Rome in the Ninth Century

Intended as a sequel to *Rome in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge, 2020), this survey of the material culture of the city of Rome spans the period from the imperial coronation of Charlemagne in 800 to the nadir of the fortunes of the Roman Church a century later. The evidence of standing buildings, objects, historical documents and archaeology is brought together to create an integrated picture of the political, economic and cultural situation in the city over this period, one characterized initially by substantial wealth resulting in enormous patronage of art and architecture, but then followed by almost total impoverishment and collapse. John Osborne also attempts to correct the widespread notion that the Franco-papal alliance of the late eighth century led to a political and cultural break between Rome and the broader cultural world of the Christian eastern Mediterranean. Beautifully illustrated, this book is essential for everyone interested in medieval Rome.

John Osborne is currently Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at Carleton University, Ottawa, and an Associate Fellow of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto. His monograph *Rome in the Eighth Century: A History in Art* (Cambridge, 2020) won the 2021 Margaret Wade Labarge prize of the Canadian Society of Medievalists.
British School at Rome Studies

Series editors
Barbara Borg
Chair of Publications of the British School at Rome
Abigail Brundin
Director of the British School at Rome
Roey Sweet
Chair of the Faculty of Archaeology, History and Letters and Member of the Council of the British School at Rome

British School at Rome Studies builds on the prestigious and long-standing Monographs series of the British School at Rome. It publishes volumes on topics that cover the full range of the history, archaeology and art history of the western Mediterranean both by the staff of the BSR and its present and former members, and by members of the academic community engaged in top-quality research in any of these fields.

In the Footsteps of the Etruscans: Changing Landscapes around Tuscania from Prehistory to Modernity Edited by Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen
Architecture in Ancient Central Italy: Connections in Etruscan and Early Roman Building Edited by Charlotte R. Potts
Roman Port Societies: The Evidence of Inscriptions Edited by Pascal Arnaud and Simon Keay
The Basilica of St John Lateran to 1600 Edited by Lex Bosman, Ian Haynes and Paolo Liverani
Rome in the Eighth Century: A History in Art John Osborne
Rome, Pollution and Propriety: Dirt, Disease and Hygiene in the Eternal City from Antiquity to Modernity Edited by Mark Bradley, with Kenneth Stow
Old Saint Peter’s, Rome Edited by Rosamond McKitterick, John Osborne, Carol M. Richardson and Joanna Story
The Punic Mediterranean: Identities and Identification from Phoenician Settlement to Roman Rule Edited by Josephine Crawley Quinn and Nicholas C. Vella
Turin and the British in the Age of the Grand Tour Edited by Paola Bianchi and Karin Wolfe
Rome in the Ninth Century

A History in Art

JOHN OSBORNE

Carleton University, Ottawa
Contents

List of Figures [page vi]
Acknowledgements [ix]
List of Abbreviations [x]
List of Ninth-century Popes [xi]

1 Introduction [1]
2 Rome in 800: The Pontificate of Leo III [10]
3 Paschal I, the Church of Santa Prassede and the Question of a ‘Carolingian Renovatio’ in Rome [51]
4 Paschal I: Other Projects [86]
5 Eugenius II, Gregory IV and Sergius II [109]
6 The Gathering Storm: The Pontificate of Pope Leo IV (847–55) [131]
7 Benedict III, Nicholas I and Hadrian II, and the Continuing ‘Greek’ Presence in Rome [161]
8 The Last Hurrah: John VIII (872–82) [196]
9 ‘Not with a Bang but a Whimper’ [235]

Afterword [263]

Bibliography [267]
Index [325]
Figures

Photographs are from the author’s archive unless otherwise indicated.

1.1 Map of ninth-century Rome, indicating churches mentioned in the text © Lacey Wallace. [page 3]


2.1 Lateran patriarchate: facsimile of Leo III’s ‘Aula Leonina’. [22]

2.2 Vatican Museums: head of an apostle from the ‘Aula Leonina’. Photo © Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei. All rights reserved. [23]

2.3 Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 5407, fol. 97r. Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana with all rights reserved. [25]

2.4 Vatican City, BAV, Barb. lat. 2160, fol. 209v (olim 157v). Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana with all rights reserved. [28]

2.5 Santi Nereo ed Achilleo: Antonio Eclissi copy of mosaics on triumphal arch. Photo: Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023. [40]

2.6 Vatican Museums: Annunciation silk. Photo © Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei. All rights reserved. [47]

3.1 Santa Prassede: apse and framing arch. Photo: Fabio Barry. [61]

3.2 Santa Prassede: apse mosaic. [63]

3.3 Santa Prassede: Pope Paschal I with a model of the church. [64]

3.4 Santa Prassede: mosaics of apsidal arch. Photo: Fabio Barry. [66]

3.5 Santa Prassede: portal of the San Zeno chapel. Photo: Fabio Barry. [70]

3.6 San Zeno chapel: mosaic in the vault. Photo: Fabio Barry. [72]
List of Figures

3.7 San Zeno chapel: *hetoimasia*. Photo: Fabio Barry. [73]
3.8 San Zeno chapel: *Deësis*. Photo: Fabio Barry. [73]
3.9 San Zeno chapel: lunette with *Agnus Dei*, saints and Theodora *episcopa*. [74]
3.10 San Zeno chapel: Theodora *episcopa*. [74]
3.11 San Zeno chapel: Anastasis. [75]
3.12 Santa Prassede: panel from the marble screen. Photo: Fabio Barry. [83]
4.1 Santa Maria in Domnica: apse mosaic. Photo: Fabio Barry. [89]
4.2 Santa Cecilia: apse mosaic. Photo: Fabio Barry. [95]
4.3 Vatican Museums: enamel reliquary cross from the Sancta Sanctorum. Photo © Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei. All rights reserved. [103]
4.4 Vatican Museums: container for enamel reliquary cross. Photo © Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei. All rights reserved. [104]
4.5 Vatican Museums: cruciform reliquary container with narrative scenes, from the Sancta Sanctorum. Photo © Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei. All rights reserved. [104]
4.6 Santa Passera: murals on south (left) wall. Photo: Giulia Bordi. [108]
5.1 Santa Sabina: clerical enclosure as reconstructed by Antonio Muñoz. Photo: Fabio Barry. [112]
5.2 San Marco: apse mosaic. Photo: Claudia Bolgia. [119]
6.1 Map of the ‘Leonine City’ © Lacey Wallace. [135]
6.2 San Clemente: Ascension mural. [152]
6.3 San Clemente: Ascension mural. Photo: British School at Rome Photographic Archive, John Henry Parker collection, jhp-1268. [152]
6.4 San Clemente: Ascension mural, detail of Pope Leo IV. [153]
6.5 San Clemente: Crucifixion and other scenes from the life of Christ. Photo: British School at Rome Photographic Archive, John Henry Parker collection, jhp-1269. [155]
6.6 San Clemente: marble block with oval cavity. [157]
7.1 House in the Forum of Nerva. [166]
7.2 San Clemente: Anastasis (tomb of St Cyril). [180]
7.3 San Clemente: Anastasis. Watercoloured photograph, from Wilpert 1916, pl. 229.2. [180]
List of Figures

7.4 Vatican City, BAV, Vat. gr. 749, fol. 6r. Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana with all rights reserved. [191]

8.1 Temple of Portunus/Church of Santa Maria de Secundicerio. [209]

8.2 Santa Maria de Secundicerio: mural fragments in vertical strip. Photo: Fabio Barry. [211]

8.3 Santa Maria de Secundicerio: Joachim and the shepherds. Raccolte fotografiche ICCD, Fondo Archivio Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, E008303 – Carlo Carboni, 1923–25, gelatin silver salts on glass. With permission of the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione – MiC. [216]

8.4 Santa Maria de Secundicerio: Christ speaks to his mother. Raccolte fotografiche ICCD, Fondo Archivio Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, E008302 – Carlo Carboni, 1923–25, gelatin silver salts on glass. With permission of the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione – MiC. [218]

8.5 Santa Maria de Secundicerio: John greets Peter and the other apostles at the door of Mary’s house. Raccolte fotografiche ICCD, Fondo Archivio Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, E008304 – Carlo Carboni, 1923–25, gelatin silver salts on glass. With permission of the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione – MiC. [219]

8.6 Santa Maria de Secundicerio: Basil and the repentant sinner. [220]

8.7 Santa Maria de Secundicerio: fragment of marble cornice. Photo: Fabio Barry. [221]

8.8 San Clemente: Anastasis, detail of St Cyril’s hood. [226]

8.9 Paris, BnF, MS gr. 923 (Sacra Parallela), fol. 208r. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France. [229]

9.1 Codex Juvenianus, fol. 2r. Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Vallicelliana – Ministero della Cultura. [248]

9.2 Codex Juvenianus, fol. 1v. Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Vallicelliana – Ministero della Cultura. [249]

9.3 Codex Juvenianus, fol. 67r. Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Vallicelliana – Ministero della Cultura. [251]

9.4 Ciampini sketch of the Oratory of Formosus, Rome: BAV, Vat. lat. 7849, fol. 3v. Photo by permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana with all rights reserved. [257]
Acknowledgements

Over almost five decades of exploration of the material culture of ninth-century Rome I have been exceptionally fortunate to have benefited from the wisdom and insights of many knowledgeable and accomplished friends and scholars, including Fabio Barry, Sible de Blaauw, Claudia Bolgia, Giulia Bordi, Leonard Boyle, Tom Brown, Leslie Brubaker, David Buckton, Robert Coates-Stephens, Robin Cormack, Caecilia Davis-Weyer, Giulio Del Buono, Judson Emerick, Julian Gardner, Manuela Gianandrea, Federico Guidobaldi, Alessandra Guiglia Guidobaldi, Ingo Herklotz, Richard Hodges, Lesley Jessop, Dale Kinney, Richard Krautheimer, Gillian Mackie, Dominic Marner, Maya Maskarinc, Charles McClendon, Rosamond McKitterick, John Mitchell, Valentino Pace, Serena Romano, Erik Thunø, Carmela Vircillo Franklin, Vera von Falkenhausen and David Whitehouse. I have profited enormously from those conversations, many of them undertaken in front of the monuments in question.

More recently, as the current project neared completion, Rosamond McKitterick generously volunteered to read each chapter in draft form, resulting in innumerable valuable suggestions for improvement. Alessandra Giovenco (British School at Rome) and Daniel Partridge (Royal Collection Trust) offered prompt assistance in the provision of images in their care, as did Lacey Wallace for the two maps. Additional visual materials were generously contributed by Claudia Bolgia, Giulia Bordi and especially Fabio Barry. I am also much in debt to Hendrik Dey and Stefania Peterlini, as well as to the librarians of the British School at Rome and the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto. This book would not have happened without their various and considerable efforts, for which I shall be forever grateful.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAV</td>
<td>Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHL</td>
<td><em>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BnF</td>
<td>Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSL</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI</td>
<td><em>Dizionario biografico degli italiani</em> (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960–)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCD</td>
<td>Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÖstNB</td>
<td>Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ninth-century Popes

Leo III  795–816
Stephen IV  816–817
Paschal I  817–824
Eugenius II  824–827
Valentine  827
Gregory IV  827–844
Sergius II  844–847
Leo IV  847–855
Benedict III  855–858
Nicholas I  858–867
Hadrian II  867–872
John VIII  872–882
Marinus I  882–884
Hadrian III  884–885
Stephen V  885–891
Formosus  891–896
Boniface VI  896
Stephen VI  896–897
Romanus  897
Theodore II  897
John IX  898–900
Benedict IV  900–903