**Unit 3**

**Gregory and Other Christians**

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**Many, perhaps most, historians give Pope Gregory I, "The Great", the crown as the most important Christian influence in Medieval times.**

**Some make him the dividing point between "Late Roman" and Medieval**

**They all may well be right, but there were others before and after him that deserve**

**some credit.**

**After Gregory, many of the same historians place Leo I, and not only because he talked Attila out of a jaunt into Rome (with or without the help of sword-bearing Peter and Paul).**

**He took actions that implied and explicitly claimed papal primacy.**

**Working with the Emperor, he exerted papal temporal authority.**

**Clearly we can't deal with all the relevant Christian players**

**As with the Barbarian groups, we'll pick a few persons who were particularly**

**influential:**

**Not movers and SHAKERS, but movers and SHAPERS -- i.e., the "orthodox"**

**(winners) not the heretics**

**Among those discussed below are the four great "Latin Fathers of the Church":**

**Abrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory 1. The four great "Greek Fathers",**

**Athanasius, Basil (The Great), Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom are**

**not included, because it would be hard to include them an a "Rome" course.**

**The study of the lives and works of the "Fathers", great and small, is called**

**"Patristics".**

**Note that any one of the persons chosen could be the subject of a lifetime of study.**

**Don't expect more than a brief (and dogmatic) precis here.**

**Christian players:**

**PETER and PAUL -- before our period, but definitive**

**Was peter in Rome?**

**He probably was, although still a few Protestant objections**

**Many 19th century doubters**

**Paul's time in Rome is better documented**

**"Postmarks" on his letters**

**Addresses of his letters**

**Contents of his letters**

**Icons/personifications of the two Christian communities;**

**The Circumcised -- i.e., "converted" Jews**

**The Gentiles -- Latin *gentilis* from *gens, gentis***

**[*Goy, -im*: TRILITERAL: *gwy*. DEFINITION: (Central Semitic noun \*gy-) tribe. *Goy*, from Hebrew *gôy*, nation people (usually, and later exclusively, of non-Israelite, and then non-Jewish]**

**DAMASUS (3??- 383) -- Pope from 366-383, commissioned Jerome**

**Had to overcome the first known "anti-Pope" (Ursinus), and was**

**accused of being worldly (even adultery), criminal (murder), ridden with**

**peccadilloes.**

**But he commissioned Jerome's *Vulgate*,**

**set a calligrapher to work engraving epigrams in tombs and catacombs, and**

**embellished and enriched churches.**

**First known Bishop of Rome to invoke the "Petrine text" -- (Mathew 16:18--"thou**

**art Peter and upon this Rock I build my Church").**

**AMBROSE (339-397) -- Bishop of Imperial Milan, unbendingly Orthodox, humiliated**

**Theodosius, music man, converted Augustine**

**[Note 1: During his Tenure, the Western Empire court settled in Milan (Gratian,**

**then Valentinian 2)].**

**[Note 2: Arianism, the first of the great "heresies", defined Christ (according to**

**its "orthodox" enemies) as a second, inferior god standing midway between the**

**"First Cause" and creatures. The Council of Nicea condemned Arianism and the**

**Nicene Creed is the expression of the "orthodox" and what became the**

**"Catholic" view.**

**Ambrose defined differences between Orthodoxy and Arianism -- public relations**

**and manifestations prevented imperial (Valentinian) efforts to allow/order debate**

**between the two streams.**

**Ambrose was clearly anti-liberal -- no reason to debate with Arians -- and even**

**argued that violence was justified in defense of faith.**

**Some writings were clearly "anti-Semitic": this was many centuries before the**

**Church announced (at Vatican 2, 1962-65) that what the Gospels clearly said**

**about responsibility of Jews for Christ's death was not what they meant. [Keep in**

**mind that this issue is still current: Mel Gibson's movie on the life of Christ is said**

**to, once again, blame the Jews.]**

**Dispute between Ambrose and Theodosius (Eastern Emperor, appointed by**

**Gratian). Although Theodosius was clearly a supporter of Ambrose's anti-Arian**

**crusade, they fell out over Theodosius' punitive executions of Thessolonica**

**rioters. Ambrose demanded and got public penitence.**

**Anticipated and directly influenced Augustine in many respects. Augustine had**

**gone to Milan and, according to his own account, was overcome by Ambrosian**

**music.**

**Great literary and musical achievements.**

**JEROME (340-420) -- "Cardinal", lion-tamer, historian, polemicist, biblical**

**translator/popularizer, biblical commentator, Latin, Greek, and "Hebrew"**

**(Semitic) linguist, ran a "research institute" in Bethlehem. Sponsored by**

**Damasus and funded by Paula.**

**Studied "classical" literature and wrote histories before imbibing the scriptures.**

**Early contact with Antioch's Jewish Christians (? First study of Hebrew?)**

**In Rome (ca 382) came under influence of Damasus and became an influential**

**Papal staffer. Started to revise the Latin bible based on Greek texts. Surrounded**

**by Pus Roman women, including Paula. When Damasus died (Dec 10, 384 -- but**

**note vagaries of pre-Gregorian dates), the "irascible", polemical and critical**

**Jerome (he'd derided Ambrose, for example) decamped again for the Middle**

**East, taking with him his coterie of Roman women. (Never any accusation of sin -**

**unlike his theretofore patron, Damasus).**

**The Bethlehem "research institute" -- by 338 they and some Antiochenes picked**

**up *en route* were ensconced in Bethlehem. Thirty-four years of literary output**

**from his hermit's cell (traditionally in a cave under the courtyard of the current**

**Latin Church of St. Catherine, adjacent to the Greek Orthodox Church of the**

**Nativity)**

**Most important product was the Vulgate -- not the first Latin translation, but it**

**was the first Latin translation using Semitic language sources as well as Greek.**

**Therefore considered more authentic. His biblical commentaries (i.e.,**

**exegetical treatises) also benefited from his knowledge of Hebrew. Note that**

**Jerome’s “Latin” was the simple inelegant contemporary (i.e., vulgar) language and**

**not the Latin of Cicero, which was later canonized by “Ciceronian” renaissance**

**humanists.**

**He’s one of the most depicted of all Christian Saints**

**AUGUSTINE (354-430) of Hippo *(see note below on Hippo location)* -- penitent playboy,**

**Teacher, bishop, Christian theoretician**

**Academic advancement in N. African Universities after an impoverished middle**

**class upbringing (a "scholarship" from a wealthy family friend made it possible).**

**Early on, he was an academic pedant and imitator of Cicero's style**

**"Looking for himself" he first became a Manichaeian (Manichaeians believed in**

**two competing powers, the perfectly good creator and the absolutely evil**

**destroyer) but soon saw through the mythology and was affronted by the**

**ignorance of Manichee teachers. Drifted back home, but soon headed back to**

**Carthage seeking new inspiration.**

**Augustine prospered there as an itinerant teacher but soon sought a bigger**

**market -- Rome. Jerome used Manichee contacts to get an interview from**

**Roman Prefect Symmachus, who hired him as a teacher for the Imperial Court in**

**Milan. Rapid advancement there and an society marriage arranged by his mom.**

**Still unhappy, perplexed, (maybe a depressive?), started to study Christianity:**

**eventually converted by Ambrose (-- he was "transfixed" by Ambrose's music.)**

**After conversion, recognizing the hollowness of temporal advancement,**

**Augustine and his companions returned to N. Africa seeking a quiet**

**contemplative life.**

**Soon "drafted" into the priesthood, then into a bishopric. Most of his efforts were**

**on local pastoral matters, but he intervened in three big controversies.**

**Donatism, which demanded rebaptism of those who had compromise**

**under persecution. Augustine initially tried to talk the Donatists around ,**

**but when they refused, he organized Imperial intervention, which after long**

**hearings suppressed the Donatists. Principle: sinners don't need**

**reconversion**

**The Cause of the fall of Rome (to Alaric) and the *City of God*: after the**

**sack, some upper class pagan Romans retired to N. African estates,**

**bringing with them the theory that neglect of the old Roman gods (i.e., rise**

**of Christianity) had caused the fall. Early books of *The City* offered**

**consolation and refuted that theory. Later volumes issued over 15 years**

**eloquently and elegantly continued to expound on Christian principles.**

**Pelagians who advocated asceticism at a level that Augustine thought was**

**extreme. Augustine eventually invoked papal and imperial authority and**

**won the day, but he then had to constantly defend the level of asceticism of**

**which he himself approved.**

**The mortal decline of Augustine coincided with the arrival of the Vandals in North**

**Africa, their having been invited by a local Roman governor seeking allies in**

**rebellion. They inevitably evaded the governor's control and took over. They Took**

**over Hippo a few days after his death and Carthage fell shortly thereafter.**

**The Vandals were Arians, so, locally, at least for the hundred -year tenure**

**of the Vandals, Augustine's efforts were for naught. On the broader and**

**especially on the Roman stage, his works, especially The City of God had**

**great influence.**

**LEO 1, "The Great" (4??-461) -- Pope, barbarian tamer, "2nd to Gregory"**

***Leo's pontificate, next to that of St. Gregory I, is the most significant and***

***important in Christian antiquity. At a time when the Church was experiencing the***

***greatest obstacles to her progress in consequence of the hastening***

***disintegration of the Western Empire, while the Orient was profoundly agitated***

***over dogmatic controversies, this great pope, with far-seeing sagacity and***

***powerful hand, guided the destiny of the Roman and Universal Church.***

***Catholic Encyclopedia***

**A formidable writer as a deacon under Celestine 1 (422-32), he was a problem-**

**solver/diplomat for Sixtus 3 (432-40). In Gaul on a mission when Sixtus 3 died, he**

**was elected *in absentia.***

**As Pope, Leo led the charge against Pelagian and Manichaeian heresies.**

**(Pelagians had originated in Rome and Manichees had fled to Rome when the**

**Vandals had taken North Africa.)**

**Leo sought out ways to interfere in extra-Roman, extra-Italian affairs, sending out**

**"warnings" to external dioceses about heresies and intervening in disputes**

**between rival claimants to bishoprics.**

**"Disciplinary decrees" were designed to enforce uniformity of rules and liturgies.**

**BOETHIUS (480-524) "The last of the Romans" -- Mathematician/scientist/musical**

**theorist, philosopher, Medieval and Renaissance role model,**

**[Note: at this time Christianity was divided between Arians and "orthodox", the**

**latter group claiming that designation *ex post facto* to the appearance of the**

**Arians. These "orthodox" have nothing to do with the "Orthodox" (upper case**

**"O") Greek Christians who appeared later.]**

**Boethius was clearly the best educated Roman of his day**

**Student, translator, and commentator of an on Neoplatonism, began a project to**

**translate and interpret all works of Plato and Aristotle, a project cut short by his**

**death.**

**Office Director (Magister Officiorum) for Theodoric, the Ostrogothic king of Italy,**

**for whom he also performed diplomatic missions.**

**Jealous enemies accused him of treason and of sacrilegious astrology and, most**

**importantly of being an orthodox Catholic. Since Theodoric was and Arian and**

**the Eastern Emperor (Justin) was orthodox, this was clearly the most dangerous**

**charge.**

**Boethius was eventually executed after an imprisonment during which he wrote**

**his most important philosophical work, *Consolations of Philosophy*. The**

**orthodox (lower case) church immediately claimed him as a martyr even though**

**his *Consolations* give no real indication that he was even a Christian -- the Church**

**still gives some labored arguments that the *Consolations* were orthodox, but it's**

**a long stretch, and it certainly has always been in the interest of the Church to**

**claim "the last Roman" as her own.**

**After his death and through the Medieval and Renaissance periods, Boethius was**

**held up as an educated Christian role model for Christians/Catholics.**

**Boethius was one of the main sources of material for the quadrivium, an**

**educational course introduced into monasteries consisting of four topics:**

**arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and the theory of music. On this last topic**

**Boethius wrote on the relation of music to science, suggesting that the pitch of a**

**note one hears is related to the frequency of sound. (Vincenzo Galilei, the father of**

**the famous Galileo Galilei. did the definitive work on musical mathematics,**

**harmonics, string tensions and frequencies, ca. 1588.)**

**BENEDICT (ca480-ca547) -- "Monk" (=a singlton fr. Gr. *monos*),**

**Western Christian monastic founder**

**Not the founder of Christian Monasticism, but of Western Christian Monasticism.**

**There were Christian monasteries in the Middle East almost from the beginning**

**as pre-existing Jewish monasteries converted.**

**Didn't set out to be a hermit -- took his old nurse along as a maidservant when he**

**left Rome and joined a company of "virtuous men" at Enfide -- supposed site of**

**his first miracle, mending a broken earthenware wheat sifter. Notoriety of the**

**event caused him to seek a more remote retreat at Subaico (nurse still went**

**along). He spent three years in the cave helped by a local monk named**

**Romanus. Eventually called out by monks to replace a local abbot who had died.**

**The monks eventually tried to poison him -- he was more strict than they had**

**bargained for. Benedict went back to his cave.**

**Miracles then came fast and thick, and eventually 13 Monasteries grew up**

**around him. Schools and homes for children followed.**

**Benedict set up a lay *Rule*, but the Church later imposed a clerical character on**

**the Benedictines.**

**The only "authentic" biography of Benedict was written by Gregory The Great**

**and comprises 38 chapters of the second volume of Gregory's *Dialogues*.**

**GREGORY 1, "The Great" (540-604) -- the watershed, first Medieval Christian**

**[Note: the "Exarch" (= "outside ruler") was the chief local administrator for the**

**Eastern Emperor, who was nominal ruler of Italy -- kind of a viceroy, but with**

**more closely defined powers (limited rather than general power or regency). *De***

***facto* the exarchs' powers were even more limited by circumstance than by the**

**Emperors directives. Unit 4 is about these guys and how and when they could**

**wield power.]**

**By about age 33 (in 573) he was already "Prefect" of the city of Rome -- de facto**

**mayor -- unusual advancement for a person of that age**

**But he had family connections: probably of *gens Amicia*, with a large villa**

**on the Caelian Hill, ruins of which are under the Church of Gregorio Magno.**

**Little known of his mother Silvia, except that she also came from wealth.**

**In 574, he dropped out and became a monk -- presumably a Benedictine, since he**

**wrote a biography of Benedict.**

**Family estates in Sicily were given over to found 6 monasteries. Caelian villa**

**converted into the Monastery of St. Andrew. Debate over whether the**

**Monasteries were Benedictine is only important in that the outcome would**

**determine what kind of monasticism Augustine of Canterbury introduced into**

**England.**

**Drawn out of austere life in 578 and appointed "regionary " deacon. Then sent to**

**Constantinople/Byzantium as the Pope's Ambassador in the hopes he could get**

**imperial help (Tiberius 2 Constantine, 578-82) against the advancing Lombards.**

**Famous dispute with Patriarch Eutychius over "palpability" of risen bodies of the**

**Elect while in Comstantinople -- and no help against Lombards. Lesson was that**

**Rome had to save itself.**

**Back to St. Andrew's by 586 -- writing and lecturing.**

**Exact date unknown -- meets Angles in the Forum and petitions the Pope for a**

**missionary assignment in England. According to legend he actually set out, but**

**was called by popular demand. (He eventually sent Augustine.)**

**Elected pope in 590 after an *anno nero* -- plagues, floods, famines, wars, dead**

**Pope. Gregory tried to beg off. During the wait for an imperial decision, in the**

**face of ongoing plague in the city and surrounding areas he organized the**

**"sevenfold procession" (seven regionary deacons) during which the eponymous**

**angel appeared over Hadrian's mausoleum/Castel Sant'Angelo.**

**The Emperor finally decided to confirm Gregory's appointment, against his**

**wishes. Stories that he fled and hid were later inventions.**

**There followed 14 years as Pope -- but he still lived as a monk in the Lateran after**

**dismissing all the lay attendants and pages and staffing the place with clerics.**

**Despite ill health, he worked tirelessly (c.f., current Pope) organizing the defense**

**of Rome against the Lombards, provisioning Rome from his former Cicilian**

**estates, reorganizing the liturgy (extent of which is debated), establishing weekly**

**"station churches" to bring the Papacy to the people , managing the churches**

**vast and widely separated estates, arguing with the (Arian) Lombards -- in short**

**he was a general manager: a COO rather than a CEO.**

**Actual hostilities between the Western Emperor and the Lombards began in 592.**

**Noting the exarch's inaction after a few Papal diplomatic moves, Gregory made a**

**separate peace with the Lombards, details of which are unknown. But the fact of**

**the existence of a treaty was thereafter an argument for sovereign Papal**

**temporal power.**

**That position, in turn roused the exarch who came roaring back into Rome, only**

**to leave with his garrison a year later. Rome was now again exposed to the re-**

**aroused northern Lombards who came back to the gates of Rome. There was a**

**meeting between Gregory and the northern leader, and Gregory later wrote that**

**he had been "paymaster to the Lombards": he presumably bought them off with**

**cash (and thereby allowed them to re-equip/re-arm to face their perceived**

**secular rival, the Eastern Emperor and his exarch.)**

**Gregory also established relations with the emerging Franks, but they lapsed at**

**his death and there was no lasting effect -- yet**

**“Bad” Popes – 9th 🡪 12th centuries – Until the “Avignon captivity” (1309 – 77)**

**One of several periods of internal strife that the Catholic Church characterizes as periods during which political actors imposed themselves on control of the Church**

**Essentially, the church is right, but it begs the question of just what the Church is – Is it only responsible for its acts when it conforms to later views of “morality”.**

**Period from 900 to 1000 is indicative.**

**Background: Charlemagne’s kids and grandkids had torn apart the Carolingian “Holy Roma Empire and the scuffles among their heirs continued for centuries – East, Middle, and West Carolingians became Germany, Lotharingia/Italy, and France. There were still Visigothic remnants in Spain.**

**In the cracks between these states, especially around Rome, local families allied with the contending Carolingian successor states.**

**End of 800s –**

**Formosus was Pope from 891 – 896. He had conections in both the “French” and “German” wings fo the Carolingian successors, but as Cardinal, he fled a French supporter – He may initially have been pro-French, and that could have made him a rival of the pro-French incumbent.**

**Formosus died of a stroke and his successor, Boniface 6, reigned 15 days.**

**Steven 7 exhumed, condemned, desecrated Formosus.**

**900s**

**Successive popes in the 900s rehabilitated and re-desecrated Formosus as power shifted among the contending external powers. For a while, he was the bellwether of which wy the flock was moving.**

**Not just an “external” problem – local nobles in Rome were working the situation to their own advantage.**

**In some cases the women were the apparent power brokers.**

**Theodora was married to Theophylact but apparently in bed with John 10, for whom, I was said, she acquired the Papacy using her husbands influence.**

**Theodora arranged a marriage between her daughter, Marozia, and Alberic (elder).**

**When Theodora and Theophylact died (ca. 928) Marozia had John 10 imprisoned and murdered. Marozia had kids with Pope Sergius, and their son became Pope John 11.**

**Alberic died and Marozia married his half brother, King Hugo of Provence – her bastard son, John 11 officiating.**

**Her son by Alberic, another Alberic, worried that he was about to be killed and appealed to the Roman mob. He imprisoned his half brother (John 11) and Marozia, the latter being kept in Castel Sant’Angelo for 50 years.**

**It goes on and on – read all about it in the Papal biographies.**

**The “German” – “French” rivalry goes on into the 20th century (and probably beyond, after they get over their current “anti-US” axis.)**

**The Church’s problem in dealing with this stuff:**

**The church doesn’t want to condone what went on in the Papacy at this time, but it does want to claim all of these “bad popes” or “imposed” popes to establish the “unbroken succession” from Peter (the foundation Rock) and the popes in power at the time of the Protestant Reformation.**

**Pope Joan: the Papessa who never was**

**Supposedly in the 800’s but doesn’t appear in legend until centuries later.**

**May well be a later distortion, witting or unwitting, of the whole Theodora/Marozia balagan**

**Suppoesedly she masqueraded as a man/monk to be with her monkish lover who eventually went to Rome accompanied by her. When he died, she blossomed into a learned scholar and then was made Pope. She delivered her lover’s child in her inaugural procession to the Lateran Palace – there’s a street nearby called Via Papessa – and was exposed. Etc.**

**THOMAS AQUINAS (1224-1274) -- philosopher, logician, reasoner (from Latin: *rationor*)**

**[Note: Persons previously discussed were on our list mostly because of how**

**the affected the period under discussion. Thomas', coming as he did nearer to**

**the end of the period, had his influence in later -- much later -- periods, and mostly**

**in the last hundred or so years. The cause of this was the decline, in the years**

**following his lifetime, in recourse to reason. Many modern theorists ascribe this**

**decline to the die-off of thinkers in the famines and plagues that swept Italy and**

**the rest of Europe starting at about the time of his death.]**

**Coming as he did from a large, rich, and noble family (youngest son of the Duke of**

**Aquino), Thomas had great education opportunities. At age 5 he was sent off to**

**the Benedictine Monastery at Monte Casino to be educated for a career in the**

**Church.**

**Stories that he was a slow learner simply are not true. At 14 he was sent to the**

**University of Naples where he excelled, studying in particular the newly**

**rediscovered works of Aristotle. Thomas became a logician.**

**At about age 19, he joined the Dominicans (OFP = Order of Friars Preachers).**

**Displeased by his choice -- not wanting a Monk, and especially an "inferior" one --**

**his family kidnapped him and tried to "de-program" him, going so far as**

**introducing a prostitute to his prison cell. Finally giving up, the family released**

**him and he took the Dominican Friars' vows.**

**He quickly left for the University of Paris where he studied under Albertus**

**Magnus. When Albertus transferred to Cologne, Thomas followed. Other**

**students of Albertus nicknamed him "Dumb Ox" because he spoke little and was**

**very large. Albertus declared that the Ox's bellows would be heard around the**

**world. In Cologne, probably around 1250 he was ordained as a pries.**

**Within a few years he was back in Paris lecturing at the University and working**

**on his own Doctorate in Theology. His degree (and degrees of other clerics) was**

**delayed when University administrators objected to his (their) unwillingness to**

**participate in street battles between the University and the "townies." Both**

**Papal and French Royal (Louis 9) interventions were needed to release the**

**degrees.**

**From 1257 though 1273 he produced over 50 major philosophical , theological,**

**and Aristotelian and scriptural exegetical works, meanwhile also actively**

**preaching and teaching. Among the written works was the *Summa Theologica*,**

**from the time of the Counter Reformation until now has been the major source of**

**Catholic theology.**

**Thomas was, above all, a supporter of "reason" as opposed to "faith" as a**

**method of philosophy and theology. Shortly after his death, circumstances (as**

**noted above) led the Church away from reason and toward faith -- and mostly of**

**the ecstatic variety.**

**Other circumstances led to the Protestant Reformation and the Church**

**responded by favoring a new "preaching order", the Jesuits, who**

**immediately seized on "Thomistic Philosophy" -- logical reasoning -- to**

**counter the Protestant emphasis on salvation through "faith".**

**CATHERINE OF SIENA (1347-1380) Mystic, Ascetic, Anorexic**

**Finally, a woman crosses the stage. Unfortunately, she represents the rise of**

**unreason in the Church and in Medieval society. It was mostly women who had**

**the ecstatic experiences that were so popular in the disastrous 14th and 15th**

**centuries, but remember, that Francis of Assisi was an early participant in the**

**previous century. Francis will be covered in unit 5 on the survey of monasticism.**

**[Note 1: Among other things she is the Patron Saint of persons ridiculed for their**

**faith -- a sign that since the beginning she has been derided for her claims of**

**intercourse" with Christ. Many modern psychologists see her ecstasies as a**

**result of long fasts, and some have diagnosed her as an end-stage anorexic --**

**i.e., someone to be pitied rather than ridiculed.]**

**[Note 2: Some modern editions of her works are "condensed" or sometimes**

**simply Bowdlerized to remove sections that are much too sensual and sexual for**

**a "religious" context: Catherine's descriptions of her ecstatic encounters with**

**Christ are explicit and livid.]**

**[Note 3: Catherine was born the year before the "Black Death" plague swept**

**through Italy. An economic depression, caused by over population and agricultural**

**soil exhaustion was already under way. In January of 1348 plague entered Italy**

**through Genoa and it reached Siena the following month. May 1348 as the month**

**of highest mortality in Siena, and, according to contemporary reports more than**

**half of the city's population was dead within one year. Social order rapidly broke**

**down leading to tradesmen's and agrarian revolutions, and the mental state of**

**the survivors was understandably fragile. In the early 1360s plague swept**

**Europe again: the *pestis secunda* or *pestis puerorum* took out the younger**

**generation who had not acquired immunity by surviving the first pandemic.**

**More on the plague(s) in unit 10.]**

**Catherine was the last or 23rd of 25 children of Giacomo and Lapa Benincasa,**

**members of the "Party of the Twelve", a lower middle-class group that took over**

**Siena between 1355 and 1368 between revolutions (i.e., when Catherine was**

**already in her nunnery.)**

**Visions and austerities were said to have begun in her childhood (age 7?). At age**

**16 she entered a Dominican nunnery and continued to have visions and ecstatic**

**experiences, including "spiritual espousals".**

**About 1366 she left the convent and began to work with the sick -- especially**

**victims and survivors of the plague (*pestis secunda*).**

**Thereafter, she was reportedly "persecuted" by her former Dominican sisters**

**and brothers who doubted the reality of her claims. Soon a small community of**

**disciples, men and women, began to agregate around her and her popularity**

**increased.**

**In summer of 1370 another series of visions and ecstasies culminated in a**

**"command" to enter public life. In a short time she was meeting with and**

**corresponding with the civil and religious aristocracy.**

**In 1375 she received the "secret" stigmata -- i.e., no outward signs while she**

**lived. The marks were visible on her body only after she died.**

**Like a modern politician, she seemed to turn up at every local and national crisis.**

**She died, as might be expected, at a very young age during one of he long and**

**rigorous fasts.**

**Donation of Constantine (Lat., *Donatio Constantini*).**

***Although it was already known that the donation was a forgery (see below), Lorenzo Valla is usually given credit for producing, in 1440, the definitive proof that it was a fake. For an English translation of Valla's full text (with a translation of the "Donation") see:*** ***http://history.hanover.edu/texts/vallatc.html***

***From the Catholic Encyclopedia:*** [***http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05118a.htm***](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05118a.htm)

**By this name is understood, since the end of the Middle Ages, a forged document of Emperor Constantine the Great, by which large privileges and rich possessions were conferred on the pope and the Roman Church. In the oldest known (ninth century) manuscript (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. Latin 2777) and in many other manuscripts the document bears the title: "Constitutum domni Constantini imperatoris". It is addressed by Constantine to Pope Sylvester I (314-35) and consists of two parts. In the first (entitled "Confessio") the emperor relates how he was instructed in the Christian Faith by Sylvester, makes a full profession of faith, and tells of his baptism in Rome by that pope, and how he was thereby cured of leprosy. In the second part (the "Donatio") Constantine is made to confer on Sylvester and his successors the following privileges and possessions: the pope, as successor of St. Peter, has the primacy over the four Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, also over all the bishops in the world. The Lateran basilica at Rome, built by Constantine, shall surpass all churches as their head, similarly the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul shall be endowed with rich possessions. The chief Roman ecclesiastics (*clerici cadinales*), among whom senators may also be received, shall obtain the same honours and distinctions as the senators. Like the emperor the Roman Church shall have as functionaries *cubicularii, ostiarii*, and *excubitores.* The pope shall enjoy the same honorary rights as the emperor, among them the right to wear an imperial crown, a purple cloak and tunic, and in general all imperial insignia or signs of distinction; but as Sylvester refused to put on his head a golden crown, the emperor invested him with the high white cap (*phrygium*). Constantine, the document continues, rendered to the pope the service of a *strator*, i.e. he led the horse upon which the pope rode. Moreover, the emperor makes a present to the pope and his successors of the Lateran palace, of Rome and the provinces, districts, and towns of Italy and all the Western regions (*tam palatium nostrum, ut prelatum est, quamque Romæ urbis et omnes Italiæ seu occidentalium regionum provinicas loca et civitates*). The document goes on to say that for himself the emperor has established in the East a new capital which bears his name, and thither he removes his government, since it is inconvenient that a secular emperor have power where God has established the residence of the head of the Christian religion. The document concludes with maledictions against all who dare to violate these donations and with the assurance that the emperor has signed them with his own hand and placed them on the tomb of St. Peter.**

**This document is without doubt a forgery, fabricated somewhere between the years 750 and 850. As early as the fifteenth century its falsity was known and demonstrated. Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (De Concordantiâ Catholicâ, III, ii, in the Basle ed. of his Opera, 1565, I) spoke of it as a *dictamen apocryphum*. Some years later (1440) Lorenzo Valla (De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio, Mainz, 1518) proved the forgery with certainty. Independently of both his predecessors, Reginald Pecocke, Bishop of Chichester (1450-57), reached a similar conclusion in his work, "The Repressor of over much Blaming of the Clergy", Rolls Series, II, 351-366. Its genuinity was yet occasionally defended, and the document still further used as authentic, until Baronius in his "Annales Ecclesiastici" (ad an. 324) admitted that the "Donatio" was a forgery, whereafter it was soon universally admitted to be such. It is so clearly a fabrication that there is no reason to wonder that, with the revival of historical criticism in the fifteenth century, the true character of the document was at once recognized. The forger made use of various authorities, which Grauert and others (see below) have thoroughly investigated. The introduction and the conclusion of the document are imitated from authentic writings of the imperial period, but formulæ of other periods are also utilized. In the "Confession" of faith the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is explained at length, afterwards the Fall of man and the Incarnation of Christ. There are also reminiscences of the decrees of the Iconoclast Synod of Constantinople (754) against the veneration of images. The narrative of the conversion and healing of the emperor is based on the apocryphal Acts of Sylvester (Acta or Gesta Sylvestri), yet all the particulars of the "Donatio" narrative do not appear in the hitherto known texts of that legend. The distinctions conferred on the pope and the cardinals of the Roman Church the forger probably invented and described according to certain contemporary rites and the court ceremonial of the Roman and the Byzantine emperors. The author also used the biographies of the popes in the Liber Pontificalis (q.v.), likewise eighth-century letters of the popes, especially in his account of the imperial donations.**

**The authorship of this document is still wrapped in obscurity. Occasionally, but without sufficient reason, critics have attributed it to the author of the False Decretals (q.v.) or to some Roman ecclesiastic of the eighth century. On the other hand, the time and place of its composition have lately been thoroughly studied by numerous investigators (especially Germans), though no sure and universally accepted conclusion has yet been reached. As to the place of the forgery Baronius (Annales, ad. an. 1081) maintained that it was done in the East by a schismatic Greek; it is, indeed, found in Greek canonical collections. Natalis Alexander opposed this view, and it is no longer held by any recent historian. Many of the recent critical students of the document locate its composition at Rome and attribute the forgery to an ecclesiastic, their chief argument being an intrinsic one: this false document was composed in favour of the popes and of the Roman Church, therefore Rome itself must have had the chief interest in a forgery executed for a purpose so clearly expressed. Moreover, the sources of the document are chiefly Roman. Nevertheless, the earlier view of Zaccaria and others that the forgery originated in the Frankish Empire has quite recently been ably defended by Hergenröther and Grauert (see below). They call attention to the fact that the "Donatio" appears first in Frankish collections, i.e. in the False Decretals and in the above-mentioned St-Denis manuscript; moreover the earliest certain quotation of it is by Frankish authors in the second half of the ninth century. Finally, this document was never used in the papal chancery until the middle of the eleventh century, nor in general is it referred to in Roman sources until the time of Otto III (983-1002, i.e. in case the famous "Diploma" of this emperor be authentic). The first certain use of it at Rome was by Leo IX in 1054, and it is to be noted that this pope was by birth and training a German, not an Italian. The writers mentioned have shown that the chief aim of the forgery was to prove the justice of the *translatio imperii* to the Franks, i.e. the transfer of the imperial title at the coronation of Charlemagne in 800; the forgery was, therefore, important mainly for the Frankish Empire. This view is rightly tenable against the opinion of the majority that this forgery originated at Rome.**

**A still greater divergency of opinion reigns as to the time of its composition. Some have asserted (more recently Martens, Friedrich, and Bayet) that each of its two parts was fabricated at different times. Martens holds that the author executed his forgery at brief intervals; that the "Constitutum" originated after 800 in connection with a letter of Adrian I (778) to Charlemagne wherein the pope acknowledged the imperial position to which the Frankish king by his own efforts and fortune had attained. Friedrich (see below), on the contrary, attempts to prove that the "Constitutum" was composed of two really distinct parts. The gist of the first part, the so-called "Confessio", appeared between 638 and 653, probably 638-641, while the second, or "Donatio" proper, was written in the reign of Stephen II, between 752 and 757, by Paul, brother and successor of Pope Stephen. According to Bayet the first part of the document was composed in the time of Paul I (757-767); the latter part appeared in or about the year 774. In opposition to these opinions most historians maintain that the document was written at the same time and wholly by one author. But when was it written? Colombier decides for the reign of Pope Conon (686-687), Genelin for the beginning of the eighth century (before 728). But neither of these views is supported by sufficient reasons, and both are certainly untenable. Most investigators accept as the earliest possible date the pontificate of Stephen II (752-757), thus establishing a connection between the forgery and the historical events that led to the origin of the States of the Church and the Western Empire of the Frankish kings. But in what year of period from the above-mentioned pontificate of Stephen II until the reception of the "Constitutum" in the collection of the False Decretals (c. 840-50) was the forgery executed? Nearly every student of this intricate question maintains his own distinct view. It is necessary first to answer a preliminary question: Did Pope Adrian I in his letter to Charlemagne of the year 778 (Codex Carolinus, ed. Jaffé Ep. lxi) exhibit a knowledge of the "Constitutum"? From a passage of this letter (Sicut temporibus beati Silvestri Romani pontificis a sanctæ recordationis piisimo Constantino magno imperatore per eius largitatem sancta Dei Catholica et Apostolica Romana ecclesia elevata et exaltata est et potestatem in his Hesperiæ partibus largiri dignatus, ita et in his vestris felicissimis temporibus atque nostris sancta Dei ecclesia, id est beati Petri apostoli, germinet atque exultet. . . .) several writers, e.g. Döllinger, Langen, Meyer, and others have concluded that Adrian I was then aware of this forgery, so that it must have appeared before 778. Friedrich assumes in Adrian I a knowledge of the "Constitutum" from his letter to Emperor Constantine VI written in 785 (Mansi, Concil. Coll., XII, 1056). Most historians, however, rightly refrain from asserting that Adrian I made use of this document; from his letters, therefore, the time of its origin cannot be deduced.**

**Most of the recent writers on the subject assume the origin of the "Donatio" between 752 and 795. Among them, some decide for the pontificate of Stephen II (752-757) on the hypothesis that the author of the forgery wished to substantiate thereby the claims of this pope in his negotiations with Pepin (Döllinger, Hauck, Friedrich, Böhmer). Others lower the date of the forgery to the time of Paul I (757-767), and base their opinion on the political events in Italy under this pope, or on the fact that he had a special veneration for St. Sylvester, and that the "Donatio" had especially in view the honour of this saint (Scheffer-Boichorst, Mayer). Others again locate its origin in the pontificate of Adrian I (772-795), on the hypothesis that this pope hoped thereby to extend the secular authority of the Roman Church over a great part of Italy and to create in this way a powerful ecclesiastical State under papal government (Langen, Loening). A smaller group of writers, however, remove the forgery to some date after 800, i.e. after the coronation of Charlemagne as emperor. Among these, Martens and Weiland assign the document to the last years of the reign of Charlemagne, or the first years of Louis the Pious, i.e. somewhere between 800 and 840. They argue that the chief purpose of the forgery was to bestow on the Western ruler the imperial power, or that the "Constitutum" was meant to indicate what the new emperor, as successor of Constantine the Great, might have conferred on the Roman Church. Those writers also who seek the forger in the Frankish Empire maintain that the document was written in the ninth century, e.g. especially Hergenröther and Grauert. The latter opines that the "Constitutum" originated in the monastery of St-Denis, at Paris, shortly before or about the same time as the False Decretals, i.e. between 840 and 850.**

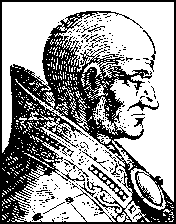
**Closely connected with the date of the forgery is the other question concerning the primary purpose of the forger of the "Donatio". Here, too, there exists a great variety of opinions. Most of the writers who locate at Rome itself the origin of the forgery maintain that it was intended principally to support the claims of the popes to secular power in Italy; they differ, however, as to the extent of the said claims. According to Döllinger the "Constitutum" was destined to aid in the creation of a united Italy under papal government. Others would limit the papal claims to those districts which Stephen II sought to obtain from Pepin, or to isolated territories which, then or later, the popes desired to acquire. In general, this class of historians seeks to connect the forgery with the historical events and political movements of that time in Italy (Mayer, Langen, Friedrich, Loening, and others). Several of these writers lay more stress on the elevation of the papacy than on the donation of territories. Occasionally it is maintained that the forger sought to secure for the pope a kind of higher secular power, something akin to imperial supremacy as against the Frankish Government, then solidly established in Italy. Again, some of this class limit to Italy the expression *occidentalium regionum provincias*, but most of them understand it to mean the whole former Western Empire. This is the attitude of Weiland, for whom the chief object of the forgery is the increase of papal power over the imperial, and the establishment of a kind of imperial supremacy of the pope over the whole West. For this reason also he lowers the date of the "Constitutum" no further than the end of the reign of Charlemagne (814). As a matter of fact, however, in this document Sylvester does indeed obtain from Constantine imperial rank and the emblems of imperial dignity, but not the real imperial supremacy. Martens therefore sees in the forgery an effort to elevate the papacy in general; all alleged prerogatives of the pope and of Roman ecclesiastics, all gifts of landed possessions, and rights of secular government are meant to promote and confirm this elevation, and from it all the new Emperor Charlemagne ought to draw practical conclusions for his behaviour in relation to the pope. Scheffer-Boichorst holds a singular opinion, namely that the forger intended primarily the glorification of Sylvester and Constantine, and only in a secondary way a defence of the papal claims to territorial possessions. Grauert, for whom the forger is a Frankish subject, shares the view of Hergenröther, i.e. the forger had in mind a defence of the new Western Empire from the attacks of the Byzantines. Therefore it was highly important for him to establish the legitimacy of the newly founded empire, and this purpose was especially aided by all that the document alleges concerning the elevation of the pope. From the foregoing it will be seen that the last word of historical research in this matter still remains to be said. Important questions concerning the sources of the forgery, the place and time of its origin, the tendency of the forger, yet await their solution. New researches will probably pay still greater attention to textual criticism, especially that of the first part or "Confession" of faith.**

**As far as the evidence at hand permits us to judge, the forged "Constitutum" was first made known in the Frankish Empire. The oldest extant manuscript of it, certainly from the ninth century, was written in the Frankish Empire. In the second half of that century the document is expressly mentioned by three Frankish writers. Ado, Bishop of Vienne, speaks of it in his Chronicle (De sex ætatibus mundi, ad an. 306, in P.L., CXXIII, 92); Æneas, Bishop of Paris, refers to it in defence of the Roman primacy (Adversus Græcos, c. ccix, op. cit., CXXI, 758); Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims, mentions the donation of Rome to the pope by Constantine the Great according to the "Constitutum" (De ordine palatii, c. xiii, op. cit., CXXV, 998). The document obtained wider circulation by its incorporation with the False Decretals (840-850, or more specifically between 847 and 852; Hinschius, Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianæ, Leipzig, 1863, p. 249). At Rome no use was made of the document during the ninth and the tenth centuries, not even amid the conflicts and difficulties of Nicholas I with Constantinople, when it might have served as a welcome argument for the claims of the pope. The first pope who used it in an official act and relied upon, was Leo IX; in a letter of 1054 to Michael Cærularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, he cites the "Donatio" to show that the Holy See possessed both an earthly and a heavenly *imperium*, the royal priesthood. Thenceforth the "Donatio" acquires more importance and is more frequently used as evidence in the ecclesiastical and political conflicts between the papacy and the secular power. Anselm of Lucca and Cardinal Deusdedit inserted it in their collections of canons. Gratian, it is true, excluded it from his "Decretum", but it was soon added to it as "Palea". The ecclesiastical writers in defence of the papacy during the conflicts of the early part of the twelfth century quoted it as authoritative (Hugo of Fleury, De regiâ potestate et ecclesiasticâ dignitate, II; Placidus of Nonantula, De honore ecclesiæ, cc. lvii, xci, cli; Disputatio vel defensio Paschalis papæ, Honorius Augustodunensis, De summâ gloriæ, c. xvii; cf. Mon. Germ. Hist., Libelli de lite, II, 456, 591, 614, 635; III, 71). St. Peter Damian also relied on it in his writings against the antipope Cadalous of Parma (Disceptatio synodalis, in Libelli de lite, I, 88). Gregory VII himself never quoted this document in his long warfare for ecclesiastical liberty against the secular power. But Urban II made use of it in 1091 to support his claims on the island of Corsica. Later popes (Innocent III, Gregory IX, Innocent IV) took its authority for granted (Innocent III, Sermo de sancto Silvestro, in P.L., CCXVII, 481 sqq.; Raynaldus, Annales, ad an. 1236, n. 24; Potthast, Regesta, no. 11,848), and ecclesiastical writers often adduced its evidence in favour of the papacy. The medieval adversaries of the popes, on the other hand, never denied the validity of this appeal to the pretended donation of Constantine, but endeavoured to show that the legal deductions drawn from it were founded on false interpretations. The authenticity of the document, as already stated, was doubted by no one before the fifteenth century. It was known to the Greeks in the second half of the twelfth century, when it appears in the collection of Theodore Balsamon (1169 sqq.); later on another Greek canonist, Matthæus Blastares (about 1335), admitted it into his collection. It appears also in other Greek works. Moreover, it was highly esteemed in the Greek East. The Greeks claimed, it is well known, for the Bishop of New Rome (Constantinople) the same honorary rights as those enjoyed by the Bishop of Old Rome. By now, by virtue of this document, they claimed for the Byzantine clergy also the privileges and perogatives granted to the pope and the Roman ecclesiastics. In the West, long after its authenticity was disputed in the fifteenth century, its validity was still upheld by the majority of canonists and jurists who continued throughout the sixteenth century to quote it as authentic. And though Baronius and later historians acknowledged it to be a forgery, they endeavoured to marshal other authorities in defence of its content, especially as regards the imperial donations. In later times even this was abandoned, so that now the whole "Constitutum", both in form and content, is rightly considered in all senses a forgery.**

## Popes and the Church in the Period 900 – 1000 CE

# Pope Sergius III

**The first pope of the 10th century was Benedict IV (900-03). His successor, Leo V, reigned for just one month when he was seized and imprisoned by a usurper, Cardinal Christopher. Meanwhile Cardinal Sergius who had tried for the papal office some seven years earlier now tried again. His supporters got both Leo and Christopher murdered and their leader became Pope Sergius III in 904.**



**Sergius had taken part in the *Synod Horrenda* [which had tried and condemned the exhumed body of Pope Formosus – tkw] and one of his first acts as pope was to honour Pope Stephen VII [who had officiated at the Synod] with a handsome epitaph and to overturn the [later] judgement that had re-instated Pope Formosus’ character. In fact, Sergius had Formosus, now ten years dead, re-exhumed and condemned once again. The corpse was then beheaded, three more fingers cut off and thrown into the river Tiber. The headless body was caught in a fisherman’s net and returned a second time to St Peter’s.**

**🡨 *Sergius***

**Theodora  &  Marozia**

**At the time one Theophylact was the senator of Rome (and civic head of the city). He had supported Sergius’ party in the battles that followed the *Synod Horrenda* and the family (wife Theodora and daughters Marozia and Theodora) came to know Sergius well. It is believed that Sergius seduced Marozia in the Lateran Palace and she became his mistress around 905 (the year after he became Pope) when she was 15 and he was 45. She soon had a son by him who was later to become pope. Meanwhile her mother Theodora’s influence had grown and it was her nominees who became the next two popes, Anastasius III and Lando. One of her lovers was reportedly John, Bishop of Bologna. Under her infuence, he rose to become Archbishop of Ravenna. According to a contemporary, Bishop Liudprand of Cremona, she missed John’s absences in Rome. “Thereupon Theodora like a harlot fearing she would have few opportunities of bedding with her sweetheart forced him to give up his bishopric and take for himself - Oh, monstrous crime - the papacy of Rome.” The bishop of Ravenna became Pope John X in 914.**

**Popes John X and XI**

**At this time, a northern soldier of fortune, Alberic, bearing the title marquis of Camerino came to Rome. He was a good ally to Theophylact, and Theodora got him married to her daughter Marozia. After the deaths of Theodora and Alberic (both around 928), Marozia had Pope John (her mother’s lover) imprisoned and reportedly suffocated to death. The next two popes, Leo VI and Stephen VIII, reigned for less than a year and three years respectively. Both disappeared mysteriously.**

Marozia’s first son (by Pope Sergius) became Pope John XI in 931. She married again and when her second husband died, she married his half-brother King Hugo of Provence, a wedding officiated by her son Pope John XI in 932. Meanwhile her second son called Alberic [II], after his father, was feeling increasingly left out. He came to know that Hugo had planned to render him helpless by blinding him. Alberic appealed to the Romans to rise against Hugo, an outsider. When the Romans responded and got ready for battle, Hugo abandoned his wife and fled.

**Alberic put the pope (his half-brother) under permanent arrest in the Lateran Palace and imprisoned his mother Marozia in Hadrian’s mausoleum where she remained for over 50 years [undoubtedly and exaggeration - tkw]. Alberic’s greatest achievement was to strip John XI (and his successors LeoVII, Stephen IX, Marinus II and Agapitus II) of all temporal power. This allowed the popes to concentrate on their spiritual duties and the good effects were felt far and wide. Alberic died in 954 at the age of 40 but not before he had made the nobles swear at the tomb of St Peter that they would make his son Octavian pontiff on the death of Agapitus II.**

**Pope John XII**

**And so Octavian became Pope John XII in 955 about the age of 18. He promptly assumed temporal powers, again making the papacy a lucrative position to aspire to. Dormant factions became active and street battles and intrigues became commonplace. John XII became one of the most profligate popes known. He was a great gambler and kept a stud farm of 2000 horses which were fed on almonds and figs soaked in wine. He pilfered pilgrims’ offerings and violated female pilgrims in the basilica of St Peter. He kept a harem at the Lateran Palace and rewarded his paramours with golden chalices taken from St Peter’s and even land. Women were warned not to enter St John Lateran if they prized their honour. King Otto of Germany (936-73) came to John’s aid when Berengar II, king of Italy, occupied the papal states. John made him emperor of the ‘Holy Roman Empire’ in 962.**

**Otto asked John to mend his ways. Fearing both the wrath of the people of Rome and Otto’s imminent arrival, John fled to Tivoli after plundering the treasury of St Peter’s. Otto promptly called a Synod at which 16 cardinals and numerous bishops were present, in effect to try John. Bishop Liudprand of Cremona read out a list of the pope’s misdeeds: celebrating mass without communion, charging for ordinations, fornicating with numerous women, blinding his spiritual director, castrating a cardinal etc.**

King Otto then communicated the decisions of the Synod to John:

**“*Everyone, clergy as well as laity, accuses you, Holiness, of murder, perjury, sacrilege, incest with your relatives including two sisters and of having invoked Jupiter, Venus and other demons.*”**

**Pope John wrote back promptly.**

**“*To all the Bishops:***

***We hear that you wish to make another Pope. If you do, I excommunicate you by Almighty God and you have no power to ordain or to celebrate Mass.*”**

**John was warned to return and when he didn’t, he was formally deposed by the Synod and Otto proposed Leo VIII (a German) as the next pope. The Romans were not pleased  and John was persuaded to return. Thereupon Leo fled to Germany and was excommunicated. Several of those responsible for deposing him were summarily maimed or executed.**

**John then resumed his old ways. One night he was caught in bed with another’s wife by the husband. The latter is reported to have taken a hammer and killed him on the spot by smashing the back of his head. John was only about 26 and it was his 8th year as pope.**

**Successors of John XII**

**There was a dispute about John’s successor. The Romans chose Benedict V while Emperor Otto who insisted that choice of pope needed his approval preferred Leo VIII, whereupon Benedict knelt at Otto’s feet, stripped off his papal garments and agreed that Leo was the lawful successor. Both Leo and Benedict lasted no more than a year. Otto then selected John XIII as the next pope. The Romans found this pope provoking wars and treating his enemies with extreme cruelty (for example, gouging out their eyes). They packed him off to Germany whereupon Otto sent him back. John XIII remained pope was seven years. He was followed by Benedict VII. Like John XII, he was noted for his sexual excesses and is believed to have died in the act of adultery.**

**All these years Marozia languished in prison. In 986 when she was in her mid-90s, she was at last released by order of Pope John XV and King Otto III (grandson of Otto I). A bishop exorcised her of any demons she possessed and she was absolved from her sins. She was then executed.**

**The same Otto III became Holy Roman Emperor in 996 at the age of 16. He went to Rome and appointed his cousin Bruno as Pope Gregory V and when Gregory died in 999 made his former tutor Gerbert pope as Sylvester II, the last pope of the 10th century.**

**Dark Period of the Papacy**

**Historians agree that the 10th century was one of the darkest periods of the papacy. Cardinal Baronius, the church historian who wrote *Ecclesiastical Annals* in the 16th century called the pontiffs of this period: “*invaders of the Holy See, less apostles than apostates…vainglorious Messalinas filled with fleshy lusts and all sorts of wickedness governed the Chair of St Peter for their minions and paramours.”***

**Cardinal Bellarmine of the 17th century was a great defender of the papacy but he considered John XII to be abominable. Nevertheless, he wrote in his book *De Romano Pontifice*: “The Pope is the supreme judge of faith of morals…*If the Pope were to err by imposing sins and forbidding virtues, the church would still have to consider sins as virtues and virtues as vices*…”**

**References:**

**1.    Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ*, Corgi Books 1994**

**2.    E R Chamberlain, *Bad Popes*, Barnes & Noble 1993**

1. ***History of the Popes*, Cheetham, Nicholas, 1992**

**[Note that the above article and all three of its sources are considered to be “non-academic”, i.e., none of them carry the normally accepted academic “apparatus” that would give them “authority” in academia. Nonetheless, they do give the flavor, if not the exact detail, of what went on in the papacy of the 10th century, during which the office was controlled by local and foreign noble factions. The situation didn’t improve much in the next centuries. – tkw]**

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| Table of 10th Century Popes **(Recognized as Popes 118 - 140 )** |
| **(Purported pictures and bio notes for all 22 Popes of the 10th century are at** [**http://www.italycyberguide.com/History/popes/10th.htm**](http://www.italycyberguide.com/History/popes/10th.htm)**)** |
| 118) Benedict IV  900-03 |
| 119) Leo V             903 |
| 120) Sergius III    904-11 |
| #  Christopher    903-04 |
| 121) Anastasius III 911-12 |
| 122) Lando          913-14 |
| 123) John X            914-28 |
| 124) Leo VIII        928 |
| 125) Stephen VIII   928-31 |
| 126) John Xl         931-35 |
| 127) Leo VII           936-39 |
| 128) Stephen IX   939-42 |
| 130) Agapitus II   946-55 |
| 129) Marinus II      942-46 |
| 131) John XII         955-63 |
| 132) Leo VIII        963-64 |
| 133) Benedict V     964 |
| 134) John XIII       965-72 |
| 135) Benedict VI    973-74 |
| #  Boniface VII   974 |
| 136) Benedict VII  974-83 |
| 137) John XIV        983-84 |
| 138) John XV        985-96 |
| 139) Gregory V      996-99 |
| #  John XVI        997-98 |
| 140) Sylvester II 999-1003 |
| Note:  # indicates unrecognized (un-numbered) rival popes |