Gregory the Great and the Exarchs: Inter-Office Relations in Italy ca. 600

THESIS

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Abstract

Scholars have long celebrated the creation of the exarchates as an important administrative reform meant to stabilize and better govern the western provinces of the Roman Empire during the invasions of Italy and North Africa in the late sixth century. However, the new exarchs did not step into an administrative vacuum: other prelates were already present in the West, not least among them bishops. As such, the scholarly narrative of the exarchs’ importance and effectiveness needs reevaluation, taking into consideration the bishops – especially as much of the extant evidence on the exarchs comes from episcopal sources. This paper examines the early exarchates through the lens of Gregory I, bishop of Rome, and his Registrum of letters dating from throughout his episcopate (590-604). These letters reveal that, due to the newness of the exarchs, the established administrative expectations of the bishops, and the ultimately conflicting priorities of the two administrations, Italy ca. 600 was in a state of disorganized administrative transition and that the exarchs’ power in this earliest period must be considered more cautiously than it has been in prior scholarship.
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The introduction of the exarchates to the West in the late sixth century has been repeatedly trumpeted as a great administrative innovation, consolidating military and civic leadership under one official and establishing some sort of efficient centralized control over a war-torn region.¹ However, the exarchs were scarcely the only civic administrators present in the West: bishops, too, had emerged as capable leaders, regionally as well as locally, in civic as well as ecclesiastical affairs. It is well established that bishops often stood as local authorities in the absence of strong imperial officials, especially during the invasions in the West of the fifth and sixth centuries.² However, studies addressing western administrative history at the time of the first exarchs fail to consider the implications of these two rather different regional authorities existing in the same geographic areas.³ This is a significant omission. A joint study of the two offices

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³ Liebeschuetz discusses the rise of the bishop in the context of his local administrative work and interactions with urban governments (see 137-69), but does not consider administrative interactions
and their interactions offers a more complete picture of Italy's administrative history at the close of the sixth century. Importantly, this new picture highlights chaos in inter-office relations and confusion over the civic role of the exarchs, especially in relation to figures like bishops, in the early decades of the exarchates.

The overall omission of the bishop from studies of the earliest exarchates is remarkable, especially given that the Registrum of Gregory I, bishop of Rome, serves as one of the most significant sources on these first exarchs. Although these letters are all written from a bishop's point of view and there is no extant corollary from the exarchs, they provide ample material and rich details for a study of bishops and exarchs ca. 600. First, Gregory's letters themselves record the bishop's everyday administrative interactions with and reactions to the relatively new officials. Second, Gregory's other works, especially his Liber regulae pastoralis, offer excellent context for understanding the information contained in his letters, as do the vast quantities of modern Gregorian scholarship. Between all this and the letters themselves, Gregory serves as an ideal figure of focus for a study of the early bishop-exarch relationship and the administrative history of Italy in the period. Furthermore, Gregory's letters are simply the best contemporary sources for this early period of the exarchates. Aside from scattered epigraphic or numismatic evidence, the next best source for the introduction of these joint civil and

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with the exarchs. The only scholar to examine the bishops and the exarchs together in any detail was André Guillou, who covered only the seventh- and eighth-centuries in his study. See Régionalisme et Indépendance dans l'Empire Byzantine au VIIe Siècle: L'Exemple de l'Exarchat et de la Pentapole d'Italie (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per Il Medio Evo, 1969), 163-179 and 231-54. T.S. Brown, in his article “The Church of Ravenna and the Imperial Administration in the Seventh Century,” gives some consideration to the relationship between the exarch and archbishop of Ravenna, but mostly in passing and across the whole of the seventh century. See The English Historical Review 94:370 (1979): 9-10. In his Gentlemen and Officers, Brown devotes a chapter to the church's role in Italy, but it is not able to specifically consider the bishop's role as an urban or regional leader in any detail. See pp. 175-89.

4 For examples of Gregory's letters as major sources on the exarchs, see Jones notes 29 and 30 to chapter 10 (for pages 313-14); notes to Diehl (1896), 466-502 and (1888), 1-31 and 168-96; and notes to T.S. Brown (1984), 50-53 and 151-54.
military officials to the West is the later Liber Pontificalis, the collected acts and reigns of the Roman bishops. This, however, is not contemporary to the ca. 600 period, and mostly features the exarchs in passing. Still, it is worth noting that two episcopal sources provide the best narrative evidence for the first exarchs in the West. Even from the sources alone, the bishop is integral to any modern understanding of the first exarchs. It is therefore necessary to study the early exarchs freshly with an especial focus on their relationships with the bishops of the West. More particularly, it is important to study Gregory and his relationships with the exarchs in particular, as the best and most directly knowledgeable surviving source on the subject.

While Gregory's letters provide the material to understand the administrative history of the West in the first decades of the exarchates more fully, it is notable that there has been no study of the early exarchs as one of multiple administrators in a region. As observed by T.S. Brown, most of the the limited scholarship on the government and society in Byzantine Italy has dealt with offices individually and in the abstract more than with the particular political realities of inter-office relations. In reaction to this problem, Brown's Gentlemen and Officers, the last major work to look at the exarchs, tackled the actual “political power and social change” that existed in Italy after the Gothic wars. However, given the book's broad scope (the larger administration of the Byzantine regions of Italy in the sixth and seventh centuries), it is only able to devote small sections

5 This work is strongest for the period after Gregory, especially for episcopal-exarch relations. While the Ravenna exarch Romanus is mentioned in Gregory's entry in the Liber pontificalis, it is for the exarch's contemporaneous military victories and contains no hint of his relationship with the bishop aside from the mention of the fact that the exarch went to Rome at one point, for a reason unknown to modern readers. See Liber pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire, ed. Louis Duchesne, vol. 1 (Paris: E. Thorin, 1955), LXVI.2.

6 And, indeed, a third provides the best evidence for the exarchs' heyday in the later seventh and eighth centuries, with Agnellus of Ravenna's Liber Pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis. Though rich in exarch source material, this work dates from the ninth-century and as such falls much later than the scope of this study.

of chapters to any one political office and a study on the exarchs in particular is still
needed, let alone one on the exarchs and bishops together. More broadly speaking,
however, there is also simply a need to de-emphasize the importance of the earliest
exarchs. For example, though celebrated as the emperor's representatives in the West, the
exarchs were scarcely the only officials in regular contact with Constantinople and the
East. When studied in abstract the exarchs can look more powerful and significant than
they perhaps were in their initial years. There is a need for a non-abstract history of the
early exarchates, therefore, and it can be best begun through a study of Gregory's
Registrum and the administrative interactions of exarch and bishop.

Drawing from readings of Gregory's letters to and about the exarchs, this paper
will argue that Gregory's letters reveal multiple authoritative jurisdictional ambiguities
between the early exarchs and the bishop of Rome as the two officials pursued their
administrative duties. The turf wars between bishop and exarch will show that the
institutions offering leadership in Italy ca. 600 had no real cohesion or clear
understanding of the other's office. In short, the exarchs, established to protect and
maintain order in the West, did not step into an administrative vacuum. Furthermore, they
were not immediately able to 'fix' the administrative problems caused by the devastation

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8 For modern considerations of the exarchs' ties to Constantinople, see T.S. Brown (1984), 150-55 and
Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, Ravenna in Late Antiquity (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 208-09.

9 For evidence of certain bishops' communications with Constantinople, consider Gaudemet, 501-06 and
the papal representative stationed in Constantinople (Gregory had served in this capacity himself, and
maintained letter-contact with the imperial court). For Gregory's time as a papal delegate see John the
Paul the Deacon, Sanctii Gregorii magni vita in in Patralogia Latina 75, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: 1874), ch. 7, as well as Jeffrey Richards,
Gregory the Great and His World (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11-12. For Gregory's letters to the
imperial court, see (for examples) S. Gregorii Magni Registrum Epistularum, ed. Dag Norberg, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 140,
Vols. 140 and 140a (Turnholt: Brepolis, 1982), III.61, IV.30, V.30-39, VI.16. Hereafter both these volumes (Vol. 140 containing books I-VII; Vol. 140a containing books VIII-XIV) will be abbreviated to Registrum. For examples of communications with and/or about the eastern churches, see I.7 and 24-25, III.52, V.44 VI.14-16, VII24, IX.136 and 157.
of the Gothic wars. Rather, they were forced to compete in a disorganized world where alternative authorities had risen to fulfill the needs of reconquered Italy in the absence of reliable central leadership.
I. Exarchs and Bishops ca. 600: Duties of Administration

As noted, scholarship on the exarchs is scarcely prolific. Some of the most detailed works on the exarchates date from the late nineteenth century, when Charles Diehl produced works on both Ravenna and Byzantine North Africa. Diehl's interest in the exarchs' office was primarily theoretical: he focused on the exarchs' role in the militarization of Western society and governance. Many of the other exarch works have also focused on how the exarchs fit into broader trends concurrent to their time. George Ostrogorsky also took up the militarization of Byzantine society and compared the exarchates of the West to the development of the theme system in the East, a system that assigned provinces to military-based governors. André Guillou studied the exarchs of Ravenna in the context of that city's growing regional independence throughout the seventh century. Other historians, such as Jones and Louis Bréhier, have simply noted the exarchs as a temporary development in administrative structures, instituted to better defend the West. T.S. Brown is the departure from other scholarship. He focuses on reconstructing Byzantine Italian society and administration from a range of literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence so that they might speak for themselves, rather than either including them in an overarching narrative. Ultimately, Brown uses his findings to argue that there was no uniform government in Italy 554-800, and that administrative

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10 Diehl (1888) and (1896).
11 Ostrogorsky, 99-110.
12 Guillou, esp. 145-223.
responsibilities could and did overlap in practice. This paper seeks to build off of Brown's conclusions as it explores the largely unexamined relationship between two types of these administrators, the bishop and the exarch.

However, in order to understand this relationship, it is necessary to establish what is known about the exarchates. First, the origins of the office give some indication of Constantinople's goals in forming the office. The title may have originally predated the formal office and been recycled to refer to the expanded military governorships developed by the emperors for the defense and administration of the Italian and African provinces. The exarch certainly appears to have absorbed the powers of a number of older offices, including but not limited to those of the magister militum and, eventually, the praetorian prefects – though he did not necessarily replace these completely in Africa. The origins of the office, therefore, seem to have grown out of the union of these previous military and civil posts, as the need for security began to outweigh those of everyday civil administration in these provinces. Charles Diehl outlines a number of theories about the creation of the office, beginning with Narses and the reconquest of Italy. However, it seems likely, as he points out, that the office developed later, with the Lombard threat in Italy. Such a later date is in line with more modern scholarship on the subject. According to T. S. Brown, most scholars agree on c. 582-584 as the date for the

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14 T.S. Brown (1984). For the set up of this argument, see 1-20.
15 For in-depth discussions of the title and its usage in the ancient sources, as well as a discussion of the offices which may have been used in its evolution, see T. S. Brown (1984), 49-50 (especially nn.22 and 23) and Diehl (1888), 15-17. Other discussion on the origins of the exarchates, see Ostrogorsky, 100-01.
16 In fact, Gregory writes to the praetorian prefect in Italy in Registrum, IV.32, proving that the office still existed, if perhaps in a form subordinate to the exarch. For other offices and titles, see T.S. Brown (1984), 49; Jones, I:312; Bréhier, II:116, and Diehl (1896), 472-73 and 487.
17 Chris Wickham, Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207.
18 Diehl (1888), 6-16.
establishment of the exarchates, with the first reference to an exarch definitively appearing in 584.\textsuperscript{19} So much is then clear: the office was created to act in an unusually wide arena of governance, and it was created only shortly before the period of Gregory's pontificate, perhaps in response to a lack of centrally-organized defense against invasions.

Given the threat of such invasions and the distance of a province such as Italy or North Africa from Constantinople, the exarchs were given considerable autonomy to govern their provinces. Louis Bréhier called the exarch a \textit{un véritable vice-empereur dont les pouvoir universel}. More recently T. S. Brown, who has suggested that previous effusions on exarchate power should be read critically, compared the exarchate office to that of a “colonial viceroy” in the British colonies.\textsuperscript{20} Exarchs were chosen with loyalty to the emperor in mind, as their main duty aside from provincial security was to be the highest representative of imperial will and authority in their region.\textsuperscript{21} While the emperors maintained a few select privileges for themselves, such as papal confirmations (until the late seventh century) and other rights of ecclesiastical interference, as well as ultimate diplomatic decisions,\textsuperscript{22} the exarchs had largely full powers over their territories. The exarch would therefore be likely to strong views about the strength and scope of his jurisdiction – though the precise role of his office might not yet be clear in practice.

The exarchs were involved in most every important aspect of regional administration: the exarch \textit{régit les finances, la justice, les travaux publics et en premier}

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\textsuperscript{19} T.S. Brown (1984), 48-49, especially n.21.
\textsuperscript{20} Bréhier (1949), 114; T.S. Brown (1984), 50 and 151.
\textsuperscript{21} T.S. Brown (1984), 151, 154; Bréhier (1949), 114; Diehl (1888), 173, 185-86.
\textsuperscript{22} Emperors and religious privileges: Diehl (1888),186-87; Emperors and diplomatic privileges: T.S. Brown (1984), 151.
\end{flushleft}
lieu ... la défense du territoire. As the top imperial representative and administrator in his province, the exarch served as a high judge for civil and criminal cases and, occasionally, intervened in episcopal cases as well. He also had a hand in the public finances of the region, with an eye towards the payment of the army, as well as tax-collection, especially as time went on, and also appointed some of the lesser public officials. The exarch even held a number of important privileges in relation to ecclesiastical administration in his province: he oversaw and confirmed episcopal elections, received commendations of newly-appointed bishops and priests, and offered his own nominations when vacancies opened. His reach was long and broad. However, this was not necessarily positive: the office did not fit preexisting administrative definitions or roles and could therefore suffer from ambiguity over its rights and responsibilities.

However, the exarch's most certain function, as noted above by Bréhier, was that of supreme military official. As Africa and Italy both existed on the far boundaries of the empire and imperial power, a strong and centralized defense was needed for these provinces so that the emperors could focus on dangers closer to home, such as the Avars, Slavs, and Persians, while simultaneously keeping control of the lands reconquered by

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23 “Ruled finances, justice, public works and, above all, the defense of the territory.” Bréhier (1949), 114.
24 For civil and criminal cases: Bréhier (1949), 222-23 and Diehl (1888), 176-77; for episcopal cases, see Diehl (1888), 177 and Registrum, IV.7 (where Gregory entrusts the correptionem – or taking hold – of episcopal cases to African exarch Gennadius), though letter V.19 orders Romanus to say out of religious matters. T.S. Brown, too, briefly notes the exarch's role in justice in general, though vaguely and does not enter into much detail about it, (1984), 151.
25 T.S. Brown (1984), 51, 151; Diehl (1888), 177-78.
26 For an example, see Registrum, VII.3.14-18, where Gennadius' appointment of a tribune is discussed.
27 Diehl (1888),179. Gregory even complains about how Romanus, in confirming the election of Maximus, was an accessory to simony (Registrum, V.6.5-6). For an example of an exarch (presumably) having promoted a particular candidate for a bishopric, see V.51.2-8. Mainly, these will be considered below.
Justinian.\textsuperscript{28} Africa had some trouble with the Amazigh (Berbers) during the beginning of the exarchate period but Gennadius, the same exarch to whom Gregory wrote, soon pacified them, leaving the mainland province with a “certain stability” and “moderate prosperity.”\textsuperscript{29} The Lombards were a more persistent threat, however, for the European continent and potentially also for Mediterranean islands such as Sardinia and Corsica, which fell under the jurisdiction of the African exarch.\textsuperscript{30} In Italy, the different Lombard kingdoms and duchies divided the province into pieces, cutting Rome and the southern half of the peninsula off from Ravenna and the north, challenging Italian peace and stability, causing significant disarray, and provoking the reorganization of military administration.\textsuperscript{31} This was the sort of dangerous situation on the borders of the empire that called for the uniting presence of an unusually powerful and autonomous military leader.\textsuperscript{32}

As military administrators and commanders, the exarchs were charged with control over the entire armies in their provinces. They saw to the all-important army payroll, and were responsible for promoting individuals within their corps and appointing lesser military officials.\textsuperscript{33} They also oversaw the subordinate military offices, such as the \textit{magistri militum} and \textit{duces}, who administered more local areas within the exarchates.\textsuperscript{34}

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\textsuperscript{28} Diehl (1896), 468-9, 471; (1888), 12; Jones, I:313.
\textsuperscript{29} Wickham, 21; Bréhier (1949), 116; Diehl (1896), 481-82; Jones, I:313.
\textsuperscript{30} For the Lombards in Sardinia, see Diehl (1896), 482. For Gregory urging Gennadius to send an army to Corsica, see \textit{Registrum}, VII.3.11-14).
\textsuperscript{31} Wickham, 34-35; Markus (1997), 97-111; Richards (1980), 181-94; Moorhead, 156-57; Guillou, 42; Diehl (1888), 12-14; Ostrogorsky, 101-02; T.S. Brown “The Church of Ravenna and the Imperial Administration in the Seventh Century,” 11. Also, for the disarray the Lombard invasions caused, particularly in the ecclesiastical organization of Italy, and to Italian unity, see Louis Duchesne, “Les évêchés d'Italie et l'invasion lombarde” in \textit{Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire} 23:1 (1903): 83-116 and 25:1 (1905): 365-399.
\textsuperscript{32} For the uniting presence of the exarch in Italy, see Guillou, 159; Diehl (1888), 14.
\textsuperscript{33} T.S. Brown (1984), 51 and 57.
\textsuperscript{34} T.S. Brown (1984), 53; Diehl (1888), 23-28, 141-50, 176.
\end{flushleft}
As part of the military command, the exarchs also held a certain amount of diplomatic power so as to best handle the preservation of their provinces and the interests of the emperor. All in all, in uniting such powers and so large authority in the hands of one, loyal official, the emperors instituted an administrative reorganization which theoretically ensured a measure of safety and security for their outlying provinces.

Practical as that new official was for the emperor, however, the exarch's broad authorities represented a distinct change from the prior administrative system in the West. Prior to the Gothic occupation of Italy, and even again in the decades following Justinian's pragmatic sanction of 554 up to ca. 580, governance had been carried out by a broader range of officials. The Roman senate, decurions, and urban and praetorian prefects had each filled separate administrative roles. However, by the time of the first recorded exarch the senate had virtually dropped off the historical record and the decurions had lost their strength and numbers, as had other local- and regional-level positions of power. Though the prefects continued to operate in Italy, the new exarchs acted as an official embodiment of the militarization that was occurring among the aristocracy and lay administrators and as a new connection to Constantinople. As such, they proved uniquely wide-ranging officials.

Given that the exarchs had such diverse interests and powers, it is unsurprising that western bishops would encounter them in the course their own administrative efforts.

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35 T.S. Brown (1984), 52; Diehl (1888), 175-76.
36 Deliyannis, 207-08; Jones, I:292; Liebeschuetz, 124-29. T.S. Brown (1984) offers a summary of known details on the end of the Roman senate as a governing body: it is noted as having sent embassies to the emperor in 578 and 580, the last references extant aside from Gregory's own imperial acclamations before some version of the institution in 603. See 21-23 for further details, as well as Brown's “Transformation and Continuity in Byzantine Italy: Society and Administration ca. 550- ca. 650” in From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium: Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th International Eirene Conference, ed. Vladimír Vavřinek (Prague: Academia Praha, 1985), 57. For the Registrum senate reference in the Registrum, see XIII.1.
on behalf of a locale or region. These efforts, traced in the works of historians like Jean Gaudemet, Peter Brown, J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz and Claudia Rapp,\textsuperscript{38} revolved around the bishop's role as head of a diocese. Like the exarch, the bishop was responsible for order, harmony, and peace. His concern came from a pastoral point of view rather than a military one, encompassing concern for the physical safety and well-being of his diocese as well as for its spiritual health. The former was necessary for concentration in pursuing the latter. As such, Rapp has described a bishop as being in the middle ground between the two poles of secular and religious leadership. His responsibilities as administrator to a diocese involve him in very mundane matters from financial administration to building works, while his duties as the shepherd of his flock entail such religious obligations as pastoral care, the preservation of doctrinal unity, and the celebration of the liturgy and other Christian rites.\textsuperscript{39}

In addition to all this, the bishop's responsibilities also included appointing and overseeing lesser ecclesiastical figures and participating in episcopal councils and the ordinations of other bishops,\textsuperscript{40} as well as traditionally acting as a judge, arbitrator, and mediator in episcopal courts.\textsuperscript{41} Here lay a distinct point of overlap between civil and ecclesiastical interests, as bishops sometimes needed the backing of imperial officials when it came to enforcing judicial sentences.\textsuperscript{42} State laws “assisted and empowered the church,” adding pragmatic weight to its theological authority and extending the bishop's

\textsuperscript{38} See note 2, above.
\textsuperscript{39} Rapp, 6. Rapp also outlines the broader trends of episcopal historiography on pp. 7-16.
\textsuperscript{40} Gaudemet, 322-345; Jones, II:874-75.
\textsuperscript{41} For the origins and functions of episcopal courts, see: Gaudemet, 231-33; Jill Harries, \textit{Law and Empire in Late Antiquity} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 191-191 and 204-205; John C. Lamoreaux, “Episcopal Courts in Late Antiquity,” in \textit{Journal of Early Christian Studies} 3 (1995), 146-149 and 151; Rapp, 242-52; Kevin Uhalde, \textit{Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine} (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 23 and 29. For the authority of the episcopal courts, see: Gaudemet 232; Lamoreaux, 149; Uhalde, 31. The proliferation and power of these courts had waned from the fourth and fifth centuries, however.
\textsuperscript{42} Harries, 210; Rapp, 244 and 246.
As with the exarch, the bishop would therefore have high expectations of his authority as an administrator, in both ecclesiastical and worldlier matters.

With the bishop of Rome, episcopal responsibilities would have been even more intense and challenging. In addition to usual episcopal duties, the bishop of Rome was responsible for further functions given the prestige of his see as one of the patriarchates and given the number of bishoprics under his supervision. As Italy had never been separated into multiple metropoleis, the bishop of Rome was metropolitan for all of central and southern Italy and Sicily, an area which included hundreds of lesser bishoprics. Northern Italy was of interest too, although by Gregory’s time any direct control Rome had once had there was extremely diminished. During Gregory's pontificate, Ravenna (itself the metropolitan of the northern Italian churches) was jockeying for position in Italy against Rome. Although the two churches had many projects and priorities in common, such as the reunion of the Istrian Three Chapters schismatics to the Roman church and the oversight of churches cut off from Rome by the Lombards, Ravenna sought more independence and autonomy from Rome. The Ravenna situation remained one of importance as Gregory worked to maintain what he saw as the proper ecclesiastical order. Additionally, though he held no official jurisdiction in Sardinia, Dalmatia, or Italia meridionale, the Registrum clearly

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43 Evans (1986), 120.
44 Gaudemet, 445-46; Jones, II:884.
47 Richards (1979), 176-77; Markus (1997), 143-56.
48 Jones, II:884 and John R. C. Martyn, introduction to *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, Medieval Sources in Translation 40, Vol. 1 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2004), 29. Also see Markus (1997), 156-62. For an example of Gregory's relationship with a metropolis outside of his direct jurisdiction (in this case, Salona), see Eidenschink, 8-9; Richards (1979), 317-18; and Ion
demonstrates that Gregory had considerable interest in these areas, stemming from either proximity or Roman ecclesiastical properties.\footnote{Coman, “Grégoire le grand et les églises illyro-thraco-daco-romaines,” in \textit{Grégoire le grand}, ed. Jacques Fontaine et al (Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1986), 96-100.} Given such geographic interests, the episcopate of Rome had significant administrative responsibilities – and no doubt sought to contribute to the governance of these many different areas.

Both the exarchs and the bishops therefore knew themselves to be administrators in the West, despite their rather different offices. Their specific powers and duties were not the same: exarchs were not clerics, bishops were not military men. Bishops had to acknowledge imperial laws, and lacked the imperial or civil authority to implement judicial punishments.\footnote{For examples of such interests, see \textit{Registrum}, V.6 and IX.156.} Despite these distinctions, however, the common ground between the two officials lay in their obligation to look after the people in their territories, whether physically or spiritually. In the period covered by this paper, 590-604, this need was embodied in an immediate and physical tie between ecclesiastical and imperial interests: the church and the empire were both under attack.\footnote{See Julia Hillner, “Gregory the Great's Prisons: Monastic Confinement in Early Byzantine Italy,” 1-37 (forthcoming).} Both were threatened by the Lombard invasions,\footnote{For a very succinct description of the situation in Italy and neighboring regions in the time of Gregory, see P. A. B. Llewellyn, “The Roman Church in the Seventh Century: the Legacy of Gregory I” in \textit{Journal of Ecclesiastical History} 25:4 (Oct. 1974): 368.} and both were apprehensive about trouble caused by heretics within the empire. These included alleged remaining Donatists in North Africa,\footnote{For the threats of the Lombards, see: Moorhead (2005), 152-55; Wickham, 152-56; Jones, I:311-12; Diehl (1888), 321. For Byzantine military policy as they dealt with the Lombard threat, see Diehl (1888), 197-202.} and also Three
Chapters schismatics in Istria. Gregory conjures up an image of Africa as being full of suspicious figures seeking ordination, including Donatists and Manichaeans, which could stir up trouble among the different sects.

However, these schismatics and heretics in both Italy and Africa not only undermined the unity and integrity of the church. They also could stand at times as outright opponents to imperial policy. As Claire Sotinel notes, at one point “to reject the condemnation of the Three Chapters after the Council of 553 was in fact to reject an imperial decision.” While this was not the case in the time of Gregory the Great, when the empire had decided to take a tolerant view towards the schismatics, the schism still caused problems for the stability and administration of the area. Tolerance was all very well, but trouble still erupted in northern Italy between Three Chapters and orthodox churches and churchmen. In letter IX.156, Gregory complained that Ravennate exarch Callinicus was taking an imperial edict protecting the Istrian churches to mean that he should prevent those who wished to reconcile with the Roman church from doing so.

Callinicus’ extremely tolerant stance not only protected the schismatics, but it also

54 Churches and members of the churches in Istria refused to denounce the controversial Three Chapters, and refused to follow bishops who did not side with them in upholding the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon of 451. Since the Byzantine church (and the Roman church, closer to home) condemned the Three Chapters, the Istrians sought independence from the Italian ecclesiastical family. For Gregory's letters on the schism and his efforts to bring Istrian clergymen back into the fold of the Catholic church, see: Registrum, IV.14, 6.38, 47, IX.142, 154 and 202. For Istrian troubles more broadly, see: Claire Sotinel, “The Three Chapters and the Transformations of Italy,” in The Crisis of the Oikoumene: the Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean, ed. Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubit (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepolis, 2007), 85-120; Andrew Louth, “The Eastern Empire in the Sixth Century,” in The New Cambridge Medieval History, 106-07; Markus (1997), 125-37; and Diehl (1888), 326-27. For an analysis of Gregory’s policy towards the Three Chapters Controversy in Italy, see Carole Straw, “Much Ado About Nothing: Gregory the Great’s Apology to the Istrians” in The Crisis of the Oikoumene, 121-60.

55 Registrum, II.31.20-22.

56 Sotinel, 85.

57 Sotinel, 103-04, 106; Richards (1979), 176. The emperor's fears that the schismatics would join with the Lombards helped fuel this position: Karl F. Morrison, Tradition and Authority in the Western Church (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 124.

58 Registrum, IX.156.33-36.
harmed the orthodox church. Such a policy in turn could itself threaten order in Italy, underlining the complications of administering a province that was torn by religious division for churchman and exarch alike. Their job descriptions and powers might not match, but exarchs and bishops had potential common projects and opportunities for interactions as they looked after the people in their care. However, they also had the potential for real conflict if their priorities in pursuing these projects should clash or if there were misunderstandings about which administrative responsibilities belonged to which office.
II. Bishop and Exarch as Prelates

Such were the roles and interactions of the exarch and the bishop, based on their official duties. It remains, however, to examine Gregory's own theories about the exercise of power, since these would shape his interpretation of the exarch-episcopal relationship. Given that Gregory is the best source for the exarchs in this early exarchate period and the only source considered in any detail in this paper, his point of view, prejudices, and hopes are important for interpreting the material on exarchs that his letters provide. This paper will now therefore consider Gregory's experiences as an administrator, and propose that the common ground between the two offices lay in their joint roles as prelates (praesidi) – that is, figures with preeminence or superiority over others.\(^59\) This common ground mattered since it gave Gregory the bishop a way to relate to the new administrator, even if their respective roles might not be concretely defined in the ca. 600 period. Establishing how Gregory thought about power and about prelates will provide context for better understanding Gregory's letters in the \textit{Registrum}.

A. Gregory's Experience

Gregory's ideas about administration and authority were influenced by his own experiences as both a secular and a church official.\(^60\) He was in the unusual position of

\(^{59}\) \textit{Praelati} from \textit{praefero}, see Lewis and Short.

having served in both the ecclesiastical and civil administrations. Born to a wealthy and prominent family in Rome, Gregory served as urban prefect before he attained a monastic vocation.\textsuperscript{61} While the urban prefect's office had fallen from much of its previous glory,\textsuperscript{62} Gregory had a taste of judicial responsibility before he fled to a contemplative life.\textsuperscript{63} Even prior to his ecclesiastical career, he understood firsthand the challenges and privileges of leadership, though not admittedly those of military command.

The urban prefecture was not the totality of Gregory's pre-papal career in politics and leadership, however. Gregory was made a deacon in the late 570s, and was soon sent to Constantinople by Pelagius II as the papal \textit{apocrisiarios} or ambassador.\textsuperscript{64} In the imperial capitol Gregory was called upon to promote Rome's interests at the imperial court, recruiting support to fight the Lombards, and also likely attending to aspects of the Three Chapters fallout that had caused a schism of churches in Italy.\textsuperscript{65} This experience, acting on behalf of the Roman see at the court of the emperor, would have taught Gregory just how much episcopal and military interests could coincide. It would also have taught him exactly how necessary the state was for the protection of the West against invading

\begin{footnotes}
\item[61] John the Deacon, I:1-4. This \textit{vita} was written in the late ninth century, but as it was based on careful research from documents in the papal archives, the information is considered reliable. See Markus (1997), 2.
\item[62] For the traditions and powers of the office, as well as its decline, see Jones, I: 357, 385-87, 481-2, and 592-93.
\item[63] Markus (1997), 9 and 134.
\item[64] John the Deacon, I.25-26 and Paul the Deacon, ch. 7. Paul's account dates from the end of the eighth century. The two near-contemporary accounts of Gregory's life – Gregory of Tours in the \textit{History of the Franks}, and the unknown author of the \textit{Liber pontificalis} – are fairly silent on Gregory's pre-episcopal career. Gregory of Tours notes that Gregory was wealthy and received a top education before becoming a monk, but this is all (X.1). The \textit{Liber pontificalis} only notes his father's name, LXVI.1.1.
\item[65] Richards (1980), 37-39; Markus (1997), 11; George E. Demacopoulos, \textit{Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church} (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 128. There is only slight direct evidence for Gregory's actual projects in Constantinople beyond the Lombard issue, however. For more on the Three Chapters schism in Istria, see footnote 64.
\end{footnotes}
heretics,\textsuperscript{66} and for the soothing and the reconciliation of schismatics. Beyond this broader education, however, Gregory had gained valuable concrete experience: he had served as a diplomat on behalf of a bishop, and seen that diplomatic service and warding off the dangers of the Lombards as a part of a bishop’s job. From his experiences, he might be able to see both the civil and the ecclesiastical viewpoints, but he would also have seen that the one could closely resemble the other.

This, then was the man who was promoted to the papal see: an intellectual monk and ascetic by vocation but an administrator by experience. Gregory’s pragmatic and contemplative sides have each been explored and touted, mostly separately, but it is important to remember that Gregory was \textit{both} an ascetic exegete and a talented leader.\textsuperscript{67} He may have had clear ideas about the place and role of the cleric in and away from the world, but he also understood the practical needs of a human congregation living in Byzantine Italy and would act to pursue and promote these. Furthermore, and more importantly, Gregory had grown up and held a career in a world prior to the creation of the exarchates. Exarchs had not figured into his civic career as an urban prefect, and there had been no exarch when he went on his embassy to Constantinople. Likewise, any models he had seen for admirable episcopal pastoral care would have been from an age without exarchs. Since the exarchs were so new and their exact role in the West still was being negotiated on the pragmatic level, it is very likely that Gregory may have seen no

\textsuperscript{66} The Lombards were largely not orthodox Christians. Tradition has held them to be Arians, as a number of Gregory’s letters attest (\textit{Registrum}, I.17, IX.229, and XI.52), though Steven Fanning has argued that they were pagan: “Lombard Arianism Reconsidered,” in \textit{Speculum} 56:2 (1981): 241-58. Either as heretics or as pagans, however, these invaders were a threat not only to the bodies of the orthodox Christians they conquered, but also their souls.

\textsuperscript{67} Historiography of Gregory’s treatment as a spiritual monk and as an active administrator can be found in Conrad Leyser, \textit{Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 140-43. Leyser is emphatic on the point that Gregory was both a contemplative intellectual \textit{and} a capable pragmatist, and that attempts to view him in only one or the other context do not attain a full picture of Gregory or his accomplishments. For a more recent study of the subject, see Demacopoulos (2007), 127-64.
problem in acting upon both his spiritual and his secular administrative impulses. He was trained to lead, and had experience helping himself.

B. Prelates and Pastoral Care

To Gregory, the interests of civil and clerical administrators may have looked the same on the surface-level. All prelates by nature and definition had subordinates, and to Gregory the care of those subordinates defined the role of the prelate, whichever institution he might serve. As he said in his Liber regulae pastoralis, his handbook on pastoral care composed by the start of his episcopate:68 scire etenim praelati debent, quia si perversa umquam perpetrant, tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos suos perditionis exempla transmittunt.69 Broadly, such a comment could potentially apply equally to either a bishop or an exarch. If the bishop were to transgress, he might lead his parishioners into sin by his own fault – and thus have spiritual deaths on his conscience; if the exarch were to prove irresponsible, he might pass on this example to lesser authorities and/or

68 Gregory first sent a copy of his Liber regulae pastoralis to John, archbishop of Ravenna, in 590 (for the two known recipients of the work, John of Ravenna and St Leander of Seville, see LRP dedicatory letter and Registrum V.53). The work outlined Gregory’s philosophy of a responsible and multifaceted leadership. The work was Gregory’s version of the pastoral handbooks already written by the likes of St Gregory of Nazianzus, St Ambrose, and St John Chrysostom (for examples: Gregory of Nazianzus’ Apologeticus pro fuga, Ambrose’s De officiis, [ed. Ivor J. Davidson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)] and Chrysostom’s De sacerdotio [Sur le sacerdoce: dialogue et homélie, ed. Anne-Marie Malingrey. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1980]). Some scholars insist that it was a purely episcopal model but others have claimed it was meant for a broader clerical audience. For the former, see: Bruno Judic, introduction to Règle Pastorale, ed. Floribert Rommel, Sources Chrétiennes 381 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1992), I:20 and “Structure et fonction de la Regula pastoralis,” in Grégoire le grand, ed. Jacques Fontaine et al (Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1986), 409-18; Markus, “Gregory the Great’s ‘Rector’ and his Genesis,” in Grégoire le grand, ed. Fontaine, 137-41; and Straw (1988), 70 and 202-03. For an episcopal audience, see: Demacopoulos, introduction to The Book of Pastoral Care, trans. Demacopoulos (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007), 14; F. Homes Dudden, Gregory the Great: His Place in History and Thought (New York: Russell and Russell, reprint 1967), I:228-41; Evans (1986), 55; Richards (1980), 142-43. However, the work may also have had broader appeal and use, as argued in this paper.

69 “And indeed, prelates should know that, if they should at any time perform transgressions, as many cases of ruin as they let pass among their subordinates, they deserve that many deaths.” Gregory I, Règle Pastorale, ed. Floribert Rommel, Sources chrétiennes 381, Vol. 1 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1992), III.4.14-16. Hereafter abbreviated to LRP, for the Latin title. Translations are my own.
physically endanger his subjects. His power was all the more dangerous because, should he err, *delinquentem namque hunc redarguere nullus praesumit.* 70 Any prelate was therefore burdened with huge responsibilities, and the moral obligations of those responsibilities. 71 These in turn could provide a pretext for bishop and exarch to work in tandem on regional projects, as each needed to live up to their official duties.

It is clear that Gregory had clear ideas about leadership and its requirements, judging from the *Liber regulae pastoralis.* While the work mostly speaks to ecclesiastical situations, such as preaching, 72 the *Liber regulae pastoralis* also communicates certain universal lessons for anyone (bishop or exarch, though neither is specified) who directed others, any prelate. A leader had to be a good example, he had to be firm against wrongdoing, he had to follow divine laws. 73 The generalized terminology of the excerpt on prelates and of other passages likewise supports the potential broad application of the ideas in the *Liber regulae pastoralis* to any leadership position, and Gregory's focus on leaders as prelates rather than as particular officials. Instead of using a specific term like *episcopus* to refer to his ideal cleric within the work, Gregory instead favored terms like *rector* and *pastor.* 74 These terms had originally held connotations of non-ecclesiastical posts of responsibility, literally guide, director or governor, and herdsman or shepherd.

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70 “For no one presumes to contradict this transgressor.” *LRP,* I.2.28-29.
71 Gregory even uses the term *pondus* (weight) to describe the responsibilities of leadership. These were all the more dangerous because of their variety and number: *saepe suscepta cura regiminis cor per diversa diverberat, et impar quisque inventur ad singula, dum confusa mente saepe suscepta cura regiminis cor per diversa diverberat, et impar quisque inventur ad singula, dum confusa mente dividitur ad multa* (“Often, when captured with the care of guidance, everyone divides his heart in different directions and is unequal to discovering a single direction, since he is divided in his confused mind towards many things,” *LRP,* I.4.3-5).
72 See, for example, the entirely of *LRP* book III.
73 *LPC,* I.10 -11 and II.1; II.6; II.11.
74 Demacopoulos (2007a), 14.
respectively. Furthermore, the *rector* appears frequently in the *Registrum* as the administrator of papal lands, a somewhat secular occupation. The term *rector* had been used to describe bishops, but it had broader connotations than purely episcopal authority. As such, this work could then be a guide for any spiritual director who is called upon to work within the secular world. Between the language of the text and the principles offered up within the work, the *Liber regulae pastoralis* therefore provides reminders of the responsibilities of all leadership and ideas about authority that could prove relevant to Gregory's own understanding of his own position as a bishop and those of the other officials he interacted with.

As such, it is important to highlight briefly the single most important point of Gregory's view of leadership in the *Liber regulae pastoralis*: pastoral care. The term denotes the multi-faceted supervision of a leader's subjects. Gregory never defines pastoral care outright, either in terms of the church or for leadership more broadly, but it is at the heart of the handbook. The closest definition to 'pastoral care' in any detail appears in book II:

\[
\textit{sit rector internorum curam in exteriorum occupatione non minuens, exteriorum providentiam in internorum sollicitudine non relinquens; ne aut exterioribus deditus ab}
\]

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76 Markus (1986), 137-38.
78 Again, Markus (1986), 138-46.
79 Such a reading could be supported by the fact that John Chrysostom using equally non-specific language in his *De sacerdotio*. See Rapp, 42 and 44-45.
80 Demacopoulos (2007), 164.
Leadership is about balancing responsibilities and fulfilling obligations to one's neighbors. If applied purely to ecclesiastical leadership, Gregory is primarily concerned that bishops or priests not spend all their time involved in government or administration to the neglect of their spiritual integrity. However, he cautions that the needs of the laity (presumably including nourishment and protection, though he does not specify) must be met for a congregation to pay attention to its pastor's preaching. The concept might be equally applied to a more secular figure like an exarch too. If the exarch distracts himself with concerns outside of his complicated job-description, perhaps by interfering in church matters, he may not be able to fulfill the responsibilities of his office (such as military oversight and the general administration of his region). Conversely, if he ignores upright personal leadership in his quest to administer his exarchate, he may not be providing the best governance. Personal integrity, justice, and even piety could be just as important for the exarch as spiritual integrity for the pastor. These are speculative readings, however, meant to prove the applicability of Gregory's views in the Liber regulae pastoralis to leadership in general. If the handbook can be read generally in this way, it supports the idea that Gregory saw himself, his fellow bishops, and the exarchs all as prelates – each with a separate office, perhaps, but each with profound responsibilities to the protection and promotion of people of the West.

81 “The [religious] director should not diminish his care for internal matters in occupation with external matters, nor should he relinquish the precaution of external matters in solicitude of internal ones, lest he fall from the inner things, being given to external ones, or, occupied with internal matters only, he not apply himself to the things which he owes his outside neighbors,” LRP, II.7.4-8. This is a vital idea to Gregory and is repeated in his writings, for example in Registrum, VII.5.86-91.

82 LRP, II.7.8-18.
83 LRP, II.7.117-130.
C. Positions of Prelates

Given that all leaders have such important responsibilities towards their subjects and that the exarchs and bishops had such a wide range of administrative duties, it is worth now also establishing their comparative positions to one another, in Gregory's view. This will further help the reader to understand the different stances taken by Gregory towards the exarchs in his letters. In addition to his remarks on the exact theoretical relationship between exarchs and bishops in the world, Gregory's view of a general universal hierarchy is relevant here. His hierarchical theories can be found in the Registrum, spelled out to the bishops of Gaul in a letter from 595. While not repeating the term praelati in this case, Gregory establishes that different leaders all exist for specific roles, in harmony:

ad hoc divinae dispensationis provisio gradus et diversos constituit ordines esse distinctos, ut, dum reverentiam minores potioribus exhiberent et potiores minoribus dilectionem impenderent, una concordiae fieret ex diversitate contextio et recte officiorum gereretur administratio singulorum. Neque enim universitas alia poterat ratione subsistere, nisi huiusmodi magnus eam differentiae ordo servaret. Quia vero creatura in una eademque aequalitate gubernari vel vivere non potest, caelestium militiarum exemplar nos instruit, quia, dum sint angeli, sint archangeli, liquet quia non aequales sunt, sed in potestate et ordine, sicut nostis, differt alter ab altero. Si ergo inter hos qui sine peccato sunt ista constat esse distinctio, quis hominum abnuat huic se libenter dispositioni submittere, cui novit etiam angelos oboedire? 84

84 “For this reason, the provision of the divine dispensation set out there be different stations and distinct orders, so that, while the less powerful exhibit reverence towards the more powerful and the more powerful devote love towards the less powerful, a single union of concord might be created from diversity and the administration of individual offices might be conducted properly. For universality would not be able to survive by another account, unless a great order of such a differentiated sort preserved it. But because creation cannot be governed or survive in a single and same equality, the example of the celestial hosts instructs us, since while there are angels and there are archangels, it is clear that they are not equal. Rather, as you know, one differs from the other in power and in rank. If therefore among these ones who are without sin it stands that there is such a distinction, who of men would decline to freely submit himself to this arrangement, which he knows that even the angels obey?” Registrum, V.59.3-15.
As with the *Liber regulae pastoralis*, the terminology is vague (*ordines, minores, potiores*), which in turn also renders its message applicable to non-ecclesiastical leaders. According to this hierarchical view, when applied to figures like the exarchs, distinctions between different leaders are necessary so that each one could carry out his proper office effectively. Hierarchy means a need for leadership, but Gregory also has clear ideas about how different leaders from different grades might come together to sustain a common interest: concord (*una concordiae*).

However, an articulated understanding of the role of each level and member of a hierarchy and how it related to the other grades was vital for any productive cooperation, as ambiguous relationships only invited friction. To rise in power and glory, one ascended grades, as Gregory reminds the emperor Maurice in 593: *de notario comitem scubitorum, de comite scubitorum caesarem, de caesare imperatorem*.\(^{85}\) However, those levels, their relation to one another, and their responsibilities were all explicit in Maurice's case. *Imperator* and *caesar* might work together to administer the empire, but everyone knew that the *imperator* had the authoritative say. This kind of clear hierarchy served a purpose: from competent leadership *ita enim et locorum ordinatio provenit*.\(^{86}\) While Gregory wrote this last phrase in relation to church administration and the need for the ecclesiastical hierarchy to be filled by vigorous individuals, the sentiment applies to the secular sphere as well. From hierarchy, *hinc etenim pax et caritas mutua se vice complectuntur, et manet firma concordiae in alterna et Deo placita dilectione sinceritas*.\(^{87}\)

In Gregory's view, stable hierarchies where each individual had a clear place and a clear

\(^{85}\) “From clerk to leader of the guard, from leader of the guard to Caesar, from Caesar to emperor,” *Registrum*, III.61.37-38.

\(^{86}\) “For thus the orderly regulation of places is produced,” *Registrum*, I.18.25-26.

\(^{87}\) “And indeed, from this, peace and shared love embrace one another and the firm sincerity of concord remains in the reciprocal love that is pleasing to God,” *Registrum*, V.59.15-17.
role led to concord. Obversely, discord was caused by indistinct and unpronounced positions. This, as will be shown, characterizes much of exarch-bishop relations in the Registrum.

Discord might also be caused by differing views on officials' positions vis-à-vis one another. In one case in the Registrum Gregory outlines his exact views on the relationship between exarchs and bishops. In July 592, Gregory wrote to John, the archbishop of Ravenna, complaining about the exarch Romanus: *nos quantum eum loco et ordine praeimus tantum si qua sunt eius levia tolerare mature et graviter debemus.*

Here, the language is clear: *nos* indicates the two bishops, *eum* refers to the exarch. The bishops are plainly set above the exarchs in particular. As clear as the judgment is, his philosophy behind it is not set out in stone. Rather, the main clue for his way of thinking lies in his use of the word *levia* in relation to the exarch: fickleness is perhaps to be expected of someone in the exarch's office as opposed to the bishop's, and the graver office could deserve more respect. Gregory could be reaching back to the same principles as his predecessor Gelasius I had a century earlier, who had declared that *tanto gravius pondus est sacerdotum, quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus hominum in divino sunt redditiuri examine rationem.*

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89 “So much as we precede him in place and rank, so much so we ought to maturely and gravely tolerate his fickleness,” Registrum, II.38.24-25.

90 “The burden of the priests is weightier by so much, by how much as even now priests must render an account in the divine reckoning on account of the kings of men themselves.” Gelasius I, “Auctoritas sacra pontificum et regalis potestas huius mundi gubernacula regunt” in Patrologia Latinae 187, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris: Jacques-Paul Migne, 1855), 458C.
excommunications of emperors Arcadius and Theodosius as examples of this order),

91 clearly an exarch should attend to the wisdom of a bishop. As with the earlier pope,

Gregory appears to have valued authority over immortal souls over that over physical
bodies or an earthly realm.92 Such distinct ideas about his own episcopal mandate
entitling him to pass on orders and advice to exarchs would certainly shape Gregory's
relationship with these officials. Furthermore, they would invite trouble from the exarchs,
if they did not share this view of episcopal-exarch relative positions. This is a particularly
significant point for understanding the relationship between exarch and episcopal
administrations ca. 600.

D. Episcopal and Exarch Authority

The key to understanding both how the two offices might define their own official
importances differently and how, with the addition of the new exarch administration,
Italian governance might have been so confused ca. 600 lies in the sources of each
prelate's respective authority. The exarchs were appointed by the emperor in
Constantinople for the express purposes of leading armies and attending to civil matters
in Italy, whereas the bishops who rose to the Roman see were elected by other
churchmen. As the two types of prelates derived their power from different places, the
bishop and the exarch, would be fundamentally disposed to question the exact nature of
the other's authority as it compared to their own – as with Gregory's letter to John of

91 Gelasius, 459A.
92 For a later articulation of these same ideas again, by another Italian churchman who had interactions
with the exarchs, see Agnellus of Ravenna, Agnelli Ravennatis Liber pontificalis ecclesiae
Ravennatis, ed. Deliannis, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 199 (Turnhout: Brepols,
2006), 100.45-55. Agnellus' lists of the responsibilities of bishops contained in this digression on
social order echoes closely with the outlook Gregory articulated in the RP and in the letters of the
Registrum.
Ravenna. It is worth briefly contrasting the two officials' authorities before examining the exarch-bishop letters of the *Registrum*, so that failures of communication between the two offices might have some context.

The bishop's authority is reasonably easy to reconstruct, at least for Gregory, given his preoccupation with the subject. The episcopal office itself was prestigious, but it only gave Gregory real and direct ecclesiastical authority over those dioceses immediately under him, as opposed to over churches or bishops further afield. Bishops also held certain civil powers by this time, however. In the decades before Gregory's episcopate and especially prior to the introduction of the exarchates, bishops found themselves stepping into something of a civil administrative vacuum. Bishops now intervened in legal cases which had previously been outside of their purview and looked after the food and water supplies for their local regions, while the more important ones also carried out their own diplomacy for regional defense.

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94 Compare, for example, the cases of the bishops of Naples and Salona, each accused of simony. Demetrius of Naples was removed from office and replaced fairly quickly: Gregory sent notice of the need to elect a new bishop in *Registrum* II.3 (September 591), and Demetrius' successor, Paul, is in office by II.8 and 9 (December 591). While additional correspondence on this election might not have survived, it seems that Gregory's words were taken to heart and the matter resolved easily. In the case of Maximus of Salona, the accusations, attempted-deposition, and eventual reconciliation took years – and outside assistance – to push through (*Registrum*, IV.3, 16, 20; V.3, 6, 25, 26, 39; VI.3, 25; VII.17; VII.8 and 24; IX.150, 156, 177-79, 231 and 234; also Appendix V). Also see Leyser (1995), 56.

95 Liebeschuetz, 137 and 158-59 and Moorhead, 157-60. Pelagius I, three decades before Gregory, blamed corruption for the decline of the civil administration in Italy, but whether corruption or war was the cause of the decline, it is clear that the church had to take over responsibilities that were not being performed adequately. See R.A. Markus, “Justinian's Ecclesiastical Politics and the Western Church” in *Sacred and Secular Themes in Late Antiquity* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1994), VII:9.

96 Liebeschuetz, 156-57.

97 For example, the missions to Constantinople from the decades before Gregory's episcopate. See Andrew Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590-752* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 4-5.
In the absence of other local authorities, bishops took on whatever practical responsibilities were vital for the comfort and safety of their congregations, though these could vary from place to place. The late sixth century episcopates were pragmatic and powerful ones, based on addressing all of the basic and spiritual needs of the faithful as they saw fit.

Otherwise, Gregory's administrative experience, *paideia* (education), and personal spiritual authority helped him to enforce his episcopal agenda. His experiences and their potential impact on him as an ecclesiastical prelate have been discussed above, but Gregory's religious and intellectual advantages are worth commenting on. Gregory had ascetic tendencies, the sort of virtue that asceticism demonstrated “empowered and enhanced” episcopal authority, denoting that the man with such extreme devotion must be a cut above one who is not so committed to the practice of his faith. The trick, then, was to make prominent “ascetic virtuosity” useful, by capitalizing on it as authority. As Claudia Rapp has argued, asceticism could give a man with strong *internal* spiritual power, such as Gregory, greater *external* practical power to give weight to his pastoral care. Gregory could also draw on his erudition for respect, as is demonstrated in Gregory

98 Liebeschuetz, 159-65.

99 As regards the authority of the episcopal tradition versus the simply ascetic one, see Rapp, 98-99 and 138-41. Gregory of Tours, in his account of Gregory's papal election, dwells most on Gregory's education and (ascetic) spirituality as his reasons for being a good candidate, proving a roughly contemporaneous observation on the power of education and piety (Gregory of Tours, X.1).

100 And for further secondary consideration of experience and authority, see Dagens, 98-106 and Leyser (1995), 49.


of Tours' admiring description of the Roman Gregory's academic achievements.\footnote{103}

Though the church was gaining a greater and greater hold on education by the late sixth century, secular subjects continued to be taught and valued.\footnote{104} *Paideia*, or a certain high level of education and knowledge, had traditionally served as a source of authority for all prelates in the empire and could continue to do so even in this late period.\footnote{105} It enhanced a bishop's ability to effectively preach, interpret scripture, and use religious language, as Gregory stands testament.\footnote{106} Such was episcopal authority: somewhat institutional, but also very dependent on personal qualities of the particular bishop.

The exarch, in turn, derived most of his power from his office itself and the army that came with it. T.S. Brown notes that during Gregory's time the exarch controlled all the imperial armies in Italy, including their administrative side, and as such had considerable force behind him.\footnote{107} This proved a very concrete way for the exarch to exercise his official authority, and a much more direct one than those held by Gregory. The exarch also had the benefit of a direct imperial mandate and regular contact with Constantinople, which still maintained considerable control over the exarchs in this

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{103}{Gregory of Tours, X.1.}
\item \footnote{104}{Ralph W. Mathisen, “Bishops, Barbarians, and the “Dark Ages”: The Fate of Late Roman Educational Institutions in Late Antique Gaul” in *Medieval Education*, ed. Ronald B. Begley and Joseph W. Koterski (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 3-13.}
\item \footnote{105}{Certain grounding in philosophy and literature was considered to provide wisdom and morality, and to enhance the ability of an official to carry out his duties on behalf of the public. This idea is evident, for example, in the two centuries earlier example of Themistius, orations 20 and 34. See a discussion of the concept in Robert J. Penella, “The Rhetoric of Praise in the Private Orations of Themistius,” in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. Tomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 196-99. For further discussion of *paideia* and power, in both bishops and laymen, see P. Brown (1992), 3-70 and 72; for the use of a new system of words/persuasion in the establishment of the churchmen, see 72-74 particularly and 71-158 generally.}
\item \footnote{106}{For the scriptural angle, see Morrison, 78.}
\item \footnote{107}{T.S. Brown (1984), 51; Jones, I:312; *Registrum*, IX.131 and 205. Brown also notes that the extent of this military control and indeed the exarch's overall power diminished in the decades and century after Gregory, however (51-52). Alternative forms of power, including significant judicial authority, were developed by the later exarchs (T.S. Brown, 151), but these are largely unclear. As regards taxation, for instance, the exarch's role is uncertain, aside from the fact that his military underlings, the tribunes, sometimes collected taxes (T.S. Brown, 57-58 and 113-16).}
\end{itemize}
earliest period. The influence of arms and of the emperor would have rendered the new officials into a distinct position of power in Italy – especially as their administrative fellows in the other branches of administration, purely civil and ecclesiastical, had become relatively removed from Constantinopolitan power after Gothic invasions. It is much more difficult to determine the extent of exarchs' personal authorities, however. Extremely little is known about the individual exarchs of Gregory's time, and most of that relates to the periods of their exarchates, and not their backgrounds or personal characters. The exarch Romanus had a military career in the East prior to taking over the exarchate of Ravenna, but nothing beyond the actions of the exarchs in office is known about the other exarchs from Gregory's episcopate, Callinicus, Gennadius, and Smaragdus. This may not matter, however. In terms of finite official power, the exarchs were in a stronger position than the exarchs, regardless of Gregory's claims to the contrary in his letter to John of Ravenna.

All in all, already room for disagreement and confusion emerges. Both the bishop and the exarch might be prelates and both might work to protect and promote the people of the West, but their shared larger goals could also lead them to trouble if each official

109 For the exarchs' strong central ties, see T.S. Brown (1984), 150-51; for the weak central ties of the bishops and the old aristocracy, see Liebeschuetz, 121-69.
110 For example, the primary sources used for T.S. Brown's specific discussions of the exarchs ((1984), 49-51 and 150-51), are the Liber pontificalis, the Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis, Gregory's Registrum, Paul the Deacon's Historia gentis Langobardis, and a couple of inscriptions (see Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum VI.1200 and Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum IV.9869). These sources talks about the exarchs in terms of their actions in office, not about the men in particular.
thought his administration deserved priority in pursuing governance in Italy. Given the
dissimilar natures of the authority each office wielded, and the different weights given by
each office to those types of authority, disagreements were bound to arise in the
interactions of the bishop and the exarch. The two offices had no clear protocol or
organized system by which they might resolve these differences, and as a result the
administration of Italy, far from being somehow clarified under the exarchs, was left
chaotic in this period.
III. The Exarch-Episcopal Relationship of the *Registrum*

This confused and chaotic relationship between exarch and episcopal administrations becomes clear through a systematic study of the *Registrum* exarch letters. Gregory, as bishop of Rome, had official interests and intervened in affairs where the exarch's military position ought to have given him clear jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the exarchs interfered with clerics and ecclesiastical troubles, and sheer misunderstandings and animosity frequently undermined exarch-episcopal relations. At least in the period ca. 600, bishops and exarchs interacted in a sometimes fraught and often unproductive manner, regardless – or even because – of any mutual interests.

A. The “Mutual Interests” of Bishops and Exarchs

The exarchs were certainly extremely powerful, as the first letter (I.59, dating from 591) to mention an exarch in the *Registrum* points out. Gennadius, exarch of North Africa, was also a force to be reckoned with within his own administration: *ex opere illi iubete dirigere*, Gregory commands Gennadius about an unruly subordinate, *si non rectitudinis contemplatione saltem formidine vestrae iussionis.*

While perhaps not an especially surprising comment to make, the very power of command that Gregory notes here speaks to either the respect that the exarchs had from their subjects or the extent of the exarch's concrete military might. Should Gennadius mean to undertake a task, then,

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113 “Order him to pass on from this work ... if not through contemplation of rectitude then at least through fear of your command.” *Registrum*, I.59.18 and 23-24.
Gregory's words suggest that he would have been well-equipped to carry it out. The exarch is therefore a strong potential ally for the bishop, if the two offices can find a project that incorporates both their interests in a way that those of one do not derail those of the other.

In the *Registrum*, Gregory seeks to advance this possible partnership by equating his ecclesiastical or spiritual agenda with the exarchs' military and civil agendas, giving the two officials a common interest. In the salutation of the first letter to an exarch extant in the collection, Gregory presents a martial image of the particular exarch, and also a pious one: *Dei vos prae oculis indesinenter habere timorem ac sectari iustitiam, submissa hostium colla testantur.* The phrase may be a formulaic salutation, but the greeting draws the reader's attention to two points: first, in the main clause, the exarch is associated with military triumph over a physical enemy; second, in the subordinate clause, the exarch is linked with piety and justice. Here, in fact, is a thumbnail illustration of the commander-*cum*-civil authority described by modern historians, of an official who triumphs over his enemies one minute and receives an exhortation to control his men, to keep an eye on taxes, and to protect the church in Sardinia the next. The protection of the church part is the important piece for Gregory: by suggesting that it is as much Gennadius' business as it is Gregory's he presents the other official with a common project. Gregory acknowledges the exarchs' great powers, and here cultivates cooperation between the two offices, knowing that the exarch can be of great use to him and to the church, especially in places like Sardinia where the exarch might have more direct sway than the bishop of Rome.

114 “The bowed-down necks of the enemy attest that you have the fear of God incessantly before your eyes and pursue justice,” *Registrum*, I.59.2-3.
115 For the exhortation, see *Registrum*, I.59.16-21.
The next two letters to concern an exarch, again addressed to Gennadius and dating from 591, also contain images that seek to promote a partnership based on coinciding ecclesiastical and exarchate priorities. In letter I.73, Gregory congratulates the exarch for his Christian works in fighting heretics and restoring sections of the Roman patrimony in northern Africa, an achievement certainly to the exarch's credit. This military victory against a physical enemy benefited the Roman church, and Gregory is quick to encourage Gennadius towards more such successes: *eminentiam vestram pro solacio sanctae re publicae misercorditer protegat et ad dilatandum per finitimas gentes nomen eius magis magisque brachii sui firmitate confortet.*\(^{116}\) In Gregory's words, the interests of the state are synonymous with Christianity and Christian interests, a scarcely novel idea but one which then allocates Gennadius a spiritual mandate in addition to his military one. The fact that Gregory has to underline these connections in his letter, however, suggests that Gennadius needed reminding of how important the religious side was, and how much it already matched the priorities of the exarch office. A natural connection between these ecclesiastical and imperial interests may not have been in the forefront of Gennadius' mind.

In the other letter from this time, Gregory again draws a parallel between imperial and ecclesiastical agendas. Letter I.72 concerns apparent Donatist troubles in Africa and the need to elect a new primate for Numidia. Here Gregory equates the importance of the exarch's military priorities and those of the church: *sicut excellentiam vestram hostilibus bellis in hac vita Dominus victoriarum fecit luce fulgere, ita oportet eam inimicis*
Once again Gregory co-opts the exarch to turn his secular office to works of religious importance, such as combating the enemies of the church. Given that Gregory wrote this letter and I.73 at the same time, this statement would suggest that the public and ecclesiastical wars can be one and the same. The need to emphasize this point across two letters, however, still suggests that Gregory was trying to persuade the exarch to help with the bishop's agenda. Room for cooperation between the two prelates existed, but it was not, perhaps, entirely natural.

It was even less natural when Gregory, the bishop, sought to help the exarch with the military and defense of Italy, two areas which certainly fell under the official jurisdiction of the commander. The letters in the Registrum dealing with actual (rather than spiritual) battles and dangers paint a picture of the exarchs and bishop of Rome as being at odds with one another, prioritizing different approaches to the same threats. Here the chance of prelates from the different administrations assisting one another failed, likely on account of the exarch's concrete authority over army and diplomatic affairs. According to letter II.38, Gregory finds Romanus the exarch of Ravenna distinctly uncooperative over the safety of the people of the empire, undermining Gregory's efforts at regional pastoral care in 592. In this letter, addressed to John, archbishop of Ravenna, Gregory notes the *excellentissimi viri Romani patricii animositatis*, and that Romanus (iste) *pugnare contra inimicos nostros dissimulat et nos facere pacem vetat*.

Romanus, at least, does not want the bishop to dictate his war tactics or the terms of any peace treaty. This exarch deliberately and willfully (*etiam velit*) prevents peace, potentially on account

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117 “Just as the Lord made your excellency shine with the light of victories in this life in wars with our enemies, just so it behooves you to oppose the enemies of the church itself with every vigor of mind and body,” *Registrum*, I.72.2-4.

118 “The animosity of that most excellent man, the lord Romanus” and “he pretends to fight against our enemies and forbids us to make peace,” *Registrum*, II.38.24 and 11-12.
of some personal failing (*eius levia*) that impedes his ability to do the job Gregory wishes of him.\(^{119}\) The crux of the matter here is that the two offices have diametrically opposing views in this case. Gregory is upset because he does not think Romanus is acting on behalf of the people in his region in a way that Gregory feels is appropriate. Gregory has tried to protect the people of Rome from the predations of the Lombard king Ariulf,\(^{120}\) but Romanus does not find Gregory's truce with Ariulf to be legitimate. Rather, he logically finds the big decisions of defense, war-management, and Western foreign relations to be exclusively his own concern, and not at all under the bishop's purview regardless of pre-exarch precedent. Since, in Romanus' view, bishops have no business making independent treaties regardless of the capabilities and experience of the bishop in question,\(^{121}\) the bishop is not able to utilize his experience or his pastoral mission in this field. The practical *ad hoc* diplomatic powers of the bishop to look after the bodily interests of his congregants, powers which Gregory and other bishops had exercised in pre-exarch Italy, run into stiff opposition from the new exarchs.

Bishops were not completely powerless against this appropriation of pre-exarch formerly episcopal functions, however. Even if they could no longer directly practice foreign diplomacy without running into the exarchs, who actually had control of the army and therefore over the fate of any truce, bishops could at least appeal to their fellow prelates. In this same letter as above, Gregory adds the exhortation *de Neapolitana vero urbe excellentissimo exarcho instanter imminate*,\(^{122}\) suggesting that the Ravennan archbishop might have weight with the exarch, whether personally, through proximity, or

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119 “Even if he wished” and “his fickleness,” *Registrum*, II.38.12 and 25.
120 *Registrum*, II.38.5.
121 And, Gregory had definite diplomatic experience, as evidenced by his time as *apocrisarius* in Constantinople.
122 “Press the most excellent exarch about the Neapolitan city instantly,” *Registrum*, II.38.46-47.
professionally, even if the Roman bishop did not.\textsuperscript{123} The bishoprics could cooperate amongst one another to gain the exarch's ear, but they had to be able to establish some mutual interest with the exarch's administration. The exarchs might have appropriated certain areas of governance, but the bishops learned alternate ways to promote their interests even in those areas. However, all this did not stop Gregory from being critical of the exarch for his failure to subdue his enemies and to provide peace for his province and various character flaws, or from offering what may perhaps was unwelcome advice about how to best defend Naples. Possibly Gregory felt that the physical safety of Italy fell under the heading of his mandate for pastoral care, so although he was formally shut out of regional defense decisions he still sought to make his voice heard on that subject.

This determination of Gregory's to pass judgment on military priorities despite the exarch's monopoly of this field is further evident in other letters. Gregory had his own strong views about how Italy should be defended from the Lombards (and furthermore voiced these to the exarch in 596),\textsuperscript{124} but he found that unresponsiveness from Gennadius spoiled his ability to help protect his people. Given that the Italian peninsula was divided and that Gregory was the most powerful administrative figure in the south and surrounding areas, one might presume that his advice about this region would be valuable, but he was still being ignored a few years later, as evidenced by 598's letter IX.11. \textit{Quod si secundum ea quae tam vobis quam excellentissimo filio nostro Gennadio hoc fore nuntiantes scripsimus sollicitudo fuisset adhibita, inimici illic aut non}

\textsuperscript{123} The archbishops of Ravenna had a much closer relationship to the exarchs than Rome did, especially given that Rome was physically cut off from Ravenna by both distance and the Lombards. For Ravenna and Rome, see Markus, "Ravenna and Rome, 554-604" in \textit{Byzantion} 51 (1981): 571-78 and (1997), 147-56. For Ravenna and the exarchs, see Deliyannis, 208-13.

\textsuperscript{124} See the discussion of \textit{Registrum}, IX.11. Also see VII.3, for Gregory's lecturing letter to the exarch Gennadius, about the security of Corsica, especially lines 9-14.
These complaints, addressed to a fellow bishop, exhibit the frustration and confusion caused by the multiplicity of administrations in Italy in the period. Gregory felt that he had an important contribution to make, but Gennadius too did not recognize Gregory's authority on the subject of war. Gregory and the exarch pursued separate policies, with Gregory finally circumventing the stony Gennadius. In this same letter, Gregory describes how he himself arranged a peace deal with the Lombard king Agilulf via an abbot, and outlines to his fellow bishop measures that can be taken for the defense of Sardinia.126 Gregory clearly felt himself to be involved and invested in the security of Italy and the surrounding area, which quite possibly resulted from his responsibility for the nearby churches and territories under his supervision as bishop of Rome. Also, this likely stemmed from diplomatic episcopal precedents in addressing the Lombard invasions directly and with the emperor, such as with the Roman delegations that had occurred shortly before and during his time as papal apocrisarius. The exarch, however, had a different view.

The exarch's view was simple and strong: bishops lacked authority in military matters. This made perfect sense in terms of secular wars, as with the Lombards, but was more problematic with wars and diplomacy relating to heresy and schism, where bishops did have real and useful contributions to make. After all, heresy and schism were of particular interest to both sides, given the threat that schismatics could pose not only to orthodoxy but also to the security of the empire and imperial interests. Gregory

125 “Because if attention had been applied following the things just as those which I, reporting to you and to our most excellent brother Gennadius, wrote would happen, our enemies would not have attacked at that place, or if they were attacking, they would incur the danger that they encountered,” Registrum, IX.11.5-8.
126 Registrum, IX.11.12-18.
underlines the parallel interests of bishop and exarch by framing the question of heresy in martial terms to Callinicus, Romanus' successor in Ravenna, in 599: *inter curas bellicas, sicut corpus ab exteriori hoste, sic animam ab interni insidiatoris impugnatione protegitis*. The exarch is given a spiritual charge in military language.\(^{127}\) Once again Gregory constructs a common platform between himself and the secular official, articulating the exarch's responsibilities towards resolving heretical and schismatic troubles. He himself could exert little influence in Istria, given that the Istrians did not acknowledge Rome, and he needed the Ravennan exarch's more direct control over the schismatic region if he hoped to resolve the schism.\(^{128}\) Gregory seeks to influence the other prelate to assist him in his cause, by casting the Istrian schismatics as a physical enemy as dangerous as the Lombards. Just as the Istrians held out against Christian orthodoxy in the empire, so too, according to Gregory, they might then hold out against other imperial mandates in their schismatic enclaves. As much as different Italian administrators might see their offices as overlapping in functions, Gregory also proves that many, particularly bishops, were sometimes powerless in areas of distinct interest to them.

Gregory repeats this equation of heretic with imperial enemy in 603 to Callinicus' own successor, Smaragdus, still in relation to Istrian schismatics: *tanto exteriores hostes nostri valentiores vos contra se repperient, quanto vos inimici rectae fidei divino in se*

\(^{127}\) “Just as you defend a body among cares of war from an exterior enemy, so you defend a soul from the assault of the enemy lurking inside,” *Registrum*, IX.142.22-23.

\(^{128}\) Diehl (1888) notes that the army at Istria was under the command of a *magister militum* at the end of the sixth century (23), but the many letters about Istria within the *Registrum* show that the exarch was clearly expected to have some influence there, especially in relation to imperial legislation effecting the area. For Gregory's lack of authority in the region, see Gaudemet, 445-47, also Sotinel, 85-120 and Straw (2007), 121-60.
senserint amore terribles. This analogy recognizes the exarch's military power, and seeks to promote the episcopal quest for resolving the schism in terms he had understand as relating to his own office: the schismatics are hostes, inimici. Gregory insists that the need for physical safety can be equated with the need for peaceful orthodoxy. Reuniting the Istrians to communion with Rome and Constantinople was in the best interests of the empire, and would promote stability, order and concord in a larger region already broken up by invasions. The emperor's edict of toleration could only perpetuate divisions. Gregory's success in persuading the exarch of this concept was limited, however: Callinicus interpreted Maurice's order of tolerance towards the Istrian churches differently from the way Gregory did. Callinicus thought that he should prevent any Istrians from rejoining the orthodox church, even should they wish to, while Gregory saw the order as simply protection for those Istrians who wished to adhere to their anti-Chalcedonian ways. In this case, the interests of the empire (peace in the region) were not fully in line with those of the Roman church (the unification of the churches of Italy).

With Smaragdus Gregory was presumably somewhat more effective, given that exarch's greater sympathy for Rome's cause, but these attempts of Gregory's to sway the exarchs demonstrate how generally powerless he was in handling the Istrian affair. The creation of the exarchates may have provided him a potential tool to help settle the dispute, but he had to work through an often uncooperative separate administration to promote his reconciliatory agenda.

129 “As much as exterior enemies will find you more strong against them, so much will the enemies of the orthodox faith feel you as terrible in your divine love,” Registrum, XIII.34.33-35.
130 See Registrum, IX.156.33-36, and above.
The same was true in North Africa, with the alleged Donatists, some years earlier. He draws together the exarch's duty to provide military victories and regional security with his own official desire to see proper religious practices protected and renegade groups quelled. In letter IV.7 from 593, Gregory baldly states *si victorias quaeritis, si de commissae vobis provinciae securitate tractatis, nihil magis vobis aliud ad haec proficere, quam zelari sacerdotum vitas et interiōna ecclesiarum, in quantum possible est, bella compescere.*\(^{132}\) As part of his recipe for military and administrative success, Gregory made his greater pastoral responsibilities relevant to those of the exarchs. He saw the exarch as a powerful potential ally, but his constructed persuasions show that he was dependent on convincing the exarch that the two prelates' interests were one. He could not pursue heretics alone, so he proposed that heretics were also the responsibility of the new secular officials. As Gennadius had also complained to Gregory about the Donatists (*gloriosus vir Gennadius de uno eorum mihi similia questus est*),\(^{133}\) he likely proved a receptive audience. After all, as Gregory noted to the emperor in 596, *nec Dei illic iudicium haberetur in metu nec principales hactenus iussiones sortirentur effectum.*\(^{134}\) The Donatists ignored imperial commands as much as ecclesiastical ones,\(^ {135}\) and thus appeared to be a mutual problem for exarch and Roman bishop.

One might expect anti-Donatism to provide an example of effective exarch-
episcopal administrative cooperation, but the two offices seem to have fallen short of

\(^{132}\) “If you seek victories, if you are handling the security of the province entrusted to you, there is no other thing more to do this, to restrain wars, than to be zealous about the lives of priests and the internal affairs of the churches, as much as is possible,” *Registrum*, IV.7.18-21.

\(^{133}\) “The most glorious man, Gennadius, has complained about one of these men to me, similarly,” *Registrum*, VI.62.14-15.

\(^{134}\) “Neither the judgement of God is held in awe there, nor so far have the imperial commands obtained an effect,” VI.62.13-14.

\(^{135}\) Imperial laws against Donatists included the *Codex Theosonianus* 16.5.38-46 and the *Codex Ius Civilis* 1.6. Donatism had also been ecclesiastically condemned at the Council of Arles in 314.
pursuing the same goals even in this matter of mutual interest. In the same year as
Gennadius had complained to Gregory about Donatists, Gregory accused Gennadius of
refusing to help one Paul, an anti-Donatist bishop in North Africa, despite an earlier
promise that he would do so.\textsuperscript{136} Paul soon found himself the subject of unspecified
accusations, possibly by Donatists he had offended, and while Gennadius refrained from
prosecuting the bishop on these charges, Gregory assumed that Gennadius had intended
to do so.\textsuperscript{137} Furthermore, while Gennadius ought to have care about heresy as a part of his
own office,\textsuperscript{138} Gregory suggested that Gennadius' interest may also have some self-interested reasons his actions against the Donatists (\textit{animarum quarum vos curae pro
vestra mercede studere dignatis}).\textsuperscript{139} This is not to say that Gennadius in any way
supported the Donatists, whom, after all, he had recently complained about. But, it does
raise questions as to how Gennadius' need for public order in North Africa might
times have clashed with Gregory's quest for orthodoxy in the region. The priorities
of each administration were not the same, and this led to ineffective and/or inconsistent
policies in western governance.

The fact that the separate administrations had these different priorities caused
most of the trouble encountered by the different prelates in promoting their interests to
the other office.

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Registrum}, VI.62.2-4. If (unlikely) the \textit{mercede} were to refer to an immaterial and spiritual reward,
possibly this observation could be congratulatory, in line with the ideal-exarch lessons scattered
throughout the \textit{Registrum}. However, if it (more likely, given the connotations of the definition) refers
to a material prize, this might be a subtle dig at the exarch's mercenary character, which would not fit
well with that idealized image.

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Registrum}, VII.2.2-11.

\textsuperscript{138} See discussion above.

\textsuperscript{139} “For the care of which souls you find worthy to strive, on behalf of your own reward,” \textit{Registrum},
VI.62.26-27.
Orthodoxy was of extreme interest to the state and its imperial officials, but the physical security and economic well-being of its subjects and territory were also vital concerns. As an administrator, Gregory and any other bishop would be concerned with maintaining public order, but as a churchman would also have a higher responsibility to Christian orthodoxy and Christian precedents than to general peace. That Gregory desired to confront the Istrians about their schism while the emperor and exarchs promoted tolerance in return for peace stands testament to this. Gregory clearly articulates this idea in letter XI.29, when the emperor Maurice proposes to replace a bishop, against canon law. Gregory's reaction to the proposal and his advice to the deacon seeking his input on the dilemma is that *quod vero ipse fecerit, si canonicum est, sequimur; si vero canonicum non est, in quantum sine peccato nostro, portamus.* Ecclesiastical customs, in short, trumped imperial law for Gregory, whereas the opposite would be true of the exarchs – though he also acknowledged that his religious priorities sometimes had to bend to those of the empire. In the cases where this was not true, however, one could expect to find a lack of cohesion or cooperation between the different western prelates.

In further evidence of the different priorities held by each administration, the empire often had to value the fates of living men more than their eternal souls, contrary to the church's preferences. An imperial edict explained in a letter in 597 brings just such a conflict into focus, when the emperor Maurice issued a law forbidding those under military obligations or fleeing legal prosecutions to become monks. While Gregory was only too willing to acknowledge that such self-interested deserters would make poor

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140 See the discussion of bishops as administrators above.
141 *Registrum*, IV.14, 6.38, 47, IX.142, 154 and 202.
142 “We follow what thing he would do, if it is canonical; if it is not canonical, we bear it to such a degree as we can without sin,” *Registrum*, XI.29.21-23.
monks should they enter the monastery for the wrong reasons,\textsuperscript{143} he insisted on differentiating between those who were escaping their burdens and those who were sincere in their desire for a holy and contemplative life. On behalf of the interests of God and the church, there must be a loophole in the law: \textit{qui si ita sunt probati atque suscepti et pro anima sua paenitentiam de perpetratis culpis agere student, pro eorum vita et lucro caelesti non est eorum conversio renuenda.}\textsuperscript{144} The emperor and the church reached a workable compromise in this law which apparently satisfied each,\textsuperscript{145} but the need for such a compromise underlines the general contrary priorities of the two parties. These sorts of mismatched goals were at the heart of the lack of any consistently constructive relationship between these two western administrations: in the end, bishops and exarchs looked to prioritize the promotion of different agendas.

\textbf{B. Exarch Interference in Church Affairs}

The above discussion of inter-office relations all stemmed from instances where the exarch might judge his military and imperial mandates to stand him in a more authoritative position than that of a bishop. However, the episcopal and exarch administrations also crossed paths in more traditionally church-based concerns, such as the appointments of clerics, correction of clerical abuses, and the episcopal courts. These powers were somewhat novel, more in line with the privileges of the emperor than of

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Dum in ecclesiastico habitu non dissimiliter quam viserunt vivunt, nequaquam student saeculum fugere sed mutare} (provided that they do not live differently in ecclesiastical garb than they lived before, they are by no means eager to flee the world, but to change it),\textit{ Registrum, VIII.10.13-14.}

\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Those men, if they have thus been under probation and been received, and for the sake of their soul they are eager to do penance for the sins they committed, on behalf of their life and gain in heaven, their conversion ought not to be declined.}\textit{ Registrum, VIII.10.20-23.}

\textsuperscript{145} Maurice allowed sincere conversions that underwent the proper protocol, provided that the individuals in question were not fleeing legal actions: \textit{Registrum, VIII.10.23-27.}
previous provincial governors or the praetorian prefects. \textsuperscript{146} Whether or not Gregory lived in a “de-secularized” world where the religious was consistently of interest to everyone and not only to churchmen, \textsuperscript{147} the Registrum proves that exarchs at least were frequently involved in 'sacred' affairs.

To judge by the letters of the Registrum, the appointment of clerics, and most especially of bishops, was a repeated topic of conversation between Gregory and the exarchs. In letter I.72, Gregory wrote to Gennadius, ordering him to instruct the council of North African bishops in their selection of a primate for Numidia in 591: *concilium vero catholicorum episcoporum admoneri praecipite ut primatem non ex ordine loci, postpositis vitae meritis, faciat.* \textsuperscript{148} The only clue to possible unusual circumstances in the election is Gregory's discussion of the election's importance in terms of the reconciliation of the Donatists: *magno profectu excellentiae vestrae apud Creatorem gloria proficit, si per eam dispersarum ecclesiarum potuerit societas restaurari.* \textsuperscript{149} The selection of the primate would be more important because of the lingering Donatist situation in North Africa, and Gregory considers this election to be Gennadius' business. The imperative *praecipite* is adamant that Gennadius has a role in the selection of the new primate, although the council would actually elect the primate. A good decision would benefit the exarch's immortal soul, but a capable and honest primate would also be a useful partner in the peaceful administration of a province prone to religious schism. Thus, while the

\textsuperscript{146} T.S. Brown (1984), 151 and Jones II:372. However, Jones notes that the praetorian prefects had been responsible for choosing provincial governors in the past. This could provide some sort of loose analogy of the powers, given that bishops had appropriated so many gubernatorial functions.


\textsuperscript{148} “Instruct the council of catholic bishops to suggest that it designate a primate not from the clerics of that place, with the merits of his life neglected...” Registrum, I.72.15-17.

\textsuperscript{149} “The glory of your excellence would advance with the Creator with your great success, if the union of the churches scattered throughout the province were to be restored,” Registrum, I.72.24-26.
elections of bishops were of most interest to the church, the exarchs certainly had both a special interest and a direct role in electoral outcomes, given the importance of capable ecclesiastical prelates in the administration of the West. There was a place for the exarchs in church affairs – but just what this should be and how far it should go remained uncertain, especially during the earliest decades of the exarchates.

Given the potential importance and possibilities of the bishop and exarch each having influence with ecclesiastical matters, it is unsurprising that Gregory, as bishop of Rome, should seek productive relationships between his episcopal candidates and the exarchs. In letter III.31, Gregory asks Romanus in Ravenna to support the Milanese deacon Constantius as he is considered for bishop of Milan in 593. Gregory's recommendation is no passing request, and potentially tied to the importance of the particular episcopate in question: Milan, as with North Africa, had its share of schismatic troubles, and the cooperation of local bishops and imperial officials could be vital in maintaining orthodox order in the region. Constantius, after he was elected archbishop, certainly ran into his share of trouble with the Three Chapters controversy, implicating the Lombard queen Theodelinda who then refused to take communion with him. Given the Christian queen's influence over her husband, Agilulf, Constantius' performance as bishop was of acute concern to a military governor like Romanus, even as a new bishop might need the support of the exarch to assist him in the performance of his office. The relationship between exarch and bishop might not be so vital in less problematic areas.

150 As noted above, potentially there is a parallel here with the praetorian prefect's historical interest and direct role in the election of provincial governors. For this administrative practice, see Jones, I:372 and 391.
151 Registrum, III.31.2-17.
152 It is unsurprising, then, that the Lombard king Agilulf would also want to suggest a candidate for the office after Constantius' death. Registrum, XI.6.23-25 and Eidenschink, 46-47.
153 See Registrum, IV.2, 3, 22, 33 and 37, and V.52.
154 For example, see Registrum, IX. 68.
Or, at least, the *Registrum* does not contain other specific examples of this sort of recommendation, except with the Marinianus, the new archbishop of Ravenna two years later, but to a scholastic in Ravenna – not to the exarch.\(^{155}\) Exarchs likely had the most interest, and perhaps the most influence,\(^ {156}\) in elections where the new ecclesiastical prelate could help with an unstable political situation.

This highlights yet another difference between Gregory and the exarchs in ecclesiastical matters: the exarchs needed bishops to be potential administrative allies, but did not necessary care about ecclesiastical interests. In the same letter where Gregory recommends Marinianus to the scholastic Andrew, it is clear that Gregory and Romanus disagreed over their definitions of a good episcopal candidate. Here Gregory proclaims the unsuitability of Donatus, Romanus' choice for archbishop of Ravenna. He refuses Donatus' ordination, *Dei iudicium metuentes*, indicating religious grounds for his rejection of the exarch's favorite.\(^ {157}\) Romanus' administration also participated in the practice of simony, which was abhorrent to Gregory's ascetic morals. In accepting money from a prospective bishop, as in the case of Maximus of Salona, the exarch and his men demonstrated the prioritization of practical considerations for filling the empty episcopal office as opposed to spiritual ones.\(^ {158}\) In response to Maximus' exchange of money for office, Gregory attempted to remove the bishop from his episcopacy, since *hominens*

\(^{155}\)*See Registrum*, V.51.17-32.

\(^{156}\) There is no definitive evidence for this point, but it is likely that the exarchs would have had more success in influencing elections when the political or security stakes were high – expediency towards external cares was as necessary as sanctity and inner cares, after all (see *LRP*, II.7.4-8).

\(^{157}\) “Fearing the judgement of God,” *Registrum*, V.51.2-16. For the quote, line 7. The plural participle refers to Gregory, who has been speaking in the first person plural.

\(^{158}\) He also may have been treating the empty office as akin to a secular one. Though addressing only secular administrations (and therefore not simony), Christopher Kelly notes the importance and prevalence of exchanges of money in the pursuit of bureaucratic advancement: *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004), 138-85.
After this, however, Romanus' successor, Callinicus, campaigned to have Maximus reinstated. Callinicus demanded (exegit) that Gregory revoke his excommunication of Maximus, and Gregory finally complied – under severe pressure and after four years of failed efforts to enforce his more morally stringent point of view on Salona. The controversy over Maximus lasted years (594 to 599), involving two different exarchs of Ravenna as well as the archbishop of Ravenna, Marinianus. This second bishop evidently felt that Maximus' claim to his episcopal seat was valid, as demonstrated by his cooperation with Callinicus to reconcile Maximus and Gregory. It is quite possible that Marinianus sided with political expediency, given the connections between the exarchs and bishops of Ravenna. However, should a bishop like Gregory take a stricter moral line on ecclesiastical appointments and therefore differ in his priorities from the exarch, disagreement was bound to erupt between the two administrations.

In addition to holding potentially opposing priorities, relations between bishop and exarch also disagreed on the privileges and preserves of their offices. Gregory, despite his attempted interventions in foreign policy and command that Gennadius

159 “The men of the glorious man (the patrician Romanus), who accepted from him [Maximus] a price and thus appointed him,” Registrum, V.6.5-6.
160 Registrum, IX.178.22-25. For all of Callinicus' efforts on behalf of Maximus, see IX.15, 156 and 177 (along with the strikingly similar 231), as well as appendix V.
161 For the entire case, see Registrum, IV.3, 16, 20; V.3, 6, 25, 26, 39; VI.3, 25; VII17; VIII.8 and 24; IX.150, 156, 177-79, 231 and 234; also Appendix V.
162 See the touching image of Registrum, appendix V.9-11: tune cucurrit exarchus Callinicus, Castoris cartularius ecclesiae Romanae cum archepiscopo Mariniano, et levatus coepit ampliorem paenitentiam coram eis agere (“then the exarch Callinicus, Castor the cartularius of the Roman church, along with the archbishop Marinianus, ran to him. And having been raised up, he [Maximus] made observed more penitence before their eyes”).
163 As above, note 123.
choose a primate, did believe in withholding some privileges for the church. In letter V.19 dating from 594, Gregory warns Romanus against offering protection to those committing clerical abuse, such as ought to come under the church's authority and not the exarch's. His particular object here is the ex-priest Speciosus, *qui, causa poscente, in monasterio a Iohanne fratre et coepiscopo nostro fuerat departus, contra sui pastoris exinde voluntatem exisse et, ecclesiastae constitutionis vigore despecto, antedicto episcopo vestra fretum tuitione resistere.* Speciosus' crimes are not specified, but his monastic confinement *causa poscente* suggested some serious clerical misdemeanor, and John of Ravenna sentenced him to monastic imprisonment. The matter at stake in Romanus' intervention in the Speciosus case appears to have been the prelates' juridical authorities. Speciosus was a *presbyter,* and therefore a clergyman. If this was a purely religious matter (given Speciosus' clerical position it may well have been), an episcopal court would have traditionally held jurisdiction. However, the crimes are *not* known, only the punishment. And this clarifies nothing: by Gregory's time monastic confinement was not a punishment only for religious crimes, but civil ones as well. Given the ambiguity of the case, it is not clear whether the exarch or the bishop had more right to determine Speciosus' fate, but each evidently felt some entitlement to do so. This in turn highlights the unarticulated boundaries between the secular and ecclesiastical administrations, and the degree to which offices disagreed as to the privileges and

164 A concept also noted by Evans (1986), 122.
165 “Who had departed from the monastery in which he was by the agency of John our brother at fellow bishop, when the cause demanded it, against the will of his pastor left the monastery. And, with the force of the ecclesiastical constitution disdained, he resisted the aforementioned bishop, relying on your protection,” *Registrum,* V.19.7-11.
166 Gaudemet 232; Lamoreaux, 149; Uhalde, 31.
167 Hillner 3-4.
168 For the exarch's sense of entitlement, see *Registrum,* V.19 for the fact that the exarch did interfere with the case. For Gregory's sense of entitlement, see Hillner, 13-23 and 27-29.
preserves of the other.

In the same letter, Gregory forbids Romanus to get involved in other religious cases, likely in an effort to set down episcopal privileges. He notes that in meddling in matters of religious discipline Romanus opens both himself and the world around him to the wrath of God: *quaesumus ut excellentia vestra in talium se causarum defensione non misceat, ne et Deus suam defendat iniuriam.* He goes on to add another point too: *et inter nos aliorum pariat culpa discordiam.*\(^{169}\) This last phrase is significant: Gregory does not want legal cases to shatter the relationship between the bishops and exarchs, such as it is. They might not work together especially successfully, but the letters between the two types of prelates indicate that there was considerable scope for administrative cooperation – if only the two offices could reconcile their separate priorities. However, jurisdictional ambiguities threatened that potential.

Another example of this can be found three years earlier: in I.32, Gregory accuses Romanus of unnecessarily detaining one Blandus, bishop of Ortona, away from his diocese and against his will, likely in relation to the Three Chapters schism.\(^{170}\) To Gregory, this detention is an insult to the honor and authority of the church hierarchy, and also hurt the faithful of the diocese, who depended on their bishop and whose faith would presumably suffer in his absence.\(^{171}\) Gregory might appreciate and desire the exarchs' occasional help with the physical defense of the empire, the pursuit of heretics, and the promotion of strong episcopal candidates, but there is a limit to how much intervention he was prepared to see by secular leaders in areas where he prioritized the rights and

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\(^{169}\) “We seek that your excellence not embroil himself in the defense of such cases, lest both God defends this injury against him ... and the guilt of others brings forth discord among us,” *Registrum, V.* 19.25-28.

\(^{170}\) This reasoning is not certain, but it is explained in Martyn's n.186 for the letter.

\(^{171}\) *Registrum, I.* 32, esp. 9-12.
needs of the church. Gregory's indignation and dire predictions are just those, however: expressions of unhappiness with the situation and appeals that Romanus change his behavior. Gregory's method of addressing the exarch's behavior is to write foreboding letters, thus implying that he had very little authoritative weight to throw around in relation to the exarch, even when dealing with clerics. As shown, jurisdictional ambiguities harmed the relationship between the two offices, but this lack of clear authority also meant that there were very few ways Gregory could enforce his point of view on the exarch in an official capacity. Not only were the multiple exarch and episcopal administrations unclear about whose job was whose, but they were singularly ill-equipped to enforce their priorities on their fellow prelates.172

C. New Exarchs and Old Bishops

The disparate priorities and the lack of clear authoritative jurisdictions between the exarch and episcopal administrations were not the only impediments to cohesive governance in Italy, however. These were also exacerbated by the way in creation of new offices, like that of the exarch, could threaten the powers and prestige of the bishops in the West. Gregory's views of the episcopal office's prerogatives had been formed in the pre-exarch era, as was demonstrated earlier by his determination to weigh in on diplomatic affairs. As this paper has discussed, Gregory's experiences as an administrator and his understanding of ecclesiastical precedents led him to intervene in judicial, military, diplomatic, and political matters, even if the exarchs might be expected to handle these types of administrative tasks.

172 Except, perhaps, in the military and defense issues discussed earlier: the exarch's control over the army would have been distinctly effective at enforcing his decisions with these.
The bishops of the West had enjoyed considerable power and prestige in the absence of strong imperial representatives in Italy. As suggested by his diplomatic efforts with the Lombards, Gregory clung to precedents to inform his understanding of how the world ought to work. Ecclesiastically this was as true as practically: Gregory's quarrel (lasting from 595 through at least 603) with the patriarchs of Constantinople and the emperor over the use of the title *universalis episcopus* is a case in point.\(^{173}\) When John the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, began to use the universal title in 595, Gregory complained to the emperor that this action was *contra statuta evangelica, contra canonum decreta.*\(^{174}\) John did not seem especially troubled by this accusation, however. The use of the 'universal bishop' title, reserved at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 exclusively for the Roman patriarch, was not an especially touchy subject outside of Rome. Those in Constantinople, including the emperor, were unsympathetic to Gregory's protestations.\(^{175}\) The very fact that Gregory prolonged his objections to the title, pouring out letter after letter of canonical arguments and visions of hellfire,\(^ {176}\) shows his determination to stand by past tradition and to defend the interests of his particular office. This uproar over the appropriation of a title is just one example of how bishops like Gregory continued to insist on recognition of episcopal powers that had been gained and exerted in the West.

However, like the emperor and patriarch, the exarchs seem to have had limited appreciation for such Western episcopal prestige. Instead of respecting Rome's importance and offering protection to its bishop, Romanus ignores a Lombard threat to

\(^{173}\) For this controversy, see *Registrum*, V.37, 39, 41, 44, 45; VII.24, 28, 30, 31; IX.157; XIII.41. For the theological history of the controversy, see Gaudemet, 393-396 and Richards (1979), 9-13.

\(^{174}\) “Against the Gospel statutes, against the decrees of the canons.” *Registrum*, V.37.62-63.


\(^ {176}\) See, for an example of this strict attitude, the massively long and furious *Registrum*, V.44.
the city in 592. Gregory complains of Romanus' animositas towards himself and his fellow bishop of Ravenna in letter II.38, and blames the exarch for a complete failure to protect Rome against the Lombard king Ariulf.\textsuperscript{177} Whether or not Romanus could have done anything about the particular invasion is unknown, but Gregory clearly felt that Romanus had not devoted proper attention to protecting the ancient and holy city and its occupants. Three years later, in 595, Romanus still shows little respect towards the episcopal administration of Rome. Once again, Gregory protests that eiusmod Longobardorum vicit, ita ut benigni videantur hostes, qui nos interimunt, quam reipublicae iudices, qui nos malitia sua, rapinis atque fallaciis in cogitatione consumunt.\textsuperscript{178} Though Gregory does not complain about this behavior to the exarch himself, instead grousing about it to a fellow bishop, it is quite evident that Gregory feels that he has not received his due. Nor is Romanus the only exarch guilty of alienating the bishop of Rome: Callinicus, too, was accused of being in malis non modicum experomentum,\textsuperscript{179} and had apparently made comments quae omnes qui eum amant ad inimicitas illius valeant excitare.\textsuperscript{180} Certainly no sense of respect for a universal patriarch is evident here.

Gregory's sense of injury is important. While his view of episcopal importance may have been overblown, he clearly thought that bishops (and particularly the bishop of Rome) deserved respect and occupied a central place in the West. However, this was more true of the pre-exarch West and Gregory was seeking to apply an old and outdated

\textsuperscript{177} Registrum, II.38.24 and 4-12, respectively.
\textsuperscript{178} “The malice of that man [Romanus] exceeds the swords of the Lombards, in such a way that our enemies who kill us seem kinder than the judges of the state, who intentionally devour us with their malice with robbery and deceptive treatment,” Registrum, V.40.17-20.
\textsuperscript{179} “Not a little experienced in evil works,” Registrum, VII.26.43-47.
\textsuperscript{180} “Which would influence all those who love him to rise towards enmity of him,” Registrum, IX.96.4-6.
model to a world that had changed with the creation of the exarchates. This, therefore, was at the root of the troubles and confusion between exarch and bishop: the exarch believed in a new view of official responsibilities and jurisdictions, while the bishops still clung on to their older one. This, in turn, was a significant impediment to a clear and functional relationship between the two administrations.
Conclusions

From the *Registrum*, it is clear that early inter-office relations between exarchs and bishops were contentious and disorganized. The new and powerful exarchs had been placed in the West to create order and security, yet on their arrival they stepped onto the toes of preexisting administrators, the most notable of whom were the bishops, rather than into a power vacuum.

While Gregory and the exarch were both Italian prelates charged with some sort of pastoral care in the West, their relations to one another and potential for productive administrative cooperation were plagued by an unclear demarcation of the powers and limits of each office. Gregory clearly saw the possibility of the exarchs offering valuable contributions to Italy, most especially in having the military and political power to counter schisms. However, given the space in his letters that Gregory devoted to convincing the exarchs that their interests and his really did coincide, it appears that collaboration between the offices was not entirely natural. The exarchs needed to be persuaded that they could benefit their own priorities by furthering episcopal agendas.

Conversely, each office evidently had to warn the other away from its particular preserves: bishops rebuked the exarchs for over-interference in ecclesiastical concerns, while exarchs bluntly overrode Lombard truces made by bishops. The period ca. 600 appears to have been characterized primarily by the desire of each office to practice a conflicting view of its duties and privileges, and the failure of the other office to fully
recognize these. Such was not unreasonable given the relative newness of the exarchs, who were stepping into an area awash with other preexisting institutions and powers.

The crux of the matter was that while bishops had been around for centuries, in the late sixth century the exarchs were still stretching their leads, establishing the extent of their reach and civil and military authority. Much exarch scholarship, including that by Diehl and Guillou, has focused on the seventh and eighth centuries, after the exarchates were firmly in place.\textsuperscript{181} This scholarship cannot be taken as the whole of the history of the exarchs, however: the considerably less problematic eighth-century relationship between the exarchs and bishops was only made possible by the clear establishment of respective exarch and episcopal precedents and jurisdictions. For the time period covered in Gregory's \textit{Registrum}, the exarchs and bishops were much more uncertain of one another.

What, then, was the more complete picture of Byzantine Italian administration ca. 600 which this paper sought to establish? On top of the chaos caused by the Lombard invasions, Italy was administratively disorganized, even after the institution of the fantastically powerful exarchs. Despite Gregory's demonstrable willingness to work with these new officials for the sake of his flock's well-being and that of their souls, his pre-exarch experiences impeded his ability to accept certain interference. Furthermore, unless the emperor intervened – or, as Gregory threatened in several letters, God did – the two officials did not observe the same hierarchies. Gregory, a man with experience in both secular and ecclesiastical offices and close personal connections to the imperial family, insisted that bishops were above exarchs, but the exarch letters in the \textit{Registrum} suggest that the exarchs did not recognize bishops as being superior except in religious matters. With such opposing views of how the exarch-episcopal relationship should work, these

\textsuperscript{181} Especially Diehl (1888) and Guillou, 159-79.
officials certainly missed out on producing that hierarchical concord Gregory dreamed of in letter V.59. There was no cohesion between institutions in Italy during Gregory's pontificate, and with the rise of the exarchate the church suddenly had a very powerful neighbor with whom it had to deal and about whom it knew very little. The state of Byzantine Italy ca. 600 was really therefore one of transition, with too many cooks in the kitchen and no clear understanding of how they would learn to coexist more productively.
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