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Reflexes of Iconoclasm and Iconophilia in the Roman Wall Paintings and Mosaics of the 8th and 9th Centuries

In the first decades of the 8th century, the affirmation of Iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire opens a groove between Rome and Constantinople, that will be reconstructed only in the middle of the next century. In this long time frame we are witnessing the rebirth of the Western Empire with the coronation of Charlemagne, who also expressed doubts about the legitimacy of the veneration of images in his *Capitulare de imaginibus*, the so-called *Libri carolini*. However, the cult of icons in Rome was out of the question and, together with the cult of the martyrs and their relics, constituted one of the pillars on which the image of the Holy City was based. This paper therefore examines the role played by these disputes on monumental decorations commissioned by popes. In the great aspe mosaics of Santi Nereo e Achilleo and Santa Maria in Domnica, by Leo III and Paschal I, and also in some wall paintings (e.g. in Santa Maria Antiqua or San Clemente), we can in fact observe a distancing from the traditional iconographic schemes, arising from the early Christian age, that probably reflects these religious struggles.