

CHURCH, FAITH AND CULTURE IN THE MEDIEVAL WEST



Edited by Damian J. Smith

# Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241)

## Power and Authority

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241)

# Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West

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*Series editors*

Brenda M. Bolton, University of London

Anne J. Duggan, King's College London

Damian J. Smith, Saint Louis University

# Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241): Power and Authority

*Edited by  
Damian J. Smith*

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: Hugo (Gregory IX), identified as cardinal bishop of Ostia, dedicating an altar to Gregory the Great in the chapel of San Gregorio at the Sacro Speco at Subiaco (photo: Claudia Bolgia)

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# Abbreviations

Abp/abp	Archbishop
Abpric	Archbishopric
AHP	<i>Archivum Historiae Pontificiae</i>
Auvray	<i>Les Registres de Grégoire IX (1227–41)</i> , ed. L. Auvray (Paris, 1890–1955)
BMCL	<i>Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law</i>
Bp/bp	Bishop
Bpric	Bishopric
BRAH	<i>Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia</i>
Cb	cardinal bishop
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis
Cd	cardinal deacon
Cod.	<i>Codex Iustinianus</i>
1 Comp.–5 Comp.	<i>Quinque compilationes antiquae necnon collectio canonum Lipsiensis</i> , ed. E. Friedberg (Leipzig, 1882; repr. Graz 1956)
Cp	cardinal priest
DA	<i>Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters</i>
Decretum	<i>Decretum Gratiani; Corpus Iuris Canonici</i> , i
DD	<i>Diplomatarium Danicum</i> , ed. A. Afzelius et al. (Copenhagen, 1938–)
DG	<i>Documentos de Gregorio IX (1227–1241) referentes a España</i> , ed. S. Dominguez Sánchez (León, 2004)
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i>
Ecumenical Councils	<i>Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta</i> , ed. J. Alberigo et al., 3rd edn, 2 vols (Bologna, 1973); the same text, with the same pagination, is available with an English translation: <i>Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils</i> , ed. N.P. Tanner, S.J., 2 vols (Georgetown, 1990)
HER	<i>English Historical Review</i>
Eubel	C. Eubel, <i>Hierarchia catholica Medii Aevi</i> , 1 (Munich, 1923)

- Foedera* T. Rymer, *Foedera, conventiones, litterae et cujuscunque generis acta publica*, vol. 1 part i, ed. A. Clarke and F. Holbrooke (London, 1816)
- Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici* *Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. E. Friedberg, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1879–1881)
- Horoy *Honorii III, romani pontificis, opera omnia, quae exstant*, ed. C.-A. Horoy, 5 vols (Paris, 1879–1882)
- JE, JK, JL P. Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ad annum 1198*, ed. S. Loewenfeld, F. Kaltenbrunner, and P.W. Ewald, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1885–1888; 1<sup>st</sup> edn, 1851; repr. Graz, 1956). Cited from the initials of the editors in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edn as JK to the year 590, JE for 590–882 and JL for 883–1198
- JEH* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
- Liber Pontificalis* *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2nd Ser. 3, 2nd edn., 3 vols (Paris, 1955–1957)
- Manrique A. Manrique, *Annales Cistercienses*, 4 vols (Lyons, 1649 repr. 1970).
- Mansi *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J. D. Mansi, cont. I.B. Martin and L. Petit, 53 vols (Florence/Venice, 1759–1798; Paris, 1901–1927; repr. Graz, 1960–1961)
- MGH* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, inde ab anno Christi quintesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum* (Hanover/Berlin, 1824–)
- MGH Briefe* *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit* (Bohlau, 1949–)
- MGH Constitutiones* *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, 8 vols (Hanover/Leipzig, 1893–1927) = *MGH Leges* (in 4to), Sectio IV
- MGH Diplomata regum* *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae* (Hanover, et al., 1872–)
- MGH Deutsches Mittelalter* *Deutsches Mittelalter. Kritische Studentexte des Reichsinstituts für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 4 vols (Leipzig/Weimar, 1937–1949)
- MGH Epp. selectae* *Epistolae selectae in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historica separatim editi*, 6 vols in 5 (Berlin, 1916–1925)

- MGH Libelli de lite* *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum*, ed. E. Sackur, 3 vols (Hanover, 1891–1897)
- MGH SRG* *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historica separatim editi*, 78 vols (Hanover, *et alibi*, 1839–2007; variously re-edited and reprinted)
- MGH SRG, NS* *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, New Series* (Berlin, 1922–)
- MGH SS* *Scriptores* (in folio), 32 vols in 34 (Hanover, 1826–1934).
- Neues Archiv* *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters*
- MOPH* *Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica*
- PL* *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina* (*Patrologia latina*), 221 vols, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1841–1864)
- Potthast A. Potthast, *Regesta pontificum romanorum inde ab a. post Christum natum MCXCVIII ad a. MCCCIV*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1874–1875; repr. Graz, 1957)
- Pressutti *Regesta Honorii Papae III*, ed. P. Pressutti, 2 vols (Rome, 1888–1895)
- Reg. Inn. *Die Register Innocenz' III*, ed. O. Hageneder, A. Sommerlechner et al., vols I–XV (Vienna, 1964–2022)
- RHF* *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet and others, 24 vols (Paris, 1738–1904)
- RISS* *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*
- RNI* *Regestum Innocentii III papae super negotio Romani imperii*, ed. F. Kempf (Rome, 1947)
- RS Rolls Series: *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores. Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, published [...] under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, 99 vols (London, 1858–1896)

- Tăutu *Acta Honorii III (1216–1227) et Gregorii IX (1227–1241)*, ed. A.L. Tăutu (Rome, 1950)
- Theiner *Vetera monumenta Slavorum meridionalium historiam illustrantia*, ed. A. Theiner (Rome, 1863)
- X *Liber Extra: Decretales Gregorii IX*: Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, ii.
- ZSSRG. KA *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, kanonistische Abteilung*

## Preface

The pontificate of Gregory IX (1227-1241) is associated with the culmination of the struggle between the papacy and the Empire, and the pope often characterized as intransigent and implacable, determined to bring about the destruction of the Hohenstaufen and the triumph of the Roman Church. Yet everything about Gregory's pontificate and the man is complex. The pope of the Inquisition and the great expansion of the Crusades, Gregory was also a peacemaker, lawgiver, advocate of Christian mission and the friend and supporter of the friars, his courage or obstinacy perhaps driven by doubts about his own worth and the influence of the apocalyptic thought of Joachim of Fiore. The twelve studies in this volume, covering the period from Gregory's promotion as cardinal in 1198 until his death in 1241, seek to unravel some of the mysteries concerning the pope and present a more detailed and intricate picture of his relations with secular powers and the Church. The editor of this volume, the sixth in a series concerning the popes of the High Middle Ages, owes many debts of gratitude: to Dr Christoph Egger, who planned this project and commented on many of the chapters; to the patience of the various scholars involved; to the Leeds Medieval International Congress, where many of the original papers were presented; to Margaret Mary Summers and Judith Nelams, of the History Department of Saint Louis University, who corrected flaws in spelling and style; to the Amsterdam University Press for their forbearance and careful editing.

DJS



# Introduction: Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241)

*Damian J. Smith, Brenda M. Bolton*

For sheer drama, very few of the notable set pieces in the long history of the papacy have matched that of February 1240. With the formidable Emperor Frederick II and his army having first entered the valley of Spoleto, then taken the cities of Viterbo and Montefiascone, as well as various castles of the Church, and now threatening the invasion of Rome itself, backed by the increasingly vociferous support of the ever-fickle Romans ('Let the emperor come. Let him come and receive the City!'), Gregory IX, *in extremis*, his cause apparently lost, played the final desperate weapon in his depleted armoury:

Behold the relics through whom your city is venerated; I cannot do more than another man!<sup>1</sup>

Taking the crown from his own head he placed it upon the skull of St Peter and then upon the skull of St Paul and called out:

Defend Rome, you saints! If the men of Rome refuse to do so!<sup>2</sup>

1 'Annales Placentini Gibellini', in *MGH SS*, xviii, 483: 'Et omnes Romani clamabant: *Veniat, veniat, imperator et accipiat Urbem!* Unde papa audiens vociferationem eorum timuit valde et congregatis Romanis extrahit foras reliquias beatorum Petri et Pauli dicens: *Ecce reliquie pro quibus civitas vestra veneratur; ego autem non possum facere magis altero homine!*' 'Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia' in *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard, 5 vols (London, 1863–1869, RS no. 36), iii, 153; *Historia Diplomatica Friderici II*, ed. J.L.A. Huillard-Bréholles, 6 vols (Paris, 1852–61), v, pt. 2, 776–9; 'Vita Gregorii IX', in *Le Liber censuum de l'église romaine*, ed. P. Fabré, 2 vols (Paris, 1889–1905), ii, 35–6; A. Spataro, *Velud fulgor meridianus. La vita di papa Gregorio IX. Edizione, traduzione e commento*, Vita e Pensiero, *Ordines*. Studi su istituzioni e società nel medioevo europeo 8 (Milan, 2018), 141–3.

2 'Annales Placentini Gibellini', 483: '*Vos sancti defendite Romam, si homines Romani nollunt defendere!*'



Then, taking with him not only the skulls of the saints but the relic of the True Cross, moving in solemn procession to the church of Saint Peter, Gregory there preached to the people:

This is the church and these are the relics of the Romans, which you must protect unto death, and which we commit to God's protection and to yours. Yet I shall not flee but rather I shall await here the mercy of God.<sup>3</sup>

Offering them the general indulgence of the Apostolic See, Gregory thus successfully rallied the Romans to his cause, with many of them taking up the sign of the Cross in defence of the Church, while Frederick, realizing he could achieve nothing more, withdrew to Apulia.<sup>4</sup>

This is Gregory IX – masterful, energetic, courageous, unyielding. This is Gregory IX – confrontational, obsessed, ‘a hate-filled stubborn old man’, as Kantorowicz delicately described him.<sup>5</sup>

Nobody (except the man himself) has ever questioned the zeal of Gregory's faith. Even though ‘the Inquisition’ had a long pre-history, certainly stretching back to Lucius III's *Ad abolendam*, the formal beginnings of the institution are most associated with Gregory.<sup>6</sup> It was he who issued the bull *Excommunicamus* of February 1231 and there provided the penalties, including the ultimate punishment, for the various groups defined as heretics – Cathars, Patarenes, the Poor of Lyons and many more (all of them tied together by their tails) – as well as their defenders and supporters.<sup>7</sup> It was he who issued *Declinante iam mundi* of May 1232, which, without altogether side-lining the episcopate, entrusted the task of capturing the little foxes who spoiled the vineyard of the Lord to the order of Preachers.<sup>8</sup> And it was he who in *Vox in Rama* in the summer of 1233 gave credence to the

3 ‘Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia’, 153: ‘Haec est ecclesia, et haec sunt reliquiae Romanorum, quas usque ad mortem tueri debetis, quas protectioni Dei et vestrae committimus. Ego autem non fugio, sed hic misericordiam Dei expecto!’, *Historia Diplomatica Friderici II*, v, pt. 2, 778.

4 ‘Annales Placentini Gibellini’, 483; ‘Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia’, 153–4; *Historia Diplomatica Friderici II*, v, pt. 2, 778.

5 E. Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin, 1931): ‘Aber wie dieser haßerfüllte starrköpfige Greis bis zur letzten Stunde unbeirrt seinen Weg verfolgte, gleichgültig dagegen, daß man ihn einen Ketzler nannte oder daß die Nächsten ihn verließen, war er bei allen kleinen Unlauterkeiten dennoch nicht nur ein gefährlicher, er wurde auch allmählich ein großer Gegner.’

6 (Ad abolendam) JL, 15109; 1 Comp. 5.6.11; X 5.7.9; H. Maisonnette, *Etudes sur les origines de l'inquisition* (Paris, 1960). And see Andrea Sommelechner, ‘Penitet eum satis? Gregory IX, inquisitors and heresy as seen in contemporary historiography’, in this volume.

7 DG, no. 169; Auvray, no. 539.

8 DG, no. 212; Potthast, no. 8932.

wilder flights of the tortured imagination of Conrad of Marburg concerning a supposed Luciferian sect with toad and black cat accompaniment.<sup>9</sup> Neither should it be forgotten that it was Gregory IX, who, however briefly, broke with Western tradition and placed in doubt the validity of baptisms in the Greek rite, nor that it was during his pontificate and on his order, in May 1231, that twelve monks of Kantara on Cyprus were executed as heretics because of their persistent denunciation of the Latin practice of using unleavened bread for the Eucharist.<sup>10</sup>

The zeal which can be seen in the pursuit of heretics was equally manifest in the expansion and increasing sophistication of crusading (which was quite often conducted against heretics). It is certainly the case that historians tend to associate this transformation of the Crusades with Gregory's predecessor and relative, Innocent III (1198–1216).<sup>11</sup> Yet is it not the case that it was Gregory IX who completed what Innocent had started, as the Crusades, which had most usually been confined to the Holy Land and (through the earlier significant influence of Paschal II) to the Iberian Peninsula, became the weapon of destruction against all enemies and all dangers, beyond Christendom and within? Now the war against Frederick, now Constantinople, now the previously unimaginable threat of the Mongols, might be uppermost in the pope's thoughts. It appeared that almost everywhere had become a theatre for crusading warfare. To what extent, both here and elsewhere, it was the pope who took the initiative and to what extent he reacted to events are central questions of this book and the answers require looking at each case and at all of the evidence. Yet nobody would suggest he did not react at all. As we shall see, it was through Gregory's policy of vow redemption, which was to have serious long-term implications, that crusading was finally opened to all, and it was because of Gregory that people were now obliged to hear crusade sermons preached.<sup>12</sup>

Given the struggle against Frederick, the development of inquisitions, and the expansion of the crusades, it might appear surprising indeed that at various points this volume considers Gregory IX as a peacemaker, just as one might find it initially difficult to see his predecessor and namesake, Gregory VII, in the same light.<sup>13</sup> Rather we might simply agree with the imperial official, Piero della Vigna, who, after initially having a good opinion

9 Auvray, no. 1391; Potthast, no. 9229–31.

10 (Baptisms) Auvray, no. 740; (Kantara) *Bullarium Cyprium*, ed. C. Schabel, 2 vols (Nicosia, 2010), I, no. d–6. And Nikolaos Chrissis, 'Gregory IX and the Greek East', in this volume.

11 See particularly, H. Roscher, *Papst Innocenz III. und die Kreuzzüge* (Göttingen, 1968).

12 Michael Lower, 'Pope Gregory IX and the Crusades', in this volume.

13 And yet, see H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (Oxford, 1998), 576–82.

of the pope, in the wake of the emperor's second excommunication and of the papal crusade against him, accused Gregory IX of:

[C]reating unrest throughout the regions of the earth  
because he was always excessively prone to make war.<sup>14</sup>

Yet it is evident from his early legatine experience that Gregory was determined and effective in calming cities and communes alike and most particularly in Lombardy in 1221 he served Honorius III and Frederick simultaneously, while winning fulsome praise from both.<sup>15</sup> Though the *Negotium Lombardie* eventually broke down, the pope's efforts to bring about a rapprochement between England and France, his use of papal dispensation to end 'the mortal enmity between Danes and Slavs', the ratification of the treaty which saw the kingdoms of León and Castile united, remind us that, although in each instance he would be the facilitator rather than the initiator of concord, Gregory firmly believed in the age-old desires, Roman and Christian, for peace and harmony.<sup>16</sup> The attack on heresy itself had now become the *negotium pacis et fidei*, and the peace and harmony of Christian society, as well as being beneficial in itself, was a necessary prerequisite for the wider victory against the enemies of the Christian people.<sup>17</sup>

So, too, was the reform of the religious life. Gregory was certainly a strong supporter of the Florentine order and also shared a special affinity with the Cistercians, probably born of his close friendship with Rainier of Ponza, formerly monk of Fossanova, and he shared Rainier's dismay at their internal quarrels.<sup>18</sup> As cardinal and then pope, Gregory is associated with

14 *Vie et correspondance de Pierre la Vigne: ministre de l'empereur Frédéric II avec une étude sur le mouvement réformiste au 13<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. J.L.A. Huillard Bréholles (Paris, 1865), 400: 'Credo quod Gregorius qui dictus est nonus | Fuit apostolicus vir, sanctus et bonus | Sed per mundi climata strepit ejus sonus | Quod ad guerras fuerat semper nimis pronus.'

15 (Frederick) *Constitutiones et Acta Publica Imperatorum et Regum*, ed. L. Weiland, *MGH* (Hanover, 1896), ii, 114–5, at 115, no. 91. (Honorius III) *Registri dei cardinali Ugolino d'Ostia e Ottaviano degli Ubaldini*, ed. G. Levi, Istituto Storico Italiano, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* (Rome, 1890), 133–4 no. 107; 138–9 no. 111.

16 Gianluca Raccagni, 'Gregory IX and the Lombard Question'; Nicholas Vincent, 'Gregory IX and the Search for an Anglo-French Peace'; Torben Nielsen, 'Gregory IX and Denmark'; Damian J. Smith, 'Gregory IX and Spain', all in this volume.

17 On the origins of the phrase, see M. Zerner, 'Le "Negotium pacis et fidei" ou l'affaire de paix et de foi, une désignation de la croisade albigeoise à revoir', *Prêcher la Paix et discipliner la société: Italie, France, Angleterre (XIIIe–Xve siècle)*, ed. R.M. Dessì (Turnhout, 2005), 63–102.

18 B. Griesser, 'Rainer von Fossanova und sein Brief an Abt Arnald von Cîteaux (1203)', *Cistercienser Chronik*, 60 (1953), 151–67 at 165; Manrique, iv, 60 no. 10. On Rainier of Ponza, see by M. Rainini, *Il profeta del Papa. Vita e memoria di Rainier da Ponza eremita di curia* (Milan, 2016);

the development of the new religious movements which so greatly shaped the spiritual life of the Later Middle Ages, although that association was a complicated one. His relationship with Dominic was close and comfortable, while that with both Francis and Clare of Assisi was at times uncomfortable, the needs of the Church as an institution, as Gregory saw it, unavoidably clashing with their strict observance of poverty. In *Quo elongati*, of September 1230, Gregory officially exempted the friars from Francis's Testament, while Clare would not achieve the life of intense poverty and dependence on the friars for her communities for which she had hoped.<sup>19</sup> It is worth remembering, however, that four of the saints strongly associated with the new movement were canonized by Gregory (Francis, in 1228; Anthony of Padua, in 1232; Dominic, in 1234; Elizabeth of Hungary in 1235).<sup>20</sup> Francis was canonized within just two years of his death, Anthony less than a year after his. It was, however, Dominic, closest of all his mendicant allies and fellow preacher in Lombardy in 1221, who inexplicably had to wait thirteen years for similar recognition. Was this all simply a matter of Gregory developing his own power in alliance with the tractable friars, whose well-being in large part depended upon him? Did he manipulate Francis, as well as his own part in the story of Francis, mainly to promote himself? Possibly. The life of Francis by Thomas of Celano, commissioned by Gregory and informed by Brother Elias, both in its initial version of 1230 and in the abbreviated version produced in 1232, certainly emphasized the pope's influence.<sup>21</sup> Yet we might also allow that Gregory's various expressions of doubt concerning his own faith were not insincere and that he may well have derived some of

and Julia Wannemacher, 'The Third Quadriga: Gregory IX, Joachim of Fiore and the Florentine Order', Brenda Bolton, 'Our Lord Hugo: Gregory IX before the pontificate', in this volume.

19 H. Grundmann, 'Die Bulle Quo elongati Papst Gregors IX.', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 54 (1961), 1–23 at 18–23; O. Capitani, 'Gregorio IX', *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, 3 vols (Rome, 2000), ii, 370.

20 Potthast, no. 8242, 8937–8, 9489, 9925–6. We should not forget the eighth-century Irish erudite, St Virgil of Salzburg, the apostle of Carinthia, who was also canonized by Gregory, in June 1233 (Potthast, 9237–8); a fine recovery from the previous criticism he had received from Pope Zachary and St Boniface for his perceived views on the inhabitants of 'another world and other men beneath the earth', Boniface (J. Carey, 'Ireland and the Antipodes: the Heterodoxy of Virgil of Salzburg', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 1–10 at 1). After the tomb of the long-forgotten Virgil at the cathedral of Salzburg had been rediscovered by chance in 1181, many miracles were worked there and a popular cult developed rapidly (K. Amon, 'Virgils Nachleben – Heiligensprechen und Kult', in *Virgil von Salzburg Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch, R. Juffinger (Salzburg, 1985), 384–99).

21 Thomas of Celano, 'The First Life of St Francis', in *St Francis of Assisi: writings and early biographies*, ed. M.A. Habig (Chicago, 1983), 227–355; J. Dalarun, *The Rediscovered Life of St Francis of Assisi: Thomas of Celano*, trans. T. Johnson (New York, 2016).

his own fortitude through the support of the holy man whom he revered, whose simple purity he admired.<sup>22</sup>

For although he demonstrated an exceptional eloquence and mastery of preaching, Gregory is recorded on several occasions early in his career as fearing that his faith was being tested to the extreme by the spirit of blasphemy, *spiritus blasphemiae*, leading to moments of lethargy (*torpor*), self-doubt and temptation.<sup>23</sup> He seems to have experienced profound spiritual doubts after receiving news of the death of Rainier (d.1207–1209),<sup>24</sup> but his uncertainties and doubts appear to have coincided with rare periods of inactivity. In 1220, between his legations to Tuscany and Umbria, Gregory, weighed down by his many sins, wrote to implore none other than Clare of Assisi to obtain mercy for him through her tears and prayers while,<sup>25</sup> in 1226, after the failure of the Fifth Crusade, his friend Jacques de Vitry gave him the finger reliquary of Mary of Oignies (d.1213) which had provided him with protection and spiritual consolation. And in 1227, Gregory, writing to the Poor Clares of Sant'Apollinare in Milan, went as far as to claim his unworthiness for election, because of his many temporal concerns and lack of time for contemplation.<sup>26</sup>

22 Thomas of Celano, 'First Life', ch. 27. lxxii, 289–90, appears to convey Hugo's mindset well: 'When at one time he [Francis] had come to Rome because the interests of his order demanded it, he longed greatly to speak before Pope Honorius and the venerable cardinals. When the lord Hugo, the glorious bishop of Ostia, who venerated the holy man of God with a special affection, understood this, he was filled with both fear and joy, admiring the fervour of the holy man but conscious of his simple purity. But confident of the mercy of the Almighty, which in the time of need never fails those who trust in it, the bishop [Hugo] brought Francis before the lord pope and the revered cardinals; and standing before such great princes, after receiving their permission and blessing, he began to speak fearlessly. Indeed, he spoke with such great fervour of spirit, that, not being able to contain himself for joy, when he spoke the words with his mouth, he moved his feet as though he were dancing, not indeed lustfully, but as one burning with the fire of divine love, not provoking laughter, but drawing forth tears of grief. For many of them were pierced to the heart in admiration of divine grace and of such great constancy in man. But the venerable lord bishop of Ostia was kept in suspense by fear, and he prayed with all his strength to the Lord that the simplicity of the blessed man would not be despised since the glory of the saint would reflect upon himself as would his disgrace, in as much as he had been placed over Francis' family as a father.'

23 J. Vandeburie, 'Sancte fidei omnino deiciari': Ugolino dei Conti di Segni's Doubts and Jacques de Vitry's Intervention', *Studies in Church History*, 22 (2016), 87–101, at 87–8.

24 E. Winkelmann, 'Analecta Heidelbergensia', *Archivio della Società di Storia Patria*, 2 (1879), Varietà ii, 363–7, at 367.

25 K. Esser, 'Die Briefe Gregors IX. an die hl. Klara von Assisi', *Franziskanische Studien*, 35 (1953), 274–95, at 274.

26 M.P. Alberzoni, 'Servus vestrum et ancillarum Christi omnium. Gregorio IX e la vita religiosa femminile', *Franciscan Studies*, 64 (2006), 145–78, at 164–5.

Little concerning Gregory is uncomplicated. The same pope who fulminated wildly in *Vox in rama*, issued the calming *Parens scientiarum* in 1231 to the masters and students of Paris, which resolved the discord of the great dispersion of 1229, protected and reenforced the rights of the university, made clear the obligation of the chancellor in selecting suitable teachers, and left in the hands of the scholars the regulation of the manner and time of lectures and disputations, costumes to be worn, and the burial of the dead.<sup>27</sup> Some masters and students may have disapproved of the pope's insistence that the university summer vacation could not exceed one month (and that the bachelors could continue their lectures even then), but the protection Gregory had offered them was to matter to universities generally in the long-term. Nor can it be forgotten that it was this same Gregory who charged his multi-talented chaplain and confessor, the Dominican Ramon de Penyafort, with the task of producing a compilation of canon law which would replace all existing collections, to be used as an authoritative textbook by the students and teachers at Bologna, as well as in the courts and elsewhere. Approved by the pope's *Rex pacificus* of September 1234, the decretals of Gregory IX, or *Liber Extra*, which included a significant quantity of Gregory's own letters, proved the most influential book of medieval law, serving its purpose until 1917 when Benedict XV promulgated the first actual code of canon law.<sup>28</sup>

As we shall see, the pope who resolved to root up and destroy those towers and palaces of the Roman nobles which obscured the magnificent view of the Lateran palace, was equally determined to build hospitals for the poor, as well as to plant trees by the rivers of Terni.<sup>29</sup> As master of ceremonies, he could use the sound of the great bell which he commissioned for Saint Peter's, the rich colour of the Seljuk carpets he was gifted, the fragrance of perfumes and flowers, to intoxicate the senses and sway the crowd to his side. Certainly, from his first days as Cardinal Hugo, at a banquet at Cistercian Casamari, theatre had been a part of Gregory's life, when he defiantly produced the letter in which Innocent III demanded that the perfidious Markward of Anweiler renounce the regency of the kingdom

27 *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. E. Chatelain, H. Denifle, 4 vols (Paris, 1888–97), i, 136–9, no. 79; S. Young, *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris: theologians, education and society, 1215–1248* (Cambridge, 2014), 64–101.

28 (*Rex pacificus*) Auvray 2083; Potthast 9694. (*Liber Extra*) *Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. E. Friedberg, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1881), vol. 2. (Benedict XV) *Codex Iuris Canonici*, ed. P. Gasparri (Rome, 1918). And Ed Reno, 'Gregory IX and the *Liber Extra*', in this volume.

29 Claudia Bolgia, 'Gregory IX and Rome: artistic patronage, ceremonies and ritual space', in this volume.

of Sicily.<sup>30</sup> Forty years on, confronted by the ward whom he and Innocent had sought to protect, Gregory's flair for the dramatic was to serve Rome well again.

In the pages which follow, in far greater detail and treating a wider range of issues, historians of thirteenth-century Church and society explore many of the major questions surrounding one of the most engaging and perplexing figures in the story of the medieval papacy and the times in which he lived. Although the figure of Frederick II necessarily hovers over many of the chapters, we have not sought to produce a book with its sole focus on the papal-imperial struggle because this has been done often and recently especially well.<sup>31</sup> As ever it is hoped that these essays will lead to further questioning, still deeper studies, and greater understanding of one of the world's most influential institutions.

## About the Authors

**Damian J. Smith** is Professor of Medieval History in the Department of History at Saint Louis University, USA. He is the author/editor/translator of numerous books and articles concerning the Medieval Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean, and the Church. He is currently writing a history of the reign of James I of Aragon (1213–1276).

**Brenda Bolton** taught medieval history at Westfield College, later Queen Mary & Westfield College and finally at Queen Mary University of London. She has published widely on various aspects of ecclesiastical history with a particular concentration on the pontificate of Innocent III (1198–1216) and on papal administration in the Patrimony of St Peter during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

<sup>30</sup> *Gesta Innocentii PP. III*, in *PL*, ccxiv, 44.

<sup>31</sup> B. Whalen, *The Two Powers: the papacy, the empire, and the struggle for sovereignty in the thirteenth century* (Philadelphia, 2019).