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HISTORY AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETY
IN SIXTH-CENTURY GAUL
AN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF
GREGORY OF TOURS' DECEM LIBRI HISTORIARUM

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HISTORY AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IN SIXTH-CENTURY GAUL

AN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF

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By

Kathleen Mitchell

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ABSTRACT

HISTORY AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IN SIXTH-CENTURY GAUL

AN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF

GREGORY OF TOURS' DECEM LIBRI HISTORIARUM

By

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This study is a thematic and organizational analysis of Gregory of Tours' Decem libri Historiarum. The Historiae has been examined primarily on the basis of internal evidence, although for interpretive reasons it has also been placed within the contexts of the established traditions of Christian historiography and of the sixth-century Gallic church.

The Historiae is a highly structured work of historical interpretation written to serve practical religious and social purposes. In it Gregory blended the Eusebian-Orosian historiographical concerns with the distant past, orthodoxy, the inseparability of church and state, and human free will with the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Gregory understood Trinitarian orthodoxy to affirm the qualities of the Godhead, whereas the Arian heresy emphasized the material aspects of God and was therefore idolatrous. To obey God's law, an orthodox society would favor the Godlike ethic of charity and harmony, and would reject the heretical and idolatrous materialism of exploitation and war for gain. The value of

orthodoxy for society was proven through the history of the Hebrews and Franks: when a community ignored God's law and lapsed into idolatry, political defeat was likely to follow. Gregory thus addressed his arguments in the Historiae to the leaders of Christian society. Bishops should counsel kings regarding the societal orthodoxy or heresy of their actions, and kings should respond to this guidance by protecting their realms from disorder and defeat through promotion of justice and charity. Were society to be truly Christian, and history showed that that made political sense, its individual members would no longer need fear the Last Judgment.

Gregory's goal in the Historiae was, in fact characteristic of the sixth-century Gallic church, because it shared with the sermons of Caesarius of Arles and the contemporary conciliar legislation the concern that Christian beliefs must make a difference in the attitudes and actions of the community of believers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study of Gregory of Tours is the result of a decade-long quest of both a personal and professional nature to discover what history is and how historians go about their business. The first paper I wrote in my doctoral program at Michigan State University was on Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum. I realized then that the field of historiography, particularly medieval historiography, is one that happily denies all possibility for the easy answer. At that time I also became intrigued with the fact that Bede's historiography is often described as being superior to that of Gregory of Tours. My second seminar paper was on Gregory and from thenceforth his Decem libri Historiarum was, I realize now, the standard against which I have measured all other examples of medieval historiography. It is very satisfying to recognize that this dissertation not only completes my doctoral studies but brings my doctoral program full circle. I am also pleased to have discovered by means of a detailed analysis of the Historiae that my early positive but naive impressions of it were, in fact, based on more reality than a perverse delight in preferring, despite the critics, Gregory of Tours' work to Bede's.

My search for a sense of what history and historians are was charted by the four important people who served on my

doctoral committee: Professors Richard E. Sullivan, Marjorie E. Gesner, Josef W. Konvitz, and John A. Yunck (Department of English). Among them are fine teachers, exciting thinkers, and highly respected friends of great wisdom and patience. Richard E. Sullivan, my major professor, has been an especially careful guide to the profession of being an historian. His support and direction are of great worth to me.

During the research and writing of the actual dissertation several people who are neither on my guidance committee nor connected with Michigan State University have also been particularly helpful. Professor Walter Goffart of the University of Toronto was most generous in his response to an early formulation of my ideas about Gregory of Tours which I gave at the 1981 International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Professor Richard Kenneth Emmerson of Walla Walla College read much of this study in manuscript form and made valuable suggestions. My colleagues and students at Pacific Union College, especially those in the Departments of History and English, have been kind and understanding friends throughout this project. I have also benefitted from use of the resources and services of the College. Cathemae Cecchin, a student at the College, did a fine job entering the major portion of this study into the word processor. Though not people, the libraries of the University of California, Berkeley, have become close and indispensable acquaintances during the last few years. I am grateful that their MGH edition

of the Historiae was never recalled while I was using it until just ten days before my dissertation defense.

Although one must ultimately bear full responsibility for one's own presentation of ideas, the creation of a work of scholarship is, without question, an affirmation of a rich and rewarding community.

At the brink of this major rite of passage, the completion of my formal education, I have articulated for myself the crucial place that six unique people have held in my lifelong development of ideals and goals. Mrs. Miriam Tymeson, my grade school principal, gave me my first sense of the joys of history. Miss Edith Davis, my high school English teacher, let her students explore ideas as much as they possibly could. Professor Donald R. McAdams, my masters level professor of English history, encouraged me to pursue doctoral studies. Professor Siegfried H. Horn, for whom I worked, by example, taught me more than anyone else the skills and production of scholarship. It is my parents, Robert H. Mitchell and Mary Jane Dybdahl Mitchell, however, who are responsible for having created in the first place my susceptibility to the charm of learning. Their delight in the exploration and aesthetic appreciation of things and ideas is unbounded. In a very concrete way, this study of Gregory of Tours is theirs.

Napa County, California
January 1983

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INTRODUCTION: "DECEM LIBROS HISTORIARUM SCRIPSI"

Gregory of Tours lived in an age of practicality and hot tempers, but in a world that was nonetheless aware of holiness and susceptible to Christian idealism. Georgius Florentius was born on the thirtieth of November, Saint Andrews' day, ca. 538, into a senatorial and episcopal family of the Auvergne. In August 573, assuming the episcopal name of Gregorius, he was elevated to the bishopric of Tours and a career of both ecclesiastical and political activity. According to his own accounts in his great work, the Decem libri Historiarum,[1] he was at Tours a fitting episcopal successor to Saint Martin:[2] he was a builder of churches,[3] a suppressor of heresy and theological error,[4] and a promoter of the relics and miracles of saints.[5] In so

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[1]Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Libri Historiarum X, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum, I (2nd ed.; Hannover: Hahn, 1951).

[2]Gregory's description of Saint Martin's career reads: "Hic enim fana distruxit, heresem oppraessit, eclesias aedicavit et, cum aliis multis vertutibus refulgeret, ad consummandum laudes suae titulum tres mortuos vitae restituit" (Hist., i. 39). For Saint Martin's influence, cf. for example, Elie Griffe, "Saint Martin et le monachisme gaulois," in Saint Martin et son temps. Mémorial du XVIe centenaire des débuts du monachisme en Gaule, 361-1961 (Studia Anselmiana, 46; Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1961), pp. 3-24.

[3]Hist., x. 31. [4]Hist., 43-44; vi. 5; x. 13.

[5]Hist., x. 31, where he lists the books he authored:

doing, he was a man of his century, a bishop vigorously concerned in all aspects of his professional life with the imposition upon society of the principles of Christian belief.[6]

The royalty who were contemporary with Gregory and toward whom he often assumed an advising, an almost prophetic role were the sons and grandsons of Lothar I (died 561). Lothar himself was the last surviving son of the great Merovingian progenitor Clovis who had unified the Frankish realms and instigated their official conversion to orthodox Christianity. According to Gregory's Historiae, the challenge to the Frankish kings was the establishment and maintenance within the kingdom of lawful authority, unity, and peace. These goals were rarely, if ever, achieved.

The periods of time, spanning, in fact, most of the century, that were especially troublesome in the political

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"Decem libros Historiarum, septem Miraculorum, unum de Vita Patrum scripsi; in Psalterii tractatu librum commentatus sum; de Cursibus etiam ecclesiasticis unum librum condidi." Cf. P. R. L. Brown, Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours (Stenton Lecture; Reading: University of Reading, 1977).

[6]Walter Ullmann has stated that the episcopal synodists of the early Middle Ages, particularly of the sixth century, "functioned as actual builders of a Christian society" ("Public Welfare and Social Legislation in the Early Medieval Councils" [Councils and Assemblies, ed. by G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (Studies in Church History, 7; Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 3)]. Cf. also Hubert Mordek, Kirchenrecht und Reform im Frankreich (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), p. 16: "Gallien erlebte . . . im 6. Jahrhundert einen Höhepunkt aktiven kirchlichen Reformstrebens, . . ."

experience of sixth-century Gaul were those when there were rival fraternal kings, each dissatisfied with his own paternal inheritance and grasping to increase his territory, power, and prestige. The first such period occurred following the death of Clovis in 511 and lasted until the death of his son Childebert in 558. The rivals then were his illegitimate son Theuderic (died 534), who was succeeded by Theudebert (died 548) and Theudebald (died 555); and the king's sons by Queen Clothild, Chlodomer (died 524), Childebert I, and Lothar. Chlodomer's line was eventually extinguished by Childebert and Lothar who, following their brother's death, assassinated two of his young sons and allowed a third to take monastic vows.[7]

The second major period of strife began with the death of Lothar and ended in 584 with the assassination of Chilperic. The rivals at that time were Charibert (died 567), Sigibert (died 575), and Guntram (died 593), and their half-brother Chilperic who, with his wife Fredegund (died 597), appears as "the worst of Lothar's sons, . . . the villain of the History."[8] The survival of one brother, as in the cases of Lothar and Guntram, however, was no guarantee of peace and harmony. Lothar in old age faced the rebellion of

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[7]Cf. Hist., iii. 18.

[8]So O. M. Dalton in the Introduction to his translation of the Historiae (The History of the Franks by Gregory of Tours, I [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927], 62).

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his son Chramn, and Guntram was continually apprehensive about the intentions of his nephew Childebert II, the heir of Sigibert. Both he and Childebert had necessarily to be constantly on guard against attempts by Chilperic's widow Fredegund upon their lives.

To serve as spiritual guide and advisor to such kings and in such circumstances as the Merovingian dynasty produced demanded political sagacity, moral courage, and unshakable fearlessness. The Tourangean bishops of the Historiae, Injuriosus in the time of Lothar[9] and Gregory himself during the reigns of Chilperic, Guntram, and Childebert II, were equal to their task. In fact, a careful reading of the Historiae indicates both the importance of episcopal leaders in sixth-century society and the position and authority, especially with kings, they had the potential to enjoy. The powerful position of these bishops, however, also made them susceptible to professional risk, and, in some cases, possible assassination. Gregory's own career served him often as illustration of both the public influence and the personal hazard inherent in the sixth-century episcopal office. He left no doubt, however, that, in his mind, the risks ultimately deserved only minimal consideration.

In the Historiae Gregory made plain his belief that the task of the bishop was to exhort and to remind the

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[9]Hist., iv. 2.

members of the Christian community about their obligations to God and to their fellows. Because he was a bishop and the successor and spokesman for Saint Martin, the preeminent Gallic saint, Gregory expected to be heard and to have his counsels seriously considered. It seems likely, in fact, that Gregory undertook to write history as a means of projecting his episcopal message beyond his own lifetime and of guaranteeing that the force of his Christian counsel and warning would never fail.

It is clear from statements in the Historiae that Gregory was concerned to write of the conflicts between good and evil[10] and of the rewards of saints and sinners.[11] He placed these in the context of the past so that what had gone before would provide hope for those anticipating the coming end of the world.[12] In an age of lessening literary culture, he felt it to be vital that historical work on these topics be done before it became impossible to achieve. His use of language troubled him, but in the end he was more interested in the comprehensibility and cohesion of his message than he was in the means by which it might be communicated. In the general preface of the work, by means of apologizing for his literary inadequacies, he noted that it was common

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[10]Cf. Hist., praef. prima; i. praef.; iii, praef.; cf. v. praef. for a more complex view of conflict.

[11]Cf. Hist., iii. praef.

[12]Hist., i. praef.

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knowledge that "few understand educated rhetoric, but many rustic speech."[13] What mattered ultimately was that he be understood. That he considered the ideas of the Historiae and of his other works to be vital is emphatically stated at the conclusion of Book X: his episcopal successors at Tours, in fear of the judgment, were to preserve his books with neither emendation nor omission.[14] What Gregory expressed there was not simple pride of accomplishment. What he had written during the course of his professional life had dealt with concerns he believed had long-lasting significance for the Christian community.

In recent years several suggestions have been made regarding the way in which Gregory of Tours' work should be studied in the future. Roger D. Ray pointed out that this important early medieval historian deserves monographic treatment.[15] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill stressed the necessity of

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[13]"'Philosophantem rethorem intellegunt pauci, loquentem rusticum multi'." Cf. Helmut Beumann, "Gregor von Tours und der Sermo Rusticus," in Spiegel der Geschichte. Festgabe fur Max Braubach zum 10. April 1964, ed. by Konrad Repgen and Stephan Skalweit (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1964), pp. 69-98; Max Bonnet, Le latin de Grégoire de Tours (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1890). Saint Caesarius of Arles had stressed the importance of the use of homiletic language which could be understood by even the most simple listener. Cf. Sermo LXXXVI, quoted by Gustave Bardy, "La prédication de Saint Césaire d'Arles, Revue d'histoire de l'église de France, 29 (1943), 228.

[14]Hist., x. 31.

[15]"Medieval Historiography Through the Twelfth Century: Problems and Progress of Research," Viator, 5 (1974), 59.

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considering Gregory's historical work in the context of both his duties as an episcopal administrator and his hagiographical writing.[16] Peter R. L. Brown, who in the last few years has dealt effectively with Gregory the hagiographer, expressed the need that Gregory be the subject of a complete religionsgeschichtliches Kommentar. He has stated that no "consequential attempt [has] been made to seize the incidents and attitudes revealed in the works of Gregory of Tours in a human or social context of satisfying precision." He noted that, "Instead, a tradition of interpretation that is inclined to join, as in a maximum and minimum thermometer, the low ebb of Gregory's Latinity with the high tide of his credulity still rests heavily on the subject."[17] In the light of these comments, one can understand that much study --in many cases initial investigations, not just reinterpretations--remains to be carried out on the work of Gregory of Tours. An important part of that study should be an analysis of his historical and religious ideas and the context in which he wrote them. This is an approach which, I believe, would be in line with Gregory of Tours' ultimatum in the final chapter of the Historiae.

On the strength of Gregory's statements of the significance of what he had written, an analysis of the internal

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[16] "Gregory of Tours in the Light of Modern Research," in The Long-Haired Kings (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1962), p. 51.

[17] Relics and Social Status, p. 3.

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thematic evidence of his works should allow his ideas to be visible in high relief.[18] This would result in the mentality of an important early medieval figure becoming better known. Despite Wallace-Hadrill's belief that the history can be best understood in the light of the hagiography, it seems reasonable that the means to a comprehension of the complete corpus is the comprehension of its individual component parts. Gregory's injunction that his literary corpus be kept intact should also be applicable to a single work within it which would be studied in terms of its own philosophical and religious integrity. If Gregory believed that his writing as a whole had cohesion, any given work within that corpus should as well. One work thematically and ideologically analyzed should help in the subsequent analysis of the whole.

This present study has subjected Gregory's major work, the Decem libri Historiarum, to careful scrutiny as regards its historical and religious themes, structural organization, and creative milieu. In the light of this analysis, the work can be seen, as Peter Brown anticipated, as being far more

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[18]Cf. for example, the studies of John H. Corbett ("The Saint as Patron in the Work of Gregory of Tours," Journal of Medieval History, 7 [1981], 1-13), and Sofia Boesch Gajano ("Il santo nella visione storiografica di Gregorio di Tours," in Gregorio di Tours [Convegni del Centro di Studi Sulla Spiritualità Medievale, XII; Todi: Presso L'Accademia Tudertina, 1977], pp. 27-91; a study originally presented in 1971) regarding the role of the saint in Gregory's works. Corbett's article reflects the influence of Peter Brown's seminal studies (such as "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," Journal of Roman Studies, 61 [1971], 80-101) on the late antique/early medieval worlds.

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than a jumbled collection of anecdotes recounted in decadent Latin with little heed given to chronological accuracy. It emerges as rather a carefully planned work of thoughtful historical interpretation. Gregory, writing in his episcopal capacity, used history in order to define and illustrate the nature and actions of a truly Christian society. The work therefore is argumentative and thus dependent upon the development of an integrated logical progression. Gregory wrote realistically with regard at least to the Historiae when he stressed the importance of the future maintenance of the thematic and structural integrity of his work.

The initial stage of this analytical study of the historical themes and organization of the Decem libri involves a placement of the work within the Christian historiographical milieu available to Gregory. The way Christian history had been written in the past must have convinced the sixth-century bishop that undertaking an historical work would be an attractive and worthwhile endeavor for him to pursue. In the fourth and fifth centuries, Eusebius of Caesarea and Orosius established to large extent the territory of Christian historiography. Gregory of Tours both explicitly and implicitly drew upon and transformed their assumptions about Christian history. Methodologically, the histories of Eusebius and Orosius have great importance for this study. Much of the historiographical understanding which guided my analysis of Gregory's Decem libri resulted from my preliminary

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work on these two early Christian historians. The survey of their historiography in Chapter I plays, therefore, a doubly illuminating role in this study of the Historiae. It outlines the qualitative framework of Christian historiography which Gregory of Tours accepted as his model for the writing of history. The chapter also identifies an historiographical interpretation which explained to me much of what Gregory of Tours did with history.

A dominant theme of Gregory's Historiae, one which he derived from Eusebius' history and which undoubtedly has a role to play with regard to the frequent medieval consideration of his work as an Historia ecclesiastica,[19] is the conflict between orthodoxy and heresy. Rather than limiting these matters to the realms of church and theology, as Eusebius had largely done, Gregory, perhaps influenced by Orosius' view of the inseparability of the state and religion, considered them to be definable in political and social terms as well. His purpose in writing history was to develop an interpretation of orthodoxy which would involve the recognition of a communal ethic governing religious, political, and social activity. As will be explored in Chapters II and III, his history, as a result, ranges from the idealistic to the realistically observant as he attempted to demonstrate by means of the vehicle of history what Christian society could

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[19]Cf. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, in Long-haired Kings, p. 51.

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be as opposed to what it most often was. His understanding of the machinery of history and of human nature led him to believe enthusiastically that society could be improved. Orthodox belief established a goal for Christian action. History provided the arena wherein one could observe that action.

The Bishop of Tours, according to his Historiae, spent his career denouncing yet cajoling his contemporaries, reminding them of their historic commitment to Christianity and saintliness, and warning them of the evils that had befallen their ancestors and which could come to them should hostility toward God and their fellow Christians prevail. Commencing his first book of histories, Gregory announced that he would write of conflicts. His reason for doing so, however, his all-consuming desire, was that he might confess and confirm orthodox Christian belief. "Christ Himself is our true end, who in His full grace will give us eternal life, if we become converted to Him."[20] As Chapter IV will point out, it was in his position as bishop that Gregory of Tours wrote his ten books of histories so that he could encourage a genuine conversion of all the constituent parts of society.

Although it has this distinctive message of the need for communal orthodoxy and harmony, the Decem libri

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[20]Hist., i. praef.: "Noster vero finis ipse Christus est, qui nobis vitam aeternam, si ad eum conversi fuerimus, larga benignitate praestabit."

Historiarum is admittedly not a work whose thesis is necessarily easily discernible. What stands out for the modern reader are the fine stories which Gregory charmingly tells with what Robert Latouche has called a cinematic style.[21] Nonetheless, a chapter by chapter analysis of the ten books indicates that almost 75% of the chapters--whether they consist of anecdote, digression, or account of historic events--are specifically directed toward an explication of Gregory's interpretation of the nature of Christianity in action or a warning of the chaos which can result when Christian harmony and charity are ignored. One of my favorites, that of Fredegund slamming down the lid of a chest hoping to choke her daughter Rigunth while she pawed through the treasure inside,[22] can serve as illustration. This story, despite its integral unity, assumes its real role within the Historiae when it is read in its broad context. It is one of several anecdotes of family dissension which anticipate the account of the serious and well-documented revolt of the Poitevin nuns of the Holy Cross against their abbess.[23] As is exemplified by this story and its context, when Gregory of Tours included material in the Historiae, one can generally count

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[21]Gregoire de Tours. Histoire des Francs, I (Paris: Societe d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1963), 20.

[22]Hist., ix. 34.

[23]Hist., ix. 33-35, 38. The account of the revolt begins with Chapter 39.

on the fact that he had a precise thematic reason for its presence there. It is true that one would find it impossible to identify a formal statement of purpose in the Decem libri Historiarum. Nonetheless, upon reflection, one can identify its clear-cut goals.

John H. Corbett has stated that "Gregory of Tours has long suffered from the contempt born of excessive familiarity."[24] It is hoped that this study will be able to add some new sparkle to the old marriage between Gregory and the historians of the early Middle Ages. It has been undertaken with the support and corroboration of scholars of several generations, but throughout I have felt an especial kinship with Nancy F. Partner who stated that "even with admirable aid in the work of others, the student of medieval historians is left peculiarly alone with his author and must willingly follow wherever he eccentrically leads."[25] The goals of scholarship aside, to follow Gregory's lead is to become almost irresistibly caught up in the bishop's idealism and hope. The "word of the preacher" still gleams "like silver."[26]

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[24]Journal of Medieval History, 7 (1982), 1.

[25]Serious Entertainments. The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 7.

[26]Hist., i. 15. Cf. below, p. 59; Chapter IV.

Chapter I

THE LESSONS OF THE PAST

Gregory of Tours stated in the Decem libri Historiarum that two major Christian historians had influenced his understanding of time and events,[1] and that he sought to follow the examples of Eusebius of Caesarea and Orosius[2] in outlining the chronological sequence from Adam to his own time. Underscoring the notion that his work was a chronicle, in the preface to Book II he stated that, should his history seem confused, it was because he wrote of events in the order in which they occurred.[3] Despite these comments of Gregory's regarding the nature of his work, were his Historiae a mere chronicle, however, it would not have presented as much of a challenge to modern scholarship as it has.[4] Although A.-D.

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[1] Hist., i. praef.

[2] He also mentioned Jerome, i.e., his continuation of Eusebius' chronicle, and Victorius. This study will not involve itself in the discussion regarding Gregory's sources. For that see, for example, the work of Massimo Oldoni, "Gregorio di Tours e i 'Libri historiarum': letture e fonti, metodi e ragioni," Studi Medievali, series 3, 13 (2), (1972), 563-700; "Gregorio di Tours e i 'Libri Historiarum' le font scritte," in Gregorio di Tours, pp. 251-324. This present study is concerned with the process of historiographical modelling.

[3] "Prosequentes ordinem temporum, mixte confusquae tam virtutes sanctorum quam strages gentium memoramus. Non enim inrationabiliter accipi puto, se filicem beatorum vitam inter miserorum memoremus excidia, cum idem non facilitas scripturis, sed temporum series praestit."

[4] Cf. the survey of scholarly interpretation of

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von den Brincken included the Historiae in her study of universal chronicles of the Middle Ages,[5] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill indicated its more congenial milieu of comparison:

> Gregory and Bede, different as they are in many respects, belong to the historiographical genre of Cassiodorus and Jordanes, Isidore, Fredegar and Paul the Deacon. . . . We cannot call them ancient historians, and only in a particular sense are they ecclesiastical historians. What they really are is medieval historians, the first of their kind. . . . [T]hey write Vulgar history, post-classical history: Latin, Catholic, apologetic, provincial.

Wallace-Hadrill also sets these early medieval historians apart from "the first great ecclesiastical historian, Eusebius, and his immediate followers."[6]

Although he is correct in recognizing that Gregory's references to his work as a chronicle are an underestimation of his actual achievement,[7] Wallace-Hadrill has perhaps not taken Gregory enough at his word because of the

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the Historiae in Oldoni, "Gregorio di Tours e i 'Libri Historiarum' letture e fonti, metodi e ragioni," Studi Medievali, series 3, 13 (2), (1972), 571-576. Cf. also, idem, "Gregorio di Tours e i 'Libri Historiarum' le font scritte," in Gregorio di Tours, pp. 256-265.

[5]"Die lateinische Weltchronistik," in Mensch und Weltgeschichte. Zur Geschichte der Universalgeschichtsschreibung, ed. by Alexander Randa (Salzburg: Universitätsverlag, 1969), pp. 43-86; cf. the charts, pp. 77-78.

[6]"Gregory of Tours and Bede: Their Views on the Personal Qualities of Kings," in the collection of his works, Early Medieval History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 96.

[7]Cf. also Gregory's final few lines of the Historiae, x. 31. Wallace-Hadrill does not specifically state this. He simply does not write of Gregory as if he were a chronicler.

suggestion that the sixth-century writer was separated from Eusebius and his successors, particularly if Orosius is considered as one of those.

Just how familiar Gregory was with the texts of the histories of Eusebius and Orosius is a matter of some discussion. Wallace-Hadrill has noted, however, that Gregory's debt to Orosius should be emphasized, but that "[the] nature of . . . [that] indebtedness . . . is a difficult question, and involves much more than the borrowing of phrases or material."[8] One area of historical interpretation in which Orosius seems clearly to have influenced Gregory of Tours is that of his development of the idea of the Christian state, his assumption that to be Christian and to be Roman were one and the same thing. On the basis of the close relationship in Orosius' thinking between Christianity and Rome, Theodor E. Mommsen has disassociated him from his immediate mentor Saint Augustine and linked him with "the school of 'Christian progressivists,' a school whose most outstanding representative had been Eusebius of Caesarea."[9] The acceptance of this interpretation regarding Orosius' understanding of history would be sufficient to demand in his regard a survey of Eusebius' historiography. The themes around which Gregory of Tours organized his Historia, however, make such a survey

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[8]The Long-Haired Kings, pp. 55, 57; cf. above, n. 2.

[9]"Orosius and Augustine," in Theodor E. Mommsen: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, ed. by Eugene F. Rice, Jr.

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imperative. Because Orosius' audience was ultimately pagan, he did not concern himself with the history of the church; he was interested rather in the interaction of the Christian God with the Roman state. Eusebius, in contrast, wrote almost exclusively of the Christian church. Although Gregory of Tours integrated these two themes, as my study as a whole will demonstrate, there is no doubt but that in the Historiae the theme of the church defines that of the state. Gregory not only used the Eusebian-like theme of the church in the Historiae, but he also wrote about the church in the same general way Eusebius had: both historians were deeply concerned with the historic definitions and implications of orthodoxy.[10] Modern scholarship, thus, has suggested a potentially complex relationship between Gregory and Orosius,

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(Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1959), pp. 325-349. In this important essay, Mommsen outlines the ideological gulf between Orosius and his mentor Augustine. He suggests "that the basic principles of Orosius' philosophy of history were those of Eusebius and his Greek and Latin followers in the fourth century, principles most explicitly rejected by Augustine in the first part of The City of God" (p. 345). Robert W. Hanning, reflecting Mommsen, stated that, "Nowhere is the triumph of Eusebius more apparent than in the work of Augustine's own disciple, Paulus Orosius" (The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth [New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966], p. 37). So also Henri Irénée Marrou, who said that Orosius was, "Tout à fait dans la lignée d'Eusèbe, tres loin par consequence d'Augustin . . ." ("Saint Augustin, Orose et l'Augustinisme," in La Storiografia Altomedievale, I [Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, XVII; Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1970], 60).

[10]It can also be misleading to see Gregory as a slavish follower of Eusebius. This has been done particularly

and between Orosius and Eusebius. Thematic analysis of the historical works of Gregory of Tours and Eusebius points out some striking similarities in their uses of history. For these reasons, it is essential that a study of Gregory's Historiae give consideration to the work of the two earlier Christian historians.[11]

Eusebius of Caesarea invented ecclesiastical history[12] to prove that nothing the church had ever done was new. It had its origins before the founding of the world, and from ancient times it had prevailed against the persistent

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in interpretations of his Clovis episodes in Book II of the Historiae. Cf. Louis Halphen, "Grégoire de Tours, historien de Clovis," in Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge offerts à M. Ferdinand Lot par ses amis et ses élèves (Paris: E. Champion, 1925), pp. 243-244.

[11]Wallace-Hadrill makes clear that the influence of Eusebius and Orosius on Gregory of Tours is not to be underestimated (Long-Haired Kings, p. 57 [Orosius]; Early Medieval History, pp. 97-98 [Eusebius, possibly via Orosius]). See also Robert W. Hanning's fine survey of the roots of the early medieval historical imagination in Vision of History, pp. 1-43.

[12]Eusebius Pamphili (ca. 260-340), Ecclesiastical History (= Historia ecclesiastica), tr. by Roy J. Deferrari (2 vols.; New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1953). This translation will be used unless otherwise noted. For the relationship of Eusebius' Greek Historia ecclesiastica and its early fifth-century Western Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia, see Torben Christensen, "Rufinus of Aquileia and the Historia Ecclesiastica, lib. VIII-IX, of Eusebius," Studia Theologia, 34 (1980), 129-152. Christensen stated that, "It should be evident that Rufinus's translation can in no way be described as 'willkurlich'. It is on the contrary the result of a meticulous attempt to understand his original and to translate it clearly and understandably into Latin" (148).

Robert M. Grant, Eusebius as Church Historian (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 39, states: "We do not need to accept all that Eusebius claims for himself."

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attacks of evil. The history of Christianity was an epic of the on-going triumph of truth and tradition over error and innovation. The Historia ecclesiastica sought to assure the fourth-century church that, despite the great changes that had recently taken place in its surroundings, it remained true to its ancestry.

The historiographical tool which Eusebius designed was to prove also to have far greater flexibility than the bishop of Caesarea would probably have cared to recognize. For him, the function of history was to propagate the gospel and to defend the church. The techniques of methodology and interpretation which he initiated in the Historia ecclesiastica, however, would eventually be applicable to the propagation and defense of history, the study of which would become an end in itself. Eusebius inadvertantly, therefore, was the founder of a Western historiography which was to evolve a rich range of topics. Glenn F. Chesnut has rightly stated that, "His work, and that of his immediate successors and imitators, determined to a large degree the way history was written for a thousand years afterwards."[13]

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[13]The First Christian Histories. Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius (Theologie Historique, 46; Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1977), p. 31. Cf. also the important suggestions of Arnaldo Momigliano as to Eusebius' role in the Western historiographical tradition ("Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.," in The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963], pp. 90-92. Cf. also pp. 88-99 for the newness of Christian historiography in the face of Graeco-Roman models).

Eusebius was not, however, the sole ancestor of western Christian historiography.[14] His model received much aid from a fifth-century successor, Orosius, who synthesized the fourth-century theme of the triumph of Christianity with the pagan outline of history. These two authors together gave to Gregory of Tours and the West an historiographical model which includes the recognition that the past identifies the present and should, if at all possible, be documented, that the church can and should be clearly defined in terms of both its institutional structure and its ideas, and that, because of its process of world evangelization, the church has a special relationship with the secular world, which is exemplified best by the state, that can in no way be denied.

The Historia ecclesiastica was Eusebius' attempt to prove that, within the history of mankind, the religious traditions which would evolved into the church of his day were orthodox and true. For the structure of his argument he drew upon an apologetic tradition established within the church by the third-century theologians Irenaeus and Tertullian. They had considered the greatest truth to be that which had withstood the most time. Heresies were ideas new to Christianity; the orthodox were those beliefs which had always been held.[15] In this context, it was essential that Eusebius

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[14]Cf. above, p. 16, n. 9, for the exclusion of Augustine from the Eusebian-Orosian-Gregorian historiographical tradition.

[15]R. L. P. Milburn, Early Christian Interpretations

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immediately establish in his Historia the venerability of the church and the timelessness of its founder, Jesus Christ, whom he identified as the Johannine Logos.[16] As he stated it, "he who intends to hand down in writing the story of Christ's leadership would have to begin with the very origin of Christ's dispensation itself,"[17] that origin being in eternity. Christ was "the light that existed before the world and the wisdom that was intellectual and essential before the ages, the Living Word who was in the beginning God by the side of the Father, . . . together with the Father the maker of all things."[18] Christianity was so orthodox, so true, that it predated time itself. The fourth-century church was a legitimate body because its source had been established even before the founding of the world.

It has been noted that Eusebius broke new ground historiographically by writing of the distant as well as of the recent past.[19] This was necessary for his establishment of

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of History (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1954), pp. 35-36. E. P. Meijering (God Being History. Studies in Patristic Philosophy [Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1975], pp. 88, 94-95) interprets the Arian ontological definition of the Godhead as the Father being superior to the Son because he was temporally precedent, temporal priority indicating qualitative superiority.

[16] HE, i. 1-4; cf. John 1:1-5.

[17] HE, i. 1.

[18] HE, i. 2.

[19] Chesnut, First Christian Histories, pp. 244-255; R. A. Markus, "Church History and Early Church Historians," in The Materials, Sources, and Methods of Ecclesiastical

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an identity of orthodox truth for the Christian church. Although his history of the church began by tracing its origins to the pre-temporal Logos and to the life of Jesus in the first century,[20] there was little attempt made to reconstruct those periods historically. In a sense, all the Christian centuries preceding those with which Eusebius was more closely acquainted were treated in much the same way. They function as documentation for the church's later character and authority, not as historical topics themselves. What historical details are available in Books I-III are drawn in large part from various works of the Jewish historian Josephus.[21]

In addition to its history, however, Eusebius considered two of the church's most striking characteristics to be important evidence in his establishment of its identity: its efforts to maintain truth and its courage in the face of opposition. Whether he was anachronistic in finding in the early church the same problems facing that of the fourth century will not be of concern here.[22] It is without doubt,

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History, ed. by Derek Baker (Studies in Church History, 11; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), pp. 2-3; Momigliano, in Paganism and Christianity, p. 91.

[20] HE, i. 2; 5-6, 9-11.

[21] Jewish War, Antiquities, Against Apion, Life; cf. Appendix E in G. A. Williamson's translation of the Historia ecclesiastica (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 422.

[22] Cf. Guy Fau's unsympathetic and meagerly documented essay, Eusèbe de Cesarée et son Histoire de l'Eglise (Paris: Cercle Ernest-Renan, 1976), where he states that,

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however, that, whether or not the church had always been faced with the need to preserve doctrinal orthodoxy and had done so with remarkable demonstrations of courage, Eusebius' Historia ecclesiastica is unified by means of the consistent presentation of these topics.[23]

The church's preoccupation with the orthodoxy of its beliefs meant that it underwent a continual process of determining what it was not. Heretics loom large in the Historia. R. A. Markus has remarked that "despite the claims made by heretics, [Eusebius believed that] heresy lay outside the church and belonged to its hostile environment."[24] The heretic, however, could not be such had he not first been within the church. Simon Magus, "the first author of all heresy," was a baptized member of the church before his deceptions were exposed and his power extinguished.[25] He

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"L'Eglise lui paraît avoir, dès l'origine, existé telle qu'elle est au IV^e siècle, avec sa hiérarchie" (p. 2). He concludes by commenting "qu'on ne lit plus guère Eusèbe de Cesarée. Mais ce qu'il a imaginé, romancé, deformé, reste gravé dans les esprits. D'où la severité de ma critique: même avec de bonnes intentions, il a causé beaucoup de tort à la vérité historique" (p. 32).

[23]Since these concerns have certainly faced the church since his time, it seems safe to assume that they were not merely historiographical devices of Eusebius' own invention.

[24]Markus, in Materials, Sources, and Methods, p. 5.

[25]HE, ii. 13, 1, 15. Because he is mentioned in the Historia ecclesiastica in the broad context of what might be called the "heresy" of the Jews, it is intriguing to see this Samaritan not merely as a Christian heretic but as a Jewish heretic as well--in other words, Simon Magus was by birth a heretic of the heretics. His successor, Menander, is

would not have been the kind of threat to the church he was had he not appeared to be part of it. Markus is correct in suggesting that "heresy lay outside the church," but that could happen only after the devil had been identified as its instigator and the heretic had been amputated from the body of Christ. Eusebius was concerned to state clearly that the church had always dealt decisively with heresy.

In his efforts to identify the church's orthodoxy historically, Eusebius drew heavily from two kinds of ecclesiastical documentation. The first was the evolving New Testament which consisted of material directly traceable to the first Christian generation. Eusebius was much concerned to establish the sacred Christian canon. In fact, his monitoring in the Historia ecclesiastica of its selection process may have helped to solidify it.[26] From the standpoint of Eusebius' emphasis on defining the identity of the church, the apostolic canon was invaluable because it told what the church had been. The second kind of Christian document showed how it intended to remain that way. These documents were the advisory and polemical materials written by the successors of the apostles, much of it having been formulated in response to the challenges of heterodox ideas. In a sense, Eusebius appears to have relished the rise of heresy because

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identified specifically as also being a Samaritan (iii. 26).

[26]Cf. HE, iii. 3, 24-25; and D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, Eusebius of Caesarea (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1960), p. 69.

of the opportunities it provided for the church to clarify its beliefs. At the close of a lengthy account describing the confounding of the heresies of Saturninus and Basilides, he commented that "truth again brought forth for itself more champions who campaigned against the godless heresies not alone with unwritten proofs but also with written demonstrations."[27] These written refutations of heresy became part of the evidential dossier available to inform the church what it was.

It is understandable that an historian whose purpose in writing was to demonstrate the church's changeless orthodoxy and to record the history of the debates by which that orthodoxy was maintained should appropriate to his work the methodology of those theological disputes. The fact that the debates the church mounted in favor of orthodoxy had motivated the creation of an impressive corpus of documentation may have been highly influential in determining that Eusebius would use written evidence to solidify and prove his historical interpretations. By the fourth century the methodology of confounding error by means of debate and document must have been second nature to Eusebius and his fellow church officials. In writing the history of these debates he would possibly almost by habit use the same procedures.[28] It was

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[27] HE, iv. 7; cf. iv. 24.

[28] R. M. Grant suggested that Eusebius' Historia ecclesiastica was his legal survival kit packaged to prove his own orthodoxy ("The Case Against Eusebius or, Did the Father

not merely in discussions of difficulties the church faced with heretics, however, that Eusebius utilized the documentary methodology of theological argumentation. Because his overall theme was the church's historic orthodoxy, this methodology could be applied to anything he wrote regarding the church.[29] Documents were useful not just to demonstrate the church's vigorous destruction of heresy, but to account also for the courage of the orthodox.

The church of the Historia ecclesiastica appears not as an inanimate safe harbor for the saints, but rather as an army in full battle array against traitors and opponents. Eusebius' two major types of historic heroes were the champions of orthodoxy and the martyrs. Through martyrdom, even a member of the laity might be engraved with bishops and presbyters on the corporate Christian memory.[30] It will not be necessary to review here the many unpleasant ways Eusebius recorded that Christians were killed. A good portion of the

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of Church History Write History?" Studia Patristica, 12 [1975], 419-421). Interestingly, Grant does not include this article in the bibliography of his Eusebius as Church Historian although he cites other of his articles on Eusebius.

One wonders whether this Christian methodology of orthodoxy is at all indebted to Roman legal practices. Grant does point out the official Roman bureaucratic precedents for Eusebius' linguistic and theologically rhetorical practices (Eusebius as Church Historian, pp. 142-144).

[29]Cf. B. Gustafsson, "Eusebius' Principles in Handling his Sources, as Found in his Church History, Books I-VII," Studia Patristica, 4 (1961), 429-441.

[30]E.g., Blandina, one of the martyrs of Gaul, who is mentioned as being of the servant class (v. 1-3).

Historia, in fact, consists of anatomical descriptions of these martyrdoms which become disgusting and monotonous by repetition. Suffice it to say that for him they served as additional proof of the church's orthodox identity. Whereas theological debates demonstrated the rationality and legitimacy of Christian doctrine, the martyrs removed all abstraction from the issue by suffering very concretely for the sake of the truth.

The orthodox identity of the church, therefore, was demonstrated in the Historia ecclesiastica in terms of the great antiquity of its beliefs, the resolve of its leaders against the onslaught of error, and the courage of its followers to defend it, when necessary, with their lives. All three of these aspects of the church's character were instituted by or responses to forces outside the church. The eternal quality of Christian doctrine was due to the timelessness of Christ, orthodoxy was defined in debate with misguided individuals, and martyrs were created by state persecutions. Eusebius did not really describe the church as an organization in and of itself. Where he came closest to doing so was in his tracing of the lines of episcopal succession. The Christian church was comprehensible to Eusebius and could be written of historically primarily in terms of what happened to it. This is not to say that he saw the church as passive. Given the right stimuli, it surged into action to spread the gospel, to establish

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truth over falsehood, and to defend itself against destruction. One must keep in mind the fact that Eusebius operated according to the principle that the church was the changeless conservator of truth.[31] Ironically, historical events in the early fourth century brought immeasurable changes to the church. Rather than interpreting them as the innovations they were, however, Eusebius was able to consider the conversion of the Roman empire to be, on the one hand, divine reward for the church's courageous defense of truth, on the other, part of the on-going apostolic tradition of evangelizing the world.

Throughout most of the Historia ecclesiastica, the secular world played either a neutral or a negative role vis-à-vis the church. The most recognition Eusebius gave to the secular world was to note the succession of political leaders. He mentioned that Jesus was born during Caesar Augustus' reign, but included no information or interpretation beyond that given in Luke 2 except to indicate the date of Christ's birth in relation to Augustus' victory over Antony

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[31]Robert L. Wilken has suggested that, "The bishop loved the Church--as a maiden! He wanted her to remain pure, untouched, virginal. . . . Any historical development, any innovation, addition, or allegation away from the apostolic faith can only be a derivation. Eusebius wrote a history of Christianity in which there is no real history, for there is no place for change in his portrait of Christianity. . . . In Eusebius' history, nothing really happens--or, more accurately, nothing new happens. The history of the church is a history of an eternal conflict between the truth of God and its opponents" (The Myth of Christian Beginnings. History's Impact on Belief [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971], p. 73).

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and Cleopatra. Theologically, Augustus had no more importance in the Historia ecclesiastica than other non-persecuting Roman emperors.[32] Eusebius used such imperial reigns primarily as a chronological framework within which to place the events of church history.

The changes wrought to the church by the conversion of the Roman empire were to be of tremendous historical consequence. In Eusebius' understanding, however, the church had simply done its duty and thereby brought a new life to the secular world which, for the first time, was able to assume an important place in Christian history because of its newly orthodox religious character. Glenn F. Chesnut devoted a chapter of The First Christian Histories to placing Eusebius' treatment of kingship within the context of Hellenistic understanding.[33] There he traced the idea of sacral kingship from the time of Alexander the Great, suggesting that "[i]t was simply part of the general intellectual atmosphere" of the Romano-Hellenistic world, and that Eusebius "linked

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[32]HE, i. 5. Cf. however, iv. 26, where he quotes Melito of Sardis' mid second-century statement of Augustan "theology." Although Eusebius shared this belief in the divine juxtaposition of Christ and Augustus and expressed it in other works, he did not do so in the Historia ecclesiastica. Cf. Theodor E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of The City of God," in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, pp. 281ff.; Chesnut, First Christian Histories, pp. 100-101.

[33]"Hellenistic Kingship and the Eschatological Constantine," pp. 133-166. Cf. also Jean-Marie Sansterre, "Eusèbe de Cesarée et la naissance de la théorie 'césaro-papiste,'" Byzantion, 42 (1972-1973), 131-195, 532-594.

himself firmly to it."[34] Pagan political theorists had long considered that, "Monarchy was . . . the imitation of God: the good ruler imitated God and thereby took on a kind of powerful reflected divinity himself. In this way the king or emperor was also turned into a kind of savior figure."[35] This notion had received wide acceptance in Roman imperial politics and, in the first century A.D. got a Jewish imprimatur when Philo used it as part of his hermeneutic for understanding such Old Testament figures as Moses and Joseph. Philo believed that, as a priest and prophet, a king's primary responsibility to his people was religious rather than political.[36] The change that occurred within the Roman government when it converted to Christianity was the legitimizing of a centuries-old bastard sacral kingship. Henceforth the emperor was to be an orthodox priest, an icon[37] of the true God. The state had become part of the church and the emperor became, in practical terms, a bishop. Book X of the Historia ecclesiastica includes much documentation demonstrating the rulers' role as priests of the church. Not only did Constantine and his co-ruler Licinius state that

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[34]First Christian Histories, p. 151.

[35]Ibid., pp. 135-136.

[36]Ibid., pp. 147-151; cf. p. 148 n. 71.

[37]Ibid., p. 151, quoting Eusebius' Vita Constantini, i. 5, and his De laudibus Constantini, 1. Chesnut does not apply the orthodoxy interpretation as I do nor does he discuss the state in purely ecclesiological terms.

orthodox Christianity was to be the sole religion of the empire and grant money to the church, but they also called synods and attempted to bring about unity among the bishops. In other words, they appear in these documents carrying out ecclesiastical administrative duties.[38]

Once the Roman empire was the church, Eusebius was allowed to detect in the political world the kinds of qualities which he had previously found solely with the church. The empire, personified by its rulers, bravely suffered persecution and rigorously battled heretics. The persecutor was chiefly the eastern emperor Maximin who was predisposed against the Christians and who had been seduced by magical arts to establish an anti-church. This persecution even inspired the use of documents forged to discredit Christ.[39] The last pagan persecutors of the church met with the same fate as the Jews, who were the first. God, "the great and heavenly defender of the Christians,"[40] intervened to topple the enemies of the church. In the western part of the empire, Maxentius and his armies, whose pontoon bridge

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[38] HE, x. 5-7. This had been foreshadowed by Aurelian's intervention to end an episcopal dispute. That matter, however, may have involved the emperor's judicial rather than sacral role as the arbitration was necessary because Paul, the heretical bishop of Antioch, following his excommunication, refused to vacate church property (vii. 30).

[39] HE, ix. 2-5; cf. Vol. II, p. 213 n. 1 of Deferrari's edition.

[40] HE, ix. 8. For the Jews, cf., for example, iii. 5.

collapsed, played pharaoh and his chariots to Constantine's Moses and Miriam. Although Licinius conquered the persecutor Maximin in the East,[41] his moment of glory was to be short-lived. Having been praised as one of the Christian rulers of Rome, Licinius became Eusebius' last heretic.

Licinius, as Constantine's co-ruler, shared both the triumph over Maxentius and Maximin and the glorification of the church following their victories: "These [two], . . . in a manner conscious of the blessings bestowed upon them by God displayed their love of virtue and of God, and their piety and gratitude to the Deity by their legislation in behalf of Christians."[42] Like Constantine, he had been one of the few described in the Historia ecclesiastica as having been chosen by God to promote the welfare of the church. As such, his later opposition to Constantine and the Christian empire was an act of heresy. Licinius, therefore, fulfilled one qualification of the heretic, because he was part of the Christian ecclesia before going astray. He also shared with the doctrinal heretics a lack of volition and a failure of rationality. In his case, these two qualities in Eusebius' account were virtually inseparable because the devil's manipulation was considered to be madness, loss of reason.[43] Licinius became the agent of evil to disrupt the celebrations

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[41] HE, ix. 9-11.

[42] HE, ix. 11.

[43] Cf. HE, ii. 13; v. 14; vii. 31

of the pax ecclesiastica by irrationally becoming a tyrant. His treasonous program was recounted in traditional theological terms as well, a fact that can serve to reiterate Eusebius' view that the Christianized state was the church. His legislation was described as "new" and "revolutionary" in contrast to Rome's orthodox political and legal doctrines which had their origins in antiquity. He was heretically innovative because he dared "to annul the ancient laws of the Romans, which were established well and wisely, and introduce in their stead certain barbarous and crude regulations, lawless laws that were really contrary to law." This reminds one of Eusebius' belief that the post-Edenic world was in a state of barbarous incivility. The devil, through Licinius, was trying to see mankind once again expelled from the Garden.[44] This time, however, good triumphed quickly over evil. Constantine, having "summoned his prudent reasoning," joined the long succession of the defenders of orthodoxy and came to the aid of those suffering under Licinius' rule. With the defeat and execution of this heretic, the kingdom came, the world was "cleansed . . . of hatred for God," and the Historia ecclesiastica closed.[45]

Although, until Books IX and X, the state played a quite neutral and minor role in the Historia ecclesiastica

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[44] HE, x. 8; cf. i. 2.

[45] HE, x. 9, which covers the account of the heresy and end of Licinius.

Eusebius' use of the state was probably one of the more significant contributions of his model for historical writing. Robert M. Grant suggested that this juxtaposition of church and state may have been the key to the contemporary usefulness of the Historia. He, in fact, considered that the Historia as a whole anticipates collaboration between church and state.[46] Nonetheless, even when it persecuted the church, as the Roman government did several times during the first Christian centuries, Eusebius was not really interested in the secular motivation but was rather concerned to outline the ecclesiastical response. Persecutions were important because they inspired great courage in Christians as well as tremendous witness to the truth of the gospel. These programs of persecution were noticeable not because of the government which instituted them, but because of the church which was the object of them. Only when the government had become the church were its political, military, and legal experiences of historical significance. Due solely to its conversion to orthodox Christianity did the state acquire the potential for having a past worthy of interpretation.

This belated historical value of the state is due to the fact that all topics included within the Historia ecclesiastica were subjugated to Eusebius' over-arching concern

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[46]Grant, Eusebius as Church Historian, p. 167. He suggests that the main correlation between Eusebius' Chronicle and his later Historia is "the basic imperial-episcopal framework" (p. 6).

with the church and its orthodoxy. The state was of little note until it converted to Christianity and became part of the church. At that point the emperor became an orthodox sacral king, in a sense a priest of the church, and whatever he did thenceforth as a function of his rulership had the potential for being considered a defense of the Christian church. The state, in Eusebian historiography, acquired both a past and a significant present only when it became an arm of the church, its historical importance being due to its newly-found orthodoxy. Eusebian historiography was not only unified by its theme of orthodoxy, and it was given a new historical methodology because of it. Applying to historical writing the methodology of theological debate and its emphasis on rational and tangible proof, Eusebius included documentation in the Historia ecclesiastica. If the present was legitimate because of its connection to the past, a major tenet of orthodox apologetic, it was important that the orthodox historian, using the documentary methodology of the orthodoxy debate, attempt to link the present with significant portions of the past.

A century after Eusebius wrote his Historia ecclesiastica, Orosius produced another kind of Christian apologetic which also assumed that the past could help identify the present. Orosius' Historia adversus Paganos libri VII[47] was

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[47]Ed. by Carl Zangenmeister (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1889); Seven Books of History Against the Pagans, tr. by Irving Woodworth Raymond (New York: Columbia University Press,

written while the western empire was still reeling under the impact of the Gothic sacking of Rome in A.D. 410. The pagans blamed Christianity for the rejection and obvious angering of the traditional gods, complaints which Orosius' teacher, Augustine of Hippo, apparently thought of as "empty chatter."[48] The means of response chosen was to demonstrate to the pagans that, across the centuries, their gods had not spared the world from an unfortunate existence. Although Augustine himself had developed much the same kind of historical interpretation in the opening books of the De civitate Dei, his ultimate emphases in that work were on "the heavenly city, whereas the task [he] assigned . . . to Orosius was to tell the tale of human misery in history."[49] What Orosius was to do was to persuade pagans that they were wrong both about the glories of their own past and about their assumptions that the present was disastrous. By destroying the traditionally proud image of the pagan past, Orosius wanted to show that Christianity had been a beneficial pacifying agent for the Roman world. Because he spoke ultimately to a pagan world he used the kind of history, military and political history, which would

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1936). Orosius was born ca. 385 and completed the Historia adversus Paganos in 418.

[48]Hist. ad. Pag., dedication. Cf., however, above, p. 16, n. 9.

[49]Mommsen, in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 331; cf. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, i-v.

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be most easily understood by his audience.[50]

Orosius was not the kind of sophisticated thinker that either Augustine or Eusebius were.[51] He was a polemical popularizer who had little room in his argumentation for either subtlety or logical theory. His technique throughout the first five books consisted of a repetitive hammering out of the litany that, regardless of time or place, the pre-Christian past had been filled with forgotten inhumanity and suffering. Even pagan historians, he stated, had "described nothing but wars and calamities." Whereas they, however, had held that these events had provided opportunities for heroic courage and patriotic fortitude, Orosius saw in them nothing but misery. He pointed out that it was insufficient to consider only victories because the reverse of each was a defeat.[52] Therefore, not even the triumphant rise of republican Rome to world power could be considered an object of praise. Left on its own, any state exemplified sinful

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[50]Cf. Benoit Lacroix, Orose et ses idées (Publications de l'Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, XVIII; Montréal: Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 1965), p. 48: "En définitive, l'Historia adversus Paganos a été conçue et preparée à cause des Païens. Mais une lecture attentive prouve qu'il s'agit en fait et plutot d'un livre chrétien ecrit à l'usage de ceux qui frequentent les Païens en général," Momigliano stated that, "Orosius gave what from the medieval point of view can be called the final Christian twist to the pagan epitome of Roman history" (Paganism and Christianity, p. 87).

[51]Lacroix compares the abilities of Orosius and Augustine thus: "le talent fragile du disciple et le génie du maître" (Orose et ses idées, p. 199).

[52]Hist. ad. Pag., i. 1; iii. pref.; v. pref.

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society. Its sole attribute was the ability to create chaos and disaster, the memory of which it pervertedly preserved as having been glorious.[53] The only hope a state had for true glory was if God chose to use it for his purposes. For this reason Rome did have cause for genuine pride, having been selected as the Lord's handmaiden to provide the matrix for the messianic incarnation. The only cause for the successful assemblage of the Roman empire was due to the fact that "God . . . established the unity of this realm . . . when, He willed Himself to become known."[54] This appropriation of the state for divine purposes did not, however, signal additional complexity in Orosius' interpretation of history. Whereas all had been bad prior to Christ's advent, all improved because of it. The structure of the argument of the Historia adversus Paganos allowed Orosius to see only evil or good. He gave himself no opportunity for interpretive ambiguity.

Although Orosius' most obvious theme in answer to the pagans was that the world had improved because of the Christ's advent, he was deeply concerned to demonstrate that throughout time the Christian God had been in control of world events, the recent sacking of Rome being no exception.

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[53]Hist. ad. Pag., iv. 6, 20. Cf. Mommsen (in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, pp. 336-337) who points out that, in contrast to Orosius, Augustine was able to see some virtue in Rome in and of itself. Cf. however, below, p. 47 n. 75.

[54]Hist. ad. Pag., v. 2.

In the opening paragraphs of the work he stated that "we hold that . . . the world and man are directed by a Divine Providence that is as good as it is just," and that the "evils which existed [in the past], as to a certain extent they exist now, were doubtless either palpable sins or the hidden punishments for sin." What good happens in the world is the gift of God, while misfortune is divine retribution for sin.

The city of Rome lies at the center of the Historia adversus Paganos. It was a Roman crisis which motivated the writing of the work, and the point of Orosius' recital of the misfortunes of ancient times was to enable him to assess qualitatively the Roman present. The pagans argued that the traditional deities were responsible for Rome's rise to world domination and that the setback of A.D. 410 was the fault of Christian Rome's rejection of her patron gods. Orosius' response consisted of reiterating[55] that contemporary memory had glossed over the sufferings and disasters of the past, that what good had occurred in pre-Christian times was due to God's mercy, and that the triumphs of imperial Rome were the direct results of the Christian dispensation. Using peace as the criterion for military and political success, Orosius pointed out that, until the reign of Augustus, Rome, "the

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[55]Even he apparently became wearied by it: "But I myself repeat again and again: do the times really need at this point to be made subject of comparison?" (Hist. ad. Pag., v. 24).

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unhappy city," had known only one year of official peace.[56] Her pre-Christian history was nothing but a saga of continual bloodshed which was halted only because God "prearranged" an environment of peace and unity to expedite the spread of the gospel.[57]

The key figure in this preparation for the advent was Caesar Augustus who, by implication, was cast in the Historia as a kind of political John the Baptist figure who prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah.[58] Orosius outlined three parallels between the Augustan settlement and the life of Christ. The first was the dual religious and political nature of the Epiphany, the sixth of January having been the date on which both Jesus' baptism and the announcement of the Augustan settlement had occurred;[59] the second was the fact that Christ's birth occurred in the year "when Caesar, by God's ordination, established the firmest and truest peace"; and the third was the census ordered by Augustus which took

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[56]Hist. ad. Pag., iv. 12. Mommsen (in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 333) points out Orosius' limited historical scope: "He showed no interest in the development of the basic institutions of state and society or in the cultural achievements of the ancient world."

[57]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 1; vi. 1.

[58]Hist. ad. Pag., vi. 20, 22.

[59]Cf. Mommsen, "Aponius and Orosius on the Significance of the Epiphany," in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, pp. 313-317. He points out that Orosius held his interpretation of the Epiphany as the celebration of Jesus' baptism in harmony with the Spanish church and St. Jerome, but in contrast to St. Augustine and the Roman church which believed it commemorated the adoration of the Magi.

Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in time for Jesus' birth. Orosius considered this census to have been doubly illustrative of the honors God had chosen to bestow upon Rome. It was "the earliest and most famous acknowledgement which designated Caesar first of all men and the Romans lords of the world." More importantly, however, because Jesus chose to be born at a time when he could be publically enrolled as a Roman citizen, it demonstrated the peerlessness of Rome within the company of all great powers of the past. Christ had chosen to become a citizen of Rome, not of any other state.[60]

That he showed Christ to have been a Roman citizen demonstrated Orosius' belief in the union of the religious and secular spheres. The concord available through Christ was made tangible by the harmony established by Augustus. Orosius had tremendous confidence regarding the present because of this unity. "I feel," he said, "no apprehension over the outbreak of any disturbance, since I can take refuge anywhere. No matter where I flee, I find my native land, my law, and my religion."[61] Although it was not original except in its detailed elaboration,[62] Orosius' interpretation

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[60]Hist. ad. Pag., vi. 22.

[61]Hist. ad. Pag., v. 2.

[62]Cf. Mommsen, in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 319. Also cf. Chesnut (First Christian Histories, p. 101) for his interpretation of Eusebius' understanding of the simultaneity of the shift from polytheism and polyarchy to monotheism and monarchy.

of the parallelism of Christ's incarnation and Augustus' settlement helped to cement in the Western mentality the dual ideas of the beneficial effects of Christianity on society and the inseparability of the state from the spiritual realm.[63] It was in the context of both the harmony brought to the world individually by Christ and Augustus and the divinely ordained union of their two grand schemes that Orosius was able to complete his explanation of what had happened a few years before when invading armies had entered the city of Rome for the first time in almost a millennium.

Orosius' argument regarding the significance of the Gothic invasion rested on his ability to convince his readers that life in Rome was much better, regardless of what happened, during the Christian era than it had been before. The peace experienced was so solid that not even a Caligula could disrupt it, "civil wars [were] settled when they [could] not be avoided," and barbarian enemies became "comrades and friends."[64] In order to come to this conclusion, however, Orosius, tied as he was to the events of relatively recent history, had to become increasingly reliant upon "God's

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[63]Cf. Orosius' explanation of the reign of Constantius who had adopted Arianism, an idolatry which sought "to find gods in God" (cf. above, p. 41, n. 62, and p. 45): "Thus the man who had rent asunder the peace and unity of the Catholic faith and had, so to speak, dismembered the Church by civil war, arming Christians against Christians, used, passed, and expended the entire period of his troubled reign and his wretched span of life in civil wars which his own kinsmen and blood relations stirred up" (Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 29).

[64]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 5, 35, 41.

inscrutable judgment" to explain that even Christian Rome knew misfortune.[65] In the final analysis he was able to provide no real solution to this dilemma beyond a tacit acceptance that, whatever would happen, God remained in control and had cause for allowing its occurrence. Orosius' line of reasoning in Book VII, consequently, is filled with contradictions and some remarkably far-fetched justifications invented to help his argument maintain its integrity. He would have done well to have pursued the route of Saint Augustine who ended his career rejecting the applicability of any theological significance to post-incarnation history. Orosius, however, was neither a great nor an original thinker. He operated firmly and simplistically within the context of fourth-century imperial theology and thus was not at all susceptible to the conclusion R. A. Markus considers Augustine to have reached, namely, that "the Roman achievement, for all its nobility, is unavailing. Taken by itself, it is neutral."[66] To the end, Orosius remained convinced that God had blessed a sinful state and then found it necessary to maintain reminders to keep it thankful for the greatness that had been thrust upon it.

The Historia adversus Paganos is strangely silent about theology except in the most general terms. Orosius

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[65]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 37.

[66]R. A. Markus, Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), pp. 55, 58.

accounted only for the changes Christianity had made in the world, but told very little about what Christianity itself was. The bare rudiments of Christian theology were there, but no real explanation of them was offered: the God of the Christians was in full control of human history; his son Jesus had lived and died as a human being and, because of his resurrection, offered salvation to believers; and the Christian community was to preach the gospel to the world. Eusebius had elaborated little more about theology in his Historia ecclesiastica, but one does glean from that work some of the organization and concerns of the Christian church. Were Orosius' book our sole source for early Christian history, we would know hardly anything about the community prior to the fourth century, and only little from then on.[67]

Eusebius considered that heresies began with Simon Magus in apostolic times and from then on had been virtually ever-present. Orosius, in contrast, mentioned no heresy beyond that of Arius which had begun during Constantine's reign. Because he viewed history only from the perspective of the state, heresies were inconsequential until they had the potential for political as well as religious divisiveness. This, of course, would have been impossible prior to the creation of Christianity as the state religion.[68]

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[67]The reason for this is, of course, due to the fact that he had a very different purpose in writing than Eusebius had had.

[68]Markus suggested (in Materials, Sources, and

Until the time of Constantine, idolators had been the chief threats to Christians, but the doctrine of the fourth-century heretic Arius made idolators of Christians. Orosius interpreted Arianism as promoting the idea "that there are certain gradations in God," or that there are "gods in God." Arius is, in fact, presented in Book VII in direct contrast to Constantine. The emperor who established monotheism throughout the world had to contend with the heretic who had brought polytheism to Christianity.

The advent of heresy as a matter of state concern provided Orosius with a new explanation for misfortune within the Christian empire. Although one wonders how convincing such an argument would have been to pagans, to Christians heresy was an obvious motivation for divine retribution. Constantius, for instance, who adopted Arianism and thus sought to divide the church, was rewarded with the upheaval of political civil wars throughout his reign.[69] The fiery death of Valens at the hand of the Goths was also perfectly justifiable. He had not only brought indignities to the church but, when requested to send missionaries to the Goths,

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Methods, p. 8) "that none of Eusebius' successors thought it worth their while to offer a new account of the period covered by Eusebius," his work being "the definitive account of pre-constantinian church history." Could it be that Orosius saw himself as a member of the "diachronic syndicate" of church historians who picked up on ecclesiastical matters only where the master had left off?

[69] Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 28-29. Cf. above, pp. 41-42, nn. 62-63.

he had sent them Arians. "Therefore, by the just judgment of God Himself, Valens was burned alive by the very men who, through his action, will burn hereafter for their heresy."[70]

As the church moved from its quiet role as intercessory petitioner with God on behalf of the empire[71] to being the major constituent of Roman imperial society, Orosius changed his attitude toward the state, moving in his interpretation of Rome closer to the kind of ecclesiastical empire Eusebius had understood. Orosius began to interpret fortune and misfortune in religious rather than in political terms. As has been seen, heresy by the Christian state was interpreted as a reasonable cause for political failure. Smugness and laxness on the part of the Christian empire was also seen as motivation for divine reprimand.[72] In this context, the sacking of Rome by Alaric and the Goths was simply a gentle separating of the wheat from the tares within the Roman church.[73]

Faced with the knowledge that the various Germanic tribes were infiltrating themselves into Roman government and society, Orosius, as a realist, was able to make what seems on the surface to be a rather radical modification to his

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[70]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 33.

[71]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 8; cf. vi. 1.

[72]In much the same way, Eusebius had accounted for Diocletian's persecution on the basis of the quarrelling within the church (HE, viii. 1).

[73]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 37, 39.

interpretation of the imperially salvific role that Rome had had during the Christian era. In a sense, however, it was simply an elaboration of the character he had assigned Augustus as the forerunner preparing the way for Jesus' coming. Silently echoing John the Baptist's comment from Herod's prison that "He must increase, but I must decrease."[74] Orosius stated that if, by their contact with Rome, the numerous Germanic peoples were to become Christians, "it would seem that the mercy of God ought to be praised and glorified, in that so many nations would be receiving, even at the cost of our weakening, a knowledge of the truth which they could never have had but for this opportunity."[75] Throughout most of the Historia adversus Paganos Orosius presented a Rome made omnipotent to carry out God's wishes in world history. What he suggested here at the end of the work was that political weakness, at least understood as such from the traditional perspective, need not jeopardize Rome's role as a divine agent. To be a Christian missionary was as noble a role as to be a Christian king. Orosius was also suggesting, however, that what might seem on the surface to be weakness, namely, the incursions of the Germans into positions of power within the empire, might well be a process of guaranteeing for Rome a future of strength.

An important part of Orosius' imperial theology was

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[74]John 3:30 King James Version.

[75]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 41.

concerned with the unity which Christianity and its imperial environment brought to all parts of the world. Everywhere he went, Orosius said he found his "native land, . . . law, and . . . religion."[76] He believed that Christian Rome had the same impact upon the non-Roman world, because Christianity was to be equated with Roman-ness. It was inconceivable that anyone who was Christian could be un-Roman, Christ himself having been Roman. Even though the Germanic peoples were by nature cruel and uncivilized barbarians, as they came in contact with Rome and converted to Christianity they became increasingly like the Romans. The Burgundians serve as an example of this. As they moved into Gaul, the "power and destructiveness of their tribes [was] manifest." However, "they . . . all recently [became] Christians, embracing the Catholic faith and acknowledging obedience to our clergy, so that they live mild, gentle, and harmless lives, regarding the Gauls not as their subjects but in truth as their Christian brethren."[77]

Christian barbarians not only made good neighbors and fellow parishioners, but they were also good enemies. Part of Orosius' argument against a harsh interpretation of Alaric's attack on Rome was to compare him with the pagan Goth Radegaisus who, but for the grace of God, would have

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[76]Hist. ad. Pag., v. 2; cf. above, p. 33.

[77]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 32, which also mentions that persecuted Gothic Christians sought safety with their Roman Christian "brethren." Cf. Eusebius (HE, i. 2) on the direct relationship between acceptance of the true religion and the acquisition of civilization.

attacked the city. Alaric "was a Christian and more like a Roman, a man, who, through the fear of God, as the event showed, inclined to spare men's lives. The other was a pagan, barbarian, and true Scythian, who in his insatiable cruelty loved not so much the fame or the rewards of butchery as he did slaughter itself."[78] It was Alaric's Christianity that made the difference. Orosius, in fact, described his attack on the city more as a pilgrimage on a high holy day than as a military maneuver. The barbarians, who, "it is true, burned a certain number of buildings," had become the "protectors" of the Romans. As conquerors, in fact, they might even bring relief to the citizens. The barbarians in Spain had proven to be no worse rulers than the Romans had been, and as administrators of peace they were superior to them because they did not force citizens to live with the anxiety of high taxes.[79]

In the end, Orosius was able to consider the Christian barbarians as the standard-bearers of not only Roman religious but also of Roman political idealism. Although the Gothic king Athaulf died before he could fully implement his program, he, inspired by his Roman wife Galla Placidia, wanted to be remembered as the "restorer of the Roman Empire." To that end he sought "to refrain from war and to promote peace." His successor Wallia retained that emphasis, offering himself and his armies as the champions of Rome, fighting

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[78]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 37.

[79]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 41.

to regain the Roman peace. "In view of these things," Orosius concluded his history, "I am ready to allow Christian times to be blamed as much as you please, if you can only point to any equally fortunate period from the foundation of the world to the present day."[80] Orosius considered it to be a clinching part of his argument regarding the blessings bestowed on Rome by God that he was able, thanks to Christianity and Roman influence, to present a barbarian king as the peacemaking heir of the great Augustus.

Orosius was conscious throughout the Historia adversus Paganos that he wrote at the commission of the author of the De civitate Dei.[81] In contrast to the work of his mentor, however, he produced what might be called the City of Rome. That city functions as the fulcrum around which all history is seen to revolve. The purpose of the past was to achieve Rome: Babylon had died that Rome might live.[82] The message of history was that Rome was superior to other states and that her present, because of her Christianity, was superior to her past. The reason for this incomparability of Rome was that God, who controls all earthly powers, had chosen to

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[80]Hist. ad. Pag., vii. 43.

[81]Cf. his dedication to Augustine and his concluding remarks, presenting the work to him (Hist. ad. Pag., ded.; vii. 43). Mommsen believes that the results of Augustine's assignment to Orosius were not necessarily satisfactory to him (in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, pp. 325-348).

[82]Hist. ad. Pag., i. 3; vii. 2.

honor her among nations by making his son her citizen. Although Orosius did not refer to Isaiah's messianic prophecies, his interpretation of Roman history could, quite simply, be phrased by the prophet's words: "Speak ye comfortably to [Rome], and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned . . . Prepare ye the way of the Lord, . . . [for] the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."[83] The Roman empire was not merely the stage upon which the cosmic drama of salvation was acted out, it was itself witness to God's power and promised peace. Orosius' point in writing was to defend the positive effects Christianity had had upon the history of Rome. He saw the empire as a divine agent and all her political and military activities to have been part of the divine plan. He was even able, without twisting his thesis too badly, to provide room in that plan for the barbarians who, in the early fifth century, were making an increasingly major impact upon Roman politics and society.

Orosius' historiographical methodology was naively simplistic. He considered history to be a persuasive device, but rather than develop his argument with careful logic, he used history repetitively, as a bludgeon. His interpretations

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[83]Isaiah 40:2-3, 5 KJV. "Sacrum romanorum imperium! On ne lit pas longtemps l'Historia adversus Paganos sans se rendre compte, en effet, que l'empire joue chez Orose le rôle d'Israël dans une théologie chrétienne authentique. L'histoire romaine est devenue l'épilogue normal de l'histoire de l'Ancien Testament" (Lacroix, Orose et ses idées, p. 198).

occasionally showed little relation to the events they were supposed to explain. He may well have justified this, however, by the fact that he was "concerned with preserving for posterity the meaning of events rather than their description."[84] Although he acknowledged his use of other histories,[85] he rarely referred openly to them. Of those sources, I. W. Raymond commented, "It is disappointing that Orosius, having a wealth of historical writing of the highest rank at his command, based so much of his work upon second rate manuals."[86] Orosius did not use primary source materials as Eusebius had done.

The seeming superficiality of Orosius' treatment of history may have provided one of its chief attractions for later generations and helped guarantee for his work a long-lived influence.[87] His position regarding the meaning of history was easily understood, forthright, and comforting. More than that, the explanations he offered were concrete and unambiguous. In the Historia adversus Paganos he boxed the past for easy transport to the future: God is in control of all and, if society practices good Christianity, everything will go well. In the view of Benoit Lacroix, this was in

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[84]Hist. ad. Pag., iii. pref. Cf. below, pp. 180-182.

[85]Hist. ad. Pag., i. 1.

[86]"Introduction," Seven Books, p. 15.

[87]Cf. Lacroix, Orose et ses idées, pp. 18-20, for a survey of the immense popularity and influence of Orosius in the Middle Ages and beyond.

fact an art and it shows Orosius to have been a poet of tragedy who was able to blend facts in the way that would be the most positively suggestive.[88]

Orosius' seemingly facile solutions were not all that could be appreciated by later students of history, particularly in the West. He had been motivated to write his history by an Italian crisis and, because he offered both historical and religious explanations for it, he pulled Christian historiography firmly into the western Mediterranean. More than that he welcomed the Germanic peoples, who were to found Rome's daughter civilization, as beneficiaries of Rome's civilizational heritage: he turned barbarians into good Romans. Because he also considered that the traditional ancient history of the Mediterranean world elucidated the Roman identity, he gave the new "Romans" an ancestry in pre-Roman, pre-Christian times as well. Probably one of his most significant contributions to western historiography, however, was his unquestioned concentration on the state as the object of his historical analysis. In the context of ancient historiography this was not at all remarkable. What made it important was the addition it made to Christian historiography. The Historia adversus Paganos made very plain that the state was a potential laboratory for the study of the actions of God within the human sphere. This helped to enforce the notion that the study of the history of the state could

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[88]Ibid., p. 75.

unquestionably be considered a worthwhile Christian activity.

At first glance it would appear that Eusebius and Orosius disagreed on almost everything about history. Eusebius wrote only of the church, looking to the past for confirmation of the immutability of truth. A champion of orthodoxy, he created of the past a machine of proof and persuasion: he was the first historian openly to use primary source material to develop his thesis. Geographically, however, he saw only dimly beyond the eastern Mediterranean.[89] Orosius, on the other hand, wrote a great deal about the actions of God in history but scarcely mentioned the church. His subject matter was solely political and military history, and his goal was to establish for a pagan audience that great changes and improvements had occurred in those areas as Christianity became more solidly established within the world. He was a polemicist and a popularizer who saw God as the puppeteer of history, a deus ex machina. Methodologically, he declaimed history rather than proving it. The city of Rome was his chief protagonist and he considered that the

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[89]So also those Christian historians of the fifth and sixth centuries--Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius--who worked strictly within the boundaries of Eusebian ecclesiastical history. Cf. Chesnut, First Christian Histories, pp. 206-207, 218-221, where the comment is made that the eastern empire seemed to have no intellectual comprehension of what was happening in the west. Those direct successors of Eusebius saw the western defeats only as opportunities for "general moralizing" (p. 206). He suggests that the stance taken by the eastern church historians is "important in helping to show why the progressive disintegration of Roman central authority in Western Europe during this period was allowed to occur so casually" (p. 221).

spotlight of history had moved irreversibly west.

What gave these two seemingly dissimilar historians common cause was that they both had great confidence in the validity of Christianity and never doubted its on-going triumph,[90] even despite possible setbacks. This led both to conclude that the church and the state were increasingly inseparable because they could not avoid seeing religious triumph in political terms. Eusebius demonstrated that the state had become the church and the emperor a bishop. By so doing, he allowed himself the option of studying the history of the state because it had become in essence the history of the church. Orosius concurred. Throughout the Historia adversus Paganos the state was presented as a highly honored ambassador commissioned by God to bring peace and progress to the world. The description of the state as divine diplomat could, however, easily become one of the state as Christian evangelist, a shift which, in fact, occurred in Orosius' thinking as he wrestled with the problem of the increasing Germanic presence in the Roman world. As such, he moved more closely toward Eusebius' comprehension of the state as church.

Eusebius, having taken an ecclesiastical route, and Orosius, looking from the perspective of the secular world, both reached the same conclusion: the salvation of the world was visible in the history of the Christian state. This

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[90]Their theme was that of Christian progressivism. So Mommsen, in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 343.

belief was probably more responsible than anything else for imprinting upon the Western mentality its fascination with history. History was a matter of practical theology.[91]

These two important Christian historians shared not just their belief in the salvific illuminations of history, they also derived much of their approach to history from the argumentative nature of Christianity. Jesus had made many of his points about the gospel in disputations with Jewish leaders, and over the centuries his followers often felt the need to defend themselves and their positions against opponents. Together Eusebius and Orosius, although their techniques differed, honed the argument from history into an effective weapon of persuasion. They both also built their works upon the belief that the study of the past would enhance the identity of the present. Although the history of the past for its own sake had no place in the thinking of either of these historians, by considering it at all, they unlocked the door for the curious.

Approaching history from opposite directions, Eusebius and Orosius reached the same destination. They agreed that there was a relationship between God and society, and they

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[91]One wonders what kind of historical mentality the West would have had had the Augustinian belief that history after Christ had no comprehensible theological significance dominated throughout the Middle Ages. Certainly one could have had less impetus to study one's own history. Cf. Chesnut, "The Pattern of the Past: Augustine's Debate with Eusebius and Sallust," in Our Common History as Christians. Essays in Honor of Albert C. Outler, ed. by John Deschner, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 69-95.

both found history to be acclimatized easily to the environment of debate. Both had arguments to win and found the past to be favorable evidence. Because they arrived at these common conclusions by dissimilar means, they bequeathed to the West a flexible historiographical model rich with possibility.

Gregory of Tours, thus, absorbed three important points from his major historiographical predecessors: the past is a matter of immediacy and identity for the present; orthodoxy can be fashioned into an historiographical art form; and the church and its host state are significantly intertwined. With Gregory, however, in contrast to Eusebius and Orosius, these three topics cannot be treated independently. The uniqueness of his craft lies in his ability to synthesize the three themes, particularly those of orthodoxy and church and state in order to develop a portrait of a Christian society.

In the Decem libri Historiarum Gregory analyzed and discussed the past and the present, orthodoxy and heresy, the ideal society and the one that most often was. Regardless of topic, however, he never deviated from his unquestioned assumption that the church and the state were partners whom God had joined together. This acceptance by Gregory of the inseparability of church and state has significance not only in terms of early Christian historiography but indicates also the evolutionary strides Christian society had taken in the centuries since Eusebius and Orosius had charted the first

tentative historical and historiographical steps taken in that direction.[92] One wonders if the historiography written by these two formative thinkers might not have been influential in helping to impress the desirability of this cooperative union upon the western mentality.

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[92]Cf. Roger D. Ray, Viator, 5 (1974), 36: "through 1200 there was . . . no one with reasons to resist the centrifugal force of heilsgeschichtes thought in order to focus on the church as something intellectually separable from the larger history of its relevant world" (see also his n. 8, (ibid.).

Chapter II

ORTHODOXY AND THE GOOD SOCIETY

In Book I of the Decem libri Historiarum Gregory of Tours interpreted the restoration of the Jerusalem temple following the Babylonian captivity as a spiritual allegory and concluded his remarks with a prayer. The soul, he said, would be doomed to enslavement and exile in sin "unless some Zerubbabel, that is Christ Himself, can rescue it." Because of this redemption there would be a restructuring and a decorating of the Christian spirit, and to that end he prayed:

> May He then build for Himself a temple within us, in which He may deign to dwell, where faith may shine as bright as gold, where the word of the preacher may gleam like silver and where all the ornaments of that other visible temple may be seen clearly in the integrity of our hearts. May He grant a successful outcome to our good intentions for 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.'[1]

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[1] Hist., i. 15, using Lewis Thorpe's translation (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974). The original reads: "Sed haec captivitas typum illius captivitatis, ut poto gerit, in qua anima peccatrix abducitur, quam nisi Zorobabil, id est Christus, liberaverit, horribiliter exsulavit. . . . Ipse enim sibi in nobis templum, in quo dignitur habitare, constituat, in quo fides ut aurum luceat, in quo eloquium praedicationes ut argentum splendeat, in quo omnia visibilis templi illius ornamenta in nostrorum sensuum honestate clariscant. Bonae etiam voluntate nostrae ipse salubrae effectu indulgeat, quia: nisi ipse aedificaverit domum, in vanum laborant qui aedificant ea [Ps. 127:1]."

A significant contribution would be made by the existence of a solid Latin-English edition of the Historiae, such as is available in German, edited and translated by Rudolf Buchner (Gregor von Tours, Zehn Bücher Geschichten [2 vols.; Berlin: Rütten & Leoning, n.d.]). The English reader can choose between O. M. Dalton's King James English (The History of the Franks by Gregory of Tours [2 vols.; Oxford:

There has always been a close relationship between the religious desire for salvation and the more secular hope for a good society. Alfred Braunthal has stated that even "eschatological" religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have combined the two goals: "At the same time as the longing for salvation was directed toward redemption from sins or from life's burdens, it was also aiming for a world of peace, harmony and justice."[2] As can be seen in Gregory's comments inspired by Zerubbabel and the rebuilding of the temple, these two themes are of unquestioned importance in the Historiae, and are supported by his most basic assumption that there was redemption available through Christ. His primary emphasis throughout the work was on the human response

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Clarendon Press, 1927]) and Thorpe's more colloquial translation. The standard French translation is that of Robert Latouche (Gregoire de Tours. Histoire des Francs). My general practice has been to use Thorpe's translation in the body of the text. The full Latin context will be provided in the notes.

[2]Salvation and the Perfect Society. The Eternal Quest (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979), p. xii. Cf. Etienne Delaruelle ("Sainte Radegonde, son type de sainteté et la Chrétienté de son temps," in Etudes mérovingiennes. Actes des Journées de Poitiers, 1er-3 mai 1952 [Paris: Editions A. et J. Picard, 1953], p. 71) who comments on "le problème de l'idée de chrétienté" and the challenge to the historian of the sixth century to discover "comment à une époque de guerres fratricides et déjà de particularisme féodal, ou l'Occident commence à se dissoudre en une poussière de principautés, où l'anarchie tend à s'installer dans l'Eglise comme dans le royaume, comment l'idée d'une société temporelle, unie par la foi, de peuples divers surmontant leurs oppositions pour se découvrir des interêts communs, a-t-elle pu survivre?" Cf. also the importance given to Christendom in Denys Hay, Europe, the Emergence of an Idea (Edinburgh: University Press, 1957).

to the Christian potential, on the faith, "the word of the preacher," and "the integrity of our hearts." Encapsulated, Gregory's thesis in the Historiae is that if Christian beliefs were to be well implemented within earthly society, the individual Christian, having participated in that endeavor, would need fear nothing with regard to either Judgment or eternity. Encouraging the Christian and motivating his desire for goodness is the loving God, the ultimate builder of the house, who asks only that he be believed and obeyed. By rearranging Braunthal's sentence, one can understand clearly Gregory's message in the Historiae: were there a world of peace, harmony, and justice, there would be redemption from sins and from life's burdens. This chapter will analyze the ways in which Gregory developed the theme of orthodoxy--in the context of the other two themes of Eusebian-Orosian historiography, the past and the church-state relationship--in order to suggest what the ethical construction of Christian society should be.

Gregory laid the groundwork for this interpretation of history in Books I and II of the Historiae. A chief concern there was that he establish the nature and extent of God's law and explain the responsibilities of human authorities in seeing that the divine will be carried out in society at large. He began with a pointed and summary history of Old Testament times,[3] but moved quickly to show that the same

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[3]For the importance of the Old Testament in the

principles that determined Israel's fate would apply wherever or whenever there were those who professed belief in God.[4]

One must believe what is truly God's law. The loss of paradise by Adam and Eve and Enoch's gain of it illustrate the gravity of the issue.[5] For that reason, Gregory was at pains to clarify his own credentials at the start of his book. If his catholicity were in question, then his arguments in the Historiae would have no weight and, far more importantly, redemption could be available neither to him nor to anyone he convinced with his reasoning. Upon orthodoxy of belief--in, namely, the Trinity as defined by the Nicene Creed, the virginity of Mary, the immortality of the soul,

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development of the medieval "sacral Christendom," see Yves Congar, "The Sacralization of Western Society in the Middle Ages," in Sacralization and Secularization, ed. by Roger Aubert (Concilium: Theology in an Age of Renewal, 47; New York: Paulist Press, 1969), pp. 55-64. Gregory's Gallic predecessor, Caesarius of Arles, also used the biblical chosen people rather than the Roman empire as his social model. Cf. William J. Daly, "Caesarius of Arles, a Precursor of Medieval Christendom," Traditio, 26 (1970), 11, 27-28.

[4]Seen in this light, it becomes clear that Gregory's own title for his great work, Decem libri Historiarum (x. 31), is more appropriate than the title Historia Francorum by which it is more commonly known. It is true that Franks figure predominantly in the work, but they do so as exempla. Gregory's concern was to illustrate by means of relevant and attractive history the social implications of Christian orthodoxy. His methodology could thus be adapted to make use of any era or peoples as exempla. Cf. Wattenbach-Levison, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter, I (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nochfolger, 1952), 101; and, for example, Peter Brown, Relics and Social Status, p. 3 n. 1. Buchner entitled the German edition of the work Zehn Bücher Geschichten.

[5]Hist., i. 1, 3.

and the eventual end of the world preceded by the coming of Antichrist--rested the sinner's only hope of salvation. One's beliefs must be pure so that pardon for sin might be obtainable from God.[6] Lapses of belief and action, however, might not immediately doom the sinner to perdition because the God of the Historiae is first and foremost a redeemer who demands compensation only when his patience has been too severely tried, but who even then will allow for reformation. Gregory explained this by means of his account of Noah's flood. Heretics, he said, ask "why the Holy Scripture says that God lost His temper. They should realize that God did not show anger as a man would do: He is moved to anger . . . so that He may call us back, He is enraged so that He may reform us."[7] History demonstrates how this works. The Hebrews, who had been redeemed out of Egypt and claimed their promised land only after having spent forty years in the desert studying the law, "ceased to observe God's commandments and were often forced to submit to the domination of foreign peoples."[8] Gregory saw the Babylonian captivity, for instance, as well as the Hebrews' loss of independent hegemony

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[6]Hist., i. praef.

[7]Hist., i. 4: "Increpant nobis hic heretici, cur Scriptura sancta Dominum dixissit iratum. Cognoscant ergo, quia Deus noster non ut homo irascitur: commovetur enim ut terreat, pellet ut revocet, irascitur ut emendit."

[8]Hist., i. 10-12. "Post cuius transitum, dum praecepta, divina postponunt, saepe in alienigenarum servitio subiugantur" (i. 12).

following the restoration as direct punishments for sin. The Israelites persisted in pursuing idolatry and "[a]s long as they continued to scorn God's prophets, they were left in the power of the Gentiles, and enslaved and put to death." In keeping, however, with the good character of God, it was precisely into that context of sin and subjugation that Christ was born for the redemption of all people.[9]

Gregory outlined Jesus' mission on earth as first and foremost having been a preaching of repentence,[10] a calling back to the true keeping of the law.[11] The reward for acceptance of such belief was the promise of "the heavenly kingdom to all nations." The Hebrews had spent forty years preparing themselves for the promised land by learning the law, and Jesus spent the forty days between his resurrection and ascension "discussing the Kingdom of God with his disciples."[12] The disciples were then to invite

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[9]Hist., i. 16: "Reversi autem per Zorobabil, sicut dixemus, nunc contra Deum murmorantes, nunc post idola conruentes vel abuminationes, quae gentes exerceunt, imitates, dum Dei prophetas contempnunt, gentibus traduntur, subiugantur, intercedunt; donec ipse Dominus patriarcharum prophetarumque vocebus repromissus, virginis Mariae utero per Spiritum sanctum inlapsus, ad redimptione nasci tam illius gentes quam omnium gentium dignaretur."

[10]Hist., i. 20: "Domino autem Deo, nostro Iesu Christo paenitentiam praedicante, . . ."

[11]Although Gregory did not specifically explain penitence as such, in the light of his build-up to the coming of Christ, it seems appropriate to suppose him agreeing with such a definition.

[12]Hist., i. 20: ". . . caelestem regnum cunctis gentibus promittente . . ."; i. 24: "Resurgens autem

the world to enter into this promise.

Although Gregory had found in the Old Testament numerous foreshadowings of the Christian church, the most important connection between the past and present was that, with Christ's creation of the church, the kingdom became attainable not by just a limited group, but by all people. Although they might be in the midst of idolatry and the punishing enslavements of sin, redemption could be acquired not only by the Hebrews--God's traditional chosen people--but also by the pagans, be they Romans or Franks. The new Christian church, like its predecessor Israel, was not free from difficulties, however, because it had to endure persecution by idolators and wrenchings apart by heretics.[13] During the reign of the emperor Constantine, though, it had been given peace; Saint Martin was born, the True Cross was found, and Eusebius and Jerome were at work on their histories.[14]

In his review of Old Testament history Gregory had stressed that when God's people failed to obey the divine commandments they were punished in clear-cut cases of cause and effect. If, however, throughout their experience, the Hebrews had been politically punished for ignoring belief in God, the Christian Romans, because of their belief, were triumphant.

Dominus, per quadraginta dies cum discipolis de regno Dei disputens, . . ."

[13]_Hist._, i. 25-35

[14]_Hist._, i. 36.

To illustrate this, Gregory used the example of the emperor Theodosius who "put all his hope and all his trust in the mercy of God . . . [and] held many peoples in check, more by vigils and prayer than by the sword . . . [S]o he strengthened the Roman state and was able to enter the city of Constantinople as a conqueror."[15] The lesson Gregory drew from the Hebrews and the Christian Romans was that belief and action in accordance with the law of God would make a tangible difference in the nature of political society. To obey that law and to become part of the Christian church was to allow for the establishment on earth of the kingdom of God. That having been accomplished, it had to be maintained or it would suffer enslavement by Babylonians rather than Theodosian victories. Because of the mission of Saint Martin,[16] the challenge of the kingdom had been thrust upon the inhabitants of Gaul; after 5500 years the promise of Eden had been brought to Tours.[17] The Gallic kingdom of God having been once established, though, it was deemed necessary by Martin's episcopal heir to preach the absolute necessity of the keeping of God's law as the

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[15]*Hist.*, i. 42: "Hic Theodosius omnem spem suam atque fidutiam in Dei misericordiam ponit, qui multas gentes non tam gladio quam vigiliis et oratione conpescuit, rem publicam confirmavit, Constantinopuli urbem victor ingressus est."

[16]Cf. *Hist.*, i. 39: "Hic enim fana distruxit, heresem oppraessit, eclesias aedificavit . . ."

[17]*Hist.*, i. 48.

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guarantee of that kingdom's continued independence.

One aspect of the law that Gregory stressed throughout the Historiae was the exercise of and respect for the authority of spiritual and political leaders. It was in Book II, however, that he specifically explored the multi-faceted nature of Christian episcopal and royal authority and outlined their delicate interrelation within the context of the Frankish take-over of Gaul and the conversion to Christianity under Clovis. Gregory considered recognition of the authority of bishops and kings to be a function of adherence to orthodox belief and he demonstrated this most pointedly by means of the experiences of Bishop Sidonius Apollinaris of Clermont-Ferrand and of King Gundobad of Burgundy. With these two narratives he also had an opportunity to comment upon the fact that, on the one hand, underlings are obligated to obey and support their superiors, and that, on the other, superiors have no ultimate choice but to take full advantage of the power and responsibilities given to them with regard to those they rule.

The bishops of Book II were good men who cared diligently for their flocks, counselling them to remain true to orthodox beliefs,[18] healing the sick,[19] praying for the safety of their people in times of attack,[20] practicing

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[18]Hist., ii. 3.

[19]Hist., ii. 1, 3.

[20]Hist., ii. 7.

eloquence and charity,[21] gaining the victory over their own weaknesses,[22] and converting pagans[23] as well as attempting to dissuade heretics.[24] Among these a bishop whom Gregory singled out for special attention was Sidonius Apollinaris, a man of wide political as well as spiritual experience who was blessed with the quality of immense generosity. Despite his goodness, however, he had to endure a rebellion on the part of two of his priests who "removed from him all control over the property of his church, reduced him to a very straitened way of life and submitted him to every kind of indignity."[25] One of these men, on the day he planned "to drag Sidonius out of his own church," died instead in the privy. Gregory was quick to point out the similarity to the death of the arch-heretic Arius and to make a strong statement with regard to the sin of rebellion:

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[21]*Hist.*, ii. 15-17, 22.

[22]*Hist.*, ii. 21.

[23]*Hist.*, ii. 31.

[24]*Hist.*, ii. 34.

[25]*Hist.*, ii. 23 (Thorpe and Dalton): "Cumque ad officium dominicum fuisset mancipatus et sanctam ageret in saeculo vitam, surrexerunt contra eum duo presbiteri, et ablatam ei omnem potestatem a rebus ecclesiae, artum ei victum et tenuem relinquentes, ad summam eum contumeliam redigerunt." Roger Sève ("La seigneurie épiscopale de Clermont, dès origines à 1357," *Revue d'Auvergne* 194 [1980], 97) points out that the seizure of the *res ecclesiae* from the bishop indicates that already by the fifth century the episcopacy of Clermont was on its way to becoming an independent *seigneurie* within the Auvergne (cf. *ibid.*, 85). Another such seizure occurred following the death of Saint Gall in the mid-sixth century (*Hist.*, iv. 5).

> From this we may deduce that this man was guilty of a crime no less serious than that of Arius . . . This, too, smacks of heresy, that one of God's bishops should not be obeyed in his own church, the man to whom had been entrusted the task of feeding God's flock, and that someone else to whom nothing at all had been entrusted, either by God or by man, should have dared to usurp his authority.

Following the death of Sidonius, the surviving conspirator carried out the plans to take over the bishopric. He seized diocesan property and acted as if he were the bishop despite having enjoyed no election to the position. Only a week after the bishop's death, he gave a great feast for the townspeople, lording over them all. During the dinner, though, his cupbearer told of a vision he had had of Sidonius bringing the already dead rebel to judgment and incriminating the man still preening in Clermont. That second priest died immediately, and Gregory had no question as to the meaning. "The Lord passed this earthly judgement on these two unruly priests: one suffered the fate of Arius and the other was dashed headlong from the very summit of his pride, like Simon Magus at the behest of the Holy Apostle. . . . [T]hese two who plotted together against their holy Bishop now have their place side by side in nethermost hell."[26]

By means of this narrative, Gregory left no doubt whatsoever,

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[26]*Hist.*, ii. 23 (emphasis mine): "Unde indubitatum est, non minoris criminis hunc reum esse quam Arrium illum, cui similiter in secessum fuerunt interna deposita per partis inferioris egestum, quia nec istud sine heresi potest accipi, ut in ecclesiam non obaudiatur sacerdos Dei, cui ad pascendum oves commissae sunt, et ille se ingerat potestati, cui neque a Deo neque ab hominibus aliquid est commissum.

about the intolerability of rebellion against that authority "entrusted . . . by God or by man." He saw it, not as institutional disruption and instability, but as sin of the first order. It not only flew in the face of God's law and character like the awful heresy of Arius, but it was also a parodic ascension into heaven of the evil of Simon Magus--and, by implication, of Antichrist.[27] The fate of the rebel who broke God's law by ignoring duly appointed authorities was destruction.

As Gregory used the example of an ecclesiastical rebellion to provide a broadening of the definition of God's law or orthodoxy, so he employed orthodoxy to examine the role and responsibilities of Christian kingship. The Burgundian king Gundobad, who had connections with Clovis and the Franks both familially and politically, eventually accepted

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". . . Haec eo loquente, exterritus presbiter, elapsum de manu calicem, reddidit spiritum; . . . Tale iudicium super contumaces clericos Dominus in hunc praetulit mundum, ut unus Arrii sortiretur mortem, alius tamquam Simon Magus apostoli sancti oratione ab excelsa arce superbiae praeceps allideretur. Qui non ambiguntur pariter possidere tartarum, qui simul egerunt nequiter contra sanctum episcopum suum."

For the sources and evolution of the legend of Arius' death, see Alice Leroy-Molighen, "La mort d'Arius," Byzantion, 38 (1968), 105-111. She points out that Arius was seen as a Judas figure, a comparison that would certainly apply in Gregory's use of the allusion.

[27]Unlike Eusebius who treated Simon Magus as the protoheretic, Gregory used him in terms of his hubristic attempt to imitate Christ's ascension, an activity which is associated with the figure of Antichrist. For the connection between Simon Magus and Antichrist, see Richard Kenneth Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), pp. 27-28, cf. p. 75.

the superiority of orthodox Christianity over that of Arianism. His request, however, that Saint Avitus of Vienne baptize him secretly inspired that bishop[28] to a determined effort to convince him of his obligation as king to lead his people publicly into orthodoxy. Avitus declared to Gundobad:

> 'You are a king, and you need not fear to be taken in charge by anyone: yet you are afraid of your subjects and you do not dare to confess in public your belief in the Creator of all things . . . Do you not realize that it is better that the people should accept your belief, rather than that you, a king, should pander to their every whim?'

He continued to say that, as a king leads his forces into war, so should he lead them into salvation.[29]

So far as Gundobad was concerned, Avitus' arguments were in vain because the king never was convinced to declare publicly his belief in the Trinity. For Gregory, however, the bishop's points were highly significant.[30] Those to

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[28]Or Gregory of Tours himself. Cf. Felix Thürlemann (Der historishe Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours. Topoi und Wirklichkeit [Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974], p. 49): "Dass Fremd- und Eigenrede von Gregor unterschiedlos behandelt werden."

[29]Hist., ii. 34: "'Tu vero cum sis rex et ad nullo adpraehendi formidas, seditionem paviscis populi, ne Creatorem omnium in publico fateares. Relinque hanc stultitiam, et quod corde te dicis credere, ore profer in plebe. . . . Metuens enim populum, o rex, ignorans, quia satius est, ut populus sequatur fidem tuam, quam tu infirmitate faveas populari. Tu enim es capud populi, non populus capud tuum [emphasis mine]. Si enim ad bellum proficiscaris, tu praecedis catervas hostium, et ille quo abieris subsequuntur. Unde melius est, ut te praecedente cognoscant veritatem, quam pereunte permaneant in errorum."

[30]In the preface to Book III where he catalogued the rewards of those who believed in the Trinity and the punishments of those who did not, Gregory included Gundobad

whom authority had been legitimately entrusted must shoulder their responsibilities to carry out whatever task would best serve those they ruled. A king was to be a military and political leader but, when given the opportunity to promote the kingdom of God among his people, he, in partnership with the clergy, must become a spiritual leader as well. With the founders of the Frankish ruling family, Clovis and Clothild, Gregory was more fortunate. In close cooperation with churchmen, these two powerful secular rulers were able to expose the superior authority of the Christian God over the pagan gods[31] and then to convert their people to orthodox Christianity.

Clovis began his career in the Historiae by killing an insubordinate soldier who refused to obey him and return to the bishop of Soissons a vase which had been taken from his cathedral as booty.[32] Although he was not yet converted,

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with Godigisel and Godomar as kings who "lost their homeland and their souls at one and the same moment."

[31]Cf. the arguments of Gregory (Hist., ii. 10), Clothild (ii. 29), and, finally, Clovis (ii. 30) on this subject.

[32]Hist., ii. 27. For the historiographical and ideological evolution of this episode, see Henri Duranton, "L'épisode du vase de Soissons vu par les historiens du XVIII^e siècle," Revue de Synthèse, 96 (1975), 283-316. "La mésaventure de Clovis, qui n'est plus aujourd'hui qu'une anecdote colorée, fut ainsi pour tout le XVIII^e siècle l'occasion de vives confrontations idéologiques" (p. 303). The eighteenth-century interpretation that the episode indicated the power of the monarch over his realm may not, actually, have been far from the intentions of the sixth-century historian of the event.

Clovis thereby demonstrated his understanding of the reciprocal authority of religious and secular leaders without which a Christian society could not be structured. He was also able to show the importance for political and military leaders of the point made with regard to the rebellion against Bishop Sidonius Apollinaris, namely, that those in authority must be able to expect obedience from those under their rule.

Clovis, in practical terms, was converted to Christianity because he perceived the Christian God to be a God of action. In battle with the Alamanni, the king informed God that he would like to believe and be baptized but, right then, he needed to win a battle and his own gods were obviously not coming to his aid.[33] He won the day, and Christianity won a convert. God having given him a victory, Clovis wanted to reciprocate and announced that the eradication of Arianism was the motivation for his move against the Visigoth Alaric.[34] He then sought the guidance and protection of Saint Martin, and his efforts bore fruit. A miraculous deer showed the army a ford across the flood-swollen Vienne, a Shekinah-like pillar of fire signalled Saint Hilary's--and the Holy Spirit's[35]--approval of the war, and

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[33]*Hist.*, ii. 30.

[34]There is much literature on this battle, a sampling of which can be found in Wattenbach-Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, I, 103-104, n. 226. Cf. also Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, pp. 63-66.

[35]Cf. *Hist.*, i. 10: "*Colomna* vero *ignis* typum sancti Spiritus praetulit."

the walls of Angoulême fell down for the troops like those of Jericho had for the Israelites.[36] Clovis returned from battle and was honored with investiture as a Roman consul.[37]

Although Gregory tried to be convincing that, "Day in and day out God submitted the enemies of Clovis to his dominion and increased his power, for he walked before Him with an upright heart and did what was pleasing in His sight,"[38] the historian does not really succeed in his efforts. The Clovis of ii. 40-42 was a warrior of great cupidity and ruthlessness who, in the end, "in his cunning way . . . hoped to find some relative still in the land of the living whom he could kill."[39] One suspects that Gregory's non-judgmentalism with regard to Clovis' last manipulative wars may be due to two facts. The first is that, as Gregory suggested in Book I, religious correctness was considered to be prerequisite to political success. Clovis was an orthodox Christian and he was politically successful, therefore, God must have

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[36]Hist., ii. 37.

[37]Hist., ii. 38. Roman imagery appears only twice in the Historiae, both times with regard to Clovis. He became a Roman consul and, at his baptism, "Procedit novos Constantinus ad lavacrum" (ii. 31). The almost total lack of historiographical "Romanity" in Gregory's Historiae is even more striking when compared to the extensive use of it by Bede and Otto of Freising.

[38]Hist., ii. 40: "Prosternebat enim cotidiae Deus hostes eius sub manu ipsius et augebat regnum eius, eo quod ambularet recto corde coram eo et facerit quae placita erant in oculis eius."

[39]Hist., ii. 42: ". . . sed dolo dicebat, si forte potuisset adhuc aliquem repperire, ut interficeret."

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blessed him. The second fact, which is probably the more convincing, is that even Clovis' strikingly secular maneuverings allowed Gregory to make yet another point about authority. In Book II he had discussed the respect due episcopal authority, the cooperation that must exist between church and state authorities, the superior authority of the Christian God over those of the pagans, and the religious and military responsibilities that are part of the authority of kings. Gregory's account of Clovis' war against the king of the Ripuarian Franks, Sigibert, and his son, Chloderic, is a recital of Clovis' dastardly double-dealings followed by his totally dishonest protestations of innocence as he attempted to convince the subjects of the now dead king and prince that he should be their successor. "When they heard what he had to say, they clashed their shields and shouted their approval. Then they raised Clovis up on a shield and made him their ruler."[40] Regardless of how he had arranged for the event to occur, Clovis was given his power over the Ripuarian Franks by means of the accepted and legitimate procedure. It may well have been because this authority had been properly

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[40]Hist., ii. 40: "At ille ista audientes, plaudentes tam parmis quam vocibus, eum clypeo evectum super se regem constituunt." Cf. Janet L. Nelson, "Symbols in Context: Rulers' Inauguration Rituals in Byzantium and the West in the Early Middle Ages" (in The Orthodox Churches and the West, ed. by Derek Baker [Studies in Church History, 13; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976], pp. 102-103) where the military (not necessarily royal) aspect of this ritual is noted.

"entrusted . . . [to him] by man,"[41] that Gregory was able to conclude his account of that campaign with the sentiment that God came to Clovis' aid because of his pleasing acts. In purely secular terms, Clovis' expansionistic rule--in this case alone, for Gregory did not implicate God in any of those other last wars--had been lawfully acquired.

In Books I and II, using the history of the distant past, Gregory built the superstructure of the Historiae. Because salvation has been offered through Jesus Christ, God's people must respond to it by believing and practicing everything that they know about God. This is the keeping of the law. To reject the authority of the law is to jeopardize one's independence and future success. God's law, however, does not pertain only to theological matters. It makes a significant difference in the very functioning of political society. On the one hand, failure to keep the law can lead to political defeat. On the other hand, there are leaders within the community whose power and authority have been given to them by God and man. These are the bishops and the kings, and God's law demands that they be obeyed. A subordinate, therefore, has no right of rebellion against them. Neither do these leaders, however, enjoy the possibility of shirking their responsibilities toward their subordinates. This practice of good rule can be best achieved when bishops and kings work together, bishops guiding and kings

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[41] Hist., ii. 23; cf. above, p. 69 n. 26.

implementing.[42] The law of God and the exercise of belief in it involves two parallel sets of mutual obligations. God provides salvation in response to which humanity will obey and serve him, and an important aspect of this serving of God is the recognition of duly appointed earthly authorities. These authorities, however, must act always in the best interests--both earthly and eternal--of those over whom they rule. Throughout the rest of the Historiae Gregory sought to decorate the temple, to continue elaborating and expanding these definitions of law and authority, both of which he considered to be matters of orthodox belief.

The great sin of the Hebrews had been their idolatry. Repeatedly they had failed to keep God's commandments, reviving their love of material deities, and had consequently fallen under the control of their enemies. Although, because of Clovis' conversion to orthodox Christianity, the Franks had rejected their early idolatry,[43] Gregory was not convinced that they had totally forsaken the worship of tangible gods.

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[42]Henry G. J. Beck has noted that the close working relationship between bishops and kings extending to the royal appointment and/or sanction of episcopal candidates was an innovation of the sixth-century Merovingian world (The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France during the Sixth Century [Analecta Gregoriana, 51; Rome: Gregorian University, 1950), pp. 20-24. Gregory cited and approved of several such instances in the Historiae (cf. iv. 6, 7, 11, 15, 26, 35). Cf. also Marc Reydellet, "Pensée et pratique politiques chez Grégoire de Tours," Gregorio di Tours, pp. 171-205.

[43]Cf. Gregory's homily against early Frankish idolatry in Hist., ii. 9.

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This reflects not simply the long-lived influence of natural paganism even within Gregory's own diocese,[44] a topic which did not concern him in the Historiae, but rather a far more subtle preoccupation among his contemporaries with material goods as well as materialism in general. The Christian Franks were as tempted by idolatry as had been the ancient Hebrews. Gregory feared that his own people could also face political defeats. He concentrated on these problems in Book V of the Historiae.

The preface to that book is a sermon to the grandsons of Clovis aimed at persuading them to preserve the patrimony he had provided for them. These royal brothers, however, had already accumulated a grim history of destructiveness.[45] Gregory felt that there was some possibility that these fratricidal wars could be a signal of the end of time, but he appears not to have been satisfied with what might have been too simple a solution. The situation demanded action not passive resignation. What was needed was that the kings repent of their greed and conflict and learn to live harmoniously

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[44]Cf. C. E. Stancliffe, "From Town to Country: The Christianisation of the Touraine 370-600," in The Church in Town and Countryside, ed. by Derek Baker (Studies in Church History, 16; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), pp. 43-59. He states (p. 56) that "when we read Gregory [of Tours'] miracle-stories, we see him at work in trying to teach people, trying to wean them away from their pagan practices and turn them to Christianity." Cf. also Jacques LeGoff, "Culture clericale et traditions folkloriques dans la civilisation mérovingienne," Annales, 22 (1967), 780-791.

[45]Cf. especially Hist., iv.

together. History, he wrote, is filled with stories of discord and subsequent defeat. Romans, Carthaginians, and even ancestral Franks had met their just rewards. "Beware, then, of discord, beware of civil wars, which are destroying you and your people. As things are, what else can you look forward to, except that . . . [you will be] conquered by enemy peoples."[46] The sole purpose of war, he explained, is to establish peace, and Clovis had done exactly that. Peace, however, was being harried into oblivion by his grandsons' intense acquisition of mundane goods and their lust for even more. Clovis had fought his wars backed up by little treasure. They, however, already had everything they could desire except peace, and that was unattainable because they kept grabbing the possessions of each other. Discontent with one's already excessive property, theft of what belonged to others, and desire for more beyond that were the bases for these wars.[47] Gregory concluded the preface by suggesting

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[46]Hist., v. praef.: "Cavete discordiam, cavete bella civilia, quae vos populumque vestrum expugnant. Quid aliud sperandum erit, nisi cum exercitus vester caeciderit, vos sine solatio reliciti atque a gentibus adversis oppressi protinus conruatis?" Throughout the work Gregory appears as being ambivalent about what would probably have been his easiest explanation of Frankish history, namely, that he and his contemporaries were living during earth's last days. Although he made references or allusions to such a possibility (e.g., i. praef., vi. 45; as well as v. praef.; and the Antichristological comparisons in ii. 22; iv. 12; vi. 46; x. 25), the overall tone of the Historiae is one which presupposes that history still has a future. This preface to Book V is a good illustration of his basic attitude.

[47]Hist., v. praef.: Et cum hoc facerit, neque

that if conflict were so delectable, it should be waged spiritually rather than physically. It should be a war of the virtues against the vices, and the results of such a combat would be freedom in Christ. Should the love of the material be allowed to win, though, the future would hold nothing but enchainment and servitude to "the root of all evil."[48] The biblical reference is to I Timothy 6:10. In many ways, the broad context of Saint Paul's counsel there is exactly what Gregory hoped to express in his warnings against the idolatry of materialism.

> They think religion should yield dividends; and of course religion does yield high dividends, but only to the man whose resources are within him. We brought nothing into the world; for that matter we cannot take anything with us when we leave, but if we have food and covering we may rest content. Those who want to be rich fall into temptations and snares and many foolish harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and perdition. The love of money is the root of all evil things, and there are some who in reaching

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aurum neque argentum, sicut nunc est in thesauris vestris, habebat. Quid agetis? Quid quaeritis? Quid non habundatis? In domibus dilitiae supercrescunt, in prumptuariis vinum, triticum oleumque redundat, in thesauris aurum atque argentum coacervatur. Unum vobis deest, quod, pacem non habentes, Dei gratiam indegetis. Cur unus tollit alteri suum? Cur alter concupiscit alienum?"

That Gregory should have stressed the importance of peace is not surprising when his work is placed in the context of his Christian historiographical predecessors. Orosius, in particular, was vitally concerned to interpret history in terms of peace rather than in the traditional terms of war. Cf. above, pp. 36-41, 49-50.

[48] Hist., v. praef.: "Si tibi, o rex, bellum civili delectat, illut quod apostolus in hominem agi meminit exerce, ut spiritus concupiscat adversus carnem et vitia virtutibus caedant; et tu liber capite tuo, id est Christo, servias, qui quondam radicem malorum servieras conpeditus."

> for it have wandered from the faith and spiked themselves on many thorny griefs.
> But you, man of God, must shun all this, and pursue justice, piety, fidelity, love, fortitude, and gentleness. Run the great race of faith and take hold of eternal life.[49]

In this preface to Book V Gregory used very comprehensible concrete examples to make a vital but difficult and abstract point. The civil disorders plaguing the Frankish Christian community were symptomatic of the much larger problem of mistaking the tangible for the real. What was real for the Christian was that one believe orthodox truth and act accordingly, and that reality would be flatly repudiated when one's efforts were directed at such activities as the snatching away of another's rights and property with shows of avarice, injustice, and unconcern for the welfare of others. Concentration on the material would result in the denial of the spiritual, and only there lay all those qualities which gave life substance. Gregory must have appreciated Saint Paul's further advice to Timothy that he should

> [i]nstruct those who are rich in this world's goods not to be proud, and not to fix their hopes on so uncertain a thing as money [or other goods], but upon God, who endows us richly with all things to enjoy. Tell them to do good and to grow rich in noble actions, to be ready to give away and to share, and so acquire a treasure which will form a good foundation for the future. Thus they will grasp the life which is life indeed.[50]

Although Gregory could well have included this quotation in

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[49]I Timothy 6:5-12 New English Bible.

[50]I Timothy 6:17-19 NEB.

his text, he did not. In essence, though, he elaborated on it throughout the Historiae by means of extended exegesis.

What probably made Gregory hopeful about the Frankish kingdom of God was that, given the right set of circumstances, even the seemingly worst people in the realm could be counted on to remember the essentials of Christianity. Faced with the imminent death of her two young sons from an epidemic, King Chilperic's cruel wife Fredegund became uncharacteristically distraught over spiritual matters. Before convincing Chilperic that they should hurl their tax books into the fire as penance for their sins, she is quoted as having made a speech concerning the excesses of their avaricious mistreatment of those whom they trampled in order to get more wealth. They were losing their children as divine punishment for the anguish their greed had caused others. They were being judged in compensation for their having provoked "'the tears of paupers, the laments of widows, and the sighs of orphans.'"[51] Fredegund then went on to express the same sentiments Gregory had written in the preface to Book V about the superfluity of wealth by asking rhetorically:

'Were our cellars not already over-flowing with wine?

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[51] Hist., v. 34: "Ecce! iam eos lacrimae pauperum, lamenta viduarum, suspira orfanorum interimunt, . . ." (my translation). As Buchner notes (Zehn Bücher Geschichten, I, 344 n. 1): ". . . auch hier spricht danach in Wirklichkeit wohl Gregor selbst, nicht Fredegunde." Cf. also Thürlemann's similar comment in Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours, p. 49 (for the quotation, see above, p. 71 n. 28).

> Were our granaries not stuffed to the roof with corn? Were our treasure-houses not already full enough with gold, silver, and precious stones, necklaces and every regal adornment one could dream of? Now we are losing the most beautiful of our possessions!'[52]

Fredegund and Chilperic were being deprived of their sons' lives because they had been concerned to stockpile only goods on earth and in so doing had deprived others of what was rightfully theirs. The children were losing their earthly lives; unless they repented and kept God's commandments, the parents would lose their eternal lives.

Fredegund may have been a useful voice to recount the evils of materialism on a simple level. For more profound elaborations on the subject, however, Gregory quoted himself. His opposition to materialism was based upon the doctrine of the Trinity and he illustrated his ideas by the record of two debates he had on the subject, one with the Arian Visigoth Agilan and the other with the theoretically orthodox Chilperic.[53] The discussion with Agilan began with the

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[52] Hist., v. 34: "Numquid non exundabant prumptuaria vino? Numquid non horrea replebantur frumento? Numquid non erant thesauri referti auro, argento, lapidibus praeciosis, monilibus vel reliquis imperialibus ornamentis? Ecce quod pulchrius habebamus perdimus!"

[53] Hist., v. 43 and 44, respectively. "There is little evidence that he [Gregory] was much affected by the great doctrinal writers of the third and fourth centuries" (William C. McDermott, Gregory of Tours, Selections from the Minor Works [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), p. 3. Cf. M. L. W. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A.D. 500 to 900 (New York: Dial Press, 1931), pp. 99-100. Laistner is generally quite unsympathetic to Gregory of Tours. Pierre Riché (Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries, tr. by John Contreni [Columbia: University of South

Visigoth[54] stating that it was clear that Christ was less than equal with the Father because he himself stated that "the Father is greater than I," and submitted himself to God at the time of his crucifixion. Gregory countered this by saying that the problem consisted solely of the fact that Christ said and did those things while in the weakness of the flesh, a state he had assumed so as to bring about redemption by means of humility rather than power.[55] What Gregory felt was wrong with Arianism was that it underestimated the infinitude and potential of the Godhead by regarding Christ predominantly in his form of finite matter. It was a cutting down of deity to human scale and composition, a demanding that what was by nature beyond comprehension be made fully

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Carolina Press, 1976], p. 271) states that "Gregory believed more in the power of miracles than in the success of extended proof."

[54]Hist., v. 43. Gregory was less than charitable in his opinion of this man: ". . . virum nulli ingenii aut dispositiones ratione conperitum, sed tantum voluntatem in catholica lege perversum." This was, in the light of Gregory's arguments against Arianism, a somewhat fitting description of that belief's adherents, though, because he felt that the heresy was a fundamental failure to recognize the need to stretch the human mind to the frontiers of its capabilities.

[55]Hist., v. 43: "'Quod autem eum dixisse ais: Pater maior me est, scias, eum hoc ex adsumptae carnis humilitate dixisse, ut cognuscas, non potestate, sed humilitate fuisse redemptum. . . . Nam et mortis timor et commendatio spiritus ad infirmitatem corporis est referenda, ut, sicut verus Deus, ita et verus homo credatur'." Cf. Mark Dorenkemper, The Trinitarian Doctrine and Sources of St. Caesarius of Arles (Fribourg: The University Press, 1953), p. 41, for the popularity of this Arian use of John 14:28 and for the traditional grounding of Gregory's explanation.

graspable by the human understanding. This fact was underscored by the Arian denigration of the Holy Spirit to a position below that of Christ. For the Arian, trapped by his materialism and paltry imagination, there had to be three separate, distinct, and tangible components of God, individual not only spatially but also temporally. The orthodox, on the other hand, was not enslaved by such literalism. He had a far wider range of possibility because he dealt with the qualities shared by the three, rather than being stymied by whatever relationship they might have. He found that concentration on the attributes of the Godhead automatically resolved the question of that relationship. As Gregory stated it: "'In the three there is one will, one power, and one action: one God in trinity and three in unity. Three persons, but one rule, one majesty, one power, and one omnipotence.'"[56] What made the question of relationship superfluous was that the Trinity was unified by a singleness of purpose and by a set of commonly shared characteristics, namely, wisdom, light, life, truth, and justice.[57]

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[56]Hist., v. 43: "'Una in tribus est voluntas, potestas, operatio; unus Deus in trinitate et trinus in unitate. Tres personae, sed unum regnum, una maiestas, una potentia omnipotentiaque'."

[57]Hist., v. 43: "Ad haec ego interrogo, si crederit, Iesum Christum filium Dei esse, si eundemque esse Dei sapientiam, si lumen, si veritatem, si vitam, si iustitiam fateretur. Qui ait: 'Credo, haec omnia esse filium Dei'. Et ego: 'Dic ergo mihi, quando Pater sine sapientia, quando sine lumine, quando sine vita, quando sine veritatem, quando sine iustitia fuerit. Sicut enim Pater sine istis esse non potuit, ita et sine Filio esse non potuit. Quae maximae ad

In terms of Gregory's argument with Agilan, the arch-heresy Arianism, a system with which he was in dispute throughout the Historiae, was a materialistic and thus a finite explanation of a phenomenon which he believed to be in essence qualitative. The human being could never hope to know God, let alone know how to obey and serve him, if he did not first make the effort to recognize that in order to do so he must somehow struggle to escape the mental servitude imposed by his mundane and finite materialism. Were he to fail to acknowledge this, any beliefs about God which he prided himself as having would be nothing but foolishness.

If the Arian erred on the side of too strong distinctions for the persons of the Godhead, Chilperic, in a flight of theological fancy that took him near the ancient heresy of

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dominice nominis mistirium coaptantur'." This argument shares similarity with that of Saint Ambrose and particularly Caesarius of Arles (Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 182). It is interesting that in these debates Gregory did not deal with the shared "essence" (homoousios) within the Godhead, a factor that had been crucial in the fourth century christological debates as well as in the sixth-century synod of Braga (cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition [100-600] [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971], pp. 181-182). His argument solely focuses upon the abstract qualitative attributes of the Trinity. For a thorough-going discussion of the nature and implications of Arianism and its scheme of redemption, see Rogert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, Early Arianism. A View of Salvation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981). For the changes that had occurred in Arianism by the sixth century, see Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrines, pp. 13-15. Dorenkemper dealt extensively with the emphasis on the attributes of the Trinity in both the Quicumque, or Athanasian Creed, and the trinitarian writings of Caesarius of Arles (see especially, the chapter entitled, "The Consubstantiality and Sequels," pp. 13-82).

Sabellianism,[58] wanted to make too little. The logic behind this was that he felt it would be unseemly to "speak of a Person in the case of God, as if he were a man of flesh and blood. He [Chilperic] affirmed that the Father was the same as the Son, and that the Holy Ghost was the same as the Father and the Son."[59] Although Gregory had outlined in his debate with Agilan that the Trinity was unified by means of shared attributes, he clarified here that the three had also each assumed different roles vis-a-vis humanity and for that reason could not be blended into a single entity. What he was attempting to illuminate was that the motivation of Chilperic's idea, which exposed its ultimate similarity to Agilan's, was his reliance upon material definitions. Although he endeavored to escape the materialism of seeing the Godhead as persons, the king ironically attempted to construe divine unity in terms of physical oneness. In response, Gregory emphasized that to understand God one must simply be able to move beyond the basic restrictions of materialism because whichever way a material or physical explanation of the

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[58]Cf. Pelikan, Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, pp. 178-179. So also Wallace-Hadrill, Long-Haired Kings, p. 58.

[59]Hist., v. 44: "Per idem tempus Chilpericus rex scripsit indicolum, ut sancta Trinitas non in personarum distinctione, sed tantam Deus nominaretur, adserens indignum esse, ut Deus persona sicut homo carneus nominetur; adfirmans etiam, ipsum esse Patrem, qui est Filius, idemque ipsum esse Spiritum sanctum, qui Pater et Filius." Caesarius of Arles had been concerned to clarify that the "Trinitatem (facit) proprietas personarum" (cited in Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 83).

Godhead might be articulated, it would be plainly inadequate. Although Gregory himself was somewhat hard-pressed to find words and images to describe the Trinity,[60] the thing of which he was absolutely certain was that, "'What you say about the Persons must be interpreted spiritually, not physically. In these three Persons there is thus one glory, one eternity and one omnipotence.'"[61]

In practical terms--and I believe that he had very practical intentions when he included these debates in Book V--Gregory stated that the spiritual must always be given precedence over the material. The infinite potential of the spiritual must never be restricted by the limitations of the material. As with the moon and the sun, the material can only achieve its value or true substance because of the energy it receives from the attributes of the spirit. This understanding of the superiority of the spiritual over the material aids not merely the human comprehension of the Trinity, but has a direct impact as well upon the individual Christian's relationship with material goods. Wealth, for instance, would become the means for the great dispensing of the divine qualities of charity and justice were its use

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[60]Gregory did not, for instance, follow the organizational structure of the Quicumque in his trinitarian explanation as Dorenkemper has demonstrated that Saint Caesarius did (Trinitarian Doctrine, especially pp. 13-82).

[61]Hist., v. 44: "'De personis vero quod ais non corporaliter, sed spiritaliter sentiendum est. In his ergo tribus personis una gloria, una aeternitas, una potestas'."

motivated by the spirit. Separated from the spiritual, it would inspire nothing but the implementation of evil, in essence, of idolatry. It was this idea which underlay the explanation attributed to Fredegund as to why her sons were dying.

The "gods" of the Franks were the goods and property of others. They were willing to wage destructive wars to acquire them and were, most of the time, unaffected by the tears, laments, and sighs of their victims. What they really acquired by so doing was discord and the threatened loss of eternal life. Their obsession with materialism could even lead them theologically to hold positions dangerously close to those of the worst heretics.[62] Concentrating on the physical definitions of God they could miss the whole point of the divine character. They could fail to see that the three personalities, each of which manifested itself to man in unique ways, were one because of their singleness of

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[62]Orosius had defined Arianism as polytheism (Hist. ad. pag., vii. 28-29; cf. above, p. 45). Ironically, the whole doctrine of the Trinity may initially have been attractive to the polytheistic Hellenistic world because of its very pluralism (William R. Schoedel, "A Neglected Motive for Second-Century Trinitarianism," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 31 [1980], 356-367. Mark Dorenkemper (Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 31) has noted that, "The possibility for the barbarians to understand the Christian doctrine in a polytheistic sense was greater now [fifth and sixth centuries] that the Church had to defend the perfect divinity of all three Persons against the Arians." Dorenkemper commented also that, "A frequent ad hominum argument employed by the Archbishop [Caesarius of Arles] is the accusation of the Arians having fallen back into paganism in their rejection of the unity of the divine substance" (ibid.); cf. also, p. 131.

purpose and their unity of will. The Godhead was not, as the materialistic Chilperic suggested, one person, but was rather "one rule, one majesty, one power, and one omnipotence." In the preface to Book V Gregory had warned that continued civil war would merit the Franks takeover by foreign enemies. This was what had happened to the Hebrews whenever they rejected the law of God, ignored the prophets, and took up idolatry. In Gregory's understanding, Frankish materialism, such as causing wars and grasping after goods, was as much the breaking of God's commandments as worshipping literal idols, rebelling against authority, or refusing to be an exemplary king. In fact, it was no different from pursuing actual heresy of belief.[63] And there was no question but that, like the idolatry with which it had similarity, the pursuit of heresy was a defiance of the law.

If discord, greed, and materialism were heresies in company with Arianism, and could be equated with idolatry,

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[63]The mortal illness of Chilperic's and Fredegund's sons which inspired Fredegund's speech against materialism is set in an interesting context in Hist., v. 34, where civil war and an epidemic of dysentery are tightly juxtaposed, events which had been preceded by prodigies. Gregory could well have been enhancing his argument that war and materialism are, in essence, heretical by connecting them closely with a killing disease. R. I. Moore has pointed out that in the twelfth century, "The language of disease . . . was used to describe the nature of heresy itself" ("Heresy as Disease," in The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages, ed. by W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst [Leuven: University Press, 1976], p. 10). Would it be too far-fetched to wonder if Gregory's use of dysentery in this instance is in any way allusively connected to the tradition that Arius died in the privy, spilling out his entrails? Cf. above, p. 69 n. 26.

their opposites--harmony, charity, and spirituality--must be orthodoxy. In that case, the key to what orthodox belief truly entails should lie within the Godhead itself. Gregory's description of the Trinity is couched in political terms, a fact which would seem to strengthen the connection between his anxiety over political materialism and his concern for theological accuracy. The three members of the Godhead have "'one will, one power, one action, . . . one rule, one majesty, . . . one glory, one eternity and one omnipotence.'"[64] They are "one God in Trinity and three persons in unity." Should not the Trinity, therefore, serve as the example for the orthodox believers? Should not they be able to put aside their quarrels and their lust for treasure and live in the kind of harmonious community that would show them to be truly in the image of God? Fraternal kings following this example would surely benefit as regards power, action, rule, majesty, glory, and, eventually, eternity should they be able to share peaceably together the patrimony of Clovis.

The example of orthodox rule that Gregory held before these Frankish kings was their eastern contemporary Tiberius who was at first Byzantine Caesar under the insane Justin and then emperor in his own right. Tiberius understood the relation of the ruler to his subjects and recognized, as did hardly any of the Franks, that power and wealth should be used for the betterment of the realm. Gregory described him

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[64]*Hist.*, v. 43, 44.

as "a capable man, energetic and wise as well as generous, a fine defender of the unfortunate . . . [He] was a great Christian and a faithful one: as long as he continued to take pleasure in distributing alms to the poor our Lord went on providing him with more and more to give."[65] God did not merely give Tiberius more wealth so that he could be more generous; in addition, he also gave the emperor political confidence and wisdom. Whereas Chilperic bullied the citizens of Limoges into paying exorbitant taxes and then quelled their riot of protest with cruelty and executions, Tiberius was able to foil a conspiracy against him by going to pray at holy shrines prior to his coronation rather than parading himself before the crowds at the hippodrome as was the custom. He was later able even to make peace with the conspirators. Like no political leader of Gregory's personal acquaintance, Tiberius was able to confound his enemies because he had placed his hope in God.[66]

As far as the Franks were concerned, they seemed to

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[65]Hist., v. 19 (Latouche and Thorpe): ". . . strinum atque sapientem, aelymosinarium inopumque optimum defensorum. . . . Et quia, ut diximus, magnus et verus christianus erat, dum hilare distributione pauperibus opem praestat, magis ac magis ei Dominus subministrat." Note that this chapter praising Tiberius immediately follows that about Praetextatus' trial when Gregory had to remind Chilperic with great force of argument about his obligations as a Christian king (cf. below). In iv. 40 Gregory also praised Tiberius for his justice, charity, military success, and, above, all, Christianity.

[66]Hist., v. 28, 30 : ". . . nihil homini, qui in Deo spem posuerat, adversare valentes (v. 30)." For Tiberius' eulogy, see Hist., vi. 30.

remember God and the qualities of good chiefly when their own natural attributes of evil had gotten them into difficulties. While Tiberius could be unafraid of political machinations and could react to them with a spirit of amnesty because he practiced kindly but firm Christianity as an essential part of his rule, the Franks, who kept forgetting their charitable and ethical obligations, degenerated into skeptical and untrustworthy antagonists as plots thickened around them. In fact, the only other rulers whom Gregory did praise in a manner somewhat similar to the way he praised Tiberius were King Solomon from the Old Testament who preferred wisdom to riches; Queen Clothild, Clovis' wife who was more God's handmaiden than she was royalty; and Theudebert who had died twenty years before the events of Book V. Although he was far from impeccable in terms of his active participation in the family disorders and civil wars, Theudebert was a king who generally showed justice and charity toward his realm,[67] and Gregory believed him to have been

> a great king, distinguished by every virtue. He ruled his kingdom justly, respected his bishops, was liberal to the churches, relieved the wants of the poor and distributed many benefits with piety and friendly goodwill. With great generosity he remitted to the churches in Clermont-Ferrand all the tribute which they used to pay to the royal treasury.[68]

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[67]*Hist.*, iii. 28, 31; 24-25, 34. He had, however, two feisty ministers and appointed a greedy and hated tax collector who was killed by a mob after his death (iii. 33, 36). For Solomon, *Hist.*, i. 13; Clothild, *Hist.*, iii. 18.

[68]*Hist.*, iii. 25: "At ille in regno firmatus, magnum

Gregory had warned his own contemporaries in the preface to Book V of the possibility of foreign invaders, but he appears not to have anticipated so complicated a scenario. The Franks had no Solomons, Clothilds, Tiberiuses, or Theudeberts living among them and they did have all the attributes necessary to destroy themselves. With guidance and repentance, however, they should nonetheless be able to continue establishing the good society. The prime requisite was that bishops and kings cooperate to guarantee that the Christian community would live in accordance with God's law by renouncing the idolatry of materialism and would exercise the kind of proper authority that would maintain the lawfulness of that society. Were those goals achieved, the redemptive society on earth would foreshadow the final redemption of the saints in heaven.

By means of the examples provided by the heretic King Gundobad and the orthodox Clovis, Gregory had demonstrated in Book II what the working relationship between bishops and kings should be. Bishops were to warn kings of their errors and to inspire them to the practice of true Christianity. Several times throughout the rest of the Historiae Gregory made obvious that the bishops of Tours were particularly bold

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se atque in omni bonitate praecipuum reddidit. Erat enim regnum cum iustitia regens, sacerdotes venerans, eclesias munerans, pauperes relevans et multa multis beneficia pia ac dulcissima accomodans voluntate. Omne tributo, quod in fisco suo ab eclesiis in Arvernum sitis reddebebatur, clementer indulsit."

and definite in implementing this responsibility. At the beginning of Book IV Gregory recorded an attempt Clovis' son Lothar had made to tax the churches under his rule for one-third of their incomes. The king would have succeeded in his efforts but for the stand taken by Injuriosus, bishop of Tours. Using an argument which Gregory had employed with regard to the Hebrews in Book I, Injuriosus informed the king that if he were to take the property of God, God would see that he quickly lost his kingdom. Lack of respect for spiritual authority and rights would result in political punishment. The bishop continued to tell the king that he should feed the poor from his own supplies, not rob them of that which others had given. The place of a king was to provide, not to steal. To do otherwise would be a serious misappropriation of royal authority.[69] Injuriosus, with the help of Saint Martin, convinced Lothar to rescind his order, but the point of this chapter was directed not just at kings. Injuriosus' remarks were as damning of his fellow bishops as they were of Lothar. Although the other bishops had suffered extreme discomfiture because of the king's intentions, none had had the courage to state or explain his convictions. Saint Martin's successor served as a salutary force to remind both church and state of their responsibilities toward one

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[69]Hist., iv. 2: "'Si volueris res Dei tollere, Dominus regnum tuum velociter aufret, quia iniquum est, ut pauperes, quos tuo debes alere horreo, ab eorum stipe tua horrea repleantur'."

another. The two were to have a mutually supportive relationship. The state was not to act with arrogance or greed toward the church, and the church was to counsel the state as to the results of its intended actions. For the majority of the bishops to have acquiesced to the king in this instance was as much a failure of their authority as Lothar's scheme to tax the churches was a travesty of his.

In the course of his own career Gregory had the opportunity to make much the same speech to both his episcopal colleagues and King Chilperic. The setting was the treason trial of Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen. Praetextatus had become involved with Chilperic's independent son Merovech and his wife Brunhild, the widow of his uncle Sigibert. Chilperic considered that the bishop had thus aided the enemy and, as a result, subjected him unfairly to trial. Although the bishop of Rouen in the end was tricked into confessing complicity with Merovech, the evidence Chilperic used to prosecute him and justify his banishment from his see was neither just nor convincing. After the king left the chamber so as to allow the bishops to confer together regarding the judgment on their unfortunate peer, Aetius, the archdeacon of Paris, was unable to stir his colleagues to action when he urged that the verdict be made only in accordance with right rather than the king's pleasure. Gregory alone took up the challenge, expressing orally many of the same points he made in written form in the Historiae. His message to his fellow

churchmen was that they should not fail in their responsibilities to Chilperic. "'You must not be silent,'" he warned. "'You must speak out and parade his sins before the King's eyes, lest some calamity should occur, in which case you will be responsible for his soul.'"[70] The historian in life as on paper, he then cited the example of Chlodomer's fate for his mistreatment of Sigismund[71] as well as the judgment that hounded the emperor Maximus for his ill-use of Saint Martin. Although he did not, he could have included the positive example of how his own predecessor Injuriosus had succeeded in convincing Lothar not to sin against the church.[72]

Gregory's words were quickly reported to the king and he was summoned to explain himself. Afraid that the verdict might go against him, Chilperic accused Gregory of being unjust toward the king because he had reminded the bishops of their duty, and threatened to hire agitators in Tours to shout that if a king could not receive justice from the bishop what could mere commoners expect. Gregory was unconcerned and responded that Chilperic would be the one discredited by such an act, not he. He then informed the king: "'What more can be said? You have the law and the canons. You must

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[70]*Hist.*, v. 18: "'Ergo nolite silere, sed praedicate et ponite ante oculos regis peccata eius, ne forte ei aliquid mali contingat et vos rei sitis pro anima eius'."

[71]Cf. *Hist.*, iii. 6.

[72]*Hist.*, iv. 2. Cf. above, p. 95 n. 69.

study them diligently. If you do not carry out what they say, you will be menaced by the judgement of God.'"[73] In one Latin sentence, Gregory stated an important practical concern characteristic of the Historiae at large. Operating within the context of the church counselling the state, he reminded Chilperic of the law, his authority to enforce it, and the judgment which would come to him should he fail in his obligation. When Chilperic tried to placate him with food, Gregory told him that nourishment must come from doing God's will: the material must not be allowed, even symbolically, to assume greater importance than the spiritual and the ethical. Once Chilperic had sworn to uphold the law, Gregory felt free to share the king's bread and wine.[74]

The keeping of the law and the canons did not, however, only involve kings' treatment of bishops. The effects of orthodox authority had to be felt throughout society. The reason this should be done was again the Trinity. Gregory's

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[73]Hist., v. 18 (Latouche and Thorpe): "'Sed quid plura? Habes legem et canones, haec te diligenter rimari oportet, et tunc quae praeciperint si non observaberis, noveris, tibi Dei iudicium imminere'."

[74]Hist., v. 18: "'Noster cibus esse debet facere voluntatem Dei et non in his diliciis dilectare, ut ea quae praecipit nullo casu praetermittamus. Tu vero, qui alios de iustitia culpas pollicire prius, quod legem et canones non omittas; et tunc credimus, quod iustitiam prosequaris'. Ille vero, porrectam dexteram, iuravit per omnipotenti Deo, quod ea quae lex et canones edocebant nullu praetermitteret pactu. Post haec, accepto pane, hausto etiam vino, discessi."

arguments in Book V with Agilan and Chilperic[75] had concentrated on the inadequacies of considering the Trinity as having a too materially comprehensible nature. In contrast, he pointed out in Book VI to the Jew Priscus that an overly spiritualized view of God could be erroneous as well. Were one to reject the existence of Christ and his assumption of human nature, one could ignore the possibility of a restored relationship between God and sinful humanity.[76] The humanity of Christ brought to mankind the possibility of restoration and rehabilitation to its full potential. Because Christ had become man, "'[w]e were reborn by His baptism, cured by His wound, raised up by His resurrection, glorified by His ascension. . . . [T]here was every need for Him to come to heal our infirmities.'"[77] Christ had reconciled humanity with God. Were his people truly to accept that redemption, they would be reconciled with their fellows as well and all the wounds festering within their communities could be healed.

Because of his enthusiastic participation in the cult of saints, especially of Saint Martin, Gregory spent his

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[76]Gregory had alluded to this in his debate with Chilperic (v. 44) in favor of distinctions of persons in the Godhead. His thrust there, however, was to argue against overly materialistic interpretations of the nature of God. Cf. vi. 40, for a similar debate, only with an Arian.

[77]Hist., vi. 5: "'Cuius nos nativitati renati, baptismo abluti, vulnere curati, resurrectione erecti, ascensione glorificati sumus. .Quod autem morbis nostris medere venturus erat, propheta tuus ait: Livore eius sanati sumus'."

episcopal career actively involved in the literal healing of wounds. He was himself troubled with frequent illness, or fear of it, and relied often upon the cures of saints.[78] When he chose to offer his most favorable extended description of his contemporary King Guntram, it was to say that, like saints and bishops, he was considered by the people to have powers of miraculous healing.[79] Although in his several works Gregory wrote much about the physical cures wrought by saints, many of the interventions of these figures

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[78]Cf. Peter Brown, Relics and Social Status, pp. 6-7, 16.

[79]Hist., ix. 21: "Ipse autem rex, ut saepe diximus, in elymosinis magnus, in vigiliis atque ieiuniis prumptus erat. Nam tunc ferebatur, Masiliam a luae inguinaria valde vastare et hunc morbum usque ad Lugdunensim vicum Octavum nomine fuisse caeleriter propalatum. Sed rex acsi bonus sacerdus providens remedia, qua cicatrices peccatoris vulgi mederentur, iussit omnem populum ad eclesiam convenire et rogationes summa cum devotione celebrare et nihil aliud in usu vescendi nisi panem ordeacium cum aqua munda adsumi, vigiliisque adesse instanter omnes iobet. Quod eo tempore ita gestum est. Per triduum enim ipsius elimosinis largius solito praecurrentibus, ita de cuncto populo formidabat, ut iam tunc non rex tantum, sed etiam sacerdus Domini putaretur, totam spem suam in Domini miseratione transfundens et in ipso iactans cogitationes, quae ei superveniebant, a quo eas effectui tradi tota fidei integritate putabat."

This is a particularly ironic passage, because in the next chapter Gregory described the actions of Bishop Theodore of Marseilles in that same epidemic. The real bishop, whom the king had done much to humiliate (cf. below, p. 158), and the king, who was acting like a bishop, carried on at that time in similar fashion. "Episcopus tamen urbis accessit ad locum et se infra basilicae sancti Victoris saepta continuit cum paucis, qui tunc cum ipso remanserant, ibique per totam urbis stragem orationibus ac vigiliis vacans, Domini misericordiam exorabat, ut tandem cessante interitu populo liceret in pace quiescere" (ix. 22). I suspect that ix. 21 actually tells more about bishops than it does about the king. That chapter is the first of a sequence of four bishop narratives (ix. 21-24).

in the Historiae are notably different. Saint Martin, who in many ways was almost Gregory's alter ego, provides the most important example.[80]

Jean Leclercq, in his article on Saint Martin and medieval monastic hagiography, commented that, until the time of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century, Saint Martin had been viewed almost exclusively as a thaumaturge. This, he noted, was particularly so in the sixth century, the time of Gregory of Tours. Saint Bernard, in contrast, stressed the imitable in Martin's life, "the gentleness, the thirst for justice, the mercy, the purity of heart."[81] A survey of the miracles or interventions of Saint Martin which appear in the Historiae, however, indicates that even Gregory of Tours was vitally concerned with Martin's imitableness, particularly with his "thirst for justice." Gregory expressed this pointedly in the context of one of the surprisingly few healing miracles of the saint which appear in the Historiae. Gregory recounted the story of the Archdeacon of Bourges' cure for cataracts. Although Saint Martin had restored his

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[80]See Sara Hansell MacGonagle, The Poor in Gregory of Tours. A Study of the Attitude of Merovingian Society Towards the Poor, as Reflected in the Literature of the Time (New York: Columbia University, 1936), pp. 66-94. Her survey of the effects of Saint Martin on Merovingian society and the poor covers especially Gregory's De Virtutibus Sancti Martini, although she drew also from the Historiae.

[81]"S. Martin dans l'hagiographie monastique du moyen âge," in Saint Martin et son temps, p. 185; translated quote, p. 187. Saint Caesarius of Arles recommended the imitation of Christ's character, not of his healing miracles (cf. Henry G. J. Beck, Pastoral Care of Souls, p. 276).

sight, Leunast consulted a Jewish physician upon his return home from Tours. He became blind again as a result and not even a second pilgrimage to Martin's shrine healed his eyes. Located as this account is in the anti-materialistic Book V, it is not surprising that Gregory interpreted this particular episode as teaching that earthly cures, such as that of the Jew, have no place competing with spiritual healing. However, he prefaced this miracle story with words that explain a belief in Saint Martin's broader concerns. "Saint Martin's power," he stated, "is shown just as much by the punishment meted out to fools as it is by the grace accorded to those who have been cured."[82]

Without doubt, Saint Martin did not suffer fools gladly. Cato, a priest who wanted so much to be bishop of Clermont that he insulted Saint Martin by refusing to accept the see of Tours, never got to be a bishop anywhere.[83] Death came to those who sought to violate the sanctuary of Saint Martin's church in pursuit of their prey.[84] The saint, in contrast, pursued with vigor and good results those who stole goods from his property;[85] struck deaf, dumb, and insane a

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[82]Hist., v. 6: "Hic tantum, quid neglegentibus evenerit, qui post virtutem caelestem terrena medicamenta quaesierunt, exsolvam, quia, sicut per gratiam sanitatum, ita et in castigationem stultorum virtus eius ostenditur."

[83]Hist., iv. 11.

[84]Hist., iv. 18; v. 1, 4.

[85]Hist., iv. 48; vi. 10; vii. 21.

man who materialistically accused him and Saint Martialis of having emptied the royal treasury;[86] and caught perjurers who stupidly attempted to clear themselves by means of his relics.[87] Ambition, violation and theft of church property, misunderstanding of the importance of almsgiving, and dishonesty were simply not tolerated by Gregory's Saint Martin and he acted in some of these cases as sheriff and judge in bringing criminals to punishment.

Martin's reactions to disregard for ecclesiastical sanctuary and the inspiration he provided involved a much greater ethic than the simple detection of lawbreakers. They involved justice, mercy, and human decency. In one of these cases, a pursuer of Austrapius attempted to starve him out of sanctuary in Saint Martin's church and merited immediate illness and death. Gregory remarked that, "After this miracle everyone hastened to provide Austrapius with the necessities of life."[88] In another case, Gregory himself plead with King Guntram for the lives of two supporters of the disruptive pretender Gundovald who had also sought sanctuary in Saint Martin's church. When the king proved unaffected by his efforts, Gregory said that his master had sent him with this message, and that his master was Saint Martin. The men

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[86]Hist., iv. 16.

[87]Hist., viii. 16.

[88]Hist., iv. 18: "Post istud miraculum omnes ei opolentissime quae erant necessaria detulerunt."

were restored to the king's favor.[89] Even thieves benefitted from Martin's mercy. A group of men who had burgled his church later quarrelled over the loot and one of them was killed. Having thus been discovered, they were ordered to appear bound before King Chilperic. Gregory, fearing that they would be executed, followed the example of Saint Martin "who while he was on earth had so often begged for the life of condemned criminals" and won them pardon.[90] When Gregory

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[89]*Hist.*, viii. 6. This case is especially noteworthy because it involves not just mercy and forgiveness but political and financial reinstatement to the king's favor as well. Referring to this episode, F. L. Ganshof ("La 'gratia' des monarques francs," *Anuario de estudios medievales*, 3 [1966], 18) stated that, "Il fallait jouir de la *gratia* pour avoir accès à des charges publiques; si on l'avait perdue, la récuperer était la condition nécessaire pour obtenir à nouveau ces charges ou pour en recevoir d'autres. L'octroi ou la concession nouvelle de la bienveillance royale, s'accompagnait d'autres faveurs. Nous pouvons imaginer que celles-ci consistaient en donations foncières ou en présents mobiliers puisés dans le trésor royal. Perdre la *gratia* entraînait des destitutions et des confiscations." Ganshof suggests further (p. 23) that the royal *gratia* had its origins in the Christian religion, as an earthly mirroring of the *gratia* of God. "Mais il est une constatation bien plus importante: que la *gratia* royale, bienveillance gratuite, condition nécessaire de tout don, de l'octroi de tout droit ou de tout privilège, est parfaitement parallèle à la *gratia* de Dieu, bienveillance gratuite, et seule source du salut; que les agents et les sujets du roi n'ont aucun titre à recevoir ses dons, pas plus que les hommes en général n'ont de droit au salut ou aux autres dons de Dieu." It is, therefore, not surprising to witness Saint Martin and Gregory of Tours, as representatives of God, interceding in this case in order to inspire a restoration of the royal *gratia*.

[90]*Hist.*, vi. 10: "Tunc ego metuens, ne ob illius causam homines morerentur, qui vivens in corpore pro perditorum vita saepius deprecatus est, epistolam regi precationis transmisi, ne, nostris non accusantibus, ad quos persecutio pertinebat, hi interficerentur. Quod ille benigne suscipiens, vitae restituit." At Praetextatus' trial (v. 18), Gregory referred to Saint Martin's efforts to convince the

himself was on trial for alleged slander against Queen Fredegund, Saint Martin released from prison the carpenter who bravely defended him.[91]

Saint Martin was influential in providing justice and mercy not only for individuals. He could intervene to protect entire kingdoms and localities. Often this was accomplished ironically by the gentle saint because of the fear of retaliation he could arouse in the guilty. The armies of Clovis were kept from unjustly foraging in the countryside of Tours lest Saint Martin be offended prior to an important battle.[92] The saint responded favorably to prayers offered by Clovis' widow Clothild that warfare cease among her sons.[93] He was also believed to have been instrumental in bringing about the pacification of the Rhinelanders, Sigibert's fierce allies in civil war, and in helping them to decide to return home.[94] When a representative of the Count of Bourges attempted to fine Saint Martin's monks for their failure to provide military service, he lost all his strength and was cured by the saint only upon his repentance. Martin, in company with Saint Hilary and the martyr Polyeuctes, was a "guarantor" that none of the kings with whom Gregory was contemporary

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emperor Maximus to spare the lives of men condemned to death.

[91]_Hist._, v. 49.

[92]_Hist._, ii. 37.

[93]_Hist._, iii. 28.

[94]_Hist._, iv. 49.

would enter Paris without the permission of the others.[95] Martin was not, however, just the patron of peace and justice. He was also a manipulator of governmental fiscal policy, for he was effective in the quelling of kings' urges to tax. Lothar, Charibert, Sigibert, and Childebert II all refrained from taxing "out of respect for Saint Martin."[96]

This saint, who was well-known for his power to cure people, appears in the Historiae as a healer of another sort. He was actively involved in the creation and maintenance of an orderly, law-abiding, just, and merciful society. The wounds he ministered to in the Historiae were those of the community. In describing Martin's career, Gregory stated that, "By his many miracles he overcame the disbelief of the Gentiles and made it clear to the people that Christ, the Son of God, is Himself the true God."[97] The Saint Martin of the Historiae constantly pointed to Christ the redeemer who had come to earth "'to heal our infirmities.'"[98] Gregory intended to demonstrate that orthodox Christian society should receive its ultimate inspiration and definition from the attributes of the Trinity. He emphasized that especially

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[95]Hist., vii. 6.

[96]Hist., iv. 1; ix. 30.

[97]Hist., i. 39: "Tunc iam et lumen nostrum exoritur, novisque lampadum radiis Gallia perlustratur, hoc est eo tempore beatissimus Martinus in Gallias praedicare exorsus est, qui Christum, Dei filium, per multa miracula verum Deum in populis declarans, gentilium incredulitatem avertit."

[98]Hist., vi. 5; cf. above, p. 99.

in the Historiae by means of his accounts there of the miracles of Saint Martin. Both the Trinity and its great Gallic defender declared that orthodoxy of belief demanded actions that would result in respect for the rights and goods of others, as well as generosity, peace, harmony, mercy, redemption, and justice to the community at large.

As can be seen in some of the interventions of Saint Martin in human affairs, the healing of communal wounds could involve the maintenance of the seemingly secular machinery of government and justice. Gregory balanced these miracle stories with accounts of historical events which proved similar points. Not only did treaties such as the Treaty of Andelot, which in 587 established harmony between Guntram and his nephew Childebert II,[99] illustrate healing of this sort, but even a classic Germanic bloodfeud provided an unlikely demonstration of orderliness.

This particular conflict centered on Sichar and the family of Chamnesind, a man who later became both his friend and his killer.[100] An important aspect of this feud is that throughout the conflict the forces of law and justice, one of whose representatives was Gregory himself, were continually interjected in attempts to end the dispute.

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[99]Hist., ix. 20.

[100]Cf. Erich Auerbach's rhetorical and linguistic analysis of this episode and Gregory's work in general in Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, tr. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 77-95.

Interestingly enough, however, it was the compensation charged by the law which fueled the second phase of the feud. For a while, though, it looked as if peace had been achieved. Then Sichar made the mistake of telling Chramnesind how fortunate he should feel that the conflict had occurred. He apparently drunkenly boasted that Chramnesind was now financially comfortable because of the fine he had been charged for having killed Chamnesind's relatives. That was too much for Chramnesind to take, and he decided that he must avenge his relatives' deaths by killing Sichar on the spot. In the end, he was able to clear himself of this deed before King Childebert because he was successful in proving "that he had taken life in order to avenge an affront."[101] One could not say that the machinery of the law worked smoothly in this case, but at least all concerned bowed to its authority on numerous occasions throughout the dispute.[102]

A case in which the powers of law and authority were more successful was that regarding the revolt of nuns at Saint Radegund's foundation of the Holy Cross in Poitiers.[103] Again, Gregory was a participant in the

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[101]*Hist.*, vii. 47; ix. 19 : "Chramisindus vero iterum ad regem abiit, iudicatumque est ei, ut convinceret super se eum interfecisse. Quod ita fecit" (ix. 19).

[102]The legality of this case benefits greatly by comparison with a similar feud "settled" by Fredegund by inviting the combatants to dinner and stationing axe-men behind their seats to execute them (*Hist.*, x. 27).

[103]*Hist.*, ix. 39-43; x. 15-17, 20, 22.

settlement. The account of this revolt is a particularly important part of the Historiae because Saint Radegund's and her nuns, bishops, and kings serve to portray the Frankish world in miniature. In that world were several levels of authority, all of which should function responsibly so as to guarantee the maintenance of order. The authority of parents, represented by the abbess, should never be challenged.[104] Bishops and nobles must keep the peace within their immediate spheres of influence because, should they fail, disaster would likely become epidemic and thus involve many more people than those immediately concerned with the issue. The ultimate responsibility for peace in society lay with the kings who, first and foremost, had to work together. Once there was a union of royal purpose, they, in accordance with the advice of the bishops, could exercise their power to implement the machinery of justice and order. Law must be the basis of every action. The revolt was begun by nuns who broke the monastic rule; it was settled by kings and bishops who based their decision on acknowledged law and on Christian decency and charity. When authorities suffer disrespect--or fail to accept their responsibilities--and when the laws are broken, chaos and disorder are the consequences. When authorities seek to interpret and uphold the law with clemency, peace and harmony can be restored. That this episode was

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[104]Two stories of mother-daughter disputes precede the account of the convent revolt; (Hist., ix. 33-34; cf. ix. 38).

significant for Gregory can be seen in the fact that it is the only one thoroughly documented in the Historiae. His account includes four entire primary documents which indicate not only the situation regarding the revolt and its settlement but also establish the context in which the monastery was founded.[105]

The rebellion at Saint Radegund's erupted when two royal cousins, Clothild and Basina, the daughters of Charibert and Chilperic, tried to oust their abbess and fled the convent with some forty other nuns seeking redress from King Guntram for wrongs allegedly done to them. The case was a delicate one because the convent's founder, Radegund, a wife of King Lothar, was a woman associated by her contemporaries with Saint Martin.[106] It was also touchy because at the root of the trouble probably lay the failure of the bishop of Poitiers to assume his lawful and expected responsibility for a foundation located within his diocese. Gregory, who became an immediate party to the issue when the escaped nuns sought asylum in Tours,[107] was disturbed not only by the revolt

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[105]The bishops' letter to Saint Radegund (Hist., ix. 39); the letter from Gundigesel, Bishop of Bordeaux, to the bishops in council with Guntram, explaining the excommunication of the rebels (ix. 41); Radegund's letter to the bishops about her intentions regarding the convent (ix. 42); and the text of the judgment settling the revolt (x. 15).

[106]Hist., ix. 39. The comparison of Radegund with Saint Martin was made in the letter to her from seven bishops.

[107]The prioress, who sided with the abbess, was Gregory's niece, Justina, a fact not, however, specified in the text (Hist., x. 15).

itself but also by the fact that the nuns were insisting on ignoring proper channels and bypassing ecclesiastical authorities in pursuit of a royal hearing. Because the appropriate chain of command was not followed, much time elapsed before the king could gather bishops to discuss the dispute. During that period some nuns married and the rest returned to Poitiers and established themselves in Saint Hilary's church along with "a gang of burglars, murderers, adulterers and criminals of all sorts."[108] Four bishops, including Maroveus of Poitiers, went to Saint Hilary's hoping to encourage the rebels to return to their convent. Meeting with obstinacy, they passed a sentence of excommunication upon them. This action prompted the nuns and their henchmen to a bloody attack on the bishops, a storming of the monastery, and a kidnapping of the abbess. Soon the entire town was involved and the Easter celebrations, including the baptisms of catechumens, were jeopardized.[109] At that point the kings Guntram and Childebert initiated an official episcopal court "in an attempt to end the revolt by canon law."[110] Macco, the count of Poitiers, was given royal orders to quell the riot with force and Clothild,

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[108] Hist., ix. 40: ". . . congregatis secum furibus, homicidis, adulteris omniumque criminum reis . . ."

[109] Hist., ix. 42; x. 15.

[110] Hist., x. 15: "Haec autem Childebertus rex audiens, legationem ad Gunthramno regum direxit, ut scilicet episcopi coniuncti de utroque regno, haec quae gerebantur sanctione canonica emendarent."

the ringleader, was called to judgment.

Gregory included in the Historiae the document which the bishops sent to Guntram and Childebert describing the trial and advising on the sentence. It clearly outlines what Gregory considered to be the proper working relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authorities and indicates as well the principles upon which those authorities should base their decisions. Since this was an ecclesiastical matter, the bishops carried out the trial, but they did so at royal command in the knowledge that their judgment would be affirmed by the kings and that Guntram and Childebert would be responsible for the restitution of monastic property. The judgment stated that, "with the agreement of Providence, religion rightly confides her judgements in the pious and Catholic kings who had been set over the people and to whom sovereign power has been granted;[111] . . . the Church recognizes that, with the help of the Holy Ghost, she is confirmed and strengthened in her authority by the jurisdiction of those in power."[112] Having presented accounts of the testimony from both sides in the dispute, the bishops advised

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[111]Cf. the statement Gregory made with regard to the revolt against Sidonius Apollinaris in Hist., ii. 23, that legitimate power is "entrusted . . . either by God or by man." Cf. above, p. 69 n. 26.

[112]Hist., x. 16 (Latouche and Thorpe): "Propitia Divinitate, piis atque catholicis populo datis principibus, quibus concessa est regio, rectissime suas causas patifecit religio, intellegens, sacrosancto participante Spiritu, eorum qui dominantur se sociari et constabiliri decreto."

that the abbess be fully reinstated and that the rebellious nuns be continued as excommunicants until satisfactorily performing penance. The document closes with a reiteration that the bishops met at royal bidding and "with due respect for the Church's authority and after having consulted the canons . . . without respect for persons."[113] They also counselled the kings that all property and grants should be restored to the convent on the principle that a judgment based on the Fathers and the canons would result in benefits for both church and government.[114] As to the two fomenters of the revolt, at royal request both were eventually pardoned by the church. Basina returned to Saint Radegund's and Clothild remained in secular life.[115]

Gregory of Tours' concern throughout the Historiae was to outline the components essential for the structuring of a society that would be truly and thoroughly orthodox in its adherence to and respect for the totality of God's law, and that would demand of its citizens lifetimes of dedication to Christian attributes and to the communal implementation of them. Both the Trinity and the saints served as guides to a

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[113]Hist., x. 16: "Haec nos pro vestra iussione, quod eclesiasticum pertenuit ordinem, circumspectis canonibus, absque personarum aliqua acceptione suggerimus peregisse."

[114]Hist., x. 16: "[S]ub catholicis regibus totum adqueratur Deo, nihil perdat relegio; ut status conservatus tam patrum quam canonum nobis proficiat ad cultum, vobis propagetur ad fructum."

[115]Hist., x. 20.

world without end of harmony, generosity, and justice. To accept this offer, the Christian community must shun idolatry in all its forms and respect those leaders whose power derives from either God or man. Those authorities must always act in accordance with the law and the canons--enacting harmony, generosity, and justice--lest they "be menaced by the judgement of God."[116] In earthly terms, the Last Judgment was seen as providing the necessary discipline for the lives of all Christians, not just of society's rulers.[117] Gregory made this point emphatically in a debate he had with one of his own priests who denied the validity of the resurrection of the body.[118]

The priest believed, as did the Sadducees, in the finality of death, and quoted Genesis 3:19 as proof that dust is the essence of man's beginning and end. To counter him, Gregory used numerous Old Testament texts to argue in favor of the resurrection preliminary to invoking the most important proof available to the Christian, namely, Christ's personal and salvific victory over death. The priest replied that, while he accepted the truth and reality of Jesus'

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[116]Gregory to Chilperic in Hist., v. 34; cf. above, pp. 86-88.

[117]Benoit Lacroix, L'historien au moyen âge (Montréal: Institute d'Etudes Médiévales, 1971), pp. 97-98: "La véritable obsession des historiens du moyen âge, si nous voulons absolument leur en trouver une, serait, à notre avis, celle du jugement dernier et du sort réservé à chaque vie humaine dans l'au-dela."

[118]Hist., x. 13.

experience, he failed to see what difference it would make for the future of humanity. This was a challenge to the whole theology of redemption, and the bishop's response was an elaboration of his earlier arguments on the subject given to his Jewish debater, Priscus:[119] "'What need was there, then,' I asked him, 'for the Son of God to come down from heaven, to be incarnate, to suffer death and to descend into Hell, if it were not that He would not permit man, whom He had himself created, to be condemned to death eternal?'"[120] Rather than convincing the priest, however, this led him to raise a whole series of questions about the physical and spiritual changes which happen to the dead and to see these as obstructions to resurrection. When he referred to the statement in Psalm 146:4 to the effect that the dead suffer the extinction of their thoughts as well as the decay of their bodies, Gregory was given the opportunity to offer another, this time ironic, warning against materialism:

> "'When the breath has left a man's body and that body lies dead, he will think no more of the things which he has left behind on earth. As you imply, he no longer thinks of building, planting, cultivating the soil; he no longer thinks of amassing gold and silver, or the riches of this world.[121]

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[119] Hist., vi. 5; cf. above, p. 99.

[120] Hist., x. 13: "Et ego: 'Et quae fuit necessitas Filio Dei de caelo discendere, carnem adsumere, mortem adire, inferna penetrare, nisi ut hominem, quem plasmaverat, non permaneret in mortem perpetuam derelinqui?'"

[121] Hist., x. 13: "Ad haec ego: 'Bene ais, quia, cum egressus fuerit ab homine spiritus et iacuerit corpus mortuum, non cogitat de his quae in mundo relinquit, acsi

Gregory had suggested at length earlier that materialistic concerns--particularly the "'amassing of gold and silver'"--often distracted people from their pursuit of the Christian life.[122] An inability to think of them in death would be a blessing! He reminded the priest that, according to Saint Paul,[123] incomprehensible changes will occur within the individual as he moves from life to death to resurrection, and it would only be expected that his thought processes would undergo transformation as well. But how that happened was not really important. Gregory considered that belief in the resurrection and the judgment which would follow it had so many implications for the living of the Christian life, that the priest's worries over difficult details were beclouding a crucial point. There had to be a resurrection so that the judgment could occur. "'If there is to be no resurrection, what will it profit the just that he has done well, how will be harm the sinner that he has done ill? If there is no Judgement Day to come, all men can follow their own petty desires, each of us can do exactly as he wishes.'"[124]

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verbi causa dicas: Non cogitat aedificare, plantare, agrum excolere; non cogitat congregare aurum, argentum vel reliquas divitias mundi'."

[122]Cf. Hist., v. praef., 34; and above, pp. 78-90.

[123]Hist., x. 13, quoting such texts as I Corinthians 15:51-52.

[124]Hist., x. 13: "'Si enim resurrectio futura non est, quid proderit iustis bene agere, quid nocebit peccatoribus male? Decedant ergo cuncti in voluptatibus suis, et faciat unusquisque quae placuerit, si iudicium futurum non erit'."

It was not the mere doing of good deeds that Gregory had in mind here. He wrote ten books of histories in support of two points. God's intention for the creatures made in his image is that they live together in peaceful orthodoxy reflecting in their attitudes toward one another the divine qualities of authority, unity, charity, and justice. Such is the keeping of the law. His second point will be considered in the next chapter, namely, that, left to their own devices, sinful people are not likely to lead the kinds of lives they should. That is the reality of history. The fact that people will be called to account for themselves in the Last Judgment is the kind of mundanely practical and humanly understandable control that might be successful in convincing them to behave decently. To minds entrapped in materialism, it offered a substantial and concrete reason[125] for the responsibilities of being Christian. Taken out of context, Gregory's belief in the necessity of the judgment might seem like a cruel and harsh goad. He had, however, expended much energy in the Historiae to elucidate the character of God and to show, by means of finely honed theological and ethical arguments, its significance and implications for the lives of human beings. The truly orthodox Christian would not find the Last Judgment to be a frightening rite of passage. To be

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[125]Dorenkemper (Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 48) states: "Arianism has been called, not without good reason, a form of rationalism. Fundamentally the Arian broke from the orthodox Trinitarian faith because of an unwarranted rationalization of revealed truth."

truly orthodox meant that an individual would lead the kind of godly life which would remove all apprehensions he might otherwise have of the judgment and which would give him confidence of his access to eternal redemption. Because the orthodox would themselves be redemptive, salvation and the good society would inevitably be synonymous.

Gregory concluded not only this debate with the Sadducean priest but also the lengthy and complex exposition which had occupied him for hundreds of pages by stating the central issue of his message forthrightly and succinctly. He said to his priest, "'Let the Apostle Paul give you your answer, just as he did for other unbelievers: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our teaching vain, and your faith is also vain."'"[126] What Gregory demonstrated in the Historiae had been the social and political applications of the gospel to the lives of Christians. The beliefs which gave meaning as well as the goal to the religion and its daughter community of faith was that Christ had already proven that life would indeed conquer death at the resurrection, and that the believer must anticipate and prepare for that event. If there was to be no resurrection and subsequent judgment there would be no ultimate point in creating and maintaining the just and ethical society which is the exhibit of the attributes of

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[126]Hist., x. 13: "'Respondeat ergo tibi Paulus apostolus, sicut aliis incredulis, dicens: Si Christus non resurrexit, inanis est praedicatio nostra, inanis est et fides vestra'" (I Corinthians 15:14).

Christianity, for Christianity itself would be meaningless.[127] If there was to be neither resurrection nor judgment, all Gregory's teachings about the gospel of healing and redemption and its effects on society would have been in vain as well, and so would his faith.

Gregory of Tours, however, suffered no such failure of confidence. He trusted in the coming eternal vindication of the righteous and he knew that on earth the machinery of Christian society did, in fact, work to overpower the forces of evil. The chapters following his discourse on the resurrection and the Last Judgment demonstrate this by means of accounts of the juridical resolutions of the ecclesiastical strife in the Saint Radegund's monastic revolt and of the long-standing political crises and disruptions with which Bishop Egidius of Rheims had been involved over the years as a conspirator.[128] Gregory also saw around him signs, at the same time frightening and encouraging, pointing to the end of time. There were plagues, famines, false Christs, heavenly fire punishing sabbath-breakers, and deaths of saintly miracle-workers.[129] Gregory saw, however, both an eternal

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[127]The modern notion that the creation of a humane society, such as one founded on the Christian ethic, could be a laudable end in itself, resurrection and judgment being superfluous to its meaning, would most likely have been foreign and repugnant to Gregory. In the light of his arguments in the Historiae, he would undoubtedly have considered such an idea to be un-Christian.

[128]Hist., x. 15-17, 20, 22; 19. Cf. below, p. 167.

[129]Hist., x. 25, 30, 29; ix. 6. Gregory did not

future and an earthly one, and warned his episcopal successors that, at risk of jeopardizing their hopes for paradise, they were to protect his books and keep them intact, neither omitting nor amending anything he had included in them.[130] Although he knew that the end of history loomed in the distance, he believed that there was still time to preach the need to prepare for the judgment and to announce the joyous news that Christian society, wherever it might be found, could indeed be structured in the image of God. When that would happen, the Lord would truly have built the house and the labor of the builders would surely not have been in vain.[131]

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interpret the death of Abbot Aredius (x. 29) as the removal of God's gracious spirit from the earth--he made a point of mentioning the miracles that occurred after his death--but the context of the last chapters of Book X could imply at least the possibility of such an idea.

[130] *Hist.*, x. 31.

[131] *Hist.*, l. 15; cf. above, p. 59 n. 1.

Chapter III

THE REALITIES OF HISTORY

Gregory of Tours' use of history in the Decem libri reveals him to have been an idealist, a moralist, and a realist. By means of the orthodoxy theme which was presented in the preceding chapter, Gregory was able to express his hopes for the potential of Christian society. Although history provided him no golden age of Christian lawfulness, he nonetheless found in the past and in the ideas revealed there enough components of the good society to support his contention that such a redemptive community could not only be established but could also be maintained.

When he analyzed times of crisis in the past, times when Christian society had failed itself, Gregory projected the stern demeanor of a moralizing Old Testament prophet. History illuminated the weaknesses of humanity. It spotlighted mankind's tendencies to greed, pride, dishonesty, and untrustworthiness. It demonstrated that, even within a Christian world, there could be "more weeping in the churches . . . than there had been at the time of Diocletian's persecution."[1] Exemplars of evil or of mere obstinacy and wrongheadedness flowed easily from Gregory's pen as he warned of the need to avoid the heresy of disorder. The history of the

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[1]Hist., iv. 47: "Fuitque tempore illo peior in eclesiis gemitus quam tempore persecutionis Diocliciani."

Frankish kingdoms between the deaths of Clovis and his grandson Sibigert provided him in Books III and IV with his greatest opportunities to focus on error. The past was well supplied with characteristics and activities that should be shunned, not emulated. Although he did not explicitly state this intention, Gregory believed that, to use the words of the eighth-century Northumbrian historian Bede,

> Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse, and with greater care pursue those things which he has learned to be good and pleasing in the sight of God.[2]

Although Gregory was convinced that history had a clear-cut homiletic function, he did not thereby deny himself awareness of the complex circumstances and pragmatic necessities governing much of human action. This ability to be not only a commentator upon history but also a realistic reporter of it is apparent primarily in his treatment of events with which he was contemporary and of which he was often an eyewitness. In the latter part of the Historiae, primarily in Books VII to X, he served as an analytic observer, and this stance contrasts sharply with his attitude toward the past visible in such books as III and IV.

In order to demonstrate that Gregory of Tours could

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[2]Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum, praef., in Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

approach history as both moralist and realist, this chapter will present an extended reconstruction of Books III and IV, as well as an analysis of his treatment of Guntram's reign. Book IV plays an important role in the Historiae not only because of the opportunities for moralizing which the events recorded there presented, but also because, by outlining what was wrong with society, Gregory was able to affirm what should be the good about the Christian world, especially regarding the relationship between the church and the state. In other words, Book IV provides a reversed image of the good society which Gregory was ultimately praying for throughout the Historiae. By contrast, his account of Guntram's reign is presented in a strikingly different way. Guntram was better intentioned than many of the kings Gregory wrote of, and he was able to comment favorably of him. The circumstances of his monarchy, however, created an environment where even an acknowledged good man could hardly be faulted for having become suspicious, feisty, and occasionally cruel. In Books VII to X Gregory described this environment and recounted what the king did. Many of Guntram's actions were quick-tempered and harsh, but Gregory appears to have understood why the king could have felt it necessary to act the way he did. On the other hand, Guntram was, without question, a force for unity, charity, and justice. He could, therefore, serve as perhaps unlikely proof of the actual viability of the good society. Gregory's realistic attitude toward life

and history is illustrated by the fact that, proven historical idealist and moralist though he was, he did not attempt to smooth over the dilemmas of Guntram and his reign. That Gregory was able to achieve this is not due to historiographical inconsistency on his part. It has to do chiefly with his understanding of the differences between the interpretive potential of the relatively distant past with that of more recent events. For that reason, this chapter will also examine the nature of history as Gregory understood it and will place him within the context of his historiographical predecessors Eusebius and Orosius.

Before beginning the analyses of Books III and IV and VII to X, however, it would be well to establish their positions in the ideological and organizational make-up of the Historiae. Although Gregory's fundamental structural device was the chronological sequence, most of the events he chose to record fit into an over-all philosophical pattern that supersedes their mere temporal relationship. It would thus be inadequate to consider him only as a "simple expositor" who transformed facts into accounts to be heard or read, as Benoit Lacroix has suggested is the nature of the medieval historian's task.[3] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill has offered the

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[3]L'historien au moyen âge, p. 16. On p. 18 Lacroix summarized Gregory of Tours' historical work by stating that in it, "Tout arrive, tout se dit, tout peut être récit." One is reminded also of V. H. Galbraith's opinion, rephrased by Nancy F. Partner, that medieval histories in general are "just one damn thing after another" (Serious Entertainments, p. 194, referring to Galbraith's "Good Kings and Bad Kings in Medieval

important reminder that, "We use . . . [Gregory (and Bede)] so often, because we must, as storehouses of information that we forget that they are historians; they controlled the information available to them, put it in a way that suited them, and left us a picture of their past that is an artefact."[4]

It has been suggested earlier that Gregory wrote his Decem libri with the belief constantly in mind that "Christ Himself is our true end, who in His full grace will give us eternal life, if we become converted to Him"; that the Historiae is, in essence, a call to repentance and redemption. Because its purpose was to publicize an important Christian argument, the work was carefully constructed in accord with a logical progression.[5] Books I and II, concerned with the

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English History," History [new series], 30 [1945], 119-132). Cf. also, however, Partner's valuable analysis of the paratactic or roman à tiroirs literary style of medieval histories (pp. 194-211), commentary that is, in fact, helpful for underderstanding much that Gregory wrote. Cf. also Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, pp. 77-95; Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, "Gregory of Tours and the Monk of St. Gall: the Paratactic Style of Medieval Latin," Latomus, 39 (1980), 173-190.

[4]In Early Medieval History, pp. 96-97. For recent analyses of the importance of the variety of philosophical and attitudinal perspectives available to historians in the Middle Ages, see such important studies as Nancy F. Partner, Serious Entertainments; Beryl Smalley, Historians in the Middle Ages (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975); and R. W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 1. The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth; 2. Hugh of St Victor and the Idea of Historical Development; 3. History as Prophecy; 4. The Sense of the Past," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (fifth series), 20-23 (1970-1973), 173-196, 159-179, 159-180, 243-263.

[5]Hist., i. praef. The arguments in this study

relatively distant past, established the obligation placed on God's people to obey the law. A crucial aspect of the law is the need to acknowledge and give allegiance to properly established authorities whose task should be to guarantee that their subordinates would fully keep the law.[6] Failure to implement lawfulness would result in divine punishment most likely occurring in the form of political defeat. Books III and IV, as will be seen, analyze the disasters which had befallen the Frankish Christians of the couple of generations following Clovis because of their frequent misappropriation of their divinely sanctioned authority. Books V and VI contain a pointed demand for repentance, for a rejection of the idolatry of materialism, with the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and the true nature of Christ and his mission being elevated as the model which Gregory's contemporaries should imitate. Book VI, which contains his interpretation of the healing aspect of Christ's redemption, concludes with the assassination of King Chilperic, a man to whom Gregory perhaps exaggeratedly assigned a character of evil as "the Nero and Herod of our time."[7] Chilperic's death left the field

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regarding the singleness of purpose and organizational integrity of the Historiae stand in clear contradiction to such notions about the nature of Gregory's craft as that of Dalton, who believed the work to be "artless, [with] easy-going methods, . . . [and a] lack of arrangement and logical plan. . . . [I]ts structure is irregular and the thread of narration is often hard to follow" (History of the Franks, I, 25).

[6]Cf. above, pp. 67-73.

[7]Hist., vi. 46. Gregory followed that chapter

clear for the dominance of his half-brother Guntram who is the most important royal figure throughout the remaining four books of the Historiae. This rise of Guntram to pre-eminence was to provide a more likely environment for political healing than had been possible when Chilperic was alive.

The last four books of the Historiae exhibit a very different tone from the first six.[8] Those earlier books were cast in an ideological mode whereby Gregory of Tours discussed the nature and structure of the Christian community and showed how its leaders and citizens should support it and how they had failed to do so in the past. They are fundamentally books of instruction stressing the authority of the law

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with words which one suspects expressed very succinctly his true feelings about Chilperic's removal from the world: "EXPLICIT IN CHRISTI NOMINE HISTORIARUM LIBER SEXTUS. DEO GRATIAS. AMEN." Cf. Buchner's use of this chapter to illustrate Gregory's historical subjectivity in Zehn Bücher Geschichten, I, xxx-xxxi. Nero and Herod are Antichristological figures. Cf. Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, p. 26.

[8]Could there be any relationship between this thematic division of Books I-VI and VII-X and the fact that the early manuscript tradition separated the books in precisely the same way? "Of the surviving manuscripts, some of the earliest contain only the first six books of the Historia (that is, to the death of Chilperic in 584), with the remaining four books added later; while others--notably Casinensis 275, of the twelfth century--contain the ten books complete. No one questions that, whatever his plan of revision may have been, and whether he added to or subtracted from an original version of the first six books, all ten books--allowing for interpolations--are from the pen of Gregory of Tours" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, Long-Haired Kings, p. 51). See the discussion of the manuscripts in Bruno Krusch's Introduction to the 1951 MGH edition of the Historiae, pp. xxii-xxxv; and Wallace-Hadrill's review of it in the English Historical Review, 67 (1952), 402-404.

and the orthodoxy of keeping it. With Guntram's rise, however, Gregory leaned more toward an analysis of events in their own right, rather than employing them to illustrate his theories. The notions about the good society that he had so painstakingly developed earlier appear in these last books, but primarily as the underlying foundation for his account of the actions of the last decade of his and Guntram's lives.[9] An important way in which these ideas announce their presence is in the kinds of historic events which Gregory recounted in detail. The settlement of the revolt at Saint Radegund's monastery in Poitiers,[10] for example, enabled Gregory at the end of the work to draw together in synthesis many of the points he had made throughout the Historiae. In these last books he also explored thoroughly the personality of King Guntram. He was a man who could do much good but whose environment forced him to become increasingly skittish and suspicious. The careful charting of Guntram's assumption of the role of avenger led up to the crescendo in Book X where Gregory concluded the Historiae with what was probably, from his perspective, his most important warning throughout the work. There he presented in strong words his reminder that, whatever Christians might do during their lifetimes, they must

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[9]Book VII begins with St. Salvius' death in 584. Guntram died in 593 (an event unrecorded in the Historiae) and Gregory probably died the next year.

[10]Hist., ix. 39-43; x. 15-17, 20, 22. Cf. above, pp. 108-113.

remain constantly aware that the cosmic blood-feud between good and evil will one day end and that they must thus prepare themselves to stand before the divine judge and to accept whatever compensation he will charge or award them in accordance with what their roles will have been in the conflict.[11]

Thus, while the Historiae is unquestionably chronologically organized and episodal in nature, it has an overarching message of redemption and reformation which provides integrity and cohesion to the work. In Books I, II, V, VI, and X can be found Gregory's statements regarding the potential of Christian society. As will be seen, Books III and IV are recitals of Christian failures, while Books VII to X provide a discussion of the conflicts between good Christian intentions, supported by sound political and judicial machinery, and the powerful forces of distrust and dissension inherent in the world.

In Book III of the Historiae Gregory is seen taking his first tentative steps toward development of a notion which might be called political heresy. Unlike his pointed comments in Book II regarding the orthodoxy of authority, his interpretation is only implied that the misappropriation of authority is heretical. It seems fair, though, to say that this concept of political heresy is nonetheless present. The first clue to Gregory's intent lies in the distinctive nature

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[11]Hist., x. 13. Cf. above, pp. 114-119.

of the preface to Book III. Whereas the four other prefaces in the Historiae[12] deal in some fashion with the broad theme of conflict, that of Book III shows a narrowing of that theme to conflict of beliefs. There Gregory presented solely the contrast "between the happy outcome of the Christians who believed in the Holy Trinity and the disasters which have befallen those who sought to destroy it."[13] He pointed out the significance of this in political terms. Although he conceded that evil could befall the righteous, he maintained that they had hope of restitution. Heretics had no such hope and stood to lose absolutely everything. The examples he used were the Arian Burgundian kings Godigisel, Gundobad, and Godomar who, he said, "lost their homeland and their souls at one and the same moment."[14] The statement regarding the fate of these kings is followed by Gregory's personal affirmation of the complex and all-powerful Trinity. He had suggested in Books I and II that the kingdom of God is known by its orthodox acknowledgement of the law in all its aspects and by its subsequent governance in accordance with proper authority. In Book I he had also been at pains to make clear

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[12]The praefatio prima, and those to Books I, II, and V.

[13]Hist., iii. praef.: "Vellim, si placet, parumper conferre, quae christianis beatam confitentibus Trinitatem prospera successerint et quae hereticis eandam scindentibus fuerint in ruinam."

[14]Hist., iii. praef.: "Probavit hoc Godigisili, Gundobadi atque Godomari interitus, qui et patriam simul et animas perdiderunt."

that disobedience to God's law would result in punishment, often appearing in the form of foreign domination. The issue raised in Book III is whether a kingdom historically characterized by orthodox belief, the specific doctrine of the Trinity being both crucial and illustrative, and by legitimately established Christian authority could survive when that authority would be used for illegitimate purposes.

Although Book III concentrates on the activities of Clovis' sons, from the beginning Gregory placed them in the geo-political context of their enemies. They were surrounded by such foreigners as the Danes, the Thuringians, and the Burgundians,[15] as well as the Arian Visigoths of Spain into whose ruling family a Merovingian princess was married.[16]

The threat of these foreigners to the Franks was far more subtle than straight-forward invasion. The Thuringians and the Burgundians, in particular, because of treachery within their own royal families, set the stage for the disintegration of unity among the Merovingians. The action occurred with a frightening kind of domino effect. Drawn in by false promises, Clovis' son Theuderic became involved in Hermanfrid's attempt to wrest control of the Thuringian kingdom from his brothers. When Hermanfrid broke his treaty of good faith with Theuderic and cruelly murdered the hostages left with him, Theuderic called his own brother Lothar to be his

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[15]Hist., iii. 3; 4, 7-8; 5-6.

[16]Hist., iii. 1.

ally in a war of vengeance against the Thuringians. Although the Franks were victorious, while they were engaged in that campaign, Theuderic mounted a plot against Lothar. An additional result of that war was that the people of Clermont-Ferrand, erroneously believing that Theuderic had been killed, invited yet another brother, Childebert (I), to rule them. Although Childebert left the city when he heard that his brother was still alive, this event planted seeds of enmity between the two and gave Theuderic the excuse later to mount a punishing and desecrating attack upon the city and its religious establishments.[17]

Meanwhile, the Burgundian king Sigismund killed his own son at the instigation of the boy's step-mother and divine vengeance followed quickly to punish him.[18] The Merovingian queen Clothild was reminded that revenge had never been carried out against her uncle Gundobad for the murder of her parents years before.[19] At her request, her eldest son Chlodomer led his brothers in an avenging attack against Sigismund and Godomar, Gundobad's successors. Godomar escaped, but Sigismund and his family were taken captive. Later, when Chlodomer had to leave for Burgundy to fight the resurgent Godomar, he decided for safety's sake to kill Sigismund first. Although, under the circumstances, there was certain

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[17]*Hist.*, iii. 4, 7-13, 15.

[18]*Hist.*, iii. 5.

[19]*Hist.*, iii. 6; cf. ii. 28.

justification for his ordering the death of a hostage enemy king, Chlodomer was counselled by Abbot Avitus of Saint-Mesmin de Micy to show clemency toward Sigismund out of respect for God. This, the abbot said, would result in a divinely aided victory. If, however, Chlodomer disregarded his advice--which, in the end, he did--whatever happened to the captive king and his family would happen to him. The path of mercy was not taken, Chlodomer died in battle against the Burgundians, and two of his three sons were murdered in one of the worst cases of Frankish family feuding recorded in the Historiae.[20]

Following Chlodomer's death, the dowager queen Clothild became the guardian of his children, and it was her apparent favoritism to the little princes which provoked their uncles to become jealous of their potential for territorial control and to decide either to strip them of their royalty or to kill them. Childebert and Lothar forced their mother into making this choice for them by sending her a pair of scissors and an unsheathed sword. She had the choice of deciding whether she preferred to see her descendants' hair cut and their royalty thus shorn or their lives ended. One horn of her dilemma was the denial of her royal grandsons' inherited honor and authority. The other was her own participation by consent in her sons' commission of a crime against the

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[20]Hist., iii. 6; cf. iii. 18. The third son, who was to become Saint Cloud (Thorpe, History of the Franks, p. 182 n. 21), tonsured himself and became a priest.

family. Her solution was to support royal authority even if it meant death to the children. Although she was "[b]eside herself with bitter grief and hardly . . . [knew] what she was saying in her anguish, she answered: 'If they are not to ascend the throne, I would rather see them dead than with their hair cut short.'"[21] Thus, the death of a child within the Burgundian royal family had resulted in the deaths of two children within the Frankish royal family.

Neither the deaths of Chlodomer's sons nor that of Theuderic stopped the Frankish royal fighting. Only the power of Saint Martin, invoked by Queen Clothild, was able to achieve that. Childebert, who failed to agree with Theuderic and attempted to deny the kingdom to his heir Theudebert, eventually gave up and allied himself with his nephew. The two then launched a campaign against Lothar. Hearing of their attack, Lothar "took to the woods, built a great circle of barricades among the trees and put his trust in the mercy of God."[22] His confidence in divine aid coupled with his

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[21] Hist., iii. 18: "At illa exterrita nuntio et nimium felle commota, praecipue cum gladium cerneret evaginatum ac forcipem, amaritudinem praeventa, ignorans in ipso dolore quid diceret, ait simpliciter: 'Satius mihi enim est, si ad regnum non ereguntur, mortuos eos videre quam tonsus'." Felix Thürlemann comments (Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours, p. 83) with regard to this passage that, "Diese enge Verbindung von Wort und Handlung hat ganz den Charakter liturgischer Zeremonien, wie es z. B. die Sakramente sind, die als Zusammensetzung von res und verba definiert werden."

[22] Hist., iii. 28: "Ille autem haec audiens, aestimans, se horum exercitum non sustenire, in silva confugit et concides magnas in silvas illas fecit, totamque spem suam in

mother's prayers to the saint resulted in a furious storm which devastated the attackers' camp, but left that of the defender unscathed. Childebert and Theudebert recognized the significance of what had happened and prayed to God for forgiveness and to Lothar for peace. These quarrels of the kings brought long-lasting unrest throughout society. For one thing, the chaos was congenial for the rising of a pretender, Munderic, who sought to establish his royalty and right to rule.[23] For another, in order to keep the peace in the rebel city of Clermont-Ferrand following his devastating attack of it, Theuderic established there a harsh governor, Sigivald, who misused his power by confiscating private property and allowing his underlings to commit serious crimes unchecked.[24] Later, the faithless Theuderic turned on his henchman as he had on his brothers, killed him, and ordered his son Theudebert to kill the man's son.[25]

Theudebert, however, was cut from a significantly different pattern than were his father and uncles. A man of charity and generosity, he disobeyed his father and allowed Sigivald's son to escape, telling him that as king he would

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Dei pietate transfundens."

[23]Hist., iii. 14.

[24]Hist., iii. 16; cf. iii. 14. When Sigivald attempted to take over property belonging to the church of Saint Julian, however, he suffered a fit and, upon his recovery, promised to restore twofold all that he had taken.

[25]Hist., iii. 23.

restore the family's wealth to him. When the time came, Theudebert kept his word.[26]

In company with Saint Martin and Queen Clothild, Theudebert, despite his too frequent contributions to the first generation of Frankish civil war, provided Gregory with the only morally favorable episodes of Book III. He was at heart a Christian king who, like the old queen, exercised much of the time the kind of legitimate use of authority which should characterize the kingdom of God all the time.[27] More frequently, however, the state of the Frankish realms in the years following Clovis' death was that of disorder, lack of confidence, and shaken authority. The ties of family were forsaken and even the sanctity of royalty was violated. A question arising from a careful reading of Book III is whether Gregory felt that the Franks, with the possible exceptions of Clothild and Theudebert, were any better than the neighboring Arians and other enemies. Book IV underscores that point.

The first major event recorded in Book IV was King Lothar's attempt to tax the churches. This action motivated Bishop Injuriosus of Tours forcefully and effectively to remind the king what is the proper relationship between the church and the state: kings are to give to the church their

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[26]Hist., iii. 24. Cf. above, p. 93.

[27]For Clothild, cf. Gregory's praise of her following the awful murder of her grandsons (Hist., iii. 18).

financial and political support and clergy are to correct and guide political leaders in the pursuit of their Christian duties.[28] That reminder echoes unheeded throughout Book IV, and the tragedy is that the church written of there was equally as unfree from blame as was the state. The book is structured in such a way that disasters occurring internally to the church appear first and are then placed in the context of the chaos within the political world. That political disorder is then shown as destroying the church from without.

With the help of Sidonius Apollinaris and the two priests who attempted to overthrow him, Gregory had outlined in Book II the seriousness of insubordination to one's superiors. It was a breaking of God's law and thus amounted to heresy. It was also an expression of the sin of pride whereby one attempted to overstep one's own position and pretend to be what one was not.[29] Two other clerics of Clermont-Ferrand, Cato and Cautinus, whose careers Gregory recounted in sharp detail, served to explain further the effects of pride, greed, and ambition upon the clergy and to show the resultant lessening of the church's ability to carry out its mission. Following the death of Gregory's uncle, Bishop Gall, the bishops in the area surrounding Clermont-Ferrand made a serious political error in deciding that they, with

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[28]*Hist.*, iv. 2. Cf. above, pp. 70-71.

[29]Cf. *Hist.*, ii. 23; and above, pp. 69-70, nn. 26-27.

the people of the diocese, had adequate authority to elect the priest Cato to be his successor without obtaining royal permission to do so. King Theudebald, the late Theudebert's son, was still a child, and those clergy wrongly acted as if his authority to approve the appointment of bishops were likewise immature. Cato, who was convinced that this position was deservedly his after his many years of working through the ecclesiastical ranks, did not move quickly enough to seek the king's confirmation on his own. In the end, his overbearing attitude, coupled with the irregularities of his appointment, deprived him of ever achieving his episcopal goal. In response to Cato's abusive threats to him, the archdeacon Cautinus escaped to Theudebald's court, told of Cato's uncanonical assumption of the bishopric, and received that office for himself in reward for his report. By means of this action of king and council, Cato was reduced to being an insubordinate priest fomenting rebellion against his legally inducted bishop.[30] He was later offered the bishopric of Tours, but by that time he had become so obsessed with claiming what he thought ought to be his in Clermont that he rudely rejected the invitation to the see which he could have, and thereby insulted King Lothar and Saint Martin--as well as the historian who later wrote of the affair. Cato then went so far as to ally himself with Lothar's son Chramn

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[30]*Hist.*, iv. 6-7. Cf. Henry G. J. Beck, *Pastoral Care*, pp. 20-24, and above, p. 77, n. 42.

who had promised to oust Cautinus in his favor should he assume his father's throne in the near future.[31]

Although Cato had reached such extreme limits of arrogance and insubordination against his proper bishop that he sought common cause with a plotting and rebellious prince, his criticisms of Cautinus, even if they might have been inappropriately expressed, were justified because the man was a reprehensible person. All he had in his favor was that his episcopal authority had been legally acquired. He drank excessively, disliked literature, and trafficked commercially with Jews. His most appalling act, however, was his burial alive of a man who refused to hand over title-deeds to property which he coveted and decided to claim as his own. The story of Anastasius' burial in a sarcophagus with a still rotting corpse and his escape from it is one of Gregory's most graphic in all the Historiae and the stench that the man endured--so great that he breathed it "through his mouth and his nose and even, so to speak, through his ears!"[32]--provoked the horror of his contemporaries, merited the perpetrator consideration as being worse than even Nero and

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[31] Hist., iv. 11, 15. Following Theudebald's early death, Lothar had taken over his kingdom (iv. 9).

[32] Hist., iv. 12: "Manabat enim ex ossibus mortui, ut ipse erat solitus referre, fetor letalis, qui non solum externa, verum etiam interna viscerum quatiebat. Cumque pallium aditus narium obseraret, quamdiu flatum continere poterat, nihil pessimum sentiebat; ubi autem se quasi suffocari potabat, remoto paululum ab ore pallio, non modo per os aut nares, verum etiam per ipsas, ut ita dicam, aures odorem pestiferum hauriebat."

Herod,[33] and can still be sensed by the reader almost a millennium and a half later. But Cautinus remained bishop and, other than being denied Anastasius' property, the only censure he received was that which would ultimately come from God. He and his rival, Cato, both died in the same outbreak of plague but with markedly different expressions of character. When the epidemic hit Clermont, Cato remained in the city carrying out his priestly duties, while Cautinus, consistent to the end, attempted futilely to save his own life by running from town to town trying to keep ahead of the disease. Despite Cato's ambition, Gregory could excuse him for his past behavior because of his final selfless willingness to help those in distress.[34] He thus concluded his career as a true Christian. Cautinus, on the other hand, from the time of his acquisition of the bishopric to that of his own death, had never really served God, king, or diocese. He had only served himself, and that was not one of the responsibilities of the episcopal office.

Although the stories of Cato and Cautinus have a kind of reality lacking in Gregory's somewhat formulaic description of his own contemporary in Clermont-Ferrand, the comparison between the good and bad bishops is striking. Avitus did not campaign for his position as had both his rival and

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[33]And, thus, even worse than King Chilperic whom Gregory later merely equated with Nero and Herod (cf. Hist., vi. 46). Cf. above, p. 126 n. 7.

[34]Hist., iv. 31.

Cautinus. Upon his nomination, in contrast to Cato, he immediately showed his deference to royal authority by petitioning the king to confirm him in office. Once he was bishop, he proved himself to be a man who accepted the obligations of the job, ruling with justice and practicing magnanimity to those in need.[35]

Of the clergy included in Book IV, however, the exemplary ones[36] were overbalanced by those who suffered one way or another from an unwillingness to shoulder obligation. These included the unimaginable abuse of power exhibited by Cautinus and the self-advancement attempted by Cato as well as the gentler but nevertheless disruptive sin of excessive humility. Gregory illustrated this by means of a story about a too self-effacing abbot who had to learn to be leader by means of a vision. In this abbot's dream he saw a narrow bridge over a river of fire from which most who tried to cross plunged into the flames. He was told that the reason for this was that the bridge would guide to safety only he

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[35]Hist., iv. 35: "Idem, accepto episcopatu, magnum se in omnibus praebuit, iustitiam populis tribuens, pauperibus opem, viduis solacium pupillisque maximum adiumentum. Iam si peregrinus ad eum advenerit, ita diligitur, ut in eodem se habere et patrem recognoscat et patriam."

[36]Such as Avitus and a novice who prayed away a storm so as to save a harvest and was kept humble despite this miracle by his abbot who immediately beat him and made him fast. Apparently the scheme worked. Cf. Hist., iv. 34. For another example of a bad bishop, see the story (iv. 36) of Bishop Priscus of Lyons and his wife Susanna who harrassed the associates of the previous bishop Nicetius because of the loyalty they retained for him. Nicetius' shade, with God's help, punished them for their misbehavior.

who had exercised proper control over those in his charge. Those who fell off had failed to be as authoritative as they ought.[37]

The most serious form of ecclesiastical disruption because of its potentially far-reaching consequences was clerical infringement upon royal prerogative. Because kings, like Lothar in iv. 2, would be frequently tempted to encroach upon ecclesiastical prerogative, the church should at the least set an example of proper respect. This point had been made in connection with Cato's short-lived episcopal reign. The bishops who advanced him to power had no right to ignore the role of the king in his appointment. The seriousness of this offense was underscored again in Book IV in Gregory's account of an episcopal council which, after King Lothar's death, attempted to expel on grounds of uncanonicity a bishop whom the late king had appointed. Lothar's successor Charibert was enraged by this act and severely fined those who usurped royal authority and thus insulted the ruling house.[38]

For Christian society to have a chance to function smoothly, the church must be led by worthy people who would show respect both to those whom they ruled and to those under whose appointment they served. The mission of the church was to call society to repentance, to adherence to God's law, to

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[37]Hist., iv. 33: "'De hoc enim ponte praecipitabitur, qui ad distringendum commissum gregum fuerit repertus ignavus; qui vero strenuus fuerit, sine periculo transit . . .'"

[38]Hist., iv. 26.

justice, and to charity. When the church itself was poisoned by ambition and greed, there would be no dependable voice of Christian morality. In a world of quarrelling kings and rebellious princes, where servant girls could help to murder queens and then replace them, such a voice was truly needed.

In the midst of that tumultuous world which witnessed the increasing disrespect for all things dear and sacred as people scrambled to obey the commands of ambition, the last great Merovingian father figure, Lothar, stands out as a tragic hero. Although he had had his dramatic moments of villainy, one of the worst of which was his role in the murder of his nephews,[39] he appeared in Book IV in a different kind of tragic scene when he marched with grief into battle, playing David to his son's Absalom and praying that God would

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[39] Hist., iii. 18: "Nec mora, adpraehensum Chlothacharius puerum seniorem brachium elesit in terra, defixumque cultram in ascella, crudiliter interfecit. Quo vociferante, frater eius ad pedes Childeberthi prosternitur, adpraehensaque eius genua, agebat cum lacrimis: 'Succurre, piissime pater, ne et ego peream sicut frater meus'. Tunc Childeberthus, lacrimis respersa facie, ait: 'Rogo, dulcissime frater, ut huius mihi vitam tua largitate concedas, et quae iusseris pro eius animam conferam, tantum ne interficiatur'. At ille convitiis actum ait: 'Aut eiece eum a te, aut certe pro eo morieris. Tu', inquid, 'es incestatur huius causae, et tam velociter de fide risillis?' Haec ille audiens, repulsum a se puerum proiecit ad eum; ipse vero excipiens, transfixum cultro in latere, sicut fratrem prius fecerat, iugulavit; deinde pueros cum nutriciis peremerunt. Quibus interfectis, Chlothacharius, ascensis equitibus, abscessit, parvi pendens de interfectione nepotum; sed et Childeberthus in suburbana concessit." Cf. Augustin Thiérry's comment (in Récits de temps mérovingiens [nouv. éd.; Paris: Michel Levy Frères, 1868], p. 4) that, "Il faut descendre jusqu'au siècle de Froissart pour trouver un narrateur qui égale Grégoire de Tours dans l'art de mettre en scène les personnages et de peindre par le dialogue." Cf. above, pp. 133-134.

avenge the injustice done him by Chramn's rebellion.[40] Forgotten was the fact that only his fear of Saint Martin had halted him from taxing his churches or that his extremely irregular marital life included simultaneous marriage to two sisters.[41] The alchemy mixing his age, his survival beyond his fraternal enemies, and his endurance in the face of his son's ruses--plus the fact that his death was followed by renewed fraternal war--put a shiny patina upon the memory of an otherwise rather tarnished king. To achieve this seeming change of character, however, Lothar in old age need not necessarily have improved much at all. The credit may well all go to his son Chramn for having mounted a campaign of rebellion against him. The prince's act went against the laws of God, society, and decency. Even his last ally, Count Chanao of Brittany, a harsh man who had killed three of his own brothers and barely missed getting the fourth, warned him to give up the actual battle with his father.[42] But Chramn, who ironically easily followed the advice of poor counsellors, went ahead to war and to his death.[43]

With Lothar's death a year after Chramn's,[44] the quarrelling began among his surviving sons and their families

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[40]Hist., iv. 20.

[41]Hist., iv. 2-3.

[42]Hist., iv. 4, 20.

[43]Hist., iv. 13, 16, 18, 20.

[44]Hist., iv. 21.

which would occupy so much of the remainder of the Historiae. Gregory left no question but that Chilperic and his family would be the chief troublemakers among the Merovingians. Immediately following his father's burial, Chilperic tried to appropriate for himself more than was his due. His brothers chastised him for this attempt at aggrandizement and forced him to submit to an equal division of the realms. Shortly thereafter, though, when Sigibert went off to successful battle with the Huns, Chilperic and his son Theudebert attacked and captured many of his cities, including his capital at Rheims.[45] Chilperic not only was in competition with his brother for his kingdom, however. He even coveted the status of Sigibert's wife.

Like their father, of Lothar's sons, only Sigibert had a trouble-free marriages. Guntram's eldest son by a mistress was poisoned by his first wife who, with her own son, died shortly thereafter. He then married Austrechild who jealously involved him in a couple of murder plots, one of which was a malicious deathbed revenge against her doctors.[46] Charibert married Ingoberg, but later became infatuated with and eventually married two sisters who were servants of the queen. This was complicated by the fact that one of them was a religious. Another of his mistresses was a shepherd's daughter who, after his death, tried unsuccessfully to

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[45]Hist., iv. 22-23, 29.

[46]Hist., iv. 25; v. 17, 35.

marry Guntram.[47] Sigibert, however, was disgusted with his brothers' tendencies to marry far beneath them, and worked out a marriage alliance with the Visigothic princess Brunhild who converted to orthodox Christianity and became for the rest of her life a powerful force in Merovingian politics.[48] But, if Sigibert could marry a princess, so too could the already much-married Chilperic. His choice was Brunhild's unfortunate sister Galswinth. Although Chilperic professed great love for Galswinth and her large dowry, his heart remained with his former wife Fredegund, and when he could take Galswinth's complaints about her no longer, he had the queen murdered.[49] Chilperic's return to Fredegund after Galswinth's death was a significant event in Frankish history, for the two were well matched as regards their pride, jealousy, and creativity in pursuing nefarious goals. Between the two of them, they were for decades to provoke conflicts, thus involving all of society, including the church, in their disruptive and insidious machinations. Chilperic's long-standing quarrels with Sigibert were exacerbated by his brief marriage with his brother's sister-in-law, for Fredegund could stand no competition. As she

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[47]Hist., iv. 26. Charibert's daughter by Ingoberg was the Bertha who married Aethelbehrt of Kent, encouraging his receptivity to St. Augustine's mission in the late 590s.

[48]Hist., iv. 27.

[49]Hist., iv. 28. In ix. 33, Fredegund's daughter Rigunth referred to her mother as a serving-woman. Cf. Dalton's History of the Franks, I, 73.

was to be succesful in arranging the deaths of another of Chilperic's former wives and her sons, so Fredegund was to be persistent throughout her life in her efforts to bring down the family of the princess in honor of whose royal blood she had once been pushed aside. For that matter, she was to plot the demise of anyone she thought had offended her, regardless whether that be king, bishop, or daughter.[50] To great extent the blueprint of Frankish history into the seventh century would be drafted by the increasingly overreaching Fredegund who, in the end, in one of the seeming great ironic injustices of history, was to die of old age peacefully in her bed and be buried with royal dignity in a tomb which survived to the eighteenth century.[51]

The world of Lothar's sons and their wives had repercussions upon the church in a way which brings the complex Book IV full circle. Under the rule of these kings there was exhibited increasing disrespect for the church and the clergy by secular leaders. Whereas Bishop Injuriosus and Saint Martin had been able to frighten Lothar out of his desire to tax the church at the beginning of Book IV, the political leaders of later years written of in the last chapters of the book

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[50]E.g., Hist., iv. 51 (Sigibert); viii. 44 (Guntram); x. 18 (Childebert II, Sigibert's and Brunhild's son); viii. 31 (Praetextatus); ix. 33 (Rigunth).

[51]Dalton, History of the Franks, I, 79. Gregory of Tours' tomb was destroyed two hundred years before the French Revolution by pillaging Huguenots (cf. Thorpe, History of the Franks, p. 54).

were unaffected by either the dignity of the church or the arguments of her clerics. Although, as has been seen, the clergy during this time were less than praiseworthy in all their actions, that was not just cause for the seemingly total disruption of harmony between church and state which Gregory had to recount at the close of the book. Already in the reign of Lothar, the rebellious Chramn and his henchmen had made light of the church and ignored its sanctity, and had merited divine judgment in consequence.[52] The sufferings of the church in the time of Lothar, however, were nonetheless proven to have been superficial in contrast with what happened during the wars of his sons. Those kings did not even respect the church enough to allow her to carry on her responsibility to be their counsellor and guide.

During a renewed outbreak of fighting between Guntram and Sigibert, Guntram called an episcopal council in hopes that their differences could be arbitrated. In the end, this was almost worse than if the advice of the bishops had not been sought at all. The civil war between the kings continued as before but only after they had committed the sin, as Gregory styled it, of failing to heed the bishops' counsel. The whole procedure of calling them together, listening to their deliberations, and then blatantly disregarding their guidance amounted to an insult and a denigration of the church, as well as a denial of the proper relationship

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[52]*Hist.*, iv. 13, 16, 18, 20.

between church and state of which Injuriosus' speech to Lothar at the beginning of the book was a prime example. From that point on as the fire of war spread, enflaming Chilperic and his son Theudebert in addition to the others, the countryside of central Gaul was devastated and the church, the would-be protector of Christian society, was itself ravaged in every imaginable way. There was no need for an enemy attacker, an Arian or a pagan. The campaign against the Christian world was mounted by Christians themselves, and "[t]here was even more weeping in the churches at this period than there had been at the time of Diocletian's persecution."[53] These wars were characterized by shifting alliances and hostilities among the brothers. Guntram allied himself first with Chilperic, then with Sigibert, then again with Chilperic, and back to Sigibert. The nature of the warfare and its destructiveness to the towns and villages was intensified when Sigibert called in Rhineland tribes to help him and they turned out to be largely uncontrollable. Only Saint Martin

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[53]Hist., iv. 47: Cf. above, p. 121 n. 1. For the aftermath of the abortive episcopal arbitration (ibid): "Sed ut bellum civili in maiore pernicitate crescerit, eos audire, peccatis facientibus, distulerunt." Some "figures represent Antichrist because their deeds resemble those expected of the deceiver in the last days. For example, Diocletian, Domitian, and Julian are types of the final persecution of the church 'in tempore Antichristi'." (Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, p. 27) In these wars the dead were violated as well as the living. The monastery containing Saint Martin's relics was pillaged, but the marauders' ship fell apart as they left and all but the one who disapproved of the group's action were killed by their own lances as they scrambled to escape the sinking boat (iv. 48).

had adequate power to convince them to sue for peace and agree to return home.[54]

The Franks themselves, however, proved to be impervious to the insinuations of Christian decency and reason. Despite the earlier failure of the episcopal council to halt the hostilities between the brothers, Bishop Germanus made one last attempt to convince the now domineering Sigibert to rely on clemency rather than to practice brutality in his conquest of Chilperic. Using reasoning reminiscent of the exchange between Saint Avitus and King Chlodomer more than a generation before, he told Sigibert that, if he went into battle determined to spare Chilperic's life, he would be victorious; otherwise he would die. But the king, "in his sinfulness," once again disregarded Christian counsel.[55] While he was at Vitry marshalling his troops for the attack, he was stabbed to death by two thugs hired by Fredegund to assassinate him.[56] By this murder Fredegund spared the brothers the sin of actual fratricide, and that was one of the few faults which could not be laid at the door of the immediate royal family in Book IV.

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[54]Hist., iv. 49-50.

[55]Hist., iv. 51: "Quod ille, peccatis facientibus, audire neglexit." Cf. iii. 6.

[56]Sigibert's chamberlain was killed at the same time. Gregory's opinion of him was that "death came to thwart him in his own plans, after he had spent his life thwarting those of others" (Hist., iv. 51: ". . . cui talis fuit vitae exitus, ut non meriritur voluntatem propriam mortem inminente conplere, qui aliorum voluntates saepe distruxerat."

In the three decades which are covered in Book IV, the various Merovingian kings and princes had over-stepped the bounds of family and position in numerous different ways. They had violated the church materially, rejected it spiritually, and, by so doing, jeopardized the sanctity of all within the realm. Christian society could function only when a recognized balance would be maintained by all its members. When individuals upset the equilibrium their punishments were, in Gregory's mind, swift in coming and clearly evident; kings were not excepted. Sigibert's murder was placed securely in the context where improper action--in this case, merely planning for improper action--would effect judging punishment. By the end of Book IV the Frankish Christian world was in shambles, being demolished from within. The church and the state, however, the gift of divinely vested power, and the knowledge of the law still existed. It may have been to reinforce that idea that Gregory concluded the book with an elaborate chronological summary of the history of the kingdom of God. Its authority had been created 5774 years before, had been passed through Israel to Christ and the saints of the church, and had finally been bequeathed to the kings of the Franks.[57] Thus far, and perhaps despite itself, the kingdom remained intact.

In fact, the Frankish kingdom of God even survived the remaining years and wars of Chilperic, "the Nero and Herod of

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[57]*Hist.*, iv. 51.

our time."[58] Although his brother Guntram, basically a good man, was his dominant successor, political life in late sixth-century Gaul continued to be complex and challenging. Gregory, however, approached the recording of it differently than he had the earlier history. The conflicts he had outlined in Books III and IV, as well as his handling of historical material in Books V and VI, appear almost as set pieces. The chicanery is too unrelenting and inexplicable. He stated that wars occurred, but provided no reasons for them. The statement itself is required to serve as explanation: "Chilperic was the next to fly into a rage";[59] "the Kings were quarrelling with each other again and once more making preparations for civil war";[60] [i]n the sixth year of his reign King Childebert [II] broke the peace which he had made with King Guntram and formed an alliance with Chilperic."[61] A characteristic of Books VII to X is that in them, although many of the events he recorded there were of a familiar disruptive nature, Gregory was forthcoming with descriptions and analyses of the context in which they occurred. One can see operating in these last books a sense of cause and effect which was

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[58]*Hist.*, vi. 46.

[59]*Hist.*, iv. 47: "Chilpericus autem in ira commotus, . . ."

[60]*Hist.*, v. 34: "Nam et discordantibus reges et iterum bellum civile parantibus, . . ."

[61]*Hist.*, vi. 1: "Anno igitur sexto regni sui Childeberthus rex, reiectam pacem Gunthchramni regis, cum Chilperico coniunctus est."

lacking in the first six books of the Historiae.

Of the rivals to Guntram's power following Chilperic's assassination, the dead king's son Lothar was not a threat because he was an infant and his mother Fredegund recognized that the protection of her brother-in-law was essential to both of them.[62] Childebert, Sigibert's adolescent successor, presented more difficulties because of his history of making alliances with his uncle and then breaking them. Guntram proved initially to be very leery of accepting Childebert's word of friendship, and this led the young king and his entourage to act with bravado toward him, at one point even threatening that an axe would eventually find his head.[63] What mended the breach between the two kings was the serious threat posed by the pretender Gundovald who had been invited to Gaul by a party of disgruntled nobles and clergy.[64] Guntram recognized that it was essential that royalty present a united front so as to deny the conspirators opportunity to exploit differences between them. For that reason, he formally made Childebert his heir and promised him his kingdom in its entirety.[65] Events were to prove, however, that the

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[62]Hist., vii. 4-5.

[63]Hist., vii. 6, 14.

[64]Cf. Hist., vii. 10, 14, 26, 32, 33; viii. 2, 7, 20; ix. 28; cf. vi. 24, 26.

[65]Hist., vii. 33: "Post haec, rex Gunthchramnus, data in manu regis Childeberthi hasta, ait: 'Hoc est indicium, quod tibi omne regnum meum tradedi. Ex hoc nunc vade et omnes civitates meas tamquam tuas proprias sub tui iuris

political situation recorded in Books VII to X was far too complex to have been solved simply by an alliance between the two leaders of the Merovingian world.

Much of Book VII is concerned with the uncovering of Gundovald's plans for the take-over of Gaul, the attack against him by Guntram's army, and his double-crossing by his chief supporters which led to him defeat and death.[66] Although Gregory expressed no specific sympathy for this man who attempted to challenge the Frankish order of Christendom, he did present him in the end as a tragic figure, a victim of the perfidy of untrustworthy traitors who had rejected legitimate authority and had brought him to prominence. When the turncoats Mummolus, Bishop Sagittarius,[67] and Waddo urged Gundovald to leave the security of the fortress-like city of Comminges to seek a supposed audience with Guntram, he "knew he was being tricked,

> 'It was at your invitation that I came to Gaul,' he cried. . . . 'Next to God's help I placed all my hope in you. I gave you my full confidence. Through you I hoped to become King. If you have deceived me you must explain your actions to God,

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dominatione subice. Nihil enim, facientibus peccatis, de stirpe mea remansit nisi tu tantum, qui mei fratris es filius. Tu enim heres in omni regno meo succede, ceteris exheredibus factis'."

[66]Hist., vii. 10, 14, 26-28, 30-32, 34-38. Chapters 39-40, 43 deal with the fates of those traitorous supporters, some of whom found their ways to Fredegund's court (43).

[67]A villain of long standing; cf. Hist., iv. 24; v. 20, 27.

for it is He who must judge my case.'[68]

As the deserted pretender walked to what he knew was certain death, he prayed that his mistreatment would be avenged by God.[69] Gundovald received a speedy death, but his real and suspected supporters were pursued doggedly by Guntram throughout many succeeding chapters of the Historiae. The treachery and deceit of those who flattered Gundovald's pretensions to power were responsible not only for that unfortunate man's death, but also for much of the nervousness exhibited by Guntram during his years of rule. Gundovald discovered too late that he could not trust those by whom he was surrounded. Guntram, in contrast, wanted to guarantee that he would meet with no such lethal surprises. Gundovald had been too trusting; Guntram came to trust hardly anyone.

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[68]Hist., vii. 38: "At ille intellegens dolum eorum, lacrimis perfusus, ait: 'Invitationem vestram in his Galliis sum delatus, thesauros vero meos, in quibus inmensum pondus argenti continetur et auri ac diversarum specierum, aliquid in Avennica urbe retenetur, aliquid Gunthchramnus Boso diripuit. Ego vero, iuxta Dei auxilium spem omnem in vobis positam, vobis consilium meum credidi, per vos regnare semper obtavi. Nunc cum Deo vobis sit actio, si quid mihi mendacii dixeritis; ipse enim iudicet causam meam'."

[69]Hist., vii. 38: "'Iudex aeterne et ultio vera innocentium, Deus, a quo omnes iustitia procedit, cui mendacium non placet, in quo nullus dolus neque versutia malitiae continetur, tibi commendo causam meam, dipraecans, ut sis velociter ultor super eos, qui me insontem in manibus tradiderunt inimicorum'." This speech, like many of the others Gregory recorded--or constructed--in the Historiae, adds a significant dimension to the understanding of the character of God as developed thus far in the work, and certainly is indicative of the goal toward which he pointed as the conclusion of his argument, namely, his warning of the coming judgment.

By the time it was necessary for the king to flush out those who had supported Gundovald, he had already proven himself under different circumstances to be an effective avenger. Following Chilperic's assassination and prior to the reconciliation with Childebert, Guntram had asserted his influence over the realms of both. Although he claimed rights to the parts of Childebert's territory which included the cities of Tours and Poitiers, he had difficulty subduing them and finally had to use incendiary and plundering armies against them.[70]

Guntram's stance toward Childebert's kingdom, prior to his recognition of that nephew as his sole heir,[71] was one of power and the imposition of dominance. Toward Chilperic's realm he assumed the role of the clement restorer and provider of justice. He returned to their owners property and goods which Chilperic and his followers had wrongfully taken, and brought to completion legal business which his brother had conveniently disregarded.[72] He was also legitimately concerned to avenge Chilperic's death. Fredegund, from whom Guntram attempted to distance himself,[73] aided him in this

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[70]Hist., vii. 13, 12, 24. The rationale used by the Tourangeaux to justify to the Poitevins their eventual capitulation was that Guntram stood as guardian and adoptive father to his nephews, the heirs of his dead brothers Sigibert and Chilperic, and thus had become, for all practical purposes, sole ruler as his father Lothar had been before him.

[71]Hist., vii. 33. [72]Hist., vii. 7, 19.

[73]Hist., vii. 19-20. This did not necessarily a

last regard. Eberulf, Chilperic's treasurer, had refused her amorous advances and, in a spirit of revenge, she accused him of having led the plot which resulted in Chilperic's death. Upon hearing this, "King Guntram swore before his leaders that he would destroy not only Eberulf himself but his children down to the ninth generation, so that by their death an end might be put to an abominable habit and no more kings be assassinated."[74] Although it was never shown in the Historiae exactly who was responsible for Chilperic's death, Eberulf was killed and there were in fact no more royal assassinations recorded. The threat of them, however, continued to demand constant wariness on the part of the kings[75] and made Guntram anxious to stamp out whatever threats of insubordination and insurrection might exist on any front.

Living in such an environment of potential treachery, Guntram was especially single-minded in his efforts to track down whoever might have supported the pretender Gundovald.

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pacifying effect. The widowed queen was insulted by this treatment because her enemy Brunhild, Childebert's widowed mother, remained in favor. In protest, Fredegund launched one of her assassination attempts against her former sister-in-law. It failed.

[74]Hist., vii. 21: "Tunc rex iuravit omnibus optimatibus, quod non modo ipsum, verum etiam progeniem eius in nonam generationem deleret, ut per horum necem consuetudo anferretur iniqua, ne reges amplius interficerentur." Cf. vii. 22, 29.

[75]Cf. Hist., viii. 11, 29, 44; ix. 3, 9, 38; x. 18. Three of these assassination attempts were instigated by Fredegund, two of them against Childebert and one against Guntram.

The process of asserting his dominance over the realms of Chilperic and Sigibert had pitted him against fairly large population groups, wooing Chilperic's kingdom and subduing parts of Childebert's. His pursuit of peace after Gundovald's conspiracy, in contrast, was directed against individuals and his revenge, in some cases, seemed to approach the excessive.

Gundovald's plot to assume the throne brought together the two powers within Christendom, for both clergy and nobility had supported his bid for power. With bishops about whom he harbored no suspicions, Guntram exhibited fine rapport.[76] On occasion he could even act like a bishop and was considered, like the saints, to have powers for miraculous healing.[77] Toward those clergy, however, who he felt had sided with the pretender, Guntram made obvious his disgust, and publicly denounced some of them with sarcasm.[78]

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[76]*Hist.*, ix. 20; cf. viii. 4, 30.

[77]*Hist.*, ix. 21. Cf. above, p. 100 n. 79.

[78]*Hist.*, viii. 2. Guntram to Bertram of Bordeaux: "'Gratias', inquid, 'agimus, quod sic custodisti fidem generationi tuae. Scire enim te oportuerat, dilectissime pater, quod parens eras nobis ex matre nostra, et super gentem tuam non debueras inducere pestem extraneam'." To Palladius of Saintes: "'Nec tibi, o Palladi episcope, nimium sunt gratiae referendae. Tertio enim mihi, quod de episcopo dici iniquum est, periurasti, mittens indicolos dolositate plenus. A me excusabaris per epistolas, et germanum meum cum scriptis aliis invitabas. Iudicavit enim Deus causam meam, cum ego provacare vos semper tamquam aeclesiae patres studui et vos circa me semper egistis dolose'. Nicasio autem et Antidio episcopis dixit: 'Quid vos, o sanctissimi patres, pro regiones utilitate vel regni nostri sospitate tractastis, edicite'. Illis quoque tacentibus, ablutis rex manibus,

When one of the accused, Palladius, was chosen by his fellow bishops to celebrate mass for the king, Guntram threatened to leave the service "rather than hear . . . [his] enemy preach."[79]

The bishop who particularly aroused Guntram's ire was Theodore of Marseilles. The king not only considered him to have been a collaborator with Gundovald, but accused him and the other conspirators of having arranged Chilperic's death as well.[80] Gregory recorded that, "King Guntram continued to do all he could to persecute Bishop Theodore," and that this harsh stance was unmerited. The bishop, Gregory felt, was "a man of great sanctity and assiduous in his prayers," a man against whom the devil had no power.[81] Guntram's negative position toward Theodore even threatened the harmony between him and his nephew Childebert in whose kingdom

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accepta a sacerdotibus benedictione, ad mensam resedit laeto vulto et hilare faciae, quasi nihil de contempto suo fuisset effatus."

[79]Hist., viii. 7: "Fratres vero consacerdotesque, qui aderant, locum Palladio episcopo ad agenda festa praebuerunt. Quo incipiente prophetiam, rex interrogat, quis esset. Cumque Palladium episcopum initiasse pronuntiassent, statim commotus rex ait: 'Qui mihi semper infidelis et perfidus fuit, ille nunc sacrata verba praedicavit? Egrediar prursus ab haec aeclesia, ne inimicum meum audiam praedicantem'."

[80]Hist., viii. 5.

[81]Hist., viii. 12: "Denique cum rex maxima intentione Theodorum episcopum iterum persequi conaretur. . . . Theodorus vero episcopus a Gunthchramno rege detentus est, sed nihil ei rex nocuit. Est enim vir egregiae sanctitatus et in oratione assiduus, . . . tamen qualis esset sacerdus, de quo haec daemon condolens declamabat, apparuit."

Theodore's see lay.[82] The bishop was eventually restored to his city, but only after Guntram became so sick that there was some thought that he would not live. Gregory had no question as to the significance of this illness: "In my opinion this was God's providence, for he [Guntram] was planning to send a great number of the bishops into exile."[83] It must not be suggested that Gregory did not believe that

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[82]*Hist.*, viii. 13.

[83]*Hist.*, viii. 20: "His etinem diebus Gunthchramnus rex graviter aegrotavit, ita ut potaretur a quibusdam non posse prorsus evadere. Quod, credo, providentia Dei fecisset. Cogitabat enim multus episcoporum exsilio detrudere. Theodorus itaque episcopus ad urbem suam regressus, favente omni populo, cum laude susceptus est." This is the sole instance where Gregory suggested that there had been a divine reaction to Guntram's individual actions.

Gregory's stance with regard to Gundovald's campaign and his partisans real and suspected is intriguing. He seems not to have been troubled by the fates of the secular ringleaders of the attempted coup, particularly Mummolus and Guntram Boso, and clearly he disapproved of the actions of Bishop Sagittarius and the non-canonical episcopal appointment of Faustianus which Gundovald had inspired. He skimmed over the episcopal council which was to try those who had participated in that investiture, however, concentrating on a debate which had occurred there regarding whether "woman" was included in the term "man." The bishop who received the most generous consideration from Gregory was Theodore of Marseilles. By Gregory's own account he was indubitably implicated with the pretender's partisans because when Gundovald arrived in Gaul he went to Marseilles and sought out the bishop who gave him horses and sent him to Mummolus (vi. 24). Yet the historian was at pains, following Gundovald's defeat, to place himself securely in opposition to Guntram's harrassment of Theodore. He may, of course, simply have found it impossible, in the end, to approve the wholesale undercutting and exile of a large proportion of the Gallic episcopacy, believing that God had sent Guntram's potentially terminal illness to prevent such an action being carried out (viii. 20). That he did not side with traitorous bishops simply because they were bishops can be seen in his account of the confession of Bishop Egidius of Rheims in x. 19.

traitors should be punished, for he expressed no qualms about the death sentence passed on the noble conspirator Guntram Boso.[84] He firmly believed that it was necessary that lawful authority maintain its sovereignty by squelching challenges to it, but he appears to have been troubled by the apparent excesses of harrassment to which Guntram seemed to have been driven in his desire for vengeance.[85]

The large context of Guntram's reign may go a long way toward explaining why he would have been less than generous with anyone he suspected of treason. One of the most touching events recorded in the Historiae is Guntram's request, shortly after Chilperic's death, to the citizens of Paris that he be spared assassination for at least three years so that the realms would not be left without an adult ruler.[86] Although his request was

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[84]Hist., ix. 10: "Fuit autem hic in actu levis, avariciae inhians, rerum alienarum ultra modem cupidus, omnibus iurans et nulli promissa adimplens. . . . Ariolus ac sortis saepius utebatur, ex quibus futura cognoscere cupiens, remansit inlusus." Cf. Gregory's previous description of his character in v. 14.

[85]Gregory himself had argued before Guntram in favor of pardon for two of Gundovald's partisans who had sought sanctuary in St. Martin's church following the defeat at Comminges (Hist., viii. 6). Cf. above, pp. 103-104, n. 89.

[86]Hist., vii. 8: "'Adiuro vos, o viri cum mulieribus qui adestis, ut mihi fidem inviolatam servare dignimini nec me, ut fratres meus nuper fecistis, interematis, liceatque nihi vel tribus annis nepotis meus, qui mihi adoptivi facti sunt filii, enutrire, ne forte contingat, quod Divinitas aeterna non patiatur, ut illis parvolis, me defuncto, simul pereatis, cum de genere nostro robustus non fuerit qui defensit'."

honored,[87] disorder abounded. The infamous Duke Rauching planned an intricate campaign to kill Childebert in the name of Chilperic's infant son Lothar,[88] and Bishop Egidius of Rheims was found to have been involved in it. Although the bishop initially cleared himself, he later confessed that he had been party not only to this plot but also to Chilperic's wars against his nephew and brother. He conceded that, "'It . . . [was] as the direct result of . . . [my] plotting that many battles . . . [have] been waged and many districts of Gaul devastated.'"[89] Egidius was stripped of his office and wealth and sent into exile. While the kings had been able to maintain the upper hand in all of these plots, such a tenuous state of control could easily become elusive. Fredegund, for one thing, was unfettered and, although she was unsuccessful in her assassination plots against the kings, she did manage to have murdered her old enemy Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen who had sided years before with her rebellious stepson

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[87]Assassination plots, however, did not cease, cf. above, p. 37 n. 75.

[88]Hist., ix. 9. The kings had Rauching and his chief conspirators Berthefried and Ursio killed (ix. 12). For another account of Rauching's life and character, cf. v. 3.

[89]Hist., ix. 14; x. 19: "At ille confusus ait: 'Ad sententiam dandam super culpabilem ne moremini; nam ego novi, me ob crimen maiestatis reum esse mortis, qui semper contra utilitatem huius regis matrisque eius abii, ac per meum consilium multa fuisse gesta certamina, quibus nonnulla Galliarum loca depopulata sunt'" (x. 19).

Merovech.[90] Guntram, for another, was frequently wary and nervous. This can be seen not just in his reactions to the clergy who had sided with Gundovald, but also in his refusal to negotiate peace with the newly orthodox Visigoths of Spain and his displeasure when Childebert did, as well as in his treatment of his unfortunate chamberlain.

In Books VIII and IX the Arian Visigoths of Spain began to send regular official peace missions to Guntram. He rebuffed them three times. Shortly thereafter Recared, their king, tested the arguments presented in debate between orthodox and Arian bishops, became convinced of the soundness of orthodoxy, and converted to Catholicism. He then renewed his overtures to Guntram who remained unimpressed. He said that he would not receive their envoys because they were his enemies.[91] The diplomats fared considerably better at Childebert's court, however, where the king and his mother Brunhild, herself a Visigoth, were agreeable even to a marriage alliance between Childebert's sister Chlodosind and Recared, dependent upon Guntram's approval.[92] This friendliness between

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[90] *Hist.*, viii. 31; cf. v. 18, for Praetextatus' trial which resulted in exile; and vii. 16, for his restoration; and above, p. 96.

[91] *Hist.*, viii. 35, 38; ix. 1, 15, 16: "'Non recipio ergo legationem Richaridi, donec me Deus ulcisci iubeat de his inimicis'" (ix. 16).

[92] *Hist.*, ix. 16, cf. ix. 25. Childebert's and Brunhild's agreement with this proposal is remarkable in light of the fact that another sister, Ingund, met with persecution and eventual death at the hands of that family. Recared, however, had not been immediately involved (cf. *Hist.*, v. 38;

Childebert and the Visigoths made Guntram extremely nervous, even though he approved of the agreement. He saw this alliance with a kingdom by whose armies he had recently been badly defeated[93] as threatening the good faith between him and his nephew and began to make unreasonable accusations about Childebert's political and diplomatic integrity. He blockaded the roads between the two kingdoms and said that Childebert was trying to overthrow him. In Gregory's opinion, "no such idea had ever entered Childebert's head." Guntram also announced his belief that Brunhild had been planning to marry one of Gundovald's sons and called a church council to discuss the issue. The bishops who travelled to get to the meeting had only to return home because the queen mother quickly cleared herself of all charges. That settled, Guntram removed the blockade.[94] He had jumped to erroneous conclusions, been prodigal in his accusations, inconvenienced numerous people, and, in the end, been proven wrong.

He later did the same kind of thing to Chundo, his

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vi. 40, 43; viii. 18, 28). Guntram's reason for his refusal to meet with Recared's envoys was that he had to avenge his niece's mistreatment. This consideration apparently did not trouble her mother and brother.

[93] *Hist.*, ix. 31.

[94] *Hist.*, ix. 20, 32: "Addita est etiam huic causae aliud amaretudinis incendium, quod Childeberthus rex filium suum seniorem Theudoberthum nomine Sessonas dirigere cogitabat; quae res suspicionem fecerat Gunthchramno rege dicente eo, quia: 'In hoc filium suum nepus meus Sessonas dirigit, ut Parisius ingredi faciat regnumque meum auferre cupiat'. Quod numquam Childeberthus vel in cogitatione, si dici fas est, habere potuit."

chamberlain, that time, however, with deadly results. Guntram's altercation with him began when the king found that some wild oxen had been killed in his forest. When pressed to name the poacher, his forester accused Chundo, who heatedly denied having ever done such a thing. Guntram announced that the judicial decision would be made in a trial by combat, Chundo's nephew standing in for him. Both combatants were killed, and Chundo was caught before he was able to reach sanctuary. His fate was death by stoning. This episode would be little more than an interesting and tragic anecdote in the Historiae were it not for the conclusion which Gregory gave to it: "Afterwards the King was sorry that he had lost his temper and that for such a trifling offence he had recklessly killed . . . a faithful and indispensable servant."[95] This account in a succinct fashion encapsulates the character of Guntram as Gregory delineated it in the last books of the Historiae. He was a hot-headed man, quick to seek combat, suspicious, vengeful. He could not be dismissed as wicked, however, because he could recognize his own faults and was at heart a fair and just ruler,[96] a genial host,[97] a

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[95]"Hist., x. 10 (Thorpe and Latouche): "Multum se ex hoc deinceps rex paenitens, ut sic eum ira praecipitem reddidisset, ut pro parvolae causae noxia fidilem sibique virum necessarium tam celeriter interemissit.

[96]Hist., vi. 33,39; vii. 7; viii.1, 6; ix. 3.

[97]Hist., viii. 3-4.

generous provider,[98] and, above all, a saint capable of healing the sick.[99]

The root of Guntram's problem was that, by the time of his reign, there had been generations of disruption in the Frankish world. He recognized that this lack of respect for the machinery of Christian society was sinful and that for his family's realms to achieve their potential, there had to be repentance and renewed adherence to the law and to Christian authority. To bring that about, the king, on one occasion, threatened that only those "'prepared to observe the law'" should be permitted to live.[100] Despite the fact that Guntram's concerns were, unfortunately, well founded in reality, the last books of the Historiae do indicate that legal procedures and respect for them were nonetheless in evidence during the reigns of Guntram and Childebert.

A treaty, for instance, was negotiated between the two kings and Childebert's mother Brunhild[101] wherein the three

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[98]Hist., vi. 36; vii. 40; viii. 3; ix. 21.

[99]Hist., ix. 21. Dalton (History of the Franks, I, 52) quotes Michelet's description of Guntram: "ce bon roi à qui on ne reprochait que deux ou trois meutres." Guntram was canonized after his death.

[100]Hist., viii. 30: "'Si quis sequitur iustitiam, vivat; si quis legem mandatumque nostrum respuit, iam pereat, ne nus diutius hoc blasphemeum prosequatur'."

[101]For the continuing political importance of Brunhild beyond the majority of her son and especially for her regency following Childebert's death in 596, see Janet L. Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History," in Medieval Women, ed. by Derek Baker (Studies in Church History, Subsidia, I; Oxford:

pledged friendship and an end to all disputes among them. "[I]t was settled, approved and mutually agreed, by the grace of God, and with the approval of their bishops and their military leaders that . . . they should maintain good faith one with another in pure loving kindness and singleness of heart."[102] In this treaty territorial lines were established, the heritable devolution of rights was determined, and the relationships between the kings and their own and each other's fighting men were acknowledged. The treaty concluded with oaths sworn "in the name of God Almighty, and by the inseparable Trinity, by all things divine and by the awful Day of Judgement."[103] An additional threat to the political stability of the realms was removed as well when Bishop Egidius of Rheims confessed to his long-standing role as political conspirator and was convicted and denied office

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Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp. 41-45. See also, Pauline Stafford, "Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages," in ibid., pp. 87-88.

[102] Hist., ix. 20: "Cum in Christo nomen praecellentissimi domni Gunthchramnus et Childebertus regis vel gloriosissima domna Brunechildis regina Andelao caritates studio convenissent, ut omnia, quae undecumque inter ipsis scandalum poterat generare, pleniori consilio definirent, id inter eos, mediantibus sacerdotibus atque proceribus, Deo medio, caritates studio sedit, placuit atque convenit, ut, quamdiu eos Deus omnipotens in praesenti saeculo superesse voluerit, fidem et caritatem puram et cimplicem sibi debeant conservare." The phraseology is not dissimilar to that used by Gregory to describe the relationship of the members of the Trinity (cf. Hist., v. 43-44).

[103] Hist., ix. 20: "His itaque omnibus definitis, iurant partes per Dei omnipotentes nomen et inseparabilem Trinitatem vel divina omnia ac tremendum diem iudicii, . . ."

by a council of his fellow bishops.[104] The blood-feud between Sichar and Chramnesind[105] and the settlement of the nuns' revolt at Saint Radegund's convent in Poitiers,[106] which were discussed in the previous chapter, also showed the forces of constraint and justice intervening, albeit with varying degrees of success, to arbitrate quarrels and to restore peace. There was no question that lawlessness existed within the Merovingian world of the late sixth century, but documented history proved that it was by no means unchallenged.

Gregory's realistic treatment of Guntram's reign could lead one to suggest that toward the end of the Historiae he made a truce with history. For reasons unstated he decided to respect it as a human phenomenon. This can be seen in the complexity he recognized history as having and in his ability to accept the fact that the misfortunes and disorder that do occur in a Christian world are often caused by forces uncontrollable by either theology or belief. It is visible as well in his use of the mechanism of divine intervention and judgment.

There are over sixty instances in the Historiae where divine intervention or judgment were interpreted as having

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[104] Hist., x. 19. See above, p. 162, n. 89.

[105] Hist., vii. 47; ix. 19. See above, pp. 107-108.

[106] Hist., ix. 39-43; x. 15-17, 20, 22. See above, pp. 108-113.

occurred.[107] Of these, only fourteen such examples appear in Books VII to X and, in most of these, reference is made to divine vengeance as a probable event or as a threat rather than as actual fact. Exceptions to this are the death of the murderer Veudast,[108] and the fates of those who violated or misused the church.[109] Nearly half of the cases of judgmental divine intervention which are presented as historical fact are to be found in Books I to IV in what, to Gregory, was the past, time which either entirely preceded his own life or which came before his professional leadership involvement in the Merovingian world. More than three-fourths of them appear in those books of the Historiae, Books I to VI, wherein he outlined his philosophical and theological arguments regarding the nature of Christian society and the dynamic of good and evil functioning within it.[110] It was the history

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[107]Cf. Book I (three examples): 12, 16, 34; Book II (nine): 3, 4, 6, 20, 23, 24, 37, 40, 42; Book III (seven): praef., 5, 6, 12, 16, 31, 36; Book IV (eleven): 2, 4, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 36, 39, 48, 51; Book V (twelve): praef., 1, 3, 4, 5, 15, 17, 18, 20, 36, 38, 46; Book VI (five): 3, 6, 10, 28, 32; Book VII (four): 3, 6, 29, 38; Book VIII (six): 12, 19, 20, 30, 31, 40; Book IX (one): 30; Book X (three): 2, 15, 22. This list includes the use of saints as divine agents as well as the use of the threat of divine intervention which brought about the desired results.

[108]Hist., vii. 3.

[109]Hist., vii. 29; viii. 12, 19, 40.

[110]Giselle de Nie has written a useful analysis of Gregory's use of natural phenomena and prodigies in the Historiae, recognizing because of them similar divisions among the ten books as I have: i.e., I-IV and V-VI; VII-X. She considers that his most definite assignment of meaning to those phenomena occurred in Books I-IV, and interprets his

of which he was an eye-witness and a participant that was allowed moral neutrality and realistic humanity. He found that one's ability to extrapolate divine participation in history benefitted from hindsight.[111]

The fact is, however, that Gregory had always considered history to be a human phenomenon. What changed between the first six and the last four books was his use of history, not his understanding of its fundamental machinery. What caused the difference between the two parts of the Historiae was that in Books I to VI Gregory sought to explore the wide-ranging potential of Christian society. In Books VII to X he sharpened his focus to examine its details.

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use of them in Books VII-X as having eschatological significance. Although the judgment and prodigy motifs are roughly parallel in Books I-VI, the similarity breaks down with regard to Books VII-X. See "Roses in January: A Neglected Dimension in Gregory of Tours' Historiae," Journal of Medieval History, 5 (1979), 259-289.

[111]Nothing could better point out the differences of historical approach between Gregory and Bede than the fact that the Northumbrian included fewer miracle stories or cases of divine intervention in what was to him the distant more pagan past than he did in his history of the recent Christian past. Joel T. Rosenthal has suggested that for Bede the miracle stories proved that, "The tension between the demons of paganism, heresy, and schism on the one hand and the true faith on the other was finally over" ("Bede's Use of Miracles in 'The Ecclesiastical History,'" Traditio, 31 [1975], 330. See also Laurence Stearns Creider, "Bede's Understanding of the Miraculous" (Diss. Yale University, 1979); Calvin B. Kendall, "Bede's Historia ecclesiastica: The Rhetoric of Faith," in Medieval Eloquence. Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric, ed. by James J. Murphy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 145-172; Roger Ray, "Bede's Vera Lex Historiae," Speculum, 55 (1980), 1-21, Benedicta Ward, "Miracles and History: A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories Used by Bede," in Famulus Christi, ed. by Gerald Bonner (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 70-76.

Although nowhere in the Historiae did he offer an explanation of what history was and how he intended to use it, he manipulated it in ways that indicate that he had clear and consistent ideas of its nature. These ideas were inextricably linked to his understanding of God and of redemption. The roles of deity in the Historiae were to promise the gift of redemption and to evaluate those who sought it--or those who should have sought it. The action of history consisted of mankind's efforts to accept or reject salvation. God offered eternal life, humanity responded to that offer, and God then reacted to the response. God was the Lord of time and eternity; mankind held history in usufruct. God and the saints did not intervene in history except to evaluate human actions which had already occurred. This was as much the case with Guntram's life-threatening illness while he was harrassing the clergy[112] as it was with Israel's domination by foreigners when they lapsed into idolatry.[113]

What Gregory considered to be the importance of the Last Judgment was equally applicable to all of these judgments within history: "'If there is no Judgement Day to

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[112]Hist., viii. 20.

[113]Hist., i. 12, 16. The most unusual example of this divine reaction was probably the assassination of Sigibert following his mere intention to rout his brother Chilperic. Gregory gave every indication, however, that the circumstances were such that Chilperic anticipated the worst from his brother. If he knew what Sigibert had the strength to do, it should probably not be surprising that God did as well, and that this intervention was as much reaction as any of the others (Hist., iv. 51).

come, all men can follow their own petty desires, each of us can do exactly as he wishes.'"[114] God is the critic, not the instigator, of historic action on earth. He has made available to human beings by means of the revelation of his own character what should be the motivation of their lives. He will decide at the end whether or not they took advantage of their possibilities. Anticipating such an evaluation of himself by God, the individual is obliged to assume the responsibility to order his life and his history accordingly.

Gregory believed that history was a textbook to which one could turn in order to learn about the structure and stresses of Christian society. By the recitation of this historical material, one would gradually become more effective in the defense against evil. In the distant past could be found an exhibit of what the whole course of human history is with examples of success and failure visible in high relief. While one could not be certain of the meaning of events in the present or the recent past, because the distant past was thoroughly complete, one could assess its meaning. This interpretive process was, in fact, vital because the past was the creator of the present as well as its example and guide. That the temporal continuum existed Gregory made clear with his several chronological summaries.[115] Were one to have analyzed the past, one should be better able

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[114] Hist., x. 13.

[115] Hist., i. 48; iii. 37; iv. 51; x. 31.

to make wise decisions regarding one's actions in the present and thus disclose for oneself some of the mysteries of the future. The judgment at the end of life and the world would not inspire fear and apprehension in the Christian were he fully cognizant of how and under what circumstances such events had been made evident in the past.

As with so much in his Historiae, Gregory's understanding and use of history is similar to yet quite different from that of Eusebius and Orosius. A close comparison of the historical machinery employed by Gregory of Tours with that of Eusebius and Orosius emphasizes the sixth-century historian's inherent philosophical sophistication and the strikingly human orientation of his history.

The views of Eusebius on history are complex and philosophical, and are difficult to present succinctly. Although he was an historical theorist and Gregory of Tours was not, the sixth-century writer operated implicitly in accordance with many of the historical principles Eusebius developed explicitly. The major difference between them is that Gregory considered all people, be they good or evil, liable for their own actions, an interpretation which may well reflect the primary influence of his own nearly contemporary countryman Saint Caesarius of Arles.[116] In essence,

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[116]Caesarius had a "very reserved explanation of predestination" (Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 223). "To him, the story of the Prodigal meant that man's fall resulted from his choice to depart from virtue and good deeds" (William J. Daly, Traditio, 26 [1970], 21).

however, Eusebius and Gregory of Tours gave the same definition to history.

Eusebius' confidence regarding the truth and orthodoxy of the church was due to the antiquity of its beliefs. This searching into eternity for the church's origins forced him to deal with the distinction between eternity and time because the church itself existed within time, that "mortal, transitory state"[117] into which humanity had fallen at the first sin. To be able once again to comprehend the truth of eternity, sinful humanity had to be patiently civilized from "wild and savage brutality . . . to mildness."[118] This was carried out, Eusebius believed, by the Hebrews but was not completed until Jesus' birth during Caesar Augustus' reign. At that point eternity superimposed itself upon history and became known in terms of chronological and calculable time because of the appearance of "that same teacher of the virtues, the assistant of the Father in all good things, the divine and heavenly Word of God, in a human body in no way differing in substance from our own nature."[119]

Eusebius considered that while the church had been founded in primeval eternity it had been confirmed in

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[117] HE, i.2, using the translation of Williamson. Cf. Glenn F. Chesnut, First Christian Histories, p. 92.

[118] HE, i. 2.

[119] HE, i. 2. Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, A Theology of History (2nd ed.; New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1963), p. 70, where Christ's incarnation is described as a "descent into history."

"historic eternity" when the Logos had allowed himself to become entrapped in time, an event which had taken place relatively recently. For the Christian, eternity was not merely that blissful state which preceded time, it had been present within time when Christ lived on earth. That first-century period provided an example of eternity comprehensible not only because it had happened within human time, but also because it was a fact of Roman, that is, contemporary, history. Although he had quite majestically established in the early pages of his work the incredible scope of Christian antiquity, Eusebius was content for practical purposes to view the age of Jesus and the apostles as the foundation in eternity of the true church of which he was a bishop.

The life of Jesus, however, was given no place in the Historia, but the time when that life occurred was solidly established because it identified from whence the church in its present form had evolved. The existence of the Logos in eternity created the spiritual church; his entry into history initiated the organized church. The point of significance was to determine when that happened. Eusebius was concerned only to place firmly within time the event of Christ's life, and to prove it by means of documentation.[120] That event was important because it motivated the apostles to structure the church, and they began the heroic action of the Historia ecclesiastica. Christ remained, despite his temporal

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[120] HE, i. 5-7, 9-11, 13.

experience, the superhuman Logos, the creator and originator of the church, the reason for its existence. Nonetheless he was outside it, having left history for eternity.

By interpreting Christ's time as being important because of the human time which it intersected, Eusebius stated that, in terms of practical understanding, history is human, it is not divine.[121] Acknowledging that within the recent past, eternity had touched time, he nonetheless placed his emphasis on time. Jesus Christ, eternal Word of the Father, was the source of the church's power, but the institution itself was human and those responsible for its organization were those men who had known the Word. Christ inspired the spread of the gospel, but what actually founded churches was "the teaching of His disciples and their wonderful works."[122] Eusebius believed, as Glenn F. Chesnut has pointed out, that "human beings in history had free will, and [that] the social order could be reformed from a Christian pespective."[123] God influenced history, but did not dictate it.

In contrast to his understanding of the motivation of

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[121]Cf. Chesnut (First Christian Histories, p. 249), who says that for Eusebius, "History . . . was the reflection of the eternal into the world of time."

[122]HE, ii. 3.

[123]First Christian Histories, pp. 35, 61-90; and idem, Our Common History as Christians, pp. 69-95. My following comments owe much foundation to Chesnut's work, although the points I make and the examples I use are not drawn from his material unless specifically mentioned as such.

the apostles' actions, however, Eusebius could not allow to heretics the free will available to the orthodox. Heretics were "poisonous reptiles" of the devil who carried out their attacks on the church at his instigation. The "[e]nemy of man's salvation" sent Simon Magus to Rome in advance of the Christian missionaries, and the founder of the Manichaeans began his work "when the Devil . . . put the man forward for the destruction of many."[124]

Lest it be construed that Eusebius credited demonic powers with having a more tangible role in human affairs than the divine, the heretical puppets were invariably confounded by those ecclesiastics who had freely chosen to defend the gospel. God was understood also to intervene to protect the church. Eusebius records three instances when that occurred: the destruction of the Jews, the conversion of Rome, and the staying of Aurelian's threatened persecution. In the latter case, Eusebius considered that the emperor's arms were held so that he could not sign the decrees and that this presented "for all to see the fact that never would it be easy for the rulers of the world to proceed against the churches of Christ, unless the hand that defends him in divine and heavenly judgment permits this to be done for the sake of discipline and correction, at whatever times it should approve."[125]

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[124]HE, v. 14; ii. 13; vii. 31.

[125]HE, vii. 30. Cf. Chesnut, First Christian

Eusebius thus comprehended three types of superhuman influence in history: the Logos-inspired free will of the orthodox, the demonic manipulation of the heretics, and the divine oversight of the affairs of state and church. Of the three, the most dominant in the Historia ecclesiastica, a work devoted to the history of orthodoxy, was that of orthodox Logos-inspired free will. Although the ultimate motivation may well have been divine, the Historia operated according to the principle that knowable historic action is human.

The importance of the Logos as the ultimate influence in history, however, cannot be underestimated for it gave to history logic, rationality, and comprehensibility. As Chesnut has stated, for Eusebius "[t]o say that human history had a logos was therefore to say that there was meaning to history. It was susceptible to human analysis, both logically and morally."[126] In addition, because truth was involved, the analysis could be carried out in a demonstrably persuasive manner. In contrast, Eusebius' quotation of Rhodo's disputation with the heretic Apelles is illustrative of the unprovability of error: "'[W]hen I adjured him to speak the truth, he swore that he spoke the truth when he said that he did not know how the unbegotten God is one, but that he believed it. And I laughed and looked down on him

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Histories, p. 162, where he discusses the Hebraic notion of divine foreordination of such as Constantine who would be agents of salvation.

[126]Chesnut, First Christian Histories, p. 123.

because, when he professed to be a teacher, he did not know how to confirm what he taught.'"[127] Eusebius wrote the history of the true, Logos-inspired church, therefore, history for him was a tangible, provable human phenomenon.

If Eusebius' analysis of history was more complicated and better developed than Gregory of Tours', that of Orosius was exactly the opposite. Gregory's view of history, as explained above, was simple, yet profound; Orosius' was simplistic. The fourth-century historian's basic assumption about history was that "the world and man are directed by a Divine Providence that is as good as it is just," and that the "evils which existed [in the past], as to a certain extent they exist now, were doubtless either palpable sins or the hidden punishments for sin."[128]

To suggest, as one must, that Orosius did not deal with the concept of free will in the Historia adversus paganos is not necessarily to say that in general terms he denied the possibility of such. The topic of his work simply was not concerned with the abilities of human beings to make moral choices. His emphases were the grand events of history, the rise and fall of nations, and he saw the state as an agency of God for both punishment and salvation. As he explained it, if "all power and all government . . . are the gift of God, all the more so are the kingdoms from which all

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[127] HE, v. 13.

[128] Hist. ad. pag., i. 1.

powers proceed." Empires are allowed to exist in order to keep rival kingdoms in check.[129] Because its God-given power is coupled with its sinfulness, however, a state could not be allowed to have free will by a merciful God because the destruction wrought would be too thorough. In a sense, it is as if God kept the state on a leash so that he could bring it to heel when necessary. As Theodor E. Mommsen has suggested by means of a different image, "Orosius evidently believed that for the most part God used the various pagan nations, regardless of their actual unworthiness, as mere puppets or tools for the furtherance of His divine purposes."[130] The same could also be said for his treatment of the Christian state.

The chief methodological similarity between Orosius and Gregory of Tours was that they both used the phenomenon of divine judgment as historical explanation. In contrast to Gregory's reasoned and pointed use of divine judgment and intervention, however, Orosius seemingly offered it when he had nothing else to suggest.

Because he was concerned with the identity of the divinely blessed Roman empire, Orosius was challenged to account for such misfortunes as persecutions which were wrought by that especially privileged State. Nero's massacre presented no difficulties as it was simply one more fillip from

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[129]Hist. ad. pag., ii. 1.

[130]In Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 339.

an altogether dispicable life. Trajan was such an otherwise good emperor, however, that his persecution was interpreted as having been somewhat of an aberration of which he later repented. Orosius rather amazingly managed to excuse his fellow Spaniard by shifting back to Nero the blame for this anti-Christian program. He recounted that "the Golden House at Rome, which Nero had built . . . , was suddenly burned to the ground. Thus it was made plain that, though the persecution was set in motion by another, the punishment fell most heavily upon the buildings of that man who first began the persecution and who was the real author of it." That Orosius was reduced to finding a building the object of divine justice illustrates the weakness of his hermeneutic! With Valerian, however, he had a much easier time because that emperor's reward for persecuting Christians was to spend the remainder of his life as a footstool for the Persian king, "an unmistakable judgment of God."[131]

These were minor problems compared to that presented to him by Diocletian, however, a fact of which he was well aware.[132] The persecution of that emperor "was longer and more cruel than any other that had preceded it," but Diocletian and his co-emperor Maximianus "laid aside their office

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[131]Hist. ad. pag., vii. 7, 12, 22.

[132]"At this point somebody suddenly runs up to me and dancing with joy taunts me, saying: 'Aha! we have long waited for you and at last you have fallen into our trap . . . '" (Hist. ad. pag., vii. 26).

and found rest as private citizens, a lot that men consider the greatest blessing and highest good of a life well lived." Orosius' scheme demanded that persecutors be personally punished for their crimes, but no such thing had occurred in this instance. Rather than admit the limitations of his historical scheme, he launched into a highly imaginative comparison of the Roman persecutions with the plagues of Egypt. The persecutors, like pharaoh, might consider themselves free from responsibility for their actions but, in the end, they and their chariots would be caught in the sea of fire and would "burn in eternal torment."[133]

In contrast, Gregory of Tours had only one excursion into this particular kind of judgmental explanation. It occurred in his telling of the story of Clovis' Arian niece Amalasuntha, the daughter of the Ostrogoth Theodoric, who, he claimed, committed at least two serious crimes on her way to a miserable death. She married a slave, an act of lèse-majesté, and then poisoned her mother by means of the communion chalice in revenge for her having brought about the death of the unfortunate husband. As a result, Amalasuntha herself was killed by being suffocated in a steam bath. Gregory's comment upon the daughter's sacramental poisoning of her mother was to assign ultimate blame for this heinous

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[133] Hist. ad. pag., vii. 25, 27. Saint Augustine denounced this kind of interpretation in De civitate Dei, xviii. 52. My thanks to Professor Richard Kenneth Emmerson for drawing my attention to this.

sin upon the devil and to suggest that one could expect little better of Arians, for "the Devil is present even at their altar." Had the mother been Catholic, however, all could have been different, for, he claimed, "We Catholics, . . . who believe in the Trinity, co-equal and all-powerful, would come to no harm even if we were to drink poison in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, one true Godhead."[134]

Although they shared some important characteristics of historical approach, the ultimate goals of Eusebius, Orosius, and Gregory of Tours determined that they would not use history in the same ways. All three, for instance, considered that history was a smooth-working, unvarying machine. How the machine was described as operating varied in accordance with the needs and temperament of each historian. All believed that God was deeply concerned with what happened within history, but each placed that concern at a different level. Knowledge of what had happened in the distant past provided each with comprehensible definitions of the nature and potential of the present and the future, but each

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[134]Hist., iii. 31: "Erant autem sub Arriana secta viventes, et quia consuetudo eorum est, ut ad altarium venientes de alio calice reges accepiant et ex alio populus minor, veninum in calice illo posuit, de quo mater commonicatura erat. Quod illa hausto, protinus mortua est. Non enim dubium est, tale maleficium esse de parte diabuli. Quid contra haec miseri heretici respondebunt, ut in sanctam eorum locum habeat inimicus? Nos vero Trinitate in una aequalitate pariter et omnipotentia confitentes, etiam si mortiferum bibamus, in nomine Patres et Filii et Spiritus sancti, veri atque incorruptibilis Dei, nihil nos nocebit."

presented the past in his own unique manner.

For Eusebius history proved the existence of the unchanging church from its origins in eternity to its evangelistic triumphs in his own day. What the church was and had always been as well as the truths it promoted could be rationally proven because God inspired with ultimate reason those who freely chose to serve him. To Orosius the past was invaluable because he needed it to convince the pagans that throughout history, although they might not have recognized it, God had always been in control of events. Whether fortune or misfortune occurred depended upon the particular function in the grand cosmic scheme of history God had assigned to a given state or people. God was, therefore, in as much control of Roman history in the time of Alaric as he had been in the time of Augustus. For Gregory of Tours history was the arena within which human beings determined for themselves whether they would accept or reject the divinely proffered gift of redemption. The process of making that choice was admittedly difficult because of the complexities and obstacles within human life and circumstances. The discrete and knowable past, however, provided a microcosm of the totality of history against which one could measure one's own experience so as to know what to expect in the Last Judgment. Gregory of Tours was in many ways not methodologically distant from the historiographical techniques of Eusebius and Orosius. When he is placed in comparison with them, though, it becomes

clear why, unlike them--and unlike some of their medieval successors such as Bede and Otto of Freising[135]--he achieved such unique historical realism: he unabashedly emphasized the mundane everyday human response to God.

This chapter has dealt on several levels with Gregory of Tours' understanding of the realities of history. As a practical and realistic Christian leader, he had to recognize the fact that perfection of behavior cannot be achieved by human beings. Despite what benefits of Christian knowledge and experience they might have, people are most likely to act toward God and each other in a combative manner. Gregory as a moral realist manipulated this fact in Books III and IV by recounting it as a liturgical recitation of seemingly unending and unexplained conflict. He became an historical realist in Books VII to X because he broadened his discussion of these conflicts in order to articulate their mitigating circumstances and to allow for significant positive events to intermingle naturally with them.

In the first part of the work, good most often occurred on an individual level and made only a generalized impact upon the immediate community, be it monastery or diocese. Maurilio, bishop of Cahors, can serve as an example. "He was a man of great charity. . . . He was just in his decisions and

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[135]For the line of inheritance between Eusebius and Bede see L. W. Barnard, "Bede and Eusebius as Church Historians," in Famulus Christi, pp. 110ff. For Orosius and Otto of Freising see Mommsen, in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, pp. 325-348; and Lacroix, Orose et ses idées, pp. 199-207.

. . . he protected the poor of his diocese from the hand of unfair judges."[136] Although Gregory described in some detail Maurilio's severe asceticism, he did not specify the nature and beneficiaries of his charity or his decisions. We can only speculate how Maurilio "protected the poor of his diocese from the hand of unfair judges," and wonder what the circumstances were when this occurred and what effects such action might have had upon the way judges acted in the future. In the last books, however, good, as illustrated not just by saintly people but also by means of treaties and judicial settlements, was thus institutionalized, documented, and employed to announce the studied intentions of government and society. Even personal charity, such as Guntram's dispersal to the poor of much of Mummolus' treasure after his death in the defeat of the pretender Gundovald, was given a specificity of circumstance that made it an event of political consequence for the realm.[137]

In all these cases, Gregory of Tours demonstrated an acceptance of the realities of human existence and history. What changed within his narrative from beginning to end was the degree of emphasis he placed upon the various aspects of that reality. The methodological foundation which gave him the solid base from which to maneuver in this manner was his

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[136]*Hist.*, v. 42: "Fuit autem valde elemosinarius, . . . Fuit etiam et in iudiciis iustus ac defendens pauperes ecclesiae suae de manu malorum iudicum iuxta illud Iob."

[137]*Hist.*, vii. 40.

reliance upon the assumption that the machinery of history itself has a reality whose dependability can be known. Without the benefit of that particular reality of history, the bishop might well not have decided to become an historian.

Chapter IV

THE HISTORIAN AS BISHOP

The world Gregory of Tours presupposed was a good one. He intellectually envisioned its potential reality and historically demonstrated its recognizable practicality. Orthodox belief, reflecting the law of God, defined what the character of that Christian world should be. What that law was could be known and Christian society had leaders who were equipped both to interpret it and to implement adherence to it. History dependably testified that society benefitted whenever those within it acted in accordance with the law and that it suffered when the law was ignored. The Trinity, the font of law and orthodoxy, expanded the motivation for acceptance and application of truth beyond history into eternity because of its offer of redemption and its intention to final judgment. The goal of Gregory's Decem libri Historiarum was to state the goals of Christian society and to provoke action toward them. In his mind, their achievement was unquestionably possible, and history should be able to record significant progress.

Gregory was not unique in his expectation of historical progress because his historiographical mentors had operated firmly within such a context. For Eusebius, although ostensibly no change ever occurred within the church's nature or identity, its evangelization of the Roman empire was

a matter of infinite triumph. All history had pointed to this grand finale when true unity was achieved in the world. The usually unsubtle Orosius, imbued with the spirit of fourth-century progressivism,[1] provided at the conclusion of his Historia a subtle qualitative account of victorious Roman survival. The divinely blessed empire would go into the future triumphantly because it would convert its Germanic conquerors and thereby turn them into true Romans. What brought these Christian historians to their unquestioning affirmation of success and progress in earthly history was their ultimate belief that an eternal force outside history motivated its events. Eusebius relied ultimately upon the inspiration of God for the free will actions of the godly. Orosius simply believed that God directly manipulated all history. In the schemes of both these historians, it was thus inevitable that whatever God controlled would triumph.[2]

Most of Gregory's fellow medieval historians gave another potent interpretation of the triumph of history. Unlike Eusebius and Orosius who were strikingly uneschatological in their presentation of historical ideas, historians like Bede in the eighth century and Otto of Freising in the twelfth explicitly considered that the ultimate explication

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[1]So Theodor E. Mommsen, in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 343. Cf. above, p. 55 n. 90

[2]For the full context of Eusebius' and Orosius' uses of history, see above, pp. 173-183

of history lay in the final escape from it.[3] Scarcely a soul in Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum anticipated death with regret, for instance, having rather an all-consuming eagerness to reach heaven and the life beyond. Otto of Freising's Historia sive de duabus civitatibus, although it provides an extensive outline of history from primeval to the author's own times, concludes with the entire final book devoted to an elaborate analysis of last day events and the second advent of Christ.[4] All four of these historians, although they did not all employ eschatology in their interpretations of history, shared the belief that history was ancillary to eternity and that consequently what happened of significance within history was ultimately motivated from without for ahistorical reasons.[5]

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[3]C. A. Patrides, The Grand Design of God. The Literary Form of the Christian View of History (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 22: "eschatology . . . was until the fifteenth century to remain a capital interest of Christian historiography."

[4]Otto's explanation of history is not as simple as it might seem in the De duabus civitatibus because of his later writing of the far more worldly history of his nephew Frederick Barbarossa's reign, the Gesta Friderici. Both works have been interpreted as sharing important characteristics despite their seeming differences of historical approach. Cf. Karl F. Morrison, "Otto of Freising's Quest for the Hermeneutic Circle," Speculum, 55 (1980), 207-236.

[5]This fundamental ahistoricalness of these writers, however, did not lead them to deny history. They simply considered its logic to be exterior to it. R. W. Southern has suggested that this "Creation, Fall and Redemption" view of history had within it the need for movement and development, and created an intellectual environment wherein, because "[t]he end was in sight almost as clearly as the beginning," history "was the story of a tight and compact world,

Gregory of Tours, as has been discussed in the preceding chapter, was like these other historians in many ways. What made him, in the final analysis, a true individual when placed in their company was his choice of interpretive emphasis. Gregory shared the Christian progressivism of his third and fourth century precedessors and he looked into the same eternal future as Bede, Otto, and many other medieval historians were later to do. What made Gregory unique, however, was that, while he firmly believed in triumph and progress, with the exception of the Last Judgment and the inarticulated heavenly bliss it would introduce, where or when that triumph and progress would occur was not foreordained but was wholly subject to human volition. The ultimate reason for progress in history did lie outside history, but the action of bringing it about was firmly within history because it was human. It was this understanding of the dynamic of history and of history's relationship to eternity that defined the nature of the practical minded bishop's historical task. Marshalling *exempla* from the past --conflicts, saints, sinners of all social classes, wars, interlopers, documents, debates--in order to remind bishops,

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of which the main outlines could be grasped without any disturbing uncertainty. . . . [M]en knew [what] they knew without ambiguity" (*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (fifth series) 21 (1971), 159-160. Gerald A. Press has argued that the Christian linear scheme of historical development may probably be in a continuum with Graeco-Roman historical understanding than separate from it ("History and the Development of the Idea of History in Antiquity," *History and Theory*, 16 [1977], 288).

kings, parishioners, and readers of future generations, the Bishop of Tours preached throughout his ten books of histories that which must be imitated and that which must be avoided so that progress can indeed occur within history.

The past for Gregory, as has been seen, was a concrete illustration of what all time would be. Its successes and failures could be clearly known. In it could be found wise and unwise rulers, selfless and ambitious clergy, individuals of decency and charity as well as those of greed and insufferable cruelty.[6] There were warnings of the final judgment as bad people met within history with well deserved ends. But most importantly of all, because of the illuminations of God and his law that were visible in the past, one could find there all the guidelines necessary to guarantee Christians successful pursuit of progress and the redemption that would be its reward. When the thoughtful person, as practical as Gregory was himself, would contemplate the contrasting results of peaceful generosity and those of war and distrust, he would acknowledge the reasonableness of Christianity and be quick to convert to it and thereby help to

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[6]One of Gregory's better examples of an evil man is Duke Rauching who was particularly despicable because of his ingenious and shameful treatment of his servants and slaves. Rauching thus served an ironically useful and positive function in the Historiae by becoming an example of how a superior should not behave toward his subordinates (Hist., v. 3). King Gundobad of Burgundy provided a similar example in ii. 34. With Gundobad and Rauching Gregory was able to stress the responsibilities of governorship from the loftiest in society to the lowliest.

save society as well as himself. The social logic and power of Christianity gave to Gregory a sense of fine optimism about history. As he had written in his interpretation of Zerubbabel's restoration of the Jerusalem temple, when Christ would build his temple within Christian society, it would have within it three kinds of decoration: faith would "shine as bright as gold," the "word of the preacher" would "gleam like silver," and there would be resultant integrity of hearts. In such a context of faith, preaching, and integrity, society's "good intentions" and actions would meet with success.[7]

In the Decem libri Historiarum, Gregory of Tours himself was a preacher and the topic of his sermon was redemption and Christian community. By the medium of history, he preached to his generation and to generations yet unborn a message of faith, integrity, and triumphant action. The stance he assumed throughout the Historiae was that of a working sixth-century bishop whose career, as J. M. Wallace-Hadrill has noted, was one of "ceaseless activity as administrator, builder, evangelist, and (though some will not have it) politician."[8] This chapter will show that to recognize Gregory as a bishop of his particular century is to have gone far toward a comprehension of the message, goal, and style of the Historiae. It is only in that professional and temporal

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[7]Hist., i. 15. Cf. above, p. 59, n. 1.

[8]The Long-Haired Kings, p. 52.

context that the unique contribution of Gregory of Tours to the development of the Western historiographical tradition can begin to be appreciated.

The Historiae is in many ways an intensely personal work. Gregory the bishop was not only the author but is also an important character of the history, assuming in essence the role of the "reliable narrator" Wayne C. Booth has identified in such fictional works as Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones.[9] The spokesman of the prefaces and the debates, the courageous bishop at the trial of Praetextatus of Rouen, the outraged victim of false accusation,[10] and the ethical and moral judge and public defender is the guide who tells us what are his most important points of argument. Within the Historiae Gregory thus fulfills what Booth stated is "[t]he most obvious task of a commentator" by telling "the reader about the facts that he could not [so] easily learn otherwise."[11] Gregory's repetitious references to Trinitarian orthodoxy are "directed to

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[9]The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961). I would like to thank my colleague Professor Kent Daniels Seltman for discussing the device of the "reliable narrator" with me in the context of his work on Henry Fielding. The eighteenth-century novelist, like the sixth-century historian, was a preacher.

[10]Hist., v. 49; cf. also the account of Felix of Nantes' accusations against Gregory's murdered brother Peter, a deacon of Langres (v.5). As an antidote to the view of Felix in the Historiae see William C. McDermott, "Felix of Nantes: A Merovingian Bishop," Traditio, 31 (1975), 1-24.

[11]Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 169, emphasis mine.

reinforcing values which most readers, one would think, already take for granted."[12] Christian character is repeatedly affirmed in the Historiae,[13] and Gregory sought throughout to mold "the reader's judgment on one scale of values."[14]

Gregory's message in the Historiae was that orthodoxy is far more than doctrinal belief, that Christianity is a religion whose doctrines should make a difference in the way

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[12]Ibid., p. 177. If Dorenkemper's assessment of the state of acceptance of Trinitarianism in the time of Saint Caesarius of Arles is correct, Gregory may have been reinforcing values that were not yet totally solidly established. The fact that the supposedly orthodox Chilperic could lean toward Sabellianism would seem to indicate this. Cf. Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrine, pp. 31, 131; and Hist., v. 44.

[13]E.g., Gregory's affirmation of his own orthodoxy (Hist., i. praef.; iii. praef.) his sermon against idolatry, ii. 10; his equation of rebellion against a superior with heresy, ii. 23; his praise of such rulers as Clothild (ii. 43; iii. 18), Theudebert (iii. 25), Tiberius (iv. 40; v. 19, 30; vi. 30); his interpretations of supernatural interventions (e.g., Chramn in iv. 20; Palladius' suicide in iv. 39; burglars of Saint Martin's monastery in iv. 48; war between the Saxons and Swabians in v. 15; Eberulf's downfall in vii. 22; Guntram's illness in viii. 20); his sadness over historical events, iv. 48, 50; his refusal to allow ecclesiastical sanctuary to be violated, v. 4, 14; his courage vis-à-vis Chilperic at Praetextatus' trial, v. 18; his sorrow for the deaths of children, v. 34; his debates in favor of orthodoxy with two Arians and with Chilperic (v. 43-44; vi. 40); his judicial vindication as a superior over a subordinate, v. 49; his debate about Christ with the Jew Priscus, vi. 5; his pleas for clemency for accused criminals (vi. 10; viii. 6; ix. 6); his rational evaluation of what he considered to be Guntram's wild accusations, ix. 32; his counsel to the rebellious nuns of Poitiers, ix. 39; his affirmation of the resurrection, x. 13; his evaluation of his career and writings, x. 31.

[14]Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 197.

people act and governments carry out their rule. That he preached such a message is due to the fact that he was a bishop.[15] The role of the bishop in sixth-century society was to serve as the interpreter of Christianity and as the conscience and caretaker of the community. Bishops were to deal charitably with the poor and helpless, and to comfort society when it was in distress. They were also to be the public's champions when its political and military leaders sought to exploit it. Gregory allied himself firmly with these provocative and prophetic obligations and with the historical tradition of episcopal responsibility. Herein rests the basis of his dependable narratorship of the Historiae.

Gregory's predecessor Saint Martin of Tours is an ever-present force in the Historiae, if not a real historical personality.[16] Gregory's description of Martin's mission is indicative of the duties the good bishop was to perform:

> By his many miracles he overcame the disbelief of the Gentiles and made it clear to the people that Christ, the Son of God, is Himself the true God. He destroyed pagan temples, suppressed heresy, built churches and earned great renown for many miracles. . . . He persuaded Maximus against the war which he was planning in Spain in an attempt to wipe out the heretics, considering it sufficient for them to be expelled from

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[15]J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, Early Medieval History, p. 102: "It is a bishop who writes."

[16]Cf. above, pp. 101-107, for Gregory's use of Saint Martin's supernatural powers in the Historiae.

Catholic churches and from Catholic communion.[17] There were two specific ways in which Gregory professionally modelled himself upon Saint Martin. As was seen earlier, because he considered heresy and idolatry to be closely intertwined, his attacks on the early paganism of the Franks, on the materialism and greed of his contemporaries, and upon erroneous interpretations of God and the Trinity[18] can be considered to be in harmony with Martin's task of confounding Gentiles and eradicating paganism and heresy. He also, in company with Saint Avitus of Saint-Mesmin de Micy,[19] his own predecessor Injuriosus, and Bishop Germanus of Paris, assumed the courageous role of giving unsolicited and undesired advice regarding mercy and charity to a king which went directly counter to

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[17]Hist., i. 39: "Tunc iam et lumen nostrum exoritur, novisque lampadum radiis Gallia perlustratur, hoc est eo tempore beatissimus Martinus in Gallias praedicare exorsus est, qui Christum, Dei filium, per multa miracula verum Deum in populis declarans, gentilium incredulitatem avertit. Hic enim fana distruxit, heresem oppraessit, eclesias aedificavit et, cum aliis multis vertutibus refulgeret, ad consummandum laudes suae titulum tres mortuos vitae restituit"; and x. 31: "Hic prohibuit Maximum, ne gladium in Hispania ad interficidestinaret haereticos, quibus sufficere statuit, quod a catholicorum ecclesiis erant vel communione remoti." Cf. Hist., v. 18, for further details about the difficult relationship between Maximus and Saint Martin, Martin being in the role of mercy-seeker.

[18]Hist., ii. 10; v. praef., 43-44; vi. 5, 40. Cf. above, pp. 77-91.

[19]This man was an abbot rather than a bishop but was nonetheless "magno tunc tempore sacerdote." The king he unsuccessfully counselled was Clovis' son Chlodomer (Hist., iii. 6).

the ruler's inclinations and intentions.[20]

Gregory also linked himself closely with other bishops besides Saint Martin and his immediate emulators. He associated himself indubitably with the work of the Trinitarian clarification and preaching carried out by the episcopal council of Nicaea and Saint Hilary of Poitiers, and elaborated on the Trinitarian creed throughout the Historiae.[21] By means both of his episcopal profession in his lifetime and of his long-lived historiographical achievement, he sought to continue the work of large-scale conversion which Saint Remigius of Rheims had begun when he baptized Clovis.[22] As Bishop Avitus of Vienne had attempted to instruct King Gundobad of Burgundy regarding the significance of orthodoxy, so Gregory endeavored as well to convince Chilperic to be an orthodox king.[23] Gregory's own career even included an opportunity to reinforce one of his more unusual identifications of heresy. He shared with Sidonius Apollinaris of Clermont-Ferrand the misfortune of suffering an attempted take-over of his see. Gregory had made plain with regard to the earlier historic event that such a

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[20]Injuriosus with Lothar, Hist., iv. 2 (ultimately the only successful such encounter); Germanus with Sigibert, iv. 51; Gregory with Chilperic, v. 18.

[21]Hist., i. praef.; iii. praef., 31; v. 43-44; vi. 5, 40.

[22]Hist., ii. 31.

[23]Hist., iii. 34; v. 18, 44.

rebellion by a subordinate amounted to heresy.[24] At his own trial for alleged treason against Chilperic and Fredegund witnesses were not, in the end, brought against him because by unanimous decision the episcopal court stated that, "'It is not right to accept the evidence of an inferior against a Bishop.'"[25]

It could be argued that Gregory used these narratives of bishops at work in the way he did because he saw all similar events as being typologically identical.[26] It could be suggested as well that he engaged in personal justification by discovering past bishops carrying out precisely the same role as he; that, rather than being a vehicle of programmatic

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[24]Hist., ii. 23. Cf. above, pp. 68-69.

[25]Hist., v. 49: "Tunc cunctis dicentibus: 'Non potest persona inferior super sacerdotem credi.'" Gregory had interpreted one of the rebels against Sidonius Apollinaris as a Simon Magus figure. The man Riculf who would have become bishop of Tours following his own expulsion from his see "seemed [to him to be] as proud as Simon Magus" (ibid.: "Sed Riculfus presbiter, qui iam promissionem de episcopatu a Leudaste habebat, in tantem elatus fuerat, ut magi Simonis superbia aequaretur."). In both these cases Simon Magus was used in ways alluding to the attempt Antichrist would make to ascent to heaven. Cf. Richard Kenneth Emmerson, Antichrist in the Middle Ages, pp. 27-28, cf. p. 75. Cf. above, p. 70 n. 27. Gregory attributed the suicide and subsequent burial in unconsecrated ground of Palladius, count of Javols, as punishment for his wronging of his bishop (Hist., iv. 39).

Like Saint Martin, Gregory was a force for mercy even toward one of his accusers. Although he was unsuccessful in sparing the man from gruesome torture (during which he made a confession favorable to Gregory), he did keep him from being executed.

[26]Cf. Felix Thürlemann, Der historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours, pp. 85 ff.

religious philosophy, the Historiae is an apologia pro vita sua. While neither of these possibilities, particularly the latter, can be discarded, there is great attraction as well as likelihood in the notion that, by recording himself as having participated in activities consistent with those of bishops of the past, he sought to establish his own episcopal legitimacy for carrying out the whole range of duties he had assigned himself.[27]

Were this the case, when he wrote of events in which he had either been an eye-witness or a participant, he would thus be allowed to recount not merely personal memoir but professional evaluation as well. Gregory the episcopal historian would have thus given himself the authority to write of Gregory the bishop as a dependable example of the role and impact within society that bishops should achieve. If he operated within such a rhetorical framework, when Gregory the historian recalled a debate Gregory the bishop had had with King Chilperic on the distinctions of the persons of the Godhead, he would lead his auditor or reader to understand more about how a bishop was professionally and theologically obligated to relate to a king than about what were his own personal abilities in debate. Another advantage that this

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[27]Another way of stating this would be to suggest that, in order to emphasize the importance of the contemporary episcopal role, he saw it as having always been similarly identifiable. Regardless of how this interpretation would be stated, the result of such a rhetorical technique would be to enhance the power of his own voice.

device would have provided him as a narrator was that, because he was able to accredit himself as a bishop and because it could be established that bishops were in positions to know what happened within society, he could be trusted as a credible observer of events not directly connected to his episcopal position. An additional episcopal advantage could accrue as well. In the latter books of the Historiae, Gregory wrote of having participated in events unlike those in which bishops of the past were recorded as having been involved. Due to the fact, however, that he had already been able to portray himself in recognizably episcopal positions,[28] he was able to invest the interest thus earned in other activities, such as negotiating ends to bloodfeuds or adjudicating and documenting monastic revolts, thereby concretely establishing and reinforcing them as legitimate episcopal occupations.

With a recognition of the role Gregory had given himself as historian/narrator of the Decem libri, an understanding of his intentions regarding the subject matter of history and its organization is more easily acquired. Although he proved himself capable of political and social realism and observation, that craft was wholly subordinated to his enthusiastic desire to be a molder of values. J. M.

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[28]It is noteworthy that the events or specifically stated attitudes of his own career which mirror those in the careers of his illustrious professional forebears are recorded in Books I to VI wherein he stated his theories about the nature of Christian society.

Wallace-Hadrill has rightly reminded us that we must not forget Gregory's historiographical selection of material.[29] Gregory was not, however, motivated in this selection primarily because he was an historian, although he was indeed a fine and in many ways a profound one. He selected material in the way he did because he was a bishop and because he had a clear and highly refined vision of what were a bishop's responsibilities for the pastoral care of souls in a real world. Although he found good and bad people useful as _exempla_, he was not content with the mere identification and description of good and evil. Nor did he consider that the _historical_ odds necessarily favored good--a characteristic which, again, sets him apart from a medieval historian like Bede. He did not advocate that the Christian life in society was easily achieved. He was concerned rather to analyze--as in Book IV especially--the complex relationship between good and evil, nevertheless stating implicitly that, despite complex and difficult circumstances there remains a specific Christian goal too significant both in history and in eternity to be forgotten. It was to that end that Gregory stated that he would "describe the wars waged by kings against hostile peoples, by martyrs against the heathen and by the Churches against the heretics."[30] He chose to deal with the fact that the church

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[29]_Early Medieval History_, pp. 96-97. Cf. above, pp. 124-125.

[30]_Hist._, i. _praef._: "Scripturus bella regum cum

was both attacked and protected, that there were simultaneously true Christians and lukewarm ones, and that "no sooner . . . [were] the church-buildings endowed by the faithful than they . . . [were] stripped bare again by those who . . . [had] no faith.[31] By means of these analyses of conflict, Gregory, from his position of episcopal authority, sought to underscore the challenge and practical importance of the ideals of Christianity for society.

Gregory of Tours had a well-supported and finely articulated vision of what Christian society could be. He also had no allusions about what it most often was like and why. From his stance as bishop of Tours and spokesman for Gaul's most celebrated saint, he accepted the mission to preach as effectively as he could a message of orthodoxy and social morality. One way he chose to do this was through the medium of history, serving as the guide to the complexities of the past and of the human experience in general. He identified himself in the Historiae, announced unambiguously what his positions and purposes would be, and remained throughout the work a consistent advocate of redemptive and harmonious Christianity. Even in the last four books of the work where his

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gentibus adversis, martyrum cum paganis, eclesiarum cum hereticis."

[31]Hist., praef. prima: ". . . eclesiae inpugnarentur ab hereticis, a catholicis tegerentur, ferveret Christi fides in plurimis, tepisceret in nonnullis, ipsae quoque eclesiae vel ditarentur a devotis vel nudarentur a perfides, . . ."

magisterial voice is not present as it was in the first six books, Gregory retained a dependability of direction. Rather than providing there the kind of immediate explanations and solutions to historical problems that he had earlier, he subtly demanded that the auditor or reader weigh the issues himself, testing his own knowledge of Christian principles against the realities of history. In the last books, Gregory interjected himself formally as an obvious guide only once to state that, "'If there is to be no resurrection, what will it profit the just that he has done well, how will it harm the sinner that he has behaved ill? If there is no Judgement Day to come, all men can follow their own petty desires, each of us can do exactly as he wishes.'"[32] By that interjection he informed his audience that, even though he had ceased writing prologues to the books or linking himself to great clergy of the past, his moral position remained the same.

Throughout the Decem libri, Bishop Gregory of Tours, the historian/narrator, proclaimed the immediacy of the need for the true conversion of society and for its consequent replacement of charity and harmony for greed and conflict.[33]

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[32]Hist., x. 13.

[33]In the light of my assessment in this study of Gregory's historical and religious ideas, I must question J. M. Wallace-Hadrill's statement that, "Bella regum . . . struck Gregory as a distinct strand of history, an activity characteristic of kings. Such wars were neither good nor bad in themselves, however; they could be either, depending on their objectives. Gregory liked peace within the kin but was less certain than Bede that absence of war was sometimes a good in itself that should cost a king no loss of dignity"

His appropriation of history as the means for making that proclamation was due to his unshakable belief that history is a moral science.[34] Because history illuminates the successes and failures of the past in ways that can be exploited homiletically and pedagogically, a bishop could legitimately be an historian without digressing in the least from his episcopal duty to encourage society to be more Christian. In fact, by becoming an historian he might be able to achieve his goals more substantially. The effectiveness of his episcopal effort to preach historiographically, however, rested upon his practical sensibility to write of and to a recognizably genuine world. Hence, despite the fact that Gregory's primary reason for becoming an historian seems likely to have

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(Early Medieval History, p. 98). He stated further that the reason "the bella civilia of his own day shocked Gregory so much [was that] they diverted strenuitas, energy, into fruitless channels. He had no objection in principle to kings shedding blood, so long as it was the right blood. If it was the wrong blood, then kings were activated by whim; they were behaving as if they were ordinary people, whose offices had never been explained to them by bishops" (ibid., p. 100). What I have tried to argue is that, while Gregory recognized the inevitability and frequent necessity of war, he did not invest it with moral significance in and of itself. Following the example of Saint Martin, he and the bishops he wrote of in fact plead for mercy when belligerence would have seemed to be the more politically expedient and royally sagacious course of action. Cf. Hist., x. 31, iii. 6, iv. 51; and above, pp. 189-190.

[34]Cf. Gordon Wright's presidential address to the American Historical Association, "History as a Moral Science," American Historical Review, 81 (1976), 1-11. Wright's analysis of the stance and responsibility that the liberal-tempered modern historian should assume is not fundamentally dissimilar from that taken by Gregory of Tours in the Historiae.

been directed by his devotion to his episcopal mission, it was that very mission that demanded that in his writing of history he utilize skills of keen observation and analysis. For a sixth-century bishop to preach redemption and to study events of historic significance was for him to engage in mutually enhancing activities.

Erich Auerbach has stressed the importance of the fact that Gregory was a bishop and hence concerned with the development of "Christian ethical attitudes," that he had the need to be practical in the pursuit of duties "in which the cure of souls might at any moment be combined with political and economic questions." As a churchman, Gregory found that "any aesthetic separation of the realms of the sublime and tragic on the one hand and of the everyday and real on the other is of course out of the question." Auerbach's most significant accolade, and one clearly borne out by this study, was his remark that Gregory "is one of the first examples of that actively practical sense of reality which we so often have occasion to admire in the Catholic church and which, developing early, made Christian dogma into something that would function in the realm of life on earth."[35]

An important source of Gregory's inspiration in this regard may well have been his fellow sixth-century bishop Saint Caesarius of Arles, a possibility that has been noted

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[35]Mimesis, pp. 91-92.

by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill.[36] Saint Caesarius, who lived ca. 470-543, was a man of great religious practicality. Mark Dorenkemper has suggested that "if we seek one word to characterize the sermons of Saint Caesarius, it is undoubtedly the word practical." By that he meant not merely that the sermons are directly provocative of moral action, but also that Caesarius "was able to conjoin and interrelate doctrine and moral. . . . [H]is preaching is directed to one end . . . , the inculcation of the true Christian life in his flock."[37] This effort of the archbishop of Arles toward the creation of a profoundly Christian society has led William M. Daly to conclude that Caesarius may well have been one of the founders of medieval Christendom in company with, and perhaps in precedence of, such other sixth-century figures as Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Saint Benedict. "[H]e made the Christian People an activist community, earning its salvation by following the pattern of life he saw as its goal and hallmark. The resulting ethos seems closer to the spirit of Charlemagne's Europe and of the crusades than it does to the mood of Augustine's City of God."[38]

Saint Caesarius' primary medium for the communication

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[36]In the following sentence: 'He comes within measurable distance, whether consciously I cannot be sure, of the teaching tradition of Caesarius of Arles" (Early Medieval History, p. 102).

[37]Trinitarian Doctrine, pp. 6-7.

[38]Traditio, 26 (1970), 1-2, 28.

of his view of Christianity and its effects upon society was the sermon. Preaching was, in fact, the way he defined his own mission. It was his means of carrying out his divinely given responsibilities and of preparing himself to stand before God. He said that, "Whenever I humbly suggest to you some words of advice for the health of your soul, I relieve my conscience."[39] The ultimate goal of Caesarius' preaching was to prepare the Christian community to succeed in the Last Judgment. Gustave Bardy has stated that almost all of his sermons conclude with an exhortation regarding Christian truths and the judgment, that "nothing is more present in his thought than the tribunal of God."[40] Caesarius was consumed with the belief that a bishop must preach, warn, correct, and denounce. The bishop, he said, "does not have the right to be one of those mute dogs who does not know how to bark."[41] Whatever the means used might be, an original sermon or one borrowed from the Fathers, Christians must be told, in words they could easily understand, the significance of Christian faith and action.[42]

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[39]My translated quotation from Sermo V, given by Gustave Bardy in "La prédication de Saint Césaire d'Arles," Revue d'histoire de l'église de France, 29 (1932), 228-227.

[40]"[N]ulle n'est plus présente à sa pensée que celle du tribunal de Dieu. Inutile ici de multiplier les références; elles seraient trop nombreuses" (ibid.).

[41]Translating from Sermo I, as quoted in Bardy, ibid., 206.

[42]Bardy, ibid., 205-208. "[J]e demande humblement que les oreilles instruites se contentent de supporter sans

As their model for the Christian life and as an aid in preparing for the judgment, Caesarius drew his listeners' attention to Christ. Henry G. J. Beck has written that, "[p]assionately, he reminded his flock that it was possible for them to imitate their Lord and that such imitation meant meekness and humility of heart rather than duplicating the miracles of . . . Christ."[43] This Christian objective would be fulfilled by a following of the commandment of Jesus to "[l]ove the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind . . . [and l]ove your neighbor as yourself.'" To love God meant the keeping of the law and, in institutional terms, the participation in the worship and sacraments of the church. As Christ said, however, the second commandment is like the first: to care for one's neighbor is to love God.[44] Referring to sixth-century sermons in general, Beck has stated that there was then a widespread understanding "that Christ lives in the needy,"[45] and Caesarius

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se plaindre des paroles rustiques, de telle sorte que tout le troupeau du Seigneur puisse recevoir la nourriture spirituelle dans un discours simple et terre à terre. Et parce que les ignorants et les simples ne peuvent pas s'élever à la hauteur des savants, que les savants daignent s'abaisser à leur ignorance, car les hommes instruits peuvent comprendre ce qui a été dit aux simples, tandis que les simples ne sont pas capables de profiter de ce qui aurait été dit aux savants" (quoting Sermo LXXXVI, ibid., 228).

[43]Pastoral Care of Souls, p. 276.

[44]Matthew 22:37, 39-40 NEB. Cf. Beck, Pastoral Care of Souls, pp. 276-277.

[45]Pastoral Care of Souls, p. 277.

actively promoted the pursuit of social charity. He made clear as well, though, that the giving of alms must have been preceded by the development of "a deep-seated love of one's fellow-man which . . . [would reveal] itself in the willingness to forgive even enemies from the heart."[46] As William M. Daly has pointed out, Caesarius' notion of charity also implied yet another form of faithful Christian action. "The true Christian must also bring peace to the quarreling." To do otherwise was to sin.[47]

This brief survey of Saint Caesarius' homiletic influence makes evident the attractiveness of his message. It is easy to understand why his voice would have resounded throughout the Middle Ages by means of collections of his sermons. "Copied, used, reused, and borrowed from, often under the name of Augustine or others, they intruded into the bedrock of the medieval sermon tradition his ideas about such topics as Christian love, the meaning of the Last Judgment, the rights of the poor, and . . . the notion of Christian society."[48] His impact was felt not only in the pulpit, however, for he was an administrator who sought to instill

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[46]Ibid., p. 278. Cf. Bardy, "L'attitude politique de Saint Césaire d'Arles," Revue d'histoire de l'église de France, 33 (1947), 241-256. Caesarius personally lived and worked under the Arian and orthodox rules of Burgundians, Ostrogoths, and Franks.

[47]Traditio, 26 (1970), 25-26. Cf. above, p. 79, n. 47; pp. 189-190; p. 196 n. 33.

[48]Traditio, 26 (1970), 8.

order and observance of faithful discipline, "not only as regards the moral life, but also in terms of liturgy, dogma, and practice."[49] He was the first to popularize the Athanasian Creed,[50] his monastic rule was an important precursor of that of Saint Benedict, and his leadership of church councils, such as that of Orange in 529, placed his stamp upon the formal development of Western doctrine and institutional concerns.[51]

Even after his death the episcopal councils held in Gaul pursued a Caesarian task of canonizing Christian principles into action. It was legislated that those who would demand from the church that which they had given to it should be considered "murderers of the poor"[52] because the church was responsible that mercy be shown to prisoners,[53] that care be taken of lepers,[54] that slaves be properly

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[49]Bardy, Revue d'histoire de l'église de France, 29 (1943), 233.

[50]He has even been considered its author. Cf. Mark Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 222, who denied this.

[51]Cf. G. de Plinval, "L'activité doctrinale dans l'église gallo romaine," in Histoire de l'eglise, 4, ed. by Augustin Fliche and Victor Martin (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1948), 406-419; René Aigrain, "L'église franque sous les mérovingiens," ibid., 5 (1947), 329; Jaroslav Pelikan, Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, p. 327; Dorenkemper, Trinitarian Doctrine.

[52]Orléans (549) Canon 16; Paris (563) Canon 1, in Charles Joseph Hefele, Histoire des conciles, III:1, tr. by H. Leclercq (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, Editeurs, 1909), pp. 162, 171.

[53]Orléans (549) Canon 22 (ibid., p. 163).

[54]Lyon (583) Canon 6 (ibid., p. 207).

freed,[55] and that widows and orphans be protected from civil judges.[56] Each city was to take care of its own poor so that they would not need to wander.[57] Several of the canons made potential impositions upon secular government and life. Royal civil war could not be used as an excuse for the confiscation of church property.[58] Judges and the powerful must not oppress the poor.[59] False accusations would not be tolerated,[60] and the right of sanctuary must be maintained.[61] That these councils were powerful organizations with the widespread ability to influence and change the legal and social structure of Gaul in a permanent way has been shown by the analyses of the participating dioceses done by Jacques Champagne and Romauld Szamkiewicz.[62]

Walter Ullmann has stated that the bishops who met in these councils "were concerned with . . . the translation of

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[55]Macon (585) Canon 7 (ibid.).

[56]Macon (585) Canon 12 (ibid., p. 210).

[57]Tours (567) Canon 5 (ibid., p. 185).

[58]Tours (567) Canon 24 (ibid., p. 191).

[59]Tours (567) Canon 26; Macon (585) Canon 14 (ibid., pp. 192, 211).

[60]Macon (583) Canon 18 (ibid., p. 205).

[61]Macon (585) Canon 8 (ibid., p. 210). Cf. also Sara Hansell MacGonagle, Poor in Gregory of Tours, pp. 22-31.

[62]"Recherches sur les conciles des temps mérovingiens," Revue historique de droit français et étranger (4e serie), 49 (1971), 5-49. Cf. also Carlo de Clercq, La législation religieuse franque de Clovis à Charlemagne. Etude sur les actes des conciles et les capitulaires, les statuts

one of the all-pervading Christian virtues, charity, into a social-legislative norm." He has suggested that the action of the Council of Tours in 567, for instance, that the poor be cared for by their own communities established the fact that "the sustenance of the poor was a public charge, a measure which in its basic assumptions was perhaps one of the most significant acts towards translating a fundamental Christian precept into a concrete measure." In searching for precedents for such legislative concerns, Ullmann found nothing. "The significance of their measures is only heightened when one considers that the synodists had no models or patterns on which they could have relied."[63] These canonists may not have been able to look to similar corporate actions of the past, but they did have a vital episcopal guide in Saint Caesarius of Arles whose reputation and sermons were well-known. It seems unlikely that a figure of his stature would not have been influential upon meeting after meeting of bishops in council. The similarity between many of his concerns and the canons approved by these councils is simply too striking. These councils may well have been the bishops' guarantee that their "barks" would always be heard.

If this suggestion regarding the spiritual and intellectual connection between the preaching of Saint Caesarius

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diocésains et les règles monastiques (507-814). Louvain: Bibliothèque de l'Université, 1936.

[63]In Councils and Assemblies, pp. 5, 7, 9.

and the legislative actions of the sixth-century episcopal councils has validity, one must have been able to presuppose that the archbishop of Arles had a dominating influence upon the ecclesiastical mentality of his century. He could have done this not necessarily by name but by the force, defensibility, and practicality of his message. As Daly has written, his ideas were "intruded into the bedrock of the medieval sermon tradition."[64] If the energy of those ideas survived throughout the medieval centuries, how unlikely it would have been that his own century would have failed to respond to their impact. It seems likely that the Decem libri Historiarum of Gregory of Tours demonstrates, like the sixth-century councils, that Caesarius' own century did in fact respond.

Although Gregory is remarkably silent about either Saint Caesarius or the major charitable legislation of the councils,[65] there are four important ways he handled his material which show him to have been susceptible to the Caesarian program. He believed that faith leads to action, and

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[64] Traditio, 26 (1970), 8.

[65] Caesarius is mentioned only in connection of the fact that Saint Radegund adopted his rule for her convent of the Holy Cross in Poitiers (Hist., ix. 40), 42).

The possibility that Saint Caesarius may have had an important impact upon the thinking of Gregory of Tours is an intriguing one which is deserving of further study, namely, of analysis of Caesarius' sermons with the goal of comparing them with Gregory's concerns. A relationship between the two is intentionally handled here as suggestive. It is clear, however, that Gregory's episcopal role was intrusive in his writing of history and that this fact can be known from internal evidence.

that Christianity, therefore, has both a practicality and an applicability to the real life of the community. He had a clearly articulated understanding of the teaching and preaching function of the episcopacy. And, he was explicitly aware that the Last Judgment provides an unavoidable discipline for the living of the Christian life.

Gregory believed that orthodox faith provides the basis upon which a practical society could be structured. Its definition and implications are complex. Orthodoxy is the keeping of God's law and involves, on the one hand, the maintenance and respect of proper authority, be it ecclesiastical or monarchical; and, on the other, an ability to understand that the relationships within the Trinity are comprehensible in terms of quality rather than of material. An orthodox imitation of the Trinity and the consequent permeation of spiritual values into daily life would alter one's relation to the material world, for one would thus be allowed to see goods ultimately as gifts to be given rather than as booty to be seized. One's fellow human beings would be creatures to be nourished not exploited. Without an orthodox understanding of human life and possession, one's use of goods and quest for more would amount to idolatry. With such an orthodox understanding, however, one's use of goods and quest for more would result in charity. With charity would come the healing of the community's wounds through peace and justice as well as the ushering in of redemption.

The bishops were to see that this would happen. They were to love, to preach, to warn, to irritate, and to cooperate with royal authority. To carry out these tasks they had to have a clear understanding of the realities of the world in which they lived. They had to be able to recognize and accept that a man like Guntram could both act like a saint and behave irrationally hot-temperedly, and try to encourage him to develop the saintly side of his personality. They could not force action, but they had an obligation entrusted to them by God[66] to proclaim what that action should be. Should they weaken under this earthly burden, they would find themselves bearing it in the Last Judgment. At Praetextatus' trial, Gregory explained to his fellow bishops how this would work.

> 'Listen carefully to what I have to say to you, . . . saintly men all, God's bishops, and especially those among you who seem to be in the King's confidence. Make sure that the advice you give him is holy advice, and worthy of your rank in the Church, for there is a danger that by turning his wrath against one of God's ministers he may destroy himself in his paroxysm and so lose both his good name and his kingdom. . . . My Lord Bishops, . . . remember the words of the prophet: "If the watchman see the iniquity of man and the people be not warned, he shall be guilty for the soul that perisheth" [Ezekiel 33:6]. You must not remain silent. You must speak out and parade his sins before the King's eyes, lest some calamity should occur, in which case you will be responsible for his soul.'[67]

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[66]Hist., ii. 23.

[67]Hist., v. 18: "'Quibus intentis et ora digitis conpraementibus, ego aio: 'Adtenti estote, quaeso, sermonibus meis, o sanctissimi sacerdotes Dei, et praesertim vos, qui familiariores esse regi vidimini; adhibite ei consilium

Such advice did not, however, apply only in this specific circumstance. It was a general principle. Most likely it was Gregory's assumption of this grave episcopal responsibility to preach and to warn which inspired him to close the Historiae with the threat to his successors that they preserve his written work intact or face condemnation in the Last Judgment.[68] Should his voice be silenced, a sinner might not be given an important warning and would thus fall unimpeded into destruction: "'in which case you will be responsible for his soul.'"

Gregory's concern for the judgment was expressed in two major ways in the Historiae. He provided examples of the kind of people and actions that he considered had merited eternal punishment and he offered numerous counsels about how to avoid such a fate. Whether he stated it or not, awareness of the discipline of the judgment was always uppermost in his mind. It is the topic which, in fact, provides structural symmetry to the work. In the prologue to Book I he stated that he wrote "[f]or the sake of those who are losing hope as they see the end of the world coming nearer

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sanctum atque sacerdotalem, ne exardiscens in ministrum Dei pereat ab ira eius et regnum perdat et gloriam'. Haec me dicente, silebant omnes. Illis vero silentibus, adieci: 'Mementote, domini mi sacerdotes, verbi prophetici, quo ait: Si viderit speculatur iniquitatem hominis et non dixerit, reus erit animae pereuntes. Ergo nolite silere, sed praedicate et ponite ante oculos regis peccata eius, no forte ei aliquid mali contingat et vos rei sitis pro anima eius."

[68]Hist., x. 31.

and nearer."[69] In other words, he wrote the Historiae in order to give courage to those in fear of the imminent judgment. He sought to present them with a pattern of life that would give them no need to fear. That this is what he intended to do he stated precisely in his exhortation to his Sadducean priest in the final book of the Historiae: "'If there is no Judgement Day to come, all men can follow their own petty desires, each of us can do exactly as he wishes.'"[70] For the community of integrity, the judgment set the standard and provided the means of guaranteeing redemption. Consciousness of the judgment would inspire the good society and give it peace, just as in real life judicial machinery could bring harmony to as troubled and as fearful an environment as the convent of the Holy Cross in Poitiers.[71]

The entire tenth book of the Historiae could, in fact, be considered to be like the exhortation on the judgment with which so many of Saint Caesarius' sermons closed. The book opens with a sermon of Gregory the Great on the need to prepare for the judgment,[72] it deals historically and

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[69]"Illud etiam placuit propter eos, qui adpropinquantem finem mundi disperant, . . ."

[70]Hist., x. 13.

[71]Hist., x. 14-17.

[72]Owen Chadwick ("Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great," Journal of Theological Studies, 50 [1949], 38-49) wrote that this sermon is probably a later interpolation and may refer not even to Gregory the Great but rather to the eighth-century pope Gregory II. For our purposes here, it does not matter whether or not it is an interpolation. If it

analytically with several events of a judicial nature,[73] and it closes with Gregory's message to his successors that they prehis work lest they fail in the judgment.[74] The theme of the judgment was the great synthesizer of the message of Gregory's episcopal narrator and it is as well of the Historiae at large. It seems likely that this demonstrates the unanimity of purpose the historical Gregory had as both a bishop and an historian.

Gregory of Tours worked in a century filled with a prophetic spirit of concrete Christian activism, a century unconvinced that proper belief was the sole responsibility of the Christian. The program of the sixth-century Gallic church, inspired most likely by Saint Caesarius of Arles, was that faith must lead to action and that Christianity must characterize communities as well as individuals. The goal of that century's episcopal preaching, synodal legislation, and--with Gregory of Tours--Christian historiography was to bring that about. Placed in juxtaposition with its context, the Decem libri Historiarum can be seen as a uniquely sixth-century work, an "artefact," to use Wallace-Hadrill's description,[75]

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is, that could serve to demonstrate a medieval understanding of Gregory of Tours' intention to close the Historiae with a book modelled on the homiletic concluding exhortation on the judgment.

[73]Cf. above, pp. 110-113, 119, 162, 166-168.

[74]Hist., x. 31.

[75]In Early Medieval History, p. 97.

of its time and a memorial to its author's profession. It is also, however, a tribute to the intellectual ingenuity of one sixth-century bishop who devised a plan to unite in a concrete and practical way the preaching and teaching task of the bishop with that of the historian. Taking the grand schemes of Christian history worked out by Eusebius and Orosius, Gregory of Tours blended them with the everyday episcopal activity of turning real people into good Christians. This gave him breadth of vision joined with clarity of detail. It also gave him increased hope and ambition for what the world might be. The Council of Tours just prior to his own episcopacy had made each town responsible for the poor within it. Gregory, as heir to the imperial historians, preached the need for Christian kingdoms and charted by means of history the necessity of sympathetic cooperation between church and state. He was not, however, an imperialist or a royalist in other ways. Although his historical message was addressed primarily to the leaders of society, he did not bolster their expectations of the contented subservience of their subjects to them. He preached to the leaders rather about their Christian obligations toward their subjects. He reminded them of their need to maintain sensitivity to the people of their realms and, bowing to the requirements of his episcopal office, kept himself firmly in touch with the world he hoped to improve. For this reason, he was not tempted to launch off the platform of history into elaborate spheres of

speculation and paradisical longing.[76] With Eusebius and Orosius he shared concerns about the distant past, the definition of orthodoxy, the nature of the Christian state, and the relation of God to human affairs. With subtle precision he transformed them into a wide-ranging anecdotal sermon, and thereby into a portrait of the realities and goals of his age.

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[76]Cf. for example, Georges Duby, The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined, tr. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Duby's late Carolingian bishops, despite their similar definition of their episcopal task (pp. 15-16), advised kings to operate as if an ideal world in fact existed, whereas their sixth-century predecessors advised kings to do what they could to try to create a better world.

CONCLUSION

Gregory of Tours was the author of one of the more significant works of early medieval historiography. The kind of history he wrote stands firmly within the Christian historiographical tradition established in the fourth century by Eusebius of Caesarea and modified a century later by Orosius. He shared with these historians an integrated view of past and present and of church and state. With Eusebius, he considered orthodox belief to be the single most important factor defining Christian institutions.

Gregory was, however, no slavish follower of the major historiographical models available to him. His manipulation of these forms may well be based, on the one hand, on the fact that he possibly had no immediate access to the texts of Eusebius and Orosius and relied on the reputations of these works rather than on their realities. On the other hand, and far more significantly, he was a man of his own time, a bishop of sixth-century Gaul with a clear sense of his own public moral responsibilities. He was imbued with the spirit of reformation and practicality which characterized the century noted for Saint Caesarius of Arles' sermons on the living of the Christian life and for the enactment of the first large-scale social legislation in Western history. While Gregory of Tours may not have been an original thinker,

he was a powerful synthesizer who single-mindedly blended the form and general themes of Christian historiography with the administrative and homiletic goals of the Gallic episcopacy.

Trinitarian orthodoxy was the fulcrum of Gregory's history. By orthodoxy, however, he meant no mere simple and concrete statement of doctrine. To believe in the Godhead was to reject the finitude of materialism as well as to dedicate oneself to the maintenance of a Trinity-like harmony, unity, and orderliness. This orderliness would make of the society of believers a community notable for peace and generosity. The discipline inspiring such action was the Last Judgment: to be able to succeed in the judgment and to accept Christ's redemption, the believer himself must have been redemptive. That such a society, modelled on the Trinity, could be created and cultivated was Gregory's ideal and the goal toward which he wrote.

Idealistic though he was, the strength of Gregory's message rested on his acknowledgement of the complexities of human realities and of the inevitable juxtaposition in society of Christian idealism and mundane expediency. Gregory of Tours was not an exponent of the formulaic answer. While the Christian life was one which adhered to established principles, the application of those principles to the unpredictable circumstances of the real world was a challenge to be met with vigor and flexibility. History provided <u>exempla</u> of problems and possibilities as Christian society and its

individual members strived and often failed to live up to the ideals established by the Godhead. History, therefore, served as the preacher's extended and long-lasting homiletic illustration. But the sermon had as its goal the Christian conversion of society, and history, thus, became the beneficiary of the preacher's practical need to direct his message to a recognizably tangible world. Although God, and occasionally the saints who were his agents, was the motivator and final evaluator of Christian behavior, each individual was fully responsible for his own actions his history. Were the situation otherwise, the preacher would have had difficulty convincing his audience of its need to be converted, and the historian might have been tempted to subjugate his history to eschatology.

This study has primarily taken Gregory of Tours at his own word, and it has investigated the Decem libri Historiarum as a whole in order to determine whether it has structural cohesion and philosophical integrity. I have not been concerned here with the nature of Gregory's immediate sources for the Historiae, the accuracy of his facts, or the quality of his linguistic means of expression. These are approaches that have largely dominated past scholarship on Gregory of Tours. I have analyzed Gregory's major work in an effort to discover what Gregory considered to be important about history and why. In so doing, I have also explored what he considered to be important about Christianity and Christian

society, for, to Gregory, history was a useful tool in the construction of a Christian world. It is hoped that this study will thus have contributed to the understanding of both the rich variety of the medieval historiographical tradition, and the mentality and concerns of a vigorous and formative era of European civilization.

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