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"Homo omnino Latinus"? The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great

By Joan M. Petersen

In an article published in 1976,[1] I attempted to challenge the assumption, made by generations of scholars, including Frederick Homes Dudden,[2] Pierre Batiffol,[3] and in more recent times Pierre Riché,[4] that Gregory the Great, in spite of six years' residence at Constantinople as *apocrisiarius,* knew no Greek. Since then I have been investigating the grounds for a second common assumption, following from the first, that Gregory had little or no knowledge of Eastern Christian spirituality and theology.

In the light of further evidence my opinions have undergone some modification, though I still believe that Gregory has too long been regarded as "homo omnino Latinus,"[5] the embodiment of the ideas of Western Christendom. It appears that though he was not totally ignorant of the Greek language, his knowledge was considerably less than I had believed earlier. He was found to have relied for many of his interpretations not only on Augustine, as I had already discovered, but also on Jerome and perhaps on Eucherius of Lyons. My research has also revealed the existence of a fund of stories common to the Eastern and Western Mediterranean areas, which were put into literary dress by Greek and Latin writers who knew the Eastern Christian world, such as Sulpicius Severus, Jerome, and Cassian, or through Latin translations of Greek writings. For the small body of material which influenced Gregory, but of which no Latin translation apparently existed in his day, we can only conclude that he had access to some oral source.

The results of my literary and theological investigations are contained in my book and in two articles dealing more specifically with the influence of the Greek Fathers upon Gregory's biblical exegesis.[6] My purpose in the present

[1] Joan M. Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great Know Greek?" *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976), 121–34.

[2] Frederick Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great: His Place in History and Thought,* 2 vols. (London, 1905), 1:153–54.

[3] Pierre Batiffol, *Grégoire le Grand* (Paris, 1928), p. 34.

[4] Pierre Riché, *Education et culture dans l'occident barbare, Ve–VIIIe siècles,* rev. ed. (Paris, 1973), p. 189.

[5] Dudden, *Gregory the Great,* 1:76, 288. See also n. 55 below.

[6] *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great in Their Late Antique Cultural Background,* Studies and Texts 69 (Toronto, 1984); "Greek Influences upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of Luke xv.1–10, *in Evang.* ii.34," *Actes du colloque international CNRS "Grégoire le Grand,"* Chantilly, 1982, ed. Jacques

article is to fill certain lacunae in my own writings by discussing the influence upon Gregory of the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, an author whom he mentions by name in the *Homiliae in Evangelia;* a possible oral source for Gregory's knowledge of Eastern Christian writings of which no Latin translation existed in his day; and the extent of Gregory's dependence on Jerome and Eucherius of Lyons for his etymologies and explanations of Greek words.

The Possible Influence of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite upon Gregory the Great

The sermon *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34, on the text of Luke 15.1–10, which is peculiarly rich in Eastern Christian material, falls into three sections. Sections 1–2 consist of the exegesis of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. Section 3 is a review of the angelic orders and their functions. The transition between the first two sections and the third section is achieved by an ingenious use of typological interpretation. The lost coin, when found, is seen by Gregory as man restored from his fallen nature to the likeness of God; the nine coins which were not lost represent the nine orders of angels. Having identified the nine coins with them, Gregory goes on to discuss the orders' names and functions. This section of the sermon contains a tantalizing reference to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, which has been the subject of much controversy: "Fertur vero Dionysius Areopagita, antiquus videlicet et venerabilis pater, dicere quod ex minoribus angelorum agminibus foras ad explendum ministerium vel visibiliter vel invisibiliter mittuntur, scilicet quia ad humana solatia ut angeli aut archangeli veniunt."[7]

There are three points at issue here: the exact significance of "fertur" (that is, what was Gregory's view of the authorship of the corpus of mystical literature attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, and did he have access to a text of it?), the identity of the portion of the Dionysian corpus which is alleged to contain the material cited by Gregory, and the relation between Gregory's sermon and the material supplied by Pseudo-Dionysius.

The normal translation of the third-person singular or plural of the passive voice of *fero,* as it is used here, is "is said" or "are said." There are numerous examples of this usage in both classical and patristic Latin, but though I have searched the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae,* I have been unable to find another example in which the infinitive following *fertur* and comparable forms is *dicere.* The underlying idea seems to be that of news or information being carried about. Denis de Sainte-Marthe, the editor of the text printed in Migne's *Patrologia Latina,* rightly pointed out that by the use of "fertur," Gregory "dubitationem aliquam significat," but he suggested that "dubitationem" ap-

Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 521–29; and "The Influence of Origen upon Gregory the Great's Exegesis of the Song of Songs," *Studia patristica,* 18/1, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Kalamazoo, 1986), pp. 343–47.

[7] PL 76:1254.

plied not to what Pseudo-Dionysius is reported to have said, but to Gregory's personal uncertainty about the identity of the author. This is a meaning which the Latin appears to be incapable of bearing. Moreover, there are two further arguments for accepting the normal meaning of "fertur" here: Gregory would surely not have used the phrase "antiquus videlicet et venerabilis pater" of an author whose authenticity was doubtful, and the belief that these mystical writings were the work of Dionysius the Areopagite, Paul's first convert in Athens (Acts 17.24), was almost universal in the sixth century. Doubts about this attribution were expressed by Hypatius, bishop of Ephesus (fl. c. 520–40), but it was generally accepted until the sixteenth century and even later. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the authorship of the *corpus Dionysiacum,* but the grounds for rejecting the authorship of Dionysius the Areopagite may be summarized as follows: the author draws largely on the work of Proclus (411–85), and he is not cited by any ancient authority earlier than Severus of Antioch (c. 500). The scholarly consensus is that this author, whoever he was, was working in the late fifth century, probably c. 500.[8]

As regards the question of Gregory's access to a text of Pseudo-Dionysius, Sainte-Marthe, without producing any definite evidence, asserted that the doubt expressed by "fertur" must apply to the question of authorship, because doubt as to the subject matter could easily have been settled by reference to a copy of the *De caelesti hierarchia,* of which there was a plentiful supply in Rome in Gregory's day: "qui [sc. liber] in omnium manibus versabatur."[9] As we shall see later, Sainte-Marthe was certainly right in assuming that Gregory was referring to the *De caelesti hierarchia,* but he had no grounds whatever for assuming that copies of the text were abundant in Rome.

Long ago Paul Lehmann pointed out examples of short sentences from Pseudo-Dionysius translated into Latin from the original Greek, beginning with a quotation in the proceedings of the Monophysite colloquium at Constantinople in 533. There is, however, no support from the evidence cited by Lehmann for the view that either the complete *corpus Dionysiacum* or any single work from it had been translated into Latin during the sixth, seventh, or eighth centuries.[10] Indeed the first mention of the existence of a text of the

[8] For the most recent discussions of the identity of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite see René Roques's edition of the *De caelesti hierarchia, La hiérarchie céleste,* Sources Chrétiennes (henceforth SC) 58 bis (Paris, 1970), pp. xcii–xcv; Jean-Michel Hornus, "Les recherches dionysiennes de 1955 à 1960," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 41 (1960), 404–8, whom Roques cites; and Ronald F. Hathaway, *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the Letters of Pseudo-Dionysius* (The Hague, 1969). See also the articles on Pseudo-Dionysius by Roques in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* and the *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques.* Confusion about this figure was increased by Hilduin's identification of Pseudo-Dionysius with St. Denis, the patron saint of Paris.

[9] PL 76:1254, note e.

[10] Paul Lehmann, "Zur Kenntnis der Schriften des Dionysius Areopagita im Mittelalter," *Revue bénédictine* 35 (1923), 81–97 (reprinted in *Erforschungen des Mittelalters* [Stuttgart, 1961], 4:128–41).

works of Pseudo-Dionysius in Rome is to be found in the *acta* of the Lateran Council of 649, when Pope Martin I ordered the "codicem sancti Dionysii episcopi Atheniensis" to be brought in so that the text of the letter to Gaius could be compared with another into which the Monophysite bishops had interpolated heretical matter. We know that this codex was in Greek, since Paschalis and Exuperius translated it into Latin for the benefit of the assembled members of the council.[11]

Had this codex already been in Rome for a little more than fifty years? Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny has suggested that Gregory may have brought it with him on his return from Constantinople to Rome and that he may have had it translated into Latin, but her grounds for making these suggestions do not seem very strong. She cites his letter to Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria, complaining about the poor quality of the translators at Constantinople, but what Gregory said there could equally well apply to the Greek versions of his own letters; there is nothing to link it with translations of Greek theological works into Latin.[12]

There is no evidence to show that Gregory did not bring the codex of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius with him when he returned from Constantinople in 586, but it seems more probable that it arrived there at a later date, through the agency of some subsequent *apocrisiarius* or pontiff. Rome in the seventh century had become so much altered that it might well be described as a Byzantine city; because of the influx of Greek-speaking refugees displaced by the Persian wars and Arab invasions and because of the religious policy of Pope Honorius I (625–38), who favored the Monothelites, Greek-speaking men of letters and theologians, such as Moschus, Sophronius, and Maximus the Confessor (though they did not support Honorius's policy), found a home there. Similarly, Greek artists were at work on the decoration of Roman churches.[13] It would be understandable for Greek theological manuscripts to be imported during this period, especially when we consider that, of the seventh-century popes, John IV (640–42) was from Dalmatia, Theodore (642–49) from Palestine and therefore presumably Greek-speaking, and John V (685–86) from Antioch.[14] It therefore seems likely that Theodore was responsible for the introduction of the Pseudo-Dionysius manuscript. We

[11]Giovanni Domenico Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio,* 31 vols. (Florence, 1759–98; repr. Graz, 1960–61), 10:975–78; Philippe Chevallier, ed., *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys l'Areopagite,* 2 vols. (Solesmes and Bruges, 1937–50), 1:lxvii, cxiii; Hyacinthe F. Dondaine, *Le corpus dionysien de l'université de Paris au XIIIe siècle,* Storia e letteratura 44 (Rome, 1953), pp. 24–25.

[12] Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, *Alain de Lille: Textes inédits* (Paris, 1965), p. 87.

[13] See Riché, *Education et culture,* p. 393; and Walter Berschin, *Griechisch-lateinisches Mittelalter von Hieronymus zu Nikolaus von Kues* (Bern and Munich, 1980), pp. 59–76, for an account of Greek influences at work in Roman society in the late sixth and seventh centuries.

[14] *Liber pontificalis,* ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris, 1886–92; repr., with supplementary volume, Paris, 1956–57), 1:330–31, 366, supplies evidence concerning the Lateran Council of 649; see also Mansi, 10:863–1184; and Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 185–88.

have already seen that this was produced by Martin I at the Lateran Council of 649 as ammunition against the Monothelites, and his predecessor, Theodore, was well known for his anti-Monothelite views. Prima facie it seems unlikely that a manuscript which had been hidden away in a library for over fifty years would suddenly be produced as evidence in a theological dispute. It seems more likely that Martin asked for it because its arrival in his predecessor's day was fresh in his memory.

Support for this view is provided by Pierre Riché's suggestion that there was no papal library before the seventh century, though he admits that it is difficult to distinguish between the papal *scrinia* or archives of the Lateran and St. Peter's and a possible collection of codices. Certainly we know that the manuscript of Arator's Latin verse translation of the Acts of the Apostles was deposited at the latter basilica. Thomas F. X. Noble, in his recent work, *The Republic of St. Peter,* makes it clear that by 649 the papal archives were installed at St. John Lateran, having previously been preserved at San Lorenzo in Damaso, and that an important official, the *primicerius,* was in charge of them. He also believes that the same official was in charge of the papal library and that this situation had existed for many years. He cites as evidence for this one of Gregory's letters which proves that the *schola* of *notarii* was in existence by 598 and epigraphic material cited in the *Enciclopedia cattolica* which purports to assign the origin of the *schola* to 565.[15] Even so, this evidence supports only the existence of the *scrinia* and not that of the library. It does not appear to invalidate Riché's suggestion.[16]

The evidence for the assumption that Gregory was referring in his sermon to the *De caelesti hierarchia* and that he possessed some knowledge of the text falls into two categories: verbal similarities and renderings of Greek phrases into Latin and similarities between his lists of the orders of angels and that of Pseudo-Dionysius.

It will be convenient first to list the verbal similarities and translations and then to examine them individually:

Pseudo-Dionysius, *De caelesti hierarchia*	Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*
ἡ θεαρχικὴ κρυφιότης (4.2, p. 95)	caelestium civium secreta (2.34.15, col. 1255)
πλῆθος γνώσεως (7.1, p. 105)	plenitudo scientiae (2.34.10, 11, cols. 1252–53)
ἐμπρησταί, θερμαίνοντες (7.1, p. 105)	ardentes vel incendentes (2.34.10, col. 1252).[17]

[15] Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistularum,* ed. Dag Norberg, 2 vols., Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (henceforth CCSL), 140–140A (Turnhout, 1982), 8.16, pp. 534–35; *Enciclopedia cattolica* (Vatican City, 1953), 10:20.

[16] See Riché, *Education et culture,* pp. 173–74; Noble, *Republic of St. Peter,* pp. 212–20, esp. p. 219, n. 37.

[17] See also Gregory's *Moralia in Iob,* ed. Marcus Adriaen, 3 vols., CCSL 143, 143A, 143B (Turnhout, 1979–85), 32.48, p. 1666.

On examination it transpires that the use of these phrases cannot be adduced as an argument for Gregory's being acquainted with the *De caelesti hierarchia.* It is true that "ἡ θεαρχικὴ κρυφιότης," which is a phrase peculiar to Pseudo-Dionysius, appears to have no Latin equivalent prior to Gregory's, but the Latin equivalents for the other two phrases occur in two earlier writers, Jerome and Eucherius of Lyons, who in his *Formulae* and *Instructiones,* written c. 427–28, drew heavily upon Jerome for his definitions. If we accept c. 500 as the floruit date of Pseudo-Dionysius[18] — and there seems no good reason for rejecting it — the other two Greek phrases antedate Pseudo-Dionysius by approximately half a century, and in one case, at any rate, the Latin form appears to antedate the Greek. "Πλῆθος γνώσεως," which Pseudo-Dionysius used to describe the cherubim, occurs at least twice in Greek theological literature: in his contemporary Procopius of Gaza, who died in 528, and in Theodoret, who died in 466.[19] The Latin form of this expression, "multitudo scientiae" or "scientiae multitudo," may antedate the Greek, since it was used by Jerome in his *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum,* which was written between 389 and 391. Eucherius borrowed this phrase from Jerome, always using the order "scientiae multitudo."[20] It is, however, possible that in this instance Gregory was following neither Jerome nor Eucherius, for he used not "multitudo scientiae" but "plenitudo scientiae" to describe the cherubim.[21] The latter is clearly the more accurate rendering, since it conveys the idea of multiplicity and diversity implied by "πλῆθος." Jerome indeed defined the cherubim as "scientia multiplicata vel quasi plures."[22] On the other hand, "plenitudo" signifies fullness, completion, perfection, like the Greek *πλήρωμα,* an idea which Gregory was anxious to stress in two passages in this sermon: "Cherubim quoque plenitudo scientiae dicitur. Et sublimiora illa agmina idcirco cherubim vocata sunt, quia tanto perfectiori scientia plena sunt, quanto claritatem Dei vicinius contemplantur; ut, secundum creaturae modum, eo plene omnia sciant, quo visione conditoris sui per meritum dignitatis appropinquant" and "Quia enim, ut praefati scimus, cherubim plenitudo scientiae dicitur, et Paulo dicente didicimus quia 'plenitudo legis est caritas' (Rom. 13.10), omnes qui Dei et proximi caritate caeteris amplius pleni sunt meritorum suorum inter cherubim numeros perceperunt."[23] The answer may be that Gregory was thinking of two earlier and slightly different phrases

[18] See n. 8 above.

[19] *De caelesti hierarchia* 7, p. 105; cf. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.10, col. 1252; Procopius of Gaza, *In Genesin,* PG 87/1:229; Theodoret, *In Ezechielem* 1.18, PG 81:829.

[20] *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum,* ed. Paul de Lagarde, CCSL 72 (Turnhout, 1959), pp. 74, 80, 103; cf. Eucherius of Lyons, *Instructiones* 2, ed. Karl Wotke, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (henceforth CSEL) 31 (Prague, Vienna, and Leipzig, 1894), p. 146.

[21] *Homiliae in Hiezechihelem,* ed. Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 142 (Turnhout, 1971), 2.9.18 and fragment 12, pp. 372 and 425.

[22] *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum,* p. 63.

[23] Col. 1252.

used to describe the cherubim, "πληθυσμὸς γνώσεως" by Didymus the Blind (c. 313–98) and "πεπληθυσμένη γῶσις" by John Chrysostom (c. 347–407).[24] The verb πληθύω, which is connected with the verb πίμπλημι 'I fill', conveys admirably the idea of both multiplicity and fulfillment to perfection. Whether this rendering was due to Gregory's knowledge of Greek or to his employment of what was perhaps a common expression in Latin-speaking circles during his time as *apocrisiarius* in Constantinople, it is impossible to say.

The term "ἐμπρησταί," which was used by Pseudo-Dionysius in conjunction with "θερμαίνοντες" to describe the seraphim and which, he asserted, derived from the Hebrew, appears to originate in Aquila's version of the Old Testament (Deut. 8.15; Isaiah 30.6) and was used thus not only by Procopius of Gaza but also by Cyril of Alexandria, who died c. 444. This word, too, can be traced back to Jerome's commentary, *In Esaiam,* written between 408 and 410. His rendering of "ἐμπρησταί," "ardentes sive incendentes," was also adopted by Eucherius, but again it seems more likely that Gregory was following Jerome here, as elsewhere.[25]

From the following table it will be seen that there is some doubt as to whether Gregory was following Eucherius or Jerome in his interpretation of the names of the archangels:

	Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.39.9 (col. 1251)	Jerome, *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum* (p. 140)	Eucherius, *Instructiones* 2.32 (p. 140)
Gabriel	fortitudo Dei	confirtavit [*sic*] me Deus fortitudo Deus vel virtus mea Deus	fortitudo Deus
Michael	quis ut Deus	quis ut Deus	qui sicut Deus
Raphael	medicina Dei		medicina Dei

For Michael he adopted Jerome's interpretation rather than that of Eucherius. On the other hand, he does not offer us the alternative meanings provided by Jerome for Gabriel, but only the single meaning given by Eucherius, and for Raphael, who is not included in Jerome's list at all, he supplied the meaning "medicina Dei," which is found in Eucherius only. This interpretation of names, however, may be an example of a commonplace, the origins of which are unknown.

[24] *Sur Zacharie,* ed. Louis Doutreleau, 3 vols., SC 83–85 (Paris, 1962), line 332, pp. 368–69; John Chrysostom, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura,* ed. Robert Flacelière, SC 28 bis (Paris, 1951), 3.338–42, pp. 214–15.

[25] *De caelesti hierarchia* 7.1, p. 105; cf. *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.10, col. 1255; Procopius of Gaza, *In Isaiam* 6, PG 87/2:1932; Cyril of Alexandria, *In Isaiam* 1.4, PG 70:173; Jerome, *In Esaiam,* ed. Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 73/1 (Turnhout, 1963), 3.6.2, p. 86; and Eucherius of Lyons, *Instructiones* 1, p. 146.

Thus all Gregory's renderings of Greek expressions used by Pseudo-Dionysius, with a single exception, are not translations from him, but derived from other Latin writers, who translated the same Greek expressions. These expressions, with this one exception, were used by writers anterior to Pseudo-Dionysius, if we accept his floruit as c. 500, or approximately contemporary with him. How and from what source Pseudo-Dionysius gained his knowledge of expressions used by Jerome, Eucherius, and Greek writers, such as Cyril of Alexandria, is a question which will probably never be answered. We may postulate the idea of a common source, but that, too, may be hard to identify. From Jerome's introduction to his work on the interpretation of Hebrew names we form the impression that he wove together information derived from Philo on the one hand and from Origen on the other, Philo being the source of the Old Testament names and Origen of the New Testament names. This may ultimately be the answer, but as Franz Wutz, followed more recently by Pierre Nautin, has shown,[26] it is impossible to make such distinctions on the basis of the material set before us. Wutz explains that the etymologies cannot be attributed to Philo, since he normally explained Hebrew names by Greek words with the same sound, whereas the author of this collection had recourse to Hebrew, Aramaic, or Syriac roots. Origen, it appears, knew too little Hebrew to compile such a collection; in two passages he refers us to what the interpreters of Hebrew say. However, this is not an appropriate place for a lengthy discussion of this interesting topic. Suffice it to repeat that Gregory provided Latin translations, derived from other writers, of Greek phrases which appear to antedate Pseudo-Dionysius.

The other great argument for the view that Gregory had some acquaintance with the text of the *De caelesti hierarchia* is the resemblance between his lists of the orders of angels and the list in that work, but in my opinion this is not conclusive. The principal lists for our purpose are those found in the Bible and those furnished by Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Gregory himself. The list compiled by Ambrose (which incidentally is not mentioned by Jean Daniélou is *Les anges et leur mission*) appears to be the first list compiled by a Latin writer. Jerome in his list seems more concerned with mentioning examples of categories than with creating a hierarchy of functions.[27] Nevertheless it is probable that Gregory,

[26] Franz Wutz, *Onomastica sacra: Untersuchungen zum Liber interpretationis nominum Hebraicorum des heiligen Hieronymus,* Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 11/1 (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 13–51; Pierre Nautin, *Origène, sa vie et son oeuvre,* Christianisme antique 1 (Paris, 1977), p. 237.

[27] Latin lists: Ambrose, *Expositio in Lucam,* ed. Karl Schenkl and Heinrich Schenkl, CSEL 32/4 (Vienna, 1902), 7.210, pp. 376–77; Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum* 2.28, PL 23:325; Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.7 and 2.34.8–10, cols. 1249 and 1250; *Moralia* 32.23, p. 665. Greek lists: Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheticae orationes,* ed. Auguste Piédagnel, SC 126 (Paris, 1966), 5.6, pp. 154–55; Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio* 28.31, PG 36:72; John Chrysostom, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* 2.269–86, 3.53–59, and 5.43–46, pp. 164–65, 190–91, and 274–75. A list similar to Gregory's list in the *Moralia* is to be found in Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae,* ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911), 7.5.

who was very much concerned with the functions of the angelic hierarchy, derived one of his lists from him, as we shall see shortly.

Gregory provided biblical evidence (Eph. 1.21; Col. 1.16) for the items in *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.7. The two biblical lists, when conflated, provide for eight orders; *archangeli* do not occur in them and indeed are mentioned in only two places in the Bible: in 1 Thessalonians 4.16, where the Lord at the Second Coming will descend from heaven "in voce archangeli," and in Jude 9, where Michael is described as "archangelus." Elsewhere Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael are individually described as "angelus." There is no suggestion of a separate order of *archangeli.* The first attempt to draw a distinction between *archangeli* and *angeli* appears to have been made by Origen in *De principiis:* Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael are called "angeli," as in the Bible; the "archangelus" is "in angelico ordine" and appears to be in charge of groups of angels.[28] In other words, archangel is at first an office, whereas angels are an order (cf. archbishop in relation to bishops). It was from the same work of Origen that the idea of a separate order of archangels developed and became incorporated into the angelology of the Greek Fathers. Ambrose and Jerome probably took it over from them and included it in their respective lists:

Ambrose, *Expositio in Lucam* 7.210 (pp. 376–77)	Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum* 2.28 (col. 325)
angeli	archangeli
archangeli	angeli
dominationes	throni
potestates	dominationes
	potestates
	cherubim
	seraphim

Gregory probably derived his ideas on the subject either from these lists or from Rufinus's translation of Origen's *De principiis.* Gregory based his distinction between angels and archangels on the relative importance of the messages which they have to announce; archangels are so called because "summa annuntiant."[29]

The Greek lists of Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom and the lists supplied by the three Latin Fathers, Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory, are all arranged in ascending order of magnitude, beginning with the angels and archangels. With the exception of John Chrysostom, who omitted them from his principal list,[30] and Ambrose, the lists of these writers all end with the

[28] *De principiis (Peri archon),* ed. Paul Koetschau, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 22 (Leipzig, 1913), 1.8, p. 94.

[29] *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.8, col. 1250.

[30] *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* 2.267–86, pp. 164–65.

cherubim and seraphim, but the placing of the other five orders varies. Pseudo-Dionysius differs from these others in that he opened his list with the seraphim and cherubim (in that order) and closed it with the archangels and angels. There are apparently two reasons for this arrangement in descending order of magnitude: Pseudo-Dionysius may here have followed the Neoplatonic teaching by adopting a scheme of descent from the highest to the lowest;[31] and he arranged the orders in accordance with his own view of their functions in the angelic hierarchy, as we shall see shortly.

Could Gregory have compiled his lists without reference to the lists of earlier writers, such as Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Pseudo-Dionysius? His explanation of the biblical basis of his list in the *Homiliae in Evangelia* suggests that he could. The angels and archangels are mentioned at the beginning, because they occur throughout the Bible. The cherubim and seraphim are figures of whom the Old Testament prophets speak. The other orders are mentioned in Ephesians and Colossians. He was at pains to show us how he arrived at the number nine.[32] However, when we consider how much he relied upon Jerome for his various explanations and interpretations of Greek terms, it seems inconceivable that he did not know Jerome's list, which is based on John Chrysostom's principal list. This last list consists of the angels and archangels, followed by the list in Colossians 1.16. It is, of course, quite possible that Pseudo-Dionysius himself knew this list and also the other names of the orders supplied by John Chrysostom.

We have now to consider the relationship between Gregory's two lists and the list supplied by Pseudo-Dionysius. For purpose of comparison they are set out below:

Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.7 (col. 1249)	Gregory the Great, *Moralia* 32.48 (p. 1666)	Pseudo-Dionysius, *De caelesti hierarchia* 7.1, 8.1, 9.1–2 (pp. 105–6, 120–22, 128–31)
angeli	angeli	σεραφὶμ
archangeli	archangeli	χερουβὶμ
virtutes	throni	θρόνοι
potestates	dominationes	κυριοτήτες
principatus	virtutes	ἐξουσίαι
dominationes	principatus	δυνάμεις
throni	potestates	ἀρχαί
cherubim	cherubim	ἀρχάγγελοι
seraphim	seraphim	ἄγγελοι

[31] See Edouard Jeauneau, "Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor in the Works of John Scottus Eriugena," in *Carolingian Essays,* ed. Ute-Renate Blumenthal (Washington, D.C., 1983), pp. 137–49, esp. p. 144.

[32] Col. 1250.

For our purposes the important list is that contained in the *Moralia,* which was certainly influenced by the Greek lists. This is not surprising, since it was compiled during Gregory's period of residence as *apocrisiarius* at Constantinople. It is possible that Gregory may have had some recollections of Pseudo-Dionysius's list upon which he based his own list; if we transpose the first and last pairs, the order of the other items is not altogether dissimilar, and the variations could be accounted for by the fact that Gregory was relying on his memory for something which he had heard. However, it seems more likely that his source was John Chrysostom's principal list, mediated to him through the works of Jerome and supplemented from the Bible.

It would take us too far from our subject to examine the influence which Pseudo-Dionysius's and Gregory's lists of the angelic orders had upon later writers, beginning with Isidore of Seville, but it is interesting to note that Dante, in canto 28 of the *Paradiso* (lines 130–35), observed the difference between the order of the names of the angelic orders in Pseudo-Dionysius's and Gregory's lists.[33]

Apart from his own mention of Pseudo-Dionysius as "antiquus videlicet et venerabilis pater," it can be argued in favor of Gregory's being acquainted with his works that the list of the angelic orders in the *Moralia* — the list which shows Greek influence — belongs to the period when he was in Constantinople, during which he and his monks could have had access to a text of Pseudo-Dionysius or — what is more likely — might have been in touch with someone who had. But, as we have already seen, this argument is inconclusive, since there were other sources of Greek influence under which he might well have come. A stronger argument in favor of Gregory's having some acquaintance with the works of Pseudo-Dionysius is, to my mind, the resemblance between their accounts of the functions of the angels, which is greater than might be supposed on first sight.

The first of these resemblances is to be found in their interpretation of Isaiah 6.6. Both Gregory and Pseudo-Dionysius found difficulty in the fact that in this verse the seraph behaves as an ordinary angel. Pseudo-Dionysius pointed out that the angel is called a seraph; that is, he is a member of the highest rank in the angelic hierarchy, who never leaves the presence of God. Yet in this verse he behaves as a mere angel, that is, as a member of the lowest rank, who acts as a messenger and has a relationship with the human race, since he descends to the temple of Jerusalem and removes a coal with tongs

[33] Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae* 7.5) gave an interpretation of the angels' names which is very similar to Gregory's. He also followed Gregory in stating that angels are named for their functions and not their natures. I hope to discuss the question of Isidore's sources and his debt to Gregory in a future article. For a full discussion of the influence of the lists of angelic names and qualities on later writers see Agostino Pertusi, "Cultura greco-byzantina nel tardo medioevo nelle Venezie e suoi echi in Dante," in *Dante e la cultura veneta: Atti di convegno di studi organizzato dalla Fondazione Giorgio Cini,* ed. Vittore Branca and Giorgio Padoan (Florence, 1966), pp. 157–95, esp. pp. 182–95.

from the altar. Gregory found the same difficulty in interpreting this verse: "Cui rei illud videtur esse contrarium quod Isaias dicit: Et volavit ad me unus de seraphim, et in manu eius calculus, quem forcipe tulerat de altari, et tetigit os meum."[34]

Both Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory offered substantially the same explanation: Pseudo-Dionysius said that the angel acts as a seraph in respect of the function of purifying by fire and is therefore so called. Gregory stated that spiritual beings carry the name of those whose functions they perform, which in this case is the name of the seraphim, who purify by fire. He quoted as a parallel: "Millia millium ministrabant ei, et decies millies centena millia assistebant ei (Daniel 7.10). Aliud namque est ministrare, aliud assistere, quia hi administrant Deo, qui et ad nos nuntiando exeunt; assistunt vero qui sic contemplatione intima perfruuntur, ut ad explenda foras opera minime mittantur."[35]

Two points should be made concerning the difference between the accounts of the functions of the angels given by Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory. First, there appears to be no single sentence in Pseudo-Dionysius's Greek which was the original of Gregory's phrase: "quod ex minoribus angelorum agminibus foras ad explendum ministerium vel visibiliter vel invisibiliter mittuntur, scilicet quia ad humana solatia ut angeli aut archangeli veniunt."[36] It is true that in chapter 9 Pseudo-Dionysius promulgated the doctrine that there are angels and archangels who care for individual nations by being attached to their rulers and whose function is apparently to reveal the true God to these nations, but this is a more specific purpose than Gregory's "ad humana solatia." The words "vel visibiliter vel invisibiliter" could be an echo of two passages where Pseudo-Dionysius spoke of the unification of the angels and archangels and of the relationship of the angels with men: "καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἑνοποιεῖ κατὰ τὰς εὐκόσμους αὐτῆς καὶ τεταγμένας καὶ ἀοράτους ἡγεμονίας," and "Οἱ γὰρ ἄγγελοι . . . συμπληρωτικῶς ἀποπερατοῦσιν τὰς ὅλας τῶν οὐρανίων νόων διακοσμήσεις, κατὰ τὸ τελευταῖον ὡς ἐν οὐρανίαις οὐσίαις ἔχοντες τὴν ἀγγελικὴν ἰδιότητα καὶ μᾶλλον πρὸς ἡμῶν, ἄγγελοι παρὰ τοὺς προτέρους οἰκειότερον ὀνομαζόμενοι ὅσῳ καὶ περὶ τὸ ἐμφανέστερον αὐτοῖς ἐστιν ἡ ἱεραρχία καὶ μᾶλλον περικόσμιος."[37] Yet the contrast between the visible and the invisible was a commonplace of patristic literature, which perhaps originated from Colossians 1.16: "et in terra visibilia, et invisibilia."

Secondly, the characteristics of the nine orders of angels are by no means identical in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius and of Gregory the Great, but as we shall see shortly, the differences in their conceptions of the angelic functions are not so great as might at first appear. We have already noted that their definitions of the cherubim and seraphim coincide and that they agreed

[34] *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.12, col. 1254.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] *De caelesti hierarchia* 9.2, pp. 129–30 and 130–31.

in assigning the function of messenger and interpreter to the beings in the lowest ranks of the hierarchy. As regards the other ranks, the distinction between Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory lies in the criteria upon which they based their definitions. For Pseudo-Dionysius the criterion was the characteristic of each heavenly order: of the thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, and virtues he says: "Ταύτην ἡμεῖς ἀποδεχόμενοι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ἱεραρχιῶν τάξιν φαμὲν ὅτι πᾶσα τῶν οὐρανίων νόων ἐπωνυμία δήλωσιν ἔχει τῆς ἑκάστου θεοειδοῦς ἰδιότητος."[38] For Gregory, on the other hand, it was the function which the heavenly beings perform: "Sed in hac prophetae sententia vult intelligi quia ii spiritus qui mittuntur eorum vocabulum percipiunt quorum officium gerunt."[39] The distinction between being and doing is apparent throughout their treatment of the various heavenly orders. We may say that Pseudo-Dionysius defined the abstract qualities, whereas Gregory worked out their practical manifestation. Thus Pseudo-Dionysius saw the supreme characteristics of the thrones as their exaltation above all baseness and impurity and their proximity to God himself, where they sit in a state of calm and passivity, receiving illumination from the Godhead. Gregory, too, defined them as participating in God's function as judge. The dominions, in the eyes of Pseudo-Dionysius, are liberated beings, free from any taint of slavery. Gregory saw them as exercising their rule over those ranks in the hierarchy which are lower than themselves, an activity not incompatible with their liberated nature and which implies an ability to rule themselves. The virtues, for Pseudo-Dionysius, are the supreme symbol of courage, whereas for Gregory they are the workers of miracles. The principalities can both turn themselves towards the supreme Principality and at the same time act as a link between the six highest orders and the two lowest; Gregory was content to dwell on this latter aspect: "Principatus etiam vocantur qui ipsis quoque bonis angelorum spiritibus praesunt, qui subjectis aliis dum quaeque sunt agenda disponunt, eis ad explenda divina ministeria principantur."[40] Pseudo-Dionysius regarded the powers as revealing their equality with the dominions in ordered harmony, but Gregory assigned to them the practical function of putting demons to flight.

Though the characteristics of the angelic orders described by Gregory are not always identical or consistent with those listed by Pseudo-Dionysius — a striking example is that of the virtues, as we have already noticed — there is sufficient resemblance to suggest that Gregory had some knowledge of the subject matter of the *De caelesti hierarchia.* Alverny, with her conviction that Gregory had had the text translated into Latin, remarks, "Il n'a utilisé que fort discrétement *La hiérarchie céleste* pour décrire le monde angélique dans l'Homélie xxxxiv sur l'Evangile,"[41] but we have already seen that the resem-

[38] Ibid. 7.1, p. 105.
[39] *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.12, col. 1254.
[40] Ibid. 2.34.10, col. 1251.
[41] Alverny, *Alain de Lille,* p. 88.

blances do not show that degree of closeness which would result from consulting a text and that external circumstances render it unlikely that the manuscript of Pseudo-Dionysius produced as evidence against the Monothelites in 649 had been brought to Rome by Gregory on his return from Constantinople.

Finally we need to consider whether Gregory had access to a manuscript of the *De caelesti hierarchia* at an earlier date. The use of the word "fertur" suggests that his knowledge had not been obtained at first hand; otherwise he would surely have used some word such as *memini* or *reminiscor.* It also suggests that his source was oral; otherwise would he not have used some word such as *scribitur* or *scriptum est?* "Fertur" implies that someone else, who knew Greek, told him what Pseudo-Dionysius had written or perhaps even translated a text to him aloud. We may postulate that his interpretation was based on his recollection of such a reading.

Gregory's Oral Source

Though Gregory could have obtained much of his knowledge of Eastern Christendom from earlier Latin writers or from Latin translations of Greek works, there is a residue of material with which he appears to have been acquainted, but of which no Latin translation existed in his own day: besides the *De caelesti hierarchia,* this material includes, for example, the *Historia religiosa* of Theodoret and the writings of Lucian of Samosata. As we shall see from the next section of this article, which confirms the opinions expressed in my previous writings, it is unlikely that he knew sufficient Greek to be able to read these works in the original. All the evidence points to the existence of an oral source.

We now need to examine the circles in which Gregory might have had a Greek-speaking contact. There appear to be three possibilities: Hellenist circles in Rome and elsewhere in the West and Constantinople.

We can distinguish in sixth-century Rome an Eastern or monastic strand of Hellenism, of which the earliest example is the Scythian monk Dionysius Exiguus, who had been summoned to Rome from Constantinople by Pope Gelasius I (492–96) to put in order the collection of canons. During his years in Rome he was active as a translator and was in close touch with Eugippius, founder and abbot of the monastery of Lucullanum, which was noted as a scriptorium, and with Cassiodorus.[42]

However, it seems unlikely that there were any monasteries of Greek monks in Rome in Gregory's day. Attempts have been made to show that Gregory of Agrigentum, who figures in Gregory the Great's correspondence, is identical

[42] His fame is largely due to his collection of canons and to his invention of our present system of dating. Among his translations are the *Vita S. Pachomii* (second version) and the *De opificio hominis* of Gregory of Nyssa. Cassiodorus paid a touching tribute to him in *Institutiones* 1.23 (ed. R. A. B. Mynors [Oxford, 1937], p. 62). For cultural conditions in Rome at this time see Berschin, *Griechisch-lateinisches Mittelalter,* pp. 96–112.

with the Greek monk of St. Sabas on the Little Aventine, whose life was written by Leontius, abbot of the same monastery, but Evelyne Patlagean has demonstrated that this is highly improbable.[43] If we accept her premises — and I see no reason for rejecting them — then the earliest mention of this monastery is contained in the account in the *Liber pontificalis* of the imprisonment of the antipope Constantine there during the pontificate of Stephen III (768–77).[44]

Experts have assigned the paintings of seven heads of saints which came to light at the church of St. Sabas during excavations there in 1900–1902 to the late seventh or early eighth century.[45] Ferdinando Antonelli has suggested that "Theodorus abbas presbyter," to whom a monastery is assigned in the acts of the Lateran Council, might conceivably have been abbot of this monastery, but this is extremely tenuous evidence, and even if we accept it, it does not furnish us with a date earlier than 649.[46] We have therefore no grounds for believing that the monastery existed in Gregory's day.

Two other monasteries in Rome come to our notice as having been occupied by Eastern monks at the time of the Lateran Council in 649. The first of these, the monastery of St. Andrew and St. Lucia, is mentioned in *Dialogues* 4.13, where Gregory wrote of its abbot Probus, nephew of Probus, bishop of Reate; this does not suggest that there was an Eastern community there in the sixth century. Antonelli's conjecture that the thirty-seven Armenian monks who were certainly in residence in 649 had come to Rome as a result of the Persian and Arab invasions and the struggle over Monothelitism inaugurated in the pontificate of Honorius I (625–38) seems reasonable.[47]

The other monastery is that of St. Vincent and St. Anastasia at Aquae Salviae (now Tre Fontane), which first comes to notice as a possible monastery of Greek monks in 649, when its abbot, Georgius, and the abbot of St. Andrew and St. Lucia refused to sign the *Libellus* against Monothelitism.[48] Hartmann Grisar long ago suggested that the monastery was founded a century earlier, in which case the Eastern monks would have been well established on the outskirts of Rome by the beginning of Gregory's pontificate, and he could have had contact with them either directly or through the monks of his own

[43] The relevant letters are *Registrum* 1.70 and 3.12, pp. 78–79 and 159; see also Leontius, *Vita S. Gregorii Agrigentini,* PG 98:514–16. For arguments in favor of the identification see I. Croce, "Per la cronologia della vita di S. Gregorio Agrigentino," *Bolletino della badia greca di Grottaferrata,* n.s. 4 (1950), 189–207; 5 (1951), 77–91. For arguments against, see Evelyne Patlagean, "Les moines grecs d'Italie et l'apologie des thèses pontificales," *Studi medievali* 5 (1964), 579–602.

[44] *Liber pontificalis,* 1:171.

[45] See Guy Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the History of the Monasteries and Convents of Rome from the Fifth through the Tenth Century,* Studi di antichità 23 (Rome, 1957), pp. 269–90.

[46] Mansi, 10:909; Ferdinando Antonelli, "I primi monasteri di monaci orientali in Roma," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 5 (1928), 104–21.

[47] Mansi, 10:909; Antonelli, "I primi monasteri," pp. 107–8.

[48] Mansi, 10:103; Antonelli, "I primi monasteri," p. 109.

monastery of St. Andrew; but the evidence, being only the word of a tenth-century chronicler, is dubious.[49]

There is, however, some evidence for visits to Rome by Greek-speaking monks during Gregory's pontificate. He himself wrote in one of his letters about some nefarious Greek monks who visited the church of St. Paul with the intention of removing the bones of obscure persons and passing them off on their return home as relics of saints.[50] Another Greek visitor was "Athanasius Isauriae presbyter," who was "apud nos" when Gregory was writing the *Dialogues* and who described to him the death of one of the monks at the monastery of Ton Galaton at Iconium.[51] There is a possibility that he may have been able to tell Gregory about other Eastern Christian writers, but of this we have no proof.

Elsewhere I have put forward the suggestion that another informant in Rome may have been Gregory's predecessor, Pope Pelagius II, who appears to have shown some interest in the works of Theodoret, though the *Historia religiosa* is not specifically mentioned.[52]

Gregory may also have obtained his knowledge through monastic contacts outside Rome, particularly in the monasteries of Vivarium,[53] Lucullanum, and Lérins, all of which are known to have had Eastern connections. Unfortunately we draw blank in all three instances.

After the death of Cassiodorus in c. 585, the monastery of Vivarium seems to have declined as a center of scholarship; we hear nothing of further literary enterprises. So far as I can discover, Gregory appears never to have been involved with this religious community over cultural matters. The only evidence for Gregory's contact with Vivarium is meager: one of his letters deals with lay interference at a daughterhouse of Vivarium and with problems in the administration of the district in which Vivarium was located.[54]

The development of Lucullanum as a center of scholarship occurred under its great abbot Eugippius in the early years of the sixth century. It appears to have had an indirect link with Eastern Christendom through the monks of Noricum, who accompanied the body of their abbot, Severinus, to its last resting place there. They were of the Western church and their late abbot is described by his biographer, the abbot Eugippius, as "homo omnino Latinus," but he had doubtless acquired some knowledge of Eastern spirituality

[49] Hartmann Grisar, *Geschichte Roms und der Päpste im Mittelalter* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1901), 1:615; Antonelli, "I primi monasteri," pp. 109–14; but see Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, p. 38.

[50] *Registrum* 4.30, pp. 248–50.

[51] *Dialogues*, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin, 3 vols., SC 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978–80), 4.40, pp. 144–47; *Registrum* 3.52, 5.44, 6.14, and 7.4, pp. 197–99, 329–37, 382–84, and 446–47.

[52] Petersen, *Dialogues*, pp. 184–86.

[53] Apart from his encouragement of translations from the Greek, Cassiodorus may have contributed other theological ideas resulting from his sojourn in Constantinople; see *Institutiones* 1.23, p. 62; Mansi, 9:357.

[54] *Registrum* 8.32, pp. 555–57.

through his travels.[55] He had probably visited the Christian East in much the same way as Cassian and Germanus had done. Some of this knowledge may have been transmitted through his monks to the community at Lucullanum, but even if this were the case, it seems unlikely that it reached Gregory, whose connection with Lucullanum was slight: two of his letters to it deal with church discipline and the other three with the dispatch of relics of Severinus.[56]

The great days of Lérins, whose heyday was in the fifth century, were almost over by Gregory's time. The basic conception of Eastern monasticism had no doubt been brought there by Honoratus as the result of his travels and would be reinforced by the arrival of monks and others from areas where Eastern ideas were familiar.[57] A more direct influence would be the teaching and writings of Cassian, who, though not one of their number, was closely associated with the monks of Lérins, Henri-Irénée Marrou has shown — in my opinion, conclusively — that he was a native of what is now called the Dobrudja,[58] which would give him an Eastern Christian background; moreover his long visits to Palestine and to the Egyptian desert gave him a knowledge of Eastern Christian spirituality unique in the West, and his thorough grasp of Latin made him a valuable interpreter. It is Cassian who formed the direct spiritual link between Gregory and Lérins. Gregory's dealings with the Lérins of his day were on a mundane level: his letter to Abbot Stephen, brought to Lérins by Augustine, solely concerns the administration of the monastery.[59] In this there is no trace of a cultural link.

Lastly Gregory may have gained information about the theologians and ascetics of the East from members of the group of people whom he knew in Constantinople. Though he lived within a Latin-speaking enclave,[60] it is not impossible that some member of his household acquired sufficient Greek to be able to read works of theology and spirituality in that language. It is also not impossible that his close friend at that period, Leander of Seville, knew some Greek, but on these points we have no information. So far as I can discover, Gregory had no Eastern monastic contacts in Constantinople. The suggestion of Charles Du Fresne Du Cange in 1680 that the monastery of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus was a kind of papal pied-à-terre from the mid-sixth century onwards was made solely on the grounds that Vigilius had taken

[55] Eugippius, *Epistola ad Paschasium* 10, ed. Rudolf Noll, in *Das Leben des heiligen Severin* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 14–15.

[56] *Registrum* 3.1 (dated 592), 10.7 (dated 600), 3.19 (dated 593), 9.181 (dated 599), and 11.19 (dated 601), pp. 146–47, 832–33, 165, 738, and 889.

[57] See Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung* (Munich, 1965), pp. 47–58, but his hypothesis should be treated with caution.

[58] Henri-Irénée Marrou, "Jean Cassien à Marseille," *Revue du moyen-âge latin* 1 (1945), 1–26; "La patrie de Jean Cassien," *Orientalia Christiana periodica* 13 (1947), 588–96.

[59] *Registrum* 6.54, p. 427.

[60] *Moralia,* ep. miss. praef., p. 2.

refuge there in 551; the idea will not stand up to examination.[61] Indeed Cyril Mango goes so far as to say that this monastic church was really a haven for Monophysites, provided by the empress Theodora.[62]

Among the group of Gregory's Greek-speaking correspondents, there were two who seem to me to be possible guides to him in the field of Eastern spirituality. The first of these is his official translator, Aristobulus, *expraefectus et antigrafus* and *κουρατὼρ τῶν βασιλικῶν οἰκῶν.*[63] In the single letter to him that we possess[64] Gregory showed not only sympathy in adversity but also a real grasp of the problems of the translator. It is not impossible that Aristobulus gave Gregory running translations or summaries of Greek works. The second candidate is Domitian, metropolitan of Melitene (in Lower Armenia), a relative of the emperor Maurice, and the recipient of four letters by Gregory.[65] According to John of Ephesus,[66] Domitian was made bishop of Melitene by Maurice when Tiberius sent Maurice to the East. When Maurice returned two years later (in 582) to become emperor, Domitian, still a young man, hurried to his side and became his counselor and comforter. So much did Maurice evidently trust him that he made him guardian of his children in his will. Thus he would have been resident in Constantinople when Gregory was there, as a member of the imperial circle in which Gregory also found a place. John of Ephesus added that Domitian was a man thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Chalcedon and of Leo, which would certainly have recommended him to Gregory. The two earliest letters addressed to Gregory by Domitian show that a genuine friendship existed between them. In a letter dated August 593[67] Gregory expressed especial pleasure at an interpretation of Scripture supplied by Domitian, which suggests that they were in the habit of discussing theological matters together. Both Aristobulus and Domitian may have been able to initiate Gregory into the world of Eastern thaumaturgy. Paul Peeters and Gérard Garitte have shown that they were linked with the mysterious figure of St. Golindouch, described by Evagrius Scholasticus as "μαρτὺς ζῶσα."[68] The stories of her miracles possess a certain affinity with the

[61] Charles Du Fresne Du Cange, *Historia Byzantina duplici commentario illustrata* 4.138 (Paris, 1680), p. 136.

[62] Cyril Mango, "The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palatine Churches," *Jahrbuch für österreichische Byzantinistik* (1972), pp. 189–93. For a reply see Richard Krautheimer, "Again Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople," ibid. (1974), pp. 251–53.

[63] For further information on Aristobulus see Theophanes, *Chronographia* 1, ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), p. 261.

[64] *Registrum* 1.26, pp. 34–35.

[65] Ibid. 3.62, 5.43, 7.7, and 9.4, pp. 211–13, 328–29, 454–56, and 565–66.

[66] John of Ephesus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.19, in *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History,* trans. R. Payne-Smith (Oxford, 1860), p. 356. See also Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.16–18, in *The Ecclesiastical History with the Scholia,* ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898; repr. Amsterdam, 1964), pp. 233–34.

[67] *Registrum* 3.62, pp. 211–13.

[68] *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.120, p. 235.

Dialogues, though there are no exact parallels.[69] Through their contact with her, and by using the literature of the desert as a source of parallel examples, Aristobulus and Domitian may have been able to bring home to Gregory the idea of the living holy man or woman as agent of miracles and counterpart of the martyrs. Though it is not possible to support this hypothesis with any very solid evidence, I believe that it is at least worth putting forward.

Gregory's Possible Debt to Jerome and Eucherius of Lyons

I have already shown how dependent Gregory was upon Jerome and perhaps also Eucherius of Lyons for his interpretation of Greek words and phrases employed by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. I have also noted that Gregory apparently made use of Jerome's list of the angelic orders. I further believe that he relied upon these writers for certain of his etymologies and explanations of Greek theological matters.

In my previous article,[70] I cited as an example of Gregory's practice of borrowing from other writers his comment on Isaiah 34.13–14 in the *Moralia,* where he followed Jerome in using the "onocentaur" as a symbol of the debauchee, and Augustine in rendering the Greek term *Panas* as "incubos."[71] I should now like to add that a valuable comment by Eucherius upon this passage indicates that Jerome adhered to the Septuagint in this passage rather than the Hebrew, and that Gregory followed him.[72]

Gregory's explanations of Greek words, with two exceptions, appear to be derived from Jerome, possibly with some reference to Eucherius. I have dealt with these exceptions elsewhere.[73] In examining the remaining explanations we have to determine whether Gregory drew his definitions directly from Jerome or from Jerome through the medium of Eucherius. We also need to consider whether Gregory was drawing upon other writers besides Jerome and Eucherius and whether some of the definitions were such common knowledge that no question of literary precedents arises. We also need to discover whether there is a residue of material which can only be derived from Eucherius.

The two works of Eucherius, the *Formulae* and the *Instructiones,* were written c. 428 for the benefit of his two young sons, Veranus and Salonius, respectively, to answer their theological queries; the boys had both been brought up at Lérins. The *Formulae* consists principally of biblical interpretations of mystical and theological terms. The first book of the *Instructiones* consists of com-

[69] Paul Peeters, "Sainte Golindouch, martyre perse," *Analecta Bollandiana* 63 (1944), 71–175; Gérard Garitte, "La passion géorgienne de sainte Golindouch," ibid. 74 (1956), 405–40.

[70] Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great Know Greek?" pp. 128–29.

[71] *Moralia* 7.28, p. 360; Jerome, *In Esaiam* 6.14.1, pp. 234–36; see also *Contra Vigilantium* 1, PL 23:353–55; Augustine, *De civitate Dei,* ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, 2 vols., CCSL 47–48 (Turnhout, 1955), 15.23, p. 488.

[72] *Instructiones* 2, p. 155.

[73] Petersen, "Did Gregory the Great Know Greek?" p. 129; *Dialogues,* p. 170.

ments on difficult passages in the Bible, but the second contains something which is important for our purpose, namely, a set of neat definitions and translations of Greek and Hebrew expressions, many of which appear to have supplied Gregory with his information, and which Eucherius may have derived from Jerome.

For the sake of convenience I will first consider those items which occur in the *Homiliae in Evangelia.* The first two occur in 1.7.5:[74] definitions of "angelus" as "nuntius" and of "thronus" as "sedes," both of which are also furnished by Eucherius in the last chapter of *Instructiones* 2, which is entitled "De Graecis nominibus."[75] The definition of "angelus" as "nuntius" occurs in the writings of Jerome, but not in so neat a form as in Eucherius.[76] Nevertheless there is no reason why Gregory should not have taken it from Jerome. There is slightly more doubt about the origin of Gregory's definition of "thronus": "Quia enim thronos Latino eloquio sedes dicimus, throni Dei dicti sunt hi qui tanta divinitatis gratia replentur. . . ."[77] However, even if this tallies with the definition given by Eucherius, there is no proof that Gregory knew his works, since the meanings of *angelus* and *thronus* may well have been commonplaces among Christians in late antiquity.

The single example apparently linked with the *Formulae* may well be a commonplace also, but it presents certain features of interest. The idea of the olive, whether in the form of fruit or of oil, symbolizing the quality of mercy was certainly familiar in late antiquity. Jerome used the phrase "oleo elemosynae" in one of his letters, and Caesarius of Arles in one of his sermons spoke of "oleum misericordiae."[78] Eucherius cited an example from Psalm 51.10: "Olea sanctus misericordiae abundans fructibus; in psalmo: ego autem sicut oliua fructifera," and defined "oleum" as signifying "misericordia uel sanctus spiritus."[79] It therefore seems unlikely that the explanation given by Gregory can be attributed to any one Latin writer: "Quos autem per olivam, nisi misericordes accipimus? quia et Graece ἔλεος misericordia vocatur, et quasi olivae liquor ante omnipotentis Dei oculos misericordiae fructus lucet."[80] The olive is represented as the symbol of mercy in at least two of the Greek Fathers, Clement of Alexandria and John Chrysostom. Clement played upon the verbal connection between ἔλαιον and ἔλεος thus: "μυστικῶς ταύτῃ νοοῦσι· τὸ

[74] Col. 1097.

[75] *Instructiones* 2, p. 160.

[76] E.g., *In Matthaeum,* ed. D. Hurst and Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 77 (Turnhout, 1969), 2.75, p. 79.

[77] *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.34.10, col. 1252.

[78] Jerome, *Epistulae,* ed. Isidor Hilberg, CSEL 54 and 55 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910–12), 96.20, p. 180; Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones,* ed. Germain Morin, 2 vols., CCSL 103–4 (Turnhout, 1953), 109.4, p. 656.

[79] *Formulae,* ed. Karl Wotke, CSEL 31 (Prague, Vienna, and Leipzig, 1894), 3 and 7, pp. 19 and 39.

[80] *Homiliae in Evangelia* 1.20, col. 1167.

ἔλαιον αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ κύριος, ἀφ' οὗ τὸ ἔλεος τὸ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς."[81] The same play upon words is found in at least one passage of Chrysostom's writings; it is only a play upon words, not a conscious attempt at a derivation.[82] It was left to Gregory, with his superficial knowledge of Greek, to furnish this dubious etymology. He is unlikely to have known the Greek texts at first hand; either he had heard of this play upon words from someone who knew rather more Greek than he did or — as seems the more likely — the belief that *τὸ ἔλεος* was derived from *τὸ ἔλαιον* was so widespread that its origins had been forgotten. Clement of Alexandria and John Chrysostom, and later, Gregory, were perhaps all repeating one of the clichés of late antiquity.

A more important definition supplied by Gregory is that of the Paraclete. This word is first used in the Greek form to describe the Holy Spirit in St. John's Gospel (24.16, 26; 15.26; 16.7) and in 1 John (2.1). Gregory implied in his homily that its meaning was known to a high proportion of his hearers: "Nostis plurimi, fratres mei, quod Graeca locutione paraclitus Latine advocatus dicitur, vel consolator."[83] This was not apparently so commonplace and widely understood an interpretation as those of *angelus* and *thronus,* but was nevertheless known to "plurimi." Who were the "plurimi," and how did they know what they knew? An investigation into the various renderings of *Παράκλητος* into Latin may afford us some clues.

In the Vulgate *Παράκλητος* is retained as "Paraclitus" wherever it occurs in St. John's Gospel, but in 1 John it is translated as "advocatus." The Vetus Italica reads "Paraclitus" and "advocatus" as in the Vulgate, with the exception of John 14.16, where "καὶ ἄλλον Παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν" is rendered as "et alium advocatum dabit vobis." It seems improbable that the "plurimi" would recognize that *Παράκλητος* or *Paraclitus* could be interpreted as *consolator* simply on the basis of this text. Since conditions in sixth-century Rome cannot have been favorable to the study of Greek, few, if any, of Gregory's hearers would have been able to arrive at this meaning as a result of their knowledge of the language. On the other hand, a high proportion of them might have been aware of the definition furnished by Eucherius: "Spiritus paraclitus spiritus consolator sive aduocatus."[84] Because of the change in the educational and cultural climate, which had been taking place from the late fourth century onwards,[85] the *Instructiones,* a work written for an able boy with distinguished teachers in the 420s, might have served as a useful textbook for young adult monks and clerics in the 580s and 590s. If so, Gregory could have

[81] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus,* ed. Otto Stählin, 3rd ed., Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Berlin, 1972), 2.8, p. 194.

[82] John Chrysostom, *Homiliae 1–88 in Iohannem* 13.4, PG 59:90, where we find the same play upon words; *Homiliae 1–90 in Matthaeum* 78.1, PG 58:712; *Homiliae 1–10 in 2 Timotheum* 2.6.3, PG 62:633. In the two last passages the use of the word "ἐλεημοσύνη" renders the expression less effective.

[83] *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.30.3, col. 1221.

[84] *Instructiones* 2, p. 160.

[85] See Petersen, *Dialogues,* pp. 90–94.

become acquainted with it during his time in the monastery, and it would have been familiar material to the monastic and clerical element in his audience. There is, however, a more likely source of knowledge for the "plurimi." There is adequate evidence that the reading "alium consolatorem dabit vobis" for John 14.16 also existed. What is more, it was cited by Jerome in his commentary *In Esaiam.*[86] It may therefore be the case that the word "plurimi" refers to a considerable number of Gregory's hearers who were acquainted with a different version of the Scriptures and that Gregory had perhaps met with this alternative reading through his study of Jerome. Thus we can account for the resemblance between the definitions of Gregory and Eucherius; both had either read Jerome's commentary on Isaiah or had been familiar with a Latin version of the Scriptures which was neither the Vetus Italica nor the Vulgate. Readings from such a version or versions do indeed occur from time to time in Gregory's own writings.[87] We need not therefore be surprised to find this variant reading in Jerome.

Gregory's second explanation-cum-etymology in this group of material — the first is that of the olive as a symbol of mercy — is to be found in *Homiliae in Ezechielem.* His definition of the words *gaza* and *gazophylacium* appears to owe something both to Eucherius and to first-century grammarians and to indicate something of his knowledge of Greek. Pomponius Mela offered the definition of *gaza* as a Persian word: "gaza: sic Persae aerarium vocant." A similar definition was supplied by Quintus Curtius: "pecuniam regiam gazam Persae vocant." By Gregory's day this definition had probably become a commonplace taught to schoolchildren. There is a certain resemblance between the definitions of *gazophylacium* given by Eucherius ("divitiarum custodem, compositam de lingua Persica et Graeca") and Gregory ("Quia sermone Graeco φυλάττειν servare dicitur et gazae lingua Persica divitiae vocantur, gazophylacium locus appellari solet quo divitiae servantur"), but here again one wonders whether this compound definition had not also become commonplace in the course of time.[88]

At any rate we may reasonably infer that Gregory knew enough Greek to be able to grasp the connection between *phylacium* and *φυλάττειν,* though it might have been more apt to cite the noun *φυλακεῖον* 'watch-tower'. We have gathered, however, from the example of *τὸ ἔλεος* and *τὸ ἔλαιον* that his knowledge was neither extensive nor always reliable.

Our final example, taken from *In librum I Regum,* need not detain us long. It is improbable that from the bald "monachus solitarius" of Eucherius[89] Gregory could have arrived at his definition of *monachus* as connected with the

[86] Jerome, *In Esaiam* 11.40.1.2, p. 454.

[87] A list of numerous such readings in the *Homiliae in Evangelia* is presented by Marcus Adriaen in the introduction to his edition of the text (pp. vi–vii).

[88] See *Instructiones* 2, p. 61. The examples from the grammarians, Pomponius Mela 1.11 and Quintus Curtius 3.13.4, 5.13, and 6.6, are cited under *gaza* in the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* 6/1:1721–72. The definition was repeated by Isidore: *Etymologiae* 10.9.1.

[89] *Instructiones* 2, p. 161.

Greek μόνος: "Quae etiam nostra sunt: quia hi, qui abrenuniantes saeculo remotioris vitae secretum petivimus, monachi vocamus. Monos quidem graece latine autem unus dicitur."[90] This definition is more likely to be based on his own knowledge of Greek, slight though it may have been, combined with two possible Latin sources. The earlier is a letter from Jerome to the monk Heliodorus: "interpretare uocabulum monachi, hoc est nomen tuum: quid facis in turba, qui solus es?"[91] The second is provided by Cassian: "monachi sive μονάζοντες a singularis et solitariae vitae destrictione nominati sunt."[92]

This small investigation yields two results. First, there seems to be very little material which Gregory might have obtained directly from the works of Eucherius: possibly the definitions of *angelus, thronus,* and *gazophylacium,* though this is by no means certain. Better evidence for his being acquainted with the two works of Eucherius lies in his definition of Raphael as "medicina Dei," which is found only in Eucherius. Secondly, Gregory's principal source for many of his explanations and etymologies is undoubtedly the corpus of Jerome's writings.

Gregory the Great is one of those characters who stand at a crossroads in history, beneath a signpost with arms pointing in four directions. Two of the arms, in his case, point in chronological directions: south to classical times and late antiquity; north to the Middle Ages and to modern times. The other two arms point in geographical directions: to the Greek-speaking Eastern Mediterranean area and to the Latin-speaking West, areas which will later signify the Eastern and Western churches. We have long been accustomed to see Gregory as a transitional figure between the ancient world and its Latin traditions on the one hand and the medieval and modern world on the other. However, I believe that we now have enough evidence to enable us to see him not only as "homo omnino Latinus," a man thoroughly versed in the Western culture and ideology of his own day, but also as one who through his own reading and personal contacts was able to interpret Eastern Christian ideas to Western Europe at a time when the linguistic division between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean areas was beginning to harden.

[90] *In librum I Regum,* ed. Patrick Verbraken, CCSL 144 (Turnhout, 1963), 1.61.1303, p. 87.
[91] Jerome, *Epistulae* 14.6, p. 52.
[92] John Cassian, *Collationes,* ed. E. Pichery, 3 vols., SC 42, 54, 64 (Paris, 1955–59), 18.5.4, p. 16.

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