Documents becoming narrative :
Gregorio di Catino and the archive of the monastery of Farfa

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Gregorio di Catino (who lived from 1060 to after 1130) was a monk of the monastery of Farfa, north of Rome, of minor aristocratic origins. In 1092, he petitioned Abbot Berardo II (ruled 1090–9) to allow him to compile a cartulary of the monastery's archive; that huge text, which Gregorio finished well after Berardo's death with the help of his nephew Todino, contains over 1300 documents, going up to 1125. We know it as the *Regesto di Farfa*, but Gregorio called it the *Liber gemniagraphus sive cleronomialis ecclesie Pharphensis*.[1] The two adjectives in this 'paratext' are apparently Gregorio's own invention, although he was not a particularly arcane stylist under normal circumstances; they indicate the pathbreaking task he had undertaken for Berardo—or against him, for Gregorio detested this abbot, as we shall see. The *Regesto* is one of the first of a whole series of monastic cartulary-chronicles which began to be written in this period in central Italy—Leone Ostiense's *Chronicon Cassinense* is exactly contemporary; Giovanni diacono's *Chronicon Vulturnense* is only slightly later—but Gregorio's work is independent of the others, and on a much larger scale. He was part of a cultural trend, but unaware of it; he thought up his project himself.[2] And this project, which took the rest of his life, expanded well beyond the *Regesto*. That only covered gifts, privileges and court cases; but after 1103 he undertook a second cartulary, the *Liber largitorius vel notarius* (or *Liber emphiteusos terrarum*), which registered some 2100 charters into the 1120s, this time recording Farfa's leases. The *Liber largitorius* mostly contains abbreviated texts, but here Gregorio shows clearly that his aim is to make Farfa's archive accessible, for it is preceded by an innovative alphabetical index of places, with detailed reference to where the documents can be found on the succeeding folios—a referencing system which is reliable, and almost complete, which is a good thing, for the modern edition of the text provides no

1 I. Giorgi and U. Balzani (ed.), *Il Regesto di Farfa*, 5 vols. (Rome, 1879–83) [henceforth *RF*], II, pp. 6–7. Gregorio glossed *gemniagraphus* as *memoria descriptionis terrarum*, and *cleronomialis* as *hereditalis Pharphensis ecclesie*.

2 See in general P. Toubert, *Les structures du Latium médiéval* (Rome, 1973), pp. 77–88; G. Arnaldi, 'Cronache con documenti, cronache "autentiche", e pubblica storiografia', in *Fonti medievali e problematica storiografica* (Rome, 1976), pp. 351–74; H. Zielinski, 'Gregor von Catino und das *Regestum Farfense*', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, LV–LVI (1976), pp. 361–404; T. Kölzer, '"Codex libertatis"', *Atti del 9° Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1983), pp. 609–53; L. Feller, *Les Abruzzes médiévales* (Rome, 1998), pp. 51–74; U. Longo, 'Agiografia e identità monastica a Farfa tra XI e XII secolo', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, XXI (2000), pp. 311–41; idem, 'Gregorio da Catino', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, LIX (Rome, 2002), pp. 254–9; idem, 'Memoria e definizione dell'identità religiosa in comunità monastiche dell'Italia centrale (secoli XI e XII)', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen âge*, CXV (2003), pp. 213–33; several contributions in R. Dondarini (ed.), *Farfa abbazia imperiale* (Negarine, 2006); S. Boynton, *Shaping a monastic identity: liturgy and history at the imperial abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125* (Ithaca, 2006), pp. 18–36; M. Costambeys, *Power and patronage in early medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 11–19; and at the back of all of these U. Balzani, *Le cronache italiane nel medio evo* (Milan, 1900), pp. 141–76. Outside Italy, the point of reference for such texts is P. J. Geary, *Phantoms of remembrance* (Princeton, 1994).

other index.[3]

These two works, which survive in Gregorio and Todino's autograph manuscripts, do not exhaust the author's activity. At the end of his life, from 1130 onwards, Gregorio compiled a topographical index to all of Farfa's possessions, the *Liber floriger*, constructed along alphabetical lines, with brief citations of the relevant texts for each location, and cross-references to the cartularies. This 'ouvrage anti-historique', in Laurent Feller's phrase, was a monument to what Farfa should possess, regardless of whether it did so or not by 1130; it summed up Gregorio's intended legacy to future generations of monks, and was a synthesis of all the documentation he had so painstakingly compiled.[4] But it was not a *summa* of his entire world-view; for Gregorio also wrote an avowedly historical work, a chronicle of Farfa's history, begun well after 1103, for he refers to the *Regesto* and the *Liber largitorius* as 'complete' (*expleti*), but before the death of its dedicatee Abbot Berardo III in 1119; in fact, it must have been compiled concurrently with the latter parts of both previous volumes, for they continue after the chronicle ends in 1118. The latter, which like the other three survives in Gregorio's autograph, is the only un-named one in his œuvre; we call it the *Chronicon Farfense*.[5] This text is the focus of my paper; I want to discuss how we might understand the textual construction of a history of Farfa, by the author of all its surviving cartularies.

Gregorio di Catino was a sophisticated and well-informed writer. He knew and cited, among others, Orosius, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, Paul the Deacon, the papal biographies in the *Liber pontificalis*, Liutprand of Cremona's *Antapodosis*, and a considerable quantity of canon law texts. He was thus well-acquainted with the historiography of early medieval Italy, and was in a good position to—I quote Pierre Toubert—'faire œuvre d'historien, c'est-à-dire d'utiliser eux-mêmes les sources … pour proposer au lecteur une reconstruction originale du passé. Entre le cartulaire et le *chronicon*, le document d'archive a ainsi changé de valeur … il est devenu pour l'auteur du *chronicon* un moyen, presque une pièce justificative destinée à corroborer le récit personnel du narrateur'.[6] Toubert was talking about all the cartulary-chroniclers here, but for him Gregorio was the most important. And the Farfa historian was also the only one who wrote several different accounts of his material, pure cartularies, an index, and a chronicle, all closely related in their intertextuality, so that we can see exactly how his use of documents 'changed value'. It may be added that his task was undertaken in complicated historical circumstances. Gregorio hated Berardo II, as I noted at the start. His successor (after one short-lived intermediary) Berardo III (1099–1119) was a hero of Gregorio, who however became dangerously involved in Henry V's conflict with Paschal II, on the imperial side—he was for a time in 1111 the pope's jailer; then Berardo was succeeded by the controversial Guido III (1119–25) and a period of civil war, recounted very bitterly by Gregorio at the end of the *Regesto*.[7] Farfa's history had been for two hundred years one of a continual see-saw between strong and stable abbots, and periods of contested rule and

3 G. Zucchetti (ed.), *Liber largitorius*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1913–22). See I, pp. 8–27 for the indexing, which seems to stop in about 1104–5. For the indexing, here and elsewhere in Gregorio's work, see M. Villani, 'Gregorio da Catino, indicizzatore', in E. Cuozzo *et al.* (eds.), *Puer Apuliae* (Paris, 2008), pp. 757–69.

4 M. T. Maggi Bei (ed.), *Il Liber "floriger"* (Rome, 1984); Feller, *Les Abruzzes*, p. 52.

5 U. Balzani (ed.), *Il Chronicon Farfense*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1903) [henceforth *CF*]. For Gregorio's (and Todino's) autographs, see above all P. Supino Martini, *Roma e l'area grafica romanesca (secoli X–XII)* (Alessandria, 1987), pp. 270–86.

6 All these authors are cited in *CF*, and tracked in the editor's notes. For canon law, see esp. T. Kölzer (ed.), *Collectio canonum Regesto Farfensi inserta* (Rome, 1982). Toubert quote: *Les structures*, p. 86.

7 See in general S. Boesch Gajano, 'Berardo' [III], *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, VIII (Rome, 1966), pp. 767–75, the best account of Berardo III; M. Stroll, *The medieval abbey of Farfa* (Leiden, 1997), the fullest overall account of the twelfth-century abbey, though often very literal in its use of sources; and the innovative Boynton, *Shaping a monastic identity*.

the dispersal of property.[8] Gregorio knew the detail of this latter better than anyone who had ever lived, and he had the ill-luck to live through not one period of crisis but two. What impact did this have on his vision of history, his 'original reconstruction of the past', that he could create from his documentary knowledge?

To investigate this, I want to begin with Gregorio's 'metatext', his statement of intent at the start of his *Chronicon*, which he may well have written first; I will then analyse his accounts of three abbots, the charismatic Ugo (998–1039), Berardo I (1047–89), the strong abbot under whose rule Gregorio entered Farfa, and the authors *bête noire* Berardo II, to see in what way, and how far, he carried out his intentions.

Gregorio begins the *Chronicon* with praise of Berardo III, and an exaltation of virtue over wealth. Then he gets down to business: this, his third work, is an *opus brevissimum*, a very short work, by comparison with the previous two (this is one reason why the preface may have been written first, for the text is 543 pages long in the modern edition). He regards it as 'very light to read', and as refined precious metal, or purified wine, by comparison with its weighty predecessors; it will be easily for readers to reread and study properly. In it will be found the 'very ancient, new and truest liberty of this monastery'; the 'individual acquisitions, wicked concessions, detestable dispersions, and the unjust invasions and impious separations of various men', which Gregorio will record faithfully, for lying about it is the work of the Devil (an image which recurs in the *Liber floriger* as well). He does this without reward, though his remarks on this are double-edged, for he also complains that Berardo II never properly funded his research expenses for the *Regesto*. He finishes by explaining how useful the knowledge of earlier monastic affairs will be for Berardo III's effective government, and that this will be his aim 'as long as I live'—which indeed it would be.[9] Gregorio's vision of the task of the historian is thus substantially tied up with its utility for the well-informed conduct of monastic affairs (*utilitas* and variants appears many times in this introduction); and this utility lies in its documentation of monastic rights, acquisitions, and losses.

Abbot Ugo ruled Farfa with two breaks for forty years; although he bought the abbacy initially in a simoniac deal with Pope Gregory V (a particularly problematic act, given the long-standing vigour with which successive abbots, not least Ugo, proclaimed its independence from Rome and its subjection to the emperor), Otto III soon confirmed him in office, and he remained close to both Otto and Henry II. Ugo was an enthusiastic restorer of monastic rights and lands, and also author of polemical writings on the subject, including an account of monastic tribulations in the tenth century (the *Destructio monasterii Farfensis*) and a long exposition of monastic land claims against the counts of Sabina, both of which texts Gregorio knew, and the latter of which only survives in the *Chronicon*.[10] Gregorio's account of him begins with the simony, which is explicitly referred to in a *Regesto* document (also reproduced here), the 998 diploma in which Otto III confirmed him as abbot, but this illegal act is minimised by the end of the same initial sentence, which refers to him as *recuperator et restauarator … gloriosus*.[11] Gregory then goes straight into a narrative of four court-cases preserved in the *Regesto*, interspersed with eight imperial diplomata cited in full. Thereafter follow accounts, sometimes brief, sometimes detailed, of 179 gifts to the monastery or successful

8 See in general I. Schuster, *L'imperiale abbazia di Farfa* (Rome, 1921), pp. 89–272, on whose work see H. Houben, 'Farfa abbazia imperiale', in Dondarini, *Farfa*, pp. 19–34, at pp. 19–22.

9 For all this, see *CF*, I, pp. 109–18. See Kölzer, '"Codex libertatis"', pp. 618–22, and G. M. Cantarella, 'Gregorio da Catino e la polemica filoimperiale', in Dondarini, *Farfa*, pp. 147–78, for comments on Gregorio's intentions. For Gregorio's scriptural citations here, see P. Supino Martini, 'La produzione libraria negli *scriptoria* delle abbazie di Farfa e di S. Eutizio', *Atti del 9º Congresso internazionale*, pp. 581–607, at pp. 597–601. For the Devil, see also *Liber "floriger"*, p. 6.

10 *CF*, I, pp. 27–77 edits Ugo's works. For his life, see Schuster, *L'imperiale abbazia*, pp. 113–82; idem, 'L'abbate Ugo Iº e la riforma di Farfa nel secolo XI (998–1030)', *Bollettino della regia deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria*, XVI (1910), pp. 603–812.

11 *CF*, II, pp. 3–4.

court cases, all taken from the *Regesto*, interspersed with three imperial and papal diplomata set out in full; then very brief accounts, a sentence each, of Ugo's leases, over 350 in total, taken from the *Liber largitorius*. Gregory's account of Ugo's reign ends with two of the abbot's own polemical texts.[12] This amounts to an exceptionally attentive account of Ugo's land transactions, which are listed, in the case of the leases, together with the money the abbot received as an entry-fine for every lease (though not the rent paid, which was usually nominal). Gregorio must have had the *Regesto* and the *Liber largitorius* open in front of him, and he often summarises them in the strict order of the earlier text. But, after the first sentence, he never passes any judgement on Ugo; nor can we tell why he resigned his office twice, to two abbots named Guido (1009–13, 1027–35). Indeed, since Gregorio does not supply any dates, we cannot even tell from his text that they were not simply Ugo's successors; we only know that they ruled during Ugo's lifetime because of the dating clauses of the documents in the *Regesto* (two of which are repeated in the *Chronicon*). This sort of complexity was not, in general, Gregorio's concern in his chronicle, whereas the complexity of land transactions definitely was.[13]

Berardo I's rule over Farfa was as long as Ugo's and without known interruptions. As I said earlier, Gregorio entered the monastery under this abbot, knew him personally, and revered him. The account of his abbacy in the *Chronicon* begins with a page and a half (two folios in the manuscript) of praise of his abilities, his capacity to get land for the monastery, his generosity, lack of suspicion [i.e. of the monks, unlike some of his successors] and good sense, and then, after a document recording his election, a long list of the castles and churches he acquired. This entire section is however taken from the *Regesto*, where it is the first discursive section about an abbot for a century; it does not mark a difference in the *Chronicon's* intent.[14] There follows, once more, a long list of cessions, court cases and leases, making up over eighty pages in the modern edition, all abbreviated from the *Regesto* and the *Liber largitorius*, ending only with Berardo's death. In this whole sequence, the only additions made in the *Chronicon* are a commentary on a court case against the bishop of Sabina in 1051; a single sentence recording Henry IV going to Rome in 1084 when Gregory VII was defending himself in the Castel S. Angelo (this sentence is appended to a short narrative of Henry IV's visit to Farfa, which is taken from the *Regesto*); a description of a monastic regulation by the abbot; and an account of the gifts to the monastery of the Byzantine duke Argyros in 1057.[15] Once again, then, Berardo's rule is seen almost exclusively in terms of his property dealings. This may well correctly reflect the peace and security enjoyed by the monastery under his rule; but it is nonetheless striking that, apart from one sentence, Gregorio says nothing whatsoever about the civil war and the wider religious conflict of the period. Farfa was, of course, an imperial monastery, and an adherent of Henry IV; Popes Victor III and Urban II do not appear in the *Chronicon*, whereas Henry's supporter Clement III does. Gregorio does also call the latter *archiepiscopus Ravennatis papa dictus*, in a clear distancing of himself from recognition of Clement's right to be called pope, but this is in a hostile narrative of the latter's successful undermining of the monks' final choice of abbot after Berardo I's death.[16] This phrase is, however, the only one in the entire late eleventh-century section of the *Chronicon* which implies any wider religious tension in the period at all. Any sort of account of the wider context in which Farfa's abbot

12 *CF*, II, pp. 4–86.

13 *CF*, II, pp. 86–106. Though it is fair to say that Gregorio gives an account of Emperor Henry III's interference in monastic elections in the period of Ugo's two overlapping successors, Suppone and Almerico: ibid, pp. 106–8, 113–14, 118–19.

14 *CF*, II, pp. 119–23; cf. *RF*, IV, pp. 209–12.

15 *CF*, II, pp. 124–205. The additions are at pp. 133–6, 172, 200, 203.

16 *CF*, II, p. 207 (cf. *RF*, V, p. 122). Note that Gregorio's catalogues of popes stop with Nicholas II. For Farfa's overall political position, see Stroll, *Farfa*, pp. 49–68.

had to act lay outside Gregorio's intent.

When Berardo I died, the monks of Farfa had a disputed election, which Gregorio recounts in some detail, in words partly taken from the *Regesto*, filled out with a canon-law citation; he also takes from the *Regesto*, and develops in more detail, an account of Berardo II's selection by Henry IV over the heads of the monks and their cautious acceptance of him. There then follows a list of the abbot's acquisitions, from the *Regesto*; then a denunciation of Berardo and an account of his bad death, also taken from the *Regesto* in slightly abbreviated form, with some of the rudest bits subsequently erased (we cannot tell if at the time or later); then a list of his leases, from the *Liber largitorius*.[17] Gregorio thus adds very little to the words he had already set out in his previous writings, even here, But because he had been more discursive about Berardo II than about the latter's predecessors in the *Regesto*, he was in the *Chronicon* as well; and the abbreviation of the documents for his rule means that the discursive narrative stands out more for this abbot than for any of his predecessors, apart from Farfa's semi-mythical founders. So, what did Berardo do that was actually so awful? Gregorio is not as precise as we would like. He prefers to refer generically to 'tyrannical and insupportable orders, and many aggravations'; slightly more specifically, Berardo played favourites, and got oaths of loyalty from some monks, while provoking others; he changed several ancient customs and broke his oath of accession. Gregorio predictably gets more exact when he comes onto the castles Berardo negligently lost control of, though his claim that Berardo was the only abbot to issue leases without imperial confirmation is manifestly false, as he must have known. It is at least clear that there was an internal schism over who was to pay for the ambitious reconstruction of the monastery after 1097, and Gregorio tells us that several monks fled to Rome, before the abbot's sudden death ended the dispute (it is often assumed that Gregory was among them, but there is no evidence of this). But more concrete information than this about the tensions of the 1090s is lacking, even in these narratives. The most graphic thing Gregorio relates is not any act of the abbot, but an unnamed monk's dream about him, in which Berardo ate a cooked boy, from the penis to the brain, while appalled monks fled the room; this dream, recounted to Berardo himself with his name prudently left out, horrified the abbot so much that he interpreted it as a vision of 'a man of death', who deserved his own and the monastery's condemnation. This dream certainly conveys the intensity of Gregorio's hatred, but not the full scale of Berardo's supposed misdeeds.[18]

The *Chronicon Farfense*, for the great bulk of its text, is an abbreviated account of monastic property transactions. They are ordered roughly chronologically, so the text is not as 'anti-historical' as the *Liber floriger*, but Gregorio's claim that the text is 'very light to read' is, sadly, highly inaccurate—this is one of the dullest historical narratives I have ever read, even though I might, as a historian who has focussed on land transactions, be expected to sympathise with Gregory's aims. But we would be wrong to conclude that he misunderstood the purpose of history-writing. For a start, Gregorio could write a graphic narrative if he chose. At the very end of the *Regesto*, Gregorio (or possibly Todino, whose hand it is, but the style is Gregorio's) wrote a detailed account of the troubles of Guido III's rule, with a specificity, and attention to political context and chronology, that is entirely absent in his condemnation of Berardo II.[19] (If this is absent in the *Chronicon*, it is only because that text deliberately ends before Guido's accession.) Secondly, Gregorio could construct quite a complex argument, as he did in the so-called *Liber Beraldi*, an autonomous text,

17 *CF*, II, pp. 209–22.

18 Ibid, pp. 214–20, cf. *RF*, V, pp. 155–6, 159. For the child, see Stroll, *Farfa*, pp. 70–1; Boynton, *Shaping a monastic identity*, pp. 26–8.

19 *RF*, V, pp. 311–25; Boynton, *Shaping a monastic identity*, pp. 215–28 for comment. At p. 215n, she also sees this text as the work of Gregorio.

again most plausibly written by himself, which he inserted at the start of his account of Berardo III's rule, before going onto a standard list of Berardo's land transactions. The *Liber Beraldi* recounts a court case of 1103–5 with the Ottaviani family over two castles in the Sabina, with unusual detail over the court machinations, and also a long account of the claims by the Ottaviani to papal-backed rights on the basis of nothing less than the Donation of Constantine, and the refutation by Farfa of such claims on the basis of imperial privileges to the monastery (and also, more surprisingly, on the basis of a version of Nicholas II's 1059 election decree, which implicitly condemned the actions and legality of previous popes—Nicholas, it should be added, was an active supporter of Farfa, and had confirmed monastic lands in his own privilege).[20] The set-piece nature of the disputation in the text allows one seriously to doubt that it took place in 1105; but it undoubtedly allows Gregorio to show off a forensic rhetorical ability which is otherwise absent from the *Chronicon*.

I conclude that the dryness of the rest of the *Chronicon* is entirely deliberate. This conclusion is reinforced by Ugo of Farfa's *Destructio Farfensis*, which is a racy narrative of the degradations of tenth-century monastic politics; Gregorio used it, but cut out much of the detail from it, substituting instead his usual synthesis of land transactions.[21] This is what he intended the *Chronicon* to consist of, not the narrative drive of some of his sources, or the polemical thrust of the *Liber Beraldi*. And this, it is important to stress, fits exactly what Gregorio said his intent was in his introduction: the setting out of the truest liberty of the monastery, the acquisitions, concessions and losses of property, for the benefit of monastic government. He deliberately cut out what was not relevant to that, even though he knew perfectly well that other historians had different preferences and aims, and even though some of the information he had at his disposal—and, for the period after 1080 or so, his own memory—would have given a context to many of the land deals he lists, which would, in our eyes at least, have added considerably to the depth of his work.

I shall therefore conclude by going back to those land transactions, and analysing them briefly as a form of narrative. Some of them are indeed short narratives of their own; this is particularly true of the court cases, whose texts, surviving in the *Regesto* in full, are in the *Chronicon* condensed as little stories, of an abbot going to a court and demanding rights from a judge, usually successfully. But even the driest sections of the chronicle can be reinterpreted as narrative, if one is willing to do so. Let us take an example at random, from the abbacy of Ugo, to make the point.

> In these times [1014–16] Teuzone the priest son of Ansa gave this monastery his properties in the territory of Sabina at Lucciolus, beside the church of S. Lucia, three *modii*. Again (*item*), Siefredo son of Sienolfo and Giovanni son of Benedetto exchanged with the lord abbot Ugo lands in Cesa Veteri, 32 *modii*, and received in Tancia the hill where *castellum Fatucli* is [Gregorio gives its bounds], 15 *modii*. Again, Bosone son of Sabino and his wife Todora and Benedetta daughter of Leone gave their properties in the territory of Sabina at Plana, with the church of S. Maria, three *modiola*. Again, Giovanni son of Benedetto and his wife Anna gave their properties in Sorbiliano, 4/5 (but not the fifth) of every quarter part. Again, the lord abbot Ugo gave to Lotterio son of Attone in lease the *casale* of Pietro the grammarian, and of Ratino, and of Gennone, and received a cession of 170 *modiola* at Curuliano. Again, Guinisio the merchant and his wife Sassa gave a salt pan in *pedica* Veteri….[22]

20 *CF*, II, pp. 233–57, the pagination of a separate version of the text, K. Heinzelmann (ed.), *Die farfenser Streitschriften* (Strassburg, 1904), pp. 40–64; see Stroll, *Farfa*, pp. 109–20, for a plausible account of the text but an over-optimistic account of its role in the actual court case. Arguably, the full text of the *Liber Beraldi* might be *CF*, II, pp. 229–59; if this was so, then Stroll's argument that the separate text was transcribed from *CF* would be reinforced. But the *Liber* still reads like an autonomous, probably prior, text, inserted into *CF*. For Nicholas's patronage, see *RF*, V, pp. 291–5 (including nn. 1306–7); the whole narrative is, significantly, placed almost at the end of the *Regesto*.

21 Compare *CF*, I, pp. 27–50 (the *Destructio*) with Gregory's own *CF*, I, pp. 300–66.

22 *CF*, II, pp. 39–40.

And so on, and on. These sentences follow the documents in the *Regesto* exactly (they are nos. 495 to 500, in order), but here they create a different sort of effect: this is what abbots of Farfa *really* do, and, by implication, what they ought to be doing. Accumulating land is their job. Even bad abbots like Berardo II do it to an extent. This is what history itself is really about. Stories about irregular elections or bad customs have their place, but they are detail. Religious conflict is not even that, unless it impacts on Farfa's liberties, as in 1105. By contrast, the solid slog of monastic government concerns, above everything else, land. This is where good and bad abbots divide, over how they handle land transactions, and not—or not except to a far lesser extent—on grounds of personal morality or political alignment. Forget the Investiture Conflict, concentrate on land.

Gregorio di Catino was not, we must remind ourselves, an isolated obsessive in making this argument. No less than Anselm of Canterbury, his saintly contemporary, feared the wrath of divine judgement if he let any of the lands and rights of his see slip away to others—if he did, he had failed in his duty as an archbishop—and he was only one of many.[23] But Gregorio is unusual in the fixedness of his purpose. His job, through reading all of Farfa's thousands of documents one by one, through writing them all out neatly so that they could be easily understood (and also be accessible in the archive, for a cartulary was not admissible in court in Italy; only original documents were legally valid), and through setting them out in narrative form as a metonym for the whole of Farfa's past, was to ensure that any abbot of good will (as was Berardo III, though, sadly, few other abbots after 1089) would know how to defend Farfa's lands and rights properly. If this was achieved, everything else would follow without fail. Gregorio was in a sense a precursor here, for many chroniclers in later years in Italy would construct monastic—and other—history through chains of documents; as a notarial style of history-writing, it had a long future, in fact. These successors valued documents for their own sake as well. But very few of Gregorio's successors, or contemporaries like Leone Ostiense, were as extreme as he was in cutting out almost all extraneous material. Gregory showed a carefulness here which we must recognise and respect. This, then, is the hermeneutic of the *Chronicon Farfense*, and by no means an unconscious or hidden one: that true monastic history is above all the history of land.

23 R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his biographer* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 141.