

ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. XV

HELSINKI 1981 HELSINGFORS

INDEX

Paavo Castrén	Von <i>populi Albenses</i> bis <i>cives Campanienses</i> : Anmerkungen zur Frühgeschichte des lateinischen Suffixes <i>-ensis</i>	5
Tapio Helen	The Non-Latin and Non-Greek Personal Names in the Roman Brick Stamps and Some Considerations on Semitic Influences on the Roman Cognomen System	13
Siegfried Jäkel	Die Norm der Sprache und die Verhaltensnorm der Menschen aus der Sicht der Poetik des Aristoteles	23
Iiro Kajanto	<i>Pontifex maximus</i> as the Title of the Pope	37
Jukka Korpela	Die Grabinschriften des Kolumbariums <i>libertorum Liviae Augustae</i> : Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung	53
Bengt Löfstedt	Zu Dhuodas Liber manualis	67
Martti Nyman	Deleting a Lautgesetz: Lat. <i>exilis</i> and Related Issues	85
Heikki Solin	Analecta epigraphica LXVII—LXXVIII	101
Arto Wilmi	Linguistische Bemerkungen zu den Gräzismen in Petrons Cena Trimalchionis	125
De novis libris iudicia	131

PONTIFEX MAXIMUS AS THE TITLE OF THE POPE

Iiro Kajanto

In relevant literature it is in general stated that *pontifex maximus*, as a honorary title of the Pope, came into use during the papacy of Leo I (440—461). Thus H. E. Feine, *Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte I* (1950) 99: "Leo I ... der sich zuerst 'Pontifex maximus' nannte"; cf. M. Bierbaum in *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*² 8 (1963), s.v.; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*² (1974); K. Ziegler in *Der Kleine Pauly* 4 (1972) 1047, and latterly G. J. Szemler, *RE Suppl. XV* (1978) 347: "Nach Papst Leo I wurde der Begriff *pontifex* [maximus] zu einem Ehrentitel der Päpste." The statement is, however, doubly erroneous. Firstly, *pontifex* and *pontifex maximus* have been confused. Again, in antiquity *pontifex* was not yet a distinctive title of the Pope. These incorrect ideas seem ultimately to derive from H. Leclercq, s.v. *pontifex* in *DACL* 14.1 (1939) 1424, whom e.g. Szemler quotes as his authority. I shall later return to the inaccuracies in Leclercq's article.

The supremacy of the Roman seat was the result of a slow development. The Pope was in origin, and remained for a long time, only the bishop of Rome. Hence his original nomenclature cannot be separated from the general nomenclature of bishops. The office dates from the post-apostolic age. In Greek, the bishop was normally designated by the word ἐπίσκοπος,

I am grateful to the direction of TLL for the permission to utilize the unpublished lists on the word *pontifex*. Although the excerpts are incomplete since Tertullian, they have been of great help to me in preparing the present paper.

'overseer'.¹ When Christian Latin began to develop, equivalents for 'bishop' were also created. The commonest of them was the Greek loan-word *episcopus*, which was rare in non-Christian Latin.² In one of the earliest Christian writings in Latin, the translation of Clement's letter to the Corinthians, from the second century,³ ἐπίσκοπος was rendered by its Latinized equivalent.⁴

In Christian Latin, Greek loan-words were, however, often replaced by native Latin words, which were either new coinages or, perhaps more often, old words which had acquired a new, Christian meaning. Thus *episcopus* had a number of Latin equivalents, *papa*, *sacerdos*, *antistes*, *praesul*, *pontifex*, occasionally even *speculator*.⁵ *Papa*, a word first found in Juvenal yet chiefly Christian, suggested 'paternité spirituelle';⁶ *sacerdos* was the general word for 'priest'; *antistes* and especially *praesul*, though also denoting pagan priests, were put to use as synonyms of *episcopus* probably because of their general meaning of 'president'.⁷ In contrast to these words, *pontifex* is at first sight an unsuitable equivalent of *episcopus*. Its transparent etymology suggested 'bridge-maker'. Moreover, the word was exclusively used to denote the chief pagan priesthood. Yet it was this word that, excepting *papa*, made the most famous career of the whole batch of the titles.

For this there must have been special reasons. The decisive one may have been the fact that in early Christian Latin, *pontifex* was used as the Latin equivalent of ἀρχιερεύς, the high priest of the Jews,⁸ thus in

¹ For the partly obscure origin of the institution, see H. Chadwick, *The Early Church* (1967) 46—48. — The word ἐπίσκοπος certainly occurs in the Bible, Acts 20,28; Phil. 1,1; 1 Tim. 3,2; Tit. 1,7, but the difference to presbyter is not yet clear.

² TLL V.2, 676.

³ *Florilegium patristicum XLIV* (1941). For the date of the letter, see the discussion in Mohrmann, *Études* 3, 78—82.

⁴ 42,5; 44,1 and 4: *episcopatus* for ἐπισκοπή.

⁵ Mohrmann, *Études* 4, 99sq.; 251sq.

⁶ P. de Labriolle, *Une esquisse de l'histoire du mot 'Papa'*, *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétienne*, 1911, 215—220.

⁷ Mohrmann, *Études* 4, 252.

⁸ For the Greek word, see Bauer, s.v.

the earliest Latin translations of the Bible, especially in the *versio Afra*,⁹ as well as in the aforementioned Latin version of Clement's letter to the Corinthians.¹⁰ In this letter, also, Christ was called *pontifex*¹¹ or *pontifex et antistes animarum nostrarum*,¹² a usage originating in the Hebrews, where Christ is often referred to by ἄρχιερέυς.¹³ Rendering ἄρχιερέυς by *pontifex* was due to the literalism of these early translations.¹⁴ Since pagan *pontifex* was translated by ἄρχιερέυς, the translations of the *versio Afra* and of Clement's letter, conversely, rendered ἄρχιερέυς by *pontifex*, notwithstanding the fact that *pontifex* still referred to an existing pagan priesthood.¹⁵ In the earliest Christian authors, *pontifex*, unless used of pagan priests, denoted Christ, thus Tertullian, Carn. 5,10 *salutis pontifex*, and Marc. 4,35 *authenticus pontifex dei patris*.

As a synonym of *episcopus*, the word was probably first used in the anonymous letter 1 of Collectio Avellana,¹⁶ which describes the disorders in Rome during the papacy of Liberius (352—366). The letter is argued to have been written by a Roman ca. 370.¹⁷ The language is unadorned and simple, almost Vulgar. In this letter, *episcopus* and *pontifex* are used as synonyms without a shade of difference, thus *qui* (scil., emperor Constantius) *et Athanasium episcopum resistentem haereticis persecutus est et, ut damnaretur ab omnibus episcopis, imperavit. quod etiam metu principis facere temptaverunt omnes ubique pontifices* (p. 1,3sq.). The word is used alternatively with *episcopus* of the bishop of Rome, *Liberius Romanus*

⁹ F. C. Burkitt, 'Chief priests' in the Latin Gospels, Journ. Theol. Studies 9 (1908) 290—97. In the 'Itala' version, the normal equivalents were *princeps sacerdotum* or *summus sacerdos*, which are also the usual equivalents in the Vulgate, except for John and the Hebrews, where *pontifex* is frequent.

¹⁰ 40,5; 41,2; 43,4: *pontificatus* for τὸ ἱερατεῦειν.

¹¹ 36,1 *pontificem et advocatum precum nostrarum* for τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν προσφορῶν ἡμῶν.

¹² 61,3 and 64 for διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ προστάτου τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

¹³ Bauer and Lampe, s.v.

¹⁴ Cf. Mohrmann, Études 3, 78—82.

¹⁵ For ἄρχιερέυς as the equivalent of *pontifex maximus*, see e.g. Augustus, Index rerum gestarum IV.7; cf. Liddell & Scott.

¹⁶ CSEL 35.1.

¹⁷ É. Amann, Libère, Dict. Théol. Cath. IX (1926) 638sq.

episcopus (p. 1,8); *se vivente Liberio pontificem alterum nullatenus habituros* (p. 1,16sq.); *sibi Ursinum diaconum pontificem in loco Liberii ordinari deprecant* (p. 2,21); *Ursinus ... qui prius fuerat pontifex ordinatus* (p. 3,3sq.). *Episcopus* is, however, more common, 11 cases in all.

In discussing the words used as synonyms of the technical term *episcopus*, Mohrmann asserts that *pontifex* was chosen "pur des raisons purement stylistiques, dans la prose rhétorique, la poésie classicisante et dans la liturgie romaine".¹⁸ She quotes examples from Hieronymus' letter 108 (dated 404) and from Paulinus of Nola (turn of 4th and 5th century) as well as from the ancient orations in the *Missale Romanum*.¹⁹ But the first letter in *Collectio Avellana* cannot possibly be described as 'rhetorical' or 'classicizing'. Arguably the use of *pontifex* as a synonym of *episcopus* is also ascribable to the rendering of ἀρχιερέως by *pontifex*, which we observed in the Latin version of Clement's letter to the Corinthians. In the same letter, the Hebrew high priest, priests, and Levites are in fact equated with the Christian ministry: τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖ ἴδιαι λειτουργίαι δεδομένα εἰσὶν, καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται, καὶ Λευίταις ἴδιαι διακονίαι ἐπικεῖνται || *Pontifici enim sua ministeria data sunt, et sacerdotibus suus locus constitutus, et Levitis suum ministerium propositum est* (40,5). Although it is the Hebrew priests that are listed here, they were meant to suggest Christian bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Hence it was easy to use *pontifex* in place of *episcopus*. The usage was facilitated by the fact that Christ, who was often called *pontifex* in early Christian Latin, was sometimes held to be the bishop of men, especially 1 Petr. 2,25 *conversi estis nunc ad pastorem, et episcopum animarum vestrarum*.²⁰ We could even propose an equation, Christ alias *episcopus* and Christ alias *pontifex* is *episcopus* alias *pontifex*. A contributing factor may have been the similarity in function between a bishop and a pagan pontiff. Both had similar duties of supervision and control.

It may be due to chance that the first case is as late as ca. 370. In any case, contrary to what Mohrmann argues, the usage originated in the

¹⁸ Études 4, 100.

¹⁹ For the orations, see Mary P. Ellebracht, Remarks on the Vocabulary of the Ancient Orations in the *Missale Romanum* (*Latinitas Christianorum primaeva* 18, 1963) 140.

²⁰ Cf. Lampe, s.v. ἐπίσκοπος II A.3.

popular language, such as the Latin version of Clement's letter and a simple piece of writing like the first letter in the *Collectio Avellana*.

Henceforward *pontifex* was frequent as a synonym of *episcopus*. In Hieronymus' Correspondence the word was found first a. 393.²¹ That *pontifex* and *episcopus* were identical in meaning is illustrated by a passage like Epist. 64,5: *pontifex et episcopus, quem oportet esse sine crimine*. Although Hieronymus might be considered 'rhetorical', the word also occurred in authors who were free from literary pretensions, in Cassian (360—435),²² in Eucherius (d. 449),²³ in *Vita S. Hilarii Arelatensis* (latter half of the 5th century),²⁴ in Iulianus Pomerius (of the same period),²⁵ and in many others, whom it is superfluous to quote here.

To turn to the misconceptions about *pontifex* as denoting the bishop of Rome or the Pope, as stated at the beginning, the erroneous idea, according to which *pontifex* or even *pontifex maximus* came into use as the honorary title of the Pope during the reign of Leo I, seems to be imputable to Leclercq, op. cit. He writes: "Cependant le titre de *pontifex* appartenait trop étroitement à la hiérarchie sacerdotale du paganisme pour que les fidèles n'éprouvassent quelque répugnance à l'appliquer aux dignitaires du clergé chrétien... A partir du V^e siècle, la décadance du paganisme est si marquée que la répugnance se dissipe." He quotes as the first example an inscription from St Paul's. The inscription, in mosaic and datable to 443—449, praises Leo because the major arch of the basilica *gaudet pontificis studio splendere Leonis*.²⁶ But as we have just seen, this is not the first case of *pontifex* as the title of the bishop of Rome. The first example is almost a century older. Even in epigraphy, there is an earlier case. In an inscription a sacred fount is claimed to be *labor ... meritumque duorum pontificum*, viz. of Bonifatius (418—422) and of Caelestinus (422—432).²⁷ The inscription is datable to the latter's term of office. Also, Leo calls himself *pontifex* in a sermon.²⁸

²¹ No. 48,4,1. For the date, J. Labourt, *Saint Jérôme, Lettres II* (1951) p. 119.

²² Inst. (CSEL 17) 2,5,1 *primus Alexandriae urbi pontifex*, etc.

²³ Instruct. (CSEL 31) p. 156,8: *sacerdotes* and *pontifices* as separate bodies.

²⁴ Proem. (Migne 50) p. 1221; 6,9 p. 1227, etc.

²⁵ J. C. Plumpe, *Pomeriana, Vigil. Christ.* 1 (1947) 227—32.

²⁶ ICVR 4784 = Diehl 1761b.

²⁷ ICVR 4100 = Diehl 1838.

²⁸ Sermo 1 (Migne 54) p. 141.

Since then, *pontifex* was not rare as the title of the Pope or the bishop of Rome, but was by no means used to the exclusion of other terms. A good example of the wide choice of the titles is to be found in the Leonine Sacramentary, which was probably composed between 440—550.²⁹ In chapter XX,³⁰ Xystus, bishop and martyr, is called *sacerdos* (I etc.), *apostolici pontificatus ... successor* (II), *praecipuus sacerdos* (III), *sedis apostolicae sacerdos* (IV), *praesul apostolicus* (V) and *sanctus pontifex* (VI). For the reasons of style, a number of different expressions denoting Pope were used. In the *Acta synhodorum habitarum Romae* 499—502,³¹ all the current expressions were employed. The Pope was designated by *pontifex*,³² by *Romanae civitatis pontifex*,³³ by *Romanus pontifex*,³⁴ by *papa*, which was much more frequent,³⁵ and in some cases by *antistes*, *episcopus*, *praesul*, and *sacerdos*.³⁶ Still in the Correspondence of Gregory the Great, we find a similar diversity of the titles. Besides *episcopus*, the Pope is called *antistes*, *papa*, *praesul* as well as *pontifex*, either simply or qualified by *Romanus* or *apostolicae sedis*.³⁷

In epigraphy, the Popes of the third century, buried in the catacomb of Callistus, had the Greek title of ἐπίσκοπος.³⁸ The only exception is Cornelius (251—253), who had a Latin epitaph, *martyr ep(iscopus)*.³⁹ In the other Papal epitaphs which have survived, the Popes, down to Gregory the Great, showed all the titles in common use.⁴⁰ Damasus

²⁹ A. Stuiber, *Libelli Sacramentorum Romani* (Theophaneia 6, 1950) 63.

³⁰ *Natale Sancti Xysti in coemeterio Callisti* (Migne 55) p. 91—93.

³¹ MGH, *Auct. Ant.* XII.

³² *Ibid.* p. 448,2.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 447,7.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 405,13.

³⁵ See index, p. 565.

³⁶ Index, p. 516, 539, 571sq., 581.

³⁷ *Gregorii I Papae registrum epistolarum I—II*, MGH *Epistulae I—II*, index, p. 519, 572, 579.

³⁸ ICVR 10558, 10584, 10616, 10645 (fragmentary, the title lacking), 10670, 10694.

³⁹ ICVR 9367.

⁴⁰ The epitaphs of the Popes have been printed in Ch. Huelsen's translation of F. Gregorovius, *Le tombe dei papi*, p. 8*sq. (1931) and by Montini (see abbreviations). To save space, I do not here give the respective numbers and pages. The inscriptions are easy to find in the books quoted.

(366—384) calls himself *episcopus*; Siricius (d. 399) is *magnus sacerdos*; Caelestinus (d. 432) *praesul apostolicae sedis*; Anastasius II (d. 498) *praesul*; John I (d. 526) *sacerdos* and *antistes Domini*; Felix IV (d. 530) *antistes*; Boniface II (d. 532) *praesul*; John II (d. 535) *antistes*, but his metrical epitaph also praises his *pontificale decus*; Pelagius I (d. 561) *papa*; Gregory the Great (d. 604) *pontifex summus* and *papa*.

We should, however, bear in mind that Papal epitaphs were written in distichs or hexametres. In verse, poetic licence and the demands of the metre favoured some expressions at the expense of others. This may explain why the trochaic *praesul*, which in the genitive forms a dactylic foot, is found in a great number of Papal epitaphs, in three of those listed above. After Gregory the Great, *praesul* is found in the epitaphs of Sabinius (d. 606), Honorius I (d. 638), Theodorus I (d. 649), John VII (d. 707), Sergius II (d. 847), Benedict III (d. 858), Nicholas I (d. 867), Adrian II (d. 872), John VIII (d. 882), Marinus I (d. 884), Stephen V (d. 891), Boniface VI (d. 896), Benedict IV (d. 903), John XIV (d. 984), John XVII (d. 1003), Sergius IV (d. 1012), Alexander III (d. 1181), Urban V (d. 1370) *summus praesul*. But some other titles, *pontifex* and especially *papa*, were even more popular. On the other hand, *praesul* once denotes a bishop, in the epitaph of Clement IV (d. 1268).

Because of the supremacy of the seat of Rome, which became increasingly conspicuous since the papacy of Leo I, one could expect that the singular position of the city's bishop among other bishops should have been shown by his title. The above review of the material has, however, revealed that before the Middle Ages there is little evidence of this. The nomenclature of the bishop of Rome was not in principle different from that of other bishops.

In view of the later history of *pontifex*, it may be useful to discuss the epithets and qualifications of the title. Unless used simply, it could be qualified by *Romanus* or a similar expression, cf. the expressions from the Roman synods and from Gregory's Correspondence quoted above. Other variants, e.g. Marcellini v.c. comitis Chronicon (post a. 534) *Romanae arcis pontifex* and *Romanae ecclesiae pontifex*.⁴¹ We even encounter *archipontifex* and *papa urbis Romae*, a. 519, a hybrid formation found

⁴¹ MGH, Auct. ant. XI, p. 77, 430,3 and p. 87, 461,1.

only here.⁴² Since all the bishops were considered to be successors of the apostles, the epithet *apostolicus* was not yet the prerogative of the bishop of Rome. But as the heir to St Peter, his position was unique, *Leone pontifice sedem beati Petri regente*.⁴³

Two expressions, *summus pontifex* and *pontifex maximus*, might seem very suitable to bring out the supremacy of the Roman seat. The former has already been quoted from the epitaph of Gregory the Great. But the examples are few. There is another case from a. 501.⁴⁴

Moreover, even this expression was used of all the other categories denoted by *pontifex*. Thus Christ was *summus pontifex*,⁴⁵ and so were ordinary bishops, e.g. Sidonius Apollinaris in his epitaph.⁴⁶ Paulinus of Nola writes about St Augustine, *Tunc vere sibi summus Christi pontifex Augustinus videbatur*.⁴⁷ In *Vita S. Hilarii Arelatensis*, there is a relevant passage, *tum presbyteri, nunc pontificis summi*.⁴⁸ It is, however, possible that the meaning of the epithet was here different from that in the title of the Pope. In the latter, it may have suggested 'chief' whereas as an epithet of a bishop it was more a panegyric term, 'high'. In the passage quoted from Paulinus of Nola, this connotation is patent. Yet there are passages in which no such connotation seems possible, thus Ennodius, *Dictio I, in ordinatione summi pontificis*,⁴⁹ 'in conferring the holy orders upon a bishop'. All this proves that the nomenclature of the bishops was still far from settled.

In Christian Latin, I have found only three cases of *pontifex maximus* used in other than pagan meaning. Tertullian, in his *De pudicitia*, written ca. 217—222, carries violent polemics against Callistus, the bishop of Rome, deriding him (1,6) as *pontifex ... maximus, quod [est] episcopus episcoporum*. But giving the bishop of Rome, amidst still vigorous paga-

⁴² Thiel, *Epist. pont.* p. 864; for the word, see TLL II, 463.

⁴³ Marcellinus, *op. cit.* p. 84, 451.

⁴⁴ *Acta synhodorum* (see n. 31) p. 450,4.

⁴⁵ E.g. Cassian, *Conl.* (CSEL 13) 14,10,2 *summus verusque pontifex noster Iesus Christus*.

⁴⁶ Diehl 1067,13.

⁴⁷ *Epist.* 7,3.

⁴⁸ XXII 29 (Migne 50) p. 1243.

⁴⁹ CSEL 6, p. 425,17.

nism, the title of the chief pagan priest, was sheer spiteful irony. Another case of no real relevance is in Prosper Tiro (first half of the 5th century), who once calls the high priest of the Jews thus.⁵⁰ Finally, Isidorus certainly uses the terms *summus sacerdos* and *pontifex maximus*, but the words refer to the bishop in his capacity of *princeps sacerdotum*. A little earlier, he called the Pope *patriarcha Romanus*.⁵¹ In Prosper Tiro no less than in Isidorus, the title of the chief pagan priest was only put to an occasional use as a synonym of more current expressions.

Pontifex maximus, in contrast to simple *pontifex*, was, then, clearly avoided in Christian nomenclature. If *pontifex* had to be qualified as 'chief' or 'high', the unequivocal epithet *summus* was used. *Pontifex maximus* was no doubt avoided because it was a very notorious pagan title. Being an inseparable part of Imperial nomenclature, one could not fail to see it everywhere in an uncountable number of inscriptions dedicated to and by the emperors. Even Christian emperors at first bore it. The last case is from 370, in the inscription recording the building of the modern ponte Cestio by Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian.⁵² But Gratian later repudiated the title. According to Zosimus, 41,36,5, the pontiffs brought Gratian the traditional *στολή* or the toga praetexta of *pontifex maximus*, but he rejected it, ἀθέμιτον εἶναι Χριστιανῶ τὸ σχῆμα νομίσας, "considering the dress unfitting for a Christian". The year was probably 375.⁵³ Though only the toga of the chief pontiff is referred to, the title was no doubt also rejected. In any case, henceforward it vanishes from Imperial nomenclature.

In ancient Church, then, *pontifex maximus* was never used as the title of the Pope, and even *pontifex* was only one of a number of generally accepted designations. Besides, it could denote ordinary bishops as well.

The title during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

In the medieval times, *papa* and *pontifex* were the usual designations for the Pope. Since the 7th century, *papa* was rarely used of other bishops,

⁵⁰ MGH, Auct. ant. IX p. 394, 167 *Hebraeorum pontifex maximus Chelchias*.

⁵¹ Etym. 7,12,13 and 7,12,5.

⁵² CIL VI 1175 = Dessau 771; cf. G. Lugli, *Itinerario di Roma antica* (1975) 93sq.

⁵³ Th. Mommsen, *Röm. Staatsrecht* II³ (1887) 1108 n. 5.

whereas *pontifex* was somewhat more freely employed.⁵⁴ In the *Liber pontificalis*, *papa* and *pontifex* alternate as the normal titles of the Pope. Occasionally we encounter *summus pontifex*, e.g. II p. 332, the 11th century. At least in the *Liber pontificalis*, this expression seems to have gained in currency in the late medieval period. In the latest biographies of the Popes, composed soon after Martin V's death in 1431 but before 1435,⁵⁵ the usual designations for the Pope were *papa* or *pontifex summus*, the latter, for instance, used of Urban V (p. 494), of Urban VI (p. 494), etc., down to Martin V (p. 515).

In Roman epigraphy, before the mid fifteenth century, the normal title was *papa*, rarely *pontifex*.⁵⁶ *Pontifex summus* is also rare. The title occurs in the epitaph of John XIII (d. 972).⁵⁷ In an inscription from a. 1278, *Nicolaus p(a)p(a)* is a few lines later, probably for the reasons of style, called *sum(mus) po(n)tifex*.⁵⁸

Pontifex maximus was, then, unknown in Papal nomenclature until the Renaissance. In the present state of neo-Latin scholarship it is not possible to tell when the title first appeared in literary documents. The only dictionary which registers the term is R. E. Latham, *Revised medieval word-list* (1965), which dates it "ca. 1500". Latham, however, covers Latin vocabulary in British and Irish sources only. Still, it is reasonable to assume that the title came first into use in Rome, the site of the Papal government. Again, since the ancient title was chiefly known from inscriptions, not from literature, one could claim that the expression was first revived in epigraphy.

If we trust to Forcella, the first example of *pontifex maximus* should be found in the inscriptions on the famous bronze doors of St Peter's, carved

⁵⁴ Cf. Labriolle, *op. cit.* (see note 6). For *pontifex*, cf., e.g., R. Hakamies, *Glossarium latinitatis medii aevi Finlandicae* (1958), s.v., where *Henricus*, the patron saint of Finland, is called *pontifex*. Cf. also note 56.

⁵⁵ P. Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis II* (1892) p. XLVIII sq.

⁵⁶ *Pontifex* as the title of Boniface VIII (1294—1303), Forcella I 5 (the Capitol); in an inscription dated 1451, there is *sedentibus Martino, Eugenio et Nicolao Ro(manis) pont(ificibus)*, Forcella I 1587 (S. Maria sopra Minerva).

⁵⁷ Montini p. 158.

⁵⁸ Forcella I 2 (the Capitol) and XIII 2 (identity not observed).

by Filarete between 1433—1445, chiefly during the last years,⁵⁹ *Eugenius III pontif(ex) max(imus)*.⁶⁰ The inscriptions between the reliefs were written by Maffeo Vegio (1407—1458), a Christian humanist and canon of St Peter's.⁶¹ But during my recent visit to Rome, I could not find the words reported by Forcella, only *Eugenius p(a)p(a)*.⁶² Either Forcella has made a mistake, not unusual for him, or the words have for some reason vanished during the century that has elapsed from Forcella's days.

In any case, the papacy of Eugenius IV was suitable for introducing the new title. The humanists, who had begun to appear at the Papal court since Martin V, were gaining more and more influence, though the Pope, a one-time monk, did not personally favour them.⁶³ Among the humanists, admiration for and imitation of things antique was rife. In this environment, the proud title of *pontifex maximus*, which designated the Roman emperor as head of state religion, could easily be lifted and conferred upon the Pope, who was being frequently compared to Roman emperors.⁶⁴ It will be remembered that even God was given the epithets of Jupiter, *optimus maximus*. The dedication *D(eo) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*, which later adorned almost every Christian tombstone, first appeared in the 1430s.⁶⁵ Further, in an age when Ciceronianism was in high honour, replacing the unclassical *papa* by the classical *pontifex maximus* may have been natural.

As stated, *pontifex maximus* as a title of the emperor was mainly known from antique inscriptions. Several Imperial inscriptions, still extant in Rome, showed the title. Also, the humanists could get a knowledge of Imperial nomenclature from epigraphical sylloges, which were beginning to be composed. In the best-known of them, in that collected by Poggio

⁵⁹ A. Venturi, *Storia dell' arte italiana* VI (1908) 523sq.

⁶⁰ Forcella VI 46.

⁶¹ See V. Zaccaria, *Dizionario critico della letteratura italiana* 3 (1973) 582sq.

⁶² Especially under the relief showing the Pope and St Peter.

⁶³ For humanism in Eugenius' Rome, see L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* I¹³ (1955) 312sqq.

⁶⁴ Examples in my forthcoming book *Papal epigraphy in Renaissance Rome*.

⁶⁵ *Classical and Christian* 24—26.

Bracciolini,⁶⁶ *pontifex maximus* was found in no less than 14 inscriptions.⁶⁷ Even if the writers of new inscriptions did not bother to look at the triumphal arches or bridges or other remains of antiquity displaying Imperial inscriptions, they could draw for models on Poggio's and other early collectors' sylloges, which surely were well-known to the restricted circle of humanists in Papal Rome in mid fifteenth century.

Another argument for the epigraphical origin of the title is supplied by the abbreviations. An abbreviation like *pontif. max.*, where the end of a word is suspended, derives from classical epigraphy, while medieval inscriptions observed a complicated system of syllabic, nasal, and contracted abbreviations, which was similar to that in manuscripts.⁶⁸ The abbreviation *pontif. max.* in fact occurs in Poggio,⁶⁹ though *pont. max.* was the commonest variant.

There are two other disputable cases from the papacy of Eugenius. The sylloge of Petrus Sabinus from the late fifteenth century, published by De Rossi,⁷⁰ records an otherwise unknown and incomplete inscription:⁷¹

Eugenius Quartus pont. max. studium urbi antiquitate extinctum senatus consulto pleb(is) suae scitu restituit. domum hanc publicis studii pecuniis habitam scolarium...⁷² do(mino) Jo(hanne) episcopo Ananiensi universitatis scolarium rectore, d(omi)no Andrea de S. Cruce advocato apostolico et sociis reformationi eorundem scitu praepositis anno MCCCCXXXIII.

According to De Rossi, the inscription is lost. It was added in a different handwriting to one manuscript of the sylloge, the codex Chisianus from the early sixteenth century. The text refers to the restoration of the university of Rome ordered by the Pope in 1431.⁷³ It is, however, question-

⁶⁶ Poggio's sylloge has been reprinted by R. Henzen in CIL VI.1 p. XXVIII—XL. Cf. De Rossi, ICVR II.1 p. 338—42 and R. Weiss, *The Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (1958) 147.

⁶⁷ Nos. 3, 8, 18, 26, 35, 37, 40, 50, 54, 58, 59, 61, 75, 76.

⁶⁸ Cf. U. Nyberg, *Über inschriftliche Abkürzungen der gotischen und humanistischen Schriftperioden*, *Arctos* 12 (1978) 63sqq.

⁶⁹ Nos. 18 and 26.

⁷⁰ ICVR II.1 p. 407—452.

⁷¹ No. 197 p. 446.

⁷² Incomplete or fragmentary, De Rossi suggests *commoditati destinavit*.

⁷³ See G. Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums* II (1881) 45.

able whether the inscription was contemporaneous with the event or a genuine inscription at all. At this relatively early date, imitation of classical expressions was still rare in epigraphy. The epitaph of Martin V, which includes the classical phrase *temporum suorum felicitas*, is from the late 1430,⁷⁴ and the metrical epitaph of Eugenius, which is entirely classicizing, was posterior to his death in 1445.⁷⁵ In the inscription quoted it is especially the phrase *senatus consulto pleb(is) suae scitu* that is suspicious. As far as I know, the phrase is unique in the Renaissance epigraphy of Rome. The nearest parallel to it, the famous S.P.Q.R., came into use considerably later.⁷⁶ The expression *antiquitate extinctum* is also unusual, the common word being *vetustate*, etc. Arguably the inscription was written later to commemorate the dedication of an (unidentified) house to the use of the students, or, more probably, it was a literary composition which for some reason slipped into one copy of Sabinus' sylloge.

In S. Maria in Aracoeli there is an epitaph where the date of death is given thus: *obiit an(no) MCCCCXXXX die XI Aug(usti) Eugenio pont(i-fice) max(imo)*.⁷⁷ The tombstone is, however, not original, cf. 1. 5: *haeredes ... opus vetustate corruptum restituerunt*. The late origin of the epitaph is also betrayed by its mature humanist diction. Another inscription from the same church has the date in a form more typical of the age, *t(em)p(or)e Eugenii p(a)p(e) IV MCCCCXLI*.⁷⁸

While there are thus no incontestable cases from the papacy of Eugenius, the reign of Nicholas V (1447—1455), himself a humanist and a great patron of the humanists,⁷⁹ saw a sharp rise in the popularity of the title.

⁷⁴ Forcella VIII 73; cf. my Classical and Christian 18sq. and the forthcoming Papal epigraphy in Renaissance Rome.

⁷⁵ Montini p. 176. The epitaph will be discussed in detail in my forthcoming Papal epigraphy.

⁷⁶ The first epigraphical case found by me is from 1514, Forcella I 37, on the Capitol.

⁷⁷ Forcella I 496.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 497.

⁷⁹ In his epitaph, he is praised for the fact that *excoluit doctos doctior ipse viros*, Forcella VI 59. For humanism at his court, see Pastor, op. cit. (note 63) II¹³ 513sqq.

In the epitaph of a bishop, dedicated by Nicholas and dated by Forcella to 1447, he is called *Nicolaus V po(n)t(ifex) max(imus)*,⁸⁰ the abbreviation combining classical suspension with medieval nasal contraction. The inscription recording the restoration of the tomb of Innocent VII (d. 1406) has both *Innocenti VII pontifici maximo* and *Nicol. V pont. max.*⁸¹ In S. Maria Maggiore there is an undated epitaph dedicated by *Nicolaus V pont. max.*⁸² The restoration of S. Stefano Rotondo, in 1453, is commemorated by an inscription set up by *Nicolaus V pont. max.* in the architrave.⁸³ Moreover, in an inscription recording the dedication of an altar in St Peter's in 1451, the future Pope Paul II calls his uncle *pontifex maximus Eugenius IIII* and himself, in addition to his other titles, *pont(ifex) Vicentinus*.⁸⁴ As the bishop of Vicenza, he usually signed his letters by *episc(opus) Vicentin(us)*.⁸⁵ Because the Pope now had the title of *pontifex maximus*, he could here call himself *pontifex*.⁸⁶

The most important of the inscriptions in which the Pope bore the new, classicizing title was the one recording the restoration of Fontana di Trevi in 1453.⁸⁷ The lost inscription has been preserved e.g. in Ciacconius.⁸⁸ In other respects too, the inscription is a superb example of the classicizing style that was rapidly gaining ground in Renaissance epigraphy:

Nicolaus V pontifex maximus post illustratam insignibus monumentis urbem ductum aquae Virginis vetustate collapsam sua impensa in splendidiorem cultum restitui ornarique mandavit anno Do(mini) Iesu Christi MCCCCLIII pontificatus sui VII.

Due to the notorious inaccuracy of Ciacconius, it is not possible to tell whether the original inscription had more abbreviations than the one given in the

⁸⁰ Forcella VI 49, St Peter's.

⁸¹ Ibid. VI 53, St Peter's.

⁸² Ibid. XI 41.

⁸³ Ibid. VIII 538.

⁸⁴ Ibid. VI 57.

⁸⁵ Pastor II¹³ 302 n. 1.

⁸⁶ In a similar dedication from a. 1456, written in hexametres, Eugenius has the title of *antistes* and the dedicator, as the bishop of Vicenza, that of *praesul*, Forcella VI 58.

⁸⁷ Forcella XIII 141.

⁸⁸ *Vitae et res gestae pontificum III*² (1677) col. 961.

text. In any case, it is this inscription, set up in a conspicuous place of the city, that made the new title, proudly evoking memories of the grandeur that was Rome, familiar to the general public.

Yet even during Nicholas' papacy, the majority of the inscriptions still designated the Pope by *papa*. Thus in the sacristy of S. Stefano Rotondo, the architrave of which displays the new title, a marble door, dated a year later, bears the title of *Nicolaus papa V.*⁸⁹ In the inscriptions on the walls and gates of Rome as well as on the ponte S. Angelo, he is briefly NIC. PP. V,⁹⁰ and in the architrave of the Collegio Capranica, in 1451, N. PP. V.⁹¹ In his verse epitaph, he is called *antistes*, a choice ascribable to the demands of the metre and to poetic diction.⁹² In the epitaphs dedicated by private persons, *papa* was also usual, e.g. *tempore pont(ificatus) d(omi)ni Nicolai p(a)p(ae) V, a. 1450.*⁹³

After Nicholas' papacy, *pontifex maximus* rapidly replaced *papa* in epigraphy. In their epitaphs all the Popes were henceforward *pontifices maximi*, an innovation facilitated by the fact that the epitaphs were now regularly in prose. In other than funeral inscriptions, *papa* survived longer. Thus in the inscriptions from Castel S. Angelo, Alexander VI is called *papa* or PP in 1493 and 1495,⁹⁴ in two others in 1495, *pont. max.*⁹⁵ In all the other inscriptions in Castel S. Angelo, down to 1743, the Popes invariably bear the title of *pont. max.*⁹⁶ In the inscriptions from the Capitol, since Paul II (1464—1471), *pont. max.* is the usual term;⁹⁷ cf. Sixtus IV,⁹⁸ Alexander VI,⁹⁹ Julius II,¹⁰⁰ etc.

⁸⁹ Forcella VIII 539.

⁹⁰ Ibid. XIII 4, 5, 90.

⁹¹ Ibid. XIII 326.

⁹² Ibid. VI 59.

⁹³ Forcella IX 637, S. Ambrogio della Massima; similar cases, I 1588, S. Maria sopra Minerva; II 1193, S. Eustachio.

⁹⁴ Ibid. XIII 247 and 250, cf. 248, undated.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 249, 250.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 252—86.

⁹⁷ Ibid. I 14, but 15: simple *pontifex*.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 16, 17, 18.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 25, 27, 29, 30.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 31, 32, 33.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Bauer = W. Bauer, Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments⁵ (1958).
CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.
CSEL = Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.
DACL = Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie.
De Rossi, ICVR II.1 = G. B. De Rossi, Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores II.1 (1888).
Dessau = Inscriptiones Latinae selectae I—III², edidit H. Dessau (1954—55).
Diehl = E. Diehl, Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae veteres I—III (1925—31).
Forcella = V. Forcella, Iscrizioni delle chiese ed altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri I—XIV (1861—1884).
ICVR = Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores. Nova series I— (1922—).
Kajanto, Classical and Christian = I. Kajanto, Classical and Christian. Studies in the Latin Epitaphs of Medieval and Renaissance Rome (1980).
Lampe = G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon (1961).
MGH, Auct. Ant. = Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi.
Mohrmann, Études = Chr. Mohrmann, Études sur le latin des chrétiens 3—4 (Storia e letteratura 103 and 143, 1965 and 1977).
Montini = U. Montini, Le tombe dei papi (1957).
RE = Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft.
TLL = Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.