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VALLA

ON THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE

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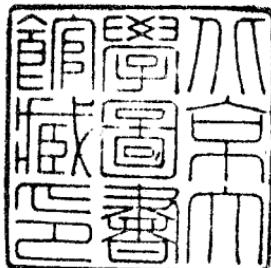
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LORENZO VALLA
• • •
ON THE DONATION
OF CONSTANTINE

TRANSLATED BY

G. W. BOWERSOCK



北大图书 21101002947038

THE I TATTI RENAISSANCE LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
LONDON, ENGLAND
2007

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Printed in the United States of America

Series design by Dean Bornstein

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Valla, Lorenzo, 1406–1457.

[*De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio.*

English & Latin]

On the donation of Constantine / Lorenzo Valla;

translated by G. W. Bowersock.

p. cm. — (*The I Tatti Renaissance library* ; 24)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-674-02533-2 (alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-674-02533-4 (alk. paper)

i. *Constitutum Constantini.* 2. Popes—Temporal power—
early works to 1800.

I. Bowersock, G. W. (Glen Warren), 1936– II. Title.

BX875.D7V3413 2007

262'.132—dc22 2006052944

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Introduction



Between 2 April and 25 May of the year 1440 Lorenzo Valla composed his devastating exposure of the so-called Donation of Constantine. His work refers explicitly to the death of the monstrous Cardinal Vitelleschi on 2 April. On 25 May Valla wrote a letter to his friend Giovanni Tortelli to accompany a copy of his recently completed *opusculum*.¹ The Donation provided the papacy, at least since the eighth century when it seems to have been fabricated, with a justification for its claims to political authority over the realms of the western Mediterranean. The document, allegedly written by Constantine the Great shortly before his death at Nicomedia in May 337, presented Pope Sylvester with title to the western part of his empire.

Until the early fifteenth century Constantine himself, considered as the author of the Donation, had been held personally responsible for the corruption of the temporal power of the popes,² but not long before Valla the Donation had come under fire in a treatise by Nicholas of Cusa,³ and it must have figured importantly in the protracted debates about papal authority in the Councils of Ferrara and Florence in 1438 and 1439. The invalidation of the Donation should have meant that the corruption of the papacy could be conveniently postdated, to the advantage of Constantine's posthumous reputation, to the time when the forgery was made, but in fact his reign continued to figure as what Robert Black has called "a crucial turning point in history."⁴

Valla launched his assault on the authenticity of this document from his post as secretary to Alfonso, King of Aragon and Sicily, as the king was trying to wrest control of Naples from papal clients in the house of Anjou. Valla had himself sought an appointment from Pope Eugenius in 1431 and 1434, but without success.

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He found a patron who appreciated him in Alfonso, who cultivated a circle of literary men in his entourage. Valla had already proven himself a master of Latin style and the ancient classics, with previous studies of Cicero and Quintilian, as well as a philosophical treatise on pleasure that was revised under the title of *On the True Good*.

Valla's attack on the Donation is more reasonably seen as an extension of his literary and philosophical interests than as a political weapon offered to Alfonso in the struggle with Eugenius. These were dangerous times, with the insecurity of Eugenius in Italy and the threat from the Ottoman Turks to the very existence of Byzantine orthodoxy in the East. The Patriarch of Constantinople came to Ferrara and Florence in search of allies, and even the Grand Prince of Moscow sent a representative of the Slavic church. The validity of the Donation was hardly a new topic in 1440.

What was new was Valla's way of treating it. He split his work into two main parts, rhetorical and philological. The opening part, imagined as set in a court of kings and princes, brings together the sons of Constantine, an orator representing the Roman senate and people, and Pope Sylvester as petitioners before the jurors, and they deliver elaborate speeches all designed to demonstrate the inherent implausibility of Constantine's giving away half his empire. In the second part Valla rips apart the Latinity of the text of the Donation to prove, brilliantly and decisively, that Constantine could not have written it. His analysis of language and style has often been seen, rightly, as the beginning of serious philological criticism. His heirs, in acumen and savagery, were Richard Bentley and A. E. Housman.

The speeches and the argument against the Donation are finely spun with all the finesse of a master rhetorician.⁵ Ultimately philology proves to be an even more powerful instrument than rhetoric for demolishing the document. But Valla makes no attempt to

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develop a case for the other side, in favor of the Donation. For this reason alone it would be wrong to consider Valla's work a declamation, which, by the classic standard of Quintilian, should argue both sides of an issue. In his printed editions from the early sixteenth century Ulrich von Hutten first attached the title *Declamatio* to Valla's piece. Valla himself had never used it.

In his letter to Tortelli Valla wrote of his *opusculum* as concerned with canon law and theology, but in opposition to all canon lawyers and all theologians (*rem canonici iuris et theologie, sed contra omnes canonistas atque omnes theologos*).⁶ This is not an unreasonable description since it is devoted to a document appended to the *Decretum* of Gratian, which constitutes the principal part of the fundamental corpus of canon law, and its theological implications for the papacy flow naturally from that.⁷ Three years later, in a letter to his Greek teacher Giovanni Aurispa, Valla called his work a speech that was more rhetorical than anything he had written (*oratio qua nihil magis oratorium scripsi*).⁸ It is evident that the work is presented as an *oratio*. It is full of addresses to putative listeners, while rhetorical questions and exclamations abound. Valla even conducts his detailed linguistic analysis in the form of a debate with the presumed forger, and at the end he launches a tirade addressed directly to the popes.

Although by the late sixteenth century Valla's fierce attack on the Donation and on the papacy itself seemed nothing less than incendiary and warranted placing the work on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1559,⁹ it clearly did not look like that when it was written. It joined a debate that was already current at the time, especially after a repudiation of the document in 1433 by Nicholas of Cusa.¹⁰ Soon after the *oratio* appeared in 1440 the humanist Gregorio Tifernate, who was a colleague of Valla's at the court of Alfonso, read it and proclaimed that it had been written *pro Christi ecclesia, non contra ecclesiam* — in support of the church of Christ, not against the church.¹¹

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By late 1443, however, two cardinals, Trevisan and Landriani, appear to have made some effort to persuade Valla to retract or revise his work, possibly with a view to satisfying his longstanding desire to return to Rome. We have only Valla's side of the correspondence, but it could not be clearer about Valla's intentions. In fact, in November 1443, writing to Trevisan, he himself put the question, "Why did I write *On the Donation of Constantine*?" He would have preferred to have written the work under another pope than Eugenius. The defense of truth and the conviction of falsehood were his sole objectives. He could not suppress or emend the work even if he had to, and even if he could he would not feel that he had to.¹² To Landriani in January 1444 Valla acknowledged that he had stirred up enemies at Rome as a result of his *oratio*, but, were it not for his mother who lived there, he attached no importance to their threats.¹³

Curiously, after Valla's correspondence with the two cardinals in late 1443 and early 1444, there is no trace of any interest in his work on the Donation until copies dating from the 1480s. Although Valla's enemies in Eugenius' entourage managed to bring him before the Inquisition at Naples in 1444, the accusations turned entirely on his other writings and, so far as can be told, had nothing to do with the Donation. They arose from his criticism of Aristotle and Boethius. Alfonso, who had already won his claim to Naples through a treaty with the pope at Terracina in June of the previous year, succeeded in closing down the investigation against Valla. In 1448, after Eugenius' death, the next pope, Nicholas V, finally made Valla apostolic *scriptor* in Rome, and in 1455 Calixtus III named him papal secretary. Apart from personal enmity in the court of Eugenius there was no sign that the papacy was smarting from his demolition of the Donation.

Notoriety lay in the future. Copies of Valla's *oratio* from the late fifteenth century provided the basis for a little noticed and now very rare printed edition, the first ever, in 1506. But when Ulrich

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von Hutten printed the text twice in successive years, in 1518 and 1519, it spawned reprints of the original Latin as well as translations into modern European languages. By 1546 it was available in Czech, French, German, English, and Italian. Its value for reformation theology was immediately apparent, and it soon became an embarrassment for a church that had accepted it with equanimity a century before. Luther famously hailed it soon after von Hutten had made it widely available. Later no less a personage than Cardinal Baronius denounced it in a strenuous defense of the Donation. Baronius even went so far as to invoke brickstamps that he claimed to have seen when the original basilica of St. Peter's was taken down to make way for Michelangelo's creation at the Vatican. He reported that the brickstamps named Constantine himself, and these were advanced as proof of Constantine's support of the papacy. But we now know that Baronius deliberately falsified what he saw in an effort to shore up papal claims to Constantinian support.¹⁴ Although the spirit of Lorenzo Valla can rest in peace today, the Catholic church still inveighs against him for loose morals and licentiousness.¹⁵

It is difficult to approach his *opusculum* without being reminded of its later notoriety. Yet, read on its own terms, it is immensely rewarding simply as a bravura exercise in rhetoric and philology. Keeping company with Valla is a thrilling experience. His writing evokes a powerful mind fueled by dazzling erudition. His mastery of the Latin language makes most of his contemporaries look like barbarians, as he would have been the first to assert. To summon up an English voice for so great a writer, without burdening him with antiquarian diction that would traduce him by alienating him, is formidably difficult. The strength of his arguments for the implausibility of the Donation and the incisiveness of his philological dissection of its Latin text must come through without destroying the pulsating energy of his prose.

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To pepper the translation with Latin words in parentheses would perhaps make the translation more serviceable for those who are trying to negotiate the original, but it would drain the text of all its blood and leave a cold cadaver where there had once been flaming passion. For example, Valla mocks the diction of the forger by observing that in the course of his inflated language he pretentiously uses *extat* for *est*, *nempe* for *scilicet*, and *concubitores* for *contubernales*. It would seriously diminish the impact of Valla's outrage if all these Latin words were inserted into the text of the translation. But an English equivalent may be offered as follows:

Everything is stuffed with these words — we decree, we adorn, *imperial*, *imperialior*, *power*, *glory*; and he has put exists in place of "is," since existing implies prominence or superiority, and indeed for "of course," and *bed-mates* for "companions." Bed-mates are those who sleep together and have intercourse, and must naturally be understood to be whores.

Similarly, when the forger made Constantine order that the holy clergy should ride on horses adorned with white saddles, he wrote *ut clerici sancti . . . equos equitent*. In his excellent English translation of 1922, Christopher Coleman hit upon precisely the right equivalent, *that the holy clergy . . . should mount mounts*.¹⁶ Not every English equivalent can be so stylishly felicitous, but an anglophone reader deserves to have the best approximation possible.

The depth and range of Valla's reading is astonishing. He quotes freely from Scripture and always from memory, as slight variations in the order of words or verses clearly demonstrate. Similarly, in drawing examples from Latin and Greek authors of classical antiquity, he plucks apposite lines at will from such voluminous writers as Livy, Valerius Maximus, Macrobius, and Homer. He clearly knew Virgil's *Aeneid* by heart and could produce phrases and whole lines effortlessly. His knowledge of Hebrew surfaces in a brief but accurate discussion of the name

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Kephas in the New Testament. With a few deft strokes he evokes institutions and titles from the history of republican and imperial Rome. His treatment of the relative social status of senator and patrician is exceptionally acute, and his knowledge of provincial organization under Constantine allows him to highlight grotesque anachronisms. The most egregious of these is the forger's use of the term "satraps" to refer to high-ranking officials.

It is now generally agreed that the forgery was made in the middle to late eighth century. Johannes Fried has recently explored its historical context as well as the significance of its espousal in the Middle Ages. He sees Frankish opposition to the emperor Louis the Pious as the background for the original fabrication.¹⁷ The manuscript tradition, as sorted out by Horst Fuhrmann in his edition of the document, which is known as the *Constitutum Constantini*,¹⁸ reveals extensive alteration and editing by copyists over succeeding centuries. Comparison of Valla's text with the one established by Fuhrmann shows that he was in possession of a considerably improved text through Gratian, even though quite enough barbarisms remained for him to destroy it with his sharp philological instruments.

Curiously, historians of Rome now know, as Valla did not, that the subscription at the end of the document, providing a date in the joint consulship of Constantine (for the fourth time) and a certain Gallicanus, indicts the forger unequivocally.¹⁹ The consular list, as scholars can reconstruct it today from various *testimonia*, reveals that Constantine and Gallicanus never served in the same year. Constantine was consul in 329, Gallicanus in 330. Furthermore, in 329, although the consul Constantine was serving for the fourth time, this was not the emperor but his son. In that year the emperor was consul for the eighth time. Let this revelation be offered admiringly here to the shade of Lorenzo Valla.

For someone coming to the *oratio* on the Donation for the first time, there could be no better salutation than the words of

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Apuleius at the opening of his novel, *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass*: *Lector intende, laetaberis*—Reader, pay attention, you will enjoy it!

NOTES

1. For the circumstances of composition and the Nachleben of Valla's work, the fundamental study remains W. Setz, *Lorenzo Vallas Schrift gegen die Konstantinische Schenkung*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 44 (Tübingen, 1975). The preface to Setz's edition of the work in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Quellen zu Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* vol. 10 (Weimar, 1976), resumes the fundamental points about composition and provides a list of manuscripts and printed editions. The less said the better about the deplorable edition of Walther Schwahn (Leipzig, 1928), on which see Setz's preface, p. 46, n. 146. Teubner reprinted it in 1994.
2. See the richly documented account of the Donation in the Middle Ages in Robert Black, "The Donation of Constantine: A New Source for the Concept of the Renaissance," in *Languages and Images of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Alison Brown (Oxford, 1995), pp. 51–85, especially pp. 63–67 on the denunciations of Constantine by Marsilius of Padua, Dante, and Petrarch.
3. Cusanus attacked the treatise's authenticity in his *De concordantia catholica*, 3.2. See note 10 below.
4. Black, *op. cit.* (n. 2 above), pp. 70–71.
5. See Salvatore I. Camporeale, "Lorenzo Valla e il *De falso credita donatione*. Retorica, libertà ed ecclesiologia nel '400," *Memorie domenicane* n.s. 19 (1988), 191–293, and his summary treatment in "Lorenzo Valla's *Oratio* on the Pseudo-Donation of Constantine: Dissent and Innovation in Early Renaissance Humanism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 (1996), 9–26.
6. *Laurentii Valle Epistole*, ed. O. Besomi and M. Regoliosi (Padua, 1984), no. 12, p. 192.

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7. Valla knew well (and discusses at length) that the Donation was a later insertion into the *Decretum* of Gratian, and canonists had treated the document as suspect: Rudolf Weigand, "Fälschungen als Paleae im Dekret Gratians," in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Schriften*, Bd. 33. II: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, Teil II (Hannover, 1998), pp. 301–318, with particular reference to the Donation on pp. 310–311. See also D. Maffei, *La Donazione di Costantino nei giuristi medievali* (Milan, 1964).
8. *Epistole* (n. 6 above), no. 23, p. 252.
9. Cf. Setz, *Lorenzo Vallas Schrift* (n. 1 above), pp. 100–101, 151–194, and Giovanni Antonazzi, *Lorenzo Valla e la polemica sulla Donazione di Costantino, con testi inediti dei secoli XV–XVII* (Rome, 1985).
10. See Riccardo Fubini, "Contestazioni quattrocentesche della Donazione di Costantino: Niccolò Cusano, Lorenzo Valla," in *Costantino il Grande dall' antichità all' umanesimo*, ed. G. Bonamente and F. Fusco (Macerata, 1992), 1: 385–431. Fubini returned to this topic in his paper, "Humanism and Truth: Valla Writes against the Donation of Constantine," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 (1996), 79–86. He argued that Valla knew Cusanus' analysis in *De concordantia catholica*, and he surmised that this knowledge "might have been the very reason for his writing on the Donation of Constantine." Fubini's case for Valla's familiarity with Cusanus' argument, particularly in the domain of canon law, is strong.
11. *Epistole* (n. 6), no. 12a, p. 193.
12. *Epistole* (n. 6), no. 22, p. 247: *At cur De Constantini donatione composui? . . . Id ego tantum abest ut malivolentia fecerim, ut summopere optassem sub alio pontifice necesse mihi fuisse id facere, non sub Eugenio. . . . Opus meum conditum editumque est, quod emendare aut supprimere nec possem si deberem, nec deberem si possem. Ipsa rei veritas se tuebitur aut ipsa falsitas se coarguet.*
13. *Epistole* (n. 6), no. 25, p. 255: *Causam meam, ut opinor, nosti: de opere, inquam Constantini donationis, ob quod multis sancte apostolice sedis senatoribus inquis sum et reus agor, immo peragor ab inimicis meis atque invidis.* He says that he is reproached and terrorized for attacking the liv-

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ing as well as the dead: *quam ego reprehensionem terroremque, nisi matris causa, que istic est, pro meo more nihil facerem.*

14. For proof, see the photograph on p. 10 of G. W. Bowersock, "Peter and Constantine," in *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, ed. W. Tronzo (Cambridge, 2005), with notes 36 and 38 on pp. 14–15.

15. See, for example, the article under his name in the current *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

16. Christopher B. Coleman, *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine*. (New Haven, 1922), p. 117. Jean-Baptiste Giard found an equally appropriate French rendering in his translation for the series *La roue à livres* (Paris, 1993), pp. 66 and 73: *que les saints clercs . . . chevauchent des chevaux.*

17. Johannes Fried, "Donation of Constantine" and "Constitutum Constantini": *The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and its Original Meaning*, with a contribution by Wolfram Brandes, "The Satraps of Constantine" (Berlin, forthcoming, 2007). For the intellectual context of Valla's work, Carlo Ginzburg, in his preface to the Giard translation (see the previous note), is worth reading.

18. See Fuhrmann's text, included in this volume, with a translation providing comparisons with Valla's quotations from the document.

19. For bibliography and details see the final note to the translated *Constitutum* in this volume. The view that the forger might have had the years 315 or 317 in mind (cf. Camporeale, n. 5 above) presupposes a reference to Constantine's real fourth consulate or another Gallicanus. But such early dates, even for the forger, would be preposterous.

Acknowledgments



I am greatly indebted to four learned friends for encouraging and supporting me in the preparation of this work. The first is James Hankins, editor of the I Tatti Renaissance Library. Knowing that I have long admired Valla's demolition of the Donation of Constantine, he made the somewhat improbable proposal that I translate the piece for his series. Since Valla's Latinity is at a very high standard, a classicist and ancient historian such as myself could feel comfortable with it. Professor Hankins' support, in general and in detail, has been indispensable. As both editor and bibliographer, he has greatly enriched this volume.

Second, Christopher Jones, my dear friend of close to fifty years and James Hankins' colleague in the Harvard History Department, has meticulously read through my entire translation as well as the introduction. With his sharp eye and impeccable Latin he led me to improve my text in more places than I can count. He too knew how much I appreciated Valla's *oratio*.

Third, the numismatist Jean-Baptiste Giard sent me his French translation of Valla's work, with a stimulating preface by Carlo Ginzburg, as soon as it appeared in 1993. This rekindled my interest, and it was perhaps the main reason why I allowed myself to be persuaded to write an iconoclastic paper on Constantine and St. Peter, in which I suggested that the initiative for the first Vatican basilica came from Constans.

Finally, the late and deeply missed John Shearman espoused my view of the Vatican basilica and offered me confirmatory evidence for it. As I persevered in my research on Constantine, my mind turned constantly to Valla, and in my introduction to the translation the reader will see traces of that encounter.

ON THE DONATION
OF CONSTANTINE

LAURENTII VALLENSIS
DE FALSO CREDITA ET
EMENTITA CONSTANTINI
DONATIONE

I Plures a me libri compluresque emissi sunt in omni fere doctrinam genere, in quibus quod a nonnullis magnisque et longo iam evo probatis auctoribus dissentio, cum sint, qui indigne ferant meque ut temerarium sacrilegumque criminentur, quid tandem nunc facturi quidam putandi sunt? quantopere in me debacchaturi? et, si facultas detur, quam avide me ad supplicium festinanterque rapturi? qui non tantum adversus mortuos scribo, sed adversus etiam vivos, nec in unum alterumve, sed in plurimos, nec contra privatos modo, verum etiam contra magistratus! At quos magistratus! Nempe sumnum pontificem, qui non temporali solum armatus est gladio regum ac principum more, sed ecclesiastico quoque, ut ab eo neque super ipsum, ut sic loquar, clipeum aliquius principis protegere te possis, quominus excommunicatione, anathemate, execratione feriare. Quod si prudenter ut dixit sic fecisse existimatus est, qui inquit, *nolo scribere in eos qui possunt proscribere*, quanto mihi magis idem faciendum esse videatur in eum, qui ne proscriptioni quidem relinquit locum? quique invisibilibus me potestatis sue iaculis persequatur, ut iure possim dicere, *quo ibo a spiritu tuo et quo a tua fugiam facie?* nisi forte putamus patientius hec esse laturum summum pontificem quam ceteri facerent. Nihil minus, siquidem Paulo, quod bona se conscientia conversatum esse diceret, Ananias, princeps sacerdotum, coram tribuno, qui iudex sedebat, iussit os verberari, et Phasur eadem preitus dignitate, Ie-

LORENZO VALLA
ON THE FORGED AND
MENDACIOUS DONATION OF
CONSTANTINE

Many, many books have issued from my pen in almost every ⁱ area of learning, and in these I have disagreed with some great authors of long established reputation. Inasmuch as there are those who feel ill treated and accuse me of recklessness and impiety, what must we imagine they are going to do now? How much will they rant against me? And if they have the chance, how eagerly and swiftly will they carry me off to punishment? I am one who writes not only against the dead, but against the living as well—not one or two of them, but many—and not merely against private persons but even against those who hold high office! What office-holders they are! The supreme pontiff, of course, who is armed not only with a temporal sword in the manner of kings and princes, but an ecclesiastical one as well, so that you cannot find protection from him by sheltering, so to speak, under the shield of any prince, to avoid being struck down by excommunication, anathema, or execration. If the man who said, *I am unwilling to write against those who have the power to proscribe*,¹ should be thought to have acted as prudently as he spoke, how much more should I act similarly towards someone who does not even allow the possibility of proscription? And he would pursue me with the invisible darts of his power, so that I could rightly say, *Whither shall I go from your spirit, and whither shall I flee from your face?*² Unless by chance we think that the supreme pontiff will bear these assaults with greater tolerance than others would. Hardly, since Ananias, the high priest, in the presence of the tribune who was sitting as judge, ordered Paul to be struck on the mouth because he said

remiam ob loquendi libertatem coniecit in carcerem. Sed illum tribunus ac preses, hunc rex adversus iniuriam pontificis tutari et potuit et voluit, me vero quis tribunus, quis preses, quis rex e manibus summi sacerdotis, si me rapuerit ille, etiam ut velit, eripere poterit?

- 2 Verum non est causa, cur me duplex hic periculi terror conturbet arceatque a proposito. Nam neque contra ius fasque summo pontifici licet aut ligare quempiam aut solvere, et in defendenda veritate atque iustitia profundere animam summe virtutis, summe laudis, summi premii est. An vero multi ob terrestrem patriam defendendam mortis adiere discrimen: ego ob celestem patriam assequendam — assequuntur autem eam, qui Deo placent, non qui hominibus — mortis discriminē deterrebor? Fcessat igitur trepidatio, procul abeant metus, timores excidant. Forti animo, magna fiducia, bona spe, defendenda est causa veritatis, causa iustitiae, causa Dei! Neque enim is verus est habendus orator, qui bene scit dicere, nisi et dicere audeat. Audeamus itaque accusare, quicunque digna committit accusatione, et qui in omnes peccat, unius pro omnium voce carpatur. At non debeo palam obiurgare fratrem, sed *inter me et ipsum*: immo publice peccans et qui privatum consilium non admitteret, publice arguendus est, *ut ceteri timorem habent*. An non Paulus, cuius verbis modo sum usus, in os Petrum coram ecclesia reprehendit, *quia reprehensibilis erat*, et hoc ad nostram doctrinam scriptum reliquit? At non sum Paulus, qui Petrum possim reprehendere: immo Paulus sum, qui Paulum imitor, quemadmodum, quod multo plus est, unus cum Deo spiritus efficior, cum studiose mandatis illius optempero. Neque aliquem sua dignitas ab increpationibus tutum reddit, que Petrum non reddi-

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that he passed his life with a good conscience, and Phasur, holding the same office, threw Jeremiah into prison for his outspokenness. But the tribune and the governor had the power and the desire to protect the former from priestly abuse, and the king the latter. Yet what tribune, what governor, what king will be able, even if he wishes, to snatch me from the hands of the supreme priest if he seizes me?

But there is no reason why this double threat of danger should trouble me or keep me from my plan. For the supreme pontiff is not allowed to bind or release anyone contrary to human and divine law, and giving up one's life in the defense of truth and justice is a mark of the greatest virtue, the greatest glory, the greatest reward. Many indeed have gone to the point of death to defend their earthly fatherland: shall I be deterred by the threat of death for striving to reach my heavenly fatherland, as do those who please God, not men? Anxiety be gone, let fears retreat far away, and worries disperse! With a bold spirit, great confidence, and good hope, the cause of truth, the cause of justice, and the cause of God must be defended. No one who knows how to speak well can be considered a true orator unless he also dares to speak out. So let us dare to accuse one who commits deeds that deserve accusation, and let one who sins against all be reviled by the voice of one who speaks for all. Yet perhaps I ought not to censure a brother openly but *between ourselves*:³ on the contrary a person who sins in public and who accepts no private counsel must be charged in public, *to frighten all the rest*.⁴ Did not Paul, whose words I have just used, reproach Peter to his face before the church, because he was reproachable,⁵ and leave this in writing for our instruction? But I am not a Paul who can reproach a Peter: I am rather a Paul who imitates Paul in such a way—which is something much greater—as to become one spirit with God, since I scrupulously obey his mandates. Personal status does not make anyone safe from attacks. It did not do so for Peter and for many others endowed with the

dit multosque alios eodem preditos gradu, ut Marcellum, quod diis libasset, ut Celestimum, quod cum Nestorio heretico sentiret, ut quosdam etiam nostra memoria, quos ab inferioribus — quis enim non est inferior papa? — reprehensos scimus, ut taceam condemnatos.

- 3 Neque vero id ago, ut quenquam cupiam insectari et in eum quasi Philippicas scribere — hoc enim a me facinus procul absit —, sed ut errorem a mentibus hominum convellam, ut eos a vitiis sceleribusque vel admonendo vel increpando summoveam. Non ausim dicere, ut alii per me edocti luxuriantem nimiis sarmentis papalem sedem, que Christi vinea est, ferro coercent, et plenas uvas, non graciles labruscas ferre compellant. Quod cum facio, nunquis erit, qui aut mihi os aut sibi aures velit occludere, ne dicam supplicium mortemque proponere? Hunc ego, si hoc faciat, etiam si papa sit, quid dicam esse: *bonumne pastorem, an aspidem surdam que nolit exaudire vocem incantantis, velit eiusdem membra morsu vene noque prestringere?*
- 4 Scio iamdudum exspectare aures hominum, quodnam pontificibus Romanis crimen impingam: profecto ingens sive supine ignorantie sive immanis avaricie que est *idolorum servitus*, sive imperandi vanitatis, cuius crudelitas semper est comes. Nam aliquot iam seculis aut non intellexerunt donationem Constantini commenticiam fictamque esse aut ipsi finxerunt sive posteriores in maiorum suorum dolis vestigia imprimentes pro vera, quam falsam cognoscerent, defenderunt, dedecorantes pontificatus maiestatem, dedecorantes veterum pontificum memoriam, dedecorantes religionem christianam, et omnia cedibus, ruinis flagitiisque miscentes. Suam esse aiunt urbem Romam, suum regnum Sicilie Neapolitanumque, suam universam Italiam, Gallias, Hispanias, Germanos,

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same rank, such as Marcellus for pouring libations to the gods,—such as Celestinus for agreeing with the heretic Nestorius,—such as certain persons also in our own time, who we know were rebuked by persons of inferior status (who is *not* inferior to the Pope?), to say nothing of those who have been condemned.⁶

I am not acting to satisfy a desire to harass anyone and to write 3 Philippics against him—may I not be guilty of such a heinous deed—, but to eradicate error from people's minds, to remove persons from vices and crimes by admonition and reproof. I would not dare say that others, instructed by me, should prune with steel the papal seat—the vineyard of Christ—which is teeming with undergrowth, and force it to bear plump grapes instead of emaciated berries. When I do this, will there not be someone who would wish to stop my mouth or his own ears, to say nothing of calling down punishment and death? If so, even if it be the Pope himself, what kind of man should I say he is: a *good shepherd*, or a *deaf snake that would not hear the voice of the charmer*? and would prefer to go at the charmer's limbs with a poisonous bite?

I know that for a long time people have been waiting to hear 4 the accusation I would bring against the Roman pontiffs: a massive accusation assuredly, of either supine ignorance or monstrous avarice, which is enslavement to idols, or pride of rule, which is always accompanied by cruelty. Already for several centuries they either did not realize that Constantine's Donation was a lie and a fabrication, or else they invented it themselves. Their descendants, following the deceitful path of earlier generations, defended as true what they knew to be false—dishonoring the majesty of the pontificate, dishonoring the memory of the pontiffs of old, dishonoring the Christian religion, and confounding everything with slaughter, collapse, and crime. They say that the city of Rome is his, that the kingdom of Sicily and Naples is his, that the whole of Italy is his, the peoples of Gaul, Spain, Germany, and Britain,—in

Britannos, suum denique occidentem: hec enim cuncta in ipsa donationis pagina contineri. Ergo hec omnia tua sunt, summe pontifex? Omnia tibi in animo est recuperare? omnes reges ac principes occidentis spoliare urbibus aut cogere, ut annua tibi tributa pensent, sententia est? At ego contra existimo iustius licere principibus spoliare te imperio omni quod optines. Nam—ut ostendam—donatio illa, unde natum esse suum ius summi pontifices volunt, Silvestro pariter et Constantino fuit incognita.

5 Verum antequam ad confutandam donationis paginam venio, quod unum istorum patrocinium est non modo falsum, verum etiam stolidum, ordo postulat, ut altius repetam. Et primum dicam non tales fuisse Constantiū Silvestrumque: illum quidem, qui donare vellet, qui iure donare posset, qui, ut in manum alteri ea traderet, in sua haberet potestate; hunc autem, qui vellet accipere quique iure accepturus foret. Secundo loco: si hec non essent, que verissima atque clarissima sunt, neque hunc acceptasse neque illum tradidisse possessionem rerum, que dicuntur donate, sed eas semper in arbitrio et imperio Cesarum permansisse. Tertio: nihil datum Silvestro a Constantino, sed priori pontifici, antequam etiam baptismum acceperat, donaque illa mediocria fuisse, quibus papa degere vitam posset. Quarto: falso dici donationis exemplum aut apud decreta reperiri aut ex historia Silvestri esse sumptum, quod neque in illa neque ulla in historia invenitur, in eoque quedam contraria, impossibilia, stulta, barbara, ridicula contineri. Preterea loquar de quorundam aliorum Cesarum vel simulata vel frivola donatione, ubi ex abundantи adiiciam: si Silvester possedisset,

short that the West is his: they say that all these are encompassed in that document of donation. Is all this yours because of that, supreme pontiff? Do you intend to recover all of it? Is it your idea to despoil of their cities all the kings and princes of the West and to force them to pay you annual tribute? I, on the contrary, think that the princes have a better right to despoil you of the entire empire you hold. For, as I shall show, that Donation, from which the supreme pontiffs want to derive their legal right, was unknown to Sylvester and Constantine alike.

But before I come to refuting the Donation document, which is the sole authority those people have, something that is not only false but even crude, structure demands that I go back farther. First, I shall assert that Constantine and Sylvester were not such men as, with the former, to want to make a donation, to be in a legal position to do so, and to have in his power the ability to hand over these territories to someone else, and, with the latter, to want to receive them and be in a legal position to do so. Second, even if these points were other than absolutely true and very clear, I shall assert that the one did not accept and the other did not hand over the possession of the things that are said to have been donated, but that they remained forever under the jurisdiction and authority of the Caesars. Third, I shall assert that nothing was given by Constantine to Sylvester, but rather to the previous pontiff before he received baptism, and that these were modest gifts of places where the Pope could spend his life. Fourth, I shall assert that it is falsely claimed a copy of the Donation was found among the emperor's decrees or was extracted from the Story of Sylvester, because it is neither found in that story nor in any other, and because in it are contained various contradictions, impossibilities, stupidities, barbarisms, and absurdities. Furthermore I shall speak about donations of certain other emperors—whether fictitious or worthless—and there I shall add from abundant evidence that if Sylvester ever had taken possession, once he or some other pontiff

tamen — sive illo sive quovis alio pontifice a possessione deiecto — post tantam temporis intercapedinem nec divino nec humano iure posse repeti. Postremo: ea, que a summo pontifice tenentur, nullius temporis longitudine potuisse prescribi.

: I :

- 6 Atque quod ad primam partem attinet — loquemur autem de Constantino prius, deinde de Silvestro — non est committendum, ut publicam et quasi Cesaream causam non maiore, quam private solent, ore agamus. Itaque quasi in contione regum ac principum orans — ut certe facio, nam mea hec oratio in manus eorum ventura est — libet tanquam presentes et in conspectu positos alloqui.
- 7 Vos appello, reges ac principes, difficile est enim privatum hominem animi regii concipere imaginem, vestram mentem inquiero, conscientiam scrutor, testimonium postulo: nunquid vestrum quispiam, si fuisset Constantini loco, faciendum sibi putasset, ut urbem Romam, patriam suam, caput orbis terrarum, reginam civitatum, potentissimam, nobilissimam, ditissimam populorum, triumphatricem nationum, et ipso aspectu sacram, liberalitatis gratia donaret alteri et se ad humile oppidum conferret, deinde Byzantium? donaret preterea una cum Roma Italiam, non provinciam sed provinciarum victricem? donaret tres Gallias, donaret duas Hispanias, donaret Germanos, donaret Britannos, totum donaret occidentem et se altero ex duobus imperii oculis orbaret? Hoc ego, ut quis faciat compos mentis, adduci non possum ut credam. Quid enim vobis exspectatius, quid iocundius, quid gratius contingere solet, quam accessionem imperiis vestris vos regnisque

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had been had been deprived of it, after so great an interval of time it could not be recovered by any legal claim, human or divine. Lastly, I shall assert that the supreme pontiff's current possessions could not, in the course of time, have been administered under his authority.

: I :

To turn to the first part, we shall speak at the start about Constantine, then about Sylvester. It is unacceptable to make a public and, so to say, imperial case with the same kind of presentation as normally accorded to private cases. Therefore I permit myself to plead as if in an assembly of kings and princes, into whose hands I am confident my speech will come, and to address them as if they were present in front of me.

I speak to you, kings and princes. Since it is hard for a private person to form any idea of a royal disposition, I probe your mind, I examine your conscience, I ask for your testimony: Would any one of you, had he been in Constantine's place, have thought he should act to bestow upon another person, by gracious liberality, the city of Rome—his own fatherland, the center of the world, the queen of cities, the most powerful, noblest, richest of peoples, which triumphed over nations and was sacred to behold? Would he have thought to remove himself to a modest town, or after that to Byzantium,⁸ and, in addition, to turn over Italy along with Rome, not just a province but a victor over provinces? Would he have thought to give away the three Gauls, the two Spains, the Germans, the British—the whole western world—and to deprive himself of one of the two eyes of his empire? I cannot be persuaded to believe that any sane person would do this. What is normally more desirable, more pleasurable, more welcome than for you to enlarge your empires and kingdoms and to extend your

adiungere et longe lateque quam maxime proferre dicionem? In hoc, ut videre videor, omnis vestra cura, omnis cogitatio, omnis labor dies noctesque consumitur, ex hoc precipua spes glorie, propter hoc voluptates relinquitis, propter hoc mille pericula aditis, propter hoc carissima pignora, propter hoc partem corporis equo animo amittitis. Siquidem neminem vestrum aut audivi aut legi a conatu ampliandi imperii fuisse deterritum, quod aut luminis, aut manus, aut cruris, aut alterius membra iacturam fecisset: quin ipse hic ardor atque hec late dominandi cupiditas, ut quisque maxime potens est, ita eum maxime angit atque agitat. Alexander non contentus deserta Libye pedibus peragrasse, orientem ad extremum usque Oceanum vicsisse, domuisse septentrionem inter tot vulnera, tot casus, recusantibus iam detestantibusque tam longinquas, tam asperas expeditiones militibus, ipse sibi nihil effecisse videbatur, nisi et occidentem et omnes nationes aut vi aut nominis sui auctoritate sibi tributarias reddidisset. Parum dico: iam Oceanum transire et si quis alias orbis esset, explorare ac suo subiicere arbitrio destinaverat, in celum tandem, ut opinor, temptasset ascendere. Talis fere est omnium regum voluntas, et si non omnium talis audacia. Taceo quanta scelera, quot abominanda propter imperium assequendum ampliandumve admissa sunt, ut nec fratres a fratribus nec filii a parentum nec parentes a filiorum sanguine nefarias abstineant manus. Adeo nusquam magis, nusquam atrocius grassari solet humana temeritas, et quod mirari possis, non segniores ad hoc videoas animos senum quam iuvenum, orborum quam parentum, regum quam tyrannorum.

- 8 Quod si tanto conatu peti dominatus solet, quanto maiore necesse est conservetur! Neque enim tantopere miserum est non ampliare imperium quam imminuere; neque tam deforme tibi alterius

sway as far and wide as possible? It seems to me that all your concern, all your thinking, all your effort is taken up day and night with this. From this arises your special hope of glory. Because of this you put aside worldly delights, because of this you submit to a thousand perils, because of this you give up with equanimity your loved ones and your own limbs. As far as I have heard or read, not one of you was ever deterred from the effort to increase his empire because he would have lost an eye, a hand, a leg, or some other member: On the contrary, this blazing passion for extensive rule most of all goads and drives one who is already supremely powerful. Alexander—who was not content to have wandered on foot through the deserts of Libya, to have subdued the East to the farthest sea, to have conquered the north amid a multitude of wounds and misfortunes, as his troops were already balking and were loathing such distant and rough campaigns—seemed to himself to have accomplished nothing at all without the subjugation of the West and all its nations either by force or by the authority of his name. Indeed, if he had already planned to explore and bring under his control the Ocean as well as any other world there might be, he would finally, in my opinion, have tried to scale heaven itself. Such is the desire of almost every king, even if not all kings share his audacity. I forbear to mention how many crimes, how many abominations have been committed in the cause of gaining or increasing empire, so that brothers do not hold back their evil hands from brothers' blood, nor sons from parents', nor parents from sons'. In no other endeavor does human recklessness normally assert itself so much and so fiercely. You may marvel when you see that in this the old are no less eagerly minded than the young, the childless no less than parents, kings no less than tyrants.

But if dominion is apt to be sought by so great an effort, how much greater must be the effort to keep it! Not enlarging an empire is not so wretched as reducing it. Even more grotesque than

regnum non accedere tuo quam tuum accedere alieno. Nam quod ab rege aliquo aut populo legimus nonnullos prepositos regno aut urbibus, id factum est non de prima nec de maxima, sed de postrema quodammodo ac minima imperii parte, atque ea ratione, ut donantem, qui donatus est, quasi dominum et se ministrum illius semper agnosceret.

- 9 Nunc queso, nonne abiecto animo et minime generoso videntur esse, qui opinantur Constantinum meliorem a se imperii alienasse partem — non dico Romam Italianaque et cetera, sed Gallias, ubi ipse prelia gesserat, ubi solum diu dominatus fuerat, ubi sue glorie suique imperii rudimenta posuerat — hominem, qui cupiditate dominandi nationibus bella intulisset, socios affinesque bello civili persecutus imperio privasset; cui nondum perdomite ac profligate reliquie essent alterius factionis; qui cum multis nationibus bella gerere non modo soleret spe glorie imperiique, sed etiam necesse haberet utpote quotidie a barbaris laceratus; qui filiis, qui coniunctis sanguine, qui amicitiis abundaret; qui senatum populumque Romanum huic facto repugnaturum nosset; qui expertus esset instabilitatem victarum nationum et ad omnem fere Romani principis mutationem rebellantium; qui se meminisset more aliorum Cesarum non electione patrum consensuque plebis, sed exercitu, armis, bello dominatum occupasse: que tam vehemens causa et urgens aderat, ut ista negligeret et tanta liberalitate uti vellet?
- 10 Aiunt: 'quia effectus erat Christianus.' Ergone imperii optima parte se abdicaret? Credo scelus erat, flagitium, nefas iam regnare, nec cum christiana religione coniungi poterat regnum. Qui in adulterio sunt, qui usurpis rem auxerunt, qui aliena possident, ii

not adding another's realm to yours is allowing yours to be added to another's. For when we read that persons have been placed in charge of a kingdom or of cities by some king or people, this did not concern the main or largest part of the empire, but some minor and insignificant part, with the aim of making the recipient forever acknowledge the donor as his master and himself as his servant.

Now I ask, do not those who think that Constantine gave away 9 the better part of his empire appear to be lowly and ignoble? I am not referring to Rome and Italy and the rest, but to the Gauls, where he himself had fought battles, where alone he had the dominion for a considerable time, where he had laid down the foundations of his glory and his empire. This was a man who launched wars on nations out of lust for rule; who had deprived allies and relatives of their empire after pursuing them in civil war; who had not yet subdued and dispatched the remains of the opposing faction; who not only was given to waging wars with many nations from hope of glory and empire but also considered it necessary inasmuch as he was assaulted daily by barbarians; who was rich in progeny, blood relations, and friendships; who knew that the Senate and People of Rome would fight against him; who had experienced the instability of conquered nations that rebelled almost every time there was a change of Roman emperor; who remembered, just like the other Caesars, that he had taken his rule not through senatorial election and consent of the plebs, but through an army, weapons, and war. What cause was so strong and pressing that he would neglect all these things and choose to manifest such liberality?

They say, "Because he had become a Christian." Would he 10 therefore give up the best part of his empire? To reign now was, I suppose, wicked, criminal, and impious, nor could his kingdom be conjoined with the Christian religion. Those who are adulterous, who enlarge their capital by usury, who possess what belongs to

post baptismum alienam uxorem, alienam pecuniam, aliena bona reddere solent: hanc cogitationem si habes, Constantine, restituere urbibus libertatem, non mutare dominum debes. Sed non id in causa fuit, tantum in honorem religionis ut faceres adductus es: quasi religiosum sit magis regnum deponere quam pro tutela religionis illud administrare. Nam quod ad accipientes attinet, neque honesta erit illis neque utilis ista donatio. Tu vero si christianum te ostendere, si pietatem indicare tuam, si consultum non dico Romane ecclesie vis sed ecclesie Dei, nunc, precipue nunc principem agas, ut pugnes pro iis, qui pugnare non possunt nec debent, ut eos tua auctoritate tutos reddas, qui insidiis iniuriisque obnoxii sunt. Nabuchodonosor, Cyro, Assuero, multisque aliis principibus sacramentum veritatis Deus aperiri voluit; a nullo tamen eorum exegit, ut imperio cederet, ut partem regni donaret, sed tantum libertatem Hebreis redderet eosque ab infestantibus finitimis protegeret. Hoc satis fuit Iudeis; hoc sat erit et Christianis. Factus es, Constantine, christianus? at indignissima res est christianum te nunc imperatorem minori esse principatu, quam fueras infidelis. Est enim principatus precipuum quoddam Dei munus, ad quem gentiles etiam principes a Deo eligi existimantur.

- II ‘At erat levatus a lepra, ideo verisimile est referre gratiam voluisse et maiore mensura reddere quam acceperat.’ Itane? Naaman ille Syrus ab Heliseo curatus munera tantum offerre voluit, non dimidium bonorum: Constantinus dimidium imperii optulisset? Piget me impudenti fabelle tanquam indubitate historie respondere, sic enim hec fabula ex historia Naaman et Helisei ut altera draconis ex fabuloso dracone Beli adumbrata est. Sed ut ista

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another normally give back, after baptism, someone else's wife, money, or property. If you follow this line of thought, Constantine, you ought to give back freedom to the cities, not to change their master. But you say that was not the issue—you were moved to do all this in order to honor religion. As if it would be more religious to give up your realm than to administer it to safeguard religion! For as far as the recipients are concerned, that donation of yours will be neither respectable nor advantageous in their eyes. In fact, if you wish to show yourself a Christian, to demonstrate your piety, to provide for—I do not say the Roman church, but the church of God—you should now, now above all, play the prince, to fight for those who cannot and must not fight, to keep safe through your authority those who are subject to plots and injuries. God wanted the secret of truth to be made manifest to Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Ahasuerus, and many other princes, and yet he demanded of none of them to withdraw from empire or to make a gift of part of his realm, but only to give back freedom to the Hebrews and to protect them from hostile neighbors. This was enough for the Jews. This will be enough for the Christians too. Did you become a Christian, Constantine? Yet it is most improper for you now as a Christian emperor to have a smaller dominion than you had as an unbeliever. Dominion is a certain special gift of God, for which even pagan princes are thought to be chosen by God.

"But he was cured of leprosy: therefore it is likely that he wanted to express his gratitude and to give back more than he had received." Really? When Naaman the Syrian was cured by Elisha he wanted to offer only gifts, not half his possessions. Would Constantine have offered half his empire? I regret that I am responding to a shameless tale as if it were irreproachable history, for this tale was concocted out of the history of Naaman and Elisha, as was a second tale, about a dragon, out of the mythical dragon of

concedam, nunquid in hac historia de donatione fit mentio? Minime! Verum de hoc commodius postea.

12 Levatus est a lepra, cepit ob id mentem christianam, Dei timore, Dei amore imbutus est, illi honorem habere voluit: non tamen persuaderi possum eum tanta donare voluisse, quippe cum videam neminem aut gentilem in honorem deorum aut fidelem in honorem Dei viventis imperium deposuisse sacerdotibusque donasse. Siquidem ex regibus Israel nemo adduci potuit, ut pristino more ad templum Ierusalem populos sacrificaturos ire permitteret, eo videlicet timore, ne forte ad regem Iude, a quo defecerant, redirent sacro illo cultu religionis admoniti ac templi maiestate. Et quanto hoc maius est, quod fecisse dicitur Constantinus! Ac ne quid tibi propter curationem lepre blandiaris: Ieroboam primus a Deo in regem Israel electus est et quidem ex infima condicione—quod mea sententia plus est quam esse lepra levatum—, et tamen is non est ausus regnum suum Deo credere. Et tu vis Constantium regnum Deo donasse, quod ab illo non accepisset? qui presertim—id quod in Ieroboam non cadebat—offenderet filios, deprimeret amicos, negligenter suos, lederet patriam, merore omnes afficeret, sui quoque obliveretur.

13 Qui si etiam talis fuisset et quasi in alium hominem versus, certe non defuissent, qui eum admonerent, et imprimis filii, propinqui, amici. Quos quis est, qui non putet protinus imperatorem fuisse adituros? Ponite igitur illos ante oculos mente Constantini audita trepidos, festinantes, cum gemitu lacrimisque ad genua principis procumbentes, et hoc voce utentes:

Bel. But granted all that—does any mention of the Donation occur in this history? By no means! But more on this later.

He was cured from leprosy and on that account adopted a Christian disposition; he was suffused with the fear of God and with the love of God. He wanted to hold Him in honor. Nevertheless, I cannot be persuaded that he wanted to give away so much, since I see that no one, neither a pagan to honor his gods nor a believer to honor the living God, has laid down an empire and given it over to priests. In fact not one of the kings of Israel could be induced to permit the people to go to Jerusalem to sacrifice, in the old way, at the temple, evidently out of fear that, moved by that holy religious ritual and by the majesty of the temple, they might perchance return to the king of Judah, from whom they had rebelled. How much greater than this is what Constantine is said to have done! And lest you delude yourself on account of the cure of leprosy: Jeroboam was chosen first by God to be the king of Israel, and indeed from a lowly status—which in my opinion is much more than being cured of leprosy—, yet he did not make bold to entrust his kingdom to God. Do you want Constantine to have donated to God a kingdom that he had not even received from him? He would assuredly offend his sons (which did not happen to Jeroboam), humiliate his friends, neglect his relatives, damage his country, afflict everyone with grief, and be forgetful of himself as well.

If he had been like that and, so to speak, turned into a different person, there would certainly not have been lacking people to admonish him, especially his sons, relatives, and friends. Is there anyone who would not suppose that they would have gone to the emperor straightaway? Imagine them trembling before your eyes, once the intention of Constantine had been made known—hustling, prostrating themselves with wailing and tears at the prince's knees, and speaking as follows:

14 Itane, pater antehac filiorum amantissime, filios privas, exhersedas, abdicas? Nam, quod te optima maximaque imperii parte exuere vis, non tam querimur quam miramur. Querimur autem, quod eam ad alios defers, cum nostra et iactura et turpitudine. Quid enim cause est, quod liberos tuos expectata successione imperii fraudas, qui ipse una cum patre regnasti? Quid in te commisimus? Qua in te, qua in patriam, qua in nomen Romanum ac maiestatem imperii impietate digni videmur? quos precipua optimaque prives principatus portione, qui a patriis laribus, a conspectu natalis soli, ab assueta aura, a vetusta consuetudine relegemur. Penates, fana, sepulcra exules relinquemus, nescio ubi aut qua terrarum regione victuri? Quid, nos propinqui, quid, nos amici, qui tecum totiens in acie stetimus, qui fratres, parentes, filios hostili mucrone confosso palpitantesque conspeximus nec aliena morte territi sumus et ipsi pro te parati mortem oppetere, nunc abs te universi deserimur? Qui Rome gerimus magistratus, qui urbibus Italie, qui Galliis, qui Hispaniis, qui ceteris provinciis presumus, aut prefuturi sumus, omnesne revocamur, omnes privati iubemur esse? An iacturam hanc aliunde pensabis? Et quomodo pro merito ac pro dignitate poteris tanta orbis terrarum parte alteri tradita? Num, qui preerat centum populis, eum tu, Cesar, uni preficies? Quomodo tibi istud in mentem venire potuit? Quomodo subita tuorum te cepit oblivio, ut nihil te misereat amicorum, nihil proximorum, nihil filiorum? Utinam nos, Cesar, salva tua dignitate atque Victoria in bello contigisset occumbere potius quam ista cernamus. Et tu quidem de imperio tuo ad tuum arbitri-

"Father, do you really deprive, disinherit, and cast off your sons, you who loved your sons very much until now? We do not so much bemoan as wonder at your desire to strip yourself of the best and greatest part of your empire. But bemoan it we do, because you are transferring it to others at our expense and to our disgrace. What reason is there for you to cheat your children from the anticipated succession to your empire, when you yourself ruled together with your father? What have we done against you? In what way do we appear guilty of disrespect towards our fatherland, the name of Rome, and the majesty of her empire? The fairest and best part of the principate you strip away from us, who are banished from our ancestral homes, from the sight of our birthplace, from the air we used to breathe, and from our traditional way of life. Shall we as exiles abandon our hearths, our shrines, and our tombs to dwell in some unknown region of the earth? We are your kin, your friends, who have stood so often with you in the line of battle, who have watched our brothers, our parents, and our sons quivering when they were impaled on the point of an enemy sword. We were not terrified by another's death and were ready ourselves to meet death for you. Are all of us now deserted by you? We who hold magistracies at Rome, who govern or shall govern the cities of Italy, the Gauls, the Spains, and all the other provinces — are we all recalled, all ordered to be stripped of office? Or will you make up this loss from some other place? How will you be able to do this in a proper and worthy manner when so much of the world has been handed over to someone else? Surely, Caesar, you will not place a man who governed a hundred peoples in charge of only one? How could such an idea ever enter your mind? How did you suddenly become so forgetful of your own that you have no pity at all for your friends, none for your kinsmen, none for your sons? If only, Caesar, we had fallen in battle with your reputation intact and victory secure rather than look upon this! You can indeed do what you want with your empire

tratum agere potes atque etiam de nobis uno dumtaxat excepto, in quo ad mortem usque erimus contumaces: ne a cultu deorum immortalium desistamus magno etiam aliis exemplo, ut scias tua ista largitas quid mereatur de religione christiana. Nam si non largiris Silvestro imperium, tecum christiani esse volumus multis factum nostrum imitaturis; sin largiris, non modo christiani fieri non sustinebimus, sed invisum, detestabile, execrandum nobis hoc nomen efficies talesque reddes, ut tandem tu et vite et mortis nostre misericordiaris nec nos, sed te ipsum duritie accuses.'

- 15 Nonne hac oratione Constantinus, nisi extirpatam ab eo volumus humanitatem, si sua sponte non movebatur, motus fuisset? Quid, si hos audire noluisset, nonne erant, qui huic facto et oratione adversarentur et manu? An senatus populusque Romanus sibi tanta in re nihil agendum putasset? nonne oratorem, ut ait Virgilius, *gravem pietate ac meritis* advocasset, qui apud Constantinum hanc haberet orationem?
- 16 'Cesar, si tu tuorum immemor es atque etiam tui, ut nec filiis hereditatem nec propinquis opes nec amicis honores nec tibi imperium esse integrum velis, non tamen senatus populusque Romanus immemor potest esse sui iuris sueque dignitatis. Etenim quomodo tibi tantum permittis de imperio Romano, quod non tuo, sed nostro sanguine partum est? Tune unum corpus in duas secessib[us] partes et ex uno duo efficies regna, duo capita, duas voluntates? et quasi duobus fratribus gladios, quibus de hereditate decernant, porriges? Nos civitatibus, que de hac urbe bene merite sunt, iura civitatis damus, ut cives Romani sint: tu a nobis dimidium imperii aufers, ne hanc urbem parentem suam agnoscant? Et in alveis qui-

and even with us, with one exception, which we will fiercely uphold unto death—we shall not desist from the worship of the immortal gods and shall serve as a great example to others, so that you may know what your vaunted largesse does for the Christian religion. For if you do not bestow the empire upon Sylvester, we are willing to be Christians with you and many others will follow suit; but if you do bestow it, we will not only refuse to become Christians, but you will cause the very name of Christian to be hated, loathed, and cursed by us, and you will make us such that you will pity our life and death, and you will not blame us, but you yourself for being implacable."

Would not Constantine have been moved by this speech, if not already moved on his own, unless we suppose that his humanity had been altogether rooted out of him? If he had been unwilling to listen to these men, were there not those who would oppose this action in both word and deed? Would the Senate and the Roman People have thought they should do nothing in such a situation? Would they not have summoned an orator who was, in Virgil's phrase, *respected for his goodness and his public service*,⁹ to deliver the following speech before Constantine?

"Caesar, if you are unmindful of your own family and even of yourself, so that you wish your sons to have no inheritance, your relatives no wealth, your friends no honors, and you no empire intact, nevertheless the Senate and People of Rome cannot be unmindful of its right and its reputation. For how can you arrogate to yourself so much of the Roman empire, which was brought forth from our blood, not yours? Will you cut one body into two parts, and will you make two realms out of one, two capitals, two wills? And will you offer to two brothers, as it were, the swords with which to decide their inheritance? To states which have served this city well we give the rights of citizenship, that they may be Roman citizens: are you taking away half of the empire from us to stop them recognizing this city as their own parent?"

dem apium, si duo reges nati sunt, alterum, qui deterior est, occidimus: tu in alveo imperii Romani, ubi unus et optimus princeps est, alterum et hunc deterrium et non apem, sed fucum colloquandum putas? Prudentiam tuam vehementer desideramus, imperator, nam quid futurum est, si vel te vivo vel post tuam mortem aut huic parti, quam alienas, aut alteri, quam tibi relinquis, bellum a barbaris nationibus inferatur? Quo robore militum, quibus copiis occurremus? vix nunc totius imperii viribus possumus, tunc poterimus? An perpetuo membrum hoc cum illo in concordia erit? Ut reor, nec esse poterit: cum Roma dominari velit, nolit pars illa servire. Quin et te vivo breve intra tempus revocatis veteribus presidibus, suffectis novis, te in tuum regnum profecto et longe agente, hic altero dominante, nonne omnia nova, id est diversa atque adversa erunt? Regno fere inter duos fratres diviso protinus et populorum animi dividuntur, et prius a se ipsis quam ab externis hostibus bellum auspicantur: idem eventurum in hoc imperio quis non videt? An ignoras hanc olim imprimis fuisse causam optimatibus, cur dicerent citius se in conspectu populi Romani esse morituros, quam rogationem illam ferri sinerent, ut pars senatus ac pars plebis ad incolendum Veios mitteretur duasque urbes communes populi Romani esse? si enim in una urbe tantum dissensionum esset, quid in duabus urbibus futurum? Ita hoc tempore, si tantum discordiarum in uno imperio — testor conscientiam tuam ac labores — quid in duobus imperiis fiet! Age vero, putasne hinc fore, qui tibi bellis occupato esse auxilio aut velint aut sciant? Ita ab armis atque ab omni re bellica abhorrentes erunt, qui preficiuntur militibus atque urbibus, ut ille, qui preficit. Quid, nonne hunc

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Even in beehives, if two kings are born, we kill the one that is weaker: do you, in the hive of the Roman empire, where there is one outstanding leader, think that another should be installed, who is weak in the extreme and not a bee but a drone? We greatly miss good sense on your part, Majesty. For what is going to happen if, either in your lifetime or after your death, a war is launched by barbarian nations upon this part that you are giving away or upon the other that you are keeping for yourself? Now, with the resources of the whole empire, we scarcely have the capacity to act: will we have it then? Will the one part be forever in harmony with the other? In my judgment this will be impossible: when Rome wishes to rule, the other part would be unwilling to be enslaved. In fact, as long as you are alive, once former governors have been recalled and new ones put in their place, when you have set out for your own kingdom and are far away while another rules here, will not everything be changed in a short time, in other words chaotic and contrary? Usually when a kingdom is divided between two brothers, the minds of the people are divided straightaway, and they expect war among themselves before responding to external enemies. Who does not see that the same will happen in this empire? Or are you unaware that formerly this was the principal reason why the aristocrats declared they would rather die in the sight of the Roman people than allow the passage of a measure that would have sent part of the Senate and part of the people to settle in Veii, and the establishment of two cities of the Roman people in common?¹⁰ For if there was so much dissension in one city, what would there be in two cities? At this time, if there is so much strife in one empire—I call to witness your own knowledge and efforts—, what will happen in two empires? Come now, do you imagine that there would be anyone here who would either want to come to your aid when you are engaged in war or know how? Those who will be put in charge of soldiers and cities will be repelled by arms and warfare of all kinds, just like the one who ap-

tam imperitum regnandi et iniurie facilem aut Romane legiones aut ipse provincie spoliare tentabunt ut quem sperabunt vel non repugnaturum vel penas non repetiturum? Credo, mehercule, ne unum quidem mensem illos in officio mansuros, sed statim et ad primum profectionis tue nuntium rebellaturos. Quid facies, quid consilii capies, cum duplii atque adeo multiplici bello urgebere? Nationes, quas subegimus, continere vix possumus: quomodo illis accedente ex liberis gentibus bello resistetur?

- 17 Tu, Cesar, quid ad te spectet ipse videris, nobis autem hec res non minus quam tibi cure esse debet. Tu mortalis es, imperium populi Romani decet esse immortale et, quantum in nobis est, erit, neque imperium modo, verum etiam pudor: scilicet, quorum religionem contemnimus, eorum accipiemus imperium? et principes orbis terrarum huic contemptissimo homini serviemus? Urbe a Gallis capta Romani senes demulceri sibi barbam a victoribus passi non sunt: nunc sibi tot senatorii ordinis, tot pretorii, tot tribunicii, tot consulares triumphalesque viri eos dominari patientur, quos ipsi tanquam servos malos omni contumeliarum genere suppliciorumque affecerunt? Istine homines magistratus creabunt, provincias regent, bella gerent, de nobis sententias capitis ferent? Sub his nobilitas Romana stipendia faciet, honores sperabit, munera assequetur? Et quod maius quodque altius penetret vulnus accipere possumus? Non ita putes, Cesar, Romanum degenerasse sanguinem, ut istud passurus sit equo animo et non quavis ratione devitandum existimet, quod, medius fidius, neque mulieres nostre sustinerent, sed magis se una cum dulcibus liberis sacrisque penatibus concremarent, ut non Cartaginienses femine fortiores fuerint quam Romane.

points them. Tell me, will not the Roman legions or the provinces themselves attempt to despoil this man, so unskilled in ruling and so vulnerable to harm, as someone they will expect either not to fight back or not to take revenge? I really believe that those appointees will not remain in their posts for even one month but will immediately rebel upon the first report of your departure. What will you do, what plan will you adopt, when you will be overwhelmed by two and even more wars? We can scarcely contain the nations that we have subjected: how will they be held back when war arises from free peoples?

"You, Caesar, will look after yourself, but this matter concerns us just as much as you. You are mortal. The empire of the Roman people must be immortal and, insofar as lies with us, it will be—not only the empire but our sense of honor as well. But shall we accept an empire of those whose religion we scorn? And shall we, as princes of the world, be subservient to this most contemptible creature? When the city was captured by the Gauls the aged Romans refused to allow their beards to be stroked by the victors. Now will so many members of the senatorial order, so many praetorians, so many tribunicians, so many consulars and holders of triumphs tolerate the domination of those whom they themselves have treated as miscreant slaves with all manner of insults and punishments? Will those men set up magistracies, rule provinces, wage wars, impose capital penalties upon us? Will the Roman nobility go on campaign for them, hope for decorations, and gain rewards? What greater wound can we receive, what wound goes deeper? You should not imagine, Caesar, that Roman blood has so degenerated that it will tolerate that with equanimity and not think it should be avoided by whatever means—something, I have to say, our women would not endure. They would rather burn themselves up with their dear children and the gods they cherish at home, for the women of Carthage should not be stronger than those of Rome.

- 18 'Etenim, Cesar, si regem te delegissemus, haberet tu quidem magnum de imperio Romano agendi arbitrium, sed non ita, ut vel minimum de ipsius imminueres maiestate. Alioquin, qui te fecissemus regem, eadem facultate abdicare te regno iuberemus, nedum posses regnum dividere, nedum tot provincias alienare, nedum ipsum regni caput peregrino atque humillimo homini addicere. Canem ovili preficimus, quem si lupi mavult officio fungi, aut eiicimus aut occidimus: nunc tu, cum diu canis officio in ovili Romano defendendo sis functus, ad extremum in lupum nullo exemplo converteris? Atque ut intelligas — quandoquidem nos pro iure nostro cogis asperius loqui — nullum tibi in populi Romani imperio ius esse: Cesar vi dominatum occupavit, Augustus et in vitium successit et adversariarum partium profligatione se dominum fecit, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasianus ceterique aut eadem aut simili via libertatem nostram predati sunt, tu quoque aliis expulsis aut interemptis dominus effectus es, sileo, quod ex matrimonio natus non sis. Quare, ut tibi nostram mentem testificemur, Cesar, si non libet te Rome principatum tenere, habes filios, quorum aliquem in locum tuum nobis quoque permittentibus ac rogantibus nature lege substituas, sin minus, nobis in animo est publicam amplitudinem cum privata dignitate defendere. Neque enim minor hec iniuria Quiritum quam olim fuit violata Lucretia, neque nobis deerit Brutus, qui contra Tarquinium se ad libertatem recuperandam huic populo prebeat ducem. Et in istos primum, quos nobis preponis, deinde et in te ferrum stringimus, quod in multos imperatores et quidem leviores ob causas fecimus.'
- 19 Hec profecto Constantimum, nisi lapidem eum aut truncum existimamus, permovissent, que, si populus non dixisset, ta-

"Caesar, had we chosen you as king, you would indeed have great control over the Roman empire, but not such that you could diminish its sovereignty in the slightest. On the contrary, we who had made you king would have ordered you by the same process to give up your throne, so that you could not divide the kingdom, not give away so many provinces, not turn over the very capital of the kingdom to a foreigner of the lowliest kind. We put a dog to protect the sheep-pen, but if the dog prefers to play the role of a wolf we either get rid of it or kill it. Now, since you have played the dog's part for a long time in defending the Roman sheep-pen, will you at the last, without any precedent, be transformed into a wolf? And, since you force us to speak rather candidly in support of our right, you need to realize that you have no legal claim on the empire of the Roman people: Julius Caesar seized rule by force, Augustus took over the crime and made himself the ruler by wiping out the opposing factions. Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasianus and all the rest plundered our freedom by the same or a similar route. You too became ruler after expelling or exterminating others, and I forbear to mention that you were an illegitimate child. Therefore, to make our mind known to you, Caesar, if you do not care to keep the government of Rome, you have sons, one of whom you may put in your place with our permission, and on our proposal, in accordance with the law of nature. Otherwise it is our intention to defend the public interest together with our own personal reputation. For this is no less an affront to the descendants of Romulus than was once the rape of Lucretia, nor will a Brutus be wanting to offer himself as a leader to this people against Tarquinus in the restoration of our freedom.¹¹ We will draw our swords first against those whom you put over us, then against you yourself, just as we have done against many emperors and for lesser reasons."

Certainly these points would have moved Constantine, unless we think he was made of stone or wood. If the people had not

men dicere apud se et his passim verbis fremere credibile erat.

- 20 Eamus nunc et dicamus Constantinum gratificari voluisse Silvestro, quem tot hominum odiis, tot gladiis subiiceret, ut vix, quantum sentio, unum Silvester diem in vita futurus fuisset, nam eo paucisque aliis absumptis videbatur omnis sublatum iri de peccatoribus Romanorum tam dire iniurie contumelieque suspicio. Age porro, si fieri potest, concedamus neque preces neque minas neque ullam rationem aliquid profecisse perstareque adhuc Constanti- num nec velle a suscepta semel persuasione recedere: quis non ad Silvestri orationem, si res vera fuisset, unquam commotum assen- tiatur? que talis haud dubie fuisset:
- 21 'Princeps optime ac fili, Cesar, pietatem quidem tuam tam pro- nam tamque effusam non possum non amare atque amplecti, veruntamen, quod in offerendis Deo muneribus immolandisque vic- timis nonnihil erres, minime demiror, quippe qui adhuc es in Christiana militia tiro. Ut non decebat olim a sacerdote omnem pecudem feramque et avem sacrificari, ita non omne ab eodem accipiendum est munus. Ego sacerdos sum ac pontifex, qui dispicere debeo, quid ad altare patiar offerri, ne forte non dico immundum animal offeratur, sed vipera aut serpens. Itaque sic habeas: si foret tui iuris partem imperii cum regina orbis, Roma, alteri tradere quam filiis — quod minime sentio —, si populus hic, si Italia, si ce- tere nationes sustinerent, ut, quos oderunt et quorum religionem adhuc respuunt, capti illecebris seculi eorum imperio obnoxii esse vellent — quod impossibile est —, tamen, si quid mihi credendum putas, fili amantissime, ut tibi assentirer ulla adduci ratione non possem, nisi vellem mihi ipsi esse dissimilis et condicionem meam oblivisci ac propemodum dominum Iesum abnegare. Tua enim

spoken out, it would still be imaginable that they spoke among themselves and raged in words like these.

Let us now move on and suppose that Constantine wanted to gratify Sylvester, whom he would be subjecting to so many men's hatred and swords that, as far as I can tell, Sylvester would not have remained alive for a single day. For with him and a few others out of the way, every hint of so terrible an outrage and insult would seem to have been removed from the breasts of the Romans. But let us just suppose, if at all possible, that prayers, threats, and any argument were unavailing and that Constantine still persisted and refused to retreat from his decision, once he had taken it. Who would not agree that he would have been moved at Sylvester's speech, if there had really been one? Doubtless it would have been like this:

21

"Caesar, my excellent liege and son, I cannot but cherish and embrace your devout outpouring of piety, and yet I am not too surprised that in offering gifts to God and in sacrificing victims you stray somewhat into error, since you are still a recruit in the Christian army. Just as formerly it was not proper for a priest to sacrifice just any kind of cattle, wild animal, and bird, so too should he not accept just any kind of gift. I am a priest and a pontiff, who has to determine what I may allow as an offering at the altar, to protect against the offering of an animal that is not just impure but a viper or a snake. So consider this. Suppose you had the right to hand over to someone other than your sons a part of your empire containing Rome, the reigning capital of the world—something I do not at all believe—; suppose this people, suppose Italy, suppose all the other nations, seduced as they are by worldly attractions, would agree, against all plausibility, that they preferred to be subject to those whom they hate and whose religion they have hitherto spat upon. Even so, my most loving son—if you think you owe me some credence—I could still not be induced by any argument to agree with you unless I wished to be

munera sive, ut tu vis, tue remunerations et gloriam et innocentiam et sanctimoniam meam atque omnium, qui mihi successuri sunt, polluerent ac prorsus everterent viamque iis, qui *ad cognitionem veritatis* venturi sunt, intercluderent. An vero Heliseus Naaman Syro a lepra curato mercedem accipere noluit: ego te curato accipiam? Ille munera respuit: ego regna mihi dari sinam? Ille personam prophete maculare noluit: ego personam Christi, quam in me gero, maculare potero? Cur autem ille accipiendis muneribus personam prophete maculari putavit? Nempe quod videri poterat vendere sacra, fenerare donum Dei, indigere presidiis hominum, elevare atque imminuere beneficii dignitatem. Maluit ergo sibi principes ac reges beneficiarios facere quam ipse beneficiarius illorum esse, immo ne mutua quidem beneficentia uti. *Beatus est enim multo*, ut inquit Dominus, *dare quam accipere*. Eadem mihi atque adeo maior est causa, cui etiam a Domino precipitur dicente: *Infirmos curate, mortuos suscitare, leprosos mundate, demones eiicite; gratis accepistis, gratis date.* Egone tantum flagitium admittam, Cesar, ut Dei precepta non exequar, ut gloriam meam polluam? *Melius est*, ut inquit Paulus, *michi mori quam ut gloriam meam quis evacuet*. Gloria nostra est apud Deum honorificare ministerium nostrum, ut idem inquit, *Vobis dico gentibus, quamdiu ego quidem sum gentium apostolus, glorificabo ministerium meum.* Ego, Cesar, aliis quoque sim et exemplum et causa delinquendi? christianus homo, sacerdos Dei, pontifex Romanus, vicarius Christi.

22 *Iam vero innocentia sacerdotum quomodo incolumis erit inter opes, inter magistratus, inter administrationem secularium negotiorum?* Ideone terrenis renuntiavimus, ut eadem uberiora assequamur? et privata abiecimus, ut aliena possideamus et publica?

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untrue to myself, forget my station, and almost deny my Lord Jesus. Your gifts or, as you prefer, your remunerations would stain and immediately wipe out the glory, innocence, and sanctity of myself and of all those who will come after me, and they would block the way for those who will come to know *the truth*. Elisha was unwilling to accept a payment when Naaman the Syrian was cured of leprosy: shall I accept one when you have been cured? He repudiated gifts: shall I allow kingdoms to be given to me? He was unwilling to besmirch the role of prophet: shall I have the capacity to besmirch the role of Christ, which I take upon myself? Why did he think that the role of prophet was besmirched by receiving gifts? Surely because he could appear to be selling sacred commodities, making money off the gift of God, needing the protection of men, weakening and diminishing the merit of his benefaction. Consequently he preferred to make princes and kings his own beneficiaries rather than to be himself their beneficiary, and not even to enjoy mutual benefaction. *For it is much more blessed, as the Lord said, to give than to receive.* The same applies to me, only more so, since I am instructed by the Lord, saying, *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons; freely have you received, freely give.* Shall I commit so great a crime, Caesar, as not to follow God's precepts, to stain my own glory? *It is better, as Paul said, for me to die than for anyone to take away my glory.* Our glory is to honor our ministry before God, as Paul also declared, *I say to you pagans, as long as I am the apostle of the pagans, I shall glorify my ministry.*¹² Should I be for others, Caesar, both an example and a cause of wrongdoing? I who am a Christian man, priest of God, Roman pontiff, vicar of Christ?

"How, moreover, will the blamelessness of priests remain secure amid wealth, magistracies, and the administration of secular business? Have we forsaken earthly things to such an extent that we pursue more opulent forms of the same things? Have we put aside our private property in order to possess the property of other peo-

22

Nostre erunt urbes, nostra tributa, nostra vectigalia? Et cur clericos, si hoc fecerimus, nos vocari licebit? Pars nostra sive sors, que Grece dicitur *κλῆρος*, dominus est, non terrena, sed celestis. Leuite, qui iidem clerici sunt, partem cum fratribus non fuere sortiti: et tu nos iubes etiam fratrum sortiri portionem? Quo mihi divitias atque opes? qui Domini voce iubeor nec de crastino esse sollicitus, et cui dictum est ab illo: *Nolite thesaurizare super terram, nolite possidere aurum neque argentum neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, et: Difficilius est divitem introire in regnum celorum quam camelum per foramen acus transire.* Ideoque pauperes sibi ministros elegit et qui omnia reliquerunt, ut eum sequerentur, et paupertatis ipse fuit exemplum. Usque adeo divitiarum pecuniarumque tractatio innocentie inimica est, non modo possessio illarum atque dominatus. Unus Iudas, qui loculos habebat et portabat que mittebantur, prevaricatus est et amore pecunie, cui assueverat, magistrum, dominum, Deum et reprehendit et prodidit. Itaque vereor, Cesar, ne me ex Petro facias Iudam. Audi etiam, quid Paulus dicat: *Nihil intulimus in hunc mundum, haud dubium quod nec auferre quid possumus. Habentes autem alimenta et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus.* Nam qui volunt divites fieri, incident in temptationem et in laqueum diaboli et desideria multa et inutilia et nociva, que mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem. Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas, quam quidam appetentes erraverunt a fide, et inseruerunt se doloribus multis. Tu autem, homo Dei, hec fuge. Et tu me accipere iubes, Cesar, que velut venenum effugere debeo?

23 'Et quis preterea — pro tua prudentia, Cesar, consideres — quis inter hec divinis rebus faciendis locus? Apostoli, quibusdam indignantibus, quod vidue ipsorum in ministerio quotidiano despicerentur, responderunt non esse equum relinquere se verbum Dei et

ple as well as public property? Will cities belong to us, taxes, and levies? And if we do this, what right will we have to be called clergy? Our portion or lot, which is called *klēros* in Greek, is the Lord—it is not a terrestrial but a heavenly lot. The Levites, who were also clergy, were not allotted a portion with their brothers: do you bid us to be allotted even our brother's portion? What are wealth and riches to me? I am bidden by the voice of the Lord to take no care for tomorrow, and I have been told by him: Do not build up treasure on earth, do not keep gold or silver or money in your wallets, and: It is more difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. And so he chose the poor as his ministers and those who gave up everything to follow him. He was himself an example of poverty. To a great extent the handling of wealth and money is an assault on innocence, not only the possession and control of it. Judas alone, who had the purses and carried the alms that were put into them, was a liar and from love of money, to which he had become accustomed, reproached and betrayed his master, his Lord, his God. And so I fear, Caesar, that you may turn me from a Peter into a Judas. Hear also what Paul says: We have brought nothing into this world, and there is no doubt that we can take nothing away from it. Having food and the wherewithal to cover ourselves let us be content. For those who want to become rich fall into temptation and into the devil's snare and into many useless and injurious desires, which plunge men into death and perdition. The root of all evils is greed, which some have espoused in leaving the faith and bringing upon themselves much pain. You, man of God, flee from these things.¹³ Do you, Caesar, bid me accept what I ought to avoid like poison?

"Furthermore, in your wisdom, Caesar, consider this: what place will there be among all these things for doing God's work? The apostles replied to certain persons who complained that their widows were being neglected in the apostles' daily ministry that it was not right for them to abandon the word of God and serve at

ministrare mensis; et tamen mensis viduarum ministrare quanto aliud est quam exigere vectigalia, curare erarium, stipendum numerare militibus et mille aliis huiusmodi curis implicari. *Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis secularibus*, inquit Paulus. Nunquid Aaron cum ceteris Levitici generis aliud quam domini tabernaculum procurabat? Cuius filii, quia ignem alienum in thuribula sumperant, igni celesti conflagraverunt: et tu iubes nos ignem secularium divitiarum, vetitum ac profanum, in sacra thuribula, id est in sacerdotalia opera sumere! Num Eleazar, num Phinees, num ceteri pontifices ministrique aut tabernaculi aut templi quicquam, nisi quod ad rem divinam pertineret, administrabant? administrabant dico, immo administrare poterant, si officio suo satisfacere volebant? Quod si nolint, audiant execrationem Domini dicentis: *Maledicti, qui opus Domini faciunt negligenter*. Que execratio cum in omnes tum in pontifices maxime cadit. O quantum est pontifcale munus! quantum est caput esse ecclesie! quantum est preponi pastorem tanto ovili, e cuius manu uniuscuiusque agni ovisque amisse sanguis exigitur, cui dictum est: *Si amas me plus quam alii, ut fateris, pasce agnos meos; iterum: si amas me, ut fateris, pasce oves meas; tertio: si amas me, ut fateris, pasce oves meas.* Et tu me iubes, Cesar, capras etiam pascere et porcos, qui nequeunt ab eodem pastore custodiri?

24 'Quid, quod me regem facere vis aut potius Cesarem, id est regum principem? Dominus Iesus Christus, deus et homo, rex et sacerdos, cum se regem affirmaret, audi de quo regno locutus est: *Regnum meum, inquit, non est de hoc mundo. Si enim de hoc mundo esset regnum meum, ministri mei utique decertarent*. Et que fuit prima vox ac frequentior clamor predicationis eius? nonne hic?: *Penitentiam agite, appropinquavit enim regnum celorum, appropinquavit regnum Dei.* Cui

tables. Yet how much different is serving at widows' tables from exacting taxes, managing the treasury, counting out soldiers' pay, and being involved in a thousand other responsibilities of this kind? *No warrior of God involves himself in worldly affairs*, said Paul.¹⁴ Did Aaron, together with all the others of the race of Levites, attend to anything other than the tabernacle of God? His sons were consumed by a celestial fire because they put a foreign flame into their censers. And you are telling us to put the fire of worldly wealth—a fire forbidden and profane—into our holy censers, that is, into our priestly offices? Did Eleazar, Phineas, and all the other pontiffs and ministers of the tabernacle or temple administer anything that was unrelated to their divine office? I say “administer,” but could they have administered anything if they wanted to do their duty? But if they should not want to do it, they would hear the execration of God saying: *Accursed are those who negligently perform the work of God.*¹⁵ This execration falls not only upon everyone but particularly upon pontiffs. How great is the responsibility of the pontiff! What it is to be the head of the Church! What a great burden it is to be placed as a shepherd in charge of so great a flock. The blood of every single lamb and sheep that has been lost is upon his hand. To him it has been said: *If you love me more than others do, feed my lambs; again, if you love me as you say you do, feed my sheep; yet a third time, if you love me as you say you do, feed my sheep.*¹⁶ Do you, Caesar, bid me also feed goats and pigs, who cannot be protected by the same shepherd?

“Tell me, do you want to make me a king or rather a Caesar—a ruler of kings? When the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, king and priest, acknowledged that he was a king, listen to what he said about his kingdom: *My kingdom, he said, is not of this world. For if my kingdom were of this world, my ministers would assuredly fight back.*¹⁷ What was the first thing he said, the often repeated purport of his preaching? Was it not this? *Repent! The kingdom of heaven is approaching! The kingdom of God is approaching!*¹⁸ To what

comparabitur regnum celi? Nonne, cum hec dixit, regnum seculare nihil ad se pertinere declaravit? Eoque non modo regnum huiusmodi non quesivit, sed oblatum quoque accipere noluit. Nam cum integereret aliquando populos destinasse, ut eum raparent regemque facerent, in montium solitudines fugit. Quod nobis, qui locum eius tenemus, non solum exemplo dedit imitandum, sed etiam precepto, inquiens: *Principes gentium dominantur eorum, et qui maiores sunt, potestatem exercent in eos.* Non ita erit inter vos, sed quicunque voluerit inter vos maior fieri, sit vester minister, et qui voluerit primus inter vos esse, erit vester servus. *Sicut filius hominis non venit, ut ministretur ei, sed ut ministret et det animam suam redemptionem pro multis.*

- 25 Iudices olim Deus, ut scias, Cesar, constituit super Israel, non reges, populumque sibi nomen regium postulantem detestatus est, nec aliter ob duritiam cordis illorum regem dedit, quam quod repudium permiserat, quod in nova lege revocavit. Et ego regnum accipiam, qui vix iudex esse permitto? *An nescitis, inquit Paulus, quod sancti de hoc mundo iudicabunt?* Et si in vobis iudicabitur mundus, indigni estis, qui de minimis iudicetis. Nescitis quod angelos iudicabimus? *Quanto magis secularia!* Secularia igitur iudicia si habueritis, contemptibiles qui sunt in ecclesia, eos constituite ad iudicandum. Atqui iudices de rebus controversis tantummodo iudicabant, non etiam tributa exigebant: ego exigam? qui scio a Domino interrogatum Petrum a quibusnam reges terre acciperent tributum censemve, a filiis an ab alienis? et, cum hic respondisset 'ab alienis,' ab eodem dictum: ergo liberi sunt filii. Quod si omnes filii mei sunt, Cesar—ut certe sunt—omnes liberi erunt, nihil quisquam solvet. Igitur non est opus mihi tua donatione, qua nihil assecuturus sum preter laborem, quem ut minime debeo, ita minime possum ferre.

will the kingdom of heaven be compared?¹⁹ When he said these things, did he not declare that a secular realm had nothing to do with him? Not only did he not seek a kingdom of this kind: he was unwilling to accept one that was offered to him. For when he realized at one moment that peoples had in mind to take him away and make him a king, he fled into the wilderness of the mountains. This is what he gave to us who stand in his place, not only as an example to be imitated, but as a precept, when he said: *The princes of the pagans rule over them, and the greater ones use their authority against them. It will not be like that among you, but whoever should wish to become greater among you, let him be your servant, and whoever should wish to be the first among you shall be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many.*²⁰

"In former times, as you know, Caesar, God set up judges, not kings, over Israel, and he abhorred the people for asking to have royalty. Because of the obstinacy in their hearts he gave them a king but only in such a way as to allow a rejection, which he revoked in a new law. Shall I accept a kingdom, when I am scarcely allowed to be a judge?²¹ Are you unaware, said Paul, that the saints will be judges over this world? If the world be judged among yourselves, it is beneath you to judge the smallest matters. Are you unaware that we shall judge the angels? How much more secular matters! If you have secular law-suits, put forward as judges those who are lowliest in the church.²² And yet judges will adjudicate only controversial cases, not demand payment as well. Shall I demand one? I know that when Peter was asked by the Lord from whom the kings of the earth received tribute or tax, whether from their sons or from foreigners, He declared, when Peter answered "from foreigners," *Therefore their sons are free.*²³ But if all people are my sons, Caesar, as they surely are, all of them will be free, no one will pay anything. Therefore I have no need of your donation, by which I would assume a task that it would be as wrong for me to bear as it is impossible.

26 *'Quid, quod necesse haberem potestatem exercere sanguinis, punire sontes, bella gerere, urbes diripere, regiones ferro ignique vastare? Aliter non est, quod sperem posse me tueri que tradidisses. Et si hec fecero, sacerdos, pontifex, Christi vicarius sum? ut illum in me tonantem audiam atque dicentem: Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur omnibus gentibus et tu fecisti eam speluncam latronum. Non veni in mundum, inquit Dominus, ut iudicem mundum, sed ut liberen rem eum. Et ego, qui illi successi, causa mortium ero? cui in persona Petri dictum est: Converte gladium tuum in locum suum, omnes enim, qui acceperint gladium, gladio peribunt. Ne defendere quidem nobis ferro nos licet—siquidem defendere Dominum Petrus volebat, cum auriculam abscidit servo—: et tu divitiarum aut comparandarum aut tuendarum causa uti ferro nos iubes? Nostra potestas est potestas clavium dicente Domino: Tibi dabo claves regni celorum, quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in celis, et quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum et in celis, et porte inferi non prevalebunt adversus eas. Nihil ad hanc potestatem, nihil ad hanc dignitatem, nihil ad hoc regnum adiici potest. Quo qui contentus non est, aliud sibi quoddam a diabolo postulat, qui etiam Domino dicere ausus est: Tibi dabo omnia regna mundi, si cadens in terram adoraveris me. Quare, Cesar—cum pace tua dictum sit—noli mihi diabolus effici, qui Christum, id est me, regna mundi a te data accipere iubeas, malo enim illa spernere quam possidere; et—ut aliquid de infidelibus, sed ut spero futuris fidelibus loquar—noli me de angelo lucis reddere illis angelum tenebrarum, quorum corda ad pietatem inducere volo, non ipsorum cervici iugum imponere, et gladio, quod est verbum Dei, non gladio ferreo mihi subiicere, ne detiniores efficiantur, ne recalcitrent, ne cornu me feriant, ne nomen*

"Why would I consider it necessary to have power over life and death, to punish the guilty, to wage wars, to destroy cities, to ravage territories by fire and sword? In no other way would I hope to be able to protect what you had transferred to me. And if I act in this way, am I a priest, a pontiff, the vicar of Christ? I should hear Him thundering against me and saying: *My house will be called the house of prayer for all peoples, and you have made it a robbers' cave.* I did not come into the world, says the Lord, to judge the world, but to free it.²⁴ Shall I, who am His successor, be a cause of deaths? I, to whom it was said in the person of Peter: *Put your sword back in its place, for all those who have taken a sword will perish by the sword.*²⁵ We are not even allowed to defend ourselves with a weapon—since Peter wanted to defend the Lord when he cut off the slave's ear.²⁶ Do you bid us employ a weapon for the acquisition or protection of riches? Our power is the power of the keys, as the Lord says: *I shall give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven too, and whatever you let loose on earth will be loosed in heaven too. And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.*²⁷ Nothing can be added to this power, nothing to this rank, nothing to this kingdom. Whoever is not content with this is demanding something else for himself from the devil, who dared to say even to the Lord: *I shall give you all the kingdoms of the world, if you fall on the ground and worship me.*²⁸ Therefore, Caesar—allow me to say this without offense—do not play the devil for me, you who tell Christ, namely me, to accept kingdoms of the world that are given by you. I prefer to repudiate them than to possess them; and—to speak of unbelievers but, I hope, future believers—do not turn me from an angel of light into an angel of darkness for those whose hearts I want to draw into piety, whose necks I do not want to bring under the yoke. I want to subject them to myself with the sword that is the word of God,²⁹ not with a sword of iron, so that they may not become worse, kick back, gore me, and, vexed by my error, blaspheme the name of God. I want to make them

Dei meo irritati errore blasphemant. Filios mihi carissimos volo reddere, non servos; adoptare, non emere; generare, non manu capere; animas eorum offerre sacrificium Deo, non diabolo corpora. Discite a me, inquit Dominus, qui mitis sum et humili corde. Capite iugum meum et invenietis requiem animabus vestris. Iugum enim meum suave et pondus meum leve. Cuius ad extremum, ut iam finem faciam, illam de hac re sententiam accipe, quam quasi inter me et te tulit. Reddite, que sunt Cesaris, Cesari, et que sunt Dei, Deo, quo fit, ut nec tu, Cesar, tua relinquere neque ego, que Cesaris sunt, accipere debeam, que, vel si millies offeras, nunquam accipiam.'

- 27 Ad hanc Silvestri orationem apostolico viro dignam, quid esset, quod amplius Constantinus posset opponere? Quod cum ita sit, qui aiunt donationem esse factam, nonne iniuriosi sunt in Constantinum, quem suos privare imperiumque Romanum voluisse convellere? iniuriosi in senatum populumque Romanum, Italiam totumque occidentem, quem contra ius fasque mutari imperium permississe? iniuriosi in Silvestrum, quem indignam sancto viro donationem acceptam habuisse? iniuriosi in summum pontificatum, cui licere terrenis potiri regnis et Romanum moderari imperium arbitrantur? Hec tamen omnia eo pertinent, ut appareat Constantinum inter tot impedimenta nunquam fuisse facturum, ut rem Romanam Silvestro ex maxima parte donaret, quod isti aiunt.

: II :

- 28 Age porro, ut credamus istam donationem, de qua facit pagina vestra mentionem, debet constare etiam de acceptatione Silvestri. Nunc de illa non constat. 'At credibile est,' dicitis, 'ratam hunc ha-

• ON THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE •

my dearest sons, not my slaves; to adopt them, not buy them; to father them, not subject them; to offer their souls as a sacrifice to God, not their bodies to the devil. *Learn from me*, the Lord said, *who am gentle and of a humble spirit. Take my yoke and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is agreeable and my burden light.*³⁰ Finally, to come to an end, on this matter hear that remark which He uttered as if directed to you and me: *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the thing that are God's.*³¹ Wherefore it turns out that neither you, Caesar, should give up what is yours nor should I accept what is Caesar's. Even if you should offer it a thousand times, I would never accept."

To this speech of Sylvester, worthy of an Apostle, what could Constantine put forward in rebuttal? Under the circumstances, those who say that the donation was made—do they not damage Constantine by asserting that he wanted to deprive his own family and tear apart the Roman empire? Do they not damage the Senate and the Roman people, Italy and the entire West, which allowed, they say, the empire to be transformed, contrary to laws human and divine? Do they not damage Sylvester, who, they say, accepted a donation unworthy of a holy man? Do they not damage the supreme pontificate, which they imagine is allowed to control earthly realms and to manage the Roman empire? All these points serve to show that Constantine would never, as they claim, have acted in the face of so many obstacles to bestow the Roman state, in large part, upon Sylvester.

: II :

Let us move on. To believe in that donation, which your document mentions, there has to be some evidence of Sylvester's acceptance. None now exists. "But," you say, "it is believable that he approved this donation." It is as believable, in my opinion, as that he

28

buisse donationem.' Ita credo, nec ratam habuisse modo verum etiam petuisse, rogasse, precibus extorsisse credibile est. Quid, vos credibile, quod preter opinionem est hominum, dicitis? Nec quia in pagina privilegii de donatione fit mentio, putandum est fuisse acceptatum, sed e contrario, quia non fit mentio de acceptatione, dicendum est non fuisse donatum. Ita plus contra vos facit hunc donum respuisse quam illum dare voluisse, et *beneficium in invitum non confertur.*

- 29 Neque vero tantum donata respuisse Silvestrum suspicari debemus, sed tacite etiam indicasse nec illum dare iure nec se iure accipere posse. Sed o cecam semper inconsultamque avaritiam! Demus, ut tabulas quoque de assensu Silvestri proferre possitis veras, incorruptas, sinceras: num protinus donata sunt, que in talibus continentur? Ubi possessio? Ubi in manus traditio? Nam si chartam modo Constantinus dat, non gratificari Silvestro voluit, sed illudere. 'Verisimile est,' dicitis, 'qui donat quippam, eum et possessionem tradere.' Videte, quid loquamini, cum possessionem non esse datam constet et, an datum sit ius, ambigatur. Verisimile est, qui possessionem non dedit, eum ne ius quidem dare voluisse.
- 30 An non constat possessionem nunquam fuisse traditam, quod negare impudentissimum est? Nunquid Silvestrum Constantinus in Capitolium quasi triumphantem inter frequentium Quiritum, sed infidelium plausum duxit? in sella aurea assistente universo senatu collocavit? magistratus pro sua quenque dignitate regem salutare et adorare iussit? Hoc erga novos principes fieri solet, non tantum aliquod palatium velut Lateranense tradi. Num postea per universam Italiam circunduxit? adiit cum illo Gallias, adiit Hispanias?

not only approved it but even sought it, asked for it, and extorted it by his prayers. Why do you say that something that goes beyond human imagining is believable? We do not have to think that the donation was accepted just because the grant is mentioned in the document about the donation. On the contrary, we must say that the donation was never made because there is no mention of an acceptance. There is more evidence against you that Sylvester rejected the gift than that Constantine wanted to make it. *A benefaction cannot be bestowed upon someone who does not want it.*³²

We ought to suppose that Sylvester not only repudiated the gifts but also indicated implicitly that Constantine had no right to bestow them and that he himself could not rightfully accept them. The blindness and injudiciousness of greed! Let us grant that you can also bring forward genuine documents—uncorrupt and authentic—concerning the agreement of Sylvester: whatever items were mentioned in those documents were not turned over straight-away, were they? Where is the possession of them? Where the transference of property? For if Constantine merely gave a piece of paper, he did not want to be nice to Sylvester but to make fun of him. "It is likely," you say, "that a donor is also the one who assigns possession." Look at what you are saying, since clearly possession was not granted and the question is whether a legal claim was. It is likely that whoever did not give possession did not want to give even a title.

Surely it is evident that possession was never granted—something it would be outrageous to deny? Did Constantine bring Sylvester to the Capitol, almost in triumph amid the applause of crowds of unbelieving Roman citizens? Did he place him upon the golden throne in the presence of the entire Senate? Did he order the magistrates, each in accord with his rank, to greet their king and prostrate themselves before him? This normally happens for new emperors, not merely the transference of some such palace as the Lateran. Did Constantine take Sylvester on a tour of all Italy?

nos, adiit Germanos ceterumque occidentem? Aut si gravabantur ambo tantum obire terrarum, quibusnam tam ingens officium delegarunt, qui et Cesaris vice traderent possessionem et Silvestri acciperent? Magni ii viri atque eximie auctoritatis esse debuerunt, et tamen qui fuerint ignoramus. Et quantum in his duobus verbis tradere et accipere subest pondus! Nostra memoria, ut exempla vetusta omittam, nunquam aliter facilitatum vidimus, cum quis aut urbis aut regionis aut provincie dominus factus est, ita demum traditam existimari possessionem, si magistratus pristini summoveantur novique surrogentur. Hoc si tunc Silvester fieri non postulasset, tamen magnificentie Constantini intererat, ut declararet non verbo se, sed re possessionem tradere, suos presides amovere aliosque ab illo substitui iubere. Non traditur possessio, que penes eosdem remanet qui possidebant, et novus dominus illos summoveare non audet. Sed fac istud quoque non obstare et nihilominus putari Silvestrum possedisse atque omnia preter morem preterque naturam tunc esse dicamus administrata. Postquam ille abiit, quos provinciis urbibusque rectores Silvester preposuit? que bella gesit? quas nationes ad arma spectantes oppressit? per quos hec administravit? 'Nihil horum scimus,' respondetis. Ita putò nocturno tempore hec omnia gesta sunt et ideo nemo vidi.

31 Age, fuit in possessione Silvester. Quis eum de possessione deiecit? Nam perpetuo in possessione non fuit neque successorum aliquis, saltem usque ad Gregorium Magnum, qui et ipse caruit possessione. Qui extra possessionem est nec se ab ea deiectum

Did he visit the Gauls with him, the Spaniards, the Germans, and all the western empire? Or if both of them were overwhelmed by such a circuit of territories, to whom did they entrust such a huge responsibility—persons who would give possession on the emperor's behalf and take it on Sylvester's? They had to have been great men of exceptional authority, and yet we do not know who they were. How weighty are those two words: give and take! Leaving aside examples from the ancient past, we have never, to the best of my knowledge, seen matters handled in any other way, when someone was made master of a city or a region or a province, than that possession is considered to be finally given over when former magistrates are removed and new ones put in their place. If Sylvester had not demanded at the time that this be done, it would nonetheless have been in the interest of Constantine's dignity to assert that he was giving over possession not only in word but in deed, that he was displacing his own governors and ordering others to be put in their place by Sylvester. There is no transfer of possession if it remains in the hands of the same persons who had it before, and the new master dares not remove them. But suppose that even this does not stand in the way, and we acknowledge that Sylvester is nevertheless deemed to have been in possession, and that everything was then managed in an untraditional and unnatural manner. After Constantine's withdrawal, to whom did Sylvester entrust the stewardship of provinces and cities? What wars did he wage? What nations on the verge of armed revolt did he suppress? Through what subordinates did he manage these things? "We do not know anything about this," you answer. So I imagine that everything was accomplished in the dead of night, and that is why no one saw anything.

All right, Sylvester had possession: Who deprived him of it? For neither he nor any of his successors remained in possession in perpetuity, at least down to Gregory the Great. Even he did not have possession. Anyone who is not in possession and cannot

probare potest, is profecto nunquam possedit et, si se possedisse dicat, insanit. Vides ut te insanum etiam probo, alioquin dic, quis papam deiecit: ipsene Constantinus an eius filii an Julianus an quis alius Cesar? Profer nomen expulsoris, profer tempus, unde primum, unde secundo, ac deinceps expulsus est. Num per seditionem et cedes an sine his? coniurarunt in eum pariter nationes, an que prima? Quid, nemo omnium auxilio fuit, ne illorum quidem, qui per Silvestrum aliumve papam prepositi urbibus ac provinciis erant? Uno die universa amisit an paulatim et per partes? Restitit ipse suique magistratus an ad primum tumultum se abdicarunt? Quid, ipsi victores non in eam fecem hominum, quam indignam imperio ducebant, ferro grassati sunt in ultionem contumelie, in tutelam occupate dominationis, in contemptum religionis nostre, in ipsum etiam posteritatis exemplum? Omnino eorum, qui victi sunt, nemo fugam cepit, nemo latuit, nemo timuit? o admirabilem casum! Imperium Romanum tantis laboribus, tanto cruento partum, tam placide, tam quiete a christianis sacerdotibus vel partum est vel amissum, ut nullus crux, nullum bellum, nulla querela intercesserit, et — quod non minus admirari debeas — per quos hoc gestum sit, quo tempore, quomodo, quandiu prorsus ignotum. Putes in silvis inter arbores regnasse Silvestrum, non Rome et inter homines, et ab hibernis imbribus frigoribusque, non ab hominibus ejectum. Quis non habet cognitum, qui paulo plura lectitarit, quot reges Rome, quot consules, quot dictatores, quot tribuni plebis, quot censores, quot ediles creati fuerint? Nemoque ex tanta hominum copia, ex tanta vetustate nos fugit. Scimus item, quot Atheniensium duces, quot Thebanorum, quot Lacedemoniorum extiterint, pugnas eorum terrestres navalesque universas tene-

prove that he was dispossessed assuredly never had possession at all and is delirious if he says that he had. You see that I am proving you too to be delirious if you cannot tell me who dispossessed the Pope. Was it Constantine himself, or his sons, or Julian, or some other emperor? Produce the name of the man who expelled him, produce the date when he was first expelled, when for a second time, when after that. Was it through rebellion and slaughter, or without these? Did nations conspire all together against him, or which one came first? Tell me, did no one of all those peoples come to help him, not even some of those whom Sylvester or some other Pope had put in charge of the cities and provinces? Did he lose absolutely everything on one day, or bit by bit over time? Did he himself offer resistance along with his magistrates, or did they abdicate at the first sign of trouble? Tell me, did not the victors themselves move, sword in hand, against the dregs of mankind they judged unworthy of empire to take vengeance for insults, to take over the power that had been usurped, to trample upon our religion, even to set an example for posterity? Did absolutely no one of those who were conquered take flight, go into hiding, or feel afraid? What an amazing episode! The Roman empire, acquired with so much effort and with so much blood, was acquired or lost by Christian priests so calmly and so quietly that no blood, no war, no contention intervened, and—what must be no less amazing—no one at all knows by whom this was done, when, how, and for how long. You would think that Sylvester ruled in the woods among trees, not in Rome among men, and was expelled by winter rains and chills, not by people. Who is not aware, if he has done a little serious reading, how many kings were appointed at Rome, how many consuls, how many dictators, how many tribunes of the plebs, how many aediles? No one escapes us from this large crowd of persons, from the most ancient of days. Similarly we know how many leaders of the Athenians there were, of the Thebans, of the Spartans, and we remember all their land

mus; non ignoramus, qui reges Persarum, Medorum, Chaldeorum, Hebreorum fuerint aliorumque plurimorum, et quomodo horum quisque aut acceperit regnum aut tenuerit aut perdiderit aut recuperaverit: Romanum autem sive Silvestrianum imperium, qua ratione incepit aut qua desierit, quando, per quos, in ipsa quoque urbe nescitur. Interrogo: num quos harum rerum testes auctoresque proferre possitis? 'Nulos,' respondetis: et non pudet vos, non tam homines quam pecudes, dicere verisimile esse posse disse Silvestrum?

- 32 Quod quia vos non potestis, ego e contrario docebo ad ultimum usque diem vite Constantinum et gradatim deinceps omnes Cesares possedisse, ut nequid habeatis, quod hiscere possitis. At per difficile est et magni, ut opinor, operis hoc docere. Evolvantur omnes Latine Greceque historie, citentur ceteri auctores, qui de illis meminere temporibus, ac neminem reperies in hac re ab alio discrepare. Unum ex mille testimoniis sufficiat: Eutropius, qui Constantinum, qui tres Constantini filios a patre relictos dominos orbis terrarum vidit, qui de Juliano, filio fratris Constantini, ita scribit: *Hic Julianus rerum potitus est ingentique apparatu Parthis intulit bellum, cui expeditioni ego quoque interfui.* Nec de donatione imperii occidentis tacuisset nec paulo post de Ioviano, qui successit Juliano, ita dixisset: *Pacem cum Sapore necessariam quidem, sed ignobilem fecit mutatis finibus ac nonnulla imperii Romani parte tradita, quod ante, ex quo Romanum imperium conditum erat, nunquam accidit.* Quin etiam legiones nostre apud Caudium per Pontium Telesinum et in Hispania apud Numantiam et in Numidia sub iugo misse sunt, ut nihil tamen finium tra deretur.

and sea battles. We are not ignorant of the kings of the Persians, the Medes, the Chaldaeans, the Hebrews, and many others, and how each of these assumed his kingdom or retained it or lost it or recovered it. But of Sylvester's Roman empire it is not known, even in the city of Rome itself, in what way it began or ended, when, or through whom. I ask you: would you be able to produce any witnesses of these things or any writers about them? "No," you reply, and you, who are more cattle than people, feel no shame in saying that Sylvester probably had possession.

Since you are unable to do this, I, on the contrary, shall show 32 that down to the last day of his life Constantine had possession and so did all the emperors in succession after him, so as to leave you with nothing to sputter at. Yet it is exceedingly difficult, in my opinion, and very laborious to show this. Let all the Latin and Greek histories be spread out, let all other authors who have mentioned those times be cited, and you will discover that none is at variance with another in this matter. Let one out of a thousand testimonies suffice—Eutropius, who saw Constantine, who saw the three sons of Constantine left by their father as masters of the world, who wrote as follows about Julian, the son of Constantine's brother: *This Julian gained power and with a huge army waged war against the Parthians in an expedition in which I too participated.*³³ He would not have kept quiet about a donation of the western empire, nor a little later would he have said about Jovian, who succeeded Julian: *With Sapor he made a necessary peace but an ignoble one, with boundary changes as a consequence of giving up some part of the Roman empire—something that had never happened before from the time the Roman empire was founded. In fact our legions had been sent under the yoke at the Caudine Forks by Pontius Telesinus and in Spain at Numantia and in Numidia so that none of our territory should be given up.*³⁴

33 Hoc loco libet vos nuperrimi, licet defuncti estis, convenire, pontifices Romani, et te, Eugeni, qui vivis cum Felicis tamen venia: cur donationem Constantini magno ore iactatis frequenterque vos ultores erepti imperii quibusdam regibus principibusque mina-
mini? et confessionem quandam servitutis a Cesare, dum coronan-
dus est, et a nonnullis aliis principibus extorquetis? — veluti ab
rege Neapolitano atque Sicilie —, id quod nunquam aliquis veter-
um Romanorum pontificum fecit, non Damasus apud Theodo-
sium, non Syricius apud Archadium, non Anastasius apud Honori-
um, non Ioannes apud Iustinianum, non alii apud alios,
sanctissimi pape apud optimos Cesares, sed semper illorum Ro-
mam Italiamque cum provinciis, quas nominavi, fuisse professi
sunt. Eoque nomismata aurea, ut de aliis monumentis sileam tem-
plisque urbis Romane, circumferuntur, non Grecis sed Latinis litteris
inscripta Constantini iam Christiani et deinceps cunctorum
ferme imperatorum, quorum multa penes me sunt, cum hac ple-
runque subscriptione super imaginem crucis: **CONCORDIA ORBIS.**
Qualia infinita reperirentur summorum pontificum, si unquam
Rome imperassetis, que nulla reperiuntur, neque aurea neque ar-
gentea, neque ab aliquo visa memorantur, et tamen necesse erat
illo tempore proprium habere nomisma, quisquis imperium Rome
teneret, saltem sub imagine Salvatoris aut Petri. Proh imperitiam
hominum! Non cernitis, si donatio Constantini vera est, Cesari —
de Latino loquor — nihil relinqu. En qualis imperator, qualis rex
Romanus erit, cuius regnum si quis habeat nec aliud habeat, om-
nino nil habeat? Quod si itaque palam est Silvestrum non posse-
disse, hoc est Constantinum non tradidisse possessionem, haud
dubium erit ne ius quidem, ut dixi, dedisse possidendi, nisi dicitis

At this point I should like to turn to you, the most recent Roman popes (though you are now deceased), and to you, Eugene, who are still alive but only by the grace of Felix.³⁵ Why do you loudly proclaim the Donation of Constantine and frequently threaten certain kings and princes as if you were exacting vengeance for a purloined empire? And why do you squeeze out some sort of admission of subjection from the emperor when he has to be crowned, as well as from some other rulers, such as the King of Naples and Sicily—something that not one of the older Roman popes ever did, not Damasus with Theodosius, not Syricius with Arcadius, not Anastasius with Honorius, not John with Justinian, nor other very saintly popes with other excellent emperors? On the contrary, they always maintained that Rome and Italy, together with the provinces I have named, belonged to the emperors. For this reason gold coins, of which I own many specimens, were in circulation (I do not speak here of other monuments and shrines of the city of Rome), bearing an inscription in Latin letters, not Greek, from the time of Constantine, already a Christian, and of almost all the emperors after him: CONCORDIA ORBIS, with this legend normally placed below a representation of the cross.³⁶ An innumerable number of coins of the popes would be found if you had ever ruled in Rome. No such coins are found, either in gold or silver, and they are not mentioned as seen by anyone, and yet it was necessary at that time for anyone who held power at Rome to have his own coinage—even with a depiction of the Savior and Peter. Alas for the ignorance of mankind! You do not perceive that, if the Donation of Constantine is true, the emperor—I am speaking of the one in the Latin West—has nothing left. What sort of Roman emperor or king will he be, if any holder of his kingdom who lacks another kingdom has absolutely nothing at all? But if therefore it is plain that Sylvester did not have possession, in other words that Constantine did not hand over possession, there will be no doubt that, as I have said, he did not even give the

ius quidem datum, sed aliqua causa possessionem non traditam. Ita plane dabat, quod minime futurum intelligebat? dabat, quod tradere non poterat? dabat, quod non prius venire in manus eius, cui dabatur, possibile erat, quam esset extinctum? dabat donum, quod ante quingentos annos aut nunquam valitetur fore? Verum hoc loqui aut sentire insanum est.

: III :

- 34 Sed iam tempus est, ne longior fiam, cause adversariorum iam concise atque lacerate letale vulnus imprimere et uno eam iugulare ictu. Omnis fere historia, que nomen historie meretur, Constantium a puero cum patre Constantio christianum refert multo etiam ante pontificatum Silvestri, ut Eusebius ecclesiastice scriptor historie, quem Rufinus, non in postremis doctus, in Latinum interpretatus duo volumina de evo suo adiecit, quorum uterque pene Constantini temporibus fuit. Adde hoc testimonium etiam Romani pontificis qui his rebus gerendis non interfuit, sed prefuit, non testis, sed auctor, non alieni negotii, sed sui narrator. Is est Melchiades papa, qui proximus fuit ante Silvestrum, qui ita ait: *Ecclesia ad hoc usque pervenit, ut non solum gentes, sed etiam Romani principes, qui totius orbis monarchiam tenebant, ad fidem Christi et fidei sacramenta concurrerent. E quibus vir religiosissimus Constantinus, primus fidem veritatis patenter adeptus licentiam dedit per universum orbem suo degentibus imperio non solum fieri christianos, sed etiam fabricandi ecclesias, et predia constituit tribuenda. Denique idem prefatus princeps donaria immensa contulit et fabricam templi prime sedis beati Petri instituit, adeo*

right to possess, unless you assert that the right was given but that for some reason possession was not assigned. Thus did he clearly give what he realized would not at all come into being? Did he give what he could not assign? Did he give what could not pass into the hands of the recipient before it ceased to exist? Did he give a gift that would be not be valid until five hundred years later or never? To talk or think like this is lunacy.

: III :

But now it is time, lest I go on too long, to administer a mortal blow to my opponents' case, already battered and mangled, and to slice its throat with a single stroke. Virtually all history that is worthy of the name reports that Constantine was a Christian from childhood together with his father Constantius even well before the papacy of Sylvester. So Eusebius, author of an ecclesiastical history which Rufinus, a man of considerable erudition, translated into Latin, adding two books devoted to his own time. Both of these men were near contemporaries of Constantine. Add to this the testimony of a Roman pontiff who did not merely participate in the course of these events but was in charge of them, not as a passive witness but as an active instigator, a narrator not of someone else's affairs but of his own. He is Pope Melchiades, who immediately preceded Sylvester, and this is what he says: *The Church has reached the point when not only peoples but even Roman emperors, who held sway over the whole world, might join together in the faith of Christ and its sacraments. Of these emperors, Constantine, a highly religious man, first openly espoused faith in the truth and made it permissible for those who lived anywhere in the world under his rule not only to become Christians but to build churches, and he arranged for the assignment of properties. Finally the aforementioned emperor provided immense largesse and started the construction of the first basilica of the see of*

ut sedem imperialem relinquaret et beato Petro suisque successoribus profuturam concederet. En nihil Melchiades a Constantino datum ait, nisi palatium Lateranense, et predia, de quibus Gregorius in registro facit sepissime mentionem. Ubi sunt, qui nos in dubium vocare non sinunt, donatio Constantini valeat necne, cum illa donatio fuerit et ante Silvestrum et rerum tantummodo privatarum?

: IV :

- 35 Que res quanquam plana et aperta sit, tamen de ipso, quod isti stolidi proferre solent, privilegio disserendum est. Et ante omnia non modo ille, qui Gratianus videri voluit, qui nonnulla ad opus Gratiani adiecit, improbitatis arguendus est, verum etiam inscitie, qui opinantur paginam privilegii apud Gratianum contineri, quod neque docti unquam putarunt, et in vetustissimis quibusque editionibus decretorum non invenitur. Et si quo in loco huius rei Gratianus meminisset, non in hoc, ubi isti collocant seriem ipsam orationis abrumpentes, sed in eo, ubi agit de Ludovici pactione, meminisset. Preterea duo milia locorum in decretis sunt, que ab huius loci fide dissentiant, quorum unus est, ubi — que superius retuli — Melchiadis verba ponuntur. Nonnulli eum, qui hoc capitulum adiecit, aiunt vocatum Paleam vel vero nomine vel ideo quod, que de suo adiunxit, ad Gratianum comparata instar palearum iuxta frumenta existimentur. Utcunque sit, indignissimum est credere, que ab hoc adiecta sunt, ea decretorum collectorem aut ignorasse aut magnificisse habuisseque pro veris.
- 36 Bene habet, sufficit, vicimus: primum, quod hoc Gratianus non ait, ut isti mentiebantur, immo adeo — prout ex infinitis locis datur

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St. Peter, so that he gave up his own imperial residence and granted it to St. Peter and his successors for their future use.³⁷ You see that Melchiades says Constantine gave nothing except the Lateran palace and the properties that Gregory very often mentions in his register. Where are those who do not allow us to question the validity of the Donation of Constantine, when the actual donation took place before Sylvester and consisted solely of private properties?

: IV :

Although this issue is clear and obvious, we must nevertheless discuss the document itself, which those blockheads keep putting forward. First of all, not only must we charge with dishonesty the person who wanted to pose as Gratian by making additions to Gratian's work, but we must also charge with ignorance those who think that the text of the document was included in Gratian's collection, since no scholars ever thought it was and it is missing in all the oldest editions of the decrees.³⁸ If Gratian had mentioned this matter anywhere, he would not have mentioned it where those persons put it, by interrupting the sequence of thought, but rather in the context of the settlement with Louis. Besides there are two thousand passages in the decrees which are at variance with the assertion of this text. One of these is where, as I have indicated above, the words of Melchiades occur. Some say that the person who added this chapter was called Palea,³⁹ either because that was really his name or because what he added on his own was, in comparison with Gratian, like chaff (*palea*) alongside wheat. Whatever the case may be, it is highly demeaning to suggest that the compiler of decrees either did not know what this man added or valued it highly and considered it authentic.

Fine, enough! We have won our case: first because Gratian does not say what they mendaciously claimed, but rather—as can be grasped from innumerable passages—denies and refutes it, and

intelligi — negat atque confutat; deinde, quod unum et ignotum et nullius auctoritatis ac numeri hominem afferunt, ita etiam stolidum, ut ea Gratiano affinxerit, que cum ceteris illius dictis congruere non possent. Hunc ergo vos auctorem profertis? huius unius testimonio nitimini, huius chartulam ad tante rei confirmationem contra sexcenta probationum genera recitatis? At ego exspectaveram, ut aurea sigilla, marmoratos titulos, mille auctores ostenderetis. 'Sed ipse,' dicitis, 'Palea auctorem profert, fontem historie ostendit et Gelatum papam cum multis episcopis in testimonium citat: Ex gestis, inquit, Silvestri, que beatus papa Gelatus in concilio LXX episcoporum a catholicis legi commemorat et pro antiquo usu multas hoc dicit ecclesias imitari, in quibus legitur Constantinus etc. Multo superius, ubi de libris legendis et non legendis agitur, etiam dixerat: Actus beati Silvestri presulis, licet eius qui scripsit nomen ignoremus, a multis tamen ab urbe Roma catholicis legi cognovimus, et pro antiquo usu hoc imitantur ecclesie.

37 Mira hec auctoritas, mirum testimonium, inexpugnabilis probatio! Dono vobis hoc, Gelatum, dum de concilio LXX episcoporum loquitur, id dixisse: num idem dixit paginam privilegii in beatissimi Silvestri gestis legi? Is vero tantum ait gesta Silvestri legi et hoc Rome, cuius ecclesie auctoritatem multe alie sequuntur, quod ego non nego; concedo, fateor, me quoque una cum Gelatio testem exhibeo. Verum quid vobis ista res prodest, nisi ut in adducendis testibus mentiri voluisse videamini? Ignoratur nomen eius, qui hoc in Decretis ascripsit: et solus hoc dicit; ignoratur nomen eius, qui scripsit historiam: et solus is et falso testis affertur. Et vos, boni

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second because they adduce an unknown person of no authority or consequence, who was so stupid that he added to Gratian material that could not be reconciled with all the rest of his utterances. Are you therefore advancing this person as the author? Do you rely upon the testimony of this one man, do you invoke his statement in confirmation of such an important matter against all kinds of proof? I should have expected you to show gold seals, marble inscriptions, a thousand authors. "But," you say, "Palea himself produces his author, displays the source of his history, and cites the testimony of Pope Gelasius together with many bishops: *It comes from the Acts of Sylvester, he asserts, which the blessed Pope Gelasius, in the Council of Seventy Bishops, mentions are read by Catholics, and he says that many churches imitate this in accordance with ancient custom—Acts in which Constantine is said etc.*"⁴⁰ Much earlier, in a discussion of which books should be read and which not, he had also said, *We know that the Acts of the blessed Sylvester, the high priest, are read by many Catholics from Rome, even though we have no idea of the name of the person who wrote them, and that churches imitate this example in accordance with ancient custom.*⁴¹

What wonderful authority this is, what wonderful testimony, an unassailable demonstration! I grant you that Gelasius said this when he was speaking in the Council of Seventy Bishops. But he did not say, did he, that the item about the donation is read in the Acts of the most blessed Sylvester? He only says that the Acts of Sylvester are read, and at Rome, and that many other churches follow the authority of Rome's church. This I do not deny. I concede it, I admit it, I present myself as a witness along with Gelasius. But what does it do for you, except that you appear to have deliberately lied in producing witnesses? No one knows the name of the man who wrote this in the decrees, and he is the only one who says it. No one knows the name of the man who wrote the history, and he is the only one brought forward as a witness, and falsely too. Do you, good and sagacious people, think that this

37

viri atque prudentes, hoc satis superque esse ad tante rei testimonium existimatis? At videte, quantum inter meum intersit vestrumpque iudicium: ego ne si hoc quidem apud gesta Silvestri privilegium contineretur pro vero habendum putarem, cum historia illa non historia sit, sed poetica et impudentissima fabula — ut posterius ostendam — nec quisquam alias alicuius duntaxat auctoritatis de hoc privilegio habeat mentionem. Et Iacobus Varaginensis, propensus in amorem clericorum ut archiepiscopus, tamen in gestis sanctorum de donatione Constantini ut fabulosa nec digna, que inter gesta Silvestri poneretur, silentium egit, lata quodammodo sententia contra eos, si qui hec litteris mandavissent.

- 38 Sed ipsum falsarium ac vere paleam, non triticum, optorto collo in iudicium trahere volo. Quid ais, falsarie? unde fit quod istud privilegium inter Silvestri gesta non legimus? Credo, rarus hic liber est difficilisque inventu nec vulgo habetur, sed tanquam fasti olim a pontificibus aut libri Sibyllini a decemviris custoditur, lingua Greca aut Syriaca aut Chaldaica scriptus est. Testatur Gelatius a multis catholicis legi, Varaginensis de eo meminit, nos quoque mille et antique scripta exemplaria vidimus, et in omni fere cathedrali ecclesia, cum adest Silvestri natalis dies, lectitantur, et tamen nemo se illic legisse istud ait, quod tu affingis, nemo audisse, nemo somniasse. An alia quedam fortassis historia est? et quenam ista erit? Ego aliam nescio nec abs te aliam dici interpretor, quippe de ea tu loqueris, quam Gelatius apud multas ecclesias lectitari refert. In hac autem tuum privilegium non invenimus. Quod si istud in vita Silvestri non legitur, quid tu ita legi tradisti? Quid in tanta re iocari es ausus et levium hominum cupiditatem eludere?

is sufficient and more than sufficient as evidence for something so important? Look at how great a difference there is between my judgment and yours: Not even if the donation were contained in the Acts of Sylvester would I think it should be reckoned authentic, since that history is not history but a poetic and very brazen fabrication—as I will show later—and no one else of the slightest authority makes mention of this donation. Even Jacopo da Voragine, as an archbishop enthusiastically inclined towards the clergy, nevertheless in his Acts of the Saints kept silent about the Donation of Constantine as fictitious and unworthy of inclusion among the Acts of Sylvester.⁴² In a way this was a judgment against those who might have written about the matter.

But this forger, this truly “straw man,” the wheatless Palea, I 38 want to grab by the neck and drag into court. What do you say, forger? How does it happen that we do not find this grant in the Acts of Sylvester? To be sure, this book is a rarity, hard to find and not in general circulation, but it is kept as the Fasti were formerly kept by the ancient Pontifices or the Sibylline Books by the Decemviri. It was written in the Greek language or in Syriac or in Chaldaean. Gelasius testifies that it was read by many Catholics, and Voragine mentions it. We too have seen thousands of copies written long ago, and they are read out in almost every cathedral on Sylvester’s birthday. Yet no one says that he has read there what you put in. No one says he has heard of it, or dreamt of it. Or perhaps there is some other history. And what will that be? I know of no other, and I cannot make out that any other is meant by you, since you talk about the one that Gelasius reports as being read in many churches. Yet in this history we have not found that grant of yours. But if it is not in the text of the life of Sylvester, why have you claimed that it is? Why in a matter of such importance have you dared to jest and to play off the desire of simple folk?

39 Sed stultus sum, qui illius potius insector audaciam quam istorum dementiam, qui crediderunt. Si quis apud Grecos, apud Hebreos, apud barbaros diceret hoc esse memorie proditum, nonne iuberetis nominari auctorem, proferri codicem et locum ab interprete fideli exponi, antequam crederetis? Nunc de lingua vestra, de notissimo codice fit mentio, et vos tam incredibile factum aut non inquiritis aut, cum scriptum non reperiatis, tam prona estis credulitate, ut pro scripto habeatis atque pro vero. Et hoc titulo contenti terras miscetis et maria et, quasi nullum subsit dubium, eos, qui vobis non credunt, terrore bellorum aliisque minis prosequimini. Bone Iesu, quanta vis, quanta divinitas est veritatis, que per sese sine magno conatu ab omnibus dolis ac fallaciis se ipsa defendit, ut non immerito, cum esset apud Darium regem exorta contentio, quid foret maxime validum, et alius aliud diceret, tributa sit palma veritati! Quia cum sacerdotibus, non cum secularibus mihi res est, ecclesiastica magis quam secularia sunt exempla repetenda: Iudas Maccabeus, cum dimissis Romanam legatis fedus amicitiamque a senatu impetrasset, curavit verba federis in es incidenda Ierosolimamque portanda. Taceo de lapideis decalogi tabulis, quas Deus Moysi dedit. Ista vero tam magnifica Constantini et tam inaudita donatio nullis, neque in auro neque in argento neque in ere neque in marmore neque postremo in libris, probari documentis potest, sed tantum, si isti credimus, in charta sive membrana. Iobal, primus musices auctor, — ut est apud Iosephum — cum esset a maioribus per manus tradita opinio res humanas semel aqua, iterum igni delendas, doctrinam suam duabus columnis inscripsit —

But I am foolish to attack that man's brazenness rather than the madness of those who have believed him. If anyone among the Greeks, Hebrews, or barbarians were to say that this was transmitted to memory, would you not ask for the author to be named, the book to be produced, and the passage to be expounded by a trustworthy critic before you believed him? Now your own language and a very famous book are at issue, and either you make no inquiry about such an unbelievable item or, when you fail to discover the written text, you show such headlong credulity that you accept it as written and as true. Fortified by this ascription, you confound earth and sea, and, as if there were no doubt at all, you pursue those who do not believe you with the terrifying prospect of war and other threats. Good Lord, what strength, what divinity there is in the truth, which, on its own, defends itself without great effort from all treachery and deceit. Thus not undeservedly, when a dispute arose at the court of King Darius as to what was strongest of all, and one person gave one opinion and another another, the palm was awarded to truth. Since my argument is with priests and not with laymen, ecclesiastical examples, rather than secular ones, ought to be produced. When Judas Maccabaeus sent his envoys to Rome to gain a treaty and friendship from the Senate, he made sure that the words of the treaty were incised on bronze and carried to Jerusalem.⁴³ I say nothing about the stone tablets of the Decalogue, which God gave to Moses. But this donation of Constantine, so splendid and so unexampled, can be proven by no document at all, whether on gold or on silver or on bronze or on marble or, finally, in books, but only, if we believe that man, on paper or parchment. Since the opinion was handed down from generation to generation that human achievements were to be destroyed at one time by water and at another by fire, Jobal, the inventor of music (according to Josephus),⁴⁴ inscribed his teaching on two columns—one in brick against fire, the other in stone against water, both of which lasted, by his own account,

latericia contra ignem, lapidea contra aquas, que ad Iosephi evum, ut idem scribit, permansit — ut suum in homines beneficium semper extaret. Et apud Romanos rusticanos adhuc et agrestes, cum parve et rare littere essent, tamen leges XII tabularum in es fuere incise, que in capta atque incensa a Gallis urbe incolumes postea sunt reperte. Adeo duo maxima in rebus humanis, diuturnitatem temporis et fortune violentiam, vincit circumspecta providentia. Constantinus vero orbis terrarum donationem papyro tantum et atramento signavit? cum presertim machinator fabule, quisquis ille fuit, faciat Constantimum dicentem se credere non defore, qui donationem hanc impia aviditate rescinderent. Hoc times, Constantine, et non caves, ne ii, qui Romam Silvestro eriperent, chartulam quoque surriperent? Quid, ipse Silvester pro se nihil agit? ita omnia Constantino remittit, ita securus ac segnis est in tanto negotio? nihil sibi, nihil ecclesie sue, nihil posteritati prospicit? En, cui imperium Romanum administrandum committas? qui tam magne rei tantoque aut lucro aut periculo indormit, siquidem sublata chartula privilegii donationem utique etate procedente probare non poterit.

- 40 *Paginam privilegii appellat homo vesanus. Privilegiumne tu — libet velut presentem insectari — vocas donationem orbis terrarum? et hoc in pagina vis esse scriptum et isto genere orationis usum esse Constantinum? Si titulus absurdus est, qualia cetera existimemus?*

to Josephus' own time—in order that his benefaction to mankind should exist forever. Even among the Romans when they were rustic and uncultivated, when there was slight and scarce literacy, the laws of the Twelve Tables were nonetheless incised on bronze. After the city was captured and burnt by the Gauls they were subsequently discovered intact. To such an extent does prudent foresight overcome the two greatest forces in human affairs, the length of time and the violence of fortune. Did Constantine really sign a donation of the world only on papyrus and with ink? The man who concocted this story, whoever he was, went out of his way to claim that Constantine said that he thought there would be no shortage of people to rescind this donation out of godless greed. Are you afraid of this, Constantine, and are you not exercising caution to stop those who would take Rome away from Sylvester from making off with the charter too? Tell me, is Sylvester himself doing nothing on his own behalf? Is he turning over everything to Constantine? Is he so indifferent and slothful in a matter of such importance? Does he take no thought for himself, no thought for the Church, no thought for posterity? Look at the man to whom you would entrust the administration of the Roman empire! He who falls asleep in a matter of such great consequence and of such potential profit or danger will be quite unable, once the grant charter has disappeared, to give proof of the donation after so much time has passed.

The madman calls it the *text of the grant*. Do you—I prefer to attack him as if he were present before me—do you speak of a donation of the world as a grant? Do you claim that this is written in the *text* and that Constantine used that kind of language? If the title is absurd, what should we think of the rest of it?

- 41 *Constantinus Imperator quarto die sui baptismatis privilegium Romane ecclesie pontifici contulit, ut in toto orbe Romano sacerdotes ita hunc caput habeant, sicut iudices regem.*

Hoc in ipsa Silvestri historia continetur, ex quo dubitari non potest, ubinam scriptum significetur privilegium. Sed more eorum, qui mendacia machinantur, a vero incepit, ut sequentibus, que falsa sunt, conciliet fidem, ut Sinon apud Virgilium: *Cuncta equidem tibi, rex, fuerint quecunque, fatebor / vera, inquit, nec me Argolica de gente negabo; / hoc primum. Deinde falsa subiecit.* Ita hoc loco noster Sinon facit, qui cum a vero incepisset, adiecit:

- 42 *In eo privilegio ita inter cetera legitur: utile iudicavimus una cum omnibus satrapis nostris et universo senatu, optimatibus etiam et cum cuncto populo imperio Romane ecclesie subiacenti, ut, sicut beatus Petrus in terris vicarius Dei videtur esse constitutus, etiam et pontifices ipsius principis apostolorum vicem, principatus potestatem amplius, quam terrene imperialis nostre serenitatis mansuetudo habere videretur, concessam a nobis nostroque imperio optineant.*

O scelerate atque malefice, eadem, quam affers in testimonium, refert historia longo tempore neminem senatorii ordinis voluisse accipere religionem christianam et Constantinum pauperes sollicitasse pretio ad baptismum: et tu ais intra primos statim dies senatum, optimates, satrapes quasi iam christianos de honestanda ecclesia Romana cum Cesare decrevisse. Quid, quod vis interfuisse satrapes? O caudex, o stipes! Sic loquuntur Cesares? sic concipi solent decreta Romana? Quis unquam satrapes in consiliis Romanorum nominari audivit? Non teneo memoria unquam legisse me ullum non modo Romanum, sed ne in Romanorum quidem

Emperor Constantine, on the fourth day after his baptism, conveyed to the pontiff of the Church of Rome a grant, so that throughout the entire Roman world priests should consider him their head, just as judges their king.⁴⁵

41

This is contained in the actual history of Sylvester, which leaves no doubt where the word grant was indicated. But, just like those who concoct lies, he begins from the truth in order to win trust for the falsehoods that follow, just as Sinon in Virgil: *I shall tell you everything that happened, king, truthfully, he said, and I shall not deny that I am of the people of Argos.*⁴⁶ This comes first. After that he puts in the lies. This is what our Sinon does here, when he adds, after starting with the truth:

Among other things the following is said in this grant: We have judged it useful, together with all our satraps and the entire Senate, and the Optimates too, along with all people subject to the rule of the Church of Rome, that, just as the blessed Peter is seen to have been established as the vicar of God on earth, so too do the pontiffs in place of the prince of the apostles obtain from us and our empire the concession of a princely power of greater extent than the clemency of our earthly imperial serenity appeared to possess.

42

You scoundrel, you miscreant, the same history that you cite in your support reports that for a long time no one in the senatorial order wanted to accept the Christian religion and that Constantine bribed the poor to undergo baptism: and you say that straightaway within the first days the Senate, the Optimates, the satraps, as if they were already Christians, issued a decree with the emperor about adorning the Church of Rome. Why do you want to bring in *satraps*?⁴⁷ You blockhead, you dolt! Do emperors talk that way? Are Roman decrees normally drafted like that? Who ever heard of satraps being named in the deliberations of the Romans? I cannot recall reading that anyone, either in Rome or

provinciis satrapem nominatum. At hic imperatoris satrapes vocat eosque senatu preponit, cum omnes honores, etiam qui principi deferuntur, tantum a senatu decernantur aut iuncto populoque Romano. Hinc est, quod in lapidibus vetustis aut tabulis ereis aut numismatis duas litteras videmus scriptas: SC, id est, senatus consulto, vel quattuor: SPQR, hoc est, senatus populusque Romanus. Et, ut Tertullianus meminit, cum Pontius Pilatus de admirandis Christi actionibus ad Tiberium Cesarem, non ad senatum scripsisset — siquidem ad senatum scribere de magnis rebus magistratus consueverant —, senatus hanc rem indigne tulit Tiberioque prerogativam ferenti, ut Jesus pro deo coleretur, repugnavit ob tacitam tantummodo indignationem offense senatorie dignitatis, et — ut scias, quantum senatus valeat auctoritas — ne pro deo coleatur, opinuit. Quid, quod ais *optimates*? quos aut primarios in republica viros intelligimus — qui cur nominentur, cum de ceteris magistratibus silentium sit? — aut eos, qui populares non sunt, bevolentiam populi aucupantes, sed optimi cuiusque et bonarum partium studiosi ac defensores, ut Cicero quadam oratione demonstrat. Ideoque Cesarem ante oppressam rempublicam popularem fuisse dicimus, Catonem ex optimatibus, quorum differentiam Salustius explicavit. Neque hi optimates magis quam populares aut ceteri boni viri dicuntur in consilio adhiberi. Sed quid mirum, si adhibentur optimates, ubi *cunctus populus*, si homini credimus, cum senatu et Cesare iudicavit, et is quidem *Romane ecclesie subiacens!* Et quis iste est populus, Romanusne? At cur non dicitur ‘populus Romanus’ potius quam ‘populus subiacens’? Que nova ista contumelia est in Quirites? de quibus optimi poete elogium est: *Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.* Qui regit alias

even in the provinces of the Romans, was ever named a satrap. But this person speaks of the emperor's satraps and puts them in charge of the Senate, even though all honors, even those conferred upon the prince himself, are only decreed by the Senate or by the Senate jointly with the Roman people. Hence we see written on old stones, bronze tablets, or coins the two letters SC, i.e. *senatus consulto* (by decree of the Senate), or the four letters SPQR, meaning *Senatus Populusque Romanus* (the Senate and Roman People). And, as Tertullian recounts,⁴⁸ when Pontius Pilate wrote about the marvelous works of Christ to Tiberius Caesar, not to the Senate — magistrates had normally written to the Senate about great events —, the Senate took this as a slight and rebuffed Tiberius' proposal to have Jesus worshipped as a god, by showing only silent indignation over the offense to senatorial dignity, while ensuring that he was not worshipped as a god, so that you might know the strength of senatorial authority. Why do you talk about Optimates? We assume that these are either the leading men in the state — why should they be named, when other magistrates are passed over in silence? — or that they are not the *Populares*, who curry the goodwill of the People, but rather partisans and defenders of every noble citizen and of good parties, as Cicero put it in one of his speeches.⁴⁹ Thus we say that Julius Caesar was a *Popularis* before the destruction of the Republic, and Cato belonged to the Optimates. Sallust has explained the difference between the two.⁵⁰ Neither are these Optimates reported to have been involved in consultation any more than the *Populares* or all other worthy people. No surprise if the Optimates are involved when *all people*, if we trust the man, deliberated with the Senate and the emperor, and, for that matter, people *subject to the Church of Rome!* What people is this? The Roman people? Why not say "Roman people" rather than "subject people"? What is this new insult to the Quirites, whom the best of poets eulogized: *You, Roman, take care to rule over peoples with your imperial power.*⁵¹ So the

populos, ipse vocatur populus subiacens, quod inauditum est. Nam in hoc, ut in multis epistolis Gregorius testatur, differt Romanus princeps a ceteris, quod solus est princeps liberi populi. Ceterum ita sit ut vis: nonne et alii populi subiacent? an alias quoque significas? Quomodo fieri istud triduo poterat, ut omnes populi subiacentes imperio Romane ecclesie illi decreto adessent? Tam et si num omnis fex populi iudicabat? Quid, antequam subieciisset Romano pontifici, populum Constantinus subiectum vocaret? Quid, quod ii, qui subiacentes vocantur, faciendo dicuntur prefuisse decreto? Quid, quod hoc ipsum dicuntur decrevisse, ut sint subiacentes et ut ille, cui subiacent, hos habeat subiacentes? Quid agis aliud, infelix, nisi ut indices te voluntatem fallendi habere, facultatem non habere?

- 43 *Eligentes nobis ipsum principem apostolorum, vel eius vicarios firmos apud Deum esse patronos. Et sicut nostra est terrena imperialis potentia, ita eius sacrosanctam Romanam ecclesiam decrevimus veneranter honorare et, amplius quam nostrum imperium terrenumque thronum, sedem sacratissimam beati Petri gloriose exaltari, tribuentes ei potestatem et gloriam et dignitatem atque vigorem et honorificentiam imperialem.*

Revivisce paulisper, Firmiane Lactanti, resistequ huic asino tam vaste immaniterque rudenti. Ita verborum turgentium strepitu delectatur, ut eadem repeatat et inculcat, que modo dixerat. Huncne in modum evo tuo loquebantur Cesaram scribe, ne dicam agasones? Elegit sibi illos Constantinus non patronos, sed esse patronos, interposuit illud esse, ut numerum redderet concinnorem. Honesta ratio barbare loqui, ut venustius currat oratio, si modo quid in tanta scabritia venustum esse potest. *Eligentes principem apostolorum vel eius vicarios:* non eligis Petrum et eius deinceps vicarios, sed

people that rules over other peoples is itself called a subject people. This is unheard of. For, as Gregory attests in many of his letters,⁵² the Roman emperor differs from all other rulers in this particular point: he alone is the leader of a free people. But even if what you claim be granted, are not other peoples also subject? Or do you also have other people in mind? How could it happen in three days that all peoples subject to the rule of the Church of Rome were on hand for that decree? The dregs of the people did not give their opinion, did they? Tell me, would Constantine call a people subject before he had subjected them to the Roman pontiff? How is it that those who are called subject are said to have participated in passing the decree? How is it they are said to have decreed precisely that they be subject and that the person to whom they were already subject should have them as his subjects? What else are you doing, miserable man, except to show that you have the will to deceive, but not the ability?

43

Choosing the very prince of the apostles, or his vicars, to be strong advocates for us with God. And like our terrestrial imperial power, we have decreed honor with veneration for his sacrosanct Roman church, and that the most sacred seat of the blessed Peter be gloriously exalted more than our empire and earthly throne, in that we assign to him power, glory, dignity, and the vigor and distinction of empire.

Come back to life, Lactantius,⁵³ just for a moment, and shut up the gross and monstrous braying of this ass. He is so enchanted by the sound of turgid vocabulary that he repeats the same things and regurgitates what he has already said. Did imperial scribes in your time talk like that, or even imperial lackeys? Constantine chose those people not as advocates, but *to be advocates*. He inserted that *to be* to make a more harmonious prose rhythm. A fine reason to speak like a barbarian, to make your utterance go more prettily, as if anything pretty could be found in such coarseness. *Choosing the very prince of the apostles, or his vicars:* you do not choose

aut hunc exclusis illis aut illos hoc excluso? Et pontifices Romanos appellat *vicarios Petri*, quasi vel vivat Petrus vel minori dignitate sint ceteri, quam Petrus fuit. Nonne et illud barbarum est: *a nobis nostroque imperio?* quasi imperium habeat animum concedendi et potestatem. Nec fuit contentus dicere *optineant*, nisi etiam diceret *concessam*, cum satis alterum esset. Et illud *firmos patronos*: perquam elegans est. Scilicet firmos vult, ne pecunia corrumpantur aut metu labantur. Et illud *terrena imperialis potentia*: duo adiectiva sine copula. Et illud *veneranter honorare*, et illud *nostre imperialis serenitatis mansuetudo!* Lactantianam eloquentiam redolet *cum de potentia agatur imperii, serenitatem nominare et mansuetudinem*, non ‘*amplitudinem*’ et ‘*maiestatem*.’ Quod etiam tumida superbia inflatum est, ut in illo quoque gloriose exaltari per gloriam et potestatem et dignitatem et vigorem et honorificentiam *imperiale*m, quod ex Apocalypsi sumptum videtur, ubi dicitur: *Dignus est agnus, qui occisus est, accipere virtutem et divinitatem et sapientiam et fortitudinem et honorem et benedictionem.* Frequenter, ut posterius liquebit, titulos Dei sibi arrogare fingitur Constantinus et imitari velle sermonem sacre scripture, quem numquam legerat.

- 44 Atque decernentes sancimus, ut principatum teneat tam super quatuor sedes Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, Ierosolimitanam, Constantinopolitanam, quam etiam super omnes in universo orbe terrarum Dei ecclesias. Etiam pontifex, qui per tempora ipsius sacrosante Romane ecclesie extiterit, celsior et princeps cunctis sacerdotibus et totius mundi existat, et eius iudicio, que ad cultum Dei et fidem christiano-rum vel stabilitatem procurandam fuerint, disponantur.

Omitto hic barbariem sermonis, quod *princeps sacerdotibus pro ‘sacerdotum’ dixit; et quod in eodem loco posuit extiterit et existat; et, cum dixerit in universo orbe terrarum, iterum addit totius mundi,*

Peter, do you, at the same time as the vicars who succeeded him? Either you choose him with the others excluded or them with him excluded. He calls the Roman pontiffs *vicars of Peter*, as if Peter is still alive or all the others are of lesser eminence than Peter was. Is it not also barbarous to talk about *us and our empire*? As if the empire had a mind and an authority to grant anything. Nor was he content to say *obtain* without also saying *granted*, when one or the other would have sufficed. That *strong advocates* is very elegant. Of course he wants them strong, so they will not be corrupted by bribes or slip back from fear. And that *terrestrial imperial power* is two adjectives without a conjunction. That *honor with veneration*, that *clemency of our imperial serenity!* It reeks of Lactantian eloquence when the power of empire is addressed, to speak of *serenity* and *clemency* instead of *amplitude* and *majesty*. How inflated with swollen pride, as in that gloriously exalted through *glory, power, dignity, vigor and distinction of empire*, which seems taken over from the Book of Revelation, where it is said: *Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive courage, divinity, wisdom, strength, honor, and blessing.*⁵⁴ Frequently, as will emerge later, Constantine is made to take over epithets of God and to affect an imitation of the language of Sacred Scripture, which he had never read.

And we sanction by decree that he have primacy over the four sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople, as well as over all churches of God in the whole globe of earth. Furthermore, the pontiff who in the course of time has stood over the sacrosanct Roman church shall exist as loftier and leader⁵⁵ to all the priests of the entire world, and whatever pertains to the worship of God and to guaranteeing the faith of Christians or their stability shall be arranged according to his judgment.

44

Here I pass over the linguistic barbarisms, such as *leader to the priests* instead of *leader of the priests*, and the fact that he uses in the same context *stand over* and *exist*, and that when he said *in the whole*

quasi quiddam diversum aut celum que mundi pars est, complecti velit, cum bona pars orbis terrarum sub Rôma non esset; et quod fidem christianorum vel stabilitatem procurandam, tamquam non possent simul esse, distinxit; et quod decernere et sancire miscuit et, veluti prius cum ceteris Constantinus non iudicasset, decernere eum et, tanquam penam proponat, sancire et quidem una cum populo sancire facit. Quis hoc christianus pati queat et non papam, qui hoc patitur ac libens audit et recitat, censorie severaque castiget? quod, cum a Christo primatum acceperit Romana sedes et id Gratiano testante multisque Grecorum octava synodus declararit, accepisse dicatur a Constantino vixdum christiano tanquam a Christo. Hoc ille modestissimus princeps dicere, hoc piissimus pontifex audire voluisse? Absit tam grave ab utroque illorum nefas!

45 Quid, quod multo est absurdius, capitne rerum natura, ut quis de Constantinopoli loqueretur tanquam una patriarchalium sedium, que nondum esset, nec patriarchalis nec sedes, nec urbs christiana nec sic nominata, nec condita nec ad condendum destinata? quippe privilegium concessum est triduo, quam Constantinus esset effectus christianus, cum Byzantium adhuc erat, non Constantinopolis. Mentior, nisi hoc quoque confiteatur hic stolidus, scribit enim prope calcem privilegii:

Unde congruum prospexit nostrum imperium et regiam potestatem orientalibus transferri regionibus et in Byzantie provincie optimo loco nomini nostro civitatem edificari et illic nostrum constitui imperium.

Si ille transferre volebat alio imperium, nondum transtulerat; si illic volebat constituere imperium, nondum constituerat; sic, si vole-

globe of earth he added of the entire world, as if he wants to include something different or the heavens, which are part of the world, although a good part of the globe of the earth was not under Rome. He also distinguished the faith of the Christians or their stability, as if they could not coexist. He mixed together decree and sanction and, as if Constantine had not made his decision earlier with all the others; makes him issue a decree and then sanction it like a punishment, and, for that matter, sanction it together with the people. What Christian would be able to put up with this and not chastise, rigorously and severely, the pope who puts up with this and gladly hears and proclaims it: although the Roman see received its primacy from Christ, and the Eighth Synod declared it, according to Gratian and many of the Greeks, it is said to have received this from Constantine, who was barely a Christian, as if from Christ. Would that very modest emperor have been willing to say this, and that very pious pontiff to hear it? Away with such serious wrongdoing on the part of either of them!

What of something much more absurd: would the nature of things allow someone to talk about Constantinople as one of the patriarchal sees, when it was then neither patriarchal nor a see, nor a Christian city, nor was it so called, nor was it yet founded, nor was the foundation envisioned? The grant was made three days after Constantine became a Christian, when the city was still Byzantium, not Constantinople. I am a liar myself if this idiot does not also admit this, for he writes near the end of the grant:

Wherefore we have considered it appropriate for our empire and our power to be transferred for the eastern territories and for a state to be built named for us in the best place of the province Byzantia, and for our empire to be established there.

If he wanted to transfer the empire somewhere else, he had not yet done it; if he wanted to establish his imperial rule there, he had not yet done it; thus, if he had any intention of building a city, he

bat edificare urbem, nondum edificaverat: non ergo fecisset mentionem de patriarchali, de una quatuor sedium, de christiana, de sic nominata, de condita; de qua condenda—ut historie placet, quam Palea in testimonium affert, ne cogitarat quidem. A qua non videt hec belua—sive is Palea sit sive alius, quem Palea sequitur—se dissentire, ubi Constantinus non sua sponte, sed inter quietem admonitu Dei, non Rome, sed Byzantii, non intra paucos dies, sed post aliquot annos dicitur decrevisse de urbe condenda nomenque, quod in somnis edoctus fuerat, indidisse. Quis ergo non videt, qui privilegium composuit, eum diu post tempora Constantini fuisse? et, cum vellet adornare mendacium, excidisse sibi, quod ante dixisset: hec gesta esse Rome tertio die, quam ille fuisset baptizatus? ut in eum decentissime cadat tritum vetustate proverbium *mendaces memores esse oportere.*

- 46 Quid, quod *Byzantium provinciam* vocat, quod erat oppidum nomine *Byzantium*, locus haudquaquam capax tante urbis condende? Nanque muris complexa est *Constantinopolis* vetus *Byzantium*, et hic in eius *optimo loco* ait urbem esse condendam. Quid, quod *Traciam*, ubi positum erat *Byzantium*, vult esse in oriente, que vergit ad aquilonem? Opinor, ignorabat Constantinus locum, quem condende urbi delegerat, sub quo celo esset, urbsque an provincia, quanta eius mensura foret.
- 47 Ecclesiis beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli pro continuatione luminum possessionum predia contulimus, et rebus diversis eas deditavimus, et per nostram imperiale iussionem sacram tam in oriente quam in occidente quam etiam a septentrione et meridionali plaga, videlicet in *Iudea, Grecia, Asia, Tracia, Africa et Italia* vel diversis

had not yet built it. He would therefore not have made mention of patriarchal status, of one of four sees, of a Christian city, named for himself and already founded. According to the story that Palea invokes as evidence, he had not even thought of founding a city. This creature, whether he is Palea or someone else whom Palea is following, fails to see that he is in disagreement with this story, whereby Constantine is said to have issued a decree, not by his own volition but in a dream sent by God, not at Rōme but at Byzantium, not within a few days but a good many years later, concerning founding a city and giving his name to it as he has been commanded when asleep. Who does not see that whoever composed the text of this grant lived long after the time of Constantine? When he wanted to embellish his falsehood, what he had said before escaped him—that these events took place at Rome on the third day after the emperor was baptized. So the hoary old proverb applies very properly to him: *Liars should have good memories.*⁵⁶

What about his reference to the province *Byzantia*? There was a town Byzantium, a place in no way big enough for so great a city. For Constantinopolis incorporated old Byzantium in its walls, whereas this man says that the city was to be founded in the best place in it. Does he want Thrace, where Byzantium had been placed, to be in the east, when it lies to the north? Constantine had, I suppose, no idea of the place that he had chosen for founding a city—under what sky it lay, whether it was a city or a province, what its size was.

To the churches of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul we have granted properties of our possessions to guarantee the lights, and we have enriched those churches with various items, and by our sacred imperial ordinance we have turned over to them through our largesse, no less in the east than in the west and even in the northern and southern sectors, that is—in Judaea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Af-

insulis, nostra largitate eis concessimus, ea prorsus ratione, ut per manus beatissimi patris nostri Silvestri summi pontificis successorumque eius omnia disponantur.

O furcifer, ecclesiene, id est templa, Rome erant Petro et Paulo dicata? Quis eas extruxerat? quis edificare ausus fuisse? cum nusquam foret, ut historia ait, christianis locus nisi secreta et latebra? Aut si qua templa Rome fuissent illis dicata apostolis, non erant digna, in quibus tanta luminaria accenderentur, edicule sacre, non edes; sacella, non templa; oratoria intra privatos parietes, non publica delubra: non ergo ante cura gerenda erat de luminaribus templorum quam de ipsis templis. Quid ais tu, qui facis Constanti-
num dicentem Petrum et Paulum *beatos*, Silvestrum vero, cum adhuc vivit, *beatissimum*, et suam, qui paulo ante fuisse ethnicus, iussionem *sacram*? Tantane conferenda sunt pro luminaribus conti-
nuandis, ut totus orbis terrarum fatigetur? At que ista predia sunt, presertim possessionum? 'Prediorum possessiones' dicere solemus, non *possessionum predia*. Das predia nec que predia explicas. Ditasti diversis rebus, nec quando nec quibus rebus ostendis. Vis *plagas* orbis a Silvestro disponi, nec pandis quo genere disponendi. Conces-
sisti hec antea: cur te hodie incepisse significas honorare ecclesiam Romanam et ei privilegium concedere? Hodie concedis, hodie ditas: cur dicis *concessimus et ditavimus*? Quid loqueris aut quid sentis, bestia? Cum fabule machinatore mihi sermo est, non cum optimo principe Constantino.

48 Sed quid in te ullam prudentiam, ullam doctrinam requiro, qui nullo ingenio, nulla litteratura es peditus; qui ais *luminariorum* pro

• ON THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE •

rica, and Italy as well as various islands, on this express condition that everything be in the hands of our most blessed father Sylvester, the supreme pontiff, and his successors.

You miserable dog, did Rome have churches, or rather temples, dedicated to Peter and Paul? Who built them? Who would have dared to build them? After all, as history tells us, nowhere was there any place for Christians apart from secret places and hidden dens. If there had been any temples at Rome dedicated to those apostles, they would not have required great lamps to be lit inside them. They were little shrines, not buildings; chapels, not temples; places of prayer in private dwellings, not public places of worship. No one therefore had to worry about temple lamps before there were the temples themselves. What are you talking about when you make Constantine speak of Peter and Paul as *blessed*, but Sylvester, when he is still alive, as *most blessed*, and his own ordinance as *sacred* when he had been a pagan shortly before? Does so much have to be provided for keeping up the lamps that the whole world is worn down? Anyhow, what are these properties, particularly landed ones? We normally say, "our possessions of property," not *property of our possessions*. You give properties, and you do not reveal what properties. You have enriched with various items, and you do not indicate when or with what. You want sectors of the world to be in the hands of Sylvester, and you do not explain how they are to be handled. You made those grants earlier. Why do you specify that you have begun today to honor the Roman church and to make the grant to it? You make the grant today, you make the enrichment today: Why do you say *We have granted* and *We have enriched*? What are you talking about or what are you thinking, you beast? My argument is with the man who invented this fiction, not with the outstanding emperor Constantine.

But why do I look for any discretion or any learning in you, 48
who are endowed with no talent and no literary taste? You say

'luminarium' et *orientalibus transferri regionibus* pro eo, quod est 'ad orientales transferri regiones'? Quid porro istene sunt quatuor *plage*? Quam *orientalem* numeras? *Traciamne?* At, ut dixi, vergit ad septentrionem. An *Iudeam?* At magis ad meridiem spectat, utpote vicina *Egypto*. Quam item *occidentalem?* *Italianamne?* At hec in Italia gerebantur, quam nemo illic agens *occidentalem* vocat; cum *Hispanias* dicamus esse in occidente, et Italia hinc ad meridiem, illinc ad arcton magis quam ad occidentem vergit. Quam *septentrionalem?* an *Traciam?* At ipse ad orientem esse vis. An *Asiam?* At hec sola totum possidet orientem, septentrionem vero communem cum *Europa*. Quam *meridionalem?* certe *Africam?* At cur non aliquam nominatim provinciam proferebas, nisi forte *Ethiopes* Romano imperio suberant? Et nihilominus non habent locum *Asia* et *Africa*, cum orbem terrarum in quatuor dividimus partes et nominatim regiones singularum referimus, sed cum in tres: *Asiam*, *Africam*, *Europam*, nisi *Asiam* pro *Asiatica* provincia, *Africam* pro ea provincia, que prope *Getulos* est, appellas, que non video, cur precipue nominentur. Siccine locutus esset *Constantinus*, cum quatuor orbis plagas exequitur, ut has regiones nominaret, ceteras non nominaret? et a *Iudea* inciperet, que pars *Syrie* numeratur et que amplius *Iudea* non erat eversa *Ierosolima*, fugatis et prope extinctis *Iudeis*, ita ut credam vix aliquem in sua tunc patria remansisse, sed alias habitasse nationes? Ubi tandem erat *Iudea*, que nec *Iudea* amplius vocabatur, ut hodie videmus illud terre nomen extinctum? Et sicut exterminatis *Chananeis* *Chananea* regio desiit appellari commutato nomine in *Iudeam* a novis incolis, ita exterminatis *Iudeis* et convenis gentibus eam incolentibus desierat *Iudea* nominari. Nuncupas *Iudeam*, *Traciam*, *insulas*, *Hispanias* vero, *Gallias*, *Germanos* non putas nuncupandos. Et cum de aliis

lights when you mean *lamps*, and *transferred for the eastern territories* when you mean *transferred to the eastern territories*. Besides, what are those four sectors? What do you consider eastern? Thrace? As I have already said, it lies to the north. Judaea? It lies more to the south, inasmuch as it is near Egypt. Again, what is western? Italy? But these events were taking place in Italy, which no one living there calls western, although we say that the Spains are in the west. Italy extends in one direction to the south, in the other to the north, rather than to the west. What is northern? Thrace? But you want Thrace to be in the east. Asia? This alone includes the whole east, but it has the north in common with Europe. What is southern? Africa definitely? But why do you not propose some province by name, unless by chance the Ethiopians were under Roman rule. Anyhow, Asia and Africa do not belong when we divide the world into four parts and mention by name the regions of individual ones, but only when we divide into three: Asia, Africa, Europe. Unless you mean Asia for the province of Asia, and Africa for that province which is near the Gaetulians, I do not see why they should be singled out. Would Constantine have spoken this way, when he was conjuring up the four sectors of the world, so as to name these regions and not to name all the rest? Would he begin with Judaea, which is counted a part of Syria and no longer Judaea, with Jerusalem destroyed, with the Jews driven out and nearly annihilated, to such an extent that I think scarcely anyone stayed in his own country but took up residence in other nations? Where then was Judaea? It was no longer called Judaea, since we see today that its name has been wiped off the earth. Just as Canaan ceased to be called Canaan after the Canaanites were wiped out and the name was changed to Judaea by the new inhabitants, so too did Judaea cease to be called by that name when foreign peoples moved into it. You specify *Judaea, Thrace, islands*, but you do not think that the Spains, the Gauls, and the Germans need to be named. Although you speak about other language

linguis loquaris, Hebrea, Greca, barbara, de ulla provinciarum Latino sermone utentium non loqueris. Video, has tu ideo omisisti, ut postea in donatione complectereris. Et quid, non tanti erant tot provincie occidentis, ut continuandis luminaribus suppeditarent sumptus, nisi reliquus orbis adiuvaret? Transeo, quod hec concedi ait per largitatem, non ergo, ut isti aiunt, ob lepre curationem, aliquin insolens sit, quisquis remunerationem loco munerum ponit.

- 49 Beato Silvestro, eius vicario, de presenti tradimus palatum imperii nostri Lateranense, deinde diadema, videlicet coronam capitis nostri, simulque phrygium nec non et superhumerale, videlicet lorum, quod imperiale circumdare solet collum, verum etiam chlamydem purpuream atque tunicam coccineam et omnia imperialia indumenta seu etiam dignitatem imperialium presidentium equitum, conferentes etiam ei imperialia sceptra simulque cuncta signa atque banna et diversa ornamenta imperialia et omnem processionem imperialis culminis et gloriam potestatis nostre. Viris etiam diversi ordinis, reverendissimis clericis sancte Romane ecclesie servientibus, illud culmen singularis potentie et precellentie habere sancimus, cuius amplissimus noster senatus videtur gloria adornari, id est patricios consules effici, necnon in ceteris dignitatibus imperialibus eos promulgavimus decorari. Et sicut imperialis extat decorata militia, ita clerum sancte Romane ecclesie adornari decrevimus. Et quemadmodum imperialis potentia diversis officiis, cubiculariorum nempe et hostiariorum atque omnium concubitorum, ordinatur, ita et sanctam Romanam ecclesiam decorari volumus. Et ut amplissime pontificale decus prefugeat, decernimus et, ut clerici sancti eiusdem sancte Romane ecclesie mapulsi et linteaminibus, id est candidissimo colore decoratos equos equitent et, sicut noster senatus calciamentis uitur, cum udonibus, id est

groups—Hebrew, Greek, barbarian, you say nothing about any of the provinces where Latin is spoken. All right, I see that you have omitted them in order to include them later in your donation. But were so many provinces in the west insufficient to cover the expense of maintaining lamps without help from the rest of the world? I pass over your statement that these grants were made through your *lassez*, not therefore, as others claim, because you were cured of leprosy. Besides, anyone who makes a payment in place of a gift would be a boor.

To the blessed *Sylvester*, his [Peter's] vicar, as of now we hand over the Lateran palace of our empire, then the diadem—that is, the crown on our head—and at the same time the Phrygian tiara and the superhumeral band (which is the strap that normally goes around the imperial neck), but also the purple cloak and the scarlet tunic and all imperial vestments, or the rank of commanders of the imperial cavalry. We confer on him as well the imperial sceptres and at the same time all standards and banners and various imperial decorations, and every procession of our imperial eminence and the glory of our power. And for men of a different rank, the very reverend clergy serving the holy Roman church, we sanction that pinnacle of exceptional authority and prominence with whose glory our most illustrious Senate seems to be adorned, namely to be made patricians and consuls, and we have promulgated that they be decorated in all other imperial dignities. Just as the imperial militia exists as decorated, so have we decreed that the clergy of the holy Roman church be adorned. Just as the imperial authority is organized by different offices—chamberlains indeed, door-keepers, and all bed-mates, so do we wish the holy Roman church to be decorated. In order that the pontifical splendor may gleam most brilliantly, we also decree that the clergy of the same holy Roman church be mounted on mounts decorated with napkins and linens that are of the whitest color, and that they be distinguished in the same way as our Senate, which makes

candido linteamine illustrentur, et ita celestia sicut terrena ad laudem Dei decorentur.

O sancte Iesu, ad hunc sententias volventem sermonibus imperitis non respondebis de turbine? non tonabis? non in tantam blasphemiam ultricia fulmina iaculabere? tantumne probrum in tua familia sustines? Hoc audire, hoc videre, hoc tam diu conniventibus oculis preterire potes? Sed patiens es, et multe misericordie, vereor tamen, ne patientia hec tua sit potius ira et condemnatio, qualis in illos fuit, de quibus dixisti: *Et dimisi eos secundum desiderium cordis eorum; ibunt in adinventionibus suis, et alibi: Tradidi eos in reprobum sensum, ut faciant, que non convenient, quia non probaverunt se habere notitiam mei.* Iube me queso, Domine, ut exclamem adversus eos, et forte convertantur. O Romani pontifices, exemplum facinorum omnium ceteris pontificibus, o improbissimi scribe et Pharisei, qui sedetis *super cathedram Moysi*, et opera Dathan et Abiron facitis, itane vestimenta, apparatus, pompa, equitatus, omnis denique vita Cesaris vicarium Christi decebit? Que communicatio sacerdotis ad Cesarem? Istane Silvester vestimenta sibi induit? eo apparatu incessit? ea celebritate ministrantium domi vixit atque regnavit? Sceleratissimi homines non intelligunt Silvestro magis vestes Aaron, qui summus Dei sacerdos fuerat, quam gentilis principis fuisse sumendas. Sed hec alias erunt exagitanda vehementius. Impresentiarum autem de barbarismo cum hoc sycophanta loquamur, cuius ex stultiloquio impudentissimum eius patescit sua sponte mendacium.

50 *Tradimus, inquit, palatum imperii nostri Lateranense:* quasi male hoc loco inter ornamenta donum palatii posuisset, iterum postea, ubi de donis agitur, replicavit. *Deinde diadema:* et quasi illi non vi-

use of shoes with felt socks—that is, with white linen. Thus will the celestial ranks be adorned like the terrestrial, to the glory of God.

O holy Jesus, will you not respond from the whirlwind to this man who is rolling out sentences without any command of his language? Will you not thunder? Will you not cast avenging bolts of lightning against such blasphemy? Do you put up with such disgrace in your own house? Can you hear this, can you see this, and yet ignore it for so long by closing your eyes? But *you are longsuffering and full of pity*.⁵⁷ Yet I fear that this longsufferingness of yours may be rather rage and condemnation, such as it was against those of whom you said: *I gave them up according to the lust of their heart; they will go in their own devisings*,⁵⁸ and elsewhere: *I have handed them over to their wicked mind, so that they may do what they ought not to do, because they have not shown that they have knowledge of me*.⁵⁹ Order me, Lord, I beg you, to shout against them, and they may by chance be converted. You Roman pontiffs, the model of all criminality for other pontiffs, you disgraceful scribes and Pharisees who sit in the seat of Moses⁶⁰ and do the deeds of Dathan and Abiron,⁶¹ will the vestments, the appurtenances, the pomp, the horses, in short the lifestyle of an emperor thus befit the vicar of Christ? What does a priest have to do with an emperor? Did Sylvester put on those vestments? Did he move about with those appurtenances? Did he live and rule with all those servants in his house? The wickedest of men fail to understand that Sylvester ought rather to have put on the garments of Aaron, who was God's highest priest, than the vestments of a pagan ruler. But these matters will have to be addressed more thoroughly elsewhere. For the present, however, let us talk with this sycophant about his barbarous language. His idiotic diction exposes, all by itself, his utterly shameless lie.

We hand over, he says, the Lateran palace of our empire: as if he had wrongly put the gift of the palace among the decorations, he repeated it again when dealing with donations. Then the diadem: as if

deant, qui adsunt, interpretatur *videlicet coronam*. Verum hic non addidit *ex auro*, sed posterius easdem res inculcans inquit *ex auro purissimo et gemmis preciosis*. Ignoravit homo imperitus diadema e panno esse aut fortassis ex serico. Unde sapiens illud regis dictum celebrari solet, quem ferunt traditum sibi diadema, priusquam capiti imponeret, retentum diu considerasse ac dixisse: *O nobilem magis quam felicem pannum, quem si quis penitus agnosceret, quam multis sollicitudinibus periculisque et miseriis sis refertus, ne humi quidem iacentem vellet tollere.* Iste non putat illud nisi *ex auro esse*, cui circulus aureus nunc cum gemmis apponi a regibus solet. Verum non erat rex Constantinus nec regem appellare nec regio se ritu ornare fuisset ausus: Imperator Romanorum erat, non rex. Ubi rex est, ibi res publica non est, at in re publica multi fuerunt etiam uno tempore imperatores. Nam Cicero frequenter ita scribit: *M. Cicero imperator illi vel illi imperatori salutem, licet postea peculiari nomine Romanus princeps ut summus omnium imperator appelletur.*

- 51 *Simulque phrygium nec non superhumerale, videlicet lorum, quod imperiale circundare solet collum: quis unquam phrygium latine dici audivit? Tu mihi, dum barbare loqueris, videri vis Constantini aut Lactantii esse sermonem? Plautus in Menechmis 'phrygionem' pro concinnatore vestium posuit, Plinius 'phrygionas' appellat vestes acu pictas, quod earum Phryges fuerint inventores: phrygium vero quid significet? Hoc non exponis, quod obscurum; exponis, quod est clarus: superhumerale aīs esse lorum nec quid sit lorum tenes. Non enim cingulum ex corio factum, quod dicitur lorum, sentis circumdari pro ornamento Cesaris collo. Hinc est, quod habemas et verbera vocamus lora. Quod si quando dicantur lora aurea, non*

those present do not understand, he glosses, *that is, the crown*. But here he did not add *of gold*, although later, treating the same subject, he says, *of purest gold and precious gems*. This ignorant man was unaware that a diadem was made of cloth, or perhaps of silk. Hence the wise and often told story of the king, *who is said, before putting on his head the diadem that had been given to him, to have held and long pondered it, and declared, "O cloth, more noble than fortunate! If anyone really knew with how much anxiety, danger, and misery you are fraught, he would not want to pick you up even if you were lying on the ground.*⁶² This forger of ours cannot conceive that what kings now normally supplement with a gold band and gems was made of anything other than gold. But Constantine was not a king, nor would have made bold to call himself a king or to adorn himself with kingly ceremonial: he was Commander of the Romans, not king. Wherever there is a king, there is no republic, but in a republic there have been many called Commander, even at the same time. For Cicero frequently writes thus: *M. Cicero Commander sends greetings to the Commander, whoever he may be.* Of course afterwards the Roman emperor is distinctively called Commander as the Commander-in-Chief.

And at the same time the Phrygian tiara and the superhumeral band (which is the strap that normally goes around the imperial neck): Who ever heard of a Phrygian tiara in Latin? Although you talk like a barbarian, you apparently want me to think this is the language of Constantine or Lactantius. In his play *Menaechmi* Plautus used the word *phrygio* for a clothesmaker, and Pliny calls embroidered garments *phrygions* because the Phrygians invented them.⁶³ But what would a Phrygian tiara signify? You fail to explain what is unclear, and you explain what is altogether clear. You say that the superhumeral band is a strap and yet you do not know what a strap is. For you do not imagine that a leather band, which is what we mean by a strap, was put around the emperor's neck as an ornament. We call reins and whips straps because they are made of

nisi de habenis, que aurate collo equi aut alterius pecudis circumdari assolent, intelligi potest. Que te res, ut mea fert opinio, fefellit, et cum lorum circumdare collo Cesaris atque Silvestri vis, de homine, de imperatore, de summo pontifice equum aut asinum facis.

- 52 *Verum et chlamydem purpuream, atque tunicam coccineam:* quia Mattheus ait *chlamydem coccineam* et Ioannes *vestem purpuream*, utrumque voluit hic eodem loco coniungere. Quod si idem color est, ut Evangeliste significant, quid tu non fuisti contentus alterum nominasse, ut illi contenti fuerunt? nisi accipis *purpuram*—ut nunc imperiti loquuntur—genus panni serici colore albo. Est autem purpura piscis, cuius sanguine lana tingitur, ideoque a tinctura datum est nomen panno, cuius color pro rubro accipi potest, licet sit magis nigricans et proximus colori sanguinis concreti et quasi violaceus. Inde ab Homero atque Virgilio purpureus dicitur sanguis, et marmor porphyricum, cuius color est simillimus amethysto, Greci enim purpuram ‘porphyram’ vocant. *Coccineum* pro ‘rubro’ accipi forte non ignoras, sed cur faciat *coccineum*, cum nos dicamus ‘coccum’? Et *chlamys*, quod genus sit vestimenti, iurarem te plane nescire. Atque ut, ne se longius persequendo singulas vestes mendacem proderet, uno semel verbo complexus est dicens *omnia imperialia indumenta*. Quid, etiamne illa, quibus in bello, quibus in veneratione, quibus in conviviis, quibus in ludis amiciri solet? Quid stultius quam omnia Cesaris indumenta dicere convenire pontifici? Sed quam lepide addit *seu etiam dignitatem imperialium presidentium equitum!* Seu inquit: distinguere duo hec invicem voluit, quasi multum inter se habeant similitudinis, et de imperatorio habitu ad equestrem dignitatem delabitur, nescio quid loquens. Mira que-

leather. But if mention be made of golden straps, it can only be understood as referring to gilded reins that are put around the neck of a horse or some other animal. In my opinion this point has escaped you, and when you propose to put a strap on the emperor's neck or Sylvester's you are making a man, a ruler, and a supreme pontiff into a horse or an ass.

But also the purple cloak and the scarlet tunic: Since Matthew speaks of a scarlet cloak and John of a purple garment,⁶⁴ this forger wanted to combine both of them together in the same place. But if the color is the same, as the Evangelists indicate, why were you not satisfied with one name, just as they were? Unless you understand by purple, in the way that ignorant people talk today, a kind of silk fabric of white color. The fact is that purple is a fish in whose blood wool is dyed,⁶⁵ and therefore the name has been applied to the cloth from the dye. Its color can be taken as red, although it may be on the black side and very close to the color of dried blood—almost violet. Hence blood is called purple by Homer and Virgil,⁶⁶ and so is porphyry, whose color is very like amethyst. The Greeks actually call purple “porphyry.” Perhaps you are not unaware that scarlet can be taken to mean “red,” but why would he put *scarlet* when we would say *crimson*? And I would swear that you simply do not know what kind of a garment the *cloak* is. And, lest he betray himself as a liar by going into more detail about individual garments, he summed them all up in a single phrase, *all imperial vestments*. Look here, everything the emperor is given to wearing in war, in hunting, in banquets, and in games? What is more idiotic than to say that all the emperor's vestments are appropriate for a pontiff? But how delicately he adds *or the rank of commanders of the imperial cavalry!* He says *or*: he wanted to distinguish these two in turn, as if they had much similarity between them, and he slides from imperial dress to equestrian rank with no sense at all. He wants to utter something marvelous, but he is afraid of being

dam effari vult, sed deprehendi in mendacio timet eoque inflatis buccis et turgido gutture *dat sine mente sonum*.

- 53 *Conferentes ei etiam imperialia sceptra*: que structura orationis! qui nitor! qui ordo! Quenam sunt *sceptra* ista *imperialia*? Unum est *sceptrum*, non plura. Si modo *sceptrum* gerebat *imperator*, num et *pontifex* *sceptrum* manu gestabit? Cur non ei dabimus et ensem et *galeam* et *iaculum*? *Simulque cuncta signa atque banna*: quid tu *signa* accipis? *Signa* sunt aut *statue*, unde frequenter legimus 'signa et tabulas' pro 'sculpturis ac picturis' — prisci enim non in parietibus pingebant, sed in tabulis — aut *vexilla*, unde illud *signa, pares aquilas*. A priore significato *sigilla* dicuntur parve *statue* atque *sculpture*: num ergo *statuas* aut *aquilas* suas *Silvestro* dabat *Constantinus*? Quid hoc absurdius? At *banna*, quid sibi velit, non invenio. Deus te perdat, improbissime mortalium, qui sermonem barbarum attribuis seculo eruditio. Et *diversa ornamenta imperialia*: quia dixit *banna*, satis putavit significatum esse et ideo cetera sub verbum universale conclusit. Et quam frequenter inculcat *imperialia*: quasi propria quedam sint *ornamenta imperatoris* magis quam *consulis*, quam *dictatoris*, quam *Cesaris*. Et *omnem processionem imperialis culminis, et gloriam potestatis nostre: proicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba, rex regum Darius consanguineusque deorum*, numquam nisi numero plurali loquens. Que est ista *processio imperialis*? *cucumeris* per *herbam torti* et *crecentis* in *ventrem*? *Triumphasse* existimas *Cesarem*, quotiens domo prodibat, ut nunc solet *papa* *precedentibus albis equis*, quos stratos ornatosque famuli dextrant? Quo, ut *taceam alias ineptias*, nihil est vanius nihilque a *pontifice Romano alienius*. Que etiam ista *gloria* est? *Gloriamne*, ut *Hebrei* lingue mos est, *pompam et apparatus illum splendorem homo Latinus appellasset*? Et illud quoque *militiam* pro 'milites,' quod ab *Hebreis*

caught lying and therefore, with inflated cheeks and swollen throat, he makes a mindless noise.⁶⁷

We confer on him as well the imperial sceptres: What a way to talk! 53
 What glamor! What balance! What are those imperial sceptres? There is just one sceptre, not several. If only the emperor carried a sceptre, will the pontiff carry a sceptre in his hand? Why shall we not give him a sword, a helmet, and a javelin? And at the same time all standards and banners: What do you understand by standards? Standards are either statues—we often say "standards and panels" for "sculptures and pictures" since the ancients did not paint on walls but panels—or else legionary ensigns, hence standards and matched eagles.⁶⁸ From the former meaning little statues and sculptures are called standing knick-knacks. Was Constantine giving Sylvester his statues or his military eagles? What could be more absurd? But what banners is supposed to mean I have no idea. May God destroy you, wickedest of mortals, for ascribing barbarous speech to an age of learning. And various imperial decorations: Because he said banners, he thought he had been clear enough and therefore lumped all the rest in a general phrase. And how often he belabors imperial: as if certain decorations are more appropriate to a commander-in-chief than to a consul, a dictator, or a Caesar. And every procession of our imperial eminence and glory of our power: "He throws out bombast and polysyllabic words,"⁶⁹—Darius, King of Kings and of the race of gods,⁷⁰ never speaking except in the plural. What is that imperial procession? Is it not that of a "cucumber that is curled up in the grass and grows into a belly?"⁷¹ Do you think that Caesar held a triumph whenever he stepped outside his house, as the Pope now does, preceded by white horses that his servants lead saddled and adorned? Not to mention other absurdities, there is nothing emptier, nothing more inappropriate for a Roman pontiff than this. Also, what is this glory? Would a Latin-speaker call glory, as is the custom in the Hebrew language, the pomp and the splendor of pageantry? Instead of "soldiers" would

sumus mutuati, quorum libros Constantinus aut ipsius scribe
numquam aspexerant?

54 Verum quanta est munificentia tua, imperator, qui non satis habes ornassee pontificem, nisi ornes et omnem clerum. *Culmen singularis potentie et precellentie auctoritatis effici patricios consules:* quis audivit senatores aliosve homines 'effici' patricios? Consules efficiuntur, non patricii ex domo vel patricia — que eadem senatoria dicitur, siquidem senatores patres conscripti sunt — vel ex equestri vel ex plebeia, plusque est senatorem esse quam patricium, nam senator est unus e delectis consiliariis rei publice, patricius vero, qui e domo senatoria ortum ducit. Ita qui senator aut ex patribus conscriptis non protinus et patricius est. Ridiculeque Romani mei hoc tempore faciunt, qui pretorem suum senatorem vocant, cum neque senatus ex uno homine constare possit necesseque sit senatorem habere collegas, et is, qui nunc senator dicitur, fungatur officio pretoris. 'At dignitas patriciatus in multis libris invenitur,' inquires. Audio, sed in iis, qui de temporibus post Constantinum loquuntur, ergo post Constantinum privilegium confectum est. Sed nunquid clerici fieri consules possunt? Coniugio sibi interdixere Latini clerici et consules fient? habitoque delectu militum cum legionibus et auxiliis in provincias, quas fuerint sortiti, se conferent? Ministri et servi consules fient, nec bini, ut solebat, sed centeni ac mileni? Ministri, qui Romane ecclesie servient, dignitate affluentur imperatoria? Et ego stolidus mirabar, quod papa affici diceretur! Ministri imperatores erunt; clerici vero milites: militesne clerici fient aut militaria ornamenta gestabunt? nisi *imperialia ornamenta* universis clericis impertis, nam nescio quid dicas. Et quis non videt hanc fabulam ab iis excogitatam esse, qui sibi omnem ves-

he say *militia*, which we have borrowed from the Hebrews, whose books Constantine or his scribes had never looked upon.

But how great is your generosity, Emperor, who are not content to have adorned the pontiff without adorning the entire clergy as well. You say that *being made patricians and consuls* is the *pinnacle of exceptional authority and prominence*. Who ever heard of senators or other men being "made" patricians? Consuls are made, not patricians, who come either from a patrician house—which is also called senatorial, inasmuch as senators are *conscript fathers*—or from an equestrian house or plebeian one. It is more important to be a senator than a patrician, since a senator is one of the chosen advisors of the republic, whereas a patrician is just someone who traces his origin from a senatorial house. That means that a senator or one of the *conscript fathers* is not straightaway also a patrician. My Roman friends nowadays behave ridiculously when they call their governor a senator, since a senate cannot consist of one man, and a senator must necessarily have colleagues. The man who is now called a senator performs the office of governor. "But the patrician rank is found in many books," you say. I know, but in those that talk about the post-Constantinian period. Therefore the grant was made after Constantine. But can clerics be made consuls too? Latin clerics deny themselves marriage. Will they become consuls? Will they levy soldiers and go out with legions and auxiliary troops into provinces they have been allotted? Will servants and slaves become consuls, not just two of them, as used to be the case, but hundreds and thousands? Will servants in the employ of the Roman church be assigned the rank of general? I was foolish enough to marvel that the Pope was said to have that rank! Servants will be generals, clerics soldiers: Will soldiers become clerics or wear military decorations? Unless you are bestowing the decorations of a general on clerics as a whole—well, in that case I do not know what you are talking about. Who fails to see that this fiction was concocted by persons who wanted complete license for

tiendi licentiam esse voluerunt? ut existimem, si qua inter demones, qui aerem incolunt, ludorum genera exercentur, eos exprimendo clericorum cultu, fastu, luxu exerceri et hoc scenici lusus genere maxime delectari.

55 Utrum magis insepar sententiarum an verborum stoliditatem? Sententiarum audistis, verborum hec est; ut dicat senatum *videri adornari*, quasi non utique adornetur, et quidem *adornari gloria*; et quod fit, factum esse velit, ut *promulgavimus* pro ‘*promulgamus*’ illo enim modo sonat iucundius oratio; et eandem rem per presens et per preteritum enuntiet, velut *decernimus* et *decrevimus*; et omnia sint referta his vocibus: *decernimus*, *decoramus*, *imperialis*, *imperatoria*, *potentia*, *gloria*; et extat pro ‘est’ posuerit — cum extare sit superemine vel superesse — et *nempe* pro ‘scilicet’ et *concubitores* pro ‘*contuberniales*’: concubitores sunt qui concumbunt et coeunt, nimirum scorta intelligenda sunt. Addit, cum quibus dormiat, ne timeat, opinor, nocturna phantasma, addit *cubicularios*, addit *hostiarios*. Non otiosum est, quare hec ab eo minuta referuntur: pupillum instituit aut adolescentem filium, non senem, cui omnia, quibus necesse habet tenera etas, ipse velut amantissimus pater preparat, ut David Salomoni fecit.

56 Atque ut per omnes numeros fabula impleatur, dantur clericis *equi*, ne asinario illo Christi more super asellos sedeant, et dantur non ‘operti’ sive ‘instrati operimentis coloris albi,’ sed *decorati colore albo*. At quibus operimentis? non stragulis, non babylonicis aut quo alio genere, sed *mappulis* et *linteaminibus*: mappe ad mensam pertinent, linteamina ad lectulos. Et quasi dubium sit, cuius sint hec coloris, interpretatur *id est candidissimo colore*. Dignus Constan-

themselves to dress up? I would imagine that if somewhere various games took place among the demons who live in the air, those creatures would be engaged in copying the ritual of clerics, their pageantry, and their luxury, and they would derive their greatest pleasure from this kind of theatrical competition.

Should I attack the foolishness of ideas more than words? You have heard about the ideas. Here is the foolishness of words: that he claims the Senate *should be adorned*, as if it were not already adorned, and, for that matter, *adorned with glory*. And he wants to turn what is happening into something that has already happened, as with *we have promulgated* instead of "we are promulgating," since the language sounds more resonant that way. He states the same thing in the present and past tenses, as *we decree* and *we have decreed*. Everything is stuffed with these words—*we decree*, *we adorn*, *imperial*, *imperialior*, *power*, *glory*; and he has put *exists* in place of *is*, since existing implies prominence or superiority, and *indeed* for "of course" and *bed-mates* for "companions." Bed-mates are those who sleep together and have intercourse, and must naturally be understood to be whores. He adds those with whom he sleeps, lest, I suppose, he be frightened by nocturnal apparitions: he adds *chamberlains*, he adds *door-keepers*. It is not irrelevant why these details are mentioned by him: he is instructing a ward or an adolescent son, not an old man. Like a doting father, he prepares for the boy everything of which his tender years have need, as David did for Solomon.

For the fiction to be fleshed out in every particular, horses are provided for the clergy, to keep them from sitting on donkeys in the way that Christ sat on an ass, and they are not "covered" or "saddled with coverings of white color," but *decorated with white color*. But with what coverings? Not with cloths, Babylonian or of any other kind, but with *napkins and linens*. Napkins go with the dining table, linens with beds. And as if there were any doubt as to what their color is, he *glosses that is, of the whitest color*. A style

tino sermo, digna Lactantio facundia cum in ceteris tum vero in illo equos equitent. Et cum de vestitu senatorum nihil dixerit, non de laticlavo, non de purpura, non de ceteris, de *calceamentis* sibi loquendum putavit, nec 'lunulas' appellavit, sed *udones*, sive *cum udonibus*, quos, ut solet homo ineptus, exponit, *id est candido linteamine*, quasi *udones* *linteamen* sint. Non occurrit impresentiarum, ubi reppererim *udones*, nisi apud Martialem Valerium, cuius distichon, quod inscribitur *Udones cilicini* hoc est: *Non hos lana dedit, sed olentis barba mariti.* / *Cyniphio poterit planta latere sinu.* Ergo non linei utique nec candidi sunt *udones*, quibus hic bipes asellus non 'calceari pedes senatorum' ait, sed *senatores illustrari*. Atque per hoc *sicut celestia ita terrena ad laudem Dei decorentur*: que tu celestia vocas? que terrena? quomodo celestia decorantur? Que autem Deo laus sit ista, tu videris, ego vero, si qua mihi fides est, nihil puto nec Deo nec ceteris hominibus magis esse invisum quam tantam clericorum in rebus secularibus licentiam. Verum quid ego in singula impetum facio? Dies me deficiat, si universa non dico amplificare, sed attingere velim.

- 57 *Pre omnibus autem licentiam tribuimus beato Silvestro et successoribus eius ex nostro indictu, ut, quem placatus proprio consilio clericare voluerit et in religioso numero religiosorum clericorum connumere, nullus ex omnibus presumat superbe agere.*

Quis est hic Melchisedech, qui patriarcham Abraam benedicit? Constantinusne vix christianus facultatem ei, a quo baptizatus est et quem beatum appellat, tribuit clericandi, quasi prius nec fecisset hoc Silvester nec facere potuisset? Et qua comminatione vetuit, ne

worthy of Constantine, an eloquence worthy of Lactantius, not only in other places but also in that phrase *be mounted on mounts!* Although he said nothing about senatorial garb—nothing about the broad stripe, the purple, or anything else, he thought he ought to speak about the *shoes*. He did not call them “lunettes” but *felt socks*, or rather *with felt socks*, which, in the way of this hopeless man, he explains *that is, with white linen*, as if *felt socks* are *linen*. At the moment I cannot think of anywhere that I have found *felt socks* apart from Martial, whose epigram inscribed *Hairy Felt Socks* goes as follows: *Wool did not make these socks, but the beard of a smelly goat. / His foot could be hidden in the Bay of Kinyps.*⁷² Therefore *felt socks* are not *linen*, and they are not *white*,—those objects with which our two-footed ass says not that the feet of senators are shod, but with which *senators are distinguished*. As for *thus will the celestial ranks be adorned like the terrestrial, to the glory of God*: what do you call *celestial*, what *terrestrial*? How are the *celestial* adorned? You may know what *glory* that may be for God, but I think, if I have any credibility, that nothing is more hateful to God and to other men than clerics’ taking so much license in secular matters. But why do I attack one individual point after another? I should run out of time if I try to mention, to say nothing of discuss, all of them.

Before all else, however, we assign to the blessed Sylvester and to his successors, according to our induction, the right to name anyone he wishes to the clergy at his pleasure and by his own decision and to include that person in the pious ranks of the pious clergy, and that no one whatsoever should consider that he is acting arrogantly.

57

Who is this Melchizedek, who blesses Abraham the patriarch? Did Constantine, hardly yet a Christian, assign the privilege of making priests to the man by whom he was baptized and whom he calls blessed, as if Sylvester would not, and could not, have done this before? And with what menace he forbade anyone from

quis impedimento esset: *nullus ex omnibus presumat superbe agere;*
qua etiam elegantia: connumerare in numero religioso religiosorum, cleri-
care clericorum et indictu, et placatus. Atque iterum ad diadema re-
vertitur:

Decrevimus itaque et hoc, ut ipse et successores eius diademate, vide-
licet corona, quam ex capite nostro illi concessimus, ex auro puris-
simo et gemmis pretiosis uti debeant pro honore beati Petri.

Iterum interpretatur *diadema* — cum barbaris enim et oblivious lo-
quebatur — et adiicit de *auro purissimo*, ne forte aliquid eris aut
scorie crederes admixtum. Et *gemmas* cum dixit, addit *pretiosas* eo-
dem timore, ne viles forsitan suspicareris. Cur tamen non ‘*pretio-*
sissimas’ quemadmodum aurum *purissimum?* Plus nanque interest
inter *gemma* et *gemma* quam inter *ayrum* et *aurum*. Et cum
dicere debuisset ‘*distinctum gemmis,*’ dixit *ex gemmis*. Quis non
vidit ex eo loco sumptum, quem princeps gentilis non legerat?: *Po-*
suisti in capite eius coronam de lapide pretioso. Sic locutus est Cesar
vanitate quadam corone sue iactande — si modo Cesares corona-
bantur — in se ipsum contumeliosus, qui vereretur, ne homines
opinarentur eum non gestare coronam *ex auro purissimo cum gemmis*
pretiosis, nisi indicasset? Accipe causam, cur sic loquatur: *pro honore*
beati Petri, quasi Christus non sit summus angularis lapis, in quo
templum ecclesie constructum est, sed Petrus, quod iterum postea
facit. Quem si tantopere venerari volebat, cur non templum epis-
copale illi potius quam Ioanni Baptiste Rome dicavit? Quid, illa
loquendi barbaries nonne testatur non seculo Constantini, sed
posteriori cantilenam hanc esse confictam?

58 Decernimus quod *uti debeant* pro eo, quod est decernimus, ‘*ut*
utantur’: sic nunc barbari homines vulgo loquuntur et scribunt,
‘*iussi, quod deberes venire*’ pro eo, quod est, ‘*iussi, ut venires*’. Et

blocking this: *no one whatsoever should consider that he is acting arrogantly.* With what choice diction: *to include that person in the pious ranks of the pious, . . . to the clergy. . . . the clergy, and induction, and at his pleasure.* And again he goes back to the diadem:

And so we have also decreed the following, that he and his successors ought to use the diadem—that is, the crown—made of purest gold and of precious gems, which we have granted to him from our own head, and this in honor of blessed Peter.

Once again he glosses diadem, since he was talking with barbarians with a short memory, and he adds of *purest gold*, in case you think that by chance some bronze or dross was mixed in. When he said *gems*, he adds *precious* out of a similar fear that you might perhaps suspect something cheap. Yet there is a greater difference between one gem and another than between gold and gold. Although he ought to have said *studded with gems*, he said *of gems*. Who fails to see that this was taken from that passage, which the pagan emperor had not read: *You have placed upon his head a crown of precious stone.*⁷³ Did the emperor speak in this way, by boasting about wearing his crown—if only emperors were crowned—and by insulting himself as someone who was afraid that men would not think he wore a crown of *purest gold with precious gems* unless he told them so. Listen to the reason why he talks like that: *in honor of blessed Peter*, as if Christ were not the most important cornerstone on which the temple of the Church has been built, but Peter, as he claims again later. If he wanted to venerate Peter so much, why did he not dedicate the Church's temple at Rome to him instead of to John the Baptist? Look here, does not that barbarous way of talking attest that this nonsense was not concocted in the age of Constantine, but later?

We decree that *they ought to use*, in place of what it is we decree, 58 namely “*that they use*”: Uncultivated people commonly talk and write this way, “*ordered that you ought to come*” instead of “*or-*

decrevimus et concessimus: quasi non tunc fiant illa, sed alio quodam tempore facta sint.

- 59 *Ipse vero beatus papa super coronam clericatus, quam gerit ad gloriam beatissimi Petri, ipsa ex auro non est passus uti corona.*

O tuam singularem stultitiam, Constantine! Modo dicebas coronam super caput pape ad honorem facere beati Petri, nunc ais non facere, quia Silvester illam recusat, et cum factum recusantis probes, tamen iubes eum *aurea uti corona*, et quod hic non debere se agere existimat, id tu ipsius successores dicis agere debere. Transeo quod rasuram *coronam* vocas et *papam* pontificem Romanum, qui nondum peculiariter sic appellari erat ceptus.

- 60 *Phrygium vero candidissimo nitore splendidum, resurrectionem dominicam designans eius sacratissimo vertici manibus nostris imposuimus, et tenentes frenum equi pro reverentia beati Petri dextratoris officium illi exhibuimus, statuentes eodem phrygio omnes eius successores singulariter uti in processionibus ad imperii nostri imitationem.*

Nonne videtur hic auctor fabule non per imprudentiam, sed consulto et dedita opera prevaricari et undique ansas ad se reprehendendum prebere? In eodem loco ait phrygio et dominicam resurrectionem representari et *imperii* Cesarei esse *imitationem*: que duo inter se maxime discrepant. Deum testor, non invenio, quibus verbis, qua verborum atrocitate confodiam hunc perditissimum nebulonem, ita omnia verba plena insanie evomit. Constantinum non tantum officio similem Moysi, qui summum sacerdotem iussu Dei ornavit, sed secreta mysteria facit exponentem, quod difficillimum

dered that you come." And *we have decreed* and *we have granted*: as if this were not happening at the time but had happened at some other time.

But the blessed Pope himself did not suffer the use of that crown of gold on top of the priestly crown, which he wears to the glory of the most blessed Peter.

59

How bizarre is your foolishness, Constantine! You were just saying that you were putting the crown on the Pope's head in honor of blessed Peter. Now you say that you are not doing that because Sylvester refuses it, and although you approve of his refusal, you nonetheless instruct him to *use a golden crown*, and what he thinks he should not do himself you say his successors should do. I pass over your calling a tonsure a *crown* and the Roman pontiff a Pope, even though that title had not yet begun to be exclusively his.⁷⁴

But we have placed with our own hands upon his most holy head a Phrygian tiara shining with the most radiant whiteness, as a symbol of our Lord's resurrection, and holding his horse's bridle out of reverence for the blessed Peter we have assumed for him the role of a squire, as we ordain that all his successors individually use the same tiara in processions in imitation of our imperial power.

60

Does not this fiction-monger appear to be a fraud, not through inadvertence but deliberately and designedly, and on all sides to furnish grips with which to catch him? In the same passage he says both that the *Lord's resurrection* is symbolized by a Phrygian tiara and that it is an *imitation of the emperor's power*: these two things are completely incompatible. With God as my witness, I cannot find the words, I cannot find the brutality of language for striking down this utterly shameless wretch. All the words he keeps spewing out are full of lunacy. He not only makes Constantine similar in office to Moses, who adorned the High Priest on the order of God, but he makes him an expounder of secret mysteries — some-

est iis, qui diu in sacris litteris sunt versati. Cur non fecisti etiam Constantinum pontificem maximum—ut multi imperatores fuerunt—, ut commodius ipsius ornamenta in alterum sumnum pontificem transferrentur? Sed nescisti historias. Ago itaque Deo etiam hoc nomine gratias, quod istam nefandissimam mentem non nisi in stultissimum hominem cadere permisit. Quod etiam posteriora declarant, nanque Aaron sedenti in equo Moysem inducit dextratoris exhibuisse officium, et hoc non per medium Israel, sed per Chananeos atque Egyptios, id est per infidelem civitatem, ubi non tam imperium erat orbis terrarum quam demonum et demones colentium populorum.

- 61 *Unde ut pontificalis apex non vilescat, sed magis quam imperii terreni dignitas gloria et potentia decoretur, ecce tam palatum nostrum quamque Romanam urbem et omnes Italie sive occidentalium regionum provincias, loca, civitates beatissimo pontifici et universaliter pape Silvestro tradimus atque relinquimus et ab eo et a successoribus eius per pragmaticum constitutum decrevimus disponendas atque iuri sancte Romane ecclesie permanendas.*

De hoc in oratione Romanorum atque Silvestri multa disseruimus. Huius loci est, ut dicamus neminem fuisse facturum, ut nationes uno cunctas verbo donationis involveret et, qui minutissima queque superius est executus: *lorum, calceos, linteamina equorum*, non referret nominatim provincias, quarum singule non singulos reges nunc aut principes regibus pares habent. Sed ignoravit videlicet hic falsator, que provincie sub Constantino erant, que non erant, nam certe cuncte sub eo non erant. Alexandro extincto videmus singulas regiones in ducum partitione numeratas; a Xenophonte terras principesque nominatos, qui vel ultiro vel armis sub imperio

• ON THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE •

thing extremely difficult even for those who have long been immersed in sacred texts. Why did you not also make Constantine the chief pontiff, as indeed many emperors were, so that his decorations might be more conveniently transferred to another supreme pontiff? But you knew no history. And so I thank God for this too, that he allowed such an utterly unspeakable idea to occur only to the stupidest possible person. Further points show this as well, for he adduces Moses' *assuming the role of a squire* for Aaron, who was sitting on his horse, not in the middle of Israel but among the Canaanites and Egyptians, in other words in a pagan state where there was not so much an empire of the world as an empire of demons and of peoples worshipping demons.

Accordingly, to ensure that the pontifical preeminence not be demeaned but adorned with glory and power greater than the dignity of imperial rule, behold—we give over to the most blessed pontiff and universal Pope, Sylvester, not only our palace but the city of Rome and all the provinces, places, and cities of Italy or the western territories, and we have decreed that they be managed by him and his successors through our pragmatic sanction and that they remain under the law of the holy Roman church. 61

We have already treated this at length in the speeches we assigned to the Romans and Sylvester. At this juncture it is pertinent to remark that no one would have acted to include all nations in a single phrase of donation, and that no one who had previously plodded through the most minute details such as *strap, shoes, and linen horsecloths* would not explicitly name provinces which today have one or more kings of their own or rulers equal to kings. Obviously this forger had no idea which provinces were under Constantine and which were not, for certainly they were not all under him. When Alexander died, we observe that specific territories were divided up among his generals. The lands and rulers that were subject to the rule of Cyrus, either voluntarily or by force, were speci-

Cyri fuerunt; ab Homero Grecorum barbarorumque regum nomen, genus, patriam, mores, vires, pulchritudinem, numerum nationum et prope numerum militum catalogo comprehensum, cuius exemplum cum multi Greci tum vero nostri Latini, Ennius, Virgiliius, Lucanus, Statius aliique nonnulli imitati sunt; a Iosue et Moyse in divisione terre promissionis viculos quoque universos fuisse descriptos: et tu gravaris etiam provincias recensere? Occidentales tantum *provincias* nominas: qui sunt fines occidentis? ubi incipiunt, ubi desinunt? Num ita certi constitutique sunt termini occidentis et orientis meridieique et septentrionis ut sunt Asie, Africe, Europe? Necessaria verba suprahis,¹ ingeris supervacua, dicas *provincias, loca, civitates*: nonne et provincie et urbes *loca* sunt? Et cum dixeris *provincias, subiungis civitates*, quasi he sub illis non intelligantur. Sed non est mirum, qui tantam orbis terrarum partem a se alienat, eundem urbium provinciarumque nomina preterire et quasi lethargo oppressum, quid loquatur, ignorare. *Italie sive occidentalium regionum*: tanquam aut hoc aut illud, cum tamen utrumque intelligat appellans *provincias regionum*, cum sint potius 'regiones provinciarum', et *permanendam* dicens pro 'perman-suram'.

- 62 Unde congruum perspeximus, nostrum imperium et regiam potestatem orientalibus transferri regionibus, et in Byzantie provincie optimo loco nomini nostro civitatem edificari et illic nostrum constitui imperium.

Taceo, quod dixit *civitates edificari*, cum urbes edificantur, non civitates, et *Byzantium provinciam*. Si tu es Constantinus, redde causam, cur illum potissimum locum condende urbi delegeris. Quod enim alio te transferas post Romam traditam, non tam *congruum* quam necessarium est, nec te appelles imperatorem, qui Romam

fied by Xenophon.⁷⁵ The names of Greek and barbarian kings, their race, country, character, strength, beauty, size of navy and the approximate size of their army were registered by Homer in a catalogue,⁷⁶ which not only many Greeks but also our own Latin writers—Ennius, Virgil, Lucan, Statius, and some others—have taken as a model. In the division of the Promised Land all the little villages were described by Joshua and Moses. And you balk at listing even provinces? You name only *western provinces*: What are the boundaries of the West? Where do they begin, where end? The limits of west, east, south, and north are not so certain and fixed as those of Asia, Africa, and Europe, are they? You leave out necessary words, you pile on superfluous ones. You say *provinces, places, and cities*: are not provinces and cities *places*? When you have said *provinces*, you add *cities*, as if these would not be understood as included. But it is not surprising that a man who relinquishes such a large part of the world should pass over the names of cities and provinces and, as if overcome with lethargy, be unaware of what he is saying. Of *Italy or the western territories*: as if he meant one or the other, when he meant both—speaking of *provinces of the territories*, although they are rather “territories of the provinces,” and in saying that they remain instead of “that they will remain.”

Wherefore we have considered it appropriate for our empire and our power to be transferred for the eastern territories, and in the best place of the province *Byzantia* for a state to be built named for us and our empire to be established there.

62

I say nothing of his talking about *building a state*, when a city, not a state, is meant. Similarly I pass over the province *Byzantia*. If you are really Constantine, give your reason for choosing that place above all others for founding a city. Moving yourself somewhere else after handing over Rome is not so much fitting as necessary, nor can you call yourself an emperor, who have lost Rome and de-

amisisti et de nomine Romano, quod discerpis, pessime meritus es, nec regem, quod nemo ante te fecit, nisi ideo te regem appelles, quia Romanus esse desiisti. Sed affers causam sane honestam:

- 63 *Quoniam ubi princeps sacerdotum et christiane religionis caput constitutum est ab imperatore celesti, iustum non est, ut illic imperator terrenus habeat potestatem.*

O stultum David, stultum Salomonem, stultum Ezechiam Iosiamque et ceteros reges, stultos ac parum religiosos, qui in urbe Ierusalem cum summis sacerdotibus habitare sustinuerunt nec tota illis urbe cesserunt. Plus sapit Constantinus triduo, quam illi tota vita sapere potuerunt. Et *imperatorem celestem* appellas, quia terrenum accepit imperium; nisi Deum intelligis, — nam ambigue loqueris —, a quo terrenum principatum sacerdotum super urbe Romana ceterisque locis constitutum esse mentiris.

- 64 *Hec vero omnia, que per hanc imperiale sacra et per alia divalia decreta statuimus et firmamus, usque in finem mundi illibata et inconcussa permanere decrevimus.*

Modo *terrenum* te vocaveras, Constantine, nunc *divum sacramque vocas*, ad gentilitatem recidis, et plus quam gentilitatem: deum te facis et verba tua sacra et decreta immortalia, nam mundo imperas, ut tua iussa conservet *illibata et inconcussa*. Non cogitas, quis tu es, modo ex sordidissimo impietatis ceno lotus et vix perlotus. Cur non addebas: *iota unum aut unus apex de privilegio hoc non preteribit, ut non magis pereat celum et terra?* Regnum Saul a Deo electi ad filios non pervenit, regnum David in nepote diserptum est et postea extinctum: et tu ad finem usque mundi regnum, quod tu sine Deo

served the worst of the Roman name, which you are tearing apart, nor can you call yourself king, as no one before you has done, unless you call yourself king because you have ceased to be a Roman. But you advance one reason that is certainly honest:

For where the prince of priests and the head of the Christian religion has been established by the heavenly ruler, it is not just for the earthly ruler to have power there.

63

Foolish David, foolish Solomon, foolish Ezechiel and Josiah and all the other kings, foolish and insufficiently pious, who kept on living with the high priests in the city of Jerusalem and did not abandon the entire city to them! Constantine knows more in three days than they were able to know in a whole lifetime. And you speak of the *heavenly ruler* because he has accepted an earthly empire, unless you are referring to God—for your words are ambiguous—, by Whom you are mendaciously claiming that the earthly principality of the priests was established over the city of Rome and all the other places.

Furthermore, everything that we have established and confirmed through this sacred imperial charter and through other divine decrees we have decreed to remain untouched and unaltered down to the end of the world.

64

Just now you had called yourself *earthly*, Constantine, now you call yourself *divine* and *sacred*. You lapse into paganism, and more than paganism: you make yourself a god, your words sacred, and your decrees immortal, for you order the world to keep your commands *untouched and unaltered*. You do not consider who you are, only recently cleansed of the foulest slime of impiety and scarcely washed clean. Why did you not add: *not one jot or one tittle will pass from this grant until heaven and earth are no more?*⁷⁷ The kingdom of Saul, who was chosen by God, did not pass to his sons, the kingdom of David was divided under his grandson and subsequently wiped

tradis, permansurum tua auctoritate decernis? Quis etiam tam cito te docuit mundum esse peritum? Nam poetis, qui hoc etiam testantur, non puto te hoc tempore fidem habere. Ergo hoc tu non dixisses, sed alius tibi affinxit. Ceterum qui tam magnifice superbeque locutus est, timere incipit sibique diffidere eoque op-testationibus agit:

Unde coram Deo vivo, qui nos regnare precepit, et coram terribili eius iudicio optestamur omnes nostros successores, imperatores vel cunctos optimates, satrapas etiam amplissimumque senatum et universum populum in universo orbe terrarum, necnon et in posterum nulli eorum quoquo modo licere hoc aut confringere vel in quoquam convelli.

Quam equa, quam religiosa adiuratio! Non secus ac si lupus per innocentiam et fidem optestetur ceteros lupos atque pastores, ne oves, quas sustulit interque filios et amicos partitus est, aut illi adimere aut hi repetere temptent. Quid tantopere extimescis, Constantine? Si opus tuum ex Deo non est, dissolvetur, sin ex Deo, dissolvi non poterit. Sed video, voluisti imitari Apocalypsim, ubi dicitur: *Contestor autem audienti omnia verba prophetie libri huius: Si quis apposuerit ad hec, apponet Deus super illum plagas scriptas in libro isto, et si quis diminuerit de verbis libri prophetie huius, auferet Deus partem eius de libro vite et de civitate sancta.* At tu nunquam legeras Apocalypsim, ergo non sunt hec verba tua.

- 65 *Si quis autem, quod non credimus, in hoc temerator extiterit, eternis condemnationibus subiaceat condemnatus, et sanctos Dei apostolos*

out: yet you decree by your own authority that the kingdom you have handed over without God will last until the end of the world. Who taught you that the world was going to perish so soon? I do not think that you have at this moment any trust in the poets who bear witness to this. Therefore you would not have said it, but someone else foisted it upon you. But the person who spoke so grandly and proudly starts to be afraid and to distrust himself, and so he launches entreaties:

Accordingly before the living God, who ordered us to reign, and before his terrible judgment seat we entreat all our successors, emperors and every nobleman, satraps too and the most resplendent Senate and the entire people in the entire world, and in time to come, to permit none of them in any way either to demolish this or for it to be torn asunder in any way.

How just, how religious this adjuration! It is no different from a wolf, who entreats, on the basis of his innocence and good faith, all the other wolves and the shepherds, not to try to steal, in the case of the wolves, or recover, in the case of the shepherds, the sheep that he has carried off and divided among his sons and friends. What frightens you so, Constantine? If your work is not of God, it will be destroyed, but if it is of God, it will be incapable of being destroyed. But, I observe, you wanted to copy the Book of Revelation, where it is said: *For I testify to the one who hears all the words of the prophecy of this book—if anyone adds to these words, God will inflict upon him the torments described in this book, and if anyone subtracts from the words of this prophetic book, God will take away his part from the book of life and the holy city.*⁷⁸ But you had never read the Book of Revelation. Therefore, those words are not yours.

If, moreover, anyone—which we do not believe—emerges as a falsifier in this context, let him be condemned and subjected to eternal damnation. Let him know that his enemies are the holy apostles of

*Petrum et Paulum sibi in presenti et in futura vita sentiat contrarios,
atque in inferno inferiori concrematus cum diabolo et omnibus defi-
ciat impiis.*

Hic terror atque hec comminatio non secularis principis solet esse, sed priscorum sacerdotum ac flaminum et nunc ecclesiasticorum: itaque non est Constantini oratio hec, sed alicuius clericuli stolidi, nec quid dicat aut quomodo dicat scientis, saginati et crassi ac inter crapulam interque fervorem vini has sententias et hec verba ructantis, que non in alium transeunt, sed in ipsum convertuntur auctorem. Primum ait *eternis condemnationibus subiaceat*, deinde, quasi plus addi queat, alia addere vult et post eternitatem penarum adiungit penas *vite presentis*; et cum Dei condernatione nos terreat adhuc, quasi maius quiddam sit, terret nos odio Petri, cui Paulum cur adiungat aut cur solum nescio. Iterumque solito lethargo ad penas eternas redit, veluti non hoc ante dixisset. Quod si mine he exsecracionesque Constantini forent, invicem execrarer ut tyrannum et profligatorem rei publice mee et illi me Romano ingenio minarer ultorem. Nunc quis extimescat execrationem avarissimi hominis et ritu histrionum verba simulantis ac sub persona Constantini alias deterrentis? Hoc est proprie hypocritam esse, si Grecam vocem exquirimus, sub aliena persona abscondere tuam.

66 *Huius vero imperialis decreti paginam propriis manibus roborantes
super venerandum corpus beati Petri posuimus.*

Chartane an membrana fuit *pagina* in qua scripta hec sunt? tam etsi paginam vocamus alteram faciem ut dicunt folii, veluti quinternio habet folia dena, paginas vicinas. O rem inauditam et incre-

God, Peter and Paul, in the present and in the life to come, and let him be burned in the lower reaches of hell and waste away together with the devil and all who are wicked.

Such terrorizing and such threatening are not characteristic of a secular ruler, but of old-school priests and keepers of the flame, and nowadays of ecclesiastics: so this is not the speech of Constantine, but of some dim-witted petty cleric, who has no idea of what he is saying or how he is saying it, someone who is fat and gross, belching out these phrases and these words while drunk and heated with wine. His words do not impinge upon anyone else but turn upon the author himself. First he says *subjected to eternal damnation*, then, as if more could be added, he wants to add something else and joins punishments of the present life after an eternity of punishments. When he terrifies us by the condemnation of God, he goes on to terrify us, as if it were something still greater, with the hatred of Peter, to whom he attaches Paul—I cannot imagine why, or why only Paul. With his typical sloth he goes back again to eternal punishments, as if he had not said this already. But if these threats and curses were really Constantine's, I would curse him in turn as a tyrant and destroyer of my nation, and I would threaten to take vengeance on him myself in my capacity as a Roman. Now, who would fear the curse of the greediest of men, mouthing words the way actors do and frightening others in the guise of Constantine? This is what it really means to be a hypocrite, if we take the Greek word literally—to hide your own identity under someone else's.⁷⁹

*Reinforcing the page of this imperial decree by our very own hands,
we have placed it on the venerable body of the blessed Peter.*

66

Was it paper or parchment, the page on which these things were written down? In fact we call a page one or the other side of a so-called leaf, just as a gathering has ten leaves but twenty pages.

dibilem! Cum essem adolescentulus, interrogasse me quandam memini, quis librum Iob scripsisset; cumque ille respondisset, 'ipse Iob,' tunc me subiunxisse, quo pacto igitur de sua ipsius morte faceret mentionem. Quod de multis aliis libris dici potest, quorum ratio huic loco non convenit. Nam quomodo vere narrari potest id, quod nondum esset administratum? et in tabulis contineri id, quod post tabularum, ut sic dicam, sepulturam factum esse ipse fateatur? Hoc nihil aliud est, quam paginam privilegii ante fuisse mortuam sepultamque quam natam, nec tamen unquam a morte atque sepultura reversam; presertim antequam conscripta esset roborata, nec id una tantum, sed utraque Cesaris manu. Et quid istud est *roborare* illam? chirographone Cesaris aut anulo signatorio? Magnum nimirum robur, maiusque multo, quam si tabulis ereis mandavisset. Sed non est opus scriptura erea, cum *super corpus beati Petri* charta reponatur. Cur hic Paulum retices, qui simul iacet cum Petro, et magis custodire possent ambo, quam si afforet tantummodo corpus unius?

- 67 Videlis artes malitiamque nequissimi Sinonis: quia donatio Constantini doceri non potest, ideo non in tabulis ereis, sed chartis privilegium esse, ideo latere illud cum corpore sanctissimi apostoli dixit, ne aut auderemus e venerabili sepulcro inquirere aut, si inquireremus, carie absumptum putaremus.
- 68 Sed ubi tunc erat corpus beati Petri? certe nondum in templo, ubi nunc est, non in loco sane munito ac tuto: ergo non illic Cesar paginam collocasset. An beatissimo Silvestro paginam non credebat ut parum sancto, parum cauto, parum diligenti? O Petre, o Silvester, o sancti Romane ecclesie pontifices, quibus oves Domini

What unheard-of and unbelievable nonsense! When I was a boy, I remember asking someone who had written the Book of Job. When he answered, "Job himself," I asked the further question of how therefore he managed to mention his own death. This can be said of many other books, although it is not appropriate to discuss them here. For how can something that has not yet taken place be accurately told? How can the tablets include something which he admits himself occurred after the burial, so to speak, of the tablets? This is tantamount to saying that the page of the grant was dead and buried before it was born, and yet never came back from its death and burial, particularly since it was reinforced before it was written—not merely with one of the emperor's hands but with both. What is meant by *reinforcing* the page? With the emperor's signature or with his signet-ring? That would certainly be a great reinforcement, much greater than if it had been entrusted to bronze tablets. But there is no need of a bronze inscription, because the document is placed upon the body of the blessed Peter. Why are you silent about Paul (lying together with Peter), when both could provide more protection than if only the body of one of them were there?

You see the cunning and malice of this most vicious Sinon. Because the Donation of Constantine cannot be exhibited, he has therefore said that the grant is not on bronze tablets but on paper sheets, and that it is hidden with the body of the most holy apostle, to keep us from boldly looking for it in the venerable tomb or, if we were to do so, we would suppose that it had been ruined by decay.

But where was the body of blessed Peter then? Certainly not in the temple where it is now, not in a well protected and safe place. Therefore the emperor would not have put his document there. Did he forbear to entrust it to the very blessed Sylvester, as not holy enough, not cautious enough, not diligent enough? O Peter and Sylvester, holy pontiffs of the Roman church, to whom the

commisso sunt, cur vobis commissam paginam non custodistis? cur a tineis illam rodi, cur situ tabescere passi estis? Opinor, quia corpora quoque vestra contabuerunt. Stulte igitur fecit Constantinus, en redacta in pulverem pagina ius simul privilegii in pulverem abiit.

69 Atqui, ut videmus, page exemplar ostenditur. Quis ergo illam de sinu sanctissimi apostoli temerarius accepit? Nemo, ut reor, hoc fecit. Unde porro exemplar? Nimirum aliquis antiquorum scriptorum debet afferri nec posterior Constantini temporibus: at is nullus affertur. Sed fortasse aliquis recens? Unde hic habuit? Quisquis enim de superiore etate historiam textit, aut Spiritu sancto dictante loquitur aut veterum scriptorum et eorum quidem, qui de sua etate scripserunt, sequitur auctoritatem. Quare quicunque veteres non sequitur, is de illorum numero erit, quibus ipsa vetustas prebet audaciam mentiendi. Quod si quo in loco ista res legitur, non aliter cum antiquitate consentit, quam illa glosatoris Accursii de legatis Romanis ad leges accipendas dimissis in Greciam plus quam stulta narratio cum Tito Livio aliisque prestantissimis scriptoribus convenit.

70 *Datum Rome tertio Kalendas Aprilis, Constantino Augusto quarto consule et Gallicano quarto consule.*

Diem posuit penultimum Martii, ut sentiremus hoc factum esse sub tempus sanctorum dierum, qui illo plerunque tempore solent esse. Et Constantino quartum consule, et Gallicano quartum consule: mirum, si uterque ter fuerat consul et in quarto consulatu forent collegae, sed mirandum magis Augustum leporosum elephantia, qui morbus inter ceteros ut elephas inter belugas eminet, velle etiam ac-

sheep of the Lord have been committed, why did you not protect the document as committed to you? Why did you allow it to be gnawed by worms, to rot with mould? Because, I suppose, your bodies have also rotted away. Constantine acted stupidly. Once the document has been reduced to dust, the legal force of the grant has turned to dust at the same time.

And yet, as we see, a copy of the document is on show. What rash person took it from the breast of the most holy apostle? No one, I think, did this. So where does the copy come from? Doubtless one of the ancient writers ought to be adduced, and someone no later than the time of Constantine. But no one is adduced. Perhaps a recent writer? Where did he get it? For anyone who has put together a history of an earlier age either speaks at the dictation of the Holy Spirit or follows the authority of old writers and naturally of those who wrote about their own time. Accordingly whoever does not follow ancient writers will be one of those whom the very antiquity of the events emboldens to lie. If that account is read at any point, it no more conforms with antiquity than that foolish narration of Accursius, the writer of glosses, accords with Livy and other preeminent writers on Roman legates who were dispatched to Greece to obtain laws.⁸⁰

*Given at Rome on the third day before the Kalends of April, when
Constantine Augustus was consul for the fourth time and Gallicanus
was consul for the fourth time.*

He has specified the thirtieth of March so that we would think this was done at the time of the holy days, which normally occur at that time. And when Constantine was consul for the fourth time and Gallicanus was consul for the fourth time: amazing if both had been three times consul and turned out to be colleagues together in their fourth consulates, but even more amazing that the Augustus, who was a leper with elephantiasis, which as a disease stands out among others like an elephant among beasts, even wanted to take

cipere consulatum, cum rex Azarias, simul ac lepra tactus est, in privato se continuerit, procuracye regni ad Ioatham filium relegata, ut fere omnes leprosi fecerunt. Quo uno argumento totum prorsus privilegium confutatur, profligatur, evertitur. Ac ne quis ambigat ante leprosum esse debuisse quam consulem, sciat et ex medicina paulatim hunc morbum succrescere et ex notitia antiquitatis consulatum iniri Ianuario mense magistratumque esse annum: et hec Martio proximo gesta referuntur. Ubi neque hoc silebo: in epistolis scribi solere *datum*, non autem in ceteris nisi apud indoctos. Dicuntur enim epistole dari vel 'illi' vel 'ad illum' — 'illi' quidem, qui perfert, utputa tabellario, ut reddat et in manum porrigit homini, cui mittuntur; 'ad illum' vero, ut ei a perferente reddantur, hic est is, cui mittuntur —, privilegium autem ut aiunt Constantini, quod reddi alicui non debebat, nec dari debuit dici, ut appareat eum, qui sic locutus est, mentitum esse nec scisse fingere, quod Constantimum dixisse ac fecisse verisimile esset.

- 71 Cuius stultitie atque vesanie affines se ac socios faciunt, quiunque hunc vera dixisse existimant atque defendunt, licet nihil iam habeant, quo opinionem suam non dico defendere, sed honeste excusare possint. An honesta erroris excusatio est, cum patefactam videoas veritatem, nolle illi acquiescere, quia nonnulli magni homines aliter senserint? magni, inquam, dignitate, non sapientia nec virtute. Unde tantum scis, an illi, quos tu sequeris, si eadem audissent que tu, mansuri in sententia fuerint an a sententia recessi? Et nihilominus indignissimum est plus homini velle tribuere quam veritati, id est Deo. Ita enim quidam omnibus defecti ratio-

up the consulate, whereas king Azarias delegated his kingdom to his son Jotham and stayed in seclusion,⁸¹ just as almost all lepers have done. By this single argument the entire grant is utterly refuted, destroyed, and overturned. And should anyone doubt whether he had to have been a leper before a consul, he should be aware both from medicine that this disease grows slowly over time and from knowledge of antiquity that a consulate begins in the month of January and is a year-long magistracy. Yet these events are assigned to the following March. Nor will I keep silent about the fact that *given* is normally written in personal correspondence, but not in other documents except among the uneducated. Letters are said to be given either "to someone" or "to someone's address"—to someone who carries the letters, such as a messenger, who would deliver and place them in the hand of the man to whom they are sent, or rather to someone's address for the letters to be delivered to the person to whom they are sent. But the grant that is allegedly Constantine's should not have been said to have been given, because it was not supposed to be delivered to anybody. Wherefore it should be apparent that the person who spoke this way was lying and had no idea how to invent what Constantine would plausibly have said or done.

Those who think that this person spoke the truth and defend him make themselves his allies, complicit in his foolishness and insanity. Yet they now have nothing with which they can decently excuse their opinion, not to say defend it. Is there anything decent about excusing an error when you refuse to accept a manifest truth just because some great men thought otherwise? They were great, I say, in rank, not in wisdom or virtue. How can you tell whether those whom you follow would have persevered in their view, rather than abandoned it, if they had heard what you have heard? Furthermore it is highly inappropriate to want to give more credit to a man than to the truth—that is, to God. For some who have been overcome by all arguments are apt to answer me: "Why have so

nibus solent mihi respondere: ‘cur tot summi pontifices donationem hanc veram esse crediderunt?’ Testificor vos, me vocatis quo nolo, et invitum me maledicere summis pontificibus cogitis, quos magis in delictis suis operire vellem.

72 Sed pergamus ingenue loqui — quandoquidem aliter agi nequit hec causa —, ut fatear eos ita credidisse et non malitia fecisse: quid mirum, si ista crediderunt, ubi tantum lucri blanditur, cum plurima, ubi nullum lucrum ostenditur, per insignem imperitiam credant? Nonne apud Aram Celi in tam eximio templo et in loco maxime augusto cernimus pictam fabulam Sibylle et Octaviani, ut ferunt ex auctoritate Innocentii tertii hec scribentis? Qui etiam de ruina templi Pacis sub natale Salvatoris, hoc est in partu virginis, scriptum reliquit, que ad evertendam magis fidem, quia falsa, quam ad stabiliendam, quia miranda sunt, pertinent. Mentirine ob speciem pietatis audet vicarius veritatis et se scientem hoc piaculo obstringere? An non mentitur? Immo vero a sanctissimis viris se, cum hoc facit, dissentire non videt. Tacebo alios, Hieronymus Varronis testimonio utitur decem Sibyllas fuisse, quod opus Varro ante Augustum condidit. Idem de templo Pacis ita scribit: *Vespasianus et Titus Rome templo Pacis edificato vasa templi et universa donaria in delubro illius consecrarunt, que Greca et Romana narrat historia.* Et hic unus indoctus plus vult libello suo etiam barbare scripto credi quam fidelissimis veterum prudentissimorum hominum historiis.

73 Quia Hieronymum attigi, non patiar hanc contumeliam ipsius tacito preteriri: Rome ex auctoritate pape ostenditur codex Biblie tamquam reliquie sanctorum luminibus semper accensis, quod di-

many supreme pontiffs believed that this was true?" You are my witnesses that you urge me where I would not go, and you force me unwillingly to speak ill of supreme pontiffs over whose mistakes I would rather draw a veil.

But let us continue to speak frankly—since this case cannot be conducted in any other way—so that I may admit that they held that belief and did so without malice. Where is the surprise if they believe this, with the enticement of so much profit, when they believe many things, in their remarkable ignorance, without any visible prospect of profit? In the Ara Coeli do we not see, in that outstanding church and in an exceedingly venerable spot a painting of the story of the Sibyl and Octavian, allegedly on the authority of Innocent III who wrote the text? He also left an account of the destruction of the Temple of Peace on the day of the Savior's birth—at the time of the delivery of the Virgin.⁸² These stories do more to overturn faith, because they are false, than to strengthen it, because they are miraculous. Does the vicar of truth dare to tell lies under the guise of piety and knowingly to implicate himself in this sin? Is he not telling lies? In fact he fails to see that, when he does this, he is disagreeing with the holiest of men. I leave others aside, but Jerome makes use of the testimony of Varro that there were ten Sibyls, and Varro composed his work before Augustus. Jerome also writes as follows about the Temple of Peace: *In the Temple of Peace that Vespasian and Titus built at Rome they dedicated vessels from the Jewish temple in its sanctuary together with all the gifts of the faithful, as the Greek and Roman historians relate.*⁸³ This single ignorant man wants his tract, written in barbarous language, to be believed more than the most trustworthy histories of the most circumspect men of antiquity.

Since I have mentioned Jerome, I shall not allow the following insult to him to be passed over in silence: at Rome, on the authority of the Pope, a manuscript of the Bible is on display, like the remains of saints, with perpetual illumination because it is said that

cant scriptum chirographo Hieronymi. Queris argumentum? quia multum, ut inquit Virgilius, est *pictai vestis et auri, rès, que magis Hieronymi manu indicat scriptum non esse.* Illum ego diligentius inspectum comperi scriptum esse iussu regis, ut opinor, Roberti, chirographo hominis imperiti. Huic simile est, quamquam decem milia huiusmodi Rome sunt, quod inter religiosa demonstratur in tabella effigies Petri et Pauli, quam Silvester Constantino ab eisdem apostolis in somnis admonito in confirmationem visionis exhibuit. Non hoc dico, quia negem effigies illas esse apostolorum — utinamque tam vera esset epistola nomine Lentuli missa de effigie Christi, que non minus improbe ementita est quam privilegium, quod confutavimus —, sed quia tabella illa a Silvestro non fuerit exhibita Constantino.

74 In quo non sustineo admirationem animi mei continere. Disputabo enim aliquid de fabula Silvestri, quia et omnis in hoc questio versatur et mihi, cum sermo sit cum pontificibus Romanis, de pontifice Romano potissimum loqui decebit, ut ex uno exemplo facile aliorum conjectura capiatur. Et ex multis ineptiis, que ibi narrantur, unam tantum de dracone attingam, ut doceam Constantinum non fuisse leprosum. Etenim gesta Silvestri ab Eusebio quodam Greco homine, ut interpres testatur, composita sunt, que natio ad mendacia semper promptissima est, ut Iuvenalis satyrica censura ait: *quicquid Grecia mendax audet in historia.* Unde draco ille venerat? Rome dracones non gignuntur. Unde etiam illi venenum? In Africa tantum pestiferi dracones ob ardorem regionis esse dicuntur. Unde preterea tantum veneni, ut tam spatiosam civitatem peste corrumperet, presertim cum in tam alto specu demersus esset, ad quem centum quinquaginta gradibus descendenteret? Ser-

Jerome wrote it with his own hand. You ask for proof? It is true that there is considerable *painted cloth and gold*, as Virgil says⁸⁴—something which would rather suggest that it was not written by the hand of Jerome. I myself, after careful inspection, discovered that it had been written by order of a king, Robert,⁸⁵ I think, in the handwriting of an inexperienced person. Similarly, although there are ten thousand instances of this kind at Rome, among the sacred objects are displayed the portraits of Peter and Paul on a panel which Sylvester put on show, when those apostles had appeared to Constantine in a dream, as a confirmation of the vision. I do not say this because I deny that those portraits of the apostles exist. I wish that Lentulus' letter about the image of Christ were as authentic,⁸⁶ even though it was no less knavishly forged than the grant that we have refuted. But I say what I say because that panel was not shown by Sylvester to Constantine.

In this matter I cannot contain my astonishment. Accordingly I shall say something about the legend of Sylvester, because the entire issue turns on this, and for me it will be fitting to speak above all about the Roman pontiff, since my discourse is concerned with Roman pontiffs, with a view to facilitating inferences about the others from this one example. Of the many absurdities that are told, I touch only upon the one about the dragon, in order to show that Constantine never had leprosy.⁸⁷ For the acts of Sylvester were written down by a certain Eusebius, a Greek man according to the testimony of the translator. That nation is always highly inclined to mendacity, as Juvenal says in a satirical assessment: *whatever the lying Greeks make bold to claim as history.*⁸⁸ Where had that dragon come from? No dragons are born in Rome. Where too had his poison come from? Only in Africa are there supposed to be venomous dragons, because of the hot climate. Besides, where had so much poison come from so as to infect such a big city, particularly since the dragon was submerged in such a deep cave that a hundred and fifty steps were required to get down

pentes, excepto forsitan basilisco, non afflatu, sed morsu virus inspirant atque interimunt. Nec Cato Cesarem fugiens cum tanta hominum manu per medias Africe arenas, dum iter faceret ac dormiret, ullum suorum comitum serpentis afflatu vidi extinctum neque illi populi ob id erem sentiunt pestilentem, et si quid fabulis credimus, et Chimera et Hydra et Cerberus sine noxa vulgo conspecti sunt ac tacti. Adhuc quin eum Romani potius occidissent? 'Non poterant,' inquis? At multo grandiorem serpentem in Africa ad ripam Bagrade Regulus occidit, hunc vero vel obstructo ore specus facile erat interimere. An nobebant? Ita opinor, pro deo colebant, ut Babylonii fecerunt. Cur ergo, ut Daniel illum dicitur occidisse, non et Silvester hunc potius occidisset, quem canabaceo filo alligasset, et domum illam in eternum perdidisset?

75 Ideo commentator fabule noluit draconem interimi, ne plane Danielis narratio referri videretur. Quod si Hieronymus, vir doctissimus ac fidelissimus interpres, Apollinarisque et Origenes atque Eusebius et nonnulli alii narrationem Beli fictam esse affirmant, si eam Iudei in veteris instrumenti archetypo non agnoscunt, id est, si doctissimi quique Latinorum, plerique Grecorum, singuli Hebreorum illam ut fabulam damnant, ego non hanc adumbratam ex illa damnabo, que nullius scriptoris auctoritate fulcitur et que magistrum multo superat stultitia? Nam quis belue supterraneam domum edificaverat? Quis illic eam collocaverat, et ne prodiret atque avolaret — volant enim dracones, ut quidam aiunt, etsi alii negant —, imperaverat? Quis genus illud cibi excogitaverat? quis feminas easque virginis ac sanctimoniales, descendere preceperat nec nisi kalendis? An tenebat draco, quis esset dies kalendarum? et tam parco raroque erat cibo contentus? Nec virgi-

to it. With the possible exception of the basilisk, serpents inject their poison and kill not by breathing, but by biting. When Cato was fleeing from Caesar across the midst of the sands of Africa with a substantial body of men, he did not see anyone of his companions, marching or sleeping, stricken down by the breath of a serpent. Nor did the people there consider the air pestilential on that account, and, if we may believe the myths, the Chimaera, Hydra, and Cerberus were commonly observed and touched with impunity. Why had the Romans not slain it before? "They could not," you declare. Yet Regulus killed a much larger serpent in Africa on the banks of the Bagrada.⁸⁹ In fact this one in Rome was easy to kill, for example by blocking the mouth of the cave. Were they unwilling to do this? In my opinion they worshipped it as a god, the way the Babylonians did. Why then did Sylvester not kill it as Daniel is said to have done, by binding it with a cord of hemp and wiping out its progeny forever?⁹⁰

The fabricator of the legend did not want the dragon to be killed for fear that the derivation from the story of Daniel would seem obvious. Yet if Jerome, a most learned and reliable translator, Apollinaris, Origen, Eusebius, and others maintain that the story of Bel is a fiction, if even the Jews do not know it in the original of the Old Testament, in other words if the most learned of the Latin writers, most of the Greeks, and certain Hebrews condemn it as a fable, shall I not condemn this story, which is inspired by it, when it is supported by the authority of no writer and greatly surpasses its model in idiocy? Who had built the subterranean dwelling for the beast? Who had put the creature in it and instructed it not to go out or fly away? (Dragons fly, they say, although some deny this.) Who had imagined that kind of food for it? Who had bidden women—virgins at that, and priestesses—to go down there, and only on the first of the month? Did the dragon know what day that was? Was he satisfied with such modest and infrequent feeding? Were not the virgins terrified of such a deep cave

nes tam altum specum, tam immanem et esurientem beluam exhorrebant? Credo, blandiebatur eis draco ut feminis, ut virginibus, ut cibaria afferentibus; credo etiam, cum illis fabulabatur: quid nisi honore dicto, etiam coibat? Nam et Alexander et Scipio ex draconis serpentis cum matre concubitu geniti dicuntur. Quid, denegate postea victu non potius aut prodisset aut fuisse extinctus? O miram hominum dementiam, qui his anilibus deliramentis fidem habent!

- 76 Iam vero quandiu hoc factitatum est? quando fieri ceptum? Ante adventum Salvatoris an postea? Nihil horum scitur. Pudeat nos, pudeat harum neniuarum et levitatis plus quam mimice, erubescat christianus homo, qui veritatis se ac lucis filium nominat, proloqui, que non modo vera non sunt, sed nec verisimilia. 'At enim,' inquiunt, 'hanc demones potestatem in gentibus optinebant, ut eas diis servientes illudarent.' Silete, imperitissimi homines, ne dicam sceleratissimos, qui fabulis vestris tale semper velamentum optenditis. Non desiderat sinceritas christiana patrocinium falsitatis, satis per se superque sua ipsius luce ac veritate defenditur sine istis commenticiis ac prestigiosis fabellis in Deum, in Christum, in Spiritum sanctum contumeliosissimis. Siccine Deus arbitrio demonum tradiderat genus humanum, ut tam manifestis, tam imperiosis miraculis seducerentur? ut prope modum posset iniustitie accusari, qui oves lupis commisisset, et homines magnam errorum suorum haberent excusationem? Quod si tantum olim licebat demonibus et nunc apud infideles vel magis liceret, quod minime videmus, nec ulle ab eis huiusmodi fabule proferuntur. Tacebo de aliis populis, dicam de Romanis, apud quos paucissima miracula feruntur eaque vetusta atque incerta.

and of such an immense and ravenous beast? The dragon was nice to them, I suppose, as one would be to women, to virgins, and to people bringing food. I suppose he also chatted with them. What if—excuse my language—he even had sex with them? For both Alexander and Scipio are said to have been born from the intercourse of a dragon or serpent with their mothers. If food were denied him afterwards, why would he not have come forth and expired? How amazing the folly of men, who can put their faith in such old-wives tales!

How long had this been going on? When did it start? Before the advent of the Savior, or subsequently? No one knows. We should be ashamed, we should be ashamed of this silliness and frivolity beyond anything in theatrical shows. A Christian, who calls himself a child of truth and light, should blush to utter things that are not only not true, but not even plausible. "But," they say, "demons gained this power among the pagans to mock those who served the gods." Be quiet, you utterly ignorant people, not to say criminals, who invariably draw a veil like this over your stories. Christian candor has no need to shelter under falsehood. It is defended enough and more than enough on its own through its light and truth without those lying and flashy tales that are profoundly insulting to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. Had God so turned over the human race to the will of demons that they would be seduced by such obvious, such imperious miracles, to such an extent that he could almost be accused of injustice for having entrusted sheep to wolves, and men would have a signal excuse for their errors? But if the demons had so much licence before, they would have even more now among the infidels. We see that this is not at all the case, and no stories of this kind are advanced by them. I shall say nothing of other peoples: I shall speak about the Romans, among whom very few miracles are reported, and these both ancient and uncertain.

77 Valerius Maximus ait hiatum illum terre in medio foro, cum se in eum Curtius armatum adacto equo immisisset, iterum coisse inque pristinam formam continuo revertisse; item Iunonem Monetam, cum a quodam milite Romano captis Veiis per iocum interrogata esset, an Romam migrare vellet, respondisse velle. Quorum neutrum Titus Livius sentit et prior auctor et gravior, nam et hiatum permansisse vult nec tam fuisse subitum quam vetustum, etiam ante conditam urbem appellatumque Curtium lacum, quod in eo delitusset Curtius Mettius Sabinus Romanorum fugiens impressionem; et Iunonem annuisse, non respondisse, adiectumque fabule postea vocem reddidisse. Atque de nutu quoque palam est illos esse mentitos, vel quod motum simulacri — avellebant autem illud — interpretati sunt sua sponte esse factum, vel, qua lascivia hostilem et victimam et lapideam deam interrogabant, eadem lascivia annuisse finxerunt, tam etsi Livius inquit non annuisse, sed milites, quod annuisset, exclamasse. Que tamen boni scriptores non defendunt facta, sed dicta excusant, nam prout idem Livius ait: *Datur hec venia antiquitati, ut miscendo humana divinis primordia urbium augustiora faciat, et alibi: Sed in rebus tam antiquis, si qua similia veri sunt, pro veris accipientur, satis habeam. hec ad ostentationem scene gaudentis miraculis aptiora quam ad fidem, neque affirmare neque refellere est opere pretium.* Terentius Varro his duobus et prior et doctior et, ut sentio, gravior auctor, ait triplicem historiam de lacu Curtio a totidem auctoribus proditam, unam a Proculo, quod is lacus ita sit appellatus a Curtio, qui se in eum deiecit, alteram a Pisone, quod a Mettio Sabino, tertiam a Cornelio, cuius rei socium addit Luctarium, quod a Curtio consule, cui collega fuit M. Genutius. Neque

Valerius Maximus says that the chasm in the ground in the middle of the forum closed up again when Curtius, urging on his horse, had precipitated himself into it in full armor, and that it immediately returned to its pristine shape.⁹¹ Likewise when the statue of Juno Moneta was jokingly asked by a certain Roman soldier after the capture of Veii whether she would like to move to Rome, she replied that she would.⁹² Livy, an earlier and more serious author, knows neither of these stories.⁹³ He maintains that the chasm was there all along and was not a sudden opening but an ancient one, even before the foundation of the city, and was called Lake Curtius, because Curtius Mettius, a Sabine fleeing an onslaught of Romans, had hidden in it. And he maintains that Juno nodded, but did not speak in reply, and that the utterance she gave was a later addition to the story.⁹⁴ As for the nod, it is plain that they lied, either because they interpreted a motion of the statue—they were pulling it away—as made of its own accord, or they invented her nodding with the same jocularity with which they interrogated the hostile and conquered stone goddess. In fact Livy does not say that she nodded, but that the soldiers shouted that she had. Good writers do not defend these as facts but excuse them as reports, just as Livy himself says: *This allowance is granted to antiquity, that by commingling the human with the divine it may make the origins of cities more grandiose,*⁹⁵ and elsewhere: *But in such ancient history I would be satisfied if whatever is like the truth be accepted as truth. All this is more suited to theatrical spectacle, which loves miraculous events, than to reliability, and it is not worthwhile either to affirm or refute it.*⁹⁶ Terentius Varro, an author who is earlier in time, more learned, and, in my opinion, more serious, says that three versions of the history of Lake Curtius have been handed down by as many authors—one by Proculus, that the lake was named for Curtius himself, who threw himself into it; a second by Piso, that it was named for Mettius the Sabine; and a third by Cornelius, with whom he associated Luctatius, that it was named for Curtius the

vero dissimulaverim Valerium non plane posse reprehendi, quod ita loquatur, cum paulo post graviter et severe subiiciat: *Nec me preterit de motu et voce deorum immortalium humanis oculis auribusque percepto, quam in ancipiti opinione estimatio versetur.* Sed quia non nova dicuntur, sed tradita repetuntur, fidem auctores vendicent. De voce deorum dixit propter Iunonem Monetam et propter simulacrum Fortune, quod bis locutum fingitur his verbis: *Rite me, matrone, vidistis, rite dedicastis.*

- 78 At vero nostri fabulatores passim inducunt idola loquentia, quod ipsi gentiles et idolorum cultores non dicunt et sincerius negant quam christiani affirmant. Apud illos paucissima miracula non fide auctorum, sed veluti sacra quadam ac religiosa vetustatis commendatione nituntur; apud istos recentiora quedam narrantur, que illorum homines temporum nescierunt. Neque ego admirationi sanctorum derogo nec ipsorum divina opera abnuo, cum sciam tantum fidei, quantum est granum sinapis, montes etiam posse transferre. Immo defendo illa ac tueor, sed misceri cum fabulis non sino. Nec persuaderi possum hos scriptores alios fuisse quam aut infideles, qui hoc agerent in derisum christianorum, si hec figmenta per dolosos homines in manus imperitorum delata acciperentur pro veris, aut fideles habentes quidem emulationem Dei, sed non secundum scientiam, qui non modo de gestis sanctorum, verum etiam Dei genetricis atque adeo Christi improba quedam et pseudevangelia scribere non reformidarunt. Et summus pontifex hos libros appellat apocryphos, quasi nihil vitii sit, quod eorum ignoratur auctor; quasi credibilia sint, que narrantur; quasi sancta et ad confirmationem religionis pertinentia, ut iam non minus culpe sit penes hunc, qui mala probat, quam penes illum, qui

consul, whose colleague was M. Genutius.⁹⁷ Furthermore, I would not conceal that Valerius Maximus cannot quite be reproved for speaking as he does, since a little later he adds solemnly and seriously: *With reference to the motion and utterance of immortal gods as perceived by human eyes and ears, I am not unaware how uncertain is the opinion on which judgment is based. But since nothing new is said here and only tradition is reported, authors should make their own claim to credibility.* As to the utterance of the gods, he spoke about Juno Moneta and the statue of Fortune, which is twice imagined as speaking in these words: *Duly have you seen me, matrons, duly have you dedicated me.*⁹⁸

But our own story-tellers indiscriminately bring in talking statues, about which pagans themselves and idolators say nothing. They repudiate such stories more strenuously than the Christians affirm them. Among pagans the very small number of miracles does not depend upon the trustworthiness of authors but, as it were, upon a certain holy and venerable claim of antiquity. Among Christians relatively recent miracles are recounted, even though those who lived at that time knew nothing about them. I do not impugn admiration of the saints nor deny their divine works, since I know that as much faith as a mustard seed can move even mountains.⁹⁹ On the contrary, I defend and protect those works, but I refuse to let them be confused with made-up stories. I cannot be persuaded that those writers were anything other than infidels, who did this in mockery of the Christians—to see if these fictions would be conveyed by treacherous men into the hands of the ignorant and accepted as true,—, or believers aspiring to imitate God but without knowledge, men who were bold enough not only to write about acts of the saints but to compose irresponsible pseud-epigrapha on the Mother of God and Christ himself. The supreme pontiff calls these books Apocrypha, as if there were nothing wrong with an unknown author,—as if the stories told were believable,—as if they were sacred and served to strengthen religion, so that now whoever approves something bad is no less cul-

mala excogitavit. Nummos reprobos discernimus, separamus, abi-
cimus: doctrinam reprobam non discerneremus, sed retinebimus?
sed cum bona miscebimus? sed pro bona defendemus?

- 79 Ego vero, ut ingenue feram sententiam, gesta Silvestri nego esse apocrypha, quia, ut dixi, Eusebius quidam fertur auctor, sed falsa atque indigna que legantur existimo, cum in aliis tum vero in eo, quod narratur de dracone, de tauro, de lepra, propter quam refu-
tandam tanta repetii. Neque enim, si Naaman leprosus fuit, conti-
nuo et Constantiū leprosum fuisse dicemus. De illo multi auc-
tores meminerunt, de hoc principe orbis terrarum nemo ne
suorum quidem civium scripsit, nisi nescio quis alienigena. Cui
non aliter habenda est fides quam alteri cuidam de vespis intra na-
res Vespasiani nidificantibus et de rana partu a Nerone emissā,
unde Lateranum vocitatum locum dicunt, quod ibi rana lateat in
sepulcro: quod nec vespe ipse nec rane, si loqui possent, dixissent.
Transeo, quod cruentum puerorum ad curationem lepre facere di-
cunt, quod medicina non confitetur, nisi ad deos Capitolinos hoc
referunt, quasi illi loqui consuissent et hoc fieri iussissent.
- 80 Sed quid mirer hec non intelligere pontifices, cum nomen igno-
rent suum: Cephas enim dicunt vocari Petrum, quia 'caput' apos-
tolorum esset, tanquam hoc vocabulum sit Grecum ἀπὸ τοῦ κε-
φαλή̄ et non Hebraicum seu potius Syriacum, quod Greci
Κηφᾶς scribunt, quod apud eos interpretatur Petrus, non 'caput.' Est enim 'Petrus' et 'petra' Grecum vocabulum stulteque per etymolo-
giā Latinam exponitur petra quasi pede trita. Et metropolitanum
ab archiepiscopo distinguunt voluntque illum a mensura civitatis
dictum, cum Grece dicatur non 'metropolis,' sed μητρόπολις, id

pable than the person who made it up. We detect spurious coins, we separate them out and throw them away: shall we not detect spurious teaching, but rather hold on to it? Shall we mix it up with good teaching and defend it as good?

For my part, to speak candidly, I deny that the Acts of Sylvester are apocryphal, because, as I have said, a certain Eusebius is alleged as author, but I consider them false and not worth reading, not only in other points but particularly in what is related about the dragon, the bull, and the leprosy, which I have done so much to refute. If Naaman was a leper, we shall not say straightaway that Constantine was too. Many authors have mentioned the former case, but about the latter, involving the ruler of the world, no one, not even one of his own citizens, has written, unless some foreigner did. Eusebius should be trusted no more than someone writing about the wasps that nested in Vespasian's nostrils and the frog to which Nero gave birth (hence the report that the Lateran acquired its name because the frog was lurking in the tomb).¹⁰⁰ Neither wasps themselves nor frogs, if they could talk, would have said this. I pass over the report that boys' blood cures leprosy, which medicine does not acknowledge,¹⁰¹ unless this is a reference to the Capitoline gods, as if they had a habit of talking and had ordered this treatment.

But why should I be surprised that the pontiffs did not understand these things, when they are ignorant about their own name? They claim that Peter was called Cephas because he was the "head" of the apostles, as if this word were Greek from *kephalē*, and not Hebrew or rather Syriac. The Greeks write *Kēphās*, which among them is translated as *Petros*,¹⁰² not "head." "Petrus / Petra" is a Greek word, and *Petra* is stupidly explained by a Latin etymology as meaning "trodden underfoot." The pontiffs distinguish a metropolitan from an archbishop and want the former to be derived from the size of the city, although in Greek it is not "metropolis" but *mētropolis*, that is—mother state or city. They explain pa-

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est mater civitas sive urbs; et patriarcham quasi 'patrem patrum,' et papam ab interiectione 'pape' dictum, et fidem orthodoxam quasi 'recte glorie,' et Simonem media correpta, cum legendum sit media longa ut Platonem et Catonem, et multa similia, quæ transseo, ne culpa aliorum omnes summos pontifices videar insectari.

- 81 Hec dicta sint, ut nemo miretur, si donationem Constantini commenticiam fuisse pape multi non potuerunt deprehendere, tam et si ab aliquo eorum ortam esse hanc fallaciam reor.

: V :

- 82 'At,' dicitis, 'cur imperatores, quorum detrimento res ista cedebat, donationem Constantini non negant, sed fatentur, affirmant, conservant?' Ingens argumentum; mirifica defensio! Nam de quo tu loqueris imperatore? Si de Greco, qui verus fuit imperator, negabo confessionem, sin de Latino, libenter etiam confitebor: etenim quis nescit imperatorem Latinum gratis factum esse a summo pontifice, ut opinor, Stephano? qui Grecum imperatorem, quod auxilium non ferret Italie, privavit Latinumque fecit, ita ut plura imperator a papa quam papa ab imperatore acciperet. Sane Troianas opes quibusdam pactionibus soli Achilles et Patroclus inter se partiti sunt. Quod etiam mihi videntur indicare Ludovici verba, cum ait,

Ego Ludovicus Imperator Romanus Augustus statuo et concedo per hoc pactum confirmationis nostre tibi, beato Petro, principi apostolorum, et per te vicario tuo, domino Pascali, summo pontifici, et suc-

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triarch as if "father of fathers," Pope by the interjection *pape*, orthodoxy as if meaning "of right glory," and *Simonem* with shortening of the middle vowel, when it ought to be pronounced long, as in *Platonem* and *Catonem*, and many other similar errors that I omit, lest I seem to be charging all the supreme pontiffs with the mistakes of some.

Let these points be made, so that no one may wonder why 81 many popes were unable to grasp that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery, even though in my opinion this deception originated with one of them.

: V :

"But," you say, "why do the emperors not deny the Donation of 82 Constantine, since it worked to their detriment, instead of acknowledging, affirming, and preserving it?" Substantial point—marvelous defense! But which emperor are you talking about? If you mean the Greek, who was the true emperor, I shall deny the admission, but if you mean the Latin, I shall gladly admit it. For who is unaware that the Latin emperor was gratuitously installed by a supreme pontiff, Stephen (I believe)?¹⁰³ He stripped the power of the Greek emperor because he would not come to the aid of Italy, and he named a Latin one, with the result that the emperor received more from the Pope than the Pope from the emperor. To be sure, Achilles and Patroclus divided up the treasures of Troy according to certain arrangements among themselves alone. The words of Louis seem to me to point to this sort of thing, when he says:

I, Louis, Roman emperor, Augustus, by our confirmatory agreement do decree and grant to you, blessed Peter, prince of apostles, and through you to your vicar, Lord Pascal, the supreme pontiff, and to

cessoribus eius in perpetuum, sicut a predecessoribus nostris usque nunc in vestra potestate et dizione tenuistis, Romanam civitatem cum ducatu suo et suburbanis atque viculis omnibus et territoriis eius montanis atque maritimis litoribus et portibus, seu cunctis civitatibus, castellis, oppidis ac villis in Tuscie partibus.

Tune, Ludovice, cum Pascale pacisceris? Si tua, id est imperii Romani sunt ista, cur alteri concedis? si ipsius et ab eo possidentur, quid attinet te illa confirmare? Quantulum etiam ex imperio Romano tuum erit, si caput ipsum imperii amisisti? A Roma dicitur Romanus imperator. Quid, cetera que possides, tuane an Pascalis sunt? Credo, tua dices: nihil ergo valet donatio Constantini, si ab eo pontifici donata tu possides. Si valet, quo iure Pascalis tibi cetera remittit retentis tantum sibi que possidet? Quid sibi vult tanta aut tua in illum aut illius in te de imperio Romano largitio? Merito igitur *pactum* appellas quasi quandam collusionem. 'Sed quid faciam,' inquires, 'repetam armis, que papa occupat? At ipse iam factus est me potentior. Repetam iure? At ius meum tantum est, quantum ille esse voluit. Non enim hereditario nomine ad imperium veni, sed pacto, ut, si imperator esse volo hec et hec invicem pape promittam. Dicam nihil donasse ex imperio Constantinum? At isto modo causam agerem Greci imperatoris et me omni fraudarem imperii dignitate. Hac enim ratione papa se dicit facere imperatorem me quasi quandam vicarium suum et, nisi promittam, non facturum et, nisi paream, me abdicaturum. Dummodo mihi det, omnia fatebor, omnia paciscar. Mihi tantum crede, si Romam ego ac Tusciam possiderem, tantum abest, ut facerem que facio, ut etiam frustra mihi Pascalis donationis — sicut reor false — caneret

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*his successors in perpetuity, just as you have had under your power and sway from our predecessors until now, the following: the state of Rome with its duchy and suburbs as well as its villages, the mountain territories as well as sea coasts and ports, and all cities, castles, walled towns, and villas in the area of Tuscany.*¹⁰⁴

Louis, are you really making an agreement with Pascal? If all this belongs to you, in other words the Roman empire, why are you granting it to someone else? If it belongs to Pascal and is his possession, what is the point of the confirmation? How much Roman empire will you have left, if you lose the capital itself? The Roman emperor is so called from the name of Rome. Tell me, is everything else you possess yours or Pascal's? Yours, I suppose you will say: therefore the Donation of Constantine is invalid if you are the owner of what he gave the pontiff. If it is valid, by what right does Pascal turn all the rest over to you after retaining for himself only what he already possesses? What is the sense of such largesse involving the Roman empire, either yours to him or his to you? You therefore rightly speak of an agreement as if it were a kind of collusion. "But what I am going to do?" you say, "Shall I recover by armed force what the Pope is holding? But he has now become more powerful than I am. Shall I recover it by legal action? But my legal right is no more than he wants it to be. I did not come to the empire by inheritance, but by an agreement that if I wanted to be emperor I should make various promises to the Pope in return. Shall I say that Constantine gave away nothing of his empire? In that way I would be making a case for the Greek emperor and would be cheating myself of all imperial rank. The Pope's rationale in making me emperor is that I am, as it were, his vicar, and if I fail to make promises he will not do this, and if I fail to obey he will depose me. As long as he gives to me, I shall admit to anything, I will agree to anything. Only believe me—if I actually owned Rome and Tuscany, I would not be acting as I am now.

cantilenam. Nunc concedo, que nec teneo nec habiturum esse me
spero. De iure pape inquirere non ad me pertinet, sed ad Constan-
tinopolitanum illum Augustum.'

83 Iam apud me excusatus es Ludovice, et quisquis alius princeps
es Ludovici similis. Quid de aliorum imperatorum cum summis
pontificibus pactione suspicandum est, cum sciamus, quid Sigis-
mundus fecerit, princeps alioquin optimus ac fortissimus, sed iam
affecta etate minus fortis? quem per Italiam paucis stipatoribus
septum in diem vivere vidimus, Rome etiam fame periturum, nisi
eum — sed non gratis, extorsit enim donationem — Eugenius pavis-
set. Is cum Romam venisset, ut pro imperatore Romanorum coro-
naretur, non aliter a papa coronari potuit, quam Constantini dona-
tionem ratam haberet eademque omnia de integro donaret.
Quid magis contrarium quam pro imperatore Romano coronari,
qui Rome ipsi renuntiasset? et coronari ab illo, quem et confiteat-
tur et, quantum in se est, dominum Romani imperii faciat? ac ra-
tam habere donationem, que vera si sit nihil imperatori de imperio
reliqui fiat? Quod, ut arbitror, nec pueri fecissent. Quo minus mi-
rum, si papa sibi arrogat Cesaris coronationem, que populi Ro-
mani esse deberet.

84 Si tu, papa, et potes Grecum imperatorem privare Italia provin-
ciisque occidentis et Latinum imperatorem facis, cur pactionibus
uteris? cur bona Cesaris partiris? cur in te imperium transfers?
Quare sciat, quisquis est, qui dicitur imperator Romanorum, me
iudice se non esse nec Augustum nec Cesarem nec imperatorem,
nisi Rome imperium teneat, et, nisi operam det, ut urbem Romam
recuperet, plane esse periurum. Nam Cesares illi priores, quorum

Pascal would be chanting in vain the tune of the Donation, since I consider it a forgery. It is not my business to look into the legal rights of the Pope, but it is the business of the emperor in Constantinople."

You are altogether forgiven in my eyes, Louis, and every other ruler in your position. What must we suspect about the agreements that other emperors have made with supreme pontiffs, when we know what Sigismund did, an otherwise excellent and very courageous man, and yet less courageous under the impact of his age? We saw him in Italy encompassed by just a few retainers and living from day to day, about to die of starvation in Rome if Eugenius had not given him food—but at the price of extorting the Donation. When he had come to Rome to be crowned emperor of the Romans, he could not have been crowned by the Pope without acknowledging the validity of the Donation of Constantine and making a donation of everything all over again.¹⁰⁵ What is more contradictory than for someone to be crowned a Roman emperor when he had renounced Rome itself? And to be crowned by a man whom he acknowledges and, to the extent it lies with him, makes the lord of the Roman empire? And to consider valid a donation which becomes true only if the emperor has nothing left of his empire? In my view, not even children would have done such a thing. So it is hardly surprising if the Pope takes upon himself the coronation of a Caesar, which ought to be the responsibility of the Roman people.

If you, Pope, can deprive the Greek emperor of Italy and the western provinces and create the Latin emperor, why do you make use of agreements? Why do you divide up Caesar's property? Why do you transfer the empire to yourself? Therefore anyone who is called emperor of the Romans should know that in my judgment he is neither Augustus nor Caesar nor emperor if he lacks full power at Rome, and that if he makes no effort to recover the city of Rome he is clearly guilty of perjury. Those former

fuit primus Constantinus, non adigebantur iusiurandum interponere, quo nunc Cesares obstringuntur: se, quantum humana ope prestari potest, nihil imminuturos esse de amplitudine imperii Romani eamque sedulo adacturos. Non ea re tamen vocati Augusti, quod imperium augere deberent — ut aliqui sentiunt Latine lingue imperiti —, est enim Augustus quasi ‘sacer’ ab avium gustu dictus, que in auspiciis adhiberi solebant, Grecorum quoque testante lingua, apud quos Augustus Σεβαστός dicitur, unde Sebastia vocata. Melius summus pontifex ab augendo Augustus dicetur, nisi quod, dum temporalia auget, spiritualia minuit. Itaque videas, ut quisque pessimus est summorum pontificum, ita maxime defendende huic donationi incumbere, qualis Bonifacius octavus, qui Celestimum tubis parieti insertis decepit. Hic et de donatione Constantini scribit et regem Francie privavit regnumque ipsum, quasi donationem Constantini exequi vellet, ecclesie Romane fuisse et esse subiectum iudicavit, quod statim successores eius, Benedictus et Clemens, ut improbum iniustumque revocarunt.

85 Verum quid sibi vult ista vestra, pontifices Romani, sollicitudo quod a singulis imperatoribus donationem Constantini exigitis confirmari, nisi quod iuri diffiditis vestro? Sed laterem lavatis, ut dicitur; nam neque illa unquam fuit, et quod non est, confirmari non potest; et quicquid donant Cesares, decepti exemplo Constantini faciunt, et donare imperium nequeunt.

86 Age vero, demus Constantinum donasse Silvestrumque aliquando possedisse, sed postea vel ipsum vel aliquem successorum a possessione deiectum. Loquor nunc de iis, que papa non possi-

Caesars—Constantine first among them—were not forced to take the oath by which today's Caesars are bound. As far as human resources allowed, they would take away nothing from the size of the Roman empire and would zealously augment it. But this is not why they were called Augusti, because they were supposed to augment the empire (as some think in their ignorance of Latin), for Augustus is called, so to speak, "sacred" from the gustatory habits of those avians that were customarily used in taking the auspices. The Greek language attests this as well, since among Greeks Augustus is called *Sebastos*, from which Sebastia takes its name.¹⁰⁶ Better for the supreme pontiff to be called Augustus, from augmenting, except that in augmenting his temporal resources he reduces his spiritual ones. So you see that the worse the supreme pontiff, the more he insists on defending this donation. Such was Boniface the Eighth, who tricked Celestine by pipes inserted into the wall.¹⁰⁷ He writes about the Donation of Constantine and despoiled the king of France, whose very kingdom he decreed to have been and to be subject to the Roman church, just as if he wanted to implement the Donation of Constantine. His successors, Benedict and Clement, immediately revoked this as wicked and unjust.

But, Roman pontiffs, what is the meaning of that anxiety of yours in demanding that the Donation of Constantine be confirmed by one emperor after another, unless you mistrust your own legal authority? But, as the saying goes, you are washing a brick. For that donation never existed, and what does not exist cannot be confirmed. Whatever the Caesars give, they do because they are deceived by the example of Constantine. They are unable to give the empire.

All right, let us suppose that Constantine gave and Sylvester was at one time in possession, but that later either he himself or one of his successors was removed from possession. (I am talking now about what the Pope does not possess, and I shall talk subse-

det, postea loquar de iis, que possidet. Quid possum vobis magis dare, quam ut ea, que nec fuerunt nec esse potuerunt, fuisse concedam? Tamen dico vos nec iure divino nec iure humano ad recuperationem agere posse. In lege veteri Hebreus supra sextum annum Hebreo servire vetabatur, et quinquagesimo quoque anno omnia redibant ad pristinum dominum: tempore gratie Christianus a vicario Christi, redemptoris nostre servitutis, premetur servitio eterno? quid dicam, revocabitur ad servitutem, postquam liber factus est diuque potitus libertate? Sileo, quam sevus, quam vehemens, quam barbarus dominatus frequenter est sacerdotum. Quod si antea ignorabatur, nuper est cognitum ex monstro illo atque portento Ioanne Vitellesco cardinale et patriarcha, qui gladium Petri, quo auriculam Malcho abscidit, in christianorum sanguine lassavit; quo gladio et ipse periit. An vero populis Israel a domo David et Salomonis, quos prophete a Deo missi unxerant, tamen propter graviora onera desciscere licuit factumque eorum Deus probavit: nobis ob tantam tyrannidem desciscere non licet? ab iis presertim, qui nec sunt reges nec esse possunt et qui de pastoribus ovium, id est animarum facti sunt fures ac latrones.

87 Et ut ad ius humanum veniam, quis ignorat nullum ius esse bellorum aut, si quod est, tamdiu valere quandiu possideas, que bello parasti? Nam cum possessionem perdis, et ius perdidisti. Ideoque captivos, si fugerint, nemo ad iudicem repetere solet; etiam nec predas, si eas priores domini receperint. Apes et quedam alia volucrum genera, si e privato meo longius evolaverint et in alieno desiderint, repeti non queunt: tu homines, non modo liberum animal, sed dominum ceterorum, si se in libertatem manu et

quently about what he does possess.) What more can I grant you than to concede that what never existed and could not have existed, did exist? Even so, I say that neither divine nor human law enables you to effect a recovery. In ancient law a Hebrew was forbidden to be a slave to a Hebrew for more than six years, and also every fifty years everything returned to its original owner:¹⁰⁸ in the time of grace shall a Christian be oppressed in eternal slavery by the vicar of Christ, who redeemed us from slavery? What should I say: will he be recalled to slavery after he has been made free and long enjoyed his freedom? I keep quiet about how savage, how violent, how barbarous the domination of priests often is. If this was unknown previously, it has recently been recognized from that depraved monster, Giovanni Vitelleschi, cardinal and patriarch, who wearied the sword, by which Peter had cut off the ear from Malchus, with the blood of Christians.¹⁰⁹ This is the sword by which he too died. Did the people of Israel truly have permission to revolt from the house of David and Solomon, whom prophets sent by God had anointed, because their burdens were overwhelming? Did God approve what they did, while we in the face of such tyranny will not have permission to revolt, especially from those who are not kings and cannot be, and from those who were shepherds of sheep—that is, of souls—and have become thieves and robbers?

To turn to human law, who is unaware that there is no legal right conferred by war, or, if there is, it has force only so long as you are in possession of what you gained by war? For when you lose possession, you have lost your legal claim. That is why no one customarily goes to court to recover captive prisoners if they have escaped. The same is true of booty, if the former owners have recovered it. Bees and certain other kinds of flying creatures cannot be recovered if they have flown away a considerable distance from my private property and settled in someone else's. When it comes to human beings—not only free creatures but masters over others—will you try to reclaim through legal action those who have

armis asserant, non manu et armis repetes, sed iure, quasi tu homo sis, illi pecudes? Neque est quod dicas: 'Romani iuste bella nationibus intulerunt iusteque libertate illas exuerunt.' Noli me ad istam vocare questionem, ne quid in Romanos meos cogar dicere, quanquam nullum crimen tam grave esse potuit, ut eternam mere- rentur populi servitutem, cum eo, quod sepe culpa principis magne alicuius in republica civis bella gesserunt et victi immerita servitutis pena affecti sunt. Quorum exemplis plena sunt omnia.

- 88 Neque vero lege nature comparatum est, ut populus sibi populum subigat. Precipere aliis eosque exhortari possumus, imperare illis ac vim afferre non possumus, nisi reicta humanitate velimus ferociores beluas imitari, que sanguinarium in infirmiores imperium exercent, ut leo in quadrupedes, aquila in volucres, delphinus in pisces. Veruntamen he belue non in suum genus sibi ius vendicant, sed in inferius. Quod quanto magis faciendum nobis est et homo homini religioni habendus, cum, ut M. Fabius inquit, *nulla supra terras adeo rabiosa belua, cui non imago sua sancta sit.* Itaque quatuor fere cause sunt, ob quas bella inferuntur: aut ob ulciscendam iniuriam defendendosque amicos, aut timore accipiende postea calamitatis, si vires aliorum augeri sinantur, aut spe prede, aut glorie cupiditate. Quarum prima nonnihil honesta, secunda parum, due posteriores nequaquam honeste sunt. Et Romanis quidem illata fuere frequenter bella, sed postquam se defenderant, et illis et aliis ipsi intulerunt, nec ulla gens est, que dicioni eorum cesserit nisi bello victa et domita, quam recte aut qua causa, ipsi viderint. Eos ego nolim nec damnare tanquam iniuste pugnaverint, nec absolvere tanquam iuste. Tantum dicam eadem ratione Romanos ceteris bella intulisse qua reliqui populi regesque, atque ipsis, qui bello la-

asserted their freedom by force and weapons, just as a person would do to reclaim his cattle, and not by force and weapons? Nor can you say to me: "The Romans justly waged war upon nations, and they justly deprived them of liberty." Do not bring me into that debate, lest I be compelled to speak against my fellow Romans. Yet no offense could have been so serious as to warrant peoples' everlasting slavery, since they have often waged wars through the fault of a prince or some great citizen in the state and then, after being defeated, were undeservedly penalized with slavery. The world is full of examples of this sort of thing.

Nor in truth is it assured by the law of nature that one people 88
subjugate another. We can instruct others and exhort them. We cannot rule over them and do them violence, unless, abandoning our humanity, we want to imitate the wilder beasts which impose their bloody rule upon the weaker, as the lion upon quadrupeds, the eagle upon birds, and the dolphin upon fish. But even these creatures do not make claims upon their own kind, but upon lesser breeds. We ought to do this all the more, and a man should scrupulously respect another man, since as Quintilian said, *no creature on earth is so fierce that it does not revere the likes of itself.*¹¹⁰ There are therefore four reasons for making war: 1) to avenge a wrong and defend friends, 2) fear of incurring a disaster in the future if the strength of others is allowed to grow, 3) the expectation of booty, 4) a desire for glory. Of these the first is, to some extent, honorable, the second less so, and the last two in no way at all. In fact wars were frequently launched against the Romans, but after they had defended themselves they waged wars against their enemies and others too, and no nation has come under their domination without being conquered and subjected in war — how rightly or for what reason is theirs to know. I would not wish to condemn them for having fought unjustly, nor to acquit them for acting justly. I would only say that that the Romans made war on others for the same reason as most peoples and kings, and that those who

cessiti victique sunt, licuisse deficere a Romanis, ut ab aliis dominis defecerunt, ne forte, quod nemo diceret, imperia omnia ad vetustissimos illos, qui primi domini fuere, id est qui primi preripiuer aliena, referantur. Et tamen melius in victis bello nationibus populo Romano quam Cesaribus rem publicam opprimentibus ius est. Quocirca si fas erat gentibus a Constantino et, quod multo plus est, a populo Romano desciscere, profecto et ab eo fas erit, cuicunque cesserit ille ius suum. Atque ut audacius agam, si Romanis licebat Constantinum aut exigere ut Tarquinium aut occidere ut Iulium Cesarem, multo magis eum vel Romanis vel provinciis licebit occidere, qui in locum Constantini utcunque succedit.

- 89 Hoc etsi verum, tamen ultra causam meam est, et idcirco me reprimere volo nec aliud ex his colligere que dixi, nisi ineptum esse, ubi armorum vis est, ibi ius quenque afferre verborum, quia quod armis acquiritur, idem rursus armis amittitur. Eo quidem magis, quod alie nove gentes — ut de Gothis accepimus —, que nunquam sub imperio Romano fuerunt, fugatis veteribus incolis Italiam et multas provincias occuparunt, quas in servitatem revocari, in qua nunquam fuerunt, que tandem equitas est, presertim victrices et fortasse a victis? Quo tempore si que urbes ac nationes, ut factum fuisse scimus, ab imperatore deserte ad barbarorum adventum necesse habuerunt diligere sibi regem, sub cuius auspiciis victoriā reportarunt: nunquid hunc postea a principatu deparent? aut eius filios tum commendatione patris tum propria virtute favorabiles iuberent esse privatos? ut iterum sub Romano principe essent, maxime cum eorum opera assidue indigerent et nullum aliunde auxilium sperarent? Hos si Cesar ipse aut Constantinus

were attacked and conquered in war had the same license to defect from the Romans as they had from other masters, so that all authority not be assigned—something no one would accept—to the most ancient peoples, who were the first masters, in other words, to those who first took away the property of others. And yet the Roman people had a stronger claim over nations conquered in war than the emperors who demolished the Republic. Accordingly, if was right for nations to revolt from Constantine and, even more, from the Roman people, it will certainly be right to revolt from the man to whom Constantine surrendered his authority. To speak more boldly, if the Romans were free to expel Constantine as they did Tarquin or to kill him as they did Julius Caesar, all the more will the Romans and the provinces be free to kill that man, whoever he may be, who has taken Constantine's place.

True as this is, it goes beyond my subject, and therefore I want to restrain myself and not exploit anything that I have said except this: it is foolish to apply a verbal claim where there is armed force, because anything acquired by force is lost by force. All the more since other new nations (as we have learned about the Goths), nations never subject to Roman rule, have occupied Italy and many provinces after driving out the original inhabitants: what is the justice in making them slaves, which they never were, particularly since they are victors and would perhaps be slaves of the people they conquered? At that time, if any cities and nations which were deserted by the emperor, as we know happened, considered it necessary, as the barbarians were approaching, to choose a king under whose leadership they won a victory, should they depose this man from his position? Should they order his sons, esteemed as much for their father's advocacy as for their own virtue, to be reduced to private status? So that they might be once again subject to a Roman emperor, particularly when they were in great need of the sons' support and hoped for help from no other source? If that emperor or Constantine were to come back to life or the Senate

ad vitam reversus aut etiam senatus populusque Romanus ad commune iudicium, quale in Grecia Amphictyonum fuit, vocaret, prima statim actione repelleretur, quod a se olim custode desertos, quod tam diu sub alio principe degentes, quod nunquam alienigenae regi subditos, quod denique homines libertati natos et in libertatem robore animi corporisque assertos ad famulatum servitiumque reposceret, ut appareat, si Cesar, si populus Romanus a repetendo exclusus est, multo vehementius papam esse exclusum, et si licet aliis nationibus, que sub Roma fuerunt, aut regem sibi creare aut rem publicam tenere, multo magis id licere populo Romano, precipue adversus novam pape tyrannidem.

: VI :

- 90 Exclusi a defendenda donatione adversarii — quod nec umquam fuit et, si qua fuisset, iam temporum conditione intercidisset — configuiunt ad alterum genus defensionis, et velut reicta urbe in arcem se recipiunt, quam statim deficientibus cibariis dedere cogentur. ‘prescripsit,’ inquiunt, ‘Romana ecclesia in iis, que possidet.’ Cur ergo, que maior pars est, ea reposcit, in quibus non prescripsit et in quibus alii prescriperunt? nisi id non licet aliis in hanc, quod huic licet in alios.
- 91 *Prescripsit Romana ecclesia:* cur ergo ab imperatoribus totiens curat sibi ius confirmandum? cur donationem confirmationemque Cesarum iactat, si hoc unum satis est? Iniuriam ei facis, si de al-

and the Roman People were to summon them to a general tribunal, such as the Amphictyons had in Greece, he would be immediately rebuffed on his first plea, because he was calling back into dependence and slavery those who had been formerly deserted by him as their protector, those who had been living for a long time under another ruler, those who had never been subject to a foreign king, those who were, in short, born to freedom and laid claim to their freedom by the strength of their minds and bodies. Hence it is clear that if the emperor and the Roman people are excluded from reclaiming their control, the Pope is excluded much more decisively, and if other nations that were under Rome are free either to create their king or maintain a republic, the Roman people is much more free, especially in opposition to a new kind of tyranny, the Pope's.

: VI :

Our adversaries, who have been kept from defending a donation that never was and, even if it had been, would have collapsed over the course of time, resort to another form of defense, and, as if they had retreated from their city, gather themselves into the citadel, which they are compelled to surrender just as soon as the food runs out. "The Roman church," they say, "has exercised its authority in those territories it possesses." Why, therefore, does it lay claim to those territories—which constitute the greater part—over which it has not exercised any authority, whereas others have? Unless the freedom the church enjoys towards others is not granted to others towards itself.

The Roman church has exercised its authority: Why, therefore, is it so often concerned that this right be confirmed by the emperors? Why does it boast of the donation and the imperial confirmation, if just one of these would suffice? You do wrong by not keeping

tero quoque iure non sileas. Cur igitur de altero non siles? Nempe quia hoc sibi non sufficit.

- 92 *Prescripsit Romana ecclesia:* et quomodo potest prescripsisse, ubi de nullo titulo, sed de male fidei possessione constat? Aut si male fidei possessionem neges, profecto stulte fidei negare non possis. An in tanta re tamque aperta excusata debet esse et facti et iuris ignorantia? facti quidem, quod Romam provinciasque non dedit Constantinus—quod ignorare idiote hominis est, non summi pontificis—, iuris autem, quod illa nec donari potuere nec accipi—quod nescire vix christiani est. Itane stulta credulitas dabit tibi ius in iis, que, si prudentior fores, tua nunquam fuissent? Quid, nonne nunc saltem, postquam te per ignorantiam atque stultitiam possedisse docui, ius istud, si quod erat, amittes? et quod inscitia male contulerat tibi, nonne id rursum cognitio bene adimet mancipiumque ab iniusto ad iustum dominum revertetur, fortassis etiam cum usufructu? Quod si adhuc possidere pergis, iam inscitia in malitiam fraudemque conversa est planeque effectus es male fidei possessor.
- 93 *Prescripsit Romana ecclesia:* o imperiti, o divini iuris ignari! Nullus quantusvis annorum numerus verum abolere titulum potest. An vero captus ego a barbaris creditusque perisse, post centum annos, quibus captivus fui, postliminio reversus paterne hereditatis repetitor excludar? Quid hac re inhumanius? Atque ut aliquod afferam exemplum, num Iephite, dux Israel, reposcentibus filiis Ammon terram *a finibus Arnon usque in Iaboc atque in Iordanem* respondit, ‘prescripsit Israel iam per trecentos annos’? an, quod nunquam illorum, sed Amorreorum fuisse terra, quam reposcerent, ostendit

quiet about the second justification. So why do you not keep quiet about it? Obviously because the Donation is insufficient on its own.

The Roman church has exercised its authority: How can it have done this, when it is based on no title but only on possession in bad faith? If you deny possession in bad faith, you certainly cannot deny in stupid faith. Or, in a matter so great and so conspicuous, ought ignorance of fact and law to be excused? Fact—because Constantine did not give Rome and the provinces: an ordinary person might be unaware of this but not the supreme pontiff. Law—because those places could not have been given or accepted: one could scarcely be a Christian and not know this. Will stupid credulity give you a right to what would never have been yours, had you been more prudent? Now at least, after I have demonstrated that you had possession through ignorance and stupidity, will you not forfeit that right, if you ever had it? Will not knowledge provide a salutary removal of what your ignorance unfortunately brought to you, and will not your estate go back from an unjust master to the just, perhaps even with interest? But if you persist in keeping possession, your ignorance is straightaway transformed into malice and deceit, and you plainly become a possessor in bad faith.

The Roman church has exercised its authority: You untutored innocents in divine law! No amount of years, no matter how many, can wipe out a legitimate title. If I had been captured by barbarians and thought to have died, would I have been shut out, after a hundred years in captivity, when I returned home again to claim my paternal inheritance? What would be more inhumane than this? And, to introduce another example, did Jephtha, the leader of Israel, answer the Ammonites who claimed the land *from the borders of the Arnon to the Jabbok and the Jordan*,¹¹¹ “Israel has already exercised its authority there for three hundred years”? Or did he show that the land they claimed had never belonged to them but to the

92

93

et hoc argumentum esse ad Ammonitas illam non pertinere, quod nunquam intra tot annorum curriculum repoposcerent?

94 *Prescripsit Romana ecclesia: tace, nefaria lingua!* Prescriptionem, que fit de rebus mutis atque irrationabilibus, ad hominem transfers, cuius quo diuturnior in servitute possessio eo est detestabilior. Aves ac fere in se prescribi nolunt, sed quantolibet tempore possesse, cum libuerit et oblata fuerit occasio, abeunt: homini ab homine possesso abire non licebit? Accipe, unde magis fraus dolusque quam ignorantia Romanorum pontificum appareat utentium iudice bello, non iure, cui simile quiddam primos pontifices in occupanda urbe ceterisque oppidis credo fecisse. Parum ante me natum — testor eorum memoriam, qui interfuerunt — per inauditum genus fraudis Roma papale accepit imperium seu tyrannidem potius, cum diu libera fuisset. Is fuit Bonifacius nonus, octavo in fraude ut in nomine par — si modo Bonifacii dicendi sunt, qui pessime faciunt —, et cum Romani deprehenso dolo apud se indignarentur, bonus papa in morem Tarquini summa queque papavera virga decussit. Quod cum postea, qui ei successit, Innocentius imitari vellet, urbe fugatus est. De aliis pontificibus nolo dicere, qui Romam vi semper oppressam armisque tenuerunt, licet quotiens potuit rebellavit ut sexto abhinc anno: cum pacem ab Eugenio optinere non posset nec par esset hostibus, qui eam obsidebant, et ipsa papam intra edes obsedit non permissura illum abire, priusquam aut pacem cum hostibus faceret aut administrationem civitatis relegaret ad cives. At ille maluit urbem deserere dissimulato habitu uno fuge comite quam civibus gratificari iusta et equa pe-

Amorites, and that the proof it did not belong to the Ammonites lay in their never having asked for it back over the course of so many years?

The Roman church has exercised its authority: Be still, wicked tongue! You transfer to man an authority that is exercised over mute and mindless objects. The longer a man is kept in slavery, the more detestable it is. Birds and wild animals do not want to be subject to authority, but however long they have been confined, as soon as the occasion presents itself, they escape as they like. Will a man, when possessed by a man, not be free to escape? Hear why the Roman pontiffs who make use of war, not law, to achieve their justice display fraud and treachery more than ignorance. In my opinion the first pontiffs behaved similarly in occupying the city of Rome and other towns. Shortly before I was born—I call upon the memory of those who were there—by an unexampled kind of deceit Rome accepted the rule of the Pope, or rather his tyranny, when for a long time the city had been free. The Pope was Boniface the Ninth, equal to the Eighth in fraud as well as in name (if in fact the worst malefactors have to be called Bonifaces), and when the Romans became outraged after the treachery was uncovered the good Pope, like Tarquin, shook off all the highest poppy flowers with his stick. Subsequently, when Innocent, the man who succeeded him, wanted to imitate this act, he was driven from the city.¹¹² I have no desire to talk about the other pontiffs who held Rome in continuous subjection by force of arms, although it rebelled as often as it could, just as it did six years ago: When the city could not obtain peace from Eugenius and, being under siege, was no match for its enemies, it laid siege to the Pope himself inside his house and would not allow him to go out before he either made peace with the enemy or turned over the administration of the state to citizens. But he preferred to abandon the city by assuming a disguise and taking along one companion in flight, rather than to accede to the citizens in their just

tentibus. Quibus si des electionem, quis ignorat libertatem magis quam servitium electuros? Idem suspicari libet de ceteris urbibus, que a summo pontifice in servitute retinentur, per quem a servitute liberari debuissent. Longum esset recensere, quot urbes ex hostibus captas populus Romanus olim liberas fecit, adeo ut Titus Flaminius omnem Greciam, que sub Antiocho fuisset, liberam esse et suis uti legibus iuberet. At papa, ut videre licet, insidiatur sedulo libertati populorum. Ideoque vicissim illi quotidie oblata facultate — ad Bononiam modo respice — rebellant. Qui si quando sponte — quod evenire potest aliquo aliunde periculo urgente — in papale imperium consenserunt, non ita accipiendum est consensisse, ut servos se facerent; ut nunquam suprahære a iugo colla possent; ut postea nati non et ipsi arbitrium sui habeant; nam hoc iniquissimum foret. Sponte ad te, summe pontifex, ut nos gubernares, venimus: sponte nunc rursus abs te, ne gubernes diutius, recedimus. Si qua tibi a nobis debentur, ponatur calculus datorum et acceptorum. At tu gubernare invitox vis, quasi pupilli simus, qui te ipsum forsitan sapientius gubernare possemus.

95. Adde huc iniurias, que aut abs te aut a tuis magistratibus huic civitati frequentissime inferuntur. Deum testamur, iniuria cogit nos rebellare, ut olim Israel a Roboam fecit. Et que tanta fuit illi iniuria, quanta portio nostre calamitatis graviora solvere tributa? Quid enim, si rem publicam nostram exhaurias? Exhausisti! Si tempula spolies? Spoliasti! Si virginibus matribusque familias stuprum inferas? Intulisti! Si urbem sanguine civili perfundas? Perfudisti! Hec nobis sustinenda sunt? an potius, cum tu pater nobis esse desieris, nos quoque filios esse obliviscemur? Pro patre,

and equitable demands.¹¹³ If you give them a choice, who does not know that they would choose freedom over slavery? One may suspect that it would be no different for other cities that are held in slavery by the supreme pontiff, by whom they ought rather to have been liberated from slavery. It would take a long time to enumerate how many cities, captured from the enemy, the Roman people formerly made free, to such an extent that Titus Flaminius ordered the whole of Greece, which had been subject to Antiochus, to be free and enjoy its own laws.¹¹⁴ But the Pope, as may be observed, assiduously plots against the liberty of peoples. Therefore, as the occasion arises, they rebel in turn every day—look at Bologna recently.¹¹⁵ If any of them ever voluntarily consented to papal rule—which can happen when some danger is threatening from another quarter, it must not be imagined that they consented to make themselves slaves, that they could never pull their necks out from under the yoke, that afterwards they and their offspring would have no jurisdiction over themselves. This would be foully unjust. Voluntarily, supreme pontiff, we came to you to govern us: voluntarily we now go away from you, lest you govern us any longer. If we owe you anything, a balance sheet of credits and debits can be drawn up. But you want to govern us against our will, as if we were your charges, whereas we would perhaps be able to govern you more wisely than you can.

Add to this the wrongs that are inflicted upon this city all the time by you and your magistrates. God knows, wrongdoing compels us to revolt, as Israel did from Rehoboam in the past. Yet what was so great a wrong for it—paying heavier taxes—is only a part of our disaster. What if you bankrupt our republic? You have done it already! If you rob our temples? You have done that too! If you violate virgins and mothers? That too you have done! If you spatter the city with civil blood? You have already done that! Must we endure this? Or rather, if you stop being a father to us, shall we forget that we are also your sons? The people summoned you, su-

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summe pontifex, aut—si hoc te magis iuvat—pro domino hic te populus advocavit, non pro hoste atque carnifice. Patrem agere aut dominum non vis, sed hostem ac carnificem. Nos sevitiam tuam impietatemque, etsi iure offense poteramus, tamen, quia christiani sumus, non imitabimur nec in tuum caput ultorem stringemus gladium, sed te abdicato atque summoto alterum patrem dominumve adoptabimus. Filiis a malis parentibus, a quibus geniti sunt, fugere licet: nobis a te, non vero patre, sed adoptivo et pesime nos tractante, non licebit? Tu vero, que sacerdotii operis sunt, cura, et noli tibi ponere sedem ad aquilonem et illinc tonantem fulgurantia fulmina in hunc populum ceterosque vibrare.

96 Sed quid plura opus est in re apertissima dicere? Ego non modo Constantinium non donasse tanta, non modo non potuisse Romanum pontificem in eisdem prescribere, sed etiam, si utrunque es-
set, tamen utrunque ius sceleribus possessorum extinctum esse contendo, cum videamus totius Italie multarumque provinciarum cladem ac vastitatem ex hoc uno fonte fluxisse. Si fons amarus est: et rivus; si radix immunda: et rami; si delibatio sancta non est: nec massa. Ita e diverso, si rivus amarus: fons obstruendus est; si rami immundi: e radice vitium venit; si massa sancta non est: delibatio quoque abominanda est. An possumus principium potentie papalis pro iure proferre, quod tantorum scelerum tantorumque omnis generis malorum cernimus esse causam? Quamobrem dico, et exclamo — neque enim timebo homines Deo fretus — neminem mea etate in summo pontificatu fuisse aut fidelem dispensatorem aut prudenter, qui tantum abest, ut dederit familie Dei cibum, ut devorarit illam velut cibum et escam panis. Papa et ipse bella pacatis populis

preme pontiff, as a father or—if you like this better—as a master, but not as an enemy and executioner. You have no desire to play the role of father or master, but of enemy and executioner. We will not imitate your cruelty and your impiety, even though under the law of reprisal we could, since we are, after all, Christians, nor will we draw our avenging swords against your person, but after your abdication and removal we will adopt another father or master. Sons are free to escape from wicked parents who gave them birth. Will we not be free to escape from you—not a true father but an adoptive one who is treating us outrageously? As for you, look after your sacral duties. Do not enthroned yourself in the North and thunder from there as you hurl bolts of lightning against this people and all others.

But why should I say anything more in a case that is utterly transparent? I not only assert that Constantine did not give away so many territories and that the Roman pontiff could not have had any authority in them, but also, if either proposition were true, it would be cancelled by the crimes of the possessors, since we see that the ruin and devastation of all Italy and many provinces have flowed from this one source. If the source is bitter, so is the stream. If the root is contaminated, so are the branches. If the first fruit is not pure, neither is the whole product. So, in reverse, if a stream is bitter, the source must be blocked. If branches are contaminated, the problem comes from the root. If a whole product is impure, the first fruit must be shunned as well. Can we justify the principle of papal power, when we observe it to be the cause of so many crimes and of so many evils of every kind? Accordingly I say and shout out—for I shall have no fear of men since I trust in God—that in my time no one in the office of supreme pontiff has been either *a faithful or a prudent steward*.¹¹⁶ He is so far from giving food to God's own people that he has eaten them up like food¹¹⁷ and a crust of bread. The Pope himself makes war on peaceful nations

infert et inter civitates principesque discordias serit, papa et alienas sitit opes et suas exorbet, ut Achilles in Agamemnonem, *δῆμοθόρος βασιλεύς*, id est populi vorator rex. Papa non modo rem publicam, quod non Verres, non Catilina, non quispiam peculator auderet, sed etiam rem ecclesiasticam et Spiritum sanctum questui habet, quod Simon ille magus etiam detestaretur. Et cum horum admonetur et a quibusdam bonis viris reprehenditur, non negat, sed palam fatetur atque gloriatur: licere enim quavis ratione patrimonium ecclesie a Constantino donatum ab occupantibus extorquere, quasi eo recuperato religio christiana futura sit beata, et non magis omnibus flagitiis, luxuriis libidinibusque oppressa, si modo opprimi magis potest et ullus est sceleri ulterior locus. Ut igitur recuperet cetera membra donationis, male eruptas a bonis viris pecunias peius effundit militumque equestres pedes tresque copias, quibus omnia infestantur, alit, cum Christus in tot milibus pauperum fame ac nuditate moriatur. Nec intelligit, o indignum facinus, cum ipse secularibus auferre, que ipsorum sunt, laborat, illos vicissim sive pessimo exemplo induci sive necessitate cogi—licet non est vera necessitas—ad auferenda, que sunt ecclesiasticorum. Nulla itaque usquam religio, nulla sanctitas, nullus Dei timor, et—quod referens quoque *horresco*—omnium scelerum impii homines a papa sumunt excusationem: in illo enim comitibusque eius esse omnis facinoris exemplum, ut cum Esaia et Paulo in papam et pape proximos dicere possumus: *Nomen Dei per vos blasphematur inter gentes. Qui alias docetis, vos ipsis non docetis; qui predicatis non furandum, latrocinamini; qui abominamini idola, sacrilegium facitis; qui in lege et in pontificatu gloriamini, per prevaricationem legis, Deum, verum pontificem, inhonoratis.* Quod si populus Romanus ob nimias opes veram illam Romanitatem perdidit, si Salomon ob

and sows discord among states and rulers. The Pope thirsts for the goods of others, in the way that Achilles described Agamemnon, *dēmōboros basileus*,¹¹⁸ "a people-devouring king." The Pope not only makes a profit from the republic, which not even Verres, Catiline, or any other embezzler dared to do, but also from the church and the Holy Spirit, which even the notorious Simon Magus refused to do. When he is advised of all this and censured by certain good men, he makes no denial but openly acknowledges it and boasts of it. He claims he is allowed to separate by any means the patrimony bestowed by Constantine upon the church from those who have possession of it, as if the Christian religion would be blessed by his taking it over and not more oppressed by every kind of crime, indulgence, and licentiousness, provided that it could still be more oppressed and more criminality could still be accommodated. In order to take over all the other parts of the donation, he spends the money he has foully stolen from good citizens for even more foul purposes by underwriting the cavalry and infantry forces that infest everything, as Christ lies dying of starvation and exposure among so many thousands of poor. He fails to realize—a most unworthy misdeed—that, when he strives to take away from secular officers what is theirs, they in turn are either induced by his deplorable example or compelled by necessity, although perhaps not genuine necessity, to take away what belongs to ecclesiastical officers. And so there is no longer any scruple, no sanctity, no fear of God, and, *I tremble to say this*,¹¹⁹ wicked men find an excuse for all their crimes in the Pope. For he and his companions furnish an example of every kind of misdeed, so that with Isaiah and Paul we can declare to the Pope and those close to him: *Through you the name of God is blasphemed among the nations. You who teach others do not teach yourselves. You who preach against theft are robbers. You who abominate idols commit sacrilege. You who glory in the law and in the pontificate dishonor God, the true pontiff, by transgressing the law.*¹²⁰ But if the Roman people lost, in consequence of excessive wealth,

eandem causam in idolatriam amore feminarum lapsus est, nonne idem putamus fieri in summo pontifice ac reliquis clericis? Et postea putamus Deum fuisse permissurum, ut materiam peccandi Silvester acciperet? Non patiar hanc iniuriam fieri sanctissimo viro, non feram hanc contumeliam fieri pontifici optimo, ut dicatur imperia, regna, provincias accepisse, quibus renuntiare etiam solent, qui clerici fieri volunt. Pauca possedit Silvester, pauca ceterique sancti pontifices, quorum aspectus apud hostes quoque erat sacro-sanctus, veluti illius Leonis, qui trucem barbari regis animum terruit ac fregit, quem Romane vires nec frangere nec terrere potuerant. Recentes vero summi pontifices, id est divitiis ac deliciis affluentibus, id videntur laborare, ut, quantum prisci fuere sapientes et sancti, tantum ipsi et impii sint et stulti et illorum egregias laudes omnibus probris vincant. Hec quis christiani nominis queat equo animo ferre?

- 97 Verum ego in hac prima nostra oratione nolo exhortari principes ac populos, ut papam effrenato cursu volitantem inhibeant eumque intra suos fines consistere compellant, sed tantum admonent, qui forsitan iam edoctus veritatem sua sponte ab aliena domo in suam et ab insanis fluctibus sevisque tempestatibus in portum se recipiet. Sin recuset, tunc ad alteram orationem multo truculentiorem accingemur. Utinam, utinam aliquando videam—nec enim mihi quicquam est longius quam hoc videre, et presertim meo consilio effectum—ut papa tantum vicarius Christi sit et non etiam Cesaris, nec amplius horrenda vox audiatur: partes ecclesie, partes contra ecclesiam, ecclesia contra Perusinos pugnat, contra Bononienses. Non contra christianos pugnat ecclesia, sed

its true Romanness, if Solomon slipped for the same reason into idolatry through consorting with women, do we not recognize that the same thing is happening to the supreme pontiff and the rest of the clergy? Do we then imagine that God would permit Sylvester to accept the wherewithal for committing sin? I will not suffer this injury to be done to a most holy man, I will not tolerate this insult to be addressed to an excellent pontiff, so that he may be said to have accepted empires, kingdoms, and provinces, which those who want to become clergy normally renounce. Sylvester had few possessions, as did all the other holy pontiffs, whose appearance struck awe even among their enemies, just as the sight of Leo terrified and broke the savage spirit of a barbarian king when Roman forces had been unable to do this.¹²¹ But recent supreme pontiffs, who are awash in riches and luxuries, seem to work hard to be as wicked and foolish as their predecessors were wise and holy, and to overwhelm the outstanding reputations of former pontiffs with every kind of disgrace. Who that considers himself a Christian can bear this with equanimity?

But in this first speech of mine I do not wish to encourage rulers and peoples to restrain the Pope as he surges ahead in his unbridled course and to force him to stay within his own borders, but only to counsel him, when perhaps he has already recognized the truth, to move back voluntarily from a house that is not his own into the one where he belongs and into a haven from irrational tides and cruel storms. But if he should refuse, then we shall gird ourselves for a second, much more aggressive speech. I wish, how I wish that one day I might see—indeed, I can scarcely wait to see, particularly if it is carried out on my initiative—that the Pope is the vicar of Christ alone and not of the emperor as well, and that those dreadful phrases are heard no more: the church faction, the anti-church faction, the church fighting against Perugia, against Bologna. The church does not fight against Christians. It is the Pope who does. The church fights against *spiritual wickedness*

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papa, illa pugnat contra *spiritualia nequitie in celestibus*. Tunc papa et dicetur et erit pater sanctus, pater omnium, pater ecclesie, nec bella inter christianos excitabit, sed ab aliis excitata censura apostolica et papali maiestate sedabit.

• ON THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE •

*in high places.*¹²² At that time to come the Pope will be called, and really will be, Holy Father, father of all, father of the church. He will not provoke wars among Christians but, through apostolic censure and papal majesty, bring an end to the wars provoked by others.

APPENDIX CONSTITUTUM CONSTANTINI

- 1 In nomine sanctae et individuae trinitatis patris, scilicet et filii et spiritus sancti. Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus in Christo Iesu, uno ex eadem sancta trinitate salvatore domino deo nostro, fidelis, mansuetus, maximus, beneficus, Alamannicus, Gothicus, Sarmaticus, Germanicus, Britannicus, Hunnicus, pius, felix, victor ac triumphator, semper augustus, sanctissimo ac beatissimo patri patrum Silvestrio, urbis Romae episcopo et papae, atque omnibus eius successoribus, qui in sede beati Petri usque in finem saeculi sessuri sunt, pontificibus nec non et omnibus reverentissimis et deo amabilibus catholicis episcopis eidem sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae per hanc nostram imperiale constitutionem subiectis in universo orbe terrarum, nunc et in posteris cunctis retro temporibus constitutis, gratia, pax, caritas, gaudium, longanimitas, misericordia a deo patre omnipotente et Iesu Christo filio eius et spiritu sancto cum omnibus vobis.
- 2 Ea quae salvator et redemptor noster dominus Iesus Christus, altissimi patris filius, per suos sanctos apostolos Petrum et Paulum, interveniente patre nostro Silvestrio summo pontifice et universalis papa, mirabiliter operari dignatus est, liquida enarratione per huius nostrae imperialis institutionis paginam ad agnitionem omnium populorum in universo orbe terrarum nostra studuit propagare mansuetissima serenitas. Primum quidem fidem nostram, quam a praelato beatissimo patre et oratore nostro Silvestrio universalis pontifice edocti sumus, intima cordis confessione ad instruendas omnium vestrum mentes proferentes et ita demum misericordiam dei super nos diffusam annuntiantes.

APPENDIX THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE¹

In the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity—Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ, our one Savior, Lord, and God
from that Holy Trinity, Flavius Caesar Constantine, the faithful,
gentle, greatest, benevolent, Alamannic, Gothic, Sarmatic, Ger-
manic, Britannic, Hunnic, pious, fortunate, victor and triumpha-
tor, ever august, to the very holy and very blessed father of fathers,
Sylvester, bishop of the city of Rome and pope, and to all his suc-
cessors who will be sitting upon the seat of the blessed Peter down
to the end of time, to the pontiffs and all very reverend and catho-
lic bishops beloved of God, who are subject to the same sacrosanct
Roman church through this our imperial constitution, those in
office now and in all time still to come: grace, peace, charity, joy,
forbearance, pity from God, the omnipotent Father, and His Son
Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you all.

What our Savior and Redeemer, Lord God Jesus Christ, Son
of the loftiest Father, has judged worthy of miraculous accom-
plishment through his holy apostles Peter and Paul, with the inter-
vention of our father Sylvester, supreme pontiff and universal
pope, our very gentle Serenity has studied to disseminate through-
out the whole world in a pellucid account by this our imperial de-
cree for the enlightenment of all peoples. Firstly our faith, which
we have learned from the aforementioned very blessed father and
our orator, Sylvester, the universal pontiff, we are advancing for
the instruction of the minds of all of you through an intimate con-
fession of the heart, and thereby declaring the pity of God that
has been spread over us.

- 3 Nosse enim vos volumus, sicut per anteriorem nostram sacram pragmaticam iussionem significavimus, nos a culturis idolorum, simulacris mutis et surdis manufactis, diabolicis compositionibus atque ab omnibus Satanae pompis recessisse et ad integrum Christianorum fidem, quae est vera lux et vita perpetua, pervenisse credentes iuxta id, quod nos isdem almificus summus pater et doctor noster Silvester instruxit pontifex, in deum patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium, et in Iesum Christum, filium eius unicum, dominum deum nostrum, per quem creata sunt omnia, et in spiritum sanctum, dominum et vivificatorem universae creaturae. Hos patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum confitemur, ita ut in trinitate perfecta et plenitudo sit divinitatis et unitas potestatis: pater deus, filius deus et spiritus sanctus deus, et tres unum sunt in Iesu Christo. Tres itaque formae, sed una potestas.
- 4 Nam sapiens retro semper deus edidit ex se, per quod semper erant gignenda saecula, verbum, et quando eodem solo suae sapientiae verbo universam ex nihilo formavit creaturam, cum eo erat, cuncta suo arcano componens mysterio. Igitur perfectis caelorum virtutibus et universis terrae materiis, pio sapientiae suae nutu ad imaginem et similitudinem suam primum de limo terrae fingens hominem, hunc in paradyso posuit voluptatis; quem antiquus serpens et hostis invidens, diabolus, per amarissimum ligni vetiti gustum exulem ab eisdem effecit gaudiis, eoque expulso non desinit sua venenosa multis modis protelare iacula, ut a via veritatis humanum abstrahens genus idolorum culturae, videlicet creaturae et non creatori, deservire suadeat, quatenus per hos eos, quos suis valuerit irretire insidiis, secum aeterno efficiat concremandos suppicio. Sed deus noster, misertus plasmae suae, dirigenς sanctos suos prophetas, per quos lumen futurae vitae, adven-

We want you to know, just as we have signified by our earlier 3
 holy pragmatic order, that we have withdrawn from the worship of
idols, deaf and dumb images made by hand, devilish devisings and
 all the pomp of Satan, and have attained the spotless faith of
 Christians, which is the true light and life everlasting, believing,
 according to the instruction we received from the greatest nourishing
 father and our teacher the pontiff Sylvester, in God the Father
 omnipotent, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord God
 through whom all things have been created, and in the Holy
 Spirit, the Lord and generator of all creation. We acknowledge
 these, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, such that the
 plenitude of divinity and the unity of power may be in a perfect
 Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,
 and the three are one in Jesus Christ. Thus three forms, but one
 power.

For the wise God has forever produced from himself the Word 4
 by which the ages had always to be brought forth, and when by
 only that same Word of wisdom He formed all creatures out of
 nothing, He was with it, arranging everything according to His
 own secret mystery. Therefore when He had made the glories of
 the heavens and all the materials of the earth, at the pious bidding
 of His wisdom He first created man from the mud of the ground
 in His image and likeness and placed him in a paradise of plea-
 sure. The old serpent and envious enemy, the devil, rendered him
 an exile from those very delights through the exceedingly bitter
 taste of the forbidden tree, and once man was expelled the serpent
 did not cease from casting his poisonous darts in manifold ways,
 so that by deflecting the human race from the path of truth he
 might persuade it to submit to the worship of idols, that is—of
 what was created rather than the Creator, whereby through those
 whom he was able to enmesh in his plots he brought it about that
 they would be burned with him in everlasting torment. But our
 God, compassionate for the creature he had formed, dispatched

tum videlicet filii sui, domini dei et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi, annuntians, misit eundem unigenitum suum filium et sapientiae verbum. Qui descendens de caelis propter nostram salutem natus de spiritu sancto et Maria virgine, verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis. Non amisit, quod fuerat, sed coepit esse, quod non erat, deum perfectum et hominem perfectum, ut deus mirabilia perficiens et ut homo humanas passiones sustinens. Ita verum hominem et verum deum praedicante patre nostro Silvestrio summo pontifice intellegimus, ut verum deum verum hominem fuisse nullo modo ambigamus; electisque duodecim apostolis, miraculis coram eis et innumerabilis populi multitudine coruscavit. Confitemur eundem dominum Iesum Christum adimplesse legem et prophetas, passum, crucifixum, secundum scripturas tertia die a mortuis resurrexisse, assumptum in caelis atque sedentem ad dexteram patris, inde venturum iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.

- 5 Haec est enim fides nostra orthodoxa a beatissimo patre nostro Silvestrio summo pontifice nobis prolata; exhortantes idcirco omnem populum et diversas gentium nationes hanc fidem tenere, collere ac praedicare et in sanctae trinitatis nomine baptismi gratiam consequi et dominum Iesum Christum salvatorem nostrum, qui cum patre et spiritu sancto per infinita vivit et regnat saecula, quem Silvester beatissimus pater noster universalis praedicat pontifex, corde devoto adorare.
- 6 Ipse enim dominus deus noster, misertus mihi peccatori, misit sanctos suos apostolos ad visitandum nos et lumen sui splendoris infulsit nobis et abstracto a tenebris ad veram lucem et agnitionem veritatis me pervenisse gratulamini. Nam dum valida squaloris lepra totam mei corporis invasisset carnem, et multorum medico-

• THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE •

His own holy prophets, through whom He announced the light of life to come—the advent of His own Son, our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, and He sent His only begotten Son and the Word of wisdom. Descending from the heavens for the reason of our salvation, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, He became the Word made flesh and dwelt among us. He did not lose what He had been, but began to be what He was not, perfect God and perfect man, as God working miracles and as man enduring human sufferings. Thus, as our father Sylvester, the supreme pontiff, preached the true man and the true God, we understand that we are in no way doubtful that He was true man and true God. Having chosen twelve apostles, He shone by his miracles before them and a multitude of innumerable people. We acknowledge that the same Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets, that having suffered and been crucified He was resurrected from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, that having been taken up into the heavens and sitting on the right hand of the Father, thence will come to judge the living and the dead, and of His reign there will be no end.

For this is our orthodox faith as transmitted to us by our most blessed father, Sylvester, the supreme pontiff. On this account are we exhorting all people and the various nations of races to embrace this faith, to practice and preach it, and to take up the grace of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, and to adore with a dedicated heart Lord Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns for infinite ages with the Father and the Holy Spirit, whom our most blessed father Sylvester, the universal pontiff, preaches. 5

Our Lord God Himself, pitying me, a sinner, sent His holy apostles to visit us, and the light of His splendor gleamed over us, and you congratulate me, having been taken out of the darkness, that I have reached the true light and recognition of the truth. For when a strongly foul leprosy had invaded all the flesh of my body and many doctors who were brought in took care of me, I did not 6

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rum convenientium cura adhiberetur, nec unius quidem promerui saluti; ad haec advenerunt sacerdotes Capitolii, dicentes mihi debere fontem fieri in Capitolio et compleri hunc innocentium infangentum sanguine et calente in eo loto me posse mundari. Et secundum eorum dicta aggregatis plurimis innocentibus infantibus, dum vellent sacrilegi paganorum sacerdotes eos mactari et ex eorum sanguine fontem repleri, cernens serenitas nostra lacrimas matrum eorum, illico exhorri facinus, misertusque eis proprios illis restitui paecepimus filios, datisque vehiculis et donis concessis gaudentes ad propria relaxavimus.

- 7 Eadem igitur transacta die, nocturna nobis facta silentia, dum somni tempus advenisset, adsunt apostoli sanctus Petrus et Paulus dicentes mihi: "Quoniam flagitiis posuisti terminum et effusionem sanguinis innocentis horruisti, missi sumus a Christo domino deo nostro, dare tibi sanitatis recuperandae consilium. Audi ergo monita nostra et fac quodcumque indicamus tibi. Silvester episcopus civitatis Romae ad montem Seraptem persecutones tuas fugiens in cavernis petrarum cum suis clericis latebram fovet. Hunc cum ad te adduxeris, ipse tibi piscinam pietatis ostendet, in qua dum te tertio merserit, omnis te valitudo ista deseret lepraes. Quod dum factum fuerit, hanc vicissitudinem tuo salvatori compensa, ut omnes iussu tuo per totum orbem ecclesiae restaurentur, te autem ipsum in hac parte purifica, ut relicta omni superstitione idolorum deum vivum et verum, qui solus est et verus, adores et excolas, ut ad eius voluntatem adtingas."
- 8 Exsurgens igitur a somno protinus iuxta id, quod a sanctis apostolis admonitus sum, peregi, advocateque eodem praecipuo et almifico patre et illuminatore nostro Silvestrio universalis papa, omnia a sanctis apostolis mihi paecepta edixi verba, percuncta-

recover my health at the hands of any one of them. Priests of the Capitol came to address the matter, declaring that I had to have a tub built on the Capitol and have it filled with the blood of innocent infants, and that I could be cleansed in this warm bath. A large number of innocent infants were rounded up according to their words, while the sacrilegious priests were arranging for them to be slaughtered and the tub to be filled from their blood, Our Serenity saw their mothers' tears. I was immediately horrified by the deed and, pitying them, we ordered their sons to be restored to their parents. With the provision of carriages and the granting of gifts, in joy we sent them home.

Once the day was over, in the silence of night when the hour for sleeping had come, the apostles, holy Peter and Paul, are with me, saying: "Since you put an end to crimes and were horrified by the spilling of innocent blood, we have been sent by Christ, our Lord God, to give you advice for recovering your health. Hear, therefore, our counsels and do whatever we tell you. Sylvester, bishop of the city of Rome, fleeing your persecutions as far as Mount Serapta, is cultivating a hiding place with his clergy in stone caves. When you have brought him to you, he will show you a pool of piety in which, as he immerses you for the third time, all that strength of the leprosy will leave you. When this has happened, reward your Savior for this change; so that all the churches in the whole world may be revived on your order. As for yourself, purify yourself in this manner — that, once you have abandoned all superstitious worship of idols, you adore the living and true God, who is the only God and true, and see to it that you follow His will."

Rising from sleep, I immediately accomplished what I had been counselled by the holy apostles to do. When that distinguished and fostering father and our illuminator, Sylvester, the universal pope, had been summoned, I revealed all the instructions I had received from the holy apostles, and we asked him who those gods

tique eum sumus, qui isti dii essent: Petrus et Paulus? Ille vero non eos deos debere dici, sed apostolos salvatoris nostri domini dei Iesu Christi. Et rursum interrogare coepimus eundem beatissimum papam, utrum istorum apostolorum imaginem expressam haberet, ut ex pictura disceremus hos esse, quos revelatio docuerat. Tunc isdem venerabilis pater imagines eorundem apostolorum per diaconem suum exhiberi praecepit. Quas dum aspicerem et eorum, quos in somno videram figuratos, in ipsis imaginibus cognovissem vultus, ingenti clamore coram omnibus satrapibus meis confessus sum eos esse, quos in somno videram.

- 9 Ad haec beatissimus isdem Silvester pater noster, urbis Romae episcopus, indixit nobis poenitentiae tempus intro palatum nostrum Lateranense in uno cubiculo in cilicio, ut omnia, quae a nobis impie peracta atque iniuste disposita fuerant, vigiliis, ieuniis atque lacrimis et orationibus apud dominum deum nostrum Iesum Christum salvatorem impetraremus. Deinde per manus impositionem clericorum usque ad ipsum praesulem veni, ibique abrenuntians Satanae pompis et operibus eius vel universis idolis manufactis, credere me in deum patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium et invisibilium, et in Iesum Christum, filium eius unicum, dominum nostrum, qui natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria virgine, spontanea voluntate coram omni populo professus sum; benedictoque fonte illic me trina mersione unda salutis purificavit. Ibi enim, me posito in fontis gremio, manu de caelo me contingente propriis vidi oculis; de qua mundus exsurgens, ab omni me leprae squalore mundatum agnoscite. Levatoque me de venerabili fonte, indutus vestibus candidis, septemformis sancti spiritus in me consignatione adhibuit beati chrismatis unctionem et vexillum sanctae crucis in mea fronte linivit dicens: "Signat te deus sigillo fidei sua in nomine patris et filii et spiritus

were: Peter and Paul? He replied that they ought not to be called gods but apostles of our Savior, the Lord God Jesus Christ. And again we began to ask the same most blessed pope whether he possessed a depiction of those apostles, so that we might learn from the picture that these were the ones that the revelation had presented to me. Then the venerable father ordered that the images of those same apostles be displayed by his deacon. When I saw these images and had recognized in them the countenances of those whom I had seen outlined in my sleep, with a huge cry in front of all my satraps I acknowledged that they were the ones whom I had seen in my sleep.

Whereupon that most blessed Sylvester, our father, bishop of 9
the city of Rome, imposed on us a penitential time within our
Lateran palace in one room in a hair shirt, so that for everything
that had been impiously transacted by us and unjustly adminis-
tered we would, by vigils, fastings, and tears, and by prayers
through our Lord God Jesus Christ, our Savior, obtain forgive-
ness. Then, by way of imposition of the hands of the clergy, I
came to the prelate himself; and there renouncing the pomp of Sa-
tan and his works, as well as all idols made by hand, I professed,
of my own free will before all people, that I believe in God the Fa-
ther omnipotent, Maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and
invisible, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was
born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. And after blessing
the font he purified me in the salubrious water by a threefold im-
mersion. There, as I was placed in the embrace of the font, I saw
with my own eyes as a hand came down to touch me from heaven.
I rose up clean. You see that I am now cleansed of all the foulness
of leprosy. When I was taken up from the venerable font and
clothed in white garments, he granted the unction of the blessed
chrisma with the sign of the sevenfold Holy Spirit upon me, and he
drew on my forehead the sign of the Holy Cross, saying: "God
marks you with the seal of his faith in the name of the Father and

sancti in consignatione fidei." Cunctus clerus respondit: "Amen." Adiecit praesul: "Pax tibi."

- io Prima itaque die post perceptum sacri baptismatis mysterium et post curationem corporis mei a lepre squalore agnovi, non esse alium deum nisi patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum, quem beatissimus Silvester papa praedicat, trinitatem in unitate, unitatem in trinitate. Nam omnes dii gentium, quos usque hactenus colui, daemonia, opera hominum manufacta comprobantur, etenim quantam potestatem isdem salvator noster suo apostolo beato Petro contulerit in caelo ac terra, lucidissime nobis isdem venerabilis pater edixit, dum fidelem eum in sua interrogatione inveniens ait: "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam." Advertite potentes et aurem cordis intendite, quid bonus magister et dominus suo discipulo adiunxit inquiens: "Et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum; quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in caelis, et quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum et in caelis." Mirum est hoc valde et gloriosum, in terra ligare et solvere et in caelo ligatum et solutum esse.
- ii Et dum haec praedicante beato Silvestrio agnoscerem et beneficiis ipsius beati Petri integre me sanitati comperi restitutum, utile iudicavimus una cum omnibus nostris satrapibus et universo senatu, optimatibus etiam et cuncto populo Romano, gloriae imperii nostri subiacenti, ut, sicut in terris vicarius filii dei esse videtur constitutus, etiam et pontifices, qui ipsius principis apostolorum gerunt vices, principatus potestatem amplius, quam terrena imperialis nostrae serenitatis mansuetudo habere videtur concessam, a nobis nostroque imperio obtineant, eligentes nobis ipsum principem apostolorum vel eius vicarios firmos apud deum adesse patronos. Et sicut nostra est terrena imperialis potentia, eius sacrosanc-

the Son and the Holy Spirit, as a token of faith." The entire clergy responded: "Amen." The prelate added: "Peace be with you."

And so on the first day after I received the mystery of the sacred baptism and the healing of my body from the foulness of leprosy, I recognized that there is no other god than the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Whom the most blessed Sylvester preaches, Trinity in unity and unity in Trinity. For all the pagan gods, which I have worshipped hitherto, are shown to be demons, hand-wrought works of men, and the venerable father expounded to us most lucidly how great a power our Savior conferred upon his blessed apostle Peter in heaven and on earth, when finding him faithful in interrogating him He says, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it."² Take note, you powerful ones, and listen with the ear of your heart to what the Good Teacher and Master added when he said to his disciple: "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens; and whatever you bind together on earth will be bound also in the heavens, and whatever you loosen on earth will be loosened in the heavens."³ This is wondrous indeed and glorious—to bind and to loosen on earth, and to be bound and loosened in heaven.

While I was recognizing these things through the preaching of the blessed Sylvester and I ascertained that I had been wholly restored to health through benefits accorded by the blessed Peter himself, we have judged it useful, together with all our satraps and the entire Senate, and the Optimates too, along with all the Roman people subject to the glory of our empire, that, just as he is seen to have been established as the vicar of the Son of God on earth, so too should the pontiffs who hold the place of the Prince of the Apostles obtain from us and our empire the concession of a princely power of greater extent than the clemency of our earthly imperial Serenity appeared to possess,⁴ choosing the very Prince of the Apostles, or his vicars, to be strong advocates for us with God.

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tam Romanam ecclesiam decrevimus veneranter honorare et amplius, quam nostrum imperium et terrenum thronum sedem sacratissimam beati Petri gloriose exaltari, tribuentes ei potestatem et gloriae dignitatem atque vigorem et honorificentiam imperialem.

- 12 Atque decernentes sancimus, ut principatum teneat tam super quattuor praecipuas sedes Antiochenam, Alexandrinam, Constantinopolitanam et Hierosolymitanam, quamque etiam super omnes in universo orbe terrarum dei ecclesias; et pontifex, qui pro tempore ipsius sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae extiterit, celsior et princeps cunctis sacerdotibus totius mundi existat et eius iudicio, quaeque ad cultum dei vel fidei Christianorum stabilitate procuranda fuerint, disponantur. Iustum quippe est, ut ibi lex sancta caput teneat principatus, ubi sanctorum legum institutor, salvator noster, beatum Petrum apostolatus obtinere paecepit cathedram, ubi et crucis patibulum sustinens beatae mortis sumpsit poculum suique magistri et domini imitator apparuit, et ibi gentes pro Christi nominis confessione colla flectant, ubi eorum doctor beatus Paulus apostolus pro Christo extenso collo martyrio coronatus est; illic usque in finem quaerant doctorem, ubi sanctum doctoris quiescit corpus, et ibi proni ac humiliati caelestis regis, dei salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi, famulentur officio, ubi superbi terreni regis serviebant imperio.
- 13 Interea nosse volumus omnem populum universarum gentium ac nationum per totum orbem terrarum, construxisse nos intro palatium nostrum Lateranense eidem salvatori nostro domino deo Iesu Christo ecclesiam a fundamentis cum baptisterio, et duodecim nos sciatis de eius fundamentis secundum numerum duodecim apostolorum cophinos terra onustatos propriis asportasse humeris; quam sacrosanctam ecclesiam caput et verticem omnium ecclesiarum in universo orbe terrarum dici, coli, venerari ac praedi-

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And as our imperial power is earthly, we have decreed honor with veneration for his sacrosanct Roman church and that the most sacred seat of the blessed Peter be gloriously exalted more than our empire and earthly throne, in that we assign to him power, the dignity of glory, and the vigor and distinction of empire.⁵

And we sanction by decree that he have primacy over the four distinguished sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem as well as over all churches of God in the whole globe of earth. Furthermore, the pontiff who in the course of time has stood over the sacrosanct Roman church shall exist as loftier and leader to all the priests of the entire world, and whatever pertains to the worship of God or to guaranteeing the stability of the faith of Christians shall be arranged according to his judgment.⁶ It is indeed just that where the institutor of holy laws, our Savior, ordered the blessed Peter to have his apostolic seat, there holy law should maintain the capital of the principate—that where shouldering the cross he drank the cup of blessed death and appeared as an imitator of his Teacher and Lord, there peoples should bend their neck in confessing the name of Christ, where their teacher the blessed apostle Paul was crowned with martyrdom after extending his neck for Christ; there they should seek their teacher unto the end, where the sacred body of the teacher rests, and there, prostrated and bowed down, they should carry out their duty towards the heavenly king, our Savior God, Jesus Christ, there where they used to be subject to the rule of a proud earthly king.

In the meantime we want all peoples of all races and nations throughout the whole world to know that we have built inside our Lateran palace a church with its own foundation and baptistery for our Savior, Lord God, Jesus Christ, and you should know that from its foundation we have carried on our own shoulders twelve bags filled with earth in accordance with the number of the twelve apostles. We prescribe that the sacrosanct church be designated, honored, venerated, and proclaimed as the head and summit of all

cari sancimus, sicut per alia nostra imperialia decreta statuimus. Construximus itaque et ecclesias beatorum Petri et Pauli, principum apostolorum, quas auro et argento locupletavimus, ubi et sacratissima eorum corpora cum magno honore recondentes, thecas ipsorum ex electro, cui nulla fortitudo p[re]avalet elementorum, construximus et crucem ex auro purissimo et gemmis pretiosis per singulas eorum thecas posuimus et clavis aureis confiximus, quibus pro concinnatione luminariorum possessionum praedia contulimus, et rebus diversis eas ditavimus, et per nostras imperialium iussionum sacras tam in oriente quam in occidente vel etiam septentrionali et meridiana plaga, videlicet in Iudea, Graecia, Asia, Thracia, Africa et Italia vel diversis insulis nostram largitatem eis concessimus, ea prorsus ratione, ut per manus beatissimi patris nostri Silvestri pontificis successorumque eius omnia disponantur.

- 14 Gaudeat enim una nobiscum omnis populus et gentium nationes in universo orbe terrarum; exhortantes omnes, ut deo nostro et salvatori Iesu Christo immensas una nobiscum referatis grates, quoniam ipse deus in caelis desuper et in terra deorsum, qui nos per suos sanctos visitans apostolos sanctum baptismatis sacramentum percipere et corporis sanitatem dignos effecit. Pro quo concedimus ipsis sanctis apostolis, dominis meis, beatissimis Petro et Paulo et per eos etiam beato Silvestrio patri nostro, summo pontifici et universalis urbis Romae papae, et omnibus eius successoribus pontificibus, qui usque in finem mundi in sede beati Petri erunt sessuri, atque de praesenti contradimus palatum imperii nostri Lateranense, quod omnibus in toto orbe terrarum p[re]feratur atque praecellet palatiis, deinde diademam videlicet coronam capitis nostri simulque frygium nec non et superhumerale, videlicet lorum, qui imperiale circumdare assolet collum, verum etiam et clamidem purpuream atque tunicam coccineam et omnia imperialia indumenta seu et dignitatem imperialium praesidentium equitum, conferentes etiam et imperialia sceptra simulque et conta

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churches in the entire world, just as we have legislated through our other imperial decrees. We have built churches of the blessed Peter and Paul, the first apostles, which we have enriched with gold and silver, where burying their most sacred bodies with great honor we have also constructed their coffins out of amber, against which no force of the elements prevails. And we have put a cross of purest gold and precious gems on their individual coffins and fastened them shut with golden keys. For these we have granted properties of our possessions to guarantee the lights, and we have enriched those churches with various items, and by our sacred imperial ordinances we have granted them a largesse no less in the east than in the west and even in the northern and southern sectors, that is—in Judaea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa, and Italy as well as various islands, on this express condition that everything be in the hands of our most blessed father Sylvester, the supreme pontiff, and his successors.⁷

Let all people rejoice with us, and nations of races in the whole world. We exhort everyone to give immense thanks with us to our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, since God Himself, in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, visiting us through His holy apostles, made us worthy to receive the holy sacrament of baptism and bodily health. For this we grant to those holy apostles, our lords, the blessed Peter and Paul and through them to the blessed Sylvester, our father, the supreme pontiff and universal pope of the city of Rome, and to all his successor pontiffs, who will be sitting in the seat of the blessed Peter until the end of the world, and as of now we hand over the Lateran palace of our empire, which ranks above and surpasses all other palaces, in the entire world, then the diadem—that is, the crown on our head and at the same time the Phrygian tiara and the superhumeral band (which is the strap that normally goes around the imperial neck), but also the purple cloak and the scarlet tunic and all imperial vestments, or the rank of commanders of the imperial cavalry. We confer on him

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atque signa, banda etiam et diversa ornamenta imperialia et omnem processionem imperialis culminis et gloriam potestatis nostrae.

15 Viris enim reverentissimis, clericis diversis ordinibus eidem sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae servantibus illud culmen, singularitatem, potentiam et praecellentiam habere sancimus, cuius amplissimus noster senatus videtur gloria adornari, id est patricios atque consules effici, nec non et ceteris dignitatibus imperialibus eos promulgantes decorari; et sicut imperialis militia, ita et clerum sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae ornari decernimus; et quemadmodum imperialis potentia officiis diversis, cubiculariorum nempe et ostiariorum atque omnium excubiorum ornatu decoratur, ita et sanctam Romanam ecclesiam decorari volumus; et ut amplissime pontificale decus praefulgeat, decernimus et hoc, ut clerici eiusdem sanctae Romanae ecclesiae mappulis ex linteaminibus, id est candidissimo colore, eorum decorari equos et ita equitari, et sicut noster senatus calciamenta uti cum udonibus, id est candido linteamine illustrari: ut sicut caelestia ita et terrena ad laudem dei decorentur; prae omnibus autem licentiam tribuentes ipso sanctissimo patri nostro Silvestrio, urbis Romae episcopo et papae, et omnibus, qui post eum in successum et perpetuis temporibus ad venerint, beatissimis pontificibus, pro honore et gloria Christi dei nostri in eadem magna dei catholica et apostolica ecclesia ex nostra synclitu, quem placatus proprio consilio clericare voluerit et in numero religiosorum clericorum connumerare, nullum ex omnibus praesumentem superbe agere.

16 Decrevimus itaque et hoc, ut isdem venerabilis pater noster Silvester, summus pontifex, vel omnes eius successores pontifices diaademam videlicet coronam, quam ex capite nostro illi concessimus, ex auro purissimo et gemmis pretiosis uti debeant et eorum capite ad laudem dei pro honore beati Petri gestare; ipse vero sanctissi-

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as well the imperial sceptres and at the same time pikes and standards and banners and various imperial decorations, and every procession of our imperial eminence and the glory of our power.⁸

And for very reverend men, clergy of different ranks serving the holy Roman church, we sanction that pinnacle, exceptionality, authority, and prominence with whose glory our most illustrious Senate seems to be adorned, namely to be made patricians and consuls, and we promulgate that they be decorated in all other imperial dignities. Just as the imperial militia exists as decorated, so have we decreed that the clergy of the holy Roman church be adorned. Just as the imperial authority is decorated by different offices—chamberlains indeed, door-keepers, and all bed-mates, so do we wish the holy Roman church to be decorated.⁹ In order that the pontifical splendor may gleam most brilliantly, we also decree that the clergy of the same holy Roman church—that their horses be decorated and ridden with napkins of linens that are of the whitest color, and that they be distinguished in the same way as our Senate, which makes use of shoes with felt socks—that is, with white linen. Thus will the celestial ranks be adorned like the terrestrial, to the glory of God.¹⁰ Before all else, however, we assign to our very holy father, Sylvester, bishop of the city of Rome and Pope, and to all most blessed pontiffs who come after him in succession and in perpetuity, for the honor and glory of Christ our God in the same great catholic and apostolic church of God, the right to name to the clergy anyone he wishes from our Senate at his pleasure and by his own decision and to include that person in the pious ranks of the pious clergy, and that no one whatsoever should consider that he is acting arrogantly.¹¹

And so we have also decreed the following; that our father, the venerable Sylvester, supreme pontiff, and all his successors ought to use the diadem—that is, the crown—made of purest gold and of precious gems, which we have granted to him from our own head, and to wear it on their head to the glory of God and for the

mus papa super coronam clericatus, quam gerit ad gloriam beati Petri, omnino ipsam ex auro non est passus uti coronam, frygium vero candido nitore splendidam resurrectionem dominicam designans eius sacratissimo vertici manibus nostris posuimus, et tenuentes frenum equi ipsius pro reverentia beati Petri stratoris officium illi exhibuimus; statuentes, eundem frygium omnes eius successores pontifices singulariter uti in processionibus ad imitationem imperii nostri.

- 17 Unde ut non pontificalis apex vilescat, sed magis amplius quam terreni imperii dignitas et gloriae potentia decoretur, ecce tam palatum nostrum, ut praelatum est, quamque Romae urbis et omnes Italiae seu occidentalium regionum provincias, loca et civitates saepefato beatissimo pontifici, patri nostro Silvestrio, universalis papae, contradentes atque relinquentes eius vel successorum ipsius pontificum potestati et ditioni firma imperiali censura per hanc nostram divalem sacram et pragmaticum constitutum decernimus disponenda atque iuri sanctae Romanae ecclesiae concedimus permanenda.
- 18 Unde congruum prospexit nosrum imperium et regni potestatem orientalibus transferri ac transmutari regionibus et in Byzantiae provincia in optimo loco nomini nostro civitatem aedificari et nostrum illic constitui imperium; quoniam, ubi principatus sacerdotum et christianae religionis caput ab imperatore caelesti constitutum est, iustum non est, ut illic imperator terrenus habeat potestatem.
- 19 Haec vero omnia, quae per hanc nostram imperiale sacram et per alia divalia decreta statuimus atque confirmavimus, usque in finem mundi illibata et inconcussa permanenda decernimus; unde coram deo vivo, qui nos regnare praecepit, et coram terribili eius iudicio obtestamur per hoc nostrum imperiale constitutum om-

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honor of blessed Peter.¹² But the most holy Pope himself did not suffer the use of that crown of gold on top of the priestly crown,¹³ which he wears to the glory of the most blessed Peter. But we have placed with our own hands upon his most holy head a Phrygian tiara of white radiance, as a symbol of our Lord's splendid resurrection, and holding his horse's bridle out of reverence for the blessed Peter we have assumed for him the role of a squire, as we ordain that all his successor pontiffs individually use the same tiara in processions in imitation of our imperial power.¹⁴

Accordingly, to ensure that the pontifical preeminence not be demeaned but adorned with a glorious power greater than the dignity of imperial rule, behold—we give over and we leave to the most blessed pontiff and universal Pope, our father Sylvester, and to the power and sway of him and his successor pontiffs, not only our palace, as has been revealed, but the city of Rome and all the provinces, places, and cities of Italy or the western territories, and by a firm imperial decision through this our sacred divine rescript and pragmatic sanction we have decreed that they be managed and we grant that they should remain under the law of the holy Roman Church.¹⁵

Wherefore we have considered it appropriate for our empire and kingly power to be transferred and transmuted for the eastern territories, and in the best place of the province Byzantia for a state to be built named for us and our empire to be established there.¹⁶ For where the prince of priests and the head of the Christian religion has been established by the heavenly ruler, it is not just for the earthly ruler to have power there.

Furthermore, everything that we have established and confirmed through this sacred imperial charter and through other divine decrees we decree to remain untouched and unaltered down to the end of the world.¹⁷ Accordingly before the living God, who ordered us to reign, and before his terrible judgment seat we entreat¹⁸ through this our imperial constitution all our successors,

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nes nostros successores imperatores vel cunctos optimates, satrapes etiam, amplissimum senatum et universum populum in toto orbe terrarum nunc et in posterum cunctis retro temporibus imperio nostro subiacenti, nulli eorum quoquo modo licere, haec, quae a nobis imperiali sanctione sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesiae vel eius omnibus pontificibus concessa sunt, refragare aut confringere vel in quoquam convelli. Si quis autem, quod non credimus, in hoc temerator aut contemptor extiterit, aeternis condemnationibus subiaceat innodatus, et sanctos dei principes apostolorum Petrum et Paulum sibi in praesenti et futura vita sentiat contrarios, atque in inferno inferiori concrematus, cum diabolo et omnibus deficiat impiis.

- 20 Huius vero imperialis decreti nostri paginam propriis manibus roborantes super venerandum corpus beati Petri, principis apostolorum, posuimus, ibique eidem dei apostolo spondentes, nos cuncta inviolabiliter conservare et nostris successoribus imperatoribus conservanda in mandatis relinqu, beatissimo patri nostro Silvestrio summo pontifici et universalii papae eiusque per eum cunctis successoribus pontificibus, domino deo et salvatore nostro Iesu Christo annuente, tradidimus perenniter atque feliciter possidenda.

Et subscriptio imperialis:

Divinitas vos conservet per multos annos, sanctissimi ac beatissimi patres.

Datum Romae sub die tertio Kalendarum Aprilium, domino nostro Flavio Constantino augusto quater et Gallicano viris clarissimis consulibus.

emperors and every nobleman, satraps too and the most resplendent Senate and the entire people in the entire world that is subject to our rule now and in all time to come, to permit none of them in any way either to oppose or demolish these things that have been granted by us through imperial sanction to the sacrosanct Roman church and all its pontiffs or for these to be torn asunder in any way.¹⁹ If, moreover, anyone—which we do not believe—emerges as a falsifier or scowler in this context, let him be bound up and subjected to eternal damnation. Let him know that his enemies are the holy first apostles of God, Peter and Paul, in the present and in the life to come, and let him be burned in the lower reaches of hell and waste away together with the devil and all who are wicked.²⁰

Reinforcing the page of this our imperial decree by our very own hands, we have placed it on the venerable body of the blessed Peter, first of the apostles. There pledging to that apostle of God to conserve all these things inviolate and to leave them under orders to our successor emperors to be conserved, we have handed them over to the most blessed Sylvester, our father, supreme pontiff, and universal Pope, and through him to all his successor pontiffs, with the assent of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to be possessed forever and prosperously.

The imperial subscription:

May the Divinity preserve you for many years, most holy and blessed fathers.

Given at Rome on the third day before the Kalends of April, when the distinguished consuls were our lord Flavius Constantine Augustus for the fourth time and Gallicanus.²¹

Note on the Texts



The Latin text of Valla's *On the Donation of Constantine* in this volume is that of Wolfram Setz in volume 10 of the *Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Weimar, 1976). It is reproduced, with minor changes, by kind permission of the MGH. Typographical errors occur in Setz at pages 78, l. 4 (*eiicite* for *eiicite*); 89, l. 8 (*pugas* for *pugnas*); 104, l. 24 (*sibiacens* for *subiacens*); 145, l. 16 (*Bragrade* for *Bagrade*); and 153, l. 7 (*Κηφᾶσ* for *Κηφᾶς*) and l. 10 (*puasi* for *quasi*). All these have been corrected here.

Setz's punctuation has been altered at p. 66, l. 5 (semicolon deleted before *iam regnare* and comma placed after those words, with elimination of the interrogative at the end of the sentence); p. 121, ll. 12–13 (comma deleted after *apparatus*); p. 125, l. 1 (full stop added after *mariti*); p. 148, l. 12 (comma deleted after *iniustitie*). At p. 174, l. 13 *referens . . . horresco* has been italicized, since it is a Virgilian quotation that Setz missed. Setz's paragraphs have occasionally been altered to harmonize with the translation.

Valla's work appears here, as in Setz's edition, divided into the six unequal parts into which Valla himself organized his *oratio*, with an *Exordium* at the beginning and a *Peroratio* at the end. Setz's pagination for the various parts is as follows: *Exordium* pp. 55–62, I pp. 62–85, II pp. 85–92, III pp. 93–94, IV pp. 95–155, V pp. 155–167, VI pp. 167–172, *Peroratio* pp. 172–176. Although Setz included cross references to the thirty chapters devised by Schwahn for his edition, there is no point in repeating them since Setz's text has replaced Schwahn's. But, to bring this text into conformity with others in the I Tatti Renaissance Library, the series editor, Professor Hankins, has introduced a new consecutive numbering for sections within the original six parts. Since Setz himself renounced any new divisions of the text and relied upon his own page numbers, this new arrangement will, we hope, facilitate reference.

The Latin text of the *Constitutum Constantini* printed here is that established by H. Fuhrmann in the series *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*:

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Fontes 10, with the following changes: *pontificale* for *pontificalis* in §15, *obtestamur* for *obtestamus* in §19, *Romae* for *Roma* in §20. In §10 Fuhrmann's punctuation has been altered so that *comprobantur etenim*, now reads *comprobantur, etenim*; and *obtineant; eligentes* in §11 has been changed to *obtineant, eligentes*.

Notes

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ABBREVIATIONS

MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina</i> , ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., 221 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1844–1891).

ON THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE

1. Cf. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2. 3. 21, recording that Asinius Pollio, who had written verses against Augustus during the triumviral period, decided to hold his tongue for the reason Valla gives. The precise quotation is "It is not easy to write . . ."
2. Psalms 139:7.
3. Echoing Matthew 18:15.
4. I Timothy 5:20.
5. Galatians 2:11.
6. For 'becoming one spirit with God' see I Corinthians 6:17. Valla's source for the story about Pope Marcellinus I (not Marcellus) is probably the *Liber pontificalis* 30; the less plausible accusation that Celestine I agreed with the heretic Nestorius may be an inference from the correspondence between Celestine and Nestorius (PL 50. 438–444). The "certain persons" "rebuked by persons of inferior status" were the popes deposed and/or condemned by the Councils of Constance and Basel.
7. John 10:11, with Psalms 58:4–5.
8. Already in late antiquity Constantine was believed to have planned first to build his new city in the vicinity of Troy in Asia Minor: Zosimus 2. 30 (cf. Sozomen 2. 3. 2), presumably at the site of Alexandria Troas, where Julius Caesar had planned a colony, Antony established one, and Augustus reinforced it: M. Ricl, *The Inscriptions of Alexandria Troas* (Bonn,

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- 1997), pp. 21–21 and 224–225. The story lived on in the *Historia Tripartita* 2, i8, 2.
9. Virgil, *Aeneid* 1. 151. Valla has reversed Virgil's word order (*pietate gravem*).
10. Livy 5. 24, 8–10.
11. Livy 1. 58.
12. The citations from Paul come from I Corinthians 9:15 and Romans 11:13, respectively. The two previous quotations are from Acts 20:35 and Matthew 10:8.
13. The Biblical quotations in this paragraph are from I Timothy 6:7–11, Matthew 6:19 and Matthew 19:24.
14. II Timothy 2:4. For the refusal of the apostles to serve at table see Acts 6:2.
15. Jeremiah 48:10.
16. John 21:15–17.
17. John 18:36.
18. Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15.
19. Cf. Mark 4:30.
20. Matthew 20:25–28.
21. The speaker is assuming the traditional identification of the nation of Israel with the Christian church, the "new Israel."
22. I Corinthians 6:2–4.
23. Matthew 17:26.
24. Matthew 21:13 and John 12:47. Both the Greek Testament and the Vulgate give *save* in place of *free*.
25. Matthew 26:52.
26. Matthew 26:51.
27. Matthew 16:18–19 (Valla has reversed the order of the verses).
28. Matthew 4:9.
29. Ephesians 6:17.

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30. Matthew 11:29–30.
31. Matthew 22:21.
32. *Digest* 50. 17. 69: *invito beneficium non datur*, ascribed to the jurist Paul.
33. Eutropius, *Breviarium* 10. 9. 1. Perhaps for stylistic reasons, Eutropius identifies the Iranian rulers as Parthians, which they were not. They were the Parthians' successors, the Sassanian Persians.
34. Eutropius, *Breviarium* 10. 17. 1–2. Sapor (Shapur II, 310–379) was the Persian Shah. Julian's successor, Jovian, made peace with him after Julian died in 363 on campaign against the Persians. Despite Valla's references to the Caudine Forks (321 BC), Numantia (153 BC), and Numidia (109 BC), he is wrong about the relinquishment of part of the Roman empire. Hadrian famously gave up territory conquered by his predecessor Trajan in a war against Parthia.
35. The antipope Felix V (Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy), elected by the Council of Basel on 5 November 1439.
36. Valla has misread and misdated gold coins in his private collection so as to mean "concord of the world." In fact, the legend is CONOB or COMOB, and the coin first appears only in 369 under Valentinian I, several decades after Constantine's death. The OB in these legends abbreviates *obryza*, a word of obscure etymology to indicate pure gold. CON was initially a mint mark for Constantinople, combined with OB, but in coins of the western empire COM appeared, perhaps indicating *com(es)*, "count" in charge of gold. See J. Melville Jones, *A Dictionary of Ancient Roman Coins* (London, 1990), p. 65. Most specimens with a cross above the legend are known as *tremisses*. Since the B can be read as an R, Valla's reading presupposes CON(cordia) OR(bis).
37. *Decretum Magistri Gratiani* (ed. Friedberg), C XII q. 1, c. 15. The reference to Eusebius is to the *Ecclesiastical History* 9.9.1–12. Valla does not know, or chooses not to mention, Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* 1.27–32, where Constantine's conversion during his campaign against Maxentius in 312 is described.
38. The Donation of Constantine appears in Part I, Distinction 96, canons 13–14 of the *Decretum*, which was a part of the text added after the

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time of Gratian (probably around 1150) by another hand. These additions, which included over 150 canons, were mostly made by law professors at the University of Bologna and were known as *paleae* ("chaff" or "straw"), though some writers later spoke as though the additions were made by a single compiler named Palea. Distinction 96 is attributed to a compiler nicknamed Paucapalea in canonist writers. Valla probably drew his information about the early text of Gratian from Nicholas of Cusa's *De concordantia catholica* 3.2 (see introduction). On the addition of the forgery to the *Decretum* see Weigand, "Fälschungen als Paleae"; on the evolution of Gratian's text, see A. Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge, 2000).

39. R. Fubini, "Humanism and Truth," 82, claims that the "some [nonnulli]" is "an actual citation of Cusanus." Not likely, unless, as Fubini asserts, Valla misread Cusanus. And that is not at all likely.

40. *Decretum*, Dist. XCVI, c. 13.

41. *Ibid.*, Dist. XV c. 3, 19.

42. Jacopo da Voragine (Vorazze), archbishop of Genoa, wrote a work called *The Golden Legend*. He died in 1298. Curiously, in the late fifteenth century, undoubtedly as a result of Valla's critique, someone inserted a reference to the Donation in the *Legend*: cf. Miglio, "L'umanista Pietro Edo," pp. 221–222, 229–232, cited by Black, "The Donation of Constantine," pp. 72–73.

43. See I Esdras 3–4 for the story of Darius and I Maccabees 8:20–22 for Judas Maccabaeus.

44. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 1. 64.

45. *Decretum*, Dist. XCVI, c. 14.

46. Virgil, *Aeneid* 2. 77–79. Scholars today prefer the reading *fuerit quodcumque*.

47. This is one of the most damning anachronisms in the entire Donation. The word *satrap* was not applied to high officials in Rome before the mid-eighth century. See Wolfgang Gericke, "Wann entstand die Konstantinische Schenkung?" *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung*

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- für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung 43 (1957), 1–88, especially p. 8, and now Wolfram Brandes, "The Satraps of Constantine," in Johannes Fried, "Donation of Constantine" and "Constitutum Constantini" (Berlin, forthcoming, 2007).
48. Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 5. 1–2, cf. 21. 24. Similarly, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2. 2–5.
49. Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 96.
50. Sallust, *Catiline* 54.
51. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6. 851.
52. Gregory I, in MGH *Epistolae* 2: 263.
53. Christian author, teacher of Constantine's son Crispus, and a master of Latinity, known in the Renaissance as the Christian Cicero. He wrote *Divine Institutes* and *On the Death of Persecutors*. Valla admired him.
54. *Apocalypse* 5:12.
55. The word *princeps* (here "leader") was also the term used as equivalent to "emperor" in ancient sources and was applied to any sovereign ruler in the Renaissance.
56. Quoted by Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 4. 2. 91.
57. Psalms 86:15.
58. Psalms 81:12.
59. Romans 1:28.
60. Matthew 23:2.
61. Cf. Numbers 16:1.
62. Valerius Maximus, *Memorabilia* 7. 2. 5.
63. Plautus, *Menaechmi* 426; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 8. 196.
64. Matthew 27:28; John 19:2.
65. A snail rather than a fish. It belongs to the family of *muricidae*.
66. Homer, *Iliad* 17. 360–361; Virgil, *Aeneid* 9. 349.

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67. Virgil, *Aeneid* 10. 640.
68. Phrase from Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1. 7.
69. Horace, *Ars Poetica* 97.
70. Julius Valerius, *Res Gestae Alexandri* I. 37.
71. Adapted from Virgil, *Georgics* 4. 121–122: *tortusque per herbam / cresceret in ventrem cucumis*.
72. Martial, *Epigrams* 14. 141. The allusion is to felt made of goat-hair from the region of Lepcis Magna and the adjacent Bay of Kinyups in North Africa. The manuscripts of Martial give the title of this two-line epigram as *Udones Cilicii* (Cilician socks), and the editor of the new Loeb edition of Martial ponders why the hair of North African goats should be referred to Cilicia. Valla's text provides the correct reading for the title in Martial: *Udones Cilicini*, i.e. hairy socks.
73. Psalms 20:4.
74. The title *papa* was used in the early Western church of any bishop and was applied even to priests in the Eastern church. The term *papacy* (*papatus*) is first used by Clement II in 1047, and the popes began to use the tiara and imperial robes only after 1059 (see Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Roman Church from 1050 to 1250* [Oxford, 1989], 107, 130).
75. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1. 1. 321.
76. Homer, *Iliad* 2. 493–877. Valla had translated both the *Cyropaedia* and the first sixteen books of the *Iliad*.
77. Matthew 5:18.
78. Apocalypse 22:18–19.
79. The Greek word for actor is *hypokritēs*. Valla plays on the prefix *hupo* (under).
80. Cf. Livy 3.31. 8. Francesco Accursio wrote glosses on the *Corpus iuris civilis*.
81. II Kings 15:5.
82. See Innocent III, *Sermones de sanctis*, PL 217.457.
83. Jerome (Hieronymus), *Commentaries on Joel* 3. 4–6 (PL 23. 270).

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84. Virgil, *Aeneid* 9. 26.
85. Setz in his edition proposes Robert Guiscard, but Valla is more likely to have in mind Robert of Anjou, King of Naples (1277–1343), the patron of Giotto, Petrarch and Boccaccio.
86. A medieval forgery, perhaps from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. See Cora E. Lutz, "The Letter of Lentulus Describing Christ," *Yale University Library Gazette*, 50 (1975), 91–97.
87. Cf. W. Pohlkamp, "Tradition und Topographie: Papst Silvester I. (314–335) und der Drache vom Forum Romanum," *Römische Quartalschrift* 78 (1983), 1–100.
88. Juvenal, *Satires* 10. 174–175.
89. Pliny, *Natural History* 8. 36; Valerius Maximus, *Memorabilia* 1. 8. 19.
90. The story of Bel and the Dragon is contained in one of the apocryphal or deutero-canonical books of the Bible.
91. Valerius Maximus, *Memorabilia* 5. 6. 2.
92. *Ibid.*, 1. 8. 3.
93. Livy, 1. 12. 10; 13. 5. Cf. 7. 6.
94. Livy, 5. 22. 5.
95. Livy, Preface 7.
96. Livy, 5. 21. 9.
97. Varro, *De lingua latina* 5. 148–150.
98. Valerius Maximus, *Memorabilia* 1. 8. 7 and 1. 8. 4.
99. Cf. Matthew 17:19.
100. *Golden Legend* 65 and 79. The fictitious etymology exploits the Latin words *rana*, "frog," and *latere*, "to lie hidden."
101. But the elder Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 26. 8) reports that in Egypt elephantiasis patients were put in bathtubs warmed with human blood.
102. John 1: 42. Cephas is Peter's name in Aramaic, and *Petros*, rock, is the Greek equivalent.
103. The imperial title was "transferred" to Charlemagne by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, AD 800.

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104. Valla quotes an imperial charter of Louis the Pious of 817, but from what source is unclear. The text is edited in the *Capitularia regum francorum*, ed. A. Boretius, MGH Legum Sectio II (Hannover, 1883), 1: 353, no. 172.
105. The coronation of Sigismund of Luxembourg as Holy Roman Emperor took place in Rome on 31 May 1433.
106. Presumably a reference to the city of Samaria in Palestine, later known as Sebastia.
107. Valla refers to a story that Boniface had a pipe inserted into the wall of the prison in which Celestine was confined. An apparently celestial voice spoke through it to urge the Pope to abdicate. See F. Gregorovius, *Geschichte des Stadt Rom im Mittelalter* (Dresden, 1926), 2: 520.
108. Deuteronomy 15:12 and Leviticus 25:10.
109. Vitelleschi was archbishop of Florence, patriarch of Alexandria, cardinal of San Lorenzo in Damaso, and legate of Eugenius IV in Rome. Notorious for his monstrous character, he was overthrown and arrested in March of 1440. He died of wounds on 2 April 1440. Since Valla completed the present work by 25 May of that year (cf. his letter to Giovanni Tortelli, cited in the Introduction), the downfall of Vitelleschi must have occurred as he was writing or shortly before.
110. The quotation, which Valla ascribes to Quintilian himself (M. Fabius Quintilianus), occurs in Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamations* 12. 27. It appears again in Valla's *Elegantiae* 2. 53.
111. Judges 11:13.
112. Both Boniface IX (pope 1389–1404) and Innocent VII (pope 1404–06) tried to limit the independence of the Commune of Rome and both were expelled from the city at various times by popular uprisings. For Tarquin and the poppies, see Livy 1. 54. 6.
113. In 1434 a popular uprising in Rome forced Eugenius to flee Rome by boat, disguised as a monk. But the ruse was found out and Eugenius was pelted by stones from both banks of the Tiber before escaping to Ostia and Florence. Eugenius was still in Florence at the time Valla's oration

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was written (hence the words about Eugenius being "enthroned in the North").

114. Valla has the name wrong, Flaminius should be Flamininus. But the history is correct: see Livy 33. 32 and Plutarch's *Life of Flamininus* ch. 10. The date was 196 BC.

115. In 1428 the papal legate was expelled from Bologna.

116. Luke 12: 42.

117. Psalms 53: 4.

118. Homer, *Iliad* 1. 231.

119. Virgil, *Aeneid* 2. 204.

120. Isaiah 52: 5; Romans 2: 21–23.

121. Leo I's appearance before Attila the Hun in 452 is said to have led to Attila's withdrawal from Italy.

122. Ephesians 6: 12.

APPENDIX: THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE

1. Valla did not subject the first ten sections of this document to the withering analysis he devoted to the terms of the actual gift. But the Latinity of those sections is no less vulnerable, abounding in infelicities, mistakes, pleonasms, and anacolutha. For example, in §5 observe the absurd redundancy of *in omnem populum et diversas gentium nationes*, or the absolute nominative participle *exhortantes* that serves as main verb. Valla could have been eloquent on *nocturna nobis facta silentia* with which §7 opens. But I do not believe that even this forger could have written *pontificalis decus* in §15, as printed by Fuhrmann, especially with strong manuscript support for *pontificale decus*. In the new fascicle of the *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*, III.1 (Munich, 2000) s.v. *decus*, only three examples of masculine *decus* are mentioned among the vast number of examples in cols. 134–137, and of those three two are but variant readings (including the *Constitutum* example).

2. Matthew 16:18.

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3. Matthew 16:19.
4. Valla's text of this section is slightly different, notably with *cuncto populo Romano gloriae imperii nostri subiacenti* replaced by *cum cuncto populo imperio Romane ecclesie subiacenti*. Valla also gives simply *vicem* after *apostolorum* without the relative *qui* and *gerunt vices*.
5. Valla's quotation of these lines is likewise slightly different, notably showing *gloriam et dignitatem* for *gloriae dignitatem* in Fuhrmann's text.
6. Valla's text of these lines omits the adjective *praecipuas* before the patriarchal seats, and, more interestingly, lists the seats in a different order: Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Constantinople. His text also reads *ad cultum Dei et fidem christianorum vel stabilitatem procurandam* in place of Fuhrmann's *ad cultum dei vel fidei Christianorum stabilitate procuranda*. Valla mocks *vel* as it appears in his text.
7. In this sentence Valla reads *continuatione* in place of *concinnatione*, and *per nostram imperiale iussionem sacram* in place of *per nostras imperialium iussionum sacras*. His text is preferable in both places. For the redaction of the Gratian text used by Valla, see Johanna Petersmann, "Die kanonistische Überlieferung des Constitutum Constantini bis zum Dekret Gratians," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 30 (1974), 356–449, especially on Gratian 389ff., a reference that I owe to the kindness of Professor Fuhrmann.
8. Valla reads *cuncta* for *et conta atque*, and *banda* for *banna*—better readings on both counts, again probably corrections made by copyists.
9. Valla's text of this section is noticeably different: it begins with *Viris etiam diversi ordinis*, and for the succession of accusatives *culmen* through *praecellentiam* he reads *culmen* with dependent genitives *singularis potentie et precellentie*. *Promulgantes* becomes *promulgavimus* in Valla. *Decernimus* in Fuhrmann becomes *decrevimus* in Valla. The word *concubitorum*, which Valla mocks, is *excubiorum* in the *Constitutum* (not that this would change Valla's point), and Valla's *ordinatur* is *ornatu decoratur* here. Valla has *ita clerum sancte Romane ecclesie adornari decrevimus* for *ita et sanctam Romanam ecclesiam decorari volumus*.
10. Apart from minor verbal variants, Valla reads *mappulis et linteaminibus*, rather than *mappulis ex linteaminibus* as here, and for the grotesque

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decoratos equos equitent, mocked by Valla, the *Constitutum* has the ungrammatical *decorari equos et ita equitari*. Similarly Valla reads *utitur* and *illustrentur* for *uti* and *illustrari* in Fuhrmann. Once again Valla's text shows corrections made in the manuscript transmission.

11. The final part of §15 is drastically abbreviated, and much improved, in Valla's text. The prolix naming of Sylvester together with his successors and the church itself is cut back to just a few words. Valla includes, however, the phrase *ex nostro indictu* after the reference to Sylvester's successors. Fuhrmann's apparatus leads one to suppose that this is a correction of *ex nostra synclitu* in the *Constitutum*, since *synclitu* is sometimes replaced with *inclitu*, *inclitis*, or *inclyto*. In Fuhrmann's Leo-Humbert group of manuscripts all display *ex nostro indictu*. In general, Valla's text seems to have the closest affinity to that group.
12. Again Valla's text of these lines is salubriously abridged, but the *vide-licet* phrase and the reference to gold and gems, which both provoked Valla's indignation, survive.
13. The tonsure. This sentence appears almost intact in Valla (apart from his *beatus* for *sanctissimus*).
14. Valla reads *splendidum* for *splendidam*, *imposuimus* for *posuimus*, *dextratoris* for *stratoris*. He omits *pontifices* before *singulariter*. At the end of the sentence the word order is inconsequentially changed in Valla's text to *ad imperii nostri imitationem*.
15. The barbarous Latin of the text as constituted at this point by Fuhrmann had been considerably cleaned up by the time of the manuscript that was available to Valla. In particular, *gloriae potentia* in the *Constitutum* has been replaced with *gloria et potentia*, *Romae urbis* with *Romanam urbem*, *contradentes atque relinquentes* with *tradimus atque relinquimus*, and above all by the replacement of everything from *eius vel successorum* through *sacram et* with *ab eo et a successoribus eius per*.
16. Valla's text is close to the *Constitutum* here, although *transmutari* has disappeared.
17. Valla's text shows inconsequential tense variants in this sentence, e.g. *decrevimus* for *decernimus*.

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18. Valla omits *per hoc nostrum imperiale constitutum* at this point.
19. The second half of this sentence is substantially abridged in Valla's text. Most of the phrase from *nunc* to *subiacenti* has gone apart from *in posterum*, *haec* has become *hoc*, and the long phrase *quae . . . concessa sunt* is completely missing. So is *refragare*.
20. There are two interesting variants in Valla: *contemptor* is missing, and *innodatus* is replaced with *condemnatus*.
21. The subscription as given by Valla is more precise in that it specifies both Constantine and Gallicanus as consuls for the fourth time. It also omits the honorific *viris clarissimis* as well as Constantine's *nomen gentile*. But this subscription is far more damning than even Valla could have imagined. The emperor Constantine was never consul in the same year with Gallicanus. Gallicanus served in 330 with Aurelius Valerius Tullianus Symmachus. Constantine had been consul in the previous year, but for the eighth time, not the fourth. In that year his colleague was none other than his own son, also called Constantine, who was actually consul then for the fourth time. See T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), p. 96. The forger mixed up two different years and two Constantines. See also the final note to the introduction in the present volume.

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TEXTS

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Publication of this volume has been made possible by

The Myron and Sheila Gilmore Publication Fund at I Tatti

The Robert Lehman Endowment Fund

The Jean-François Malle Scholarly Programs and Publications Fund

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