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### Harrowing the Church: Gregory VII, Manasses of Reims, and the Eleventh-Century Ecclesiastical Revolution in France

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# **Harrowing the Church**

Gregory VII, Manasses of Reims, and the Eleventh-Century Ecclesiastical  
Revolution in France

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Spring 2019

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## Introduction

In the cold early months of 1081, the prominent clergy of the northern French city of Reims received a letter from Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085). We do not know exactly what reception the bishop of Rome's message received, but it is hard to imagine that it did not cause a stir. The subject at hand was the archbishop of the city, a minor noble-turned-clergyman by the name of Manasses of Gournay (r. c.1069-1081). Manasses and Gregory had once been allies; Gregory had supported Manasses in his bid for the archbishopric of Reims, the most prominent clerical position in France, and Manasses had been one of the first people Gregory wrote to upon becoming pope in 1073.<sup>1</sup> Even into the late 1070s, as relations between Reims and Rome grew frayed and Manasses increasingly came into conflict with the pope and with Bishop Hugh of Die (c.1040-1106), his mighty representative in France, Gregory had continued to show leniency to his old ally. Now, it seemed, things had finally come to a head: a council of the bishops of the region called by Hugh of Die had found Manasses guilty of disobeying Hugh's instructions and stripped him of his office. Desperate, the archbishop had sent a verbose and florid letter to the Pope asking for clemency, but to no avail. Now a new response came from Rome, addressed not to Manasses but to "all the clergy and the people of Reims." The pope did not mince words:

[W]e warn you that you should in no wise share in his [Manasses'] wrongful acts, but that you should by all means resist him, so that he may be taken...and delivered to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that the spirit may be saved.<sup>2</sup>

It would be several years before Reims once again had an archbishop. The pope and his representative, working in conjunction with local clergy, had successfully forced the most powerful cleric in France out of office. Manasses does not appear again in the historical record.

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<sup>1</sup> Gregory VII, *The Register of Gregory VII*, trans. H.E.J. Cowdrey (Clarendon: Oxford University Press), 1.4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 8.17.

A few decades earlier, a blink of an eye in the long sweep of ecclesiastical history, the chain of events leading to Manasses' deposition would have been unthinkable. Up to about 1000 popes had generally not been figures of influence outside the city of Rome; papal involvement in the broader church was sporadic and largely in an advisory capacity. Prevailing ecclesiastical legal theory viewed religious authority as being distributed among bishops, each holding ultimate jurisdiction over their own diocese; this theory was borne out in *de facto* reality across Latin Christendom.<sup>3</sup> Such decentralized rule-by-bishops had been the norm for centuries, but by the time Manasses received his bad news in 1081 the structure of the church had already begun to change. Starting from about 1050, Latin Christianity was swept up in a large-scale reform movement aiming to eradicate certain practices widely held among clergy that the reformers viewed as fundamentally immoral, primarily simony (the corrupt buying and selling of church offices for profit) and the marriage of clergy (also known as nicolaism). A string of reform-minded popes, in the course of their campaigns to purge the church of these moral crimes, began to assert a wider latitude for papal intervention in the affairs of far-flung dioceses.

These innovations started a long trend of increasing papal prominence and authority within the Latin Church. By the end of the thirteenth century the office had been revolutionized. The pope was recognized as a monarch whose dominion was the entire church, routinely intervening in the affairs of the farthest-flung churches in communion with Rome. Political theorists wrote lengthy treatises justifying papal sovereignty in the church, some going so far as to claim that all bishops were merely officers of the pope with no independent jurisdiction of their own.<sup>4</sup> This transition was not smooth. Generations of popes spread over the course of

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<sup>3</sup> John Howe, *Before the Gregorian Reform: The Latin Church at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2016), 230.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Pennington, *Popes and Bishops: The Papal Monarchy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984) 194.

centuries spent their pontificates embroiled in bitter conflicts with ideological opponents of papal supremacy ranging from independent-minded bishops to continent-straddling monarchs. Driving these disputes were fundamental questions about how the structure of the Latin Christian church should be conceived. Was it a horizontally organized institution, composed of the corporation of autonomous local churches under the jurisdiction of independent bishops? Or was it something more akin to the large secular polities of the day, with a single monarchic figure exercising jurisdiction over a range of subordinates? In a society as thoroughly defined by religion as that of eleventh-century Latin Christendom, these questions were neither arcane nor limited in their import. In the words of noted scholar of medieval society Edward Peters, “[T]hroughout the Middle Ages...theological conformity was synonymous with social cohesion in societies that regarded themselves as bound together at their most fundamental level by religion.”<sup>5</sup> Disputes over the structure of the church had implications for the deepest underlying fabric of Medieval Latin Christian society.

The deposition of Mansses occurred at the critical moment in ecclesiastical history when such disputes were coming to a head. By the 1070s, a growing gulf had begun to open between the powers which the popes were claiming for themselves and the powers which historical precedent and legal convention recognized them as having. This divide was greatly widened by Gregory, who in 1076 wrote the *Dictatus Papae* (“Saying of the Pope”) a private document containing twenty-seven short statements on the nature of the papal office. These sayings outline a vision of papal authority that was dramatically more far-reaching than any found in previous centuries. These assertions particularly concerned the right of the papacy and its agents to intervene in various ways in the affairs of smaller local churches. In the course of the document,

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 3.

Gregory claimed for Rome the right to depose and transfer bishops while exempting the popes from any ecclesiastical jurisdiction; he also mandated that all important church judicial cases be referred to Rome.<sup>6</sup> Each of these claimed powers marked a striking divergence from previous conceptions of the church's structure. Perhaps inevitably, attempts to implement this new vision resulted in conflict between the papacy and local religious and secular authority figures who were unused to so proactive a bishop of Rome. Gregory would die in exile, driven from Rome by his titanic conflict with Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV (r.1056-1105), ruler of the most powerful secular polity in Latin Christendom.

Though not as spectacular as his conflict with the emperor, Gregory's interventions in the French Church provide a particularly interesting case study of the development of the theory and practice of papal power. This was largely due to the highly decentralized nature of political power in the French kingdom in the late eleventh century. In a stark contrast to the Empire, where Henry had the ability to mount a systematic challenge to papal authority, the eleventh-century kings of France lacked power outside of a geographically small region centered on Paris.<sup>7</sup> Both religious and secular authority in the French kingdom of this period were highly localized, and central authority of either kind was lacking. When Gregory sought to use Roman authority to compel French clergy and laity to conform to his vision of a reformed church, he encountered not a unified resistance but instead a whole constellation of different reactions stemming from the differing situations of the various petty lords and bishops of France.

This lack of a unitary narrative thread presents a fundamental challenge to scholars who wish to study the phenomena of French reform as a whole. One common response has been to

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<sup>6</sup> Gregory VII, "The *Dictatus Papae*," Medieval Sourcebook, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/g7-dictpap.asp>, (January 26, 1996). [Original source: Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1911), 366-367.]

<sup>7</sup> Jim Bradbury, *The Capetians: Kings of France, 987-1328* (London: Hambledon, 2007), 97.

choose a different field. Due to what the medievalist J.R. Williams in 1949 called “the unspectacular nature of the French struggle,” Gregory’s dealings in France have been chronically understudied in comparison to the high drama of Gregory’s conflict with Henry IV.<sup>8</sup> Popular histories of the papacy such as Eamon Duffy’s *Saints and Sinners* and John Julius Norwich’s *Absolute Monarchs* give ample attention to the imperial conflict but scant mention to Gregory’s dealings in France. This trend also extends to less popular works such as the noted papal scholar Walter Ullmann’s *Short History of the Medieval Papacy*, whose chapter “The Gregorian Age” focuses almost exclusively on the papal-imperial conflict. The prominent Gregorianist H.E.J. Cowdrey’s magisterial biography of Gregory is a welcome exception to this trend, containing a lucid and insightful ninety-page chapter on the pope’s relations with France. But Cowdrey’s main argument is that Gregory had no set policy towards France, preferring to respond “more...to persons and circumstances as he encountered them.”<sup>9</sup> His solution to this problem is to catalogue the pope’s interactions with individual French notables, generally declining to engage in deeper comparative analysis of French reform as a whole.

An alternative approach to French reform taken by many scholars has been to give close study to particular instances of the movement, particularly the conflict between Gregory and Manasses of Reims. Many historians have been drawn to what the French medievalist John Ott calls the “vivid image” of Manasses which is preserved in the relatively copious surviving sources relating to him. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen an abundance of

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<sup>8</sup> J.R. Williams, “Archbishop Manasses of Reims and Pope Gregory VII,” *American Historical Review* 54 (July 1949): 804-824.

<sup>9</sup> HEJ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 332. For broader papal histories which do not include much analysis of French Reform, see Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); John Julius Norwich, *Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy*, (New York: Random House, 2011); Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, trans. Walter Ullmann (New York: Routledge, 1972).

studies of Manasses, many of them quite thoughtful and illuminating.<sup>10</sup> Although these works provide valuable perspective on French reform, by their nature they can give only limited insight into the broader development in the French church in the Gregorian period. Most notably, the focus on Manasses has prevented the other cases of French bishops driven from their positions by conflict with the pope from receiving the scholarly attention they deserve, even though many of their situations paralleled that of Manasses quite closely. Ott, among other scholars, identifies in Manasses' case a conflict between two rival conceptions of the Church, a Rome-centric hierarchical model supported by the pope and a more decentralized model advocated by the archbishop.<sup>11</sup> This conflict in Gregorian France involved far more than a personal quarrel between two men, a fact which is obscured by

In this thesis I will avoid this approach, holistically analyzing the French reform during Gregory VII's pontificate by focusing on the cases of bishops removed from office at the instigation of the pope. I examine the case of Reims in the geographical and political circumstances of eleventh century France, and will also compare it to other notable examples of clashes between Gregory VII and the French bishops. Specifically, I will examine the cases of Humbert of Lyons, Herman of Vienne, Stephen of le Puy, and Robert of Chartres, all of whom were ultimately driven from office by the efforts of papal representatives and by the condemnations of their inferiors and their fellow bishops. I will also give consideration to the cases of Bishops Rainierius of Orleans and Isembert of Poitiers, who managed to narrowly escape the same fate despite being accused of crimes similar to those of their deposed colleagues.

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<sup>10</sup> John Ott, "Reims and Rome are Equals," in Sigrid Danielson and Evan A. Gatti, eds. *Envisioning the Bishop: Images and the Episcopacy in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 277. See this source for a representative example of the scholarship on Manasses of Reims, along with: Augustin Fliche, *Le Regne de Philippe I, Roi de France* (Paris: Societe Francaise 1912), 417; J.R. Williams, "Archbishop Manasses of Reims and Pope Gregory VII"; and Ian Stuart Robinson, "Periculosus Homo: Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority," *Viator* 9 (1978), 103-132.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 278.

In the course of this analysis, I will demonstrate that these depositions were not isolated cases, but collectively had the effect of systematically expanding papal authority over the French church and increasing the accountability of French bishops to Rome. This effort was justified by the ideologies of papal supremacy which were then developing out of the existing ideas of the movement to morally reform the church. In the course of this process, not only the reform movement but also a variety of existing ecclesiastical institutions were subtly manipulated into becoming avenues of Roman influence. The cumulative effect of these developments was that by the time Gregory died in 1085 the institutional relationship between the pope and the bishops of France had changed substantially.

This process of change and reform was not, however, exclusively dictated from Rome, nor was it an unqualified triumph of papal authority. Rather, I will demonstrate that reform was always predicated on a tenuous alliance between local and papal authority, an alliance that took on a variety of forms in various locations where circumstances differed. When this alliance held together, the papal agenda could move forward; when it failed, the Roman curia was frustrated in its aims. I will find that this partnership cannot be said in any real way to have been dominated by Rome; for a bishop to be deposed successfully, the authority and resources of both the papacy and local clerical authorities, as well as a degree of cooperation from secular rulers. The pope lacked any ability to enforce his agenda unilaterally, and in many cases was forced to act reactively in response to developments within local churches. Nonetheless, my concluding survey will find that Gregory's attempts to reform the French church did find long-term success in establishing a permanent papal presence in the French episcopacy and making it substantially more difficult for a bishop to exhibit open defiance of papal authority without consequences.

The first chapter of this thesis will be devoted to describing the status quo of the Latin Christian church in France in 1000. I will demonstrate that the church in this period can be best thought of as having a fundamentally horizontal power structure, as opposed to the vertical power structure which it developed from the end of the 11th century onwards. In the following chapter, I will move on to an analysis of the existing institutions which made deposition possible. I will show that these structures were not created by the Gregorian reformers, but instead were existing institutions and offices which were manipulated by Roman agents for their own purposes. In the final chapter, I will trace the process of deposition from start to finish, showing each step involved a close collaboration between Roman and local ecclesiastical authorities.

## Chapter I: The Church at the Millennium

The ecclesiastical world in which Gregory, Manasses, Hugh and the other deposed bishops operated was radically different from that of the modern Catholic Church. Context is required for a modern reader to understand the significance of the fact that a half dozen French bishops, including three archbishops, were deposed during Gregory's twelve-year stint in the pontifical office, all of them at the instigation of the pope or a papal representative acting on orders from Rome. Authority in the millennial Latin Christian church was distributed horizontally among local authority figures, a mirror image of the strictly hierarchical vertical power structure which distinguished the Catholic Church from the late medieval period onward. Manasses, like all the French clerics of his time, was the product of a world in which a bishop was far more important in his diocese than the weak and distant bishop of Rome. In addition to the manifold religious and administrative roles which the bishop played in the relevant community, there was a general belief that a bishop was connected with his diocese on a metaphysical level. In order to understand the singular drama which each bishop removed from office represented, it is necessary to understand how durable the ties holding officiant to office actually were.

The first distinctive feature of the millennial bishop was his deep and mystical connection with his diocese. In about 1200, when the great struggles of the Gregorian reform had faded from living memory, Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) made a rather startling statement in a letter to a minor bishop. "One could be forgiven for thinking," he wrote, "that the pope does not have authority to separate a marriage of spirit of the kind that exists between bishop and diocese."<sup>12</sup> That Innocent goes on to claim that the pope does in fact have this power is not surprising in itself, as the annals of history contain few characters with as unyieldingly broad a conception of

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<sup>12</sup> Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 77.

papal power as him. What is strange about this passage is rather the fact that Innocent advances his claim so timorously to begin with. Despite living at the high water mark of papal authority that would later be called the “Papal Monarchy,” Innocent—who would later bluntly assert the right of the bishop of Rome to unilaterally remove any secular ruler in the Christian world from office at will—offered an uncharacteristically qualified and hesitant defense of the pope’s right to depose his own suffragan bishops.<sup>13</sup>

Some clue as to why can be found in Innocent’s description of the relationship between bishop and diocese as a “marriage of spirit.” This phrase is rich in theological connotation—marriage was an ancient and widely used metaphor for the relationship between Jesus and the body of the Christian faithful as a whole—and does much to express the depth and gravity afforded to the office of the bishop in medieval Europe. The presence and influence of a bishop within his jurisdiction was all-pervasive and wide-ranging; “[f]rom the summit of worldly power to the most remote rural pastures...men and women of every rank and station felt his presence in their lives.”<sup>14</sup> The bishop might be called on at various times to act in a wide variety of roles. Manasses, for example, at various times served as a counselor to a secular ruler, as architect for a new monastery, or even as patron to a poet, all while retaining a personal responsibility for the immortal souls of each and every person in his diocese. The chronicler Rodolfus Glaber, describing Pope Sergius IV’s failed attempt to overrule the bishops of the Archdiocese of Tours around 1000 in a matter regarding the foundation of a monastery, reports that the Pope was told

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<sup>13</sup> Readers interested in these later developments in the theory of papal power are directed to Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*. Those interested in a broader overview of the twelfth and thirteenth century papacy are directed to Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> John Ott and Anna Trumbore-Jones, “Introduction: The Bishop Reformed” in John Ott and Anna Trumbore-Jones, eds., *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 1.

that “each bishop of the orthodox<sup>15</sup> church is bridegroom of his own see and equally embodies the Saviour, and so none should interfere insolently in the diocese of another bishopric.”<sup>16</sup>

The eleventh-century episcopacy was further distinguished by its status as a stable, transregional power structure, a type of entity which most of Latin Christendom lacked in the period. Timothy Reuter, surveying the distribution of political authority in this period, finds it to be in a state of disorder. With the exception of the Ottonian Emperors (and slightly later the Norman Kings of England) there were few large-scale polities wielding anything more than a notional central authority, with most inhabitants of this region owing fealty to either a petty king or a local lord, possibly with some nominal obligation to a far-away ruler.<sup>17</sup> The solidification of boundaries between the main political entities of the region was still two centuries off. The Latin Christian religion as a whole was in a similar state. Where the Byzantine Emperors had maintained the politically-based church hierarchies that defined the church of Late Antiquity, there was no steady power in the West to prevent the decay of vertical clerical power structures.

The episcopacy of the period formed a nearly opposite picture. In the words of Reuter, “[t]he period 950-1050 was no crucible...for bishops. There was the odd foundation in the high and Middle Ages, but the network of bishoprics was essentially complete in 1000 and remained surprisingly unchanged up to the time of the Reformation.”<sup>18</sup> Many dioceses were substantially older than the lay polities they were located in and had already amassed centuries of lore and tradition. To take a pronounced but not entirely atypical example, the Kingdom of France was scarcely a century and a half old in 1000. The city of Reims, the home of Manasses, had housed

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<sup>15</sup> Here used without sectarian connotations to simply mean “correctly believing.”

<sup>16</sup> Howe, *Before the Gregorian Reform*, 240.

<sup>17</sup> Timothy Reuter, “A Europe of Bishops” in Ludger Körntgen and Dominik Wassenhoven, eds., *Patterns of Episcopal Power: Bishops in Tenth and Eleventh Century Western Europe* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2011), 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 23.

a bishop for well over seven hundred years. Although there were clear regional differences in the structure of each episcopate, Reuter convincingly argues that the structure of dioceses was far more homogenous than the various lay authorities, effectively functioning as a network of statelets.

This homogeneity inevitably led to a degree of corporatization. Individual bishops, operating in similar capacities in close geographic relation to each other, gradually began to work as a collective, or at least on a more-than-individual basis. Bishops and archbishops had “developed strong horizontal links among themselves when they met at church dedications, at courts, and at local councils”<sup>19</sup> since Carolingian times. The fragmentation of Carolingian power accelerated this trend, to the point that historians have long recognized the increasing corporatization of the clergy as one of the most important social trends of the transitional period between the Early and High Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup>

It therefore becomes clear that the eleventh and twelfth centuries did not see the Latin Church pass from a state of disorder to one of order. Rather, the late stages of church reform saw the imposition of a degree of vertical hierarchy on a well-developed and remarkably stable horizontal power structure. The modern historian might be tempted to view the millennial church’s structure as already containing the seeds of the papal monarchy that would develop in future centuries. There was, after all, a good deal of continuity across the eleventh century: though the independence of bishops decreased with time, their status within their communities did not, and the centralization of the church helped rather than hindered the confederation of church officials as a class.

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<sup>19</sup> Howe, *Before the Gregorian Reform*, 236.

<sup>20</sup> Harold Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 90.

Whether or not this was the case, the efforts of the papacy to assert its authority over the Latin Church did meet with firm opposition from a wide spectrum of sources within the church, in France as elsewhere. Against their often well-connected opponents, the reformers of the late eleventh century era had only a paltry few resources. The millennial popes utterly lacked the material means to unilaterally assert themselves in any meaningful way outside of the city of Rome. The bishop of Rome had an ancient and universally-respected claim to being the most important churchman in some sense, but what the practical applications of this vague idea were was unclear and contradictory at best. In prevailing practice, the pope was more an advisor and mediator than a figure of authority, almost more a resource for the church than a leader. The interventions of the millennial popes in the affairs of far-flung dioceses were sporadic, of mixed efficacy, and generally resulted from the initiative of someone outside the Roman church that they controlled directly. The papal court was not noticeably larger or grander than that of the more important archbishops, and the Roman church's bureaucracy was only a shadow of what it would become in the centuries that followed. There was a similar dearth of ideological tools available to the Gregorian reformers. The "vocabulary" of papal authority, as Pennington terms it, had barely begun to develop.<sup>21</sup> Canon law was in a state of infancy; there was little precedent and virtually no legal theory which the popes could turn to assert their authority.

And yet assert authority they did, with the result that the popes and their representatives involved themselves in countless disputes with ecclesiastical and secular authority figures over the course of the mid-eleventh century. Much ink has been spilled on the titanic battle between Gregory VII and his successors against the Ottonian emperors, and of the eventual establishment of papal control over the imperial church. Yet far less scholarly attention has been given to the reform of the French church. Plenty of consideration has been given to the cases of individual

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<sup>21</sup> Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 41.

French bishops who in one way or another ran afoul of Rome, but there have been few systematic studies of the changes in the French church as a whole in this period. This problem is particularly manifest in the question of the deposition of French bishops in this period. Individual cases, particularly the case of Manasses of Reims, have attracted much attention, yet these studies remain largely atomized; there is more attention given to the individual bishops as bellwethers than to the broader trends of the French church in the Gregorian period.

There are multiple reasons for this state of affairs. The French reform lacks a clear line between the early and late stages of reform such as the Investiture Conflict in the Holy Roman Empire; rather, the earlier, more localized, and less obviously political French reform movement transformed gradually into the Roman-centric movement of the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The French bishops lacked a single unitary authority figure. The influence of the weak Capetian kings did not extend far past the Ile-de-France, and as such they had the bishops of Paris as clients but otherwise yielded little influence over the broader French church. The bulk of the French episcopacy was fully entangled in local politics. Some were appointed by mighty lords, such as the bishops of southern France who were basically clients of the Dukes of Aquitaine. But most French ecclesiastics were the scions of noble families who had had gained their office through some combination of bribery and familial influence. This stood in stark contrast to centralized polities such as Norman England, where Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury served as a loyal vassal to King William the Conqueror.<sup>22</sup>

The local nature of the French church as an institution necessarily meant that changes to it had to stem from local sources. It is therefore difficult to cleanly fit the full sweep of French ecclesiastical reform into a single narrative. Yet such an effort must be made, as the end result of

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<sup>22</sup> Birt, Henry Norbert. "Lanfranc." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. 8 (New York: Robert Appleton Company 1913). From [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Encyclopedia\\_\(1913\)/Lanfranc](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Lanfranc).

the Gregorian reform in France marks a dramatic change which requires an explanation. During the time of Gregory's pontificate, at least half a dozen rebellious French bishops were either removed from office, had their authority substantially subverted, or were compelled into compliance with Rome. The relative success of the Gregorian reform in France, in the context of millennial Europe, invites puzzlement. How could an institution with so few avenues to project authority able to do exactly that in do dramatic and ostentatious? How did these bishops of Europe become subject to the influence of a far-off authority figure who had no way to project power directly in their dioceses? The German bishops already all had the same ultimate master, the emperor; jurisdictional conflicts in the imperial church mainly manifested as conflicts between pope and emperor. Gregory's dealings in France required a finer and more subtle approach; if the French church was to change, it would have to change bit by bit, diocese by diocese, and the mechanisms of reform would have to be subtly different in each case. The Archbishops of Reims did not have as great a patron as the great German archbishops did in their emperor, but they did have a claim to equality with the popes through a convoluted founding myth that ascribed the founding of the city to Remus, as Rome had been founded by Romulus. They were certainly as used to autonomy in their region as the Popes had been in central Italy. I will now consider the strategies used to advance papal interests and ideas in France, before considering the degree to which we can say that the French church was transformed in this period.

## Chapter II: The Tools of Deposition

Gregorian policy in France rested on a great compromise between ideology and reality, between the visions circulating in reformist circles concerning what the church should be and the hard reality of what the church actually was in the late eleventh century. Gregory and his supporters consistently claimed powers for Rome that the broad body of the Latin Christian world was willing to grant. Therefore, in order to actually achieve his goals, Gregory was forced to go through the existing channels of church authority. This involved the manipulation of existing offices and institutions such as papal legates and episcopal councils for the purpose of increasing the influence of Rome over far-flung churches. It also required the papacy to entangle itself in the minutiae of local politics for the sake of realizing its broader goals. This was due to the simple fact that the papacy of the eleventh century lacked the ability to unilaterally impose its authority in distant regions such as France. Successful Roman intervention in the French church generally lending papal authority and gravitas to a faction or figure within a regional French church whose interests happened to align with those of Rome. Though these interventions did not achieve Gregory's grand designs for increasing papal authority as expressed in the *Dictatus Papae*, they did substantially increase papal influence in France and lay the groundwork for the future development of papal power.

### **Bishops Behaving Badly: Reformist Ideology and Papal Supremacy**

A dramatic shift in the general expectations of conduct for the occupants of major church office made possible the wave of depositions of French bishops in the Gregorian period. The charges which Manasses and the other French bishops lost their positions over were activities (primarily simony and nicolaism) which clergy had until recently been able to engage in without major retribution or condemnation. As a result of the reform movement, these practices

increasingly viewed as unacceptable violations of ecclesiastical decorum which demanded the most severe penalties available. By the time Gregory took office in 1073, this shift in perspective had largely been completed, but the actual practices of clergy across Latin Christendom had not changed a piece. Given that the Roman pontiffs had a recognized precedent of acting to ensure that moral demands of the reform movement were followed among church officials, this state of affairs offered a potential avenue for increasing papal authority in far-flung dioceses. As I will show in the following section, Gregory and his allies manipulated the ideas of the existing reform movement to justify and construct an ideological basis for their unprecedented interventions in the French church.

The role of the pope in the reform movement was largely settled by 1073. The reform-minded Leo IX (r. 1049-1054) opened proceedings at a general ecclesiastical council held at Reims held in 1049 with a sweeping denunciation of simony, nicolaism, and lay investiture, and demanded that the assembled clergy swear that they had not engaged in any of these activities,<sup>23</sup> much as the councils of antiquity had involved oaths of belief in orthodox doctrine. From that point onward, the popes had made it a priority to promote the reform movement not only within Rome but across the Latin Church. Although Gregory sowed the seeds of much of what the office of the papacy would later become, that pontiff did little to establish the office's role as a clarion of moral reform and a sentinel assuring the good conduct of clergy. The earlier generation of reformer popes such as Alexander II and Victor II (r. 1055-1057) had already sent correspondence and messengers across Latin Christendom with the aim of furthering the aims of the reform movement. Targets of papal ire could and did resist the interference of Rome when they viewed it as unwarranted, but by the time Gregory took office there was substantial

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<sup>23</sup> Joannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, vol. 19, (Venice: Antonio Zatta, 1774), 737.

precedent for a pope intervening in local ecclesiastical affairs with the aim of punishing instances of vice among clergy. And indeed it was in this capacity that virtually all of Gregory's interventions in the French church took place.

These changes in the role of the papacy was accompanied by an increasingly strident tone taken against those guilty of the crimes the reformers sought to eliminate. It became common in the mid-11th century for reformers to refer to simony especially as a heresy and to label simoniacs as heretics, a word used to refer to Christians who diverged from orthodoxy on important theological points. The many heterodox groups active in the first centuries of Christianity's existence had been the targets of the polemics of antique theologians who had lain the groundwork of orthodoxy, and they remained societal bogeymen throughout the middle Ages.<sup>24</sup> Language comparing simoniacs to heretics was widely utilized by Gregory,<sup>25</sup> but it did not originate with him. His predecessor Alexander II (r. 1061-1073), for example, made the comparison while urging Archbishop Gervasius of Reims (r. 1056-1067) to eradicate the "plague of simony."<sup>26</sup> The Reims Synod of 1049 also condemned simony as heresy in similar terms.<sup>27</sup> The language Alexander used later in the same letter sheds further light on the rhetorical strategy used by reformers to condemn simony:

But truly, I constantly hear of your worthy zeal for holy religion, and I rejoice greatly to hear that so diligent a gardener is at work in the vineyard of the Lord, and that no sapling of simony...is able to take root in it.<sup>28</sup>

This is particularly florid language (in the same letter Alexander refers to simony as a serpent), but it touches on a fundamental theme of reformist propaganda: simony, like the other

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<sup>24</sup> Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), passim.

<sup>25</sup> For examples of this terminology, see Gregory VII, *The Register of Gregory VII*, 1.27, 2.76, 4.11, and passim.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Bouquet and Leopold Delise, eds, *Receuil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Vol. 14 (Paris: Gregg Press 1877) 537.

<sup>27</sup> Joannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* vol. 19, 737.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Bouquet and Leopold Delise, eds, *Receuil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Vol. 14 (Paris: Gregg Press 1877) 537.

commonplace moral crimes of the clergy, represents separation from the church. The phenomenon of simony is a malevolent force from outside the sanctified bounds of the orthodox religion which must be protected from such corrupting foreign influences. Given this line of thinking, it is understandable why the reformers often constructed simoniacs as heretics, literally those who choose to depart from the teachings of the church. By not merely casting simony as a crime or a moral outrage but also connecting it to the feared heresy of old, the reformers sought not only to defame but to separate, emphasizing the otherness of those who engaged in what had until recently been a routine practice. By the time Gregory ascended to the Roman See, this framework had become sufficiently widespread that open simony had ceased to be acceptable, and even those who were genuinely guilty of the crime did their best to hide their actions.

The acceptance of this view greatly narrowed the logical leap required to use deposition as a punishment for bishops who did not meet the reformers' standards. Following the line of logic that simony was an odious heresy foreign to the church, the removal of a simoniac from office was not a radical move but simply a confirmation of an already-existing reality. Such a person was by definition unfit for clerical office and alien to the church; he was nothing but an "invader," a word used again and again throughout the Gregorian Reform to refer to those who had gained office through simony, especially when referring to clergy the pope was struggling to depose or keep out of office.<sup>29</sup> As Gregory put it when justifying the deposition of Bishop Hermann of Bamberg in 1075: "[w]e are, indeed, separating him from the episcopal office because he invaded the church simoniacally; we also deprive him of the priesthood, because under the guise of holiness he has tried to rend apart and to destroy it."<sup>30</sup> The case of Manasses

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<sup>29</sup> See for example Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronicon* in Georg Heinrich Perz (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, vol. 8 (Hannover: Hanniani 1860), 288-502, as well as Gregory VII, *Register*, 2.76, 5.8 and *passim*.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory VII, *The Register of Gregory VII*, 3.1.

of Reims illustrates how effective. Manasses hailed from his own archdiocese and had a long history as a clergyman. He was also never explicitly accused of simony during his time in office. And yet when the heavily pro-Gregorian chronicler Hugh of Flavigny wrote his take on the archbishop's story in the early twelfth century, the archbishop is described as a simoniac invader.<sup>31</sup> The chronicler could evidently think of no more effective slander.

Gregory made a skillful use of these ideological developments throughout his pontificate, using them as a theoretical basis for justifying papal intervention in distant churches. We have seen that the ideological tools necessary to justify the deposition of simoniacs was well in place by the time Gregory assumed office, as was a precedent for popes acting as general promoters of the reform movement. Where Gregory's innovation lay was in his combination of these two ideas into the assertion that it was the right of the pope to pass judgment on and depose errant bishops. A strikingly direct version of this sentiment appears in the *Dictatus Papae*, in which the power to remove bishops from office is assigned solely to the pope.<sup>32</sup> This statement is bewilderingly unprecedented when considered in the context of the eleventh century, at which point the popes had barely been involved in affairs beyond the city of Rome for more than two decades. A clue as to the origin of this sentiment comes from the context of the reformist popes' actual condemnations of bishops, virtually all of which were reformist attempts to punish wayward clergy. Gregory's tireless battles with bishops accused of moral crimes and innovations in the *Dictatus Papae* both stem from the same source: a new vision of a reformed church whose moral character was maintained by a vigilant, powerful bishop of Rome.

This vision was rooted in the reformist ideology of Gregory's immediate predecessors, but assigned to Rome an authority to act proactively which was a creation of his own. The

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<sup>31</sup> Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronicon*, 415.

<sup>32</sup> Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*, 3.

generation of popes from Leo IX to Alexander II (from 1049 to 1073) were reformers, but they generally deferred to the authority of their local allies, acting more as advisors and helpers than as leaders. To take an example, the vast majority Alexander's surviving letters are exhortations urging the clergy of Latin Christendom to greater moral probity, and he was unafraid to offer unsolicited advice to his allies. Yet Alexander generally restrained himself to acting as a catalyst encouraging for more local authorities to take action. This mode of exercising papal authority is exemplified in a letter Alexander wrote to Gervasius, Archbishop of Reims, on the subject of two errant bishops, one about to be consecrated after engaging in simony and the other guilty of abusing a monastery within his diocese. Alexander urged Gervasius to investigate the crimes and to bring the culprits to justice if guilty, saying that "if you are unable to accomplish this by yourself, refer the whole affair to me by letter at an appropriate time so that the dispute might be resolved by means of apostolic authority."<sup>33</sup>

There is a world of difference between the advisory role Alexander and his predecessors preferred to take and the model of a church centered on Rome proposed by Gregory in the *Dictatus Papae*. There is no equivalent document giving insight into what Alexander or any of his predecessors might have viewed as an ideal church, but the deference they habitually showed to the jurisdiction of local clerical authorities indicates that it was solidly within the model of horizontal governance which the church then followed. Gregory, in his actions and words, left this model behind, in the process laying the groundwork for the development of papal authority in the next two and a half centuries. But for this expansion of Roman authority to cross from the world of ideas to the world of reality, the papacy would need to find a new method to bridge the yawning physical distances which had previously hindered the exercise of Roman authority

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Bouquet and Leopold Delise, eds, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 537.

outside of central Italy. These he found in a pair of existing institutions, the legate and the episcopal council, as I will demonstrate in the following two sub-sections.

### **Vicus Noster Pleno Jure: Hugh of Die and the French Legates**

Gregory VII's letter to Count William of Die, dated March 23, 1074, is a typically Hildebrandine artifact. Although ostensibly writing to mark the consecration of Hugh, the newly elected bishop of Die, the pope took the opportunity to chastise William for his alleged plundering of the Dieish church and to threaten the Count with anathema, exclusion from church life, the most grievous weapon in the papal arsenal. Not content with offering merely one round of dire admonition, Gregory closed his missive with a striking warning for the same Hugh he had commended William to obey not twenty lines earlier:

Even if...from fear of some kind or from favor he [Hugh] should fail to do this [anathematize William for the abuse of the Dieish church], we however shall not leave a crime of such great boldness unavenged, and the bishop would weigh well that danger was impending for him for negligence of duty in a ministry that is not lightly undertaken.<sup>34</sup>

Gregory's anxieties about the untested Hugh, though understandable, would prove to be groundless. The only reason the pope would ever find to rebuke his new bishop would be an overabundance of zeal in the papal service and an unwillingness to compromise with those who he viewed as enemies of Rome. By the end of Gregory's pontificate in 1085, Hugh would become the most powerful churchman in the kingdom and perhaps the single most important figure in the establishment of Roman dominance in the region. Hugh did not wield this authority through himself; his great accomplishments were achieved as a legate, a diplomatic position in service to the pope that was radically redefined during Gregory's reign. This new model of the legatine office, developed and refined in France by Gregory, Hugh, and other legates such as Amatus of Oloron and Gerard of Ostia, provided an avenue for the papacy to establish a

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.69.

permanent presence in the French church and to reorient the ecclesiastical judicial system towards Rome.

As was the case with reformist ideology, the new pope received an innovative and vigorous legatine system as a bequest from his predecessors on his assumption of office in 1073. The bishops of Rome had used emissaries and messengers of various kinds since Late Antiquity, and the pre-Gregorian reformer popes had already begun to mold the office of legate into active agents of papal influence as opposed to the surrogates and diplomatic agents they had been in earlier centuries. By the time of the reform, the old tradition of the *legati nati* ('born legates'), the bishops who by virtue of their office were supposed to act as agents of Rome in their regions, had nearly died out. In its place arose the *legati missi* ('sent legates'), the group of legates appointed by the Pope for their individual character and accomplishments rather than their title.<sup>35</sup>

Though it had begun to expand, the legatine system of 1073 still operated informally and without an explicit protocol. Even what their office was precisely to be called remained somewhat unsettled. Gregory used various terms to refer to the officials he invested with the power to act in his name: sometimes *legatus*, sometimes *vicarius* ("vicar"), sometimes *nuntius* ("messenger"), most often simply *filius noster* or *frater noster* ("our son" or "our brother").<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, they had a relatively substantial pedigree—the popes from Leo IX to Alexander II made a fairly extensive use of legates to the French kingdom. Hildebrand<sup>37</sup> himself, as a subdeacon, served as a legate in France and Germany under Leo and under Victor II his successor, completing a number of important diplomatic missions and working to investigate

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<sup>35</sup> Bonaventure Cerretti, "Legate" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. 9 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910). (Ceretto 1910)

<sup>36</sup> To take a few representative examples, the same group of messengers are referred to as *legati* in 2.32 and as *nunti* in 2.52a, and Hugh of Die is referred to by all these titles at various times.

<sup>37</sup> Gregory's pre-papal birth name was Hildebrand of Sovana.

bishops accused of simony and nicolaism.<sup>38</sup> Because the *legati missi* were hand-selected by the Popes, they could be more solidly expected to further the agenda of Rome than the earlier legates who had received their role automatically upon their assumption of office. They could also be sent on a more flexible variety of missions, as were Gregory's legates in France, and could be charged with any task from completing a surgical diplomatic mission to settling a dispute over monastic jurisdiction to working with local authorities to eradicate simony in a given region.<sup>39</sup>

Though the *legati missi* were often sent on finite and well-defined missions, they could also be stationed indefinitely in a region without a goal less broad than the advancement of the reformist agenda. Such an assignment was given in 1063 by Alexander II to Peter Damian, one of the foremost intellectuals of eleventh-century Latin Christendom and a strong supporter of the reformers. Though Damian was under Alexander's direction, he had a wide latitude to act on his own initiative, interpreting the broad goals of his assignment in a way of his choosing.

Alexander's letter to the French archbishops informing them of Damian's commission is worth quoting at length for the insight it gives into the origin and purpose of the new papal legates:

Your holy fraternity [of French bishops] is not unaware...that on account of the authority of the Apostolic See...the oversight and administration of the whole of the universal church is incumbent upon us. Seeing as we are occupied by the many affairs of the church and are unable to come to you ourselves, we have arranged to send to you a man who in the Roman church holds power lesser only to ours--Bishop Peter Damian of Ostia, who is our very eye and indeed the immoveable firmament of the Apostolic See. We therefore commission this man as our vicar and invest him with full legal authority, so that whatever rulings he, God's help with him, should make in these lands might be held to be as fast and inviolable as if it proceeded from our very own judgment. Therefore we warmly advise and exhort with apostolic authority your fraternity [of French bishops]...to humbly obey his judgments and sentences.<sup>40</sup>

As is apparent from the above quotation, the new legatine office arose largely in response to the practical problems posed by expanding papal authority. When the bishops of Rome had

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<sup>38</sup> Hazel Goggin, *Hugh, Bishop of Die and Archbishop of Lyons: An Agent of Papal Reform in France* (Dublin: Trinity College Press 1995), 165-166.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, passim.

<sup>40</sup> Bouquet and Delise, *Receuil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France* Vol. 14, 537.

been largely unconcerned with issues not local to central Italy, a well-developed legatine system was not a necessity. As the first reforming popes began to involve themselves in the affairs of churches across Latin Christendom, they found themselves inundated with too many questions for the Roman church apparatus on its own to act as a direct operator in all of them. This was compounded was further complicated by the fact that in this era in which voyage by horse was the fastest means of overland travel, communication was too slow for affairs in France to be managed directly from Rome. The semi-permanent *legati missi*, first Peter Damian and later Hugh of Die, provided what was necessary for Rome's influence in the French church to increase: competent, loyal emissaries who could stay in the Gallic kingdom for the long term, always mindful of their general assignments from Rome but able to react quickly to events on the ground as they developed.

Those reactions often involved the legates acting in a judicial role. An important component of the legate's duty from the beginning of the reform era was the condemnation, punishment, and removal from office of church officials who in one or another failed to live up to the new moral standards which were increasingly being placed upon ecclesiastical officials. When Peter Damian next appeared in Alexander's register, it was when the Pope confirmed his removal of a simoniacal abbot from office.<sup>41</sup> Gregory himself had been involved in the condemnation of errant bishops while a legate for Victor II in France.<sup>42</sup> The construction of the papal power of deposition was thus intimately associated with the construction of the legatine power of deposition. The new breed of *legati missi* served not simply as emissaries or diplomats, but as judges and prosecutors as well.

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<sup>41</sup> Bouquet and Delise, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Vol. 14, 540.

<sup>42</sup> Goggin, *Hugh, Bishop of Die and Archbishop of Lyons: An Agent of Papal Reform in France*, 165.

Given that the legates exercised their power through the pope rather than through themselves, the increased judicial activity of legates had the effect of centering the ecclesiastical justice system on Rome. It was not a new phenomenon for ecclesiastical cases, including ecclesiastical cases initiated by papal legates, to be referred for direct judgment from Rome; there was plenty of precedent before, during, and after Gregory's pontificate for sentences of deposition on church officials to be appealed to Rome. But Gregory was more proactive; where his predecessors made Roman judgment an option available to clergy across Latin Christendom, Gregory preferred to order litigants to appear before him to make their cases. An incident from March 1074 is illustrative: Gerard of Ostia, then the most senior papal legate in France, had enjoined the suffragans of Archbishop William of Auch to show the archbishop more reverence. When they responded that their continuing disobedience stemmed from valid complaints against William, Gregory ordered them to come to Rome to detail their allegations if allegations they had.<sup>43</sup> These innovations accord perfectly with one of the boldest statements in the *Dictatus Papae*, that all important judicial cases within the church should be referred to Rome.<sup>44</sup> This was not accomplished within Gregory's pontificate, but major ecclesiastical French cases were referred to Rome or a Roman legate more often than they were during the earlier reform movement. Because the main judicial alternative to accepting legatine rulings was to appeal directly to Rome, the ecclesiastical judicial system was bound ever tighter to Roman authority.

The work that the Gregory's legates on his behalf was not thankless, as their loyalty was rewarded with support from Rome whenever they ran afoul of local secular or ecclesiastical authorities. Bishop Isembert of Poitiers learned this lesson when he disobeyed and interfered in the activities of the legate Amatus of Oloron, Gregory sent him an angry letter demanding that he

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<sup>43</sup> Gregory VII, *The Register of Gregory VII*, 1.55.

<sup>44</sup> Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*, 21.

present himself for judgment at Rome. This marked the beginning of a bitter conflict between Gregory and Isembert in which Gregory harassed Isembert repeatedly and initiated efforts to have him deposed.<sup>45</sup> This was not an isolated incident: where the earlier reformer popes had been largely content with verbally admonishing members of the church to obey and honor their legates, Gregory proactively sought to bring harsh punishments to bear against those who failed to do so.

The protection afforded by Rome was only one way in which the French legate-bishops gained advantage from their position. Through their ability to exercise Roman authority and the support they received from Rome, the French legates gained an ability to upset the existing hierarchies of the French church in a manner that would not have been possible in previous centuries. In a purely French context, Manasses of Reims' office afforded him prestige and authority which a minor bishop like Hugh of Die could never have dreamed of wielding. Had a conflict between the two occurred in a time before the reform movement, Hugh would almost certainly have come out the worse for it. But in the changing world of eleventh-century Latin Christendom, Hugh was able to successfully marshal Roman authority the bureaucratic institutions of the church to drive Manasses from office. Minor regional players could use the weight of Roman authority to raise their station in ways that would have been impossible otherwise.

This fact did not go unnoticed by Manasses, nor did he accept it quietly. He met his ill end largely because of his attempts to resist the growing authority of legates and the threat to established power structures they represented. When Hugh summoned him to judgment in 1078, the archbishop, recognizing that his privileged position in the French church was in jeopardy, wrote to Gregory claiming that he did not need to obey a papal legate who was not actually from

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<sup>45</sup>See Gregory VII, *Register*, 1.73, 2.2.

the city of Rome. Gregory's response was terse and blunt: "We marvel greatly that your prudence was led so far as to ask that in our good will we would diminish the rights of the apostolic see and that, in matters of business concerning yourself alone, something should not be allowed to us that in respect of everyone's matters of business our predecessors enjoyed without contradiction as permissible and lawful."<sup>46</sup> Despite Gregory's protestations, the authority he was granting to Hugh of Die in this case was a substantial innovation. The power balance within the French church was undergoing a quiet revolution. The power of the mighty archbishops was in decline, the authority of legates was on the rise, and the entirety of French church was becoming more directly subject to Roman authority than it had been before. However, even the new legates were not powerful enough to construct papal authority in France entirely on their own. This problem was overcome by the novel manipulation of another existing bureaucratic structure, the episcopal council, as will be explored in the next subsection.

### **Episcopal Councils**

The final and most important tool used by Gregory and his legates to assert their authority over the French church was the episcopal council. Indeed, it is not strictly speaking accurate to describe any French bishop as being deposed by Gregory VII; all had their sentences either given or confirmed by a gathering of the bishops from the region around the accused's diocese. These councils, which were held regularly across eleventh-century Christendom, had broad authority to make rulings concerning ecclesiastical affairs and were the main vehicle for resolving regional disputes in the pre-reform era church. By strategically manipulating the existing institution of the ecclesiastical councils, Gregory and his legates were able to marshal to gain a degree of influence in the French church that could never have achieved through unilateral action.

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<sup>46</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 6.2.

The church council or synod was an integral part of virtually every facet of religious life in medieval Europe. The doctrinal glue that united Latin Christianity, including such foundational concepts as precise relationship between the members of the Trinity, had been formulated and approved by the great councils of antiquity. More immediately, councils were held often and regularly, and most routine ecclesiastical business that could not be settled within a single diocese was referred to a synod. Greta Austin has even argued that the sum total of conciliar rulings formed an “interpretive tradition” which, together with the gospel, was expected to guide the decisions of bishops in ecclesiastical disputes.<sup>47</sup> It was customary for Rome to host a general synod each Lent season; there were also occasionally large gatherings in other cities, as well as a large number of regional councils of various sizes. Their jurisdiction was determined by their size: the Lenten Synods and other general gatherings had a wide latitude to make ecclesiastical law to be followed by the whole of the church, while the regional councils were limited in scope to local issues. The popes had virtually secured the sole right to call a truly general synod, but regional councils could be called by any authority figure: a lay ruler, a noble, an archbishop, or a papal legate.

Upon Gregory’s assumption of the pontificate, it was far from obvious that this conciliar culture would be a tool to achieve papal goals: rather, the opposite was closer to the truth. The high volume of synods and the general respect for their authority was a hallmark of the horizontal power structure of the pre-reform church, in which ecclesiastical authority was distributed among the general body of the episcopacy. For example, when the aftermath of the 1066 Norman Conquest of England raised questions of canon law in that country, the Archbishop of Canterbury called a general council in London to definitively settle the issues at

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<sup>47</sup> Greta Austin, “Bishops and Religious Law 900-1050” in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2007), 44.

hand; the papacy was not involved in any way, nor was any papal representative present during the conciliar deliberations.<sup>48</sup>

There was additionally some precedent for episcopal councils being the site of open defiance of papal authority. At the general synod of 1067, William the Conqueror decreed that the King of England could choose to accept or reject the authority of any Pope, and that the ecclesiastical law of England would be made through synods convened by the King.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, Emperor Henry IV would ultimately call a synod of German bishops at Brixen in 1080 that declared Gregory deposed and selected a rival claimant to the Roman See.<sup>50</sup> There was a further complication in that many of the rights which Gregory was beginning to assert for the bishop of Rome, such as deposition and judgment of ecclesiastical cases, were traditionally held to be under the purview of the ecclesiastical councils.

The increasing activity of papal legates in France, however, allowed those legates to co-opt the power of the episcopal councils as a tool for the exertion of papal influence. The right of the papal legate to call an episcopal council had already been established by the time Gregory took office. As noted in the previous section, the pope himself had previously operated as a legate in France and had called and presided over a pair of regional synods. The presence of a papal legate afforded extra gravitas to the council; it also made it more likely that the pope would be satisfied with the council's decisions. Given that it was increasingly likely that any individual unsatisfied with a conciliar ruling would appeal to Rome, this was not an inconsequential consideration.

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<sup>48</sup> Joannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* vol. 19, 555.

<sup>49</sup> Berman, *Law and Revolution*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Various, "The Decision of the Synod at Brixen," *The Avalon Project*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/inv13.asp>. [Original source: Henderson, *Documents of the Middle Ages*.]

In the matter of councils, the innovations of the Gregorian reformers in France can largely be attributed to Hugh of Die. Gregory's other legates in France were known to call councils at times: Gerard of Ostia held one at Bordeaux, probably in 1074,<sup>51</sup> and the obscure Subdeacon Hubert held one at Montreuil sometime before November 1076.<sup>52</sup> Such legatine activity can be viewed as comparable to the precedents set by an earlier generation of French legates operating on behalf of reformist popes. Hildebrand's own activities as a legate in France, in which he held two councils over the course of about five years in the mid-1050s, stand as a good example of this. Hugh of Die, in contrast, called a full thirteen clerical councils in his time as papal legate.<sup>53</sup> The issues addressed by these councils were standard fare for such gatherings: jurisdictional conflicts, issues relating to the independence of monasteries, the chastisement and deposition of errant bishops. Yet the fact that so many councils were called and presided over by one of the most zealous defenders of Roman supremacy in the whole of the Latin Christendom inevitably meant that the interests of Rome were inevitably prominently represented. The local grew less local in the French church, and issues which would have been settled purely by regional authorities in past times (and still were in other parts of Europe) were increasingly subject to the influence of the pope and his agents.

It is true that Hugh drew a gentle rebuke from Gregory for his activities in France, but it should be noted that Gregory's displeasure was not with the frequency of Hugh's activity but rather with its severity; his specific instruction is that Hugh should strive to "be censured for mercy [rather] than...for excessive severity."<sup>54</sup> Indeed, in exhorting Hugh to be mild to those under his jurisdiction, Gregory specifically urged him to forgive those offender who were willing

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<sup>51</sup> Goggin, *Hugh of Die*, 179.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 2.43

to confess and do penance for their crimes before him at a Roman synod.<sup>55</sup> The breadth and frequency of Hugh's interventions in local French ecclesiastical politics never drew Gregory's ire, nor did they ever have cause to, for they were perfectly in line with Gregory's personal ecclesiology in which the papacy should take an active role in the affairs of each individual diocese.

This state of affairs can be seen as a compromise between the ideal church existing in the minds of the Gregorian reformers and the real French church of the late eleventh century. The strictest interpretation of the *Dictatus Papae* never came close to being realized in France under Gregory's pontificate. Far from episcopal deposition being the sole and unilateral prerogative of the pope, it in practice required the accord of a critical mass of local clergy in the form of a synodal vote. However, Gregory's demand that "[t]he more important cases of each church shall be referred to the Holy See"<sup>56</sup> was nonetheless partially fulfilled, at least in relation to the French church. The sheer quantity of French synods held by Hugh, and the subsequent referral of cases to Roman synods to be placed under the direct oversight of Gregory, abrogated the need for councils fully independent of papal authority. Rome gained a voice in the major cases of the French church. Although the unilateral control Gregory believed he was entitled to remained elusive, this nonetheless marked a substantial and unprecedented increase in papal power over French ecclesiastical concerns.

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<sup>55</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 2.4

<sup>56</sup> Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*, 21.

### Chapter III: The Mechanics of Deposition

The great paradox of French reform is that it was a non-systematic effort that effected systematic change. Papal intervention in the French church during Gregory's pontificate was undeniably conducted on an *ad hoc* basis, consisting of the pope and his legates reacting to events on the ground in the French kingdom. In the words of H.E.J Cowdrey, "[Gregory] reacted to events [in France] rather than directing them."<sup>57</sup> And yet Gregory's dealings with the French Church did fundamentally alter his relations with that institution. In the words of Kenneth Pennington, "By the twelfth century, the judgment of bishops had generally become a papal prerogative."<sup>58</sup> This had not been the case even as late as the pontificate of Alexander II, Gregory's immediate predecessor. The establishment of papal authority to judge bishops, and by extension the establishment of papal authority over the whole French Church, hinged on the outcome of a series of apparently minor and provincial judicial processes.

For reference, I shall now lay out the basic facts of the cases of each deposed French bishop which this thesis examines:

**Archbishop Manasses of Reims** was a sympathizer of the reform movement and an early ally of Gregory VII. He first ran afoul of the papacy when he refused to travel to the Council of Autun (September 1077), an episcopal gathering called by Hugh of Die on Gregory's orders to deal with the cases of French bishops accused of simony. For this lapse he was excommunicated by Hugh, who was in communication with a number of clerics in the diocese of Reims who were personal enemies of Manasses. This sentence was reversed by Gregory in March 1078 on the grounds that it was too harsh. Manasses sent a letter to Gregory complaining of his ill treatment by Hugh in August 1078 in which he claimed the right to not obey any papal

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<sup>57</sup> Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 400.

<sup>58</sup> Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 76.

legates not from the city of Rome; this earned him a sharp rebuke from the pope. Members of the clergy of Reims continued to bring ill reports of Manasses' doings to Gregory and Hugh, accusing him of seizing the possessions of his suffragans for personal gain. Gregory ordered Hugh to summon Manasses before another council which was held at Lyons in February 1080. Manasses again failed to show up, writing a letter to Gregory claiming that he was unable to travel safely to Lyons. The council voted to depose Manasses, a decision which Gregory offered to revoke should Manasses apologize to Hugh and his offended suffragans and spend a year living as a monk. The archbishop refused this offer, and in early 1081 Gregory sent out letters to the clerics and secular rulers of Reims urging them to cease obeying Manasses. The archbishop was removed from office by the end of the year and thence disappears from the historical record.<sup>59</sup>

**Archbishop Humbert of Lyons** was a powerful cleric and a well-known simoniac. Hugh of Flavigny reports that he offered to invest Hugh of Die for money, which Hugh of Die (being viciously opposed to simony) refused. He was condemned at the Council of Anse in 1075, the first council called by Hugh of Die. This sentence which was upheld and praised by Gregory, who commended Hugh on his zeal in dealing with simony. Humbert was formally removed from office in 1077 at the Council of Clermont, also called by Hugh. Hugh of Flavigny reports that spent the rest of his days as a monk.<sup>60</sup>

**Archbishop Herman of Vienne** was also condemned at the Council of Anse in 1075 and then deposed at the Lent Synod of 1076. He was described in the Lent Synod's records as being guilty of simony, acts of perjury and sacrilege, and apostasy." It is uncertain but possible that the

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<sup>59</sup> See Gregory VII, *Register*, 1.4, 5.17, 5.22, 6.2, 6.3, 7.12, 7.20, 8.17-20. Most secondary accounts of Manasses' downfall, such as Ott "Reims and Rome are Equal," simply synthesize the information available in these letters.

<sup>60</sup>Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 399.

perjury referred to involved the breaking of an oath to Rome. This possibility is made more likely by the fact that Humbert's perjury is associated with his sacrilege, given that Gregory tended to demand that bishops swear on the Tomb of St. Peter, a holy site. More specific details about Herman's crime have not survived.<sup>61</sup>

**Bishop Stephen of le Puy** gained his seat in 1074 with Gregory's approval, defeating a rival episcopal claimant (also named Stephen) who the pope viewed as a simoniac invader and promptly swearing an oath of allegiance to Rome. This Stephen quickly found himself out of Gregory's favor; he was excommunicated by Hugh of Die sometime in 1076 and then condemned and deposed at the 1076 Lent Synod in Rome, where he was described an anonymous record-keeper as a "simoniac and homicide." Slightly later in 1076, a French council called by Hugh of Die at Claremont declared him deposed again for good measure. In March 1077 Gregory wrote letters to the whole French clergy ordering them to have no dealings with Stephen, who he accused of breaking his oath to Rome. The bishop seems to have been driven from office by the end of the year. The exact crimes which Stephen was accused of have not been preserved.<sup>62</sup>

**Bishop Robert of Chartres** is another figure about which relatively little is known; he first enters the historical record in 1076, swearing an oath to resign when ordered to by a papal legate. The circumstances of this oath are unknown; what is certain is that Robert did not obey it, and was condemned by Gregory as a perjurer. Robert was driven out by his immediate superior, Archbishop Richerius of Sens, and by his own clerics by the end of the year.<sup>63</sup>

**Bishop Rainierius of Orleans** was perhaps the French bishop who most openly defied papal authority. Gregory first made recorded contact with Rainerius in April 1076, when he

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<sup>61</sup> Goggin, *Hugh of Die*, 124.

<sup>62</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 1.80, 3.10 and Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 400.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 3.17a, 4.14.

summoned him to Rome to explain rumors that the bishop had been engaging in the same simoniacal behavior that had earned him a condemnation from Alexander II. Rainerius ignored this summons. Gregory offered to forgive him if he took an oath that he had never received the previous summons; Rainerius ignored this as well. At this point, late 1077, Gregory ordered Richerius of Sens to convene a council to depose Rainerius, sending Rainerius a copy of the same letter along with a warning to obey the council's rulings; Rainerius responded by imprisoning the papal messenger. The council did gather and vote to depose Rainerius; Gregory extended one final chance for Rainerius to absolve himself, which he failed to do. By March 1079 a papally-supported candidate named Sanzo had appeared to challenge Rainerius, who found Gregory's support but apparently not much success. How this affair ended is lost to history.<sup>64</sup>

**Bishop Isembert of Poitiers** came close to being deposed in 1074, but managed to avoid that sentence. His crime, described in a letter Gregory sent him in September 1074, was to send armed men to prevent the legate Amatus of Oloron from dissolving an incestuous marriage of the count of Poitou. Gregory demanded that Isembert come to Rome to account for his actions before him; the pope even warned Archbishop Gozelin of Bordeaux to be prepared to take steps to have Isembert removed from his see. This effort seems to have petered out as quickly as it began; Isembert retained his position, and in later years became an ally of Gregory's. The historical record is silent on how exactly this happened, but it seems likely that either Gregory lost interest in Isembert or that Isembert made satisfactory penance.<sup>65</sup>

In this chapter I will analyze the similarities between these cases, making the argument that Gregory and his legates exercised a consistent policy towards the French Church with the

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 3.17, 4.9, 5.8, 5.9, 5.20, 6.23.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 2.2, 2.23, 6.32.

goal of increasing the authority of the papacy over the French Church. In the first section I will show how Gregory harnessed the rhetoric and goals of the reform movement to target and penalize bishops who attempted to resist or subvert papal authority. I will then proceed to analyze the alliance which Gregory formed with local clergy, and why so many French clerics were willing to support the pope's efforts to depose rebellious bishops. Finally, I will analyze the strategy Gregory took to make sure that sentences of deposition were actually carried out, as well as analyzing the two cases in which these strategies did not work and the bishops in question were not deposed.

### **The Crimes**

Deposition was fundamentally a judicial process; for a bishop to be removed from office, he had to be accused of a specific crime or crimes. It is on this point that the first major commonality among the cases of the deposed French bishops emerges. The nominal rationale for their removal from office was generally that they had engaged in some activity that contradicted the tents of the reform movement: they were simoniacs, or they had allowed a secular ruler to choose the successor of a bishop, or they had neglected the duties of their office in pursuit of influence in secular politics. But, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the actual similarity which the deposed bishops shared was that they all were guilty of consciously and conspicuously resisting or disrespecting Roman authority. Gregory and his legates' efforts to depose French bishops were also efforts to assert Roman authority and punish those who opposed it. The fact that these efforts generally found success represented a marked increase in the authority which the pope could wield over the French church.

Some historical guesswork must be used when deciphering the crimes for which a bishop was nominally removed from office. In many cases the actual rulings issued by the various

councils which passed judgment have been lost; often what has survived are merely roughly contemporary summaries of the rulings. Even when more complete records survive, their focus tends to be on the sentence rather than on the trial. It is not uncommon for only a few words to be given to describe the reasoning behind the deposition of a given bishop. A brief extract of a *post facto* summary of the rulings of the Roman Synod of 1075 suffice to give the reader an idea of the challenge of determining the exact crimes a given bishop was accused of:

Archbishop Liemar of Bremen he [Gregory] suspended from office for the disobedience of his pride...Bishop Guarnerius of Strasbourg he suspended from episcopal and sacerdotal office. Henry of Speyer he suspended. Hermann of Bamberg he has likewise suspended if he shall not have come by Easter to make satisfaction.<sup>66</sup>

There is slightly more information about the rulings of the 1076 synod, of which the actual record survives. In it we learn, for example, that Archbishop Hermann of Vienne had been “justly deposed for simony, acts of perjury and sacrilege, and apostasy,” but no indication is given of precisely what these various acts were. To such sources we may add retrospective accounts found in chronicles as well as the surviving letters amongst the relevant parties, which often include language concerning the bishop’s crimes which is more rhetorical and picturesque than judicial and exact. From these sources, we can paint a tentative picture of the crimes which the French bishops were deposed for.

The single most common charge which lost French bishops their jobs was simony. This is not particularly surprising; in addition to the importance of simony as an issue in the reform movement which was described in Chapter II, France had something of a reputation as a hotbed for that particular vice.<sup>67</sup> The charges leveled by Gregory and by Hugh of Die against French bishops generally conformed to this stereotype. Charges of simony played major roles in the cases of Hermann of Vienne (who was explicitly described as a simoniac by Gregory), Rainerius

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<sup>66</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 2.52a.

<sup>67</sup> See for example Hugh of Flavigny’s description of , *Chronicon*,

of Orleans, Stephen of le Puy, and Humbert of Lyons.<sup>68</sup> The allegation of simony was so strong a charge that Hugh of Flavigny even ascribed it to Manasses of Reims, who is not accused of simony in any of the contemporary documents relating to his case which have survived.<sup>69</sup> The odd ones out were Isembert of Poitier and Robert of Chartres, who were accused of disrespecting papal legates.

The reformers prosecuting these cases, did not view these themselves as opposing people, but rather as doing battle with broader social ills. As was shown in the previous chapter, reformist propaganda likened simony to a serpent or a weed, an impersonal force that the followers of true religion must battle against. From this perspective, the unique circumstances associated with each case of simony or lay investiture or nicolaism were less important than the things which bound them together. A deposition was not an isolated judicial proceeding against a single bad actor; it was a battle in a larger war against societal phenomena. The same language could be used to describe each case because they were all manifestations of the same societal disease, the same plague of simony.

This rhetoric proved an invaluable tool for increasing papal authority in France. The idea that loyalty and subordination (as opposed to merely deference and respect) were owed to Rome by all bishops was a novel concept, and in many regions it had not even emerged at all. As recently as the early eleventh century, it had been possible for individual bishops to ignore the direct admonition of the pope without consequence. In contrast, thanks to the efforts of the first generation of reformers, it was generally unacceptable by the late eleventh century to openly practice simony; the fact that no theoretical defense of the practice survives from the Gregorian era is testament to this fact. As Gregory and Hugh of Die discovered, a bishop guilty of

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<sup>68</sup> See notes to bishop's cases on pp. 33-35.

<sup>69</sup> Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronicon*, 415.

disobeying Roman authority could be removed from office provided he was accused of a moral transgression.

If one attempts to take the nominal crimes the deposed bishops were charged with at face value, the question would have to be asked: why these clerics? Hugh of Flavigny probably exaggerated when he claimed that virtually every cleric in France was a simoniac or had been invested by a layman, but it is still hard to believe that these seven bishops represented the principle moral offenders of the French church.<sup>70</sup> Rather, what unites the deposed bishops is that each was guilty of disobeying or subverting the authority of Rome. Manasses ignored papal summons to Rome and quarreled and disrespected Hugh of Die; Rainerius and Isembert forcibly interfered with the duties of French legates. Robert of Chartres took an oath of allegiance to Rome on assuming office. Stephen of le Puy, Herman of Vienne, and Humbert of Lyons all gained Gregory's approval by deceitful professions of loyalty to Rome, but soon proved themselves to corrupt and guilty of simony.<sup>71</sup>

As is apparent from the descriptions of their cases, a high proportion of the deposed bishops were specifically guilty of disrespecting or disobeying a papal legate in France. Manasses, Robert, Stephen, and Isembert all fit into this category; the first three were also guilty of having ignored a legate's summon to an episcopal council. Gregory seems to have been particularly determined to punish those who disrespected his legates. He was tolerant of Manasses, his former ally, until he sent a letter to Rome arguing that he should be exempt from the jurisdiction of papal legates, and he consistently supported his legate's efforts to punish bishops who ignored conciliar summons. Both of these institutions, the legate and the legate-called episcopal council, represented innovative intrusions into the affairs of the French church

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<sup>70</sup> Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronicon*, 238.

<sup>71</sup> See footnotes on pp. 33-35 for entries in Gregory's register which contain this information.

on the part of the pope. Resistance to them implicitly signified resistance to the vision of the church that Gregory laid out in the *Dictatus Papae*. On the result of these conflicts hinged the question of whether the papacy could establish a substantial, sustainable authority over the French church.

Signs of the deeper meaning of the deposition struggles are also discernable in Gregory's concern with being able to compel bishops to travel to Rome to appear before him. If the use of legates allowed for the papacy to come to anywhere in Latin Christendom, Gregory also struggled to assure that clergymen from various locations could be made to come to the papacy. The pope cared about this to the point that even so redoubtable a character as Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury, a mighty churchman on generally good terms with Gregory, could be sharply rebuked for failing to pay a visit to the Apostolic See.<sup>72</sup> As with the innovations associated with the legatine office, the underlying aim of this development was to shrink the physical distance and slow communication times which hindered super-local administration in the period. When the wily Bishop Rainerius of Orleans, one of the most persistent French renegades from Roman authority, first attracted papal ire in 1076, the thrust of the missive sent to him was a summons to a council: "we order that, between now and the festival of All Saints, you will appear before us in person and render account both of these matters and of many others that are alleged against you."<sup>73</sup> When Rainerius failed to do so, Gregory used this fact as his main argument to Archbishop Richerius of Sens (of whom Rainerius was a suffragan) that the Bishop of Orleans should be suspended from office; he also demanded that Richerius bring Rainerius with him to the next Roman synod.<sup>74</sup> Isembert, Stephen, and Robert all faced rebukes from Gregory for the same failing of ignoring a summons to Rome.

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<sup>72</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 6.30.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* 3.17.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 4.9.

There was undoubtedly a practical component to Gregory's emphasis on control over the physical location of his suffragans. It was more convenient to adjudicate all relevant cases at the handful of yearly synods in Rome rather than continuously and discretely, and it was easier to resolve complex disputes quickly when the parties involved could converse face-to-face rather than laboriously through written communication. Yet the greater part of this preoccupation impetus lay in its symbolic component. What incensed Gregory against Rainerius, enough to dedicate years of fruitless effort to remove the bishop from office, was not that Rainerius had failed to appear before him *per se*, but that he had disobeyed a direct papal order and thus flouted Roman authority. This was a shift from previous popes in that the act of disobedience to Rome, or at least one specific instance of it, was being constructed as a crime comparable to simony and nicolaism in severity.

In order for this symbolism to be taken seriously, it was of course necessary that there be serious actual consequences for disobedience. Papal agents, to the best of their ability, did their best to make good the admonitions issued alongside summons to episcopal councils. Manasses of Reims, once an ally of Rome and a dedicated reformer, took his first step towards losing his position when he failed to follow a summons to a council called by Hugh of Die—as an officiant, not as a defendant.<sup>75</sup> Despite the fact that Manasses sent an emissary in his stead, and offered legitimate reasons for this and for his future absences at councils called by Hugh, it was enough to ultimately earn him the loss of his job.

Gregory's emphasis on being able to summon bishops to Rome marked a dramatic break with the previous generation of popes. There is scant evidence in the letters of Alexander II of litigants or litigees being summoned to Rome; though his legates did on occasion summon bishops to councils they had called, there is no evidence of any major efforts to punish those who

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<sup>75</sup> John Ott, "Letters of (and Concerning) Archbishop Manasses of Reims."

failed to answer those summons. There is no reason to believe that the French bishops of the 1050s and 1060s were any more likely to be obedient to papal or legatine summons; if anything, it is likely that the inverse would be true, as there was already some precedent for more vigorous papal intervention by the 1070s that was not available in prior decades. It can thus be concluded that this obsession with the physical locations of bishops was a particularly Gregorian concern.

And yet if Gregory's pontificates marked dramatic changes in the relationship between Rome and the French church, those innovations were largely accepted among the French clergy by the end of Gregory's pontificate. Individuals might mount some resistance. Manasses of Reims offered erudite and well-sourced arguments to get out of being compelled to appear before various councils: to Gregory he claimed to be free of the summons of those from outside of the city of Rome, to Hugh he claimed that a bishop had the right to refuse an unreasonable summons.<sup>76</sup> Rainerius of Orleans took a more direct tact, ignoring repeated summons and imprisoning a messenger sent to him.<sup>77</sup> But for the most part the power and momentum of the reformist movement overwhelmed bishops opposed to Rome, allowing Gregory and his legates to lay the ideological groundwork for papal domination of the French church without major, unified resistance. This ideological victory, would not count for much were it not for Rome's partners on the ground in France who were willing to support the reformist agenda. The nature of this alliance will be explored in the following section.

### **All the Clergy and People: The Papal-Episcopal Alliance**

In 1157, almost a century after Gregory's death, Bishop Hilary of Chichester appeared before King Henry II of England to dispute the monarch on some points regarding ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In the course of their conversation, the bishop made the assertion that the right to

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<sup>76</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 6.2.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* 4.9, 5.9.

judge bishops lay with the pope alone. The king responded with a laugh. Thrusting out his palm, he said: “Very true. One can’t just depose a bishop. But you can push him out like so.”<sup>78</sup> The unilateral deposition of hostile bishops was always an option for powerful secular rulers like Henry II, who commanded armies capable of ejecting a bishop from his cathedral and placing a preferred successor in his place. Gregory had no such luxury; the pope lacked access to the brute force necessary to drive a bishop from office, and anyway there was no legal precedent for a pope unilaterally deposing a bishop from office. Rather, the power strong enough to drive so many bishops from their sees was a tactical alliance of local clerics with the Roman church and its emissaries. This alliance took a different form in each bishopric Gregory intervened in and was often precarious, but it could wield a substantial amount of ecclesiastical authority and was the engine which drove the reform of the institutions of the French church.

This alliance did not form by choice. The *Dictatus Papae* claims the right to depose bishops for the pope alone, and Gregory showed no compunction in threatening bishops with removal from office even though that decision was not technically his to make.<sup>79</sup> It is highly unlikely that the pope would have operated through the oft-times cumbersome process of calling and convening an episcopal council had he thought himself able to achieve the same goals working on his own. But the idea of unilateral deposition by the pope was simply too radical for anyone in the eleventh-century church to give serious credence to. As recently as a few decades prior, even the old papal right to hear appeals in cases of deposition had barely been honored.<sup>80</sup> The Gregorian reform in France was not directed from Rome, nor could it have amounted to anything if it had been.

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<sup>78</sup> Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 76.

<sup>79</sup> Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae*, 3.

<sup>80</sup> Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 76.

Yet it would be equally erroneous to describe the reform of the French church as operating in a “bottom up” manner in the Gregorian era. The process of condemnation was a two-way street; it required someone to make complaints and someone to hear them, someone to call a council and someone to attend it and vote. The investigation of bishops accused of wrongdoing was initiated by reports from local clerics, but it was handled by a combination of papal legates and French bishops working on the order of the pope. All of the French bishops deposed in this period were sentenced by episcopal councils convened by and presided over by papal legates; many of those councils were called specifically on Gregory’s orders.

The question thus emerges of where precisely the impetus came from that toppled so many primates of the French church. Who, for example, was responsible for the deposition of Manasses of Reims? Was it Hugh of Die, the papal legate who became his sworn enemy and called the council which condemned him? Was it the archbishop’s rebellious underlings, most notably the canon Manasses, who quarreled incessantly with his superior and who Archbishop Manasses credited with turning Hugh of Die’s mind against him? Was it the other northern French bishops, many of them Manasses’ enemies, who gathered at the Council of Clarendon in 1080 and voted for his deposition?

The answer to these questions is that both partners in this alliance were required for deposition to succeed. Rome and its legates provided the legitimacy of authority and of the pan-Latin Christian reform movement, and in return gained a partial ability to bring real consequences to bear against the enemies of the Gregorian agenda. Local clerics and occasionally secular figures provided the muscle necessary to effect real change on a local level; in return they received papal support in settling their personal quarrels and often achieved some

degree of material advance in return for their troubles (as was the case of Provost Manasses, who would become Archbishop Manasses II of Reims in 1096).<sup>81</sup>

The fact of this alliance is obscured by the primary sources available from the period, which tend to downplay the mutual dependence of either Roman reformers at the cost of non-Roman or vice versa. Returning again to the case of Manasses, eleventh and twelfth century historiography treats his deposition in two diametrically opposite ways. On the one hand stands the testimony of Guibert of Nogent, a monk from north-central France of moderate reformist who was a child when Manasses was removed from office. Recalling stories heard in his youth in his *Monodies*, Guibert describes his downfall as such: “[l]ater, after Hugh of Die—archbishop of Lyon, legate of the Apostolic See—had repeatedly struck Manasses with anathema...he [Manasses] was driven from the position he occupied with such wickedness by the nobility, the clergy, and the burghers.”<sup>82</sup> Though Hugh of Die appears as a character in this story, his punishments are not portrayed as particularly effective. In Guibert’s telling, the real push to get Manasses out of office came from local sources. The chronicler papal apologist Hugh of Flavigny, writing about a decade earlier, offered quite a different perspective. His work places the agency in the situation far more solidly in the hands of the pope’s agents, depicting the removal of Manasses from office as being the just punishment of an inferior by a superior (Gregory) and that superior’s loyal agent (Hugh of Die).

The reality was somewhere between these two extremes. At every stage of the successful processes of deposition in France, Roman and local authorities were in close collaboration, each providing something to the venture which the other could not. Each sentence of deposition handed down on a bishop was another victory for this tenuous yet quite powerful alliance. Yet it

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<sup>81</sup> Goyau, Georges, “Reims,” in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company 1913). From <http://www.knight.org/cathen/12725a.htm>.

<sup>82</sup> Guibert of Nogent, *Monodies*, trans. Jay Rubenstein (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 27.

remained imbalanced in one critical way: the pope and his legates, unlike local authority figures, lacked the ability to follow through and make sure that sentences of deposition were respected.

This had important implications, as will be explored in the following section.

### **You Can Push Them Out Like So: Enforcing Deposition**

This alliance of the pope, papal legates and local clerics, acting through the existing institutions of the church, had enough judicial authority to pass judgment even on very senior clerics such as Manasses of Reims. But for all the weight and authority the French episcopal councils wielded, their ability to physically remove clerics from their positions was highly limited. No matter how much legal authority a sentence of deposition might carry, there was always the possibility that a sentenced bishop might simply refuse to leave office. Gregory, who lacked a real army and wielded no political power outside the city of Rome, had very few means available to him to assure that conciliar sentences were actually carried out. When it came to the post-sentencing stage of the deposition process—the actual eviction of a deposed bishop from his see and the installation of a successor in his place—the agency of Rome was restricted. Gregory and his legates could do little besides offering verbal encouragement to local clerical and secular authority figures, urging them to make sure that the deposed bishop actually left office. The fact that deposition was almost always successful testifies to the willingness of local clerics to cooperate with the papal agenda, a willingness which stemmed from the benefits the Gregorian reform brought to much of the French clergy.

Sentencing by an episcopal council was far from the end of the process of deposition. Most deposed bishops did their best to fight their sentences through all available legal and extra-legal means and often were able to substantially delay the imposition of their punishments. As was demonstrated in Chapter I, the average eleventh-century bishop was viewed as having a

deep and semi-mystical connection with his diocese, and usually also had deep connections with the secular power structures in their diocese; severing these bonds was neither simple nor easy. Manasses of Reims had his formal sentence confirmed on December 27, 1080, yet there are records of him acting in his official capacity as archbishop as late as May 1081, and there is some reason to believe he was still consecrating churches as late as September of that year.<sup>83</sup> Robert of Chartres, similarly, was coerced by Hugh of Die in April 1076 that he would resign when ordered to by a papal legate, but when that eventuality came to pass he attempted to ignore his promise.<sup>84</sup> Bishop Stephen of le Puy also managed to dodge his excommunication and deposition at the Council of Clermont in 1076 for almost a year, first by appealing to Rome and then, after his sentence was confirmed at a Roman synod, by attempting to simply ignore his sentence.<sup>85</sup>

By the end of Gregory's pontificate, the pope had developed a fairly standardized *modus operandi* for dealing with deposed bishops. The base of this strategy lay in recognizing the powerlessness of the papacy and in appealing to local secular and clerical who authority figures who actually did have the ability to drive bishops from office. Unable to act directly, Gregory wrote letters: to archbishops, nobles, the canons of the deposed bishop's see, anyone who could help drive the bishop from office. The format of these letters was quite similar. They were addressed to a generic group in the see of the deposed bishop: "the clergy and the people of Chartres," "the canons of le Puy," "all the clergy and the people of Reims," and so on.<sup>86</sup> This was followed by a direct and to-the-point announcement of the deposition with brief notes on the crimes which caused the sentence and the judicial history of the case. At this stage of the letter,

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<sup>83</sup> John Ott, "Letters of (and Concerning) Archbishop Manasses of Reims." Retrieved on February 2, 2019 from <http://www.web.pdx.edu/~ott/manasses/index.html>.

<sup>84</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 4.14.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 4.18-4.19.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 4.14, 4.18, 8.17

Gregory usually took the chance to hurl invective against the deposed bishops. Taking again the above three examples, Robert of Chartres became “the monk Robert, who has occupied your church,” while Manasses became “a thief and a most savage robber...[who became archbishop] that he might rend and ruin the Lord’s flock.”<sup>87</sup>

For all the rhetorical boldness that is to be found in Gregory’s post-deposition letters, they nonetheless belie the underlying inability of the papacy to act directly to remove deposed bishops from office. In these letters, Gregory uses every persuasion strategy available to him. The authority of the papacy and of the episcopal councils is invoked, as are the heinous crimes which merited the sentence of deposition. Notably lacking, though, is any suggestion that Rome might intervene directly to assure that the bishop left office, or that Gregory might move to punish those who failed to act in accordance with his wishes. His letter to the clergy of Reims after Manasses’ deposition is representative in this regard. In that letter the pope cajoles and tries to convince his audience to cease obeying Manasses, arguing it is in their best interests, but he does not threaten them.<sup>88</sup> Though Gregory was doing his utmost to assert its agency and advance its goals at this point, the ultimate agency in driving deposed bishops out of office lay in the hands of local agents.

The exact recipients of Gregory’s post-deposition missives varied from case to case. There was usually at least one letter sent to the clergy; often another was sent to a specific noble or to the archbishop to whom the newly-deposed bishop was a former suffragan. Manasses of Reims, being the most senior deposed bishop, presents the most extreme version of this. Gregory sent a full four letters following his removal from office: the aforementioned general missive to the people and clergy of Reims; one to Count Ebohus of Roucy, a kinsman of Manasses, urging

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 4.14, 8.17.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* 8.17.

him to abandon his ally; one specifically addressed to Manasses' suffragans, ordering them to cease giving obedience to their former lord; and one to King Philip of France, urging him not to interfere with the deposition of Manasses or the election of his successor.<sup>89</sup> Though this is an extreme case, each deposition of a French bishop was followed by the equivalent of at least one of these letters, oftentimes two. These were the figures which actually had the power to make or break a deposition.<sup>90</sup>

They didn't always do so, as will be discussed in the following section, but they did, with surprising regularity. In each of the three cases at hand—Manasses, Robert, and Stephen—the bishop in question was successfully driven from office over the course of a few months. Again, a lack of sources prohibits too definitive a statement on the chain of events in these cases; it is likely that it involved some sort of internal dispute between the supporters and enemies of the incumbent in the church and secular power structure, the latter being egged on and indirectly supported by Rome and its agents. Certainly Gregory's post-deposition missives were packed with calls to action, often urging their recipients not to associate or obey the agents of the recently-deposed bishop. That this was necessary is a testament to the fragility of any sentence passed on a churchman by an episcopal council, and of the fact that procuring a formal sentence was only the first step in the process of deposition.

And yet in all cases save one<sup>91</sup> the struggle ended with the sentence being carried out and with the deposed bishop being removed from office. From this evidence we can make the assumption that the clergy under the deposed bishops generally were willing to abide by the sentence of deposition, despite a lack of obvious repercussions had they remained loyal. The

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 8.17-8.20.

<sup>90</sup> For example see Gregory letters following the depositions of Robert of Chartres (*Registry* 4.14), Stephen of le Puy (Ibid. 4.18, 4.19), and Rainerius of Orleans (6.23).

<sup>91</sup> Bishop Rainerius of Orleans, discussed at length in the following subsection.

reasons for this were no doubt varied. Reformist ideology was widespread, and many clergy genuinely sought the moral cleansing of the church at the cost of the deposition of their bishop. Some, like the Provost Manasses who played such a large role in Archbishop Manasses' downfall, were also motivated by personal animi against the deposed as well as a degree of desire for personal advancement.<sup>92</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, papal intervention gave such figures a chance to settle grudges with senior clerics that they would not have had in previous centuries. Such motivations go part of the way towards explaining the willingness of local authority figures to follow the directives of Gregory and of the episcopal councils rather than those of their own bishops.

Another consideration was the potential for the creation of a more egalitarian system for electing bishops. The creation of new bishops became an increasingly contentious issue in Latin Christendom over the course of the 1070s. The most common model, which reformers weighed against heavily, was of appointment by lay lord. As the reformers increasingly turned against this, the question arose of what would replace it. The response, despite the increasingly Rome-centric nature of the movement, was not an emphasis on the power of the Pope to choose successors to dead or deposed bishops. Rather, the model which was increasingly promoted by reformers was of a kind of restricted democracy, in which new bishops would be chosen collectively by the church that the candidate was to rule, with a moderate papal influence in that successful candidates were required to go to Rome to be ordained. I.S. Robinson describes this theory in its final form as it had developed by the mid-1080s. Quoting a Gregorian polemicist's apologia for a papal-supported bishop of Constance, Robinson identifies two major marks of

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<sup>92</sup> The depth of the personal animus between the two Manasseses is attested to by the Archbishop's harsh words about the provost to Hugh of Die and by the Provost's advice to Hugh that the Archbishop should be deposed, which can both be found in which can be found in John Ott, "Letters of (and Concerning) Archbishop Manasses of Reims."

episcopal legitimacy in the Gregorian mind: that he be “lawfully elected and demanded by all the clergy and people, and [that he be] solemnly enthroned...in the widowed see according to the apostolic authority [of the bishop of Rome].”<sup>93</sup>

The seeds of this philosophy are apparent throughout the record of papal dealings with France in the 1070s. Throughout the decade, Gregory’s register bears testament to the Pope’s concern with assuring free and fair elections to replace bishops. The people of Chartres, for example, were ordered “to elect such a bishop for yourselves as, not entering by some other way like as a thief or a robber but through the door, [that he] may be called a shepherd of sheep.”<sup>94</sup> The clergy of le Puy, likewise, were urged to “shake your necks clear of the yoke...and with [Hugh of Die’s] counsel elect yourselves a shepherd as is pleasing to God.”<sup>95</sup> This new model of election of new bishops must have seemed more attractive to many French clerics than the older model in which vacant bishoprics were filled by secular rulers or given to the highest bidder.

It was thus often in the interest of local clerical authorities to deal cooperatively with papal interference in their churches. Although the Gregorian reform did reduce the independence of the French church in some ways, it also brought tangible benefits in the form of more open episcopal elections and a watchdog powerful enough to punish powerful clerics who displeased enough of their subordinates. The emphasis in reformist literature on the necessity of preserving the church’s *libertas* from secular rule was not entirely propaganda.<sup>96</sup> Reform, even in its later stages, had clear and tangible benefits for many of the clergy it affected. It was this shared interest that formed the bedrock for the alliance between Roman and local authorities, an alliance which made French reform possible.

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<sup>93</sup> Iain Stuart Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Conflict* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), 168.

<sup>94</sup> Gregory VII, Register, 4.14.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 4.18

<sup>96</sup> Put examples here.

## The Failures of Deposition

This alliance, though powerful and capable of effecting dramatic changes within the French church, was nonetheless chronically fragile and could fail under the correct conditions. The remarkable success of the papacy and its agents in removing hostile French bishops from office should not obscure the cases in which it failed in that same effort. In this chapter I will focus on the two most high-profile cases of failed deposition: Rainerius of Orleans and Isembert of Poitiers. In both of these instances, an all-out effort on the part of Gregory to remove a bishop from office provoked stiff opposition from the cleric in question and ultimately ended in failure. However, although they were not removed from office, neither bishop emerged from their conflict with Rome unscathed. Isembert ultimately reconciled with Gregory and became a loyal servant of Rome; Rainerius, who never ceased to resist Gregory's efforts to punish him, found himself in a civil war in his own diocese against a papally-supported pretender to his position. Although papal authority was not irresistible in France at this point, it could no longer be ignored without serious consequences, as these cases bear witness to.

The stories of Rainerius and Isembert, at least at first glance, seem strikingly similar to the previously analyzed cases in which deposition went relatively smoothly. Both of them committed, or at least were accused of, virtually identical crimes to those which their less fortunate compatriots were. A letter from Gregory reveals Isembert's original sin which embittered Rome against him: he supported the marriage of the powerful Count William of Poitou, which both Gregory and a number of important clergy viewed as incestuous. When those clergy and a papal legate gathered in council in 1074 to annul the marriage, they were assaulted and beaten by thugs who Gregory assumed to be in the service of Isembert.<sup>97</sup> Though the particulars of this circumstance emerged from the unique dynastic politics of Poitiers, Isembert's

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<sup>97</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 2.2.

case still bore all the hallmarks of a deposable offence. involved a moral issue that also had deep implications concerning the relationship between clergy and lay rulers as well as the status of the bishop of Rome (Gregory was particularly outraged that Isembert had continued to act as bishop despite being placed under interdict by his legates). The initial crime of Rainerius seems to have been even simpler: pure simony. Gregory described the bishop as “simoniacally selling...almost all the ministerial offices of the church.”<sup>98</sup> Rainerius was also very much guilty of disobeying apostolic authority; not only did he ignore multiple summons to Rome, but he also associated with Eurard, a clerk who had been excommunicated since before Gregory even assumed the pontificate.<sup>99</sup>

Gregory’s attempts to depose Isembert and Rainerius also took the same shape as his other, more successful attempts to punish disobedient bishops. Rainerius in particular was subjected to virtually every trick in the papal book. The pontiff first called on Archbishop Richerius of Sens, usually a solid ally of Rome, to bring his suffragan into line, repeating the order after Rainerius simply ignored a summons to defend himself before a Roman synod. To get across the magnitude of the threat, Gregory sent a copy of his letter to Richerius to Rainerius; Rainerius responded by imprisoning the papal messenger. About a year later, when was Gregory finally satisfied that Rainerius could not be compelled to make amends, he began to threaten him with deposition by a council held by a legate. This came to pass and Rainerius was sentenced with deposition; true to form, he remained completely unresponsive.<sup>100</sup> His ultimate fate is

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 3.16

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> See footnotes on pp.33-35 for citations in Gregory’s register in which this narrative is told.

unknown, but as late as 1079 or 1080, long after his theoretical deposition, there is record of him engaging in everyday business in the see of Orleans.<sup>101</sup>

Isembert and Rainerius were both able to withstand Gregory's attempts to drive them from office, but they did so by employing opposite strategies. In the case of Isembert, the bishop avoided deposition partly due to a stroke of good luck, but also due to his openness to cooperating with Gregory on the pope's terms. This did not initially seem to be a likely scenario. Having ignored the interdict he had been placed under by the legate Gerald of Ostia, Isembert was summoned by Gregory to explain and defend himself before the Lent Synod of 1075.<sup>102</sup> The brief record of that council makes no mention of the bishop of Poitiers, and the dispute seems to vanish from history; when Gregory and Isembert next interacted, half a decade later, it was in the context of a perfectly cordial letter in which the pope asked the bishop to settle a minor dispute within his see.<sup>103</sup>

The abrupt end to Gregory's conflict with Isembert probably stemmed partly from a loss of interest on Gregory's part and partly from a willingness to make amends on Isembert's part. Gregory's quarrel with Isembert occurred at the same time (September-December 1074) as what Cowdrey describes as a "brief but violent crisis" between the pope and King Philip of France.<sup>104</sup> During this period, Gregory made efforts to assure the loyalty of the French bishops, who would likely be key players in any conflict between Paris and Rome. One suspects Gregory, hearing of so blatant an insult cast by a bishop towards Rome, was inclined to stamp out the disobedience as quickly as possible. This crisis, an aberration in the otherwise cordial relations between Gregory and Philip, had basically burned out by early 1075, making it less urgent for Gregory to assure

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<sup>101</sup> Joeseoph Thiller and Eugene Jarry (eds.), *Cartulaire de Sainte-Croix d'Orleans* (Orleans: Paul Pigelet 1906), 132.

<sup>102</sup> Gregory VII, *Register*, 2.23.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 6.32.

<sup>104</sup> Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 336.

the loyalty of the bishops of France to Rome. From the later friendly relations between the two, and Isembert's apparent willingness to run errands for Gregory, this seems to have been a double rapprochement, a meeting in the middle which resulted in a mutually agreeable relationship between bishop and pope.

Rainerius, confronted with a hostile pope, took the opposite tack from Isembert, resisting Roman authority thoroughly and consistently. The key to his impressive ability to survive at least half a decade of papal attempts to depose him lay in his absolute refusal to pay even lip service to any ideological framework of papal power. He afforded no respect to Rome or its messengers; he did not appear or send a representative to any councils, nor did he offer any response to repeated papal communication unless one counts his imprisonment of a messenger who brought him a menacing letter from Rome. After Rainerius ignored his first summons to Rome, Gregory offered him an "out," effectively stating that he would not punish Rainerius if the bishop swore that he had simply not seen Gregory's last letter. Where other bishops would have taken an opportunity to deceive, negotiate, and delay, Rainerius simply remained unresponsive, thus passing up a chance to achieve a reconciliation with Rome in the way that Isembert had.

Although Rainerius held to his bishopric tenaciously, the conflict he courted with Rome nonetheless took its toll on his authority within the see of Orleans. An unknown number of clerics in the city rallied to the papal standard and in 1079 elected an anti-bishop by the name of Sanzo. Gregory wrote these rebels a letter of commendation and encouragement in which he nonetheless was forced to admit that Rainerius "does not yet wholly appear to be parted from [his church]"; it was at about this time or later that he gave his signature to a document settling a dispute over a monastery in Orleans, a document that gives no indication that there was any

bishop of the city besides Rainerius.<sup>105</sup> These final glimpses into the affairs of Rainerius portray a bishop fighting for his life to retain his position, with mixed success.

Although the tactics and methods which subdued other previously failed, these were still qualified successes of some kind. Isembert, though peacefully remaining in office through the rest of Gregory's pontificate, seems to have given the Pope no more trouble and to have formed a cordial working relationship. Rainerius, even if he ultimately remained in office, was nonetheless forced into a bitter fight to remain in his position. Even if the ire of the Pope was not a death sentence, it was no longer something that could simply be ignored; even the most independent of bishops were forced to find a new accommodation under the new system. The French church had changed forever.

### **Conclusion: The French Church Harrowed**

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<sup>105</sup> See Joeseph Thiller and Eugene Jarry (eds.), *Cartulaire de Sainte-Croix d'Orleans*, 132 for the record of Rainerius' tenacity, and Gregory, *Register*, 6.23 for the quotation.

The efforts of Gregory VII and his legates to reform the French church had implications far beyond the eight bishops they attempted to remove from office. An unknowably large number of clergy in that kingdom was affected by the struggles of the Gregorian reformers. Dozens of bishops and lesser ecclesiastical figures were summoned to episcopal councils to judge their peers' guilt; all of the major archbishops of France were required at some point or another to investigate their suffragans for their accused crimes. These judicial processes were highly public, being conducted by a councils of church notables, and by 1085 any clergyman in France would have had ample opportunity to observe the fate of their compatriots who had taken it upon themselves to come into conflict with Rome. No cleric was safe from the prospect of deposition, from minor and obscure figures such as Stephen of le Puy to mighty prelates such as Manasses of Reims. Gregory's dealings with the French church, though it took the form of numerous small-scale interventions rather than a single large-scale conflict, nonetheless resulted in substantial and systematic change within that kingdom.

The general scholarly tendency to focus on the cases individual bishops has obscured the broader implications of the process as a whole, a case of missing the forest for the trees. The question of how the relationship of French bishops to each other and to the pope changed in the eleventh centuries is an understudied one among church historians of all stripes. The cooperation between pope and bishop in pursuit of a common goal, the blueprint for the removal of French bishops from office, would be a defining characteristic of the ventures of the post-Gregorian church. When Pope Urban II called the First Crusade in 1095, one of the primary organizers of the crusade in France was Archbishop Manasses II of Reims—the same Provost Manasses who had helped Hugh of Die depose his identically-named predecessor. Similar tactics to those Gregory used were employed by Popes at least as late as Innocent III (1198-1216), whose legates

deposed a number of French bishops (including one who declared himself to be pope within his own diocese).

The conclusions reached in this paper open the door for a wider investigation of the interactions between the papacy and the rest of the Latin Church in the Gregorian era. Gregory famously took it upon himself to interact with Christians all across the known world,<sup>106</sup> most of which was closer to France than to England or the Empire in terms of the organization of secular political authority. What parallels or differences to these French cases might be found in Gregory's dealings with the Polish or Hungarian churches, or other ecclesiastical institutions on the frontiers of Latin Christendom? The examination of Gregory's relationship with the episcopacy in general, not on a case-by-case basis or in the context of his relationships with secular rulers, would do much to shed light on these subjects.

There is also the question of the ultimate effect of Gregory's actions on the Kingdom of France. Papal interventions in the previously atomized French church tended to push it towards corporatization; bishops were made accountable to each other as much as they were made accountable to their distant colleague in Rome. The trend towards corporatization, a major tendency of medieval society in the post-millennial era, was exacerbated among French bishops by papal legates calling regular episcopal councils and by a pope who semi-regularly wrote letters addressed to all the bishops of France. Did these interventions perhaps prompt French bishops to think less parochially, to consider their place with France and within Latin Christendom as a whole? By the fourteenth century France would be a unified and mighty power, and the French kings (like the Holy Roman Emperors before them) increasingly found themselves in conflict with a papacy claiming for itself an increasingly dramatic form of supremacy. In these conflicts, the French kings managed to garner the support of a large majority

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<sup>106</sup> Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 423-424.

of French bishops used to playing various potentates against each other for their own benefit.

What role did the corporatization of the French church play in the rise of a unified secular French kingdom? Did the mighty Capetians kings of the thirteenth century benefit from a clergy ready to consider itself French rather than Reimsian or Aquitanian? These questions have broad implications and merit further scholarly investigation.

The potential impact of the French depositions on the history of the papacy is no less pronounced. As Kenneth Pennington describes in *Popes and Bishops: The Papal Monarchy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, from the twelfth century ecclesiastical thinkers, formalizing the vague notions of the reformers into a codified system of thought, generally constructed the papal office as a sort of monarch of the church. Pennington describes the outline of this theory thusly:

After building a formidable theory of papal monarchy, the canonists [of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries] did not conclude that the pope's supreme sovereignty reduced the bishops to officers whose authority was simply delegated by the pope or derived from him. The bishops had rights the pope should safeguard. Christ had established the "status ecclesiae" in which the bishops occupied an important place, and even the pope could not destroy it.<sup>107</sup>

This theory, dramatically different from the millennial conception of the papacy and its power described in Chapter I of this thesis, owes some debt to the vision of papal power which Gregory outlined in the *Dictatus Papae*. But the structure it actually describes bears striking parallels to the power balance in the French church of the Gregorian era. The concept of the pope as a limited monarch of the church, exercising sovereignty within the bounds of tradition, law, and local privilege, the norm in canon law in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was largely realized in France in the 1070s and 1080s. As Pennington points out, this model also laid the groundwork for the even broader conceptions of papal power of the late middle Ages and Renaissance. The interactions of Gregory with the French church thus prove to be a pivot point

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<sup>107</sup> Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 192.

for centuries of development of the theory and practice of papal power, a connection which deserves fuller study and which could prove a fruitful point of investigation for future scholarship.

**Appendix A: Map of France in About 1030 AD**



Figure 1 Map of France c.1030 (Coward 1998), By Zigeuner - Own work, from France about 1035, in William R. Shepherd, The Historical Atlas, 1911

### Appendix B: List of Relevant Figures

### The Gregorian Reformers

**Pope Gregory VII** (c.1015-1085, r. 1073-1085): Born Hildebrand of Sovana, Gregory was for almost three decades the leader of a party of radical ecclesiastical reformers based in Rome, first as a deacon and papal advisor in the 1050s and 1060s and then as pope. In office, Gregory worked tirelessly to eliminate simony, nicolaism, and lay investiture across Latin Christendom, simultaneously asserting more and more rights and privileges to belong to the bishop of Rome.

**Hugh of Die** (c.1040-1106, r. Bishop of Die 1074-1081, r. Archbishop of Lyons 1081-1106): Hugh was an ardent reformer and the most prominent and most active of Gregory VII's legates in France, mainly active in the northern part of the kingdom. From 1075 to 1085, Hugh called thirteen councils and deposed multiple bishops, prosecuting clerics for simony and other crimes with such zeal that Gregory was forced to censure him on at least one occasion for overzealousness.

**Amatus of Oloron** (r. Bishop of Oloron 1073-1089, r. Archbishop of Bordeaux 1089-1101): Another papal legate in France, less active than Hugh of Die but still a steadfast supporter of Gregory's agenda. Amatus generally worked in the south of France, and was instrumental in the deposition of Stephen of le Puy.

**Gerard of Ostia** (Unknown): A French legate active in the early parts of Gregory's reign. He was not as active as Hugh of Die or Amatus of Oloron, though he was responsible for first placing an interdict on Isembert of Poitou.

**Subdeacon Humbert** (Unknown): A French legate active early in Gregory's pontificate; almost nothing is known about him.

### The Pre-Gregorian Reformers

**Pope Leo IX** (1002-1054, r. 1049-1054): Generally classed as the first of the reformer popes, Leo was a German cleric who gained the papacy with the support of Holy Roman Emperor Henry III. In a series of synods, Leo condemned simony and clerical marriage, and started a line of popes who took an active and sustained interest in promoting the reform movement across Latin Christendom.

**Pope Victor II** (c. 1018-1057, r. 1055-1057): A reformist pope for whom the future Gregory VII was a legate in France. Victor continued Leo's policy of campaigning against simony and clerical marriage.

**Pope Alexander II** (1010-1073, r. 1061-1073): Gregory's immediate predecessor and the greatest of the pre-Gregorian reformer popes. Alexander continued his predecessors' tendency to involve the papacy in the affairs of churches across Latin Christendom, especially in France.

### The Deposed French Bishops

See pp. 31-32.

### Other French Clerics

**Archbishop Richerius of Sens** (r.1062-1096): A powerful French cleric who was generally amenable to the goals of the Gregorian reformers and often collaborated with Gregory's requests for him to investigate bishops accused of crimes.

### Secular Rulers

**King Phillip I of France** (1056-1108, r. 1060-1108): The weak Capetian king of France whose area of actual control did not extend far beyond the city of Paris. Phillip had one major dispute with Gregory in 1075 over the rights of pilgrims to French shrines, but otherwise maintained cordial relations with the pope. He did not play a particularly large role in French reform.

**Emperor Henry IV** (1050-1106, r. 1060-1105): The Salian Emperor whose long conflict with Gregory dominated the latter part of his pontificate. Their dispute was over lay investiture, specifically Henry's right to invest lay bishops, which Gregory fiercely denied. Despite several attempts to resolve this conflict, it outlasted both Henry and Gregory, and Gregory died in exile, forced from Rome by Henry's troops.

Bishopric: The office held by a bishop.

Diocese: The area of jurisdiction of a bishop, generally centered around a city containing a large church called a cathedral.

Holy Roman Empire: A large and powerful polity in central Europe, centered around modern Germany and with a theoretical lineage reaching back to the Carolingian Empire ruled by Charlemagne. The emperors frequently fought with popes from the eleventh century onward over matters related to the imperial church.

Latin Church/Latin Christianity: A name for the collection of regional Christian churches, mostly in modern western and central Europe, whose liturgy was in Latin. By the late eleventh century the Latin Church had begun to split theologically and doctrinally from the Greek Church of the eastern Mediterranean and the other Christian churches farther to the east.

Latin Christendom: The regions where the Latin Church was the prevailing religious institution, roughly corresponding to modern Europe, running north-south from Italy to Scandinavia and east-west from the British Isles to Poland.

Lay Investiture: The practice of new bishops being selected by a secular ruler rather than being elected by the clergy of the relevant diocese. This was the norm until the Gregorian era, and was a major point of contention between Gregory VII and multiple secular rulers.

Nicolaism: Another name for the practice of clergy marrying or being sexually active. This was widespread in the Latin Church until the eleventh century and was a major target of the reform movement.

Pope: An informal but common name for the bishop of Rome, who by longstanding tradition was viewed as being preeminent among the bishops of the Latin Church.

Reform Movement: A widespread movement from the early eleventh century onward seeking to eradicate what reformers saw as immoral practices from the Latin Church.

See: The throne of a bishop, often used metaphorically to describe a specific bishopric (e.g., the see of Reims refers to the bishopric of Reims).

Simony: The buying or selling of church offices for material gain. A major goal of the reform movement was to eradicate simony.

Simoniac: A person guilty of simony.

Suffragan: A bishop under the jurisdiction of another bishop. For example, the bishopric of Orleans was under the jurisdiction of the archbishopric of Sens, so the bishop of Orleans was a suffragan of the bishop of Sens.

#### **Appendix D: The *Dictatus Papae***

1. That the Roman church was founded by God alone.
2. That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal.
3. That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.
4. That in a council his legate, even if a lower grade, is above all bishops, and can pass sentence of deposition against them.
5. That the pope may depose the absent.
6. That, among other things, we ought not to remain in the same house with those excommunicated by him.
7. That for him alone is it lawful, according to the needs of the time, to make new laws, to assemble together new congregations, to make an abbey of a canonry; and, on the other hand, to divide a rich bishopric and unite the poor ones.
8. That he alone may use the imperial insignia.
9. That of the pope alone all princes shall kiss the feet.
10. That his name alone shall be spoken in the churches.
11. That this is the only name in the world.
12. That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors.
13. That he may be permitted to transfer bishops if need be.
14. That he has power to ordain a clerk of any church he may wish.
15. That he who is ordained by him may preside over another church, but may not hold a subordinate position; and that such a one may not receive a higher grade from any bishop.
16. That no synod shall be called a general one without his order.
17. That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority.
18. That a sentence passed by him may be retracted by no one; and that he himself, alone of all, may retract it.
19. That he himself may be judged by no one.
20. That no one shall dare to condemn one who appeals to the apostolic chair.
21. That to the latter should be referred the more important cases of every church.
22. That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness.
23. That the Roman pontiff, if he have been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter; St. Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, bearing witness, and many holy fathers agreeing with him. As is contained in the decrees of St. Symmachus the pope.
24. That, by his command and consent, it may be lawful for subordinates to bring accusations.
25. That he may depose and reinstate bishops without assembling a synod.
26. That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered catholic.
27. That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Gregory VII, "The *Dictatus Papae*."

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