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Kingship in the political thought of Pope Gregory VII (1073-85)

A thesis submitted to the Department of History in the University of Dublin for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy.

Brian McNamee
Trinity College Dublin, December 2015
Department of History
Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

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Summary

Gregory VII is remembered as the pope who initiated the notion of the supremacy of the apostolic see in temporal as well as ecclesiastical matters. The assumption in the twentieth and twenty-first century secondary literature is that this was inadvertent, that it was an unintended consequence of Gregory’s pursuit of spiritual reform, and that his political ideas were subsidiary to his religious motives. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate that assumption. This attempt to discover what his political ideas were, and what weight he placed upon them, involves a careful examination of the language of the pope’s preserved correspondence, which comprises some 440 letters together with more than two dozen other documents, mostly synod records and oaths. An important focus of the study is the investigation of the sources – scriptural, patristic, and canon law – and precedents for the political assumptions in the letters.

The dissertation includes a detailed territory-based examination of Gregory’s correspondence relating to the contemporary Christian rulers and their domains. It identifies the key political issues raised in the papal letters, and analyses the language that he uses in his advice or admonitions to these rulers. This is followed by a comparative thematic study of the political ideas which dominate Gregory’s correspondence. The subjects addressed are general ideas of politico-ecclesial morality, libertas ecclesiae, papal authority, Christian kingship, the German king as presumed futurus imperator, Gregory’s perception of the tribulations afflicting the Church, and the reformers’ attacks on simony, clerical fornication, and lay investiture. In addition, a comparative discussion of the pope’s lengthy letters of 1076 and 1081 to Bishop Hermann of Metz, reveals much about the evolution of his ideas of kingship.
Acknowledgements

I want to express my deep appreciation to my supervisor Professor Ian Robinson for his guidance, encouragement, and patience. His extraordinary knowledge of medieval ecclesiastical history was an immense resource for me at every stage in the research and writing of this thesis.

My love and gratitude go to my wife Sheila, whose idea it was that I set out on this journey, and who encouraged me every step of the way.
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Abbreviations


CCL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina.


DA Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters.

DP Dictatus Papae.

EHR English Historical Review.

Ep. Epistola.


JEH Journal of Ecclesiastical History

JTS Journal of Theological Studies

MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica

Briefe Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit

Epp. sel. Epistolae selectae

Libelli Libelli de Lute imperatorum et pontificum

SRG Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum

SS Scriptores


Reg. past. Pope Gregory I, Regulæ Pastoralis Liber, MPL 77.

RB The rule of Saint Benedict: a guide to Christian living: the full text of the rule in Latin and English, trans. the monks of Glenstal Abbey (Blackrock, 1994).


SG Studi Gregoriani
1. Introduction

1.1 Aims of this study

And if the holy apostolic see, deciding through the pre-eminent power that is divinely conferred upon it, settles spiritual matters, why not also secular matters? (Letter from Pope Gregory to Bishop Hermann of Metz, 15 August 1076)

There can be no doubt of the immense political significance of the pontificate of Pope Gregory VII (1073-85). Its importance derives mainly from the conflict between himself and King Henry IV of Germany (1056-1105). What began as a determined attempt by the earlier papal reformers of the eleventh century to free the Church from secular control turned into a many-faceted dispute on the broad issue of whether king or pope wielded ultimate authority in a Christian empire. Gerd Tellenbach (1940) succinctly described the conflict as 'a struggle for right order in the world'. However, Karl Morrison (1969) pointed out that this characterisation, although attractive, suggests a preconceived idea of what constitutes 'right order'. The controversy evolved into the misleadingly named 'Investiture Contest'. Because the dispute was initiated during the reign of Pope Gregory VII, historians sometimes use the term 'Gregorianism' as a label for the closely related concepts of complete papal autonomy and papal supremacy in political affairs, notions that were utterly incompatible with traditional ideas of divinely ordained kingship.

This study examines ideas of political thought and church-state relationships during Gregory's pontificate. The secondary literature in English, German, French, and Italian includes no detailed analytical study of the political ideas of Gregory VII. There are broader based studies of his thought, with the emphasis always on his spiritual aims, the suggestion being that in Gregory VII's mind political ideas were subsidiary to his spiritual ideas, that his attempts to intrude himself into secular issues derived from religious

---

1Reg. 4.2, p. 295.8-9: 'Quodsi sancta sedes apostolica divinitus sibi collata principali potestate spiritualia decernens diiudical, cur non et secularia ?'
concerns rather than from a desire for temporal power as such. The principal aim of this dissertation is to test that assumption. This involves a close examination of the language of Gregory's correspondence with a view to discovering what it tells us about his ideas, and determining the weight he placed upon them. An appendix to this study considers the immediate reactions of hostile writers to his statements and actions. They leave no doubt that the pope's opponents were extremely preoccupied with the political implications of Gregory's words and actions.

Part 2, 'Gregory and the political powers', is a territory-based examination of the development of Gregory VII's attitudes to kingship, as revealed in his correspondence. It discusses his interactions with individual regna and principatus within the context of contemporary events and political relationships in Christian Europe. It encompasses the rulers of all the Christian territories with whom Gregory corresponded. Hence the inclusion of rulers who, although not actually 'kings', nevertheless possessed 'quasi-royal' authority: the dukes of Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, and the Norman rulers of southern Italy. For the sake of completeness, the Byzantine emperor is also included since a single letter addresses Michael VII Ducas (1071-8), and his subsequent deposition arises in later correspondence. Parallel sources, where available, are used to highlight Gregory's particular perceptions. Relevant background information and intervening events are summarized through footnote references to secondary literature. The chapter that addresses the pope's fraught relationship with King Henry IV (1056-1105) is by far the longest.

Part 3, 'Gregory's political language and themes', takes the findings of Part 2 as its starting point. It is a comparative discussion of the letters addressed to, or concerning, the rulers of the various parts of western Christendom. It examines the political ideas pertaining to kingship and church-state relations that emerge from a careful evaluation

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5 See Appendix A 'Contemporary pro-Henrician Polemics': pp. 305ff.
of the language and preoccupations of Gregory's letters. It is important to beware of generalising, of supposing that his opinions were static or consistent, of assuming that the archdeacon Hildebrand arrived at the papacy with preconceived ideas that neither changed nor evolved. Part 3 draws upon the pope's correspondence to build a picture of the evolution of his views in a number of areas. Chapter 3.1 looks at the way in which the interests of the Church dominated Gregory's political ideas. Analysis of the central issues of Gregory's reform programme is the subject of chapters 3.2 and 3.3, namely the libertas of the Church and the auctoritas of the apostolic see. In particular, these chapters examine the ways in which royal conduct and other aspects of secular policy could affect the papal reform programme. Naturally, the discussions assess the influence of specific circumstances and events in the temporal sphere. Chapter 3.4, in many ways the pivotal chapter, identifies the characteristics Gregory looked for in a true Christian king. The specific case of the claim of the king of the Germans — initiated under Henry III — to be ipso facto the future emperor is the subject of chapter 3.5. Chapter 3.6 looks at the grievances of the contemporary Church against secular authority — a constant refrain in Gregory's letters — and the language in which his correspondence portrays them. The chapter also examines the demands made of rulers to alleviate the misfortunes that their predecessors had imposed upon the Church. The specific grievances of simony, clerical marriage, and the lay investiture of bishops are discussed in chapter 3.7. The complex issue of Gregory VII's demands for fidelitas, and the different meanings of that term in the pope's usage are addressed in chapter 3.8. Chapter 3.9 looks at Gregory's longest expositions of his ideas of relations between secular rulers and the pope. These are found in two letters to Bishop Hermann of Metz. The chapter examines and contrasts the issues highlighted in the epistola of 1076 and the much longer letter of 1081. Implicit in the discussions in Part 3 is an attempt to understand what prompted the pope's unprecedented intrusion of papal authority into secular matters.

There are two appendices. Appendix A deals with the immediate reaction of the supporters of Henry IV to the implications of Gregory VII's excommunication and deposition of the king and the political ideas expressed in the pope's letters. Gottschalk of Aachen, the dictator of the royal chancery, and Wenrich, the master of the school of Trier, are treated here. The sudden extension of the debate begun here in the polemical
literature immediately following the death of Gregory VII does not fall within the parameters of this study. Appendix B looks at the case of Archbishop Manasses I of Rheims, and the challenge that Gregory’s political ideas presented to this prelate’s sense of the traditional special relationship between his church and the German king.

It is useful at this point to identify the political vocabulary, which constantly appears in Gregory’s letters.

**POLITICAL VOCABULARY IN THE REGISTER OF POPE GREGORY VII**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>administratio regie potestatis</td>
<td>Reg. 4.28, p. 344.25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignitates</td>
<td>Reg. 1.19, p. 31.32; Reg. 4.2, p. 295.25; Reg. p. 4.2, 296.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignitas imperatorio vel regia</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, p. 558.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignitas regia</td>
<td>Reg. 2.18, p. 150.28; Reg. 3.10, p. 264.27; Reg. 4.2, p. 295.20; et passim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignitates mundane</td>
<td>Reg. 2.45, p. 183.9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignitas regni</td>
<td>Reg. 2.5, p. 132.25; Reg. 2.75, p. 238.15; Reg. 6.13, p. 417.20; et passim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dominatio secularis</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, p. 555.10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dominium</td>
<td>Reg. 2.63, p. 218.30; Reg. 4.14, p. 318.26; Reg. 8.1c, p. 516.27; et passim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gladius materialis</td>
<td>Reg. 2.51, p. 194.9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honores seculares</td>
<td>Reg. 2.44, p. 181.4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honor romanique imperii</td>
<td>Reg. 4.3, p. 298.27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honor regni</td>
<td>Reg. 2.32, p. 168.25; Reg. 5.10, p. 362.31; Reg. 5.11, p. 365.5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honor regie dignitatis</td>
<td>Reg. 1.9, p. 15.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honor huius mundi</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, p. 559.20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honores huius seculi</td>
<td>Reg. 4.28, p. 344.15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regalis honor vel oboedientia</td>
<td>Reg. 2.18, p. 151.11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honor seu regnum</td>
<td>Reg. 5.10, p. 362.6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperium</td>
<td>Reg. 1.11, p. 19.5; Reg. 2.44, p. 181.16; Reg. 3.10, p. 267.17; et passim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romani imperii principes</td>
<td>Reg. 1.50, p. 76.23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperii gubernacula</td>
<td>Reg. 4.3, p. 298.25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperatoria maiestas</td>
<td>Reg. 2.31, p. 165.27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperare orbi universo</td>
<td>Reg. 2.31, p. 166.21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maiestas Romana</td>
<td>Reg. 1.68, p. 98.7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maiestas regia</td>
<td>Reg. 1.75, p. 107.1; Reg. 2.13, p. 145.17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potestas mundana</td>
<td>Reg. 1.23, 39.23; Reg. 6.30, p. 443.25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potestas regia</td>
<td>Reg. 2.15, p. 130.15; Reg. 2.30, p. 164.20; Reg. 2.30, p. 165.1; et passim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potestas secularis</td>
<td>Reg. 6.34, p. 448.18; Reg. 7.24, p. 503.5; Reg. 7.24, p. 504.1; et passim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potestates mundane</td>
<td>Reg. 1.70, p. 102.3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potestates seculares</td>
<td>Reg. 4.22, p. 334.5; Reg. 7.14a, p. 480.26.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potestas regni</td>
<td>Reg. 2.70, p. 230.15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>princeps secularis</td>
<td>Reg. 6.5b, p. 403.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>princeps terrenus</td>
<td>Reg. 3.4, p. 250.20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>princeps mundi</td>
<td>Reg. 1.47, p. 72.1; Reg. 8.21, p. 552.15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principes seculares</td>
<td>Reg. 2.49, p. 189.23; Reg. 2.49, p. 190.16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principes terreni</td>
<td>Reg. 4.1, p. 290.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principes huius mundi</td>
<td>Reg. 1.42, p. 64.34; 602.10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principes huius seculi</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, p. 295.10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regimen temporale</td>
<td>Reg. 8.11, p. 530.30.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regimina mundi</td>
<td>Reg. 7.25, p. 505.19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regnum terrenum</td>
<td>Reg. 6.13, p. 417.34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regna mundi</td>
<td>Reg. 1.63, p. 92.10; Reg. 8.21, p. 552.20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regnorum principes</td>
<td>Reg. 2.51, p. 193.5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regnum et imperium</td>
<td>Reg. 2.44, p. 181.31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seculi potentes</td>
<td>Reg. 7.23, p. 501.16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seculi domini et potestates</td>
<td>Reg. 4.22, p. 334.5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tyrannus</td>
<td>Reg. 2.5, p. 130.33; Reg. 2.32, p. 168.22; Reg. 5.14a, p. 370.23; et passim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One final point: the cited scriptural references are from the Vulgate Bible, since this is the version with which Pope Gregory would have been familiar.
1.2 Gregory's letters

Our principal sources for the thought of this enigmatic figure are two collections of his surviving letters, namely the copies entered into his official Register and the unregistered so-called ‘wandering letters’ (epistolae vagantes or extravagantes). The latter are drawn from chronicles elsewhere in Europe. The Register’s purpose has been described as analogous to that of a carbon copy file. It is preserved in the Archivio Vaticano (‘Reg. Vat. 2’). Although the provenance and nature of Reg. Vat. 2 has come under scholarly scrutiny, no compelling case has been made against its authenticity as the official chancery register. Erich Caspar’s critical edition, published in 1920-3 by the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (MGH), is the source for H.E.J. Cowdrey’s English translation, published in 2002. Cowdrey’s edited translation of the epistolae vagantes was published in 1972. The two collections comprise some 440 letters together with more than two dozen other documents, mostly synodal records and oaths. Rudolf Schieffer (1989) concluded that Gregory was the first medieval pope to have been in epistolary contact with all the accessible Christian rulers in Europe of his time. Forty-nine letters to these rulers or their immediate family members are preserved. Of the remaining surviving texts, (both registered and vagantes), 198 either allude to these or lesser magnates or touch on temporal issues. In other words, a majority (247) of Gregory’s preserved documents are potentially of political interest. In 1076, he even despatched an amicable letter to the ruler of Islamic Mauretania.

Alexander Murray (1966) estimated that Gregory’s unregistered letters numbered between six and seven hundred, some ten times the sixty-five collected in the epistolae vagantes. There is no way of knowing why so many of Gregory’s letters were apparently not copied into the Register. Presumably, there were instances when the carrier departed before the scribe could make a copy. One must also bear in mind that sensitive

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2 Das Register Gregors VII, MGH, Epp. sel. 2, ed. E. Caspar (Berlin, 1920, 1923); Cowdrey, Register.
5 Reg. 3.21, pp. 287.26-288.33.
items of a communication were often excluded from the *epistola* itself, to be delivered orally by the trusted messenger. Given the difficulties of travel in the eleventh century, the lengthy intervals that usually separated written exchanges between individuals come as no surprise. No matter how urgent the subject matter, a gap of three to four months was normal for letters between the apostolic see and correspondents outside Italy. Doubtless, there were occasions where a local issue addressed in a papal letter had been resolved or transformed by the time it reached its destination. Furthermore, the preservation of a letter in the Register is no guarantee that it reached its intended recipient, or that it was even despatched.

Gregory did not normally draft his own *epistolae*. Only five of his registered documents bear the scribal note 'Dictatus Papae'. However, his modern translator believed that even the most routine of Gregory's letters bears the stamp of Gregory's personality. Cowdrey listed a series of criteria that might lead us to suspect Gregory's personal dictation of certain other letters. These include the frequent citation of specific favourite biblical and patristic texts, the use of the first person, expressions of strong devotion to St Peter and the Virgin Mary, indications of moral intensity or personal emotion, the deployment of certain similes and metaphors, and particular forms of sentence construction.

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8 Reg. 1.47, 2.31, 2.37, 2.43, 2.55a.

1.3 Church and state prior to Hildebrand's election

In spring 1066, Duke William of Normandy (1035-87) was contemplating an armed expedition to take by force the English crown to which he felt entitled following the death in January of King Edward the Confessor (1042-66). In the previous three centuries, ecclesiastical sanction had become an important means of strengthening an individual's claim to a disputed kingship, particularly if there was a deficiency in his blood-right or electoral support. Conscious of the value that papal consent would give to the proposed invasion, both in terms of moral legitimation and in promoting the armed support of other nobles, William sought Rome's approval. Archdeacon Hildebrand was instrumental in persuading Pope Alexander II (1061-73) to endorse the duke, not least because his record in Normandy suggested that he would encourage church reform in England.¹

The principle of the autonomy of the spiritual life, specifically the independence of spiritual authority from temporal control, was a primary political conception in western Christendom in the Middle Ages. The dualistic theory of authority in society (duo sunt) found early expression in the writings of Pope Gelasius I (492-6). He attempted to develop a political theory in response to the emerging split between Rome and the Byzantine church and emperor. A passage from his letter of 494 to Emperor Anastasius I (491-518) dominated medieval political theology until the eleventh century:²

The world is chiefly governed by these two: the sacred authority of bishops and the royal power. Of these, the burden of the priests is weightier in so far as they will answer to the Lord for the kings of men themselves at the divine judgement. For you know, most merciful son, that although you rule over the human race in dignity, you nevertheless devoutly bow the neck to those who are placed in charge of religious matters and seek from them the means of your salvation; and you understand that, according to the order of religion, in what concerns the receiving

¹ See below pp. 21ff.
and correct administering of the heavenly sacraments you must be subject rather than in command.³

Gelasius emphasized the separation of sacerdotium and regnum. He laid down the great principle that the spiritual and temporal authorities separately draw their authority from God, that each is independent of the other within its own sphere, but dependent in the sphere of the other. This notion conflicted sharply with Byzantine 'caesaropapism' by which the religious and imperial powers worked in combination, with the latter being superior. In Gelasius's opinion, ecclesiastical authority was legislative (auctoritas) whereas secular authority was executive (potestas). He not only asserted the authority of the Church in all spiritual matters, but also sought to establish the principle that the temporal powers had no jurisdiction over ecclesiastical persons, at least in spiritual matters. By the eleventh century the Gelasian theory of regnum and sacerdotium was widely accepted: God had divided the governance of the Church between his spiritual and temporal vicars, namely bishops and kings. However, Gelasius's statement that the priestly authority would have to account even for kings at the last judgement, combined with his assertion that ecclesiastical auctoritas was weightier (gravius) than royal potestas, could be interpreted as asserting the superiority of church over state. Even more radically, it might be argued that imperial potestas springs from, is perhaps even subservient to, papal auctoritas. Such interpretations surfaced during the pontificate of Gregory VII.⁴

Given the political structure of Europe in the fifth and sixth centuries, the early medieval bishops of Rome would have been well aware of the futility – and danger – of confronting the quasi-divine emperor based in Constantinople. He was regarded as both king and priest, and this combination of regal and sacerdotal (priestly) power made him God’s vice-regent on earth. As head of the Church, he was uniquely empowered to


maintain peace and piety, and to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the one true Catholic Church. Although the emperor might formally acknowledge the particular spiritual authority of the bishop of Rome as Peter's successor, the pope had to rely on Constantinople for protection and for assistance in combating heresy. He had no choice since at that time there was little in the way of Christian kingship in western Europe, apart from the fragile and fragmented realm of the Franks.

The views of Pope Gregory I (590-604), commonly known as 'Gregory the Great', were immensely influential in the general development of medieval thought in the Christian west. He is the patristic source most frequently used by Gregory VII. One practical reason for his influence was the preservation of nearly all of his writings in the papal archives where they were available to his successors. Gregory I sent missions to the west, a strategy that facilitated the eventual Christianisation of northern and central Europe. Within these regions, ideas of papal primacy did not meet with the kind of constitutional objections inherent in the Byzantine perspective on church-state relations. Gregory I emphasized that St Paul had written that all government officials existed to serve God (Rom. 13: 4-6). His *Regula Pastoralis* ('Pastoral Care'), the definitive statement of the nature of the episcopal office, emphasized the religious mission of Christian rulers. God tasked kings with performing their Christian duty for the benefit of their subjects; in the context of this 'theocratic kingship', kings should exhibit *humilitas*. *Regula Pastoralis* was widely used in later centuries as a handbook on the duties of secular rulers. From the Carolingian period onwards, the ecclesiastical nature of kingship was a fundamental feature of clerical political theory. Gregory I emphasized the primacy of the apostolic see in an ecclesiastical context, the role of the pope being to exercise jurisdiction and require clerical obedience within a structure devoted to the defence of the faith and the service of all Christians. He adopted the title 'servant of the servants of God' (*servus servorum dei*), a practice followed by his successors. Gregory I's own words have been used to summarize his view of the role of the pope: the 'care and headship' (*cura et principatus*) of the Church committed to him by God.

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5 For relations between pope and emperor, see Ullmann, 'Introduction', in *Growth*, pp. 1-43.
6 Gregory I, *Regula Pastoralis*, MPL 77, 2.6, cols. 34C-38D.
7 Canning, *History*, p. 42.
By the time of the election of Pope Leo IX (1048/9-54), the event that inaugurated what came to be known as the ‘reform papacy’, the political structure in Europe was very different, although mechanisms of government remained rudimentary. A substantial part of the continent consisted of well-established Christian kingdoms, notably Germany, France, Burgundy, Italy, and England. New regna Christiana were being developed on Europe’s periphery. Rome now looked for protection, not to the weakened Byzantium, but to the German king and emperor.

At this time, the western Empire consisted of the lands ruled by the rex Teutonicorum: Germany, Burgundy, and much of Italy. Although the western Roman Empire had ended some three centuries earlier, the imperial title was revived in 800 when Pope Leo III conferred the imperial crown upon Charlemagne, the Frankish king. The authority and mystique of Charlemagne’s Ottonian and Salian successors were underpinned by the deliberate perpetuation of the myth that they were the natural inheritors of Constantine the Great’s empire. Despite the dubious territorial correspondence between the new and old empires, there remained a significant institutional link, namely the surviving authority structure within the Church. It was customary for each German king to journey to Rome where the pope would crown him emperor. Repeated papal claims to spiritual supremacy notwithstanding, the period 801-1049 was an age of temporal domination of the apostolic see, a time when the papacy was a tool of political factions. This was challenged by Leo IX and his successors, particularly Gregory VII. The papal reformers sought to recover what they imagined to have been the pristine intensity of the early church, and thereby restore the apostolic see to what they regarded as its proper place in the world.

There was general acceptance of certain notions of kingship, at least until sometime after the papal reform movement got under way in the middle of the eleventh century. According to the Old Testament, kingship was the system of government that God had selected for his chosen people, the Jews. As such, it was the one constant element in society upon which the Church might rely in the task of building St

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10 See below pp. 122, 105.
12 Vita Leonis IX Papae, MPL 143, 2, cols. 0487A-0489A.
Augustine’s City of God on earth.\textsuperscript{13} In particular, it was acknowledged that there was a sacral aspect to the royal office, that it was a gift of God. St Paul himself had said that every soul should be subject unto the higher powers since their power was ordained of God (Rom. 13: 1). If this was true of the pagan rulers of Paul’s time, then surely the later Christian kings were even more entitled to obedience?

Coronation ceremonies in the tenth and eleventh centuries reinforced both the sacral aspects of kingship and the interdependence of the secular and spiritual powers. The Burgundian author Wipo is a useful witness to church-state relations in the second quarter of the eleventh century, Hildebrand’s formative years. Wipo’s biography of the first Salian king of Germany, Conrad II (1024-39), includes a lengthy description of his election and coronation in 1024. Wipo asserts that Conrad’s election took place by the collective will of the princes without hesitation or controversy, although it is known that the choice of Conrad was far from unanimous. According to Wipo, Conrad was elected ‘by the assent of God’ \textit{(Dei nutu)}.\textsuperscript{14} Following the election by the princes, all concerned travelled to Mainz, where the archbishop consecrated Conrad. Through the holy unction, ‘the omnipotent King of Kings’ poured upon Conrad the grace of dignity which empowered him to do God’s work, to defend and promote the Church. He was now \textit{vicarius Christi}.\textsuperscript{15} The Saliens understood this to mean that the king had quasi-episcopal as well as temporal powers. To paraphrase Morrison (1961), the Salian kings saw this as giving them the right to intervene in nearly all ecclesiastical matters except the purely sacramental.\textsuperscript{16} The so-called Romano-Germanic Pontifical was compiled in Mainz in the mid-tenth century.\textsuperscript{17} According to this influential collection of liturgical practices, the king was \textit{mediator cleri et plebis}.\textsuperscript{18} This might be interpreted as meaning his role was that of mediator with God on behalf of the clergy and people, but Cowdrey (1998) suggested that in this context ‘governor’ is a better translation of \textit{mediator}: the king must regulate society and ensure that justice prevails.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 3, pp. 20.20-24.6.
\textsuperscript{17} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{PRG}, 72.25, vol. 1.258-9.
\textsuperscript{19} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 76-7.
The ceremony of 'investiture' was a striking symbol of the king's assumed right of involvement in church matters. Whenever someone was elevated to high office, whether lay or clerical, the promotion was normally marked by 'investiture', the formal clothing of the appointee with the symbols of his new position. The Salian kings viewed their investiture of bishops as no less a prerogative of kingship than their investiture of dukes and margraves. The Church tacitly accepted the situation. Of Conrad's relationship with the Church, Wipo says: 'For although he was ignorant in letters, nevertheless he prudently instructed every member of the clergy not only lovingly and courteously in public but also with fitting discipline in private.' The expressions 'prudently instructed' and 'fitting discipline' speak volumes, not only for the king's assumption that he was entitled to control clerical behaviour, but also for Wipo's wholehearted approval of the king's behaviour despite Conrad's limited understanding of spiritual matters.

The reign of Conrad's son and successor, King Henry III (1039-56), further enhanced the prestige of the Salian monarchy. He also made episcopal appointments, but as an avowed enemy of simony – specifically, the buying and selling of church offices – Henry did not benefit materially from these investitures. Because of his devotion to the purification of the Church, he came to be far more revered by churchmen than his father had been. In December 1046 he presided over a synod at Sutri, at which the three current claimants to the papacy were removed, and a new pope elected. By the time of his death in 1056 Henry had, to all intents and purposes, appointed the four most recent popes, all Germans who had served him loyally in Germany. Most ecclesiastics accepted, even embraced, Henry III's proactive control of the Church because of his support for church reform, especially the campaign to rid the Church of the evil of simony. These efforts reached unprecedented heights in the pontificate of Leo IX. Our main primary source for Henry III is the Swabian monk and chronicler Hermann of Reichenau. It has been deduced that Hermann wrote his chronicle from 1048 until his death in 1054. His retrospective account of the first half of Henry III's reign reveals his admiration for the king's piety, trust in God, and compassion, his willingness to forgive his enemies to
achieve peace, his organisation of the removal of the ‘false popes’ at Sutri, and his imperial coronation in Rome on Christmas Day 1046.\textsuperscript{22} Following the king’s death in 1056, the close alliance between the German regnum and the reform papacy deteriorated during the years of the regency government that exercised authority on behalf of Henry III’s son, the boy-king Henry IV.\textsuperscript{23} Nevertheless, it seems that the papal reformers assumed that when the young king attained his majority he would be a reformer in the same mould as his father. This expectation seems to underlie the Papal Election Decree enacted at a Lateran council in 1059. It was designed to preclude any future attempt by the leading aristocratic families of Rome to impose their own (non-reforming) candidate on the apostolic see. The decree designates the cardinal-bishops as the pre-eminent papal electorate, but the ‘royal paragraph’ gives the German king – and presumed future emperor – a power of veto in order to guarantee that a suitable reformer would ascend to the pontificate.\textsuperscript{24} However, following his coming of age in 1065, Henry acquired a dubious personal reputation and many believed that wicked advisers were exercising undue influence over him. Furthermore, in the latter years of the reign of Pope Alexander II a particularly serious conflict between king and pope arose over the archepiscopate of Milan.\textsuperscript{25} After his election as Pope Alexander II in 1061, Bishop Anselm I of Lucca retained his first bishopric and spent much of his twelve-year pontificate in Lucca. Hildebrand deputized for him during these prolonged absences. Various sources testify to his dominant role in the making of papal policy during these years.\textsuperscript{26} The archdeacon became identified with Rome’s defence, administration, and jurisdiction, and with the

\textsuperscript{22} For Henry III and the Church see Tellenbach, \textit{Church, state}, pp. 85-8, 97-8; S. Weinfurter, \textit{The Salian century} (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 85-103.

\textsuperscript{23} See below p. 51.


\textsuperscript{25} See below p. 53.

spiritual and reforming influence of the apostolic see within the Church. The habitual presence in Rome of this experienced, commanding personality meant that he was the figure to whom many looked to conduct business. Hildebrand’s familiarity with Germany, France, and Italy and his enthusiasm for reform propelled him to become involved with individuals, institutions, and issues in these territories and beyond. By the time of his elevation to the papacy on 22 April 1073, he had long been at the centre of affairs in Rome, and was well aware of the current state of relations between the apostolic see and the rulers of western Christendom.


Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 59.
1.4 Twentieth century historiography

Hundreds of works about Hildebrand-Gregory appeared over the nine centuries that followed the earliest biography of him in Bonizo of Sutri’s *Liber ad amicum*, thought to date from 1085-6. Writings about Gregory VII were central to the confessional disputes in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. He became a key figure, both for Catholic Church loyalists and for Protestant reformers. For a long time after the Reformation, references to Gregory were usually distinctly partisan. Protestant authors were hostile while Catholic authors favoured him. The early seventeenth century saw the inauguration of the Catholic perception of the Investiture Contest as Catholic orthodoxy’s endeavour to combat the pernicious persecution of the Church by the secular powers. Pope Paul V’s canonization of Gregory in 1606 indicated the contemporary Church’s high regard for his memory. The Roman Catholic view of Gregory VII’s importance, which was established in the confessional debate, particularly in the seventeenth century, survives in the writings of Augustin Fliche in the 1920s and 1930s. His three-volume work on the ‘Gregorian reform’ presents a pure ultramontane discussion of Gregory VII from the point of view of Catholic loyalism. The heading of one chapter in the second volume illustrates Fliche’s panegyrical tone: ‘The character of Hildebrand: his faith, his piety, his humility, his resignation, his charity, his love of peace and justice.’ However, in the second half of the nineteenth century historical scholarship was increasingly influenced by the method of German writers, notably Leopold Ranke (1795-1886) and Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903). Ranke advocated so-called ‘objectivity’, the presentation of history as it happened (wie es eigentlich gewesen), stripped of interpretation and embellishment.

As already noted, Caspar’s edition (1920-3) of Gregory VII’s Register is the source for the English translation by H.E.J. Cowdrey, who had previously translated a collection of Gregory’s unregistered *epistolae vagantes*. The intentional literalness of Cowdrey’s clause-by-clause translations facilitates matching the English with the original Latin. However, his introduction to the *extravagantes* cautions readers to make critical and careful comparisons between his own interpretations and the Latin. These two volumes

3 See above p. 6.
are of immense value to students of ecclesiastical history, not least this writer. Cowdrey’s tour-de-force, a tome of a quality and scale traditionally described as ‘magisterial’, is his comprehensive biography of Gregory VII (1998), the first full study of him in more than fifty years. One reviewer highlighted Cowdrey’s conclusion that, far from having a coherent, consistent philosophy, Gregory’s record indicates a high degree of flexibility – even uncertainty – combined with a pragmatism that was always underpinned by a deep religious faith. Cowdrey’s British Academy memoirist noted Gregory’s emergence from the work as a ‘relatively conciliatory figure’. On the other hand, Karl Leyser (1965) contended that it is misleading to regard Gregory as a representative of forces latent in the church reform movement of the eleventh century, since too much of the impulse for change associated with his pontificate came from within himself, from his overpowering individual sense of mission. Despite Gregory’s constant assertions that he was only upholding the precepts of the Church Fathers, there remained what Leyser called the ‘frightening severity and heroic persistence’ with which he pursued his objectives, heedless of the consequences for himself and others.

The proliferation of Gregorian studies in the twentieth century was manifested in the founding by G.B. Borino in 1947 of *Studi Gregoriani*, a periodical created to provide a forum for scholarly articles on Gregory. Over the course of the twentieth century, a number of themes emerged in the discussions of Gregory’s pontificate. What follows is a selection of the most important works relevant to Gregory’s political thought.

A debate on his alleged militarism dominated German studies in the early twentieth century. From this, emerged a study by Carl Erdmann (1935) who linked Gregory’s militaristic musings to the evolution of ideas of crusade and holy war; the title of the English translation makes the connection explicit. Tellenbach (1940) analysed Gregory’s ‘hierocratic’ assertions of the superiority of the *sacerdotium* over the *regnum* in temporal affairs in the latter part of his reign. He wrote of Gregory VII’s struggle for

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5 Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*.


10 Hierocratic doctrine: see below p. 165.
the ‘freedom of the Church’ (*libertas Ecclesiae*), specifically its liberation from the encumbrances of simony, lay investiture, and imperial domination.\(^\text{11}\) Walter Ullmann, a prominent contributor to the scholarship on medieval political thought and the reform papacy, played an influential role in insisting on the centrality of Gregory VII’s claims to the development of medieval papacy. Ullmann (1970) believed that Gregory was the personification of that process whereby the hierocratic doctrine became ‘the governmental basis of the papacy’. Indeed, Ullmann wrote that Gregory was ‘hierocratic doctrine brought down to earth and made eminently concrete’.\(^\text{12}\) For Ullmann however, as for H.E.J. Cowdrey, Gregory’s preoccupation with the pope’s relationship with the secular power was always subordinate to the spiritual objectives of his reform programme.

Regarding Gregory VII in politics, the great emphasis in the research over the past century has been on his relationship with Henry IV. An essential early work is the six-volume consideration of the primary sources, produced by Gerold Meyer von Knonau (1890-1907), of which volumes 2 (1894) and 3 (1900) are relevant to this study.\(^\text{13}\) One of the purposes of this dissertation is to place the pope’s relationship with the German king in the broader context of Gregory VII’s relations with kings in general, especially the statements in his letters that deal with kingship. Christian Schneider (1972) produced an important detailed monograph on Gregory’s relationship with King Henry up to 1076. According to Schneider, the plethora of quotations from Old Testament prophets in Gregory’s correspondence suggests that the pope saw himself as having inherited the authority of these prophets to instruct kings.\(^\text{14}\) Jörgen Vogel (1983) continued the discussion by considering the relationship from the meeting of the two men at the northern Italian fortress of Canossa in late January 1077 up to 1080.\(^\text{15}\) Both studies focused on the statements and actions of pope and king as evidence of their ‘self-

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\(^\text{11}\) Tellenbach, *Church, state*, pp. 126-61; see also Robinson, ‘Bibliographical surveys’, p. 441.


awareness' (*Selbstverständnis*). According to Schneider, the years 1073-7 witnessed a discourse between a pope who saw his reforming role in the prophetic language of the Old Testament and a king who was extremely conscious of his role as *vicarius Christi*, a divinely ordained ruler in the Ottonian-Salian tradition.

The Canossa encounter has dominated the scholarship on the relations between Gregory and Henry. One topic is the question of whether Henry was restored to the kingship at Canossa. Fliche (1947) had no doubt that this was the case, but H.-X. Arquillière (1952) took the opposite view. Karl Morrison (1962) challenged their assumption that Henry had been deprived of his kingship in the first place. His article on the meaning of Henry's penitence and absolution at Canossa advanced the debate on Gregory's political ideas regarding the correct relationship of kingship and priesthood. In his 1972 study of penitent rulers from the time of St Ambrose to Gregory VII Rudolf Schieffer concluded that the Canossa episode was completely unprecedented.

Another major issue in the scholarship of the relations of the two men is that of lay investiture, particularly the dating of the first papal decree forbidding it. It had long been assumed that a decree issued from the Lenten synod of 1075. However, Schieffer (1981) demonstrated the gradualness of the development of Gregory's opposition to royal investiture of bishops, culminating in the first formal decree in November 1078.

The notion that 'feudo-vassalic' ideas were central to Pope Gregory's efforts to implant papal authority throughout western Christendom is a theme to which one chapter of this study will pay particular attention. Karl Jordan (1932) contended that feudal ideas dominated Gregory's dealings with secular powers, and that in this he was innovatory. Jordan subsequently (1958) summarized his arguments, proposing that Gregory attempted to implement the apostolic see's claims to universal supremacy by

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19 See below pp. 245ff.
21 See below pp. 254ff.
converting the relationships between the papacy and various princes into arrangements that amounted to a curial ‘feudal system’ whereby princes entered into vassal relationships with St Peter. More information on the relevant scholarship is given in the later discussion of the theme of fidelitas in the pope’s contacts with lay rulers.

At the outset of this study it was noted that modern studies of Gregory VII’s political thought emphasise his spiritual aims, the assumption being that his interventions in the temporal sphere were not driven by a desire for political influence for its own sake, but were the unintended consequences of his pursuit of spiritual reform. In other words, his political ideas were ancillary to his religious motives. The following passage from the conclusion of Cowdrey’s biography of Gregory encapsulates this view:

The deepest springs of Gregory’s thought and action are not to be found in any politician’s urge to wield power and to humble his adversaries, nor in any abuse of priestly power by seeking domination over the souls of others and, above all, of kings and of the lay orders of society. Before all else, his motives were religious.

Cowdrey is asserting that the fundamental impulse behind this pope’s unprecedented interventions into political matters at the highest levels of governance in contemporary Christian Europe was religious.

It is clear that all of the authors who have made a detailed analysis of the ideas of Gregory VII – notably Fliche, Ullmann, and Cowdrey – essentially agreed that Gregory’s interventions in politics were not politically motivated. Gregory, in short, was compelled to involve himself in the politics of western Europe by his devotion to the objectives of the reform of the Church, and his actions were concerned solely to facilitate the programme of libertas Ecclesiae. The purpose of my dissertation is to examine in detail this widespread assumption about Gregory VII’s lack of interest in politics for their own sake.

24 See below pp. 254ff.
26 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 695.
2. Gregory and the political powers

2.1 William I, *rex Anglorum*

This is the first of a series of case studies concerning the pope's dealings with rulers of western Christendom. They examine the language of the surviving correspondence issued in Gregory's name pertaining to his relations with these rulers, and set it in the context of those relationships. Fifteen preserved *epistolae* furnish evidence of Gregory's attitude to William the Conqueror at various stages of his pontificate.

A letter from Gregory dated 24 April 1080 reminds the king (1066-87) of the *studium* (zeal) with which he had promoted the cause of the then Norman duke in 1066 so that he might advance to the royal dignity.¹ This is the only extant letter from Gregory that alludes to the Norman Conquest. Historians have long debated what precise role the pope was claiming for himself in the dispute over the English succession. Harold Godwineson succeeded to the English throne following the death of Edward the Confessor in January 1066. However, Duke William II of Normandy regarded himself as Edward's rightful successor, and sought papal legitimation of his plans to use force to remove the usurper. It has been deduced from Gregory's reference to his *studium* on William's behalf that it was the sponsorship of William's claims to the English throne by the then Archdeacon Hildebrand that was chiefly responsible for Pope Alexander II's stand in favour of the subsequent invasion with its predictable bloodshed.² Gregory's letter recalls that the support that he gave to William with such great good will resulted in a degree of damage to his own reputation that was little short of 'great infamy'; some of the brethren 'murmured softly' (*summurmurare*) about his active support for the violent enterprise.³ The term *murmurare* would have had a particular significance for Gregory, rooted as he was in the spirituality of eleventh-century monasticism.⁴ He was

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¹ *Reg.* 7.23, pp. 499.31-500.2
³ *Reg.* 7.23, p. 500.3-5
strongly influenced by his early training under the Benedictine Rule; even as pope, he wore a monastic habit. The condemnation of the sin of 'murmuring' in no less than eight of the Rule's seventy-three chapters testifies to the intensity of Benedict's dislike of the offence. Gregory's use of murmurare suggests that the injury to his standing that followed his backing of William had deeply upset him. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two men survived and each acknowledged their close political amicitia (friendship) in their correspondence. Gregory's letters to his royal amicus normally employed language conveying considerable warmth. Sometimes William was his 'beloved son' (filius dilectus or dilectissimus, filius karissimus, or simply karissimus). On occasion, he was his excellentissimus filius. Gregory said that he had always loved William. He told Robert Curthose, the king's son, of his love for Robert's parents. The pope's high regard extended to the king's family: Queen Matilda was his filia diletta and his filia karissima; Robert was his filius dilectus. Positive reports about Robert had gladdened Gregory's heart because of his love both for him and for his parents. In two letters to the king's close ally, Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury, Gregory said that William was the carissimum et unicum filium sanctae Romanae ecclesiae and that he had always specially loved him.

However, Gregory sometimes moderated his expressions of affection when he was dissatisfied with the king's behaviour. Late 1076, after 27 September, saw the despatch of the first of two letters to William on the subject of Archbishop Juhel of the Breton see of Dol, branded by Gregory as a simoniac and a nicolaite. The letter cautions his excellentissimus filius gloriosus rex Anglorum to withdraw his support from the 'so-called bishop' (dictus episcopus). In the second letter, dated 21 March 1077, the pope

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5 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 556, 663.
6 RB, chapters 4, 5, 23, 34, 35, 40, 41, 53.
8 Reg. 1.70, p. 101.7, 15, 27; Reg. 5.19, p. 382.26; Reg. 7.23, p. 500.11.
9 Epp. Vag. 16, pp. 44-7; Reg. 7.23, p. 499.31.
10 Reg. 7.23, p. 499.31-4.
12 Reg. 1.71, p. 103.1; Reg. 7.26, p. 507.22; Reg. 7.27, p. 508.24.
15 See below p. 28. For nicolaitism, see pp. 238ff.
conveys his displeasure by withdrawing behind formal terms of address. In the inititulatio the king is now simply Wilielmo regi Anglorum. The text addresses him as excellentia vestra ('your excellency') and vestra celsitudo ('your highness') before informing the king that he is sending three legates to investigate the Dol situation. Here is an example of the reform papacy's practice of despatching legates to impose the jurisdiction of the apostolic see in dioceses far from Rome. As Kathleen Rennie (2007) put it, the legate became 'a vehicle of reform for the papacy's efforts to bind the Roman Church in political, judicial, and institutional terms'. In this letter to William, it is not the king, but one of the legates, who is dilectus filius noster. Nonetheless, the letter tells William that the pope always embraces him in corde et visceribus (in his heart and innermost being). Gregory's letters make it clear that he took it for granted that William placed a high value on the pope's affection for him. This assumption underlies his warning to Lanfranc, in March 1079, that the king might become 'unworthy of our love' should he continue to behave inappropriately in his dealings with the apostolic see.

Gregory's view of William as his filius dilectus complements his frequent depiction of the Roman Church as mother of all. He makes this point forcefully and repeatedly in his earliest surviving letter to the king, dated 4 April 1074. The pope writes that he has no doubt that William cleaves from the heart to his mother, the holy Roman Church, that he should – and does – love her with all his strength, that the death of Gregory's predecessor, Alexander, had been comparable to widowhood, that William is showing the affection of a good son, one who (again) loves his mother from the heart, and that his mother is advising him to struggle for iustitia. Five years later, Gregory again cautioned Lanfranc that the king should presume nothing against the Church, mater omnium. A year later, as his conflict with the rex Teutonicorum worsened, the pope twice exploited the Church-as-mother metaphor when he opened himself up (aperire) to William in a reminiscence about his own elevation to the papacy, emphasizing his reluctance when he was seized (rapere) by sancta mater nostra ecclesia. The letter also

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18 Reg. 4.17, pp. 322.14-323.32.
20 Reg. 1.70, p. 101.7-19.
21 Reg. 6.30, pp. 443.32-444.1.
speaks of God's selection of him as *vicarius* to rule *sanctam matrem nostrum*, and urges William to stand ready to help his afflicted mother.\(^ {22}\) Gregory had previously (April 1078) counselled the king on the need to help churches that were 'widowed of their shepherds'.\(^ {23}\)

Gregory also promoted William as an exemplar of Christian virtue within the context of the family. This emerges in three letters: two to William's wife Matilda, the third to his eldest son Robert Curthose. Gregory wanted Matilda to be a good influence on her husband. His brief *epistola* to her of April 1074 twice applauds her *dilectio et humilitas*, and urges her to press her husband ceaselessly to do whatever will be *utilis* (beneficial) for his soul, adding that even the faith of a believing husband is increased for the better by a believing wife (cf. I Cor. 7: 14.).\(^ {24}\) Some years later, in May 1080, Gregory told the Queen that gold and gems are of less value to him than her merits – chastity, generosity to the poor, love of God and her neighbour – before returning to the central theme of his earlier letter: these merits are weapons with which to arm her husband.\(^ {25}\)

While a wife has an obligation to encourage and improve her husband, Gregory made it clear that a son has a duty to love and respect his parents. Robert Curthose had become engaged in a prolonged armed rebellion in Normandy against his father. Certain sons of the Norman aristocracy, no friends of William, had assisted and sheltered the king's son. In January 1079, Robert inflicted a humiliating military defeat upon the Conqueror, but the conflict had recently ended through a mediated reconciliation of sorts.\(^ {26}\) A letter from Gregory to Robert, dated May 1080, suggests that the pope believed that the cessation of hostilities was a matter of Robert dutifully agreeing to his father's counsels and casting out those of wicked men.\(^ {27}\) It instructs Robert to banish such *pravorum consilia* (wicked counsels) and bend to his father's will in all matters.\(^ {28}\) He further advises him to bear in mind that whatsoever his father forcibly seized from his enemies will pass to an heir. In other words, William's eldest son should recognize the wisdom of remaining on good terms with his father, and should consider whether his

\(^{22}\) *Reg.* 7.23, p. 500.11-25.  
\(^{23}\) *Reg.* 5.19, p. 382.18.  
\(^{24}\) *Reg.* 1.71, p. 103.9-10.  
\(^{27}\) *Reg.* 7.27, p. 508.16.  
\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 508.34-6.
father’s enemies who had supported him might wish to share what ought to be his inheritance alone. Gregory was suggesting to Robert that both duty and pragmatism dictated obedience to his father.

The pope normally linked his expressions of affection for William with plaudits for his virtues. Sometimes these were general affirmations of his excellence. More usually, he mentioned specific qualities. Taken together, they include most of the characteristics of Gregory’s model rex Christianus, whose attributes are examined later. They are summarized here because, in Gregory’s eyes, William was apparently the contemporary king who came closest to his ideal. Thus, William is endowed with the God-given qualities of prudentia and honestas (good character). He is vir sapiens (a wise man). He strives for iustitia. He endeavours to bring pax to his subjects. Many of his characteristics concern his interaction with ecclesia Romana. The pope believed that William loved the Church as his mother. Similarly, if not quite identically, the rex Anglorum was devotus to St Peter and to the apostolic see. He should care for the churches committed to him for their defence. That the king has a duty to promote ecclesiastical reform emerges in a letter of 1081 from Gregory to his legates in France. It notes with approval William’s imposition of reform in England; he is neither destroying nor selling churches, and he is forcing priests to abandon their wives, and laymen to give up their tithes.

Three further aspects of the relationship to the Church of Gregory’s ideal rex Christianus must be mentioned here. First, the pope believed that he must exhibit humilitas (submissiveness) to the apostolic see. Gregory’s pastoral letter to William of 24 April 1080 intimates that by dutifully humbling himself the king will be raised up as a sign of God’s favour. It notes with approval the emergence of William as potentissimus
rex (a very powerful king). Second, the king must demonstrate oboedientia to sedes apostolicae. It is perhaps significant that this issue arose in two letters to William sent in quick succession soon after the 1080 Lenten synod that re-excommunicated Henry IV and issued a comprehensive decree against lay investiture. The first epistola links oboedientia to salus (salvation), urging William to show oboedientia both to secure his own honour and salus, and to set an example to other princes that they too might attain salus; just as by dutifully humiliating himself he will be raised up, so also by obeying he will be exalted. The second letter amounts to a short treatise expounding Gregory’s view of the proper relationship between regnum and sacerdotium. It presents the Gelasian idea that the apostolic and pontifical dignity will represent Christian kings before the divine tribunal and render account to God for their offences. Unusually, instead of speaking of the necessity of oboedientia to the apostolic see or St Peter, Gregory personalizes this obligation: it has become a matter of urgency for the sake of the king’s salus that he obey ‘me’ without delay. Third, the king must show due reverence to the sacerdotium; the pope states this in the context of his firm admonishing of William for having imprisoned Bishop Odo of Bayeux, an act which ‘violently overshadowed the joy in a friendly heart’.

Gregory often expressed his belief that William’s virtues raised him above all other living kings. His letter of November 1073 to Archbishop Lanfranc speaks of the prudentia singularis of the king, who is a unique son of the Holy Roman Church. His earliest extant letter to William himself, dated April 1074, tells the king that his love for mother Church, his toiling for iustitia, and his protection of the English and Norman churches set him alone inter reges. In April 1078, Gregory told him that he embraces him amongst kings with a special love (specialis dilectio). The following year he told Lanfranc that William compares favourably with other rulers, and that he has always especially loved

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39 Reg. 7.23, p. 501.7-12.
40 Reg. 7.14a(7)(2), pp. 483.1-487.19, 480.26-481.3.
41 Reg. 7.23, p. 505.16-21; cf 2 Cor. 10:5.
42 See above p. 8.
43 Reg. 7.25, pp. 505.16-507.5.
44 Reg. 9.37, pp. 630.33-631.1; also see below p. 30.
45 Reg. 1.31, p. 52.11-15.
47 Reg. 5.19, p. 382.19-22.
William amongst others of his dignity. In April 1080, in the wake of the abovementioned Lenten synod, Gregory told William that with God's help he had become a jewel amongst princes (gemma principum). The last of his preserved letters to the king (1083) reiterates that William's devotion to the apostolic see makes him unique among his ordo. If this correspondence with William and his ally Lanfranc was all that survived it might be wondered whether the pope's repeated assertions of William's unparalleled Christian virtues were inflated in order to encourage the king and to preserve their amicitia. However, a letter of 1081 from Gregory to his legates in France expresses a view of William that is reasonably consistent with his direct correspondence with the king and his archbishop. It delivers a measured assessment of the king, concluding that, although William's behaviour is less than perfect in quibusdam ('in certain respects'), he nevertheless merits approval and honour more than other kings.

The quaedam to which the pope alluded concerned the king's determined control of ecclesiastical affairs in England. Church reform had been an important element in William's earlier consolidation of his authority in Normandy. His regime's implementation of canon law excluded those spheres that would have undermined his own dominance over his bishops and abbots, a control he considered necessary for the security and spiritual health of the Church. He regarded the development of a reformed, reorganized, and united English Church as crucial for the exercise of his rule over a politically united regnum Anglorum. Gregory came to the papacy more than six years after William's coronation, and nearly three years after Lanfranc's appointment to the see of Canterbury. By now, the king and the archbishop were developing a close working relationship, characterized by a shared enthusiasm both for church reform and for resistance to papal encroachment upon the independence of the ecclesia Anglorum. Lanfranc's refusal to obey Gregory's summonses to Rome was, in part, a manifestation

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48 Reg. 6.30, p. 443.21-7.  
49 Reg. 7.23, pp. 500.26-501.5.  
50 Reg. 9.37, p. 630.13-17.  
51 Reg. 9.5, pp. 579.27-580.3.  
52 Douglas, William the Conqueror, p. 39.  
54 Cowdrey, 'Anglo-Norman church', pp. 82, 87.
of the latter.\textsuperscript{55} This partnership of king and archbishop achieved significant reform within the English church and established the king's authority over it.\textsuperscript{56}

The pope's correspondence with William shows that that the issues that most threatened to undermine their relationship arose from this close royal involvement in ecclesiastical matters. In November 1073, Gregory wrote to Lanfranc in an effort to protect the abbey of Bury St Edmunds from the claims of a neighbouring bishop. The letter asks the archbishop to warn (admonere) the king lest the \textit{dictus episcopus} deceive him.\textsuperscript{57} The pope's words imply a pragmatic toleration of the king's personal engagement in the appointment of senior prelates in the English Church. None of Gregory's letters hint at any disquiet about William's investiture of bishops.

Nevertheless, he did sometimes express annoyance at certain of the king's actions with regard to the Church. Gregory most frequently articulated his displeasure with the king's \textit{interventus} in the prolonged controversy over the Breton see of Dol; eight \textit{epistolae} refer to the issue.\textsuperscript{58} The problems centred on Dol's disreputable Archbishop Juhel.\textsuperscript{59} In the summer of 1076, when William was laying siege to the castle of Dol where the rebellious earl of Norfolk was established, Gregory wrote to the king, hoping to exploit his presence in the locality to engineer the removal of the troublesome prelate.\textsuperscript{60} The pope's letter trenchantly lists Juhel's crimes as if in no doubt that William will share his repugnance toward the turpitude of this \textit{dictus episcopus}. He follows up his castigation of the errant bishop with a warning to the king to beware lest \textit{per ignorantiam} he 'further' help such a wicked man. Gregory is offering William a face-saving excuse for withdrawing his support for Juhel; now that the pope has helpfully clarified the situation, the king should humbly obey the warnings of the apostolic see. The recent (first) excommunication of Henry IV may have helped to persuade Gregory of the political expediency of a measured approach to the \textit{rex Anglorum} lest he alienate a powerful reform-minded ally.\textsuperscript{61} The letter informs William that, \textit{Deo inspirante}, the pope

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Cowdrey, \textit{Lanfranc}, pp. 186-96.
\item \textsuperscript{57} \textit{Reg.} 1.31, pp. 51.21-52.18.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 395-6.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Cowdrey, 'Anglo-Norman church', p. 101.
\item \textsuperscript{61} \textit{Reg.} 3.10a, pp. 270.1-271.20.
\end{itemize}
has consecrated Juhel's replacement. In addition, he has already notified the Dol clergy and the Breton bishops. There appears to have been no prior consultation with the king; the new appointment was a fait accompli. It turned out that Gregory's hopes to use William to oust Juhel came to naught when King Philip I of France (1060-1108) forced the rex Anglorum to withdraw the siege. A few months later, 21 March 1077, the pope despatched another letter on the subject of Dol. It informs William that the matter of the bishopric seems to have been resolved, as the pope has learned that Juhel, on whose behalf William had intervened (intervenire), has been ejected from the bishopric through his own wickedness. Intervenire can mean either 'intervene' or 'interfere'. The pope could have deployed intercedere, a word with no connotation of meddling. Gregory's use of intervenire might suggest that he considered the king to be something of an outsider in this ecclesiastical matter. It may be significant that the letter was despatched at a time when the pope was hardening in his opinion that lay investiture was, in the words of Cowdrey (1998), 'an intrinsically unwarranted intrusion of laymen in the process of an ecclesiastical appointment'. Nevertheless, in a move to conciliate the king, the pope was addressing William's concerns by despatching two of his leading legates to investigate the matter to make sure that Gregory has not been misinformed about the situation. The letter ends with a useful reminder to William of his mortality and the uncertainty of his salus. A year later, the Dol issue remaining unresolved, the pope instructed his legates in France to convene a general council to decide the episcopal succession; they were to ensure that the rex Anglorum sent an envoy who was both prudens and religiosus. At about this time (spring 1078) Gregory wrote again to William. Once more, he extols the king's virtues and expresses his special love for him. The pope did not want the issue of the Dol episcopate to undermine their amicitia.

Gregory became increasingly irked by the failure of senior prelates to respond to papal summonses to Rome. A letter dated 25 March 1079, which rebukes Lanfranc for

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63 Reg. 4.4, pp. 300.21-301.7; Reg. 4.5, pp. 301.23-303.11.
65 Reg. 4.17, p. 322.16-21.
66 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 547.
67 Reg. 4.17, p. 323.26-32.
68 Reg. 5.22, p. 386.2-32.
69 Reg. 5.19 p. 382.19-22.
his non-appearance \textit{ad limina apostolorum} (at the threshold of the apostles), sheds new light on the pope's view of William. Gregory wonders if \textit{metus regis} (fear of the king) is a factor in the archbishop's absence from Rome. Perhaps an 'unusual swelling of arrogance' (\textit{novus arrogantiae tumor}) is causing William to be hostile to the apostolic see. Lanfranc must constantly admonish the king to do nothing unjust against the mother of us all, the holy Roman Church, nor insolently venture upon anything incompatible with a \textit{religiosa potestas} (religious power), nor inhibit \textit{ad limina} visits.\footnote{Reg. 6.30, pp. 443.12-444.18.}

Even as he urges Lanfranc to reprove William, Gregory is acknowledging the king's status as a \textit{religiosa potestas}. A few months later (September 1079), Gregory wrote to the legate Hubert. The letter fulminates against William's behaviour with a harshness missing from earlier letters: William is the first king, Christian or otherwise, to presume to prevent bishops and archbishops from journeying \textit{ad limina}; this is the behaviour of an irreverent and shameless spirit. Hubert must admonish the king to mend his ways lest he incur the severe anger of St Peter. Finally, \textit{ex parte beati Petri}, he instructs Hubert to order the attendance of at least two bishops from each archiepiscopate at the next Lenten synod in Rome.\footnote{Reg. 7.1, pp. 458.26-460.14.}

Clearly, William's obstructiveness in this matter was causing Gregory considerably more concern than he revealed in his direct correspondence with the king. Summer 1082 brought another summons to Lanfranc: his failure to travel to Rome would result in his suspension from office.\footnote{Reg. 9.20, pp. 600.20-601.11.} On this occasion Gregory did not propose \textit{metus regis} as a reason for Lanfranc's failure to travel. In the intervening three years, Gregory may have come to understand that Lanfranc's robust alliance with William was not based on fear. The suspension warning seems to have been an idle threat since there is no evidence that Lanfranc made the journey or incurred any penalty for not doing so.\footnote{Cowdrey, 'Anglo-Norman church', p. 96.}

In the same year, 1082, William imprisoned Bishop Odo I of Bayeux, his own half-brother, possibly because he planned to recruit knights in England to intervene in Rome.\footnote{Cowdrey, \textit{Epistolae vagantes}, p. 128, n. * re \textit{Epp. Vag.} 53.} Gregory rages about this to Archbishop Hugh of Lyons in a letter of which only a scrap survives. The \textit{rex Anglorum} has dared to lay hands upon their brother and fellow
bishop; this is completely counter to *fas* (divine law), *honestas* (right), *regia modestas* (proper kingly restraint) and the *reverentia* due to the *sacerdotium*; he has behaved *impudenter*. Gregory raises the incident with William himself in a letter whose ending is lost. As usual, he tempers his language when addressing the king; the first part of the surviving fragment includes a reminder of their *amicitia*, positive comments on William’s unique *devotus* to the apostolic see, and some reflections on his own current troubles. Only then does Gregory admonish the king for taking the prelate captive: William is setting worldly caution and calculation before *lex divina* in failing to show due *reverentia* to the *sacerdotium*. As his relations with King Henry IV of Germany deteriorated, Gregory was reluctant to jeopardize his *amicitia* with William, notwithstanding his irritation at the latter’s continued meddling in church matters. One indication of this was his mildness when addressing the king directly, in contrast to the opinions he sometimes expressed in confidential messages to trusted prelates. Another sign is the efforts he made to curb the activities of certain papal legates lest they aggravate William. In September 1079, Gregory responded to a report by Archdeacon Hubert that Teuzo, another legate, had criticized the king as if on the pope’s behalf. The letter tells Hubert that he has not prescribed Teuzo’s words. Gregory is not claiming that criticism of the *rex Anglorum* is unjust *per se*; rather, he is ordering that the wording of any criticism of William must have the pope’s prior sanction.

In 1081, Gregory wrote to his two legates in France, Bishops Hugh of Die and Amatus of Oloron. He had learned that they had suspended nearly all of the senior clergy of Normandy for failing to attend a regional council. The letter speaks up for the suspended clergy, saying that the pope has heard that *metus regis Francorum* lay behind their absence. It notes that, although the behaviour of the *rex Anglorum* is less than perfect, he is nevertheless rigorously imposing reform within his own kingdom. William’s refusal to align himself with ‘certain enemies of Christ’s cross’ must also have been

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76 *Reg.* 9.37, pp. 630.11-631.18.
appreciated by Gregory. He would hardly have wished to antagonize another powerful member of the regnum, especially one who in most respects was performing the duties of Christian kingship in such an exemplary fashion. The letter instructs the zealous legates to moderate their reforming rigour towards William's subjects. This is a time for wisdom and restraint pending the return of tranquillitas.

No examination of Gregory's dealings with William the Conqueror would be complete if it failed to mention the pope's request in 1080 for the king's fealty and the king's firm rejection of the proposal. This was the incident that came closest to destabilising their amicitia. The issue is addressed in some detail in the later chapter on fidelitas. Suffice it to say at this stage that both parties seem to have taken care to ensure that the episode did not seriously damage their relationship.

The long relationship between the two men had many facets - remarkably so, considering that they never actually met. Gregory's letters to William, Matilda, and Lanfranc frequently extol William's unique kingly virtues. However, when set against the more measured opinions and criticisms expressed in other correspondence, it appears that the language of Gregory's letters to the king and his confidantes was influenced by his wish to sustain the connection between papa and rex. The pope's praise for the king seems to blend sincere belief, wishful thinking, and cajolery; he wants to set a standard to which William - and other kings - might aspire. The letters indicate that the pope consistently held to the view that William was the contemporary ruler who, despite his irksome meddling in ecclesiastical affairs and disinclination to obey the apostolic see, came nearest to matching Gregory's exemplary rex Christianus. For his part, William's resolute control and reform of the English Church arose from his view that the political harmony of his lands depended upon their ecclesiastical unity. Each of these two determined, but vulnerable, princes had good reason to endeavour to retain the political support of the other. William's military victory and ascent to the English throne in 1066

80 Reg. 9.5, pp. 579.26-580.4.
81 Ibid., pp. 580.20-581.18.
82 See below pp. 270ff.
84 Cowdrey, 'Anglo-Norman church', p. 87.
85 Ibid., p. 79.
had resulted in the acquisition by the papacy of a firm royal ally in promoting the reform of the English clergy.\textsuperscript{86} Rome's consistent underwriting of William's kingship was an essential legitimization of his authority.\textsuperscript{87} Not only was Gregory's papacy increasingly dominated by the deterioration in relations with the German king, but he was also engaged in a constant, smouldering conflict with the French king over Philip's exploitation of the Church.\textsuperscript{88} Political exigencies persuaded this pope, already at odds with two of the three most powerful \textit{reges} of Europe, to beware of alienating the third. Finally, by exalting William's rule Gregory was implicitly asserting the feasibility of his ideal \textit{rex Christianus}.

\textsuperscript{86} Maccarini, 'William the Conqueror', p. 173.
\textsuperscript{87} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, p. 467.
\textsuperscript{88} Cowdrey, 'Anglo-Norman Church', p. 81.
2.2 Toirdhealbhach ua Briain, rex Hiberniae

An unregistered letter, c. July 1073, from Gregory to Archbishop Lanfranc confirmed Canterbury’s primacy over Ireland. Only one letter from Gregory to Ireland survives. The intended recipient is Toirdhealbhach ua Briain, king of Munster and would-be high king of Ireland. According to Schieffer (1989), the pope was unsure of the function – or even existence – of Toirdhealbhach. A. Gwynn (1950) effectively dispelled doubts about the letter’s authenticity. The year of composition is unknown. It conveys greetings and apostolic blessings to Terdelvachus, the illustrious king of Ireland (inclitus rex Hiberniae), and to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, nobles and all Christian inhabitants of the island.

The letter cites the Petrine commission: by Christ’s authority, the Church was founded upon a solid rock, and its government committed to St Peter (cf. Matt. 16: 18). God set the Church over all of the world’s kingdoms (super omnia mundi regna sunt), a claim that seems to echo the forged document on papal authority known as the ‘Donation of Constantine’ (Constitutum Constantini). The emphasis on the founding of the Roman church by Christ alone is also found in the eleventh-century canon law collection known as the ‘Seventy-Four Titles’ (74T). Therefore, the letter continues, the whole world (universus orbis) owes oboedientia and reverentia to St Peter and his vicars, among whose number divine providence has appointed Gregory. It exhorts all Irish Christians to practise iustitia, love the catholic peace of the Church, and bind themselves to Rome in the bonds of charity. If ever they need assistance, they should not hesitate to have recourse to Rome. The pope’s declaration of the Church’s authority super omnia mundi regna resembles the assertion, in his letter of January 1075 to King Sweyn of Denmark, of the universal administration (universale regimen) entrusted to the papacy.

This letter to Terdelvachus amounts to a concise, characteristically Gregorian, formulation of papal supremacy.

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1 Lanfranc, Letters, 8, pp. 64-67. For Lanfranc and Ireland, see Cowdrey, Lanfranc, pp. 144-6.
4 See below p. 178.
5 74T, 2, p. 20.
7 Reg. 2.51, p. 193.3-6.
2.3 Philip I, rex Francorum

King Philip I of France (1060-1108) was the longest reigning Capetian king. Only two letters to him from Gregory have survived. A further eleven refer to him. In addition, he is named in the record of the 1075 Lenten synod. It might seem surprising that a further 140 of Gregory's epistolae address issues within the regnum Francorum without mentioning Philip; in other words, fewer than ten per cent of the pope's letters to the kingdom make even the slightest reference to its king. Any discussion of Gregory's attitude to Philip must consider the nature and limitations of the king's authority within a realm that has been described as 'a kaleidoscope of competing overlapping governments'.

The royal lands were a fragmented collection of mostly wooded territories in the Île-de-France, centred on Paris and Orléans. This agglomeration occupied a gap between the lands of some of the great French princes, who were effectively independent rulers even as they acknowledged the king as their feudal overlord (suzerain). Beyond the Île-de-France, the king was barely more than primus inter pares. Within the royal lands themselves, the king and his retinue had to undertake frequent journeys (itinera) to maintain his authority. The limited range of these itinera is further evidence of the relative weakness of the Capetian kings in the eleventh century. A study of the restricted sources concluded that in the course of his forty-eight year reign Philip made few journeys outside the Île-de-France into the territories of his lay vassals. The duke of Normandy, Philip's most important vassal and rival, frequently warred with the king although he occasionally obeyed him. A similar mixture of independence and intermittent conformity characterized the rulerships of Burgundy, Brittany, Aquitaine,

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5 For relations between Normandy and its neighbours, see D. Bates, Normandy before 1066 (London, 1982), pp. 46-93.
Flanders, Toulouse, Anjou, Blois and Champagne. They paid lip service to the king's nominal authority but did not expect him to assert it in their territories. Only rarely did the early Capetians attempt to do so. Nevertheless, it was not forgotten that the king was a successor to Charlemagne (king of the Franks 768-814, emperor 800-814). Gregory VII affirmed the Church's veneration of the memory of Charlemagne as one of the few emperors who loved iustitia, propagated religion, and defended churches. The retention of the tradition of royal coronation with holy oil at Rheims helped to perpetuate the Capetian association with the Carolingian myth of kingship, a perception that garnered the Capetian kings some continuing respect and occasionally gave them opportunities to express moral leadership.

Philip's relations with the French Church were another matter. The king's ecclesiastical demesne was a network that ranged both within, and far beyond, the Île-de-France. In the second half of the eleventh century, the support of the Church in France was the weakened crown's main asset. The backing of the bishops of certain sees — notably Rheims, Laon, Châlons, and Beauvais — was crucial to the maintenance of royal authority. For its part, the Church supported the king because it needed his ability to deploy his suzerainty to protect the vast ecclesiastical property holdings from predatory local nobles. As a major landowner, with many people living on its estates, the Church possessed temporal as well as spiritual power. The king exercised particular authority over a number of 'royal' bishoprics. A royal bishopric was one where the king had the power to appoint the bishop. The Capetian kings viewed their involvement in the selection of new prelates as an important part of their rights. Whenever a royal bishopric fell vacant, the king took control of its temporalities and might be slow to

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6 For the individual duchies and counties, see Dunbabin, Making, pp. 169-212; for a closer study of Anjou, see W. S. Jessee, Robert the Burgundian and the counts of Anjou, ca. 1025-1098 (Washington D.C., 2000), pp. 117-34.
7 Dunbabin, Making, p. 131.
8 For Charlemagne's posthumous reputation, see R. Folz, Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval (Paris, 1950).
9 Reg. 8.21, p. 559.5-8.
10 Dunbabin, Making, p. 137.
12 Fawtier, Capetian kings, p. 69.
13 For a list of the royal bishoprics, see ibid. p. 71.
14 Bouchard, 'Kingdom', p. 130.
restore them if the elected successor was not to his liking; he might even refuse to confirm the election. Whenever a bishop died, the king might exploit his rights of regalia and spolia pending the investiture of a successor. Regalia was the authority to hold a see's estates and to administer its lands for one's own benefit. The right of spolia enabled the king to appropriate the moveable property of a deceased bishop. The early Capetian kings also controlled a number of important monasteries.

The king's dealings with the churches in France brought him into serious conflict with the papacy. Many bishoprics beyond the Île-de-France bore something of the nature of Capetian advanced outposts within the territories of the great secular vassals. The king's religious vassals (bishops and abbots) controlled sizeable assets in the form of lands, money, and men; as vassals, they owed aid and counsel to their suzerain. In ideological terms Philip's prestige within France, such as it was, was strongly bound up with the Church's moral authority. The consecration with holy oil of a new king at Rheims symbolized the sanctification by the Church of the king's person. In the eyes of French ecclesiastics, the reges Francorum retained something close to a sacerdotal aspect. Marc Bloch (1924) thought that the custom of the monarch applying the 'royal touch' to cure the 'King's Evil' (scrofula) began in France in Philip I's reign. Guibert of Nogent wrote that Philip often performed 'this glorious miracle' until he lost the ability. Formal crown-wearings and regular re-enactments of the king's enthronement at the Church's great festivals also helped to preserve the idea of royal sacrality. The king's coronation itself resembled the ceremony of investiture by which a bishop acquired his see through the conferring on him of the cathedral church, lands, and jurisdiction. The bishop would swear fealty to his suzerain – the king in the case of a royal bishopric, otherwise the local magnate. Such a commitment obviously had the potential to

15 Fawtier, Capetian kings, pp. 72-3.
17 Fawtier, Capetian kings, pp. 73-4.
18 Bouchard, 'Kingdom', p. 127.
19 For kingship and Capetian propaganda, see Dunbabin, Making, pp. 133-140. See also above p. 11.
21 Guibert of Nogent, De pignoribus sanctorum, MPL 156, col. 616A.
22 Discussed in Fawtier, Capetian Kings, pp. 67-71.
provoke a conflict of interest should the papacy decide to exceed the customary exercise of its authority over the French churches.

Hildebrand acquired a good knowledge of the French Church and its clergy during his extensive travels prior to his elevation to the papacy. In the 1050s, the reform papacy initiated the transformation of the role of papal legate into an instrument of the apostolic see, tasked with implementing papal decrees and inculcating respect for Rome’s primacy. Hildebrand was one such legate. Our knowledge of his experiences in France comes from reforming circles, particularly those associated with Abbot Hugh of the Benedictine monastery of Cluny (1049-1109), (with whom Hildebrand travelled for a time), and with Archbishop Hugh of Lyons (1082/3-1106). Therefore, it is influenced by their preoccupations. One of Hildebrand’s most notable legatine achievements was the Synod of Tours in 1054, at which the controversial theologian Berengar was persuaded to make a statement that could be interpreted as indicating his acknowledgment of the real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Our main source for Hildebrand is Bonizo of Sutri, who wrote his biographical study of Gregory VII immediately after the pope’s death in summer 1085, a generation after his legatine activity. Bonizo informs us that at Chalon-sur-Saône in 1056 Hildebrand held a council that deposed several bishops for simony and other offences. The deposition of bishops illustrates the unprecedented degree of authority that the reform papacy increasingly granted to its legates. They reported directly to the pope and their decisions were to be accepted as the pope’s will. Gregory VII made extensive use of legates to reinforce his authority, nowhere more so than in France. His clearest elucidation of his concept of the legate’s role appears in a letter, possibly dated 28 June 1077, to the Christians of Narbonne, Gascony, and Spain. Legates, he wrote, are more than administrative agents of the papacy; they share in its duty to preach salvation, root out errors, promote virtue within all churches, and instruct the world in sound apostolic doctrine. The weakness of Philip’s kingship and


the absence of civil war contributed to a situation where papal legates could impose the views of the reform papacy far more successfully in France than in Germany.

Under Pope Gregory, a legate was often assigned his own province. Its inhabitants were to receive and obey him as if he was the pope – or rather, St Peter. The synod was the mechanism by means the legate instructed the faithful, and he took precedence over the attending bishops. Foremost among these ‘permanent legates’ was Hugh, bishop of Die from 1074, archbishop of Lyons from 1082/3. Gregory appointed him legate in 1077. Like other permanent legates, he combined episcopal and legatine duties. He was a native of Vienne, the French see that included Die. According to Hugh of Flavigny, the pope sent Hugh of Die into Gaul to stamp out the evils in the Church, particularly simony. He was a loyal, devoted agent of Gregory and a rigorous enforcer of Christian iustitia in France. We have no evidence that he was ever accused of excessive leniency. Sometimes the pope felt constrained by compassion, pragmatism, or both, to temper Hugh’s severity, even countermand his decisions. In certain situations, Gregory ensured that Hugh worked in tandem with another legate – often Abbot Hugh of Cluny – who could act as a moderating influence upon all parties. It has been speculated that the marked decline in the attendance of French bishops at the Capetian court after 1077 reflects the effectiveness of Hugh of Die and other legates in establishing the pope’s standards among French churchmen. The most recent research has shown that it was in 1077, in his correspondence with Hugh of Die relating to French ecclesiastical politics, that Gregory VII initially formulated his views on lay investiture of bishops and abbots, a topic that is addressed in detail later.

29 Hugh of Flavigny, Chronicon, p. 412.43-4.
30 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 357.
32 See above p. 31.
33 Reg.4.22; Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 370.
34 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 337.
35 Schieffer, Investiturbverbots, pp. 159-67. For the relevant correspondence, see S. Beulertz, Das Verbot der Laieninvestitur im Investiturstreit, MGH, Studien und Texte 2 (Hanover, 1991), pp. 4-9. For discussion of lay investiture, see below pp. 245ff.
Gregory's surviving correspondence first identifies Philip in connection with one of the more distant royal bishoprics. On 4 December 1073, the pope despatched two letters concerning Mâcon, a see on the southern edge of the duchy of Burgundy that had been without a pastor since March 1072. One is addressed to Bishop Roclin of Chalon-sur-Saône, the other to Archbishop Humbert of Lyons. The letter to Roclin states that Gregory has learned that Landeric, archdeacon of Autun, was elected bishop with the unanimous consent of the clergy and people of Mâcon and with the assent of the king. The pope is aware of complaints by the clerks of Mâcon that Philip is trying to hinder the appointment of Landeric and that the church is suffering in the absence of a bishop. The letter begins with a severe condemnation of the evil of simony: a number of princes, motivated by depraved greed, have destroyed the Church of God; in so doing they are crushing underfoot the mother to whom they owe honor et reverentia. It identifies Philip as the worst offender: he has seemingly ascended the highest peak of this most detestable outrage. The intensity of Gregory's anger would have prompted him to act against the king with severe canonical rigour had he not recently been informed by Philip's chamberlain, Alberic, that the king proposed to amend his life and put the churches in order. Philip must choose: he can follow through on his repudiation of the foul trafficking of symoniae haeresis (simoniacal heresy), and allow the appointment of idoneii (suitable individuals) to church positions. Failing this, by the authority of Saints Peter and Paul, the pope will employ canonical sternness to curb the severe obstinacy of Philip's inoboedientia by striking the French with the sword of a general anathema, whereupon they will refuse to obey the king. The pope is threatening to mobilize canon law to render the king incommunicado, thereby damaging his authority, perhaps fatally. Mâcon will be a test of Philip's good faith. For Gregory the key issue is whether Philip will allow Landeric's consecration to proceed without a payment to the king. He has selected Bishop Roclin as his emissary to Philip because of Roclin's reputation for prudentia (discretion) and his familiaritas (good relationship) with the king. Roclin must zealously communicate these things to Philip. He is to use every means, including encouragement and entreaties, to drive the message home to Philip that he must allow canonical provision for Mâcon and other churches. Gregory's letter to Archbishop

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36 Cowdrey Register, p. 40, n. 4.
37 Reg. 1.35, pp. 56.12-57.16.
Humbert summarizes the situation at Macon and his instructions to Rodin, and commands Humbert that, should Philip refuse to mend his ways, the archbishop must proceed with the consecration of Landeric. He warns Humbert that if he is negligent in this matter then he will incur apostolic indignatio (displeasure) and Gregory himself will ordain Landeric if he comes to Rome. A few months later, that is exactly what happened.

One can draw a number of inferences from the pope's approach to the Macon issue in the early months of his pontificate. Gregory knew that symoniaca haeresis was endemic in France. There can be no doubting his fierce opposition to simony. He was outraged at Philip's unparalleled involvement in this iniquity and sought to eliminate the practice in France. To achieve this he was prepared to exploit every means available to him, including excommunication, to undermine the king's authority. Philip's dependence on the Church has already been noted. Gregory tried to mobilize the senior French clergy. His letter to Bishop Rodin has been described as 'startling' evidence of a new papal policy of deploying every weapon at his disposal to secure church reform. Should Archbishop Humbert be unwilling to go against his king he would experience papal indignatio. If necessary, the pope was prepared to intervene personally. According to Gregory, it was the king's duty to obey the pope in ecclesiastical matters; it was therefore necessary to curb his inoboedientia. Philip's despatch of his chamberlain with a conciliatory message may have encouraged Gregory to believe that the Macon issue could be resolved through diplomacy. Hence his instructions to Rodin, a Burgundian prelate on good terms with the king, that he must use all the weapons of persuasion in his armoury to convince Philip to comply with the pope's wishes. In the end, Landeric was consecrated in Rome and the tensions between Philip and the pope seem to have been defused. No doubt the king's undertakings, communicated through his chamberlain, to amend his private life and behave correctly with regard to episcopal

38 Reg. 1.36, pp. 57.34-58.23.
39 Reg. 1.76, Reg. 1.85a.
40 Reg. 1.35, p. 56.14-20.
41 See below pp. 229ff.
42 For Gregory's campaign against simony in France, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 398-403.
43 See above p. 36.
44 Carlyle and Carlyle, History 4, pp. 173-4.
45 Reg. 1.35, p. 57.5-8.
elections contributed to a calming of sorts in the relationship. It is worth noting in passing that at this point, less than a year after his elevation, Gregory still accepted the customary right of the king to assent to the election of a bishop, his concern being to ensure that episcopal elections were free, canonically valid, and untainted by simony. 46

Philip reappears in Gregory’s correspondence the following spring. On 16 March 1074, the pope wrote to the suspended Bishop Roger III of Châlons-sur-Marne in response to many complaints against him by the church of Châlons that he had plundered its goods. 47 The letter acknowledges the pope’s receipt of pleas from Philip for the bishop’s absolution but dismisses them because Roger’s transgressions are such that iustitia dictates the need for canonical rigour. 48 The pope’s determination to impose iustitia outweighed the intercession of the king on behalf of a favoured prelate. Gregory was set on enforcing canonical discipline within the French Church even if this meant denying Philip. Roger was subsequently stripped of his office. 49 Another letter from Gregory, dated March 1075, accuses the metropolitan, Archbishop Manasses I of Rheims (c. 1069-80), of negligence over Bishop Roger’s disoboedientia. Manasses must ensure the restoration of the clerks’ property; failing that, Roger should be excommunicated. 50

A similar theme emerges a month later in two letters from Gregory, dated 13 April 1074, concerning the diocese of Beauvais. However, in this case the targets of Gregory’s canonical rigour are the clergy and people, who have perpetrated ‘horrible and detestable’ acts against God and their bishop. The first letter severely chastises them before informing them that, in response to their bishop’s intercession, he is lifting their excommunication. 51 Beauvais was one of the sees upon which the king was particularly reliant for support. 52 For the purposes of this study, the significance of the affair derives from the king’s collusion with the citizens. This comes to light in the second letter, the first of Gregory’s two surviving letters to King Philip himself. It acknowledges the king’s

46 For the development of Gregory’s opposition to lay investiture, see below pp. 245 ff.
47 Fliche, Philippe, p. 419; Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 335.
48 Reg. 1.56, pp. 83.23-84.22.
49 Cowdrey, Register, p. 150, n. 2 re Reg. 2.56.
50 Reg. 2.56, pp. 209.15-210.6.
51 Reg. 1.74, pp. 105.23-106.10.
52 Bouchard, ‘Kingdom’, p. 131.
communication of his desire devotedly and fittingly to obey St Peter and the directions of the pope in ecclesiastical matters. Echoing his approach to the Mâcon problem, the pope advises Philip to translate his words into actions; he must placate God by correcting a number of matters, specifically including the wrongs he has inflicted on the church of Beauvais. Gregory then launches into a melancholy reflection on the former glory of the French monarchy when Philip’s predecessors (antecessores), the most illustrious and famous kings, were pius et devotus in increasing and defending churches, and rigorously upheld iustitia. However, their successors subverted human and divine laws, and corrupt customs were introduced. The pope has a duty to speak plainly to the king about these matters. The Lord issued a warning through the words of the prophet who said ‘Cry out, do not cease, lift up your voice like a trumpet’ (Isa. 58: 1). The letter ends by exhorting the king to imitate his antecessores, pursue iustitia, and defend the churches. God might then grant him the crown of eternal glory.\(^5\) Gregory’s essential point is that the decline in the monarchy’s potestas since the days of Philip’s glorious predecessors is a result of the decline in kingly virtue, especially regarding the treatment of churches.

Philip did not heed the pope’s warnings.\(^5\) A long letter, dated 10 September 1074, to the French archbishops and bishops signalled a hardening of Gregory’s attitude to the king. It begins with a bleak portrayal of the prevailing state of affairs in Francia. The pope reiterates some of the allegations made in his letter to Philip, specifically the falling away of the French kingdom from its previous glory and power, the growth of evil customs, and the disregard for iustitia. The loss of regia potestas means that there is no law enforcement. This has led to warlike conditions in which abominable behaviour is now the norm. Such behaviour includes the violence and robbery suffered by peregrini (pilgrims) travelling to, or from, the apostolic see. The letter fiercely denounces Philip. Through the devil’s urging, he is the leader and cause of all this; he has become a tyrannus who has dishonoured his own life and has actively incited criminality. Not only has he earned the wrath of God through the devastation of churches, adulteries, wicked plundering, perjuries, and every kind of deceit – for which the pope has often reproved

\(^5\) Fliche, Philippe, p. 390.
him – but he is also behaving like a robber. He who should be upholding *leges* and *iustitia* has become his kingdom’s most active *depredator* (plunderer).

Having outlined the lamentable state of the French kingdom and the charges against the king, the letter turns to the responsibilities of the archbishops and bishops of France. It cites Jeremiah: ‘Cursed is the man who keepeth back his sword from blood’ (Jer. 48: 10). The pope is interpreting ‘sword’ as the word of preaching, as had Gregory the Great (590-604).\(^5^5\) He accuses the prelates of fostering the king’s wickedness by failing to oppose him, and hopes that their negligence does not indicate their indifference to Philip’s perdition. Gregory raises the subject of the bishops’ *fidelitas* to the king, that is, the oath of fealty that they swore at their investiture. He declares that delivering the king from the shipwreck of his soul – however unwilling he might be – will be a surer sign of their *fidelitas* than acquiescing in his perishing in a whirlpool of sin. They need not fear the king as long as they stand together. Even if they are in danger of death, they must defend the *libertas* of their priestly office. Gregory exhorts the bishops to assemble and confront the king with his own and his kingdom’s confusion and peril. He must abandon the ways of youth, hold fast to *iustitia*, and make a start on restoring the bruised *dignitas* and glory of his kingdom. Should he persist in his hardness of heart (cf. Exod. 9: 12) the prelates must wield the sword of apostolic punishment by putting the kingdom under interdict; specifically, they should separate themselves completely from the king’s service and fellowship and forbid the performance of any divine office in France. If these spiritual penalties prove ineffective, the pope will strive to withdraw the kingdom from Philip’s possession. Should the bishops remain lukewarm and thereby uphold the king through their *fidelitas*, the pope will deprive them of their offices. They must be zealous soldiers of Christ (*milites Christi*).\(^5^6\) Having depicted the French kingdom as a war zone, Gregory is using the language of war – *gladius, milites Christi* – to mobilize the French bishops to confront the king. He wants to force them to choose between their *fidelitas* to the king and their episcopal responsibilities, not the least of which is their duty of *oboedientia* to the apostolic see. The fact that Gregory was apparently entertaining the possibility of deposing Philip from his kingship prompts the question: did the pope believe at this stage that he had either the authority or the practical means

\(^{55}\) Gregory I, Reg. past., 3.25, col. 96D.

\(^{56}\) Reg. 2.5, pp. 130.2-134.1.
to achieve this? Gregory's martial language seems to reflect an increased militancy in his thinking. His use of this vocabulary came in the aftermath of his unsuccessful efforts in summer 1074 to mobilize a military campaign – in which he would participate – against Duke Robert Guiscard of Apulia and Calabria. Furthermore, in 1074 the idea of personally leading an armed expedition to the east to defend Byzantium against the Turks was on his mind.

Two months later, 13 November 1074, Gregory wrote in a similar vein to a senior French magnate, Count William VI of Poitou. Again, he denounces the king's iniquities. He cites Philip's destruction of churches, his greed-driven plundering of travelling Italian negotiatores (merchants), and his attacks on peregrini. Just as he had written to the bishops of Francia, so now he is summoning this lay magnate, 'one who sincerely loves St Peter and ourselves', to join with certain of the better bishops and the more noble individuals in France to impress upon the king the sinfulness of his deeds. If the king agrees to William's counsels Gregory is prepared to show him caritas (affection). If he nevertheless persists in accumulating the wrath of God and St Peter, he will be excommunicated, as will anyone who continues to obey him. The pope explains that until recently he has overlooked the king's iniquities because of his youth – Philip was aged twenty at the start of Gregory's papacy. The king's notoriety means that this tolerance has ended. His iniquities must be punished even if he possesses such great strength as the pagan emperors had exerted on the holy martyrs. Gregory evidently hoped that Count William – a brother of the Empress Agnes, the widow of Henry III of Germany and the pope's close confidante in Rome – would be a powerful lay ally in the confrontation with Philip. This letter has been interpreted as signalling a new determination by the papacy to confront the temporal powers over the issue of simony. It has been conjectured that it was Gregory's dispute with King Philip that planted in the pope's mind the possibility that the secular nobility might be mobilized in the service of St Peter against their own lay princes.

58 Reg. 2.18, pp. 150.22-151.34.
59 Carlyle and Carlyle, History 4, p. 175.
Soon afterwards, on 8 December 1074, the pope wrote to the most senior French prelate, Archbishop Manasses I of Rheims. The letter describes Philip as a ‘ravenous wolf, unjust tyrannus, enemy of God and the religion of holy Church’. Iustitia demands that the king correct his behaviour, in which case the pope will rejoice and thank God for the return of the lost sheep (cf. Luke 15: 6). Otherwise, Gregory will oppose him with all powers and means.\(^6^1\) The record of the Lenten synod of 1075 includes a warning that Philip will be deemed excommunicate if he fails to satisfy the papal envoys who are due to go to France.\(^6^2\) This shows that Philip had not been excommunicated and the legates had yet to set out on their journey. The synod’s renewal of the anathema against Duke Robert Guiscard of Apulia and Calabria demonstrated that Gregory was not necessarily bluffing when he threatened secular rulers with this sanction.\(^6^3\) Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the king was excommunicated or that the recipients of the three letters mentioned above responded to the pope. It has been surmised that Philip prudently acted to reduce the molestation of peregrini and negotiatores, that pope and king took each other’s measure, and that Gregory came to recognize that he had less influence in France than he had hoped.\(^6^4\) Whatever the truth of the matter, no such scathing criticism of Philip recurs in Gregory’s remaining extant letters.

Indeed, the French king rarely rates even a mention in the pope’s subsequent correspondence. A letter of April 1076 to Archbishop Richerius of Sens concurs with the king’s opposition to Rainerius, the negligent and venal bishop of Orléans.\(^6^5\) A letter from Gregory, dated 12 May 1077, informs his standing legate Bishop Hugh of Die that the king has repeatedly petitioned the pope to approve the appointment and ordination of a certain Abbot Robert to the episcopate of Chartres.\(^6^6\) Robert had been a simoniacal appointment to the bishopric.\(^6^7\) An item in the Register records that in Rome in April 1076 Robert swore an oath that he would resign the office upon the arrival of a papal legate in his see.\(^6^8\) Gregory wants his legate to investigate the matter of Chartres but

\(^{61}\) Reg. 2.32, pp.168.15-169.6.
\(^{62}\) Reg. 2.52a, p.196.20-23.
\(^{63}\) Reg. 2.52a, p. 197.2-3.
\(^{64}\) Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 337.
\(^{65}\) Reg. 3.16, p. 278.16-19.
\(^{66}\) Reg. 5.11, p. 364.6-11.
\(^{67}\) Cowdrey *Gregory VII*, p. 354.
\(^{68}\) Reg. 3.17a, pp. 282.13-283.4.
makes no comment on Philip's intervention. Crucially, the pope does not exclude the retention by Robert of the see as long as there is a valid canonical election; the king's views are apparently irrelevant. As time passed, Gregory's continual mildness, perhaps indifference, towards the king's behaviour in response to the complaints of Hugh of Die proved somewhat frustrating to his more rigorous legate. For example, in early summer 1079 a letter from Gregory to Hugh rejects the royal investiture of the bishop of Chalon-sur-Sâone, but neither names nor criticizes the king.

The second of Gregory's two surviving letters to Philip is dated 27 December 1080. It opens in conciliatory fashion, addressing the king as gloriosus rex Francorum. Having recalled Philip's frequent messages to Gregory indicating his desire for the 'gratia (favour) of Saint Peter and the amicitia of ourselves', it proceeds to lecture the king on his responsibilities and past transgressions. He must now show himself more diligens et devotus in matters of the Church as befits a rex Christianus. The pope again gently attributes Philip's past negligence to his youth. Now is the time for the king to love iustitia, preserve misericordia (mercy, compassion), defend churches, protect orphans and widows, despise pravorum consilia, and cease to associate with excommunicates. In particular, he must withdraw his amicitia from Manasses, the recently deposed archbishop of Rheims, and facilitate the canonical election of his replacement. Finally, the letter informs the king that both his kingdom and his soul are in the hands of St Peter and reminds him of the Petrine sanction of binding and loosing (Matt. 16: 19).

The letter to the king highlights Philip's absence from the previous papal correspondence concerning Manasses. The conflict between the archbishop and the papal legates, particularly Hugh of Die, was protracted. Gregory fluctuated between supporting Hugh of Die and reining him in before finally coming down against Manasses. A short account of the pope's attitude to Manasses, as revealed in his correspondence, is appended to this study. The king's apparent failure to defend Manasses seems surprising and significant. As the Capetian crowning place, Rheims was of particular importance to Philip. The archbishop was one of his most important ecclesiastical

70 RHGF 14, 613-16, nos. 79-80; 616B, no.80.
72 Reg. 8.20, p. 542.11-543.22.
73 See Appendix B 'Gregory and Manasses of Rheims', pp. 331f.
vassals. The relations between Manasses and the king are obscure, but there is no evidence of any strain. It might be conjectured that Manasses' propensity to make enemies, together with the persistent pursuit of him by Hugh of Die – with Gregory's eventual backing – persuaded the king that his interests would not be served by backing the archbishop. Although Philip habitually resisted papal pressure, he may have seen little advantage in further aggravating his relations with Gregory by aligning himself with a prelate whose conflict with the pope and his legate was increasingly intractable.

The December 1080 letter to the king seems to have been Gregory's last attempt to persuade Philip to bring his behaviour into line with his vision of Christian kingship. It has been suggested that both the timing and relative mildness of the letter were linked to his continuing conflict with Henry IV, the recent death of the German anti-king Rudolf, and the preoccupation of Duke Robert Guiscard of Apulia and Calabria, the papacy's most obvious potential military ally against the German king, with thoughts of an expedition against Constantinople. Even if Gregory envisaged some sort of military alliance with the rex Francorum, he can have had few illusions about Philip. A few months later he countermanded the suspensions that his legates had imposed on the majority of the French bishops for their failure to attend a Church council because he had been informed that their absence resulted from metus regis Francorum.

To conclude, simony was rife in the regnum Francorum, and the king was its most prominent practitioner. Furthermore, the early years of Gregory's pontificate coincided with an outbreak in France of attacks on negotiatores and peregrini ad apostolorum limina. The king was implicated in these; he who should have been acting as protector was the most obvious depredator. Some of the pope's letters use harsh language to convey his anger at Philip's iniquities. In the early years of his pontificate, he tried to change the king's behaviour through personal correspondence and by mobilising prelates and lay magnates as intermediaries. The king was exorted to bring his life and his treatment of the churches into line with Gregory's ideal rex Christianus, and warned that failure to do so would endanger his salus. Philip's virtuous royal predecessors were

74 Williams, 'Manasses', p. 823, n. 102.
75 Fliche, Philippe, p. 422.
76 See above p. 31.
invoked as models. The French kingship’s loss of *potestas* and the consequent widespread lawlessness were cited as evidence of Philip’s wickedness. The sword of excommunication was brandished in his direction. It all seems to have been of no avail. Philip was well versed in the art of making conciliatory statements that were followed by little or no action. In his dealings with the French churches, Gregory strove to ensure that episcopal elections were canonically correct and excluded simoniacal payments. However, simony was a means of government for Philip, and he persisted with it. Inevitably, the pope’s determination to enforce canonical discipline within the French Church collided with Philip’s resolve to preserve his rights and protect the bishops who had purchased their offices from him. The result was something of a standoff. It has been said that during the reign of Gregory’s predecessor, Alexander II and Philip each alternated between firmness and conciliation in their conflicts over episcopal appointments. A similar pattern seems to have continued during Gregory’s pontificate. Only once, towards the end of 1074, did a papal confrontation with Philip seem likely. It appears that one or both sides backed away. In practice, the *seigneurs* imitated their king in resisting the snatching away of their bishoprics with the result that simony was nearly as prevalent in France during Gregory’s reign as under Alexander. The king’s restricted authority, his intransigence, and the pope’s increasing reliance on legates to represent him in France all help to explain the infrequency of Gregory’s correspondence with the king. Between Philip’s intractability on the one hand, and Gregory’s deteriorating relationship with Henry IV on the other, the pope may have concluded that his considerable energies could be more profitably applied elsewhere than on attempts to amend the behaviour of the *rex Francorum*.

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78 Ibid., p. 421.
2.4 Henry IV, rex Teutonicorum, rex Italiae

Gregory VII's long struggle with King Henry IV of Germany (1056-1106) dominates the histories of his pontificate.¹ Five letters from Gregory to Henry have survived. More than sixty other surviving documents – letters and synodal records – mention the king. The Register also includes both a copy of Henry's penitent letter to the pope of late summer 1073 and a record of Henry's oath at Canossa in January 1077.² This chapter examines these texts for evidence of the development of Gregory's ideas about kingship and the correct relationship between regnum and sacerdotium. Six documents are particularly instructive, since they indicate Gregory's attitude to the German king at critical stages in his pontificate. The first is his so-called 'ultimatum letter' to Henry of December 1075.³ Two are the records of the Lenten synods of 1076 and 1080.⁴ The fourth is the pope's long letter in summer 1076 to the German faithful, which explains the recent excommunication of their king.⁵ The last two are Gregory's polemical letters of 1076 and 1081 to Bishop Hermann of Metz (1073-90), which are scrutinized separately.⁶ These and other writings provide considerable insights into the changes in the relationship of the apostolic see and the imperial court during those years.

Hildebrand had long been a figure of importance at the papal court. Following the death in 1061 of Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, he became the key influence next to the pope himself. Gregory VII was the first pope since 1046 not to have held a high spiritual office in the Salian imperial church. Nevertheless, the archdeacon was aware of – and involved in – all significant papal contacts with the German court during Henry IV's youth. The future pope's solicitude for Henry began during the king's early childhood. After Henry III died in 1056, Pope Victor II travelled to Germany and organized the

¹ For the reign of Henry IV, see Meyer von Knonau, Jahrbücher; I.S. Robinson, Henry IV of Germany 1056-1106 (Cambridge, 1999).
² Penitent letter (supplex epistola): Reg. 1.29a, pp. 48.2-50.11; see below pp. 60ff.
³ Henry's oath: Reg. 4.12a, pp. 314.22-315.17; see below pp. 81f.
⁴ Reg. 3.10.
⁵ Reg. 3.10a, Reg. 7.14a(7).
⁷ See below pp. 275ff.
transfer of the royal crown to Henry, the six-year-old son of the deceased emperor. 7 A letter dated 1 September 1073, from Gregory to Duke Rudolf of Swabia (1057-79), Henry IV's brother-in-law, gives two reasons for the pope’s personal commitment to the welfare of the king. First, it emphasizes his respect for Henry’s late father Henry III, who had treated him with especial honour at the German court. Second, it recalls his own commendation of Henry III’s young son to the Roman Church through Victor II. 8 The later discussion of Gregory’s ideas of papal authority will consider his exaggeration of Victor’s role in 1056. 9 In July 1076, he recalled the period after Henry’s maturity in 1065 when, as deacon, his brotherly affection for the young king and his love for Henry’s parents, Henry III and Empress Agnes, prompted him to issue warnings to him. 10 In September 1076, he invoked the ‘godly and famous memory’ of Henry III and Agnes, with whom no contemporary was comparable for the government of the empire. 11

A regency exercised power for nine years during Henry IV’s minority. 12 During this time, the court’s authority declined as lay and episcopal magnates asserted themselves. 13 The child-king’s mother, Empress Agnes, acted as regent until March 1062. In the course of these years, certain developments eroded the close alliance between the apostolic see and the German court. The Papal Election Decree of 1059, enacted during the pontificate of Nicholas II (1059-61), was designed to reduce the influence of the Roman aristocrats. By confining the initial electorate to the cardinal-bishops it implicitly reduced the role of the German court although the rex Teutonicorum retained a veto. 14 According to Cowdrey (1998), there is no evidence that Hildebrand was involved in the composition of the 1059 Decree or that he subsequently expressed any

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7 Chronica monsterii Casinensis, ed. H. Hoffmann, MGH SS 34 (1980), 2.91, p. 345. Although this was later interpreted by some adherents of the reform papacy as an important extension of papal authority, some modern scholars have surmised that Victor was only exercising his authority as bishop, prince, and former adviser to the deceased emperor: see W. Berges, ‘Gregor VII. und das deutsche Designationsrecht’, SG 2 (1947), pp. 190-202; W. Goez, ‘Gebhard I., Bischof von Eichstätt, als Papst Viktor II’, Frankische Lebensbilder 9 (1980), pp. 11-21. Also Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 26-7.

8 Reg. 1.19, pp. 31.35-32.8. For a discussion of Hildebrand’s possible role in Henry’s accession to the throne, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 34-5.

9 See below p.219.

10 Reg. 4.1, p. 290.16-19.

11 Reg. 4.3, p. 298.22-25.

12 For Henry’s minority, see Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 19-62.

13 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 82.

14 Ullmann, Growth, pp. 322-5.
commitment to its provisions. At Melfi in the same year, Pope Nicholas received the fealty of Duke Robert Guiscard of Apulia and Calabria, territories over which the German kings claimed suzerainty. Archdeacon Hildebrand was present at Melfi. It may be that the German court regarded both this alliance and the Papal Election Decree as anti-imperial measures because, according to Cardinal Peter Damian, a German synod in 1061 annulled the legislation of Pope Nicholas.

Most damaging was the so-called ‘schism of Cadalus’. The death of Nicholas II in July 1061 was followed, after an imprudent delay, by the reform Cardinals’ decision in Rome to elect Bishop Anselm I of Lucca as Pope Alexander II. The procedure conformed to the 1059 Election Decree but was not sanctioned by the German imperial court. Empress Agnes responded by organizing an assembly of anti-reform bishops and notables, which elected Bishop Cadalus of Parma as Pope ‘Honorius II’. The regency’s recognition of the anti-pope deepened and prolonged the papal schism, and was one of the issues that provoked disaffection with the royal court among a number of German princes. In 1062, Archbishop Anno of Cologne (1056-75) became the principal influence. He endeavoured to undo the German court’s support for Cadalus and to restore relations with the reform papacy. Following the virtual collapse in early 1064 of Cadalus’s efforts to oust Alexander, the synod of Mantua in May 1064 excommunicated the anti-pope and recognized Alexander. The rejection of the German court’s candidate damaged its prestige. Cadalus apart, the most obvious potential threat to the reformers remained the Roman aristocracy, whose control of the papacy Henry III had extinguished in 1046. During the dangerous years of the Cadalan schism, the papacy sought new protectors. Of these, the rulers of Tuscany, Duke Godfrey III ‘the Bearded’ and his wife Countess Beatrice, proved to be rather more reliable than the southern Italian Normans, Robert Guiscard and Richard of Capua.

15 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 44-5.
17 See below p. 127.
19 For Cadalan Schism, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 49-53.
21 Re Normans see below pp. 127ff.; also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp 52-3.
Upon coming of age at Eastertide 1065, Henry IV accepted a papal invitation to visit Rome where he would receive the imperial crown from Alexander. The pope hoped that this would consolidate the imperial court’s support for himself and bolster his defences against the lingering ambitions of Cadalus. The royal journey was planned for May but was deferred, almost certainly because of the competition for influence at the German court between Anno and Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen (1043-72). Although the king did not make the journey, the fact that it was envisaged can only have reinforced Henry’s sense of entitlement to the imperial crown previously held by his father.

The circumstances prompted Peter Damian to despatch a letter (#120) to the king at some point in 1065-6. It reports the ‘ugly rumour’ (infamia) that some of the administrators at Henry’s court are overjoyed at the persecution of the Roman Church. The letter pleads with Henry to ‘disregard the advice of wicked counsellors as you would turn a deaf ear to the poisonous hissing of snakes’. This crucial text presents an idealised image of the necessary close relationship and mutual dependence of imperium and sacerdotium. It seems to have influenced certain key epistolog from both Gregory and Henry.

1069 and 1070-1 witnessed successive rebellions by Saxon princes. The eruption of a third, greater conflict was imminent when Hildebrand was raised to the papacy in the spring of 1073. The young king’s problems in Saxony were to have a major impact on his dealings with the new pope. Even more damaging to Henry’s relations with the apostolic see during Alexander’s final years was his role in the conflict over the archiepiscopal succession in Milan. According to the customary selection procedure, the clergy and people of the Ambrosian see would request the Italian king, now Henry IV, to

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22 See Meyer von Knonau, Jahrbücher 1, pp. 425-8; Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 54-5.
23 Peter Damiani, Briefe 3, Ep. 120, p. 386.10-11.
24 Ibid., p. 388.24-5.
25 Ibid., p. 389.7-22.
26 For Reg. 1.19 from Gregory to Rudolf of Swabia, see below pp. 58, 99. For Henry’s supplex epistola to the pope (Reg. 1.21a), see below p. 60.
27 Sources for the Saxon rising: Lampert of Hersfeld, Annales, in Lamperti monachi Hersfeldensis Opera, MGH SRG 38 (1894), 3-304; Bruno of Merseburg, Saxonicum bellum: Brunos Buch vom Sachsenkrieg, MGH Deutsches Mittelalter 2 (1937), pp. 28-84, 191-405; Carmen de bello Saxonico, ed. O. Holder-Egge, Quellen HIV, pp. 20-7, 143-89. For a modern account of Henry’s conflicts with Saxony, see Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 63-105.
appoint the new archbishop. However, the ‘Pataria’, a Milanese faction comprising knights, lower clergy, and citizenry, which was intent on reforming the higher clergy in their city, promoted the free canonical election of the archbishop by clergy and people. Archdeacon Hildebrand supported their campaign, insisting that the candidate so chosen must receive Rome’s consent. The Lenten synod of 1072 recognized the reformers’ nominee Atto and excommunicated Henry’s candidate Godfrey, a suspected simoniac. Nevertheless, upon Henry’s instructions Godfrey was consecrated in Milan early in 1073. Bonizo records that Pope Alexander excommunicated five of Henry’s counsellors at the 1073 Lenten synod, shortly before his own death. Historians have usually regarded Alexander’s action as a response to Godfrey’s installation, but an alternative view suggests that the excommunications represented efforts by the reform papacy to counter the widespread practice of simony by Henry and his circle. Given Alexander’s mortal illness, we can assume that Hildebrand played a prominent role in the synod’s determinations. A subsequent letter, dated 15 August 1076, from the former archdeacon – now Pope Gregory VII – stated that symoniaca haeresis had been the reason for the excommunication of Henry’s courtiers. Archdeacon Hildebrand’s frequent admonishment of Henry by letter and messenger must have contributed to the substantial opposition within the empire to his elevation to the papacy. Lampert of Hersfeld records the German episcopate’s fear that Hildebrand’s ‘ardent temperament and passionate faith in God’ would embarrass them. Nevertheless, the day after Alexander’s death on 21 April 1073 saw Hildebrand’s election by popular acclaim, a ‘procedure’ that was utterly irreconcilable with the Papal Election Decree of 1059. At the start of Gregory VII’s reign, therefore, there was an existing dispute between the papacy and the German king upon an issue involving the relationship between regnum and sacerdotium. Although Henry himself had not been excommunicated, his continuing association with these excommunicate individuals meant that the apostolic see refused any direct contact with him.

28 Bonizo, 1, p. 600; 7, pp. 601, 5.
30 Reg. 4.2, p. 293.34.
32 Lampert, Annales 1073, p. 145.
At the time of Gregory’s election, the king was only twenty-two years of age, but had been exercising power in his own right for eight years. It has been observed that Gregory VII and Henry IV had in common a deep piety and a shared reverence for the Virgin Mary and St Peter. The Virgin Mary had been the patron saint of the Salian dynasty since the election of Conrad II in 1024. Nevertheless, in 1073 Henry IV’s personal reputation was low, both in Germany and at the papal court. The shelving of his journey to Rome in 1065 to defend Alexander II against Cadalus was seen as a failure in his duty to protect the pope. The fact that the 1068 visit of a distinguished royal legation to Italy included a meeting with Cadalus would hardly have lessened papal distrust of the German court. Furthermore, the king’s ecclesiastical dealings allowed opponents to paint him as a simoniac. Another damaging episode was Henry IV’s attempt in 1069 to divorce Queen Bertha. According to the chronicle of Lampert of Hersfeld, Pope Alexander despatched the eminent reformer, Peter Damian, cardinal bishop of Ostia, to adjudicate on the issue. The legate confirmed the pope’s opposition to the divorce, and his willingness to invoke canon law to prevent it. A divorce would amount to such a betrayal of the Christian faith that the king could never be consecrated emperor by the pope’s hands. The papal verdict, combined with pressure from the German princes, persuaded Henry to abandon his divorce plans. The issue further impaired Henry’s reputation. Pro-Saxon polemicists subsequently circulated allegations of the king’s shameless sexual misconduct. Cowdrey (1998) surmised that the combination of Henry’s domestic politics and private life meant that he was unable to establish an image of righteous kingship that ecclesiastical office demanded and that his father had bequeathed.

34 See Vogel, Nach Canossa, p. 263.
35 For Conrad II and Henry III and the Virgin Mary, see Weinfurter, Salian Century, pp. 35, 38-9, 86-7. For Henry IV and the Virgin Mary, see pp. 156, 158 in the same work.
37 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 87-8.
38 Lampert, Annales, 1069, pp. 115, 118-20; 1073, pp. 151-2, 162.
39 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 86.
The following discussion of the interaction between Pope Gregory and King Henry follows Tellenbach's (1988) division of Gregory's twelve-year pontificate into four distinct phases.\(^{40}\)

**Phase 1: April 1073 to December 1075**

The first four documents in the Register are letters dated 23-28 April 1073. They show that the new pope notified eight named individuals of his election. Three were secular rulers, namely Prince Gisulf of Salerno, Countess Beatrice of Tuscany, and King Sweyn Estrithson II of Denmark. Scholars have long pondered over Gregory’s apparent failure to inform the king of Germany. The waters are further muddied by a claim in the earliest surviving biography of Gregory, the *Liber ad amicum* of the pro-Gregorian polemicist Bonizo of Sutri. Bonizo wrote that not only did the newly-elected pope inform Henry of his election, but that he considered it necessary to do so and even sought the king’s consent to his election (in the hope that it would not be forthcoming).\(^{41}\) The main reason for believing that Gregory did not write to Henry at that time relates to the recent excommunication by Gregory’s predecessor Alexander II of five of the king’s counsellors.\(^{42}\) Gregory, aware that Henry had not ceased to communicate with them, could not have made contact with somebody who was maintaining contact with excommunicates until they repented and were reconciled with the apostolic see.\(^{43}\) More than a year later, a letter dated 15 June 1074 from the pope to Henry’s mother the Empress Agnes states plainly that fear of divine vengeance prohibited him from meeting her son prior to his recent restoration to the communion of the Church.\(^{44}\) It has been conjectured that Bonizo, writing shortly after the pope’s death in May 1085, modelled his fabricated account of Gregory VII’s election on that of the reluctant Pope Gregory I, who had written to the Byzantine emperor Maurice, seeking to be freed from the burden of papal office.\(^{45}\) It has been further hypothesized that Bonizo’s purpose was, in part, to counter recent accusations by royal supporters that insatiable ambition had

\(^{40}\) Tellenbach, *Church in Western Europe*, pp. 230-52.

\(^{41}\) Bonizo, 7, p. 601.14-19.

\(^{42}\) See above p. 54.


\(^{44}\) Reg. 1.85, p. 121.24-7. See below p. 63.

\(^{45}\) John the Deacon, *Sancti Gregorii magni vita*, *MPL* 75, col. 79C.
driven Hildebrand to usurp the papacy by violence.\textsuperscript{46} Schneider (1972) surmised that Gregory's contemporaries – certainly the correspondents discussed below – understood the excommunication of the five advisers at the 1073 Lenten synod to have been the work of Archdeacon Hildebrand rather than the declining Pope Alexander.\textsuperscript{47}

Schneider examined Gregory VII's early correspondence with a view to determining his views on the German king at the start of his pontificate. Five of Gregory's letters address the conditions under which Henry might be restored to communion with the Church, and relations between the papal and German courts normalized. Three of these epistolae make it clear that Gregory is responding to questions from his correspondent about the king.\textsuperscript{48} A letter, dated 6 May 1073, to Duke Godfrey IV 'the Hunchback' of Lower Lotharingia (1069-76) sets out the new pope's attitude to Henry. It says that no one could desire the king's wellbeing more than he. Accordingly, he intends to despatch messengers to Henry to convey to him his fatherly love and to admonish him about certain matters pertaining to the advancement of the Church (profectum ecclesiae) and the honour of his royal dignity. In other words, they will discuss how to preserve the progress of ecclesiastical reform while maintaining the king's authority. If the king heeds his words and holds fast to iustitia the pope will rejoice for his salvation. If, however, he responds with hatred, then Gregory will not withhold his sword from blood (cf. Jer. 48: 1). The pope invariably imitated beatus Gregorius by deploying St Jerome's words to mean that he would preach against Henry.\textsuperscript{49} Gregory clearly harboured suspicions about the king's intentions. The letter concludes that it is his God-given duty to uphold the God's law, and invokes St Paul's apostolic message that if one sets out to please men then one could not be the servant of God (cf. Gal. 1: 10).

This warning, delivered via Henry's most steadfast ducal ally, has something of the nature of an early shot across the king's bow by the new pope. It certainly illustrates the prevailing tension between the papal and German courts. In his letter of 24 June 1073 to Godfrey's stepmother/mother-in-law Beatrice and his wife Matilda, the margravines of

\textsuperscript{46} I.S. Robinson, 'Introduction', in Robinson, Papal reform, pp. 61-2.
\textsuperscript{47} Schneider, Propheticus Sacerdotium, p. 42. Lampert of Hersfeld identified three of the excommunicated advisers as Udalric of Godesheim, Count Eberhard 'the Bearded, and Hartmann: Lampert, Annales 1076, pp. 282-3.
\textsuperscript{49} Reg. 1.9, pp. 14.34-15.11; Gregory I, Reg. past., 3.25, col. 96D. See above p. 44.
Tuscany, Gregory assumes that they have read his letter to the duke and restates his desire that the king be recalled to the love of his mother, the Roman Church. He hopes that the king will so improve his manner of life that he will become fit to receive the imperial office, implying that Henry is not currently worthy of the imperium.  

A week later, a letter from the pope dated 1 July 1073 informs the 'faithful of Lombardy' (the supporters of the Pataria) of the irrevocability of the condemnation of ‘this heretic Godfrey’ – the archbishop of Milan invested by Henry IV – and instructs them to rally to Godfrey’s opponents. The pope was not for turning on this issue.

On the other hand, Gregory was not actively seeking to exacerbate tensions. Schneider reached this conclusion after he examined these two letters and certain other documents from the summer of 1073. On 1 September 1073, Gregory wrote to Duke Rudolf of Swabia in response to a (lost) letter that had congratulated him on his accession. The pope’s letter acknowledges Rudolf’s evident devotion to the honour of sancta Romana ecclesia. Accordingly, the pope invites him to come to Rome to join himself, Empress Agnes, and others in considering how to promote the concordia sacerdotii et imperii that is the basis both of the honourable rule of the order of the empire, and the strengthening of the vigour of holy Church. Gregory stresses that he bears Henry IV no ill will ‘because we elected him as king, because his father, the Emperor Henry of praiseworthy memory, treated us with especial honour amongst all the Italians at his court, and because when he was dying he himself commended his son to the Roman church through Pope Victor of venerable memory’. The first and third of these purported justifications for his good will towards Henry IV will be discussed later. The letter’s emphasis on the need for concordia between the spiritual and temporal powers appears to be influenced by Peter Damian’s letter (#120) to Henry IV in 1065/6.

It seems that copies of it were available to the notaries in both the papal and imperial chanceries. On the same date Gregory despatched a letter to Bishop Rainald of Como (1061/2-84), inviting him to the proposed meeting. He reminds this trusted counsellor of

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50 Reg. 1.11, p. 19.5-17.  
51 Reg. 1.15, pp. 23.19-25.2.  
52 Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, p. 42.  
54 See below pp. 218f.  
55 Peter Damiani, Briefe 3, Ep. 120, p. 389.7-22. See above p. 53.
Empress Agnes of his previously expressed wish that Henry would be rich in possessions, and holy in religion. With God's permission, he will journey to Rome to receive the imperial crown. Gregory says he has no reason to believe that Henry does not aspire to love religion, gather good men around him, and defend the churches. He must, however, shun like poison the counsels of wicked men and, 'as has now been reported to us', trust in those of good men. It seems that the pope had been given to understand that the king had dismissed the five excommunicated advisers. A third papal letter, also dated 1 September 1073, addresses Anselm II, bishop-elect of Lucca. Having instructed Anselm that he must not receive investiture from the king until the latter has made satisfaction to God for having communicated with excommunicates, the pope names some of the eminent individuals – Empress Agnes, the Tuscan margravines, Duke Rudolf of Swabia – who are trying to bring about Henry's reconciliation with the Church. At this stage, Gregory was apparently not objecting to lay investiture of bishops per se, but to communication with a king who remained in contact with excommunicates. His benign feelings for Henry are revealed in a letter, dated 24 September 1073, to Prince Bruno of Verona, which speaks of the unfeigned love with which he cherishes the king and his desire to watch over his honour. Finally, Prince Richard of Capua's oath of vassalage to Pope Gregory, which acknowledges the rights of King Henry, survives as a Register entry dated 14 September 1073. In brief, it is clear that during the early months of his pontificate Gregory was exploring the possibility of a mediated rapprochement with the king that did not involve any compromise by himself on the issue of the excommunicate counsellors. Of significance also is that within the papal court the feasibility of Henry receiving the imperial crown was apparently under discussion. There can be little doubt that Gregory was seeking a harmonious relationship with Henry, that he was contemplating an alliance with the king 'as a project for the future'.

56 G.B. Borino emphasized the importance of Gregory's preparedness for the imperial coronation at this early stage of his pontificate: see Borino, 'Perché', pp. 313-43.
57 Reg. 1.20, pp. 33.24-34.18.
58 Reg. 1.21, pp. 34.31-35.16.
59 For Gregory's opposition to lay investiture, see below pp. 245ff. See also Schieffer, Investiturverbots.
60 Reg. 1.24, p. 41.18-22.
61 Reg. 1.21a, pp. 35.31-36.25. See J. Deér, Papsttum und Normannen: Untersuchungen zu ihren lehnsrechtlichen und kirchenpolitischen Beziehungen (Cologne-Vienna, 1972), pp. 8, 37, n. 158, 90. Also below p. 260.
62 Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, p. 41.
In summer 1073, Henry’s attention was again focused on the duchy of Saxony. The first two Saxon rebellions had arisen from the grievances of individual princes. The third, a two-year struggle that started in July 1073, was a much more formidable revolt, arising at a time when the king was planning an expedition against the Poles. It developed into a political campaign against the royal government by the east Saxon and Thuringian nobility. The rebels were willing to exploit the problems dividing king and papacy. Lampert of Hersfeld recorded their demands for the expulsion of evil counsellors from the royal court and their warnings of the danger of contact with ‘a man who had betrayed the Christian faith by crimes worthy of death’. The same chronicler also reported that when Henry sought assistance from the powerful group of princes who had manifested their support for reform at the assembly of Worms in 1072, they advised him to be reconciled with the pope. Feeling threatened by the prospect of harmony between the Saxon rebels and the papal court, the king set out to mend his fences with Gregory. At this time, he was willing to tolerate far more papal interference in the German church than would later be the case.

Henry’s penitent letter (supplex epistola) of August/September 1073 to the pope is one of only two incoming letters inserted into Gregory’s Register. The salutatio identifies the writer as ‘Henry by the grace of God king of the Romans’ (Heinricus Romanorum Dei gratia rex). The letter acknowledges that the pope is ‘distinguished by heaven with the apostolic dignity’ (apostolica dignitate caelitus insignito), and offers Gregory his famulatus fidelissimus. One can translate this as ‘faithful service’ or ‘faithful servitude’, although it has also been rendered as ‘due subservience’. The epistola presents Henry’s concept of the correct relationship between regnum and sacerdotium: joined in Christ, they should be in perfect agreement, cleaving together in perfect charity and peace for the sake of Christian unity and the good order of the Church. This idealistic image of the necessary close relationship between imperium and sacerdotium is so resonant of Peter Damian’s letter (#120) to the king in 1065-6 that it suggests that the

63 For Saxon Rising 1073-5, see Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 90-102.
64 Lampert, Annales 1073, pp. 151-2.
66 The other is Reg. 9.29a from Count Bertrand of Provence, requesting a new privilege for the abbey of Montmajour.
67 For the significance of the title Rex Romanorum, see below pp. 215ff.
royal notary had access to it.® Gregory would hardly have disagreed with these aspirations; only two weeks earlier, his letter to Rudolf of Swabia had expressed similar views.® The king's letter repeats the claim that he was appointed to the kingship by God, before admitting his failure to display due justice and honour (legitimum ius et honorem) to the sacerdotium in every respect. He is now seeking absolution by confessing his sins to a most gracious father. 'Alas', writes Henry, he is 'guilty and wretched'. He blames this on his own youthfulness, the licence (libertas) of great power, and – above all – the deceptions of certain counsellors. Having scapegoated his five advisers, Henry resumes his somewhat hyperbolic declaration of contrition. He confesses that he has sinned against heaven (cf. Luke 15: 18, the parable of the prodigal son); he has not only usurped ecclesiastical properties, but has sold the churches to unworthy men embittered with the gall of simony. He has failed in his duty to defend those churches. He specifically identifies the church of Milan as having fallen into error through his fault. Henry is seeking the pope's authority, counsel, and assistance to reform the churches, and is ready to obey him zealously in every respect. He humbly entreats Gregory to respond, and says that he will be sending another letter to him. It is noteworthy that this impressive letter of penitence includes three assertions that Henry obtained his throne from God." The second letter (lost) duly arrived and was subsequently characterized by Gregory as 'suppliant and full of all humility'.® The pope was relieved and delighted. Writing to the Milanese Patarene leader Erlembald on 27 September 1073, he describes Henry's first letter as 'full of sweetness and obedience', and unprecedented in the history of relations between the German king and the papacy. Gregory states that some of the king's leading counsellors have assured the pope that Henry will be obedient to him in the matter of the Milanese Church. The pope's undertaking to let Erlembald know quickly whether the proposed concord between Henry and himself materializes suggests that he was still keeping his options open.® Soon afterwards, another letter to Erlembald, dated 9 October, shows that he was now more confident that mediation

69 See above p. 53.
72 Epp. Vag. 14, pp. 32-41. For the hypothesis that Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz recommended the sending of the supplex epistola, was perhaps even one of its authors, see Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, pp. 66-8.
73 Reg. 1.25, p. 42.10-33.
would bring the king round to the pope's line on ecclesiastical matters in general and the Milanese archiepiscopal succession in particular.  

On 20 December 1073, Gregory wrote to the clerical and lay leaders of the Saxon rebels. He states that his letter arises from the duty imposed on him by his stewardship of the Church and its flock. His intervention in the Saxon dispute is necessitated by the homicides, arson, plundering of churches, and wretched devastation caused by the discord between the princes and their 'own lord', King Henry. He is asking both the king and the Saxon princes to suspend hostilities pending the arrival of papal envoys. They, with the favour and assistance of apostolic authority, will investigate the causes of the conflict and adjudicate on the issues with a view to securing a lasting settlement and the restoration of *iustitia*.

A.J. Carlyle (1921) noted that in this first important example of Gregory's intervention between Henry and his subjects, he assumes a position of authority as well as of mediation; the tone is courteous but also authoritative. In effect, Henry IV's *supplex epistola* achieved its purpose, namely to avert a rapprochement between the rebels and the pope. Cowdrey (1998) concluded that the letter demonstrates Gregory's wish to promote three aims: the Saxons' obedience to Henry, the king's obedience to the pope, and the acceptance of the apostolic see as supreme arbiter.

Two developments in the spring of 1074 strengthened Henry's position. Under the terms of a peace agreement with the Saxon rebels, dated 2 February, the king would dismantle some of the royal castles in eastern Saxony whose construction had contributed to the outbreak of hostilities. The slowness with which their demolition proceeded prompted the Saxon peasantry (*vulgus*) to destroy the key royal castle of Harzburg, desecrate the church, and violate the graves of Henry's firstborn son and younger brother. This was regarded as a sacrilege, since royal graves were perceived as possessing some of the sacramental characteristics of the living king. The act engendered

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74 Reg. 1.26, p. 43.28-36.  
76 Carlyle and Carlyle, *History* 4, p. 178.  
much sympathy for the king throughout Germany and, according to Lampert and Bruno, led the Saxon leaders to dissociate themselves from the vandalism. Second, shortly after Easter Henry met with a papal legation at Nuremberg. Henry’s mother, the Empress Agnes, accompanied the two legates, the cardinal-bishops of Ostia and Palestrina. Their main task was to restore the king to communion, and thereby re-establish concordia between him and the papacy. Thanks largely to his mother’s mediation, the king did penance and his excommunication was lifted. The legation’s second aim was to reconcile the German episcopate with the pope’s pursuit of church reforms but their efforts were unsuccessful, even counter-productive. Following these events, Henry gradually consolidated his authority in Germany during 1074 so that by the end of the year he was in a significantly stronger position than he had been when he despatched his supplex epistola to the pope in the late summer of 1073. This seems to be reflected in his treatment of certain issues. In particular, Henry seems to have paid little more than lip service to the notion of active cooperation with the apostolic see in resolving the Milan question on Rome’s terms.

The Register is silent on the subject of Henry until two letters from the pope to the king, both dated 7 December 1074. The salutationes refer to him as Heinricus rex and Heinricus gloriosus rex respectively, ignoring Henry’s claim in his supplex epistola of August/September 1073 that he was rex Romanorum Dei gratia. Nonetheless, the letters show that Henry was now high in Gregory’s esteem, probably in large measure because of the Nuremberg meeting. The first letter addresses him as fili karissime (‘dearest son’), fili excellentissime (‘most excellent son’), and sublimitatis tuae dignatio (‘your sublime excellency’), terms virtually identical to those Gregory often applied to William the Conqueror, his usual model of Christian kingship. The letter warns the king to take care with his choice of counsellors and presses him to help resolve the Milan situation according to earlier synodal judgements. It says that the Empress Agnes has

80 Lampert, Annales, 1074, pp. 183-4; Bruno, Saxonicum bellum, pp. 33-4.
81 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 98.
82 Ibid., pp. 112-3.
83 Tellenbach, Church in Western Europe, p. 232.
84 For relations between Gregory and Henry 1074-5, see C. Erdmann, Studien zum Briefliteratur Deutschlands in elften Jahrhundert, MGH Schriften 1 (Stuttgart, 1938), esp. pp. 225-81.
85 Reg. 2.30, p. 163.15; Reg. 2.31, p. 165.20. For Rex Romanorum, see pp. 186ff.
86 See above p. 22.
informed him that her son firmly intends to extirpate *symoniaca haeresis* from his kingdom, and to address the problem of clerical fornication. This gladdens the pope exceedingly. The *epistola* ends by requesting Henry to exercise his *regia potestas* to compel Archbishop Siegfried I of Mainz (1060-84), or his envoys, to attend the next Lenten synod. It makes the same request regarding three bishops, namely Hermann of Bamberg (1065-75), Werner II of Strassburg (1065-77), and Henry of Speyer (1067-85), whose entries into office and manners of life were under particular scrutiny in Rome. This letter prompted Erdmann (1938) to conjecture that an ‘alliance of curia and king against the episcopate’ emerged in the immediate aftermath of the papal legation of 1074.

Gregory’s efforts to enlist the king’s aid in eliminating simony, correcting the morals of the clergy, and disciplining senior prelates, demonstrate his new confidence in Henry. It is indicated even more dramatically in the second letter, personally dictated by him, in which the pope informs the king that if his own aspiration to lead a military force to relieve the beleaguered Christians of Byzantium comes to fruition he wants Henry to come to Rome to protect the Church in his absence. In Gregory’s words, ‘If by God’s favour I shall go thither, I am leaving to you, after God, the Roman church so that you may both guard her as a holy mother and defend her to her honour.’

The Register includes a brief record of some of Gregory’s decisions at the Lenten synod of 24-28 February 1075. Five members of the German king’s household would be deemed excommunicate unless they came to Rome by 1 June and made satisfaction. Although the record does not name these individuals, they were presumably the advisers excommunicated by Alexander II two years before. The king’s apparent continuing failure to exclude them from his company must have provoked unease within

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88 Reg. 2.30, pp. 163.15-165.7.
90 Reg. 2.31, pp. 165.20-168.4. See Cowdrey, ‘Pope Gregory VII’s “crusading” plans’.
91 Reg. 2.31, p. 167.15-19: ‘si hoc Deus me permiserit incipere, a te quero consilium et, ut tibi placet, auxilium, quia, si illuc favente Deo ivero, post Deum tibi Romanamecclesiam relinquo, ut eam et sicut sanctam matrem custodias et ad eius honorem defendas.’
92 Reg. 2.52a, p. 196.16-19.
the papal court. Other synodal decisions illustrate the continuing differences between Rome and certain senior German prelates. Archbishop Liemar of Bremen (1072-1101) was suspended from office. \(^{94}\) Gregory also took action against the three bishops named in his December 1074 correspondence with Henry: Werner of Strassburg, and Henry of Speyer were suspended forthwith while Hermann of Bamberg was threatened with suspension should he fail to make satisfaction at Rome by Eastertide. \(^{95}\) Hermann was subsequently suspended as a simoniac. \(^{96}\) Since the legation of April 1074, the pope had been experiencing more overt opposition from the German episcopate than from the king.

Gregory’s current policy towards Henry — a blend of praise and cajolery — resurfaces in his next letter to him, dated 20 July 1075. The pope commends the king for the reported zeal with which he is resolutely resisting simoniacs and wants to enforce clerical chastity. Having explained the circumstances of the suspension and excommunication of Bishop Hermann of Bamberg, he mentions the latter’s subsequent despoliation of the goods of the clerks of the church. He knows that the king is aware of this, and he has heard that Hermann’s behaviour would have been even worse had Henry not constrained him. The pope urges the king to set the church of Bamberg in order according to God’s will. \(^{97}\)

On 9 June 1075, at Homburg-on-the-Unstrut, Henry’s forces inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Saxons that led to their military collapse the following autumn. \(^{98}\) Rudolf of Swabia was Henry’s leading commander, with the contingent of Godfrey IV of Lower Lotharingia also prominent. \(^{99}\) Gregory’s next surviving letter to the king, thought to date from early September 1075, acknowledges the differences between the two men, and expresses, somewhat obliquely, the pope’s continuing uncertainty as to whether the king has yet renounced evil advisers. He congratulates Henry on his victory: ‘Now, as concerns the pride of the Saxons who are unjustly resisting you, which by divine judgement has been crushed before your face, there should be both joy for the peace of

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\(^{94}\) Cf. Reg. 2.28.

\(^{95}\) Reg. 2.52a, p. 196.23-27.

\(^{96}\) Reg. 3.3, pp. 246.13-247.30.

\(^{97}\) Reg. 3.1, pp. 242.19-244.6; Reg. 3.2, pp. 244.20-245.17.


\(^{99}\) See Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 100-1.
the church and sorrow because much blood of Christian men has been shed'. The pope again urges Henry to arrange the appointment of a suitable pastor to the see of Bamberg.  

A later letter, dated 11 September 1075, to the Tuscan margravines communicates the pope's increasing disquiet about Henry's intentions. It also describes Duke Godfrey IV, Matilda's estranged husband and Henry's military ally, as a man whose word is not to be believed. 

In the last months of 1075, his problems in Saxony apparently resolved, Henry began to impose his presence on the Italian peninsula. He seems to have tried to negotiate with the excommunicate papal vassal Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia and Calabria, with a view to persuading him to accept investiture at the king's hands. Henry's envoys to southern Italy included Count Eberhard 'the Bearded', one of the five excommunicate royal advisers. The king also presumed to invest new bishops in Fermo and Spoleto, two Italian dioceses that fell under Rome's metropolitan jurisdiction. Furthermore, he sent Count Eberhard to Milan to address the longstanding problem of the archiepiscopal succession. Gregory had excommunicated Godfrey, Henry's previous appointee, while Atto, the Patarene nominee acknowledged by the papacy, had fled Milan and now lived peacefully in Rome. Apparently, Godfrey was sidelined and a former member of the royal chapel, the anti-Patarene Milanese subdeacon Tedald, was subsequently consecrated. Tedald soon engaged in contact with Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna whom Gregory had threatened with suspension from office, and with Cardinal Hugh Candidus whom he had recently excommunicated. Regarding the king's motives in Italy, it has been speculated that Henry, probably influenced by Duke Godfrey, was trying to strengthen his position in the peninsula so that he could claim the imperial title on his own terms rather than those of the apostolic see.

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100 Reg. 3.7, pp. 256.17-259.4. See also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 109.
102 Amatus, Storia dei Normannidi Amato di Montecassino, ed. V. de Bartholomeis, Fonti per la storia Italia, 76 (Rome, 1935), 7.27, pp. 320-1.
103 Bonizo, 7, p. 605. See also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 131, n. 243.
105 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 130-1.
Gregory addressed the Milan issue in three letters dated 8 December 1075. They illustrate the continuing deterioration in the relations between the papal and royal courts. The first chastises Tedald for accepting the see during the lifetime of his predecessor (Atto), and instructs him to journey *ad limina*. It disposes of any suggestion that the king’s authority justified Tedald’s appointment: ‘cursed be the man who rests his hope upon man’ (cf. Jer. 17: 5); ‘the power of kings and emperors are but ashes and chaff’ (cf. Job 21: 18) in the face of apostolic rights (*apostolicum ius*) and the omnipotence of the highest God. Gregory also wrote to the suffragan bishops of Milan, informing them that, the king’s previous promises notwithstanding, he understands Tedald’s appointment to have been irregular, and forbids them from proceeding with his consecration.

The trenchant third letter addresses Henry himself. It is Gregory’s last preserved *epistola* to the king. Often referred to as the pope’s ‘ultimatum letter’, it has been described as the first fully-fledged polemic to emerge from the Gregorian papal chancery. The *salutatio* sets the new tone ‘King Henry, greeting and apostolic blessing, if, however, he shall show himself obedient to the apostolic see as befits a rex Christianus’. The conditional clause could hardly have made clearer Gregory’s conviction that *oboedientia* to the papacy is a key duty of Christian kingship. The letter goes on to express the pope’s disquiet at the disjunction between the king’s repeated professions of devotion and obedience to the apostolic see, and his ‘infliction of wound upon wound’ upon the Church. In this letter, Henry is not the pope’s ‘filius karissimus’. Having reminded the king of the excommunication of his five advisers at the 1075 Lenten synod, Gregory issues an ultimatum: Henry can receive the grace of neither a divine nor an apostolic benediction unless he banishes the excommunicates from his presence and constrains them to do penance. In addition, he must himself receive personal absolution and pardon for his transgressions. The pope counsels him to confess his sins to a suitable bishop who might ‘by licence from us’ impose a suitable penance upon him and absolve him. He criticizes the king for breaking his promises regarding Milan, which were conveyed through his mother. Furthermore, the king has handed, ‘if, however, a church

106 Reg. 3.8, pp. 259.19-261.16.
107 Reg. 3.9, pp. 261.32-263.5.
can be handed or given by a man', the bishoprics of Fermo and Spoleto to two men who are unknown to Gregory. One obvious reason for Gregory's concern is that these two sees fell within the metropolitan jurisdiction of the pope. However, the conditional clause also raises the issue of the permissibility of lay investiture of bishops, a question considered in a later chapter. This extended admonishment of Henry ends with an offer of an olive branch of sorts: the long patience of God still calls the king to amendment; he ought to recall the 'empire of Christ over him' (Christi supra te imperium); he should not impede libertas Ecclesiae, and he must acknowledge his debt to God and St Peter for his victory over the Saxons. In order that the fear of God, 'in whose hand and power is every kingdom and empire' (in cuius manu et potestate omne regnum est et imperium), might convince Henry of the need for increased devotion, Gregory alludes to one of his favourite scriptural passages, namely Samuel's Old Testament account of Saul and David. The king should bear in mind what happened to Saul who, following the victory granted to him at the prophet's decree, gloried in his triumph but failed to follow Samuel's instructions. Consequently, he was rejected by the Lord and lost his crown (cf. 1 Sam. 15). According to Gregory, David acquired the kingship as a reward for his humility, (although there is no specific basis for this in scripture). The reference is intended to promote the necessity of royal oboedientia to God's commandments as relayed through the apostolic see. Disappointed though he was with Henry's behaviour, Gregory had seemingly not entirely abandoned hope that the king would respond to papal mildness. The king's own envoys would convey the letter to him, together with the pope's verbal responses to previous enquiries by the king. Cowdrey (1998) conjectured that the latter might have been a reference to previous requests from Henry about his imperial coronation. The letter refers to the 'empire of Christ' above Henry (Christi supra te imperium) whereas the usual expression is 'kingdom of Christ'. It has been conjectured that the second half of the letter contains other formulations evocative of imperium, likewise intended to suggest that the

109 See below pp. 245ff.
110 See below p. 172. For a discussion of Gregory's comparison of Henry IV and Saul in the 'ultimatum letter', see Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, pp. 139-45.
111 Reg. 3.10, pp. 263.23-267.2.
112 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 133.
prospect of the king's imperial coronation was conditional on his oboedientia to the apostolic see and his implementation of reform.\textsuperscript{113}

The king spent Christmas 1075 at Goslar, his favourite palace in Saxony.\textsuperscript{114} On 1 January, his messengers arrived from Rome with the papal letter, the speed with which they completed the long journey speaking volumes for the urgency of their mission. Subsequently, a letter of summer 1076 from the pope to the faithful in Germany, recalled the verbal messages that the envoys delivered to the king:

We also sent to him three religious men, faithful followers of his own, through whom we secretly admonished him to do penance for his sins which, shameful to say, were known to most men and noised abroad through many parts; for the authority of divine and human laws enjoined and commanded that on account of them he should not only be excommunicated until he had made due satisfaction but that he should be deprived of his entire dignity as king without hope of recovery.\textsuperscript{115}

The king did not take the pope's letter and verbal messages well.\textsuperscript{116} He gave free rein to the resentment against Gregory that he had suppressed during his conflict with the Saxons. He interpreted the pope's ultimatum as an attack upon the basis of his regnum, as a threat to deprive him of both his earthly kingdom and his salvation.\textsuperscript{117}

\textit{Phase 2: January 1076 (Worms) to late February 1077 (Canossa)}

Henry's reaction inaugurated the second phase in the relationship between pope and king. The dispute between the apostolic see on one hand and the royal court and the German episcopate on the other, which had simmered since the time of Alexander II, now became an open rupture. Henry brazenly consulted his excommunicate counsellors and, upon their advice, summoned the spiritual and lay princes of his

\textsuperscript{113}For 'imperial language' in this letter, see Robinson, \textit{Henry IV}, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{114}For Goslar, see W. Berges, ‘Zur Geschichte des Werla-Goslarer Reichsbezirks von neunten bis zur elften Jahrhundert’ in \textit{Deutsches Königspalzen} 1 (1963), pp. 113-57.

\textsuperscript{115}Epp. Vag. 14, pp. 32-41: ‘Preterea misimus ad eum tres religiosos uiros, suos utique fideles, per quos eum secreto monuimus ut penitentiam ageret de sceleribus suis, que quidem horrenda dictu sunt pluribus autem nota et in multis partibus diuulgata; propter que eum non solum excommunicari usque ad condignam satisfactionem sed ab omni honore regni absque spe recuperationis debere destitu, duinarum et humanarum legum testatur et iubet auctoritas.’

\textsuperscript{116}For the king's interpretation of the 'ultimatum letter' and the envoys' verbal messages, see below p. 71.

\textsuperscript{117}Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 134-5.
kingdom to a general council that met in the Rhineland city of Worms on 24 January 1076. Here, the king presented himself as defender of an episcopate persecuted by the pope. Although most of the attendees were bishops (including two archbishops) and abbots, a third of the episcopate was absent.\(^{118}\) Bernold of St Blasien wrote that Duke Godfrey IV was the ringleader (\textit{auctor}) in enforcing the bishops’ obedience to Henry.\(^{119}\) However, Lampert highlighted the influence of Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz and Bishop William of Utrecht.\(^{120}\) Hugh Candidus, recently deposed from the cardinalate by Gregory, impugned the pope’s election and traduced his public conduct and private life in the strongest terms.\(^{121}\) The assembled churchmen issued a decree withdrawing their obedience from the pope, and reproaching him with irregular election and behaviour not fitting the head of Christendom. Since the assembled bishops deemed Gregory never to have been pope, the conciliar records make no reference to his ‘deposition’. Lampert recorded that two attending bishops, Hermann of Metz and Adalbero of Würzburg, declared that the proceedings contravened canon law.\(^{122}\) Nevertheless, the assembly effectively ceased to recognize Gregory’s pontificate.\(^{123}\)

Two letters, from the bishops and the king respectively, informed the pope of the council’s decisions. Both address ‘Hildebrand’, the use of his given name representing their explicit rejection of the validity of Gregory’s election. Siegfried of Mainz was the first of the twenty-six signatories of the bishops’ letter. It accuses ‘Brother Hildebrand’ of having arrogantly usurped (\textit{invadere}) the government of the Church against human and divine law (\textit{ius et fas}); in other words his election had been invalid. The bishops say that they have held their tongue in the hope that Hildebrand might mend his ways, but his increasingly wicked actions and decrees are consistent with his evil beginnings. They accuse him of cruelty, pride, and eagerness for profane innovations (\textit{profanae novitates}). He has sown discord in the churches of Italy, Germany, France, and Spain. He has attempted to reduce the episcopal power divinely conferred by the Holy Spirit; in particular, he has asserted that only he or his legates retain the power to bind and loose.

\(^{118}\) For the identities of the attending bishops, see Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, p. 135, n. 259.


\(^{120}\) Lampert, \textit{Annales}, 1076, p. 254.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., pp. 344-6.

\(^{122}\) Ibid., p. 254.

Hildebrand is not now, nor could he ever have been, the head of the apostolic see. The bishops make three specific allegations. First, that in accepting the papal office without consulting the German king he broke a solemn oath that he himself made to Henry III, and contravened the Papal Election Decree of 1059. The oath to the late emperor must have been made in 1054. Second, he has brought scandal to the Church through his intimacy with another man’s wife, meaning Matilda of Tuscany. Third, thanks to Hildebrand, the Church is now administered by a senate of women, a clear reference to the influence of the Empress Agnes and the Tuscan margravines. The bishops renounce their obedience to ‘Hildebrand’, which they never promised to him; he is not now their pope.

The *salutatio* in Henry’s letter is ‘Henry, King by the grace of God, to Hildebrand’ (*Heinricus dei gratia rex Hildebrando*). The letter levels a series of charges: Hildebrand is the pernicious enemy of Henry and his kingship; he has arrogantly snatched away the hereditary dignity owed to the king by Rome; he has employed the most evil arts to alienate the *regnum Italiae*; contrary to human and divine laws (*divina et humana iura*) he has harassed and abused those bishops who are loyal to the king. Misinterpreting Henry’s patience as cowardice, he has tried to deprive him of his life and kingly office. Henry confirms the assembly’s verdict, and orders Hildebrand to stand down from the papacy that he only seems to hold. The king invokes his authority as *patricius Romanorum*, a title denoting the holder’s role as protector of the Roman church. Given that neither letter uses the word *deponere* (depose), it has been surmised that it was hoped that the pope would emulate his namesake Pope Gregory VI who abdicated in 1046 in response to the wishes of King Henry III. To maximize the pressure on Gregory, Henry also despatched a letter to the clergy and people of the Roman Church. It included the text of his letter to ‘the monk Hildebrand’ and urged them to rise against

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125 The important role at Worms of Godfrey IV of Lower Lotharingia, Matilda’s estranged husband and Henry’s ally, was noted earlier - see above p. 70.
him, force him out of office, and accept a replacement to be elected by the king with the counsel of all the bishops and themselves.\textsuperscript{129}

The letters reached Rome in time for the Lenten synod of 1076. In the meantime, the northern Italian bishops met at Piacenza, and similarly withdrew their obedience from the pope. Gregory faced the challenges without flinching. He was determined to follow through on his conviction that papal primacy applied in the temporal as well as the spiritual realm. Church reform now became a contest for dominance between \textit{sacerdotium} and \textit{regnum}, as the reformers strove to displace the Carolingian model of mutual cooperation whereby the care of the Church was committed to the monarchy. The synod excommunicated Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz and suspended him until his penitent return to his senses. As for the other signatories of the bishops’ letter, those who consented to this ‘schism’ of their own free will were also suspended from office; those who had signed under duress would be similarly suspended unless they displayed penitence by the festival of St Peter (1 August).\textsuperscript{130} Even more dramatic was the sentence on Henry IV, which took the form of an invocation to St Peter. Gregory begins his prayer by using the opening verses of Psalm 85: like David, he is calling upon God for help when the utmost danger threatens (cf. Ps. 85: 1-2). Schneider (1972) thought that this was impressive evidence of the pope’s belief in the power of prayer.\textsuperscript{131} Gregory again insists that he was dragged unwillingly to the papal office. In saying this, he is responding to the allegations concerning his ambition in the episcopal and royal letters. By the grace of the first apostle, the Christian people entrusted to Peter should obey the pope though the vicarship committed to him. By that grace, God has given to him the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth (Matt. 16: 19). Having summarized the basis of his own authority Gregory passes sentence upon the king:

\begin{quote}
For the honour and defence of your Church, on behalf of Almighty God, Father, son and Holy Spirit, through your power and authority I deny to King Henry, son of the emperor Henry, who has risen up with unheard-of pride against your Church, the government of the entire kingdom of the Germans and of Italy, and I absolve all Christians from the bond of any oath that they have taken, or shall take, to him; and
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{130} Reg. 3.10a, pp. 268.15-269.2.

\textsuperscript{131} See Schneider, \textit{Prophetisches Sacerdotium}, p. 155. Also see below p. 170
I forbid anyone to serve him as king. For it is fitting that he who seeks to diminish the honour of your Church should lose that honour which he previously appeared to have. And, since he scorns to show obedience like a Christian nor returns to God, whom he deserted by communicating with excommunicates, and in spurning my warnings which I sent, as you are witness, for his salvation, and in separating himself from your Church by seeking to divide it, I bind him with the chain of anathema acting on your behalf, and I do this on your authority, so that the peoples may know this and see that you are Peter and upon your rock the Son of the living God has built his Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. (cf. Matt 16: 18.).

The emphasis on the king’s continued communication with his excommunicated advisers bespeaks the centrality of the issue for the pope. Technically, Henry was not deposed from the kingship, merely suspended from exercising it. Pro-imperial critics were particularly hostile to the pope’s seemingly innovatory freeing of Henry’s subjects from their oaths to him. The text of the sentence of suspension from the kingship and excommunication of Henry was circulated to ‘all the faithful of St Peter’. Gregory’s accompanying letter reiterates that the king’s excommunication is the decision of the first apostle himself.

In the following months, the pope’s actions encouraged princely opposition to the king and undermined his episcopal support. Henry reacted to his suspension and excommunication by convening an assembly in Utrecht. On 26 March 1076, it decided to excommunicate Gregory publicly the following day, Easter Sunday. A number of bishops, including the one assigned the task, secretly departed that night, leaving only Bishop William of Utrecht to do the king’s bidding in his own city. He duly proclaimed Gregory’s

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132 Reg. 3.10a, pp. 270.1-271.19: ‘Hac itaque fiducia fretus pro ecclesiae tuae honore et defensione ex parte omnipotentis Dei Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti per tuam potestatem et auctoritatem Heinrico regi, filio Heinrici imperatoris, qui contra tuam ecclesiam inaudita superbia insurrexit, totius regni Teutonicorum et Italiae gubernacula contradico et omnes christianos a vinculo iuramenti, quod sibi fecerunt vel facient, absolvo et, ut nullus ei sicut regi serviat, interdico. Dignum est enim, ut, qui studet honorum ecclesiae tuae imminuere, ipse honorum animitat, quem videtur habere. Et quia sicut christianus contemptus obsequire nec ad Deum redit, quem dimisis participando excommunicatis meaque monita, que prosusa salute nisi, te teste, spernendo seque ab ecclesia tua temptans eam scindere separando, vinculo eum anathematis vice tua alligo et sic eum ex fiducia tua alligo, ut sciant gentes et comprobent, quia tu es Petrus et super tuam petram filius Dei vivi aedificavit ecclesiam suam et porte inferni non prevalebunt adversus eam.’

133 Wenrich of Trier: see Appendix A, pp. 325ff.

134 Reg. 3.6*, p. 254.4-27.

135 Reg. 3.6, p. 255.19-20.
excommunication and the king staged a ritual 'crown-wearing' to emphasize his position as vicarius Dei.\textsuperscript{136} A further escalation in the war of words followed the Utrecht events. Gottschalk of Aachen, the imperial chaplain who emerged in the following years as Henry's chief propagandist, composed two letters in the king's name.\textsuperscript{137} The first addresses 'Hildebrand, now not pope, but false monk'.\textsuperscript{138} The second is a royal encyclical inviting the bishops to another assembly at Worms at Whitsuntide (15 May) to advise the king on what should be done to combat the 'Hildebrandine madness'.\textsuperscript{139} At Worms the proceedings were deferred until 29 June, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul. On that date, the council declared the pope excommunicate and the Lent sentence on the king invalid. However, the episcopate was now less united against Gregory than had appeared to be the case at the January assembly in Worms.\textsuperscript{140}

The pope's 1076 correspondence indicates that he continued to be politically active. In March, he indicated his openness to reconciliation with the southern Italian Normans, including the excommunicate Duke Robert Guiscard.\textsuperscript{141} A number of Gregory's letters show him justifying his position vis-à-vis the German king. A letter of April 1076 to the Milanese knight Wilfred summarizes his recent dealings with the Normans. It confirms that, in response to many direct pleadings by certain individuals, he is ready to make peace with the rex Alamanniae if the latter takes steps to have peace with God and, as advised by the pope, sets right his 'damage to the holy Church and to the increase of his own perdition'.\textsuperscript{142} An epistola from the pope to Bishop Henry of Trent is thought to have been despatched between March and July. It questions whether any sane individual can doubt that the sentence on the German king is the result of the Gregory's zeal for iustitia; anyone rash enough to believe that his excommunication of King Henry is unjust or derives from a personal grievance should consult the pope.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{136} See Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 142; Robinson, Henry IV, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{137} Gottschalk of Aachen: see Appendix A, pp. 307ff.
\textsuperscript{138} Die Briefe Heinrichs IV, 12, pp. 15-17: 'Hildebrando iam non apostolico, sed falso monacho.'
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 13, pp. 17-20.
\textsuperscript{140} Lampert, Annales, 1076, pp. 263-4; Berthold of Reichenau, Annales, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 5 (1844), 1076, p. 284. See also Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, pp. 170-1; Robinson, Henry IV, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{141} Reg. 3.11, pp. 271.20-272.27.
\textsuperscript{142} Reg. 3.15, pp. 276.26-277.36.
\textsuperscript{143} Epp. Vag. 13, pp. 30-3.
That summer, a long letter from Gregory to the German faithful addressed the misgivings of those who thought that his excommunication of the king was a rash and unjust use of the spiritual sword. Most of the text reviews his dealings with Henry. It reminds the pope’s hearers of his longstanding awareness of the king’s shameful behaviour and of his own forbearance, which derived from his respect for the imperial dignity and for Henry’s parents. Gregory states that as deacon he frequently admonished the king in the hope that he would mend his ways and become worthy, God willing, to receive the emperorship. However, the king’s wickedness increased over the years even as he sent cordial letters to the pope excusing himself on the grounds of his youth and the advice of bad counsellors. He utterly trampled upon his own promises to heed Gregory’s warnings. Through the agency of his courtiers, the king engaged in the pernicious trafficking of *symoniaca haeresis*, whereby wolves were established instead of shepherds, and bishoprics and monasteries were polluted. As already observed, the king had admitted this in his *supplex epistola* of late August 1073. The record of the 1075 Lenten synod had recorded the excommunication of five members of the king’s household, ‘by whose counsel churches are sold’ but had stopped short of accusing Henry himself of personal involvement. This *epistola* is significant in that it is the earliest registered document to charge the king with direct complicity in simony. The pope’s letter now recalls that Henry sent his *supplex epistola* when he was embroiled in conflict with the Saxons, and notes the king’s readmission of the excommunicate counsellors once he had defeated the Saxons. Gregory recollects his own grief and his further attempts to induce the king to hear the call of apostolic mercy, reject those advisers, and do penance. He had warned Henry that otherwise he would be excommunicated and deprived of his kingship. Gregory had still hoped that the king would heed his admonitions and amend his life, in which case the pope would have rejoiced for his *honor* and *salus*, and lovingly embraced him back into the bosom of holy Church. However, Henry scorned any attempts to restrain or reprove him. He forced nearly all the Italian bishops, and many German bishops, to contradict their obedience to St Peter and the apostolic see. Gregory gives three reasons for the king’s

144 Referring to Henry’s *supplex epistola* of autumn 1073, (Reg. 1.29a).
145 See above p. 60.
146 Reg. 2.52a, p. 196.16-19.
147 Referring to the oral message delivered by the envoys who delivered the ‘ultimatum letter’ (Reg. 3.10) to the king.
excommunication: his simony, his lack of penitence, and his attacks on the Church. Since mercy has not recalled Henry to the way of salvation, the pope hopes that severity will succeed. He enjoins his listeners to stand firm with \textit{iustitia} in the face of the king’s wrath, and prays that Henry will finally come to understand that those who do so love him far more truly than those who comply with his sins. Finally, Gregory repeats that, in the event of the king’s repentance, the pope remains ready to welcome him back into the fellowship of the Church.\footnote{Epp. Vag. 14, pp. 32-41.}

Another letter, dated 25 July 1076, shows Gregory again focusing upon the need for contrition and forgiveness. It calls on all the faithful in the Roman Empire to endeavour to deliver the king from the devil’s hand and rouse him to true penitence. It exhorts his fellow bishops to show clemency by admitting back into the bosom of mother Church those supporters of the king who withdraw from the king’s communion. As for those who fail to repent, the pope again quotes Jeremiah’s words: ‘Cursed is the man who withholds his sword from blood’ (Jer. 48: 10), the ‘sword’ being the word of correction.\footnote{Cf. Gregory I, Reg. past. 3.25, col. 96D.} There are several more scriptural quotations and allusions before the letter ends with Gregory’s hope for the deliverance of the Church, ‘God’s bride, our mother’, from the jaws of wolves.\footnote{Reg. 4.1, pp. 289.1-292.19.} A month later, however, a letter dated 29 August 1076 finds the pope warning the same audience that he has heard that the king is deceitfully trying to divide the members of the Church. It ordains that only he or his legates can free the king from the bonds of excommunication.\footnote{Epp. Vag. 15, pp. 42-3.} Meanwhile, a letter dated 15 August 1076 from Gregory to Bishop Hermann of Metz, answers those who question the propriety of excommunicating a king.\footnote{Reg. 4.2, pp. 293.17-297.23.} Some years later, in March 1081 he sent a much longer letter to Hermann.\footnote{Epp. Vag. 15, pp. 42-3.} These two \textit{epistolae} go to the heart of Gregory’s ideas about the relationship between \textit{regnum} and \textit{sacerdotium}, and are examined and compared later.\footnote{Reg. 8.21, pp. 546.12-562.26.} Suffice to say that at this time, August 1076, Gregory was affirming the superiority of episcopal over royal authority on the grounds that the former always aspires to heavenly life and was instituted by divine mercy, whereas the latter ceaselessly snatches at vain

\footnote{Epp. Vag. 14, pp. 32-41.}
\footnote{Cf. Gregory I, Reg. past. 3.25, col. 96D.}
\footnote{Reg. 4.1, pp. 289.1-292.19.}
\footnote{Epp. Vag. 15, pp. 42-3.}
\footnote{Reg. 4.2, pp. 293.17-297.23.}
\footnote{Reg. 8.21, pp. 546.12-562.26.}
\footnote{See below pp. 275ff.}
glory and is merely the outworking of human pride. The 1076 letter to Hermann engages in innovative reinterpretation of historic precedent to justify the excommunication and deposition of the king. In addition, it declares that in the light of Gregory’s receipt of a number of (lost) letters from unnamed bishops and dukes he is authorising the absolution of those who are prepared to separate themselves from the king’s company.

On 3 September 1076, the pope wrote to the faithful in Germany, asking them to study the documents of the previous Lenten synod so that they might understand why the ‘so-called king’ (rex dictus) was bound with the chain of anathema and deposed (deponere) from the kingship, and why his subjects were released from any oaths that they had taken to him. If the faithful had actually examined those texts they might have noticed that, unlike this letter, they make no mention of the king’s ‘deposition’. The synodal record says only that Henry is denied the government of the kingdoms of Germany and Italy, and forbids Christians to serve him. The papal letter with which the synodal record was distributed refers to the king’s excommunication but does not mention Henry’s earthly office. The revised summary of the measures against the German king in this letter of September 1076 succinctly illustrates the unprecedented nature of the authority that the pope was now seeking to assume. Furthermore, clearly aware of Henry’s attempts to sow division among the German episcopate, Gregory expressly prohibits the absolution of the king without the prior approval of the apostolic see. His letter goes even further: if Henry fails to return to God, a new candidate should be chosen after consultation with the Empress Agnes and the pope.

Despite early successes, Henry’s fortunes declined during 1076. The January assembly in Worms was followed by a meeting in Piacenza of north Italian bishops and princes, who committed themselves to renounce all future obedience to Gregory. However, Henry overestimated Gregory’s vulnerability in Rome. He may have been

155 Reg. 4.2, p. 295.20-23.
156 Ibid., p. 294.4-23.
157 Ibid., p. 296.8-11.
158 Reg. 4.3, p. 298.12-14.
159 Reg. 3.10a, p. 270.15-22. See above p. 72.
160 Reg. 3.6, pp. 253.4-256.15.
161 Reg. 4.3, p. 299.6-9.
162 Ibid., p. 299.12-25.
unduly influenced by two exiles from that city, who were hostile to the pope. These were the excommunicate Cardinal Hugh Candidus, and Cencius Stephani, son of the Roman prefect Stephen, who had been central to a violent, but short-lived, abduction of the pope at Christmas 1075.\(^{163}\) The king’s hopes that some combination of the Italian episcopate and the Romans might force Gregory’s abdication came to naught. Moreover, on the day of the Easter synod in Utrecht, at which Bishop William had proclaimed Gregory’s excommunication, lightning reduced the church of St Peter to ashes. A month later, Bishop William suffered a painful death.\(^{164}\) To Henry’s critics these events seemed to be St Peter’s judgement on both king and bishop. More problems began to emerge in Germany. Henry’s support within the German episcopate was never unanimous. Many bishops had absented themselves from the January assembly in Worms, and a significant number of the participants signed the bishops’ letter under duress, but subsequently experienced troubled consciences.\(^{165}\) Apart from his close ally Godfrey IV, Henry had had the backing of few lay princes at Worms. Godfrey himself was murdered within days of the assembly. The king’s subsequent conferral of Godfrey’s duchy of Lower Lotharingia upon Henry’s infant son Conrad affronted many German princes and contributed to the growth of an anti-royal conspiracy.\(^{166}\) Summer 1076 also saw renewed unrest in Saxony. The failure of a military incursion into the duchy by Henry’s forces heartened his enemies. Otto of Nordheim, Henry’s erstwhile viceroy in Saxony, allied himself with the rebels. The three South German dukes, Rudolf of Swabia, Welf of Bavaria, and Berthold of Carinthia, together with Bishops Adalbero of Würzburg and Hermann of Metz, had been plotting against the king since spring. In late August or early September, they led an assembly at Ulm to organize resistance to King Henry in alliance with the Saxons. The meeting decided to reconvene on 16 October 1076 near Tribur in the Rhineland.\(^{167}\) In the meantime the leakage in the king’s support, not least the defection of Siegfried of Mainz, his close adviser and principal figure in the synod of Worms, persuaded Henry that he was in trouble and should negotiate.

\(^{163}\) For Gregory’s abduction, see Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, pp. 326-8.


Accordingly, when the rebellious princes met at Tribur the royal court was camped on the other side of the Rhine at Oppenheim. Bishop Altmann of Passau attended the Tribur assembly as one of two papal legates. The other was Patriarch Sigehard of Aquileia. The princes were divided. The ‘deposition faction’, led by the three southern dukes and Otto of Nordheim, wanted to force the removal of Henry from the German throne and elect a replacement. However, according to Berthold of Reichenau, the ‘moderates’ and the papal legates hoped that the king would do penance and be restored to communion by the pope. After extensive debate between the princes, and several days of negotiation with the royal envoys, the moderates’ strategy prevailed. It has been conjectured that Gregory’s legates played a critical role in the debates and the succeeding negotiations. The strength of the princely opposition at Tribur compelled Henry to make major concessions, including the banishment from his court of the five excommunicate counsellors. Two documents emerged in Henry’s name. The first was a letter to his princes, in which he committed himself to render due obedience to the pope, and advised his excommunicated subjects to strive to obtain absolution from the Lord Pope Gregory. The second document indicated Henry’s acceptance of the terms of the ‘Promise of Oppenheim’, which was to be sent to the pope:

Urged by the counsel of my faithful subjects, I promise to the apostolic see and to you, Pope Gregory, that I will maintain due obedience to you in all things. Whatever infringement of the honour of your see or of yourself may seem to have arisen through me I will be pains to set right by making proper satisfaction.

According to the versions of Lampert and of Berthold of Reichenau, it was agreed that Henry must gain the pope’s absolution before February 1077, the anniversary of his

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174 Ibid., Appendix B, p. 69: ‘Consilio fidelium nostrorum admonitus, sedi apostolicae et tibi Gregorio papae debitam in omnibus servare obedientiam promitto, et quaecunque eiusdem sedis vel tui honoris imminuto per nos orta videtur, devota satisfactione emendare curabo.’
excommunication. Otherwise, he would no longer be recognized as king, and the German princes and bishops would elect another, in effect implementing Gregory’s ‘deposition’ of Henry in February 1076. The absolution, if obtained, would be performed in Germany, to which end Gregory was to be invited to journey to Augsburg for an assembly on 2 February 1077.

Humiliating for the king as the overall outcome of Tribur-Oppenheim undoubtedly was, his Promissio had the obvious merit of delaying the election of his replacement. Moreover, Henry hoped to prove his innocence of certain graver matters (his plans to depose Gregory?). The king wanted to prevent the proposed meeting in Augsburg between the pope and the princes, an encounter which would pose an obvious threat to his own authority. For his part, Gregory would surely have welcomed the opportunity to attend the assembly where he could demonstrate the authority of the sacerdotium to mediate an issue affecting the highest level of the regnum.

The pope accepted the princes’ invitation to meet them at Augsburg. His letter of 31 October 1076 to his Milanese supporters expresses his satisfaction with the information he is receiving from Germany: opposition to the ‘conspiracy of heretics’ is growing to such an extent that unless the king makes satisfaction there is talk of electing another king. Subject to iustitia, Gregory would support them. He announced his decision to travel to Augsburg in two letters that were probably despatched in December 1076. He regarded his proposed journey as perilous, and told the faithful in Germany that he was risking his life for the honour of God and the salvation of their souls. He informed his princely supporters in Germany that he was prepared to shed his blood for libertas Ecclesiae and salus imperii, and asked them to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate his journey. This statement of his commitment to salus imperii illustrates Gregory’s increasing use of imperial language.

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175 Lampert, Annales 1076, p.281; Berthold, Annales 1076, pp. 286-7.
176 Reg. 4.7, p. 305.23-29.
Gregory set out northwards. He reached Lombardy, but the princes' anticipated escort company failed to appear. On hearing that the king was in Italy, the papal party retreated to Canossa, the fortress of the pope's ally Margravine Matilda of Tuscany. Henry arrived at the castle on 25 January 1077 in the middle of a bitterly cold winter. Immediately afterwards, Gregory described their encounter in a letter, probably dated 28 January 1077, to the ecclesiastical and lay princes of Germany:

And there for three days he [Henry] stayed before the castle gate, having laid aside all kingly adornment, wretchedly, as being unshod and clad in wool. Ceaselessly and tearfully he begged the aid and consolation of our apostolic mercy, until he moved all who were there present or who learned what was happening to such great mercy and compassion that they interceded for him with many pleadings and tears. For all marvelled at the unwonted harshness of our attitude, some complained that we were showing, not the strictness of apostolic authority, but a cruelty that was reminiscent of a tyrant's inhumanity.

It has been conjectured that the three-day wait was partly due to the pope's irresolution. The attending mediators included Henry's godfather, Abbot Hugh of Cluny. Gregory can hardly have been unaware of Henry's dwindling support in Germany. However, he was overcome by the king's 'humility and manifold display of repentance' (humilitas et multimoda penitudinis exibitio). Conscious of his pastoral duty of care for Henry's spiritual welfare, he finally gave in to the entreaties of the king and of his own companions. On 28 January, Gregory granted the king an absolution that was conditional on the king taking an oath (iusiurandum) concerning his future conduct:

I, King Henry, with regard to the complaint which the archbishops, bishops, dukes, counts, and other princes of the German kingdom maintain against me as do others

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179 Epp. Vag. 19, pp. 50-5. Other primary sources on Canossa include Lampert, Annales 1076-7, pp. 392-412; Berthold, Annales 1077, pp. 280-90; Bonizo, 8, pp. 609-10.
180 Meyer von Knonau, Jahrbücher 2, p. 750, n.7.
181 Reg. 4.12, p. 313.1-10: 'Ibique per triduum ante portam castri deposito omne regio cultu miserabiliter utpote discalcatus et laneis indutus persistens non prius cum multo fletu apostolicae miserationis auxilium et consolationem implorare desitit, quam omnes, qui ibi aderant et ad quos rumor ille pervenit, ad tantam pietatem et compassionis misericordiam movit, ut pro eo multis precibus et lacrimis intercedentes omnes quidem insolitam nostrae mentis duritiam mirarentur, nonnulli vero in nobis non apostolicae severitatis gratiam, sed quasi tyrannicae feritatis crudelitatem esse clamarent.'
who follow them in their difference, will, within the time limit that the Lord Pope Gregory shall appoint, do either whatever is right according to his judgement or whatever makes for agreement according to his counsel, unless any insuperable impediment shall hinder either me or him; when it is removed, I will stand ready to do whatever is called for.¹⁸⁵

Henry also undertook to provide security for Gregory and his companions should they wish to proceed across the mountains.¹⁸⁶ An immense amount of scholarship has been devoted to the significance of the Canossa encounter.¹⁸⁷ One issue is whether Henry's suspension from the German kingship at the 1076 Lenten synod—his 'deposition', according to the pope's letter of 3 September 1076 to the German faithful—was revoked at Canossa.¹⁸⁸ The identification of the Register's copy of the oath as 'lusurandum Heinrici regis Teutonicorum' suggests the apostolic see's implicit acceptance of his royal status. On the other hand, Gregory's post-Canossa letter to the German bishops and princes contains no hint of such a revocation. Neither does it include any statement reversing the decision of the 1076 Lenten synod to free Henry's subjects from their oath of fealty.¹⁸⁹ Four years later the decree of the 1080 Lenten synod that proclaimed the king's second excommunciation confirmed that neither matter was discussed at Canossa.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the meeting gained Henry breathing space in relation to his domestic political difficulties. Perhaps the main significance of Henry's submission at Canossa is that a rex Teutonicorum acknowledged the right of the apostolic see to judge kings.

¹⁸⁵ Reg. 4.12a, pp. 314.22-315.6: 'Ego HEINRICUS rex de murmuratione et dissensione, quam nunc habent contra me archiepiscopi et episcopi, duces comites caeterique principes regni Teutonicorum et alii, qui eos in eadem dissensionis causa sequuntur, infra terminum, quem dominus papa GREGORIUS constituerit, aut iustitiam secundum judicium eius aut concordiam secundum consilium eius faciam, nisi certum impedimentum mihi vel sibi obstiterit; quo transacto ad peragendum idem paratus ero.'

¹⁸⁶ Reg. 4.12a, p. 315.7-16.


¹⁸⁸ Reg. 4.3, p. 298.12-14.

¹⁸⁹ Reg. 4.12, pp. 312.7-313.26.

Phase 3: March 1077 to end 1079

Canossa initiated a new phase in the dealings between pope and king. During these three years, Gregory's German strategy was dominated by his aspiration to mediate between Henry and his princely enemies. The aforementioned letter to the German princes following the Canossa meeting informs them that he still wishes to travel to their lands. It has been observed that the outcome of Canossa meant that if Gregory had indeed subsequently attended an assembly of German princes, he would no longer have been one of Henry's accusers; instead, his professed priority would have been the encouragement of pax and concordia in Germany. He would have been conciliator, not partisan. He stated this in his letter to the princes, and reiterated it to the archbishop of Gran, to whom he wrote on 9 June 1077. Canossa had greatly reduced the likelihood of an alliance between the pope and the German king's princely enemies, the fear of which may have been the primary driving force behind Henry's public act of penitence. The king's personal humiliation at Canossa had produced an enormous political benefit in that the pope had been neutralized, at least for the moment.

The Canossa encounter had other consequences. A number of German bishops, formerly opposed to Gregory, were reconciled to the pope before and during the event. This encouraged Gregory to believe that episcopal opposition to reform might be less significant in the future. On the other hand, it has been suggested that some Germans who were not opposed to the king would have found the episode shocking, since Henry's appeal for grace and mercy from Gregory resembled the normal rituals for secular rebels submitting to a king. Such an apparent undermining of the sacral basis of Henry's kingship may have seemed offensive and have evoked some sympathy for Henry. Most importantly perhaps, from Henry's perspective, he had acquired papal absolution within the time limit demanded at Tribur, thereby depriving the opposition princes of their ostensible justification for replacing him. Many of Henry's most vigorous opponents felt that the pope had deserted them. Cowdrey (1998) concluded that

191 Reg. 4.12, p. 313.19-21.
192 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 165.
Canossa left pope and king competing through propaganda and prudent action to maximize their authority with the aim of establishing right order in Germany.\textsuperscript{195} With both Gregory and Henry still in Italy, the opposition princes arranged to meet on 13 March 1077 at Forchheim, near Bamberg.

Although invited to the Forchheim assembly Gregory never made the journey. Several factors were responsible, including the opposition of most of the Lombardy episcopate, the failure of the princes to provide an escort, and the inability or unwillingness of the king to provide security. A letter to the German faithful, written soon after Canossa, reveals that the pope is already disappointed at the king's failure to do more than the bare minimum to conform to his \textit{iusiurandum}. Furthermore, the king's presence in northern Italy is prompting 'certain very wicked men' to show boldness rather than fear towards the apostolic see.\textsuperscript{196} Gregory sent two legates to Forchheim. He charged Cardinal-deacon Bernard and Abbot Bernard of St Victor in Marseilles with presenting the case against the immediate election of a new king, and for the postponement of any discussion of Henry's possible replacement. This reflected his view that his primary aim was to re-establish \textit{pax} and \textit{concordia} between Henry and the opposition princes, but was contrary to the wishes of the latter. However, the pope's letter to the faithful in September the previous year had countenanced the election of a new king.\textsuperscript{197} Now, at Forchheim, the opposition to Henry was so great that the legates concluded that they could do little more than affirm that the pope would not actively resist a new election.\textsuperscript{198} On 15 March 1077, Duke Rudolf of Swabia was elected king of Germany, and crowned in Mainz on 26 March. The \textit{regnum Teutonicorum} now had an anti-king as well as a king.

Gregory adopted an even-handed approach to the rival kings. Two letters dated 31 May 1077 indicate his thinking. The first asks his legates, the two Bernards, to instruct Henry and Rudolf on St Peter's behalf to facilitate his journey \textit{ultra montes} so that he might mediate the dispute between the two kings.\textsuperscript{199} The later discussion of papal

\textsuperscript{195} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{196} Epp. Vag. 19, pp. 50-5.
\textsuperscript{197} Reg. 4.3, p. 299.12-15.
\textsuperscript{199} Reg. 4.23, pp. 334.28-336.17.
authority examines this letter in more detail.\textsuperscript{200} Gregory’s second letter addresses the German faithful. It describes the legates’ mission and emphasizes the dangers of the current situation: the consigning of thousands of Christians to both temporal and eternal death, and the destruction of both the Christian religion and the Roman Empire. It states that both kings seek his help, and that he is willing to judge (\textit{decernere}) the equity of the two cases, and assist whomsoever \textit{iustitia} favours. The legates will determine the issue on his behalf.\textsuperscript{201} Both \textit{epistolae} underpin the pope’s approach by referring to the \textit{auctoritas} of Gregory I’s declaration that a king will fall from office if he contravenes the orders of the apostolic see.\textsuperscript{202} As discussed later, this is a distortion of a standard anathema clause in a papal privilege granted by \textit{beatus Gregorius}, which Gregory VII presents as a canonical text.\textsuperscript{203} After finally abandoning his efforts to reach Germany, the pope returned to Rome in late summer 1077. A letter dated 30 September 1077, addressed to Archbishop Udo of Trier (1066-78) and his suffragans, expresses Gregory’s anxiety at the current disorder in Germany. It makes a point of affirming his lack of hostility towards Henry despite the king’s inaction over the recent imprisonment of two papal legates by some of his supporters.\textsuperscript{204}

Subsequent papal letters are silent on the conflict until the 1078 Lenten synod, from which emerged a fresh proposal to send envoys to Germany. According to the synodal record, dated 3 March, the plan involved the convening by papal legates of a general assembly (\textit{colloquium}) in Germany, which would either attempt to restore peace between the two claimants, or else support whosoever has \textit{iustitia} on his side. Anyone who hindered the envoys would incur severe spiritual sanctions, including excommunication.\textsuperscript{205} On 9 March, Gregory sent two letters to Germany. The first, addressed to all Germans, repeats his proposal for an assembly and asks Archbishop Udo of Trier to organize the council in cooperation with somebody from Rudolf’s side and the letter’s unnamed bearer.\textsuperscript{206} The second letter, addressed to Udo personally, instructs him to come to Rome with a view to escorting the papal legates northwards. Gregory

\textsuperscript{200} See below pp. 171f.
\textsuperscript{201} \textit{Reg.} 4.24, pp. 337.3-338.27.
\textsuperscript{202} Gregory I, \textit{Reg.} 13.9, ii. 1006.
\textsuperscript{203} See below p. 285.
\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Reg.} 5.7, pp. 356.16-358.12.
\textsuperscript{205} \textit{Reg.} 5.14a, pp. 370.11-371.5.
\textsuperscript{206} \textit{Reg.} 5.15, p. 376.4-16.
asserts that he is motivated, not just by a wish for peace, but also by a concern to pre­empt accusations of personal negligence should the conflict continue. The parties’ failure to agree prompted Gregory to repeat his demand for an assembly in a letter dated 1 July 1078. One of the factors preventing such a meeting was the east Saxons’ determination to be rid of Henry. They had been encouraged by Henry’s excommunication and the recognition of Rudolf as sole king by Cardinal-deacon Bernard in November 1077. Gregory’s failure to confirm his own legate’s verdict is evidence of the sincerity of his current policy of neutrality between Henry and Rudolf. However, it did not lessen the Saxons’ opposition to Henry. Furthermore, Bruno of Merseburg’s chronicle of the Saxon Wars reveals that it engendered considerable disillusion within their ranks over the pope’s perceived vacillation.

On 19 March 1078, the pope wrote to Bishop Huzmann of Speyer, reaffirming his commitment to the fundamental agenda of the reform papacy. Speyer’s church of St Mary was closely associated with the Salian dynasty, not least because Henry IV’s father and grandparents were buried there. Huzmann was one of a number of German bishops who deserted the king’s cause at the time of Tribur-Oppenheim. Gregory’s letter chastises Huzmann on a number of counts, including simony, toleration of clerical unchastity, and administrative neglect. However, the first transgression addressed by Gregory is Huzmann’s acceptance of his bishopric from King Henry. This, says the letter, contravenes a decree of the apostolic see. Gregory’s reprimand raises the issue of lay investiture, and whether it had been prohibited at the 1075 Lenten synod, an issue discussed later.

Gregory’s proposed German assembly never came to pass. Two particular events worked against his plans. First, the inconclusive Battle of Mellrichstadt on 7 August 1078 led to the splitting of the anti-Henrician forces when Rudolf retreated to East Saxony. This made it less likely that Rudolf could pacify and unify the German kingdom. The

207 Reg. 5.16, p. 377.7-26.
209 Berthold, Annales 1077, pp. 302-3
211 Berthold, Annales 1076, p. 286.
212 Reg. 5.18, pp. 381.11-382.3.
213 See below pp. 245ff.
Henricians represented the battle as a victory for their side, and it seems that this was believed in Rome. Mellrichstadt encouraged Henry to think that he could resolve the situation in his favour without the support of the apostolic see. He was determined to frustrate the efforts of the pope or his legates to convene a council in Germany to decide the kingship. Second, Gregory’s hopes that Udo of Trier might supervise such an assembly ended with the archbishop’s death in November 1078.

Instead, the pope convened a synod, which met in Rome on 19 November 1078. The synodal record states that the purpose of the assembly is the renewal of the Church (*pro restauracione sanctae ecclesiae*). Envoys of Henry and Rudolf swore that neither contender would obstruct any *colloquium* that papal legates might hold in Germany. Two of the thirteen documented decrees have particular significance for our theme. One is aimed at Germany, specifically the widespread ‘proprietary church system’ (*Reichskirchensystem*) by which laymen possessed church properties, lands, buildings, and revenues. This problem had become more acute because of the civil war, as rival forces made ever more demands on the churches to finance their military operations. Excommunication now awaited any lay prince who had acquired church lands in this fashion, and failed to restore them. The synodal record also contains the earliest surviving papal decree against lay investiture, a momentous challenge to the exercise of royal authority over the imperial church.

Following the granting by both parties of guarantees for the security of papal legates at the synod, Gregory tried yet again to activate his proposal for a gathering in Germany of lovers of *pax* and *iustitia*. An open letter, thought to date from late November 1078, notifies the supporters of both claimants that he intends to send two more legates. They would be charged with either establishing *pax* between the parties or else passing canonical sentence on those who are the cause of this great division. Gregory was still maintaining his impartiality, prioritising the establishment of *pax* and

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214 Reg. 6.5b, p. 400.26.
215 Ibid., p. 400.29.
217 Reg. 6.5b, pp. 401.6-7, 402.34-403.5.
218 Ibid., p. 403.11-19. For lay investiture, see below pp. 245ff.
concordia with a view to creating a long-term relationship with the rex Teutonicorum, (whoever that might turn out to be), with the intention of promoting church reform in Germany. In a letter dated 30 December 1078 to Rudolf's supporter, Duke Welf IV of Bavaria, Gregory defends his even-handedness: since the maintenance of aequitas (impartiality) is a traditional duty of the papal office, Welf should accordingly cease murmuring (murmurare) and adhere to iustitia. Gregory was evidently still convinced of the efficacy of his policy of neutrality. The hopes for a German conference persisted into the new year. The record of the 1079 Lenten synod contains the denunciation by Rudolf's envoys of Henry's crushing and trampling of religion in Germany, including the capture and even torture of bishops and archbishops (a reference to the Battle of Mellrichstadt). Upon hearing this, many at the synod called for the use of the apostolic sword against Henry, but apostolic mildness prevailed. The record also includes oaths by envoys of Henry and Rudolf. Henry would supply an escort for the papal legates and promised to obey them according to iustitia. Rudolf would submit to any judgements that would emerge from the assembly. The granting to Henry of a more active role was an implicit acknowledgement of Rudolf's failure to extend his power beyond Saxony.

The pope immediately despatched two legates to Germany. A letter from Gregory, dated 3 March 1079, to his reliable, powerful ally Margravine Matilda, reports that they are already en route. The mission of pro-reformist Cardinal-bishop Peter of Albano and pro-Henrician Bishop Udalric of Padua was restricted. In a letter sent between July and October 1079, Gregory admonishes them, the one for his gullibility, the other for his guile. He reminds them of their instructions: they are to make no judgement regarding the kingship; neither are they to adjudicate on any bishop who has been invested by lay hands. Their objective is to try to reach agreement with Henry about holding a conference, re-establishing peace, and restoring bishops to their sees. They should speedily report to the pope. Depending on their feedback, Gregory will send 'suitable persons' (tales personae), who will hold an assembly to reach a definitive settlement of

221 Reg. 6.17a, pp. 427.16-428.24.
222 Reg. 6.22, p. 434.29-30.
the kingship. On 1 October 1079, Gregory wrote to his German supporters. The letter counters accusations of fickleness and harshness towards Henry by insisting that the pope is driven by a concern for *iustitia* and *aequitas*. He apologizes for certain unspecified aspects of his legates' behaviour; in this, they have strayed from his instructions. He tells his hearers that he will never deviate from the path of *iustitia*. In the meantime, further action on his part must await the return of his envoys to Rome. The legates returned separately late in 1079. According to Berthold, Udalric of Padua, the first to arrive, played upon the considerable support for the Salian king at Rome in his attempts to persuade the pope to support Henry. Rudolf's envoy contradicted these arguments, as subsequently did Peter of Albano upon reaching Rome. The legates were divided and their mission had failed.

Phase 4: January 1080 to July 1085

This failure ushered in the final phase of the relationship between king and pope. Gregory abandoned his neutrality, moving from aspiring adjudicator to supporter of Rudolf. He revealed his decision with stark clarity by his second excommunication of Henry at the Lenten synod of 7 March 1080. The breach between king and pope was now irreversible. *Excommunicatio regis Heinrici* is the subject of the final long seventh clause of the synodal record. The text combines a justification of the pope's previous actions with a searing indictment of Henry and a short exposition of some of Gregory's views of *auctoritas sedis apostolicae*. It takes the form of a prayer, in which Gregory addresses not only St Peter, as in 1076, but also St Paul. As in 1076, Gregory opens with a reference to a psalm in which David asks for God's help in a time of danger. He asks the two saints to 'incline your ears to me and graciously to hearken to me' (cf. Ps. 16: 6). He implicitly refutes any suggestion of personal ambition by emphasizing both his unworthiness and the unwillingness with which he shouldered the burden that the two

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227 For the legation, see Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, pp. 188-94.
229 Re papal authority, see below pp. 169f.
saints imposed on him. It was only 'with great sorrow and groaning and complaint' that he was placed upon 'your throne'. This burden is, of course, the papacy.

The address reviews the history of the conflict, beginning with an exegesis of Psalm 2: kings, secular and ecclesiastical princes, courtiers, and commoners, have come together against the Lord and Peter. One such is Henry 'whom men call king'. In conspiracy with many ultramontane bishops, he has raised his heel (cf. John 13: 18) against the Church. Confounded and humiliatus (cf. Ps. 73: 21), he came to Gregory in Lombardy to seek absolution from excommunication. Impressed by Henry's promises, the pope restored him to communion because he wished to establish iustitia and pax. Henry assured him that he would do so. When the ultramontane princes and bishops subsequently learned that Henry had not kept his oath they despaired of him, and — without the pope's counsel — elected Rudolf as king. Since then Rudolf has repeatedly confirmed his willingness to obey the apostolic see. When Henry implored Gregory's aid against Rudolf the pope replied that he was willing to hear both sides and establish which iustitia more favoured. Iustitia occurs four times in this passage. By impeding such an assembly, Henry has incurred his own excommunication. He has caused the death of a great multitude of Christians, the ruination of churches, and the desolation of almost the whole realm of the Germans.\(^{231}\) The papal sentence upon Henry is unambiguous and definitive:

Wherefore, trusting in the judgment and mercy of God and of his most holy mother the ever-virgin Mary, relying on your authority, I lay under excommunication and bind with the chains of the anathema the oft-mentioned Henry — the so-called king — and all his followers. And again, on behalf of Almighty God and of yourselves, I deny him the kingdom of the Germans and of Italy; I take away from him all royal power and dignity; and I forbid any Christian to obey him as king, and absolve from their oath all who have sworn or shall swear to him as ruler of the land. May this same Henry and his partisans be powerless in any war and obtain no victory during his life. Whereas I grant and concede in your name that Rudolf, whom, as a mark of fidelity to you, the Germans have chosen to be their king, may rule and defend the land of the Germans. To all who faithfully adhere to him I, trusting in your support, grant absolution of all sins and your blessing in this life and the life to come. For

\(^{231}\) Reg. 7.14a(7), pp. 483.1-486.10
even as Henry, on account of his pride, disobedience and falseness, is justly cast
down from his royal dignity, so the power and dignity of kingship are granted to
Rudolf, for his humility, obedience and truthfulness.²³²

The most obviously controversial shared feature of both the 1076 and 1080 synodal
records is the apostolic see’s claim that it has the right to ‘depose’ kings. The 1080 synod
added the right to transfer political authority. There are other key elements in the
pope’s arraignment of Henry. First, Gregory asserts that at Canossa he neither restored
Henry to the kingship from which he had deposed him nor reactivated the oaths of those
who had sworn fidelity to him. Second, Henry subsequently established a reputation for
failing to keep his oaths. Third, Henry’s repeated obstruction of an adjudicatory
assembly in Germany means that he has brought his excommunication upon himself as a
consequence of the explicit warning given at the 1078 Lenten synod. Fourth, Gregory is
deeply impressed by Rudolf’s repeated commitments to obey the apostolic see. Fifth,
while Henry is removed from the kingship of the Germans and of Italy, the synod’s
sanctioning of Rudolf’s royal title applies only to the regnum Teutonicorum to which he
has been elected.

The synod’s decision came too late, neither helping Rudolf nor seriously damaging
Henry. Reaction was soon forthcoming. The papal and royal parties abandoned restraint
in their renewed verbal war. On 12 April 1080, a number of German bishops denounced
the pope and withdrew their obedience during an Easter mass in Bamberg. An episcopal
council in Mainz at Whitsun (31 May) declared that another worthier person should be
elected in place of Hildebrand. Most dramatic and decisive was the outcome of a synod
held under the king’s aegis on 25 June 1080 in Brixen, a south Bavarian city chosen to
facilitate the attendance of pro-Henrician north Italian bishops. Henry, accompanied by

²³² Reg. 7.14a(7), pp. 486.11-487.3: ‘Quapropter confidens de iudicio et misericordia Dei eiusque piissime
matris semper virginis Mariae, fultus vestra auctoritate saepe nominatum Heinricum, quem regem
dicunt, omnesque fatores eius excommunicationi subicio et anathematis vinculis alligo. Et iterum
regnum Teutonicorum et Italiae ex parte omnipotentis Dei et vestra interdicens ei omnem potestatem et
dignitatem illi regiam tollo et, ut nullus christianus ei sicut regi oboediat, interdico omnesque, qui ei
iuraverunt vel iurabunt de regni dominacione, a iuramento promissione absolvo. Ipse autem Heinricus
cum suis fatoarus in omni congressione belli nullas vires nullamque in vita sua victoriam optineat. Ut
autem Rodulfus regnum Teutonicum regat et defendat, quem Teutonicci elegerunt sibi in regem ad
vestram fidelitatem, ex parte vestra dono largior et concedo, omnibus sibi fideliter adhaerentibus
absolutionem omnium peccatorum vestramque benedictionem in hac vita et in futuro vestra fretus
fiducia largior. Sicut enim Heinricus pro sua superbia inobedientia et falsitate a regni dignitate iuste
abicitur, ita Rodulfo pro sua humilitate oboedientia et veritate potestas et dignitas regni conceditur.’
a military force, acted as moderator (*mediante*). The first signatory of the synod decree was Cardinal Hugh Candidus ‘in the name of all the Roman cardinals’. Twenty-eight other bishops, most of them Italian, added their names. The charges against ‘the cruel madness of one false monk Hildebrand’ could hardly be more serious. St Peter is crying out that not only is the king supreme, but that governors are to be sent by him for the punishment of evildoers (cf. I Pet. 2: 13-14). To their most glorious king it seems just that the bishops should issue the sentence of divine censure against Hildebrand, and depose him from the papacy, before the material sword is used against him. There follows a catalogue of Hildebrand’s alleged crimes: his untrammelled ambition, the falseness of his monkish profession, his devotion to obscene theatrical shows, his liking for filthy lucre, his seizure of the archdiaconate, his involvement in the violent murder of no fewer than four popes, his usurpation of the pontificate in 1073 by means of armed force. Furthermore, after taking over the papacy, Hildebrand subverted ecclesiastical order and plotted the physical and spiritual death of the catholic and peaceful king (Henry). In addition, Hildebrand defends as king a known oath-breaker and traitor (Rudolf). He has converted concord to discord, promoted scandals among brothers, and divorce among the married. The assembly, claiming to have gathered through the agency of God, passed judgement against that same most insolent Hildebrand who preached sacrilege and arson, defended perjuries and murders, and wandered beyond the limits of the true Faith. Their final verdict was that he must be canonically deposed and expelled; if he did not abdicate then he was forever damned.

Despite Hugh Candidus’ claim to speak on behalf of the Roman cardinalate, there was an implicit acceptance that only the Roman Church itself could canonically depose the pope; hence the call to Hildebrand to stand down of his own accord. The threat to use ‘the material sword’ against Hildebrand suggests that Henry might have been considering a military expedition to Rome following the precedent set by his father in 1046, an intervention that saw the election of a new pope who then crowned Henry III emperor. That prospect must have seemed more likely when the Brixen assembly nominated Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna as the prospective anti-pope.\(^\text{234}\) He

\(^{233}\) *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, Appendix C, pp. 69-73.

subsequently took the name ‘Clement III’, a conscious echo of Henry III’s nominee, Pope Clement II, who had performed the imperial crowning ceremony in 1046. The 1080 Lenten synod in Rome had also renewed Guibert’s original excommunication at the 1078 synod. It has been surmised that Guibert’s reputation as a moderate supporter of reform commended him both to the bishops and to the king, the former for reasons of principle, the latter as a matter of political judgement.

The pope reacted quickly with a forthright *epistola* to the bishops of southern Italy. The letter, dated 21 July 1080, denounces Brixen as an assembly of Satan where diabolical pride inflamed the *dicti episcopi*. King Henry is the author of this pestilential council. The pope recalls both the shameful ditch of confusion into which Henry fell by his support of Cadalus, and his direction three years earlier of the conspiracies of the Lombard bishops against Rome. St Peter has protected the papacy before and stands ready to inflict apostolic retribution again. Gregory specifically denounces Guibert as the ravager of the holy church of Ravenna, a sacrilegious perjurer against the Roman Church, a man who is stigmatized for the wickedest of crimes, and is now Antichrist and heresiarch. The pope trusts that the ruin of these men will not long be delayed. In the summer of 1080, Gregory attempted, apparently unsuccessfully, to procure military action against Guibert by the southern Italian Norman leadership. In two letters dated 15 October, he wrote to the clergy and laity of Ravenna and its neighbourhood to promote the deposition of the *dictus archiepiscopus* and the election of a replacement. On 11 December 1080, he wrote to them again, identifying a certain Raidolfus as the new archbishop, and encouraging them to support him against Guibert, that sacrilegious and accursed destroyer.

At the 1081 Lenten synod Gregory again excommunicated Henry and his supporters, ‘who had hardened their hearts against the previous excommunication’. This was his first general excommunication of the king’s supporters. The surviving letters

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235 Reg. 5.14a, p. 369.4-5.; Reg. 7.14a(3), p. 481.4-9.
238 Reg. 8.7, pp. 525.6-526.11.
240 Reg. 8.14, pp. 534.31-535.27.
241 Reg. 8.20a, p. 544.10-12.
between then and his death in 1085 exhibit little evidence of further development in Gregory's thought on the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. Rather, they reiterate and summarize his conceptions. Bishop Hermann of Metz asked the pope to supply him with arguments with which he could counter 'the madness of those who chatter with wicked mouth' that the apostolic see did not have the power to excommunicate the king. Gregory responded with a long letter, dated 15 March 1081, which has been described 'a complete theology of the relations between church and state'.

Meanwhile, on 15 October 1080, the anti-Henrician cause in Germany suffered what proved to be a disastrous setback when Rudolf of Swabia died from battle wounds. This was an age when success or failure on the battlefield was seen as a sign of God's will. Despite the eventual nomination of a new anti-king, the military challenge to Henry gradually diminished, even in Saxony, so that the Salian king felt increasingly free to attend to Gregory's removal. In late February 1081, the pope appeared unworried, telling Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino that he had been told that Henry had 'never been more unhappily placed'. By the time of his letter of March 1081 to two loyal allies, Bishop Altmann of Passau (1065-91) and Abbot William of Hirsau (1069-91), Gregory had finally learned of Rudolf's death. Gregory says that almost all of his faithful followers are now exhorting him to accept Henry. He acknowledges the overwhelming backing for Henry in Italy and the unlikelihood of adequate military support for himself from south Germany should the king journey south. The pope seems to be more concerned for Margravine Matilda of Tuscany. In the event of the king entering Lombardy, Bishop Altmann, Gregory's papal vicar in South Germany since 1076, should induce Duke Welf IV of Bavaria to perform fealty (*facere fidelitatem*) to St Peter. By this means, he and others may provide military service for the apostolic see, and the Italians might be persuaded to transfer their allegiance from Henry to St Peter. The letter counsels caution on the issue of the election of Rudolf's replacement. The chosen candidate must be *idoneus* (suitable), that is to say, committed to the defence and oversight of Christianity. It acknowledges the weariness of Gregory's brothers with the

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243 For Saxon disunity, see Fenske, *Adelsopposition*, pp. 77, 82.

244 Reg. 9.4, p. 579.1-3.
long struggle to restore membra diaboli to christiana libertas. Nevertheless, the pope insists that the new king must be oboediens, humiliter devotus, and utilis (serviceable) to holy Church. To this end, Gregory includes the wording of an oath to be taken by Rudolf’s successor.\(^{245}\) This oath is germane to the later discussions of the pope’s ideal rex Christianus and his understanding of the meaning of fidelitas.\(^{246}\) In 1081, Gregory instructed Bishop Altmann that he should fraternally receive back into the fold any penitent erstwhile episcopal supporters of Henry who seek reconciliation with the apostolic see.\(^{247}\)

A letter of May 1081 reveals that Gregory was now less sanguine about the possibility of military intervention by Henry in Italy. He has learned that the king is already in Ravenna, and thinking of advancing on Rome with a military force, despite provisioning difficulties. The pope is undaunted; he would sooner undergo death than relinquish iustitia or yield to the impieties of Henry and his followers.\(^{248}\) Henry did indeed reach Rome but, unable to persuade the Romans to admit him, eventually retired north of the Appennines. He returned in the spring of 1082, and eventually captured Rome in early June 1083. However, he retreated in the face of the summer heat, and fever subsequently wiped out most of his remaining garrison.

During the summer of 1083 a letter from Gregory summoned to a November synod those French and German bishops and abbots who seem to wish to remain in the bosom of the holy Roman Church. It castigates those who are neglecting to bring relief to their persecuted mother; few have shown themselves to be upholders of iustitia; nevertheless, he has still not given up hope of ending the rift between the sedes apostolica and the regnum.\(^{249}\) The record of the November 1083 synod, ill attended as a result of the king’s ‘perfidy’, explains Henry’s earlier seizure of the city walls as the result of the citizens’ negligence rather than the valour of the king’s forces; furthermore, famine and war-weariness have forced many to flee the city.\(^{250}\)

\(^{245}\) Reg. 9.3, pp. 573.16-577.10. For wording of oath, see p. 254.
\(^{246}\) Rex Christianus: see below pp. 186ff.; fidelitas: see below pp. 254ff.
\(^{247}\) Reg. 9.10, p. 587.15-31.
\(^{248}\) Reg. 9.11, pp. 588.12-589.13.
\(^{250}\) Reg. 9.35a, pp. 627.26-628.20.
The spring of 1084 saw the desertion to Guibert and Henry of twelve cardinals, some other prelates, and members of the papal administration. This was followed by the defection of seventeen of the twenty-eight cardinal priests. There is no doubt that Gregory's dogged refusal to consider any concessions to Henry contributed to the disillusion of many leading supporters. Henry eventually negotiated an agreement with the Romans, and re-entered the city shortly before Easter 1084. Guibert was crowned anti-pope 'Clement III' on Palm Sunday. He in turn crowned Henry emperor on Easter Sunday. Gregory withdrew to the redoubt of Castel Sant' Angelo where he endured further defections. On learning of the approach of Robert Guiscard and a Norman army, Henry abandoned the city and 'Clement III' retired to Tivoli. The Normans entered Rome at the end of May. The ensuing battle with the inhabitants caused widespread devastation. After the Normans withdrew, the citizens' anger made Gregory's presence untenable. In July, he left Rome with the hated Normans. After initially taking refuge in Montecassino, he eventually reached Salerno where he died on 25 May 1085.

At some point during the second half of 1084, Pope Gregory sent his last uncompromising call to the faithful in the form of a letter to the prelates of France and Germany. It asks why a vast throng of kings and princes is standing against Christ and St Peter (cf. Ps. 2: 2), trying to destroy the Christian religion, and spreading their depraved heresy. The pope cannot disregard the threat posed by those who wish to enslave the bride of Christ. If his hearers truly grieve at this, they must heed the instructions of the pope's legates. Unworthy though he is, God has spoken to him. Since rising to the papacy, his greatest concern has been that the bride of Christ should return to her former glory, and stand free, chaste, and catholic. The ancient enemy has armed his members against the apostolic see and, as the time of Antichrist approaches, the more violently he strives to destroy the Christian religion. Gregory delivers a final summary of the source of papal authority: all true Christians know and believe that St Peter, the prince of the apostles, is the father of all Christians and their first shepherd after Christ, and that the holy Roman Church is the mother and mistress of all the churches; that being so the pope is their brother and unworthy master. The letter asks and commands

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251 Beno, Benonis et aliorum cardinialum schismaticorum contrum Gregorium VII. et Urbanum II. scripta, ed. K. Francke, MGH Libelli 2, pp. 369-70, 375, 394.

252 Tellenbach, Church in Western Europe, pp. 250-1. For sources on Gregory's death, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 677, n. 1.
Gregory’s listeners by Almighty God to help and succour their father and mother, through whom they will gain absolution for their sins, and blessing and grace in the world to come.  

In summary, there were four distinct phases in Pope Gregory’s relationship with Henry. The first lasted from Gregory’s election in April 1073 to late 1075. For most of this period, neither party was anxious to exacerbate the pre-existing tensions centred on the struggle for the Milan archiepiscopate and the resulting excommunication of five of Henry’s advisers by Pope Alexander II. Gregory sought the mediation of third parties to bring about a rapprochement with the king. In the meantime, Henry was preoccupied with the third, and most serious, of the rebellions by the Saxons, who strove to exploit the differences between king and pope. In spring 1074, Henry was restored to full communion following his penitential letter to Gregory the previous August. Although the king was for a while the pope’s filius karissimus, the issue of Henry’s continuing contact with the excommunicate advisers did not go away. The conclusive defeat of the Saxons by the crown forces in June 1075 diminished the king’s inclination to employ moderation in his dealings with Gregory. Relations became increasingly strained as Henry began to impose himself in Italy. The dispute turned into an open rupture after the pope’s ‘ultimatum letter’ of December 1075 ordered Henry to banish the five excommunicate counsellors from his presence and confess his sins to a suitable bishop.

The council of Worms in January 1076 initiated the second phase. The assembly renounced Gregory and urged him to abdicate. The succeeding Lenten synod in Rome excommunicated Henry, suspended him from the kingship, and released his subjects from their oaths of fealty. The king reacted by summoning a council in Utrecht at Easter. It proclaimed Gregory’s excommunication, which was confirmed in June at Mainz. During 1076, the pope sent a number of letters justifying his actions towards Henry. In September, Gregory stated that the March synod had deposed Henry from the kingship. In Germany, hostility to Henry grew dramatically, especially in Saxony and the southern duchies. The Tribur-Oppenheim meetings produced Henry’s Promissio to seek absolution

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from the pope by February 1077, failing which the rebel princes would cease to recognize him as king. The plan was that Pope Gregory would grant this absolution in the presence of the princes at a proposed assembly in Augsburg. The prospect of such a humiliating threat to his authority by a probable alliance between the princes and the pope prompted Henry to intercept Gregory *en route* north. His penitent appearance at Canossa in January 1077 persuaded the pope to perform his pastoral role by granting him absolution. However, Gregory neither revoked Henry’s suspension from the kingship nor reinstated his subjects’ oaths of fealty to him. Nevertheless, Henry had successfully pre-empted an assembly that might have seen his deposition with the pope’s approval.

Canossa triggered the third phase. After the election of the anti-king Rudolf in March 1077, Gregory saw his role as that of aspirant mediator rather than anti-Henrician partisan. His impartiality disappointed the Saxons and the princely ‘deposition faction’. The pope maintained this stance for three years while his envoys strove to arrange an assembly in Germany at which Gregory or suitable legates might arbitrate the dispute by assigning the kingship to whichever claimant had *iustitia* on his side. However, by 1080 Henry’s incessant frustrating of plans for the assembly, combined with the overwhelming evidence of the king’s ‘trampling of religion’ in Germany, persuaded Gregory to relinquish his neutrality.

The 1080 Lenten synod launched the fourth phase, re-excommunicating Henry, affirming his deposition and the revocation of his subjects’ oath of fealty, and granting the kingship to Rudolf, the candidate who had consistently promised *oboedientia* to the apostolic see. The rupture between Gregory and Henry was definitive. At Brixen, ‘Hildebrand’ was called upon to abdicate and an anti-pope was nominated. Rudolf’s death in October 1080 was the key event that turned the military struggle in Henry’s favour. The king’s army eventually captured Rome in March 1084. Guibert was enthroned as anti-pope ‘Clement III’. He duly conferred the imperial crown on Henry. The Normans arrived in Rome and sacked the city. Gregory retreated southwards with his Norman liberators, and died in Salerno the following summer.254

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2.5 Rudolf of Swabia

The Register includes six letters from Pope Gregory to Rudolf of Rheinfelden, duke of Swabia (1057-79). A further ten allude to him. 15 March 1077, the date of the duke's election as the German anti-king, is a convenient dividing point for reviewing his relationship with the pope. His elevation was a key factor in the disastrous deterioration in the relations between Gregory and Rudolf's brother-in-law, King Henry. Rudolf had long been linked with the papal court. Prior to Gregory's election, he had been closely associated with a new wave of monastic reform in Germany, most notably through his patronage of the monastery of St Blasien. It has been conjectured that the dissatisfaction of church reformers with the behaviour of Henry and his advisers in ecclesiastical affairs encouraged endeavours to reform monastic life beyond the ambit of the imperial church.

The raising of Hildebrand to the papacy in April 1073 occurred at a time of considerable tension between the papal and royal courts. As already noted, the new pope declined to communicate directly with King Henry because of his continuing association with the five advisers excommunicated by Pope Alexander II at the recent Lenten synod. In the summer of 1073 Rudolf was one of a number of princes whose assistance Gregory sought to broker a settlement between himself and the rex Teutonicorum. Gregory's letter dated 1 September 1073 to the Swabian duke was his reply to a (lost) letter from Rudolf, which had congratulated the pope on his election. The pope's epistola states his appreciation for the duke's past devotion to the honour of the Holy Roman Church, agrees with Rudolf on the necessity of concord between sacerdotium and imperium, and invites him to visit Rome to discuss the matter with him and the other proposed mediators. The influence of Peter Damian's ideas on the correct

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3 See above pp. 56ff.
4 For Rudolf's letter, see Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, p. 44, n. 115. For the scholarship on the letter, see ibid, p. 58, n. 174; also p. 60, n. 179. See above p. 58.
5 Reg. 1.19, pp. 31.22-32.25. For a survey of Reg. 1.19, see Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, p. 45.
relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, as set out in his earlier letter #120 (1065-6) to King Henry, finds expression in Gregory's declaration that 'just as the human body is ruled with temporal light by two eyes, so the body of the Church is recognised to be ruled and illuminated with spiritual light by these two dignities when they are concordant in pure religion'.

Another letter bearing the same date reiterates Gregory's instruction to Bishop Anselm II of Lucca to refuse investiture from Henry until the king has made satisfaction with God for communicating with excommunicates. It names Rudolf as one of those who are trying to bring this about. Attention has already been drawn to Henry's *supplex epistola* to Gregory, of August/September 1073. Some historians regarded it as evidence that Rudolf had returned to the king's court and had persuaded Henry to submit to the pope. However, another possibility is that Henry sent the letter to forestall a possible meeting between Rudolf and the pope, an encounter that might undermine the king's position. Borino (1956) conjectured that episcopal expressions of concern influenced the production of the document.

On 11 January 1075, Gregory wrote to Rudolf and another South German duke, Berthold I of Carinthia, concerning simony and clerical marriage. For many years, the apostolic see had tried, by means of councils and legates, to enforce its prohibitions of these offences. Faced with overwhelming resistance from the German episcopate, Gregory now turned to these dukes, confident in their faith and devotion, and asked them to ensure the obedience of their local bishops to these canon laws. They should, using force if necessary, prevent simoniacs and unchaste priests from performing clerical functions. Here is a notable example of a pope deploying secular authority to enforce canonical discipline on the clergy. It also demonstrates Gregory's trust in the pro-reform instincts of Rudolf and Berthold, despite the final remarks in Rudolf's copy, which instruct him to make amends for his past involvement in simoniacal transactions by

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6 Reg. 1.19, p. 31.32-4.  
7 Reg. 1.21, pp. 34.31-35.16.  
8 Reg. 1.29a, pp. 48.2-49.26. See also above p. 60.  
10 Borino, 'Perché', p. 331.  
11 A copy of the letter was also sent to the third south German duke, Welf IV of Bavaria. See Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 118, n. 182.
using those financial gains either for the benefit of the churches in question or for the relief of the poor.¹²

Rudolf was one of the leading princes whose presence is not recorded at the councils of Worms and Mainz, in January and June 1076 respectively, which saw the issuing of forceful denunciations of Pope Gregory.¹³ A hugely important development in the subsequent deterioration in Henry’s position was Rudolf’s election as anti-king by the minority ‘deposition faction’ of the German princes at Forchheim on 15 March 1077.¹⁴ It took place in the presence of two papal legates, Cardinal-deacon Bernard and Abbot Bernard of St Victor in Marseilles. According to Bruno of Merseburg, their intervention to reduce the tarnishing of the proceedings with simony helped to expedite the election. Rudolf gave two important undertakings: first, bishops would be freely elected by their own churches (that is, without the taint of simony); second, in an explicit rejection of hereditary right, future kings would be elected by the princes.¹⁵ In choosing this patron of reformed monasticism and ally of Empress Agnes, the princes hoped to promote papal support for Rudolf’s election and Henry’s deposition.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it is improbable that Gregory would have thrown his support behind a rival king so soon after he had absolved the ostensibly penitent Henry. Subsequently, the pope consistently denied having given his backing to Rudolf’s election. According to the record of the 1080 Lenten synod, Rudolf’s election in 1077 took place without the pope’s counsel (sine suo consilio).¹⁷ Gregory was even more explicit in a letter thought to date from summer 1083. It maintains that in 1077, not only had Rudolf not received his kingdom by his instruction or advice, but that the pope had warned the senior prelates who set Rudolf up that unless they defended their actions he would depose them from their dignities, and Rudolf from his kingdom.¹⁸ In practice, Gregory adopted a neutral position between the rival kings, even overruling Cardinal-deacon Bernard’s

¹² Reg. 2.45, pp. 182.32-185.23.
¹³ See above pp. 69ff.
¹⁵ Bruno, Saxonicum bellum, p. 85. See also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 170-1; Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 169-70.
¹⁶ Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 169-70.
¹⁷ Reg. 7.14a(7), p. 484.21-23.
¹⁸ Reg. 9.29, p. 613.6-12.
excommunication of Henry in 1077. He publicly maintained this policy until the 1080 Lenten synod. It has been suggested that another consideration in the pope's thinking during this time was his conviction that a primary function of a rex Christianus was to act as an agent of the apostolic see in the task of church reform. However, he could only perform this role if he possessed sufficient potestas. Notwithstanding Rudolf's reforming record, it can rarely, if ever, have been apparent to Gregory that he qualified in this regard.

In the wake of the 1079 Lenten synod, Gregory communicated with Rudolf and his supporters in two letters. The first, despatched in late February, addresses King Rudolf and his supporters in the regnum Saxonum. It suggests that the pope regards their military endeavours as having something of the nature of a holy war. It opens by granting the recipients absolution for their sins and apostolic blessing. The succeeding text makes it clear that it is through their military services that they are earning this apparently unconditional absolution: despite the storms of war with which they are assailed they should increasingly devote themselves to safeguarding Christian truth, and zealously set themselves and their bodies as a wall for the house of God (cf. 2 Tim. 2: 5). The letter also praises the nobility of their race, and assures them of the pope's prayers and his unwavering concern for their needs. The second epistola, composed in March or April 1079, addresses Rudolf and all his supporters who are 'defending the Christian religion'. It indicates Gregory's distrust of Henry, and notes the persistent attempts by envoys and friends of Henry to bend him to the Salian king's side; with the help of the Holy Spirit the pope will distinguish true iustitia from false, perfect oboedientia from feigned. Gregory's reassurances about his resistance to the ploys of Henry's side implicitly bolstered his defence against the charges of papal vacillation by Rudolf's allies.

By the time of the Lenten synod of early March 1080, Gregory had decided to abandon his policy of neutrality between the rival kings. The synodal record recalls that

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19 See above p. 86.
20 See above p. 89.
21 See below p. 192.
22 Robinson, Henry IV, p. 178.
23 See Erdmann, Origin, p. 92.
after his election in 1077, Rudolf had immediately sent an envoy to the pope. He informed Gregory that Rudolf had accepted the kingship only under duress, and was ready to obey Gregory in all matters, a position from which he had not deviated during the intervening years. This presentation of Rudolf is consistent with the topos of the reluctant king (*rex renitens*), the view that acceptance of royal office unwillingly and under protest is a mark of a just candidate for kingship.²⁶ It was now, in 1080, that Gregory re-excommunicated Henry and granted the *potestas et dignitas regni* to Rudolf in recognition of his *humilitas, oboedientia, and veritas* (truthfulness).²⁷ However, within months Gregory's chosen *rex Teutonicorum* was dead, mortally wounded at the Battle of Hohenmölsen on the banks of the River Elster on 15 October 1080. This was a critical setback for the rebels and a propaganda victory for Henry, who accused Rudolf of 'perjury': 'It was the Lord who destroyed our knight, the perjurer who Hildebrand ordained king over us'.²⁸ The accusation appeared to be vindicated by Rudolf's loss in the battle of the right hand with which he had sworn fealty to Henry at his investiture as duke of Swabia in 1057. Furthermore, Gregory's repeated assertions that *iustitia* and divine favour characterized the apostolic see's choice of king seemed to have been confounded by divine judgement. Nevertheless, in 1081 the pope lamented the death of King Rudolf 'of blessed memory', and stated that his successor should be as *humiliter, devotus,* and *utilis* to the Church as he had anticipated that Rudolf would have been.²⁹

In conclusion, it is clear that the pope was favourably disposed towards the Swabian duke, even though they never met. This derived largely from Rudolf's connection with the Empress Agnes and his encouragement of reformed monasticism at St Blasien. Furthermore, from the beginning of Gregory's pontificate Rudolf, unlike Henry, consistently and unequivocally expressed his willingness to obey the apostolic see. In the early years of his reign, Gregory welcomed Rudolf's participation in the efforts to reconcile pope and king. Following Henry's restoration to the communion of the Church at Canossa in January 1077, and Rudolf's election as anti-king a few weeks later, Gregory

²⁷ *Reg.* 7.14a(7), pp. 484.21-487.3. See above pp. 89ff.
²⁸ *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, 17, p. 25.
sought to arbitrate between the rivals, hoping that this would facilitate the return of *pax* and *concordia*, and promote the welfare of the Church in Germany. During the next three years, the rebels became disillusioned with the pope’s perceived irresoluteness, while Henry’s military position strengthened. His absolution at Canossa contributed hugely to his recovery. When Gregory eventually re-excommunicated Henry and declared in favour of Rudolf at the 1080 Lenten synod his actions had much less influence than would have been the case in 1077.
2.6 Wratislav II, dux Boemiae

Gregory's Register includes fifteen letters related to Bohemia. The duchy resembled certain other 'peripheral' European lands in that its Christianisation and consolidation were relatively recent phenomena that had come about through the agency of ruling princes. Members of the Přemyslid dynasty founded the vast majority of ecclesiastical institutions in Bohemia. Moravia was annexed c. 1029. At the time of Gregory's elevation, a distinctive feature of Bohemian Christianity was the persistence of the so-called Slavonic liturgy. The fact that the see of Prague came under the jurisdiction of the German archbishopric of Mainz was a potentially troublesome element. Duke Wratislav II (1061-92), who ruled Bohemia throughout Gregory's pontificate, had sworn fealty to Henry IV. Politically therefore, Bohemia was subject to German suzerainty and was a firm ally of the rex Teutonicorum in his conflict with the apostolic see. Gregory's letters show that the Bohemian issues that most preoccupied him were the prolonged quarrels between Duke Wratislav and his brother, Bishop Jaromir of Prague, and between Jaromir and Bishop John of Olomouc. The surviving correspondence suggests that the pope's early interest in the duchy was not sustained; fourteen of the fifteen letters were composed during the first two years of his pontificate.

On 8 July 1073, Gregory wrote to Duke Wratislav and his brothers, the margraves Conrad and Otto. The letter applauds them for the good will with which they had received two papal legates, the cardinal-deacons Bernard and Gregory; this demonstrates their devotion and reverence to Saints Peter and Paul. Having lamented the rarity of earlier legatine visits, the pope turns to the matter of Bishop Jaromir's reported hostility to the two envoys. Gregory wants the duke to summon Jaromir, once Gregory's friend but now 'a follower of Simon Magus', to meet the legates. Wratislav is to urge his brother to obey their righteous admonitions. Should Jaromir fail to respond, the bishop will incur severe apostolic anger and experience the full force of papal

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auctoritas. Gregory invokes a number of ominous scriptural passages to reinforce his warnings.  

The pope was willing to acknowledge royal rulers as religiosae potestates in order to encourage their correct behaviour. His next letter to Wratislav, dated 17 December 1073, renews the decision of his predecessor, Alexander II, to accede to the duke’s request for a mitre, a symbol of senior religious office ‘not customarily granted to a lay person’. Gregory expresses his wish to build upon the ‘intimate affection’ (intima dilectio) represented by the mitre. For his part, Wratislav should think of his own salvation and live up to his promises of zealous devotion to St Peter and the apostolic see. In permitting Wratislav to wear a mitre, Alexander had confirmed a privilege granted to Wratislav by Pope Nicholas II in return for the payment to Rome of an annual census. The mitre was a sign closely related to Rome, originally a symbol of Roman patriciate, now an episcopal liturgical ornament. It was undoubtedly intended to signify Bohemia’s connection to the holy see.

Gregory’s efforts to resolve the conflict between Bishops Jaromír of Prague (Bohemia) and John of Olomouc (Moravia) dominate his next ten letters. Two epistolae dated 31 January 1074, to Jaromír and Wratislav respectively, indicate his concern to protect individual rights. The letter to Jaromír criticizes his wrongdoing, inoboedientia, and evasiveness, but overrides his legates’ decision by allowing the bishop to retain the property of his church, the loss of which Jaromír had presented as excusing his non-appearance in Rome. Gregory urges Wratislav to instruct both bishops to present themselves at the apostolic see by Palm Sunday, and earnestly desires the duke’s own

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2 Reg. 1.17, pp. 27.12-28.30.  
3 See above p. 30, below p. 112.  
4 There is no surviving record of such a grant by Alexander II: see Cowdrey, Register, p. 43, n. 1.  
6 Reg. 1.38, p. 60.15-31.  
7 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 449. For Nicholas II’s grant of the mitre, see Deusdedit, Collectio canonum: Die Kanonessammlung des Kardinals Deusdedit, ed. V. Wulf von Glanvell, 1 (Paderborn, 1905), 3.279, p. 385.  
10 Reg. 1.44, pp. 67.25-68.18.
The conflict was again on the pope’s mind when he despatched three letters, dated 18 March, on the subject. The first warns Wratislav’s brothers, the margraves Conrad and Otto, that an attack by them on the see of Olomouc will endanger their salvation. The second chastises Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz for his unworthy, arrogant attempt to usurp the pope’s adjudicatory role in the dispute, and reminds him that his own continuance in office is in the gift of the apostolic see. The third letter informs Wratislav that he has rebuked Siegfried and that the duke should regard Siegfried’s judgements as null and void. On 18 April 1074, Gregory wrote again to Wratislav to inform him that Jaromir had presented himself in Rome and had exhibited appropriate humility. Consequently, he had been restored to office. The next synod would address the protracted dispute between the bishops. The letter urges Wratislav to be reconciled with Jaromir.

Three letters dated 22 September 1074 show Gregory re-engaging with the continuing quarrel between the bishops. One rebukes Jaromir, not just for his latest offences against John of Olomouc, but also for claiming papal sanction for them. He must return the castle that he has unlawfully seized from Bishop John. The letter also chastises Jaromir for his mendacious complaints against his brother Wratislav, and his unlawful excommunication of some of the duke’s men. Gregory attached a copy of this letter to an epistola to Wratislav, which expresses his gratitude to the duke for sending the census associated with the mitre. He also thanks him for his obedient reconciliation with Jaromir but advises him to study the enclosed letter in which he will learn of Jaromir’s deceit and the pope’s reproof. The third letter, addressed to Bishop John, encloses copies of the other two letters and assures him of Gregory’s full support. The following year the two bishops appeared before the Lenten synod in Rome. A registered document, dated 2 March 1075, records Gregory’s verdict. It states that the complexities of the dispute are such that they have proved impossible to unravel satisfactorily. In the

11 Reg. 1.45. pp. 67.31-69.24.
12 Reg. 1.59. pp. 86.24-87.8.
13 Reg. 1.60. pp. 87.20-89.5.
14 Reg. 1.61. pp. 89.19-90.8.
15 Reg. 1.78. pp. 111.18-112.27.
17 Reg. 2.7. pp. 135.34-136.35.
interests of peace, the pope has made a pragmatic decision to divide the contentious possessions between the bishops, while leaving open the possibility that the production within ten years of further evidence will prompt another review.19

On 17 April 1075, Gregory wrote two more letters to Bohemia, the first to Wratislav, the second a pastoral letter to the people of Bohemia. The themes of the former are peace and reconciliation. The pope asks the duke to restore his nephew Frederick, a 'fidelis' of the Roman Church, to his beneficium; Wratislav should let iustitia be his guide. More generally, he should work to establish pax in his land, particularly between himself and his brothers Conrad and Otto, and between Bishops Jaromir and John.20 The other letter exhorts the Bohemian people to follow the Christian way of life: love God and their neighbours, live in peace, pay tithes, give alms and hospitality, and flee carnal desires.21

One other epistola from Gregory to Bohemia survives: a letter to Wratislav dated 2 January 1080. It is clear that the pope’s hopes for the duke and his duchy have not borne fruit. The letter rebukes Wratislav for his dealings with excommunicates, by which he presumably means Henry IV and his allies. The pope had failed to coax him away from his support for the German king.22 This would subsequently be demonstrated by Wratislav’s elevation to the kingship by Emperor Henry IV in the last year of Gregory’s pontificate. Most of the letter consists of an extended reproof to the duke for his failure to pursue iustitia and respond to papal admonitions, together with warnings about the implications for his salvation. Gregory also categorically refuses Wratislav’s request to allow the use of the Slavonic liturgy in Bohemian churches.23

In the final analysis, the pope made little headway in establishing the apostolic see’s authority in Bohemia. His letters indicate that most of his efforts were devoted to encouraging peace and stability, particularly with regard to the protracted and complex

19 Reg. 2.53, pp. 197.15-198.28.
20 Reg. 2.71, pp. 231.12-232.5.
21 Reg. 2.72, pp. 232.23-233.2.
22 Vlasto, Entry, p. 107.
23 Reg. 7.11, pp. 473.13-475.12.
dispute between Bishops Jaromir and John. His sustained interest was partly motivated by his concern that this Christian land should be independent of German influence; hence his sharp reprimand to the archbishop of Mainz for trying to interfere in the matter. His rejection of the use of the Slavonic liturgy is another illustration of his desire to impose St Peter’s control over the western Christian Church.
2.7 The rulers of Hungary

This chapter examines the eight surviving letters of Gregory VII addressed to recipients in the recently unified and Christianized kingdom of Hungary. Its emergence as a political entity is usually dated to the accession of King Stephen I (1000-1038), the first Christian king of the Árpád dynasty. Stephen strove to consolidate his power at the expense of the (mostly pagan) clan leaders, and pursued the extension and unification of his kingdom through the creation of a territorial organization that was both ecclesiastical and royal. During his reign, the systematic establishment of Christianity was legally enforced. When Stephen died, he left no surviving son and the middle decades of the century saw a series of struggles for succession, although the kingship survived as an institution. German kings repeatedly tried to expand their rule into Hungary by exploiting these conflicts, sometimes obtaining oaths of fealty from favoured candidates. In 1063, Salomon I (1063-74) took possession of the throne following the military intervention of his brother-in-law, King Henry IV of Germany. In the early years of his reign Salomon seems to have ruled in harmony with his cousin and rival Duke Gésa (1074-77). However, their relationship turned into open conflict and Gésa turned to the papacy for support against his German-backed rival.

In a letter, dated 17 March 1074, Gregory VII replied to a (lost) letter from Gésa. The epistola praises the duke for his expressions of devotion and reverence for the apostolic see, which would assure his salvation. It professes Gregory’s ‘fatherly affection’ (paterinus affectus) for Gésa, declaring that any enemy who plots against him will experience apostolic wrath. Meanwhile on 14 March 1074, despite German support, Salomon was defeated by an army led by Duke Gésa and his brothers, and fled to the west. By the time of his oath of fidelity to Henry IV later that year Salomon, although

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2 N. Berend, ‘Hungary in the eleventh and twelfth centuries’, NCMH 2, p. 304.
5 Engel, Realm, p. 31.
6 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 444.
7 Reg. 1.58, pp. 85.17-86.4.
8 Engel, Realm, pp. 31-2.
nominally still king, had lost most of his effective authority in Hungary. His lordship was now limited to the western borderlands. Nevertheless, in a letter dated 28 October 1074, Gregory VII greets him as rex Ungarorum. Having rebuked him for his submission to Henry IV, the pope sets out his understanding of Hungary’s status as the ‘property of the holy Roman Church’ (sanctae Romanae ecclesiae proprium). By receiving the kingdom as a beneficium from the rex Teutonicorum Salomon had diminished and alienated the honor sancti Petri. He should acknowledge that he holds the regnum as a gift of apostolic, not royal sovereignty (apostolicae, non regiae majestatis beneficium).

The letter is discussed in the later examination of the significance of fidelitas in Gregory’s thought.

In spring 1075, Gregory wrote two letters to Duke Gésa after learning of the failure of a military campaign in Hungary by Henry IV. The first, dated 23 March, asserts that, as a consequence of Salomon’s acquisition of the Hungarian throne through the intervention of the German king, ‘divine judgement’ has obstructed his lordship, and that effective authority is now in Gésa’s hands. Hungary should experience proper libertas, that is to say it should be independent of any external king, submitting only to the holy and universal mother the Roman Church. This is a specific denial of the claims of the German king and emperor to suzerainty over Hungary. Such lordship had been the aim of Henry III, an aspiration embodied in the marriage in 1063 of King Salomon to the late emperor’s daughter, the imperial princess Judith. Gregory’s letter exhorts Duke Gésa to show iustitia. Many good reports of Gésa’s behaviour have persuaded the pope to extend his love to him. The pope urges him to rule in a manner befitting a Christian ruler: care for churches, exercise utmost zeal for religion, and obey the papal legates who will visit Hungary. The second letter to Gésa is dated 17 April 1075, only three weeks later. Here the emphasis is on Gregory’s wish for the restoration of peace between Salomon and Gésa. It states that when Salomon, despite St Peter’s lordship (dominium) over Hungary, made himself subject to the rex Teutonicorum, he thereby reduced himself to a lesser king (regulus). The letter restates Gregory’s verdict that by

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9 Berend, Hungary, p. 39.
11 Reg. 2.13, pp. 144.36-146.2.
12 See below p. 266.
13 Reg. 2.63, pp. 218.15-219.4.
this 'sacrilegious usurpation', (his reception of the *regnum Ungarorum* from the *rex Teutonicorum*), Salomon has stripped himself of any right to the kingdom, and that power has been transferred to Gésa.\(^{14}\) The case of Gésa predates by five years the more famous judgement in favour of Duke Rudolf of Swabia, the German anti-king.\(^{15}\) In each case, the pope is claiming the right to transfer the rulership of a *regnum Christianum* from one individual to another. These two letters of spring 1075 address Gésa as *dux Ungarie*. They give no indication that Gregory knew of negotiations between Gésa and the Byzantine Empire, as a result of which the duke received a royal crown from the Emperor Michael VII at some point in that year.\(^{16}\)

After King Gésa's sudden death in April 1077 his brother, Ladislaus, was elected to the throne. There is no evidence that King Ladislaus I (1077-95) sought the approval of the apostolic see. Gregory responded promptly to the change in a letter dated 9 June 1077 to Archbishop Nehemiah of Gran. It instructs Nehemiah, in concert with his brother bishops and princes of Hungary, to advise 'the king who has been elected among you' to make clear his intentions, and his proper devotion and reverence to the apostolic see, by sending envoys to Rome. The pope will then do 'what pertained to him' (*quod ad nos attinet*) for the benefit of the king and his kingdom.\(^{17}\) Cowdrey (1998) conjectured that Gregory was seeking to confer the kingdom on Ladislaus on St Peter's behalf.\(^{18}\)

A letter dated 25 March 1079 is Gregory's only extant letter to Ladislaus. It complains at some length about the failure of his *dilectio* ('beloved') to send as many envoys as requested. This suggests that Gregory still harboured doubts about Ladislaus' commitment to the apostolic see, despite the letter's initial expression of pleasure at frequent reports of the king's willingness to serve (*servire*) blessed Peter as a *religiosa potestas* should, and to obey the apostolic see as befits a freeborn son (*liberalis filius*). Having thereby reaffirmed that Ladislaus is not subject to any other king - Henry IV by implication - the letter compliments him for his possession of certain qualities which Gregory associated with ideal kingship, namely his zeal, his upholding of *iustitia*, and the


\(^{15}\) See above p. 89.

\(^{16}\) Engel, *Realm*, p. 32.

\(^{17}\) *Reg.* 4.25, p. 340.11-21.

\(^{18}\) Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 446.
nobility of his blood lineage. It asks Ladislaus to provide a safe haven for certain counts, as a mark of his fidelitas to St Peter and in response to his own commendation. Gregory does not neglect to remind the rex Ungarorum of the general behaviour expected of Christian kings: an unswerving pursuit of iustitia, the protection of widows, orphans, and pilgrims, and the defence of churches.\(^{19}\) However, the letter does not allude to Hungary's supposed status as a property of St Peter.

Gregory's last extant epistola to Hungary probably dates from 1081. The recipient was Ladislaus' wife, Queen Adelaide, the daughter of the deceased German anti-king Rudolf. At her request, the pope wrote it in his own hand, one of only two self-penned letters in his surviving correspondence.\(^{20}\) This pastoral letter exhorts Adelaide to be tireless in the task of focusing her husband's mind on matters of the spirit.\(^{21}\)

The pope's letters to the young kingdom are largely preoccupied with its relationship to the apostolic see. Gregory clearly considered Hungary to be a possession, a beneficium, of St Peter. His letters draw upon feudal language (sanctae Romanae ecclesiae proprium, apostolicae majestatis beneficium, dominium) to assert Peter's claim to suzerainty and to strengthen the kingdom's links with the apostolic see. In Gregory's mind, the king is no more than the custodian of the realm. Consequently, Salomon's subjection to the German king was a wilful usurpation of the rights of St Peter.\(^{22}\) Hungary would find true libertas only through obedience to the Roman Church. Gregory's correspondence with the regnum Ungarorum supports the view that this pope considered that Christian kingdoms should be independent of a temporal superior, owing allegiance only to St Peter. Hungary is probably the last documented case of Gregory's preoccupation with countering Salian efforts to create imperial bonds with the neighbouring kingdoms.

\(^{19}\) Reg. 6.29, pp. 441.20-442.36.

\(^{20}\) The other is Reg. 1.50, dated 4 Mar. 1074, to Beatrice and Matilda of Tuscany.


2.8 Boleslaw II, dux Poloniorum

Only one letter from Gregory to Poland survives. Dated 20 April 1075, it addresses the country’s ruler, Bolesaw II (duke 1058-76, king 1076-9), who continued the reorganization of the Church initiated by his predecessor, Kazimierz. Boleslaw was a firm partisan of Gregory in the conflict with Henry IV. It is therefore somewhat surprising to find so little evidence of written contact between them.

The letter expresses Gregory’s confidence in Boleslaw’s love and reverence for St Peter, before offering to extend to him the stewardship (dispensatio) of the ministry to which God had ordained and appointed the papacy. He will do so in proportion to the duke’s willingness to show oboedientia. The epistola broaches two fundamental papal concerns about the state of the Church in Poland, namely the lack of a metropolitan see to give overall direction, and the shortage of bishops. The unnamed legates bearing the letter will discuss these issues with him. Boleslaw should keep in mind the terror of future judgement in the course of exercising his power, since the supreme Ruler will rigorously examine his record. An extended blessing follows this warning. The text ends with a political intervention in the form of a call to the duke to return to the rex Ruscorum (Prince Isjaslav of Kiev) some money that Boleslaw has seized from him. The salvation of Boleslaw’s soul depends on his doing so, since those who unjustly take the goods of others can have no part in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

We do not know whether the pope played any part in Bolesaw’s acquisition of the royal crown in 1076. However, Gregory’s emphasis on the desirability of Boleslaw’s oboedientia indicates the pope’s obvious wish to extend papal influence into Poland. Beyond that, this single letter does not convey any information about the pope’s attitudes to secular governance that is not presented in his more extensive correspondence with other rulers.

1 Vlasto, Entry of the Slavs into Christendom, pp. 131-3.
2 J. Wyrozumski, ‘Poland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries’, NCMH 2, pp. 280-1.
3 For the history of the Polish church, see P. David, ‘The Church in Poland from its origin to 1250’, in W.F. Reddaway and others, eds., Cambridge history of Poland (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 60-84. Also A.B. Ketrzyński, ‘The introduction of Christianity and the early kings of Poland’, in ibid., pp. 16-42.
4 Reg. 2.73, pp. 233.31-235.30.
2.9 The kings of Scandinavia

Eight of Gregory's preserved letters are addressed to Scandinavian kings: Denmark (five), Sweden (two), and Norway (one). The limited evidence suggests that the emergence of these *regna* as distinct entities was recent, probably the result of the change from an economy of plunder to one of exploitation, and the introduction of Christianity. Denmark led the process of consolidation and unification, partly because it lay in the most fertile and densely populated region in Scandinavia, partly because of its closeness to imperial Germany. At the time of Gregory's election, there were no archdioceses in Scandinavia; the establishing of Christianity was wholly dependent on the rulers. The kings and chiefs who converted, and then advanced the dissemination of the Christian cult were motivated by more than just religious conviction. The new creed came with an ecclesiastical organisation that might enhance their prestige and consolidate their control over men and land. Ideologically, Christianity exalted and legitimized kingship; in 1080, Pope Gregory told King Harold Hein of Denmark (1074-80) that 'divine providence' had committed the kingdom to his charge. Not only were the new Christian clergy the first royal agents in Scandinavia to be literate, but they were in contact with other countries and becoming familiar with more advanced systems of government. As a result, they were beginning to play important roles as counsellors and administrators.

Gregory's contemporary, the chronicler-geographer Adam of Bremen, is the most important eleventh-century source on the growth of Christianity in these lands. One of the aims of his great *History of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, written around 1075, was the promotion of the claims of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen to primacy over Scandinavia. Ansgar, a ninth-century missionary to the north, became archbishop of Hamburg, and later Bremen. According to Adam, papal privileges meant

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2 Tellenbach, *Church in Western Europe*, p. 219.
3 Reg. 7.21, p. 497.23-25.
that Ansgar’s successors inherited the right to evangelize the north. During the 1050s, King Sweyn Estrithson II of Denmark (1047-74/76) reached an understanding with Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen (1043-72). Subsequently new episcopal sees were created in the Danish kingdom. However, the harmony between the two men did not last. At some point Sweyn began to plan to free the Danish church from Hamburg-Bremen’s control through the creation of a separate ecclesiastical province, a development for which papal approval was required. As the relationship between Sweyn and Adalbert cooled, contact between the Danish churches and Hamburg-Bremen declined to a minimum. In contrast, direct communication between Rome and the Scandinavian kings increased. The fact that Sweyn was one of the few individuals to receive written notification from Gregory of his election suggests that the new pope held him in high regard, considered their contacts important, and expected their relationship to prosper. The payment of alms to Rome by the Danish kingdom was initiated during the reign of Cnut the Great, king of Denmark (1019-35), England (1016-35), and Norway (1028-35); the custom seems to have been modelled on the payment of Peter’s pence by the regnum Anglorum.In 1062, a letter from Pope Alexander II reminded Sweyn of the census his predecessors were accustomed to pay to the holy apostolic Church. The fact that from that time onwards they were to be presented to the pope in person suggests a heightened appreciation by Rome of its ties with Denmark.

A letter from Gregory to Sweyn, dated 25 January 1075, reminds the king that as archdeacon he had corresponded with him regarding a metropolitan see and other matters. Three months later, another papal epistola, dated 17 April 1075, asks the rex Danorum whether there is anything he needs that the authority of the Roman church might rightly grant to him. If so, he should make it known to Gregory via the messengers through which they are proposing to communicate. The letter recalls that Sweyn sought

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8 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 454.
9 Reg. 1.4, p. 7.12-17 re Reg. 1.3, pp. 5.10-6.27. For the failure to progress negotiations for a Danish see during Gregory’s pontificate, see Cowdrey, ‘Anglo-Norman lands and Scandinavia’, pp. 328-30.
11 Alexander II, JL 4495, MPL 146, Ep. 6, col. 1283B.
12 Reg. 2.51, pp. 192.31-2, 193.29-32.
'certain things' (quaedam) from Pope Alexander, which would have gained St Peter's exalted patronage for his kingdom. Did Sweyn still seek these things? It ends by reminding Sweyn of their mutual affection. It is hard to believe that the creation of a Danish metropolitan see was not prominent among these unidentified quaedam.\textsuperscript{13}

Contact between Rome and Scandinavia was physically difficult and intermittent. Gregory's letter of January 1075 informed Sweyn that papal legates who embarked on the long journey to his kingdom had to turn back because disturbances in Germany made the journey too dangerous.\textsuperscript{14} The pope regarded the Danes as being 'at the furthest ends of the earth'; similarly, the Norwegians lived 'in the furthermost circle of lands' and at the 'furthest frontiers'.\textsuperscript{15} Even Adam of Bremen, from his vantage point not far from the Danish frontier, described Sweden and Norway as 'until now nearly unknown in our parts'.\textsuperscript{16} Gregory sought the construction of Scandinavian Christianity on solid foundations so that its survival would not be vulnerable to changes in their kingships. He tried to rectify his ignorance of the three kingdoms; four of his letters to Scandinavia include requests for the despatch of suitable envoys to Rome to educate the papal court.\textsuperscript{17} One reminds Sweyn's successor, Harold Hein, of the fleeting nature of the joys of earthly life and requests him to despatch a prudens clericus to Rome for instruction so that the Christianity that Harold has done so much to foster might survive his passing. This clericus will increase the papacy's knowledge of the Danes and their customs and would return to Denmark with the commands and lessons of the apostolic see.\textsuperscript{18}

Much of the content of Gregory's letters is devoted to instruction in basic Christian doctrine, an element not found in his correspondence with rulers in Christian lands with established church structures. The pope took every opportunity to reinforce the Church's teaching for the benefit of these relatively recent converts. For example, a lengthy pastoral letter, dated 15 December 1078, to the Norwegian king, Olav III (1067-93), cites Norway's remoteness from Rome to justify its need for solace and instruction

\textsuperscript{13} Reg. 2.75, p. 238.8-27.
\textsuperscript{14} Reg. 2.51, p. 193.33-4.
\textsuperscript{15} Reg. 7.5, p. 464.26; Reg. 6.13, pp. 416.1-5, 417.26.
\textsuperscript{16} Adam of Bremen, Gesta, p. 250.
\textsuperscript{17} Reg. 2.51, pp. 193.35-194.7; Reg. 6.13, pp. 416.34-417.2; Reg. 7.5, p. 465.15-18; Reg. 8.11, p. 530.22-27.
\textsuperscript{18} Reg. 7.5, p. 465.15-18
in the Christian religion. The letter draws on an array of biblical sources to outline Christianity's core beliefs: faith in Christ (cf. Gal. 3: 26; 1 Tim. 3: 13; 2 Tim. 3: 15.), who was made man by the will of the father (cf. Eph. 1: 5.) and the Holy Spirit, who was born of a virgin, who reconciled the world to death, who cancelled our sins through the shedding of his own blood, who overcame death itself, and who left us an eternal undefiled inheritance (cf. 1 Pet. 1: 3-4.) Faith will be rewarded with eternal salvation and life (cf. Heb. 3: 6.). These are just some of the numerous biblical references in the early part of the letter, which is a notable example of Gregory's habitual deployment of scripture to underpin his messages and propagate the faith.  

Gregory also acquainted the Scandinavian rulers with the responsibilities of reges Christiani regarding their subjects. He encouraged Sweyn to govern according to God's will and demonstrate the perpetual iustitia that was the basis of his authority. Olav III of Norway should use his power to help the oppressed, defend widows, help orphans, and love and defend iustitia. He urged Kings Inge I and Halstan of Sweden to bestow compassion upon the poor and afflicted. He enjoined Harold Hein to guard the welfare of the Danish kingdom with all diligence, skill, and knowledge, and to help those who were poor, fatherless, or widowed. Gregory's second letter to Harold Hein, dated 19 April 1080, exhorts him to defend the churches, revere the sacerdotalis (priesthood), and observe iustitia et misericordia in his judgements. The letter raises two specific disturbing issues, vivid reminders that the Christianisation of Denmark was still a work in progress. First, Gregory says that he has received reports of the persecution of Christian priests in Denmark because they are blamed for bad weather and bodily afflictions; by apostolic authority, he commands Harold to ensure that this ends. Second, he expresses disapproval of the cruel treatment of certain unoffending women in that land, a reference to the brutality meted out to suspected witches. Should the king fail to correct this behaviour then his prosperity will turn to disaster. If, however, Harold brings these outrages to an end he will be pardoned for his sins, since he 'will have been obedient to

20 Reg. 2.51, p. 193.12-16.
21 Reg. 6.13, p. 417.30-32.
22 Reg. 9.14, p. 593.16-27.
23 Reg. 5.10, p. 362.31-36.
us – no, to blessed Peter’. Gregory frequently employed variations on this verbal formula to emphasize his identification with Peter.

The pope’s letters to Scandinavia have much to say about its rulers’ obligations to the apostolic see and to the churches in their lands. His epistola of January 1075 informs Sweyn of the universal governance (universale regimen) entrusted to the papacy. This may have been a warning to the rex Danorum against too close a relationship with the rex Teutonicorum. Gregory may have known of a secret conference between Sweyn and Henry in 1071, which the king’s enemies saw as designed to bring about the formation of a possible military alliance against the Saxons. The assertion of the universale regimen of the holy see is not dissimilar to the ‘imperial’ language the pope employed at the end of 1075 in his ‘ultimatum letter’ to the Salian king. The letter to Sweyn also requests him to send a military force to do battle against ‘a certain extremely rich province, not far from us, which is under the control of base and cowardly heretics’. Gregory declares that the lex Romanorum pontificum has governed more lands than has imperial law. He invokes scripture to express and dramatize his regret that other kings and rulers have descended into inoboedientia, which Samuel likened to idolatry (Rom. 10: 18; Ps. 18: 5; Ps. 2: 2; I Sam. 15: 23). Unlike Sweyn, these princes are not heeding the pope’s words. He commends the king for his wisdom and for the proper reverentia that he is showing to the Church. This was one of six letters despatched simultaneously to princely leaders and peoples in eastern and northern Europe. Taken together they

24 Reg. 7.21, pp. 497.11-498.39
25 Reg. 2.69, pp. 228.31-229.4; Reg. 4.23, pp. 335.26-336.8; Reg. 8.10, p. 528.35-8; et passim.
26 Reg. 2.51, p. 193.3-6.
28 See above p. 68
29 Reg. 2.51, p. 194.8-16. W. Seegrün (1967) argued that the pope had the Normans of southern Italy in mind: W. Seegrün, ‘Das Papsttum und Skandinavien bis zur Vollendung der nordischen Kirchenorganisation (1164)’, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins 51 (Neumünster, 1967), p. 82. However, Cowdrey (1998) thought the ‘base and ignoble heretics’, in question were those in Croatia who used the Slavonic liturgy: Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 441.
30 Reg. 2.75, pp. 237.30-238.17.
suggest similarities in the pope's approach to the peripheral lands beyond Germany, France, and Italy.  

The same letter lauds the eminence of Sweyn's *nobilitas* (noble character), which causes him to stand out above the princes of other kingdoms, sentiments that echo his expressions of admiration for William the Conqueror. The Danish king's literacy and zeal for the adornment of the Church demonstrates this *nobilitas*. After learning of Sweyn's death Gregory extolled him as an ideal *rex Christianus*. In a letter dated 6 November 1077 to Sweyn's eldest son and successor Harold Hein, the pope recalls the *servitus* and due *oboedientia* that his father had shown towards the honour of St Peter. Sweyn's devotion, faith, and singularly zealous love for the Church had made him second almost to none amongst kings. He tells Harold that it is proper that such a good father has left him as heir to his corporal and earthly kingdom, suggesting Gregory's approval of filial inheritance from a suitable king. If Harold shows himself to be a true son of St Peter then the apostle will ensure that he inherits the heavenly kingdom. The Church believes that Peter received power from the Lord, so that whosoever he binds shall be bound and whom he looses shall be loosed in heaven (cf. Matt. 16: 18-19). Gregory often cited this passage from Matthew, the 'Petrine commission', to justify his conviction that papal authority comes from God by way of St Peter. The pope, as a father, again exhorts Harold to care for the Church of God, 'our mother and mistress' whom, Gregory has heard, is not fittingly protected in the *regnum Danorum*. The king must guard her, foster her, and seize her from the jaws of lurking wolves; nothing will please the supreme Judge more. When he despatched his last preserved letter to Harold Hein on 19 April 1080 Gregory was unaware that the king had died two days before. Although Harold is the main addressee, Gregory includes the bishops, princes, clergy, and people of the kingdom in the *salutatio*. Addressing Harold as *dilectio* (beloved), the pope begins by saying that, insofar as he has been able to learn, Harold is in his love showing *oboedientia* and *reverentia* towards God and St Peter. With paternal concern, Gregory urges his *filius karissimus* to emulate the kingly qualities and  

31 Reg. 2.70 to 2.75; Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 423-25.  
32 See above pp. 21ff.  
33 Reg. 2.51, p. 193.7-11.  
34 For dating of Sweyn's death, see Cowdrey, 'Anglo-Norman Lands and Scandinavia', p. 330, n. 36.  
35 Reg. 2.70, p. 230.26-28; Reg. 2.72, p. 233.10-17; Reg. 3.10a, pp. 270.25-271.19; et passim.  
36 Reg. 5.10, pp. 361.18-363.16.
outstanding virtues of his *excellentissimus* father (Sweyn). The pope declares that in the manner of his life Harold's father outshone even the Emperor Henry III, a striking tribute to Sweyn considering the exalted reputation of the late emperor in reform circles. In urging Harold to replicate his father's virtues and to be seen to continue a lineage of most noble blood, Gregory again indicates his partiality for the passing on to sons of the inheritance of meritorious kings.  

Gregory manifested his concern to preserve the unity and integrity of fledgling Christian kingdoms in his letter of December 1078 to Olav III of Norway. The pope has learned that Harold Hein's brothers dispute his succession to the Danish throne, and are seeking Olav's assistance in their endeavours to split the inheritance. Gregory strongly counsels Olav against this: has not Christ himself said that 'every kingdom divided against itself will be made desolate, and will fall house upon house' (Luke 11: 17)? He warns Olav that an intervention of this nature will bring God's wrath upon himself and his kingdom, and counsels him to mediate in the dispute by persuading Harold to receive his brothers in charity and distribute goods and honours among them.

Sweden was the destination of Gregory's last two letters to Scandinavia. Its Christianisation was already under way before Hamburg-Bremen started its missionary offensive in the 1050s. Gregory's letter to King Inge I, dated 4 October 1080, is the oldest surviving item of direct communication between the papal court and a Swedish king. The pope applauds the healthful teaching by which the 'Gallican church' has passed on to Sweden what she has received from the treasuries of her mother, the holy Roman Church. Having thereby both ignored the missionary contribution of Hamburg-Bremen and asserted the primacy of Rome, Gregory repeats the request he made to the kings of Denmark and Norway: Inge should send a suitable envoy to the apostolic see to educate the papacy about Sweden and return with apostolic directions. He counsels Inge on the duties of Christian kingship: the preservation of *pax, iustitia, and aequitas* (equity, fairness). In this way, Inge will attain eternal security. By the time, probably 1081, that

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37 Reg. 7.21, p. 497.11-33.
38 Reg. 6.13, p. 417.3-21. See also Jordan, 'Das Eindringen Eindringen des Lehnswesens'.
40 Ibid., p. 184.
41 Reg. 8.11, p. 530.14-36.
he sent his second letter to Sweden, Gregory was aware that the inheritance of King Stenkil (1060-66) was now shared by his two sons. The addressees are Kings Inge I and Halstan, 'kings of the Visigoths'. Evidently, a 'suitable envoy' had reached Rome for the pope rejoices that 'your bishop R.' has brought the news of the recent conversion of the Swedes. Gregory exhorts his carissimi filii to maintain their mutual love and concord, to bestow honour upon churches, to show reverentia and oboedientia to bishops and priests, and to levy tithes for the benefit of the churches and the poor. He hopes that their shared kingship will merit a reputation comparable to the praiseworthy reports he has heard about their predecessor.\(^2\)

Although Gregory knew very little about the Scandinavian lands, he was aware that the unity and Christianisation of these faraway kingdoms were recent and fragile. This explains his opposition to the moves by Harold Hein's brothers to split the Danish kingdom and his concern to preserve the concord in Sweden between King Stenkil's sons. An obvious similarity between Gregory's letters to Scandinavia is that all are addressed to kings; no Scandinavian bishop is even clearly identified. The pope's concern to promote Christianisation is clear from the missionary, sometimes sermon-like, content of his correspondence, and by his requests for the despatch of envoys to Rome. These emissaries would serve three purposes: they would educate the papal court on conditions in Scandinavia, they would return after suitable instruction to propagate the tenets of Christianity, and they would buttress Rome's authority regarding ecclesiastical matters in their lands. Gregory repeatedly counselled his letters' royal recipients on their duties and responsibilities as Christian kings, particularly vis-à-vis the papacy. Indications of this include his repeated emphasis on the need for Christian rulers to demonstrate oboedientia to the apostolic see, together with his references to the Petrine commission, the universale regimen of the papacy, and the customary right of papal legates to reprove kings and princes. His letters to these faraway kingdoms were designed to promote the consolidation of their Christian unity and their obedience to the apostolic see.

\(^2\) Reg. 9.14, pp. 593.2-594.20.
2.10 The rulers of Kievan Rus’

The territory of Kievan Rus’ was the precursor of Ukraine and Russia. As in the case of Poland, only one letter from Gregory has survived. Following the death in 1072 of the Kievan ruler Prince Iaroslav (1059-72), his eldest son Isjaslav inherited the princedom, but was expelled in 1073 by his younger brothers, Svjatoslav and Vsevolod. Isjaslav subsequently sought Gregory’s assistance.¹

Gregory’s letter, dated 17 April 1075, to Prince Isjaslav and his wife addresses them as rex Ruscorum et regina, thereby recognising the royal character of their rulership. The epistola was prompted by the visit to Rome of their son, Jaropolk. It recounts that Jaropolk, having exhibited due fidelity (debita fidelitas) to St Peter, asked that he might receive the ‘kingdom’ as a gift from the prince of the apostles ‘through our hands’ (per manus nostras). Jaropolk claimed that he was presenting this petition with the knowledge of his father, who would confirm his son’s possession so long as it received the favour and protection of apostolic authority. It is significant that this initiative for a ‘feudal’ relationship with the apostolic see comes from the ousted dynasty. The letter informs Isjaslav that Gregory is consenting, ex parte beati Petri, to hand (tradere) to Jaropolk the government of the kingdom. Two papal legates will explain this and other matters to his Excellency.² Three days later Gregory wrote to Duke Boleslaw of Poland, asking him to return some stolen monies to Prince Isjaslav.³ It can be assumed that the pope’s urgent rebuke to the duke of Poland about the plundered money is linked to Jaropolk’s attitude towards St Peter. Following Svjatoslav’s death in 1076, Isjaslav regained power in Kiev with the military aid of Boleslaw. However, his incumbency was brief for he was killed in 1078.⁴ Isjaslav was succeeded, not by Jaropolk, but by his own brother, Vsevolod.⁵

² Reg. 2.74, pp. 236.19-237.16.
³ See above p. 114.
⁴ Franklin, Rus, pp. 259-61.
⁵ Vlasto, Entry, p. 289.
The pope's speedy response to Jaropolk's petition to confer the lordship of the regnum Ruscorum upon him, his recognition of the dynasty's 'royal' character, and his request to Boleslaw to return stolen money to Isjaslav, are further demonstrations of Gregory's predisposition to exploit every available opportunity to assert St Peter's authority in foreign lands, irrespective of their distance from Rome.
2.11 The kings of Croatia and Zeta

Three preserved letters testify to Gregory's interest in the affairs of the kingdoms of Croatia-Dalmatia and Zeta on the eastern side of the Adriatic. The first concerns an ecclesiastical dispute. This chapter considers the other two letters for evidence of his approach to Christian kingship.

Following the death of King Peter Krešimir of Croatia (1059-75), the pope's sponsorship of Duke Demetrius-Zvonimir resulted in the latter's election as king of Croatia-Dalmatia (1075-89). The canonist Cardinal Deusdedit recorded the coronation oath taken by Zvonimir in the presence of the papal legate who was acting with auctoritas apostolica. The oath is discussed later. The text makes it clear that Zvonimir was entering into a vassal relationship with the apostolic see. This was politically advantageous for both Zvonimir and the papacy, since the king's subsequent loyalty to Rome greatly undermined Byzantine suzerainty over Croatia. There can be little doubt that Gregory's backing for Zvonimir was reinforced by the latter's support for the Roman rite against the traditional Slavonic liturgy.

The seriousness with which Gregory viewed the connection with Croatia is shown by his letter dated 7 October 1079 to a certain knight named Wezelin, who had rebelled against King Zvonimir. The letter opens on an ironic note, marvelling at Wezelin's prudentia in that he who promised to be faithful to St Peter is now in rebellion against a king who had been established by apostolic authority. To take up arms against King Zvonimir is equivalent to doing so against the apostolic see. If Wezelin has a complaint against the king, he should seek justice from the pope rather than resort to armed force. If he disobeys this order, Gregory will unsheathe the sword of St Peter against him. The pope is explicitly asserting that King Zvonimir's oath of fealty to the apostolic see was the crucial act by which he received the throne; already king de facto, he was now king de jure.

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1 Reg. 1.65, pp. 94.22-95.17.
2 Deusdedit, Collectio canonum, 3.278, pp. 383-5.
3 See below p. 267.
4 See Deër, Papsstum, pp. 52-5.
5 Reg. 7.4, pp. 463.30-464.14.
The Serbian kingdom of Zeta was Croatia's southern neighbour. Gregory sent King Michael of Zeta (1051-81) a short letter dated 28 January 1078 in reply to a (lost) letter from him. The pope noted a difference of opinion between the king and a papal legate to Zeta. This was essentially a dispute over ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Gregory's letter envisages that once he has acquired full knowledge of the issues he can settle the matter canonically, following which he hopes to satisfy the king's request for a *vexillum* (papal banner).<sup>6</sup> It seems that the king of Zeta wished to establish a relationship with the apostolic see similar to that of his northern neighbour, and that the pope was by no means averse to this.

The scanty surviving correspondence with Croatia-Dalmatia and Zeta, provides more evidence of Gregory's policy of promoting direct links between Christian kingdoms and the apostolic see. The pope's predilection for using terms normally associated with vassal relationships is particularly striking, and will be considered elsewhere as part of a discussion of Gregory's use of feudal language.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reg. 5.12, p. 365.15-29.

<sup>7</sup> See below pp. 254ff.
2.12 The Norman rulers of southern Italy

The leaders of the Norman territories in Italy were, second only to King Henry IV of Germany, the secular rulers with whom Pope Gregory VII endured the most troublesome relationships of his pontificate.¹ Twenty-four registered documents and two *epistolae vagantes* throw light on Gregory’s interactions with Duke Robert Guiscard of Apulia and Calabria (1059-85), Prince Richard I of Capua (1058-78), Richard’s son and successor Prince Jordan I of Capua (1078-91), and Count Roger I of Sicily (1071-1101).

The Normans were comparatively recent arrivals in Italy. They started to appear around the start of the eleventh century and their numbers grew over the following years. Many obtained employment as mercenaries in this politically fragmented region, which consisted of the Byzantine territories of Apulia and Calabria, the Lombard principalities of Capua, Salerno, and Benevento, and a handful of smaller independent counties. By the 1040s, they had begun to seize the initiative and assert control.² The only concerted military effort to resist them was organized by Pope Leo IX. In 1053, he personally led an army that was destroyed by Norman forces at Civitate in northern Apulia. This paved the way for the consolidation of Norman domination of the southern mainland.³ In 1061, they embarked on the ultimately successful conquest of Sicily from the Muslims. Meanwhile a number of factors, including the recognition that the Normans were obviously there to stay, the precariousness of the position of the reform papacy, and the political situation in Germany, prompted the apostolic see to revise its attitude to its dangerous southern neighbours. The papacy’s need for protection dovetailed with the Norman leadership’s wish to obtain recognition and legitimization of their title to these lands and rights that they had obtained by conquest and usurpation. The outcome was a new alliance.

In August 1059, at the council of Melfi, Pope Nicholas II accepted the fealty of Robert Guiscard, whose territories of Apulia and Calabria (the heel and toe respectively

¹ For the main phases of Gregory’s dealings with southern Italy, see Cowdrey, *Desiderius*, pp. 122-76.
³ Ibid., pp. 110-20.
of the Italian peninsula) were also claimed by the German kings. According to the contemporary historian Amatus of Montecassino, the pope’s investiture of Robert as duke included the awarding of a papal banner. Nicholas also invested Duke Robert with future title to Muslim-controlled Sicily. According to one source, Archdeacon Hildebrand, the future Pope Gregory VII, attended at Melfi. It is thought that Prince Richard of Capua also swore fealty to the apostolic see, either at Melfi or in 1058. The source of the earlier date is the Annales Romani, which suggest that in 1058 it was Hildebrand himself who acknowledged the new Norman prince and received his fealty to the apostolic see as a price for Capuan military assistance for the reformers’ candidate for the papacy, Nicholas II, in his conflict with the Romans’ candidate, ‘Benedict X’. The capture of ‘Benedict’ and the submission of his forces in early 1059 was the work of Richard’s knights. Pope Nicholas moved speedily to try to pre-empt any future such threats to the reformers. In April 1059, a Lateran synod promulgated the famous Papal Election Decree, which designated the cardinal-bishops as the principal papal electorate. In summer 1059, Nicholas journeyed south, reaching Melfi where in August he secured the alliance with the Normans. *En route*, the pope visited Montecassino, the richest and most renowned abbey in the south. Its new abbot, Desiderius (1058-87), whom Nicholas had raised to the cardinalate in March, was already in alliance with the Norman leaders and may have played a key role in brokering the agreement. The compact had the important additional advantage of improving the prospects of extending the reform programme to the southern churches.

The weakness of the regency government of the German kingdom during Henry IV’s minority (1056-65) had a major influence upon the reform papacy’s search for alternative military protection, particularly from the Roman nobility. The new accord suited both parties: the Normans acquired moral legitimization for their recent conquests, while Robert Guiscard’s oath committed him to safeguard the *regalia* and

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4 For Papal-Norman relations 1059-85, see Loud, *Robert Guiscard*, pp. 186-245; also Loud, ‘Southern Italy in the eleventh century’, *NCMH* 2, pp. 111-4.
7 For the uncertainty regarding the dating of Richard’s oath, see Loud, ‘Southern Italy’, p.107, n. 29.
9 See above p. 14.
possessions of St Peter. Furthermore, the duke would pay an annual census to the apostolic see.\textsuperscript{10} As G.A. Loud (2000) put it, although the agreement was framed as a vassalic oath between subject and overlord, its main purpose was to give the reform papacy the military muscle it hitherto lacked.\textsuperscript{11} This compact appears to have been the precedent for the papacy’s involvement in vassal relationships with secular rulers. Gregory’s Register includes the texts of oaths by which Richard of Capua (September 1073) and Robert Guiscard (June 1080) reaffirmed their fealty to the apostolic see during Gregory’s pontificate.\textsuperscript{12} These oaths will form part of the later discussion of Gregory’s interest in creating so-called ‘feudo-vassalic’ relationships between the papacy and secular rulers.\textsuperscript{13}

The prolonged ‘schism of Cadalus’ followed Pope Nicholas II’s death in July 1061.\textsuperscript{14} Bishop Anselm I of Lucca was elected as Pope Alexander II, presumably in accordance with the election decree of 1059. Despite the hostility of the Roman nobles, on 30 September 1061 he was formally enthroned with the aid of Richard and his Capuan Normans. The \textit{quid pro quo} came two days later: Richard’s oath of fealty to the new pope and, in all probability, his reinvestiture with the principality as the pope’s vassal. The schism between Alexander and Cadalus (‘Honorius II’) lasted until the imperial court withdrew its support from the anti-pope in 1064. During these years it was the Tuscan rulers, Duke Godfrey III ‘the Bearded’ and his wife Countess Beatrice, who played the major role in establishing and maintaining Alexander against the opposition of Cadalus’ forces and the Roman nobility. Prince Richard also lent his assistance, but his priority was the consolidation of his rule in Capua, just as Robert Guiscard, (who gave no aid whatsoever to Alexander during the schism) spent these years doing the same in Calabria and Sicily. It is clear that, despite their oaths of \textit{fidelitas}, the Normans were far from being reliable allies and protectors of the papacy. Furthermore, the papal territories in central Italy shared an ominously long and ill-defined southern border with Capua. In the middle and later years of the decade, Norman Capuan troops made a number of incursions into the Roman Campagna and the Abruzzi, resulting in the

\textsuperscript{10} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{11} Loud, \textit{Robert Guiscard}, p. 190.
\textsuperscript{12} Richard of Capua: \textit{Reg} 1.21a, pp. 35.31-36.25; Robert Guiscard: \textit{Reg}. 8.1a, pp. 514.18-515.22.
\textsuperscript{13} See below pp. 258ff.
\textsuperscript{14} See above p. 52.
alienation of church property. Nevertheless, Alexander took care to maintain a generally good relationship with the Norman leadership.\footnote{Loud, \textit{Robert Guiscard}, pp. 194-6.}

All this began to change soon after the elevation of Hildebrand to the papacy in April 1073. He was well acquainted with papal-Norman dealings over the years. From the start, the new pope actively engaged with southern leaders. The first two entries in his Register are the only letters dated 23 April 1073, the day after his election. Both are notifications of the event addressed to two prominent Lombard figures in the south, namely Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino and Prince Gisulf II of Salerno (1052-77).\footnote{Reg. 1.1, pp. 3.11-4.12; Reg. 1.2, p. 4.22-33.} According to Amatus, the new pope responded to a false rumour of Robert Guiscard's death by sending a conciliatory letter of condolence to Sichelgaita, the presumed widow of this \textit{karissimus filius} of the Church. Gregory offered to invest Guiscard's son, Roger Borsa, with his father's lands.\footnote{Amatus, \textit{Storia}, 7.8, pp. 298-9. See also Loud, \textit{Robert Guiscard}, p. 197; Cowdrey, \textit{Desiderius}, p. 124.} In the summer of 1073, the new pope was in Benevento in the company of Desiderius and other cardinals. Here, on 12 August, he concluded a treaty with another long-serving Lombard prince, Landulf VI of Benevento (1038-77), whereby Landulf surrendered the remnants of his principality - the town and its immediate environs - and received them back as a papal fief.\footnote{Reg. 1.18a, pp. 30.23-31.10.} Henceforth any Norman attack on Benevento and its \textit{contado} would be an attack on papal property. Amatus tells us that the failure of attempts by Desiderius to organize a meeting between Gregory and Robert Guiscard later in August resulted in much ill will between the pope and the duke, although his account does not give the reasons.\footnote{Loud, \textit{Robert Guiscard}, p. 198.} It has been conjectured that the cause was the continuing Norman incursions into territory under papal overlordship. Attacks in the Abruzzi in particular were causing considerable damage to church property. The most prominent Norman leader in this region, Count Robert of Loritello, was Robert Guiscard's nephew. It is likely that Gregory concluded that the duke was conspicuously failing to exercise a restraining influence upon his kinsman.\footnote{Amatus, \textit{Storia}, 7.9, pp. 298-9.}
In September, the new pope journeyed to Capua where he received a reaffirmation by Prince Richard of his fealty to the apostolic see. The later chapter on fidelitas discusses his oath. Cowdrey (1998) saw Gregory’s absence from Rome during the second half of 1073 as evidence of his wish to secure the peace and harmony of southern Italy whose rulers would, by due loyalty, provide both military and spiritual service to the Roman church. In a letter dated 27 September 1073, Gregory informed the Milanese knight Erlembald that his visit to Capua was proving profitable to the Church. His reasoning related to his relief at the current strife between Duke Robert Guiscard and Prince Richard. Their earlier plans to unite would seemingly have presented a threat to the res publica and the Church. Now Gregory saw the opportunity to make peace between them on his own terms by renewing their custom of submitting humbly and showing customary reverence to the new pope. In other words, peace between Duke Robert and Prince Richard would work against papal interests unless the pope was actively involved in brokering it. Cowdrey (1998) concluded that for the rest of the decade Gregory pursued a policy of divide et impera towards the southern Normans. However, Loud (2003) disagreed with Cowdrey on this point. According to him, the popes had three good reasons for desiring harmony in southern Italy. The first was their natural repugnance toward bloodshed among Christians. Second, the reformers continued to need Norman military support to bolster their precarious control in Rome. Third, good relations between the papacy and the Normans were clearly a precondition for implementing the much-needed reform of the southern churches.

Robert Guiscard’s subsequent military activity produced further deterioration in his relationship with the pope, resulting in the excommunication of the duke and his accomplices at the Lenten synod of 1074. Gregory’s correspondence shows that he was sounding out the possibility of military action against him. A letter to Count William I of Burgundy, dated 2 February 1074, requests the aid of ‘a multitude of knights’ to defend Romanae ecclesiae libertas against a possible Norman threat. He wanted the contingent...
to intimidate the Normans and thereby subdue them to iustitia.\textsuperscript{28} At this stage, a year into his pontificate, the pope seems to have been favourably disposed towards military solutions. A papal letter of 1 March 1074 makes a general summons to all the faithful to go to the defence of Byzantium, currently beleaguered by the Seljuk Turks.\textsuperscript{29} Gregory wanted the knightly multitude to journey east after they had eliminated the Norman threats to papal interests.\textsuperscript{30} However, the pope's appeals for armed assistance achieved limited success.\textsuperscript{31} Margravine Beatrice of Tuscany organized some troops but her contingent seems to have dispersed en route southwards. A letter from Gregory, dated 4 April 1074, admonishes Duke Godfrey IV 'the Hunchback' of Lower Lotharingia, for failing to provide the knights he had pledged to supply for the honour and support of St Peter.\textsuperscript{32} Gregory might have expected more from the son of Godfrey III 'the Bearded', who had provided military assistance to Pope Alexander II.

For a while at least, Robert Guiscard seems to have been keen to assuage the pope's hostility. A letter dated 16 October 1074 from Gregory to Margravines Beatrice and Matilda of Tuscany informs them that the duke has frequently sent supplicant messages to him, offering to bind himself to the pope by the most stringent possible promise of fealty. However, said the pope, he had good reasons for biding his time.\textsuperscript{33} According to a bleak letter, dated 22 January 1075, seeking support and advice from Abbot Hugh of Cluny, the pope depicted himself as oppressed by great tribulation and fenced around by immeasurable grief and insurmountable sorrow. One of the reasons for his dejection was that those in his vicinity – the Romans, the Lombards, and the Normans – were 'worse than Jews and pagans'.\textsuperscript{34} A few weeks later, the Lenten synod of March 1075 witnessed the second excommunication of Robert Guiscard as an invader of the property of St. Peter. The synod also placed the duke's nephew Robert of Laritello under anathema.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{28} Reg. 1.46, p. 70.13-16.
\textsuperscript{29} Reg. 1.49, pp. 75.9-76.3; for Gregory's relations with Byzantium, see pp. 141ff.
\textsuperscript{30} For Gregory's plans to assist Byzantium, see Cowdrey, 'Pope Gregory VII's “crusading” plans'.
\textsuperscript{32} Reg. 1.72, pp. 103.25-104.10.
\textsuperscript{33} Reg. 2.9, pp. 138.20-140.6.
\textsuperscript{34} Reg. 2.49, pp. 189.2-190.24.
\textsuperscript{35} Reg. 2.52a, pp. 196.10-197.2.
During the subsequent months of 1075, Gregory's deteriorating relationship with Henry IV increasingly influenced his attitude to the Normans. After the ending of the Saxon rebellion the rex Teutonicorum began to turn his attention to Italy.\(^{36}\) According to Amatus, royal envoys tried to persuade the excommunicate papal vassal Robert Guiscard to accept investiture from the Henry IV's hands, but the duke declined to allow the king to invest him with territories that he had himself conquered, and affirmed his loyalty to the pope and St Peter.\(^{37}\) The king's envoys included Count Eberhard 'the Bearded', one of the five royal advisers excommunicated by Pope Alexander II during his final days.\(^{38}\) The remnants of the relationship between pope and king crumbled during the winter of 1075-6, culminating in Henry's excommunication at the 1076 Lenten synod in Rome.\(^{39}\)

Almost immediately, Gregory began to explore the possibility of reconciliation with Robert Guiscard. A papal letter dated 14 March 1076 instructs Archbishop Arnald of the southern Italian see of Acerenza to absolve Count Roger of Sicily and his knights if they performed penance. Furthermore, Arnald should convey through the count to Roger's brother Robert Guiscard, the pope's readiness to receive him with a father's love and to free him from the chains of excommunication.\(^{40}\) In April Gregory informed the Milanese knight Wilfred about his recent dealings with the Normans. His letter confirms that discussions are taking place and that he hopes that the Normans will be recalled to secure fidelitas to St Peter.\(^{41}\)

Gregory's optimism proved ill founded, at least in the short term. Amatus informs us that Abbot Desiderius mediated a mutual aid agreement between Duke Robert and Prince Richard whereby each would help the other to capture Naples and Salerno respectively; incursions into the Roman Campagna to 'capture the lands of St Peter' were later added to the agenda.\(^{42}\) A letter dated 31 October 1076, from the pope to his Milanese supporters, expresses his anger at the behaviour of the Normans, and affirms

\(^{36}\) For imperial claims to suzerainty over southern Italy, see Deér, Papsttum, pp. 37-50.

\(^{37}\) Amatus, Storia, 7.27, pp. 320-1.

\(^{38}\) See above p. 66.

\(^{39}\) See above pp. 72ff.

\(^{40}\) Reg. 3.11, pp. 271.20-272.27.

\(^{41}\) Reg. 3.15, pp. 276.26-277.36.

\(^{42}\) For Salerno, see Amatus, Storia, 8.14-30, pp. 354-71. For Benevento see, Amatus, Storia, Storia, 8.32-5, pp. 372-4.
that he will never consent to their retention of any papal lands captured during their sacrilegious invasion.\textsuperscript{43} Loud (2000) conjectured that the Normans had sought such consent as part of any negotiated reconciliation with Rome.\textsuperscript{44}

Between the October 1076 letter to Milan and the spring of 1079, the pope's preserved correspondence is silent on the subject of the Italian Normans. Gregory was away from Rome from late 1076 until September 1077, a period that included the Canossa encounter with the German king in late February and the election of the anti-king Rudolf in March. Meanwhile the Norman incursions continued. Robert Guiscard captured Salerno and besieged Benevento.\textsuperscript{45} The record of the 1078 Lenten synod records the excommunication of all Normans working to invade the land of St Peter, specifically Fermo and Spoleto. The synod also excommunicated the besiegers of Benevento, the would-be invaders and despoilers of the Roman Campagna, and those attempting to incite disorder in Rome. Any bishop or priest who ministered to the excommunicates would lose his priestly office.\textsuperscript{46} It may be significant that the synodal record does not name the guilty Normans. Prince Richard of Capua died on 5 April 1078 and was succeeded by his son Jordan. Despite an initial public reconciliation with the pope, almost certainly designed to facilitate his succession to the title, Jordan soon revealed himself as another threat to church interests at both Rome and Montecassino. A letter dated 21 April 1079 from Gregory to Jordan reprimands him for specific offences, including the despoliation and violation of the abbey of Montecassino.\textsuperscript{47} The pope also rebuked Abbot Desiderius and his fellow monks for permitting such an outrage.\textsuperscript{48}

Nevertheless, events were propelling the pope and the Normans towards a rapprochement. One of these was the final collapse of the relationship between Gregory and Henry IV. The papacy now needed all the political and military support it could get. The 1080 Lenten synod witnessed the second excommunication and definitive

\textsuperscript{43} Reg. 4.7, p. 305.10-35.
\textsuperscript{44} Loud, Robert Guiscard, p. 204.
\textsuperscript{45} Amatus, Storia, 8.14-30, pp. 354-71.
\textsuperscript{46} Reg. 5.14a, p. 371.17-27.
\textsuperscript{47} Reg. 6.37, pp. 453.33-454.23.
\textsuperscript{48} Epp. Vag. 28, 29, pp. 72-6.
deposition of the *rex Teutonicorum*. The council record also reaffirms the excommunication of Norman plunderers of papal property. However, the wording shows a new papal equivocacy on the issue of the Normans’ wish to retain those properties that they had already captured; if any Norman felt he had a legitimate claim, he should pursue it through the appropriate authorities. As briskly summarized by Loud (2000), this amounted to an invitation to the Normans to take what they wanted as long as they do so nicely. Cardinal Deusdedit had a role in the subsequent negotiations and it is he who informs us of Gregory’s journey to Ceprano, on the border between Capua and the Roman Campagna, where he accepted an oath of fealty from Prince Jordan on 10 June 1080. Three Register entries dated 29 June 1080 record Robert Guiscard’s oath of fealty, investiture with his lands, and commitment to an annual payment (*pensio*) for Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily. The record of the investiture notes Guiscard’s illegal occupation of Salerno, Amalfi and other lands, and expresses the pope’s preparedness to tolerate the situation pending the duke’s decision to do the right thing.

Gregory soon indicated his confidence in the military alliance with the Normans. In mid-summer 1080, he issued an apparently unsuccessful call to arms against Ravenna. This letter to the faithful of St Peter announces the Norman leadership’s undertakings to defend the Roman church and the honour of the apostolic see against all men. For a while, it seemed that the interests of the pope and Robert Guiscard were also converging with regard to Byzantium. A letter from Gregory, dated 25 July 1080, calls upon the bishops of Apulia and Calabria to support the duke in his efforts to restore the supposed Emperor Michael VII to the imperial throne. On 18 September 1080 the pope wrote to the archbishop of Salerno to congratulate him upon the wonderful news of the discovery there of the remains of the apostle and evangelist St Matthew. The letter instructs the archbishop to urge the glorious Duke Robert and his most noble wife to revere and honour their exalted patron and to strive devotedly to earn his grace and help.

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49 See above p. 89.
52 Reg. 8.1a, b, c, pp. 514.18-517.5.
53 Reg. 8.7, p. 525.6-16.
55 Reg. 8.8, pp. 526.12-527.8.
At the start of 1081, the pope still hoped to obtain Norman military assistance in northern and central Italy. However, disillusionment set in as it gradually dawned on Gregory that Guiscard would continue to put his own interests before those of the apostolic see. In late February 1081, the pope wrote to Abbot Desiderius, who still maintained a good relationship with the duke. The letter acknowledges Gregory’s disappointment and asks the abbot to sound Guiscard out on the possibility that he might yet provide armed forces to aid St Peter. It also asks Desiderius to remind the duke of his promise to curb the predatory activities of his nephew Robert of Laritello, who was still involved in incursions into the property of the apostolic see. In May 1081, the pope wrote again to Desiderius. Gregory was now aware that the dictus rex Henry and his forces had reached Ravenna en route to Rome. Furthermore, Margravine Matilda had warned the pope of a possible pact (placitum) between Henry and Duke Robert. Gregory implied that, should the story be true and the Romans became aware of the duke’s withdrawal of his promised help to the apostolic see, then this would undermine their confidence in the pope. Desiderius was to monitor the situation, advise on what should be done, and then hasten to Rome. In the end, Duke Robert declined to ally himself with Henry. The king reached Rome in May 1081, was refused entry, and returned to Germany before the dangerous summer conditions set in.

That same summer, Duke Robert made his priorities plain by leading an army across the Adriatic to campaign against Byzantium, achieving a significant victory at Durazzo on 18 October 1081. Gregory sent Guiscard a letter (date unknown) that conveyed his congratulations. It reminded the duke of the beneficia he had received from St Peter, and of the oath that he took to beatus Petrus in June 1080. The epistola raises the subject of the great disturbance to his mother the holy Roman church, which is the result of the actions of Henry, the dictus rex. She needs Robert’s help, and he should support her. In April 1082, the duke returned to Italy, alarmed at the prospect that an alliance between Henry and the new Byzantine emperor, Alexius Comnenus, might assist a rebellion currently under way in Apulia. For the remainder of 1082 and throughout 1083 Guiscard was preoccupied with his Italian territories. It has been

56 Reg. 9.4, pp. 578.2-579.1.
surmised that although he was aware that military intervention on behalf of the apostolic see was not high on Guiscard's list of priorities, the pope was nevertheless relieved that the duke was back in Italy and at odds with Henry IV. His relief would have been reinforced by the behaviour of Prince Jordan I of Capua. According to William of Apulia, Jordan did fealty to Henry in April 1082, the first occasion since the time of Henry III that a Norman prince had explicitly acknowledged German suzerainty over lands in southern Italy. When Robert Guiscard finally delivered significant military aid to Gregory, it was too late to maintain him in the apostolic see. The pope was forced to leave Rome, eventually arriving under Norman protection at Salerno, where he died on 25 May 1085.

In conclusion, self-interest and unreliability characterized the south Italian Normans' attitude to Gregory's papacy as it had that of Alexander II. C. Morris (1989) well observed that for a long time papal policy maintained a delicate balance between Rome's need for Norman support and fear of Norman expansion into the lands of St Peter. In the end, Gregory's attempts to exploit Norman military capabilities to the advantage of the apostolic see had mixed results. Plunder and violence were apparently the Normans' main interests, and their aggression was such as to earn Robert Guiscard three papal excommunications. Arguably, the very presence in the south of the Peninsula of rulers who were papal vassals minimized their potential threat to Rome, although clearly that did not deter them from frequent predations in the land of St Peter. From Rome's point of view, it can at least be said that Robert Guiscard declined to make common cause with the Henry IV, a development that would have hugely increased the threat to the reform papacy.

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62 See above pp. 89ff.
2.13 The kings of Spain

Gregory VII's pontificate coincided with increasing Christian militancy in Spain. The so-called Reconquista was the long slow southward expansion of several Christian kingdoms across the Iberian Peninsula at the expense of the Muslim Moorish states of Al-Andalus. The Reconquista dominated Spanish medieval history, accelerating in the eleventh century when Moorish unity broke down and the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain became influenced by an aggressive, anti-Muslim spirit.¹ Seventeen of Gregory's surviving letters refer to 'Hyspania'. Eight address named kings. What do they reveal of the pope's attitudes to Spain and its Christian kings?

Gregory's close identification with St Peter has been noted.² His special interest in Spain derived from his belief that Hyspania was lawfully a possession of the first apostle. The later chapter on fidelitas discusses the pope's efforts to persuade the Christian rulers of Spain of the apostolic see's proprietorship over their kingdoms and any Muslim-held territory on the peninsula that they might subsequently recover.³ At this stage, suffice to say that Gregory made little, if any, headway in this.

However, he did achieve considerable success regarding an obviously ecclesiastical issue, namely the enforcement of the Roman liturgy in place of the Hispanic (Mozarabic) liturgical rite.⁴ For this, he sought the active cooperation of kings as well as bishops and legates.⁵ Gregory outlined the origins of the problem in a letter dated 19 March 1074 to Kings Alphonso VI of León-Castile (1065-1109) and Sancho IV of Navarre (1054-76). It recounts that the apostle Paul visited Spain and that subsequently Peter and Paul sent seven bishops to instruct the Spanish peoples. However, the corruption and pollution of Spain by the Priscillianist and Arian heresies disrupted the resulting concord between Rome and Spain.⁶ The Visigothic and Saracen invasions severed communication with the Roman rite. Gregory's letter exhorts the two kings to recognize the Roman Church as

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¹ For the history of the Reconquista, see B. F. Reilly, The medieval Spains (Cambridge, 1993); D.W. Lomax, The reconquest of Spain (New York, 1978); S. Barton, 'Spain in the eleventh century', NCMH 2, pp. 154-90.
² See above p. 119.
³ See below pp. 263ff.
⁴ For the Hispano-Mozarabic rite, see R. Gómez-Ruiz, Mozarabs, Hispanics & the cross (New York, 2007), pp. 27-67.
⁵ Reg. 3.18, pp. 283.24-284.28 to Bishop Simeon of Oca-Burgos, urging him to further promote the Roman ecclesiastical order in Spain, May 1076.
⁶ For Arianism in Spain, see Gomez-Ruiz, Mozarabs, pp. 129-32; for Priscillianism, see ibid. pp. 126-9.
their mother and to receive its order and office, rejecting all others. A simultaneous letter from the pope to King Sancho I (Ramirez) of Aragon (1063-94) congratulates him for his fidelity to Peter and Paul and to the Roman Church; the king’s self-professed zeal in enforcing the Roman order shows that he has restored the former concord and friendship between the Spanish kings and the papacy. In a letter to Alphonso dated 15 October 1079, Gregory refers to papal legates who have informed the pope about the due observances of faith and ecclesiastical order in Alphonso’s kingdom. Gregory praises the king, and reinforces his approbation by enclosing a fragment of St Peter’s chains to remind Alphonso of his indebtedness to the first apostle. Sometime later, probably 1081, another letter from Gregory commends his carissimus filius Alphonso for his enforcement of the Roman liturgy, his divinely inspired care for the salvation of his subjects, and his wisdom and humilitas.

That letter to Alphonso of October 1079 includes a commendation of the returning cardinal legate Richard, abbot of Saint-Victor at Marseille. Following his arrival in Spain Richard took offence over two matters about which he had not been consulted. His subsequent report to Gregory generated tension between the pope and Alphonso, at that time the most powerful of the Spanish Christian kings. The first issue was the king’s remarriage to a niece of Abbot Hugh of Cluny, Constance of Burgundy, whom Richard discovered was related to Alphonso’s deceased first wife, Agnes, within the fourth degree of consanguinity, so making the union contrary to canon law. The second matter involved Alphonso’s ecclesiastical counsellor, the Cluniac monk Robert, whom the king had imposed upon the abbey of Sahagún in order to reinforce its status as a religious centre in León-Castile. Richard’s (lost) letter of complaint to the pope evidently depicted these events in terms sufficiently strong to prompt a forceful response from Gregory. He despatched letters dated 27 June 1080, to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, King Alphonso, and the legate Richard. The pope included a copy of Richard’s letter with his epistola to Hugh so that the latter might be aware of the significance of Robert’s offence. It has been speculated that the pope’s portrayal of Robert as ‘an imitator of

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7 Reg. 1.64, p. 93.5-25.
8 Reg. 7.6, pp. 466.8-15, 467.12-20.
Simon Magus' referred to the monk's supposed support for the Hispanic liturgy. Gregory states that he understands Hugh to be as aggrieved as himself at the enormity of Robert's wrongdoing in endangering the Spanish Church, and urges him to order the monk to return to Cluny for punishment, possibly even excommunication, for his temerity. He also wants Hugh to write to the king to communicate St Peter's anger at what Gregory depicts as his dishonouring of his legate. Should Alphonso fail to repent then spiritual sanctions, including excommunication, might await him. If all else fails Gregory himself will go to Spain to lead a military expedition against such an enemy of the Christian religion. By contrast, the pope opens his admonitory letter to the king with a statement of his inexpressible joy at Richard's report of Alphonso's obedience. He warns the king that the devil is endangering his salvation through one of his members, a certain false monk Robert, and through his ancient helper, a 'lost woman'. Gregory reinforces his denunciation of Constance with a number of scriptural references, including the story of the casting down of King Solomon by an unchaste woman (cf. 1 Kgs. 2). Alphonso must reject his illicit marriage to his first wife's cousin. As for Robert, 'the deceiver of you and subverter of your kingdom', he will do penance within the cloisters of Cluny. The pope concludes by expressing his hope that Almighty God will gladden him through the correction of his dearest son. Gregory's brief letter to Richard empathizes with the legate's sorrow at the hindering of his work in Spain by the machinations of the devil and notifies him of his instruction to Abbot Hugh to compel Richard to return to Cluny so that he might experience the harshness of a heavy penance. It is not certain that the three letters reached their intended recipients, or that they were even sent. Cowdrey (1970) conjectured that the subsequent restoration of harmony between the pope and the king, as evidenced by the laudatory letter of 1081 mentioned above, would have been implausible if Alphonso had learned of the content of these letters. Robert lost the abbacy of Sahagún but the king's marriage to Constance survived. Neither issue recurs in Gregory's correspondence.

12 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 477.
13 Reg. 8.2, pp. 517.19-518.37.
14 Reg. 8.3, pp. 519.11-520.21.
15 Reg. 8.4, pp. 520.32-521.27.
16 Cowdrey, Cluniacs, p. 236.
17 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 478-9; for Sahagún, see Cowdrey, Cluniacs, pp. 239-44.
In the end, despite the failure of his early attempts, discussed later, to impose the proprietorship of St Peter over the peninsula, the pope achieved great success in his efforts to impose the Roman rite within the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain.¹⁸ Spring 1080 saw Cardinal Richard and King Alphonso jointly convening the Council of Burgos at which the Roman liturgy was officially accepted in Alphonso’s realm.¹⁹ This was a powerful symbolic acknowledgment of St Peter’s spiritual authority in Christian Spain. Richard’s role illustrates the potential effectiveness of a zealous legate in establishing and strengthening papal authority in Christian kingdoms and in keeping the pope informed. Overall, the evolution of Gregory’s pragmatic policy with regard to the regna Hyspaniae bears some resemblance to his dealings with William the Conqueror.

¹⁸ For the apostolic see’s claim to proprietorship over Spain, see below pp. 263ff.
2.14 Byzantium

A few weeks after his election Pope Gregory despatched a letter, dated 9 July 1073, to Emperor Michael VII Ducas (1071-8). It expresses his desire to renew the *concordia antiqua* between the *Romana ecclesia* and its Constantinopolitan daughter (*filia eius Constantinopolitana*), a harmony that formerly benefitted both the *sedes apostolica* and the (eastern) *imperium*. However, their mutual charity has latterly grown cold, to the harm of both.

In 1054, Pope Leo IX had wanted to iron out the differences of custom and ritual between the apostolic see and the eastern Christian Church, and to persuade Constantinople to accept Rome’s authority. To that end, he sent a legation to Constantinople to carry out negotiations. Its leader was Humbert, cardinal-bishop of Silva-Candida. The visit ended in recriminations and mutual excommunications by the legates and the patriarch, Michael Cerularius. The net effect was to consolidate the break between Rome and Constantinople. In later centuries, the events of summer 1054 came to be seen as the definitive start of the schism between the eastern and western Churches that persists to this day. However, at the time it was not perceived in such dramatic terms. Contemporary chroniclers did not record the occasion and it seems to have been soon forgotten. Nevertheless, as a member of the papal circle the young Archdeacon Hildebrand would have been aware of what had transpired.

The aforementioned letter is the only preserved *epistola* from Gregory to a reigning eastern emperor. It begins by thanking him for his own (lost) letter, which had apparently indicated his ‘no small devotion’ (*non parva devotio*) to *sanctae Romanae ecclesiae*. The pope’s response exhibits no trace of hostility. Nevertheless, the reference to Constantinople as the ‘daughter’ church of Rome indicates that the pope does not intend to dilute the apostolic see’s claims to authority over the whole of Christendom. The fact that the text variously addresses the emperor as ‘your excellency’ (*excellentiae* 

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2 Reg. 1.18, pp. 29.12-30.7.

vestrae), 'your highness' (magnitudini vestrae), and 'your majesty' (nobilitatis vestrae) suggests ambiguity in Gregory's mind about the precise status of the Constantinopolitano imperator. The letter concludes by stating that other secret matters will be communicated verbally to the emperor by the bearer, the trusted Patriarch Dominicus IV of Grado (Venice). Emperor Michael's initiative should be seen in the context of the dire threat to Byzantium from the (Muslim) Seljuk Turks. Michael's own succession in 1071 had been a consequence of the Seljuk victory at Manzikert in 1071. By 1073, the Turks had taken most of Asia Minor and the emperor badly needed military assistance.

The following year the pope responded to Constantinople's plight by appealing to the Christian west for the despatch of a large military contingent to the east. Two decades later, in 1095, Pope Urban II (1088-99) called forth an armed pilgrimage to the east, an enterprise now known as the First Crusade. Part of the extensive debate on the origins of the crusading movement has centred on the issue of whether Gregory's efforts in 1074, albeit unsuccessful, merit depiction as a 'proto-crusade'. On the basis of his surviving correspondence, 1074 was the only period during his pontificate when Gregory showed a sustained engagement with Byzantine matters. Six letters attest to this.

His epistola to Count William I of Burgundy, dated 2 February 1074, suggests that the proposed, hopefully formidable, military contingent might kill two birds with one stone by intimidating the south Italian Normans into quiescence before moving east to aid the much-reduced Byzantine Empire. Incidentally, one of those from whom the pope requested armed forces was Count Raymond IV of Saint-Gilles, who would play a prominent role in the First Crusade (1096-99). Also mentioned earlier was the papal letter of 1 March 1074, which calls on all the faithful to go to the defence of Byzantium. By 10 September, Gregory had heard a rumour that the eastern Christians were holding their own against the 'pagans'. The pope now appeared to be undecided about how to proceed — or, as he put it, he was still awaiting the guidance of divine providence.

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4 See Angold, 'The Byzantine empire', pp. 236-40.
5 See Erdmann, Origin, pp. 160-5; also Cowdrey, 'Pope Gregory VII's “crusading” plans'.
6 See above p. 131.
7 Reg. 1.46, p. 70.13-16.
8 Reg. 1.49, pp. 75.9-76.3.
9 Reg. 2.3, pp. 127.2-128.11.
earlier discussion of the pope’s fluctuating relationship with Henry IV observed that in late 1074 the German king was so much in Gregory’s favour that a papal letter dated 7 December proposes that, in the event of Gregory personally leading an expedition to the east, the apostolic see would be left under Henry’s protection. Presumably, one motive for this would be to deter further Norman incursions into papal lands in Gregory’s absence. A papal letter marked dictatus papae, dated 16 December, addresses all the faithful of St Peter, especially those beyond the Alps. It states that membri diaboli are cruelly slaughtering their brother Christians like cattle and urges its hearers to be ready to cross the sea to defend the Christian faith. Later that month, Gregory wrote to his firm ally and confidante Margravine Matilda of Tuscany. The letter reveals that his mind is firmly set upon crossing the sea himself to aid the Christians who are being slaughtered by the heathen. He states his belief that many knights support the proposed campaign and, noting that the Empress Agnes herself desires to make the journey, suggests that if Matilda accompanies her then the participation of both women will encourage others to take part. In the end, as already remarked, the response to the pope’s appeals for armed assistance was disappointing. It seems that by the time of the despatch of his letter of 22 January 1075 to Abbot Hugh of Cluny Gregory was well aware of the failure of his plans. The letter pours forth his utter dejection regarding the current state of western Christendom. He particularly lambasts the princely rulers who all place their own honour before God’s, and lucre before iustitia.

After this disappointment, Byzantium disappears from Gregory’s surviving correspondence until 1080, although an entry in the record of the synod of November 1078 demonstrates his continuing support for Michael VII. It records the pope’s excommunication of Emperor Nicephorus III Botaniates (1078-81), the successor of the deposed Michael. Subsequently, an individual claiming to be Michael arrived in Italy and sought help from St Peter and Duke Robert. He was actually an imposter, although

10 Reg. 2.31, pp. 165.20-168.4. Also above p. 64.
11 Reg. 2.37, p. 173.4-29.
13 See above p. 132.
14 Reg. 2.49, pp. 189.2-190.24.
15 Reg. 6.5b, p. 400.28.
Guiscard behaved as if he accepted him at face value. The fact that the duke’s daughter had been engaged to the son of Emperor Michael may have influenced the decision of the ambitious duke to intervene on his behalf, and to ask the pope to support a military expedition to the east. A letter from Gregory, dated 25 July 1080, addresses the bishops of Guiscard’s territories of Apulia and Calabria. It begins by stating that ‘Michael’, the most glorious emperor of Constantinople, has been maliciously and undeservedly cast down from the summit of his imperial dignity. ‘Michael’ and the duke have requested papal assistance. The letter declares Gregory’s full support for the plan to use force to restore the deposed emperor. The participants are not to waver in their support for ‘Michael’, and the bishops are to assist in their spiritual preparation. The Norman campaign in the east got under way during the following months. In the meantime, Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118) captured the imperial throne in April 1081 following a military coup. The pope’s last surviving letter on the subject of the eastern Empire was despatched following the Norman victory over the Byzantine army at Durazzo on 18 October 1081. The letter congratulates Duke Robert on his victory and reminds him of the commitments he made to St Peter in June 1080.

In conclusion, there is no surviving evidence of any direct dialogue between the pope and the eastern emperor other than a single exchange of cordial letters following Gregory’s elevation in April 1073. The only extended period of papal interest in Byzantine affairs was Gregory’s ultimately unsuccessful efforts in 1074 to organize a military campaign to aid Constantinople against the Seljuk Turks. His support for Robert Guiscard’s invasion six years later should be seen in the context of the apostolic see’s need for protection following the deterioration in its relationship with the German king.

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16 For the duke’s motives and subsequent campaign, see Loud, Robert Guiscard, pp. 213-220; also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 485-6.
17 Reg. 8.6, pp. 523.35-524.26.
18 Reg. 9.17, pp. 597.15-598.13. Also Reg. 8.1a, b, c, pp. 514.18-517.5. See above p. 135.
3. Gregory's political language and themes

3.1 Politico-ecclesial morality in Gregory's letters

The following seven chapters examine major political themes in Gregory's correspondence. Part 3 concludes with an examination of – and comparison between – the pope's extended epistolae to Bishop Hermann of Metz of 1076 and 1081. This first chapter offers a preliminary survey of Gregory's letters designed to supplement the succeeding discussions by highlighting certain significant political features of the pope's vocabulary.

A recurring topic is Gregory's conviction that he is the latest in a long line of vicarii Sancti Petri who are duty bound to send legates to Christian lands and to instruct, warn, and admonish Christian rulers and peoples. An example is his letter dated 17 April 1075 to King Sweyn II of Denmark, which states that among his predecessors it was a matter of right and custom to send embassies to teach the way of the Lord to all nations, and to reprove all kings and princes when necessary.\(^1\) His epistola dated 28 June 1077 to the kings and lay magnates of Spain quotes St Paul: 'A necessity to preach is imposed upon me; for woe be to me if I shall not preach the gospel' (1 Cor. 9: 16).\(^2\) A slightly different – but telling – insight into the pope's thinking about kingship arises in Gregory's letter of 23 March 1075 to Duke Gésa of Hungary, which speaks of the faithful promptings of the charity by which 'we admonish all kings and princes as sons'.\(^3\) In other words, the pope believes he has a duty to act towards a ruler as a father reproving his son.

Gregory's relations with King Henry IV of Germany increasingly dominated his pontificate. Schieffer (1989) observed that it must be assumed that during the fluctuations in their relationship the pope's views were governed on the one hand by general basic ideas about secular rulers (saecularis potestas), but that on the other hand these perceptions were constantly being modified by his actual experiences with the Salian king.\(^4\) Gregory's correspondence to, or about, other Christian rulers throws light on his notions about saecularis potestas. The most fundamental topic is arguably sacral kingship, the pope's rare allusions to which are considered in the later discussion of the

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\(^1\) *Reg.* 2.75, p. 237.30-3.

\(^2\) *Reg.* 4.28, p. 344.4-7.

\(^3\) *Reg.* 2.63, p. 218.17-20.

\(^4\) Schieffer, 'Gregor VII. und die Königse Europas', p. 194.
characteristics of Gregory’s ideal *rex Christianus.* However, on the evidence of his letters, it is clear that recognition of royal sacrality did not loom large in his thinking.

Advice to kings is scattered throughout the papal letters. His 1081 *epistola* to King Alphonso of León-Castile includes a variation on the New Testament’s ‘Golden Rule’, advising him to refrain from doing to his Lord and Saviour that which he would not permit from his own servant (cf. Matt. 7: 12). Gregory was also well aware of the danger of royal vainglory. For instance, his pastoral letter of 28 June 1077 warns the Spanish kings and lay magnates against excessive vanity and advises them to ensure that their current eminence does not cause them to forget that kings and paupers share the same transitory human condition: the life of mortals is fleeting and fragile, and death can arrive at any time. Accordingly, they should direct some of their arms, resources, and power to the honour and service of God. Similar observations on the implications of mortality for kings crop up in other letters composed during the second half of his pontificate.

A related theme arises in some of Gregory’s earlier letters. This is the proposition that God will judge kings more rigorously because they have been entrusted with the care of so many others. His letter of 25 January 1075 to King Sweyn II of Denmark reminds him that kings and paupers will likewise be reduced to dust and ashes, but that the former will face the stricter judgement (*ad districtum iudicium*). Other letters touch on the same subject, suggesting that iniquitous behaviour by rulers threatens their eternal salvation. Gregory was capable of presenting the same message in a positive manner by offering the prospect of eternal blessedness in the heavenly kingdom. Thus, his pastoral letter of 6 November 1077 to Sweyn’s successor, Harold Hein, ends with a statement of the pope’s hope that the Danish king will govern in temporal matters in such a way that when his life ends he will merit the glory of the eternal kingdom.

Gregory’s letters make clear that although contemporary kings might pay lip service to the notion of governing virtuously in order to gain salvation, the pope is
unconvinced of their sincerity. In his *epistolae*, unconditional praise for kings is usually reserved for dead rulers such as Sweyn II of Denmark, Henry III of Germany, and the predecessors of Philip I of France. As Schieffer (1989) noted, Gregory’s letters to living kings often open with words of acknowledgement which serve as *captatio benevolentiae*, a rhetorical formula meaning literally ‘to capture the good will’ of the reader, before launching into the warnings and reservations that form the main substance of the text. Recipients of such letters included William I of England, Sweyn II of Denmark, Ladislaus I of Hungary, and Boleslaw II of Poland.

Sometimes the pope expressed his sombre view of kingship in general terms. His sombre letter dated 22 January 1075 to his confidant, Abbot Hugh of Cluny, rues the placing by princely rulers of their own honour before God’s, and lucre before *iustitia*. Four years later, a letter to Abbot Hugh dated 2 January 1079 reveals that his pessimism persisted: ‘princes who fear and love God’ are scarcely to be found in the west. A pastoral letter dated 24 April 1080 to William the Conqueror warns the king about ‘the multitude of most wicked princes’ (*pessimorum principum turba*), virtue and royal power being rarely combined. Other papal letters express harsh criticism of particular kings. Unsurprisingly Gregory’s two main targets were the *reges Francorum et Teutonicorum*, whose behaviour made them dangers to, and enemies of, the Church. The attack on Philip I in Gregory’s letter of December 1073 to Bishop Rodin was considered earlier. Also noted was the even more scathing castigation of him in his letter dated 10 September 1074 to the French archbishops and bishops, which declares that Philip has changed from a king to a *tyrannus* whose infamies and crimes have defiled his whole life. One of his longest epistolary tirades against an individual king was his letter to the faithful of the Roman Empire, dated 25 July 1076, which speaks of the ‘unheard of

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12 (France) *Reg.* 1.75, pp. 106.34-107.3; (Sweyn) *Reg.* 5.10, pp. 361.20-362.11; (Henry III) *Reg.* 1.19, pp. 31.35-32.9; *et passim.*


14 *Reg.* 1.70, p. 101.5-29; *Reg.* 2.51, pp. 192.31-193.11; *Reg.* 2.73, pp. 233.33-234.14; *et passim.*

15 *Reg.* 2.49, pp. 189.2-190.24.


18 See above p. 40.

19 *Reg.* 2.5, p. 130.33-4. See above p. 43.
wickednesses and manifold iniquities' (inauditas pravitates et diversas iniquitates) of the recently excommunicated Henry IV. 20

Gregory sometimes advised royal correspondents that St Peter would reward their loyalty to him, not just with spiritual benefits, but also with victory over their enemies or assistance in governing their subjects. His letter of 20 March 1074 to Sancho I of Aragon informs him that the prince of the apostles will repay the king's faith in him by bringing him victory over his adversaries. 21 It may be relevant that at this time the pope was pressing the apostolic see's claims over Hyspania. 22 Less than a year later, Gregory despatched a letter, dated 25 January 1075, asking Sancho to lend assistance to the ailing Bishop Sancho II of Huesca (1056-76). It ends by assuring the king that if he does so, then St Peter will help him both to rule his subjects and, once he has been absolved by Peter's merits from the bonds of his sins, to enjoy the glory of eternal bliss in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 23

The material discussed in this short preliminary discussion indicates that Gregory's perception of contemporary Christian rulers was generally pessimistic. They were in constant need of the admonitions that it was his duty to issue. It was probably the same essentially negative outlook that prompted his occasional somewhat extravagant praise for the few kings who displayed some signs of meritorious Christian rulership. 24 It is noticeable that the great majority of the letters mentioned were directed at rulers of peripheral territories of Europe whom Gregory had good reason to believe to be more likely to respond positively to advice and admonition than the long established kingdoms ruled by the reges Teutonicorum et Francorum.

20 Reg. 4.1, pp. 289.20-292.13.
21 Reg. 1.63, p. 92.8-12.
22 See below pp. 263ff.
23 Reg. 2.50, p.p. 190.35-192.15. See also Reg. 9.2, pp.572.24-573.15.
24 For example, see above p. 25 (William I), p. 120 (Sweyn II).
3.2 Libertas Ecclesiae

Ever since by divine providence mother Church set me upon the apostolic throne, deeply unworthy and, as God is my witness, unwilling though I was, my greatest concern has been that holy Church, the bride of Christ, our lady and mother, should return to her true glory and stand free, chaste, and catholic.¹

This statement forms part of Pope Gregory's last encyclical to the faithful. He composed it in exile in Salerno at some point in the second half of 1084. He died there on 25 May 1085. Bernold of St Blasien recorded the event, describing the deceased pope as 'a most fervent teacher of the catholic religion and a most vigorous defender of the freedom of the Church' (aeclasiasticae libertatis strennuissimus defensor). Furthermore, wrote Bernold, Gregory did not wish the ecclesiastical order to be under the hands of laymen, but to surpass them, both in holiness of conduct and in dignity of rank.²

Libertas is a key term in the politico-ecclesiastical vocabulary of the eleventh century. Members of the ruling class used the word to characterize their privileged status, which normally included an element of dominium over lesser nobles. However, there was a more particular contemporary meaning of libertas. This was its use to characterize the independence and superiority of the Church. Tellenbach (1940) began his examination of the importance of the idea of libertas Ecclesiae in the so-called Investiture Contest with these memorable words: 'In moments of considered solemnity, when their tone was passionate and their religious feeling at its deepest, Gregory VII and his contemporaries called the object toward which they were striving the "freedom" of the Church'.³ Tellenbach presented Gregory VII's pontificate as a battle to establish libertas Ecclesiae, meaning the liberation of the Church from the encumbrances of simony, lay investiture, and secular control and jurisdiction.⁴ Leyser (1965) proposed libertas Ecclesiae as the most obvious expression of Gregory's aims.⁵ Ullmann (1970) emphasized that when Gregory spoke of libertas Ecclesiae he meant libertas sacerdotii,

¹ Epp. Vag. 54, pp. 128-34: 'Ex quo enim disposizione diuina mater aecclesia in trono apostolico me ualde indignum et Deo teste imitum collocauit, summopere procurauit ut sancta ecclesia, sponsa Dei, domina et mater nostra, ad proprium Rediens decus libera, casta, et catholica permaneret.'
² Bernold, Chronicon, p. 455.1-4.
³ Tellenbach, Church, state, p. 126.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 126-61.
⁵ Leyser, 'Polemics', p. 53.
rather than that of the wider universal church, the whole *societas christiana*.\textsuperscript{6} Canning (1996) agreed that *libertas Ecclesiae*, signifying the subjection of the Church as a lay body to the pope and its freedom from lay control, lay at the core of Gregory's thinking.\textsuperscript{7}

This dissertation has already called attention to Pope Gelasius I's articulation of the concept of the independence of spiritual authority from temporal control.\textsuperscript{8} His famous letter of 494 to the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I included this statement: 'Two there are, august Emperor, by which this world is ruled on title of original and sovereign right – the consecrated authority of the priesthood and the royal power'\textsuperscript{9}. Alois Dempf (1929) thought that this text constituted the 'Magna Charta of the freedom of the church'.\textsuperscript{10} Insofar as he was alluding to Gregory VII's later concept of *libertas Ecclesiae*, this seems to be a somewhat anachronistic interpretation given that Gelasius's statement represents nothing more than an attempt to exclude secular rulership from any control over spiritual matters by separating *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. In the political context of the late fifth century it could not conceivably have been, as Gregory VII claimed, an assertion of sacerdotal authority in the political realm.\textsuperscript{11} By the time of Gregory VII's election, the dualistic Gelasian conception of the separation of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* was widely accepted. However, in the early Middle Ages it was a political fact of life that the affairs of the Church within individual territories were customarily managed and protected by the local kings and princes. This was accepted as a legitimate responsibility of 'sacral kingship'. Royal sacratity was manifested in coronation ceremonies where medieval Christian kings, like those of ancient Israel, were anointed and invested with both spiritual and political duties. These spiritual duties included responsibility for the reform of the churches and monasteries, especially those monasteries that enjoyed royal protection.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{6} W. Ullmann, *Growth*, p. 294.
\textsuperscript{7} Canning, *History*, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{8} See above pp. 8ff.
\textsuperscript{9} Gelasius I, Ep. 8, col. 0042B.
\textsuperscript{11} Reg. 8.21, p. 549.13-23.
Gregory’s reforming predecessors concentrated their efforts on the elimination of simony and clerical fornication. Initially, Gregory also focused on these issues, but a combination of political circumstances and his own inclination and temperament propelled him to the belief that reform was more than just a matter of the moral or spiritual life; it concerned what Tellenbach called ‘a struggle for right order in the world’. Gregory came to regard lay control of the Church per se as the main obstruction to reform. His preserved letters provide much evidence of his conception of libertas. Before turning to this pope’s perception of libertas Ecclesiae – the independence of the Church as a whole – it is useful to consider briefly other contexts in which he deployed the term libertas.

One of these is especially significant because it may have predisposed this former monk to conclude that it was necessary to ‘restore’ the libertas of the universal Church. This was the ‘gift’ (munus) of Romana libertas granted by the apostolic see to certain monasteries. Romana libertas was the privilege of ‘spiritual exemption’ bestowed upon a monastery by placing it under the direct protection and jurisdiction of the papacy. Only through subjection to God and St Peter could the monks attain true libertas. Its practical purpose was the defence of reforming monasteries from predatory or incompetent local bishops. Unsurprisingly, monastic exemption became a major bone of contention between the papal reformers and much of the episcopate. The theme of Romana libertas surfaces in Gregory’s correspondence in relation to a number of monasteries. The great exemplar of monastic exemption, from its foundation in 910, was the Burgundian abbey of Cluny, whose rights and privileges Gregory confirmed in 1075. In 1079 Cluny’s spiritual and temporal interests came under renewed threat from local forces. In response, Gregory again endorsed Cluny’s immunitas. This is discussed in two documents, thought to date from March 1080. The first is a letter from Gregory, reproving Cluny’s local diocesan Bishop Landeric of Macon, for challenging the recent confirmation of the abbey’s privileges by the papal legate, Peter of Albano. The second

13 Tellenbach, Church, state, p. 1.
14 Reg. 7.24, p. 504.21.
15 Reg. 2.59, p. 213.2; Reg. 2.69, p. 228.1; Reg. 7.24, p. 504.2; et passim. For Gregory and monasticism, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 659-76.
16 Cowdrey, Cluniacs, p. 51.
text, composed early March 1080, records Gregory's panegyric on Cluny at the recent Lenten synod. It declares that among the abbey's many virtues is that it has always copied the *libertas* and *dignitas* of the apostolic see, whose authority it has preserved for itself; the monks have never submitted to any outsider or earthly power, but have remained under the exclusive *subiectio* and *defensio* of St Peter and the apostolic see. The pope accordingly confirmed in perpetuity the abbey's *immunitas* and *libertas*.\(^\text{18}\) Cowdrey (1970) described Cluny as 'the classic example of the true liberty in subjection to the lordship of St Peter, which it was Gregory's purpose to foster in the Church'.\(^\text{19}\) The importance of monastic influence on the eleventh-century reformers' anxiety for the purity and right order of the Church and their dedication to the purification both of the Church and of Christian society is now recognized.\(^\text{20}\)

Five of Gregory's letters concern the *libertas* of specific episcopal sees. One, dated 1 July 1073, warns the faithful in Lombardy to resist Godfrey, the excommunicate archbishop of Milan, whose simoniacal depredations have destroyed that church's former *libertas*.\(^\text{21}\) Gregory's view of the connection between the Milan affair and *libertas Ecclesiae* is discussed below.\(^\text{22}\) His letter to William I of Burgundy of February 1074 requests the count to prepare a force of knights to come to the aid of the *libertas* of the Roman church (*sucurrendum Romanae ecclesiae libertati*) against a possible threat from the Normans of southern Italy.\(^\text{23}\) A later *epistola*, dated 8 March 1080, addresses the protracted dispute over the claims by the archbishop of Tours to jurisdiction over Brittany; it reports a decision by the recent Lenten synod that legates would visit the region to decide whether the Bretons should 'remain undisturbed' in their *libertas*.\(^\text{24}\) A fourth letter, dated 15 October 1080, denounces Guibert, the *dictus archiepiscopus* of Ravenna, and calls for a new election so that the church of Ravenna might be restored to her *antiqua libertas*.\(^\text{25}\) Lastly, the end of Rome's tolerance for Archbishop Manasses I of Rheims is signalled in a letter dated 27 September 1080, in which Gregory orders the


\(^{19}\) Cowdrey, *Cluniacs*, p. 57.


\(^{22}\) See below p.157.

\(^{23}\) Reg. 1.46, p. 70.13-16. See above p. 131.


\(^{25}\) Reg. 8.12, pp. 531.15-532.23.
election of a new metropolitan so that the *antiqua libertas* of the archdiocese might be restored.26

Three letters preserve the pope’s thoughts on the *libertas* of priests and legates. His long *epistola* of 10 September 1074 to the senior prelates of France denounces Philip I before urging the archbishops and bishops to confront the king and thereby uphold the independence of their priestly office (*libertas vestri sacerdotalis officii*).27 On 26 October 1074 the pope wrote to a long-time ally, Bishop Burchard II of the Saxon diocese of Halberstadt, raising the issue of the poor reception recently received in Burchard’s ‘kingdom’ by papal legates. The letter expresses Gregory’s hope that there has been no violation of the *veritas* and *libertas* of the legates’ *auctoritas*.28 Another papal letter, dated 25 March 1077, charges Bishop Josfred of Paris to investigate complaints that Archbishop Manasses of Rheims has acted with undue severity, and ends with a statement of Gregory’s desire that Josfred’s efforts will give the pope reason to rejoice in the *libertas* and success (*fructus*) of the bishop’s priestly office.29

Other correspondence indicates that Gregory was mindful of the need to promote what might be termed the *libertas* of the individual. The pope’s approval of the reported willingness of King Ladislaus I of Hungary to obey the apostolic see as befits a freeborn son (*liberalis filius*) was noted earlier.30 At some date in 1073, after 18 July, Gregory wrote to the clerks, monks, and laymen of Vallombrosa in Tuscany. Having praised their late abbot John Gualbertus, he exhorts them to ‘let your mind stand upright to the confusion of evil men in the *libertas* wherein it is wont to stand’.31 A letter, dated 4 March 1077, to the clergy and people of Chartres, denounces Bishop Robert and apprises them of his deposition; they must now, without fear or favour, canonically elect his replacement. It concludes with an instruction that goes to the core of Gregory’s concept of *libertas* as the key to individual salvation through submission under Christ and the apostolic see:

27 *Reg.* 2.5, p. 132.10. See above p. 43.
28 *Reg.* 2.12, p. 143.31.
30 See above p. 112.
31 *Epp. Vag.* 2, pp. 4-7.
Accordingly be mindful that no one has suffered for you, no one has died for you, except Christ. Holding to and defending his *libertas* as beloved sons of God, you should in no way allow a yoke of iniquity or any lordship to be imposed upon you to the perdition of your souls, knowing that apostolic authority and defence will never be lacking to you in this cause.32

The pope's famous long letter of 15 March 1081 to Hermann of Metz, defending his second excommunication of King Henry IV, is examined later.33 It twice alludes to individual *libertas* within Christ. An early passage argues that nobody — not even a king — is excluded from St Peter's power of binding and loosing (cf. Matt. 16: 19), unless it be that unhappy man who, being unable to bear the yoke of the Lord, instead subjects himself to the devil's burden and refuses to be numbered among Christ's sheep. The spurning through self-glory of the divinely granted power of Peter will not advance such a man to a wretched freedom (*misera libertas*). On the contrary, the burden of Peter, which he refuses to bear, will weigh heavily on him when it comes to the day of judgement and the matter of his damnation.34 Although he frames his words as a statement pertaining to all Christians, Gregory clearly has King Henry in mind. The centrality of *libertas* to the pope's thinking is demonstrated by his return to the idea in the closing sentence of this, his longest epistola. Having reiterated the need for kings and emperors to exhibit *humilitas* and *oboedientia*, Gregory declares that those who humbly imitate Christ will cross from a servile and transitory kingdom to the kingdom of true *libertas* and *aeternitas*.35

The independence of the Church as a whole was by far the most frequent context in which Gregory employed the term *libertas*. Twelve of his surviving letters specifically mention *libertas Ecclesiae*.36 Four more use similar expressions in contexts that make it clear that they are effectively synonymous with *libertas Ecclesiae: libertas christianae religionis* appears twice, while *libertas christianae fidei et religionis* and *Romanae

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32 Reg. 4.14, p. 318.25-8: 'Cuius libertatem sicut dilecti filii Dei tenentes ac defendentes iugum iniquitatis aut aliquod dominium ad perditionem animarum vestrarum vobis imponi nullatenus patiamini scientes, quod nunquam vobis in hac causa apostolica deeerit auctoritas et defensio.'

33 See below pp. 275ff.

34 Reg. 8.21, p. 548.10-25.


36 Reg. 1.12, p. 20.5; Reg. 1.42, p. 65.21; Reg. 1.85, p. 122.17-23; *et passim*. 

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aecclesiae libertatem occur once. Furthermore, many of these references crop up in particularly important letters, written at times of crisis. Significantly, his use of the expression libertas Ecclesiae tacitly excludes the laity from his definition of the Church. In his mind, the expression stood for libertas sacerdotii in general, and libertas sedis apostolicae in particular.

Unsurprisingly, the earliest references in Gregory’s correspondence to libertas Ecclesiae concern the disputed archiepiscopal succession in Milan. An earlier chapter noted the consecration of Henry IV’s candidate Godfrey as archbishop in early 1073 in defiance of the decision by the 1072 Lenten synod to excommunicate Godfrey and recognize Atto, the candidate of the Patarene reformers in Milan. During what turned out to be his last weeks of life, Pope Alexander responded by excommunicating five of Henry’s counsellors at the Lenten synod of 1073. In a letter dated 24 June 1073, Pope Gregory describes Godfrey as a heretic who has been excommunicated, and condemned as a simoniac. A week later, he despatched two letters in quick succession on the subject of the dictus archiepiscopus. The first, dated 29 June 1073, calls upon the bishop of Pavia to demonstrate that he shares the pope’s zeal in resisting Godfrey and all those in conflict with the apostolic see. He must do so for the sake of libertas sanctae Ecclesiae. The letter depicts these enemies as attempting to overthrow the catholic faith and the rules of the Church’s religion. Those opposing Godfrey are engaged in the ‘battle of Christ’ (certamen Christi). The text indicates Gregory’s awareness of Peter Damian’s letter #120 of 1065-66 to Henry IV, which exhorted him to defend the papacy against the schismatic Cadalus. The second letter, dated 1 July 1073, addresses ‘the faithful of St Peter’, especially the supporters of the Pataria. It invokes the memory of Milan’s patron saint, Ambrose, and recalls that the Milanese church was once a beacon of religio, libertas ac specialis gloria. In contrast to his epistola to the bishop of Pavia, Gregory couches this exhortatory letter in dramatic terms with numerous scriptural references.

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39 Ullmann, Growth, p. 294.
40 See above pp. 53ff.
41 Reg. 1.11, p. 18.8-12.
42 Reg. 1.12, pp. 19.33-20.35.
43 Peter Damiani, Briefe 3, Ep. 120, p. 385.1-392.16. See above p. 53.
The faithful must resist Godfrey and defend the Christian faith. This is a call to arms against Godfrey and his supporters, whom Gregory describes as ministers of Satan and heralds of Antichrist (ministri sathanae et precones antichristi).

Vivid depictions of the oppression of the church by evil men crop up in many of Gregory’s letters. These typically precede calls for support in the struggle for libertas Ecclesiae. A case in point is Gregory’s letter of 24 January 1074 to Archbishop Sigehard of Aquileia and his suffragans. If mostly comprises a graphic description of the dire condition of the Church: it is stricken, desolated, and close to foundering; the rulers and princes, having abandoned all reverence, are oppressing their lady and mother the bride of Christ, are treating her like a common slave-girl, and would destroy her to satisfy their own desires. It castigates the majority of bishops, albeit in less extravagant language, and ends with an invitation to the prelates to attend the forthcoming Lenten synod so that they may gird themselves more securely to support ecclesiastica libertas et religio. This correspondence illustrates some of the essential elements in the pope’s understanding of libertas Ecclesiae.

One of those elements was based upon Gregory’s absolute conviction that mankind is divided between membra Christi and membra diaboli. Consequently, the reformers are engaged in a struggle, a war; they face an enemy against whom they must fortify themselves for certamen Christi. Gregory’s letter of 15 June 1074 to the Empress Agnes praises her for urging others to help a struggling Church (laborans Ecclesia), which although currently placed, as it were, in a sepulchre of affliction, will hopefully regain its libertas. Another letter, thought to date from December 1076, informs his supporters in Germany that he is determined to continue his journey northward to meet with the rebel princes and – perhaps – to absolve King Henry. Significantly, the letter links libertas Ecclesiae with salus imperii: Gregory is prepared to endure any hardship, even the shedding of blood, pro libertate sancte Ecclesie et salute imperii. The reality of bloodshed may have been brought home to the pope when some of his own was shed in

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44 Reg. 1.15, pp. 23.19-25.2.  
45 For tribulationes Ecclesiae, see below pp. 221ff.  
46 Reg. 1.42, pp. 62.28-65.28.  
47 Reg. 1.85, p. 122.17-23.  
48 See above pp. 79ff. Also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 150-6.  
the course of his temporary kidnapping while celebrating mass on Christmas Eve 1075.\footnote{Bonizo, 7, p. 603.13-18; Paul of Bernreid, \textit{Vita Gregorii VII papae}, ed. J.M. Watterich, \textit{Pontificum Romanorum Vitae} 1 (Leipzig, 1862), 499. Also Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 326-8.} Cowdrey (2002) conjectured that Gregory still had this experience in mind at the 1080 Lenten synod that re-excommunicated Henry IV.\footnote{Reg. 7.14a(7), p. 483.19-23.} The council’s record presents this decision as part of a direct address to SS. Peter and Paul, in the course of which Gregory declares that \textit{membra diaboli} laid hands upon him to the point of shedding blood.\footnote{Reg. 1.9, p. 15.7; Reg. 1.15, p. 23.23; Reg. 1.17, p. 28.15; \textit{et passim}.} The pope’s letter dated 15 October 1080 to the clergy and laity of Ravenna castigates the \textit{dictus archiepiscopus} Guibert, who has contemplated invading \textit{sancta Romana sedes} with the intention of dragging her into ruin and downfall. It states that this ‘rotten member’ (Guibert) has been cut off by the sword of excommunication. The pope’s partiality for militant language is shown by his use of ‘sword’ (\textit{gladius}) no less than fifty-six times in his preserved correspondence, often as a metaphor for preaching or correction (cf. Jer. 48.10), sometimes meaning the imposition of anathema upon individuals.\footnote{See above p. 94.} Bearing in mind Gregory’s intense identification with his first predecessor, it may be that the pope’s penchant for the sword metaphor was influenced by the gospel story that Simon Peter, in an attempt to defend Jesus at the time of his arrest, used a non-metaphorical sword to cut off the right ear of the high priest’s servant (cf. John. 18: 10).

Perhaps the clearest depiction of the pope’s belief in the necessity to confront the enemy in the conflict for \textit{libertas Ecclesiae} is found in Gregory’s important letter of March 1081 to Bishop Altmann of Passau and Abbot William of Hirsau.\footnote{Reg. 9.3, p. 575.8-13: ‘Nobilius tamen esse dinoscitur multo tempore pro libertate sanctae ecclesiae decertare quam misereae ac diabolicae servituti subiacere. Certant namque miseri, scilicet membra diaboli, ut eiusdem misera servitute opprimantur; certant e contra membra Christi, ut eosdem miseris ad christianam libertatem reducant.’}

We hold it to be far nobler to fight for a long time for \textit{libertas sanctae ecclesiae} than to sink into a miserable and devilish servitude. For the wretched fight as members of the devil, and are crushed down into miserable slavery to him. The members of Christ, on the other hand, fight to bring back those same wretches into Christian liberty.\footnote{Reg. 7.14a(7), p. 483.19-23.}
The phrase ‘for a long time’ (*multo tempore*) suggests the pope’s acceptance that the contest, already longstanding, is likely to be further protracted.

Exactly who were these enemies of *libertas Ecclesiae*? Gregory had no doubt that they were Satan and his earthly allies. As observed earlier, he depicted Godfrey and his Milanese supporters as *ministri sathanae et precones antichristi*, and recalled his own physical assault by *membra diaboli*. His ‘ultimatum letter’ to Henry IV, dated 8 December 1075, refers to the trampling underfoot of the Christian religion at the devil’s instigation (*suadens diaboli*) and the manifest ruin of the Lord’s flock.\(^{56}\) His letter of 15 October 1080 to the clergy and people of Ravenna blames their problems on that source of pride and sower of discord, the devil (*superbiae auctor et discordiae seminator diabolus*), of whom Guibert, the *dictus archiepiscopus* of Ravenna, is the leading *membrum*.\(^{57}\)

When it came to defining the aims of the enemies of *libertas Ecclesiae*, the pope’s correspondence tends to eschew understatement. On the other hand, there is no reason to think that Gregory deliberately indulged in hyperbole; his letters convey the impression that he is firmly convinced of the fundamental truth of his words. His letter to the bishop of Pavia of 29 June 1073 declares that *libertas sanctae Ecclesiae* is at stake, and depicts the Church’s foes as trying to overthrow the catholic faith and the rules of the Church’s religion.\(^{58}\) The chief weapons of the Church’s princely enemies were simony and lay investiture, although the pope did not express concern about the latter at the beginning of his pontificate. A later chapter discusses these two topics, together with clerical fornication.\(^{59}\) In the eleventh century, simony, the buying and selling of church offices, was the most widespread of the many abuses affecting the Church. From the start of his reign, Gregory vigorously continued his reforming predecessors’ campaign against it. He expresses vividly his loathing of *symoniaca haeresis* and its role in undermining *libertas* in his letter of July 1073 to the faithful of Lombardy. The pope accuses the *dictus archiepiscopus* Godfrey of buying, like ‘a vile slave girl’ (*vila ancilla*) the church of Milan, once a shining example of *libertas*. By attempting to prostitute (*prostituere*) the bride of Christ to the devil and to separate her from the catholic faith,

\(^{56}\) *Reg.* 3.10, pp. 265.27-266.7.
\(^{57}\) *Reg.* 8.13, p. 533.7-12.
\(^{58}\) *Reg.* 1.12, pp. 19.33-20.35.
\(^{59}\) See below pp. 228ff.
Godfrey has striven to besmirch her with the offence of heresy. The power of this indictment of the Milanese usurper is greatly enhanced by the striking use of sexual metaphor, specifically his likening of Godfrey’s behaviour to the rape of the bride of Christ. Gregory’s letter to Archbishop Sigehard of Aquileia dated 24 Jan 1074 includes a similarly lurid portrayal of rulers and princes as oppressors of the bride of Christ: they treat her like a common slave-girl and are prepared to destroy her to satisfy their own desires. The record of the 1080 Lenten synod links investitura to libertas by confirming the ban on the lay investiture of bishops, and declaring that any secular ruler who presumes to do so will suffer excommunication pending his repentance and the restoration of libertas to the church in question. The definitive Gregorian programme of libertas Ecclesiae may have been formulated at this synod.

Three of the pope’s letters associate libertas Ecclesiae with individual salvation. His long letter of March 1081 to Bishop Hermann of Metz concludes with a declaration that those who humbly imitate Christ will cross from a servile and transitory kingdom to the kingdom of true libertas and aeternitas. An earlier epistola, dated 3 September 1076, tells the German faithful that King Henry should adhere to the teachings of the Holy Fathers, intended by God for our salvation, rather than champion the customs (consuetudines) of pride that run counter to libertas Ecclesiae. Simony is presumably prominent among these consuetudines. Another letter, dated 30 September 1077, to Archbishop Udo of Trier and his suffragans concludes by exhorting them to act in a manner consistent with their great love for libertas Ecclesiae and the common salvation of all men.

In summary, Gregory’s letters demonstrate clearly that from the outset of his pontificate he sought to vindicate Christian libertas in various contexts: monasteries and sees, ecclesiastical officials, Christian individuals, and – above all – Ecclesia universalis.

61 Reg. 1.42, pp. 64.34-65.2. See above p. 158.
62 Reg. 7.14a(2), pp. 480.26-481.3
63 Robinson, Henry IV, p. 195.
64 Reg. 8.21, p. 23-26.
65 Reg. 4.3, pp. 298.37-299.2.
66 Reg. 5.7, p. 358.6-11.
MacIntyre (1996) observed that the widespread failure to maintain priestly celibacy and prevent simony, combined with the tendency of bishops to value princely favours rather than papal authority, were all understood by Gregory as ways in which sex, money, and political power were being used to subvert the independence, the *libertas*, of the Church. Cowdrey (1998) concluded that Gregory's concept of *libertas* was based on his conviction that mankind must choose between Christ and the devil, and that *libertas* is the fundamental characteristic of *membra Christi*. True *libertas* springs from free and unhindered subjection to Christ as mediated through his bride, the universal Church. Finally, let us turn again to Tellenbach (1944) who wrote that the Church is Christ's heir and His kingdom; He appeared in order to found it, and it represents His eternal presence on earth. Since the Church is bound to Him as the body is to the head, it therefore follows that His freedom is its freedom. Nothing in Gregory VII's correspondence suggests that he would have disagreed with these interpretations.

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69 Tellenbach, *Church, state*, p. 127.
3.3 *Auctoritas sedis apostolicae*

His [Lord Jesus'] authority founded the holy Church upon a solid rock and committed her government to St Peter who owed his venerable name to the rock. He also set her over all the kingdoms of the world and made subject to her principalities and powers and whosoever in the world is seen to be exalted ... Therefore to St Peter and to his vicars, amongst whom divine providence has appointed that our lot should also be numbered, the whole world owes obedience and likewise reverence.¹

The above passage is from Pope Gregory's single preserved letter to the 'king of Ireland', summarized in the earlier discussion of that island on the north-west periphery of Europe.² It is a concise example of the pope's claims for papal authority in temporal affairs, as is a claim in his letter to King Sweyn of Denmark, dated 17 April 1075, which advises this ruler of another territory on the edge of western Christendom that 'the law of the Roman pontiffs has governed more lands than did that of the emperors'.³

The end of 1048 saw the election of the first of the eleventh-century reforming popes, Leo IX (1048/9-54). Almost coincidentally, it was in 1047 that the term 'papacy' (papatus) was coined to signify the elevated status of the *sedes apostolica* over the rest of the episcopate.⁴ Pope Leo's extensive travels initiated a renewed internationalisation of the holy see. His ambitious, determined campaign attacked the widespread abuses in the Church and sought to assert papal authority throughout western Christendom. One of the key reformers recruited into his entourage was Humbert, a monk of Moyenmoutier from Leo's own diocese of Toul, who subsequently became cardinal-bishop of Silva-Candida. Humbert's most significant contribution to the reform movement was his articulation of the concept of papal supremacy over the Church.⁵ For

¹ Epp. Vag. 57, pp. 138-41: *Huius auctoritas sanctam aeccelesiam in solida petra fundauit et beato Petro a petra venerabile nomen habenti eius iura commissit; quam etiam super omnia mundi regna constituit, cui principatus et potestates et quicquid in seculo sublume uidetur esse subiect ... Beato igitur Petro eiusque uicariis, inter quos dispensatio diuina nostram quoque sortem amnumerari dispositus, orbis uniuersus obedientiam similiter et reuerentiam debet.*

² See above p. 34.

³ Reg. 2.75, p. 237.34: *Plus enim terrarum lex Romanorum pontificum quam imperatorum obtinuit.* See above p. 119.


example, a letter of 1054, issued in the name of Leo IX but composed by Humbert, speaks of ‘the earthly and heavenly empire of the royal priesthood of the holy Roman and apostolic see’.  

From the time of Leo onwards Hildebrand spent nearly all his time in Rome, closely associated with papal circles. As Pope Gregory VII, he would devote much of his correspondence to justifying his actions on the basis of precedent and sacred authorities: scripture, the Church Fathers, and canon law. Morris (1996) described his letters as a major vehicle of propaganda. This study has already encountered many examples of the pope’s desire to root out abuses in the western Church by consolidating Rome’s authority over it and eliminating interference by secular rulers in ecclesiastical matters. Gregory deployed various methods in his endeavours to establish Rome’s jurisdiction over the sacerdotium. One favoured approach was the use of trusted legates (legati, nuntii), to whom he entrusted papal prerogatives. His increased mobilization of legates enabled Gregory to enforce papal claims in different lands without the constant personal travelling that had characterized the pontificate of Leo IX. Their use allowed him to remain in Rome for most of his reign. His letters suggest that the only periods in his pontificate when he was a significant distance from the apostolic see were his travels in southern Italy from July to December 1073, his prolonged stay in northern Italy from December 1076 to September 1077, and his enforced exile in southern Italy during his last months. Gregory gave his legates detailed instructions and subjected them to strict oversight. Although they normally went on particular missions, some, such as Hugh of Die, were standing legates, permanently established in one territory. Legates outranked local prelates and could preside over synods. Gregory’s ceaseless efforts to enforce Rome’s authority over the sacerdotium also included the use of letters, councils, and an insistence on episcopal visits ad limina.

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6 Leo IX, JL 4302, MPL 143, col. 752D.
7 Morris, Papal Monarchy, p. 127.
8 Obvious examples of such interference are William the Conqueror’s involvement in Dol (see above pp. 28ff.) and imprisonment of Bishop Odo of Bayeux (above p. 30), Philip I’s ceaseless meddling in the French churches (above pp. 37ff.), and Henry IV’s intervention in the issue of the archbishopric of Milan (above p. 66).
9 For Gregory’s use of legates, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 592-6; Rennie, ‘Uproot and destroy’. 

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However, Gregory’s main contribution to the concept of Petrine authority was his claim that the authority of the apostolic see extended beyond spiritual matters into the political realm, even to the point of attempting to subordinate Christian rulers to papal authority. According to Ullmann (1970), from the 1050s onwards, the application of the ‘hierocratic’ doctrine became ‘the governmental basis of the papacy’, and Gregory came to personify this; he was ‘hierocratic doctrine brought down to earth and made eminently concrete’. Hierocratic doctrine defines Ecclesia as the universal fellowship of believers, encompassing laity as well as clergy, and is what Gregory meant when he referred to societas christiana. This body is to be governed by those who are ‘functionally qualified’. Since, by definition, its constitutive basis is the Church then its principatus is the pope. The king’s ‘function’ is ‘purely auxiliary and supplementary’. To paraphrase Gilchrist (1962), Pope Leo IX and his successors – particularly Gregory VII – laid the foundation of a new relationship whereby the temporal powers, led by the emperor, were subservient to the sacerdotium under the papacy’s leadership. Scripture records that Jesus Christ himself spurned an offer of kingship because he was not willing to take on even the appearance of earthly grandeur (cf. Matt. 4: 8-10). Gregory mentions this in his pastoral letter of 15 October 1079 to King Alphonso of León-Castile, to emphasize that Christ’s purpose in entering our world was to lead men back to the heavenly kingdom. It is somewhat surprising that the pope did not cite this passage more often.

This chapter discusses the evidence in Gregory’s correspondence of his efforts to expand the rights of the apostolic see into the secular sphere, and to justify this. Contemporary royal defenders were outraged by what they saw as his innovatory attempts to undermine traditional obedience to the earthly powers. The pope was apparently challenging the very idea of the sacral authority of kings and princes. However, papal reformers consistently denied that their thinking was innovatory, insisting that they sought only for the restoration of – and fidelity to – tradition and to

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10 Ullmann, Growth, pp. 270-2.
11 Reg. 6.16, p. 422.8-22.
12 Ullmann, Growth, p. 344.
13 Ibid., p. 271.
14 Gilchrist, ‘Canon law aspects’, p. 21. For hierocratic doctrine, see Ullmann, Growth, esp. p. 271.
15 Reg. 7.6, pp. 466.35-467.3.
16 For a discussion of the early polemical reaction by the king’s supporters, see Appendix A: pp. 305ff.
what they perceived as ancient discipline. Southern (1953) thought that it would be more indicative of their revolutionary aims to call them the ‘Restoring Party’ rather than the ‘Reforming Party’. Tellenbach (1988) noticed that Gregory did not use the noun *reformatio* in his correspondence. While it is true that four of the six appearances of the verb *reformare* do refer to ecclesiastical matters, they concern individual religious establishments, not the universal Church.

Gregory usually accompanied his sanctions with allusions to scripture, the Church Fathers, and *canonica auctoritas*, with individual decisions tempered by the need for *iustitia*. Such references are ubiquitous in his correspondence. One letter, thought to date from late 1075, succinctly summarizes the basis of papal authority. It enjoins the pope’s hearers, in this case the clergy and laity of Constance, to obey the words of the gospels and of the apostles, the decrees of authoritative councils, and the precepts of distinguished doctors, and maintains that there is nothing new in the pope’s teaching. In another letter, dated 17 September 1077, apropos Aquileia, which was the focus of one of the crucial investiture disputes of his pontificate, Gregory again insists that he is doing nothing new, nothing of his own devising (nichil novi, nichil nostris adinventionibus). Conversely, he is seeking to ensure that episcopal appointments are made according to the general consensus and understanding of the Fathers, together with the authority of the gospels and canons. A prior letter, dated 29 March 1075, to Archbishop Anno of Cologne presents essentially the same argument before making the additional claim that sancta Romana ecclesia has always been permitted, and will always be permitted, to address new transgressions by formulating new decrees and remedies (*decreta atque remedia*).  

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18 Reg. 4.5, p. 300.27; Reg. 4.5, p. 302.23.; Reg. 8.12, p. 532.5; Reg. 9.6, p. 581.29. See Tellenbach, *Church in Western Europe*. p. 160. Also Barrow, ‘Ideas and applications of reform’, esp. pp. 361-2. Gregory’s two other uses of *reformare* occur in a letter of January 1079 (Reg. 6.16), which attempts to restore (*reformare*) peace between the sons of Count Berengar I of Barcelona, and a letter dated 20 April 1079 (Reg. 6.35) to three French archbishops, expressing his wish for the restoration (*reformare*) of the unjustly suppressed.
19 Both Caspar’s Latin edition of the Register and Cowdrey’s English translation include useful indexes to Gregory’s allusions to biblical, patristic, conciliar, and secular sources: Caspar, *Das Register*, pp. 644-51; Cowdrey, Reg. 5.5, p. 353.21-7. For an equivalent index to the *Epistolae Vagantes*, see Cowdrey, *Epistolae Vagantissimae*, pp. 169-70.
21 Reg. 5.5, p. 353.21-7.
22 Reg. 2.67, pp. 223.31-224.8.
With respect to Gregory’s arguments seeking to legitimize his secular interventions, the most important of his surviving documents is undoubtedly his long polemical letter, dated 15 March 1081, to Bishop of Hermann of Metz. It responds to the bishop’s request for proofs of the pope’s entitlement to perform his recent (second) excommunication of Henry IV and his absolution of the king’s subjects from their oath of fealty. Gregory assures Hermann of the plentiful supply of such proofs in the sacred writings, and sets these out at considerable length. This letter and its 1076 predecessor are examined later. For now, it is useful to discuss Gregory’s deployment of the three categories of sacred writings – the Bible, the Church Fathers, and canonica auctoritas – to underpin papal authority. Which sources did he prefer? How did he deploy them?

Scripture

Gregory’s correspondence contains hundreds of allusions to identifiable biblical passages, either direct quotations or paraphrases. A good example is his pastoral letter of December 1078 to King Olav III of Norway, which includes at least twenty-one biblical allusions. The same letter also asks the king to despatch some young nobles to Rome to receive instruction so that they might return to Olav with the commands (mandata) of the apostolic see.

Of the four evangelists, it is Matthew who lays the most stress upon the special status of the Galilean fisherman, Peter, relative to the other apostles. Two consecutive verses in Matthew’s gospel constitute the Petrine commission, the fundamental scriptural basis for the apostolic see’s claim to universal spiritual authority:

And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in

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24 See below pp. 275ff.
25 For Gregory’s use of scripture, see Arquillière, Saint Grégoire VII, pp. 220-60.
26 See above p. 117.
heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven.

(Matt. 16: 18-19)28

Catholic doctrine states that Christ handed over the primacy of His Church to Peter who, according to tradition, went on to become the first bishop of Rome. Each successor bishop of Rome inherits that primacy as St Peter’s vicar. Gregory’s correspondence invokes Matthew’s Petrine commission more frequently than any other biblical passage.29 In some letters, the pope repeats the traditional depiction of Peter as princeps apostolorum, a somewhat ambiguous expression that one can interpret as meaning that Peter was either the chief or the prince of the twelve disciples. The pope expressed the excommunications of Henry IV in 1076 and 1080 as prayers of supplication to Beate Petre apostolorum princeps.30 Gregory’s correspondence was characterized by his insistent self-identification with St Peter and a conscious propaganda effort to promote the reformers’ idea of papal primacy.31 Apropos Gregory’s religious vision, Cowdrey (1998) concluded that the pope’s close identification with St Peter was consistent with the prevailing Roman understanding of the papal office rather than a personal idiosyncrasy. It was reflected in his habitual use of the title vicarius sancti Petri, rather than vicarius Christi.32 Cowdrey rejected any notion of a mystical quality to Gregory’s association of himself with the first apostle, not just because of the pope’s sense of his own unworthiness, but more particularly because mysticism was ‘foreign to Gregory’s religious and mental outlook’.33

Sometimes Gregory went so far as to say that the Petrine commission means that the first apostle was granted supreme temporal authority in the world. Three surviving letters assert this with particular clarity. One is the pope’s single extant epistola to the king of Ireland, the relevant passage from which opens this chapter. The others were

29 Reg. 1.22, p. 37.5; Reg. 1.64, p. 93.17-25; Reg. p. 230.17-18; et passim.
30 Reg. 3.6*, p. 353.4; Reg. 3.10a, p. 270.2; Reg. 7.14a(7), p. 483.2.
31 Robinson, Authority, pp. 19-20.
32 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 514, 525.
33 Ibid., p. 529.
directed at Spanish rulers. A letter of 20 March 1074 to King Sancho I of Aragon claims that Lord Jesus Christ made St Peter the prince over all the world’s kingdoms. An epistola dated 15 October 1079 tells King Alphonso VI of León-Castile that Almighty God made all principalities and powers of the earth subject to Peter because he received the right to bind and loose in heaven and on earth. A.J. Carlyle (1921) suggested that such assertions, when read in conjunction with the claims in Gregory’s Dictatus Papae (discussed below) that the pope can depose emperors and release the subjects of unjust rulers from their oaths of allegiance, seem to indicate that the papacy had both a new confidence and a new policy.

The salutatio that opens the pope’s scathing ‘ultimatum letter’ to Henry IV of 8 December 1075 makes Gregory’s greeting and apostolic blessing conditional upon Henry showing oboedientia to the apostolic see as befits a Christian king. The letter accuses Henry of failing to show sufficient respect to St Peter. It reminds him that Christ granted to Peter the power to bind and loose (cf. Matt. 16: 19). Furthermore, in a striking illustration of Gregory’s identification with the first apostle, it claims that when the pope reads Henry’s letters or listens to the king’s messengers, it is St Peter himself who receives the words and discerns the disposition of mind from which they proceed. The king should therefore take care to avoid any ‘disparity of intention’ in his words and embassies. Specifically, since the Lord commanded the apostles and their successors that he who hears them hears Him, and he who despises them despises Him (cf. Luke 10: 16) then whoever wishes to obey God should keep the pope’s precepts as if they issued from the mouth of St Peter himself. The discussion of Gregory’s dealings with the German king noted the pope’s justification for the first excommunication and deposition of Henry in the record of the Lenten synod of 1076. Gregory’s address to the first apostle states that the vicarship that Peter committed to the pope equates to a command to all Christian people to obey him. By contrast, Henry has ‘disdained to obey like a Christian’.

34 Reg. 1.63, p. 92.8-12.
35 Reg. 7.6, p. 465.34-8.
36 Carlyle and Carlyle, History 4, pp. 175-6. For Dictatus Papae, see below pp. 182ff.
37 Reg. 3.10, pp. 264.29-265.21. See above p. 67.
The invocation ends by reiterating Christ's decision that Peter was the rock on which he would build his Church (cf. Matt. 16: 18).\(^{38}\)

The earlier review of the re-excommunication of Henry at the 1080 Lenten synod observed that Gregory's address to SS. Peter and Paul claims that he is 'relying on your authority' in subjecting the king to excommunication, and binding his supporters to the bond of anathema.\(^{39}\) Jörgen Vogel (1983) examined the text of the 1080 sentence in its theological context, and as evidence of the pope's 'self-awareness' (Selbstverständnis). He noted that both the 1076 and 1080 sentences were framed as prayers that began with references to verses from psalms of David (Psalms 85: 1 and 16: 6 respectively), which appeal for God's help in time of adversity. However, the use of Psalm 16: 6 in the later sentence reflects the changed context in 1080. Like David, Gregory asks God to 'incline your ears to me and graciously hearken to me'. In the five preceding verses of Psalm 16, David assures God that he has not spoken sinfully and has followed the prescribed path. It is then that he asks to be heard. According to Vogel, the emphasis on Psalm 16: 6 should be understood against the historical background of the sentence that the pope is about to pronounce. Gregory is asserting that he has done nothing falsely and is alluding to this psalm to justify his apparent indecisiveness towards the rival German kings during the negotiations of 1077-80.\(^{40}\) The 1080 text recalls that he unwillingly went beyond the mountains with Gregory VI and returned to Rome in the entourage of Leo IX. In this context, Gregory VII speaks of his own papal election.\(^{41}\) Having declared that it was not he who selected God, but God who selected him (cf. John 15: 16), the pope cites the prophet Isaiah to link his accession to the apostolic see at the command of God with Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai (cf. Isa. 40: 9). Just as the prophet received the divine instructions to announce salvation to the house of Jacob and the sons of Israel (Exod. 19: 3), so Gregory believes himself to have been ordered by the Lord 'to cry out and announce to the people of God their offences, and to the sons of the Church their sins' (cf. Isa. 58: 1).\(^{42}\) He follows his recollection of his rise to the

\(^{38}\) Reg. 3.10a, pp. 268.9-271.18. See above p. 72.

\(^{39}\) See above pp. 89f.

\(^{40}\) See Vogel, Nach Canossa, p. 190.

\(^{41}\) This passage was treated by Schneider (1972) in connection with the accession of Gregory as evidence of the pope's self-awareness: Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, pp. 31-2, 36-7.

papacy with an unmistakeable reference to Psalm 2:2, which prophesies the rising against God of the kings of the earth and the princes of this world (reges terrae et principes seculares).\(^3\) Schneider (1972) deduced that in March 1080 the pope understood 'the happenings of his time as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Psalm 2:2 before his very eyes, and identified himself with the threatened christus domini (Lord's anointed) of the psalm. The rising of the reges terrae et principes is directed against himself (Gregory) who, since the day of his consecration, has been christus domini and protector of lex dei et iustitia.'\(^4\)

Another verse occasionally deployed by the pope to underpin papal jurisdiction is that in which Christ tells Peter to 'feed my sheep' (John 21:17). His letter dated 1 July 1075 to the faithful of Lombardy, which is largely a tirade against Godfrey, the simoniacal and excommunicated so-called archbishop of Milan, ends by declaring that when He entrusted his sheep to blessed Peter, God thereby granted him rule over the whole Church.\(^5\) Three other letters make this explicit linkage between John 21:17 and the Petrine commission.\(^6\) Gregory's epistolae repeatedly extol the virtues of oboedientia and humilitas, whereas they often attack inoboedientia and, less frequently, the related transgressions of contumacia (stubbornness, obstinacy, defiance) and rebellio (rebellion).\(^7\)

The discussion of the pope's dealings with Henry IV referred to Gregory's letter of 31 May 1077 to his two legates in Germany, Cardinal-deacon Bernard and Abbot Bernard of Marseilles.\(^8\) The context was Gregory's continuing aspiration, months after the Canossa meeting, to journey from Lombardy to Germany where he hoped to adjudicate on the German kingship according to iustitia between Henry IV and Rudolf of Swabia. The letter's essential message is that the key qualifications for Christian kingship are adherence to iustitia and oboedientia to the apostolic see. It cites two crucial

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\(^3\) Reg. 7.14a, p. 483.24.
\(^4\) Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, pp. 36-9.
\(^5\) Reg. 1.15, p. 24.34-6;
\(^6\) Reg. 3.10, pp. 264.29-265.3; Reg. 8.21, p. 548.10-17; Reg 9.31, p. 622.34-7.
\(^7\) Contumacia: Reg. 1.35, p. 57.5-8; Reg. 1.55, p. 83.3-6; Reg. 2.4, p. 129.14-18; et passim. 
Rebellio: Reg. 1.17, p. 28.4; Reg. 2.1, p. 124.33; Reg. 2.46, p. 186.1; et passim.
\(^8\) See above p. 84.
auctoritates to justify the condemnation and deposition of a Christian king who disobeys the holy see:

'... that he who disdains to obey the apostolic see incurs the crime of idolatry (cf. 1 Sam. 15: 23), and that blessed Gregory, the holy and humble teacher, has laid down that kings fall from their office if by bold presumption they presume to contravene the orders of the holy see.'

Gregory’s correspondence frequently refers to Samuel’s depiction of disobedience as equivalent to idolatry – in effect, heresy. 1 Sam. 15: 23 states that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. It has been observed that these words of Samuel to Saul are one of many scriptural passages that Gregory ‘sharpened’ or ‘redirected’ to enhance the authority of his own statements, in this case to accentuate the precept of obedience. Gregory alluded to Samuel’s verse almost as frequently as he invoked Matthew’s Petrine commission (Matt. 16: 18-19). His correspondence contains more references to these two passages concerned with papal authority than to any other scriptural verses. However, it was not until early 1075 that Gregory’s letters began to refer to 1 Sam. 15: 23. St Gregory’s commentary on Samuel’s verse, which defines oboedientia as the subjection of oneself to God’s will, is deployed by Gregory VII to justify the necessity of obedience to the pope by clergy and laity. The story of King Saul, as recounted in 1 Sam. 15, seems to have occupied a prominent place in the pope’s views on kingship. Gregory’s ‘ultimatum letter’ to the king of December 1075 compared Henry IV with Saul. In recalling Saul’s loss of his kingdom after his failure to follow God’s instructions as transmitted by the prophet (cf. 1 Sam. 15), the pope was urging the need for Henry’s oboedientia to God’s commandments as relayed through the apostolic see.

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50 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 516.

51 Reg. 2.45, p. 222.4-6; Reg. 2.75, p. 238.1-7; Reg. 4.2, p. 296.25; et passim.


53 See above p. 68. In 1081, Gregory included the story in his long polemical letter to Bp. Hermann of Metz: see below p. 293.
A passage from one of Gregory’s last preserved letters, a long *epistola* of 1083 to the bishops and leading laymen of Flanders, encapsulates his mobilisation of scripture to justify papal authority:

In your charity you have all of you known, dearest brothers and sons, that although we are a sinner and unequal to bearing so great a burden, nevertheless the care and oversight of all the churches (cf. 2 Cor. 11: 28) has been committed by God to our small self. For the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed blessed Peter to be prince of the apostles, giving to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth; upon him, also, he has built his church, (Matt. 16: 18-19) committing to him his sheep that they should be fed.(cf. John 21: 17)

From that time, this principality and power have passed through blessed Peter to all who have received his throne, or who will receive it until the end of the world, by divine privilege and hereditary right.  

**Patristic sources**

The papal reformers of the eleventh century were keenly aware of the ‘Church Fathers’, the theologians who developed the seminal ideas of Christianity between the end of the New Testament era (c. 100 AD) and the seventh century. The expression ‘Holy Fathers’ (*patres sancti*) occurs ninety-four times in Gregory’s surviving letters. He repeatedly asserted that his own statements were consistent with the *patres sancti*. One letter, dated 29 June 1073, instructs Bishop William of Pavia to keep to the statutes of the Roman church ‘for she does not diverge from the path of the *patres sancti*’. Another example is found in his unsparing ‘ultimatum letter’ of 8 December 1075 to Henry IV, in which Gregory declares that in the face of oppression he has turned to the decrees and teaching of the *patres sancti*, changing and adding nothing (*nichil novi, nichil adinventione*). The great majority of the Fathers cited in Gregory’s letters are papal

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54 Reg. 9.35, pp. 622.31-623.6: ‘Noverit caritas omnium vestrum, fratres et filii carissimi, quoniam, licet peccatores et ad tantum onus portandum inpares simus, tamen cura et sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum parvitati nostrae a Deo commissa est. Dominus enim Jesus Christus beatum P. constituit principem apostolorum dans et claves regni caelorum et potestatem ligandi et solvendi in caelo et in terra; super quem eciam ecclesiam suam edificavit commendans et oves suas pascendae. Ex quo tempore principatus ille et potestas per beatum P. successit omnibus suam cathedram suscipiens ibus vel usque in finem mundi susceptoris divino privilegio et iure hereditario.’

55 Reg. 1.5, p. 7.31; Reg. 1.12, p. 20.26; Reg. 1.15, p. 24.16; *et passim*.


57 Reg 3.10, pp. 265.27-266.6.
predecessors, especially his namesake Gregory I (590-604). By contrast, St Augustine for example, appears just once.

The Introduction to this study noted that Pope Gelasius I's thinking on the roles and relationships of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* – the 'Gelasian theory' – was widely accepted by the time of Hildebrand's elevation in 1073. To recap, God divided the supervision of the worldwide Church between his spiritual and temporal vicars, the *sacerdotium* and the *regnum*; each separately receives its authority from God, is independent of the other within its own domain, but dependent in the domain of the other. Gelasius believed that, since the time of Christ, there were two institutions of authority in the world, namely prelates who enjoyed spiritual power, and kings and emperors who exercised temporal power. He was innovatory in arguing for a division between these powers, a duality of authority (*duo sunt*). The same discussion highlighted two other statements in Gelasius's letter of 494 to Emperor Anastasius: first, that at the last judgement the priestly authority will have to account even for kings, and second, that ecclesiastical *auctoritas* is weightier (*gravius*) than royal *potestas*. Taken out of context, these claims could be interpreted as implying, not only that the Church is superior to the state, but that imperial *potestas* emanates from, may even be subordinate to, papal *auctoritas*. As his pontificate advanced, Gregory VII was increasingly drawn to these inferences.

It has been argued that Gregory VII's thinking was not original, remaining broadly in line with Gelasian thought as expressed in the letter to Anastasius. Was this really the case? At the beginning of his pontificate, Gregory was keen to explore the possibility of ending the standoff with Henry IV regarding the five excommunicate royal advisers, a problem that he had inherited. In a letter dated 1 September 1073 to one potential mediator, Duke Rudolf of Swabia, he compares the Church to a human body ruled by two eyes; the body of the Church is ruled with spiritual light by *regnum* and *sacerdotium* when they are in concord. In other words, it seems that at this stage Gregory envisaged

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58 References to Gregory I: *Reg.* 1.11, pp. 17.28, 18.18; *Reg.* 2.6, p. 135.8; *Reg.* 2.66, p. 22.7; *et passim*.
59 *Reg.* 8.21, p. 556.2.
60 See above p. 8f.
61 For the relevant text, see above p. 8.
63 *Reg.* 1.19, p. 31.28-34.
a unitary Church encompassing spiritual and temporal elements, jointly ruled by the ecclesiastical and secular powers. This seems a far cry from the Gelasian vision of a dual society. A few years later, Gregory's views had developed. A previous chapter drew attention to his pastoral letter on the duties of kingship, dated May 1080, to the rex Anglorum. It uses the famous image of the sun and moon, created by God on the fourth day to enlighten the world (cf. Gen. 1:16), to compare the differing functions of the apostolic and royal dignities. By 'this distinction of greater and lesser' (maioritatis et minoritatis distantia) the royal dignity is governed by the enlightenment, care, and direction of the apostolic. In other words, the apostolic dignity of the Church takes precedence over the monarchical order of the state. The letter urges William I, in the interest of his own salvation, to render obediencia to the apostolic see, which will represent him on Judgement Day. The following year, the pope's influential long letter to Bishop Hermann of Metz twice refers to Gelasius's epistola to Anastasius. First, it claims that Gelasius instructed the emperor on the primacy of the apostolic see. Second, it quotes Gelasius's words regarding the greater weight of priestly authority, deriving its role in rendering accounts at the divine Judgement. Gregory presents both statements as part of his justification for the encroachment of the apostolic see upon secular matters. It is impossible to see this as anything other than a distortion of Gelasius's words.

Of central importance to the papal reform movement was the auctoritas of Popes Leo I (440-61) and Gregory I (590-604), from whom Leo IX and Gregory VII derived their pontifical names. Gregory VII's preserved letters name Leo I only four times. Gregory the Great is another matter. In the words of Southern (1953) it was in the enormous collection of St Gregory's correspondence that the papal reformers 'found in its most practical form the lofty spirit of order and papal initiative in the affairs of all the churches of the west which they sought to renew'. The first monk to rise to the papacy, Gregory I was the favourite patristic source of Gregory VII; his letters identify beatus

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64 See above p. 26.
65 Reg. 7.25, pp. 505.18-507.4.
67 Ibid., p. 553.14-22.
68 Reg. 7.14a, p. 482.29; Reg. 9.5, p. 580.7; Epp Vag. 9, pp. 18-23; Epp. Vag. 45, pp. 108-11.
69 Southern, Making, p. 137.
Furthermore, they include sixty-six references to his writings, no less than half of the identified patristic and canonical *sententiae*.

An earlier chapter noted the papal letters of 31 May 1077 to his German legates and the German faithful, which back up Gregory VII’s condemnation of *disobedientia* by recalling that *beatus Gregorius* declared that a king who disobeys the pope would lose office. The pope also quotes this passage in the long polemical letters of August 1076 and March 1081 to Bishop Hermann of Metz. This is just one example of the usefulness of St Gregory’s writings for Gregory VII’s promotion of papal supremacy. However, it distorts Gregory I’s intentions: the quotation comes from a standard anathema issued by Gregory I whereas Gregory VII treats it as a doctrinal statement.

Chapter 3.25 of St Gregory’s *Regula Pastoralis* concerns a crucial aspect of papal authority, namely the duty of preaching (*praedicatio*). One short section is the patristic source most frequently quoted in Gregory VII’s correspondence. Twelve letters cite Gregory I’s exegesis of a verse from the prophet Jeremiah.

It was encountered in the earlier discussions of the Church’s relations with Kings Philip I and Henry IV. St Gregory deploys two analogies: the farmer who hides corn during a famine and the medical practitioner who refuses to lance a sore. Each is guilty of causing death. By way of a parallel, St Gregory quotes Jeremiah: ‘Cursed is the man who keepeth back his sword from blood’ (Jer. 48: 10). He goes on to explain that the ‘sword’ is the word of preaching (*praedicationis verbum*), and that he who withholds *praedicationis verbum* is guilty of failure to care for the souls of carnal men. Jeremiah’s words, when used in tandem with Gregory VII’s interpretation of *beatus Gregorius*, are among the strongest arguments mobilised by the pope, both to persuade fellow prelates to stand up to transgressing rulers, and to assert the apostolic see’s right to bring *praedicationis*...
verbum to bear on kings and princes. In a similar vein, St Gregory declared that he who
neglects to correct the faults of others is himself guilty of those faults. 78 Three of Gregory
VII’s letters reference this. 79

Another passage in St Gregory’s writings helped Gregory VII to justify the
broadening of the definition of symoniaca haeresis. He articulates this in a letter dated
20 April 1079 to Archbishop Gebuin of Lyons. This privilege for the church of Lyons
presents St Gregory’s three-fold definition of simony: simony by hand (a manu) where
money is paid, simony by service (ab obsequio) where a task is performed, and simony
by the tongue (a lingua) where advocacy or oral commendation is given in return. 80 A
later chapter examines the evolution of Gregory VII’s views on simony in more detail. 81

Finally, beatus Gregorius features prominently among the sources in Gregory VII’s
memorable letter of March 1081 to Hermann of Metz. The document, a long, considered
defence of the pope’s recent second deposition and excommunication of King Henry IV,
calls upon numerous scriptural, patristic and other sources to justify Gregory’s actions. It
and its 1076 precursor form the subject of a later discussion. 82 For the moment, we can
note that the references to the writings of St Gregory are among the most significant of
these justifications of Gregory VII’s moves against Henry. First, the pope recalls the
actual words of beatus Gregorius papa to the effect that kings who presume to
transgress the decrees of the apostolic see shall fall from office. 83 Further on, Gregory
backs up his assertion that priests are the masters of kings and princes by referring to a
letter of St Gregory, which recalls the deference shown by Emperor Constantine to the
assembled bishops at the Nicene synod of 325. 84 Third, having condemned those who
strive for secular power, the letter quotes a statement in the Regula Pastoralis that a
man devoid of virtues should not exercise rule. 85 Fourth, the pope again invokes the

78 Gregory I, Reg. 9.214, 216, 773, 779.
79 Reg. 3.4, p. 249.7; Reg. 4.1, p. 292.9; Reg. 9.35, p. 624.31.
80 Reg. 6.34, p. 448.5-15; Gregory I: Homiliae XL in Evangelia, MPL 76, 1.4.4, col. 1092.
81 See below pp. 230ff.
82 See below pp. 275ff.
83 Reg. 8.21, p. 550.19-551.6; Gregory I, Reg. 13.9, ii. 1006.
84 Reg. 8.21, p. 553.7-13; Gregory I, Reg. 5.36, i. 305-6.
85 Reg. 8.21, p. 560.14-17; Gregory I, Reg. past. 1.9, col. 22C.
Regula Pastoralis, presenting two excerpts to back up his claim that kings and emperors should show *humilitas et oboedientia* to holy Church.  

**Canon Law**

The reformers' canon law collections brought together ancient texts, whose value and reputation as *auctoritates* increased with age. However, Gilchrist (1980) submitted that 'there was no one collection used by the reformers; thus there could be no monolithic unity, no single mentality that could assert itself over others'. Gregory's knowledge of canon law was limited. In 1059 Peter Damian, one of the most prominent early reform ideologues, wrote to the then Archdeacon Hildebrand. His letter mentions the latter's requests that he examine the decrees and official deliverances of the popes, to extract diligently whatever was of particular relevance to the authority of the apostolic see, and to compile these into a single volume, which was to be systematically arranged (*nova compilationis arte*). He assures Hildebrand that he will pursue the matter. However, there is no evidence that he complied with the archdeacon's requests. During the four centuries before 1150, the compilers of canon law collections attempted to distil from the ancient traditions of the Church a set of rules for right conduct. Such a collection would be effectively a body of Church laws. However, there were few existing collections at the inauguration of the papal reform movement in the middle of the eleventh century. The reformers' understanding of the Church's golden age was largely based on two spurious documents.

One was the so-called 'Donation of Constantine' (*Constitutum Constantini*), which was forged in the late eighth century. Almost certainly concocted in Rome, its original purpose was to substantiate the papacy's claims to the Patrimony of St Peter against...
Byzantine counterclaims. It was not until the sixteenth century that Lorenzo Valla definitively exposed it as a forgery. The *Constitutum* purports to record that the first Christian emperor, Constantine, expressed his gratitude to Pope Sylvester I (314-35) for miraculously curing him of leprosy by granting to him lands in 'Judea, Greece, Thrace, Africa and Italy and the various islands' (clause 13), the imperial insignia and the Lateran palace (clause 14), and 'the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts, and regions of Italy and the western regions' (clause 17). Gilchrist (1962) doubted whether Gregory ever thought of the *Constitutum* as more than a confirmation of the 'magisterial supremacy' already conferred by the Petrine supremacy. Gilchrist (1972) also noticed that 'several' references in the pope's letters indicate the increasing deployment of the *Constitutum* in the legal battle to recover ecclesiastical rights. He offers as a prime example Gregory's proposed oath, dated March 1081, to be sworn by whoever was elected to succeed the deceased Rudolf as *rex Teutonicorum* and *futurus imperator*. It seeks to ensure that the new king will be *devotus* and *idoneus* to holy Church through the inclusion of a commitment to reach an agreement with the pope regarding 'the lands or the rent that the Emperor Constantine or Charles have given to St Peter'. There are, however, no explicit references to the *Constitutum* in Gregory's letters, although it may have influenced his formulation of clause 8 in the *Dictatus Papae*: 'That he alone [the Roman pontiff] can use imperial insignia'. Perhaps he thought that any such allusion would have implied an acknowledgement that *auctoritas sedis apostolicae* originated, at least in part, from a temporal rather than a spiritual source. The *Constitutum* achieved its main historical influence and inclusion in subsequent canon law through its incorporation in the second forgery, the Pseudo-Isidorian, or 'False' Decretals.

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95 Gilchrist, ‘Canon law aspects’, p. 27.  
97 Reg. 9.3, p. 576.4-10. See below p. 254 for the wording of the oath.  
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Pseudo-Isidore emerged in the middle of the ninth century, probably in or near Rheims. This compilation of papal writings—some spurious, some genuine—extols papal primacy. It was the most widely distributed medieval canon law collection. After studying the provenance, early circulation, and influence of Pseudo-Isidore, Fuhrmann (2001) concluded that the papacy, after some initial reluctance, began to cite it ‘often, thoroughly, and literally’. Frequently, it was through the dissemination of this dubious work that ancient canon law continued to be represented, directly or indirectly, through its inclusion in later collections. Pseudo-Isidore’s centralisation of ecclesiastical authority in Rome was designed to defend the independence of the episcopate from the predatory inclinations of metropolitans and secular princes. However, whatever its original purpose, Pseudo-Isidore contains what Blumenthal (1998) described as ‘a ready reservoir of ringing statements about the nature of papal authority’, which were unhesitatingly modified and adapted by later eleventh-century reformers to support papal primacy. Cowdrey (1998) discerned a strong Pseudo-Isidorean influence in Gregory VII’s long letter of March 1081 to Hermann of Metz.

Gregory and his entourage took a keen interest in any canon law sources that they could deploy to sanction the judicial authority of the apostolic see. For example, one papal letter, concerning a problem in Lucca, indicates that advisers have supplied Gregory with relevant canon law texts originating from the reigns of two previous popes, Fabian (236-50) and Stephen I (254-7); it cites them in his condemnation of the disobedient clerks of the cathedral of San Martino. That letter also shows the influence of Pseudo-Isidore. Within days of his election, the pope wrote a letter, dated 29 April 1073, to the Bishop of Florence, advising him to use canonica auctoritas to deal with an accusation regarding an alleged uncanonical marriage in the bishop’s diocese.

101 Ibid., p. 195.
102 Robinson, ‘Church and papacy’, p. 269.
104 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 613. See p. 651 of Caspar’s index to Das Register, which identifies the influence of Pseudo-Isidore in other letters. Two of these pertain to relations between regnum and sacerdotium: Reg. 7.2 (1079) to the clergy and people of Lucca; Reg. 9.29 (1083) to all the faithful.
105 Reg. 7.2, p. 461.5-11.
106 See p. 651 of Caspar’s index to the Register.
107 Reg. 1.5, pp. 7.29-8.17.
References to *canonica auctoritas* occur frequently in the Register.\(^{108}\) Gregory sometimes used synonyms or near-synonyms such as *sacri canones, patrum decreta, decreta sanctorum, regula canonum, divinae leges, and lex dei.*\(^ {109}\) It comes as no surprise that many of the references to canon law arise in the context of Gregory's relentless commitment to enforcing discipline within the ranks of the clergy. In particular, he proclaimed the necessity for canonical election of bishops and abbots.\(^ {110}\) Sometimes he acted with canonical severity (*rigor canonicus*).\(^ {111}\) There were other situations when he judged it more prudent to employ apostolic mildness (*apostolica mansuetudo*).\(^ {112}\) In cases of alleged canonical transgressions, Gregory was noticeably meticulous in seeking to ensure the application of due process.\(^ {113}\) Given his obvious interest in using *canonica auctoritas* to legitimize his judicial decisions, the question arises: which canon law writings were available to Gregory's circle?

Gilchrist (1967) examined the Register of Gregory VII to determine the extent of Gregory's awareness of the available canon law and his understanding of its operation. His analysis focused on specific themes, one of which was papal primacy. He concluded that not only was Gregory's ideology closely dependent upon the contemporary canonical concepts and texts, especially those texts that came originally from Pseudo-Isidore, but that Gregory's very insistence on the law distinguished him from many of his predecessors. According to Gilchrist, in the period 1049-1141 Gregory, more than any other pope, drew on canon law to determine precisely relations both within the Church and between churchmen and princes.\(^ {114}\) However, although he frequently invoked *canonica auctoritas*, Gregory seldom quoted actual texts. This makes it difficult to determine the canonical sources he was using. It might also prompt the suspicions of contemporaries about their very existence. In an earlier article, Gilchrist (1962) suggested that this vagueness contributed to the impression that Gregory sometimes acted unlawfully.\(^ {115}\) Fuhrmann (1973) pointed out that Gregory VII was hardly a trained

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\(^{108}\) *Reg.* 1.5, p. 8.9; *Reg.* 1.33, p. 54.5-12; *Reg.* 2.4, p. 129.6; *et passim*.

\(^{109}\) *Reg.* 1.13, p. 1.21-3; *Reg.* 2.1, p. 124.18; *Reg.* 1.60, p. 87.28-30; *et passim*

\(^{110}\) *Reg.* 1.33, p. 54.10-14; *Reg.* 2.55, p. 200.19; *Reg.* 4.15, p. 319.23; *et passim*.

\(^{111}\) *Reg.* 1.35, p. 56.26; *Reg.* 1.56, p. 83.27; *Reg.* 1.68, p. 98.1; *et passim*.

\(^{112}\) *Reg.* 4.16, p. 320.24; *Reg.* 6.4, p. 396.27; *Reg.* 6.11, p. 413.2; *et passim*.

\(^{113}\) *Reg.* 1.63, p. 92.17; *Reg.* 2.4, p. 129.6; *Reg.* 6.7, p. 407.34; *et passim*.

\(^{114}\) Gilchrist, 'Juristic sources', p. 37.

\(^{115}\) Gilchrist, 'Canon law aspects', p. 24.
jurist and legal authority, and demonstrated that if it served the pope’s purposes he was prepared to distort the meaning of canonical sources by quoting them selectively or citing them out of context.\(^{116}\)

**Dictatus Papae (DP)**

No discussion of Gregory’s views on papal authority can ignore a unique document lodged in the Register between letters dated 3 and 5 March 1075.\(^{117}\) We know that Gregory personally dictated these twenty-seven brief, explicit, statements on the subject of papal authority because it is marked *dictatus papae*, the name by which it came to be known. The *DP* has provoked extensive speculation, not least in relation to the issue of the canonical validity of its contents. It was not widely circulated at the time, and it is difficult to assess how integral it was to Gregory’s conception of papal authority.\(^{118}\) Had it gained full acceptance in western Christendom, the pope would have become the primary authority on church law; only he could have decided if a source was canonical (*#17*), and he alone could have imposed new laws (*#7*).

Despite the extensive scholarship and debate, there is no agreement on the value or sources of the *DP*, or on Gregory’s intentions. One influential hypothesis was Borino’s theory (1944) that it represented the *capitulatio* of an existing canon law collection, the bulk of whose material – the *auctoritates*, the evidence – was subsequently lost.\(^{119}\) In the first of two important modern commentaries on the *DP*, Fuhrmann (1977) rejected Borino’s theory. Such material is missing, he said, because some *DP* statements were indefensible in terms of existing *auctoritates*, some contradicted existing canon law, while others made claims for which no possible legal foundation existed.\(^{120}\) Fuhrmann referred to the document’s ‘verschärfende Umbiegung’, a German expression for which there is no exact English translation, but which suggests a ‘sharpening’ or ‘intensifying’ distortion of the principle involved.\(^{121}\) For C. Brooke (1958) the *DP* is ‘a kind of index of


\(^{117}\) Reg. 2.55a, pp. 203.7-208.1.

\(^{118}\) Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 610.


\(^{121}\) Fuhrmann, ‘Quod catholicus’, p. 287.
papal authority'. A. Murray (1966) described it as a 'mysterious manifesto of papal claims. In the view of Blumenthal (1998), the DP lacks juridical precision, reflecting Gregory's convictions and opinions rather than accepted canonical principles. Nelson (2008) suggested that it was 'more aide-mémoire than manifesto'.

Cowdrey's 1998 biography of Gregory includes the second significant modern commentary on the DP, reflecting scholarship that was unavailable to Fuhrmann twenty years earlier. Regarding the paucity of allusions to the DP in the contemporary polemical literature, Cowdrey conjectured that, had it been widely disseminated, its uncompromising assertions of papal authority would undoubtedly have drawn the fire of anti-Gregorian polemicists. Noting that few traces of the sententiae are found in Gregory's own later correspondence, he believed that the DP confirms that Gregory's thinking at this time was exploratory and developing. In suggesting a linkage between its minimal diffusion and Gregory's awareness that he possessed insufficient ancient texts to justify the theses, Cowdrey was implicitly agreeing with Fuhrmann. For Cowdrey, the DP's stark, uncompromising statements on papal authority represent only an intermediate stage in the pope's thinking, and that his final position should be sought in later correspondence, notably the long polemical letter of March 1081 to Hermann of Metz, which expounds a picture of auctoritas sedes apostolica that is more firmly grounded, nuanced, and rounded. Melve (2007) characterized the DP as 'combative and polemical'. Whatever the thinking behind it, the DP's blunt assertions of papal authority were scarcely reflected in 1075 in Gregory's pragmatic pursuit of peace, concord, and collaboration with Henry IV and other Christian rulers.

Most of the twenty-seven sententiae are uncompromising assertions of papal primacy in the spiritual sphere, of the authority of the sedes apostolica over the sacerdotium. Striking though they are, they are not directly germane to this discussion.

123 Murray, 'Letters', p. 150.
126 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 502-7; Reg. 8.21, pp. 546.12-562.26. For Gregory's two polemical letters to Hermann of Metz, see below pp. 275ff.
However, two forthright statements on the superiority of the papacy over the temporal powers go to the heart of the conflict between Gregory and Henry:

#12. That it is permitted to him [the pope] to depose emperors.
#27. That he [the pope] can absolve the subjects of the unjust from their fealty.\(^{128}\)

Cowdrey (1998) thought that not only was #27 the most radical of the theses, but that it would have been conspicuously hard to justify in canon law.\(^{129}\) Echoing Fuhrman’s ‘verschärfende Umbiegung’, Cowdrey noted that the general ‘sharpening’ tendency of the theses would have made the DP vulnerable to criticism, and would have conflicted with Gregory’s innate circumspection and pragmatic recognition of the need to adjust papal claims in the face of contemporary realities.\(^{130}\)

Cowdrey discussed the three main theories regarding the purpose of the DP. First, he thought that the organisation of the sententiae argued against the notion that they were intended as headings of a systematically arranged canon law collection on papal auctoritates such as Gregory had requested from Peter Damian.\(^{131}\) Second, having considered the possibility that Gregory intended that the DP would provide a basis for negotiations between the Latin and Greek churches, he concluded that its relative formlessness made this unlikely.\(^{132}\) Third, he considered whether the DP was composed with the 1075 Lenten synod in mind, that it was to be the basis of a formal address at the council. However, he contended that this also is unlikely because of the same formlessness, and because it ignores current key issues such as simony and clerical fornication.\(^{133}\)

Cowdrey mooted the possibility that the creation of the DP related to Gregory’s optimism in early 1075 that King Henry might visit Rome in the near future to receive his long desired imperial coronation. The pope might have planned to take this opportunity to require, as a condition of coronation, the acknowledgement by the king and the German church of Gregory’s increasingly singular perspective on auctoritas sedis

\(^{128}\) Reg. 2.55a, p. 204.5: ‘XII. Quod illi liceat imperatores deponere’; p. 208.1: ‘XXVII. Quod a fidelitate iniquorum subjectos potest absolvere.’

\(^{129}\) Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 504.

\(^{130}\) Ibid., p. 505.

\(^{131}\) Ibid. See above p. 178.

\(^{132}\) Ibid., pp. 505-6.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., p. 506.
A number of DP statements are consistent with this theory. Since most of them concern papal authority in an ecclesiastical context, they would require the German episcopate to accept subordination to Rome. Church relationships aside, the two statements with which we are concerned would also have had great relevance in this eventuality. DP #12's claim that the pope can depose an emperor would give the newly crowned Henry an obvious incentive to avoid evil behaviour. The same is true of DP #27's assertion of the pope's right to free the subjects of disobedient kings from their oaths of fealty. Nevertheless, there is no way of knowing if there is any truth in this hypothesis. Cowdrey himself recognized that many of the DP's statements would have had no relevance in those circumstances. If the DP does indeed date from early 1075 then the document in general, and #12 and #27 in particular, shed light on the uncompromising nature of Gregory's response when his simmering conflict with King Henry finally boiled over at the end of that year.

To conclude, Gregory consistently rejected charges of innovation. In order to justify the extension of Petrine authority into the temporal sphere and to obtain the oboedientia of secular rulers, he deployed favourite scriptural and patristic sources, together with canonica auctoritas and precedent. In his view societas Christiana, encompassing both churchmen and laity, came under the auctoritas of the sacerdotium, whose head is the sedes apostolica. Gregory's 'hierocratic' claims implicitly challenged traditional ideas of the God-given 'sacral' authority of kings and princes.

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134 Ibid., pp. 506-7.
3.4 Rex Christianus

Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to King Henry, greeting and apostolic blessing, if, however, he shall show himself obedient to the apostolic see as befits a rex Christianus.¹

The above salutatio of the pope’s crucial ‘ultimatum letter’ of 8 December 1075 to the rex Teutonicorum makes the customary papal blessing conditional upon King Henry’s oboedientia to the apostolic see.² There can be no doubt that Gregory’s conflict with Henry heavily influenced his attitude to kingship. However, Part 2 of this study confirmed the flexibility and pragmatism that characterized Gregory’s interactions with the secular rulers of western Christendom. Part 1 included a review of the accepted sources of authority in Christian Europe, their natures and relationships, in the years preceding Hildebrand’s ascent to the highest spiritual office in the west.³ The eleventh-century reform papacy predated the emergence of the concepts of state and church as separate entities. The two acknowledged major sources of earthly authority were regnum and sacerdotium, the former being regarded as possessing its own ‘sacral’ dimension. It was accepted as natural that these two complementary divine institutions should work in close alliance, ruling the temporal and spiritual spheres of Christendom in harmonious cooperation according to the dualistic Gelasian theory. Before the papal reformers started to make progress in the second half of the century the vast majority of bishops accepted, at least tacitly, that the king’s ‘sacrality’ justified royal domination of the Church. The theory of sacral kingship originated in the Old Testament Book of Samuel, and was symbolized by the coronation rite which included the anointing of the king with holy oils by which he received the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 16: 13).⁴ The writings of his reforming admirers extolled King Henry III of Germany (1039-56) who epitomized

¹ Reg. 3.10, p. 263.23-5: ‘GREGORIUS episcopus servus servorum Dei Henrico regi salutem et apostolicam benedictionem, si tamen apostolicae sedi, ut christianum decet regem, oboedierit.’
² See above pp. 67ff.
³ See above pp. 8ff.

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'theocratic rule': the direction and protection of regnum and sacerdotium as a single entity, together with the promotion of iustitia, by the divinely elected, anointed emperor, who was sometimes characterized as vicarius Christi or vicarius Dei. Henry III was deeply pious and intensely conscious of both the sacrality and the majesty of his office. He regarded himself as God’s representative in both the temporal and spiritual spheres, and emphasized the quasi-priestly aspects of the imperial dignity more than any other Salian emperor. Henry III’s commitment to the purification of the Church, particularly the elimination of simony, resulted in the acceptance by most ecclesiastics of his proactive supervision. This control is illustrated by Henry’s effective nomination of four successive Germans to the papacy, including his relative Leo IX (1048/9-54), the first historically significant reforming pope.

By the time Hildebrand ascended to the papacy in 1073, much had changed in the relationship between regnum and sacerdotium. The death of Henry III in 1056 and the succession of his young son Henry IV led to the deterioration of the bond between the German regnum and the reform papacy under the regency that ruled on behalf of the underage king until 1065. Following his coming of age, Henry acquired a questionable personal reputation and was perceived as being influenced by wicked counsellors. The serious, prolonged conflict between king and pope over the archbishopric of Milan, which began during the reign of Gregory’s immediate predecessor, Alexander II, was another major blow to the erstwhile cooperation of regnum and sacerdotium. Under the Ottonian and Salian dynasties, it was understood that the German king-emperor had a particular responsibility for the defence of the apostolic see. However, the weakening of the regnum Teutonicum under the regency of 1056-65 persuaded the papacy to seek other protectors.

Gregory’s letters do not emphasize the idea of sacral kingship. Nevertheless, they occasionally acknowledge that royal power is conferred by God. His epistola to the king of Denmark, dated 19 April 1080, refers to Harold Hein as ‘you to whom divine providence has committed the charge of the kingdom’. His letter to the rex Anglorum

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5 Wipo, Gesta, p. 22.24; Peter Damiani, Briefe 1, Ep. 20, p. 200.4.
6 See Tellenbach, Church, state, pp. 85-8.
7 See above p. 13.
8 Reg. 7.21, p. 497.23-5: ‘Te ..., cui regni curam providentia divina commisit.’
dated 8 May 1080 tells William that 'we believe it not to be concealed from your wisdom that Almighty God has allotted to this world as its governing authorities the apostolic and royal dignities which are more excellent than all the others'. A third example is an undated letter to King Sancho Ramirez of Aragon, in which Gregory thanks Almighty God 'because you walk justly and rightly in the stewardship which you have been given from above.' The pope seems never to have referred to the role of consecration in the making of a king. However, as he stated in his letter dated 4 April 1074 to William the Conqueror, Gregory stressed the necessity for kings to place the honour of God above themselves and worldly things. Shortly after, his letter dated 13 April 1074 to Philip I advised the rex Francorum that Christian princes must join the holy see in the camp of the Lord so that they can work together to defend Christendom.

The expression rex Christianus is found in only four of Gregory's preserved letters. All were composed in one twelve-month period. His epistola of 8 May 1080 to the rex Anglorum reminds William that the apostolic and pontifical dignity will represent reges Christiani before the divine tribunal. Another letter, dated 27 December 1080, advises the rex Francorum, Philip I, that the interests of his salvation dictate that he behave in a manner befitting a rex Christianus. Gregory's key letter, of March 1081, to Hermann of Metz makes the same point, albeit more dramatically: every rex Christianus at the point of death seeks as a pitiable suppliant the help of a priest to escape the prison of hell. Lastly, another important letter, probably also dating from March 1081, informs Altmann of Passau and William of Hirsau that the pope will continue to oppose Henry IV unless he is oboediens, humiliter devotus, and utilis to holy Church as befits a rex Christianus. Gregory's correspondence has much more to say on these and other requirements for Christian kingship.

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9 Reg. 7.25, p. 505.18-19: 'Credimus prudentiam vestram non latere omnibus aliis excellentiores apostolicam et regiam dignitates huic mundo ad eius regimina omnipotentem Deum distribuisse.'
10 Epp. Vag. 65, pp. 146-9: 'Gratias omnipotenti Deo referimus quod in administratione desuper tibi data iuste et racionabiliter incedis.'
12 Reg. 1.75, p. 107.10-17.
13 Reg. 7.25, p. 506.6-10.
15 Reg. 8.21, p. 556.10-12.
He went out of his way to commend his *excellentissimus filius* William the Conqueror as the contemporary ruler who came closest to the ideal *rex Christianus*. The chapter on William noted that the pope despatched a number of letters praising the *rex Anglorum* for his attributes, and outlining many of the desirable characteristics of a Christian king: he possesses *prudentia* and *honestas*, strives for *iustitia*, brings *pax* to his subjects, loves his mother the church, is *devotus* to St Peter and the apostolic see, and cares for the churches committed to him for their defence. Another characteristic, crucial in the eyes of reformers, is his commitment to the promotion of ecclesiastical reform, especially the elimination of simony and clerical formication. Perhaps most significantly for this study, a *rex Christianus* demonstrates *humilitas* and *oboedientia* towards the apostolic see.  

The pope lauded King Sweyn Estrithson II of Denmark in similar terms. These and other ideas are articulated by Gregory in many *epistolae*, be they letters of approval, exhortation, or reproach.  

In contrast to William and Sweyn, the king least likely to win Gregory’s endorsement as an exemplary *rex Christianus*, at least before the outbreak of his conflict with Henry IV in early 1076, was Philip I of France. The discussion of Gregory’s dealings with the *rex Francoram* highlighted papal *epistolae* that were highly critical of him. Philip’s habitual simoniacal dealings and *inoboedientia* led the pope to threaten to excommunicate him. Early in his pontificate, Gregory came to understand that the king’s frequent promises to mend his ways were utterly insincere. His patience exhausted, he attacked Philip as a *tyrannus* who, instead of upholding *leges* and *iustitia*, was actively instigating criminality and was his own kingdom’s worst *depredator*. After 1075, Philip is rarely mentioned in Gregory’s many letters concerning France. The king’s obvious incorrigibility apparently persuaded Gregory to abandon his efforts to cajole the *rex Francoram* into governing in a manner befitting a *rex Christianus*.  

Gregory’s letter, probably dated March 1081, to his two leading adherents in Germany, Bishop Altmann of Passau and Abbot William of Hirsau was also discussed.

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17 See above pp. 25ff.
18 See above p. 120.
19 For a summary of Gregory’s expectations in the 1070s regarding royal servicableness, see Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 622.
20 See above pp. 35ff.
earlier. Following the death of the anti-king Rudolf the previous October, many exhorted the pope to recognise the legitimacy of Henry IV. The *epistola* implicitly acknowledges that the tide has turned in Henry’s favour, but as for the suggestion that Gregory should now recognize Henry the pope has this to say:

> Furthermore, all in your parts who fear God and who love the liberty of the bride of Christ should be cautioned that not by the blandishment of any favour or by the constraint of any fear should they rush rashly into electing a person whose habits and other things that there have to be in a king are at variance with his undertaking the defence and oversight of the Christian religion. Indeed, we consider it to be better that with some delay a suitable king should be provided according to God’s will to the honour of holy Church, than that by unduly hastening some unworthy person should be set up as king. We know, to be sure, that our brothers are wearied by the long struggle and by disturbances of many kinds. Yet it is accepted to be nobler to strive for a long time for the freedom of holy Church than to be subjected to a wretched and diabolical servitude. For the wretched, namely the limbs of the devil, strive to the end that they may be oppressed by his wretched slavery; on the other hand, the limbs of Christ strive to the end that they lead these same wretches back to Christian liberty.

In other words, the key criterion for choosing a suitable (*idoneus*) Christian king is his willingness to defend and care for the Church, with particular emphasis on *libertas Ecclesiae*. The pope is so certain of this that his supporters, *membra Christi*, must resist blandishments and intimidation. Despite their weariness, they should prepare for a protracted struggle against *membra diaboli*. The letter elaborates other elements in Gregory’s current ideas of Christian kingship. The suitable candidate must be *oboediens*, *humiliter devotus*, and *utilis* to the Church. Also included is a proposed oath to be taken

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21 See above p. 94.

22 Reg. 9.3, pp. 574.29-575.13: ‘Preterea admonendi sunt omnes in partibus vestris Deum timentes ac sponsae Christi libertatem diligenties, ut non aliqua gratia suadente aut ullo metu cogente propter eam temere personam eligere, cius mores et cetera, quae regi oportet inesse, a suscipienda Christiane religionis defensione et cura discordent. Melius quippe fore arbitrur, ut aliqua mora secundum Deum ad honorem sanitae ecclesiae rex provideatur idoneus, quam nimium festinando in regem aliquis ordinetur indigamus. Scimus quidem, quod fratres nostri longo certamine diversissique perturbationibus fatigantur. Nobilium tamen esse dinoscitur multo tempore pro libertate sanitae ecclesiae decertare quam miserae ac diabolicae servitutis subiacere. Certant namque miseri, scilicet membra diaboli, ut eosdem miseram servitutem oppressantur; certant e contra membra Christi, ut eosdem miseris ad christianam libertatem reducant.’

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by the new king. A key extract opens the later chapter on *fidelitas.* The oath consolidates the above ideas into clear commitments by the king to render *oboedientia, fidelitas, honor, and utilitas* to the pope, and to care for the churches in the king’s care.

The use of these terms in Gregory’s correspondence is evidence of the radicalisation in papal political thought with regard to *reges Christiani* with which he is associated. *Hereditas* and kin-right are no longer important considerations. The claims that *utilitas* to the holy see and *idoneitas* are criteria for kingship have no precedent in the preserved correspondence of Gregory’s predecessors. This pope’s focus on these attributes shows that he is taking an increasingly functional approach to assessing candidates for royal office. Just as innovatory as the introduction of these two new touchstones is the underlying assumption that the apostolic see has the right to judge the *utilitas* and *idoneitas* of a candidate for kingship. Gregory’s correspondence shows that his ideal Christian king had several specific characteristics and duties, which are now examined under these headings: moral leadership, religion, governance, *idoneitas, utilitas,* and noble lineage.

**Moral leadership**

Two contemporary sources criticised Henry IV’s moral character. In 1069, Lampert of Hersfeld wrote in his *Annales:*

> If he [the king] was not afraid of human laws and the decrees of the canons, he should at least refrain from injuring his own reputation and honour, lest the poison of such a disgraceful example, originating with the king, should contaminate the whole Christian people, and he who ought to be the punisher of wrongdoing would himself become the instigator and standard bearer of shameful deeds.

In 1086, Wido of Ferrara was no less censorious when he asked ‘how is [the king] to be a punisher of crime, an avenger of sin, when he himself is in the toils of the same errors? Under what covenant will he preserve the law for others when he has destroyed the rule

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23 See below p. 254.
25 Lampert, *Annales* 1069, pp. 109.25-110.2: ‘Si minus humanis legibus vel canonum sanctionibus terreretur, parceret saltem famae et existimationi propriae, ne scilicet tam fedi exempli venenum ab rege sumpto iniclo totum commaculari et populum christianum, et qui utior esse debuisset criminum, ipse auctor et signifer fieret ad flagicium.’
of justice in himself? Summing up the moral behaviour expected of eleventh-century kingship, Hagen Keller (1986) described the imposition of the strictest standards as being a consequence of the Ottonian-Salian royal theology; the king must not give a bad example to those who were subject to his lordship and endanger the welfare of all by bringing down God’s anger on himself.27

Gregory too had no doubt that a Christian king has a duty to order the moral development of his subjects. He made this clear in epistolae that reprove kings for their moral failings. A vivid example is his letter of September 1074 to the French episcopate.28 It consists mainly of an extended scathing attack on the moral failings of King Philip I. Instead of setting a virtuous example to his subjects, the king’s own corruption, predatory behaviour, and lax control has left them with ample opportunity for iniquitous behaviour. The letter describes Philip’s government as useless (infelix inutiliter gerens), and emphasizes that in order to constrain others to do what is right he must abandon iniquity.29 Gregory’s pastoral letter dated 15 October 1079 to King Harold Hein of Denmark states that a king must operate as a positive model since the more he stands above and rules the many then the greater is his ability to lead his subjects by his example.30

Religion

An important element of the responsibility of a rex Christianus to provide moral direction to his subjects is his behaviour in ecclesiastical matters. In late 1081, Abbot William of Hirsau wrote to Hermann of Salm, recently elected anti-king in succession to the late Rudolf of Swabia. The Black Forest monastery of Hirsau was a bastion of monastic libertas in Germany and William was a loyal supporter of Gregory VII. His letter sets out succinctly the responsibilities of the king vis-a-vis the Church: he has three particular tasks, namely the eradication of symoniaca haeresis, the rooting out of clericorum incontinentia, and the avoidance of investitura of clerics by any layman, even

26 Wido of Ferrara, De scismate Hildebrandi, MGH Libelli 1 (1891), 536.23-5: ‘Quomodo enim sit criminis vindex, utor sceleris, qui eisdem erroribus teneatur? aut quo pacto servabit alis legem, qui in se ipso regulam destruit aequitatis? vel quomodo erit iusticiae minister, qui maliciae auctor et magister efficitur?’
28 See above pp. 43ff.
29 Reg. 2.5, pp. 130.34-131.3, 132.25-8.
30 Reg. 7.5, p. 465.5-8.
the king. These measures are necessary in order to restore a weakened Church (*Ecclesia labefactata*). Moreover, the king’s duty to purify *sancta Ecclesia* is itself conditional upon his obedience to the pope.31 A later chapter considers these three specific duties.32 William’s letter reminds us of certain accepted ideas of the duties of an eleventh-century Christian king: the defence of the clergy, the maintenance of the discipline of the churches in his kingdom, and the guardianship of the morality of his subjects. The qualities and performance of a *rex Christianus* with regard to religious matters get particular and repeated attention in Gregory’s writings.

No aspect of this receives more frequent consideration than the necessity that secular rulers demonstrate *oboedientia* to the apostolic see; twenty-three registered documents mention this. The three earliest, composed in Gregory’s first pontifical year, indicate that the required *oboedientia* relates specifically to church matters. The first says that Henry IV should obey the apostolic see with regard to the Milanese Church. The second declares the need to deploy canonical sternness to curb Philip I’s *inoboedientia* regarding the *Gallicanae ecclesiae*. The third – the only one of the three that refers to church affairs in general – instructs Philip to obey St Peter’s instructions in things that belong to *ecclesiasticam religio*.33 It is perhaps significant that none of the twenty later documents restrict the required *oboedientia* to religious matters.34 Taken at face value, these later texts suggest that the prescribed obedience is unqualified. One might conjecture that Gregory quietly ceased to mention the limitation on the required obedience to ecclesiastical issues in the hope that it would fade from the common understanding of papal authority.

Four of Gregory VII’s most important *epistolae* refer to the declaration by Pope Gregory I that a king who contravenes the orders of the apostolic see will fall from office.35 Two of these are his important letters to Bishop Hermann of Metz of 1076 and 1081.36 Saint Gregory’s claim is also referenced in two letters, dated 31 May 1077, addressed to his legates in Germany and the German faithful respectively.37 However, as

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31 William of Hirsau, Hildesheimer Briefe 18 in *MGH, Briebsammlungen der Zeit Heinrichs IV*, pp. 41-2.
32 See below pp. 228ff.
33 *Reg.* 1.25, p. 42.10-33; *Reg.* 1.35, p. 57.5-8; *Reg.* 1.75, pp. 106.21-107.24.
34 *Reg.* 2.63, pp. 218.15-219.4; *Reg.* 2.73, pp. 233.31-235.30; *Reg.* 2.75, pp. 237.30-238.17; *et passim*.
36 See below pp. 275ff.
discussed later, Gregory VII’s representation of this assertion by his favourite patristic source as a papal *sententia* is misleading, since it is no more than a conventional anathema clause at the end of a papal privilege. Ten letters (including the four that reference Gregory I) speak of *oboedientia* to the apostolic see, St Peter, the Church, or papal legates. Five more speak generally of the necessity for a specific named ruler to demonstrate *oboedientia*, clearly implying submission to commands of the apostolic see. The aforementioned letter to William the Conqueror was the second of two *epistolarum* to the *rex Anglorum* in spring 1080. The fact that both advise the king that his salvation depends on his *oboedientia* suggests an increased willingness by the pope to ratchet up the pressure on his royal correspondents to obtain their submission.

The later discussion of *fidelitas* refers to the texts of two oaths. The first is King Zwonimir of Croatia’s oath of *fidelitas* to the apostolic see, sworn in the presence of a papal legate in 1076, in which he solemnly promises ‘to implement without change all orders that your holiness imposes on me’. The second is Gregory’s proposed oath to be taken by a future *rex Teutonicorum*, which is included in his letter to Bishop Altmann of Passau and Abbot William of Hirsau, which is thought to date from March 1081. The text includes an undertaking by the king to perform faithfully whatsoever the pope himself shall command him with these words: *per veram oboedientiam*. Apropos the latter text, A.J. Carlyle (1921) commented that even if it not certain that the ‘strict and significant phrases’ of the oath imply a feudal relationship, the wording certainly represents a very extreme claim to the future king’s obedience to the apostolic see. With Gregory’s constant demands for *oboedientia* in mind one scholar even proposed that it would be better to regard him as a disciplinarian rather than a reformer.

When broaching the subject of the desirable attributes of kingship regarding religion, some of Gregory’s letters urge royal submissiveness (*humilitas*) and/or humility (*modestia*), characteristics that are nearly synonymous, and obviously akin to

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38 See below p. 285.
39 *Reg.* 3.10, pp. 263.23-267.2; *Reg.* 4.23, pp. 334.28-336.17; *Reg.* 4.24, pp. 337.3-338.27; *et passim.*
40 *Reg.* 2.75, pp. 237.30-238.17; *Reg.* 2.73, pp. 233.31-235.30; *Reg.* 7.23, p. 505.16-21; *et passim.*
42 See below p. 267. See also above p. 125.
oboedientia. It seems that the pope made little distinction between these manifestations of deference. In late 1076, a letter from Gregory advises William the Conqueror to 'humbly obey' (modeste parere) his warnings concerning the see of Dol. One of the three reasons for Henry IV's deposition at the 1080 Lenten synod was his pride (superbia), whereas one of the justifications for Rudolf's elevation was his humilitas. ⁴⁵ In 1081, the pope also praised King Alphonso VI of León-Castile for his humilitas. ⁴⁶ Gregory's letter of March 1081 to Altmann of Passau advises the bishop that the deceased Rudolf should be succeeded by a rex Teutonicorum who will be humiliter devotus to holy Church. ⁴⁷

Devotio was another mark of Christian kingship. Some of Gregory's letters call for kings to display zeal (studium) in their devotio to the apostolic see and St Peter. An early letter, dated 17 December 1073, reminds Duke Wratislav II of Bohemia of his promise of utmost devotion (non modica devotio) to St Peter, and to consider the importance to his salvation of keeping his vows. ⁴⁸ Another epistola, dated 13 April 1074, finds Gregory comparing Philip I unfavourably with previous reges Francorum, who were pius and devotus, 'increased and defended churches', and rigorously upheld iustitia. ⁴⁹ Other letters similarly exhort Christian rulers to show amor, studium, devotio, humilitas, diligentia, and reverentia towards the Church. ⁵⁰ Some letters emphasize the duty of reges Christiani to 'increase and defend churches'. ⁵¹ One of the pope's later epistolae, thought to date from 1081, advises Kings Inge I and Halstan of Sweden to levy tithes for the benefit of the churches and the poor. ⁵² Sweden was one of a number of recently Christianised territories on the periphery of Europe where the pope was keen to consolidate the new religion and develop an ecclesiastical infrastructure.

A Christian king must also ensure reverentia for the sacerdotium. Four of Gregory's later epistolae express his concern to promote and preserve reverentia for priests. The first, dated 19 April 1080, advises King Harold Hein of Denmark that reverentia for the

⁴⁵ Reg. 7.14a, pp. 483.1–487.20.
⁴⁷ Reg. 9.3, pp. 573.16–577.10.
⁴⁸ Reg. 1.38, p. 60.15–31.
⁴⁹ Reg. 1.75, pp. 106.21–107.24
⁵⁰ Reg. 2.63, pp. 218.15–219.4; Reg. 2.73, pp. 233.31–235.30; Reg. 6.29, pp. 441.20–442.36; et passim.
⁵¹ Reg. 2.63, pp. 218.15–219.4; Reg. 5.10, p. 362.31–36; Reg. 7.21, pp. 497.11–498.39; et passim.
⁵² Reg. 9.14, pp. 593.2–594.20.
sacerdotalis ordo should predominate in his thinking, second only to defensio ecclesiarum. His 1081 papal letter to the kings of Sweden, charges them not only to levy tithes, but also to show reverentia and oboedientia to sacerdotes, especially episcopi. The other two epistolae criticize William the Conqueror’s imprisonment of Bishop Odo of Bayeux as contrary to the reverentia due to the sacerdotium since it violated regia modestas (proper kingly restraint). A number of Gregory’s letters reiterate the general responsibility of Christian rulers to protect and care for the churches committed to them.

Symoniaca haeresis and fornicatio clericorum were the main targets of papal reformers, at least in the early years of Gregory VII’s papacy before lay investiture began to overtake them as his chief preoccupation. His correspondence shows his awareness of the importance of energetic participation by Christian kings and princes in the apostolic see’s ceaseless campaign to promote ecclesiastical reform, particularly the extirpation of these two offences. The earliest reference to this in the pope’s preserved correspondence is somewhat oblique, although the inference is clear. A letter dated 6 May 1073 informs Duke Godfrey IV of Lower Lotharingia that he, Gregory, will send messages to King Henry IV to convey to him his fatherly love and to admonish him about certain matters pertaining to ‘the advancement of the Church’ (profectum ecclesiae), no doubt an allusion to church reform. The pope’s letter of 7 December 1074 to Henry reveals that the king’s mother, the Empress Agnes, has constantly informed Gregory – and his own legates have confirmed – that her son wishes entirely to extirpate symoniaca haeresis from his kingdom and to address the chronic sickness of fornicatio clericorum; this gladdens the pope exceedingly. Gregory’s increasing optimism regarding Henry is reflected in his letter of 20 July 1075 to the king, which informs his karissimus filius that he has heard that Henry’s zeal for betterment is being manifested in two ways: he is manfully resisting simoniacs and desires to enforce clerical chastity.
The short-lived thaw in the relationship between pope and king underwent a
dramatic reversal at the end of 1075. It has been conjectured that Gregory viewed the
king's role in promoting church reform as his principal function. Certainly, the
'deposition faction', the German princes opposing Henry, seem to have been conscious
of the pope's interest in the subject when they elected Duke Rudolf of Swabia as antiking at Forchheim in March 1077. Their desire to gain Gregory's support appears to have
influenced their choice of this long-time promoter of reformed monasticism and friend
of Gregory's ally Empress Agnes. Furthermore, Rudolf promised in the presence of papal
legates that future bishops would be freely elected by their own churches. In other
words, the elections would be uncontaminated by simony.

Gregory sometimes embellished his exhortations by presenting the apostolic see
as the 'mother' of all churches. This evocative metaphor crops up in a number of the
pope's letters to William the Conqueror. An epistola of June 1073 tells the Tuscan
margravines Beatrice and Matilda of Gregory's desire that King Henry be recalled to the
love of his mother, the Roman Church. His letter of 17 April 1075 praises King Sweyn
Estrithson II of Denmark for demonstrating fitting reverentia to mater omnium ecclesiarum. Another epistola, dated 6 November 1077, advises Sweyn's son and
successor Harold Hein to care for 'our mother and mistress', the Church of God; he must
guard her, foster her, and seize her from the jaws of lurking wolves. The letter adds that
nothing will please the supreme Judge more, an obvious suggestion that this would
improve the king's prospects of salvation.

One of Gregory's later preserved letters, thought to date from 1081, calls attention
to another desirable royal attribute pertaining to matters spiritual, namely care for the
souls of the king's subjects in the hereafter. It praises King Alphonso VI of León-Castile
for enforcing the Roman liturgy in his kingdom; this is evidence of his divinely inspired
care for the salus of his subjects. This approbation came in the wake of the pope's

61 See above pp. 65ff.
62 Robinson, Henry IV, p. 178.
63 See above p. 101.
64 See above p. 23.
65 Reg. 1.11, p. 19.5-17.
66 Reg. 2.75, pp. 237.30-238.17.
67 Reg. 5.10, p. 362.31-36.

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successful campaign to persuade the Spanish kings to impose the Roman liturgy at the expense of the Mozarabic rite.⁶⁹

Finally, regarding the religious responsibilities of reges Christiani, a fundamental requirement is that they avoid contact with excommunicates. Gregory’s letter dated 7 December 1080 to the rex Francorum makes this clear by including it in a list of royal obligations, along with loving iustitia, preserving misericordia, defending churches, protecting orphans and widows, and despising the counsels of wicked men (pravorum consilia).⁷⁰ Earlier that year, a papal letter dated 2 January reprimands Duke Wratislav II of Bohemia for his dealings with excommunicates, meaning Henry IV and his allies.⁷¹ As would be expected, the rex Teutonicorum dominates the references to excommunicates in the context of kingship in Gregory’s correspondence. Two early letters, both dated 1 September 1073, focus on the matter. The first tells Bishop Rainald of Como that the king must shun malorum consilia like poison (venenum).⁷² The second instructs Anselm, bishop-elect of Lucca, to withhold himself from investiture by the king until the latter makes satisfaction to God for having communicated with excommunicates.⁷³ This was one of the serious charges laid against Henry in Gregory’s ‘ultimatum letter’ of 8 December 1075: unless the king forgoes further contact with the excommunicates and forces them to do penance he can receive the grace of neither divine nor apostolic benediction.⁷⁴

Governance

Gregory’s second – and last – preserved letter to the rex Francorum is dated 7 December 1080. As well as instructing Philip on some aspects of the correct relationship between kingship and the Church, it admonishes Philip to love iustitia, preserve misericordia, protect orphans and widows, and despise pravorum consilia.⁷⁵ The preservation of pax et concordia and the upholding of leges can be added to this list of the pope’s conception of the manner in which a rex Christianus should administer his

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⁶⁹ See above pp. 138ff.
⁷⁰ Reg. 8.20, p. 542.27-32.
⁷² Reg. 1.20, pp. 33.28-34.3
⁷³ Reg. 1.21, p. 35.4-8.
⁷⁴ Reg. 3.10, pp. 263.26-264.3. See above pp. 67ff.
⁷⁵ Reg. 8.20, p. 542.11-543.22.
regnum. The way in which kings should govern often arises in the pope’s correspondence with reges Christiani.

Love for iustitia is the aspect most frequently addressed. The frequency of the occurrence of a term in Gregory’s correspondence indicates its importance to the pope. Between them, iustitia and its adjective iustus occur 397 times in the Register and the epistolae vagantes, while their opposites, iniustitia and iniustus, occur 73 times, totalling 470 or an average of one per document. The very first entry in the Register, a brief statement of Gregory’s election, records that ‘we’ have elected ‘a pre-eminent lover of equity and righteousness’ (aequitatis et iustitiae prestantissimus amator). According to the most complete surviving text of Gregory’s death-bed testament, his final words, subsequently engraved upon his tomb in Salerno, were ‘I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, so I die in exile’ (‘Dilexi iustitiam et odivi iniquitatem, propterea morior in exilio.’). In addition to the classical meanings of justice, fairness, and uprightness, Niermeyer’s dictionary gives twenty-four meanings of ‘justitia’ as it was understood in the Middle Ages. Most of Niermeyer’s definitions pertain to jurisprudence: ‘law’, its jurisdiction and administration. However, one definition is ‘righteousness, equity, moral honesty, and charity’. A combination of this with the older classical meanings may suggest a general sense of Gregory’s usual understanding of the term, although the pope sometimes did use iustitia in a limited legal sense. Cowdrey (1998) pointed out that when Gregory’s letters use the expressions habere iustitia or facere iustitia the implication is often simply the distribution of justice in a legal forum.

From the outset of his pontificate, Gregory assumed the task of instilling a love for iustitia in the hearts and minds of the rulers of western Christendom. One of his earliest letters, dated 6 May 1073, informs Duke Godfrey IV of Lower Lotharingia that he plans to send messengers to King Henry to convey to him his fatherly love and to admonish him about certain matters; if the king heeds those admonishments and holds fast to

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76 For iustitia in Gregory’s thought, see Ullmann, Growth, pp. 273-6, 285-310; Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 559-60.
77 Reg. 1.1*, pp. 1.12-2.16; Cowdrey, Register, p. 1.
79 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 559.
*iustitia* the pope will rejoice for his *salus*. Other letters exhort individual *reges* to undertake — or praise them for — the pursuit, defence, upholding, observance, love, and performance of *iustitia*. A letter dated 25 March 1079 praises King Ladislaus I of Hungary for his eager desire and heartfelt intention to serve blessed Peter as a religious power should, and obey ‘us’ as becomes a freeborn son; by following the footsteps of the best kings Ladislaus shines forth by upholding the standard of *iustitia* in character (*moribus normam iustitiae*) and lineage of nobility in blood (*lineam nobilitatis in sanguine*). Three *epistolae* emphasize that a ruler’s *salus* is contingent upon his pursuit of *iustitia*. In such statements, it is reasonable to interpret *iustitia* as ‘righteousness’. A different usage appears in a letter from Gregory, dated 28 October 1074, which scolds King Salomon of Hungary for having reputedly received his kingdom as a *beneficium* from the *rex Teutonicorum*, and instructs him to pay regard to *iustitia*. In this instance, the pope seems to be employing *iustitia* in the legal sense of ‘jurisdiction’, undoubtedly a reference to the apostolic see’s existing claim to Hungary. Also worth noting are two letters, dated 19 April 1080 and 7 December 1080 respectively, which enjoin Kings Harold Hein of Denmark and Philip I of France to temper *iustitia* with *misericordia*.

One indication of the importance that Gregory attached to *iustitia* is the oath taken at Canossa by the penitent Henry IV, which opens with his commitment to either implement *iustitia* according to papal judgement or establish *concordia* with the princes of his kingdom according to the pope’s counsel. In this case, *iustitia* seems to mean the guaranteeing of the just claims of subjects regarding the grievances that they had communicated to the pope. This study has already discussed the pope’s excommunication of Henry IV at the Lenten synod of 1080. *Iustitia* is the central theme of Gregory’s prayer to SS. Peter and Paul that includes the dramatic announcement. The pope recalls that at Canossa he neither restored Henry to the kingship nor reversed the absolving of the oaths of the king’s subjects, and that this was because he wanted to

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80 Reg. 1.9, pp. 14.34-15.11.  
81 Reg. 1.75, pp.106.21-107.24; Reg. 6.13, p. 417.30-32; Reg. 6.29, pp. 441.20-442.36; et passim  
82 Reg. 6.29, p. 441.22-30;  
83 Reg. 1.75, pp.106.21-107.24; Reg. 7.11, pp. 473.13-475.12; Reg. 8.11, p. 530.14-36.  
84 Reg. 2.13, pp. 144.36-146.2; for Hungary, see above pp. 110ff; also chapter below on *fidelitas*, esp. p. 266.  
85 See above 111.  
86 Reg. 7.21, pp. 497.11-498.39; Reg. 8.20, p. 542.11-543.22.  
87 Reg. 4.12a, pp. 314.22-315.6.  
88 See above pp. 89ff. For Canossa, see above pp. 81ff.
establish *iustitia* or bring about *pax* between Henry and his opponents. He wanted to hear the arguments of both sides so that he might know which of them *iustitia* most favoured. Representatives of both parties came to Rome, and requested the pope to perform (*facere*) *iustitia* for their respective leaders. Gregory recalls that (at the Lenten synod of 1078) he called for an assembly in Germany to ascertain which candidate was supported by *iustitia*. Furthermore, suspecting that the more unjust party (*iniustior pars*) might not agree to such a synod for the very reason that it would favour *iustitia*, the pope had excommunicated anyone who blocked such a meeting. It was precisely because Henry and his accomplices, not fearing the danger of *disobedientia* – which is equivalent to idolatry (cf. I Sam. 15: 23) – had hindered the assembly, that the king and his supporters have incurred excommunication. The formal decree follows this.®® No other surviving document demonstrates so clearly the centrality of *iustitia* to Gregory’s view of kingship.

The foregoing consideration of Gregory’s usage of *iustitia* brings us perhaps a little closer to appreciating his understanding of this term that was so obviously fundamental to his thinking. Cowdrey’s translations (1972, 2002) of Gregory’s correspondence normally render *iustitia* as ‘righteousness’.®® Perhaps the somewhat archaic word ‘rightfulness’ is another term that might also help us to understand what Gregory has in mind when he encourages kings to employ *iustitia* in the exercise of their rulership. One reviewer of Cowdrey’s translation of the Register thought that all Gregory demanded of ‘his’ kings was that they stand up for *iustitia*, and that this included church autonomy.®® For Ullmann (1970) *iustitia* is the crystallized and most abstract expression of the ‘hierocratic doctrine’, which defines *Ecclesia* as the universal fellowship of believers, encompassing laity as well as clergy. Ullmann thought that Gregory VII regarded *iustitia* as ‘the right norm of living’ in a *societas christiana*, that the pope alone ‘is entitled to issue on the basis of *iustitia* concrete and detailed laws which bind everyone without exception in the *societas christiana*’.®®

We have seen that most of Niermeyer’s definitions of *iustitia* pertain to ‘law’, its jurisdiction and administration. These juridical meanings associate *iustitia* with the more

®® Reg. 7.14a, pp. 484.10-486.14.
®® Reg. 1.7, p. 11.20; Reg. 1.8, p. 13.7; Reg. 1.9, p. 15.4; et passim.
®® Murray, Review of Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*.
obvious word for law, namely *lex*. The word *lex* features little in Gregory's correspondence with regard to Christian kingship. One example is his letter of September 1074 to the French prelates, which castigates Philip I and highlights the conspicuous disparity between his duty to uphold *iustitia* and *leges* and his actual behaviour as the kingdom's most active *depredator*. In this case, the pope seems to be making a clear distinction between *iustitia* as righteousness, and the upholding of laws.

The preservation of *pax et concordia* were obvious governmental responsibilities of kingship. The chapter on Bohemia highlighted Gregory's concern that internal conflicts threatened the consolidation of Christianity there. His letter to Duke Wratislav of 17 April 1075 stresses the importance of *pax*: those who foster discord and disputes are *filii diaboli* whereas 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.' (Matt. 5: 9). A letter bearing the same date exhorts the Bohemians to follow the Christian way of life, by loving God and one's neighbours, and establishing among themselves the *pax* without which no one shall see the Lord (cf. Heb. 12: 14). Another letter, dated 4 October 1080, advises King Inge of Sweden that the preservation of *pax* is a duty of Christian kingship. A 1081 *epistola* from Gregory to his legates in France commends William the Conqueror for his measures to bring *pax et iustitia* to his subjects. The accusation that the pope was himself a notorious disturber of the peace is a frequent theme in contemporary anti-Gregorian polemic. An example is the decree deposing 'Hildebrand', issued by the pro-Henrician synod of Brixen in 1080. It implicitly acknowledges that a desire to preserve *pax* is a praiseworthy characteristic of a Christian king since, having accused Hildebrand of various crimes, including the murder of four popes and the use of force and terror, to acquire the papacy, it denounces him for plotting against the *rex catholicus et pacificus*.

Many of Gregory's pastoral letters, particularly to more peripheral territories whose adoption of Christianity was usually recent, instruct their rulers in their

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93 See above p. 43.
94 See above pp. 105ff.
95 Reg. 2.71, pp. 231.30-232.2.
96 Reg. 2.72, pp. 232.23-233.2.
97 Reg. 8.11, p. 530.14-36.
98 Reg. 9.5, pp. 579.27-580.3.
responsibilities as *reges Christiani*. One such obligation is the care of their more unfortunate subjects, specifically paupers, widows, and orphans (cf. 2 Sam. 12: 1-15; Ps. 67: 6; Is. 10: 2; *et passim*). A good example is his letter, dated 6 November 1077, which charges King Harold Hein of Denmark with guarding his kingdom’s welfare and helping the poor, fatherless, and widowed.\textsuperscript{100} The pope gave similar advice to Kings Olaf III of Norway, Ladislaus I of Hungary, and Inge I and Halstan of Sweden. The letter to Ladislaus includes pilgrims among those whom the king should defend. The *epistola* to the kings of Sweden exhorts them to levy tithes for the benefit of the churches and the poor.\textsuperscript{101} A later letter to Harold Hein, dated 19 Apr 1080, highlights the need to eliminate superstition and witchcraft in Denmark. Referring to reports of the cruel treatment of certain unoffending women, it warns the king to ensure that these barbarous practices cease lest his prosperity turn to disaster.\textsuperscript{102}

Finally, three *epistolae* indicate that *prudentia* was one of the qualities of William the Conqueror that persuaded Gregory that this *filius dilectissimus* was a fine example of Christian kingship despite his disinclination to demonstrate *oboedientia*. The first letter describes William’s *prudentia* as *singularis*, the second speaks of his *liberalis prudentia*, while the third shows Gregory rejoicing at the abundance of *prudentia, honestas*, and *iustitia* possessed by this *vir sapiens*.\textsuperscript{103}

*Idoneitas*

Gregory’s letter, thought to date from March 1081, to Bishop Altmann of Passau and Abbot William of Hirsau, declares that, rather than rashly electing a king of Germany (Henry) who has so obviously failed to fulfil his undertakings to defend and oversee the Christian religion, it would be better to delay a decision until a suitable king (*rex idoneus*) is provided according to God’s will to the honour of holy Church. The letter defines such an individual as a ruler who is committed to the defence and oversight (*cura*) of Christianity.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{100} *Reg.* 5.10, p. 362.31-36.
\textsuperscript{102} *Reg.* 7.21, p. 498.8-35.
\textsuperscript{103} *Reg.* 1.31, p. 52.11-15; *Reg.* 5.19, p. 382.19-22; *Reg.* 7.23, p. 501.22-3.
\textsuperscript{104} *Reg.* 9.3, p. 575.3-5.
**Idoneus** is the adjective most commonly used in Gregory's correspondence to express the idea of an individual's suitability for a task or a position of authority. Is he qualified for the role? Will he be acceptable, responsible, and competent? Surviving letters show that whenever an important church office became vacant, Gregory VII’s predecessors usually sought to select an individual who was *idoneus*. There is nothing surprising about this. However, given Gregory's assertion that *idoneitas* is a key criterion for the kingship of Germany the question arises: is there any precedent for papal adjudication on the suitability of candidates for secular, as against ecclesiastical, positions?

In the fifth and sixth centuries, papal interest in the *idoneitas* of candidates was reserved for church positions. This was inevitable, given the contemporary political structure of Europe. Even if the early medieval bishops of Rome had contemplating involving themselves in secular appointments they would have been aware of the futility — and danger — of confronting the quasi-divine Byzantine emperor based in Constantinople. Pope Leo I (440-61) recognized the importance of *idoneitas* in making church appointments. According to him, the bishop of Rome, as direct successor of St Peter, was personally authorised to bind and loose (Matt. 16: 19). He informed Bishop Anastasius of Thessalonica (434-51) that only the bishop of Rome possessed the Petrine fullness of power (*plenitudo potestatis*). Leo's declaration that he was the legal heir of St Peter was an important contribution to the development of the theology of 'papal monarchy'. He insisted that it was the pope's prerogative to distribute jurisdictional power to other bishops.\(^\text{105}\) Leo also emphasized the importance of appointing men who were 'suitable for the administration of sacred things' (*eos idoneos sacris administrationibus*).\(^\text{106}\) By the time of Gregory I's pontificate (590-604), adjudication on the *idoneitas* of candidates for clerical office seems to have become an established papal function. One letter shows him instructing the Bishop of Syracuse to forbid the appointment of ecclesiastical clergy to senior monastic positions and vice versa; their different formations and experience means that neither would be *idoneus* for


employment in the other tradition. This regulation is included in the eleventh-century canon law collection known as the ‘Seventy-Four Titles’ (74T).

The great majority of the surviving letters of Pope Leo IX (1048/9-54) are ecclesiastical privileges: confirmations of metropolitan status or monastic entitlements. They show that he too was conscious of the importance of *idoneitas* when making ecclesiastical appointments. The pattern recurs in the limited surviving correspondence of Popes Stephen IX (X) (1057-8), Nicholas II (1059-61), and Alexander II (1061-73). There is no evidence that these earlier reform-minded popes expressed any views on the *idoneitas* of candidates for secular rulership.

The specification of *idoneitas* as a criterion for the selection of individuals to perform tasks or take up appointments appears in forty of Gregory’s letters. Most fall into two groups. First, Gregory sometimes asks correspondents to send to the apostolic see envoys, representatives, or messengers who are *idoneus*. Second, and more importantly for this study, the pope followed his predecessors in stressing the importance of *idoneitas* in the selection of senior churchmen, that is to say, bishops, abbots, and now legates. Two letters composed almost simultaneously show that Gregory appreciated the distinctions between *idoneitas* (suitability), *utilitas* (usefulness), and *dignitas* (worthiness). The first, dated 16 September 1077, stipulates that the new bishop of Volterra must be *utilis et idoneus*. The second, dated 17 September 1077, informs the suffragans of Aquileia that his legates will supervise the election of a new bishop who would be *dignus et idoneus*.

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108 74T, 43, p. 44.
111 *Reg.* 1.14, p. 22.38; *Reg.* 2.6, p. 135.1-2; *Reg.* 2.21, p. 153.33; et passim.
112 *Reg.* 1.6, p. 10.8; *Reg.* 1.52, p. 79.19; *Reg.* 2.76, p. 240.5; et passim.
114 *Reg.* 5.6, p. 355.15-17.
Gregory’s early correspondence as pope shows that he initially accepted the customary royal involvement in the filling of senior ecclesiastical offices. A letter dated 4 December 1073 declares that the French king, Philip I, must repudiate simony and permit the appointment of *idoneii* (suitable individuals) to church positions. Another, dated 22 December 1074, was sent shortly after Gregory’s despatch of two amicable letters to Henry IV. His current optimism regarding the German king may account in part for his statement that the counsel and dispensation of the king (*regis consilium et dispensatio*) would be sought in the selection of an *idoneus* to fill the vacant see of Fermo, an Italian diocese that came under the metropolitan jurisdiction of Rome. The king’s subsequent behaviour in the matter of the Fermo appointment was one of the issues that showed Gregory that his optimism was ill founded.

Given the foregoing, Gregory’s claim in his letter of March 1081 to Bishop Altmann of Passau and Abbot William of Hirsau that *idoneitas* is a key criterion in the selection of a German king, seems to be truly innovatory. Here, for the first time, is a reigning pope declaring that suitability, as judged by the apostolic see, is an essential qualification for Christian kingship, in this case that of the *regnum Teutonicum*. Although the requirement that a *rex Christianus* be *idoneus* does not recur in Gregory’s surviving correspondence, it is nevertheless the earliest surviving evidence that *idoneitas* had entered the papacy’s political vocabulary with regard to lay rulers. As such, it is a striking illustration of the radicalisation of Gregory VII’s views on the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* in the later years of his pontificate.

*Utilitas*

15 March 1081 saw the despatch of another revealing letter from the pope. The *epistola* to Bishop Hermann of Metz, an extended defence of the right of the apostolic see to depose a king, is examined later. For now, let us note a key passage, which cites the supposed precedent of a previous pope’s deposition of the king of the Franks.

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115 See above p. 40.
116 See above p. 63.
118 See above p. 66.
119 See below pp. 275ff.
because he was not utilis. Does the correspondence of earlier popes provide genuine precedents for Gregory VII's assertion of utilitas as a criterion for kingship or other secular rulership?

Surviving papal letters show that his predecessors used the noun utilitas far more often than the adjective utilis. In their correspondence, utilitas could signify benefit, advantage, usefulness, welfare, or interest. Utilis could mean useful, beneficial, advantageous, serviceable, expedient, helpful, or qualified. Utilitas and utilis crop up frequently in the letters of Leo I and Gregory I. It is hardly surprising that both enjoined their fellow bishops to act for the utilitas of the universal Church. They also expressed concern for the utilitas of the general community. Both assured the eastern emperor of papal concern for the utilitas of the republic. They often used the term in specific contexts. For example, Leo I criticized the ordination of superfluous bishops in Africa as inutilis for the priestly dignity; Gregory I instructed the subdeacon of Sicily to ensure that marriage fees went to the utilitas of the farmer in question, rather than to the Church. Some surviving letters from Gregory VII's reforming predecessors in the years 1049-73 show that they emulated their forerunners in promoting concern for the utilitas of the universal church. Since a significant proportion of their correspondence consists of privileges, it is natural that these letters convey expressions of solicitude for the utilitas of the individual churches and monasteries concerned. One of Alexander II's letters of 1063 is a papal bull for a church in his original see of Lucca, whose bishopric he retained on becoming pope. This document is somewhat unusual in that it includes advice from a reigning pope that a candidate for a clerical office should be utilis; in the event of the death of the overseer (ordinarius) of the church of St Donatus, if a cleric is found whose

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120 Reg. 8.21, p. 554.3-7.
121 Leo I, JK 489, MPL 54, Ep. 113, col. 1025B; JL 496, MPL 54, Ep. 120, col. 1054C; JL 505, MPL 54, Ep. 129, col. 1078A; et passim. Gregory I, Reg. 1.70, 79.18-20; Reg. 3.18, 164.13-15; Reg. 3.25, 170.21-3; et passim.
122 Leo I, JK 481, MPL 54, Ep. 104, col. 995B; Gregory I, Reg. 3.29, 174.19-24; Reg. 5.57, 353.3-9; Reg. 9.53, 612.6-13; et passim.
123 Leo I, JK 491, MPL 54, Ep. 115, col. 1031B; JL 504, MPL 54, Ep. 126, col. 1070A; Gregory I, Reg. 5.36, 305.18-21.
124 Leo I, JK 408, MPL 54, 655A.
125 Leo IX, JL 4273, 4283, 4292, MPL 143, cols. 682D, 699A, 709B.
Victor II, JL 4364, 4367, MPL 143, cols. 825B, 830C.
Nicholas II, JL 4395, MPL 143, col. 1303C.
character (mores) and service (officium) appear utilis for the church, and who promises to live according to the canons, the pope will appoint and confirm the candidate to a permanent position to live according to the Rule (regulariter). The use of the terms ordinarius and regulariter suggest that St Donatus was a congregation of canons, one of the places that was part of the contemporary experiment of secular clergy living a monastic life. Any suggestion that Hildebrand had a hand in its writing, or was even aware of the letter, must be speculative, but such advice is less rare in the letters of Alexander’s successor.

Utilitas occurs forty-two times in Gregory VII’s Register. In most cases, it expresses Gregory’s care for the utilitas of all Christians, the universal church, or specific churches and monasteries. Prior to his March 1081 letter to Hermann of Metz, Gregory gave instructions on three separate occasions that an appointee to a specific religious office or task must be utilis. In the first of these he refers to the considerable efforts he has made to ensure the election to the bishopric of Volterra of someone who is useful and suitable according to God’s will and canonical authority (secundum Deum et auctoritatem canonum utilis et idoneus). Second, a letter of 9 March 1078 informs the Germans of a decision by the recent Rome synod that legates from the apostolic see will call a council in Germany to decide between the two rivals for the kingship; the archbishop of Trier will represent Henry, while Rudolf’s legate should be a bishop who is utilis et religiosus. Third, in a letter of 2 January 1080, Gregory informs Duke Wratislav of Bohemia that he plans to send a legate who would be usefully assigned (utiliter deputari) to the duke’s affairs. In another letter, dated 8 May 1080, Gregory informs Abbot William of Hirsau that he can replace any lay representative (advocatus) should he turn out not to be utilis to the monastery.

Less than a year later, 15 March 1081 saw the despatch of the famous long letter to Bishop Hermann of Metz. Part of this lengthy defence of his condemnation of Henry IV is Gregory’s claim that many previous pontiffs excommunicated kings and emperors. He cites three examples, one of which is supposedly the key precedent for his assertion

126 Alexander II, JL 4497, MPL 146, col. 1284D.
127 Reg. 1.25, p. 42.6; Reg. 1.33, p. 54.12; Reg. 1.42, p. 65.7; et passim.
128 Reg. 5.3, p. 350.28-30.
129 Reg. 5.15, p. 376.10-16.
130 Reg. 7.11, p. 475.5-7.
131 Reg. 7.24, p. 504.4-5.
that *utilitas*, as defined by the apostolic see, is a legitimate criterion for judging the validity of a king's rulership. Gregory contends that one of his predecessors decided that the reigning king of the Franks was not *utilis* for so great a position (*quod tantae potestati non erat utilis*). Consequently, he freed the king's subjects from their oaths of fidelity to him, and replaced him with Pippin III, the father of the future Emperor Charlemagne.\(^{132}\) This is not the only surviving evidence of Gregory's interpretation of that event. His earlier polemical letter to the same Bishop Hermann, dated 15 August 1076, cites the episode in his defence of his first excommunication of Henry, and identifies Pope Zacharias (741-52) as the pope who performed the deposition of the king and the absolution of his subjects.\(^ {133}\)

Gregory was adverting to the claim that in 751 Pope Zacharias sanctioned the deposition of Childeric III (743-52), the last of the Merovingian kings. Apparently, Childeric was playing no part in the public business of the realm; it was Pippin, the mayor of the palace, who exercised effective control. According to the *Annales regni Francorum*, the 'house chronicle' of the Carolingian kings, ambassadors allegedly journeyed to Rome to obtain the pope's advice on this situation of a powerless king and a powerful mayor of the palace. Zacharias is said to have counselled that he who holds the power (*potestas*) should hold the title.\(^ {134}\) This was interpreted as an instruction to change the dynasty. Childeric was tonsured and put into a monastery, while Pippin was elected and enthroned as King Pippin III, so completing the Carolingian *coup d'état*. Obviously, the grounds for the supposed papal deposition of Childeric (lack of *utilitas*), differ from Gregory's justification for his deposition of Henry. The pope's central point is that the change of dynasty in the Frankish kingdom was the result of a papal command, and that *ipso facto* it provides a precedent for the lawful deposition of a king by a pope. If Gregory's interpretation of those events is accurate, it clearly subverts the view, consistent with Gelasian theory, that the *regnum* is superior to the *sacerdotium* in the secular sphere.

Was Gregory correct about the circumstances of Childeric's removal from office? Walter Affeldt (1969) investigated the story. The main substance of his article concerns the treatment of the 751 change of dynasty in the Frankish kingdom in a pro-Henrician

\(^ {132}\) *Reg.* 8.21, p. 554.3-7.


\(^ {134}\) *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SRG* 6 (1895), pp. 8-10.
polemical work of the 1090s by an anonymous monk of Hersfeld. *Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda* deals with the need to preserve the unity of the Church, the undermining of which is the chief accusation against the late Pope Gregory VII. The Hersfeld Anonymous sets out to discredit Gregory's claims of the right of the apostolic see to depose kings by showing that the pope's interpretation of 751 was erroneous. The writer specifically targets Gregory's 1081 letter to Hermann of Metz. Affeldt likewise concentrates on this letter since the pope's political ideas had become firmer and more fully defended since his 1076 letter to Hermann. Affeldt takes a particular interest in Gregory's statement that Childeric's deposition was achieved through the pope's absolution of the Franks from their oaths of fidelity to the king. The scholar says that the Hersfeld Anonymous correctly recognized that Gregory VII ultimately based his right of deposition and absolution of the oaths of subjects on the power granted to St Peter to bind and to loose. For Gregory's opponents the issue became the hallmark of his misguided thinking.

Affeldt carefully weaves his way through the sources for the events surrounding Childeric's deposition and Pippin's elevation, the timing of those events, and the roles – if any – played by Pope Zacharias (741-52) and his successor Stephen II (752-7). He surmises that it would have been natural for Gregory to believe that it was Zacharias who raised Pippin in place of the Merovingian king, since all of the sources to which Gregory and his advisers might have had access state more or less explicitly that papal auctoritas was the decisive element in this political change. Significantly, however, the Frankish chronicles do not mention any oaths of fidelity to Childeric; with regard to this, Gregory was apparently going beyond the sources. Affeldt speculates that, given his knowledge of the secular, legal and political relations of his own time, Gregory assumed that in the mid-eighth century similar bonds of loyalty had tied the Frankish subjects to their king. Consequently, given Gregory's belief that one of his predecessors deposed the last Merovingian king, it must have seemed to him that it had been necessary for that pope to release the Frankish magnates from their oaths in order to accomplish

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137 Ibid., p. 329.
Childeric’s removal. In effect, Gregory was superimposing current mechanisms of political authority on circumstances three centuries before. Affeldt offers the ‘rapid conclusion’ that it cannot be established unambiguously the source with which Gregory VII supported himself in his presentation of the elevation of Pippin to the kingship. Nevertheless, the authors to whom his advisers may have had access offered him enough opportunity to develop his version of things. Gregory VII claimed that Zacharias deposed Childeric, released the Franks from their oath of loyalty to him, and set up Pippin in his place. Affeldt states that it is the claim about the absolution from the oath that has the least support in the Frankish sources and is the most difficult to prove. In a more recent study R. McKitterick (2000) goes much further than Affeldt, arguing that there was no papal involvement whatsoever in Pippin’s elevation to the kingship prior to Pope Stephen II’s re-consecration of him at St Denis in 754. Whether or not Gregory really believed that Zacharias absolved the Franks from their oaths, the fact remains that there is no evidence that it happened, and consequently Gregory’s accusers were correct when they said that the pope’s absolution of Henry IV’s subjects from their oaths was innovatory.

Although Affeldt showed that the belief that a previous pope sanctioned the removal of a rex Francorum because he lacked potestas, and therefore utilitas, was extremely dubious, it is nevertheless evident that Gregory recognized the importance of potestas. His letter dated 10 September 1074 to the senior prelates of France is mostly a prolonged denunciation of King Philip. At an early stage of this diatribe, after recalling that the regnum Francorum was once potentissimum, Gregory laments its subsequent descent into evil customs. The consequence of the loss of potestas has meant that leges are neglected and iustitia trampled underfoot. There is much more along these lines.

In complete contrast is Gregory’s letter, dated 24 April 1080, which praises William the

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138 Ibid., p. 331.
139 Ibid., p. 333.
140 The main basis for McKitterick’s conclusion is the absence from the surviving papal annals of any mention of the alleged events. She conjectures that the story of the visit of an embassy to Rome to seek Zacharias’ advice, and his subsequent sanctioning of Childeric’s removal, was a later Carolingian invention designed to underpin King Pippin’s legitimacy: R. McKitterick, ‘The illusion of royal power in the Carolingian Annals’, EHR 115 (2000), pp. 1-20.
142 Reg. 2.5, pp. 130.2-134.1, See above p. 43.
Conqueror and notes approvingly that God has made him a *potentissimus rex*. We have already drawn attention to the pope's neutral stance in the years 1077-79 between Henry IV and Rudolf of Swabia – the rival candidates for the German crown. We also observed that, given Gregory's conviction that a king's primary function is to act as an agent of the apostolic see in the task of church reform, it is unlikely that the pope was ever convinced that Rudolf possessed sufficient *potestas* to be *utilis* to the apostolic see.

**Noble lineage**

The significance of noble lineage crops up in some of Gregory's *epistolae* to or about kings. His letter of summer 1076 to the German faithful recalls that as archdeacon he had tried to persuade their king to be mindful of his illustrious family (*clarissimum genus*) and conduct himself accordingly. His pastoral letter dated 6 November 1077 to King Harold Hein of Denmark opens by praising Harold's late father Sweyn Esthrithson before declaring that 'it is proper that one who, as a good father, left you as heir to his corporeal and earthly kingdom'. A few months later, another papal letter, dated 19 April 1080, urges Harold Hein to replicate the 'kingly qualities and outstanding virtues' of his father so that he will be seen to derive a lineage of most noble blood (*nobilissimi sanguinis linea*). The chapter on Hungary discussed the disastrous consequences for King Salomon of his military defeat by Duke Gésa in March 1074. Salomon's wife, Judith, was a daughter of Henry III and Agnes, and a sister of Henry IV (Salomon's ally). A pastoral letter to Judith from the pope, dated 10 January 1075, consoles her and encourages her to endure her current *tribulationes* in a manner befitting her inherited *nobilitas*. In Gregory's eyes, she is the daughter of the 'most excellent Emperor Henry' and the 'august' Empress Agnes. Judith has been an ornament to her family's honour among 'a savage and unknown people', and has acted and behaved with impeccable imperial decorum (*decus imperiale*). Nothing can alter the 'imperial seed' (*imperiale

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143 Reg. 7.23, p. 501.7-12.
144 See above p. 102.
146 Reg. 5.10, p. 362.6-10: 'Decet enim, ut, qui te sui corporalis et secularis regni seu honoris heredem ut bonus pater reliquit."
147 Reg. 7.21, pp. 497.11-498.38.
The death of Gésa in April 1077 was followed by the election to the kingship of his brother Ladislaus. The discussion of Hungary also alluded to Gregory's letter to King Ladislaus, dated 25 March 1079. Despite the pope's uncertainty about the king's loyalty to the apostolic see, it praises him for particular qualities, one of which is the nobility of his blood lineage (\textit{linea nobilitata in sanguine}). These \textit{epistolae} affirm Gregory's respect for \textit{linea nobilitata in sanguine} that he perceives in the Salian and Árpád families. Gregory also sent a letter, dated 4 April 1074, to Queen Matilda of England, expressing his hope that the noble blood of this daughter of the Count of Flanders would help her to aspire to noble virtue. She should not cease from suggesting things to her husband that will profit his soul. Although William was a son of Robert I, the sixth duke of Normandy, the illegitimacy of his birth had earned him the soubriquet 'William the Bastard'. It is not known whether Gregory was aware of this. Cowdrey (1998) conjectured that the pope hoped that the infusion of Matilda's indisputably illustrious family lineage, together with her corresponding virtues, would increase the likelihood that their marriage would provide the basis for the establishment of an ideal Christian dynasty in England. He concluded that Gregory was not greatly concerned about noble lineage as such; his interest in \textit{linea nobilitatis} derived from his wish to encourage the consolidation of model reform-minded Christian kings, whose heirs would imitate their meritorious example. Of course, nothing illustrates the pragmatic character of Gregory's interest in the acquisition of kingship through noble lineage than his eventual backing of elective kingship in Germany.

In conclusion, Gregory VII followed his predecessors in promoting many of the traditional characteristics of Christian kingship, such as the preservation of \textit{pax} and \textit{iustitia}. However, his pontificate saw the assertion of significant modification and expansion of the papacy's view of the attributes and duties of \textit{reges Christiani}. It is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Reg.} 2.44, pp. 180.25-182.10.
\item See above p. 112.
\item \textit{Reg.} 6.29, p. 441.26-30.
\item \textit{Reg.} 1.71, p. 103.6-7.
\item Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 462-3.
\item Ibid., pp. 618-20.
\end{itemize}
noticeable that it is in his letters to kings in the more recently Christianized peripheral lands that one finds the most cogent, coherent, and traditional statements of his ideas of kingship. This suggests that he regarded these recently pagan leaders as possessing something of the nature of *tabulae rasae* on whom he could express his views with particular effect. The spectacular deterioration in the relationship between Gregory and King Henry IV contributed hugely to a concomitant undermining of the belief in the sacrality of Christian kingship, the traditional basis for royal domination of the Church. On the contrary, this pope strongly emphasized the duty of kings to display *oboedientia* to the apostolic see; failure to do so would jeopardize their salvation, and make them liable to loss of office. He also introduced two functional qualities for kingship. One was *idoneitas*; in order to be suitable for the throne a candidate must protect religion and promote church reform, and it is the apostolic see that judges his suitability. The other was *utilitas*; a king can be serviceable only if he possesses sufficient *potestas* to impose his rulership, to exercise authority effectively in order to implement the instructions of the apostolic see. Gregory’s innovatory specification of these two criteria, together with his consistent demand for royal *oboedientia*, implicitly challenged the traditional understanding of the Gelasian doctrine by which *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, two institutions established by God, govern the temporal and spiritual spheres of Christendom in harmonious cooperation.
3.5 *Rex Romanorum, futurus imperator?*

Vigilantissimo et desiderantissimo domno papae GREGORIO apostolica dignitate
caelitus insignito HEINRICUS Romanorum Dei gratia rex debiti famulatus
fidelissimam exhibitionem.¹

This is the intitulatio of Henry IV’s *supplex epistola* to Gregory of late August or
September 1073. It identifies the sender as ‘King of the Romans by the grace of God’, a
designation that sits uneasily with the penitential character of the rest of the text, which
Gregory described as ‘full of sweetness and obedience’.² The Register includes five
subsequent letters from the pope to the king, from December 1074 to December 1075.
In four cases the inscriptiones recognize him simply as Heinricus rex, the fifth as
Heinricus gloriosus rex.³ None alludes to Henry’s claim to be Rex Romanorum. Nor do
any of Gregory’s other preserved documents refer to him as Rex Romanorum. Seven
describe him as Rex Teutonicorum, Rex Teutonicus, or Rex Alamanniae, titles that clearly
limit his authority to the German kingdom, and suggest that in the pope’s view Henry’s
standing was no greater than that of other reges Christiani. Four of these texts are
letters to third parties.⁴ Two are the records of the crucial Lenten synods of 1075 and
1076, the former noting Gregory’s excommunication of five of Henry’s counsellors, the
latter recording the king’s (first) excommunication.⁵ The Register also includes the oath
taken by Henry at Canossa at the end of January 1077 *(iusiurandum Heinrici regis
Teutonicorum).*⁶ This chapter addresses three questions. First, why does Henry depict
himself as Rex Romanorum? Second, why does the apostolic see not acknowledge him
as such? Third, does Gregory’s withholding of this recognition add to our knowledge of
his views on papal authority?⁷

According to Ullmann (1968) the title Rex Romanorum arose from what was an
obvious chancery mistake during Henry II’s (imperial) time, and subsequently came to
designate both German royal control over Italian territories and the inherent claim to

¹ *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, 5, pp. 8-9; also Reg. 1.29a, pp. 48.2-49.26.
² Reg. 1.25, p. 42.17-19.
³ Heinricus rex: Reg. 2.30, p. 163.15; Reg. 3.3, p. 246.13; Reg. 3.7, p. 256.17; Reg. 3.10, p. 263.23.
Heinricus gloriosus rex: Reg. 2.31, p. 165.20.
⁴ Reg. 2.13, p. 145.10-13; Reg. 2.65, 218.29-30; Reg. 2.70, 230.11-13; Reg. 3.15, p. 277.5.
⁵ Reg. 2.52a, p. 196.16-19; Reg. 3.10a, pp. 270.1;
⁶ Reg. 4.12a, p. 314.21.
Roman emperorship. Henry III began to use it in earnest, and by the reign of Henry V (1099-1125) *Rex Romanorum* was conventional in the royal title. R. Buchner (1963) studied the use of *Rex Romanorum* in eleventh-century German charters, paying close attention to the question of their authenticity. He concluded that the only genuine use of *Rex Romanorum* in any of Henry IV’s letters is the aforementioned *epistola* to Pope Gregory of late summer 1073. He also surmised that the title was not the normal usage of the royal chancery. The fact that it appears far more frequently in Italian diplomas, often prepared by the Italian petitioners themselves, is essentially an expression of the German king’s lordship in Italy. Overall, Buchner played down the significance of *Rex Romanorum* as a claim to the emperorship.

H. Beumann (1981) also studied the use of the title by German kings in the central Middle Ages, but drew quite different conclusions. Unlike Buchner and Ullmann, he conjectured that the addition of *Rex Romanorum* to the king’s title in the time of Henry II was not a chancery mistake, but a direct consequence of the definitive establishment of the imperial title in the reign of his predecessor, Otto III; it was intended to characterize the *rex Teutonicorum* as *futurus imperator* and to establish his authority over the kingdoms of Italy and Burgundy prior to his imperial coronation. Beumann observed that, although Henry III and Henry IV sometimes used the title, it was the latter’s son and successor Henry V who was the first *rex Teutonicorum* to use it consistently. He suggested that this might have been simply a matter of the royal chancery finally overcoming its resistance to changes in the formulas of diplomas. However, he acknowledged that other authors have explained it as a conscious effort to forestall the danger that Henry V would encounter the difficulties with the papacy that his father Henry IV had experienced with Gregory VII. Beumann concluded that the importance of Henry IV’s use of the title is that it does indeed connote the holder’s designation as *futurus imperator*. The letter’s designation of Henry as *Rex Romanorum* means that the royal chancery is claiming the imperial title in advance of the king’s formal coronation as emperor. Furthermore, as Cowdrey (1998) observed, the words *Dei gratia* imply that

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8 W. Ullmann, ‘Dies ortus imperii. A note on the glossa ordinaria on C.III.12.7 (5)’, in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Accursiani* (Milan, 1968), pp. 685-6, also n. 79.
10 H. Beumann, ‘Der Deutsche konig als “Romanorum Rex”’, *Sitzungsberichte der wissenschaftlichen an der Hohann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität* 18, 2 (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 75-8.
Henry’s claim to the empire is divinely-given.\textsuperscript{11} It is taken for granted that the pope will perform the crowning ceremony when the king has an opportunity to travel to Rome. The assumption that he is already emperor-designate means that the journey itself is not a matter of great urgency.

Initially, Pope Gregory seemed to expect that Henry would receive the imperial title. This is indicated in a letter that he wrote before he received the king’s supplex epistola of autumn 1073. His epistola to Bishop Rainald of Como, dated 1 September 1073, describes Henry, as the head of the laymen (caput laicorum) who is king and with God’s permission (Deo annuente) will become emperor at Rome.\textsuperscript{12} As Cowdrey (2002) pointed out, this seems to be an echo of the ‘royal paragraph’ in the Papal Election Decree of 1059.\textsuperscript{13} In this clause, Pope Nicholas II stated that Henry IV is hoped in the future to be emperor ‘if God concedes this as we have already conceded it to him’.\textsuperscript{14} Although Gregory’s words to Rainald imply that, given the right conditions, he will approve of Henry’s imperial coronation, the conditional Deo annuente does not match the certainty implied by Henry’s use of Dei gratia.

In the early years of his reign, the pope’s considerable uneasiness about the king’s behaviour may have fuelled his uncertainty regarding the prospect of Henry’s rising to the emperorship. A clear example of his disquiet appears in a letter he wrote to Matilda and Beatrice of Tuscany two months after his raising to the papacy. Dated 24 June 1073, it ends with Gregory informing the margravines of his intention to send religious men to Henry in the hope that their admonishments will recall him to the love of his mother, the Church, and instruct him in an appropriate (condignus) manner of life for receiving the imperial crown. If the king refuses to listen then the pope will not consent to his iniquity, and thereby plunge with him to perdition.\textsuperscript{15} Cowdrey (1998) deduced from this that Gregory considered that his role was to instruct and admonish Henry in the virtues belonging to the imperial dignity, and that only when he was convinced that the king had adopted them would he make him emperor by God’s permission. In other words,

\textsuperscript{11} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, p. 635, n. 121.
\textsuperscript{12} Reg. 1.20, pp. 33.28-34.3
\textsuperscript{13} Cowdrey, \textit{Register}, p. 23, n. 5.
\textsuperscript{14} The text is in Jasper, \textit{Das Papstwahldekret von 1059}, pp. 85-7.
\textsuperscript{15} Reg. 1.11, p. 19.5-17.
imperial coronation was not a right, but a divine gift to be bestowed at the pope's discretion only when he was satisfied of the moral suitability of the candidate, and his practical usefulness to the Church. Gregory's long letter of summer 1076 to the German faithful suggests that his belief that the king's imperial coronation was not preordained predated his rise to the papacy. It recalls that as archdeacon he responded to shameful reports about Henry's behaviour with frequent admonishments, and attempted to persuade the king to be mindful of his illustrious family and conduct himself as befitted a king and 'emperor-to-be if God so disposed' (Deo donante futurus imperator). A slightly later letter to the German faithful, dated 3 September 1076, suggests that in the light of his conflict with Henry the pope feared that the honour of the Church and the Roman Empire might be vulnerable to ruin through his own neglect. In other words, he had a responsibility to protect the honour of the imperium.

According to Beumann, Pope Gregory subsequently implemented a 'title strategy' (Titelpolitik), manifested in the letters and other documents discussed above, from which Rex Romanorum is conspicuously absent. This strategy, argued Beumann, contradicted the Ottonian-Salian theory of an imperial kingship with genuine claims to rulership of Italy and the office of emperor. The pope's insistence on using rex Teutonicorum reduced Henry IV to the same level as other kings of Europe. In Beumann's opinion, it could definitely be inferred that the pope was denying Henry IV the automatic right to be futurus imperator.

The previous chapter discussed Gregory's belief that the removal of Childeric III from the kingship of the Franks more than three hundred years before was sanctioned by the then pope, and that this constituted a precedent for the intervention of the apostolic see in royal elections in Christian kingdoms. However, Gregory may also have

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16 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 636.
18 Reg. 4.3, p. 298.26-8: 'ne ... honor sanctae ecclesiae Romanique imperii nostra neglegentia magnae ruinae patescat.'
19 Beumann, Der Deutsche konig als 'Romanorum Rex', p. 79. Beumann's article ends (pp. 79-84.) with a discussion of the possibility that eschatological writings about the 'last emperor' (Endkaiser) and Antichrist influenced the understanding of Rex Romanorum title at the time of the Investiture Contest. He suggests that by the end of the eleventh century the use of the Rex Romanorum title in the widely disseminated 'last emperor' literature might have habituated people to its attribution to the rex Teutonicorum, and that this might help to explain why Henry V's chancery adopted it for every diploma. However, there is little evidence that it was a significant factor in Gregory VII's lifetime.
20 See above pp. 209ff.
regarded a more recent event as justifying such papal interventions, in this case in the matter of the German throne. The survey of Gregory’s relationship with the rex Teutonicorum alluded briefly to the role of Pope Victor II (1054-7) in the transfer of the German kingship in 1056 to Henry IV, the six-year-old son of the recently deceased Emperor Henry III. Shortly before his death, the emperor committed the guardianship of his son to his trusted adviser, Bishop Gebhard of Eichstätt (1042-57), who was now Pope Victor. Gebhard, who had retained his bishopric following his reluctant nomination to the papacy, was the fourth and last of Henry III’s German appointees to the holy see. After Henry III’s death on 5 October 1056, the formalities of inaugurating the reign of the new king were performed in Aachen. They probably included the coronation of the six-year-old Henry IV by Pope Victor. Having supervised the royal transition, Victor returned to Rome, leaving Empress Agnes to assume the regency. Soon afterwards, Peter Damian wrote to the pope, claiming that Victor’s role meant that Christ had ‘added monarchies’ to the other powers of the papacy, and ‘allowed him jurisdiction over the whole of the vacant Roman Empire’. In reality, Henry III probably entrusted the guardianship of his son to Gebhard in his role as trusted adviser, his recent promotion to the papacy being of marginal relevance. Two of Gregory VII’s preserved letters mention Victor II; one of them is germane to this discussion. Dated 1 September 1073, it addresses Duke Rudolf of Swabia, and includes two statements that touch on the ascent of Henry IV to the throne. The first is a claim that ‘we elected [Henry IV] as king’, an apparent reference to Hildebrand’s role as papal legate during one of the ceremonies at which the infant Henry was chosen or confirmed as king. The second is an assertion that in 1056 the dying Henry III commended his son to the Roman Church through Pope Victor. It has been suggested that this, like Childeric’s dismissal, was a characteristic ‘creative misinterpretation’ by Gregory. There is no way of knowing if Hildebrand was influenced by – or even aware of – Peter Damian’s contention that Pope Victor’s role meant that the papacy now possessed jurisdiction over the vacant Roman

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21 See above p. 50.
22 Thes events are summarized in Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 26-7.
24 Cowdrey, Register, p. 22, n. 5.
25 Reg. 1.19, pp. 31.35-32.9.
26 Robinson, Henry IV, pp. 154-5.
Empire. However, Gregory's correspondence confirms that he considered the *imperium* to be in the gift of the apostolic see.

It seems evident that Gregory believed that not only did the *sedes apostolica* have a legitimate right to oversee the election of a *rex Teutonicorum*, but was entitled to judge a candidate's suitability for the imperial title, and to withhold it if the pope deemed the individual unworthy. Only a candidate who demonstrated virtuous kingship could rise to the imperial office. We can construe Gregory's refusal to acknowledge Henry as *Rex Romanorum* as reinforcing those of his statements that indicate his belief that the conferring of the emperorship was at the discretion of the pope. As such, it amounts to a significant and deeply symbolic augmentation by Gregory of *auctoritas sedis apostolicae* in the political affairs of Christian Europe.

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3.6 Tribulationes Ecclesiae

We believe that you in your prudence are not unaware of by how great waves of confusion the church is everywhere being stricken and is almost being made shipwreck and caused to founder by the disasters of her desolation. For the rulers and princes of this world, each seeking the things that are their own and not those of Jesus Christ, have abandoned all reverence and oppress their lady and mother, that is, the bride of Christ, like a common slave-girl; and they in no wise fear to destroy her, for just so long as they can satisfy their own desires.

(Letter from Gregory VII, 24 January 1074, to Archbishop Sigehard of Aquileia).

The troubles of the Church of God are recurring preoccupations in Gregory's correspondence. Sometimes the pope also writes about the tribulationes that he personally is enduring. Other terms in his letters include persecutio, oppressio, and pericula. At times Gregory refers to these dangers in general terms. For example, his pastoral letter of late 1077 to Harold Hein speaks of the oppression of 'our mother and lady' the Church of God and urges the Danish king to do all in his power to seize her from the 'jaws of wolves that lie in wait'. However, the pope was normally rather more specific when identifying the source of the threats. Within weeks of his election, the pope sent a letter, dated 6 May 1073, to Duke Godfrey IV of Lower Lotharingia:

For as a result of sins, almost the whole world is so placed in the power of the evil one (cf. I John 5: 19) that all, and especially those who hold high office in the church, strive rather to confound it than with faithful devotion to defend or honour it; while they pant after their own gains or desires for present glory, they set

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1 Reg. 1.42, pp. 64.31-65.2: "Non ignorare credimus prudentiam tuam, quantis perturbationum fluctibus ecclesiae sit usquequaque concussa et pene desolationis suae calamitatibus naufraga et submersa sit facta. Rectores enim et principes huius mundi, singuli quaerentes quae sua sunt, non quae lesu Christi, dominam et matrem suam, videlicet sponsam Christi omni reverentia conculcata quasi vilem ancillam opprimunt eamque confundere, dum cupiditates suas expelle valeant, nullatemus pertimescunt."

2 Reg. 1.23, pp. 39.32-40.7; Reg. 2.49, p. 189.48, 12; Reg. 4.28, pp. 344.38-355.3; et passim.

3 Persecutio: Reg. 1.23, p. 39.19; Reg. 1.70, p. 102.1; Reg. 2.52, p. 194.32; et passim.

Oppressio: Reg. 1.35, p. 56.14-19; Reg. 1.50, p. 77.3-7; Reg. 2.7, p. 136.26-30; et passim.

Pericula: Reg. 1.1, p. 4.2-5; Reg. 1.2, p. 4.24-30; Reg. 1.3, p. 6.5-15; et passim.

4 Reg. 5.10, p. 363.7-11.
themselves as enemies against all things that belong to the religion and iustitia of God.\(^5\)

It is noteworthy that this letter to a lay ruler at the beginning of his pontificate identifies church prelates, not secular princes, as the chief followers of the \textit{malignus}, meaning the devil. Other letters identify the devil as Satan (\textit{Sathana}), the ancient enemy (hostis \textit{antiquus}), or the enemy of man (hostis \textit{humani}, inimicus \textit{humani generis}).\(^6\) Gregory's famous letter of March 1081 to Bishop Hermann of Metz laments the behaviour of simoniacal bishops who support Henry IV, 'the unjust king' (iniquus rex), and their entanglement in the 'snares of Satan' (\textit{laquei Sathanae}).\(^7\) The devil's human agents are variously described as ministers of Satan (\textit{ministri Sathanae}), accomplices of the ancient enemy (\textit{antiqui hostis satellites}), enemies of God and sons of the devil (inimici \textit{Dei et filii diaboli}), and \textit{membra diaboli}.\(^8\) A letter dated 21 July 1080 advises the bishops of southern Italy to consider how much the devil employs his \textit{membra} to inflict disturbance upon the Roman church.\(^9\)

Nine of the pope's letters refer to the threat from another embodiment of evil, a servant of the devil, namely Antichrist.\(^10\) This tormentor of Christians and final enemy of Christ first appeared in the epistles of St. John (1 John 2: 18, 22; 1 John 4: 3; 2 John 1: 7). Adso of Montier-en-Derin, a Benedictine monk from Lotharingia, brought together various traditions in a short treatise on the subject. His \textit{Libellus de Antichristo} (c. 954) became very influential. In Adso's account, the coming of Antichrist will bring great tribulation and persecution of Christians before the final battle in which either Christ or the archangel Michael will kill Antichrist. There will then be a time of peace before the

\(^5\) \textit{Reg.} 1.9, p. 14.20-5: 'Peccatis enim facientibus ita pene totus mundus in maligno est positus, ut omnes et precipue qui in ecclesia prelati sunt, eam potius conturbare quam fideli devotione defendere vel celebrare contendant et, dum suis aut lucris aut presentis gloriae desideriis inhiant, omnibus, quae ad religionem et iustitiam Dei pertinent, se velut hostes opponant.'

\(^6\) \textit{Sathana: Reg.} 1.15, p. 23.32; \textit{Reg.} 4.27, p. 342.11; \textit{Reg.} 8.5, p. 522.33, \textit{et passim}.

\textit{Hostis antiquus: Reg.} 1.11, p. 18.13; \textit{Reg.} 4.1, p. 290.12; \textit{Reg.} 9.21, p. 602.31; \textit{et passim}.


\(^7\) \textit{Reg.} 8.21, pp. 557.20-558.3.

\(^8\) \textit{Ministri Sathanae: Reg.} 15, p. 23.32-3.

\textit{Antiqui hostis satellites: Reg.} 1.11, p. 18.13-17.

\textit{Inimici Dei et filii diaboli} \textit{Reg.} 6.1, p. 390.10.

\textit{Membra diaboli: Reg.} 2.49, p. 189.14; \textit{Reg.} 3.15, p. 277.15-17, 32; \textit{Reg.} 4.18, p. 324.21; \textit{et passim}.


\(^{10}\) \textit{Reg.} 1.11, p. 18.13-17; \textit{Reg.} 1.15, p. 23.32-4; \textit{Reg.} 4.1, p. 289.30; \textit{et passim}.
Last Judgment. Gregory presents the enemies of the Church as agents of the devil or heralds of Antichrist, sometimes both. For example, a papal letter, dated 24 June 1073, to the Tuscan margravines describes the Lombard bishops who are supporting Godfrey, the simoniacal and excommunicate bishop elect of Milan, as precursors of Antichrist and accomplices of the ancient enemy (*precursoris antichristi et antiqui hostis satellites*). Some months after the first excommunication of Henry IV, a letter dated 25 July 1076 warned the faithful in the German kingdom that this was a perilous time when Antichrist was already everywhere working in his members.

In view of the relentless threats to the universal mother Church the pope had no doubt that Christians must fight to defend their religion. On a number of occasions, he used military expressions to depict this conflict. A letter dated 29 June 1073 warns Bishop William of Pavia that those who resist Godfrey, the excommunicate bishop of Milan, are engaged in the ‘battle of Christ’ (*certamen Christi*). Later that year, on 10 October, the pope wrote again to Bishop William, calling on him to support Erlembald, the Patarene leader in Milan. William would be taking part in the ‘warfare of God’ (*bellum Dei*) to resist the enemies of holy Church. Some years later, a letter dated 2 January 1079 from Gregory to Abbot Hugh of Cluny alluded to the ‘war of Christ’ (*bellum Christi*).

The pope’s *epistolae* show him identifying specific prominent individuals as posing the greatest threat to the bride of Christ. Among these was Godfrey, the *dictus archiepiscopus* of Milan, together with his episcopal supporters in Lombardy. Another was King Philip I of France, that ‘ravening wolf, unjust tyrannus, and enemy of God and the religion of holy Church’. Following the excommunication and deposition of Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna at the Lenten synod of 1080, an episcopal synod of pro-Henrician bishops at Brixen in June nominated Guibert as the rival anti-pope. Gregory’s rapid response to the Brixen assembly was noted earlier; he denounced the *dicti episcopi* as disciples of Satan (*sathanae discipuli*), who were inflamed with diabolic pride.
(diabolica superbia) when they attended that pestilential council organized by King Henry. In Gregory's eyes Henry, Guibert, and their episcopal supporters were undoubtedly now hostes Ecclesiae.

When characterising the threats to the Church and the tribulations inflicted upon it by its enemies, the pope routinely expressed his pessimism in language that was eloquent and dramatic. This chapter began with the opening sentence of a letter dated 24 January 1074 to Archbishop Sigehard of Aquileia. Towards the end of the letter, Gregory informs Sigehard that a Lent council in Rome will address the extreme danger, 'lest we should witness in our own times the irreparable ruin and destruction of the Church'. Another letter, dated 2 January 1075, declares that wickedness abounds, the devil's decepts everywhere wax stronger, charity has grown cold, and devotion to things religious is virtually extinct. His 'ultimatum letter' of 8 December 1075 to Henry IV speaks of 'the perils and manifest ruin of the Lord's flock'. An epistola of May 1076 to Bishop Simeon of the Spanish see of Oca-Burgos warns him to resist steadfastly those who desire to slay his flock by the teeth of savage ravenging wolves or by poison. A letter of 31 October 1076 asks Bishop Henry of Liège to pray constantly to God that He may look mercifully upon the Church which has been labouring long and heavily, and that, seeing it wretchedly buffeted and well-nigh shattered amongst the waves of many, great whirlpools, he may deliver it lest it be utterly swallowed up. His letter of 2 January 1079 to Hugh of Cluny asks why the abbot does not consider in 'how much peril and in how much misery holy Church is fallen'. His pastoral letter of 22 September 1080 to the German faithful exhorts them to penitence because the 'holy Church is stricken by a mass of floods and storms and hitherto suffers the raging of tyrannical persecution'. There are other examples in the pope's correspondence of his use of similarly vivid language to depict the threats to the Church and the sufferings that it was enduring.

19 See above p. 93.
20 Reg. 1.42, p. 65.15-20.
21 Reg. 2.40, p. 177.12-14.
22 Reg. 3.10, pp. 265.27-266.7.
23 Reg. 3.18, p. 284.11-15.
24 Reg. 4.6, p. 304.22-28.
26 Reg. 8.9, p. 527.25-29.
27 Reg. 1.42, p. 64.31-2; Reg. 4.1, p. 291.7-12; Reg. 8.8, p. 526.32-3; et passim.
In the midst of these tribulations, Gregory VII presented himself as promoting and preserving *pax* and *concordia* according to *iustitia*. This is a recurrent theme in his correspondence.\(^{28}\) *Pax* makes 115 appearances in his extant letters, while *concordia* occurs forty-three times.\(^{29}\) A letter to Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna, dated 26 April 1073, four days after his election, expresses the new pope's wish for *pax et concordia* between the churches of Rome and Ravenna.\(^{30}\) At this time, Gregory was not to know how comprehensively his hopes for peace between the two men were to be dashed. An *epistola* of late November 1078 reflects Gregory's preoccupation with the current divisions within the *regnum Teutonicum*. It addresses the ecclesiastical and lay princely supporters of both Henry and Rudolf excepting, of course, those already excommunicated. It announces the decision of the recent November synod to despatch legates to Germany to attempt to either establish *concordia* or punish those who obstruct their efforts. Gregory states that he is aware of the long running dispute and discord among them; this poses grave danger both to holy Church and to them. The legates will bring together all lovers of *pax et iustitia* who are *idonei*. The pope knows that there are those who, led astray by the devil and misled by covetousness, would prefer *discordia* to *pax*. Accordingly, the chain of excommunication will bind anyone who dares to impede the efforts of the legates.

As far as the maintenance of *pax* was concerned, Gregory's primary concern was naturally the prevention of *discordia* within the Church itself. His correspondence includes a number of references to schisms (*scismata*) and condemnations of those who were trying to rend (*scindere*) the Church. The two earliest letters to deploy the term *scisma* concern local issues. The first, dated 5 March 1075, enjoins the clergy and people of Fiesole to dispense with their *scismata* et *contentiones*.\(^{31}\) The second addresses the monks of Saint-Denis who were in dispute with their new abbot, whom they accused of simony. Gregory hopes that the legate he is sending to adjudicate the case does not determine that *discordia* or *scisma* has come about among them as a result of the deceit of the devil (*fraus diaboli*).\(^{32}\) However, the pope generally reserved his use of *scisma* and

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\(^{29}\) *Pax*: Reg. 1.6, p. 9.13; Reg. 1.10, p. 16.27-29, 17.7; Reg. 1.13, pp. 21.37-22.3; et passim.

\(^{30}\) *Concordia*: Reg. 18, pp. 29.30-30.2 (2); Reg. 1.19, p. 31.28-34 (2), 32.10; Reg. 1.20, p. 34.4; et passim.


\(^{32}\) Reg. 2.57, pp. 210.19-211.9.
scindere for important letters concerned with his conflict with Henry IV and his episcopal supporters. The terms are deployed in this context in six letters and two synodal records. Many examples occur in letters of 1076 following the January synod of the German episcopate in Worms, from which emerged the letter denouncing ‘Hildebrand’, and the subsequent Lenten synod in Rome that excommunicated the king. The record of the excommunication, formulated as a prayer to St Peter, accuses Henry of attempting to rend asunder (scindere separando) the Church of the first apostle. The synod also excommunicated and suspended Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz for trying to cut off (scindere) the bishops and abbots of the regnum Teutonicorum from their spiritual mother, the holy Roman Church. Also suspended for consenting to this scisma were those German bishops who had freely signed the letter excoriating ‘Hildebrand’. The implication that the pope suspected (hoped?) that not all of the signatories had complied voluntarily is supported by a letter despatched in late April 1076 to Archbishop Udo of Trier and Bishops Thierry of Verdun and Hermann of Metz. Gregory says that he understands that the three prelates did not assent willingly to the scismatici who have reared up against God and the authority of the holy Roman church. In summer 1076, the pope addressed a letter to all the faithful in Germany in response to those who doubted the justice of his excommunication of their king. Among the justifications given by Gregory is that Henry has not feared to rend (scindere) the body of Christ, namely the whole Church.

Another papal letter, dated 25 July 1076, informs the faithful in the Roman Empire that by raising his heel against blessed Peter the king has set about rending (scindere) the holy Church that Almighty God committed to the first apostle. Guided by brotherly charity, the pope still hopes to recall Henry to the bosom of our common mother whom he has tried to rend. However, this must be done in such a way that he cannot deceitfully undertake a renewed act of destruction and trample holy Church under his feet.

In summary, Pope Gregory was alert to the threats to the universal mother Church, the bride of Christ, represented by Satan, Antichrist, and membri diaboli. The faithful were involved in a continuous war against the ravening wolves who wanted to replace

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33 Reg. 3.10a, p. 270.25-7; also Reg. 3.6*, p. 254.1-3.
34 Reg. 3.10a, pp. 268.15-269.1.
37 Reg. 4.1, p. 290.20-27.
pax et concordia with misery and pestilence. He recognized that the prevailing disorder in Germany and the resistance of much of the imperial episcopate to his efforts to impose the authority of the apostolic see were threats to the maintenance of iustitia and the re-establishment of libertas Ecclesiae. Perhaps the greatest of the tribulationes Ecclesiae were the two parallel, albeit related, schisms that were developing in consequence of a number of issues. The first was within western Christendom in general, essentially a division between the apostolic see and the regnum teutonicum, highlighted by the papal deposition and excommunications of King Henry. The second split was within Ecclesia itself, escalated dramatically by the Worms assembly of most of the German bishops in January 1076, and their subsequent letter renouncing 'Hildebrand'. The two schisms had gradually emerged during the previous years, largely because of the attempts by the apostolic see to enforce its authority apropos two key issues: simony and clerical fornication. A third issue came to the fore in the second half of the 1070s, namely lay investiture itself. The next chapter examines Gregory VII's approach to these three fundamental matters.
3.7 Symonia, fornicatio clericorum, et investitura

Gregory VII’s correspondence shows that he frequently concerned himself with local ecclesiastical matters, such as disputes within – or depredations upon – individual churches and abbeys. However, there were three fundamental concerns that went to the heart of his drive for libertas Ecclesiae. His inexorable campaigning to extirpate the customs of simony, clerical fornication, and lay investiture contributed hugely to the development of the profound and long-lasting two-fold conflict, between regnum and sacerdotium and within the latter, which began during his pontificate. None of Gregory’s predecessors strove so forcefully and consistently to enforce submission to papal decrees. His efforts undermined the authority of many prelates and lesser clergy over their flocks. Many (most?) bishops resented what they saw as the pope’s attempts to usurp their jurisdiction over their dioceses. The majority had allegiances to both secular and ecclesiastical superiors. The pope’s interventions often challenged this dual loyalty.

Gregory inherited papal antipathy to two of these offences from his predecessors. From the very beginning of the reform papacy, the custom of simony (the buying or selling of ecclesiastical offices and pardons) began to come under sustained attack by Rome. The apostolic see’s campaign to eliminate this transgression had the strong backing of Emperor Henry III (1046-56). Following the death of Pope Damasus II in August 1048, Henry nominated the Lotharingian reformer, Bishop Bruno of Toul, as Damasus’ successor. When Bruno arrived in Rome in early 1049 to take up the reins of the papacy as Pope Leo IX, the subdeacon Hildebrand was in his entourage. He was to become increasingly influential in the apostolic see under Leo and his successors. In autumn 1049, the pope presided over a notable church council at Rheims, which tried individual bishops for simony. Leo moved on to Mainz where he held another council, which anathematized simoniaics and condemned them to eternal damnation. Over the course of his five-year pontificate Leo held more than ten synods, issued decrees against simony, stressed the validity of canon law, and insisted that bishops must be canonically elected. E. Walsh (2014) has shown that the campaign against clerical marriage

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1 Reg. 1.31, pp. 51.21-52.18; Reg. 1.32, pp. 52.29-53.21; Reg. 1.51, pp. 77.34-78.20; et passim.
emerged a decade later than the offensive against simony, being first clearly visible in 1059 in the letters of Peter Damian.4

Gregory VII carried forward the attack on simonia and fornicatio clericorum with even more determination than his reforming predecessors. Initially he appeared to accept – perhaps with misgivings – the participation of secular rulers in senior church appointments as long as simony was not involved. However, he reached the conclusion that it was the practice of investitura itself that lay behind the alliance between most of the German episcopate and King Henry IV, a coalition that was blocking church reform. He became convinced that lay involvement in episcopal and abbatial investiture was the fundamental barrier to libertas Ecclesiae, and that kings and princes should have no role whatsoever in appointments to spiritual offices. Churches and monasteries must be emancipated from subordination to lay rulers. In effect, the concept of simony was extended to include lay investiture of bishops and abbots with ecclesiastical offices and benefices even if money or favours were not involved. This issue ultimately provided the name – ‘Investiture Contest’ – to the prolonged conflict between the papacy and the German kingdom that started in Gregory’s reign and continued for decades after his death in 1085. The following pages discuss the three topics under separate headings, although any attempt to separate entirely the pope’s campaigns against simony and clerical unchastity is somewhat artificial given the frequency with which Gregory associated them in his correspondence. Many churchmen seem to have been guilty on both counts. Twenty-five of Gregory’s preserved letters address both issues.5 Typical of these is a letter dated 26 October 1074, which reminds Count Albert of Calw of the apostolic see’s warnings against simoniacal and unchaste clergy.6 It was not until the second half of the 1070s, that the reformers began to subordinate these two offences to lay investiture itself as their primary target.

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4 E. Walsh, Salus Populi: the eschatological imagination of St Peter Damian (c.1007-1072) (PhD thesis: Dublin, 2014).
5 Reg. 1.27, pp. 44.19-45.13; Reg. 1.28, pp. 45.26-46.5; Reg. 1.77, pp. 109.21-111.3; et passim.
6 Reg. 2.11, p. 143.6-10.
Symonia

‘In the meantime we summoned to do penance some of his [Henry IV’s] courtiers, by whose counsels and devices he had polluted with the simonia heresy the bishoprics and the many monasteries in which, for a price, wolves had been established instead of shepherds.’

(Letter from Pope Gregory to all the faithful in Germany, summer 1076)

The letter quoted above was composed shortly after the outbreak of the pope’s open conflict with the rex Teutonicorum in early 1076. In this epistola, Gregory finally implicates the king himself – as against certain of his advisers – in symoniaca haeresis. The term simony is derived from a New Testament passage that recounts the attempt by the sorcerer Simon Magus to buy the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and his subsequent condemnation by St Peter (Acts 8: 9-24). From the fourth century onwards, its definition was gradually extended. Pope Gregory I (590-604) formulated what became the canonical tripartite definition of simony as the illicit purchase or sale of ecclesiastical offices, estates, and sacraments through fees or gifts (munus a manu), through service or favours (munus ab obsequio), or through intercession (munus a lingua). Peter Damian called it a ‘many headed hydra’. Gregory VII restated Gregory I’s definition in a privilege dated 20 April 1079. Although Saint Gregory was not the first to associate simony with heresy, his use of the expression symoniaca haeresis in one of his homilies accelerated the designation of perpetrators as heretics. Gregory VII deployed the terms simony and simonia heresy interchangeably; of the eighty allusions to symonia in his extant correspondence thirty-two refer to symoniaca haeresis. Behind the reformers’ opposition to simony lay a realisation that the Church needed temporal wealth, and the political power contingent upon it; consequently this wealth and power must be under its own control, not that of laymen.
Gregory’s letters regularly deploy graphic language to express his loathing of simony. For example, one dated 1 July 1073 warns the Lombard faithful of the attempts by Godfrey, the simoniacal archbishop of Milan, ‘to prostitute the bride of Christ to the devil’ by besmirching her with the offence of heresy. An *epistola* of 27 November 1073, responding to a claim by the former abbot of Saint-Lomer that he was displaced while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, instructs Bishop Arald of Chartres to investigate the matter, and depose the new abbot if it turns out that his promotion was ‘polluted by the filth of simony’. Another letter, dated 4 December 1073, talks of unnamed contemporary princes ‘who from depraved greed have destroyed the church of God by putting it up for sale, and who have utterly trampled underfoot as of a slave-girl the mother to whom by the Lord’s precept they owed honour and reverence (cf. Matt. 15: 5-6)’. The same letter speaks of the ‘foul trafficking of the simoniac heresy’. This discussion’s opening quotation from a letter from Gregory to the German faithful was not the only time he used the wolf-shepherd metaphor to depict simoniacal practices. A.J. Carlyle (1921) observed that whereas his reforming predecessors had attacked the simoniacal clergy, under Gregory the apostolic see increasingly focused also on the culpability of the secular authorities.

Although Gregory VII reigned for twelve years, the records of only four of his Roman synods have survived. Those of Lent 1076, Lent 1078, and autumn 1078 are substantial, while the brief record of Lent 1075 consists mostly of threats to excommunicate named individuals. Two synods held in the 1070s passed decrees against simony and clerical unchastity. One was that of autumn 1078. The other council preceded it. Four letters of 1075 from Gregory to German prelates confirm the enactment of the earlier decrees. Although they do not reveal the year of the synod, either 1074 or 1075 is the preferred date of most historians.

The pope outlined the justification for the condemnation of simony in a letter dated 17 September 1077 to the clergy and people of Aquileia. It quotes John’s gospel:

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14 Reg. 1.15, pp. 23.19-25.2.  
15 Reg. 1.32, p. 53.16.  
16 Reg. 1.35, pp. 56.12-57.22.  
17 See Reg. 2.10, p. 142.1-2; Reg. 2.54, p. 199.23-4; Reg. 3.4, p. 248.30-4.  
'He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep; and whoever does not enter by the door but climbs in elsewhere is a thief and robber' (John 10: 1-2). This was the characteristic scriptural passage used by eleventh-century reformers to condemn simony. Gregory is affirming that the scriptural basis for denouncing this 'evil custom' is a specific statement by Christ himself as reported by the Evangelist. The reformers interpreted Christ's comparison between the shepherd entering the door and the thief and robber climbing in elsewhere as analogous to lawful canonical election and simony, respectively. Gregory's correspondence includes twelve allusions to John 10: 1-2 in the context of the condemnation of simony. King Henry himself, in his supplex epistola of 1073, confessed to having sold churches to unworthy individuals who, embittered by the gall of simony, entered not by the door but by another way. Gregory's letter instructs the Aquileians to submit their election of a new patriarch to the scrutiny of papal legates. If the legates decide that the election is legalis et canonica, the apostolic see will support them. Otherwise, the individual and his accomplices will undoubtedly experience the sword of St Peter and the dart of apostolic censure. The letter also declares Gregory's commitment to work with unwearied endeavour for the rest of life for the elimination of uncanonical election.

The pope's attitude to the three major reges of Christian Europe was largely determined by their behaviour with regard to simony in their own kingdoms. His high regard for William the Conqueror was bolstered by the king's active imposition of church reform in England; not only was he innocent of simony, but he was actively forcing priests to give up their wives. In stark contrast, simony was rampant in France despite the efforts of Pope Leo IX a generation before. Our chapter on Gregory's dealings with the regnum Francorum noted the pope's letter, dated December 1073, which denounces French princes who are guilty of this evil, and names King Philip as the offender who has seemingly scaled the highest peak of the foul trafficking of symoniaca haeresis. By the time of Gregory VII's election in 1073, King Henry IV of Germany was also thought to be heavily involved in simony. Both the excommunication in early 1073 of five Henrician

20 Reg. 4.11, p. 310.27-30; Reg. 4.14, p. 318.12-18; Reg. 6.12, p.414.14-26; et passim
21 Die Briefe Heinrichs IV, 5, pp. 8-9; also Reg. 1.29a, pp. 48.2-49.26.
22 Reg. 5.5, pp. 353.2-354.13.
23 See above p. 25.
advisers by Pope Alexander II for involvement in simoniacal dealings, and the dispute over the Milan archbishopric, reinforced this impression. In summer 1076, Gregory cited Henry’s engagement in the pernicious trafficking of simoniaca haeresis as one of the three main reasons for the (first) excommunication of the rex Teutonicorum. The chapter on Gregory’s relationship with Rudolf of Swabia noted that the duke’s election as German anti-king in March 1077 was accompanied by his pledge in the presence of papal legates that under his kingship episcopal elections would be untainted by simony.

Gregory’s correspondence contains abundant evidence of his determination to rid the Church of simony. Many of his letters address problems outside the empire, particularly in France. However, it was his interventions within the territories ruled by the rex Teutonicorum that contributed hugely to the collapse of his relationship with Henry IV. Even before he started to shift his focus to lay investiture, Gregory’s attacks on simony and clerical fornication within the empire provoked contention between pope and king on the one hand, and between the apostolic see and much of the imperial episcopate on the other.

The most flagrant instance of simony was that of the archbishopric of Milan, a problem that Gregory inherited from Pope Alexander II, although it is likely that he had encouraged his predecessor’s forcefulness on the issue. Peter Damian, cardinal-bishop of Ostia, had brought the issue to his attention in 1059 in a letter that informed Hildebrand of the condition of the Milanese church, which he had witnessed during his recent legation to Milan. Pope Gregory was certainly aware of the prevalence of simony in northern Italy. A letter dated 24 June 1073 warns the Tuscan margravines about the bishops of Lombardy who openly defend and promote simoniaca haeresis. This, he says, is demonstrated by their support for Godfrey, King Henry’s candidate for the archbishopric of Milan, ‘a simoniac and for this reason excommunicated and condemned’. This discussion has already alluded to the papal letter a week later, dated

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26 See above p. 101.
27 Reg. 1.17, p. 28.4; Reg. 1.32, p. 53.16; Reg. 1.35, p. 57.9; et passim.
28 Peter Damiani, Briefe 3, Ep. 65, p. 228.18-247.15.
29 Reg. 1.11, p. 18.8-12.
1 July 1073, to the Lombard faithful, which launched a comprehensive verbal assault on Godfrey. It declares that certain *ministri satanae* and heralds of Antichrist are working in Lombardy to confound the Christian faith and draw God’s wrath down on them. Godfrey, the so-called archbishop of Milan, has presumed to buy, like a base slave-girl, the church that formerly shone for religion, liberty, and especial glory through the merits of the Virgin Mary and blessed Ambrose. Gregory exhorts the Lombards to defend the Christian faith by resisting Godfrey, and ends by reminding them that God entrusted his sheep especially to St Peter (cf. John 21: 17) and gave him rule over the whole Church.

Another letter, dated 30 October 1073, urges the bishop-elect of Acqui to join the pope in the fight against Simon Magus who, through Godfrey, has miserably infected the church of blessed Ambrose with the poison of his venality. Henry’s *supplex epistola* to the pope of August/September 1073 specifically admits that it was through the king’s fault that the church of Milan is in error, and asks the pope to correct it canonically by apostolic censure.

The Tuscan margravines were not the only lay rulers whose support Gregory sought in his efforts to combat simony in the imperial territories. A papal letter dated 7 December 1074 informs Henry IV that he has been tremendously gladdened to hear from the king’s mother, the Empress Agnes, that her son is eager to eliminate the heresy from his kingdom. As late as 20 July 1075, another letter to the king reiterates Gregory’s pleasure at reports that Henry is manfully (viriliter) resisting simoniacs. However, the pope soon came to understand that his satisfaction was premature. A letter dated 11 January 1075 to the South German dukes, Rudolf of Swabia and Berthold of Carinthia, articulates the pope’s disappointment that the majority of German bishops are ‘despising apostolic mandates’ by tolerating the crimes of simony and clerical fornication. Accordingly, the pope is turning to the two dukes, confident in their faith and devotion. Invoking apostolic authority, he asks them to debar clerical offenders, using force if necessary, from serving at the most holy mysteries. In a move clearly

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30 See above p. 231.
31 Reg. 1.15, pp. 23.19-25.2.
32 Reg. 1.27, pp. 44.29-45.1.
33 *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, 5, pp. 8-9; also Reg. 1.29a, pp. 48.2-49.26.
34 Reg. 2.30, p. 163.23-25.
35 Reg. 3.3, p. 246.15-19.
directed against Henry IV, Gregory also commands the dukes to ‘publish and proclaim’ the pope’s admonitions in the royal court. 

Not only does this letter highlight the growing breach between the apostolic see and most of the German bishops, but it also attests to the pope’s willingness to ask co-operative lay princes to coerce clerical offenders into compliance.

Three letters, all dated 20 July 1075, address respectively the clergy and people of the see of Bamberg, Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz, and King Henry. They notify the recipients of the pope’s deposition and excommunication of Hermann, the simoniacal bishop of Bamberg. The king’s apparent willingness to forsake Hermann, for so long his confidential adviser, testifies to his wish at this time to retain papal approval. Other cases of simony in the empire raised in papal letters of 1074-5 concern the abbey of Reichenau (6 May 1074), and the sees of Toul (16 Oct 1074), Lodi (3 March 1075), and Liège (23 March 1075). Early 1075 saw the despatch of a number of letters from the pope to German prelates. They urge the recipients to implement the decrees against simony and clerical fornication. These individuals included Patriarch Sigehard of Aquileia (23 March 1075), Archbishop Anno II of Cologne (29 March 1075), Archbishops Siegfried of Mainz, Werner of Magdeburg (February 1075), and Bishop Otto of Constance (February or March 1075). A later letter to Siegfried of Mainz, dated 3 September 1075, is evidence of the development during 1075 of prelatic resistance to the papal decrees and resentment at the intrusion of the apostolic see into the affairs of the churches in the empire. The epistola rebukes the archbishop for his failure to convene an episcopal assembly in Germany and for his continuing moderation and prevarication in the battles against simony and clerical fornication. The later discussion of fornicatio clericorum will consider Gregory’s two letters of late 1075 regarding the conduct of Bishop Otto of Constance, one addressed to Otto himself, the other to the clergy and laity of his

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36 Reg. 2.45, pp. 182.32-185.13.  
37 Reg. 3.1, pp. 242.1-244.6; Reg. 3.2, pp. 244.20-245.17; Reg. 3.3, pp. 246.13-247.30.  
38 For Gregory and Hermann of Bamberg, see Tellenbach, Church in Western Europe, pp. 214-16; Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 110-4, 124-7.  
39 Reg. 1.82, p. 117.18; Reg. 2.10, p. 140.34; Reg. 2.55, p. 200.13; Reg. 2.61, p. 215.27.  
40 Reg. 2.62, p. 217.18; Reg. 2.67, p. 224.26; Epp. Vag. 6-8, pp. 14-19.  
41 Reg. 3.4, pp. 248.14-250.30.
The chapter on Gregory’s dealings with Henry IV considered the open discord between king and pope during 1076, initiated by the rejection of ‘Hildebrand’ by the Worms assembly of 24 January. The succeeding Lenten synod in Rome excommunicated the king. The subject of simony in the imperial territories does not resurface in Gregory’s surviving correspondence of 1076 until summer. A letter dated 25 July to the faithful in the Roman Empire declares that if King Henry continues to maintain contact with the five counsellors, long since excommunicated for *symoniaca haeresis*, he will be following the devil rather than Christ. The pope’s extended letter of summer 1076 to the German faithful makes the same point at greater length. The issue of the five counsellors also appears in Gregory’s letter to Bishop Hermann of Metz dated 15 August 1076. This is the first of Gregory’s two key self-justifying *epistolae* to Hermann, which are examined later. Another letter, dated 3 September, which addresses the German faithful, includes this statement:

> Let there be far removed from him [Henry IV] the *pravorum consilia* who, having been excommunicated for *symoniaca haeresis*, have not shrunk from infecting their lord with their own leprosy and, by leading him astray through various crimes, from moving him to rend apart (*scindere*) holy Church and from driving him into the wrath of God and of St Peter.

Gregory’s letters of summer 1076 emphasize the heretical character of simony; the king is associating, not just with excommunicates, but also with wicked *haeretici* who are leading him into criminal activity. The above passage takes the charges against Henry to a new level: the king’s crimes are rending the Church apart. The question as to who exactly was responsible for the dramatic descent into *discordia* was an important issue.
in the contemporary debates prompted by the conflict. This letter raises the possibility of the election of a new king following consultation with the pope. A few weeks later Gregory pursued the notion in a letter dated 31 October 1076 to his Milanese supporters. It notes the increased opposition within Germany to the 'conspiracy of heretics and the king' by those who are faithful to the Church. The latter are talking openly of electing another king. Gregory says that, subject to *iustitia*, he intends to keep his promise to support them.

After autumn 1076, the term *symonia* appears in only three surviving letters from Gregory, all of them to recipients in Germany and Italy. The first, dated 21 June 1079, asks Bishop Rainald of Como to investigate accusations of simony against the bishop-elect of Bergamo, and answers a query about the validity of ordinations performed by simonia. The second is the pope's long letter to Bishop Hermann of Metz of March 1081, which is discussed later. The third is an *epistola* of summer 1083, which tells all the faithful that if the *dictus rex* Henry had obeyed the pope as he had promised many evils would not have occurred; among these is *symoniaca haeresis*. The comparative rarity of references to *symonia* in the papal correspondence after 1076 does not indicate a reduction in Gregory's wish to address the problem of non-canonical election. On the contrary, he became increasingly preoccupied with the question of the legitimacy of any involvement by lay princes in the appointment of new bishops and abbots, irrespective of the intervention of simony. In other words, the focus of the apostolic see shifted from simony to lay investiture itself.

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48 See Appendix A, pp. 305ff.
49 See above p. 77.
52 See below pp. 275ff.
Fornicatio clericorum

'Wherefore, brother, we enjoin and command you by apostolic authority that, in order to preach and more zealously to drive home the chastity of clerks, you sound more stridently and more urgently with the priestly horn, until you shatter and undermine the walls of Jericho, that is, the workings of revolt and the pollutions of filthy lust ...'

(Papal letter, dated 29 Mar 1075, to Archbishop Werner of Magdeburg)^54

Peter Damian’s 1059 report to Hildebrand on his recent legation to Milan is a key text in the debates on simony and clerical fornication of the second half of the eleventh century.\(^\text{55}\) The term ‘nicolaitism’ (*haeresis Nicolaitarum*) was often used for the supposed sin committed by a cleric living with a woman, whether wife or concubine. Offenders were often referred to as ‘nicolaitans’ (*nicoliatae*). Two somewhat obscure passages in the Book of Revelations (Rev. 2: 6, 15) provide the original source of the word. However, it was not part of Gregory’s regular vocabulary; ‘nicoliata’ appears only once in his preserved letters.\(^\text{56}\) He normally used *fornicatio (clericorum)* for the offence, and *fornicator* for the offender.\(^\text{57}\) From the Church’s point of view, there was a practical as well as a moral objection to nicolaitism. Clerical marriage, like simony, could threaten ecclesiastical rights. If a member of a lay family formed a marital connection with a cleric, the family might acquire control of church property. Gregory’s awareness of this possible consequence is shown in his *epistola* of late 1076 to William the Conqueror complaining about the scandalous Bishop Juhel of Dol.\(^\text{58}\) It attacks Juhel’s abominable sacrilege in marrying off the daughters of his illicit marriage, and bestowing and alienating church lands and revenues as dowries.\(^\text{59}\)

A letter dated 15 April 1074 to Margravines Beatrice and Matilda of Tuscany, makes it clear that Gregory was familiar with the longstanding problem of nicolaitism

\(^{54}\) Reg. 2.68, pp. 225.16-226.11: ‘*Quam ob rem fraternitati tuae apostolica auctoritate inungimus atque precipimus, ut ad castitatem clericorum predicandum et studiosius inculcandum bucina sacerdotali vehementius et instantius instrepas, donec lericho muros, id est defectionis opera et sordide libidinis pollutiones, ...*’


\(^{56}\) *Epp. Vag.* 16, pp. 44-7. This letter of late 1076 to William the Conqueror condemns Bishop Juhel of Dol as a nicoliata.

\(^{57}\) Reg. 2.10, pp. 140.34-141.3; Reg. 2.11, p. 143.6-10; Reg. 2.30, p. 163.23-7; *et passim*.

\(^{58}\) See above p. 22.

prior to his election. It recalls that the late Pope Alexander II summoned to Rome many German bishops who were polluted by both carnal crime and the defilement of simony. The fact that Werner of Strasbourg was the only one of these bishops to obey the summons illustrates the limited amenability of the German episcopate to Rome’s authority. The preceding discussion of simony referred to a letter from Gregory, dated 11 January 1075, to Dukes Rudolf of Swabia and Berthold of Carinthia. It opens with a pessimistic observation about the wretched desolation of the Christian religion. Having stated that most German prelates despise apostolic mandates forbidding fornicatio clericorum and symoniaca haeresis, and foster the crimes of their subjects, Gregory asks Rudolf and Berthold for their help: they should debar such offenders – by force if necessary – from serving at the most holy mysteries. He proposes that anyone who doubts that these matters are the business of the dukes should take the matter up with him.

The contribution of Gregory’s offensive against nicolaitism to the conflict between regnum and sacerdotium was less direct than his attacks on simony and, subsequently, lay investiture. However, any ruler might resent attempts by the apostolic see to impose its authority over ‘his’ churchmen. Furthermore, he would hardly welcome the potential for disruption implicit in the intrusion of Rome into an area intimately linked with the deepest personal loyalties of many of his subjects. It is true that some rulers – notably Kings Henry III of Germany and William I of England – were prepared to enforce clerical chastity in their lands, but they did this on their own initiative, displaying little inclination to cede authority over local sees to the pope. Two surviving letters from Gregory to Henry IV attest to the pope’s optimism in the early part of his reign that even the troublesome rex Teutonicorum was prepared to support the struggle against nicolaitism and simony. The first, dated 7 December 1074, states that Gregory is much gladdened by the constant statements by the king’s mother, the Empress Agnes, and

60 Reg. 1.77, p. 109.21-8.
61 See above p. 234.
62 Reg. 2.45, pp. 182.32-185.13.
confirmed by papal legates, that Henry wishes to extirpate simony from his kingdom and correct the chronic disease of clerical fornication (*inveteratus morbus fornicationis clericorum*).\(^{64}\) The second, dated 20 July 1075, lauds his *filius karissimus* for the zeal with which he is resisting simoniacs and for his desire to enforce clerical chastity (*castitas clericorum*).\(^{65}\) We have seen that Henry’s temporary show of deference to the apostolic see was related to his current preoccupation with the war against the Saxon rebels, a conflict that came to a victorious conclusion for the royal forces with the military disintegration of the Saxons in the second half of 1075.\(^{66}\)

The real importance of nicolaitism to the catastrophic deterioration in the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* derives largely from the resentment that Gregory’s sustained offensive against it provoked among ecclesiastics of all ranks, particularly in the churches of the empire. His repeated attempts to impose his authority over the churches in Germany and Italy generated a split within the *sacerdotium* itself. The result was that when the conflict between pope and king came into the open at the beginning of 1076, the majority of the prelates in Henry’s kingdoms supported the king. This was an enormous source of strength for the imperialist side. The ecclesiastical disunity eventually developed into an all-out schism.\(^{67}\)

An examination of the surviving letters from Gregory that refer to clerical unchastity confirmed that the vast majority concern the German and Italian kingdoms. The same study showed that the issue appears far more often in his letters of 1075 than any other year.\(^{68}\) Its rarity in later papal correspondence is probably due to the diversion of Gregory’s energies to the troubled relationship between pope and king. It is known that a decree against clerical unchastity emerged from the Lenten synod of either 1074 or 1075. No record of the 1074 synod survives; our only source for it is the reclusive Irish chronicler Marianus Scotus, at that time based in Mainz.\(^{69}\) The Register’s brief report on

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\(^{64}\) Reg. 2.30, p. 163.23-7.

\(^{65}\) Reg. 3.3, p. 246.15-20.

\(^{66}\) See above p. 65.

\(^{67}\) See Tellenbach, *Church in Western Europe*, pp. 185-204, 222-52; Morris, *Papal monarchy*, pp. 113-21; Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, pp. 110-93.

\(^{68}\) Cowdrey, ‘Chastity of the Clergy’, pp. 271-2.

the 1075 synod is silent on the subject. However, as has been seen, a number of papal letters, perhaps composed in the wake of one of the councils, leave no doubt that a decree emerged.

Certain letters to German metropolitans in the years 1073 to 1075 provide evidence of the directness of Gregory's pressure on these senior prelates regarding this issue, and the robustness of the language with which he depicts the offence. The first reference to nicolaitism in his surviving correspondence appears in a letter dated 15 November 1073, which accuses Archbishop Gebhard of Salzburg of negligence with regard to those of his clerks who are behaving shamefully (turpiter), and instructs him to enact the decrees of the Roman church about 'clerical uncleanness' (inmunditia clericorum). Another letter, dated 16 October 1074, orders Archbishop Udo of Trier to investigate a charge against Bishop Pibo of Toul. One of Pibo's own clerks has accused the prelate of lying in open fornication with a certain woman (cum muliere quadam in publica fornicatione) who subsequently gave birth to a son. The letter gives specific directions to Udo on how he should proceed with the case.

The pope wrote to German metropolitans in the wake of the Lenten synod of February 1075 that may have produced the aforementioned stricter decrees against clerical unchastity and simony. Two identical letters of late February 1075, perhaps written before the synod even concluded, address Archbishops Siegfried of Mainz and Werner of Magdeburg. They affirm the pope's rekindled resolve to banish symonia haeresis and enforce castite clericorum. Accordingly, he is determined to impose this task upon the metropolitans. Having acknowledged that their clergy and people are widely dispersed and that their bishops are many and far-flung, the letters insist that Siegfried, Werner, and the bishops must zealously impress upon the clergy the need to observe inviolably the decrees of the Church. To support their work he is providing them with a special letter bearing the papal seal so that they might more safely and boldly obey the pope's command to drive out symonia haeresis and the 'filthy defilement of polluting lust' (foeda pollutio contagionis libidinosae). The words 'safely' and 'boldly'

70 Reg. 2.52a, pp. 196.10-197.2.
71 Epp. Vag. 6-9, pp. 14-23. For the dating, see Cowdrey, 'Additional note', in Epistolae Vagantes, pp. 160-1. Also, see above p. 231.
72 Reg. 1.30, p. 50.20-7.
73 Reg. 2.10, pp. 140.19-142.5.
indicate some appreciation on the pope's part of the difficulties that he is imposing upon these senior prelates; they will need courage to execute his commands. The letters reiterate the messages that they must communicate throughout their churches. Having conveyed the decisions of the synod (either the 1075 council just completed or that held in 1074) on simoniacal clergy, they move on to the topic of clerical unchastity. The majority of Gregory's letters that deal with this topic also deal with simony, with the latter taking precedence. The synodal decree states that clergy found guilty of fornication may not celebrate masses, and that the people (populus) must boycott any cleric who disregards this ruling. The letters end by exhorting the two metropolitans to show themselves zealous fellow workers with Gregory in these matters.  

Two more epistolae to German archbishops were despatched on 29 March 1075. One was a follow-up letter to Werner of Magdeburg, essentially reproving him for his inadequate display of reforming zeal. The first section refers to the Old Testament passage that relates the fall of the walls of Jericho after the sevenfold circuit of the city by Joshua's trumpet-blowing Israelite army (cf. Josh. 6: 1-27). Gregory uses this story to urge Werner to obedience and to warn him that silence will strengthen the defences of the enemies of the new Joshua, meaning Jesus. Another passage, which opens this discussion, deploys the Jericho story to exhort the archbishop to work assiduously to eliminate clerical unchastity. The second letter, addressed to Archbishop Anno of Cologne, begins by declaring that Cologne's outstanding record of faith and loyalty to the holy see provides the basis for the pope's confidence in the oboedientia of his karissimus frater. It commands the archbishop to call a provincial episcopal council to announce the synodal decrees against clerical unchastity and simony, and to ensure their implementation. Gregory's awareness that his fellow bishops are likely to meet resistance is again indicated by the letter's advice to Anno that should he suffer persecution and tribulation as a consequence of his faithful and resolute pursuit of these matters then the pope, protected by the shield of blessed Peter, will always be ready to protect him - if he is able (si possumus). That final conditional clause may have somewhat diminished the effectiveness of the papal reassurance.

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74 Epp. Vag. 6, 7, pp. 14-17.  
75 See above p. 238.  
76 Reg. 2.67, pp. 223.14-225.4.
Gregory's preserved correspondence includes four other examples of his renewed efforts after the 1075 Lenten synod to eliminate *fornicatio clericorum*. The first, dated 3 March, urges the faithful of Lodi in Lombardy to support their bishop's campaign against simony and clerical unchastity. The second, dated 23 March, admonishes the aged Bishop Dietwin of Liège for tolerating clerical fornication and for his own simoniacal activities. The third, also dated 23 March, urges the patriarch of Aquileia in northeastern Italy to take action against simoniacs and clerical fornicators. Lastly, an *epistola*, dated 29 March 1075, to Bishop Burchard II of Halberstadt in Saxony focuses on the need to deal with clerical incontinence. Clearly, the pope suspected the bishop of tardiness on the issue. The letter reminds Burchard of the widespread distribution of the decrees against clerical unchastity issued by himself and his predecessors, and recalls that the papal legates who visited Burchard the previous year had pressed him to display *obedientia* in this particular task. If Burchard has procrastinated Gregory wants to goad him to cast off the slumber of sloth (*somnus torporis*) in order to avoid *disoboedientia*, which is as the sin of witchcraft (cf. Sam. 15: 22-3).

Three other letters from Gregory, two to Bishop Otto of Constance, the third to the clergy and laity of Otto's see, illustrate the pope's increasing exasperation over episcopal resistance to synodal decrees and papal strictures against nicolaitism and simony. None of the original manuscripts includes the year of composition. However, it is thought that they were composed in 1074 or 1075. The first, dated late February or March, informs Otto of the decrees of the recent council against simony and clerical fornication, including the sanctions on offenders. It is estimated that the two other letters were composed in late 1074 or late 1075. In the first, another letter to Bishop Otto, Gregory restates the reasons for the seriousness of the two offences, and ends with a passage, which makes clear the pope's ideas on the necessity of clerical unchastity and episcopal submission to the apostolic see:

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77 Reg. 2.55, pp. 200.11-201.3.  
78 Reg. 2.61, pp. 215.25-216.28.  
79 Reg. 2.62, p. 217.11-32.  
80 Reg. 2.66, pp. 221.11-222.25.  
81 For the dating of *Epp. Vag.* 6-11, see 'Additional note', in Cowdrey, *Epistolae Vagantes*, pp. 160-1  
Yet when we passed on all these things for you to observe by your pastoral oversight, you, setting your heart not on things above but on the earth below, relaxed the reins of lust, as we have heard, to all these orders, allowing those who had joined themselves to women to continue in their shame and those who had not taken women to have no fear of your prohibition. O the impudence! O the unparalleled insolence! that a bishop should despise the decrees of the apostolic see, should set at naught the precepts of the Holy Fathers, and in truth should impose upon his subjects from his lofty place and from his episcopal chair things contrary to these precepts and opposed to the Christian faith! We accordingly command you by apostolic authority to present yourself at our next council in the first week of Lent, to answer canonically respecting both this disobedience and contempt of the apostolic see, and all the charges that have been laid against you.

The second letter speaks directly to the clergy and laity of Constance. Having outlined the charges against their bishop, it declares that, should Otto persist in his brazen hostility to St Peter and the holy apostolic see, then they must show him neither respect nor obedience. The letter hammers home the pope’s insistence on obedience to the apostolic see: oboedientia occurs eight times, inoboedientia thrice, and oboedire once. It climaxes with Gregory I’s statement comparing rebellion to witchcraft, and stubbornness to iniquity and idolatry. A short letter to the clergy and laity of Germany, also thought to date from late 1074 or late 1075, indicates that the pope was aware that Bishop Otto was not the only German prelate who was insufficiently compliant with the decrees against clerical unchastity. It informs them that he has heard that certain of their bishops either condone or ignore the keeping of women by priests, deacons, and subdeacons. Like his epistola to the clergy and people of Constance, it enjoins all in Germany to withdraw their obedience from the bishops in question.

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83 Epp. Vag. 9, pp. 18-23: ‘Cum aulem hec omnia tibi obseruanda pastoraliprouidentia transmitteremus, tu, non sursum cor sed deorsum in terra ponens, predictis ordinibus frena libidinis, sicut accepeimus, laxasti, ut qui mulierculis se iuvenem in flagitto persisterent, et qui needum ducerent tua interdicta non timerent. O impudentiam, o audaciam singularem, uidelicet episcopum sedis apostolice decreta contemnere, precepta sanctorum patrum conuellerse, immo vero preceptis contraria ac fidei christianae repugnantia de superiori loco et de cathedra pontificali subiectis ingerere. Quapropter tibi apostolica anctoritate precipimus, ut ad proximam synodum nostram prima ebdomada quadragesime te presentem exhibeas, tam de hac inobedientia et sedis apostolice contemptu quam de omnibus que tibi obiciuntur canonice responsurus.’


The synod of autumn 1078 ordered the suspension from office of bishops who tolerate fornication or incest within their jurisdictions. However, after 1075 the subject of nicolaitism appears in only one more letter from Gregory concerning Henry’s kingdoms: in 1079, he again forbade the Italian and German faithful from hearing the offices of unchaste clergy, and reiterated that personal salvation depends on obedience to the apostolic see.

Finally, it is worth noting a startling event reported in a letter, dated 25 March 1077, from Gregory to Bishop Josfred of Paris. The pope expresses his shock that the citizens of Cambrai burnt alive a man who ventured to say that simoniacs and fornicating priests ought not to celebrate masses, and that their ministration should not be accepted; in other words, for asserting the validity of papal decrees. So far, this discussion has mostly been concerned with the interaction between the apostolic see and senior prelates. This incident must have brought home to Gregory the sensitivity of the issue of clerical celibacy, and its potential to incite extreme violence among the laity.

Investitura

Since we understand that lay persons invest with churches in many regions, contrary to the ordinances of the Holy Fathers, and that numberless disturbances have arisen in the Church as a result, and that the Christian religion has been trodden underfoot, we decree that no clergyman may receive investiture of a bishopric, abbey or church from the hands of an emperor or king or any other lay person, male or female. And if one should so presume, let him know that the investiture is, by the apostolic authority, null and void, and that he lies under excommunication until he makes proper satisfaction.

(Canon 3 of the autumn synod in Rome, 19 November 1078)

86 Reg. 6.5b, pp. 402.12, 405.24.
88 Reg. 4.20, p. 328.22-7.
89 Reg. 6.5b, p. 403.11-19: ‘Quoniam investituras ecclesiarum contra statuta sanctorum patrum a laicis personis in multis partibus cognovimus fieri et ex eo plurimas perturbationes in ecclesia oriri, ex quibus christiana religio conculaeatur, decernimus, ut nullus clericorum investituras episcopatus vel abbatiae vel ecclesiae de manu imperatoris vel regis vel alcuinii laice personae, viri vel feminae, suscipiat. Quod si presumpserit, recognoscat investituram illum apostolica auctoritate irritam esse et se usque ad dignam satisfactionem excommunicationi subiacere.’
This, the earliest papal decree against lay investiture, marks the culmination of the preoccupation of the reform papacy and its adherents with the subject. There was a widespread opinion among eleventh-century churchmen that the 'mingling of sacred and secular things' was behind many of the evils besetting the Church. Simony was the most prominent and criticized example of the contamination of the sacred by the secular. However, the very involvement of lay princes in clerical appointments was a more fundamental issue. The close cooperation between regnum and sacerdotium in the empire, sometimes misleadingly termed the Reichskirchensystem ('imperial church system') by later historians, found its most obvious expression in the king's nomination of bishops and abbots. Canon law required the clergy and people of a diocese to elect its own bishop, but the customary royal right was long-standing and little contested. After all, the king was himself appointed by God, and his ministerium included the responsibility to protect and supervise the churches in his kingdoms. In general, the harmonious cooperation between king and churchmen was appreciated as a natural complementarity of two interdependent divine institutions. By the time of the accession to the papacy of Leo IX (1048/9-54) an assemblage of ceremonial, largely derived from feudal practices, had accumulated around the 'investiture' of a cleric with his office and benefice by the local lay lord. In 1058, Cardinal Humbert of Silva-Candida produced a major work, Adversus Simoniacos, which not only rigorously attacked simony, but unprecedentedly interpreted canon law as prohibiting lay investiture itself. In Humbert's opinion, simony and lay investiture were two manifestations of the one heresy. However, his radical theory received little circulation at the time and there is no surviving evidence of serious opposition to lay investiture in papal circles until Gregory VII turned his attention to it.

Schieffer (1981) demonstrated the gradualness of the development of Gregory's opinion that the custom of lay involvement in the appointment of senior churchmen was the basic problem underlying simony. Prior to Schieffer, most modern historians, particularly those writing in English, thought that a prohibition on receiving investiture

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90 Southern, Making, p. 126.
91 For a critique of the formulation Reichskirchensystem, see Reuter, 'Imperial Church system'.
92 Ullmann, Medieval political thought, p. 83.
93 Humbert of Silva Candida, Libri III adversus simoniacos, ed. F. Thaner, MGH Libelli 1, 205-6.
94 Morris, Papal Monarchy, pp. 91, 106; Canning, History, p. 86.
95 Schieffer, Investiturverbots.
at the hands of laymen had been issued at the Roman synod of 14-20 February 1075, less than two years into Gregory's reign. Cowdrey (1998) too conjectured that some form of legislation against lay investiture was probably included in the proceedings of Lent 1075. However, the correspondence between Gregory and Henry during the summer of 1075 does not mention investiture problems. Furthermore, bishops subsequently accused of receiving investiture from the king assured the pope that they had not known of any investiture prohibition dating from the spring of 1075.

The Register's entries for the first two years of Gregory's pontificate contain only two references to lay involvement in episcopal or abbatial investiture. The first, dated 12 August 1073, records a convention of Gregory and Prince Landulf of Benevento in which the prince promises that he will not make any investiture without the consent or instructions of the pope. The second is a letter dated 1 September 1073, which confirms a previous (lost) communication to Anselm, the bishop-elect of Lucca. It instructs him to refuse investiture from the king until the latter has made satisfaction with God for persistently communicating with excommunicate persons, a clear reference to the five royal advisers excommunicated by Alexander II at the Lenten synod earlier that year. The letter contains no hint of disquiet about the legitimacy of lay investiture per se. On the contrary, the obvious implication is that Henry would be free to resume the performance of investitures once he 'makes satisfaction with God'. The 1075 Lenten synod re-excommunicated the five counsellors. King Henry again failed to dispense with their services. Therefore, in papal eyes he was once again unable to confer investiture.

Gregory wrote to Henry on 20 July 1075. The letter congratulates his filius karissimus for cooperating in the removal of a royal supporter, the Bishop Hermann of Bamberg, recently deposed by the pope because of his simony. It asks the king to ensure that 'with the counsel of religious men this church should be set in order (ordinare) according to God's will'. The pope is giving Henry the task – which he would anyway

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96 Examples include Carlyle and Carlyle, History 4, p. 78; Fliche, Réforme, vol. 1, pp. 178-86; Tellenbach, Church, state, p. 113; B. Tierney, The crisis of church and state 1050-1300 (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964), p. 46; Schneider, Prophetisches Sacerdotium, pp. 108-10.
98 Reg. 4.22 (12 May 1077), pp. 330.27-331.11; Reg. 5.18 (19 Mar 1078), p. 381.13-20.
99 Reg. 1.18a, p. 30.27-31.4.
100 Reg. 1.21, p. 35.4-8.
101 Reg. 2.52a, p. 196.16-19.
have assumed was his – of appointing a new bishop in Bamberg after due consultation with Archbishop Siegfried of Mainz. This is hardly consistent with a recent outright ban on lay investiture.  

A letter of late 1075 suggests that the pope was beginning to question this custom. Because of the dissipation of the Saxon threat during the latter part of 1075, the king felt increasingly free to impose his presence in Italy. He invested new bishops, probably Germans, in two Italian sees. Not only were the individuals unknown to the pope, but the episcopates in question came under the metropolitan jurisdiction of Rome. Gregory’s ‘ultimatum letter’ to Henry of December 1075 reproaches him on a number of matters, including these two investitures. The pope accuses the king of unlawfully handing the churches of Fermo and Spoleto, ‘if however, a church can be handed or given by a man’ (this writer’s italics) to certain individuals who are unknown to the pope. It is the fact that the appointees are unfamiliar to the apostolic see that makes Henry’s actions definitely illegal since the pope, as metropolitan, was required by canon law to approve the candidates’ suitability for consecration. However, the conditional clause makes it clear that Gregory was entertaining doubts about the legitimacy of lay investiture itself. The letter refers to the 1075 Lenten synod, at which, says Gregory, he reacted to ‘the perils and manifest ruin of the Lord’s flock’ by having recourse to the decrees and teachings of the Holy Fathers. He adds his customary qualification that he had laid down nothing new, nothing of his own choosing.  

Spring 1077 saw a new development. An epistola to Archbishop Ralph of Tours, dated 1 March 1077 – immediately after Henry IV’s restoration to communion at Canossa in late February – commends the princes of Brittany for renouncing the ‘ancient and most evil’ custom of investiture or the seeking of financial advantage. This is the first of Gregory’s letters to identify investiture and simony as equivalent transgressions. Soon afterwards, lay investiture was the main concern of a letter from Gregory dated 12 May 1077 to the papal legate in France, Bishop Hugh of Die. It is central to understanding the development of the pope’s thinking on the matter. The early part of the text concerns the see of Cambrai in the Low Countries, which was under

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102 Reg. 3.3, pp. 246.13-247.30.
103 See above p. 66.
104 Reg. 3.10, pp. 263.23-267.29.
106 Robinson, Henry IV, p. 184, n. 64.
the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rheims, but the temporal jurisdiction of the German king. It begins with a report that Gerard, Cambrai’s bishop elect, has visited Rome where he admitted that after his election by clergy and people he received the episcopate from King Henry. Gerard strongly denied prior knowledge of both ‘our own decree about the prohibition of this manner of acceptance’ and the king’s status as an excommunicate. Schieffer noted that this was the earliest mention in the pope’s correspondence of a decree concerning the prohibition of investing and receiving churches in this manner. According to Schieffer, this must be connected to the Lenten synod of 1075, but in his opinion, it refers not to a general prohibition, but to the legal consequences of a failure to observe the sanctions against the simoniacl counsellors of Henry IV. Gregory’s letter goes on to say that he warned Gerard that ignorance of these matters does not lessen the seriousness of transgressing synodal decrees and being stained by dealings with one who has been excommunicated. Nevertheless, considering the bishop-elect’s humility, the preceding of his investiture by a canonical election, and the pleas on his behalf by fellow bishops, the pope is prepared to consent to Gerard’s election. In Schieffer’s view the fact that the introitus into office of the Bishop of Cambrai took place in 1076 – when the king was still excommunicate – means that Gregory’s views on the matter in this letter of May 1077 cannot be adduced as evidence of the pope’s attitude to the German king’s rights of investiture after Canossa.

Nevertheless, Gregory did not want this decision to set a precedent. On the contrary, he wanted the issue clarified, at least as far as the French Church was concerned. The letter therefore urges Hugh to call the prelates of France to a council, at which Gerard should purge himself before his brother bishops. The legate and Archbishop Manasses I of Rheims may then arrange for his consecration. The pope is effectively nullifying Gerard’s so-called investiture by King Henry. He is confirming that the appointment of the bishop of Cambrai is a matter of French ecclesiastical jurisdiction, not German temporal jurisdiction. The letter goes on to instruct Hugh to issue a definitive ban on lay investiture at the forthcoming council. He must forbid the bishops ‘by clear and resounding authority’ from assisting in the consecration of anyone

107 Reg. 4.22, pp. 330.27-331.2.
108 Schieffer, Investiturverbots, pp. 148-9, 156.
109 Reg. 4.22, p. 331.2-16.
who has received his office from a layman; any bishop who does so will forfeit his office. The single precedent cited by the pope for the proposed ban on lay investiture is canon 22 of the council of Constantinople in 869-70. The letter's depiction of offenders as ‘violators of sacred authority’ (sacrae auctoritatis corruptores) paraphrases part of canon 22. The canon prohibits, under pain of anathema, the attempted or actual participation by any lay power in the election or promotion of bishops.

If the Lenten synod of 1075 had issued a blanket decree against investitura it is inconceivable that Gregory would not have mentioned it in this letter of May 1077. The absence of any such reference is convincing evidence that no such decretum was issued in February 1075. P. Healy (2006) conjectured that Hugh of Die himself might have supplied the initial inspiration for Gregory's campaign against lay investiture. In September 1077, Hugh duly convened a council at Autun in the duchy of Burgundy. Its decree against lay investiture has not survived. However, the legate called a further council in Poitiers in January 1078. It too promulgated a decree, which has been preserved. The text is based on the instructions in Gregory's letter:

The holy synod decrees that no bishop, abbot, priest or any clerical person shall receive from the hand of a king or a count or any lay person the gift of a bishopric or an abbey or any ecclesiastical office, but that a bishop should receive his office from the metropolitan, the abbot, priest and other lesser persons from their own bishop. But if laymen, resisting the canonical decrees, violently presume to hold churches, let them be excommunicated.

The assembly duly suspended a number of French bishops on the grounds of their uncanonical promotion.

However, a similar clarity on investiture was not yet evident with regard to the imperial church. In early September 1077 King Henry placed two of his chaplains in vacant dioceses in Germany and Italy, namely Augsburg and Aquileia. As Schieffer commented, the king was exercising his position as lord of the imperial church in a

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112 Reg. 4.22, p. 333.18-32.
115 For the best text, see Beulertz, Das Verbot, pp. 5-6, no. 3.
manner that, though particularly decisive, was hardly unusual. Interestingly, the pope’s surviving correspondence does not allude to the Augsburg appointment. This is not so in the case of Aquileia. The earlier discussion of simony referred to Gregory’s letter, dated 17 September 1077, to the clergy and people of Aquileia. The pope was responding to a request by the Aquileians to confirm their election of their own archdeacon as patriarch. At this time, Gregory was unaware of the king’s unilateral appointment of another individual as the new patriarch. According to P. Schmid (1926), it was in this letter that the pope developed the programme of his reign. It begins with what Schieffer described as a fundamental statement of the necessity of authentic canonical election:

It is an ancient and well known rule of sacred institution, sanctioned not by men but by Jesus Christ our God and Lord by the fullest deliberation of his wisdom and declaration of the truth when he himself says in the gospel: ‘He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep; and whoever does not enter by the door but climbs in elsewhere is a thief and robber’ (cf. John 10: 1-2). Accordingly, that which has in the church for long been, and is, by dint of sins neglected and corrupted by evil custom, we desire to renew and to restore for the honour of God and the salvation of the whole of Christendom: to be precise, we desire that to rule the people of God in each and every church when occasion arises, such a person should be elected bishop, and by such a procedure, that according to the judgement of the Truth he should not be called thief and robber but may be worthy to have the title and office of shepherd. This, in truth, is our purpose; this is our desire; this, by God’s mercy, will for so long as we shall live be our unwearied endeavour.

118 See above p. 231.
120 Schieffer, *Investiturverbots*, p. 158.
121 Reg. 5.5, p. 353.5-19: ‘Antiqua et nota sacrae institutionis est regula non ab hominibus, sed ab Iesu Christo Deo et domino nostro plenissima suae sapientiae consideratione et veritatis diffinitione sancta ipso diciente in evangelio: ‘Qui intrat per ostium, pastor est ovium; qui autem non intrat per ostium, sed ascendit aliunde, fur est et latro.’ Quapropter, quod in ecclesia diu peccatis facientibus neglectum et nefanda consuetudine corruptum fuit et est, nos ad honorem Dei et salutem totius christianitatis innovare et restaurare cupimus, videlicet ut ad regendum populum Dei in unaquaque ecclesia exigente tempore tali et eo ordine eligatur episcopus, qui iuxta Veritatis sententiam non fur et latro dici debeat, sed nomen et officium pastoris habere dignus existat. Haec quidem nostra voluntas, hoc nostrum est desiderium, hoc miserante Deo nostrum, quoad viserimus, indefessum erit studium.’
Then the letter addresses the legal rights of the king:

However, as for what belongs to the service and due fealty of the king, in no way do we wish to deny or hinder it. And so we are attempting nothing new, nothing of our own devising, but we seek solely for what both the salvation of all and necessity alike demand: that in the appointment of bishops according to the general understanding and consensus of the Holy Fathers, the authority of the gospel and of the canons shall be maintained.\textsuperscript{122}

Schieffer drew attention to the fact that the letter includes neither an express warning about the intervention of the king nor any reference to an investiture prohibition.\textsuperscript{123} In Cowdrey’s opinion, this case provides circumstantial evidence of the origins of the distinction between episcopal \textit{spiritualia} and \textit{regalia} that would form the basis of the eventual resolution of the Investiture Contest.\textsuperscript{124} Nothing more was heard about the Aquileians’ own nominee. Cowdrey surmised that the pope’s anxiety to avoid confrontation with Henry persuaded him to accept the king’s choice, also called Henry.\textsuperscript{125} The record of the 1079 Lenten synod includes Patriarch Henry’s oath of \textit{fidelitas} and \textit{oboedientia} to St Peter.\textsuperscript{126}

Early in 1078 the pope addressed another case of lay investiture, one that concerned the Salian dynasty’s spiritual home in Germany. King Henry invested Bishop Huzmann of Speyer in April/May 1075. Huzmann’s situation – and Gregory’s approach to it – presents some parallels with the case of Gerard of Cambrai. A letter from Gregory to Huzmann, dated 19 March 1078, expresses his fear that Huzmann wittingly and rashly received the pastoral staff from the hand of the king \textit{contra decretum apostolicae sedis}. Nonetheless, having been assured by Huzmann’s messenger that the bishop did not at that time have certain knowledge of such a decree, Gregory is allowing him to continue to perform his episcopal office subject to his making satisfaction before either the pope or his legates.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 353.20-27: ‘Ceterum, quod ad servitium et debitam fidelitatem regis pertinet, nequaquam contradicere aut impedire volumus. Et ideo nichil novi, nichil nostris adinventionibus superinducere conamur, sed illud solummodo querimus, quod et omnium salus postulat et necessitas, ut in ordinatione episcoporum secundum communem sanctorum patrum intellegentiam et approbationem primo omnium evangelica et canonica servetur auctoritas.’

\textsuperscript{123} Schieffer, \textit{Investiturverbots}, p. 158.


\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 293.

\textsuperscript{126} Reg. 6.17a, pp. 428.25-429.9.

\textsuperscript{127} Reg. 5.18, pp. 381.11-382.2.
It was not until the Rome synod of November 1078 that the apostolic see issued a definitive decree against lay investiture that was applicable throughout western Christendom. Canon 3 is quoted in full at the start of this discussion.\(^{128}\) The wording resembles the decree issued by the Poitiers synod of January 1078. The apostolic see had finally achieved clarity on the issue; the reference to emperors, kings and all lay persons leaves no room for ambiguity. There is no evidence that Gregory consulted German prelates beforehand. A further decree at the Lenten synod of 1080 reiterated the strictures against secular involvement before proceeding to condemn ‘any emperor, king, duke, marquis, count, or any secular power or person’ who presumes to give the *investitura* of bishoprics or any ecclesiastical dignity; they too would be subject to excommunication.\(^{129}\) The 1080 decree punished the investing ruler as well as the invested cleric, who alone had been punished in the 1078 decree. This later decree presented an ideal version of canonical election, elevating the role of the metropolitan.\(^{130}\)

It has been observed that, despite the strictness of these decrees, Gregory only raised the issue of lay investiture in relation to France and the imperial territories. With regard to the more peripheral Christian lands, most notably England, the presence of a powerful ruler who was acting in a manner that was favourable to church reform seemed to persuade the pope to exercise restraint in attempting to intrude his own authority, particularly insofar as these new decrees were concerned.\(^{131}\) Nonetheless, Gregory’s active campaigning against lay investiture – crystallized in the unambiguous synodal decrees of 1078 and 1080 – contributed to the undermining of the idea of ‘sacral kingship’, the assumption that royal domination of churches was justified by the king’s coronation rite, which included his anointing with holy oils whereby he received the Holy Spirit. The prohibition of lay investiture was the most radical and innovatory of the reform measures initiated during Gregory’s reign. This fundamental assault on royal authority became a key issue in the ensuing decades-long so-called ‘Investiture Contest’ between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*.

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\(^{128}\) See above p. 245.

\(^{129}\) *Reg.* 7.14a, pp. 480.26-481.2.

\(^{130}\) See Robinson, ‘Reform and the church’, *NCMH* 1, esp. pp. 289-90, 304.

3.8 Fidelitas

From this hour and henceforth I will be faithful by true faith (fidelis per rectam fidem) to blessed Peter the apostle and to his vicar Pope Gregory, now living in the flesh. Whatsoever the pope himself shall command me with these words: through true obedience (per veram oboedientiam), I shall perform faithfully (fideliter) as befits a Christian. And concerning the order of churches and concerning the lands or the rent that the Emperor Constantine or Charles have given to St Peter ... I will so make agreement with the pope that I shall not incur the peril of sacrilege and the perdition of my soul. And to God and to St Peter, with the help of Christ, I shall yield due honour and serviceability (honor et utilitas). And on the day when I shall first see him I will faithfully through my own hands be made the knight of St Peter (fideliter per manus meas miles sancti Petri) and of himself.¹

Following the death of the anti-king Rudolf in October 1080, a letter issued in Gregory’s name, thought to date from March 1081, included the text of a proposed oath for any future German king and emperor-in-waiting. It is in this oath, of which the above is an extract, that Gregory VII most fully embraced the language that historians have characterized as feudal. It contains much of the essential vocabulary associated with feudal relationships. The key words and phrases are fidelis, fideliter, fides, per veram oboedientiam, honorem et utilitatem, and fideliter per manus meas miles sancti Petri. The text illustrates the problem of translating ambiguous key words. For example, miles is here translated as ‘knight’, but alternatives include ‘soldier’, ‘advocate’, and – significantly – ‘vassal’. The oath is discussed later.²

Scholars have differed widely in their assessments of the role of ‘feudo-vassalic’ ideas in Pope Gregory’s efforts to establish or extend papal authority throughout western Christendom. Dempf (1929) was the first to posit the idea that Gregory VII sought to create feudal relationships with secular powers. He argued that the twin meanings of fidelitas in the Germanic world – both spiritual and political loyalty – prompted Pope Gregory to the false construction of a feudal supremacy of the apostolic

¹ Reg. 9.3, pp. 575.30-576.12: ‘Ab hac hora et deinceps fidelis ero per rectam fidem beato Petro apostolo eiusque vicario pape GREGORIO, qui nunc in carne vivit. Et quodcumque mihi ipse papa precaperit, sub his videlicet verbis: per veram oboedientiam, fideliter, sicut oportet christianum, observabo. De ordinatione vero ecclesiarum et de terris vel censu, quae Constantinus imperator vel Carolus sancto Petro dederunt, ... ita conveniam cum papa, ut periculum sacrilegii et perditionem animae meae non incurram. Et Deo sanctoque Petro adivante Christo dignum honorem et utilitatem impendam. Et eo die, quando illum primitus videro, fideliter per manus meas miles sancti Petri et illius efficiar.’
² See below pp. 273ff.
see over all Christian peoples. Shortly afterwards, Karl Jordan (1932) contended that Gregory VII ‘was dominated by feudal ideas’ in his dealings with secular princes. He suggested that the pope was doubly innovatory in that not only did he set out a theoretical basis for the feudal claims of the apostolic see, but also systematized what had previously been isolated ventures. Jordan came to these conclusions after examining Gregory’s interactions with southern Italy, Spain, England, Hungary, and Croatia-Dalmatia. In Jordan’s opinion, the most significant source of the intrusion of feudal law into papal circles was Lotharingia, the home of the early leading figures of the reform movement in Rome. Jordan claimed that the ‘Tuscan Gregory VII’, who was closely allied with the Lotharingian reformers, was ‘entirely enthusiastic’ about such views. Jordan subsequently (1958) summarized his arguments, proposing that Gregory tried to realise the *regimen universale* of the papacy over Christendom through the construction of a curial ‘feudal system’ (*Lehnswesen*). Schieffer (1989) essentially agreed with Jordan; according to him Gregory attempted to implement a papal ‘feudal policy’ (*Lehnspolitik*) as part of his conception of ‘the true and appropriate order of the Christian world’.

Tellenbach (1944) contended that Gregory had no general policy of creating vassallic relationships as such, but his keen desire to transform the apostolic see’s moral connections with lay rulers into legal ties led him to use the normal contemporary means of achieving this. Ullmann (1970) accepted Jordan’s premise of the ‘entry of feudal principles into the Roman curia’, but denied that this had any ideological significance. He explained it in functional terms, as a practical arrangement that could accommodate a personal relationship between the pope and a vassal king, with the granting of St Peter’s protective power or patronage (*patrocinium*) to the ruler. The *patrocinium beati Petri* granted to a ruler meant that his territory could not legitimately be offered to another ruler, and that any injury inflicted upon either king or country was

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5 Ibid., p. 71.
6 Ibid., p. 36.
7 Jordan, ‘Das Reformpapsttum’, p. 130.
9 Tellenbach, *Church, state*, p. 157.
regarded as injuring the Church itself. On the papacy's side, vassalage was employed as the customary contemporary institution in public law for obtaining specific services.\textsuperscript{10}

Cowdrey (1998) pursued a similar line of argument. In his opinion, it is more useful to discuss Gregory's ideas of \textit{fidelitas} in a religious rather than a political context because of his intense preoccupation with his role as St Peter's successor, with the notion that Christ had assigned comprehensive lordship over the whole world to Peter, that all principalities and powers owed obedience and service to the Church, and that all rulers should therefore seek the \textit{patrocinium beati Petri}, not least because it would be crucial for their salvation on the day of judgement. Cowdrey claimed that Gregory had no set formula for this, that he wanted rulers to acknowledge their debt to St Peter in a way that included politics but also transcended it. Gregory often spoke of \textit{fidelitas}. His attempts to obtain the \textit{fidelitas} of kings could have various meanings, including precise commitments to personal loyalty and obligation, promises of legal fealty, or a very deep kind of religious commitment.\textsuperscript{11} Cowdrey considered that in Gregory's use of \textit{fidelitas} in relation to secular rulers the temporal, and especially the feudal implications, might sometimes be important, but were ultimately secondary and negotiable. His demands for loyalty, service, and obedience sprang essentially from their spiritual and scriptural contexts.\textsuperscript{12}

Recent studies of feudalism have drawn attention to the enormous diversity of relationships covered by the concept. Susan Reynolds' revisionist study (1994) of the significance of feudal terminology ranged widely over the use of feudal language in various sources, including Gregory VII's letters. She was attempting to compare the medieval evidence of property relations and political relations with the concepts of the fief and vassalage as used by medieval historians. Reynolds found that the paucity of evidence to support the traditional picture of either, and of their connection and development, more than justified her initial scepticism.\textsuperscript{13} This chapter sets out to test Jordan's proposition that Gregory VII embarked upon a conscious policy of asserting papal primacy in the secular sphere through the creation of 'feudal' relationships with lay rulers, a 'curial feudal system'.

\textsuperscript{10} Ullmann, \textit{Growth}, pp. 332-6.
\textsuperscript{11} Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 639-49.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 564.
None of Gregory VII’s letters mentions *feodum*, the word used in France and England for a vassal’s landholding. He was accustomed to *beneficium*, the term used in Germany and most of Italy. *Beneficium* makes thirty-three appearances in Gregory’s preserved correspondence. It frequently arises in contexts devoid of any possible feudal association: benefit, bounty, favour, kindness, etc. An important development in his thinking seems to be suggested by letters that remind correspondents of the *beneficia* to be gained from God, St Peter, or the apostles. This is illustrated by his ‘ultimatum letter’ to Henry IV, of December 1075, which seems to imply that the king’s recent decisive military victory over the Saxons was a *beneficium* granted by God and St Peter.14 In some of Gregory’s letters *beneficium* refers to a ‘benefice’, meaning a permanent church position carrying income and property.15 The pope’s familiarity with the word’s possible association with vassal relationships is shown by two letters that discuss specific ‘monastic’ *beneficia*, meaning the lands and peasant workers belonging to individual monasteries.16 Another letter declares that a knight who abandons his lord before a battle should lose the advantage of his fief (*beneficii commodum*).17

The term used for fealty in the eleventh century was *fidelitas*. Unfortunately this word, like *beneficium*, has meanings unrelated to vassalage. Ullmann (1954) offered *fidelitas* as a prime example of the ‘exasperating duplicity’ of certain crucial Latin terms whose ambiguity often provoked misunderstanding and serious repercussions in the politics of medieval Christendom.18 Ullmann’s irritation persisted: his study of the growth of papal government (1970) observes that feudal language and Roman-papal language are ‘exasperatingly identical’.19 Lewis and Short’s dictionary of classical Latin translates *fidelitas* variously as faithfulness, loyalty, trustiness, or firm adherence. Niermeyer’s Medieval Latin dictionary supplements Lewis and Short by presenting the additional meanings acquired in the Middle Ages. Four of Niermeyer’s eight definitions of *fidelitas* concern vassal relationships. Both the classical and contemporary connotations of Latin

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14 Reg. 3.10, p. 267.14. For other examples of Gregory’s use of *beneficium* in this sense, see Reg. 1.58, p. 85.19; Reg. 2.34, p. 170.37; Reg. 2.39, p. 176.8; Reg. 7.6, p. 467.12; Reg. 8.8, p. 526.26-8; Reg. 9.17, p. 597.24.
15 Reg. 1.34, p. 55.22; Reg. 2.56, p. 209.31; Reg. 2.62, p. 217.18; et passim.
16 Reg. 1.82, p. 117.18-29, p. 118.5-6; Reg. 7.19, p. 494-14, 23-4.
17 Reg. 1.43, pp. 66.19-67.2.
terms were available to medieval authors. The plethora of possible interpretations of a word so laden with significance amply justifies Ullmann's contention that the word had the potential to generate dangerous confusion. In some of Gregory's letters, the use of *fidelitas* is certainly suggestive of an alliance that exhibits vassalic characteristics. The linking of *fidelitas* to certain key words adds credibility to such a 'feudal' interpretation. The most obvious such words are *iurare* (to swear), *facere* (to perform), and either *sacramentum* or *iuramentum* (oath). The noun *fides* and the adjective *fidelis* were similarly open to a wide variety of interpretations.

*Fidelitas* occurs fifty-seven times in Gregory's surviving correspondence. Sometimes it signifies straightforward loyalty and trustworthiness. For example, Gregory's letter of 17 April 1075 to Duke Gésa of Hungary indicates that its bearers, in whose *fidelitas* the pope has complete confidence, will communicate certain matters unmentioned in the letter to him.²⁰ Many letters refer to a spiritual *fidelitas* to St Peter in contexts lacking any connotation of vassalage.²¹ A famous example is Gregory's sentencing of Henry IV at the Lenten synod of 1076, which takes the form of a supplicatory prayer to St Peter in which the pope declares that he is hated by wicked men because of his *fidelitas* to the first apostle.²² Also of interest is a letter from Gregory, dated 1 June 1073, which refers to a complaint that Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna is attempting to compel certain citizens to swear an oath of fealty (*iurara sacramenta fidelitatis*) to Guibert himself. This would have alienated them from their existing *fidelitas* to the apostolic see. Situated within the Patrimony of St Peter, Ravenna had specific obligations to the pope. In hindsight, Guibert's later role as Henry IV's anti-pope enhances the complaint's significance.

**The Normans of southern Italy**

It is, above all, the relationship between the reform papacy and their near neighbours, the recently arrived Norman princes controlling the south of the peninsula, which has prompted scholars to consider whether, under Gregory VII, the apostolic see pursued a conscious policy of establishing feudal lordships over Christian rulers. As noted above, both Dempf (1929) and Jordan (1932) argued strongly that Gregory VII

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²⁰ Reg. 2.70, p. 230.23. For other examples, see Reg. 3.21, p. 288.24; Epp. Vag 54, pp. 128-35.  
²¹ Reg. 1.7, p. 12.3; Reg. 1.19, p. 32.20; Reg. 1.63, p. 91.32; et passim.  
²² Reg. 3.6*, p. 253.4; Reg. 3.10a, p. 270.2.
consciously attempted to create feudal ties between the apostolic see and the Christian lands of Europe.\textsuperscript{23} Jordan asserted that the investiture of the Norman princes from 1059 onwards meant that the curia had developed imperial rights which did not belong to it, and that this step amounted to a challenge to the German kingdom.\textsuperscript{24} Two years later Paul Kehr (1934) published a paper on ‘The investiture of the South Italian Norman princes by the pope’. He based his work on a long study of papal diplomas. His chief source was the \textit{Italia Pontificia}, a register of papal documents relating to different regions of Italy, in this case the volume dealing with the \textit{regnum Romanorum} (Italian kingship). Kehr’s use of diplomas rather than narrative sources challenged the importance of contemporary chroniclers, most obviously Amatus of Montecassino.\textsuperscript{25} Kehr suggested that, rather than being an attempt to usurp imperial privileges, the papal investitures in southern Italy were a consequence of \textit{vacante imperio} (a vacancy in the empire), that in the absence of an emperor the papacy felt called upon to act on behalf of the imperial power, that the popes essentially acted as imperial deputies to ensure stability.\textsuperscript{26} More recently, Deér (1972) re-examined the relationship between the papacy and the southern Italian Normans. He completely rejected the idea of a generalised papal feudal policy, a ‘system of feudal states’ (\textit{Lehnsstaatensystem}) affecting all secular powers, arguing that any such tendencies did not appear until the later Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{27} Deér set out to determine whether the papacy deliberately intended to usurp the empire’s secular rights in southern Italy, or whether other motives and a unique historical situation were the determining factors in Rome’s dealings with the Normans during the early reform papacy, and the pontificate of Gregory VII in particular.\textsuperscript{28} The ‘feudal’ bonds between Rome and the Normans dated back to 1059. In Melfi that year, Pope Nicholas II accepted the fealty of Duke Robert Guiscard of Apulia and Calabria, lands also claimed by the \textit{reges Teutonicorum}. Archdeacon Hildebrand was present at Melfi.\textsuperscript{29} Consequently, long before his own elevation, the future Pope Gregory VII was acquainted with the value of oaths of fidelity to underpin the obligations of

\textsuperscript{23} See above p. 254.
\textsuperscript{24} Jordan, ‘Das Eindringen des Lehnsweisens’ p. 72.
\textsuperscript{25} P.F. Kehr, ‘Die Belehnungen der süditalienischen Normannenfürsten durch die Papste’, \textit{Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin} 1 (1934).
\textsuperscript{26} Kehr, ‘Die Belehnungen’, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{29} See Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory}, p. 47, n. 83.
powerful individuals under the *patrocinium beati Petri*. It is thought that Prince Richard of Capua also swore fealty to the pope, either at Melfi or in the previous year.\textsuperscript{30} The two Norman leaders were now vassals of their overlord, the pope. Feudal ceremonial formalized the alliances. These oaths created precedents for secular rulers swearing fealty to the pope.

By using a *vexillum* (papal banner) to invest Guiscard with his lands, the papacy was drawing on the precedent set when eleventh-century Salian emperors granted fiefs to their principal subjects. Deér (1972) argued persuasively that the *vexilla* used from 1059 onward in papal investitures of Norman princes were very different in meaning from the *vexilla S. Petri* often sent to princes to symbolise the pope's approval or blessing of enterprises favourable to the Roman church, with no implication of feudal ties.\textsuperscript{31} Loud (2000) emphasized that these new arrangements were not hostile attempts to supplant imperial influence in southern Italy; rather, they were pragmatic moves on the part of the papacy to compensate for the current weakness of the German regency by acquiring new allies and protectors.\textsuperscript{32}

The use of feudo-vassalic terminology to define relationships between the apostolic see and individual rulers began to proliferate during Gregory's reign. The Register includes the texts of some oaths of *fidelitas* by lay rulers to the apostolic see. Two of these are reaffirmations of their *fidelitas* by the same southern Italian Normans: Richard of Capua in September 1073 and Robert Guiscard in June 1080. The 1073 and 1080 texts are similar. Both Duke Robert and Prince Richard acknowledge that they hold their titles by the grace of God and St Peter; they will henceforth be faithful to the Roman church, the apostolic see, and to Gregory the universal pope; they will help the Roman church to hold, acquire and defend the 'regalian' rights of St Peter; and they will not invade, acquire, or plunder the land of St Peter (*terra sancti Petri*).\textsuperscript{33} The oaths also specify that the annual financial tribute (*pensio*) will be paid to the Roman church, and that each ruler will hand over all the churches in his territory to Rome and henceforth

\begin{itemize}
  \item Loud, *Robert Guiscard*, pp. 193-4. For the uncertainty regarding the dating of Richard's oath, see Loud, 'Southern Italy', p107, n. 29. Also see above p. 128
  \item Deér, *Papsttum*, pp. 7-36.
  \item Loud, *Robert Guiscard*, pp. 186-8. Deér (1972) investigated the precedents and traditions guiding the papal investiture of the two Norman princes in 1059. He concluded that they were based on institutions and customs of pre-Norman Italy rather than French Normandy: Deér, *Papsttum*, pp. 1-12.
  \item In these oaths the phrase ' *terra sancti Petri* signified only the *patrimonium Petri*, i.e. those lands under direct papal overlordship': Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 641. See also Deér, *Papsttum*, pp. 67-96.
\end{itemize}
defend them in *fidelitas* to the holy Roman church. Furthermore, each oath includes a pledge that, in the event of the death of Gregory or his successors, the ruler will assist in the election of a new pope as advised in the first instance by the ‘better cardinals’. This seems to be a commitment to help implement the procedures specified in the 1059 Papal Election Decree. The only substantial difference between the two texts is the presence in Richard’s oath of the following sentence: ‘When I am called upon to do this by you or your successors, I will swear fealty to King Henry, saving, however, fealty to the holy Roman church’. It has been conjectured that this reflects the view, at least in 1073, that the German king and the apostolic see exercised joint governorship of southern Italy. Given the current absence of direct communication between pope and king, because of the latter’s continuing contact with his excommunicated advisers, the statement’s initial conditional clause suggests that Gregory would not wish Richard to swear *fidelitas* to Henry until that issue was resolved.

We can compare Robert Guiscard’s oaths of 1059 and 1080 since both texts have survived. It is obvious that the latter was based on the former, since the commitments are largely identical. Although there is no evidence that Gregory tried to enhance the terms of the apostolic see’s pre-existing treaty with the duke, there is one key difference between the two texts. The 1059 oath states that he will swear fealty to no one ‘except saving the fealty of the holy Roman church’ (*salve Romane fidelitate sancte ecclesiae*). This suggests that in 1059 Duke Robert was reserving the right to bind himself to another lord. This could only have been the king of Italy and Germany, bearing in mind his historical claim to Apulia. No such clause appears in the 1080 oath. In the light of the re-excommunication of the *rex Teutonicorum* earlier that year it is likely that the pope was no longer willing to tolerate such a double fealty.

These oaths fulfil most of the requirements of a vassal relationship, however defined. Nevertheless, although the accords took the form of vassal oaths, they were essentially reaffirmations of political alliances by which, in exchange for the moral legitimation of their rulership by the apostolic see’s recognition, the Normans

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34 Richard of Capua: Reg 1.21a, pp. 35.31-36.25; Robert Guiscard: Reg. 8.1a-c, pp. 514.18-517.18.
35 Reg. 1.21a, p. 36.16-17: ‘Regi vero Heinrico, cum a te admonitus fuero vel a tuis successoribus, iurabo fidelitate, salva tamen fidelitate sanctae Romanae ecclesiae.’ See also Deer, Papsttum, pp. 8, 37 n. 158, 1059: *Le Liber censuum*, 1, p. 422. 1080: Reg. 8.1a-c, pp. 514.18-517.18.
36 Cowdrey, Register, p. 25, n. 3.
undertook to supply the reform papacy with the military strength that it sorely lacked. Essentially, the papacy needed the Normans far more than the reverse. As such, the relationship was far more equal than was customarily the case between suzerain and vassal.\(^{38}\) This is demonstrated by the ambiguities, tensions, and vicissitudes that characterized Pope Gregory's dealings with the Normans, particularly the thrice-excommunicated Robert Guiscard.\(^{39}\) A crucial distinction between these arrangements and a conventional vassalic alliance is the fact that the Normans regarded their territories as hereditary rather than being in the gift of the sedes apostolica. Although Rome may have attached greater significance than the Normans to its overlordship there is no reason to think that the papacy disputed the Norman belief in their hereditary title to the lands.\(^{40}\) It has been surmised that the very fact that the formal ceremonies renewing these investitures after the election of a new pope were sometimes long delayed confirms that both parties saw them as 'declarative' rather than 'constitutive'. The absence from the investiture ceremonies, at least before 1120, of acts of homage also suggests that they were not conventional vassalic relationships. Nor is there any indication that Gregory, in contrast to his policy regarding Henry IV, ever sought to depose the excommunicate Robert Guiscard.\(^{41}\) In essence, by recognizing the Norman possessions in southern Italy the papacy was acknowledging an indisputable reality, and attempting to exploit it for its own purposes. Feudo-vassalic language and ceremonial were convenient, familiar instruments to delineate and consolidate what were fundamentally military alliances.

**Scandinavia**

The chapter on Scandinavia noted the customary payment of alms by Denmark to the holy see.\(^{42}\) Gregory's earliest preserved letter to King Sweyn Estrithson of Denmark, is dated 25 January 1075.\(^{43}\) It informs Sweyn of the universal government (universale regimen) entrusted to the papacy, and asks him to supply knights and the 'material

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\(^{39}\) See above pp. 127ff.

\(^{40}\) Deér (1972), however, believed that this issue lay at the root of the frequent conflicts between the popes and their Norman vassals. The Normans considered that their fiefs were hereditary whereas the papacy did not accept that it was obliged to grant the fief to the heir of a deceased vassal: Deér, *Papsttum*, pp. xii-xiv.


\(^{42}\) See above p. 116.

\(^{43}\) See above p. 119.
sword' (*materialis gladius*) to deal with the heathen and the enemies of God. The pope wants the king to despatch an armed contingent, led by one of Sweyn’s own sons, to do battle against a certain extremely rich province, currently controlled by base and cowardly heretics. Gregory wishes the king’s son to become general, prince, and *defensor christianitatis* in the unnamed territory.\(^4\) Does the pope’s linking of pious Christian duty with professional soldiering rewarded by worldly goods imply that he thought of his connection with the *rex Danorum* as having some of the characteristics of a feudal relationship? It is noteworthy that Gregory’s request for military assistance immediately follows a reference to earlier discussions with Sweyn about the creation of a metropolitan see in Denmark. Whether this juxtaposition amounted to a suggestion of a *quid pro quo* is necessarily conjectural. Furthermore, it could be surmised that the pope, aware that Sweyn was a novice with regard to the duties and prerogatives of Christian kingship, saw this as a promising opportunity to recruit a *rex Christianus* in a military role on behalf of the papacy. However, neither the alms payments nor Gregory’s request for military aid can be adduced as substantial evidence that he sought Denmark’s entry into a vassal relationship with the apostolic see. It is possible that Gregory’s attitude to the *rex Danorum* was influenced by reports of Sweyn’s meeting with Henry IV in 1071, which may have involved discussions of a military alliance against the Saxons.\(^4\)5 Also of interest is a statement in the pope’s later letter to Sweyn, dated 17 April 1075, which informs this ruler of this territory bordering the *regnum Teutonicorum* that ‘the law of the Roman pontiffs has governed more lands than did that of the emperors’.\(^4\)6 This might be construed as an oblique admonition not to enter into a relationship, perhaps ‘feudal’, with the German kingdom.

**Spain**

The discussion of the pope’s dealings with Spain noted that Gregory came to the papacy apparently convinced that *Hyspania* was the property of St Peter, and had been so since ancient times.\(^4\)7 Within days of his election, the pope despatched two letters dated 30 April 1073, which allude to this ‘proprietorship’. The first ‘reminds’ French

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\(^4\) Reg. 2.51, p. 194.8-16. Scholars have differed on the identity of the *provincia opulentissima*; the Normans of southern Italy according to Seegriin, *Das Papsttum*, p. 82; Croatia in the view of Cowdrey, ‘Anglo-Norman lands and Scandinavia’, p. 324, n. 13.


\(^4\)6 Reg. 2.75, p. 237.34: ‘Plus enim terrarum lex Romanorum pontificum quam imperatorum obtinuit.’

\(^4\)7 See above p. 138.
knights planning to campaign in Spain that the land has been under the individual jurisdiction of St Peter since ancient times (*regnum Hyspaniae ab antiquo proprii iuris sancti PETRI fuisse*). Its longstanding occupation by pagans has not annulled the law of *iustitia*; Spain rightfully belongs to no mortal man, but to the apostolic see. The letter exhibits hallmarks of a proposal to open negotiations in that it mentions the possibility of a lawful grant (*legitima concessio*) by which the use of the lands might be given to others. It cites the precedent of Count Ebolus of Roucy to whom the apostolic see has conceded the right to possess, on St Peter’s behalf, any lands that he might conquer from the Saracen. Unless the knights are prepared to pay due attention to the rights of St Peter in terms of an equitable treaty, the pope would rather restrain them by apostolic authority from undertaking the campaign than allow the wounding of mother Church. Gregory informs them that his envoy, Hugh Candidus, will bring plans and decrees that will provide a basis for discussion. The second letter, addressed to the pope’s legates in France, Cardinal-Bishop Gerald of Ostia and the subdeacon Rainbald, refers to the efforts of Pope Alexander II to promote Ebolus’s enterprise, and of the treaty – in the form of a charter – which the papacy made with him about the land of Spain. The *epistola*, delivered to the legates by Hugh Candidus, indicates the pope’s desire that, if any princes intend to campaign in Spain independently of Ebolus, then Hugh should undertake a legatine mission in Spain on St Peter’s behalf to require from those princes a just treaty and obligation (*aequam pactionem et debitum exigat*).

Three years later Gregory sent a pastoral letter dated 28 June 1077 to the kings and lay magnates of Spain. It revisits the theme of the Petrine proprietorship. Following a characteristic Gregorian statement of the God-given duties of the apostolic see to admonish, to uphold *iustitia*, and to preach so that hearers might attain salvation, it exhorts its lay audience at some length to fear and love God rather than worldly riches and honours, and to protect the *libertas* of the Christian faith. Gregory backs up his instructions with a plethora of scriptural references, instructing his hearers to direct their arms, resources and power to the service (*servitium*) of the eternal King so that He may bring them to the incomparable kingdom of His glory. All this is by way of a

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*Reg.* 4.28, pp. 343.25-345.34.

*Reg.* 1.6, pp. 8.32-10.35.

*Reg.* 1.7, pp. 11.17-12.23.
preamble to an attempt to convince the Spanish kings of the apostolic proprietorship of their lands. According to the pope, unspecified ‘ancient statutes’ show that the regnum Hyspaniae was delivered ‘in rightful ownership’ (in ius et proprietatem) to blessed Peter and the holy Roman Church. In other words, Gregory is claiming that St Peter is Spain’s landlord. The identity of these ancient authorities is unclear. It is conceivable that Gregory was alluding to the Constitutum Constantini, clause 17 of which states that Emperor Constantine I granted ‘the provinces, districts, and regions of Italy and the western regions’ to Pope Sylvester I. The letter goes on to say that this proprietorship has been obscured by past misfortunes and (Gregory admits) the negligence of his predecessors. The kingdom’s occupation by Saracens and pagans meant that the service formerly rendered to Peter was withheld, and memories of the Petrine proprietorship faded. Now divina clementia has granted victory to Christian rulers and placed the lands in their hands. They deserve high merit for the recovery and restoration of iustitia and the honour of St Peter. Heaven forbid (quod absit) that they should lose their divine reward either through the silence of the apostolic see or from their own ignorance. Gregory trusts that they will follow the ordinances and examples of the most Christian princes. He names two legates who will travel to Spain to meet them in order to elaborate on the above and discuss what steps they should take for the salvation of their souls. The only other surviving epistola from Gregory relating to the possible feudal status of a Spanish territory is addressed to King Sanchez Ramirez of Aragon (1063-94), who had made his kingdom a papal fief in 1068. The letter (date unknown) thanks God that the king walks justly and rightly in the stewardship (administratio) granted to him from above.

St Peter’s proprietorship over Spain never resurfaces in Gregory’s surviving correspondence. As we have seen, in the early years of his pontificate Gregory tried various approaches – letters to campaigning French knights, epistolae to Spanish kings, the influence of papal legates – to impose the authority of the apostolic see, in ius et proprietatem, on Spain. None worked, although the loyalty of King Alphonso of León-

51 Robinson, ‘Soldiers’, p. 177.
52 Das Constitutum Constantini, pp. 85-6, 93-4. For a discussion of these ‘statutes’, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp.468-70; on the possible relevance of the Constitutum Constantini see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 469, n. 215.
53 Reg. 4.28, pp. 345.35-347.16.
54 Epp. Vag. 65, pp. 146-49; also n. †.
Castile to St Peter was consolidated. Cowdrey (1998) surmised that the difficulty of communication with a distant land, the fragmentation of authority in Christian Spain, and the limited feasibility of effective papal sanctions, all combined to persuade the pope to adopt a flexible, pragmatic approach to Spain. The pope's increasing preoccupation with events in Germany and Italy might be included among these considerations.

Hungary

The discussion of Hungary referred briefly to Gregory's reproving letter, dated 28 October 1074, to Salomon I, the nominal rex Ungarorum. Having rebuked Salomon for his 'ill-advised arrangement' (incauta conditio) - his submission to Henry IV - which had 'greatly offended' beatus Petrus, the letter sets out Gregory's understanding of Hungary's status. The pope draws upon arguably feudal language to assert the apostolic see's claim to suzerainty over Hungary, allegedly a gift from King Stephen I in 1000. According to the letter, the kingdom is the 'property' (proprium) of the holy Roman Church, as Salomon might himself learn from the elders (maiores) of Hungary. Gregory is apparently relying entirely on the testimony of these unidentified maiores, there being no documentary evidence to support his claim that King Stephen 'with all his right and power' (cum omni iure et potestate sua) handed over (tradere) Hungary to beatus Petrus. Furthermore, states the letter, Emperor Henry III 'of pious memory' vanquished the kingdom 'for the honour of St Peter', and sent the Hungarian crown and the royal lance to Rome to signify St Peter's dominion (principatus). Gregory has now learned that Salomon has threatened and alienated (imminere et alienare) the right and honour (ius et honor) of St Peter by accepting the kingdom in beneficium from the German king. The letter concludes by offering Salomon the hope of regaining the love of the Roman Church: he should acknowledge that his kingdom is a beneficium of apostolic, not royal, sovereignty (apostolicae, non regiae majestatis beneficium). Fliche (1924-37) interpreted Gregory's use of the term beneficium as evidence that the pope believed Hungary to be a fief of the apostolic see. Schieffer (1989) also believed that a feudal

55 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 469.
56 See above p. 111.
57 Berend et al, Kingdom, p.343; Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 645.
58 Reg. 2.13, pp. 144.36-146.2.
bond (Lehnsband) to the holy see was established in the time of King Stephen. However, the fact that Hungary's new ruler Duke Géza accepted a royal crown from the Byzantine emperor, perhaps in 1075, demonstrates emphatically that the country's leadership did not see their land as a vassal state of the papacy.

**Kievan 'Rus**

The single surviving letter, dated 17 April 1075, from Gregory to Kievan 'Rus addresses Prince Isjaslav, who inherited the rulership of Kiev following his father's death. However, Isjaslav was expelled from the kingdom by his own brother. According to Gregory's letter Isjaslav's son Jaropolk has appeared in Rome and, with his father's approval, exhibited due fidelity (debita fidelitas) to St Peter, and requested the 'kingship' by gift of St Peter through the pope's hands (donum sancti Petri per manus nostras). The letter confirms that, after due deliberation, the pope is consenting to grant the regnum Ruscorum to Jaropolk. The two aspects of the letter that raise the issue of fealty are Jaropolk's exhibition of debita fidelitas to St Peter and the assumption by both parties that the regnum is in the gift of the first apostle. More pertinently, what is being proposed is a mutually advantageous relationship whereby Isjaslav and his son would acquire papal backing for their attempts to regain the rulership of Kiev, while Gregory might successfully intrude the authority of the apostolic see in a distant land whose Christianity was of Byzantine origin. There is no evidence that either side profited significantly from their brief dalliance.

**Croatia and Zeta**

The discussion of the pope's dealings with Croatia noted Gregory's role in the election of King Zwonimir (1075-89) and alluded to his oath of fidelitas to the apostolic see, sworn in the presence of the papal legate, and recorded by the canonist Cardinal Deusdedit. The oath states that Zwonimir is receiving his authority from Gregory's legate, is being invested and established (investitus et constitutus) as king of Croatia and Dalmatia by election of the synod and the unanimous will of the clergy and people, and

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63 Reg. 5.12, p. 365.15-29. See above p. 125.
is receiving the vexillum, sword, sceptre and crown. He solemnly promises to implement without change all orders that the pope imposes on him, to be faithful to the apostolic see in all matters, and to implement everything in his kingdom that the apostolic see and its legates shall decide. In addition to these specific commitments to loyalty and obedience to the papacy, the king vows to promote iustitia and defend churches. Furthermore, he will enforce clerical celibacy, protect widows and orphans, institute a correct marriage discipline, end the slave trade, and ensure lawfulness and equity in all things. In return for the grant of the kingdom, Zwonimir will make an annual payment (tributum) to the apostolic see. The new king swears fealty to the pope and his successors. Not only is Zwonimir acknowledging that his kingdom is a papal fief, but is undertaking to conduct himself in a manner befitting a conscientious rex Christianus. Subsequent correspondence makes it clear that Gregory comprehended Zwonimir’s oath to have been the constitutive event which ‘made’ him king.

The same discussion observed that King Michael of Zeta, Croatia’s southern neighbour, asked for a vexillum from the pope, a request that Gregory, in a letter dated January 1078, said that he hoped to satisfy. King Michael may have been seeking a relationship with Rome similar to Zwonimir’s. What cannot be doubted is that he sought a banner from the apostolic see in order to gain papal legitimization, rather as William the Bastard achieved for his invasion of England in 1066.

Corsica and Sardinia

Strictly speaking, these strategically important islands are not germane to Gregory’s views on kingship. They are introduced here because the pope’s correspondence regarding them contains further examples of Gregory’s assertions of St Peter’s proprietorship over other territories. The Constitutum Constantini was discussed earlier. Given the absence of any mention of the Constitutum in the pope’s preserved letters, the possibility that it influenced his territorial claims must be conjectural. In particular, did the document’s granting of land in ‘Judea, Greece, Thrace, Africa and Italy and the various islands’ to the apostolic see, reinforce Gregory’s claims to papal

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64 Deusdedit, Collectio canonum, 3.278, pp. 383-5.
65 See above p. 125.
66 See above p. 126.
67 See above p. 178
jurisdiction over these two islands? Cowdrey (1997) had no doubt that Gregory would have invoked the Constitutum to justify his interest in islands like Corsica and Sardinia.

In autumn 1077, Gregory sent two letters to the people of Corsica. The first, dated 1 September, notifies them of the appointment of Bishop Landulf of Pisa (1077-9) as papal vicar over the island. It expresses, in mostly religious terms, the pope's concern for the salvation and welfare (utilitas) of the people. The second, dated 16 September, asserts that the island belongs to the holy Roman church 'properly, or by right of proprietorship' (ex dubito vel iuris proprietate). Adopting a stance reminiscent of his approach to Spain, Gregory states that Rome's proprietorship is not affected by Corsica's domination by others (the Franks, then the Pisans), who have not shown fidelitas, subiectio, or oboedientia to St Peter. It is Landulf's task to undo this criminal sacrilege, and restore the honor et iustitia of apostolic supremacy (principatus). Landulf will execute both ecclesiastical and temporal roles: he will act on the pope's behalf in spiritual matters, and rule the island zealously and diligently on behalf of St Peter. The letter ends by instructing the Corsicans to render fidelitas to Landulf should he request it, saving only their fidelitas to St Peter, Gregory, and his successors. In a further letter to Landulf, dated 30 November 1078, Gregory states his hope that, through the bishop's zeal, Corsica will be recalled, according to ancient custom, to the dominium of the apostolic see.

A letter dated 14 October 1073 from Gregory to the four judges of Sardinia urges the islanders to renew the devotion that their forbears showed to their mother, the holy Roman church. It adverts to the Church's right 'to exercise a special and so to speak private care' over the island. Should they fail to incline an ear of due obedience (debita oboedientia) to his exhortations and thereby imperil their country then they will have only themselves to blame. A few months later, a letter dated 16 January 1074 warns one of the judges, Orzoccus of Cagliari, that unless the pope receives a decision concerning a certain unspecified matter he will no longer hesitate to establish ius et

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68 Das Constitutum Constantini, lines 203-8, pp. 85-6.  
69 Cowdrey, 'Eleventh-century reformers', p. 82.  
70 Reg. 5.2, pp. 349.19-350.12.  
71 Reg. 5.4, pp. 351.24-352.28.  
72 Reg. 6.12, pp. 414.27-415.18.  
73 Reg. 1.29, pp. 46.23-47.22.
honor sancti Petri over Sardinia. Gregory's extant correspondence is silent on Sardinia until another letter, dated 1 October 1080, to Judge Orzoccus. It begins by thanking God that the judge has acknowledged beatus Petrus, and has shown due honour and reverence to Gregory's legate. Having clarified the apostolic see's position on the vexed issue of bearded clergy, the letter reveals that Gregory has received a number of requests – from the Normans, Tuscans, Lombards, and others – for the pope's permission to invade the island. The proposed arrangement would see the apostolic see governing half of Sardinia while the invading force would hold the other half ad fidelitatem to the papacy. The letter goes on to say that, thanks to the islanders' renewed devotion to St Peter, no such consent will be forthcoming, and ends with a reassurance that the Sardinians can be sure of St Peter's aid just as long as they persevere in their fidelitas to him. Gregory is apparently pleased at the Sardinians' declaration of devotion to the first apostle. Nevertheless, he is making it clear that powerful other rulers, who recognise St Peter's jurisdiction over the island, have suggested a settlement whereby they might accept part of Sardinia as a papal fief. This might be similar to the vassalage connection between the Italian Normans and the papacy. The pope is implying that Sardinian self-interest dictates that they continue to bind themselves to the protection of the apostolic see lest a worse fate befall them.

England

The discussion of the pope's dealings with William the Conqueror alluded briefly to Gregory's request for the king's fealty. His famous pastoral letter to the rex Anglorum, dated 24 April 1080, tells the king that he is 'fidelis sancti Petri et nostri'. This is a somewhat surprising use of fidelis, a term often used in eleventh-century sources to indicate a vassal relationship. The letter goes on to present Gregory's views on the duties of kingship and the proper relationship between regnum and sacerdotium before indicating that certain other matters will be conveyed to the king verbally. The clarity and brevity of William's written response suggests that it was probably composed by Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury. The opening greeting refers to the amicitia of pope
and king. Then follows a flat statement that the legate Hubert, acting on Gregory’s behalf, had urged William to perform fealty (fidelitatem facere) to the pope and to ensure the annual money payments (Peter’s pence) to Rome. The rex Anglorum bluntly refuses to perform fidelitas; he has never desired to do so, nor does he desire it now, for he has neither promised it on his own behalf nor can he discover that his (Anglo-Saxon) predecessors ever performed it to previous popes. Nonetheless, he undertakes to address the matter of the payments. David Bates (1989), a biographer of William, conjectured that the response illustrates the king’s wish to maintain the relationship between the Anglo-Norman lands and the papacy in the same condition as it was prior to 1073. The letter ends by requesting Gregory to pray for the king and his realm, and states William’s desire to love the pope and listen to him obediently above all others. Overall, the letter both affirms and circumscribes the king’s commitment to respect (diligere), and show oboedientia to, the apostolic see.

Gregory’s request for fealty has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate, much of it concerned with what exactly Gregory meant by fidelitas. Was he merely seeking personal fealty or, far more significantly, a fealty in respect of lands? Did he wish England to be a papal fief? Moreover, on what grounds was Gregory basing his claim? The most important contemporary sources on the issue are William’s letter and a document compiled towards the end of Gregory VII’s papacy by his ally, the canon lawyer Cardinal Deusdedit. The latter is included in Deusdedit’s Collectio canonum, assembled at Gregory’s instigation, and completed in 1087. Deusdedit’s intention was to compile a canon law collection that demonstrated Rome’s primacy among churches and provided guidance for all Christians. It includes fragments of an earlier (lost) letter from Alexander II to William, purportedly ‘proof’ of England’s subordination to the papacy. Deusdedit quotes Alexander as telling William that, from the time of the introduction of Christianity, the regnum Anglorum had been ‘under the power and protection of the first of the apostles’ until led astray by some sons of Satan. The second fragment refers to the payments by the English of Peter’s pence as an expression of their devotion to the

81 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 322-3.
apostolic see. Gregory would have known of Alexander’s letter, and may have been involved in its composition. It has been conjectured that Alexander based the papacy’s claim to English fealty on historical precedent, and that Gregory imitated his immediate predecessor and reinforced the claim by suggesting that Peter’s pence was some sort of vassal tribute. Gregory may also have thought that the papal support given to William in 1066 implied some form of fidelitas, especially if the Norman duke had received a vexillum (banner). David Douglas (1964), another biographer of William, had no doubt that the main reason for the demand for fealty related to William’s request for papal support in 1066, despite the king’s denial that he ever proffered homage. Many scholars have accepted that William received a vexillum. The conferment of a vexillum sancti Petri could indeed symbolize enfeoffment although that was not necessarily its import. William clearly rejected any notion that the apostolic see bestowed the kingship on him. It is also noteworthy that the inclusion of the phrase salutem cum amicitia in William’s opening greeting sets the king’s refusal to do fealty in the context of the friendship between the two men. In this era princely amicitia suggested friendly political cooperation, an alliance based upon mutual respect of sovereignty. Such a relationship would not comfortably have accommodated the notion of fealty.

Was the incident the result of an error in communication? Fliche (1924-37) speculated that the manner in which the request for fidelitas was conveyed to William distorted Gregory’s intentions, that the pope was merely seeking an acknowledgement of deference by the king towards the apostolic see. According to Ullmann (1970), the virtual indistinguishability of feudal language and Roman-papal language may have caused William to misunderstand Gregory’s ‘Roman’ terminology.

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82 Alexander II, JL 4757, MPL 146, col. 1413D; Deusdedit, Collectio Canonum, 3.150, p. 328.
87 Erdmann, Origin, p. 189.
88 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 647.
90 Ullmann, Growth, p. 340.
Gregory’s model oath for the rex Teutonicorum

This chapter opened with the bulk of the text of Gregory’s proposed oath for any future German king and emperor-in-waiting. It is included in a letter issued in the pope’s name, thought to date from March 1081. Gregory was now aware of the death the previous October of the anti-king Rudolf. Although the wording has features in common with the oaths of vassalage sworn by the Normans of southern Italy, it includes additional significant elements. It identifies Gregory as the living vicarius Sancti Petri. Furthermore, the king will render complete oboedientia to the apostolic see, and will safeguard the papacy’s entitlement to lands and rent (census) granted to it by Emperors Constantine and Charlemagne. The former may be a reference to the spurious Constitutum Constantini. The latter might allude to the so-called ‘Donation of Charlemagne’ (Donatio Caroli), long thought to have been the confirmation by Charlemagne in 774 of papal rights over extensive territory in central Italy. Apparently, in 756 Charlemagne’s father, Pippin III, had conceded these lands, the basis for the future Papal States, to the apostolic see (‘Donation of Pippin’). The oath also states that the king will yield due honor and utilitas to God and St Peter. In both its general tenor and the use of specific words – oboedientia, honor, utilitas – the emphasis seems to be on the future king’s commitment to rule in a manner consistent with Gregory’s ideal rex Christianus. The final sentence could be construed as a commitment by the king and prospective emperor to become per manus (a ‘feudal’ act of homage?) a knight (miles) of St Peter and of the pope. However, there is not universal agreement on this interpretation. As noted above, the word miles, usually translated as knight, soldier, or warrior, could also mean a vassal. Consequently, the oath might have committed the future king and emperor to a vassal relationship with St Peter.

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91 See above p. 254.  
92 See above p. 178.  
94 See Noble, Republic, pp. 93-4.  
95 See pp. 206ff for Gregory’s view that utilitas is a key characteristic of the ideal rex Christianus.  
97 H.E.J. Cowdrey draws attention to the problem: Cowdrey, Register, p. 403, n. 14.
In conclusion, this review of Gregory's correspondence casts doubt on Jordan's notion that the pope was engaged in a systematic attempt to enfold the realms of western Christendom in 'feudal' relationships with the apostolic see. On the contrary, the alliances between the apostolic see and the rulers of western Christendom lacked any pattern that is discernibly 'systematic'. There were many arrangements by which a prince could acknowledge the patrocinium beati Petri. The language of feudalism, particularly fidelitas, obviously lent itself to expressing the dependence of earthly sovereigns on the pope, who would represent them before the judgement of God. The evidence of a 'curial feudal policy' during Gregory's pontificate is unconvincing. The language that we think of as 'feudal' could be mobilized to define accords that were clearly non-vassalic, including full-blown alliances, non-aggression pacts, or connections involving service to Rome. In defining relationships between regnum and sacerdotium, this pope does not seem to have had any preconceived template for binding kingships to the apostolic see. On the contrary, he appears to have been flexible and pragmatic, adapting his approach to each territory according to his perception of its ruler and his understanding of the prevailing political circumstances.
3.9 *Duæ epistolæ ad Metensem episcopum*

Who can doubt but that the priests of Christ are to be considered the fathers and masters of kings and princes and of all the faithful? Is it not considered miserable madness for a son to attempt to subject to himself his father, a pupil his master; and for one to bring into his power and bind with iniquitous bonds him by whom he believes that he himself can be bound and loosed not only on earth but also in Heaven? (cf. Matt. 16: 19)

This passage is from the last of six preserved letters from Pope Gregory to Bishop Hermann (1073-90) of the suffragan diocese of Metz in the Lotharingian ecclesiastical province of Trier. Reg. 8.21 bears the date 15 March 1081. At 3,013 words, it is by far the longest of Gregory's *epistolae*. It was widely circulated in Germany, initially through the so-called 'Gregorian friendship network'. Reg. 8.21 is the pope's reply to a request from this leading German prelate for an authoritative defence of the re-excommunication of King Henry at the Lenten synod of 1080. It consists largely of elaborate justifications for his actions against the *rex Teutonicorum*, and is central to this dissertation because Gregory uses it to set out his current ideas on the proper roles of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* at a point five years after the outbreak of his conflict with the German king in early 1076. It was the second occasion on which Gregory's chancery had issued a polemical written response to such a request from Hermann. Its precursor, Reg. 4.2 dated 15 August 1076, responds to a similar inquiry from the bishop, who was seeking Gregory's justification for the first excommunication of King Henry at Lent 1076. At 1,007 words, the 1076 letter is a third the length of its 1081 successor. Comparing the two, A.J. Carlyle (1921) described the later letter as drawing out principles more fully and stating conclusions more sharply. For Robinson (1978) the letters are obvious examples of Gregory's anxiety to provide the faithful with manuals instructing them on

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1 Reg. 8.21, p. 553.1-6: *Quis dubitet sacerdotes Christi regum et principalium omniumque fidelium patres et magistros censeri? Nonne miserabilis insaniae esse cognoscitur, si filius patrem, discipulus magistrum sibi conetur subiugare et iniquis obligationibus illum suae potestati subicere, a quo credit non solum in terra, sed etiam in caelis se ligari posse et solvi?*

2 Reg. 1.53 (16 Mar. 1074), Reg. 3.11 (14 Mar. 1076), Reg. 4.2 (15 Aug. 1076), Reg. 4.21 (6 Apr. 1077), Reg. 6.5 (22 Oct. 1078), Reg. 8.21 (15 Mar. 1081).


4 Carlyle and Carlyle, *History* 4, pp. 204-5.
obedience to the apostolic see. These two doctrinal letters seek to depict the absurdity of the view that the pope has no right to excommunicate the king. Ullmann (1970) cited them to illustrate the 'hierocratic' theory of the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*.

The struggle between the spiritual and secular powers put the imperial episcopate under pressure to choose sides. There are good reasons for believing that the intended audience for the 1076 letter was restricted to German clerics. However, it was Gregory's intention that the 1081 *epistola* should be widely disseminated. It became the most influential of his letters. The two tracts have been described as the most obvious examples of Gregory's preoccupation with providing the faithful with material instructing them on the necessity of obedience to the apostolic see. The precise content of Hermann's own letters is unknown since they have not survived. We deduce his concerns from Gregory's replies. These two *apologiae* set forth the pope's ideas and sources regarding papal authority, Christian kingship, and the appropriate relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. This is achieved by means of a series of distinct, coherent passages, which this discussion will refer to as 'arguments'. They include a number of assertions that generated much controversy. Although this chapter's primary focus is the 1081 *epistola*, it begins with a short review of its far less comprehensive predecessor with a view to determining what a comparison of the two documents reveals about the evolution of the pope's views and priorities between these two crucial junctures in the struggle.

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8 Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, p. 211.
9 Ibid., p. 626.
11 Caspar's edition of the Register separates the 'arguments' visually by presenting each as a distinct paragraph. Cowdrey's translation follows Caspar's lead.
The 1076 letter (Reg. 4.2, pp. 293.17-297.23)

It seems that this letter was written in haste. It opens with a tetchy complaint, which suggests that Gregory would have preferred to respond at greater length:

By your questioning, you are seeking many things of me who am exceedingly busy, and you send a messenger who presses me too much at his own pleasure. Accordingly, if I do not reply sufficiently, I ask you to bear it with patience.

Evidently, Hermann had inquired about the pope’s physical health and his dealings with the Romans and the Normans. Gregory says that the letter’s bearer will inform the bishop on these matters. Before addressing Hermann’s other concerns, the pope expresses his hope that St Peter will answer through himself, ‘for he is often honoured or suffers injury in me, his servant such as I am’. At the outset, therefore, Gregory is emphasizing his role as mouthpiece for the first apostle. Although the letter ends with a petitio concerning some matters of church administration, the bulk of it is composed of six arguments covering matters integral to the conflict. They can be divided into two overall themes. Three of the six arguments (#1, #5, #6) address the continuing excommunications of the king and of other German clerics and laymen – their causes, consequences, and the conditions of any possible absolution. These issues do not resurface in the 1081 letter. The general theme of the other three arguments (#2, #3, #4) is the subordination of regnum to sacerdotium: its nature, authority, and supposed precedents. These topics are discussed at considerably greater length in the 1081 document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Register reference</th>
<th>1081 (Reg. 8.21)</th>
<th>Arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identification of excommunicates</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, pp. 293.28-294.3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Authorities, precedents for excommunicating, deposing kings</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, p. 294.4-23</td>
<td>Yes, greatly expanded</td>
<td>2, 4, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Source of sacerdotal authority, kings not excepted.</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, pp. 294.24-295.19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comparison of royal, episcopal dignities</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, pp. 295.20-296.7</td>
<td>Yes, greatly expanded</td>
<td>7, 9, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conditions for absolution</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, p. 296.8-22</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Recalcitrant bishops</td>
<td>Reg. 4.2, pp. 296.22-297.3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 612.
14 Reg. 4.2, p. 293.19-21: ‘Multa interrogando a me valde occupato requiris et multium, qui me nimis impellat ad sui licentiam, transmittis. Quocirca, si non satis respondeo, patiencer feras rogo.’
The theme of the first of the three arguments (#1) whose subject-matter does not find a place in the 1081 letter is the excommunication imposed on many of Henry’s supporters. Hermann’s letter had obviously asked the pope to identify these individuals since the pope replies that the question is unnecessary; they are obviously those bishops, priests, or laymen who are still in contact with the king, ‘if it is right that he should be called king’. Through their support for him, these transgressors are driving Henry further towards the wrath of God. Gregory reminds Hermann that the king earned his anathema by maintaining contact with the five advisers excommunicated by Pope Alexander in early 1073. The second of these three arguments (#5) is the only one of the six that cites no auctoritates. It addresses the circumstances under which an excommunicate might earn absolution. Gregory tells Hermann that, having received a number of letters (lost) on this subject from brother bishops and dukes, he is authorising them to absolve any excommunicate who henceforth has the courage to refrain from communion with the king – even if it was the pope himself who had excommunicated him. As for the possible granting of absolution to King Henry, Gregory makes clear that no bishop, whether led astray by fear or favour, or misled by any pretext that seems to emanate from the pope, may absolve the king. The only circumstances that might secure the lifting of the royal excommunication would be the receipt by the pope of trustworthy reports of Henry’s assured penitence and sincere satisfaction. In that event, Gregory himself will decide the issue of a possible absolution. The third argument whose subject matter is not addressed in the later letter (#6) concerns the status of recalcitrant bishops who refuse to obey the apostolic see. In the course of a vitriolic attack on them, the pope cites scriptural authorities and Gregory the Great to depict them as idolaters (cf. 1 Sam. 15: 23), accursed (cf. Jer. 48: 10), and an execration before God. Those who are accursed and excommunicate cannot bestow divine grace when they deny that very grace by their own works.

As for the second overall theme, the appropriate relationship between regnum and sacerdotium, arguments #2, #3, and #4 address three fundamental issues. Argument #2 concerns authorities and precedents for excommunicating and deposing kings; #3

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15 Reg. 4.2, pp. 293.28-294.2.
16 Reg. 4.2, p. 296.8-21.
17 Gregory I, Reg. 4.20, 689-90.
18 Reg. 4.2, p. 296.23-31.
addresses the theme that kingship is not exempted from the subordination of all Christians to the papacy; #4 compares the royal and episcopal dignities. For the purposes of comparison, our examination of the 1081 letter will review these three arguments.

It is noticeable that one significant authority for excommunicating or deposing kings cited in argument #2 is omitted from the later letter. This is St Paul. Gregory quotes Paul's report of St Peter's instructions to the Christian community at the ordination of St Clement, when he emphasized the need to be 'ready to avenge every act of disobedience' (2 Cor. 10: 6). Since the preceding verse in Paul's actual text speaks of casting down 'every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor. 10: 5), it can be understood why the pope regarded this as a useful auctoritas for his own actions in relation to Henry's disoboedientia. The 1076 epistola also invites the foolish (fatui) to consider to whom St Paul refers when he says, 'With such a man not even to take food' (1 Cor. 5: 11). The unquoted preceding words in Paul's text inform us that his admonition applies to whosoever is a fornicator, covetous, an idolater, a 'railer', a drunkard, or an extortioner. While Henry's personal reputation was certainly not spotless, it is a moot point whether his behaviour would have met Paul's criteria for exclusion.

The letter employs the subjunctive – 'let them read' (legant), 'let them learn' (addiscant), etc. – to direct those who question the apostolic see's authority to investigate for themselves some of the sources that Gregory identifies as precedents and authorities. The letter's hasty composition may explain, in part at least, the brevity of the provided synopses of these sources. As will be seen, four of the sources are discussed in considerably greater depth in the 1081 letter. Ullmann (1970) noted the 'exemplary unambiguity' of a crucial statement in argument #3: 'And if the holy apostolic see, deciding through the pre-eminent power that is divinely conferred upon it, settles spiritual matters, why not also secular matters?'. This is an argument a fortiori. Melve (2007) observed that the claim is obviously relevant to the hierocratic theme, and that while the idea recurrently underlies Gregory's 'ultimatum letter' of December 1075 to

King Henry, it is unprecedented in papal correspondence with a fellow member of the sacerdotium.\textsuperscript{20}

Cowdrey (1998) compared the 1076 letter to Hermann with the Dictatus Papae. Unlike the DP, the epistola sought to 'discover, educate, and persuade'. In the case of Hermann, it evidently succeeded. He had attended the assembly of German bishops in Worms on January 26 that agreed to withdraw recognition of Gregory's pontificate.\textsuperscript{21} Even though he was one of two prelates who declared the proceedings to be uncanonical, his presence indicates that he was unsure of his loyalties. However, after receiving this letter a few months later, Hermann never again seriously wavered in his backing for Gregory.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{20} Melve, Inventing, p. 224, also n. 284. See also Reg. 3.10, pp. 263.23-267.29.
\textsuperscript{21} See above p. 69.
\textsuperscript{22} Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 148.
The brief *salutatio* is followed by fourteen arguments:

**SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS IN 1081 LETTER TO HERMANN OF METZ (Reg. 8.21)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Register reference</th>
<th>1076 (Reg. 4.2)</th>
<th>Arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exhortation: courage, endurance, danger, battle for Christian truth.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, p. 547.3-16</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concerning those who question the authority for Gregory's actions.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 547.17-548.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Papal primacy, Petrine commission; kings not excepted.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, p. 548.10-25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Patristic authorities for papal primacy over regna.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 548.26-550.18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Henry as shameless robber, destroyer of the Church, and false friend.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 550.19-552.4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Origins of kingship in godless criminality; scriptural and patristic authorities for superiority of sacerdotium.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 552.5-553-22</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>'Precedents' for excommunication, deposition of kings, emperors.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 553.23-555.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If even exorcists have more power than the laity, how much more authority have priests?</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 555.10-556.9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Priests rank above kings, the pope even more so.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 556.10-557.11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Comparison of good Christians with tyrannical kings.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, p. 557.12-19</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Wicked, simoniacal clergy who are bound to the king.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 557.20-558.3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Papacy's role to instruct kings on the dangers of pride and the need for humility for salvation; comparison between few kings who loved <em>iustitia</em> and vast majority enticed by vain glory.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 558.4-560.13</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Those aspiring to reign with Christ should not seek secular power; the inherent merit of the papacy.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 560.14-561.23</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Church anoints kings; they should acknowledge priests as their masters and fathers, promote <em>iustitia</em>, display humilitas.</td>
<td>Reg. 8.21, pp. 561.14-562.25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
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**Argument #1:** The faithful must be courageous in the battle for Christian truth.\(^{23}\)

Following the *salutatio*, the letter launches into an exhortation to God's chosen to show courage and endurance in the battle to defend Christian truth. Undoubtedly, much of this is designed to reassure those who have faltered through doubt or fear that they

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\(^{23}\) Reg. 8.21, p. 547.3-16.
may still avail of God’s grace and clemency to steady them. Gregory does not mention Hermann’s own previous hesitation and there can be no doubt that his words of comfort are to be understood as being generally targeted at waverers within the German episcopate.

**Argument #2: Concerning those who question the authority for Gregory’s actions.**

This crucial topic arises in a truncated form in the 1076 letter (argument #2). This later letter presents a considered answer to the bishop’s request that the pope provide answers to help and fortify Hermann against ‘the madness (insania) of those who chatter with wicked mouth’ that the apostolic see does not possess the authority to excommunicate King Henry or to absolve his subjects from their oaths of fealty to him. Ullmann (1970) surmised that this wording reflects Gregory’s irritation that Hermann might doubt the apostolic see’s right to release Henry’s subjects from their oaths. The depiction of the king as ‘a man who is a despiser of the Christian law in that he is a destroyer of churches and the empire, and the author and accomplice of heretics’, obviously underlines the insania of those who question the pope’s entitlement to condemn him. Where the 1076 letter speaks of the great foolishness (magna fatuitas) of such people, in 1081 Gregory is now excoriating them as insani. Before identifying some of the ‘many and sure instructions’ (multa ac certissima documenta) in sacra scriptura that uphold the legitimacy of his actions, the pope takes a measured swipe at his wicked opponents who, he says, have brazenly misappropriated these texts, either out of ignorance or from wretched despair.

**Argument #3: Papal primacy, refutation of royal exceptionalism**

This subject is also discussed in both letters. We have noted some of the numerous allusions to the Petrine commission in Gregory’s correspondence. This comprises two verses in Matthew’s gospel (Matt. 16: 18-19) that provide the fundamental scriptural basis for the apostolic see’s claim to universal spiritual authority. In the 1076 letter (3)

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24 Ibid., p. 547.5-8.
25 Reg. 8.21, pp. 547.17-548.9.
26 Ullmann, Growth, p. 303, n. 2; Ullmann thought that the many exclamatory rhetorical questions also testify to Gregory’s irritation with the doubters: see ibid., p. 286, n. 1.
27 Reg. 8.21, p. 548.3-6.
28 Ibid., p. 548.10-25.
29 For the text, see above p. 167.
the justification of royal subordination to Rome is structured around four rhetorical questions. The first asks if God excepted kingship when he thrice committed his church to blessed Peter with the words ‘feed my sheep’ (John 21: 15-17). The Church Fathers and subsequent theologians regarded John 21: 15-17 as part of the Petrine commission. Gregory clearly shared this view. Having posed this question, he immediately asks why the doubters do not shamefacedly acknowledge that when God gave Peter the power of binding and loosing he excluded nobody, and withheld nothing, from Peter’s power. The 1076 letter goes on to argue a fortiori that, given the apostolic see’s entitlement to settle spiritual matters by means of this divinely conferred pre-eminent power, why not also secular matters? This is followed by a comparison between membra Christi who obey God’s command, and those kings and princes who are membra antichristi, since they set their own honour and temporal gains before iustitia Dei. The 1076 letter’s discussion of the question of royal exemption from subordination to the papacy ends by rephrasing the third question, essentially replacing ‘matters’ with ‘men’: if spiritual men are judged when necessary, why are not secular ones even more under constraint with regard to their wicked acts?  

The discourse on this subject in the 1081 letter begins by quoting both verses of Matthew’s Petrine commission (Matt. 16: 18-19). Then comes a rhetorical echo of the 1076 letter’s reference to John’s gospel: are kings not among the sheep whom the son of God has committed to St Peter (cf. John 21: 17)? It has been suggested that the abundance of exclamatory rhetorical questions in the letter reflect Gregory’s ‘justifiable irritation’. Having asked who considers himself to be excluded from St Peter’s power to bind and loose, Gregory answers his own question by referencing another passage in Matthew: such an unhappy man is one who, unwilling to bear the yoke of the Lord (cf. Matt. 11: 30), has chosen instead to bear the burden of the devil rather than be one of Christ’s sheep. Extending the burden metaphor, the letter declares that a man who has shaken from his proud neck the power of Peter divinely granted to him has not advanced towards a misera libertas; rather, his pride and self-glory has rendered him

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31 Ullmann, Growth, p. 286, n. 1.
32 For Gregory’s views on the division of men between followers of Christ or the devil, see Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 532-4.
liable to damnation. The unmistakable message is the profound sinfulness of the king’s refusal to show oboedientia to the apostolic see.

Argument #4: Patristic authorities for papal primacy over regna

Although the 1076 document addressed this topic (#2), this letter devotes far more space to it. Three of the four supposed authorities or precedents in the earlier letter are set out at greater length in this later document, but St Paul is absent. The three in question are the supposed deposition by Pope Zacharias (741-52) of the ‘king of the Franks’, the inclusion in certain ecclesiastical privileges by Pope Gregory I of the excommunication and forfeiture of office of kings and dukes who contravened his words, and the excommunication of the Emperor Theodosius I (379-85) by Archbishop Ambrose of Milan (374-97). The first two are discussed in this argument, Ambrose in argument #7 below. However, they are just three among many that this second letter cites to clarify and justify the subordination of regnum to sacerdotium.

Argument #4 begins with a considered affirmation of the basis of auctoritas sedes apostolica. Divine will handed the governance of the Church to St Peter, and this was confirmed by heavenly decree. The Holy Fathers received and confirmed this privilege with great veneration. In their councils, writings, and deeds they designated the holy Roman church as the universal mother. These same Fathers received her teachings and judgements. By one spirit and voice, they agreed that all greater matters of business and the judgements of the churches should be referred to their mother and head; no appeal should be made against her, and her judgements should be neither revised nor rejected. Gregory invokes three Church Fathers to support the legitimacy of the pope’s treatment of Henry. This study has referred on more than one occasion to the passage in the letter of 494 from Pope Gelasius I to Emperor Anastasius I that addresses the separation and interdependence of the spiritual and temporal authorities. It will be encountered again in this inquiry. However, at this point it should be noted that a

33 Reg. 8.21, p. 548.16-25.
34 Ibid., pp. 548.26-550.18.
35 See above p. 281.
39 See esp. above pp. 8ff., 152, 174.
proximate subsequent statement in the same Gelasian letter is quoted by Gregory to support his claim for the primacy of the see of Rome over all priests and the entire Church:

Even if it is fitting that the necks of the faithful should in general be subjected to all priests who rightly handle divine things, how much more should consent be accorded to the bishop of the see which both the supreme godhead wished to be superior to all priests and also the subsequent devotion of the whole church has continuously celebrated.40

Argument #4 goes on to refer to a letter that Pope Julius I (337-52) wrote to the eastern episcopate, reproving them for their failure to speak courteously of the holy see. Julius quotes the Petrine commission and reminds the bishops that the first apostle has the power to open and close the gates of heaven to whom he wills. For Gregory this is another cue to assert the right of the apostolic see to adjudicate in temporal matters. He does so with another a fortiori question: is the one who has the power of opening and closing heaven not also allowed to judge concerning the earth? He enlists St Paul to reinforce the point with yet another rhetorical argument a fortiori: 'Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more worldly things!' (cf. I Cor. 6: 3). Having used Gelasius I to claim the apostolic see’s authority over all Christians, and Julius I to profess its right to judge earthly matters, the argument turns to a third patristic source to claim the papacy’s entitlement to depose kings. The passage in question, mentioned in both the 1076 and the 1081 letters, is found near the end of a privilege issued by Gregory I.41

The earlier letter suggests that Gregory VII’s doubters learn from the Register of beatus Gregorius that in certain church privileges, he not only excommunicated kings and dukes who contravened his words, but also adjudged that they had forfeited their offices.42

Similarly, the 1081 letter states that Gregory I ruled that a king who presumes to transgress the decrees of the apostolic see shall fall from office. It backs this up by

40 Gelasius I, Ep. 8, col. 0042C: 'Et si cunctis generaliter sacerdotibus recte divina tractantibus, fidelium convent corda submitti, quanto potius sedis illius praesuli consensus est adhibendus, quem cunctis sacerdotibus et Divinitas summa voluit praeminerre, et subsequens Ecclesiae generalis jugiter pietas celebravit?'

41 Gregory I, Reg. 13.9, 1004-6. This is the first of three nearly identical privileges, which Gregory I granted in November 602 in response to a petition by Brunchild, the dowager Queen of the Franks. The establishments concerned are a hospice, a church, and a convent. See also Gregory I, Reg. 13.10, 13.11, 1007-11. Fuhrmann cited Gregory's misrepresentation as an example of verschärfende Umbiegung: Fuhrmann, ‘Quod catholicus’, p. 285, n. 68.

42 Reg. 4.2, p. 294.16-17.
quoting the actual words of Gregory I that the apostolic see has the power both to depose and excommunicate errant kings, and that furthermore they will thereafter endure strict retribution and eternal scrutiny. Gregory VII refers to this extract in two other important letters, dated 31 May 1077, to his legates in Germany, and the German faithful respectively.\textsuperscript{45} All four epistolae give the impression that beatus Gregorius was issuing a doctrinal statement, whereas it was nothing more than a conventional protective anathema clause of a kind regularly included in certain types of papal privilege, in this instance for a hospice (\textit{xenodochium}) in Autun, Burgundy.\textsuperscript{44} While argument #4 is concerned with patristic justifications for the papal excommunication and deposition of kings, it might usefully be read in conjunction with argument #7 (below), which relates supposed actual precedents of such actions.

\textit{Argument #5: Henry as shameless robber, destroyer of the Church, and false friend}\textsuperscript{45}

The text now digresses from the general theme of the subordination of \textit{regnum} to \textit{sacerdotium} to the particular case of Henry IV. It poses yet another rhetorical question, extrapolated from the anathema clause in the aforementioned privilege of Gregory I. The particular importance of the four references to beatus Gregorius in this letter has been noted.\textsuperscript{46} If, asks the letter, the mild blessed Gregory was willing to depose, excommunicate, and condemn kings over a single hospital, who can take Pope Gregory VII to task for deposing and excommunicating Henry, that treader underfoot of mother Church, shameless robber, and fierce destroyer of the whole kingdom and of churches? Under the guise of friendship, the king is doing the work of the Church’s enemies. In effect, he is the enemy within. As such, he is far worse than the obvious, external foes of the Church.

\textit{Argument #6: Secular origins of kingship in godless criminality, scriptural and patristic authorities for superiority of sacerdotium}.\textsuperscript{47}

Having emphasized the exceptional iniquity of King Henry, the letter returns to the general relationship between \textit{regnum} and \textit{sacerdotium}. Here we encounter an assertion

\textsuperscript{45} Reg. 4.23, pp. 335.26-336.7; Reg. 4.24, p. 338.8-13.
\textsuperscript{44} See Robinson, \textit{Authority}, pp. 140-1.
\textsuperscript{45} Reg. 8.21, pp. 550.19-552.4.
\textsuperscript{46} See above p. 177.
\textsuperscript{47} Reg. 8.21, pp. 552.5-553-22.
of the inherent inferiority of secular authority to the priesthood. It begins with an attack on the provenance of kingship, that in effect it was invented by Godless men. As such, should it not be subject to that dignitas that God mercifully gave to the world?

Who may not know that kings and dukes have had their origin from those who, being ignorant of God (cf. Gal. 4: 8), by pride, rapines, treachery, murders – at length by practically all crimes whatsoever, with the devil, the prince of the world, indeed urging them on, have presumed by blind greed and insupportable presumption to lord it over their equals, namely men?

A.J. Carlyle (1909) considered this passage as emphatic and startling, but pointed out other letters in which Gregory spoke in very different terms. They describe secular authority as derived from God, as finding its true character in the defence and maintenance of iustitia, and hoping for true concordia between the two authorities appointed by God to rule the world, namely the sacerdotium and the imperium. Carlyle stressed that the above passage must be seen in the context of the purpose of the two letters: to refute as absurd the arguments of those who contend that it is neither lawful nor proper for the pope to excommunicate a king or emperor. Ullmann (1970) thought that no other doctrine of Gregory VII generated as much misunderstanding as this allegation regarding the sinful origin of the ‘State’. Robinson (1978) and Melve (2007) conjectured that the passage is grounded in an Augustinian view of the origins of secular power whereby earthly sovereignty (dignitas) is regarded as a creation of men rather than God, and kingdoms from which iustitia is removed are merely bands of robbers (latrocinia). Morris (1989) observed that the notoriety of Gregory’s claim that kings came into existence because of sin arose because it obviously stripped the royal office of much of its dignity. The declaration of the diabolic origins of kingship obviously leaves little room for traditional notions of royal sacrality. It is hardly surprising that imperial supporters regarded this part of the letter as nothing short of an assault on the very

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48 Ibid., p. 552.13-17: ‘Quis nesciat reges et duces ab ills habuisse principium, qui Deum ignorantes superbia rapinis perfidia homicidiis postremo universis pene sceleribus mundi principe diabolo videlicet agitante super pares, scilicet homines, dominari caeca cupidine et intollerabili presumptione affectaverunt?’

49 Reg. 1.19, pp. 31.22-32.25; Reg. 2.30, pp. 163.15-165.7; Reg. 2.51, pp. 192.29-194.17; Reg. 5.10, pp. 361.18-363.21; Reg. 6.13, pp. 415.37-418.3.

50 Carlyle and Carlyle, History 3, pp. 92-7.

51 Ullmann, Growth, p. 271, n. 1.


53 Morris, Papal monarchy, p. 227.
basis of sacral kingship. Warming to the theme, the letter now presents the claim quoted at the start of this chapter, which asserts the status of priests as the fathers and masters of secular rulers, and the madness of sons who wish to subject their fathers to themselves. The passage also reminds us yet again that Gregory regarded Matthew’s Petrine commission as his trump card when he proclaimed the universal authority of the apostolic see.54

The argument goes on to cite the writings of two prominent Church Fathers on the subject of relations between sacerdotium and imperium. The first alludes to a letter of Gregory I, which tells of the deference shown by the Emperor Constantine towards the assembled bishops at the Nicene synod of 325.55 The second named Father is Gelasius I. This study has already referred a number of times to the passage in Gelasius’s hugely influential letter of 494 to Emperor Anastasius, which articulates the so-called ‘Gelasian theory’ of the dual relationship between regnum and sacerdotium.56 The discussion of argument #4 in this 1081 letter noted Gregory’s use of a subsequent passage in the same Gelasian letter to justify the apostolic see’s primacy over the entire Church. Now Reg. 8.21 invokes the earlier Gelasian passage. It develops the hierocratic interpretation by emphasizing Gelasius’s statement referring to the weightier burden of the priesthood, who must render account even for kings in the divine judgement. The argument’s selective use of the passage, omitting Gelasius’s references to the emperor’s ‘presiding over the human race’, has been characterized as tendentious because it conveys the completely misleading impression that Gelasius demanded unlimited imperial subjection to the sacerdotium.57 Argument #6 closes with a reference to another passage slightly later in the same Gelasian letter, which states that since royal powers depend upon the judgement of the priesthood in matters concerning death and salvation, they should not seek to subject priests to their will.58

54 See above p. 275
55 Gregory I, Reg. 5.36, 305-6.
56 See esp. above pp. 8ff, 152, 174ff. See above p. 8 for the text
58 Gelasius I, Ep. 8, col. 0042B.
Argument #7: Alleged precedents and more authorities

This argument builds upon the previous arguments, especially #4. Therefore, argument #7 begins, based on these teachings and authorities there are very many (plerique) precedents for the excommunication of kings or emperors. Three alleged historical examples of such excommunications are now identified, two by popes and one by a bishop. The writer apparently seeks to give the impression that these are merely three of a number of examples that he could cite if he so wished. The first case is the supposed excommunication of Emperor Arcadius by Pope Innocent I. The source of this ‘event’ is a letter, ostensibly from Innocent, but now known to be spurious. The second and third examples also arise in the 1076 letter (argument #2). The second is the story that in 751 Pope Zacharias deposed King Childeric III of the Franks because he was a rex inutilis, replaced him with Pippin III, and absolved the Franks from the oaths to the deposed king. The 1081 letter also mentions that Pippin was the father of the future Emperor Charlemagne. This may be implicitly intended to further justify Pippin’s promotion. A previous chapter discussed Walter Affeldt’s debunking of the myth of the papal deposition of Childeric. On the subject of oaths of fealty, the letter states that the Church often absolves knights from their oaths to bishops who are subsequently deposed by apostolic authority. The third example is St Ambrose’s supposed excommunication of Emperor Theodosius. However, Ambrose’s denunciation of the emperor was not the complete exclusion of Theodosius from the Church that the term ‘excommunication’ implied in Gregory VII’s time. The cause of this episcopal confrontation with a secular ruler was Theodosius’ order to restore a burnt-down synagogue. Ambrose regarded this as apostasy. When Theodosius appeared for Mass in the cathedral of Milan, Ambrose denounced him publicly and refused to continue celebrating the Eucharist unless the emperor retracted the order. He did so immediately. Gregory’s three examples do not qualify as substantial precedents for the excommunication of kings and emperors. Nevertheless, the letter presents them as

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59 Reg. 8.21, pp. 553.23-555.9.
60 For a useful discussion of this topic, see Jasper, ‘Deposition and excommunication’.
61 See Cowdrey, Register, p. 391, n. 19.
evidence for longstanding papal authority over secular rulers. There is, of course, no reason to believe that the pope himself harboured any doubts regarding their validity. The remainder of argument #7 concerns two Ambrosian statements that unambiguously affirm the superiority of sacerdotium over regnum.

Argument #8: Even exorcists have more power than the laity

This passage is intended to drive home the point that the highest secular power is subordinate to even the lowest member of the clergy. In the early Church, exorcists were one of the four so-called ‘minor orders’, the lowest level in the hierarchy. The argument opens by stating that all lay authority is inferior to the power of exorcists to drive out demons. Regrettably, it continues, demons have dominion over those kings and princes who do not fear God. The latter are men of intolerable pride who seek to dominate others that they may fulfil the lust of their souls. The argument concludes swiftly that if God gives exorcists command over demons, how much more so over those who are subject to demons (membra demonum)? Furthermore, if exorcists so greatly excel them (i.e. impious rulers), how much more do priests?

Argument #9: Priests rank above kings, the pope even more so

This argument begins with one of the profusion of conjunctive adverbs used by the letter to connect the individual arguments and develop an overall case for the supremacy of the apostolic see. Moreover (preterea), says the writer, at the hour of his death every Christian king supplicably and pitiably seeks the help of a priest; the reverse is never true. Some rhetorical questions follow. Can a king or emperor baptise an individual to save him from the devil, or strengthen him with holy chrism? Who of them can consecrate the body and blood of the Lord, and who of them has received the power of binding and of loosing in heaven and on earth? These things clearly prove the great pre-eminence of priestly power. The text reinforces the message by pointing out that no king can ordain or depose a priest. Now the argument moves speedily to its climax. Having briefly mentioned the lesser authority of other bishops compared to the apostolic, see it closes with another question: who can doubt that if priests judge kings for their sins then who should more rightly judge them than the Roman pontiff?

65 Reg. 8.21, pp. 553.23-556.9.
66 Ibid., pp. 556.10-557.11.
Argument #10: Comparison of good Christians with tyrannical kings

The writer now summarizes (ad summam) the preceding arguments. This passage resonates with argument #6's allusion to the godless origins of kingship. Since evil princes seek their own rather than godly things they are less deserving of being regarded as kings than is any good Christian. These mali principes are the body of the devil (diaboli corpus) (cf. 1 Cor. 12: 27). They are tyrannical oppressors whose acts will lead them into eternal damnation with the prince of darkness, who is king over all such sons of pride (cf. Job 41: 25). The clear inference is that Henry is numbered among these tyranni.

Argument #11: Wicked, simoniacal clergy who are bound to the king

Now the letter turns on the prelates who are supporting the evil king (iniquus rex), whom they love and fear. These simoniacs ordain all and sundry, even selling God for a low price. They are resolutely banded with the head of wickedness against the good. The text prescribes tearful lamentations on their behalf, in the hope that Almighty God will eventually lead them away from the snares of Satan (lagueus Sathanae) by which they are held captive (cf. 2 Tim. 2: 26), and towards the truth. As Cowdrey (1998) observed, Gregory always kept open the possibility, God's mercies being infinite, that his opponents - even excommunicates - might repent.

Argument #12: Papacy’s role to instruct kings

Cowdrey (1998) viewed the last three arguments of Reg. 8.21 as proposing a new and startling moralization of kingship. Argument #12, the longest in the letter, begins by dismissing those kings and emperors who, puffed up by worldly glory, reign for themselves rather than for God. Incidentally - or perhaps not - this is the first of seven sentences in this argument that associate kings and emperors. For the first time, the letter introduces the pedagogic role of the universal authority of the apostolic see. The papacy has a pre-ordained responsibility to exhort emperors, kings, and princes on God's behalf to abandon pride, and to provide them with the weapons of humility. They should recognize the inherent dangers of the imperial and royal dignities, for few are saved.

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68 See Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 532.
69 Reg. 8.21, pp. 557.20-558.3.
70 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 534.
71 Reg. 8.21, pp. 558.4-560.13.
72 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 626-8.
all 'authentic writings' (autentica scriptura) from the beginning of the world we do not find seven emperors or kings whose lives have been distinguished by religion and adorned by the power of miracles. No emperor or king, no matter how venerated for his holiness, has ever performed miracles such as raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and giving sight to the blind. The letter identifies five long-dead secular rulers who loved iustitia, propagated religion, and defended churches. Their number is minuscule compared to the multitude of despisers of the world, many of whom may nevertheless have found salvation through God's mercy. The text quotes a chilling warning from scripture, 'the powerful will more powerfully suffer torments' (Wisd. 6: 7), before expounding on the immensity of the responsibility of princes for the care of the souls of their many subjects. Since holy Church punishes a sinner for the death of just one man, what of those who deliver thousands to their death for the sake of worldly honour?

They pay lip service to the notion of penitence, but they rejoice for the increase in their worldly honour rather than grieve at having driven their brothers to Hades. Their contrition is insincere, since they are unwilling to forgo things acquired or retained by human blood. Compare them with the Roman pontiffs, of whom almost a hundred, (an obvious exaggeration), from St Peter onwards are reckoned among the holiest of men. The argument concludes by reiterating the contrast between the kings and princes of the earth who are enticed by vain glory, and religious pontiffs who despise vain glory and set the things that are God's before carnal things.

Argument #13: The inherent merit of the papacy

The letter now declares that, therefore, Christians who aspire to reign with Christ should not strive for secular power. No doubt with Henry IV in mind, it quotes the Regula Pastoralis of Gregory I, who wrote that one devoid of virtues should not accede even under compulsion. Gregory VII presents the case for the intrinsic worthiness of each pope. Any God-fearing man who, under compulsion (coactus) and with great fear (magnus timor), assumes the papacy, inevitably becomes a better man through the enduring endowment of the merits of St Peter. The references to coactus and magnus

73 Cowdrey (1998) saw this as a graphic illustration of the persistence of a stigma upon the waging of war: ibid., p. 656.
74 Reg. 8.21, pp. 560.14-561.23.
75 Gregory I, Reg. past., 1.9, col. 22C.
timor are meant to remind the reader of Gregory’s constant insistence that he was dragged unwillingly to the pontificate.  

Argument #14: The Church anoints kings; they should acknowledge priests as their masters and fathers, promote iustitia, display humilitas

The closing argument amounts to a sermon on the necessity for royal docility towards the Church. The opening words set the tone: ‘Wherefore (quapropter) let those whom holy Church of her own will summons by deliberate counsel to kingship or empire not for transitory glory but for the salvation of many show humble obedience ...’. The writer’s claim that it is the Church – no mention here of God – that calls a king to the throne, provides the context for the succeeding admonitions. The argument deploys the subjunctive (‘let them’, ‘let those’, ‘let him’) no less than nine times. To reinforce those opening words the text refers to Gregory I’s account of the story of Saul’s pride, taken from the first Book of Samuel (1 Sam. 15). The lesson to be drawn is that Saul’s discarding of humility in favour of a swelling of pride brought him low in the eyes of the Lord who had set him as head over the tribes of Israel. Next comes a series of scripture-based instructions to kings to refrain from seeking glory, to set God’s honour above their own, embrace and maintain iustitia, avoid the ungodly, cleave humbly to the sacerdotium, eschew any attempt to subdue holy Church, and honour and obey priests as their masters and fathers. Now the writer appears to attack the hereditary principle of kingship: any king, ‘enticed by carnal love’, who selects his own son to succeed him when someone more utilis to the Church is available risks inflicting great harm to holy mother Church. By implication, this is an indictment of the Salian practice whereby the rex Teutonicorum designated his son as king during his own lifetime. (Henry IV was aged six when he was so designated on Christmas Day 1050). The argument – and the letter – concludes by re-emphasizing the need for kings to demonstrate humilitas so that they may pass from this servile and transitory kingdom to that of true libertas et aeternitas.

76 Reg. 3.6*, p. 253.8; Reg. 3.10a, p. 20.6.
77 Reg. 8.21, pp. 561.14-562.25.
78 Gregory I, Reg. past., 2.6, col. 35C.
79 See Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 695.
Duae epistolae: Summary

For our purposes, these are the essential concepts and claims in the letters:

### 1076 LETTER ONLY
- Identification of excommunicates and conditions for their absolution.\(^{80}\)
- *Fatuitas* of those who question the pope’s right to condemn Henry.\(^{81}\)
- Condemnation of recalcitrant bishops who still communicate with Henry.\(^{82}\)

### BOTH LETTERS
- Papal primacy, refutation of royal exceptionalism.\(^{83}\)
- Justification, authorities, precedents for excommunication of kings.\(^{84}\)
- Justification, authorities, ‘precedents’ for deposition of kings.\(^{85}\)
- Inferior origins and status of kingship.\(^{86}\)

### 1081 LETTER ONLY
- Obligation to stand firm in the battle for Christian religion.\(^{87}\)
- The iniquity of King Henry.\(^{88}\)
- *Insania* of those who question the pope’s right to condemn Henry.\(^{89}\)
- *Insania* of he who would try to subject the apostolic see to himself.\(^{90}\)
- Justification for papal absolution of Henry’s subjects from their oaths of fealty.\(^{91}\)
- The Roman church as universal mother.\(^{92}\)
- The (misleading) use of Gelasius I regarding *regnum* and *sacerdotium*.\(^{93}\)
- At death, kings depend on the *sacerdotium* for their salvation.\(^{94}\)
- All priests rank above kings.\(^{95}\)
- *Mali principes* as *tyranni, diaboli corpora*, destined for eternal damnation.\(^{96}\)
- Kings must love *iustitia*, propagate religion, defend churches.\(^{97}\)
- Condemnation of wicked, simoniacal priests who support Henry.\(^{98}\)
- The papacy’s God-given role to instruct kings.\(^{99}\)
- Kings must reject pride and worldly glory, exhibit *humilitas*.\(^{100}\)
- Those who aspire to salvation should not seek secular power.\(^{101}\)

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\(^{80}\) Reg. 4.2, pp. 293.28-294.3, 296.8-22.

\(^{81}\) Ibid., p. 294.4-7.

\(^{82}\) Ibid., pp. 296.22-297.3.

\(^{83}\) Reg. 4.2, pp. 294.24-295.19; Reg. 8.21, pp. 548.10-552.4.

\(^{84}\) Reg. 4.2, p. 294.4-12, 16-23; Reg. 8.21, pp. 547.17-548.25, 550.19-552.4.

\(^{85}\) Reg. 4.2, p. 294.13-23; Reg. 8.21, pp. 548.26-552.4, 554.3-7.

\(^{86}\) Reg. 4.2, pp. 295.20-296.7; Reg. 8.21, pp. 552.5-553-22.

\(^{87}\) Reg. 8.21, p. 547.3-16.


\(^{89}\) Ibid., pp. 547.17-548.2.

\(^{90}\) Ibid., p. 553.3-6.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., pp. 547.17-548.9, 554.3-7.

\(^{92}\) Ibid., pp. 548.26-549.12, 550.29-551.7, 562.8-17.

\(^{93}\) Ibid., pp. 549.13-19, 553.14-22.

\(^{94}\) Ibid., p. 556.10-12.

\(^{95}\) Ibid., pp. 555.9-557.11.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., p. 557.12-19.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., pp. 559.5-8, 562.1-3.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., pp. 557.20-558.3.

\(^{99}\) Ibid., p. 558.5-9.

\(^{100}\) Ibid., pp. 558.4-20, 560.5-8, 561.24-562.7, 562.20-22.

\(^{101}\) Ibid., p. 560.14-18.
The intrinsic merit of St Peter's successors. The Church summons kings to their thrones. Elective kingship; utilitas - not heredity - as key criterion.

The foregoing examination and comparison of these two letters to Bishop Hermann demonstrates the radical transformation and crystallisation of Gregory's views on regnum and sacerdotium by 1081. Evidently, the pope and his advisers had made significant progress in harvesting additional source material to reinforce papal claims to universal authority. Cowdrey (1998) judged the 1076 letter as overall the 'most weakly argued' of Gregory's major letters, for at that stage the pope had not yet developed a 'considered and well-grounded' theory of regnum and sacerdotium. The Petrine commission on the power to bind and loose was the only argument for papal authority of which he was assured. The shadow of King Henry hangs over both letters even though they name him only three times. The two epistolae have some topics in common. However, so great are the differences in terms of subject matter, structure, and the thoroughness with which ideas are set forth, that the 1081 document cannot be regarded as an extended version of the 1076 letter. Another distinction between the texts is their deployment of almost entirely different scriptural allusions to support the pope's arguments. As for the much greater length and the abundance of authorities in the later letter, it may be conjectured that there were at least three possible reasons. First, the opening words of the earlier letter reveal that the writer was working under severe time constraints. Second, it is evident that by 1081 the chancery had assembled considerably more sources and apparent precedents to support Gregory's growing insistence on the universality of the authority of the apostolic see. Third, the deterioration of the papal position by 1081 may have helped to persuade Gregory of the need to present his views with considerable detail and coherence in the later letter to this influential German prelate.

The pope's ruminations in 1076 on the ramifications of the excommunication of Henry and of certain German clerics and laymen, together with the conditions for

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102 Ibid., p. 561.6-13.
104 Ibid., p. 562.11-17.
105 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 612.
106 Reg. 4.2, p. 293.28-30; Reg. 8.21, pp. 547.18, 550.21.
107 For a summary of some historiographical comparisons of the two letters, see Melve, Inventing, p. 250.
absolving them, find no place in the 1081 letter. On the other hand, the earlier
document’s brief pointers to auctoritates and ‘precedents’ for the apostolic see’s right
to excommunicate kings, are substantially expanded in the 1081 epistola. This also holds
true for the hierocratic theme: the divinely ordained subordination of regnum to
sacerdotium. The assertions in the later letter are backed up, not only with numerous
scriptural and patristic allusions, but also with a number of precedents (albeit many of
them dubious). They account for much of the document’s singular length. Melve (2007)
highlighted four conclusions that Gregory drew from the auctoritates that he deployed:
the legitimacy of the pope’s power to excommunicate kings, the capacity of bishops and
holy men also to do so, the transgressions being punished need not be very serious, and
the occurrence of such excommunications as long ago as the patristic age.\footnote{108} Cowdrey
(1998) thought that the 1081 letter represents Gregory’s more sophisticated and
positive understanding of the superiority of sacerdotium to regnum than is apparent in
the earlier text.\footnote{109} He pinpointed four key elements in Gregory’s arguments for this
superiority: superiority in giving judgement based upon the Petrine commission;
superiority based on the powers with which it is endowed and exercises; superiority on
account of the ‘spiritual and transcendental solidarities to which priests and kings
characteristically belonged’ (kings are capable of excellence if tutored in Christian
obedience by the sacerdotium, as disciple to master); and superiority of sanctity.\footnote{110}

This examination confirms that Gregory’s thinking on the respective merits and
roles of regnum and sacerdotium hardened and acquired considerably greater clarity
between 1076 and 1081.

\footnote{108} See Melve, Inventing, pp. 258-9.
\footnote{109} Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 613.
\footnote{110} Ibid., pp. 615-7.
4. Conclusion

Is the one to whom the power is given of opening and closing heaven not allowed to judge concerning the earth? Heaven forbid!

(Letter from Pope Gregory to Bishop Hermann of Metz, 15 March 1081)

The aim of this study, as set out in Part 1, has been to examine the language in the letters of Gregory VII concerning kings and other secular rulers to test the assumption of historians that his attempts to intrude himself into secular issues derived from religious concerns rather than from a desire for temporal power as such.

The last preserved letter in Gregory's Register, thought to date from 1083, is addressed to William the Conqueror. It expresses agreement with the king's view that the pope has laboured more greatly (amplius desudare) than some of his predecessors for the honour of the apostolic see, and that this has aggrieved certain persons of royal rank who feel that they are neither loved nor honoured by the sedes apostolica. However, the pope states that he has absolutely no regrets, and declares his determination to persevere in the same devotion to holy Church and zeal for iustitia. He is acknowledging that he has been more assertive than some previous popes, but claims that he has always been motivated by devotio to the apostolic see, to St Peter, and to studium iustitiae.

The unapologetic tone of this letter of 1083 becomes even more emphatic in the last letters of the pontificate. We noted a letter from Gregory to all the faithful dating from his exile in Salerno. By now, the papal chancery was no longer in operation and the epistola does not survive in the Register. Here we find the themes that characterised Gregory's last known writings. They are expressed with an unmistakeable intensity. In this final appeal to his remaining supporters in western Europe Gregory represents his conflict with Henry IV as metaphysical battle between the forces of good and evil in the universe:

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1 Reg. 8.21, p. 550.4-5: 'Cui ergo aperiendi claudendique caeli data potestas est, de terra iudicare non licet? Absit'
2 Reg. 9.37, p. 630.13-29.
3 See above p. 96.
Dearest brothers, we think it must assuredly have struck you that in our times the psalmist’s question and answer have found renewed meaning: ‘Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot vain things? The kings of the earth stand up and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed.’ [Ps. 2: 1-2]

For the princes of the nations and the princes of the priests have indeed taken counsel with a vast throng against Christ, the Son of Almighty God, and against his apostle Peter, to destroy the Christian religion and to spread their depraved heresy. But by God’s mercy there is no fear or cruelty, nor any promise of worldly glory, by which they can pervert to their own ungodliness those who trust in the Lord. They have wickedly conspired and lifted up their hands against us for no reason whatsoever save that we would not silently disregard the danger that beset holy Church not the men who did not scruple to reduce to slavery the bride of Christ.  

The forces of evil have been aroused by the pope’s attempts to restore *libertas Ecclesiae*. In this interpretation of his papal career, Gregory establishes his claim to be a martyr, famously expressed in the last of his words that were recorded and disseminated by his adherents: ‘I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, so I die in exile.’

Gregory often insisted that he was dragged, unwilling and unworthy, to the papal throne by the will of St Peter himself. His letter dated 19 April 1080 to King Harold Hein of Denmark admonishes him to eliminate certain pernicious practices in his country. If the king complies then he ‘will have been obedient to us – no, to blessed Peter’. We have observed Gregory’s use of variations on this verbal formula to emphasize his complete identification with the first apostle. Also noted was Gregory’s statement in his ‘ultimatum letter’ to King Henry of December 1075 that whoever wishes to obey God...
should keep the pope's precepts as if they issued from the mouth of St Peter himself. In other words, the pope thought of himself as a conduit for the first apostle. The question is whether political motivations contributed to Gregory's energetic efforts to express his love for St Peter and *iustitia* through intervention in other lands? Did he consciously attempt to influence the government or public affairs of western Christendom?

The chapter on *libertas Ecclesiae* observed that a number of scholars have seen this expression as encapsulating the aims of Gregory VII. For this pope it denoted both the freedom of the Church from secular interference and its inherent superiority over the temporal sphere. The reformers' campaign to eliminate secular control focused initially on simony, but was extended to include nicolaitism and, eventually, lay investiture. The same discussion drew attention to Gregory's belief that reform meant more than the correction of the moral or spiritual life, but concerned what Tellenbach termed 'the right order of the world'. The 'right order of the world' is inherently a political matter. Irrespective of any supposed basis in scripture, the Church Fathers, canon law, or precedent, any papal intervention that is intended to influence the ordering of society, is intrinsically political. In particular, the innovatory prohibition of lay investiture was nothing less than a radical assault on traditional assumptions concerning royal authority.

This dissertation has highlighted a number of important elements in the pope's dealings with temporal rulers and their territories. For example, he maintained that, as *vicarius Sancti Petri*, he had a duty to send legates to Christian lands and to advise, instruct, warn, and admonish Christian rulers and peoples. In some of his letters, especially those concerning Henry IV of Germany, he expresses this duty in terms of the conduct of the Old Testament prophets who were required by God to speak truth to royal power. Gregory believed that the spiritual authority has responsibility for the conduct of the secular authority, and is answerable to God for that. His criticism of individual kings could be extremely severe. He reminded rulers that on the last day they would face a stricter judgement than their subjects would, and that their salvation was contingent upon their manner of governance and their obedience to the pope. Certain

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9 See above p. 169.
10 See above p. 151.
12 See above p. 147.
13 See above p. 18.
letters informed their royal recipients that loyalty to St Peter would win them not just spiritual *beneficia*, but even military success over their opponents. The infrequency of the pope’s recognition of any sacral aspect to kingship reinforces the perception that he did not have a high regard for most contemporary Christian rulers.

A number of Gregory’s statements indicate that he believed that the papacy’s responsibility *vis-à-vis* secular rulers extended well beyond the issuing of guidance and reproofs. This is expressed with stark clarity in his single preserved letter to Ireland, which cites the key foundation stone of the assertion of *auctoritas sedis apostolicae* over the Church, namely Matthew’s Petrine commission (Matt. 16: 18). Even more eye-catching is the letter’s next statement: God set the Church over all the kingdoms of the world (*super omnia mundi regna*), and the whole world (*universus orbis*) owes *oboedientia* and *reverentia* to St Peter and to his vicars, among whose number divine providence has appointed Gregory. This startling declaration might be dismissed as an aberration were it not for the preservation of two other letters from Gregory that make essentially the same claim for the universal authority of the papacy. It is also present in the record of the Lent 1076 synod, which states that the vicarship committed by Peter to the pope equates to a command to all Christian people to obey him. Also relevant are two of the statements on papal authority set down in the document known as the *Dictatus Papae*, namely that the pope can depose emperors (#12) and release the subjects of unjust rulers from their oaths of allegiance (#27). While the purpose of the text has long been a matter of controversy, its content presumably reflects Gregory’s thinking at the time of composition, probably 1075.

Insofar as the pope’s attempts to impose the authority of the apostolic see in the temporal sphere achieved any traction then they were likely to have political implications, especially if they implicitly or explicitly undermined royal authority. In particular, the challenge that these ‘hierocratic’ claims posed to traditional assumptions of royal sacrality generated increasing hostility to Gregory among pro-Henricians. It is hard to believe that Gregory was blind to the potential negative consequences of his insistence on *oboedientia* to St Peter, meaning the apostolic see. However, the papal

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14 *Epp. Vag.* 57, pp. 138-41. See above p. 34.
15 *Reg.* 1.63, p. 92.s.12 (1074) to Sancho I of Aragon; *Reg.* 7.6, p. 465.34-8 (1079) to King Alphonso of León-Castile; see above pp. 168ff.
17 *Reg.* 2.55a, pp. 203.7-208.1. See above pp. 182ff.
reformers consistently denied that their thinking was innovatory, maintaining that they were only seeking to restore the supposed pristine integrity of the early Church. The chapter on *auctoritas sedis apostolicae* discussed Gregory’s justifications for his unprecedented claims for the primacy of the apostolic see over the temporal sphere, as well as the spiritual. His letters on the subject of papal authority support his assertions with many references to scriptural, patristic, and canonical sources, and to precedent. To take just one example, his letter of 31 May 1077 to his two legates in Germany refers to 1 Sam. 15: 23 – one of his most frequently cited scriptural passages, which tells of King Saul’s disobedience and consequent downfall – when it claims that he who disdains to obey the apostolic see incurs the crime of idolatry. This is tantamount to equating disobedience to the pope with heresy. The same passage goes on to allege that Gregory I laid down that kings who presume to contravene the orders of the holy see will fall from office. Gregory VII seemed to be convinced that a Christian king has a fundamental duty to obey the pope, and that failure to do so renders him liable to excommunication and the loss of his throne. Excommunication is obviously a spiritual penalty. However, attempting to deprive a king of his throne is clearly a political act, even if the rationale is the ruler’s supposed sinfulness.

The discussion of the desirable attributes of a Christian king showed that Gregory accepted and promoted traditional attributes and duties of a *rex Christianus*, such as love for *iustitia*, upholding of *leges*, preservation of *pax et concordia*, protection of the vulnerable, and devotion to the Church. A key aspect of this last requirement is the king’s willingness to act as an agent of the apostolic see in protecting the Church and promoting its *libertas*, specifically the extirpation of simony, nicolaitism, and – subsequently – lay investiture. With this in mind Gregory introduced two functional characteristics of a *rex Christianus*, namely *idoneitas* (suitability) and *utilitas* (serviceability), and minimised the importance of *hereditas* and kin-right. The promotion of *idoneitas* and *utilitas* as requirements for Christian kingship illustrates the innovatory nature of papal political thought with regard to *reges Christiani* with which Gregory is associated. The specification of these two criteria, combined with the constant demands for royal obedience to the apostolic see, did much to undermine the

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18 See above pp. 163ff.
19 See above pp. 186ff.
20 *Idoneitas*: see above pp. 203ff.; *utilitas*: see above pp. 206ff.
longstanding understanding of the Gelasian teaching that the God-given institutions of regnum and sacerdotium should work together to rule the temporal and spiritual domains of Christendom in harmony.

Gregory seized the opportunity of the conflict between Henry IV and Rudolf of Swabia to claim the apostolic see's right to oversee the election of a rex Teutonicorum. However, the pope went further. The discussion of the title Rex Romanorum observed the pope's refusal to acknowledge Henry IV self-designation as such. This appellation had come to be regarded as an indication of the German king's future entitlement to the imperial title. A notable, emblematic example of Gregory's efforts to enhance the auctoritas sedis apostolicae in the political affairs of Christian Europe is his evident belief in the apostolic see's entitlement to judge a candidate's suitability for the imperium, and to withhold it from an individual whom he considered unworthy.

The chapter on fidelitas considered Karl Jordan's theory that Gregory tried to implement the papacy's claims to universal supremacy by implementing a 'curial feudal system' whereby secular rulers entered into vassal relationships with St Peter. The discussion cast doubt on Jordan's hypothesis. The language of secular politics—not that of spirituality—was used to define certain alliances with the apostolic see, most conspicuously those with the southern Italian Normans, which predated Gregory's reign. The alliance with King Zwonimir of Croatia also seems to qualify as 'feudo-vassalic'. Furthermore, the pope's proposed model oath for a future German king, which was composed following the death of the anti-king Rudolf, appears to commit a future king (and emperor) to a vassal relationship with St Peter. Otherwise, no convincing 'feudal' pattern is apparent. Of perhaps greater significance is the pope's apparent enthusiasm for creating bilateral relationships by which individual rulers acknowledged the patrocinium beati Petri. Even if they were patently not vassalic, these legal bonds were often defined using 'feudal' language since that was the conventional contemporary terminology for doing so.

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21 See above pp. 215ff.
22 See above pp. 254ff.
23 See above pp. 273ff.
This study has examined the language of Pope Gregory’s letters to determine whether his attempts to intrude himself into secular issues derived from religious concerns, (as suggested by Fliche, Ullmann, and – above all – by Cowdrey) rather than from a desire for political power as such. The preceding exploration suggests that the question itself is based on a misleading dichotomy, an assumption that the worlds of religion and politics were separate at this time. However, this was clearly not the case. The temporal and spiritual powers were fundamentally connected and interdependent, even if the Gelasian ideal was not always followed in practice. The consequence of this institutional entanglement is that Gregory’s forceful struggle to achieve libertas Ecclesiae, particularly the elimination of lay investiture, was bound to disturb what we now think of as the ‘political’ sphere. His relevant letters are laden with assurances of the religious inspiration behind his efforts to purify the Church. The same applies to his claims that he has the authority to excommunicate and depose kings. These assurances are backed up with numerous references (albeit some dubious or selective) to scripture, the Church Fathers, canon law, and precedent. However, given the established association of the spiritual and the temporal at this period in the history of European Christendom, to insist that the impulse driving this pope was purely religious implicitly understates the fundamental importance of that linkage.

The political ideas of Gregory VII were never as fully formed as those of his politically minded successor, Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). Nevertheless, the evidence of his political interventions as presented in this dissertation suggests that he considered himself to have a God-given right to instruct and to rebuke secular rulers in an attempt to influence political events throughout western Christendom. Gregory VII’s single contribution to the development of the idea of papal authority was, as we have seen, the belief that the papal primacy extended to secular rulers and temporal politics as well as to churchmen and ecclesiastical affairs. It has been the purpose of this dissertation to show that it was this aspect of auctoritas sedis apostolicae that Gregory evoked when he exercised his right to admonish, and even punish, secular rulers. Pope Gregory VII’s attempts to achieve libertas Ecclesiae and to impose the authority of the apostolic see on the entire societas Christiana were intrinsically political as well as spiritual.
Appendix A: Contemporary pro-Henrician polemics

The start of the debate

The key events and correspondence of late 1075 and early 1076 that initiated the dramatic escalation of hostilities between pope and king were discussed above. Prominent among these were Gregory's 'ultimatum letter' to Henry of 8 December 1075, the rejection of Gregory's papacy by the council of Worms of 24 January 1076, Henry's excommunication at the subsequent Lenten synod, and the Utrecht assembly on Easter Sunday at which Gregory's own excommunication was proclaimed.

Other writers added their voices to the emerging war of words between king and pope. They contributed to an unprecedented polemical debate on the functions and relationship of *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, on issues of authority and obedience. The resulting literature, some of it vituperative, discussed the questions in both political and ecclesiastical terms. The dialogue in this, the first propaganda campaign in the Middle Ages, was conducted through a series of pro- and anti-Gregorian tracts. The responses of Gregory's opponents show that they were very much concerned with the political implications of the pope's words and actions. Henry's defenders rejected the threat that Gregory's attempts to extend papal sovereignty into secular affairs posed to traditional ideas of kingship, not least its 'sacrality'. Even more than Gregory's excommunications of the king in 1076 and 1080, it was the pope's release of Henry's subjects from their oaths of fealty that presented the greatest danger to royal authority, being seen by many as amounting to open incitement to rebellion. The polemical writings of royal supporters articulated the particular antagonism provoked by this papal action.

The debates provoked by the investiture struggle achieved their full intensity in the decades following the death of Gregory in 1085. Before that, pro-Henrician writings were few in number. One example is a polemic by Sigebert of Gembloux, thought to

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1 See above pp. 66ff.

2 For extended discussions of the polemical literature of the Investiture Contest, see Robinson, Authority; also Melve, *Inventing*. For background and general discussion of the polemics, see Carlyle and Carlyle, *History*, esp. pp. 173-4, pp. 81-95, 181-4, 211-49. See also Leyser, 'Polemics', pp. 42-64.

date from 1075, which attacks the papal rulings on priestly chastity. Another work is the *Defensio Heinrici IV*, traditionally ascribed to the Italian jurist Peter Crassus, and thought to have been composed during the early 1080s. However, it was two other writers, Gottschalk of Aachen and Wenrich of Trier, who produced the most influential defences of Henry during Gregory’s lifetime. The following pages examine these works.

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Gottschalk of Aachen

Descend, therefore, condemned by this anathema and by the common judgment of all our bishops and of ourself. Relinquish the apostolic see, which you have arrogated. Let another mount the throne of Saint Peter, another who, will not cloak violence with religion but who will teach the pure doctrine of Saint Peter. I, Henry, King by the grace of God, together with all our bishops, say to you: Descend! Descend!

These are the final words of a letter of early 1076 from Henry IV to the pope. Carl Erdmann assigned it the number 12 in his 1936 edition of the king’s forty-two preserved letters. Letter 12 is Henry’s response to his excommunication at the previous Lenten synod. One modern scholar characterized this epistola as the first imperial blow of the Investiture Contest, and probably the most famous example of medieval invective. It is central to our theme because it deals with relations between regnum and sacerdotium. The salutatio is ‘Henry, king not by usurpation but by the pious ordination of God, to Hildebrand, now not pope but false monk’. The epistola accuses the pope of several serious abuses of his authority. It was Gregory VII’s encroachment on secular politics, rather than his actual beliefs, which drew the heaviest criticism from Henry’s supporters. A deeply researched article by Erdmann and his pupil Dietrich von Gladiss (1939) identified the imperial chaplain, Gottschalk of Aachen, as the author of a number of Henry’s letters, including number 12. Erdmann and von Gladiss described him as Henry’s ‘master propagandist’. Gottschalk seems to have been the first polemicist to take issue with Gregory VII.

Schieffer (1981) assembled the known facts about Gottschalk’s life. First identifiable as a dictator and scribe of a 1071 diploma of King Henry, he remained almost permanently in the royal entourage until 1084, then intermittently until about 1103. He

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6 `Tu ergo hoc anathemate et omnium episcoporum nostrorum iudicio et nostro damnatus descende, vendicatem sedem apostolicam relinque. Alius in solium beati Petri ascendat, qui nulla viol entiam religion palliat Petri sanam doctrinam doceat. Ego Henricus dei gratia rex cum omnibus episcopis nostris tibi dicimus: descende, descende!'

7 P.G. Jestice, Wayward monks and the religious revolution of the eleventh century (Leiden, 1997), p. 266.

8 Die Briefe Heinrichs IV, 12, pp. 15-17.


11 See Robinson, Authority, pp. 61-7.
is known as Gottschalk of Aachen because his most illustrious post was provost of the cathedral of St Mary of Aachen after 1091. As well as the *epistolae* with which he is associated, Gottschalk was notary and scribe for thirty-five original diplomas. He also composed *sequentia* (hymn collections) and *sermones*.12 The strong stylistic resemblances with Gottschalk’s sermons enabled Erdmann to identify him as ‘Adalbero C’, the author of certain letters and diplomas. Using the techniques of ‘style criticism’ (*Stilkritik*) and ‘style comparison’ (*Stilvergleich*) Erdmann and von Gladiss deduced that Gottschalk was the author of eleven of the king’s letters. Three of them – numbers 10, 12, and 13 – illustrate the entry of Henry’s chancery into propagandist discourse in 1076. They are central to our theme since they seek to legitimize the royal stance in the struggle between king and pope.

Erdmann and von Gladiss commented on Gottschalk’s literary style. They noted the strongly biblical and patristic character of his Latin, scriptural quotations being far more numerous in his letters than in other royal correspondence; Gottschalk’s deductive arguments often begin with a biblical passage. Unlike other Henrician letters, those by Gottschalk are highly theoretical in their structure and arguments. Moreover, they are characterized by his continuous use of rhyming prose and his deployment of certain rhetorical figures. This rhetorical elaboration is especially obvious in letters 12 and 13, the two letters that are our chief concern.13 Erdmann and von Gladiss suggested that Gottschalk was something of an individualist, the likely consequence being that his theoretical and moralising style would have been considered too elaborate for routine, business-like letters. They described him as ‘an eccentric theologian, who was no practical politician’.14 He was the first to bring into royal correspondence the literary ambition that was influencing contemporary writers and collectors of letters at this time. The intellectual and rhetorical content of Gottschalk’s writing disturbed his readers. The tragic pathos of his letters was effective and made a strong impression. His royal letters demonstrate both his literary and theological interests. Unlike the majority of writers on the investiture dispute, Gottschalk was no canonist, but rather a liturgical preacher and

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14 Ibid., p. 157.
moralist. It was because his rhetoric was so respected that Gottschalk was entrusted with the composition of directly propagandist letters.\textsuperscript{15}

The royal letters 10 to 13 date from the first half of 1076. Henry's letters of 1076, his first foray into propaganda techniques, determined the content of papal and anti-papal propaganda for at least a decade.\textsuperscript{16} Although letters 12 and 13 are of direct importance to our discussion, number 10 is also significant in that it facilitated the wide circulation of the king's case. It addresses the clergy and people of Rome. Enclosed with it was an epistola from Henry to the pope, letter 11, which was not a Gottschalk composition. Letter 11's salutatio is 'Henry, King by the grace of God, to Hildebrand', an explicit rejection of both Hildebrand's papal title and his entitlement to association with the legacy of Gregory the Great. The epistola makes several serious accusations against Hildebrand: he is the most pernicious enemy of Henry's life and office; he has used evil arts to alienate his kingdom of Italy; he has set his hand against the imperial bishops, harassing and abusing them against divine human laws. It ends with an endorsement of the pope's deposition at Worms.\textsuperscript{17} The covering Gottschalk-authored letter 10 to the Romans implicitly assumes that Henry IV, like his father before him, possesses the title and authority of patricius Romanorum.\textsuperscript{18} The opening sentence thanks the Romans for their fidelitas, before urging them to enmity against 'the monk Hildebrand' for the reasons expressed in the enclosed letter 11. They should condemn Hildebrand. Letter 10 ends by instructing them that, if Hildebrand proves unwilling to abdicate, they should force him to do so and accept a new pope, whom the king would elect with the common counsel of the bishops and the Romans themselves. This amounts to a bid by Henry to reassert the control over papal elections that his father Henry III (1039-56) had exercised a generation before.\textsuperscript{19} In his study of the 'invention of the public sphere' during the Investiture Contest, Melve (2007) suggested that the joint distribution of letters 10 and 11 is the clearest example of the discovery of public opinion, that the interpolation of letter 11 (the 'deposition letter') informed the clergy and people of Rome of high politics.\textsuperscript{20}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item 15 Ibid., pp. 154-6.
  \item 16 Robinson, Authority, p. 60.
  \item 17 Die Briefe Heinrichs IV, II, pp. 13-15.
  \item 18 Ibid., 10, pp. 12-13.
  \item 19 See above p. 13.
  \item 20 Melve, Inventing, p. 219.
\end{itemize}

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Letter 12

Letter 12 is nothing short of a verbal onslaught on the pope in the king’s name.\textsuperscript{21} The main themes are Hildebrand’s disruption of the Church, the falseness of his claims that he is entitled to threaten the God-given power of the king, and the invalidity of his rise to the papacy. The \textit{salutatio} is ‘Henry, king not by usurpation but by the pious ordination of God (cf. Rom. 13: 1-3), to Hildebrand, now not pope (\textit{apostolicus}), but false monk’. This is followed by a justification for such harshness: the damage that Hildebrand has caused to the Church, replacing honour with confusion, malediction with benediction. There are two significant differences between this \textit{salutatio} and that in the (non-Gottschalk) letter 11. First, it identifies its nominal author as \textit{rex non usurpative} (not by usurpation) rather than the standard \textit{dei gratia rex}. Melve (2007) suggested that these words imply that the king was attempting to undo the damage caused by his admission, in his earlier ‘\textit{supplex epistola}’ to Pope Gregory (Letter 5, 1073), that he had usurped ecclesiastical properties.\textsuperscript{22} However, the totality of the letter suggests a more obvious interpretation: an assertion of a fundamental distinction between the legitimacy of Henry’s kingship and Hildebrand’s ‘usurpation’ of the papacy. Second, the depiction of Hildebrand as a ‘false monk’ alludes to the accusation that, many years before, the ambition of this professed monk had induced him to abandon the monastic life, contrary to the traditional Benedictine model of \textit{stabilitas}, defined as unbroken residence in one place.\textsuperscript{23} This became a favourite charge against the pope by anti-Gregorian writers.

The writer now announces that he is going to discuss just a few of many matters, the implication being that there are many more charges that could be levelled against Hildebrand. The letter charges him with abusive behaviour towards his fellow churchmen. In crushing them, he has won the approval of the rabble (\textit{vulgus}), popular support for Gregory’s actions apparently reinforcing the allegations against him. Tellingly, the letter turns some words of Gregory the Great, ‘whose name you have arrogated for yourself’, against Hildebrand, claiming that the former had prophesied Hildebrand’s behaviour when he accused certain prelates of excessive pride, an

\textsuperscript{21} For an analysis of the discourse in Letter 12, see ibid., pp. 202-8.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 203. Text of the king’s letter: \textit{Die Briefe Heinrichs IV}, 5, pp. 8-9; also Reg. 1.29a. See above p. 60
\textsuperscript{23} For a summary of what is known about Gregory’s monastic career, see Cowdrey, \textit{Gregory VII}, pp. 28-9. For the significance of the accusation in the Investiture Contest, see Robinson, \textit{Authority}, pp. 33-5.
exaggerated estimate of their own knowledge, and an inflated sense of their own power.\textsuperscript{24}

Letter 12 now addresses the topic that would become the underlying issue in the long conflict between king and pope, namely the correct roles of \textit{regnnum} and \textit{sacerdotium}, and the proper relationship between them:

And we, indeed, bore with all these abuses, since we were eager to preserve the honour of the apostolic see. But you construed our humility as fear, and so you were emboldened to rise up even against the royal power itself, granted to us by God. You dared to threaten to take the kingship away from us – as though we had received the kingship from you, as though kingship and empire were in your hand and not in the hand of God.\textsuperscript{25}

The next \textit{sententia} crystallizes the contrast between Henry’s legitimacy and Hildebrand’s lack thereof: ‘Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has called us to the kingship, but has not called you to the priesthood’. The letter goes on to explain this denial of the validity of Hildebrand’s election, claiming that he acted in blatant disregard of the monastic profession’s abhorrence of cunning (\textit{astutia}). Furthermore, he used the sword to come to the throne of peace, from which position he has actually destroyed the peace. Henry (Gottschalk) also attacks the pope’s undermining of episcopal authority by his enlistment of lay magnates to enforce clerical discipline.

Next comes a reassertion of the rights of sacral kingship. The pope has touched (\textit{tangere}) the king, who was anointed to the kingship. The reference to the psalmist’s instruction to ‘touch ye not mine anointed’ (Ps. 104: 15) amounts to a condemnation of Gregory for violating an Old Testament prohibition. The Holy Fathers taught that only God can judge a king; the only possible grounds for his deposition would be his deviation from the Faith. God has chosen Henry; he can only be deposed if – ‘may it never happen’ – he becomes a heretic. Gottschalk argues that even a pagan ruler should not be resisted, citing the case of Julian the Apostate. Erdmann and von Gladiss observed that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[24] Reg. past. 2.6, cols. 34C-38C.
\item[25] ‘Et nos quidem hec omnia suistimus, dum apostolice sedis honorem servare studuimus. Sed tu humilitatem nostram timorem fore intellexisti ideoque et in ipsum regiam potestatem nobis a deo concessam exurgere non timuisti, quam te nobis afferre ausus es minari: quasi nos a te regnum acceperimus, quasi in tua et non in dei manu sit: regnum vel imperium.’
\end{footnotes}

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Letter 12 does not provide any canon law source for its claim that the only justification for royal deposition is heresy. It runs completely counter to the established belief, which is grounded in the declaration in Rom. 13: 1-3 that all existing authorities are appointed by God, and a king can only be deposed if he is a tyrannus. Gottschalk claims that, despite the instruction by St Peter, the ‘true pope’, to ‘fear God, honour the king’ (1 Pet. 2: 17), Hildebrand, having no fear of God, dishonours Henry who is ordained (constitutum) of Him. Accordingly, the pope is guilty of preaching heterodoxy (docens alia), for which St Paul said that the transgressor should be accursed (Gal. 1: 18). Gottschalk’s well-constructed letter now reaches its climax. Hildebrand, standing condemned by this anathema and by the judgement both of ‘our’ bishops and of the king, must relinquish the apostolic see. The letter ends with Henry, ‘dei gratia rex’, calling on Hildebrand to ‘descende! descende!’ from the papal throne.

Letter 13

Gottschalk also composed Letter 13, a royal encyclical individually addressed to every imperial bishop. The opening narratio argues the importance of episcopal loyalty to the king; there are five references to the bishops’ faithfulness, past and – hopefully – in the future. Their loyalty and good will are now even more important, considering the state of the Church. The letter thrice refers to the oppressio of the Church before identifying its source: that monk Hildebrand, a violent usurper who, from the throne of peace, dissolves the bond of catholic peace. He has usurped for himself both the regnum and the sacerdotium in contempt of God’s command that they be separate entities. The contrast between Gregory as peace-breaker and Henry as peacemaker was a recurrent theme in the pro-Henrician polemics that emerged in the following years.

Now we encounter a passage that has been described as Gottschalk’s ‘claim to fame’. Essentially, it reworks the dualistic Gelasian concept of the parallel existence of the temporal and physical powers in their own spheres. As in Letter 12, Gottschalk asserts that the Henry’s kingship was the ‘pious ordination of God (cf. Rom. 13: 1-3)
before presenting a pro-Henrician explanation of Luke’s reference to Christ’s pronouncement on ‘the two swords’. The differing interpretations of this passage would be fundamental to the theological dispute over the roles of regnum and sacerdotium:

In his Passion, the Saviour Himself meant the figurative sufficiency of the two swords to be understood in this way: when it was said to him “Lord, behold there are two swords here”, He answered “It is enough”, (Luke 23: 38) signifying by this sufficient duality that the spiritual and carnal swords are to be used in the Church and that by them every harmful thing is to be cut off. That is to say, He was teaching that every man is constrained by the priestly sword to obey the king as the representative of God but by the kingly sword to repel enemies of Christ outside and to obey the sacerdotium inside. So in charity the province of one extends into the other, as long as neither the regnum is deprived of honour by the sacerdotium, nor the sacerdotium is deprived of honour by the regnum.  

From the imperial point of view, there are two key statements in this passage. First, the priestly sword advocates obedience to the king as the representative of God (rex pro Deo), while the kingly sword constrains men to repel Christ’s external enemies and obey the sacerdotium. Gottschalk accuses Hildebrand of misusing the priestly sword by advocating disobedience, and usurping the royal sword to use against the king himself.  

Second, God decreed that the sacerdotium must not ‘deprive the regnum of honour’. However, Hildebrand, whom God did not call to the priesthood, has striven to deprive Henry of the kingship to which God called him. Robinson (1978) described rex pro Deo as one of Gottschalk’s key formulations, an ‘extreme conception of the vicariate of the king’. The passage obviously runs completely counter to any theory of ‘papal monarchy’. The letter emphasizes that although Henry did not receive his kingship from him, Hildebrand has nevertheless threatened to deprive him of both his life and his kingship, and meted out humiliating treatment to the king’s envoys, behaviour

30 Die Briefe Heinrichs IV, 13, pp. 17-20: ‘In quo piam dei ordinationem contempsit, que non in uno, sed in duobus, duo, id est regnum et sacerdotium, principaliter consistere voluit, sicut ipse salvator in passione sua de duorum gladiorum sufficientia typica intelligi innuit. Cui cum diceretur: ‘domine, ecce duo gladii hic’, respondit: ‘satis est’, significans hac sufficienti dualitate spiritualem et carnalem gladium in ecclesia esse gerendum, quibus omne nocivum foret amputandum, videlicet sacerdotali ad obedientiam regis pro deo, regali vero gladio ad expellendos Christi inimicos exterius et ad obedientiam sacerdotii interius omnem hominem docens fore constringendum, et tia de alio in alium caritate tenderetur, dum nec sacerdotii regnum nec sacerdotium regni honore privaretur.’


32 Ibid., pp. 152-3.
comparable with that of the tyrant Decius.\textsuperscript{33} Accordingly, the bishops are invited to a new assembly at Worms at Whitsuntide (15 May) so that they might advise the king on what should be done.\textsuperscript{34}

The central argument of letters 11 and 12 is that Hildebrand deserves deposition because in attacking the king he has scorned ‘the pious ordination of God’ (cf. Rom. 13: 1-3).\textsuperscript{35} In the view of Erdmann and von Gladiss, Gottschalk’s strong influence on the arguments of the Investiture Contest does not mean that he contributed to the theological formulations subsequently used to argue the royal standpoint. On the contrary, Henry’s later defenders went in quite a different direction. After spring 1076, Gottschalk himself became hesitant. The two scholars link this to an incident mentioned earlier: after the excommunication of Gregory VII by Bishop William of Utrecht in the presence of the king on Easter Day 1076, a stroke of lightning reduced St Peter’s Cathedral in Utrecht to ashes, an event interpreted by many as the first apostle’s revenge for the ill-treatment of the pope.\textsuperscript{36} Two royal diplomas composed by Gottschalk soon afterwards suggest the unease in the royal entourage.\textsuperscript{37} The first, dated 21 April, records a royal gift to the church of St Mary in Aachen, apparently an effort to obtain for Henry the patronage of both the Virgin and Charlemagne, the church’s founder.\textsuperscript{38} The second, dated 23 May, documents an attempt to mollify St Peter by means of a royal donation to the destroyed church in Utrecht.\textsuperscript{39} Erdmann and von Gladiss conjectured that the perception that St Peter had been provoked to anger may explain why Gottschalk left the world and entered a monastery. They also suggest that the crown lacked sufficient scholarly resources at the beginning of the conflict with the apostolic see, and that Gottschalk was the only individual with the required literary ability, who was available to the king at this critical time. However, his intellect was not appropriate for participation in an extended struggle. They conclude that Gottschalk perceived the

\textsuperscript{33} Roman emperor, reigned 249-51.
\textsuperscript{34} Die Briefe Heinrichs IV, 13, pp. 17-20.
\textsuperscript{35} Robinson, Authority, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{36} See above p. 73.
\textsuperscript{37} Robinson, Henry IV, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{38} Henry IV, Heinrici IV Diplomata: Die Urkunden Heinrichs IV. MGH Diplomata 6/1-3 (1941, 1959, 1978), 283.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 284.
issues with unusual clarity, went about his task with deep earnestness and that, in particular, his powerful 'descend, descend' indicates a personality of quality.⁴⁰

Wenrich of Trier

It is new, and unheard of in all previous ages, that popes wish frivolously to divide the kingdoms of the peoples, to seek through sudden conspiracies to destroy the title of kings, which existed from the beginning of the world and was later confirmed by God, to change the Lord’s anointed like common servants whenever they please, to order them to come down from the throne of their fathers and punish them with excommunication if they do not do so promptly.41

The above passage is from a polemical open letter to Pope Gregory, composed under the name of the veteran Bishop Theoderic of Verdun.42 Much of this pro-Henrician treatise concerns the rights of the apostolic see with regard to the regnum. The text’s final sentence (explicit) identifies the author: ‘Here ends the letter of Bishop Theoderic, composed in his name by Wenrich scholasticus of Trier’.43 Therefore, the writer was a certain Wenrich, the master of the cathedral school of Trier in Lotharingia. We know little about him. The memorial book of the cathedral church of Verdun indicates that he was a member of the cathedral clergy in Verdun before Archbishop Udo of Trier appointed him as scholasticus and bibliotecarius (librarian) in his episcopal city. He later became bishop of Piacenza, and died in an unknown place on 30 September, at the earliest in 1096.44

This letter by the Trier scholasticus reacts to the decrees of the Roman Lenten synod of 7 March 1080, which re-excommunicated Henry IV, released his subjects from their oaths of fidelity, and acknowledged Rudolf of Swabia as lawful ruler of the regnum Teutonicorum. Part of the German episcopate responded by assembling in Mainz at Whitsuntide, 31 May 1080, where they renounced their obedience to the pope.45 At a subsequent council in Trier Gregory’s opponents in Upper Lotharingia decided to issue an answer to the pope’s conduct. The task fell to Wenrich, who conceived of an open

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41 Wenrich, Epistola, p. 289.32-5: ‘Novum est autem et omnibus retro seculis inauditum, pontifices regna gentium tam facile velle dividere, nomen regum, inter ipsa mundi initia repertum, a Deo postea stabilitum, repentina factione elidere, cristos Domini quotiens libuerit plebeia sorte sicut villicos mutare, regno patrum suorum decedere iussos, nisi confestim adquireverint, anathemate damnare.’

42 For Wenrich’s letter, see Carlyle and Carlyle, History 4, pp. 81-2, 218-22; Robinson, Authority, esp. pp. 126, 131, 139; Melve, Inventing, esp. pp. 290-303. Also Cowdrey, Gregory VII, pp. 216-17.

43 Wenrich, Epistola, p. 299.15: ‘Explicit epistola Theodrici episcopi edita ex persona ipsius a Guenrico scolastico Trevirensi’.

44 For what is known about Wenrich and his writings, see D. Jasper, ‘Winrich von Trier’, in Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters Verfasserlexikon, 10 (Berlin, 1999), cols. 1219-24.

45 See above pp. 89ff.
letter to the pope in the name of Bishop Theoderic, a supporter—albeit sometimes wavering—of Henry IV, who had been with him at Canossa. A slightly earlier polemical letter issued in Theoderic’s name, addressed to all secular and ecclesiastical princes of the empire and to the clergy and people, was probably composed immediately after the aforementioned episcopal council of 31 May 1080. It rebukes the pope in the harshest terms, represents him as unfit to preside over the Church, and calls for his deposition. As a consequence, Theoderic encountered opposition from the clergy of his own see upon his return to Verdun. He was suspended, subsequently sent back his episcopal insignia to the pope, and finally begged for forgiveness. Theoderic’s local difficulties may have contributed to the somewhat ambiguous nature of Wenrich’s letter, which attempts with varying success to maintain a relatively respectful tone and avoid overt hostility. It has been conjectured that the its essential purpose was to vindicate Theoderic’s conduct, and that its main intended audience was the clergy of Verdun who were unwilling to accept their bishop’s anti-Gregorian stance. It should also be borne in mind that Theoderic was an appointee of Henry III, raised to the episcopate in the time of Pope Leo IX. He therefore belonged to an older generation of prelates who recalled Henry III’s dedication to the papacy and its reform and the close relationship between regnum and sacerdotium that then prevailed. This may have made him baulk at the prospect of a complete break between king and pope, no matter how troublesome the latter. The ostensible mildness of Wenrich’s epistola is in marked contrast with the severity of Theoderic’s earlier letter. Melve (2007) observed that the intensity of Manegold of Lautenbach’s response four years later indicates the success of Wenrich’s polemic.

The letter’s date of composition is unknown. Most research suggests a time between the death of Rudolf on 15 October 1080 and the election of Hermann of Salm as the new anti-king on 6 August 1081. The omission from the epistola of any explicit reference to certain key events, such as the election of the anti-pope Clement III in

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46 Wenrich, Epistola: the footnotes on p. 282 identify the various sources describing the behaviour of Theoderic in 1080.
48 Robinson, Authority, p. 156.
49 Manegold of Lautenberg, Ad Geberhardum liber, MGH Libelli 1, 300-400. See Melve, Inventing, p. 281.
Brixen in June 1080, the interpretation by Henry IV's supporters of Rudolf's loss of his right hand and mortal wounding in the Battle of Hohenmölsen on 15 October 1080 as a divine judgement, and Gregory's widely-disseminated second polemical letter, dated 15 March 1081, to Bishop Hermann of Metz, lends credence to a composition date prior to October 1980. After investigating the issue in some detail, I. Schmale-Ott (1984) concluded that the first three weeks of June 1080 was the most likely time of composition.\(^{50}\) This would imply a date between the Mainz assembly of 31 May and the Brixen synod of 25 June. However, chapter eight's reference to bishops invested by the anti-king as having been 'smuggled in by the consecrated right hand of Rudolf' surely suggests the writer's awareness of the latter's demise and the Henricians' perception of its significance.\(^{51}\)

Superficially, the letter comes across as having been written more in sorrow and puzzlement than in anger. It presents accusations made by unidentified persons (**inquiunt, ut dicitur, cum dicitur**) against the pope, and asks him to respond to them because the writer is unable to do so. Melve (2007) counted seventeen accusations against the pope in the *epistola*, and observed that the asymmetry between the letter's 'attack' and 'defence' shows Wenrich to be strongly advocating the anti-papal position without acknowledging his partisanship.\(^{52}\) Schmale-Ott (1984) observed the prominence in the letter of Wenrich's own thoughts, *auctoritates* being used only sparingly. This contrasts with other polemics that heap quotation upon quotation. Wenrich lets his own voice be heard far more than other polemicists, preferring not to shelter behind a plethora of references to Church Fathers and canon law. Of the quotations that he does use, the overwhelming majority are from scripture, demonstrating his belief that the Bible takes precedence over other authorities.\(^{53}\) The letter considers all the questions that were preoccupying contemporary intellectuals, and does so in clear language, devoid of extravagant rhetoric.\(^{54}\)

Two manuscripts of Wenrich's *epistola* survive: a twelfth-century version originating in Gembloux, and a document in the Vienna State Library dating from either the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. K. Francke's Latin edition (1891) in the *Libelli de lite*

\(^{50}\) Schmale-Ott, 'Einleitung', p. 11.


\(^{52}\) Melve, *Inventing*, p. 292.

\(^{53}\) Schmale-Ott, 'Einleitung', p. 12.

\(^{54}\) Ibid. p. 13.
generally follows the Brussels manuscript. Schmale-Ott (1984) discussed both texts in the introduction to her German translation, which broadly follows Franke’s edition. She noted the clear, systematic construction of the letter, which is divided into nine chapters in both Francke’s text and her own. Three of them are omitted from this discussion. The first is chapter three, which criticizes the pope’s legislation against clerical unchastity for causing serious damage to the Church by inflaming the laity against the clergy. Also missing is chapter five, which is primarily a theological discussion of excommunications, in which Wenrich questions the validity, and therefore the effectiveness, of Henry’s excommunication. Chapter nine, concerning sacrilegious acts in Milan and elsewhere, is also irrelevant to this study. This examination therefore focuses on the six chapters that include material pertinent to the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*.

#1 Praise for Hildebrand-Gregory.
#2 Accusations against the pope’s ambition and manner of life.
#4 The deposition of Henry IV.
#6 The freeing of the king’s subjects from their oath of fealty.
#7 The recognition and absolution of Rudolf and his followers.
#8 The proscription of lay investiture.

The letter is addressed to ‘Pope Hildebrand’ (*Hildebrandus Papa*). At the very beginning therefore, we encounter an element of ambiguity: the writer acknowledges Gregory’s papacy but not his regnal name. The earlier discussion of Henry IV’s Gottschalk-composed Letter 12 of 1076 highlighted its accusation that the ‘false monk’ Hildebrand is unworthy of being called Gregory since his behaviour and teachings are in complete contrast to those of Gregory I, whose name he took. Presumably, a royal supporter could not now call the pope Gregory. *Hildebrandus Papa* seems to be a compromise.

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58 Ibid., pp. 291.27-293.7.
59 Ibid., pp. 298.29-299.13.
60 See above pp. 310ff.
Wenrich's first chapter eloquently expresses the need of many contemporaries for knowledge and certainty in the face of the conflict between regnum and sacerdotium, a conflict that Theoderic appears to personify. The bishop's confusion and desperation might be real. Theoderic may genuinely have wanted to reconcile his loyalties to pope and king. If so, this would surely be represented in a letter written in his name. The opening chapter focuses on the pope's positive qualities. It begins with a quotation from scripture: 'A friend is a friend at all times, it is in adversity that a brother is born' (cf. Prov. 17: 17). Theoderic (Wenrich) is presenting himself as the pope's friend and brother. A little further on comes an expression of the main theme of the chapter: 'In fact, so that you may trust in me as an individual, the more inappropriately I see you treated, the more I rouse my zeal to protect you, aroused by distress at the unworthiness of your situation' (that is, the way you have been treated unworthily).

The letter is purporting to represent Theoderic as a friend who is advising the pope on what is being said about him, and requesting him for guidance on how to respond to the negative reactions to the pope's statements and actions. This calls to mind the probable requests of Hermann of Metz in his (lost) epistolae to which Gregory responded in his polemical letters of 1076 and 1081. Wenrich apprises the pope of the storm of vituperation and abuse that is being hurled at him by his shameless enemies: they hold unworthy opinions about his life and conduct; they ridicule ecclesiastical punishments and the pope's new legislation, and tread it underfoot. There follows a flattering résumé of the pope's life and career to date, from childhood to papacy, culminating in a declaration that the necessity of the pastoral office propelled Hildebrand to make supreme efforts to correct the alienated hearts of perverse men and bring them to the line of rectitude without respect of persons; by this means the pope has won the love and service of all good persons. Chapter one ends by noting that the pope has experienced hatred and detraction by those men who are lost, and expresses admiration for the fact that he has remained unshakable, continuing along the royal way (via regia).
with the weapons of *iustitia*, continuing to argue, beseech, and rebuke. For the reformers, progress along the *via regia* was an allegory for the elimination of abuses such as simony, clerical unchastity, and lay investiture. The *via regia* also designated those who were obedient to the pope.

The second chapter opens with a statement of the writer’s (regrettable) inability to answer the pope’s enemies, and follows this with a succinct review of the grievances against Hildebrand’s ambition, way of life, and the disruptive effect of his actions on the internal order of the Church and the *regnum Teutonicorum*. It is being said that the universal Church is burning with the flames of conflict that Hildebrand has kindled. The letter restates a key charge in Henry IV’s letters, namely that Hildebrand is a false monk who broke the vow of *stabilitas* by abandoning his monastery. Furthermore, he subsequently visited cities in Italy, France, and ‘Gaul’, and violated the (monastic) vow of silence. So great is his intemperance, that he has often cursed priests, bishops, and archbishops with the most obscene complaints, to the confusion of his hearers. He has spoken not only against individuals, but also against whole peoples. Wenrich now broaches a subject that he will later discuss in much greater detail, one which goes to the heart of our main theme: it is said that the pope has wrongfully intervened in the kingdom, promoting divisions through secret manoeuvring. The letter recounts a series of accusations that are ‘clear and supported by the indisputable (*irrefragabilis*) witness of living men’. The use of *irrefragabilis* indicates Wenrich’s acceptance of the credibility of those who are making the charges. Most of the allegations concern ecclesiastical matters. For example, through the sale of his services the pope has accumulated vast sums, by which means he has gathered a following of corrupt individuals. After more assertions about his worldly ambitions comes the extremely serious claim that Hildebrand has deliberately thrown the Church into a state of confusion lest peaceful conditions compel him to account for his personal conduct and his unlawful entry into office.

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68 For example, Henry’s Gottschalk-authored letters 10 and 12: see above pp. 307ff.
70 Ibid., p. 286.28-31.
71 Ibid., pp. 286.32-287.8.
Now the subject changes to temporal affairs:

First he [the pope] promoted dissension in the kingdom through secret machinations; when this was not sufficiently successful he urged on the factions, now summoning them secretly to himself, now sending legates to urge them on; finally he showed his hand openly, having often denied both publicly and privately given his oath that it was not so; now he openly commended his king [R] in public and was fired with unbelievable passion.72

The commendation of Rudolf, 'your king', seems to be the last datable event identified in the letter. The passage presumably refers to the pope’s initial denial that he encouraged Rudolf’s election at Forchheim in March 1077, and his ultimate recognition of Rudolf’s kingship that accompanied his second excommunication and deposition of Henry IV in March 1080. Wenrich is characterising Hildebrand as the maker of the anti-king. The text returns from the secular political world (exterius) to the Church (interius). The pope has ‘so confounded the inner order of the Church that there was no bishopric, no abbey, no monastery, finally no institution of religious life which did not experience uncertainty’. The second chapter ends with a call for attention to ‘the dangerous shipwreck of the faith and of all morals with this conflagration of perjury and excommunication that he has aroused’.73

Chapter four addresses the deposition and excommunication of King Henry IV. It includes many scriptural auctoritates. In the view of Wenrich’s modern German translator, the unusually harsh wording indicates that Wenrich is expressing his own opinion.74 He begins by expressing his shame when he recalls the mockery that greeted the widely circulated report of the Lenten synod of 1080, which contained the deposition of ‘my lord the king’ and the enthronement of ‘your Rudolf’. In other words, the long seventh clause of the synodal record ('Item excommunicatio regis Heinrici') had provoked ridicule.75 Those, including Wenrich, who objected to the subsequent retaliatory attempts to depose the pope on grounds of illegality, provoked counter-

72 Ibid., p. 287.9-12: 'Regni dissensionem primum machinationibus fovit occultis, postquam id parum procedebat, partium incitamentis, nunc ad se clam evocando, nunc per legatos confortando, excitavit; postremo, quod sepe negaverat, quod publice et privatim interrogatus sancte deieraverat, iam palam confitens, iam regem suum publice commendans et attollens, incredibili animositate succedit.'

73 Ibid., p. 287.22-9.


arguments that the pope's proceedings against the king were themselves unlawful. The indignation generated by the pope's actions against Henry has meant that Gregory's would-be defenders are easily reduced to confusion: some say the king's deposition by the pope is unlawful while others declare the pope's deposition by the king to be unlawful; hence the intellectual turbulence.

At this point Wenrich introduces the first of a number of Old Testament passages, which he regards as authorities for good political conduct. It is the story of how King Solomon, 'the wisest of men', reacted to an attack on his kingship by his half-brother Adonias, who was anointed by the high priest Abiathar (1 Kgs. 1-2). Wenrich presents Solomon, Adonias and Abiathar as precise parallels with Henry, Rudolf and Gregory. He recalls the speed with which Solomon exacted vengeance on the usurper, the instigator (Joab, the commander of the guard who put Adonias on the throne), and the priest Abiathar who authorised the seizure of the throne. He had Adonias and Joab killed, and removed Abiathar in perpetuity out of the high priesthood, (replacing him with Zadok, who appointed Solomon king). Wenrich draws out the relevance of the episode to the current circumstances. Given the auctoritas of Solomon's actions, should not King Henry proceed against (persequi) the pope? The chapter lists Gregory's many offences, contrasting them with Abiathar's good deeds prior to his one transgression; in other words, the pope's conduct compares unfavourably with that of Abiathar. Wenrich then poses this question:

Shall this man [Henry IV] now contending against the instigator of so many evils [Gregory VII], who has condemned him unjustly in so many speeches, excommunicated him in such a prejudicial fashion, tried to defame him with so many evil allegations, sought to dishonour him in letters, which were a stranger to apostolic papal sobriety but worthy of his own disreputable character, who set his most ferocious enemy [Rudolf] against his kingdom and his life – should this man

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76 In 1080 episcopal assemblies at Bamberg (Easter) and Mainz (Whitsun) denounced Hildebrand. The crucial Brixen synod of 25 June 1080 called for his deposition and expulsion. See above pp. 89ff.
77 Wenrich, Epistola, pp. 288.30-289.17.
love such a person I say and bow his head even to being crushed before his recriminations?\textsuperscript{78}

Having reminded the pope of the deposition of Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims (816-35) for his rebellion against Louis the Pious (emperor, 813-40), Wenrich declares his intention to examine further the *scripturae* and *seculares hystoriae* (secular histories).

First, he pinpoints the source of the devastation, the destruction of cities, and the confusion of men. These are inevitable when the efforts of those who wish to usurp kingships are countered by the defence by reigning kings of their status, freedom, lordship, and honour. History shows that it is not new for royal honour to defend itself against the Godless rashness of those who rise up against it, and neither is it new for secular men to think and act in a worldly manner. However, says Wenrich, what is new and unheard of is the very idea that a pope should wish frivolously to divide kingdoms, to seek by sudden plots (*repentinae factiones*) to destroy kingships, to replace the Lord’s anointed as if they were (mere) bailiffs (*villici*), to give up their fathers’ lordship, and to excommunicate them if they do not immediately consent. The pope invited the renowned princes of the land to participate in a well-prepared condemnation (the 1080 Lenten synod?), and reminded them that they were given spiritual milk to drink and nourished by him so that they would acknowledge that they were his pupils (*alumni*). Thereupon, thoroughly satiated with the milk of the apostles, he used obscene words to attack a power established by God and poured unbearable words of abuse into the ears of the Church.\textsuperscript{79}

The foregoing indictment of Hildebrand’s interference in political affairs is the core of the chapter. The remainder consists of an increasingly elaborate exegesis of various *scripturae* and *seculares hystoriae* to support Wenrich’s contentions. Among them is a comparison between Hildebrand’s behaviour towards Henry and that of the boy David who played his harp to calm the mind of the tormented Saul (cf. 1 Sam. 16: 23). There are numerous scriptural references concerning *gravitas* and soundness in speech.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p. 289.18-22: ‘Iste hominem tot malorum incentorem, qui eum tot contionibus iniuste damnavit, tot preudicitis excommunicavit, turpibus insectationibus totiens infamare contendit, litteris apostolica sobrietate alienis, sua vero procacitate dignissimis, dehonestare temptavit, acerrimum hostem in regnum et caput eius inmisit: istum, inquam, hominem diligere et cervicem suam ludibrio eius usquequaque conculcandam poterit substernere?’

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., pp. 289.26-290.1.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., pp. 290.2-291.1.
The chapter ends with some telling references to Pope Gregory I, whom Wenrich nominates as a model for correct papal behaviour towards kings and emperors. *Beatus Gregorius* was, of course, Gregory VII’s favourite patristic source, whose name he adopted when he was raised to the papacy. Gregory VII frequently claimed that secular rulers owe *oboedientia* to the apostolic see. Wenrich now employs the writings of Gregory I to counter these claims. He recalls that Saint Gregory taught that obedience was due to the divinely ordained ruler, whether he was good or evil, and he did not challenge imperial legislation even when he disagreed with it. He diffused humility and mildness in his words, his manners, even in his rebukes. Wenrich cites Gregory I’s letter to Emperor Maurice (582-602), which implores the ruler to reconsider his new law banning public officials from taking monastic vows, but ends with a declaration of obedience to the emperor. Saint Gregory referred approvingly to David’s playing of the harp to soothe the raving Saul. Finally, Wenrich mentions Gregory I’s recollection of how gently the prophet Nathan alluded to the adultery of the then king (David) and the murders he had committed, but did not rebuke him (2 Sam. 12).

Chapter six discusses another key topic, namely Gregory’s absolution of Henry’s subjects from their oath of fidelity to the king. Wenrich strongly disputes the pope’s claim that he has the authority to do so. ‘They say that the Lord Pope absolved far too frivolously the holy, and in all previous centuries by all people (*omnium gentium nations*) inviolable, binding commitment of the oath.’ The writer thereby identifies Hildebrand’s opponents as defenders of the age-old respect for the inviolability of sworn oaths. Furthermore, even though they have not sought it, Henry’s subjects are absolved from their oath of allegiance irrespective of their wishes. ‘But to an intelligent observer something which is so easily dispensed with is clearly of only limited value.’ Wenrich suggests an anomaly in the papal absolution: why are Henry’s personal functionaries not excepted? In other words, it is one thing for the pope to take away those powers that

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81 See above p. 193.
83 *Reg. past.* 3.2, col. 0053A.
85 Ibid., p. 293.8-11: ‘Sanctam autem et omnibus retro seculis apud omnium gentium nationes inviolatem iurisirandam religionem facillima, inquit, domni papae rescindit absolution ...’
86 Ibid., p. 293.14: ‘Sed rem diligenter intuenti patet facili precio comparabile, quod tam facile dispensatur.’
belong to the *fiscus* (crown property, treasury), but should not the king’s domestic property be left intact? The implication is that Hildebrand has crossed the line between royal and private jurisdiction. Even more seriously, Wenrich suggests that to free a man from a moral obligation, by absolving him from a solemn oath, is to involve him in a crime against God. He provides a scriptural reference for this accusation (Prov. 5: 22), and asks how should those who took the oath respond to the pope’s action. In answering his own question, Wenrich for the first time speaks directly to Hildebrand. God, he says, understands the difference between an ordinary liar and an oath-breaker:

In this case, Lord Pope, we do not listen to you; we do not break the fidelity which we promised to him, which was not only promised but sworn; because if the mouth that speaks an outright lie kills the soul [cf. Wis. 1: 11] it is clearly inconsistent that the mouth that lies with oath-breaking does not kill the soul; and if He destroys all liars (cf. Ps. 5: 7), He must all the more destroy the oath-breakers.  

Wenrich pursues the point by pleading with the pope not to sin against his brothers by giving them a false sense of security (*perversa securitas*) by placing a stumbling block before the children of Christ (cf. Matt. 18: 6) through a promise of freedom from punishment (*impunitas*). ‘We cannot follow this, nor can you command it.’

The letter turns again to scripture, recalling Jesus’ statement that the Pharisees are responsible for interpreting the law, as Moses taught it, to the Jewish people (cf. Matt. 23: 1-3). Again, Wenrich addresses the pope:

If you sit on the seat of Moses then I must observe what you say and do what you command. You have stepped down from the seat of Moses and you have absolved me from the need for obedience in all cases in which I was bound to you.

Wenrich’s point is that Hildebrand must be obeyed as long as he correctly states Church law, but by declaring absolution from the oath of fealty, he has lost the status of authoritative interpreter of the law. Wenrich defends this assertion with scriptural

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87 Ibid., p. 293.29-32: ‘Non te in hoc, domne papa, audimus; non abnegamus ei fidel, quam promissimus, non tantum promissimus, sed iuravimus; quia, si os, quod simpliciter mentitur, occidit animam, valde est inconsequens, ut os, quod cum perio mentitur, non occidat animam; et si perdit omnes qui loquuntur mendacium, mucho amplius perdit omnes qui loquuntur peritiurium.’

88 Ibid., p. 293.33-5.

89 Ibid., p. 293.36: ‘Istud nec nos sequi, nec tu potes precipere.’

90 Ibid., p. 293.37-8: ‘Si super cathedram Moysi sederes, necesse haberem servare et facere quod tuberes. Cathedram Moysi descendisti, ab omni, quam tibi debebam, oboedientiae necessitate me absolvisti.’

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passages. He starts with Moses’ prohibition of taking the Lord’s name in vain (Exod. 20: 7, Lev. 19: 12), and develops his argument with two further auctoritates:

Hear O Israel the Lord your God is one God (Deut. 6: 4).
You shall not worship foreign gods (Exod. 20: 5).

He then says that if reverence for Hildebrand’s authority is to compel him, contrary to this commandment, to follow foreign gods, surely it would be madness in the name of obedience to show my terrified assent to you to the point of sacrilege and impiety? For he who says you shall not worship foreign gods, subsequently adds ‘you shall not break your oath’ (Lev. 19: 12). Both these commandments are God-given, and promulgated by Moses. They must be reverently accepted and steadfastly established (firmitate statutum). Wenrich sarcastically identifies those who defend the decrees of Lent 1080 as the pope’s evangelistae, preaching and circulating Hildebrand-Gregory’s words as if they are equivalent to gospel. In fact, the resultant behaviour is sinful and they are behaving shamefully in encouraging those sins. In summary, because the oath of fidelity is – like kingship itself – established by God, it cannot lawfully be negated by the pope.

The focus of the chapter now switches to the pope’s candidate for the kingship. Wenrich’s attack on Rudolf blends undisguised anger with the irony that so characterizes his work. He describes the anti-king as irrevocably wicked, and as a deserter, traitor, perjurer, murderer, and polygamist. These offences, these virtues of his genius (illae animi virtutes), have suddenly raised him to the kingship; more truly, they have raised him momentarily from the ignominy which will remain to him and his posterity. Such a man was deemed suitable (idoneus) to undertake the imperial dignity and was called the son of blessed Peter! Like Rudolf, others have seized thrones with tyrannical violence, have prepared their way with bloodshed, have set upon their heads gory crowns, have consolidated their royal rule with murders, plunder, mutilation, and torture; some have even murdered their nearest kindred and their own lords, and seized their office (honores). The Lord Pope calls them his friends, blesses them, and greets them as victorious princes. This closes the chapter’s treatment of Rudolf.

91 Ibid., p. 293.39-294.8
92 Wenrich’s editor identified these other tyrannical usurpers as William the Conqueror, Robert Guiscard, and Count Robert of Flanders: Wenrich, Epistola, p. 294, n. 3.
93 Wenrich, Epistola, p. 294.9-25.
Wenrich turns once again to the oath and the issue of its absolution. He continues to build up his case, presenting it as the argument of other contemporary commentators opposed to Gregory VII’s measures. He insists that an oath of fidelity is sacrosanct even if sworn to a wicked king, producing a series of exemplar from the Old Testament to demonstrate the inadmissibility of breaking an oath under any circumstances (Gen. 21: 22-4, 26: 26; Josh. 6: 22-3, 9: 3-27). He declares that those, such as himself, who follow the witness of the insuperable truth shall never deceive corrupted men away from a willingly and lawfully sworn oath, even if an angel from heaven ordered them to do so. He again backs his stance with a string of scriptural exemplar (Exod. 23: 1; Deut. 18: 20; Jer. 23: 16, 21; Ezek. 13: 3, 6; 2 John: 10), which bring this irony-laden chapter to a close.84

Chapter six segues into the brief, but important, chapter seven, which opens by contending that the aforementioned exemplar bind men not to accept absolution from their oaths. This, says Wenrich, leads to reports of another aspect of the pope’s behaviour that is contrary to those auctoritates. Now a new accusation appears in anti-Gregorian polemic: his encouragement of secular men to engage in bloodshed in exchange for pardon for their sins.85 As a result, murders are thought of little account and are permitted on any pretext (occasio); the property of blessed Peter is to be defended with force, and the pope promises that anyone who dies in the process does so, through his obedience, free from every sin. Hildebrand-Gregory will ‘render account for him who has not been afraid to kill a Christian for the sake of Christ’. Wenrich says that many bishops claim to have heard the pope state this, but do not go to the trouble of disputing with him since the impropriety of his words is so obvious.86 In other words, the very idea of allowing – even encouraging – Christians to kill other Christians with papal permission provided they are obedient to the pope obviously contradicts Christian tradition. The bishops’ silence should not be read as consent. The pope’s general absolution of Rudolf’s supporters calls to mind the earlier discussion of Gregory’s

84 Ibid., p. 294.26-296.11.
85 Robinson, Authority, p. 96.
86 Wenrich, Epistola, pp. 296.12-297.3.
contrasting of the *beneficia* offered by service to St Peter with those offered by a secular lord.\(^{97}\)

Chapter eight examines the pope's prohibition of lay investiture.\(^{98}\) It begins by acknowledging that the legislation has some appearance of reason despite its 'novelty'—always a term of abuse in eleventh-century discourse. Having made this somewhat grudging concession, Wenrich introduces the grounds for his criticism of the decree: its timing, its haste, and the forcefulness of its imposition. He claims that it is motivated, not by religious zeal, but out of hatred for Henry. Warming to the theme, he compares the treatment meted out by the pope to those who were 'not so much installed as smuggled in by the consecrated right hand of Rudolf' with 'our' (Henry's) prelates. The former 'are not refused consecration and the pallium is sent to their house' whereas the king's legally elected and accepted bishops and archbishops are forbidden communion with the laity because they keep their *fides* to Henry and fear to break their oaths.\(^{99}\) If Wenrich already knows of Rudolf's decease and its circumstances then his allusion to Rudolf's 'consecrated right hand' is darkly ironic, since it was the anti-king's loss of this hand that precipitated the death.

Wenrich employs much exaggeration as he summarizes the unavailing efforts of the (Henrician) bishops to promote the peace of the Church. Seemingly, they threw themselves at the pope's feet seeking to know the conditions of peace and treated his legates as angels of God even to the extent of enduring indignities for the sake of public tranquillity. That having failed, they sent supplicant embassies to Rome seeking usable canons. Instead, they were greeted with abuse.\(^{100}\) Thanks to the protection of blessed Peter, they escaped many great dangers and returned home, bringing nothing with them but insults and threats.\(^{101}\)

The writer claims that the king's right of investiture is a custom has lasted from the Holy Fathers into our own time, has grown old over a long time, is received as law,

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97 See above p. 257.
98 Schmale-Ott (1984) thought that this chapter was Wenrich's reaction to the Lenten synod's repetition of the prohibition of lay investiture by any secular office-holder with renewed severity and with penalties: Schmale-Ott, 'Einleitung', p. 14.
strengthened under grace, \textit{(sub lege recepta, sub gratia roborata)} and has grown in value through the long duration of its existence. In theological terms, the juxtaposition of \textit{'lege'} with \textit{'gratia'} normally implies a comparison between the Old and New Testaments. \textit{Lege} is the Mosaic Law, which was perfected by Christ's grace. Wenrich may be suggesting that the custom of lay investiture is endowed with both Old Testament authority and the greater authority of Christ. He continues by saying that whoever attentively reads the canonical writing will find that this is the case. He mentions 'only some of the many references'. For example, if royal power was not accustomed to confer episcopal offices then the canonical scriptures would never report that the kings of Israel ejected priests and established others in their place. He offers two alleged precedents from the book of Maccabees (Macc. 10: 20, 14: 38). Wenrich also refers to some correspondence between two seventh century Spanish fathers, Bishop Braulio of Zaragoza (590-651) and Archbishop Isidore of Seville (604-36), which clearly shows their acceptance of the rights of the Visigothic king of Spain to appoint bishops. He turns to Gregory I again, saying that his Register provides much evidence that he accepted the emperor's right to appoint the pope (and other bishops, by implication). Likewise the work entitled 'The deeds of the Roman bishops' (\textit{Liber Pontificalis}, the Roman clergy's official record of the biographies of the popes) nowhere seems to deny that that this was permitted not only to the emperor but also to kings, and even to tyrants. The chapter ends with Wenrich reiterating that, to a well informed person, it seems inappropriate that a situation that has hitherto been permitted must be annulled with such haste.\textsuperscript{102}

The letter ends with a final address by Wenrich to Hildebrand: 'May your holiness receive this work with the charity with which it is directed to you. It would reward my zeal and obedience with a greatly desired prize if after all these reproaches, which almost kill me, have been read I may be instructed with the appropriate proofs and with certain authority that will answer these complaints.'\textsuperscript{103} With that, Wenrich rested his challenge to the pope.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., pp. 297.14-298.28.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 299.10-12: \textit{'Haec ea, qua vobis directa sunt, karitate suscipiens sanctitas vestra sollicitudinis meae obsequium longe optabili premio poterit remunerare, si de his omnibus, quibus me enecant, obiectionibus congrua ratione refellendis, certa auctoritate evacuandis parvitatem meam obnixe id deprecantem dignabitur instruere.'}
Appendix B: Gregory and Manasses of Rheims

It is understandable that the establishing of papal legates in France as permanent local representatives of the apostolic see carried with it the potential for friction with senior local prelates who might fear the undermining of their own authority.¹ Discord was especially likely when the tenacious Hugh of Die was involved. None of these conflicts was as protracted and difficult as that involving the leading churchman of the regnum Francorum, Archbishop Manasses I of Rheims.² At the start of his pontificate, Gregory seems to have been on good terms with him. In April 1073, Manasses was one of the few individuals to receive written notification from Gregory of his elevation.³ A year later he reminded Manasses that he had ‘favoured and agreed to’ his original promotion to the archdiocese in 1069/70. In 1077, Manasses confirmed this in a letter to Gregory.⁴ The pope’s epistolae lay bare the deterioration in their relationship. A letter from Gregory, dated 8 December 1074, notifies the archbishop of the forthcoming arrival of papal legates, whom Manasses should receive and love as representatives of St Peter and the pope, news which it may be supposed was less than welcome to this senior prelate.⁵ In March 1075, Gregory criticized Manasses’ persistent negligence in tolerating the contumacious disobedientia of Bishop Roger III of Châlons-sur-Marne.⁶ The abbatial succession at the monastery of Saint-Remi, an issue whose origin predated Gregory’s elevation, was another focus of dispute between the pope and the archbishop.⁷

A papal letter dated 12 May 1077 instructs Hugh of Die to convene a council to which the archbishop of Rheims and as many of the French clergy as possible should be summoned. Abbot Hugh of Cluny should also attend. There is no reason to believe that

¹ Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 375.
³ Reg. 1.4; cf. Reg. 1.3.
⁵ Reg. 2.32, p. 169.1-5.
⁶ See above p. 42.
Manasses was to be targeted at these proceedings. However, he and most of the other French prelates failed to attend the meeting at Autun on 10 September 1077. Hugh of Die responded by imposing a series of penalties on the absentee. He excommunicated Manasses and suspended him from office. Manasses' oath to mend his ways at the 1078 Lenten synod in Rome was followed by a notable example of Gregory's willingness to overturn decisions by his zealous legate: the archbishop's excommunication was reversed and he was restored to office. Nevertheless, there remained outstanding charges against him. Manasses tried various stratagems to avoid having to face them, even arguing that the 'ultramontane' (i.e. non-Italian) Hugh of Die could not be a 'Roman' legate. A letter from Gregory, dated 22 August 1078, put him right on that particular matter. Three days later the pope wrote to Hugh of Die and Abbot Hugh of Cluny confirming that Manasses owed them his obedience. An epistola from Gregory, dated 3 January 1080, took the archbishop to task for his continuing defiance of legatine authority. The following month Manasses failed to attend a council at Lyons, a meeting that saw his deposition by Hugh of Die. A letter from Gregory to Manasses, dated 17 April 1080, confirmed the legate's sentence but offered him one more opportunity to clear himself of the charges against him by swearing a suitable oath in the presence of Hugh of Die. The deposed archbishop apparently paid no heed to this final concession. The consequence was that Gregory dispatched similar letters, all dated 27 December 1080, to the clergy and people of Rheims, Count Ebalus of Roucy, the suffragans of Rheims, and King Philip. They were to shun Manasses and cooperate in the speedy and canonical election of a new metropolitan. At this point, Manasses 'vanished from history'.

9 Reg. 5.17, pp. 378.24-381.10.
10 Reg. 6.2, pp. 391.25-394.1.
11 Reg. 6.3, pp. 394.31-396.5
12 Reg. 7.12, pp. 475.25-477.12.
13 Reg. 7.20, pp. 496.2-497.10.
14 Reg. 8.17-20, pp. 538.21-543.22.
15 Cowdrey, Gregory VII, p. 387.
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