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THE BYZANTINIZATION OF SICILY

THE history of the mass migrations which disturbed the Mediterranean in the seventh century remains to be written. Our present knowledge of the great shifts of population from East to West, the displacement of Greeks by Semites and of Latins by Greeks, is exasperatingly small. While the general outline of these movements is clear, the details can seldom be determined with any certainty. In the study of them, Sicily is of the greatest importance. Almost blocking the narrow passage between the eastern and western basins of the Mediterranean, the island received the full impact of that wave of Greeks and Greek influences which swept westward, temporarily submerging the Latinity of North Africa, Southern Italy, and of Rome itself, and completely ousting the Latin element from Sicily and Lower Calabria. An examination of the Sicilian evidence may therefore help to define the more general problems and to throw some light on how, when, and why this Byzantine inundation took place.

I

Was the population of Sicily predominantly Greek- or Latin-speaking at the end of the sixth century? By happy coincidence we have an invaluable source for the study of Sicilian social history at just that time: the *Registrum* of Gregory I (590-604). The see of Rome possessed enormous estates on the island, and Gregory's private patrimony there was so extensive that with it he was able to build and endow six monasteries.<sup>1</sup> More than two hundred of Gregory's letters refer to Sicily. From them we get what would seem to be a most intimate picture of its life. Surely from such a wealth of documents we might expect an answer to our question. And indeed a perusal of the *Registrum* supplies a partial one. The vast majority of proper names are Latin;

<sup>1</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, bk. X, ch. 1, ed. by W. Arndt and B. Krusch in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, I, 407.

the only evidence of Greeks permanently settled in Sicily shows that they lived where we should expect to find them, in Catania and Syracuse on the Ionian Sea, where merchants would naturally be found,<sup>2</sup> and at the centers of imperial administration.<sup>3</sup> Gregory's letters would lead us to the conclusion that about the year 600 Sicily was overwhelmingly Latin.

The excavations of recent decades, however, have supplied much new material and have forced us to modify this opinion drastically.<sup>4</sup> The inscriptions from Messina, Catania, and Syracuse show that as late as the fifth century A. D. everywhere along the east coast of the island a majority of the people spoke Greek. As one approaches its southern tip, the proportion of Greek inscriptions increases; in the catacombs of Syracuse, the most important city of Sicily, they outnumber the Latin ten to one. The astonishing number of Latin names on these Greek tombstones shows how easily we may be misled regarding the ordinary language of the "Latins" found in Gregory's letters.<sup>5</sup>

Except along the east coast the epigraphic material is as yet too scarce to warrant conclusions. But there is evidence hitherto unexploited which indicates that at the end of the sixth century the Hellenic population had maintained itself on the south coast as well, for at Agrigento (Girgenti), the ancient Akragas, we find a Greek bishop. The proof of this turns on the problem of the proper date of St. Gregory of Agrigento, the author

<sup>2</sup> *Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum*, Ep. IX, 26, ed. by P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann, *M. G. H., Epp.*, II, 59. The *Registrum* twice mentions oriental transients in Sicily: a debt-ridden Syrian merchant named Cosmas (Ep. IV, 43, *ibid.*, I, 278) and a group of Monophysites from Alexandria (Ep. XII, 16, *ibid.*, II, 362). The Latin tombstone of an Alexandrian cloth-merchant in Palermo is dated 602. *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. X<sup>2</sup>, no. 7330.

<sup>3</sup> The pope replies to a Greek communication from Zitta, *magister militum* in Sicily. Ep. X, 10, *M. G. H., Epp.*, II, 245.

<sup>4</sup> The admirable recent work of Gerhard Rohlfs, *Scavi linguistici nella Magna Grecia* (Rome, 1933), especially pp. 129-131, makes it superfluous to examine the archaeological evidence here in any detail. Rohlfs's central thesis, that the Greek tongue was used continuously in Southern Italy and Sicily in Roman times, is now generally accepted. Unfortunately his reaction against the older theory that Southern Italy was completely Romanized for several centuries has led him to minimize the importance of the oriental immigration of the early Middle Ages (p. 147). Consequently his attempt to account for the remarkable revival of Hellenism in these regions during the seventh century (p. 136) is unsatisfactory.

<sup>5</sup> See the Greek index of Vincenzo Strazzulla, *Museum epigraphicum seu inscriptionum Christianarum quae Syracusanis in catacumbis reperiae sunt corpusculum* (Palermo, 1897), in *Documenti per servire alla storia di Sicilia*, ser. 3, vol. III. Similar ambiguity prevents us from drawing any conclusion from the names in three Latin papyri of the late fifth century which concern Sicily, in Gaetano Marini, *I papiri diplomatici* (Rome, 1805), nos. 73, 82, 83, and in Biagio Pace, "I barbari ed i bizantini in Sicilia", *Archivio storico siciliano*, XXXVI (1911), 59-68.

of an extant Greek commentary on *Ecclesiastes*.<sup>6</sup> The memory of this St. Gregory is enshrined in a lengthy and ecstatic *vita* by Leontius, abbot of the Greek monastery of St. Saba in Rome.<sup>7</sup> Despite his vivid style and wealth of detail, Leontius has not given us a single chronological indication; even his proper names are so full of anachronisms as to make the biography almost worthless to the historian. It contains, however, one incident which seems to show when the bishop of Agrigento lived. From Syria, whither he had gone to practice the monastic life, Gregory went to Rome. Shortly thereafter the pope made him bishop of his native Agrigento. But in Sicily Bishop Gregory made enemies, who sought revenge by compromising him with a woman and then denouncing him to the pope. Gregory was taken to Rome and long imprisoned, awaiting trial. Finally he was acquitted, and returned to his see, where he lived to an advanced age. Now the register of Gregory I reveals an almost identical case. In August, 591, the pope ordered three bishops, Gregory of Agrigento, Leo of Catania, and Victor of Palermo, to appear before his Sicilian vicar for trial.<sup>8</sup> The cases were carried to Rome. On July 5, 592, Leo of Catania was acquitted, and by April, 593, Victor had returned to Palermo.<sup>9</sup> Not so Gregory of Agrigento; in November, 592, the pope was still attempting to secure the presence of his accusers in Rome so that the trial might be held.<sup>10</sup> Two years later Gregory must still have been in duress, for in November, 594, the pope appointed

<sup>6</sup> *Sancti Gregorii II Agrigentinarum episcopi explanationes Ecclesiastae libri decem*, Stefano Antonio Morcelli, ed. (Venice, 1791), reprinted in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. XCVIII, cols. 742-1181.

<sup>7</sup> Morcelli, ed., *ibid.*, cols. 549-716. Leontius's genius for obfuscation has wrapped his own history in as great obscurity as that of his hero. Morcelli (cols. 541-546) has ingeniously discovered a monk Leontius in Rome about 680, and believes him to have been at St. Saba's; but the name is too common to be convincing proof of identity. From internal evidence it would seem that the *vita* was written in the Orient rather than at Rome (Morcelli, col. 547 and Domenico Gaspare Lancia di Brolo, *Storia della chiesa in Sicilia nei dieci primi secoli*, Palermo, 1880-1884, II, 54). There is no indication of the date of its composition. The earliest extant MS. is of the eighth-ninth centuries (Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, Munich, 1897, p. 129). I am inclined to believe that it was written after the separation of Sicily from the western patriarchate (see p. 20), for one passage (Morcelli, col. 665) intimates that a Sicilian bishop could not be tried in Rome without the consent of the patriarch of Constantinople and of the eastern emperor.

<sup>8</sup> Ep. I, 70, *M. G. H., Epp.*, I, 90. The bishops were embroiled with Justin, praetor of Sicily, an unsavory character (Ep. III, 37, *ibid.*, I, 195), evidently quite capable of "framing" Gregory. The garbled oral tradition of this incident probably furnished the nucleus of Leontius's story.

<sup>9</sup> *Epp.* II, 30 and III, 27, *ibid.*, pp. 126, 184.

<sup>10</sup> Ep. III, 12, *ibid.*, p. 171.

Bishop Peter of Triocala as visitor for the diocese of Agrigento.<sup>11</sup> By January of 603 Gregory was free, for a Sicilian bishop of the same name is referred to under circumstances which point decisively to his identity with our Bishop Gregory and to his long-continued occupation of the see of Agrigento.<sup>12</sup> Gregory may have been free as early as 598.<sup>13</sup>

The vicissitudes of Leontius's saint and of the Bishop Gregory of the papal register are so similar that it is difficult to doubt their identity. Lancia di Brolo, however, combats such a conclusion with linguistic and liturgical arguments: in his commentary on *Ecclesiastes*, Bishop Gregory

<sup>11</sup> Ep. V, 12, *ibid.*, I, 293. Archbishop Lancia di Brolo (I, 388, n. 5), who opposes the identification of Leontius's Gregory with the bishop of the *Registrum*, asserts that Peter's appointment indicates that Gregory of Agrigento had been deposed. But in such a case the pope would certainly have ordered the election of a new bishop for so important a see. Lancia di Brolo (II, 48) further insists that Bishop Gregory had been deposed because in June, 595 (Ep. V, 40, *M. G. H., Epp.*, I, 331), the pope offered an unnamed vacant see in Sicily to the fugitive Bishop Sebastian of Resina, who did not accept. But Lancia di Brolo is wrong in believing that this can only refer to Agrigento: on the contrary Bishop Agatho of Lipari had been deposed in 592 (Ep. II, 19, *ibid.*, I, 115; cf. p. 51, n. 1) and no successor is known; also we have no record of a bishop at Lentini before 602 (Ep. XII, 15, *ibid.*, II, 362).

<sup>12</sup> Ep. XIII, 22, *ibid.*, p. 388. In this letter the pope introduces Adrian, the new Syracusan *defensor* of papal estates in that part of the island, to seven Sicilian bishops. From other letters we can positively identify the sees of six of these: Catania, Taormina, Syracuse, Messina, Lentini, and Malta. Lipari and Tindari are never mentioned in connection with the *defensores*, presumably because there were no papal estates in those small dioceses. On the other hand a letter of October, 598 (Ep. IX, 29, *ibid.*, p. 62), specifically entrusts to a new Syracusan *defensor* the properties of the Roman church "in partibus Syracusanis, Catenensibus, Agrigentinis vel Messanensibus". Lancia di Brolo (I, 470, n. 1) is therefore wrong in asserting that the diocese of Agrigento was in the jurisdiction of the *defensor* of Palermo. The one letter (Ep. VIII, 23, *M. G. H., Epp.*, II, 24) which can be adduced to support such a view is dated May, 598, and deals with an exceptional situation, since the *defensorship* of Syracuse was then vacant (see above). The seventh bishop, named Gregory, in our letter of January, 603, is therefore Gregory of Agrigento.

This is not a new Bishop Gregory, for the pope addresses the bishops in order of seniority, and Gregory ranks first, taking precedence over Leo of Catania and Secundinus of Taormina, both of whom were occupying their sees in 591 (Epp. I, 70, 71, *ibid.*, I, 90-91). Lipari's bishop was deposed in 592 (above, n. 11), while at Tindari Benenatus succeeded Eutychius between 593 and 599 (Epp. III, 59, and IX, 180, *ibid.*, I, 218 and II, 174).

Lancia di Brolo (II, 50), led astray by the Maurine edition of the *Registrum*, is likewise in error in maintaining that the Bishop Exhilaratus, mentioned in September, 603, as being in the jurisdiction of the Palermitan *defensor* (Ep. XIV, 4, *ibid.*, II, 423), must have been bishop of Agrigento. Bishop Peter of Triocala last appears in October, 598 (Ep. IX, 21, *ibid.*, p. 55), while Bishop Decius of Lilybaeum is not mentioned after August, 599 (Ep. IX, 233, *ibid.*, p. 228). In neither case is the successor known. Therefore Exhilaratus may have been bishop either of Triocala or of Lilybaeum.

<sup>13</sup> Ep. VIII, 23, *ibid.*, p. 24.

cites only the oriental Fathers, and he uses the form of eucharistic institution found in the Greek Mass,<sup>14</sup> whereas "Sicily for the entire sixth century and sometime after observed exclusively the liturgy and the rite of the Roman church".<sup>15</sup>

As we have seen, excavations since Lancia di Brolo's time have disposed of the linguistic difficulty. But what was the customary rite of Sicily at the end of the sixth century?<sup>16</sup> The evidence is scanty and ambiguous. The popes made sporadic efforts to enforce Roman liturgical usages in Southern Italy and Sicily, but with doubtful success. In 447 Leo I wrote to the bishops of Sicily, rebuking them for permitting baptism at Epiphany, as the Greeks did, and ordering them to observe the Roman custom of baptizing on Easter and Whitsunday, "quam culpam nullo modo potuissetis incidere si . . . beati Petri apostoli sedes, quae vobis sacerdotalis mater est dignitatis, esset ecclesiasticae magistratura rationis".<sup>17</sup> In 494 Gelasius I was fighting the extension of the same Byzantine habit not merely in Sicily, but in Calabria and Lucania as well.<sup>18</sup> Evidently the local clergy paid little attention to papal wishes in such matters, and the custom spread. A century later, under Gregory the Great, baptism seems to have been administered at Epiphany with great pomp in the church of Naples.<sup>19</sup> It would therefore be unsafe to assume that papal commands in liturgical matters were actually conformed to. In 598, however, Pope Gregory does specifically assert that the Roman rite was then used in the churches of Syracuse, and by implication in those of all Sicily: "Nam vestrae ecclesiae numquid traditionem a Graecis acceperunt? Unde habent ergo hodie, ut subdiaconi lineis in tunicis procedant, nisi quia hoc a matre sua Romana ecclesia per ceperunt?"<sup>20</sup> But such rhetorical questions are not to be taken too seriously; Gregory is defending the Roman church from the charge of imitating certain features of the Greek rite. At least once in this very letter he chooses to disregard an actual case of oriental liturgical infiltration in the transfer of the Pater Noster to the end of the Canon, which, as Duchesne remarks, "had the effect of bringing the Roman use into con-

<sup>14</sup> Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. XCVIII, Morelli's note 99, col. 837.

<sup>15</sup> Lancia di Brolo, II, 51.

<sup>16</sup> A discussion of the older controversial literature will be found in Adrian Fortescue, *The Uniate and Eastern Churches: the Byzantine Rite in Italy, Sicily, Syria, and Egypt* (London, 1923), p. 73, n. 1.

<sup>17</sup> P. Jaffé, *Regesta pontificum*, S. Loewenfeld, F. Kaltenbrunner, and P. Ewald, eds. (Leipzig, 1885), no. 414; also in Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, vol. LIV, col. 696.

<sup>18</sup> Jaffé, no. 636; Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, vol. LIX, col. 52.

<sup>19</sup> G. Morin, "La liturgie de Naples au temps de S. Grégoire", *Revue Bénédictine*, VIII (1891), 533-534.

<sup>20</sup> Ep. IX, 26, *M. G. H., Epp.*, II, 59.

formity with that of Constantinople".<sup>21</sup> It seems impossible, then, to reach any certainty regarding the Sicilian rite at the end of the sixth century. Probably it was the Roman, somewhat modified by eastern practices. It may even at times have been celebrated in Greek; a manuscript from Rossano preserves a Greek translation of the Roman Mass in its late seventh century form.<sup>22</sup>

In any case, the commentary on *Ecclesiastes* of Gregory of Agrigento does not mean that an oriental liturgy was used at Agrigento in his day. There is no evidence that it was written after he became bishop there; it may easily have been composed in one of those Palestinian or Syrian monasteries where, if Leontius is to be trusted, Gregory stayed for a considerable time before his return to the Occident.<sup>23</sup>

There is no reason to doubt, therefore, that from before 591 until after 603 our learned Greek exegete occupied the bishopric of Agrigento. His election to that see would mean that there was at that time a considerable Greek-speaking population in southern Sicily.<sup>24</sup> This, with the archaeological evidence from the east coast, indicates that Gregory's *Registrum* does not give us a wholly accurate picture of the contemporary Sicilian population. The pope was corresponding with the officials, the papal agents, the bishops and abbots and wealthy laymen of the island. This ruling class was probably far more Latinized than were the common people. The foundations of Sicily, at least in the east and south, were Greek; only the superstructure was Latin.<sup>25</sup> It is this

<sup>21</sup> Louis Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, tr. by M. L. McClure (London, 1919), p. 184.

<sup>22</sup> Pierre Batiffol, *L'abbaye de Rossano* (Paris, 1891), p. xi.

<sup>23</sup> Leontius (Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. XCVIII, col. 597) specifically tells us that during his year's residence at Antioch Gregory was busied with dogmatic writings which by their learning amazed the scholars of that city.

<sup>24</sup> Despite Lancia di Brolo's labors, not a shred of evidence has yet been produced to prove the existence of a second Gregory of Agrigento in the Byzantinized Sicily of the late seventh century. Niceta Pectoratus, *Contra Latinos*, in Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. CXX, col. 1018, speaks of the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680 "praesidente synodo Agathone papa Romae et Gregorio cum eis Agrigentinarum episcopo praesidente" (Greek text not extant), but the records of the council contain no such name. Cardinal Baronius, *Martyrologium Romanum* (Rome, 1586) under November 23, says that in 680 Bishop Gregory of Agrigento signed a synodal with Pope Agatho, but this is a misreading for Bishop George of Agrigento, who likewise attended a Roman council in 679. Lancia di Brolo, II, 53, n. 1; William Smith and Henry Wace, *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (London, 1877-1887) II, 777.

<sup>25</sup> Additional evidence of the continued use of the Greek tongue in the island is to be found in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament. The latest criticism ascribes the Codex Bezae and the Codex Claromontanus (both of fifth-sixth century origin) to Sicily. James Hardy Ropes, *The Text of Acts*, vol. III of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, pt. I, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. by F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London, 1926), pp. lix-lxviii.

persistence of the Hellenic element in Sicily which explains the astonishing rapidity and permanence with which the island was Byzantinized in the first half of the seventh century by successive waves of immigrants from the Levant.

## II

The documentation of these westward movements is as yet most inadequate, and the chances of error regarding them are great. The discussion has already passed through several stages. The first scholar to attract general attention to the "second Hellenization of Magna Graecia", François Lenormant, asserted that its agents were refugees, particularly iconodulic monks, fleeing the wrath of the iconoclastic emperors of the eighth century.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately Lenormant's most striking proofs of monastic migration to Italy at that time were derived from an eighteenth century forgery designed to enhance the reputation of a miraculous ikon in Bari.<sup>27</sup> Moreover the researches of Charles Diehl refuted Lenormant's contention that despite Byzantine rule, Italy was almost unaffected by oriental influences for two hundred years after Justinian's conquest of the Goths.<sup>28</sup> Louis Bréhier and Paolo Orsi then decided that the process of Hellenization dated back to the middle of the sixth century.<sup>29</sup>

This view in turn is being modified. Of course there had long been oriental commercial colonies in the West, and eastern pilgrims had frequented the shrines of SS. Peter and Paul. But no proof has yet been offered that Sicily or Italy, outside the exarchal city of Ravenna, was profoundly affected by Byzantinism before the seventh century. Under Pope Gregory I, after fifty years of Greek domination, Rome was a very Latin city. Two generations later it was truly "une ville byzantine",<sup>30</sup> and Sicily, which in Gregory's day contained a considerable Latin element, had become completely Greek in language, rite, and culture.

The cause of this metamorphosis was an influx of Greek-speaking immigrants, both lay and clerical, from Syria and Egypt. From 614 onward the Levant suffered a series of fearful convulsions any one of which would have forced thousands of refugees across the sea.<sup>31</sup> The

<sup>26</sup> *La Grande-Grèce* (Paris, 1881), I, vii and II, 371-400.

<sup>27</sup> Batiffol, p. v.

<sup>28</sup> Diehl, *Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne*, 568-751 (Paris, 1888), esp. pp. 241-288; Lenormant, II, 382.

<sup>29</sup> Bréhier, "Les colonies d'orientaux en occident au commencement du moyen-âge", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XII (1903), 8; Orsi, "Byzantina Siciliae", *ibid.*, XIX (1910), 475.

<sup>30</sup> Bréhier, *loc. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> See especially the brilliant sketch of Jules Gay, "Notes sur la crise du monde chrétien après les conquêtes arabes", *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, XLV (1928), 1-7.

first disaster was the Persian invasion under Khusrau II. The Sassanid armies spread terror throughout Syria. The churches particularly suffered. In the famous abbey of St. Saba, on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, forty-four monks were tortured to death; Antiochus, one who escaped, tells how he and other survivors fled from place to place, seeking safety.<sup>32</sup> Alexandria was filled with Syrians, clergy and laymen, living on the bounty of Patriarch John of that city.<sup>33</sup> But the relentless Persians advanced southward to the Nile and destroyed a great part of the monasteries of Egypt as well.<sup>34</sup> We know the name of one monk, John Moschus, who had retreated from Palestine to Antioch, then from Antioch to Alexandria. When in 617 the invaders besieged Alexandria itself, he fled westward to Rome.<sup>35</sup> Presumably he was only one of many who did likewise.

It is noteworthy that the migration to the Occident in the seventh century seems to have included almost no Coptic- or Syriac-speaking refugees; it was a purely Hellenic movement.<sup>36</sup> This is explained by the religious situation in the Orient at that time. The Greek-speaking population of the larger cities, particularly along the coast, had clung to Chalcedonian orthodoxy. The indigenous Copts and Syrians tended to adopt the Monophysite heresy. Politics and religion were inseparable: the orthodox party was also the imperialist (Melkite) faction; the Monophysites were by reason of their heresy traitors to Byzantium. In faith, language, and political allegiance the schism between the two groups became increasingly sharp. "The key to the whole of this epoch is the antagonism between the Monophysites and the Melkites."<sup>37</sup>

After the first tempest of war had passed, the Persians used these

<sup>32</sup> Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. LXXXIX, cols. 1422-1428.

<sup>33</sup> See the excerpt from John Moschus's life of John the Almoner in H. Gelzer, *Leontios von Neopolis Leben des heiligen Johannes des Baumherzigen, Erzbischofs von Alexandria* (Freiburg i. B., 1893), p. 112; Hippolyte Delehaye, "Une vie inédite de saint Jean l'Aumônier", *Analecta Bollandiana*, XLV (1927), 21-22.

<sup>34</sup> *The History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, edited by B. T. A. Evetts (Paris, 1907), pp. 485-490; *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, attributed to Abū Sālih the Armenian, ed. and tr. by B. T. A. Evetts and Alfred J. Butler (Oxford, 1895), p. 168; Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion* (Oxford, 1902), pp. 74-75.

<sup>35</sup> Krumbacher, p. 187.

<sup>36</sup> The heretical nuns from Alexandria found at Carthage in 641 by St. Maximus Confessor (Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. XCI, cols. 459, 463, 466) may have been Greek-speaking Monothelites rather than Coptic Monophysites. A real exception may be the Syrian Nestorian monks discovered in Rome by Pope Donus (676-678); see *Liber pontificalis*, L. Duchesne, ed. (Paris, 1886), I, 348. If Monophysites went west to escape the Heraclian persecution, they seem to have returned east after the Arab conquest (see n. 45).

<sup>37</sup> Butler, *Arab Conquest*, p. 29.

divisions to strengthen their hold on the newly conquered provinces. Michael the Syrian tells us that "at the command of Khusrau all the Chalcedonian bishops were driven from the whole region of Mesopotamia and Syria. The churches and monasteries were given to the Jacobites".<sup>38</sup> The object was purely political, and persecution of the Melkites was directly instigated by the heretics. Al-Makīn tells us that Khusrau "had a Jacobite physician, John by name, who persuaded him that so long as [the Melkites] followed orthodoxy, they would incline towards the Romans"; so Khusrau offered the Chalcedonians the alternative of Jacobitism or death.<sup>39</sup> Evidently a similar policy was followed in Egypt, which the Persians ruled for more than a decade.<sup>40</sup> All this would doubtless stimulate emigration by the Greek minority.<sup>41</sup>

When the Emperor Heraclius finally drove back the Persians, he determined to unify the orthodox and heretical churches at all costs. To this end he promulgated in 629 the theological compromise known as Monothelism. The Jacobites and Copts, whose antipathy to the Empire was as much political as religious, would have nothing to do with it and were ruthlessly persecuted in return. But worse, Heraclius split the Greek-speaking Melkites. The extreme orthodox group, having suffered such tribulations for the faith under Khusrau, was adamant against this new attempt to dilute the Christology of Chalcedon. Led by the monk Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, it bitterly opposed the emperor's heresy and suffered a persecution which sent another wave of refugee clerics to Rome, the traditional bulwark of orthodoxy. The late Erich Caspar has recently shown that the Roman synod of 649, which definitively condemned Monothelism, was largely controlled by immigrant monks.<sup>42</sup>

Heraclius's fanaticism spent itself chiefly, however, on the Monophysites. For ten years he oppressed them brutally, particularly in Alex-

<sup>38</sup> *Chronique*, ed. and tr. by J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1901), II, 379; cf. pp. 380-381.

<sup>39</sup> *Historia Saracenica*, ed. and tr. by T. Erpenius (Leyden, 1625), p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Michael the Syrian (*op. cit.*, p. 381) says "at that time the bishops of Syria who had been expelled by the Chalcedonians and had fled to Egypt returned to their sees in Syria by order of Khusrau". This would indicate a consistent Persian policy throughout the conquered regions. See Butler, *Arab Conquest*, p. 90.

<sup>41</sup> J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire, 395-800* (London, 1889), II, 249. and L. Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam*, II (Milan, 1907), 1048, agree in estimating the Egyptian Melkites under Heraclius at about 30,000, as compared with between five and six million Copts.

<sup>42</sup> "Die Lateransynode von 649", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LI (1932), 118-120. These refugees likewise brought the Syrian form of the crucifix to Rome and popularized its use in the West as the most adequate symbol of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation. Louis Bréhier, *Les origines du crucifix dans l'art religieux* (Paris, 1908), p. 59.

andria. He reaped his reward when the armies of Islam, advancing through Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, were greeted as liberators.<sup>43</sup> The invaders clearly understood the advantage they might draw from internal strife; the contemporary history of the Coptic patriarchs informs us that "the Muslims kept their hands off the province and its inhabitants, but destroyed the nation of the Romans".<sup>44</sup> The Arab commander 'Amr requested, and received, the prayers of the Coptic patriarch for the speedy conquest of Cyrenaica and the rest of North Africa. In fact many Monophysites who had fled to the Pentapolis and even farther west to escape the persecution of Heraclius now returned to live in peace under Moslem masters.<sup>45</sup>

The Greek-speaking population of Egypt, retreating before the militant Arabs and hostile Copts, huddled in Alexandria.<sup>46</sup> In 642 the city capitulated. Under the terms of the treaty, a large part of the inhabitants departed with their goods.<sup>47</sup> It seems probable that some of them reached the West, although there is no clear evidence on the point.<sup>48</sup> The

<sup>43</sup> The contrary opinion of Butler, *Arab Conquest*, pp. 298, 357, 442, is not acceptable. In the late seventh century Bishop John of Nikiu (*Chronique*, ed. and tr. by Herman Zotenberg, Paris, 1883, p. 442) says: "Seeing the weakness of the Romans, and the hostility of the inhabitants towards the Emperor Heraclius because of the persecution he had inflicted on all Egypt against the orthodox [*i. e.*, Coptic] religion . . . the Moslems became bolder and stronger in battle". On page 464 he adds, "Everyone said that the expulsion [of the Romans] and the victory of the Moslems had been brought about by the tyranny of the Emperor Heraclius, and by the afflictions he had visited upon the orthodox [Copts]"; see also pp. 443, 449-450, 466. This is reprinted in *Notices et extraits des MSS., XXIV*<sup>1</sup> (Paris, 1883), 562-563, 569-570, 584-586.

The classic statement of the Jacobite attitude towards the Islamic conquest gains greater weight because it comes from the twelfth century, when the full effects of the Arab domination were visible. Michael the Syrian (*op. cit.*, II, 412-413) says: "The God of vengeance . . . beholding the wickedness of the Romans, who, wherever they ruled, cruelly pillaged our churches and monasteries and condemned us without mercy, brought from the southland the sons of Ishmael to deliver us by them from the hands of the Romans." Barhebraeus (*Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, J. B. Abbeloos and T. J. Lamy, eds., Louvain, 1872, I, 274) expresses identical sentiments in the thirteenth century. See also E. Amélineau, "Fragments coptes pour servir à l'histoire de la conquête de l'Égypte par les arabes", *Journal asiatique*, ser. 8, XII (1888), 361-410; and Caetani, *Annali*, II, 1049; III, 813; V, 394.

<sup>44</sup> Evetts, ed., p. 494.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 496-497.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 494.

<sup>47</sup> Butler, *Arab Conquest*, pp. 358, 366.

<sup>48</sup> The oldest MS. of the Alexandrian Liturgy of St. Mark comes from Messina (that of the Antiochene Liturgy of St. James was found at Rossano); see Batiffol, p. xi. Myrtille Avery, "The Alexandrian Style at Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome", *The Art Bulletin of the College Art Association of America*, VII (1925), 131-149, ascribes the second of the five layers of fresco in Santa Maria to Alexandrian artists of the first half of the

Mohammedan histories show that a large proportion of the Greeks left the conquered regions,<sup>49</sup> but it is difficult to distinguish the refugees in the Occident who retreated before the armies of Islam from those who had previously sought safety from the Persians and the persecution of Heraclius. The clearest data come from Carthage, where in 641 St. Maximus reports immigrants from Syria, Egypt, and Lybia.<sup>50</sup> Many of these were monks,<sup>51</sup> and in 649 we find in Rome Palestinian monks who had probably fled from Africa to escape the Saracen raid into Byzacium in 647.<sup>52</sup> We know definitely that Sicily received some of

seventh century. Since the third layer can be dated *ca.* 650, it is improbable that the second layer was the work of refugees fleeing the Moslems in 642. Although Miss Avery's attribution of the second fresco to the Alexandrian school is still under debate, the sharp contrast between the first and second frescoes is admirable evidence of the arrival in Rome before 650 of eastern immigrants.

<sup>49</sup> E. g., al-Balādhurī, *Origins of the Islamic State*, tr. by Philip Khūrī Hitti (New York, 1916), p. 180, says that Mu'āwiyah sent Semitic colonists from the interior to settle places along the seacoast of Syria deserted by the Greeks. Pages 194-195 tell how, when the Greeks evacuated Tripoli, a large colony of Jews took their place. Greek refugees are also mentioned from Damascus (p. 189), Antioch (p. 227), Alexandria (p. 348), and other cities (p. 232). The area of abandoned land in Syria was evidently considerable (p. 234).

<sup>50</sup> Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. XCI, cols. 459, 466. On the date, see Charles Diehl, *L'Afrique byzantine* (Paris, 1896), p. 543, n. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, *loc. cit.*, and col. 391. W. Seston, "Le monastère d'Ain-Tamda et les origines de l'architecture monastique en Afrique du Nord", extract from *Mélanges d'Arch. et d'Hist.*, vol. LI (1934), describes a monastery in Caesarian Mauretania having a ground plan which originated among the small abbeyes of South Syria, and which became typical of the Occident, as distinct from the Byzantine lands, which adopted the Egyptian arrangement. Seston points out that the channel by which the South-Syrian plan reached the West has not been traced. With great hesitancy he dates Ain-Tamda in the fifth or sixth century, because he believes that a trident incised on two columns of the nave is a Trinitarian symbol aimed at the Arian Vandals. But it might equally be an anti-Monophysite or anti-Monothelite symbol. Since the Moslems did not reach the region of Ain-Tamda before 683 (Diehl, *Afrique*, p. 578), the monastery may have been built by Syrian refugees in the first part of the seventh century.

<sup>52</sup> ". . . et prius quidem", they say, "dum Afrorum habitarem provinciam". Mansi, *Concilioorum Collectio*, X, 906. Al-Bakrī ("Description de l'Afrique septentrionale", tr. by the Baron de Slane, *Journal asiatique*, ser. 5, XII [1858], 525) says that the Romans of Africa fled before the Arab attack to the island of Pantellaria, between Sicily and Africa. Michele Amari (*Storia dei musulmani di Sicilia*, Catania, 1933, I, 237) puts this in the year 669, but Diehl (*Afrique*, p. 561, n. 1) dates it 647. Since the Moslem conquest of North Africa was not completed until the early eighth century, emigration continued long from that region. A letter of Pope Gregory II, Dec. 1, 722, shows that African refugees were then common in Thuringia. Jaffé-Ewald, no. 2161; Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, vol. LXXXIX, col. 502; Léon Godard, "Observations critiques sur quelques points de l'histoire du christianisme en Afrique: I, Quels sont les Africains que le pape Grégoire II défendit en 723 d'élever au sacerdoce?", *Revue africaine*, V (1861), 48-53. We should not be astonished to find such expatriates north of the Alps. By 664 the Greek-speaking African

these North African fugitives, for in 643, when the Saracens seized Sabrantha in the Tripolitana, a small group sailed to the island for safety.<sup>53</sup>

After order had been restored in the provinces seized by Islam, the volume of the westward movement seems to have diminished greatly. Unlike the rulers of Persia and Byzantium, the early caliphs showed almost no religious fanaticism. Little pressure was exerted to convert Christians to Mohammedanism, factional strife was repressed, and all sects were treated with even-handed justice.<sup>54</sup> Indeed there was no inducement to migrate. The seventh and eighth centuries were artistically and intellectually a golden age not merely for the Monophysites of Syria and Egypt, but also for the remaining Melkites, as witness St. John of Damascus.

It is certain, however, that for thirty years at least, following the Persian invasion, Greeks kept arriving in North Africa, Sicily, Southern Italy, and Rome, and that as the Moslems advanced along the African coast, the refugees in that region joined those in the islands or in Europe. The size and importance of the Greek colonies formed by this migration is clearly seen in Rome. By the middle of the seventh century there were at least two, and probably three, oriental abbeys in the city; by 678 there were four.<sup>55</sup> From 678 to 752, or until after Ravenna had

Abbot Hadrian had sought safety in the Campania; four years later he and his friend Theodore, a Cilician monk, were sent to England by Pope Vitalian (Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, bk. IV, ch. 1, J. Stevenson, ed., London, 1838, pp. 243-244). An Irish litany of the tenth or eleventh century mentions seven Egyptian monks buried together at Disret Uilaig, who may likewise have been fugitives of the seventh century (C. Plummer, *Irish Litanies*, London, 1925, p. 64). *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, dating from about 800 (Whitley Stokes, ed., London, 1905, pp. 80, 86), records an Egyptian monk named Moses who seems, from the context, to have died in Ireland.

<sup>53</sup> Alphonse Rousseau, "Voyage du scheïkh Et-Tidjani dans la régence de Tunis", *Journal asiatique*, ser. 5, I (1853), 125-126. On at-Tidjani's credibility, see Amari, I, 233, n. 1.

The linguistic and cultural effect of such North African immigrants in northern lands is uncertain. St. Maximus's letters (see above, n. 50) would indicate that by 641 the classes which could migrate most easily were strongly Byzantinized. The Byzantine period furnishes a large number of Greek inscriptions, few of which can be dated exactly; see Paul Monceaux, "Enquête sur l'épigraphie chrétienne d'Afrique", *Revue archéologique*, ser. 4, II (1903), 65, and Walter Thieling, *Der Hellenismus in Kleinasien* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 55-56. Godard, *op. cit.*, p. 50, believes that "l'Église d'Afrique, durant le dernière période de son existence . . . était devenue en quelque sort greco-latine, par le mélange des byzantines avec le population africaine et par la langue de ses écrivains".

<sup>54</sup> Butler, *Arab Conquest*, pp. 447-448.

<sup>55</sup> F. Antonelli, "I primi monasteri di monaci orientali in Roma", *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, V (1929), 105-121. One of these, the *Renatum*, was Latin in the days of Gregory I.

fallen before the Lombards, out of thirteen popes, eleven were orientals. Diehl supposed that this astonishing series was due to pressure exerted by the Byzantine emperor or his exarch upon the Roman electors, but Gay has shown that there is evidence neither of such official influence nor of any unusual subservience on the part of the immigrant popes to imperial wishes. Gay himself explains the election of so many foreigners on the ground that the Latin clerics realized that they were too ignorant of theology to carry on subtle disputes and negotiations with heretical emperors.<sup>56</sup> Admitting that the Latin clergy was indeed less learned than the Greek, it is, nevertheless, incredible that for three quarters of a century the native Romans should have practiced such exemplary self-abnegation in the interest of an alien minority.<sup>57</sup> One is driven to the conclusion that in the later seventh and early eighth centuries the Orientals actually formed a majority of the Roman clergy and presumably of the more influential laity as well—a thesis which seems amply substantiated by the remains of the Rome of that period.<sup>58</sup>

Certain of these "Greek" popes were Sicilians, and their biographies in the *Liber pontificalis* are particularly valuable to us. The first of them, Agatho (678-681), is called simply "natione Sicula". His successor, Leo II (682-683), was likewise a Sicilian, "greca latinaque lingua cruditus". Conon (686-687) came originally from the east coast of the Aegean but was educated in Sicily before he went to Rome. The biography of Sergius (687-701) is even more informative: "Sergius, natione Syrus, Antiochiac regionis, ortus ex patre Tiberio in Panormo Siciliae. . . Romam veniens sub sanctae memoriae Adeodato pontifice [*i. e.*, between 672 and 676] inter clerum Romanae ecclesiae connumer-

<sup>56</sup> Diehl, *Ravenna*, 257-260; Gay "Quelques remarques sur les papes grecs et syriens avant la querelle des iconoclastes, 678-715", *Mélanges Schlumberger* (Paris, 1924), I, 44-46.

<sup>57</sup> Indeed a note of bitter resentment against the Greek immigrants and their popes has been left us from the late seventh century by a Latin Roman, who laments the departed glory of his city, and the

Vulgus ab extremis distractum partibus orbis;  
Servorum servi nunc tibi sunt domini.

Published in Lodovico Antonio Muratori, *Antiquitates italicae mediæ ævi* (Milan, 1738), II, 147; for date see Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1903), II, 153, n. 1.

<sup>58</sup> "Tout ce quartier de Rome, sur les flancs du Palatin, et jusqu'au pied du Capitole, est plein encore de monuments et de souvenirs, qui rappellent non seulement les temps de la domination byzantine, mais l'importance que garde, après la chute de l'exarchat, cette colonie orientale, d'où sont sortis les papes grecs et syriens", Gay, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Diehl, *Ravenna*, pp. 278-279.



atus est."<sup>59</sup> Here we find clear indication of what we guessed from the analogy of Africa and Italy, that by the middle of the seventh century Sicily was flooded with Greek-speaking refugees from the East.

The information from the *Liber pontificalis* is welcome, for the sources for the history of Sicily are meager after the *Registrum* of Pope Gregory fails us in 604. The Latin atmosphere of the island was certainly changing rapidly. About 648 St. Maximus Confessor, abbot of Chrysopolis near Chalcedon, visited Sicily and addressed a Greek letter "to the holy fathers, hegumens, monks and orthodox laity" resident there, which implies in its recipients a certain acquaintance with oriental theology.<sup>60</sup> Fortunately we have one sure example of the Byzantinization of a Sicilian abbey which at the end of the sixth century had been Latin and probably Benedictine. In 597 St. Peter's of Baias near Syracuse had as abbot Gregory's Roman friend Caesarius; by 681 it must have passed to the Greeks, since its abbot, Theophanes, was made patriarch of Antioch.<sup>61</sup>

How and when did such changes take place? Lancia di Brolo maintains that the island passed to the Greek rite and tongue during the six years (663-668) when Constans II made Syracuse his residence and the capital of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>62</sup> Certainly the presence of the imperial court in Sicily's metropolis would greatly stimulate such a transition. To uphold his contention Lancia di Brolo points out that during his stay Constans appointed as bishop of Syracuse a noted Greek hymnographer named George, who had studied at Constantinople.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *Liber Pont.*, I, 350, 359, 368, 371. The last of the Sicilian popes, Stephen III (768-772), went to Rome as a small boy in the pontificate of the Syrian Gregory III (731-741). *Ibid.*, p. 468.

<sup>60</sup> Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. XCI, cols. 112 ff.; cf. vol. XC, col. 84.

<sup>61</sup> *Registrum*, Ep. VII, 36, *M. G. H., Epp.*, I, 485; *Liber Pont.*, I, 354. That Theophanes was not simply a Greek in a Latin abbey is indicated by the fact that when in 678 the emperor requested that monks be sent to a general council from the four "Byzantine" monasteries of Rome, Pope Agatho (another Sicilian) included Theophanes in the group. *Ibid.*, p. 355, n. 8; Mansi, XI, 200.

It is thought that Cosmos, the learned monk who was captured by Saracen raiders in the later seventh century and taken as a slave to Syria, where he became the tutor of St. John of Damascus, was a Sicilian. St. John's late tenth century biography merely speaks of Cosmos as "from Italy". Migne, *Pat. Gr.*, vol. XCIV, col. 441. Amari (I, 303) thinks he was Sicilian or Sardinian. An Arabic life of St. John composed in 1084 calls Cosmos a Calabrian; see G. Graf, "Das arabische Original der Vita des hl. Johannes von Damaskus", *Der Katholik*, XCIII<sup>2</sup> (1913), 173. However, the earliest extant biography, dating from the first half of the tenth century, has no mention of this Cosmos, but only of St. John's school-boy friend of the same name. M. Gordillo, *Damascenica: I, Vita Marciana*, in *Orientalia Christiana*, VIII<sup>o</sup> (1926), 64, 66.

<sup>62</sup> Lancia di Brolo, II, 21.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 22, 324.

But the church of Syracuse, ruled in Gregory I's time by a Roman Benedictine, Maximianus,<sup>64</sup> had elected Greek-speaking bishops for twenty years at least before Constans appointed George to that see. In the first decade of the century Zosimus, the scion of a Greek family of Syracuse, entered the monastery of St. Lucy.<sup>65</sup> Thirty years later he succeeded Faustus as abbot—an indication that, whatever may have been the earlier situation at St. Lucy's, the dominant group of monks was then Greek. Under Pope Theodore (642-649), himself a Palestinian Melkite,<sup>66</sup> Zosimus became bishop of Syracuse, and gave to his cathedral a Greek-inscribed baptismal font which still exists.<sup>67</sup> After thirteen years (or between 655 and 662), he was succeeded by Elias, under whom the Greek biography of St. Zosimus was probably composed.<sup>68</sup> The appointment by Constans of a Greek-speaking bishop at Syracuse was therefore no novelty. The Byzantinization of Sicily was not the result of an emperor's residence there, but of a gradual process which was practically completed by his time.

### III

There is evidence that in Rome by the year 700 the native Latin element was beginning to reassert itself, or at least to Latinize the descendants of the oriental immigrants.<sup>69</sup> Wherever the Levantine refugees of

<sup>64</sup> Formerly abbot of St. Andrew's on the Coelian; see note of the editors of the *Registrum*, *M. G. H., Epp.*, I, 15.

<sup>65</sup> The Greek original of Zosimus's *vita* is not extant. The Latin version in *Acta sanctorum*, March III, pp. 835-839, says he became an oblate at the age of seven. Faustus being abbot, that he was a simple monk for thirty years, and then ruled as abbot for forty years before being elected bishop under Theodore (642-649). According to this chronology, Faustus was abbot of St. Lucy's in 579 at the latest, and died in 602 at the earliest. But we know from Gregory's *Registrum* (*Epp.* I, 67, III, 3, VII, 36, *M. G. H., Epp.*, I, 87, 160, and 484) that an Abbot John ruled St. Lucy's from 591 to 597 at least. It is evident that an error has crept into the translation: the figure forty years includes Zosimus's whole residence at St. Lucy's, thirty years as oblate and monk, and ten years as abbot. No suspicion is cast on this biography by its reference to raiding Saracens as "Vandali", for the same expression is used in the authentic tenth century *vita* of St. Leo Luke of Corleone referring to the Sicilian Moslems, *Acta sanctorum*, March I, p. 98.

<sup>66</sup> *Liber Pont.*, p. 331.

<sup>67</sup> Strazzulla (*Museum epigraphicum*, pp. 206-207) disputes Lancia di Brolo (II, 34, n.) regarding this font.

<sup>68</sup> *Acta Sanct.*, pp. 835, 837.

<sup>69</sup> The later frescoes of Santa Maria Antiqua illustrate the revival of Latinism: "The steady decay of Greek form is accompanied by a change from Greek to Latin in the inscriptions. The inscriptions of Martin I (c. 650) are in Greek; those of John VII (705-07) are in Greek and Latin; and that of Paul I (757-67) is in Latin only". Avery, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

the seventh century found an essentially Latin population, their influence was merely temporary. On the contrary in Sicily (and probably in Lower Calabria) where, as we have seen, they found a vigorous substratum of Hellenes, the conjunction of these immigrants with the indigenous Greeks completely eliminated or Byzantinized the Latin group, which had been dominant for several centuries.

When did Latinism finally disappear from Sicily? The last trace of it is found in a document which has hitherto been regarded as a forgery, a letter of Pope Vitalian (657-672). It is one of a group of documents used to support the claims of Monte Cassino to lands in Sicily. In the years 1127-1130 Roger II of Sicily added all of Southern Italy to his domains. Monte Cassino, as the greatest monastic establishment of the kingdom, would naturally expect to receive considerable benefactions in Sicily (where it then owned no property) from its new sovereign. But Roger II proved reluctant; doubtless he was suspicious of Cassinese loyalty, in view of the abbey's tradition of friendship with both pope and German emperor. By a happy chance, legend told how Tertullus, the father of Placidus,<sup>70</sup> one of St. Benedict's favorite pupils, had given vast Sicilian estates to Monte Cassino, and how St. Placidus had gone to Sicily and there suffered martyrdom. The legend of these lands established a valuable precedent. Now there dwelt at Monte Cassino under Roger II the archforger of the Middle Ages, Peter the Deacon—a genius whose talents in our own day might have found a legitimate outlet in writing historical fiction. By 1130 Peter had already tried his hand at miscellaneous lives of saints. In a vain attempt to rouse the king's generosity, he produced a series of fabrications about St. Placidus and the Sicilian domains which for complexity and inventive ingenuity has no rival in the annals of medieval forgery.<sup>71</sup> Its chief components are two spurious *vitae* and a chronicle. But these are buttressed and supplemented by a most extraordinary variety of minor documents.

Two of these latter are of particular interest for us. The first is a letter purporting to have been written in 669 to the Benedictines of Monte Cassino, at that time residing in the Lateran, by monks who had survived a raid of Alexandrian Saracens which had destroyed the monastery of St. Placidus in Messina and ruined many of the possessions

<sup>70</sup> All that we know about the boy Placidus is found in Gregory I's *Dialogues*, II, c. 2, 5, and 7, Umberto Moricca, ed. (Rome, 1924), pp. 86-90.

<sup>71</sup> Erich Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus und die Monte Cassineser Fälschungen* (Berlin, 1909), pp. 47-72.

of Monte Cassino in Sicily. The other is the alleged reply of Pope Vitalian, sending some Cassinese to assist the distressed brethren in the work of reconstruction and urging co-operation in that pious task.<sup>72</sup>

Cardinal Baronius, the first historian to examine these documents critically, rejected them as forged.<sup>73</sup> His chief objection, aside from the exaggerated property claims of the first letter, arose from his own faulty chronology. On the basis of the errors in the *Liber pontificalis* he believed that Vitalian died in January, 669, and so could not have been responsible for the reply ascribed to him. Later scholars, although recognizing that Vitalian survived three years longer, have accepted Baronius's view. Mabillon, Di Giovanni, Jaffé, Ewald, and Caspar all condemn the letters.<sup>74</sup> In view of the frequent mention of St. Placidus, whose Sicilian martyrdom is pure fantasy,<sup>75</sup> and the outrageous assertion that "nonaginta et octo civitates et villae" of Monte Cassino had been destroyed, it would be a thankless task to defend the authenticity of the letter of the Sicilian monks to the Cassinese at the Lateran.

The case for the supposed epistle of Vitalian is not so black. In the eighteenth century the Bollandist Jacobus Bueus noticed that its references to landed property are much more modest than those in its companion and doubted Baronius's wisdom in holding both letters "ob mutuam connexionem aequae fictitias".<sup>76</sup> Caspar's discovery that another forgery of the same series—the donation of Sicilian estates to St. Benedict by Tertullus, the father of St. Placidus—is based on a genuine document, probably of the sixth century,<sup>77</sup> makes it likely that other authentic nuclei may be found in Peter's fabrications.

The text of the letter of Vitalian is as follows:

Vitalianus episcopus servus servorum Dei dilectis in Christo filiis sub patris Benedicti et Placidi dominio in Sicilia constitutis salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Ad hoc nos superna clementia in orbe terrarum praefecit rectores atque custodes, ut dispersa congregare, et congregata conservare, et destructa restituere summopere procuremus. Quapropter quia civitates, castra, monasteria, possessiones et villas beato Benedicto in Sicilia subditas

<sup>72</sup> C. Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, ed. by A. Pagius (Lucca, 1742), XI, 571; Mansi, XI, 21; G. di Giovanni, *Codex Siciliae diplomaticus* (Palermo, 1743), pp. 396-398; Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, vol. LXXXVII, col. 1005.

<sup>73</sup> *Annales*; XI, 569-570.

<sup>74</sup> Jean Mabillon, *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti* (Lucca, 1739), I, 459; Di Giovanni, p. 374, note a; Jaffé-Ewald, no. 2102; Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, and H. Delehaye's note in the new Bollandist edition of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, November II, pars posterior (Brussels, 1931), p. 541.

<sup>76</sup> *Acta sanctorum*, October III (Antwerp, 1770), p. 101.

<sup>77</sup> E. Caspar, "Zur ältesten Geschichte von Monte Cassino", *Neues Archiv*, XXXIV (1908), 195-207.

paganorum incursionibus desolatas esse audivimus, supra modum dolemus, omnipotentique Deo super hoc gratias agimus, qui ideo temporaliter hic flagella<sup>78</sup> irrogat, ne in aeternum puniat. Unde vos carissimi filii, a fletu et moerere cessare monemus, et his nostris filiis, quos de Cassinensi congregatione ad monasteria restauranda, et civitates, castra, possessiones et villas recuperandas in Siciliam dirigere studuimus, ut specialibus dominis deservire curetis, ex parte beati Benedicti et nostra praecipientes, ut in restauratione monasterii et possessionum illos adjuvare studeatis, coeptumque laborem ad effectum perducere summopere procuretis. Nos enim et vos et civitates, castra, possessiones et villas, quas Tertullus patricius beato patri Benedicto dedit, defendere, adjuvare et manu tenere parati sumus. Omnipotens Deus sua vos gratia benedicat, atque a cunctis adversis eripiat. Valet.

The essential point to be noted is that if this letter were a pure fabrication, Peter the Deacon would have written it not in the name of Vitalian but in that of his successor, Pope Adeodatus. In 669 (or shortly thereafter) there was, in fact, a major Saracenic raid on Syracuse, recorded both by Islamic and by Christian historians.<sup>79</sup> The *Liber pontificalis*, however, explicitly places this attack in the pontificate of Adeodatus.<sup>80</sup> Nor is there anything in the *Historia Langobardorum*, which Peter copied verbatim for the account of the episode in his *Chronicle*,<sup>81</sup> to correct the defective dating of Vitalian's death found in the *Liber pontificalis*.<sup>82</sup> It is probable that Peter was also acquainted with the *Gesta episcoporum Neapolitanorum*, which likewise quotes the exact words of the *Historia Langobardorum* describing the raid, but which borrows from the *Liber pontificalis* the assertion that it occurred under Adeodatus.<sup>83</sup>

It will be seen, therefore, that Peter the Deacon had some very strong reason to believe that the *Liber pontificalis* was wrong in placing the Saracenic expedition under Adeodatus. In ascribing our letter to Pope Vitalian he was running a risk which a forger does not take lightly: he was flatly contradicting one of the most widely known his-

<sup>78</sup> "flagellari" in Mansi, XI, 22, and Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, vol. LXXXVII, col. 1006.

<sup>79</sup> Amari, I, 216-222. In forging the letter from the Sicilian monks to the Cassinese, Peter seems to have calculated the correct date from the twelfth indiction mentioned by the *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. by L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, *M. G. H., SS. Rer. Langob.*, p. 150, and by the *Liber Pont.*, p. 344, in connection with the murder of Constans II, the news of which precipitated the Arab incursion. The latest discussion of this crime is by P. Peeters, "Une vie grecque du pape S. Martin I", *Analecta Bollandiana*, LI (1933), 228-231. On Peter's skill in computing dates, see Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, p. 167, n. 6.

<sup>80</sup> P. 346. Peter used the *Liber Pont.* frequently; Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus*, pp. 62, 114.

<sup>81</sup> O. Caietanus, *Vitae sanctorum Siculorum* (Palermo, 1657), I, 181.

<sup>82</sup> *Hist. Langob.*, p. 150. This history was copied at Monte Cassino in the late eleventh century under the Abbot Desiderius. See Leo's *Chronicle*, ed. by W. Wattenbach, *M. G. H., SS.*, VII, 746.

<sup>83</sup> Ed. by G. Waitz in *M. G. H., SS. Rer. Langob.*, p. 419.

torical authorities of his time and was doing so without the support of any chronicle or document available to his contemporaries. Nor are we dealing with a mere *lapsus calami* on Peter's part, for his *Chronicle*, an integral portion of the Placidus forgeries, cleverly alludes to this papal letter.<sup>84</sup>

What was the source of information in which Peter felt such confidence? It appears to have been Vitalian's own letter, which our fabricator retouched in the interests of the Placidus legend and added to his corpus of forgeries. The present text of the epistle shows clearly that it is not in its original form. It contains two references to "monasteria" and "monasteria restauranda", both in questionable passages; but Peter betrays himself when his pen follows too closely the original, and Vitalian enjoins the Sicilian monks to aid "in restauratione monasterii". The use of the word *congregatio* is also significant: in the twelfth century it usually meant a group of cloisters dependent on some great abbey; in our letter it is used in the pre-Cluniac sense of a single *coenobium*.

To whom was the original letter sent? Since Caspar's rehabilitation of Tertullus's donation, it seems probable that in the seventh century Monte Cassino possessed latifundia and even daughter-houses in Sicily.<sup>85</sup> The authentic sources agree that in 669 the Saracens limited their devastations to Syracuse and its neighborhood. We know that some seventy years earlier there were Latin Benedictines thereabouts, for we have already noticed that Maximianus, bishop of Syracuse from ca. 590 to 594, had been abbot of Gregory's own foundation of St. Andrew on the Coelian in Rome, and that Caesarius, abbot of St. Peter's of Baias, near Syracuse, had formerly been a monk in Rome.<sup>86</sup> It seems highly probable, then, that Peter the Deacon's forgery rests upon an

<sup>84</sup> "Itaque dum Casinensi Congregationi tunc Laterani degenti relatum fuisset, qualiter Saraceni iam dicti Martyris Placidi Monasterium ruinave et monachos morti dedissent, Vitaliani Papae adminiculo fulti, cum ingenti apparatu mittentes in Siciliam, idem Monasterium restauraverunt". Caietanus, *loc. cit.*

<sup>85</sup> Baronius nods when he writes (*Annales ecclesiastici*, XI, 571) of these letters: "nobis parum arrident ob id potissimum, quod civitates plures in Sicilia hoc tempore possedisse monachi dicerentur: quando nec ipsa Romana Ecclesia vel unius oppiduli domina esset, ut ipsum possideret". In 685-686 the Byzantine emperor granted important fiscal exemptions to the papal estates in Sicily and Calabria (*Liber Pont.*, p. 366). Without other evidence the possession of these estates until 732 (see n. 88) cannot be used as proof of continued Latinity in Sicily. In 686-687 the rector of the papal properties was no longer a Roman, but a Sicilian named Constantine, deacon of the church of Syracuse and probably a Greek, *ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>86</sup> Above, p. 14, n. 61, and p. 15, n. 64. The *Registrum* also mentions an Abbot Eusebius of Syracuse (Epp. II, 31, 35, *M. G. H., Epp.*, I, 127, 131) whose monastery is not named, and the abbey of St. Lucy in that city (Ep. VII, 36, *ibid.*, p. 484; also XII, 22, *ibid.*, II, 295).

authentic letter sent by Pope Vitalian, between 669 and his death in 672, to Benedictines in or near Syracuse. We are safe in assuming that if these monks were still clinging to St. Benedict's rule, they were not yet completely Byzantinized in tongue or culture.

Vitalian's letter is the last trace of Latinism to be discovered in Sicily until the coming of the Normans, four centuries later.<sup>87</sup> For at least two generations after 669 the island remained a part of the western patriarchate, but its interests and connections were almost entirely with the Byzantine East. In 732, because of Rome's stand against iconoclasm, Leo the Isaurian confiscated the papal estates in Sicily and Southern Italy.<sup>88</sup> There is no evidence that he transferred the bishoprics of those regions to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople,<sup>89</sup> but inevitably, as the pope found new political support in the Frankish kings, the church of Magna Graecia drifted towards the New Rome.<sup>90</sup> By 787 the ecclesiastical shift was completed, for the Sicilian bishops called the Byzantine patriarch "universal".<sup>91</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Isidoro Carini, "Sopra un sugello siciliano inedito del Museo Britannico", *Nuove effemeride siciliane*, ser. 1, I (1869), 214-222, 268-276, ascribes a badly damaged seal with a Latin inscription to the Bishop George of Catania who appears in 679 (cf. Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, Oxford, 1871, III, 131). But W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1898), vol. V, p. 37, no. 17,639, neglecting Carini's views, assigns it to Bishop Leo II of Catania, whom he wrongly dates ca. 778 rather than ca. 725; cf. B. Pace, "I barbari ed i bizantini in Sicilia", *Archivio storico siciliano*, XXXVI (1911), 22, n. 1. Probably the seal is hopelessly illegible. Certainly by ca. 786 Bishop Theodore of Catania had a Greek seal; cf. G. Libertini, "Miscellanea epigrafica", *Archivio storico per la Sicilia orientale*, XXVII (1931), 50.

J. Gay, "Notes sur l'hellenisme sicilien de l'occupation arabe à la conquête normande", *Byzantion*, I (1924), 223, quite properly rejects the theory of Amari I (1833), 321-324, II (1858), 398-399, III (1868-1872), 204-206, 874-880, that a Latin element was present in Sicily when the Normans landed in 1060. Amari himself (II, 399) recognizes the weakness of his position. Similarly Paolo Orsi, in *Arch. Stor. per la Sic. Orient.*, XII (1915), 449, declares unproved the theory of N. Maccarrone, *La vita del latino in Sicilia fino all'età normanna* (Florence, 1915), that a part of the Sicilian peasantry spoke a vulgar Latin under Moslem rule. Rohlfs (pp. 85-86) is convinced by an examination of the modern Sicilian dialects that their roots lie not in the Latin brought to the island by the Romans but in the new Latinization of Sicily in Norman times.

<sup>88</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. by K. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), I, 410.

<sup>89</sup> P. Lajolo, "Sul passaggio delle chiese sicule sotto il dominio del patriarca bizantino", *Arch. Stor. per la Sic. Orient.*, XI (1914), 369.

<sup>90</sup> In the early ninth century Basil the Armenian remarks that the churches of Sicily and Calabria were united to Constantinople after "the pope of Old Rome fell under the power of the barbarians"; cf. George of Cyprus, *Descriptio orbis Romani*, ed. by H. Gelzer (Leipzig, 1890), p. 27.

<sup>91</sup> Mansi, XII, 1151, cf. pp. 983, 993, 1000; and Lancia di Brolo, II, 166-167. Shortly

In all else Sicily had become oriental more than a hundred years earlier. As in no other part of the West, the presence of a large indigenous Hellenic population in the island enabled the Byzantinism brought by refugees fleeing Persians, Monothelites, and Moslems to strike deep roots, to obliterate the Latin elements, and to produce a purely Greek culture, which flourished until Saracenic conquest crushed it in the late ninth century.

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afterwards the Byzantine patriarch sent a letter directly to the Sicilian bishops (thus ignoring papal claims to jurisdiction in the island), and addressed them as "σὺλλειτουργοί", that is as using the liturgy of Constantinople. John Baptiste Pitra, *Juris ecclesiastici Græcorum historia et monumenta* (Rome, 1868), II, 309.