

## *Weapons of Reform: Gregory VII, Armenia, and the Liturgy*

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*This paper examines Gregory VII's (1073–85) evolutionary efforts to unite the Armenian Church with Rome in the 1070s and 1080s. The pope's changing attitude towards Armenian liturgical practices, it is argued, illustrates a broader and visionary papal outlook, revealing in turn many social, cultural, political, and doctrinal dynamics at work during his pontificate. As a consequence of this interplay, Gregory's vested interest in the world beyond Latin Christendom becomes manifest, contributing ultimately to a more nuanced portrait of this pope and a broader historical understanding of his papacy and its governance.*

THE liturgy offers an intriguing lens through which to view the last quarter of the eleventh century. In an era of ecclesiastical renewal and liberty commonly associated with Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and his papal predecessors,<sup>1</sup> it took on a reforming character of its own. Indeed, the liturgy was for many Roman bishops a leverage point for measuring doctrinal unity within Christendom as a whole—a common denominator (in theory at least) to which all Christians, regardless of language, race, geography, or ethnicity, were expected to adhere. In analyzing Gregory VII's evolutionary efforts to unite the Armenian Church with Rome in the 1070s and 1080s, the liturgy

<sup>1</sup>On this subject, whose historiography is extensive, see especially Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Change* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2005); Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *Gregor VII. Papst zwischen Canossa und Kirchenreform* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001); H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073–1198: Continuity and Innovation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, trans. Timothy Reuter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*, trans. R. F. Bennett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940; reprinted Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

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represents a crucial weapon in the reformers' agenda for centralized political and ecclesiastical authority and control. The pope's changing attitude towards Armenian liturgical practices illustrates a broader and visionary papal outlook, revealing in turn many social, cultural, political, and doctrinal dynamics at work during his pontificate. As a consequence of this interplay, Gregory's vested interest in the "world beyond Latin Christendom"<sup>2</sup> becomes manifest, contributing ultimately to a more nuanced portrait of this pope and a clearer historical understanding of his papacy and its governance.

Two papal letters in particular are of interest for substantiating this position. The first, a *dictatus papae* written in December 1074 to King Henry IV (r. 1056–1106), pleaded for the German king's assistance in rising up "in armed force against the enemies of God and to go as far as the sepulchre of the Lord under his leadership."<sup>3</sup> Calling for an expedition to help rescue the Eastern Christians from advancing Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor—three years after the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert (1071) and the loss of Bari (in Italy) to the Normans—Gregory VII was answering earlier pleas made to Rome by the Byzantine emperor Michael VII Ducas (1071–78).<sup>4</sup> Although the subject matter of this letter does not concern Armenia directly, it is revealing nonetheless for the papacy's assumed responsibility for Eastern churches in times of crisis. The second letter, written in 1080, was addressed to Gregory II Vkasaser of Tsamandos, archbishop, primate, and Catholicos (*kat'olikos*) of the Armenian Church from 1065–1105.<sup>5</sup> Between 1074 and 1080, the pope's interest with the Armenian Church went from one of perfunctory concern to a more active, involved, and pastoral role. While the reasons for this development will be explored further, faith, obedience, and security were concerns foremost on the pope's mind.<sup>6</sup>

The wider context in which Gregory addressed Henry IV is not irrelevant to this consideration. Faced with Turkish military conquests in Eastern (Byzantine) Christian lands, the pope sought unity (*concordia*) between the Byzantine and Armenian Churches and the apostolic see in Rome.<sup>7</sup> As

<sup>2</sup>This expression is borrowed from Cowdrey who uses it to categorize the Byzantine Church and Empire, the Armenian Church, and Islam, *Pope Gregory VII*, 481.

<sup>3</sup>*Das Register Gregors VII*, ed. Erich Caspar, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Selectae* 2 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1920–23); English translation by H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) [hereafter *Reg.*], II, 31.

<sup>4</sup>See *Reg.* I, 46 and 49.

<sup>5</sup>For a description of this patriarch, see *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa* [hereafter *Matthew of Edessa*], trans. Ara Edmond Dostourian (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1993), Part II, c.26, 107.

<sup>6</sup>For further discussion on the papacy's "visionary" outlook, see Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 85.

<sup>7</sup>H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The Gregorian Papacy, Byzantium, and the First Crusade," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 13 (1988), 153.

confessed to the German king, Gregory was “spurred to the task” by the possibility of concord with the church of Constantinople which, he noted, “dissents from us concerning the Holy Spirit.”<sup>8</sup> This admission carries heavy overtones of the “Great Schism” of 1054, for which doctrinal controversy between Rome and the Eastern patriarch of Constantinople Gregory was seeking some reconciliation in the name of spiritual (doctrinal) unity. Indeed, for this pope nearly twenty years later, the breach between Roman and Greek churches seriously undermined the objectives to which he directed his reforming party and principles. Presenting something of an obstacle in this regard, the Armenians—as Gregory feared—were “almost all astray from the Catholic faith.” In short, the pope concluded that “nearly all the easterners” were “awaiting what the faith of the apostle Peter may decide amongst their various opinions.”<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, Gregory was expressing his concern that the Armenians might never abandon their Monophysite faith with which they had been associated since the council of Chalcedon in 451.<sup>10</sup> Important for defining the Armenian Church and its national identity, this ecumenical council forever isolated the Armenians from Roman and Byzantine traditions—a split that was not healed until the council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439.<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding the definition of faith issued at Chalcedon, this council did not fully succeed in its more universal mission. Claiming to have “driven off erroneous doctrines” by a “collective resolution,” the decrees of Chalcedon were never fully accepted by the Roman Church, let alone the Armenians. The legates<sup>12</sup> representing Pope Leo I (440–61) at this council refused to accept canon 28, which asserted Constantinopolitan apostolic privileges and recognition on par with Rome.<sup>13</sup> Only after pressure from Emperor Marcian and Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople, but more so because “heretics were misinterpreting his withholding approval,”<sup>14</sup> did Leo confirm the decrees of this council on 21 March 453. Canon 28, however, was still rejected by Rome “because it ran counter to the canons of Nicaea and to the privileges

<sup>8</sup>See Gregory VII’s letter to Emperor Michael of Constantinople (*Reg.* I.18).

<sup>9</sup>Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 487.

<sup>10</sup>For this council see *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, ed. Norman P. Tanner (London and Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 76–103, or *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta, I: The Ecumenical Council From Nicaea to Nicaea II (325–787)*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 119–51. For this council’s importance for Armenia, see Nina G. Garsoïan, “Quelques précisions préliminaires sur le schisme entre les Églises byzantine et arménienne au sujet du concile de Chalcédoine: II. La date et les circonstances de la rupture,” *Byzantina Sorbonensia* 12 (*L’Arménie et Byzances: Histoire et Culture*) (Paris: A. Bontemps, 1996), 99–112.

<sup>11</sup>See ‘*Bulla unionis Armenorum*,’ in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 534–59.

<sup>12</sup>Paschasinus, Bishop Lucentius, and the priest Boniface.

<sup>13</sup>“Council of Chalcedon” (canon 28), in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 99–100.

<sup>14</sup>Norman Tanner, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 76.

of particular churches.”<sup>15</sup> The reason for this resilience surrounds the issue of Roman primacy, which the bishops of Rome had been trying to exercise over the patriarchal sees of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem since the council of Constantinople in 381.<sup>16</sup>

The overall religious spirit of the council, on the other hand, was more widely accepted. The number of “private heresies” spawning “novel formulas”<sup>17</sup> was a recognizable fear for Eastern and Western churches alike. The council’s ultimate intention was to exclude all “tricks against the truth”<sup>18</sup> by enforcing the inviolate decrees of previous ecumenical councils, with a particular emphasis being placed on Nicaea in 325. Against those who sought to “tear apart the mystery of the economy into a duality of sons,”<sup>19</sup> Byzantine and Roman Churches were united with a common purpose. And fundamental to the present investigation, it was at this council that the fate of the Armenian Church (and other Eastern Churches) was sealed: belief in “a single nature of the flesh and the divinity” (Monophysitism) was hitherto universally condemned.<sup>20</sup>

For the Armenian Church, the decrees promulgated at Chalcedon not only isolated it from Roman and Byzantine traditions but in turn created a religious tension lasting throughout the Middle Ages. Geo-politically, as well, the Armenians were divided. In the late fourth century, when the Byzantines and Persians first territorially partitioned Armenia (c.387), with the former taking Lesser Armenia (*Armenia minor*) and the Cilician coastline in the West, Armenia acted as a “buffer-state which protected one of the most vulnerable borderlines of the Empire like a rampart against the peril from south-east: from the Sassanids, the Arabs and ultimately from the Seljuk Turks.”<sup>21</sup> Being divided in this manner, “into two monarchies and two spheres of influence—a large Iranian sector east of a line running from Sper to Martyropolis . . . and a much smaller Roman sector west of that line up to the Euphrates,”<sup>22</sup> Armenia

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>“Council of Constantinople” (canon 3), in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 32.

<sup>17</sup>“Council of Chalcedon,” in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 84.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 85.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 84.

<sup>21</sup>Gabriele Winkler, “The Political Influence of the Holy See on Armenia and its Liturgy (XI–XIV Century),” in *The Romanization Tendency*, ed. Jacob Vellian (Kottayam: K. P. Press, 1975), 111. For a full description of Armenian territorial divisions, see Nicholas Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian: The Political Conditions Based on the Naxarar System*, trans. Nina G. Garsoïan (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970). For a contemporary description of the Byzantine and Persian territorial divide, see Procopius, *Buildings*, trans. H. B. Dewing (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), Book III, ii, 2–3.

<sup>22</sup>R. W. Thomson, “Eastern Neighbours: Armenia (400–600),” in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 157.

remained “an ambiguous place between the major powers, be they the East Roman empire and Sassanian Iran, the Byzantine empire and the caliphate, or the Ottoman empire and the Safavids.”<sup>23</sup> Integration into Byzantine or Persian territories was never successfully achieved, though ruling powers often intruded in the ecclesiastical sphere. The Macedonian Dynasty of the ninth and tenth centuries, for example, did see the succession of numerous Byzantine emperors with Armenian origins, though as Gabriele Winkler has argued, “gradually the ties between Armenia and Constantinople grew cooler, when the Byzantines imposed themselves too eagerly on the internal affairs of Armenia.”<sup>24</sup>

Such prevailing conditions and circumstances did not weaken the Armenians’ resolve in religious matters. At the councils of Dvin in 506 and 555 (in the Persian sector), the Armenian Church renounced the Chalcedonian doctrine and Nestorianism (the belief in two persons [human and divine] in the incarnate Christ) for a second and third time, thereby setting itself more firmly in an Oriental—as opposed to Roman or Byzantine—tradition.<sup>25</sup> This position did not placate earlier efforts from Roman and Byzantine Churches; neither did it stop them from pressuring the Armenian Church to conform to orthodox (Chalcedonian) traditions. In 572, for example, Emperor Justin II forced the Catholicos John II Gabelean into communion with the Greeks, prompting his lengthy “demonstration” on the nature of Christ.<sup>26</sup> According to the seventh-century Armenian chronicler Sebeos, the Catholicos Moses II (574–604) rejected Maurice’s imperial invitation in 591 to attend the council of Constantinople that sought union between the two churches.<sup>27</sup> This command, according to Sebeos, was to unite the Armenians “in communion through his

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, 156.

<sup>24</sup>Winkler, “The Political Influence of the Holy See on Armenia and its Liturgy (XI–XIV Century),” 111. See also T. W. Greenwood, “Armenian Neighbours (600–1045),” in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 333–64.

<sup>25</sup>For the council of Dvin in 505, see *La Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, ed. G. Garitte, *Corpus scriptorium Christianorum orientalem*, v.132. Subsidia, t.4 (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1952), chapters 60–76; French translation by Jean-Pierre Mahé, “La Narratio de rebus Armeniae: Traduction française,” *Revue des études Arméniennes* 25 (1994–1995), 43 3–34. For the council of Dvin in 555, see E. Ter-Minassiantz, *Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zu den syrischen Kirchen* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1904), 56–57. See also Peter Halfter, *Das Papsttum und die Armenier im frühen und hohen Mittelalter: Von den ersten Kontakten bis zur Fixierung der Kirchenunion im Jahre 1198* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1996), 58–63.

<sup>26</sup>*La Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, chapters 80–81. See also Nina G. Garsoïan, “Secular Jurisdiction over the Armenian Church (Fourth–Seventh Centuries),” in *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Sevenko on his Sixtieth Birthday*, Harvard Ukrainian Studies 7 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 224.

<sup>27</sup>*The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, trans. and comm. R. W. Thomson and James Howard-Johnston (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), vol. I, chapter 19, 37; cf. *La Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, chapter 101; cf. Garsoïan, “Secular Jurisdiction over the Armenian Church (Fourth–Seventh Centuries),” 224.

army,” though many reportedly fled to a foreign land, disregarded the emperor’s command, or simply remained unmoved.<sup>28</sup>

At the council of Garin (Theodosiopolis) in 631, the Armenian Catholicos Euz (630–41) signed a temporary union with Constantinople under Emperor Heraclius condemning Nestorianism but making no reference to Chalcedon.<sup>29</sup> In 652–653, Emperor Constans II pressured the Catholicos Nerses III into accepting communion with the Greeks.<sup>30</sup> At the council in *Trullo* (*concilium quinisextum*) convened by Emperor Justinian II (685–95 and 705–11) in 692, the Armenians were again condemned for certain religious practices at variance with the Byzantine Church.<sup>31</sup> This action came after a reported union between the emperor and the Armenian Catholicos Isaac, at the council of Constantinople in 689/90, though our only source for this union immediately describes the subsequent and resulting rebellion.<sup>32</sup> At the council of Manazkert in 726, Armenia terminated its union with the Byzantine Church under the order of the Armenian Catholicos John III of Odzun (717–27).<sup>33</sup> Surviving correspondence from the 720s between John and Patriarch Germanos I (715–30) of Constantinople thus “marks the final breach between the churches and was preserved because it articulated the differences.”<sup>34</sup>

No further Byzantine attempt was made to restore church union with Armenia until the council of Shirakavan (*Schirachavenense*) in 862, convened by the Catholicos Zacharias (855–76).<sup>35</sup> And other than Pope Nicholas I’s Roman council in 861,<sup>36</sup> which issued decrees on the nature of

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>*La Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, chapters 121–36; cf. Mahé’s translation, “La Narratio de rebus Armeniae: Traduction française,” 436–37.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, chapter 138; cf. Garsoïan, “Secular Jurisdiction over the Armenian Church (Fourth–Seventh Centuries),” 225.

<sup>31</sup>See canons 32, 33, 56, 99 in *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta*, 251–53, 267–68, 290.

<sup>32</sup>*La Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, chapters 144–45; cf. Mahé’s translation, “La Narratio de rebus Armeniae: Traduction française,” 437.

<sup>33</sup>A. E. Redgate, *The Armenians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 185; “The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc’i,” trans. R.W. Thomson, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989), 180. See also R. W. Thomson, “An Armenian List of Heresies,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (1965), 359–60. See Girk’ T’gh’t’ots’ [*Book of Letters*] (Tiflis: Tparan T. Rōtineants’ ew Sharadzē, 1901), 358–95; ed. Pogharean (Jerusalem: Tparan Srbots’ Hakobeants’, 1994), 414–66; partial French translation in M. Tallon, *Livres des lettres (Girk’ T’lt’oc): 1er groupe: documents concernant les relations avec les Grecs* (Beirut: Impr. catholique, 1955) [= *Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph* 32, 103–38]; and partial French translation in Nina G. Garsoïan, *L’Église arménienne et le grand schisme d’Orient*, in *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientaliū* 574 (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), 411–583.

<sup>34</sup>Greenwood, “Armenian Neighbours (600–1045),” 346–47.

<sup>35</sup>*Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J. D. Mansi, 31 volumes (Florence and Venice: Apud Antonium Zatta, 1759–98) [hereafter Mansi], vol. XV, cols 639–40 (canons XII–XIV); cf. Greenwood, “Armenian Neighbours (600–1045),” 351.

<sup>36</sup>Pope Nicholas I, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Epistolae VI (Berlin: Monumenta Germaniae Historica 1925), *Ep.* 98, 560–61; cf. Mansi, vol. XV, cols 597–606.



Christ (thereby condemning the doctrine of Monophysitism by association), the majority of efforts to reconcile the Armenian Church with mainstream Christian doctrine were eastern initiatives.<sup>37</sup> Yet even the repeated efforts of Patriarch Photios of Constantinople from 858–67 and 877–86 proved unsuccessful, failures reluctantly acknowledged in 924/5 by one of his successors, Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos (901–7, 912–25).<sup>38</sup> It was not until the second half of the eleventh century that further and decisive steps were taken to secure union with Rome.<sup>39</sup>

Before Pope Gregory VII's push for *concordia* in the 1070s, however, Armenian liturgical practices were more-or-less tolerated. That is to say that they were never officially accepted or condemned by Byzantine or Roman Churches.<sup>40</sup> This reality, which reflects a “general consensus about the nature of the church, and its daily liturgical life. . . in spite of manifold peripheral variations,”<sup>41</sup> lasted only until the second half of the eleventh century, after which period the Armenian Church again experienced pressure for union with Constantinople. This renewed interest owes in part to the political fallout from the “Great Schism” of 1054, which gave witness to a vested concern from both Eastern and Western patriarchs in securing obedience and faith from neighbouring churches. According to the chronicler Matthew of Edessa, writing c.1100–36, Byzantium renewed its criticism of Armenian religious beliefs with a new fervor in 1059/60: “Thus, scorning warfare, battles, and combats, they sought to bring disorder in the church of God.”<sup>42</sup> When Emperor Constantine X Ducas came to power in 1058–59, he reportedly “conceived the malicious idea of removing the patriarchal see of Saint Gregory [the ‘Illuminator’, c.240–332] from the Armenians and destroying it.”<sup>43</sup> His aim, we are told, was to uproot the Church's very foundations by discrediting its renowned evangelizer—the figure most revered for bringing Christianity to this region in the early fourth century. Following the death of the Armenian Catholicos Peter in the same year, the Byzantines are said to have “attacked the

<sup>37</sup>See Halfter, *Das Papsttum und die Armenier im frühen und hohen Mittelalter: Von den ersten Kontakten bis zur Fixierung der Kirchenunion im Jahre 1198*, 112.

<sup>38</sup>Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. and trans. R. J. H. Jenkins and L. G. Westerlink, in *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae* 6 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973), no. 139, 579.

<sup>39</sup>Halter, *Das Papsttum und die Armenier im frühen und hohen Mittelalter: Von den ersten Kontakten bis zur Fixierung der Kirchenunion im Jahre 1198*, 113–14. The most complete survey of Armenia between the seventh and eleventh centuries is by Jean-Pierre Mahé, “L'Église Arménienne de 611 à 1066,” in *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, vol. IV, *Évêques, Moines et Empereurs (610–1054)*, eds. Gilbert Dragon, Pierre Riché, and André Vauchez (Paris: Desclée, 1993), 457–548.

<sup>40</sup>Redgate, *The Armenians*, 253.

<sup>41</sup>Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, 22.

<sup>42</sup>Matthew of Edessa, Part II, c.13, 96.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, c.14, 97.

holy see, intending to abolish it and to compel the Armenians to adhere to the impious faith as set forth at Chalcedon.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus seeking to destroy the Armenian Church by corrupting the faith of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the emperor masterminded a plan to “substitute his demonic, confused, and defective doctrine for that faith which had been established in Armenia since time immemorial.” This was a faith, according to Matthew of Edessa, “founded on diamond-like rocks through the efforts and martyrdoms of the holy apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew and through the many-sided and varied tribulations of St. Gregory the Illuminator, a faith which is and will remain unshaken for eternity.”<sup>45</sup> Such resolution as described here is certainly persuasive, especially because the emperor’s plans to demolish the “lofty tower of doctrine”<sup>46</sup> upon which the Armenian faith was founded never did succeed.

Having summoned the sons of the king of Armenia (Atom and Abusahl) to Constantinople, who brought with them the *vardapet* (teacher) James K’arap’nets’i—a man “erudite in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures”<sup>47</sup>—the emperor sought to baptize them and all princes of Armenia ‘according to the Roman [meaning Byzantine] faith.’<sup>48</sup> Suspicious of the emperor’s plans, however, the king’s sons feared making any decisions without their king, Gagik of Kars Ani (1029–65), a man considered “brilliant in philosophical debates and invincible in answering questions put to him.”<sup>49</sup> While Atom and Abusahl secretly petitioned Gagik, the emperor began his criticism of the Armenian faith to James, who ended up drafting a profession of faith that would reunite the Armenian and Byzantine churches. When Gagik finally arrived in Constantinople, however, all hopes of a union were dashed. Rebuking James for acting beyond his station, and going further to boast his own knowledge of both Old and New Testaments, the Armenian king set out a lengthy explanation and defense of the Armenian faith. By distinguishing clearly between the well-known and universally condemned heresies of Nestorius, Eutyches, Sargis, Paul of Samosata, Peter the Fuller, Dioscorus, Arius, and Mani, Gagik allegedly convinced the emperor and “all the savants who held seats in the Academy” of the purity of the Armenian faith, which, according to this account, was now completely free of heretical suspicion.<sup>50</sup>

One suspects that neither the Latin Romans nor Byzantines were so easily convinced. Whether or not the Armenian king was given the opportunity to

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid, c.30, 109–10.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid, 110.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, 113ff.



defend his faith—and if so, whether he was at all as persuasive and knowledgeable as Matthew would have us believe—suspicions continued to linger and grow around the Armenian Church and its “Eastern” religious practices. Such views had presumably been festering throughout the Early Middle Ages, with deep, fifth-century Chalcedonian roots. The decrees of the ecumenical councils were never forgotten or easily transposed, nor was any violation of their authority permissible or tolerated. Gregory VII’s views on this matter, at least early on in his pontificate, followed closely with the custom and tradition established by his papal predecessors, who themselves relied heavily upon the authority of universal church councils. Of his own personal views on the Armenian liturgy, which occupied a more prominent place on his agenda than the Christological debate (though perhaps not treated as an entirely separate, doctrinal issue), we know very little other than what exists in the extant correspondence. It is to this papal evidence that we must now turn for a fuller historical understanding of the Armenian liturgy and its interpretation by Western church authorities in the last quarter of the eleventh century.

From Gregory VII’s 1080 letter to Archbishop Gregory II of Tsamandos, we learn a great deal about the determination with which the Armenian liturgy was treated as a matter of concern in Rome. Through reports brought to Rome (sometime prior to June 6, 1080) by an envoy known only as John the priest, the pope was surprised to learn that in Armenia water is not mixed with wine during the celebration of the Eucharist, regardless of the assertion that “no Christian who is familiar with the sacred gospels may doubt that water flowed with blood from the side of the Lord” (John 19:34).<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, these reports, made in person to the pope in Rome, revealed that in Armenian religious practice the holy chrism is made from butter and not, as was the custom of the Holy Roman Church, balsam—a practice that, as Gregory was keen to remark, is reminiscent of the Alexandrine heresiarch Dioscorus, a figure ultimately deposed and condemned for his beliefs at the council of Chalcedon in 451.

Significant is the accusatory tone of Gregory’s letter to the archbishop, which is remarkably different from the passive language used in his letter to Henry IV in 1074 (mentioned above). Between the issuance of this first letter and the dispatching of the second in 1080, Gregory evidently altered his position on, and tactics for, the Armenian Church; his views, it seems, were revolving increasingly around matters of doctrinal uniformity. In reaching this objective, expediency was his prime motivator. From this 1080 letter, moreover, one cannot fail to notice Gregory’s “marked prejudice”<sup>52</sup> against the Armenian

<sup>51</sup>*Reg. VIII, 1.*

<sup>52</sup>Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 487.

Church and its orthodoxy. Nevertheless, great uncertainty and misunderstanding on the pope's part still remained. Due presumably to the information provided by the Armenian envoy, it was no longer prudent for Gregory to assume the Armenian Church as being willfully divergent from the universal Christian faith. The mere chance of their being led astray through simple ignorance left open the possibility of recovery, which was presumably the desired outcome in such cases of "perceived" (as opposed to "real") heresy.<sup>53</sup> While John the priest, face-to-face with the pope in Rome, flatly denied the various religious practices of which the Armenian Church was accused, Gregory nevertheless requested from the archbishop of Tsamandos that a profession of faith be given on the above-mentioned (and other) doctrinal points.

The prevailing issue was one of uniformity and solidarity throughout Christendom as a whole: a key eleventh-century reforming objective. While the liturgy united all Christians in a physical and participatory celebration of faith, calling them together for divine worship, Gregory VII treated liturgical matters as part-and-parcel of the wider church reform movement. As H. E. J. Cowdrey noted, the liturgy was "far from being a free-standing subject." In other words, "it was but one aspect of a comprehensive if far from systematic body of right belief and canonical regulation which was deemed to be of ancient, indeed of timeless, validity."<sup>54</sup> That Gregory saw fit to reform specific aspects of the liturgy, with a particular eye to modifying and promoting its Roman character, does not suggest any directed or immediate concern over Christology. Rather, the evidence for his intervention reveals a centralized effort towards repairing individual cases and implementing uniform legislation wherever possible. The dissemination of *In die resurrectionis* and *Licet nova consuetudo*, for example, two "Gregorian" decrees which concern the reading of "psalms and lections at the night office throughout the year"<sup>55</sup> and "the dates for the ember fasts which were also times for ecclesiastical consecrations"<sup>56</sup> respectively, bear witness to

<sup>53</sup>See especially R. I. Moore, "Popular Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon?," *The Journal of Religious History* 24 (2000), 16–17; R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

<sup>54</sup>H. E. J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and the Liturgy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 55 (2004), 55.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 60; cf. G. Morin, "Règlements inédits du pape Saint Grégoire VII pour les chanoines réguliers," *Revue Bénédictine* 18 (1901), 177–83; C. Dereine, "La prétendue règle de Grégoire VII pour chanoine réguliers," *Revue Bénédictine* 71 (1961), 108–18; C. Dereine, "Notes sur l'influence de la règle de Grégoire VII pour chanoines réguliers," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 43 (1948), 512–14; A.B. Palacios, "La redacción breve del c. "In die resurrectionis" en las collecciones canonicas pregracianas," in *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Munich, 13–18 July 1992*, eds. P. Landau and J. Mueller (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1997), 923–52.

<sup>56</sup>Uta-Renate Blumenthal, "Poitevin Manuscripts, the Abbey of Saint-Ruf and Ecclesiastical Reform in the Eleventh Century," in *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages: Studies in Medieval Canon Law in Honour of Linda Fowler-Magerl*, eds. Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 89; cf. Uta-Renate Blumenthal and Detlev

some of these contemporary changes. That these and other liturgical texts were copied into select French and German canon law collections of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries attests to their circulation and contemporary relevance during and after Gregory's lifetime.<sup>57</sup>

The broader theological framework of Gregory's liturgical reform was informed by historical tradition and precedence. Expounding on the subject in his *Micrologus de ecclesiasticis observationibus* (written between 1086–1100), the contemporary Swabian chronicler, Bernold of Constance (c.1054–1100), noted Gregory's constant reliance on the statutes of early church fathers, his papal predecessors, and ecumenical church councils.<sup>58</sup> According to Cowdrey, this perspective suggests that Gregory promoted "respect of the true and ancient order established by the early popes and therefore a vindication of Roman authority and Roman order."<sup>59</sup> Such an outlook on the relationship between the liturgy and church reform fits well with this pope's larger reforming objective: "to introduce nothing novel, nothing of our own devising," seeking "only what the salvation of all men and their necessity duly demand."<sup>60</sup>

This ostensible promotion of *concordia* is reminiscent of Gregory's contemporaneous dealings with Archdeacon Berengar of Tours, whose divergent Eucharistic doctrine had been troubling the papacy since the pontificate of Leo IX (1049–54). In both cases, where alternative religious practices and interpretations were being explored, Gregory attempted to secure obedience to the precepts of the Holy Roman See through a "mutual acknowledgement of difference usages so long as they were severally compatible with Christian tradition."<sup>61</sup> Moreover, and perhaps even his initial intention, Gregory was seeking to establish closer connections with the Armenian Church, which he hoped could be exercised more regularly

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Jasper, "'Licet nova consuetudo' – Gregor VII. und die Liturgie," in *Bishops, Texts and the Use of Canon Law around 1100: Essays in Honour of Martin Brett*, eds. Bruce C. Brasington and Kathleen G. Cushing (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 45–68.

<sup>57</sup>See the *Collectio Burdegalensis* (Ms Bordeaux 11, fol. 159v and Ms Würzburg M.p.j.q.2, fols. 27v–28v), *Collectio Caesaraugustana* (Ms Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 3876, fols. 27v–28r), *Collectio Britannica* (Ms London, British Library, Add. 8873, fol. 73r), *Polycarpus* (Ms Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 7127, fol. 353r), *Collectio XIII librorum* (Ms Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Savigny 3, fol. 132v), *Collectio Tarraconensis* (Ms Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 5517, fols. 119v–120v and Ms Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 4281B, fol. 140r–v), and *Collectio IV librorum* (Ms Canterbury, Cathedral and Chapter Library, Lit. B.7, fols. 71v–72r).

<sup>58</sup>Cf. Bernold of Constance, *Micrologus de ecclesiasticis observationibus*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 151, cols 995C, 998B, and 1000A.

<sup>59</sup>Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and the Liturgy," 68.

<sup>60</sup>*Reg.* V, 5.

<sup>61</sup>H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The papacy and the Berengarian controversy," in *Auctoritas und Ratio: Studien zu Berengar von Tours*, eds. Peter Ganz, Robert B.C. Huygens, and Friedrich Niewoehner (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990), 132; cf. *Reg.* VI, 17a.

through the dispatching of letters to Rome. Similar attempts to expand his “friendship network” were certainly being made elsewhere in Christendom during this period, primarily through the dispatching of letters and papal legates, the convening of more regular church councils, and the issuance of law. In his communication with Armenia, Gregory sought nothing short of a complete admission of the Catholic (Latin, Roman) faith, fully expecting the Armenian Church to embrace the faith of the four ecumenical councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451). He likewise sought the archbishop’s personal belief on these matters and “about others if any wherein you are uncertain.” The Roman Church, as Gregory stated implicitly, was the authority and head in all matters regarding the Christian faith, the exemplar to which all churches must adhere in matters of faith, doctrine, and religious practice.

A closer reading of Gregory’s 1080 letter suggests yet another fear: that heresy might exercise rule in Armenia. This “perceived” threat, however, should not be treated separately from the church reformers’ larger objectives; rather, the successful detection and suppression of religious dissent is a true reflection of Church authority, centralization, and legitimacy. Seizing the opportunity to reinforce such themes, Gregory VII expounded his views and expectations on orthodoxy with incredible detail by referring to the first four ecumenical councils. For this interpretation he relied exclusively on a sixth-century letter written by Pope Gregory the Great (590–604). According to both popes, holding the faith meant acknowledging and venerating the four Gospel books and the first four ecumenical councils, at which meetings the “heretical” teachings of Arius were destroyed (Nicaea in 325); the error of Eunomius and Macedonius was refuted (Constantinople in 381); where Nestorius was condemned (Ephesus in 431); and where the perversity of Eutyches and Dioscorus was rejected (Chalcedon in 451).<sup>62</sup> Embracing these four councils was crucial to orthodoxy because, as Gregory the Great declared, “in them the structure of the holy faith rises up as if built on a square stone, and whoever does not uphold their solidity, whatever his life and works may be, even if he appears to be of stone, he lies outside the building.”<sup>63</sup> Gregory the Great also cited the second council of Constantinople in 553 as worthy of veneration; it was here that Ibas was rejected “as being full of error”; where Theodore, “who separated the person of the mediator of God and me in two substances,” was convicted of having “fallen into the perfidy of ungodliness”; and, finally, where Theodoret, “through which the faith of blessed Cyril is

<sup>62</sup>“Epistula Papae Leonis ad Flavianum ep. Constantinopolitanum de Eutyche,” in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 77–82.

<sup>63</sup>Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistularum*, ed. D. Norberg, 2 vols, in *Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis* 140, 140a (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), i.24.

censured,” was rejected as being insane. To Gregory the Great in the sixth century, as to his successor in the late eleventh, the issue at hand was one of doctrinal obedience to the established truth and foundations of Christian faith: to untie what was bound in these councils was nothing short of anathema.<sup>64</sup>

For Gregory VII, these ecumenical councils and the writings of his namesake formed the bedrock of Christian belief and practice. It was perhaps only natural for him to expect the same, unquestionable obedience from the Armenian Church, a doctrinal concern that came to prominence amidst growing and contemporaneous efforts for liturgical uniformity in Spain and Bohemia (see below). To avoid “a stumbling-block concerning the faith for one’s brothers,” the pope called for the omission of a certain text (“Three Chapters,” *Trisagion*<sup>65</sup>), which reads: “Who has been crucified for us” (“*Qui crucifixus es pro nobis*”), to which the Armenian Church appended the words “Holy God, holy strong, and holy immortal” (*Sanctus Deus, sanctus fortis, sanctus immortalis*).<sup>66</sup> Gregory’s issue with this textual inclusion, in addition to its being contrary to Roman custom, was that these words were added to the liturgy in the fifth century by one Peter the Fuller (†488), patriarch of Antioch—words subsequently “condemned for their Monophysite implication.”<sup>67</sup> But as Cowdrey observed, Gregory asked the Armenians to ‘omit them in deference to the scruples of other Christians, for St. Paul’s charitable reason, that Christians should avoid offending each other about matters which, although of weight for themselves, were objectionable to others’<sup>68</sup> (Rom. 14: 19–24). Once again it seems right to suggest that uniformity of practice was ultimately sought—a current of opinion and religious belief underpinning the wider church reform movement that so characterizes the late eleventh-century Latin West.

To be sure, similar measures for religious uniformity were being taken elsewhere in Western Christendom, a fact evident in Gregory VII’s dealings with the church in Spain. The pope’s genuine desire for concord with Rome and its religious practices is apparent most explicitly in his letter to Kings Alfonso VI of León-Castile and Sancho IV of Navarre written in March 1074. In this account the pope reminded these rulers of Christianity’s historical triumph on the Iberian Peninsula over the “poison of the Priscillianists” in the fourth and fifth centuries and the “perfidy of the

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>A chant of the Eastern churches, recognized in the Latin rite as a part of the Reproaches sung in the Good Friday liturgy.

<sup>66</sup>See Halfter, *Das Papsttum und die Armenier im frühen und hohen Mittelalter: Von den ersten Kontakten bis zur Fixierung der Kirchenunion im Jahre 1198*, 114–21; cf. Georg Hofmann, “Papst Gregor VII. und der Christliche Osten,” *Studi Gregoriani* 1 (1947), 173–75.

<sup>67</sup>Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII*, 362, n.15.

<sup>68</sup>Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 489 and “The Gregorian Papacy, Byzantium, and the First Crusade,” 159.

Arians” in the fifth and sixth centuries, and of their being “cut off from the Roman rite, first by the encroaching Goths [in the fourth and fifth centuries] and finally by the invading Saracens” in the early eighth century (711–20). Gregory’s familiarity with historical precedent is evident from his citing of Pope Innocent I’s letter to Bishop Decentius of Gubbio in 416,<sup>69</sup> Pope Hormisdas’s letter to Bishop Sallustius of Seville in 520,<sup>70</sup> the councils of Toledo in 633<sup>71</sup> and Braga in 563,<sup>72</sup> and two more recent meetings convened in Aragon by the papal legate and Cardinal-priest Hugh Candidus in 1068 and 1071, all of which strengthened the papal-led campaign against the Mozarabic/Hispanic rite that was still prevalent in Navarre and León-Castile.<sup>73</sup> After receiving a report from three Spanish bishops (sometime prior to 19 March 1074),<sup>74</sup> who promised *per scripta* to adopt the decrees of the councils convened during Alexander II’s pontificate (1061–73), Gregory VII appeared increasingly confident that the Roman tradition would prevail in that region.

Still exercising some caution, the pope lamented on the current state of religion in late eleventh-century Spain as being undermined and on the verge of collapse. The contention here, however, was more the ordering of Divine Office, which Gregory exhorted should be that of the Roman church:

not of the Toledan or any other, but that, like the other kingdoms of the west and north, you hold to that which has been founded through Christ by Peter and Paul upon the firm rock and consecrated by their blood, against which the gates of hell, that is, the tongues of heretics, have never been able to prevail.<sup>75</sup>

The persistence in Spain of “certain things that are contrary to the catholic faith”<sup>76</sup> furthermore, prompted a response in Gregory’s letter to King Alfonso in 1081. Yet by this stage of the doctrinal debate, the pope had come to recognize the faithfulness of all churches in that kingdom, thereby congratulating the king on his resolve to abandon error and return to the ancient custom of the Holy Roman Church—a clear indication that the church in Spain had effectively conformed to papal wishes.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>69</sup>*Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et capitula Angilramni*, ed. Paul Hinschius (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1863; repr. Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1963), 527–29. See also Karl-Georg Schon’s online *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH) edition at: <http://www.pseudoisidor.mgh.de/>.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 693.

<sup>71</sup>Mansi, vol. X, cols 611–43.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., vol. IX, cols 773–80.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., vol. IX, cols 1063–66 and 1069–70.

<sup>74</sup>See *Codex Emelianense* in *La España Sagrada*, ed. E. Flórez, iii (Madrid: Marin, 1754), 391; Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII*, 68, n15.

<sup>75</sup>Reg. I, 64.

<sup>76</sup>Reg. IX, 2.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

The case in Spain is an exemplary model of doctrinal reform, obedience, and vigor. Its successful outcome during Gregory's pontificate makes it seem (perhaps falsely) as though simply raising awareness of the error in question was the most expedient and necessary solution. Yet from his success in this matter we might understand further the pope's expectations for the church in Armenia, as the initiative taken in both regions was closely aligned in both purpose and intent. One significant distinction, however, is that that "Spain represented an especial responsibility in liturgical matters,"<sup>78</sup> whereas with the Armenians "Gregory had no thought of pressing . . . any adoption of Roman liturgical practice as a whole or in part."<sup>79</sup> The justification for such reasoning perpetuates the ideological divide between Eastern and Western churches. On the one hand, the kingdom of Spain's alignment with Rome was understood and presented historically as belonging to "blessed Peter and the holy Roman Church" *in ius et proprietam*.<sup>80</sup> By sending the *legatus natus* Bishop Amatus of Oloron and Abbot Frotard of Saint-Pons de Thomières to Spain in June 1077, Gregory reminded the kings and magnates of the "misfortunes of past times,"<sup>81</sup> which he deemed responsible for obscuring and weakening the kingdom's fidelity to St. Peter—namely Arian and Priscillianist heresies and periods of Visigothic and Saracen rule. Armenia's connection with the Roman liturgy, by comparison, was less firmly grounded in this occidental (Latin) historical tradition.

Yet tolerance or acceptance of the Armenian liturgy was not a viable option for the Roman Church, an important consideration in light of the ongoing church reform movement. In this grander scheme of ecclesiastical renewal and liberty, the standardization of liturgical practice became a crucial reforming objective, much as it had been for the Carolingians in the ninth century.<sup>82</sup> Any attempts to introduce novel liturgical practices ran contrary to the established doctrinal ideal, which in the second half of the eleventh century was leaning more heavily towards uniformity. This explains why, in writing to Duke Wratislav of Bohemia in January 1080, Gregory fiercely opposed his request that divine service be performed in the Slavonic tongue. The reasoning behind his prohibition was that Holy Scripture might become anything but transparent—that is to say that it might become obscure, "cheapened and subject to contempt," or "wrongly understood by incompetent persons" which ultimately might "lead to error."<sup>83</sup> In short, Gregory feared the inevitable lapse from ignorance or deviance of Christian doctrine into outright

<sup>78</sup>Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and the Liturgy," 78.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>80</sup>Reg. IV, 28.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Cf. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII (1073–85) and the Liturgy," 55–83.

<sup>83</sup>Reg. VII, 11.



formal denial—from orthodoxy to heresy. But in contemporary political terms, such an obstinate refusal to religious adherence was more likely interpreted as a direct challenge to the pope's claims to spiritual supremacy throughout the Christian world. Indeed, as evident from another case arising in Dalmatia, where the Slavonic liturgy was prevailing—prompting Gregory's petition c.1075 to King Sweyn of Denmark for help in defending Christendom against these "cowardly heretics"<sup>84</sup>—the pressures to orientate central Europe to Latin (Roman) liturgical traditions dominate this pope's general outlook.

Given this line of reasoning, the Armenian Church remained a great and immediate concern for Gregory VII and his reforming papacy in the 1070s and 1080s. Reminding the archbishop of Tsamandos of his religious duty and burden of responsibility, the pope concluded his 1080 letter by reiterating the urgency of the matter at hand. In seeking an admission of faith, he expected some communication to arrive at Rome forthwith that would define the Armenian position on all doctrinal matters once and for all. While no such correspondence exists, Gregory's pastoral responsibility and veritable concern for this particular Christian province and its churches is representative of his more universal, reforming leadership. From the "watchtower of the highest see," Gregory grieved for those "who separate themselves from the body of Christ." But at the same time he rejoiced "with saving consent and unspeakable joy for those who are of a right mind and who are acknowledged to maintain the unity of the faith." In overseeing and protecting the universal church, Gregory was by his own admission "moved by fatherly compassion" to pursue the state of the Armenian Church. With every action, Gregory sought to secure Christian unity "by discussion and agreement, rather than by command and coercion."<sup>85</sup> In his dealing with the Armenians, Gregory presumed that "harmony and collaboration could be established, and that a quest should be made to establish good relationships upon a basis of peace and concord."<sup>86</sup> This rather judicial (read: diplomatic) attitude is indicative of this pope's dealings with other distant Christian provinces—a rather subtle and increasingly patient approach adopted and frequently employed throughout his pontificate.

Indeed, Gregory was often cautious and forgiving in his handling of ecclesiastical matters, forever fearful of creating unnecessary enemies. Individual cases and scenarios, experience had taught him, called for individual consideration and concession. (The investiture dispute with Henry IV of Germany, with its dramatic episodes of excommunication, deposition, and absolution, is by far the most emblematic example from this period.<sup>87</sup>)

<sup>84</sup>Reg. II, 51; cf. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 440.

<sup>85</sup>Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 489.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>See note 1 for some good literature on this subject.

Temperance and mercy as well as a flexible application of the law and reform could go a long way in securing necessary alliances while avoiding unnecessary disputes. Compromise was the rule of the day, especially in matters of litigation.<sup>88</sup> In the same way that church courts sought the middle ground for fear of alienating one litigant or party, Gregory VII sought to reconcile the Armenian Church with the traditional Latin Roman rites of religious belief and practice. His methods for doing so ostensibly hardened over time. And there is little doubt that Constantinople played some part in shaping the extent and nature of Gregory's concern.

It soon became clear to Gregory that Roman and Armenian liturgical practices were not as polarized as his predecessors once thought. As the pope himself discerned, the Armenians sacrificed with unleavened bread during the celebration of the Eucharist—a practice shared with Rome, though one that brought them censure from the Greeks, “ignorant as they are, for heresy.”<sup>89</sup> For Gregory, the fear of losing the Armenians to the Greeks only encouraged the level of his involvement. He worried that the Greeks’ “importunate loquacity” (*temerarius garrullitas*) might eventually persuade the Armenians to depart fully from Roman custom. In his lengthy letter to the archbishop of Tsamandos, Gregory found it pertinent to address the matter directly, offering words of encouragement that he hoped might at once convert them to Roman custom. Once again, temperance and restraint of discretion could prove as useful tools in such a mission. It was only a matter of time, as the pope presumably feared, before incessant accusations against Armenian religious practices by the Latin West, and slander against the Holy Roman Church by the Byzantines, might persuade the Armenians to shift allegiance to the patriarch in Constantinople.

Rather than condemn the Armenians for heresy, therefore, Gregory appealed to their common religious interests and sensibilities. In matters of faith, he was not one for severing ties without adequate justification, which, after speaking with the Armenian envoy John the priest, could not be found. Nor were the Armenians themselves anxious to “forfeit papal favour”<sup>90</sup> because, as Cowdrey rightly noted, they were “subject to the same Seljuk pressures as the Byzantines”<sup>91</sup> in the 1060s and 1070s. Occupying that region between invading Turkish armies and the Eastern Christian empire, the Armenians were not in a position to spurn potential military allies. In this respect, the likelihood of their trying to establish an alliance with Rome is also deserving of some mention, if only for some evidence of mutual contact and

<sup>88</sup>See Fredric L. Cheyette, “Suum Cuique Tribuere,” *French Historical Studies* 6 (1970) and Stephen D. White, “*Pactum . . . Legem Vincit et Amor Judicium*”—The Settlement of Disputes by Compromise in Eleventh-Century France,” *The American Journal of Legal History* 22 (1978).

<sup>89</sup>*Reg.* VIII, 1.

<sup>90</sup>Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 487–88.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*

communication between the Armenian Church and Rome. According to a chronicle entry for 1074–75, Matthew of Edessa noted Archbishop Gregory II of Tsamandos’s journey from Armenia to Constantinople, then to Rome, and onward to the desert in Egypt before fulfilling a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>92</sup> This “Grand Tour” was possibly undertaken in part to request or perhaps even receive the *pallium* from Gregory VII in Rome, which action—if true—would imply “a sign of their [Armenians’] devotion to, and communion with, Rome.”<sup>93</sup> The degree to which “compromise” and “discussion” epitomize Gregory’s interaction with the Armenian Church suggests strongly that the latter was closer to a union with Rome than the evidence admits.

This potential religious affinity can be inferred also from Gregory’s letter to Archbishop Roffred of Benevento (dated 1080), our last communiqué relative to Armenia for this period. While the contents of this letter concern an Armenian imposter by the name of Macharus and the manner in which he should be brought back into the fold of orthodoxy, what interests us most is that Roman and Armenian Churches appear united in taking down this wandering “wrongdoer.”<sup>94</sup> Indeed, with the assistance of Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino and other religious figures, concerted efforts were mobilized to track down this figure in southern Italy (at Frigento, near Avellino), in which region he was reportedly hiding out. This action was taken, it should be said, in answer to complaints by the archbishop of Tsamandos, made to Rome through his envoy John the Priest. With Macharus having been driven from Armenia, and “judged to be a heretic convicted by his own mouth,” Gregory’s handling of this affair shows no hint of discord between Western and Eastern churches. In fact, quite the contrary is true. Gregory explicitly stated in this letter his approval for the orthodox faith of the Armenian Church: “Wherefore we, having approved the faith of that church, namely that of the Armenians.”<sup>95</sup> In this exceptional admission, Gregory mentions his approval only in passing, crediting his information entirely to the promises of the Armenian envoy. Uniting for the common purpose of combating heresy, any existing conflict over liturgical or doctrinal differences was temporarily suspended, but surely not forgotten or resolved.

For two and half centuries after Gregory VII’s pontificate, in fact, attempts were made by the West to reform the Armenian Church. Pope Celestine III

<sup>92</sup>Matthew of Edessa, Part II, c.63, 140.

<sup>93</sup>Winkler, “The Political Influence of the Holy See on Armenia and its Liturgy (XI–XIV Century),” 113–4; cf. Angele Kapoian-Kouymjian, “Le catholicos Gregoire II le Martyrophile (Vkasaser) et ses pègrinations,” *Revue des études arméniennes* 132 (1974), 306–25.

<sup>94</sup>*Reg.* VII, 28.

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

(1191–98) sent his legate Cardinal Conrad of Wittelsbach to realize this mission (to no avail), with the additional hope of enforcing the use of the Latin language in Armenian schools.<sup>96</sup> Pope Eugenius III (1145–53) sought a similar conformity in liturgical practice by calling on the Armenians to mix wine with water and to celebrate the feast of the Nativity on December 25 (as opposed to January 6), bringing to light further contentions between Eastern and Western religious practices.<sup>97</sup> The Armenian Catholicos Nerses Snorhali (1166–73) attempted to defend these rites, refusing also to adopt the Roman practice of the Nativity and the unmixed chalice. Not until the rule of the Catholicos Grigor IV Tla(y) (1173–93) in the late twelfth century did the Armenians actually adopt the Latin rite of ordination, and then only in return for Pope Lucius III's (1181–85) assistance against Byzantine attempts to force a unification with the Greeks.<sup>98</sup> In the fourteenth century, Pope Benedict XII (1334–42) also tried his hand at subjecting the Armenian Church to Roman supremacy, though with little success.

Given this long and resilient tradition, Gregory VII's relations with Armenia stand apart. The political, military, and indeed religious, circumstances under which he addressed this region were unlike those ever encountered by his predecessors. Throughout his pontificate, Gregory's efforts to reform the Armenians became more concerted, and his ideas on the liturgy more formulated and cohesive as a result. The degree to which he relied upon external information and communications is well worth iterating here. In one sense, Gregory's knowledge of the Armenian Church and its religious practices owed more to the flow of business into Rome than personal experience. There is little doubt, for instance, that John the Priest greatly informed and advanced Gregory's understanding on the Armenian liturgy, which in turn established enduring levels of tolerance and trust between the two churches. Forcing his hand externally, however, was the ongoing military aggression facing Byzantium in the last decades of the eleventh

<sup>96</sup>“L'histoire d'arménie de Guiragos de Kantzag” [=Kiwrakos Ganjekeci (Getkeci)], in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens*, 2 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1869–1906; reprinted Farnborough: Gregg Press, 1967), 1: 422–23; cf. François Tournéize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie depuis les origines des Arméniens jusqu'à la mort de leur dernier roi (l'an 1393)* (Paris: A. Picard, 1910), 185ff.; Winkler, “The Political Influence of the Holy See on Armenia and its Liturgy (XI–XIV Century),” 113.

<sup>97</sup>A. Balgy, [= Palcean], *Historia doctrinae catholicae inter armenos unionisque eorum cum Ecclesia Romana in Concilio Florentino*, 2 vols (Vienna: Typis Cong. Mechitharisticae (W. Heinrich), 1878), 32; cf. Tournéize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie depuis les origines des Arméniens jusqu'à la mort de leur dernier roi (l'an 1393)*, 250; Winkler, “The Political Influence of the Holy See on Armenia and its Liturgy (XI–XIV Century),” 114.

<sup>98</sup>Winkler, “The Political Influence of the Holy See on Armenia and its Liturgy (XI–XIV Century),” 115; P. Tekeyan, *Controverses christologiques en Armeno-Cilicie dans la seconde moitié du XII siècle (1165–1198)* [= *Orientalia Christiania Analecta* 124] (Rome: Pont. Inst. Orientalium Studiorum, 1939), 51–54.

century, in addition to the church reform movement initiated throughout Christendom, aspects both that stressed even more the importance of conformity in religious practice. With such complex political and cultural dynamics at play, Gregory's interaction with the Armenian Church reveals more broadly his genuine desire to unite Christians under a universal banner, contributing ultimately to a more effective exercising of his spiritual domain to the very periphery of Christendom.