George E. Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter: Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity.* **(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.) Print, 262 pp., £24.99, ISBN: 9780812223699.**

Review

This book is an intensive and comprehensive study on the ecclesiastical history of papal authority from late antiquity to the Middle Ages. The special connection between the apostle Peter and the popes of the Roman Church is considered as a new papal theory. The discourses (referring to papal letters, treatises, and biographies) from the historical figures of Leo the Great (bishop of Rome, 440-461), Gelasius I (492-496), and Gregory the Great (590-604), are rhetorically explored by George E. Demacopoulos to argue that 'the escalations of papal rhetoric, almost always linked directly to a Petrine claim, were often born in moments of papal anxiety or weakness' (p. 2) and that the specific claims of the Petrine discourse contributed to its survival.

Chapter One surveys the earliest narratives about Peter and features aspects of the Petrine legend that would prove most useful for bridging Petrine and papal authority in subsequent centuries. The author examined three elements of the Petrine legends, the external recognition of Petrine privilege, and the cultic practices associated with Peter's tomb. Among the early Christian texts, the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, and *Martyrdom of Peter* failed to mention Peter as a bishop or the existence of a Roman episcopate. However, the *Pseudo-Clementines* and *First Clement* are seen to claim the authority of Peter, Paul, and Irenaeus of Lyon. Here, the *Pseudo-Clement's Epistle to James* is presumed to be one of the earliest elaborations of a Petrine legend, differentiating the Roman See and the Roman bishop from other sees and bishops. Based on this, Demacopoulos maintains that although there was a connection

between Peter, Rome, and the Roman bishop as early as the late second century, the bishops of Rome themselves started to link their authority to the Petrine legacy from the middle of the fourth century. Leo's narrative decisions in his formulation of Roman authority are discussed in Chapter Two; his writings survive in relatively complete editions. The extant 140 letters are presumed to be genuine. As Leo was one of the earliest pontiffs to employ the figure of Peter, his use of the topos was typically confined to a specific set of diplomatic circumstances. A large number of Leo's sermons corresponding to the Christian feasts of Holy Week, Christmas, Pentecost, Lent, the September fast, and the Feast of Sts Peter and Paul adopted the Petrine topos as a form of rhetorical performance and self-presentation. In particular, *Sermon* 82 is seen 'as a sophisticated appropriation of key elements of an "imperial" discourse for the purpose of promoting Petrine authority' (p. 44). Four *homilies* also depict Peter as a forceful tool for the publicity of Roman episcopal authority. When the Christological controversies dominated the theological debate of the Eastern Church during the fifth century, the Petrine discourse enabled Leo's rhetorical choices to achieve his diplomatic goals. Demacopoulos maintained that 'Leo's initial development of the Petrine topos between 441 and 443 may have been born of anxiety over the extent to which other episcopal leaders would accept his authority' (p. 71).

Pope Gelasius I was the first pope to propose a specific model for church/state interaction, through which he offered the most assertive of late ancient papal claims to ecclesiastical authority. Chapter Three 'raises the possibility that Gelasius' assertions of papal authority do not document ecclesiological or political realities, but instead encapsulate a discourse of papal ambition born of frustration […] either at home or abroad' (p. 74). Such results, according to *Tractate 6*, were caused by the personal experience that 'he neither enjoyed the respect of the Senate

nor had the full support of the Roman clergy' (p. 74). Yet, *The Invention of Peter* introduces Gelasius as the pontiff most involved in the ecclesiastical and political affairs of Italy, Sicily, and the Latin-speaking Balkans. Unlike the previous part, Chapter Four describes how the sixth-century papacy rarely enjoyed its privilege over the secular rulers of Italy or the empire. Especially, the so-called Laurentian schism, which began with the contested papal election between Symmachus and Laurentius in 498, weakened the papal authority religio-politically. The *Novellae*, representing new laws, reforms or clarifications of previous laws, typically characterized the See of Rome as little more than the administrative office of a provincial church. Although the majority of ecclesiastical legislation often emphasized the bishop of Constantinople as the authority, it is argued that the popes of Rome in this era were subjected to the concerns of Theoderic (ruler of Italy, 493–526) and Justinian (the Byzantine, or Eastern Roman, emperor, 527-565).

The final chapter focuses on Gregory who, like many of his predecessors, employed assertive elements of an inherited Petrine discourse in times of international weakness. His theological treatises proved that the pope developed new ways to promote and utilize Peter's shrine and relics. The Peter of Gregory was believed to perform miracles through his tomb and chain filings used during his imprisonment. The four test cases of the Sicilian clergy, Germanic aristocracy, Eastern clergy, and Roman emperor were used to demonstrate the notion that 'Gregory's use of the topos was, at best, inconsistently effective in achieving its immediate goals' (p. 135). The pope is understood to have been able to maximize the rhetorical force of the Petrine topos and transform it into a multidimensional resource, constituted in terms of space, time, and memory. Ultimately, this volume has been limited to three major papal figures, but the broad knowledge and different aspects of the Petrine legacy transmitted to Western Europe in the later Middle Ages

are useful for readers and students of ecclesiastical history, rhetoric, philosophy, papal studies, medieval politics, discourse studies, and classics.

David W. Kim

Australian National University