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# Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and his Vision of the Jurisdictional Papal Primacy

Constantin RUS

Traian NOJEA

## Constantin Rus

“Hilarion V. Felea” Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Arad, Romania  
Email: constantin.rus@uav.ro

## Traian NOJEA

“Hilarion V. Felea” Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Arad, Romania  
Email: traiannojea@gmail.com

## Abstract

The matter of Pope’s superiority over synods and empires continued in the XIII century, the first representative being Pope Innocent III. Entitling himself “smaller than God, but greater than human”, Innocent tried – and succeeded in part – to enforce his views both in canonical and ecclesiastical relations, as well as and in those related to the empire.

Therefore, all his actions aimed at increasing the prestige of the papacy, towards the council, and especially the western kingdoms.

Beyond all these, his pontificate is linked to other important events, such as the codification of papal canon law (resulting *Compilatio tertia*), and promotion of the IVth Crusade, which will have a devastating impact on the Orthodox East.

## Keywords

papacy, sinodality, Latin Church, *plenitudo potestatis*, Lateran councils

## **I. Introduction**

It is not our purpose to deal with the papal primacy in detail, but rather to elucidate on the causes that led to the jurisdictional primacy, and to the final downfall of the Papacy. In this study, we shall start with the pontificate of Innocent III. The struggle for supremacy between the Eastern emperors and the popes of Rome had lasted from Constantine to 716 A. D., a period of nearly four hundred years. Among the leading popes who during their occupancy of the papal chair wielded great power were: Leo the Great, Felix III, Gelasius, Symmachus, and Hormisdas. On the side of the emperors we have: Theodosius, Justinian, Constance, and Justinian II. It was an ebb and a flow of power from and to the pope of Rome. Prophecy demanded that the “little horn” of Daniel should rule in the Western Empire, and here we find it.

The conflict for supremacy in the church between the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire and the popes of Rome lasted over three hundred years. The culminating point of that struggle was reached during the reign of Innocent III, from 1198 to 1216 A. D. From the time of Leo III, who crowned Charlemagne emperor in 800 A. D., to this very time the kings and emperors in the Holy Roman Empire had with but few exceptions taken an oath of loyalty to the papal see. Previous to 716 A. D., the popes in some instances were vassals to the emperors; now some kings and emperors are vassals to the popes. It is no longer the Holy Catholic Church as the emperor Constantine named it, but it is the Holy Roman Catholic Church in the Holy Roman Empire. Otto IV (1208 – 1212) and Frederick II (1212 – 1246), were the emperors who occupied the throne of the empire in succession during the pontificate of Innocent III.

## **II. Lotario dei Conti di Segni – Pope Innocent III**

Innocent III (Lotario dei Conti di Segni) was born in Gavignano, near the town Segni, Italy, in 1160. He was elected pope on January 8, 1198 and died in Perugia in 1216. The pontificate of Innocent III lasted for more than two decades and was a fruitful one<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For further details connected to the life and activity of pope Innocent III, check the classical biographies of Friedrich HURTER, *Geschichte Papst Innocenz des Dritten und seiner Zeitgenossen*, 4 vol., Hamburg, 1841 – 1844; Achille LUCHAIRE, *Innocent III*,

Its greatness derives from the symbiosis between his remarkable personality and his religious and political beliefs.

Born into a noble family, Lotario enjoyed an extensive cultural training. At first, he studied in Rome at St. Andrew's Convent under the guidance of Petrus Ismahel. Soon after, he was taken under the protection of Cardinal Paolo Scolari, the future Pope Clement III (1187 – 1191), and devoted himself to liturgical study at the "schola cantorum" in the Lateran, becoming a canonic. He continued his studies in Paris, where he had Peter Corbeil (d. 1222) as teacher.

After returning to Rome in 1186, Pope Gregory VIII (1187) ordained Lotario as a subdeacon. Lotario began the study of canon law at Bologna, the city with the most renowned law professors, including Huguccio of Pisa (d. 1210)<sup>2</sup>. His work and activities were influenced by theological outlooks based on canon law, but also by an originality characterized by his ability to organize, codify and develop rigorous syntheses<sup>3</sup>.

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6 vol., Paris, 1904 – 1908; Helene TILLMANN, *Papst Innocenz m.*, Boon, 1954, (eng. trans., Amsterdam, 1980); Werner MALECZEK, *Papst und Kardinalskolleg von 1191 bis 1216*, Wien, 1984; Jane SAYERS, *Innocent III: Leader of Europe, 1198 – 1216*, London, Longman Pub Group, 1994; James M. POWELL, *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?*, Washington, Catholic University of American Press, 1994; John C. MOORE, *Pope Innocent III (1160/61 – 1216): To Root Up and to Plant*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2003; Olivier HANNE, *Innocent III, la stupeur du monde*, Paris, Editions Belin, Paris, 2012; Olivier HANNE, *De Lothaire à Innocent III. L'ascension d'un clerc au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses universitaires de Provence, 2014; John C. MOORE, "Pope Innocent III, Sardinia, and the Papal State", in: *Speculum*, 1987 1, pp. 81 – 101; James M. POWELL, "Innocent III (1198 – 1216)", in: Frank. J. COPPA (ed.), *The Great Popes through History: An Encyclopedia*, vol. II, Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 2002, pp. 123 – 131; Andrea SOMMERLECHNER (ed.), *Innocenzo III: Urbs et Orbis. Atti del Congresso Internazionale, Roma, 9 – 15 settembre 1998*, 2 vol., Rome, 2003; Keith KENDALL, "'Mute Dogs, Unable to Bark': Innocent III's Call to Combat Heresy", in: Wolfgang P. MÜLLER and Mary E. SOMMAR (eds.), *Medieval Church Law and the Origins of the Western Legal Tradition: A Tribute to Kenneth Pennington*, Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 2006, pp. 170 – 178; etc.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. TANNER, C. W. PREVITÉ-ORTON, Z. N. BROOKE, *The Cambridge Medieval History*, planned by J. B. BURY, volume VI, *Victory of the Papacy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1936, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> August FRANZEN, Remigius BÄUMER, *Istoria papilor*, translated by Romulus POP, Bucharest, Romano-Catholic Archbishop Publishing House, 1996, p. 207.

### III. Pope – Vicarius Christi

As pope, Innocent III immediately got into conflict with royalty. In the context of an ample reflection on the earthly and spiritual powers, persisting since the Gregorian reform, he was the one who philosophised extensively on this theory, formulated in his letters and *Decretals*<sup>4</sup>.

Even if the pope's vision resembles that of Innocent IV (1243 – 1254) and Boniface VIII (1294 – 1303), it can be said that it was more than just a theocratic one. A key phrase that reflects his leadership is “plenitudo potestatis” which can be translated not only as absolute power over the world and social life, but also as “plenitudo ecclesiasticae potestatis”, a pontifical power over all churches and clergy. This means, among other things, unlimited control over the transfer of bishops and resignations and the ability of establishing fees for ecclesiastical benefits<sup>5</sup>. It was therefore an absolute power, even if it was governed by religious ethics and Church canons. The Pope proclaimed himself “vicarius Christi”, not just the “vicar of Peter” (“vicarius Petri”), the Roman Church being referred to as “mater ecclesiarum et mater omnium Christi fidelium”<sup>6</sup>. Innocent often said that a pope, a vicar of Christ, “is inferior to God, but superior to man” (“minor Deo, major homine”)<sup>7</sup>. Surprisingly or not, more than 650 years later, another pope, Pius IX (1846 – 1878), will use exactly the same arguments

<sup>4</sup> Leopold VON RANKE, *History of the popes*, vol. I, F. Ungar Publishing Company, 1966, pp. 17 – 24.

<sup>5</sup> “Omne enim ius condendi leges vel canones populus contulit in imperatorem et ecclesia in apostolicum where intelligitur uterque plenitudinem potestatis quo ad hoc...”, cf. \*\*\*, *Summa ad Dist.* 4 c. 3, MS P. 72 fol. 119 ra; William D. MCCREADY, “Papal Plenitudo Potestatis and the Source of Temporal Authority in Late Medieval Papal Hierocratic Theory”, in: *Speculum*, 1973 4, pp. 654 – 674; also see: Jeannine QUILLET, *Cheile puterii in Evul Mediu*, translated by Maria PAVEL, Bucharest, Corint Publishing House, 2003, pp. 51 – 52.

<sup>6</sup> Achille LUCHAIRE, *Innocent III, les royautés vassales du Saint – Siege*, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1908, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>7</sup> INOCENT III, *Sermone de conscr. pontific.*, tom 1, p. 180; other names given by the popes were: “the Vicar of the Apostles” (*Vicarius Principis Apostolorum*), “the Vicar of Apostolic Siege” (*Vicarius Sedis Apostolicae*), “The Apostolic Prince” (*Dominus Apostolicus*), or “the Pope of Universal Church” (*Summus Pontifex Ecclesiae Universalis*), cf. William Henry Windsor FANNING, “Vicar of Christ”, in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. V, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1913, p. 535. Also see: Michele MACCARONE, *Vicarius Christi: Storia Del Titolo Papale*, Rome, Facultas Theologica Pontificii Athenaei Lateranensis, 1952.

during Vatican I Council (1869 – 1870) in support of papal infallibility: “Io sono la tradizione, io sono la Chiesa”<sup>8</sup>.

When restoring the mosaic of the apsis from St. Peter Church, Pope Innocent III demanded that Jesus Christ be represented in the upper register between St. Peter and St. Paul and in the lower one between the Pope and the Roman Church. Although Innocent III exaggeratedly compared himself to Melchizedek, he saw the earthly and spiritual power as two spheres well established, a theory that he took over from his master, canonist Huguccio of Pisa, who was claiming that there should be mutual independence between the Empire and the papacy (“quoad institutionem neutrum pendet ab altero”)<sup>9</sup>. However, Innocent changed this theory so that the papacy could interfere in earthly aspects based on religious reasons (“ratione peccati”)<sup>10</sup>. It didn’t interfere in the kingdoms’ governing process, but could excommunicate a sovereign and absolve the subjects from their oath of fidelity, should the monarch constitute a threat to the Church’s integrity. The two “authorities”, each of them represented by a “vicar”, were basically independent, but also in a reciprocity relation “like the moon and the sun”. By enshrining the emperor, the earthly power received legitimacy “exactly as the moon receives the sun’s light”<sup>11</sup>.

#### IV. Pope – The Supreme Secular Authority

The political problems of the Empire were one of the major concerns of Innocent III. The Pope’s attention was focused on them for several years and the documents relating to this issue have been compiled by German

<sup>8</sup> Fr. Phd. Lecturer Marius ȚEPELEA, *Istoria bisericească universală*, vol. III, Oradea, 2007, pp. 131 – 132; also: Andrea TORNIELLI, *Pio IX, l’ultimo papa re*, Milano, Edizioni Mondadori, 2011, p. 31.

<sup>9</sup> W. HARTMANN and K. PENNINGTON, “The Summa decretorum of Huguccio”, in: W. HARTMANN and K. PENNINGTON (eds.), *The History of Canon Law in the Classical Period, 1140 – 1234: From Gratian to the Decretals of Pope Gregory IX*, Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 2008, pp. 142 – 160.

<sup>10</sup> Marcel DIETLER, “La theocratie pontificale et Inocent III”, in: *Les Echos de Saint – Maurice*, LXIV (1966) 1, pp. 102 – 103.

<sup>11</sup> Charles DE MIRAMON, “Innocent III, Huguccio de Ferrare et Hubert de Pirovano: Droit canonique, théologie et philosophie à Bologne dans les années 1180”, in: Wolfgang P. MÜLLER, Mary E. SOMMAR (eds.), *Medieval Church Law ...*, pp. 320 – 346.

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historians in a special theory entitled *Thronstreitregister*<sup>12</sup>. In May 1202, Pope Innocent III wrote the famous decree *Venerabilem* (“*Venerabilem fratrem nostrum...*”), addressed to Berthlot, Duke of Zähringen, in which he presented his main theories relating to the relationship between the papacy and the German Empire. Thus, according to his writings, although the Germans have the right to choose their leader, the pope is the one who enshrines him. If the pope has suspicions about his faith, he can refuse consecration. Furthermore, in the case of heresy or disobedience towards the pontiff, the pope can excommunicate him, which leads to the loss of imperial crown.<sup>13</sup> Due to its influence over the canonical and judicial relation between Church and State, the decree *Venerabilem* was included in *Corpus Juris Canonici*, the canonical law official collection of Catholic Church<sup>14</sup>.

The relations with the other European monarchies were marked by various conflicts related to the Episcopal appointments or by the difficult application of canonical laws related to matrimonial matters. Indeed, Innocent III granted a key role to bishops, laying the foundations of what was called “the Episcopal reform” of the XIII century<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Manfred LAUFS, *Politik und Recht bei Innozenz III: Kaiserprivilegien, Thronstreitregister und Egerer Goldbulle in der Reichs- und Rekuperationspolitik Papst Innozenz III (Kölner historische Abhandlungen)*, Böhlau, 1980, pp. 281 – 288; Pierre C. F. DAUNOU, *Essai historique sur la puissance temporelle des papes, sur l’abus qu’il ont fait, de leur ministère spirituel et sur les guerres qu’ils ont déclarées aux souverains*, Paris, Bureau du Censeur européen, 1818, pp. 162 – 178.

<sup>13</sup> See the whole decree at Friedrich KEMPF, “Regestum Innocentii III papae super negotio Romani imperii”, *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae*, vol. 12, 1947, pp. 166 – 175. This last idea completed the well-known doctrine *translatio imperi*. In the direct and immediate service of papal interests, it came afterwards to justify the political interests of Germans who invoked it to legitimate their claim to dominate. In 1217, Johannes Teutonicus in Glossa to the document from 1202, shows that all kingdoms are or should be subject to the Roman Empire of the Germans (cf. Gaines POST, “Blessed Lady Spain – Vincentius Hispanus and Spanish National Imperialism in the Thirteenth Century”, in: *Speculum*, XXIX (1954), p. 128, apud C. Leon TIPTON (ed.), *Nationalism in the Middle Ages*, Rinehart and Winston, Holt, 1972, p. 82).

<sup>14</sup> A. L. RICHTER, E. FRIEDBERG (eds.), *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Leipzig, 1881 (reed. 1959), col. 79 – 82.

<sup>15</sup> See the whole decree at Friedrich KEMPF, “Regestum Innocentii III papae super negotio Romani imperii”, in: *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae*, XII (1947), pp. 166 – 175. This last idea completed the well-known doctrine *translatio imperi*. In the direct and immediate service of papal interests, it came afterwards to justify the political inter-

Henry VI died on 27 September 1197. As a result, two candidates confronted each other for the imperial throne, both having been elected: Philip of Hohenstaufen, brother of the deceased and duke of Swabia, was elected in March 1198, and Otto of Brunswick, of the Guelph faction, in June 1198<sup>16</sup>. After the death of Queen Constance, the Pope took the young Frederick (1194 – 1250) under his tutelage, who gave up the imperial throne for a time, becoming king of Sicily (3 September 1198).

The assassination of Philip (21 June 1208) compelled Innocent III to negotiate with Otto, who will be crowned emperor on 4 October 1209 in Rome, as Otto IV (1209 – 1215). Otto implemented his imperial policy of territorial expansion towards central Italy, leading to a new war in 1210, when the kingdom of Sicily was invaded. Innocent III absolved the king's subjects from their oath of fidelity, excommunicated him on the 3rd of March 1211 and allied himself with the king of France, Philip Augustus (1180 – 1223). Eventually, Frederick would be crowned king in Frankfurt, with the title of Frederick II, on the 5th of December 1212. He was accredited by the pope after he accepted and recognize the papal state's integrity. Otto IV was defeated at Bouvines on 27 July 1214 and, on the 1st of July 1216, Frederick II promised that after his coronation as emperor, his son Henry, already named king of Sicily, will become a vassal of the Holy See, independent from his father. The situation, however, was not clarified and the successors of Innocent III will come into conflict with the interests of imperial politics<sup>17</sup>.

Innocent III also came into conflict with the king of England, John Lackland (1199 – 1216) in 1206, when the pope didn't agree to the appointment of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton (1150 – 1228), previously a renowned professor at the University of Paris. Since a concord wasn't possible, in 1208, the pope excommunicated the king, who, in the end, in 1213, declared himself vassal of the Pope, like the kings

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ests of Germans who invoked it to legitimate their claim to dominate. In 1217, Johannes Teutonicus in Glossa to the document from 1202, shows that all kingdoms are or should be subject to the Roman Empire of the Germans (cf. Gaines POST, "Blessed Lady Spain...", p. 128, apud C. Leon TIPTON (ed.), *Nationalism in the Middle Ages...*, p. 82).

<sup>16</sup> Felix ROCQUAIN, *La papauté dans la Moyen Age*, Ed. Hachette, Paris, 2012, pp. 295 – 311.

<sup>17</sup> M. PACAUT, *La théocratie: l'Eglise et le pouvoir au Moyen Age*, Ed. Desclée, Paris, 1989, pp. 107 – 124.

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of Spain and Portugal. In August 1215, Innocent III helped the English king, as the nobles revolted against John Lackland, cancelling the *Magna Charta* which had been imposed<sup>18</sup>.

Innocent III also interfered in the matrimonial problems of kings Peter II of Aragon (1196 – 1213), Alfonso IX of Leon (1188 – 1230) and Philip Augustus of France (1180 – 1223)<sup>19</sup>.

**V. Pope – The Source of Canon Law**

A greater achievement of his pontificate was the reorganization of Papal Curia. He reformed the Chamber, the Chapel and the Chancellery. The first regulations of the Pontifical Chancellery date from this period and, since 1198, this institution has ensured the preservation of important documents belonging to the diplomacy of Western Church<sup>20</sup>. Innocent III was also involved in reforming the judiciary and ecclesiastical system, being known by his contemporaries as the “new Solomon of our times” (“Solomon nostri temporis”)<sup>21</sup>.

Regarding the canonical problem of synodality, Innocent was inspired by the Gregorian ideas. Starting with Pope Alexander III (1159 – 1181), the councils were seen rather as solemn occasions to emphasize pontifical decisions. For example, the Third Lateran Council from 1179, is described by contemporaries as “the pontiff’s council”<sup>22</sup>. At the famous 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council, assembled by Innocent in November 1215, 70 patriarchs and archbishops, 453 bishops and over 800 Latin abbots were present. This council further strengthened this line of interpreting synodality. Thus, within this council, the bishops were just marionettes who had to approve

<sup>18</sup> Achille LUCHAIRE, *Innocent III, les royautés vassales du Saint – Siege*, pp. 137 – 181.

<sup>19</sup> Achille LUCHAIRE, *Innocent III, les royautés vassales du Saint – Siege*, pp. 182 – 247.

<sup>20</sup> “Nunc dicitur Curia Romana quae antehae dicebatur Ecclesia Romana. Si revolvantur antiqua. Romanorum pontificum scripta, nusquam in eis reperitur hoc nomen, quod est Curia, in designatione sacrosantae Romanae Ecclesiae”, according to G. D. MANSI, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, tom. 2, Venice, 1761, col. 197. See the study of James M. POWELL, “Innocent III and Petrus Beneventanus: Reconstructing a Career at the Papal Curia”, relating to the reorganization of the papal curia, pp. 51 – 62.

<sup>21</sup> *Gesta Innocenti*, c. 1, apud Felix ROCQUAIN, *La papauté dans la Moyen Age*, p. 161.

<sup>22</sup> J. TROUILLAT, *Monuments de l’histoire de l’ancien évêché de Bale*, part 1, Paris, 1861, p. 389: “in generali concilio summi pontificis – iudicatum est”.



the papal decisions that have already been taken<sup>23</sup>. According to Felix Rocquain, it was then that the name of “universal bishop”, proposed by Gregory VII (1073 – 1085) in the second sentence of *Dictatus* became a reality<sup>24</sup>. In other words, Pope Innocent III was, no more, no less, “the supreme bishop of Christianity”<sup>25</sup>.

Innocent III continued the policy initiated by his predecessors of establishing a real pontifical state, which aimed to include the pontifical territories of the Duchy of Ravenna and the province Toscana, following a decision of the Marquise Matilda of Canossa<sup>26</sup>. By way of the “engagement from Neuss” (8 June 1201), Otto IV acknowledged the sovereignty of the Pope over the territories around Ravenna, from Radicofani to Ceprano, in other words the Exarchate, the regions Pentapolis, Ancona and Spoleto, territories left by Matilda of Canossa and all other regions already recognized as belonging to the pontifical State (suburbs of Rome, Campania, Sabina, Tuscia, Narni and Viterbo Maremma)<sup>27</sup>. Relating to the new territories considered to be subjected to the pontifical state, the papacy was able to exert a real influence only on the Duchy of Spoleto and the possessions in Tuscany<sup>28</sup>.

In 1198, Innocent announces the Fourth Crusade (1202 – 1204) whose purpose was to regain Jerusalem, but which will end up conquering and plundering Constantinople in 1204, leading to an irretrievable division

<sup>23</sup> “Facto prius ab ipso papa exhortationis sermone, recitata sunt in pleno concilio capitula LX, cuae aliis placibilia, aliis videbantur onerosa”, according to \*\*\*, *Math. Paris., Angl. hist. maj.*, Parisiis, 1644, p. 188, apud Felix ROCQUAIN, *La papauté dans la Moyen Age*, p. 173; See C. HEFELE et J. LECLERQ, *Histoire des conciles*, tom V, part. 2, Paris, 1912, pp. 1316 – 1399, for a detailed presentation of the events that occurred during this council, considered the XIIth ecumenical council.

<sup>24</sup> “Quod solus Romanus pontifex iure dicatur universalis”, according to MANSI XX, 495.

<sup>25</sup> Felix ROCQUAIN, *La papauté dans la Moyen Age*, p. 173. Innocent quotes an excerpt from the canonical law compilation *Summa Coloniensis* (cca. 1170), even quotes an excerpt from the canonic law compilation *Summa Coloniensis* (cca. 1170), according to which, pope is the supreme bishop of christianity, and also the true king, while the king is his vicar („imperator Papa verus est, imperator est vicarius eius”); See C. HEFELE et J. LECLERQ, *Histoire des conciles*, tom V, part. 2, pp. 1179 – 1409 for the detailed presentation of councils during Innocent’s papacy.

<sup>26</sup> Gheorghe G. STĂNESCU, “Politica imperialistă a papii Inocențiu III și luptele de succesiune dintre Stauffi și Welfi”, in: Ioan Vasile LEB (ed.), *Studii de Istorie Bisericească Universală și Patristică*, Cluj-Napoca, 1998, pp. 156 – 160.

<sup>27</sup> Philippe LEVILLAIN (ed.), *Dizionario storico del papato*, Milano, 1996, p. 790.

<sup>28</sup> John C. MORE, “Pope Innocent III, Sardinia, and the Papal State”, pp. 81 – 101.

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between East and West<sup>29</sup>. In this context, the so-called crusade against the Albigensians (1208 – 1209; 1213) aimed at putting an end to the Cathar heresy in France<sup>30</sup>. However, if Innocent III's pontificate was the climax of the papacy, for the Western Church it was the beginning of a continuous decline, culminating with the papal captivity in Avignon.

More than six thousand letters were preserved from the time of Innocent's pontificate, the most important ones bearing his signature. In the winter of 1209 – 1210, Pope Innocent published a collection of his most important *Decretals*, under the title of *Compilatio tertia*, arranged by his chaplain, Peter Collivaccino and sent to the University of Bologna<sup>31</sup>. A large number of Innocent III's speeches have also been preserved, gathered by Arnaldo de Cîteaux, chronicler of the crusade against the Cathars<sup>32</sup>. The speech delivered at the opening of the Fourth Council of the Lateran, on *Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum antequam patiar* (Luke 22, 15: “So much have I desired to eat this Passover with you before my suffering”) generates reverence even today<sup>33</sup>.

**VI. Conclusion**

The pontificate of Innocent III is considered by many historians the most important in the history of the Medieval Latin Church. Moreover, Lortz sees his pontificate as “the most brilliant in the history of the Church”<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> For further details, see the study of Fr. Phd. Ion Alexandru MIZGAN, “Relațiile dintre bizantini și apuseni în zorii Cruciadei a IV-a”, in: *Studia Universitatis Septentrionis, Theologia Orthodoxa*, 2012 1, pp. 15 – 31.

<sup>30</sup> Further details about the Cathar heresy and the crusade against it in Anne BRENON, *Catharii*, translation by Ion Doru BRANA, Bucharest, Publishing House Nemira, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Werner MALECZEK, *Papst und Kardinalskolleg von 1191 bis 1216*, pp. 172 – 174 (including biography, especially related to *Compilatio tertia*).

<sup>32</sup> E. F. JACOB, “Innocenzo III”, in John Bagnell BURY, Alberto MEROLA, Z. N. BROOKE, C. W. PREVITÉ-ORTON, and Joseph ROBSON TANNER (eds.), *Storia del mondo medievale*, vol. 5, Milano, Garzanti Libri, 1999, pp. 5 – 53.

<sup>33</sup> Emil DUMEAU, *Istoria Bisericii (secolele XI – XXI)*, Iași, Publishing House Sapientia, 2011, pp. 22 – 23.

<sup>34</sup> J. LORTZ, *Storia della Chiesa considerata in prospettiva di storia delle idee*, vol. I, Roma, 1980, p. 505; for a detailed presentation of the papacy of Innocent, see René François ROHRBACHER, *Histoire universelle de l'Eglise catholique par Rohrbacher, continuée jusqu'à nos jours par M. l'abbé Guillaume*, tom VII, Paris, Letouzey et Anne, 1872, pp. 215 – 394.

Among the successors of Innocent III who embraced his way of thinking and acting, related to the ecclesiastical power towards the secular one, we mention Innocent IV (1243 – 1254) and Boniface VIII (1294 – 1303)<sup>35</sup>.

Beginning with the 14th century, popes had to accept compromises that would considerably limit their power outside Rome. Up to this date, popes saw themselves as heirs and true keepers of Roman imperial traditions. According to a counterfeit act which was considered authentic until the beginning of Renaissance (*Donatio Constantini*), Emperor Constantine I (306 – 337) would have entrusted the entire west to Sylvester I, the bishop of Rome (314 – 335). And if Rome became *caput mundi*, its bishop had to be the same.

Contemporary papal historian Paravicini Bagliani believes that “the imitation of the Roman Empire has accompanied the history of popes since the beginning of the 11th century reform”<sup>36</sup>. As clothing, the Roman Pontiffs chose imperial mantle and porphyry. Once with the end of the 13th century, a papal coronation is established. This was a special consecration ceremony with a hint of imperial coronation. To show case the superiority of the papal power over the secular one, the Popes of Rome wore a tiara with three crowns. Before the 11th century, the papal tiara was a crown with precious stones and flowers and, in the 12th century, a second crown was added. In the 13th century, as a symbol of the *triregnum*, a third crown which represents the heaven, earth and underworld is added<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> For a detailed presentation of the popes from the XIIIth century (Honorius III, 1216 – 1227; Gregory IX, 1227 – 1241; Celestine IV, 1243; Innocent IV, 1243 – 1254; Alexander IV, 1254 – 1261; Urban IV, 1261 – 1264; Clement IV, 1265 – 1268; Gregory X, 1271 – 1276; Innocent V, 1276; Adrian V, 1276; John XXI, 1276 – 1277; Nicholas III, 1277 – 1280; Martin IV, 1281 – 1285; Honorius IV, 1285 – 1287; Nicholas IV, 1288 – 1292; Celestine V, 1294 and Boniface VIII, 1294 – 1303, see: Emil DUMEA, *Istoria Bisericii (secolele XI – XXI)*, pp. 61 – 85, and Agostino PARAVICINII BAGLIANI, *Il papato nel secolo XIII cent'anni di bibliografia (1875 – 2009)*, Firenze, Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Julien THÉRY, “Le triomphe de la théocratie pontificale, du III<sup>e</sup> concile du Latran au pontificat de Boniface VIII (1179 – 1303)”, in: M.-M. DE CEVINS, J.-M. MATZ (ed.), *Structures et dynamiques de la vie religieuse en Occident (1179 – 1449)*, Rennes, 2010, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> G. ANTICI-MATTEI, “Insegne della potestà Pontificale: le origini e le forme della tiara”, in: *L'Illustrazione Vaticana*, 1938 9, R. SPIAZZI, “La triplice corona”, in: *Ecclesia*, 1956 15; A. LIPINSKY, “Il triregno dei Romani Pontefici”, in: *Ecclesia*, 1958 17, etc.

*Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and his Vision of the Jurisdictional Papal Primacy*

The 13th century also brought about the establishment of new relations between clergy and laymen, based on the Gregorian principles. Ecclesiastical institutions acquire an unprecedented power. Papal theocracy is a determining factor of this change that will affect the social life of the West for centuries. The new *societas christiana* will be based on the radical separation between the clergy and the laymen, as well as on the full autonomy of the ecclesiastical institutions in their relations with the state.

The history of the Episcopal title illustrates this change very well. From the very beginning of the 13th century onwards, and systematically in the following centuries, the Latin bishops no longer used the epithet “from the mercy of God”, replacing it with “from the mercy of God and the grace of the Holy Apostolic See of Rome”<sup>38</sup>.

All in all, we can assert that after the fall of the Roman Empire, the Church, being the only institution with the authority and prestige needed to unify the Western world, it actually filled a power gap that the fall of this empire had caused. Ceasing links with Orthodox Byzantium and restoring those with the West, the Church retains its entire authority, except occasional periods of decay.

In the thirteenth century, during the papacy of Pope Innocent III and his successors, the popes reached the peak of their power. In this context, it was difficult not to have a doctrine in the service of papal hegemony. Theologians and canonists consider it an ecclesiastical authority originated directly from Christ, which was nothing more than a contingent consequence of determined historical circumstances:

“Instead of distinguishing between the authority actually assigned to the Church by its founder, and the one which history, in a specific period of time attributed to the church hierarchy, they misinterpreted them, and made it impossible for their contemporaries to understand what Christ entrusted to Peter and what Peter received from history”.

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<sup>38</sup> Julien THÉRY, “Le triomphe de la théocratie pontificale...”, p. 24; It’s worth mentioning that Francisc I, the present pope, has already abolished the titles of some catholic priests, according to Gerard O’CONNELL, *Pope abolishes honorary title of monsignor for diocesan priests under the age of 65*, in: *Vatican Insider*, 4 January 2014.