

# **“HER ACCOMPLICE IN MUCH EVIL-DOING”:**

The role of emotion in violent female responses to anger, disrespect, grief, and jealousy in Gregory of Tours’ *Libri historiarum*, and their impact on gendered representations

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates whether certain emotions experienced by women in Gregory of Tours' *Libri historiarum* contribute to a gendered construction of their identity. Focusing upon the responses to anger, disrespect, grief and jealousy, the research determines whether these emotions, or the violent acts which occur as a consequence of them, are deliberately conveyed by Gregory with regards to the individuals' gender. A utilisation of Emotional History and Gender Studies to analyse certain scenes and events within Gregory's narrative, suggests that the emotions do not seek to cast judgements on the women because of their gender, but does vilify (or praise) emotions because of the social, moral and political factors influencing Gregory's literary purpose, and his personal motivations. The impact of emotions on the identity and representation of Late Antique women, particularly Merovingian women, is a field in which much research is needed. This dissertation determines whether the way in which emotions and gender function in accordance with one another in the literature reflects the author and the social world in which they were written.



## DECLARATION

I, ....., certify that this thesis contains no material that has been submitted for any degree or diploma to any university or institution.

Date:.....

Signed:.....





To my father who kept stealing my sources to read,  
To my brother, Alex, who made me overanalyse my every sentence,  
To my brother, Cameron, who wrangled my formatting terrors,  
To my mother who made sense of my words and reassured me,  
To the friends who kept my head firmly attached to my shoulders,  
To Macquarie University for the opportunity,  
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To my supervisor, Associate Professor Andrew Gillett, for helping me navigate every  
problem and thought, especially when the ant hills seems liked mountains

– thank you.



## ABBREVIATIONS

Greg. Tur., <i>LH</i>	<i>Libri historiarum</i> Thorpe, L., <i>Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks</i> (London, 1974).
<i>LHF</i>	<i>Liber Historiae Francorum</i> Bachrach, B. S., <i>Liber Historiae Francorum</i> (Lawrence, 1973).
<i>MGH SRM I</i>	Arndt, W., and Krusch, B., <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i> , Vol. 1 (Hanover, 1965).
PLREIIIA	Martindale, J. R., ed., <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Volume 3, AD 527-641</i> , Volume IIIA (Cambridge University Press, 1992).
PLREIIIB	Martindale, J. R., ed., <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Volume 3, AD 527-641</i> , Volume IIIB (Cambridge University Press, 1992).
Ven. Fort., <i>carm.</i>	George, J., trans., <i>Venantius Fortunatus : Personal and Political Poems</i> (Liverpool University Press, 1995).
	Poem V.3 - Pucci, J., trans., <i>Venantius Fortunatus, Poems to Friends</i> (Indianapolis, 2010).



## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

One of the most important ways human beings perceive each other is through the strength and variety of their emotions. Emotions, when represented as either positive or negative experiences by a set group of peoples, tell us much about society's perception of emotional legitimisation. The source and social construction of emotional states also clearly show that their "consequences are an inseparable part of the social process"<sup>1</sup>. It is the aim of this thesis to assess how the portrayal of emotions and their consequences affect the representation of women in Merovingian Gaul. The following analysis will focus on Gregory of Tours' *Libri Historiarum*<sup>2</sup>, and the manner in which he represents certain emotions in women, what these emotions reveal about the identity and experience of Merovingian women, and how the violent consequences of those emotions come into play<sup>3</sup>. In addition, it will establish whether or not Gregory's representation of female emotional experience in any way contributes to a gendered representation.

As the focus of this investigation is upon the lives of women, feminism and gender studies have naturally influenced this dissertation. While it does not directly address feminist theory, it will base feminist understandings in order to address gendered representation. As this thesis investigates female representation and what is meant by gendered representation in Merovingian Gaul, modern gender theory will crucially underpin the work.

For example, the manner in which one would consider the author of the text and how they may or may not legitimise emotions and violence will inherently be shaped by an understanding of gender theory. Gender theory proscribes that gendered identities

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<sup>1</sup> Franks, D. D., 'The Bias Against Emotions in Western Civilization' in Valentine, C. G., *et al*, *Sociology of Emotions: Syllabi and Instructional Materials* (New York, 1999), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter simply referred to as *LH*.

<sup>3</sup> The title for this thesis "Her Accomplice in Much Evil-Doing" is a quote from Greg. Tur., *LH* VII.15. Her accomplice is in reference to Queen Fredegund's ally Audo, however, Fredegund is upset and raging after hearing about the maltreatment of her daughter, Rigunth. Her emotions in this scene are a focus of her character, and are therefore an ally (in addition to Audo), forming part of her characterisation and vilification.

are fluid and should be considered on a spectrum, as any identity is a product of multiple political and cultural inequalities constructed in a specific historical context<sup>4</sup>. The approach undertaken will use a 'gendered lens' through which to observe the disparities between the social roles of Merovingian men and women.

The overall academic discourse on the lives of Merovingian women has benefited greatly from investigations into not only the agency in their lives<sup>5</sup>, but also the manner in which their image has been conveyed within the literature<sup>6</sup>. Thomas notes that the representation of gender roles used by Gregory helped to create a normative representation of women by manipulating contemporary expectations of gendered roles<sup>7</sup>. The intent of this dissertation is to build upon interpretation and determine whether Gregory's representation of female gender is impacted by his portrayal of emotions.

Using Emotional History<sup>8</sup> in the understanding of Merovingian and Late Antique society has already proven beneficial in other areas of research<sup>9</sup>, however while the violence and anger of women has been addressed, other emotions have not extensively been considered.

In order to carry out these aims, three particular emotions will be assessed as part of certain narratives within Gregory of Tours' *Libri historiarum*. Firstly, the revolt at the Nunnery of the Holy Cross in Poitiers in 590 shows how a sense of injustice and maltreatment can lead to feelings of anger, and how the ensuing violence characterises these women. The following chapter, however, looks at the grief of Fredegund and her

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<sup>4</sup> Farmer, S., *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. ix.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas addresses the importance of a gendered perspective for Merovingian women while focusing on Brunhilde – Thomas, E. J., '*The Second Jezebel: Representations of the sixth-century Queen Brunhild*', doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow (2012).

<sup>6</sup> Macdonald, E., '*Representations of Women in Sidonius Apollinaris and Gregory of Tours: Coniuges et Reginae*', doctoral thesis, University of Ottawa (2002).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, '*The Second Jezebel*', p. 188.

<sup>8</sup> For a full description and understanding of Emotional History see page 13 in the following Literature Review.

<sup>9</sup> Rosenwein, B. H., *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 2007).

husband Chilperic at the death of their sons and how that grief characterises their violent actions of vengeance. Lastly, the emotion of jealousy expressed through the marital affairs of Chlothar I's sons shortly after his death brings into perspective the role of jealousy within a court environment, and how that emotion prompts a negative violent mechanism.

All three literary examples will be considered in reference to the specific emotions mentioned. How the sources demonstrate these emotions and their transition to anger, and the violent actions that follow will also be examined. Each of these events and chapters are important to understanding the treatment of women, and in some circumstances, how they directly compare to male representation. Whether that treatment plays a gendered role, or whether it is the emotions themselves that are considered negative or the violent action that occurs as a result will be considered.

While Merovingian Gaul is a comparatively smaller discipline, the significance of this research lies in its approach and what it reveals about Merovingian women. Investigating the manner of emotions from a gendered viewpoint will provide a new perspective of the limited primary literature of the discipline and help to determine whether or not this approach is beneficial when looking at a small subset of society through the eyes of an outsider<sup>10</sup>.

## Literature Review

The content of this thesis requires an academic review of several areas in order to understand the content, as well as the theoretical and methodological approaches to the question. Most pertinent is the understanding of the periodisation in which Merovingian Gaul lies, feminism and gender history, and the discipline of Emotional History. Each of these areas have helped to shape not only the approach taken within, but the academic influence of scholarly discourse.

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<sup>10</sup> While Gregory himself is not necessarily a contemporary 'outsider', he is not a woman, nor the one directly experiencing the emotions, and that is all that is meant here.

## Periodisation: Late Antiquity, the Early Middle Ages and Merovingian Gaul

Periodisation has affected academic approaches towards Merovingian Gaul, but that periodisation has also evolved in recent decades. Merovingian Gaul traverses two major sub-disciplines of Ancient History – that of Late Antique studies, and that of the Early Middle Ages. The Early Middle Ages has its origins in the works of the Italian Bruni, who challenged the chronicle tradition in the 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>. Bruni's focus on Florentine origins set the groundwork for understanding the past as a precursor to modern Europe, and as such, it has been understood in terms of its relationship to European origins. More specifically, the period of the Early Middle Ages emphasises Merovingian Gaul's importance to the origin of French history<sup>12</sup>. The period also contextualises Western Europe's rise to dominance, an element that the period of Late Antiquity inherently contests<sup>13</sup>.

In contrast, the discipline of Late Antiquity is less than 50 years old. While German scholars had been using the term since roughly 1901<sup>14</sup>, and other scholars using the English equivalent in the six decades following, it wasn't until Brown<sup>15</sup> published a book in 1971 entitled *The World of Late Antiquity* that the discipline developed. His definition of Late Antiquity focuses upon the years 250 – 800 CE, and encompasses the Mediterranean world. While many series, overviews, and books have been published under this discipline of Late Antiquity, there are only two academic journals dedicated to its study – *L'Antiquité Tardive* first published in 1993<sup>16</sup>, and the *Journal of Late Antiquity* in only 2008<sup>17</sup>. This new genre intends to distance this historical period from an even older interpretation that it was an era of social, political and cultural decline –

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<sup>11</sup> Ianziti, G., 'Challenging Chronicles: Leonardo Bruni's History of the Florentine People', in Dale, S., et al, (eds), *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, (Pennsylvania State University, 2007), p. 250.

<sup>12</sup> To understand more recent nationalism implications in Merovingian research, see – Effros, B., *Uncovering the Germanic Past: Merovingian Archaeology in France 1830-1914* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Gillett, A., Review, *The Medieval Review*, 07/10/12.

<sup>14</sup> James, E., 'The Rise and Function of the Concept "Late Antiquity"' *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), p. 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, P., *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* (London, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> *Brepols Publishers, Antiquité Tardive* – Accessed 11/6/14  
<http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=AT>.

<sup>17</sup> *Project Muse, Journal of Late Antiquity* – Accessed 11/6/14  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_late\\_antiquity/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_late_antiquity/).



‘The Dark Ages’. This misinterpretation has been propagated by many key ancient historians. Of particular note is the renowned Edward Gibbon whose seminal 18<sup>th</sup> century work *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, encourages the idea that Rome, and thereby Mediterranean culture was unravelling and becoming rude in nature<sup>18</sup>. Robertson, a contemporary of Gibbon, helped perpetuate this idea of an absence of culture and art<sup>19</sup>. While modern scholars, from both Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, are far more wary and critical of the centuries-old attitude towards the end of the Roman world, there is no denying that the imagery has lasted.

Notably for this thesis, this imagery and the interpretation of Merovingian literature have been significantly altered in the last few decades. German scholars Breukelaar<sup>20</sup>, Heinzelmann<sup>21</sup> and Goffart<sup>22</sup>, focussing upon the works of Gregory of Tours, have helped to challenge previous thoughts about the literary culture of Merovingian Gaul. Thoughts that often described Gregory’s literary structure as “chaos [that was] reflected in the disorder of his narrative”<sup>23</sup>. By reassessing Gregory, they have helped us to move past negative connotations of Merovingian culture and writing.

It is not, however, solely the academic world that is attempting to enlighten this period. A current exhibition at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in the Netherlands is advertising their Merovingian exhibition as “The Golden Middle Ages”<sup>24</sup>. The ‘dark age’ perceptions of violence have also been subject to scholarly debate as Medievalists attempt to understand the varying perspectives on violence: those of the modern

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<sup>18</sup> Bowerstock, G. W., et al, *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Post-Classical World* (Harvard University Press, 1999), p. ix.

<sup>19</sup> Ward-Perkins, B., *The Fall of Rome: And the End of Civilization*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Breukelaar, A. H. B., *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: The Histories of Gregory of Tours interpreted in their historical context* (Göttingen, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Heinzelmann, M., *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Goffart, W., *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon)* (Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> Thierry, A., *Récits des temps mérovingiens* (Paris, 1856), p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Rijksmuseum van Oudheden - *Golden Middle Ages Exhibition* - Accessed 11/6/14 <http://www.rmo.nl/english/current/exhibitions/golden-middle-ages>.

scholar; those of the medieval individual; and those of the medieval author<sup>25</sup>. Such scholarship also highlights the modern thoughts on violence as a catalyst for change or evidence for feudalism<sup>26</sup>, and how older historians viewed it as an element of primitive barbarism<sup>27</sup>. Current scholarship on Merovingian violence continues this trend of understanding the expression of violence, of attempting to understand violence, despite the limited literary material, and the frequency with which violence is demonstrated<sup>28</sup>. Fouracre additionally criticises the interpretation that Merovingian violence could erupt at any time<sup>29</sup>.

Late Antiquity, the period in which this thesis is situated, encompasses the whole Mediterranean area. Due to its periodisation, students of the Early Middle Ages have in the past been forced to ignore the complications of the fall of the later Roman empire<sup>30</sup>, meaning they often prefer to approach the period through a discontinuity with the Roman world, rather than one of continuity. The application of continuity for Early Medievalists is sometimes optional<sup>31</sup>. It is important for research into Merovingian Gaul to be aware of the various elements of the Roman world that impacted law, politics and society, and how these influenced the shaping of the culture and its institutions of behaviour as well as the behaviours in other contemporary societies. Much of Merovingian Gaul's scholarship still remains in the Early Middle Ages, and many scholars consider themselves scholars of both. James<sup>32</sup> is a well respected Early Medievalist whilst still advocating for Late Antiquity. However, by analysing Merovingian Gaul in terms of its Late Antique context it enables an understanding of commonalities across the Mediterranean and analyses cultural, political and social phenomena. Despite the benefits of a Late Antique perspective, the discipline itself is not

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<sup>25</sup> Meyerson, M. D., et al., *A Great Effusion of Blood?: Interpreting Medieval Violence* (University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Halsall, G., 'Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West: an Introductory Survey', in Halsall, G., ed., *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Meyerson, *A Great Effusion of Blood?*, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Fouracre, P., 'Attitudes towards violence in seventh- and eighth-century Francia' in Halsall, G., ed., *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> Fouracre, 'Attitudes towards violence', p. 60.

<sup>30</sup> Gillett, Review.

<sup>31</sup> Wickham, C., *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 11-14.

<sup>32</sup> James, 'The Rise and Function of the Concept of "Late Antiquity"', pp. 20-30.

one of the main focuses Late Antique scholarship has taken. The three main handbooks of Late Antiquity<sup>33</sup>, do not have significant sections on the Western Kingdoms after their establishment, particularly Merovingian Gaul.

### Feminism and Gender History

As this thesis centres around female expressions of violence, understanding the nature of female centred scholarship is essential. Like other medieval women's studies, this developed from the feminist movements of the 1970s and 1980s<sup>34</sup>. Oakley's *Sex, Gender and Society* published in 1972<sup>35</sup> helped launch a gender-focused re-evaluation<sup>36</sup>, a trend that continued well into the 1990s with post structuralism encouraging new feminist thinking at the hands of seminal scholars such as Butler and built on the backs of many European – largely French – scholars<sup>37</sup>. Butler's own understanding of representation and that is a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy is a normative function of language<sup>38</sup>, has important bearing for the direction of this thesis. Many of the women represented by Gregory have political purposes and understanding this representation is essential in understanding their identity. However, Feminism and indeed Women's Studies have a problematic history and relationship with the study of Merovingian Gaul.

Prior to the Feminism of the 1970s, the scholarly focus upon Merovingian women was to highlight exemplary woman<sup>39</sup>. This was part of a long historical tradition, one that focused especially upon queens and saints and often used to highlight more modern

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<sup>33</sup> Bowerstock, G. W., et al., *A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Harvard University Press, 2000); Johnson, S. F., ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 2012); Rousseau, P., ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Little, L. K., & Rosenwein, B. H., eds, *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings* (Malden, Mass., 1998), p. 213.

<sup>35</sup> Oakley, A., *Sex, Gender and Society* (London, 1972).

<sup>36</sup> Smith, J. M. H., 'Introduction: gendering the early medieval world', in Brubaker, L., & Smith, J. M. H., *Gender in the Medieval World: East and West, 300 – 900* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Butler, J., *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Abingdon, 2010), p. x.

<sup>38</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Little, & Rosenwein, *Debating the Middle Ages*, p. 215.

ideals. This tradition under a feminist influence unfortunately brought about what scholars see as the search for a "Golden Age"<sup>40</sup>. This Golden Age interpretation is one of two directions feminist application has taken on Merovingian studies; the second depicts women as victims who are void of agency. One author to note for this period is Wemple, whose *Women in Frankish Society*<sup>41</sup> is a synthesis of everyday knowledge of these women. While her work remains a detailed groundwork, the book is now thirty years old, and its Golden Age-like interpretation has influenced scholarly thought. Hen draws attention to the need for scepticism and awareness when reading Wemple as her work conjures up the image of powerful and influential women in all sectors of society; a representation Hen sees as influenced by Wemple's modern feminist context<sup>42</sup>.

In contrast, Merovingian history has also been affected by the tendency to portray women as the victim. Gradowicz-Pancer follows the thesis that female violence and anger in Merovingian Gaul was an essential part of politics, and a way of legitimising respect and power. Her work is the only academic publication that solely addresses female violence and this thesis intends to build upon her work. However, Gradowicz-Pancer believes that feminist scholarship tends to "conceive of women only in the role of victims"<sup>43</sup>. Her avoidance of victimising these women is a common stance among historians<sup>44</sup>.

Both Hen's and Gradowicz-Pancer's observations regarding the pitfalls of mixing Feminism with Merovingian women have merit. We cannot accurately assess with the extant evidence any definitive level of agency, nor does it fall under the aims of this dissertation. However, Feminism is still readily used in the study of Late Antiquity, and there are many online academic societies centred around developing and improving its field, for example the academic resource *Feminae: Medieval Woman and Gender Index*<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Little, & Rosenwein, *Debating the Middle Ages*, p. 215.

<sup>41</sup> Wemple, S. F., *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500 to 900* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

<sup>42</sup> Hen, Y., *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, AD 481-751* (Leiden, 1995), p. 123.

<sup>43</sup> Gradowicz-Pancer, N., 'De-gendering female violence: Merovingian female honour as an 'exchange of violence' *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002), p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Little, & Rosenwein, *Debating the Middle Ages*, p. 215.

<sup>45</sup> *Feminae: Medieval Woman and Gender Index* – Accessed 10/9/14  
<http://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/Default.aspx>.

Gender History has had a significant impact upon Late Antiquity. Gender is the central element of social relationships based on culturally perceived differences between the sexes, and their various implications<sup>46</sup> and is a performative and hermeneutic category that within texts provides various veiled meanings<sup>47</sup>. Gender has also been adopted in scholarship often to set a neutral tone<sup>48</sup>, but with regards to this research, gender plays a substantial role in maintaining awareness of the presence of not only modern but ancient perceptions of gender, while avoiding in-depth deconstruction. Gregory himself does not focus upon the differences between male and female morals, although they are on occasion present in his turns of phrase. The interpretation of gender within his material will therefore rely on when he (or similarly his contemporaries) reference characteristics that are associated with that person's gender. However, focusing on gender does not always guarantee objective social interpretation. Brożyna describes the queens of Merovingian Gaul as being “wholly dependent on the whim of their husbands<sup>49</sup>” which is a subconscious example of the victim approach previously mentioned. The critical questioning of women as a cohesive historical subject, object or political identity in the mid-1980s, was a factor in the furthered use of the term 'gender' as was the links between sex, gender and biology in feminist thought and was argued by some scholars to take preference in order to establish historical categories<sup>50</sup>.

The complications regarding Feminism evolved into 'Gender History'. For the parameters of this research, gender is then seen as the social and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity, in order to avoid the problems associated with Feminism, while providing a more theoretically sound environment in which to consider Merovingian women along with, rather than aside from, their masculine contemporaries. The way in which gender is approached and considered is of

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<sup>46</sup> Brożyna, M. A., *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages: A Medieval Source Documents Reader* (Jefferson, 2005), p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> L'Estrange, E., & More, A., eds, *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600-1530* (Farnham, 2011) p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Brożyna, *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Brożyna, *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> Canning, K., *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 8-9.

significance for this thesis, due to its focus upon a gendered social demographic. Clearer gendered paradigms allows for more theoretically and historically aware approaches to Merovingian women, and their social behaviours.

### Emotional History

Thirdly, Emotional History is the methodological discipline through which this research will investigate emotions and violence in relation to its social environment. Stearns and Stearns propose the use of the term 'emotionology' for what they define as "the attitudes or standards that a society, or definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression and ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct"<sup>51</sup>. This definition coincides with the communal emotional aims of not only Emotional History, but also the motivations of this thesis and the way it highlights institutions within Merovingian culture that might explain the violent responses.

Emotional History is also a recent approach. The analysis of emotions began to take focus in the 1940s with Febvre who in sum believed that emotions were intimately related to societies' behaviours and intellectual natures<sup>52</sup>. Emotional History has become a culmination of other disciplines, most significantly it incorporates sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Subsequently, where this research focus situates, there are multiple different disciplinary approaches that can be taken to include philosophy, musicology, art history or literary interpretation. Emotional History has significantly been utilised by scholars in the area of Late Antiquity/Early Middle Ages, thanks largely to Rosenwein<sup>53</sup>. Emotional History has proved beneficial in this area of history. By understanding the varying uses of previously perceived expressions of anger such as cursing in religious settings<sup>54</sup>, or the use of violence for political purposes<sup>55</sup>. This thesis

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<sup>51</sup> Stearns, P. N., & Stearns, C. Z., 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards' *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985), p. 813.

<sup>52</sup> Burke, P., trans., *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Lucien Febvre* (New York, 1973), p. 12-26.

<sup>53</sup> Such as - Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*.

<sup>54</sup> Cubitt, C., 'The history of emotions: a debate' *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), p. 225.

<sup>55</sup> Cubitt, 'The history of emotions', p. 225.

builds upon this academic discourse as it seeks to understand the nature and value of anger<sup>56</sup>.

Rosenwein has been instrumental for Emotional History in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. She interprets the material by assessing the frequency of words and the manner in which they are utilised<sup>57</sup>. Newbold has also used this methodology for Gregory of Tours<sup>58</sup>, however, neither have focused on its impact upon women and their identities as this research proposes. Additionally, it will look to literary expression as well as word usage, as Newbold himself said “the experience of these emotions obviously extends much further than what the keywords flag”<sup>59</sup>. Rosenwein additionally highlights how recent scholarship in this area may suggest that emotions are not universal or biological entities<sup>60</sup>. For example that ‘love’ in French is not an emotion but a sentiment, whereas anger is an emotion<sup>61</sup>. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century ‘passions’ was the common phrase for what we now in English call emotion<sup>62</sup>. Using this framework, it is important to be aware of such anachronisms to remain objective, while still using so called ‘hermeneutics of empathy’ to attempt to still connect to the material as a reader<sup>63</sup>.

Emotional History has become an important growth area for Australian academia. As part of an increase in interest worldwide<sup>64</sup>, The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotion is a significant scholarly

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<sup>56</sup> Rosenwein, B. H., *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenwein, *Anger's Past*, p. 26.

<sup>58</sup> Newbold, R., 'Secondary Responses to Fear and Grief in Gregory of Tours' *Libri Historiarum*', *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia* 7 (2006), p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Newbold, 'Secondary Responses to Fear and Grief', p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Rosenwein, B. H., 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions' *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions* 1 (2010), p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Garrison, M., 'The Study of Emotions in Early Medieval History: Some Starting Points' *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), p. 244.

<sup>64</sup> See also - ACCESS The Amsterdam Centre for Cross-disciplinary Emotion and Sensory Studies – Accessed 14/9/14 <http://access-emotionsandsenses.nl/>; Center for the History of Emotions, Max Planck Institute for Human Development – Accessed 14/9/14 <https://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/en/research/history-of-emotions>; Queen Mary Centre for the History of Emotions – Accessed 14/9/14 <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/emotions/>; *Les Émotions au Moyen Age* – Accessed 14/9/14 <http://emma.hypotheses.org/>.

association that has been set up to investigate the various expressions and changes of emotion between 1100 CE and 1800 CE in Europe. While this is out of the period covered by this particular research, it has similar aims and motivations. One of the centre's main aims is to examine more than just the emotions of individuals, but that the importance of communal emotions and what their political, social and cultural effects could be<sup>65</sup>. The research developed from this program will create ideas and theories that will in turn benefit study into various historical periods and other disciplinary endeavours.

### Methodology

#### Primary Source Content Analysis

The foremost methodology to be used for this research will be the content analysis within primary source materials, specifically, the examples of violence and emotion within Gregory of Tours. Content analysis is understood within this dissertation as the quantitative analysis that relies on scientific approaches such as objectivity and inter-subjectivity, and that also investigates authorship, audience, context, impact and techniques of communication<sup>66</sup>. It is worth noting that 'scientific' is not a universal term but is both socially-constructed and socially-relative<sup>67</sup>. This thesis will use 'scientific' as a way of objectively and systematically approaching the material.

In order to comprehensively understand the nature of violence, and the means by which it is carried out within Merovingian society, understanding its role and function within Gregory of Tours' narrative is essential. To discern the level of violence as perceived by our sources, a quantitative analysis of the various examples of violence will be undertaken. In order to achieve this, chapters five to ten of the *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis. Libri Historiarum X*, herein referred to as LH, will be read and each example

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<sup>65</sup> Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions – Accessed 18/6/14.

<http://www.historyofemotions.org.au/about-the-centre.aspx>.

<sup>66</sup> Neuendorf, K. A., *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (California, 2002), p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Lloyd, C., 'The Methodologies of Social History: A Critical Survey and Defense of Structurism' *History and Theory* 30 (1991), p. 180.



of violence will be catalogued. Each example of violence will be determined to be either personal violence (enacted by the individual themselves) or commissioned (enacted by another). Following this, the actions within the text will be analysed with regard to the immediate responses to those actions. These reactions will be from various peoples, whether the immediate individual, the author or by the audience.

By identifying each example of violence and the manner in which it is received through the observation of patterns, a clearer understanding will be gained of how women use, are affected, and are influenced by violence. By taking into account the variations of violence, a more thorough understanding of the nature of the violence will become apparent and thereby enable relative conceptualisation of whether the acts of violence were unique or considered the norm in Merovingian Gaul. Similarly, an overview of violence within these key chapters will enable a comparison to be drawn between female and male expressed anger. The results from this method will be used in conjunction with other contemporary and later sources, in addition to modern scholars in a variety of methodological disciplines, similar to the methodology of a longitudinal meta-analysis model.

Similarly, the treatment of Gregory of Tours as an author or an historian has been considered naïve<sup>68</sup> and gullible<sup>69</sup>. European authors since the 17<sup>th</sup> century have been labelling him as such, and it has led in the past centuries to what Heinzelmann calls an “extraordinarily successful character assassination” of an author and his context<sup>70</sup>. This interpretation of Gregory based on his previously thought incoherent structure has been widely accepted<sup>71</sup> until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when authors such as Heinzelmann and Goffart began to reassess Gregory’s use of structure, method, and motivations. The understanding of the history and treatment of Gregory informs the interpretation of this research, the understanding of representations of violence, and the nature of the secondary sources.

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<sup>68</sup> Murray, A. C., *Gregory of Tours: The Merovingians* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 3.

## Emotional History

Literary analysis is an inherent element of the Emotional History approach of this thesis. The methodological approach taken through the history of emotions thus varies, just as the material through which scholars research varies. Rosenwein and Newbold largely take a linguistic approach to Merovingian literature regardless of text type or genre (hagiographies, charters, letters, inscriptions, etc.), in order to draw commonalities across cultures<sup>72</sup>. Of particular importance for this thesis is the comparison with other genres, so as not to confuse genre expression for a particular group, or for what Rosenwein terms an 'emotional community'<sup>73</sup>. Additionally, due to the current availability of Merovingian literature, researchers are incredibly reliant upon the sources that are extant and must be aware that the representations of the society are told specifically through the authors' words. This particular methodology will be utilised to some degree within this thesis. While this study focuses upon the emotional representation within Gregory's history, it is also important to compare language within his works with other contemporaries, such as Venantius Fortunatus.

Within this analysis of emotion a taxonomy of violence will be created in order to establish the circumstances of the emotions and violent acts within the text. This taxonomy will catalogue every occurrence of violence throughout Gregory's *LH* to identify frequency, the manner in which it is enacted (self-enacted or commissioned), the cause (both emotional and contextual), the immediate consequences, as well as any in text responses by either other historical characters or Gregory. By categorising each instance of female expressed violence it will be easier to determine any patterns and the reoccurrence of violence by particular individuals.

Within this methodology, it is important to be aware and avoid the anachronisms present when applying the term emotion to past experiences. Emotions are not

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<sup>72</sup> Colish, M. L., Review, Rosenwein, B. H., *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, in *Speculum* 82 (2007), p. 760.

<sup>73</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 27.

universal or biological entities<sup>74</sup>, and depending upon the language or the historical period, meaning can change. In order to avoid misunderstanding the primary source data, the inspection of the original Latin will be used as well as research into the historical meaning of terms that influence the understanding of this thesis. This approach has been utilised<sup>75</sup> and suggested<sup>76</sup> by Rosenwein and Newbold for this area of history with positive results, where Newbold focuses upon the linguistic use and occurrences of certain words<sup>77</sup>, and Rosenwein often does the same<sup>78</sup>.

Within an Emotional History approach is an integrated utilisation of psychology and sociology. The development of theoretical approaches to emotions has in the past been largely either 'universalist' or 'evolutionist', which come from psychological and scientific approaches<sup>79</sup>. Though these approaches are unfavourable for historical interpretations of this thesis, psychology and sociology are inherent in the analysis of cognitive responses of a society.

### Historiography

Historiographical awareness will become essential for the understanding of secondary sources. This will be particularly relevant when understanding the intentions behind past scholars of Merovingian women who may have projected 'Golden Age' ideals upon them<sup>80</sup>, or victimised them. Likewise, the emotional and intellectual behaviours of Late Antique or Medieval peoples have been subject to modern condescension. As previously mentioned, the intellectual and literary capabilities of its authors are judged upon more modern ideals and sensibilities as are their emotional experiences. Huizinga described the Medieval emotional experience like that of a child, suggesting that the emotional experience was some how undeveloped and not yet

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<sup>74</sup> Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods', p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 26.

<sup>76</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 26.

<sup>77</sup> Newbold, 'Secondary Responses to Fear and Grief'. p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 35.

<sup>79</sup> Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods', pp. 1-5.

<sup>80</sup> Little, & Rosenwein, *Debating the Middle Ages*, p. 215.

civilised<sup>81</sup>. This particular strain of emotional thinking continues to influence modern scholars into thinking Early Medieval emotions are infantile<sup>82</sup>, leading to the theoretical consideration that throughout Late Antiquity there was a process of 'civilising'<sup>83</sup>. The use of historiography will enable an awareness and avoidance of secondary sources and authors who, consciously or otherwise, perpetuate this mentality that contradicts the position of this dissertation.

### Gender Theory

As this research focuses upon a particular social community, that of women, it is important that its approach to gender is explicit. This work does not intend to problematise gendered perception, and in order to avoid projecting these women as powerful or as victims, the methodological approaches associated with 'Gender History' will be adopted. For the parameters of this research, gender is then seen as the social and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity<sup>84</sup> with an awareness that modern, western gender systems are not universal<sup>85</sup>. It is both a method of analysing past societies and the subject of the study<sup>86</sup>. James provides a clearer definition by stating that gender is "the differences between men and women in terms of the differences created by societies rather than the biological difference of sex"<sup>87</sup>.

Most predominantly, this research benefits from a cultural feminism and post-structuralist approach to gender. Post-structuralism and gender theory will allow an investigation into the subjectivity of individual experience and attempt to be inclusive of a wider female experience while avoiding universalisms. However, as Alcoff elaborates, this kind of nominalism in feminism can remove gender and predominant influences

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<sup>81</sup> Huizinga, J., *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Payton, R. J., & Mammitzsch, U., (Chicago, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 7

<sup>84</sup> As outlined in - Smith, 'Introduction: gendering the early medieval world', p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Smith, 'Introduction: gendering the early medieval world', p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Smith, 'Introduction: gendering the early medieval world', p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> James, L., *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (London, 1997), p. xvii.

such as the male patriarchy from the analysis, thereby making gender less defined<sup>88</sup>. Kolodny states that even though feminist scholars do not necessarily like to label themselves as structuralists, in essence feminist scholars are still searching for patterns and structures that “can order and explain the otherwise inchoate”<sup>89</sup>. This certainly applies to this research, where literary patterns help to build emotional atmosphere and the personalities of women.

So while this research is influenced by the discourse between women, gender, social communication, politics, and how language perpetuates those images, it will avoid as best it can these issues with this particular stream of feminism and gender in order to assess the emotions and identities of women in various classes. However, as briefly stated in the discussion in the Literature Review, Gregory does not necessarily focus upon male versus female morals, and so his representation of women does not always differentiate from that of his male characters. Therefore, this thesis will investigate whether or not Gregory engenders emotions.

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<sup>88</sup> Alcoff, L., ‘Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory’, *Signs*, Vol. 13 (1988), pp. 418-419

<sup>89</sup> Kolodny, A., ‘Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism’ *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 6 (1980), p. 17

## CHAPTER TWO – THE REVOLT OF THE NUNS

One of the most significant examples of female violence in Gregory's *Histories* is the revolt in the nunnery of Radegund in Poitiers, which takes place in Books IX and X. The violent actions of several nuns under the guidance of Clotilde, and to a lesser extent her cousin Basina, are told in great detail. While anger is a recurring theme throughout all chapters, here the emotional response is largely anger that is elicited through a feeling of disrespect and humiliation which act as catalysts for that fury and violence<sup>1</sup>. These events of this narrative are important in helping to understand the place of emotions and violence in the actions of not just an individual, but of a group of women.

### The Events

The revolt itself took place in 589<sup>2</sup> and carried on into 590<sup>3</sup> in the Nunnery of the Holy Cross in Poitiers, founded by St Radegund. When the events occur, Radegund had only died two years previously<sup>4</sup> and it is this death that underlies the outburst of the conflict. It is under the appointment of the new abbess Leubovera<sup>5</sup> that Clotilde and her fellow nuns feel humiliated and feel they are living in what they deem substandard conditions for their position<sup>6</sup>. Gregory also cites their maltreatment under Bishop Maroveus<sup>7</sup>, with whom the nuns of the Holy Cross had a strenuous relationship<sup>8</sup>. Under her own instigation, Clotilde, one of four known daughters of King Charibert<sup>9</sup>, walked out of the nunnery with forty or so other nuns<sup>10</sup> demanding the dismissal of their

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<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of how injustice elicits an angry and violent response see - Hegtvedt, K. A., & Scheuerman, H. L., 'The Justice/Morality Link', in Hitlin, S., & Vaisley, S., eds, *Handbook of the Sociology of Morality* (New York, 2010), p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> PLRE IIIA, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> PLRE IIIA, p. 312.

<sup>4</sup> PLRE IIIB, p. 1074.

<sup>5</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>6</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>7</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.40.

<sup>8</sup> Will be discussed further under 'Emotions of Individuals'.

<sup>9</sup> PLRE IIIA, Charibertus 1, p. 283.

<sup>10</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

Mother Superior Leubovera<sup>11</sup>. One of these nuns was Basina, daughter of King Chilperic<sup>12</sup>. They took refuge in the church of Saint Hilary, where physical conflict between the bishops and the nuns' 'mob of ruffians' occurred when the nuns were declared excommunicated<sup>13</sup>. The conflict turned bloody, in the church of Saint Hilary and when the bishops fled, Clotilde took control of the nunnery's estates<sup>14</sup>. While several of the women departed from Clotilde and her cousin Basina's group, many stayed on, and according to Gregory, the situation grew more serious over the winter<sup>15</sup> that ends Book IX<sup>16</sup>.

In Book X the narrative continues with Clotilde's followers attempting to kidnap their Abbess Leubovera. The abduction is described very violently by Gregory who details the manner in which Clotilde and her followers slit the dresses of nuns, and tear the veil of the prioress, committing violence and arguing with one another. The taxonomy of violence<sup>17</sup> reveals that most of the violence enacted as part of the revolt is commissioned violence by Clotilde's gangs and none of the physically violent acts are specifically described as performed by women. That being said, most of the threats made, for example by Clotilde towards Macco's men<sup>18</sup>, are violent threats made by women. Basina, Clotilde's cousin, attempted to redeem herself to her Abbess, but more quarrelling erupted, which resulted in the death of one of Basina's servants<sup>19</sup>. Eventually, King Guntram and Childebert suggested ending the revolt through canon law. This entailed the two feuding kingdoms under Guntram and Childebert to collaborate as a full council of bishops, of which Gregory was one<sup>20</sup>. Gregory himself refused to go to Poitiers until the fighting had been quelled, and after one last physical conflict between Macco the local Count and Clotilde's followers the revolt was physically resolved<sup>21</sup>. The aforementioned bishops eventually met and addressed all of the

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<sup>11</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.40.

<sup>12</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V. 39.

<sup>13</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.41.

<sup>14</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.41.

<sup>15</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>16</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>17</sup> As discussed within the Methodologies section of Chapter One.

<sup>18</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>19</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>20</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>21</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

accusations by and against the nuns, before both Basina and Clotilde were suspended from communion<sup>22</sup>.

### Nature of Gregory's Text

The structural composition of Gregory's text in terms of where these events are situated, its parallel with other examples of female conflict, and the use of supplementary documents impact the reading of the revolt. These elements not only help to build the drama relating to the scenes, but to increase the vilification of its participants particularly in the context of their religious setting.

True to the fragmented nature of Gregory's *LH*<sup>23</sup> the sequence of events is interrupted with other contemporary events that have been used to highlight many of the revolts moral lessons and consequences. Its use here, as it is also used within Chapter Three of this dissertation, is to extend the action and add a heightened sense of drama to the events. Gregory begins Chapter IX by telling us that Radegund has died at the great lamentation of her nunnery<sup>24</sup>. This placement far before the events of the revolt create an awareness of the shift in power in the nunnery for the reader. The context and narrative build-up to the revolt do help somewhat to understand its purpose in terms of placement. The end of Book IX, save mention of natural phenomena, details the initial cessation of the conflict at Poitiers, and then directly leads into the beginning of Book X's introduction to Pope Gregory. Based on their internal characteristics, Heinzelmann interprets the beginning of Book X to serve the function of a prologue<sup>25</sup>, and thereby determines Book X to be largely centred around the *ecclesia* and Last Judgement<sup>26</sup>. Regardless, the emphasis on Christian moral behaviour that is reflected throughout the *LH* can be seen through Gregory's decision to structure these events.

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<sup>22</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal*, p. 291; Goffart discusses it in regards to his suggestion that *LH* is satirical – Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 199.

<sup>24</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.2.

<sup>25</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 119.

<sup>26</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 119.



The impact of the revolt of the nunnery is paralleled with another conflict in a nunnery between Ingitrude, Mother Superior at the nunnery at Saint Martin's church, and her daughter Berthegund. Berthegund and her mother, while living in the nunnery at Tours<sup>27</sup>, quarrel over her father's estate<sup>28</sup>. This follows after a conflict a few years prior, in 580<sup>29</sup> in which her mother wished her to join the convent although she was already married<sup>30</sup>. This narrative similarly takes place in Books IX and X. While Gregory's moral emphasis through this conflict is on virtue and slothful behaviour<sup>31</sup> it is equally as focused upon the adherence to The Rule<sup>32</sup>, religious and familial authority. Both stories highlight the irresponsible nature of women of royal lineages, the bishops' assembly as a source of authority for the eschatological Church, and also demonstrate the need for royal and religious collaboration<sup>33</sup>. It is interesting to note that in both instances Gregory claims that so many evils were done by these women that he could not put them all down in words (*vel quis umquam tantas plagas tantasque strages vel tanta mala verbis verbis poterit explicare*)<sup>34</sup>. While this may be a turn of phrase, the parallel and repetition of the phrase only a few chapters apart reminds the reader of the moral sins of these women and the evil of their actions.

It should not be overlooked that both of these conflicts are between monastic women, however, it is more likely to be a parallel rather than a consistent structural pattern. This parallel is one that contrasts Gregory's narrative devices with the possibility of real systematic flaws in nunneries across Gaul. Although there is a significant amount of female violence, both self-enacted and commissioned in Books IX

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<sup>27</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX. 33.

<sup>28</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX. 33.

<sup>29</sup> PLRE IIIA, p. 228.

<sup>30</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX. 33.

<sup>32</sup> The Rule is as Gregory highlights in the excerpt from the Letters of the Seven Bishops in Greg. Tur., *LH* IX. 39. Probably Caesarius' Rule, although it is not known if that particular rule was still the only rule used at the time of the revolt - Hochstetler, D., A, *Conflict of Traditions: Women in Religion in the Early Middle Ages 500-840* (Lanham, 1992), p. 145. However, Gregory does mention Radegund's influence from Caesarius' Rule in *LH* IX. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 72.

<sup>34</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.12; X.15. When indicating Latin terms within this dissertation for the *LH*, the *MGH SRM* text will be referenced. All other references to Greg. Tur., *LH* will use Thorpe's translation, unless otherwise stated.

and X, there is little consistency to suggest a theme of female violence to directly lead to the revolt. While no conclusion can be drawn that Gregory determines monastic conflict with authority is only an issue pertaining to women and their superiors, it is relevant that he chooses to parallel these events. Both instances, so similar in language, equally pair conflicts amongst women with the issue of disregarding church law, and thereby reinforce Gregory's point that adhering to church Rule will yield more peace than going against it.

The importance of this rebellion to the overarching effect of Gregory's work is unclear. The story certainly plays an important role in emphasising the importance of civil harmony and adherence to the Rule of the church. While it is difficult to gauge the significance of the events by the length given to them<sup>35</sup> or the supplementary texts within Gregory's work<sup>36</sup>, its inclusion at all by Gregory speaks some volumes about its importance. Not only that, but the chunks of text dedicated to these events are considerable in length further accompanied by several lengthy original documents. These documents, such as the foundation letter of the Nunnery of the Holy Cross<sup>37</sup> These scenes highlight not only that Gregory was involved in the events, but that he saw himself as an active participant and therefore intimately involved in the affairs of the rebellion. This is evident as he attempts to curb the violence and conflict in a discussion with Clotilde<sup>38</sup>. Gregory would have attended many councils, and while he does often personally involve himself in stories as he does in IX.6 that concerns events of imposters and soothsayers<sup>39</sup>, the particular detail with which he becomes involved in these revolt events reveals more of the revolts importance to him.

Heinzelmann believes that the event held specific importance for Gregory due to the nature of his interest in Radegund<sup>40</sup>, the founder of the nunnery in question. Gregory

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<sup>35</sup> Sections Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39 and X.15 are lengthy, and is due in part to the addition of the supplementary texts.

<sup>36</sup> For example the 'Letter of the Seven Bishops' in Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39, the 'Reply to Bishop Gundegisel's Letter' in *LH* IX. 41, and the 'Text of Judgement' in *LH* X.15

<sup>37</sup> Known as the Letter of the Seven Bishops.

<sup>38</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.40.

<sup>39</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.6.

<sup>40</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 72.

attended Radegund's funeral<sup>41</sup>, and wrote about her in his *Glory of the Confessors*<sup>42</sup>, the content of which is indicative of his reverence for her. Therefore, his sentiments towards Radegund clearly present a bias that Gregory holds towards the rebels of her nunnery whose actions directly address sentiments in Radegund's foundation letter. In the letter, Radegund states that any woman who brings shame and opprobrium to her vows shall be punished and banned from communion<sup>43</sup>. It is from these opprobrium that Gregory, as both historical character and narrator, tries to persuade her<sup>44</sup> to the audience against such rash behaviour that directly goes against religious Rule. Moreover, in conjunction with this, Gregory's involvement was also a familial issue. Gregory's own niece in the events. Justina, a Prioress, aligns herself with the Abbess and is personally involved with the conflict and protection of Leubovera<sup>45</sup>. Justina is Gregory's own intimate connection and involved him on a moral, political and familial level.

### Portrayal of Emotion

There are three significant ways in which Gregory builds up emotion within the narrative of the revolt: through the use of specific words, through the description of action, and through the use of religious imagery. Each of these approaches enables him to manipulate the emotional nature of the events, and to shape the reader's interpretation of individuals.

The most predominant emotion described within the revolt is that of fury and anger. One way in which Gregory achieves this is through the direct use of emotive words. He portrays Clotilde as an unhappy or unfortunate (*inflex*) woman<sup>46</sup> and Basina as filled with regret (*paenitentia*)<sup>47</sup>. Humiliation (indicated by the verb *humiliamur* - "we were humiliated")<sup>48</sup> is additionally an emotional theme that runs through both books,

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<sup>41</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.2.

<sup>42</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Confessors*, 104.

<sup>43</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>44</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>45</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>46</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IX.39

<sup>47</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.15

<sup>48</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IX. 39

particularly as it is treated as one of the core catalysts for the conflict<sup>49</sup>. This will become more of a focus later in the section regarding individual emotions.

Instead, Gregory is far more inclined to describe the behaviour that occurs as a result of emotion. For example, Clotilde's assailants are "very ferocious" (*acerbior*)<sup>50</sup>, or her own actions involve loud cries and aggression (*convitium*)<sup>51</sup>, and, trickery through which "savage attacks" are delivered (*alias coepit Chrodielidis calumnias saevas inferre*)<sup>52</sup>. Though these descriptors do not directly state the emotions being experienced, they do highlight the strength of the emotions behind such actions as catalysts for what is described as great evil and violence. While they do convey an emotional state, the use of terms such as savage are also indicative of a Late Antique literary tradition that attributes animal like qualities and describes individuals as sub-human and barbarian due to their use of violence<sup>53</sup>. The involvement of not only of bishops<sup>54</sup> but of kings<sup>55</sup> would seem to indicate that the violence and the conflict was in fact 'savage' enough to warrant intervention. Gregory is suggesting that reacting so savagely is a consequence of the emotional turmoil of each individual.

Of particular interest are the inclusions within the text that suggest shared emotions. By this, it is meant that the emotions experienced are shared. The inclusion that Clotilde "in her arrogance egged them all on to further fury"<sup>56</sup>, in addition to Clotilde declaring that "we are humiliated" "insults which we have to suffer" after forty or more women departed the nunnery,<sup>57</sup> is a unique representation within Gregory's work of shared female emotion in one event. It is particularly important from a historical point of view to understand not simply how one individual's emotions are considered, but a

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<sup>49</sup> When directly asked during their trial the reason for their behavior, Clotilde and Basina initially address lack of food, decent clothing, and harsh treatment – Greg. Tur., *LH* X.16.

<sup>50</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.15

<sup>51</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.15

<sup>52</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.15

<sup>53</sup> Mathisen, R. W., 'Violent Behavior and the Construction of Barbarian Identity in Late Antiquity' in Drake, H. A., ed., *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 28.

<sup>54</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.41.

<sup>55</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>56</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>57</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IX.39.

group of them. Essentially, it allows us to glimpse the treatment of women in a broader context. The revolt at Poitiers, while the blame is levelled at the leaders Clotilde and Basina, clearly involved the cooperation of many other women. While there are those who ultimately sided with the Abbess Leubovera<sup>58</sup>, including Gregory's own niece<sup>59</sup> Justina who was a Prioress<sup>60</sup>, there were those who had sided with Clotilde's cause. Many of those women accepted marriages or took refuge inside Saint Hilary's church rather than return to the nunnery<sup>61</sup>. For these women to leave en masse suggests that the level of discontent and unhappiness within the nunnery was wide spread. It is worth noting that Gregory quotes them<sup>62</sup> as being treated poorly because of their royal blood. While it is difficult to know the make up of aristocratic or other social classes within the nunnery at this time, Gregory's direct quote would further imply that it is aristocratic women who believe they are being treated below their social class.

This portrayal of their anger and violence is consistently supported by the narration of actions. Whether it is Clotilde employing men by force<sup>63</sup>, threatening others<sup>64</sup>, the dragging or the man-handling of the Abbess<sup>65</sup>, or murder in sacred places<sup>66</sup> this particular event is littered with actions that are meant to recount outrageous events, but also to emphasise disaster. This emphasis on chaos is important as it adds to the context of rage and anger felt by those involved. The fact that it is described by Gregory as so chaotic implies that emotions were high. Whether or not this is the reality of what happened is not under scrutiny here, rather that the use of rage and anger are viable catalysts for such violence. Gregory employs furor to portray violence that is "socially destructive in the extreme"<sup>67</sup>.

By the same token, a lack of detail about events has a similar effect. When Gregory asks who could possibly "set down in words all this violence, all this slaughter,

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<sup>58</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>59</sup> Thorpe, L., *Gregory of Tours: The History of the Franks*, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>61</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.40.

<sup>62</sup> Not one particular individual, rather they as a plural.

<sup>63</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>64</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>65</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>66</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>67</sup> Rosenwein, 'Anger's Past', p. 49.

all this evil”<sup>68</sup> a strong impression is left that the actions are so violent and so numerable that they cannot be written. While these actions speak for themselves with regard to violence as an emotional response, without the initial explanation of the nun’s revolt, and the actions of both men and women, these descriptions would imply less of an emotional catalyst.

Theological concepts as a form of character description are the most dramatic expression of emotion used by Gregory for the revolt. They not only colour the behaviour of individuals, but highlight Gregory’s feelings regarding events. From the first mention of the events in IX.39, Gregory tells his readers that the revolt was due to Clotilde giving in to the “blandishments of the devil”<sup>69</sup> (*insidiante diabolo in corde Chrodieldis*)<sup>70</sup>. His application of religious terminology to characterise the nuns and their assailants distinctly as evil, a word which he uses to directly refer to their actions<sup>71</sup>, dramatically colours the scene and fits into the religious framework of the work as a whole. It is a strong contrast between describing the founder, Saint Radegund, as “the example of celestial love”<sup>72</sup>. This religious portrayal is not simply used to highlight the sins or the extreme violence of the rebels, but to further cement the immoral nature of their actions. It is only when they try to rectify their mistakes and attempt to seek forgiveness, as Basina does, that they put an end to their “evil behaviour”<sup>73</sup> and are humbled<sup>74</sup>. However, it is important to note that this ‘evil behaviour’ is not a direct literary translation, but a translation provided by Thorpe where he interprets this element of Gregory’s representation of their actions, where the original Latin describes Basina asking for peace (*et conversa, humiliavit se coram abbatissam, expetens pacem eius*)<sup>75</sup>. This literary construction additionally reveals the importance of the narrative to Gregory and complements his own investment as the author in the moral and religious lessons within his text. There is also a notable contrast between the nunnery or the sacred places as a place of piety, and the violence that occurs there. Clotilde’s band of

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<sup>68</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>69</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39

<sup>70</sup> *MHG SRM* I, IX.39

<sup>71</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>72</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>73</sup> Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours*, p. 569

<sup>74</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>75</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15

ruffians attack and profane the church of Saint Hilary while leaving the churchmen covered with blood, promptly followed by Gregory comparing the acts to the hand of the Devil<sup>76</sup>. The same thing occurs in X.15: Gregory describes the violence taking place within the church, immediately before describing the acts as evil<sup>77</sup>. This creates a striking contrast and further colours the characterisation of the women and their violence. There has been some academic discourse on the manner in which Gregory uses biblical tropes in his gendered representations of women and how this directly correlates to both the negative and positive representations of women<sup>78</sup>. Formulaic representations of emotions, while they complicate the accuracy of emotional representation, do not diminish what they reveal to us about the portrayal. As Rosenwein states “commonplaces are socially true even if they may not be individually sincere”<sup>79</sup>.

### *Emotions of Individuals*

Within the events of the revolt, perhaps the most significant representations of emotions are those of Clotilde, Basina and those of Gregory himself.

Clotilde’s emotional state can best be seen as a series of reactions to her perceived injustice. The injustice and humiliation she feels as a result of her experience within the nunnery<sup>80</sup>, manifests itself through anger, rashness, and stubbornness<sup>81</sup>. The description of Clotilde’s actions more explicitly express her emotions, rather than a specific description of her feelings, similar to the revolt as a whole. For instance, Clotilde’s reaction to being ordered to desist by Bishop Maroveus<sup>82</sup> is to instantly (“lost no time in singling out”<sup>83</sup>) relay aggressive orders to one of her ‘assassins’. This portrayal, of how Clotilde responds to situations, is essential to her characterisation and

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<sup>76</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.41.

<sup>77</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>78</sup> For an analysis of this see - McRobbie, J., *Gender and violence in Gregory of Tours' 'Decem libri historiarum'*, doctoral thesis, University of St Andrews (2012).

<sup>79</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 193.

<sup>80</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>81</sup> “Why do you refuse to listen?” – Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>82</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>83</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

emotional portrayal by Gregory. Throughout this particular saga, Gregory reiterates that Clotilde's actions are rash, and ill-thought out<sup>84</sup>. The overall affect of this is to suggest that Clotilde's emotional capabilities are so clouded by rage and stubbornness as a direct result of injustice, in part to condemn her actions but also to condemn her character.

What is clear is that Gregory does not sympathise with Clotilde's emotions or responses to them. His portrayal of these events, as highlighted by the focus, and the support of a lot of documentary evidence, suggests that his involvement with it is personal. Harlos and Pinder emphasise that injustice, as focused upon in an organisation, such as the nunnery at Poitiers, is "inherently perceptual and thus subjective"<sup>85</sup>, meaning that Gregory's disagreement with Clotilde's feelings, should not dismiss them. Given what we know about Basina's circumstances and how she came to arrive in the nunnery, and as previously mentioned, the frequency previously mentioned with which aristocratic women were kept in nunneries as a safe house, might indicate that their emotions were valid. Regardless of reality, Clotilde and Basina clearly felt that their Abbess' behaviour was causing them both religious<sup>86</sup> and aristocratic discomfort<sup>87</sup>. Clearly, they are subjectively legitimate responses to her situation, and therefore must be considered in their own right, as well as in Gregory's opinion. Gregory's opinion is mirrored in the response of other bishops within the Text of Judgement, as rash or reckless<sup>88</sup>, but these opinions all come from religious superiors to Clotilde. Their objection to her actions are not specified or even particularly representative of any suggestion of female emotional weakness. Gregory is not adverse to demonstrating female weakness - "they will say I am as weak as a woman, for I no longer have the right to be called a man"<sup>89</sup> - but the events of the revolt are never specifically represented as an issue of gendered emotion.

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<sup>84</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39; IX.40.

<sup>85</sup> Harlos, K. P., & Pinder, C. C., 'Emotion and Injustice in the Workplace' in Fineman, S., *Emotion in Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, 2006), p. 255.

<sup>86</sup> Due to the various accusations against the Abbess' conduct including backgammon, engagement parties and male company – Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>87</sup> Such as poor food, lack of clothing and shared bathrooms – Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>88</sup> Discussed in more detail in the following section.

<sup>89</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.19.



Clotilde's dissatisfaction with her position and treatment within the nunnery is not unique, nor is she the only one within *LH*. Gregory depicts her as a woman who is not living within the nunnery with a sense of religious piety, but rather one simply living there and this can be paralleled with her sister Berthefled living in the nunnery at Tours, also a daughter of Charibert. Berthefled had no interest in her religious duties according to Gregory and who was largely interested in eating and sleeping<sup>90</sup>. Both Berthefled and Clotilde are women uninterested in the religious life, who seek to live among comforts, and when situations – for example the conflict between Ingetrude and her daughter that erupted in Tours<sup>91</sup> – do not meet their satisfaction they flee as Berthefled did, or fight against it as Clotilde does. There was certainly a tradition within Merovingian culture by which women were sent to live in monasteries. In fact, Basina was only living in the nunnery at Poitiers because she had been tricked by Queen Fredegund's servants<sup>92</sup>. The nunnery of the Holy Cross was initially established by Radgeund after her divorce from Chlothar I<sup>93</sup>, and while she was far more devout than Clotilde, Basina or Berthefled, it represents a history of using nunneries as a refuge or a depository for royal Merovingian women. So while Gregory places particular emphasis on the immoral behaviour of some of these women, their political context is also key to understanding their emotions and therefore the response to those emotions.

Largely, Gregory's emotions regarding the revolt come through in his description of events and what he chooses to include. It is the morals behind the emotions that Gregory most strongly objects to, in this case, it is religious disobedience for personal gain and lack of respect for superiors. He particularly feels this is relevant with regards to Clotilde, describing her behaviour as part of her "overweening insolence" (*superbiam augetur*)<sup>94</sup>. Though he largely disagrees with the conduct of the nuns during the revolt, he begins the story with a recounting of the complicated history that the nunnery of Poitiers had with Bishop Maroveus<sup>95</sup>. This inclusion infers that while Gregory disagrees with certain elements of their behaviour, there are other external factors that prompted

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<sup>90</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX. 33.

<sup>91</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.33.

<sup>92</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>93</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* III.7.

<sup>94</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.15.

<sup>95</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.40.

their behaviour. This is also a literary device utilised by Gregory in which he often demonstrates characters in terms of a 'bad meets worse' type scenario<sup>96</sup>. If Gregory had not felt that this history with Bishop Maroveus was not important to the unfurling of events, he would not have included it, nor would he have personally stated that he believed Maroveus' resentment against the nuns was involved<sup>97</sup>. This inclusion reinforces the moral religious respect that Gregory enforces through this narrative and it could be inferred that Bishop Maroveus' treatment of the nuns was in some way responsible for the outbreak of conflict. However, though Gregory's own emotions do not reveal directly female emotions, understanding his motives and therefore his manipulation of their actions and emotions helps us to assess whether he is vilifying their emotions as elements of their gender, or vilifying them because of their actions which go against his own moral perspective.

This chapter and these events constantly attempt to reiterate the importance of the religious institution and canon law, and Bishop Maroveus' strained history with the Nunnery of the Holy Cross is an important, though brief, element of that. Maroveus' refusal to partake in the ceremonies surrounding the acquisition of the Holy Cross and his reluctance to Radegund's acquisition of the Holy Cross relic would have been an important cultural and social occasion and, as bishop, Maroveus' involvement in proceedings was an essential element<sup>98</sup>. It is likely that part of Gregory's inclusion of Maroveus in the unfolding of events is due to Gregory's opinion on his ecclesiastic responsibilities. His suggestion within the narrative, rather than as the author, to Clotilde in Book IX that she should speak to Maroveus before matters worsen is indicative of Gregory's respect for hierarchy, regardless of his opinion of the man's past actions.

Furthermore, Gregory's disdain for Maroveus carries over into his disdain for the tax-lists that are developed by Childebert. According to Gregory, it was under Maroveus' request that tax inspectors were sent to Poitiers and Tours<sup>99</sup>. Gregory himself describes how he directly fought against any new tax-laws in Tours, and that Childebert heeded

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<sup>96</sup> Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 218.

<sup>97</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH IX.40*.

<sup>98</sup> Hen, *Culture and Religion*, p. 109.

<sup>99</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH IX.30*.

his wishes<sup>100</sup>. Gregory's disapproval of such tax-lists is well attested, particularly as it becomes a core reason for the death of Fredegund's sons<sup>101</sup>. Given Gregory's contempt for such measures, if they were initiated by Maroveus himself, this is another reason for the blame and negative image of the man which Gregory presents.

### Significance of Emotion

Emotions play an important role in the revolt, not simply from the perspective of Clotilde and her fellow nuns, but in the emotions of Gregory and his contemporaries. These emotions additionally reveal more about the external influences that caused their emotions as well as how Gregory chose to portray them.

The emotional catalyst for Clotilde as represented to the reader by Gregory is one of humiliation<sup>102</sup>. This humiliation was born out of perceived maltreatment within the nunnery at Poitiers and while it is clear that Gregory, both the historical character and the author, consider Clotilde's response as small-mindedness<sup>103</sup> there is no judgement from Gregory that an emotion such as humiliation turned into anger should be perceived as an illogical motivation. It is highly likely that this is due to both Basina and Clotilde's familial connections to Chilperic and Charibert, especially as neither of them are necessarily there by choice<sup>104</sup>.

The emotional reaction for the reader to the actions of the nuns have just as much credence in the narrative Gregory is telling as the emotions of the nuns. Within this story, and indeed within the *Historia* as a whole, the 'hand of the Devil' is a constant literary dramatisation. Religious sentiments aside, the exclamation of such a point brings a sense of dramatisation, something which Gregory is keen to express to his readers. The horrors being committed during the siege in Saint Hilary's church continue in a manner that has Gregory expressing his horror at the fact that "scarcely a day

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<sup>100</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.30.

<sup>101</sup> This is the subject of Chapter Three.

<sup>102</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>103</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>104</sup> Basina certainly wasn't but no history of Clotilde's circumstances are known.

passed without someone being murdered”<sup>105</sup>. The emotional reaction to Clotilde and her fellow nuns is so pronounced that Gregory places a significant amount of blame upon her as can be seen through Gregory’s representation of her rash behaviour. Gregory also quotes himself as saying that the bloodthirsty revolt is a result of an atmosphere Clotilde herself has stirred up<sup>106</sup>. Although Gregory carefully indicates that Clotilde has men and servants commit violent acts for her<sup>107</sup>, the violence is blamed upon the instigators rather than those commissioned into action, additionally noted within the Text of Judgement<sup>108</sup>.

The use of the word *audacter*<sup>109</sup> within the Text of Judgement, indicates the level of emotion within official documents regarding the matter. Thorpe and Dalton translate the word respectively as either “rashly”<sup>110</sup> or “recklessly”<sup>111</sup> and the fact that the texts choose to use such a descriptive adverb to illustrate the actions of the accused betrays an emotional opinion of some of their contemporaries other than Gregory. The use of heavily emotive words in Merovingian ecclesiastic council documents is not unique. In the surviving account of the 585 Council of Mâcon there is a moral comment regarding the treatment of social inferiors<sup>112</sup>. The use of such colourful terms in Clotilde’s case highlights the place of her rash emotional reactions. The emotions in the document directly correlate to how Gregory has revealed what he feels throughout the revolt. He believes that the women are behaving immorally and without due regard towards the church in addition to making claims upon the nunnery of the Holy Cross that he sees as invalid. His decision to include this only emphasises his position on both the emotions of the women and their actions.

The inclusion within the narrative of the Text of Judgement from the trial of Clotilde and Basina is a notable inclusion from Gregory that acts to solidify the narrative

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<sup>105</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>106</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>107</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.15.

<sup>108</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.16.

<sup>109</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.16.

<sup>110</sup> Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours*, p. 571.

<sup>111</sup> Dalton, O. M., trans., *The History of the Franks by Gregory of Tours* (Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 450.

<sup>112</sup> Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, p. 574.

within factual history. This inclusion is not the only external text used in conjunction with the revolt of the nunnery, as Gregory also includes the letter to Radegund from seven other bishops in Book IX on the founding of her convent<sup>113</sup>, and it is the story within the text that uses the most supported documentary evidence. The use of the documentary evidence aids in cementing the guilt of Clotilde and her accomplices and adds credence to Gregory's accusations. Although the intention with the Text of Judgement is to consolidate facts, its addition adds to the emotional interpretation of events. The legal inclusion of motivations such as the poor quality of food, the indecent clothing and the sharing of bathrooms. This, followed by the prompt rebuttal by the Abbess to refute these facts, leaves the reader with the understanding that they are not sufficient justifications for their behaviours (as was discussed further in the previous assessment of Clotilde's emotions and the Text of Judgement in the *Emotions of Individuals* in this chapter).

Another significant element is that the blame and responsibility for violence does not always hold with those who enact it, but those who commission it. The influence over the actions of others is seen as the direct fault of the influential individual. For example, on multiple occasions Clotilde is held responsible for the emotions and the actions of those around her. Though this is not always the case, as within the Text of Judgement, the bishops themselves did not blame Clotilde or Basina for the actions of the other nuns (for example, getting pregnant) were seen as neither their fault, nor the fault of the "poor girls" simply that this was what happened when unsupervised<sup>114</sup>.

### Conclusion

When assessing the legitimisation of female violence and anger within the revolt, the treatment of the women themselves as well as the other motives of Gregory the narrator are important. Clearly, Gregory's inclusion of the revolt serves an historical purpose in addition to his moral objectives regarding sins, virtues, and the role and involvement of the Church. However, within this narrative alone Gregory's treatment of

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<sup>113</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.39.

<sup>114</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.16.

the emotional response of Clotilde and her followers as 'evil' or 'ill-advised' are a result of the nature of their actions. Gregory does not pass judgement on their emotions themselves, simply the consequences of those emotions. In terms of assessing legitimisation of the violence, all of the acts of physical violence specifically mentioned by Gregory in the revolt are enacted by gender ambiguous characters - such as her murderous adulterous (*homicidis, adulteris*)<sup>115</sup> accomplices - or by men (*pueri qui cum abbatisa errant*)<sup>116</sup>. While the blame is upon the females of the story it could be suggested that women's role in violence is not necessarily the same as men's. While many women within the *LH* do physically commit acts of violence themselves (such as Fredegund<sup>117</sup>, Septimia<sup>118</sup>, and Magnatrude<sup>119</sup>) these are exceptions not the norm.

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<sup>115</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.15.

<sup>116</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X. 15.

<sup>117</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.34.

<sup>118</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.38.

<sup>119</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.5.

## CHAPTER THREE – FREDEGUND’S GRIEF

Discussions in this chapter will investigate the use of the emotion of grief, the violent responses to that grief, and the ways in which gender may or may not influence the literary representations of these feelings and reactions. The main focus on these feelings will assess the way in which grief interacts with the emotions of fear and fury and consequently the violent reactions to these emotions. The literary example discussed here that depicts gendered emotions and violence is the events surrounding the deaths of Chlodobert, Dagobert and Theuderic, the sons of Fredegund and Chilperic, as told to us by Gregory of Tours. Just as occurred during the revolt of the nunnery of Poitiers, there are other socio-political elements that shape Gregory’s representation of emotions aside from gender. In this chapter the many facets that affect representation will be investigated.

### The Events

In Book V of the Histories, set in the fifth year of Chilperic’s reign, 580CE, Gregory tells us that a series of natural disasters and wonders occurred, particularly great floods in the area of Auvergne and an earthquake in Bordeaux<sup>1</sup>. Commentary on natural phenomenon is far from unusual within Gregory’s text, and indeed in Christian literature, but Gregory himself indicated in the following section that these natural phenomena led to the serious epidemic of dysentery (*desentericus*<sup>2</sup>) that was the cause of the death of Fredegund’s sons Chlodobert and Dagobert. Fredegund had five sons by Chilperic, however only three of them had been born by the time of this narrative<sup>3</sup>: Chlodobert, Samson and Dagobert. Fredegund’s reaction to the illness of Chlodobert and Dagobert is a predominant part of the narrative and she blames the ‘evil’ behaviour of

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<sup>1</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.32.

<sup>2</sup> *MGH SRM* I, V.34.1.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory provides little information regarding the date of their sons. We know that Chlodobert was born in 565, that Samson lived and died between 575 and 577, and finally that Dagobert died during infancy in 580. Theoderic and Chlothar were born in 582 and 584 respectively – *PLRE* IIIA, p. 494.

both herself and Chilperic for the dysentery as well as other events (such as environmental phenomena)<sup>4</sup>. This 'evil' behaviour includes amassing great wealth and the increase of taxes, the tax-lists that Fredegund promptly burns in an attempt to compensate for their wrongs<sup>5</sup>. Gregory focuses heavily upon the grief felt by both Fredegund and Chilperic and indeed the general populace<sup>6</sup>.

The violence that proceeds is, as Gregory tells it, prompted by the arrogance of Fredegund's stepson Clovis<sup>7</sup>, who boasts about his position after the death of his brothers.<sup>8</sup> There is no indication by Gregory that Clovis felt any grief over the death of his half-brothers. However, there is little that can be suggested by such an omission, except to say perhaps that Gregory continues a theme that displays poor behaviour along with an absence of emotion. Fredegund and Chilperic both apparently wish Clovis had been taken by dysentery instead<sup>9</sup>. In addition, Fredegund received information that the mother of Clovis' lover cast magic that resulted in the death of her sons<sup>10</sup>. Fredegund then has the sorceress in question tortured for the truth (and later burnt alive admitting she lied), and eventually Clovis is murdered in secret. Here Gregory focuses upon the multiple acts of violence such as torture while Chilperic apparently shows no remorse over the death of Clovis his son<sup>11</sup>. While Clovis' mother Audovera was killed, his sister Basina was tricked into joining the nunnery and Poitiers<sup>12</sup>, where she was involved in the revolt previously discussed in Chapter Two.

This story is directly paralleled with the death of another of Fredegund's sons, Theuderic in Book VI, similarly from dysentery<sup>13</sup> and witchcraft<sup>14</sup>. Theuderic was supposedly sacrificed for the health of the prefect Mommulus. In response, Fredegund

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<sup>4</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>5</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>6</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>7</sup> Clovis was Chilperic's son from his previous marriage to Audovera – Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.28.

<sup>8</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>9</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>10</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>11</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>12</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>13</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.34.

<sup>14</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.35.



had many Parisian housewives tortured and killed, while Mommulus was tortured for his involvement in the events<sup>15</sup>. Though eventually Mommulus' life was spared, his property and possessions were collected<sup>16</sup>.

### Nature of Gregory's Text

Once again, the positioning of Fredegund's grief is important to the overall message Gregory is trying to convey, as well as the impact of the story, and thematic progression.

The positioning of the story itself heightens its dramatic effect. The events themselves, as previously mentioned, are separated into two sections and placed within Books V and VI. Heinzelmann notes that the first section of the story, which includes the death of the boys, the fictional speech delivered by Fredegund and the abolishment of their tax-lists, is chronologically out of place<sup>17</sup>. Instead, this section of the story should have taken place some time, after section fifty in Book V, according to Heinzelmann<sup>18</sup>. Though he does not fully expand upon his explanation of why this adds drama, it is clear that those particular events thematically follow from the other sections surrounding them in the text. Heinzelmann does briefly explain that several of the events within Book V are intended to build towards the development and political implications of the trial in sections 47-49 in which Gregory himself was involved<sup>19</sup>. While this is one implication of the placement of the narrative, it is not the only one, and there are others that have more of an effect upon the emotional interpretation of the reader.

For example, the literary structure within which these events take place accentuates the severity of the bout of dysentery and the omens surrounding the time. Additionally, they highlight the moral lessons upon which Gregory chooses to focus. Gregory informs his reader that the fifth year of Chilperic's reign experienced a series of environmental

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<sup>15</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.35.

<sup>16</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.35.

<sup>17</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 143.

<sup>18</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 143.

<sup>19</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 144.

phenomena intended to act as ill omens<sup>20</sup>. While omens are a staple of Christian narratives, they are integrated into Gregory's works<sup>21</sup> as they increase the dramatic impact of events by adding both a religious and earthly element. Omens also increase the perceived chaotic climate of the text. Gregory references omens as a precursor to the dysentery that spreads and kills Fredegund's sons, essentially rendering the use of omens as textual foreshadowing of an impending negative event. Part of the purpose of these omens is to build the discord up until Chilperic's demise at the end of Book VI. Correspondingly, Heinzelmann interprets both Books V and VI as focused upon the reign of Chilperic<sup>22</sup>, which would expound the gradual increase of drama, and the placement of the death of all four of Fredegund and Chilperic's sons. Gregory tells us in V.14, far in advance of the actual events being discussed, foretold in a dream-vision that Gregory has<sup>23</sup>, that Chilperic's sons are going to die<sup>24</sup>. By prolonging such events and spreading them throughout both books, he is extending the drama by making the events seem more concurrent.

The manipulation of textual tension by Gregory invites the reader to understand the emotional reaction of its characters in relation to a high stress environment. Indeed, the response of Fredegund with regards to the tax-lists further connects her own personal mourning to the drama of the political world. Though this is largely in part to Gregory's own criticisms on those taxes, we cannot be ignorant of the affect it has on Fredegund's emotional response. During Fredegund's speech, she declares that "time and time again He has sent us warnings"<sup>25</sup>. In the context of the moment it is used to accentuate her grief, yet it also situates her emotions within contemporary events and warnings Gregory has specifically included within the larger narrative framework. Whether or not this is historically accurate is irrelevant within this analysis. For what the text reveals about the historical reality is the way Gregory sought to represent history. Within his representation, the reader is positioned to emotionally interpret the portrayed characters.

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<sup>20</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.33.

<sup>21</sup> A dedicated section for the description of environmental phenomena and weather is included in chapters, Greg. Tur., *LH* III, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X.

<sup>22</sup> Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society*, p. 119.

<sup>23</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.14.

<sup>24</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.14.

<sup>25</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

One of the recurring themes of Book V is the loss of three of Fredegund's sons. Gregory only mentions Samson briefly with the discussion of Fredegund's rejection and attempted killing of him before his eventual death<sup>26</sup>. Fredegund's reactions to her sons Chlodobert and Dagobert's deaths are dramatic<sup>27</sup> as we have seen. The sections prior to the death of Chlodobert and Dagobert build up to the events surrounding the dysentery that affects the people. Gregory himself has a prophecy in section fourteen that all of Chilperic's sons will die<sup>28</sup>. Then in section twenty-two his youngest Samson dies<sup>29</sup>. Gregory's placement of these events is no different to any other reoccurring element of his narrative. Certain elements of the story are spread out throughout his books in order to extend a theme and prolong the drama of events.

### Portrayal of Emotion

There are three main emotions portrayed within the scenes from Book V and Book VI: grief, fear and fury.

Firstly, Gregory's expression of public grief is the most predominant within these two sections of narrative. Here he describes extensively the public loss felt, not just at the loss of Fredegund's sons, but those who died from the epidemic: specifically children. Gregory takes a moment in Book V to poetically wax about the loss of "our little ones, who were so dear to us and sweet"<sup>30</sup>. As far as specific emotions are concerned, Gregory does not explicitly express using particular words. Here he uses emotional description through actions – "as I write I wipe away my tears"<sup>31</sup> (*sed, abstersis lacrimis*)<sup>32</sup> – and in doing so paints vividly the circumstances. Clearly the loss of young lives was an emotional outcome of this epidemic, but Gregory is intentionally evoking a response from his reader to ensure that they understand the level of loss. This loss goes

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<sup>26</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.22.

<sup>27</sup> Frassetto, M., *The Early Medieval World: From the Fall of Rome to the Time of Charlemagne* (Santa Barbara, 2013), p. 261.

<sup>28</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.14.

<sup>29</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.22.

<sup>30</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>31</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>32</sup> *MGH SRM* I V.34

beyond the circumstances of Fredegund and Chilperic, and affects the general populace. Additionally, he is making sure that by following these sentiments with words from Job, he is reinforcing the spiritual connection to current events.

Gregory's portrayal of grief is not only shown through particular emotional words but also through phrases that compose an emotional atmosphere. These phrases are often emotive adjectives. 'Deeply moved'<sup>33</sup> (*graviter egrotavit*)<sup>34</sup>, 'wasted away'<sup>35</sup> (*tabesco*)<sup>36</sup>, 'worn to a shadow'<sup>37</sup> (*iam et tenuis spiritum exalavit*)<sup>38</sup> and 'with broken hearts'<sup>39</sup> (*maximo merore*)<sup>40</sup> are all examples of language through which Gregory intentionally establishes the level of sadness and illness associated with the death of the sons.

Similarly, Fredegund's speech which follows the above example does not mention explicit emotions, rather it is through a highly emotional speech that we as readers are informed about the grief of the situation. Fredegund's speech in which she laments accumulating wealth in such a way that is described as greedily, was all for naught as now she has no offspring onto whom to pass the riches<sup>41</sup>. The implication of greed of Fredegund and Chilperic is one of the moral lessons Gregory wishes to focus on in this passage and it is of interest that he chooses to display it through Fredegund's words. As with most speeches from the ancient world, it is difficult to prove that Fredegund's words are true, especially as they are quoted by Gregory, who was neither present, nor her friend. Their grief prompted the "tears of paupers which are the cause of their death"<sup>42</sup>. The inclusion of Gregory informing us that Chilperic was "deeply moved"<sup>43</sup> by her speech is more about Gregory's representation of Chilperic's emotions, however, and will be discussed in depth in the next section.

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<sup>33</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*

<sup>34</sup> *MGH SRM I, V.34*

<sup>35</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*

<sup>36</sup> *MGH SRM I, V.34*

<sup>37</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*

<sup>38</sup> *MGH SRM I, V.34*

<sup>39</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*

<sup>40</sup> *MGH SRM I, V.34*

<sup>41</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*.

<sup>42</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*.

<sup>43</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*.

Gregory does use specific words to express emotions, but largely when he is describing Fredegund's feelings. She is terrified (*terrebatur*)<sup>44</sup> when Clovis boasts about his new position and says negative things about Fredegund, and is again greatly frightened (*timore perterrita*)<sup>45</sup> when she learns of the witchcraft that is responsible and it is this fear, combined with a nervous depression<sup>46</sup> that leads to Fredegund's fury<sup>47</sup>. These emotions of fear, nervousness and depression are not repeated in the telling of Theuderic's death in Book V.

Aside from grief and fear, anger is another significant emotion in these scenes. Fredegund experiences anger in both instances when she discovers that it is through human intervention that she has lost her sons. That fury is a direct result of her grief, as Gregory himself tells us. Upon learning that Clovis her stepson had threatened her position and said discreditable things about her, Fredegund, in such a state of "nervous depression because of her recent loss, and worked herself into a fury"<sup>48</sup> (*...regina non condecibilia detractabat. Quae illa audiens, pavore nimio terrebatur*)<sup>49</sup>. In providing an explanation, it is probable that Gregory is explaining the emotional journey that she experiences and thus is legitimising the evolution of her feelings, despite the fact that he disapproves of how she acts upon those emotions. While this is the only specific mention of anger, Gregory goes into much detail about the violent actions of torture and murder that happen as a direct consequence of grief.

Similarly, within the second instance, the death of Theuderic, there is also only one explicit mention of anger. However, as with the first instance, it is the violent acts that follow that accentuate the level of rage. Although Gregory does not directly link Fredegund's grief to her rage, the instances of both these deaths are so similar that Gregory may have intended that his reader draw direct parallels between both stories.

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<sup>44</sup> *MGH SRM I*, V.39.

<sup>45</sup> *MGH SRM I*, V.39.

<sup>46</sup> Nervous depression is not part of the original Latin, but part of Thorpe's interpretation in his translation - Greg. Tur., *LH V.39*.

<sup>47</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.34*.

<sup>48</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V.39*.

<sup>49</sup> *MGH SRM I*, V.39

Fredegund is mourning her son, and when she learns of the intervention in witchcraft she is 'furious' (*maiorie furore*)<sup>50</sup>.

### Emotions of Individuals

In this particular narrative there are two important aspects to analyse: the varying representations of grief in different characters and the different demonstrations of violence from a gendered perspective. In order to assess this, the reactions of Fredegund and Chilperic are a key focus.

Firstly, Fredegund's grief is well pronounced within Gregory's narrative. She expresses that grief in multiple ways. As we have seen, her violent reactions to her grief are but one facet. Newbold describes them as her "manic defences against feeling helpless and broken"<sup>51</sup> and responds with "extravagant expressions of grief"<sup>52</sup>. Gregory by no means excuses her actions, heavily condemning her responses to Clovis' family members and the Parisian witches. This is evidenced in the way that Gregory describes her torture of them as "most cruel"<sup>53</sup> and "inhuman"<sup>54</sup> (*tormentis gravioribus mulieribus affectis*)<sup>55</sup>. It is important to distinguish that, although Gregory paints Fredegund as a villain, and while he actively condemns her actions, he does not inherently disregard her emotions or her grief. She feels as a mother should at the loss of her children, and attempts (though Gregory believes a little late in the case in Book V<sup>56</sup>) to repent her sins as grief supposedly teaches her the error of her ways. This is not the only occasion upon which Fredegund seeks an outlet for her grief that is not illustrated through the vengeful torture of others. Just as Fredegund instigates the burning of the tax-lists, upon the death of Theuderic she collects all of his possession, several carts full, and burns them<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> *MGH SRM I*, VI.35.

<sup>51</sup> Newbold, 'Secondary Responses to Fear and Grief', p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Wood, I., *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450-751* (Abingdon, 1994), p. 123.

<sup>53</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V*.39.

<sup>54</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH VI*.35.

<sup>55</sup> Another liberal translation by Thorpe, that is impacted by Gregory's language and the description of torture - *MGH SRM I*, VI. 35

<sup>56</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH V*.34.

<sup>57</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH VI*.35.

This she does, as Gregory informs us, in order to remove everything that might remind her of the loss of her son<sup>58</sup>. Both of these attempts at dealing with her grief demonstrate through desperate actions the depth of grief that Fredegund feels. Fredegund's grief is also expressed through the beating of her own breast<sup>59</sup>, an element of cultural *topoi*<sup>60</sup> that Gregory uses in order to further cement her emotional grief.

While grief is not shown as such, Gregory is not afraid to engender emotions. For instance, in Book VI, Brunhilde "with a vigour which would have become a man (*praecingens se viriliter*)<sup>61</sup>... rose in her wrath and took her stand"<sup>62</sup>. This particular description by Gregory clearly indicates that the way in which she is using 'vigour' and 'wrath' is considered a manly emotion and trait by him. Grief does not hold such gendered views. Neither Fredegund nor Chilperic display characteristics that are not part of their represented gender, and instead are represented in terms of their roles as parents, and even their roles as aristocracy<sup>63</sup>.

Fredegund's grief is felt by the rest of the populace. Men and women alike grieve in a manner befitting cultural *topos*<sup>64</sup>, however, it is the way that Gregory phrases how they 'bewailed' Chlodebert's death that elicits an emotional understanding. Fredegund and Chilperic's grief is a shared experience and is described positively by Gregory. While most of the women present in Gregory's history are women of positions and power, most often royalty, mirroring Fredegund's grief with others in their realm. While elements of her position may not be realities of lower born women, grief is represented as a universal emotion.

Gregory's representation of emotion in this story is separate to his treatment of the violent consequences of those emotions. Chilperic's grief comes under great scrutiny

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<sup>58</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.35.

<sup>59</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.33.

<sup>60</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 117.

<sup>61</sup> *MGH SRM* I, VI.4

<sup>62</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.4.

<sup>63</sup> By their role as aristocracy it is meant that other social classes would have been more restricted in their ability to escape to mourn as they do in the forest of Cuise, or perhaps distribute violent revenge against witchcraft.

<sup>64</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

from Gregory, and indeed it is often his lack of emotions that cause Gregory to critique him. Although Gregory states that Fredegund manipulated Chilperic into having Clovis killed, Gregory himself expressly tells his reader that he himself believed it to be Chilperic's ultimate involvement that killed Clovis<sup>65</sup>. While Newbold sees Fredegund's manipulation as part of Fredegund's grief fuelled fury<sup>66</sup>, Gregory is intentionally highlighting more. He wants his reader to understand that it is Chilperic's lack of emotion, the fact that he "wept no tear,"<sup>67</sup> that is a heavy part of his denigration of his character. It is true that, through the words of Guntrum, Fredegund is blamed for the actual murder of Clovis<sup>68</sup>, but Gregory heavily condemns Chilperic's absence of fatherly emotion towards Clovis. These sins of a father against the son are a reoccurring element of Gregory's didacticism. In the section immediately prior to Clovis sanctioning Clovis' death, Leuvigild, in a battle with his father is quoted as saying his "father does wrong to attack me... it is a sin for father to be killed by a son, or a son to be killed by a father"<sup>69</sup>. Fathers who are persuaded to kill their sons, as Fredegund does Chilperic, do so on evil advice and God eventually kills them as justice<sup>70</sup>.

Despite the criticisms and negativity shown to us by Gregory, Chilperic does mourn for the death of Dagobert and Chlodobert. Both he and Fredegund spend the month of October to grieve and mourn in the forest of Cuise<sup>71</sup>. Although Gregory provides no dramatic description of his feelings here, clearly he is expected to feel something during this period to take time out to emotionally cope. Additionally, when Fredegund delivers her speech, Chilperic is "deeply moved" (*compunctus corde*)<sup>72</sup>. This feeling is followed by the burning of tax-lists, ensuring that such measures are never taken again, and in future becoming more charitable towards the poor<sup>73</sup>. Both Fredegund and Chilperic are broken-hearted (*maximo merore*)<sup>74</sup> by the loss of their

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<sup>65</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>66</sup> Newbold, 'Secondary Responses to Fear and Grief', p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>68</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* XIII.10.

<sup>69</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.38.

<sup>70</sup> For a comparative tale, see – Greg. Tur., *LH* III.5.

<sup>71</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>72</sup> *MGH SRM* I, V.34.

<sup>73</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>74</sup> *MGH SRM* I, V.34.



sons<sup>75</sup>, and Gregory ensures that his reader understands the degree of loss to which they felt.

In contrast, Gregory highlights Fredegund's emotions regarding her sons in a positive light. Rosenwein suggests that despite the unsavoury relationship between the two, Gregory imagines Fredegund's feelings towards her sons as being fiercely loving<sup>76</sup>. Despite the story of Fredegund attempting to crush her daughter Rigunth's head in a chest<sup>77</sup>, she does also "nearly go mad"<sup>78</sup>, behaving in a violent manner (*illa audiens furore commota*)<sup>79</sup> when she hears of Rigunth's humiliation in Toulouse. Gregory's inclusion of this emotional characteristic of Fredegund serves his purpose that represents an ideal emotional connection between parents and children that is throughout his work. It is also difficult to discern whether Gregory's inclusion of the attack on Rigunth is a comment on her emotional instability or her absent morality. The academic perception of Gregory's attitudes towards violence accepts that his illumination of spectacular violence was a way for him to stress that not behaving in a Christian manner led to their downfall<sup>80</sup>. One example of this can be seen in the conflict between Berthefled and Ingutruide mentioned in Chapter Two. Aside from his own moral intentions, it reinforces the idea that her grief, as a facet of her motherly love, is a legitimate emotion for her to feel, and to express.

Gregory's depiction of Fredegund on the whole is an important element of how the reader understands her behaviour. It is worthwhile comparing the contemporaneous and anonymous *Liber Historiae Francorum*. Fredegund's character is certainly similar to that of Gregory's. The anonymous author here uses Gregory as one of his sources<sup>81</sup>, and as a result the impression of Fredegund as an evil and manipulative character lives on. Curiously, Bachrach sees the *LHF* as far more favourable towards

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<sup>75</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.34.

<sup>76</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 117.

<sup>77</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IX.33.

<sup>78</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VII.15.

<sup>79</sup> *MGH SRM* I, VII.15.

<sup>80</sup> Fouracre, P., 'Attitudes towards Violence in Seventh and Eight-Century Francia', in Halsall, G., ed., *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 62.

<sup>81</sup> Bachrach, B. S., *Liber Historiae Francorum*, (Lawrence, 1973), p. 17.

Fredegund, especially through its omission to many of Fredegund's more violent acts<sup>82</sup>, such as her attack upon Rigunth. While Bachrach agrees that the differences are subtle<sup>83</sup> it cannot be ignored that the author still emphasises the unwarranted violence of Fredegund. The language and style of the *LHF* is not as liberal in its emotive language, although it frequently ascribed wickedness upon her. Fredegund "wickedly created scandal"<sup>84</sup> and gave "wicked counsel" that led to Chilperic killing his wife Galswintha<sup>85</sup>. This is not dissimilar to the way in which the instigators of the revolt at Poitiers were treated by Gregory as 'evil'. In fact, although Bachrach is right in suggesting the author wished to highlight her intelligence<sup>86</sup> and her beauty<sup>87</sup>, as it is a frequent element of his narrative, her intelligence was never something Gregory contested, though he did not highlight this perhaps in the same manner. Nor does the *LHF* author's inclusion of these attributes in any way make up for his consistent emphasis upon her wickedness. On multiple occasions, the evil actions of others are prompted through the instigation of Fredegund<sup>88</sup>, and while it does not necessarily describe her as colourfully as Gregory's history, the impression it leaves upon the reader is that her manipulation often had negative repercussions. It is important to consider the *LHF*, one of the few other contemporary sources for Fredegund, as it highlights that her negative qualities are not linked with her emotions. It also emphasises that while both texts are written in a different manner, they still use evil as a keystone reminder of historical individuals whose morals were of concern to the reader.

It is interesting to note that within these events Chilperic's violent actions are not accompanied by emotions, nor are they described as having been prompted by his grief. Fredegund's actions are always seen as related to her emotions. Fredegund's emotions are what lead her to torture and kill others, while Chilperic's actions are not accompanied by his grief. Gregory may have had two reasons for doing this: he wanted to further exaggerate the emotional flaws that Gregory believes Chilperic had, for example in his emotional and violent maltreatment of Clovis, or to further connect

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<sup>82</sup> Bachrach, *Liber Historiae Francorum*, p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> Bachrach, *Liber Historiae Francorum*, p. 10.

<sup>84</sup> *LHF* 31.

<sup>85</sup> *LHF* 31.

<sup>86</sup> Bachrach, *Liber Historiae Francorum*, p. 10; *LHF* 31

<sup>87</sup> *LHF* 35.

<sup>88</sup> *LHF* 31; *LHF* 33; *LHF* 36.

Fredegund's actions with her emotions. While it is obvious from Gregory's account that he is no friend of Fredegund's, he never explicitly states that her emotions are illegitimate, but her actions are.

Gregory's representation of Chilperic is essential in understanding his representation of Fredegund. At the end of Book VI, Gregory goes into great detail about the 'evil' which Chilperic exhibited<sup>89</sup> and essentially sums up how Gregory displays Chilperic throughout the history. Chilperic is evil, remorseless, and rejoices in the destruction of others as Nero did. He was arrogant in his own qualities, and was keen to learn new ways of torture in addition to hating the poor and everything they stood for. While Gregory's account of a man he hated and displayed bias against cannot be taken on its word, it explains why during the death of sons he is little moved – Gregory is trying to depict him as emotionless or at least that to him Chilperic's emotions are illogical. Interestingly, in this section, Gregory notes how Chilperic was vicious in his torture and yet no mention of his cruelty is made in relation to his sons' deaths.

While it is clear in Gregory's history that he has a personal animosity towards Fredegund, and despite male attribution to her character, there is no gendered representation of the emotions or violence that are connected with familial discord. Wood notes that within the recorded events of Merovingian history, grief and violence against family are negative moral traits, but ones that are not attributed to any specific gender<sup>90</sup>. Though Wood does seem to downplay Gregory's disgust of Chilperic's agreement to the killing of his son Clovis which could be argued, given the evidence presented here, is a significant part of his vilification of Chilperic's character.

### Significance of Emotion

The elements highlighted within these events bring to the forefront many significant conversations about represented grief. They accentuate the importance of

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<sup>89</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.46.

<sup>90</sup> Wood, I., 'Deconstructing the Merovingian Family', in Carradini, R., et al., *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 155-156.

grief regardless of the vilification of Fredegund, what this reveals about Gregory as an author, and the insight into Merovingian grief that they provide.

Gregory's particular representation of Fredegund's grief, despite her being essentially a villain in his work, is important. Gregory is demonstrating a vulnerability of his seemingly ruthless characters that is not necessarily needed. As a personal enemy, Gregory is not obliged to include characteristics that show her in a positive light. As mentioned previously, Bachrach believes the LHF shows Fredegund in a more positive light,<sup>91</sup> but this emphasis on the power of her grief humanises her to the reader. Not only does it humanise her, but it helps credit Gregory's balance as an historian a little more even though Gregory clearly disapproves of her actions, even describing those who to Gregory are wrongly being accused of witchcraft as "poor wretches"<sup>92</sup> (this is however another interpretative translation by Thorpe – *tormentis gravioribus mulieribus affectis*) and a "poor creature"<sup>93</sup> (*misero*)<sup>94</sup>. However, representing Fredegund's 'legitimate' emotions may have a political implications. It does contribute to Gregory's representation of the contemporary climate as one of mourning and drama, which in turn provides a more emotional course of events in his narrative.

Although, it could be said that the grief felt in these circumstances was not isolated to Gregory's representation of society at the time. Venantius Fortunatus wrote several *consolationes* to Chilperic and Fredegund on the death of Dagobert and Chlodobert. Poem 9.2, while adhering to standard *consolatio* structure, can also be assessed with regards to its political context. George suggests that the *consolatio* is specifically attuned to their stages of mourning, as well as being specific towards the circumstances of Fredegund and Chilperic as grieving parents<sup>95</sup>. In addition to its role as a panegyric and adherence to literary topoi<sup>96</sup> the poem highlights the emotional state of the king and queen, and as a public poem, makes their grief and its intensity aware to

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<sup>91</sup> Bachrach, *Liber Historiae Francorum*, p. 10.

<sup>92</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* VI.35.

<sup>93</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.39.

<sup>94</sup> *MGH SRM* I, V.39

<sup>95</sup> George, J., trans. by, *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems* (Liverpool University Press, 1995), p. 80, n. 37.

<sup>96</sup> George, J., 'Poet as Politician: Venantius Fortunatus' Panegyric to King Chilperic' *Journal of Medieval History* 15 (1989), p. 5.

the reader. The *consolatio*, despite having a political agenda in brokering peace between Venantius' friend Bishop Gregory and Chilperic<sup>97</sup>, also adds to our interpretation of the public understanding of the aristocrats' mourning, just as Gregory's description of public mourning did.

### Conclusion

The significance of emotion within these events lies in what it reveals about Gregory's political agenda, his moral lessons, and the manner in which he uses Fredegund to do so. Fredegund's emotional representation, while largely a narrative device, fortunately shows us a certain portrayal of emotions that is deemed as rational by Gregory and his intended audience. While there are several examples of grief within Gregory, this particular collection of events is important not only for the political and moral reasons, but also because of the separate treatments of emotions and actions. In assessing the validation of emotions within Gregory, his praise of Fredegund's grief, however changeable she may be in the treatment of her children, indicates a level of acceptance by the author. Although the emotions and circumstances are different, this is not unlike Gregory's treatment of Clotilde and the revolt at Poitiers. Just as he does on that occasion, here he draws a distinction between the emotions and the violent reactions of the women, and in doing so allows for a closer inspection of emotional legitimisation.

In terms of his representation of gendered emotion, the contrast between both the emotions and the associated actions of Fredegund and Chilperic grief, Gregory does not choose to represent the emotion as inherent of a particular gender. While Gregory's criticisms regarding both of their treatments of Clovis heavily focus upon Chilperic's betrayal as a father towards Clovis, this does not indicate that he is entirely emotionless. As we have seen, both he and Fredegund are expected to mourn, and mourn openly. This is not specific to the scenes discussed here either, but grief in general is an accepted part of learning and feeling within the world Gregory writes. There is not necessarily a

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<sup>97</sup> To understand the academic discourse regarding Venantius' political motives behind the *consolatio* see – George, J, 'Poet as Politician: Venantius Fortunatus', pp. 5-18.

contrast between the gendered expressions of grief, rather a comparison is able to be drawn regarding how they act in the circumstances.

## CHAPTER FOUR – THE JEALOUSY OF THE BROTHERS' CONSORTS

The emotions of jealousy and envy are ones that, represented as a vice and a sin, are emotions that occur multiple times within Gregory's history. While jealousy is a reoccurring theme throughout Gregory's narrative, regardless of gender, there is a sequence within Book IV that illustrates a series of conflicts with regards to marriage and mistresses. Individually, direct references to jealousy are few, but specific. However, in this collective set of sections Gregory stresses the precarious nature of aristocratic women, specifically queens, in Merovingian society. The emphasis upon envy with regards to these political circumstances reveals something of the nature of jealousy for aristocratic women at this time, as a moralistic representation of the politically fraught position of royal consorts.

Jealousy is sometimes described in modern psychological literature as a product of other emotions<sup>1</sup> - such as anger, sadness, fear, disgust and happiness – but it is also widely considered a complex or secondary emotion in its own right<sup>2</sup>.

### The Events

The events upon which this chapter will focus occur in Book IV, sections 25 to 28. The events describe the marriage complications of four kings – Guntram, Charibert, Sigibert and Chilperic – all of whom were brothers<sup>3</sup>, who inherited and partitioned the unified kingdom of their father, Chlothar I, immediately creating a complex political situation of competition and shifting alliances between the four brothers. As a result, the

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<sup>1</sup> Hupka, R. B., 'The Motive for the Arousal of Romantic Jealousy: Its Cultural Origin', in Salovey, P., ed., *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy* (New York, 1991), p. 255 .

<sup>2</sup> While there is debate as to whether jealousy is a secondary or a primary emotion, it is seen as an emotion all the same. For this debate and the complexity of jealousy as an emotion see: Hobson, R. P., 'Is Jealousy a Complex Emotion?' in Hart, S. L., & Legerstee, M., eds, *Handbook of Jealousy: Theory, Research, and Multidisciplinary Approaches* (Chichester, 1988), pp. 293-311.

<sup>3</sup> Chilperic was only a half-brother – Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 59.

brothers often made intermittent attempts to annex each other's territories<sup>4</sup> in what Goffart describes as a "condition of chronic, damaging inter-brother conflict"<sup>5</sup>. Shortly after the death of their father Chlothar I in 561<sup>6</sup> Gregory describes the various mistresses, wives and offspring that the four sons have, and the subsequent violent and manipulative consequences of the relationships.

Initially, Guntram marries Marcatrude, who becomes jealous of Guntram's son Gundobad by a previous mistress, Veneranda<sup>7</sup>. This jealousy prompted her to orchestrate the poisoning of Gundobad<sup>8</sup>. When Guntram had married Marcatrude, Gregory tells us he send Gundobad to Orleans, and yet his threat to Marcatrude's position was enough for her to attempt to poison him anyway. While objectively this could appear as a strategic move, Gregory expressly indicates that jealousy was the cause, and her punishment for the violent response to that emotion is the death of her son by Gundobad "by the hand of God"<sup>9</sup>. Guntram then estranged himself from her and married another woman, Austrechild<sup>10</sup>. Later in Book V, Gregory recounts that Guntram kills two of Marcatrude's brothers, Guntio and Wiolich, for making hateful remarks about Austrechild and seized their possessions<sup>11</sup>. While Gregory's emphasis on this story is the mirrored loss of Guntram's own two sons, it remains that the conflict regarding the king's consorts was an issue of ensuing contention for all families involved.

This story is immediately followed with Charibert's own marital complications, a deliberate decision by Gregory to concentrate the events and to compound the rivalry and complications between the brothers. Although initially married to a woman named Ingoberg, Charibert fell in love with two of her serving girls, Marcofled and Marcovefa,

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<sup>4</sup> These events begin in Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.22 when their father's property is divided between them, and remains a reoccurring element throughout the *LH*.

<sup>5</sup> Goffart, W., 'The Frankish Pretender Gundobald, 582-585: A Crisis of Merovingian Blood' *Francia (Mittelalter)* 39 (2012), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Murray, A. C., 'Chronology and the Composition of the Histories of Gregory of Tours, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), p. 175.; Greg. Tur. *Hist.* IV 21-22.

<sup>7</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>8</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>9</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>10</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>11</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* V.17.



both the daughters of a wool worker. Ingoberg was jealous of the girls and hired their father to work for her in the hopes that when Charibert saw the man performing the job subserviently that he would come to despise the two girls. However, this plan was unsuccessful and Charibert instead dismissed her in anger, and replaced her with Merofled<sup>12</sup>.

Sigibert, according to Gregory, having decided that his brothers had degraded themselves by electing to marry their own servants, intended to marry someone he deemed more suitable. He sent messengers to seek the hand of Brunhilde who was the daughter of the Visigothic king Athanagild<sup>13</sup>. Brunhilde, who Gregory describes as elegant and decorous, is sent with a large dowry as Sigibert's bride<sup>14</sup>. The section regarding Sigibert's marriage is the only account between the brothers that does not involve jealousy or murder in some capacity and highlights Gregory's consistent favouritism towards Brunhilde<sup>15</sup>, which is an important element in his display of jealousy<sup>16</sup>.

Chilperic, after seeing the success of Sigibert's marriage, requests the hand of Brunhilde's sister, Galswintha whom he then marries in a similar manner – with a large dowry, and a conversion from Arianism to Catholicism. However, their marital bliss is short-lived, when Galswintha quickly becomes jealous of Fredegund, whom Chilperic had married prior to Galswintha; as a result of this conflict, Chilperic has Galswintha garrotted by a servant<sup>17</sup>.

The conflict and rivalry between the Merovingian kings has been relevant throughout this thesis, in Chapter Three where Gregory's conflict with Fredegund and Chilperic are notable, but here its understanding is most important. Sigibert's death in 575<sup>18</sup> although at the hands of Fredegund's assassins<sup>19</sup>, is pre-empted by a warning

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<sup>12</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.27.

<sup>14</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Wood, I., *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 126.

<sup>16</sup> Will be discussed further as part of Emotions of Individuals

<sup>17</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 28.

<sup>18</sup> PLRE IIB, p. 1148.

<sup>19</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 51.

from Saint Germanus to Sigibert which said that if he intended to spare his brother Chilperic's life, only then would he survive<sup>20</sup>. This is one way in which Gregory stresses that the fraternal conflict is one that the church and God condemn.

### Nature of Gregory's Text

As previously mentioned, these events take place at a time of unrest following shortly after Chlothar I's death. The manner in which Gregory structures these events is important because it contextualises the emotional environment of the women. Upon Chlothar I's death his sons amicably divide up the Frankish kingdom, but when Gaul is attacked by the Avars in 562<sup>21</sup>, Sigibert brokers peace with them only to return to find his brother Chilperic attacking his kingdom<sup>22</sup>. Again, this context is important as it immediately situates the period as one of both external and internal conflict, as well as asserting the struggle for dominance between the brothers<sup>23</sup>. It would be naïve to assume that the women were not aware of the rivalry between the brothers, and the inherent importance that progeny would hold in the success of the kings. Just as Gregory built the sense of drama surrounding the death of Fredegund's sons in Chapter Three, here he emphasises the tension by detailing the affairs of the kings as they are involved with multiple women and the conflict that develops as a consequence. Contextually, all four brothers were struggling to produce an heir which only heightened the belligerency between them<sup>24</sup>, and therefore the consorts play an important role in these politics – their importance linked to either the favour of their king, or their ability to produce a male heir.

Gregory uses these sections to demonstrate the conflict and downfall of the kings and their descendants. The focus therefore is upon the complications of succession and the precarious position in which women were situated. However, the fact remains that

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<sup>20</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 49.

<sup>21</sup> PLRE IIIB, p. 1147.

<sup>22</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 23.

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the context after the death of Chlothar I see – James, E., *The Franks* (Chichester, 1991), p. 162.

<sup>24</sup> For a clearer understanding as to the desperation for an heir during this period, see – Goffart, 'The Frankish Pretender', p. 25-26.

jealousy is a reoccurring element representation in the conflict of these segments and is a reoccurring problem for women in this position. Although jealousy itself is not a strictly female emotion, nor is it represented as such, its consistent place in the concerns of queens and mistresses indicates that where aristocratic succession is concerned, female jealousy plays a huge part in their politics.

Although the death of Chlothar I occurs in the middle of Book IV, scholars see it as a distinct event which signifies the beginning of a new era of Merovingian history<sup>25</sup>. This positioning therefore is important in terms of Gregory's emphasis upon the impact of these marital events. After the events of the four brothers, Gregory specifically states that "I must now return to what I was describing to you"<sup>26</sup>. This particular digression by Gregory is interesting, in that it indicates that Gregory himself sees this as a detour from his original purpose, but one that he deems necessary. Goffart notes that in these circumstances in which Gregory repeatedly redirects his reader's attention back to the main 'subject', indicates a change in both narrative pace and direction, but notably that the digressions were not considered subpar to the 'main subject'<sup>27</sup>. Indeed, these digressions are often just as crucial to his purpose as the main narrative<sup>28</sup> and as the circumstances between the brothers in IV.25-28 show, are part of his thematic purpose and historical narrative. One of the overarching lessons from this work is the fact that the aristocratic and familial conflicts result in a range of mistakes and sins that hold consequences for its individuals and the general populace. Gregory therefore feels that the consequences – eg. justice at the hand of god<sup>29</sup>, estrangement<sup>30</sup> and death<sup>31</sup> - of not only jealousy but the complications of having so many mistresses is a worthy piece of information to include and a justifiable lengthy detour. Not only does their inclusion in the text illustrate how important they are to Gregory's overall work, their placement shortly after the death of Chlothar I sets the tone for the rest of the 'new era' – a tone of conflict and violence.

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<sup>25</sup> Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, p. 311.

<sup>26</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.28.

<sup>27</sup> Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> James, E., 'Gregory of Tours and "Arianism"', in Cain, A., and Lenski, N., *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2009), p. 335.

<sup>29</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>30</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>31</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25; IV.26; IV.28.

This pattern of a new era of conflict and violence is set up earlier at the beginning of Book IV with the death of Queen Clotild. Her role in Gregory's narrative in Book III<sup>32</sup> is to stand as a symbol preventing fratricidal conflict that is mirrored in the conflict between the brothers in Book IV.25-28. Her death is prominent as the beginning of a new chapter<sup>33</sup>, and signals an end to her restraining force. The following sections immediately narrate Chlothar I's negative taxation of the church<sup>34</sup>, as well as detailing the narrative of Chlothar's own romantic exploits and children<sup>35</sup>, that parallels to that of his sons in IV.25-26 and 28. Gregory has built up this conflict intentionally through associating the kings' marital arrangement and fratricidal conflict in addition to the circumstances of his own consorts to emphasis the chaotic context that impact the emotions of the women in question.

Much of the issue with the secondary material for the emotion of jealousy revolves around scholarship's interpretation of events. Dalton perceived Fredegund's attack upon Rigunth as a consequence of her jealousy, sparked by the fact that Fredegund was born of a lower class than her daughter. Similarly, Chilperic is supposedly jealous of Sigibert's well-matched marriage to Brunhilde, and that is what inspires him to ask for Galswitha's hand<sup>36</sup>. While Chilperic is seen as being inspired by Sigibert, he is in no way described by Gregory in this instance as jealous. However, the context and structure of the narrative repeatedly demonstrates the constant rivalry between the brothers, and though Gregory does not phrase it as such, the narrative is constructed so as to emphasise these emotions within the political context.

### Portrayal of Emotion

While jealousy is the main emotional focus for these passages, there is one other prominent emotion that is mentioned explicitly or developed in literary artifice and whose portrayed is worth observing: love. Additionally, the expression of jealousy

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<sup>32</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* III.28.

<sup>33</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.1.

<sup>34</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.2.

<sup>35</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.2.

<sup>36</sup> Frassetto, *The Early Medieval World*, p. 129.

within this chapter, as in previous chapters, relates not only to the words utilised by Gregory, but the structure of his text and is of importance to the discussion here.

Jealousy is the most notable emotion within this particular narrative. There are few specific mentions of female jealousy in Gregory's overall narrative, however, it appears twice in IV.25-26. Marcatrude is jealous (*aemulus*)<sup>37</sup> of Guntram's son by another woman and Ingoberg is jealous (*aemulus*)<sup>38</sup> of her husband Charibert favouring other women. These are the only specific occurrences of the term *aemula* in these chapters. The theme of jealousy, however, is not a unique one within Gregory's work. When in X.8 Eulalius abducts a nun to marry her, the other women whom he was bedding become jealous (*invidia*)<sup>39</sup> and turn to witchcraft in order to curse him<sup>40</sup>. This tale, while similarly mirroring Charibert and Guntram's dalliances, again indicates jealousy as an emotion felt by women in a romantic or familial context, as violence was then used as an outlet for that emotion. Here we can see that jealousy does not always have romantic links; in fact, often the implication is professional or social jealousy<sup>41</sup>. Elsewhere in the *LH* Parthenius, a tax-collector, murdered his wife and his friend as a consequence of his own jealousy (*zelo*)<sup>42</sup>. The emotional context here of 'romantic' jealousy is similar to the women in IV.25-26 and yet Gregory does not separate term for his jealousy is used. It is possible that this is because the social and political ramifications for their affair were not comparable to what the consorts experienced.

The term *aemula*, however, does not translate exclusively with English 'jealousy', and therefore must be treated with due caution. Therefore, it affects not only how we read the emotions of Ingoberg, Marcatrude, or the other jealous women in X.8, but also how we interpret their emotional experience as women. The word that Gregory uses to describe their emotions is *aemula*<sup>43</sup> and while this could easily be translated as jealousy, it is also likely that it means rivalry. Rivalry would have entirely different implications

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<sup>37</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IV.25.

<sup>38</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IV.26.

<sup>39</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.8.

<sup>40</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* X.8.

<sup>41</sup> For example, one doorkeeper attempts to have another assumed guilty of an attempt to kill king Guntram because of jealousy (*invidia*) – Greg. Tur., *LH* VIII.11.

<sup>42</sup> *MGH SRM* I, III.36.

<sup>43</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IV. 25; IV.26.

for the translation, and thereby, the interpretation of the women in these scenes. Instead of women motivated by their emotions, they would be women motivated by a strategic need to remain in the kings' favour. While much of the surrounding text heavily re-enforces the interpretation of jealousy, were Gregory's intentions to stress upon the rivalry, it would alter the meaning of the passages. However, IV 25 and 26 are two of only four instances in the history in which Gregory uses *aemula*. In X.8, for example, the women who cast witchcraft upon Elalius do so out of *invidia*<sup>44</sup>. Curiously, three out of the four instances in which Gregory uses variants of *aemula*<sup>45</sup> he is describing sinful female emotions. One of these occurs in I.44 where the wife of a Bishop Pricus is overcome with the Devil's own malice which is hostile to holiness<sup>46</sup>. Although the use of *aemula* in this instance is directly describing the Devil, the association with the woman who is possessed by his hostility immediately makes Urbicus' wife synonymous with the Devil's emotions. The last instance of *aemula* in the *LH* does not regard women, but still involves religious rivalry as Clovis, speaking to God, references Arians and their constant rivalry with Him<sup>47</sup>. Here the use of *aemula* is equally about rivalry, but always presented in a way which insinuates competition and jealousy. Similarly, the last two instances of *aemula* are religious based rivalries, and does directly correlate to what was mentioned earlier about jealousy being considered and depicted as a sin.

Gregory does not simply use specific vocabulary and phraseology to convey jealousy, but literary artifice. The story of the four kings and their consorts reveals a pattern of contest and rivalry, through which the women's emotions are core elements in the narrative sequence. Regardless of the fact that Gregory does not specifically state that Galswintha is jealous of Fredegund (instead she experiences emotions of shame as she is disrespected – this will be discussed shortly), Gregory has effectively established a narrative in these sections that perpetuates the role of these women through jealousy and contest, one that culminates in violence.

As previously touched upon, jealousy was treated by Gregory and his contemporaries as a sin, and likewise it is the consistently violent responses to jealousy

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<sup>44</sup> *MGH SRM* I, X.8.

<sup>45</sup> *MGH SRM* I, I.44, II. 37, IV.25, IV.26.

<sup>46</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH*, I.44.

<sup>47</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH*, II.27.

that exacerbate its immorality. Gregory of Tours assumes that his readers understand jealousy as a vice "directed at the material advantages enjoyed by others"<sup>48</sup>. Marcatrude's jealousy prompts her to poison her stepson, an act so villainous that Gregory does not hesitate to say that the subsequent death of her son and eventually herself was an act of extreme divine retribution<sup>49</sup>. Similarly, Ingoberg's jealousy is a catalyst for the plan to shame her rival's father – an act which angers Charibert so much that he estranges himself from her. Charibert has no noticeable troubles finding another woman, though he soon finds himself in conflict with the church. He and his new wife Marcovefa are excommunicated, and eventually die, also by the judgement of God<sup>50</sup>. The reason for highlighting the consequence of jealous violence is that it helps to serve Gregory's overall moral teachings.

Although briefly mentioned, love is an emotion that Gregory introduces in association with situations involving jealousy. Rosenwein warns, however, that even love is not necessarily a positive emotion<sup>51</sup>. Gregory's representations of love vary, and in this context Charibert's love for the two girls is seen as fierce (*quarum amore rex valde detenebatur*)<sup>52</sup>. Gregory does not directly comment on the role of love, but in the following section he states that Sigibert observed that his brothers were taking wives unworthy of them<sup>53</sup>. The overall assertion is that the varying dalliances of Sigibert's brothers are wrong as they do not befit their station, and this is true for Gregory's representation of Charibert's love. However, it is not that Gregory dismisses the emotion, rather the way in which Charibert acts upon those emotions. This is the same as Clotilde's response to her shame, and Fredegund's grief; in this circumstance, however, Charibert's actions are not necessarily violent. Instead, his actions are seen as inappropriate for his position as king. Emotions, for Gregory, have the potential to be good if properly directed<sup>54</sup>. Love is also mentioned with regards to Chilperic's feelings

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<sup>48</sup> Balint, B. K., 'Envy in the Intellectual Discourse of the High Middle Ages', in Newhauser, R., ed., *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals* (Leiden, 2007), p. 45.

<sup>49</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.25.

<sup>50</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 26.

<sup>51</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> *MGH SRM* I, IV.26.

<sup>53</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.27.

<sup>54</sup> Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 85.

for both Galswintha (*magno amore*<sup>55</sup>) and Fredegund (*amor*<sup>56</sup>). In these instances, Chilperic's love is also seen as problematic as it is what complicates the emotions of Galswintha and places her in a precarious position as his love is torn between the two queens. Love, therefore, is expressed in these examples as emotions that complicate the political sphere when it is not monogamous. Despite the fact that this love is always expressed from a male point of view, this is most likely due to the focus of the narrative upon the kings.

### Emotions of Individuals

There are three distinct groups of individuals through whom the emotions are most distinct: the emotions of the kings, the emotions of their consorts, and lastly the emotions of Gregory himself. Although jealousy is not a gendered emotion, its use in Gregory frequently has a gendered context or intent, specifically for its representation of the emotions of aristocratic women.

The juxtaposition of the stories of the four brothers reveals more about the representation of Galswintha's emotions than the usage of specific terms. *LH* never specifically states that Galswintha is jealous of Fredegund. In fact, the emotions which Gregory indicates are those of shame that is a consequence of disrespect that hails from a constant slew of insults which she must endure<sup>57</sup>. However, her jealousy is suggested by its position in the text along side the other marriages.

Rosenwein and Wood<sup>58</sup> highlight that these stories of Gregory's vividly show emotions that could not possibly have been known to Gregory as explicitly as he is stating. Further, they show how Gregory's depiction of emotions are his own idealistic representations<sup>59</sup>. However, this is true for other contemporary authors<sup>60</sup>, and

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<sup>55</sup> *MGH SRM I*, IV. 28.

<sup>56</sup> *MGH SRM I*, IV. 28.

<sup>57</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV. 28.

<sup>58</sup> Wood, I., 'The Individuality of Gregory of Tours', in Mitchell, K., & Wood, I., *The World of Gregory of Tours* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 29-46.

<sup>59</sup> Rosenwein, B. H., 'Even the Devil (Sometimes) has Feelings: Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages' *Haskins Society Journal* 14 (2003), p. 9.



regardless of what this states we are still able to determine what the author is saying. It is difficult to ascertain comprehensively the emotions of any group or individuals without the evidence of self-expression, the emphasis and placement given by Gregory as a narrator, essentially reveals his own emotions.

Gregory's own bias may also affect how we understand the nature of jealousy at court. The only king who experiences no drama with marriage is Sigibert. His engagement and subsequent marriage to Brunhilde is represented as a peaceful transition; however, Gregory was ordained as bishop under the reign of Sigibert two years before his assassination<sup>61</sup> and Venantius Fortunatus tells us that it was under Brunhilde's appointment that he got the position<sup>62</sup>. Consequently, Gregory then lived under the reign of Chilperic, a man who, as previously discussed, Gregory did not favour, and Fredegund, whom he blamed for Sigibert's death<sup>63</sup>. Gregory's own intimate opinions from his own situation may very well influence how he has represented the emotions of both the brothers and their consorts who he deemed immoral. Moreover, Gregory heavily insists that their jealous rivalry was inherent in their downfall. So, as the text reveals Gregory's own feelings, it is imperative to understand and be aware of those feelings and the possible consequences of their actions upon the accuracy of the historical documentation of jealousy. Being aware of this distinction within the Latin, as in the case of *aemula*, while important, does not detract from interpreting the literature as expressions of jealousy. Jealousy is the emotion one experiences when there is a social bond that one is afraid of losing to someone else<sup>64</sup>. It is worth noting that interpreting jealousy this way is a modern construction and understanding of the term, and it does by no means assume Merovingians understood it in the same way<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> Such as Gregory the Great – Rosenwein, 'Even the Devil (Sometimes) Has Feelings', p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> James, E., *Gregory of Tours: Life of the Fathers* (Liverpool, 1991), p. x

<sup>62</sup> Ven. Fort. carm., V 3.

<sup>63</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.51.

<sup>64</sup> Legerstee, M., et al, 'Social Bonds, Triadic Relationships, and Goals: Preconditions for the Emergence of Human Jealousy' in Hart, S. L., & Legerstee, M., eds, *Handbook of Jealousy: Theory, Research, and Multidisciplinary Approaches* (Maldan, 2013), p. 166

<sup>65</sup> This would be an area for further research.

## Significance of Emotion

The most significant element here is what emotions and jealousy tells us about the political circumstance for women as a king's mistress, and how exactly their emotions played into that political vulnerability. We know from the Salic Law that a woman's value varied depending upon her age and her ability to bear children<sup>66</sup> and while Merovingian women clearly had a lot of political and social status to gain by bearing children for the king<sup>67</sup>, Gregory is clearly emphasising the precarious and dangerous nature of becoming so involved.

This bridal vulnerability presented in Gregory's passages is further emphasised within the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus<sup>68</sup>. Venantius' elegy *On Galswintha* details how painful the manner of her passing was for multiple individuals<sup>69</sup>, predominantly the pain for her mother Goiswinth in loving an absent daughter, a theme regarding women which reoccurs within his poetry<sup>70</sup>. While no direct mention is made by Venantius on the manner of her death - most likely because the poem attempts to conciliate between her sister Brunhilde and Fredegund<sup>71</sup> - his poem further emphasises the stressful nature of aristocratic marriages. This stressful nature only highlights the emotional response to the circumstances of both her marriage and her death.

Gregory's representation of jealousy is far more complicated than grief or humiliation as represented in previous chapters of this dissertation. While jealousy is not necessarily described as a feminine emotion, and is experienced by both of the represented genders, jealousy with regards to political ascension and position would appear to be a female-specific problem. Despite the fact that these instances highlight political complications within the female sphere, the flaw of these women is that they feel jealousy at all, and that their jealousy prompts them to act violently or in an immoral manner. Gregory frequently depicts jealousy in this way. For example, In Book

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<sup>66</sup> *Lex Salica*, LXV, p. 127.

<sup>67</sup> Frassetto, *The Early Medieval World*, p. 569.

<sup>68</sup> Ven. Fort., carm. VI.5.

<sup>69</sup> Ven. Fort., carm. VI.5.

<sup>70</sup> Roberts, M. J., *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus* (University of Michigan, 2009), p. 109.

<sup>71</sup> George, J., *Venantius*, p. 40, n. 76.

I, Joseph's brothers envied him and so they sold him into slavery<sup>72</sup>, and elsewhere in Book IV Bishop Priscus and his wife behaved in an irreligious manner because of Priscus' jealousy over his predecessor.<sup>73</sup>

The complications with the jealousy interpretations highlight where the emotional history approach is most beneficial within the study of Merovingian women. The part of Emotional History that directly investigates the various expressions of emotion and focuses upon the use of certain words, is an element that has helped reveal the issue. That is, through an emotional investigation Gregory's narrative depicts women as less prone to jealous violence. This is not to say that they were not jealous, but the translation of the queens as being envious of other women not only paints the women as more prone to sins – as jealousy is also a sin – but also suggests that Gregory himself was presenting these women as acting on a jealous emotion rather than a strategic one. Though that strategy is often motivated by fear, fear does not hold the same moral implications that jealousy does as a sin (at least in this circumstance).

Conflict between the aristocratic families is an important element of Gregory's entire narrative. Although it has been touched upon in prior chapters, the heavy presence of it within the ascension and the position of women makes it applicable to the legitimisation of the emotions represented here. Rosenwein notes that many of Gregory's miracle narratives are "dry and emotionless"<sup>74</sup> but one particular miracle directly relates to the emotion between a mother and her son<sup>75</sup>. Though Gregory expresses the emotional state of the infant, a reality he could not have truly known, the emphasis in this narrative is upon the emotional connection between relatives, and this is why Rosenwein believes it is represented emotionally<sup>76</sup>. This not only demonstrates the on-going emphasis Gregory deems necessary for the implications of his narrative and Merovingian politics, but it reveals the emotions of him as an author.

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<sup>72</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* I.9.

<sup>73</sup> Greg. Tur., *LH* IV.36.

<sup>74</sup> Rosenwein, 'Even the Devil (Sometimes) Has Feelings', p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> Greg. Tur., *De virtutibus santi Martini* 2.29.

<sup>76</sup> Rosenwein, 'Even the Devil (Sometimes) Has Feelings', p. 9.

## Conclusion

Essentially, what can be drawn from these examples of female jealousy is that jealousy is not represented in any gendered way within *LH*. Although the events in which women express jealousy are involved commit to a theme, Gregory does not portray their expression of the emotion separately to that of men experiencing jealousy. That theme of political and marital rivalry and instability is more indicative of the role of women in Merovingian society. Men also experience jealousy of a lover – as mentioned, the story of Parthenius who killed his friend and wife – and though the phraseology may be different, Gregory is also trying to convey a different message<sup>77</sup>. Therefore, we can see that jealousy is not represented differently between the two represented genders.

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<sup>77</sup> Political jealousy and the rivalry involved for the consorts of the kings is quite separate to Parthenius' romantic jealousy. Gregory provides no information as to whether Parthenius marriage held any financial or social dangers that would match the two stories.

## CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION

The engagement with the emotions of contempt, grief, jealousy and rage ultimately reveal the nature of Gregory's representation of women, rather than his engendering of emotion. While Gregory's text is intended to shock with violence and a slew of negative and sinful emotions, his moral, political and religious aims do not affect how he chooses to represent gender – at least with regards to the emotions that were assessed here. Comparing multiple people – both men and women – who experienced these emotions clearly shows that the depiction of emotion was coloured by other elements.

Each emotion within this dissertation was affected by a range of factors: literary and narrative construction (often including *topoi*), social and political context, and Gregory's own historical and moral motivations. The fragmentary nature of the material, the deliberate placement of events and the *topoi* – most notably the evil representation of Clotilde and the grieving of Fredegund – all create an atmosphere of drama that allows the emotions to manifest and grow. Even more so do these literary devices increase the concept of anger and violence in Merovingian society.

The anger and violence that occurred as a result these emotions accentuate the inherently sinful consequences of these emotions and act to vilify not simply the women in each scenario, but elements of their character (as seen in Fredegund), elements of their cause (represented in Clotilde), or the actions that they take under certain pressures (evident in the jealous women). Jealousy and contempt are seen as negative emotions and therefore it is natural for Gregory to connect both negative emotions to their violent actions. Grief, however, is represented differently and even shows Fredegund – less so Chiperic – as less of a horrible character as a result of her ability to grieve. It does not redeem her other mistakes in Gregory's eyes though. However, the acts of torture and violence that occur as a result of the depth of her grief are still deplorable acts.

Jealousy and grief are represented in some way with regards their female experience. The jealousy felt by the consorts of the kings obviously has a feminine context because it is a situation regarding women's lives, but as seen in Chapter Four, the jealousy and rivalry that they felt was represented no differently to male experienced jealousy. The only cause for concern regarding female jealousy is the use of the Latin *aemula*. The use of such a term may have meant more to Gregory's audience in the context of Merovingian language and this would certainly be an opportunity for further research beyond the confines and limitations of this thesis. However, Gregory's shaping of the text and literary construction yields the narrative to read as female jealousy and still highlights this passage as one coloured by jealousy.

This thesis sought to investigate whether or not emotional history could be useful in terms of understanding the emotions of Merovingian women, and the response to that investigation is not straight forward. Assessing the varying representations of emotions and their subsequent responses within Gregory's work does reveal that emotions such as jealousy, grief, contempt or anger are not treated as gender specific experiences. The obvious downside to such research, is that we are limited by our sources. However, the study of Merovingian Gaul's society and customs has always been thus limited, and yet applications of more recent theories and historical approaches does change our perspective, as the utilisation of Emotional History has. We may rely heavily upon Gregory, and to a lesser extent *LHF*, Fredegar and Venantius Fortunatus, to understand these emotions but likewise the same sources have provided previous generations with the dichotomy of the pious or the sinful Merovingian woman.

As one of the core texts for the Merovingian period, and thereby Merovingian women. Gregory's representation of them is essential to our understanding of the individuals in the narratives such as Fredegund and Clotilde and how that affects the historical fact and narrative. Additionally, how we understand the social lives and identities of Merovingian women and having an awareness of the impact emotion has on their identity is essential for any historical application.

In sum, applying an Emotional History analysis to emotion in Gregory of Tours helps us to understand that while Merovingian Gaul was a patriarchal society, the

expression of certain emotions was not an element of their gendered identity. For Gregory, emotions had communicative functions and transformative effects<sup>1</sup>. Of course, this analysis, while it reveals much, is not wholly conclusive, due to both the availability of extant sources from the period, and the limited examples of female emotion in Gregory himself. Most significantly, this thesis highlights that these emotions often held more of a moral, political and narrative purpose than they did in representing gender.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenwein, 'Even the Devil (Sometimes) Has Feelings', p. 7.

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