

From Queens to Slaves: Pope Gregory s Special Concern for Women

John R. C. Martyn



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The book is based on the author s very careful study of all the women who were involved with the normally extremely busy and painfully sick Pope Gregory the Great, many of them staying with him in Rome while he sorted out their mainly legal cases, and one of them, Theoctista, the learned sister of the Emperor Maurice, receiving the longest letter that he ever wrote to any individual. The consular son of the great Boethius, Flavius, was the father of Lady Rusticiana, who received several letters from her very dear friend, Pope Gregory, as did all of her family. After a preface, the book is divided into seven main sections, the first on Pope Gregory himself, with an historical setting, and a short first chapter dealing with his female relatives. Chapters 2 and 3 cover the royal and aristocratic women, including four queens, and then the abbesses and nuns are discussed, including several who were missed in the precursor to this book, Pope Gregory and the Brides of Christ. Then the widows and marriages are discussed, followed by women cohabiting with clerics and escaping from slavery to join convents. Finally, a bibliography provides the main works on the Pope and the period when he lived, about 600 AD, with an index to help scholars find the main characters and places in the book.

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