

STUDII ȘI ARTICOLE

ARTICLES

Anastasius the Librarian's Papal Interpolations into Pope Adrian I's *Letter to the Emperors* (JE 2448)

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Abstract: In recent years, the scholarly consensus that certain passages weighing in upon Papal Primacy in the letters of Pope Adrian I to the Ecumenical Council of Nicea II (JE 2448 and 2449) were originally missing in the Greek, and thereby not read out during the council, has been called into question. Though the aforementioned passages are missing from every Greek manuscript, they are found in the Latin retroversion of the Greek made by Anastasius the Librarian and in an independent Latin witness, the *Collectio Britannica*. While one may infer that Anastasius faithfully preserved the renderings of the Greek before it was allegedly corrupted, the weight of evidence inveighs against this as the aforementioned Papal Primacy passages lack any sign of retroversion. Furthermore, they contain fingerprints of forgery, including anachronisms and unattested Papal quotations whose words are borrowed to devise new, advanced jurisdictional claims similar to another contemporary forgery, the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*.

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During the Iconoclast Controversy, Pope Gregory III retaliated against Byzantine Emperor Leo III for compelling Germanus of Constantinople to abdicate the Patriarchate, excommunicating the iconoclasts in the Council of Rome (731). In 733, as

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this was the twilight years of the Byzantine Papacy, Leo III lacked the capacity by force of arms to depose the Pope. He settled upon transferring jurisdiction of ecclesiastical territory and properties in southern Italy and the Balkans, which were more securely under his thumb, from the Roman to the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. Unable to contest this militarily, Rome would maintain their excommunication of Constantinople for over 50 years. By the 780s, with Imperial support, Tarasius assumed the Patriarchate and forcefully moved to end iconoclasm and restore communion with Rome. As it was now clear that iconoclasm was out of Patriarchal and Imperial favor, Rome under Pope Adrian I had an opportunity for rapprochement. However, this was not without difficulty as doctrinal agreement would not automatically bring about the relinquishing of the profitable patrimonies seized decades previously. Rome held a council in 785 tasked with addressing the issues at hand, resulting in Adrian I composing the *Letter to the Emperors* (JE 2448) and the *Letter to Tarasius* (JE 2449). These were subsequently received by the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea II (787).

Adrian I had every reason to be tactful in accomplishing dual aims: the restoration of communion with Constantinople contingent upon the rejection of iconoclasm and return of Roman jurisdiction in southern Italy and the Balkans. This is the context which shapes the debate over when in his attempt to accomplish both goals, whether Adrian I made claims consistent with a more advanced medieval Papacy in the aforementioned letters. In JE 2448 specifically, the Latin tradition preserves what may be construed as Papal Primacy claims that are rhetorically and substantially further developed than those asserted by previous Papal chanceries. The Greek tradition of JE 2448 lacks these passages. It suffices to say that the majority of scholars have asserted that both the Greek and Latin renderings of JE 2448 and 2449 are authentic, but the Greek was actually read out at the council.² The underlying logic is that Adrian I pressed hard to accomplish his

² Scholars who believe that both the Greek and Latin renderings of JE 2448 and 2449 are essentially authentic, but the Greek was what was read during the council are as follows: A. Edward Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 213; Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 85; Michele Maccarrone, "Il Papa Adriano I. e il Concilio di Nicaea del 787," *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 20.1 (1988): 111-14; Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 97; Anton Michel, "Die Kaisermacht in der Ostkirche," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 5 (1956): 2; Georg Ostrogorsky, "Rom und Byzanz im Kampf um die Bilderverehrung," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 6 (1933): 77; L. Serraz, "Les lettres du pape Hadrien Ier lues au I^{er} concile de Nicee," *Échos d'Orient* 25/144 (1926): 407; Henry Percival, "The Second Council of Nice," in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.), *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 14* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1900), 537; Charles Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church: Vol. V* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896), 349; and John Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea, Held A.D. 787, in which the*

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aims and that in so doing, matters were put forward in a way offensive to Byzantine sensibilities so that the documents needed to be edited for conciliar consumption.

In recent years, a couple of scholars expounded the view that the Greek minutes are falsifications from the 860s-70s due to manipulations made by Photius' chancery in response to controversy over his ordination.³ Instead of the content of these letters being offensive to Byzantine eyes and ears in the eighth century, they were problematic in the ninth—inspiring multiple rounds of revision.

Contrary to the preceding, the evidence most strongly points to the original Latin version of JE 2448 being interpolated by its translator and collator, Anastasius the Librarian, approximately 90 years after it was first penned. The reason this is the case is because Latin JE 2448 as it is preserved today in a retroversion from the Greek contains anachronisms and textual indications evidencing interpolations. These “fingerprints” of forgery include uncited verbiage drawn from Papal correspondence framed as the words of Adrian I and textual evidence demonstrating that none of the statements of Papal import were retroverted from the Greek unlike much of the remainder of the text. Additionally, the historical context surrounding Anastasius' translation of Nicaea II better supplies the motive for introducing Papal interpolations than that of Nicaea II itself would for removing said Papal passages. While JE 2448 originally made requests for jurisdiction consistent with Adrian I's purposes, the letter did not contain divisively worded claims to Papal Primacy which would have compromised his work. Considering the preceding, subsequent scholarship must both revise their evaluation of the contents

Worship of Images was Established (London: William Edward Painter, 1850), 70. It should be noted that both Mendham and Percival translated Nicaea II, making this view that of most of the council's English translators. As it will be covered later, Serraz elsewhere in his article entertains the possibility that Anastasius the Librarian, due to his “ambitious character and delicate conscience,” potentially made some Papal interpolations. He is not decisive on the question. See Serraz, “Les lettres du pape Hadrien Ier lues au IIe concile de Nicee,” 413. Serraz anticipates the conclusions from this study, even though he is most closely aligned with the majority scholarly opinion on the question.

³ Richard Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 20 and Erich Lamberz, “‘Falsata Graecorum more’? Die Griechische Version der Briefe Papst Hadrians I. in den Akten des VII. Ökumenischen Konzils” in Claudia Sode and Sarolta A. Takács (eds.), *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck* (London: Routledge, 2016), 213-29. Price merely reiterates the theory of Lamberz, being indebted to the latter for his critical edition of the council. It should go without saying that Lamberz is the chief living authority on Nicaea II. His theories are an improvement upon those posed by a scholar in the 1960s. See Luitpold Wallach, “The Greek and Latin Versions of II Nicaea and the ‘Synodica’ of Hadrian I (JE 2448): A Diplomatic Study,” *Traditio* 22 (1966): 103-25.

of JE 2448 and approach Anastasius' literary activity with an increasingly critical eye, adopting a greater appreciation of how his work helped shape the medieval Papacy.

The Origin of the Extant Version of Latin JE 2448

Some background to the extant Latin version of JE 2448 is in order. This tradition is derived entirely, outside of fragments, from a translation from the Greek made by Anastasius in 873.⁴ During the 860s, the Roman Synod (led by Pope Nicholas and, in a sense, Anastasius himself as his “ghostwriter”)⁵ refused to consent to the consecration of Photius as Patriarch of Constantinople. They also did not recognize the deposition of Ignatius of Constantinople.⁶ What followed was a diplomatic exchange between Nicholas/Anastasius and Byzantine Emperor Michael III/Photius where Papal claims and assertions of jurisdiction in the Balkans and Italy were made by Rome, which were not recognized by Constantinople. Relations soured so badly that Nicholas deposed his own Papal legates who had recognized Photius' consecration in 863. Then, all the Eastern patriarchates deposed Nicholas in 867. The next Pope (Adrian II) and Byzantine Emperor (Basil I) had Photius deposed during the Council of Constantinople (869-870). A few years after this controversy died down, Anastasius translated Nicaea II into Latin from a Greek manuscript. In so doing, he retroverted much of JE 2448 back into Latin and his work preserves the Latin tradition that exists today.

If it is proven that, textually, the evidence points to Anastasius' interpolating Papal claims into the text he translated, one would expect that the interpolations dwell upon aspects of the preceding controversy. The motive for their creation would be to address the ecclesiastical and geopolitical disputes of the day, especially Rome's weakness in light of Nicholas' deposition that had the assent of what appeared to be the whole Christian East in 867.⁷

⁴ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 19.

⁵ The term “ghostwriter” has been applied to Anastasius by Evangelos Chrysos. See Dumbarton Oaks, *The Pope's Ghostwriter*. <<https://www.doaks.org/newsletter/news-archives/2019/the-pope2019s-ghostwriter>>, October 2, 2023. Anastasius took credit for “almost” all the correspondence in relation to Photius and Michael III, as well as Pope Adrian II's correspondence on the same matters. For the words of Anastasius himself see Richard Price and Federico Montinaro, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 869-70* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022), 94. See also Evangelos Chrysos, “The Principle of Pentarchy at the Council(s) (869-70 and 879-80),” in Maria Youni and Lydia Paparriga-Artemiadi (eds.), *Constantinos G. Pitsakis: In Memoriam* (Athens: Academy of Athens, 2023), 157.

⁶ This was likely a reneging on an earlier acceptance of Photius' communion. See the comments of Constantinople's legates affirming their initial communion with Pope Nicholas in Price and Montinaro, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 869-70*, 189-92; 215.

⁷ Photius mustered 1,000 bishops in deposing Pope Nicholas in 867 according to Anastasius in *Ibid.*, 87. Even presuming this was a vastly inflated number, it implies the number was still

The Relevance of JE 2449 and Proofs That JE 2448 and JE 2449 Were Diplomatically Edited During Nicaea II

In previous treatments of this topic, Adrian I's other letter to the Council of Nicaea II, *The Letter to Tarasius* (JE 2449), is discussed as it offers a foil to evaluate JE 2448. Like JE 2448, it contains a criticism of Tarasius' elevation from layman to Patriarch (in contradiction to the Lateran Council of 769's ban) and complains about Rome's stolen jurisdiction in the Balkans and Italy. Rome surely cared about both issues at the time, but they were conspicuously not addressed by Nicaea II itself. Not surprisingly, the jurisdictional question is completely excised from Greek JE 2449 and the criticism of Tarasius' ordination is muted. Both such complaints are missing entirely from Greek JE 2448.⁸ This should not be surprising, as an obvious motive existed to defend the legitimacy of Tarasius' Patriarchate and not give up ecclesiastical jurisdictions acquired decades previously.

Considering Papal honorifics, both Greek and Latin JE 2449 include a quotation of Mt 16:18, applying the promise made in the passage to the whole Church (and not Rome in particular).⁹ Nevertheless, the Roman church is identified as "holding the pre-eminence...and exists as the head of all the Churches...and will ever retain the Primacy."¹⁰ Such honorifics are consistent with earlier usage such as during Chalcedon¹¹ and had precedent in canon law (Canon 3 of Constantinople I and Canon 28 of Chalcedon). Though they are worded assertively, they are uncontroversial. Additionally, in Session 6 of Nicaea II, Mt 16:18 is exegeted in an identical, Churchwide sense.¹² The preceding indicates that though honorifics exist in JE 2449, they are intact between the Latin and Greek. They are interpretively consistent with the rest of the council and with earlier conciliar precedent.

Where Latin and Greek JE 2449 differ is in their treatment of Tarasius and jurisdictional questions. For example, in the Latin Adrian I complains that he was "greatly disturbed and confounded, because Tarasius had been suddenly raised to the

much higher than those who opposed Photius as the Council of Constantinople 869-70 only mustered 12 active participants for most of its duration and ultimately about 102 signatories. See *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea* (787), 169; 176; 179.

⁹ Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 75-76. Mendham's translation relies upon a Greek version of Nicaea II. He translates alternate Latin renderings in his footnotes. For this reason his translation is preferred in this study for the sake of easy comparison to the Greek.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹¹ See *The Council Fathers to Pope Leo* where the Pope is called "the head" and the Synod "the members [of the body]" and "the children" in Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volume Three* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 121; 124.

¹² Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 406.

dignity of the Patriarchate from the ranks of the Laity...[the] Canonical rule [of Lateran 769] has ordained that no one should pass at once from the order of the Laity to the rank of Chief Priest...” and protests his “unlawful ordination.”¹³ It also makes territorial demands for a return of formerly Roman patrimonies while maintaining a diplomatic tone.¹⁴ Greek JE 2449 is more muted, lacking any mention of an “unlawful ordination.” In the Greek, Adrian I simply gives a negative accounting of events: “we found that your Holiness had been raised to that sacerdotal dignity from the ranks of the Laity...and very greatly was our soul amazed at this...”¹⁵ Predictably, demands for jurisdiction over former Roman territories are entirely absent. Surely, Adrian I had the motive to write what he did in the Latin, just as Tarasius (and the council) had the motive to have such critiques removed. The preceding indicates that the differences between Latin and Greek JE 2449 originate from the council itself, the Papal legates permitting a diplomatic alteration.¹⁶

There is additional evidence suggesting that modifications were made to the Greek letters at Nicaea II. First, both the Latin and Greek minutes specify that Tarasius put an exaggerated emphasis on the Papal legates authenticating that the “letters” (both JE 2448 and 2449) “interpretation of the Latin”¹⁷ (i.e. Greek translation) was indeed

¹³ Ibid., 72.

¹⁴ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 179.

¹⁵ Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 72.

¹⁶ The diplomatic alteration of Papal letters has precedent. Pope Celestine gave his legates considerable latitude in what they could do during the Council of Ephesus, instructing them, “you are to decide on the basis of the situation what you ought to do.” See Richard Price and Thomas Graumann, *The Council of Ephesus of 431* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 206. For Pope Hormisdas instructing his legates about what changes were allowable to a reunion formula (“Formula of Hormisdas”) see Edward Denny, *Papalism: A Treatise on the Claims of the Papacy as Set Forth in the Encyclical Satis Cognitum* (Rivingtons: London, 1912), 408-409. During Constantinople III, it appears that a diplomatic excision was made, removing the following statement that is found in the Latin: *nunquam a via veritatis in qualibet erroris parte deflexa est, cujus auctoritatem, upote apostolorum omnium principis, semper omnis catholica Christi ecclesia*. See Mansi 11, 239D-E. The most reliable Greek as preserved by Parisinus Graecus 1115 lacks this one statement but otherwise follows the Latin. See Mansi 11, 240E-241A. See also Rudolf Riedinger, *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum Tertium: Volumen II* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990), 62-63.

¹⁷ Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 47; 70-1. Mendham in prioritizing the Greek in his translation unambiguously delineates letters in the plural are being spoken of: τὰ τοιαῦτα γράμματα. Price translates the Latin word *litteris* (meaning “letters” in the plural, but it can mean “letter” in the singular if context demands it) as a singular letter in Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 174. For the Latin and Greek see Erich Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum: Concilii Actiones I-III* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 172-3. The context demands that the letters be understood in the plural. Immediately before

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accurate. This virtually guarantees that a diplomatic alteration to the contents had occurred for at least one of the letters; otherwise, this detail is difficult to explain. Second, Anastasius, the source for all of the extant Latin differences, asserts that the divergences between the Latin and Greek of JE 2448 were out of “consideration for Tarasios [sic]” at Nicaea II and the excision “already happened when the letter was read out at the council itself and in the original acts.”¹⁸ Anastasius similarly acknowledges differences in JE 2449, implying the same cause.¹⁹ Third, a tenth century Latin gloss of Pope Nicholas’ *Letter Eighty Six*, a letter which complains that the Greeks with malintent removed important passages from JE 2449, likewise identifies partisans of Tarasius as responsible for the anomaly between the Latin and Greek.²⁰ Every early source on the question claims the Greek renderings of JE 2448 and 2449 are authentic to Nicaea II. The only rationale ever given is that diplomatic excisions were made at the council. At no point is it suggested that Papal honorifics or doctrines were a bone of contention. From the preceding, one can justifiably conclude that JE 2449 was altered and read out during the council as it is presently rendered in the Greek.

Evaluating the Differences Between Latin and Greek JE 2448

However, what does one make of the differences found between Latin and Greek JE 2448? Considering the Papacy, near the beginning of the letter Latin JE 2448 cites Mt 16:18. It claims that the Apostle Peter alone was given “the singular honor” to the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” by Christ Himself, with privileges bestowed to Peter’s

the reading of JE 2448, the “Holy Council” asks that “the letters of the most holy and blessed Adrian” be read. What immediately follows is the reading of both letters. There can be no doubt that in any event, each letter had both a Greek and Latin version and both were read out. This would justify the use of the plural and otherwise conform to Price’s translation conceptually, but does not account for the Holy Council already referring to both JE 2448 and 2449 before the reading in the former. For the existence of each letter in both languages being present see Wallach, “The Greek and Latin Versions of II Nicaea,” 104-7.

¹⁸ Lamberz, “Falsata Graecorum more,” 215. See also Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 146. Cf. Mansi 12, 1073-4 for the marginal note of Anastasius the Librarian included in the midst of the Latin addition to JE 2448. This contains his brief, but full reflection upon the subject.

¹⁹ Anastasius states, “And here also has much been expunged by the Greeks which nevertheless may be found entire in the archives of the Roman Church.” See Mansi 12, 1081, here translated by Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 75. Cf. Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 179. Therein, Price speculates Anastasius left out the excised section in his translation of Nicaea II simply because of its similarity with jurisdictional requests in JE 2448. If true, this lends credibility to the idea that Anastasius in making his short comment implied the same cause for the difference in the Greek as that he identified in his comments in JE 2448. See N. 17.

²⁰ Wallach, “The Greek and Latin Versions of II Nicaea,” 112.

“successors” in the “Apostolic See.”²¹ The end of the letter says that this charism gives Rome the greatest “executive role” in the Church, with the Church’s “assent,” granting Rome the capacity to “confirm each synod” by their own “authority.”²² There are also similar criticisms of Tarasius for being a layman elevated to the episcopacy, but it gets considerably more agitated in tone than what is found in both Latin and Greek JE 2449. For example, it criticizes the title “Ecumenical” being applied to Tarasius on the basis of the Papacy’s authority, claiming it contradicts that the Pope has been given “primatial authority everywhere on earth.”²³ It likewise includes demands concerning jurisdiction in Italy and the Balkans, worded more harshly than what is found in JE 2449. Near its end, Latin JE 2448 suddenly changes back to a positive tone, extolling Charlemagne and kindly requesting the return of Roman territories.

Anastasius’ final evaluation concerning the origins of the differences between JE 2448 and 2449, that they are authentic to Nicaea II, is surprising given his vague accusations between 862-71 that the letters were manipulated.²⁴ Yet, Anastasius (writing for Pope Nicholas) never specifically named Photius, or anyone living, as specifically being responsible for the alleged differences between the “original” Latin and Greek texts of Nicaea II. This implies an awareness in the Papal chancery during the 860s that at least some differences were made during Nicaea II itself, something that Anastasius readily admits to by 873 when translating said council. Ultimately, Anastasius did not change his story, as opposed to Lamberz’s assessment of the matter.²⁵ Rather, Anastasius insultingly implied the Greeks were at present making alterations to Nicaea II, but through vagueness left the question open so that when he clarified the matter in 873, he did not really contradict himself.

Anastasius’ evaluation is concealing something, but at first glance this would seem not to be the case. The very end of Latin JE 2448 appears authentic. In fact, its statement concerning Charlemagne is quoted in the *Caroline Books*, including his royal title (that he is a “Roman patrician,” lit. “*patricius Romanorum*”), explicitly citing the statement comes from Adrian I’s letter.²⁶ This proves that the *original* Latin version of JE 2448 differed from Greek JE 2448, thereby predating Nicaea II itself. Such an excision in the Greek, where demands over jurisdiction and bestowing Roman titles would have caused offense to the Byzantines, fits the political situation of the 780s and the motives which informed alterations to JE 2449. So, Anastasius’ evaluation of JE 2448 is correct—for

²¹ Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 49. The term “honor” is corrected from “honour.”

²² Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 171.

²³ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁴ Lamberz, ““Falsata Graecorum more,”” 215.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 171.

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some of the Latin changes. As for *all* of the Papal-related changes, which scholarship acknowledges there being no motive in the 780s for their excision,²⁷ Anastasius is suspiciously silent.

How One Identifies Differences Between the Original Latin JE 2448 and Anastasius' Modified Latin Version

Serraz anticipates the thesis of this article: there were in fact substantially *three* versions of JE 2448.²⁸ The original Latin of Adrian I (herein called "Original Latin"), the Greek translation, and Anastasius' modified Latin version (herein called "Anastasian"). Wallach inferred that such differences between Original Latin and Anastasian JE 2448s were merely the result of Anastasius correcting Patristic citations, making them substantially the same.²⁹ However, the following will show that Anastasius introduced profound ecclesiastical forgeries. That is, the Latin differences pertaining to the Papacy in Anastasian JE 2448 are in fact interpolations introduced by their tradition's source. Unlike the *Donation of Constantine*, which is a flagrant forgery, there seems to be nothing in Latin JE 2448 that is so blatant. Instead, it is much more subtle akin to the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals* that likewise make their appearance in the mid-ninth century.

The *Decretals* contain many authentic texts with slight alterations and interpolations from authentic texts. Similarly, even their invented texts borrow authentic-sounding terminology and quotes from Patristic letters. According to Chrysos,

"[The *Decretals*] forgers...did not create them from scratch, but after precise selection from countless authentic works, and, in a way, the composition is reminiscent of a mosaic with of all kinds of tesserae. So they chose passages from the Bible, the Roman and the Frankish legislation, excerpts from authentic letters of the popes, from the acts of councils and synods, from theological treatises and from historiographical works. It is

²⁷ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 143.

²⁸ Serraz, "Les lettres du pape Hadrien Ier lues au IIe concile de Nicee," 420.

²⁹ Wallach, "The Greek and Latin Versions of II Nicaea," 119. See also Luitpold Wallach, "The Libri Carolini and Patristics, Latin and Greek: Prolegomena to a Critical Edition," in Luitpold Wallach (ed.), *Diplomatic Studies in Latin and Greek Documents from the Carolingian Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 495. The reasoning behind doing this was to clear up imprecision in the original Latin that justified Frankish opposition to Nicaea II. When translating Constantinople III, a previous Papal chancery simply inserted the original Latin letters of Saint Pope Agatho and that of the Roman synod instead of retroverting them from the Greek. See Rudolf Riedinger, *Kleine Schriften zu den Konzilsakten des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 289. The original Latin translation of Nicaea II may have been similar in this regard. A definitive answer to this question can be derived by comparing the Latin of the *Collectio Britannica* with pre-Anastasian fragments of Nicaea II in the Latin.

therefore not surprising that the authenticity of these documents was never put in doubt during the Middle Ages.”³⁰

Forgeries of this sort escape easy detection. However, if one recognizes the contemporary method of forgery in Anastasius’ day, it is apparent that this same method was employed in the creation of Anastasian JE 2448.

According to Anastasius, he allegedly had recourse to the original versions of JE 2448 and 2449 “in the archives of the Roman Church”³¹ from which he identified differences. Since there verifiably are differences between Original Latin and Greek JE 2448 and 2449, this must be accurate. However, one must also consider that during Nicholas’ Papacy, Anastasius quoted the *Decretals* forty times in correspondence against Photius and Michael III.³² It should be noted that these *Decretals* were completed sometime after April 21, 847.³³ Anastasius’ career began, at its latest, around the same time considering he already made enough enemies to be excommunicated by 849.³⁴ Anastasius was even shortly an (anti-) Pope in 855, a position likely only attainable with an ecclesiastical career significantly predating 847. The point is, when Anastasius in the 860s was making Papal claims “beyond any precedent known from the past”³⁵ by quoting the *Decretals*, even citing an altered canon of Chalcedon,³⁶ he did so with what must have been an awareness of his own duplicity. Being learned in Greek and surely adept at working with manuscripts, he likely had access to accurate Latin, if not Greek, copies of canons in Rome. Additionally, the young age of the paper of Anastasius’ copy of the *Decretals*’ manuscript, being that even if he worked with the original it would have been approximately 15 years old at most, had to be more than a little suspicious. One may also infer that Anastasius, learned as he was politically connected, would have had an awareness of canon law as it was before 847. The preceding compels one to conclude that Anastasius was not suckered by the *Decretals*. He was knowingly employing them despite their forged nature. It is unlikely that Anastasius had moral qualms about this considering he was embroiled in more serious crimes, such as the infamous murder of Pope Adrian II’s family.³⁷

³⁰ Evangelos Chrysos, “New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium in the letters of Pope Nicholas I to Emperor Michael III,” *Travaux et Memoires*, 22:1 (2018): 332.

³¹ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 179.

³² Chrysos, “New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium,” 333.

³³ Eric Knibbs, “Ebo of Reims, Pseudo-Isidore, and the Date of the False *Decretals*,” *Speculum* 92 (2017): 181.

³⁴ Reka Forrai, “The Interpreter of the Popes: The Translation Project of Anastasius Bibliothecarius,” PHD diss., (Central European University [Budapest], 2008), 17.

³⁵ Chrysos, “New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium,” 323.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 334.

³⁷ Whether Anastasius had firsthand involvement in the conspiracy or not, which implicated both the murderer (Eleutherius, his cousin) and Arsenius of Orta (his fleeing uncle), he was back

Ecclesiastical Interpolations Introduced into Anastasian JE 2448

With the preceding in mind, let's first evaluate the differences pertaining to the Papacy introduced near the beginning of JE 2448.³⁸ Greek JE 2448 ascribes "the foundation of the Catholic and Orthodox faith" to all who "succeed to their [Peter and Paul's] thrones," a reference to all bishops in common. There is no mention of Mt 16:18. While the Anastasian Latin invokes the Apostle Peter in isolation, the invocation of Peter and Paul makes more sense. Immediately after the differing passage in question, where the Anastasian Latin waxes on poetically about the "singular honor" of the "power of authority" given to the Roman pontiffs by virtue of Mt 16:18, what follows in both the Latin and Greek is a quotation from the *Life of Saint [Pope] Sylvester* where both Peter and Paul appear to Constantine. In the Greek, the details all connect. The "holy Roman Church of these chief Apostles" contains the "orthodox faith of those chief Apostles SS. [saints] Peter and Paul," who being the "guardians" of the Byzantine "kingdom," those "holy and chief Apostles, who laid the foundation of the Catholic and Orthodox faith" intended that "all who ever should succeed to their thrones" maintain that faith, and that "from the beginning" in their time "to this day, our Churches have...images" as "Pope Sylvester bears witness" in the *Life* where both saints appeared to Constantine "while he was sleeping."³⁹ In the Latin, the details do not logically and thematically cohere. The appearance of both Peter and Paul in the *Life* is disjointed from what immediately precedes them: ecclesiastical claims which surround Peter exclusively. There is no reference to Peter and Paul being guardians to the Byzantine Empire, something which is implied by their appearance to Constantine. The appeal to the Apostolic origin of icons in all the churches bequeathed by these Apostles loses its force when rather than being framed as a mutual inheritance as it is in the Greek, it is recast in the Latin as a singular Petrine inheritance found only in Rome. Serraz perceptively observed, "one cannot help but be struck by the fact that the Greek text harmonizes much better than the Latin text....In short, the Greek text itself bears no sign of alteration, and if it is accused of this, it can only be on the assumption the original character of the Latin we possess."⁴⁰

A motive for the Latin interpolation is easily discernible. Anastasian JE 2448's interpretation of Mt 16:18 contradicts the interpretation given in Latin and Greek JE 2449, as well as elsewhere in the council. Clearly, the point of the interpolation is to

in the Papal chancery's employ within the same year. See Forrai, "The Interpreter of the Popes," 18. See also n. 4. The preceding cannot but imply that Adrian II had Anastasius imposed upon him.

³⁸ Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 49.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Serraz, "Les lettres du pape Hadrien Ier lues au IIe concile de Nicee," 412-413.

reinterpret Mt 16:18 so that the ecclesiastical power connoted by Peter's keys can be understood as a "singular honor" given to the Pope of Rome. While there is no shortage of saints teaching both that the keys are given to Peter/Rome and that said keys are likewise given to the other Apostles/all the bishops, any claim to Rome being given the keys exclusively is without earlier attestation—particularly in the Ecumenical Councils. For example, the Papal legate Philip during the Council of Ephesus, who emphatically spoke of then Pope Celestine's Petrine inheritance, did not go as far as to specify Petrine inheritance as a singular honor of Rome's.⁴¹ Such a claim in an Ecumenical Council, with many such Petrine sees represented, would have been an unforgivable insult. Its sudden inclusion in Anastasian JE 2448 should lead one to raise her/his eyebrow.

Second, the ending of Anastasian JE 2448 is decisive on the question of interpolations. In the Greek, it simply ends paying homage to the Byzantine rulers, admonishing them to heed the testimony of the Patristic prooftexts supplied earlier in the letter.⁴² Even though it lacks a dating, as is customary, the letter ends naturally enough. Yet, as demonstrated previously, Original Latin JE 2448 certainly had a longer ending than Greek JE 2448. In the Latin, the letter continues, making requests about imperial policy towards icons (specifically to the Byzantine Empress Irene that she issue a *sacra* confessing iconodulia) and then disputes jurisdictional issues. The latter shared similar motives for excision with JE 2449, the former being excised perhaps due to the negative portrayal it gave of previous Byzantine ecclesiastical policy. Additionally, Pope Nicholas' *Letter Eighty Eight* (approximately 865) cites an early part of the ending, noting it was falsified by the Greeks.⁴³ He does not say explicitly when, implying an awareness of diplomatic revisions during Nicaea II.

The content within the middle of the Latin's extended ending is particularly suspect. Within the request for a *sacra* confessing iconodulia is a curious section which has words "taken verbatim...from the Latin...letter of Constantine IV to Pope Donus," and put into Adrian I's figurative mouth without attestation, for seemingly no good reason.⁴⁴ While Price believes that this insertion renders "obscure the point Hadrian [I] is making,"⁴⁵ its inclusion was intended to strengthen the criticism given in the passage concerning Constantinople's bad track record for persecutions. Its ambiguity in the Latin indicates that modifications are being introduced into the text beginning at this section. At this point, Anastasian JE 2448 begins to differ with Original Latin JE 2448.

⁴¹ Price and Graumann, *The Council of Ephesus of 431*, 377.

⁴² Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 69.

⁴³ Lamberz, "'Falsata Graecorum more,'" 228. The passage in question cites how the Byzantine state used to persecute iconodules. See Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 170.

⁴⁴ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 170.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

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In Anastasian JE 2448, what follows the preceding is a long, irate aside which appears to be a complete addition to the text as opposed to interpolated in individual sections. It is a large section, specifically everything between “[i]n addition” and “against our holy catholic and apostolic church.”⁴⁶ The whole section contains suspicious elements. The paragraph immediately after this entirely interpolated section invokes how Tarasius had already confessed iconodulia in his own encyclical, a detail which is consistent with the request earlier made for the Imperial *sacra*. This implies the authenticity of this paragraph after the interpolated section. The paragraph later gives a criticism of Tarasius’ elevation to Patriarch from his status as a layman, a criticism that is redundant, as it also exists in the preceding section. Its redundancy implies the former complaint about Tarasius to be an interpolation. The second complaint about Tarasius’ elevation, though authentic, is significantly expanded with another interpolation. At this point the interpolations end and Original Latin JE 2448 resumes, invoking Charlemagne, thanking him for restoring Roman patrimony from the Lombards. This, though less clearly than the demands made in JE 2449 and earlier in Anastasian JE 2448, implied that the Byzantines should do the same. Its absence in the Greek, along with the critique of Tarasius, should not be a surprise.⁴⁷ Its removal does not verify what Anastasius otherwise renders is reliable. In fact, it raises the question why Latin JE 2448 would earlier lay claim to jurisdiction in such a caustic manner, only to end in a predictably diplomatic way. Rather, the ending’s absence simply verifies the majority thesis that diplomatic changes of some sort were made in both JE 2448 and JE 2449 during the council.

Latin JE 2448’s ending reads much more naturally with the “in addition” section removed. Even the terminology “in addition” implies the whole section is an interpolation which does not fit into the original text. In fact, shortly after “in addition” is a long section that in the Latin “is virtually identical” to a passage from JE 2449 preserved in the *Collectio Britannica*.⁴⁸ Pope Gelasius,⁴⁹ a letter to Pope Donus,⁵⁰ and Pope Gregory the Great are similarly closely paraphrased or quoted word-for-word

⁴⁶ Ibid., 170-72. “In addition” is “*porro*” in the Latin. See Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 165.

⁴⁷ Serraz concurs with this assessment. See Serraz, “Les lettres du pape Hadrien Ier lues au I^e concile de Nicee,” 418.

⁴⁸ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 179. See also Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 165. The Latin in *Collectio Britannica* fol. 103v-r has slight differences in spelling that do not affect overall meaning. See British Library, *Add MS 8873*. <https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_8873_fs001r>, July 21, 2023.

⁴⁹ Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 167.

⁵⁰ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 170.

without attestation slightly before, during, and slightly after this section.⁵¹ What is the significance of four⁵² sudden Papal quotations, without attestation, in the same section of the text? The preceding are noticeable indications of a sort of “copy and pasting” methodology typical of high-quality ninth-century Latin forgeries such as the *Decretals*, as discussed previously.

This pattern is suspiciously absent in the rest of Latin JE 2448.⁵³ Whenever Popes are quoted, or anyone for that matter, they are named. For example, Gregory the Great is cited by name earlier in JE 2448.⁵⁴ The one exception to the preceding is an uncited passage from the acts of the Lateran (769).⁵⁵ This council was not old enough to be treated as an authority and thereby merit citation. The Roman Synod in 785 that penned JE 2448 relied on Lateran (769), especially considering it contained relevant source material to draw from.⁵⁶ This exception does not betray the pattern of strategically placed unattested quotations of more traditional Papal authorities all roughly one after another. Such unattested quotations are a suspicious textual discontinuity amidst the thematic discontinuity in the section. Considering the controversial content surrounding these insertions, the motivation for forgery is just as obvious as the textual indications of its existence.

Another sign of forgery is how Anastasian JE 2448 manipulates its quotation from Pope Gelasius. Without attestation it asserts that Rome’s “executive role” was given “through an injunction of the Lord...with the church no less assenting” granting Rome “primacy throughout the world” amidst complaints over jurisdiction of those lands taken from Rome.⁵⁷ Similarly in the next paragraph, amidst complaints over the

⁵¹ Wallach, “The Greek and Latin Versions of II Nicaea,” 122-23. See also Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 169.

⁵² Anastasius may be forgiven for not citing one of these quotations, namely JE 2449, because one should not expect a forger to pretend Adrian I would have cited himself.

⁵³ Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 119-63. Cf *Ibid.*, 175; 179. A large part of the introduction and a section in the middle of JE 2449 contain unattested paraphrases from letters of Gregory the Great. Further research must be done to explore the motivation for these authentic unattested paraphrases and why they were only of Gregory the Great. What both passages have in common is their diplomatic tone in addressing the Church at large in invoking Rome’s pastoral role—perhaps something Adrian felt needed to be put carefully given the breach in communion between Constantinople and Rome up to this point. JE 2448’s uncited Papal statements serve the opposite purpose, evidencing a different author.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵⁶ Luitpold Wallach, “Ambrosii Verba Retro Versa e Translatione Graeca (Libri Carolini II, 15),” *The Harvard Theological Review* 65:2 (1972): 178. See also Wallach, “The Libri Carolini and Patristics, Latin and Greek,” 483.

⁵⁷ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 171.

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title “Ecumenical Patriarch” (which will be soon covered), it is asserted that the Pope has “primatial authority everywhere on earth...given by the Redeemer” and that “the apostolic Roman church...will hold for all times primacy and sovereign authority...”⁵⁸ It is not so much the complaints over jurisdiction that are suspicious, but the rationale for those complaints which implies a then unheard-of claim to direct jurisdiction. Without the garbling of Anastasian JE 2448, Pope Gelasius in his original letter notes that “the rule of each synod” is that there is an “executive role” for Rome as “approved by the assent of the whole Church” and “enjoined by a saying of the Lord.”⁵⁹

The change in emphasis is palpable—Anastasian JE 2448 contains a concern for what appears to be direct jurisdiction (in reality, an exaggeration to attain to Rome’s former local jurisdictional rights) as a prerogative granted by God Himself. Gelasius, on the other hand, invokes Rome’s prerogatives in conciliar procedure rooted in the Church’s assent, merely citing Mt 16:18 as an additional justification for such prerogatives. Jurisdiction is not mentioned. Anastasius evidently inserts the novel jurisdictional idea. In treating the actual source material he was quoting from, Anastasian JE 2448 puts that which in Gelasius’ personal emphasis, was the cart (Rome’s position by virtue of the Church’s assent) before the horse (its institution by Christ). “No less assenting” implies what is of chief importance in Gelasius’ actual letter to be of secondary importance in Anastasian JE 2448. Anastasian JE 2448’s reformulation of Gelasius’ words appears to be an intentional echo of Nicholas’ *Letter Eighty Six* to Michael III, which boasted: “The privileges of the Roman church were founded by Christ upon Saint Peter...These privileges were granted to our church by Christ, not by synods, which merely have celebrated and venerated them.”⁶⁰ The preceding likely was gleaned from the *Gelasian Decretum*. According to Chrysos, the *Gelasian Decretum* was found by Anastasius in the *Decretals*.⁶¹

In any event, the motive for interpolating a rationale with an innovative conception of Papal jurisdiction appears to postdate Nicaea II considerably. In 869-70, the Council of Constantinople was so unpopular it had only about a dozen bishops in attendance until its final session. The council ultimately did not concede Roman jurisdictional claims in the Balkans. This is evidenced by Adrian II’s *Letter to the Emperors*. Therein he complains that Ignatius of Constantinople, the Patriarch whom Rome helped reinstate in place of Photius, “presumed to consecrate the bishop for the region of the Bulgars....he will not escape canonical punishment, nor will those who usurp the title of

⁵⁸ Ibid., 172.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 171.

⁶⁰ Chrysos, “New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium,” 326-27.

⁶¹ Evangelos Chrysos, “The Principle of Pentarchy at the Council(s) (869-70 and 879-80),” in Maria Youni and Lydia Paparriga-Artemiadi (eds.) *Constantinos G. Pitsakis: In Memoriam* (Athens: Academy of Athens, 2023), 160-61.

episcopacy...”⁶² This fresh wound, in a way fresher than the stolen jurisdiction Adrian I complained about in Latin JE 2449, likely was the motivation Anastasius had for worsening the tone over the question and devising new grounds for Roman jurisdiction. If any Patriarch was going to concede former jurisdictions back to Rome, Ignatius was a more likely candidate than Tarasius, the latter’s position as Patriarch not having significant popular opposition. Yet, Ignatius (even though he was in a much more tenuous position) refused to relinquish these territories. Anastasius must have realized that if Ignatius was not going to relent on this jurisdictional question, no one would. This perhaps inspired the interpolation. From the preceding, one may surmise that Anastasius in the style of the *Decretals* spliced words of Gelasius to make Rome’s claims to jurisdiction not only sound more authentic, but additionally convey a direct jurisdictional basis which was buttressed by the authority of an Ecumenical Council.

Yet another obvious sign of forgery is that in the same interpolated section, there is an oddly anachronistic criticism of Tarasius for using the title “Ecumenical Patriarch.”⁶³ This was something of a dead letter two centuries previous, even in Gregory the Great’s time (considering the lack of response he received). The resurrection of such a criticism appears diplomatically foolish in the 780s when the city of Rome itself was neither under Byzantine threat of taxation nor imminent military aggression (as it had been in Gregory’s time).⁶⁴ The entire basis of the complaint is the opposite of Gregory’s, as Anastasian JE 2448 implies the title rightly belongs to Adrian I.⁶⁵ Contrarily, Gregory vociferously warned against the pretensions implied by the title and denied its import to the Papacy.

Such a critique of the title “Ecumenical Patriarch” better fits the 860s. During this time, the chancery of Pope Nicholas under the helm of Anastasius had a protracted program of pressing Papal claims in correspondence with Photius and Michael III. The culmination of this campaign of asserting Papal prerogatives was the Council of Constantinople (869-70). During this council, Ignatius of Constantinople was not permitted to use the title “Ecumenical Patriarch,” because the title “Ecumenical” was

⁶² Price and Montinaro, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 869-70*, 459.

⁶³ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 171.

⁶⁴ Gregory the Great’s complaints concerning the title “Ecumenical Patriarch” were adjacent to complaints about monetary disputes with the Byzantines. See Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistolarum*, Book Seven, *Letters Twenty Six and Twenty Seven* (NPNF 2:1084-89). In *Letter Twenty Six*, Gregory speaks of receiving money from the Byzantines and in the next letter, his complaints about the title “Ecumenical Patriarch” are more muted, going as far as to quip that “it was not worth my while” to break communion over the question at that juncture as he had done before.

⁶⁵ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 171.

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explicitly bestowed upon the Pope of that time.⁶⁶ In contrast, during Nicaea II the title “Ecumenical Patriarch” is used without controversy in the Latin and Greek versions.⁶⁷ Anastasius apparently leaves behind the aforementioned internal evidence indicating the non-controversial nature of the title “Ecumenical Patriarch” in his translation of Nicaea II, because by 873 (when his translation was completed) the controversy was set aside. In fact, in the translation’s introduction, Anastasius even gives a sort of apology for having formerly “criticized the Greeks about the term” until he realized they did not mean it literally.⁶⁸

Anastasius likely was not honest in his assessment, as well read as he was, and so this points to some sort of change in political maneuvering since his stay in Constantinople during 870. Perhaps, some event presented itself as an occasion for rapprochement, such as the expansion of the Byzantine navy and their capture of Otranto in 873. This may also explain why that same year Anastasius dropped the pretense that the Greeks were falsifying the minutes of Nicaea II. The preceding has interesting ramifications upon the dating of Anastasian JE 2448’s interpolations, as it implies it was devised some time before 873 when the rest of Nicaea II was translated. Being mindful of all possibilities, the simplest interpretation of the historical data is that the critique over the title Ecumenical Patriarch is part of a polemical environment expressly concerned with expanding Papal prerogatives during the 860s, rather than the 780s where there was no motive to debate Patriarchal or Papal claims.

Evaluating the Argument that JE 2449’s Critiques and Papal Ecclesiology Corroborate the Authenticity of Anastasian JE 2448

The most convincing argument scholars (specifically Lamberz, as Price follows his reasoning) assert in favor of Anastasius’ Latin rendering of JE 2448 being substantially faithful to the version read out during Nicaea II is that JE 2449 in both the Greek and Latin (the latter more so) includes criticisms of Tarasius. This is so important to their position, it is described in heroic terms by Lamberz: “the letter to Tarasios comes to the rescue.”⁶⁹ Therefore, Lamberz’s argument goes, Greek JE 2448 (presently lacking such

⁶⁶ For the title “Ecumenical Pope” and Ignatius of Constantinople being identified simply as “archbishop,” see Price and Montinaro, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 869-70*, 427-29. Throughout the council, Ignatius is otherwise identified as “Most Holy Patriarch.”

⁶⁷ Cosmas the Deacon before the reading of JE 2449 calls Tarasius by his title “Ecumenical Patriarch.” The Latin and Greek do not differ on this point. See Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 173-74. There are no mentions of differences elsewhere between the Latin and Greek concerning the same title. See Mendham, *The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicaea*, 71; 80; 82-84; 90; 119; 120; 123.

⁶⁸ PL 129:197.

⁶⁹ Lamberz, “Falsata Graecorum more,” 215. The German is: *des Briefes an Tarasios zu Hilfe*.

criticisms) must have been altered *after* Anastasius translated an earlier version of the Greek into Latin (allegedly) faithfully.⁷⁰ Supposedly, Greek JE 2448's Papal Primacy claims were excised along with the criticisms sometime during the 870s. This is because JE 2449 in both Greek and Latin preserves (as discussed above) "claim[s] to primacy" pertaining to "the Roman Church."⁷¹ According to Lamberz, this demonstrates there was a time when such claims were not objectionable and therefore not excised. Due to this, he concludes that there were at least two rounds of revision by Photius (or his partisans), once during the 860s (from which Anastasius faithfully translated the 860s-version of Greek JE 2448 into Latin), and another round by Photius made after Anastasius left Constantinople with the earlier (altered) version of the Greek.⁷² Otherwise, according to Lamberz's thesis, Anastasius would have dutifully reported that JE 2448 had extensive alterations in the disputed pro-Papal section near its beginning when he translated it.

It is worth detailing some more points by Lamberz on this note. Pope Nicholas in *Letter Eighty Two* does not mention any alterations in JE 2448 or 2449 and Photius in his response (*Letter 290*) makes no issue of Nicholas' Papal claims.⁷³ Lamberz concludes from the preceding that in 860 (when *Letter Eighty Two* was penned) JE 2449 must have not been altered yet. From this, he deduces that the alterations subsequently made in JE 2448 and 2449 only excised Roman jurisdictional claims, leaving behind Papal Primacy language. The logic is that Papal Primacy was not objected to at that time, so Photius did not have the motive to remove the Papal honorifics from either letter. Due to the preceding, only years later (and a change of heart thanks to his deposition), did Photius or one of his partisans excise Papal Primacy from JE 2448—this being after Anastasius got his hands on an earlier version of Greek JE 2448 without ecclesiastical excisions.

There are problems with the preceding theory. First, Lamberz presupposes that the sort of Papal Primacy found in Anastasian JE 2448 was considered normative in both the East and West during the 860s, such that it would have not elicited the attention of Photius' chancery when they did their first excisions. This presupposition places Lamberz outside the consensus of scholars on the development of the Papacy and the reception of Papal ecclesiology in the East.⁷⁴ Additionally, correspondence during the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 226.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 227-28.

⁷⁴ Scholarly treatments reviewing the development of the Roman Papacy, even when allowing for a higher view of Papal ecclesiology existing in the West, have consistently concluded that the East had a synodical ecclesiology which never approved of Papal Primacy beyond that of an honorary one. See Siecienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox*; Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*; Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Aristeides Papadakis and John Meyendorff, *The Christian East and the*

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860s repeatedly exhibits frictions over questions pertaining to Papal ecclesiastical prerogatives.⁷⁵ Second, there is no plausible occasion for Photius finding Papal Primacy more objectionable subsequent to 870 (at which point Anastasius after his stay in Constantinople had his hands on Greek JE 2448) than he did during the 860s. Photius had more motivation before 870 to alter these documents' alleged Papal claims than after his return to the Emperor Basil I's good graces. His second deposition cannot be the answer, as he would have lost control of the levers of power to corrupt the Greek manuscript tradition. Third, Lamberz poses no explanation as to why Photius was so ham-handed as to excise jurisdictional claims in the 860s from JE 2448 and JE 2449; yet during the 870s excise Papal Primacy claims in JE 2448, but not similar claims from JE 2449.

Due to the preceding, one is compelled to lay aside Lamberz's theory concerning JE 2448. To make his theory work, the Greek forger (identified to be Photius or a partisan) simply forgot to remove Papal Primacy claims from JE 2449 when he was surgically excising the more exaggerated claims found in 2448. This is unlikely. Serraz concurs: "If it was the concern to diminish [Roman] primacy which motivated the alleged alteration of the *Letter to the Emperors* [JE 2448] by the Greek translator, we cannot understand the integrity of [i.e. make sense of] the *Letter to Tarasius* [JE 2449]."⁷⁶ The theory also uncritically assumes that Anastasius was not negligent (either intentionally or unintentionally) in mentioning all the differences in JE 2448. This places a lot of faith in Anastasius, which is not well placed. It additionally imputes the motive to alter documentation solely upon Photius. Yet, during Constantinople IV (879-80), Photius' chancery did not manifest a tendency to edit out Roman ecclesiastical claims, as statements made in Pope John VIII's *Tome* and by his legates retained their condescending and domineering tone in the Greek minutes.⁷⁷ Lamberz's conjecture that there were multiple rounds of Photian forgeries has too many problems to be a

Rise of the Papacy: The Church 1071-1453 A.D. (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994). In 2016, the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church likewise presumes upon this conclusion. See "Chieti Document," *Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church*, <<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiese-ortodosse-di-tradizione-bizantina/commissione-mista-internazionale-per-il-dialogo-teologico-tra-la/documenti-di-dialogo/testo-in-inglese1.html>>, July 13, 2023.

⁷⁵ Chrysos, "New perceptions of imperium and sacerdotium," 313-340.

⁷⁶ Serraz, "Les lettres du pape Hadrien Ier lues au IIe concile de Nicee," 420.

⁷⁷ John Sanidopoulos, "Photios the Great and the Eighth Ecumenical Synod' by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos," *Orthodox Christianity Then and Now*, <<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2016/02/photios-great-and-eighth-ecumenical.html>>, July 12, 2023.

compelling explanation for the differences between Latin and Greek JE 2448 on ecclesiastical questions.

Meanwhile, the inference that Anastasius merely interpolated material into JE 2448, with JE 2448 and JE 2449 otherwise already having differences between the Latin and Greek since Tarasius' time, requires no contrarian ecclesiastical presuppositions or unexplainable motives. Textually, it is the simplest explanation. A forgery of the Latin manuscript record following a predictable pattern of the era, as gleaned from the methodology of forgery used by the *Decretals*, from a known employer of forgeries (Anastasius), is a conclusion drawn from the evidence that works. As for *Letter Eighty Two* and *Letter 290* discussed above, their tone is explained by mutual relations between Nicholas and Photius having not yet fully broken down as they had by 862. In fact, it is only after this impasse does controversy over Nicaea II's renderings begin. This implies a change in Roman rhetoric in response to their new tact towards Photius.

Insight Drawn from Fragments of Latin JE 2448 and 2449 in the *Collectio Britannica*

The preceding conclusion is buttressed by fragments of JE 2448 and JE 2449 found in the *Collectio Britannica*.⁷⁸ The *Collectio* contains fragments of early Church documents, often using abbreviations and alternate spellings. Due to scholarship acknowledging potentially inauthentic and manipulated documents within the collection that is extant today, even if it is overall a reliable source for available documents from the 11th century,⁷⁹ one must be careful in placing too much importance in its contents. In fact, some of its contents match no known manuscript of a given work, evidencing an inventive gloss or false attribution.⁸⁰ Yet, there is some reason to believe the *Collectio* is helpful in this case.

Anastasius' interpolations are found within the *Collectio*'s fragments of JE 2448. Lamberz concludes they preserve an independent tradition of JE 2448, thereby corroborating the accuracy of Anastasius' translation as being faithful to the original.⁸¹ *Collectio*'s renderings of the Anastasian interpolations nearly word-for-word match what is found Anastasius' translation of Nicaea II. For example, the verbiage and word order of the Papal fragment at the beginning of *Collectio*'s JE 2448 is identical with the Papal interpolation at the beginning of Anastasian JE 2448, with the exception of an

⁷⁸ British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 100r-1v; 103v-4r.

⁷⁹ Christof Rolker, "The *Collectio Britannica* and its Sources: Reviewing the Trustworthiness of a Key Witness of Medieval Papal Letters," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 108 (2022): 111-69.

⁸⁰ In particular, statements in Jerome's *Ad Amandum (Letter Fifty Five)*: "Obsecro ut petas rufinum..." and "Interp[re]tacione quoq[ue]; psalmos..." in British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 100r. Cf. CSEL 54:486-95.

⁸¹ Lamberz, "Falsata Graecorum more," 217.

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added word (“*pennit*,” an abbreviation) and the absence of the word (“*suis*.”)⁸² Similarly, the interpolation containing verbiage from the letter to Pope Donus is word-for-word in most respects.⁸³ The passage afterwards in *Collectio* (*si uerram...ecclesiae*) containing the beginning of Anastasian JE 2448’s largest interpolation (beginning at *porro* as discussed previously) is word-for-word between both traditions.⁸⁴ Additionally, *Collectio* JE 2448’s rendering of Anastasian JE 2448’s first complaint about the title “Ecumenical Patriarch” is almost word-for-word.⁸⁵ In the preceding, there are merely some spelling differences due to the *Collectio*’s tendency to abbreviate.

The preceding word-for-word parallel passages, instead of independently verifying the contents of Anastasius’ translation of Nicaea II, prove the opposite. They inveigh against the possibility the *Collectio* independently corroborates Anastasius’ retroversion into Latin. One would expect that after two translations Latin words would begin dropping out and changing. Indeed, Lamberz’s thesis is that Anastasius restored the ending of Greek JE 2448 from Original Latin JE 2448, so this can explain why those passages contain no signs of retroversion. However, this cannot explain why the Papal Primacy passage earlier in JE 2448 also has no signs of retroversion either. Gleaning the pattern of retroversion, and lack thereof, is not complicated. *Collectio*’s Passages which are not Papal interpolations concerning John Chrysostom⁸⁶ and Stephen of Bostra⁸⁷ predictably contain Latin verbiage greatly at odds with Anastasian JE 2448. They are so highly variant, it is at first glance surprising that the *Collectio* is so reliable with all the former passages, but none of the latter.

However, if one is informed by the thesis presented here, a sensible explanation is possible. The *Collectio* preserves tampered correspondence of Adrian I. As inferred

⁸² Lamberz, *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum*, 123. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 101r.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 163. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 100v. For example, wording is identical for eight lines (as per Lamberz’s critical edition) until the word *sub* is found in front of *iureiurando* in the latter source.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 165. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 101r.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 167. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 101r-v. For example, wording is identical for nine lines (as per Lamberz’s critical edition) until the word *sibi* in the former is rendered *suam* in the latter source.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 143. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 101r-v. For example, *contumeliis affeceris* in the former is rendered *iniuriaueris* in the latter; *contumelias irrogas* is *iniurias*; *ad ipsum imperatorem, id est ad ipsum principale et ad eius dignitatem refert iniuriam* is *in prime forme dignitas adfert iniuria*; after this point the differences become even more profound.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 157. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 100v. For example, *non enim lignum adoratur* in the former is rendered *non lignum adoratur* in the latter; *conspicitur et memoratur, honorrificatur* is *comemoratur et cotemplatur*. Similar to the latter part of N. 82, after this point the differences become even more profound.

previously, Anastasius created his interpolations before he completed his translation of Nicaea II in 873. Due to the variant Latin in the non-Papal fragments as opposed to the Papal ones, this implies that Anastasius' initial interpolations into JE 2448 were not made into a copy of Nicaea II, but into Adrian I's Papal registry. It was this registry "found in the archives of the Roman Church" that Anastasius refers to.⁸⁸ He used this registry to supplement his retroversion of Greek JE 2448.

It is also possible (though not favored by this study) that the majority scholarly position, that JE 2448 in both Greek and Latin are essentially faithful to their autographs in 787, is correct. After all, for the Papal Primacy statement at the beginning of Latin JE 2448 to have no signs of retroversion, but for other passages to have said signs, may allow for Anastasius (without notifying his readers) to have faithfully imported the Papal statement from Adrian I's original Latin letter into his retroversion of Greek JE 2448. This is less likely due to the textual issues discussed previously, but even if it were to be the case it disallows for Lamberz's thesis that Anastasius faithfully represented Greek JE 2448 in all crucial points and that a second round of Photian forgeries occurred.

A discussion about a fragment from *Collectio's* JE 2448, which very closely follows *Collectio's* fragment of JE 2449, is in order. The fragment is a passage, though rendered in Price's translation of JE 2449,⁸⁹ that is absent in Anastasius' version of Nicaea II. It is only found in the *Collectio*.⁹⁰ Interestingly, the fragment in *Collectio* JE 2449 essentially repeats itself in one of the aforementioned fragments of *Collectio* JE 2448 (*si uerram...ecclesiae*). Price recognizes that *Collectio* JE 2449 and the parallel in JE 2448 are word-for-word.⁹¹ Due to the internal details in *Collectio's* JE 2449 appearing authentic, one may justifiably infer the likelihood of *Collectio's* fragment being original to Latin JE 2449. This further indicates that Anastasius had introduced an interpolation by inserting authentic Papal correspondence from JE 2449 into JE 2448, a conclusion surmised previously. Due to said contents not existing in the Greek by Anastasius' own admission, one should not expect any sign of retroversion.

Conclusion: Anastasius Corrupted Latin JE 2448

From the preceding, one is hard pressed to conclude that Anastasius did not add interpolations into Latin JE 2448. While the majority thesis is correct that there were diplomatic edits made to JE 2448 and 2449 so that since Nicaea II both the Latin and Greek henceforth had marked differences, these diplomatic edits were not applied to JE

⁸⁸ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 179.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 103v-4r.

⁹¹ Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, 179. Differences are minimal, aside from the addition of the word *dignetur* at the end of *Collectio's* JE2449. See Ibid., 165; 183. Cf. British Library, *Add MS 8873*, fol. 101r; 103v-4r.

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2449's short Papal statements. This makes the excision of such Papal statements in JE 2448 initially surprising, until one applies a critical eye to their nature. Unlike JE 2449's Papal Primacy statement, JE 2448's contents' treatment of the Papacy are peculiarly more advanced than earlier conciliar precedent and contain an obvious anachronism in reference to a ninth century debate surrounding the title "Ecumenical Patriarch." They also contain identifiable "fingerprints" evidencing interpolations. Like the *Decretals*, Anastasian JE 2448 contains verbiage buttressing Papal Primacy from uncited Papal correspondence in four examples within a few paragraphs. The entirety of the letter lacks any such uncited correspondence. Furthermore, within the *Collectio* Latin fragments of JE 2448 bearing on Papal ecclesiology correspond word-for-word with Anastasian JE 2448. This means that Anastasian JE 2448 suspiciously lacks any signs of retroversion in these sections, even though fragments not bearing upon the Papacy have drastically different Latin, consistent with Anastasius retroverting Greek JE 2448. The preceding is not entirely relevant concerning those fragments found in the end of the letter as Anastasius admits they were missing from the Greek since Nicaea II and he had allegedly restored them. Rather, it is particularly important in reference to the fragment which corresponds with an earlier part of Latin JE 2448 touching upon Rome's Petrine inheritance being a "singular honor." One cannot posit that this section was restored word-for-word by Anastasius from an allegedly intact version of Original Latin JE 2448 without dispensing with any notion of an additional round of Photian forgeries.

Lastly, Anastasius most plausibly had the motive to alter JE 2448 in these sections. As discussed beforehand, the ecclesiastical question of Rome's authority was being treated innovatively during Anastasius' tenure in the Papal chancery. Such creativity was given an additional impetus by Pope Nicholas' deposition in 867, as such a deposition presumed upon the Pope being under the disciplinary authority of the world's synods acting in concert. Previous Patriarchal depositions, such as those of Paul of Samosata, Nestorius of Constantinople, and Dioscorus of Alexandria, required the consent of the world's Patriarchs and their synods. Previous Papal depositions, the most famous being that of Vigilius during Constantinople II, followed the same model.⁹² A combination of Nicholas' deposition and Ignatius' intransigence concerning the jurisdictional dispute in southern Italy and the Balkans demanded a response from the Papal chancery which had already used forgeries to exaggerate their prerogatives. An Ecumenical Council

⁹² Richard Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553 with related texts on the Three Chapters Controversy: Volume Two* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 99-101. As for Pope Silverius and Pope Martin, they were similarly deposed by imperial decree with the consent of the world's synods. Presuming upon the authentic consent of all the Patriarchs and their synods, this made the depositions canonical. The Roman Synod's implicit acquiescence, in that they accepted the election of new Popes while Silverius and Martin were still alive, effectively meant that Rome had consented to the deposition of their own Patriarch both times.

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weighing in on the Pope's role in the Church was not particularly useful in 787, but it was increasingly useful *after* 867. Barring an authentic conciliar text providing Anastasius what he needed, necessity proved to be the mother of invention. Interpolations were first introduced in Adrian I's registry and soon afterwards these were used to modify the Latin retroversion of JE 2448.