

OOC Note: Two copies of your Historical Research request are included – one typeset in the original format, and one set into a more readable font. You are welcome to use both copies IC as convenient.

On the past life of Delina Barossa

A note upon Methodology

It should be noted that - lacking any other details other than "the past life of Delina Barossa" - this report would otherwise have been very short.

Happily, Livia Cascade, the Seer of the Gateway, has recently published her account of Delina's vision - assuming this account's accuracy, it seems that the historical figure to be investigated is "Maude, daughter of Esther, Cardinal of Purity at the beginning of the Empire". As it relates to the early history of the Empire, I, Octavia Stream's Source, am the natural researcher to take on this task.

I will say that all my normal caveats about the perils of historiography - especially in the period of the founding of which so much is lost - apply here. I have been strongly asked by my superiors in the department to refrain from snippy comments about the scholarship (or otherwise!) of various nations and so I will not repeat them here. All that I am saying is that if there are holes in the following narrative, if things are lost to

history, it is not hard to guess which scholarly tradition - or lack thereof! - might be to blame - probably the scholarly tradition most concerned with preserving so-called "Virtuous stories". Anyway. Yes. I shall not be reprimanded again.

On the history of the Synod

There is evidence that suggests that the form of the Synod evolved considerably over the reign of the First Empress. It is thought to have grown out of the old Highborn Assembly of the Day, whose existence began sometime between the Revelation and the founding of the Empire. It began as a way for individuals across Chapters to meet, discuss the Day, and celebrate it - there is some evidence that it began as a tradition of meeting once a year on some suitable anniversary of the Revelation. At some point, the custom arose to name individuals whose virtue was "cardinal" amongst their peers, and it is from here that the notion of a "Cardinal" arose.

The Assembly was not originally concerned with the finer points of doctrine, however - that was the preserve of the Tribunal - but over time the two became quite enmeshed. Sadly, the details of the Day in its pre-

Imperial form are lost to history - however, there has always been some evidence that, for instance, there was some disagreement as to exactly which Virtues were True.

An Aside on the Tribunal

The reader may or may not be familiar with the Tribunal of the Orthodox to Ensure the Integrity of the Day, so here is a brief primer.

In short: the Tribunal was founded between the Revelation and the Foundation of the Empire. Initially, the Tribunal consisted entirely of Highborn priests and theologians and was set up as a response to increasing exposure of The Day of Virtue to foreigners and their philosophies, such as the Navarr Great Dance and Arizen Net of the Heavens, and how the Day of Virtue might inform, and be informed, by these beliefs. They are not uncontroversial, although most of their later controversy stems from later in history - they were, for instance, outlawed under Empress Varkula, and

subsequently reconciled with the Empire under Emperor Frederick - but their primary influence on the Empire was in its earliest years.

The nature of the chapters, however, meant that it was perfectly possible for one chapter to believe in seven virtues, rejecting, say, Loyalty in favour of the false virtue of Hatred, while another to believe in seven virtues, the seven that we know today are True. While the influence of the Tribunal worked to try and homogenise things, for whatever reason this did not successfully occur - suggesting, perhaps, that the Tribunal was just as riven on the issue, or distracted by defending the Day from the differing philosophies that other nations shared.

On the foundation of the Empire, the Highborn Assembly of the Day became what we know of today as the Synod. The constitution as we know it today certainly suggests a Synod much like the modern form; but the constitution was always a statement of intent, of axioms, and there is some evidence from from passing references in other texts that the transfer between the axioms laid out there and actual practice was not immediate but gradual, over time. It is only with the full codifying of Imperial Law under Emperor Giovanni that this transition ended. So, then, there was a continuum between the Highborn Assembly of the Day - a single assembly

of Highborn, able to speak on all matters of Virtue, disinclined towards making statements of Dogma or doctrine - to the pluralistic Synod which we ended up with. But it is lost to history exactly how this change occurred, or at what pace.

On Hatred, or Purity

It is a relatively well-known historical fact that Hatred was strongly considered by the early Synod before being rejected. There is some evidence - Adelina's vision seems to directly confirm this - that it was once known as Purity. Adelina's vision is clearly at a time when something much like an "Assembly of Purity" appears to exist, but it is unclear who exactly is a voting member, or what the title of "Cardinal" truly means here. It appears that Maude-who-would-be-Adelina was the "Cardinal of Purity". Did the early Empire truly fully recognise Purity as a virtue; was there a Cardinal in the "Assembly of the Nine" - did such an Assembly exist at the time? We do not know, and perhaps may never know; this history is quite extensively lost, which I for one find highly suspicious.

A Request for Direction on Future Scholarship

The original request was quite broad, and as you can see it has raised more questions than it answers. I see various avenues which my research could progress further along:

- I could investigate further the false virtue of Hatred itself, under its other name of Purity, and track what is known about its nature throughout history. This is likely to turn up evidence of theological interest but of perhaps little practical use.
- I could investigate occurrences of actual support for Hatred and Purity throughout history. This would be likely to resolve the question as whether or not the Empire ever truly recognised a "Cardinal of Purity", as well as tracing any known cults to the modern day.
- I could spend more time looking specifically into the life of Maude, daughter of Esther, perhaps discovering what she did with her life after the events of the Past Life Vision. This might turn up something interesting, but perhaps not - it is hard to know how well she hid or, indeed, where she went.
- I could spend some time investigating the pre-Imperial Day; records will surely exist somewhere. This moves away from the

original focus of the research but, I suppose, might be of interest to theological historians.

- * I could spend some time investigating the very early history of the Synod and how it moved towards its modern form, perhaps with particular reference to the Constitution. The evidence here is very scant, but given time to focus on it, who knows what might be found?

A suitable announcement in the Senate will direct the Department in the usual fashion.

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The Assembly was not originally concerned with the finer points of doctrine, however – that was the preserve of the Tribunal – but over time the two became quite enmeshed. Sadly, the details of the Way in its pre-Imperial form are lost to history – however, there has always been some evidence that, for instance, there was some disagreement as to exactly which Virtues were True.

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