed sometime before the seventh century.²²⁸ This was when the gaps in the portico were bricked up to create an enclosed space which would have functioned as a small church and *diaconia*.²²⁹ A date in the mid to late sixth century would fit well with the pattern already established in this thesis regarding the foundation of the Greek churches and *diaconiae* on the Palatine during the Byzantine occupation.

Yet, if Santa Maria in Cosmedin was a sixth-century foundation, then in its first incarnation it was both a small and relatively unimportant church, which fails to appear in the written record before the eighth century. It is worth noting Santa Maria's absence from *Il Catalogo Salisburgense* which was compiled in the seventh century. The *Catalogo Salisburgense* refers to several Greek churches such as, "Basilica quae appellatur sancta. Anastasia... Basilica quae appellatur sancta. Maria Antiqua...Basilica quae appellatur sanctus Giorgio."²³⁰ However two of the Greek churches located on the Palatine whose construction can be dated to the sixth century, San Teodoro and Santa Maria in

²²⁸ Hostetter and Brandt, *Palatine East* 273.

²²⁹ Hostetter and Brandt, *Palatine East* 273.

²³⁰ Huelsen, *Chiese* 8.

Cosmedin, are suspiciously absent from this otherwise comprehensive list. Their omission from this source perhaps indicates their relative unimportance and size in comparison to other more prominent churches at this time, such as Sant'Anastasia.²³¹ Thus, Santa Maria's omission from *Il Catalogo Salisburgense* does not preclude a sixth-century foundation date, but rather may indicate the relative unimportance of the church before its eighth-century renovation.

Another catalogue of Roman churches which fails to refer to Santa Maria in Cosmedin is the *L'Itinerario di Einsiedeln*, which was assembled at the end of the eighth century.²³² However the *diaconia* of San Teodoro is present. The principal reason for the omission of Santa Maria in Cosmedin from this later catalogue was most likely due to its relative anonymity and state of disrepair at the time of the *L'Itinerario di Einsiedeln* compilation. Therefore, before the late eighth century Santa Maria was relatively unimportant, and it was not until the pontificate of Hadrian I that its status in Rome improved.

It was during the years 781-2 that Pope Hadrian decided to extensively rebuild and redecorate Santa Maria in Cosmedin because it was, "dudum breve in edificiis existens, sub ruinis posita, maximum monumentum de Tubertinos tufos super ea dependens."²³³ Before his intervention Santa Maria in Cosmedin failed to rank amongst the most important churches of Rome. However, the *LP* acknowledges its existence before 781, which is supported by the archaeological evidence, yet more importantly it describes

²³¹ By the eighth century other churches in Rome had eclipsed the churches of the Palatine in terms of importance, these included Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni in Laterano.

²³² Huelsen, *Chiese* 9.

²³³ "...only a small building with a huge monument of the Tiburtine tufa hanging over it." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCVII:LXXII, 20 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 97:72, 159-160.

Santa Maria as a *diaconia*.²³⁴ This is the first time that it is described as a *diaconia*, but since there is no written evidence before this reference in the *LP*, the date from which the church functioned as a *diaconia* remains subject to debate. It may have functioned as a *diaconiae* from its foundation in the sixth century onwards or may have been granted this charitable duty at some later date sometime before its appearance in the *LP*. However Santa Maria fits the pattern already seen with the other Greek churches in the area. It was most likely built in the sixth century during the Byzantine occupation of the city and as it had strong ties with the east in both its dedication to the Virgin and later with the addition of the Greek term *cosmedin*. A further indication of its Byzantine heritage is its topographical position on the Palatine and that the surviving evidence indicates it was *diaconia* similar to San Teodoro and Santa Maria Antiqua.²³⁵ Also because there is no reference to a change in status of the church, it is likely that the inclusion of the term *diaconia* in the eighth-century *LP* was nothing more than an inclusion of its official title rather than signifying a change and earlier omissions of the term *diaconia* were for reasons of style or negligence on the part of the author.

After its initial appearance in the *LP* the fortunes and prominence of Santa Maria in Cosmedin rose dramatically. The church is recorded in the 806 list of papal gifts bestowed by Pope Leo III on the churches and monasteries of Rome recorded in the *LP*, “seu et in diaconia ipsius Dei genetricis quae appellatur Cosmidi similiter fecit coronam ex argento.”²³⁶ As Davis suggests, the position of a church in the 806 list is a compromise

²³⁴ Armellini, *Le Chiese* 600-1 and Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 175.

²³⁵ Armellini, *Le Chiese*, 600-1 and D. J. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Change and Continuity* (Woodbridge, 1998), 124.

²³⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:LXX, 19 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:70, 209.

between the importance of the church in Rome as well as to whom the church was dedicated.²³⁷

Santa Maria appears again as a *diaconia* in the *LP* in the year 833 during the pontificate of Gregory IV, “Fecit etiam in diaconia beate semper virginis Mariae in Cosmidi vestem di tireo, habentem storiā dominice Nativatis atque Resurrectionis Christi veri Dei nostril.”²³⁸ Several decades later Santa Maria in Cosmedin was given a number of gifts by Pope Nicholas I, and was once more referred to as deaconry and with the title of *Cosmedin* now becoming standard in reference to this church,

Hic beatissimus praesul, divina inspiratione repletus, in diaconia sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae dominae nostrae quae vocatur Cosmidi fecit veste olosirica I de stauraci, habentem storiā leones maiores II. Ubi supra fecit velum album rosatum I, ornatum in circuitu de tyreo, more magnitudinis. Obtulit vero in iamdicta diaconia gabatham saxiscam de argento purissimo I.²³⁹

Furthermore, *The Life of Pope Nicholas*, which unlike some of the other papal lives contained in the pages of the *LP*, does not record a plethora of churches, and instead mentions only a handful. Nevertheless, the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin appears several times on different occasions, which perhaps denotes the importance of this church during the pontificate of Nicholas and to the Pope himself.

Verum etiam et in aecclesia eiusdem genitricis Dei et domini nostril Iesu Christi qui vocatur Cosmidi fecit hospitium largum ac spaciosum satisque

²³⁷ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:LXX, 19 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:70, 209.

²³⁸ “In the ever-virgin St Mary’s deaconry in Cosmedin [Gregory IV] provided a Tyrian cloth representing the birth and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XX, 77 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:20, 58-59.

²³⁹ “The blessed prelate, filled with God’s inspiration provided in God’s mother St Mary our Lady’s deaconry called Cosmedin, one silk cross adorned cloth, and decorated with the representations of two large lions. There too he provided one white veil with roses, decorated around with Tyrian cloth of wondrous size. In that deaconry he also presented one fine silver Saxon bowl.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVII:XI, 152-3 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 107:11, 208-9.

precipuum, ad opus adque utilitatem pontificum, ubi quotiens oportuum fuerit, cum omnibus qui eis famulantur, amplissime hospitentur.²⁴⁰

Later in the reign Pope Nicholas the *LP* records that “...in aecclesia beatae Dei genitricis Mariae quae vocatur Cosmidi fecit calpi de argento purissimo.”²⁴¹ While the last entry regarding the church of Santa Maria Cosmedin in the *LP* for the ninth and tenth centuries occurs in the last few pages of the Life of Pope Nicholas I,

Sanctissimus autem et fulgidissimus pontifex, dolens populum tot oppressum calamitatibus, Deum tantum modo innumeris invocabat precibus et infinitis laudabat preconiiis, non tamen aecclesiarum Dei cum relinquens, sed potius in tribulation et temporali temptation decenter adaugens. Nam renovavit in basilica Dei genitricis Mariae quae dicitur Cosmidi secretarium, ibique pulchri operis fecit triclinium cum caminatis, ad honorem et decorum eius. Pari modo iuxta idem secretarium porticum renovans illic construxit atque edificavit oratorium in honore sancti martyris Christi Nicolai et plurima dona ibi contulit almus.²⁴²

This entry demonstrates the significant amount of work undertaken by Pope Nicholas to further glorify the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin. This renovation and the addition of new features was the largest project undertaken at Santa Maria for nearly a century, and unlike other churches in the area the purpose of these renovations was not to repair damage to the building, but to enhance it. It is also significant that the new oratory built by Pope Nicholas was dedicated to the saint of the same name, Nicholas.

Thus, although it is obvious that Pope Nicholas highly favoured the church of Santa

²⁴⁰ “In the church of our Lord and God Jesus Christ’s same mother called Cosmedin [Nicholas] provided a broad, spacious and distinguished hospice for the purposes and need of the pontiffs, where they could be fully accommodated with all who were in their service, whenever it was opportune.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVII:XVI, 154 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 107:16, 211.

²⁴¹ “[Nicholas] provided in God’s mother St Mary’s church called Cosmedin a fine silver calpi.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVII:XXXVI, 158 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 107:36, 220-21.

²⁴² “The Holy and splendid pontiff, grieving that the people were oppressed with so many calamities... [Nicholas] did not abandon his concern for God’s churches, but rather increased it fittingly at this time of trouble and trial. For in God’s mother Mary’s basilica called *Cosmedin*, he renewed the *secretarium*, and there he built a *triclinium* of beautiful work, with parlours, for its honour and splendour. Close to the *secretarium* he renewed the portico and constructed and built there an oratory in honour of Christ’s martyr Saint Nicholas; and the bountiful man conferred many gifts there.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVII:LII, 161 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 107:52, 232.

Maria in Cosmedin, the reasons for his special relationship with the church, remain unconfirmed, however, the dedication of the oratory reveals that Pope Nicholas was creating a legacy for himself through the glorification of Santa Maria Cosmedin. Why he chose to focus on this Greek *diaconia* remains unclear.

The entries regarding the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in the *LP* during the pontificate of Pope Nicholas I reveal a number of important issues. Firstly, the increased frequency with which Santa Maria in Cosmedin is mentioned in the ninth-century *LP*, compared to the eighth century and earlier. This is indicative of a church which had been given new prominence in Rome, and although initially championed by Hadrian I, the fact that it was so heavily patronised by later popes, especially Nicholas, is demonstrative of the durability of the church's importance. Secondly, the large number of gifts, decorative and building programmes, that were lavished on Santa Maria in Cosmedin, particular by Pope Nicholas, would most likely indicate that the church served a significant congregation in the area surrounding it. Although this does not preclude its continued status as a *diaconia* fulfilling a charitable mandate, and does not preclude the housing of a monastic community, the sheer amount of expenditure by Nicholas would signify that an audience was needed to appreciate and marvel at the Pope's generosity. This is reinforced by the last entry concerning Santa Maria in Cosmedin in the ninth-century *LP*, where Pope Nicholas, hoping to raise the spirits of the people and demonstrate his commitment to the preservation and glorification of the churches of Rome, chose Santa Maria in Cosmedin as his first and greatest project.²⁴³

²⁴³ Although there is no internal chronology in this section of the *Life of Pope Nicholas*, it is reasonable to assume that the writer of this work recorded the restoration and building programme of his subject in roughly chronological order, as there is no reason to suspect otherwise in the case of this papal life. In

This would imply that this church in particular was already well known in Rome, and that a great number of people, from the lowliest to prominent citizens could benefit and also witness Nicholas's generosity through his gifts to Santa Maria in Cosmedin.

The fact that the Pope dedicated an oratory to his namesake, Nicholas, shows his wish to forward some political agenda, as well as create a legacy, which would have been lost on the lowest of society or equally an isolated monastic community.²⁴⁴ Although it remains relatively likely that Santa Maria in Cosmedin continued to observe the Greek rite during the period, and the source indicates that it served a lay population on the Palatine, there is no definitive evidence that this was Greek speaking.

Finally, before turning to the role of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in Rome and how that affected the location of the church, there are two later sources to consider when examining this church. Santa Maria in Cosmedin, apart from its appearance in the *LP*, is mentioned by both John the Deacon (*fl.* 12th century) and Peter Mallius (*fl.* 12th century) in their lists of the churches of Rome.²⁴⁵ In both works Santa Maria in Cosmedin is classified as a *diaconia* and referred to as "S Maria in Schola Graeca palatii."²⁴⁶ This would seem to be a variation on the appellation primarily used by the *LP*, which refers to the church as *Cosmedin*, rather than *Schola Graeca*. This is most likely a stylistic choice with the terms *Schola Graeca* and *cosmedin* being interchangeable, one most likely highlighting the beauty of the church, the other its location in Rome and ties to the

addition the contemporary nature of the *Liber Pontificalis* to the events that were occurring around it in Rome has already been discussed in the introduction of this work.

²⁴⁴ Political statements are aimed at those members of a society who would both understand and would be directly influenced by such a gesture. It is unlikely that monks or the lower classes of Rome were the primary recipients of such a gesture, as they would have held little economic or political power in the city.

²⁴⁵ Printed in Huelsen, *Chiese* 15. Both authors were certainly writing during the pontificate of Alexander III (1159-81).

²⁴⁶ Huelsen, *Chiese* 15.

Greek community of the city. Both names evoke some form of Greek connection, whether through reference to a Greek-dominated location in Rome or the use of Greek terminology is unclear.

Therefore, based upon the arguments outlined above the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin should be placed in the Palatine group of Greek churches as it shares its *diaconia* status with San Teodoro, San Maria Antiqua and San Giorgio, as well as a common estimated foundation date. In addition to its ties to the historic Byzantine presence in Rome, its dedication and title also link it to the Greek churches of the Palatine. Therefore, the elements which tie the Greek churches of the Palatine together are as follows:

- The majority possess the *diaconia* title with the exception of Sant'Anastasia.
- They all possess some link (foundation date) to the Byzantine presence on the Palatine in the sixth century.
- The saints to whom the churches are dedicated either originated in the east, or were more popular in Byzantium than Rome in the sixth century.
- Before the ninth century their early history and circumstances surrounding their foundations are extremely fragmentary, and are for most non-existent.
- They number among the oldest surviving and active churches in Rome by the eleventh century.
- All appear in the 806 list of papal gifts, so were all established functioning churches almost three hundred years after their estimated foundations.

- All of them more than likely were staffed by Greek monastics/clerics, while some such as San Giorgio, Sant'Anastasia and Santa Maria Cosmedin in all probability served a Greek-speaking congregation.

Therefore, the reasons for the location in Rome of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Teodoro and San Giorgio in Velabro are intrinsically tied to the needs and functions of their role as *diaconiae*. Sant'Anastasia, although part of the same ecclesiastical unit, was not a *diaconia*; thus the reasons for its location on the Palatine differed from the others. What elements then influenced the locations of the Greek *diaconiae* in Rome? Firstly, there is impact caused by the presence of the Byzantine military and administration on the Palatine from the middle of the sixth century until at least 644 to consider.²⁴⁷ The settlement on the Palatine of the Byzantine elite and military had a profound effect on the surrounding area and institutions. Rome had suffered greatly as a result of the war between Byzantium and the Goths, so much so that a number of the Roman elite elected to immigrate to Constantinople rather than endure the hardships facing the city during this period. Therefore, charity and a grain distribution system would have been most needed in the wake of the destruction and famine caused by the recent wars; and the money and resources needed for such a venture would have had to have come from Constantinople due to the dire situation faced by Rome. Also Byzantium's wish to maintain morale in the city, as well as improving relations with the native populace through a demonstration of charity cannot be discounted. That the *diaconiae* were

²⁴⁷ In 644 there was a rebellion in Rome led by the head of the Byzantine forces stationed within the city by the name Maurikos, this shows that there was still a significant Byzantine presence in Rome even up until the middle of the seventh century, with imperial troops still garrisoned within the city limits, and most likely on the Palatine, see, Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome* 114, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, LXXV:I-II, 331 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis* 75:1-2, 65.

founded on the Palatine is mostly the result of the desire of the Byzantine administration on the Palatine to keep them in close proximity. By having the *diaconiae* close by, Byzantium could more effectively control and protect these centres of grain distribution from both external and internal threats. The Palatine also offered a number of logistical benefits ranging from its close proximity to the Tiber to its accessibility via the road system of the city. The demographic of the Palatine area also played a key role in the establishment of the highly concentrated number of *diaconiae* in this region, as well as only housing the Greek forms of these institutions. The demographic of the Palatine naturally altered throughout the medieval period, but based on the arguments made in this chapter the region most likely housed a significant Greek population, in addition to a large poor and deprived population. A combination of these two demographics would explain the need for such a high number of Greek *diaconiae* in this one area, and as the demographic of the city changed so did the importance and role of the Palatine Hill and churches on it. Therefore, the conditions that made the Palatine a favourable area in which to found such a large proportion of Rome's *diaconiae* and Greek churches may no longer have been favourable after the seventh century; with demographic, political and logistical factors all playing some part in the slow decline of the Palatine and thus the churches in this area.

The Monastery of San Cesareo in Palatio

The monastery of San Cesareo in Palatino is one of the more puzzling, yet lasting examples of Greek monasticism in medieval Rome.²⁴⁸ Although this thesis has decided to group San Cesareo in the Greek Palatine ecclesiastical unit there are several differences that puts the monastery apart from the other religious institutions. Firstly, unlike the other Greek churches examined in this chapter the monastery of San Cesareo was not founded during the Byzantine occupation of the Palatine in the sixth century. Secondly, San Cesareo was located on the summit of the Palatine Hill, while the other Greek religious establishments were to be found around the base of the hill. Thirdly, San Cesareo is the only example of what can be classified as traditional 'Greek' monasticism i.e. was not charged with charitable duties like the *diaconiae*. San Cesareo in the majority of sources is described as a *monasterium*,²⁴⁹ thus its duties were most likely dominated activities such as the production of manuscripts and prayer. And finally although San Cesareo was founded some time later than the previously examined Greek churches the monastery is no longer extant. In addition to the loss of the physical building of San Cesareo, archaeological and historical investigation has so far been unable to uncover the exact location on the Palatine where the monastery stood.²⁵⁰ However, recent archaeological work conducted on the Palatine, as well as a number of

²⁴⁸ San Cesareo is referred to as *S. Cesarii Graecorum* as late as 1187 in the archives of Santa Maria Nova, Huelsen, *Chiese* 232.

²⁴⁹ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CV:XXXV, 114 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 105:35, 125.

²⁵⁰ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 89 and Augenti. *Il Palatino* 64. Augenti proposes that decorated capitals that he has dated to the Carolingian era and which were found close to the *Villa Mills* on the Palatine may have been belonged to the monastery of San Cesareo, and were typical of medieval cloisters.

references to the monastery in the historical record compensates to some extent for lack of physical remains, giving some indication of its original location.²⁵¹

Therefore to reconstruct the history of the monastery of San Cesareo and its place in the ecclesiastical landscape of Rome there are two strands of investigation available: the archaeological excavations undertaken on the Palatine Hill and the references to San Cesareo in historical documentary sources, both of which combined can shed some light on the development of the monastery and the reasons for its prominent location on the summit of the antique Palatine.

Firstly, the written source material for the history of the monastery of San Cesareo is extremely varied in both chronology and genre. Unlike the majority of the early monasteries of Rome, San Cesareo is rarely referenced in the *LP* and does not appear in the text of the *LP* until the middle of the ninth century in *The Life of Pope Leo IV* (847-855).

It first appears in the historical record not in a Roman source, but rather in the lesser known work of Einhard, *The Translation and the Miracles of the Blessed Martyrs Marcellinus and Peter*.²⁵² The work, owing to internal references to contemporary events, can be dated to c.825.²⁵³ Consequently the events that Einhard records in this work and his visit to Rome must have occurred several years preceding its composition in the 820s, giving us a foundation date of no later than the early ninth century. Unlike some of the other Greek monasteries of Rome such as Santa Prassede and San Silvestro

²⁵¹ Augenti *Il Palatino* 64-65.

²⁵² Einhard, 'The Translation and the Miracles of the Blessed Martyrs Marcellinus and Peter', in *Charlemagne's Courtier: The Complete Einhard*, (ed and trans) P.E. Dutton (Toronto, 1998), xviii-xli.

²⁵³ Einhard, *Translation* xxv- xxvii.

in Capite, there is no surviving evidence which records the foundation date of San Cesareo in Palatio. For that reason, there are two options regarding a foundation date. The first would be to place its foundation sometime in the mid to late sixth century, placing the monastery's construction in a period where Byzantine authority was at its peak in Rome. Therefore, it is possible that the foundation of the monastery of San Cesareo coincided with the Byzantine occupation of the Palatine and the foundation of the other Greek churches around the hill. The problem with proposing this foundation date, which would firmly link San Cesareo with the other earlier 'imperial' Byzantine ecclesiastical foundations, is the lack of evidence which would support this.

Although this is a problem it is not necessarily insurmountable, as both the churches of San Teodoro and Sant'Anastasia very rarely appear in the historical record between the sixth and ninth centuries. Without their early appearance in the *LP* it would be impossible to establish a foundation date for these churches. In the case of San Teodoro the earliest written source that makes a reference to the church does not appear until almost a century after San Teodoro's foundation, which has been determined through archaeological investigation as the sixth or early seventh century. In the case of San Cesareo we have no such archaeological evidence to provide an alternative date to that suggested by the surviving written evidence. Therefore, it is possible that San Cesareo was founded in the sixth century, but did not appear in the historical record until the early ninth century, perhaps because of the loss or destruction of sources. Its location on the summit of the Palatine also put it off a number of the processional routes of Rome, denying the historian this useful source of information. A final option is that San Cesareo did not gain prominence in Rome until the eighth and ninth centuries, and

before this was a relatively unimportant foundation, thus not warranting a mention in contemporary sources. The increase in importance of San Cesareo in the eighth and ninth centuries may have been a result of Greek monastic refugees arriving in Rome as a consequence of the Iconoclasm in Byzantium; however this is purely speculative based on circumstantial, rather than any solid, evidence.

The other option regarding the foundation date of San Cesareo is to place its foundation sometime in the early to mid-eighth century, during the Iconoclast controversy in Byzantium. An eighth-century foundation date would fit in with the monastery's appearance in Einhard's work, with the translation of the saint's relics and their subsequent enshrinement in S. Sebastian in St-Medard of Soisson recorded in the *Royal Frank Annals* as occurring in 826.²⁵⁴ Therefore, Einhard and Ratleig's visit to Rome must have occurred several years before this account was recorded in the annals and their visit to the monastery while in Rome indicates its importance in the city during this period. Therefore, San Cesareo must have been active for a significant period of time before Einhard's arrival in Rome to allow it enough time to rise to such prominence.

A foundation date in the eighth century would neatly coincide with the first wave of Iconoclasm in Byzantium. However, the same principle applies to this as it does to the earlier suggestion of a foundation date in the sixth century coinciding with the Byzantine occupation of the city and the later Persian and Arab invasions in the east. Therefore, without further evidence both suggestions regarding the foundation dates of San

²⁵⁴ *Carolingian Chronicles: The Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (trans), B. Scholz and B. Rogers (Ann Arbor, 1970), Year 826, 77.

Cesareo remain purely speculative; with only a foundation sometime before 826 being confirmed by the surviving source material.

Evidence for the history of this monastery is also problematic, starting as it does in 826, rather than at its beginning. The monastery's history post 826 is far more comprehensive with a wide range of sources making reference to it. Although most of these references are brief and lacking in detail, they nevertheless demonstrate its continued presence on the Palatine from its initial appearance in the *Translation and the Miracles of the Blessed Martyrs Marcellinus and Peter* in 826 to the end of the Middle Ages.

What is known about San Cesareo from the early ninth century until its disappearance from the historical record in the late fourteenth? Why was it located on the Palatine Hill and what function did it serve in Rome? As discussed above, the monastery is first mentioned in Einhard's *Translatio*. This work recounts the Frankish scholar's visit to Rome in the early ninth century with the purpose of procuring saints' relics. It was also during this period that the papacy was attempting to protect the relics of Rome and to bring under control their frequent theft and sale.²⁵⁵ This goal was partly achieved by papally sponsored monastic houses, such as Santa Prassede and San Silvestro in Capite, whose role as stewards for Rome's relics will be discussed in the next chapter.²⁵⁶ According to the *Translatio* it was Einhard's companion Ratleig who encountered a

²⁵⁵ C. Goodson, *The Rome of Paschal I: Papal Power, Urban Renovation, Church Building and Relic Translation 817-24* (Cambridge, 2010), 191.

²⁵⁶ Goodson, *Paschal I* 187-228.

Greek monk while they were staying in Rome.²⁵⁷ Ratleig, whilst scouring the streets of Rome looking for someone to aid him in his search for relics of the blessed martyrs Peter and Marcellinus, encountered a Greek *monachus* by the name of Basil who belonged to a Greek *hospitium* located on the Palatine Hill and was willing to help the Frankish traveller.²⁵⁸ Although Einhard refers to the religious house that Basil resided in as a *hospitium* rather than a *monasterium* this does not preclude the possibility that he is in fact referring to the monastery of San Cesareo for several reasons. Firstly, the monastery of San Cesareo may have contained in its complex a *hospitium*, an institution whose duty it was to care for foreign pilgrims and visitors, as well as perhaps the poor of Rome.²⁵⁹ This would fit well with later developments regarding the monastery of San Cesareo as we know that in c.866 a Greek monk named Blasius stayed in the monastery

²⁵⁷ Einhard, *Translation* Book 1:5, 75. However, Geary in *Furta Sacra: thefts of relics in the central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978) suggests that this story is hardly credible for several reasons. Firstly, it unlikely Einhard's agents would have just happened upon the correct church and chance meeting with a monk who knew the location of the relics they required. Secondly the relic merchant Deusdona that had promised Einhard the relics would not have turned down the opportunity to remove the relic with the assistance of Frankish agents. Thirdly, why would Einhard choose to conduct business with Deusdona after this affair if he was so unreliable? Therefore, Geary suggests that it is a fabrication to play down Deusdona's role in the acquisition of the relics and transformed it into a "story of cooperation between Einhard's high-minded servant and two saints" P. J Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1979) 118-21. However, this does not preclude that there was a Greek *hospitium* or *monasterium* on the Palatine Hill. If Einhard was going to fabricate a tale why would he create a Greek house on the Palatine which people would recognise as false if it didn't exist? It is therefore likely that Einhard knew that there was a Greek monastery on the Palatine Hill and perhaps he or his servants conversed with a monk named Basil as stated in the *Translatio*. If this was the case it might explain Einhard's use of *hospitium* instead of *monasterium* owing to his unfamiliarity with the Greek house in question and thus confusion over the nature of it. This also might explain his omission of the religious house's name, and that he vaguely knew there was a Greek monastic community housed on the Palatine, but was unaware of the details surrounding it. However, these speculations are based on Geary's hypothesis that Einhard created or embellished Ratleig's encounter with Basil, and there is no evidence to indicate that Einhard fabricated this event, and even if he did, why would he create the detail of a Greek-speaking monastic community on the Palatine Hill whose existence must have been common knowledge, or else it would have been easy for someone to spot Einhard's lies.

²⁵⁸ "...he happened to meet a foreign monachus by the name of Basil who two years before had travelled from Constantinople to Rome. He resided in Rome with four of his students on the Palatine hill in a house occupied by other Greek [monks]." [Einhard, *Translation* Book 1:5, p75. *Hospitium*: In hac anxietate constitutes, repperit quondam monachum peregrinum nomine Basilium, qui ante biennium de Constantiopoli Roman venerare atque ibi in monte Palatino apud alios Graecos, qui eiusdem professionis aperuit. G Waitz ed. *MGH Scriptores* 15:1 p 242 lines 3-7.

²⁵⁹ Dey, *Diaconiae, Xenodochia* 407-8.

and a century later sometime before 990 San Saba stayed in the monastery until his death.²⁶⁰ Therefore it is plausible that San Cesareo monastic complex contained a *hospitium* and the above examples demonstrate that perhaps it was a popular destination in Rome for monastics travelling from the east. In addition it is unclear what and how detailed the evidence was that Einhard was working with when describing Ratleig's encounter with Basil. He may not have known the name of the house Basil was residing in and assumed it was a *hospitium* as it housed foreign monks or even that the story was fabricated and it is thus lacking specific details that could uncover its falsehood.²⁶¹

This brief reference in the *Translatio* to San Cesareo is the first appearance of the monastery in the historical record. However, the monastery that the Greek *monachus* whom Ratleig met in Rome and subsequently went to for advice concerning relics, was not explicitly referred to as San Cesareo. Instead it is only referred to as a monastery that was located on the Palatine and that was staffed by Greek monks;²⁶² nowhere in Einhard's work is this monastery referred to as San Cesareo. However, since the monastery described by Einhard's companion Ratleig was located on the Palatine and staffed by Greek monks the general consensus is that Ratleig was describing San Cesareo, as it was the only known Greek monastery located on the Palatine Hill itself.²⁶³ Although there were possibly several *diaconiae* staffed by Greek monks around the Palatine during this period, none of them was located on the summit. In any case, they

²⁶⁰ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 89

²⁶¹ For further discussion on Einhard's account of Ratleig's encounter with Greek monk Basil refer to page 100 note 255 and Geary, *Furta Sacra* 119-21.

²⁶² Einhard, *Translation* Book 1:5, 75.

²⁶³ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 88-94.

would have been referred to most likely by name or as being located in the *Schola Graeca*.

Therefore, it is more than likely that the monastery that the Greek monk Basil and his students belonged to was in fact San Cesareo. If this was the case Einhard's work sheds some light on the early life of the monastery, its location and function. According to the conversation that Ratleig had with the Greek monk, Basil originally come from Constantinople and had only arrived in Rome two years prior to this encounter.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, Basil did not arrive in Rome alone but brought with him four of his students.²⁶⁵ However during his discourse with Ratleig he fails to indicate why he and his students left Constantinople for a monastery in Rome. Since Basil and his students arrived in Rome in the early ninth century, around 820, it is tempting to attribute their movement from Constantinople to the resurgence of Iconoclasm in the imperial capital. This would also fit with the community of Greek monks who took up residence at the monastery and basilica of Santa Prassede only a decade before.²⁶⁶ Yet there is no evidence to indicate that either the group of monks inhabiting Santa Prassede or Basil and his companions were forced to leave Byzantium due to religious or political pressures. It is easy to use the disturbances in Byzantium during this period as the primary reason for foreign clergy travelling to Rome. However, this ignores the fact that Rome was a centre of pilgrimage and an apostolic city, containing not only the relics and sites of martyrdom for the apostles Peter and Paul, but a whole host of relics and shrines dedicated to the early martyrs persecuted under the Roman Empire. For these

²⁶⁴ Einhard, *Translation* Book 1:5, 75.

²⁶⁵ Einhard, *Translation* Book 1:5, 75.

²⁶⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:VIII-XI, 54-55 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:8-11, 9-12.

reasons Rome was a centre of pilgrimage for many Greeks travelling from both Constantinople and other areas of the Byzantine Empire. There are many examples of Greek monks and saints travelling to Rome, not out of necessity, but rather desire, a desire to witness first-hand the relics of Peter and Paul and those who died for their faith, the epitome of sainthood, the early Christian martyrs.²⁶⁷ For example in the late tenth century Leo the Bishop of Synada on his way to meet with Otto III to negotiate a marriage alliance between the Ottonian Court and the Byzantine Empire, stopped in Rome to visit the many sacred sites of the city.²⁶⁸ There were a number of other eastern travellers who visited Rome for a variety of reasons ranging from imperial envoys and pilgrims to merchants and exiles.²⁶⁹ Therefore, it would be inaccurate to cite Iconoclasm in Constantinople as the impetus for Basil and his students' reason for leaving Constantinople and subsequent settling San Cesareo without more evidence.

After Einhard's reference to the monastery in his *Translatio* San Cesareo next appears in the ninth-century *LP*, in *The Life of Pope Leo IV* (847-55). This entry records the gifts given to the monastery by Leo, "Et in monasterio sancti Cesarii in Palatio fecit vestem de fundato I et vela VIII."²⁷⁰ Although it is only a brief entry in the ninth-century *LP*, the monastery's inclusion in the work demonstrates several things. Firstly, the monastery of

²⁶⁷ *The Life of Saint Lazaros of Mt. Galieson* trans. Richard P.H Greenfield in *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* ed. Mary Talbot (Washington, 2006), 104 and 114.

²⁶⁸ Leo of Synada, *The Correspondence of Leo, Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, (trans) M. Pollard Vinson (Washington, 1985), Letters 1-13 pp 2-21.

²⁶⁹ According to the research carried out by McCormick, between the fourth and tenth centuries he has identified 340 different individuals traveling to Rome from Byzantium. It is likely the actual number was much higher than this, and this number only represents individuals whose travels to Rome are supported by surviving evidence, as well as not taking into account entourages and families accompany individuals. Therefore, it is likely that a number of Greek speaking individuals and groups travelled to Medieval Rome from all over the Byzantine Empire for a variety of reasons, however their travels have failed to make it into the historical record: M, McCormick., *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce 300-900AD* (Cambridge, 2001), 218-234.

²⁷⁰ "And in the monastery of Saint Cesareo in Palatio he provided one gold interwoven cloth and eight veils." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CV:XXXV, 114 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 105:35, 125.

San Cesareo was the recipient of papal gifts. This suggests that the monastery was well known in Rome and in addition was of particular importance to warrant several gifts of significant value, whereas fifty years earlier it was a relatively unknown religious house. Secondly, this is the first time in the historical record that the monastery appears by name and is thus the first definitive account of the monastery of San Cesareo. Finally, this brief entry serves to demonstrate that even after the end of second Iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire, the monastery of San Cesareo was still functioning as a monastic house and its existence was not wholly dependent on turmoil in Byzantium.

If it was the case that the monastery of San Cesareo was used only as a temporary refuge for those fleeing Iconoclasm, then one would expect that with the end of the heresy both in 787 and then again in 843 a large exodus of Greek monks returned to Byzantium and abandoned the monasteries and churches that they had staffed. The evidence does not support this idea.²⁷¹

Although the monastery of San Cesareo does not fit with the model this thesis has proposed regarding the Greek churches of the Palatine, it has been included to demonstrate the fluid nature of these models. San Cesareo was a monastery, not a *diaconia*. It was likely founded in the eighth century, not the sixth century. Therefore, while not falling into the Palatine group of churches, it may have more in common with the eighth and ninth-century Greek foundations on the Esquiline Hill. However, San Cesareo's presence on the Palatine reminds us that no model or pattern can completely explain or accurately account for the specific locations of all the churches and

²⁷¹ Indeed it has already been established that the monastery was most likely staffed by Greek monastics until as late as 1187 given the reference to *S. Cesarii Graecorum* contained in the archives of Santa Maria Nova, Huelsen, *Chiese* 232.

monasteries of Rome. San Cesareo demonstrates that there is always an exception to the rule, and unfortunately this applies to a number of aspects when studying the turbulent and often confusing history of medieval Rome.²⁷²

Palatine Conclusions

This chapter has examined the historical debate surrounding the status and function of the *diaconiae* in early medieval Rome. Although previous academic studies have examined the *diaconiae* of Rome in more detail than this work ever could, no modern work has attempted to draw a connection between the function and status of the *diaconiae* on the Palatine and the effect that this would have had upon the Greek community in this area. Moreover, the conclusions that can be drawn from an examination of the Greek churches of the Palatine are affected by what is known about the purpose and formation of the Greek *diaconiae* of Rome. What this thesis has

²⁷² The monastery of San Cesareo remained a Greek religious house well into the eleventh century, in stark contrast to the other Greek foundations of the Palatine that were taken over by Latin clergy and monastics. San Cesareo is recorded in the Life of San Saba the Younger, and was the monastery where the Greek saint stayed shortly before his death in 990 (Orestes, *Historia et Laudes SS. Sabae et Macarii* ch. 49). The fact that San Saba was a respected and revered Italo-Greek saint demonstrates that the monastery, at this time staffed by his Greek speaking countrymen, was also a very prestigious house to warrant such an esteemed visitor, who had close connections with both the Empress Theophano and her son the Emperor Otto III. In addition in the year 1000 the Emperor Otto III granted a number of privileges to "in palatio monasterio," [the diploma has not survived, but is recorded by Nerini in his work, *De Templo et Coenobio SS. Bonifacii et Alexii* (1752) 371], since there were no other monasteries known to have been located on the summit of the Palatine Hill during this period; the general consensus amongst historians is that this monastery was San Cesareo. Once again this shows the importance of this particular monastery and sets it apart from the other Greek foundations of the Palatine. Thus, although San Cesareo was geographically located on the Palatine, it was not a sixth-century foundation, nor did it have ties to the old Byzantine administration of the city, but rather had close ties with the Ottonian royal family, as well as the Italo-Greek saints and this may be the reason for its continued prosperity. Additionally San Cesareo was not a *diaconia*, but rather was a monastery and this may indicate it was the decline of the role of the *diaconiae* in Rome which was the cause of the decline of the Greek religious foundations of the Palatine, rather than their observance of the Greek rite. However, it has been beyond the scope of this thesis to cover this monastery beyond the late tenth century and further exploration of a comparison between San Cesareo and the other Greek foundations of the area has still to be undertaken.

established is a workable and probable set of hypotheses regarding the *diaconiae*, the Palatine Hill, the Greek community and the connections between them:

1. The Greek *diaconiae* located on the Palatine functioned as charitable institutions, in a similar fashion to those found in Constantinople, staffed by monastics, but offered only negligible services to the local congregation who would have been reliant on more traditional churches such as Sant'Anastasia for those needs. The extent to which a monastic community could have partaken in other activities while running the *diaconiae*, i.e. the production of written works or care of relics, remains subject to debate.
2. Another option is that the term *diaconia* was nothing more than a title and did not reflect the function of these religious houses, with their role in Rome being more typical of other churches in the city.
3. Finally, the last suggestion and what has been already stated in this thesis as the most probable, working within the parameters of the source material available for the Greek *diaconiae* on the Palatine Hill, is that they were a hybrid model. This model incorporated monastic, charitable and more traditional ecclesiastical elements and services, which were subject to change and evolution throughout the individual histories of the Greek churches of the Palatine.

Consequently, the source material, as well as archaeological evidence indicates that the *diaconiae* of San Giorgio in Velabro, San Teodoro and Santa Maria in Cosmedin from their early beginnings were mandated with providing grain and foodstuffs to the poor of the city. This is strongly indicated by several factors such as the conversion of antique

granaries into *diaconiae*, their position on the Tiber for ease of transportation and their date of foundation during the period in which the city was suffering widespread famine and starvation as a direct result of the Gothic Wars. However, there is no reason to suggest that these religious houses did not function as traditional basilicas for the community around them, and as reviewed earlier in this thesis, the case of San Giorgio and the presence of archpriest John demonstrates that secular clergy were present in these institutions and were there to serve the needs of the Greek community in that area. Therefore, as discussed in chapter one the location of the *diaconiae* and other Greek churches on the Palatine was a conscious decision with the reasons behind their situation in this area of Rome intrinsically being tied to their function and mandate.

Chapter Two: The Esquiline and Campo Marzio Group

This chapter will examine the Greek religious foundations located on the Esquiline Hill and further west towards the Campo Marzio, which was a considerable distance from the Palatine Hill. The basilicas and their attached monasteries, which will be examined in this chapter are Santa Prassede, San Silvestro in Capite and finally Santa Maria in Campo Marzio.²⁷³ All three religious foundations housed Greek-speaking monastic communities: San Silvestro in Capite and Santa Prassede housed communities of Greek monks, while Santa Maria in Campo Marzio most likely housed the only female Greek monastic community in medieval Rome. All of these religious houses were founded in the late eighth and early ninth century, which coincided with the dispute between Byzantium and Rome over Iconoclasm. Thus, the origins and development of these foundations must be viewed in the wider historical context of the period. Although Iconoclasm undoubtedly had some effect on a number of features of these foundations, the magnitude of Iconoclasm's influence on these religious houses remains open to question. Furthermore, all three of these Greek religious foundations housed and cared for a number of important relics which was unusual in Rome during this period, as relics were rarely stored in urban monasteries, but rather in shrines and cemeteries outside the city walls.²⁷⁴ Finally all three religious houses differ greatly from the Greek churches of the Palatine; these Greek foundations on the Esquiline did not possess any specific charitable duties, nor were they built during a time when Byzantium had a strong

²⁷³ Also referred to as San Gregorio Nazianzeno the basilica's history, yet from the late nineteenth century onwards it has been known as Santa Maria della Concezione in Campo Marzio. See M. Armellini, *Le chiese di Roma dal secolo IV al XIX* (1891), 335.

²⁷⁴ The relationship of the Greek churches of Rome and the relics located both outside and inside the city walls will be discussed later in this chapter regarding Santa Prassede and San Silvestro in Capite.

physical presence in the city. In fact none of these foundations had any links with Byzantium, but rather were founded and financed by the papacy, further setting them apart from the Palatine group.

Santa Prassede

The basilica of Santa Prassede is one of only a few Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome which is still extant. In the present day, however, the Greek rite is no longer observed, and the basilica is home to a Catholic congregation.²⁷⁵ The Latin rite has been exclusively observed in Santa Prassede from an indeterminable date in the eleventh century, when the church and adjoining monastery were handed over to the regular canons of the nearby basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.²⁷⁶ Although no longer what can be termed a Greek church, Santa Prassede remains one of the most interesting churches in Rome today, containing some of the best preserved early ninth-century mosaics in the city.²⁷⁷

In studying Santa Prassede there are five key areas that should be considered: its history and development; its physical proximity to papal power in the Lateran; the artistic influences and implications of decoration; the role and function of the Greek monastic

²⁷⁵ P. Gallio, *The Basilica of Saint Praxedes* (Genoa, 2009), 65.

²⁷⁶ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 54.

²⁷⁷ Its popularity and importance is reflected in the number of publications and examinations regarding the mosaics decorating the basilica: G. Mackie, 'The Zeno Chapel – a prayer for salvation,' *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 57 (1989), 172-199, G. Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the west: decoration, function and patronage* (Toronto, 2003), and C.J. Goodson, *The Rome of Paschal I. Papal power, urban renovation, church rebuilding and relic translation, 817-824* (Cambridge, 2010).

community in the basilica in relation to the care of relics; and finally how the function and development of Santa Prassede were affected by its location on the Esquiline Hill.

The basilica of Santa Prassede was founded on the Esquiline Hill which is one of the Seven Hills of ancient Rome located in the north-eastern region of the medieval city.²⁷⁸

The church of Santa Prassede is close to the much larger and more prominent basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in the area referred to as *Clivus Surbonus*.²⁷⁹ Surrounding Santa Maria Maggiore were a number of minor basilicas including the sister churches of Santa Prassede and Santa Prudenziana.²⁸⁰ The location of Santa Prassede on the Esquiline Hill is significant, not least for its distance from the Palatine, the traditional area of Greek ecclesiastical settlement in Rome. This chapter will attempt to provide answers for the change in location of Greek monastic communities from the eighth century onwards from the traditional area of the Palatine to other areas of Rome, for example the Esquiline and the Campo Marzio.

Although some distance to the northeast of the centre of Rome the Esquiline still benefited from the protection of the Aurelian Walls, as well as offering an abundance of space and materials from the ancient villas of the area with which to build new basilicas.²⁸¹ However, more important was Santa Prassede's proximity and accessibility

²⁷⁸ These were the Aventine, Palatine, Capitoline, Esquiline, Caelian, Viminal and Quirinal. See works such as Coulston, *Ancient Rome*, also refer to appendix 2, Maps A and B.

²⁷⁹ A possible translation of the phrase would be the slope of the city.

²⁸⁰ Goodson, *Paschal I*, 101, Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 54-6, Gallio, *Praxedes* 1-3 and Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 65-68 and 68-72.

²⁸¹ R. Coates-Stephens, *Porta Maggiore: Monument and Landscape* (Rome, 2004), 111-5, 115-25 and Dey, *Aurelian* 171.

by the Lateran Palace and San Giovanni in Laterano, which during the period under question was the seat of the papal court and thus papal authority in the city.²⁸²

Therefore, several questions suggest themselves in connection with Santa Prassede. Why was this specific site chosen to house a Greek religious community and how did the church's location in Rome affect its status and later development? What were the causes and consequences of Santa Prassede's distance and physical separation from the *Schola Graeca* based around the Palatine Hill? Moreover, Santa Prassede's location on the Esquiline offered it unparalleled access to both the Lateran Palace and San Giovanni in Laterano. How were these Greek monastic communities utilised by the papacy for their skills and knowledge, such as their skill in the care and preservation of relics or knowledge of the Greek language and understanding of Byzantine ecclesiastical matters and customs?²⁸³ These would have been of great use to the papacy in the years following the foundation of Santa Prassede, with the recurrence of Iconoclasm in Byzantium in the early eighth century and the need for a refined theological dialogue between Rome and Constantinople. Finally, what role did the location of Santa Prassede have upon the church's duty to care for a great number of Rome's relics? Was it Santa Prassede's proximity to a number of Roman cemeteries²⁸⁴ outside the Aurelian Walls that resulted in the church being charged with the care of the relics that were once contained in these cemeteries? Or was the stewardship of these relics by the monks of

²⁸² It is only 1.8km from Santa Prassede to San Giovanni in Laterano via the Via in Merulana, offering a direct and expedient route between the two basilicas. Also the Lateran was an important ceremonial space making proximity to it extremely advantageous to the status of a church, Noble, *Celebration and Power* 89.

²⁸³ On the benefits that may have been afforded to the papal court please see the discussion by Hamilton, *Oriental Lumen* 182-215 and Hamilton, *City of Rome* 19-22 and J. Osborne, 'Papal Court Culture during the Pontificate of Zacharias,' in C. Cubitt (ed), *Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages: The Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference* (2003), 223-234.

²⁸⁴ Webb, *Churches and Monasteries* 68-72, and Goodson, *Paschal I* 79 and 102.

Santa Prassede its primary function and the chief reason behind its foundation, which in turn dictated its location in Rome?

The early history of the church of Santa Prassede, much like its Palatine counterparts, is poorly documented and as a result very little is known about the church before the ninth century. However, what is known is that there was a smaller basilica dedicated to Santa Prassede constructed sometime in late antique Rome.²⁸⁵ The antique Santa Prassede first appears in the historical records in the fifth century shortly after the construction of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore by Pope Sixtus III (432-440), replacing a smaller church of the same name.²⁸⁶ This foundation to Santa Maria Maggiore was on a far grander scale which secured the basilica's position as one of the most prominent churches in Rome throughout the medieval period. Due to the newfound status of Santa Maria Maggiore a number of smaller basilicas were founded in the area around it, one of which was the first basilica of Santa Prassede. An epitaph that is no longer extant was found on the Esquiline referring to a church named the "*titulus Prassede*", dated to 491.²⁸⁷ Apart from this nothing more is known beyond the fact that there was a basilica in the fifth century dedicated to Santa Prassede, which was located somewhere on the Esquiline Hill. The site of the fifth-century basilica has yet to be located.

The basilica of Santa Prassede is not referred to again until the end of the eighth century when it is mentioned several times in the *LP*. In 783/4 the *LP* records that Pope Hadrian I (772-795) totally renewed the *titulus Prassede*, "*Titulum vero sancta Praxedis ex parte*

²⁸⁵ Goodson, *Paschal I*, 93.

²⁸⁶ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 9.

²⁸⁷ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 3.

ruens in integro renovavit.”²⁸⁸ Then in the year 800, during the pontificate of Pope Leo III (802-806), “Fecit et in titulo sanctae Praxedis vestem de stauraci cum periclisin de lathin.”²⁸⁹ Santa Prassede is recorded in the *LP* seven years later in Pope Leo III’s donation list of 806; the church was given a silver crown weighing five pounds.²⁹⁰ Yet, by the time of the pontificate of Paschal I (817-824) the church of Santa Prassede was in danger of imminent collapse.²⁹¹ That Paschal had to rebuild Santa Prassede only thirty years after Hadrian I had completely *renewed* it would indicate that either something had happened to the church shortly before Paschal I’s pontificate, such as a fire or flood, neither of which are recorded in any contemporary source material, or another possibility is that the fifth-century basilica of Santa Prassede was not fit for the purpose Paschal had in mind for the church. However, all that is mentioned concerning the fifth-century incarnation of Santa Prassede is that it was in a state of disrepair and was in danger of imminent collapse.²⁹² In response to its poor condition Pope Paschal had the fifth-century church completely demolished and built a new basilica in 817 dedicated to Santa Prassede on a site nearby.²⁹³ Pope Paschal also commissioned the construction of a monastery attached to the newly built basilica of Santa Prassede, which was to be staffed by Greek monks to administer the needs of the church.²⁹⁴ It is interesting to note that although demolishing the fifth-century basilica he elected to found the replacement in approximately the same area, on the Esquiline Hill. Paschal invested vast amounts in

²⁸⁸ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVII:LXXVIII, 23-4 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 97:78, 163.

²⁸⁹ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVIII:XXXVII, 11 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:37, 197.

²⁹⁰ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CVIII:LXXIV, 21 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:74, 211.

²⁹¹ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:VIII, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 100:8, 9.

²⁹² “The church of Christ’s martyr St Praxedes, built a long time ago, was now suffering such fatigue, from its great age that collapse to its foundations was threatening its ruin.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:VIII, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:8, 9.

²⁹³ Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 5, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:VIII, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:8, 9.

²⁹⁴ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:IX, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

building and decorating the basilica which arguably is his greatest legacy in Rome.

Therefore, choosing to found Santa Prassede as well as its sister church Santa Prudeniana on the Esquiline indicated the importance of this area. That a series of popes renewed and rebuilt churches in this area from the late seventh century onwards demonstrates either the growing importance of the Esquiline Hill, or a desire by the papacy to make this a prominent location area through ecclesiastical investment and church building programmes. In order to ascertain the reasons behind Paschal's founding of Santa Prassede on the Esquiline Hill, as well as the church's function in Rome, it is imperative to examine the main surviving source, the mosaics that decorate the interior of the basilica.

Santa Prassede and its oratories were decorated at great cost, the result being that the mosaics that adorned the walls of the basilica are among the finest ever produced in the medieval west.²⁹⁵ The style and iconography of the mosaics have frequently been described as 'Byzantine' influenced by historians and art historians alike.²⁹⁶ However, many elements found in Santa Prassede's mosaics could also be found in other churches of early medieval Rome such as Santi Cosmas e Damiano, which, could have easily acted as a template for Santa Prassede's decorative programme rather than a Byzantine influence.²⁹⁷

There have been several suggestions put forward regarding the artistry of the mosaics of Santa Prassede. Firstly, it has been proposed that the Greek monks who arrived in Rome

²⁹⁵ Goodson, *Paschal I* 154-9, Mackie *Zeno chapel* 172-99 and G. Mackie, 'Abstract and vegetal design in the San Zeno chapel, Rome: the ornamental setting of an early medieval funerary programme,' *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 63 (1995), 159-182.

²⁹⁶ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 195-6 and Gallio, *Praxedes* 34.

²⁹⁷ Goodson, *Paschal I* 154 and Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 192.

and subsequently staffed Santa Prassede from 817 onwards were responsible for its decoration and eastern style.²⁹⁸ Secondly it has been suggested that the artists who undertook the mosaic programme of Santa Prassede were drawn from the pool of artisans present in Rome's native Greek community.²⁹⁹ For example Nordhagen suggests that Pope John VII employed Greeks living in Rome to produce the mosaics for Santa Maria in Antiqua.³⁰⁰ Thirdly Mackie suggests that it is highly likely that the decorative programme of Santa Prassede was influenced by these immigrant monks who influenced the iconography based on eastern practices and theological precept, this will be discussed later in reference to the chapel of San Zeno.³⁰¹ A final theory regarding the mosaics' origin disregards a contemporary Greek involvement in their production and instead favours Roman artisans who drew on imperial and Byzantine influences found in Rome.³⁰² However, there is no clear evidence to identify the origins of the craftsmen who produced these mosaics leaving these questions unanswered.

While little can be gleaned concerning the artisans responsible for the production of the mosaics, their style, iconography and subject matter reveals certain aspects of the origins, development and purpose of the basilica. The two mosaics that are of primary importance when examining Santa Prassede in the ninth century, and Pope Paschal's

²⁹⁸ This unlikely hypothesis is usually confined to older more general works such as, J.H. Parker, *Medieval Church and Altar Decorations in Rome* (Oxford, 1876), 36-7.

²⁹⁹ Goodson, *Paschal I* 188.

³⁰⁰ P.J. Nordhagen, *The frescoes of John VII 705-707 in Santa Maria Antiqua* (Rome, 1968), 151-6.

³⁰¹ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 195.

³⁰² Nordhagen, *Frescoes* 156.

design for the basilica, are the apse mosaic and the mosaics that adorn the chapel dedicated to San Zeno.³⁰³

The main apse of Santa Prassede depicts the scene of the apocalypse as described in the *Book of Revelations* and is dated to the foundation of Paschal's church in 817.³⁰⁴ The decoration of the apse is divided into two parts; in the upper part, standing amongst red and green clouds is the figure of Christ dressed in a brown senatorial toga. His right hand held up to heaven bears the marks of the crucifixion, whilst in his left he holds a scroll with A and Ω; he stands in the river Jordan (*IORDANES*).³⁰⁵ The head of Christ is crowned by a golden halo with a blue cross; the use of a golden halo is significant as early Byzantine and Italian mosaics generally depicted Christ with a silver halo. The use of a golden halo in this case seems to have been a primarily Roman practice.³⁰⁶ Above Christ is the descending hand of God (*manus dei*), emerging from wispy blue clouds to crown Christ upon his Second Coming.

On the left of Christ are three figures, the first and closest to Christ is San Pietro, garbed in a long white toga decorated with red stripes. Pietro has his hand around the shoulder of a woman who has been identified as Santa Prudeniziana whom he is presenting to Christ.³⁰⁷ Prudeniziana is richly dressed in a gold costume adorned with numerous coloured jewels and white pearls. On her head she wears a thin golden diadem, reminiscent of female Byzantine imperial garb. The last figure standing on the left of Christ in the apse mosaic is an unidentified male figure, who can be recognised as a

³⁰³ See appendix 3 fig. 1 and 2 for the apse mosaic of Santa Prassede and fig. 3, 4 and 5 for San Zeno.

³⁰⁴ Goodson, *Paschal I* 149-51 and Gallio, *Praxedes* 10-11.

³⁰⁵ Goodson, *Paschal I* 150 and Gallio, *Praxedes* 12.

³⁰⁶ Nordhagen, *Frescoes* 151.

³⁰⁷ Goodson, *Paschal I* 149-50 and Gallio, *Praxedes* 10-13.

deacon, owing to the dalmatic white robe which he wears over a white tunic and a deacon's mantle.³⁰⁸ The identity of this individual remains subject to conjecture, it has been suggested that he may be San Zeno, whose relics are housed in the chapel that bears his name.³⁰⁹

Standing on the right of the figure of Christ are three more figures in a symmetrical stance to those on the left. The first figure has been identified as Saint Paolo, who is garbed in a similar fashion to San Pietro, with the additional detail of a red letter *rho* on the sleeve of his tunic.³¹⁰ In an identical stance to San Pietro, Paolo also has his arm around the shoulder of a female saint who has been identified as the patron of the church, Santa Prassede, who was Santa Prudenziانا's sister. Paolo, like Pietro, appears to be presenting Santa Prassede to Christ in this mosaic. Santa Prassede is garbed similarly to her sister, in a rich and highly adorned gold garment, and is also offering up her crown of martyrdom to Christ. Standing next to Santa Prassede in the same position as the anonymous deacon on the left of Christ is another figure who been identified as Pope Paschal I.³¹¹ Paschal wears a gold chasuble and white pallium, and offers up a model of the basilica to Christ. A detail which sets Paschal apart from the other individuals depicted in the apse mosaic is the use of a square halo, in place of the more common circular nimbuses that crown the heads of the other figures. The significance and purpose of the square halo has been the subject of a prolonged historical debate which still has not reached a consensus. One suggestion is that the square halo was used to signify that the individual was alive at the time that the mosaic was produced, instead

³⁰⁸ Goodson, *Paschal I* 149-50 and Gallio, *Praxedes* 10-13.

³⁰⁹ Goodson, *Paschal I* 150.

³¹⁰ Goodson, *Paschal I* 150 and Gallio, *Praxedes* 11.

³¹¹ Goodson, *Paschal I* 159 and Parker *Decorations* 33.

of a round halo which indicated the individual was dead.³¹² John Osborne suggests that the square halo was employed by artisans to indicate that the depiction of an individual was an accurate likeness, and not merely the product of an artist's imagination or a portrayal dictated by tradition.³¹³ In the case of the apse mosaic of Santa Prassede it is likely, owing to Paschal's founding of the church early in his pontificate, that the Pope was alive at the completion of this mosaic.

Christ and the other six figures are enclosed within the central space of the apse mosaic by two palm trees, one on each side, representing their presence in paradise.³¹⁴ On a branch of the palm tree that stands on the right of the mosaic is a depiction of a bird, identified as a phoenix, crowned with a blue nimbus, the phoenix being the symbol of the rising and setting sun, as well rebirth and thus Christ like connotations.³¹⁵ In the middle of the apse mosaic is the figure of a lamb, the *agnus dei*, the representation of Christ as the sacrificial lamb. The depiction of Christ as a lamb was condemned at the Quinisext Council in 692, and this condemnation was confirmed by the later iconoclastic councils.³¹⁶ It can be argued that the deliberate inclusion of the figure of the *agnus dei* in the apse mosaic in Santa Prassede, a highly visible location, was a symbol of Pope Paschal's defiant stance against the Byzantine policy of Iconoclasm and of attempted Byzantine imperial interference in ecclesiastical matters.³¹⁷ However, in the mosaics in the chapel of San Zeno in the basilica Christ is depicted as man, as well as the *agnus dei*,

³¹² Goodson, *Paschal I* 166.

³¹³ J. Osborne, 'The Portrait of Pope Leo IV in San Clemente, Rome: A re-examination of the so-called square nimbus in medieval art,' in *Papers of the British School of Rome* vol. 47 (1979), 58-65.

³¹⁴ Goodson, *Paschal I* 150 and Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 178-80.

³¹⁵ Goodson, *Paschal I* 150-1.

³¹⁶ *Translated Canons of the Quinisext Council* from the Fordham resources website: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/trullo.asp>, Canon 82. Accessed 13/08/2012 and Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 173.

³¹⁷ Goodson, *Paschal I* 189-91.

thus Mackie suggests that these depictions of Christ were used interchangeably during this period in Rome, thus casting doubt on the political dimension of the choice of this iconography³¹⁸.

The chapel of San Zeno in Santa Prassede reveals some of the influences and purpose behind Paschal's choice of iconography. The chapel of San Zeno is one of the few surviving medieval chapels in Rome and no other example contains as well preserved interior decoration. The chapel's structure follows a square plan with rectangular niches on each side and a groin vault over the top.³¹⁹ The architecture and decoration of the chapel combine to create a three dimensional image glorifying the redemption of man through the intercession of Christ, the Virgin and the saints.³²⁰ There are a number of iconographical elements which Mackie has identified as having contemporary Byzantine influences. The first of these appears in the vault mosaics of the chapel which depict Christ in human form within the central medallion borne by four angels. The lateral wall mosaics contain images of the Virgin, John the Evangelist, Andrew, James, Praxedis, Prudentia and Agnes.³²¹ Mackie identifies the assembly of these images as the first example of Byzantine influence in the conception of this decorative programme. She suggests that with Christ being represented as the largest figure and placed in the dome, the highest point in the chapel followed by the angels below him, and below them around the bowl of the apse are the saints. This likely reflects the hierarchy of images

³¹⁸ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 173.

³¹⁹ Goodson, *Paschal I*. Goodson draws parallels with the no longer extant fifth-century chapel of S. Croce at the Lateran baptistery and the mid-ninth-century chapel of S.Barbara in SS. Quattro Coronati.

³²⁰ Goodson, *Paschal I* 166 and 171. The chapel of San Zeno was designed as a funerary chapel for the mother of Pope Paschal I and the mosaics stress the redemption of her soul through Christ and the saints.

³²¹ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 174-77.

was set out in the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787.³²² The second element that Mackie identifies as distinctly Byzantine is the depiction of the *deesis* with Christ placed above and between the Virgin and John the Baptist who are interceding on behalf of humanity. This depiction of the *deesis* is primarily found in the post-iconoclasm (post-787) Byzantine funerary chapel apse mosaics.³²³ Additionally in the lateral wall mosaics, on the inner entrance of the chapel, is an image of an empty throne. This image was associated with the Second Coming of Christ which was also a popular depiction in post-iconoclastic Byzantium.³²⁴ Finally Mackie identifies the mosaic in the altar niche of the chapel as one of the most telling signs of a contemporary Greek influence on the decorative programme of San Zeno. The mosaic depicts the transfiguration scene in the synoptic gospels which describes Christ's transformation in front of his followers from man to God to man again.³²⁵ The transfiguration and its relationship with the judgement of man appear in John Chrysostom's homily on the Metamorphosis. In this homily, after describing the Metamorphosis, he goes on to describe in some detail those who merit heaven and those who will be consigned to the punishments of Hell.³²⁶ Mackie suggests that the depiction of the transfiguration, which Chrysostom believes heralds the Second Coming, fits with overall eschatological theme of the chapel and therefore can be said to be a visual reference to Chrysostom's homily.³²⁷ Therefore, it is possible this reference to Chrysostom suggests a Greek influence in the decorative programme of the chapel owing to his popularity in the east, as well the eastern theological knowledge needed to

³²² Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 192.

³²³ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 175.

³²⁴ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 178 and Mackie, *Chapels* 239.

³²⁵ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 179.

³²⁶ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 179.

³²⁷ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 179.

understand and realise this homily in a mosaic.³²⁸ Therefore, visual representations of the hierarchy of images set out in the Seventh Ecumenical Council, John Chrysostom's homily on the Metamorphosis and the empty throne heralding the Second Coming indicate that Paschal likely had up to date advice regarding the Seventh Ecumenical Council and eastern theology. Mackie suggests this advice and expertise could have come from the newly arrived immigrant monks who took up residence in San Prassede after fleeing Byzantium as a result of Second Iconoclasm.³²⁹ Although I agree with Mackie that there are Greek influences at work in the decoration of Santa Prassede, there were other Greek monastics and clerics in Rome during this period who may have had the knowledge to have advised Paschal on these theological matters. However, it is impossible to determine what links the Greek religious communities of Rome had with Constantinople and their knowledge of contemporary theological issues, because of this it seems most likely that the monks who took up residence in Santa Prassede were those that influenced its decorative programme.

San Zeno was a largely unknown fourth-century bishop of Verona and Paschal's choice in dedicating this chapel to him does not seem to have been influenced by his somewhat contentious relationship with Constantinople over Iconoclasm.³³⁰ In addition, this dedication to San Zeno, who most likely originated in North Africa before travelling to Italy,³³¹ does not appear to have had any special connection or relevance to the Greek monastic community that was eventually housed in the basilica. This is a similar story for Santa Prassede and her sister Prudenziانا, who were maidens living in Rome during the

³²⁸ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 181.

³²⁹ Mackie, *Zeno Chapel* 195.

³³⁰ Gallio, *Praxedes* 25 and Goodson, *Paschal I* 170.

³³¹ *Acta Sanctorum Scriptores*, II April, 68.

third century, and were sisters of the saints Donato and Timoteo.³³² During one of the periods of persecution that occurred in ancient Rome the sisters gathered the bodies of the early Christian martyrs, rescuing them from destruction and concealing them for their protection.³³³ Therefore, even the choice of the maiden Santa Prassede had no connection with the Greek monastic community that was housed in the church; in fact it is unlikely that the veneration of Santa Prassede and her sister Prudenziana was practised outside of Rome. The fact that neither Santa Prassede, nor San Zeno had any special link to the Greek community of Rome would seem to indicate that the decision to place a Greek monastic community in this house was more ad hoc than previously believed. This idea is further supported by the fact that a number of other Greek basilicas and monasteries in Rome were dedicated to saints who were either revered in the east, or at the very least enjoyed universal recognition and popularity, for example San Giorgio, San Teodoro or Sant'Alessio.³³⁴

Thus, if the choice of Santa Prassede had no relevance to the monastic community housed there, then it can be argued that the choice of Santa Prassede to be the recipient of Paschal's patronage was linked to the function of the church rather than the ethnicity of the monks who staffed it. The principal purpose of Santa Prassede was to act as a large reliquary used to house the great number of Roman martyrs' relics, which had been in the numerous cemeteries scattered outside the walls of Rome.³³⁵ Thus, the choice of Santa Prassede and Santa Prudenziana was significant for the role Paschal

³³² Gallio *Praxedes* 1-2.

³³³ Little is known about the life of the sisters, and it remains unknown exactly when they lived and under what emperor this supposed persecution that they rescued the bodies of the martyrs from occurred. What is known is based upon much later unsubstantiated traditions.

³³⁴ They were all saints of eastern origins, who enjoyed widespread popularity in Byzantium before their later arrival in the West.

³³⁵ Goodson, *Paschal I* 167 and 228-9.

chose for the foundation. It was Santa Prassede's collection and care of relics before her own martyrdom that was likely responsible for Paschal's decision to choose her as the patron of his new basilica, which was subsequently charged with the care and protection of holy relics.

Therefore, when examining the choice of iconography and dedications chosen by Paschal I when founding Santa Prassede, it is essential to place these choices in the historical and diplomatic context of the period.³³⁶ His decision to place a Greek monastic community in Santa Prassede in the early ninth century could be interpreted as a bold move on the part of the Pope, especially if this monastic community had recently fled Constantinople due to Iconoclasm; which a later tradition claims. However, while tempting to view Paschal's decision in this light no contemporary evidence indicates that the monks housed in Santa Prassede were refugees from Constantinople. Furthermore there is no evidence that Paschal wished to antagonise Byzantium, or even if the placement of a refugee monastic community in one of Paschal's prize basilicas would have been noticed in Constantinople by the Imperial Court.

Consequently, there must have been specific reasons, if not advantages to housing a community of Greek monks in Santa Prassede. The duties of Santa Prassede as outlined by Paschal were to be twofold.³³⁷ Firstly, they would need to serve the general needs and maintenance of the basilica, as well as the church's congregation. Secondly Santa Prassede housed a great number of relics whose care and veneration would have been the responsibility of, "In quo et sanctam Grecorum congregation adgregans, quae die

³³⁶ This being the strained relations with Constantinople over the resurgence of Iconoclasm in the east from 814 until the restoration of Orthodoxy in 842.

³³⁷ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

nocturne grece modulationis psalmodie laudes omnipotenti Deo sanctisque illius ibidem quiescentibus sedule persolverent introduxit.”³³⁸

Santa Prassede, unlike the majority of Greek houses on the Palatine, was not a *diaconia*, and thus was not charged with any of the charitable responsibilities of said institutions, namely the distribution of grain.³³⁹ Additionally, the area around the Esquiline Hill had been largely abandoned from the fifth century onwards, and even by the advent of the ninth century the region still did not boast a large number of residential areas.³⁴⁰ In fact the area around Santa Prassede and the larger Santa Maria Maggiore remained without a large residential population for most of the medieval era.³⁴¹ Furthermore, there is no evidence to indicate that a lay Greek community was ever present on the Esquiline. Thus, if there was a small lay congregation it is more likely that they would have been Latin. Therefore, if the monks of Santa Prassede were not charged with tending a lay population the principal duty bestowed on them by Pope Paschal in 826 was to venerate and care for the relics interred within the basilica, as well as the duty of prayer and song. Paschal’s devotion and desire to provide the necessary care and protection for this vast number of saints’ relics is emphasised in the *LP*. The source records that Paschal had collected the relics of the early Roman martyrs from the cemeteries and shrines that lay outside the protection of the city walls and interred them in Santa Prassede, “[Paschal]

³³⁸ “...a holy community of Greeks, which he placed therein to carry out carefully by day and night praises to almighty God and his saints resting therein, chanting the Psalms in the Greek manner.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

³³⁹ Refer to Chapter 1 for a discussion on the charitable function of *diaconiae* in Rome.

³⁴⁰ Hostetter and Brandt, *Palatine East* 192.

³⁴¹ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 57 and Coates-Stephens, *Porta Maggiore* 111.

multa corpora sanctorum dirutis in cimiteriis iacentia, pia sollicitudine, ne remanerent neglecte, querece atque inventa colligens...³⁴²

The *LP* is not the only source that describes the relics interred in Santa Prassede in the ninth century. On a marble tablet located within the present day basilica is a list of relics that were translated to the church by Paschal and placed in the oratory of Sant'Agnese, which he commissioned.³⁴³ Paschal's vision for Santa Prassede was not only to glorify the basilica itself through the beauty of its mosaics and the grandeur of its architecture, but also the glorification of the relics interred within. The housing of saints' relics within an urban environment was unusual in the medieval west in this period, but not an uncommon practice in Byzantium.³⁴⁴

The historic practice of leaving relics scattered in small shrines and cemeteries far from the centre of Rome made them difficult to access for the purpose of veneration and also for their use in liturgical processions.³⁴⁵ By moving the relics of the Roman saints and martyrs to several key areas in the city the papacy gained greater control over both the veneration and movements of them. The installation of a large number of relics in the basilica also increased the prestige and status of the church; in essence it was an expedient way to raise a newly built basilica's status within the city which would have reflected well on the pope who patronised them. Finally, there may have been more pragmatic motives behind the transference of relics from the cemeteries around Rome

³⁴² "[Paschal I] sought out, found and collected many bodies of saints lying in destroyed cemeteries, with dutiful concern they should not remain neglected." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 10-11.

³⁴³ Goodson *Paschal I* 167 note 34 and 228-9.

³⁴⁴ Goodson, *Paschal I* 191.

³⁴⁵ There are some exceptions, most notably San Silvestro in Capite which Pope Paul entrusted with the care of a number of Roman martyrs relics in the middle of the eighth century which will be covered later in this chapter.

which was to protect them from theft and raiding, as the majority of these sites that lay outside the protection of the city walls.³⁴⁶ By the early ninth century it appears that relic theft in Rome was becoming increasingly common, for example in Einhard's *Translation and the Miracles of the Blessed Martyrs Marcellinus and Peter*, he travels to Rome for the sole purpose of acquiring certain relics which he achieved through nefarious means.³⁴⁷ A similar process was occurring in Naples in the eighth and ninth centuries where a number of saints' relics were translated from their vulnerable sites outside the city to urban churches and monasteries such as San Restituto.³⁴⁸

The community housed in Santa Prassede was entrusted with the duty to, "In quo et sanctam Grecorum congregation adgregans, quae die noctuque grece modulations psalmodie laudes omnipotenti Deo sanctisque illius ibidem quiescentibus sedule persolverent introduxit."³⁴⁹ Although only a short entry in an otherwise lengthy and detailed work, it provides a remarkable insight into the Greek community of Santa Prassede. If taken literally, "... die noctuque,"³⁵⁰ would imply that the monks were entrusted with offering prayers for these relics and carried out this duty twenty four hours a day, with the continuous recitation of the Psalms. Goodson suggests that the practice of uninterrupted prayer was an uncommon, if not unheard of practice in the mediaeval west during this period. Yet vigils and recitations of the psalms which lasted

³⁴⁶ "[Paschal] sought out, found and collected many bodies of saints lying in destroyed cemeteries," Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11. "[Pope Paul] deposited [in San Silvestro] the bodies of the uncounted saints he removed from the demolished cemeteries," Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁴⁷ Einhard, *Translation* Book 1:5, 75-6 and Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 45-9.

³⁴⁸ Arthur, *Naples* 72.

³⁴⁹ "...carry out carefully by day and night praises to the almighty God and his saints resting therein, chanting the Psalms in the Greek manner." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

³⁵⁰ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

throughout the entire day were not unusual in Byzantium.³⁵¹ An example of this practice can be found in Constantinople dating from the fifth century, where a group of monasteries, renowned for their orthodoxy and devotion, were founded by a largely unknown individual named Alexander the Akoimetos.³⁵² These monasteries practiced long hours of prayer and song which lasted throughout the night, and were known as the *Akoimetoï*, the 'sleepless ones'.³⁵³ The reputation of these monks spread throughout Constantinople and other parts of the Byzantine Empire for this unique form of liturgy.³⁵⁴ According to Goodson, Alexander devised this new and strict form of liturgy, basing it upon several biblical passages; such as Psalm 1.2, "...and on his law he shall meditate both day and night."³⁵⁵ If this passage were to be read literally, it would demand the continuous singing of hymns and psalms. According to the *Life of Alexander the Akoimetos*, these monastic communities were divided into twenty four offices; this allowed every hour of the day to be filled with the sound of the recitations praising God.³⁵⁶ The concept of this perpetual recitation of Psalms would have been likely unknown in the west during the lifetime of Alexander the *Akoimetos*, but this may not have been the case by the ninth century. It is possible that when the *LP* states, "...die noctuque" it is referring to the form of liturgy or a derivation practiced by the *Akoimetoï*.³⁵⁷

If the community of Greek monks housed in Santa Prassede did sing the Psalms continually throughout the day and night, a connection with a Constantinopolitan

³⁵¹ Goodson, *Paschal I* 191.

³⁵² *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* vol. 1, (ed), Alexander P. Kazhdan (New York, 1991), 46-7 and 59.

³⁵³ *ODB* Vol. I. 46-7, 59.

³⁵⁴ Goodson, *Paschal I* 191.

³⁵⁵ Goodson, *Paschal I* 191.

³⁵⁶ *ODB* Vol. I. 46-7, 59.

³⁵⁷ Goodson, *Paschal I* 191.

liturgical practice dating from the fifth century remains tenuous at best. The fate of the *Akoimetoï* in Constantinople remains unknown, although they seem to have declined in influence and favour during Monothelitism in the seventh century.³⁵⁸ The *Akoimetoï* monasteries do not appear in any surviving sources after this, thus their survival in Constantinople in the ninth century is purely speculative. However, if only one of these monasteries or a hybridisation of their practice had survived into the ninth century, their dedication to orthodoxy, demonstrated through their defiant stance against monothelitism would have certainly put them at odds with Iconoclasm.³⁵⁹ Thus, if the *Akoimetoï* had survived in some form to the ninth century, flight to Rome to escape Iconoclasm could have been a possibility. Yet, there is no evidence to substantiate such a hypothesis, and one is in danger of drawing a connection between two similar practices that were centuries apart and with no evidence to connect them. A more likely possibility is that there was a diffusion of the traditions and practices of the *Akoimetoï* throughout the Byzantine Empire from the fifth century onwards. With a number of other monasteries adopting some of the *Akoimetoï* customs, in particular a liturgical model which could last all day and night. However, without further evidence regarding the liturgical practices of Santa Prassede in the ninth century, or of the diffusion of

³⁵⁸ *ODB* Vol. I. 46-7, 59.

³⁵⁹ The monastery of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura which was located in the northeast of Rome just outside the city walls also housed a Greek monastic community during the reign of Leo IV (847-55) that conducted a similar practice to the monks of Santa Prassede, according to the wording of the entry in the *LP*. "In it [San Lorenzo] he [Leo IV] established many monks of Greek race and of holy behaviour who might fulfil day and night the praises to almighty God and that martyr." Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CV:XXX, 113 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* Leo IV 105:30. Although this religious foundation was staffed by both Greek and Latin monastics, the phrasing of how the Greek monks carried out their liturgical practices is reminiscent of how the *LP* described the monks in Santa Prassede carrying out similar duties, as well as the much earlier practice of the *Akoimetoï*. Again this may be another case of a poor choice of phraseology on the part of the *LP*, but it may indicate a Greek liturgical practice in the ninth century which involved unceasing prayer and song, and is an area of study that while already examined by Goodson warrants further study.

Akoimetoï to ninth-century Rome, the connection between the Greek monks of Santa Prassede and the *Akoimetoï* remains tenuous.

The *Life of Paschal I*, contained in the ninth-century *LP*, distinguishes the liturgical rite practiced by the Greek monks residing in Santa Prassede from the typical 'Latin' rites prevalent in Rome. Thus, this entry in the *LP* sets the liturgy practised by the Greek monks apart from the more common liturgical rites practiced in the city, "...a holy community of Greeks, which he placed therein to carry out carefully by day and night praises to almighty God and his saints resting therein, chanting the Psalms in the Greek manner."³⁶⁰ It is unclear what is meant by in the '*Greek manner*;' it is most likely referring to the use of the Greek language and Greek rite in the liturgy, songs and services practiced in Santa Prassede. However, the identification of what is meant by the '*Greek manner*' is further complicated by the frequent and general use of Greek in medieval Rome to denote a large swathe of different ethnicities and cultures. This generalisation was based on the view that those from the east shared a language and similar customs and made little allowances for regional diversity; thus, a myriad of different ethnicities fell under the all-encompassing term of 'Greek' including Syrian, Palestinian, Southern Italian and Constantinopolitan to name but a few.³⁶¹ However, the '*Greek manner*' may refer to expertise possessed by this group of Greek monks or those monks who observe the Greek rite in general that could not be found in the native Latin monastic community; perhaps the practise of a continual liturgy as discussed earlier in this chapter, or the expertise regarding the care of relics.

³⁶⁰ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

³⁶¹ M, McCormick., 'The Imperial Edge: Italo-Byzantine Identity, Movement and Integration 650-950,' in H. Ahrweiler and A. E. Laiou (eds), *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge Ma, 1998), 20-30.

As has been mentioned above it was unusual in the west for relics to be kept in urban areas and it was not until popes Paul I and later Paschal that many were moved into the city. Paul and later Paschal had these relics housed primarily in the churches of Santa Prassede and San Silvestro; both of which were staffed by Greek monks. Goodson suggests that this is not a mere coincidence.³⁶² Therefore, it has been suggested that the Latin monks of Rome were unaccustomed to the physical and spiritual care needed for such a large number of relics. Consequently, the popes looked to the Greek monastic communities, as the practice of storing and caring for relics in an urban setting was both a common, and long established custom in the east.³⁶³

The position of the smaller basilica of Santa Prassede on the Esquiline Hill, near the more prestigious basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore resulted in the church being included in a number of liturgical processions. Santa Maria Maggiore's importance in the city guaranteed that the nearby churches benefited and gained prestige by playing a role in these rituals of power.³⁶⁴ For example on the vigil of the Feast of the Assumption that can be dated to the pontificate of Pope Leo IV (847-855) a procession started at the Lateran Palace, and then proceeded to the basilica of Hadrian, then to the basilica of Santa Maria Nova and then finally ending at Santa Maria Maggiore.³⁶⁵ Several processions celebrating minor litanies were first introduced by Pope Leo III (795-816) and their routes lay between Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni in Laterano and likely included Santa Prassede as a station on the processional route, linking it with the

³⁶² Goodson, *Paschal I* 190-2.

³⁶³ Goodson, *Paschal I* 190-2.

³⁶⁴ Noble, *Celebration and Power* 87.

³⁶⁵ Noble, *Celebration and Power* 87-9.

great churches of Rome.³⁶⁶ The combination of Santa Prassede lying on the path of several important processional routes, and the wealth of relics contained within her walls would have attracted visitors and pilgrims, ensuring a continued income for Santa Prassede.

The location of Santa Prassede on the Esquiline, and the choice to house a Greek monastic community within its walls were significant for several reasons. Firstly, the church's location on the Esquiline offered it both access and proximity to the centre of papal power in eighth and ninth-century Rome, the Lateran. The importance of the Lateran having easy access to several Greek monastic communities has been mentioned earlier in this chapter. Secondly, Santa Prassede's situation in the Esquiline region of the city allowed the basilica to benefit from the prestige of the nearby Santa Maria Maggiore; it put Santa Prassede on several processional and pilgrim routes within the city thereby helping to ensure its continued survival. As discussed previously in this chapter it has been suggested that a Greek community was chosen to be housed in Santa Prassede for specific skills that they possessed. It is unclear, however, if Santa Prassede was built for the purpose of housing a Greek community from the outset. There is not enough evidence to indicate if Paschal had always intended for Santa Prassede and the relics stored within it to be cared for by Greek monastics, or if it was an ad hoc decision based on the need to house a refugee monastic community and monks' possession of the skills required to care for relics.

Finally, the translation of a number of renowned martyrs' relics from the cemeteries of Rome to Santa Prassede further increased the status of the church. The location of the

²⁸⁴ Noble, *Celebration and Power* 87-9.

church on the Esquiline, its duty caring for these relics, and the housing of a Greek monastic community in it, in essence distinguished it from almost all the other churches of the city and set it apart from what had come before; an innovative and unique legacy for Paschal. By choosing this location the Pope aided in regenerating the ecclesiastical fabric of this part of Rome and chose an area that had access to the Lateran while allowing a symbiotic relationship to develop between Santa Prassede and Santa Maria Maggiore. Furthermore, Santa Prassede remained one of the few Greek monastic communities situated away from the Palatine region and this was most likely a deliberate move on the part of Paschal. This may have been to allow the Pope access to a Greek community close to his residence in the Lateran for practical or political reasons. However, it may have been a more pragmatic decision based on the availability of space in existing Greek communities which dictated the placement of monks in an available religious house. Therefore, the housing of a Greek community in Santa Prassede on the Esquiline marked a new era in the development of Greek monasticism in Rome; no longer were the Greek religious houses confined to the Palatine; they were spreading throughout the city, with several being charged with specific tasks and duties by the papacy, who made use of their valuable skills.

San Silvestro

The church of Santa Prassede was not the only basilica near the Esquiline Hill staffed by Greek monks. The basilica of San Silvestro, founded a generation earlier by Pope Paul I was located east of San Lorenzo in Lucina, and therefore a short distance from the

eighteenth-century Fontana de Trevi.³⁶⁷ Although not located on the Esquiline Hill, San Silvestro was situated far from the Palatine and shared many common elements with the churches of Santa Prassede and Santa Maria in Campo Marzio. These similarities are such that they constitute a distinct group of churches within Rome, separating them from the Greek churches of the Palatine Hill and the other Greek religious foundations.

The basilica of San Silvestro was founded in the late eighth century by Pope Paul I, and was originally dedicated to the saints Stephano and Silvester, “[Paul I] constructed from the ground up a monastery in his own house in honour of St Stephen the martyr and pontiff and of St Sylvester, another Pontiff and confessor of Christ.”³⁶⁸ As its foundation was a papal commissioned project, evidence for it has survived in excerpts from the *LP*. Furthermore, the original constitution and foundation charter of San Silvestro, written at the behest of Pope Paul I, survives. Although the foundation charter can be internally dated to 761, its authenticity and accuracy has been scrutinised because of discrepancies found in earlier editions of the manuscript and more importantly because of the inconsistencies and contradictions between its information and the content of the *LP*. An example of this is that the constitution makes no mention of the community of Greek monks which is to be housed in San Silvestro, a detail which is emphasised in the *LP*.³⁶⁹ Also the constitution could have been written sometime after the foundation of the monastery to legitimise it and guarantee its holdings. There is an example of this pertaining to San Silvestro, where a twelfth-century copy of an 844 papal bull, issued by Sergius II, is used to legitimatise its holdings. However, historians agree that this is a

³⁶⁷ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V, 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁶⁸ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V, 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁶⁹ Ferrari, *Monasteries* 306.

falsification and that the original papal bull never existed, but was a twelfth-century fabrication used to establish the monastery's ownership over certain lands and holdings.³⁷⁰ Therefore, care must be taken when using this document, although if used in conjunction with the *LP* it can provide great insight into the foundation and early years of the monastery. Furthermore, the date when the church stopped observing the Greek rite in favour of the Latin remains unknown. From the surviving evidence, the indication is that San Silvestro was bestowed on the Benedictine order sometime in the twelfth century; roughly at the same time, Pope Innocent II had the head of John the Baptist moved to the basilica, hence the title *capite* was added to make *San Silvestro in Capite*.³⁷¹

According to the *LP*, the basilica of San Silvestro was converted from the private family residence of Pope Paul I several years before 761.³⁷² The monastery attached to the church was, from its foundation to house monks and explicitly not nuns.³⁷³ The reason that the monastery of San Silvestro was limited to male monastics was intended to provide the basilica with a staff that could perform the choir recitation, as well as care for, and provide the necessary devotion to the many relics housed in San Silvestro. Furthermore, the foundation charter forbids the monastery's first abbot Leontius from renting or selling any of San Silvestro's lands.³⁷⁴ This clause may have been added to the foundation charter to preserve the integrity of the holdings of San Silvestro, to protect the monastery and its lands from the Roman nobility or used by the monastery after the

³⁷⁰ Ferrari, *Monasteries* 308.

³⁷¹ The exact date of the transference from Greek to Latin observation remains unknown, however the change of name in the mid-twelfth century might act as an indication of a change in staff, Huelsen, *Chiese* 467 and J.S. Gaynor and I. Toesca, *San Silvestro in Capite* (Rome, 1963), 23-5.

³⁷² Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V, 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁷³ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V, 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁷⁴ *Constitution of San Silvestro* V. Federici (ed and trans), reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 302.

eighth century to claim back lands that had been previously sold. By imposing these restrictions on the staffing and transference of the property Pope Paul may have been ensuring the continuance of the task for which he established the church and adjoining monastery, namely the care of the relics and veneration of the martyrs of early Christian Rome, placing them firmly at the centre of the liturgy.³⁷⁵

Ubi et monachorum congregationem constituens grece modulationos
psalmodie cynovium esse decrevit, atque Deo nostro omnipotenti et
omnibus ibidem requiescentibus sanctis magnis sub interdictionibus sedule
ac indesinenter laudes statuit persolvendas³⁷⁶

It is interesting that the *LP* chose to word the duty of the Greek monks in such a way, using the word *indesinenter*. The phraseology is reminiscent of the way that the author described the charge of the monks of Santa Prassede to pray “...both day and night.”³⁷⁷ The choice of the word unceasingly, *indesinenter*, can be interpreted to mean that San Silvestro was staffed by monks who undertook a rare form of devotion which consisted of chanting the psalms and praying throughout all the hours of the day and night. However, as in the case of the monks of Santa Prassede there is insufficient evidence to prove that this was the case. The choice of the word *indesinenter* may alternatively be viewed as nothing more than a turn of phrase, perhaps meaning that the monks were to carry out their duties eternally, or for at least a long period of time, rather than meaning constantly and without interruption. Without further evidence the details regarding the liturgy practiced in San Silvestro remains subject to conjecture.

³⁷⁵ Costambey, *Farfa* 286.

³⁷⁶ “There he established a monastery for chanting the Psalms in the Greek manner and he had it laid down under great excommunication that the praise to our God almighty and all the saints resting within there should be performed diligently and unceasingly.” Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V, 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁷⁷ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:IX, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

The above excerpt from the *LP* states that the monks who were to make up the choir and to care for the relics entrusted to them were to be Greek, rather than Latin. That they were Greek monks chosen by Pope Paul is made explicit by the *LP*, indicating that there was some specific reason for housing Greek monks in San Silvestro. Thus, San Silvestro could have been the antecedent for Pope Paschal's vision for the later Santa Prassede, which similarly housed a Greek monastic community and cared for a large number of Roman relics. According to the foundation charter of the basilica, Pope Paul I entrusted to its safety and guardianship the sacred relics of Rome, which were being stolen and even desecrated by the frequent raiding of the city's suburbs where the cemeteries and shrines of the martyrs were located.³⁷⁸ In a similar fashion to the later Santa Prassede, San Silvestro contained two sets of inscriptions, one of which is still housed in the rebuilt basilica, while the other is stored in the Vatican.³⁷⁹ These inscriptions record the names of the saints whose relics were given to San Silvestro; they are divided by sex, and then organised by feast day. Apart from the later addition of the head of John the Baptist, the roughly fifty saints' relics kept at San Silvestro were all local to Rome, the majority being early Christian martyrs.³⁸⁰

Unlike Santa Prassede, some evidence survives regarding the monastery and church of San Silvestro in the tenth century, which is highly unusual given the tumultuous nature of that period in Roman political and ecclesiastical affairs. The pieces of evidence that survive are two papal bulls contained in the archives of San Silvestro; the first dated to

³⁷⁸ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V 464-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 83.

³⁷⁹ Printed in Gaynor and Toesca, *San Silvestro* Figure 1 and 2, 17-8.

³⁸⁰ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs* 158-60.

955 in the reign of Pope Agapitus II,³⁸¹ whilst the other was issued during the pontificate of Pope John XII in 962.³⁸² The bull issued by John XII repeats much of what was contained in the bull of Agapitus II with no inconsistencies between the two documents indicating that they were not later forgeries such as the aforementioned bull of Sergius II.³⁸³

The first bull, dated to 955, was issued by Agapitus II and addressed to the abbot of San Silvestro, an individual named Leo.³⁸⁴ Although it is difficult to ascertain Leo's origins from his name alone it remains a possibility that this Leo could have been of Greek descent. The absence of an abbot with a distinctive Latin name provides enough consideration to suggest that the monastery and basilica were still observing the Greek rite at the time this bull was issued, or may have adopted a dual rite model, like other contemporary monasteries in areas such as Salerno.³⁸⁵ In the bull of 955 the monastery is referred to as SS. Stephen, Denis and Sylvester.³⁸⁶ (This is the first appearance in the written record of the addition of Saint Stephen to the name). The bull issued by Pope Agapitus II confirms a number of lands, holdings and smaller churches and chapels upon the basilica and monastery of San Silvestro.³⁸⁷

S. Angelus de Augustus

³⁸¹ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 22 (1899), 265-81, reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 304-5.

³⁸² *Bull of John XII*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 22 (1899), 265-81, reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 305.

³⁸³ Ferrari, *Monasteries* 309.

³⁸⁴ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81, reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 304-5.

³⁸⁵ Ramseyer, *Religious Landscape* 88-91.

³⁸⁶ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81 reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 304-5.

³⁸⁷ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81 reprinted in Huelsen, *Chiese* 137 and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries*, 304-5.

S. Andrea de columna

S. Nicholaus

S. Maria ante Monasterium San Silvestro

S. Maria (minore) ante monasterium San Silvestro

S. Hippolytus

S. Anastasius

S. Stephanus

S. Maria ubi dicitur Arcianes

S. Iohannes in Pinea

S. Valentinus

S. Blasius de posterula pignae

Very little is known about most of these smaller churches and houses; the location of some is a mystery. Yet, most of these religious houses likely observed the Latin rite, as previous historical works have identified the majority of possible Greek churches and monasteries in Rome. This is the first record that demonstrates that a Greek religious house had authority over smaller Latin and other Greek houses. This would indicate that the observance of a particular house had little relevance regarding its ability and eligibility to be in a leadership role in relation to other houses.

The later bull issued by Pope John XII is mainly a repetition of Agapitus II's confirmation of San Silvestro's authority over a large number of smaller houses of worship in Rome, yet there are several subtle differences. The first is that by 962 those who had held the position of Pope and that of abbot of San Silvestro had changed. In 962 the Pope was John XII and the abbot of San Silvestro was an individual referred to as Theofilactus who

led the, "... consitutuo abbatia {established monastery}."³⁸⁸ The name Theofilactus may betray the Greek origins of this new abbot of San Silvestro.³⁸⁹ Therefore, both of these papal bulls demonstrate that the church and monastery San Silvestro by the late tenth century was still a rich and prosperous house, and was heavily favoured by the popes, receiving lands as well as numerous gifts. The bulls also indicate that as late as 962 San Silvestro likely observed the Greek rite, and subsequently it remained one of the few influential and wealthy Greek monasteries in late tenth-century Rome.

In addition to the lands given to the church and adjoining monastery of San Silvestro recorded in the papal bulls, it was also heavily patronised by a succession of popes, throughout the late eighth and the ninth century, whose gifts to the monastery are recorded in the *LP*.³⁹⁰ Thus, from the documentary evidence available it would appear that the church and monastery of San Silvestro was heavily patronised by the papacy from its foundation up until at least the end of the tenth century.³⁹¹ Yet, it is unclear when the observation of the Greek rite was replaced by the Latin. Both the abbots mentioned in the papal bulls of 955 and 962 bore Greek Christian names; although by no means proves conclusively that San Silvestro was still in Greek hands as late as 962, it leaves that possibility open. An absence of source material should not be interpreted as

³⁸⁸ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81 reprinted in Huelsen, *Chiese* 137 and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries*, 304-5.

³⁸⁹ *Bull of John XII*, V. Federici (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81, reprinted in reprinted in Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 305.

³⁹⁰ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, XCV:V, 464-5, XCVI:XII, 471, XCVIII:XI, 4, XCVIII:XIII, 5, XCVIII:XXXVIII, 11, XCVIII:LXXVI, 22, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, CIII:XXIX, 81-2, CVI:XXIII, 145. CVII:XIV, 153 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 95:5, 96:12, 98:11, 98:13, 98:38, 98:76, Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 103:29, 106:23, 107:14.

³⁹¹ The patronage of San Silvestro in Capite by the papacy after the tenth century most likely continued. However, records for the monastery after this point become increasingly rare. The lack of entries concerning the church after the tenth century are more likely a result of the lack of source material rather than an indication that the monastery's status in Rome was in decline.

the abandonment of the monastery. On the contrary its steady prominence and wealth from its foundation, until at least the late tenth century indicates its stable nature, which suggests that it could have continued to observe the Greek rite well beyond 962. Given the prominence of San Silvestro, its papal foundation, and the extensive lands it held, if it had changed to the Latin rite sometime before the eleventh century it is surprising that there is no mention of this in any contemporary sources. A suggested date, deduced from the available evidence, for the change of a Greek to Latin observance in San Silvestro would be sometime during the eleventh century. It would have been at some date after this that the monastery began to struggle, or suffered staffing issues, which then caused it to be transferred to the Benedictines. However, it is doubtful that this 'decline' happened in such a short space of time with no cataclysmic events or papal chastisements recorded in the contemporary source material to explain it. On the contrary, the prosperity of the monastery in 962, which gained a number of new lands and smaller basilicas, indicates an ascendancy rather than decline; and with no firm evidence to demonstrate an earlier date, the continued practice of the Greek rite in San Silvestro into the eleventh century would be a reasonable hypothesis.

The church and adjoining monastery of San Silvestro in Capite is in many ways similar to the ninth-century Santa Prassede. San Silvestro was in a similar topographical region as Santa Prassede which was not located in the traditional area, the Palatine Hill that had come to be associated with the Greek community in Rome. In addition both San Silvestro and Santa Prassede were charged with the care and guardianship of a number of martyrs' relics, and that this duty was to be given to a Greek monastic community. Another similarity is the manner in which this care and veneration was to be conducted.

The *LP*, when recording the duties of the Greek monks who staffed these houses, makes reference to a temporal dimension i.e. the continual or unceasing nature of the monk's prayer and songs such as the practice of the *akoimetoι*. Furthermore, Santa Prassede and San Silvestro were founded during the period of Iconoclasm in Byzantium and both were directly founded by popes; Paschal I and Paul I. Therefore, since Santa Prassede and Silvestro shared a number of similarities concerning their foundation, purpose and staffing, it is logical to conclude that this also extended to the monastery's location in the city. The location of San Silvestro was a conscious choice by Pope Paul I, providing it with access to the Lateran and situated a considerable distance from the Palatine. He founded San Silvestro in his former home, which may indicate that one reason for its location was the land available to the Pope. Alternatively by using his former home as the foundation for this new monastery his name would be forever associated with San Silvestro. Thus, the housing of a Greek monastic community in San Silvestro may have been an ad hoc decision by Pope Paul after he decided to make the foundation. It is unclear where and exactly when this Greek monastic community arrived in Rome and it is even possible that they were native to the city. However it is generally assumed that the Greek monks who settled in San Silvestro arrived in the city as a result of Iconoclasm, but there is no evidence to support this theory.

Even without knowing the reasons behind the arrival and housing of Greek monks in San Silvestro, what can be concluded from the surviving evidence is that this foundation, like Santa Prassede, marked a new phase in the ecclesiastical topography of Rome. These churches were founded from the eighth century onwards and were located a considerable distance from the sixth-century Greek churches on the Palatine. Both were

built in areas of Rome that had few, if any imperial associations or concentrated ecclesiastical foundations, thus allowing Paschal and Paul to strengthen their authority and influence in these areas. What also ties the churches of Santa Prassede and San Silvestro is that both establishments were founded by popes and had close relations with their papal founders. This may have been one of the reasons for the location of San Silvestro, as the monastery was not tied to the Palatine area as it had no responsibility, or relationship to the community settled in that area, but instead its location primarily rested on the decision of Pope Paul I.

Santa Maria in Campo Marzio

The last of the Greek churches that fall into the Esquiline group is the basilica of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio, located north of the ancient Pantheon and in close proximity to the ancient fora of the city. The modern basilica, renamed Santa Maria della Concezione rests on the foundations of the medieval basilica,³⁹² which was located north of the Piazza Barberini. Santa Maria in Campo Marzio was the most northerly of the known Greek basilicas of Rome, at a considerable distance from the Palatine region, which has been historically viewed as the centre of Greek settlement in early medieval Rome.³⁹³

The foundation and early history of the basilica of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio is plagued by confusion and large gaps in the chronology; this is due to the complete lack of contemporary evidence, with only much later traditions explaining its Greek origins.

³⁹² Armellini, *Le Chiese* 334.

³⁹³ F. Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide* (Berkeley, 2008), 261-3.

The most popular of these traditions arose in the sixteenth century, nearly a millennium after the foundation of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio. This tradition describes how Pope Zacharias (741-52) granted the basilica of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio and adjoining convent to a group of Greek nuns fleeing persecution in Constantinople as a result of Iconoclasm. This tradition was first recorded in a lost chronicle by Giacinto De Nobili sometime in the late sixteenth century.³⁹⁴ However, the sources that he used remain unknown, thus his credibility regarding the tradition around the origins of Santa Maria remains in question. If this tradition is true then the nuns' arrival in Rome can be dated to the years 741-751, which were the dates of Zacharias' pontificate.³⁹⁵ Purportedly this group of nuns fled from their convent, Sant'Anastasia in Constantinople, arriving in Rome seeking refuge.³⁹⁶

According to this tradition the nuns brought with them the relics of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, which had been interred in their convent in Constantinople.³⁹⁷ The date of the nuns supposed arrival in Rome in the middle of the eighth century is in part supported by Leo III's list of gifts to the churches of Rome recorded in the *LP*, where it records in the year 806, "Seu et in oratorio sancti Gregorii qui ponitur in Campo Martis fecit canistrum ex argento..."³⁹⁸ The small oratory mentioned in this extract was in a basilica located somewhere in the Campo Marzio. This oratory likely contained the relics of Gregory of Nazianzus. The exact location of the oratory is not specified by the

³⁹⁴ Armellini, *Le Chiese* 334. It is unclear which sources which are no longer extant De Nobili had access to, thus his version of the foundation of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio should not be discounted out of hand.

³⁹⁵ No mention of this event is recorded in the *LP* regarding the pontificate of Pope Zacharias, Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. I, I:XXIX, 426-35. Although this should not necessarily be taken as an indication that the event did not take place as the source material for medieval Rome can be notoriously unreliable.

³⁹⁶ Armellini, *Le Chiese* 334.

³⁹⁷ Armellini, *Le Chiese* 334.

³⁹⁸ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, XCVIII:LXXX, 24-5 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 98:80, 217, "...and in the oratory of Saint Gregory in the Campus Martius silver canister 3lbs."

available evidence which merely records that there was an oratory dedicated to a certain saint named Gregory somewhere on the Campo Marzio. A similar tradition surrounds the foundation of San Gregorio Armeno in Naples which describes that the convent was founded by a group of Greek nuns fleeing Iconoclasm in the eighth century and brought with them relics of the saint. However, San Gregorio Armeno does not appear in the written record until 930, thus it is difficult to ascertain the validity of this foundation story.³⁹⁹ It is interesting to note the parallels between the traditions surrounding the foundation of San Gregorio Armeno and Santa Maria in Campo Marzio. Both were founded by Greek nuns, both groups were fleeing Iconoclasm in the eighth century and finally both brought with them relics of the saint to whom their religious house would be dedicated. These similarities can be viewed in two different ways. Firstly, that both churches share a similar foundation story may indicate that in the eighth century groups of Greek monastics were fleeing Byzantium because of Iconoclasm, and that these examples both support the validity of the foundation by Greek nuns. However, the similarities may exist as it was a popular fictional tradition attributed to churches, monasteries and convents whose own foundation history was lost thereby bringing them authenticity and prestige, as well as ties to the east. Yet, without further evidence the 'Greek nun tradition' remains based purely on speculation and later traditions whose origins can neither be identified nor corroborated.

It is not until the year 937 that the basilica of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio appears in the written record, the *Subiaco Register*. In the register the basilica is referred to as, "S.

³⁹⁹ Arthur, *Naples* 71.

Maria et S. Gregorii quod ponitur in Campo Martio.”⁴⁰⁰ Firstly, this entry in the *Subiaco Register* verifies that the oratory dedicated to San Gregorio in the ninth century was situated in Santa Maria Campo Marzio. Secondly, by the tenth century, the title of the basilica had been altered with the addition of the Virgin to the dedication, and is referred to as *Sancta Maria et Sanctus Gregorii*, in the *Subiaco Register*.⁴⁰¹ Although the dedication to the Virgin Mary was an addition, as it did not appear in the description of the basilica recorded in Leo III’s 806 list of gifts to the churches of Rome, there may have been another reason for its omission from the *LP*. The 806 list only describes the gift given to the oratory dedicated to a Saint Gregory and there is no mention of a basilica dedicated to the Virgin. Although it is a possibility that there was no such basilica in the Campo Marzio in the ninth century, it is more likely that either there was an accidental omission from the *LP* concerning the basilica dedicated to the Virgin or that Leo III’s gift was made directly to the oratory of Saint Gregory.

The basilica does not appear again in the historical record until 955, when Pope Agapitos II issued a papal bull confirming the transference of a number of lands and smaller houses of worship to the monastery of San Silvestro.⁴⁰² Several of the holdings given to San Silvestro had once belonged to “Sanctus Gregorius in Campo Martis.”⁴⁰³ This would indicate that by 955 the basilica of Sancti Maria and Gregorio could no longer administer the lands it had accumulated since the eighth century. This does not necessarily mean that the basilica had fallen into complete disrepair, or had been abandoned due to a lack

⁴⁰⁰ *Il Regesto Sublacense del secolo XI* (ed and trans), Allodi-Levi (Rome, 1885) 169 no 121.

⁴⁰¹ *Regesto Sublacense* 169 no 121.

⁴⁰² *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81, reprinted in Huelsen, *Chiese* 137 and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 304-5.

⁴⁰³ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81, reprinted in Huelsen, *Chiese* 137 and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 304-5.

of staff, but it instead would be symptomatic of a religious house that was no longer as wealthy or prestigious as it had been in earlier centuries. This internal upheaval may be suggestive of a change in leadership or change in the rite observed in the basilica. The fact that Santa Maria lost a large number of her holdings in 955 may indicate that it was around this date that the observance of the Greek rite was replaced by the Latin, although this suggestion is based purely on speculation with only circumstantial evidence to support such a claim. On the other hand the church, which received a number of these holdings, was the basilica of San Silvestro,⁴⁰⁴ which at this juncture was most likely staffed by a Greek monastic community and was prospering at the expense of its fellow Greek basilica, Santa Maria. Hence, this amalgamation of land under San Silvestro may indicate that Santa Maria was struggling to maintain her lands due to a lack of staff or that the church was completely abandoned at this time. However, although Santa Maria was a Greek foundation this cannot be taken as an indication that all the Greek religious houses of Rome were struggling in the tenth century, for it was a Greek foundation, San Silvestro, which received and benefited from the lands Santa Maria could no longer administer.

Therefore, the early history of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio is based on a much later tradition, with no contemporary evidence to support the origins of its foundation and early development. However, there are several elements that might indicate that Santa Maria did house a Greek female community at some point. Although based on a later tradition, it seems to have been grounded in historical reality with pontifical dates and Iconoclasm fitting the apparent course of events. Secondly, later sources mention the

⁴⁰⁴ *Bull of Agapitus II*, V. Federici, (ed and trans), *Archivio* 265-81, reprinted in Huelsen, *Chiese* 137 and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 304-5.

oratory of San Gregorio, which may have had its foundation in the relics of San Gregory of Nazianzus. Thirdly, Santa Maria would have been the first of three churches which may have been given by a pope in Rome to a group of Greek monastic refugees: Santa Maria in Campo Marzio, Santa Prassede and San Silvestro. In addition all three of these basilicas were located roughly in the same topographical area in the city, and all fall within a common time frame, the Iconoclast controversy. Finally, with the history and origins of a great number of Rome's basilicas and monasteries suffering from a dearth of evidence, it would be unfair to discount the later tradition surrounding the housing of Greek nuns in Santa Maria in Campo Marzio as pure fabrication. The authors which recorded these traditions may have had access to material regarding the origins and early history of Santa Maria that is no longer extant. Therefore, the basilica of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio falls into the same category as the previously examined Santa Prassede and San Silvestro. It shares a number of similar elements, however unlike Santa Prassede and San Silvestro the evidence regarding this basilica is fragmentary. While it falls within the Esquiline group the lack of information makes insight into the reasons for its location much harder to deduce.

Esquiline and Campo Marzio Conclusion

The basilicas of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio, Santa Prassede and San Silvestro can be categorised as a single group of religious houses in medieval Rome based on three factors: topography, chronology and purpose.

All three basilicas were situated a considerable distance from what has been traditionally considered the 'Greek' quarter of Rome, the Palatine Hill and *Foro Romano*. Instead these churches were located in areas with no links to the sixth-century Byzantine occupation of the city. Furthermore, the areas in which these basilicas were founded were decided by individual popes, such as Paschal I and Paul I, thus they were constructed in areas which these popes deemed suitable and also advantageous. Therefore these churches were directly founded and patronised by a series of popes and were not tied to what had been the traditional areas of Byzantine influence in Rome, namely the Palatine. As available patrons and the needs of the city changed, so did the ecclesiastical topography of Rome.

One reason for housing Greek monastic communities in these new basilicas was the importance afforded to Santa Prassede, Santa Maria in Campo Marzio and San Silvestro by the treasured relics housed and cared for in these basilicas. The large number of relics stored in these religious houses would have made accessibility of paramount importance when deciding where they would be housed. The basilicas were located close to the Lateran as well as to other populous areas of the city such as the Campo Marzio and Foro Romano. The housing of relics in these churches would have quickly increased their status within the city, as well as rejuvenating the areas around them as a result of the trade, patronage and pilgrims these basilicas would have attracted. In the case of Santa Prassede the decision by Pope Paschal to place it on the Esquiline, in close proximity to Santa Maggiore, was clearly an attempt by Paschal to utilise the reputation and status of the larger basilica to benefit Santa Prassede.

Secondly, by choosing to restore and develop these churches, as well as investing them with the important charge of caring for the relics of the early Roman martyrs in the areas of the Camp Marzio and the Esquiline, it ensured the security of these precious relics by moving them within the city walls. By placing these relics in Santa Prassede and San Silvestro, Popes Paul and Paschal were investing these new constructions with saintly legitimacy, thereby ensuring that they ranked among the most important in Rome. Thus, the possession of such numerous important relics by Santa Prassede and San Silvestro would draw devotees from Rome itself and beyond, to venerate them and seek intercession. Therefore, between papal sponsorship and the possession of a number of Rome's most treasured relics, San Silvestro and San Prassede enjoyed a reputation and place of honour among the basilicas of Rome, in spite of neither possessing the heritage, nor grand size of some of their ecclesiastical rivals.

Thirdly, as previously stated, these three basilicas were located in what might be labelled a very 'Latin area,' and it could be suggested that the reason for the placement of Greek monastic communities in such prestigious basilicas was to highlight the papal opposition to the Byzantine policy of Iconoclasm. It may further demonstrate Rome's willingness to accept Greek refugees and hold itself up as a centre of orthodoxy beyond the reach of imperial interference. By entrusting the care of Rome's relics and newest basilicas to Greek monastic communities, rather than native Latin monks, it can be argued that these popes were signifying their defiance of the theological policy adopted by Constantinople regarding the veneration of icons. However, the problem with such a theory is twofold. Firstly, there are no contemporary sources that state that the Greek

monks and nuns who were housed in San Silvestro, Santa Prassede and Santa Maria in Campo Marzio were fleeing because of Iconoclasm and persecution. Secondly, it is questionable what impact this sort of gesture would have made, and it may be more likely the case that historians are politicising what may have been a religious or pragmatic decision made by the Popes Paschal, Zacharias and Paul.

In addition, if Iconoclasm in Byzantium had caused a surge of monastic refugees, how did the restoration of Orthodoxy to the Empire in 843 affect the staffing of Santa Prassede, San Silvestro and Santa Maria in Campo Marzio? One would assume that the restoration of the veneration of icons in Byzantium would have signalled the end of Greek monastic communities leaving the Byzantine Empire to settle in Rome, and as a result these three basilicas in particular would have suffered the most. Yet, where evidence exists it shows that these three basilicas weathered the restoration of orthodoxy in Byzantium and continued to observe the Greek rite, and in the case of San Silvestro and Santa Prassede this carried on well into the tenth century. Therefore, the questions above, regarding Iconoclasm and its influence on the location of Santa Maria, San Silvestro and Santa Prassede, as well as their Greek staff, cannot be answered with any certainty. The evidence concerning Iconoclasm and its effects on Rome is plagued by large chronological gaps, bias and inconsistencies; with Iconoclasm as an impetus for these foundations appearing not in contemporary source material, but in much later traditions dating from the sixteenth century onwards. Therefore, the role of Iconoclasm remains a highly charged topic, and without further research into the impact this controversy had on the churches of Rome, as well as the Greek refugees who

supposedly fled west during this period, the role that Iconoclasm had upon the location of the Esquiline churches remains primarily speculative.

Finally, the proximity and accessibility of Santa Prassede and San Silvestro to the Lateran Palace and San Giovanni in Laterano is of particular significance when examining the reasons behind the location of these Greek monastic communities on, or near to the Esquiline Hill. In this period the Lateran and the area surrounding was the seat of papal power and influence in Rome whereas the importance of the Palatine had largely faded and the Vatican was yet to rise to prominence. Thus, the Lateran became the centre of ecclesiastical, as well as secular authority in the city, and those churches close by benefited from this proximity.

It was during this same period that the papacy started to flex its proverbial muscles and assert its spiritual, as well as secular independence. By patronising building and patronising these religious houses the popes were extending and strengthening their authority in these areas of Rome. Santa Prassede and to a lesser extent Santa Maria in Campo Marzio and San Silvestro were located close to the Lateran, and had easy access by way of the Via Merulana, the main thoroughfare between Santa Maria Maggiore and the Lateran.⁴⁰⁵ This proximity to the Lateran would have been beneficial to both parties providing the Greek monastics of San Silvestro and Santa Prassede with opportunities to gain papal favour, which is clearly demonstrated by the gifts and lands given to these houses. In addition it would have provided the papal court with quick and easy access to individuals housed in these monasteries who could act as translators, as well as those familiar with the traditions and customs particular to eastern Christianity. This would

⁴⁰⁵ Noble, *Celebration and Power* 51.

have been of particular value during the eighth and ninth centuries, when the dialogue between Constantinople and Rome was coloured by the issues of Iconoclasm, Frankish involvement in Rome and the Slavic missions. At this time Byzantine also confiscated the papal patrimonies in Illyricum, Calabria and Sicily, and transferred the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of these areas to the Patriarch of Constantinople, making access to linguistic and religious knowledge of Byzantium vital⁴⁰⁶

Therefore, no one clear reason stands out as the primary motivation behind the choice of a series of popes to locate Greek monastic communities in areas where previously there had been no Greek presence, either secular or monastic. However, from the eighth century onwards no new Greek basilicas or monasteries were founded in the Palatine area, nor is there any evidence to indicate that Greek refugee communities were settled in the existing Palatine foundations. Therefore, by the mid eighth century there had been a change in the patronage of the Greek religious foundations of Rome. In addition to this, there was also a change in the needs of the papacy and of the city which is reflected in the duty of Santa Prassede and San Silvestro as stewards of Rome's relics, as opposed to the sixth-century Greek foundations whose primary duty was charitable.

⁴⁰⁶ Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Eighth* 17 and Noble, *St Peter* 40 and Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (New York, 1971), 168-9 and Theophanes, *Chronographia* 6234 AM 732-3.

Conclusion

The Greek churches and monasteries of Rome played an important role in the history of medieval Rome from the sixth to the eleventh centuries. They had positions of prominence disproportionate to their numbers and may have played a role in Rome's relationship with Constantinople. Unlike Constantinople where western monasteries and churches were located in the ethnic quarters of the city, such as the Genoese or Venetian quarter, in Rome the Greek religious houses and churches constituted part of the urban fabric of the city.⁴⁰⁷ It has been demonstrated throughout this thesis that these institutions and clerics were perceived as a necessary and beneficial resource for Rome.

The ecclesiastical groupings that are of primary importance for the purpose of this thesis, and have been explored in the preceding chapters, are the Esquiline and Palatine groups. These groups are made up of a number of individual churches, *diaconiae* and monasteries the majority of which share a number of similar characteristics that distinguish them from the other Greek religious houses in Rome. The first two chapters of this work have demonstrated the different factors which influenced the foundation of a number of Greek religious houses on the Palatine Hill in the sixth century and later, in the eighth century near the Esquiline Hill. The origins, purpose and development of these churches and monasteries on these two hills of Rome show the changing needs of the city, the papacy and relationship between the Greek churches and the Greek community of Rome. Thus, the churches on the Palatine and Esquiline Hills when viewed

⁴⁰⁷ Janin, *Les Églises* 569-75.

as two distinct units provide a valuable insight into the roles of these churches, as well as their origins, histories, and how they shaped the ecclesiastical landscape of Rome.

There are five principal reasons that determined the location of the Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome. The first of these reasons, one that contributed to the topography of all the churches and monasteries of medieval Rome was the period in which they were founded. Their location in the city was not only tied to developments within Rome, but also to events in Byzantium and the east. Religious controversy, persecution and warfare all played a role in the displacement of Greek-speaking peoples in the east, a number of whom sought refuge in Rome which offered protection and support of the popes. There were approximately three discernible periods of major clerical and monastic immigration to Rome from the Greek-speaking east. The first occurred during the Byzantine governance of Rome in the sixth century shortly followed by the Persian Wars and climaxing in the seventh-century Arab conquests in the east, which forced many clerics, as well as the laity westwards, with some seeking succour in Rome.⁴⁰⁸ However, it was not only warfare that displaced a sizeable number of Greek-speaking clergy, but also religious controversies such Monoenergism and the later more forceful theology of Monothelitism.⁴⁰⁹ The second period is again characterised by strife and theological discord in Byzantium. It was the combination of Slavic invasions of the Greek mainland, the major Arab victories in Asia Minor and the imperial policy of Iconoclasm that came to define the second period of Greek clerical migration to Rome

⁴⁰⁸ McCormick *Italo-Greek* 20.

⁴⁰⁹ See Chapter 1 of this thesis regarding the Greek churches and monasteries of the Palatine Hill.

throughout the eighth and early ninth centuries.⁴¹⁰ The final period that had a recognisable impact on the location and development of the Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome occurred in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Once more it was a combination of warfare, as well as political and theological disputes that led to a change in the topography and development of the Greek monasteries and churches in Rome. The tenth-century Arab raids on Southern Italy and Sicily were the catalyst for the movement of a number of Italo-Greek holy men, their followers and their families, north to seek safety in such cities as Naples and Rome; the most famous and best documented example being San Nilo.⁴¹¹ This movement of peoples was set against the backdrop of internal reform within the papacy and Church of Rome, in addition to the growing estrangement between Rome and Constantinople. These issues combined to change the Greek ecclesiastical settlement of Rome and heavily influenced the creation of a new model of Greek monasticism in the city, as well as helping to shape the papal relationship with Greek monasteries in and around the city.

The second factor determining the location of the Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome was the purpose for which they were built and the mandate that was entrusted to them by their patrons, whether lay or papal. The Greek *diaconiae* were located on the Palatine, not just as the historical consequence of the Byzantine occupation of the hill in the sixth century, but also for a number of other reasons related to their work. In the case of the Palatine it offered access to the rest of the city as well as being in a prime location to receive grain ships sailing up the Tiber. The Palatine also

⁴¹⁰ See chapter two of this thesis for a discussion of the effect that Iconoclasm had on the Greek ecclesiastical foundations on Rome, particularly those located on the Esquiline Hill.

⁴¹¹ *Vita S. Nilus in Acta Sanctorum, September* Vol. VIII (Paris, 1863).

offered a secure location in the city, well within the protection of the walls. On the other hand the monasteries and churches founded on and near the Esquiline Hill were located in this area for different reasons. The Esquiline offered easy access to the Lateran and was on the route of several major processions owing to the proximity of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.⁴¹² Another Greek-speaking monastery that could add to this particular discussion was, Sant'Anastasio, also known as Aquas Salvias. The location outside the walls of the city was determined by both its purpose and the period in which it was founded. In the case of Aquas Salvias the purpose of the monastery, its early history and location are all intrinsically tied, with the monastery and church being built on the supposed site of the execution of the Apostle Paul in the reign of the Emperor Nero.⁴¹³ The church and later monastery were built here to protect the site of the martyrdom and his relics. Although constructed, or at least expanded during the period of heavy Byzantine church building on the Palatine, Aquas Salvias was tied to this location which was far from the centre of Greek settlement in Rome located outside the city walls, leaving it vulnerable. Yet, even with these drawbacks to its location, the purpose of this religious house to protect and memorialise the martyrdom of Saint Paul was paramount, with all other concerns being secondary.

The third factor that played some part in the location of the Greek-speaking monastic and clerical communities of Rome were the various regions of the Byzantine Empire where these Greek communities originally came from; as previously discussed, the Greek clerical and monastic diaspora that arrived in Rome hailed from a multitude of eastern cities and regions, as well as a number from Greek-speaking areas of Southern

⁴¹² Goodson, *Paschal I* 190-2.

⁴¹³ Augenti, *Il Palatino* 11.

Italy and Sicily. An example of this influence that has been examined already in this thesis are San Prassede and Santa Maria in Campo Martis, with the foundations of both houses being likely rooted in the Iconoclasm controversies of the eighth and ninth centuries. Both churches were located near the Esquiline Hill and both were most likely staffed by nuns and monks from Constantinople rather than from the provinces of the Byzantine Empire; whereas the monastery of San Sabas which was located on the *Piccolo Aventino* was primarily staffed by monks from the Holy Land. Additionally, Sant'Alessio was staffed by followers of Sergius the former Bishop of Damascus who had travelled from Palestine.⁴¹⁴ Therefore, three different groupings of monasteries and churches were located in different regions of the Rome, all of them staffed by monastics from different regions of the Eastern Roman Empire. One must bear in mind that although they were considered Greek, as this was their common tongue, the peoples of provinces of the Empire followed different customs and traditions that set them apart from other Greek-speaking peoples. Thus, it is a modern fallacy to classify the churches and monasteries of Rome that were staffed by Greek-speaking clergy, as merely Greek, as they represent the full ecumenical nature of Eastern Christendom.⁴¹⁵ It is therefore logical to conclude that different ethnic monastic communities would not necessarily welcome new arrivals solely based upon the fact that they shared a common tongue.

⁴¹⁴ It has been out-with the ambit of this thesis to investigate the development and fate of the Greek foundations beyond the tenth century. Although a number of Greek foundations were taken over by Latin communities in the tenth century, such as San Saba (Ferrari, *Monasteries*, 290), some remained Greek, such as San Cesareo (Ferrari, *Monasteries*, 90-1). In fact by the end of the tenth century the monastery of San Alessio, a dual rite house that housed both a Latin and Greek monastic community flourished (Hamilton, *San Alessio*) and was even recommended by San Nilo to Adalbert of Prague as the monastery where he should settle after he had given up his bishopric (Canaparius, *Vita S. Adalberti*, ch 15, M.G.H. SS Vol. IV, 588). For a more in depth examination of the monastery of San Alessio in tenth century Rome refer to: Hamilton, *Eastern Churches* (1961), Hamilton, *Greek Influences* (1963), Hamilton, *San Alessio* (1965) and Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* (1957), 78-87.

⁴¹⁵ Hamilton, *City of Rome* 13.

Therefore, different Greek-speaking clergy would not have necessarily been drawn to the same areas as other Greek-speaking communities and indeed further study may uncover topographical patterns determined by this in Rome as well as other medieval cities that housed a large number of Greek-speaking peoples. However, the role of the region of origin of monastics and clerics arriving in Rome is indivisible from the wider historical context. Certain areas of the East were subject to internal and external pressures during different periods which acted as a catalyst, if not impetus, for the movement of Greek-speaking clerics and monastics from these areas to Rome. Thus, by itself, the ethnic origins of monastics perhaps only played a small role in determining the location of monastic and ecclesiastical settlement in Rome. However it is difficult to assess what impact this factor had owing to the ambiguity of the source material regarding what is meant by the term 'Greek'. The best example of such ambiguity in contemporary source material is the *LP* which uses the term Greek to mean any individual or group that speaks the Greek language, whether from Syria, Constantinople, the Holy Land or Southern Italy. Hence, it becomes a herculean endeavour to identify the ethnic origins of Greek speaking groups and individuals arriving in Rome.⁴¹⁶

The fourth factor which may have affected a small number of the Greek monasteries and churches of Rome was the deliberate use of certain religious houses as political and ecumenical statements. Although there is some evidence of limited lay patronage of the Greek religious houses of Rome, it is the predominantly papal patronage these monasteries and churches which can be interpreted as having political, ecclesiastical spiritual motivations. While there is no explicit contemporary evidence to demonstrate

⁴¹⁶ Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis*, Vol. II, C:XI, 54 and Davis, *Liber Pontificalis Ninth* 100:9, 11.

such motivations behind the foundation or patronage of a particular Greek monastery or church in Rome, several modern readings of the source material, as well as the surviving artistic evidence, suggest that in some cases the choice of location may have been a political statement. The most notable example for this hypothesis is the ninth-century church of Santa Prassede, whose role in the dispute between Rome and Constantinople over the veneration of icons has been the subject of numerous modern studies.⁴¹⁷ As discussed in chapter two there are several historians who have put forward the suggestion that the iconography used to decorate the interior of the basilica of Santa Prassede, combined with the fact that it was staffed by Greek monks and that the foundation of the basilica can be dated to Second Iconoclasm, all contribute to the argument that Santa Prassede was a political statement by Paschal. This theory is based heavily upon the iconography used to decorate the interior of the basilica, which includes a number of figures and images denounced in Byzantium under the iconoclastic regime, such as the representation of Christ as the *agnus dei*. As a result some view this as a deliberate move by Pope Paschal to assert his opposition to the Byzantine policy of Iconoclasm, and moreover to assert his independence from Constantinople. Furthermore, by offering sanctuary to groups of monastic refugees from Byzantium and by placing them in the jewel of Paschal's church building programme some view this as an attempt by the Pope to send a clear message to Constantinople and the rest of Christendom of the Church of Rome adherence to Orthodoxy. However, as explored in chapter two, it is difficult to establish if this was the case with Santa Prassede, or if in fact it is the product of modern inference and interpretation of sources and events. Thus, the political calculus behind the location of Greek churches and monasteries

⁴¹⁷ For example see Goodson, *Paschal I* and Mackie, *Zeno Chapel*.

remains ambiguous. There are however arguments to be made regarding the use of these institutions to proclaim and actively promote the ecumenical nature and mandate of the See of Saint Peter. The patronage of the Greek monasteries and churches by the popes, as well as their integration into the urban fabric of the city, has been seen by some as an attempt by the papacy to display the ecumenical nature of their rule, that all Christians, not just Latins, were its responsibility. This could be viewed as an early example of Rome asserting her primacy amongst the Pentarchy, particularly over Constantinople. Hamilton suggests in his works that it was conscious decision by several popes to include a number of Greek-speaking monks and clerics as high ranking officials in the papal court to show its ecumenical nature.⁴¹⁸ Nevertheless, the precise role of all these factors is highly speculative owing to the limited available evidence. While the wider political message of religious houses is in doubt this thesis has also contended that various popes used the establishments and patronage of Greek religious houses to create 'sancti loci'. In the case of sixth-century houses on the Palatine, this manifested in appropriating the mantle of secular power when secular power was in abeyance. In the eight century this manifested itself in demonstrating the ecumenical nature of the papacy in traditional Latin areas by endowing houses with relics and welcoming and housing refugees during Iconoclasm thereby making tangible the claims to universality of the Church of Rome. Throughout the period the clustering of houses and their inclusion on processional routes served to bind the city together via islands of papal influence.

⁴¹⁸ Hamilton, *The City of Rome* 13.

The final and perhaps most straightforward aspect that influenced the location of new Greek religious houses or the placement of a Greek monastic community in already established institutions, was simply a combination of expedience and convenience. This is because the papal court had no way of knowing or pre-empting the arrival of various groups of Greek monastics and clerics in Rome. Nor are there any surviving letters or hagiographical accounts that include mention of refugee Greek communities or individuals giving notice or seeking permission before arriving in Rome. Although perhaps neither the most imaginative interpretation of the source material, nor the most complex motivations behind the choice of locations for the Greek monasteries and churches of Rome, necessity and convenience likely played a significant role in shaping the ecclesiastical topography of the city.

Therefore, this thesis, through an examination of individual Greek churches and monasteries, as well as identification and study of larger patterns of ecclesiastical and monastic settlement in Rome from the sixth to eleventh centuries, has recognized several elements that in some way shaped and developed the Greek ecclesiastical and monastic topography of the city. The degree of influence these elements had was dependent on the circumstances of the individual monastery or church, with no two cases being exactly the same. Stated above are the five most general and perhaps most significant factors that affected the location of Greek monasteries and churches in Rome. Furthermore, decisions concerning the location of a specific monastic community in medieval Rome did not take place in a vacuum, and thus could be influenced by any combination of the elements mentioned above, as well as a myriad of other lesser factors. Consequently, in every individual case, the location of a specific Greek

monastery or church was the result of a multitude of factors and influences, and cannot be easily identified and distilled into a neat one sentence reason explaining why a monastery was built where it was built.

What contributes to the difficulty in identifying and assessing the factors which affected the location of the Greek churches and monasteries in Rome is our perception and interpretation of the ecclesiastical history of early medieval Rome. It is coloured, and in a sense warped, by a reliance on a limited amount of historical and archaeological material; which itself is of varying quality and peppered with bias and inaccuracies. It is primarily due to this the early history and development of a number of Greek, as well as Latin monasteries and churches in Rome remain for the most part a mystery; with later traditions and histories often serving to confuse the circumstances surrounding their foundation. Thus, as previously discussed in the methodologies, some of the problems concerning source material for individual religious houses have been partly tackled with the creation of groups of monasteries and churches sharing similar histories, development and other patterns. By combining the limited source material from a number of Greek monasteries and churches it is possible to synthesis a fuller and clearer history. Although comparative analysis has a number of drawbacks, it remains one of the few ways to fill in the chronological gaps for the majority of the Greek religious houses of Rome providing the historian with a reasonable amount of evidence to draw speculative conclusions from.

An area of further study that needs addressing is the effect that the founding of the monastery of Grottaferrata had upon the Greek religious houses of Rome. It can be

suggested that the creation of a powerful and highly influential Greek monastic community such as Grottaferrata so close to the city attracted a high level of patronage as well as staff, thus siphoning these precious resources from the Greek urban monasteries. Therefore, a study of the consequences of the location of Grottaferrata and of the effect upon Greek monasteries of the city is still an area that warrants further academic attention.⁴¹⁹ In addition to examining the effect that Grottaferrata had on the decline of the Greek religious foundations of Rome, an examination into the role that the Italo-Greek saints, such as San Nilo and their new forms of contemplative and isolated spirituality had upon the urban monasteries of Rome would also be fruitful.⁴²⁰ It can be suggested that this popularisation of a return to a more secluded and natural spirituality impacted negatively on the Greek urban monasteries of Rome, with monastics being attracted to the isolation of the rugged country. However, it has been beyond the ambit of this thesis to explore these arguments, but their investigation would be greatly advantageous to the study of the Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome.

This thesis set out to identify and explain the reasons behind the location of the Greek churches and monasteries in Rome, charting how the changes in the geo-political situation affected the topography and development of Greek religious houses. The conclusion of this study has determined that there was not one definitive reason, nor model that can be applied to all the Greek churches and monasteries of Rome; each having its own unique foundation story and its own *raison d'être*. However, what has

⁴¹⁹ On Grottaferrata see; Hamilton, *Eastern Churches* (1961), Hamilton, *Greek Influences* (1963) and Parenti, *Monastero di Grottaferrata* (2005), F. Portelli, *L'Abbazia greca di Grottaferrata* (Rome, 2009).

⁴²⁰ Hamilton, *Oriente Lumen* 182-90.

been established is that there is a visible set of patterns that begins to emerge when groups of churches and monasteries are examined in detail, rather than looking at them as individual cases. These patterns show that there were links between individual churches and monasteries, and the factors that influenced the location and development of these institutions were often the same. Monasteries and churches that shared similar characteristics whether they are the period in which they were founded, or the purpose for which they were built were all affected by similar internal and external influences in determining their place in the city of Rome, hence patterns and groupings begin to emerge if the churches are viewed in this way.

This thesis has identified, examined and studied comparatively the topographical patterns of the Greek monasteries and churches of medieval Rome, in addition to investigating the factors, both unique and shared that influenced their locations. It has demonstrated that a myriad of element played some role in shaping the ecclesiastical landscape of Rome, which the Greek churches and monasteries were fully integrated into throughout the early medieval history of the city. These elements differed depending on the institutions and periods in question, but certain influences and themes linked a number of these Greek religious houses which produced a set of topographical patterns. Hence, the location of the Greek monasteries and churches of Rome was not the result of random placement or haphazard choices made by a succession of popes, nor was there a consistent policy for the location of Greek monasteries and churches in the city, but the reasons rather fall somewhere in between and as the needs of Rome and the popes changed so too did the place of the Greek religious houses in the city's ecclesiastical and physical topography.

Appendix 1

Name	Location	Foundation/Earliest Recorded Date	End of Greek Rite Observance ⁴²¹
Sant'Anastasia	Palatine	c. 4 th century ⁴²²	c. Late 8 th century
San Giorgio in Velabro	Palatine	c. 6 th century	c. 10 th /11 th century
Santa Maria in Cosmedin	Palatine	c. 6 th century	Unknown perhaps as late as the 18 th century
San Cesareo in Palatio	Palatine	Late 8 th early 9 th century	c. 13 th /14 th century
Santa Maria Antiqua	Foro Romano	5 th century	c. 9 th century
San Silvestro in Capite	Piazza San Silvestro, Northeast of Campo Marzio	c. 761	c. 11 th /12 th century
Santa Maria in Campo Marzio	Campo Marzio	Early-Mid 8 th century	c. 10 th century
Santa Prassede	Esquiline Hill	817	c. 11 th century
Sant'Anastasio	Via Laurentina, South of the City Walls	c. 6 th century	c. 11 th /12 th century
San Saba	Piccolo Aventino	c. 7 th century	c. Late 10 th /early 11 th century
San Gregorio in Clivo Scauri	Celio Hill	Greek from mid-8 th century, previously Latin.	c. Early 10 th century
Sant'Erasmo	Unknown ⁴²³	c. 7 th century	c. 10 th century
San Renato	Unknown ⁴²⁴	c. 7 th century	c. Late 10 th century
Sant'Alessio	Aventine Hill	977	c. Mid-11 th century
Grottaferrata	Grottaferrata, c.20km southeast of Rome.	1004	Present day

⁴²¹ These dates are purely informed estimates based on the evidence available, or are the last entry in a source which indicates that the foundation was staffed by a Greek religious community.

⁴²² Although the original antique basilica of Sant'Anastasia may have been founded as early as the fourth century, its status and size increased during the Byzantine occupation of Rome in the sixth century.

⁴²³ Ferrari suggests that the monastery was located somewhere in the area near to the basilica of San Saba and Santo Stefano Rotondo on the Piccolo Aventino, Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 126.

⁴²⁴ There is very little evidence relating to the location of this monastery in Rome, but owing to the monastery owning property near the Porta Maggiore Ferrari suggests a location somewhere on the Esquiline Hill, Ferrari, *Roman Monasteries* 280.

Appendix 2

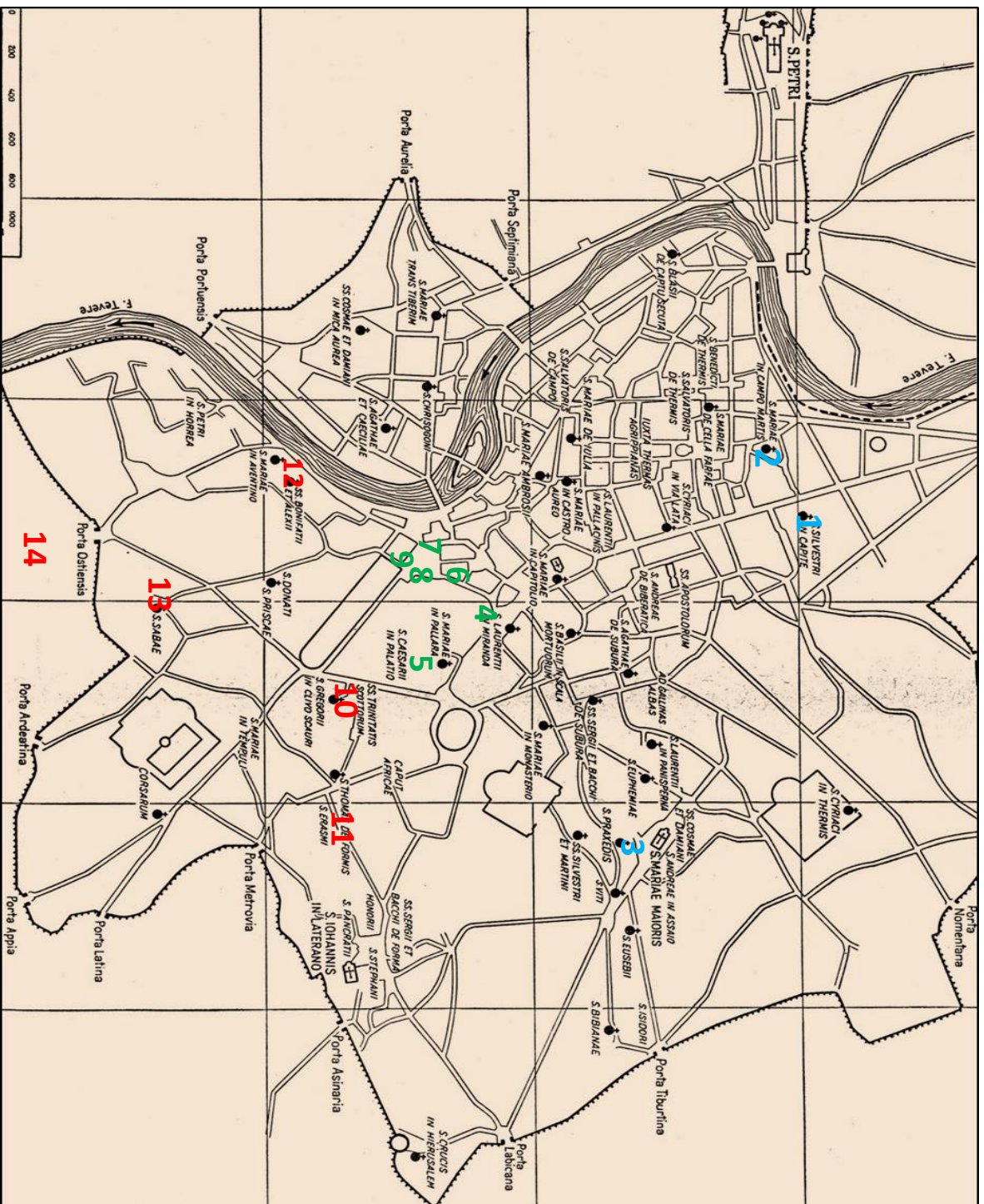


Esquiline and Campo Marzio Group

1. San Silvestro in Capite
 2. Santa Maria in Campo Marzio
 3. Santa Prassede
- Palatine Group
4. Santa Maria Antiqua
 5. San Cesareo in Palatio
 6. San Teodoro
 7. San Giorgio in Velabro
 8. Sant' Anastasia
 9. Santa Marian in Cosmedin
- Non-grouped Greek Monasteries
10. San Gregorio in Clivo Scauri
 11. Probable site of Sant'Erasmo
 12. Sant' Alessio
 13. San Saba
 14. Sant' Anastasio 7km south of the Porta Ostiensis along the Via Laurentina.

Map B: Map of the Greek Monasteries and Churches of Medieval Rome *

* Map adapted from Ferrari, G, *Early Roman Monasteries: notes for the history of the monasteries and convents at Rome from the V through the X century* (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1957) Map I



Appendix 3



Figure 1. The ninth-century apse mosaic in Santa Prassede.

(Gallio, 2008)



Figure 2. The ninth-century apse mosaic in Santa Prassede.

(Gallio, 2008)



Figure 3. The vault mosaic in the chapel of San Zeno.

(Gallio, 2008)

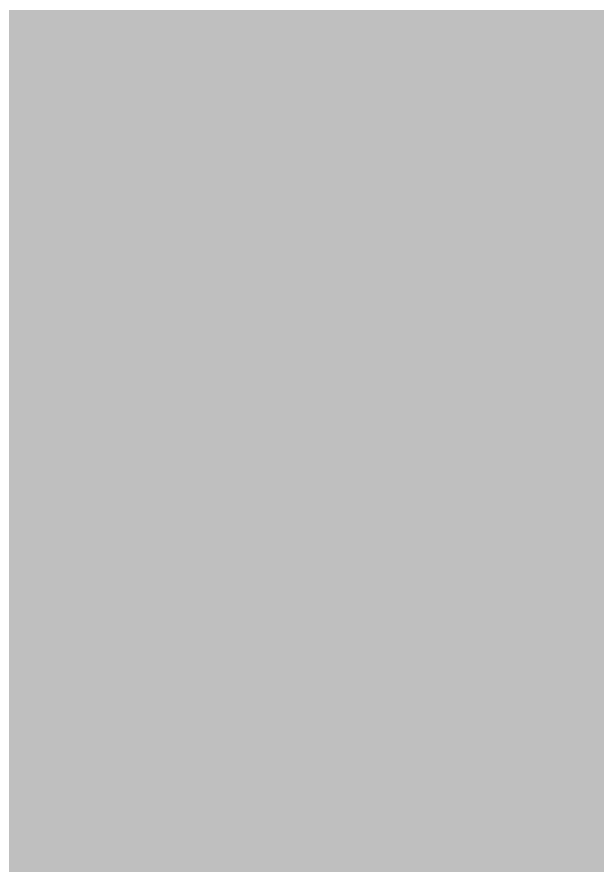


Figure 4. Mosaic depicting an empty throne heralding the Second Coming, located on the inner entrance wall of the chapel of San Zeno

(Gallio, 2008)



Figure 5. Mosaic depicting the transfiguration of Christ in the Altar Niche of the chapel of San Zeno.

(Gallio, 2008)

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