

# Research paper on gregory the great

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



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## Introduction

After the destruction of the Roman Empire, the church became one of the foundations of civilization. During the time of Gregory I the Great (590-694), the medieval papacy started exerting its power. Gregory's accomplishment was to assert its authority and establish the temporal papal power. Gregory was a Roman aristocrat by birth and he witnessed the destruction of Rome. Gregory concluded that the world was coming to an end and therefore withdrew from it in order to become a Benedictine monk. Gregory was elected Pope in 590 and took the role of protecting Rome and the surrounding territory from the emanating Lombard threat. Gregory therefore became the first pope to render services as a temporal ruler of the area that was later renamed as Papal States. He also laid the foundation for the intricate papal machinery of church government. He sent a mission of the Benedictine monks to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons in order to increase the papal control of the church outside Italy. He also helped in establishing the standards for the church and the hierarchy that exists in the church to date like the Bishops being supervised by the archbishops, while the archbishops are supervised by the pope. Gregory's successors continued the

process of increasing the papal control and extending the pope's temporal authority. The pattern of the papal government was later transferred to France and Germany by the English missionaries (Fiero, 2010). This helped a great deal in increasing and expanding the pope's temporal power.

Gregory the great is recognized for having ordered the simplification and the classification of music which was consigned to definite celebrations in the Catholic Church calendar. The advancement of the Gregorian chant or the monophonic liturgical music within the western Christianity is as a result of the intervention of Gregory the Great (Willi, 1990). The new mode of music went along with the celebration of Mass and other ritualistic services in the Catholic Church. Even though Gregory couldn't have done this as a system of notating music, the consequential body of music was the first to be notated in a system inherited to the contemporary musical notation. The chants were commonly learnt through the viva voice method and then accompanied by some oral examples. The Gregorian chants were derived from the frugal life which involved commemorating the Divine Office eight times a day at the proper hours. Singing of psalms also contributed to a large part of the life in a Spartan community while a lesser group and soloists sang the chants. The Gregorian chants have however, been subjected to several steady changes and improvements (Willi, 1990).

## **Gregorian calendar**

The Gregorian calendar is also known as the Western or Christian calendar and is the internationally recognized calendar. This calendar was introduced by Pope Gregory in 1582. The Gregorian calendar contained reforms in two parts namely the Julian calendar and the reform of the lunar cycle (Moyer,

1982 p 150). The Gregorian calendar modified the Julian calendar which was in existence prior to the era of Gregory the great. The Julian calendar had some errors that accumulated to about 3 days every four years hence the need to have a more accurate calendar. In order to avoid the inconsistencies and the errors caused by the Julian calendar, every year exactly divisible by four was considered as a leap year while years exactly divisible by 100 were not. For instance 1900 was not a leap year while the year 2000 was a leap year (Moyer, 1982 p 146). Gregory made major contributions towards the adoption of the new calendar system which was more accurate as compared to the traditional Julian system.

There were several reforms that took place in the Catholic Church as a result of the involvement and intervention of Gregory the great at various instances. Gregory played very significant roles in the conversions and the reformation of the ecclesiastical structures and the administration which later on led to the launching of the renewed missionary efforts. There were several missionaries who were sent from Rome to other parts of Europe to convert the Anglo-Saxons. Among them was Augustine of Canterbury who played a very important role in the spreading and popularizing the Roman Catholic Church. The missionaries who were acting under the directive of Gregory the Great, helped in spreading Catholicism among the Germans, slaves, Vikings and later on to other Scandinavian countries. Gregory the great made major contributions towards the development of the modern Catholic Church. He was also one of the most important patrons of the Benedictine monastic movement. Gregory's influence in the centralization of the Catholic Church also played a very important role towards the church's

development. Gregory introduced the concept of appointing church officials who could serve the church at various levels. He also introduced the hierarchical system of governance whereby church officials at different levels of leadership could be supervised by their seniors in order to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the church. For instance, he came with the concept of bishops, archbishops and the officials to supervise them. The bishops were supervised by the archbishops while the archbishops were supervised by the pope. This is a trend that is still held by the church to date and has helped in ensuring accountability and smooth running of the church affairs (Fiero, 2010).

## **Work cited**

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