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Ferdinand Gregorovius

Excerpt

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# HISTORY OF THE CITY OF ROME IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

## CHAPTER I.

1. POSITION OF THE CITY OF ROME IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY—INFLUENCE OF THE CIVIC ELEMENTS ON THE PAPACY—THE LOMBARDS ELECT ARDUIN KING; THE ROMANS RAISE JOHN CRESCENTIUS TO THE PATRICIATE — DEATH OF SYLVESTER, 1003—JOHN XVII. AND XVIII.—TUSCULUM AND ITS COUNTS—SERGIUS IV.—END OF JOHN CRESCENTIUS, 1012.

THE eleventh century forms one of the most important epochs in the annals of the Papacy. A greater contrast between the utter decay and the sudden revival of the same power is nowhere else encountered in history. The extinction of the house of Otto was succeeded by conditions which resembled the conditions that had followed the extinction of the Carolingian Empire. The papal power sank both morally and politically, while the city exerted itself to obtain its final emancipation

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from the papal yoke. Its efforts proved unsuccessful, since the Papacy remained an indestructible principle hostile to civic development, a principle which could only be temporarily repressed but could never be removed, and which, through the aid of foreign powers, was always able to recover its ascendancy. In Rome no burgher class existed sufficiently strong to form a firm foundation for a secular constitution. There still remained merely the powerful noble families, the captains or great feudal vassals of the Church in city and country, who snatched the power from the Pope, to quarrel for it among themselves. These men ruled Rome as patricians in the first half of the eleventh century; they appointed popes from amongst their relatives, and made the Sacred Chair a family possession, and the Papacy fell into a condition of such utter barbarism that the times of the most infamous emperors of antiquity seemed to have been renewed. Then followed, however, that memorable reaction which, with marvellous rapidity, raised the Roman Church into a cosmopolitan power.

Civic affairs contributed very materially to work this result; the city itself providing the immediate causes for far-reaching movements. Its existing relations to the emperors and the popes, even the events which occurred within the narrow circuit of its walls, its opposition to the spiritual dominion, the difficulty in which the popes were placed through the civic nobility, the permanent condition of indigence, self-defence, and vigilance in which they were kept, all these causes contributed to produce

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more or less remote effects and wide-spread political results. We may assert that, without the constant opposition of the city of Rome to the spiritual government, the history of the Papacy would not have followed the course which it took both before and after Gregory VII.

The conception of the Roman patriciate from the eleventh century onwards became of world-wide importance. It invested the German kings, who snatched it from the Roman nobility and allied it to their crown, with power over the city and the right of nomination to the Sacred Chair. It therefore became the foremost object of the struggle between the Church—struggling to obtain her emancipation—and the State. The Church had scarcely entered on the path of inward reform when she strove with all her power to throw off the yoke of the Patricius. Neither creatures of the nobility, nor creatures of the king, were to be appointed to the Papacy: the papal election must be free and the independent work of the clergy. The patriciate of the city thus called forth the celebrated statute of election of Nicholas II. and the creation of the College of Cardinals, and the struggle of the popes against the patriciate at length developed into a struggle against the right of investiture in general.

The great conflict concerning investiture governed the history of the city in the latter half of the eleventh century. Rome continued to be its source and the scene of strife on which Hildebrand displayed his genius and his marvellous activity, not only in founding a new ecclesiastical

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state with feudal territories, but in forming the Papacy, after its emancipation from the patriciate, into an all-ruling power. Tedious civil wars and terrible misfortunes overtook unhappy Rome in consequence of the great struggle between the Church and the Empire, and we shall see these struggles prolonged into the twelfth century, until the city itself issues from these great convulsions during the period of the rising city republics of Italy, itself in the new form of a republic.

After the death of Otto III., Italy found herself freed from her king, Rome from her pope. No heir could claim the title of the first Otto. A favourable opportunity had arisen for the Italians to pronounce the German royal and imperial power over their country extinguished and to attain independence. As in the time of Berengar, North Italy immediately transferred the crown of the Lombards to a native prince, and Arduin, Margrave of Ivrea, a powerful noble whom Otto III. had placed under the ban of the Empire, was elected King in Pavia as early as February 15, 1002. Arduin made royal progress through the country, and even cherished hopes of the imperial crown. Such of the Lombard bishops as adhered to the German monarchy made strenuous resistance, and among these prelates Leo, Bishop of Vercelli, a favourite of Otto III., was Arduin's most formidable opponent.<sup>1</sup>

The Romans placed the patrician diadem on the head of the son of the celebrated Crescentius, and

<sup>1</sup> Sam. Löwenfeld, *Leo of Vercelli*, 1877.

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John entered on a ten years' rule as lord of the city.<sup>1</sup> His family was hostile to the German monarchy, but was beloved by the Romans, owing to the sacrifices it had made for the freedom of the city. The populace, therefore, renouncing the Counts of Tusculum, turned to the Crescentii. The relations of the new Patricius, John and Crescentius, sons of Benedict and Theodoranda, ruled as Counts in the Sabina; John even called himself duke and margrave, perhaps because he also ruled over Spoleto and Camerino. The Patricius also made another Crescentius Prefect of the city,<sup>2</sup> and effected a marriage between his own sister Rogata, now Senatrix of the Romans, and Octavian, son of Joseph, a Lombard duke in the Sabina.<sup>3</sup>

John  
Crescentius,  
Patricius  
of the  
Romans.

<sup>1</sup> *Mortuo vero ipso Imp. Johes. Crescentii fil. ordinatus est patricius, qui Joh. et Crescent. filios præd. comitis (Benedicti) ut dilectos consanguineos amare cepit. Chron. Farf., p. 541.* He appears as *Patricius Urbis R.* in 1003 (*Reg. Farf.*, n. 649).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen was still prefect in the year 1002 (*Docum. of S. Cosma, Mscr. Vatican, 7931, p. 30*). In documents Crescentius appears as holding the office from 1003. Contelor, *de Præf. Urb.*, erroneously calls him *de Turre*; an appellation which belonged to his brother: *Marinus qui vocor de Turre . . . Crescentio olim præf. germano meo. A. 1036, 15 Nov., Reg. Farf., n. 620.* The Prefect Crescentius was not the brother of the Patricius John, since in this case Marinus would have been proud of being brother to the Patricius.

<sup>3</sup> Two celebrated documents in the *Reg. Farf.*, n. 504 (Oct. 1007), n. 523 (Oct. 1013). The first: *Temporib. D. Johis. S. P. et XVIII. PP. et D. Johis. Patricii Romanor. et Ven. Rainerii Epi., et Dni. Oddonis et Crescentii incl. Comitum Territ. Sabine. In M. Octobr. Ind. V. Constat nos dom. Octavianum Vir. magnif. fil. cujusd. Joseph, seu et D. Rogatum illust. jugalem filiam cujusd. Crescentii b. m.—pro anima Dni. Crescentii genitoris mei, et D. Theodore genitricis mee supte Rogate, et pro an. Johannis Patricii Romanor. germani mei et Senioris nostri. . . .* In n. 523, Octavian names *D. Rogatam*

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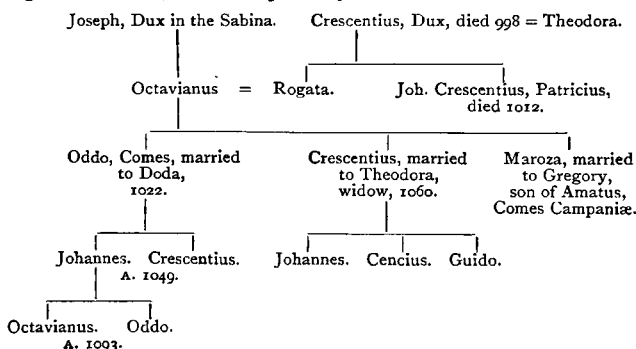
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Death of  
Sylvester  
II., May  
12, 1003.

The aged Sylvester meanwhile bewailed his loneliness for another year in the deserted Lateran, where he may, however, have found solace in his beloved parchments, until a violent death finally released him on May 12, 1003. His third successor erected a monument to his memory in S. John's, and we may still read the eulogy on the celebrated Pope and recall the various legends with which the Middle Ages adorned the life of this "Magician" on the throne of Peter.<sup>1</sup>

The epitaph laments that peace vanished from the *Senatricem conjugem meam*. Oddo and Crescentius, the sons of Octavian, were counts in the Sabina about 1024; the county remained in the family until the beginning of the twelfth century. The genealogical tree in Sperandio (*Sabina sacra*, p. 131) is inaccurate. According to documents, it is more probably as follows:—



<sup>1</sup> *Iste locus mundi Sylvestri membra sepulti*

*Venturo Domino conferet ad sonitum. . . .*

Stephania or Theodora was said to have poisoned him as well as Otto III.; Siegbert (who died in 1113) believed that he had been carried off by the devil. Orderich Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, Martin Polonus, Walter Map (*De nugis curialium*, Dist. iv. c. 11) relate legends concerning Sylvester.

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world on his death, and that the Church sank into confusion. The reigns of the two popes who succeeded him are, however, wrapped in complete obscurity. John XVII. Sico died in the course of seven months, and John XVIII. ascended the Sacred Chair on December 25, 1003. Both were Romans, relatives or creatures of the Patricius who had raised them.<sup>1</sup>

During his pontificate of more than five years, John XVIII. scarcely ventured to turn his timid glance towards the distant Kings of Germany. The Duke of Bavaria, who had there succeeded to the throne as Henry II., desired to revive the Imperium in the German nation; Arduin, however, King at all events in his Alpine heights, stood between him and the imperial crown. The Bavarian had overcome, if not removed, his rival, and had assumed the crown of Italy in rebellious Pavia, on May 14, 1004, but nevertheless had returned to Germany. Arduin's defeat, Henry's coronation, and the expectation of his journey to Rome, combined to give the German party in the city a fresh access of power. This party was now led by the Counts of Tusculum, who, from hatred to the Crescentii, feigned a sympathy for the German monarchy.

<sup>1</sup> *Cod. Vat.*, 3764: *Johs. qui vocatur Sico nat. Rom. de regione biberatica sed. m. V. d. XXV.*—*Johs. qui voc. Fasanus de regione secus porta metrovi sed. a. I.*, corrected by the *Cod. Vat.*, 1437, to *a. V.* The *R. Biberatica* is to be found in *Regio Montium*. The first year of John XVIII. is given by an instrument from S. Cosma in Mica Aurea (*Mscr. Vat.*, 7931, p. 33): *Anno Pont. Dn. Johis octabidecini pape in sede anno primo m. madius Ind. II.*, therefore 1004. His last year is mentioned by the *Reg. Sublac.*, fol. 88, *a. VI. Johis XVIII. Ind. VII. m. Januar. die XI.*, therefore 1009.

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Tusculum. Fifteen miles distant from Rome the ruins of ancient and mediæval Tusculum still stand on the heights above Frascati. The city was older than Rome, its origin being lost in the myths of Odysseus, by whom and by Telegonus, the son of Circe, it was said to have been founded. As a seat of Latin power, it long made war on Rome. Its ruler, Mamilius Octavius, there gave shelter to his father-in-law, the last Tarquinius, and himself fell in the battle of Lake Regillus. Various illustrious families—the Mamilii, the Fulvii, the Fonteiani, the Juventii—owed their origin to Tusculum, but greater than any of these were the Porcii, for this gloomy fortress had also been the cradle of the Catos.<sup>1</sup> Many figures, conspicuous during the prime of Roman learning, meet the traveller amid the ruins of Tusculum. He there discovers the site of Cicero's Academy and the villa in which he wrote the Tusculan Disputations. M. Brutus, Hortensius, Lucullus and Crassus, Metellus, Cæsar, and the later emperors owned villas at Tusculum; the fertile slope being covered with luxurious country houses in Roman times, even as Frascati, the delightful successor of Tusculum which arose in the Middle Ages long before Tusculum itself perished, is covered with the beautiful villas of the Roman nobility at the present day.<sup>2</sup> In the

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the name Monte Porzio is probably derived from swine. *Montem Porculi*, document of the year 1151, *Cod. Albini Vatican*, 3057, fol. 1151. And as early as 1074 (Nibby, *Analisi*, ii. 357).

<sup>2</sup> Bishops of Tusculum appear from the middle of sæc. v. Mattei (*Mem. Ist. dell' antico Tuscolo*, Roma, 1711) repeats all the fictions of Zazzera, Kircher, Arnold Vion, &c. Concerning Tusculum in the



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tenth century the Tusculan municipium was an almost impregnable town, filled with the ruins of ancient magnificence. The owner of the fortress ruled over the Latin mountains and a part of the Campagna, and its site gave Tusculum a greater importance than it was possible for any other stronghold in Roman territory to possess.

The resident family of counts (*de Tusculana*) were descended from Marozia and Theodora, and the family name of Theophylact, which they preserved, shows "the Senator of Rome" to have been an ancestor of the house. Alberic, the son of Marozia, may possibly have inherited Tusculum from his mother; no document, however, gives any information on the subject. We might boldly trace the Tusculan family to Theophylact, did we not hesitate to trifle with genealogical trees which lead us back to Mamilius Octavius.<sup>1</sup> Gregory, Senator of the Romans, bearing the title *de Tusculana*, appears for the first time in history during the reign of Otto III. as a favourite of the Emperor and undoubtedly as Count of Tusculum.<sup>2</sup> The life of Middle Ages, see G. Tomassetti, "Campagna Romana" (*Archivio d. Soc. Rom.*, ix, 1886).

The family  
of the  
Counts of  
Tusculum.

<sup>1</sup> The family cannot be historically traced beyond Theodora and Theophylact, as even Tomassetti, in his attempt at a genealogical tree, maintains. In the *Reg. Petri Diaconi* (n. 257 in M. Casino) a Count of Tusculum writes in the beginning of sæc. xii.: *Ptolemaus Julia stirpe progenitus romanorq. consul excell. Petro nepoti*. Alberic laid claim to this descent, and consequently gave his son the name of Octavian. The oldest deed concerning Tusculum contains the lease of a mill from the Count Palatine Alberic in 1028: from S. Maria Nova (*Mscr. Vat.*, 8043). Then documents from the middle of sæc. xi. in the *Reg. Petr. Diac.*; from sæc. xii. in Albinus and Cencius,

<sup>2</sup> First mentioned as *Dom. Gregorius Romanor. Senator* A. 986

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S. Nilo depicts him as a rich, crafty and violent despot, and relates that on coming to Rome in 1002 he presented the saint with a piece of land on which the Basilian Monastery of Grotta Ferrata was founded.<sup>1</sup>

Gregory, son or grandson of Alberic, had married Maria and became the father of three sons, Alberic, Romanus, and Theophylact. These lawless barons, like birds of prey, looked down from the heights of Tusculum upon Rome, where John Crescentius now ruled as Patricius, and where Alberic fifty years before had reigned with royal power. They aimed at making Rome a family possession, and a favourable opportunity soon occurred. On the death of John XVIII. in June 1009, the Tusculans apparently succeeded in obtaining a papal election favourable to their cause.<sup>2</sup> The successor to the

(*Mscr. Vat.*, 8042). Then A. 999: *Gregorio excell. viro, qui de tusculana, atque praefecto navali* (*Reg. Farf.*, n. 470). Coppi (*Mem. Colonn.*) represents Gregory as son of the celebrated Alberic, others make him the son of Deusdedit. The will of a *Patricius Romanor. Albericus* given by Sperandio (*Sabina S.*, p. 327) is a fiction.

<sup>1</sup> *Mscr. Vat.*, 8042. Concerning this celebrated monastery, see Rocchi, *La Badia di Grotta Ferrata*, Rome, 1884; Tomassetti, "Camp. Romana," *Arch. d. Soc. R.*, vol. viii., 1885, p. 487 f. An inscription inspired Galletti with the idea of writing the history of the Conti di Tusculo; the materials for which are to be found in the Vatican library.

*Aurea progenies iacet hic vocitata JOHS. . .*

The child who died in 1030 is called the *nepos* of the great Prince Alberic; his father Gregory, however, was grandson of Gregory of Tusculum (who, according to documents, died before 1012). John XIX. was great-uncle to the child.

<sup>2</sup> *Catalog. Eccardi: Phasianus Card. s. Petri, qui et Joh. de patre Urso Presbytero, matre Stephania, post annos V. et dimid. in S.*