3

Responses to the Sack of Rome in 410

> My voice sticks in my throat: and, as I dictate, sobs choke my utterance. The city that captured the whole world is captured.
>
> —Jerome, *Letter* 127, 412 CE[1]

> Although the memory of the event is still fresh, anyone who saw the numbers of the Romans themselves and listened to their talk would think that nothing had happened, as they themselves admit, unless perhaps he were to notice some charred ruins still remaining.
>
> –Orosius, *History Against the Pagans*, 417 CE[2]

After three years of intermittent sieges and failed negotiations, someone opened the Salarian Gate of Rome to the Gothic general Alaric on August 24, 410. Alaric, infuriated by his failed negotiations with the western emperor Honorius, allowed his Gothic and Germanic soldiers to plunder at will. They set on fire parts of the city, including the Gardens of Sallustius, a lavish green park between the Quirinal and Pincian Hills.[3] (See Map 1 at the beginning of the book.) The Goths targeted wealthy private homes as well as churches and public buildings in search of portable wealth. Slaves and nobles alike were seized, the former to provide labor, the latter for ransom. After terrorizing the inhabitants from August 24 to August 27, 410, the Goths departed for southern Italy to try to pass by sea to North Africa.[4] News of these events reverberated around the Mediterranean. Jerome, nestled in his monastery in

[1] Jer. *Ep.* 127: *Haeret vox, et singultus intercipiunt verba dictantis. Capitur urbs, quae totum cepit orbem.* On the exaggeration in Jerome's statements about 410, see Salzman 2009, pp. 175–92.

[2] Oros. *Hist.* 7.40.2: *Cuius rei quamvis recens memoria sit, tamen si quis ipsius populi Romani et multitudinem videat et vocem audiat, nihil factum, sicut etiam ipsi fatentur, arbitrabitur, nisi aliquantis adhuc existentibus ex incendio ruinis forte doceatur.*

[3] Procop. *Wars* 3.2.24. For the opening of the gate by treachery or by a woman, see note 70 below.

[4] See notes 77–78 below. The year 2010 saw a host of books and articles on this event. For the impact on the city of Rome, see articles in Lipps, Machado and von Rummel (edds.) 2013.

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far-off Bethlehem, bemoaned the "fall" of Rome as the end of the world, as the epigraph to this chapter underscores. From his retreat in Palestine, the ascetic Pelagius saw this as the apocalypse and blamed it on the failure of "the order of the nobles."[5]

But by 417, other Romans, like Orosius and Olympiodorus, would write that the city had fully recovered and that apart from a few charred remains, it was as if the sack had never happened.[6] However, neither perspective captures the reality of life in Rome after 410. As I will demonstrate, the responses of Roman elites to 410 did bring about the recovery and resurgence of the city. Nonetheless, the trauma of 410 had long-lasting effects not only on the city and its inhabitants, but also on the political trajectory of Italy and the West.

To appreciate the complex landscape that Roman elites faced in the decade after 410, I begin with a brief outline of what led to the city's fall. The prolonged negotiations that had preceded that event and the elevation of a senator to be emperor changed the balance of power among Roman senators, imperial officials, the military, and the bishops. The material, social, and political interventions undertaken by these men and women brought about a new equilibrium. Regardless of how one sees the increasing political power claimed by senatorial aristocrats, their efforts – at times in competition with one another and at other times working together with generals and the imperial court – were key to the resurgence of the city. In contrast, the influence of Rome's bishop on the restoration of the city was diminished in the post-410 decade and only recovered slowly, most notably with the coming of the emperor Valentinian III and his family to the city in the 440s. But by the 420s, due to the contestation for influence among elites and the successful settling of the Goths in Gaul and Spain, the senators of Rome could boast of living in the *caput mundi* (the head of the world), still the largest city in the western Roman Empire.

The Failure of Honorius and the Imperial Administration, 408–10

Most historians – modern and ancient – blame the western emperor Honorius and the intrigues of the imperial courtiers for the failed negotiations that led to

[5] Pelagius, *Ep. ad Demet*. 30.1: *Recens factum est, et quod ipsa audisti, cum ad stridulae buccinae sonum, Gothorumque clamorem, lugubri oppressa metu domina orbis Roma contremuit. Ubi tunc nobilitatis ordo? Ubi certi et distincti illius dignitatis gradus?* ("It [the apocalypse] came to pass recently, as you yourself heard, when to the shrill sound of the war-trumpet and the shouts of the Goths Rome, the mistress of the world, crushed with dismal fear, shuddered. Where was the order of nobles then? Where were the occupiers of those fixed, distinct grades of their hierarchy?") Trans. by Rees 1998, p. 69.

[6] Oros. *Hist*. 7.40.2 in the epigraph to this chapter; Olymp. *Frag*. 25, ed. Blockley 1983, p. 188.

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Alaric's sack of Rome in 410. The sixth-century Greek writer Procopius brilliantly captured the critique. He described how, when the information about the final fall of Rome was relayed to Honorius by his eunuch cook, the emperor was upset only because he thought his pet cock, named Rome, had died; even when the cook corrected him, the emperor expressed merely relief that his cock was still alive. Honorius's stupidity (*amathes*), his complete lack of concern for his citizens, along with his foolish reliance on his courtiers convey how unfit for rule Honorius was.[7]

This image reflected a literary tradition hostile to this emperor, but the reality of the situation in Italy and the western Mediterranean was more complex. It cannot be explained simply due to the foolishness or detachment of the emperor. In fact, Honorius and his courtiers had been in negotiations with Alaric, a Gothic general, for at least three years prior to the sack, but the emperor had not been able to set a consistent policy in response to his demands. Alaric claimed payment for himself and his followers – fighters, refugees, women, and children. He had fought for the Romans since 395. The breaking of the Rhine frontier in 405–6 by large bands of Germanic troops and an uprising in Britain and Gaul by the usurper Constantine III in 407 had made his service critical.[8] Most recently, Alaric had fought in Illyricum in 406 upon orders from Honorius. But the western emperor changed course and no longer needed Alaric's services there.[9] Honorius's commander in chief, the powerful general Stilicho, had persuaded Alaric to move to Gaul to fight for Honorius to suppress the usurper Constantine III.[10] Yet Honorius balked at what was represented as Alaric's changing and excessive demands for payment.

As negotiations with Alaric continued, Roman senatorial aristocrats and the Senate, as a decision-making body, were involved in what was, as Matthews well observed, "a dramatic extension in the range of its political experiences."[11] At times, the Senate negotiated with the emperor, with

[7] Procop. *Wars* 3.2.25–26: "So great, they say, was the the stupidity of this emperor." Trans. here and throughout by Kaldellis 2014, p. 147. This scene is depicted by the famous Waterhouse painting of Honorius; see the discussion by Dunn 2010, pp. 243–62.

[8] For the crossing of the Rhine frontier by Sueves, Vandals, Alans, Burgundians, and their allies as a key break of the Roman defenses, see especially Heather 2006, pp. 192–211. For the uprising in Britain that led to the rise of the general Constantine, who gained control of Gaul early in 407; Zos. 5.27.2, 31.4, 6.3–4.

[9] Zos. 5.26.2 reports Stilicho's plans to seize control of the provinces of eastern Illyricum for the western government of Honorius. See Soz. 9.4.3 for Honorius's appointment of Iovius as prefect of Illyricum. For Honorius's change of mind, see Zos. 5. 29.7–8.

[10] See Stilicho, *PLRE* 1, pp. 853–58. For Stilicho's persuasion, see Doyle 2019, pp. 136–37.

[11] Matthews 1990, p. 302.

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Stilicho, and with Alaric independently. It came together to debate foreign affairs, financial policy, and diplomatic missions. This activity brought real responsibility and power, as well as danger to senators and the city.[12] This emerged clearly early in 408, when Alaric moved to Noricum from Epirus on the way to Gaul and, stopping just north of the Alpine passes to Italy, threatened to attack if he was not paid for his recent services to Honorius.[13] The demand for gold was conveyed to Honorius and the Senate by the general Stilicho, commander in chief of the western army who had negotiated with Alaric for Honorius. Stilicho, the son of a Vandal father and a Roman mother, was quite familiar with the late Roman senatorial aristocracy for he had been the beneficiary of Rome's willingness to incorporate Germans into the highest levels of society. Stilicho had married a Roman aristocratic woman, Serena, cousin of Honorius. Their eldest daughter, Maria, had married Honorius in 398, and after Maria's death in 407 or 408, their second daughter, Thermantia, also wed Honorius in 408.[14]

The debate about the Roman response to Alaric's demands that took place in a Senate meeting held at the imperial palace in Rome was a long and heated one, and accounts of it underscore the decisive role of getting the senators to support Stilicho's arrangements. Although the first vote of the Senate favored war and no recompense to Alaric, Stilicho persuaded the senators that the payment was justified. A majority of the senators reversed course and provided some 4,000 pounds of gold from their own funds to pay the price demanded for peace.[15] This was not, after all, an overwhelming sum since a wealthy senator had a yearly income of about 4,000 pounds of gold.[16] Not all senators were happy with this resolution. The aristocrat Lampadius famously decried this action: "This is not a peace but a promise of slavery."[17] Stilicho's enemies later used this intervention to convince Honorius that the general wanted Rome's wealth to incite barbarians against the empire.[18] Indeed, the wealth of the senators at this juncture is striking, especially in contrast to the financial

[12] See Matthews 1990, pp. 296–305. But senatorial political influence can only partially be attributed to the presence of the court in northern Italy, a point that Matthews, p. 303, emphasized.

[13] Zos. 5.29.4–8. See too Matthews 1990, p. 276.

[14] For these women, see Serena I, *PLRE* 1, p. 824; Maria 3, *PLRE* 2, p. 720; Aelia Materna Thermanita, *PLRE* 2, pp. 408–9. For fuller discussion of the dynastic implications, see Doyle 2019, pp. 103–40.

[15] Zos. 5.29.9, dating likely to early 408; and Olymp. *Frag.* 7.2, ed Blockley 1983, pp. 158–59.

[16] Olymp. *Frag.* 41.2, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 204–5.

[17] Zos. 5.29.5, using the Latin from Cicero. Lizzi Testa (unpublished manuscript), identifies this Lampadius not with Postumius Lampadius, who was *PPO* under Attalus, but with the Lampadius who was brother of Fl. Mallius Theodorus, Lampadius 2, *PLRE* 2, p. 655, following Paschoud 2011, p. 221. If so, then his was a powerful opposing voice.

[18] Oros. 7.38; Jer. *Ep.* 123.16.

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constraints allegedly faced by Honorius. Soon after this vote, Stilicho convinced Honorius not to travel to Constantinople for the funeral of his brother, the eastern emperor Arcadius, arguing in part, that the trip was too costly.[19]

Tensions between emperor and general escalated when Honorius left Rome for the relative safety of Pavia, near Ravenna, in May 408.[20] For his part, Stilicho was said to be unhappy with the emperor's presence near the army, allegedly concerned that the Roman soldiers would rebel against his leadership.[21] Yet Ravenna was a more secure place to reside, and Honorius was allegedly swayed by this argument by his mother-in-law, Stilicho's wife, Serena.[22] Certainly, the emperor's departure and continued absence from Rome opened new opportunities for misunderstanding between him and the senators, even as it encouraged their independent political action. It is worth underscoring here that the emperor's sojourn in Ravenna was not intended to be permanent. After 402, Ravenna was another *sedes imperii* – seat of empire – with the ability to strike coins, but Rome was still viewed as the *caput mundi* (head of the world), which is why I follow Andrew Gillett and others who argue that Honorius resided there for long intervals from 401 or 402 to 408.[23]

With Stilicho alive and in control of the military In Italy, Honorius must have felt that the city of Rome was relatively safe. Between 401 and 403, Honorius had substantially restored and extended the wall that Aurelian had built.[24] (See Map 1.) Rome's wall did, in fact, withstand sieges twice in 409. But Honorius's departure, with his body guard, reduced the number of active troops in the city. And the city only had a limited number of armed defenders. After 312, Constantine had eliminated the resident imperial horse guard (*equites singulares*), and the urban cohorts disappeared over the course of the fourth century, leaving the urban prefect only a limited police force of lightly armed men under his control.[25] The small number of experienced soldiers in the city was known to Alaric, who, when told that the citizens were trained and ready to fight, mockingly dismissed them by saying that thicker grass was easier to mow than thinner.[26]

[19] Zos. 5. 31. On the wealth of Roman elites in their houses, see Olymp. *Frag.* 41, Blockley 1983, pp. 204–6.

[20] Gillett 2001, pp. 140–41 for the movements of Honorius. [21] Zos. 5.30; 5.32.2–7.

[22] Zos. 5.30.2.

[23] Deliyannis 2010, pp. 49–51; Gillett 2001, pp. 140–41. However, Doyle 2019, p. 130 argues the view that Honorius had transferred his court to Ravenna in 402 as a result of Alaric's siege of Milan.

[24] Dey 2011, pp. 32–47.

[25] Chastagnol 1960, pp. 254–95. On Constantine's disbanding of the *equites singulares*, see Chapter 2, note 35.

[26] Zos. 5.40.3.

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The fall of Stilicho in August 408 changed everything. His death led to a significant weakening of the state and its defense. Stilicho, powerful as he was, had created enemies at court. Indeed, our sources blame Honorius for being manipulated by his courtiers, especially the head of the imperial bureau of secretaries, the eunuch, Olympius.[27] Olympius spread the rumor that Stilicho intended to place his own son, Eucherius, on the eastern throne in place of the son of Honorius's deceased brother, the eastern emperor Arcadius. This led to a mutiny of the soldiers at Ticinum.[28] In the purge that followed, Stilicho was executed at Honorius's command, as were many of the Gothic soldiers who had supported him. Those who could escape fled to Alaric's army.[29] At this juncture, in autumn of 408, the Senate followed Honorius's lead and voted to put Stilicho's widow, Serena, to death. She, too, was charged with colluding with her husband and their son, Eucherius, who was also hunted down and killed.[30]

The demise of Stilicho unleashed even greater political intrigue at the court in Ravenna, and the upheavals that followed hampered any efforts to protect Rome from attack. Honorius, who must have been aware of and had some hand in Stilicho's execution, now faced factions jockeying for power. The eunuch Olympius who had engineered Stilicho's fall, now in charge of the imperial bureaucracy as *magister officiorum*, soon fell from power, attacked by other eunuchs as being disloyal.[31] By the end of February or March 409, his replacement, the praetorian prefect Jovius, who had started advocating for a policy of conciliation with Alaric, also was removed from office for being "a friend and client of Alaric."[32] The eunuch Olympius was recalled from exile only to be removed again from office and finally murdered, ironically, for his part in the murder of Stilicho.[33]

In these uncertain times, with constant political turnover in Ravenna, the defense of Rome and a negotiated settlement with Alaric was left increasingly to the Senate. Some inhabitants, fearing attack, fled Rome.[34] But many stayed

[27] Zos. 5.34.1–5. Olympius was *magister scriniorum* then for his career, see Olympius 2, *PLRE* 2, pp. 801–2.

[28] Zos. 5.32.1–4. [29] Zos. 5.34–35.

[30] Zos. 5.38.1–4. Paschoud 2011, pp. 257–66 alleges that the Senate was angry at Serena's role in the sale of the property of the senatorial ascetic couple Melania the Younger and Eucherius. For the murder of Eucherius, see Zos. 5.35.3.

[31] Zos. 5.46.1; Olymp. *Frag.* 8.2 ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 162–63. Lizzi Testa dates this to 409; see Lizzi Testa 2012, 1–32.

[32] For a full discussion of the twists and turns of these negotiations, see Matthews 1990, pp. 284–306; quote on p. 293; and Lizzi Testa (unpublished manuscript). For Jovius's appointment, see *C. Th.* 2, 8, 25 (April 409). For Jovius's connection with Alaric, see Zos. 5.48.2 and Matthews 1990, p. 293, note 4.

[33] Zos. 5.46.1; Olymp. *Frag.* 8.2, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 162–63.

[34] Gerontius, *Life of Melania the Younger*, 19–20 = *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, *SC* 90, ed. Gorce, 1962.

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behind, trusting in the city's military and civic leadership to protect them. The Senate sent several embassies to Honorius and to Alaric to press for a settlement.[35] According to Zosimus, Alaric wanted only a "moderate" sum of money, an exchange of hostages, and the concession of land in Pannonia for his people to inhabit.[36] Encouraged by additional Hunnic and Gothic soldiers, and having summoned his brother-in-law, Athaulf, from Pannonia, Alaric marched through northern Italy to the walls of Rome unopposed. This first siege of the city in 408–9 brought starvation and suffering for the inhabitants.[37] The Senate took action on its own. It sent an embassy to negotiate with Alaric, headed by a prestigious senator, the former urban prefect Basilius, and a certain tribune, a friend of Alaric named Ioannes.[38] At the same time, the then-urban prefect and senator Pompeianus turned to traditional religion to try to restore civic confidence; pagan priests from Etruria, who happened to be in Rome, offered to perform public rites on behalf of the city.[39] According to the Greek historian Zosimus, the bishop of Rome, Innocent I, would have allowed the rite if it was performed in private. The priests, however, refused this stipulation, so, of course, when the city fell, this vignette provided further justification for the sack among pagans.[40] Lizzi Testa, for one, takes this episode as evidence for how great were the religious and social tensions that the siege unearthed.[41]

But it is worth again emphasizing the role that the Senate took at this juncture. In response to his demands, the Senate sent a second embassy to Alaric, who now was demanding 5,000 pounds of gold, 30,000 pounds of silver, and large quantities of spices and clothing. The Senate then voted to approve this amount and to raise this money based on a census of their own property undertaken by Palladius, the chief financial officer.[42] Although Palladius's failure to collect the full amount was attributed to greed or sudden poverty by Zosimus, the Senate determined to raise the money by despoiling the statues of the pagan gods, an act that later pagan writers saw as contributing to the fall of the city.[43]

The payment to Alaric gave the Romans a brief respite to get food from the port city nearby. Now more citizens fled the city and Gothic slaves bolted to join Alaric's forces, swelling their number, allegedly, to more than 40,000.[44] After this payment, the Senate again tried to get the Emperor Honorius to negotiate with Alaric. Indeed, throughout this period, we hear of several

[35] Zos. 5.36. [36] Zos. 5.36.
[37] Zos. 5.39–40. For Basilius, urban prefect in 395, see *PLRE* 1, Basilius 3, p. 149. [38] Zos. 5.40.
[39] Zos. 5.41.1. For another source that verifies this incident, see Soz. 9.6.1–7.
[40] Salzman 2015, pp. 346–59. [41] Lizzi Testa 2013, 81–112.
[42] Zos. 5.41.4–5. See Palladius 19, *PLRE* 2, pp. 822–24. [43] Zos. 5.41.4–6. [44] Zos. 5.42.2–3.

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embassies undertaken by the Senate to resolve the standoff.[45] And although Honorius was supposed to finally ratify an agreement to release Gothic hostages, he and his courtiers kept delaying their approval. Zosimus reports another senatorial embassy to Ravenna, one including the senators Priscus Attalus, Caecilianus, and Maximianus, which again tried to convince the imperial court to accept their prearranged settlement.[46] The senators even took with them the bishop of Rome, Innocent I, trying to reinforce their position by appealing to Honorius's piety.[47] Still, Honorius would not act, caught up in shifting internal court politics. But in an attempt to assuage the worsening finances of the senators, Honorius made Priscus Attalus the new chief financial officer (*comes sacrarum largitionum*), and then soon after, he appointed him as urban prefect of Rome.[48]

The career of Priscus Attalus shows the political possibilities for a Roman senator – and for the Senate – in the polyglot capital. Attalus was regarded as one of the leading members in the Senate, although his father had likely come from Antioch and had established himself in Rome in the late fourth century, rising to the office of urban prefect in 371–72 under the emperor Valentinian I. By the turn of the fifth century, Priscus Attalus was well positioned to lead, inheriting status along with property in Sardinia and Rome as well as in the East.[49] As early as 398, he had represented the Senate on an embassy to Honorius that had successfully argued that senators not provide recruits to the army.[50] His status, education, and experience made him a natural choice to represent the Senate on embassies in 409 and gave him a key role in the events that followed.[51]

The situation in the city turned desperate in the winter of 409 when Alaric seized the city's port, Portus, and its granaries. Faced with starvation and potential food riots, the Senate accepted all of Alaric's demands. In a direct challenge to Honorius, the Senate, with the support of Alaric, recognized as emperor Priscus Attalus, one of their own.[52] According to Philostorgius, the

[45] Zos. 5.40; 5.41.4; 5.42; and 5.45.5. [46] Zos. 5.42–44. [47] Zos. 5.45.5.

[48] Zos. 5.44; urban prefect under Honorius in 409, Zos. 5.46.1; Philost. *HE* 12.3; Soz. *HE* 9.8.1. He was prefect by March, after the death of Pompeianus; see Priscus Attalus 2, *PLRE* 2, pp. 180–81.

[49] Matthews 1990, pp. 42, 303, note 2. His father is most likely Publius Ampelius, Ampelius 3, *PLRE* 1, pp. 56–57. Attalus corresponded with Symmachus; see note 50 below and Cecconi 2013, pp. 141–56.

[50] Symm. *Ep*. 6.58, 6.62, 7.54, 113, 114 for the 398 embassy. Cecconi 2013, pp. 143–44 doubts Attalus's eastern origins, but Philostorgius *HE* 12.3 asserts this, and most scholars agree. His career underscores the possibilities for upward mobility in Rome for provincials.

[51] See Zos. 5.44.1 and note 45 above for the embassy in 409. For Attalus's interest in literature, see Symm. *Ep*. 7.18. For his studies with Himerius, see Him. *Or*. 29.

[52] Zosimus 6.7.1–2

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Romans – that is, the Senate and citizens – chose Attalus as emperor, and Attalus then appointed Alaric general, the post that he had sought from Honorius.[53] Attalus, upon his accession, delivered an oration promising to restore the Senate to its "ancient honor."[54] He also minted coins with a legend that harkened back to Roman traditions – namely, "Invicta Roma Aeterna."[55] The legend emphasized Rome as the seat of power. His appeal to tradition likely included an openness to paganism; that attitude would explain why Priscus was called a pagan by later writers, although he subsequently was baptized by an Arian bishop, an event that may explain Sozomen's remark that pagans and Arians were upset by his death.[56]

A strand of modern scholarship influenced by hostile ancient writers, sees Priscus Attalus as no more than a "puppet emperor" of Alaric, intended to challenge the authority of the emperor Honorius.[57] But this interpretation does not hold up on closer inspection, as Giovanni Cecconi has demonstrated.[58] Rather, the events show that Attalus was a powerful senator in his own right. Frustrated by a weak and ineffective imperial court, he took the opportunity offered by Alaric to take the throne – with the support of a number of senators. Indeed, for two years, Attalus and the Senate had tried to mediate a compromise between Honorius and Attalus.[59] Attalus's political experience and prestige, along with his ambition, led to his elevation, but he was not the only senator who saw rebellion as the best means to protect senatorial interests.

The role of the Senate is often overlooked in the events leading up to 410, especially by modern historians who assume this institution was no more than a relic.[60] But throughout these years, the Senate had been deeply involved in the political developments of the day. For this and other reasons, Attalus promised to revive senatorial traditions. He also turned to fellow senators to hold office under his regime. The eminent senators Lampadius and Marcianus accepted positions as praetorian prefect of Italy and urban

[53] Philost. *HE* 12.3.4; Cecconi 2013, p. 150. Cecconi follows the sequence of events in Philost. *HE* 12.3.4, though this sequence is reversed in Zos. 6.6.3; 7.1.1 and Soz. *HE* 9.8.1. Sozomen has Alaric compel Roman acceptance of Attalus as emperor. Alaric wanted to be *magister militum*; see Socr. *HE* 9.7.1–2; Zos. 5.48.1–3.

[54] Zos. 6.7.3; Soz. *HE* 9.8.2. [55] *RIC* X, Priscus Attalus, 1403–08; 1411–12.

[56] For Priscus Attalus as a pagan, see Philost. 12.3.4. For his baptism by the Gothic bishop Sigishar, see Soz. *HE* 9.9.1.

[57] For the view that Alaric forced the Senate to vote on Attalus, see Soz. *HE* 9.81.1 and Zos. 6.6.3; 7.1.1. For this as a "puppet government," see for example Mathews 1990, p. 295.

[58] Cecconi 2013, pp. 141–56. [59] Zos. 5.44.1.

[60] On this point, I agree with Lizzi Testa (unpublished manuscript), who discusses the historiographic tradition. Even Cecconi 2013, p. 148, who provides a pathbreaking assessment of Priscus Attalus, still fails to give enough credit to the Senate as an institution with relevance and political influence.

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prefect of Rome, respectively.[61] Another senator, Tertullus, accepted the honor of the consulship from the emperor Attalus.[62] Certainly, some senators did not join the new regime. Zosimus relates that the Anicii, one of the most powerful of the established Roman families, were resentful of the "general good fortune" of Rome under Alaric's control.[63] Still, enough of the senators approved of their new emperor and this new government to confirm Attalus as emperor and Alaric as his new general.

Priscus Attalus recognized that the survival of his regime and of Rome depended on maintaining the city's grain supply from Africa. To do that, he would have to remove Africa from Honorius's control. Attalus appointed a Roman general, Constans, to undertake the assault, even though Alaric had urged employing a Gothic general, Druma, as commander instead.[64] Attalus's independence as demonstrated by his appointment of a Roman general lends further support for viewing him not as a mere "puppet" of the Gothic general. He also helped Alaric in the negotiations with Honorius, likely seeking to persuade Honorius to repeat his own example since, earlier in 409, Honorius had recognized another rival usurper in Gaul, Constantine III.[65] According to Zosimus, a fearful Honorius was willing to accept this arrangement, and only the arrival of reinforcements from the eastern court changed his mind about making this concession.[66]

The failure of Constans, Attalus's general, to take Africa and ongoing resistance on the part of Attalus and the senators to sending a Gothic general to Africa changed Alaric's mind about his support for Attalus. Later in the year, Alaric forced Attalus to renounce his office and to return to private life, even as Alaric recommenced what were his final negotiations with Honorius.[67] The blame for the breakdown in this last set of talks varies, depending on the source. But there is a general consensus that the unexpected appearance of Alaric's enemy, the Goth Sarus, disrupted them.[68]

[61] Zos. 6.7.2; for Lampadius, see note 17 above. The identity of Marcianus is not certain. Matthews 1990, pp. 303–4, would identify him as Marcianus 14, *PLRE* 1, pp. 555–56, but this identification is questioned because it assumes a later date for the *Carmen Contra Paganos*, which is more likely dated to 384. On this, see Cameron 2011, p. 194. Matthews would see him as tied to the future senator Tarrutenius Maximilianus 3, *PLRE* 2, p. 741.

[62] Tertullus's consulship is mentioned by Zos. 6.7.4 and Oros. 7.42.8. See Tertullus 1, *PLRE* 2, p. 1059.

[63] Zos. 6.7.4.

[64] Zos. 6.7.5–6; Soz. *HE* 9.8.3.

[65] Olymp. *Frags*. 13–14, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 170–75; Zos. 5.43.1–2 for Heraclian, and McEvoy 2013, p. 196, note 44. Zos. 6.8.1–2 indicates that Honorius was willing to accept this, but was deterred by the arrival of new forces from the East.

[66] Zos. 6.8.1–2.

[67] Zos. 6.12.3; Soz. *HE* 9.8.10; with discussion by Matthews 1990, p. 299; Cecconi 2013, pp. 144–45.

[68] Zos. 6.13; Soz. *HE* 9.9.3; and Philost. *HE* 12.3.

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Honorius's failure to concede led Alaric, in anger and frustration at not receiving an agreement on even a modified request for land for his followers, to turn against Rome.[69]

For the third time, Alaric laid siege to the city, but this time someone opened a gate. Procopius attributed this betrayal either to a treacherous woman of the Anician family who had taken pity on the starving urban dwellers or, in an inventive, Homeric-inspired incident, to the treachery of some handsome young barbarians who had been taken into the city as a warranty of peace.[70] Regardless of the culprit, the city fell. Frustration at yet another set of failed negotiations had led Alaric to the walls of Rome again, but if the gate had not been opened, the city could have held out, as Honorius and his couriers had likely believed. It was certainly safer to blame the treachery of one individual or the "barbarians" for the fall of the city than to acknowledge the failed leadership of the emperor Honorius. In any case, on the evening of August 24, 410. Alaric's men entered unopposed, plundering the city for three days before leaving for greener pastures in southern Italy.[71]

If we look at the path of Alaric's men through the city, anger at Roman institutions is visible. His men targeted imperial buildings as well as the homes of senatorial aristocrats, which were also, obviously, rich sites to plunder. As noted earlier, after Alaric's entrance into the city by the Salarian Gate, the Goths set fire to the Gardens of Sallustius, which were now part of the imperial properties. (See Map 1.)[72] They then went into the center of the city, directing their attention to public buildings in the Forum, notably the Senate House. Churches were also plundered, although, according to Orosius, the Goths (who were Arian Christians) were under orders from Alaric to not burn the city and to respect Christian places of worship.[73] Orosius describes Alaric's men leading Christians to safety in St. Peter's, singing hymns together as they walked.[74] But the evidence, to be discussed concerning Rome's restoration, shows that Alaric's men did not entirely respect these commands. They also sacked private houses on the Caelian and Aventine Hills and in Trastevere before departing through the Appian Gate. (See Map 1.)

[69] Zos. 6.13; Soz. *HE* 9.9.2–5; and Philost. *HE* 12.3–4.

[70] Procop., *Wars* 3.2.14–27. The woman was Anicia Faltonia Proba, allegedly. For the Anicii as philobarbarian, see notes 106 and 107 below.

[71] For full discussion of the event, see the essays in Lipps, Machado, and von Rummel (eds.) 2013.

[72] Procop. *Wars* 3.2.24. [73] Jord. *Get*. 30, 156.

[74] Oros. *Hist.* 7.39.3–14. And for a merciful barbarian treatment of another Nicene Christian woman, see Sozomon *HE* 9.10.

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The terror of these days and some sense of the trauma of these events pervade our sources, which were, by and large, written by witnesses at a distance from the violence.[75] Yet Jerome vividly describes the beating with sticks and the whipping that the elderly virgin Marcella faced at the hands of Gothic invaders who broke into her home looking for gold and treasures. No wonder, then, that she died soon after.[76] The relief felt by Romans that the Goths had gone further south so soon is palpable in a later sermon of the bishop of Rome Leo I (discussed later in this chapter). Alaric had evidently planned to cross to Sicily but was prevented from doing so, likely by a dearth of ships.[77] Alaric's unexpected death at Cosenza (ancient Cosentia) in Bruttium led to the elevation of his successor and brother-in-law, Athaulf, who in early 411 led the Goths from southern Italy to Gaul. Their departure greatly eased Roman fears of a second attack.[78] However, by late 410 or early 411, a new general had emerged at the court of Honorius, Flavius Constantius, a Roman from the Danubian provinces. He would lead the restoration of political and military stability in the West.[79] He quieted the political intrigue at court and took up the fight against usurpers in Gaul – notably Constantine III in 411 – with the aid of the Goths under Athaulf, who were now paid for their services in 412.[80]

It is indicative of the degree of dissatisfaction with Honorius's rule and fear of punishment that some Romans who had aligned themselves with the Goths followed them from Italy to Gaul; Priscus Attalus left for Gaul, along with his son Ampelius.[81] Athaulf tried once more to negotiate a position for himself and food for his people before settling near Narbonne in late 413. Honorius, now faced with another revolt, this one by the general Heraclian who had attacked Ravenna in 413, would not agree to the demands of Athaulf at this date. Fortunately for Honorius, Constantius quickly defeated Heraclian in Italy.[82] But the Goths were not happy with their treatment.

[75] On the silence of writers in geographical proximity to Rome, see Bjornlie 2020, pp. 260–62.

[76] Jer. *Ep*. 127.13–14. [77] Olymp. *Frag*. 16, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 176–77.

[78] Jordanes, *Get*. 158; Philost. *HE* 12.4; Oros. *Hist*. 7.43.2; Prosper *Chron*. s.a. 412; Procop. *Wars* 3.2.37.

[79] Olymp. *Frags*. 33 and 37, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 196–99; 201. Constantius is from Naissus, a city in Dacia. For his career, see Constantius 17, *PLRE* 2, pp. 321–25.

[80] Olymp. *Frags*. 8; 14, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 160–63 and pp. 172–75, respectively. Matthews 1990, p. 302 for the murder of the courtier Olympius. For the murder of the general Allobichus in another court upheaval, Olymp. *Frag*. 15, and Soz. *HE* 9.12.5, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 174–77, following Matthews 1990, p. 312, note 2. On the dating of the beginning of Constantius's ascendancy, see McEvoy 2013, p. 196, note 48. For the defeat and murder of Constantine III, see Olymp. *Frag*. 17 and Sozomen *HE* 9.15.1, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 174–81; and Matthews 1990, pp. 312–13.

[81] Cecconi 2013, p. 145, emphasizing Prosper, *Chron*. s.a. 409: *Attalus Romae imperator factus, qui mox privatus regno Gothis cohaesit*. See too Olymp. *Frag*. 14. ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 172–75.

[82] For Heraclian's attack on Ravenna and his defeat by Constantius, see Oros. *Hist*. 7.42; Philost. *HE* 12.6. Heraclian, *comes Africae*, had been loyal to Honorius during the usurpation of Alaric

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Hence, in January 414, Athaulf married Galla Placidia, the uterine sister of Honorius, and Attalus rose to be emperor once more. Attalus even composed a wedding song at the marriage, which took place in the home of a Gallo-Roman aristocrat, accompanied by a number of other Roman and Gallic nobles. Their presence is further proof of the willingness of some Roman aristocrats to align with the Visigoths against an ineffective and distant imperial court in Ravenna.[83]

Only after the murder of Athaulf by one of his slaves in 415 did Honorius find a resolution to the Gothic problem. The new Gothic king Vallia swore allegiance to Honorius and signed a treaty with the Romans in 416. Vallia returned Galla Placidia to Honorius's court in Ravenna. Attalus, still alive, was also sent back to Rome to be paraded in the triumphal games that Honorius celebrated there in 416. The display of this defeated usurper was intended as a lesson for other Roman aristocrats of the dangers of independent action. In a show of Honorius's clemency, he cut off only two of Attalus's fingers and exiled him.[84] By 416, however, the rebuilding of Rome was well under way.

Rome Restored: The Competition for Power after 410

In the three years during which Rome had been under siege, the balance of power had shifted significantly. The emperor Honorius had been vilified as ineffective and uncaring, but he had survived and was now supported by the eminent general, Flavius Constantius. The emperor also sought to rebuild ties with the senators and to reassert his influence and that of the imperial court from Ravenna. Constantius, too, established ties with the senators with whom he could work to restore Roman rule. Indeed, it was in the best interest of the emperor and the general to overlook the collusion of those senators who had supported the usurpation of Attalus and Alaric in an effort to encourage them to remain in or to return to Rome soon after 410. All involved were eager to blame Alaric and his "puppet emperor" Attalus rather than publicize the degree to which senators had conspired with the Gothic general. And aside from Attalus, no other senator is known to have suffered punishment.

and Attalus, but in April 413, as consul, he withheld grain shipments to Rome; see McEvoy 2013, p. 188, note 64.

[83] Cecconi 2013, p. 146. McEvoy 2013, p. 201; and see Olymp. *Frag.* 24.1–6, ed. Blockley 1983, p. 187, for the wedding, at which the nobles, Candidianus, Phoebadius, and Rusticius were present.

[84] Oros. *Hist.* 7.43.12 for Valila's decision to restore Galla Placidia to Ravenna and to become an ally of Rome. See too Hydatius, s.a. 417. Kulikowski 2007, pp. 178–84. For Priscus Attalus's fate and exile to the Isles of Lipari, see Olymp. *Frag.* 14, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 174–75; and Olymp. *Frag.* 26.2 = Philost. *HE* 12.5, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 190–91.

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As Honorius and Constantius sought to reassert their authority over Rome and to secure senatorial support for their government, they faced a politically active senatorial aristocracy newly engaged in the running of government who had experience in foreign affairs and financial policy. Many of these men saw the possibilities for independent action in a senate that had taken on greater diplomatic importance. Significantly, senatorial aristocrats saw it as incumbent on themselves to retain what Matthews has described as "the tradition of participation in public and political life."[85] The three years leading up to the fall of the city had allowed, or some would say forced, the Senate and individual senators to make an unusually large number of political and financial decisions independent of the emperor and the court in Ravenna. Senatorial aristocrats returned to rule under Honorius with even greater awareness of their positions in the empire, and they used this new appreciation of their value to rebuild not only the material city but also their own relationships and those with other elites on more equal footing.

Before 410, as Carlos Machado has rightly observed, "political collaboration between Rome and Milan (later Ravenna) was based on a fragile arrangement involving two power-blocks with interests and agendas that did not always coincide."[86] Machado is referring to the senators active as high officeholders, many from established aristocratic families, who were primarily focused on Rome and Italy. This bloc collaborated with imperial courtiers and bureaucrats who, ever since the reforms of Constantine, were also holders of senatorial rank. The third elite bloc that also was a factor was the military, who also had gained senatorial rank by holding military office, the highest being the illustrious (*illustris*) rank of master of soldiers (*magister militum*) or master of the cavalry (*magister equitum*).[87] There can be no doubt that the importance of the military had increased in light of recent invasions from a host of Gothic, Hunnic, and Vandal armies arriving on the northern frontiers after 405–06. After 411, the general Flavius Constantius led the military response that restored stability in the West.[88] As a reward for his service, Constantius was wed to Galla Placidia, the sister of the emperor Honorius, in January of 417.[89] Constantius was proclaimed augustus by Honorius in February 421.[90]

[85] Matthews 1990, p. 398. [86] Machado 2013, p. 64.
[87] See my discussion of the senatorial ranks at the end of Chapter 2.
[88] Olymp. *Frags*. 33–34; 37, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 196–201.
[89] For Constantius's marriage to Galla Placidia in 417, see Olymp. *Frag*. 33, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 196–99 = Philost. *HE* 12.12.
[90] Olymp. *Frag*. 33, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 196–97; and for discussion, see Constantius 17, *PLRE* 2, p. 324.

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This pattern – one in which power was triangulated among the military generals, imperial courtiers, and senatorial aristocrats – would remain throughout the balance of Honorius's rule and that of his successor, Valentinian III.[91] Importantly, the possibility of attaining power led to greater contestation for influence among elites, whose leadership was critical in restoring Roman rule to what was left of the western empire. And most importantly, in my view, the city of Rome revived as quickly as it did in large part due to this same competition on the part of elites – military, imperial, and senatorial.

My focus in this section of the chapter is on reconstructing the role of senatorial aristocrats because, in my view, they were the essential actors fueling the resurgence of the city of Rome in the decade following 410. Senatorial aristocrats demonstrated remarkable resilience, will, and creativity. They were motivated, in no small part, by their desire for personal advancement, namely, the very traditional desire for honor and power to protect themselves and their family, friends, and clients. Nonetheless, because senatorial aristocrats viewed the city of Rome as the stage on which they acted out their lives and their status, they worked with the support of the emperor and the military to rebuild the city, marshalling their resources to speed up the city's recovery. Certainly, not all aristocrats were able to return and thrive after 410. But enough did, relying on their properties and rents from estates across Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Gaul, and until the 440s, North Africa, to revive the city of Rome in the decade after 410. They benefitted, too, from an imperial court and a military eager to support these efforts.

The elite contestation for influence that restored the city of Rome also extended to the religious life of the city. The bishop of Rome and the estimated fifty to one hundred priests as well as seven deacons and their subdeacons made up another elite component of late Roman society.[92] As bishop during the sieges and after the sack, Innocent I (401–17) oversaw this new elite as well as a good number of lower clergy (readers, acolytes, exorcists, doorkeepers). Although the bishop of Rome claimed to be the single authoritative leader of the Roman church and hence should play a key role in restoring the city's community of faithful, Innocent, unlike a modern pope, did not command a highly developed and consolidated monarchic episcopate and structure. Rather, Innocent oversaw a rudimentary bureaucracy and had but limited

[91] See McEvoy 2013, pp. 1–22, and 305–29 for the implications of the child emperor; and see too McEvoy 2010, pp. 151–92.

[92] This is the estimate for the clergy based on clergy in attendance in the later fifth centuries; for further discussion see Thompson 2015, pp. 22–25 with reference to the synods.

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power to enforce his views on Christian communities in the city or abroad.[93] Moreover, in the city of Rome, Innocent oversaw a church with ongoing internal divisions. A fiercely contested episcopal election in which clergy and deacons along with a number of secular elites had brawled in the streets had only been resolved to allow the church to come together under Damasus (366–84). But tensions between priests and the bishop's central assistants, the seven deacons, persisted, a situation that came out into the open in the subsequent papacies of Innocent's successors Zosimus (417–18) and Boniface (418–22). In addition, in a city as large as Rome, Innocent and his successors faced a number of competing Christian sects; we hear of actions against Manichaeans, Montanists, Priscillianists, and Novatians, the latter of whose churches Innocent seized.[94] These religious realities and competing sects further undermined attempts by the bishops of Rome to claim hegemonic control over all Christians in the city in the early fifth century.

The sack of Rome called the bishop of Rome's authority further into question, for it was also a crisis of faith, as the *Sermons* of Augustine delivered in North Africa to refugees from the city in the two years immediately after 410 make vividly clear.[95] Pagans, newly emboldened, blamed the "fall" of Rome on the emperor's chosen religion; Christians questioned the god who had brought such suffering on the city and its Christian faithful and had allowed the martyria and churches to be plundered. The bishop of Rome, Innocent, who had been part of a failed embassy to Ravenna when the city had fallen, had to face his task of rebuilding Rome while encountering these and other challenges to his authority from within the Christian community of the city.[96] Among those who challenged episcopal authority were the Christian senatorial aristocrats. With their tradition of religious patronage, they continued to sponsor their favored titular churches and clergy in neighborhoods across the city as well as in their private homes. In light of these challenges, the bishops of Rome in the decade after 410 – Innocent, Zosimus, and Boniface – often turned to liturgy to assert their authority and to restore the Christian communities of Rome, foregoing a more public role in restoring the city.

The year 410 dealt a serious blow to Rome's urban fabric – not only to its population, infrastructure, and wealth – but also to the trust that the inhabitants of the city had in the institutions associated with the imperial state,

[93] So, for instance, when Spanish bishops came to Rome for assistance on what to do about readmitting repentant followers of the Spanish bishop Priscillian, Innocent offered an opinion but had no means to enforce it. For Innocent's letter, see Innocent I, *Ep*. 3 (*PL* 20.486–94). For the limits of his authority within Rome as well, see especially Dunn 2015, pp. 89–107.

[94] Socr. *HE* 7.2. For the law of Honorius, which had Innocent's support, see *C. Th*. 16.5.40.

[95] Salzman 2015, pp. 346–59. [96] See notes 193 and 194, and my discussion below.

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including the episcopate. In the decade that followed, the restoration of the city fell largely to secular elites. Indeed, there was a notable activism on the part of the senatorial aristocrats and the imperial state that was manifested in the maintenance and repair of the ancient buildings and monuments dear to their identities, like the Senate house; this same activism is discernible in the politics of the period during which senators took on office and new leadership roles in the wake of this attack. Senatorial activism, in my view, grew out of a natural desire for influence as elites strove to reassert themselves in the reviving city in the face of a weakened imperial court. And by the 420s, Rome was enjoying a resurgence, judging by modern measures such as the returning population, housing repairs and constructions, jobs, infrastructure, and quality of life – notably, bread, pork, and games. Thus, although the urban population had not returned to the same levels as existed before 410, the city was certainly growing again. If we use the estimates based on pig bones in southern Italy, there were around 120,000 recipients of the pork dole in Rome in 419 and around 140,000 in 452, statistics that imply a speedy recovery by 419 and a total population numbering between 300,000 and 500,000 residents.[97] This number is a decrease from the estimates of between 700,000 and 1,000,000 residents at the end of the fourth century, but it still made Rome the largest city in the western Mediterranean.[98] To explain this resurgence and the important role that contestation among elites – senatorial aristocrats working along with military and imperial elites – played in bringing Rome back to life, I begin with the key civic leader on the ground, the urban prefect.

The Importance of the Urban Prefect of Rome

Since the changes in the age of Constantine, the office of urban prefect oversaw the preservation of Rome's infrastructure as well as a host of vital services ranging from law and order, the food supply, building repairs, and maintenance to public games and circuses. The urban prefect, much like the mayor of a great city today, held political and social power that made it a highly influential but demanding post. He did have a bureaucracy in Rome to help with his tasks. By the early fifth century, even the prefect of the food supply was under his authority.[99] The position of urban prefect was most

[97] Barnish 1987, p. 166. The key texts for these numbers are *C. Th.* 14.4.10 and the *Nov. Val.* 36. Barnish estimated that in 452 Rome had a total population between 300,000 and 500,000.

[98] See too population estimates in Chapter 1, note 19.

[99] For the office of urban prefect, see Chastagnol 1960, passim, and especially pp. 54–63; Machado 2019, pp. 46–47; and for the prefect of the food supply (*praefectus annonae*), see *Not. Dig. Occ.* 4.

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often held by members of established Roman aristocratic families and was seen as a peak in the career of many an Italo-Roman senator. Indeed, these senators had a long tradition of serving the city and the government, using – if it was to their advantage – their own funds to support games, circuses, food, and buildings for the populace of Rome in exchange for honor, status, and economic advantages. Appointed by the emperor, the urban prefect mediated between the emperor and the Senate, as evidenced by his role in calling the Senate into meetings. The holders of this position were therefore, in the decade after 410, especially critical for rebuilding the city and keeping the peace. They were increasingly aware of their importance and used the opportunities of office presented by their management of a large number of necessary repairs to the city, for instance, to augment their status and power under a regime that was struggling to reassert its authority.

Honorius and Constantius were keenly aware of the need for men of high status to fill the office of urban prefect in order to ensure the support of Rome's senators. But they were aware as well of the influence of the holder of this office. Indeed, emperors had kept a close eye on the urban prefects lest those who were too ambitious, like Priscus Attalus, undermine their rule.[100] Emperors had also selected urban prefects with awareness of political conditions in the city, as their attention to the religion of their appointees had demonstrated.[101] Of the twelve men attested as urban prefects in the period 410–23, six were certainly or at least probably from Italian and Roman noble families, and even those whose family origins are uncertain, like Petronius Maximus, were from wealthy and high-status families. (See Table 3.1.) Typical is the urban prefect of 414; Caecina Decius Acinatius Albinus was likely part of the Ceionii and the Decii family; his son, Basilius, would go on to hold high office later in the century (see Table 3.1). These men were wealthy landowners with a stake in the city. Palmatus, urban prefect in 412, was a wealthy Christian aristocrat whose beneficence to the church did not preclude him or one of his family members from dedicating an ancient Egyptian statue of Jupiter in their ancestral house.[102] Even the brief appointment of the Gallic poet Namatianus in the summer of 414

[100] Machado 2019, p. 32 makes this point, as does Chastagnol 1960, pp. 392–462.

[101] See Chapter 2, and Salzman 2016, pp. 29–35.

[102] His family later donated a house of theirs in Rome, with bath and bakery, to support St. Maria Maggiore, a church built at the time of Bishop Sixtus III (432–40): see *Lib. Pont.* 46, ed. Duchesne 1981, p. 233. For the statue of the Egyptian Jove rededicated by the urban prefect Neratius Palmatus, see *LSA* 2538.

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speaks to respect for Roman traditions; Namatianus's father had also likely been urban prefect as well as consular in Italy.[103]

Honorius, along with Constantius, was determined to bring men into this sensitive but powerful office who had been untouched by close involvement with the recent usurpation of Alaric and Attalus. In this effort they followed a policy quite different from that of Constantine (discussed in Chapter 2), who had tried to convey continuity in society by continuing the urban prefects of Maxentius in office. In contrast, Honorius chose new faces, a move presenting further evidence of his awareness of the danger that had been presented by Attalus's attempted usurpation. Of the twelve men attested as urban prefects in the period 410–23, only six are attested as having held any civic office prior to that point.[104] The first urban prefect appointed by Honorius in 410, Bonosianus, is otherwise unattested before or after attaining this position, but he must have been a trusted official whose loyalty to the emperor and general would not have been in doubt.[105] Although these appointments affirm the desires of Constantius and Honorius to work with Italo-Roman senatorial aristocrats, the recently attempted coup also had had an impact.

The omission of some important families from this office during this decade speaks to some tensions both within the senatorial aristocracy and with the emperor and his court. Indeed, some new men appear to have been more successful than others, leading some scholars to argue that the absence of the powerful Anician family from this office through most of this decade was the result of this family's philo-barbarian sentiment; this attachment had allegedly led an Anician woman to open the gates of Rome to Alaric's Goths.[106] However, I am not the first to find this view problematic. It assumes that the Anicii were one clan united behind a consistent political position on the issue of barbarians; however, the Anicii, as Alan Cameron has demonstrated, were much more loosely tied together and, like other elites, formed alliances as the politics of the moment demanded.[107] Nor were all members of the Anicii out of favor in this decade if the Probus who held the position in

[103] See Table 3.1. His father was Lachanius; see *PLRE* 1, p. 491. Rut. Nam. *De red. suo* 1.579–80 attests his father's prefecture, which is likely that of urban prefect. I see no evidence of a trend to bring in Gallo-Roman aristocrats here as suggested by McEvoy 2013, pp. 198–203.

[104] Gracchus, urban prefect in 415, was likely consular of Campania in 397. He was likely from a Roman senatorial aristocratic family as were four of the others; see Table 3.1.

[105] Although Chastagnol 1962, p. 269 suggests that Bonosianus was already in office during the sack, there is no evidence for this.

[106] This was proposed by Cracco Ruggini 1988, pp. 79–81, with bibliography; and most recently by Roberto 2012, p. 212, following the views of Zecchini 1981, pp. 123–40.

[107] Cameron 2012, pp. 133–71.

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charge of the state finances, the count of the sacred largesses (CSL, or *comes sacrarum largitionum*), from 412 to 414 is identified as the son of a member of the Anician family (see Table 3.2). And the 418 appointment as urban prefect of a member of the Symmachi family who had married into the Anicii, Aurelius Anicius Symmachus, goes against the idea that all with ties to the Anicii had one political view, although by then, it is worth noting, the Visigoths had been settled in Gaul by the general Constantius.[108]

The Restoration of Rome. The act of constructing and repairing Rome's infrastructure and buildings was a traditional avenue for senatorial aristocrats and emperors to demonstrate their status and beneficence in Rome. As Gregor Kalas well observed:

> Senators frequently paid for building projects while honoring emperors, since aristocrats in Rome felt obliged to share patronage credit with imperial sponsors, who garnered most of the credit. Yet . . . inscriptions usually masked the degree to which imperial authorities competed with local senators in establishing pre-eminence over the urban fabric of Rome. Such struggles motivated Valentinian I (364–75) to address a letter to Rome's urban prefect prohibiting the construction of new buildings and encouraging the restoration of extant historic structures, effectively preventing senators from using new building projects to assert their local agendas.[109]

The evolution in the language of late antique building inscriptions from the fourth century on, as Carlos Machado has demonstrated, with the increasing use of formulae that emphasized that the urban prefect was dedicating the work *to* emperors but that the work was *not by* the emperors who paid for it, points to the ways in which urban prefects seized "every opportunity available for advertising their status and power."[110] Similarly, the inscriptions that advertise repairs on buildings after 410 by senators or by urban prefects offer their efforts as an act of munificence to the emperor but emphasize the status and power of the official overseeing this work. And the late fourth-century stipulations that senators not undertake new construction – a restriction aimed at reducing their influence and conserving the traditional façade of cities – was reiterated in November 411 when Honorius said that although some claimed the "pretense of any emergency" to try to build new structures, this reason was not allowed and was expressly prohibited in a rescript to the

[108] For the ongoing debate about the terms of this treaty, see McEvoy 2013, p. 202, note 84.
[109] Kalas 2010, p. 26, cites *C. Th.* 15.1.11 (May 25, 364).
[110] Machado 2019, p. 67. This too was noted by Löhken 1982, pp. 75–76.

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prefect of Rome, Bonosianus, concerning a city in Suburbicarian Italy, an area that was under his supervision.[111]

It is in this spirit of competitive building that we can appreciate the ways in which Rome after 410 opened up possibilities for Rome's urban prefects, along with their senatorial peers, to compete for influence by repairing or adorning edifices in Rome, albeit to honor the emperor and/or his general, the master of soldiers. Their competitive reconstruction efforts also help explain the uptick in the statuary habit in Rome, especially in the later part of the decade, as new statues were dedicated or old ones repaired and/or resited.[112]

Repairs in the Area of the Senate in the Roman Forum. The efforts of Rome's urban prefects are recorded most clearly in areas that traditionally had ideological and political importance to senatorial and imperial identity, namely, in the area of the Senate House in the Roman Forum. Repairs near the Senate House are recorded fairly quickly.[113] (See Map 1.) Epiphanius, urban prefect of Rome from October 15, 412, to May 27, 414, is attested as having made an important repair here:[114]

> *Salvis dominis nostris Honorio et Theodosio victoriosissimis principibus, secretarium amplissimi senatus, quod vir inlustris Flavianus instituerat et fatalis ignis absumpsit, Flavius Annius Eurcharius Epifanius v.c., praef. urb., vice sacr. iud., reparavit et ad pristinam faciem reduxit.*
>
> With our lords, the most victorious princes, Honorius and Theodosius, being safe, Flavius Annius Eucharius Epifanius, a *vir clarissiumus*, prefect of the city, [and] judge of appeal, repaired the *secretarium* of the most distinguished Senate, [a building that] Flavianus, a man of *illustris* rank, had erected and an inescapable fire had consumed, and he [Epifanius] returned it to its original appearance.[115]

Several aspects of this inscription contribute to an understanding of the contestation for influence by elites that fueled the restoration of the city.

[111] *C. Th.* 15.1.48 to Bonosianus, PUR November 28, 411. The restrictions on new building were also aimed at conserving ancient buildings, as articulated in laws from the fourth century; see Lizzi Testa 2001, pp. 685–91.

[112] For a full discussion, see Ward-Perkins and Machado 2013, pp. 353–63.

[113] Chastagnol 1962, pp. 270–72, attributed the repairs of the Senate house to Neratius Palmatus, PUR in 412, based on his reconstruction of *CIL* 6.37128, revising *Neratius Iu* to read Neratius P and positing his name as Neratius Iunius Palmatus. Orlandi 2013, p. 341, has reexamined the inscription and sees no room for this wording. Orlandi dates the inscription to the fourth century based on the style of the lettering and the cutting of the block. Finally, there is no indication of the office of urban prefect. Hence, I agree with Orlandi that this repair cannot be securely dated to 412.

[114] Epiphanius, in *PLRE* 2, p. 399, s.v. Epiphanius 7.

[115] *CIL* 6.1718 = *ILS* 5522.

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First, although the inscription commences with the standard dedication under secure emperors, it also honors the prestigious senator Nicomachus Flavianus the Younger, who had built this monument (*instituerat*) only a decade earlier when he was urban prefect in 392–94. Flavianus's family had fallen from favor because Flavianus the Elder had participated in the failed usurpation under Magnus Maximus and Eugenius. The father had committed suicide, and his name had been condemned by Theodosius I, who had, however, cleared Flavianus the Younger of any crime.[116] Theodosius II later reversed this decision on the father so that by the time that Epiphanius restored this building, the family was again in good standing. Epiphanius's inscription thus has a double honorific function – to praise its senatorial founder as well as the emperors named.

Second, this restoration should be read within the charged political circumstances after 410. Ernst Nash had shown that the *Secretarium Senatus* was where senators conducted trials of their peers accused of capital crimes.[117] This senatorial duty was asserted in the late fourth century by a law of 376 and is either a fourth-century innovation or a fourth-century reiteration of the right of senators to sit in judgement of each other.[118] Although it may seem odd to a modern audience that "augmenting senatorial authority necessarily occurred in conjunction with an expression of concord with the ruling emperors," to a senatorial audience this inscription augmented their status in proper formulaic language.[119] Epiphanius was asserting the senatorial right to sit in judgment of one's peers during a period when some senators who had aligned themselves with the usurper Alaric would likely have been brought up on charges. This occurrence was a real possibility. In 416, when Honorius celebrated his triumph over the Goths in Rome, he made a point of very publicly punishing Priscus Attalus in front of the Senate and people of Rome, as noted above.[120]

And third, acknowledging that the destruction of the *Secretarium Senatus* had been "inescapable" (*fatalis*) can be seen as a step toward healing. By adopting this view of the recent destruction, Epiphanius avoids assigning any guilt to human – that is, senatorial – agency. Epiphanius's dedication thus encouraged Romans to accept the past destruction as having been divinely sanctioned and to move forward by reestablishing senatorial traditions in Rome.[121] This notion of the "inescapable" fate that had led to the rebuilding

[116] Nicomachus Flavianus, *PLRE* 1, p. 347, s.v. Flavianus 14. See too Hedrick 2000, pp. 25–28. For a good discussion of this monument and argument, see Kalas 2015, pp. 158–60.

[117] Nash 1976, p. 194. [118] *C. Th.* 9.1.13. [119] Kalas 2015, p. 159. [120] See note 84 above.

[121] Orlandi 2013, p. 342 discusses the intent of *fatalis* but does not make the associations suggested here.

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or relocating of statues mentioned in the post-410 inscriptions recurred and was a characteristic Roman aristocratic perspective that supported efforts to restore the city and aristocrats' role in them. We see it in a restoration from an inscription from the Circus Flaminius on an architrave, now lost, dated to the first prefecture of Glabrio Faustus, 421–23, that mentions a building *fatali casu subversam* ("destroyed by an inescapable event") and in a law that refers to the attack of Alaric as *fatalem hostium ruinam* (inescapable disaster caused by the enemy).[122]

Before leaving the area of the Senate, we should note that, in addition to the inscription acknowledging Epiphanius's repair of the *Secretarium Senatus*, there are other inscriptions that date to this same period and area. A richly decorated architrave with an inscription dedicated to Honorius and Theodosius was part of this post-410 restoration, but another refurbishment that speaks of the gilded room in the Senate house (*cameram auro fulgentem*) dedicated on behalf of the "Genius of this most abundant Senate" (*pro genio senatus amplissimi*) by the urban prefect Flavius Ianuarius, or Ianuarianus, cannot be securely dated.[123]

Repairs across the City by Urban Prefects. There are other reports of restorations across Rome associated with the activity of the urban prefect in the aftermath of 410, even if we cannot know in all cases that the repairs were caused by the sack of the city. The repairs and resiting of statues in the Decian (Aventine) Baths by the urban prefect Caecina Decius Acinatius Albinus in 414–15 describes the work on the steam room (*cellam tepidariam*) that had to be repaired due to a collapsed wall, and another inscription on a marble base in this area records the addition of statues (now lost), presumably from some other building that had been moved to ornament this work.[124] The statues were most likely moved from an unstated location to this more frequented area, a practice that had developed in the fourth-century city.[125] We cannot know the cause of the collapsed wall, but the insertion of Albinus's name for the repair at this early date is indicative of the competitive process of restoration that I want to underscore.

Another instance of restoration occurred when, as urban prefect from 418 to 420, the eminent senator Aurelius Anicius Symmachus proudly

[122] For the building identified as perhaps the Porticus Minucia, see *CIL* 6.1676, and Orlandi 2013, p. 342. For the law, see the *N. Val.* 32.6, 451 CE, and Orlandi 2013, p. 342, note 66.

[123] For the richly decorated architrave, see *CIL* 6.41386–41387. For the restoration of the *cameram auro fulgentem* by the urban prefect named Flavius Ianuarius or Ianuarianus whose prefecture is not securely dated, see *CIL* 6.41378 with discussion by Orlandi 2013, p. 341; and Spera 2012, pp. 127–42.

[124] *CIL* 6. 1703; and 1659 for the prefect who "added [the statue] for ornamentation" (*facto a se adjecit ornatui*). On this, see Orlandi 2013, p. 339; Chastagnol 1962, p. 274. This man was also prefect in 426, but this dedication can be dated to his first turn of that office.

[125] Orlandi 2013, p. 342.

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proclaimed his work in the Roman Forum. Another inscription records that he repaired a marketplace in Ostia, Rome's port city, for "the ornamentation and the benefit of the citizens."[126] Another urban prefect, Glabrio Faustus (421–23), is attested by an inscription on a fragment of an architrave in the Circus Flaminius, noted earlier, now lost but known from manuscripts. The architrave was part of a building or portico that had been "overturned by an inescapable fall," an event that was traditionally associated with the sack of 410 but that may refer to an earlier earthquake on what was, as Orlandi has argued, a reused block.[127] Hence, we cannot know if the repair was directly tied to the sack of 410, but the work was undertaken by this urban prefect.

However, some restorations cannot be so well dated. The restoration of statues in front of the Basilica Julia in the Roman Forum (see Map 1), is generally attributed to the urban prefect of 416, identified with, Gabinius Vettius Probianus. But based on the writing, this identification has been questioned and may instead be the work of a late fourth- rather than an early fifth-century urban prefect.[128] Nonetheless, the enthusiasm of urban prefects to be identified with reconstruction efforts after 410 speaks to a reinvestment in the city that augmented aristocratic status at the same time. That there were other repairs to buildings by urban prefects in the decade after 410 is certain, but not all inscriptions have survived.

Trends in Honorific Statues in Rome. Another sign of the growing prestige of senators and the Senate after 410 emerges from a consideration of the number and locations of honorific statues. Indeed, as Bryan Ward-Perkins and Carlos Machado have observed, the events of 410 "did not kill the statue habit in Rome." The contestation for honor that drove Roman elites continued to feed the statuary habit there in a way that contrasts markedly with its prevalence in other cities in Italy. Although these scholars observed a gap – or, as they put it, a dent – between 407 and 416 in new statue dedications, the urban prefects were repairing and relocating statues as early as the period 412–14.[129] However, in the fifth century, new statue dedications emerged that support my view of the increased authority of senatorial and military elites in Rome.

[126] For the works in the Roman Forum, see *CIL* 6.36962. For Ostia, see *CIL* 14.4719, and the reconstruction of the text by Chastagnol 1962, p. 281: . . . *r]eparatu[m ad ornatum] Urbis et i[n usum civium]*. For a discussion of reconstruction efforts, see Vannesse 2010, pp. 508–10; and Spera 2012, pp. 113–55.

[127] *CIL* 6.1676: *fatali casu subversam*. On this block, see note 122 above.

[128] *CIL* 6 3864a=31883; and *CIL* 6.3864b=31884. For fuller discussion see Orlandi 2013, pp. 341–42, who proposes a late fourth-century date for the relocation of these statues. For Probianus as urban prefect, see Table 3.1.

[129] Ward-Perkins and Machado 2013, pp. 353–55. Quote on page 354.

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Carlos Machado identified sixty-nine statue bases dedicated in the Roman Forum between 284 and 476. Thirty-four of these were dedicated to emperors; seven were dedicated to senatorial aristocrats; and four, to generals. At first sight, this area appears to be an imperial space, but the distribution changed greatly over time. Between 337 and 410, emperors received the majority of identifiable dedications (thirteen of twenty-one). But after 410, not a single freestanding statue dedicated to an emperor in the Forum has been identified, while aristocrats and aristocratic generals received three – Petronius Maximus, Flavius Constantius, and Aetius.[130] This decline in the imperial presence and rise of the political prominence of aristocrats and generals are all the more striking since during the second quarter of the fifth century, the emperor Valentinian III often came back to reside in Rome.

These dedicatory patterns underscore that the competition for honor among elites in Rome had tilted in favor of senators and generals. And it is worth noting that this group had developed ties to one another as well. Generals, like Stilicho, had developed friendship networks with Roman senators as a means of securing political advantages. Indicative of the value of such a tie between senators and generals is the honorific statue by the urban prefect Aurelius Anicius Symmachus to the commander in chief Flavius Constantius dated to 420.[131]

A similar trend emerges from the area of the Forum of Trajan, which, as Robert Chenault has convincingly shown, was the locus of senatorial honorific statues from the early fourth into the late fifth century. Seven of twenty statues dedicated to senators from the Forum of Trajan date to after 410, according to Chenault, and only four imperial statue dedications out of a total of twenty-nine are attested.[132] Only one from the Forum of Trajan was a fifth-century imperial dedication, in 417–18, nominally from the "Senate and People of Rome" (*SPQR*), under the direction of (*curante*) the urban prefect Rufius Antonius Agrypnius Volusianus: "Under our lord Honorius, most flourishing, most invincible prince."[133] Whether the emperor is honoring the senators by his presence or the emperor is being honored by the presence of other senators, it is clear that Honorius is being incorporated into a space, the

[130] Machado 2006A, pp. 157–92.

[131] For this urban prefect, see Table 3.1. For the dedication in 420, see *CIL* 6.1719. Constantius also received another honorific statue by an unknown dedicator, *CIL* 6.1720. Both date before his elevation to Augustus in 421. For the dedication to Stilicho from the rostra in the Forum, see *CIL* 6. 1195, 406/407.

[132] Chenault 2012, pp. 103–32. For the dedication in 417/418, see *CIL* 6.1194.

[133] *CIL* 6.1194: *D.n. Honorio florentissimo invictissimoq. Principi, s.p.q.r., curante Rufiio Antonio Agrypnio Volusiano, v.c., praef. Urb. Iterum vice sacra iudicante*. The adjective used for Honorius, *invictissimo* ("most invincible"), is taken up by him only after the victory over the Goths in 416.

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Forum of Trajan, devoted to senators as if he were one of them. The second statue to Honorius was dedicated between 418 and 420 by the urban prefect Aurelius Anicius Symmachus in the *porticus* of the theater of Pompey, a building that apparently had been damaged in 410.[134]

Senatorial Fora. In Rome, traditional dedicators – emperors and the Senate as well as aristocratic family members – are attested throughout the fifth century. But there is one other development that also speaks of the growth of senatorial prestige in the city of Rome. We have evidence that senators also started installing statues in their family *fora* – squares associated at times with the *domus* of their families or simply areas that they developed for daily interaction among people of different social standing. This intrusion on public spaces by senatorial families is a physical manifestation of their growing encroachment on the urban fabric of the city, a privilege that was once jealously restricted to members of the imperial family.[135] For example, the aristocrat Sibidius dedicated a forum in the Campus Marius when he was urban prefect in 421–23; his heirs and relatives in the 430s dedicated new statues in this forum that was likely tied to the workings of the pork supply as well.[136] Petronius Maximus and Fl. Eurycles Epityncanus, urban prefect in 450, both built *fora* near their houses or in prime residential areas. The former was built on the Caelian Hill near the modern St. Clement, the latter on the slopes of the Esquiline on the site of the earlier Esquiline Forum, and both are first attested only in the fifth century (see Map 1).[137]

Feeding Rome: The Honor and Burden. After 410 Honorius sought to act once more as imperial patron of Rome and to take up his traditional role as the provider of "bread and circuses." As discussed in Chapter 1, emperors provided free bread to a certain proportion of the population – the *plebs frumentaria* – who, from the time of the late third-century emperor Aurelian, were also the recipients of pork and state-subsidized oil and wine.[138] Indeed, one of the signs of the revival of Rome is a law from 419

[134] *CIL* 6. 1193, cf. 1191.

[135] On laws controlling new building, see Lizzi Testa 2001, pp. 671–707.

[136] Ward-Perkins and Machado 2013, pp. 354 and 358. See s.v. Forum Sibidius, *LTUR*, p. 346 (Pap); and Santangeli Valenzani 2007, pp. 63–82. Anicius Acilius Glabrio Faustus, who dedicated these statues in 438, was urban prefect under Honorius; see Table 3.1. For the inscriptions, see *CIL* 6.1678, 413891, 1767.

[137] For the forum of Petronius Maximus, see *CIL* 6.1198=ILS 807–8. For the forum of Epityncanus, see *CIL* 6.1662 = *ILS* 5357; and *CIL* 6.31888. For further discussion, see Machado 2019, pp. 266–67.

[138] A subset of citizens who received bread sufficient for one individual (not a family) for a month as the hereditary right of citizenship in Rome, the qualifications of which by the late fourth and early fifth centuries were hereditary citizenship and, in some categories, service to the state; see Chapter 1, notes 18 and 20.

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in which the emperor Honorius stipulated that five pounds of pork be distributed per individual citizen recipient for five months of the year.[139] This would come to roughly three million pounds of pork, an amount somewhat smaller than the 3.6 million pounds noted in a law of Valentinian III in 452 and half as much as the amount issued in a constitution in 367.[140] Based on the assumption that pork and grain distributions fed the same percentages of the populace as they had done in the early empire, Elio Lo Cascio calculated that in 419 the number of people who benefitted from the distribution of pork was 120,000 and the city's population was almost 500,000 as compared with the approximately 700,000 to 1,000,000 estimated in Rome before the sack.[141]

Although the emperor paid for food for Rome with state funds, the distribution was administered by senators in their position of urban prefect, who also by the early fifth century directed the efforts of the prefect of the *annona*.[142] This bureaucratic development gave the urban prefect more power since he now oversaw, we think, the prefect of the food supply (*praefectus annonae*), who was the official in control of the fund for foodstuffs (the *arca frumentaria*) and was in charge of everyday operations in Ostia, Portus, and Rome.[143] Now there were increased opportunities for senators to accrue honor and blame for the functioning of Rome's food supply for a population that appears to have grown soon after 410. Indeed, a fragment of Olympiodorus alludes to this development. In 414 or 415, the urban prefect Caecina Decius Acinatius Albinus (September 414 to July 415) wrote to the emperor that the food ration provided for the people was inadequate because of the increase in the city's population. The prefect claimed that he had enrolled 14,000 new inhabitants of Rome in a single - day.[144] New births and the return of refugees make this a plausible figure for some historians.[145] In opposition is the view of Nicholas Purcell, who has regarded this request as "grandiloquent over-provisioning" by an emperor eager to blot out the memory of his past inactivity.[146] However, it seems unlikely that this would be the case; no evidence to support such imperial posturing around the food supply exists. Moreover, Philostorgios suggests that this population growth happened with imperial support since after

139 *C. Th.* 14.4.3; 419 CE.

140 *N. Val.* 36.1–2, 452 CE; *C. Th.* 15.4.4, 367 CE under Valentinian I.

141 Lo Cascio 1999, pp. 163–82; 2000, pp. 60–61.

142 Jones 1964, pp. 698–99 and note 143 below.

143 For this development by the early fifth century, see *Not. Dig. Occ.* 4 and the discussion by Machado 2019, pp. 46–47. For the fund for the food supply, see Chastagnol 1960, pp. 176–77.

144 Olymp. *Frag.* 25 with note 56, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 188–89.

145 Lo Cascio 1999, pp. 163–82; 2000, p. 60–61; Barnish 1987, p. 166.

146 Purcell 1999, p. 139.

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signing the treaty with the Goths in 416, Honorius had come to Rome and allegedly put in place a *synoikismos*. According to Purcell, *synoikismos* here means "the deployment of imperial authority to gather from whatever source was available a new population."[147] It was clearly part of Honorius's propaganda of imperial refoundation, a message that was aimed in no small part at the senatorial elite.

The actual size of the grain supply (*annona*) at this juncture is unknowable, but the dynamic of its logistics is worth discussing. The urban prefect is presented as both facilitating food distribution and increasing the supply for Rome to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. Honorius was eager to comply since he wanted to erase the memory of the sack through this act of imperial beneficence. The resulting prestige for augmenting Rome's food supplies would also go to the urban prefect, whose handling of his duty would ingratiate him with the city. Thus, this vignette illustrates how a senatorial urban prefect gained influence by generously feeding the people of Rome. But the emperor felt the need to assert his generosity in person. Honorius returned to Rome to celebrate his triumph over Alaric by hosting games and making generous gifts.[148]

Financial Responsibilities and Resources

Controlling the finances related to the feeding and functioning of Rome naturally made the office of the urban prefect, along with that of the emperor, singularly important in restoring the city after 410. Not only did the urban prefect oversee the food supply, he also controlled the funds from the *arca vinaria*, the treasury responsible for the supply of wine and meat, which was also traditionally used for building repairs. But urban prefects, like modern administrators, always needed more money. Indeed, the urban prefects regularly turned to the emperor's administrators, specifically to the chief financial officer of the imperial treasury (*comes sacrarum largitionum*) for additional money. Alternatively, the urban prefect could seek money from the Senate, as did the urban prefect of 376.[149] Of course, urban prefects could – and did in 414–15 – directly ask the emperor for additional funding. In times of need, they also could use their own monies to avoid food shortages or to

[147] Philost. *HE* 12.5 = Olymp. *Frag.* 26.2, ed. Blockley 1983, p. 191. See Purcell 1999, p. 149.

[148] Prosper *Chron.* s.a. 417, Philost. *HE* 12.5 = Olymp. *Frag.* 26.2, ed. Blockley 1983, p. 191. Honorius's 416 victory celebration took place at some time after May 3 and before July 4 when he is attested in Ravenna, according to Gillett 2001, p. 138. McCormick 1986, pp. 57–58 proposed June 28, 416, for the triumph in Rome and Constantinople.

[149] Ambr. *De offic.* 43.45–51 for a case in 376 where the urban prefect turned to the Senate for funds.

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supplement the entertainments paid for by the emperor. Certainly, during the siege of 408, the empress Laeta, Gratian's widow, was not the only aristocrat who shared her supplies with people in need, particularly her clients.[150]

Count of the Imperial Treasury (*comes sacrarum largitionum or CSL*). The office of the count of the imperial treasury was of particular importance to the revival of the aristocracy. This high-ranking financial officer collected the *chrysargyron*, the taxes on senators, customs duties, and other voluntary payments, and also was in control of mines, state mills, dye works, and minting.[151] Because this official determined the taxes on individual senators, the choice of a Roman senatorial aristocrat installed in this position underlines the desire on the part of Honorius and his general, Constantius, to work with senators to restore their well-being and to incorporate them in their government. The *comes sacrarum largitionum* was also a member of the imperial council, or consistory, that advised the emperor (*consistorium*), a situation that explains why this office was also a springboard for an ambitious senator to reach other high offices and honors.

Honorius appointed members of powerful Roman senatorial families to this office after 410; in 412–14 he appointed a Probus who has been identified as possibly belonging to the senatorial Anicii (see Table 3.2).[152] Another man, whose date of service is uncertain but whose office fell before 417, was Lucillus, father of Decius, whose appointment as consular of Tusciae and Umbriae suggests that he too was a member of the Italian senatorial aristocracy (see Table 3.2). Between 415 and 416–19, the noble Petronius Maximus held this post; he was one of the most influential senators of the fifth century. His family was among the high elites of the city, although his uncertain origin has suggested to some scholars how upwardly mobile provincial elites were absorbed into senatorial circles in Rome.[153] In any case, these ties would be helpful to senatorial aristocrats as they sought tax relief in this time of recovery.

Laws and Financial Assistance. In addition to choosing Roman senatorial aristocrats for key civic offices, Honorius and Constantius passed laws to relieve the tax burdens on this group of landowners as part of their efforts to help the recovery of Italy after 410. In 413 a major tax concession reduced the

[150] Zos. 5.39.4; see also Brown 1992, pp. 82–83.

[151] Kahzdan and Cutler, eds. s.v. *comes sacrarorum largitionum*, 2005, oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093

[152] This assumes the Probus chosen was Probus 1, *PLRE* 2, p. 910, and possibly identical with Probus 11, *PLRE* 2, pp. 913–14. See Table 3.2.

[153] For Petronius Maximus as urban prefect in 415, see Chastagnol 1962, pp. 281–82, followed by Delmaire 1989, p. 197 and Machado 2013, p. 65. For his family and social ties, see note 208 below and Chapter 4, note 17.

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liability of taxpayers in a number of areas in Campania, Tuscany, Picenum, Samnium Apulia, Calabria, Bruttium, and Lucania; the emperor made this a five-year remission to one-fifth of their former tax assessments. A second law of 418 further reduced the liability of Campania to one-ninth and that of Picenum and Tuscany to one-seventh of their previous levels, with no time limit; the intent was to remove complaints about taxes on abandoned lands as well as to reduce the burdens on those who had returned.[154] Clearly, Italy had suffered greatly from the wars fought on its soil. Tax relief would help revive its agriculture to levels of production that could sustain its population. Most of the large landowners in these areas were senatorial aristocrats; hence, these concessions speak to the very real pressure the elites put on the government to heal the damage to Italy's economy as a result of the Gothic presence. That said, the aristocracy perhaps benefitted most from these tax reductions as these taxpayers returned to rebuild their estates and homes in Italy and in Rome.[155]

Praetorian Prefects of Italy, Africa, and Gaul. The need for experienced men led Honorius and Constantius to appoint some men who had already held office in the government of Alaric and Attalus to the position of praetorian prefect in the post-410 decade. But since these men would be tied to the court now in Ravenna, they would have been more easily controlled. Certainly, in the praetorian prefects in the decade after 410, we find men who had made their way up to this position by holding offices both at the court and through the traditional civic offices in the run-up to Attalus's usurpation. For example, from 416 to 421, the office of praetorian prefect was occupied by a Roman senatorial aristocrat, Palladius, who had also served as chief financial officer (CSL) earlier and who had also been tied to the imperial court (see Table 3.4). Ioannes, praetorian prefect from June 412 to June 413 and again in 422, is another interesting case. He had been a high-ranking civic official who had served on the senatorial embassy that had gone to Alaric in 409. Ioannes's earlier experience in government is, as Carlos Machado rightly notes, "a good illustration of the degree to which court and senators were forced to compromise in order to rebuild the political settlement that had broken with the fall of Stilicho in 408."[156]

Circus Races and the Games. An inhabitant of early fifth-century Rome would probably have said that life had returned to normal when the circus

[154] *C. Th.* 11.28.7, May 413; 11.28.12, May 418. See also *C. Th.* 15.14.14, March 416. For abandoned lands, see *C. Th.* 11.1.31, Jan. 412. If an area could meet some of their tax demands, they were given tax reductions; see *C. Th.* 13.11.13, June 412. For this issue, see McEvoy 2013, p. 202.

[155] McEvoy 2013, p. 202.

[156] Machado 2013, p. 63. For Ioannes, see Table 3.4, and Ioannes 4, *PLRE* 2, p. 594 = Ioannes 2, *PLRE* 1, p. 459.

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races and the games in the amphitheater had returned. The animal combats, gladiatorial contests, and theatrical performances of pantomimes that constituted the traditional games, along with the circus races, had long been the locus for wealthy senatorial aristocrats to display their status as part of their office-holding duties as well as being the site for imperial munificence. When exactly the circus races and games began again is hard to know, but the circus races and some games were held at the latest in 414 for the visit of Honorius for his *vicennalia*.[157] The celebration was far less elaborate than it had been in the past. When Constantius celebrated his consulship in this same year in Ravenna, he had had to use monies, less than expected, from the seized estates of the usurper Heraclian; only 2,000 pounds of gold emerged.[158] The relative poverty of the general contrasts with that of the senators, who although having suffered from the Gothic presence, were recovering financially over this decade. By early 423 to 425, a senator of the Anician family (Probus, son of Olybrius) easily spent 1,200 pounds of gold on his praetorian games.[159]

Archaeologists support these textual references to the return of the games. One of the central spaces for senatorial elite activity after 410 was the Flavian Amphitheater, or Colosseum, where gladiatorial combats and animal hunts were held. (See Map 1.) A series of inscriptions from the Colosseum through the fifth and well into the early sixth century shows the importance of this space for elite displays of status and accruing honor on the part of senatorial aristocrats, generals, and emperors. The first restoration of the Colosseum after the sack is recorded in an inscription by Iunius Valerius Bellicius, urban prefect between 417 and 423 (see Figure 6). Although not enough of the inscription survives to allow us to know the full nature of the restoration, scholars have hypothesized that these inscriptions can be associated with the reopening of the Colosseum and its purification.[160] This connection would have been necessary because archaeologists have found bodies buried next to the Colosseum in contravention of the laws against intramural burials; these internments have been dated to the early fifth century and interpreted as a sign of the desperate nature of the sieges before 410. Hence, Silvia Orlandi posits that one of the first tasks the Romans would have had to do would have been to exhume the bodies and purify the area of the amphitheater under the direction of the urban prefect with the approval of the Senate.

[157] Gillett 2001, p. 138 notes that Honorius is attested there by a law dated to August 30, 414 CE, *C. Th*. 16.5.55.

[158] Olymp. *Frag*. 23, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 186–87.

[159] Olymp. *Frag*. 41.2, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 204–7.

[160] Orlandi 2004, pp. 42–46; 67–81; and 86–159; and 2013, p. 340; Rea 2002, pp. 126–39.

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Figure 6 Photo of fragments of the Bellicius inscription from the restoration in the Colosseum. *Source* Figure 4 from Orlandi 2013, p. 340.

The return of games to the amphitheater underscores the survival not just of animal hunts but also of gladiatorial combats. Indeed, images of these also appear, as Orlandi has observed, on one of the medallions known as *contorniates*, which were minted in conjunction with Roman games dated to 413 or 423 that show on one side a bust of *Dea Roma* with the acclamation "Rome Unconquered, a Fortunate Senate" (*Invicta Roma, felix Senatus*); the other side displays a scene of gladiatorial combat with the legend "Let the Renewal of the Spectacle/Gladiatorial Game Be Fortunate" (*Reparatio muneris feliciter*).[161] These artifacts point to the restoration of gladiatorial games and circuses in Rome by the end of the decade, accomplished with the support of Roman elites and a Christian emperor. Indeed, the earlier 399 law of Honorius that had tried to prevent gladiators from going into the service of senators had not at all closed off this form of entertainment, which arguably continued in the city until 438. Animal hunts and circus games were held long after that, into the sixth century, because senators and emperors wanted to continue them as a means of asserting their own status and power.[162]

Rebuilding Relationships: Senators, Emperors, and Generals in Rome

Senatorial, imperial, and military elites took active steps to restore the city in the immediate decade after the Gothic capture of the city. Their focus on

[161] The date of this *contorniate* series falls in this period, either to 413, according to Alföldi, or a decade later under Valentinian III, according to Chastagnol; see the discussion by Orlandi 2004, pp. 42 ff.

[162] See Ville 1960, pp. 320–35; and Salzman 1990, p. 227. For the games in 523, see Cass. *Var.* 5.42.

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Rome may have grown out of necessity; Rome was of renewed importance to the western empire in light of lost territories in Africa, Gaul, Britain, and Spain. Rome – the *caput mundi* still – could rise again through the efforts of Rome's leadership. The key figure directing the restoration on the ground, as the evidence indicates, was the holder of the office of urban prefect. This position was consistently filled with members of Roman and Italian elite senatorial families, most of whom had not held high office before 410. With these urban prefects, we see a new generation of senators emerging and lending their talents and considerable resources to the city as they competed for influence. The emperor Honorius encouraged new senators, appointing them in the hope of restoring his relationship with Rome's aristocracy because he deemed their support critical for the stability of his government. At the same time, Honorius's government was heavily reliant on the general Constantius. And Roman senators were equally aware of the need to build ties to the general. Not surprisingly, then, the urban prefect in 420, Aurelius Anicius Symmachus, dedicated a statue to honor Constantius, praising him as a "repairer of the state and the father of the most invincible of princes."[163] This award shows the development of ties between senators and the military, part of the triangulation of power that was the hallmark of Rome in the decades after 410.

After 416, Honorius returned to Ravenna; his authority having been reasserted, he did not contest for power in Rome again in person. His final return was in 423, when his body was laid to rest in the mausoleum of the Theodosian dynasty south of the transept of St. Peter's.[164] His burial in Rome reasserted his family's support for the city and its ties to Roman imperial traditions of rulership, even as he offered imperial support for the bishop and church of Rome. Indeed, the bishop and the clergy welcomed imperial support because the decade after 410 had been challenging. The bishop of Rome, as we shall see, had to contest to reassert his authority in the face of other elites and non-elites who had been newly empowered by the events of 410. There were competing Christian bishops and sects in Rome who vied for followers with the bishop of Rome. As well, there were internal divisions within the clergy that contributed to the turmoil within the church during this decade, even as other lay elites – senators, emperors, and generals – sought to assert their influence using, as they always had, religion to further their positions in Rome. The ongoing contestation for influence with

[163] *CIL* 6.1719 = *ILS* 801. The inscription begins: *reparatori rei publicae [et] parenti invictissimo[rum] principum*.

[164] *LTUR Suburbium* IV, s.v. *S. Petri basilica, coemeterium, episcopia, cubicula, habitacula, porticus, fons, atrium*, pp. 185–95: p. 193 (H. Brandenburg). Johnson 1991, pp. 330–38.

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lay and religious elites thus weakened the bishop of the city and hampered his efforts at recovery until the arrival of new imperial patrons in the later 420s who could help finance rebuilding the Church in Rome.

Bishops and the Clergy after 410

Many Christians saw the fall of Rome in 410 as a crisis of faith. In North Africa, Augustine vividly recreated the doubts expressed by ordinary Christians: "Look, it's during Christian times that Rome is being afflicted, or rather has been afflicted and burnt. Why in Christian times?"[165] Augustine delivered a series of sermons in the years 410 and 411 to an audience of refugees and worshippers before arriving at a new definition of Roman – that is, Christian – faith based on the dismissal of the physical *Urbs Roma:* "Perhaps Rome isn't destroyed; perhaps it has been scourged, not put to death, chastised perhaps, not obliterated. Perhaps Rome isn't perishing . . . if Romans aren't perishing. I mean, they won't perish if they praise God; they will if they blaspheme him. What is Rome, after all, but Romans?"[166]

However, the inhabitants of Rome were less convinced by this argument. For those who had remained as well as those who had returned, the physical restoration of their communities by their bishop was of urgent importance. Indeed, the faithful needed immediate pastoral care. Yet when the city had been taken, the bishop at the time, Innocent I (410–17), had been in Ravenna as part of a senatorial embassy to Honorius's court.[167] After the sack, Innocent remained at court for many months, not returning to the city until 412.[168] His absence had been problematic, leading some to turn to God for justification.[169] In the face of such doubts in a church that was suffering from physical losses, Innocent turned to the importation of liturgy to revive Christian communities across the city.

[165] Aug. *Sermon* 296.9 (=*serm*. Casin. 1,133): *Ecce temporibus christianis Roma affligitur, aut afflicta est, et incensa est: quare temporibus christianis?* For the sermons on the fall of Rome, see De Bruyn 1993, pp. 405–21; and Salzman 2015, pp. 346–59.

[166] Aug. *Sermon* 81 (*PL* 38. 505): *Forte Roma non perit, si Romani non pereant. Non enim peribunt, si Deum laudabunt: peribunt, si blasphemabunt. Roma enim quid est, nisi Romani?*

[167] Zos. 5.45; Oros. *Hist*. 7.39; and Sozomen, *HE* 9.7.

[168] Demougeot 1954, p. 32, note 3. From Ravenna, Innocent wrote to the bishop of Nich (*Ep*. 299, ed. Jaffé-Wattenbach, *Regesta I*, p. 46) stating that he stayed at Ravenna: *propter Romani populi necessitates creberrimas*. For Innocent's activities, see Dunn 2009, pp. 319–33.

[169] Oros. *Hist*. 7.39.

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Liturgy and Topography: Contestation for Influence after 410

The Church of Rome incorporated a day to do penance and give thanks to God for the liberation of the city after the departure of Alaric in 410.[170] The best evidence for this day of commemoration is an important but little appreciated sermon, *Sermon* 84, preached by a later bishop of Rome, Leo (440–460), in the years 441–45.[171] Because this sermon was once thought to refer to the 455 sack of the city, it has not been fully appreciated for the evidence it provides for the ways in which the bishop and his clergy had responded to the events of 410.[172] But there are good reasons to associate this sermon and the annual day of penance and liberation with an earlier liturgical innovation taken by Innocent (410–17) soon after 410. The content of Leo's sermon certainly fits the sack of 410, and the likelihood of this day being an annual event is further suggested by its comparison with other such celebrations across the early fifth-century empire.

Leo *Sermon* 84. Leo's *Sermon* begins by lamenting the sparse church attendance on this day of thanksgiving prayer for surviving the sack:

> The religious devotion with which the whole congregation of the faithful used to come together to give thanks to God . . . on account of the day of our penance and our liberation (*ob diem castigationis et liberationis nostrae*) has lately been neglected by almost everyone, as the rare few who are present demonstrate. . . . For it is great danger when men are ungrateful to God, and through forgetfulness of his benefits feel no remorse for their chastisement, nor rejoice in their pardon.[173]

Leo explains that the city survived because God "softened the hearts of the raging barbarians," a reference to the liberation of the city when the Goths

[170] For some of these arguments, see Salzman 2014, pp. 183–201; and 2013, pp. 208–32.

[171] Chavasse's work on the manuscripts of Leo demonstrated that there was an initial publication of some fifty-four Sermons of Leo from the first five years of his pontificate and hence this sermon must refer to the 410 sack of the city; see Chavasse 1973, pp. 523–24 and pp. CXCI–CXCII, with discussion in vol. 138, pp. XIVXLV and CLXXV–CXCIII. See, too, Montanari 1997, vol. I. pp. 171–214. For dating this sermon to August 30 or September 6, but not precisely to the year 442 CE as Chavasse (p. 523) proposed, see my discussion above and Salzman 2014, pp. 183–201.

[172] Courcelle 1964, p. 184, note 2 is one of the few to identify Leo's remark as a reference to Alaric's departure from Rome, but he was arguing against the views of most scholars who saw it as a reference to the Vandal attack on Rome in 455.

[173] Leo, *Sermon* 84.1 (*CCSL* 138A, p. 525): *Religiosam devotionem, dilectissimi, qua ob diem castigationis et liberationis nostrae, cunctus fidelium populus ad agenda Deo gratias confluebat, pene ab omnibus proxime fuisse neglectam, ipsa paucorum qui adfuerunt raritas demonstravit, et cordi meo multum tristiae intulit, et plurimum pavoris incussit . . .. Magnum enim periculum est esse homines ingratos Deo, et per oblivionem beneficiorum eius nec de correptione conpungi, nec de remissione laetari.*

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departed.[174] But he is emphatic that the Christians understand the true reason for their survival:

> Who restored this city to safety? Who snatched it from captivity? Who rebuilt this city for health? Who protected it from slaughter? Was it the circus games, or the watchful care of the saints? And by whose prayers was the divine decision to punish altered so that we who deserved wrath were saved for pardon?[175]

Leo is pained because less attention is paid to "veneration of the saints" (*cura sanctorum*) in church than to the "circus games" (*ludi Circensium*):

> It shames me to say it, but one must not keep silent. More effort is spent on demons than on the apostles, and the wild entertainments draw greater crowds than the blessed shrines of martyrs.[176]

The bishop argues that those Romans who believe that liberation was owed to the stars – that is, to fate or astrology – or to the gods are mistaken; he labels these people as "impious" and puts them in the same category as those who mistakenly trust in games, like the senatorial elites who fund them.[177]

But if it was God who had softened the barbarians' hearts, it was the bishop in church who had to convey thanks and lead the community on this day of "penance and liberation." In essence, Leo is asserting the symbolic role once held by the emperor who, as *pontifex maximus*, maintained the good will of God. For the bishop, however, the good will of God is maintained through the prayers of thanks mediated by the bishop's intersession in church, not in the circus.

This same conjunction of ideas – of a crisis as a sort of punishment with gratitude to God for survival – was certainly familiar to Christians living in Rome. So, for example, Romans still celebrated annually the Theodosian victory over the usurper Maximus, overthrown in 388.[178] In 425 a thanksgiving procession in Antioch with prayers in church was organized

[174] Leo, *Sermon* 84.2 (*CCSL* 138A), p. 525: *corda furentium barbarorum mitigare dignatus est.*

[175] Leo, *Sermon* 84.1 (*CCSL* 138A), p. 525: *Quis hanc urbem reformavit saluti? Quis a captivitate eruit? Quis a caede defendit? Ludus Circensium, an cura sanctorum, quorum utique precibus divinae censurae flexa sententia est, ut qui merebamur iram servaremur ad veniam?* Trans. adapted from Neil 2009, p. 120.

[176] Leo, *Sermon* 84.1 (*CCSL* 138A), p. 525: *Pudet dicere, sed necesse est non tacere: plus impenditur daemoniis quam apostolis, et maiorem obtinent frequentiam insana spectacula quam beata martyria.*

[177] Leo's concern with demons and the effects of the stars also led to his attacks on Manichees and heretics; see especially Maier 1996, pp. 440–61.

[178] Procop. *Wars* 3.4.16. After Theodosius, we hear of annual thanksgiving masses to celebrate other imperial victories; see Salzman 2014, pp. 190–91.

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to celebrate Theodosius II's defeat of the usurper John.[179] Also, a day was added to the Christian Calendar of Constantinople to thank God for the survival of the city after the earthquake of November 6, 447; this day was commemorated annually with a procession and special liturgy, including thanksgiving prayers.[180] Such thanksgiving celebrations were annual events in the fifth century, allowing the bishop to organize the community to come together to commemorate their survival and to give thanks to God for the restoration of life under the direction of the bishop.

The Anniversary of 410 under Innocent. Leo's description of his service suggests that such a date had become part of the annual calendar of the city of Rome by the time that he was preaching in the early 440s. But the initial day of penance and liberation – which was once much more popularly attended, he complains – would have most likely been developed earlier in the fifth century, most reasonably under the papacy of Innocent. It may have begun in conjunction with Honorius's visits to Rome, either in August 414 for his *vicennalia* or in 416 for celebrations of his victory over the Goths.[181] Both of these were moments of thanksgiving, the former to celebrate the *vicennalia* and probably also the defeat of the usurper Heraclianus; the latter, to celebrate the defeat of Attalus; such imperial victory celebrations were often turned into annual events. If the original day of thanksgiving for liberation and penance had been a spontaneous event soon after 410, it may have become an annual event in association with the commemoration of Honorius's visit to Rome in 414 or 416. The manuscript evidence for the date of delivery for Leo's *Sermon* 84 lends some support connect it to Honorius's 414 stay.[182]

If this is the case, the thanksgiving service described by Leo's *Sermon* 84, held on either the last Sunday in August or the first Sunday in September in the years 441–45, hearkens back to a ritual instituted some thirty years earlier that had become an annual event. In the 440s, as Rome faced the threat of the

[179] Socr. *HE* 7.24; John of Antioch, *De insidiis*, *Frag.* 82, De Boor *Excerpta historica* 3.27–29. See McCormick 1986, p. 60.

[180] Baldovin 1987, p. 186, notes 117 and 118. The *Chronicon Paschale*, compiled during the reign of Heraclius, ca. 629, Baldovin, p. 586, indicates that this was a contemporary celebration at the Church of the Triconch in Constantinople. If the liberation of Rome was an annual thanksgiving ritual, it would seem that Rome preceded Constantinople in this regard. This commemoration appears to have lasted for at least 200 years, for it is recorded in a *Chronicle* dated to the year 629 CE as a contemporary celebration.

[181] For the August 414 and 416 visits, see Gillett 2001, pp. 137–41, and for the 414 visit, see *C. Th.* 16.5.55.

[182] For discussion of the manuscript evidence leading to the likelihood that the celebration was held in conjunction with the 414 visit of Honorius, see Salzman 2017B, pp. 65–85.

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Vandals, Leo preached a message similar to that of his predecessor Innocent: Survival depends on divine aid, for which the bishop leads the city in doing penance and giving thanks in church.

But in Rome, unlike in Constantinople, where we hear of thanksgiving for imperial victories often including public processions, no such processions were recorded. As Jacob Latham has shown, there were no Christian processions in Rome until 556, when we find the first papal processions due to Byzantine interventions in episcopal politics; their absence from Rome contrasts with their occurrence in other late antique cities.[183] This late date for a processional liturgy in Rome and the relative slowness of the church in Rome in developing a stational liturgy are indicative, as I have also argued elsewhere, of the limited authority of Rome's bishop, literally unable to take control of the city's streets.[184] We see these same limits as well in the early decade after the sack as evidenced by the limited rebuilding efforts of the papacy.

Rebuilding Churches, 410–23. In the aftermath of the damage done to the churches and martyria in 410, the bishops of Rome did not undertake a major rebuilding campaign during the first decade of the city's restoration. In fact, as Manuela Gianandrea has observed, there is not a single act of artistic patronage that we can attribute to Innocent (401–17) throughout his tenure.[185] Not until Celestine (422–32) do we hear of an episcopal dedication of a church in the wake of damages done by the Goths; the *Liber Pontificalis* records that the Basilica of Julius was dedicated – not built – after the Gothic conflagration under this bishop of Rome and that silver liturgical vessels were presented upon its dedication without recording the funding source for either.[186] We know of one additional site that was damaged in the events of 410 because Bishop Sixtus of Rome (432–40) later requested that the emperor Valentinian construct a silver *fastigium* (a lintel or colonnade) in the Constantinian basilica, the modern St. John Lateran, because "it had been removed by the barbarians."[187]

The modesty of these early fifth-century efforts on the part of Rome's bishops can be explained by a number of factors. First, the fifth-century bishops of Rome were not aristocrats, nor did they have access to the kinds of financial resources that many of their senatorial parishioners had. To build churches, they relied on wealthy Roman aristocrats, clergy, or emperors. The only building attributed to the bishop of Rome, Innocent, in the

[183] Latham 2012, pp. 298–327. [184] Salzman 2013, pp. 208–32. [185] Gianandrea 2017, p. 183.

[186] *Lib. Pont.* 45, ed. Duchesne 1981, vol. 1, p. 230. Gianandrea 2017, p. 186 makes the important distinction between *dedicare* and *facere*.

[187] *Lib. Pont.* 45, Duchesne 1981, p. 233. For the *fastigium* as a lintel or colonnade within the church, see the discussion by Davis 2010, p. 115.

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sixth-century *Liber Pontificalis* was funded by a senatorial aristocratic woman, Vestina. In her will, she had left instructions to sell off her jewelry and pearls and to use the money to build a church, with the help of some priests; Innocent carried out her wishes and thus established a titular – that is, a neighborhood – church in Rome (see my discussion of this term below).[188] In post-410 Rome, bishops remained dependent on wealthy donors – be they Christian senatorial aristocrats, non-elite clerics, or emperors – for their major building projects, as we shall see shortly under Valentinian III.[189] Thus where some scholars see the gradual widening of episcopal power in the fifth-century city, the building evidence suggests that its leadership was too concerned with internal reconstitution and caring for its dependents to play a significant civic role in this decade.

The Bishop of Rome Innocent and the Treatment of Captive Romans. Given what seem like limited episcopal resources, we can perhaps better understand why we do not hear that Innocent ransomed Christian prisoners who had been abducted by the Goths, a reality of siege warfare. Rather, Innocent aimed to restore the Christian communities of Rome primarily through liturgical innovations and his pastoral care. Yet here, too, we see the limits of his authority, as exemplified in the case of the abduction of a Roman woman named Ursa at some time in his papacy, perhaps due to the siege or capture of Rome in 410. Her husband, Fortunius, no doubt mourned his loss, but rather than wait for her to return, he had remarried. To his surprise, Ursa later returned. Finding that he had remarried happily, she went to the bishop, Innocent, for assistance in getting her husband back. Innocent agreed to help, but he could only do so through the intervention of a powerful senatorial aristocrat named Probus, whom Innocent called "deservedly illustrious lord, my son" (*domine fili merito illustris*).[190] Innocent wrote to Probus to try to persuade him to get Fortunius to put aside his second wife. This indirect method of providing pastoral care demonstrates the limits of Innocent's authority.

On the one hand, as Kristina Sessa has cogently observed, the bishop had no legal leg to stand on; according to Roman law, if the enemy captures

[188] *Lib. Pont.* 42, Duchesne 1981, p. 220 cited the church donated by Vestina as the *basilica sanctorum Gervasi et Protasi*. However, the church is called the *Titulus of Vestina* in the Council of 499 (*MGH. AA* 12 p. 11). Its name reflects its donor.

[189] Hillner 2007, pp. 225–61. See too Bowes 2008, pp. 65–67; Salzman 2013, pp. 208–32.

[190] Innocent *Ep.* 36 (*PL* 20, 602). For Probus identified with Flavius Anicius Petronius Probus, consul of 406, see Probus 11, *PLRE* 2, pp. 913–14. For an excellent discussion of this case, see Sessa 2012, pp. 140–44.

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a spouse, one can remarry without incurring penalties, although there may have been an accustomed waiting period.[191] Yet Innocent was promoting the Christian view of marriage as a permanent bond, so, as Sessa emphasized, the only option for Innocent was to work through preexisting social networks, which is why he had written to Probus, a high-ranking senator, to persuade Fortunius to change his mind. Probus was likely the patron of Ursa and Fortunius, who were either members of his household or his tenants, clients, or freedmen/freedwomen. The success or failure of Innocent's intervention is not known, but it points to the kind of indirect, limited influence the bishop of Rome had in helping to resolve some of the personal domestic issues that emerged in the wake of this "fall" of Rome. To do so, he had to involve the illustrious senator Probus in a domestic dispute; this scenario must have played out across the city as captured folks returned to Rome after 410.

Internal Conflicts. Innocent, like his immediate successors, faced challenges to his authority from clergy within the church, a situation that also deterred him from taking a larger role in the restoration of the city. Tensions persisted between the powerful seven deacons who worked closely with the bishop. The deacons had financial responsibilities that gave them power and influence, and they came into conflict at time with the city's priests who served in the more than twenty neighborhood churches across the city.[192] The bishop also faced challenges to his authority from rival Christian sects, which, we know, still thrived in the fifth century.

We can see some of these tensions emerge as Innocent was forced to take a stand on the views of the ascetic Pelagius, who had resided in Rome. Pelagius had spread views on sin and free will that were counter to those of some powerful contemporary Christian bishops, most notably Augustine. After living through the events of 410 – which Pelagius described as the apocalypse – he departed for North Africa and then traveled to Palestine, but his followers remained in the West. Toward the end of his reign in 417,

[191] Sessa 2012, p. 141, pointing to the *C. Th.* 5.7.1, dated to 366 CE. Justinian would change this law in 536, *Nov.* 22.7, and reaffirmed in 117.12 in 542, to put in place a waiting period of five years before remarriage if the captured spouse was not known to be alive; if the captured spouse was alive, remarriage was not possible.

[192] For the seven deacons with their duties, see *Lib. Pont.* 21, ed. Duchesne 1981, p. 148. For the number of priests, see note 92 above. For structural tensions with priests in the more than twenty titular churches in the early fifth century, see Hunter 2017, pp. 496–510, and note 195 below.

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Innocent openly condemned Pelagius and his followers.[193] But Innocent's successor, Zosimus, failed to satisfy the clergy in his handling of Pelagius and his followers. Hence, a number of them complained about their treatment in person at the court of the emperor Honorius in Ravenna.[194]

After the untimely death of Zosimus in 418, divisions within Rome's clergy emerged openly on the question of a successor. Eulalius was supported by his fellow deacons as well as a few priests and the population at large, while his rival, Boniface, drew support largely from his fellow priests, some seventy of whom wrote to Honorius to dispute the events as relayed to the emperor by the then urban prefect Anicius Symmachus.[195] The disputed election led to fighting in the streets of Rome. In what we will see as a recurrent pattern, the emperor, the general Constantius, and the senatorial aristocratic urban prefect Anicius Symmachus were all involved in trying to put an end to the violence.[196] But rather than go into the political and theological differences, I emphasize here that the continuing tensions within the church between deacons and priests that emerged full-blown in the disputed election of 418 limited the ability of the bishops to engage as fully as possible in the restoration of the city in the decade after the sack. These internal challenges from his own clergy as well as from other Christian groups in the city, as represented, for instance, by the Pelagians, diminished the influence of these bishops through the end of Honorius's reign, even as the city was regaining its economic, political, and social footing.

Rome Resurgent: The City under Valentinian III (425–55)

The resurgence of Rome helps to explain the return of Emperor Valentinian III and his court to the city in the second quarter of the fifth century. It is worth considering these decades under Valentinian III to fully appreciate the

[193] The twists and turns of this well-documented controversy survive; see Wermelinger 1975; and Marcos 2013, pp. 145–66. Innocent condemned (*damnavit*) Pelagius and his supporter Caelestius; see *Lib. Pont.* 21, ed. Duchesne 1981, p. 220. For Pelagius on 410, see note 5 above.

[194] For the view that Zosimus's actions divided the clergy, see Wermelinger 1975, p. 137, and Marcos 2013, p. 159.

[195] See *Lib. Pont.* 43 and 44, ed. Duchesne 1981, pp. 223–29. For the deacons backing their fellow deacon Eulalius who also had the support of the population at large, see Honorius, *Exemplum sacrarum litterarum* (*Gestis omnibus*) = *CA* 15 (*CSEL* 35, pp. 60–61); and *Precum ad Honorium (Petimus clementiam)* = *CA* 17 (*CSEL* 35, pp. 63–64). For the seventy presbyters who contested the events, see *Precum ad Honorium (Petimus clementiam)* = *CA Ep. 17* (*CSEL* 35, pp. 63–65).

[196] See *CA*, 16, 19, 29, 34 (*CSEL* 35, pp. 59–60, 61–63, 66–67, 74–76, 80–81), for correspondence between Symmachus and the emperor Honorius; *CA* 29, 30, and 32 (*CSEL* 35, pp. 74–76, 78–79) for correspondence between Symmachus and Constantius.

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revival of Rome so soon after the 410 capture and before moving to Chapter 4 on the crisis of 455.

Because Rome was central to the stability of the empire, the death of Honorius and the usurpation in Rome in 423 by John, a high court official, the former chief of the notaries (*primicerius notariorum*), were seen as a serious threat to the eastern court and the Theodosian dynasty.[197] The eastern emperor, Theodosius II, the nephew of Honorius, refused to acknowledge John and sought to restore legitimate Roman rule. In Constantinople in late 424, Theodosius II thus proclaimed as caesar – junior ruler, as it were – the six-year-old boy Placidus Valentinian, son of Honorius's sister Galla Placidia and the now deceased general and (briefly) western emperor Flavius Constantius.[198] To signal his support, Theodosius II betrothed his one-year-old daughter, Licinia Eudoxia, to Placidus Valentinian, now Valentinian III.[199] He also sent a military expedition to Italy. Support for John's rule fell apart. The Senate reversed its allegiance, and by mid-425 the then urban prefect, Anicius Acilus Glabrio Faustus, made manifest his support for the new regime by dedicating a statue honoring Valentinian III as caesar.[200]

Faustus was likely again urban prefect when in Rome on October 23, 425, Valentinian III was elevated to the position of emperor in a public ceremony, which the city's mints commemorated by issuing gold coins as gifts to certain supporters and senators.[201] Since he was a child, Valentinian's mother, Galla Placidia, and the officials in his court took control of administering the state. Thus, for instance, as Mark Humphries underscores, the western court issued laws in the name of Valentinian III and Theodosius II to assert imperial control over Italy and Africa.[202] The court, located mostly in Ravenna, also passed laws to gain the support of senators and the Senate in Rome. In 426, Valentinian III partially remitted the gold, a virtual tax, traditionally paid to the emperor by the senators, and passed laws dealing with inheritance and

[197] For the usurpation by John, see Ioannes 6, *PLRE* 2, pp. 594–95. See the discussions by McEvoy 2013, pp. 229–31; Humphries 2012, p. 164.

[198] See Humphries 2012, p. 164 and notes 15–16 for bibliography. For Galla Placidia and Constantius, see notes 89 and 90 above.

[199] For Licinia Eudoxia, born in 422, see Marcell. com. *Chron*. s.a. 422, and Licinia Eudoxia 2, *PLRE* 2, pp. 410–12. The marriage took place in Constantinople in 437.

[200] *CIL* 6.1676. For Valentinian as Caesar, see Olymp. *Frag*. 43.1, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 206–7.

[201] See Kent, *RIC* 10.363 (nos. 2001–2002) for the gold solidi. On this event, see Humphries 2012, pp. 164–65.

[202] Humphries 2012, p. 165.

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succession that would have appealed to wealthy elites.[203] Valentinian's court relied on the military to maintain control. Soon after 425, two powerful but competing Roman generals emerged, Flavius Aetius and Boniface. Indeed, Flavius Aetius, who had originally supported the usurper, had gathered a force of Huns that he later disbanded, but the Romans had continued to rely on a range of Germanic paid soldiers to fight for them now as they had since the late fourth century. Aetius had disbanded the Huns with the fall of John and then changed his allegiance to support Valentinian III.[204]

Valentinian III made an early ceremonial visit to Rome in 425–26 to assert his control, but we cannot track his return visits there with certainty until the 440s, when he was recorded as being there often – between January and March 440, in August 442, from March to December 443, and between 445 and 447 – before taking up permanent residence in 450 until his death on March 16, 455.[205] The continual presence of the emperor and his court has to be appreciated against the background of recent history. With the exception of Maxentius (306–12), Valentinian III was the first emperor to reside in Rome since the mid third-century Gallienus. The prolonged presence of Valentinian and his court in the city brought new possibilities for advancement and influence, which further fueled the ambitions of Rome's senatorial aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and military elites alongside their imperial peers.

In this reviving city, all but one of the attested urban prefects under Valentinian III (425–55) were senators from Rome. In the early years, Valentinian sought continuity with the regime of Honorius and reappointed men who had held this office before, such as Faustus and Petronius Maximus. And there continued to be a number of urban prefects drawn from the great senatorial families such as the Petronii, the Acilii, the Glabriones, and the Nicomachi.[206] Importantly, the majority of Valentinian's praetorian prefects of Italy also came from distinguished Italo-Roman senatorial families, another indication of the close ties between this emperor and the aristocracy.[207]

[203] For the remission of the gold given to the emperor (*aurum oblaticium*) in 426, see *C. Th.* 6.2.25. For the laws, see Honoré 1998, pp. 249–51.

[204] For Flavius Aetius, see Aetius 7, *PLRE* 2, pp. 21–29. For Boniface, general since 423, see Bonifatius 3, *PLRE* 2, pp. 237–40.

[205] Humphries 2012, pp. 161–82, with references to travels at p. 166, citing the important study by Gillett 2001, p. 145.

[206] Humphries 2012, pp. 161–82. Grossi 2019 provides important new dates for the urban prefects under Valentinian, while reinforcing their important senatorial families. I do not, however, see evidence for a strong political division between the Anicii and the Caeionii-Decentii as Grossi (pp. 160–61) proposes. However, the inclusion of Gallo-Roman names is an important observation.

[207] Twyman 1987, pp. 480–503.

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Emblematic of the resurging influence of senatorial aristocrats working in close conjunction with the imperial court is the career of Petronius Maximus. His father had spent lavishly on his son's praetorian games after 410; Olympiodorus claims that Petronius Maximus's father spent 40 *centenaria* (which equaled 300,000 solidi, or 4,000 pounds) of gold on these games, dating to approximately 411, an amount twice as much as what Symmachus spent on his son's games in 402.[208] This expenditure in the period soon after the 410 capture should be seen as an important reinvestment on the part of this family in a traditional form of civic euergetism intended to gain political influence in a time-honored way. It worked. Petronius was tapped to serve as the key financial figure, the count of the imperial fund, in this critical period of recovery, 416–19, before attaining the position of urban prefect (420–21), an office he held again, likely before his two praetorian prefectures (421?–39, 439–41). He was twice honored as consul (433, 443) as well as named *patricius* by 445.[209]

Petronius Maximus's career evidences the status that a wealthy senatorial aristocrat could achieve by holding a combination of traditional senatorial civic offices along with providing service to the imperial court. His life embodied the values that raised him, at least according to the Gallo-Roman aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris: "His hospitality and character, his wealth and his display, his literary reputation and his magistracies, his estate, and his roll of clients were splendid indeed; the very division of his time was so carefully looked after that it was measured and arranged by the hourly periods of the clock."[210] Nor was Petronius Maximus alone in gaining power and status through office and patronage. The Roman aristocrat Anicius Acilius Glabrio Faustus, who as urban prefect restored part of the Colosseum, attained the position of praetorian prefect of Italy, Illyria, and Africa, where he worked closely with the imperial administration before attaining his consulship in 438.[211]

Roman senatorial aristocrats, along with the emperor and his family, also manifested their restored positions in society through their patronage of the church. A prominent fifth-century family that could claim an urban prefect in 412, passed on a house (*domus Palmati*) to the church of Rome.[212] We do not know the exact circumstances of the donation, but the Bishop of Rome,

[208] Olymp. *Frag*. 41.2, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 204–5. [209] See Maximus 22, *PLRE* 2, pp. 749–50.
[210] Sid. Apoll. *Ep*. 2.1.4: *igitur ille, epulae mores, pecuniae pompae, litterae fasces, patrimonia patrocinia florebant, cuius ipsa sic denique spatia vitae custodiebant ut per horarum disposita clepsydras explicarentur*. Transl. by Anderson, *LCL*, 1996, p. 477.
[211] See Faustus 8, *PLRE* 2, pp. 452–54. For the restorations, see *CIL* 6.32090.
[212] For the prefect of 412, see Palmatus 2, *PLRE* 2, p. 824; and Table 3.1.

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Sixtus III (432–40) used it as part of the patrimony when building the church of modern St. Maria Maggiore.[213] Indeed, a decline in population after 410 reduced pressures on Rome's housing market, a factor that also contributed to making donations of urban houses, along with public baths and bakeries, a more attractive avenue for aristocratic patrons to enhance their status among their fellow worshippers as well as their influence in the church.[214]

The donations of Roman aristocrats like Palmatus certainly augmented the wealth of the church of Rome, but such gifts also emphasized the role of elites as religious patrons. As has been well studied, wealthy aristocrats frequently donated private properties, either houses (*domus*) or apartment blocks (*insulae*) that became the foundations of a number of Rome's neighborhood churches – the *tituli*, or titular churches – whose name refers to the fact that the donors legally owned the properties that they were now giving to the church. Indeed, many of these titular churches continued to bear the names of their private founders or were associated through foundation legends with aristocratic owners. The question persists among scholars as to how much control donors exercised over the titular churches that were donated.[215] Some tensions over this issue do emerge (see Chapter 4). Nonetheless, the donation of elite urban properties after 410 led to the growing wealth of the church and gave more resources to the bishop of Rome to use at his discretion.

The return of the emperor Valentinian III to the city for extended periods of time fueled a construction boom for the church in Rome. Valentinian III and his family were generous benefactors. As Andrew Gillett observed, in the *Book of the Popes* the donations by Valentinian III represent the largest imperial investment in the Roman church since the time of Constantine.[216] Even if one does not fully accept the accuracy of the

[213] The *domus* furnished a rent of 155 solidi and 3 *siliqua* (*Lib. Pont.* 38, ed. Duchesne 1981, p. 233), an amount comparable to the 155 solidi rent from one *domus* under Bishop Damasus. See too Spera 2012, pp. 219–27, esp. 224–27 for wealthy Roman aristocrats active in Rome after the 410 sack.

[214] The *Liber Pontificalis* records a large number of such donations to the fifth-century church; on their impact, see Machado 2019, pp. 192–94.

[215] See Salzman 2013, pp. 229–30. See also Hillner 2006, pp. 56–65, who adds that a number of the titular churches were donated by wealthy clergy. For the division among scholars on how much control the lay patron had on these titular churches once donated, see Machado 2019, p. 193, who suggests, with reason, that episcopal control increased over time. Hillner 2006, pp. 61–62 points to evidence for the bishop's complete control from a letter of Bishop Pelagius dating to 558 (*Ep.* 17, ed. Gasso). That fits with my view of the increased civic authority of the bishop of Rome in post Gothic War Italy. (see Chapter 6), For the definition of the *titulus* as the legal right of possession of the owner, see Pietri 1978, p. 328. For more on the titular churches in fifth-century Rome, see Chapter 4.

[216] Gillett 2001, p. 145.

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amounts listed in the *Book of the Popes*, the construction projects are impressive: the imperial family (re)built St. Peter in Chains; restored the mosaics and decoration of the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem; and rebuilt St. Paul Outside the Walls as a monumental church and decorated its triumphal arch, donating gold and silver as well as sculptures, structures, and liturgical furnishings to this last church along with doing the same to St. Peter's in the Vatican and St. John Lateran.[217]

Bishop Leo of Rome (440–61), even more than his predecessors Celestine I (422–32) and Sixtus III (432–40), was able to benefit from Valentinian's support, and he used it to contest for influence with Rome's senatorial elites not only through church building and decoration but also through the visual manifestation of episcopal authority demonstrated by his control of topography and liturgy. In Leo's *Sermons* – which were edited and circulated during his lifetime – we see the bishop of Rome congregating the faithful at St. Peter's in the Vatican on a regular basis and at new times of the year in a period when most Christians were not yet expected to attend church every Sunday and when there was not yet a set church or place that the bishop of Rome would return to every year for his sermons on the feasts of the martyrs of Rome.[218] Indeed, through the fourth and into the early fifth century, St. Peter's was used only infrequently for liturgical purposes, mostly at Christmas or for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, and was most often a site for commemoration of the dead.[219] But Leo's sermons highlight St. Peter's as the focus of episcopal liturgy. Hence Leo's efforts at centralizing ritual at St. Peter's – what I call his use of liturgical topography – aimed to make the Vatican sanctuary, not St. John Lateran, as some have proposed, "the religious center . . . and the symbol of the papacy" in the middle of the fifth century.[220]

[217] For sources, see Ward-Perkins 1984, p. 237 and Humphries 2012, p. 167. Gianandrea 2017, pp. 208–12 suggests that Valentinian III also started the construction of St. Stephen in the Round.

[218] See Green 2008, pp. 3–4; MacMullen 2009, pp. 81–89. Masses might be held on a weekly basis in the urban *tituli*, but that does not mean weekly attendance. On weekly services, see Saxer 1989, II, p. 928.

[219] See Pietri 1976, pp. 575–95; Krautheimer 1983, pp. 112–16; Bauer 2012, pp. 155–70; and de Blaauw 1994, pp. 496–511. I agree with de Blaauw that the "sleepless priest" performing rites at St Peter's on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul should be identified with the bishop of Rome; Paulinus, *Perist.* 12, 61–64.

[220] Krautheimer 1983, pp. 112–16 acknowledges the competition between St. John Lateran and St. Peter's, but proposes that St John Lateran was the seat of the papacy based largely on physical changes to the area, as does Thacker 2007, p. 43, who sees the emergence of St. Peter's only under Pope Symmachus (498–514). However, the archaeological evidence to support this view, like the bishop's palace, does not exist for the early fifth century and the textual evidence is open to interpretation. For a different point of view, see Liverani 2004, pp. 17–49.

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Leo's use of topography within Christian liturgy should thus be seen as one of the earliest episcopal attempts to contest for space – physically and symbolically – in Rome. Leo encouraged Christians to forego games on civic holidays and to participate instead in communal public worship, most often at St. Peter's in the Vatican. Since the fourth century, this site had been a locus for conspicuous aristocratic munificence – private burial monuments, funerary banquets, and charity. Drunken feasts "far from the bishop's conversation" suggest that the rites at St. Peter's had been hard for the bishop to control, especially since Rome's aristocrats spent lavishly there into the fifth century.[221] For example, a senatorial woman named Anastasia and her husband decorated an unidentified structure in the basilica, perhaps the baptistery, in the late fourth century, while another Anastasia, who was married to the consul of 423, paid for the decoration on the façade of the basilica at the request of the bishop Leo.[222]

By centralizing episcopal liturgy, including public vigils and fasts, at St. Peter's, Leo was openly asserting his authority and control in competition with Rome's aristocracy. Simultaneously, Leo's use of liturgy at the Vatican site offered a stage to demonstrate his authority in the same space as the imperial family. When Valentinian III and his family came to Rome in 450, they visited St. Peter's on the day after their arrival to attend a vigil, probably the feast known as the Chair of Peter (*cathedra Petri*).[223] A little later that year, Valentinian III's mother, Galla Placidia, along with the assembled Senate, presided over the reburial of Placidia's long-dead son, Theodosius, in a chapel in St. Peter's.[224] Leo benefitted from the presence of the imperial family as he asserted his religious role also in front of Roman elites.

[221] For criticism of drunken feasting at St. Peter's, see Aug. *Ep*. 29.9–10 (*CSEL* 30.1), 119–20 (*remotus . . . ab episcopi conversatione*). For the failure of the bishop of Rome's control there, see Thacker 2007, p. 43. For one aristocratic funeral in St. Peter's, that of Pammachius' wife, see Paulinus of Nola, *Ep*. 13.11 (*CSEL* 29), pp. 92–95. For aristocratic charity to the poor in the Vatican area, see Amm. Marc. 27.3.6; Bauer 2012, pp. 156–59.

[222] For the senatorial Anastasia and Damasus, see *CIL* 6.41331a = *ICUR* n.s. II, 4097. For the Anastasia married to the consul of 423, see CIL 6.41397a= *ICUR* n.s. II, 4102. And see the discussion by Machado 2019, pp. 190–91. Her son, the wealthy Rufius Viventius Gallus, also donated to a construction in St. Peter's; see Gallus 3, *PLRE* 2, p. 492, and *ILCV* 1759.

[223] Leo, *Epp*. 55–58.

[224] Continuation to Prosper in the Codex Reichenaviensis, c. 12, ed. Mommsen 1892, p. 489 *Theodosius cum magna pompa a Placidia et Leone et omni senator deductus et in mauseoleo ad apostolum Petrum depositus est*. See the discussion by Humphries 2012, p. 170.

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Rome and the Coming of the Huns and the Vandals

The resurgence of Rome and the growing influence of its elites – senatorial, ecclesiastical, imperial, and military – in a revived capital were threatened by Rome's conflicts with the Vandals and Huns. After the Vandals had seized Carthage in 439, Valentinian III signed a second, very important treaty with the Vandal king Geiseric in 442, which from the Roman imperial perspective was very advantageous. It ended Vandal attacks and divided the wealthy North African provinces between Vandals and Romans.[225] Imperial lands in the fertile provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Byzacena as well as eastern Numidia and western Tripolitania were lost to the Vandals, but the emperor regained control of the less fertile provinces of Mauretania Caesariensis, Stifensis, and western Numidia.[226] (See Map 4.)

Valentinian III's government worked to reduce the impact of the losses on those affected, especially the aristocrats; he remitted taxes for those landholders who had suffered losses in the recent war and even gave portions of the imperial estates to those who had lost lands to the Vandals and to those involved in supplying bread for Rome, even as he tried to control the military situation on the Numidian frontiers.[227] The impact of these territorial losses on Rome's aristocracy thus varied greatly. But it surely is a sign of financial stress that by the mid fifth century, the less wealthy provincial aristocrats of the two lower senatorial grades (*clarissimi* and *spectabiles*) were no longer required to come to Rome to give games and no longer required special permission to reside in the provinces; only the men with the highest rank, the "illustrious" senators (*illustres*), came to the city to sponsor the games – in essence a tax on their wealth – and had to establish fiscal residency in Rome.[228] These changes show that the bifurcation of the senatorial elites continued. (For these differences, see the last section of Chapter 2.) Indeed,

[225] Prosper, *Chron*. s.a. 442.

[226] Conant 2012, p. 22 and note 9, citing Vict. *Vit*. 1.13, p. 7 and *N. Val*. 13 and 34.

[227] *N. Val*. 12; 13; 34.3–4. Compare Leo, *Ep*. 12 to the bishops of Mauretania; and see Merrills and Miles 2010, pp. 64–65.

[228] For these senatorial requirements, see Chapter 2 note 239. *C. Iust*. 12.2.1, 450 CE, states that *clarissimi* and *spectabiles* were not required to undertake the office of praetor. *C. Iust*. 12.1.15 abolished the need for permission to reside in the provinces, between 426 and 442 CE. Jones 1964, p. 529, observed that: "Marcian by excusing provincial *spectabiles* and *clarissimi* from the praetorship, cut their last effective link with the senate. The *illustres* thus came to form the inner aristocracy . . ." The lower ranks of senators contributed money for the games to a special treasury, the *arca quaestoria*; see Zuckerman 1998, p. 129. However, residency in Rome was required for all active in the Senate there, which could include the lower senatorial ranks of *spectabiles* and *clarissimi*. Thus residency further distinguished provincial *clarissimi* and *spectabiles* from senators of those ranks in either Rome or Constantinople. On this, see Cass. *Var*. 7.37; Cracco Ruggini 1998, p. 347; La Rocca and Oppedisano 2016, pp. 30–31 and 185–86.

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these distinctions in senatorial rank had only sharpened in the fifth century, enabling the wealthier senators to be able to withstand financial losses in Africa.

The treaty was confirmed by what some have seen as a "massive break" with Roman tradition.[229] Emperor Valentinian III, now wed to Licinia Eudoxia, agreed to a future marriage of the Vandal king Geiseric's eldest son, Huneric, to his four-year-old daughter, Eudocia.[230] Traditionalists, if they were upset, are not recorded as being such. Most Romans, and certainly those in Rome, must have breathed a collective sigh of relief. Of key import was the treaty's stabilization of the grain supply for Rome, which was now paid as part of the Vandals' yearly tribute to Rome.[231] Moreover, it is clear, from a variety of sources, that this treaty allowed for trade to continue between North Africa and the western Mediterranean. Only now, Vandal landlords, alongside Roman ones, sold their goods from Africa across the Mediterranean; a considerable number of amphorae filled with African olive oil shipped abroad date from the Vandal period, and African goods continued to travel to Rome and Italy after the enactment of the treaty.[232]

Although it used to be said that the Vandal seizure of Africa irrevocably weakened the Italian senatorial aristocracy, that idea is no longer viable. Indeed, landowners in Africa had faced significant losses, but the wealthiest senators weathered these changes and even saw increased revenues resulting from increased demands for their produce from Italy and Sicily. As scholars have noted, by the 450s, the loss of African territories alongside the losses of Britain and large parts of Gaul and Spain meant that the western empire was far smaller than it had been in the early fifth century. This reduction in its western provinces, conversely, made Italy and the city of Rome, along with the senatorial aristocrats who resided there, more influential.[233] This was one factor in Valentinian III's decision to reside in Rome rather than in Ravenna after 450.

Yet 450 was also the year that the eastern emperor, Marcian, feeling secure and in need of funds, stopped paying the customary tribute to the Hunnic forces that had become increasingly powerful under the direction of their then king, Attila.[234] The Huns had been pressuring the Roman frontiers

[229] Heather 2006, p. 292.

[230] Merobaudes, *Panegyricus* II, ed. Vollmer, *MGH AA* 14, pp. 22–18, esp. p. 12, lines 24–29 and Merobaudes, *Carmen* 1.17–1.8, ed. Vollmer, *MGH AA* 14.3 with commentary by Clover 1971, pp. 24, 51–54; and Conant 2012, p. 23. For Eudocia, see Eudocia 1, *PLRE* 2, pp. 407–8.

[231] Procop. *Wars* 3.4.13, and Conant 2012, p. 23, note 13.

[232] Conant 2012, pp. 51–52 and note 153; pp. 48–49 and note 141.

[233] Humphries 2007, p. 40. McEvoy 2017, pp. 95–97 and note 2.

[234] For a good discussion of these events, see Maas 2015, pp. 1–25.

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along the Rhine and the Danube since the late fourth century, but payments had managed to keep this group in the Balkans. Angered and in search of an easier target, Attila and his forces moved westward into Gaul. The Huns suffered a defeat there at the hands of the Roman general Aetius, who had led a coalition of Romans, Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths against Attila in 451 on the Catalaunian Plains.[235] However, Attila retreated with his followers, a mix of Hunnic and other Germanic soldiers, wives, and children, into northern Italy in 452. Allegedly, he had been asked to come by Iusta Grata Honoria, the daughter of the previous emperor Constantius and the empress Galla Placidia.[236]

When Attila was encamped in the area of Venetia (near Mantua), the emperor, Senate, and people of Rome sent an embassy, which included Leo, to deter his attack. Money exchanged hands, and a famine in Italy along with the outbreak of the plague made Attila withdraw to the Great Hungarian Plain.[237] As he celebrated his new marriage to a Gothic princess, Attila went to bed drunk and somehow hemorrhaged, choking to death in his own blood.[238] After Attila's demise in 453, disunity overtook the Hunnic leaders and their confederation disintegrated.[239] The emperor Valentinian III and the inhabitants of Rome in 454 could look forward to a world without any immediate Hunnic threat. Indeed, with the accretion of power and wealth increasingly centered on a smaller group of aristocratic families in Rome, with a resident imperial family, the future of the fifth-century city and its aristocracy once more looked secure.

Elite Contestations after 410: Some Interim Conclusions

The sack of Rome in 410 was a crisis in the eyes of contemporaries, but it also offered new opportunities for Roman elites. The Roman senatorial aristocracy, along with the military elite, may have gained the most in terms of power and influence as they rebuilt their relationships with one another,

[235] This battle is discussed along with changes in the military by Elton 2015, pp. 193–95.

[236] For Honoria's life, see *PLRE* 2, pp. 568–69. Honoria had unhappily embraced the life of a virgin, but after breaking her vows, was forced into an engagement to a senator in Constantinople whom she despised. In an attempt to avoid this lackluster marriage, Honoria wrote to Attila in search of assistance and sent her signet ring. Attila saw this as a marriage proposal and demanded half of the western Empire as her dowry. Only the intervention of her mother, Galla Placidia, saved her from execution by her brother. See Priscus, *Frag.* 17 = John of Antioch, *Frag.* 199.2, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 300–4.

[237] Priscus, *Frag.* 22 = Jord. *Get.* 42.219–24, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 310–13.

[238] Priscus, *Frag.* 24 = Jord. *Get.* 49.254–55, ed. Blockley 1983, pp. 316–19.

[239] For a succinct summary of Attila's demise and its impact, see Maas 2015, pp. 16–18.

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with imperial courtiers, and with the emperor Honorius. The proliferation of statues to honor senators and generals in public spaces of the city once monopolized by the emperor and the imperial family – in the Forum, the Forum of Trajan, and the Colosseum – was one way of demonstrating their enlarged influence. (See Map 1.) After 410 we see the emperor Honorius reasserting his authority in Rome even as he ceded the active role of defending the city to the military and of administering it to the senatorial aristocracy.

Another indication of the intrusion of senators and generals into the civic life of the city, and a good example of their close ties, is afforded by their interactions as they tried to put a halt to the fighting that overtook Rome over episcopal succession after the death of the Bishop of Rome Zosimus in 418. The then urban prefect, Symmachus, wrote letters to inform the emperor, but he also wrote to the general Constantius for advice about how to proceed. It is fitting that Symmachus addressed his letter to the general as "Lord, forever illustrious and magnificent in all ways, and deservedly sublime and outstanding patron, Constantius."[240] Similarly gracious was the general's reply to the urban prefect, whom he addresses as "your eminence" (*tua eximietas*).[241] Both the prefect and the general referenced the emperor in their responses, but his consultation of the general is a sign not only of Constantius's importance but also of his ties to senatorial aristocrats. It is eminently fitting that in addition to the statue to honor Honorius dedicated by this urban prefect in the Theater of Pompey, a statue to Constantius as "the repairer of the republic and parent of the most unconquered princes" was also installed in Rome in 420 by this same urban prefect.[242]

The year 410 and its aftermath had a significant impact on the church and the bishop of Rome. Although much modern scholarship has traditionally argued that "already by the fifth century the popes had taken over the role of emperors within the city of Rome in authority, patronage, and church benefaction," the evidence from 410 and the bishops' responses in the decade following go against that simple transformation.[243] Rather, this

[240] *CA* 29 (*CSEL* 35, p. 74): *Domino semper illustri et cuncta magnifico meritoque sublimi ac praecelso patrono Constantio.*

[241] *CA* 30 (*CSEL* 35, p. 76).

[242] For the dedication of a statue by the urban prefect Symmachus to Constantius see note 163 above. For the statue by Symmachus to Honorius, see *CIL* 6.1193.

[243] McEvoy 2013, p. 277, referring to the traditional view of Rome in which the bishop had a large civic role. In support of this perspective of the bishop as civil leader, see, for example, Neil 2009, pp. 4–8; and the influential work by Krautheimer 1983, pp. 99, 121, discussed by Gianandrea 2017, pp. 183–216. For a counterview, see Humphries 2007, pp. 25, 46–47, 54–57; and 2012, pp. 161–82.

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chapter has shown that especially in the post-410 period, Rome was very much still beholden to secular elites – senatorial, imperial, and military – for patronage, rebuilding, and security. The transition from an imperial to a papal city had clearly not yet happened. On the contrary, Bishop Innocent, while playing a role in the embassy to Honorius and being consulted by the urban prefect on a pagan sacrifice, was an ineffective protector of the city; his responses after 410 focused on liturgy and pastoral care. Conflicts with other Christian sects in the city, such as the followers of Pelagius, as well as the internal divisions within the church clergy took up his attention and limited the civic influence of the bishop in the decade after 410. In contrast, the rebuilding of relationships among senators, emperors, and the military fueled the city's restoration efforts and allowed these elites to provide strong leadership.

The memories of 410 and elite responses to it shaped the ways in which later senators reacted to subsequent crises, influencing as well, as we shall see, their willingness to work with new leaders in Rome, be they chosen by the eastern emperor or by Ostrogothic kings. Rather than seeing the events of 410 as trapping Rome in a downward spiral, I suggest that we adopt the view of late fifth-century senatorial aristocrats who saw 410 as an opportunity to use this crisis to further their influence. In their eyes, 410 had been a disaster, but over the decade that followed, the damages and losses were viewed against the background of a resurgent Rome, a city in which individuals and groups contested for influence, honor, and wealth. Indeed, part of the difficulties for modern readers seeking to understand what happened to the city and how it recovered comes from the shifting memories of those whose descriptions of 410 were shaped by their own rhetorical goals.[244]

It is not surprising that in a city experiencing growing aristocratic influence, a rising military force, and a resident imperial court open to ecclesiastical elites, one of the most successful of Rome's senators emerged to seek imperial office – with destructive consequences. Petronius Maximus, as we shall see in Chapter 4, acted, as ambitious senators had done for centuries, by removing his competition. The political crisis that ensued led to the second "fall" of the city during the fifth century, this time to the Vandals in 455. It would be a different set of elites who would have to respond to this new crisis.

[244] For the role of memory in recreating the events of 410, see Bjornlie 2020, pp. 248–79.

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