

Final Exchange on 2nd Nicaea

Craig's comments are in blue, and whenever it is italicized/quoted, that is because he is taking a quote from my article and then offering his own comments. My responses are in red. As a forewarning, I assume readers will see the clear combative nature that Truglia takes, including his insults and rude antics. I won't be seeking to return that in kind. I intend this to be my last raw response to the issue on 2nd Nicaea with Truglia, and if anyone wishes to resolve a problem he might claim still exists, please message me and I can deal with it on a singular basis. Thank you.

Sometimes, in place of a careful and measured response to historical claims, a response is made with an emotional, rhetorical sort of flailing with enough sources and careful considerations mixed in where it merits a response, but not without mention of its rhetorical excesses. Sadly, Erick Ybarra's reply to my article Pope Adrian's Greek and Latin Letters in Nicea II (JE 2448 and JE 2449) is one of these.

My post was not a "reply" to Truglia's article on the Greek and Latin of Hadrian's letters (JE 2448-2449). That article is a lengthy treatise attempting to prove the traditional belief that the Greek version of Hadrian's letters were what was accepted by the Council, and not the longer Latin versions. I disagree with him here, but I have no reason or motivation to respond to it because nothing therein has any relevance to the issue of the Papacy and its evidence at the Council.

In all sincerity, due to the monstrous size of my own blog post, I am grateful that someone has given it some thought. And to do something of a worthy endeavor, that is, considering a position other than one's own, is still worthy. However, it is where Ybarra's analysis falls short, often in its polemical tact and lawyering, which is most disappointing and a disservice to Christians. For those who want to know if there is a reply, here it is, but due to Ybarra's sophistic methodology I cannot avoid pointing this out without putting myself at a severe disadvantage when discussing the issue. And so, with honest regret, I must point out the difference between lawyering, sophistry, and actual historical points made in his reply and weed through these in a transparent manner. In summation, there is not too much of substance in Ybarra's reply, which is not much of a surprise, as those with substance will not resort to such methods.

This itself is simply polemical rhetoric. How can one accuse another of what he does, and expect to be taken seriously?

Due to his method of replying, I will not wed myself to multiple rebuttals if they do in fact come. Ybarra never quoted my largely dispassionate body of work in any sort of detail and so is not really cautiously expounding a counter-argument. He is, as I said, flailing back at me with his keyboard likely for something he perceived as embarrassing to himself (when it was really more directed at Erich Lamberg's arguments specifically, and quotes him at length).

See here this curiously comes up again. It is thought that we are seeking to respond to his long article on Hadrian's letters. That was nowhere in our intention. My post here was respectfully constructed, I insulted no one, and I didn't even mention Craig Truglia's name more than once. And when I did mention it, it was simply to credit him with the source of the objections that I found worthy of making a

public response to. My article is an example of someone who is interested in the historical data, and not in trying to speculate on motives, evil intentions, or the moral or intellectual limitations of others. On the other hand, that seems to be the occupation of Truglia. And for what reason?

Without further ado, here is my reply. Ybarra will be presented in Italics and quotations. He begins his article literally as follows:

“One of the most common mistakes made in pursuit to test the evidence of the Papacy in the early Church throughout the 1st millennium is when the researcher has an unreasonable criterion for what amounts to evidence...”

We already know that the response is not going to be that compelling when its first words concern itself with lowering its own bar for evidence. It appears to be an attempt at a “God of the gaps” sort of argument.

On the contrary, it is universally known that evidence can be cumulative, rather than exhaustive in its pieces. I am simply clearing the way so as to avoid unnecessary expectations for what a Catholic apologist is seeking to do, or what he or she might expect to do. The case for the Papacy, just like the case for many Christian doctrines, is not adorned with strength unless it affords the chance of an accumulation of many items of evidence which, when individually looked at, might not give the same strong message. This is standard operating procedure in the investigative world, and it is curious to see someone calling it an attempt to “lower the bar for evidence”. Does that mean that only when pieces of evidence are potent enough to prove a case beyond a shadow do they measure up to be admissible? That would quickly destroy the legal procedure everywhere in the world.

“[W]e understand that the Vatican Council’s dogmatic constitution on Papal authority is an elaborate argument that builds through an organic development of the idea of the primacy of St. Peter.”

It is good that Ybarra defines his own position, so that way it is not strawmanned or portrayed as something else. However, what he is ignoring is that the primacy of the first see, which is a redundant expression, of course exists in Orthodoxy because canonical order exists between the churches to this day.

So, what is the difference between him and I? The difference between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Catholic view of history is epistemic, as while the Orthodox are looking to preserve the ecclesiology of the Church from its pre-schism consensus (standard Roman Catholic traditionalists, which are apparently rare these days, would affirm the same). However, Roman Catholic Post-Traditionalists, who Ybarra represents, demand that one understands the undeniable existence of historical primacy as a necessary precedent in the development of Roman Catholic ecclesiology today.

I don’t agree with this. I think that the bare minimum evidence that would count as worthy evidence for the legitimate development of the Papacy would involve a great deal more than simply the acceptance of historical primacy. I don’t define what I mean here by “primacy of St. Peter”, and so it would be overly hasty to assume I mean something akin to what Orthodox admit.

And so, the traditionalist Roman Catholics are incorrect inasmuch they boldly believe that the developed notion of the Papacy is not anachronistic and the Orthodox, for that matter, are incorrect inasmuch that

they refuse to accept something because it was not fully developed. According to Ybarra, discerning the truth of the Papacy's merits is no longer a question of good history, but of arbitrary subjectivity, though he likely has not come to grips with this himself.

What this comment here reveals is that there are many who still do not understand the healthy and obvious truth of what St. John Henry Newman called his theory of developments (yes, plural), a theory which he understood accounts for all sciences, not least religious. It is commonly understood by those who have never read Newman that this theory is simply a method to bridge two contradictory beliefs over the course of time. But this is plainly an incorrect reading of the theory, and it would be doubly incorrect to presume that Catholics should be accused of holding to someone's incorrect reading of a valid theory. Lack of responsibility is the what pops out to the screen, not a meritorious observation of what is relevant to Catholicism.

After all, what is a development? The Communists would have viewed their societal views as "scientific" and "developed." They had a whole epistemology that literally delineated it as such. But, clearly what they represented was a societal retrogression. Once the argument over the merits of the Papacy no longer demand scrutiny over its actual historical existence, but rather its alleged development, this demands some claim as to what is in fact a development.

Newman himself gave ample criteria for what distinguishes a legitimate development versus a corruption of doctrine. For example, when he discussed the development of the Roman Empire as a corruption of type. This proves that neither Newman, nor Catholics, can be gratuitously shelved with the sort of blank-check theory of aimless and unrestricted development. It would take a charitable person to do the work of understanding what is being claimed. If one did want to access something of this kind, I would recommend Owen Chadwick's *From Bossuet to Newman*. He details the differences between traditional Catholics prior to liberal scholarship, and how Newman attempts to handle the situation while being faithful to the original deposit of Christian revelation.

For most of world history, governance has been developing towards an increasingly radical direct-democracy model. Now, they even mail the ballots to people's houses that do not even want to vote. So, if this is how governance develops, wouldn't the more hyper-conciliar system be more developed over and against the backward, monarchic, Vatican-I conception of the Papacy? Shouldn't things be developing in the opposite direction that Ybarra posits according to the gods of logic and the discipline of history? The fact that the preceding is possible according to theory reveals how impractical Ybarra's criteria here for the evaluation the Papacy's merits really are.

Once again, this is simply a misunderstanding of the Catholic position. The underlying assumption here is that since the Catholic belief is that the Pope is the supreme authority in the Church, that means he must be at the helm of every decision and procedure. However, what is being forgotten is that the Papal primacy works together with conciliarity. That is clearly taught in *Lumen Gentium* of the 2nd Vatican Council. The lack of understanding this is what explains why the target is being so repeatedly missed by the affront laid down by Truglia. Until more knowledge of the Catholic position is acquired, the more debate and dialogue is stunted.

“(1) Christ divinely singled out Peter and (2) gave him a unique power to govern the universal Church, and that (3) this pastoral commission and (4) prerogative of power is (5) inherited by Peter’s successors in the Roman bishopric until the consummation of all things.”

In the preceding short statement, I numbered the different claims being made by Ybarra. There are varying levels of truth and falsehood in them. (1) is indeed true and (2) partially so, as Peter played the role of ordaining the other Apostles to their Bishoprics (cf Matt 16:18; Optatus Against the Donatists Book 1 Chap 10; Eusebius Ecclesiastical History Book 2, Chap 1, Par 2-3; John of Thessalonica Dormition Homily Chap 13). However, what precisely this “unique power” of Peter was is not mysterious or something obscure that exists in seed form and must be allowed to grow over time in order to perceive it clearly. Rather, it is revealed in the Church’s canons which are Her universally affirmed “rules” for these matters.

Not surprisingly, especially considering the fact the Post-Traditionalists do not even affirm the historicity of a Vatican I Papacy, Papal Supremacy is missing from the canons. In fact, even the word “primacy” in regards to Rome, used in a forged Roman copy of Canon 6 of Nicea I, was objected to by the Council of Chalcedon in its 16th session. And so, what Ybarra is demanding in his short, claim-laden statement, is something radically inconsistent with the explicitly forged consensus of the Church in its own councils and canons. One can already tell Ybarra is selling a “bill of goods” that the pre-schism Church herself never bought.

Truglia here thinks that the very word “primacy” was objected to by the Council of Chalcedon (16th session), and this is supposed to be illustrating his point that even by the 5th century, the very term itself was only arguably said to be possessed of by Rome let alone defined. This has some irony in it since Truglia just admitted above that for Orthodox to deny Rome’s “historical primacy” is erroneous and that right-thinking Orthodox readily admit a “historical primacy” of Rome. Yet here Truglia wants the very term “primacy” to be one of disputation in the 5th century, and at an Ecumenical Council no less. But it is not only ironic, but it is also deeply mistaken. Truglia is reading a controversy into history that doesn’t exist. Nowhere in the 16th session of Chalcedon does any Bishop object to Rome’s chief primacy in the universal Church. The very canon that this 16th session is intent on passing, the 28th of Chalcedon (which renews canon 3 of Constantinople 381), assumes that Constantinople would be the 2nd primate in the taxis of apostolic sees, which more powerfully assumes the 1st place (primacy) of Rome.

(3) is true enough, as the prerogatives given to any bishop is inherently pastoral, that’s why they have pastor’s staffs. (4) is also true, as tradition dictates that prerogatives are inherited. (5) is only partially true, because as before stated, all the Apostles received their bishoprics from Peter, and therefore the whole Church contains this succession. Any special prerogatives ascribed to Rome herself are always contingent upon the Church’s consent, not only strictly for soteriological consistency (as salvation is never top-down, but is experienced only via a free response from the recipient—though this too is by God’s grace), but also as a basic historical necessity. Rome’s bishopric was not always in the city of Rome. It spent considerable time in a whole other country. In fact, this has been true of all of the

Pentarchy at some point or another (and for nearly seven centuries, Antioch has been permanently located outside the ruins of that now non-existent city). The only thing that can make this all work is that people consent to the change in venue, accepting that the new locale is sufficient to both represent and to assume the charism which rightly belongs to another locale, even if that honor is simply the maintaining of its name as the locale when invoking the See.

Most readers can see how this is a blatant reductionism of the clear evidence, and doesn't require any correction beyond another call to common sense.

"[T]here are important forms of evidence for the Papal supremacy to be observed in the Acts of 2nd Nicaea, and it is to those observations that a Catholic should be bound to provide explanation for. None of these observed points can be thought to 'prove' Papal supremacy or infallibility, but when all the points are taken together, they form what St. John Henry Newman called a 'cumulative argument' that arises in favor of something akin to the Petrine primacy [sic, supremacy] that is taught by the [Roman] Catholic Church."

As one can immediately identify, the low bar for evidence can be reduced to as follows: "As long as there are suggestive tidbits which, in my own arbitrary analysis, are consistent with an evolution of an idea I personally believe and want you to believe, then I think only the interpretation of these tidbits consistent with my preconceived conclusion concerning Petrine supremacy can possibly be correct." One can see that this is the most crass sophistry, an utter waste of the natural talent given to man to understand ideas and communicate them, a great sin against the Creator who wants honesty and true ingenuity—not duckspeak.

Again, rhetorical complaints that sound like an angry lady waiting in line for more flour at the supermarket. Nothing of substance.

"Can it be said that all the Byzantines at the time believed in the Roman view of Petrine supremacy? Probably not."

Unlike traditionalist Roman Catholics who believe the Orthodox to be in the sin of schism because they are rejecting the ecclesiastical consensus of the Church (which they believe is Papalist), the Post-Traditionalists can amazingly presume upon the sinfulness of the Orthodox despite the Orthodox having, what they often concede to be, a historically and traditionally authentic position. This bears for all the reality that the Post-Traditionalists are also Post-Truth.

There were signs of acceptance and rejection in all the Councils. Answering a question like "Did the Byzantines accept the Papacy" isn't as easy when you have variegated responses to it. That is simply honesty at work. What is avoided here is brute sand-pounding fundamentalism, an anti-intellectual power of the will trying to fideistically force something into reality that is unreal.

"...the late French Byzantine historian Charles Diehl..."

Ybarra, for some reason, quotes someone (probably out of context) in a sense which actually is inconsistent with what he just said. In fact, there has not been a single cogent point made yet and I am making this point not in jest or with a lack of charity, but as a matter of honest assessment.

Diehl speaks of the Byzantine's outward adherence to the Papal supremacy for the sake of some other root cause other than it being the default Apostolic practice. That seems to affirm the Byzantines at the time were either pre-disposed, in some number (majority/minority?), to not normally concede the Pope such a prerogative. That seems to not contradict my point.

"Response to Objection 1"

In short, Ybarra argues that the Latin minutes of JE 2448 of Nicea II (the passage he quotes is missing from the Greek, a detail he clears up later in the reply) do not contain what would have been understood as empty honorifics. Despite quoting something that was so objectionable it did not make it into the final cut of the council (that's not my opinion, but that of Nicea II's Latin translator, Anastasius the Librarian), it does not prove his point that Roman claims were not honorifics. After all, a basic definition for honorific is "(of an office or position) given as a mark of respect, but having few or no duties." So, while a definition of Rome being ascribed with honorifics with zero meaning would be too far (after all, Orthodox affirm Roman primacy in the canonical order), to interpret words expressing high status higher than what the canons and councils explicitly affirm, as I stated before, is too far. And so, while Ybarra's binary presentation, like that of a defense attorney, attempts to lock the reader into conceding that such Roman claims would have not been understood as honorifics, this presentation requires not even understanding the meaning of the word "honorific." Worse yet, for the historian, it requires understanding what was stated and accepted on different terms than how contemporaries, such as the Carolingians, would have. Being that Ybarra deals with this later in his screed, we will address that issue at that point.

Truglia here tries to clarify what he means by "empty honorific", something which he now says could be still a real canonical reality which nevertheless gets exaggerative or hyperbolic praise. However, it was his own words in minute 13:44 of his debate with Dr. James Likoudis where he said these honorifics were "effectively meaningless". In any case, the use of unreal honorifics is not a problem, but employing that as the manner to interpret Pope Hadrian's epistles is clearly incorrect. Pope Hadrian employs the divinely instituted power given to Peter by Christ Himself and to be everlastingly passed to his successors in the Roman bishopric as the material witness against the Patriarch of Constantinople's use of the title "Ecumenical Patriarch." Again, as I wrote in my original post, you don't refute a fact with a known fiction, and so Hadrian was speaking plain facts, and not empty honorifics. That should be readily admitted by Truglia, and one wonders what in the world remains in existence for Truglia to stall in doing so.

As for those interested in how literally Rome understood the title "Ecumenical Patriarch," ironically Anastasius the Librarian answers that for us, as he wrote the following to Pope John VIII: "But inasmuch as the Greeks very improperly in this Synod have frequently styled their Patriarch as Ecumenical let your apostleship pardon their flattery for they are accustomed thus reprehensibly to flatter their superiors." (p. xviii) Ybarra was posed with the preceding quote twice, once in an article addressed to himself that he responded to and a second time live during a debate. Somehow, a seemingly convenient amnesia has taken over. The idea (as expounded in Ybarra's reply) that Rome did not understand the title of Ecumenical Patriarch as a mere honorific and so they respond with literal explanations of their own authority is patently ahistorical, as the preceding shows.

This is a logical error. The fact that Anastasius has to write to inform John VIII shows that there was at least a habit of interpreting the title "Ecumenical Patriarch" literally. To say that the clarifications

provided by a papal apocrisiarius who spent time in Constantinople nearly a century after the events of Pope Hadrian I and 2nd Nicaea somehow provide an argument that proves Hadrian would have known the title was mere flattery is manifestly fallacious, it doesn't need anymore fixing than to repeat the claim for the fallacy to become clear.

"[I]f the Byzantines understood the Papal claims of Hadrian to have simply been 'empty honorifics', hyperbolic exaggeration 'with no application in reality', and merely unrealistic literary devices, then they would have had no motivation to remove those claims from the Latin original of the Pope's letter to the Emperors."

If Ybarra cared to read Anastasius on this topic, he would have never said this (or at least, would have been more careful in what he said). This is because Anastasius asserted that this whole section of the letter was omitted "out of consideration for Taurisius" seeing that criticizing the ecumenical Patriarch and degrading him would have hurt the integrity of the council itself and the possibility of affirming its conclusions.

Actually, I specifically state that Anastasius understood the Greek "omissions" at the Council were beside any motive to play down papal claims. So care was taken. However, when interacting with people who think that the papal claims of Hadrian's Latin original (JE2448) was edited to remove the Papal claims, it is a hypothetical, for the sake of argument, to figure the picture of the Greeks doing so. In this case, I play along with the theory of those who think the Greeks rejected Hadrian's Latin original at minute 52:07 in his debate with Dr. Likoudis, in order to show how *IF this was the case*, then the theory of Hadrian's words being simply "empty honorifics" is unaccounted for, and even falsified. So Truglia here simply misunderstands the nature of my argument and forgets that he employs the same one.

So again, Ybarra's binary thinking, which appears to be presented falsely to the reader that one must accept his conclusions as if there is no alternative, is exposed as a false choice—one that would never have to be made by someone who has any understanding of the actual history. But, perhaps Ybarra plays to those who do not understand the history and it appears to be his hope that one does not, because after all, the above quote from Anastasius and its context is treated in detail in the very article Erick is responding to. But, I'd agree with his instinct that most people will not read a 15,000 word blog post. He probably didn't.

Again, he is accusing someone of something he did. He claims to have read my article, and in that article I myself appeal to the fact that Anastasius doesn't believe the Council edited the Latin for the sake of Papal claims. So he is the only one guilty of not reading the material he is critiquing. Secondly, I simply repeat that I was never responding to his 15,000 word blog article which is completely irrelevant to this entire discussion.

"[M]ost scholars do not take the view that Hadrian was producing hollow exaggerations for the sake of literary style..."

1. Ybarra has not read every piece of scholarship on this question, let alone counted them to know whether most scholars or not take such a view. This is dishonest.

I've read quite a few authors on this subject that range from various backgrounds. Just like in statistical mathematics, one doesn't need the general populace but a sub-group in order to speak on behalf of the whole, so also I would appeal to that method.

2. This is a logical fallacy, as it is an appeal to authority. Why does Ybarra repeatedly employ logical fallacies? Isn't that disconcerting?

I would argue Truglia isn't properly understanding my intention, nor the fallacy of "appeal to authority". It is not a fallacy to simply appeal to authority if said appeal is not with the intention that by the appeal the argument is thereby proved. That would clearly be a failure, and a commission of the fallacy. And that was not my intention. However, to appeal to authority to add a supporting note is recognized by many scholars to be entirely legitimate.

"Pope Hadrian responds to the Libri Carolini and its claim that 2nd Nicaea and Rome were in the wrong, the Pope explains that the Apostolic See of Rome has, a priori, always upheld the true faith without blemish, and refers to an inscription that on an old Roman aspe which says 'iustitiae sedes, fidei domus, aula pudoris'."

This statement does not really make a point. When two people disagree, of course each side is going to affirm their own veracity and the falsehood of the other.

No this is a reductionism. Hadrian appeals to an inscription that was a description of the essence of the Roman city, and his intention was to speak of it as an ever present reality that has been maintained perfectly.

"Response to Objection 2...it is perceptively observed by some that, even so, the court theology of Charlemagne likewise speaks highly of the power and authority of the Apostolic See, but nevertheless because they dissented from the Pope on icon veneration and the 2nd Council of Nicaea, this effectively shows that such high claims of Petrine supremacy still amount to having 'no application in reality' and are 'effectively meaningless'...[T]he proof against this so far as the Pope himself was concerned provided above appears to me as conclusive."

Erick somewhat charitably frames my position that we have people, like the Carolingians, who opposed any actual notion of Papal Infallibility due to the fact that they opposed the Pope in detail over doctrinal matters. His response to it is merely his aforementioned arguments which I have already debunked. In short, it is a poor response which ignores the salient fact that we have a Latin source treating these Papal claims as hollow honorifics. Erick then quotes who he presumes to be the author of the heretical Caroline Books, "Saint" Alcuin of York, making some milquetoast statements about how one needs to be in communion with the Roman Church. *"Alcuin puts communion with the Roman Church as indispensable for salvation,"* Ybarra writes. He offers no context, as what was the alternative at this time for not being in communion with Rome in the frontiers of Western Europe? And, if Alcuin thought Rome to be in heresy over Nicea II and able to be rejected, then how subservient is the historian to interpret words such as his? Again, as honorifics. Ybarra fails to make his point, though it is honestly not clear that he is trying that hard as his argument would fail to be convincing to anyone other than someone desperate to be convinced.

St. Anselm is speaking to a priest in the West on the matter of the sacraments, and the appeal to Rome is quite plain, general, and all-encompassing. He also attributes to the Pope the position of "head", "key-

bearer”, and the one to who has the authority to “cut off” those who stand at variance. Of course, that is a clear indication of a real primacy that is not intended to be an empty honorific, precisely because St. Anselm isn’t writing to the Pope for a favor, nor is he speaking of how Rome can be favorable to the addressee. Rather, the notation is a threat of spiritual disaster in light of the possessed authority of the Roman Church. Again, the context is one of a plain fact.

“Rome, in St. [sic] Alcuin’s mind, is more than just another Church that has supreme canonical privilege.”

This is a bizarre reading of Alcuin, as nowhere in what Ybarra quoted from him spoke of “supreme canonical privilege,” or delineated the difference between this over and against the divine establishment of the Papacy. Ybarra then quotes some odds and ends surrounding a Synod in Rome in 800, where the Pope was tried, and people said “we cannot judge the Pope.” (What were the results of these synods? Has Erick read the minutes to contextualize these statements? How about future synods that judged the Pope, like the Cadaver Synod? How about Session VII of the Fifth Ecumenical Council?)

Truglia ignores the plain sense of St. Alcuin’s letter to a Western presbyter, a situation for which his empty honorific has no account for. Secondly, he ignores the divine ordering that St. Alcuin understands the whole world to lie under, i.e. the temporal and spiritual. The spiritual, says St. Alcuin, is in the hands of the Bishop of Rome as the heir of St. Peter’s power. This is not a context wherein empty honorific plays any literary function, and thus it is shown that the Carolingians, though they felt the particular right to pit a present Pope against the Roman tradition (which they understood as divinely indispensable), did not have a view of Papal primacy that was simply an empty honorific, but was divinely established by the Lord Himself. As for the Council of Rome (800), I have the scholarly sources. If he has an issue with any of the arguments, he should have made mention of what part of the Council undoes the point being made. Nothing of the kind exists in his critique. The simple fact of the matter is that the court theologians of Charlemagne, including himself, understood the Pope to not be able to be judged by his inferiors, and the rationale is a match for the *Symmachian vs. Laurentian* controversy. Truglia then brings up the Cadaver Synod, presumably because he thinks this is a point of contest for the dictum “the First see is judged by none”? That would be extremely odd as the trial at that synod was enacting a judgment against the already deceased Pope Formosus (891-96), headed by the contemporary Pope Stephen VI (89-97) himself, and for the sake of proving that Formosus unlawfully ascended to the Papal throne, i.e. showing he was no Pope to begin with. Bringing this synod up as an instance to challenge *prima sedes a nemine iudicator* can only be done without any knowledge of the facts of the synod. Truglia then brings up the 7th session of the 5th Ecumenical Council. However, even if that stuck in the books (which it did not, c.f. Evangelos Chrysos’s *praefatio* in the ACO series on C’ple 553 ed. Johannes Straub), the situation was for the sake of Vigilius’s supposed heresy, a condition for which opens up the Pope to be judged as is understood by the majority of Papal Western canon law.

The fact that Ybarra is reaching so deep and coming out empty reveals how damaging the quote from Book 1, Chap 6 of the Caroline Books apparently is to his whole argument. And so, I avail the reader to my initial article in the second last section if they would like to see this discussed in more detail. To be fair to Ybarra, he gives an interesting read of Book 1, Chap 6; that being the Caroline Books were attempting to pit the Pope against previous Popes. And, without carefully considering the matter, I happily concede this must have been amongst their motivations as to anyone who has read the Caroline Books, they throw everything and the kitchen sink at Pope Adrian I concerning Nicea II. Its style is very

similar to this article. It is very tit for tat, citing any source relevant to the issue at hand. So, if my memory serves me right, the Caroline Books did in fact quote other Popes as authorities. But, they quoted a lot of authorities. So, Erick's point that the whole pretext behind the Caroline Books is solely the authority of a pre-existing Papal magisterium which they hold Pope Adrian on account to, is unsubstantiated.

I never said the "whole pretext behind the Caroline Books is solely the authority of a pre-existing Papal magisterium". How could anyone have gotten that from my article?

Rather, what one sees is how they can contextualize such claims of Roman authority as being amongst other authorities (Scriptural, traditional, conciliar, etcetera) which are holistically understood as being the Catholic faith. And so, consistent with later Carolingian statements such as "the privilege of Peter does not persist when judgment is not passed with equity," (Tavard, p. 616) what one sees is the tacit acceptance of an authority, but contextualized so that it is not supreme but amongst other authorities. After all, how does one judge the Pope as now losing the privilege of Peter if he cannot be judged? Who determines his judgement's equity? How? Ultimately, Ybarra's lens for history (which, as we already established, is extremely vague and eisegetical because he is merely looking for tidbits which can serve as premises to a developed idea that fits a preconceived notion of Papal Supremacy) cannot make sense of such words.

Again, Truglia here devolves to poorly made ad hominem and rude antics because my original article, though immensely respectful, probably did teach him that his original arguments were poor. I won't be returning rudeness or uncharitable insults, but I will be simply saying that he appears to lack a sense of what Papal infallibility is. Yes, the Carolingians theory of Roman primacy, while being immensely high and divinely understood, was to be shelved together with the other divinely revealed structures of the Christian faith, and harmony must be considered a pre-condition. It would be the same thing assumed in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in Vatican 1, which I would recommend Truglia to sit down and read.

"Response to Objection 3"

This section is dedicated to discussion the real debate latent in the Latin versions of JE 2448 and 2449, which is, jurisdiction in the Balkans and southern Italy. Now, if Papal Supremacy historically actually existed, there would be no debate. In fact, it would be unthinkable that an ecumenical council would have ignored this issue, as it would have been an ecclesiastical heresy to usurp the Pope's jurisdiction and not repent. However, the Church appeared woefully unconcerned about this issue, not even addressing it at the council, evidently omitting any mention of it from the Greek translation of Pope Adrian's letters. To this, Ybarra replies that, "the Pope never ratified the Council 'as Ecumenical' because of the lack of co-operation of the Emperor to satisfy his request of the confiscated territories." Now, there may be more context to his letter that can show that this is the case, but from what he quoted it does not state that Adrian did not accept the council. The fact the Papacy translated the Council from Greek to Latin (according to Wallach) and sent it to Charlemagne betrays its acceptance, as does Anastasius' ghostwritten letters in the 860s which cite original documents from the council as binding. So, I am very skeptical of what Ybarra posits here without more proof. In any event, the actual criteria for an ecumenical council does not require Papal ratification, as set forth by Nicea II itself. So much for that.

The patrimonies of Sicily and Calabria and the Roman Patriarchal jurisdiction over these two territories plus the prefecture of Illyricum were unlawfully taken by a heretical and wicked Emperor, and placed into the hands of an apostate Patriarch of Constantinople. The same Emperor justified this by simply appealing to his authority to re-arrange boundaries. The Pope was requesting these territories back by both divine law and by pure justice. Now, the Council did not even address the issue, because it likely did not believe that matter lied within its prerogative. Trugila here thinks the Byzantines thought they could have successfully ran against the Imperial administration at 2nd Nicaea. Such was unthinkable. At the time, a willingness to get as much as one can, i.e. the condemnation of Hieria (754) and the defense of image veneration, was valuable enough not to make the former matter a point of contention so devastating so as to abrogate the main mission. We see the same issue come up against at the end of the 9th century, and there it is Photius himself who says that it would be the Emperor, and not Bishops or a Council, who can restore those territories to Rome. In both cases, the Pope thought he could excommunicate the Emperor over the matter, which means the Pope did not think he was beholden to secular will. Therefore, this argument of Truglia used in the Likoudis debate was a rather weak one, and is comes with a good answer from the Catholic side.

“Some Orthodox might press the matter that if the Pope had universal jurisdiction, he would not have to ask for something that already belongs to him. However, this stance ignores the difference between the Patriarchal supervision that Rome had over unique lands and the universal Petrine commission which worked through the mode of appellate procedure.”

This mode of appellate procedure, according to Ybarra himself, is a fantasy that always ends with a recourse back to Rome as a default. And so, if such a fantasy had any semblance of reality, one can hardly imagine Pope Adrian stewing as he does in his letter to Charlemagne over his demands concerning local jurisdiction being ignored. He would have just settled it right then and there over and against the council. However, this would have been inconceivable because, in reality, no one was able to press the honorific far enough that the Pope can operate above canons or councils. Likely, Canon 38 of Trullo was understood as giving the civil governance the ability to shift Rome’s jurisdiction. So, the Pope was not in fact supreme, the chief judicial function of the Church was in fact the Ecumenical Council and everyone knew it. Hence, while Ybarra imagines some parsing between local and supreme jurisdiction, such a parsing is not mentioned in any contemporary source because no one contemplated supreme Roman jurisdiction. It’s an anachronism. After all, that’s why the idea had to evolve over time in the Post-Traditionalist view, the view that Ybarra expounds.

Truglia didn’t understand the argument here. Rome would have been met with military resistance if she had attempted to lawfully resume her jurisdiction over Sicily, Calabria, and Illyricum. As for canon 39 of Trullo, even from a low Papacy view, what is held by antiquity should never be abrogated even by jurisdictional canons that were created for the sake of new situations, as is evidenced by the Orthodox maintenance of Constantinople as the 1st See despite the migration North and the secular authority of Russia. And I’ll repeat that Pope Nicholas, Hadrian II, and John VIII, all Popes that held to the immediate universal jurisdiction of their see, also requested these territories back, knowing it was the Imperial will that was in transgression, and not the Greek bishops.

“...let’s admit that this shows that they didn’t hold the Pope had universal immediate jurisdiction. What actions are proven in its place? Is it the Eastern Orthodox policy of sobornost conciliarity that takes the place of Papal supremacy? No. What is there is Imperial supremacy.”

The binary thinking of Ybarra is back at it. In short, jurisdiction was treated as a political football and it was tossed around based upon getting concessions for other things. So, Pope John VIII conceded these jurisdictions for a political alliance against the Arabs. To think that Photius may not concede the jurisdictions for some element of necessary gain (perhaps his recognition as a Bishop) and simply blame the Emperor for “not being able to do more” and actually go through with it would be a pretty basic interpretation of events. One may not like the politicking, but this is standard diplomacy. If online Papal lawyers were professional diplomats, they would regularly misunderstand what other diplomats are saying and doing.

But this works in favor of the Catholic, as well. Diplomacy could also be a means to instill the belief that one has authority to do otherwise, but concedes for the sake of some other profit in light of its benefit being preferred at the time. Diplomacy is useful, and violating the normal rule of international relations for the sake of belief may be more destructive than simply to work as safely as one can for the time. That seems to have been the case with Popes who understood their authority to be of the kind that could be legitimate, but simply not recognized by others.

As for the issue of Caesero-Papism, state manipulation of the Church was a real issue for Rome and probably today they are puppets of NATO's. Likewise, the idea that local Orthodox Churches are not subservient to their local governments, is also a real issue. It was no different in the past. I suppose, if corruption and state machinations are too much for one to handle, there always remains the option of abandoning an Apostolic Church and opting for Pastor Jim's Bible Church, providing Jim kept his doors open during the Covid quarantine.

Sure, a real issue that has been with the Church since the 4th century. However, for one's argument to rely on its legitimacy is rather different than one conceding a diplomatic negotiation for the sake of a slower means to achieve the goal without justifying it. The Emperor's will, pure and simply, is being used as a way to defend Truglia's history, and that is what is problematic.

“Response to Objection 4”

In short, Ybarra's argument is that Matt 16:18 must be about the Roman Church because the Roman Catechism says so. That argument is pretty poor, especially in light of how Nicea II exegetes the passage:

I would they have had taken into consideration the word which the Lord said to Peter, the chief of the Apostles, ‘Thou art Peter and on this rock will I build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ But having no part with the erection of this building, they bubble out things worthy of derision defining thus...[quotes Hieria's depositions of clergy]...Having slandered the whole Church of God and not satisfied with this or as yet satiated with impiety, contrary to all law and justice, they go on to determine that no one after this shall dare to make any image whatever” (Sixth Session, p. 406 in Mendham's translation)

Truglia here doesn't understand the argument. The Catholic Church's interpretation of “ekklesia” in Matt 16 is the universal Church.

“Response to Objection 5...The belief at the time that all the Patriarchs needed to be involved in a Council for it to be truly ‘great and Ecumenical’ was a belief simply driven by the rule that the whole Church

should be joining in one voice to proclaim the Apostolic faith...However, during a Council, the Apostolic See of Rome has 'chief place' in the primacy and legitimacy of a valid Council representing the universal Church."

Actually, Rome has a secondary role according to the explicit verbiage of what constitutes an Ecumenical Council. I deal with this issue in detail here.

"In other words, whatever handicap the absence of the 3 Eastern Patriarchs and their under-bishops might surface to discredit the Council, the co-operation and agreement of the apostolic see of Peter is a sufficient weight to make their absence negligible to actually discredit the Council."

Ybarra cites an interesting letter in the third session of Nicea II which essentially says that the Patriarchs who could not physically attend the council gave their vote at the Council to the Pope. It has been two-three years since I have read Nicea II, so I do not pretend to remember all the details, but my guess would be that these Patriarchs never accepted Hiera (as evidenced by Hiera not being able to claim their adherence) and so, canonically, they would have appealed to Rome against Hiera before this point. And so, in a new council they cannot attend, it makes sense that they allow the see whom they sent their appeal to, to make their case. What this does not undo is Session 6's criteria which delineated Rome's secondary role during an ecumenical council, and the reception of these Patriarchs and synods after the council, something that took embarrassingly long in many respects, though officially they all accepted Nicea II at Constantinople IV, 879-880. Their tardy reception is all the more confusing given Ybarra's wooden reading of events.

I am at a loss in understanding how Truglia engages with what I wrote on the Catholic understanding of the authority of Ecumenical Councils. The simple point to be made here is that he thinks that Catholics believe is that all you need is the ratification of the Pope. However, our Code says otherwise.

Ybarra then quotes an interesting snippet from St. Nikiphoros. He chortles, "Could it be any clearer?" But, from a snippet, it is hard for me to draw exactly what is being communicated (because if taken literally, it is crassly inaccurate, as Rome did not in fact "preside over" Nicea II). My inkling would be that Nikiphoros is presenting Nicea II as superior to Hiera because of its reception from the Roman See. This would be consistent with Nicea II's explanation of ecumenicity linked to above. And so, without more context, I would not see the need to reconceptualize this statement as expounding a whole other view of ecumenicity.

Again, a reductionism. For more information, read the entire book of Fr. Patrick O'Connell's *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus of Constantinople* for the orthodox Byzantine view of Rome and Councils. This book is recommended by well known Orthodox apologists such as Perry Robinson, Seraphim Hamilton, and the Ubi Petrus team.

"[T]he Byzantine Orthodox Churches...have lost the means to do precisely what St. Nikiphoros here states would be impossible without the Pope of Rome according to divine prescription."

And Rome has lost the means to do what Nicea II says is impossible without the remaining Pentarchy and their synods. Are we all heading to Pastor Jim's?

Again, the need for all the Patriarchs and the Emperor against the claims of Hieria were simply to speak of universality versus minority. We can reproduce the intention by having a General Council with a representation of the universal Episcopate under the cooperation of the Pope of Rome.

“Response to Objection 6...the Greek version that came to be in possession of the East of Hadrian’s letter to the Emperors is that real authentic conciliar text...even if this were the case, it is just as powerful, perhaps even more, than the Latin original of the same letter.”

The moment someone says “perhaps even more” when earlier in his reply he is arguing the removal of the Latin sections was designed to tone down Papal claims, should make one suspicious of dishonesty. An argument is laid out depending upon Ybarra’s rendering of the Greek. A sophistic case is made that Rome alone inherits the thrones of Peter and Paul, but this is eviscerated by words plainly repeated in one of his block quotes: For the holy and chief Apostles themselves, who set up the Catholic and orthodox Faith, have laid it down as a written law that all who after them are to be successors of their seats (θρόνων / thrones), should hold their Faith and remain in it to the end. Obviously, the admonishment to hold the faith of the apostles was made to the whole Church. This was Adrian’s point. He wanted other bishops to follow him in following the right faith of these Apostles. Ybarra’s reading, that this is somehow not an admonishment to exhibit right faith when it is clearly designed to be, shows his wrangling over words and parsing of Greek to be of no effect.

Again, Truglia isn’t reading the Greek version correctly. The entire section is just needs to be repeated and the reader will see how clear it is that the “thrones” (plural) refer to the positions of Peter and Paul as outlived in their Vicar, the bishop of Rome:

*And especially if you follow the tradition of the orthodox Faith of the **Church of the holy Peter and Paul**, the chief Apostles, and embrace their Vicar, as the Emperors who reigned before you of old both honoured **their Vicar**, and loved him with all their heart: and if your sacred majesty honour the most holy **Roman Church of the chief Apostles**, to whom was given power by God the Word himself to loose and to bind sins in heaven and earth. For they will extend **their shield over your power**, and all barbarous nations shall be put under your feet: and wherever you go they will make you conquerors. For the holy and chief Apostles themselves, who set up the Catholic and orthodox Faith, have laid it down as a written law that all who after them are to be **successors of their seats**, should hold their Faith and remain in it to the end.”*

A clear statement about the Vicars of Peter and Paul. Where is that Vicar? It is obvious from the text that it is Hadrian in the episcopate of Rome.

“Response to Objection 7...One can see, therefore, that there is no substantially different message between the Papal claims of the letters sent by Hadrian to 2nd Nicaea [between the Latin and Greek of JE 2448].”

I agree. There is no substantially different message, as my argument is that the Latin dealt with honorifics which had a certain traction within the West, but not so in the east (where they would have been somewhat bizarre, as Roman prerogatives were seen as the result of canons and a dual inheritance from Peter and Paul, consistent with Nikiphoros’ letter above.) And so, what Adrian was actually trying to communicate likely was not at all different between the two, in my own estimation. The difference, would be, in the subtleties: one rendering clearly builds Rome up more and, as the longer ending of

Latin JE 2448 explicitly delineates, an implicit denial of the need for canonical acceptance of such prerogatives. And so, it is the inference one can draw in the Latin which is faulty. Its exact historical motives for composition are unknown, as I have carefully considered these, and so for those who want to weigh the speculations they have recourse to my previous article.

Truglia's argumentation here fails for reasons already given, but most clearly in that Pope St. Nicholas I, a Pope no one denies taught the universal and immediate jurisdiction of his see, appealed to the canons, just like St. Gelasius. He actually in one place says: "*the authority given to us by God through blessed Peter by reason of the laws of the holy canons and papal constitutions.*" (Nicholas, Epistle 46, in PL (Patrologia Latina) 119.845A; eng. Trans found from E. Symonds, The Church Universal and the See of Rome, 233). The supposed difference between Gelasius and Hadrian, or Gelasius and Nicholas, is unfounded. Obviously, when Rome appealed to these canons, as did many Pope's after Nicholas I, they did not mean they were not divinely instituted, but that the canons reflects what was understood to be a donation of Christ himself.