# THE CORONATION OF CHARLEMAGNE
# AS A LITURGICAL EVENT

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WHEN it comes to the coronation of Charlemagne as emperor, it seems that there is nothing new to say.[1] It remains one of the best studied

[1] A full bibliography on the coronation of Charlemagne is impossible. Some of the most representative treatments include Matthias Becher, "Die Kaiserkrönung im Jahr 800: Eine Streitfrage zwischen Karl dem Großen und Papst Leo III.," *Rheinische Vierteljahresblätter* 66 (2002): 1–38; Erich Caspar, *Das Papsttum unter fränkischer Herrschaft* (Darmstadt, 1956), 136–40; Peter Classen, *Karl der Grosse, das Papsttum und Byzanz: die Begründung des karolingischen Kaistertums* (Sigmaringen, 1985), 62–80; Roger Collins, "Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation and the Annals of Lorsch," in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society,* ed. Joanna Story (Manchester and New York, 2005), 52–70; Norton Downs, "The Role of the Papacy in the Coronation of Charlemagne," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 3 (1970): 7–22; Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire,* trans. Peter Munz (Oxford, 1957), 72–78; Robert Folz, *The Coronation of Charlemagne, 25 December 800,* trans. J. E. Anderson (London, 1974); Johannes Fried, *Charlemagne,* trans. Peter Lewis (Cambridge, MA, 2016), 419–30; F. L. Ganshof, *The Imperial Coronation of Charlemagne* (Glasgow, 1949) and reprinted in *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History* (Ithaca, NY, 1971), 41–54; Léon Levillain, "Le couronnement impérial de Charlemagne," *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France* 18 (1932): 5–19; Peter Llewellyn, "Le contexte romain du couronnement de Charlemagne. Le temps de l'Avent de l'année 800," *Le Moyen Age* 96 (1990): 209–25; Henry Mayr-Harting, "Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800," *English Historical Review* 111 (1996): 1113–33; Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge and New York, 2008), 114–18; Elsbet Orth, "Die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen in Rom," in *Das Fest: eine Kulturgeschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart,* ed. Uwe Schultz (Munich, 1988), 59–69 (with notes on 423–25); Rudolf Schieffer, "Neues von der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen," *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 2 (2004): 3–25; Percy Ernst Schramm, "Die Anerkennung Karls des

single events of the entire Middle Ages, and for many, a conventional if not outdated subject of interest for medievalists. For all of the attention the coronation has received, however, the discordant historiography on its root causes and significance leaves basic questions unresolved, and some aspects of the coronation have rarely seen the light of day. My intention here is to focus on one underappreciated facet of the occasion. Given that the study of the liturgy has too often been glossed over,[2] or cordoned off from the field of politics,[3] it is easy to forget that the coronation was incorporated into papal liturgy. This angle has not been entirely neglected,[4] but the coronation has not been sufficiently evaluated in this light. Scholars have rightly examined the essential question of the reception of Roman liturgy in Francia,[5] but we understand less about the liturgical response of Romans to the Franks.

The coronation cannot be detached from the context in which it was initially staged—that is, in the course of the papal Mass on Christmas day, 25 December 800 at Old St. Peter's. The pontiff responsible for the Mass was Pope Leo III (795–816), who had only recently survived a challenge to his position, though it was surely compromised as a result. Before any further

Grossen als Kaiser," *Historische Zeitschrift* 172 (1951): 449–515; and *The Coronation of Charlemagne: What Did It Signify?* ed. Richard E. Sullivan (Boston, 1959).

[2] For one recent work that pushes back against this trend, see *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation,* ed. Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton (Burlington, VT, 2016).

[3] Still essential for the interaction is Janet L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London and Ronceverte, WV, 1986). A thought-provoking collection engaging the theme is *Culto cristiano, politica imperiale carolingia* (Todi, 1979), even if some of its individual arguments must be reconsidered.

[4] Karl Josef Benz, "'Cum ab oratione surgeret': Überlegungen zur Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen," *Deutsches Archiv* 31 (1975): 337–69. Benz is followed most notably by Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor: liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale,* 2 vols. (Vatican City, 1994), 2:611–15.

[5] Among Yitzhak Hen's important contributions on this theme, see these recent works: "The Romanization of the Frankish Liturgy: Ideal, Reality and the Rhetoric of Reform," in *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500–1400,* ed. Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne (Cambridge and New York, 2011), 111–24; and "When Liturgy Gets Out of Hand," in *Writing the Early Medieval West: Studies in Honour of Rosamond McKitterick,* ed. Elina Screen and Charles West (Cambridge and New York, 2018), 203–12.

examination, however, I must first reconstruct the ceremonial of the coronation, both how it appeared and how it was constructed. Only then can I demonstrate how this context changes our reading of what the day meant.[6] Before tackling the question of the global significance of the coronation in the Rome of Leo III, one must first narrow one's vision to the ceremonial itself. An examination of this kind lays emphasis on the role that ritual played in the interaction between Charlemagne and Leo III. Scholars have often contemplated the innovatory nature of the coronation, but they have not focused on the continuity associated with the papal Mass into which it was absorbed and received by its original audience. When the relationship between the Mass and the coronation is properly evaluated, the coronation is revealed to have been cobbled together from old elements of worship and inserted into the Mass in order to respond to the pope's contemporary crisis.

Before proceeding any further, it will be useful to comment on my use of liturgical sources, especially in pairing them with more familiar narrative sources. The implicit suggestion I am making is that the former cannot be dismissed as *sui generis,* without any consideration given about how they relate to historical accounts. This holds most prominently with my handling of *ordines,* liturgical scripts that detail the action of worship.[7] Those texts within this genre that appear here were in their original context *aides-mémoires* intended to assist Roman ceremonial managers in the performance of genuine worship, and it would have been self-defeating for them

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[6] If positioned in the old dichotomy that located the event either in the broader sociopolitical context of its time (the "universalist" position) or in the more immediate context of the politics of the city of Rome (the "localist" position), as clearly contrasted in, for instance, *Coronation of Charlemagne* (n. 1 above), my approach for lack of a better term may be labeled "hyperlocalist."

[7] The standard work for *ordines* is Aimé-Georges Martimort, *Les "Ordines," les ordinaires et les céremoniaux* (Turnhout, 1991). Important source criticism of *ordines* appears in Janet L. Nelson, "Ritual and Reality in Early Medieval Ordines," in *The Materials, Sources, and Methods of Ecclesiastical History,* ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1975), 41–51, and reprinted in her *Politics and Ritual,* 329–40; and Richard W. Pfaff, "Prescription and Reality in the Rubrics of the Sarum Rite Service Books," in *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Margaret Gibson,* ed. Lesley Smith and Benedicta Ward (London and Rio Grande, OH, 1992), 197–205. A stimulating recent reading of the Romano-German Pontifical with broader implications for the study of liturgical sources is Henry Parkes, *The Making of Liturgy in the Ottonian Church: Books, Music and Ritual in Mainz, 950–1050* (Cambridge and New York, 2015), esp. 218–23.

to misrepresent how liturgy was actually conducted. On account of the conservatism of ritual, they preserve a flowchart of worship that was long applicable to certain trends in Roman liturgy. Modern scholars have these documents because of the idealization of Rome's liturgy by Franks and their subsequent efforts to copy and preserve them. They ended up being emulated North of the Alps only in part or, in some cases, they may have sat on the shelf as reference works.[8] One must naturally exert caution in analyzing and drawing from documents designed to perform worship as with any sources, but it is my hope that the results will show that liturgical sources merit a closer look in contemplating the history of events.

Reconstructing the Mass of the coronation requires us to consider the four major narrative accounts: in the Annals of Lorsch; in the biography of Leo III from the series of papal biographies the *Liber pontificalis;* in the Royal Frankish Annals; and in Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne.*[9] From the perspective of the liturgy, a particularly useful account is the *Liber pontificalis,* as it issued forth from the same clerical circles that participated in papal liturgy. Of these accounts, only the Royal Frankish Annals is explicit that the coronation occurred *ad missam.*[10] The appropriate translation of this phrase is "at Mass," not, as in the popular English translation of the Royal Frankish Annals, "to take part in the Mass."[11] This is not the classical understanding

[8] As can be seen for instance with baptismal sources; see Susan A. Keefe, *Water and the Word: Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire,* 2 vols. (Notre Dame, IN, 2002).

[9] For editions of the main sources, see Annals of Lorsch = *Annales Laureshamenses,* a. 800 and a. 801 (ed. Georg H. Pertz, MGH Scriptores 1 [Hanover, 1826], 38); biography of Leo III = *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, cc. 22–24 (ed. Louis Duchesne, 2 vols. [Paris, 1886; 1892], 2:7–8); Royal Frankish Annals = *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (ed. Frederick Kurze, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum [Hanover, 1895], 112); Einhard, *Vita Karoli,* c. 28 (ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum [Hanover, 1911], 32). Janet L. Nelson, "Why Are There So Many Different Accounts of Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation?" in *Courts, Elites, and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages: Charlemagne and Others* (Aldershot, Hants, 2007), no. XII, 1–27, gathers together all of these sources, translates them, and provides invaluable discussion.

[10] *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112): "cum rex ad missam ante confessionem beati Petri apostolici ab oratione surgeret…."

[11] The correct translation appears in P. D. King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Cumbria, 1987), 93, but cf. *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish An-*

of the preposition *ad* to mean "in order to," but a medieval version meaning "at."[12] The formulations *ad missam, ad missa,* and *ad missas* with the same force of "at Mass/Masses" recur in contemporary liturgical sources.[13] The biography in the *Liber pontificalis* implies that the coronation happened in a Mass, in referring first to the coronation and then Charlemagne's granting of gifts that transpired *missa peracta, post celebrationem missarum,* i.e., when the dismissal had been completed, after the celebration of the Mass.[14] The most likely reading is that what came immediately before (including the coronation) was a part of the Mass. This passage does not exclude the possibility that the coronation took place before the Mass started, although, as I will explain below, I am not convinced of this explanation. Einhard's account strongly suggests that the coronation happened during a Mass. Charlemagne was said to have entered the church because of a feast.[15] Although his biographer never states unambiguously that a Mass was celebrated while he was there, this is what one would logically expect to transpire on a feast day. The Annals of Lorsch contain little on the specific context, although they do not contradict the notion that the coronation was incorporated into the Mass.[16] Noteworthy here is that our best source for the identification of this event with a Mass, the Royal Frankish Annals, had no

*nals and Nithard's Histories,* trans. Bernhard Walker Scholz and Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor, 1972), 81. For the translation of this term, see Benz, "'Cum ab oratione surgeret,'" 348.

[12] A. G. Rigg, "Morphology and Syntax," in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide,* ed. F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington, DC, 1996), 83–92, at 87.

[13] See examples in the Gregorian Sacramentary: *Le sacramentaire grégorien, ses principales formes d'après les plus anciens manuscrits,* ed. Jean Deshusses, 3 vols. (Fribourg, 1971–82), 1:124, formula 27, no. 124; 128, formula 31, no. 141; 154, formula 59, no. 259; 171, formula 77, titulus; 172, formula 77, no. 333; 189, formula 87, titulus; 191, formula 88, titulus; 213, formula 100, no. 472; 219, formula 125, titulus; 225, formula 111, titulus; 243, formula 128, titulus; 258, formula 143, titulus; 263, formula 149, titulus; 268, formula 156, titulus; 283, formula 173, titulus; 304, formula 197, titulus.

[14] *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 24 (2:7): "Et missa peracta, post celebrationem missarum, obtulit ipse serenissimus domnus imperator. . . ."

[15] Einhard, *Vita Karoli,* c. 28 (32): ". . . ut adfirmaret se eo die, quamvis praecipua festivitas esset, ecclesiam non intraturum si pontificis consilium praescire potuisset."

[16] Cf. *Annales Laureshamenses,* a. 800 and a. 801 (38).

reason to lie about it being absorbed into the Mass. If anything, the author seemed to want to get the background details right to build support for the idea that the crowning had been a surprise to Charlemagne. This is the questionable assertion based on a literal reading of the passage known by the German phrase *Kaiser wider Willen,* which is to say that Charlemagne was made emperor against his will.[17]

All four of the main sources for the coronation agree that it occurred on Christmas day, 25 December. Whereas most feast days have only one primary Mass celebrated by the pope in Rome, the situation was more complicated for Christmas. Three separate Masses are held in the Roman rite for Christmas, an exceptional case already present in our earliest sources that persists to the current day.[18] The first was the Midnight Mass, celebrated at Santa Maria Maggiore. The second Mass was held at dawn at the church of Sant'Anastasia on the Palatine Hill. The reason for this unusual dawn Mass is unclear, but it has been plausibly argued to have been a private Mass said for the Byzantine emperor or, more frequently, for his representative in a location that still represented the imperial presence in the city of Rome.[19] Since the coronation signaled the repudiation of the pope's political allegiance to the Byzantine emperor, in addition to the small size of the interior and the limited space available for the laity in comparison with the normal churches for the first or third Christmas Masses, it was hardly an apt choice for this coronation. The final, or third, Mass held during the day was the Mass during which Charlemagne was crowned; as I will discuss shortly, this

[17] Discussion in Classen, *Karl der Grosse,* 75–77; Orth, "Die Kaiserkrönung," 66–67.

[18] G. Morin, "Liturgie et basiliques de Rome au milieu du VII$^e$ siècle d'après les listes d'Evangiles de Würzburg," *Revue bénédictine* 28 (1911): 296–330, at 297; *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:99–104, formulas 6–8; and for a chronologically proximate evangelary (post-750), see *Das römische Capitulare evangeliorum,* ed. Theodor Klauser (Münster in Westfalen, 1935), 140. In the last of these, the three Masses are referred to as "in uigilia natalis domini in nocte," "ad scam Anastasiam mane prima," and "in die natalis domini ad scum Petrum." For discussion, Hansjörg auf der Maur, *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit I: Herrenfeste in Woche und Jahr,* Gottesdienst der Kirche 5 (Regensburg, 1983), 169–71.

[19] Auf der Maur, *Feiern,* 170; Pierre Jounel, "The Year," in *The Liturgy and Time,* ed. Irénée Henri Dalmais, Pierre Jounel, and Aimé-Georges Martimort, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, The Church at Prayer 4 (Collegeville, MN, 1986), 31–150, at 83.

was held at Old St. Peter's. This was the main Mass for the celebration of Christmas in Rome, making it the best setting for such an event. As opposed to the argument of one recent scholar,[20] it is unlikely that Charlemagne would have attended all three Masses, but instead he may have emerged only at the primary and most festal Mass. In fact, it is also unlikely that the pope would have attended all three Masses given the practical limitations on traveling to both Sant'Anastasia and Old St. Peter's on the same morning; at most the pope would have ministered at the Midnight Mass and the Mass during the day, and perhaps only the latter. This is a good example of choosing feast days and Sundays for special acts of state like coronations or papal ordinations, which granted them more solemnity and associated them with the elevated sanctity of the day.[21] Since Charlemagne had arrived in Rome on 24 November,[22] Christmas was the first major feast available to host the coronation, far more prestigious than the intervening four Sundays in Advent that were bypassed as options.

All the sources we have agree that the coronation Mass took place at Old St. Peter's. There is no surprise in this, in that since at least the mid-fifth century (and perhaps earlier) St. Peter's had been the standard church for the Christmas Mass during the day according to the stational cycle of churches.[23] St. Peter's often hosted stational Masses, such as the Epiphany, the Sunday of Quinguagesima, Saturday after the first week in Lent, Passion Sunday, Easter Monday, the Ascension, Pentecost, Saturday after Pentecost, the Third Sunday of Advent, and the Saturday after the Third Sunday of Advent.[24] Robert Folz once argued that there had to have been a special accommodation to allow for the pope to say Mass at St. Peter's on Christmas during the day, an argument that recently has been revived.[25] According to

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[20] Fried, *Charlemagne,* 423.

[21] Hans Martin Schaller, "Der heilige Tag als Termin mittelalterlicher Staatsakte," *Deutsches Archiv* 30 (1974): 1–24.

[22] *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (110).

[23] G. G. Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy* (London, 1968), 23. This was accurately reported by Benz, "'Cum ab oratione surgeret,'" 339–40. For the stational liturgy, see John F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome, 1987).

[24] Willis, *Further Essays,* 54–55.

[25] Folz, *Coronation,* 144–45. This argument has surfaced more recently in Paolo Delogu, "Leone III, santo," *Enciclopedia dei papi,* 3 vols. (Rome, 2000),

liturgical documents this is simply not the case. The other possible claimant for the Mass was Santa Maria Maggiore, which already was the church for the Midnight Mass, but only in the mid-twelfth century would it start to be used for the Mass during the day.[26] The official rationale was that the length of the journey from the Lateran to St. Peter's compelled the change, but this appears to be an elaborate justification given that for centuries St. Peter's had been the station. The real reason may have been that during the controversial papacy of Innocent II (1130–43), the rival pope (and later antipope) Anacletus II and his family the Pierleoni held St. Peter's and its environs, forcing Innocent II to relocate his celebration of Christmas.[27] Other than finding no support in the sources, the idea that Leo III would have moved a Mass to ingratiate himself with Charlemagne was never particularly likely. Leo III suffered from bad press in the Eternal City and was likely hated by a subsection of the Roman clergy. It made little sense to antagonize some of them deliberately by stripping from them the honor of hosting the Mass.

Even aside from considerations of the standard church for this Mass, for other reasons St. Peter's was the ideal place to host the coronation. This church could hold a crowd of up to ca. 9000 people, which would have represented a tenth if not more of the population of the city of Rome at the time.[28] For the popes, this was the church of their primary patron saint, Peter, and symbolically a locus of great power.[29] Franks and Christians more generally throughout Western Europe venerated this spot, where the relics

1:699; Eamon Duffy, *Saints & Sinners: A History of the Popes,* 2nd ed. (New Haven, 2006), 95; and Caroline Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: Papal Power, Urban Renovation, Church Rebuilding and Relic Translation, 817–824* (Cambridge and New York, 2010), 26–27.

[26] *Liber politicus,* cc. 16–17, in *Le Liber censuum de l'Eglise romaine,* ed. Paul Fabre and Louis Duchesne, 3 vols. (Paris, 1910–52), 2:145a–b.

[27] John F. Romano, "The Ceremonies of the Roman Pontiff: Rereading Benedict's Twelfth-Century Liturgical Script," *Viator* 41 (2010): 133–49, at 144–46.

[28] Blaauw, *Cultus et decor* 2:505. Population estimates of Rome in this period vary from ca. 50,000 to ca. 90,000. See Jean Durliat, *De la ville antique à la ville byzantine: Le problème des subsistances* (Rome, 1990), 159–60; Roberto Meneghini and Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, *Roma nell'altomedioevo: Topografia e urbanistica della città dal V al X secolo* (Rome, 2004), 23.

[29] For the church, see in particular *Old Saint Peter's, Rome,* ed. Rosamond McKitterick, John Osborne, Carol M. Richardson, and Joanna Story (Cambridge and New York, 2013).

of Peter could be found, and were familiar with it as a destination for pilgrimage.[30]

With an idea of the setting, we can begin the reconstruction of the papal Mass. It should be stated at the outset that it is necessary to draw on liturgical sources from a significant chronological range, and that ultimately, certain components of the reconstruction must remain imperfect and hypothetical.[31] Nevertheless, it is a useful exercise to describe the Mass as best as our sources allow, which sets the stage, but also characterizes the flavor of the celebration as a whole. By doing so, I am implicitly proposing that a reconstruction of the coronation of Charlemagne is possible in spite of the diverse and sometimes contradictory accounts of it,[32] so long as one is realistic about the level of detail one can expect to provide. This task is naturally easier when one confines the reconstruction to the liturgy itself rather than any consideration of what preceded and followed the event. It further demonstrates that medieval narratives can at least help in the reconstruction of ritual,[33] even though this is an unusual case in which liturgical sources bolster terse and biased chronicles.

Before the Mass that incorporated the coronation could begin, the main players first had to arrive at the church. A procession issued forth from the papal residence at the Lateran in the southeastern corner of the city to the northwestern area of the Vatican, where Old St. Peter's was located. Papal processions began at daybreak in order to maximize the daylight available and (for most of the year) to minimize the heat of the Mediterranean sun; in

[30] Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700–c. 1500* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, 2002), 11–12, 46, 87.

[31] Useful for its methodology in reconstructing liturgies is Robert F. Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34 (1980–81): 45–75.

[32] For discussion, see Collins, "Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation," 53–54; Fried, *Charlemagne,* 419–30; and Nelson, "Why Are There So Many Different Accounts of Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation?" 7–8.

[33] For caution on the use of medieval narratives to reconstruct rituals, see Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, 2001), but with debate in Geoffrey Koziol, "The Dangers of Polemic: Is Ritual Still an Interesting Topic of Historical Study?" *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002): 367–88, at 368–77; and Philippe Buc, "The Monster and the Critics: A Ritual Reply," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007): 441–52.

this case it would put the beginning of the procession at 7:41 A.M.[34] A rough estimate of the amount of time it would take to travel between the Lateran palace and Old St. Peter's is one hour, seventeen minutes; this would put the pope's arrival at 8:58 A.M.[35] Given that the way was long, his position in the city of Rome uncertain, and the task ahead important, it is possible that the pope limited the number of petitioners he heard on this particular journey,[36] but this is conjecture. After having traveled to the church, Leo III entered the neighboring secretarium, a small sacristy set off from the church, for vesting before the opening of the Mass.[37] The start of the actual Mass was likely not before the third hour of the Roman day, which in this instance was 9:12 A.M.; this constituted a long-standing convention for the opening time of Mass.[38] With that being said, the liturgist Amalar of Metz complained that Leo III did not always hold to this custom,[39] and because of the short turnaround between the pope's arrival and the supposed starting time for the Mass, he may not have started exactly on time. Whether or not Charlemagne participated in the procession to St. Peter's is an open question. It cannot be taken as a given, since the long procession would have been an

[34] For this as an ancient Roman custom, see J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (New York, 1969), 24, 136. For papal processions starting at daybreak, see OR I.7, in *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge,* ed. Michel Andrieu, 5 vols. (Louvain, 1931–61), 2:69–70. "OR" is the abbreviation for *ordo romanus* (i.e., a liturgical script) and is followed by the *ordo* number and chapter. OR I is from late seventh-century Rome.

[35] There are approximately 4.5 km between the two as the crow flies. The walking speed was calculated at a rate of 3.49 km/hour, which is the average walking speed of pedestrians 65 and older; those on foot were likely to have been younger than this age, but the procession must have deliberately maintained a solemn pace. For the pace, see Richard L. Knoblauch, Martin T. Pietrucha, and Marsha Nitzburg, "Field Studies of Pedestrian Walking Speed and Start-Up Time," *Transportation Research Record* 1538 (1996): 27–38.

[36] Cf. OR I.10–11, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:70–71.

[37] OR I.29–25, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:76–79.

[38] Blaauw, *Cultus et decor* 1:73; Josef A. Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia: Eine genetische Erklärung der römischen Messe,* 5th ed., 2 vols. (Vienna, 1962), 1:323–24.

[39] Amalar of Metz, *Liber officialis* 3.42.5 and 4.40.4 (ed. J. M. Hanssens, *Amalarii episcopi Opera liturgica omnia,* 3 vols. [Vatican City, 1948–50], 2:379–80, 529–30). In these passages, Amalar was criticizing Leo for having started the Mass too early, i.e., right at daybreak—presumably at the Lateran, since it involved no travel.

unnecessary security risk. In addition, he had stayed in the region around St. Peter's, plausibly in accommodations for prominent visitors, while in Rome in 774; [40] he may have done so again, allowing him simply to show up in the morning for Mass.

The opening procession of the Mass was its first formal element.[41] It was essentially a clerical affair, with a lead-up of lesser clergy until the appearance of the pope. While the clergy walked down the nave, the introit *Puer natus est* was chanted.[42] It is exceedingly unlikely that the coronation would have taken place before the introit. This was the moment of festive entrance of the pope, which would have been less impressive if the pope had come in earlier to crown Charlemagne. Dispatching the coronation earlier would further have robbed the coronation of the special sanctity of having been embedded in a Mass. The sources fall silent on whether Charlemagne was incorporated in the opening procession. Even if Charlemagne's bodyguards ensured that security was not an issue, his presence among the clergy would have raised awkward questions about precedence and proper order.[43] It is conceivable, even if it cannot be proven, that he was simply positioned in the presbytery from the start. Although the laity was not normally allowed in this clerical enclosure, an exception was made for the Byzantine emperor,[44] albeit without any attestation of this custom having been practiced in Rome.

It was after the opening procession that the coronation took place, a moment of natural pause in the papal Mass and when the ordination of the pope

[40] *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 39 (1:497); Rudolf Schieffer, "Die Karolinger in Rom," in *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente,* 2 vols., Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 49 (Spoleto, 2001), 1:101–27, at 112–13.

[41] OR I.40–49, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:80–83.

[42] *Antiphonale missarum sextuplex,* ed. René-Jean Hesbert (Brussels, 1935), 14–15: "Puer natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis cujus imperium super humerum ejus et vocabitur nomen ejus magni consilii Angelis." Here as elsewhere when citing from this source, I provide the spelling from the antiphoner of Compiègne (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 17436), but the content is similar in all of the manuscripts used to compile the edition. The introit is a modification of Isaiah 9:6.

[43] This was a complex issue when the procession only included members of the Roman clergy; see John F. Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, 2014), 105–6.

[44] *The Council in Trullo Revisited,* LXIX, ed. George Nedungatt and Michael Featherstone (Rome, 1995), 151.

was held.[45] Here we can first see that the coronation was an improvised ceremony that borrowed from analogue liturgies with which the popes were already familiar. It was a mixture of elements, largely from the ferial papal Mass, with some components from Roman clerical ordinations including papal ordination.[46] Other actions drew from confirmation. Since there was no traditional coronation liturgy on which the pope could draw, it made it necessary for Leo III and his clergy to forge something new with pieces of pre-existing ceremonial—a kind of ritual pastiche. This situation had precedents. Carolingian liturgists for instance were no strangers to recycling older liturgical forms to create new worship and simultaneously to promote liturgical reform by drawing on Roman models.[47]

At the end of the opening procession, the pope would normally kneel in front of the altar while he silently said a prayer.[48] This would later be the moment in which the celebrant said the exculpatory prayer, the *Confiteor,* although there is no evidence of this before the eleventh century.[49] It seems that Charlemagne positioned himself next to the pope on his knees, for later he is said to have risen (*surgeret*).[50] This was in front of the *confessio* of St. Peter's (*ante confessionem*), the sacred spot of Peter's relics.[51] The phrase *ante confessionem* does not mean below in the crypt of the *confessio;* it is rather the outer front part of the high choir, which means that Charlemagne

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[45] For this positioning of the coronation in the Mass, see Arnold Angenendt, "Mediävistik und Liturgie," in the collection of his works, *Liturgie im Mittelalter,* ed. Thomas Flammer and Daniel Mayer (Münster, 2004), 397–417, at 416–17, though Angenendt includes the *Kyrie eleison.*

[46] Benz, "'Cum ab oratione surgeret,'" 342, 362–69, who first stressed the similarity with Roman ordination.

[47] Yitzhak Hen, "The Recycling of Liturgy under Pippin III and Charlemagne," in *Medieval Manuscripts in Transition,* ed. Geert H. M. Classens and Werner Verbeke (Leuven, 2006), 149–60.

[48] OR I.50, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:83: "et accedens pontifex orat super ipsum [i.e., an *oratorium,* a prayer rug] usque ad repetitionem versus." Also see OR XV.15, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:98 (from Francia, ca. 775–80), which has the celebrant prostrate his entire body on the ground.

[49] Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia* 1:386–88.

[50] *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112), and see above for quotation. For similar language, albeit when the celebrant alone arises after the initial prayer, see OR XV.16, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:98: "Surgens autem ab orationem. . . ."

[51] *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112), and see above for quotation.

was visible to the congregation during the ceremony.[52] The decision to kneel in front of the *confessio* was an exception to the normative position of prayer in the Roman liturgy, which was standing, and so this moment would have been noteworthy to contemporaries. This standard as the proper stance for praying can be seen as far back as the Council of Nicaea, but it was repeated too in contemporary sources like Walafrid Strabo's liturgical guide and the Pseudo-Isidorean decretals.[53] One of the few other times in the Roman liturgy when anyone would kneel was during the Universal Prayer on Good Friday.[54]

At this point Charlemagne rose; he was then crowned by the pope and given acclamations (*laudes*).[55] He then received a *consecratio* from the pope.[56] Although the temptation is to translate this term literally as a conse-cration or anointment with holy oil, the term *consecratio* was more malle-able than that: it can, for instance, refer to the consecration of the Eucharist,

[52]  Arnold Angenendt, "Mensa Pippini Regis: Zur liturgischen Präsenz der Ka-rolinger in Sankt Peter," in *Hundert Jahre Deutsches Priesterkolleg beim Campo Santo Teutonico 1876–1976,* ed. Erwin Gatz (Rome, 1977), 59–64; pace Nelson, "Why Are There So Many Different Accounts of Charlemagne's Imperial Corona-tion?" 12–13. For another use of the term *ante confessionem,* see OR I.74, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:92; here the pope was visible while he collected offerings of the clergy. This was not done in private, since the donors wanted public recognition.

[53]  Council of Nicaea, c. 20 (ed. Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* 2 vols. [London, 1990], 1:16); *Walahfrid Strabo's Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum,* c. 26, ed. and trans. Alice L. Harting-Correa (Leiden and New York, 1996), 154–55; *Decretales pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni,* c. 20 (ed. Paul Hinschius [Leipzig, 1863], 260).

[54]  OR XXIII.20, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:271 (from Rome, ca. 700–750).

[55]  *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112): ". . . Leo papa coronam capiti eius imposuit, et a cuncto Romanorum populo adclamatum est: 'Carolo augusto, a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori Romanorum, vita et victoria!'" On this re-construction, cf. Donald A. Bullough, "Roman Books and Carolingian *renovatio,*" in *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester and New York, 1991), 32 n. 62, who without any rationale rejected Benz's placement of the coronation in the introduction of the Mass before the acclamations, in spite of finding it "ingen-ious and serious." The classic work on *laudes* is Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946).

[56]  *Annales Laureshamenses,* a. 801 (38): "in ipsa nativitate domini nostri Iesu Christi ipsum nomen imperatoris cum consecratione domni Leonis papae suscepit."

the dedication of a new church, and the ordination of a priest.[57] Here the word is best translated as a blessing, benediction, or simply prayer, similar to the *consecratio* given for ordination. This is the sense in which it is used in Roman worship, both in the sacramentary and in liturgical scripts.[58] When Charlemagne rises *ab oratione,*[59] it does not mean from his personal prayer but from the pope's prayer said over him. Incidentally, if the Annals of Lorsch are taken at their word—and it appears the author is intentionally mirroring technical liturgical vocabulary here—it was the prayer (*consecratio*) that gave Charlemagne the name of emperor, not, as it is sometimes claimed, either the acclamations or the crowning that followed. Just as prayer had the ability to ordain someone or to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus, so too could prayer change Charlemagne's status to that of an emperor.[60]

According to the *Liber pontificalis,* immediately (*ilico*) after Charlemagne's coronation, his son the Young Charles was anointed by Leo III,[61] a sequence that would have suggested the close connection (biologically and politically) between father and son. The source only specifies a "holy oil," but what it certainly refers to is chrism, a mixture of olive oil and balsam

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[57]  Albert Blaise, *Le vocabulaire latin des principaux thèmes liturgiques* (Turnhout, 1966), 39.

[58]  For the use of *consecratio* as a prayer to create a bishop, see *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:93, formula 2, nos. 23a–23b; for priests, *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:95–96, formula 3, nos. 29a–b; for deacons, *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:97–98, formula 4, nos. 32a–b. See also OR XXXIV.9–12, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:605–6 (from Rome, ca. 750), in which the prayer of ordination is referred to as the *oratio consecrationis.* It is the prayer by which the bishop "consecrates" a man as a priest: "Et tunc alia illi dante orationem, consecrat illum presbiterum. . . ."

[59]  *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112).

[60]  For contemporary Roman mentalities about prayer, see Romano, *Liturgy and Society,* 171–206; specifically for the words of prayer as causing the consecration, ibid., 187–88, and Amalar of Metz, *Liber officialis* 3.24.1 (ed. Hanssens, *Amalarii episcopi Opera* 2:337); Walafrid Strabo, *Walahfrid Strabo's Libellus,* c. 23, 144–45. For the role of prayer in Carolingian monasteries, see Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume 2, c. 700–c. 900,* ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 622–53.

[61]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 23 (2:7): "Ilico sanctissimus antistes et pontifex unxit oleo sancto Karolo, excellentissimo filio eius, rege. . . ."

that was blessed by the pope on Maundy Thursday,[62] the Thursday immediately preceding Easter; this was used for the confirmation in the rites of initiation.[63] That seems a more fitting interpretation than either of the other two holy oils produced on that day, the oil of the sick or the oil of exorcism. It is likely this component of the ceremony that Theophanes had in mind when he said that it had been Charlemagne who had been anointed; in addition to getting the subject of the ceremony wrong, it further exaggerated by claiming that he had been anointed with oil from head to foot.[64] The exoticism of the foreign ritual of anointing of kings, unknown in the Byzantine Empire, may have caught the attention of the chronicler in this passage. It is at least possible that Charlemagne was also anointed, but it seems unlikely.[65] The Chronicle of Theophanes was written without any direct experience of the coronation, and it is the only source that reported any anointing for Charlemagne. Whatever reservations the papal authors of the *Liber pontificalis* may have had about Charlemagne, they did not hesitate to report on the anointing of his son and, had it occurred, they would have said something about Charlemagne's anointing as well.

In addition to inserting something very unusual in the course of a Mass yet again, this action added another liturgical element. Although it has sometimes been argued that episcopal ordination was the model for the anointing of kings by the pope, what it resembles most in Roman liturgy is confirmation, although in this period, this was not an independent liturgy.[66]

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[62] See for instance OR XXIII.7, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:269–70. The language of the chronicler here was intended to parallel Biblical phrasing, not to be precise about the oil used. See Exodus 30:25, 31; Numbers 35:25; Psalms 88:21; and Ecclesiasticus 45:18.

[63] OR XI.101, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:446 (from Rome, mid-seventh century).

[64] *Theophanis Chronographia,* ed. Carl de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883–85), AM 6289, 2:472–73: "*chrisas elaiōi apo kephalēs heōs podōn. . . .*" For translation and commentary, see *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813,* trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford and New York, 1997), 649–50.

[65] *Liber pontificalis* 2:38, nn. 34–35.

[66] Arnold Angenendt, "*Rex et sacerdos:* Zur Genese der Königssalbung," in *Tradition als historische Kraft: interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters,* ed. Norbert Kamp and Joachim Wollasch (Berlin and New York, 1982), 100–118. On the two rites remaining combined in this period, see

After the child had already received baptism, and the priest had first anointed him or her with chrism, then confirmation took place: the pope said a prayer and for the second time anointed him with chrism.[67] Like the account in the *Liber pontificalis,* the Roman liturgical script for baptism was specific about the application of chrism, albeit here on the child's forehead in the form of a cross.[68] Whatever the similarity to confirmation, however, the application of holy oil on someone's head was a new idea that completely changed the meaning of the gesture. Here it was understood at least by the clergy and the Franks to make a king instead of furthering the ritual initiation of a Christian. In the Roman context, where anointment of kings was not customary, the ceremonial must have appeared ambiguous or strange. It was obvious to the Romans that the Young Charles was not receiving confirmation a second time, but the meaning was not evident in the same way a coronation would have been. It may well have been viewed as conferring some kind of special yet vague blessing from the pope.

One final word is necessary before proceeding with the rest of the Mass for Christmas. As in any liturgy organized by the papal clergy, all of the ceremonial was meticulously planned and it cannot possibly be that Charlemagne was innocently praying and was suddenly ambushed with a crown.[69] This assertion, found in Einhard's account, was intended to reflect the appropriate attitude of a ruler upon receiving power; it is flat out contradicted by the version of the Annals of Lorsch, which makes it clear that there had been three weeks of planning before the actual event.[70] Before the formal ceremony, Charlemagne had been granted special privileges previously reserved for the Byzantine emperor alone, including the right to mint coinage with the names of Charlemagne and the pope, the introduction of Charlemagne's portrait into churches, and the staging of imperial processions and

J. D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West: A Study of the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (London, 1965).

[67] OR XI.96–102, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:445–46.

[68] OR XI.97, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:446: "Ipse vero presbiter facit de crisma crucem cum police in vertice eorum . . ." and OR XI.101, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:446: the pope ". . . facit crucem cum police et chrisma in singulorum frontibus. . . ."

[69] Benz, "'Cum ab oratione surgeret,'" 342–43.

[70] Collins, "Charlemagne's Imperial Coronation," 52–55; Fichtenau, *Carolingian Empire,* 72–78.

acclamations for Charlemagne.[71] Some scholars would argue in a broader sense that the rupture that the coronation represented between the pope and the Byzantine emperor was long in coming. Pope Hadrian I (772–95) in particular had advanced the cause of papal independence, ceasing to date diplomas by the emperor's name, discontinuing the sending of anyone to Constantinople for judgment, and minting coinage in his own name.[72] While it is accurate to reject the idea of the coronation having been an abrupt signal of the new relationship between popes and Byzantine emperors, it was a public, formal ritual that communicated unmistakably what previously had only been hinted at in front of an audience that accorded weight to symbolic displays.

It was after the anointing that the pope prostrated himself (*adoratus est*) in front of Charlemagne.[73] Although this is the meaning intended in this passage, this verb can also be understood in a cultic setting to mean worshipping God.[74] Augustine for instance used the same phrase several times to speak about the Magi worshipping the infant Jesus in the crib, no doubt influenced by the wording of Matthew 2:2.[75] This is relevant in this context because of the popularity in the Carolingian age of Augustine's work,[76] which may have exerted influence on the phrasing. If this is the case, it is a far cry from the adoration of the baby Jesus by the Magi to speak about the adoration of Charlemagne by the pope on Jesus' birthday. The discomfort the Roman clergy felt with the pope's apparent subordination may have been why any memory of it is suppressed in the version provided in the

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[71] Schramm, "Die Anerkennung."

[72] Florian Hartmann, *Hadrian I. (772–795): frühmittelalterliches Adelspapsttum und die Lösung Roms vom byzantinischer Kaiser* (Stuttgart, 2006), 157–95.

[73] *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800, 112: ". . . Et post laudes ab apostolico more antiquorum principum adoratus est. . . ."

[74] Blaise, *Le vocabulaire latin,* 25.

[75] Augustine, sermon 199 (PL 38:1026): "hodie celebravimus quo a gentibus [i.e., the Magi] adoratus est"; idem, sermon 204B: ". . . quo a magis dominus adoratus est," *Sermones selecti,* ed. Clemens Weidmann, CSEL 101 (Berlin and Boston, 2015), 67; idem, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 44.3 (ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont, 3 vols., CCL 38 [Turnhout, 1956], 1:496): ". . . magos stella direxit, adoratus est in praesepi. . . ." Cf. Mt 2:2: "dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est rex Iudaeorum? vidimus enim stellam ejus in oriente, et venimus adorare eum."

[76] John J. Contreni, "Carolingian Era, Early," *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia,* ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), 124–29.

*Liber pontificalis.*[77] From the verb itself it was unclear whether this consisted of genuflection or full prostration.[78] However obsequious or humiliating this may have seemed, it was bluntly the price of admission if Leo III wanted to secure Charlemagne's protection against his enemies.

Although the papal gesture has been referred to as "the Western counterpart of the Eastern proskynesis,"[79] it was not a straightforward imitation of Byzantine practice in this period. Even the Royal Frankish Annals only refers to the gesture as having been done according to the custom of *ancient* emperors,[80] not the contemporary ones in the city of Constantinople, and here it served as a means to confer further legitimacy on the proceedings. Einhard was not well-informed on ritual detail, but he did distance Charlemagne from the Byzantine emperors, who were in his telling irrationally indignant at Charlemagne's having received the title of emperor—the main result of the ceremony.[81] Nor do Byzantine sources provide any firmer evidence for the supposed Byzantine parallels to the liturgy. In the near-contemporary ceremonial text handling the coronation and wedding of the Empress Irene from the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies, the patriarch of Constantinople and the clergy attached to him did not kneel down before the emperor unlike secular courtiers.[82] Instead the patriarch prayed over the chlamys, the crown, and the *prependoulia* (the ornaments hanging from the crown), and then handed them over to the *despotai* (likely Emperors Constantine V and Leo IV) to put them on. After that, the patriarch and his men would immediately depart to the Church of St. Stephen to prepare for the imperial nuptials. Lest this be seen as a quirk of one version of the coronation ceremony, a tenth-century document also in the Book of Ceremonies confirms that the patriarch did not bow down before the emperor though the lay members of the imperial court did; he prayed over the chlamys and

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[77]  Folz, *Coronation,* 148.

[78]  Becher, "Die Kaiserkrönung," 10 n. 49. Technically, only the bending of the knee would be proskynesis, as opposed to full prostration.

[79]  Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955), 315.

[80]  *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112): "more antiquorum principum. . . ."

[81]  Einhard, *Vita Karoli,* cc. 16, 19–20 (28, 32).

[82]  Cf. Book of Ceremonies I.41, which dates from 768. Edition in *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae,* ed. J. J. Reiske, 2 vols. (Bonn, 1829–30), 1:207–16; English translation in *The Book of Ceremonies,* trans. Anne Moffatt, 2 vols. (Canberra, 2012), 1:207–16.

crown, and at least in this version, he placed the crown on the emperor's head himself.[83] Scholars should exert caution in describing the "Byzantinization" of early-medieval papal liturgy,[84] resisting the urge to look for Eastern precedents for ceremonial when there are better models closer to home. This is an especially ironic trend in the literature surrounding Charlemagne's coronation given that the papacy was in the course of the ritual that broadcast the severing of political ties with the Byzantines, not looking to them for liturgical models.

The greater likelihood is that this ceremony was developed in the city of Rome, not in Constantinople. Several elements were borrowed from the ordination of the pope: both events took place in front of the *confessio;* both men had a special prayer said over them; and an item would be given to indicate the change of status of the subject of the ceremony, with the pallium given to the pope and the crown given to the emperor.[85] Later scripts for coronation of the emperor would replicate all of these elements, and in fact, even expand on the borrowings from papal ordination: in one of them, the same three suburbicarian bishops who combined to ordain the pope (i.e., those of Albano, Porto, and Ostia) would also each say a prayer over the candidate for emperor.[86] The ordination of other members of the Roman clergy also featured some of the same elements as that of a pope and may also have been part of the inspiration for Charlemagne's ceremony. In particular, the candidates for a new clerical office would have to prostrate themselves in front of the altar, have a prayer of consecration said over them by a superior, and they were given either objects or clothing that symbolized

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[83] Cf. Book of Ceremonies I.38, dating from ca. 957–59. Edition in *Le livre des cérémonies,* ed. and trans. Albert Vogt, 2 vols. (Paris, 1935–39), 2:1–5; translation in *Book of Ceremonies* 1:191–96.

[84] Romano, *Liturgy and Society,* 26–28.

[85] Cf. the sources for the ordination of the pope, similarly worded in both sources, but here cited from the latter: *Liber diurnus Romanorum pontificum,* ed. Hans Foerster (Bern, 1958), 111 (V57) = 209 (C56) = 315–16 (A51); OR XLA, in *Les Ordines Romani* 4:297 (from sixth-century Rome): Pope in front of *confessio:* "venit ad confessionem" (OR XLA.1); pope blessed: "Tunc episcopus Ostensis consecrat eum pontificem" (OR XLA.6); pope given pallium: "Post hoc archidiaconus mittit ei pallium" (OR XLA.7).

[86] *Le Pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle,* ed. Cyrille Vogel and Reinhard Elze, 3 vols. (Vatican City, 1963–72), 1:263–64 (no. LXXV).

their new status and allowed them to fulfill their new functions.[87] It may also have been that the litany chanted at the ordination of a bishop was borrowed for the litany chanted for Charlemagne, since the *Liber pontificalis* states that many saints were invoked while Charlemagne was being acclaimed.[88] The imitation of procedures related to bishops started before ordination with their election. At least two of the main sources for Charlemagne's coronation mention that Charlemagne had been made emperor by everyone or that his new status had been requested by the whole people, both the clergy and the laity.[89] Bishops too at least on the theoretical level received the unanimous consent of the clergy and laity,[90] and it appears by extension, the clerical authors thought that emperors ought to as well. In making this argument, it should be noted that neither for the pope nor for any of the other clergy was anyone anointed with holy oil upon ordination,

[87] Cf. the two Roman *ordines* for ordination, OR XXXIV from ca. 750 and OR XXXIX from 790–800: OR XXXIV.1–3, 32–45, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:603–6, 611–13; OR XXXIX.12–25, in *Les Ordines Romani* 4:284–85. The acolyte received a sack for carrying the Eucharist; the subdeacon received a chalice; the deacon received a dalmatic; the priest received a chasuble; and the bishop received bread consecrated by the pope from which he would continue to take communion for forty days.

[88] *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 23 (2:7): "plures sanctos invocantes. . . ." Cf. OR XXXIV.39–40, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:612–13. As it is presented here, the litany (*laetania*) is distinct from the *Kyrie eleison.*

[89] *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 23 (2:7): "ab omnibus constitutus est imperator Romanorum." *Annales Lareshamenses,* a. 800 (38): "ipse [Charlemagne] cum Dei adiutorio et universo christiano populo petente ipsum nomen [i.e., of emperor] haberet . . ."; "subiectus Deo et petitioni sacerdotum et universi christiani populi . . . ipsum nomen imperatoris . . . suscepit." For a comparable source, see the Northumbrian Annals, *Symeonis monachis Opera omnia,* a. 800, ed. Thomas Arnold, 2 vols. (London, 1885), 2:64: "Hanc dignitatem ipso die meruit ab omni populo percipere, ut imperator totius orbis appellaretur et esset." Cf., for example, OR XXXIV.14, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:606: "Dum a civitate et loco episcopus fuerit defunctus, a populo civitatis elegitur alius et fiet a sacerdotibus, clero et populo decretus."

[90] Andreas Thier, *Hierarchie und Autonomie: Regelungstraditionen der Bischofsbestellung in der Geschichte des kirchlichen Wahlrechts bis 1140* (Frankfurt am Main, 2011), 239–45. This was for instance the case with Leo III: ". . . divina inspiratione, una concordia eademque voluntate, a cunctis sacerdotibus seu proceribus et omni clero, necnon et obtimatibus vel cuncto populo Romano, Dei nutu . . . electus est . . ." (*Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 2 [2:1]).

something that would not debut in the Eternal City until the tenth century.[91] Rather than anointment, the saying of a prayer during the ordination of the pope was accompanied by the laying on of hands by the third bishop, the bishop of Ostia, while saying a prayer over him.[92] Some variation of the laying on of hands may well have occurred during Charlemagne's coronation, but if so, our sources are silent on this point.

The next element in the papal Mass was normally the *Kyrie eleison,* an intercessory chant initially composed for penitential processions that retained its penitential character.[93] In a contemporary liturgical script, this chant had been suppressed during certain stational Masses in Lent,[94] which makes it possible that Leo III would have chosen to suppress it in this case too. Instead it would have made more sense to chant the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* immediately,[95] a chant that was performed only in the presence of the bishop and on either Sundays or feast days.[96] This was appropriate since it expressed joy, which could simultaneously refer to either the birth of Jesus or the celebration for the crowning. This would nicely have paralleled the use of the same chant when Leo III had greeted Charlemagne when he was entering the city of Rome.[97] Afterwards the pope chanted the first prayer known as the collect, and the clergy sat down, normally the only ones in the entire church who had chairs or benches.[98]

After the extraordinary incursion of a coronation and anointing into the Mass, the papal Mass would have proceeded according to its normal course. There is no sign that anyone other than the pope led the Mass, intoning chants and chanting prayers in the simple form known as the liturgical re-

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[91] Bruno Kleinheyer, *Die Priesterweihe im römischen Ritus: eine liturgie-historische Studie* (Trier, 1962), 53–84.

[92] Ibid., 65–71.

[93] OR I.52, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:84. For the history of the chant, see John F. Baldovin, "Kyrie Eleison and the Entrance Rite of the Roman Eucharist," *Worship* 60 (1986): 334–47.

[94] OR XXII.16, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:261 (from Francia, ca. 780–800).

[95] *L'ordinaire de la messe: texte critique, traduction et études,* ed. and trans. Bernard Botte and Christine Mohrmann (Paris, 1953), 62, 64.

[96] *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:85, formula 1, no. 2.

[97] *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 16 (2:6).

[98] Collect: "Concede quaesumus omnipotens deus ut nos unigeniti tui noua per carnem natiuitas liberet, quos sub peccati iugo uetusta seruitus tenet" (*Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:103, formula 8, no. 49). For the standing of the congregation, see Blaauw, *Cultus et decor* 1:83–84.

citative. This is one more argument that whatever legends circulated, Leo III never lost his tongue and miraculously regained it.[99] In addition to the other reasons for disbelieving this story are the practical demands of the liturgy, which anticipated that the main celebrant could pronounce the words. This ran deeper than the aesthetics of worship: if the celebrant could not adequately voice the words of consecration, there was a doubt as to whether the transformation of the bread and wine would be effective.[100]

The other major moments of the Mass can be reported on summarily. First the clergy completed the readings and chants normally delivered for Christmas Mass during the day. A subdeacon chanted the first reading, which in this case was Hebrews 1:1–12.[101] The cantor and the *schola cantorum* chanted the gradual *Viderunt omnes fines*.[102] Before the Gospel was delivered, the cantor and the *schola cantorum* chanted the joyful *Alleluia*.[103] After all of these, a deacon gave the pericope from the Gospel, John 1:1–14.[104] This reading was so iconic that in the later Middle Ages, it would be read towards the conclusion of every single Mass.[105] There is no indication that popes in this period were regularly in the habit of delivering a sermon here or at any point during the service, or that preaching as a whole in this period was afforded the kind of respect that it would be later in the Middle Ages.[106]

[99] Schieffer, "Neues von der Kaiserkrönung," 15–16.

[100] Gregory I, *Registrum,* ep. 14.2, ed. Dag Norberg, 2 vols., CCL 140–140A (Turnhout, 1982), 2:1066–69.

[101] OR I.55–56, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:85–86. For the reading, see G. Morin, "Le plus ancien 'Comes' ou lectionnaire de l'Eglise romaine," *Revue bénédictine* 27 (1910): 41–74, at 46.

[102] OR I.57, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:86. The gradual text was "Viderunt omnes fines terrę salutare Dei nostri jubilate Deo omnis terra," with the verse "Notum fecit Dominus salutare suum ante conspectu gentium revelabit justitiam suam" (*Antiphonale,* 14–15). The main text is a modified form of Isaiah 52:10, whereas the verse derives from Psalm 97:2.

[103] OR I.57, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:86. The text for the *Alleluia* was "Dies sanctificatus inluxit nobis, venite gentes et adorate Dominum quia hodie descendit lux magna super terram" (*Antiphonale,* 16–17). This text appears to be an original composition without an obvious Biblical source.

[104] Cf. OR I.59–63, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:87–89. For the reading, *Das römische Capitulare,* 140.

[105] Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia* 2:554–59.

[106] Romano, *Liturgy and Society,* 50–51.

The creed was not incorporated into the Roman Mass until the eleventh century.[107]

The next movements of the Mass all revolved around the Eucharist, the bread and wine believed to be consecrated as the body and blood of Jesus: they had to be offered and received by the clergy, blessed, and then distributed. First in this process came what was known as the offertory.[108] Noble lay Romans as well as some of the clergy donated the bread and wine, which had previously been prepared and brought to church for the Mass. This was before a time in the Eternal City when the offerings given had been commuted to coinage.[109] The pope would be the one who took the offerings from the elite Romans in attendance. While the offertory was taking place, the *schola cantorum* chanted the accompanying offertory antiphon *Tui sunt caeli*.[110] Once the bread and wine were on the altar, the pope said the prayer over the gifts (*oratio super oblata*), which conferred a blessing on them; at this time it was still voiced aloud and so it had yet to transform itself into the prayer known as the secret.[111] The clergy also had to prepare the altar by putting the correct implements on it to accomplish the sacrifice, as well as positioning the clergy in the appropriate array behind the pope.[112]

The next part of the Mass was the preface, which began with a short dialogue between the celebrant and those in attendance and ended with a

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[107]  Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia* 1:601.

[108]  OR I.67–85, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:90–95.

[109]  Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia* 2:28–30.

[110]  The text for the offertory antiphon was "Tui sunt caeli et tua est terra, orbem terrarum et plenitudinem ejus tu fundasti, justicia et judicium praeparatio sedis tuae," with three verses: (1) "Magnus et metuendus super omnes qui in circuitu ejus sunt, tu dominaris potestates maris motum autem fluctuum ejus tu mitigas"; (2) "Misericordia et veritas praehibuit ante faciem tuam et in beneplacito tuo exaltabitur cornu nostrum"; and (3) "Tu humiliasti sicut vulneratum, superbum et in virtute brachii tui dispersisti inimicos tuos, firmetur manus tua et exaltetur dextera tua Domine" (*Antiphonale,* 16–17). The texts all come from Psalm 88: the main text combines Psalm 88:12, 15; verse 1 combines Psalm 88:8, 10; verse 2 combines Psalm 88:15, 18; verse 3 combines Psalm 88:11, 14.

[111]  The *oratio super oblata* was "Oblata domine munera noua unigeniti tui natiuitate sanctifica, nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda" (*Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:103, formula 8, no. 50). On its transformation to the secret, see Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections,* trans. John Halliburton (London, 1969), 66.

[112]  OR I.84–87, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:94–95.

prayer; there was a special preface reserved for the Mass on Christmas day that was said at this point.[113] After it was finished, the *Sanctus,* which would praise God's holiness, was chanted.[114] At this point the series of prayers known as the Roman canon, the Eucharistic anaphora, were chanted.[115] The main goal of these prayers as a whole was to effect the transformation of the bread and wine, but at this point, there was no one "moment" of consecration, nor would anyone yet speak about transubstantiation. When this Mass was held, the canon was most likely still chanted out loud rather than the silent mumbling of a later period, although already by this point, the chanting may have been low enough that only the other clergy gathered around the altar could hear it.[116] It was not until the second half of the ninth century that we have evidence for the shift to a silent canon. It is unclear if at this point the pope prayed for Charlemagne in the context of the prayer included in the canon the *Te igitur,* which is likely where previously the Byzantine emperor's name had been said, or if the part of the prayer into which emperors' names were inserted had already been scrubbed entirely.[117] Depending on the volume used for the prayer, Charlemagne's name may not have been audible to many in attendance if spoken at all.

   After the recital of the canon, two prayers were said: the *Pater noster* and the *Libera nos,* the latter a prayer designed to deliver people from evil and

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[113]   The preface was "Uere dignum et iustum est aequum et salutare. Quia per incarnati uerbi mysterium, noua mentis nostrae oculis lux tuae claritatis infulsit, ut dum uisibiliter deum cognoscimus per hunc in inuisibilium amore rapiamur. Et ideo cum angelis et archangelis cum thronis et dominationibus, cumque omni militia caelestis exercitus ymnum gloriae tuae canimus sine fine dicentes . . ." (*Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:103, formula 8, no. 51).

[114]   OR I.87–88, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:95.

[115]   OR I.88–95, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:95–98; Romano, *Liturgy and Society,* 46–47.

[116]   The evidence comes from three *ordines,* the first from Rome and the latter two from Francia: OR III.1, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:131 (this chapter ca. 690–700), in which the canon was chanted aloud; OR XV.37–39, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:103 (ca. 775–80), in which the canon chanted by the celebrant could only be heard by other priests near to him; and OR V.58, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:221 (ca. 850–900), in which the prayer was entirely silent. For discussion, see Robert F. Taft, "Was the Eucharistic Anaphora Recited Secretly or Aloud? The Ancient Tradition and What Became of It," in *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighboring Christian East* (Crestwood, NY and New Rochelle, NY, 2006), 40.

[117]   Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia* 1:68–70; 2:197–99.

sin.[118] At this point, the clergy and laity would exchange the Kiss of Peace. Certain members of the clergy would then break apart the pieces of bread while the chant the *Agnus Dei,* in which Jesus is referred to as a lamb with the ability to remit sin, was performed.[119] The bread in the West was still unleavened, with significant evidence of leavened bread being used emerging only in the ninth century.[120] Finally here the bread and wine were distributed to the faithful, in three different groups according to their societal precedence.[121] It is likely that Roman laity still received the Eucharist on a regular basis, and Carolingian reformers advocated for habitual reception of the Eucharist, but even those who normally did not partake of it would likely have made an exception for Christmas: it was still one of the days in which virtually everyone in the congregation consumed it, even in the later Middle Ages when few regularly did.[122] While this process was going on, the Communion antiphon *Viderunt omnes fines terrae* was chanted by the *schola cantorum.*[123] After the distribution of the Eucharist came the postcommunion prayer, in which Mary was praised for having brought forth a savior while retaining her virginity.[124]

The parts of the Mass left after the Communion were fairly brief. The pope said the final prayer and then the deacon said the dismissal.[125] Then

[118] OR I.94, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:97; *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:91–92, formula 1, no. 19.

[119] OR I.99, 105, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:99, 101.

[120] Fernand Cabrol, "Azymes," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie,* vol. 1/2 (Paris, 1924), col. 3257.

[121] OR I.113–16, 118, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:103–6; Romano, *Liturgy and Society,* 97–98.

[122] Peter Browe, "Die öftere Kommunion der Laien im Mittelalter," *Bonner Zeitschrift für Theologie und Seelsorge* 6 (1929): 1–28, and reprinted in his collected volume *Die Eucharistie im Mittelalter: Liturgiehistorische Forschungen in kulturwissenschaftlicher Absicht,* ed. Hubertus Lutterbach and Thomas Flammer (Münster, 2003), 67–88.

[123] The text of the Communion antiphon was "Viderunt omnes fines terrae salutare Dei nostri" (*Antiphonale,* 14–15). The text is a modification of Isaiah 52:10.

[124] The text of the postcommunion prayer was "Communicantes et diem sacratissimum celebrantes, quo beatae mariae intermerata uirginitas huic mundo edidit saluatorem, sed et memoriam uenerantes eiusdem gloriosae semper uirginis mariae genetricis dei et domini nostri iesu christi sed et beatorum" (*Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:104, formula 8, no. 53).

[125] OR I.123–24, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:107. The text of the final prayer was

the pope and some other clergy would recess back into the secretarium.[126] In the course of his passage out of the church, the pope stopped and issued blessings for the different groups in attendance.[127] Altogether the Mass would have taken around three hours,[128] much of which would have been devoted to chanting and distribution of the consecrated bread and wine. Given the addition of the coronation and the anointing, this Mass may have been lengthier than the average papal Mass.

Altogether Charlemagne would have had a limited role in the action of the Mass subsequent to the coronation. It is likely that he would have exchanged the Kiss of Peace before the reception of the Eucharist, and likely with the pope himself.[129] During the fraction, when the pope's clergy fanned out to invite grandees to the papal dinner held after the Mass,[130] this surely would have included Charlemagne, and likely as the first guest. As with the highest grade of Romans, he would have taken Eucharist from the pope and received the consecrated wine from the archdeacon, the pope's right-hand man.[131] But there were limitations to his role as well. Charlemagne did give gifts with a liturgical purpose to the pope (in particular, silver tables, a golden paten, and chalices[132]), but these were not offered during Mass. It is likely that elite Romans were the ones who, as usual, would have presented the gifts of bread and wine to be used in the same Mass to the pope in the offertory.[133] The offertory since the seventh century served as a public display of the allegiance of lay leaders in the city to the papacy,[134] and the need to renew this bond was particularly acute at this moment.

"Praesta quaesumus omnipotens deus, ut natus hodie saluator mundi, sicut diuinae nobis generationis est auctor, ita et inmoralitatis sit ipse largitor" (*Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:104, formula 8, no. 53).

[126] OR I.125–26, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:107–8.

[127] OR I.126, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:108.

[128] Gregory I, *Registrum,* ep. 10.14 (2:840–42).

[129] OR I.96, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:98.

[130] OR I.99, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:99.

[131] OR I.113, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:103–4.

[132] *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 24 (2:7–8). For discussion, see Janet L. Nelson, "The Settings of the Gift in the Reign of Charlemagne," in *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge and New York, 2010), 116–48.

[133] OR I.69, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:91.

[134] Joseph Dyer, "The Roman Offertory: An Introduction and Some Hypothe-

In attempting to make sense of the Mass that took place on 25 December 800, the first thing to note is what it was not—that is, something completely novel. Nearly all of the individual elements of this Mass were recycled from typical Roman liturgies. In fact, the Mass resembled nothing so much as a vast warehouse of old liturgical boxes.[135] The readings were initially written in the first century, though they were mediated from the fourth-century Vulgate translation; the assignment of readings to specific days was generated over a period of centuries but was largely fixed in Rome by the sixth century. The oldest manuscript for which we have Roman prayers is early seventh century, though some of the prayers within it were considerably older, with the canon or Eucharistic prayers in particular deriving from the fourth century. The stational cycle of churches in Rome dates from the mid- to late fifth century. The actions as described in a liturgical script were from at the latest the late seventh century. The music of the Mass is from at least the late seventh century, but some of the pieces may be considerably older. What this means is that nearly all of these components were at least a century old when employed in the Mass of Charlemagne's coronation. The spirit of experimentation in this Mass allowed the incorporation of the coronation for the first time, but even this ceremonial would have been swallowed alive in the full course of papal liturgy, especially given that it took place early in the worship right after the opening procession. The explicit message of the texts heralded the Incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ and they implicitly connected the pope and this holy event; none focused on the crowning of Charlemagne. This was something that the clerical shapers of the Mass were well aware of, even if they did not outwardly express their hope that the focus would be more on Jesus than their Frankish guests: "Straightaway the holy bishop and pontiff anointed Charles, his excellent son, as king, on that same birthday of our Lord Jesus

ses," in *The Offertory and its Verses: Research, Past, Present and Future,* ed. Roman Hankeln (Trondheim, 2007), 15–40, at 31–33.

[135] For the chronology of liturgical materials used in the Mass, see by way of summary Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century,* trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN, 1998), 21–23, 39–41, 71, 86–87, 153, 179. For the dating of the stational cycle, see Baldovin, *Urban Character,* 153. For the dating of the music of the Mass, see James McKinnon, *The Advent Project: The Later-Seventh-Century Creation of the Roman Mass Proper* (Berkeley, CA, 2000).

Christ."[136] Some of the texts enacted in the Mass may have reminded listeners of the capacities of Charlemagne and Christ: both could for instance provide justice and fight against enemies. It was, however, only Jesus who could forgive sin, offer eternal judgment, and open the doors to salvation. Even before Charlemagne was crowned as emperor, the introit reminded those in attendance that the true *imperium* belonged to Jesus and not to Charlemagne. Given Charlemagne's reputation for sexual promiscuity,[137] the reference to the virginity of Mary in the postcommunion prayer could hardly have seemed a flattering juxtaposition.

When it came to liturgy, popes were in their normal field of play; they were experts of public worship and had gained their stature through the holiness that issued from it.[138] Even apart from his relationship with the Frankish monarch, Leo III's very identity as a pope was tied to his performance of the liturgy. In his biography in the *Liber pontificalis,* Leo III was praised for maintaining the ritual of the orthodox faith.[139] Leo III's connection to the Mass, perhaps in part because of the Mass with the coronation of Charlemagne, would become legendary; a tradition grew up at some unspecified point that he celebrated Mass between seven and nine times a day.[140] Even his oath of purgation was a ritual event that incorporated liturgical elements, likely intended to invoke memories of his initial consecration. It was no accident that the oath like the ordination was held at St. Peter's, and that the pope held the Gospel book during his oath—a proof of his veracity, but also a reminder of how the Gospel book had been held over his head during his consecration as pope.[141]

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[136]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 24 (2:7), and for translation, *The Lives of the Eighth-century Popes (Liber pontificalis),* trans. Raymond Davis, 2nd ed. (Liverpool, 2007), 191.

[137]  *Heitonis Visio Wettini,* c. 11 (ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Poetae 2 [Berlin, 1884], 271). For interpretation of this passage, see Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, 1994), 63–67.

[138]  Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY, 1990), 4.

[139]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 11 (2:4): "ritum orthodoxe fidei teneret."

[140]  *Walahfrid Strabo's Libellus,* c. 22 (124–25, with discussion on 262).

[141]  For the accounts of the oath of purgation, see *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (112); *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, c. 22 (2:7). For the papal ordination, *Liber diurnus,* 111 (V57) = 209 (C56) = 315–16 (A51); OR XLA.5, in *Les Ordines Romani* 4:297.

Popes were accustomed to utilizing liturgy to mediate their relationships with the secular world. Since the mid-eighth century, Carolingian kings had had previous popes serve as the godfather to their children while administering the rite of confirmation to them; this rite forged a new spiritual relationship between both parties and the expectation for protection from the pope's enemies.[142] This explains why when presented a problem with how to crown Charlemagne, the pope's natural response was to draw on the resources of the cult. It had been the major way in which the pope interacted with the city of Rome for centuries at this point. It had already been how the popes negotiated their relationship with the Frankish king. When Hadrian I first greeted Charlemagne, the people greeted him with palms and olive branches that had been harvested for the recently celebrated day of Palm Sunday.[143] The acclamation they used for this greeting was liturgical in nature, having been borrowed directly from the *Sanctus* chant of the Mass.[144] This was true too of the *sustentatio* ritual by which the pope held the hand of Charlemagne as various members of the Roman clergy would do with the pope in the course of the papal Mass.[145] Hadrian I had celebrated the Masses for Easter Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday for Charlemagne and his retinue when they visited the city of Rome in 774; the Roman clergy took special pride not in the novelty of any of this, but that the celebration had been performed *more solito* (in the customary fashion) and *ut mos est* (as is customary).[146] Even before Charlemagne arrived for the fateful events in 800, Leo III had been praying for him in Masses celebrated over the course of Lent.[147]

There was an advantage to Charlemagne of having a coronation embedded within a Mass. Much like his relationship with the pope more generally, this lent an air of sanctity to his political position that had been wrested with

[142]  Arnold Angenendt, "Das geistliche Bündnis der Päpste mit den Karolingern (754–796)," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 100 (1980): 1–94.

[143]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVII, c. 36 (1:497).

[144]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVII, c. 38 (1:497): "'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini' et cetera . . ." as in *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 1:86, formula 1, no. 4.

[145]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVII, c. 38 (1:497). Cf. OR I.29, 45, 69, 76, in *Les Ordines Romani* 2:76–77, 81, 91, 92.

[146]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVII, c. 40 (1:498).

[147]  OR XXII.13, in *Les Ordines Romani* 3:260–61; Josef A. Jungmann, "Flectere pro Carolo rege," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Monseigneur Michel Andrieu* (Strasbourg, 1956), 219–28.

the sword. Carolingian rulers were aware that the liturgy could be part of the symbolic apparatus by which they communicated and further enforced their authority.[148] In a more concrete sense, they had used popular manifestations such as processions to have the populace pray for military victory.[149] Yet Carolingian rulers were relative amateurs by comparison in employing the liturgy to accomplish their aims. This goes a long way to explaining why Leo III might have wanted the coronation in the Mass, since the liturgy was his normal area of competence, not Charlemagne's, and it renewed his elevated, sacred status. It displayed his ability to consecrate the bread and wine and intervene with God for his flock's salvation. Papal leadership in ritual gave him access to the supernatural realm, staking a superior claim to the military leadership of a secular ruler. In examining this issue, it should be asserted that incorporating the coronation into the spiritually powerful Mass was indeed a choice. Here it is once again instructive to compare Byzantine coronation ceremonies from a similar period: although crowning involved prayers and processions and parts of the ceremony were completed in a church, the coronation was an independent ceremony, not a subset of a Mass or any kind of liturgy.[150] The Byzantine master of ceremonies responsible for Irene's coronation was careful to separate the wedding liturgy that the patriarch conducted from the nuptial crowning that followed the end of the liturgy.[151] The argument that the crowning of the Byzantine emperor Leo V in 813 was executed during a Mass hinges entirely on the presence of the term *epiklēsis* in a saint's life, but here the term is better translated as an invocation for prayer.[152]

[148]  Ildar H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c. 751–877)* (Leiden and Boston, 2008), 43–100.

[149]  Michael McCormick, "The Liturgy of War in the Early Middle Ages: Crisis, Litanies, and the Carolingian Monarchy," *Viator* 15 (1984): 1–23.

[150]  Cf. Book of Ceremonies I.38 (*Le livre des cérémonies* 2:1–5) and I.41 (*De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* 1:207–16). Pace Classen, *Karl der Grosse,* 63, there is no indication that the coronation of I.38 included a Mass, although part of the ceremony was held in the Hagia Sophia and it incorporated a procession and prayer.

[151]  Book of Ceremonies I.41 (*De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* 1:212).

[152]  Cf. Classen, *Karl der Grosse,* 63. Classen referenced the phrase *meta tēn tēs euchēs epiklēsin,* in *Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula historica,* ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig, 1880), 164, arguing that it refers to the epiclesis, the moment of the Byzantine Mass when the priest requests that the Holy Spirit descend and transform the bread and wine. The term, however, can mean any in-

The first rationale for combining the Mass and the coronation of Charlemagne was Leo III's attempt to reestablish himself in a position of leadership in Rome. The public cult equally possessed the power to hurt and heal him. It certainly had demonstrated the power to wound him, since he had been attacked in the course of the lengthy procession across Rome known as the Major Litany held on 25 April,[153] which had precipitated the entire crisis that required the intervention of Charlemagne in the first place. Now, however, the liturgy could normalize his status in Rome. Raw feelings existed given the trumped up charges that had been issued against him including perjury and adultery, which may have been inspired by the maneuvers of his supporters to seize the papacy after Hadrian I's death.[154] Liturgy in Rome projected the illusion of societal unity, but it simultaneously exposed anyone who rejected its officiants like the pope.[155] Some of the clergy who had opposed Leo III were forced to recognize his authority by attending the Mass, or risk alienation or worse by failing to attend it. Those Romans who greeted Leo III upon his return to Rome in November 799, attended his Mass in Old St. Peter's, and received Eucharist from him publicly proclaimed that they recognized him as the legitimate pope.[156] A contemporary monk at the Southern Italian monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno who refused to chant Charlemagne's name in the course of the Divine Office because of his negative view of the Frankish ruler committed more than a faux pas: it created a major controversy for his monastery and put his life at risk.[157] In contrast the coronation had the advantage of reminding everyone who Leo III's ally was. What is more, the pope did not need to worry that

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vocation in prayer; it is not confined to the Mass. See G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 526. A recent translation of the life of Nikephorus by Elizabeth A. Fisher has "after he [i.e., Nikephorus] had pronounced the blessing . . ." (*Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation,* ed. Alice-Mary Talbot [Washington, DC, 1998], 73).

[153]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, cc. 11–13 (2:4–5); *Annales regni Francorum,* a. 800 (106). For the Major Litany, see Joseph Dyer, "Roman Processions of the Major Litany (*litaniae maiores*) from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century," in *Roma felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome,* ed. Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2007), 112–37.

[154]  Folz, *Coronation,* 132–35.

[155]  Romano, *Liturgy and Society,* 109–69.

[156]  *Liber pontificalis* XCVIII, cc. 18–19 (2:6).

[157]  McCormick, "Liturgy of War," 3–5.

Charlemagne's stature would overwhelm him in the course of the celebration. Since the pope was the absolute center of a papal Mass such as this one, and he presided over sacral power that even an emperor crowned by a pope could never attain, it would at least temporarily neuter Charlemagne. For most of the Mass he would have been playing second fiddle to the pope. If Charlemagne had been annoyed by anything in the Mass, it was not that the crowning had occurred, which he anticipated, but that he remained an afterthought for the majority of the ceremony.

The power of liturgy derives largely from its antiquity and continuity with the past; everything about its flow suggests the illusion of eternality. In its course it seemed as if things were the way they had always been and would always be. Given the tumult of Leo III's reign up to this point, it would have been exactly the message Leo III and his followers wished to convey. By leading the liturgy on an important feast day he was following in a long line from his predecessors without interruption and he was stepping back into his appropriate role. Papal authority even in a city like Rome was not a given. It had to be renewed continually through liturgical manifestations.[158] This has been one of the reasons that the popes were able to wrest secular control over the city of Rome, and it was why they were able to keep it.[159] It was through his mastery of the liturgy that Pope Sergius I (687–701) consolidated his hold on the office after a contested election.[160] One of the ways that this process had occurred was by the use of papal processions through which popes physically claimed the territory of the city. This outward sign of the papacy's power was likely the reason that the Major Litany had been targeted as the event to attack Leo III, an event that would leave him open to assault but also that symbolically represented his ownership of the city. Even if it is difficult to prove definitively, liturgy was likely one of the elements that allowed Leo III to serve out the rest of his papacy in peace, even after Charlemagne had returned home. On the very day that Charlemagne departed from the city, on 25 April 801, Leo III performed the Major Litany

[158] Thomas F. X. Noble, "Topography, Celebration, and Power: The Making of a Papal Rome in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, and Carine van Rhijn (Leiden, 2001), 45–91.

[159] Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1984), 216–17.

[160] John F. Romano, "Joy in Waiting? The History of Gaudete Sunday," *Mediaeval Studies* 72 (2010): 75–124, at 81–90.

again.[161] This time, he did it without incident, even in Charlemagne's absence. By doing so, the pope had symbolically reclaimed the city, ritually and politically.

This last point should indicate pointedly that liturgy when correctly employed could be exploited as a strategy. Worship should not be reflexively relegated to being mere window dressing or mindless repetition of formulas. In fact, liturgy had the capacity to create new realities, and within a context in which they would be assumed to be holy and immutable. By the same ritual Leo III had raised Charlemagne to emperor and reasserted his control over Rome. What is more, the crowning immediately conveyed the new status of Charlemagne through actions, which would have been communicated even to those who could not comprehend the words of the liturgy. In designing the coronation of Charlemagne, the Roman clergy had with little time at their disposal proved themselves to be adaptable, nimbly repurposing elements from other ceremonies to forge this new one, which was then inserted into the Mass. In the course of this liturgy too the understanding of ritual had undergone a change in the city of Rome. Previously popes had used liturgy to mediate internal Roman issues, but increasingly interactions with the Franks exposed its potential for being pressed into service for "international relations." Though it is likely that no one at the time contemplated the long-term consequences of this, inadvertently the Mass on Christmas day had added to the powers that the pope had at his disposal; now he could through the liturgy raise someone to the position of emperor. These results would long outlive the specific historical circumstances that had brought them into being. Looking at the broad consequences, though, may obscure how conventional aspects of the papal Mass on 25 December 800 were, and how the modifications made to its form were largely intended to serve the immediate ends of both Charlemagne and Leo III. It may make us forget that one of the most celebrated events in the Middle Ages was a Mass.

*Benedictine College.*

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[161]  Becher, "Die Kaiserkrönung," 17.