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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Essence of the Papacy and the Church: A Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract

This article offers a philosophical analysis of the papacy and the Church in the first millennium, and of their transformation in the Latin West after the Gregorian reforms, using Kit Fine's non-modal essentialism and E. J. Lowe's Four-Category Ontology. Its central thesis is the following: if this framework provides the correct individuation criteria for institutional entities, then, first, historical evidence supports the conclusion that the consensus-bound papacy of the early Church and the supremacy-based papacy of the modern Roman Catholic Church are numerically distinct ecclesiological realities, and that the first-millennium Church is numerically distinct from the post-Gregorian Church. And, second, this the same framework shows that Eastern Orthodoxy continues to preserve the ecclesial realities that are the first-millennium papacy and Church. Hence, the article argues that the post-Gregorian transition represents an ontological replacement of the papacy and the church of the first-millenium rather than an organic development, and that it is, in fact, the Eastern Orthodox Church constitutes the authentic continuation of these first-millennium ecclesiological realities. The framework thereby provides conceptual resources both for reframing the nature of the Great Schism as an asymmetrical divergence rather than a symmetrical rupture, and for identifying Eastern Orthodoxy as the tradition that preserves essential identity with the undivided Church of the first-millenium.

Keywords: Essentialism, Ecclesiology, Papacy, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy.

1. Introduction

According to the historical and theological conception of the first millennium of the Christian Church, the governance of the universal body of Christ was grounded in a specific ecclesiological understanding, wherein the authority of the Roman see, and the Church as a whole, was exercised within a framework of collegial agreement and communion rather than unilateral supremacy. More specifically, the operative principle of first-millennium 'ecclesiology' and 'epistemology', was that of 'consensus' wherein authority required collegial agreement and doctrinal truth was discerned collectively—with this principle being essentially constitutive of the 'pre-Gregorian' papal and ecclesiastical institutions. Moreover, in this ancient conception of the Church, was a further ecclesial perspective termed 'Eucharistic ecclesiology' where the Church was not conceived primarily as a global administrative institution but as the eucharistic assembly gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) the canonically orthodox bishop, where the local church represented the fullness of the catholic Church in that place. Consequently, while the bishop of Rome was acknowledged as the 'first among equals' and a locus of unity, his authority was constitutionally bound by the requirement of consent from the broader episcopate—a principle enshrined in the apostolic canons and witnessed by the operation of the ecumenical councils.

In unpacking the above in more detail, central to this perspective is the unequivocal affirmation that the unity of the Church is preserved through the communion of local churches, rather than through subjection to a single supreme pontiff. This understanding finds its expression in the concept of 'Consensus-based ecclesiology', where decision

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making requires the agreement of the bishops and the faithful, reflecting the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As St Cyprian of Carthage famously articulated, the episcopate is a single entity held by each bishop in its totality ('episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur'). This implies that no single bishop possesses a power superior to the episcopal college itself. Given this, we can construe the central elements of the first-millennium understanding of both the Church and papal authority (henceforth, 'the first millennium papacy' and 'the first millennium Church' respectively) as follows:

(1) (The First Millennium Papacy)	(2) (The First Millennium Church)
The authority of the bishop of Rome, while holding the primacy of honour (presbeia tes times) among the patriarchs and exercising appellate jurisdiction grounded upon the Sardican privilege, operated within the framework of a consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology, where doctrinal and disciplinary decisions affecting the universal Church required the consent of the broader episcopate and could not be imposed unilaterally by a single see.	The Church is the eschatological communion of persons, constituted as the one Body of Christ in the Holy Spirit through the Eucharist, gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) the bishop, who presides in the place of Christ and makes the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church present in each local church (i.e. diocese), thereby guaranteeing its unity and catholicity.

This perspective is not merely a modern reconstruction but is attested to by the consistent witness of the early Church. St Vincent of Lerins, for instance, established the epistemological standard for discerning truth not by appeal to a single office, but by looking to 'universality, antiquity, and consent'.[1] Similarly, the thirty-fourth Apostolic Canon explicitly dictates that while the bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them, the head must 'do nothing of consequence without the consent of all'. The apparent contradiction between this historical reality and later developments arises with the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century, which inaugurated a new model of papal authority characterised by universal jurisdiction, immediate power over all churches, and an inherent claim to infallibility independent of conciliar consent—a model codified in Dictatus Papae.[2] Correlatively, these reforms brought with them a transformed understanding of the Church itself in the West, wherein the locus of ecclesial identity shifted from the local eucharistic assembly to the universal juridical structure headed by the Roman pontiff, such that the Church came to be conceived as subsisting primarily in the worldwide institution governed by the successor of St Peter rather than in each local gathering around its bishop.

The tension between the consensus-based model of the first millennium—that is, the 'first millennium papacy' and the 'first millennium Church'—and the supremacy-based model of the second millennium—that is, the 'Roman Catholic Papacy' and the 'Roman Catholic Church'—prompts a specific historical and metaphysical inquiry.[3] That is, if the modern papacy and the modern Roman Catholic Church claim to be the same institutions as those of St. Peter and St Gregory the Great, yet possess attributes that appear mutually exclusive to their earlier forms, we are faced with a significant conceptual difficulty. This challenge can be formulated as follows: the divergence between the consensus-based ecclesiology of the first millennium and the supremacy-based ecclesiology of the second presents a conceptual challenge regarding identity: *How can we conceptualise the nature of the papacy and the Church in these two periods to determine whether they represent the same ecclesiastical entities undergoing accidental change, or pairs of essentially distinct entities instantiating different ontological kinds?*

The answer to this question, as this article shall first argue, yields what may be termed the 'Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis'. This thesis holds that the transition from the first millennium to the post-Gregorian period is best understood not as an organic development within a continuous institutional identity, but as ontological replacement: the consensus-based papacy of the first millennium was replaced by an essentially distinct supremacy- based papacy, and correspondingly, the eucharistic-episcopal communion of the first millennium Church in the Latin West was replaced by an essentially distinct papal-juridical institution. The discontinuity in question is

[1]Vincent of Lerins (1894) Commonitorium, 2.6, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 11. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

[2]Pope Gregory VII (1075) Dictatus Papae, in Robinson, I.S. (ed.) (2004) The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century: Lives of Pope Leo IX and Pope Gregory VII. Manchester: Manchester University Press

[3]At points in this article I will interchange between 'Roman Catholic papacy' and 'post-Gregorian papacy' and 'Roman Catholic Church' and 'post-Gregorian Church'

not merely a matter of changed practices or emphases, but a rupture at the level of essential constitution, such that the later entities, despite bearing the same names and occupying the same sees, are numerically distinct from their predecessors. This article will thus focus directly on establishing this thesis; however, the central aim is to move beyond mere historical description to an ontological analysis of what the papacy and the Church are in each period. That is, the article aims to explore whether one can offer a coherent model for thinking about how such a shift in governance and ecclesiological self-understanding constitutes an essential change in the identity of the institutions themselves, thereby vindicating the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis on metaphysical grounds. More specifically, the central aim of this article is to argue that, if non-modal essentialism provides the correct individuation criteria for institutional entities, then the combination of this philosophical framework with the historical evidence provides the best explanation for the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis: namely, that both the papacy and the Church of the first millennium are essentially distinct from their counterparts in the second millennium, having been replaced by entities that instantiate incompatible substantial universals. This end will be achieved by situating the historical data regarding the papacy and the Church within a particular metaphysical and ontological framework—namely, the 'non-modal essentialism' of Kit Fine and the 'Four-Category Ontology' of Edward Jonathan (E.J.) Lowe.

Now, for clarity, the arguments that will be fleshed out throughout this article can be formulated as two deductively valid syllogisms:[4]

(3) ((Negative) Argument (A))

i. If non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then, for any institutions A and B, if A and B have incompatible real definitions and B historically succeeds A, then B is numerically distinct from A and replaces A rather than developing from A.

ii. The first-millennium papacy and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic papacy' have incompatible real definitions, since the former is consensus-bound whereas the latter is supremacy-based.

iii. The first-millennium Church and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic Church' have incompatible real definitions, since the former is a synodally unified eucharistic-episcopal communion whereas the latter is a papally unified juridical communion.

iv. The post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic papacy' historically succeeds the first-millennium papacy, and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic Church' historically succeeds the first-millennium Church in the Latin West.

v. Therefore, if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic papacy' is numerically distinct from, and replaces rather than develops from, the first-millennium papacy; and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic Church' is numerically distinct from, and replaces rather than develops from, the first-millennium Church in the Latin West.

vi. Therefore, if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis follows.

(4) ((Positive) Argument (B))

i. If non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then, for any institutions C and D, if C and D have compatible real definitions, D historically and organically succeeds C, and D preserves every essential constituent, every essential dependence relation, and every characterising attribute of C, then D is not a replacement of C but the continuation of C.

ii. The Orthodox understanding of primacy and the first-millennium papacy have compatible real definitions, since both locate primacy within a consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology, both allow primacy to function within the episcopal and conciliar structure of the Church, and both reject a supremacy-based account of universal jurisdiction as constitutive of the primatial office.

iii. The Orthodox understanding of primacy historically and organically succeeds the first-millennium papacy by preserving the essential structure of first-millennium primacy, including intra-patriarchal jurisdiction, conciliar dependence, and distributed Petrine succession.

[4]It is important to note that, unlike non-modal essentialism, the Four-Category Ontology, which also features prominently in this article, serves as a helpful clarificatory tool rather than as the substantial metaphysical driving force of the argument, and thus this is why the former ontological system does not feature in the premises of the following argument.

iv. The Eastern Orthodox Church and the first-millennium Church have compatible real definitions, since both are constituted as a synodally unified eucharistic-episcopal communion rather than as a papally unified juridical communion.

v. The Eastern Orthodox Church historically and organically succeeds the first-millennium Church by preserving the essential structure of first-millennium ecclesiology, including the local eucharistic assembly presided over (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) by a canonically orthodox bishop, qualitative catholicity, derivative presbyteral ministry, functional inter-ecclesial structures, and a distributed Petrine foundation.

vi. Therefore, if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then Orthodox primacy is not a replacement of the first-millennium papacy but its continuation.

vii. Therefore, if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then the Eastern Orthodox Church is not a replacement of the first-millennium Church but its continuation.

viii. Therefore, if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, the Continuation Identity Thesis follows.

These arguments jointly establish that, on the condition that non-modal essentialism supplies the correct individuation criteria for institutional entities, both the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis and the Continuation-Identity Thesis follow. Argument A proceeds by first establishing in premise (i) the general principle that governs institutional discontinuity under non-modal essentialism: where two institutions possess incompatible real definitions and one historically succeeds the other, the successor is numerically distinct from its predecessor and replaces it rather than developing from it. Premises (ii) and (iii) then establish the relevant incompatibility conditions for both the papacy and the Church: the first-millennium papacy and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic papacy' possess incompatible real definitions, since the former is consensus-bound whereas the latter is supremacy-based; and correspondingly, the first-millennium Church and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic Church' possess incompatible real definitions, since the former is a synodally unified eucharistic-episcopal communion whereas the latter is a papally unified juridical communion. Premise (iv) establishes the relevant historical succession: the post-Gregorian entities succeeded the first-millennium entities in the Latin West. The conclusion in premise (v) then follows by instantiating the general principle of premise (i) with the specific cases established in premises (ii) through (iv): if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic papacy' is numerically distinct from, and replaces rather than develops from, the first-millennium papacy; and the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic Church' is numerically distinct from, and replaces rather than develops from, the first-millennium Church in the Latin West. This is precisely the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis. Argument B establishes the correlative positive conclusion. It proceeds by first establishing in premise (i) the general principle that governs institutional continuation under non-modal essentialism: where two institutions have compatible real definitions, where one historically and organically succeeds the other, and where the successor preserves every essential constituent, every essential dependence relation, and every characterising attribute of its predecessor, the successor is not a replacement but the continuation of its predecessor. Premises (ii) and (iii) then establish that these conditions are met with respect to the Orthodox understanding of primacy and the first-millennium papacy: the two have compatible real definitions, and Orthodox primacy historically and organically succeeds the first-millennium papacy by preserving the essential structure of first-millennium primacy, including intra-patriarchal jurisdiction, conciliar dependence, and distributed Petrine succession. Premises (iv) and (v) establish the corresponding claim with respect to the Eastern Orthodox Church and the first-millennium Church: the two have compatible real definitions, and the Eastern Orthodox Church historically and organically succeeds the first-millennium Church by preserving the essential structure of first-millennium ecclesiology, including the local eucharistic assembly presided over by a canonically orthodox bishop, qualitative catholicity, derivative presbyteral ministry, functional inter-ecclesial structures, and a distributed Petrine foundation. The conclusions in premises (vi) and (vii) then follow: if non-modal essentialism correctly individuates institutional entities, then Orthodox primacy is not a replacement of the first-millennium papacy but its continuation, and the Eastern Orthodox Church is not a replacement of the first-millennium Church but its continuation. This is the Continuation-Identity Thesis. The central conclusions are therefore conditional and metaphysical: if the essentialist

framework is correct, then the historical transition culminating in the Gregorian reforms is best understood not as doctrinal development but as ontological replacement, such that continuity of name, see, and succession can coincide with a discontinuity of institutional kind, affecting both the papacy and the Church in which it is situated, whilst the Eastern Orthodox Church, which did not undergo this transformation, preserves the essential identity of the first-millennium ecclesiological reality, exemplifying the same substantial realities that were displaced in the Latin West.

Now, the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis and its correlative Continuation-Identity Thesis depend upon several pivotal claims, each of which will be addressed explicitly in the article's argumentative sequence: first, the claim that Fine's non-modal essentialism and Lowe's Four-Category Ontology can be extended to institutional entities in a principled way, which will be defended in Section 2 through an account of real definition, essential dependence, and the applicability of kind-level individuation to normatively constituted objects; second, the claim that the first-millennium papacy is correctly characterised by a consensus-based real definition, and that the first-millennium Church is correctly characterised by its constitution through the local eucharistic assembly presided over (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) by a canonically orthodox bishop possessing shared Petrine succession, which will be argued in Section 3 by adducing the operative ecclesiology and epistemology of the early Church, the role of ecumenical councils, and the constrained character of Roman primacy within a collegially structured and conciliar framework of co-ordination among the major apostolic sees. Third, the claim that the post-Gregorian 'Roman Catholic papacy' is correctly characterised by a supremacy-based real definition, and that the post-Gregorian Roman Catholic Church is correspondingly characterised by its constitution through hierarchical communion with the Pope and the ontological priority of the universal Church over local churches, which will be established by tracing, across the late first millennium and into the Gregorian reforms, the emergence and consolidation of universal jurisdiction, unilateral authority, and doctrinal irreformability as self-defining features of the Roman see, culminating in the decisive codification of this model. Fourth the claim that these two real definitions of the papacy are incompatible in the relevant essentialist sense, and that the two real definitions of the Church are likewise incompatible, rather than being merely different emphases within a shared genus, which will be demonstrated in Section 4 by showing that they embed contrary authority-conditions into the papacy's essence, reverse the dependence relations between papal judgement and conciliar consent, and invert the ontological priority between local and universal Church. Fifth, the claim that the post-Gregorian entities historically succeeded the first-millennium entities, which will be established through the historical narrative of Section 3 tracing the transformation from the consensus-based model through to its replacement by the supremacy-based model; sixth, the claim that the Eastern Orthodox Church's ecclesiologicalself-understanding preserves every essential constituent identified in the first-millennium real definitions, instantiates the same substantial universals, and stands in the same essential dependence relations, thereby establishing the Continuation-Identity Thesis, which will be demonstrated in Section 5 by formulating Orthodox real definitions for both primacy and the Church and comparing them constituent by constituent with their first-millennium counterparts. And seventh, the claim that this framework-driven conclusion, namely the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis, withstands certain important challenges that will be raised in Section 6 and tested through sustained replies to development-based, succession-based, and complementarity-based objections, alongside challenges to the metaphysical framework itself, so that the conditional inference can be evaluated on both historical and philosophical grounds.

Thus, the plan is as follows: in Section 2 (Philosophical Framework: The Nature of Essence and Four-Category Ontology), I explicate the metaphysical framework itself, including a detailed justification for why this framework is applicable to institutional entities such as the papacy and the Church. In Section 3 (Historical Analysis: The Nature of the First Millennium Church and Papacy), I examine the historical evidence to establish the essential constituents of the early papacy and Church, focusing on their operation within a consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology, and tracing the continuity of this model through the first millennium to the eve of the Gregorian reforms, whilst also establishing the historical succession whereby the post-Gregorian entities came to replace their first-millennium predecessors. Section 4 (Philosophical Elucidation: The Essential Transformation of the Papacy and Church) applies the metaphysical framework to the historical findings to argue that, within the adopted metaphysics, the Gregorian reforms are best understood as effecting an ontological replacement, thereby establishing the

Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis. Section 5 (The Positive Case: Eastern Orthodoxy and the First-Millennium Ecclesial Realities) applies the same metaphysical framework to the ecclesiological self-understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy, demonstrating that the Orthodox Church continues to possess and instantiate the first millennium definitions and kinds and that none of the incompatibilities that arise with respect to Roman Catholicism arise with respect to Orthodoxy, thereby establishing the Continuation-Identity Thesis. Section 6 (Objections and Replies) then addresses potential objections to both the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis and the Continuation-Identity Thesis, including challenges from doctrinal development theory, identity through succession, alternative ontological construals, complementarity interpretations, and objections specifically directed at the positive Orthodox case. Finally, Section 7 (Conclusion) will summarise the results, affirm both the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis and the Continuation-Identity Thesis, and conclude the article.

2. Philosophical Framework: The Nature of Essence and Four-Category Ontology

2.1. The Nature of Essence

Essentialism is the metaphysical view that certain entities can be meaningfully said to have essences and essential features, and it comes in two forms: modal and non-modal. Modal essentialism, the more prevalent form in contemporary thought, characterises an essence as the collection of properties an entity must possess in order to exist. In contrast, Fine and Lowe pursue a non-modal approach termed 'serious essentialism', focused on the notion of a real definition and following Aristotle and Locke in construing an essence as the very being of anything, whereby it is what it is. More precisely:

(5) (Essence)	*An essence of an entity x is what x is or what it is to be x, as expressed by a real definition*

An essence constitutes the identity of its entity, offering a non-modal means by which one can identify, in the most perspicuous manner, what that entity is. Crucially, non-modal essentialism does not reify essences by treating them as further entities. As Lowe notes, an entity's essence does not literally contain any entities as parts, since only entities can have other entities as parts. As Fine writes, 'just as we may define a word, or say what it means, so we may define an object, or say what it is'.

A real definition, according to Lowe, is the definition of a thing (res) in contradistinction to a verbal definition, specifying what it is to be a particular entity. It is formulated through a 'to be … is to be …' construction. As Lowe further writes, 'a real definition of an Entity, E, is to be understood as a proposition which tells us, in the most perspicuous fashion, what E is, or … what E is or would be'. We can illustrate this through the following table:

Table 1. *Essence & Real Definitions*

Entity	Essence	Real Definition
Gold	What Gold is or what it is to be Gold	<To be Gold is to be a metal whose atomic constituents have the atomic number 79>
Socrates	What Socrates is or what it is to be Socrates	<To be Socrates is to be a rational animal who has Sophroniscus and Phaenarete as his parents>
Set	What a set is or what it is to be a set	<To be a set is to be a collection of members that satisfies the axioms of set theory>
Water	What water is or what it is to be water	<To be a quantity of water is to be a quantity of a chemical substance composed (predominantly) of H2O molecules>

The definiendum (on the left side of the construction) is the entity to be defined, while the definiens (on the right side) uniquely identifies and explains the essential nature of the definiendum. A real definition is successful if, as Koslicki points out,[5] it not only uniquely identifies the entity but also explains its essential nature. Real definitions are thus explanatory devices that provide definitive answers to what Cowling terms what-questions,[6] which ask for the metaphysically significant features of an individual. Closely related to essence is the notion of 'essential dependence', which belongs to the wider category of 'ontological dependence' relations. Ontological dependence, as Correia writes,[7] stands for 'a non-well delineated, rich family of properties and relations which are usually taken to be among the most

[5]Kathrin Koslicki, 'Varieties of Ontological Dependence', in Fabrice Correia and Benjamin Schnieder (eds.), Metaphysical Grounding: Understanding the Structure of Reality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 200

[6]Sam Cowling, Abstract Entities (London: Routledge, 2017), 4.

[7]Fabrice Correia, 'Ontological Dependence', Philosophy Compass 3/5 (2008), 1013.

fundamental ontological properties and relations'. This notion is distinct from causal dependence,[8] logical dependence,[9] and probabilistic dependence,[10] none of which express a relation in the deep ontological sense. The specific variety that does fulfil this role, according to Koslicki,[11] is essential dependence, best understood as obtaining when an entity x is ontologically dependent on another entity y because y is a constituent of a proposition true in virtue of x's nature.[12] This constitutive relationship, in Koslicki's terminology,[13] is one of essential constituency:

(6) (Essential Constituency	*An entity, x, is an essential constituent of an entity, y, just in case x is a constituent in a real definition of y*

The entities that fulfil the role of being the essential constituents of another entity pertain to (or feature within) the real definition of that specific entity and therefore contribute to defining the entity as it is. This constitutive relationship can hold between an entity and their essential constituent, in regards to its general essence—where the essential constituent of the entity has its general essence (i.e., kind identity) determined by this entity through it being a constituent of the part of its real definition that expresses what it is to be of its kind. Moreover, this constitutive relationship can hold between an entity and their essential constituent, in regards to its individual essence—where the essential constituent of the entity has its individuation determined by this entity through it being a constituent of the part of its real definition that expresses what it is to be that specific individual. Taking this all into account, we can thus further illustrate these notions through the following table:

Entity	Essence	Real Definition	Essential Dependence	Essential Constituents
Smile	Essence What a smile is or what it is to be a smile General Essence (Kind of Entity):Action IndividualEssence (Particular Kind of Entity):Facial Expression	<To be a smile is to be a state resulting from an activity of smiling engaged in by a mouth >	Smiles essentially depend on the mouth that is smiling.	Mouths are constituents in real definitions of smiles.
Lightning	Essence What Lightning is or what it is to be Lighing General Essence (Kind of Entity): Event Individual Essence (Particular Kind of Entity): Electrical Discharge	<To be (an occurrence of) Lightning is to be an event in which energy is discharged by electrons (in a certain way)>	(An occurrence of) Lightning ontologically depends on some electrons.	Electrons are constituents in real definitions of a Lightning event.
Water	Essence What water is or what it is to be water General Essence (Kind of Entity): Chemical Compound Individual Essence (Particular Kind of Entity): Hydrogen and Oxygen Molecular Structure	<To be a quantity of water is to be a quantity of a chemical substance composed (predominantly) of H2O molecules>	Water essentially depends on H2O molecules.	H2O molecules are constituents in real definitions of water.
Holes	Essence What a hole is or what it is to be a hole General Essence (Kind of Entity): Immaterial Object Individual Essence (Particular Kind of Entity): Absence	<To be a hole is to be an opening present in an object>.	Holes essentially depend on their "hosts".	The "hosts" of holes are constituents in real definitions of holes.

[8]Koslicki, 'Varieties of Ontological Dependence'.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Ibid.; Kathrin Koslicki, 'Ontological Dependence: An Opinionated Survey', in Benjamin Schnieder, Miguel Hoeltje and Alex Steinberg (eds.), Varieties of .Dependence (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 2013).
[12]Koslicki, 'Varieties of Ontological Dependence'.
[13]Koslicki (2012, 2013) proposes the notion of essential constituency within the context of explicating some more 'fine-grained' notions of ontological dependence and adds another clause to (EC) that an x must also be a constituent of y itself. This additional clause will not be included within the notion of essential constituency employed in this article. Furthermore, Lowe himself does not utilise this notion in formulating his non-modal essentialism. However, the terminology is useful for referring to the entities that constitute the real definition of a given entity.

As Fine writes, 'given that one object is ineliminably involved in the nature of another, then it is not compatible with the nature of the second that it should exist without the first'.[14] This relationship is asymmetrical, since the dependent entity has the entity upon which it depends as a constituent of its real definition, but not vice versa.

In summary, within the non-modal essentialist framework, entities are taken to have essences, which are what it is to be those entities and which thereby constitute their identities. These essences are not themselves entities and are expressed by real definitions, which state what it is to be a given entity in the most perspicuous manner possible. Where the real definition of one entity involves another entity as a constituent, a relation of essential dependence obtains between them, such that the former entity cannot exist without the latter, given that the latter serves as an essential constituent that partly determines the identity and existence of the former. This relation is asymmetrical and fine-grained, holding only in the direction from the dependent entity to the entity upon which it depends. Having established this account of essence and essential dependence, we can now turn our attention to an explication of the four-category ontology, which provides the categorial framework within which these essentialist notions are to be situated and applied.

2.2 The Nature of the Four-Category Ontology

Formal ontology focuses on identifying the ontological categories and formal relations between members of those categories. Lowe has formulated a neo-Aristotelian categorial ontology, termed the four-category ontology,[15] which aims to provide a metaphysical foundation for the natural sciences:

(7) (Four-Category)	*There exist four cross-categorial fundamental ontological categories: objects (substances), modes (property-instances), kinds (substantial universals) and attributes (non-substantial universals).*

These categories, according to Lowe,[16] are defined in terms of three dependence relations (rigid existential, non-rigid existential, and identity dependence) and three formal ontological relations (instantiation, characterisation, and exemplification), represented in the Ontological Square:

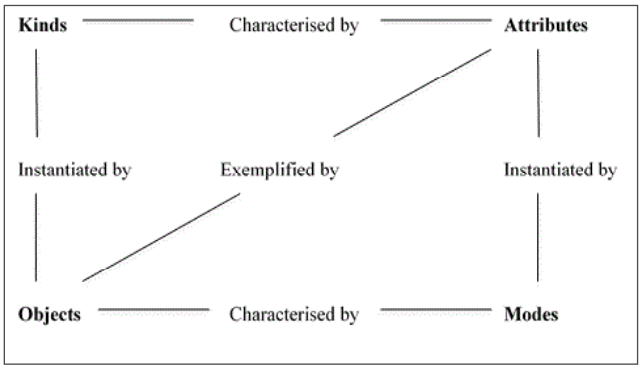

Figure 1. *Ontological Square (Lowe 2006a)*

For each of the categories, one can understand that: first, particular objects are property-bearing particulars with determinate existence and identity conditions, rigidly existentially dependent upon their kinds. Second, kinds are universals that are secondary objects and kinds of being, with membership determined by existence and identity conditions determinable a priori. Moreover, kinds can be construed as forms in a hylomorphic sense that constitute the essence of their members, and they are non-rigidly existentially dependent upon their instances while also deriving their identity from the attributes that characterise them. Third, attributes are universal ways of being that function as characterising property universals, with modes as their instances. And, forth, modes are particularised properties, the particular ways of being of a given entity, rigidly existentially dependent upon the attributes they instantiate.

These categories are related by three asymmetrical formal ontological relations. According to Lowe,[17] these are irreducible and primitive notions. Characterisation (or inherence) takes modes and attributes as characteristics of the entities they

[14]Fine, K. 1995. "Ontological Dependence." In Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. 95, 269–90.
[15]E. J. Lowe, The Four-Category Ontology: A Foundation for Natural Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[16]Ibid.
[17]Ibid

characterise, not as their constituents. Instantiation relates particular entities to universals, where particular objects are instances of kinds. Exemplification, unlike the other two relations, is non-primitive and indirect, derivable from instantiation and characterisation. As noted by Lowe,[18] exemplification obtains in two varieties: dispositional exemplification, where an object instantiates a kind characterised by an attribute, and occurrent exemplification, where an object is characterised by a mode that instantiates an attribute.

In summary, within the ontological framework of the Four-Category Ontology, there are thus four ontological categories: objects, kinds, attributes, and modes. These are defined by three ontological dependence relations: rigid existential dependence, non-rigid existential dependence, and identity-dependence. These are related to one another by three fundamental formal ontological relations: instantiation, characterisation, and exemplification. Having established this metaphysical foundation, we can now examine how these concepts of kinds, attributes, modes, and their relations provide the conceptual resources needed to address our task at hand However, before proceeding, it is necessary to address in what sense an institution can be considered a 'particular object' amenable to essentialist analysis. After all, Lowe's paradigmatic examples of particular objects are typically organisms or physical artefacts with clear spatiotemporal boundaries, whereas an institution might seem categorically different. Yet the category of 'particular object' in Lowe's ontology is defined functionally rather than materially: a particular object is any property-bearing particular that has determinate existence and identity conditions, is countable, and is not itself borne by anything else. Institutions satisfy these criteria, since an institution bears properties such as jurisdictional authority, comes into being through a founding act, persists through an ordered succession of authorised office-holders, and is not itself a property of some other entity. Moreover, an institution is reducible neither to its members nor to its associated physical artefacts, but is rather a structured entity constituted by normative relations and essential dependencies. Institutions thus fall within the category of 'normatively constituted objects', whose identity conditions are fixed by the normative frameworks that define and sustain them. If institutions are to be intelligible objects of discourse at all, such that we can meaningfully ask whether an institution has changed or remained the same, then there must be facts about what it essentially is.

It should nonetheless be acknowledged that applying non-modal essentialism to institutional entities is not uncontroversial. The argument of this article is therefore explicitly conditional: if non-modal essentialism (and the Four-Category Ontology), is the appropriate tool for individuating institutional entities, then the historical evidence supports the conclusion that the institution as configured in its first historical phase and the institution as configured in its later phase are essentially distinct.

3. Historical Analysis: The Nature of the First Millennium Church and Papacy[19]

3.1 The Nature of the First Millennium Church

At the centre of the ecclesiology of the first millennium are four key theoretical frameworks that shaped early church governance, which we can state together succinctly as follows: [20]

(8) (Ecclesiological Frameworks)	*First-millennium ecclesiology was centred on a consensus-based ecclesiology and consensus-based epistemology, with authority structured by intra-patriarchal relations constrained by mutual consent and inter-patriarchal relations requiring cross-sees consensus, rather than unilateral imposition.*

In unpacking these ecclesiological frameworks in more depth: first is 'consensus-based ecclesiology', which describes a model of church governance where ecclesiastical authority and decision-making required agreement and consent among bishops and church councils, rather than unilateral pronouncements from any single authority. This was the dominant model in the Church. The second is 'consensus-based epistemology', which encompasses the understanding that religious truth and doctrine were discerned through collective agreement of the church rather than through individual pronouncement. The desire and drive to both identify and establish consensus is evident in all the ante-Nicene ecclesiastical controversies and the

[18]Ibid

[19]In this section, the conceptualisation of the 'nature of the papacy' in the first millennium is a summary of the extensive work of Craig Truglia and related scholarship such as that of Evangelos Chrysos, and Aristeides Papadakis and John Meyendorff. Hence, for a more detailed unpacking of the historical evidence and analysis presented in this section see Truglia, C. (2023a) The Rise and Fall of the Papacy: An Orthodox Perspective. Mount Athos: Uncut Mountain Press; Truglia, C. (2023b) Anastasius the Librarian's papal interpolations into Pope Adrian I's letter to the emperors (JE 2448)', Revista Teologică - Mitropolia Ardealului, 4; Chrysos, E. (2018) 'New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium in the letters of Pope Nicholas I to Emperor Michael III', Travaux et Memoires, 22(1); Papadakis, A. and Meyendorff, J. (1994) The Christian East and the rise of the Papacy (The Church in History, Vol. 4). Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

[20]The terminology of the following principles are introduced into the literature by Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.

presence of consensus was seen as evidence of the Holy Spirit's guidance, because when the entirety of the Church decided something, it was understood as evidence that God did so with them.[21] The third and fourth is the distinction between 'intra-patriarchal' relations (within a patriarch's jurisdiction) and 'inter-patriarchal' relations (between different patriarchal se**es).**[22] In intra-patriarchal contexts, a major see could exercise direct authority over its own jurisdiction, though even this required a degree of consensus as outlined in Apostolic Canon 34 (possibly dating from the second century), which stipulates, 'The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but each may do those things only which concern his own parish… But neither let him (who is the first) do anything without the consent of all'.[23] However, in inter-patriarchal relations, no patriarch could unilaterally impose decisions on other patriarchal sees—consensus was required. Accordingly, the unity sought and expressed through synodal consent was located most concretely in the local eucharistic assembly gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) its bishop, where heaven and earth met and the eschatological reality of the Kingdom broke into historical existence. This vision, which modern scholarship terms 'Eucharistic ecclesiology',[24] located the Church's fullness in each local eucharistic celebration presided over by a 'canonically orthodox' bishop. Ignatius of Antioch, in the earliest extant sources, links the Church's fullness and catholicity to the one Eucharist celebrated in unity with the bishop. More fully, Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the early second century while under escort to Rome, offers one of the earliest and most explicit articulations of the relationship between the bishop, the Eucharist, and the catholic Church, since in his Letter to the Smyrnaeans he insists that 'Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it'[25], and he then declares that 'Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church'.[26]This formulation is decisive for first millennium ecclesiology, because Ignatius does not ground catholicity in a distant administrative apparatus but in the local assembly gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery)its bishop, so that the bishop's presence functions as the visible condition of ecclesial fullness in that place. In the same letter, he reinforces the bishop's constitutive role for sacramental and communal life by stating, 'It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid'[27]**,** thereby locating ecclesial security and sacramental order in communion with the bishop.

This episcopal centring of unity is echoed across the Ignatian corpus, since in the Letter to the Ephesians he describes the Church's harmony with its bishop in explicitly Christological terms when he writes, 'For if I in this brief space of time have enjoyed such fellowship with your bishop, I mean not of a mere human, but of a spiritual nature, how much more do I reckon you happy who are so joined to him as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father, that so all things may agree in unity'[28], and he also exhorts the faithful to liturgical convergence by urging, 'Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when ye assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith'.[29]In the Letter to the Magnesians he renders the same logic practical and disciplinary when he commands, 'As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, neither by Himself nor by the apostles, so neither do ye anything without the bishop and presbyters'[30] and when he further exhorts,

[21]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.

[22]These terms are employed throughout this article as functional analytical categories describing the operative jurisdictional geography of the first-millennium Church, in which certain sees exercised direct authority over determinate regions whilst relating to one another through collegial co-ordination. The terminology does not presuppose that all parties, and Rome in particular, formally accepted the title 'patriarch' as a self-designation or endorsed the pentarchy as a formal ecclesiological theory; it designates the structural reality of how jurisdiction was in fact exercised, regardless of the precise titles that individual sees adopted or refused.

[23]Apostolic Canon 34, in Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

[24]The term 'Eucharistic ecclesiology' is most closely associated with the work of Nicholas Afanasiev, particularly his The Church of the Holy Spirit (1971), translated by Plekon, M. (2007) Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, and further developed by Alexander Schmemann in The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom (1988), translated by Kucharski, P. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press; see also Zizioulas, J.D. (2001) Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries. Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, for a systematic elaboration of this ecclesiological vision

[25]Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans, 8.1, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[26]Ibid., 8.2.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians, 5.1, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[29]Ibid., 13.1.

[30]Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians, 7.1, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

'Be ye subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh, and the apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit; that so there may be a union both fleshly and spiritual'.[31] Likewise, in the Letter to the Trallians he commends their ecclesial life precisely in terms of this submission when he observes, 'For, since ye are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ'[32], and he sharpens the boundary of ecclesial existence by adding, 'Apart from these, there is no Church'[33], while also warning that 'he who does anything apart from the bishop, and presbytery, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience'.[34] Finally, in the Letter to the Philadelphians he binds eucharistic singularity to episcopal singularity by declaring, 'For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants'[35], and he identifies ecclesial belonging by stating, 'For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop'[36], so that unity with the bishop is presented not as a matter of administrative convenience but as the concrete form of communion in the one Body of Christ.

Importantly, however, Ignatius' witness is not an isolated Antiochene peculiarity but an early expression of a wider ecclesial consensus. Cyprian of Carthage gave this vision its most memorable formulation when he declared that 'the Church is in the Bishop and the Bishop is in the Church', and when he argued further that the episcopate was a single reality held by each bishop in its totality, 'episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur', such that the local bishop possessed the fullness of apostolic dignity required to constitute the Church without appeal to a higher external power.[37]

On this logic, the local church was not merely a part or portion of a larger whole, but the Church's fullness in that place.[38] Clement of Rome, writing in the first century, underscores that liturgical order is determined by appointed ministers who succeed the Apostles, thereby implying that the validity of the offering is bound to the proper gathering of the community under its appointed head.[39] Irenaeus of Lyons later intertwined doctrine and Eucharist by insisting that 'our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking', thus locating the criterion of truth not in a distant administrative centre but in the sacramental act of the local community living the apostolic faith.[40] The Didascalia Apostolorum, a third-century church order, exhorts the faithful to honour the bishop 'as God', precisely because he presides in the place of the Almighty during the oblation, whilst the Areopagite corpus in the late fifth century deepens the same instinct by depicting the ecclesiastical hierarchy as an icon of the celestial hierarchy, realised within the synaxis of the local church rather than through a global structure.[41] Justin Martyr, writing in the mid-second century, provides a further and distinctive perspective on ecclesial leadership that complements and in certain respects qualifies the Ignatian model. In his

[31]Ibid., 13.2.

[32]Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Trallians, 2.1, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[33]Ibid., 3.1.

[34]Ibid., 7.2.

[35]Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Philadelphians, 4.1, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[36]Ibid., 3.2

[7]Cyprian of Carthage (1994) Epistle 66, 8, and De Unitate Ecclesiae, 5, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

[38]The scholarly literature on early ecclesiology has extensively confirmed and elaborated this picture of episcopally centred, eucharistically constituted local churches. John Zizioulas, in Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), has provided the most systematic philosophical articulation of the thesis that the bishop's presidency at the Eucharist is ontologically constitutive of the Church, arguing that ecclesial being is fundamentally relational and that the local eucharistic assembly under its bishop is the primary mode of the Church's existence. Zizioulas's work builds upon the earlier contributions of Nicholas Afanasiev, whose The Church of the Holy Spirit (translated by M. Plekon, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007; originally composed in the 1940s and published posthumously in 1971) first developed the concept of 'eucharistic ecclesiology' as a formal ecclesiological category, arguing that each local church celebrating the Eucharist under its bishop possesses the fullness of ecclesial reality without dependence upon any supra-local structure. Alexander Schmemann's The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom (translated by P. Kucharski, Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988) further deepened this tradition by demonstrating that the Eucharist is not one sacrament among others but the constitutive act of the Church itself, whilst J.-M. R. Tillard, in Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion (translated by R.C. de Peaux, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992) and Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion (translated by M. Beaumont, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), developed a richly patristic account of communion ecclesiology that traced the inseparability of eucharistic celebration and episcopal presidency through the first-millennium sources. On the historical side, Stuart G. Hall's Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church (2nd edn, London: SPCK, 2005) provides a careful account of the development of episcopal structures in their liturgical and doctrinal context, whilst W. H. C. Frend's The Rise of Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) situates early ecclesiology within the broader social and political history of the ancient Mediterranean world.

[39]Clement of Rome (2007) First Clement, 40-44, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[40]Irenaeus of Lyons (1994) Against Heresies, 4.18.5, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

[41]Didascalia Apostolorum (1929) 2.26, translated by Connolly, R.H. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (1987) The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 1.1-3, in Luibheid, C. and Rorem, P. (trans.) Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works. New York: Paulist Press.

First Apology (chapters 65-67),[42] Justin describes the eucharistic gathering not in terms of a bishop presiding but rather through the functionally neutral term ho proestos ('the one presiding' or 'the president'), stating that 'there is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water, and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe',[43] and that 'on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read… then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things'.[44] Justin's terminology is significant because it avoids the hierarchical vocabulary of episkopos and presbyteros altogether, designating the liturgical leader simply as the one who presides, a usage that suggests either that the monarchical episcopate had not yet fully consolidated in Rome by the 150s or, alternatively, that Justin was deliberately employing language intelligible to his pagan audience without importing specifically Christian ecclesiastical categories. In either case, Justin's account reinforces the broader first-millennium pattern in which ecclesial authority was identified with local liturgical presidency rather than with a centralised administrative office, and the absence of any reference to a higher authority beyond the local assembly further confirms that the eucharistic gathering under its presiding minister constituted the primary locus of ecclesial reality. The upshot is straightforward: the Church is to be identified with each local eucharistic assembly gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) its bishop, such that the Church simply is the local eucharistic assembly presided over by a 'canonically orthodox' bishop, meaning a bishop who stands in apostolic succession, remains in full communion with the wider episcopate, and faithfully upholds the Church's dogmatic and liturgical tradition, since only under such a bishop does the local eucharistic assembly manifest the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church in its fullness.

Within this first millennium horizon, the Greek term 'katholiki' carried a range of meanings that included, but were not exhausted by, geographical universality. (The term could and did denote the worldwide extension of the Church across the nations, as is attested by numerous patristic writers, and to deny this would be to reproduce the error of the Donatists, who maintained that the true Church could subsist in a geographically restricted communion defined by internal purity alone. Augustine of Hippo argued extensively against this restriction, insisting that the Church's catholicity necessarily entailed its visible spread throughout the world, such that a communion confined to a single region or faction could not claim the mark of catholicity regardless of its internal holiness). This geographical dimension of catholicity is not disputed by the present analysis; rather, what the present analysis does maintain, however, is that alongside this geographical sense, the term 'katholiki' also, most importantly, carried a qualitative sense that was of particular ecclesiological significance for the relationship between the local church and the universal communion, and that this qualitative sense played a constitutive role in first-millennium ecclesiology that the post-Gregorian tradition has tended to obscure. To put the point precisely: the first-millennium sources attest that a local church gathered (directly or indirectly) around its bishop for the celebration of the Eucharist was not regarded as a mere fragment or administrative subdivision of a larger catholic whole, but as itself catholic in a qualitative sense, possessing the fullness of Christ's sacramental reality in that place. The Martyrdom of Polycarp can describe the church sojourning at Smyrna as a 'catholic church', not because it governed a wide territory, but because it possessed the whole reality of ecclesial life in that place.[45] Cyril of Jerusalem makes the same point explicitly in Catechetical Lectures 18.23, where the Church is called 'Catholic' not merely because it extends throughout the world, but because it teaches the fullness of doctrine and ministers healing for every kind of sin, thereby foregrounding qualitative completeness rather than quantitative expanse.[46] Consequently, the bishop, as president of the eucharistic assembly, stands as the living symbol of the catholic Church, the icon of Christ amidst his people and the guarantor of unity. This imagery appears with particular force in the Apostolic Constitutions, compiled around 380 CE, which liken the bishop to

[42]Justin Martyr (1997) First Apology, in Falls, T.B. (trans.) The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discours to the Greeks, The Monarchy or The Rule of God. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press.

[43]Justin Martyr, First Apology 65, in Falls, T.B. (trans.) (1997) The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy or The Rule of God. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press.

[44]Justin Martyr, First Apology 67, in Falls, T.B. (trans.) (1997) The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy or The Rule of God. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press.

[45]Martyrdom of Polycarp, Inscription, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[46]Cyril of Jerusalem (1894) Catechetical Lectures, 18.23, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers

the captain of a great ship and the deacons to mariners, urging ordered seating in the liturgical gathering so that the synaxis appears not as a disordered crowd but as a structured microcosm of God's ordered world.[47] As churches expanded and parishes multiplied, a practical question arose: how could the principle of one Eucharist under one bishop be preserved across distance and growth? The received solution was that presbyters celebrated only as an extension of episcopal authority, a logic expressed in the practice known as the 'fermentum', documented in Innocent I's letter to Decentius of Gubbio around 416 CE, where he explains that acolytes carried consecrated particles to presbyters throughout the city so that they would not consider themselves separated from the bishop's communion on that day.[48] That same ecclesial instinct is preserved, in different forms, in later symbols of eucharistic and episcopal unity such as the antimension. From these local eucharistic assemblies, identified each as a distinct church gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) its bishop, larger structures emerged, including metropolitan communions, autocephalous churches, and the universal communion of the first millennium, yet these operated as coordinating and unifying forms rather than as higher ontological entities. The legal prototype for this pattern appears in early canonical arrangements such as the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, whose Canon 4 required provincial episcopal consent for consecration, thereby locating the legitimacy of order in local and regional synodal recognition rather than in a distant monarchic source.[49] The result is a principled account of ecclesial reality: the local church with its bishop fully embodies the catholic Church and the Body of Christ, regional relationships generate a functional interdependence and a corresponding functional primacy, and any structure above the local level remains functional in nature, facilitating cooperation and preserving unity without constituting a higher ecclesial reality with ontological priority over the local churches.

To illustrate this distinction, consider the distinction between a family and a neighbourhood watch community. The family possesses ontological priority: it is constituted by the essential relationships between its members (parents and children, spouses to one another), and these relationships determine what the family fundamentally is. The family does not derive its identity as a family from its membership in any larger organisation; rather, it is a complete reality in itself, lacking nothing of what it means to be a family. The father of the family, in his role as head of the household, possesses authority that is intrinsic to the family itself; his authority to govern the domestic sphere, to make decisions concerning the upbringing of children, and to order the internal life of the household derives from his constitutive role within the family rather than from any external delegation. By contrast, the neighbourhood watch community is a functional arrangement that coordinates the activities of multiple families for particular purposes (security, mutual assistance, community cohesion), but it does not constitute a higher ontological reality that makes the families what they are. The leader of the neighbourhood watch, however respected and however important his coordinating role may be, cannot determine what happens within any given family: he cannot dictate how a father raises his children, how the household budget is allocated, or what traditions the family observes. His authority extends only to the coordination of inter-family matters and the facilitation of common purposes; it does not penetrate into the domestic sphere where the father's authority is constitutive and complete. Moreover, the governance of the neighbourhood watch itself operates according to a principle of mutual accountability: whilst the individual families ought to recognise the leader of the neighbourhood watch as the coordinating head and ought not to undertake matters affecting the whole community without consulting him, the leader himself ought not to act in matters of communal significance without the consent of the families he coordinates. This reciprocal structure mirrors precisely what Apostolic Canon 34 stipulates for ecclesiastical governance: 'The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but neither let him do anything without the consent of all'. Just as the neighbourhood watch leader possesses a genuine primacy of coordination that the families ought to respect, yet cannot act unilaterally in communal matters without their agreement, so too the patriarch possesses a genuine primacy that the bishops ought to acknowledge, yet cannot impose decisions upon the broader episcopate without their consent. The authority flows in both directions: upward from the families to legitimate the leader's coordinating role,

[47]Apostolic Constitutions (1994) 2.57, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
[48]Pope Innocent I (416) Epistula ad Decentium, 5, in Migne, J.P. (ed.) (1845) Patrologia Latina, Vol. 20. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique.
[49]Council of Nicaea (325) 'Canons', Canon 4, in Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Their Canons and Do matic Decrees, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 11.

and outward from the leader to facilitate unified action, but never downward in a manner that would override the constitutive authority of the individual families or reduce them to mere administrative units of a higher organisation. The families do not become families by joining the neighbourhood watch; they were already families before any such coordination existed, and they would remain families were the neighbourhood watch to dissolve. The neighbourhood watch depends for its existence upon the families that comprise it, not vice versa. In precisely this manner, the first millennium understanding held that the local eucharistic assembly gathered around (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) its bishop constituted the Church in its ontological fullness, with the bishop functioning analogously to the father whose authority is intrinsic to and constitutive of his local church, whilst metropolitans, patriarchs, and the structures of the universal communion functioned analogously to the neighbourhood watch leader, coordinating the activities of multiple local churches and facilitating cooperation and unity among ontologically complete ecclesial realities, without themselves constituting a higher authority that could override the bishop's intrinsic governance of his own local church or a higher ecclesial reality upon which the local churches depended for their ecclesial character.

In light of all of these things—these principles and the conception of the nature of the Church within the first millennium—we can now map out chronologically the historical evidence pertaining to the nature of the papacy within the first millennium (keeping in mind the principles that have been just detailed).

3.2 The Nature of the First Millennium Papacy

As we have just seen, an examination of the first century (and earliest) evidence reveals that from its inception the Christian Church operated according to a model defined not by unilateral authority but by consensus based ecclesiology and epistemology.[50] This model, in fact, has deep roots predating Christianity. There is strong reason to believe that early Church ecclesiology was not exactly the same as, but bore a close resemblance to, first-century Jewish synagogal organisation. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls note that the local leader of the Essene community was referred to as a 'mevaqqer' or 'paqid'—terms that literally mean 'overseer' or 'bishop'. Thus, beneath this leader were the priests.[51] Outside the Essenes, early (proto-Rabbinic) synagogues seem to have been integrated into larger organisations governed by a synod known as the Sanhedrin.[52] This body was headed by a High Priest—though High Priests were not chosen from an unchanging line of succession—and always acted in consultation with the Sanhedrin, with decisions reached by majority vote. Local synagogues, meanwhile, were typically led by regional lesser Sanhedrins, each headed by a single 'ruler' called a 'Nasi'. Such a hierarchical, synodal system shows notable parallels to the organisational structure of the Church, particularly in its 'crypto-monoepiscopal framework'. However, despite these similarities, as Truglia notes, some differences between Judaism and the Church can be discerned from the limited evidence available: in Judaism, the Sanhedrin consisted of both elders and hereditary priests—roles that, while mutually exclusive, created a mixed leadership structure with hereditary priesthoods holding higher authority than lay members. This clan-based, Levitical system was eventually set aside in the Church. For instance, archdeacons in the Church sometimes exercised considerably more authority than both priests and certain bishops, serving as an analogue to the mixed leadership found in Jewish institutions.[53] Nevertheless, it is plausible, as Truglia writes, that the hierarchy of bishop > chorbishop > priests > deacons > laity evolved in a way that mirrors local synagogue organisation—synagogue ruler > lesser rulers > priests > elders > laity—with lesser Sanhedrins functioning similarly to a metropolitan structure, where a Nasi oversaw subordinate bodies much like a Metropolitan would guide lesser bishops.[54] Thus, this heritage of the episcopate, consensus and orderly succession was later fulfilled in the Christian context. As figures like Timothy (1 Tim 1:2), who functioned in a role akin to that of a bishop, as Paul commanded him regarding local bishops, 'command certain men… not to teach a different doctrine' (1 Tim 1:3), with co-bishops or presbyter-bishops assisting him, as noted previously, exemplify how early Christianity adopted and adapted these long-established models of leadership. The Pastoral Epistles as a whole furnish

[50]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[51]Ibid..
[52]Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

significant, if debated, evidence for the emergence of structured episcopal governance within the apostolic and sub-apostolic periods. In 1 Timothy 3:1-7, the qualifications for the episkopos (overseer) are set out in detail, specifying that the office-holder must be 'above reproach', 'apt to teach', and capable of governing his own household well, 'for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the Church of God?' (1 Tim 3:5). The letter to Titus similarly instructs its recipient to 'appoint elders in every city' (Tit 1:5) and provides parallel qualifications for the episkopos, thereby attesting to a pattern of delegated authority in which apostolic figures established local leaders who would govern their communities after the apostles' departure. The Second Epistle to Timothy reinforces this pattern through its emphasis upon the transmission of teaching authority across generations, exhorting Timothy to 'guard the good deposit entrusted to you' (2 Tim 1:14) and to 'entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also' what he has received (2 Tim 2:2), a passage that has been widely read as an early articulation of the principle of apostolic succession through episcopal ordination. First Peter likewise contributes to this picture, since its author addresses the 'elders' (presbyteroi) of the communities and exhorts them to 'shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight (episkopountes)' (1 Pet 5:1-2), a formulation that conflates presbyteral and episcopal language in a manner consistent with the view that the sharp distinction between bishop and presbyter had not yet crystallised but that a supervisory pastoral office was already operative. Scholars remain divided on whether these texts reflect historical conditions during Paul's lifetime or the ecclesiological arrangements of a later generation writing under Pauline pseudonymity; on either reading, however, the texts attest to an early pattern of localised, pastoral oversight exercised within a framework of transmitted apostolic authority rather than centralised monarchical governance, and they are therefore consistent with the consensus-based ecclesiology that the present analysis identifies as constitutive of the first-millennium Church. Moreover, from the first century one can see that decisions in the Church were made collectively—bishops and elders coming together in local and regional assemblies—to discern truth and settle doctrinal matters through mutual agreement rather than through top down decrees. For example, the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 provides the blueprint for inter-patriarchal relations. At this council, the 'apostles and elders' gathered to address whether Gentile converts must follow Mosaic law. While St. Peter spoke prominently of his ministry to the Gentiles, citing how 'a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel' (Acts 15:7), Paul and Barnabas also related their experiences, speaking 'of miracles done through themselves', and ultimately James issued the decisive judgment. The final proclamation was attributed to the consensus of the apostles, elders and 'the whole church' (Acts 15:22) with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the decree stated, 'For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us' (Acts 15:28). The ecclesiology of consent was informed by an epistemology of consent from the very beginning. St. Peter's authority was clearly not understood as final or unilateral, as evidenced by Paul's public rebuke of St. Peter for hypocrisy when he showed symbolic support to the Judaisers by eating with 'men…from James'. There is no indication that St. Peter gave the final judgment on the matter and that the consent of others was unnecessary. Rather, the opposite is the simplest interpretation of the evidence.

Now, although St. Peter's ministry to the Gentiles is prominently featured (cf. Matt 16:18; Luke 22:32; John 21:15-19), early Church Fathers regarded him as the origin of the episcopate. They believed that the keys given to St. Peter by Christ (Matt 16:18) were transmitted to his successors—with each bishop individually 'sitting on his chair' (as Optatus later affirmed) and possessing 'St. Peter's keys' —thus endowing St. Peter's legacy with a presiding authority. However, this authority was not meant to be exercised unilaterally; because other disciples similarly received the keys, as Cyprian noted, 'Assuredly the rest of the Apostles were also the same as was St. Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour and power', The earliest explicit historical evidence thus appears to identify that St. Peter was considered the origin of the entire episcopate if not categorically, then at least largely so. Eusebius of Caesarea, citing Clement of Alexandria's now lost Hypotyposes (a source from approximately 200 AD) reveals that St. Peter was involved in the consecration of St. James the Just as the Bishop of Jerusalem.[55] The same, citing St. Papias (a source from the early second century), asserts that St. Peter consecrated St. Mark as Bishop of Alexandria.[56] This suggests that St. Peter's role as 'origin of the episcopate' was not merely honorary but involved actual ordinations of key apostolic sees. And episcopal leadership was understood to be shared on a monoepiscopal basis, with each local church led by a single bishop assisted by co bishops or presbyter-bishops in a broader collegial network.[57]

[55]Eusebius, Ecclesiatical History, Book 1, Chap 15-16.
[56]Ibid., Chap 24.
[57]Cyprian of Carthage (1994) Epistle 68, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

Given what has been said previously, early tradition—as attested by Cyprian of Carthage, and Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote '[Christ] through St. Peter gave to the bishops the keys of the heavenly honours', Optatus, who stated St. Peter 'alone received the keys… which he was to communicate to the rest', and several later popes, such as Innocent I who wrote that St. Peter was the one 'from whom the episcopate itself and the whole authority of this name is derived' —acknowledges that while St. Peter enjoyed pre-eminence as the source of episcopal authority, his special privileges did not translate into an exclusive, monarchical rule.[58] Instead, his legacy was understood to be shared among all bishops—this is that, Cyprian of Carthage, Gregory of Nyssa, Optatus, and several popes all affirmed that the apostles and all bishops shared in the authority given to St. Peter. More precisely, it was taken to be the case that within the ecclesiological understanding of the Early church that every 'canonically orthodox' bishop sits upon the Chair of St. Peter in his own local church—with this principle being grounded in the dominical commission recorded in Matthew 16:18-19, wherein Christ declared to St. Peter, 'upon this rock I will build my Church', and bestowed upon him 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' together with the judicial authority 'to bind and to loose'. The early Church understood this Petrine foundation not as the exclusive prerogative of a single see, but as the inheritance of the entire episcopate. As noted above, but bears repeating, Cyprian articulated, the apostles were all endowed with 'a like partnership both of honour and power' (more fully, 'The Lord says to St. Peter: 'I say unto thee, that thou art St. Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church'…Assuredly the rest of the Apostles were also the same as was St. Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity, that the Church of Christ may be set forth as one'),[59] such that while St. Peter received the keys first (thereby establishing unity of origin), all bishops subsequently came to possess what St. Peter possessed. In other words, on this reading, St Peter received the keys first so as to establish unity of origin, yet all the apostles, and by extension all bishops who succeed them, were endowed with 'a like partnership both of honour and power', such that the Petrine foundation is not the exclusive possession of a single see but the shared inheritance of the entire episcopate.[60]

Hence, each bishop, in presiding over his local church, sits upon St. Peter's chair and exercises St. Peter's keys; each local church is therefore built upon the rock that is St. Peter and participates fully in the Petrine promise. This shared Petrine succession is not a diminution or distribution of an authority that properly belongs to one see alone, but rather the manner in which the Petrine foundation is made present in every local church. The catholicity of the local church is thus intrinsically connected to its Petrine character: each local church possesses qualitative catholic fullness precisely because its bishop sits upon St. Peter's chair, exercises St. Peter's keys, and thereby makes present the rock upon which Christ builds his Church. The local church lacks nothing of the Petrine foundation; it is not a derivative participation in a Petrine reality that belongs properly to Rome, but rather a full instantiation of the Petrine promise in that place. Consequently, St. Peter is not merely the historical origin of the episcopate, but the abiding foundation of each local church: wherever a canonically orthodox bishop presides (whether directly or indirectly) there St. Peter's chair stands, there the keys are exercised,

[58]Gregory of Nyssa (1994) 'On the Soul and the Resurrection', in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 5. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers; Optatus of Milevis (1917) Against the Donatists, translated by Vassall-Phillips, O.R. London: Longmans, Green and Co.; Pope Innocent I (404-417) 'Epistolae et Decreta', in Migne, J.P. (ed.) (1845) Patrologia Latina, Vol. 20. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, cols. 463-608.

[59]Cyprian of Carthage (1994) De Unitate Ecclesiae, 4-5, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

[60]A significant textual complication must be acknowledged at this point. Cyprian's De ecclesiae catholicae unitate survives in two distinct recensions, conventionally designated the Textus Receptus (TR) and the Primatus text (PT). The Textus Receptus, which is the version quoted above, presents Peter's reception of the keys as establishing a principle of unity of origin without attributing to Peter or his successors a permanent jurisdictional superiority over the other apostles, since "assuredly the rest of the Apostles were also the same as was Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour and power". The Primatus text, by contrast, contains additional language that appears to accord Peter a more elevated and distinctive authority, speaking of the cathedra Petri and the ecclesia principalis in terms that could be read as grounding a claim to Petrine primacy of a more robust character than the Textus Receptus allows. The relationship between these two recensions has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate: some scholars, following Maurice Bévenot's influential study The Tradition of Manuscripts: A Study in the Transmission of St. Cyprian's Treatises (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), have argued that the Primatus text represents Cyprian's original composition and the Textus Receptus a later revision intended to moderate Petrine language in the context of the rebaptism controversy with Pope Stephen; others have argued the reverse, holding that the Primatus text is the later interpolation. On either chronology, however, two points remain clear for the purposes of the present analysis. In the first place, even the Primatus text does not attribute to Peter or to his successors the kind of jurisdictional supremacy, doctrinal infallibility, or independence from conciliar consent that characterises the post-Gregorian papacy; the primatus Petri of which it speaks functions as a principle of ecclesial unity and origin rather than as a claim to monarchical governance, and it must be read alongside Cyprian's explicit and repeated insistence elsewhere in his correspondence that "every bishop has his own proper right of judgment" and that no bishop, including the bishop of Rome, may impose his decisions upon the episcopal college unilaterally. In the second place, Cyprian's own conduct during the rebaptism controversy, in which he publicly and strenuously resisted Pope Stephen's attempt to impose a universal baptismal policy, demonstrates that whatever the Primatus text may assert about Peter's special dignity, Cyprian himself did not understand this as entailing the kind of papal authority that the post-Gregorian tradition would later claim. The existence of the Primatus text thus attests to the diversity of ways in which Petrine primacy was imagined within the first millennium, a diversity that the present analysis has already acknowledged, without undermining the central claim that all such models operated within a framework of consensual constraint

there the rock upon which Christ builds his Church is present. The qualitative catholicity of the local church, its possession of the fullness of the Body of Christ, is thus metaphysically grounded in its Petrine character. The local church is catholic because it is Petrine; it possesses the wholeness of Christ's Church because it possesses the wholeness of the Petrine foundation.

However, within this perspective, these special Petrine privileges did not negate the fundamentally collegial character of church governance. Instead, his legacy was understood to be shared among all apostles and bishops in communion with one another. This collegiality is further evidenced by documents like First Clement, which—read as an intra-patriarchal text, given that, at the time of writing, Corinth was under (rather than outside of) the jurisdiction of Rome (as Paul was the founder of the church in Corinth and continued, during his life, to exercise apostolic pastoral oversight over it; and he became integral to the church of Rome's apostolic foundation through his evangelistic witness there and, above all, through his martyrdom in Rome—and thus is taken, because of this, alongside Peter, to be part of the apostolic foundation of the church) shows that local primacy of the Roman synod (and not the bishop of Rome, as this had not developed yet) was recognised only within the broader consensus of a regional synod. This is evidenced by Clement writing on behalf of the Roman Synod to address an appeal from Corinth. Moreover, in accordance with Apostolic Canon 34, as was noted before but bears repeating, not only were local presbyters required to acknowledge their authoritative synods, but that authoritative synod, too, was to exercise authority only with the assent of all. In this way, the Church framed matters of jurisdiction as belonging to the 'whole Church' rather than to any one office or individual.

A closer look at second century sources further reinforces this picture. Ignatius of Antioch, writing in his Letter to the Romans, proclaims that the Roman church 'presides in the place of the region of the Romans' and 'presides over love'—a statement whose interpretation remains contested among scholars. Whilst some commentators have read the phrase 'presides over love' (prokathemene tes agapes) as an acknowledgement that the Roman church held a position of preeminence over the entire Christian communion, this reading is by no means universally accepted. As Fredrick Klawiter has argued,[61] the language of 'presiding' in Ignatius may refer not to the institutional preeminence of the Roman church over other churches but rather to the preeminence of the church as such, understood as the community of martyrial witness and eucharistic self-offering, over other forms of social and civic institution. On this reading, Ignatius is praising the Roman community for its exemplary embodiment of Christian love and sacrificial witness rather than attributing to it a governing authority over other apostolic sees. The phrase 'presides in the place of the region of the Romans' likewise admits of a purely geographical rather than jurisdictional interpretation, designating Rome's local presidency within its own region rather than a universal primacy. Whether one adopts the broader or the narrower reading, the passage simultaneously implies that such pre-eminence, if acknowledged at all, was part of a complex intra-patriarchal network rather than an assertion of unilateral supremacy.[62] Irenaeus of Lyons, while asserting that the Roman church was 'founded and organised at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul' and arguing that 'every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority', was primarily invoking historical succession and the maintenance of a consensual tradition rather than endorsing absolute supremacy.[63] Irenaeus's point was epistemic, in that Rome was a microcosm of worldwide Christian consensus, validated by Christians from everywhere convening there and bringing the same tradition.[64] This consensus based orientation is further tested during the Paschal controversy. Although Asia Minor had long been under Rome's local jurisdiction—a legacy of the evangelistic labours of St. Peter and Paul—an intra-patriarchal dispute arose when Pope Victor excommunicated churches over their method of dating Easter. In response, Polycrates of Ephesus claimed that his see, by virtue of possessing St. John's relics (and deliberately omitting Timothy's, which would have bolstered Rome's claim), was an independent apostolic centre.[65] This is that, the location of Timothy's relics were likely deliberately left out of the Ephesian letter for that specific reason. Naming Timothy's relics would substantiate that Paul had sent Timothy there before his death, enhancing claims that Ephesus was under Rome's local

[61]Klawiter, F.C. (2022) Martyrdom, Sacrificial Libation, and the Eucharist of Ignatius of Antioch. Maryland: Fortress Academic.
[62]Ignatius of Antioch (2007) Letter to the Romans, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1.
[63] Irenaeus of Lyons, 'Against Heresies', 3.3.2.
[64]Truglia,The Riseand Fall of the Papacy.
[65]Polycrates of Ephesus, as cited in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 5.24.2-7.

jurisdiction.[66] In rallying behind Ephesus' Johannine succession, bishops such as Irenaeus did not dispute Rome's general authority but underscored that even in matters of local jurisdiction, apostolic succession must be validated by the consensus of the broader church, rebuking Victor for attempting to 'cut off' the Ephesian Church.[67] In this way, the debate over Paschal dating illuminates how even intra-patriarchal authority was subject to dispute when competing claims of apostolic heritage were at stake. The fluidity of early episcopal terminology is further illustrated by Polycarp of Smyrna,[68] who, despite exercising the functions of a bishop over one of the most prominent churches in Asia Minor and being addressed as such by Ignatius, refers to himself in his own Letter to the Philippians simply as a 'presbyter' alongside his fellow presbyters,[69] without claiming the title of episkopos. This self-designation is significant for two reasons. In the first place, it attests to the fact that the sharp terminological distinction between bishop and presbyter had not yet fully crystallised in all regions by the early to mid-second century, even in communities where a single presiding figure was already operative, and that the monarchical episcopate emerged at different rates and with different degrees of terminological self-consciousness across the early Church. In the second place, Polycarp's presbyteral self-designation reinforces the regional and collegial character of early church governance, since it suggests that the presiding minister understood himself as first among fellow elders rather than as an officer of a categorically different rank, a self-understanding that coheres with the consensus-based ecclesiology identified here as constitutive of the first millennium

By the third century, the evidence of a collegial, consensus-based ecclesiology becomes even more compelling. The rigorist writers Tertullian and Hippolytus provide crucial testimony to the absence of any notion of papal infallibility during this period. By Tertullian's time (the turn of the second to third century), exceptions began being made in penance practices if a martyr or a confessor vouched for an individual. These were called 'indulgences', because a bishop would 'indulge' the request of a confessor to 'go easy' on the penitent.[70] This is the context of Tertullian's critique of the 'Pontifex Maximus'—the bishop of bishops—who issues an edict: 'I remit, to such as have discharged (the requirements of) repentance, the sins both of adultery and of fornication'.[71] What is particularly revealing is Tertullian's analysis of the Church's appeal to Matt 16:18. In what may be the earliest exegesis to this passage, Tertullian reveals the passage's popular interpretation: the Church cited the passage as pertaining to disciplinary power exercised by the entire episcopate—not the Pope of Rome in isolation. Apparently, 'every church' was 'akin to St. Peter', which makes sense if it was a well understood tradition that St. Peter was the origin of the entire episcopacy. Additionally, Tertullian refers to there being a 'bishop of bishops'—a title which appears to be a common, non-exclusive insult in the third century, used as a pejorative for a bishop who does not submit to conciliarity or consensus. St. Hippolytus, a contemporary rigorist who was within the Church (contrary to claims that he was an antipope), provides extensive evidence of papal fallibility. He identifies himself as part of the 'high priesthood' and uses the term 'we', implying he was the head of a faction of rigorists within the Roman Synod.[72] For example, Pope 'Zephyrinus imagines that he administers the affairs of the Church—an uninformed and shamefully corrupt man'.[73] Contextually, 'Church' here refers to the whole Church, interestingly implying that Zephyrinus asserted some sort of worldwide Papal prerogatives. He accuses Popes Zephyrinus of Modalism and 'heresy', and likewise, Pope Callistus allegedly disseminated Modalism 'throughout the entire world'.[74] Most importantly, Hippolytus exhibits no understanding whatsoever of papal infallibility. His accusations of Popes being heretics are made with no thought paid to the idea that this would scandalise anyone within the Roman Synod, let alone the Christian world. Additionally, the Popes do not counter Hippolytus citing their alleged doctrinal infallibility. Both of these facts imply the doctrine's non-existence in any form. The fact that neither popes nor their critics invoked such a doctrine underscores

[66]The Acts of Timothy locates his death in Ephesus and the Latin manuscript tradition of these acts identifies Polycrates was its author. Hence, there is reliable attestation that Polycrates was fully aware that he omitted Timothy.

[67]Irenaeus of Lyons, 'Against Heresies', 3.3.2

[68]Polycarp of Smyrna (2007) Letter to the Philippians, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations. 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[69]Polycarp of Smyrna, Letter to the Philippians 1.1, in Holmes, M.W. (ed.) (2007) The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

[70]Tertullian, On Modesty, Chap 22.

[71]Ibid., Chap 1.

[72]Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, Book 1, Preface; Book 9, Par 6.

[73]Ibid., Book 9, Par 2.

[74]Ibid., Par 2, 8.

the prevailing epistemology of consensus.[75] This perspective is vividly articulated by Cyprian of Carthage in his epistles to Pope Cornelius, where he insists that the pope 'owes' love and obedience to his fellow bishops and that 'every bishop has his own proper right of judgment'.[76] Cyprian's assertion that 'the episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole' further encapsulates a model of leadership that is inherently collegial.[77] Yet tensions emerged even within this synodal framework. The rebaptism controversy, in which Pope Stephen decreed that all baptisms were valid—regardless of whether administered by heretics or schismatics—sparked fierce opposition. The contemporary sources reveal that Stephen's position was rejected by the entire Christian world. St. Cyprian, representing the African Synod, and Firmilian, representing the Asian/Ephesian Synod, condemned Stephen emphatically.[78] Pope Dionysius of Alexandria, writing on behalf of the Egyptian Synod to Stephen, clearly supported Cyprian, commanding Stephen to 'be careful' with his 'utterances'—a rejection of Stephen's policy of excommunication.[79] Dionysius boasted that 'the largest synods of the bishops' decreed contrary to Stephen.[80] Firmilian interpreted Stephen's actions as schismatic, writing to Cyprian that 'Stephen has now dared to' ruin the unity of the Church by 'breaking the peace'. He explains: 'he [Stephen] is really the schismatic who has made himself an apostate from the communion of ecclesiastical unity. For while you [Stephen] think that all may be excommunicated by you, you have excommunicated yourself alone from all'.[81] Firmilian reveals more details relevant to the question at hand: '[Stephen] boasts of the place of his episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession from St. Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were laid… the Christian Rock is overshadowed, and in some measure abolished, by him when he thus betrays and deserts unity'.[82] Firmilian's point is that schism and rejecting the unity of the Church abolishes any claim to Petrine authority.

When Stephen excommunicated dissenters, the reaction was not one of universal submission; as Dionysius of Alexandria noted, Stephen had merely 'broken communion' with those who disagreed.[83] Most significantly, Rome later relented and modified their teaching. Dionysius of Alexandria wrote that Dionysius of Rome (the future Pope who would succeed Sixtus II) and Philemon (another Roman clergyman) 'formerly had held the same opinion as Stephen'—proving that Rome had already begun changing their teaching in the face of popular opposition.[84] This demonstrates that Stephen's teaching was disowned and then lost to history, while Cyprian's traditions were preserved in the canons. The fact that the whole Christian world refused to submit to Stephen's view or recognise his excommunication reveals the operative ecclesiological presumptions of the time.[85] This is that, after Stephen's death, his successor Sixtus adopted a more conciliatory tone, implicitly acknowledging the limits of unilateral papal action. And when Rome subsequently repudiated Stephen's baptismal teaching—modifying its own practice under Alexandrian influence —the episode provided one of the clearest early attestations that even a pope's doctrinal pronouncements were not regarded as infallible. A further development in the third century came with the unprecedented deposition of Paul of Samosata as bishop of Antioch. In this case, an inter patriarchal synod was convened, including bishops from Palestine and Asia Minor, and both Rome and Alexandria were called upon to ratify the verdict, with the synod writing 'an epistle addressed to Dionysius, bishop of Rome, and Maximus of Alexandria, and sent it to all the provinces'.[86] Although the emperor Aurelian later decreed that the bishop recognised by Italian and Roman authorities should receive the church property, the political mandate did not erase the long standing tradition of synodal consensus—a tension that would continue to shape the Church in the centuries to come.[87]

The fourth century, however, marks a decisive turning point as the Church's relationship with the Roman state underwent fundamental change. With the Edict of Milan and subsequent imperial endorsements, Christianity's new status meant that ecclesiastical

[75]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy
[76]Cyprian of Carthage (1994) Epistle 51, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers
[77]Cyprian of Carthage (1994) Treatise 1, Chapter 5, in Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J. (eds.) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
[78]Letter 74 in Cyprian's correspondence; see also Firmilian's letter to Cyprian regarding Stephen's schismatic actions.
[79]Dionysius of Alexandria, Armenian Letter 1.
[80]Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 7, Chap 4-5.
[81]Cyprian, Letter 74, Par 16, 24.
[82]Ibid., Par 17.
[83]Dionysius of Alexandria, as cited in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 7.5.
[84]Ibid., Chap 5.
[85]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[86]Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 7.30.
[87]Ibid., 7.30.19.

governance and imperial politics became increasingly intertwined. The Donatists themselves anticipated that Roman decisions were not final but subject to review. Augustine later recounted their expectation that Rome's decision could be reviewed by 'a plenary Council of the universal Church, in which these judges themselves might be put on their defence' [88] Augustine matter-of-factly observes that the Church of Rome's decisions can be appealed to a 'plenary council of the universal Church'—meaning an Ecumenical Council. This was not an innovative idea, as in previous centuries Rome was appealed against during the Ephesian and Rebaptism Controversies.[89] Initially appealing to a Roman synod under Pope Miltiades—and later to Emperor Constantine and the Council of Arles (314)—the Donatists themselves anticipated that Roman decisions were not final but subject to review by a 'plenary council of the universal Church', as Augustine later recounted their expectation that Rome's decision could be reviewed by 'a plenary Council of the universal Church, in which these judges themselves might be put on their defence'.[90] Augustine evidently believed that local councils can err, but not ecumenical ones. He classified two kinds of plenary councils: those 'embraced by the whole Church, or at least [those who] represented our brethren beyond the sea'.[91] It appears councils of the 'whole Church' require participation of the Eastern churches. Augustine's understanding of ecclesiastical infallibility was explicitly consensus-based: 'the safe course for us is…to assert, with all the confidence of a voice that cannot be gainsaid, what has been confirmed by the consent of the universal Church'.[92] Even at the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325), where its decrees were widely celebrated as the work of God because they reflected the consensus of bishops 'widely separated, not merely in sentiment but also personally', Rome's role was that of a participant rather than a dictator. Pope Sylvester's delegation of legates to Nicaea further illustrates that, while Rome was respected, its authority was not construed as absolute.

Imperial policies during the aftermath of Nicaea—especially the rise of semi Arianism and the subsequent Council of Sardica (343) as well as Pope Julius I's correspondence—reaffirmed that even appeals to Rome were framed in terms of achieving broader synodal agreement rather than asserting unilateral ju-risdiction. During this controversy, for the first time detailed statements are made that may legitimately be construed as teaching some sort of Papal Primacy. For example, Pope Julius and the Roman Synod respond-ing to the semi-Arian Council of Antioch (341) asked: 'Are you ignorant that the custom has been for word to be written first to us, and then for a just decision to be passed from this place?'[93] However, Julius never claims a final decision-making authority. Rather, he is claiming that Rome has a right to a say. Julius cites Nicaea's reception as precedent: 'The Bishops who assembled in the great Council of Nicæa agreed...that the decisions of one council should be examined in another [i.e. Rome's]'.[94] What Julius is expounding is a legitimate clarification of Rome's claims consistent with the necessity for Church-wide consensus. The Council of Sardica's canons seem to at least imply interpatriarchal appeals to Rome, yet Eastern canonists understood these as local in character. As one scholar notes, inferring an interpatriarchal appeal was 'a remarkable stretch of what Sardica did, or could have, set out in the mid-fourth century...There was certainly no clear precedent'.[95] Yet, St. Pope Leo the Great in hearing an appeal from St. Flavian of Constantinoplecited Sardica's 'canon' requiring an 'appeal to command a special Synod in Italy...to it should also come the bishops of all the [E]astern provinces...[from] the whole world'. In other words, he cited the canon as interpatriarchal in import, but specifying that a Pope as part of an Ecumenical Council that is fully representative of the Church acts as the final place of appeal. In other words, consensus-based ecclesiology rules the day.[96]

That is, more fully, a careful examination of what the Sardican canons actually stipulated reveals a model of appellate authority that preserved the fundamentally conciliar nature of church governance. Canons 3, 4, and 5 of Sardica acknowledged the bishop of Rome's role as a court of appeal in cases involving bishops,

[88]Augustine, Letter 43, Par 19.
[89]Truglia, The Rise and the Fall of the Papacy.
[90]Truglia, The Rise and the Fall of the Papacy.
[91]Augustine of Hippo (1994) 'Letter 43', in Schaff, P. (ed.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 1. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 287.
[92]Augustine, On Baptism, Against the Donatists, Book 2, Par 14.
[93]Ibid., Book 7, Par 102.
[94]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[95]Pope Julius quoted in Athanasius, Defense Against the Arians, Par 35.
[96]Ibid.

whilst still preserving synodal principles.[97] Crucially, this appellate function did not envision unilateral papal decisions; rather, it authorised the ordering of retrials or new hearings. Canon 3 stipulated that if 'sentence be given against a bishop in any matter and he supposes his case to be not unsound but good, in order that the question may be reopened', the bishop of Rome could determine 'that the case may be retried by the bishops of the neighbouring prov**inces'.**[98] Canon 5 elaborated this procedure further: if the bishop thought 'it right that the trial or examination of his case be renewed, let him be pleased to write to those bishops who are in an adjacent and neighbouring province, that they may diligently inquire into all the particulars and decide according to the word of truth'.[99] The Pope's role was thus to examine whether proper canonical procedures had been followed and whether justice had been served. If irregularities were discovered, the Pope could order that the case be retried by a different synod, or alternatively, under his own court with appropriate episcopal participation. Canon 5 specified that if the appellant' shall by his entreaty move the Bishop of Rome to send presbyters a latere, it shall be in the power of that bishop…that some be sent to be judges with the bishops and invested with his authority'.[100] The ninth-century Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, and subsequently the Gallican scholar Du Pin, observed that this mechanism provided 'properly speaking no provision for 'appeal', which entirely suspends…the execution and effect of the first sentence; but rather for a revision of judgment', wherein those sent by the Roman bishop 'ought, together with the bishops of the province who had given the former sentence, to give a fresh judgment'.[101] This procedure preserved the principle that ecclesiastical decisions must emerge from synodal deliberation rather than papal decree, whilst still providing a means of ensuring justice and canonical propriety. Hamilton Hess, in his authoritative study of the Sardican canons, characterises them as establishing 'the provision for appeal to the bishop of Rome for retrial in cases of unjust judgements against them by their peers', emphasising retrial rather than direct papal adjudication.[102] Under such a model, consensus remained the normative basis for ecclesiastical decisions, with the papacy serving as a mechanism for resolving disputes or addressing situations where consensus proved elusive. This appellate function granted the papacy a form of universal jurisdiction, but one that was carefully circumscribed and exercised only within specific contexts: rather than possessing direct, immediate jurisdiction over every diocese, the Pope's universal authority would be activated through the appellate process, when cases were brought to Rome through established ecclesiastical channels. The Pope's intervention primarily took the form of procedural oversight: ensuring that cases received fair hearings according to canonical norms, ordering retrials where necessary either by other competent tribunals or under the Roman court itself (always with synodal participation), and facilitating the convening of appropriate synods to address unresolved matters. The substantive decisions themselves still emerged from conciliar processes, with the Pope's role being to guarantee that these processes functioned properly and justly. This limitation preserved the autonomy of local churches and patriarchates in their internal affairs whilst providing a mechanism for addressing issues that transcended local or regional boundaries. Pope Leo the Great later cited Sardica's canon as specifying that a Pope as part of an Ecumenical Council acts as the final place of appeal.[103]

Outside of Sardica, the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (381) eventually granted Constantinople 'honourary primacy' (Canon 3) based on imperial status rather than intrinsic doctrinal superiority, stating, 'Let the Bishop of Constantinople, however, have the priorities of honour after the Bishop of Rome, because of its being New Rome', while also imposing limits on intervening in other dioceses (Canon 2).[104] Yet in the late fourth century, the schism over the see of Antioch—where Rome's support for Paulinus clashed with the Eastern recognition of Meletius and Flavian —underscored that even as Rome's ascendancy grew, its jurisdiction was still circumscribed by the consensual norms established over preceding centuries, as evidenced by Rome eventually re-establishing communion with Flavian under imperial pressure.[105]

[97]From a discussion of Rome's machinations during the ninth century, cited in Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[98]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[99]Council of Sardica (343) Canons 3, 4, and 5, in Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
[100]Ibid., Canon 3.
[101]Ibid., Canon 5.
[102]Ibid.
[103]Du Pin, L.E. (1686) De Antiqua Ecclesiae Disciplina Dissertationes Historicae, Diss. II, Cap. I, Sec. 3; cf. Hincmar of Rheims, Letters in the Name of Charles the Bald to John VIII.
[104]Hess, H. (2002) The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[105]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.

In the fifth century, the language of Roman primacy began to intensify, yet the underlying model of collegial, synodal governance persisted. The North African councils of Carthage (419, 424) reveal that local bishops rejected the idea that any papal decree could unilaterally override conciliar decisions. The way intrapatriarchal appeals were regulated can be surmised from the canons produced during this era. Carthage (393) in Canon 27 forbade 'bishops…to travel beyond the sea, unless they have consulted the bishop of the first see of their respective province' and received his permission. Carthage (419) in Canon 125 (Latin numbering) disallowed foreign appeals for local clergy: 'let them not carry the appeal except to African councils or to the primates of their provinces. But whoever shall think of carrying an appeal across seas he shall be admitted to communion by no one in Africa'. The African response to papal assertions of authority was particularly telling during the Apiarius affair. The council rejected that a 'single individual' (i.e. the Pope) can overturn a local conciliar judgment: 'For that your Holiness should send any on your part [to dictate to us] we can find ordained by no council of Fathers…whoever desires you to delegate any of your clergy to execute your orders, do not comply, lest it seem that we are introducing the pride of secular dominion into the Church of Christ'. Here, they ordered Celestine to desist, accusing this of being akin to 'secular dominion' (i.e. the autocratic rule of an Emperor), as there would have been no ecclesiastical precedent or Scriptural basis where the Pope of Rome was able to act thus. Canon 17 (Canon 125 in Latin numbering), for instance, explicitly provided that condemned bishops should seek redress from 'the primates of their own provinces' rather than from Rome, stating, as we noted previously 'let them not carry the appeal except to African councils or to the primates of their provinces. But whoever shall think of carrying an appeal across seas he shall be admitted to communion by no one in Africa'. At the same time, key ecumenical councils—such as those at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451)—demonstrated that while Roman support was crucial in confronting heresy (for example, Pope Celestine I's joint decree with the Ephesus synod deposing Nestorius), even his actions were understood as local measures subject to later ecumenical confirmation. At Ephesus, the ecclesiology of consent is explicitly found in the sources. Celestine functioned, in operative terms, as the primatial bishop of the Western churches, and the scope of his direct jurisdictional action at Ephesus was confined to the Latin West rather than extending over the entire Church (It should be noted, however, that this is a functional characterisation of how Celestine's authority operated at the council, not a claim about how Celestine or the Roman see would have described itself; as the bishops of Rome did not adopt the title 'Patriarch of the West' during the first millennium, and to describe Celestine's role in patriarchal terms is to employ an Eastern ecclesiological category that Rome itself neither embraced nor formally endorsed. The functional claim nonetheless stands: whatever title Rome may or may not have accepted, the concrete exercise of Celestine's jurisdiction at Ephesus was Western in scope, and the council's proceedings required Rome's assent as one voice among the patriarchal sees rather than as a supreme authority whose judgement was self-sufficient). When the Roman legates finally arrived, Cyril made clear that Rome was to officially give assent to the council's work. The 'entire' council pressed the legates: 'Since the…legate[s] of the [A]postolic [S]ee have spoken most fittingly, it is appropriate that they fulfil their promise and confirm the proceedings by subscription'.[106] Projectus, one of the legates, signed the minutes stating: 'I hereby sign the just judgement of this holy [E]cumenical [C]ouncil, of which we learned from the proceedings, putting into effect in every way the deposition of the impious Nestorius'. 'Putting into effect in every way' is a reference to making the deposition canonical, but conditional upon the Roman delegation's present assent. Indeed, when Nestorius was tried, his retention of an ecclesiastical title despite prior excommunication indicated that Rome's judgment was not viewed as final or universal. Consistent with Pope Julius a century previous, Rome had the right to consent to the council, which is why their subscription 'in every way' effected the deposition of Nestorius. And so, again, the of consent is explicitly found in the sources surrounding this council. With later notions of Papal Supremacy being conspicuously absent. St. Vincent of Lerins in the Commonitorium was the first to put pen onto paper and explicitly delineate the epistemology of consensus. He described how it can decide doctrinal matters. Vincent merely made explicit what had been the operating principle: 'I have often then inquired earnestly and attentively of very many men eminent for sanctity and learning, how and by what sure and so to speak universal rule I may be

[106]Council of Constantinople (1900) 'Canons', in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series. Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., Canon 3.

able to distinguish the truth of Catholic faith from the falsehood…we must, the Lord helping, fortify our own belief in two ways; first, by the authority of the Divine Law, and then, by the Tradition of the Catholic Church'.[107] Vincent gives the exact reason why tradition is needed alongside Scripture: 'someone perhaps will ask, 'Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church's interpretation?' For this reason—because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense'.[108] Vincent understood this magisterium to be a historical consensus of Christian authorities: 'We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors'.[109] The (near) consensus of the saints was not merely historical verification but an indication of the illumination of the Holy Spirit: 'Great then is the example of these same blessed men, an example plainly divine…who, like the seven-branched candlestick, shining with the sevenfold light of the Holy Spirit, showed to posterity how…[heresy] might be crushed by the authority of hallowed antiquity'. The epistemology is explicitly applied to 'the whole priesthood of the Catholic Church, with the authority of a General Council'. In summary, St. Vincent provided a written explanation of the operating principles the Church had been using for centuries.

In speaking of the patriarchal roles at Chalcedon,[110] the council's admiration for Leo as 'head of the universal church' did not imply that he held an unchallengeable veto—his refusal to approve Canon 28 (which confirmed Constantinople as second in honour) exemplified his vast prestige tempered by the requirement of wider consensus.[111] Vincent of Lerins, as we saw above, would later encapsulate this approach with his dictum that orthodoxy is determined by 'universality, antiquity, and consent'.[112] And the precariousness of Roman influence is further attested during the Acacian Schism (484CE – 519CE), when the Henoticon edict—designed to reconcile Chalcedonians and Monophysites —precipitated a rupture that, though eventually healed, demonstrated that even papal excommunications (as with Pope Felix III's censure of Acacius) were not immune to contestation.[113] Pope Gelasius I (492-496) later insisted that 'the first see is judged by no one', arguing based on the Canons of Sardica, yet his argument was grounded in a tradition of conciliar canons rather than in a claim to unilateral authority, and he simultaneously affirmed that Rome acted according to the consensus represented by Chalcedon.[114] As the later fifth century witnessed a growing divergence between Eastern and Western canon law—with Roman bishops increasingly incorporating papal decrees alongside conciliar canons—the seeds of an incipient legal dualism were sown, a tension that would come to the fore in subsequent centuries.

The sixth century then brings both the rhetorical apex and the practical nadir of papal claims. The humiliating submission of Pope Vigilius to the judgment of the Fifth Ecumenical Council exemplifies this period. Vigilius often expressed himself with high-Papal language due to indications that he was going to be forced by Justinian to anathematise certain crypto-Nestorian statements recorded in the 'Three Chapters'. For example, in a letter excommunicating those who subscribed to Justinian's Edict, Vigilius identifies himself as from 'the primatial see'. He boasted of 'the role and authority of the blessed St. Peter the [A] postle' and 'decreed' that those who disagreed with him were 'stripped both of priestly dignity and catholic communion'.[115] Such strong wording is innovative in an interpatriarchal context. However, one must separate rhetoric from substance, words from facts. Vigilius expounded consensus-based ecclesiology and viewed his excommunications as purely local in character.[116] His resistance to Justinian's Edict was predicated upon it being 'transact[ed]' without 'resolution by the [i.e. Ecumenical] council'. In a Papal encyclical, Vigilius asserts that Justinian and

[107]Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, 2.8.
[108]Cyril quoted in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus.
[109]Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium, Par 4.
[110]Ibid., Par 5.
[111]Ibid., Par 6.
[112]Council of Chalcedon (451) 'Acts of the Council', in Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers..
[113]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[114]Vincent of Lérins 'Commonitorium'.
[115]Davis, L.D. (1983) The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
[116]Pope Gelasius I (492-496) 'Epistula 12', in Thiel, A. (ed.) (1868) Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum Genuinae. Braunsberg: Eduard Peter of Braunsberg.

everyone else are 'obliged to wait for a common resolution' and that they were 'suspended as transgressors', being excluded 'from communion with the see of the blessed [A]postle St. Peter'.[117] He specifies this as 'our communion', indicating that Vigilius understood his excommunications were not binding Church-wide. Vigilius based his authority upon his see and 'the ecclesiastical canons'.[118] Early in the century, the 'Symmachan old guard' produced forgeries declaring that the pope 'is judged by no one'—statements aimed not at asserting universal jurisdiction but at shielding Rome from external (notably Ostrogothic) interference. In the aftermath of the Acacian Schism, Pope Hormisdas' Formula required Eastern bishops to affirm Rome's indefectible orthodoxy ('in the Apostolic See the Catholic religion has always been kept unsullied'); yet this language was gradually moderated, as seen in Hormisdas allowing modifications and not requiring the formula be confessed verbatim, and as seen when Patriarch John II of Constantinople invoked the equal prerogatives of 'Old Rome' and 'New Rome' in his modified subscription. With the advent of Justinian's reign, imperial interference deepened. Pope Silverius was deposed in 537, and Pope Vigilius himself—although he claimed the 'role and authority of the blessed St. Peter the apostle' —was ultimately forced by the Second Council of Constantinople (553) to retract his opposition, his deposition reinforcing that even a pope must answer to a consensus of bishops when it comes to doctrinal matters. The council responded by excommunicating Vigilius and teaching consensus-based ecclesiology in a firm repudiation of his intransigence. Concerning Vigilius' excommunication, it was intentionally predicated upon his heresy in not imputing heterodoxy to the 'Three Chapters'.

The excommunication is recorded as follows: 'The Holy Council Said: 'May the sacred decree be duly received and read'. [Decree of Justinian]: '…we have pronounced that his name [Vigilius] is alien to Christians and is not read out in the sacred diptychs'.[119] The holy council said: 'What has now seemed good…Let us therefore preserve unity with the [A] postolic [S]ee of the sancrosanct church of Elder Rome, transacting everything according to the tenor of the texts that have been read'.[120] His eventual capitulation—accompanied by the council's explicit declaration that 'it is through joint examination… that the light of truth dispels the darkness of lies. For neither is it permissible in the case of faith for anyone to anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality'—demonstrates that consensus, not unilateral papal fiat, was the normative basis for resolving disputes. More striking is the emphasis put upon 'joint examination'. It is identified as morally 'certain' that it is the only way 'the light of truth' is discerned. The establishment of consensus is considered non-negotiable and the idea any individual can make a singular judgment for the Church, with the Pope of Rome specifically in view, is disallowed.[121] By any consistent theological standard, this conciliar decree must be understood as expressing the dogmatic ecclesiastical and epistemological view of the entire early Church. This obviously includes Rome, which accepted this conciliar decree. Vigilius capitulated to Justinian under pressure. He wrote to Constantinople's Patriarch, Eutychius, blaming 'the enemy of the human race' for deceiving him into writing against the 'Three Chapters' and then 'annul[ed the First Constitution] by the authority of our present letter'.[122] The ignominy of Vigilius, though not preventing local reception of the council in Rome itself, led to parts of the West not consenting to the council's work. This was despite Papal ratification. For example, decades later St. Pope Gregory the Great wrote several letters imploring foreign synods to accept Constantinople II. If there is any episode in history that thoroughly demonstrates how anachronistic modern conceptions of the Papacy are, it is Vigilius and the events surrounding Constantinople II. Consensus-based ecclesiology (and epistemology) is accepted by all parties involved and dogmatised. The Pope teaches heresy and blames Satan for it. The Pope's deposition and excommunication is accepted as fact by all parties involved. Apostolic Canon 34 remains in full force as Rome's acceptance and promotion of Constantinople II fails to win the assent of those within the Western churches under Rome's direct jurisdiction, despite them being in full Roman communion.[123]

Now, continuity and subtle shifts characterise the seventh century. While tensions between Roman

[117]Price, R (2009) The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: Volume One, 163.
[118]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[119]The encyclical's name is Dum in Sanctae Euphemiae. See ibid., 170.
[120]Ibid., 164.
[121]Price, R. (2009) The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: Volume Two, 99, 101.
[122]Ibid 101.
[123]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.

autonomy and Byzantine control persisted (as in the case of Pope Martin I), the essential commitment to a synodal, consensus based model remained intact. In his prolific writings and administrative reforms, Pope Gregory the Great (Gregory I) exemplified this transitional phase. Gregory maintained that doctrinal decisions must arise from the discernment of the whole Church ('I will in no wise contradict, but gladly fulfil and subscribe to what is decided in common') while at the same time emphasising the Roman see's role as the central point of unity and continuity in the West (denying the title 'Universal Pope' because it undermined the equality of bishops).[124] His careful balance between upholding the apostolic tradition and exercising pastoral responsibility laid important groundwork for the gradual evolution of the papal office—a process that would eventually recast the nature of ecclesiastical authority in later centuries.[125] Alongside his contemporaries, Gregory's approach reinforced that, even when assuming a special role, the papacy was still rooted in collective discernment rather than unilateral decree.

Going further into the seventh century presents a complex picture of papal authority. The pontificate of Pope Honourius I marks a notorious episode where papal fallibility was dramatically demonstrated through his condemnation for Monothelitism by the Sixth Ecumenical Council.[126] During this period, the Byzantine hold over the papacy remained firm despite occasional attempts at independence. Pope Martin I's resistance to the Monothelite Typos decree resulted in his arrest, trial, and exile by Emperor Constans II in 653—a stark reminder of the relative weakness of papal authority when opposing imperial will.[127] Nevertheless, the Lateran Synod of 649, convened by Martin, represents an important development in papal self-understanding, even as it remained fundamentally within the consensus-based ecclesiological framework. While the synod's pronouncements employed elevated papal rhetoric, careful examination reveals that even here, Martin acknowledged that Rome lacked the authority to directly appoint patriarchs, stating that 'according to the canons…power was lacking to us [in Rome] to appoint the [P]atriarch of Jerusalem, to build up the clerical orders'.[128] His approach to addressing the Monothelite crisis relied not on claims of universal jurisdiction but on supporting local Dyothelite clergy as legitimate representatives of their respective synods.[129] Pope Agatho's letter to the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681) similarly demonstrates the balanced approach characteristic of this period. While employing language that appears to assert Roman infallibility ('this Apostolic Church… has never erred'), the letter ultimately grounds its authority in the orthodox faith rather than papal prerogatives, concluding that 'the evangelical and apostolic uprightness of the orthodox faith, which has been established upon the firm rock of this Church of blessed St. Peter… remains free from all error'.[130] The council's subsequent anathematization of Pope Honourius, accepted by Agatho's successor Leo II, underscores that papal pronouncements remained subject to conciliar evaluation and correction.[131] And the century concludes with the Quinisext Council (692), which the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II attempted to impose on Pope Sergius I. The Pope's initial refusal and the Emperor's inability to enforce acceptance due to military setbacks against the Caliphate reflect the ongoing tensions in papal-imperial relations.[132] It was only in the early eighth century that Pope Constantine, after being summoned to Constantinople, finally reached a compromise accepting most of the council's canons through the canonical principle of economia.[133] Throughout these developments, the underlying consensus-based ecclesiology remained intact, even as both papal rhetoric and resistance to imperial control became more pronounced—creating the conditions for more dramatic shifts in subsequent centuries.[134]

[124]Price, The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: Volume Two, 215, 218.
[125]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy
[126]Pope Gregory I (1894) 'Registrum Epistolarum', in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 12. Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., Book 1, Letter 25.
[127]Markus, R.A. (1997) Gregory the Great and His World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[128]Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) 'The Third Council of Constantinople', in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. [14.] Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 344.
[129]Neil, B. (2006) Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers.
[130]Pope Martin to Pantaleon, a Cleric in Jerusalem in Neil, B. and Allen, P. (2020) Conflict and Negotiation in the Early Church: Letters from Late Antiquity, Translated from the Greek, Latin, and Syriac. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, p. 223.
[131]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[132]Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) 'The Third Council of Constantinople', in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 337.
[133]Pope Leo II to Ervigius, King of Spain in Neil, B. and Allen, P. (2020) Conflict and Negotiation in the Early Church: Letters from Late Antiquity, Translated from the Greek, Latin, and Syriac. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, p. 238.
[134]Treadgold, W. (1997) A History of the Byzantine State and Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

The eighth century, while witnessing growing political autonomy (as evidenced by the Donation of Sutri and even the forged Donation of Constantine), largely preserved the synodal ethos. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) affirmed that the Church's faith was established 'by our common vote',[135] and thus dogmatised the consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology that had played an important role throughout the previous centuries.[136] Despite occasional discrepancies in the strength of papal language—such as those later found in Pope Hadrian I's Latin versus Greek letters (differences Anastasius Bibliothecarius himself later acknowledged when translating the council acts)—the council's acts and its assignment of roles (with Roman legates tasked with 'cooperation' while other patriarchates provided 'assent') underscore that even as Rome's influence expanded, its doctrinal contributions were validated by a broader consensus.

As the eighth century drew to a close, the Church's longstanding practice of synodal decision making—wherein its faith was established 'by our common vote'—began to show signs of profound transformation. [137] That is, the period from the ninth to the eleventh centuries marked the decisive shift from the ancient conciliar paradigm to a new model of papal supremacy, even as the older ecclesiological framework persisted in the East. The key figure in this transformation was Anastasius Bibliothecarius (i.e., the Librarian), a Frankish ghost-writer and de facto head diplomat for Popes Nicholas, Adrian II, and John VIII, whose literary activity laid the intellectual foundations for the later Gregorian reform movement.[138] His translations and orchestrations of key conciliar documents consistently inserted or emphasised Roman priority, such as potentially falsifying the minutes of the Second Council of Nicaea (787) by inserting papal prerogatives that were notably absent from the original Greek texts (Anastasius produced the sole Latin translation of Nicaea II decades later), working hand in glove with the emerging Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals (forgeries originating in Frankish lands designed to protect local bishops from imperial interference).[139] These efforts, while incremental at first, built up a repository of textual 'evidence' that would eventually be marshalled to defend far-reaching papal prerogatives unheard of in the earlier centuries.

Anastasius's conceptual innovations, however, were not the product of solitary intellectual labour but emerged from a coordinated programme of what recent scholarship has termed 'papal myth-making', involving a circle of Roman intellectuals operating under the oversight of Popes Nicholas I, Hadrian II, and John VIII.[140] This circle constituted what has been described as a 'golden generation' in Rome, consisting principally of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, John the Deacon, Gauderic of Velletri, and the future Popes Marinus I and Formosus.[141] Yet despite the ambitions of this circle, the early ninth century still saw the papacy operating within what Eastern writers such as Theodore the Studite understood as a system of co-ordination among the major apostolic sees.[142] Theodore situated the pope as the head of the West within a collegial framework, affirming that true authority lay in the consensus of the primatial bishops guided by the Holy Spirit. That the East still regarded Rome in a cooperative light underscores the abiding standard: while the bishop of Rome was indeed honoured as first in rank, final decisions on dogma or discipline required cross-patriarchal acceptance. Early in the ninth century, the Church's self-understanding still hewed closely to the centuries-old patterns of collaboration among Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. It was precisely against this backdrop of continuing consensus-based ecclesiology that the myth-making circle set about constructing an alternative vision of papal authority. It must be acknowledged, however, that Anastasius and his circle did not operate in an ideological vacuum, and the present argument should not be taken to suggest that they invented the Rome-centred model of the papacy from nothing. As Rosamond McKitterick has demonstrated,[143] the Liber Pontificalis, whose earliest recensions date to the sixth century with

[135]Price, R. (2020) The Canons of the Quinisext Council (691/2). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p. 43.
[136]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[137]Second Council of Nicaea (787) 'Acts of the Council', in Percival, H.R. (ed.) (1994) The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.
[138]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.
[139]Ibid; Anastasius Bibliothecarius (873) 'Translation of the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea', in Lamberz, E. (ed.) Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum: Concilii actiones I-III. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008.
[140]Truglia, The Rise and Fall of the Papacy.; Truglia, C. (2023b) 'Anastasius the Librarian's papal interpolations into Pope Adrian I's letter to the emperors (JE 2448)', Revista Teologică Mitropolia Ardealului, 4.
[141]Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals (850), in Hinschius, P. (ed.) (1863) Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni. Leipzig: Tauchnitz; cf. Fuhrmann, H. (1972-1974) Einfluss und Verbreitung der pseudoisidorischen Falschungen, 3 vols. Stuttgart: Hiersemann.
[142]Barritt, D. (Unpublished) 'The Invention of the Papacy'. DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford.
[143]Ibid. Barritt draws upon Arnaldi's observation: 'Giovanni, Gauderico, Anastasio: sono gli stessi nomi che ritornano sempre' ('John, Gauderic, Anastasius: they are the same names that always return'). See Arnaldi, G. (1956) 'Anastasio Bibliotecario', Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, Vol. 3. Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana.

substantial later additions, had already constructed a sustained narrative of papal history that placed Rome and its bishops at the centre of the Church's identity. The Liber Pontificalis furnished a biographical framework in which each pope was presented as a link in an unbroken chain of authority stretching back to Peter, and its successive redactions progressively emphasised Roman centrality, liturgical precedence, and doctrinal custodianship. McKitterick's argument shows that the Liber Pontificalis itself built upon patristic precedent, drawing selectively on earlier traditions to construct an increasingly coherent Rome-centred ecclesiological vision. Anastasius and his circle were therefore heirs to, and elaborators of, a pre-existing Roman tradition of institutional self-narration, and their conceptual innovations in the ninth century are better understood as a decisive radicalisation and systematisation of tendencies already present in this earlier literary tradition than as a creation ex nihilo. What distinguishes the ninth-century programme from its Liber Pontificalis predecessors, for the purposes of the present argument, is not its Rome-centred orientation as such, which was already well established, but its explicit transformation of that orientation into a systematic claim to jurisdictional supremacy, doctrinal infallibility, and conciliar subordination that exceeded anything found in the earlier tradition, however much it drew upon that tradition's conceptual and narrative resources. The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis does not, therefore, depend upon the claim that Anastasius alone invented papal ideology; rather, it depends upon the claim that the essential character of papal authority shifted from a consensually constrained model to a supremacy-based model, and the ninth-century programme, building upon but decisively exceeding its predecessors, constituted the critical phase in which this shift was articulated with sufficient systematic force to enable its eventual institutional implementation.

The Council of Constantinople (869-870) marked a watershed in this endeavour. While the council's canons endorsed a fundamentally synodal ecclesiology, the papal legates, under Anastasius' influence, advanced unprecedented claims for Roman primacy. Anastasius, acting as ghost-writer for Pope Nicholas, penned letters making claims 'beyond any precedent known from the past', asserting the Pope alone could convoke synods and that Roman prerogatives were granted by Christ, irrespective of synodal assent.[144] Pope Hadrian II's formula of faith, preserved in a Latin version likely interpolated by Anastasius (who translated these council acts into Latin as well), requiring submission to Rome as the condition for 'true totality of the Christian religion', went beyond earlier tradition, even if its most exalted phrases were absent from the Greek acts, a version Anastasius himself possessed under suspicious circumstances and later 'corrected'.[145] This pivotal moment illustrates the mismatch between Latin and Greek renderings, revealing how Rome's delegation—fortified by Anastasius' editorial liberties—presented a bold new vision of papal authority. Meanwhile, the Greek version retained a more traditional view, indicating that the East only partially recognised or chose to overlook the papacy's enhanced rhetoric. Consequently, the seeds of ecclesiological discord were sown more deeply.The collaborative and deliberate character of this enterprise extended well beyond conciliar manipulation. It was Anastasius' literary activity that crystallised these emerging trends into a systematic papal ideology. The collaborative character of this work is evidenced by direct documentary attestation: Anastasius records that Gauderic commissioned him to locate Greek texts in the papal library that John the Deacon could employ in composing a Life of St Clement, demonstrating that the production of supremacist papal ideology was a deliberate institutional project rather than an organic doctrinal development.[146] Drawing on the recent Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals, Anastasius reframed canon law to establish papal supremacy over councils.[147] In his view, conciliar authority was subordinate to Rome, and the pope alone could convoke a truly ecumenical synod. Anastasius was also the first to explicitly articulate a doctrine of papal infallibility, arguing that the Roman see had never erred and never would, possibly inspired by his translation of Maximus the Confessor's works.[148] Such systematic codification of papal claims revolutionised the existing canonical landscape. By weaving older canons, spurious decretals (which he used against opponents such as Hincmar of Reims), and newly minted commentaries, Anastasius

[144]Theodore the Studite (826) 'Letters', in Migne, J.P. (ed.) (1860) Patrologia Graeca, Vol. 99. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, cols. 903-1679.
[145]McKitterick, Rosamond. Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber Pontificalis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[146]Chrysos, E. (2018) 'New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium in the letters of Pope Nicholas I to Emperor Michael III', Travaux et Memoires, 22(1); cf. Barritt, 'Invention'; Truglia, 'Anastasius the Librarian's papal interpolations'.
[147]Pope Hadrian II (869) 'Formula of Faith', in Mansi, J.D. (ed.) (1759-1798) Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio. Florence: Zatta, Vol. 16, cols. 27-30; Anastasius Bibliothecarius ('Translation of the Acts of the Council of Constantinople (869-870)'.
[148]Anastasius Bibliothecarius (877/878) Letter to Gauderic of Velletri, in MGH Epp. 7; cf. Barritt, 'Invention'.

generated a cohesive narrative that appeared ancient yet represented a substantial departure from first-millennium conciliar norms.

The other members of the circle pursued complementary projects that reinforced Anastasius's canonical and theological labours. John the Deacon's Vita Gregorii Magni—the longest saints' life from early medieval Europe—was commissioned by John VIII and dedicated to him, with the explicit purpose of implicitly comparing Gregory with John VIII and thereby providing historical precedent for contemporary papal claims.[149] Significantly, Gregory only acquired the epithet 'the Great' as a consequence of this ninth-century campaign of glorification, indicating that even the historical memory of earlier popes was being deliberately reshaped to furnish precedents for claims that were in reality innovations.[150] Gauderic of Velletri, whose cathedral was dedicated to St Clement, cultivated the cult of this early Roman bishop with particular vigour, installing Clement's alleged relics in his cathedral and constructing an oratory to Clement in his Roman residence.[151] The circle's interest in Clement was strategically motivated: the Epistola Clementis ad Jacobum fratrem Domini, which they promoted, presented Clement not merely as one among Peter's several successors but as 'Peter's heir to the cathedram doctrinae', thereby supporting the conceptual transition from distributed to exclusive Petrine succession that would distinguish the post-Gregorian from the first-millennium understanding of papal authority.[152] The alleged discovery of Clement's relics by Cyril and Methodios was likewise exploited to bolster these claims, demonstrating how the myth-making enterprise systematically constructed the narrative of exclusive Roman Petrine authority that would later be dogmatised.[153]

The significance of this collaborative enterprise for the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is considerable. The very fact that the conceptual foundations of papal supremacy required deliberate 'invention' through coordinated intellectual effort demonstrates that these foundations were not essentially constitutive of the first-millennium papacy. If the supremacy-based understanding had been genuinely present in the earlier period, it would not have required 'rediscovery' or systematic construction in the ninth century; the myth-makers would have found their task already accomplished by their predecessors. Instead, the circle engaged in what amounted to the creation of a new ideological framework, marshalling figures from the distant papal past such as Gregory and Clement not because these figures had articulated supremacist claims, but because their historical distance rendered them useful vehicles for projecting contemporary innovations backwards onto an imagined apostolic antiquity. The programme operated, moreover, with explicit papal approval: as Barritt has noted, 'it is highly unlikely that Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII would not have been supportive of all this', given that 'all the intellectual luminaries of later ninth-century Rome held senior positions in the papal entourage' and that 'the papal initiatives that we can see are clearly influenced by the general intellectual initiatives going on in Rome during this time'.[154] The myth-making enterprise thus generated what has been aptly described as 'a new self-confidence and ideological dynamism' for the papacy, enabling it to 'start playing an active and central role' in ecclesiastical affairs 'in a way it had not done in the earlier middle ages'.[155] This 'ideological dynamism' was not the flowering of latent potentialities within the consensus-based papacy but the introduction of an essentially alien conception that would, through the Gregorian reforms, eventually displace and replace the earlier understanding entirely.

In many ways, then, Anastasius and his circle (i.e., John the Deacon, Gauderic of Velletri, Popes Marinus I and Formosus (and Pope John VIII as overseer)) can be rightfully called the 'inventor of Papalism'—laying the intellectual and legal foundations for what would later become the modern papacy. These ideas, though not yet accepted in the East, gained currency in the Latin Church over the following centuries. Yet the historical mechanism of replacement exhibits a two-phase structure, and the ninth century represents only the first phase. During this period, Anastasius and his circle constructed the conceptual apparatus of supremacy-based papal authority through their

[149]Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals; cf. Gallagher, C. (1978) Church Law and Church Order in Rome and Constantinople. Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute.
[150]Anastasius Bibliothecarius (871) 'Collectanea', in Migne, J.P. (ed.) (1852) Patrologia Latina, Vol. 129. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, cols. 557-700.
[151]John the Deacon, Vita Gregorii Magni, in Migne, J.P. (ed.) Patrologia Latina, Vol. 75, cols. 62-242; cf. Barritt, 'Invention'.
[152]Barritt, 'Invention', p. 17, noting John the Deacon, Vita Gregorii 4.76 on the epithet 'the Great'
[153]Neil, B. (2006) Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers; Barritt, 'Invention'.
[154]Neil, Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs; Barritt, 'Invention'.
[155]Barritt, 'Invention'.

programme of 'papal myth-making', generating the theoretical framework and textual justifications that would later be institutionally implemented. However, this conceptual innovation remained largely rhetorical during the ninth century itself, and the myth-making enterprise 'ran out of steam' by the tenth century, as Roman intellectual culture 'turned inwards on itself' and became consumed by disputes over episcopal transfer and the legitimacy of Formosus's pontificate.[156] The conceptual apparatus constructed by Anastasius and his circle thus awaited institutional implementation.

The second phase arrived with the Gregorian reform movement of the eleventh century. Led by Pope Gregory VII, this movement represents the full flowering of Anastasius' vision. The eleventh-century reformers, significantly, used the ninth century 'as a model of how not to do things' even whilst drawing upon its texts, confirming that the Gregorian reforms represented a new institutional creation built upon Anastasius and his circle's conceptual foundations rather than a return to any previous reality.[157] The Gregorian reforms thus completed this transformation, bringing Anastasius and his circle's theoretical framework into concrete ecclesiastical reality. Pope Gregory VII's Dictatus Papae (1075) represents one concentrated, if programmatic, articulation of the new "supremacy-based" ecclesiology (and epistemology) that was emerging through the broader papal reform movement; should not be understood as a single document that by itself effected the replacement of one ecclesiological model by another, but rather as a crystallisation of claims that were being advanced, contested, and progressively institutionalised across multiple pontificates and through a variety of juridical, theological, and liturgical instruments over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Drawing heavily on the precedents Anastasius had established or popularised, the Dictatus boldly declared that the Roman pontiff possessed unique and unchallenged privileges, including the power to depose emperors and release subjects from fealty to unjust rulers..[158]

Central to the conceptual apparatus that underwrote this new model of papal authority was a distinction that had no operative parallel in the ecclesiology of the first millennium: the separation of ordo (sacramental power conferred through ordination) from jurisdictio (governing power conferred through canonical mission).[159]As Robert L. Benson has demonstrated in his study of the medieval bishop-elect, this distinction became foundational to the Western Church's hierarchical self-understanding, since it enabled the claim that whilst sacramental power derived from episcopal consecration, the authority to govern, to teach bindingly, and to exercise discipline over the faithful descended not through ordination as such but through jurisdictional delegation from the pope as Peter's successor. The entire papal case for hierarchic supremacy rested upon this bifurcation: once jurisdiction was conceptually separated from orders and traced to a Petrine source distinct from the sacramental succession shared by all bishops, it became possible to maintain that the pope alone possessed the plenitude of jurisdictional authority, which he then communicated to local bishops, who in turn governed their dioceses not by inherent right but by participation in papal jurisdiction. This conceptual architecture was wholly foreign to the first-millennium framework, wherein no such separation between sacramental and governing authority was operative, and wherein the bishop's authority to preside, to teach, and to govern was understood as flowing integrally from his ordination within apostolic succession and his communion with the broader episcopate, rather than from a distinct jurisdictional grant traceable to the Roman see. The emergence of the orders/jurisdiction distinction thus constitutes a further and significant marker of the essential discontinuity that the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis identifies: it provided the conceptual mechanism by which the post-Gregorian papacy could coherently claim that all episcopal governing authority was derived from, and therefore subordinate to, papal authority, a claim that would have been unintelligible within the undifferentiated ecclesiology of the first millennium, wherein the bishop's sacramental and governing functions were aspects of a single, integral charism received through ordination and recognised through collegial communion.

The revolutionary character of what the Dictatus Papae represented is further illuminated by Klaus Schatz's analysis of the fundamental conceptual shifts that the reforms introduced.[160] Schatz identifies a decisive transition in the very conception of papal authority: whereas in the first millennium Rome hadbeen understood primarily as the centre of communion

[156]Ibid., 131..
[157] Ibid., 137.
[158]Ibid., 197.
[159]Ibid., 233.
[160]Benson, R. L. (2015) Bishop-Elect: A Study in Medieval Ecclesiastical Office. Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

and the norm of true belief, functioning in what might be termed a 'passive' or receptive capacity, the Gregorian reformers reconceptualised the Roman church as the mater omnium ecclesiarum (mother of all churches), the fons et origo (source and origin), and the vertex et fundamentum (pinnacle and foundation) of the entire ecclesiastical structure.[161] This shift from 'centre of unity' to 'source and origin' represents precisely the inversion of ontological priority that the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis identifies: the local churches no longer constitute the universal communion through their mutual recognition, but rather derive their ecclesial character from the Roman 'head' upon which the health of the entire 'body' is now understood to depend. The Dictatus Papae itself, which Schatz characterises as an 'aggressive and compact expression' of Gregory VII's consciousness of power, embodied claims so unprecedented that it inevitably produced upon some readers 'the impression of the pope appearing as a replacement for Christ', suggesting that 'the pope alone could do everything in the Church' and that there were 'absolutely no limits to papal authority'.[162]

Schatz's analysis is particularly valuable for distinguishing which elements of the Dictatus Papae represented genuine innovations as opposed to formulations of existing traditions. Whilst certain claims, such as papal responsibility for causae maiores or the principle that the pope could not be judged by any earthly authority, possessed some precedent in earlier canonical tradition, Schatz identifies several provisions as constituting revolutionary departures from first-millennium practice.[163] The claim that the pope could depose emperors and release subjects from their oaths of allegiance to wicked princes was, in Schatz's assessment, entirely 'new', representing a power that Gregory VII exercised against Henry IV but which was not claimed again until Innocent IV invoked it in 1245.[164] Similarly novel was the assertion that the pope could establish new laws 'according to the need of the time', which, although still understood within a conservative medieval framework of preserving tradition, effectively granted the papacy an active legislative role to define 'true tradition' against what it deemed 'improper consuetudo' (custom).[165] Most directly relevant to the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is Gregory's claim that he possessed the right to depose bishops 'without a synodal assembly', which Schatz identifies as exceptional and as a decisive departure from the traditional synodal processes of the first millennium.[166] This provision alone demonstrates the essential discontinuity between the consensus-based papacy and its supremacy-based successor: the former could not act without the consent of the broader episcopate, whilst the latter claimed authority to override episcopal judgement unilaterally.

Two further elements of the Gregorian programme merit attention for their bearing upon the ontological transformation at issue. First, Schatz draws attention to the 'peculiar statement' in the Dictatus Papae that the Roman pontiff 'indubitably becomes holy through the merits of Blessed Peter'.[167] This claim went beyond any earlier understanding of papal authority by suggesting a quasi-sacramental bestowal of grace through the office itself, wherein Peter was understood to act in the pope rather than merely to have bequeathed an inheritance to his successors. Such a conception inverts the first-millennium understanding of shared Petrine succession, wherein every bishop sits upon Peter's chair in his own local church, and replaces it with a mystical identification of the Roman pontiff with Peter himself. Second, Schatz argues that the Gregorian interpretation of primacy was not primarily juridical in character but 'spiritual or even mystical', grounded in a 'feeling for the Church' according to which spiritual vitality was drawn from union with Rome, thereby rendering papal primacy 'the central point for the Church's entire life'.[168] This spiritual or mystical grounding of papal authority represents a fundamentally different kind of claim from the functional and consensual primacy of the first millennium: it posits not merely that the Roman see possesses certain prerogatives within the ecclesiastical order, but that the Roman see is the ontological source from which all ecclesial life flows. The Gregorian reforms thus effected not merely an expansion of papal prerogatives but a transformation in the very nature of what papal authority was understood to be—a transformation that, within the framework of non-modal essentialism, constitutes, as we will see, change in kind rather than a change in degree.

[161]Pope Gregory VII (1075) Dictatus Papae, in Robinson, I.S. (ed.) (2004) The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[162]Schatz, K. (1996) Papal Primacy: From Its Origins to the Present. Translated by Maloney, J.A. and Houston, L.M. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
[163]Ibid., 86.
[164]Ibid., 86.
[165]Ibid.
[166]Ibid.
[167]Ibid.
[168]Ibid.

It should be noted, however, that the significance of the Dictatus Papae for the present argument lies not in its direct canonical legacy but in its crystallisation of the supremacy-based ecclesiological vision that would subsequently be institutionalised through other, more enduring juridical and theological instruments. The Dictatus Papae itself never entered the formal body of canon law and fell largely out of sight after Gregory VII's pontificate, a point that might appear to weaken its probative force. Yet the hierarchic principle that the Dictatus articulated in concentrated form found its most powerful and lasting embodiment in the appropriation of the title Vicarius Christi (Vicar of Christ) as a designation exclusive to the Roman pontiff. Whilst the title had been applied in earlier centuries to bishops, kings, and even priests, as one among several honorific expressions of the representative character of Christian authority, it was from the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216) onwards that 'Vicar of Christ' became the distinctive and exclusive prerogative of the pope, signifying not merely a primacy of honour or a first-among-equals presidency, but a direct and unique representation of Christ's own sovereign authority on earth. In this appropriation, the hierarchic principle that Gregory VII had asserted programmatically in the Dictatus received its mature theological and juridical expression: if the pope is Christ's sole vicar, then all other ecclesiastical authority is necessarily derivative from and subordinate to his, since no bishop, council, or synod can claim an authority coordinate with that of Christ's own representative. The title thus encapsulated, in a single designation, the entire inversion of dependence relations that distinguishes the post-Gregorian papacy from its first-millennium predecessor. Whereas the first-millennium papacy derived its effective authority from its embeddedness within the collegial and conciliar framework, the 'Vicar of Christ' papacy claimed an authority that was inherent, immediate, and underived, standing in relation to the rest of the episcopate as Christ stands in relation to His Church. It is this mature expression of the hierarchic principle, rather than the Dictatus Papae considered in isolation, that the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis identifies as the definitive marker of the post-Gregorian papacy's essentially distinct character.

Taking all of these things into account, we can see that with these reforms, the consensus-based papacy of the first millennium ceased to exist entirely, replaced by a fundamentally different conception of papal authority characterised by jurisdictional supremacy, universal governance, and independent authority. As Aristeides Papadakis and John Meyendorff write:

> the western concept of papal primacy over the Church in toto orbe had achieved an astonishing degree of theoretical practical development by 1100….the new juridical understanding of primacy as supremacy was, arguably, the most decisive chapter in the entire history of the Roman patriarchate….It is at any rate safe to assume that the ancient practice of conciliarity, in which the Church was conceived as koinonia regulated by episcopal collegiality or a synodal structure, was for them no longer important… [now in the understanding of the reformers] the pope had direct authority to dispense and to modify both Christian tradition and institutions. As St. Peter's successor he could act unencumbered without the consent or approval of his brother bishops and the Church's councils.[169]

Furthermore, under the renewed impetus of the Gregorian reforms, the reformed papacy—under the leadership of figures such as Gregory VII—began to extend its authority into realms previously considered the domain of local bishops or even secular rulers.

The pope not only claimed spiritual supremacy but also asserted practical jurisdiction that reached into both the internal governance of dioceses and the temporal affairs of Christendom. As a result, the once decentralised, collegial structure of the Church was progressively replaced by an authoritarian model in which papal decrees and pronouncements were seen as the ultimate arbiter of truth and discipline throughout the Christian world.[170] Thus, the Gregorian reforms mark a watershed moment in Church history—a deliberate and systematic move from a model of mutual, synodal discernment toward a centralised, monarchical papacy that claimed universal jurisdiction and infallibility, reshaping both the ecclesiological and political landscape of medieval Christendom, as Papadakis & Meyndorff write, 'Ecclesiologically, at any rate, the rapid transformation of the Western Church in the eleventh century was a revolutionary development. Fundamentally, the term reform is a serious understatement, reflecting in part the desire of the papal party itself—and of later Roman Catholic historians—to play down the magnitude of the discontinuity between what had gone before and what came latter'.[171] This radical shift and transformation

[169]Ibid., 86.
[170]Ibid., 86.
[171]Papadakis, A. and Meyendorff, J. (1994) The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, p. 55.

not only redefined the authority of the papacy but also set the stage for enduring tensions between Eastern and Western Christianity, with lasting theological and ecclesiological implications into the future. That is, the ecclesiological transformation of the papacy did not occur in isolation, for the papacy is not a freestanding institution but rather an office embedded within a broader ecclesiological framework. Consequently, the ontological rupture in the nature of papal authority necessarily entailed a corresponding rupture in the understanding of the Church itself. Historically, we can see that the consequences of this transformation for relations between East and West were tested with particular force at the Council of Florence (1431-1449), which produced the most sustained attempt at reunion between the Latin and Greek churches prior to the modern ecumenical movement. The immediate political context was the imminent fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks and the desperate need of the Byzantine Empire for Western military assistance, a circumstance that placed the Greek delegation under considerable pressure to reach agreement on terms favourable to Rome. The resulting decree Laetentur Caeli (1439) defined papal primacy in terms that bore the unmistakable imprint of the supremacy-based ecclesiology that had emerged from the Gregorian reforms, declaring that the Roman pontiff possesses 'the full power of tending, ruling, and governing the whole Church', a formulation that exceeded anything the first-millennium councils had attributed to the bishop of Rome and that codified, in the language of a would-be ecumenical decree, the very claims whose novelty the present analysis has traced through the ninth and eleventh centuries. The Greek delegation signed the decree, with the notable exception of Mark of Ephesus, Metropolitan of the Church of Ephesus, who alone among the Greek bishops refused his assent. Mark's refusal was grounded in the conviction that the Florentine definition of papal authority was incompatible with the consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology that the ecumenical councils had established as normative for the governance of the Church. His resistance became the rallying point for the broader Eastern rejection that followed: upon the delegation's return to Constantinople, the union was repudiated by the overwhelming majority of the Eastern clergy and laity, who regarded the concessions made at Florence as a betrayal of the ecclesiological principles that had governed the undivided Church. The Council of Constantinople in 1484 formally rejected the Florentine union, restoring the status quo ante.

Now, the Florentine episode is significant for the historical narrative being traced in this section for three reasons. In the first place, it demonstrates that the supremacy-based ecclesiology was not merely a theoretical innovation confined to Western canonical discourse but was actively deployed as a condition of ecclesial reunion, such that the East was required to accept papal sovereignty as the price of restored communion. In the second place, the Greek rejection reveals that the Eastern churches recognised the incompatibility between the post-Gregorian construal of papal authority and the first-millennium model under which they continued to operate. Mark of Ephesus did not contest that the bishop of Rome held the honour of first rank among the major apostolic sees; what he contested was that this primacy entailed the 'full power of tending, ruling, and governing the whole Church' independently of conciliar consent, which is precisely the distinction that will be formalised in Section 4 between two essentially different conceptions of primatial authority. In the third place, the circumstances under which the union was initially accepted and subsequently repudiated are themselves instructive. The fact that the Greek delegation consented only under extreme political duress, and that the union collapsed almost immediately upon their return because the broader Eastern episcopate and faithful refused to receive it, illustrates the continuing operative force of consensus-based ecclesiology in the East: a doctrinal and ecclesiological agreement that lacked genuine reception by the whole Church could not stand, regardless of the signatures that had been appended to it at the cou*ncil itself. The Florentine failure thus provides further historical evidence that the post-Gregorian papacy was recognised, even by contemporaries still operating within the first-millennium ecclesiological framework, as a fundamentally different institution from the primacy that the undivided Church had known.

In other words, the consequence of this transformation is that the post-Gregorian Church came to be essentially constituted by universal juridical structure rather than by local eucharistic celebration, such that the locus of ecclesial identity shifted definitively from the eucharistic altar to the papal office. The Catechism of the Catholic Church articulates this understanding by stating that 'the sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic…subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of St. Peter and by the bishops in communion with him',[172] thereby making governance by the successor of St. Peter the defining

[172]Ibid.

characteristic of the Church's subsistence rather than the celebration of the Eucharist under a canonically orthodox bishop. Pope Pius XII's encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi elaborates this vision with particular clarity, stating that 'the bishops must be considered as more illustrious members of the Universal Church, for they are united by a very special bond to the divine Head of the whole Body and so are rightly called 'principal parts of the members of the Lord'; moreover, as far as his own diocese is concerned, each one as a true Shepherd feeds the flock entrusted to him and rules it in the name of Christ. Yet in exercising this office they are not altogether independent, but are subordinate to the lawful authority of the Roman Pontiff, although enjoying ordinary power of jurisdiction which they receive directly from the same Supreme Pontiff'.[173] The significance of this formulation lies in its assertion that bishops receive their ordinary power of jurisdiction 'directly from the same Supreme Pontiff', a claim which inverts the first millennium understanding wherein episcopal authority was received through apostolic succession and validated by communion with the broader episcopate rather than derived from papal delegation.

This ecclesiological transformation entails a corresponding reversal in the ontological priority between the universal and local Church. Whereas the first millennium understanding held, as noted previously, that the local eucharistic assembly constituted the 'real' or 'ontological' Church, with structures above the local level being 'functional' in character, facilitating cooperation and preserving unity without constituting a higher ecclesial reality, the post-Gregorian understanding inverts this relationship by granting ontological priority to the universal Church over the local. This principle was articulated with particular force by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in his capacity as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who wrote in a letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church entitled Communionis Notio that 'the universal Church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular Churches, or as a federation of particular Churches', and that 'the Church universal is not the result of the communion of the Churches, but, in its essential mystery, it is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church'.[174] This formulation explicitly rejects the first millennium understanding wherein the universal communion emerged from and was constituted by the communion of local churches, each possessing qualitative catholic fullness, and instead posits the universal Church as an ontological reality that precedes and constitutes the local churches as its administrative subdivisions. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reinforces this teaching by stating that 'the Church is catholic: she proclaims the fullness of the faith. She bears in herself and administers the totality of the means of salvation. She is sent out to all peoples. She speaks to all men. She encompasses all times. She is 'missionary of her very nature'', thereby locating catholicity not in the qualitative fullness of each local eucharistic assembly but in the quantitative universality and administrative comprehensiveness of the global institution.[175] The post-Gregorian Church thus operates according to the principle that the fullness of the Church subsists in the universal structure headed by the Pope, such that local churches are administrative subdivisions of this universal entity rather than manifestations of catholic fullness in their own right, and the universal Church possesses an ontological priority that reduces the local church from the primary locus of ecclesial reality to a derivative and dependent expression of a prior universal whole.

Thus, this transformed understanding of the papacy—and now the essentially linked transformation of the understanding of the church—that found its origination in the work of Anastasius (and his circle) and brought to full fruition in the eleventh century within the context of the Gregorian reforms, was ultimately dogmatised in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by the Roman Catholic Church. The First Vatican Council (1869-1870) formally defined papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction as binding doctrines, declaring that when the Pope speaks ex cathedra on matters of faith and morals, he possesses 'that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to be endowed'.[176] The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), while emphasising the collegial nature of the episcopate, nevertheless reaffirmed that the Pope possesses 'full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise **unhindered'.**[177] The Catechism of the Catholic Church further

[173]Ibid., p. 55.
[174]Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edn. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997, §870.
[175]Pope Pius XII (1943) Mystici Corporis Christi. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, §42
[176]Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1992) Communionis Notio: Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, §9.
[177]Catechism of the Catholic Church, §868.

enshrines this supremacy-based ecclesiology (and epistemology), stating that 'the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered'.[178] Thus, the modern Roman Catholic understanding of papal authority represents not an organic (or 'doctrinal') development of the first millennium's consensus-based model, but rather the adoption and formalisation of a fundamentally different conception— a supremacy-based ecclesiology (and epistemology)—that emerged through the intellectual reforms of Anastasius (and his circle) and the structural changes implemented during the Gregorian period.

4. Philosophical Elucidation: The Essential Transformation of the Papacy and Church

4.1 The Essential Transformation of the Papacy

Having established the conceptual apparatus of non-modal essentialism and the Four-Category Ontology, and having traced the historical development of papal authority through the first millennium, we are now positioned to apply the former to the latter. The thesis advanced here is that the consensus-based papacy of the first millennium—the 'first millennium papacy'—and the supremacy-based papacy that emerged after the Gregorian reforms—the 'Roman Catholic Papacy'—constitute two essentially distinct entities, such that one cannot be understood as a mere continuation or development of the other. They are, in the technical sense elaborated by Fine and Lowe different kinds of things altogether, possessing different real definitions, instantiating incompatible substantial universals and characterised by mutually exclusive attributes. In order to proceed without equivocation, it is necessary to recall how the analytical tools developed in our philosophical framework will be deployed. As noted previously, a real definition, uniquely identifies and explains the essential nature of an entity by specifying what it is to be that entity. The definiendum (the entity to be defined) stands in a definitional relationship to the definiens (which performs the function of uniquely identifying and explaining the essential nature of the definiendum). It follows that when the essence of an entity changes, the entity itself ceases to be what it was and becomes something else entirely, since its very identity has been altered. This point becomes sharper once essential dependence is brought into view, since it clarifies how entities are constituted by relations to other entities. As noted above, an entity x ontologically depends upon an entity y if y is a constituent in the real definition of x, which introduces an asymmetry: the dependent entity includes the entity upon which it depends as a constituent of its real definition, but not vice versa. And lastly, as noted previously, within the Four-Category Ontology, particular objects instantiate kinds (substantial universals) and are characterised by modes (property-instances) that instantiate attributes (non-substantial universals). The decisive question, therefore, is whether the pre-Gregorian and post-Gregorian papacies have the same real definitions and instantiate the same kind, or whether they have different real definitions and instantiate different kinds.

In applying this framework we can now be more precise about how ecclesiastical institutions map onto its categorial structure. The papacy, considered as a concrete historical institution, is a particular object in the technical sense: it is a property-bearing particular with determinate existence and identity conditions, it is countable, and it is not itself borne or possessed by anything else. As a particular object, the papacy instantiates a kind (substantial universal) that determines what sort of entity it is, and this instantiation relation is one of rigid existential dependence, since the papacy's existence requires the existence of that specific kind. The papacy is also characterised by various modes (property-instances), which are the particular ways of being that the papacy exhibits, and these modes instantiate attributes (non-substantial universals), which are the universal ways of being that may characterise not only the papacy but potentially other entities as well. These categories are linked by formal ontological relations, and it is their structure that allows the historical question to be posed as a metaphysical one. The papacy instantiates its kind, it is characterised by its modes, and it exemplifies attributes either dispositionally (through instantiating a kind that is characterised by those attributes) or occurrently (through being characterised by modes that instantiate those attributes). Consequently, the question of whether the pre-Gregorian and post-Gregorian papacies are essentially identical reduces to whether they instantiate the same kind and are characterised by modes instantiating the same attributes. If they instantiate different kinds, or if they are characterised by modes instantiating incompatible attributes, then they are essentially distinct entities despite any nominal or historical continuity. With that methodological groundwork in place, we can now formulate a real definition of the papacy as it existed during the first millennium, drawing upon the historical evidence surveyed in the preceding section

[178]First Vatican Council, 'Pastor Aeternus', Ch. 4, as cited in Catholic Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000

(9) (First Millennium Papacy Real Definition)	*< To be the first millennium papacy is to be the primatial see whose direct jurisdictional competence operated, as a matter of historical practice, principally within the Western churches, possessing honour of first rank among the major apostolic sees, whose authority is exercised within the framework of consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology, requiring the consent of the broader episcopate and ecumenical councils for doctrinal determinations, whose jurisdictional competence is fundamentally intra-patriarchal in character whilst participating in inter-patriarchal affairs through collegial agreement rather than unilateral decree, whose appellate authority as established by the Council of Sardica operates as procedural oversight ensuring proper conciliar process rather than as direct jurisdictional power, and whose bishop sits upon the Chair of St. Peter as does every bishop in their own local church>.*

Before unpacking this real definition, a methodological qualification is necessary.[179] In identifying 'consensus-based ecclesiology' as constitutive of the first-millennium papacy, the present analysis does not claim that a single, undifferentiated model of papal authority prevailed uniformly throughout the first thousand years of Christian history. The historical record attests to a considerable diversity in the ways in which papal primacy was imagined and exercised. The designation of James of Jerusalem as 'bishop of bishops' by Clement of Rome and others reflects an early strand of ecclesiological thought in which Petrine primacy was by no means the sole or even the primary organising principle of episcopal authority; James's precedence derived from his consecration by Peter before Peter's arrival in Rome, and this Jacobean model coexisted alongside Petrine claims throughout the ante-Nicene period. A search through the patristic corpus for references to 'Petri' and 'primatus' reveals a striking plurality of ways in which Petrine primacy was conceived: some authors located it in doctrinal fidelity, others in confessional precedence, others in pastoral solicitude, and still others in jurisdictional honour, without these diverse conceptions being reducible to a single systematic account. The claim advanced here is therefore not that the first millennium possessed a monolithic ecclesiology but rather that, beneath this acknowledged diversity, a structural principle operated as a constitutive constraint upon all the varying models: namely, that papal authority, however expansively or modestly conceived by individual authors, functioned within a framework wherein doctrinal and disciplinary decisions affecting the universal Church required collegial consent and could not be imposed by the Roman see unilaterally. It is this structural principle of consensual constraint, attested by the ecumenical councils' operative procedures and dogmatised by Constantinople II, that the real definition formulated above identifies as essential, not a claim that every patristic author held identical views about the scope or basis of Roman primacy. The diversity of first-millennium models is therefore compatible with the essentialist analysis, provided one recognises that what is essential is the consensual constraint within which all such models operated, rather than any particular theological account of why that constraint obtained.

Now, the real definition featured in (9) identifies four essential constituents that jointly constitute what the first millennium papacy is, and these are not accidental features that the papacy happened to possess during this period, but constitutive elements without which the entity would not be what it is. In the first place, the first millennium papacy is essentially defined by its operation within consensus-based ecclesiology. The

[179]A terminological clarification is necessary at this point regarding the patriarchal and pentarchical language employed in this real definition and throughout the preceding historical analysis. The bishops of Rome did not call themselves 'Patriarchs of the West' during the first millennium and did not pronounce formal support for the pentarchy theory as such. This observation must be taken seriously. Rome's rejection of Canon 28 of Chalcedon, which elevated Constantinople to second rank on the ground that it was the 'New Rome', is particularly instructive, since Leo I refused the canon precisely because it grounded ecclesiastical rank in political accommodation rather than apostolic foundation, a refusal that placed Rome in tension with the very logic by which the pentarchical system was structured. If Rome rejected the principle underlying the pentarchy's internal ordering, it becomes difficult to claim without qualification that Rome understood itself within a pentarchical framework. The present analysis therefore does not claim that Rome endorsed pentarchy as a formal ecclesiological theory or accepted the title 'Patriarch of the West' as a self-designation. What the analysis does claim is that the concrete, operative exercise of Roman jurisdiction in the first millennium was, as a matter of historical fact, overwhelmingly Western in scope, and that Rome participated in conciliar structures that presupposed something functionally analogous to a system of patriarchal co-ordination, even whilst maintaining theological claims about its own authority that exceeded what that system, strictly construed, would have permitted. The distinction between Roman self-understanding and the functional reality of Roman jurisdiction is itself a methodological question of some consequence: the reviewer assumes that self-description should take priority over operative function, whilst the present analysis gives weight to both, arguing that whatever Rome may have claimed about the nature and basis of its authority, the actual exercise of that authority was constrained by the consensus-based and collegially structured framework that the historical evidence attests. The real definition formulated above is therefore a characterisation of the first-millennium papacy's operative reality rather than a reproduction of Rome's preferred self-description, and the language of 'primatial see whose jurisdiction operated principally within the Western churches' and 'honour of first rank among the major apostolic sees' is intended to capture this functional reality without importing Eastern ecclesiological categories that Rome did not accept as its own. This qualification does not weaken the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis; if anything, it strengthens it, since even on the most generous reading of Rome's first-millennium self-understanding, the gap between that self-understanding and the post-Gregorian claims to universal, immediate, and inherently infallible jurisdiction remains vast, and it is this gap, rather than the question of whether Rome accepted pentarchical terminology, that the essentialist analysis identifies as constituting essential discontinuity.

historical evidence marshalled previously, from the Council of Jerusalem through to the Second Council of Nicaea, uniformly attests that ecclesiastical authority and decision-making required agreement and consent among bishops (ideally (but not always) in the form of a council) rather than unilateral pronouncements. The requirement for mutual consent, as stipulated in Apostolic Canon 34, is therefore not a limitation externally imposed upon papal authority, but an internal constituent of what papal authority is within this framework, such that removing this requirement would not merely diminish papal authority but would transform it into something essentially different. The second constituent follows naturally once the ecclesiological setting has been fixed, since institutional authority presupposes an epistemological posture about how doctrinal truth is known and affirmed. The first millennium papacy is essentially constituted by consensus-based epistemology, in which religious truth and doctrine are discerned through collective agreement rather than individual pronouncement, with consensus functioning as evidence of the Holy Spirit's guidance. This framework was dogmatised by the Second Council of Constantinople (553), which declared, as noted previously, that 'neither is it permissible in the case of faith for anyone to anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality'. The first millennium papacy thus operates within an epistemological order in which truth is discerned collectively rather than pronounced individually.

Once authority and knowledge are situated within consensus, the scope of jurisdiction takes on a determinate shape, and this yields the third constituent. The first millennium papacy's jurisdiction was fundamentally intra-patriarchal: it exercised direct authority within its own patriarchate while participating in inter-patriarchal relations through consensus rather than command. As the historical survey demonstrated, no patriarch could unilaterally impose decisions on other patriarchal sees, and even appeals to Rome were understood within a framework oriented toward achieving broader synodal agreement. The Sardican privilege illuminates this point with particular clarity, since even when the Council of Sardica granted the papacy an appellate function in cases involving bishops, this authority operated entirely within the consensus-based framework rather than constituting an exception to it. The Pope's universal appellate authority was not direct or immediate jurisdiction over every diocese, but rather an authority activated only through the appellate process when cases were brought to Rome through established ecclesiastical channels. The Pope's intervention took the form of procedural oversight: ensuring that cases received fair hearings according to canonical norms, ordering retrials where necessary either by other competent tribunals or under the Roman court itself (always with synodal participation), and facilitating the convening of appropriate synods to address unresolved matters. The substantive decisions themselves still emerged from conciliar processes, with the Pope's role being to guarantee that these processes functioned properly and justly. As Hincmar of Rheims and Du Pin observed, this mechanism, as noted previously, provided 'properly speaking no provision for 'appeal'…but rather for a revision of judgment', preserving the principle that ecclesiastical decisions must emerge from synodal deliberation rather than papal decree. The Sardican model thus represents not an exception to, but a paradigmatic expression of, the consensus-based ecclesiology that constitutes the first millennium papacy: even when exercising appellate authority, the Pope operated as a facilitator of proper conciliar process rather than as an independent source of jurisdictional power. This jurisdictional limitation is not an accidental restriction imposed from without, but an internal constituent of what the first millennium papacy essentially is.

Now, the fourth constituent completes the picture by locating Roman primacy within the larger theology of the episcopacy rather than isolating it as an exclusive possession. The first millennium papacy operates within a framework of shared Petrine succession, in which every bishop is understood to sit upon the Chair of St. Peter in their own local church. The 'Chair of St. Peter' is a single reality shared by the entire episcopate in common, with the bishop of Rome differing in honour but not in essential episcopal dignity. The first millennium papacy's claim to Petrine authority is thus paradigmatic rather than exclusive. These constituents also imply specific relations of essential dependence, and it is here that the metaphysical analysis yields particularly decisive results. The first millennium papacy stands in relations of essential dependence to the broader structures of ecclesial authority, since it is essentially dependent upon the episcopate and the conciliar system for the validation of its doctrinal pronouncements. As we noted earlier, as Fine emphasises, 'given that one object is ineliminably involved in the nature of another, then it is not compatible with the nature of the second that it should exist without the first'. The first millennium papacy cannot exist without the conciliar and consensual framework that constitutes

it, so that removing this framework would destroy the entity itself rather than merely modify its properties.

Furthermore, within the Four-Category Ontology, this can now be stated with more precision: as a particular object, the first millennium papacy instantiates the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', understood as a substantial universal that determines the identity conditions of its instances, such that to be an instance of this kind is to be an ecclesial office whose authority is constitutively bound to consensual validation. This kind is characterised by attributes including requiring collegial consent, operating within pentarchical structure, and possessing honour without universal jurisdiction, where these attributes are non-substantial universals specifying the essential features of the kind. The first millennium papacy, as an instance of this kind, dispositionally exemplifies these attributes through instantiating a kind characterised by them, and this exemplification is constitutive rather than accidental, since it cannot cease to dispositionally exemplify requiring collegial consent without ceasing to instantiate the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', which would mean ceasing to be what it essentially is. At the same time, the first millennium papacy is characterised by particular modes that instantiate these attributes occurrently. For example, it is characterised by a particular mode of consensual authority, which is the specific concrete way in which this papacy exercises its authority, and this mode instantiates the attribute consensual authority, thereby making it the case that the first millennium papacy occurrently exemplifies that attribute. The mode is identity-dependent upon the first millennium papacy, since it is the consensual authority of this particular institution, and it is rigidly existentially dependent upon the attribute it instantiates, since it cannot exist without the attribute consensual authority existing. If the first millennium papacy is defined in these terms, then the papacy that emerged from the Gregorian reforms, building upon Anastasius Bibliothecarius' (and his circle's) conceptual innovations—which we have termed above the 'Roman Catholic Papacy—requires a fundamentally different real definition, which is stated below in (10).

(10) (Roman Catholic Papacy Real Definition)	*<To be the Roman Catholic Papacy is to be the supreme and universal head of the entire Church, possessing full and immediate jurisdictional authority over all Christians and all ecclesiastical bodies without exception, whose doctrinal pronouncements when made ex cathedra are infallible and irreformable by their own authority and not from the consent of the Church, whose power to convoke councils, approve their decrees, and override any ecclesiastical judgment whatsoever is inherent rather than derived from conciliar or consensual sources, and whose bishop alone possesses the plenitude of Petrine authority as distinct from and superior to all other bishops>.*

The constituent elements of this real definition stand in stark contrast to those of the first millennium papacy, demonstrating that we are dealing with essentially distinct entities. As, first, the Roman Catholic Papacy is essentially defined by a supremacy-based ecclesiology, wherein the pope possesses unique and unchallenged privileges including full and immediate jurisdiction over the entire Church. The Dictatus Papae, as noted previously, declares that the Roman pontiff alone can convoke councils, approve their decrees, and exercise judgment that cannot be reviewed by any other authority. This is diametrically opposed to the consensus-based ecclesiology that constitutes the first millennium papacy.

Second, the Roman Catholic Papacy is essentially constituted by supremacy-based epistemology, wherein the pope alone possesses the charism of infallibility in doctrinal matters, independent of conciliar consent or broader ecclesiastical agreement. According to the First Vatican Council, papal definitions are 'irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church' (ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae).[180] This stands in direct contradiction to the dogmatic declaration of Constantinople II. Third, the Roman Catholic Papacy's jurisdiction is universal rather than patriarchal, extending immediately and directly to every Christian and every ecclesiastical body without the mediation of local hierarchies or the requirement of collegial consent. This stands in stark contrast to the sole intra-patriarchal jurisdiction of the first millennium papacy. Fourth, the Roman Catholic Papacy operates within a framework of exclusive Petrine succession, wherein the bishop of Rome alone possesses the plenitude of Petrine authority, as distinct from and superior to all other bishops. This exclusive claim stands in direct contradiction to the shared Petrine succession that constitutes the first millennium papacy.

Importantly, in light of this, one can understand that the Roman Catholic Papacy is essentially independent of the conciliar system for the validation of its doctrinal pronouncements. Whereas the first

[180]Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium, 22.

millennium papacy is essentially dependent upon councils for doctrinal authority, the Roman Catholic Papacy possesses authority that is inherent rather than derived. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Papacy reverses the dependence relation, claiming that councils derive their authority from papal approval rather than the other way around.

And so, within the Four-Category Ontology, the Roman Catholic Papacy instantiates a different kind altogether: 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy'. This kind is a substantial universal with entirely different identity conditions from kind (substantial universal) 'Consensus-Based Primatial See'. To be an instance of 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy' is to be an ecclesial office whose authority is inherent, universal, and independent of external validation. The kind 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy' is characterised by attributes such as 'possessing inherent authority', 'exercising universal jurisdiction', and 'being doctrinally infallible'. These attributes are incompatible with those that characterise 'Consensus-Based Primatial See'. The Roman Catholic Papacy dispositionally exemplifies these attributes through instantiating this kind. It dispositionally exemplifies 'possessing inherent authority' not because of any contingent feature it happens to possess, but because the kind it instantiates is characterised by this attribute. This dispositional exemplification cannot be removed without the Roman Catholic Papacy ceasing to instantiate 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy', which would mean ceasing to be what it essentially is according to its own self-understanding. The Roman Catholic Papacy is also characterised by modes that occurrently exemplify these attributes. It is characterised by a particular mode of 'supreme authority' that is the specific, concrete way in which this papacy exercises its authority. This mode instantiates the attribute 'supreme authority', making it the case that the Roman Catholic Papacy occurrently exemplifies this attribute. Crucially, this mode is incompatible with the mode of 'consensual authority' that characterises the first millennium papacy: they instantiate contrary attributes that cannot both characterise the same particular object simultaneously.

In light of the above, one can thus see that the constituent elements of this real definition stand in stark contrast to those of the first millennium papacy, and their contrast is not merely rhetorical but ontological. As, once the two real definitions are placed side by side, the case for essential discontinuity becomes difficult to evade, since they answer the fundamental what-question differently. To ask 'what is the papacy' yields incompatible responses depending upon whether one is speaking of the pre-Gregorian or post-Gregorian institution, and this incompatibility is not a matter of emphasis but of essence. The essential constituents of each papacy are mutually exclusive: consensus-based ecclesiology contradicts supremacy-based ecclesiology, consensus-based epistemology contradicts supremacy-based epistemology, (sole) intra patriarchal jurisdiction contradicts universal jurisdiction, and shared Petrine succession contradicts exclusive Petrine succession. These are not differences of degree along a single spectrum, since an institution cannot simultaneously require and not require consensual validation for doctrinal determinations, it cannot simultaneously possess patriarchal and universal jurisdiction in the relevant sense, and it cannot simultaneously hold that Petrine authority is shared among all bishops and that it is exclusively possessed by the bishop of Rome. The incompatibility also extends to the essential dependence relations. The first millennium papacy is essentially dependent upon the broader episcopate and the conciliar system, whereas the Roman Catholic Papacy is essentially independent of these and claims that they are dependent upon it. One cannot simultaneously be essentially dependent upon and essentially independent of the same entities for the same authority, and the First Vatican Council's declaration that papal definitions are, as noted previously, irreformable 'ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae' explicitly negates the essential dependence relation that constitutes the first millennium papacy. And, in the terms of the Four-Category Ontology, the conclusion follows with a certain inevitability: the first millennium papacy and the Roman Catholic Papacy instantiate different kinds. The first millennium papacy instantiates the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', whereas the Roman Catholic Papacy instantiates the kind 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy', and these are distinct substantial universals with different essential properties (attributes) that characterise them. A particular object cannot instantiate two incompatible kinds simultaneously, since kinds constitute the essence or very identity of their instances, and particular objects are rigidly existentially dependent upon their kinds, meaning that a change in the kind instantiated is not an accidental modification but an essential transformation. When the papacy ceased to instantiate 'Consensus-Based Primatial See' and began to instantiate 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy', it ceased to be what it was and became something essentially different.

The force of this incompatibility can be brought into sharper relief by juxtaposing two concrete historical episodes that illustrate, in practice, the contrary authority-conditions embedded in each real definition. When Pope Honorius I (625-638) was posthumously condemned as a heretic by the Third Council of Constantinople (680-681), the condemnation was ratified by his successor Pope Leo II, who confirmed that Honorius had 'permitted the immaculate faith to be subverted'. This event was not regarded as an anomaly or an overreach by the conciliar fathers; on the contrary, it was entirely intelligible within the first-millennium framework, wherein papal teaching authority was constitutionally subject to conciliar correction, and wherein the bishop of Rome, however honoured his primacy, could be found doctrinally deficient by the collegial discernment of the broader episcopate assembled in council. The condemnation of Honorius thus exemplifies the very essential constituents identified in real definition (8): consensus-based ecclesiology, consensus-based epistemology, and the essential dependence of papal authority upon the conciliar system. The council's capacity to judge a pope for heresy was not an exceptional exercise of emergency power but a natural expression of the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', within which papal judgement is essentially dependent upon, and therefore accountable to, the broader episcopal consensus. By contrast, when Pope Pius IX promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 through the bull Ineffabilis Deus, he did so by his own apostolic authority and without the convocation of an ecumenical council, having merely consulted the bishops beforehand by letter rather than submitting the matter to their collegial deliberation and consent. The definition was presented as an exercise of the pope's supreme and ordinary magisterium, and the subsequent First Vatican Council (1869-1870) formally codified the principle underlying this act by declaring that papal definitions are irreformable 'of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church' (ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae). This event exemplifies the essential constituents identified in real definition 10 supremacy-based ecclesiology, supremacy-based epistemology, and the essential independence of papal authority from the conciliar system. Crucially, within this post-Gregorian framework, a conciliar condemnation of a pope for heresy, such as occurred with Honorius, would not be merely improbable but ontologically incoherent, since the very locus of supreme doctrinal authority would reside in the papal office itself, rendering the notion of a council standing in judgement over a pope self-contradictory on the framework's own terms. The juxtaposition of these two episodes discloses the incompatibility at the level of concrete institutional operation. In the first-millennium case, the highest doctrinal authority operated through conciliar consensus, and a pope could be found wanting by that standard; in the post-Gregorian case, the highest doctrinal authority resided in the papal office, and a pope could define doctrine independently of conciliar agreement. These are not two points on a single developmental spectrum, since the first requires that papal judgement be validated by the broader episcopate whilst the second requires that it not depend upon such validation. Each episode is therefore not merely consistent with, but is rendered intelligible only by, the real definition of the institution to which it belongs, and each would be incoherent within the framework of the other. This confirms, at the level of historical practice, the conclusion already reached at the level of ontological analysis: the two papacies instantiate incompatible kinds, and the transition from one to the other constitutes essential replacement rather than accidental modification.

The essential discontinuity can be articulated even more sharply by tracing how it manifests across the ontology's categorial levels. At the level of kinds (substantial universals), the two papacies instantiate different and incompatible kinds, and these are not species of a common genus that could preserve essential continuity beneath surface divergence, since their identity conditions are irreducibly distinct. At the level of attributes (non-substantial universals), the attributes that characterise each kind are contraries: consensual authority and supreme authority are not different degrees of the same attribute, but excluding attributes, and the same pattern holds for patriarchal jurisdiction and universal jurisdiction, for shared Petrine succession and exclusive Petrine succession, and for derived doctrinal authority and inherent doctrinal authority. At the level of modes (property-instances), the particular ways of being that characterise each papacy are numerically and qualitatively distinct, since the first millennium papacy's particular mode of consensual authority is not a weaker form of the Roman Catholic Papacy's particular mode of supreme authority, but a different mode instantiating a contrary attribute. At the level of formal ontological relations, the discontinuity appears as a reversal of dependence, since the first millennium papacy includes the conciliar system as an essential constituent within its real definition, whereas the Roman Catholic Papacy claims that councils

derive authority from papal approval, which is not merely a change in description but a reversal of the asymmetrical dependence relation itself. Finally, at the level of exemplification, the discontinuity remains, since the first millennium papacy dispositionally and occurrently exemplifies consensual authority through its kind and its modes, whereas the Roman Catholic Papacy dispositionally and occurrently exemplifies supreme authority through a different kind and contrary modes, leaving no common attribute exemplified in the same way.

At this point, it becomes important to show that the essential transformation did not occur ex nihilo, since the historical mechanism by which the shift took place clarifies how apparent continuity can coincide with essential rupture. As the historical survey indicated, Anastasius Bibliothecarius (and his circle) constructed a new conceptual framework for papal authority in the ninth century, and the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century brought that framework into concrete ecclesiastical reality. In essentialist terms, Anastasius functioned as the architect of a new essence for the papacy, even if that new essence was not instantiated until the Gregorian reforms, since he provided the conceptual resources, textual justifications, and theological framework that would enable Gregory VII to articulate a discontinuous vision of papal authority. The relation between Anastasius's conceptual innovations and Gregory VII's practical implementation can be illuminated by the distinction between dispositional and occurrent exemplification. That is, on this reading, Anastasius's writings created a dispositional framework in which the attributes of supremacy-based papal authority were available for instantiation, even though they were not yet occurrently exemplified by any actual papal institution. The kind 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy' existed, so to speak, in potentia but was not yet instantiated by any particular object, and the Gregorian reforms effected the transition from dispositional to occurrent exemplification by creating a papal institution that actually instantiated this new kind rather than merely possessing the conceptual resources that would make such instantiation intelligible. Stating this in a different manner, prior to the Gregorian reforms, the kind 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy' existed as an uninstantiated substantial universal—and within an Aristotelian framework such as the Four Category ontology , attributes can exist without being instantiated in modes and kinds can exist without being instantiated in particular objects. Anastasius's conceptual innovations did not create this kind ex nihilo, but articulated it, making it available for instantiation by supplying the conceptual and textual apparatus necessary for an ecclesial institution to recognise itself as instantiating that kind. The Gregorian reforms then constituted the moment of instantiation. When Gregory VII promulgated the Dictatus Papae and the Roman church began to understand itself in supremacist terms, the papacy ceased to instantiate 'Consensus-Based Primatial See' and began to instantiate 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy'. Although the historical process may appear gradual when described sociologically or politically, the ontological transformation is discrete, since an entity cannot partially instantiate two incompatible kinds or gradually move from instantiating one to instantiating the other. At some point the papacy was an instance of one kind, and subsequently it was an instance of another.

In light of this, one can understand how this also resolves the apparent paradox of continuity and discontinuity: the see of Rome persisted, the succession of bishops continued, and the name 'papacy' remained in use, yet the entity that occupied this see, continued this succession, and bore this name was essentially different after the Gregorian reforms than before. Nominal continuity masked an essential rupture, since the particular object 'the papacy' underwent not merely a change in its modes (which would be accidental change) but a change in the kind it instantiated (which is essential change). For that reason, the pre-Gregorian papacy and the post-Gregorian papacy are not the same entity at different stages of development, but different entities related by historical succession and nominal identity.

The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis thus receives its first major confirmation at the level of the papacy itself. The thesis of replacement is established by demonstrating that the post-Gregorian papacy instantiates the kind 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy' rather than the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', such that the entity occupying the Roman see after the Gregorian reforms is not the same entity that occupied it before. The thesis of discontinuity is established by demonstrating that these two kinds are incompatible, characterised by contrary attributes and embedding contradictory essential dependence relations, such that no continuous institutional identity can bridge the transition from one to the other. The consensus-based papacy of the first millennium did not develop into the supremacy-based papacy of the second millennium; rather, it was replaced by it, and the replacement occurred through

a process of conceptual innovation (by Anastasius Bibliothecarius (and his circle) followed by institutional implementation (through the Gregorian reforms).

4.2 The Essential Transformation of the Church

As noted previously, the essential transformation of the papacy that has been traced in the preceding sections did not occur in isolation, for the papacy is not a freestanding institution but rather an office embedded within a broader ecclesiological framework. Consequently, as also was previously noted, the ontological rupture in the nature of papal authority necessarily entailed a corresponding rupture in the understanding of the Church itself. Now, the previous section has demonstrated that the first millennium's conception of the Church—that was intrinsically bound to the consensus-based papacy, whilst the post-Gregorian understanding of the Church emerged precisely through its reconstitution around the supremacy-based papacy—resulted in not merely different emphases within a shared ecclesiology but represent two essentially distinct conceptions of what the Church is, each requiring a different real definition and each instantiating a different substantial universal within the Four-Category Ontology. And so, just as the first millennium papacy and the Roman Catholic Papacy possess incompatible real definitions that answer the fundamental what-question differently, so too the ecclesiologies within which these papacies are embedded possess incompatible real definitions specifying essentially distinct identity conditions. The methodological approach employed in analysing the papacy can therefore be extended to the Church itself: by formulating real definitions that specify the essential constituents of the Church in each period, and by examining the essential dependence relations and the kinds instantiated, one can determine whether the first millennium Church and the post-Gregorian Church represent the same entity undergoing accidental modification or two essentially distinct entities related only by nominal continuity. Drawing again upon the historical evidence surveyed above, we can now formulate the real definition of the Church as it was understood in the first millennium, and is stated below in (11).

(11) First Millennium Church Real Definition)	*<To be the Church of the first millennium is to be the local eucharistic assembly presided over (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) by a canonically orthodox bishop, where 'canonically orthodox' denotes a bishop who stands in apostolic succession, maintains full communion with the wider episcopate, and faithfully upholds the Church's dogmatic and liturgical tradition, such that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is present in its qualitative fullness wherever this assembly gathers around its bishop for the celebration of the Eucharist, with any presbyteral celebrations functioning as derivative extensions of the bishop's eucharistic presidency, with each bishop sitting upon the Chair of St. Peter and thereby grounding the Petrine character of his local church, and with inter-ecclesial structures above the local level possessing functional rather than ontological status>.*

This real definition identifies six essential constituents that jointly constitute what the first millennium Church is. In the first place, the Church is essentially constituted by the local eucharistic assembly, meaning that the Church's identity is inseparable from the concrete gathering of the faithful around the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist. The patristic dictum that 'the Eucharist makes the Church' expresses this constitutive relationship: the Church does not exist as an abstract juridical entity that subsequently gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, but rather comes into being precisely through and in the eucharistic celebration itself. In the second place, the Church is essentially constituted by the presidency of a canonically orthodox bishop, where canonical orthodoxy is itself a compound condition requiring apostolic succession, communion with the wider episcopate, and fidelity to the Church's dogmatic and liturgical tradition. In the third place, the Church is essentially constituted by the principle that each local church manifests the fullness of the catholic Church in that place, rather than being merely a part or administrative subdivision of a larger global institution. In the fourth place, the Church is essentially constituted by the derivative status of presbyteral ministry in relation to episcopal presidency, since the presbyter does not possess an independent constitutive function with respect to the Church but rather exercises his liturgical ministry as a participation in and extension of the bishop's eucharistic presidency. The practice of the fermentum, where by consecrated particles were sent from the bishop's Eucharist to presbyters celebrating in distant parishes, symbolised this essential dependence. In the fifth place, the Church is essentially constituted by the functional rather than ontological status of inter-ecclesial structures, since metropolitan communions, patriarchates, and the universal communion of churches do not constitute a higher ecclesial reality

existing over and above the local churches, but rather represent functional arrangements facilitating cooperation and preserving unity among ontologically complete local churches. In the sixth place, the Church is essentially constituted by the distributed Petrine foundation of each episcopal see, since within the first millennium understanding every canonically orthodox bishop sits upon the Chair of St. Peter in his own local church, such that the Petrine dignity is not the exclusive possession of a single see but the shared inheritance of the entire episcopate.

These six essential constituents imply a specific understanding of catholicity that must be distinguished from later conceptions. In the first millennium understanding, catholicity is a qualitative rather than quantitative attribute: it signifies the wholeness and integrity of the local church possessing the full sacramental reality of Christ, not geographical extension across the world. This qualitative catholicity is grounded in the distributed Petrine foundation: because each bishop sits upon St. Peter's chair, each local church possesses the Petrine character that constitutes its catholic fullness. Within the Four-Category Ontology, qualitative catholicity is an attribute that characterises the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' directly, such that each instance of this kind dispositionally exemplifies qualitative catholicity through instantiating the kind itself, and this qualitative catholicity is itself grounded in the attribute distributed Petrine foundation.

More fully, within the Four-Category Ontology, the first millennium Church as a particular object instantiates the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion', understood as a substantial universal whose identity conditions are fixed by the constitutive relationship between eucharistic celebration and episcopal presidency. This kind is characterised by attributes including being constituted by the Eucharist, being localised in each diocese, possessing distributed Petrine foundation, and possessing qualitative catholic fullness in each place. The first millennium Church dispositionally exemplifies these attributes through instantiating this kind, and this exemplification is constitutive rather than accidental, since it cannot cease to dispositionally exemplify being constituted by the Eucharist or possessing distributed Petrine foundation without ceasing to instantiate the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'. Furthermore, the first millennium Church stands in relations of essential dependence to both the Eucharist and the canonically orthodox bishop, since both appear as essential constituents within its real definition. The essential dependence relations within the first millennium ecclesiology exhibit a determinate hierarchical structure. The Church is essentially dependent upon the Eucharist as its constitutive act and upon the canonically orthodox bishop as the president of the eucharistic assembly. The catholicity of the local church is essentially dependent upon its Petrine foundation, which is not a separate essential constituent alongside the bishop but rather a dimension of what it means for the bishop to be canonically orthodox. The presbytery is essentially dependent upon the bishop, since presbyteral ministry is constituted by its derivation from episcopal authority. Inter-ecclesial structures are essentially dependent upon the local churches that comprise them, since these structures possess merely functional status. Crucially, there is no 'universal Church' that stands at the apex of this hierarchy as an ontological reality upon which everything else depends; the direction of essential dependence runs from the local to the inter-ecclesial, not from the universal to the local.

The transformation in the understanding of the papacy corresponded to a parallel and equally profound transformation in the understanding of the Church itself. As Henri de Lubac demonstrated in his seminal study Corpus Mysticum, a decisive semantic and conceptual shift occurred during the high Middle Ages, whereby the term 'mystical body' (corpus mysticum), which had originally designated Christ's eucharistic body, came instead to designate the visible Church as an institution, whilst the Eucharist itself came to be designated as the 'true body' (corpus verum).[181] This inversion severed the essential tie which had bound the eucharistic cult to the unity of the Church, such that the Church came to be conceived as existing for the sake of celebrating the Eucharist rather than as constituted by it. Drawing upon this transformed understanding, we can now formulate the real definition of the Church as it came to be understood in the post-Gregorian period, which is stated below in (12).

(12) (Roman Catholic Church Real Definition)	*<To be the Church of the post-Gregorian period is to be the aggregate of bishops in hierarchical communion with the Pope, together with the faithful subject to their jurisdiction, such that the ecclesial character of any local assembly derives not from the presence of Christ in the Eucharist but from its juridical connection to the Roman pontiff, and the fullness of the Church subsists in the universal structure headed by the Pope rather than being present in each local eucharistic assembly, with catholicity understood as quantitative universality under papal headship, with the Petrine foundation concentrated exclusively in the Roman see, and with the 'universal Church' possessing ontological priority over local churches>.*

.[181]Catholic Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 882.

This real definition identifies six essential constituents that stand in stark contrast to those of the first millennium Church. In the first place, the post-Gregorian Church is essentially constituted by hierarchical communion with the Pope, meaning that the Church's identity is inseparable from the juridical relationship of subordination to the Roman pontiff. In the second place, the post-Gregorian Church is essentially constituted by universal juridical structure rather than by local eucharistic celebration. In the third place, the post-Gregorian Church operates according to the principle that the fullness of the Church subsists in the universal structure headed by the Pope. In the fourth place, the post-Gregorian Church is essentially constituted by quantitative rather than qualitative catholicity, whereby a local church is catholic not because it lacks nothing of the Body of Christ in its own eucharistic celebration, but because it participates in the worldwide structure headed by the Pope. In the fifth place, the post-Gregorian Church is essentially constituted by the ontological priority of the 'universal Church' over local churches. In the sixth place, the post-Gregorian Church is essentially constituted by the exclusive concentration of the Petrine foundation in the Roman see, such that other bishops do not sit upon St. Peter's chair in their own local churches but possess episcopal dignity only through their hierarchical communion with St. Peter's sole successor.

The essential constituents of the two real definitions are mutually exclusive. The first millennium Church is essentially constituted by the Eucharist and the canonically orthodox bishop, whereas the post-Gregorian Church is essentially constituted by juridical communion with the Pope. The first millennium Church locates qualitative catholic fullness in each local eucharistic assembly, whereas the post-Gregorian Church locates quantitative catholic fullness in the universal structure. The first millennium Church understands each bishop as sitting upon St. Peter's chair and thereby grounding the Petrine character of his local church, whereas the post-Gregorian Church understands St. Peter's chair as belonging exclusively to the bishop of Rome. These are not differences of emphasis or degree along a single spectrum, since an entity cannot simultaneously be constituted by the Eucharist and by juridical communion with Rome, it cannot simultaneously locate fullness in the local and in the universal, it cannot simultaneously construe catholicity as qualitative wholeness and as quantitative extension, it cannot simultaneously distribute the Petrine foundation across all episcopal sees and concentrate it exclusively in Rome, and it cannot simultaneously depend essentially solely upon the local bishop and solely upon the Roman pontiff.

Within the Four-Category Ontology, the post-Gregorian Church instantiates a different kind altogether: 'Papal-Juridical Institution'. This kind is a substantial universal with entirely different identity conditions from the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'. The kind 'Papal-Juridical Institution' is characterised by attributes such as being constituted by papal communion, being structured as a universal hierarchy, possessing quantitative catholicity, possessing exclusive Petrine foundation concentrated in the Roman see, and granting ontological priority to the universal Church over local churches. These attributes are incompatible with those that characterise 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion', since being constituted by the Eucharist and being constituted by papal communion are contrary attributes, qualitative catholicity and quantitative catholicity are contrary attributes specifying incompatible identity conditions, distributed Petrine foundation and exclusive Petrine foundation are contrary attributes that locate the Petrine dignity in incompatible places, and ontological priority of the local and ontological priority of the universal are contrary attributes that reverse the direction of essential dependence.

Furthermore, the essential dependence relations are reversed between the two ecclesiologies. In the first millennium understanding, the Eucharist is the essential constituent upon which the Church depends for its existence and identity. In the post-Gregorian understanding, this dependence relation is inverted: the Church exists as a juridical structure that then celebrates the Eucharist. Similarly, in the first millennium understanding, the local bishop is the essential constituent who guarantees the presence of the Church in each place, whereas in the post-Gregorian understanding, the local bishop's ecclesial authority derives from his hierarchical communion with the Pope. Most fundamentally, the entire hierarchical structure of essential dependence is reversed: in the first millennium understanding, the direction of essential dependence runs from the local to the inter-ecclesial, whilst in the post-Gregorian understanding, the direction runs from the universal to the local. This reversal is not a change in modes but a change in the very structure of essential dependence that constitutes the entity, which is to say a change in kind.

Stating this all more fully, the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' is characterised by the

attribute qualitative catholicity, whilst the kind 'Papal-Juridical Institution' is characterised by the attribute quantitative catholicity; these attributes are contraries, since an entity cannot simultaneously possess fullness in its own right and participate derivatively in a fullness that belongs to a higher structure. Similarly, the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' is characterised by the attribute functional inter-ecclesial structure, whilst the kind 'Papal-Juridical Institution' is characterised by the attribute ontological universal priority; these attributes are also contraries, since essential dependence is an asymmetrical relation whose direction cannot run simultaneously in both directions. Furthermore, the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' is characterised by the attribute distributed Petrine foundation, whilst the kind 'Papal-Juridical Institution' is characterised by the attribute exclusive Petrine foundation; these attributes are contraries, since the Petrine foundation cannot simultaneously be distributed across all episcopal sees and concentrated exclusively in Rome. For these reasons, the two kinds cannot be instantiated by the same particular object, and an entity that instantiates one kind cannot, without ceasing to exist as what it essentially is, come to instantiate the other. The transformation from 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' to 'Papal-Juridical Institution' is therefore not a development within identity but an ontological replacement.

The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis thus receives its second and completing confirmation at the level of the Church itself. The thesis of replacement is established by demonstrating that the post-Gregorian Church in the Latin West has a distinct real definition and instantiates the kind 'Papal-Juridical Institution' rather than the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion', such that the ecclesial entity that emerged from the Gregorian reforms is not the same entity that existed in the Latin West prior to those reforms. The thesis of discontinuity is established by demonstrating that these two definitions and kinds are incompatible, characterised by contrary attributes regarding the locus of catholicity, the direction of essential dependence between local and universal Church, and the distribution or concentration of the Petrine foundation. The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is therefore a thesis about both the papacy and the Church, and the two aspects are intrinsically connected: because the papacy is embedded within a broader ecclesiological framework, the replacement of the consensus-based papacy by a supremacy-based papacy necessarily entailed the corresponding replacement of the eucharistic-episcopal communion by a papal-juridical institution.

If this analysis, together with that of the previous section, is correct, then the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is established, and several implications follow. Claims of historical continuity, whether between the first millennium Church and the modern Roman Catholic Church or between the first millennium papacy and the modern Roman Catholic papacy, must be critically re-examined in light of this thesis, since to assert that the Church has always been constituted by hierarchical communion with the Pope, that the chair of St Peter has always belonged exclusively to the bishop of Rome, or that the pope has always possessed universal jurisdiction and infallibility, is to conflate two essentially distinct entities or institutions that share the same name and occupy the same see. The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis reframes ecumenical dialogue because Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians would then disagree not merely about the extent or exercise of papal authority within a shared ecclesial framework, but about the very nature and identity of both the Church and the papacy themselves, so that the disagreement is qualitative rather than quantitative and cannot be resolved by compromise over scope. On this account, the relationship between the first-millennium and post-Gregorian entities is not one of development or clarification within continuity but of replacement, a conclusion that entails that reunion cannot be achieved through the acceptance of post-Gregorian ecclesiology or post-Gregorian papal claims, since such acceptance would not amount to recognising a legitimate development but to acquiescing in the displacement of the first-millennium understanding by an essentially alien conception. More broadly, the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis also illuminates how institutions can change over time, since not all institutional change is accidental and some changes are fundamental enough to constitute the replacement of one institution by another, with non-modal essentialism providing an analytical tool for distinguishing genuine development within continuity from essential rupture masked by continuity of name. Finally, the thesis clarifies why, from an Orthodox perspective, maintaining the first-millennium understanding preserves the authentic continuation of what the Church and the papacy essentially were, whereas the post-Gregorian tradition, despite its claims to continuity, represents not the development but the replacement of the original ecclesiological reality. This implication will be given its full metaphysical

grounding in Section 5, where the Continuation-Identity Thesis will be established by demonstrating that the Orthodox Church instantiates the same substantial universals as the first-millennium Church and papacy, such that the positive case for Orthodoxy follows from the same philosophical framework that generates the negative case against the Roman Catholic claim to continuity.

The application of non-modal essentialism and the Four-Category Ontology to the historical evidence therefore yields a unified conclusion, namely the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis: the Gregorian reforms effected not a development within continuous institutional identity but an essential transformation constituting ontological replacement, affecting not only the papacy but the Church itself. The first millennium papacy and the Roman Catholic Papacy are essentially distinct entities with incompatible real definitions, incompatible essential constituents, incompatible essential dependence relations, and incompatible kinds. The first millennium papacy was constituted by consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology, essential dependence upon the broader episcopate and conciliar system, intra-patriarchal jurisdiction, and shared Petrine succession, whereas the Roman Catholic Papacy is constituted by supremacy-based ecclesiology and epistemology, essential independence from conciliar consent, universal jurisdiction, and exclusive Petrine succession. Correspondingly, the first millennium Church and the post-Gregorian Church are essentially distinct entities with incompatible real definitions, incompatible essential constituents, incompatible essential dependence relations, and incompatible kinds. The first millennium Church was constituted by the local eucharistic assembly, the presidency of a canonically orthodox bishop, qualitative catholicity present in each local church, the derivative status of presbyteral ministry, the functional status of inter-ecclesial structures, and the distributed Petrine foundation whereby each bishop sits upon the Chair of St Peter, whereas the post-Gregorian Church is constituted by hierarchical communion with the Pope, universal juridical structure, quantitative catholicity subsisting in the worldwide organisation, the ontological priority of the universal Church over local churches, and the exclusive concentration of the Petrine foundation in the Roman see. These represent two different answers to the question ‘what is the papacy’ and two different answers to the question ‘what is the Church’, and since an entity’s essence is what it is to be that entity, they represent two essentially different kinds of institution. And, as we have seen, within the Four-Category Ontology, this discontinuity is visible at every level: kinds differ, the characterising attributes are contraries, the modes are qualitatively distinct, and the dependence relations are reversed. The kind ‘Consensus-Based Primatial See’ is incompatible with the kind ‘Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy’, and the kind ‘Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion’ is incompatible with the kind ‘Papal-Juridical Institution’; qualitative catholicity contradicts quantitative catholicity, distributed Petrine foundation contradicts exclusive Petrine foundation, and the ontological priority of the local contradicts the ontological priority of the universal. For that reason, the pre-Gregorian and post-Gregorian papacies are not two stages of a single entity’s development but two distinct entities related only by historical succession and nominal identity, and the pre-Gregorian and post-Gregorian Churches are likewise not two stages of a single entity’s development but two distinct entities related only by historical succession and nominal identity. The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is therefore confirmed at both the level of the papacy and the level of the Church. The consensus-based papacy of the first millennium ceased to exist in the Roman communion after the Gregorian reforms, replaced by a supremacy-based papacy that, despite its claims to continuity, was a new creation built upon the conceptual foundations laid by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, and the Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion of the first millennium was correspondingly replaced by a Papal-Juridical Institution whose essential constituents are incompatible with those of its predecessor. The discontinuity is not merely historical or sociological but ontological, and the replacement is not merely rhetorical but metaphysical. It is thus not the Roman Catholic, post-Gregorian ecclesiological tradition that preserves the authentic continuation of the first-millennium Church and papacy, but rather another tradition—namely, the Orthodox ecclesiological tradition—which preserves not merely an alternative interpretation of a shared institution but the genuine continuation of what the Church and the papacy essentially were prior to their replacement by fundamentally different entities, as will be demonstrated in Section 5. [182] Nevertheless, taking all of this into account, we may now turn to the positive case for Eastern Orthodoxy as the authentic continuation of the first-millennium ecclesiological reality, before proceeding to address significant objections that may be raised against both the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis and the Continuation-Identity Thesis.

[182] First Vatican Council, ‘Pastor Aeternus’, Ch. 4.

5. The Positive Case: Eastern Orthodoxy and the First-Millennium Kinds

5.1 The Orthodox Understanding of Primacy as Instantiating 'Consensus-Based Primatial See'

The foregoing analysis has established, on the condition that non-modal essentialism supplies the correct individuation criteria for institutional entities, that the post-Gregorian papacy and Church in the Latin West are numerically distinct from the first-millennium papacy and Church, having replaced them through a process of an ontological transformation rather than an organic (or 'doctrinal') development. The conclusion of the preceding analysis noted that it is not the Roman Catholic, post-Gregorian ecclesiological tradition that preserves the authentic continuation of the first-millennium Church and papacy, but rather the Orthodox ecclesiological tradition, which preserves not merely an alternative interpretation of a shared institution but the genuine continuation of what the Church and the papacy essentially were prior to their replacement by fundamentally different entities. The present section undertakes the demonstration that was previously deferred, arguing that this claim can be established on the same metaphysical grounds that were employed to establish the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis itself. That is, just as the incompatibility between the first-millennium and post-Gregorian real definitions was established by applying non-modal essentialism and the Four-Category Ontology to the historical evidence regarding the Latin West, so too the compatibility between the first-millennium real definitions and the Orthodox understanding can be established by applying the same philosophical apparatus to the ecclesiological self-understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy. The method is therefore symmetrical: the same tools that identified the essential rupture in the West will be deployed to identify the essential continuity in the East, and the conclusion will be that, within the adopted metaphysical framework, the Eastern Orthodox Church continues to instantiate the very substantial universals, 'Consensus-Based Primatial See' and 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion', that the first-millennium papacy and Church instantiated prior to the Gregorian replacement, and that none of the incompatibilities that generated the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis with respect to the Roman Catholic Church arise with respect to Eastern Orthodoxy.

Now, in order to determine whether the Eastern Orthodox understanding of primacy continues to instantiate the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', it is necessary first to formulate the Orthodox understanding of primatial authority with sufficient precision to permit comparison with the real definitions established in Section 4. According to Orthodox ecclesiology, the Church recognises the need for primacy at various levels, local, regional, and universal, but understands this primacy functionally rather than ontologically, as a matter of good order and practical necessity rather than as a divine institution conferring supreme jurisdictional authority upon a single see.[183] As we have seen throughout this work, the Thirty-fourth Apostolic Canon, which is part of the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church alongside the canons of the ecumenical councils, expresses this understanding with particular clarity: the bishops of every region should know who is first among them and do nothing without his consent, whilst the first should do nothing without the consent of all, thereby creating a constitutive balance between primacy and conciliarity.[184] The ultimate authority in the Orthodox Church lies not with any individual bishop but with the consensus of the Church expressed through ecumenical councils, reflecting the pattern seen in Acts 15, where even St Peter's role was exercised within the context of a council.[185] Moreover, as John Meyendorff argues in his account of Byzantine and patristic interpretations of Peter, the Petrine foundation cannot be reduced to the exclusive possession of one episcopal see. The patristic tradition contains a broader ecclesiological reading in which, as Meyendorff notes, for Origen, 'all believers are Peter's successors', while, for Cyprian, 'every local Church is the see of Peter'. Laurent Cleenewerck's contemporary Orthodox account, in his influent work His Broken Body, reinforces this reading beyond Origen, noting that Chrysostom could speak of Flavian of Antioch as 'another Peter', one who had 'succeeded to the virtue of Peter, and also to his chair', while also citing Jerome's principle that, 'wherever there is a bishop, whether at Rome or Gubbio, or Constantinople or Rhegium, or Alexandria or Tanis, his worth is the same, and his priesthood is the same'. Cleenewerck therefore concludes that, once this 'fundamental principle of divine and ontological equality of all bishops' is established, primacy and conciliarity can be discussed without converting episcopal equality into papal supremacy..

[183]De Lubac, H. (2006) Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages, translated by Simmonds, G., Price, R. and Saward, J. London: SCM Press

[184]For this analysis and argument see [removed for review].

[185]Staniloae, D. (1970) 'The Theological Foundations of Hierarchy and Synodality', Studii Teologice 22(3-4), pp. 165-178.

Thus, within Orthodox ecclesiology, episcopal authority is apostolic and Petrine insofar as every canonical bishop presides over the local Church in the apostolic faith confessed by Peter; the Petrine dignity is therefore distributed across the episcopate rather than concentrated exclusively in the Roman see.[186] Drawing upon this self-understanding, we can formulate the real definition of primacy as it is understood within Eastern Orthodoxy, which is stated in (13) below

(13) (Orthodox Primacy Real Definition)	<To be the primatial office is to be the first among equal episcopal sees within a synodal framework, possessing honour of first rank among the major apostolic sees whose authority is exercised within the framework of consensus-based ecclesiology and epistemology, requiring the consent of the broader episcopate and ecumenical councils for doctrinal determinations, whose jurisdictional competence is fundamentally patriarchal in character whilst participating in inter-patriarchal affairs through collegial agreement rather than unilateral decree, whose appellate function operates as procedural oversight ensuring proper conciliar process rather than as direct jurisdictional power, and whose bishop sits upon the Chair of St Peter as does every bishop in their own local church>

The essential constituents of this real definition can now be compared, constituent by constituent, with the real definition of the first-millennium papacy formulated in Section 4. The comparison yields a result of decisive significance: the Orthodox real definition preserves every essential constituent that the first-millennium real definition identifies.

In the first place, the first-millennium papacy is essentially defined by its operation within consensus-based ecclesiology, wherein ecclesiastical authority and decision-making require agreement and consent among bishops and councils rather than unilateral pronouncements. The Orthodox understanding of primacy preserves this constituent without modification, since the Orthodox Church maintains that doctrinal and disciplinary decisions affecting the universal Church require the consent of the broader episcopate expressed through conciliar deliberation, and that no single bishop, however elevated his honour, possesses the authority to impose decisions unilaterally upon the Church. This stands in direct contrast to the Roman Catholic Papacy, whose real definition (real definition in (10) specifies that papal doctrinal pronouncements when made ex cathedra are infallible and irreformable by their own authority and not from the consent of the Church. The contrary that generates the incompatibility between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic real definitions, namely the contradiction between consensus-based and supremacy-based ecclesiology, simply does not arise between the first-millennium and Orthodox real definitions, since both specify the same authority-condition: doctrinal determinations require consensual validation.

In the second place, the first-millennium papacy is essentially constituted by consensus-based epistemology, in which religious truth and doctrine are discerned through collective agreement rather than individual pronouncement, with consensus functioning as evidence of the Holy Spirit's guidance, a principle, that we saw previously, was dogmatised by the Second Council of Constantinople (553), which declared, as stated before, that 'neither is it permissible in the case of faith for anyone to anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality'. The Orthodox understanding of primacy preserves this constituent without modification, since the Orthodox Church maintains that the ecumenical council, not the individual bishop (however preeminent), is the highest organ of doctrinal discernment, and that truth is identified through the reception and agreement of the whole Church rather than through individual magisterial pronouncement. This stands in direct contrast to the Roman Catholic Papacy, whose real definition specifies that the pope alone possesses the charism of infallibility in doctrinal matters, independent of conciliar consent, a principle that, as we saw before, the First Vatican Council formulated in the declaration that papal definitions are 'irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church' (ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae). The contradiction between the dogmatic declaration of Constantinople II and the dogmatic declaration of Vatican I, which constitutes one of the sharpest markers of essential discontinuity between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic papacies, does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church continues to affirm and operate within the epistemological framework that Constantinople II dogmatised.

In the third place, the first-millennium papacy's jurisdiction was fundamentally intra-patriarchal, exercising direct authority within its own patriarchate whilst participating in inter-patriarchal relations through consensus rather than command, with even the

[186]Apostolic Canon 34, in Percival, H.R. (ed.) The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, in Schaff, P. and Wace, H. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Sardican appellate privilege operating as procedural oversight ensuring proper conciliar process rather than as direct jurisdictional power. This structure is reflected in the Ravenna Document, which observes that, 'at least until the ninth century', ecclesial prerogatives were recognised 'always in the context of conciliarity': locally, the bishop was protos of his diocese; regionally, the metropolitan was protos of his province; patriarchally, each patriarch was protos within his own circumscription; and universally, the bishop of Rome was recognised as protos 'among the patriarchs'. The Orthodox understanding of primacy preserves this constituent without modification, since the Orthodox Church structures its governance patriarchally and synodally, with autocephalous churches exercising self-government within their own canonical territories, and with inter-Orthodox questions mediated through conciliar agreement rather than through the assertion of universal jurisdiction by any single see. This stands in direct contrast to the Roman Catholic Papacy, whose real definition specifies that it possesses full and immediate jurisdictional authority over all Christians and all ecclesiastical bodies without exception, a jurisdiction that the Catechism of the Catholic Church describes as 'full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered'. The incompatibility between intra-patriarchal and universal jurisdiction, which constitutes another marker of essential discontinuity between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic papacies, does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church preserves the patriarchal jurisdictional framework.

In the fourth place, the first-millennium papacy operates within a framework of shared Petrine succession, in which the bishop of Rome possesses primacy of honour without thereby possessing an essentially different episcopal dignity from the rest of the episcopate. The Orthodox understanding of primacy preserves this constituent without modification, since Metropolitan Kallistos Ware notes that, although Orthodoxy acknowledges the bishop of Rome as Peter's successor 'in a special sense', 'many Orthodox theologians would say that not only the Bishop of Rome but all bishops are successors of Peter'. This wider Petrine logic is expressed with particular clarity in the fourth-century writer Maximinus, who asks, 'why do you not understand that the see of Peter is equal and common to all the bishops?' Thus, Petrine dignity is not confined to Rome but belongs to the episcopate as a whole, insofar as every canonical bishop presides over the local Church in the apostolic faith confessed by Peter.[187] This stands in direct contrast to the Roman Catholic Papacy, whose real definition specifies that the bishop of Rome alone possesses the plenitude of Petrine authority as distinct from and superior to all other bishops. The contradiction between shared and exclusive Petrine succession, which constitutes a further marker of essential discontinuity between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic papacies, does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church maintains the distributed Petrine foundation. The essential dependence relations that constitute the Orthodox understanding of primacy can likewise be compared with those of the first-millennium and Roman Catholic papacies. As established in Section 4, the first-millennium papacy stands in relations of essential dependence to the broader structures of ecclesial authority, since it is essentially dependent upon the episcopate and the conciliar system for the validation of its doctrinal pronouncements, and it cannot exist without the conciliar and consensual framework that constitutes it, so that removing this framework would destroy the entity itself rather than merely modify its properties. The Orthodox understanding of primacy preserves this dependence relation without modification or inversion: the primatial office within Orthodoxy is essentially dependent upon the broader episcopate and the conciliar system, since it possesses no doctrinal authority independent of conciliar consensus, and it cannot exercise its primatial function apart from the collegial framework within which it is embedded. This stands in direct contrast to the Roman Catholic Papacy, which, as demonstrated in Section 4, reverses the dependence relation entirely, claiming essential independence from the conciliar system and asserting that councils derive their authority from papal approval rather than the other way around. The reversal of the asymmetrical dependence relation, which constitutes perhaps the most fundamental marker of essential discontinuity between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic papacies, does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the direction of dependence remains the same: the primatial office depends upon the conciliar framework, not the reverse.

Within the Four-Category Ontology, these comparisons yield a determinate conclusion. The Orthodox understanding of primacy, as a particular object, instantiates the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', understood as a substantial

[187]Evdokimov, P. (2011) Orthodoxy: The Cosmos Transfigured. New City Press, p. 165.

universal that determines the identity conditions of its instances, such that to be an instance of this kind is to be an ecclesial office whose authority is constitutively bound to consensual validation. This kind is characterised by attributes including requiring collegial consent, operating within a synodal structure, possessing honour without universal jurisdiction, and maintaining distributed Petrine succession. The Orthodox understanding of primacy dispositionally exemplifies these attributes through instantiating the kind that is characterised by them, and this exemplification is constitutive rather than accidental. The Orthodox primatial office is also characterised by particular modes that instantiate these attributes occurrently: it is characterised by a particular mode of consensual authority, which is the specific concrete way in which primacy is exercised within Orthodoxy, and this mode instantiates the attribute consensual authority, the same attribute that was instantiated by the modes characterising the first-millennium papacy. At no categorial level does any incompatibility arise between the Orthodox and first-millennium understandings: the kinds are the same, the characterising attributes are the same, the modes instantiate the same attributes, and the dependence relations run in the same direction. By contrast, as demonstrated in Section 4, every categorial level exhibits incompatibility between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic understandings: the kinds differ, the characterising attributes are contraries, the modes instantiate contrary attributes, and the dependence relations are reversed. The Orthodox understanding of primacy therefore does not face the replacement problem that the Roman Catholic Papacy faces, and the metaphysical conclusion follows: within the adopted framework, Orthodox primacy is not a different entity from the first-millennium papacy but a continuation of the same entity, instantiating the same kind and characterised by modes that instantiate the same attributes.

5.2 The Orthodox Church as Instantiating 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'

The same analytical method can now be applied to the Orthodox understanding of the Church itself, to determine whether it continues to instantiate the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' that the first-millennium Church instantiated. According to Orthodox ecclesiology, the Church is manifested in the local eucharistic community, each led by its own bishop, with these local churches being complete in themselves whilst maintaining communion with other local churches, thus forming the universal Orthodox fellowship bound by shared faith and sacramental life.[188] As Zizioulas has demonstrated, the identification of the Eucharist with the Church of God in a particular place was firmly established in the consciousness of the first-millennium Church, and this core understanding of ecclesial structure, centred on the eucharistic assembly under episcopal leadership, remains precisely preserved in Orthodox ecclesiology today.[189]Drawing upon this self-understanding, we can formulate the real definition of the Church as it is understood within Eastern Orthodox, which is stated in (14) below

(14) (Orthodox Church Real Definition)	*<To be the Church is to be the local eucharistic assembly presided over (whether directly under his presidency or indirectly through the presbytery) by a canonically orthodox bishop, where 'canonically orthodox' denotes a bishop who stands in apostolic succession, maintains full communion with the wider episcopate, and faithfully upholds the Church's dogmatic and liturgical tradition, such that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is present in its qualitative fullness wherever this assembly gathers around its bishop for the celebration of the Eucharist, with any presbyteral celebrations functioning as derivative extensions of the bishop's eucharistic presidency, with each bishop sitting upon the Chair of St Peter and thereby grounding the Petrine character of his local church, and with inter-ecclesial structures above the local level possessing functional rather than ontological status>.*

The comparison between this real definition and the first-millennium Church real definition (real definition real definition in (11) formulated in Section 4 yields a result that is, in its own way, as decisive as the comparison between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic Church real definitions, though in the opposite direction. Whereas the latter comparison revealed incompatibility at every level, the former again reveals compatibility at every level. In the first place, the first-millennium Church is essentially constituted by the local eucharistic assembly, such that the Church's identity is inseparable from the concrete gathering of the faithful around the altar for the

[188]Meyendorff, J. (1992) 'St Peter in Byzantine theology', in Meyendorff, J. (ed.) The Primacy of Peter: Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp. 69- 70; Cleenewerck, L. (2008) His Broken Body: Understanding and Healing the Schism between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches: An Orthodox Perspective. Washington, DC: Euclid University Consortium Press, pp. 83-84. cf. Afanasiev, N. (1971) The Church of the Holy Spirit, translated by Plekon, M. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007; Ware, T. (1963) The Orthodox Church. London: Penguin Books.
[189]Cyprian of Carthage, Letter 26.1; Zizioulas, Eucharist, Bishop, Church, p. 263.

celebration of the Eucharist, and the patristic dictum that 'the Eucharist makes the Church' expresses this constitutive relationship. The Orthodox understanding of the Church preserves this constituent without modification. As Afanasiev has insisted, 'in our theological consciousness, we have to return to the basic principle of the Eucharist, namely to the fact that it is the president of the local church who celebrates it', and as Timothy Ware has observed, 'the Eucharist creates the unity of the Church' and 'each local community, as it celebrates the Eucharist Sunday by Sunday, is the Church in its fullness'.[190] The Eucharist is not, within Orthodox theology, simply one activity among many that the Church performs, but rather the very act that constitutes the Church as the Body of Christ, such that the Church comes into being precisely through and in the eucharistic celebration itself. This stands in direct contrast to the post-Gregorian Roman Catholic Church, whose real definition specifies that the ecclesial character of any local assembly derives not from the presence of Christ in the Eucharist but from its juridical connection to the Roman pontiff, a transformation that we saw de Lubac had traced to the high medieval inversion whereby the term 'mystical body' (corpus mysticum), which had originally designated Christ's eucharistic body, came instead to designate the visible Church as an institution. The incompatibility between eucharistic and juridical constitution, which constitutes one of the contrary attributes distinguishing 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' from 'Papal-Juridical Institution', does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church continues to identify its essential constitution with the eucharistic celebration.

In the second place, the first-millennium Church is essentially constituted by the presidency of a canonically orthodox bishop, where canonical orthodoxy is itself a compound condition requiring apostolic succession, communion with the wider episcopate, and fidelity to the Church's dogmatic and liturgical tradition. The Orthodox understanding of the Church preserves this constituent without modification. As Zizioulas writes 'it is then possible to speak of a complete and "catholic" Church', where the Eucharistic community gathers 'in the presence of all the ministers, including the college of presbyters with the bishop at its head'. Florovsky makes a similar point in terms of episcopal catholicity, arguing that 'through its bishop, or rather in its bishop, every particular or local Church is included in the catholic fulness of the Church'.[191] The bishop's role is not merely administrative but deeply sacramental: he is the one who offers the Eucharist on behalf of all, surrounded by his presbyters, deacons, and faithful, and his authority to preside, teach, and govern is understood as flowing integrally from his ordination within apostolic succession and his communion with the broader episcopate, rather than from a distinct jurisdictional grant traceable to the Roman see. This latter point is of particular significance for the present analysis, since the Orthodox Church thereby preserves the undifferentiated unity of orders and jurisdiction that characterised the first-millennium ecclesiology, without adopting the separation of ordo from jurisdictio that, as demonstrated in Section 3, became foundational to the post-Gregorian Western Church's hierarchical self-understanding and that provided the conceptual mechanism by which the post-Gregorian papacy could coherently claim that all episcopal governing authority was derived from, and therefore subordinate to, papal authority.

In the third place, the first-millennium Church is essentially constituted by the principle that each local church manifests the fullness of the catholic Church in that place, rather than being merely a part or administrative subdivision of a larger global institution. The Orthodox understanding of the Church preserves this constituent without modification, since, as the Orthodox theological tradition consistently affirms, catholicity is understood qualitatively rather than quantitatively, signifying the wholeness and completeness of the local church possessing the full sacramental reality of Christ, rather than geographical extension or numerical dominance under papal headship. As Zizioulas has noted, within the first-millennium Church the term katholikos initially expressed the fullness, wholeness, and identity of t he body of Christ realised and revealed in the one Eucharist under the one bishop, and this understanding of qualitative catholicity is preserved within Orthodox ecclesiology, as he writes 'The Catholic Church, as the w hole Church, is such by virtue of the fact that she has the w hole Christ. But the local Church too is likewise catholic, because she has the whole Christ through the Divine Eucharist. The Bishop as being directly connected with the Divine Eucharist represents the local Church in the same way as the whole Christ represents the generic (kathololl)

[190]Ware, K. (1997) The Orthodox Church. New edn. London: Penguin.; Maximinus, Dissertatio contra Ambrosium, PL Suppl. 1:722.

[191]For the Orthodox self-understanding see Zizioulas, J. (1985) Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church. Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, chapter 7; Afanasiev, N. (1971) The Church of the Holy Spirit. Translated by M. Plekon. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

or catholic Church. But given that both the whole Christ and the Bishop are connected with the Church in the Divine Eucharist, the kath' olou or Catholic Church is to be found where the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop are. Thus the Bishop, as it has been most aptly observed, comes to be "the center of the visible and also the true Church,"' and the local Church comes to be the "Catholic Church" herself'.[192] This stands in direct contrast to the post-Gregorian Roman Catholic Church, whose real definition specifies that the fullness of the Church subsists in the universal structure headed by the Pope, with catholicity understood as quantitative universality under papal headship. The incompatibility between qualitative and quantitative catholicity, which constitutes another of the contrary attributes distinguishing 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' from 'Papal-Juridical Institution', does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church preserves the qualitative understanding.

In the fourth place, the first-millennium Church is essentially constituted by the derivative status of presbyteral ministry in relation to episcopal presidency, since the presbyter does not possess an independent constitutive function with respect to the Church but rather exercises his liturgical ministry as a participation in and extension of the bishop's eucharistic presidency. The Orthodox understanding of the Church preserves this constituent without modification. As Thomas Hopko has documented, the antimension is not a merely decorative liturgical object but the concrete sign of episcopal authorisation: it is 'the cloth called the antimension signed by the bishop', which constitutes 'the permission to the community to gather and to act as the Church of God'. Indeed, 'without the antimension, the priest and his people cannot function legitimately, and the actions of the assembly cannot be considered as being authentically "of the Church"'. This reflects the wider Orthodox understanding that the parish Eucharist is not a self-contained unit, since the presbyter celebrates not as an independent eucharistic head but in communion with, and under the mandate of, the local bishop. The antimension, together with the liturgical commemoration of the bishop, therefore preserves the ancient ecclesiological conviction that a Eucharist wholly independent of the bishop is **unthinkable.**[193] The practice of the fermentum, though it eventually disappeared in its original form, finds its underlying principle preserved in these liturgical practices, which maintain the conviction that the presbyter celebrates in the bishop's name and that his presidency represents a geographical distribution of the synthronon rather than a new eucharistic centre independent of the one episcopal throne.

In the fifth place, the first-millennium Church is essentially constituted by the functional rather than ontological status of inter-ecclesial structures, since metropolitan communions, patriarchates, and the universal communion of churches do not constitute a higher ecclesial reality existing over and above the local churches, but rather represent functional arrangements facilitating cooperation and preserving unity among ontologically complete local churches. The Orthodox understanding of the Church preserves this constituent without modification. Within Orthodox theology, as has been consistently affirmed by its leading ecclesiologists, there is no 'universal Church' that exists as an organism above and beyond the local churches; instead, there is a communion of local churches, each complete in itself yet bound together in love and faith, with the direction of essential dependence running from the local to the inter-ecclesial.[194] This stands in direct contrast to the post-Gregorian Roman Catholic Church, whose real definition specifies, following Cardinal Ratzinger's formulation in Communionis Notio, that 'the universal Church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular Churches, or as a federation of particular Churches', and that 'the Church universal is…a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church'. The incompatibility between functional inter-ecclesial structure and ontological universal priority, which constitutes another of the contrary attributes distinguishing 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' from 'Papal-Juridical Institution' and which reverses the direction of essential dependence, does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy, since the Orthodox Church preserves the functional understanding and the direction of dependence from local to inter-ecclesial.

In the sixth place, the first-millennium Church is essentially constituted by the distributed Petrine foundation of each episcopal see, wherein every

[192]Zizioulas, Eucharist, Bishop, Church, p. 119.

[193]Afanasiev, N. (1952) The Lord's Supper. Paris: Religiozno-pedagogicheskii kabinet pri Pravoslavnom Bogoslovskom Institute, p. 63; Ware, T. (1963) The Orthodox Church. London: Penguin Books, pp. 249-260.

[194]Zizioulas, (1985). Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp. 24-25; Florovsky, (1972) 'The Catholicity of the Church', in Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, vol. 1 of The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky. Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing Company, p. 45.

canonically orthodox bishop sits upon the Chair of St Peter in his own local church, such that the Petrine dignity is the shared inheritance of the entire episcopate rather than the exclusive possession of a single see. The Orthodox understanding of the Church preserves this constituent without modification, as has already been demonstrated in the analysis of primacy above. The Orthodox understanding that the Chair of St Peter is present in every episcopal see, grounded in Cyprian's teaching and in the witness of Maximinus that 'the see of St Peter is equal and common to all the bishops', stands in direct contrast to the post-Gregorian Roman Catholic understanding that the Petrine foundation is concentrated exclusively in the Roman see and that other bishops do not sit upon St Peter's chair but possess episcopal dignity only through their hierarchical communion with Peter's sole successor.[195] The incompatibility between distributed and exclusive Petrine foundation, which constitutes a further contrary attribute distinguishing the two kinds, does not arise with respect to Orthodoxy.

The essential dependence relations within the Orthodox ecclesiology likewise preserve the structure identified in the first-millennium real definition. The Orthodox Church is essentially dependent upon the Eucharist as its constitutive act and upon the canonically orthodox bishop as the president of the eucharistic assembly. The catholicity of the local church is essentially dependent upon its Petrine foundation, which is itself a dimension of what it means for the bishop to be canonically orthodox. The presbytery is essentially dependent upon the bishop, since presbyteral ministry is constituted by its derivation from episcopal authority. Inter-ecclesial structures are essentially dependent upon the local churches that comprise them, since these structures possess merely functional status. Crucially, there is no 'universal Church' that stands at the apex of this hierarchy as an ontological reality upon which everything else depends; the direction of essential dependence runs from the local to the inter-ecclesial, not from the universal to the local. At no point are these dependence relations reversed, as they are in the post-Gregorian Roman Catholic ecclesiology, where the direction runs from the universal to the local, from the papal office to the local bishop, and from hierarchical communion with the Pope to the ecclesial character of the local assembly.

Within the Four-Category Ontology, the conclusion follows with the same precision that characterised the analysis of the papacy. The Orthodox Church, as a particular object, instantiates the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion', understood as a substantial universal whose identity conditions are fixed by the constitutive relationship between eucharistic celebration and episcopal presidency. This kind is characterised by attributes including being constituted by the Eucharist, being localised in each diocese, possessing distributed Petrine foundation, possessing qualitative catholic fullness in each place, and granting functional status to inter-ecclesial structures. The Orthodox Church dispositionally exemplifies these attributes through instantiating this kind, and this exemplification is constitutive rather than accidental. The Orthodox Church is also characterised by particular modes that instantiate these attributes occurrently: it is characterised by a particular mode of eucharistic constitution, a particular mode of qualitative catholicity, and a particular mode of distributed Petrine foundation, and these modes instantiate the same attributes that characterised the first-millennium Church. At no categorial level does any incompatibility arise between the Orthodox and first-millennium understandings: the kinds are the same ('Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'), the characterising attributes are the same (qualitative catholicity, distributed Petrine foundation, functional inter-ecclesial structure, eucharistic constitution), the modes instantiate the same attributes, and the dependence relations run in the same direction (from the local to the inter-ecclesial, from the Eucharist and the bishop to the ecclesial identity of the local church). By contrast, as demonstrated in Section 4, every categorial level exhibits incompatibility between the first-millennium and Roman Catholic understandings: the kinds differ ('Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' versus 'Papal-Juridical Institution'), the characterising attributes are contraries (qualitative versus quantitative catholicity, distributed versus exclusive Petrine foundation, functional versus ontological inter-ecclesial structure, eucharistic versus juridical constitution), the modes instantiate contrary attributes, and the dependence relations are reversed. The Orthodox Church therefore does not face the replacement problem, and the metaphysical conclusion follows: within the adopted framework, the Orthodox Church is not a different entity from the first-millennium Church but a continuation of the same entity, instantiating the same kind and characterised by modes that instantiate the same attributes.

[195]Zizioulas, Eucharist, Bishop, Church, p. 117

5.3 The Asymmetry of the Schism and the Identification of the First-Millennium Church

The results of the preceding two subsections, taken together, yield a conclusion of considerable significance for the understanding of the Great Schism and for the identification of the first-millennium Church in the present day. If the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is correct, as has been argued throughout this article, then the post-Gregorian papacy and Church in the Latin West replaced the first-millennium papacy and Church by having incompatible real definitions and instantiating incompatible substantial universals. Yet the Eastern Orthodox Church, as the preceding analysis has demonstrated, continues to posses a compatible real defintion and instantiate the same substantial universals that the first-millennium entities instantiated: 'Consensus-Based Primatial See' for the understanding of primacy, and 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' for the understanding of the Church. The schism between East and West is therefore not a symmetrical rupture within a single continuous institution, where both parties departed from a common centre and the question of which (if either) preserves the original identity remains indeterminate, but an asymmetrical divergence in which the Latin West replaced the first-millennium ecclesiological reality with a fundamentally different one, whilst the East continued to instantiate the original.

This asymmetry can again be stated with precision within the Four-Category Ontology. The first-millennium papacy instantiated the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See'. The post-Gregorian Roman Catholic Papacy instantiates a different and incompatible kind, 'Supremacy-Based Universal Monarchy'. The Orthodox understanding of primacy instantiates the same kind as the first-millennium papacy, 'Consensus-Based Primatial See'. Therefore, within the framework of non-modal essentialism, the Orthodox understanding of primacy preserves the essential identity of the first-millennium papacy, whereas the Roman Catholic Papacy does not. Correspondingly, the first-millennium Church instantiated the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'. The post-Gregorian Roman Catholic Church instantiates a different and incompatible kind, 'Papal-Juridical Institution'. The Orthodox Church instantiates the same kind as the first-millennium Church, 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'. Therefore, within the framework of non-modal essentialism, the Orthodox Church preserves the essential identity of the first-millennium Church, whereas the Roman Catholic Church does not.

This conclusion reframes the nature of the Great Schism in a manner that goes beyond the conventional understanding of a mutual estrangement between two equally legitimate traditions. The Eastern churches, which did not undergo the Gregorian reforms, did not adopt the separation of ordo from jurisdictio, and did not accept the innovations codified in the Dictatus Papae and subsequently dogmatised at Vatican I, retained the consensus-based ecclesiology and the eucharistic-episcopal understanding of the Church that had been common to the undivided Church of the first millennium. Their rejection of papal supremacy was not, on the account furnished by the present analysis, a schismatic departure from an institution to which they had formerly been subject, but rather a refusal to accept the ontological replacement that had occurred in the Latin West: the Eastern churches continued to instantiate the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' and to recognise primatial authority only insofar as it instantiated the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See', whilst the post-Gregorian West demanded recognition of institutions that instantiated fundamentally different and incompatible kinds. The schism, understood through the lens of the analysis presented in this article, was therefore not a rupture within a single continuous institution but a divergence between two traditions that, from the moment of the Gregorian transformation, were operating with incompatible constitutive principles regarding authority, ecclesial identity, and the relationship between local and universal Church. The Orthodox churches did not leave the first-millennium Church; rather, the Latin West replaced the first-millennium Church with a new entity, and the East declined to follow. As this pattern of Eastern refusal to accept supremacy-based papal claims was repeated with particular clarity at the Council of Florence (1439), where the decree Laetentur Caeli presented the post-Gregorian understanding of papal authority as the condition of reunion and the Eastern churches, after initial acceptance under political duress, repudiated the union precisely because they recognised the incompatibility between the Florentine definition and the consensus-based ecclesiology that they continued to instantiate.

Furthermore, the positive identification of the Orthodox Church as instantiating the first-millennium kinds provides metaphysical grounds, within the adopted framework, for identifying the Eastern Orthodox Church as the authentic continuation of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church established by Jesus Christ and expressed by the Niceno-

Constantinopolitan Creed. If the essential identity of an entity is determined by the real definition it possesses and, more significantly, the kind it instantiates, and if the Orthodox Church preserves the same real definition and instantiates the same kinds as the first-millennium Church, then the Orthodox Church is, in the metaphysically relevant sense, the same entity as the first-millennium Church, preserving not merely nominal or historical continuity but essential identity. This conclusion is, like the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis itself, conditional upon the correctness of the philosophical framework: if non-modal essentialism supplies the correct individuation criteria for institutional entities, then the Eastern Orthodox Church's preservation of the essential constituents, essential dependence relations, and substantial universals of the first-millennium Church and papacy establishes it as the continuation of those entities in a sense that the Roman Catholic Church, having undergone ontological replacement, cannot claim. The conditionality of this conclusion does not diminish its force, for the same conditionality attaches to the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis itself, and if one accepts the framework as applicable to institutional entities (as has been argued in Section 2, and is indeed widely done within contemporary metaphysics), then both the negative conclusion regarding the Roman Catholic Church and the positive conclusion regarding the Eastern Orthodox Church follow jointly from the same philosophical premises applied to the same historical and ecclesiological evidence.

6. Objections and Responses

6.1 Objection (i) the Doctrinal Development Objection (Newman-Style)

This objection appeals to John Henry Newman's theory of doctrinal development, which holds that Christian doctrine develops organically over time whilst remaining essentially continuous with its origins. Newman's seven 'notes' of authentic development might be deployed to argue that the post-Gregorian papacy and Church represent legitimate development rather than corruption. If Newman's framework can accommodate the transition from consensus-based to supremacy-based authority as genuine development rather than essential change, the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis would be undermined.

6.1.1 Response

We must distinguish the question of whether a doctrine or institution has developed legitimately according to certain evaluative criteria from the question of whether the entity in question has changed essentially. These questions are logically independent. Newman's notes are epistemological criteria for evaluating legitimacy, but they are not metaphysical criteria for individuating identity. Within non-modal essentialism, the question is not whether the transition was 'legitimate' by some standard, but whether the essential constituents of the entity changed in such a manner that replacement rather than development occurred. An acorn developing into an oak tree does not change the kind it instantiates, whereas the transition from requiring consensual validation to not requiring it changes the kind of authority possessed, which changes the kind of entity. Furthermore, even on Newman's own terms, several of his notes appear to be violated. The 'preservation of type' requires that a development maintain the original character and form; yet the transition from a consensus-bound office to a supremacy-based monarchy represents a change in type, not a preservation. The 'continuity of principles' requires that the same principles govern both early and late forms; yet the principle that 'neither is it permissible in the case of faith for anyone to anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality' (Constantinople II) is explicitly negated by 'ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae' (Vatican I). These are not continuous principles but contradictory ones. The Newmanian objection thus fails on two counts: it conflates legitimacy with identity, and it cannot demonstrate that the specific transitions at issue satisfy even Newman's own criteria, leaving the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis unscathed.

6.2 Objection (ii) the 'Same Kind, Different Powers' Objection

This objection holds that the argument confuses the powers of an office or institution with the kind of office or institution it is. An office can gain or lose powers whilst remaining the same kind of thing—for example, just as the US presidency has accumulated powers not originally envisaged by the Constitution yet remains an instance of 'Elected Head of State'. If consensus-based or supremacy-based authority and eucharistic or juridical constitution are modes rather than kind-constitutive attributes, then the two papacies and two Churches could be instances of the same kind whilst differing only in their particular ways of exercising authority, thereby undermining the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis.

6.2.1 Response

The objection rests on a controversial assumption about where to draw the line between essential and

accidental features. The non-modal essentialist framework requires that we identify what is constitutive of the entity's identity as opposed to what merely characterises it accidentally. The objection assumes that 'Primatial Episcopal See' is the relevant kind, with consensus-based or supremacy-based authority being mere modes. But this assumption is question-begging. An office that essentially requires consensual validation for its doctrinal pronouncements is a different kind of office from one that essentially does not. This is not a difference in how much power the office has, but a difference in the very nature of the authority possessed. It is analogous to the difference between a constitutional monarchy and an absolute monarchy. The difference between 'authority that requires validation' and 'authority that does not require validation' is not a difference of degree but a difference of kind, which is precisely the claim upon which the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis rests. Furthermore, the historical evidence suggests that the first-millennium Church understood these features as essential rather than accidental. The dogmatic declaration of Constantinople II treats consensual discernment not as a contingent feature of church governance but as a necessary condition for the legitimate exercise of doctrinal authority. The objection's appeal to the US presidency actually supports the essentialist analysis, as whilst the presidency has accumulated additional powers, it has not changed from an office that essentially requires electoral validation to one that essentially does not, whereas the papacy, according to the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis, underwent precisely such a transformation of essential structure.

6.3 Objection (iii) the Complementarity Objection

This objection offers an irenic reframing, suggesting that first-millennium and post-Gregorian ecclesiologies represent complementary emphases rather than contradictory positions. Vatican II's teaching on collegiality can be cited as evidence that the Roman Catholic tradition holds papal primacy and episcopal collegiality, as well as local and universal ecclesiology, in creative tension rather than opposition. If this complementarity obtains, then the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis overstates the difference between the two periods.

6.3.1 Response

This objection obscures the genuine incompatibilities that the evidence reveals. The claim that papal definitions are 'irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church' is not a matter of emphasis; rather, it is a direct denial that papal authority is constitutively dependent upon consensual validation. The declaration of Constantinople II that no one may 'anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality' is not compatible with the claim that the Pope can define doctrine independently of conciliar consent. These are contradictory propositions, not complementary emphases. Moreover, the complementarity thesis faces a dilemma. Either the Pope's authority is essentially dependent upon the consent of the Church, or it is not. If it is, then the Roman Catholic claims to independent papal infallibility are false. If it is not, then the first-millennium understanding of papal authority was mistaken. The logical structure of the claims made by the two ecclesiologies does not permit a both/and resolution; it is genuinely either/or. Regarding Vatican II's teaching on collegiality: whilst the Council did affirm episcopal collegiality alongside papal primacy, it explicitly subordinated collegiality to primacy by teaching that the college of bishops has no authority except in union with the Pope, whilst the Pope can act independently of the college. This is not genuine complementarity but asymmetrical hierarchy, and the alleged complementarity therefore dissolves upon closer examination into genuine contradiction, thus again leaving the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis intact.

6.4 Objection (iv) the Anastasius Attribution Objection

This objection concerns the historical claim that Anastasius Bibliothecarius was the 'inventor of Papalism'. This places enormous weight on a single figure whose influence might be overstated. Papal claims developed gradually through many hands, and even if Anastasius played a significant role, ideas can be articulated and systematised without thereby creating new entities. If the historical mechanism of replacement is misidentified, the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis may be weakened.

6.4.1 Response

The objection correctly notes that the development of papal ideology was a complex process involving many figures over several centuries, and the argument does not rest on the claim that Anastasius single-handedly created supremacy-based ecclesiology ex nihilo. Rather, the claim is that Anastasius played a pivotal role in crystallising and systematising ideas that would later be brought to full institutional expression in the Gregorian reforms. The essentialist

analysis does not require that a single individual be the sole cause of essential transformation; it requires only that at some point the entities ceased to instantiate one kind and began to instantiate another. Regarding the distinction between articulation and creation: the objection assumes that ideas can be clarified without entities being changed, but this assumption is precisely what the essentialist analysis calls into question. If the 'clarification' involves asserting propositions that contradict the previous self-understanding of the institution, then what has occurred is not clarification but replacement. The ideas that Anastasius articulated were not implicit in the first-millennium understanding; rather, they contradicted that understanding. The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis therefore does not depend upon attributing the entire transformation to Anastasius alone, but upon demonstrating that a transformation occurred; Anastasius is identified as a pivotal figure in the historical mechanism of that transformation rather than as its sole sufficient cause, and the thesis would stand even if the precise attribution of historical agency were revised.

6.5 Objection (v) the Orthodox Self-Understanding Objection

This objection notes that the argument appears to presuppose the Orthodox understanding of first-millennium ecclesiology and then unsurprisingly concludes that the Roman Catholic understanding represents a departure. Roman Catholic historians would dispute this characterisation, pointing to texts like Pope Gelasius's assertion that 'the first see is judged by no one' and Pope Leo's role at Chalcedon as evidence that supremacy-based elements were present from the beginning. If the historical evidence is contested, then the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis cannot claim to have established discontinuity on neutral grounds.

6.5.1 Response

The argument does not presuppose the Orthodox interpretation; rather, it engages with the historical sources directly. The position proposed here acknowledges that papal language intensified over the centuries and that figures like Gelasius and Leo employed elevated rhetoric. But it distinguishes between rhetoric and substance, noting that even these assertive papal claims were made within a framework that presupposed consensual validation. Gelasius's claim was grounded in conciliar canons (Sardica) rather than in inherent papal authority. Leo's Tome was celebrated at Chalcedon not because of papal authority alone but because 'St Peter has spoken through Leo'; the council validated the Tome's orthodoxy through its own deliberation. The decisive evidence, however, comes not from contested interpretations of ambiguous texts but from the explicit dogmatic declarations of ecumenical councils. Constantinople II's declaration that 'neither is it permissible in the case of faith for anyone to anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality' is not an Orthodox interpretation of an ambiguous source; it is the plain meaning of a dogmatic decree accepted by Rome itself. These sources establish that the first-millennium Church understood papal authority as essentially bound by consensual validation, and this understanding has dogmatic, not merely historical, status. The Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis is thus grounded in sources that both traditions acknowledge as authoritative rather than in a partisan reading of contested evidence.

6.6 Objection (vi) the Post-Vatican II Ressourcement Objection

This objection holds that the sharp distinction between first-millennium and post-Gregorian ecclesiology fails to account for developments within Roman Catholicism itself, particularly from Vatican II and the ressourcement movement. Figures such as Ratzinger, de Lubac, and Tillard developed eucharistic ecclesiologies remarkably consonant with the first-millennium understanding. If the Roman Catholic tradition has recovered eucharistic ecclesiology and episcopal collegiality through its own internal resources, does this not suggest that supremacy-based ecclesiology was an aberration rather than an essential transformation, thereby undermining the Replacement-Discontinuity **Thesis?**[196]

6.6.1 Response

Upon closer examination, these developments confirm rather than refute the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis. First, the retrieval of collegial and eucharistic themes within post-conciliar Roman Catholicism operates within a framework that continues to presuppose the supremacy-based ecclesiology dogmatised at Vatican I. Vatican II's teaching on collegiality is explicitly qualified by the assertion that the college of bishops possesses

[196]Thomas Hopko, The Orthodox Faith, vol. 2, Worship, 'Holy Orders', Orthodox Church in America, where Hopko writes that the antimension is 'signed by the bishop' and is 'the permission to the community to gather and to act as the Church of God'; he adds that 'without the antimension, the priest and his people cannot function legitimately'. See also Thomas Hopko, The Orthodox Faith, vol. 2, Worship, 'Altar Table', Orthodox Church in America, where the antimension is described as containing 'the signature of the bishop' and as 'the permission for the local community to gather as the Church'

authority only 'together with its head the Roman Pontiff and never without this head', whilst the Pope retains 'full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church'. Moreover, the Nota Explicativa Praevia appended to Lumen Gentium at Pope Paul VI's insistence reinforces this asymmetry, stating that the Pope 'alone' can perform certain acts 'which are not at all within the competence of the bishops'. Episcopal collegiality within post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism is thus a collegiality subordinated to papal supremacy, not a collegiality that constitutes papal authority through consensual validation. Second, the eucharistic ecclesiology developed by these figures was never adopted as magisterial teaching in a manner that would displace the juridical ecclesiology that defines the institution's essential self-understanding. Ratzinger's eucharistic affirmations coexist in his writings with strong affirmations of papal primacy and universal jurisdiction, as in Communionis notio, which asserts that the universal Church is 'ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church'. This formulation directly contradicts the first-millennium understanding wherein the universal communion emerged from the communion of local churches. Third, the very fact that the ressourcement theologians' recovery of patristic ecclesiology generated such evident tension with the received juridical framework, requiring constant qualification and subordination to papal prerogatives, itself testifies to the essential discontinuity between the two ecclesiological visions that the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis identifies. The post-Vatican II developments represent not a return to first-millennium ecclesiology but an attempt to hold together incompatible principles through theological creativity and diplomatic ambiguity, and the tensions inherent in this attempt illustrate precisely why the first-millennium and post-Gregorian ecclesiologies cannot be reconciled as complementary emphases within a single continuous tradition.

6.7 Objection (vii) the Designed Compatibility Objection

This objection observes that the compatibility between the first-millennium real definitions and the Orthodox real definitions formulated in Section 5 appears suspiciously perfect: at every categorial level, at every essential constituent, and at every dependence relation, the Orthodox and first-millennium understandings are shown to coincide without remainder, whilst the Roman Catholic understanding diverges at every corresponding point. This degree of alignment, the objection contends, raises the suspicion that the first-millennium real definitions were not formulated on genuinely neutral historical grounds but were constructed with the Orthodox conclusion already in view, such that the historical evidence was selectively characterised in a manner designed to produce the appearance of Orthodox continuity and Roman Catholic discontinuity. If the first-millennium real definitions were tailored to match the Orthodox self-understanding, then the Continuation-Identity Thesis is circular: it presupposes what it purports to demonstrate, and the neat alignment between the first-millennium and Orthodox real definitions is an artefact of methodology rather than a discovery about ecclesiological reality.

6.7.1 Response

In the first place, the first-millennium real definitions formulated in Section 4 were not constructed with the Orthodox conclusion in view but were derived from the historical evidence surveyed in Section 3, which drew upon sources that both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions acknowledge as authoritative: the ecumenical councils, the apostolic canons, the patristic corpus, and the operative ecclesiology of the undivided Church. The essential constituents identified in those real definitions, namely consensus-based ecclesiology, consensus-based epistemology, intra-patriarchal jurisdiction, and shared Petrine succession for the papacy, and eucharistic constitution, episcopal presidency, qualitative catholicity, derivative presbyteral ministry, functional inter-ecclesial structure, and distributed Petrine foundation for the Church, were established through direct engagement with the historical record in Sections 3 and 4 before the Orthodox case was introduced in Section 5. The order of argumentation is therefore not circular: the first-millennium real definitions were formulated first, the Roman Catholic incompatibility was demonstrated second, and the Orthodox compatibility was demonstrated third, with the same real definitions serving as the fixed point of comparison in both cases. In the second place, the objection implicitly concedes the very point at issue. If the first-millennium real definitions accurately characterise the ecclesiology of the undivided Church, and if those real definitions happen to coincide with the Orthodox self-understanding, then the alignment is not an artefact of methodology but a consequence of the fact that the Orthodox Church has preserved the first-millennium ecclesiology. The alignment would be suspicious only if there were independent grounds for thinking that the first-millennium real definitions

were inaccurate or tendentiously formulated, and the objection does not provide such grounds; it merely notes that the alignment is too neat, which is not itself an argument against its accuracy. Indeed, one would expect that a tradition which genuinely preserved the essential character of the first-millennium Church would exhibit precisely this kind of comprehensive alignment, and the absence of such alignment would be more troubling than its presence. In the third place, the critical test of the first-millennium real definitions is not their relationship to Orthodoxy but their relationship to the historical evidence, and this test has been conducted independently in Sections 3 and 4. The characterisation of the first-millennium papacy as consensus-based is not an Orthodox imposition upon the evidence but the plain meaning of the dogmatic declaration of Constantinople II that 'neither is it permissible in the case of faith for anyone to anticipate the judgement of the church in her totality', a declaration that Rome itself accepted. The characterisation of the first-millennium Church as constituted by the eucharistic assembly under the bishop is not an Orthodox reconstruction but the explicit teaching of Ignatius of Antioch, Cyprian of Carthage, and the operative ecclesiology attested by the ecumenical councils. If these characterisations happen to coincide with Orthodox self-understanding, the appropriate inference is not that the characterisations were designed to produce this result, but that Orthodox self-understanding has preserved what the historical evidence independently attests. The Continuation-Identity Thesis therefore withstands the Designed Compatibility Objection, since the alignment between the first-millennium and Orthodox real definitions is grounded in independently established historical evidence rather than in a circular methodology.

6.8 Objection (viii) the Internal Diversity and Jurisdictional Disputes Objection

This objection contends that the Eastern Orthodox Church's actual historical and contemporary practice does not uniformly instantiate the kind 'Consensus-Based Primatial See' or the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' in the idealised manner that Section 5 suggests. The Orthodox world exhibits significant internal jurisdictional disputes, including the ongoing rupture in Eucharistic communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the contested autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and historical instances of phyletism (the subordination of ecclesial identity to ethnic or national categories, condemned as a heresy by the Council of Constantinople in 1872). If the Orthodox Church cannot maintain the consensus-based governance and the communion of local churches that its own ecclesiology requires, then perhaps it does not in fact instantiate the first-millennium kinds as described, and the Continuation-Identity Thesis overstates the alignment between Orthodox practice and first-millennium ecclesiology.

6.8.1 Response

This objection correctly identifies a genuine tension within contemporary Orthodoxy, and it is important to acknowledge rather than to minimise the reality of internal Orthodox disputes. The response, however, is that these disputes do not undermine the Continuation-Identity Thesis, for two reasons. Firstly, the thesis concerns the essential constitution of the Orthodox Church, that is, the kind it instantiates and the real definition that specifies what it is to be the Orthodox Church, rather than the accidental perfection with which it realises that constitution at every historical moment. Within the framework of non-modal essentialism, the distinction between essential and accidental features is very important: an entity can fail to realise its essential nature perfectly in every instance without thereby ceasing to instantiate the kind that constitutes it. For instance, a constitutional democracy that experiences a political crisis does not thereby cease to instantiate the kind 'Constitutional Democracy' and begin to instantiate the kind 'Authoritarian Regime'; it remains an instance of the former kind, albeit one that is failing to realise its essential nature with full adequacy. Correspondingly, the Orthodox Church, when it experiences jurisdictional disputes or ruptures in Eucharistic communion, does not thereby cease to instantiate the kind 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion'; it remains an instance of that kind, albeit one that is failing to realise one of its characterising attributes (the communion of local churches) with full adequacy at a particular historical juncture. The relevant question for the Continuation-Identity Thesis is not whether the Orthodox Church has always and everywhere perfectly realised its ecclesiology, but whether its ecclesiology, its self-understanding, and its constitutive principles are those of the first-millennium Church, and this the preceding analysis has demonstrated. In the second place, and more significantly, the very character of these Orthodox disputes itself confirms rather than refutes the Continuation-Identity Thesis, since these disputes are intelligible only within a consensus-based ecclesiological framework. The rupture between

Moscow and Constantinople is not a case of one patriarch claiming supreme and universal jurisdiction over the other and the other refusing to submit; rather, it is a case of two patriarchates disagreeing about the proper exercise of conciliar authority, the legitimate conditions for granting autocephaly, and the boundaries of patriarchal jurisdiction, precisely the kinds of disputes that arise within a consensus-based system where no single see possesses the inherent authority to resolve them unilaterally. The fact that these disputes resist easy resolution is itself evidence that the Orthodox Church operates within a genuine consensus-based framework rather than a supremacy-based one, as in a supremacy-based framework, such disputes would be resolved by papal decree, whereas in a consensus-based framework, they must be resolved through the slow and often painful process of conciliar deliberation, mutual recognition, and eventual reception by the whole Church. Furthermore, the first-millennium Church itself experienced comparable internal disputes, including the Paschal controversy, the rebaptism controversy between Cyprian and Stephen of Rome, the Acacian Schism, and various contested depositions, all of which were navigated within the same consensus-based framework without any single bishop claiming the authority to resolve them by unilateral decree. The presence of comparable disputes within contemporary Orthodoxy therefore constitutes evidence of continuity with the first-millennium pattern rather than evidence of departure from it, and the Continuation-Identity Thesis is confirmed rather than refuted by the very features of Orthodox life that the objection identifies.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has proposed a metaphysical account of the historical reality of the papacy and the Church, explaining how the passage from the first to the second millennium may be understood despite continuity of name and see alongside a decisive shift in governance and self-understanding. The central result of this investigation has been the establishment of two jointly grounded and mutually reinforcing theses. The first is the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis: the claim that the Gregorian reforms effected not a development within continuous institutional identity but an ontological replacement, whereby the consensus-based papacy of the first millennium was replaced by an essentially distinct supremacy-based papacy, and the eucharistic-episcopal communion of the first-millennium Church in the Latin West was correspondingly replaced by an essentially distinct papal-juridical institution. Whilst polemics have been avoided, the central conceptual problem has been addressed by applying the neo-Aristotelian resources of Kit Fine and E. J. Lowe, especially non-modal essentialism and the Four-Category Ontology, to the relevant historical evidence. On that application, the move from a consensus-shaped primatial office within a conciliar ecclesiology to a supremacy-shaped universal office within a correspondingly reconfigured ecclesiology is best described as an essential change, since the later claims of universal jurisdiction and inherent infallibility introduce an incompatible kind rather than an accidental modification. By framing the later configuration as the instantiation of new kinds/substantial universals, the model renders intelligible the claim that the first-millennium papacy and Church are not identical with the second-millennium papacy and Church, so that the ecumenical issue is recast as a choice between essentially distinct ecclesiological realities.

The second is the Continuation-Identity Thesis: the claim that the same philosophical framework that identifies the essential rupture in the Latin West simultaneously identifies the essential continuity in the East. By applying the same analytical tools, namely non-modal essentialism and the Four-Category Ontology, to the ecclesiological self-understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy, it has been shown that the Orthodox Church continues to instantiate the kinds 'Consensus-Based Primatial See' and 'Eucharistic-Episcopal Communion' that the first-millennium papacy and Church instantiated, preserving every essential constituent, every essential dependence relation, and every characterising attribute identified in the first-millennium real definitions. None of the incompatibilities that generate the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis with respect to the Roman Catholic Church arise with respect to Eastern Orthodoxy: the kinds are the same, the attributes are the same, the modes instantiate the same attributes, and the dependence relations run in the same direction. The two theses are not merely compatible but mutually reinforcing: the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis establishes that the first-millennium ecclesiological reality was displaced in the Latin West, whilst the Continuation-Identity Thesis establishes that this same reality persists in the East, and each thesis derives additional probative force from the other, since the identification of essential rupture in one tradition and essential continuity in another, using the same philosophical apparatus and the same first-millennium real definitions as the fixed point of

comparison, constitutes a more powerful result than either thesis would deliver in isolation.

The Great Schism is thereby reframed not as a symmetrical rupture within a single continuous institution but as an asymmetrical divergence in which the Latin West replaced the first-millennium ecclesiological reality with a fundamentally different one, whilst the East continued to instantiate the original. The Orthodox churches did not leave the first-millennium Church; rather, the Latin West replaced the first-millennium Church with a new entity, and the East declined to follow. Both theses are, as has been emphasised throughout, conditional upon the correctness of the adopted philosophical framework: if non-modal essentialism supplies the correct individuation criteria for institutional entities, then the Replacement-Discontinuity Thesis and the Continuation-Identity Thesis jointly follow from the application of that framework to the historical and ecclesiological evidence. The conditionality of the conclusions does not diminish their force, for it makes explicit the philosophical commitments upon which the argument depends, and if one accepts the framework as applicable to institutional entities, as has been argued in Section 2, then both the negative conclusion regarding the Roman Catholic Church and the positive conclusion regarding the Eastern Orthodox Church follow from the same philosophical premises applied to the same body of evidence. The evidence and argumentation presented in this article therefore support the conclusion that, within the adopted metaphysical framework, it is the Eastern Orthodox Church, and not the Roman Catholic Church, that constitutes the authentic continuation of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church that was established by Jesus Christ and thus that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed affirms, preserving not merely nominal or historical continuity but essential identity, having the same real definitions, instantiating the same substantial universals, and being characterised by modes that instantiate the same attributes, as the undivided Church of the first millennium.

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