

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentarchy>

"**Pentarchy**" (from the Greek Πενταρχία, *Pentarchia* from πέντε *pente*, "five", and ἄρχειν *archein*, "to rule") is a model historically championed in Eastern Christianity as a model of church relations and administration. In the model, the Christian church is governed by the heads (Patriarchs) of the five major episcopal sees of the Roman Empire: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.^[2] The idea came about because of the political and ecclesiastical prominence of these five sees, but the concept of their universal and exclusive authority was firmly tied to the administrative structure of the Roman Empire. The pentarchy was first tangibly expressed in the laws of Emperor Justinian I (527–565), particularly in *Novella* 131. The Quinisext Council of 692 gave it formal recognition and ranked the sees in order of preeminence. Especially following Quinisext, the pentarchy was at least philosophically accepted in Eastern Christianity, but generally not in the West, which rejected the Council, and the concept of the pentarchy.^[3]

The greater authority of these sees in relation to others was tied to their political and ecclesiastical prominence; all were located in important cities and regions of the Roman Empire and were important centers of the Christian Church. Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were prominent from the time of early Christianity, while Constantinople came to the fore upon becoming the imperial residence in the 4th century. Thereafter it was consistently ranked just after Rome. Jerusalem received a ceremonial place due to the city's importance in the early days of Christianity. Justinian and the Quinisext Council excluded from their pentarchical arrangement churches outside the Empire, such as the then-flourishing Church of the East in Sassanid Persia, which they saw as heretical. Within the empire they recognized only the Chalcedonian (or Melchite) incumbents, regarding as illegitimate the non-Chalcedonian claimants of Alexandria and Antioch.

Infighting among the sees, and particularly the rivalry between Rome (which considered itself preeminent over all the Church) and Constantinople (which came to hold sway over the other Eastern sees and which saw itself as equal to Rome, with Rome "first among equals") prevented the pentarchy from ever becoming a functioning administrative reality. The Islamic conquests of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch in the 7th century left Constantinople the only practical authority in the East, and afterward the concept of a "pentarchy" retained little more than symbolic significance. Tensions between East and West, which culminated in the East–West Schism, and the rise of powerful, largely independent metropolitan sees and patriarchates outside the Byzantine Empire in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia eroded the importance of the old imperial sees.

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The Pentarchy, a Greek word meaning "government of five", designates the Five Great Sees or early Patriarchates, which were the five major centres of the Christian church in Late Antiquity. The respective cities with their presumed apostolic founders (i.e. patriarchs) and modern-day countries are:

Rome (Sts. Peter and Paul), the only Pentarch in the Western Roman Empire (now Italy).
Constantinople (St. Andrew), in the Eastern Roman Empire (now Turkey)
Alexandria (St. Mark), in the Eastern Roman Empire (now Egypt)
Antioch (St. Peter), in the Eastern Roman Empire (now Turkey)
Jerusalem (St. James), in the Eastern Roman Empire (now Israel)

In the 4th century (that is, in the era when Christianity was first beginning to gain political support from the Roman state) these constituted the four most important cities of the Roman Empire, plus Jerusalem. Some traditions see this as a process of development: At first, only the church leaders in Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were widely acknowledged as having spiritual and juridical authority in the Christian church; the position of Jerusalem gained importance at the First Council of Nicaea and Constantinople at the Council of Chalcedon (Catholic Encyclopedia). The Council of Nicaea also established the supremacy of honor of the apostolic sees as follows: Rome, followed by Alexandria, followed by Antioch, followed by Jerusalem. This hierarchy was only one of honor among four equal Apostolic Sees.

After the 7th century Arab conquests, and the Byzantine loss of the Rome-Ravenna corridor, only Constantinople remained securely within a state calling itself the "Roman Empire", whereas Rome became independent (see Gregory the Great), Jerusalem and Alexandria fell under Muslim rule, and Antioch was on the front lines of hundreds of years of recurring border warfare between the Byzantine Empire and the Arab Caliphate. These historical-political changes, combined with the northward shift of the center of gravity of Christendom during the Middle Ages, and the fact that the majority of Christians in Muslim-ruled Egypt and Syria were Non-Chalcedonians who refused to recognize the authority of either Rome or Constantinople, meant that the original ideal of five great co-operating centers of administration of the whole Christian church grew ever more remote from practical reality.

Today it would be difficult to identify a leading claimant to the patriarchate of Antioch. There are five claimants to the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem dating from the time of the Crusades. These include Maronite Catholics, Melkite Catholics, Syriac Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Syriac Orthodox.

Introduction: 250-451AD

The period of the 5 Patriarchs: The oligarchic diocesan episcopate. Three changes take place in this era.

1. 250 AD: "**The rise of diocesan bishops.**" One bishop began to rule a small group of churches in addition to his own local church. This was documented in the previous study. Click here for more: [Outline: 150-250 AD](#)
2. 300 AD: "**The rise of metropolitans.**" These men were nothing more than the diocesan bishops from the large and important cities that began to rule over the bishops of the smaller cities. Now you have bishops over bishops. Interesting, the Roman Catholic church later simplified its organization to only three levels, so that all bishops were under a single metropolitan, (which grew into a Patriarch), which they called, "The Pope", or the bishop of Rome. The Eastern Orthodox church today retains this additional level of government, whereas the Roman Catholic system combined metropolitans and patriarchs into the single office of pope. In 325, the Nicene creed tells us there were 3 main metropolitans. ● Catholic organization today.
3. 381 AD: "**The rise of 5 patriarchs.**" Patriarchs grew directly out of metropolitans. Patriarch is directly equivalent to the office of "pope". The Roman Catholic church as a single Patriarch today which they call the "Pope" and the Eastern Greek Orthodox church has 14 Patriarchs which function as autocephalous (independent and autonomous) popes. Of the 14 Patriarchs in the Orthodox church today, only the Patriarch of Alexandria, calls himself "His Beatitude, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria", whereas most are merely called, Patriarchs.



At 250 AD: "The rise of the Diocesan Bishop"

1. Diocese is born with one diocesan bishop over many other churches.
2. No single bishop controls the world-wide church.
3. This was documented in the previous study and is not discussed here. Click here for more: [Outline: 150-250 AD](#)
- 4.

At 300 AD: "The rise of Metropolitans."

1. Metropolitans who rules over diocesan bishops, where an outgrowth of the diocesan bishops. The diocesan bishops from the largest cities, became Metropolitans! The very word "metropolitan" or "metro" means large city centre.
2. In 325, the Nicene creed lists three Metropolitans who where the bishops of the largest and most politically and economically important cities: Rome, Antioch, Alexandria
3. There were likely a lot more than three Metropolitans, but interestingly, only the largest three got honorable mention in the Nicene Council: "Let the ancient customs in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis prevail, that the Bishop of Alexandria have jurisdiction in all these, since the like is customary for the Bishop of Rome also. Likewise in Antioch and the other provinces, let the Churches retain their privileges. (The First Ecumenical Council of Nice, Canon VI, 325 AD)



At 381 AD: "The rise of 5 patriarchs."

1. The patriarchs were a continuing trend of centralization carried forward from the Metropolitans. Of all the many Metropolitans, Metropolitans the very largest of the large cities, became Patriarchs!
2. There were only 5 patriarchs: Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem. Patriarchs began to rule over Metropolitans from the "smaller large cities". The exception was Jerusalem, which although was a rather insignificant city at the time, was granted patriarchal status, solely for historical reasons since the church began there.
3. These 5 are listed in the Second Ecumenical Council: "The Bishop of Constantinople, however, shall have the prerogative of honour after the Bishop of Rome; because Constantinople is New Rome." (The Second Ecumenical Council, Constantinople, Canon III, 381 AD)
4. The 5 patriarchs (one of which is in blue in the centre of the graphic below), all became the equivalent of Popes that governed in a monarchical manner within their own territory. Rome, of course, ignored these geographic boundaries and claimed to rule the world after 606 AD. The other four, developed into what is today, the Eastern Greek Orthodox church, where the Patriarchs is 14. The "Ecumenical



Patriarch" of Constantinople is considered first among the other 13 equals.

250-451 AD: The period of the 5 Patriarchs: The oligarchic diocesan episcopate.

A. Our comments and observations:

1. At the beginning of the period we have Cyprian (250 AD), who complains against some local bishops who are trying to exercise control over more than one church. Cyprian's affirmation that all bishops are equal, and that one bishop is not over another bishop, signals the rise of diocesan bishops and metropolitans, (or archbishops). Cyprian also represents an historical marker of the actual transition point. His warnings and complains went unheeded.
2. A rapid change take place between 250 AD and 325 AD. Two important changes occur during this 75 year period: 1. The rise of diocesan bishops who rule a small group of churches in addition to his own local church. 2. The rise of metropolitans who were nothing more than the diocesan bishops from the largest and most important cities.
3. By 325 AD, it is evident from the first Ecumenical Council (at Nice), that there were three "Metropolitans" that ruled the world as equals, with Rome having first place among equals. These were: Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. The 318 local church bishops in attendance, most of which were from the east, confirm the power of these three "Metropolitans". This council does not create the office of Metropolitans, but merely confirms this office that already existed in 325 AD. So Nice acts as another historical marker of the drift towards centralization in church organization.
4. About 60 years after Nice, the Second Ecumenical Council (at Constantinople in 381 AD) increased the number of patriarchs Metropolitans from 3 to 5. These were: Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem. Jerusalem was added as a token honorary Patriarch, merely because it was the first church in history.
5. The rise of patriarchs was solidly established by 451 AD. Yet Patriarch evolved from nothing more than the bishops the largest and most important cities of the Roman Empire.
6. At the end of this period, in 451 AD, we see that Constantinople takes equal rank with Rome. With the trend towards centralization, the stage was set in 451 AD, for one of these 5 Patriarchs to become the "Pope" or "universal bishop" in 606 AD.
7. Thus we have an oligarchy between the 5 bishops (Patriarchs) who are from the most important cities of the Roman empire. There is clearly no papal monarchy in existence, even though again, Rome is seen as first among equals. But this is because Rome was the most powerful city in the world, not because God had chosen this city to be the world headquarters for his church.

B. What Scholars say about the period of 250-451 AD:

1. "Among the great bishops of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome, the Roman bishop combined all the conditions for a primacy, which, from a purely honorary distinction, gradually became the basis of a supremacy of jurisdiction. The same propension to monarchical unity, which created out of the episcopate a centre, first for each

congregation, then for each diocese, pressed on towards a visible centre for the whole church. Primacy and episcopacy grew together. In the present period we already find the faint beginnings of the papacy" (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church)

2. "The third stage, the rise of archbishops, was effected by obvious causes, but required a considerable time for its completion. Since the gospel was first preached in the large cities, these became centres of evangelization for the surrounding districts. Naturally, a very close relation subsisted between the mother church and the congregations organized by her missionary efforts. The high responsibilities of the episcopal office in the great cities tended to bring to such positions men of stamp and reputation. Apart from their personal qualities, their very position would give them a certain authority. Nothing was more natural, then, than to appeal to them in case of dispute. Prerogatives, awarded in the first instance by mere custom, could easily acquire in time a constitutional force. Hence, a kind of jurisdiction over the surrounding territory became attached to the bishops of large cities, and the rank of archbishop more or less definitely established." (Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, Vol 1, p 148)
3. "**Metropolitans and Patriarchs.** The bishop of the capital city of a province (the metropolis) or of another principal city began in the third century to assume a leading position among the bishops of the province. He presided at the provincial councils, gave his approval for the ordination of bishops, and often was the principal ordainer himself when a new bishop was installed. The metropolitan bishops of the ancient church were forerunners of the medieval archbishops in the western church. The idea of councils of bishops led to the calling of ecumenical councils (world wide) to represent the whole church, the first of which was summoned by the emperor Constantine for Nicaea in 325. The council at Nicaea recognized the churches at Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch as having jurisdictional authority extending beyond the usual provincial limits. This was the germ of the patriarchal system. Eventually five patriarchs were recognized: the bishops of the above three churches and Constantinople and Jerusalem. When the division between the Greek (or Eastern) churches and the Latin (or Western) churches occurred, the Greek Church continued to hold to the patriarchal theory of church organization, whereas the Latin Church had recognized the bishop of Rome as the single pope thus giving it a monarchical organization." (Everett Ferguson, Early Christians Speak, p 16)
4. "Taking the Church at large, the only primacy accorded to the Roman bishop in the first three centuries was a primacy of honor, or a certain precedence as regards the respect rendered. This was due in some degree to the fact that the Roman was an apostolic church, founded, according to current belief, by the two eminent apostles Peter and Paul. It was due in a much larger degree to the political pre-eminence of Rome. It is no exaggeration to say, that the political importance, the grandeur, and the imperial associations of the city of Rome were the pre-eminent factors in giving origin to the papacy. In the race for episcopal honor and power, the political importance of the various cities outweighed by far every other factor. Jerusalem, the mother of all churches, was for a long time the seat of a subordinate bishopric. The bishop there was of small account because the city was of small account, and rose to importance only as the city rose to importance, and became a favorite pilgrim resort. Antioch, though the first Christian centre after Jerusalem, and the scene of the labors of the very chief of apostles, was

compelled to yield the palm to Alexandria. The importance of the see of Antioch became second to that of Alexandria because the city was second. Constantinople, built on the site of an obscure bishopric, overtopped both Antioch and Alexandria in episcopal honor; and her patriarch became well-nigh a rival for the Bishop of Rome, simply because Constantinople rose to the greatest political importance of any city in the East. There is no mystery, therefore, about the genesis of the papacy. Before the building of Constantinople, Rome was what no city has been since, - the capital of the civilized world. From her prestige the Roman bishop derived prestige. In the midst of tendencies toward ecclesiastical monarchy, he had a start and an advantage enjoyed by no other. The first three centuries, however, witnessed only growing ambition and pretension: they did not witness the beginning of the papacy in the sense of any acknowledgment of a constitutional supremacy in the Roman bishop over the Church at large." (Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, Vol 1, p 258)

C. What Cyprian said in 250 AD:

1. "a great many bishops from the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, had met together at Carthage, together with the presbyters and deacons, and a considerable part of the congregation who were also present ... For neither does any of us set himself up as a bishop of bishops, nor by tyrannical terror does any compel his colleague to the necessity of obedience; since every bishop, according to the allowance of his liberty and power, has his own proper right of judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he himself can judge another. (The Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian, The Judgment of Eighty-Seven Bishops on the Baptism of Heretics, 250 AD)
2. "But let these things which were done by Stephen [bishop of Rome] be passed by for the present, lest, while we remember his audacity and pride, we bring a more lasting sadness on ourselves from the things that he has wickedly done. ... But that they who are at Rome do not observe those things in all cases which are handed down from the beginning, and vainly pretend the authority of the apostles; any one may know also from the fact, that concerning the celebration of Easter, and concerning many other sacraments of divine matters, he may see that there are some diversities among them, and that all things are not observed among them alike, which are observed at Jerusalem, just as in very many other provinces also many things are varied because of the difference of the places and names". (Cyprian, Epistle 1xxiv, 256 AD)

D. What Scholars say about what Cyprian said in 250 AD:

1. Cyprian renounced the concept of a "bishop of bishops" and specifically emphasized that all bishops, the world over, were equal. It is obvious that the rise of metropolitans, or archbishops has begun to manifest itself. What Tertullian mocked in 200 AD, (bishop of bishops) later become a reality. It is important to note that his expression, "bishop of bishops" refers to a single large city bishop (a Metropolitan) over many smaller city bishops. Cyprian certainly does not use the term "bishop of bishops" to imply the Bishop of Rome was attempting to exercise world control, as in the later Papal use of the term.

In short, Cyprian was complaining that the bishop of Rome was trying to exercise control as one of many Metropolitans, not the "universal bishop" of the world.

2. "An African bishop, Cyprian (258 AD), was the first to give to that passage of the 16th of Matthew, innocently as it were, and with no suspicion of the future use and abuse of his view, a papistic interpretation, and to bring out clearly the idea of a perpetual *cathedra Petri*. The same Cyprian, however, whether consistently or not, was at the same time equally animated with the consciousness of episcopal equality and independence, afterward actually came out in bold opposition to Pope Stephen in a doctrinal controversy on the validity of heretical baptism, and persisted in this protest to his death" (Comp. vol. i. § 110.) (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church)
3. "A very decisive example of denial of universal jurisdiction in the Roman bishop occurred also in connection with the Easter controversy already mentioned. Polycrates, the venerable Bishop of Ephesus, replying to the demands of Victor, in the name of a synod of bishops, declared plainly that he was not at all alarmed by the things threatened against him, and had no intention whatever of departing from the custom which had been handed down by his predecessors. [Epist., 1xxiv., in works of Cyprian, 256 AD] (Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, Vol 1, p 257)

E. 325 AD The first ecumenical council of Nice actually decreed:

1. "Let the ancient customs in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis prevail, that the Bishop of Alexandria have jurisdiction in all these, since the like is customary for the Bishop of Rome also. Likewise in Antioch and the other provinces, let the Churches retain their privileges. And this is to be universally understood, that if any one be made bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan, the great Synod has declared that such a man ought not to be a bishop. If, however, two or three bishops shall from natural love of contradiction, oppose the common suffrage of the rest, it being reasonable and in accordance with the ecclesiastical law, then let the choice of the majority prevail." (Philip Schaff's Translation of Nice, Canon VI, The First Ecumenical Council; The First Council of Nice, Canon VI, 325 AD)
2. Various translations of the 6th canon: "Let the ancient usage throughout Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis be strictly adhered to, so that the Bishop of Alexandria shall have jurisdiction over all these; since this is also the custom of the Bishop of Rome. In like manner, as regards Antioch and the other provinces, let each church retain its special privileges." (James F. Loughlin's translation of Nice, Canon VI, The Sixth Nicene Canon And The Papacy, p 224, 1880 AD) "Since this is also the Roman Bishop's custom." (Sheppherd's translation of Nice, Canon VI,, History of the Church of Rome, p. 63) "Since this is the custom also with the Roman Bishop." (Neander's translation of Nice, Canon VI,, Church History, vol. ii., p. 162) "Since this also is customary with the Bishop of Rome." (Schaff's translation of Nice, Canon VI,, History of the Christian Church, vol. ii., p.275)

F. What scholars say about Nicene council of 325 AD:

1. A clear diocese system is in place here with three almost equal Patriarchs. Although their was a clear ranking in effect, with Rome 1st, Alexandria 2rd, Antioch 3nd, full papal

authority of Rome did not exist at this time. Remember, the Bishop of Rome did not even preside over this council, which he would have, if he was as powerful as Roman Catholic's would lead us to believe he was. Constantinople, at this time, was a growing power that wasn't mentioned.

2. Constantine, the Roman emperor who presided over the Nicene council, was called universal bishop by Eusebius, and Constantine's son Constantius, called himself bishop of bishops. Remember, these two men were heads of state, not church Bishops. It is also important to note that the Bishop of Rome, did not preside over this council, as Roman Catholics, wished to God, was the actual historical case. Even worse, it was called, not by a church leader, but by an unbaptized Roman Emperor. Yes Constantine was a godly man who practiced what he preached in his many church sermons. But if the Bishop of Rome, was the top world power at this time, as Catholics imagine, this first council would have been called by the "Pope" and presided over by the Pope, not a head of state. And it should have been held in Rome itself, not 800 hundred miles away in what is now Iznik, Turkey.
3. "Of the five patriarchates that were ultimately acknowledged, three had become established by the year 325; namely, those of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch." (Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, Vol 1, p 149)
4. "The first ecumenical council of Nice, in 325, as yet knew nothing of five patriarchs that would be fully established in 451 AD, but only the three metropolitans (Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome), confirming them in their traditional rights." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)
5. "Accordingly, though not yet even baptized, he [Constantine in 325 AD] acted as the patron and universal temporal bishop of the church; summoned the first ecumenical council [Nicea] for the settlement of the controversy respecting the divinity of Christ; instituted and deposed bishops; and occasionally even delivered sermons to the people; but on the other hand, with genuine tact (though this was in his earlier period, a.d. 314), kept aloof from the Donatist controversy, and referred to the episcopal tribunal as the highest and last resort in purely spiritual matters. [Footnote:] Eusebius in fact calls him a divinely appointed universal bishop ... Vit. Const. i. 44. His son Constantius was fond of being called "bishop of bishops."" (History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff, Vol 3, ch 3)
6. "The importance of the document before us is greatly enhanced by the fact that it was the very first utterance by the Universal Church on the subject of the prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome. The Nicene Synod was the first of the Ecumenical councils, and was, consequently, the first occasion which offered itself to the Catholic Church of speaking in a corporate and official manner." (James F. Loughlin, The Sixth Nicene Canon And The Papacy, p 222, 1880 AD,.)
7. "In regard to the antiquity of the primacy of the Roman See, there is nothing in favor of its establishment more ancient than the decree of the Council of Nice, by which the first place among the Patriarchs is assigned to the Bishop of Rome, and he is enjoined to take care of the suburban churches. While the Council, in dividing between him and the other Patriarchs, assigns the proper limits of each, it certainly does not appoint him head of all, but only one of the chief." (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, b. iv., c. 7, commenting on Canon VI of the First Council of Nice)

G. 343 AD: Council of Sardica in Illyria, conferred as a new power, not previously held, to the Roman bishop Julius himself, the right to act as an appeal court for deposed bishops, during the Arian controversies, could be reinstated. The council of Sardica clearly illustrates the growing trend of the desire of Roman centralization and control of the church world wide.

1. "The council of Sardica was not a general council, but only a local synod of the West, and could therefore establish no law for the whole church. For the Eastern bishops withdrew at the very beginning. ... The general councils of 381, 451, and 680 knew nothing of such a supreme appellate tribunal. (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church)
2. "the four great ecumenical councils, the first of Nice, the first of Constantinople, that of Ephesus, and that of Chalcedon [451 AD]: accord to the bishop of Rome a precedence of honor among the five officially coequal patriarchs, and thus acknowledge him *primus inter pares*, but, by that very concession, disallow his claims to supremacy of jurisdiction, and to monarchical authority over the entire church. The whole patriarchal system, in fact, was not monarchy, but oligarchy. (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church)
3. "It is, therefore, an undeniable historical fact, that the greatest dogmatic and legislative authorities of the ancient church bear as decidedly against the specific papal claims of the Roman bishopric, is in favor of its patriarchal rights and an honorary primacy in the patriarchal oligarchy. The subsequent separation of the Greek church from the Latin proves to this day, that she was never willing to sacrifice her independence to Rome, or to depart from the decrees of her own greatest councils." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, ch 5)

H. 381 AD: Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople: This council tried to change the world organization from three basically equal Patriarchs [Rome, Antioch and Alexandria], to two [Rome, Constantinople]. Rome having first place and Constantinople, which wasn't even one of the original four, having a very close second to Rome. Antioch and Alexandria are demoted and Constantinople is promoted. This sets the stage for the beginning of the final battle for top papal power between Rome and Constantinople.

1. "The Bishop of Constantinople, however, shall have the prerogative of honour after the Bishop of Rome; because Constantinople is New Rome." (The Second Ecumenical Council. The First Council Of Constantinople, Canon III, 381 AD)
2. "It should be remembered that the change effected by this canon did not affect Rome directly in any way, but did seriously affect Alexandria and Antioch, which till then had ranked next after the see of Rome. When the pope refused to acknowledge the authority of this canon, he was in reality defending the principle laid down in the canon of Nice, that in such matters the ancient customs should continue. Even the last clause, it would seem, could give no offence to the most sensitive on the papal claims, for it implies a wonderful power in the rank of Old Rome, if a see is to rank next to it because it happens to be "New Rome." Of course these remarks only refer to the wording of the canon which is carefully guarded; the intention doubtless was to exalt the see of Constantinople, the chief see of the East, to a position of as near equality as possible with the chief see of the West." (Philip Schaff, commenting on: the Second Ecumenical Council. The First Council Of Constantinople, Canon III, 381 AD)

I. 395 AD: The Roman empire split into two, which was the first event that eventually split the church in two right along political lines. Five basically equal and autonomous patriarchs: 4 Western Patriarchs: Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem One Eastern Patriarch: Constantinople. Rome still has the philosophical first place, because the Bishop of Rome had claimed to be the successor of Apostle Peter.

1. "Thus at the close of the fourth century we see the Catholic church of the Graeco-Roman empire under the oligarchy of five coordinate and independent patriarchs, four in the East [Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem] and one in the West [Constantinople]. But the analogy of the political constitution, and the tendency toward a visible, tangible representation of the unity of the church, which had lain at the bottom of the development of the hierarchy from the very beginnings of the episcopate, pressed beyond oligarchy to monarchy; especially in the West. Now that the empire was geographically and politically severed into East and West, which, after the death of Theodosius, in 395, had their several emperors, and were never permanently reunited, we can but expect in like manner a double head in the hierarchy. This we find in the two patriarchs of old Rome and New Rome; the one representing the Western or Latin church, the other the Eastern or Greek." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Book 3, ch 5)
2. "To complete the hierarchical scheme, it only remained to fix upon an episcopal centre, to assign to one bishop a constitutional supremacy [ie. total Papal power] over all the rest. This result was not reached in the first centuries, and, indeed, has never been reached. While the theory of such a supremacy was finally worked out, and asserted in behalf of the Roman bishop, Christendom has at no time been united in its acceptance. As regards the first three centuries, we have to deal only with tendencies toward this species of episcopal supremacy. We shall find here no pope, in the later sense of that term. The claim for that dignity, and the acknowledgment of it. are both wanting." (Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, Vol 1, p 149)

J. 400 AD: Augustine, The Bishop of Hippo's, looks back 150 years to the Seventh Council of Carthage under Cyprian, and reaffirms the autonomy of individual Bishops, proving the modern Papal system did not exist in his day, with one Bishop over all others acting as a "Pope".

1. "He [Augustine, referring back to Cyprian and the Seventh Council of Carthage] allows me, therefore, without losing the right of communion, not only to continue inquiring into the truth, but even to hold opinions differing from his own. "For no one of us," he says, "setteth himself up as a bishop of bishops, or by tyrannical terror forces his colleagues to a necessity of obeying." What could be more kind? what more humble? Surely there is here no authority restraining us from inquiry into what is truth. "Inasmuch as every bishop," he says, "in the free use of his liberty and power, has the right of forming his own judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he can himself judge another," (Augustine-Anti-Donatist Writings, Book III, Chapter 3, 5) (see also Augustine-Anti-Donatist Writings, Book II. Chapter 1, 3, quoting Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian, 400 AD)

K. 404 AD: Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople viewed both the bishops of Antioch and Rome, as the successors of Peter:

1. "His [Chrysostom] 242 extant letters are nearly all from the three years of his exile [A.D. 404-407], and breathe a noble Christian spirit, in a clear, brilliant and persuasive style." (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. IX, The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom, Chapter X.-Chrysostom in Exile. His Death. A.D. 404-407)
2. "As to the question of the papacy he [Chrysostom] considered the bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and appealed to him in his exile against the unjust condemnation of the Council at the Oak. Such appeals furnished the popes with a welcome opportunity to act as judges in the controversies of the Eastern church, and greatly strengthened their claims. But his Epistle to Innocent was addressed also to the bishops of Milan and Aquileia, and falls far short of the language of submission to an infallible authority. He conceded to the pope merely a primacy of honor, not a supremacy of jurisdiction. He calls the bishop of Antioch (Ignatius and Flavian) likewise a successor of Peter, who labored there according to the express testimony of Paul. In commenting on Gal. i. 18, he represents Paul as equal in dignity to Peter. He was free from jealousy of Rome, but had he lived during the violent controversies between the patriarch of new Rome and the pope of old Rome, it is not doubtful on which side he would have stood. (Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. IX, The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom, Chapter XIII.-His Theology and Exegesis.)
3. "So Chrysostom, for instance, calls Ignatius of Antioch a "successor of Peter, on whom, after Peter, the government of the church devolved," and in another place says still more distinctly: "Since I have named Peter, I am reminded of another Peter [Flavian, bishop of Antioch], our common father and teacher, who has inherited as well the virtues as the chair of Peter. Yea, for this is the privilege of this city of ours [Antioch], to have first had the coryphaeus of the apostles for its teacher. For it was proper that the city, where the Christian name originated, should receive the first of the apostles for its pastor. But after we had him for our teacher, we, did not retain him, but transferred him to imperial Rome." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)

L. 416 AD: Pope Innocent I, in a letter to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio (Ep. xxv), condemning Pelagianism, this Bishop of Rome claimed he was in the chair of Peter, with apostolic authority to settle the issue. Decentius is the first known Bishop of Gubbio and may have been a new kid on the block. This may explain why Pope Innocent I may have made this boast to the newcomer. Of course, these claims were rejected by the east.

M. 451 AD: The fourth ecumenical council, held at Chalcedon in 451 confirmed and extended the power of the bishop of Constantinople, in the celebrated twenty-eighth canon. The 5 Patriarchs: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople.

1. "Following in all things the decisions of the holy Fathers, and acknowledging the canon, which has been just read, of the One Hundred and Fifty Bishops beloved-of-God (who assembled in the imperial city of Constantinople, which is New Rome, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius of happy memory), we also do enact and decree the same things

concerning the privileges of the most holy Church of Constantinople, which is New Rome. For the Fathers rightly granted privileges to the throne of old Rome, because it was the royal city. And the One Hundred and Fifty most religious Bishops, actuated by the same consideration, gave equal privileges to the most holy throne of New Rome, justly judging that the city which is honoured with the Sovereignty and the Senate, and enjoys equal privileges with the old imperial Rome, should in ecclesiastical matters also be magnified as she is, and rank next after her; so that, in the Pontic, the Asian, and the Thracian dioceses, the metropolitans only and such bishops also of the Dioceses aforesaid as are among the barbarians, should be ordained by the aforesaid most holy throne of the most holy Church of Constantinople; every metropolitan of the aforesaid dioceses, together with the bishops of his province, ordaining his own provincial bishops, as has been declared by the divine canons; but that, as has been above said, the metropolitans of the aforesaid Dioceses should be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, after the proper elections have been held according to custom and have been reported to him. (The Fourth Ecumenical Council.; The Council of Chalcedon, The XXX Canons of the Holy and Fourth Synods, of Chalcedon, Canon XXVIII, 451 AD)

2. "These patriarchs, in the official sense of the word as already fixed at the time of the fourth ecumenical council, were the bishops of the four great capitals of the empire, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople; to whom was added, by way of honorary distinction, the bishop of Jerusalem, as president of the oldest Christian congregation (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)
3. Pope Leo I was never called "universal Bishop". Schaff notes that the fourth ecumenical council, held at Chalcedon in 451, never actually gave the title, "Universal Bishop" to pope Leo I. Catholic claims to the contrary are based upon myth: "The title "Universal Bishop" had before been used in flattery by oriental patriarchs, and the later Roman bishops bore it, in spite of the protest of Gregory I., without scruple. The statement of popes Gregory I. and Leo IX., that the council of Chalcedon conferred on the Roman bishop Leo the title of universal episcopus, [universal bishop] and that he rejected it, is erroneous. No trace of it can be found either in the Acts of the councils or in the epistles of Leo." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)
4. "The council of Chalcedon in this decree only followed consistently the oriental principle of politico-ecclesiastical division. Its intention was to make the new political capital also the ecclesiastical capital of the East, to advance its bishop over the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, and to make him as nearly as possible equal to the bishop of Rome. ... But thus, at the same time, was roused the jealousy of the bishop of Rome, to whom a rival in Constantinople, with equal prerogatives, was far more dangerous than a rival in Alexandria or Antioch. Especially offensive must it have been to him, that the council of Chalcedon said not a word of the primacy of Peter, and based the power of the Roman bishop, like that of the Constantinopolitan, on political grounds; which was indeed not erroneous, yet only half of the truth, and in that respect unfair. Just here, therefore, is the point, where the Eastern church entered into a conflict with the Western, which continues to this day. The papal delegates protested against the twenty-eighth canon of the Chalcedonian council, on the spot, in the sixteenth and last session of the council; but in vain, though their protest was admitted to record. They appealed to the sixth canon of the Nicene council, according to the enlarged Latin version, which, in the later addition,

"*Ecclesia Romana semper habuit primatum*," seems to assign the Roman bishop a position above all the patriarchs, and drops Constantinople from notice; whereupon the canon was read to them in its original form from the Greek Acts, without that addition, together with the first three canons of the second ecumenical council with their express acknowledgment of the patriarch of Constantinople in the second rank" (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)

5. "the bishop of Jerusalem, after long contests with the metropolitan of Caesarea and the patriarch of Antioch, succeeded in advancing himself to the patriarchal dignity; but his distinction remained chiefly a matter of honor, far below the other patriarchates in extent of real power. ... the fourth ecumenical council [451 AD], at its seventh session, confirmed the bishop of Jerusalem in his patriarchal rank, and assigned to him the three provinces of Palestine as a diocese, without opposition" (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, book 3, chapter 5)
6. "Despite these bold assertions, the Council of Chalcedon (451) placed Constantinople on a practical equality with Rome. (Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to Constantinople, which survived the fall of Rome and served as the capital of the Byzantine Empire for another thousand years.) This was just another harbinger of the schism that was developing between the East and West, but the primacy of the Roman bishop was being set forth in theory even though it was not yet fully observed in practice." (Gary Eubanks, Church History: A Biblical View)