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The Church of Ravenna and the imperial administration in the seventh century

In studies of ecclesiastical attitudes to secular authority in Byzantine Italy scholarly interest has not unnaturally concentrated on the relations of the Roman Church with the empire. A momentous change occurred between the sixth century, when Justinian I succeeded in imposing his ecclesiastical policies on the papacy and Pope Gregory the Great maintained an attitude of political loyalty to the empire, and the eighth century, when resentment against imperial maladministration, fiscal exactions and doctrinal error caused a crisis of confidence which eventually led to the calling in of the Frankish monarchy as an alternative protector. Comparative little attention has been paid to the other sees of Byzantine Italy and to the practical implications of imperial rule on their day-to-day administration. As 'agents of the state' bishops were called upon to fulfil a large number of functions, as contemporary writers recognized, sometimes with concern over the secular outlook which resulted. Pope Gregory the Great outlined in his Pastoral Care the extensive range of duties which bishops had to their flock in the earthly domain as huic sanctui potestas. A more critical view was taken after a visit to Rome in 613 by St Columbanus, whose denunciations of the complacency and affluence of the clergy can best be understood in the context of the favours lavished on the church by the government in return for services performed. In the same period


the clergy of Ravenna became so preoccupied with secular concerns that Archbishop John IV was singled out in the tradition of his see as exceptional for his refusal to grant gifts out of episcopal revenues to powerful laymen.1

The involvement of bishops in secular government can be traced back to the Late Roman period, when they were allotted a share in many civic functions and a role as watchdogs over imperial officials. The process was accelerated in the Byzantine period, and bishops even for a time played a part in the selection of local governors. In the legal sphere bishops were expected to publish imperial legislation and to act as arbitrators in civil litigation, and were granted jurisdiction in all cases involving clergy by a novel of 629. Factors which contributed to the growth of episcopal control over civic services such as the corn supply and the repair of walls include the vacuum caused by the collapse of the old civil institutions and the impoverishment of the imperial government. Here it is unwise to generalize from the example of Rome, where the papacy's exceptional authority and wealth soon enabled it to dominate the administration of the city. Elsewhere the military garrisons assumed an important role and the secular authorities and the church co-operated in maintaining what they could of the old city services.2 Fortunately a reasonable amount of material survives for the see of Ravenna, largely in the Liber Pontificalis of the ninth-century writer Andreas Agnellus, which provides a corrective to the Roman evidence.

1 Liber regularis pastorali, Migne, Patrologia Latina, IX, 53 (discussed by A. Guillou, L'évêque dans la société des VIe-VIIe siècles, Bulletin de l'Ecole des Chartes, cxxvi (1935), 12); Columbanus, Ep. 5, ed. W. Gundlach, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Episcopii, iii (Berlin, 1892), 172 (the importance of this passage has been brought out in the perceptive article of P. Llewellyn, 'The Roman Church in the Seventh Century: the legacy of Gregory I', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, xxv (1974), 371); Agnellus, cap. 104, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH, Scriptores Rerum Langobardiarum et Italicarum SIE, VI-IX (Hanover, 1878), p. 345. The superior but incomplete edition of A. Tacci Raspanti, Codex Pontificalis selectus Ravennatis, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores SIE, ii, iii (Bologna, 1914) is not used in this paper since it does not extend beyond 606.

2 Late Roman position: J. Gaudemet, L'apôtre dans l'empire romain (VIIe-Ve siècle), Histoire du droit et des institutions de l'église en occident, iii (Paris, n.d.), 225-72. Important powers were conferred on bishops in Italy by the Pragmatic Sanction of 154: Corpus Juris Canonici, i, Novellae, ed. R. Schnell and G. Krall (Berlin, 1891), 880-1, capp. 12, 13, 18. Judicial power: H. Jaeger, 'Justitien et l'épiscopat authentique', Rev. Hist. de Droit Fr. et Etr., xxxviii (1968), 334-63; see Graeco-Romanum, ed. K. E. Zachariah von Lingenhoel, iii (Leipzig, 1857), 444-49, no. 21. Episcopal powers in Italy: C. Dietl, Etudes sur l'administration byzantine dans l'Empire de Ravenne (Paris, 1888), pp. 340-8; M. Machi, 'On the powers and duties of the bishops in the Roman Empire during the late middle ages' (Rome, 1910), pp. 17-102; Guillou, Régionalisme, pp. 163-7. An interesting example of church-state co-operation is a grant made by the imperial treasury to a charitable diaconia of the church of Urbino: Gregory I, Registrum, V, 48, ed. P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann, MGH, Epistolae, i (Berlin, 1873), 348. In the case of Ravenna Ernst Stein believed that local government was dominated by the city's acacottarii: 'Beiträge zur Geschichte von Ravenna in spätromischer und byzantinischer Zeit', Klio, xvi (1919), 68-69 (= Opera Minorca Selecta (Amsterdam, 1968), pp. 29-30). Although the military element possessed particular importance in the capital, partly because of its numbers, Stein's views do not do full justice to the co-operation between army and clergy which resulted from common interests and background.
The wealth of many churches was a major factor in their relations with the state. Rome, Ravenna and many other sees had benefited greatly from the pious benefactions of emperors and private individuals, and at a time when civilian tax-payers were impoverished by war and the state was fighting for its life against the Lombards, ecclesiastical property was called upon to make a major contribution to the government’s revenues. The weight of the tax burden on papal patrimonies is clear from Pope Gregory’s letters and from the relief expressed in papal circles when Constantine IV and Justinian II reduced the assessment for tax and compulsory purchases of corn on papal estates. In the 720s Pope Gregory II’s promotion of a tax boycott in protest over increased rates suggests that the papacy was an important contributor. In the following decade Leo III confiscated papal patrimonies in Sicily and Calabria and ordered the tenants to pay 3½ talents of gold to his treasury. Some of the lands may originally have belonged to the state, and parallels in the East suggest that Leo may have felt justified in making use of lands administered by the church in view of the crisis of the Arab invasions. Similarly the tax increases on church property for which Burychius, the last exarch in Italy, was bitterly criticized were probably a reflection of the desperate financial straits of the imperial administration in its final years. In the time of Gregory the Great the papacy had been prepared to use its resources to aid the beleaguered government. The Pope authorized the payment of large sums as tribute to the Lombards and even claimed that he had taken on the responsibility of paying the local garrison as if he was the emperor’s paymaster in Rome. This remark may represent more than mere rhetoric, since Patriarch Gregory of Antioch distributed pay to his city’s garrison, and in 640 unpaid troops in Rome stormed the Lateran Palace on the grounds that Pope Honorius had failed to issue the donatives stored there, presumably on behalf of the emperor.\footnote{Gregory I’s concern with taxation: F. Homes Dudden, \textit{Gregory the Great. His Place in History and Thought} (London, 1905), ii. 233–48. Concessions of Constantine IV and Justinian II: \textit{Liber Pontificalis}, ed. L. Duchesne, i (Paris, 1888), 366, 368, 369 (= F. Doelter, \textit{Regesten des Kaiserurhinken des oströmischen Reiches}, i (Münch and Berlin, 1934), 31, 31a, 259, 253, 256); an indication of the state’s determination in exacting its fiscal rights is furnished by the provision in the last privilege for the return of slaves of the Roman patrimony seized as a pledge for the payment of tax arrears. Gregory II’s boycott: \textit{LP}, i. 454, Theophanes, \textit{Chronographia}, a. 6217, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1887), i. 404. Leo III’s confiscations: \textit{ibid.}, 2. 6224, i. 410, discussed in L. M. Hartmann, \textit{Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter}, ii. 1 (Gotha, 1903), 112–14. Eutychius’ impositions: \textit{LP}, i. 458. The tribute paid by Gregory was probably reimbursed by the imperial government: Berthelot, \textit{Roma}, p. 210. The pope’s claim to be \textit{imperial sanctusarius}: Gregory, \textit{Regestra}, v. 25, i. 328; cf. Evagrius, \textit{Ecclesiastical History}, vi. 11, ed. J. Bidez and L. Farmentier (London, 1898), p. 229 and \textit{LP}, i. 328.} It has also been argued that the state compelled the church to rent out some of its lands to soldier-farmers. However, there is no evidence for such \textit{limitanæi} or for any official allocation of land in Byzantine Italy, and soldiers can be seen to have obtained their
holdings by individual commercial transactions with churches and other parties.\footnote{1}

The expansion of ecclesiastical property coincides with a sharp fall in references to the imperial patrimony. It is clear that the state possessed extensive lands in the fifth and sixth centuries, and that these were augmented by the confiscation of a large proportion of Gothic property after 532; the vast patrimony of Theodahad in Tuscany, for example, probably reverted to the state. The copious references to agents of the imperial domain in the letters of Pope Gregory the Great suggest that the administration of the patrimony remained intact at the end of the sixth century. The paucity of later references can reasonably be attributed to a widespread process of alienation, which contributed to the growing local power of military officials. Important evidence is contained in the record of a plea held before the Frankish duke of Istria concerning the rights of the inhabitants 'in the time of the Greeks', in which a distinction is made between the public lands (\textit{fiscus publicus}) at Cittanova, the proceeds from which had been illegally detained by the new duke, and the extensive property in the hands of the local landowners, the \textit{tribuni}. It is likely that the latter obtained much of their land by usurpation, but the conferment of state property on officials such as the duke may have received imperial sanction because the machinery for administering such estates had broken down and the direct allocation of income was a convenient form of remuneration. A two-fold explanation for the disappearance of imperial domains was advanced by Ludo Hartmann; his first hypothesis, that lands were divided up as lands for \textit{limitanici}, can be ruled out, but his argument that tenants let their payments lapse and officials usurped the lands in their charge as a consequence of the unsettled times and the weakness of central government can be accepted. Both the alienation of lands by tenants and officials and the official selling of lands of the \textit{rex privata} occurred in the Late Roman period.\footnote{2}

1. The arguments for an allocation of state land advanced by J. M. Hartmann, \textit{Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Verwaltung in Italien (530-750)} (Leipzig, 1889), pp. 59-60, and in H. Haussig, 'Anfänge der Themenordnung', in R. Altheim and R. Streit, \textit{Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike} (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1957), pp. 184-5, 214, are largely based on \textit{Registrium}, vili. 32. ii. 34, which refers to the inhabitants of the \textit{castrum} of Squillace failing to pay rent to the monastery of Vinarium. The present author sought to show in \textit{Social Structure and the Hierarchy of Officials in Byzantine Italy, 554-602 A.D.} (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, 1970), pp. 144-5, that the tenants mentioned were not soldiers but local civilians who sought refuge on property owned by the monastery.

2. Imperial lands in Italy: Hartmann, \textit{Untersuchungen}, pp. 75-77. Property of Theodahad: Procopius, \textit{De Bello Gotico}, i. 3, 2; ed. J. Haury, ii (Leipzig, 1901), 15. Gregory's references to the imperial patrimony: \textit{Registrium}, v. 36, xx. 72, ix. 339, xiii. 26, i. 325, ii. 9, 236-7, 307 et al. Plea of Risanio, ed. C. Macrini, \textit{I placiti del regnum Latino}, i, \textit{Fonte por la tavola d'\'Italia}, xxiii (Rome, 1955), 50-56; at 53, a superior edition to that of Guilleau, \textit{Régionalismes}, pp. 301-7. The usual fate of the revenues of the \textit{fiscus} is not clear, and the \textit{fiscus} is only mentioned at Cittanova, which may well have been an exceptional case since it is the only area where a state official (\textit{cancellarius}) is recorded as
It is clear that a great deal of imperial property came into the hands of the church. The last imperial edict recorded in Italy before the loss of Ravenna concerns the grant by Constantine V to the Roman Church of two estates which were used by Pope Zacharias as the basis for a new domuscella in southern Lazio. In general the transfers were effected by donation, although in the Rome area at least some property was taken over unilaterally by the church; in some cases land used to maintain troops or public services seems to have retained a distinct legal status as publicum. This widespread phenomenon of the passing of imperial estates into ecclesiastical hands was facilitated by the fact that the state's holdings were in general fluid, its supervision irregular and its rights ill-defined. In addition to unauthorized usurpations, grants and sales were continually made and to some extent the patrimony was replenished by confiscations. More than a century after Gregory the Great complained about the over-zealousness of officials in this regard, Roman citizens were in fear of the forfeiture of their property when they were accused of crimes before the exarch, and the iconoclast Leo III confiscated land of the Roman church in southern Italy. Moreover large, directly-managed estates were always a much less important element in the imperial patrimony than scattered holdings which were leased to tenants in return for rent or granted to favoured subjects as rewards. By a seeming paradox the state often found that the safest and most efficient way of exploiting its lands was to grant them out in return for regular tax and rent payments. The most frequent recipient was the church, since it was a perpetual institution with close ties to the secular authorities which could be counted upon not to alienate the property and to pay its dues regularly.

Such a calculated fiscal policy can be traced in grants made to the Roman church. During the pontificate of Pelagius I (556–561) the papal patrimony was stated to be increasing, and there is mention of a dispute with officials of the imperial patrimonium over lands in the church's keeping. Most instructive of all is a case involving lands near Palestrina which had previously belonged to one Hildebad (probably the uncle of the Gothic king Totila); a demand
made by the general Narses that payments he made from the state’s revenues to two local priests suggests that confiscated lands were granted to the church on predetermined conditions.1

Such a nexus is more clearly visible in the case of the church of Ravenna, which enjoyed a particularly close relationship with the imperial government. The statement of Agnellus that the state conferred property confiscated from the Arian Church of the Goths on Archbishop Agnellus (537–576) is confirmed by a papyrus document from the early years of Justin II which records the tax payable to the prefect and the rent payable to the comes patrimonii in respect of one such grant of lands near Ravenna.2 On another occasion Justinian donated a forest in Istria to Archbishop Maximian. A large part of the see’s considerable patrimony can be assumed to have stemmed from imperial grants; in the seventh century no less than 13,000 solidi, almost half of the church’s revenue from its Sicilian possessions, were paid to Constantinople, and this probably included rent for previously imperial land as well as tax.3 The rights retained by the state are obscure, but they appear to have included some lien on the property’s revenue, and the level of taxation seems to have been high. Agnellus records that Justinian granted Bishop Victor of Ravenna (537–544) the yield of one year’s tax (contise) from all Italy; this garbled account probably refers to a year’s remission of the large sum of tax payable on the church’s lands. The government was able to use its position as benefactor as a lever to extract favours from the church, such as the immense loan of 600 pounds of gold obtained in 599.4 On the other hand, the church could use its importance as an agent of the imperial power to obtain valuable privileges. The rent and taxes obtained from churches such as Ravenna were essential to the government because economic dislocation caused its revenue to fall far short of the large sums which it required for diplomatic initiatives, the payment of tribute and the remuneration of soldiers and officials. Although some savings were achieved as officials came to support themselves from their own estates, the state’s financial problems became more acute as its income was reduced by embezzlement, the contraction of imperial territory and the general shortage of liquidity. Particular campaigns such as those of Constans II

3. Agnellus, cap. 74, 111, pp. 328, 350. The seventh-century sums indicate that the see’s revenues had increased greatly from the 13,000 solidi which it possessed in 526–530, an income which was still great enough to place Ravenna in the first rank of non-patriarchal sees: ibid., cap. 66, p. 319, and see Jones, Later Roman Empire, ii. 905.
4. Agnellus, cap. 96, p. 344, and see Hartmann, Untersuchungen, p. 873; Gregory, Regesten, ii. 240, ii. 234.
necessitated extraordinary tax demands which aggravated the suffering and exhaustion of the country. In this deteriorating economic climate sums such as the 2171 ½ solidi specified as payable on particular estates under the document of 565/570 and the 15,000 payable from the Sicilian patrimony of the see of Ravenna were crucial to a government which had the greatest difficulty in raising such small sums as 12,000 or 36,000 solidi as tribute.1

In the case of Ravenna both the church’s economic importance and the power and influence exercised by its archbishop were reinforced as a result of the ‘special relationship’ which existed with the imperial authorities. The see had enjoyed a remarkable rise to the position of metropolitan of Emilia as a consequence of its status as the seat of the Western emperors in the fifth century. The elevation, which owed much to the forcefulness of those most learned of the see’s bishops, St Peter Chrysologus (432–450), left the church in an anomalous position as the metropolitan of a province to which it itself did not belong while remaining a suffragan of Rome as one of the bishoprics of Flaminia. Only towards the end of the sixth century were the other dioceses of Flaminia, Forlì, Cesena and Sarsina, incorporated within its jurisdiction.2 This obscure development can best be associated with the remarkable relationship between the bishops of Ravenna and the emperor Justinian. After the reconquest of the city from the Goths in 540 privileges were lavished on the see and tangible evidence of imperial favour survives in the churches built and decorated under the emperor’s patronage. Some scholars have even seen in this period the establishment of a ‘state church subject to imperial power’ and have deduced from the honourable position held by Bishop Maximian in the ‘court’ mosaic on the left wall of the apse of the Church of S. Vitale a desire to exalt Ravenna to a quasi-patriarchal status as a kind of second Constantinople. However such a precise purpose seems less likely than a more general one of glorifying the emperor in the eyes of his subjects, and in view of the enduring scholarly controversy over the interpretation of the work it would be hazardous to read more into it than an indication of the imperial favour which Ravenna enjoyed, on a par with the remarkable ivory throne presented to Maximian during his visit, which is dated 549.3


by the emperor. Although the clergy later developed claims to apostolic foundation which implied patriarchal status, nothing in Ravennate tradition suggests that Justinian bolstered these ambitions. Agnellus in fact records the emperor’s refusal to grant Maximian the relics of St Andrew, the supposed apostolic founder of the see of Constantinople.

Justinian’s elevation of the see seems rather to have been limited in scope and practical in intention. In 546 he appointed as prelate his own confidant, Maximian, a native of Pola in Istria, and arranged for him to receive the pallium, a band of white wool originally issued by the emperor to high dignitaries in both the ecclesiastical and civil spheres. The emperor also appears to have been responsible for the conferment of the title of archbishop on his protegé, although Maximian is not recorded as employing it officially until 553. In line with his policy of defining the ecclesiastical hierarchy more precisely, Justinian can be seen as granting the previously vague title of archbishop to metropolitans who possessed jurisdiction in provinces additional to their own, but in Ravenna’s case there may have been a recognition that this was exercised through a papal vicariate, as the emperor had to concede in the case of his birthplace Justiniana Prima, which he had raised to archiepiscopal status in 533.2 Undoubtedly Byzantine conceptions of hierarchy required that the ecclesiastical standing of a city should match its civil status, and Justinian thus conferred superior metropolitan rank on politically favoured centres such as Carthage and Justiniana Prima as well as Ravenna. As part of an apparent policy of rewarding sees considered likely to be tractable, Carthage was granted privileges which undermined those of the rival provinces of Byzacenum and Numidia and, like Ravenna, received generous grants of confiscated lands.3


2. Ibid., cap. 70, p. 326; Simonini, *Antepfallia*, pp. 57–58 and n. 19. The most likely interpretation of Agnellus’ obscure wording seems to be that Pope Vigilius, whose policy was still one of co-operation with Justinian in 546, conferred the pallium at the emperor’s request. The pallium had long ceased to be a secular mark of office, but popes are recorded as obtaining rulers’ approval before conferring the distinction, as in the case of Pope Symmachus’ grant to Caesarius of Arles in 513: E. Steid, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, ii (Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, 1949), 153, n. 1. In general on the pallium see P. Bartifol, *Études de liturgie et d’archéologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1919), pp. 57–71.

The gradual process of Ravenna’s promotion was accelerated by the serious schism which arose in Italy over the condemnation by the Council of Constantinople of 553 of the opinions of three theologians which had been accepted by the earlier Council of Chalcedon. A pressing need arose for a loyal ecclesiastic to carry out imperial policies, including the condemnation of these ‘Three Chapters’, since Pope Vigilius had at first refused to follow the imperial line and the metropolitans of Aquileia and Milan remained steadfast in their opposition. During this period of schism in northern Italy the staunchly loyal archbishops of Ravenna seem to have exercised jurisdiction over Istria and Liguria as well as Emilia. In all three provinces the consecration of non-schismatic bishops was carried out by the archbishop of Ravenna, whose name was inserted in the canons of the Ambrosian mass after that of the pope. The Ravenna pontiff received the archiepiscopal title in order that he might exercise primatial power over a group of provinces by the mandate of the emperor or of the pope acting as patriarch of the West. This policy of leadership of the opposition to the ‘Istrian schism’ continued after the papacy lined up behind the imperial position. When the exarch Smaragdus decided to suppress the resistance of the schismatic bishops by force in 187, he had Patriarch Severus of Aquileia and three of his suffragans brought to Ravenna and forced them to abjure the Three Chapters in the presence of Archbishop John III.

The exarchs used the archbishop as the main instrument of imperial religious policy and rewarded him accordingly. The exarch Romanus steadfastly defended the archbishop’s right to wear the pallium when Pope Gregory claimed that the use was unauthorized, and was accused of arranging for the display of a placard defaming

1. ‘Test. Raspoin, ibid supra, 43-44. A letter of Pope Pelagius I records that the name of Agnellus, Maximian’s successor, was included in the mass-canons in the schismatic areas of Venetia and Istria: Epistulae, no. 50, p. 131, and of examples of Ravenna’s authority over schismatics in ibid., nos. 49, 74, pp. 136-8, 187-8. The inclusion of a mass for St. Apollinaris in the earliest Ambrosian sacramentaries, which date from the ninth century and which also mention the saint in the Ambrosian canon, may have originated in this period: A. Paredi, Sacramentarium Bergomense. Manoscritto del secolo IX, Monumenta Borgomense, vii (Bergamo, 1962), 156, 157, 261-2, and Corpus Ambrosianum Liturgicum, i. Des Sacramentarium Triplum, ed. O. Heimig, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen, Heft 45 (Münster, 1968), 102, 198-9. The commemoration of the Ravenna saint long after the see of Milan fell out of the political orbit of the empire is the result of the Lombard capture of her place of exile (Genoa) in c. 649 runs counter to the view of Llewellyn ‘Roman Church’ (cited supra p. 2, n. 1), 373, that Apollinaris became the ‘patron saint of Byzantine Italy’ in the early seventh century.

2. Paul the Deacon, Historia Langobardorum, iii. 26, pp. 105-6. In 598 the archbishop co-operated with the exarch in imposing penance on a bishop of Salona who had been uncanonically elected: Gregory, Registrum, viii. 30, ii. 38.
the pope in Ravenna. 1 Although the degree of influence exercised by the exarch in the election of a new archbishop is unclear, an official of his importance would certainly be consulted on the choice, and a late description of a consecration ceremony plausibly portrays the exarch as standing surety for the archbishop. A letter of Pope Gregory the Great mentions two candidates who were presented by the exarch for the pope’s approval. The exarch could also exert considerable influence through the officials and troops under his command, whose role in the actual election was as important as that of the Roman military aristocracy in seventh-century papal elections. 2
In turn the archbishop’s views carried considerable weight with the exarch, as was recognized by a form letter of the papal chancery which requested the archbishop to intercede with the exarch in order to secure approval of a newly elected pope. In the late seventh century the exarch acceded to a request of Archbishop Theodore for help in conciliating his irate clergy, and in the fourth decade of the eighth century the exarch Eutychius was encouraged by timely bribes to obtain the recall of Archbishop John VI from exile. Such buying of support was not uncommon, if one may judge from Maximian’s use of cash handouts to placate opponents of his appointment and Agnellus’ bitter complaints against pontiffs who gave rich gifts to lay “princes”. 3
The most systematically used instrument for securing influence, however, was the conferment of land. The oldest surviving document drawn up in the archiepiscopal chancery of Ravenna is a papyrus contract from the middle of the seventh century granting lands and houses in Rimini to the former exarch Theodore Calliopa in return for a modest rent of seven solidi. Many such grants to officials were made with the clear intention of securing goodwill useful to the church, and some scholars have made a clear distinction between these increasingly common “political” grants and the original “economic” contracts of emphyteusis. In addition tenants signed an undertaking not to take any action detrimental to their dominus, and Archbishop John VI was able to use this provision to fine those of his tenants who had driven him into exile. 4 These financial links came to be matched by financial ties after the soldiers and officials

1. Ibid., vii. 42, i. 450.
2. G. Rossi, Historiarum Ravennatium Libri XI (Venice, 1589), pp. 741–2, and cf. Guillou, Regiones, pp. 174-5; Gregory, Epistlerum, v. 51, i. 551. The inclusion of dux and militum in Pope Gregory’s address to the city of Ravenna (reference in n. 21) suggests that the city’s exarch was a role analogous to that exercised by the garrison of Rome in the seventh century, on which see Pattegno, ‘Les armes’, 25–38.
settled down and married into the local families which filled the ranks of both the secular administration and the local clergy. In this way a subdeacon who was the son of a magister militum donated considerable lands to his church in 625. The family of Agnellus, which the historian traced back to the secretary of an exarch around 690, included both prominent clerics and leading secular officials. In 744 it was a lay nobleman, the consul Sergius, who was elected to become one of the most vigorous of Ravenna's archbishops. Interdependence of laity and clergy, at least on the economic plane, was a common feature of early Byzantine society. In the sixth century laymen appear to have financed the building of churches as a speculative venture, with the aim of recouping their investment by placing their friends and relatives in clerical offices or even by dividing the church's revenues with the clergy.  

Although the marked rise in Ravenna's authority from the late sixth century coincides with the first appearance of the office of exarch in 584, the see's standing is unlikely to have been significantly affected by an innovation which represented a mere change in administrative terminology rather than a radical reform of secular government. A much more important factor was the virtual blocking of communications between northern and southern Italy caused by the Lombard invasions and the creation of the Duchy of Spoleto. Not only did pressure on the resources of church and state become more acute, but it became increasingly difficult for the bishop of Rome to exercise jurisdiction over the suffragans of his province north of the Apennines. In 592 Pope Gregory had to delegate certain temporary powers over sees in the Pentapolis to Ravenna because of the 'intrusion of the barbarians'.  

The apex of Ravenna's power was reached in 666, when the see obtained from the Emperor Constans II the privilege of independence from the Roman Church, the autocephalia which Bacchini, the first editor of Agnellus' history denounced as 'indignum ... facinus et silentio aeterno obnudentum'. The more moderate tendency of recent scholars has been to see the grant not as a devilish plan to foment schism within the Western Church but as an example of Byzantine kirchenpolitik whereby the empire sought to weaken the theologically obstructive church of Rome and to bind the second most powerful

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1. Concilia inter clericos et laicos de Ravenna' negli Studii di Orazio da Polenta, I (1932), 34-47, although it has to be stressed that no differences appear in the formulae of the documents.

2. P. Ital., no. 21, p. 356; Agnellus, cap. 120, 246, 154, pp. 336, 375, 377. Archbishop Sergius can probably be identified with the Sergius consilis Ravennae who had earlier been held prisoner by King Liutprand (L.P., i. 428). On the profits which laymen could gain by building churches see C. Mango, Architettura bizantina (r.p. or d. [1974]), p. 24, and idem, 'Les monuments de l'architecture du Xe siècle et leur signification historique et sociale', Travaine et MHowever, vi (1976), 333.

3. Gregory, Registrum, ii. 28, i. 124-5; cf. Testi Rasponi, ubi supra, 46-47.

4. B. Bacchini, Nigro, ML., cxi, col. 450.
see in Italy more closely to Constantinople. In the words of Charles
Diehl the Greeks sought to make the archbishop of Ravenna ‘un
serviteur docile de l’Exarche’.

There are several difficulties with this
view. Firstly, as has been seen, the archbishops had already shown
themselves consistently loyal to the Byzantine governors. Secondly,
the judicial independence awarded extended only to Ravenna’s
metropolitan province of Emilia and Flaminia; in no way can the
grant of autocephaly be seen as an attempt to set up a ‘new religious
capital of the West’. At no point did the empire seek to undermine
the primacy of honour of the Roman see, since such a step would
have struck at the basis of Byzantine attitudes to apostolic primacy
and ecclesiastical hierarchy. Nevertheless Rome reacted violently to
this restriction of her patriarchal authority, and an exchange of
anathemas followed between Pope Vitalian and Archbishop Maurus.
It is hard to see what the empire hoped to gain from thus
antagonizing the papacy. A measure of reconciliation had been
achieved after the traumatic episode of the arrest of Pope Martin I
treasury; and on his visit to Rome in 663 Constans II had gone
out of his way to confirm Rome’s rights as senior church and to
present precious gifts including jewelled gospel-books. If Constans
intended to grant autocephaly in order to punish a defeated
ecclesiastical opponent he miscalculated badly.

The main aim of the ecclesiastical policy of the Heraclian dynasty
had been the smoothing over of differences and rivalries, but the
effect of the grant of autocephaly was to place the two leading sees
of imperial Italy at loggerheads at an extremely dangerous time,
when the empire faced strong opposition from the Arabs and the
Lombards of Benevento. On the other hand the Roman sources,
although they condemn Constans for his rapacity, make no mention
of his initiating the hateful schism. To attribute to the emperor any
consistent policy of undermining Roman primacy is to overstretch
the evidence and to ignore the real dilemma which he faced in trying
to reconcile the principle of the equivalence of secular and
ecclesiastical status with the accepted notion of the apostolic origin
of the five patriarchates. The attitude of the archbishops of Ravenna
can be more clearly seen as one of resentment over the anomalous

1. Diehl, *Studios*, p. 266.
2. As argued by P. Lemerle, ‘Les répercussions de la crise de l’empire d’orient au
VIIIe siècle sur les pays d’occident’, *Sesimane (di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto
Medioevo)*, v, ii (Societa, 1939), 731.
Maurus: Aquilias, cap. 114, pp. 355–6. On Constans’ policy see L. Magi,
La sede romana nelle corrispondenza degli imperatori e patriarchi bizantini (VI–VII sec.)
(Rome–Louvain, 1972), p. 126, and P. Llewellyn, ‘Constans II and the Roman Church:
a possible example of imperial pressure’, *Byzantium*, xlvi (1972), 129–6. Although the
details of Llewellyn’s arguments may be questioned, his study confirms that, rather than
pitting one see against another, Constans took more positive steps to make both
Ravenna and Rome more amenable to the imperial position.
position of their see, which as a suffragan of Rome in respect of its own diocese was denied full metropolitan status and whose ecclesiastical rank fell short of Ravenna's importance in the civil hierarchy. The initiative is more likely, therefore, to have come from Maurus himself, who is presented by Agnellus as an ambitious figure prepared to make visits to Constantinople in order to advance his case and who was remembered in Ravennate tradition as the driving force behind the autocephaly movement. This view is confirmed by the privilege itself; the emperor stated that the document was a reward for the loyalty \textit{(fidei animum) and service (servicium) of the archbishop issued in response to the submission of the exarch Gregory and the report of Maurus himself as conveyed by his envoy Reparatus. The protocol gives a clue to the emperor's motive, since it states that the archbishop had made payments to the exarch \textit{(praestita sibi indicat solatia).}\footnote{1}

Constans' willingness to recognize the see's claims may have been further encouraged by the presentation of a series of forgeries which illustrate the developing aspirations of the Ravennate clergy. The most notorious of these is the false diploma of Valentinian III conferring jurisdiction over the whole of Emilia and Flaminia, which survives only in a papyrus copy and which has been variously dated to the first half of the seventh century, the Carolingian period and the years between 1047 and 1078. There are, however, strong arguments in favour of the most commonly accepted view that the document was forged shortly before 666; it fits in well with the likely climate of clerical opinion during the archiepiscopate of Maurus, and must almost certainly have been drawn up before 840 because there are clear echoes of its wording in a passage of Agnellus.\footnote{2} A second important forgery is a privilege attributed to Pope Gregory the Great. This has been dated to the same period as the Valentinian document on the grounds that the list of bishops placed under Ravennate jurisdiction is very similar and that some passages, most notably that granting the right to the pallium, exhibit close verbal parallels. However, the inclusion of the bishoprics of Cervia and Comacchio and a reference to 'the customs of the Lombard kings' (inconceivable before the imperial recognition of the Lombard kingdom around 680 and highly unlikely before 751) point to a date

\footnote{1}{Agnellus, cap. 110, 112, pp. 349, 352. The privilege is edited \textit{ibid.}, pp. 350–1, n. 8.}
in the late eighth or ninth centuries. These documents, together with a third forgery in the name of Charlemagne, were ascribed to the tenth century in a detailed study by Karl Brandi. Only the last document can, however, be dated so late, on the grounds that it includes nine bishoprics in the Pentapolis which were not at issue between Ravenna and Rome until the late tenth century. These documents represent only a few of the numerous authentic and spurious privileges claimed by the church of Ravenna. The document attributed to Pope Gregory, for example, mentions praesidia issued by Valentinian, Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius, Justinian, Tiberius II and Maurice, while a papal bull of 1086 adds mention of privileges of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious and several German emperors.1

Only the Valentinian privilege can therefore be ascribed to the seventh century. There are, however, also literary productions which vividly demonstrate the independent consciousness of Ravenna in this period. To the seventh century, whose productiveness stands out amid the curiously meagre literary achievement of the city between 550 and 1000, can be assigned the distinctive Latin liturgy for Advent known as the Rotulus of Ravenna and the Cosmography compiled by an anonymous geographer with a blazing pride in the nobilitas and ecclesiastical dignity of his city.2 An equally interesting composition is the Passion of St Apollinaris, which portrays the city's patron as a friend of St Peter who came to Ravenna from the

1. Kehr, IP, v. 33, no. 164; ed. Rossi, p. 154. Cf. Brandi, 'Ravenna', to, 15-18, Simonini, p. 85, n. 23. Privilege of Charlemagne: J. F. Böhmer and E. Mühbacher, edd., Regesta Imperii, i. Die Regesten der Kaiserreicke unter den Karolinger, 2nd ed., reprinted with corrections (Hildesheim, 1956) (henceforth BM), no. 449; ed. S. Bernocchi, Documenti dell'Archivio Storico Comunale di Ravenna anteriori al secolo XII, FR, supplemento, i (1914), 6-9, no. 4 (a superior edition to that of E. Mühbacher in MGH, Diplomata Carolingiana, i (Hanover, 1906), no. 314); on the date, Brandi, 'Ravenna', 13 and n. 2, M. Mazzotti, 'La provincia ecclesiastica ravennate attraverso i secoli', Atti dei Convegni di Casena e Ravenna, i (Cesena, 1969), 15-26. Bull of Clement III: Kehr, IP v. 56-57, no. 187, ed. Migne, PL, cxlviii, col. 810. A lost privilege of Charlemagne bearing the date 787 gave the Church of Ravenna rights to half of the fish caught in one of the lagoons near Comacchio (Ravenna, Biblioteca Comunale, xix, no. 65 BM no. 449). However the mention of a grant of media piscarium Guarnionis usque ad Mare et usque ad eariusm Gernose, which also occurs in BM no. 449, suggests that the privilege may well be identical with the eleven-century forgery. On the other hand, Agnellus, cap. 161, p. 384, records that Archbishop Gratiosus (r. 781-788) obtained everything that he wanted from Charles (pugnatus imperator...obtulit; a phrase often used by Agnellus of the receipt of privileges).

2. S. Benz, Der Rotulus von Ravenna nach seiner Herkunft und seiner Bedeutung für die Liturgische Geschichte kirchlich germanisch, i. Q and II, Heft 45 (Münster, 1957), pp. 9-16; although this work belongs to the Gallician tradition, it was copied at least a century after the Roman rite had been introduced into Ravenna. Fragments of two 'Gelasian' sacramentaries survive which were probably produced in Ravenna in the seventh or eighth centuries: K. Gamber, Codices Liturgici Latini Antiquissimae (Freiburg, 1903), pp. 119-20, nos. 670, 671. Ravennatis anonyma cosmographia, ed. J. Schnetz, Itineraria Romana, ii (Leipzig, 1940); for one example from a considerable recent literature see S. Mazzatinti, 'Da Lollianus et Arboerto al mosaico storico di S. Apollinare in Classe. Note sulla tradizione culturale di Ravenna e sull'Anonimo Ravennate', Rivista di studi bizantini e neoeovene, n.s., ii-xiii (xii-xiii) (1951), 111-14.
East to convert Emilia and who ultimately suffered martyrdom. Legends associated with the saint were already current in the time of St Peter Chrysologus, but no attempt was made to claim for the first bishop of the city the status of an apostolic companion of St Peter or of a martyr. The fact that Constans II recognized Ravenna as an apostolic see in his privilege of 666 may indicate that the Passion in was in circulation by that date, and the revamped legend fits in well with the aspirations of clerics such as Mauroz to exalt the status of their see. The form of the legend also demonstrates that Ravenna’s claim to autonomy did not entail a repudiation of the Roman primacy. Neither the Ravennate clergy or their historian Agnellus sought to impugn the Petrine authority of the see of Rome; instead they attempted to emulate it by raising their patron to the level of St Peter. The mentality is demonstrated by a remark of Agnellus about Archbishop Maximian’s attempt to obtain the relics of St Andrew the Apostle from Constantinople: ‘And truly, brethren, if he (Maximian) had buried the body of St Andrew, the brother of St Peter the Prince, here (i.e. in the Basilica of S. Andrea Maggiore), he would never have subordinated us to the Roman pontiff’. Ravenna could never enjoy the prestige vis-à-vis Rome enjoyed by Constantinople unless it could claim the association of an apostle.

Further confirmation that Ravenna was forcefully pursuing its claims in the first half of the seventh century is offered by the expansion of the cult of St Apollinaris. The dedication of an oratory in the atrium of St Peter’s to the saint by Pope Honorius (625–638) and the first traces of some commemoration of the saint’s name in Rome at around this time may reflect a willingness on the part of the popes to co-operate with the exarchs’ policy of raising the standing of Ravenna. An episode of 679, however, suggests that

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2. In general on the cult of St Apollinaris, E. Will, ‘Saint Apollinaire de Ravenne (Paris, 1938), pp. 12–27, and von Simson, pp. 52–53, whose view that the feast of St. Apollinaris seems to have been introduced into the Roman liturgy in the middle of the 7th century’ requires modification. The building erected by Honorius was not a basilica (ibid., p. 53) but a mere oratory in the South-East corner of the atrium of St Peter’s. Apollinaris figures in none of the early Roman sacramentaries (Gelasian, ‘Eighteenth Century Gelasians’ and early Gregorian), although the ‘Hadraniel’ text of the Gregorian sacramentary shows that the saint’s oratory had become the station for the Thursday of Passion Week by c. 725; ed. H. Lietsmann, Das Sacramentarium Gregorianum nach dem Aachener Urschreiber, I & Q und F, Heft 3 (Münster, 1921), p. 41. On the other hand, some commemoration must have existed since the saint’s feast (25 July) does appear in early Roman lectionaries (as well as the earliest Roman Graduale) of T. Klauser, Das römische Capitolare Evangeliorum. Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner ältesten Gegenwart, and ed., I & Q und F, Heft 18 (Münster, 1972), pp. 72, 78, 178, 178. G. Morin, ‘Liturgie et basiliques de Rome au milieu du VIIe siècle d’après les listes d’évangiles de Wurzburg’, Revue bénédictine, xxviii (1911), 296–330, associated the introduction of the
the clergy may not have developed a full commitment to ecclesiastical independence before the archiepiscopate of Maurus (644–673). When the exarch Eleutherius revolted against Heraclius, Archbishop John IV urged him to go to Rome to be crowned because it was the seat of empire (pallium imperii). Although this action was merely a ruse to enable the archbishop to hedge his bets in a politically awkward situation, a prelate as dedicated as Maurus to the apostolic and political importance of his see would hardly have resorted to an excuse so derogatory to the standing of his own city. It is also possible that the idea of autocephaly took some time to mature in Maurus’ mind. In 649 he was summoned by Pope Martin I to attend the Lateran synod convened to condemn the monothelite policies of Constans II, but he wrote to the pontiff that he was prevented from attending by the soldiers and people of Ravenna and the Pentapolis, who considered his presence necessary in case of a Lombard attack. Maurus’ deferential words are best taken at their face value, and the signing of the council’s acta by his representatives suggests that he was not yet contemplating an open breach.1

Maurus may not, however, have been averse to making capital out of the pope’s opposition to the emperor, just as his predecessors had profited from Pope Vigilius’ resistance to Justinian a century earlier. Certainly his long cultivation of the emperor through repeated visits to Constantinople suggests that his plan had been formulated some years before Constans’ departure for the West in 662. In strict legal terms the grant of 666 was not altogether exceptional, since precedents existed for the grant of jurisdictional independence, and Constans merely stated that Ravenna’s autocephalous position was to be the same as that of ‘other metropolitans in various provinces of our realm’. It is unclear whether the archbishop’s ‘loyalty’ and ‘service’ cited in the document refers to some particular action. It has been suggested that Maurus supported the monothelite policy promoted by Constans. Pro-monothelite sentiment among the city’s garrison may have played a part in the refusal to let Maurus go to Rome in 649, and the orders given to the exarch Olympus on his appointment in the same year included the obtaining

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of support for the official position among the bishops. On the other hand, Maurus’ orthodox profession of faith to the Lateran synod, the Ravennate tradition of adherence to the Roman position in matters of dogma and the lack of any imputation of heresy against Maurus in the Roman sources render pro-monothelite sympathies unlikely. Another possible explanation lies in Olympius’ revolt against Constans in 631. Very little is known of this episode, except that it collapsed with the usurper’s death in 632. In 633 the new exarch Theodore Callipopa arrested Pope Martin for complicity in the revolt and sent him for trial in Constantinople. Can it be assumed that Maurus remained loyal during Olympius’ rebellion? It might seem unlikely, until it is recalled that John IV had earlier avoided being compromised in an equally tricky situation. Also Martin’s arrest was carried out by contingents of the exercitus of Ravenna, which implies that certain elements in Olympius’ capital had not originally supported his revolt.

A more potent factor was probably the acute financial crisis facing the empire, which was exacerbated by the ambitious campaign of Constans II against the Lombard duchy of Benevento. After the unsuccessful outcome of the expedition Constans’ fiscal policy became increasingly oppressive. On his visit to Rome in 663 he stripped the city of its bronze statues and fittings and his tax demands in Sicily and southern Italy caused widespread distress. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the privilege of 666 was granted in return for some financial help offered by Maurus. The document mentions payments which the archbishop had made to the exarch, and Agnellus prefakes his discussion of autocephaly with a reference to the large sums paid to the imperial treasury from the revenues of Ravenna’s Sicilian patrimony. The suggestion that the privilege was a reward for Ravenna’s financial support has already been made by an Italian scholar, who argued that autocephaly was ‘a battle fought with weapons which were economic rather than ideological’.

Such contributions would fit in well with the state’s policy of using the church of Ravenna as an administrative agent. In the sixth century the see received important benefactions from Justinian, including much of the property confiscated from the Goths, as well as numerous donations from individuals. The most remarkable


4. Agnellus, cap. 111, p. 350; ibid., p. 352, n. 8; Simonini, p. 98.
aspect of the see’s patrimony is the extent of its holdings outside its metropolitan province in such areas as Sicily, Istria, the Pentapolis and the territory of Perugia. The extensive estates granted to Ravenna in the area of Pola appear to have been intended as a wedge driven into the province of the schismatic patriarch of Aquileia, but were retained in some measure until their seizure by the counts of Gorizia in the twelfth century. In the case of the Pentapolis, the grant to the former exarch Theodore Calliopa of houses and lands in Rimini originally donated by his father has already been noted, and numerous other examples of lands granted out by the church in the Pentapolis are recorded in a fragmentary register of deeds compiled in the third quarter of the tenth century generally known as the Codex Basarus. The surviving portions list leases and emphyteutic grants issued in the territories of Rimini, Senigallia, Osimo, Iesi, Gubbio, Perugia, Fossombrone, Urbino, Ancona, Montefeltro, Sarzana, Cervia and Cesena and include transactions as early as the archiepiscopate of Damianus (693–709).1 The question immediately arises of the origin of these properties. Although many must have been donated by individuals either for the remedy of their souls or for the judicial and economic advantages which could accrue if the donor, like Theodore, received his lands back in emphyteusis, the fact that most of the areas concerned lay outside Ravenna’s metropolitan jurisdiction suggests that many of the estates may have been granted by the state. From the latter’s point of view the use of the church as an agent served several purposes at a time when its own machinery of domanial administration had broken down. It was assured of a guaranteed income in taxes and, in some cases, of rent, and the close supervision of church administrators ensured that the land was kept productive and not alienated. A useful by-product was that it helped to maintain the goodwill of the church. Support for this hypothesis of state involvement comes from the diplomatic characteristics of the emphyteutic grants made by the church. Recent research has suggested that the model for these documents was none other than grants and edicts issued by the imperial chancery.2 The similarity is in part a reflection of the large number of


imperial privileges conferred on the church of Ravenna, but it is also plausible that these diplomatic parallels denote collaboration between the chancelleries of the archbishop and the exarch, and even some measure of secular supervision of the allocation of church lands.

An economic nexus of this kind may help to explain the mercenary character of the Ravenna clergy and the administrative background of many of the pontiffs. Maurus was bursar (ycenomus) before his consecration, while both Reparatus (673–679) and Felix (709–723) were vicarii dominii with reputations for administrative ability. The background of Theodore (679–692) is uncertain, but he was in constant conflict with his clergy over the allocation of his see’s revenues. Ludo Hartmann pointed out that the rights and property of the see became so extensive that some of its complexes took on the features of territorial lordships; an example is the area near Ravenna known as the tribunatus decimus which Archbishop Leo refused to hand over to the Pope in 775.¹

Although the policy of using a local church as a financial agent of the state was most highly developed in the case of Ravenna, similar principles operated elsewhere. Justinian I devoted considerable attention to the supervision of ecclesiastical property with the aim of preventing alienation and ensuring that a church’s revenues met its needs, such as maintenance of the clergy, the upkeep of buildings and the relief of the poor. It was in order to stop the alienation of church lands that the emperor laid down the conditions governing emphyteutic contracts which formed the basis of the grants so lavishly made by the archbishops of Ravenna over the following centuries. Ecclesiastical estates remained extensive in the early Byzantine period and were usually liable for the payment of major taxes. Favoured churches continued to benefit from donations, such as the valuable salt pans granted to Thessalonica by Justinian II.² In times of crisis emperors felt justified in using ecclesiastical property for their own purposes. Heraclius used the church’s silver plate to help finance his campaigns against the Persians, Nicephorus I

¹ Simonini, pp. 97–98. Agellius, cap. 100, p. 370; Codex Carolinus, no. 55, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH, Epictolos, ii (Berlin, 1862), 579; see Hartmann, Untersuchungen, pp. 83–86, and A. Campagna, ‘Decimo, Decimato, Dianaco: ricerche di toponomastica romana e medievale nella pianura romagnola’, Italia Romana, 1 (1941), 17–24, who identifies the tribunatus decimus with the area around File de S. Cassiano in Decimo, nine miles south of Ravenna which was recorded as a comitatus in the tenth century.

brought certain ecclesiastical estates under the control of the imperial domain, and Nicephorus II intervened to improve the efficiency of church properties. Although the emperors clearly felt that they had a right to dispose of ecclesiastical property for the common good, there was less need for a policy of entrusting imperial lands to the church in the East because the seventh century saw the creation of a reformed system of financial administration which was capable of managing the imperial patrimony.

From the late Roman period the empire demonstrated its close ties of mutual dependence with the church by issuing privileges exempting clerics from secular jurisdiction in many cases and ecclesiastical incomes from a wide range of taxes. The hypothesis that this relationship was extended into the sphere of land management gains support from the provisions of privileges conferred on Ravenna, especially a series granted by Constantine IV, whose purpose and chronology were studied, but not finally settled, in a seminal study by Karl Brandt. The concessions are recorded in Agnellus' life of Archbishop Reparatus (October 673–July 679):

(Reparatus) was vicarius of the church and thereafter he held the office of pontiff. In the time of Constantine the Great, father of Eulogius and Liberius, he travelled to Constantinople and whatever request he made of the emperor was obtained. Among other confirmations they (ie. Constantine and his co-emperors) ordered the following edict (praeciptum) to be issued, that no priest or cleric should pay any tax (censum) to the public treasury, and no one should exact from them ripaetum, portatum, silicium or telumum. In addition he established and decreed that neither the church or members of monasteries or the clients (sacerdotiales) of the church or its grooms or cross-bearers should be made subject to any judge or tax-collector or any authority other than the pontiff or the rector of the church alone. And he decreed that a newly elected bishop should have to wait no more than eight days at Rome (for consecration). And he (Reparatus) ordered that effigies of himself and them (the emperors)

1. Theophanes, a. 613, a. 6302, l. 502–3, 486–7; Nicephorus, Nov. xix, in Cronos cranum, i (Leipzig, 1876), 249–50; see P. Charanis, 'The Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire', Dumbarton Oaks Papers, iv (1948), 51–58. An unsuccessful attempt to requisition church property in Egypt occurs in Leonius of Neapolis, Leben des heiligen Johannes des harmloseren Erzbischofs von Alexandrien, cap. 12, ed. H. Gelzer (Freiburg-in-Breslau and Leipzig, 1893), pp. 23–25. Imperial power over church lands was later exercised by charitikia, the appointment of lay patrons as defenders of monasteries; on this and monastic wealth see A. Sivanops, Zur Soziologie des byzantinischen Mönchentums (Leiden and Cologne, 1962), pp. 41–52.

2. Delger, Beiträge, pp. 68–69; although these changes in the financial administration were under way as early as the sixth century (J. Karayanopoulos, 'Über die vermeintliche Reformatätigkeit des Kaisers Heraclius', Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft, x (1961), 62–78), the reform does not appear to have been introduced in Italy.

should be portrayed in the apse of S. Apollinare and set out in tesserae of many colours.1

The monument described by Agnellus can be identified with a mosaic on the left wall of the apse of the basilica of S. Apollinare in Classe which depicts an emperor accompanied by three laymen presenting a roll inscribed privilegia to an archbishop in the presence of a second archbishop and three acolytes. It would be tedious to record here the conflicting arguments which have raged over the details of the mosaic, especially since the drastic degree of restoration which it has undergone over the centuries makes it impossible to test many of the hypotheses advanced. However, the question most relevant to the present inquiry, the identification of the privilege, has recently been examined by Professor Deichmann in his magisterial study of the monuments of Ravenna, and his arguments may, in the present author’s opinion, be regarded as settling the issue. The mosaic was commissioned by Archbishop Reparatus to commemorate his role as the ambassador who obtained the privileges from the imperial court, although it was deemed necessary to include on his right the reigning pontiff, Maurus. Examination of the dress and headgear of the laymen depicted proves that all four were emperors. From this it follows that the figures can only be Constans II and his sons, Constantine IV, Heraclius and Tiberius, and that the privilege in question is almost certainly the grant of autocephaly issued in Syracuse in 666.2

This interpretation does not conflict with the account of Agnellus, who does not explicitly associate the mosaic with the later privileges of Constantine IV, and such an imposing mosaic is more likely to have commemorated the conferment of autocephaly than the later less important fiscal and legal privileges. The confusion apparent in the Agnellus passage can easily be explained if it is assumed that the historian was misled by the inscription Constantinus maior imperator! Erazli et Constantini imperator above the emperors’ heads. As it stands, this is more likely to refer to Constantine IV and his two brothers than to Constans II, alias Constantine, since only one Constantine is mentioned. Agnellus had access to the privileges of the archiepiscopal archive before many of the original documents were carried off to Francia by Archbishop George for confirmation and lost at the Battle of Fontenoy in 841. As an observant student

of his city's mosaics, the historian could see that the inscription did not match the protocol of Constans' grant of autoccephaly, but was in line with privileges issued by Constantine IV. There need be no question that Agnellus preserves the gist of a genuine privilege of the latter emperor (or, more likely, three separate grants), and in fact a document issued by Constantine was preserved in the papal archive in 1589 according to a list of privileges published by Girolamo Rossi. 1 The historian's confusion can be explained away by the appealing hypothesis of Deichmann that the inscription was already damaged in the ninth century. The complete inscription referred to Constans and his sons and would have read Constantinus maior imperator [pater Constantini]/[H]eractii et Tiberii imperatori[um]. 2

The privileges of Constantine IV mentioned by Agnellus are difficult to date precisely. The first two concessions may have been issued at the same time, but the third is clearly separate and later, since it implies a retreat on one of the main points of autoccephaly, the right of the archbishop to be consecrated by one of his own suffragans. This concession can hardly have been made before 673, since Agnellus states that Rome and Ravenna remained bitterly hostile until the deaths of Pope Vitalian and Archbishop Maurus (January 672 and September 673 respectively). 3 The most likely date for Ravenna's climb-down on the matter of consecration is early 678, since the life of Pope Dorus (676–678) states that Reparatus recognized papal supremacy before his death. Reparatus may only have yielded on this one point, since Agnellus denies that he ever admitted Rome's authority, and his successor had himself consecrated by three of his suffragans. The whole question was only resolved by an edict of Constantine IV subordinating Ravenna to Rome in about 682. However, the emperor may well have forced Ravenna to give some ground in 678, since he made overtures to Rome about a reconciliation over the monothelite controversy in that year. 4

It has been suggested that the two grants of fiscal and jurisdictional immunity were issued at the time of the revocation of Ravenna's autoccephaly as imperial compensation for the see's loss of independence. This is a possibility, but a more likely context can be found if the privileges are dated to the beginning of Reparatus' archiepiscopate. Agnellus associates the first privilege with Reparatus' journey to Constantinople but leaves it vague whether he was archbishop or merely nescendimus at the time. The archbishop was already an old man on his election, and between 673 and 678

1. Rossi, ubi supra, 514, appendix: Index scripturarum quas in tabularia sine archivi Romani habentur, spectantium ad archiepiscopatum ecclesiasticum Ravennensem.
4. L.P. 356 (= Dolger, Regesten, i. 51, no. 231); Berrollini, Roma, pp. 366–37.
communications with Constantinople were singularly difficult because of continuous Arab attacks on Constantinople. It is not unlikely, however, that Reparatus acted as Maurus' envoy in Constantinople at some date between 669 and 673 and succeeded in negotiating concessions from Constantine which were confirmed when he became archbishop. A possible motive for the two privileges is a desire to reward Ravenna for her loyalty in the crisis of 668, when Constans II was murdered in Syracuse and the usurper Mezzeus rose up in revolt.

The contents of the first privilege are not very novel. The fiscal concessions represent exemptions from taxes and dues on goods traded, for which there were precedents in the Late Roman period and which were of particular benefit to a large ecclesiastical corporation such as the see of Ravenna which possessed a sizable fleet of ships and whose archbishops were known to speculate in corn in a manner reminiscent of large landowners in the sixth century. The four taxes mentioned can be identified with imposts found in the eastern provinces of the empire, and *sitioquaticum* and *ileoenum* recur in a grant of immunity issued by Charlemagne to the formerly Byzantine church of Grado in 803.

More puzzling is the exemption granted from secular jurisdiction, which seems to have extended to both the clergy and the dependents of the church. Control by the church over its clients and servants would clearly be a useful asset, especially since many commended themselves to the church for protection. But a point overlooked by scholars is that immunity for the clergy already existed, since a novel of 629 ruled that both civil and criminal cases involving ecclesiastics could only be brought before an episcopal court. One possible explanation lies in the land administered by the church outside its own metropolitan province and especially in the Pentapolis, where bishops came under the authority of the Roman see. Litigation would in any case have been hampered by the problems of communication with Rome, but the system must have become unworkable after 666, when the Roman see was bitterly opposed to its rival's pretensions. The privilege can best be seen as an attempt to facilitate the ad-

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2. *LP* i, 344, 346.


ministration of church lands in the Pentapolis and elsewhere, many of which may have been managed on the state's behalf. Here confusion has arisen from the mistaken identification of the privilege with a fragmentary palimpsest papyrus in the Vatican Library. If this identification could be accepted, the papyrus text would offer a possible hint of a context for the grant, since it mentions *conspiraciu*es atque seditiones raised against the see of Ravenna and threatens future perpetrators of such acts with a heavy fine. Unfortunately the document cannot be placed as early as the seventh century (although the text does appear to have been written over a genuine private document of that period). The script is datable to the late ninth century, and although specific names and dates are wholly lacking, such features as the penalty clause and the eschatocal have close parallels in the later Carolingian period. The 'privilege' also confirms the authority of Ravenna over 'the bishops resident in Romania', a term which first occurs in the sense of the Exarchate of Ravenna in the Frankish period. This is one of a number of elements which strongly suggest a later date, and in any case the parallels between Agnellus' account of the privilege and the papyrus text are very slight. Although it might appear tempting to identify the document with a privilege described by Rossi as having been issued by the Emperor Lothar (840-855) in confirmation of Constantine's provisions, it may be questioned whether such a document ever existed since such a confirmation is unprecedented in Carolingian diplomas. Altogether a later date seems preferable, and a possible donor can be seen in Carloman, king of Italy from 878 to 879, who issued several important privileges to north Italian churches, and in whose name a privilege is recorded in an early fifteenth-century description of the archiepiscopal archive of Ravenna. The 'conspiracies and seditions' are likely to refer to the ferocious opposition

1. Novel of 839: *Haec Graeco-romanum, iii. 44-49, no. 29. Luther, *Roma et Ravenna*, p. 69, pointed out that imperial grants of jurisdiction and fiscal immunity helped the archbishops to build up their power in the Romagna and eventually to cast themselves in the role of successors of the exarch, but failed to develop the argument fully.


3. T. Sickel, *Die Urkunden der Karolinger, i. Urkundenlehre. Lehre von den Urkunden der ersten Karolinger* (Vienna, 1857), 287, n. 4. The author is deeply grateful to Professor Jan-Olof Tjaeder for furnishing a photograph of the papyrus and for giving his opinion that the script denotes a date in the second half of the ninth century.

4. Brandt, *Ravenna*, 8-9, 12, 19, who points out that both the provision for complete immunity and the corroborative clause suggest a later date.

5. Rossi, *ubi supra*, p. 814: *Privilegium Helveticum amplissimum (confirmat illud Constantini; continet quidam de moaetariis in Italia 24, in Francia 14, de illo mari, marinoratis coloniis etc. pro ecclesia Ravennatis); the reference to monasteries in Francia gives grounds for particular suspicion.* T. Schieffer did not include this document in his edition of Lothar's diplomas and is confident that no such privilege was issued by the emperor. The author wishes to thank Professor D. A. Bullough for this information.
led by the dukes John and Deusdedit and others against Archbishop Romanus, a supporter of Carломann. 1

The close relationship between the empire and the church of Ravenna reflected in the seventh-century privileges was soon modified by a fundamental change in the attitude of the emperor's Italian subjects. Separatist feelings inspired by growing local consciousness and by resentment at imperial oppression were encouraged by the peace concluded with the Lombards around 680, which made unity behind the empire for defensive purposes less imperative, and by the astonishingly capricious behaviour of Justinian II towards his Italian subjects. A serious weakening of imperial authority was marked by Rome's successful opposition to the imposition of Eastern customs by the Council in Trullo in 692, a stand in which the popes had the support of Ravenna. The garrison of Ravenna emerged as a much more independent entity, to the extent that it participated in attempts on the lives of the exarchs Theophylact (701) and John Rizocopus (716) and elected its own duke to resist a punitive expedition sent from Constantinople. The clergy of Ravenna co-operated closely with the new movement, less out of calculated self-interest than out of a feeling of solidarity with a social group whose background and outlook they shared. Thus the conspicuous role played by Archbishop Felix (709–725) in the resistance to Justinian II led to his blinding, and the clergy and their dependants formed one of the twelve militia units raised to resist the Greek expedition of 716. 2

Although co-operation between church and empire could hardly remain as close in this climate as in the seventh century, some attempt to maintain it on a more general level is evident from the privileges which emperors continued to grant to the church of Ravenna. Later papal bulls refer to grants made by an emperor 'Leo'; this can only be Leontius (695–698), and it is plausible that the privilege was intended as a reward for Ravenna's opposition to his deposed predecessor Justinian II. 3 The next recorded privilege


3. Privilegia Leoii quandam imperetoris were confirmed in a bull of Pope Paschal I dated 819, ed. *Ponsificum Romanorum diplomata quae supersunt* (Vatican City, 1939), no. 1 (= Kehr, *IP*, p. 38, no. 94). In Italian sources Leontius was consistently called Leo: J. P. C. Kent, 'The Mystery of Leontius II', *Numismatie Chronicla*, 6th ser., xiv (1934), 217–18.
was issued by Philippicus (711–713) whose coup d'état ended the second reign of Justinian II and led to the liberation of Archbishop Felix from captivity in Constantinople. Agnellus states that all that Felix requested was granted and that compensation was given for the gifts of previous emperors which Justinian had seized. Jewels, precious fabrics and ornaments are specifically mentioned among the fortunae ‘devoured’ by the emperor. The archiepiscopal treasury was well stocked with lavish gifts, many of which may have accompanied imperial grants of land and immunity. Whatever its precise form, Philippicus’ donation is best seen as recompense for the victim of a political opponent, rather than as a reflection of acquiescence on the part of Felix with the emperor’s monothelite policies. In this case it is possible that Philippicus was hoping to play Ravenna off against the papacy, since the schismatic emperor was extremely unpopular in Rome, and Felix had previously refused to sign the customary pledge of obedience to the Pope at the behest of imperial officials.¹

Relations between the archbishops and their political and spiritual masters, the exarch and the Pope, remained fluid in the first half of the eighth century, a period in which the political and ideological foundations of imperial power were being steadily undermined. In doctrinal matters, such as resistance to iconoclasm, the archbishops supported the papacy’s line, but otherwise the co-operation between such figures as Archbishop John VI and the exarch Eutychius seems to have been fairly close. The situation was transformed after the fall of the imperial administration in 751, and the traditional relationship between the archbishops and the empire may account for the determination of the former to control the administration of the Exarchate and Pentapolis. Archbishop Sergius (744–769) thus attempted to govern the Pentapolis seduis exarchius, and his claims are likely to have extended to control of the imperial patrimony.²

¹ Privilege of Philippicus (711–713): Agnellus, cap. 144, p. 572. Brandt, ‘Ravenna’, p. 13, wrongly attributed this privilege to Justinian II and that of Levonius to Constantine V. The sumptuous gifts preserved in the archiepiscopal treasury are described in Agnellus’ account of Pope Stephen II’s removal of part of the see’s riches to France in 754: cap. 165, p. 154. Felix’ stand: LP i, 586; sed per potentiam iudicam expositi ut malit. The more likely interpretation of this passage is that the indicus of Ravenna supported Felix’ stand (no Hartmann, Untersuchungen, p. 30). The hypothesis, advanced by Guillou, Racionalisme, p. 214, that the officials prevailed upon Felix to give way, cannot be reconciled with the fact that the archbishop clearly persisted in his resistance until his arrest and blinding in 710.

² Agnellus, cap. 159, p. 384. On Ravenna’s resistance to papal claims, E. Caspar, Der Papsttum unter fränkischer Herrschaft (Darmstadt, 1956), pp. 40–43. A different connection between imperial privileges to Ravenna and the see’s hostility to papal claims has been posited by H. W. Haussig, ‘L’arcivescovo di Ravenna, il papa e il re dei Franchi’, Convegni di cultura nell’arte ravennate e bizantina, xix (1973), 215–17 and p. 114, who argued that much of the property expropriated by the Goths had originally belonged to the papacy, and that it was re-allocated by the exarch to troops as military holdings. If such land was inherited by a widow or minor it would then be transferred to the church of Ravenna. Apart from the absence of positive evidence in support of this hypothesis, it has to be rejected because it is based on an erroneous view of the allocation of land to soldiers, and the Roman patrimony in the area of Ravenna is unlikely to have been very extensive.
This attitude inevitably led to a serious clash with the papacy, which aimed at gaining control of the Exarchate and the Pentapolis, possibly by virtue of an imperial commission granted to Stephen II. An instructive source in this regard is the Donation of Constantine, whose most likely context may be the desire of Roman clerical circles to produce a justification for papal claims in the Exarchate. What is remarkable is the form which the justification took; rather than advance any purely spiritual or Petrine arguments for papal claims, its author cast the first and most distinguished of the Christian emperors as the donor of temporal authority in Italy and the West. The significance of this controversial document cannot be analysed here, but in the context of relations between Rome and Ravenna it can be seen as the last word in imperial privileges and as such a useful weapon against the basis of Ravenna’s resistance to papal claims, the see’s imperial privileges and the tradition of co-operation with the state which they reflect. Control over landed estates became a major issue between the archbishops, who tried to retain the patrimonies which they had managed on the empire’s behalf, and the papacy, which claimed the lands as successors of the exarch. In a letter to the Emperor Constantine VI Pope Hadrian I spoke of the patrimonial estates which had been seized by the Lombards, and in a letter to Charlemagne in 781 he complained of the loss of lands given to the popes by ‘emperors, patricians and other god-fearing persons’. The ambiguous position of such estates as ecclesiastical possessions administered on behalf of the state may account for the vague terms in which the papacy couched its claims to its rights (iure, dicere) in the Exarchate. Some of the land administered by the papacy at the end of the eighth century can be shown to have been originally imperial property. Hadrian I made a grant of omnia loca iuris publici in a location near Ravenna in 782, and Leo III later laid claim to lands managed from the palatium of Ravenna which can only be seen as former state property.


2. It is noteworthy that the donation confers imperial lands as well as more general sovereignty: Constitutiones Constantini, cap. 13, ed. H. Petersen, MGH, Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui, v (Hanover, 1966), 85–86: pro coositionibus hancurarum passressione praestat consultum et ... nostrum largitatem ur consensum. Y. Congar, L’œcologie du haut Moyen Age (Paris, 1968), p. 201, suggested that the document ‘répond à une volonté de défense contre un concurrent’. The identificaton of Ravenna as the ‘competition’ helps to explain both the document’s emphasis on the imperial traditions of Rome and its implicit acceptance of imperial authority, since the basis of the see of Ravenna’s claims to the Exarchate was the city’s traditional status as an imperial capital.

3. Complaints of Hadelin I: J. D. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum ... collectio, xii (Florence, 1766), col. 1076; Codex Carolinus, 14, p. 587, Cf. the view of O. Bertoloni, ‘Le prime manifestazioni concrete dei potere dei papi nell’esercito di Ravenna, 756–7’, Atti dell’Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Classe scienze morali e lettere, ivi, ii (1948), 280–300, at 287, 299–300 (= Sertuti Scelti, ii, 593–612), that the grants made by Pepin III concern rights not of a sovereign over a state but of a proprietor over his
The control of patrimonies remained a major issue in the renewed conflicts between Rome and Ravenna in the ninth century. In 853, for example, Archbishop John VIII used the political support of his brother, Duke George, to establish an autonomous position and to usurp papal property. The Archbishop was only compelled to renounce his stand and to restore the property at the Lateran synod of 861.\(^1\) In the tenth century an awareness of anti-Roman traditions survived in Ravenna, which the Ottonian policy of using the see as a reliable Reichskirche was able to build upon. A false distinction was made between the Byzantine and Ottonian periods of imperial supervision by Karl Brandl when he argued that ‘the new political jealousy between Rome and Ravenna occurred in relation to property and territorial rights in the Pentapolis’, since a concern with territorial possessions was already prominent in the Byzantine period.\(^2\)

The policy of close co-operation with the state pursued by the church of Ravenna was the exceptional result of its proximity to the exarchal court and of its long-standing ambitions to increase its authority, but it is important to appreciate the extent to which clergy were prepared to act as imperial agents in the exercise of secular functions out of both self-interest and a sense of duty. These activities, reminiscent of the pattern of church–state interdependence which became the norm in the East, form only one of the major elements in the complex development of relations between empire and church in Italy from the sixth century to the eighth, but their existence points to the danger of seeing the history of the church solely in terms of progress towards ‘emancipation’ from imperial influence. Ravenna’s acceptance of Byzantine notions of the state’s right to prescribe the powers and duties of bishops may have been more typical of the sees in imperial Italy in the seventh century than the more ambivalent attitude of Rome.\(^3\) Landed endowments and fiscal privileges were essential to a church’s status and the pursuit of its ecclesiastical claims, and in the case of Ravenna a relationship was forged which served the interests of both parties.


