

## Gregory of Rimini : a fourteenth-century Augustinian

Gregory of Rimini, in company with many other fourteenth-century thinkers, has been the subject of conflicting judgements. He is at once the *Antesignanus nominalistarum*<sup>1</sup> and an anti-Pelagian<sup>2</sup>; an Ockhamist<sup>3</sup> and the forerunner of Luther<sup>4</sup>; while for centuries he has had to bear the unjust title of *Tortor infantium*. Even his Augustinianism, to the existence of which there appears to be general assent, does not in itself render his outlook clear: are we to understand it as denoting the doctrines of St Augustine or of the thirteenth-century Augustinians or of Duns Scotus? and what relationship does it bear to the so-called Augustinianism of his contemporary, Thomas Bradwardine? This article is an attempt to elucidate Gregory's outlook and its place in fourteenth-century thought.

So far as his intellectual milieu was concerned it seems probable that it was predominantly at Paris, under the impact of Ockhamism, that Gregory's doctrines were formulated. As with so many of his contemporaries we have no firm date for Gregory's birth. The older view<sup>5</sup> that he was a contemporary—indeed a rival—of Duns Scotus has little to support it; and the existence of a letter from Pope Clement VI to the Chancellor of Paris University, dated 12 January 1345, renders it highly dubious<sup>6</sup>. The Pope then requested that Gregory be provided with a chair at the University, and, in support of Gregory's claims, recounted the main events of his career. The outstanding feature of it is that it appears to have begun only twenty years previously, in 1323, when,

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1. The expression, according to D. TRAPP, « Augustinian theology of the 14th century » (*Augustiniana*, VI, 1956) pp. 183-4 was first coined by Aventinus (Avensberg, 1477-1517). See *Annales Ducum Boiariae*, ed. Riezler, Munich, 1884, p. 200.

2. See for example, M. SCHÜLER, *Prädestination, Sünde und Freiheit bei Gregor von Rimini*, (Stuttgart, 1934), and P. VIGNAUX, *Justification et Prédestination* (Paris, 1934).

3. J. WÜRSDÖRFER, *Erkennen und Wissen bei Gregor von Rimini* (Münster in W., 1917).

4. SCHÜLER, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-11. For a discussion of the latest evidence see H. Beintker, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 1957, 68, pp. 144-8, where he examines the findings of L. Saint-Blancat that Gregory's influence upon Luther was indirect and unknown to Luther.

5. E.g. Gandolphus, Quadrio, Budinsky and Tonini, cited in SCHÜLER, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

6. DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1891), II, 1097, p. 557.

says the letter, Gregory first studied as a bachelor at Paris for six years continuously—i.e. until 1329. Having qualified, he then returned to Padua and Perugia before going for a second time to Paris in 1341, where he spent a further four years reading the *Sentences*: « *quarum lectura ibidem commendabiliter consummavit*<sup>7</sup> ». This sequence would imply that Gregory's career opened with his first period of study at Paris, so that he was far more likely to have been in his early twenties—born that is to say c. 1300—than in his forties, as would have been the case had he been a contemporary of Duns Scotus. It seems hardly conceivable that had Gregory been born a generation earlier there would have been no mention at all of events prior to 1323. The whole purport of the Pope's letter was to provide an outline of Gregory's history; as such it appears to be the most conclusive evidence for holding to the later date.

This would also make Gregory's subsequent career more plausible. His second stay at Paris lasted for ten years from 1341 to 1351<sup>8</sup> during which he commented the *Sentences* and occupied a teaching chair. As a contemporary of Duns Scotus he would then have been sixty or seventy years of age: by any standards a ripe one for such activities. Even more incongruous, he would have been eighty at the time of his election as general of the Augustinians in May 1357, in succession to Thomas of Strasbourg, having spent the previous six years as lector to his order in his native city of Rimini. The crowded eighteen months of activity which ensued before he finally died in Vienna, in November 1358<sup>9</sup>, would have been unusual, to say the least, in a man of over eighty. Gregory would then have enjoyed the almost unique distinction of having been a survivor both from the generation of Duns Scotus and the Black Death. On all these counts it seems much more likely that Gregory died at the mature, but not excessive, age of 57 or 58 years, having achieved eminence as *doctor authenticus* and head of his own order.

Of Gregory's extant works, undoubtedly the *magnum opus* and the source of his doctrine is his *Commentary on the Sentences*. It is to be found only to the first two books of which there are eight printed editions, and twenty-six manuscripts, excluding a number of fragments<sup>10</sup>. There do not seem any good grounds for supposing that there were originally four books. *A priori* there is no good reason why we should expect

7. *Ibid.*

8. « Anno 1351 fuit principalis lector scholae nostrae Ariminensis », Elssius, *Encomiasticum Augustinianum* (Brussels, 1654) p. 247, quoted in Würsdörfer, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. SCHÜLER, *op. cit.*, p. 16, who cites from an unpublished dissertation of F.-M. KNOTE, *Gregor von Rimini, seine Gnadenlehre und seine geschichtliche Bedeutung besonders für die Zeit der Reformation*, 1906/1907.

10. For details, see F. STEGMÜLLER: *Repertorium Commentatorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, Würzburg, 1947.

them; certainly among the majority of Gregory's contemporaries it was highly unusual, and few achieved anything approaching a full-scale Commentary on traditional lines, with only the most perfunctory attention paid to the original questions. Thus Holcot, Buckingham, Halifax and Woodham, to mention only four examples, all reduced their Commentaries to a fraction of the original, often following neither the order of the books nor dividing them into distinctions. Buckingham's Commentary consisted of merely six questions and Holcot's about twice that number. Even in Ockham's case, only the first book is in *ordinatio* form<sup>11</sup>.

Gregory's Commentary, on the other hand, was, as we have already observed, the work of maturity; it was on a large scale; and even though it did not encompass every question of the original book of the Lombard, its six hundred folios and more could well have taken up the four years which he devoted to reading the *Sentences* during his second stay in Paris. Of the manuscripts I have examined seven concur in giving 1344 as the date of their publication<sup>12</sup>; in the following year Gregory turned to teaching<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, Schüler has pointed out<sup>14</sup> that when John Caproleus took issue with Gregory in defence of St Thomas in the fifteenth century, he referred only to Gregory's Commentary on the first two books. Although this cannot be considered conclusive it helps to support the view that Gregory did not write a third and fourth book. Had he done so, it is strange, to say the least, that in view of the comparatively large number of manuscripts and editions of the first two, no trace of the others has survived. It must be concluded, then, that there is no evidence to suggest that they ever existed.

Even in only two books, Gregory's Commentary is among the most considerable works of his time, on a scale comparable with the Commentaries of Durandus of St Pourçain, Pierre Aureole, Ockham, and Thomas Bradwardine's *De causa Dei*, and far beyond the usual scope of those his contemporaries. Nor does it lack comprehensiveness; unlike the majority of his contemporaries Gregory follows with almost meticulous care the accepted order of questions, beginning with fruition of God and considering almost all the 48 questions of the first book and the 44 questions of the second. His treatment is almost unique in its blend of the traditional with the contemporary, so that, as we shall discuss, the burning issues of his own day are interpreted in the context of the past, especially the doctrines of St Augustine.

11. See the present writer's *Bradwardine and the Pelagians* (Cambridge 1957), pp. 9-10.

12. Bib. Mazarine, Paris, 913, Bib. Arsenal, Paris, 512, Bib. Nationale, Paris, Latin 15889, Bib. de l'Université, Paris, 196, New College, Oxford, 110, Balliol College, Oxford, 73, National-Bib., Vienna, 1515.

13. See the letter from Clement VI to Gregory, dated October 1347 which addresses him as 'sacrae theologiae magistro', DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *op. cit.*, 1142, p. 606.

14. *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

There could, in consequence, scarcely be more remarkable testimony to the state of thought in the earlier fourteenth century than Gregory's Commentary. We are presented with what is in effect a transposition of St Augustine's teachings to the age of Ockham; his doctrines on God, free will, sin, the relation of faith to knowledge, are all restated in fourteenth-century terms. It is as an Augustinian in the literal sense, of owing the essentials of his outlook to St Augustine rather than to the thirteenth-century Augustinians, that Gregory must be regarded; and his importance lies in this seemingly paradoxical combination of the fourth with the fourteenth century. His outlook is essentially the response of tradition to the innovations of his time; and it enables us to appreciate more clearly than the extremes of either Ockham or Bradwardine their magnitude. Perhaps for the first time we can see fourteenth-century thought less as a simple conflict between the *via antiqua* and the *via nova* than as a number of different responses to a fundamentally changed situation in which knowledge and faith had once more become separated. It provided the starting point for Bradwardine and Gregory no less than for Ockham; and separated them all from the thinkers of the pre-Scotist era. However else they differed, Augustine and Ockham both accepted the independence of theology from natural knowledge and the impossibility of arriving at the articles of faith by rational demonstration. This applied to the great body of earlier fourteenth-century thinkers; and their affinity with the fourth century is the measure of their distance from the thirteenth century. Even the most traditional of them, Gregory included, could not, and did not, think in exclusively traditional terms; however strongly they drew upon tradition, they did so to grapple with an untraditional situation: the need to delimit faith from knowledge, while not allowing them to conflict. In this sense all the leading thinkers of the earlier fourteenth century were to some degree *moderni* in virtue of what confronted them. Since their point of departure was a changed one, their own outlooks in some degree shared in this novelty.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of Gregory. Different though his thinking was from the majority of his contemporaries it mirrored the preoccupation of the time; on all the main questions Gregory takes the side of tradition yet he does so from the standpoint of the fourteenth century. That is to say, he treats them as they had come to be formulated by his contemporaries and near contemporaries. Thus his discussion of the Godhead and the divine attribute was largely directed against the *distinctio formalis* of Duns Scotus; his theory of knowledge adopts much of the terminology of Ockham; he utilizes the distinction between God's two kinds of power; he shares the contemporary view of the status of theology. But in every case his conclusions

take him back to St Augustine, or at least away from the dominant attitude of doubt so rife in the first part of the fourteenth century.

The whole of Gregory's thought is informed by the almost obsessive awareness of the contingency of creation and everything connected with it. This was perhaps the outstanding intellectual trait of the fourteenth century and Gregory displayed it to the full. On the one hand, there was God necessary and free; on the other, creation devoid of any *raison d'être* other than His willing: it could as well never have been or have been different. This realization is ever-present in Gregory. So far as God was concerned it meant observing the distinction between God's *potentia ordinata* and *potentia absoluta*, so that by the latter God was free from following any prescribed course of action no matter what He had ordained<sup>15</sup>. Whereas Ockham and his followers had interpreted this to mean that God could override His ordinances even when this seemed to undermine His very attributes of goodness, wisdom, mercy, omniscience and so on, Gregory regarded it simply as the reassertion of God's untrammelled freedom: in his hands it was neither heterodox nor paradoxical. If it meant uncertainty in the inherent constancy of the natural order it meant also absolute certainty in God's omnipotence; but not an omnipotence which engulfed His nature. Here, if anywhere, lay the great division between the traditionalism of Gregory and the innovation of his contemporaries.

For the latter God's omnipotence was its own justification; hence if God should lie or mislead or ignore His own ordinances, His ability to do so was His justification. No moral consideration arose, for everything was subordinate to His act of willing. His willing was the only criterion, and questions of right and wrong, good and evil, lost any independent validity<sup>16</sup>. If, on the other hand, as in Gregory's case, God's being was good, wise, merciful and just in its own right, there could be no question of jettisoning these values as independent considerations; if He were good, He could not mislead or be unjust, not because He was not all-powerful but because if He did so He would not then be God. It was the difference between subsuming God's nature under His will and taking His nature as given; His goodness, mercy and wisdom were goodness, mercy and wisdom regardless, qualities which were universal and constant. There could be no question of flux and mutability in what they stood for; God's will far from acting as a barrier to any coherent image of God's nature was the means whereby knowledge of it came. Although not enabling us to know God in Himself, His laws and ordinances, as given in revelation, provided traces of Him; far from being unreliable or deceptive, as implied by the Ockhamists, they were the infallible guide

15. Gregory was one of the few thinkers of the period to deal with them explicitly. *Senten-ces*, I, d. 42-44, q. 1, a. 2.

16. See *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*, Part II, *passim*.

to His true nature ; and His creatures in being governed by His will met the full array of His attributes to which it gave expression.

In an illuminating passage, Gregory, while rejecting all suggestion of obligation in the way in which God acts, concedes that He can only do that which is fitting for Him ; that whatever He does must be just ; and that whatever He does not, had He done so, would have been equally good and just<sup>17</sup>. Thus, while, as we shall see, acknowledging that God by His *potentia absoluta* could dispense with the habit of grace, he denied the more extreme consequences of Ockham and his followers which rendered the accepted notions of God and His law meaningless. He therefore opposed Ockham's contention that God could reward with merit a man who fulfilled the precept to hate Him, on the simple ground that it was impossible : God could not be the author of such an act any more than He could be the author of sin<sup>18</sup>. The use of the term « impossible » is testimony to Gregory's adherence to certain fundamental canons which govern God's actions. This attitude is even more manifest over the problem of whether God could mislead or falsify. It arose from the juxtaposition of God's *potentia absoluta* to His *potentia ordinata*. Since the former could supersede the latter, the whole of revelation was imperilled, and that which God had revealed in His word might never come to pass. Such a problem, crucial in itself, became more vexed by the assertion of Adam of Woodham, for one, that God by His absolute power could lie<sup>19</sup>. It was inextricably to involve God's nature in the dispute and this is how Gregory regarded it. He rejected out of hand the possibility that God could lie either with intent to deceive or simply and absolutely<sup>20</sup>. His reasons for doing so constitute the most explicit and sustained account of what we may call the traditional attitude. They revolve round the conception of God already discussed : He is not simply omnipotence ; His omnipotence derives from His perfection ; and every action which He undertakes must be consonant with His goodness, as it is with His will ; or, more exactly, for Him to will that which was unjust or wrong would be as contradictory to His nature as His inability to will at all. In consequence we see a striking reversal of the Ockhamist position, where God's nature is subsumed under His will, in virtue of which what He wills is *ipso facto* good. Gregory expressly adopts the opposite standpoint when he cites a passage from *Cur Deus Homo*. Since, he quotes, that is just which God wills and unjust which He does not

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17. Alius sensus est quod deus non potest facere nisi illud quod si faceret esset bonum et iustum fieri, ita quod nunquam possit esse vera deus facit aliquid quod non est bonum et iustum fieri, et sic est vera (*Sentences*, I, d. 42-44, q. 1. 165M. All references to Venice Edition, 1522).

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Sentences*, Bk. III, q. 5 and also *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*, pp. 250-54.

20. *Sentences*, *vid.*, 166A.

will, this does not mean that if He were to will what was unjust it would be just, because of His willing<sup>21</sup>. Rather it would entail, in, say, the case of lying, that He who did so would not be God<sup>22</sup>. God, that is to say, is by definition good; He can do no wrong; therefore to impute wrongdoing to Him is to negate Him. In this respect Gregory draws upon St Augustine's dictum that for God to be omnipotent He cannot die, He cannot do wrong, He cannot not be<sup>23</sup>: they are incompatible with His nature as God.

Above all, Gregory rejects two different standards by which to judge God, one by His *potentia ordinata*, the other by His *potentia absoluta*. He opposed in particular Adam of Woodham who averred that it would be no sin for God to lie by His absolute power. Since, he replied, God's omnipotence precludes His ability not to be, this applies equally to God's *potentia absoluta*<sup>24</sup> which is synonymous with His omnipotence. If God could lie by His absolute power He could lie also by His ordained power; and conversely, if by His ordained power He is unable to lie, He is correspondingly restricted by His absolute power. For the same reason God's word cannot be doubted; for this would be to make God able to lie. If He could do so, the whole of faith would be undermined—an argument used also by Bradwardine—and an attitude of doubt towards faith engendered. On these grounds alone, Gregory holds, no believer could subscribe to such an opinion of God<sup>25</sup>.

Hence, Gregory's interpretation of God's *potentia absoluta* is very different from that of the Ockhamists. Far from being a vehicle for unconstrained speculation, immune from all restrictions, it is the direct expression of God's nature, the source of His ordinances. God in His absolute power remains the God of tradition; it derives not from itself but from God's attributes; its allegiance is to God's nature and so ultimately to His law. Accordingly, as employed by Gregory, it never took on the destructive, almost iconoclastic, power it received from his contemporaries. This is where its interest lies: for on the one hand, it shows how deep the revulsion against anything approaching divine determinism had been in the aftermath of the 1277 condemnations; on the other, the desire to reaffirm God's nature in the face of the assertions of men like Adam of Woodham.

This application of a predominantly fourteenth-century concept to

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21. Non ita intelligendum est ut si deus velit quodlibet inconueniens iustum sit quia ipse vult (*ibid.*, 166 I).

22. Non enim sequitur, inquit, si deus vult mentiri iustum esse mentiri, sed potius deum illud non esse (*ibid.*).

23. *Ibid.*, 166C.

24. Et constat quod nec de potentia absoluta deus potest illa, ergo nec mentiri ... nihil tamen absolute quin posset ordinare se illud facere (*ibid.*, 166H).

25. *Ibid.*, 166Q-167A.

traditional ends is equally apparent in what Gregory has to say on the divine attributes. He combats both the formal distinction of Duns Scotus, as being logically untenable, and the virtual distinctions of St Thomas<sup>26</sup>, on the grounds that no distinction between God and His attributes can be founded upon reason. Each is the work of the mind, and does not relate to anything outside it. But if the mind's reasons do not bear upon God's nature, they do have a connotation for His extrinsic acts; and in this sense we can say that His attributes are distinguished by reason<sup>27</sup>. When for example God is described as omnipotent or just these distinctions are not meaningless; though they do not refer to Him they apply to what He does. In the words of the Lombard they represent the diverse senses in which God's workings are manifested in His creatures. Thus to call God just or merciful is to predicate the divine essence in the aspect of bestower of justice or mercy. They are divine operations as opposed to divine entities and located in His creatures not Himself<sup>28</sup>.

Thus while God in His own nature cannot be the subject of discussion, He can be considered from the aspect of His creatures' experience of Him. The conclusions to which this gives rise are fully in keeping with the traditional conception of God as found in the teachings of St Augustine and Peter Lombard. While he insists upon the verbal nature of the distinctions attributed to God, they yet express God's true qualities<sup>29</sup>. There is no attempt, as with the Ockhamists, to plead ignorance of whether He is good or wise or merciful. The limitations of reason are not a pretext for doubting God's reality.

The recognition that our concepts about God—discursive though they be—are truly founded is one of the guiding threads to Gregory's outlook; it provides the criteria by which to view God's actions, putting a brake upon the uncontrolled speculations of Ockham, Holcot, Buckingham and Woodham. Within the framework of God's attributable perfections, any question of what God can do is tempered by the consideration of whether He would do it. It was the difference between a tradition based upon authority and the sceptical probings of reason; it was a difference the magnitude of which engulfed the fourteenth century.

This brings us to Gregory's epistemology, which is essentially a fusion of the traditional with the modern. It is dominated by the central distinction which he makes between sensory knowledge and intelligible knowledge. The former applies to all that can be known of the external world; the latter is concerned with inner experience<sup>30</sup>. It is the sover-

26. *Ibid.*, I, d. 8, q. 2, a. 1.

27. *Ibid.*, 71 B.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Ecce quod iustitia et misericordia nullo modo res vel entitates distinctas significant, sed tantummodo eam essentiam dei ... (*ibid.*, 71 D).

30. *Ibid.*, I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, 37 N.



eignty which Gregory allots to the mental world which is the hallmark of his theory of knowledge and which marks his fundamental divergence from Ockham. Where Ockham was primarily concerned to excise from knowledge all mental phenomena that lacked a strict correspondence with sensory objects Gregory treated them in their own right. Consequently, while sharing to the full Ockham's rigorous standards of verification for the external world, Gregory recognized an independent sphere of intelligible experience where the same conditions did not obtain. Thus he could dispense with the universal as a self-subsisting entity outside the mind<sup>31</sup> and yet retain the general concepts—such as whiteness, goodness and so on—for intellectual knowledge, as requiring no external evidence for their validity<sup>32</sup>.

For this reason, Gregory's adherence to the *cognitio rei individualis* was robbed of any of the destructiveness with which Ockham had endowed it; it never went beyond the sensory world. In consequence the mind's experience of its own state, or its awareness of non-sensory qualities, constituted knowledge in its own right and not mere mental figments as with Ockham<sup>33</sup>. By their means it was enabled to know of immaterial substances such as the soul, which could not be experienced immediately by the senses but which could be reached by the mind through abstraction<sup>34</sup>. In this way, also, Gregory was able to make a return to something like St Augustine's conception of ideas in the mind, which owed nothing to previous external experience. By our inner possession of concepts like truth, wisdom, justice, we could become aware of these qualities without having first to encounter them in things; on the contrary without their presence in the mind we should not know how to recognize them<sup>35</sup>. Accordingly, even though our knowledge of the world was limited to our experience of individual objects—and the universal had no separate existence therein—there still remained the inner world of ideas. Gregory likewise rejected any attempt to prove God's existence from natural experience, while being prepared to accept that certain concepts like goodness can apply to Him; by these we could describe Him<sup>36</sup>. The second aspect of Gregory's epistemology was his reinstatement of the mental image as indispensable to knowledge, both sensory and intelli-

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31. ... Quod universale non est aliqua res extra animam, sed tantum est quidem conceptus fictus seu formatus per animam communis pluribus rebus (*ibid.*, q. 3, a. 2, 47 FG).

32. Recordatio et notitia rerum absentium et non existentium est notitia alicuius speciei vel imaginis (*ibid.*, q. 2, a. 1, 45 F).

33. Ex quibus patet quod Augustinus utitur hac consequentia: mens se scire vel se scientem esse, igitur scit se... (*ibid.*, 44 P).

34. *Ibid.*, 45 H.

35. Ex hac igitur notitia habituali naturaliter insita, per quam quis novit hoc et illud, cum illa considerat esse bona et recte facta... qui naturaliter etiam format sibi conceptum generalem boni et iusti, bonitatis et iustitie in quo generali notitia iustitiam cognoscit (*ibid.*, 46 F).

36. *Ibid.*, I, d. 3, q. 4.

gible. It could be either a species, the record of an object, which was stored in the memory and the source of all part knowledge ; or it could be, as we have already mentioned, a general concept arrived at through abstraction, and referring either to sensory objects, such as whiteness or to intelligible experience such as goodness. In each case, the image was the bearer of reality and, as such, indispensable to all knowledge<sup>37</sup>.

Thirdly, as the result of Gregory's division between sensory and intelligible knowledge, Gregory gave a different connotation to intuitive and abstractive knowledge : where both Ockham and Duns Scotus had regarded intuitive knowledge as denoting the existence of the object, for Gregory it was merely immediate knowledge, while abstractive knowledge was indirect knowledge. Intuitive knowledge then could be as well about an image in the mind as about an object outside it. That is to say, it was distinguished not by what was known but by how it was known<sup>38</sup>. The cause for this shift of emphasis lies in Gregory's separate recognition of mental knowledge. Unlike Ockham he regarded it as equally valid, and therefore had no need to distinguish between knowledge (of an object) and imagination (of an image).

In these ways Gregory's doctrine of simple knowledge was far more Augustinian than Ockhamist ; for however rigorous his insistence upon the primacy of the individual, it applied only to the external world. Indeed, the justification for individual knowledge lay in its dependence upon the Augustinian conception of intelligible experience. It was there, not in sensory objects, that the universal had an existence ; and because this was endowed with its own intelligible reality it did not need to be posited for the external world.

Accordingly in his doctrine of simple knowledge Gregory was at once as thoroughgoing an empiricist as Ockham for the external world and an equally convinced Augustinian for the intelligible. It was here that the distinctiveness of his doctrine lay. He was the first leading fourteenth-century thinker to make clearcut the Augustinian separation between the sensory and the intelligible, adopting the criteria of Ockham for one and of St Augustine for the other.

With complex knowledge, Gregory's treatment was noteworthy for his insistence upon the composite nature (*significatum totale*) of a demonstration ; it could not be simply accepted from its conclusion, but needed also verification in experience<sup>39</sup>. He also introduced the distinction

37. *Ibid.*, I, d. 3, q. 1.

38. ... Nec quantum ad intuitivam notitiam interest quod obiectum realiter existat vel non existat... id est si ipsum immediate cognoscitur intuitive cognoscitur et ista notitia est eius intuitiva (*ibid.*, I, d. 3, q. 3, a. 1, 46 O-P).

39. Prologue, q. 1, a. 1, 1, G.

between a term standing for an object (*simplex*) and a mere verbal expression which bore no direct correspondence to any single thing (*complexe*). The latter, called by him the *complexe significabile*<sup>40</sup>, he employed to show, for example, the non-existence of sin as an actual entity but as a description for certain wrong actions. As taken up by his contemporaries it became one of the most potent forms of scepticism and was actively combated at Paris during the 1340s<sup>41</sup>; with Gregory, however, it was designed to reinforce traditional tenets.

The same combination of tradition with modernity is to be found in Gregory's cosmology. Here, too, we are presented with the response of a Christian thinker to Aristotelian and Arabian determinism. It led to a clear demarcation between the older, *a priori* conception of the universe as the reflexion of God's workings and the new predominantly empirical view of the fourteenth century where it was treated largely in its own natural terms. The difference was less one of principle than interpretation; and one of the main misconceptions over the fourteenth century has been to confuse the two. As a principle all held to God's will as the final arbiter; but whereas thirteenth-century thinkers saw His workings in terms of the eternal laws regulating all creation, the fourteenth-century looked directly to God. They interpreted the universe not as God's final dispensation, but as the realization of one of many possibilities, all equally contingent. Far from its being the embodiment of invariable laws its characteristic was its liability to change; even its finiteness and existence in time were not inherent in it. It was, in fact, testimony to nothing but its own contingency and God's freedom.

In this discontinuity between the divine and the created lay the source of the fourteenth-century attitude to the universe, both in its physical and its moral aspects. But, where for the latter, it meant contradicting the tenets of revealed truth, as we shall observe, in the case of the physical world the main target was Aristotle's cosmology. Aristotle had started from the assumption of an unmoved mover and a finite universe; and in rejecting it fourteenth-century thinkers took two momentous steps. The first was to substitute an indeterminate for a fixed cosmology; the second was to make the individual their sole consideration.

The consequences can be seen clearly with Gregory. In the first place, as a macrocosm, the universe lost definition: there was no reason why its creatures could not be infinite, if God so willed, as in say a mass composed of infinite parts, or a body of infinite length. Whatever was not contradictory God could do<sup>42</sup>. Had Aristotle been willing to concede

40. *Ibid.*, I, Q.

41. For the importance of the *complexe significabile*, see H. ÉLIE, *Le Complexe Significabile*. Paris, 1934. An example of its influence can be seen in the condemnation of the new doctrines by the Rector of Paris University in 1340. DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *op. cit.*, 1042, pp. 505-7.

42. I, d. 42-44, q. 4, a. 1.

this, He would have also been able to accept the possibility of the infinity of bodies<sup>43</sup>. The same applied to eternity; there was no reason why something other than God could not be eternal if God decided to create it<sup>44</sup>. Gregory therefore concluded that the world and the heavenly bodies could have been eternal<sup>45</sup>. As with infinity both states were possible for God's creatures because both were possible for God to will. Gregory did not posit these possibilities as an alternative to the existing order, but rather as a *caveat* against taking it to be invariable. He was concerned to stress the indeterminacy inherent in all creation by virtue of its being creation. The second consequence of this attitude was the refusal to treat the physical world in terms of unverifiable concepts; the only certainty comes from the knowledge of actually existing individuals given to us in experience. They alone provided the guarantee of the truth of our propositions about the world. Hence, in place of an all-embracing world view within the setting of Aristotle's four causes, came a world of discrete individuals; they became the measure of all things, to be taken in themselves and not as the expression of higher universal truths. Accordingly knowledge of them was to be sought in their own physical properties as material beings: extension, mass, movement, relation and so on. Correspondingly the universal, the genus, the species, the disembodied form were displaced.

For Gregory form and matter were no longer metaphysical properties but the constituents of physical beings and states; he treated them in terms of generation and destruction, intensification and remission, rarefaction and condensation<sup>46</sup>. Here we see a further consequence of this new attitude: if as a macrocosm the universe lost its definition—and could be held to be infinite or eternal according to God's will—as a microcosm it became ever more precise; and in this sense we might speak of a rehabilitation of Aristotle more complete than at any previous time in the middle ages. For with the emphasis upon individual experience, observation, verification and measurement became the elements of practical knowledge; and for this no one was better fitted than the Stagirate. Thus while Gregory was openly defiant of Aristotle's judgements on the nature of the universe as a whole, he drew upon him closely for discussion of its physical and mechanical aspects. Just as forms and matter become transposed into physical terms, so with movement, number, change, place; they referred to specific beings in particular states, or relations to other beings, and relation itself lost any of the independent status which it had enjoyed for so long.

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43. *Ibid.*, 173 N-O.

44. *Tertio quod possibile fuit aliquam rem aliam a deo fuisse ab eterno* (II, d. 1, q. 3, a. 1, 12K)-

45. *Ibid.*, 11Q.

46. I, d. 17, q. 2, 3, 4; II, d. 12.

Parallel with these considerations at the nature level went the ever-present possibility of what God could do by His *potentia absoluta* : as for example that two bodies could inhabit the same space at the same time or that there could be several worlds each infinite<sup>47</sup>. In all these ways Gregory displays the full impact of the new intellectual currents, with its twin emphases upon God's freedom and individual experience.

It is in his doctrine of grace, free will and predestination that Gregory's adherence to tradition, and above all St Augustine, received fullest expression. Indeed the most striking feature of his discussion was its orthodoxy. At a time when at the hands of Ockham and his followers, the laws governing man's spiritual condition were being treated as no less contingent than those governing the physical world, Gregory held fast to them<sup>48</sup>. He did so, moreover, without going to the extremes of Bradwardine, who in his reply to the Ockhamists virtually denied man any value on his own account. In particular where the latter exalted free will and denied the need for grace in a meritorious action, Bradwardine discounted free will. Each side tended to take the argument beyond the boundaries of man's condition *un statu isto*.

The unorthodoxy of so much fourteenth-century thinking is nowhere more apparent than in this swing away from straightforward dogma towards the ideal and the abstract in viewing man. This was largely through the use of God's *potentia absoluta*, by means of which an alternative order to man's present one was posited ; thus, just as God could have created a different world, or several worlds, so could man have enjoyed a different condition, endowed with powers to accomplish that for which, in his fallen state, a supernatural aid was needed. It had been in reply to this attitude among Ockham and his followers that Bradwardine had fashioned his system. He did so not primarily in dogmatic terms but by trying to establish from theology and metaphysics man's moral impotence. He matched Ockham's emphasis upon what man could be by what he could not be ; neither considered him primarily as he was, as the result of the fall.

This is where Gregory was distinguished from both ; he took man as he was in the aftermath of the fall, regarding him primarily from the standpoint of St Augustine upon whose authority he virtually rested his case. His treatment of free will, grace and sin was essentially a recapitulation of the Saint's teaching. Like St Augustine, and unlike Bradwardine, he saw the fall as the watershed in man's development ; from that time onwards a special grace in addition to habitual grace was necessary if he were to remain free from sin and obey God ; and Gregory

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47. E.g., I, d. 42-44, 173 N-O.

48. For what follows, see *Bradwardine and the Pelagians, passim*.

took issue with Bradwardine for not recognizing this<sup>49</sup>. Gregory likewise followed St Augustine in identifying original sin with concupiscence<sup>50</sup>, and its effects as ignorance and impotence. He therefore firmly opposed the contention of the Ockhamists that man of his own could achieve moral good, and that this could lead to merit *de congruo*; this could only come about through the infusion of grace<sup>51</sup>. But whereas Bradwardine took the claim to merit *de congruo* as « the most famous error of all and the main reason why so many fall into Pelagianism », devoting some forty pages of his *De causa Dei* to it, Gregory considered it in the wider context of Pelagianism.

As with Bradwardine he opposed the suggestion of the Ockhamists that man could merit by free will alone, if God so willed. But he did so on very grounds, and ones which once again give a fourteenth-century stamp to his thinking. On the one hand he insisted upon the need for an additional aid from God if fallen man was to do good and resist sin; on the other God could dispense with the habit of created grace, if He so willed. That is to say Gregory's standpoint was at once traditional in its ends and novel in its means. Ultimately it rests with God's saving will whom to reward, yet He was not bound to follow a set course in doing so. It is for that reason that God was able to pass by created habits and do directly that which He did through them. Accordingly, by His absolute power, God could accept a man as *gratus* without the habit of created grace, and, conversely, He was not obliged to accept as *gratus* one who was in grace; for in each case God's award of merit was not governed by created habits<sup>52</sup>.

Now while Gregory joined with the Ockhamists in rejecting the need for the habit of charity, his reasons were far from similar. The Ockhamists<sup>53</sup> placed all their emphasis in any meritorious action upon God's acceptance in such a way that it rendered both created habits and created actions devoid of intrinsic value. God, by His absolute power, was free to accept any action however or by whomever it had been accomplished; whether it was from a sinner or from one in grace it rested with God to treat it as He thought fit. The action was therefore in itself neither good nor bad; if God decided to regard it as good, it was good even though it was from a mortal sinner, and, similarly, even if it had been informed by grace, God could reject it if He so willed. Secondly, in putting the entire onus upon God, the Ockhamists concluded that a man could act

49. II, d. 29, q. 1, a. 1, 105 K-L.

50. II, d. 30-33, q. 1, a. 2, 112M.

51. II, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, 93.

52. ... Quod possibile est de dei potentia absoluta aliquem esse deo carum et acceptum non habendo charitatem infusam... Secunda est quod possibile est aliquem habendo huius charitatem non esse deo carum et acceptum ad vitam eternam (I, d. 17, q. 1, a. 2, 86F).

53. See Bradwardine and the Pelagians, Part II, *passim*.

meritoriously *ex puris naturalibus* ; since, as Ockham said, the act alone counted God could reward or reject it. If taken to extremes, as in the case of Holcot, Buckingham and Adam of Woodham, there was no reason why God should not reward the mortal sinner and damn the man in grace.

With Gregory none of this applied. While he evinced a similar desire to unshackle God from a fixed mode of activity there were bounds to His freedom, imposed not by any constraint but by His own nature. Thus where for Ockham and his confrères the very constituents of creation appeared to undergo transformation (to say nothing of a God who could mislead and sin) so that good and evil, grace and sin, lost their intrinsic qualities and are as God will them, for Gregory they remained constant ; the change, if such it can be called, was in the relation of these qualities to God's will : grace still continued to engender goodness, but it did not necessarily follow that God should be governed by its presence in choosing whom to reward. God could still be free and good and evil could yet remain constant. Thus Gregory understood God's power to dispense with habits not as destroying them but as rendering them unnecessary ; it signified His freedom to achieve His end by other means, but the two must remain compatible.

The very nature of grace rendered it in no way indispensable to eternal glory. As a gratuitous gift from God it imposed no obligation upon Him to reward it, as if He were someone's debtor. On the contrary, as St Augustine said (*De Trinitate*, 13) all our merits were God's gift. Therefore they were not condign with His rewards whether eternal or temporal ; whatever the degree of godness in grace it could never approximate to the goodness in God's award of eternal life. In every case of merit God gave *ultra condignum*<sup>54</sup>. Hence when Gregory said that God, in His *potentia absoluta*, could reward without a previously existing habit of grace, supernatural aid was not withdrawn<sup>55</sup> ; it simply took on another and more direct form. Here Gregory asserted his Augustinianism ; for he was merely pointing to the inadequacy of any created form to act in lieu or independently of God's will : the final decision upon a man's eternal state must rest solely with the divine will. Consequently, Gregory concluded that no one, even though informed by habitual grace, could resist sin or overcome temptation unless he had an additional aid from God<sup>56</sup>. In all essentials this aid fulfilled the same function as the grace of final perseverance, in enabling a man, once

54. I, d. 17, q. 1, a. 2, 88 B-89 A.

55. Contra hoc potest argui, nam si conclusio esset vera, aut hoc esset quia homo ex suis naturalibus absque aliquo bono supernaturali sibi collato posset elicere dilectionem meritoriam. Aut propter specialem assistentiam et influentiam dei coagentis ad actum illum... Respondeo dicendum quod secundo modo... immediate conproducendo et movendo voluntatem... (*ibid.*, 89 D-F).

56. II, d. 26-28, q. 2, a. 2, 102 C-D.

justified, to remain free from sin ; and Gregory invoked St Augustine's own words from *De correptione et gratia* in this sense<sup>57</sup>. The influence of St Augustine is equally apparent in his discussion of the reasons for man's dependence upon this additional aid ; it was founded upon the relation between operating and cooperating grace, so that in every good action there was a twofold process. First God operated in us that we might want good ; secondly he co-operated with us that we might realize this desire. Each was inseparable from God's will. Only by the immediate presence of God's will could a man be rendered truly just<sup>58</sup>. Here, then, was the source of Gregory's additional divine aid : while it could, by His absolute power, by-pass habits, it must, whatever God's dispensation, be the final arbiter in a man's actions. We are thus brought back to an almost starkly traditional interpretation of grace, which owed its main inspiration to St Augustine in each of its two major premises : that God's special aid in some form had always been needed for man to do good, and that, as a result of Adam's sin, a further aid—in Gregory's case God's will acting directly—was required. Hence the dividing line between righteous man and fallen man was the need for God's added aid<sup>59</sup>. It was for Gregory to re-emphasise this traditional tenet at a time when it had been largely ignored both by the Ockhamists and Bradwardine.

Only over predestination did Gregory show a departure from tradition, probably in reaction against the ideas of Ockham and Duns Scotus with their emphasis upon the rôle of free will. For Gregory, on the other hand, the cause of predestination lay so entirely with God that no nuance could be discerned in His election of one and damnation of another save the fact that had He willed it<sup>60</sup>. God, far from loving all mankind and desiring the salvation of all individuals, deliberately discriminated between them, choosing to elect some and damn others<sup>61</sup>. Hence he interpreted Timothy 1, 2, 4, that « God wills all men to be saved » not as literally applying to all men, but men of every different sort and condition, high and low, rich and poor<sup>62</sup>. Those whose salvation God did not will were damned ; there was thus a double predestination : to reprobation as well as to glory. Each lay with God's will, and Gregory made no attempt to mitigate God's initial refusal to save all men. By placing the onus for reprobation squarely upon God's free refusal to bestow His mercy, Gregory dissociated himself from traditional Catholic teaching.

57. *Ibid.*, D-E.

58. *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 3, 99G.

59. *Ibid.*, D-E.

60. I, d. 40-41, q. 1, a. 1.

61. Ad rationem ergo dico quod consequens est verum, scilicet quod deus non vult omnes homines salvos fieri (*ibid.*, a. 2, 160 M).

62. *Ibid.*, I, 46-47, q. 1, 180 M.



There remains, lastly, to consider the status of theology. From what has already been said it is not hard to see why it once more reverted to a position of complete independence from natural experience. Most of the leading thinkers of the period all joined in returning to the older view of theology as the preserve of scriptural truth, concerned with elucidating the articles of faith and fortifying its adherents. It was practical rather than speculative, to glorify God rather than to comprehend Him. The overriding contingency of creation and the consequent unknowability of God, together with all that was outside practical experience, cut the ties between theology and knowledge. Theology, as deriving from God's word, dealt with truths inaccessible to human experience. Even where it was still held that God's existence was amenable to proof, as with Duns and Bradwardine, theology became increasingly confined to the articles of faith, so that, although God could be shown to be first cause or *ens infinitum*, His enactments still remained the property of revelation, knowledge of which was given only to those who believed. In these circumstances theology could have no place as an object of independent rational enquiry; it dealt in eternal truths, where knowledge was bounded by contingency; it alone gave certainty in belief, enshrined in God's decrees, where natural knowledge could only express God's power to override them. This attitude was fully shared by Gregory; in his view theology was founded on scriptural truth and was therefore the exclusive property of the believer; its purpose was to honour God and strengthen belief in Him<sup>63</sup>. The whole of his discussion was directed to establishing these propositions. It led to the complete reversal of the thirteenth-century conception of supporting revelation by reason; it therefore denied theology any apologetic rôle, for, by definition, it excluded the infidel. Indeed the exclusiveness of theology was one of Gregory's main themes; it was its *raison d'être*<sup>64</sup>. Consequently, not only did theological knowledge rule out any independent terrain where reason could operate; it also precluded speculation about God or His nature other than as the creator of the world; for it was in this aspect alone that we had been vouchsafed any knowledge of Him. It revealed Him to us not *sub ratione deitatis* but that we may glorify Him<sup>65</sup>.

If these remarks have shown anything it is that Gregory was the exclusive protagonist of neither the *via antiqua* nor the *via moderna*. He shared the presuppositions common to the majority of his contemporaries, that knowledge and theology were distinct pursuits; that God

63. *Prologue*, q. 1, a. 2, 3 C.

64. *Ibid.*, a. 4, 7 C.

65. *Ibid.*, q. 3, a. 4, 17 B-C.

Tertio quod ratione talis contractionis congrue potest dici quod deus in quantum glorificator vel glorificativus est subiectum theologie nostre. (*Ibid.*).

was inaccessible to reason ; that His actions were undeterminable ; that creation was so contingent that neither the laws of nature nor ethics were invariable ; and that by God's *potentia absoluta* they and all God's creatures could be superseded. Similarly, he was preoccupied with the same problems of delimiting knowledge, of overcoming Aristotelian and Arabian determinism in nature, and of reconciling free will with God's will (over grace and future contingents). But where these had led contemporaries, like Ockham, Holcot, Buckingham, Mirecourt, Autrecourt and Woodham, to an attitude of scepticism towards the infallibility of revealed truth, for Gregory they provided the grounds for reasserting dogmatic first principles. The very absence of a meeting place between revelation and reason made the authority of revelation all the more unchallengeable : speculation unfounded in scripture could have no bearing upon what belonged to faith ; and reason was both confined to what was verifiable and compelled to acknowledge the liability of its supersession by God in His absolute power. It was in making explicit this dualism between faith and reason that Gregory's thought was so important. In doing so he reasserted the full tradition of St Augustine, and as such can claim to be its true upholder during the earlier fourteenth century.

Gordon LEFF.