

Translation by Catherine J. Bright and Courtney M. Booker, of Henri-Xavier Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme politique: Essai sur la formation des théories politiques du Moyen-Age*, second ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1955), 19–50.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The study that I present in these pages is by no means a general statement of Saint Augustine's political doctrine. That has been done many times.¹ The goal of my research is more limited.

All medievalists have been struck by the profound intermingling of the Church and the State, which forms one of the characteristic traits of medieval civilization.

How did this intimate relationship operate? How was the old Roman idea of the State absorbed by the increasing influence of the Christian idea, to the point that it led to the theory of the two swords in the twelfth century?

That is the question. I have named this progressive, irregular movement *political Augustinism*, for want of a better term.²

I endeavored to define its formation and to mark some of its stages with precision. If by doing so I was able to open some avenues of research, in which I have directed several of my students, then I will have fully achieved my goal.

I sought to observe the lives of certain ideas—to catch, in a way, their distortion in the minds of those that were simpler than the protagonists who inspired them, and to establish how these ideas came to transform major institutions, such as the monarchy.

¹ See in particular the recent work of Gustave Combès, *La doctrine politique de saint Augustin*, Paris, 1927 (482 p.). At the beginning there is an interesting study of all the authors who have dealt with this question since Tillemont. The author does not point out the article of E. Bernheim, *Politische Begriffe des Mittelalters im Lichte des Anschauungen Augustins*, in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* (1896), p. 1–23; nor his work *Mittelalterliche Zeitanschauungen in ihren Einfluss auf Politik und Geschichtsschreibung*, Tübingen, 1918; nor Offergelt, *Die Staatslehre des Hl. Augustinus nach seinen sämtlichen Werken*, Bonn, 1914. In fact, Combès, like the authors who preceded him, concerned himself above all with giving an exact description of Saint Augustine's ideas on authority, law, justice, the homeland, war, and the relationship between the Church and the State. On the influence of Saint Augustine, he refers to interesting texts that demonstrate the prestige the great doctor enjoyed, but he did not investigate (though it was not his main subject) whether Saint Augustine's concepts were transformed in later centuries. See also the three volumes of the acts of the Congrès augustiniens of 1954, *Augustinus magister*, Paris, 1954–1955.

² I am not entirely wedded to this denomination. If I have adopted it, it is because certain passages of the Augustinian corpus mark its beginning, and because the essential tendencies of the Augustinian mindset are found there. On this point, see my *Réflexions sur l'essence de l'augustinisme polit.* in *Augustinus magister*, vol. II, p. 991.

This life of ideas, which is not at all like a juxtaposed description of the philosophical or theological systems of a series of thinkers, is a seldom explored area of history. It seems to me, however, that it is capable of illuminating the very foundations of medieval civilization.

At first, this study of *political Augustinism* made up the initial part of my work *Saint Grégoire VII, Essai sur sa conception du pouvoir pontifical*. Indeed, it seemed that, without this preliminary research, the person and the work of the great Pontiff would remain largely unexplained.

I believed that I should publish it separately, because it can shed light not only on one of the greatest popes in history, but also on the development of the politico-religious theories of the Middle Ages.

In closing, allow me to express my deep gratitude to my eminent master, Edouard Jordan, for his encouragement and precious advice.

H.-X. Arquillière

August 21, 1933, *Presbytère de Chazay-d'Azergues (Rhône)*

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

POLITICAL AUGUSTINISM AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MEDIEVAL PAPACY

This new edition has led me to revise my text carefully. I have introduced some minor corrections, but it seemed to me that the work as a whole, based upon documents that have not changed, has retained its general consistency. The most recently published studies have only confirmed this opinion.³

On the other hand, the research that I have pursued since the first edition⁴ has permitted me to better grasp its scope, and to situate it more precisely in a more general problem: that of the medieval Papacy.

It may be opportune here to provide a brief summary of that problem, which will illuminate political Augustinism in a more satisfactory light.

First of all, is there a problem of the medieval Papacy? One knows what sort of heated controversies have stirred up the question of the Roman Pontiff's jurisdiction, whether between partisans of the pope and the emperor since the eleventh century—between Gallicans and Ultramontanes—or more recently, on the occasion of the *Loi sur les associations* (1901) and the *Loi sur la Séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat* (1905).

³ See especially, among the latest works that have studied this question in particular, P. Baudet, *Onderzoekingen over het system der Mideleeuwse Geschied beschouwing*, thesis presented at the University of Leiden, 1947, p. 9, 73, 84, 99, 168, etc. – Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, London, 1955, p. 134. Even more recently, the work of Professor Truyol, *Les fondements spirituels d'une communauté universelle des peuples*. (Conference of the *Association des Etudes internationales*), Paris, 1955. Section I, p. 26–27, p. 30–33, (typewritten section), given at the *Assoc. des Etudes internationales*, Paris.

⁴ See H.-X. Arquillière, *Origines de la théorie des deux glaives*, in the compilation of Gregorian studies assembled by Don Gino Borino, *Studi Gregoriani*, Rome, 1947, vol. I, p. 501–521. Idem, *La signification théologique du Pontificat de Grégoire VII*, in *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, April–June 1950. Idem, *Réflexions sur l'essence de l'augustinisme politique*, communication to the Congrès international augustinien, Paris, Sept. 21–24, 1954, published in the *Actes du Congrès Augustinus magister*, Paris, 1954, vol. II, p. 991 to 1001. Idem, *L'Augustinisme politique et la Papauté*, communication to the Congrès d'études médiévales de Cologne (October 4–8, 1954). I have borrowed many elements from these various works. Furthermore, I intend to resume this study by giving it greater scope and more justifications.

Nowadays, one can attack this problem with the composure that is fitting for a disinterested inquiry. The first condition for clarifying the problem is to lay it out in its fundamental terms.

Two pontifical texts, weighed against one another, will serve to help clarify the problem: one by Gregory VII, the other by Leo XIII.

In the solemn act of the second excommunication of Henry IV, on March 7, 1080, Pope Gregory VII wrote: “Now, most holy Fathers (Saints Peter and Paul), let the world understand and know that, if you can bind and loose in Heaven, then on the earth you can take from and give to each man—according to his merits—empires, kingdoms, principalities, duchies, marches, counties, and all their possessions.”⁵ Thus, Gregory relied upon the power of the keys, and a religious motive inspired him: “to take them away from depraved and unworthy men, and to give them to those whose piety recommends them.”⁶ By the same act, the pope clearly claimed the two powers—or as Saint Bernard would say, the two swords: the temporal and the spiritual.⁷

In contrast to this medieval declaration that was repeated in various forms up until the fourteenth century,⁸ let us read from the encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1885), penned by Pope Leo XIII, when he defined the domain of the two powers: “*Utraque potestas, est in genere suo maxima.*” Each power is sovereign in its own sphere.

Thus, on one hand, the pope seems to have secular powers at his disposal. The natural law of the State—prior to the Church, founded on the primitive demands of human nature, independent and sovereign in its sphere—seems completely unrecognized; it is absorbed within ecclesiastical law. On the

⁵ “*Agite nunc, queso, patres et principes sanctissimi (Saint Peter and Saint Paul), ut omnis mundus intellegat et cognoscat, quia, si potestis in coelo ligare et solvere, potestis in terra imperia, regna, principatus, ducatus marchias comitatus et omnium hominum possessiones, pro meritis tollere unicuique et concedere.*” *Register Gregors VII*, ed. Caspar, p. 487.

⁶ “*Vos enim (Saint Peter and Saint Paul) patriarchatus primatus archiepiscopatus episcopatus frequenter TULISTIS PRAVIS ET INDIGNIS ET RELIGIOSIS VIRIS DEDISTIS. Si enim spiritualia iudicatis, quid de secularibus vos posse credendum est? Et si angelos dominantes omnibus superbis principibus iudicabitis, quid de illorum servis facere potestis? Addiscant nunc reges et omnes seculi principes, quanti vos estis, quid potestis, et timeant parvipendere iussionem ecclesiae vestrae.*” *Regist. Greg. VII*, ed. Caspar, ibidem, p. 487.

⁷ On the connection between the Gregorian doctrine and the theory of the two swords, see H.-X. Arquillière, *Origines de la théorie des deux glaives*, in *Studi Gregoriani*, ed. Gino Borino, vol. I, p. 501–521.

⁸ See below, p. 136

other hand, this fundamental law upon which the ancient and modern States rest is bluntly affirmed. There is obviously a profound gap, a hiatus, even an apparent contradiction, between the two aspects of the Papacy that are revealed by these key declarations. Must one hasten to conclude that there is an interruption or even a real opposition between the medieval Papacy and the modern Papacy?

Such is the problem, stripped of all secondary questions, as it arises in the final analysis in its most profound and most precise terms. How can one solve it, or at least illuminate the directions for research that lead to its solution? Three primary considerations seem to me to be capable of shedding some light on this delicate question:

1. How was Gregory VII led to formulate the doctrine that bears his name?
2. Was Gregory VII the creator of this doctrine, or rather just a link in the continuing chain of sovereign Pontiffs?
3. In which case, how are the contrasted aspects of the medieval Papacy and the modern Papacy, with respect to the State, related in the reality of History?

This study will permit us (and this is its whole objective) to mark with precision the place that political Augustinism holds in the solution to this problem.⁹

I

THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONS IN WHICH GREGORY VII FORMULATED HIS DOCTRINE¹⁰

Gregory VII has been one of the most misunderstood figures of the Middle Ages. During his lifetime, he was already a symbol of contradiction, and he aroused resolute partisans and passionate

⁹ Thus, this introduction directly constitutes a part of the rest of the work, and adds to political Augustinism a doctrinal complement, which determines its scope more accurately.

¹⁰ Only a few summary indications are possible here. One will find them elaborated, with the necessary texts, in H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII, Essai sur sa conception du pouvoir pontifical*, Paris, 1934 (a new edition is forthcoming). In particular, see chapter III, *L'évolution de la pensée grégorienne*, p. 123-201. Cf. Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne*, Paris, 1925, vol. II. *La réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne, 1057-1123*, Paris, 1940 (col. Fliche and Martin).

adversaries. For long centuries, the same partiality toward Gregory has existed among his historians, and the same distortion of his work and doctrine. One knows of Napoleon's famous saying, when he was negotiating the Concordat: "I am of Bossuet's religion, not Gregory VII's."

Indeed, Bossuet wrote: "Turning these things over in my mind, this idea alone seemed right to me: since Gregory VII, animated by a fervent spirit, tolerated with bitterness so many bad princes who lived in his time, and since he perceived them to be unmoved by ecclesiastical censure, he thought about terrifying them with other sanctions and *about taking their power away from them*, thus fearlessly asserting *things that were entirely new and unusual* for the apostolic see."¹¹

Edgar Quinet also speaks of "*revolution* in the spiritual government of the Church that claimed to have undergone none."¹² Michelet echoed him when he wrote on the subject of the Gregorian reform: "This *revolutionary* purification of the Church gave it an immense shock."¹³

A bit later, on the eve of the Vatican council, Döllinger¹⁴ formulated this judgment: "Even though he often invoked the example of his predecessors, Gregory VII scarcely considered himself as just the reformer of the Church, but as the founder, designated by God, of an institution hitherto unknown."

The studies of Martens,¹⁵ Bernheim,¹⁶ Mirbt,¹⁷ Hauck,¹⁸ Fliche,¹⁹ Wühr,²⁰ and the fine collections of *Studi Gregoriani*, edited under the direction of Don Gino Borino,²¹ assuredly show progress in

¹¹ Bossuet, *Defensio cleri gallicani*, Part I, book I, section 1, Liège, 1768, p. 143. Cf. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, p. 2–3.

¹² Edgar Quinet, *Le christianisme et la Révolution française*, Paris, no date, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Hachette, vol. III, p. 127–134.

¹³ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, definitive edition, Paris, no date, pp. 135, 137.

¹⁴ Dallinger, *Janus ou la Papauté*, translation, Giraud-Teulon, p. 36. The author certainly saw the opposition between the ancient papacy and the medieval papacy, and he believed simply in a break from tradition.

¹⁵ W. Martens, *Gregor VII, sein Leben und Wirken*, Leipzig, 1894, 2 vol.

¹⁶ Bernheim, *Mittelalterliche Zeitanschauungen in ihren Einfluss auf Politik und Geschichtsschreibung*, Tübingen, 1918.

¹⁷ Mirbt, *Die Publizistik im Zeitalter Gregors VII*, Leipzig, 1894. By the same, *Stellung Augustins in der Publizistik des Gregorianischen Kirchenstreits*, Leipzig, 1888.

¹⁸ Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 3rd ed. Leipzig, 1920, vol. IV.

¹⁹ Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne*, Paris-Louvain, 1924, 3 vol. By the same, *La réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, Paris, 1940.

²⁰ Wühr, *Studien zur Gregor VII*, Munich, 1930.

²¹ Don Gino Borino, *Studi gregoriani*, Rome, 1947–1952, 4 vols. Volumes V and VI are forthcoming.

the understanding of the person of Gregory VII and his work. However, none of these authors treated the theological problem that Gregory's pontificate raises.

How do the great Pontiff's person and activity appear to us, when we read the texts? We already have a brief overview of the thick and tenacious legend that has enveloped him for so long. He appeared to be the great despiser of lay powers and the champion of papal omnipotence. However, the real Gregory VII (and the studies about him are far from being exhaustive) appears more and more as a man of genuinely ardent piety and of unquenchable zeal for Church reform. And yet, he was also sincerely humble, anxious in the face of his task, and shrank from the sight of the supreme authority that was imposed upon him almost by force. He himself recounted how, at his predecessor's funeral, all at once "a great tumult and a great din arose among the people. They threw themselves on me," he said, "with true madness, such that I can say along with the prophet: 'I am come into the depth of the sea: and a tempest hath overwhelmed me; I have labored with crying; my jaws are become hoarse' (Ps. 68:3–4)."²² These are the conditions in which he acceded to the Sovereign Pontificate. He would often repeat, especially during the dramatic moments of his reign: "my conscience is my witness that I have not sought the honors of the supreme charge for a vain human glory."²³

Once he was invested, however, he applied himself to his work with uncommon energy. Though sometimes hesitant as to what means he should use to accomplish his essentially religious task, he remained unyielding in the defense of the Church's rights. Always firm in his successive directions, he kept his anxieties to himself, without letting any of them show from beneath the Roman clarity of his commands. This son of a Tuscan goatherd was a great and lofty figure, led by his merit alone—as if in spite of himself—to the summit of human dignities.

²² "*Sed subito, cum predictus dominus noster papa in ecclesia sancti Salvatoris sepulture traderetur, ortus est magnus tumultus populi et fremitus et in me quasi vesani insurrexerunt, ita ut cum propheta possim dicere: 'Veni in altitudine maris et tempestas demersit me; laboravi clamans, rauce facte sunt fauces mee'; et: 'timor et tremor venerunt super me et contexerunt me tenebre'. Sed quia in lecto iacens valde fatigatus satis dictare nequeo, angustias meas enarrare supersedeo.*" *Regist.* I, 1 (ed. Caspar, p. 3–4.) Cf. *Ibidem*, I, 2 (ed. Caspar, p. 5).

²³ See the texts assembled in H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, p. 70, n. 1 and p. 71, n. 1. See also the critique of the position taken by Fliche, *Ibidem*, p. 67–74.

A single, dominant idea already appeared clearly in the first years of his pontificate: he was responsible for the salvation of the world;²⁴ therefore, he was obliged to make Christian justice²⁵ (the fundamental condition of salvation) reign everywhere, among sovereigns just as among their subjects.

During the first years of his reign, his reforming activity was practiced strictly along the lines of his predecessors. He had collaborated intimately with them. He continued their struggles, fighting against Nicolaism and against simony, with the same doctrine and the same sanctions.

After two years of unceasing action, however, his endeavors appeared pointless, his effort fruitless. He ran up against a tremendous force of inertia, sometimes against a contrary doctrine,²⁶ and even against violent resistance in Italy, France, and Germany. To cite but one example: at the council of Erfurt (October 1073), when the archbishop Siegfried of Mainz promulgated reforming decrees, his clergy responded to him: “If the Lord Pope cannot content himself with men to perform the ministry of churches, then let him make an arrangement to obtain angels.”²⁷ Elsewhere, as in Normandy, the bishops who announced the reform were received by being struck with stones.²⁸ In the face of his repeated failures, the pope experienced a moment of desperation. In a confidential letter to his friend Hugh of Cluny, he reached the point of wishing for death, and added:

“Thanks to the Enemy’s traps, the Eastern Church has apostasized the Catholic faith. If I consider the West in my mind—if I look to the west, the north, and the south—I find hardly even a few bishops who have entered into office and who behave in a lawful manner... As for the group that surrounds me—Romans, Lombards, and Normans—they are worse than Jews

²⁴ This was the idea of Pope Gelasius (492–496), in his famous letter to Emperor Anastasius: “*Duo quippe sunt, imperator Auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur: auctoritas sacra pontificum, et regalis potestas. In quibus tanto gravius est pondus sacerdotum, quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus Domino in divino redditori sunt examine rationem.*” in *Patr. lat.* vol. LIX, col. 42.

²⁵ See the meaning of the word “justice,” so frequently employed by Gregory VII, in H.-X. Arquillière, *op. cit.*, ch. IV, *Les sources de la pensée grégorienne*, p. 260–272.

²⁶ See, for example, that which was professed by the concubinary priests of the Church of Milan, in Landulf, *Hist. ecclesiae mediolanensis*, book III, 35. Cf. H.-X. Arq., *Saint Grég. VII*, p. 16 and p. 125, note 4., and A. Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne*, vol. II, p. 160, note 2.

²⁷ Lambert of Hersfeld, *Annales*, an. 1074 in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.*, vol. V, p. 218.

²⁸ Orderic Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, IV, 9, (ed. Leprévost, vol. II, p. 327).

and pagans... And now, if I consider myself, I find that I am so weighed down by my own actions that no other hope remains for me but divine mercy... My life, to speak the truth, is nothing but a continual death.”²⁹

This intimate letter must not be forgotten when one seeks to delve into the hidden motives of Gregory VII’s activity.

Since disciplinary measures were failing; since traditional methods were proving themselves ineffective against simony and incontinence; since he realized that such a widespread moral situation could only be changed by regenerating the institutions, Gregory VII decided, after lengthy hesitations, to eliminate lay investiture, the principal source of the condemned abuses. This was the work of the Roman synod of February 1075.

To be sure, he did not consider parting with tradition (*nil novi facientes, nil adinventione nostra statuentes*); rather, he believed he was returning to it, since he relied on the Fourth Council of Constantinople (869–870).³⁰ Yet he recognized his right to set new decrees against new dangers, if necessity called for it.³¹ It is probably this awareness of a more extensive personal power, than of the existing decrees, that lies behind the *Dictatus papae*.

In my view, this prohibition of lay investiture, under pain of excommunication,³² occupied the central point of his Pontificate. The investiture controversy would arise from it. The open opposition of King Henry IV to the Roman Pontiff would result from it: namely, his attempt to depose the pope at

²⁹ *Regist.*, II, 49 (ed. Caspar, p. 189–190).

³⁰ *Regist.* IV, 22. Cf. *Conc. Constantinople*, in Mansi, vol. XVI, p. 174. This council prohibited laypeople from participating in religious affairs. Gregory VII frequently repeated that he wanted to follow the example of the “Holy Fathers” – even though, he took care to add, he recognized the right to oppose them by new means, if new calamities were to threaten the Church: “*Novit enim fraternitas tua, quia precepta haec non de nostro sensu exculpimus, sed antiquorum patrum sanctiones... officii nostri necessitate in medium propalamus... quanquam huic sancte Romane ecclesie semper licuit semperque licebit contra noviter increscentes excessus nova quoque decreta atque remedia procurare, quae... nulli homini sit fas ut irrita refutare.*” *Letter to Anno, Archbishop of Cologne* (March 29, 1075) in *Regist.* II, 67. Cf. *Ibidem*, *Letter to the Archbishop of Magdeburg* (March 29, 1075), II, 68, (ed. Caspar, p. 223 and p. 226).

³¹ See the preceding note. In the *Dictatus papae* (March 1075) the pope details the scope of his power. See the circumstances that surrounded this redaction in H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, p. 130 and ff. The text of the *Dictatus papae* is printed in *Regist.*, ed. Caspar, p. 202–206. Cf. Fliche, *La réforme grégor.*, II, 189.

³² H.-X. Arquillière, *op. cit.*, p. 128, n. 1.

the secret council of Worms in January 1076, which was immediately followed by Gregory VII's retort of the excommunication and deposition of the king. The drama of Canossa and the civil war in Germany would consequently arise from it as well. Ultimately, in the final analysis, the articulation of the Gregorian doctrine in the two letters to Hermann of Metz (1076 and 1081) also resulted from it.

In this tangle of causes and consequences, there is one event that dominates the others by its novelty: the king's deposition. This was a hitherto unheard of sanction. It involved a doctrine of the Church's authority over the State, which Gregory VII would develop with precision in his letters to Hermann, when public opinion, which had been affected by the strange measures taken against the king, desired to know what reasons had motivated the pontifical perspective.

One must avoid preconceived ideas here. For us moderns, who have a conception of a strong State far from that of the Middle Ages, there are two aspects—two very different acts—in the judgment of 1076 (excommunication and deposition of the king): on the one hand, a religious act, the excommunication, which a pope always had the right to pronounce against an unworthy member of the Church, whether king or emperor. The Church had used it more than once in the past. On the other hand, according to our modern viewpoint, there was a political act: the deposition of the king—the overthrow of a head of State. That fact has rightly vexed Bossuet and so many historians. It has made Gregory VII be accused of having a grasping, arrogant spirit of domination, and of being a religious despot—an “usurper monk.”

Why? Because in modern times, we are faced with well-differentiated States that are firmly established on natural law, conscious of their independence and of their autonomy, and which do not allow the interference of a foreign power in their governance. But it is a grave fault of the critic to transpose the ideas of his time into an earlier period, or to impose his mental patterns onto a distant historical reality that did not possess them.

And yet, for Gregory VII, the two aspects of the judgment that I have just analyzed and separated were associated—were linked in his thought by the most intimate bonds, in a transcendent

unity that simultaneously dominated pontifical jurisdiction and royal power: the Church. And the supreme authority of the Church resided, at that time just as it does today, in the person of the pope. It is equally remarkable that, in the statement of his condemnation in 1076, Gregory began by deposing the king, then freed the royal subjects from their oath of fidelity, and lastly pronounced an anathema against the king. To Gregory, all this seemed to flow directly from his spiritual power—his power of the keys.

Let us briefly recall the precise circumstances that determined the Pontiff's actions. The king of Germania, conqueror of the rebellious Saxons, who was master of his clergy and anxious about conserving the invaluable benefits of lay investiture, believed the moment had come in January 1076 to rid himself of the formidable adversary who reigned at the Lateran Palace. He assembled the Council of Worms, and had an act for the deposition of the "false monk Hildebrand" signed by the 24 bishops who were present. He had this judgment communicated to Gregory VII, who was presiding at the Roman synod (February 1076). After a night of reflection, the pope responded with the decision that I have discussed.³³

It is clear that, in this judgment provoked by dramatic and unforeseen events, all the elements made sense and came together as one in the Pontiff's mind—and that the topics invoked (pride, disobedience, attempt at schism) were of a purely religious order. The pope did not believe for one moment that he was departing from his spiritual domain, nor overstepping the limits of his papal power. Why? Because in the *Dictatus papae*, drafted the previous year, he had identified his right to depose the emperor through proposition XII.³⁴ And why did he recognize this prerogative, which appears strange to us? As much as one can gather from the texts, it is because, in his eyes, kings and emperors were in

³³ All the events alluded to and the texts referred to here are developed in ch. III, *L'évolution de la pensée grégorienne*, in H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, p. 123–201. It seems indispensable to do this reading in order to understand these ideas and events.

³⁴ "*Quod illi (papae) liceat imperatores deponere.*" *Dictatus papae* in *Registr.* (ed. Caspar, p. 202–207). Cf. H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, p. 133–136. The more recent study, the (typewritten) thesis by Goison, *Les "Dictatus papae"*, arrives at the same conclusions as in my work. One finds there an extensive development of the controversy's history, and a study of the derivation of the texts that make up the *Dictatus papae*, more detailed than that in Caspar, *Registr.*, p. 203–207.

the Church, they made up an integral part of the Church—and because, above the various nations that comprised Christendom, he saw only the Church, of which he was the leader. He believed, as Pope Gelasius had said in the fifth century, that he “would have to answer for the kings themselves at the Last Judgment.” The idea of the natural law of the State, of its own independent domain based on principles distinct from ecclesiastical law, did not even occur to him. In the fifth century, Gelasius was restrained by the existence of the Byzantine Empire, which was firmly rooted in Roman tradition, and he did not dream of interfering in the political domain. He balked before a prerogative that was not within his realm of jurisdiction. In the eleventh century, the old notion of the State as anterior to the Church and independent in its domain found itself absorbed or taken over by the religious function that secular princes themselves were obliged to exercise in their kingdoms, and which, according to pontifical doctrine, had become their primary purpose. In short, the Roman idea of the State had slowly crumbled under the erosion of political Augustinism.

Furthermore, consider how Gregory articulated his political design in the famous letter to Hermann of Metz, where in 1080 he revealed his entire doctrine. It is very simple and minimally nuanced. He recalled the power of the keys, the primary source of his strength, and he added: “Are kings exempt from this? Do kings not make up part of the flock that Christ entrusted to the blessed Peter?”³⁵ They constituted part of it in a loftier position than others; and at this point, he expressed the royal obligations. For, he said, “*the princes will render an account to God of all the people who are subject to their domination. If it is no small task for a simple Christian to save a single soul—namely, one’s own—then how great must be the responsibility of princes who are the attendants of thousands of souls.*”³⁶ Therefore, the first duty of kings is of a spiritual order: to save themselves and to labor for the salvation of their subjects.

³⁵ “*Quis ignorat vocem domini ac salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi dicentis in evangelio: Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam, et porte inferi non prevalebunt adversus eam; et tibi dabo claves regni celorum; et quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in celis et quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum in celis. Nunquid sunt hic reges excepti, aut non sunt de ovibus, quas filius Dei beato Petro commisit?*” Second letter to Hermann of Metz (1080), in *Regist.*, VIII, 21 (ed. Caspar, p. 548).

³⁶ “*De tot enim hominibus Deo redditori sunt rationem, quot suae dominationi subditos habuerunt. Quodsi alicui religioso privato non parvus labor est unam suam animam custodire, quantus labor imminet principibus super multis millibus animarum.*” *Regist.*, VIII, 21 (ed. Caspar, p. 559).

A bit further, the Pontiff continued in this way: “*This is why those who are called by the holy Church (an allusion to the consecration of kings) must respond humbly to this call, not to acquire a fleeting glory, but to procure the salvation of a great number of people... They should always place God’s honor before their honor, and faithfully practice justice in respecting the rights of each person.*”³⁷ Such is, in essence, the Gregorian concept of secular power: its basic function was to aid in the salvation of the subjects for whom kings had responsibility. Naturally, they needed to manage their Crown’s interests, to make their laws respected by their vassals and by their subjects; they could legislate whenever the need was felt—and in this domain they enjoyed broad freedom. But they were obliged to put their temporal interests after their religious mission, “the honor of God before their honor.”

In this, there is a sort of parallelism and even competition between the pope’s mission and the king’s mission: both had to work through their own means for the salvation of the masses. Such ideas had permeated their minds so deeply that when Henry IV wanted to depose Gregory VII, he intervened in January 1076 under the title of champion of the Church, to put an end to the usurpation of a false pope—just as would happen two centuries later, when Philip the Fair wanted to hand Boniface VIII over to a council in order to depose him, which was also to put a stop to the enterprises of an usurper pope.³⁸

It is clear that such a mixture of the spiritual and temporal, or more precisely, such an absorption of the temporal by the spiritual, could give the head of the Church nearly limitless rights of intervention, and that Gregory VII, in deposing a king who threatened to create a schism, thought he was fulfilling what was at once the most painful and most sacred of his duties as the sovereign Pontiff. This was the first time that a pope had employed such a prerogative. His successors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries followed in his wake. One can cite numerous texts of Eugene III, Alexander III,

³⁷ “*Quapropter quos sancta ecclesia sua sponte ad regimen vel imperium deliberato consilio advocat non pro transitoria gloria, sed pro multorum salute... Honorem Dei semper suo preponant, iustitiam unicuique suam servando ius amplectantur atque custodiant.*” *Ibidem*, p. 561–562.

³⁸ H.-X. Arquillière, *L’appel au concile sous Philippe le Bel et la genèse des théories conciliaires*, in *Revue des questions historiques* (January 1911). Cf. by the same author, *L’Origine des théories conciliaires*, in *Compte rendu de l’Académie des sciences morales et politiques* (May 1911). Note that the king of France, in 1302–1303, only recognized conciliar jurisdiction in regard to a false pope.

Innocent III, Gregory IX, Innocent IV, Boniface VIII, which faithfully echoed—even amplified—those of Gregory VII.

Here is an example that has particular authority, since it comes from a great jurist, Innocent IV. In 1245, in the bull *Aeger cui levia*, he wrote: “In succeeding Jesus Christ, who is altogether the true king and true priest according to the order of Melchizedek, the popes have received not only the pontifical but also the royal monarchy—and not only the celestial but also the earthly Empire... The two swords—the symbol of the two powers—were deposited in the Church. Therefore, he who is not a member of the Church can possess neither one nor the other, and the secular powers, in exercising their authority, can only employ the strength that has been transmitted to them by the Church.”³⁹ In this way, the Church seemed to fill the entire horizon, and the secular powers only legitimately existed in and by way of the Church. The State’s natural law seems to have become eclipsed within pontifical thought.

These expressions, which would be easy to multiply, are striking. I believe we deceive ourselves if we see in them only the effect of a sacred rhetoric to which the papal chancery had become accustomed. It is an equally superficial view that leads certain historians to think, in this field as in others, that the Middle Ages thrived on comparisons, metaphors, and symbols, suitable for feeding the subtlety of medieval people’s minds and their inveterate taste for fantasy.

There is more than all that behind these expressions. There is a doctrine. There is an entire conception of the world, slowly elaborated by the work of centuries, and which reflects, in full bloom, a civilization of indisputable grandeur. This way of thinking, which one must not confuse with the dogmatic and permanent element of pontifical power, is often called pontifical theocracy. It is, in more

³⁹ “*Dominus enim Ihesus Christus, dei filius, sicut verus homo verusque deus, sic secundum ordinem Melchisedech verus rex ac verus sacerdos existens... non solum pontificalem sed et regalem constituit monarchatum, beato Petro eiusque successoribus terreni simul ac coelestis imperii commissis habentis... In gremio enim fidelis ecclesiae ambo gladii habentur administrationis utriusque reconditi... unde quisquis ibidem non fuerit, neutrum habet... Hoc nempe ille ritus ostendit, quo summus pontifex caesari, quem coronat, exhibet gladium vagina contentum, quem acceptum princeps exerit et vibrando innuit se illius exercitium accepisse.*” Innocent IV, *Aeger cui levia* in Winkelmann, *Acta imperii inedita*, Innsbruck, 1885, vol. II, p. 698. The passages reproduced above are already highly meaningful. But if one wants to grasp their full force, it is necessary to read the entire bull, which in my estimation is the fullest expression of pontifical theocracy in the Middle Ages.

precise terms, the doctrine of the governance of the world by God, by means of his highest representative here below, of his supreme vicar: the pope. The other powers are legitimate only insofar as they are instituted or approved by this supreme hierarchy.⁴⁰ The Gregorian view culminated in this expansiveness of pontifical authority.

II

WAS GREGORY VII THE CREATOR OF THE DOCTRINE THAT HE FORMULATED?

Is one entitled to say, as Döllinger did, that the Gregorian doctrine—which tended towards the State's natural law being absorbed into ecclesiastical law—was the pope's own? Did it appear in his mind as a sort of spontaneous creation? In short, was Gregory VII the creator of this doctrine? At first sight, it would be quite strange for a man, who had his eyes constantly turned toward the past (*nil novi facientes, nil adinventione nostra statuentes*), with whose scriptural, patristic, and canonical reminiscences the Register is replete, to have borrowed only inconsistent formulas from them. History alone can offer an apt response through the documents that it has given us.

Obviously, only a brief outline of the progressive erasure of the State's natural law may be presented here.⁴¹ First of all, what does it include? An analysis of this highly significant formula shows that it meant that every State—pagan, Christian, or neutral—was allowed to exist prior to the Church and independently from the Church. Why? Because this right was founded on man's very nature. It is a natural, primitive right, as each human being has the right to life and the right to normal development. Indeed, God created man as essentially social: he can only develop his abilities through life in society. Consequently, if God formed man thus from the beginning, He simultaneously willed the conditions that are indispensable to social life: the authority of the leader and the obedience of subordinates. For

⁴⁰ See some developments and the texts pertaining to this question in H.-X. Arquillière, *Sur la formation de la 'théocratie pontificale'* in *Mélanges Ferdinand Lot*, Paris, 1926, p. 1–25.

⁴¹ This is the subject of the present book. Within it, one will find all the documents and developments of this introduction, which are solely for the purpose of preparing the comprehension of the whole – which has escaped some historians – and to show the place of *political Augustinism* in the more general problem of the medieval Papacy.

there is no State, even an informal one, without commandment and without obedience. The States and nations were built on this foundation, intended by God, well before the Church's existence. Christ Himself recognized the legitimate value of the pagan State when He said: "*render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's.*" In this way, He separated the political and religious domains. It was likewise when He responded to Pilate, the Empire's representative: "*You would have no power over me, if it had not been given to you from On High.*" Thus, even pagan power came from God.

Saint Paul echoed Him fully when he declared in the Epistle to the Romans, 13:1–8: "*Let every soul be subject to the established powers. Because all power comes from God.*" Who embodied the Power to which he called for obedience, as an authority ordained by God? It was the emperor Nero. This is why I could write that Saint Paul had been the first theologian of the State's natural law.⁴²

Therefore, how was this notion of the independent and sovereign State—one founded on natural law and so strongly developed by the Romans—able to fade to the point of almost total disappearance within the pontifical doctrine? This historical phenomenon came to pass imperceptibly, and without the Church believing it was departing from its spiritual role.

The Fathers of the Church faithfully followed Saint Paul's lead: Saint Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, etc.⁴³ The martyrs themselves echoed them. Saint Polycarp's response to the Proconsul who was about to condemn him is well known: "*I have judged you worthy of an explanation, for we have been instructed to witness, as is fitting, to the princes and authorities established by God,⁴⁴ the honor that is due to them when it does not damage our soul.*"⁴⁵

One observes the same attitude under different forms until Saint Augustine and even until Gregory the Great.

⁴² Aristotle had already expressed this idea in *Politics*, I, 1. "Man is a political animal." This thought would be taken up again by Saint Thomas.

⁴³ See the texts below, p. 98.

⁴⁴ He used the same terms as Saint Paul: "*Qua sunt a Deo ordinatae sunt.*"

⁴⁵ See the full text, *infra*, p. 98.

Nevertheless, with Saint Augustine we witness an early distortion of the Pauline doctrine. He certainly recognized the legitimate value of the State, as he put it, among the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Assyrians, and all the nations of antiquity. But he favored a tendency, which has been well analyzed by Mandonnet⁴⁶ and Gilson,⁴⁷ among others, of *the natural order to become absorbed within the supernatural order*. This inclination is at the origin of that which I have termed *political Augustinism*. In my understanding, it is even what constitutes its essence.⁴⁸

Moreover, it is not rare for an originator to see his thought more or less impoverished, simplified, or even deformed by his students, without their ceasing to claim that they are followers of their master. Descartes would certainly not have recognized himself among all the Cartesians, nor Saint Thomas in the thoughts of all the Thomists.

In this way, the natural law of the State tended to be absorbed into Christian law as the Church extended its authority over the barbarian peoples, and its influence penetrated both their ideas and their institutions.

To understand the method of its penetration, one can dwell briefly upon certain striking stages. They reveal the lines of this slow process more clearly, as in a magnifying glass. Gregory the Great offers a remarkable example of this. The illustrious pope of Merovingian times professed the loyalty of a citizen of ancient Rome to the Byzantine Empire. But he showed himself to be much more liberal with regard to the young nations that had recently been established on the remains of the western Empire and converted to Christianity. He showed great leniency to the Merovingian kings. He endeavored to instill in them the sentiments of being a most Christian king. He dictated their obligations to them with gentleness. Sometimes too, when faced with the persistent abuses of Frankish society, such as simony,

⁴⁶ P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroïsme latin au XIII^e siècle*, Louvain, 1911. See *infra*, p. 53.

⁴⁷ E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin*, Paris, 1929. See the texts, *infra*, p. 53-54.

⁴⁸ See my recent study: *Réflexions sur l'essence de l'augustinisme politique*. Communication made to the Congrès international augustinien de Paris, September 21–24, 1954. See the Acts of the Congress, published under the title *Augustinus magister*, in *Études augustinienes*, 8, rue François I, Paris, 1954, vol. II, p. 991–1002. I do not claim that such a tendency was absent from earlier patristic literature, but Saint Augustine added to its prestige, and above all, he was the first to have applied it to the State.

the promotions of laypeople to the episcopacy, the moral laxity of clerics, and the survival of pagan traditions, he chided them with firmness. But it was precisely in his concern for protecting the ecclesiastical discipline of which he was guardian that he persuaded kings to fight the above-mentioned abuses, if they wanted to prove they were Christians. For example, he ordered Childebert II to apply a remedy against the aforesaid evils. “It is necessary,” he told him, “that you observe our orders in all things for God and blessed Peter, and that Your Excellency should thus show himself to be worthy of praise, and agreeable to God.”⁴⁹ He urged Queen Brunhilde to repress simony and oblige her subjects to stop sacrificing to idols. He ordered her to mend the ways of violent people, adulterers, thieves, and all wrongdoers through the fear of divine vengeance (*divinae ultionis iracundia*).⁵⁰ And why did the pope intervene in this way? He says it himself: “*Quia animam vestram salvam desidero.*”⁵¹ He simply applied the thinking of his predecessor, Pope Gelasius (492–496): “*Two powers have been appointed to the government of men: the sacred authority of the Pontiffs and royal power. But the weight of priestly responsibility is all the more burdensome as the Pontiffs will have to answer for the kings themselves at the final judgment.*”⁵²

It is clear that, without departing from his spiritual role, Gregory the Great included a religious function within the royal institution. He spoke as a pontiff who, with the aid of princes, was concerned with restraining the reign of sin and was preoccupied with increasing the effect of grace. By its very nature, this religious mission of the king had to become paramount in a Christianised society. In this confusion of powers, which would come to leave its mark upon the entire medieval period, the fundamentally spiritual character of pontifical interventions is evident from the outset. One could say that, by introducing Christian morals into politics, and by instilling in kings the duty to protect the Church’s discipline, Gregory was opening up a boundless field to the interventions of the Holy See.

A new and decisive step was taken at the end of the seventh century with Isidore of Seville.

⁴⁹ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, VI, 5 (an. 595).

⁵⁰ Gregory the Great, *Registr.*, VIII, 4 (an. 597).

⁵¹ Gregory the Great, *Registr.*, V, 60 (an. 595). One could add other texts that are similar. I retained only the most suggestive ones here.

⁵² *Patr. lat.*, vol. LX, col. 42. See the Latin text, *infra*, p. 121.

At the time, Christianity was spreading rapidly in the Western world. The Arianism that had influenced the Burgundians, Alani, Suebi, Goths, and Lombards was completely routed. Important bishops, such as Saint Hilarius of Poitiers, Saint Caesarius of Arles, Saint Leodegar, Saint Eligius, Saint Avitus, Saint Audoin, Saint Gregory of Tours, and many others, became the guides of Western thinking, along with the great monks: Saint Martin, Saint Benedict, and Saint Columbanus. Nearly everywhere, oratories were being built beside cathedral churches, rural parishes appeared, and the monasteries that cropped up in many places took an active part in the evangelisation of the countryside. It was the promise of the future that had to be discerned through the wars and miseries of the Merovingian period. Bishops were often the advisors of kings, and the councils took up a vigilant though ineffective watch over ecclesiastical discipline.

In Spain, the influence of the Visigothic Church on political institutions was even more pronounced than in Gaul. These institutions were imbued with Christian notions in a more accentuated way. Here is how Isidore of Seville, who was the teacher of the Middle Ages, defined the place of the secular powers in the Church, in a famous maxim: *“From time to time, the earthly princes occupy the heights of power in the Church, in order to protect ecclesiastical discipline by their might. MOREOVER, IN THE CHURCH, THESE POWERS WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY IF THEY DID NOT NEED TO IMPOSE BY THE TERROR OF DISCIPLINE THAT WHICH PRIESTS ARE POWERLESS TO ESTABLISH BY PREACHING... May the earthly princes know that God will demand an account from them on the subject of the Church that He entrusted to their protection.”*⁵³

In this text, does one not already sense a rather profound resemblance to the remarks of Gregory VII? It is also rather strange that the most recent historians of Gregory VII have not detected this relationship—all the more so because the Isidorian text is frequently cited by the canonists and narrators who were contemporary to the great pontiff: Cardinal Deusdedit, Anselm of Lucca, Hugh of Fleury, Honorius Augustodunensis, etc.

⁵³ Isidore, III, 51 in *Patr. lat.*, vol. LXXXIII, col. 723–724. See the full Latin text, *infra*, p. 142.

This judgment by Isidore, which indeed had a great fortune in political theories and in the later canonical collections, is one of enormous plenitude. Let us observe that the religious function of the secular powers was not only a preeminent obligation, but their principal purpose: “*Non essent necessari: they would not be necessary!*” Their natural right of existence, to exercise power without having to protect the Church, faded and seemed to disappear. Their presence was justified by the vital complement of strength that their sword brought to the Church’s activity, to the priest’s preaching. The foundation of secular power was no longer of a legal, human, or natural order. It was now of a religious, ecclesiastical order. Their goal most likely continued to be the common good of their subjects, but this good was determined as the Church understood it, as the preaching of priests sought to instill it among the faithful. According to Gelasius (cited several times by Gregory VII), if the popes would have to render an account to God of the kings themselves, then the kings would have to answer for the protection guaranteed to the Church by the might of their sword.

These doctrines, which were becoming more and more widespread, could not fail to have an effect on institutions. One can see in this current of thought one of the profound motives that had inspired the consecration of kings, instituted in Gaul at the accession of Pippin the Short (751).⁵⁴ This royal consecration was more than a symbol of the rapprochement of the two powers, and more than an exchange of good service between the pope and the founder of the pontifical State: it was the official incorporation of the royal institution into the Church. The ecclesiastical hierarchy gave a religious investiture to the king’s power, which came to him from elsewhere. It was the liturgical translation of the “*ministerium regis.*” In the eyes of the episcopacy, the king still held his power from God, yet no longer through a primitive arrangement of Providence, as with the ancient monarchies, but now through the intermediary of the Church. Before its being a point of departure, the consecration arose from current ideas.

⁵⁴ It is known that consecration had already come into practice in Visigothic Spain for King Wamba, in 672. See below.

These ideas continued to spread in the ninth century. Charlemagne was their most powerful distributor through his immense prestige, the literary renaissance that he inspired, and his ideal of government, which he articulated in this way: “To ensure that each person, according to his rank or dignity, applies himself to the holy service of God.”⁵⁵ He also propagated these ideas with his conquests. By making baptism the principal link between the highly diverse nations united under his scepter, he built the foundations of medieval Christianity. But while waiting for the Papacy to become its head, he himself presided over this mystical unity that was the work of his faith, his politics, and his arms.

All the political theorists of his time—Smaragdus, Jonas of Orléans, Sedulius Scottus, Hincmar—agreed in seeing the sole foundation of secular power in religion, in Christian law. Consequently, they declared quite simply that the kings of antiquity were all tyrants: “*Antiqui autem omnes reges tyrannos vocabant.*”⁵⁶

This slow penetration of Christian notions into political structures, particularly in the royal institution, finally resulted in the absorption of its natural content and its natural law, and its permeation with Christian and ecclesiastical substance. All this was realized bit by bit, without upheaval, as if each person did nothing but take inspiration from the same ideal. Indeed, it sometimes took place at the initiative of the kings themselves. It was Pippin the Short who wished to receive the consecration from Pope Stephen II, in order to consolidate his dynasty.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, these ideas represented the land, so to speak; the deep soil in which the politico-religious doctrines of that period were implanted.

Even Gregory VII’s adversaries, when they protested against the deposition of the king, were far from depending on the idea of the sovereign State; on its natural law prior to the Church; on its primitive independence. No one would have understood this idea. The most learned among them,

⁵⁵ Boretius, *Capitularia regnum Francorum*, vol. I, p. 92.

⁵⁶ E. Delaruelle, *En relisant le “De institutione regia” de Jonas d’Orléans* in *Mélanges L. Halphen*, Paris, 1951, p. 187 and ff. – *Jonas d’Orléans et le moralisme carolingien* in *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, nos. 3 and 4, 1954. Cf. Jean Reviron, *Jonas d’Orléans et son “De institutione regia”*, Paris, 1930, Caput III, *Quid sit rex, quid esse, quidve debeat cavere*, p. 138.

Petrus Crassus, who had legal training and was steeped in Roman law, had some inklings of this point, but he preferred to take refuge in the tangled thicket of procedure: Gregory was nothing but a false pope; Gregory had been elected against traditional rules; Gregory had not accorded to Henry IV the necessary time for preparing his defense; Gregory had condemned him without a hearing, etc.⁵⁷ They all evolved in the same intellectual atmosphere, one from which they cannot be separated.

Gregory VII lived and breathed in this doctrinal environment. If one labors to scrutinize the letter where he best developed his doctrine, one will find numerous borrowings of various age and origin, made with the meager critical methods that he had at his disposal. An original idea will not be discovered there. Let us not hasten to declare the absence of genius. For this pontiff, hardly an innovator in the creation of ideas, so distrustful of himself when he was not supported by a specific tradition, gave form and life to all the fundamental concepts inherited from the past. He fashioned a living synthesis from them. Under the influence of great events that arose, in the sight of the Church in peril, and before the threat of a power ready to enslave him, Gregory conceived of his might as equal to the needs of the moment. There was a grave hour, in which the weakness of a pope could have caused History to take a different course. To make his tremendous recovery, he needed a glimmer of genius and the determination of a saint, in a doctrinal milieu that was deeply permeated with political Augustinism.

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⁵⁷ One will find a detailed analysis of the texts, either by polemicists or historiographers, partisans or adversaries of Gregory VII, in two chapters of H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, ch. V, *L'atmosphère intellectuelle de l'époque chez les controversistes*. I. *Les Grégoriens*: Peter Damian, Cardinal Humbert, Manegold of Lautenbach, Bernold and Bernard of Constance, Cardinal Deusdedit and Anselm of Lucca. II. *Les Henriens*: Petrus Crassus, Guy of Osnabruck, Sigebert of Gembloux, Thierry of Verdun, Wenrich of Trier, the anonymous author of *De unitate ecclesiae*, p. 289–369. See also chap. VI, *L'atmosphère intellectuelle de l'époque chez les historiographes*, p. 369–435. One will perceive, by studying these diverse documents, that all of them evolved with comparable logic and ease in the same Augustinist atmosphere.

Consequently, one understands the place that this current of thought—of Augustinian origin, even though it did not exactly reproduce all the ideas of its master—holds in the more general problem of the medieval Papacy. If one fails to situate Gregory VII in his milieu of ideas, he remains barely comprehensible, at least with respect to the deep sources of his inspiration, his thought, and his action. He appears to be an iceberg of unusual size, coming from who knows where, against which would dash Germanic pretensions and the revolts of a clergy contaminated by the world.

If one ignores this Augustinist movement, Gregory VII's successors from the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century can easily seem excessive in the affirmations of their power—above all, if one makes the mistake of judging them according to modern concepts. It is true that their government remains subject to the critiques that all human activity can provoke. But their fundamental inspiration is justified and clarified in a new light when its origin is understood.

The evolution of political Augustinism is no more than the reflection of a more important movement: that of the general Christianisation of the West. It grew easily within the political domain, especially since its progress was slow, subtle, and imperceptible; since it happened with the sovereigns' consent; and since it was formulated by ecclesiastical writers, without being given any serious consideration up to the end of the eleventh century.

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How, one may wonder, did we depart from this medieval notion? Can one perceive a profound continuity between the Papacy of the Middle Ages and the modern Papacy? I have stated it elsewhere, and I shall point it out here as well, in order to open new perspectives for research.

It suffices to consider History's course—of which it is possible to provide only a distilled reflection here—with some depth. In the Middle Ages, society was founded on faith. So much was this

so that the emperor and even the pope (private doctor) saw themselves as deprived of their function if, by misfortune, they happened to deviate from the faith.⁵⁸ All the Western powers put down their roots, so to speak, in the same religious ground. They were all within the Church. They existed chiefly to cooperate with the Church. They saw themselves as having, in the first place, a spiritual responsibility: the oaths of consecration were significant in this respect. How was it surprising if the supreme head of Christian society, who had received the fullness of spiritual power, considered himself the judge of kings and emperors? Indeed, these sovereigns received only a fraction of religious authority, and yet, according to the ideas of the day, it was enough to constitute their right to govern Christians. And so, as *head of the Church*, the Roman Pontiff found himself at the summit of medieval Christianity.

But if the idea of the State, so forcefully created by the Romans, had been charged with religious energy and had faded since the Merovingian period (we have seen how), it was gradually brought back to light through the renaissance of Roman Law, the development of Thomism—which distinguished more clearly the domain of nature and that of grace, of reason and that of faith—and the formation of nationalities that were jealous of their independence.

This idea of the State began to take shape at the dawn of the fourteenth century, when it was violently challenged amid the struggles taking place during the reign of Philip the Fair. The idea was organized and fortified, but not without intruding on the ecclesiastical affairs of the nation. Later, the Protestant Reformation gave new strength to this idea of political sovereignty, even in the religious domain.⁵⁹ The Church recognized the natural law of the State, which appeared, as it were, in a pure form in the nations that were separated from Catholicism, as formerly in the times of the pagan empire.

⁵⁸ Henry IV declared: “Even though I can only be deposed by God alone, at least I have not erred in the faith – which is not pleasing to God...”. See this text in M. G., *Constitutiones et acta*, vol. I, p. 106–108. Cf. H.-X. Arquillière, *Saint Grégoire VII*, p. 141–142. In a sermon on pontifical consecration, Innocent III declared: “This is why the faith of the supreme Pastor must be sheltered from all troubles... Faith is so necessary to me that, falling under God alone for other faults, I could become answerable to the Church by sinning against the faith.” in *Patr. lat.*, vol. CCXVII, col. 656. Cf. H.-X. Arquillière, *Origines des théories conciliaires*, in *Compte rendu des séances de l’Académie des sciences morales et politiques*, May 1911. I have gathered other texts there on the same subject.

⁵⁹ See J. Leclerc, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience*, Paris, 1955, vol. I, p. 161 and ff.

But in the modern Church, as in the medieval Church—and this is the profound point; the central point of the identity of the two aspects of the Holy See—the pope still remains the supreme head of the Church. He occupies that place perhaps even more so today than in other times. For his powers have been defined with more precision at the Vatican Council. It is not the Papacy that has changed. It is the intellectual culture that has evolved. The field of ideas has expanded. The domain of powers has been differentiated. The sociological aspect of nations has undergone a change. The Holy See adapted itself to this by invariably pursuing its identical religious mission within the new conditions. As I have indicated,⁶⁰ each society, each state of civilization has only a certain number of ideas for interpreting events, directing them, combatting them, or adapting itself to them. One can demand no more than that the popes, who touch upon eternity by God’s revealed message, should be ahead by several centuries on behalf of human culture.

My study of *political Augustinism* has no other goal than to trace the outline of its formation, which concluded in the ninth century. It is marked by stages, and is based on only the most significant texts.

From the brief indications that I have just presented in this introduction, on the relationship between this current of ideas and the problem of the medieval Papacy, these points follow:

1. If the Church and its Leader seem to have absorbed the natural law of the State into ecclesiastical Law, the fact is that political Augustinism had already accomplished this task in people’s minds according to mainstream thought for a long time, sometimes even with the collaboration of the lay powers themselves. Gregory VII was just a more prominent link in the chain of pontifical tradition. Church reform instigated his action, and political Augustinism inspired his doctrine of the State. In this way, he was intimately connected with the past. Political Augustinism therefore erases the idea of “revolution” accomplished by Gregory VII in the “pontifical system,” and consequently in the

⁶⁰ See below, p. 97 and ff. Cf. the more extensive review of my book by Léon Levillain in *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartes*, July–December 1935, p. 383–391.

constitution of the Church as well. It substitutes therein the idea of internal and logical development, according to the needs of the time.

2. Much research remains to be done to specify its exact influence on the great popes who succeeded each other until the end of the Middle Ages, and who made their personal imprint on this movement, as well as on their own era. Finally, the strength of crosscurrents remains to be determined, as well as a precise demonstration of how the natural law of the State reappeared, and how it was incorporated into both the theological doctrine itself and pontifical government.

In his study *Le Droit romain au service de la domination pontificale*,⁶¹ Le Bras masterfully demonstrated the use that the popes made of law in the canonical framework of their power. A clarification of the *internal* development of the medieval papacy—namely, the idea that each sovereign Pontiff held of his ministry—remains to be done. In this slow process, in which many influences intermingle, political Augustinism seems to occupy a significant place in the history of the Papacy's dogma.

Paris, August 11, 1955.

⁶¹ Gabriel Le Bras, *Le Droit romain au service de la domination pontificale*, in *Revue historique de Droit français et étranger*, 1949.