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NEL IX CENTENARIO DEL PRIMO ESILIO DI ILDEBRANDO

STUDI GREGORIANI

PER LA STORIA DI GREGORIO VII
E DELLA RIFORMA GREGORIANA

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THE MONITOR OF THE POPES
ST. PETER DAMIAN

In the reform movement of the eleventh century the roles of the Popes between the years 1033 and 1073 are decisive in understanding the achievements of Gregory VII. Several lines of influence, especially that of the emperor, Henry III (1039-1056) and of the archdeacon Hildebrand himself played vitally on papal policy in the forty years preceding Gregory's pontificate. More subtle and perhaps not so well known was the directive force of both the written word and the living example of St. Peter Damian in moulding the spiritual and secular policies of the papacy from the accession of Clement II in December, 1046 to his own death in 1072.¹ The present study will attempt an analysis of Peter Damian's guidance of the Popes before and after the death of Henry III. The passing of this illustrious emperor marks a half-way station in the reforming career of Damian; for after 1056 a change in Damian's attitude is discernible in reference to simony and to imperial participation in papal reforms.

Damian's interest in the so-called Roman reform began as early as 1043. At that date he was actually anticipating the efforts of the Popes, since he could hope for little while the

¹ For controlling the intricacies of papal policy during this period as revealed in conciliar enactments, cf. HEFELE-LECLERCQ, *Histoire des conciles*, Paris 1911, IV, 2, pp. 976-1289. The literature on St. Peter Damian continues to grow. For the older material, see *ibid.*, pp. 1131-1133. More recent materials are contained in A. FLICHE, *La réforme grégorienne*, I, Paris 1924; J. P. WHITNEY, *Hildebrandine Essays*, Cambridge 1932; A. FLICHE and V. MARTIN, *Histoire de l'Église*, VII, Paris 1943, 339-340; VIII, Paris 1946, 24 ff.; O. J. BLUM, *St. Peter Damian: His Teaching on the Spiritual Life*, Washington, D. C. 1947, pp. 19-35, 169-176. The writings of Peter Damian, edited by C. Gaetani, *S. Petri Damiani opera omnia*, Rome 1606-1641, 4 vols., are reprinted with corrections by Cardinal Mai in MIGNÉ, *PL*, 144, 145. Citations in the present essay will be made from the Migne edition, excepting the more critical editions of the *Liber gratissimus* and the *Disceptatio synodalis*, ed. L. Heinemann, in *MGH., Libri de lite*, I, 15-94.

luxury-loving Benedict IX was on the throne. Damian was urging Gebhard, the archbishop of Ravenna to greater action against simony. He commended him for the worthy condition of his church and contrasted it with the sorry state of affairs that prevailed at Rome.² During the early pontificates of his career the hermit of Fonte Avellana was definitely espoused to the cause of imperial participation in the reform movement.³ He saw that such Popes as Gregory VI, Clement II, and even Leo IX depended for their success upon the good will of the energetic Henry, and hence his praise of the reforming emperor was almost without bound.⁴ To him the emperor was a second David, another Constantine,⁵ working for the welfare of the Church by fostering the spirit of reform at the very center of Christendom. While Henry was thus disposed, Damian saw no reason to disturb the relations existing between Church and State, nor even to question the privilege of the *patriciatu*s granted to Henry III by Clement II and the Romans in December, 1046.⁶

² *Epist.*, III, 2 (*PL.*, 144, 289 C).

³ Damian's outlook in political affairs has rightly been adjudged as Gelasian due to the friendly personal relations existing between himself and Henry III. In pinning his hopes on that imperial reformer, Damian did not compromise the Church's freedom of action so necessary to spiritual success, nor did he relegate the spiritual to a role subsidiary to the temporal or secular. For a fuller treatment of this better-known phase of Damian's activity, cf. Hans von Schubert, *Petrus Damiani als Kirchenpolitiker*, in *Festgabe von Fachgenossen und Freunden Karl Müller...* dargebracht, Tübingen 1922; Leopold Kühn, *Petrus Damiani und seine Anschauungen über Staat und Kirche*, Karlsruhe 1913; A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, I, London 1927, 184-193; O. J. Blum, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28.

⁴ Cf. *Opusc.* 6; *Liber gratissimus*, cap. 36 (*PL.*, 145, 151-133; *MGH.*, *Libelli de lite*, I, 71f.).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ HEFELE-LECLERCQ, *op. cit.*, pp. 990-991, and the literature there cited. The title of *patricius Romanorum* granted to Henry by Clement II, was later confirmed by Nicholas II and applied to his young son, Henry IV. Cf. Damian's *Opusc.* 4; *Disceptatio synodalis* (*PL.*, 145, 71 B-D; *MGH.*, *Libelli de lite*, I, 80-81). However, in the same work (*PL.*, 145, 79-80; *MGH.*, *ibid.*, p. 87) Damian, speaking as the *defensor Romanae ecclesiae*, states that this title was voided by the actions of the young king's counselors. We quote his assertion; *Ecce compelles me vulgato sermone deperomere, quod ob imperialis palatii reverentiam decreveram silentio pretereire. Sed iuxta vestrae scilicet exactionis instantiam iam profertur in medium opus egregium vestrum, saeculis omnibus inauditum. Rectores enim aulae regiae cum nonnullis Teutonici regni sanctis, ut ita loquar, episcopis, conspirantes contra Romanam aecclesiam, concilium [apud Sinodatem m. iunio vel iulio, a. 1060] collegistis, quo papam quasi per synodalem sententiam condempnastis, et omnia, quae ab eo fuerant statuta, cassare incredibili prorsus audacia presumpstistis. In quo nimirum non dicam iudicio, sed preiudicio id ipsum quoque privilegium, quod regi predictus papa contulerat, si dicere liceat, vacuastis.*

With the Popes themselves Damian's influence was casual but ever pointed in the direction of reform. He tendered them little direct personal advice before 1056, because perhaps of a lack of that intimacy which existed only between Damian and Alexander II. Yet Damian volunteered words of counsel to these popes which at times implied personal guidance and even rebuke. Gregory VI he attempted to stimulate to energetic action against the ungodly bishops of Castello, Fano, and especially Pesaro. The last mentioned diocese was headed by a man, castigated by Damian as adulterous, incestuous, perjured, and rapacious — and of him Damian wished to make a test case. After praising Gregory for his good will and assuring him of the people's confidence, he came to the heart of the problem.

Whether the world is justified in hoping for these things which we have described, the church of Pesaro will give us the first clear proof. For unless the above mentioned church be freed..., every hope that the people had entertained for the renewal of the world will be totally destroyed. All direct their eyes to this one goal, all give ear to this one word. But should this man, involved in so many crimes, be restored to the summit of the episcopate, it would deny completely that any further good could be achieved by the Apostolic See.⁷

This incident gives evidence of Damian's local interest in reform — an attitude which endured until his creation as Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia in 1057.⁸ After the deposition of Gregory VI, Clement II (1046-1047) came to the throne of Peter to further the restoration of papal moral leadership. Damian found no complaint with his actions at Rome, but as before lamented the Pope's lack of interest in the Romagna. « We had hoped », Damian wrote almost plaintively, « that you were about to redeem Israel ».⁹ He reminded Clement that as God's vicar on earth it was his duty to feed his flock and defend it against all adversaries. Yet, as Damian put it, he allowed the bishops of Fano and Osimo to return in pride and triumph to

Nam dum, quicquid ille constituit, vestra sententia decernente destruitur, consequenter etiam id, quod ab eo regi prestitum fuerat, aboletur. Cf. also HEFEE-LE-CLERCO, op. cit., pp. 1149-1151.

⁷ Epist., I, 1 (PL., 144, 206A).

⁸ BLUM, op. cit., p. 29.

⁹ Epist., I, 3 (PL., 144, 208B).

their dioceses even after they had been cursed and excommunicated by his predecessors.¹⁰ Such action assuredly destroyed the hope Damian had nurtured that a wholesouled reform would proceed from Clement's efforts.

At the accession of Leo IX (1049-1054), the former Bishop Bruno of Toul, the Holy See was finally rescued from the dallying policy of the last two regimes. Damian recognized the pre-eminence of this Pope and hastened to add his advice and admonition to further Leo's efforts. In the course of this pontificate Damian completed two of his most important works, dealing with clerical morality.¹¹ In the first of these, the *Liber Gomorrhianus*, Damian gave evidence of his great filial devotion to the Apostolic See — a point that needs stressing in view of the oft-repeated statement that Damian at times gave undue support to the imperial cause in its struggle against the papacy. Thus Damian began the work with an address to Pope Leo IX:

Since it is known from the very mouth of Truth itself that the Apostolic See is the mother of all churches, it is mete that if at any time a doubt should arise in a matter that is seen to pertain to souls, it should be referred to her as to the teacher and to the fountain of heavenly wisdom; so that from this one head may proceed the light of ecclesiastical discipline, by which the darkness of indecision is dispelled and the whole body of the Church is made bright with the clear brilliance of truth.¹²

This work, known for the ruthlessness with which its author pursued incontinent clerics,¹³ is often considered the product of a brilliant but injudicious radical. Yet Damian showed rare tact and uncommon good sense in his conclusion

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Opusc. 7: Liber Gomorrhianus* (PL., 145, 159-190), written in 1049 to combat the unnatural vices of the times as they affected the clergy, and *Opusc. 6: Liber gratissimus* (MGH., *Libelli de lite*, I, 15-75; PL., 145, 99-156). Damian's contribution to the heated controversy on the reordination of simonists. On this problem, see L. SALTET, *Les réordinations*, Paris 1907, pp. 190 ff. Heinemann, the editor of the latter work, noted from a study of the Mss that in 1060 Damian revised the *Liber gratissimus*, first composed in 1052, omitted cap. 16-18, 29-31, and added cap. 41. It may be noted here that cap. 29-31 (MGH., *ibid.*, pp. 58-63) do not appear in the edition of C. Gaetani (1608).

¹² *Opusc. 7: Liber Gomorrhianus*, pref. (PL., 145, 161A).

¹³ It is so alarmingly frank that Karl MIBBT (*Die Publizistik im Zeitalter Gregors VII.*, p. 250) thought that the author's good intentions might be called into question if the work were not known to be Damian's.

addressed to the Pope. He asked Leo to investigate the sacred canons to assure himself that the penalties suggested were not too severe, and to enlist the aid of prudent and spiritual men in making his decision, lest the guilty object to the harshness on an individual critic.¹⁴ Damian's only wish in the matter was that in Leo's pontificate God might completely destroy this « vicious monster » and restore the Church to the full exercise of her rights.¹⁵

There is little evidence that Damian was directly associated with Leo IX or that he made it his business to advise the Pope in person. That he disapproved of the martial accomplishments of the warrior pope in taking up arms against Robert Guiscard is evident, however, from a letter which Damian wrote to Odeoric, the Bishop of Fermo, almost ten years after the incident.¹⁶ He asserted that the clergy were not to retaliate by force of arms if their churches were attacked. Such procedure certainly opposed the instructions of the Gospel and was contrary to the example of the meek Christ who counseled turning the other cheek to the persecutor.¹⁷ Damian explained that the apostles had established the Church on the basis of charity and patience and that its triumph was assured by the sacrifices of the martyrs. Therefore, he contended, if it be unlawful to take up arms in defence of the faith by which the universal Church lives, how may one use the sword to save temporal goods?¹⁸ Nor would Damian be moved by the plea that the saintly Leo had frequently engaged in warlike pursuits. He rejoined that Peter did not receive the primacy because he had denied the Lord, nor was David given the grace of prophecy for having committed adultery. The good or the evil

¹⁴ *Liber Gomorrhianus*, cap. 26 (PL., 145, 189-190).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Cf. J. GAY, *Les papes du XI^e siècle et la chrétienté*, Paris 1926, pp. 155 ff.; *Epist.*, IV, 9 (PL., 144, 315-316).

¹⁷ ...nonnullos movet utrum ecclesiarum rectores expetere vindictam debeant, ut malis mala, more saecularium reddant... Quod mihi plane satis videtur absurdum, ut ipsi Domini sacerdotes attemptent quod turbis vulgaribus prohibent, et quod verbis impugnant, operibus asserant. Quid enim magis Christianae legi probatur esse contrarium quam redihibitio laesianum?... Si enim nobis non licet eadem ipsa quae nobis sunt ablata repetere, quomodo pro his licet ultoriae retributionis vultnus inferre? *Epist.*, IV 9 (PL., 144, 313D; Cod. Vat. lat. 3797, f. 242v).

¹⁸ Si ergo pro fide qua universalis vivit ecclesia, nusquam ferrea corripitur arma conceditur, quomodo pro terrenis ac transitoriis ecclesiae facultatibus loricae acies in gladios debacchantur? *Ibid.* (PL., 144, 316A).

that one performs, he added, must not be judged on the basis of personal merit, but on the quality of the individual act.¹⁹

As Damian grew in age and spiritual stature his approach to the popes was easier and less marked by timidity. In the only extant letter addressed to Victor II (1055-1057) he assumed, perhaps for the first time, the true role of papal monitor. The incident here recorded is only of passing interest, but it reveals the lengths to which Damian would go to guarantee the personal integrity of the Vicar of Christ. The case was one involving the principles of legal justice in which the Pope had failed to defend the rights of a certain Henry who had been despoiled of his possessions upon entering the service of the Church. Damian declared that the injury was inflicted, not so much on Henry, but rather on Christ Himself. He held Victor personally responsible, and upbraided the Pope by placing words of reproach into the mouth of Christ:

Passing over the beginnings, I have raised you, He says, from the common group of clerics to the heights of the priesthood, and have promoted you from the rank of bishop's client to the rights of the episcopal office itself. I have set you up, as it were, to be the father of the emperor, and have directed his heart to show favor to you in preference to all mortal men. I have placed in your hands the keys of the whole universal Church over which I have appointed you as My Vicar, and which I redeemed by the shedding of My Blood. And if these things are not enough, I have also granted you monarchies, and with the death of the king, have even committed to you the authority of the vacant Roman Empire. But I, who have given you such great offices, find neither law nor justice in your proceedings and, as One despised and neglected, depart from your court.²⁰

In the end Damian humbly begged the Pope to render justice to the injured man with the loving solicitude that becomes a priest, but advised him to administer punishment to the wicked with regal severity.²¹ Still he felt the rashness of

¹⁹ *Ad haec si quis objiciat bellicis usibus Leonem se frequenter implicuisse pontificem, verumtamen sanctum esse, dico quod sentio: quoniam nec Petrus ob hoc apostolicum obtinet principatum quia negavit, nec David idcirco prophetiae meretur oraculum quia torum alieni juris invasit; cum mala vel bona non pro meritis considerentur habentium, sed ex propriis debeant qualitatibus judicare.* Ibid. (PL., 144, 316C; cod. Vat. lat. 3797, f. 243v).

²⁰ *Epist., I, 5 (PL., 144, 210A).*

²¹ *Exhibeatur misero cum sacerdotali pietate justitia, prodeat in perversum cum regiae animadversionis severitate censura.* Ibid. (PL., 144, 210C).

his position as self-appointed corrector of the Pope, but justified his action by citing the advice of the Lord to Isaias: « The come and accuse me ».²²

With the accession of Frederick of Lorraine, the former abbot of Monte Cassino, to the papal throne as Stephen IX, the harmony which had existed between the Papacy and the Empire came to an end.²³ Peter Damian assumed a more important role during this pontificate; for at his elevation to the office of Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia in the fall of 1057 his reforming energies were put to work on a much broader plane. No letters exist to enlighten us on the relations between Stephen and Damian, but the letter to his fellow cardinal-bishops, written in November, 1057,²⁴ reveals the grasp he had of reform problems which was now as universal as the Church itself. There can be no doubt that Damian was displeased at his elevation to the cardinalate and that he acceded to Stephen's wishes only from a spirit of obedience.²⁵ In a letter to Stephen's successor, Nicholas II, written in 1060 he speaks of the man who elevated him as « his persecutor », who uncanonically thrust the dignity upon him.²⁶ Yet in spite of his protests, Damian took up the duties of his new office with fiery efficiency and during the two succeeding pontificates stood side by side with Hildebrand and Humbert²⁷ as the guiding spirits of the Roman reform.

Nicholas II, the former Bishop Gerard of Florence, was elected to succeed Stephen IX in June, 1058.²⁸ He was unable to take office, in Rome, however, till January 24, 1059 because

²² ISA., 1, 18.

²³ For a brief but searching treatment of this pontificate, see A. FLICHE, *La réforme grégorienne*, I, 167-174.

²⁴ *Epist.*, II, 1 (PL., 144, 253-259).

²⁵ *Sub obedientiae namque sibi praecepit imperio ut obtemperans fratribus, placide quod jubebatur assumeret; moxque ipsius arripiens dexteram annulo simul dotavit et virga.* JOHN of Lodi, *Vita Petri Damiani*, cap. 14 (PL., 144, 131 A).

²⁶ *...post sanctae memoriae domini Stephani, vestri quidem decessoris, mei autem persecutoris, obitum, ego a me protinus episcopatum non canonice traditum, sed violenter injectum funditus abscidissem.* *Opusc.*, 19: *De abdicatione episcopatus* (PL., 145, 423 B). Hildebrand also shared in Damian's reproaches for the part he played in his appointment to the see of Ostia. Cf. *Epist.*, II, 8 (PL., 144, 273 A); *Opusc.* 20: *Apologeticus ob dimissum episcopatum*, capp. 1, 7 (PL., 145, 444 A, 456 A).

²⁷ Cardinal Humbert disappears from the scene at the death of Nicholas II. He is thought to have died on May 5, 1061. On which, cf. A. FLICHE, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

²⁸ FLICHE, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

of the intrigues of the Roman nobility, led by the counts of Tusculum and Galeria. This group, contrary to the express command of the dying Stephen,²⁹ proceeded with an election and placed John Mincius, Bishop of Velletri, upon the papal throne under the name of Benedict X. In a letter to Henry, Archbishop of Ravenna, written in the winter of 1058,³⁰ Damian gives a considered appreciation of the rival candidates. He portrayed Nicholas as a man of education, vigorous, of unsuspected character, and generous to the poor.³¹ The Bishop of Velletri, on the other hand, seemed so dull and indolent that Damian thought him incapable of devising the coup of which he was the beneficiary. With biting sarcasm, in which he revealed somewhat his frustration and inability to remedy a bad situation, Damian further wrote of him: « If the latter, on the contrary, were able to explain fully for me — I will not say one psalm — but even one verse of a homily, I would hold my tongue and do nothing further against him, I would surrender, kiss his feet, and would no longer call him apostolic but, if you wish, a veritable apostle ».³²

After Nicholas II took office he proved to be as energetic as Damian had predicted. In April, 1059 he called the council of the Lateran where the Pope promulgated the famous Papal Election Decree³³ which precipitated a storm of opposition

²⁹ *Epist.*, III, 4 (*PL.*, 144, 292 A). Cf. FLICHE, *op. cit.*, p. 310; BLUM, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

³⁰ *Epist.*, III, 4 (*PL.*, 144, 291-292). The analysis for this letter, written by the editor, Constantine Gaetani, supposed that Damian was comparing the antipope Honorius II (Cadalous, Bishop of Parma) and Alexander II. But from internal evidence it is clear that Nicholas II and John Mincius are under discussion. The chronology of his whole period is quite-obscure and J. P. WHITNEY (*Hildebrandine Essays*, Cambridge 1932, pp. 129 ff.) seems also to have confused the antipopes Mincius and Cadalous.

³¹ *...de electo hoc mihi videtur, quia bene litteratus est, et vivacis ingenii, sine suspitione castus, in erogandis elemosynis pius.* Ibid. (*PL.*, 144, 292 B).

³² *Ita quippe est homo stolidus, deses ac nullius ingenii, ut credi possit nescisse per se talia machinari... Ille autem econtra, si unum, non dicam psalmi, sed vel homiliae quidem versiculum plene mihi valet exponere, mutum (ed. multum) adversus eum ultra non facio, manus do, plantas osculor, et non modo jam apostolicum, sed et apostolum, si jubetis, appello.* Ibid. (*PL.*, 144, 291 C, 292 B; *Cod. Vat. lat.* 3797, f. 200).

³³ For a discussion of this decree and its literature, see A. MICHEL, *Papstwahl und Königsrecht oder das Papstwahl-Konkordat von 1059*, Munich, 1936; A. FLICHE, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-325; HEFELÉ-LECLERCQ, *op. cit.*, pp. 1139-1166; F. NEUKIRCH, *Das Leben des Petrus Damiani*, Göttingen 1875, pp. 83 ff.; J. VON PFLUGK-HARTUNG, *Die Papstwahlen und das Kaisertum (1046-1328)*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XXVII, 1906, 283-295.

especially from the imperial party in Germany and Italy. Damian's part in the preparation of the decree was probably a minor one — Cardinal Humbert was the responsible formulator of its wording and ideas³⁴ — but Damian had somewhat set the standard and prepared the minds of his contemporaries by his strenuous action at Milan in defense of the rights and privileges of the Roman Church. His mission to that city with Anselm of Lucca was undertaken early in 1059 at the behest of Nicholas and he published his legatine report just as the Lateran council was getting underway.³⁵ That Damian was loyal to the Election Decree is clear from his later writings, especially the *Disceptatio synodalis* in which his discussion of papal elections forms an argument for the papal version of this celebrated document.³⁶

Damian's greatest efforts during the pontificate of Nicholas were directed toward the extirpation of clerical incontinence and simony. Just as the Pope was taking office he addressed to him a letter³⁷ describing the scandalous state of clerical morality which, at the same time, placed the responsibility

³⁴ MICHEL, op. cit., pp. 178-208.

³⁵ Damian's report is contained in his *Opusc. 5: Actus Mediolani de privilegio Romanae ecclesiae* (PL., 145, 89-98), addressed to the archdeacon, Hildebrand. He makes no reference to the election of the Supreme Pontiff but speaks so forcefully of the prerogatives of the Roman Church that any papal decree issued thereafter would flow forth only as a corollary. Thus in his sermon before Guido, the archbishop, and the representatives of the Ambrosian church, he declared: «Therefore no mere earthly authority, but the Word by whom heaven and earth was made, by whom in fine all things were produced, established the Roman Church. It enjoys with certainty His prerogative and is sustained by His authority. Hence it cannot be doubted that whoever withholds from any church its right, commits an injustice; he, however, who attempts to take away from the supreme head of all the churches the privilege bestowed upon the Roman Church, undoubtedly falls into heresy. While the former is termed unjust, the latter must be called a heretic. He indeed violates the faith who strives against her who is the mother of the faith, and is found to be contumacious to Him Who is known to have preferred her to all churches.» Ibid. (PL., 145, 91 C). In this work also Damian coined the phrase which would later have many applications: *Romanam autem ecclesiam solus ipse fundavit, super petram fidei mox nascentis erexit, qui beato vitae aeternae clavigero terreni simul et coelestis imperii iura commisit.* Ibid. (PL. 145, 91 C). On which, cf. J. RIVIÈRE, *Le problème de l'Église et de l'État au temps de Philippe le Bel*, Louvain 1926, pp. 387-393; A. J. CARLYLE, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, IV, London 1927, 45 f.

³⁶ *Opusc. 4* (MGH., *Libelli de lite*, I, 79, 81). Cf. FLICHE, op. cit., pp. 320-322. See also Damian's letter to the antipope, Honorius II (Cadalous), where the papal version of the decree is substantiated (*Epist.*, I, 20, PL., 144, 238 C, 243 B).

³⁷ *Opusc. 17: De caelibatu sacerdotum* (PL., 145, 379-388).

for its correction squarely on Nicholas' shoulders. So pointed were his words of admonition that they may well have been the cause of the Pope's decree against nicolaitism in the Lateran Council of 1059.³⁸ Nicholas was appraised of the existing situation which, after personal investigation, Damian declared to be so far advanced that he could scarcely elicit from offenders a bare promise of reform. The cause, as he saw it, lay with the clerics themselves who despaired of ever living chastely and who, at the same time, flaunted any action that the Holy See might take against them.³⁹ The blame in part lay at the door of canonical laxity which closed an eye to « clerical marriage ». But Damian also intimated that the Church's hesitancy in taking action was due to a fear of offending the interests of laymen.⁴⁰

Damian directed his most stinging barbs against incontinent bishops, but by indirection he meant to arouse the Pope to action. « For as I dare not affront even slightly the supreme bishop of the universal Church, » he stated, « I will briefly address him who is in sin. »⁴¹ Yet he could not forego the opportunity of admonishing the Pontiff and inspiring him with his own burning zeal. He reminded the Pope that, as Christ's Vicar, wielding the fullness of apostolic power, he dare not approach this problem in the listless spirit of the high priest Heli. Nor would he escape blame if, by conniving at the evil of incontinence, he neglected to apply the remedy that should lay it low once for all. That remedy, as Damian suggested, was deposition for those who defiled the beauty of ecclesiastical chastity, so that others, seeing the punishment inflicted for this crime, would be deterred from following in the same path.⁴² He likewise prevailed upon Nicholas to enforce the sanction, decreed earlier by Leo IX, that no one should dare attend the Mass of a priest, listen to the Gospel read by a deacon, or the Epistle by a subdeacon, if he knew that they were

³⁸ Cf. FLICHE, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-337.

³⁹ *Hujus autem capituli nudam saltem promissionem tremulis prolatam labiis difficiliter extorquemus. Primo. quia fastigium castitatis attingere se posse desperant: deinde quia synodali se plectendos esse sententia propter luxuriae vitium non formidant. Opusc. 17: De caelibatu sacerdotum (PL., 145, 379 D).*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (PL., 145, 380 D).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, cap. 2 (PL., 145, 384 B).

⁴² *Ibid.*, cap. 4 (PL., 145, 386 B).

consorting with women.⁴³ This solution was severe; but Damian had seen from experience that neither threats of eternal punishment nor the promises of virtue's reward would impress the clerics with whom he was dealing. As a last resort, the radical cures of deposition and public infamy were required. They spoke the language that the offenders understood, for it deprived them of the office from which they received the livelihood that sustained them in their simulated vedlock. As an added goad to the Pope, Damian reminded him of the wrath of God in store for superiors who failed to discipline their subjects. The man whom sloth deterred from inflicting the salutary wound of penance, Damian concluded, would be delivered into the hands of the devil, the devouring lion of which St. Peter spoke.⁴⁴

The pontificate of Nicholas has been considered the prologue of the drama that unfolded in the reign of Gregory VII. Certainly the councils of 1059 and 1060 laid the foundation for later action against the root of the twin evils of simony and clerical marriage which was lay investiture. At the time of the second Lateran synod Damian gave evidence in his revision of the *Liber gratisimus* that the old problem of reordination had not been solved in the reign of Leo IX.⁴⁵ He stated that in Nicholas' time this question was again raised and broadly discussed, and that finally a decision was reached. It declared that all who in the past had been ordained gratis by simonists could remain in possession of their dignity, but that in the future such ordinations would be prohibited.⁴⁶ Damian could hardly congratulate himself that the ideas for which he had so long been striving had now been vindicated. For Nicholas had to placate two extremes, each of which had a champion in his

⁴³ *Nos plane, quilibet nimirum apostolicae sedis aeditui, hoc per omnes publice concionamur ecclesias, ut nemo missas a presbytero, non evangelium a diacono, non denique epistolam a subdiacono prorsus audiat, quos misceri feminis non ignorat. Opusc. 182: Contra clericorum intemperantiam, cap. 2 (PL., 145, 400 B).*

⁴⁴ *Ibid., cap. 4 (PL., 145, 386 D).*

⁴⁵ Cf. supra, note 11.

⁴⁶ *Tempore autem Nicolai venerabilis papae rursus haec quaestio mota est ac diutius ventilata... ad hunc tandem judicialis sententiae limitem res expedita pervenit, ut hactenus a simoniacis gratuito consecrati in adeptae dignitatis honore persisterent, necdum vero promoti ab illis ad ordinem provehi de cetero licentiam non haberent. Opusc. 6: Liber gratissimus, cap. 41 (PL., 145, 155 D; MGH., Libelli de lite, I, 75).*

official family. In doing so he conceded Damian's view that those freely ordained by simonists retained their priesthood and did not require reordination; that future depositions were to be in the nature of disciplinary acts, and not because the candidate, as Cardinal Humbert held, had received the sacrament of orders invalidly. Yet this much the Pope granted to Humbert — and Damian notes it also somewhat disapprovingly: the concession to past ordinations was given out of compassion rather than from a sense of justice, lest the entire ecclesiastical fabric be destroyed.⁴⁷

In several of his writings to Nicholas Damian deplores the sorry condition of the Church resulting from simony and hints that he must frequently have discussed the matter personally with the Pontiff. He cites the example of St. Bonitus,⁴⁸ the Merovingian Bishop of Clermont, who resigned his bishopric because he had received it from the hands of the king. And yet Damian wondered what the good bishop would have done had he been subjected to the torments which now afflicted the episcopate. He records the sad conditions that prevailed among worldly prelates, placed in office by their own cupidity and by the interests of laymen, who failed to live worthily in their vocation. By force of circumstances they were expected to follow the example of temporal lords, to travel with military retinue, and to surround themselves with all the trappings of an armed camp. They who submitted to such degradation paid dearly for the lands and properties of the Church. Daily they were called upon to provide banquets and make pretentious displays of all kinds. The bishop, Damian lamented, should be the almoner and steward of the poor; but strangers glutted themselves at their groaning tables, while they to whom his whole substance belonged were excluded and wasted away from want and hunger.⁴⁹ Worst of all, he thought, was the evil of squandering the property of the Church under the military arrangements of feudalism, and of disposing of lands and tithes and tenants themselves as benefices to laymen. Such shameful liberality deprived the needy of their sustenance and also de-

⁴⁷ Ibid. (PL., 145, 156 A; MGH., *ibid.*). Cf. also FLICHE, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-340.

⁴⁸ Cf. A. ZIMMERMANN, *Bonitus*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, II, 1931, 463.

⁴⁹ *Opusc.* 20: *Apologeticus ob dimissum episcopatum*, cap. 2 (PL., 145, 445 B-C).

tered the faithful from paying the taxes to which they were obliged.⁵⁰

Time and again throughout the pontificate of Nicholas II Damian attempted to resign his episcopal office and the pastoral responsibilities which it entailed. So insistent were his appeals that some historians have interpreted Damian's action as the result of a personal feud between himself and the Pope, caused by a difference in viewpoint in handling the problems of reform.⁵¹ A complete perusal of Damian's letters of resignation, however, reveals that, far from disparaging the work of the Pope and of his counsellors, Humbert, Stephen, and Hildebrand, Damian had only words of praise for their efforts. The real motive, indeed, for his desired release from office was a distinctly personal one: he pleaded his own unworthiness, his physical infirmity, and his longing for the contemplative life.⁵² Damian also felt, as he wrote to Nicholas the spring of 1060, that the dangers which had beset the Church were now past. Wherefore he implored the Pope to grant his request, to take back his ring and staff, and allow him to retire emeritus to his beloved solitude.⁵³

Yet Damian was not to obtain from Nicholas the release he so much desired. For the next twelve years he remained active in the service of Nicholas' successor, Alexander II, Damian's old friend and fellow-worker, Anselm of Lucca.

During the pontificate of Alexander II (1061-1073) Damian assumed the role of personal counsellor of the Pope. His intimacy with Alexander, especially at the time of their joint mission to Milan in 1059, is undoubtedly responsible for the close friendship that existed during the latter's tenure of office. It explains Damian's copious correspondence with Alex-

⁵⁰ *Inter omnia porro haec mala illud excedit, et diabolicam propemodum videtur aequare nequitiam, quia praediis in militiam profligatis, omnique possessione terrarum, insuper etiam et decimae ac plebes adduntur in beneficium saecularibus. Quae profecto liberalitas inhonesta, et indigentibus adimit unde vivant, et dioecsanos etiam deterret, ut decimas non persolvent. Ibid., cap. 3 (PL., 145, 445 D).*

⁵¹ Cf. A. HAUCK, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, III, Leipzig 1920, 682 ff.

⁵² *Opusc.* 19; *De abdicatione episcopatus*, cap. 5 (PL., 145, 432 B).

⁵³ *Cum igitur sub sancto pontificatu vestro jucunda pace universalis ecclesia patiatur, canis meis et grandaevae jam senectuti quaero requies non negetur. Quapropter ob remissionem omnium peccatorum meorum, quae nequiter perpetravi, cedo jure episcopatus, et per hunc annulum (virgam enim tulistis) desperata deinceps omni repetendi querela, renuntio: utrumque etiam vobis monasterium reddo: et ut quiescendi municipium veterano et emerito militi permittatur, imploro. Ibid., pref. (PL., 145, 423 C).*

ander and the fact that he was more liberal with advice and admonition to him than to any of the Pope's predecessors.⁵⁴ The opening of Alexander's pontificate was sullied by the schism occasioned by Cadalous, the Bishop of Parma, who, with the assistance of the German court, attempted to gain the papacy for his own benefit and that of the imperial party.⁵⁵ Immediately Damian sprang to the defense of his friend and with typical fierceness flayed Cadalous for his prostitution of the highest and holiest office in Christendom.⁵⁶ He was all the more opposed to the intruder because through simony he had engaged the support of his abettors. In the summer of 1062, shortly before the meeting of the council of Augsburg which examined the case of the rival candidates, Damian composed his *Disceptatio synodalis* as a further defense of the cause of Alexander.⁵⁷ With the later's victory, Damian could rejoice that virtue had triumphed over vice, that the Election Decree had been vindicated, and that the Church could now pursue in peace the task of reforming the evils which yet remained to plague her.

Typical of Damian's relations with Alexander II was the occasion on which he wrote to him about several irregularities in the discipline of the Church which, in his opinion, needed correction. The first of these involved the indiscriminate exercise of the Church's coercive power in appending anathemas to any and all decrees.⁵⁸ Damian saw in this usage a danger

⁵⁴ Nine of Damian's extant letters are addressed to Alexander II. Six of them (*Epist.* I, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, *PL.*, 144, 213-237) are found in their correct position among the other letters of Damian, while three others because of their length were edited by Raynaud in 1623 as *opuscula* and *vitae*. These works are: *Opusc.* 23: *De brevitate vitae Romanorum pontificum* (*PL.*, 145, 471-480); *Opusc.* 24: *Contra clericos regulares proprietarios* (*ibid.*, 145, 480-490); *Vita sancti Radulphi et s. Dominici Loricati* (*ibid.*, 144, 1009, 1024). *Opusc.* 20: *Apologeticus ob dimissum episcopatum* (*ibid.*, 145, 441-456) was mistakenly identified by C. Gactani as a work sent to Alexander II. From internal evidence it is clear that this work was written to Nicholas II in the winter of 1058.

⁵⁵ Cf. A. FLICHE, *La réforme grégorienne*, pp. 343-350.

⁵⁶ *Epist.* I, 20, 21 (*PL.*, 144, 237-254).

⁵⁷ *MGH.*, *Libelli de lite*, I, 76-94; *PL.*, 145, 67-87. This work reveals Damian in the role of peacemaker, which in part explains the apparent weakness of his defense of the privileges of the Roman Church. That he could speak his mind even here is evident from the sharp exchange of words with the *regius advocatus* in which, dropping diplomatic language, he spoke plainly against the king's counselors (v. supra, note 6). Yet, the general tenor of the *Disceptatio* in Gelasian, an attempt to conciliate the *Imperium* and the *Sacerdotium*. Cf. especially the conclusion of this work (*MGH.*, *ibid.*, pp. 93 f; *PL.*, 145, 86 f).

⁵⁸ *Praeterea duo quaedam apud apostolicam sedem frequens usus obtinuit, quae si sancta prudentia vestra iudicat, ut nobis videtur, omnino digna sunt corrigi.*

to souls since no distinction was made between greater and lesser offenses, for all were equally punished by the same grave sentence. In civil law, he noted, the penalty was apportioned to the crime; that for some crimes a man was enslaved, for others his property was confiscated, or a fine imposed. But in ecclesiastical procedure the culprit is punished by the loss of God Himself, the Author of all good things.⁵⁹ Another irregularity, as Damian saw it, was the baneful influence of the pseudo-Isidorian decretals which forbade a cleric or a layman to bring complaint against his bishop. That Damian used these forgeries in several of his works as if they were genuine is undoubtedly true. However, it now seems untenable to claim, as several authors have declared, that he accepted these documents in their entirety without the slightest suspicion of their authenticity.⁶⁰ Certainly, the penitential canons passing under the name of *Canones Apostolorum*, and included in part in the Forged Decretals, were repudiated by Damian as spurious.⁶¹ Yet, aside from the question whether he suspected even a major portion of the forgeries — and Fournier and Le Bras state that he did not⁶² — Damian was nevertheless opposed to the spirit in which they defended the bishop, right or wrong, at the expense of the general discipline of the Church. His argument against the immunity of bishops rested on the example of St. Peter who, although holding the highest office in the Church, submitted to correction from his inferiors. Damian consequently begged Alexander II to delete this pernicious custom from the body of ecclesiastical discipline, and recommended that bishops be subjected to the same control from above as was exercised over other less exalted members of the faithful.⁶³

Unum, quia cunctis fere decretalibus paginis anathema subjungitur... Dicitur enim quisquis haec, vel illa non fecerit; sive certe quisquis hoc, quod superius statutum est, irritum duxerit, vel in aliquo violaverit, anathema sit. Epist., I, 12 (PL., 144, 214 D).

⁵⁹ Ibid. (PL., 144, 215 B).

⁶⁰ ...alterum, quia cujuslibet ecclesiae filius, sive clericus sit sive laicus, exponere proprii excessus antistitis prohibetur. Ibid. (PL., 144, 215 A). Cf. J. P. WHITNEY, op. cit., pp. 140 f.; FLICHE, op. cit., p. 261; O. J. BLUM, op. cit., pp. 173-175, where this question is treated more in detail.

⁶¹ *Opusc. 7: Liber Gomorrhianus*, cap. 12 (PL., 145, 172 A).

⁶² *Histoire des collections canoniques en occident depuis les fausses décrétales jusqu'au Décret de Gratien*, II, Paris, 1932, 6 ff.

⁶³ *Excludatur ergo ab ecclesiastica disciplina perniciosae consuetudinis regula, tollatur haec subterfugii versuta calliditas: ut is qui tam perversis audacis superbiae*

A discussion of Peter Damian's views on simony and lay investiture will serve as a summary of his relations with the Papacy during the last ten years of his life. It may also be considered a prologue to the career of Gregory VII. One thing seems clear from a reading of Damian's texts on simony: he does not distinguish sharply between simony and lay investiture. On the contrary, it would appear that he opposed the idea of separating these two concepts and grouped the qualities of both under the one word, simony. An insight into his thought on the problem may be gained from a study of his letters written after 1061, especially his communications to Alexander II.⁶⁴ He described for the Pope a situation existing at the court of Duke Godfrey of Lorraine, where the duke's two chaplains entered a heated discussion with him on the subject of simony. They contended that one who received a bishopric from the king or from any other prince in view of the payment of a sum of money, was not to be convicted of simony, if only he received his consecration freely. Under these conditions, they stated, one does not buy the priesthood but the possession of lands; and a price is placed on that by which they become rich, but they acquire gratis that by which they become priests.⁶⁵ This is, indeed, an indirect approach to the question of investiture, for it states the problem only from the viewpoint of the cleric, and does not consider the legality or illegality of the act of the king or prince.

Damian answered these statements by disallowing the distinction made by the chaplains. It was no more acceptable, he said, than that which held that a man buying a field, acquired the earth but not the crop which it produced; or, that a kidnapper or slaver, who dispose of a man, sells his flesh but not his soul. At the same time he took it as self-evident that every investiture by a layman involved the practice of simony.

Tell me, I say, what was the nature of this investiture and what was the symbol which the prince placed in your hands? Indeed, if it

allegationibus utitur, immunitatem commissi piaculi non lucretur... Et qui censoriam super alios conculit virgam, ipse quoque super se vigoris ecclesiastici sentiat disciplinam. Epist., I, 12 (PL., 144, 218 B).

⁶⁴ *Epist., I, 13 (PL., 144, 219-223); Opusc. 22: Contra clericos aulicos (PL., 145, 463-472); Epist., V, 11 (PL., 144, 358-367).*

⁶⁵ *Epist., I, 13 (PL., 144, 219 B).*

were a rod or a simple staff, I readily congratulate you because, as you assert, you were admitted, not into the episcopate but into his service as a steward. Therefore it is now not necessary that you be subject to the bishop who is to be preferred to you. But if the lay prince received or was promised money and gave you the pastoral staff, how can you impudently excuse this trafficking in episcopal offices? For unless by this investiture the prince bestowed upon you the title of the episcopal office which was to follow, the future consecrator would not administer to you the sacrament by the imposition of hands. Through that, therefore, which you venally received, you were consequently promoted to the episcopate. And hence, even though the imposition of hands was not performed corruptly, but gratis; nevertheless, on your part it was not free from the stain of venality.⁶⁶

Clearly Damian recognized that the rite of lay investiture was concerned with more than the actual transfer of temporalities into the hands of the candidate. Writing of the same chaplains, he says:

Still I return to investiture and question you who glory in having received, not the Church, but the estates of the Church. Indeed, when he placed the staff in your hands, did he say: 'Receive the lands and the wealth of this Church,' or rather, which is certain, 'Receive the Church'? If you received the goods of the Church without the Church, you are schismatic and sacrilegious, you who separate the goods of the Church from the Church, and violently turn to your own rightful use that which belongs to another. If you have received the Church, which you can in no way deny, without doubt you have become simoniacal and venality made you a heretic before the imposition of hands rendered you consecrate. For then you most evidently bought consecration when you received for money that, on account of which you were to be advanced to consecration.⁶⁷

Damian's advice to Alexander II in dealing with this question was characteristic of his reforming temperament. He suggested that, so far as possible, no one be permitted to become or remain a bishop who had evidently paid for his position, or, which he thought more damnable, who had furthered his cause by courting curial favor. « God forbid, » he concluded, « that he should obtain the spiritual dignity of ecclesiastical prominence, who has fostered the favor of a secular prince in striving for a prelacy ».⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Epist.*, I, 13 (PL., 144, 220 B).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (PL., 144, 221 A).

⁶⁸ *Unum in calce hujus epistolae clementiae vestrae auribus suggero: ut in quantum facultas suppetit, nunquam vel fieri vel esse permittat episcopum, quem*

Damian's approach to the subject of lay investiture, it seems safe to say, was cautious but at the same time hopeful. Only once in his writings did he take cognizance of the illegality of this institution, and that in a way which lacked firmness. Writing to Alexander of a nearly canonical condemnation of simony, he said:

Here also we must note that, although [the text] first made mention of bishops, it immediately added kings and all higher powers, so that this heresy must be avoided, not only by bishops who impose hands upon those to be consecrated, but also by secular princes who, although unjustly, nevertheless in some way hand over the churches to future rectors.⁶⁹

His usual advice in the matter was tempered by a fear that the secular powers would furiously oppose a headlong attack, and by the hope that in the end an understanding might be reached between the *Imperium* and the *Sacerdotium*. Typical of this advice were the words addressed to Boniface, the Cardinal-Bishop of Albano:

Princes also and the disposers of churches must especially beware lest they bestow the sacred places freely and recklessly, heedless of the divine judgment, and to their own confusion disrupt the order of divine law and the statutes of the sacred canons. For whoever disposes the Church of God without regard for order, but by force, brings down upon his head all the evils of him who was promoted to office.⁷⁰

Whether Damian's was the wisest policy is a matter open to discussion. But it is perhaps significant that the tremendous clash of Church and State occurred only after St. Peter Damian's death.

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ad honoris culmen constiterit ascendisse per praemium; vel etiam, quod damnable est, per curialis obsequii famulatum. Absit enim ut qui praelationis ambitu saecularem coluit principem, spiritalem ecclesiastici culminis obtineat dignitatem. Ibid. (PL., 144, 221 A).

⁶⁹ *Hic quoque notandum, quod cum praemisisset episcopis, illico subdidit, regibus et omnibus sublimioribus potestatibus, ut non modo cavenda sit haeresis illa solis duntaxat episcopis, qui consecrandis manus imponunt, sed et saecularibus quoque principibus, qui licet injuste, aliquo modo tamen ecclesias futuris rectoribus tradunt.* Ibid. (PL., 144, 222 D).

⁷⁰ *Opusc. 22: Contra clericos aulicos, cap. 4 (PL., 145, 468 D).*