UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
History Working Paper

Number VII, October 2013

The Memory of Gregory the Great and the Making of Latin Europe, 700-1000

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The exercise of power in the post-Roman West presents a paradox. As has long been remarked, successor states in the western provinces were weak, economically and in terms of infrastructure—but they were large in terms of territory. The kingdoms of the Visigoths, the Lombards, and the Franks covered huge areas. In part, it has been argued, there was an inversely proportional relationship between their breadth and their shallowness. And what they lacked in material resources, they made up for with ideological capital. These thin sheets of authority were held together by the memory of the expanse of Roman authority, as mediated in particular by the Church. [1] The 'ascent of Latin Europe' owes as much to narrative bravura as it does to conquest of territory or subjugation of the peasantry.[2]

Pope Gregory I (d. 604) is a test case for this view of the power of memory to enable political authority. His reputation as a maker of early medieval societies rests on a well-known *coup de théâtre*: the decision to send monks to covert the new inhabitants of Roman Britain. Here, if ever, is a legend of power at a distance.[3]

Our focus in this essay is on the less spectacular, but apparently more solid, evidence of Gregory's *Register*. His surviving correspondence comprises over 800 letters, the most extensive documentary record of any figure in the early Middle Ages, spanning the length and breadth of Europe and the Mediterranean. Early medieval readers saw here the outlines of Latin Christendom taking shape, and modern scholars, in their gratitude for a rich early medieval archive, have tended to follow suit. One should beware, however. We do not have the original *Register*: what we have is a sample, selected by later enthusiasts for their own needs and purposes. Put at its strongest, the Latin Christendom of Gregory's *Register* is a product not of sixth-century papal administration, but of Carolingian and post-Carolingian ideology.[4] The case illustrates precisely the power of cultural memory in the making of early medieval polities.

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[1] P. Fouracre, 'Cultural conformity and social conservatism in early medieval Europe', *History Workshop Journal* 33 (1992), 152–61. This essay is intended as a companion piece to my study cited in n. 48. Earlier versions were delivered to and improved by audiences in Princeton, Oxford, Sheffield, and Zurich. It was completed in the genial setting of the Seminar für mittelalterliche Geschichte at the University of Tübingen: my thanks to Steffen Patzold and his colleagues there. My thanks also to Lucia Castaldi, Kate Cooper, Bernard Gowers, Annette Grabowski, Bruno Judic, Rudolf Pokorny, Helmut Reimitz, Roger Reynolds, Herbert Schneider, and Charles West for their collegiality and correction.

[2] Cf. K.J. Leyser, 'The Ascent of Latin Europe', in *id.*, *Communications and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, 2 vols., ed. T. Reuter (London, 1994), 215-32.

[3] For the mission and its later memory, see H. Mayr-Harting, 'Two Conversions to Christianity: the Bulgarians and the Anglo-Saxons', The Stenton Lecture 1993 (Reading, 1994).

[4] Cf. B. Judic, 'Le registre des lettres de Grégoire le Grand: une création carolingienne?', in J. Desmulliez, C. Hoët-Van-Cauwenberghe, J. Jolivet eds., *L'étude des correspondances dans le monde romain de l'Antiquité classique à l'Antiquité tardive: permanences et mutations* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2010), 1-21.

In the long making of Pope Gregory as founder of Christendom, there are two, perhaps three phases.[5] In the first, up to the mid ninth century, Gregory was conscripted to support an aggressive regnal and then an imperial church. His texts were excerpted, reset, and used to develop a range of institutions—in particular the monastery and the episcopacy. These were fundamental to the construction of the Carolingian Empire.

Charlemagne's Empire and Gregory's Europe were to diverge, however. In what we might see as 'Phase Two', Rome took back the memory of Gregory from Frankish courts: in the 870s, a Roman biographer dubbed him 'Great', to rival the greatness of Charles.[6] Finally, in the third phase, after the splintering of Carolingian rule, the memory of Gregory acquired its own momentum. The forced emancipation from Empire threw churchmen back on their own cultural resources. It became not only possible, but even necessary to draw on Gregory as a survivor of imperial collapse. He became an icon of ecclesiastical autonomy—a means to articulate a Christian Europe without the awning of an emperor's power.

1. Gregory's Europe

Gregory himself had no blueprint for Latin Christendom. His own landscape was that of ancient imperial Christianity. As Robert Markus emphasized several decades ago, seen in its 'proper context', Gregory's Europe was 'in every way closer to the Europe of Justinian than that of Charlemagne'. [7] Furthermore, as I have argued elsewhere, Gregory did not expect any future: his most solid conviction was that the world was about to end.[8] He was thus at once a highly conventional Roman aristocrat, and a radical eschatological prophet. He either accepted the status quo, or he did without it altogether: institution building for the future did not occur to him as a relevant goal.

By birth, Gregory was a privileged Roman aristocratic insider, and his career followed a well-worn pattern.[9] He moved from secular to ecclesiastical administration, from Rome to Constantinople and back again. When in 590 Pope Pelagius II died of the plague, Gregory was the obvious choice to succeed him. What made him unusual was his profession as a monk, the first indeed to occupy the throne of St Peter. This rogue element in his *curriculum vitae* notwithstanding, Gregory was inclined to think of the Church in wholly conventional terms. The Emperor was his master, even if he, Gregory, was *de facto* ruler in Rome. He may

[5] Blazing a trail here here is B. Judic, ' ''*totius Europae speculator*'': la fondation d'une culture médiéval européene et la construction d'une auctoritas: la postérité de Grégoire le Grand dans la haut moyen âge latin', Unpublished Thesis, 2 vols., (Lille, 1999).
[6] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* IV. 63, PL 75, 213C. On titular 'greatness', see P. Lehmann, 'Mittelalterliche Beinahmen und Ehrentitel', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 49 (1929), 215-39.
[7] See R. A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical* Society, 5th ser. 31, (1981), 21-36, at 36.
[8] C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), 131-88.
[9] R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997) is the definitive biography.

have sent missionaries to Britain and cultivated links with Frankish or Lombard kings, but Gregory did not for a moment see himself as looking to establish the papacy as an autonomous power leading a confederation of Christian barbarian peoples.

Gregory's insensitivity to Latin Christendom as an entity was not a failure of the imagination: far from it. He was more than capable of envisioning a different order to the one in which he lived. He thought, in fact, on a cosmic scale. His own most certain belief was that the end of the world was at hand. Everywhere, he saw signs of the impending cataclysm. Storms came unexpectedly in the summer time; a sinner's corpse was expelled from its place of burial in anticipation of the final reckoning. In the deathbed visions of teenage girls, as in the celebration of the Mass, the nearness of Judgement was to him palpable and eerie, like the tricks of the light in a breaking dawn.[10] As a preacher of the Last Days, Gregory styled himself after the Old Testament prophets—in particular Ezekiel—whose task it was to announce to the people their sins. Above all he took as his model the Apostle Paul. As Paul had done, Gregory saw it to be his duty to gather in the faithful in preparation for Judgement. It was for this reason that he sent monks to Britain: not as a first step towards a medieval future, but, as 'unfinished business' before the end of time.

Gregory's radical eschatology co-existed with his conservative institutional identity. He moved back and forth between the routine conduct of business and the heightened consciousness of the end times with a facility his modern readers find confusing. His literary output reflects this ease. On the one hand, we have the sermons of scriptural exegesis, in particular 35 books of dense meditation on the meaning of the book of Job. (Homilies on Ezekiel and the Gospels have also survived.) On the other hand, we have the voluminous correspondence. While we may be impressed by the scale of the *Register* as we have it, this is likely to have been a quarter of what Gregory produced, as we shall see.

Besides these torrents of exegesis and correspondence, there are two texts, the *Pastoral Rule*, a treatise on the proper conduct of authority; and the *Dialogues*, a collection of miracle stories of Italian holy men and women, cast in the classic form of ancient philosophical instruction.[11] Like any well-educated ancient person, Gregory could shift between rhetorical genres. Ultimately, however, he maintained a unified perspective. His administrative transactions were pragmatic: he was not interested in institutions, be they monastic or clerical. His vision of authority was a moral one. Anyone—layperson, ascetic, or holder of clerical office—could and, if suitably qualified, should assume authority in order to guide the faithful in the Last Days.

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[10] See e.g. Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia* II.35.1, PL 76, 1260C; id., *Dialogi* II. 55 and IV. 18, SC 260, 182 & SC 265, 70.

[11] On the *Dialogues*, see now M. dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cults in the Age of Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2012).

Without the eschatological frame, however, what did Gregory's body of work mean? If we trace the reception of his works, it is clear that his medieval readers supplied an institutional rationale to a set of largely pragmatic and provisional arrangements. Many modern studies have assumed that he was, in fact, following a policy and building for the future.[12] As a verdict on Gregory, this is unwarranted—but as a characterization of the priorities of Gregory's early medieval readers, it is entirely accurate.

2. Charlemagne's Gregory: the Imperial Moment

By the time Charles, king of the Franks had been crowned Emperor of the Romans, Gregory had been remade as a usable, indeed an indispensable resource. This was not a coincidence. The Emperor's *literati*, Alcuin of York, Theodulf of Orleans, and Paul the Deacon, were all, in ways that remain to be fully explored, advocates of Gregory's value. Their success in selling him is borne out in the Carolingian library collections, such as Fleury or St Gall.[13] In the early ninth century, a 'Gregory toolkit' consisted of the following elements: a (usually compressed) sample of his exegesis; the *Pastoral Rule*; the *Dialogues*; a biography; and an epitome of the *Register*. Across the seventh and eighth centuries, these elements had been assembled, in Spain, England, Lombard Italy, and Francia itself.

We may begin with the exegesis. The task of rendering Gregory's moral intensity into manageable units of institutional resource began, in fact, before his death, and with Gregory's complicity. His notary Paterius had begun a commonplace book, noting down Gregory's interpretation of verses of Scripture delivered incidentally in the course of his discourses on Job or Ezekiel.[14] Gregory insisted that these be systematically set out in the canonical order of scripture. The resulting *Liber testimoniorum* was widely diffused across early medieval libraries, and set a pattern for other excerptors in the seventh century, such as Taio of Saragossa, or the Irish monk Lathcen. In his epitome of the *Moralia*, Lathcen filleted out the lengthy disquisitions on the moral meaning of the text, to produce a lapidary series of statements about how to respond to demonic attack.[15] The net effect of these seventh-century excerptors of Gregory was to help in the diffusion of his authority, while actually draining away what was specific about his meaning. By the end of the seventh century, in the *Liber scintillarum* attributed to Defensor of Ligugé, excerpts from Gregory take their place alongside those of Augustine, Jerome, Cassian, and other Latin *patres*.[16]

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[12] G. Jenal, *Italia Ascetica atque Monastica*, 2 vols., (Stuttgart, 1995) shows conclusively that Gregory did not pursue a monastic 'policy'.

[13] See L. Castaldi ed., *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo, Gregorius I Papa* (Florence, 2013).

[14] See now L. Castaldi, F. Martello, '«Tempera quasi aurum»: origine, redazione e diffusione del *Liber testimoniorum* di Paterio', *Filologia Mediolatina* 18 (2011), 23-107.

[15] Lathcen, *Egloga quam scripsit Lathcen filius Baith de Moralibus Iob quas Gregorius fecit,* ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 145 (1969). For an overview, see R. Wasselynck, 'Les compilations des "Moralia in Job" du VIIe au XIIe siècle', *RTAM* 29 (1962), 5-32.

[16] *Defensoris Liber scintillarum*, ed. H. Rochais, CCSL 117 (1957); the text awaits a full modern treatment.

In the case of his treatise on *Pastoral Rule*, Gregory's readers were able to go further, and to press Gregory's authority directly into the service of institutional authority.[17] Gregory composed the text on his accession to papal office. Dedicated to a bishop John (most likely of Ravenna), and sent around to episcopal colleagues around the Mediterranean, the text is a treatise on the assumption and conduct of office. It is couched, however, in studiously vague terms as a tract for all rulers (*rectores*), not only bishops, in Gregory's view.[18] The bulk of the text is devoted to detailing what kind of corrective guidance (*admonitio*) a ruler should give to those in his charge. Different readers sought to harness it to different institututional purposes: for Isidore and Bede, it served as a blueprint for Christian kingship; for Gregory's contemporary Columbanus, it was a blueprint for abbatial authority. By the mid ninth century, however, it is fair to say that an episcopal reading had taken over. In the 860s, Hincmar of Rheims urges his nephew Hincmar of Laon to treat the work as a handbook for his conduct of office. It should be on the altar of every bishop at consecration.[19]

A similar range of interpretative possibilities attended the reception of the *Dialogue*s. Some early medieval readers responded to the otherworldly immediacy of the text: across the seventh century, a number of visionary narratives amplified Gregory's sense that spiritual realms were stunningly close.[20] Other readers took a more this-worldly perspective: in their hands, Gregory's effort in philosophical instruction became a resource in the institutional development of Benedictine monasticism. Gregory had mentioned the *Rule of St Benedict* very briefly in his account of Benedict in the *Dialogues*, but had not promoted it as a code for monks to follow. Gregory's Benedict is a miracle-working prophet of the end times, very different from the wisdom teacher projected in the *Rule*.[21] From the mid eighth century, however, with the refoundation of Benedict's abbey of Montecassino, the opportunity to assimilate Gregory's narrative of Benedict's life with the *Rule* transmitted under his name was too good to pass up. A number of Gregory's readers among the Latin West took this opportunity. Pre-eminent among these was Paul the Deacon, monk of Montecassino, author of a *Life of Gregory*, and editor of a small selection of his letters (fifty four of them).[22] In his *History of the Lombards*, Paul gave both Benedict and Gregory central roles, as he sought to present himself to the Carolingians as a cultural broker for Italian traditions.[23]

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[17] As finely observed in P. R. L. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, 200-1000* (Oxford, revised edn., 2013).

[18] R. A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Rector and his Genesis', in J. Fontaine, R. Gillet, and S. Pellistrandi, eds., *Grégoire le Grand,* Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Centre culturel les Fontaines, 15-19 septembre 1982 (Paris, 1986), 137-46.

[19] Hincmar of Rheims, *Opusculum LV capitulorum*, *pref. MGH Conc.* IV Supp. II, 146.

[20] See further I. Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, NY, 2000).

[21] Leyser, *Authority & Asceticism*, 182.

[22] Known as the 'P' collection: see D. Jasper, H. Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters in the Early Middle Ages* (Washington, DC, 2001), 72.

[23] A start has been made here by C. Azzara, 'La figura di Gregorio magno nell'opera di Paolo Diacono', and M. Costambeys, 'The Monastuic Environment of Paul the Deacon', both in P. Chiesa ed., *Paolo diacono. Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobardo e rinnovamento carolingio* (Udine, 2000), 29-38, and 129-38. See also

Just as Gregory's story of Benedict was yoked to the *Rule* in order to give the *Rule* greater prestige and institutional heft, so Gregory's own biography became a medium for the shaping of his message. Gregory, in fact, was the most 'storied' of the Latin Fathers, receiving repeated biographical treatment. Gregory's status as icon of authority takes form across the successive writings and rewritings of his life story.

The first freestanding biography is the so-called Whitby *Life*, written in England c. 700 by an ascetic (male or female) associated with the monastery of Whitby in Northumbria. It survives in one copy, but we know it was widely read and adapted, as we shall see. The main theme of the *Life* was the reach of Gregory's power—whether in space or time. He had reeled in the far-flung English; at the end of time, the Whitby author envisages, he would lead them in to heaven. Gregory's range extends backwards to the pas. Through his tears, in a story 'marvellous to tell and marvellous to hear', the Emperor Trajan is redeemed from Hell. Neither barbarians at the rim of the world, nor the Romans of centuries ago, were beyond his power, inherited from St Peter, to bind and to loose. [24]

The earliest reader of the Whitby *Life* whom we can identify was Bede. He posed the same question—how did Gregory exercise power at a distance?—but had a different answer. Less through miracles than through letters, proposed Bede. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Bede told the story of Augustine's mission as an epistolary novel.[25] Through the sequence of letters sent by Gregory, readers can track the progress of the mission, Gregory's change of heart about the use of pagan temples, and his concern for Augustine's growing sense of his own importance. Bede is among our earliest witnesses to the availability of Gregory's letters outside Rome, and our first source for the *Libellus Responsionum*, the replies to the series of questions Augustine had asked from the missionary field. [26] Unlike other early medieval gregorians, however, Bede's goal was not to build ecclesiastical institutions. In his view, the English Church had become overly complacent as an institutional structure, and in writing the history of its heroic missionary past, he sought to give a moral jolt to the Church in his own day.[27]

C. Leyser, 'Late Antiquity in the Medieval West' in Philip Rousseau ed., *Blackwells Companion to Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), 29-42.

[24] *Vita Gregorii* 29, ed. B. Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great,* (Cambridge, 1985), 127-29. The reception of this story is traced by G. Whatley, 'The Uses of Hagiography. The Legend of Pope Gregory and the Emperor Trajan in the Middle Ages', *Viator* 15 (1984) 25-63.

[25] Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gens anglorum* I. 27-32. T. Mommsen, 'Die Papstbriefe bei Beda', *Neues Archiv* 17 (1892), 387-96 is the classic discussion.

[26] See P. Meyvaert, 'Le "Libellus responsionum" à Augustin de Cantorbéry : une oeuvre authentique de Saint Grégoire le Grand', in *Grégoire le Grand*, 543-50.

[27] See further A. Thacker, 'Bede's Idea of Reform', in P. Wormald, D. Bullough, R. Collins eds., *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), 130-53.

These English characterizations of Gregory reverberated through later centuries. At some point in the late eighth or early ninth century, an unknown author spliced together Paul the Deacon 's *Life of Gregory* with several of the miracle stories from the Whitby Life, including that concerning the Emperor Trajan. The resultant *Life of Gregory* was wildly successful, surviving in well over a hundred copies, at least as many as Paul's original composition. It seems to have circulated under his name—but its appeal, we suggest, lay in its redirection, without the English tilt, of the Whitby *Life*'s sense of the breadth and immediacy of Gregory's power. [28]

Carolingian interest in Gregory only increased as the Empire steered into crisis in the generation after Charlemagne. The tension between Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious and his own sons set up questions about the moral accountability of those in power that Gregory's texts were ideally suited to answer. Specifically, with his performance of public penance in 822, Louis inaugurated two decades of intensive discussion about how to correct the ruler when he was in error. One scholar has called the Empire of Louis 'the penitential state': it could equally have been called 'the Gregorian state', so focussed was the court on the agenda Gregory has worked through in the *Pastoral Rule*. [29] As another scholar has shown, this was a critical moment in the self-consciousness of bishops in the Frankish kingdom, and their sense of themselves as delivering *admonitio* to the Emperor. [30]

3. Rome's Gregory: John the Deacon and the *Register*

The apotheosis of Gregory north of the Alps was to meet with a concerted response in Rome. In the early 870s, the Roman deacon John surveyed the literary scene of Gregory commemoration. There was scarcely a people of Europe who had not offered an account of Gregory, he observed: the Franks (through a brief notice in Gregory of Tours), the Anglo-Saxons, through the Whitby *Life* and Bede, and the Lombards though Paul the Deacon. This was an irony, notes John, in that Gregory had hated the Lombards. But there was no Roman account of Rome's most famous son. In response, John produced the longest saint's life in early medieval Europe. His ambition was nothing less than a programmatic summation of Gregory commemoration, and indeed of Gregory's work itself.[31]

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[28] C. Leyser, 'The Memory of Pope Gregory the Great in the Ninth Century: a Redating of the Interpolator's *Vita Gregorii* (*BHL* 3640)', in F. Santo ed., *Gregorio magno e le origini dell' Europa, Atti del convegno internazionale*, *Firenze, 13-17 maggio 2006* (Florence, forthcoming 2014).

[29] M. de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge, 2009).

[30] S. Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008).

[31] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii*, *pref*. PL 75, 61B-C. See further G. Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide e la cultura a Roma al tempo di Giovanni VIII', *BISI* 68 (1956) 33–89; *id*. ' "Giovanni Immonide e la cultura a Roma al tempo di Giovanni VIII": Una *retractatio*', in G. Arnaldi & G. Cavallo eds., *Europa medievale e mondo Bizantino. Contatti effetive e possibilità di studi comparativi* (Rome, 1997), 163-77.

The bulk of John's text was composed of extracts from Gregory's *Register*. Consciously or not, John picked up on Bede's intuition that the way to tell Gregory's story was through his letters. In finding a way both to evoke and to contain the profusion of Gregory's correspondence, John shows remarkable poise—more than some of Gregory's biographers since. To appreciate this, we have to explain what happened to the letters, for which John is in fact our key source.

From the historian's point of view, the story of Gregory's *Register* is one of loss. What John tells us is that the original *Register* was kept in fourteen papyrus volumes in the papal archive: one volume for each of the fourteen years for which Gregory was Pope (590-604).[32] These volumes have not survived: John is in fact out last witness for their existence.

In the eighth century, there is evidence that the *Register* was consulted and selectively copied by visitors to Rome. Besides Bede and Paul the Deacon, as noted above, there were two principal excerptors of the *Register*. In the early eighth century, an archbishop of Cologne organized the copying of some 200 letters from the year 595. We have no sources documenting his intentions. The Cologne collection amounts to a sample of Gregory's papacy in administrative action, and this may have been what the archbishop wanted: a practical manual, or even a formulary, for his conduct of episcopal office. [33]

The biggest and most influential selection from the *Register* was made in Rome itself by Pope Hadrian I (772-795). From the fourteen papyrus volumes, papal scribes selected 684 letters, approximately 50 from every year of Gregory's papacy. These they put into two parchment volumes. We have no evidence for the criteria of selection or the numbers omitted. If the 200 letters from the Cologne collection are at all typical, roughly a quarter of which of which are found in Hadrian's selection for 595, then we have a multiplier of 'times four' for the original *Register*: it may have contained 2000-3000 texts.[34] Modern critical editions of the *Register*, then, amount to an assimilation of the Cologne collection (known to scholars as 'C') with the Hadrianic epitome (known as 'R'), to produce a total of some 850 letters.[35]

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[32] John the Deacon, *VG pref* & IV.71, PL 75, 62C & 223B. See further Jasper & Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, 70-72; L. Castaldi, 'Il *Registrum Epistularum* di Gregorio Magno', *Filologia Mediolatina* 11 (2004), 55-97.

[33] For the Cologne collection, see L. Fowler Magerl, 'The Use of the Letters of Pope Gregory I in Northeastern France and Lorraine before 1100', in *Festschrift Nörr* (Cologne, 2003), 237-260.

[34] E. Pitz, *Papstreskripte im frühen Mittelalter: Diplomatische und rechtsgeschichtliche Studien zum Brief-Corpus Gregors den Großen* (Sigmaringen, 1990) suggests that the original *Register* may have contained 20,000 letters.

[35] P. Ewald, 'Studien zur Angabe des Registers Gregors I', *Neues Archiv* 3 (1878), 433-625; leading to the edition, Gregory, *Registrum epistularum,* eds. P. Ewald and L. Hartmann, 2 vols., MGH Epp. (1891-99). The more recent edition of D. Norberg, 2 vols., CCSL 140, 140A (1982) does not add to Ewald's discussion of the manuscripts.

Hadrian's purposes in making his selection, and the basis of his criteria remain an enigma. It may be that his is a random sample. An obvious point to make, though, is that the vast majority of letters selected concern Italy. This may have reflected the balance of the original *Register*. It must also reflect Hadrian's context in the wake of Carolingian conquest of Italy in 774. Commemoration of Gregory's authority in Italy is surely part of the great shift in papal loyalties in the late eighth century, moving away from Byzantium, and into closer and closer collaboration with Frankish kings. Hadrian's epitome was made at the same time as the copying of the *Codex Carolinus*—a systematic collection of correspondence between the popes and Frankish kings—from papyrus to parchment. Gregory did not imagine his official position outside of an Eastern imperial context, but Hadrian did.[36]

While its genesis may be inscrutable, its effect is clear: Hadrian's edition of the *Register* transformed the meaning of canon law in the West. Gregory's letters had not featured at all strongly in earlier collections, which took Dionysus Exiguus' early sixth-century compilations as the end point of the canonical tradition. If the decretal tradition was not closed, it could be re-invented wholesale.

Such a re-invention was the work of the following generation. The 830s witnessed, in the heat of the conflict between Louis the Pious and his sons, the construction of a cavernous series of canon law forgeries, the Pseudo-Isidore.[37] This extraordinary project went back to early papal history to combine the decretals the Carolingians had actually received together with those that they wished they had inherited. At the end of the Collection came a series of letters of Gregory. These came almost all from 'R', but included also the *Libellus Responsionum* transmitted by Bede. As the figure whose *Register* had re-opened the decretal tradition, Gregory in some sense legitimised the whole enterprise of the Pseudo-Isidore. [38]

In the period 800-1000, there was no other canonical resource like 'R'. Canonical extracts from it were juxtaposed with selections from the Pseudo-Isidore. From the mid ninth century, there start to proliferate large and small scale collections, excerpting from the Pseudo-Isidore and Gregory—while being careful to distinguish between them. [39] In the

[36] For a suggestive reading of Hadrian I in this context, see now S. Scholz, 'Das Papsttum, Roms wirtschaftliche Lage und die Enteignung der päpstlichen Patromonien in der Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts', in S. Weinfurter ed., *Päpstliche Herrschaft im Mittelalter. Funktionen-Strategien-Darstellunsformen* (Ostfildern, 2012), 11-25.
[37] See Jaspers & Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, 137-94; and http://www.pseudoisidor.mgh.de/
[38] H. Fuhrmann, *Einfluss und Verbreitung der pseudoisidorsichen Fälschungen,* Schriften der *MGH* 12, 3 vols., (Munich, 1972–74) I, 189-91.
[39] The association between the Pseudo-Isidore and 'R' solidified in the following generations, and spread across the Frankish Empire. In one branch of the Pseudo-Isidore family ($A2_R$), a series of 36 letters was appended (the so-called R3 version); in another, an additional series of extracts of 46 letters was tacked on. See further Fuhrmann & Jaspers, *Papal Letters*, 75-77.

880s, for example, a canonical collection was made for the bishop of Milan, Anselm. It was divided into twelve books, according to theme, and each book was divided into three sections: papal decretals, including the Pseudo-Isidore, extracts from 'R', and finally from Roman law. [40] While exegetical florilegia, as we have seen, smoothed over the difference between Gregory and other *patres*, canonical collections continued to 'mark' Gregory as distinctive. Eventually, in the early eleventh-century Collection of Burchard of Worms, Gregory would be folded in with the rest of the Latin tradition: for the moment, he had a distinctive, as yet unassimilated, profile.

Meanwhile in Rome, an attempt was made to take control of the memory of Gregory as unleashed by 'R'. In the late eighth century, when Hadrian sponsored the making of 'R', the papal sense of ownership may have been implicit rather than explicit; from the 860s, however, Gregory and his letters were openly trumpeted by an aggressively expansive papacy. In the race with the Byzantine Patriarchate to secure the allegiance of the Bulgarians, Pope Nicholas I brilliantly cast his approach to Khan Boris on the pattern of Gregory's mission to the Anglo-Saxons. His *Consulta Bulgarorum* addressed to the Khan was a self-conscious iteration of Gregory's *Libellus Responsionum* to Augustine.[41] Although (or because) the Bulgarian mission failed, the Gregorian programme gathered momentum. In the early 870s, Pope John VIII instructed his chancery to keep his correspondence on the model of Gregory's *Register.*[42] At Easter of 873, John commissioned a namesake, the Roman deacon John, to write a *Life of Gregory*—to which we may now return.

John's *Life of Gregory* is a huge, hybrid text. It is less hagiography than a canonical tract on episcopal office, which assimilates the life and teaching of Gregory to 'R'. What John sought to do, then, was to impose some kind of thematic order onto the nearly seven hundred letters selected by Hadrian's scribes. Of these, he in turn selected some two hundred for excerpting. John ostentatiously describes the fourteen papyrus volumes of the original *Register* as the documentary bedrock of his account. It is, however, no more than bluster: all of John's extracts are to be found in 'R'. [43]

John may have had done this deliberately. While this is a source of bitter frustration to the historian of the sixth century, who would like nothing more than a glimpse of the original papyri, it tells us something of John's purposes. While claiming privileged knowledge of the archive, John's goal was in fact to create a widely accessible Gregory. His readers would be

[40] P. Fournier, 'L'origine de la collection "Anselmo dedicata", *Mélanges P. F. Girard* (Paris, 1912), 478-95 remains the best introduction to the *Collectio*, which is as yet unedited. L. Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages, ca. 400-1140* (Washington, DC, 1999), 124-28.
[41] Mayr-Harting, 'Two Conversions'.
[42] See D. Lohrmann, *Das Register Papst Johannes' VIII* (Tübingen, 1968).
[43] As shown by Castaldi, 'Il *Registrum*'. For John's context, see C. Leyser, 'Charisma in the Archives: Roman Monasteries and the Memory of Gregory the Great, c. 870 – c. 940' in W.Pohl, F. de Rubeis eds., *Le scritture dai monasteri, II Seminario internazionale di studio 'I monasteri nell'alto medioevo* (Rome, 2003), 207-226.

able to check his selection of the letters next to 'R'. As we shall see, his readings were gratefully received by subsequent canonists. His *Life* was ten times more successful than 'R' itself (which we have in full in some 15 manuscripts), with over 150 copies surviving, including some made within a decade of the completion of the text. [44]

In a further attempt to bring order, John says he will organize his text on the pattern of Gregory's *Pastoral Rule*: in four books, on what sort of man should be a ruler, how he should respond to office, what sort of admonitions he should deliver, and finally how he should return to himself.[45] Like Hincmar (above p. 5), John insists upon an episcopal, in fact a papal interpretation of Gregory's text. What sort of man should be a ruler: Pope Gregory. What sort of advice should he give? The directives issued by Gregory in 'R'. Where Gregory in Book III of the Rule had outlined a series of abstract pieces of moral guidance, John's Book III is composed entirely of extracts from 'R'. Book III is indeed the centre of gravity of his text: unlike books I, II, and IV it is unadulterated by any narrative content. John had cleared the decks to construct 'gregorian policy' from the miscellany of texts in 'R'. What he offers is a sustained treatise on the acquisition and transmission of episcopal office of the sort that Gregory himself had never considered.

4. **The Episcopal Gregory: Bishops and Careerism**

On one topic in particular, Carolingian readers were keen to extract a ruling from Gregory and his *Register*: the translation of a bishop from one see to another. Was this it permissible? Much late Roman tradition held that a bishop was a servant to his flock, whom he should not abandon in pursuit of his own advancement. This apparently abstruse obscure corner of canon law has only recently begun to attract its due measure of attention. [46]

The creation of the Carolingian empire had made it possible to imagine the Church as a career. For the ambitious—both those bishops who won, and those displaced in the struggle for preferment—professional mobility now became essential. Across the ninth-century West, then, bishops debated how episcopal office was to be assumed and transmitted. Gregory was a key resource in this discussion. We can track the issue across the series of text outlined above—'R', the Pseudo-Isidore, John the Deacon—and, as we shall see, in the post-Carolingian excerptors of 'R'. We meet, inevitably, Formosus, bishop of Porto, pope in 891, then posthumously accused of having moved sees illegitimately.[47] The so-called Synod

[44] See L. Castaldi, *Iohannes Hymmonides diaconus romanus. Vita Gregorii I papae : (B.H.L. 3641-3642)*, Vol. I, *La tradizione manoscritta* (Florence, 2004).
[45] John the Deacon, *VG,* pref., PL 75, 62B.
[46] See S. Scholz, *Transmigration und Translation: Studien zum Bistumswechsel der Bischöfe von der Spätantike bis zum Hohen Mittelalter* (Cologne, 1992); and M. Sommar, 'The Changing Role of the Bishop in Society: Episcopal Translation in the Middle Ages', Syracuse Univeristy PhD, 1998.
[47] See now W. Hartmann, I. Schröder, G. Schmitz eds., *Die Konzilien der Karolingischen Teilreiche 875-911*, MGH Conc. V (2012), 416-19.

of the Corpse is usually wheeled out by scholars to demonstrate the decadence of the unreformed Church. Viewed with less prejuduce, the trial of Formosus takes its place as an episode in the much wider story arc of Gregory the Great's commemoration.[48]

Gregory's ninth- and tenth-century readers honed in on the instances where he had authorized bishops to move from one see to another. The context was usually one of pastoral crisis—the destruction of sees by the invading Lombards, or simply the incapacitation through age of incumbents. Thus in 590, Bacaudus of Formia is instructed to take over the see of Minturno (*Reg.* I.8); Martin of Corsica is instructed both to move and to become visitor to another see (*Reg* I. 77; I. 79). In 592, John of Alessio is instructed to move from his see, which has been devastated, to Squillace; Gregory adds that he should watch out for stray Africans or Manichaens, who might try to obtain ordination (*Reg.* II. 37). In the same year, John of Velletri is instructed both to move his see to Arenata (*Reg.* II.17), and to merge his church with that Tres Tabernas (II. 48). Gregory was merely attempting to deal with the exigencies of his situation. Given the formulaic character of the letters, it is likely, in fact, that these letters were all composed by notaries, in accordance with standard procedure. Here we have Gregory the passive follower of convention.

As recorded in 'R' and in the hands of later canonists, however, Gregory's decisions represented an active body of law that could be set against the more suspicious rulings of earlier canonical tradition. In the later Roman Empire, councils had warned against ambitious bishops seeking to move from place to place. [49] Gregory's notaries do not mention them. If they knew of them, it is likely that they saw no reason to cross-reference rulings about the sees of Antioch or Constantinople with their own desperately obscure rural situations. Four centuries later, this is exactly what happened.

Gregory's rulings as visible in 'R' may well have lain behind the creativity of the Pseudo-Isidore with regard to the question of translation; but his authority was most explicitly invoked in the 860s, in the case of Actard of Nantes. Actard was a bit player in episcopal politics—but his case came to involve a contest for who spoke for Gregory, and it established a 'script' for how the question of translation was to be discussed.

In brief, the situation was this.[50] Actard, an aspiring protégé of Charles the Bald, had requested a transfer from the see of Nantes, whence he claimed he had been driven by Vikings, to the see of Tours. The request was initially supported by Hincmar of Rheims, who sought Actard's help in negotiating the deposition of his nephew, Hincmar of Laon. Pope

[48] C. Leyser, 'Episcopal Office in the Italy of Liudprand of Cremona, c. 890-c.970', *English Historical Review* 125 (2010), 795-817.

[49] See, e.g. Nicaea can. 15; Antioch (330 X 341) can. 21; Sardica (343), can. 1, as transmitted in the Dionysio-Hadriana and the Pseudo-Isidore; see Scholz, *Transmigration*, 18-36, and M. Sommar, 'Pragmatic Application of Proto-Canon Law: Episcopal Translation', in L.J. Hall ed., *Confrontation in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2003), 89-101.

[50] See Fuhrmann, *Einfluss und Verbreitung*, 278-80.

Hadrian II however, managed to subvert Hincmar of Rheims' purposes by refusing to ratify the deposition of Hincmar, but willingly granting Actard his transfer. Hadrian supported his position with an appeal to the Pseudo-Isidore, and a string of citations from 'R'. [51]

Hincmar's reply to Hadrian, a letter known as *De quibus apud*, is a rhetorical masterpiece, using the majesty of Gregory the Great to belittle Actard's case for translation. [52] Hadrian had drawn on Gregory: Hincmar demonstrated a still more fluent command of gregorian texts, drawing on the *Pastoral Rule* and the *Homilies on the Gospels* as well as 'R' (*Reg.* II. 37 on John of Squillace; *Reg.* III. 13 on Agnellus of Fondi; Reg. I. 8 on Bacaudus of Formia). The gregorian criteria the pope had used to justify Actard's translation in fact condemned it. Actard was no humble refugee, driven from his see by barbarians: he was, on the contrary, a coward and a *mercenarius*, seeking only his own advancement.

Hadrian II died with Actard's situation unresolved. Who was there to answer Hincmar? Attention has usually focused on the contribution of Anastasius Bibliothcarius, who is the most likely author of a treatise on episcopal translation drawn from the Pseudo-Isidore, to which Hincmar had not refered.[53] For a text which meets Hincmar head on, however, we may turn to John the Deacon's *Life of Gregory*. John, it should be noted, mentions neither Actard nor Hincmar; he was, however, in the inner circle of Anastasius Bibliothecarius. John is also is the likely author of the notice for Hadrian II in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and he will have known at least that the question of translation was 'in the air'.

In his *Life of Gregory*, John set out a gregorian summa on the issue of career mobility.[54] Book III, as we saw above, is comprised entirely of extracts from 'R', focussed on episcopal office. John begins with simony and Gregory's uncompromising campaign against it (Bk III. 1-8). Episcopal office cannot be trafficked: it is a gift of the spirit. But it may be portable. John then starts to consider the circumstances in which bishops might move: when sees were vacant, or when they themselves had been forcibly displaced (Bk III. 8-13). In two key chapters, John assembled the case law for Gregory's authorization of translation (Bk III. 14-15; the cases of Bacaudos of Formia, Martin in Corsica, John of Squillace, and John of Velletri).[55] Then comes an element of caution: there was at least one case where Gregory had stopped short of moving a bishop to a see that was in trouble (Bk III. 18) Paul of Nepi had acted as a visitor to Naples but had then returned to his own see. Gregory, John avers,

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[51] Hadrian II, *Ep.* 34, MGH *Epp*. VI (1875), 738-40.

[52] For the text, see PL 126, 210-30; for discussion, see M. Sommar, 'Hincmar of Reims and the Canon Law of Episcopal Translation', *Catholic Historical Review* 88 (2002), 429-45.

[53] See J. Pozzi, 'Le manuscrit Tomus XVIII de la Vallicelliana et le libelle *De episcoporum transmigratione et quod non temere iudicetur regule quadraginta quattuor*', *Apollinaris*, xxxi (1958), 313-50 (including an edition of the text). This advanced a series of Pseudo-Isidorian decretals to support translation. As Sommar 'Hincmar of Rheims' has noted, it is characterized by its lack of overlap with Hincmar's *De quibus apud*. It is possible that the treatise was an attempt to outflank Hincmar's Gregorian erudition.

[54] John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* III. 8-22 PL 75, 133-43.

[55] Note that John's friend Gauderic was Bishop of Velletri.

was concerned lest vacant sees be regarded as an opportunity to ransack and asset strip. These cautions stated, however, the overall effect of John's presentation is to make translation seem feasible, and indeed desirable when properly managed. Actard, who by this point seems to have been installed at Tours, might have taken this as a defence of his position—and a demonstration that Hincmar had no monopoly of the authority of Gregory.

For John, as for Hincmar then, Gregory was a giant whose pronouncements could be used to assess contemporary bishops. But while it was possible to extract from 'R' a relatively coherent account of the issue, John could not control the way his own text, with its monumental portrait of Gregory, was received or used. And he did not resolve the specific issue one way or the other. The adjudication of cases of translation remained a volatile business, as the sequel was to show.

Within four years of the papal defence of Actard, and before John had finished his *Life of Gregory*, the tables were turned on the bishop of Rome. In 876, Pope John VIII seems to have accused Formosus of aspiring to papal office.[56] Formosus, who had been Nicholas I's man in the field in Bulgaria, was guilty enough to have fled the city. John VIII repeatedly secured his formal condemnation. John the Deacon, meanwhile, may have been associated with this disgrace: his elaborate attempts to distance himself from Formosus seem to suggest as much.[57] In 882, however, John VIII was assassinated, and Formosus returned to Rome. Within ten years, he assumed papal office—only to be pursued beyond the grave for his perceived lust for power.

Debate over Formosus' legitimacy as pope, and the legitimacy of the ordinations he performed, continued deep into the tenth century, and beyond.[58] As we shall see, both Formosus' accusers and his defenders deployed material that had been cued up in the debate over Actard, and by John the Deacon. Auxilius, Formosus' champion in the early tenth century, explicitly invoked Actard's case, and he made an extravagant play for the authority of Gregory. Auxilius was prepared to go so far as to say that Gregory's authority was greater than that of all the Church councils: 'doctor suavissimus et papa beatissimus,

[56] Merseburg 104, ff47v-49v for the Roman synod of June 876 and the Synod of Troyes, 878; see Hartmann et al eds., *Konzilien 875-911*, 29-30, and 76-148.

[57] See P. Devos, 'Le mystérieux épisode final de la *Vita Gregorii* de Jean Diacre. Formose et sa fuite de Rome', *AB* 82 (1964) 356–81; and now the brilliant piece of detective work by L. Castaldi, 'Le dediche di Giovanni Immonide', *Filologia mediolatina* 17 (2010), 39-69.

[58] A. Grabowski, 'Streit um Formosus. Edition und Analyse der Streitschriften des Auxilius', (Univ. Tübingen PhD, 2012) will replace E. Dümmler, ed., *Auxilius & Vulgaris*: *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Papstthums im Anfänge des Zehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1866). For the eleventh-century polemics, see W. K. Firminger, 'St Peter Damiani and "Auxilius" ', *Journal of Theological Studies* 26 (1924-25), 78-81; J. Ryan, 'Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida and Auxilius: the 'Anonymous Adversary of *Liber I Adversus Simoniacos*', *Mediaeval Studies* 13 (1951), 218-23.

Gregorium dico, vere Gregorium'.[59] In the course of these polemics, the figure of Gregory is in fact more substantial than the wraith of Formosus.[60]

5. Europe's Gregory: Church after Empire

The memory of Gregory served well the needs of ninth-century Carolingian ideologues, but in the era after empire, Gregory came into his own as a resource for episcopal authority, now freed from his role as a handmaiden to earthly rule. As 'kinglets' (Regino of Prum) took the place of imperial dynasts, bishops come to the fore.[61] The realization dawned, in late antiquity, the Church had survived the disintegration of an Empire: why not again? Gregory had repelled the Lombards from the gates of Rome. He had found a way to sustain the Church in Italy and indeed across the Latin West. For tenth-century bishops, Gregory's *Register* was a mirror of how to survive and indeed to prosper in a world spinning out of control.

This was true above all in Italy. For some eighty years after the death of the Emperor Charles the Fat and before the arrival of the Otto I in 962 as the new Roman Emperor from north of the Alps, no earthly ruler held secure sway. The insecurity of successive kings of Italy worked to the advantage of those who support they had to buy. Bishops ate up regalian rights, and showed very little scruple in trading their loyalty to the highest bidder.[62]

In a world ruled by bishops, Gregory's *Register* was a treasure trove to be raided for imaginative self-justification. A brilliant generation of learned clerics conjured an Italian Church that otherwise had no existence, given the fractured nature of political authority in the peninsula. The *Register* was at once a travelogue for bishops who were forced to stay put; and a set of entitlements for those ambitiously on the move. Some of these bishops—Atto of Vercelli, Rather of Verona, Liudprand of Cremona--have imprinted the historical record with their egos.[63] Others are known to us only by name, if at all. For these men, our best evidence comes in the form of 'farraginous' canonical collections characteristic of the tenth century.[64] These assemblages, like attics, resist attempts to tidy them up, but some

[59] Auxilius, *De ordinationibus a Formoso papa factis*, ed. Dümmler, *Auxilius*, 107
[60] See above n. 57.
[61] See S. Airlie, 'Sad stories of the death of kings': narrative patterns and structures of authority in Regino of Prum's *Chronicon* in E.M. Tyler and R. Balzaretti eds., *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West* (Turnhout, 2006), 105-131.
[62] See e.g. C. Pivano, *Stato e chiesa da Berengario I ad Arduino, 888 - 1015* (Turin, 1908); P. Delogu, 'Vescovi, conti e sovrani nella crisi del regno italico (Ricerche sull'aristocrazia carolingia in Italia, III)', *Annali della scuola speciale per archvisti e bibliotecari del'Universita di Romà*, viii (1968), 3-72.
[63] R. Corradini, M. Gillis, R. McKitterick, I. van Renswoude eds., *Ego-Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010).
[64] R. Reynolds, 'Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Collections in Italy', in W. Hartmann & K. Pennington eds., *The History of Western Canon Law to 1000* (Washington, DC, in preparation).

recurring themes are clear. Formosus haunts these collections, as does the discussion of transfer; above all, however, we find the letters and world of Gregory the Great.

Let us briefly take two codices, one from North Italy, largely ignored by scholars, and the other a much better-known codex from the South; both transmit canonical collections made (at least in part) at the turn of the tenth century. The north Italian manuscript, Merseburg 104, written c. 900, is an assemblage of loosely tessellated elements, held together by the presence of Gregory.[65] There are four sections to the codex, three of which seem to have been initially bound together, before the later addition of the fourth. At the end of the first section, Formosus makes a darting appearance: there are records of his condemnations in the mid-870s. A cluster of Pseudo-Isidore texts and extracts from the *Register* follow, centred on the question of episcopal transfer. In the third section, however, the codex devolves into a series of extracts from the *Register*, spasmodically interrupted by other authors (Alcuin; the *Collectio Anselmo dedicata*). Episcopal translation remains a concern—as witnessed in an extract from Cassiodorus' *Historia Tripartita*—but the larger purpose of the collection is harder to parse.[66] What strikes the reader forcibly is the name GREGORIUS, which appears 'in bold', i.e. inked in, on more pages than it does not. The codex is thereby riveted to his authority, and this may be enough to explain its production.[67]

From southern Italy, we have the Collection in 452 Titles, to be found in the much-discussed Vallicellian Tome XVIII. The manuscript itself is now dated to the early eleventh century, but a version of the Collection in 452 Titles must have been made earlier, as sustained use of its contents was made by Auxilius in his defense of Formosus in the early tenth century.[68] A little noticed *terminus post quem* is provided by an explicit citation, deep into the Collection, of John the Deacon's *Life of Gregory* ('hoc de sancti Gregorii vita quam iohannes levita descripsit ablatum est'.)[69] Overall it would be too much to say that Gregory dominates the Collection in 452 Titles which is an altogether more expansive venture than the Merseburg book. But in the first half of the Collection, Gregory's *Register* is a constant point of reference. In particular, the codex includes a collection of 55 *Sententiae ex codice qui appellatur regestum epistolarum sancti gregorii pape* carefully set out in chronological order;[70] and a similar epitome of the *Moralia in Job*. In the space of four pages, an epitomator has gone through Gregory's text (or another epitome) in order, selecting brief

[65] Kéry, *Canonical Collections*, 190-91. Rudolf Pokorny's contribution to Hartmann & K. Pennington eds., *Western Canon Law to 1000* will discuss the manuscript.
[66] Merseburg 104, ff. 132v-133r for the extract from Cassiodorus *Historia Tripartita* XII. 8, listing bishops who have moved sees.
[67] By the end of the tenth century, the codex was in Merseburg, where it played a role on the debate over Giselher's attempted suppression of the see and translation to Magdeburg.
[68] As shown by S. Lindemans, 'Auxilius et le manuscrit Vallicellian Tomus XVIII', *Revue d'histoire écclesiastique*, lvii (1962), 470–84.
[69] Vallicellian T. XVIII, f. 210r.
[70] For a list of the letters extracted, see Fowler Magerl, 'The Influence'.

passages, sometimes no more than a sentence long.[71] Armed with these densely compressed versions of the *Register* and the *Moralia*, we may suppose, the book's readers have nothing to fear from this or other-worldly powers.

To look for pattern in the making and the use of the *Register* across the tenth century may be to ask the wrong question. The meaning of Gregory's letters may have been more talismanic than content-driven. What stands out on the manuscript pages of these compendia is Gregory's name, and the names of his addressees. These books allowed their clerical readers to conceive of a Latin Church which they hoped to build (in the ninth century), or which they hoped would survive (in the tenth).

All of this helps us in turn to reconstruct the world that produced Rather of Verona and Liudprand of Cremona. These men were open careerists, as I have argued elsewhere.[72] Rather's attempts at self-promotion are indeed well known. Initially installed at Verona, and then displaced for treason, he made two attempts, both only temporarily successful, to reclaim his seat there; and for a brief period in the early 950s, he tried unsuccessfully to transfer north of the Alps to Liège. He protested indefatigably that each of his attempted moves was legitimate, compiling a list of precedents which resumed the discussion of episcopal translation across the past three generations. The list concludes, as we should now expect, with the illustrious presence of Gregory. [73] Rather's arguments proved vain, and he died without a see. But if he failed, the episcopal cadre to which he belonged, and the gregorian discourse he invoked, were there to stay.

Gregory himself knew both triumph and disaster. As he had made explicit, Job's story resonated with him: 'Perhaps it was no chance that stricken as I am, I should recount the story of one stricken.' [74] Gregory's *Moralia in Iob* in turn spoke vividly to a tenth-century audience. Rather and his colleague Liudprand both drew heavily on the *Moralia* as they sought to broadcast their own sense of injustice and victimization.[75] But that was not the end of Job's story: having proved impervious to the ordeals to which he was subjected, Job's patience was duly rewarded by the Lord. The concluding sections of the *Moralia* concern the moral problems not of suffering, but of success. In his *Antapodosis*, Liudprand, having begun his text in spite and in exile, found that he was concluding it as occupant of the see of

[71] This epitome has never been studied, to my knowledge. It bears comparison with other tenth-century epitomes of the *Moralia*, on which see G. Braga, 'Moralia in Iob: Epitomi dei secoli VII-X e loro evoluzione', In *Grégoire le Grand*, 561-68.
[72] Leyser, 'Episcopal Office'.
[73] Rather of Verona, *Conclusio deliberativa* xl, ed. P. Reid, CCSL 46 (1976), 6.
[74] Gregory, *Moralia in Iob*, *Epistula ad Leandrum* I, CCSL 143, 1-2
[75] See H. Jessen, *Die Wirkungen der augustinischen Geschichtsphilosophie auf die Weltanschauung und Geschichtsschreibung Liudprands von Cremona* (Bamberg, 1921).

Cremona. Like Gregory's Job, then, Liudprand meditates at length on prosperity, failure, and just deserts.[76]

The *Antapodosis* has long been taken as a text which heralds the rise of a Christian Latin Europe, both in its cosmopolitanism, and in its prejudices.[77] Its precocity should not obscure its appeal back to Gregory in its very framing. The *Antapodosis* was dedicated to a Spanish bishop, Reccared, whom Liudprand had met at Constantinople. Gregory's *Moralia* were begun in Constantinople and dedicated to a Spanish bishop, Leander of Seville). There is a perfect overlay between Liudprand's literary geography and Gregory's—of which Liudprand cannot have been unaware. In this sense, his performance as a narrator throughout follows a Gregorian 'script'.

Conclusion: History and the Sense of the Past

In 1971, Richard Southern argued that 'English History' as a narrative genre developed after the Norman Conquest as a determined effort of documentation provoked by a land grab.[78] Monasteries after 1066 fought with all the means at their disposal to defend their property rights against the rapacious invader. From their determination to protect their land, Southern argued, developed the archive of the Anglo-Saxon past, whether authentic or forged. My suggestion is that churchmen in the Latin West after the Carolingians used the memory and specifically the *Register* of Gregory the Great in an analogous way. The *Register* allowed them to access a past in which the Church had heroically survived the collapse of an Empire, emerging with a clear moral title to rule. At the same time, it provided an explicit mandate to develop a flexible and orderly career structure, allowing churchmen to stand free of imperial power and its vicissitudes. The *libertas ecclesiae*, around which zealots were to rally after the first millennium, became imaginatively possible in the tenth century, which we can no longer condemn as an era of 'corruption'. For all that he was central to this effort, Gregory himself, we might remember, would found it misdirected: no amount of institution-building on earth could compare to the community of believers to be gathered in by the justice of God at the end of time.

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[76] Liudprand, *Antapodosis* VI. 10.
[77] See K.J. Leyser, 'Ends and Means in Liudprand of Cremona', in *Communications and Power*, I, 125-42.
[78] R. W. Southern, 'The Sense of the Past', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 23 (1973), 243-63.