1077 and all that:

Gregory VII in Reformation historical writing

ABSTRACT

From the late Middle Ages onwards, the reputation of Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073–85) was hotly debated. Lionized during the Catholic Reformation, the controversial pope was also the target of strident polemic from conciliarists, German humanists and then, most intensely, from Protestants. This article will focus on the development of polemic against Gregory by Lutherans and English Protestants. Important contemporary sources against Gregory were unearthed by humanist and conciliarist scholars such as Johannes Aventinus and Ortwin Gratius and then published by Protestants such as Philip Melanchthon and Caspar Hedio. English writers with strong connections to the Lutherans such as Thomas Swinnerton and Robert Barnes presented the polemical history of Gregory's pontificate to English audiences. It was then further extended by Matthias Flacius, John Bale and John Foxe. Yet while all Protestant accounts of Gregory agreed that he epitomised papal depravity, there were significant variations in emphasizing which qualities of his were truly Antichristian. For some writers it was his imposition of clerical celibacy, for others his excommunication and deposition of an emperor and for others it was his activities as a sorcerer. This article will conclude discussing these variations and evaluate the reasons for their popularity. Gianmarco Giuliani's article in this collection describes how Gregory VII became a keystone in Catholic interpretations of the Church and the Papacy. This article will attempt to show how he became a keystone of Protestant interpretations of ecclesiastical and papal history.

Ever since his pontificate and down through the following centuries, there has been a virtually unanimous consensus that Gregory VII (r.1073-85) was a decisive figure in the history of the Church. He has also been, in his lifetime and ever since, a deeply controversial figure as well. This article is not about Gregory, however. Instead the first part of this article examines the genesis and formation of what became the standard Protestant account of Gregory VII; this account began to be created in the fifteenth century and it was established, in all of its essential details, by 1570. In the second part of this article, I will analyse the changing ways that Gregory VII was depicted by Protestant writers and how the ways in which he was depicted were rooted in specific religious, social and political contexts.

Reformation depictions of Gregory VII provide an instructive example of the intertwining of history and polemic in the Reformation, but there are other insights to be gained from studying Protestant historiography on Gregory VII. For one thing, while a great deal has been has been written about the Protestant use of medieval history, there are few detailed examinations of the portrayal of specific medieval figures in Protestant historical writing.[1] This article provides a detailed account of the evolution of the Protestant account of Gregory, describing the sources on which it was based and analysing the often tendentious use of these sources by humanist, Lutheran and English Protestant authors. At the same time, there has been a trend in scholarship which minimises the influence of Lutheran theology on the English Reformation after the reign of Henry VIII.[2] This may be true of Lutheran theology, narrowly defined, but as will be seen in the case of Gregory VII, Lutheran scholarship shaped English Protestant interpretations of Church History and, in doing so, it would subtly but powerful influence English Protestantism. Finally Protestant depictions of Gregory are characterised by varying emphases being placed the iniquitous deeds of the pope at different times and in different circumstances; studying these changing accusations provides insights in the nature and impact of anti-papal polemic during the Reformation.

II

[1] Margaret Aston, 'John Wycliffe's Reformation reputation', *Past and Present* 30 (1964), 23-51 and Thomas S. Freeman, 'John Bale's "Book of Martyrs"?: The account of King John in *Acts and Monuments*' , *Reformation* 3 (1998), 175-223 examines the accounts by English Protestant writers of John Wiclif and King John of England. Helen Parish looks at English Protestant accounts of Thomas Becket, St Dunstan and various medieval popes (*Monks, miracles and magic: Reformation representations of the late medieval church* [London and New York: Routledge, 2005], chaps. 5 and 6). Kurt Stadtwald, 'Pope Alexander III's humiliation of the Emperor Barbarossa as an episode in sixteenth-century German history', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992), 755-68 describes Lutheran historians using a medieval legend for polemical purposes while Phillip N. Haberkern, *Patron saint and prophet: Jan Hus in the Bohemian and German Reformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) examines commemorations of Hus by the Hussites and the Lutherans.

[2] The most forceful presentation of this view is Alec Ryrie, 'The strange death of Lutheran England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2002), 64-92.

The winter of 1076–77 was unusually severe, but high up in the Apennines, a barefoot figure stood waiting outside the gates of the castle of Canossa.[3] The man in the snow sought absolution from an anathema issued by Pope Gregory VII, who was residing in the fortress. The man outside the castle gate, however, was no ordinary penitent, he was the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and the humiliation that he underwent would be remembered vividly in the Catholic and Protestant Reformations as, depending on one's confessional allegiance, either a triumph for the True Church or for Antichrist.

As Hildebrand, a Cluniac monk, who rose to become cardinal archdeacon of Rome, the future Pope Gregory VII had been in the forefront of a reform movement which had swept the eleventh century Church. This movement, which sought to weaken lay influence over the Church, ended up being led by a series of popes. Specific objectives of the reformers were the elimination of simony (broadly defined as the attainment of clerical office, not simply through purchase, but also through any exercise of secular influence) and the abolition of clerical marriage. A linked objective of the reformers was to establish clerical control over the appointment of senior clergy. These objectives were linked because clerical marriage fostered the hereditary succession of church offices and thus restricted the opportunity for papal appointments to these offices. This was a matter of crucial political, as well as ecclesiastical, importance because bishops and abbots were powerful figures on whose loyalty and support monarchs and princes needed to rely. But if secular rulers could no longer control the appointments of senior clergy, then they lost control of the resources these clerics administered. Such considerations transformed the Holy Roman Emperors, originally champions of ecclesiastical reform, into its opponents.[4]

The election of Hildebrand as pope in 1073, saw the ascension to the papacy of a longstanding champion of papal reform, who was also a remarkably polarizing figure:

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[3] For the severity of the winter of 1076–77 see Lampert of Hersfeld, *The Annals*, ed. and trans. I. S. Robinson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015) (hereafter *LH*), 347.

[4] Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 79–108. See also H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 27–58.

driven, energetic, dedicated, self-righteous, zealous and almost completely incapable of compromise. Nevertheless, relations between Gregory VII and Henry IV, the Holy Roman Emperor, were, in the beginning, relatively amicable. From 1073 until 1075, Henry was preoccupied with a major rebellion in Saxony. Having defeated the rebels in 1075, Henry then sought to quell violent disturbances in Milan between rival claimants to the archiepiscopal throne. He deposed the different claimants and forcibly installed his own candidate as archbishop. Milan had long been a focal point of papal-imperial tension and Henry's action seemed even more provocative because Gregory had held a synod earlier that year which unequivocally prohibited lay appointments of clergy. Henry's high-handed imposition of secular control over a major archbishopric provoked Gregory to threaten to excommunicate and depose the Emperor. In 1076, Henry summoned a synod of his bishops at Worms which decreed Gregory's deposition. But Henry had overplayed his hand. Gregory countered by excommunicating the Emperor. A considerable number of German bishops remained loyal to Gregory, a large body of German nobles felt that Henry had overreached and the Saxons renewed their opposition to the Emperor. In October 1076, Henry met with the German nobles and they swore to end their recognition of him as emperor if he did not receive absolution from the pope within a year of his excommunication.[5]

In the meantime, Gregory VII commanded that the emperor and the German nobles meet him at Augsburg and started to make his way north to Germany. Henry decided that the best course was to intercept the pope *en route* and negotiate with him in the absence of the German nobles. Hearing that the Emperor was heading for Italy, Gregory withdrew into a castle belonging to his most trusted ally, Matilda, margravine of Tuscany.[6] After an arduous journey, Henry arrived at Canossa where his reception by Gregory was, literally and figuratively, cold. The Emperor, anxious to receive absolution, was kept waiting, barefoot and penitentially clothed only in simple woollen clothes, from 25 January to 27 January 1077 outside the inner gate of the

[5] Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 114–16; Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 129–53; I. S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056–1106* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 138–58.
[6] Robinson, *Henry IV*, 158–61 and Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 153–56.

castle at Canossa.[7] Although Henry appeared to be a powerless suppliant, Gregory's options were, in fact, limited. He would have preferred not to rescind the excommunication until the issues between the Emperor, the German nobles and the Church had been settled. However, a disadvantage, at least in practical terms, of being pope is that one must be perceived to be practicing Christian virtues. Gregory could not refuse to pardon a publicly repentant sinner. Henry's absolution simultaneously saved his throne and alienated Gregory's allies who had wanted the Emperor deposed. In 1080, Rudolf, Duke of Swabia, a rival claimant to the imperial throne, was defeated by Henry IV and died in battle. This victory allowed Henry to focus his attention on Gregory and the Emperor appointed an antipope, Archbishop Guibert of Ravenna, who proclaimed himself Clement III, and then tried to oust Gregory. In 1084, Henry's armies entered Rome and although Gregory was rescued by his allies, he died in exile in 1085.[8]

Yet although Canossa was politically an ephemeral triumph for the papacy, its emblematic power was enduring and the humiliation of the greatest secular ruler in Christendom was not forgotten.[9] Gregory's pontificate witnessed substantial achievements in championing papal prerogatives and implementing ecclesiastical reforms, but his greatest impact was arguably symbolic, in providing an archetype of papal power that remained relevant for centuries.

III

Gregory's uncompromising championship of papal authority and clerical celibacy made him a hero to the Counter Reformation Church. In 1583, Gregory XIII had Gregory VII's name included in the Roman martyrology under the date 25 May; this step gave official confirmation to a local cult which had formed at Salerno, where Gregory VII had

[7] Gregory's account of what happened at Canossa is in Gregory VII, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085*, ed. and trans. H. E. J. Cowdrey (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 222; also see *LH*, 347–56.
[8] Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 218–32 and 677–78; also Robinson, *Henry IV*, 204–5 and 222–35.
[9] Harald Zimmerman, *De Canossagang von 1077* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975), 41–98.

been buried.[10] Gregory XIII's action was almost certainly a response to the recent excommunication of Gebhard Truchsess von Waldburg, the archbishop of Cologne who, despite announcing his conversion to Protestantism in December 1582 and marrying in February 1583, had refused to resign his see. Honouring Gregory was a justification for the excommunication of the archbishop and ultimately a justification of the military intervention—which led to a decade long war—to depose him.[11] Yet it was also an insistence on the legitimacy of the papal power to excommunicate and, by extension, a declaration of the papal readiness to use it. (It is worth noting that, in 1580, Gregory XIII republished *Regnans in excelsis*, the papal bull excommunicating Elizabeth I and releasing her subjects from obedience to her).

The potent symbolism of this aspect of Gregory VIII's legacy meant that, for fear of offending the rulers of Europe, (who were disturbed by Gregory's claims to the authority to depose reprobate princes), veneration of the eleventh century pontiff needed to be circumspect. In 1609, when Gregory was canonised, Paul V ordered that his feast day only be celebrated in Salerno. In 1728, when Benedict XIII ordered that Gregory's feast day be observed throughout the Church, this decree 'caused a furore in the royal courts of Catholic Europe'.[12] Urban VIII cleverly managed to glorify Gregory obliquely by commissioning Bernini to carve a statue of Gregory's loyal supporter Matilda of Tuscany for St Peter's in Rome; a statue which had a relief at the bottom showing Gregory in triumph at Canossa. The interest of Urban, the last pope to extend papal territory in Italy, in his bellicose predecessor is both manifest and understandable, even though Gregory's militant reputation, which Urban wished to invoke, prevented him from erecting a statue to Gregory himself.

The Catholic hierarchy's commitment to lionizing Gregory can be seen in the curious fate of a biography of the pontiff, written by the eminent archaeologist, antiquarian and historian Onofrio Panvinio. Before his death in 1568, Panvinio wrote a

[10] I would like to thank Prof. Simon Ditchfield for explaining the steps that Gregory XIII took to honour Gregory VII in a personal communication.
[11] On Gebhard Truchsess von Waldburg and the 'Cologne War' see Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 1, 402–3.
[12] Simon Ditchfield, '"Historia magistra sanctitatis"? The Relationship between Historiography and Hagiography in Italy after the Council of Trent (1564–1742)', in Massimo Firpo (ed.), *Nunc alia tempora, alii mores: storici e storia in età postridentina* (Florence: Olschki, 2005), 23.

short account of Gregory VII, which would not appear in print until 1609, when it was included in a work, edited by a Jesuit named Jacob Gretser, defending various Catholic interpretations of ecclesiastical history.[13] In introducing Panvinio's life of Gregory, Gretser alludes to the reasons that probably prevented it from being published earlier when he warns his readers that Panvinio had relied too heavily on schismatic writers such as Sigebert of Gembloux, Burchard of Ursperg and Johannes Aventinus.[14] Gretser assured his readers that, to protect them from error, he would provide annotations and cross-references to Cesare Baronio's *Annales ecclesiastici* in those places in Panvinio's text that were suspect.[15]

In fact, Panvinio was not without admiration for Gregory VII; at the conclusion of his biography he extolls Gregory's courage and his zeal to protect true doctrine as well as praising his defence of an embattled church against heretics and schismatics.[16] Nevertheless, Panvinio's account is measured. He describes events such as Canossa or Gregory's death coolly, without anger or melodrama.[17] More importantly, Panvinio made a real effort to be objective. For example, he describes Gregory's struggle with Henry IV as arising from the pope's riding roughshod over traditional imperial rights and prerogatives; opinions which Gretser, citing Baronio, could not refute quickly

[13] Onofrio Panvinio, 'Gregorii Papae VII vita', in Jacob Gretser (ed.), *Controversiarum Roberti Bellarmini Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalis amplissimi defensio*, 2 vols. (Ingolstadt: Adam Sartorius, 1607–9). vol. 2, cols. 235–73. I am most grateful to Stefan Bauer for informing me about this work and sending me a digital copy of it. The late Eric Cochrane claimed that Panvinio had 'prepared' a four volume history of Gregory VII and his pontificate but Cochrane did not supply a reference to this work or any further information about it. (Eric Cochrane, *Historians and historiography in the Italian Renaissance* [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981], 398). I have been unable to find any trace of this work.

[14] Sigebert of Gembloux (c. 1030–1112) was the author of the *Chronicon sive Chronographia*, a universal chronicle first printed in 1513. He was also opposed to Gregory VII and that pontiff's expansive view of papal power. Gretser is also referring to a chronicle written at the abbey of Ursperg, by its provost Burchard in 1229 or 1230. This chronicle was continued from the year 1230 and printed by Casper Hedio, a Protestant historian and theologian, in 1537. Johannes Aventinus was the author of a highly regarded and markedly anti-clerical history of Bavaria. The historical writings of both Hedio and Aventinus will be discussed in more detail further on in this article.

[15] Gretser, *Controversiarum ... defensio*, vol. 2, cols. 231–32.

[16] Panvinio, 'Vita', in Gretser, *Controversiarum ... defensio*, vol. 2, cols. 270–73.

[17] Ibid., cols. 259–60 and 269–70.

enough.[18] It would be Baronio's unreservedly admiring account of Gregory VII which would be the standard Catholic Reformation interpretation of the controversial pontiff.[19] The long account of Gregory VII in the *Annales ecclesiastici* culminates with praise of Gregory as a champion of the faith and of the prerogatives of the papacy. If this were not enough, Baronio concludes with a list of testimonials to Gregory's sanctity and posthumous miracles performed by his relics.[20]

III

The accomplishments that made that made Gregory a hero to early modern Catholics understandably made him abominable to early modern Protestants. Like the Catholics, Protestants recognised the importance of Gregory's pontificate, particularly his deposing Henry IV and his enforcing clerical celibacy. But to the Protestants these actions were not simply misguided, they were diabolical. As a result, even though the vast majority of sixteenth-century Protestants regarded the Papacy, and all medieval popes, as embodiments of Antichrist, Gregory VII was nevertheless regarded as particularly evil. John Foxe, the author of an enormously influential history of the Church, the *Acts and monuments* (popularly known as Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'), summarized the Protestant views of Gregory's unholy importance:

> From this Pope (if thou marke well) springeth all the occasion of myschefe, of pride, pompe, stoutnesse, presumption and tiranny which sence that time hath raigned in his successors hitherto, in the Cathedral church of the Roman clergy . For here came firste the subiection of the temporall regiment under the spiritual iurisdiction and emperors which were theyr masters are now made theyr underlings. Also here come in the suppression of priestes marriage as is

[18] Ibid., cols. 241, 245–46 and 263–67.
[19] See Gianmarco Giuliani, '*Reformatio* or *Restauratio'* (in this volume), p. 19.
[20] Cesare Baronio, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 12 vols. (Cologne: Johann Gymnico and Anton Hierat, 1609), vol. 11, cols. 436–612, esp. cols. 611–12. For more on Baronio and Gregory VII, see Giuliani, '*Refmatio* or *Restauratio*'.

> sufficiently declared … .Finally here comes in the first example to persecute of emperors and kings with rebellion and excommunication. [21]

It was a short step from believing that Gregory was an egregiously evil pope to believing that his pontificate marked the zenith of Antichrist's power. As the English polemicist Thomas Beard put it, in a nautical metaphor, Gregory's pontificate was ''the top and top-gallant of his [Antichrist's] reign'; Beard went on to add that Antichrist's 'tyranny and pride encreased by degrees till Gregory the seventh when it was ascended to his highest power'.[22] In his last work, a commentary on Revelation, Foxe also stated that Gregory's pontificate was the time when Antichrist reached the height of his power.[23] One English author even maintained that the thousand year imprisonment of Satan, described in Revelation, began with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 73 and ended with the election of Gregory VII in 1073.[24]

Protestant convictions of Gregory's depravity were reinforced by the ongoing discovery, in the sixteenth century, of a number of eleventh-century sources profoundly hostile to Gregory VII. Although Protestants would make eager use of these sources, their discovery and dissemination was the work of German humanists who, before the Reformation, sharply attacked the papacy. Their hostility stemmed from the humanist perception of the popes as determined opponents both of ecclesiastical reform and the Holy Roman Emperors, whom the humanists regarded as the representatives and champions of the German people.[25]

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Jacob Wimpheling printed the *Carmen de bello Saxonico*, a poem written around 1076 which extolled Henry IV, from

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[21] John Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perilous dayes touching matters of the church…*(London: John Day, 1563), 29–30 (hereafter *A&M* [1563]).
[22] Thomas Beard, *Antichrist the pope of Rome* (London: Isaac Jugard, 1635), 180–81.
[23] John Foxe, *Eicasmi seu meditationes in sacram Apocalypsim* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1587), 90.
[24] George Downame, *A treatise concerning Antichrist* (London: Cuthbert Burbie, 1603), Book II, 64. The Temple was, in fact, destroyed in AD 70.
[25] John F. D'Amico, 'Ulrich von Hutten and Beatus Rhenanus as Medieval Historians and Religious Propagandists in the Early Reformation', in idem, *Roman and German Humanism, 1450–1550* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 3–4.

a manuscript which he had discovered in the library of Speyer Cathedral.[26] In 1518, Johannes Aventinus published the laudatory *Vita Henrici IV* which he had discovered in the monastery of St Emmeram in Regensburg. Included in this volume was an appendix of Henry IV's official letters, also discovered by Aventinus. Among these letters were four issued by Henry IV in 1076, which announced the deposition of Gregory VII and denounced him as a papal usurper and a false monk.[27] In the meantime, Ulrich von Hutten discovered, at the monastery of Fulda, in 1519, the *Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda*, one of the most important of the pro-Imperial tracts written during the struggle between Gregory VII and Henry IV. He wasted no time in having the work printed in 1520.[28] Humanist writers, such as Wimpheling, Aventinus and von Hutten, were closely followed by Lutheran writers such as Sleidan and Melanchthon; together they succeeded in portraying Gregory VII as a usurper who tried to seize the imperial crown from the rightful emperor, Henry IV.[29]

Yet while the German humanists provided material which the Lutherans used, their religious beliefs were not necessarily similar. Aventinus was bitterly anti-clerical and sympathised with the Lutherans; in fact, his antipapal feelings were so pronounced that he provided much of the historical evidence for George Downame's early seventeenth-century treatise 'proving' that the Papacy was Antichrist.[30] And von Hutten openly sided with Luther, although, he had earlier opposed the papacy from political and patriotic, rather than religious, motives.[31] But Wimpheling, while

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[26] *Carmen de bello Saxonica*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, SS rer*. *Germ*. 17 (Hanover: Hahn, 1889), x–xi.
[27] Gerald Strauss, *Historian in an Age of Crisis: The Life and Work of Johannes Aventinus, 1477–1534* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 68, 92.
[28] John F. D'Amico, 'Ulrich von Hutten', 12, 17–18. A translation of the these four letters into English can be found in *Imperial Lives and Letters of the Eleventh Century*, trans. Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 138–99.
[29] Erica Schirmer, *Die Persönlichkeit Kaiser Heinrichs IV. im Urteil der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung* (Jena: Biederman, 1931), 26–44. Similarly, German humanists portrayed Frederick Barbarossa as the victim of papal aggression, creating a legend that Alexander III forced the emperor to prostrate himself and stepped on his neck. This story was, as were the negative accounts of Gregory VII, appropriated by the Lutherans. (See Kurt Stadtwald, 'Pope Alexander III's Humiliation', 755–68).
[30] See Downame, *Antichrist*, Book I, 32, 37–39, 51, 66–69 and 121 and Book II, 371.
[31] See Jacques Ride, 'Ulrich von Hutten contre Rome: motivation et arrière-plans d'une polemique', *Recherches germaniques,* 9 (1979), 3–17.

sympathetic to the conciliarists and a champion of the Holy Roman Emperors, was also a dedicated Catholic who rejected Luther's teachings and wrote works defending the Immaculate Conception.[32] In fact, while many of the most prominent German humanists penned scathing attacks on individual pontiffs, there was almost no dismissal of the institution as inherently evil. As one scholar has observed, 'the broadly shared sentiment of German humanists was one of harshly criticizing particular papal practices while re-affirming a fundamental loyalty to the papal monarchy'[33]

Just how far the convictions of the pre-Reformation humanists could diverge from those of the Protestants, who eagerly forged their research into powerful weapons of propaganda, is demonstrated by the example of Ortwin Gratius. Although he is now largely remembered as the target of Ulrich von Hutten's invective during the Reuchlin controversy, Gratius also compiled a collection of medieval documents, the *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum ac fugiendarum*, which became a cornerstone of Protestant interpretations of medieval church history. The *Fasciculus* was a major source for Protestants writing about the Middle Ages: Matthias Flacius drew on it significantly and John Foxe incorporated sizable extracts of it into his own work.[34]

One invaluable aspect of the *Fasciculus* for Protestants was that it provided documentation of medieval figures—such as Peter Waldo and the Waldensians, John Wiclif and Jan Hus—whom the Protestants regarded as spiritual predecessors whose

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[32] Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 41–60.

[33] Noel L. Brann, 'Pre-Reformation Humanism in Germany and the Papal Monarchy: A Study in Ambivalence', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 14 (1984), 160–61.

[34] Compare Ortwin Gratius, *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum* (Cologne: Peter Quentell, 1535), fols. 39v–43v, 50r–51r and 163v, with Matthias Flacius, *Catalogus testium veritatis* (Strasbourg: Paul Messerschmidt and Johann Oporinus, 1562), 220–30, 233–34 and 560. (Hereafter the *Catalogus testium veritatis* will be cited as *CTV*.) Flacius also summarises Gratius on the Donation of Constantine, cf. Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 62v–81r, with *CTV*, 490. For Foxe's incorporation of extracts from Gratius into the second edition of the *Acts and monuments*, compare Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 1v–26r, 39v–43r,150r–151r, 162v–167r and 217v–220v, with John Foxe, *The ecclesiasticall history containing the actes and monuments of thyngs passed …* (London: John Day, 1570) (hereafter *A&M* [1570]), 228–32, 549–50, 792–819, 858–60 and 868–69). Foxe also listed authors who denounced the Donation of Constantine from the *Fasciculus* (compare Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 65rv–80r, with A&M [1570], 144) and dramatically abridged Waldensian letters printed by Gratius (compare Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 84v–95r, with *A&M* [1570], 296).

existence demonstrated that there was a Protestant Church before Luther. But if Gratius documented these proto-Protestants, it was to bury them, not to praise them. In introductions to the documents that he printed, Gratius denounced these figures, especially John Wiclif, who was castigated as 'fodder for the fires of hell' and compared to Cerberus rabidly foaming at the mouth.[35] Gratius was an ardent conciliarist who saw a general council as the only hope for reforming a thoroughly corrupt church. The documents in the *Fasciculus* were intended to document the need for ecclesiastical reform, to subvert papal claims to supreme authority over the Church and to present precedents for maintaining the supremacy of general councils over the pope.[36] And although the *Fasciculus* was systematically looted by major Protestant historical writers, Gratius remained resolutely Catholic as the Reformation progressed. He attacked Luther in print, numbered the Catholic polemicists Johannes Cochlaeus and Friedrich Nausea among his friends and served as spiritual adviser for a Benedictine convent during the 1520s. As editor (and de-facto director) of the Quentell publishing house in Cologne, Gratius shepherded anti-Protestant works through the press, including John Fisher's *De veritate corporis et sanguinis Christi in Eucharistia, adversus Johannem Oecolampadium* to which Gratius contributed a preface extolling the bishop of Rochester's piety and erudition.[37] Gratius' unyielding Catholicism along with the extensive use Protestants made of the *Fasciculus* demonstrates the often complex relationship between Protestant historical writers and their predecessors. That complexity was increased by the willingness of Reformation writers in both confessions to subvert the purposes of the authorities which they cited. It is noteworthy that while Flacius and Foxe both lifted their extracts of writers criticizing the Donation of Constantine from the *Fasciculus*, they both failed to print, or even to mention, Gratius' defiant endorsement of the Donation's authenticity.[38]

Among the documents Gratius printed were letters from Cardinal Beno, an opponent of Gregory VII, containing lengthy, largely fictitious, accounts of the pope's

[35] Ortwin Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 152r and 241v–242r: 'pabulum gehennae ignis'.
[36] James V. Mehl, 'Ortwin Gratius, Conciliarism and the Call for Church Reform', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 76 (1985), 169–94.
[37] Ibid, 171–75.
[38] Compare *CTV*, 490, and *A&M* [1570], 144, with Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 62v–81r, 240r–241r.

crimes and misdeeds.[39] These letters had originally been printed as part of an edition of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's commentaries on the council on the Council of Basel, which was published in 1521.[40] The letters were printed in an attempt to discredit papal claims to both supreme headship of the Church and jurisdiction over secular rulers by discrediting the pope who had been an uncompromising advocate of these claims.

Martin Luther considered Gregory VII's pontificate as a milestone in the transformation of the Papacy into Antichrist.[41] Lutherans with humanist backgrounds and educations, such as Philipp Melanchthon and Caspar Hedio, continued to search for, discover and publish medieval sources which buttressed their anti-papal interpretation of the past. Hedio, who became a leading preacher in Strasbourg and sealed his adherence to the new faith by taking a wife, also continued the thirteenth-century chronicle of Burchard of Ursberg, an important and consistently anti-papal history, from the years 1230 to 1537 and oversaw its publication that same year.[42] It would be translated into German and published two years later and this edition would become, as Matthias Pohlig has observed, a standard historical text for the Lutherans.[43] An even more important source, at least for shaping Protestant perceptions of Gregory VII, was the *Annals* of Lampert of Hersfeld, which provided a very detailed account of the reign of Henry IV down to the year 1077. Although the *Annals* were not unknown, relatively few manuscript copies were made during the Middle Ages. However, Johannes Trithemius described the work late in the fifteenth-century, in his influential collection of lives of famous Germans and the humanist

[39] Gratius, *Fasciculus*, fols. 39v–43v.
[40] Martina Hartmann, *Humanismus und Kirchenkritik: Matthias Flacius lllyricus als Erforscher des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001), 159–60.
[41] See Giuliani, '*Reformatio* or *Restauratio*', 6.
[42] Miriam U. Chrisman, 'Casper Hedio of Ettlingen', in Peter G. Bietenholz (ed.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985–97), vol. 2, 169–70; Hartwig Keute, *Reformation und Geschichte: Kaspar Hedio als Historiograph* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 20–34; Matthias Pohlig, *Zwischen Gelehrsamkeit und konfessioneller Identitätsstifung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 283–88.
[43] Pohlig, *Gelehrsamkeit*, 214

historian Hartmann Schedel copied extracts from the work in 1507.[44] Trithemius and Schedel made Lampert's *Annals* widely known to scholars and it was first printed, under the auspices of Melanchthon, in Tübingen in 1525. A second edition followed from the same press eight years later and four further editions were printed in the Protestant centres of Frankfurt and Basel.[45]

IV

Despite the wealth of new material on Gregory printed in the first half of the sixteenth century (revealing the importance that early modern humanists and Protestants attached to his pontificate) Protestant interpretations of Gregory VII largely rested on three sources. The first of these were the letters of Beno, the cardinal priest of SS Martino e Silvestro al Monte. In 1085, Beno went over to the imperial side after Henry IV had entered Rome and he became a supporter of Clement III, the antipope whom the emperor supported against Gregory. Until his death sometime before 1099, Beno remained one of Clement III's leading adherents.[46] Beno was the author of two open letters to the cardinals; the first was written sometime between November 1084 and May 1085 and the second sometime after 1088.[47] In these letters, Beno claims that Gregory VII had poisoned six popes to smooth his own way to the

[44] *Lamperti monachi Hersfeldensis opera*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, SS rer. Germ., 38 (Hanover: Hahn, 1894), li–lv and Arno Mentzel-Reuters, 'Reformation drucken das Mittelalter: Luther's "Theologia deutsch" und Melancthons Lampert von Hersfeld' in Günter Frank and Volker Leppin, (eds.), *Die Refrormation und ihr Mittelalter* (Stuttgart—Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzburg), 98-99.

[45] *Lamperti … opera*, ed. Holder-Egger, xlvii–lxiv, Johannes Haller, 'Die Überlieferung der Annalen Lamperts von Hersfeld', in *Wirtschaft und Kultur: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Alfons Dopsch* (Leipzig: Rohrer, 1938), 410–23, esp. 417–18, and *LH*, 34–36. Mentzel-Reuters provides a detailed discussion of Melancthon directing the printing of Lampert's *Annals* and of the early editions of the work ('Reformation drucken das Mittlelalters', 98-110).

[46] See Zelina Zafarana, 'Benone', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960–), vol. 8, 564–69, and 'Benonis et aliorum cardinalium schismaticorum contra Gregorium VII et Urbannum II scripta', ed. Kuno Francke, in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum*, 3 vols. (Hanover: Hahn, 1891–97), vol. 2, 367–68. (Hereafter the *Libelli de lite* will be cited as *LL*). Beno is often carelessly confused with his contemporaries St Benno of Osnabrück and St Benno of Meissen; neither of these latter two figures were, however, cardinals.

[47] Zafarana, 'Benone'.

papal throne, that Gregory had attempted to have Henry IV murdered, that Gregory was a sorcerer (in one story Beno relates, Gregory's servants, in his absence, opened one his books of magic and inadvertently conjured up a host of demons) and that Gregory was heretic who blasphemously cast the Host into a fire.[48] All but the last of these charges were faithfully, indeed incessantly, levelled by Protestant writers for centuries.

Beno's letters not only contained a seemingly bottomless reservoir of colourful libels, they had the polemical bonus of being written by a cardinal, which allowed Protestants to claim that Beno's rank in the Catholic Church meant that he must be telling the truth about Gregory.[49] On the other hand, Beno shared a weakness of many polemicists: his obvious bias and exaggerations limited his credibility. Baronio caustically compared believing Beno's letters on Gregory to believing a description of Christ written by Caiphas.[50] Panvinio more soberly declared that, because of his overt animosity towards Gregory VII, no credit could be placed in Beno as a source.[51] Protestant writers tried, with considerable ingenuity, although only mixed success , to wriggle around Beno's obvious partisanship. The English apologist John Jewel, for example, blithely justified Protestant reliance on Beno by asserting that Catholic writers used sources whose biased sympathy *for* Gregory made them equally prejudiced and unworthy of trust.[52] Nevertheless, Beno's manifest hostility towards Gregory was a limitation to an otherwise invaluable source for Protestant propaganda.

The second major source for Protestant depictions of Gregory, the *Annals* of Lampert of Hersfeld, presented different opportunities and challenges for the Protestants. Lampert wrote his chronicle when he was a monk at the major Benedictine abbey of Hersfeld, ending his chronicle in 1077, possibly because he left

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[48] For a modern edition of Beno's letters see 'Benonis … scripta', in *LL*, vol. 2, 366–80.
[49] For an example of such claims see Richard Sheldon, *The motives of Richard Sheldon for his … renouncing of Communion with the Bishop of Rome* (London: Nathaniel Butter, 1612), Book II, 29.
[50] Baronio, *Annales*, vol. 11, col. 436. For other denunciations, by Baronio, of Beno as a liar and schismatic who slandered Gregory VII see *Annales*, vol. 11, cols. 438–40 and 499.
[51] Panvinio, 'Vita', in Gretser, *Controversiarum … defensio*, vol. 2, col. 272
[52] *The Works of John Jewel*, ed. John Ayre, Parker Society, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845–50), vol. 3, 346.

the abbey for a satellite house where he later became abbot.[53] Lampert appears to have left Hersfeld because he opposed Henry IV's policies to the extent that it created tensions for him with the abbot and monks of the pro-imperial monastery of Hersfeld.[54] Yet Lampert also had reservations about Gregory VII's reforms, particularly clerical celibacy.[55] Hersfeld's location in Hesse and its prominence, meant that Lampert was well placed to learn what was happening among the clergy in western Germany and eastern France.

Lampert's genuine ambivalence about Gregory and the events of his pontificate infused his narrative and meant that both Protestant and Catholic historians readily drew on the *Annals*.[56] Protestants were willing to ignore Lampert's general admiration for Gregory and his dislike of Henry because they valued his detailed accounts of clerical opposition to Gregory's attempts to mandate clerical celibacy. At the same time, Lampert's status as a monk was valuable to Protestants because it showed that eleventh-century clerics were opposed to Gregory's reforms. Finally, Lampert was less outspokenly partisan than Beno.

Beno and Lampert gained additional credibility from having been contemporaries with Gregory and they also had attitudes and biases which, to a greater or lesser degree, fitted Protestant requirements. But the works of both authors were limited in their coverage. Beno's letters dealt almost exclusively with Gregory VII's career and certain incidents in it while Lampert was focused on the clergy in Germany and France and their reactions to Gregory VII's policies. Neither author provided a general history of Gregory's pontificate, especially its military and political contexts. For this background Protestants relied on Bartolomeo Sacchi's *Vitae pontificum*, a collection of papal biographies, written around the years 1471–5. Sacchi, who was known as Platina from his birthplace, was a humanist who had a chequered career at the papal court—including two periods of imprisonment during the pontificate of Paul II—which, however, culminated in his appointment as Vatican

[53] For the inconclusive evidence that Lampert became the abbot of Hasungen see *LH*, 25–28.
[54] *LH*, 21–24.
[55] *LH*, 18–23 and 34.
[56] For Catholic historians using Lampert of Hersfeld see Giuliani, '*Reformatio* or *Restauratio*', 18.

librarian by Sixtus IV.[57] Platina's papal lives won acclaim for their elegant Latin style and were an enduring success throughout Europe.[58]

Yet Platina's papal biographies were a source that Protestants found uncongenial. Foxe would characterize Platina as 'a man not unlearned, but yet a shamefull flatterer and bearer with the wicked lives of the Popes'.[59] In fact, Protestant accusations of Platina's pro-papal bias were matched by Catholic charges that Platina was unfairly critical of the Papacy.[60] However, while Platina was quite critical of some popes—including his nemesis Paul II—he was an admirer of Gregory and Protestants had to work across the grain of his work to create the depiction of Gregory that they wanted. Nevertheless the Protestants reluctantly found Platina's work useful on Gregory since he provided a comprehensive and accessible overview of Gregory's pontificate and filled in details omitted by other sources. As a result, while Protestant historians consulted Platina, and even acknowledged his work as a source, they were ready to disregard or misrepresent what he said when it suited their interests. Thus, for example, while the Protestant writers Robert Barnes, John Bale, Matthias Flacius and John Foxe all read Platina's biography of Gregory VII carefully, they all stated that Rudolph of Swabia was a puppet of Gregory's and that the pope was the instigator of his rebellion against Henry IV even though Platina maintained that Rudolph and his supporters were acting on their own and that Gregory maintained a policy of strict neutrality between the two sides.[61] Nevertheless, Platina's papal biographies were the third major source on which Protestant interpretations were ultimately based.

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[57] Stefan Bauer, 'Sacchi, Bartolomeo, detto il Platina', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 89 (2017), 472–75.
[58] Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, 55.
[59] *A&M* [1570], 861.
[60] Stefan Bauer, '"Platina non vitas, sed vitia scripsit": le censure sulle Vite dei papi', in *Nunc alia tempora, alii mores*, 279–89, and Stefan Bauer, *The Censorship and Fortuna of Platina's Lives of the Popes in the Sixteenth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), chaps. 3–5.
[61] Compare Bartolomeo Platina, *Vitae pontificum* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1481), fol. 62r–v, with Robert Barnes, *Vitae Romanorum pontificum* (Wittenberg: Joseph Clug, 1536), sig. Q8r, John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae … catalogus* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1557), 258–59, *CTV*, 212, and *A&M* [1563], 28. (Hereafter Platina's work will be cited as *VP* and Barnes' book as *VRP*).

V

It was the Germans, both humanists and Lutherans, who took the lead in discovering and printing the primary sources for Gregory and his pontificate. But these sources were to be disseminated in English by English writers who had lived in Germany and had excellent contacts with the Lutherans. In 1534, a year before Ortwin Gratius printed Beno's letters, Thomas Swinnerton, an English evangelical printed an English translation of the letters.[62] Swinnerton had matriculated at the University of Wittenberg in 1526, where he probably came upon the 1521 edition of Beno's letters. Swinnerton returned to England by the early 1530s; the translation of Beno's letters was one of two works that he printed in 1534 to attack the papacy and support claims for royal supremacy over the English church.[63]

Luther's close friend, the English evangelical Robert Barnes, was obviously following the scholarship on Gregory VII closely. In the second edition of his *Supplication to Henry VIII*, printed in 1534, the year after a second edition of Lampert of Hersfeld's *Annals* had been published, Barnes described clerical resistance to Gregory VII in passages which followed Lampert closely, although Barnes never cited the *Annals* as a source.[64] In the *Supplication*, Barnes also quoted passages from Beno's letters denouncing Gregory VII as a murderer and a sorcerer.[65] Barnes drew on both the works of Lampert and Beno more extensively in his series of papal biographies, the *Vitae Romanorum pontificum*, published at Wittenberg, with an introduction by Martin Luther, in 1536.[66]

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[62] *A muster of schismatyke byshopps of Rome* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1534); this work was published under the alias John Roberts.
[63] Richard Rex, 'Swynnerton [Swinnerton], Thomas (d. 1554)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[64] Compare Robert Barnes, *A supplication unto the most gracious prynce kynge Henry the viii* (London: John Byddell, 1534, sigs. U1v–U2r, with *LH*, 328–40 and 272.
[65] Barnes, *Supplication*, sig. U1r.
[66] Compare *VRP*, sigs. Q7r–v and R8v–S2v, with *LH*, 238–40, 272 and 355–56; also compare *VRP*, sig. P8v with *LL*, vol. 2, 377. Luther's introduction to Barnes' papal biographies is printed in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische gesamtausgabe schriften* 72 vols. (Weimar: H. Bohlau, 1883-2009), vol. 50, 3-5. (Hereafter *Luthers Werke* will be cited as *WA*).

Barnes's account of Gregory was seminal for a number of reasons. For one thing, as Korey Maas has observed, Barnes was the first author to combine material from Beno and Lambert and in doing so he set the template for early modern Protestant accounts of Gregory.[67] Moreover, subsequent Protestant writers drew extensively on Barnes's papal biographies, including his biography of Gregory VII, for their polemic.[68] For example, John Ponet's lengthy description of Gregory's efforts to impose celibacy on the clergy, in his 1549 *Defence of the marriage of priests*, was a direct, albeit unacknowledged, translation from Barnes.[69] Thomas Becon provided a slightly looser translation of the same passages in his preface to *The Golden Book of Christian Matrimony*.[70]

Barnes's account of Gregory would be used by such major Protestant historians as John Bale and Matthias Flacius. But what would ultimately be the most influential Protestant narrative of Gregory's reign—the account found in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*—was particularly heavily influenced by Barnes. About two thirds of Foxe's 'tragical history' of Gregory is closely based on, sometimes even copied word-or-word from, the *Vitae Romanorum pontificum*.[71] This relationship is demonstrated by Foxe's

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[67] Korey D. Maas, *The Reformation and Robert Barnes: History, theology and polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 215.

[68] The influence of Barnes's *Vitae Romanorum pontificum* on Reformation historiography is discussed in Maas, *Robert Barnes*, 213–26.

[69] Compare John Ponet, *A defence of the marriage of priestes* (London: Reynold Wolff, 1549), sigs. C2r–C6r, with *VRP*, sigs. R8r–S1r

[70] Thomas Becon, *The worckes of Thomas Becon*, 3 vols. (London: John Day, 1564), vol. 1, sigs. MMm1r–MMm4r.

[71] Compare *A&M* [1563], 22–29, with *VRP*, fols. Q1v, Q4v–R6v and R8r–S2v. The similarity between Barnes's account of Gregory and Foxe's account has gone unnoticed by other scholars, particularly Helen Parish and Matthew Philpott who both list sources for Foxe's account but do not mention Barnes. (See Helen Parish, *Monks, miracles and magic*, pp. 234-7 and Matthew Philpott, *The Reformation of England's past* [Routledge: London and New York, 2018], p. 70). Unfortunately, I am responsible for their oversight. Both Parish and Philpott are drawing their information on the sources for Foxe's account of Gregory VII from a work I wrote about fifteen years ago. (The work is Thomas S. Freeman,"'St Peter did not do Thus': Papal history in the *Acts and Monuments*" published on *The Acts and Monuments Online* website www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=more&gototype=&type=essay&book=essay17. Parish acknowledges borrowing from my essay, Philpott does not). In researching this essay, I made a significant mistake. Foxe did not cite Barnes as a source for the history of Gregory VII, but he often cited Platina. I compared Platina's text to Foxe's and they were very similar except for

often repeating Barnes's wording. Merely as one out of numerous examples, Lampert stated that opponents of Gregory VII described the pope as 'a man full of heresy and insane doctrine'.[72] Robert Barnes freely rendered this passage as 'hominum hereticum, impii dogmatis auctorem esse, suggerenteque non Spiritus sancto, sed Satana' which Foxe translated almost exactly as '[Gregory VII] was an heretike and author of a wicked doctrine, who ruled and governed not by the spirit of God, but by Satan'.[73] In passages like this, and there are a number of them, it is clear that Foxe was drawing on Barnes and not on the sources—be it Beno, Lampert, Platina or someone else—that Barnes consulted. In fact, Barnes's value to Foxe was threefold. Barnes presented Foxe with ready-to-appropriate and suitably Reformed versions of important sources such as Platina. Similarly, Foxe quoted documents which ultimately came from Platina in Barnes's doctrinally reliable versions.[74] But Barnes's text may also have been Foxe's means of access to Lampert's *Annals*. Certainly, while Foxe repeats a number of episodes from the *Annals*, there is nothing that he repeats from Lampert that is not also found in Barnes's papal biographies.[75] This is, of course, merely negative evidence, but there is one further indication that Barnes's text was a conduit through which Foxe drank from Lampert's spring. In his account of Gregory VII, Foxe cited Lampert only once, in a marginal note which read: 'Ex Lamberto Schafnaburgensis. in Histo. Germanorum.[76] (Lampert had been ordained priest in Aschaffenburg and was dubbed 'Lambertus Schafnaburgensis' by Trithemius).[77] Foxe's reference to Lampert is close to Barnes's citation of 'Lammbertus Schafnaburgensis de gestis germanorum Monachus Hersveldensis' and further suggests that Foxe did not consult Lampert's text directly.[78]

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numerous anti-papal passages. I assumed that these passages, which were not in Platina, were insertions by Foxe. Years later, when I read Barnes, I realised thart he was Foxe's source.

[72] *Lamperti … opera*, ed. Holder-Egger, 199: 'hominem plane hereticum et versani dogmatis esse'.

[73] *VRP*, sig. R8v; *A&M* [1563], 22.

[74] Compare *A&M* [1563], 24 –25 and 27–8, with *VRP*, sigs. Q5r–Q6r and R2v–R5r.

[75] Matthew Phillpott asserts confidently that Lampert of Hersfeld was a source for Foxe but this is apparently based on the similarity in content between the two texts. Phillpott has not read Barnes' *VRP* and has not compared Barnes's text with the texts of Lampert or Foxe (Phillpott, *Reformation*, 70).

[76] *A&M* [1563], 231

[77] *LH*, 36 and 73; Mentzel-Reuters, 'Reformatoren drucken das Mittelalter', 116.

[78] The citation is on the verso of the title page of *VRP.*

Another important source for Foxe's account of Gregory VII was the *Catalogus testium veritatis*, compiled and edited by the Lutheran scholar Matthias Flacius. This 'catalogue of witnesses to the truth' was a collection of documents designed to demonstrate the existence of proto-Protestants as well as opponents of the Papacy throughout the Middle Ages. Foxe translated a few documents in Flacius' *Catalogus* for his account of Gregory: a letter from the pope to the bishop of Constance, a papal bull of 1075 and the sentence of the council of Brixen against Gregory VII. Foxe also translated passages by Flacius presenting an idealised account of imperial-papal relations before Hildebrand became a power in the Roman church.[79]

Finally, portions of what Foxe's mentor, the polemicist and antiquarian John Bale, wrote about Gregory strongly influenced Foxe's narrative. The most influential of Bale's writings on Gregory was the biography of the pontiff in his *Scriptorum Illustrium majoris Brytanniae … Catalogus.* (Despite its title, the 'Catalogue of illustrious writers of Great Britain' contained not only biographies of British authors but also biographies of every pope from St Peter to Paul IV).[80] Once again, because Bale based his work on the writings of other authors, it is often difficult to ascertain when Foxe consulted him but once again, similarities in wording sometimes reveal occasions when he followed Bale very closely. For example, Bale is one of a number of authors who assert that Gregory sent an imperial crown to Henry IV's rival, Rudolph of Swabia, with a couplet asserting that the crown was bestowed by the pope. But Bale alone denounced 'hoc barbaro verso' so that when Foxe describes the couplet as a 'barbarous verse' it seems clear whose account he was following.[81] Some important, if disparate, sections of

[79] Compare *CTV*, 211, 230 and 239, with *A&M* [1563], 22 and 29, and *A&M* [1570], 227. The letters of Beno, which Foxe translated, were printed in the *CTV* but they were also printed in Ortwin Gratius' *Fasciculus*. Foxe had access to both works and could have read Beno's letters in either work or, more probably, in both works.

[80] John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae, quam nunc Angliam and Scotiam vocant, catalogus* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus: 1557). The papal biographies are on pp. 16–18, 24–26, 228–32, 35–36,45–47,61–63, 69–72, 77–82, 104–08, 114–22, 129–36, 242–49, 154–65, 173–80, 200–06, 233–39, 286–93, 328–34, 370–76, 437–42, 521–24, 545–51, 600–08 and 631–44. These lives were gathered together in a separate volume as John Bale, *Acta Romanorum pontificum* (Frankfurt: Alfred A. De Pass, 1560). A loose translation of the *Acta Romanorum pontificum* is *The Pageant of Popes*, trans. John Studley (London: Thomas Marsh, 1574).

[81] Compare Bale, *Catalogus*, 158, with *A&M* 1563], 26.

Foxe's narrative were based closely on Bale, such as accounts of Hildebrand shaping the anti-imperial policies of Leo IX and engineering the elections of popes Victor II, Nicholas II and Alexander II.[82]

One particularly significant borrowing Foxe made from Bale was his detailed accusations that Matilda, the margravine of Tuscany, one of Gregory's most steadfast supporters, was the pope's lover. This libel did not originate with Bale; accusations that there were sexual relations between Matilda and Gregory were a feature of eleventh-century imperial propaganda.[83] The Protestants most important source for this calumny was Lampert of Hersfeld, who wrote that:

> Matilda stayed at the side of the of the Roman pontiff as his virtually inseparable companion and devoted herself to him with extraordinary compassion … . Wherever the pope had need of her help, therefore, she was there with all speed and zealously served him as a father or a lord. For this reason she could not escape the suspicion that she was guilty of an incestuous passion.[84] The king's [Henry IV's] supporters and especially the clergy—whom the pope had had forbidden to contract unlawful marriages against the ordinances of the canons—spread far and wide the story the story that day and night the pope shamelessly luxuriated in her embraces and that she refused to marry a second time after she lost her husband because she was preoccupied with clandestine passion for the pope.[85]

This passage was repeated—with embellishment—by a number of Protestant writers.[86] None of these writers, however, quoted, paraphrased or mentioned the

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[82] Compare Bale, *Catalogus*, 144, 148 and 155–56, with *A&M* [1563], 121–24.
[83] D. J. Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa, 1046–1115* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 63–64.
[84] 'Incestuous' because, as pope, Gregory was Matilda's spiritual father.
[85] *LH*, 349. Matilda's first husband was assassinated in 1077. She took a second husband, Welf of Bavaria, in 1089.
[86] *VRP*, sig. R5v; Bale, *Catalogus*, 259; *A&M* [1563], 26; Matthias Flacius Illyricus et al., *Ecclesiastica historia*, 13 vols. (Basel: J. Oporinus, 1559–74), *Centuria XI*, cols. 343–44; and John

sentence which immediately followed this passage in Lampert's *Annals*: 'But it was clearer than day to all men of sound judgement that what they said [about Matilda and Gregory] was false'.[87]

Barnes flatly asserted that Matilda was Gregory's lover and the Magdeburg Centuriators repeatedly cited Lampert's reported rumours about Matilda as facts.[88] But no one was as pre-occupied in repeating stories of Gregory's affair with Matilda, or in embellishing them with lurid details than Bale was.[89] The tone of Bale's writing on Gregory and Matilda is epitomised in a passage in which he draws on Lampert for the substance but adds his own imaginative, if unsubtle, overtones. Bale declares that Gregory

> dyvorced Matilda from her seconde husband Azon the marques of Esten.[90] Their occupynges were *furtivi complexus* (the storye sayth) imbracynges in the darke or such cullynges whan the candle was out as myght not be seane of all the worlde.[91]

In his account of Canossa, Bale added parenthetically, in a remark found in none of his sources, that Matilda was Gregory VII's 'paramour'. Foxe not only repeated this calumny, he would even go a step further, as we shall shortly see, in providing a visual illustration of the shameful, if entirely fictitious, relationship.[92]

However, while Foxe drew particularly on Bale for the character assassination of Matilda of Tuscany, he was even more indebted to Bale for his account of the dramatic confrontation of Gregory VII and Henry IV at Canossa. Bale himself drew

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Bale, *The first two partes of the Actes … of the English votaryes* (London: S. Mierdman, 1551), part 2, fols. 33v–34r.

[87] *LH*, 349.

[88] *VRP*, sig. R5v, and Flacius (et al.), *Ecclesiastica historia*, *Centuria XI*, cols. 343–44 and 382.

[89] E.g. John Bale, *Yet a course at the Romish foxe* (Antwerp: A. Goinus, 1543), fol. 75v; John Bale, *A mysterye of inyquyte* (Antwerp: A. Goinus, 1545), fol. 17v, and Bale, *Catalogus*, 159.

[90] Bale mistakenly believed that Matilda had been married to Adalbert Azzo II of Este.

[91] John Bale, *The first two partes of the actes…. of the English votaryes* (London: S. Mierdman, 1551), fols. 33v–34r.

[92] Compare Bale, *Catalogus*, 159, with *A&M* [1563], 26.

heavily on the account Robert Barnes had given and it is worth comparing the two narratives. Barnes wrote that

> Eam ob rem Caesar non parum turbatus, positis regalibus ornamentis et nudis pedibus, ante portas civitates Canossi, a mane usque ad vesperam ieiunis, veniane petit, supplex cupit se ad pontificem intromitti, sed ingressus denegatur. Petenti instantius per totam triduum respondetur, pontifici non esse adhuc ocium colloquendi cum eo. Henricus aequo animo ferens se non intromitti in urbem, mansit in sub urbio, non sine magna incommoditate Hyems, namque fuit asperrima et cuncta rigescebant gelu.[93] [The emperor, not a little disturbed by this [news], laid aside his royal ornaments and with bare feet [stood] before the city gates of Canossa, fasting from morning until vespers, begging forgiveness, desiring, on bended knee to see the pope, but he was denied entrance. Continuing to beg for three whole days, he was answered that the pope would not speak with him soon. Henry, bearing himself with a calm spirit, did not enter the city but remained on its outskirts, not without great hardship, for the winter was unusually severe and everything was frozen].

Bale's version ran:

> Eam ob rem non parum turbatus Henricus, deposits ornamentis regalibus, **cum uxore ac filio parvulo, Canusium periculosissimo itinere ad illum venit. In laneis vestibus,** pedibus nudibus, **spectaculum et angelorum et hominum factus (inquit Benno)** ante portas civitates, a mane usque ad vesperam, veniam supplex petiit. **Hildebrandi ludibria inter meretices et monachos, in lachrymabili afflectione,** triduo pertult, cupiens ad illum intromitti sed ingressus denegabatur. Petenti instantius per totam triduum, respondebatur **(o pessime Antichriste)** pontifici non esse adhuc ocium colloquendi cum eo. Henricus aequo animo ferens, se non intromitti in urbem, transit in suburbia

[93] *VRP*, sigs. Q6v–Q7r.

non sine magno incommidate Hyems namque solito crudelior erat et cuncta rigescebant.[94] [Henry, not a little disturbed by this [news], laid aside his royal ornaments **and went with his wife and young som, in a harsh winter, on a very dangerous journey to Canossa. Clad in wool clothing** [and] with bare feet, **he made a spectacle for angels and men (Beno said)** [standing] before the gates of the city, fasting from morning to vespers, he pled on bended knee for pardon. For three days he endured, **in lamentable distress, the mocking of Hildebrand among monks and whores,** hoping for admittance to that place. But entry was denied. Begging urgently through all three days, [Henry] was told **(O most evil Antichrist!)** that the pope would not be able to speak with him. Henry bearing himself with a clam spirit, did did not enter the city but remained on the outskirts, not without great hardship, for the winter was unusually severe and everything was frozen].

Bale's borrowing is obvious, much of his account is simply copied directly from Barnes. At the same time, however, Bale's additions to what Barnes wrote are striking. Apart from quoting Beno and calling Gregory VII the Antichrist, Bale added that the emperor was mocked by monks and whores (whom Bale apparently thought of as an integral part of the papal retinue). He also added that the emperor set out for Canossa with his wife and young son, despite the very harsh winter.

All of Bale's additions to the account of Canossa were included by Foxe, in his narrative of Canossa, which follows Bale's account quite closely, sometimes translating it on a word-for-word basis.[95] Foxe's reasons for preferring Bale's account to any other are obvious: it was vehemently anti-papal, melodramatic and effective Protestant propaganda. Nevertheless, Foxe made some variations to Bale in the account of Canossa that appeared in the *Acts and Monuments*. Foxe deleted Bale's quotation of Beno and, more puzzlingly, failed to repeat Bale's description of the papal retinue deriding the emperor. Most striking, however, was Foxe's assertion that Henry IV

[94] Bale, *Catalogus*, 158–59.
[95] Compare Bale, *Catalogus*, 158–59, with *A&M* [1563], 26.

'came barefoote with his wife and child to the gates of Canossa'.[96] Eleventh century sources had stated that Henry travelled on his journey with his wife Bertha and his three year old son Conrad; Lampert of Hersfeld has a vivid description of Bertha and her ladies sitting on ox-hides and being pulled through the snowy mountain passes.[97] Yet no medieval or early modern source before Foxe says that either Bertha or Conrad stood outside the gates of Canossa. Did Foxe misunderstand Bale's declaration that Henry journeyed with his wife and son to Canossa? Or was this detail a deliberate invention by Foxe?

Certainly a woodcut of Canossa in the *Acts and Monuments* makes the suffering imperial family the centrepiece of its emotive propaganda (fig. 1). Standing in the foreground of the picture , Henry, along with his wife and son (all three of them barefoot), stand outside the gate of Canossa in the cold. Through a window in the castle, shown in the upper right side of the woodcut, a woman (Matilda of Tuscany) can be seen caressing the pope, who is sitting in a front of a roaring fire. In the upper left hand corner of the woodcut monks and bishops stand on the ramparts of the castle, laughing at the imperial family. The woodcut, in a testimony to its effectiveness as propaganda, was actually used twice in the *Acts and Monuments*. In the second edition of the *Acts and Monuments*, printed in 1570, a section containing a series of anti-papal woodcuts—undoubtedly a response to *Regnans in excelsis*—was added to the first volume. [98] One of these woodcuts was the illustration of Canossa, which had already been used earlier in the volume.[99]

[96] *A&M* [1563], 26.
[97] *LH*, 347; also see I. S. Robinson (ed.), *Eleventh-Century Germany: The Swabian Chronicles* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 157.
[98] For a discussion of this section, and the anti-papal woodcuts used in it, see Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 214–27.
[99] See *A&* [1570], 292. The section with the anti-papal woodcuts is not paginated but it is on the last pages of the first volume of the 1570 edition.

Fig: 1 Emperor Henry IV at Canossa, woodcut. From: John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1583), 202.

Yet despite the effectiveness of the Canossa woodcut as propaganda, it has some perplexing features. Foxe did not repeat Bale's description of the members of the papal entourage mocking Henry IV, yet it is depicted in the woodcut. How did the engraver know about this detail from Bale's *Catalogus*? And why were Bale's monks and whores transformed into monks and bishops? The woodcut, as with all the woodcuts in the *Acts and monuments*, would have been created by a free-lance engraver, probably a refugee from the Low Countries, possibly with a limited ability to read English.[100] The natural way to instruct an engraver, working outside the print shop, on what should be engraved would have been to provide him with a text

[100] Evenden and Freeman, *Religion and the Book*, 194–98, and Elizabeth Evenden, 'The Fleeing Dutchmen? The Influence of Dutch Immigrants upon the Print Shop of John Day', in David Loades (ed.), *John Foxe at Home and Abroad* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 63–77.

describing the incident and Bale's text, on which Foxe's account was based, would have been ideal, as long as the engraver could read Latin. This does not explain why the group mocking Henry suddenly included bishops; this may have been an anti-episcopal touch added by the engraver or by John Day, the printer of the *Acts and Monuments.*

In any case, whatever the answer to these conundrums is, it is beyond question that Foxe's account of Canossa, and the picture accompanying his account, created an enduring myth that Henry's wife and son suffered with him at Canossa. Later polemicists wrote indignantly over this fictitious outrage. Thomas Bilson, for example, denounced Gregory VII's arrogance in 'making the Emperour with his Queene and young Prince in extreme frost and snow, waite his leisure and in woollen [clothes], at the gates of Canusium while himselfe was warme in a Ladies chamber'. [101] (Although Bilson cited Lampert of Hersfeld and Burchard of Ursberg as his sources, it is obvious that his source was the picture of Canossa in the *Acts and Monuments*.) George Downame was another English Protestant who repeated Foxe's story about the ordeal of the imperial family for polemical advantage, asserting that Gregory VII forced 'Henry the Emperour, who came in all humilitie to submitte himself unto him with his wife and child, to daunce attendance at his gate bare-foote and barehead by the space of three daies'.[102] Protestant writers had used rumour, slander and sheer invention to transform an admittedly dramatic encounter between emperor and pope into a climactic battle between a virtuous prince and the papal Antichrist.

VI

As we have seen, conciliarists and Protestants agreed that Gregory VII's pontificate plumbed the depths of papal depravity. Nevertheless, there were significant variations in the specific transgressions that he was accused of committing and in the aspects of

[101] Thomas Bilson, *The true difference betweene Christian subjection and unchristian rebellion* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1585), 427.
[102] Downame, *Treatise*, Book I, 67).

his pontificate that were considered fundamentally Antichristian. There were a number of evil deeds attributed to Gregory by various authors, even including the charge (first levelled by Beno) that Gregory had murdered up to six popes in order to mount the papal throne himself.[103] However, Protestant attacks mainly centred on three topics.

The first of these was clerical celibacy. The Catholic apologist Thomas Stapleton observed the importance of this issue to English Protestants and caustically commented on the reason for this. Gregory VII, Stapleton declared, ' with his decree that he made against your concubines, doth I trow much more greve you, then doth this matter of emperour, or any wronge ye pretende, by this Pope, to have been to him'.[104] Whether or not their motives were as self-interested and carnal as Stapleton claimed, he was correct in assessing how powerfully sixteenth-century Protestants were motivated to defend clerical marriage, which, in turn, incited them to attack the memory of Gregory VII. In 1530, Martin Luther, drawing on Lampert of Hersfeld, applauded the outspoken resistance by clergy in 1074, to attempts by Gregory VII to impose clerical celibacy.[105] Four years later, Robert Barnes repeated, at length, Lampert of Hersfeld's description of clerical opposition to mandatory celibacy and these passages were repeated by the evangelicals John Ponet and Thomas Becon in their works defending clerical marriage.[106] (Ponet also claimed that Gregory, in outlawing clerical marriage, was acting 'at the commaundement of Antichrist').[107]

The evangelical preoccupation with Gregory's struggle to end clerical marriage was fuelled by the battle to establish it in England despite royal and popular opposition.[108] Clerical marriage was not legalised in England until 1549, in the reign of Edward VI. Abolishing it was a priority in the reign of Mary, Edward's successor, who

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[103] Robert Barnes, *Supplication*, sig. U1r; Bale, *Catalogus*, 156; Flacius (et al.), *Ecclesiastica historia*, *Centuria XI*, col. 536, and Beard, *Antichrist*, 28.
[104] Thomas Stapleton, *A counterblast to M. Horne's vayne blast against M. Feckenham* (Louvain: John Fowler, 1567), fol. 278r.
[105] See Martin Luther, *WA*, vol. 30, part 2, 324 n. 1.
[106] Barnes, *Supplication*, sigs. U1v–U2r, and *LH*, 238–40 and 272. For the writings of Ponet and Becon see notes 69 and 70 above.
[107] Ponet, *Defence*, sigs. C1v–C2r.
[108] Helen Parish, *Clerical marriage and the English Reformation* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 27–38.

came to the throne in 1553. Although clerical celibacy was legalised again after Elizabeth became queen, the frequent changes in the status of married clergy had made Protestants understandably anxious and determined to attack the historical and theological foundations of clerical celibacy. In 1564, Becon would write that Gregory VII's imposition of clerical celibacy identified him as Antichrist .[109] Foxe blamed Gregory VII for ending the marriage of priests and held it to be, along with usurping imperial authority, one of Gregory's overriding goals and one of his most evil achievements.[110] Foxe's animus towards Gregory over the issue of clerical marriage remained constant. In the second edition of his *Acts and Monuments* Foxe expanded his coverage of this topic.[111] Seven years later, Foxe would denounce Gregory VII as a 'stygium sacerdote' because of his role in mandating clerical celibacy.[112]

But as the sixteenth century progressed, and the marriage of Protestant clerics became increasingly established in both England and the rest of Europe, the urgency in denouncing clerical celibacy lessened. While the Magdeburg Centuriators, writing around 1570, denounced Gregory at scattered intervals for enforcing clerical celibacy, the bulk of what they wrote about Gregory VII concerned his conflict with Henry IV.[113] Over fifty years later, Thomas Beard castigated Gregory as a murderer, a sorcerer and a usurper of imperial authority; but he wrote nothing about Gregory and clerical celibacy.[114]

Gregory's conflict with Henry IV was a prime example, at least to Protestants, of papal attempts to seize authority from secular princes. As we have seen papal-imperial relationships were an overriding concern of German humanists and their work was developed by Lutheran historical writers. Henry VIII's break with Rome also made this subject a central concern to English Protestants. The chief purpose of Swinnerton's

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[109] *Worckes of Thomas Becon*, vol. 1, sig. MMm2r.
[110] *A&M* [1563], 6 and 21.
[111] Compare *A&M* [1563], 22, with *A&M* [1570], 227.
[112] Walter Haddon and John Foxe, *Contra Hieronymum Osorium … responsio apologetica, per clarissimum virum Gualt. Haddonum inchoata, deinde suscepta et continuata per Ioannem Foxum* (London: John Day, 1577), fol. 33v.
[113] Flacius (et al.), *Ecclesiastica historia*, *Centuria XI*, cols. 16, 44, 267 and 388–91, are the attacks on Gregory VII over clerical celibacy; cols. 420–437 are the attacks on Gregory for usurping imperial authority.
[114] Beard, *Antichrist*, 22, 28, 180–81 and 377.

Mustre of schismatic bishops was to denounce the 'usurped' authority of the Bishop of Rome over the English king. The conflict between popes and princes was not only a cornerstone of Barnes's papal biographies; it was also the basis of Barnes repeatedly characterising Gregory VII as Antichrist. Marginal notes to Barnes's narrative of Gregory's pontificate read: 'Bestiae Caesarem deponit', 'O bestia est hoc obedire' and 'excommunicatio bestaie'.[115] In another footnote, Barnes wrote 'Principes igitur iure deberent amare istam novam (ut vocant) doctrinam, cum per eum sint liberati a bestia' [Princes therefore ought, in justice, to love the new doctrine (as they call it) since it frees them from the Beast].[116]

Foxe also saw Gregory's humiliation of Henry IV as proof that the pontiff was Antichrist. Next to passages describing the conditions that Henry IV was forced to submit to in order to receive absolution, Foxe appended a marginal note: 'Here the beast of the Apocalypse appeareth in his coloures'.[117] The Magdeburg Centuriators declared that 'Who will doubt therefore the Roman pontiffs to be Antichrists themselves, since not only do they spit on all political power but they even desire to seize the imperial crown and all civil law [legal jurisdiction], violently, for themselves?'.[118] The humiliation of Henry IV at Canossa did not cause John Jewel to compare Gregory to Antichrist, but it unlocked a floodgate of righteous indignation from the bishop of Salisbury at Gregory's immoderate pride and unapostolic behaviour.[119] Even worse than the degradation of the emperor at Canossa, in the eyes of sixteenth century Protestants, was Gregory's inciting rebellion against him.

The Northern Rebellion in 1569 as well as the issuing of the papal bull, *Regnans in excelsis*, excommunicating Elizabeth I and absolving her subjects of any allegiance to her, in 1570, inflamed English Protestant fears and made Gregory a toxic historical

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[115] *VRP*, sig. Q6r–v.
[116] *VRP*, sig. Q7r.
[117] *A&M* [1563], 26.
[118] 'Quis igitur dubitabit, pontifices Romanos ipsissimos esse Antichristos: quia politicam potestatem non soum omni dedecore conspuuunt, sed etiam coronam imperii atque omne civile ad se quam violentissime rapiunt?' (*EH* XI, 8 [page not column because it is in the dedication]).
[119] *Works of John Jewel*, vol. 3, 345–46.

example.[120] In the immediate aftermath of *Regnans in excelsis*, 'hellish Hildebrand' was condemned for excommunicating Henry IV and releasing his subjects from their allegiance.[121] Heinrich Bullinger, in his response to *Regnans in excelsis*, censured Gregory's instigating rebellions against Henry IV and also, in an unmistakeable reference to the Northern Rebellion denounced the nobles, particularly Rudolph of Swabia, who rebelled against Henry. Bullinger also warned the English, Gregory VII's excommunication of the emperor led to a fatal and permanent weakening of monarchical power.[122]

The threats of Catholic rebellion and invasion by Catholic powers made Gregory's legacy bitterly relevant to the English for most of the sixteenth century.[123] A few years after Gregory XIII renewed *Regnans in excelsis*, William Cecil asserted that Gregory VII was the first pope to try to usurp the power of princes.[124] It is worth observing that when Thomas Bilson wrote about Gregory in 1585, he focused almost exclusively on Gregory as the mastermind of rebellions against the emperor and although he cited Beno, he did not repeat Beno's charges that Gregory was a sorcerer or a murderer.[125] Similarly, Franciscus Junius (François du Jon) the elder, a leading Protestant theologian, wrote a commentary on Revelation, which was translated into English in 1592 and began by mentioning that Gregory VII was 'a most monstrous negromancer'. But after this passing reference, Junius proceeded to detail how Gregory VIII 'by all maner of treacherie to set up and put downe Empires and Kingdomes as liked'.[126] The translation of Junius' commentary was popular, it was

[120] English responses to *Regnans in excelsis* are discussed in Aislinn Muller, 'Defending the Defender of the Faith: The Use of History in Responses to Queen Elizabeth's Excommunication', in Sarah Bastow and Angela Ranson (eds.), *Defending the Faith* (Penn State University Press: College Park, PA, 2018). I would like to thank Aislinn Muller for sending me a copy of her article before its publication.
[121] Lewis Evans, *Hateful hypocrisie and rebellion of the Romish prelate* (London: Thomas Purfoote, 1570), 43.
[122] Heinrich Bullinger, *Confutation of the Pope's Bull …*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: John Day, 1572), fols. 72v–74v.
[123] For Catholic wrtitings on this issue see Giuliani, '*Reformatio* or *Restauratio',* 10-11.
[124] William Cecil, *The execution of iustice* (London: Christopher Barker, 1583), sigs. C4r–D1r.
[125] Bilson, *True difference*, 424–44.
[126] François du Jon, *Apocalypsis* (London: R. Field for R. Dexter, 1592), sig. A4v.

printed six times between 1592 and 1622. But far more importantly, the commentary was added to every edition of the Geneva Bible from 1594 onwards.

Lutheran accounts of Gregory VII in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, also tended, while insisting on his moral depravity, to emphasise that Gregory was a tyrant who sought to supplant imperial rule.[127] In England, the theme of papal aggression against the monarch remained, but in the seventeenth century it began lose urgency. The fear now was that the Stuarts were either under the influence of Catholic courtiers or, worse yet, were Catholics themselves. Increasingly now, to many, the threat to Protestantism in England was seen to come from king, not the pope.

Instead, another theme of papal iniquity flourished in the seventeenth century: that of Gregory VII and other popes as evil sorcerers.[128] Of course, the depiction of Gregory as a necromancer goes back to Beno and had been known in the late Middle Ages, to say nothing of the sixteenth century. Beno's tales were enthusiastically repeated by many Protestant writers. Yet on closer examination, depictions of Gregory as a sorcerer were less ubiquitous and more complicated than is apparent at first glance.

Admittedly Bale was fixated with tales of Gregory VII's dark magic and he repeated stories of it across a number of his works.[129] On the other hand, Robert Barnes, while he made extensive use of Beno's letters, only mentioned Gregory's sorcery briefly, and he did not retell episodes such as Beno's story of Gregory's servants conjuring up a horde of demons.[130] Foxe also seems to have reservations about Beno's stories of Gregory's sorcery. In the first edition of the *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe related the story of Gregory's servants invoking demons, but cautiously added: ''Thus much out of Benno, which if it be but a fable ye have the

[127] Pohlig, *Gelehrsamkeit*, 248, 250, 399, 404 and 434.
[128] Helen Parish discusses legends of Gregory VII as a sorcerer by Bale, Foxe and other Protestant writers, although we come to somewhat different conclusions about the centrality of this issue to Foxe (Parish, *Monks, miracles and magic*, 134-9).
[129] Bale, *Votaryes*, part 2, fols. 30v–32v; Bale, *Romish foxe*, fol. 75r; Bale, *Mysterye of inyquyte*, fol. 17v and Bale, *Catalogus*, 157-8.
[130] *VRP*, sigs. P8v and R7V.

author therof'.[131] (Foxe's apparent scepticism does not arise from any scepticism about a pope being a sorcerer or even about the existence of witches and warlocks. He not only related that Sylvester II gained magical powers by selling his soul to the Devil but he went on to hope, that from Sylvester's example, 'our sorcerors and inchanters and magicians maye learne to beware the deceitfull operation of Sathan'.)[132] In this first edition there was only one other terse reference to Gregory and magic.[133] In the second edition of his book, Foxe added further material from both of Beno's letters, but he largely omitted the additional material in those letters on Gregory the sorcerer: 'It were too long and tedious to recite all the detestable doings and and diabolical practices, of conjurings, of charms and filthy sorceries, exercised [by Gregory] … wherof a long narration followeth in the foresaid epistle of Benno to the cardinallis … to whom, the reader may repayre'.[134] Foxe's minimal use of Beno's detailed accusations of Gregory's necromancy probably stemmed from Foxe's desire not to distract the reader from those diabolical deeds of Gregory's that Foxe wished to emphasize: the usurpation of imperial authority and the proscription of clerical marriage.

Certainly through much of the sixteenth century, Gregory's sorcery is related by a number of writers, but it is a secondary element in these accounts, mentioned largely as a means of discrediting Gregory and his policies. Robert Barnes declared that Gregory was a 'a man of yvell lyvyng as the cronycles testifieth and also a great Nygromancer and very familiar with the deyll'.[135] Bale, writing against clerical celibacy, declared that 'holye Pope Hyldebrand, which was a Necromancer, made this constitution, that none should be admitted to holy orders, unlesse he forsware marriage for terme of his lyfe'.[136] Foxe wrote that Gregory was 'no less a wicked necromancer, than a stout maintainer of Romish liberties against good emperors'.[137]

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[131] *A&M* [1563], 24.
[132] *A&M* [1563], 11.
[133] *A&M* [1563], 23.
[134] *A&M* [1570], 231.
[135] Barnes, *Supplycation*, sig. U1r.
[136] Bale, *Mysterye of inyquyte*, fol. 17v.
[137] *A&M* [1563], 14. Foxe later parenthetically adds that Gregory was a sorcerer when he denounces the pontiff for stirring up unrest against Henry IV; see *A&M* [1563], 20.

And next to Heinrich Bullinger's denunciation of Hildebrand and his mentor, Gregory VI, for defying the emperor, a marginal note read that 'The maister [Gregory VI] and the scholer [Hildebrand] were both witches'.[138] In all of these cases, Gregory's alleged practice of black magic is being cited largely to condemn clerical celibacy or papal claims to jurisdiction over secular rulers.

However, the stories of Gregory's magical prowess became rather widely known. In 1566, the printed examination of one John Walsh, of Dorset, on charges of witchcraft, contained a preface that related anecdotes of papal sorcery. Among the most notable of these papal practitioners of the diabolic arts—and the only one who lived before the Renaissance—was 'Gregory the VII otherwise called Hellybrand (Hildebrand I should say) who was also a great Sorceror and Nigromancer, as Benno the Cardinal doth declare in his worke of this Gregories life. Saying that he also had a familiar spirit, whereby he wrought many mischiefes in the common weale of Rome, as also for to increase hys riches and dignitie'.[139] (The dubious accuracy of this statement—Beno did not claim that Gregory had a familiar spirit—suggest that this story was repeated from hearsay). On the Continent, the Magdeburg Centuries repeated Beno's stories about the sorcerer in detail and the legend of Gregory as the greatest of the sorcerer popes flourished in late sixteenth-century Lutheran Germany.[140]

It also flourished in seventeenth England. One reason for this was that it helped identify the pope as Antichrist. A number of writers repeated the assertion that Gregory could produce fire from his sleeves, a traditional attribute of Antichrist.[141] Richard Sheldon, a royal chaplain, maintained that Gregory's false miracles, as well his subversion of secular rulers, conclusively identified him as Antichrist.[142] But the portrayal of Gregory as sorcerer also buttressed a fundamental binary that helped support English anti-popery: the contrast between the religion of the True Church

[138] Heinrich Bullinger, *Confutation of the Popes Bull …*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: John Day, 1572), fol. 74r).
[139] *The examination of John Walsh …* [London: John Awdeley, 1566], sig. A3r.
[140] *EH* XI, cols. 535 and 538; Pohlig, *Gelehrsamkeit*, 409–10.
[141] E.g., Downame, *Antichrist*, Book I, 115–21, and Beard, *Antichrist*, 22.
[142] Sheldon, *Motives*, Book I, 58–59 and 62.

based on following the Word of God and the religion of the False Church based on superstition, magic and false miracles.[143] In the seventeenth century, the godly in England increasingly viewed Antichrist as operating through evil counsellors, or even through the monarchs themselves, as well as by means of 'popish' clerics. Conquest by Catholic powers and the forcible imposition of Catholicism were not the most prevalent of Satan's threats; now what was to be feared was the corruption of true religion by superstition , idolatry and carnal religion. Antichrist was now understood to be operating less through force than through trickery and seduction, inspiring the new emphasis on the pope as a sorcerer.

VII

There are a number of benefits in examining the Reformation *nachleben* of Gregory VII. It provides an excellent case study in the interest that both Catholics and Protestants had in using materials from the church militant's past to build a model of the Church Triumphant. This interest inspired intense efforts to quarry the historical materials but also shape them into the desired configurations, no matter how much the newly shaped materials differed from their original forms. The use of history in the service of ecclesiology was as important to English Protestants as to anyone else. And as we have seen, Lutheran scholars played a decisive role in shaping the ideas that English Protestants had regarding the history of the early and medieval Church.[144] And while it may be true that the influence of Lutheran doctrines and teachings atrophied in England in the second half of the sixteenth-century; the influence of Lutheran writers on English ecclesiastical history, and thus on English ecclesiology, remained authoritative.

[143] See Peter Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice', in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 76–77.
[144] For a discussion of the influence of the Magdeburg Centuriators on John Foxe's history of the early Church see Thomas S. Freeman and Susannah B. Monta, '"Straunge and prodigious miracles"? John Foxe's reformation of virgin martyr legends' *Reformation* 25 [forthcoming in November 2019].

Perhaps the most important reason for examining the depictions of Gregory VII by the Protestants is that it provides an interesting case study into a major cause of the influence and importance of anti-popery. A mystery of the English Reformation was the potency of anti-popery. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was a major political and cultural ideology which brought tumult, war and revolution to the three kingdoms in the British Isles. Moreover, anti-popery was not only powerful, it was persistent as well; fears of the fires of Smithfield being re-kindled horrified the English for centuries after the ashes Marian martyrs had cooled. One reason why anti-popery in England was so durable was its flexibility and the ease with which it could be adapted to changing circumstances. After all, while the objectives of Antichrist were understood, both scripture and legend were vague as to the methods that he would use to attain those objectives, leaving different generations a freehand in imagining and describing these methods. At the same time, identifying a wide range of popes as the Antichrist, gave Protestant writers a wide variety of personalities and achievements to choose to emphasise as essential aspects of Antichrist. This allowed Antichrist to be depicted as a persecutor, as a lecher, as a heretic and the champion of false doctrine, as the subverter of secular powers or as a the master of evil magic, whichever attributes or attributes best served the polemic of a given historical moment. The shifting identity, and shifting type of threat, Antichrist represented, made it possible for his shadow to loom over England for centuries, while the fear it created would help destroy one king and overthrow another, even though the actual power of Gregory VII's successors, and the real threat that they posed continued to wane dramatically.