Speech and Silence in Models of Monastic Holiness: Gaul/Francia, 400-750

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Abstract

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Scholars often assume a break between Late Antiquity and the Medieval Era, but there is more continuity there than is always recognised. The great changes which come about in the medieval period make the continuity of ideas even more surprising. One place in which we witness this is in the endurance of late-antique views concerning the spiritual life as a journey toward perfection. This view was picked up on by Merovingian monastic writers, thereby allowing authors to guide and direct their monastic readers towards perfection. In order to demonstrate this, this thesis considers the role speech and silence played in four case studies, and how authors were able to adapt late-antique ideas to their own contexts. I order my study as follows: Chapter 1 begins by looking at rhetoric in the Late Roman Empire, concentrating particularly on frank speech in ascetic movements; Chapter 2 analyses John Cassian's writings as an example of how he applied these ideas in his late-antique Gallic context, with particular attention to how he used sleep and silence to both reveal and create holiness in his readers; Chapter 3 examines the writings of Caesarius of Arles and his followers, demonstrating the adaptation of late-antique ideas for the female monastics of St. John's and Radegund's Holy Cross; Chapter 4 evaluates the writings of Columbanus and his followers, analysing how the same ideas were used to display the holiness of his male and female disciples in different contexts; Chapter 5 discusses the little-studied florilegium the *Liber scintillarum*, its purpose and the way in which it used late-antique

ideas to establish holiness in a wider group of people. These cases studies demonstrate the continuity of late-antique ideas throughout the Merovingian period.

Abstract

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The Gaul of the fifth century and the Gaul of the eighth century, on the surface, are very dissimilar. Whereas the former was in the midst of witnessing the fracturing of the Roman Empire and the incursion of barbarians, the latter had settled down under the barbarian rule of the Merovingian kings. Monasticism had changed significantly, as well, from the urban ascetic households of elites to the rural cenobitic monasteries under the guidance of written rules. The contrast of these two pictures could lead us to conclude that there had been a decisive break when the Roman Empire fell in the West, but to conclude thusly would be rash. A deeper look reveals the strands of continuity laced throughout the centuries. The ideas which shaped the late antique period were not abandoned when imperial power receded, but rather developed and evolved. Late-antique ideas concerning speech and silence in the ascetic context are a prime example of this process. The underlying principle of seeking interior purity through focusing the mind on God is present even as successive ascetic authors develop methods throughout the centuries.

This thesis traces late-antique ideas related to ascetic speech and silence through the Merovingian period across four case studies. Chapter 1 serves as background and context. I look at rhetoric in the Late Roman Empire, sketching the context in which it developed. In particular, I look at speaking truth to power, or frank speech, its history,

and the internalising movement from frank speech as based on the content of the message to frank speech based on the reputation of the speaker. I also consider the use of confessional speech amongst the Desert Fathers and Mothers, as well as Augustine's preference for plain speech in an educational context.

Chapter 2 begins the first case study, taken from late-antique Gaul. It seeks to delve into the ascetic John Cassian's monastic theology in his two great works, the *De institutis coenobiorum* and the *Conlationes*, and to demonstrate its relation to his use of speech and silence as indicators but also as instruments of spiritual progress. Cassian's monastic theology contained the belief that monastics were on a spiritual journey, and that progress towards God was possible. Only the pure of heart could see God, and this was the goal of the monastic. The method Cassian provided for an ascetic to advance toward perfection was a two-part system. The first part, ridding oneself of all vices, was best done in the cenobium. It involved focusing the mind on the Word of God, thereby forcing all other thoughts out and keeping the mind solely occupied with God. This required an internal silence to create the space to rightly hear God's words, even if they themselves were the ones speaking them. Those seeking perfection ought to open all their thoughts before a spiritual elder who could discern for them their origin. This kind of frank speech, already common amongst desert ascetics, required the speaker to hold nothing back, no matter the consequences. Once ascetics had reached perfection and could discern their own thoughts for themselves, they could progress onto the solitary life where they could practice the second part of Cassian's programme: *theoria*. This also involved meditation on the scriptures, but now, because of their perfect state, they would be able to understand the scriptures properly and draw close to God in prayer as they had not been able to do before. Though Cassian focuses on cenobitic and eremitic

male monastics, he calls attention to the fact that people do not need to be monastics to use his programme. Neither must they be male; though he does not address women specifically, his language is inclusive, and the nuns of the convent he founded likely read his works.

Though Augustine was bothered by the idea that ascetics were considered morally superior to other Christians and sought to discredit the idea, Cassian, conversely, sought to prove their greater purity through unbiased measurement. He held that someone with a pure heart would speak pure words, and that holiness could therefore be gauged by speech. The best way, however, to measure a man's purity was through assessing the frequency of his nocturnal emissions. The mind relaxed in sleep was the one point at which all hidden sin would rise to the surface, manifesting itself in erotic dreams with the accompanying nocturnal emission. A man who experienced an emission two or three times a year or less was one who was completely perfect and pure. Since Cassian advocated for the necessity of perfection in all teachers, achieving this high standard verified a man's perfection and provided the necessary qualifications to teach; this was a great advantage for ascetics who sought politically powerful episcopal positions, such as the monks of Lérins. This metric had limitations, though, as it was male-centric, and it also required honesty on the part of the ascetic, who would have to admit to what happened at night in his solitary cell, for even cenobia at this time were made up of cells for one or, at most, two people. The underlying theory, however, of the sleeping mind being unable to hide the true state of the heart was one which later authors would adapt to their own circumstances. As a writer in late-antique Gaul whose influence extended well beyond the Merovingian era, Cassian serves as a vehicle for late-antique ideas; this will become apparent throughout the remaining case studies.

Chapter 3 begins the second case study, here taken from the Gallic-Germanic transition period of the sixth century. I discuss Caesarius of Arles, and how he used and developed late-antique ideas, and, in turn, how these ideas were used further north in the context of Radegund's Convent of the Holy Cross. This chapter straddles the late antique and medieval periods, yet we are able to see the continuity of late-antique ideas. I argue that Caesarius develops these ideas for his own context, but it is a development and not a break. For instance, he alters Cassian's programme for use in the cenobitic environment of the Convent of St. John, demonstrating its applicability for female monastics. Caesaria II, Rusticula, and Radegund also employ his method, whilst Aurelianus of Arles uses his pure speech metric to exhibit the holiness of the nuns in his new convent in order to increase his own prominence. Whilst Caesarius, due to his desire as a bishop to see even lay people grow in holiness through the study of scripture, strays from Cassian in his advocation of 'imperfect' teachers, his followers retain the requirement of perfection. Beginning with the *Vita Caesarii*, Caesarius's followers also adapt Cassian's ultimate metric for holiness for use in a cenobitic environment. Instead of the lack of nocturnal emissions as the sign of true purity, the marks become the verbal signs of sleep-preaching and sleep-meditation. This development was picked up by the authors of the *Vita Rusticulae* and the *Vita Radegundis*, thereby giving an unbiased metric appropriate for women which still retained Cassian's basic principle that the sleeping mind would reveal any latent sin.

In Chapter 4, I look at how Columbanus and his followers used late-antique ideas in the seventh century in the Frankish north. Although working in a rural environment backed by Merovingian kings, Columbanus still followed Cassian's programme for

purification. What he does not do is employ an absolute metric such as Cassian's lack of nocturnal emissions or the Caesarian sleep-speech. As a result, he and his followers had difficulty determining if a person has reached perfection and is ready to become a hermit or missionary preacher, something which caused strife within the community. Columbanus emphasised the formal use of confession as an instrument of spiritual growth; this was a development of the confessional speech the Desert Fathers and Mothers encouraged during spiritual conferences. Confession led to penance, and Columbanus frequently prescribed silence, believing in the power of silence to drive out sin and bring about holiness; he would also prescribe psalm-recitation for the same reason. His own speech demonstrates the frank speech which is akin to the frank speech of the holy men of the fourth century, and his biographer, Jonas of Bobbio, picks this up and uses it to as a method of displaying his purity as well as the purity of his followers. Jonas continued to use speech as a method of revealing his protagonists' holiness, including prophesy and public preaching as well; these speech-acts all provided the witnesses Jonas felt essential to his burden of proof. When he came to female monasticism, however, finding he lacked sufficient witnesses, he decided to employ deathbed scenes with large groups of nuns and even angelic witnesses to attend to the pure speech of the dying nuns of the Convent of Faremoutiers. In another Columbanian convent (Chelles), the authors of the *vitae* of Balthild and Bertilla find another way to employ Cassian's pure speech metric to display the women's holiness. Instead of deathbed scenes, the authors concentrate on aligning the nuns' speech with the Columbanian Rule, with a particular focus on confession. Thus, they demonstrate how Cassian's ideas and methods continue to exert influence even in the seventh century.

In chapter 5, I consider the *Liber scintillarum*, the florilegium usually assigned to Defensor of Ligugé. This source has not been thoroughly studied, so this study begins with a look at the manuscript tradition, authorship, and provenance. I argue that the attribution of the work to Defensor – the attribution championed by H.-M. Rochais – is improbable. Instead, the work was likely written somewhere under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the north of Francia. Its manuscript transmission and content point to it having been written for use by missionary monastics in their pastoral work amongst the laity. Its use of rhetorical deportment to instill holiness demonstrates a remarkable continuity with the fifth century, despite the passing of three hundred years. The author, like Cassian, but for the most part independently of him, discusses how to use speech as a metric for purity and his use of scripture to focus the mind and create holiness. The author makes less use of silence; this is to be expected considering the impracticality of the discipline in the secular world. The author's belief in the necessity of perfection for teachers accords with Cassian's, and, as it did for the monk-bishops of the fifth century, bolsters the missionary monastics' authority to teach in the wider community.

There is a strong strand of continuity which runs from the late antique period throughout the whole of the Merovingian period. By tracing late-antique ideas about the roles of speech and silence in the monastic life through several case studies, it is possible to see this continuity, as well as the development of the ideas. This development takes different shapes in each case according to the circumstances and purposes of the author. In every instance, however, it is apparent that speech and silence are used as tools as well as barometers for progress towards the monastic ideal of perfection and closeness to God. Late-antique ascetic culture certainly went through a

transformation – the urban ascetic households of the fourth century are different from the cenobitic rural foundations of the early eighth. This study demonstrates some of the changes which occurred, such as the evolution of female pure speech and the Columbanian practice of confession. These changes, however, represent developments of late-antique ideas, and are thus even more surprising due to the significant change in contexts. The idea that medieval monastics were solely preoccupied with external marks of holiness is simplistic. This study shows that there existed a yearning for interior purity and a need to express it externally which was as real and vibrant in the Merovingian world as it was in the late-antique world.

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Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Daniel. He has sacrificed so much in order to make my dream a reality, and without a complaint. My life is incomparably better because of him. To him I dedicate this work, and to my six children, Merielle, Dominique, Elijah, Moses, Noah, and Emmanuelle.

Gloria Deo

Abbreviations

Epist.	Columbanus, *Epistola*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*
Conl.	Cassian, *Conlationes*
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
HF	Gregory of Tours, *Liber historiarum X*
Inst.	Cassian, *Institutiones*
Instr.	Columbanus, *Instructio*
LHF	*Liber historiae Francorum*
LS	*Liber scintillarum*
MGM, Auct. ant.	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
MGM, SRM	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*
MGM, SS rer. Germ.	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*
Paen.	Columbanus, *Paenitentiale*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris)
Reg coen	Columbanus, *Regula coenobialis*
RMon	Caesarius, *Regula ad monachos*
Reg mon	Columbanus, *Regula monachorum*
Reg virg	Caesarius, *Regula ad virgines*
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*
Sermo	Caesarius, *Sermo*
VCae	*Vita Caesarii*

VCol	*Vita Columbani*
VBalt	*Vita Balthildis*
VBert	*Vita Bertillae*
VRad	*Vita Radegundis*
VRus	*Vita Rusticulae*

All biblical citations are from the *New King James Version* (Nashville, 1982) unless otherwise noted.

All other translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

'Early-medieval studies in general suffer from over-generalization, from excessive hypothesizing to fill lacunae in the sources, and especially from arguments supplying the unknown on the basis of parallels and analogies with the known.'[1] The reasons for this are easy to see, primarily the dearth of source material of the period leading to the tantalising temptation to make what is known from one geographical area, or even chronological period, apply to others. Though the temptation to paint the early Middle Ages with sweeping strokes is real, the danger of doing so is great. The established governments, institutions, and even peoples of the later Middle Ages are fledging, variable, or even missing altogether. The early Middle Ages are a time of transition, a transition which did not occur uniformly throughout the regions of the former Roman Empire, even from city to city.

Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the transition entailed a total break. The late antique period, with all its political chaos and religious upheaval, did not end abruptly, nor did everything which characterised it disappear. Ever since Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a great divorce has existed within historiography between the late antique and the medieval periods. The vast majority of scholars spend their time in one era or the other, and 'never the twain shall meet'. The presumed break dictates the belief that the influence of late Roman culture was muted or even absent in the Middle Ages. This belief is especially evident in the field of monastic history, where generalisations abound. For instance, in recent years, there has been much work done

[1] Richard E. Sullivan, '"Abbayes et chapitres entre Sambre et Meuse (VIIe-XIe siècles): Contribution à l'histoire religieuse des campagnes du haut moyen âge" by Alain Dierkens and Georges Despy' [review article], *Speculum*, 63 (1988), p. 654.

on the meaning and importance of sexual continence in the monastic context, which has led some, such as Albrecht Diem and Marilyn Dunn, to uphold a break with late Roman culture.[2]

This study seeks to demonstrate that there is indeed meaningful continuity between the late antique and early medieval eras. In a way, my work is easily accomplished through the proof in a single area, which is all that is needed to show a clean break between the periods to be an oversimplification based on generalisations. In order to do this, I take the example of how late-antique rhetorical conventions influenced the ways in which speech and silence were used to create the monastic ideal in the medieval west. Whereas Diem postulates a cessation of the late-antique emphasis on interior holiness in favour of an exterior holiness intent on publicising its efficacy in intercession, I argue that a stress on inner purity, as articulated by John Cassian in particular, remained integral to the monastic ideal of holiness throughout the medieval period. The method for this investigation is the close examination of four case studies spanning from Late Antiquity through the end of the Merovingian period. The first case study looks at the early fifth-century John Cassian, author of two highly influential ascetic works. The following two case studies are of Caesarius of Arles (469/70-542) and Columbanus (543-615), two key Merovingian monastic legislators. The final case study looks at the *Liber scintillarum*, a late Merovingian florilegium compiled *circa* 700. I maintain that these case studies demonstrate the continued importance of interior holiness, and do not reflect a shift to external signs of holiness for the benefit of the public. In taking this approach, I hope to accomplish two things. Firstly, to demonstrate that there is a

[2] Albrecht Diem, *Das monastische Experiment: Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens* (Münster, 2005); Marilyn Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2000).

continuity of late-antique ideas in the early medieval period. Secondly, by taking care to acknowledge the limited scope of my investigation, to avoid unhelpful simplifications and generalisations about the period as a whole. It is possible to prove the former without engaging in the latter.

There has been no full-length study on monastic silence in the early medieval period. Scott G. Bruce, a scholar of Cluniac silence and sign language, has attempted a cursory study of monastic silence leading up to his period of expertise, but it is wide-ranging and brief.[3] Diarmaid MacCulloch has done a sweeping survey of silence within the Christian tradition, but has skipped over most of the early medieval western monastic tradition, particularly in Gaul.[4] Heavily dependent upon Bruce, MacCulloch does not mention either Caesarius or Columbanus, and Cassian is barely present. Ambrose Wathen has written a book which seeks to study silence in the *Regula Benedicti* in part by considering the discipline in the *Rule*'s sources.[5] His work is descriptive, rather than analytical, outlining the mentions of silence in the older *rules*. Despite how fundamental a role silence played in the life of monastics, Dunn's survey of early monasticism does not mention it. This is surprising, considering she does discuss desert monasticism, Cassian, and monastic rules, all spheres which demonstrate how omnipresent silence was in a monastic's life. C. H. Lawrence touches on the matter in his survey, but only begins with Cluny.[6]

[3] Scott G. Bruce, 'The Tongue Is a Fire: The Discipline of Silence in Early Medieval Monasticism (400-1100),' in Edwin D. Craun (ed), *The Hands of the Tongue: Essays on Deviant Speech* (Kalamazoo, 2007), pp. 3-32.
[4] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History* (London, 2013).
[5] Ambrose G. Wathen, *Silence: The Meaning of Silence in the Rule of St Benedict* (Washington, D.C., 1973).
[6] C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2015), pp. 78, 107-8.

Older studies exist from the post-WWI period until the 1960's, when there was an interest in the signification of religious silence in both academia and the church. No doubt due to the horrendous results of warfare on an unprecedented scale which those decades saw, the studies on silence were a part of the more general appeal of quietist movements and a reaction against the effusive propaganda associated with the wars.[7] Gustav Mensching, in an attempt to systematise silence from a multitude of world religions, provides a framework for understanding silence as interior (*innere*) or external (*äussere*), a framework which, though lacking in some respects, is useful.[8]

The most important work in this period, and the most relevant to the current study, belongs to Jean LeClercq. In his 1957 study, *L'Amour des Lettres et le Désir de Dieu: Initiation aux Auteurs Monastiques du Moyen Âge*, he demonstrates the robust relationship between silence, meditation, reading, and learning.[9] This understanding within the context of the development of monasticism occurring in the late antique and early medieval eras provides one of the key beginnings of my study. More recently, Joshua Brockway has studied the integrity of liturgical and contemplative prayer in Cassian, arguing against the division between liturgical prayer, often viewed as external to the monastic, and silent, internal prayer which is prevalent in Cassianic studies.[10] He

[7] Paul Gehl provides a good overview/synthesis of the studies from this era. See Paul Gehl, '*Competens silentium*: Varieties of Monastic Silence in the Medieval West', *Viator*, 18 (1987), pp. 125-60.
[8] Gustav Mensching, *Das heilige Schweigen: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Giessen, 1926). For a reaction against Mensching's methodology, see Pierre Salmon, 'Le Silence Religieux, Practique et Théorie', in *Mélanges Bénédictines Publiés a l 'Occasion du XlVe Centenaire de la Mort de S. Benoît* (S. Wandrille, 1947), pp. 13-57.
[9] Jean LeClercq, *L'Amour des Lettres et le Désir de Dieu: Initiation aux Auteurs Monastiques du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1957); tr. Catherine Misrahi, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York, 1982).
[10] Joshua Brockway, 'The Ritual Dimension of John Cassian's Asceticism' (Ph.D. thesis, Catholic University of America, 2015). For an example of a study which focuses on contemplation in Cassian's work, see Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford, 1998). Contrastingly, for a mining of Cassian's works for information concerning liturgy, see Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, MN, 1986).

points out that both types of prayer – spoken communal and wordless contemplative – contribute to the spiritual formation of the monastic. This blurs the lines set out by Mensching and allows for a more holistic view of spiritual formation.

Many scholars have studied various aspects of speech in the Middle Ages, particularly the later part of the period. The early medieval period has received substantially less attention. As the study of speech encompasses a myriad of possible foci for the scholar, I want to be clear as to which aspects of speech I intend to focus upon, and which I will leave to others. My intention is to look at the interplay between speech and silence. As silence seems to have been the preferred state for monastics, I am interested in when monastic legislators considered it needful for a person to break that silence, and in what way. At points, this will lead to a discussion concerning power or gender, but these are not central emphases. Instead, I focus on three distinct but related forms of rhetorical expression: pure speech, which indicates the pure heart of the speaker; speaking truth to power, which I also term ‘frank’ or ‘bold’ speech; and confessional speech, speech which reveals every sinful corner of the speaker’s mind. This is not a lexical or philologial study, but a conceptional one in which these categories of speech are the main, though not exclusive, focus. They develop from their classical origins into distinct methods of speech which are necessary for the spiritual education and growth of Christian monastics.

Irene van Renswoude has studied free speech, including speaking truth to power, in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, concentrating mainly on bishops outside of a

monastic context;[11] Peter Brown has studied the same topic with an emphasis on freedom of speech's political aspects;[12] Michel Foucault has explored frank speech as it relates to the early desert monastics, including Cassian, with important implications for this study.[13] Taking these three scholars as a springboard, I look at frank speech within the context of monastic holiness and from a distinctly Merovingian perspective, leaving aside sources from other areas and periods. Related to frank speech, but distinct from, is plain speaking, another speech-act whose continuity I chronicle from the late antique period which becomes crucial within the realm of instruction and forms an important part of pure speech. Finally, I consider how verbal confession is used to both expose and create holiness within monastics, from its late-antique form to its Columbanian practice of the seventh century.

I begin by sketching the ancient rhetorical background. In Chapter 1, I look at the eastern and desert beginnings of monasticism, introducing the importance of silence, both external and internal. Early monasticism was disparate and varied, but even in this, common themes are apparent. The desire for silence and solitude runs through the desert traditions, with both men and women seeking the 'wilderness' in various forms. I trace the early influences of Cassian's ideas, as well as sketch the contemporary context in which his ideas developed. In particular, the importance of the rhetorical forms mentioned above will become apparent and their histories will be detailed.

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[11] Irene Van Renswoude, 'Licence to Speak: The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Utrecht, 2011); also, Van Renswoude's recently published book based on her thesis, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2019).
[12] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1992).
[13] Michel Foucault, 'Parrēsia', tr. Graham Burchell, *Critical Inquiry*, 41 (Winter 2015), pp. 219-53.

In Chapter 2, I turn to the first of my case studies, John Cassian. Despite the extraordinary influence and popularity of Cassian's works throughout the Middle Ages, he is usually passed over by scholars in favour of Augustine. When he does manage to attract attention, it is usually for his influence on the *Regula Benedicti*, or for his notoriously non-Augustinian view of grace and his role in the so-called semi-Pelagian heresy. Few have studied Cassian for his own sake, and there remain only a handful of monographs in modern times devoted to him. Columba Stewart has produced the best recent study on Cassian, emphasising his theology concerning prayer, whilst Augustine Casiday has made a study of his theology in relation to Augustine.[14] Richard J. Goodrich has taken a more secular approach, analysing Cassian in his fifth-century Gallic context.[15] Some scholars have been fascinated by his ideas concerning sexual continence, and Michel Foucault has been instrumental in bringing Cassian to the fore in this area.[16] In the past generation, there has been some work done relating Cassian to ideas of power in the wake of the legacy of Peter Brown's Holy Man.[17] Philip Rousseau discusses Cassian in the context of the growing effect of the ascetic movement on the church.[18] Conrad Leyser has written about the pure speech of Cassian from a point of view of the creation of a moral authority.[19] My work builds on the work of these scholars. Cassian has usually been read as referring to an exclusively male monastic audience, but I intend to show that he was used within female communities as well. Because of his extraordinary influence, he becomes a vehicle for late-antique ideas to carry over into the medieval period.

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[14] Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford, 1998); Augustine Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St John Cassian* (Oxford, 2007).
[15] Richard J. Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian* (Oxford, 2007).
[16] Michel Foucault, 'Le Combat de la Chasteté', in Philippe Ariès and André Béjin (eds), *Sexualités Occidentales* (Paris, 1982), pp. 15-25.
[17] Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), pp. 80-101.
[18] Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford, 1978).
[19] Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000).

According to John Cassian, the end of the monastic vocation was eternal life, but the immediate goal was purity of heart, or sanctification. Cassian was concerned to regulate the life of monastics in Gaul in such a way that they might be able to make progress toward this goal of sanctification. Modification of behaviour, however, whether through strict regulation or the inspiration of example, cannot in itself produce the purity of heart which is the prerequisite for seeing God. Outward change, therefore, was not Cassian's ultimate goal. Instead, his goal was the transformation of the mind of the monastic. Control of speech was crucial. Unlike the tenth-century reform movement at the Abbey of Cluny which sought to maintain complete silence amongst the monks, Cassian did not believe that all speech was bad. Speech, as well as silence, could aid the monastic in the journey toward sanctification, but it could also hinder it. Speech and silence both had the power to reveal the heart of the monastic, illuminating just how far along the road to sanctification he had come. Thus, the regulation of speech was a difficult matter which required great discernment.

This chapter seeks to delve into Cassian's monastic theology in his two great works, the *De institutis coenobiorum* and the *Conlationes,* and to demonstrate its relation to his use of speech and silence as indicators but also as instruments of spiritual progress.[20] Cassian's monastic theology contained the belief that monastics were on a spiritual journey, and progress toward God was possible. Only the pure of heart could see God, and this was the goal of the monastic. Cassian maintained that there existed spiritually perfect people who could and whose responsibility it was to guide the less spiritually

[20] John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis*, ed. Jean-Claude Guy, *SC* 109 (Paris, 1965); tr. Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Institutes* (New York, 2000). John Cassian, *Conlationes*, ed. Pichéry, *SC* 42, 54, 64 (3 vols, Paris, 1955-9); tr. Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences* (New York, 1997).

mature disciples. Holiness was a virtue which was reflected outwardly, particularly through pure speech. This verbal emanation could be faked, and so there was another, ultimate sign which could not. This sign was the nocturnal emission, another emanation, this time physical. This occurred during sleep, the time when the mind was not on guard, and the person's purity could be properly and truly assessed. This metric provided proof of holiness, and, therefore, the qualification necessary to be a teacher; it was a stratagem to confirm the fitness of ascetics to take on episcopal roles. Nevertheless, despite the inappropriateness of this metric for female monastics, some of his earliest readers would have been women.

Chapter 3 begins the second case study, here taken from the sixth century. I discuss Caesarius of Arles and how his use of speech and silence in his monastic writings, though written in a period which straddles the late antique and medieval periods, develops rather than departs from ideas from Late Antiquity, especially those of Cassian. I argue that Caesarius develops late-antique ideas for his own context, altering them for use in the cenobitic environment of the Convent of St. John, and demonstrating their applicability for female monastics. Caesarius was particularly influential at the Convent of St. John, which he founded, as well as Queen Radegund's Convent of the Holy Cross in Poitiers. In discussing the monastic writings associated with these convents, I engage with John Kitchen, who has studied the gendering of Merovingian hagiography with a particular focus on the *vitae* of Radegund.[21] I also look at the writings of Aurelianus of Arles, bishop after Caesarius and founder of the Convent of St. Mary, an author who has not benefited from much study. Diem has

[21] John Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography* (Oxford, 2014).

written an article comparing the *Rules* of Caesarius and Aurelianus,[22] and my work builds on his. I argue that Aurelianus uses Cassian's pure speech metric to exhibit the holiness of the nuns in his new convent in order to increase his own prominence. Whilst Caesarius, due to his desire as a bishop to see even lay people grow in holiness through the study of scripture, prefers to follow Augustine in his advocation of 'imperfect' teachers, his followers retain Cassian's and the Desert Fathers' requirement of perfection. Beginning with the *Vita Caesarii*, Caesarius's followers also adapt Cassian's ultimate metric for holiness for use in a cenobitic environment. Instead of the lack of nocturnal emissions as the sign of true purity, the marks become the verbal signs of sleep-preaching and sleep-meditation, speech-acts which occur during the unguarded moments of dreams. This development was picked up by the authors of the *Vita Rusticulae* and the *Vita Radegundis,* thereby giving an unbiased metric appropriate for women which still retained Cassian's basic principle that the sleeping mind would reveal any latent sin.

In Chapter 4, I look at how Columbanus and his followers used Cassian's ideas in the seventh century in the Germanic north. Although working in a rural environment backed by Merovingian kings, Columbanus still advocated for a purification programme which was similar to those followed in Late Antiquity. What he does not do is employ an absolute metric such as Cassian's lack of nocturnal emissions or the Caesarian sleep-speech. As a result, he and his followers have difficulty determining if a person has reached perfection and is ready to become a hermit or missionary preacher, something which caused strife within the community. Columbanus emphasised the

[22] Albrecht Diem, '*…ut si professus fuerit se omnia impleturum, tunc excipiatur*. Observations on the Rules for Monks and Nuns of Caesarius and Aurelianus of Arles', in Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl, Lukas J. Dorfbauer, and Clemens Weidmann, *Edition und Erforschung lateinischer patristischer Texte* (Berlin, 2014), pp. 191-224.

formalised use of confession as an instrument of spiritual growth. Confession led to penance, and Columbanus frequently prescribed silence, believing in the power of silence to drive out sin and bring about holiness; he would also prescribe psalm-recitation for the same reason. His own speech demonstrates the use of the rhetorical form of speaking truth to power which is akin to that used by the holy men of the fourth century, and his biographer, Jonas of Bobbio, picks this up and uses it to as a method of displaying his purity as well as the purity of his followers. Jonas continued to use speech as a method of revealing his protagonists' holiness, including prophesy and public preaching as well; these speech-acts all provided the witnesses Jonas felt essential to his burden of proof. When he came to female monasticism, however, finding he lacked sufficient witnesses, he decided to employ deathbed scenes with large groups of nuns and even angelic witnesses to attend to the pure speech of the dying nuns of the Convent of Faremoutiers. In another Columbanian convent (Chelles), the authors of the *vitae* of Balthild and Bertilla find another way to employ Cassian's pure speech metric to display the women's holiness. Instead of deathbed scenes, the authors concentrate on aligning the nuns' speech with the Columbanian Rule, with a particular focus on confession. Thus, they demonstrate how late-antique ideas and methods continue to exert influence even in the seventh century.

In chapter 5, I consider the *Liber scintillarum*, the florilegium usually assigned to Defensor of Ligugé. The large number of extant manuscripts of this work shows just how popular it was, yet there has never been a full-length study of it. The only scholar who has given it sustained attention is H.-M. Rochais back in the middle of the previous

century.[23] My study, therefore, covers fresh ground and yields a greater understanding of a work which was widely read. I begin with a look at the manuscript tradition, authorship, and provenance. I argue that the attribution of the work to Defensor – the attribution championed by Rochais – is improbable. Instead, the work was likely written somewhere under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the north of Francia. Its manuscript transmission and content point to it having been written for use by missionary monastics in their pastoral work amongst the laity. Its use of a programme of speech to instil holiness demonstrates a remarkable continuity with the fifth century, despite the passing of three hundred years. The work, in fact, has a wider sense of this tradition than the sixth-century authors considered. It looks well beyond Cassian's work as the author amasses a number of patristic authorities in his use of speech as a metric for purity and his use of scripture to focus the mind and create holiness. The author makes less use of silence; this is to be expected considering the impracticality of the discipline in the secular world. The author held to the necessity of perfection for teachers, and this, as it did for the monk-bishops of the fifth century, bolstered the missionary monastics' authority to teach in the wider community.

There is a strong strand of continuity which runs from the late antique period throughout the whole of the Merovingian period. By tracing ideas on the roles of speech and silence on the monastic life through several case studies, it is possible to see this continuity, as well as the development of these ideas. This development takes different shapes in each case according to the circumstances and purposes of the author. In every instance, however, it is apparent that speech and silence are used as tools as well as

[23] H.-M. Rochais edited the *Liber scintillarum* and later translated it into French; see Defensor of Ligugé, *Liber scintillarum*, ed. Rochais, *CCSL* 117 (Turnhout, 1957); Defensor of Ligugé, *Livre d'Étincelles*, ed. and tr. H.-M. Rochais (2 vols., Paris, 1961-2). He also published numerous articles detailing the problems associated with editing the work.

barometers for progress toward the monastic ideal of perfection and closeness to God. Undergirding the theology of every writer is the idea that people are able to attain perfection and see God in this life.

Late antique monasticism certainly went through a transformation – the urban ascetic households of the fourth century are different from the cenobitic rural foundations of the early eighth. This study will demonstrate some of the changes which occurred, such as the evolution of female pure speech and the move from Cassian's total mind-bearing to the Columbanian practice of confession. These changes, however, represent developments of late-antique ideas, and are thus even more surprising due to the significant change in contexts. The idea that medieval monastics were solely preoccupied with external marks of holiness is simplistic. This study shows that there existed a yearning for interior purity and a need to express it externally which was as real and vibrant in the Merovingian world as it was in late-antique Gaul.

Chapter 1: Speech and Silence in the Late Roman Empire

Just as we can trace the use of speech and silence in Late Antiquity forward into the monastic context in Merovingian Gaul, so we can trace it back through time even earlier. The rhetorical forms which are of particular interest here – speaking truth to power, confessional speech, and pure speech – developed throughout the classical period and into the late antique era. The purpose of this chapter is to sketch the earlier history of their use, as well as to describe the wider late-antique context in which they operated before we come to our first case study – taken from within that late-antique context – in Chapter Two. The present chapter begins with a look at the state of rhetoric in the late Roman Empire, with a focus on the rhetorical form of speaking truth to power and how it was being adapted first by ancient philosophers and then by the late Roman Christians. It then discusses how the Desert Fathers and Mothers advocated for confessional speech which entailed the complete disclosure of a disciple's every thought to an elder for discernment; this was a key component of spiritual growth. Silence, another key component, is also examined, and provides a useful comparison for how Cassian develops this tool of spiritual growth in Chapter Two. Finally, this chapter considers the different ways which the late-antique authors Augustine of Hippo and Sulpicius Severus, the author of the *Vita Martini*, employ speech and silence as markers of holiness, and looks in particular at Augustine's preference for pure speech.

Rhetoric, which can be defined simply as the art of using language to persuade, came into existence as a recognised subject of study in the ancient Athenian Republic. With the earliest beginnings the subject of much debate, history really begins to shed light on the discipline in the fourth century BC, first with Plato, and then with the writing of

Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*.[1] Encompassing any written, but especially spoken, method of persuasion, rhetoric became of vital importance in the democratic Republic in the civic realm. It also became important in the courtroom, as well as on formal occasions. Rhetoric was part of *paideia*, the common cultural education, of the elites throughout the Greek Empire, and, later, the Roman Empire.[2] In a democracy, rhetoric allowed the speaker intentionally to influence other citizens to vote in particular ways. Under the Roman Empire, when power became concentrated in fewer individuals – and ultimately the emperor – rhetoric continued in importance as, for civilians, persuasion was usually the only method for obtaining the desired political results – and even for survival. Though authors of rhetorical handbooks always maintained that speakers use wisdom when choosing their words, taking into account timing and audience, this became even more imperative during the imperial period, where a contrary speech could very well be the speaker's last.[3]

By the fourth century AD, rhetoric had become formalised and limited as to the topic and illustrations which the speaker could employ.[4] This meant that elites who sought to influence the emperor were less likely to be successful in their entreaties, potentially exposing themselves to the consequences of incurring the imperial wrath. There was, however, a specific rhetorical technique – speaking truth to power, or *parrhesia* in the

[1] The traditional history of Corex and Tismis of Syracuse being the first teachers of rhetoric, followed by the Sophists, has been undermined in the last few decades, particularly with the recognition that the Sophists did not espouse any central doctrine and that many taught no rhetoric at all. Also, some historians have cast doubt on the either the existence of Corex as a separate person from Tismis. Revisionist history now concentrates on a more open marketplace of ideas of speech prior to Plato. For a brief overview of the current state of scholarship, see Wilfred Major, 'Epicharmus, Tisias, and the Early History of Rhetoric', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 107 (2013), pp. 55-59. For a more in-depth look at the history of early rhetoric, see George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, 2011).

[2] Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, p. 38. On the development of a common culture between the Greek-speaking East and the Latin-speaking West, see Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 201.

[3] Irene Van Renswoude, *Rhetoric of Free Speech*, pp. 1-2.

[4] Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, p. 42.

Greek – which was particularly well-suited to facing down the wrath of the emperor, but, as it involved significant risk, it was rarely employed by elites by this time. *Parrhesia* began as a civic right for the early Greeks.[5] It allowed any citizen to stand up in the assembly and speak his mind frankly and freely. It soon moved from a political right to a form of rhetoric employable by philosophers whose perceived virtue gave them licence to speak plainly and freely, usually with a message which would not please the hearers, but which was the truth – or at least that is how they represented it. The philosopher purported to be bound to speak the truth no matter the consequences. This type of rhetoric is distinguishable from other types because it claims not to be rhetoric at all, but really a dropping of the smoke and mirrors of rhetorical speech. The truth is spoken 'from the heart', without the 'tricks' of rhetoric. [6]

Parrhesia was often employed by the Cynics.[7] 'Cynicism' was more of a lifestyle than a philosophy: it had no official doctrines, but espoused a way of life which eschewed wealth, sex, fame, and political power in favour of simplicity.[8] The goal was to live in such a way as was in line with nature, or, in other words, in 'self-chosen bestiality'.[9] Diogenes of Sinope, the most famous Cynic, was notorious for the bold and forceful way in which he spoke to others, including Alexander the Great.[10] Whilst *parrhesia* was

[5] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 18. The practice of *parrhesia* was first named in democratic Athens in the fifth century BC. Van Renswoude's study provides a history of the rhetoric of free speech which is called *parrhesia* in the Greek context and is translated by a variety of terms in Latin.
[6] Socrates used *parrhesia* at his trial, which greatly influenced the Cynics, Stoics, and later Christians.
[7] For an overview of Cynicism, see John Leach, *Cynicism* (Cambridge, 2009); or Luis E. Navia, *Classical Cynicism: A Critical Study* (London, 1996). For the history of Cynicism and its relationship to Stoicism -- the more mainstream philosophy of the day -- see Christopher Gill, 'Cynicism and Stoicism', in Roger Crisp (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 93-111.
[8] Anthony Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy: A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford, 2004), p. 128.
[9] Gill, 'Cynicism and Stoicism', p. 94.
[10] When Alexander, coming to Diogenes in the streets of Athens, asked him what he could do for him, Diogenes replied that he could get out of his light (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, tr. R. D. Hicks (2 vols., London, 1950), 2, p. 41). Despite this, Alexander was a fan of Diogenes (2, p. 35).

not the only rhetorical method the Cynics employed, it was a favoured method.[11] The ability to speak frankly, however, was dependent upon the reputation of the speaker.[12] In order for the message to be received, the virtuous character of the speaker must precede him. Virtue for the Cynics meant possessing the kind of character which could live in accordance with nature.[13] Thus, in living a life of absolute poverty and shunning all worldly trappings, they were able to speak the truth -- often insolently -- even to kings.

The Stoics embraced the asceticism of the Cynics but differed in their understanding of virtue.[14] The Stoics believed that happiness was wholly and only dependent upon the virtue of a person. To be virtuous, a person's will must obey reason, with the end result of living in accordance with nature.[15] Outward circumstances had no effect upon a person's happiness, and therefore should not cause fluctuations in emotions. They saw emotion as a disease which needed to be cured. The healthful state, then, was called *apatheia*, a passionless state which refuses to let fortune affect the emotions. This is neither indifference nor 'invulnerability', but rather an 'invincibility' to everything external.[16] Stoicism, then, saw the Stoic sage as someone who was perfectly self-controlled. Thus, under the Stoics, *parrhesia* required the person to speak the truth in an

[11] Navia, *Classical Cynicism*, p. 6. Antisthenes, the founder of Cynicism, was also a noted teacher of rhetoric. See Navia, p. 37. Diogenes, on the other hand, despised rhetoricians (Diogenes, *Eminent Philosophers*, 2, p. 49).
[12] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 22.
[13] Gill, 'Cynicism and Stoicism', p. 94.
[14] Stoicism began in Greece with the teaching of Zeno of Citium in the third century BC; it continued to flourish under the Romans until its decline in the fourth century. Zeno had been a disciple of Crates of Thebes, a noted Cynic. For an overview of Stoicism, see M. Andrew Holowchak, *The Stoics* (London, 2008); for the history of Stoicism in Late Antiquity, see Brad Inwood, 'Stoicism', in Lloyd P. Gerson (ed), *Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 126-39. For the practical morality of Stoicism, see Seneca the Younger, *Epistles*, tr. Richard M. Gummere (3 vols, London, 1920).
[15] Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. 131.
[16] Holowchak explains *apatheia* thusly: 'a Stoic sage, like anyone else, certainly feels his troubles. He differs from others in that he endures his troubles and, thus, they not at all affect his happiness. Therefore, *apatheia*, properly grasped, is invincibility, rather than invulnerability, to fortune.' Holowchak, *Stoics*, p. 48.

unimpassioned manner.[17] Stoics believed that it was only possible to speak truthfully if the speaker could keep his emotions under control.[18] As with later Christian ascetics like Cassian, right speech depended upon the internal nature of the speaker.

Thus, by the first century, *parrhesia* as a political tactic was mostly ascribed to philosophers. Elites, whose character did not necessarily warrant the use of *parrhesia*, tended to limit their use of the technique to the courtroom, where it had to be used rarely and carefully to avoid antagonising the judge.[19] The speaker had to pretend to be unwilling to speak frankly, only doing so because to not speak the truth would be wrong. Use of *parrhesia* outside of the courtroom was rare, particularly because the making of public political speeches was forbidden in Imperial Rome.[20] The use of rhetoric in order to dissuade and petition the emperor had allowed the elites to continue as effective patrons of their cities despite the inability to use *parrhesia*. By the late fourth century, this was no longer the case. The role of the philosopher was more important than ever, but the character of the philosopher was also changing.

By the late fourth century, whilst the success of the parrhesiast was by no means guaranteed, the philosopher played a role in a drama which allowed the emperor to relent in his wrath towards his culpable subjects in a way which was commensurate with the ideals of *paideia*. Like the kings who yielded to the entreaties of their pious queens on behalf of disgraced aristocrats,[21] bending to the speech of the philosopher permitted the emperor to maintain his reputation for both fierceness and mercy. In 387,

[17] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 33.
[18] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 19.
[19] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 23.
[20] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 25.
[21] See Kate Cooper, 'Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 82 (1992), pp. 113-27.

Theodosius, desirous of forwarding the status of the Catholic church in the Empire, deliberately began choosing Catholic bishops and monks over pagan philosophers such as Themistius for the role of parrhesiast.[22] He allowed a Syrian monk and the bishop of Antioch to mitigate his anger at the city after they had pulled down the statues of the emperor and empress during a riot in the spring of that year. Then, in 390, Theodosius even performed the penance Ambrose of Milan assigned him for the massacre perpetrated at Thessalonica. This act enshrined the bishop as the assuager of his imperial wrath, the new *parrhesia*-dispensing philosopher. It was not, however, merely the Catholic religion of the bishops which qualified them for this role. It was also because they had developed the reputation of 'carers for the poor', the lowest people on the social scale who did not even hold citizenship and were therefore unable to wield political power.[23] Like the old pagan philosophers, because the bishops presented themselves as being outside of the political hierarchy, they were able to speak freely on behalf of the people. This outsider status, however, was an illusion, and Peter Brown argues that the bishops were able to mobilise the crowds to put pressure on the imperial government to achieve political ends. Still, the 'carer of the poor' image allowed bishops the use of *parrhesia*, where even Christian elites were not able to employ it.

Irene Van Renswoude, in a study on the use of free speech from the classical period through to the early Middle Ages, clearly demonstrates that the meaning of *parrhesia* was never confined to one specific definition at any one time.[24] Brown, concentrating on the political uses of *parrhesia*, has left virtually untouched the religious uses of this form of rhetoric. Whilst *parrhesia* for the philosopher-bishop meant the ability to speak

[22] Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, p. 105.
[23] Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, pp. 91-117.
[24] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, pp. 17-43, esp. p. 36.

boldly to the emperor based on a lack of perceived political attachments, in the gospels it has a different connotation. When Jesus spoke with the crowds or with the Pharisees, he often spoke in parables; when he spoke with the disciples, however, he spoke openly and clearly, and this way of speaking was described as *parrhesia*.[25] The Latin translates his *parrhesia* using the word (*in*) *palam*, which means to speak openly or plainly.[26] He spoke so that the disciples could understand.

This plain-speaking provided a precedent for future Christian authors and preachers in terms of style as well as content. Whereas in classical rhetoric, the style must match the content -- the more important the topic, the higher the style -- these Christian speakers took their cue from Jesus and aimed instead for a style which even the least-educated among their listeners could understand. In this way, the authority for *parrhesia* was again based on the truth of the speech rather than on the political character of the speaker. *Parrhesia* also became linked with the boldness with which a Christian could come before God in prayer.[27] The character of the speaker here was of the upmost importance, as it was believed that the holier a person was, the greater the *parrhesia* before God. It is in the early martyr accounts, however, where the holiness of the speaker and the truth of the message begin to be linked as qualifications for *parrhesia*. Early martyr accounts tend to depict Christians keeping silent in the face of accusations from their pagan persecutors. In this, they mirror Jesus' silence before Pontius Pilate and the Jewish council of Sadducees.[28] Because of this precedent, their silence, better than any arguments, proclaimed their innocence. When they did speak, it was only to

[25] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, pp. 34-5.
[26] Thank you to Irene Van Renswoude for clarification on this point. See Van Renswoude, *Rhetoric of Free Speech*, p. 9. Cf. John 16:25. Similarly, the word *manifeste* (*dicere*) is also used to describe Jesus' open and plain teaching. Cf. John 11:14.
[27] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 39.
[28] Matthew 27.12-14; 62-63. Mark 14.60-61; 15.4-5. Luke 23.9.

plainly confess their faith in Christ in speech which was described as *parrhesia*.[29] The Christian public, schooled in classical rhetoric, understood that the plain speech of the martyrs was not inferior to other forms of rhetoric.[30] Instead, it was the virtuous nature of the martyrs and the truth of their confession which allowed them to speak with *parrhesia* in the face of those with authority. Though this is not a philological study, this brief survey demonstrates the development of and the link between speaking truth to power and plain, open speech within the rhetorical context of Late Antiquity.

For Augustine of Hippo, plain speaking was hugely important. His relationship with rhetoric in general, though, was complicated. As a young man, he was a teacher of rhetoric, first in Carthage, and later in Rome and Milan. He taught rhetoric to young elites for use in the courtroom. At Milan, he himself learned much about rhetoric from Bishop Ambrose.[31] As he listened to Ambrose preach, he eventually became more and more interested in the content instead of just the style. At this point, he desired to become a Christian, but found he could not come to the point of conversion. Timothy Asay describes how, in the *Confessiones*, Augustine's struggle is a problem of rhetoric.[32] He wants to desire God completely, but rhetoric is required to create the desire, signalling the incompleteness of the desire and the impossibility of submitting completely to God. The moment of his conversion only comes when he despairs of resolving the problem himself and opens himself up to a 'divine rhetoric' -- the children's song of '*tolle, lege'*.[33] Though Augustine subsequently gives up his post as a

[29] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, pp. 93-4.
[30] Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 113.
[31] Augustine, *Confessiones* 5.13(23), ed. James J. O'Donnell (3 vols., Oxford, 1992), 1, p. 56-7; tr. Henry Chadwick, *Confessions* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 87-8.
[32] Timothy Asay, 'Rhetoric Renouncing Rhetoric: Contemplating Conversion and Persuasion in the *Confessions*', in *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 48 (2015), pp. 139-61.
[33] Augustine, *Confessiones* 8.12(29); ed. O'Donnell, 1, p. 101.

teacher of rhetoric, he does not eschew the discipline. Since all things are connected to God, content, he maintains, is not to be related to style. Earlier in the *Confessiones*, he writes,

> nothing is true merely because it is eloquently said, nor false because the signs coming from the lips make sounds deficient in a sense of style. Again, a statement is not true because it is enunciated in an unpolished idiom, nor false because the words are splendid. Wisdom and foolishness are like food that is nourishing or useless. Whether the words are ornate or not does not decide the issue.[34]

This subject is so important to him that he stresses it three times. The fourth book of *De doctrina Christiana*, which he completed late in life, he devotes to rhetoric and its usage in Christian teaching, admitting the benefits it affords, but also stating that eloquence is not necessary for a Christian preacher, only wisdom.[35] Augustine, against commonly held tradition, takes pains to demonstrate through the use of scripture and other Christian authors that the style employed should not be high out of respect for the topic, but that clear communication is the goal. For this, he reasons, a high, low, or mixed style may be suitable depending on whether the listener is to be instructed, delighted, or moved to obedience.[36] Instruction is usually best done in the low style. Most important, however, is the character of the preacher.[37] When the preacher expounds the scriptures, the innate truth of what he is saying will inevitably have some benefit, even if the character of the preacher is wicked. A preacher who 'practices what he preaches', however, will give the most benefit to his listeners. The holiness of the preacher, combined with the truth of the content and a low style, is the best concoction for instruction.

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[34] Augustine, *Confessiones* 5.6(10); ed. O'Donnell, 1, p. 50; tr. Chadwick, p. 78. Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, ed. R. P. H. Green (Oxford, 1995), p. 118 and pp. 196-8.
[35] Augustine states, however, that wisdom without eloquence is less effective. Augustine, *De doctrina*, 4.17; ed. Green, pp. 238-40.
[36] Augustine, *De doctrina* 4.96-99; ed. Green, pp. 238-40. The classic discussion is Eric Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Antiquity*, tr. Ralph Mannheim (London, 1965), pp. 25-66.
[37] Augustine, *De doctrina* 4.151ff; ed. Green, pp. 276ff.

At the moment when Augustine's ears apprehend the divine rhetoric, he remembers the story of Antony the Great, who had appropriated a gospel text read out as meant for himself,[38] leading Augustine to take up the Letters of Paul and read the text from the Epistle to the Romans which triggered his conversion. The *Vita Antonii*, written by Athanasius of Alexandria, was a tremendously popular text; [39] Augustine's friend, who introduced him to it in Milan, was surprised that he had not heard of it before.[40] The text represented the ascetic Christianity which was growing up in the Egyptian and Syrian deserts, a movement which in some ways set itself up against *paideia*, with its classical education and book-learning. It purported to represent practical Christianity, eschewing lofty discussions in favour of hands-on piety. In reality, the desert did not solely consist of illiterate poor people, but also of educated elites. Though Athanasius describes Antony as a poor, illiterate peasant, the seven extant letters Antony (probably) wrote in Coptic show him to have been the opposite.[41] Whilst theological controversy was known to rage through the desert,[42] putting the lie to the idea that desert monastics

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[38] Athanasius, *The Life of Saint Antony*, tr. Robert T. Meyer (London, 1950), pp. 19-20. Antony had been walking and meditating on passages of scripture concerning leaving all possessions to follow Jesus when he wandered into a church just as Matthew 19:21 was being read out: 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' Athanasius writes that it was as if 'the passage had been read on his account'; Antony immediately sold all his possessions and shortly afterward left for the desert.

[39] Athanasius's *Life of Antony* was translated into Latin almost directly after he had written it in Greek by an anonymous translator, then again soon after by Evagrius of Antioch.

[40] Augustine, *Confessiones*, 8.6(14); ed. O'Donnell, 1, p. 94.

[41] For a thorough study of Antony's background and the authenticity of his letters, see Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (Lund, 1990). There is some disagreement over the authenticity of the letters. Cf. Dimitrij F. Bumazhnov, 'The Evil Angels in the *Vita* and *Letters* of St. Antony the Great: Some Observations Concerning the Problem of the Authenticity of the *Letters*', in Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum, 11 (2008), pp. 500-16; and Alexandr Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi: einige Probleme des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Münster, 1994), pp. 158-66. Whether or not the letters are authentic, Rubenson's study of literacy and education in the rural areas of Egypt points to the diversity in backgrounds of desert ascetics.

[42] The Origenist controversy of the fourth century resulted in the destruction of the monastic community at Nitria. Also, Cassian writes about a dispute over Anthropomorphism (Audianism) in *Conl*. 10.2-3 (ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 75-8) and *Inst.* 8.2-4 (ed. Guy, pp. 338-44), in which he indicates the involvement of multiple desert communities. See Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural*

had no taste for high-minded discussions, the main emphasis of the desert was not on rhetorical discourses, but rather on silence and solitude. For the desert monastics, silence and solitude were marks of holiness.

The holiness of Athanasius's Antony is also a result of his time spent in solitude. His exploits against demons in the tombs near his hometown were certainly impressive to the many onlookers,[43] but it is not until he emerges from having spent twenty years in complete solitude in a ruined fort that his holiness is perfected. Appearing before a crowd of people wishing to imitate him, Athanasius describes Antony's perfection in terms reminiscent of the Stoics: 'the state of his soul was pure, for it was neither contracted by grief, nor dissipated by pleasure nor pervaded by jollity or dejection. He was not embarrassed when he saw the crowd, nor was he elated at seeing so many there to receive him.'[44] This is *apatheia*, freedom from the swings of emotion, and is an integral part of holiness in the desert. The solitude of the desert, and the accompanying silence, is fundamental to the programme desert monastics followed in their attempts to reach the perfection of Antony.

The crowds of disciples which Athanasius depicts as violently breaking down the door of the fort to get to Antony were only doing what every monastic in the desert knew was the first step of the spiritual programme of the desert: find a master. Antony himself sought out 'pious men' from whom he could learn various virtues before going

Construction of an Early Christian Debate (Princeton, 1992). For Anthropomorphism specifically, see Clark, pp. 43-84.

[43] See Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, pp. 26-7, where a crowd of people gather around his unconscious and beaten body; they even sleep outside the tombs as though unwilling to miss the show. Though alone in the tombs, his frequent emergence interrupted his solitude.

[44] Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, p. 32.

off on his own to the tombs.[45] A master was necessary to guide disciples along the path to holiness. Having spent years in silence in order to obtain perfection, the master creates a 'fertile ground' in his mind in which pure words can be cultivated, bearing fruit in the lives of the listening disciples.[46] It was because they knew how powerful words could be that they valued silence as much as they did. A diligent monastic could expect that after spending years at the feet of a master, either in a cenobium or in a cell farther afield, he or she would be able to move out into the desert alone to complete his or her training. Once perfect, he or she would also be qualified to teach disciples; and so the cycle began again.

It was a foundational belief in desert monasticism that it was possible to draw closer to God through the eradication of vices, growth in virtue, and the careful control of one's thoughts. The master was fundamental. Antony taught his disciples about how to gain a virtuous soul, free from vice.[47] Virtue, he said, is the natural state of the soul, and vice occurs when the soul moves away from that natural state. This happens through concentrating on 'ignoble' thoughts. Therefore, it was within the power of the ascetic to regain and maintain the virtue of his soul through the control of his thoughts.

The teaching concerning the control of thoughts was standard fare for the Desert Fathers and Mothers. This is evident from the popular collections of sayings which circulated throughout Europe. When disciples would visit an abba or amma, often having travelled a great distance, they would ask them for 'a word'. The master would

[45] Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, pp. 20-1.
[46] Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford, 1993), p. 135.
[47] Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, pp. 37-8.

respond, perhaps after a period of silence which could stretch into days,[48] with a pithy saying which the disciples would memorise and meditate upon. Upon the destruction of their community, the surviving monks of Scetis fled from Berber swords to establish a new monastery in Palestine; it was at that point that they began to gather together and write down the sayings they had memorised.[49] They compiled the *Apophthegmata patrum* first according to the abba or amma to whom the saying was attributed; later other collections were compiled arranged by topic or amassing the various sayings without attribution.[50] The language of the Desert Fathers and Mothers was Coptic, and when their sayings were written down, it was done so in Greek. Later, the collections were translated into Latin.[51] The collections which we have today show the popularity of the Apophthegmata, but also their inherent mutability; no two are exactly alike. Despite all these issues, the *Apophthegmata* still give a good reflection of the teachings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers.

Besides the memorisation of and meditation upon the sayings of the masters, disciples were to bring every thought to their master, making no judgment as to the origin of the thought themselves. The master would then discern for them whether the thought was

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[48] Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, p. 148.
[49] William Harmless, 'Remembering Poemen Remembering: The Desert Fathers and the Spirituality of Memory', *Church History* 69 (2000), pp. 483-4.
[50] These are known as the Alphabetic, Systematic, and Anonymous collections. See *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*, tr. Benedicta Ward (London, 1984); *Book of the Elders: Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection*, tr. John Wortley (Collegeville, 2012); *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers: Systematic Sayings from the Anonymous Series of the* Apophthegmata Patrum, tr. Benedicta Ward (Oxford, 1986). The sayings of the desert ammas are included in these, however, Laura Swan has collected their sayings together in one book. See Laura Swan, *The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives, and Stories of Early Christian Women* (New York, 2001).
[51] The Latin version of the *Apophthegmata* travelled under various names, including the *Adhortationes sanctorum patrum* and the *Verba seniorum*. For an extensive study of the transmission of the Latin version, see Columba Batlle, *Die* 'Adhortationes sanctorum patrum' ('Verba seniorum') *im lateinischen Mittealter: Überlieferung, Fortleben und Wirkung* (Münster, 1972). Dom Batlle demonstrates that the earliest systematic collection of sayings was translated by Popes Pelagius and John before either ascended the papal seat in the mid-sixth century. Other Latin versions, however, had been in circulation in Gaul by the mid-fifth century.

from the devil, themselves, or God. Michel Foucault describes this as a form of *parrhesia* that was peculiar to desert spirituality in the fourth and fifth centuries.[52] In defining *parrhesia* as the obligation to speak the truth without regard for consequences, he moves this speech-act beyond its rhetorical use to one which can be exercised by anyone in a more private sphere. It is transformed into confessional speech, speech which tells all irrespective of punishment.[53] Any punishment which may result is accepted that it may be experienced and then left behind, for the final outcome – a greater degree of purity – is more beneficial than avoiding punishment and maintaining hidden sin. This complete revelation of thought was the method for learning discernment, the key virtue of the spiritual life in the desert.

Discerning thoughts was the primary pastime of desert monastics, allowing them to learn to focus on thoughts from God. For this the monastics required *hēsychia*, a state characterised by an internal silence which produces a profound peace.[54] In this state, the monastic will not be distracted from his prayers by anything; indeed, he or she will not even hear the wind in the reeds or the song of a sparrow.[55] *Hēsychia*, besides creating the space for a constant communion with God, can also protect the monastic from even seeing things which will later be remembered and cause distraction.[56] Though Amma Syncletica stated that *hēsychia* could be maintained anywhere, even in a crowd,[57] the vast majority of sayings addressing *hēsychia* required the monastic to remain in his or her cell, alone.

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[52] Foucault, 'Parrēsia', p. 221. Foucault differentiates this *tout-dire* or *exagoreusis* from traditional confession because it necessitates the telling of every thought, not merely sinful thoughts or actions.
[53] It should be noted, though, that the term *parrhesia* does not itself appear in the *Apophthegmata* in reference to the act of confession.
[54] John Wortley, 'How the Desert Fathers Meditated', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 46 (2006), p. 15.
[55] *Book of the Elders*, 2.8; tr. Wortley, pp. 40-1.
[56] *Book of the Elders*, 2.22; tr. Wortley, p. 43.
[57] *Forgotten Mothers*, p. 58.

So, whilst solitude was necessary for *hēsychia*, one might ask the question as to whether or not external silence was also necessary. Perhaps surprisingly, it was not. Meditation (*meletê*) was not done silently. Instead, the monastics would repeat passages from scripture or the sayings of the masters vocally and continuously in their cells.[58] An anonymous monk's first-hand description of the living arrangement of monks in Nitria, a monastic community in Egypt, explains the distance between the cells: 'They inhabit a desert place and have their cells some distance from each other, so that no one should be recognised from afar by another, or be seen easily, or hear another's voice. On the contrary, they live in profound silence, each monk isolated on his own.'[59] The cells were set far enough apart that they could not hear each other praying and meditating aloud in their cells.[60] The audible recitation of scripture or of the master's saying was an integral part of *meletê*.[61] The spoken words became hedges which direct and focus the mind on the narrow path which leads towards God. *Hēsychia*, then, provided an arena of silence in which the only voice which is heard is God's.[62]

Whilst some monastics had memorised the entirety of the bible, this was an exception and a cause for awe. [63] Still, it would be a rare monk or nun who did not have the Psalter memorised, and this would give food for *meletê*. Memorising scripture, however, was not a focus of the Egyptian monastics, and the reason for this goes

[58] Wortley, 'Desert Fathers', p. 317.
[59] *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 20.7; tr. Norman Russell (London, 1980), p. 106.
[60] Wortley, 'Desert Fathers', p. 321.
[61] Jean Leclercq, in writing on the practice of meditation, says, 'To speak, to think, to remember, are the three necessary phases of the same activity.' See Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p. 16.
[62] There exists a beautiful ode to *hēsychia* which celebrates its many benefits for the monastic. A short excerpt reads: 'O *hēsychia*! School of prayer, school of reading. O *hēsychia*! Calm of *logismoi*, and a sheltered harbor' (*Book of the Elders*, 2.35; tr. Wortley, pp. 45-6). See below for the need to discern *logismoi*.
[63] Wortley, 'Desert Fathers', p. 319.

beyond the fact that some -- but by no means all -- were illiterate.[64] It instead was a product of their belief that it was important not to continuously fill the mind with new information, but rather to meditate on the wisdom they had already imbibed until it had penetrated their whole beings.[65] Many of Desert Fathers and Mothers were not abstract system builders, and they themselves proclaimed that they did not have pretensions to understand the whole bible.[66] Instead, they focussed on practical passages, and spent their time in learning to apply them. This, in essence, was the purpose of meditation: the practical application of saying or scripture to the person of the monastic.

This pragmatic eclecticism of the *Apophthegmata* was, however, theorised in the work of Evagrius of Pontus (c. 345-99). Amongst several other treatises which touch on the subject, Evagrius also wrote a guide to the practical life for ascetics called *Praktikos*, a work which greatly influenced John Cassian, who one of his students. Cassian's eight vices are a refinement of the Evagrius's eight deadly thoughts (*logismoi*), the great enemies that the practical life is bent on combatting. These thoughts come from the devil, with the term *logismoi* coming in essence to refer to demons for those living in the desert.[67] Evagrius would spend the weekend teaching his disciples, even through the night, but, whilst he encouraged them to share any troubling thoughts they had with him, he told them to remain silent until they were alone with him.[68] In this way, the other brothers would not be affected. Whilst the Stoics viewed emotions as contaminants, for Evagrius and his followers, it was these *logismoi* which were like

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[64] Wortley, 'Desert Fathers', p. 323.
[65] Books were treated with suspicion in the desert. More often we hear of them being sold for the sake of the poor than being read. Wortley, 'Desert Fathers', pp. 323-4.
[66] Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, p. 155.
[67] Augustine Casiday, 'Tradition and Theology in John Cassian' (Ph.D. thesis, Durham University, 2002), p. 24.
[68] Palladius, *Life of Evagrius*, tr. Tim Vivian, in *Four Desert Fathers: Pambo, Evagrius, Macarius of Egypt and Macarius of Alexandria* (New York, 2004), p. 83.

infectious diseases, able to spread to others, corrupting minds and destroying purity. Controlling their thoughts would liberate them from vice and bring about the state of *apatheia* so dear to the Stoics. This passionless state would allow them to enter into full communion with God.

Augustine also wrote guidelines for monastics, and so has had a significant part to play in the shaping of the monastic movement. A dossier of texts for male and female communities was transmitted in his name; their chronological sequencing is much debated, but this does not concern us here.[69] Though roughly contemporary, Augustine and Cassian had a very different way of approaching the monastic vocation. Whilst Cassian's approach, growing out of the desert tradition, was intrinsically individualistic (as we shall see in the next chapter), Augustine's focus was on the community as a whole. This stemmed from his conception of the monastic community as a precursor of the heavenly kingdom. There is a much greater emphasis on the cooperation of monastics in their joint spiritual progress. For instance, whenever women are present in the church, the monks are commanded to safeguard one another's purity by watching each other to make certain no one is gazing or glancing at the fairer sex.[70] Here, it is the eye which reveals the nature of the heart, not words: 'an impure eye is the herald of an impure heart. Unchaste hearts reveal themselves by exchanging glances even without any words.'[71] Being vigilant in order to witness another monastic's ocular transgression is stressed: 'If you notice in any of your number this roving eye referred to above,

[69] Augustine's monastic works can be found in George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (Oxford, 1987), with a facing-page translation: *Praeceptum*, pp. 80-103; *Obiurgatio* (commonly called the *Reprimand to Quarrelling Nuns*), pp. 104-9; *Ordo monasterii*, pp. 74-8; *Regularis informatio* (commonly called the *Rule for Nuns*), pp. 110-8. See Lawless, pp. 65-72 for a discussion of the texts which form the Augustinian monastic corpus.
[70] Augustine, *Praeceptum*, 4.6; ed. Lawless, p. 90.
[71] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 4.4; ed. and tr. Lawless, pp. 88-9.

immediately admonish the individual and correct the matter as soon as possible, in order to curb its progress.'[72] Augustine insists that if a male monastic glances at a woman, it will not go unseen; if by some chance, it does, God will see it. Meanwhile, the expected watchfulness of the other monastics represents the watchfulness of God within the community.

The purpose of all of this is stated outright when Augustine expounds upon the verse, 'Love is not self-seeking.'[73] He writes, 'We understand this to mean: the common good takes precedence over the individual good, the individual good yields to the common good. Here again, you will know the extent of your progress as you enlarge your concern or the common interest instead of your own private interest'.[74] Augustine did not believe that it was possible for monastics to measure with certainty any increase in moral purity or draw closer to God, a stance which left many monastics confused as to the purpose of their vocation.[75] The progress he refers to here is instead a movement towards a clearer witness of heaven. Whilst monasticism in general followed Cassian's theory that moral progress was possible and measurable, Augustine left his mark

[72] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 4.7; ed. and tr. Lawless, pp. 90-1.
[73] 1 Corinthians 13:5 (Lawless's translation in Augustine, *Praeceptum*, p. 95).
[74] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 5.2; ed. and tr. Lawless, pp. 94-5.
[75] Augustine's stance on this matter and the resulting confusion of the monks of Hadrumetum led to his strengthening his position with the publication of two treatises, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* and *De correptione et gratia*. This, in turn, led to the controversy within the Gallic church concerning the nature of grace, and possibly to the publication of Cassian's notorious thirteenth Conference. For an introduction to the controversy, often referred to anachronistically as the 'semi-Pelagian controversy', including Cassian's role in it, see Irena Backus and Aza Goudriaan, '"Semipelagianism": The Origins of the Term and Its Passage into the History of Heresy", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 65 (2014), pp. 25-46; David Lambert, "Semipelagianism", in Karla Pollmon (ed), *Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 1714-5; Conrad Leyser, 'Semi-Pelagianism', in Allan Fitzgerald (ed), *Augustine through the Ages* (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 761-6; R. A. Markus, 'The Legacy of Pelagius: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Conciliation', in Rowan Williams (ed), *The Making of Orthodoxy* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 214-34. Also see Augustine Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St John Cassian* (Oxford, 2007) for an attempt to make Cassian's theology orthodox. For more on Augustine's focus on charity over and against moral superiority, see Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 9-11.

through his emphasis on the practice of charity. Love must be shown through service to one another, including shielding one another from temptation and sin.

It is in this context that Augustine addresses speech in the so-called *Praeceptum*, addressed to a male monastic community. Sins of speech are to be avoided because of the harm they cause the community. Grumbling,[76] quarrelling,[77] harsh words,[78] et cetera, are all condemned, as is typical in monastic rules, however, it is the love of one another which is meant to be restored through confession and the seeking of forgiveness for these sins. The emphasis is on having right relationships with each other, as this is necessary for the achievement of the monastic goal. This goal Augustine states at the beginning of the *Praeceptum*: 'For this foremost reason you are gathered as one, so that acting with one accord you may live in the house and there may be for you one spirit and one heart in God.'[79] The weight given to love within the community is not found in Cassian; nevertheless, it greatly influences the development of the later monastic movement in Gaul.

The late-fourth century was also home to another figure who had a considerable impact upon monasticism in Gaul: Martin of Tours. When Sulpicius Severus wrote the *Vita Martini*, he was helping to launch a new genre of writing in the west. One of the earliest pieces of Christian hagiographic literature, it became a template for future authors in western Christendom. Sulpicius's choice of hero was telling of the times: the people who had become saints before now were generally martyrs, but Martin, living in a time without persecution, was not. Sulpicius set out to demonstrate Martin's holiness to his

[76] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 5.1, 5, and 9; ed. Lawless, pp. 94, 96, and 96.
[77] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 6.1; ed. Lawless, p. 98.
[78] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 6.2; ed. Lawless, p. 98.
[79] Augustine, *Praeceptum* 1.2; ed. and tr. Lawless, p. 80-1.

readers through a narration of his life, rather than his death.[80] Martin lived a life of martyrdom by way of his asceticism and self-denial. The *Vita Martini* helped to solidify the link between monasticism and martyrdom which was forming in the minds of those in the western church.

Sulpicius was an aristocrat from Aquitaine whose fascination for Martin led him, if not to imitate him exactly, then to compose several encomia to glorify him in the popular imagination of the literate. Having founded a monastery on his own estate of Primuliacum, he spent his life in philosophical and religious discussions with other educated aristocrats, and in writing letters and books. This sociable monastic life would have differed significantly from the life which Martin and his disciples led at Marmoutier, being more akin to an 'aristocratic spa'.[81] Besides the *Vita Martini*, Sulpicius also wrote a history of the world up to his present day (the *Chronica*), the *Dialogi de virtutibus Sancti Martini*, and many letters, only three of which are extant.[82] Though Martin has a small role in the *Chronica*,[83] he is the subject of the surviving letters and the *Dialogi*, revealing just how much he captivated Sulpicius. Sulpicius, who had read the *Vita Antonii*, sought to portray Martin as a holy man who was not just as good as the saints of the Egyptian desert, but even better because he had raised the

[80] The *Vita Martini* was written whilst Martin was still alive. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Sancti Martini*, ed. Jacques Fontaine in *Vie de Saint Martin, SC* 133 (Paris, 1967), pp. 248-316; tr. Richard J. Goodrich, 'The Life of Saint Martin', in *Sulpicius Severus: The Complete Works* (New York, 2015), pp. 23-54. Sulpicius does subsequently describe Martin's death in *Epistula* 3. See Sulpicius Severus, *Epistulae*, ed. Jacques Fontaine in *Vie de Saint Martin, SC* 133 (Paris 1967), pp. 316-45.

[81] Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 135. Clare Stancliffe is also of the opinion that Sulpicius's ascetic life was of an easier variety than Martin's, though points out that there was much common ground; see Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 33-5.

[82] We know, however, that he was a prolific letter writer from the responses of his friend Paulinus of Nola. See Richard J. Goodrich, *Sulpicius Severus: The Complete Works* (New York, 2015), p. 12. Also see, Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica*, ed. and tr. Ghislaine de Senneville-Grave in *Chroniques SC* 441 (Paris, 1999); and Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi de virtutibus Sancti Martini*, ed. Jacques Fontaine in *Gallus: Dialogues sur les 'Vertus' de Saint Martin*, SC 510 (Paris, 2006).

[83] See Sulpicius, *Chronica*, 2.50; ed. Fontaine, pp. 340-2.

dead.[84] For Sulpicius, it was the power to work miracles which ultimately demonstrated Martin's holiness, along with the capacity the miracles had on the witnesses to bring about repentance and salvation. On the other hand, Cassian tells us that he intentionally avoids relating the miracles of the desert abbas because he did not see them as useful for helping the reader increase in holiness.[85]

Martin's inimitable holiness has led modern historiography to conclude a divide between the charisma of northern monasticism and the more orderly nature of southern monasticism, represented primarily by Cassian and those associated with the monastery of Lérins (more on Lérins in Chapter 2).[86] Though Sulpicius's aim in producing the *Vita Martini* was not to give monastics a model for imitation,[87] he did intend for it to inspire the readers towards holiness. Whilst his primary proof of Martin's holiness was his power to perform wonders, a secondary barometer was his speech, a barometer we have already seen in use in the desert.

The effect of Martin's miracles on witnesses was their repentance and conversion, but these miracles were preceded by the preaching of the scriptures.[88] Martin, on the other hand, was not always so dramatic. 'Often, however, when the rustics were speaking against him, lest he destroy their temple, he would soften their pagan hearts with holy

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[84] Sulpicius, *Dialogues*, 1.24; ed. Fontaine, pp. 198-200. Cf. Sulpicius, *Vita Martini*, 7.2-4, 8.2-3; ed. Fontaine, pp. 266-8, 270. Also, see Stancliffe, *St. Martin*, p. 18-9, particularly n. 16.
[85] *Inst. Prae* 7; ed. Guy, p. 28.
[86] This view was first put forward by Friedrich Prinz in *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich* (Munich, 1965), pp. 449-84. See Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 41 (and esp. n. 30) for a look at the scholarship in this area, as well as some of the problems of this approach.
[87] Cf. Sulpicius, *Vita Martini*, 1.6; ed. Fontaine, p. 250. Sulpicius says the opposite about his intentions, but the Martin he describes in the work itself does not lend himself to imitation by the average monastic. Just as he was inspired towards an ascetic life by his contact with Martin, but one which was not as difficult as his, so he intended Martin to inspire readers towards a life of holiness without expecting them to produce miracles.
[88] Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, p. 132.

preaching so that, the light of truth having been revealed to them, they themselves overturned their temple.'[89] Martin spoke with power, in contrast to the futile speech of the pagans. The precise task he had intended to accomplish himself – the pulling down of the pagan temple – is now completed by the very people who used to worship there.

Martin's speech has power because it stems from a pure heart. Sulpicius underlines this fact in a panegyric on the quality of Martin's speech:

> Now truly in his words and conversation there was such gravity, such dignity! How piercing, how effective he was, how readily and without difficulty he was able to resolve questions of scripture! …I testify with Jesus and the common hope that I never heard out of the mouth of anyone such knowledge, such talent, such speech which was so good and so pure.[90]

Martin was very familiar with the scriptures, and we can infer that he spent much time in reading, studying, and meditating over them. Because of this, he was able to teach and expound with excellence. Sulpicius links Martin's speech with the condition of his heart elsewhere, as well: 'Never was there anything in his mouth except Christ, in his heart never anything except piety, except peace, except mercy.'[91] His words were always concerning Christ or influenced by him, and this comes from a heart which exemplifies Christian virtue, with no room left for vice. Martin's heart is perfect, and it is proved by his pure speech.

Though Sulpicius does not go into detail regarding Martin's personal devotional life, he does give us a glimpse. The monastery which Martin founded at Marmoutier had its origins in the Egyptian desert, and the silence which characterised the latter would have

[89] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 15.3; ed. Fontaine, p. 286; tr. Goodrich, p. 40.
[90] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 25.6-7; ed. Fontaine, pp. 310-12; tr. Goodrich, p. 52.
[91] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 27.2.; ed. Fontaine, p. 314; tr. Goodrich, p. 53.

distinguished the former as well.[92] The monks made cells for themselves, which consisted of separate huts, or even caves dug out in the surrounding hills. Coming together only for communal prayer and meals, they otherwise remained alone in their cells.[93] Sulpicius depicts the location as being extremely remote and difficult to access, recreating the solitude of the desert in eastern Gaul.[94] The first monastery he founded at Ligugé, possibly with the help of his mentor Hilary, then bishop of Tours, was of the same type – separate cells built by the disciples who gathered around Martin. Thus, his monastic life, if not his episcopal life, was characterised by a profound silence and focus on prayer.[95] It was from this silence that Martin's deep knowledge of the scriptures sprang, and from which the wellsprings of his teaching came forth. This was the part of Martin's life which his readers could emulate.

Sulpicius uses another feature of Martin's speech to demonstrate his holiness, this time one which is not so imitable. In several places in the *Vita Martini*, Martin makes prophecies which come true soon after or, sometimes, many years later. Concerning his journey to visit his parents, he makes a prediction to his fellow monks that he would face many difficult things;[96] the robbers' attack which happens immediately afterwards in the narrative was one of those difficulties. Later, Martin predicts the manner of Emperor Maximus's death.[97] He prophesied that Maximus would attack Emperor

[92] These separate cells certainly do not imply the same intermediary distance as those of Nitria. Stancliffe provides a comparison between Marmoutier and the cenobia of Egypt, describing both similarities and differences. She sees Marmoutier as moving towards a more cohesive monastic establishment, with Martin taking on the authority of an abbot rather than merely a spiritual advisor. See Stancliffe, *St. Martin*, pp. 24-6.
[93] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 10.7; ed. Fontaine, p. 274.
[94] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 10.4; ed. Fontaine, p.274. In contrast, Stancliffe describes the monastery as having been close to Tours and 'very much in touch with civilization'. Stancliffe, *St. Martin*, p. 26.
[95] Martin's monks did no manual labour, and only the younger monks copied the scriptures. The freedom this afforded the older monks especially allowed them to spend as much time in prayer as possible. See Sulpicius, *Vita Martini*, 10.6; ed. Fontaine, p. 274.
[96] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 5.3; ed. Fontaine, p. 262.
[97] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 20.8; ed. Fontaine, p. 298.

Valentinian in Italy and win the battle but die soon after. That, says Sulpicius, is what we saw happen.[98] Akin to his prophetic speech is the boldness with which Martin speaks to kings and councils. Again, we see the authority to speak truth to power based on the character of the speaker; Martin can speak in such a manner to the emperor because of his holiness. Martin's prophetic utterances and frank speech are instances of miraculous speech, which Sulpicius uses to underscore the pure nature of Martin's heart. His use of speech for this purpose is ancillary, but still present.

The *Vita Martini*, as hagiography, is not as practical as works from other genres, such as Cassian's *Institutiones* and *Conlationes*, but it is still didactic. Readers learned about Martin's *vita* – his way of life, rather than the historical facts of his life. Gregory of Tours, in the preface to the *Vita Patrum*, explained that he used the singular in the title of his work because, though 'there is a diversity of merits and virtues among them [ie. the fathers], [there is] but the one life of this body sustains them all in this world.'[99] Monastics, in reading hagiography, were learning through narrative about that one way of life which would make them, too, into saints who could see God. This burgeoning genre would be taken up by many monastic authors throughout the Merovingian period with the same aim of teaching men and women the way of life which would lead them to holiness. Cassian, however, would take a more direct approach in instructing aspiring saints.

[98] Sulpicius, *Vita Martini* 20.8; ed. Fontaine, p. 298.
[99] Gregory of Tours, *Liber vita patrum*, Preface; ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH, SRM* 1.2 (Hanover, 1884), p. 212.

To sum up: though the fourth century saw a great deal of change, continuity is detectable throughout, especially when we consider the rhetorical form of *parrhesia*. Though it began as a civic right for all citizens in the Greek republic, and morphed into a method of speaking unpleasant truths in the face of considerable risk, the underlying principle of plain speech is still evident. By Late Antiquity, it had become the realm of holy men, whether bishops or monks, men whose ability to speak with *parrhesia* was based on the virtue of their character. Plain speech was also becoming more important in the realm of teaching, with some, such as Augustine, advocating for a plain style aimed at comprehension by all. In the world of the desert, however, confessional speech became a tool for spiritual growth – disciples would speak their whole mind plainly and await the discernment of the elders. The purpose was to develop their own discernment that they might direct their minds towards God, a method which, as we shall see, would be key to Cassian's own spiritual programme. Silence was a vital strategy for seeking perfection, but it was a silence interspersed with the monastic's own voice repeating phrases for meditation. These phrases, unlike what we will see with Cassian, were most often the sayings of some abba or amma. Through practice, these monastics believed they would reach perfection, a state of oneness with God. Augustine, however, strongly disagreed with such a notion, arguing that no one person can have moral superiority over another. His use of speech, then, was to provide a purer witness of heaven within the monastic community rather than as a tool to aid the monastic in gaining perfection. Sulpicius, in his descriptions of the inimitable Martin, used prophecy as a speech-marker of holiness, something we will see again when we discuss Columbanus in Chapter 4. Though his Martin evidently followed from the tradition of the desert, Sulpicius's focus is not on creating holiness in his readers. In the next chapter, we shall

see how Cassian develops his monastic programme for that express purpose – helping ascetics become perfect so that they may see God.

Chapter 2: John Cassian

> …when every love, every desire, every effort, every undertaking, every thought of ours, everything that we live, that we speak, that we breathe, will be God, and when that unity which the Father now has with the Son and which the Son has with the Father will be carried over into our understanding and our mind, so that, just as he loves us with a sincere and pure and indissoluble love, we too may be joined to him with a perpetual and inseparable love and so united with him that whatever we breathe, whatever we understand, whatever we speak, may be God.[1]

John Cassian here describes the pinnacle experience of the ascetic life: a mystical communion with God achieved through prayer – consummate, unparalleled, divine. At this point, all sin and hinderance is removed, the veil separating the human and the divine is lifted, and the monk comes into the awesome presence of God Himself. This is 'seeing God', and according to Cassian, it is the *telos*, or end, of the monastic life. In order to reach this state, one must first achieve a state of perfection, and this Cassian calls the *scopos*, or goal, of the ascetic. This was purity of heart (*puritas cordis*), and to guide the ascetic towards this goal is the purpose of Cassian's 'moral science' as outlined in his two great works of ascetic instruction, the *Institutiones* and the *Conlationes*. Cassian maintained that if a person were to follow his programme, by the grace of God he, too, could scale the peaks of prayer and see God. His programme involved the careful control of the tongue, for both those seeking perfection and those who were already perfect. Carefully regulating the speech and silence of the ascetics according to their spiritual state would ensure continued progress towards their goal. Their progress could also be revealed by their tongues, making speech and silence powerful metrics in Cassian's programme for the spiritual life. His use of speech both required and created the purity expected of a holy man.

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[1] *Conl.* 10.7.2; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 81; tr. Ramsey, pp. 375-6.

Cassian wrote for men. His prescriptions could be used by women, as we shall see, but the audience he himself envisaged was a male one. In order to assess a man's purity of heart, he created a method to monitor dreams, the subconscious revealer of hidden sin, through the scrutinisation of the frequency of nocturnal emissions. This method would go on to be adapted and applied in the medieval period, thereby demonstrating the continuity of late-antique ideas. This case study, then, both reveals how Cassian's thought flowed out of his late-antique context as well as sets him up as a vehicle to carry late-antique ideas into the Merovingian period.

Cassian's works were influential in his own time, but also throughout the medieval period and right up to today. His influence can be traced in such important later writers as Gregory I and Isidore of Seville. The *Regula Benedicti* finds much of its starting point in Cassian, and even twice recommends reading his works.[2] Despite this popularity, Cassian is somewhat overlooked in modern scholarship. Augustine, Cassian's contemporary, attracts much more attention, aided by his productivity as well as his personal candour, so rare amongst the early Fathers. Cassian is often depicted as a rival of Augustine in the debate on predestination and free will, and discussed solely on these terms.[3] This is due to Cassian's discussion of free will in *Conlatio* XIII, which, whilst declaring the necessity of God's grace, allows a person to make a small, independent step towards God first in some cases. Scholars, and indeed contemporaries,

[2] The dependence of the *Regula Benedicti* on Cassian is well-noted by scholars; see, for instance, Adalbert de Vogüé's notes in Benedict of Nursia, *Regula Benedicti*, ed. Jean Neufville, *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, *SC* 181-6a (7 vols, Paris, 1972-7), *passim*. The only other works Benedict recommends are the *Vitae patrum* and Basil. For Benedict's recommendations in regards to reading Cassian, see Benedict, 42.3 (2, pp. 584) and 73.5 (2, p. 672).

[3] Augustine Casiday notes the bias of modern scholars against Cassian as influenced by Prosper of Aquitaine's treatise, *Contra collatorem*. Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St John Cassian* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 264-6. Also see Columba Stewart, 'Scripture and Contemplation in the Monastic Spiritual Theology of John Cassian', *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), p. 457. Cf. Prosper of Aquitaine, *Contra collatorem*, *PL* 51 (Paris, 1846), cols. 215-76.

have traditionally seen *Conlatio* XIII as a criticism of Augustine, though Robert Markus argues against this view.[4] Cassian has been painted as the leader of a group of Massilian monks who strongly disagreed with Augustine's extreme views on predestination. Studies dedicated to Cassian outside of this context are few. Owen Chadwick's monograph in the 1950's is the first study in English to be devoted to Cassian; [5] it took nearly fifty years before another was penned, this time by Columba Stewart.[6] In recent years, Cassian has begun to garner more attention. Augustine Casiday, in a thorough study of all three of Cassian's works, including the treatise *De incarnatione*, a work neglected even by those who study Cassian, has attempted to redeem Cassian's reputation as a theologian.[7] Christopher Kelly has looked specifically at the *Conlationes* to investigate Cassian's use of scripture in creating the monastic ideal.[8] Even more recently, Richard Goodrich has done a study placing Cassian in his aristocratic, Gallic context.[9] A few scholars have worked to put Cassian in the context of other, later Church Fathers. Phillip Rousseau and Conrad Leyser have looked at Cassian within the framework of ascetic authority as part of wider studies of the fourth through sixth centuries.[10] Most studies concerning Cassian, however, do not trace his influence into the Middle Ages with precision. Again, historiography has drawn a line between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This chapter seeks to outline Cassian's thought concerning speech and silence, demonstrating how it is both in line with late-antique

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[4] R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 177-9. Also, cf. Mark Vessey, 'Ideas of Christian Writing in Late Roman Gaul' (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1988), p. 227.
[5] Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism* (Cambridge, 1950). A second edition was published in 1968. All references are to the second edition.
[6] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*.
[7] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology*. Vessey also takes a close look at the *De incarnatione* in his study of Gallic writers. Vessey, 'Christian Writing', pp. 228-37. Cf. Cassian, *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium libri VII*, ed. Michael Petschenig, *CSEL* 17 (Vienna, 1888), pp. 235-391.
[8] Christopher Kelly, *Cassian's Conferences: Scriptural Interpretation and the Monastic Ideal* (Surrey, 2012).
[9] Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*.
[10] Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church*. Leyser, *Ascetics and Authority*.

thought but also how he adapts late-antique thought to his own Christian, ascetic context. Further chapters will then show how medieval authors did the same with Cassian's and other late-antique ideas, thereby establishing a chain of continuity back through the medieval period to the late antique era. I show how Cassian used speech and silence to both reveal and further the holiness of ascetics, helping them to reach the pinnacle of perfection at which point they could 'see God'. I also analyse Cassian's ultimate indicator of the sleeping mind as a way to reveal the true level of purity in a person through dreams and nocturnal emissions, a metric which later authors pick up and adapt in order to apply to both men and women.

John Cassian was an ascetic who flourished in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Likely from Scythia in modern-day Dalmatia,[11] he spent decades living in a monastery in Bethlehem and touring the Egyptian and Syrian deserts, learning the various ways in which the ascetic life is practiced. He sat at the feet of Evagrius of Pontus, a renowned ascetic and theologian who later drew heat from Jerome concerning his Origenist leanings. Around 400, Cassian was forced to leave Egypt on account of the Origenist controversy, making his way with his friend Germanus to Constantinople, where John Chrysostom was taking in refugee monks.[12] Ordained a priest under Chrysostom, he later went to Rome as an emissary on behalf of the now-exiled bishop.[13] Instead of returning to Constantinople, however, Cassian continued on to Gaul, where he settled in

[11] This is the majority opinion of scholars. Some, however, propose Gaul as his birthplace. See, for example, Karl Suso Frank, 'John Cassian on John Cassian', *Studia Patristica* 33 (1997), pp. 422-6. Also see Markus, *Ancient Christianity*, p. 192, where he states Cassian's Gallic provenance without explanation, and then uses it to argue that the desire Germanus and Cassian express in *Conl*. 23 to return home is an 'apology' for his work in Gaul. The outcome of the conversation, however, could not be used in such a fashion, as Abba Abraham is clear that returning home would be detrimental to their spiritual life. It is better used as a proof that Cassian was not originally from Gaul.

[12] Jean-Claude Guy, 'Introduction', in John Cassian, *Institutions Cénobitiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Guy, *SC* 109 (Paris, 1965), p. 7.

[13] Palladius, *Dialogue sur la Vie de Jean Chrysostome*, ed. Anne Marie Malingrey, *SC* 341, 342 (2 vols, Paris, 1988), 1, p. 76.

Marseille around 415.[14] Now a much older man, he took to writing, producing the works which would go on to influence monasticism right up to the present day.

Though Cassian's wider context has been discussed in depth in Chapter One, there are a few things worth noting about his more immediate context. There was another resident of Marseille who was contemporary with Cassian named Salvian, a noble who had renounced his wife and child that he might live a continent and ascetic life. Salvian had spent time at Lérins and was deeply influenced by Cassian.[15] He wrote *De gubernatione Dei* in which he tried to find the answer for the sufferings which Gaul was experiencing in the fifth century.[16] He argued that God was allowing the Roman Empire to be punished through the incursions of barbarians because of the sinfulness of the church. Though this was hardly a new conclusion, his solution was radical. He proposed that all true Christians needed to live ascetically in the manner of monastics.[17] He had applied this remedy to his own life and thought it suitable for everyone else as well. Salvian was not the only one who was concerned about the spiritual causes of the present situation, and nor was he the only one to apply such a drastic antidote: many were flocking to join monasteries at this time, and doubtless many more were retiring to live ascetically in their own households.[18]

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[14] Scholars are divided on whether John Cassian is the 'Cassianus' which Innocent I mentions in two letters describing a priest who consulted with him concerning the Antiochene schism. I follow Geoffrey Dunn, Stewart, and Henri Irénée Marrou in rejecting this hypothesis. See Geoffrey Dunn, 'Cassian in Syria? The Evidence of Innocent I', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 69 (2015), pp. 3-17; Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 14-15; and Henri Irénée Marrou, 'Jean Cassien à Marseille', *Revue du Moyen Âge Latin*, 1 (1945), pp. 18-20. For the other side of the debate, see Élie Griffe, 'Cassien a-t-il été prêtre d'Antioche?', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 55 (1954), pp. 240-4; and Rousseau, pp. 174. Cf. Innocent I, *Epistolae* 19-20, *PL* 20 (Paris, 1845), cols. 540-3.

[15] For more on Salvian, see David Lambert, 'History and Community in the Works of Salvian of Marseille' (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 2003).

[16] Salvian of Marseille, *De gubernatione Dei*, ed. Georges Lagarrigue, *Salvien: Oeuvres*, *SC* 220 (Paris, 1975).

[17] Markus, *Ancient Christianity*, p. 168.

[18] For estimates on the number of monks in the late antique period, see Ian Wood, *The Transformation of the Roman West* (Leeds, 2018), pp. 70-1. Cassian registers his displeasure at the number of people in

Lérins was one of the places in which many took refuge, and was the foremost monastic community at the time. Salvian himself spent a number of years there before moving to Marseille. Lérins was well-known for its high ascetic standards, and its monks were renowned for their holiness. As a result of this reputation, cities sought out Lérinian monks to be their bishops, making the abbey into a sort of pastoral training ground.[19] It was a place where a nobleman could live out his religious convictions whilst retaining ambition for a career in the church. Lérins, with its desert ideals, might have seemed like a natural place for Cassian to settle, and though he did not choose to do so, he did cultivate ties with the monastery.[20] The monks of Lérins, in turn, appreciated his works, and his influence can be traced in the writings which they later produced.[21] For example, the *Commonitorium* of Vincent of Lérins, a work composed less than ten years after the *Conlationes* were published, demonstrates Cassian's influence.[22] Eucherius, one of Cassian's dedicatees, prepared a condensed version of his *Institutiones*.[23]

Gaul who claim to be monks but live according to their own whims rather than the traditions of the elders, demonstrating the popularity of religious retirement. See *Inst. Prae*. 8; ed. Guy, p. 30.

[19] Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 35. Some of the many monks from Lérins who became bishops include: Honoratus (427-30), Hilary (430-49), Caesarius of Arles (503-42); Maximus (434-60), Faustus of Riez (462- c.495); Eucherius of Lyons (c.433-50); Lupus of Troyes (426-78); Valerianus of Cimiez (fl.439-55); and Veranus of Vence (451-c.80).

[20] He dedicated Part Two of the *Conlationes* to Honoratus and Eucherius of Lérins.

[21] Conrad Leyser, '"This Sainted Isle": Panegyric, Nostalgia, and the Invention of Lerinian Monasticism', in William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (eds), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, 1999), pp. 202-4.

[22] For Cassian's influence on Lérins, see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 24. Also see Leyser, '"This Sainted Isle"'.

[23] This is, unfortunately, lost. We know about it from Gennadius of Marseille, *Liber de viris inlustribus*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, in *Hieronymus, Liber de viris inlustribus, Gennadius Liber de viris inlustribus* 65 (Leipzig, 1896), p. 83; tr. Ernest Cushing Richardson, 'Lives of Illustrious Men', in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, 3 (Edinburgh, 1988-91), p. 1032.

Thus, a life 'withdrawn from the world' could still very much be involved with it. Another example of this is the way in which religious controversies were a constant in Gaul during the early fifth century; monastics were vigorous participants. Prosper of Aquitaine, a devoted follower of Augustine living in Marseille, wrote to him complaining that Pelagian teaching was alive and well in Gaul, and particularly in Marseille.[24] He told how the error was being perpetuated by '*servorum Christi*' who were renowned for their holiness, and also implicated Bishop Hilary of Arles, a former monk of Lérins.[25] Additionally, he had written a letter to a fellow layman named Rufinus in which he complained of men who were straying from orthodoxy with their '*multas collationes*'.[26] This was a reference to Cassian, as he was particularly incensed about the theology presented in *Conlatio* XIII. Prosper would go on to write *Contra collatorem*, an inflammatory refutation which does not accurately reflect Cassian's thought but which would contribute to the later tarnishing of his reputation nonetheless.[27] Furthermore, another layman named Hilary had also written to Augustine, protesting the anti-Augustinian theology which people of ecclesiastical rank were propagating in Gaul and especially Marseille.[28] This evidence, taken together, seems to point to the involvement, even if unwitting, of Cassian and his monks, as well as the monks of Lérins, in a theological controversy which extended outside the bounds of their monasteries, and even across the Mediterranean. Later, Cassian would be recruited by the future Leo I to write against the Nestorian heresy – another example of how men continued to be involved in the wider world even after taking vows.

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[24] Prosper's letter is preserved in the collection of Augustine's letters. See Augustine, *Epistula* 225 [from Prosper of Aquitaine], ed. Alois Goldbacher, in Augustine, *Epistulae*, *CSEL* 57 (Paris, 1911), pp. 454-68.
[25] Augustine, *Epistula* 225.7 [from Prosper]; ed. Goldbacher, p. 465. Prosper writes, '*multum nos et uitae meritis antecellunt et aliqui eorum adepto nuper summi sacerdotii honore supereminient*'. The second part of the sentence is taken to refer to Hilary, who was just raised to the bishopric of Arles.
[26] Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epistola ad Rufini*, *PL* 51 (Paris, 1846), cols. 77A-90A, esp. 80A.
[27] Prosper, *Contra collatorem*. Also see, Casiday, *Tradition and Theology*, pp. 17-71.
[28] Hilary's letter is preserved in the collection of Augustine's letters. See Augustine, *Epistula* 226.2 [from Hilary]; ed. Goldbacher, pp. 468-81.

Sources

Cassian wrote three works: two concerning the ascetic life and a little-read treatise against Nestorianism.[29] The first two works, the *Institutiones* and the *Conlationes* were immensely popular. Cassian conceived the project as a whole, referring to a future set of *conlationes* in the *Institutiones*, which he wrote first. The *Institutiones* are divided into twelve books. The first four deal with what Cassian deems to be the external aspects of ascetic life: clothing, food, the daily offices, etc. The next eight systematically expound upon the eight cardinal vices from which all other vices stem, describing them and explaining how to rid oneself of each one. The *Conlationes* consist of twenty-four books published in three parts. *Conlatio* refers to a spiritual conference between an abba and his disciples and is the main form of instruction amongst desert monks. The *Conlationes* follows Cassian and his friend Germanus as they travel throughout Egypt, sitting at the feet of various abbas in order to learn all they can about the ascetic life. Each *conlatio* is structured as a dialogue between an abba and Germanus – Cassian rarely speaks and thus remains very much a background figure in his own work. Some abbas are granted more than one *conlatio*, and so there are fifteen different abbas in the *Conlationes*.

The classification of the religious life of Cassian's intended audience deserves a few words. As Cassian was writing at a time when monasticism was just becoming established in the west, being varied in practice far beyond what would later become the established norm, some definition of terms is necessary. It is clear that he is not envisioning a monastery of the type which becomes commonplace in the later Middle

[29] Only two manuscripts survive prior to 1100 of Cassian's third work, *De incarnatione*, indicating it was not a popular work. Cassian wrote against Nestorianism, which was condemned in 430 and, barring an empty accusation in eighth-century Spain, did not trouble the church again. The lack of popularity makes sense: the treatise was simply not needed. Chadwick, *Cassian*, p. 39.

Ages, with dormitories, attached churches, or even clear hierarchies. When he uses the term *monasteria*, he refers exclusively to buildings in which monks live, even if only their cells.[30] Instead, he employs *coenobium* as the name for the community of monks which live in common under one elder. The living arrangements of *coenobia* can vary, but the one constant feature is the individual cell; there is no dormitory. At most, a cell may house two monks who must be alike in spiritual maturity. Cassian also uses the term a*bba* in a way which is distinct from the later definition of 'abbot'. Though usually applied to elders – the spiritually perfect – he also uses it for the less spiritually mature on occasion.[31] The head of a *coenobium* is designated by description – for instance, 'the elder of the coenobium'.[32] Throughout his works, Cassian uses the word *monachus*, but we must not think of the word as meaning 'monk' in the later sense of the word. A better translation would be 'male ascetic', a man who devotes his life to the careful control of body and mind in order to attain the Kingdom of Heaven. This person could be a man living in a *coenobium* or as a solitary in the desert; he could also be a man living the ascetic life as a continent married man, as a carer of the sick, or even as an innkeeper.[33] Generally, however, when Cassian uses the term *monachus*, he means a cenobite or anchorite. For the sake of shorthand, I will use the term 'monk' (and 'nun') or 'monastic' in this manner as well, leaving 'ascetic' to describe anyone living by ascetic principles regardless of location. As Cassian addressed male ascetics exclusively, I use the male pronoun throughout this chapter.

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[30] Cassian himself defines *monasterium* and *coenobium* for us in *Conl*. 18.10; ed. Pichéry, 3, p. 22.
[31] Witness his titling his friend Germanus *Abba* in *Conl.* 1.1 and 20.2.3; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 78 and 3, p. 59.
[32] For example, '…*abbatem Piamun, omnium anachoretarum illic inhabitantium seniorem eorundemque presbyterum*…'. In this case, *abba* does not refer to his position in the *cenobium*, but *senior* and *presbyter* do. *Conl.* 18.1.2; ed. Pichéry, 3, p. 11.
[33] For the story of a continent yet married man whose holiness surpassed even a desert elder, see *Conl.* 14.7; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 187-9. Also see *Conl*. 14.4 (ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 185-6) for Cassian's nod to the possibility of holiness being obtained by people of other professions.

The *Conlationes* focus on what Cassian considers to be the interior life of the monastic and covers a wide variety of topics including friendship, lying, repentance, and the mutability of the soul. The *Institutiones*, he tells us, is aimed at cenobites, who represent the external life of the monk; the *Conlationes* is written for anchorites who represent the internal life. There is considerable cross-over, however. That the 'external' life should include eight books on the eradication of vices seems incongruous, as does the inclusion in the *Conlationes* of topics such as why monks do not kneel during the season of Pentecost. This cross-over points to a key part of Cassian's monastic theology: the spiritual life ebbs and flows, and a sin conquered now will likely reappear in another form in the future. Ascetics were engaged in an ongoing spiritual battle, and the enemy will never leave off, often employing the same temptations in the attacks again and again. Tim Brockway's argument against divorcing liturgical prayer from contemplative prayer when studying Cassian makes sense in this light, and, indeed, we ought to be careful not to be more distinct in our divisions than Cassian was himself. There is no real dualism in Cassian.[34] The external and the internal meld into one another. The reason Cassian chose to frame his works as divided between the exterior and the interior man will be discussed below.

The *Conlationes* were published in three parts, and some scholarship has questioned if the last two parts were part of the plan as originally envisaged, or if Cassian instead added them to fill in gaps which he had not anticipated.[35] The reason for doubting the integrity of the work is two-fold. First, Part One has a cohesive structure and seems to climax in two books on prayer, the highest calling of the monastic life, and thus a

[34] Brockway, pp. 6-7.
[35] This is the opinion of Stewart (*Cassian the Monk*, pp. 29ff.) and Ramsey (*Conferences*, p. 8).

natural place to end the work. Second, as Part One of the *Conlationes* follows Cassian and Germanus's second tour of Egypt and the second two parts their first tour, the chronology seems illogical. Despite these two arguments, however, there are several reasons for believing Cassian intended the work just as he produced it. To begin with, in the *Institutiones*, Cassian promises to address certain issues which he does not do until the second and third parts.[36] In *Inst.* 2.1, he vows to discuss unceasing prayer in the forth-coming *Conlationes*; in *Inst.* 2.9.1, he vows the same concerning canonical prayer. Many of the topics which Cassian covers in the second and third parts, however, are not anticipated in the first part, and therefore not mere clarifications. Some of these topics include friendship, lying, healing, and miracles. The biggest obstacle to the theory stated above, however, is the cohesive structure of the *Conlationes* in its entirety. Though at first glance, the *Conlationes* may appear to be arranged in a somewhat random fashion, De Vogüé has shown that there is in fact a cogent structure throughout.[37] The first book begins with a discussion of what Cassian calls the 'end' (*telos*) of the monk, which he defines as the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as the 'goal' (*scopos*) – which we may more properly see as the penultimate goal to Cassian's *telos* – defined as purity of heart, without which no one may see God. The second book then introduces the means to obtain purity of heart, which is discretion, the capacity for spiritual discernment. These two themes of purity of heart and discretion are then alternated throughout the remaining conferences, to greater or lesser degrees. Thus, the odd number conferences take up questions of purity, whilst the even number conferences the practical means of obtaining it. Whilst this structure may seem forced at

[36] *Inst.* 2.18 (ed. Guy, p. 88) points forward to *Conl.* 21.11ff. (ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 86ff.); and *Inst.* 5.4.3 (ed. Guy, p. 196) points forward to *Conl*. 18-19 (ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 10-55). For an argument against the latter connection, see Ramsey, *Conferences*, p. 632.
[37] Adalbert De Vogüé, 'Understanding Cassian: A Survey of the Conferences', *Cistercian Studies* 19 (1984), pp. 101-21.

times, as De Vogüé readily admits,[38] it still points to the overall cohesiveness of the work. Moreover, and perhaps most compellingly, De Vogüé demonstrates how the progression from the beginning of the *Institutiones* to the end of the *Conlationes* creates a pleasing *inclusio* which is surely intentional.[39] The *Institutiones* begins with a discussion of the cenobitic life, the *Conlationes* takes up the eremitic life which is the next step in Cassian's programme after the cenobitic life, and finally ends by going back to the cenobitic life.

There is another argument for the cohesiveness of Cassian's works which De Vogüé only hints at. When the *Institutiones* and the three parts of the *Conlationes* are considered as a whole, we see that Cassian not only anticipates the progression of a monastic's life from cenobite to anchorite, but he also anticipates the ebb and flow of his spiritual life. We see a progression from the imperfect to the perfect and union with God, but we also find Cassian returning again and again to the sins which keep cropping up to ensnare even the perfect. Thus, humility and pride, the fight for continence, relational problems which can affect even the solitaries, and other issues are addressed in several places in the two later parts. Cassian's view of the ascetic life as a battle which requires constant vigilance, combined with his belief that a person can never remain static in his spiritual life, means that he recognises that lapses will reoccur throughout the monastic's life, even as he approaches the *telos*. Hence, subjects do reappear, but not merely for the sake of clarification. Each subject is treated to a deeper degree each time it reoccurs to reflect the more sophisticated battle upon which the monastic, as he draws closer to God, engages. In this light, it makes sense that his

[38] De Vogüé, 'Understanding Cassian', p. 109. He calls for more work to be done in this area, calling his own work a mere starting point, p. 102.
[39] De Vogüé, 'Understanding Cassian', p. 104.

discussion of contemplative prayer comes earlier in the work, rather than at the end, and its placement becomes an argument against the theory that the first part of *Conlationes* was where Cassian intended to end his work.

Finally, there is another *inclusio* which demonstrates the coherence of all three parts of the *Conlationes*. In the preface to the first part, Cassian uses a metaphor of a ship sailing into vast waters from the safe harbour of silence to describe his beginning the task of writing about the life of the anchorite.[40] In the final words of the last conference of Part Three, he revisits this metaphor, telling us that, having been tossed by stormy waves, he now returns to the safe harbour of silence.[41] If he had Part One as a complete work, we would expect this metaphor at the end of *Conlatio* X. The safety of silence was more than just a metaphor to Cassian, who was well aware from his associations with Evagrius and John Chrysostom of the dangers which speaking out could bring upon a person; both men were accused of heresy because of their Origenist teachings. There are many indications that Cassian carefully constructed his texts to avoid controversy, such as modifying the Origenist vocabulary he would have certainly learned from his mentor, Evagrius. One can imagine that Cassian was relieved to have finished the *Conlationes* so that he could remove himself from the line of fire. Unlike other authors of the time – one thinks of Jerome or Augustine – Cassian did not become embroiled in controversy, nor did he choose to answer allegations made against him, such as those by Prosper. When he did write again, he did so only at the command of the future Leo I, already a powerful figure in Rome, and again he used the same metaphor about emerging from the harbour of silence. [42] Cassian knew the perils of

[40] *Conl.* 1 *Prae*. 3; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 75.
[41] *Conl.* 24.26.19; ed. Pichéry, 3, p. 206.
[42] Cassian, *De incarnatione*, Prae. 1; ed. Petschenig, p. 235.

being in the public eye, and he did not seek it out often. Richard Goodrich sees this metaphor as merely literary convention,[43] but he does not take into account the significance of silence in Cassian's theology, more of which will be discussed below.

Cassian wrote with the purpose of reforming the monasteries of Gaul by bringing to bear the weight of ancient monastic tradition of the Egyptian desert. Cassian was appalled by the state of monasticism in Gaul. The fledgling movement was highly variable, and Cassian perceived the lack of a standardised way of life with horror.[44] For him, the ancient traditions of the Egyptian monks provided the best model, and, as someone who had first-hand experience with them, he was the one to bring this eastern light to the west. The authority with which he wrote, he claimed, was not his own, but rather he was merely reporting the methods of authoritative abbas of Egypt. He promised to relate the traditions faithfully, as far as his memory would serve him,[45] only tempering Egyptian austerity with the traditions of the less rigorous Mesopotamian and Palestinian monasteries when he considered the Egyptian way too severe for the Gallic monks.[46] Though claiming the position of reporter, he was not writing a history, and despite his use of Egyptian abbas, his works nevertheless form a cohesive monastic theology.[47]

When Cassian wrote, he intended for his audience male ascetics across a range of institutional contexts. He dedicates the *Institutiones* to Bishop Castor of Apt, who

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[43] Goodrich, 'Underpinning the Text: Self-Justification in John Cassian's Ascetic Prefaces', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 13 (2005), pp. 433-5. Goodrich, while noting how Cassian shifts responsibility for *De incarnatione* onto Leo from himself, misses the fact that Cassian felt himself to be on much more dangerous ground in tackling a theological controversy for an international audience.
[44] *Inst. Prae*. 8; ed. Guy, p. 30. See *Conl*. 18.7-8 (ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 18-22) for Cassian's commentary on monks who make up their own rules.
[45] *Inst. Prae*. 4; ed. Guy, p. 24.
[46] *Inst. Prae*. 9; ed. Guy, pp. 30-1.
[47] For Cassian as a reporter, see Vessey, 'Christian Writing', pp. 226-7.

commissioned the work in order to help him organise a monastery of male ascetics. This is fitting, as the *Institutiones* concerns the cenobitic life. Part One of the *Conlationes* he dedicates to Bishop Leontius, Castor's brother – Castor now being dead – and the anchorite Helladius.[48] Castor had commissioned the *Conlationes* as well, and this fact demonstrates that the view of the eremitic life as the end goal of the cenobitic life was commonly held – Leontius, Cassian tells us, now stands in for Castor. Part Two he dedicates to Honoratus, then abbot of Lérins, and Eucherius, an anchorite associated with the same abbey. Honoratus had originally settled at Lérins in order to live a solitary life, but had founded a monastery for the numerous disciples who had followed him there. Thus, Cassian again chooses two proponents of the eremitic life to formally receive his work. Finally, Part Three he dedicates to four male ascetics: Jovinianus, Minervius, Leontius (a different one from above), and Theodore. The four prefaces allow us to date the publication of the *Institutiones* and the three parts of the *Conlationes* fairly precisely. As the first mention of Bishop Castor is in 419 and he died in 426, the *Institutiones* was written sometime between those two dates.[49] By the time of the writing of Part One of the *Conlationes*, Castor was dead. Part Two, however, styles Honoratus as *frater*, which means that, at the time of publication, he had not yet become bishop of Arles, an event which occurred in the same year as Castor's death. Thus, both Part One and Part Two of the *Conlationes* were published in 426 and very close together, another indication that the three parts of the *Conlationes* were conceived of as whole. There would have been very little time for Cassian to receive feedback requesting further information from his readers before conceiving of Part Two, writing it, and publishing it. Part Three can be dated before 428 at the latest, as Cassian speaks

[48] Leontius's see is unknown, but it may have been Fréjus. See Chadwick, p. 38. Helladius is elevated to the bishopric of an unknown see, making him another example of the numerous ascetics which became bishops in the late antique and early middle ages. See *Conl*. 1 Prae. 2; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 74.
[49] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 16, n. 134.

of Honoratus, who died in this year, as though he was still living. Thus, the two works were complete by 428.

Whilst Cassian dedicates his works to men for use by male ascetics, there is another aspect of his work which demonstrates the male audience he had in mind. A topic which recurs several times throughout both works is that of sexual purity. Though many of the early Fathers wrote concerning female virginity, Cassian does not address women at all. In fact, most of his discussion on sexual purity is about a decidedly male concern: nocturnal emission. This involuntary event will occur infrequently in the man who has successfully combatted the vice of fornication. It is therefore a physical proof of the state of a monk's heart. The amount of space Cassian gives this topic is indicative of the male audience he had in mind as the recipients of his works.

Cassian's writings do have a male focus, but even though he does not address issues pertaining to women specifically, it is clear that his works were read by women and had a profound influence on them, as the rest of this thesis will demonstrate. In fact, women likely read his works as soon as he wrote them; as we shall see below, Cassian did found a convent, and the nuns were likely some of his first readers. Though much of his discussion of continence revolves around the question of how to limit nocturnal emission, the methodology which underlies it is the same as the broader methodology which underlies his entire programme: the control of the mind. This methodology was therefore as relevant to female ascetics as it was to male. That later monastic writers recognised this will be demonstrated in later chapters.

A survey of the manuscript transmission is important to help demonstrate Cassian's impact in the early medieval world. Innumerable are the works which quote or refer to Cassian. For instance, Gregory the Great's *Moralia*, a very popular work in the Middle Ages, contains ideas from Cassian's writings.[50] Also, monastic rules written after Cassian borrow heavily from him.[51] This includes everything from the *Rule of the Four Fathers* to the *Rule of Benedict*. Further, as we shall see in Chapter 3, Caesarius of Arles, who in 529 at the Council of Orange defended his orthodoxy successfully by showing himself to be a proponent of Augustine, frequently made use of Cassian in his sermons.[52] What ensured Cassian's abiding influence, however, was Benedict's recommendation in his *Rule*. As a result, generations of monastics have reverently read Cassian's works, right up to today. This is not the same, however, as a historical study of his influence.

Besides influencing other works, a study of the manuscript transmission of Cassian's books reveals that they were copied and read over a wide geographic area. There are at least thirty-three extant manuscripts prior to 1100 which include all or portions of the *Institutiones*.[53] It was common for the *Institutiones* to be copied as a whole, alone, or with other works. Occasionally, only the first four books were copied. Often, excerpted sections were included in larger collections of monastic rules along with rules for both male and female monastic communities.[54] This fact shows Cassian's continuing and varied impact on the Christian world, both in male and female contexts.

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[50] Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 163-4.
[51] For instance, see Adalbert de Vogüé, *De Saint Pachôme à Jean Cassien* (Rome, 1996), pp. 339-43; or Adalbert de Vogüé, *Les Règles des Saints Pères* (Paris, 1982), pp. 142-44.
[52] Leyser, 'Semi-Pelagianism', p. 765. The Bishop of Vienne implied at the Council of Valence (c. 528) that Caesarius held less-than-orthodox views on grace and free will.
[53] This number does not include some fragments. The existence of numerous fragments again points to the extensive nature of his influence.
[54] That women also read the *Institutiones* is evidenced by its inclusion alongside rules for virgins in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 28118 and El Escorial a.I.13.

It is not always easy to determine a manuscript's origins, but the information we do have concerning some of the manuscripts of the *Institutiones* indicates the wide geographic area of his readership. For instance, manuscripts are extant from Italy,[55] northern France,[56] central France,[57] southern France,[58] Switzerland,[59]Germany,[60] and Ireland.[61] The *Institutiones*, therefore, were read and copied over the whole of western Europe.

Though some of Cassian's theology presented in *Conlatio* XIII was contentious, it certainly did not prevent the copying and distribution of the *Conlationes*, either; the early Middle Ages (pre-1100) have left us at least twenty-seven manuscripts which contain all or part of the *Collationes*. The three parts of the *Conlationes* almost exclusively travelled separately prior to 800.[62] After that time, they were sometimes compiled into one book, or two parts were copied together, and we begin to find them alongside works by different authors. We continue, however, to find Cassian's works travelling on their own, indicating that he was considered important enough to warrant whole codices being dedicated to him.

[55] Montecassino, Archivio e Biblioteca dell'Abbazia 295; Turin, Bibliotheca Nazionale F. IV. 1 Fasc. 16.
[56] Paris BN lat. 12634. It was at Corbie by the twelfth century at the latest; this manuscript is listed in a twelfth-century catalogue for Corbie.
[57] Paris, BN lat. 2157. Origin based on the presence of a record of donation for the Abbey of Saint-Martial de Limoges, added in the eleventh century. The manuscript was at Limoges, then, at least by the eleventh century.
[58] Autun, Bibliothèque Municipale 28 (24).
[59] Sarnen, Bibliothek des Kollegiums Fragm. 1.6 (from a Rhaetian centre. The exact area is unknown, but the palaeography suggests somewhere in the area of Switzerland or southern Germany); St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 183 (Alemmanic miniscule).
[60] Bamberg, Stiftsbibliothek lit. 143 (B.VI.15). Provenance assumed on the basis of the inclusion of charters for the monastery of Michelsberg.
[61] Paris, BN lat. 12292.
[62] The only exception is Paris BN lat. 12634 which contains just two chapters from *Conlatio 13* as part of the so-called *Regula Eugippi*.

A study of the manuscripts can also hint at the extent of his readership. There are surviving manuscripts from northern France,[63] eastern France,[64] eastern Germany,[65] southern Bavaria,[66] and England.[67] There also exists a fragment written in the area of Switzerland.[68] Like the *Institutiones*, we also find excerpts of the *Collationes* in a book meant for female religious.[69] So the *Collationes* were also copied and read widely throughout western Europe.

Despite the popularity of his works, John Cassian himself is an elusive figure. He provides us with very little autobiographical information. He tells us that he and his older friend Germanus were monks in a monastery in Bethlehem before they toured Egypt, returning briefly before a second tour.[70] He had a sister, but we know nothing about her except that Cassian was unable to avoid her.[71] We know his first name was John because he refers to himself as such twice.[72] The name 'Cassian' comes from titles of early manuscripts and is not in the works themselves. In *De incarnatione*, he tells us that he was mentored and ordained a deacon by John Chrysostom.[73]

We can glean a few more fragments of knowledge concerning his life from other sources. Palladius's *Dialogue* and a letter from Pope Innocent I both mention Cassian

[63] St. Petersburg, Russian National Library O.v.I 4 (likely from Corbie); and Paris BN lat. 12634.
[64] Colmar, Archives Départementales du Haut-Rhin Ms 49 (82). Likely from Murbach, today in France near the borders of Germany and Switzerland.
[65] Munich, Bayerische Staatbibliothek Clm 4549. Benediktbeuern or nearby monastery.
[66] Munich, Bayerische Staatbibliothek Clm 6343. Likely at Freising.
[67] Cambridge, St. John's College 101 (D.26).
[68] Donaueschingen, Hofbibliothek Frag.B. III.13 (925). From a Rhaetian centre, likely a companion to Sarnen, Bibliothek des Kollegiums, Fragm. 1.6.
[69] Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 140.
[70] *Inst.* 3.4.1; ed. Guy, p. 102.
[71] *Inst.* 11.18; ed. Guy, p. 444. Some scholars speculate that it was for her that Cassian founded a monastery for women; see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 16.
[72] *Inst.* 5.35; ed. Guy, p. 246. *Conl.* 14.9.4; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 193.
[73] Cassian, *De incarnatione*, 7.31; ed. Petschenig, p. 389.

and Germanus as envoys on behalf of John Chrysostom to Rome.[74] Palladius designates Cassian a deacon and Germanus a priest. They arrived in Rome in 404.[75] The only dateable event in the *Conlationes* is a letter concerning the Anthropomorphite heresy which arrived at the desert cenobia Cassian and Germanus were visiting, dated to 399.[76] As the Origenist controversy kicked off in the same year, Cassian and Germanus went into exile at Constantinople with other Origenist monks around this time. John Chrysostom welcomed them, and, as part of his clergy, they became trusted enough to be sent to plead with Rome when John was deposed in 403. The next fact we can be sure of is his arrival in Gaul sometime before 426, the *terminus ante quem* date for the composition of the *Institutiones*.

There is one more source, however, from which historians draw most of their information concerning Cassian. Gennadius of Marseilles penned an entry on Cassian in his continuation of Jerome's *De viris inlustribus*.[77] Gennadius wrote toward the end of the fifth century, and was a priest of Marseille, and almost certainly a monk.[78] The *De viris inlustribus* is essentially a list of all the Christian authors Gennadius had read and the books they had written, including Gennadius's own critiques and a small amount of biographical information. Scholars have generally not taken an interest in Gennadius, except to mine *De viris inlustribus* for information about other figures. Consequently, his reliability has not been firmly established, leading scholars to cast doubt upon the facts he provides about Cassian. Gennadius tells us that Cassian was

> Scythian by race, ordained deacon by bishop John the Great, at Constantinople, and a presbyter [*apud*] Marseilles, founded two monasteries, that is to say one

[74] Palladius, *Dialogue*, 1, p. 76; Innocent I, *Epistola* 7, col. 501B.
[75] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 14.
[76] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 12.
[77] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*.
[78] Gennadius, 101; ed. Richardson, p. 97. He describes himself as *presbyter*, his official rank within the church, however, his preoccupation with monastic sources means he was likely a monk.

> for men and one for women, which are still standing. He wrote from experience, and in forcible language, or to speak more clearly, with meaning back of his words, and action back of his talk.[79]

Then, unusually, he lists out the names of nearly all the books in the *Institutiones* and *Conlationes*. After mentioning the *De incarnatione*, he writes that Cassian 'made an end, both to living and writing, [*apud*] Marseilles, in the reign of Theodosius and Valentinianus.'

Every fact which Gennadius presents about Cassian has been challenged by scholars.[80] Scholars doubt his Scythian origins,[81] debate his place of ordination,[82] and argue about the length of time he spent in Constantinople.[83] Recently, Goodrich has even argued Cassian never lived in Marseille at all, or possibly moved there after he had finished writing.[84] Unfortunately, Gennadius himself is understudied, and so his reliability has not yet been established.[85] As he is the sole source of biographical information for figures besides Cassian as well, his reliability is of the utmost importance and we can hope that scholars will make him the subject of a dedicated study in the future.

Until then, we can discover in Gennadius a few more morsels concerning Cassian to whet our appetite. Scholars have remarked upon Gennadius's 'semi-Pelagian' leanings, a no-small strike against him being the fact that he distinctly favours Cassian against

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[79] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 62; ed. Richardson, p. 82; tr. Richardson, p. 1029.
[80] For example, see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 4-6, 13; Marrou, pp. 588–96; and Frank, pp. 418–33.
[81] See note 11.
[82] See Chadwick, p. 32, and Frank, pp. 419-20.
[83] This is part of the debate over his possible trip to Antioch. See note 14.
[84] Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, pp. 211-34.
[85] Two scholars have done some work on Gennadius. See Salvatore Pricoco, 'Storia Ecclesiastica e Storia Letteraria: Il *De viris inlustribus* di Gennadio di Marsiglia', in Università di Messina: Centro di Studi Umanistici (ed), *La Storiografia Ecclesiastica nella Tarda Antichità: Atti del Convegno Tenuto in Erice* (Messina, 1980), pp. 241-73; also, Vessey, pp. xvii-xxv.

Prosper.[86] In his entry on Prosper, Gennadius tells us that he regards 'as his also an anonymous book against certain works of Cassianus, which the church of God finds salutary, but which he brands as injurious, and in fact, some of the opinions of Cassian and Prosper on the grace of God and on free will are at variance with one another.'[87] This statement is considered damning evidence, proving Gennadius's semi-Pelagian status.[88] As some scholars are now pointing out, Gennadius here provides confirmation that a good portion of the church, at least in Gaul, believed as Cassian did concerning grace.[89] Gennadius so admires Cassian that he devotes more space to him than to almost any other author.[90] He also gives him the title *sanctus*, an uncommon honour in Gennadius. He does not give the title to everyone whom history remembers as saints, but instead reserves it only for men who were long dead and who had long been recognised as saints at the time of his writing (Stephen, Cyprian, and Ephraim),[91] and for a few more recently deceased men who had lived in Gaul. Specifically, he refers to Martin of Tours and Paulinus of Nola as saints,[92] but also three men associated with Marseille. Besides, Cassian, he gives the designation to two recent bishops of the city, Venerius (ca. 431-51) and Eustathius (fl. 463). The entry in which the two bishops are

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[86] Again, we see how Cassian's negative reputation in relation to his theology in *Conl.* 13 influences scholarship.
[87] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 85; ed. Richardson, p. 90; tr. Richardson, p. 1052.
[88] Another argument for Gennadius's 'semi-Pelagianism' is what is sometimes perceived as a derogatory remark in Augustine's entry: he 'wrote works so many that they cannot all be gathered. For who is there that can boast himself of having all his works, or who reads with such diligence as to read all he has written?' It is not necessary, however, to read this as sarcasm, and the rest of the entry is certainly complimentary. Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 39; ed. Richardson, p. 75; tr. Richardson, p. 1006.
[89] For instance, see Markus, 'Legacy of Pelagius', pp. 221-2 and Leyser, 'Semi-Pelagianism', p. 765.
[90] The other authors are Pomerius and James of Nisibis. James's entry is Gennadius's first, and Gennadius spends part of it speculating as to why Jerome left him out of his work. If we disregard these comments, the space he devotes to James is about the same as he does to Cassian.
[91] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 47, 43, and 75, respectively; ed. Richardson, pp. 78, 77, and 87. The first two were martyrs, a requirement for early sainthood. None of the three receive an entry because they lived before the time period Gennadius covers. Jerome, however, gives entries to both Cyrian and Ephrem; Stephen, the first martyr, did not leave any writings.
[92] He mentions them in Sulpicius's entry (see Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 19; ed. Richardson, p. 69). Martin did not leave any writings, but Paulinus did, and Gennadius gives him his own entry (see Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 49; ed. Richardson, pp. 78-9).

mentioned belongs to Musaeus, a liturgist of the church in Marseille.[93] The passage demonstrates Gennadius's close connection with the church in Marseille; he mentions how Musaeus's work lessened the anxiety of the church's readers. The fact that Gennadius gives the title of saint to these two men may suggest that he is using the title in line with the liturgy in place in Marseille as the time, and that there may have existed cults for them which have been lost to time. Likewise, his designation of the same title to Cassian, whom Gennadius maintained lived and died in Marseille, may suggest that Cassian had a cult there as well in Gennadius's time, though also invisible to the eyes of history.

These tantalisingly few facts are all that is known about John Cassian's life. Perhaps this dearth is the reason why the remembrance of his person is indistinct in the early Middle Ages. Despite how highly thought of or how widely disseminated his works were, there is little evidence of a cult relating to Cassian until the eleventh century, even in Marseille. At this time, the Abbey of St. Victor in Marseille claimed him as his founder and began celebrating his feast day on 23 July. Despite the many scholars who take this claim as fact,[94] Simon Loseby has pointed out that there is a lack of archeological evidence for a monastery at St. Victor's in the fifth century. [95] The earliest evidence for a monastery on that location is from the eighth century, whilst the earliest documentary evidence linking Cassian to the monastery comes from the eleventh. In Cassian's time, there was a church of St. Victor on the site, but no monastic activity. The longevity of the two monasteries Cassian founded is unknown. Gennadius tells us

[93] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 80; ed. Richardson, pp. 88-9.
[94] For example, see Stephen Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture* (New York, 2002), p. 46.
[95] Simon Loseby, 'Marseille in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1993), p. 160.

they were still functioning in his time, at the end of the fifth century. We know there was at least one other (male) ascetic community in Marseille at the time of Cassian.[96] After that time, the evidence is less secure. Caesarius, in the sixth century, sends his sister Caesaria for a time to a monastery in Marseille, and, though the monastery is not named, many scholars assume this to be Cassian's.[97] Gregory I wrote a letter to the abbess of a '*monasterio quod in honorem sancti Cassiani est consecratum*' in 596;[98] the meaning of this is unknown, and may or may not refer to the female monastery Cassian had founded. Thus, as it stands, we do not know anything for certain about Cassian's monasteries except that they were *apud* Marseille.[99]

Cassian's Programme

Cassian's programme was greatly dependent on immersing the monastic's mind in the Word of God. Reading, an activity that we generally today do in silence, was not a silent activity in the late antique world. Even when alone, a person read aloud to him- or herself.[100] Thus, reading was a speech activity for early monastics, and the person who was speaking when the scriptures were read out was God Himself. It was God's voice

[96] Proculus, bishop of Marseille, had a monastery in his household. Proculus's renown as an ascetic had reached as far as Jerome, who recommended his monastery in a letter to Rufinus. Whether or not his successors continued the monastery is not known. Jerome, *Epistula* 125, ed. Isidorus Hilberg, in *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistolae*, *CSEL* 56 (Vindobonae, 1918), p. 20. Also see, Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 16.

[97] For example, see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 16; and Chong-Kyung Lee, 'To Pursue a Life of Perfection: Distinctive Forms of Female Monastic Life in the Early Middle Ages', (PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1997), p. 96.

[98] Gregory I, *Epistola* 12, in *Registri Epistolarum*, *PL* 77 (Paris, 1849), col. 866A.

[99] The word *apud* has puzzled some scholars, most recently Goodrich, particularly because Gennadius uses it twice ('…*apud Massiliam presbyter…*' and '*…in his scribendi apud Massiliam et vivendi finem fecit*'). *Apud* can mean 'at', 'by', or 'near', and Goodrich uses the ambiguity of the word to argue that Cassian lived elsewhere (Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, p. 227-8). A study of Gennadius's use of the word, however, reveals that it is most likely that he simply means 'at'. When we take into consideration that Cassian's favoured model for monasticism is the *cenobium* of the desert, we could also consider the possibility that Cassian founded his monasteries *outside* Marseille, rather than in it. This would make Gennadius's repeated use of the word *apud* reasonable, and, as we shall see, would fit better with Cassian's programme.

[100] Leclerq, *Love of Learning*, p. 15.

which Cassian and the ascetics wished to hear, but reading the scriptures aloud was not enough to hear what the Author wanted to communicate. The depth of meaning inherent in the bible was too great. Cassian laid out four levels of biblical interpretation: historical, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical.[101] Historical is the literal meaning of the text; tropology applies the text to the life of the reader; allegory relates it to Christ; and anagogy relates it to invisible, heavenly realities. The various levels of meaning will not, however, be apparent to just any reader. Cassian contended that only the perfect were able to understand the scriptures properly and fully. The sin of the not-yet-perfect gets in the way of understanding. In order to hear God rightly, sin must be removed from the equation.

Thus, reading was simultaneously both speaking and listening. In order to hear God's voice, the monk must read the scriptures, listening to his own voice standing in for God's. Prayer was the way to respond, to talk back to God. The prayer of the perfect – *theoria* in Cassian's scheme – encompasses meditation upon the scriptures -- a kind of steady replaying of God's voice. Revelation as to the meaning of all the words the monastic had heard God speak will occur, and the monk will be drawn closer and closer to God through the progressive revelation. The pinnacle of prayer, however, is wordless, a celestial joining of the monk to the heart of God. For this reason, Cassian devised a programme which, if followed precisely, anyone could use to achieve the heights of prayer.

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[101] *Conl.* 14.8; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 189-92. Cassian first divides knowledge into two parts, the practical (historical) and the theoretical. This distinction can be found as far back as Aristotle, but certainly in Cassian's mentor Evagrius. The split of the theoretical into three parts is original to him (Ramsey, *Conferences*, p. 500). Augustine and Ambrose both have four levels of interpretation, but they differ from Cassian's. For a deeper treatment, see Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, tr. Mark Sebanc (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1998), 1, pp. 134-7.

In the first book of the *Conlationes,* Abba Moses defines what he calls the end, or *telos,* of the ascetic life.[102] The end is the Kingdom of Heaven, variously referred to throughout the work as seeing God, unity with God, and a state of constant prayer. In order for a monk to achieve his end, Moses tells us, he must keep his eyes on a more immediate goal, or *scopos,* which he defines as purity of heart. Cassian's purity of heart is redolent of Evagrius's *apatheia,*[103] which, as we have seen, was itself an outgrowth of ancient classical philosophy. This state also goes by several names in the *Conlationes*, such as perfection (*perfectio*), love (*caritas*), chastity (*castimonia, pudicitia, continentia*), and holiness (*sanctitas*). He explains the difference between *telos* and *scopos* with the analogy of a farmer.[104] The farmer's *telos* is a good crop at the end of the season. In order to achieve this, he must plough his field thoroughly, which is his *scopos*. The ploughing of the field, then, full of its many difficulties – weather, briers, weeds, clumps – is analogous to the ascetic life, full of the hardships of poverty, hunger, humility. Just as the farmer knows what he must do to achieve his *telos,* so there is a method which must be followed for the ascetic to achieve his own *telos*. This is the heart of Cassian's works: the idea that the Kingdom of Heaven can be achieved by following a specific programme.

A farmer may work diligently, however, and still not bring in a good crop, because some things are outside of his control. The weather, blight, insects – all these can ruin a crop in spite of all the farmer's hard work. Therefore, God's blessing is necessary for the farmer to achieve his end. The same is true for the ascetic. The monk must pray for God's help in everything, for without it, all his work will come to nought.

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[102] *Conl.* 1.4; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 81.
[103] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 28.
[104] *Conl.* 1.2; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 79-80.

Thus, Cassian's programme consists of two parts, as his *scopos* and *telos* are best explained as successive goals. The first part aims at achieving purity of heart, which Cassian understands as freedom from the eight cardinal vices. Once an ascetic achieves this, he is considered 'perfect'. This part of the programme Cassian calls the *praktike*. His list of eight vices originates in Evagrius Pontus's eight deadly thoughts (*logismoi*), though Cassian deals with them differently.[105] In the *Institutiones*, Cassian handles each vice in its own book in a methodical manner. Each vice must be conquered successively, beginning with gluttony. Once a vice is conquered, the next vice is easier to deal with. So, the monk moves through the list of vices: gluttony, fornication, avarice (understood strictly as a love of money), anger, sadness, acedia (weariness of heart), vainglory, and pride. The vices are arranged in pairs, as they were apt to aggravate each other. Vainglory and pride are set apart because they tend to make their presence felt once the other sins have been vanquished. Thus, Cassian's programme allows a monk who hopes to achieve perfection to follow a systematic plan which, Cassian says, generations of desert ascetics had tried, tested, and followed.

Cassian prescribes several means to help the ascetic achieve purity of heart. Though some of these means are external actions the ascetic performs, such as vigils, fasting, and manual labour, Cassian does not care much about externals. His overwhelming concern is for the control of the mind, which is how Cassian intends to rout out all the vices. To this end, however, he recognises that the body has a profound impact upon the mind, and so his programme encompasses the body as well. The external acts of

[105] See Evagrius, *Praktikos*, 6-14; ed. Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, *SC* 171 (Paris, 1971), pp. 506-34.

asceticism he recommends are intended to help the monk to discipline his mind. For instance, he advocates for total poverty and all things held in common. In a passage of pronounced psychological insight, he describes the development of sinful thoughts in a monk who secretly holds onto money.[106] The monk moves through various other sins, and is never able to fully embrace the monastic life, always aware that he has a way out should he desire. Eventually, Cassian contends, he will take it, to his own destruction.

The mind requires constant vigilance because it never remains still. It is always being bombarded with thoughts, which may or may not be conducive to the monastic's end. As stated in Chapter 1, according to Evagrius and the Desert Fathers and Mothers, thoughts (*logismoi*) could come from one of three places: God, the person himself, or the devil, though, for them, *logismoi* most often came from demons, so much so that the word *logismoi* was practically synonymous with demons. Cassian, whilst maintaining the three possible origins for thoughts, is not inclined to categorise most thoughts as demonic. He does, however, require that each and every thought be properly discerned as to its origins. Thoughts from all three authors will come, Cassian says, and the mind will dwell on something.[107] He uses the analogy of the mind as a millstone.[108] The millstone cannot stop grinding, as the water relentlessly powers it regardless. Our role, then, is to ensure that it has good grain to grind. Dwelling upon evil thoughts, or even 'silly conversations' is like giving the millstone weeds to grind. In Cassian's scheme, thoughts do not become sinful unless they are dwelt upon – given to the millstone to grind.

[106] *Inst.* 7.7-10; ed. Guy, pp. 298-306.
[107] *Conl*. 1.19; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 99-101.
[108] *Conl*. 1.18.1; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 99.

How, then, can a monk give the millstone of his mind good grain to grind? A monk must focus his mind upon the scriptures through reading, memorising, and meditating upon what he has memorised. This is the heart of Cassian's method. In this he differed substantively from most of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, who emphasised meditation upon sayings rather than scripture. Cassian, on the other hand, does not hesitate to say that a monk should eventually memorise the whole bible.[109] Because the bible is the Word of God, and therefore God's voice speaking, in thinking about the scriptures he is really tuning his ears to hear God's voice instead of his own or the devil's. By 'grinding' the Word of God, he crowds out the 'weeds' of other thoughts. Understanding the scriptures at this point does not matter much, Cassian says; that will come in time. As the millstone of the mind grinds a passage of scripture, meaning is progressively revealed. The full meaning of scripture, however, is reserved for the perfect.

Once a person has achieved purity of heart through *praktike*, he is ready for the second part of Cassian's programme. This part is aimed at 'seeing God', by which Cassian means constant meditation upon God, or *theoria*. Thus, there is a shift from hearing God's word to seeing God Himself. Listening, however, is still key. The sins which previously hampered the ascetic from hearing God's voice properly have now been cast aside. Now, the ascetic's main obstacle is learning to focus completely upon God without distraction. Cassian admits that no one is able to keep his mind permanently upon God because there are too many distractions in this world.[110] It is, however, possible to come close to achieving this and it is certainly the aim of every monk.

[109] *Conl.* 14.10; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 196.
[110] *Conl*. 1.13.1; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 90.

Ever practical, Cassian provides the monastic with a method for cultivating unceasing prayer. The first verse of Psalm 70 – 'O God, incline unto my aid; O Lord, make haste to help me' – should be repeated over and over.[111] The monk, having rid his mind of all the vices, ought to cling to this verse as an anchor. Distraction was the foremost enemy of the monk practicing *theoria*, and this method was a focusing technique designed to direct the mind back to its intention – the contemplation of God. Cassian's programme depended upon the monk being able to have complete and continuous control over his own mind, and the technique he learned to help him overcome the vices is now the one he must employ in order to practice *theoria*, that is, perfect communion with God. Reading and meditating upon the scriptures continues to be the main strategy for the monk, continually bringing his mind back to God from every distraction. The pinnacle of prayer is imageless and wordless. The monk moves beyond the scriptures as he joins with God in perfect communion. There is some question as to whether a person can remain completely and continually focussed on God alone. In the first book of the *Conlationes*, Abba Moses says that it is impossible: there will always be bodily needs, visitors, and other distractions; living alone has the potential to compound these distractions as the monk must take care of everything himself.[112] This perfect communion remains, however, the goal of the monk, though it will not be realised. Cassian often describes this state of focused attention as *cordis intentio* or *mentis intentio*, and uses this or variations of these phrase throughout his work.[113] Cassian conflates *cors* and *mens* in several places; for instance, in *Conlatio* I.7, he begins by

[111] *Conl*. 10.10.2 ff; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 85ff.
[112] *Conl*. 1.13.1; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 90.
[113] For instance, see *Conl*. 1.4, 4.4.2, 7.3.4, 9.7.4, 12.8.5, and 23.11.3 (ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 80; 1, p. 169; 1, p. 247; 2, p. 48; 2, p. 135; and 3, p. 154) amongst others. He also uses the phrase '*intenta mente*', *Conl*. 9.35.2; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 71.

discussing the goal of *puritatem cordis* but ends having switched the term to *mentis…puritatem*.[114] For him, then, *cors* and *mens* were synonymous.[115] His use of the terms An intent mind is one which focuses completely on God and is therefore able to ascend to the place of unceasing prayer. As we shall see in the next chapter, this phrase was to become a fundamental part of Radegund's identity.

Cassian also describes a form of prayer which goes beyond *theoria*. It is this prayer which is the subject of the rapturous quotation at the beginning of this chapter. Cassian often refers to it using fire and light imagery.[116] This type of prayer is the ultimate experience for a monk. In the tenth book of the *Conlationes,* Cassian describes it in exalted and mystical terms. It is union with God, beyond speech. It is wordless, and, in the silence, God's perfect love pervades the whole mind of the monk so that it overwhelms his mind and is reflected perfectly back to God. This, then, is the *telos* of the ascetic life. This fiery prayer cannot be sustained; instead, it is a foretaste of heaven. Beginners may experience it briefly, but this is rare; it belongs to the realm of the perfect ascetic who has set out into the silence and solitude of the desert. Beginners must begin at the beginning, so let us now take a closer look at Cassian's programme as it pertains to disciples – those seeking perfection.

Right Speech

When a person wishes to begin following Cassian's programme with the end goal of seeing God, he must at first rely completely on the discretion of the elders in all things. He has not yet developed his own discretion (*discretio*), so therefore it would be

[114] *Conl*. 1.7; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 85.
[115] Also see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk,* p. 46.
[116] On Cassian's 'fiery prayer', see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk,* pp. 117-8, 120-3.

dangerous for him to rely upon his own judgment (*iudicium*). Confession is important. He must confess every thought – not merely those he might consider to be sinful or shameful – to an elder; it is only the elders (abbas) who can discern if thoughts are good or evil.[117] In this, Cassian followed the traditions of the Desert Fathers and Mothers who practiced this form of confessional speech, as we saw in the last chapter. No thought was to remain hidden. The monk must trust to the discretion of the elders, steeped in the tradition of those Desert Fathers and Mothers who came before them, to properly assess his thoughts and decide from whence they came, following the *logismoi* tradition. As an example of the difficulty which a monk may encounter, Cassian describes the seemingly good ideas which the devil might put into his mind:

> He also persuades us to give ourselves to acts of meditation and to pious visitations, by which he would pry us away from the spiritual ramparts of the monastery and from our retreat of cherished calm, even suggesting that we worry and be concerned about nuns and destitute women, by snares of this sort inextricably entangling the entrapped monk with baleful preoccupations.[118]

Ideas which would seem full of virtue are actually deadly for the distraction they would cause the monk. The elders' discretion, then, is protection for the new monk, who is not yet spiritually mature enough to discern the origin of thoughts for himself. It is the monk's responsibility to speak frankly; to do otherwise is to risk hindering his own progress.

This type of confessional speech, though done in a frank manner, differs markedly from the frank speech of the ancient philosophers. Whilst they could speak frankly because their freedom from political or worldly attachments allowed it, it was the very fact that the character of Cassian's disciples was too worldly that allowed them to speak in such

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[117] *Inst.* 4.9; ed. Guy, p. 132. Age, however, did not necessarily bring wisdom. Cf. *Conl*. 2.13; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 125-30.
[118] *Conl.* 1.20.5; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 103; tr. Ramsey, p. 60.

a manner. In other words, the better or 'more perfect' character of the ancient philosophers gave them the right to speak freely, but it was the deficiency in the character of Cassian's disciples which necessitated their freedom of speech. Thus, for Cassian, this type of speech does not require holiness, but rather creates it. It is through speaking their every thought without consideration for embarrassment or shame that the disciple learns how to focus his mind on God and learns discretion himself. It was a powerful tool for the creation of holiness.

Despite asserting this rather awkwardly exhaustive regimen, Cassian does not stress confession. The picture he presents is not one of continual confession, with abbas counselling a steady stream of disciples throughout the day. For the disciple, speech is acceptable, and even desirable, if it is confession, but though he expounds upon the importance of confession, it takes a back seat to silence. Instead, confession seems to have taken place during the *conlationes*, the spiritual conferences during which the abbas would discourse on various topics. The disciples would have the opportunity to speak freely, asking questions or sharing their thoughts. These *conlationes* could happen at regular intervals – Evagrius held them every weekend – or they could happen irregularly, such as when Cassian and Germanus visited an abba. By framing the *Conlationes* as a series of these conferences with Germanus voicing questions throughout, Cassian gives his readers a model for what these conferences should look like. Indeed, the characters of Germanus and Cassian provide models for the ideal disciples.[119] They spend most of their time listening in silence, with Cassian only speaking once. When Germanus does speak, he does so openly, not hiding his own

[119] Ramsey, *Conferences*, p. 13. Ramsey notes that there is a 'certain pallid characterization' of Cassian and Germanus – the price they must pay for serving as models in the ideal disciple-master relationship.

struggles.[120] Thus, whilst an important part of Cassian's programme, the outworking of the practice was infrequent or even sporadic compared with the ideal which he presents. In Chapter 4, we shall see how Columbanus and his followers take this practice and formalise it, thereby bringing it closer to the ideal of constant confession which logically follows from Cassian's programme.

Silence and the *Cenobium*

Outside of the frank confession of the conferences, silence was the preferred state for the disciple at all times. Silence, however, did not mean solitude. A monk who has not yet reached perfection should remain in the *cenobium*. Solitude, for him, is unhelpful. He requires others around him to aid him in the expunging of his vices. Not only is solitude unhelpful for the disciple, it is dangerous. Solitude allows vices to lie hidden. If a person who is not pure lives in solitude away from other people, he will think he has eradicated the sin of anger, for instance, simply because there is no one to make him angry. This will cause trouble later.[121] A monk who wants to go into the desert to seek contemplation before he is perfect is merely, in Cassian's opinion, unwilling to work on his own vices.[122]

The only exception Cassian makes is when a monk is dealing with the vice of fornication. This particular vice, he says, is better worked on away from others.[123]

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[120] See, for instance, his dismay at the thought of ever reaching perfect chastity, *Conl*. 12.14; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 143-4.
[121] *Inst.* 8.18-19; ed. Guy, pp. 358-62.
[122] *Inst.* 8.16; ed. Guy, pp. 356-8.
[123] *Inst.* 6.3; ed. Guy, pp. 264-6. Terrence Kardong points out that Cassian does not emphasise the necessity of solitude at this point. See Terrence Kardong, 'John Cassian's Teaching on Perfect Chastity', *American Benedictine Review*, 30 (1979), p. 10. Because the *Institutes* describes the life of the monk in the *cenobium*, this advice would not make sense without realising that Cassian envisions a life of spiritual ebbs and flows, with the same vices, especially fornication, coming back to torment the monk even after he has left the *cenobium* for the desert.

Cassian's teaching on how a monk should rid himself of this particular vice is variable and sometimes even contradictory, thereby highlighting the difficulty it posed for the monks. Despite the difficult nature of the struggle, Cassian's standards for purity were high. In the twelfth *conlatio,* Abba Chaeremon outlines seven levels of chastity, from not submitting to carnal acts in the day, all the way to not even experiencing nocturnal emission.[124] Though he lists fornication as the second vice which a monk must expunge, he elsewhere admits that fornication cannot be completely conquered until the other vices are gone.[125] A monk may be better able to fight the vice of fornication in solitude, however, Cassian is certainly not envisaging the immature ascetic going out into the desert for a period of time before returning to fight the other vices. Fornication is a vice which monks will continue to battle against, a temptation which will crop up again and again throughout their lives, even after they have reached perfection and moved into the solitude of the desert.[126] Cassian's recurring discussions of sexual purity demonstrate his belief in the ebb and flow of the spiritual life; the same temptations will return persistently. His advice, then, is not contradictory, but rather addresses the monk at different points in his spiritual life, either in the *cenobium* or as a solitary. Thus, though Cassian requires solitude for acquiring perfect chastity, he still intends for monks who are initially working on ridding themselves of the vices to do so in the *cenobium*.

For those living in a *cenobium*, silence is practical. Silence, as opposed to speech, helps a monastery to run smoothly. It does this by preventing long-winded speech or prayer

[124] *Conl.* 12.7.3-6; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 123-31. In *Conl.* 2.23.1 (ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 134), Cassian states that it is possible to reduce nocturnal emissions to 2-3 times per year; elsewhere, he says every two months is acceptable (*Inst.* 6.20; ed. Guy, p. 284). See below for a fuller discussion.
[125] *Inst.* 6.1; ed. Guy, p. 262.
[126] *Conl*. 4.15; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 179-81.

from causing activities to run overtime, allowing the monks to remain on schedule.[127] Silence maintains order. It also maintains order when the monks are together in worship. If all were to pray out loud, they would disturb one another. Instead, silent prayer allows all the brothers to pray without causing distracting thoughts or annoyance in each other.[128] Even more importantly, secret prayer is commanded in scripture: 'Before anything else, we must carefully observe the gospel command which says that we should go into our room and pray to our Father with the door shut.'[129] This is not to be taken literally; instead, Cassian envisions the closed room of the heart created by silence: 'We pray with the door shut when with closed lips and in total silence (*omni silentio*), we pray to the searcher not of voices but of hearts (*cordium*).'[130] This silence allows for each monk to individually draw close to God, even in the midst of a communal worship experience.

The reason the vices are best fought in the *cenobium* is because the tool of primary import in the routing out of vice is obedience.[131] A monk must obey unquestioningly, unhesitatingly, without delay, and without murmuring (*murmuro*). *Murmur*, an onomatopoeic word which is used pejoratively throughout monastic literature, conjures up the image of the Israelites grumbling in the desert.[132] This picture represented the antithesis of how the monastic should behave. Even more, because the goal is a pure heart, murmuring must not even occur internally. The matter of obedience goes beyond obeying the mandate to confess every thought. A monk must obey anything an elder

[127] *Conl.* 1.23; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 108.
[128] *Conl.* 9.35; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 71-2.
[129] *Conl.* 9.35; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 71; tr. Ramsey, p. 353.
[130] *Conl.* 9.35; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 71; tr. Ramsey, p. 353. Cf. Matthew 6:6.
[131] *Inst.* 4.8; ed. Guy, pp. 130-1.
[132] Courtney M. Booker, '*Iusta murmuratio*: The Sound of Scandal in the Early Middle Ages', *Revue Bénédictine*, 126 (2016), p. 241. Booker, using the *Regula Benedicti*, explores the instances when *murmuratio* could be considered in a positive light. In the sources under consideration here, however, *murmur/murmuratio* is always used negatively.

would have him do, even the ridiculous or the impossible. Cassian tells the story of an elder and his disciple John, a monk who was characterised by perfect obedience.[133] In order to determine whether John's obedience was merely a good outward show which concealed a grumbling heart, he assigned him the following task: planting a dry stick in the ground, the elder told John to travel two miles every day to fetch water to sprinkle on it so that he might see if it would sprout roots. He had John do this for a whole year, then finally pulled the stick out of the ground in front of him and tossed it away. John passed the test. His daily faithfulness, even in extreme weather which could have provided a legitimate reason to excuse himself from such an inane chore, satisfied the elder that his obedience was not merely external.

The word obedience, *oboedire*, comes from Latin *ob-*, meaning 'toward', and *audire*, meaning 'to hear'. Thus, to obey someone literally means to listen to someone. Obedience is right hearing; it is hearing and acting on what is heard. Submitting to the authority of someone else -- in John's case, his elder -- is bound up with the idea of having heard that person properly. If the person does not act, he has not heard. Further, there is no hearing without speech. The elder must speak in order for the disciple to obey. When he obeys, he grows in humility, the greatest virtue according to Cassian, and a virtue which is necessary to the complete eradication of all the vices.

In order to hear rightly so that he may obey, a monk must be silent. Cassian and Germanus model this for us in the *Conlationes*. The *Conlationes* was conceived as a series of dialogues between the two young men and the abbas, yet, as mentioned above, Cassian and Germanus rarely speak. They are not holding a conversation, but silently

[133] *Inst.* 4.24; ed. Guy, pp. 154-6.

absorbing and considering the words of the elder. It is a relationship which is characterised by silent listening with the intent to practice what has been heard – in other words, by obedience. Cassian primarily uses two words for silence: *silentium* and *taciturnitas*. Whilst both indicate noiselessness, *taciturnitas* also connotes a prolonged state of silence. Cassian uses this word when he considers silence as a virtue,[134] a virtue which allows the person to rightly hear the elder so that he or she may then obey.

At this point, we would do well to consider what was Cassian's conception of the relationship between the *cenobium* and the eremitic life. Several scholars have argued that Cassian originally pictured the monastic life as a movement from the cenobitic life to the solitary life of the anchorite, but by the time he had finished writing the third part of the *Conlationes*, he had changed his mind, putting the cenobitic life on par with the eremitic life.[135] In Part Three of the *Conlationes*, Cassian does present two surprising characters and makes some statements concerning the 'perfection' of the cenobitic life. *Conlatio* XIX features Abba John, a former anchorite who had returned to the *cenobium* out of preference. John explains his reasons, citing primarily the sheer difficulty of survival in the desert and his desire to fulfil Jesus' command to not worry about the morrow.[136] In *Conlatio* XX, we meet Abba Pinufius who, formerly presiding over a *cenobium*, to escape the acclaim his great virtue had brought, ran away to join another monastery as an unknown novice. Though he desired the humility of submission, he

[134] *Inst.* 5.4; ed. Guy, p. 194.
[135] See, for instance, Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 30-2; De Vogüé, 'Understanding Cassian', pp. 101-21; Rousseau, pp. 177-82, and Markus, *Ancient Christianity*, pp. 181-97. Cf. Chadwick, pp. 53-4, where he argues that Cassian accepted the superiority of the anchorite 'in theory', but since he did not believe that anyone could actually reach perfection(!), in all practicality, everyone should live in a *cenobium*. We might wonder, then, why Cassian devoted so much space to *theoria*, which only the perfect could practice.
[136] *Conl*. 19.6; ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 43-5. Matthew 6:25.

was discovered and had to return to his original post.[137] Cassian presents the cenobitic profession as a desirable one for attaining perfection and maintaining humility.

This, however, does not mean that Cassian has decided that all professions are equal. The cenobitic profession is the best for producing perfection, but the solitary life is the best place for practising *theoria*. In the preface of the third part, he mentions the 'sublimity' of the anchoritic life over the cenobitic and assumes the progression from cenobite to anchorite.[138] This, of course, is the ideal; not all monks will progress so far. Cassian tells us that most monks in Egypt are cenobites.[139] That being the case, a discussion of the merits of the *cenobium* is well-warranted, making *Conlationes* XIX and XX a valuable part of Cassian's strategy to reform Gallic monasteries. Though the founder of monasteries, Cassian himself was an anchorite for at least part of his varied life.[140] In order to assess Cassian's valuation of the two professions, we must recall the two-part goal of his programme. The *scopos*, which must be achieved first, is perfection, but the ultimate end goal, the *telos*, is 'seeing God'. Whilst a monk in the *cenobium* may reach the *scopos* of the monastic life, he will not reach the *telos*, the state in which *theoria* may be practiced. This requires the solitude of the eremitic life. In the Merovingian period, as we shall see in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, the anchoritic profession becomes less common and thus the second part of Cassian's programme falls away.

[137] *Conl*. 20.1.4-5; ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 60-2. He did the same thing a second time, receiving much praise from his disciples when he was again found out.
[138] *Conl.* 3 *Prae*. 1; ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 8; tr. Ramsey, p. 625.
[139] *Conl*. 18.4.2; ed. Pichéry, 3, p. 14.
[140] See *Conl.* 18.16.15; ed. Pichéry, 3, p. 36.

Whilst he valued the eremitic life above other vocations for its ability to produce *theoria*, he did not design his programme solely to be used in one context.[141] Anyone could follow it and achieve results. Though he does not hesitate to say that the vices are better fought in a *cenobium*, perfection can be found in other vocations as well. As examples, he lists caring for the sick, advocating for the poor, giving alms, and even the hospitality of an innkeeper.[142] Thus, Cassian was providing a way that any serious Christian could seek perfection, living a life which would please God, thereby giving a practical programme for people like Salvian who were looking for ways to bring God's favour back to the Christian world. *Praktike* could be applied by anyone because it is about controlling the mind, a reality which is the same for every person regardless of situation, environment, and even gender, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The Safety of Silence

As mentioned above, in the preface of the first part of his *Conferences*, Cassian describes himself as having been anchored in the 'harbour of silence' before setting about writing these books. At the end of the third part, he pictures himself as returning again to the 'safe harbour of silence.' This is not merely a handy image to unify the books, but rather it points to a theme which runs throughout his works. Silence is a safe harbour for all monks, a harbour in which they will be able to withstand the tempests of sin and the bad influences of others.

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[141] Conrad Leyser, '*Lectio divina, oratio pura*: Rhetoric and the Techniques of Asceticism in the *Conferences* of John Cassian', in Giulia Barone, Marina Caffiero, and Franscesco Scorza Barcellona (eds), *Modelli di Santità e Modelli di Comportamento: Contrasti, Intersezioni, Complementarità* (Turin, 1994), pp. 82-3.
[142] *Conl*. 14.4.2-3; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 185-6.

First and foremost, silence protects the monk from the devil. Prayers offered aloud are overheard by the devil and give him knowledge of the thoughts and temptations with which the monk is struggling.[143] The devil can then use that knowledge to strengthen his attack. On the contrary, prayers offered in silence cannot be overheard. This is one reason Cassian so encourages silent prayer. It also fits with the vertical orientation of Cassian's monastic theology, which emphasises the monk's relationship with God over and above his relationship with others, in contrast to Augustine, whose horizontal orientation emphasises the relationships amongst the brothers of the community.[144]

Silence, Cassian states, is the proper attitude for a disciple.[145] Elders may teach, but the spiritually immature should not presume to do so. Safer is listening and doing – obedience. A disciple who leaves the safe harbour of silence in order to teach what he has not yet practiced becomes prey to the sins of vainglory and pride. Silence for the disciple is so important in this respect that Cassian augments it with a superlative: *summum silentium*. Embracing silence also provides further protection from the sin of acedia. A monk who is weary in heart cannot stand silence and is always being drawn away from his cell to visit other monks, until he 'begins to forget the object of his profession, which is nothing but meditation and contemplation of that divine purity which excels all things, and which can only be gained by silence (*silentio*) and continually remaining in the cell, and by meditation.'[146] Staying in the cell, meditating in silence, prevents acedia from taking hold of the monk and allows him to continue toward his goal, 'which can only be gained by silence'.

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[143] *Conl.* 9.35; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 71.
[144] For the horizontal/vertical axes of Augustine and Cassian, see Markus, *Ancient Christianity*, pp. 162-8.
[145] *Conl.* 14.9; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 193-5.
[146] *Inst.* 10.3; ed. Guy, p. 388; tr. Ramsey, p. 220.

Silence can help to protect a monk by isolating him, but this in a positive manner. It can isolate him from distractions at meal time, a time at which Cassian describes the Egyptian monks as keeping *tantum silentio*.[147] This silence is augmented by the visual barrier of their hoods being pulled low over their eyes so that they can only see their own food and not their neighbours'. In this way, the monks are isolated from one another even in the midst of a communal experience. This prevents idle conversation and wandering thoughts. Another example Cassian gives in which silence can isolate a monk is when a monk witnesses another monk being disobedient.[148] He tells us to be as 'one who is deaf and mute and blind,' ignoring all things which do not edify. Again, silence is combined with blindness to provide a refuge for the monk, and, again, the vertical aspect of the spiritual life is emphasised.

As a disciple is obligated to remain silent in order to learn, so an elder is obliged to speak in order to teach. This obligation does not come without danger to the elder himself. Every time the mouth opens, the opportunity to sin is present. Cassian alludes to this danger in the preface of the *Conlationes*, describing himself as venturing out from 'a harbor of silence' onto a 'vast sea' where he will be 'tossed about amidst the dangers of deeper waters'.[149] This is more than the usual mandatory, self-effacing remarks concerning the author's ability to rise to the task at hand, but points to a theme which runs throughout the work -- that of the safety of silence. Nor is Cassian's statement of return to the harbour at the end of Part Three merely a neat *inclusio* (though it is also that): 'It remains for the spiritual zephyr of your prayers to accompany

[147] *Inst.* 4.17; ed. Guy, p. 144.
[148] *Inst.* 4.41.2; ed. Guy, p. 182.
[149] *Conl.* 1 Prae. 3-4; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 75; tr. Ramsey, pp. 29-30.

me now tossed about as I have been thus far by a most dangerous tempest, to the safe harbor of silence.'[150] The very first conference opens with the recognition of this risk. Cassian and Germanus must plead with Abba Moses for a time before he consents to speak, a performance that is a test of their worthiness, but also a safeguard for himself:

> In fact we had been quite aware of his inflexible attitude, such that he would never consent to open the portal of perfection except to those who faithfully desired it and who sought it in utter contrition of heart. Otherwise, if he disclosed it without further ado to those who were unwilling or to those whose desire was not a consuming one, he would seem to be committing either the vice of boasting or the crime of betrayal by pandering important things, which should only be known to those seeking perfection, to the unworthy and to those who would receive them disdainfully.[151]

In order to avoid sin, Abba Moses was very reluctant to leave the safety of silence, and would only do so if convinced that his listeners were true disciples.

The 'safe harbour of silence', however, points to another, more sinister, danger. Opening the mouth to teach brought with it the danger of becoming embroiled in controversy, and the outcome of controversy could have devastating effects. Cassian had himself gone into exile with the other Origenist monks during the Origenist Controversy. He had also witnessed first-hand the exile of John Chrysostom. As mentioned above, Cassian reluctantly leaves this safe harbour to write the *Conlationes*, and again, perhaps with even more reluctance, when he pens *De incarnatione*. Though, as an elder, he is obliged to teach, he does so knowing full well the perils of doing so. His fears are realised, of course, in the form of Prosper's attacks against him, and, in the end, his reputation is tarnished as the Gallic church's theology finally coagulates into its official Augustinian form. Instead of evolving into a saint of similar cult-like status to

[150] *Conl*. 24.26.18; ed. Pichéry, 3, p. 206; tr. Ramsey, p. 852.
[151] *Conl*. 1.1; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 78-9; tr. Ramsey, p. 41.

other early Church Fathers, he retains the title but with little cult presence outside of Marseille.

Thus, Cassian had another reason for requiring purity of heart in all teachers. As it is only the pure of heart who could understand scripture properly, it is right that they be the ones who interpret scripture for the sake of the rest of the Church. This requirement undergirded the authority of ascetics in the wider Christian community, making their holiness the mark of their authority to teach. Not everyone was convinced that ascetics ought to teach the wider Christian population; Celestine I remonstrated the church in Gaul for installing ascetics with no clerical background as bishops.[152] Cassian's programme gave more credibility for those monks who did become bishops: their holiness could be measured thereby allowing them to prove their suitability to teach. Non-ascetics, whether cleric or not, would not have the holiness necessary to teach. Accordingly, Cassian's works were especially welcome at Lérins, where at least some monks were prepared for the pastoral obligations which elevation to bishoprics would bring.[153] Their holiness, so awesome to the average lay person, made them especially sought after. Though, as noted above, Cassian believed that anyone could follow his programme, the prevalence of asceticism in the monastic profession meant that he was effectively endorsing monks as church leaders above all others.[154] The particularly high standards set for the ascetic necessitated, however, an unambiguous metric, and, as we shall see, Cassian supplied just that through his scrutinisation of dreams and nocturnal emission.

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[152] Celestine I, *Epistola* 4.2.4-5, *PL* 50 (Paris, 1846), col. 433. Cf. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 33. Also see, Leyser, 'Sainted Isle', p. 194.
[153] For the power ambitions of Lérinian monks, see Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 39.
[154] Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 61.

Sleep as Heart Revealer

Because Cassian viewed life as a spiritual battle, the monastic always had to be on guard for every waking moment. Constant vigilance over his thoughts was necessary lest the mind begin to wander into forbidden areas or dwell on thoughts insinuated by the devil. When the monk allowed sleep to overtake him, however, he could no longer fight against the unrelenting devil. All the monk's defences come down; he is no longer in control. In Cassian's thought, dreams brought forth a true revelation of the monk's interior self and what happens when the monk is asleep is the ultimate indicator of the level of purity which the monk has achieved. Though he may control his mind during the day, his dreams will betray the state of his heart at night. Any hidden and lurking areas of sin would expose themselves at night, rising to the surface of the deep pool of the mind when it was undisturbed by the waves of daytime distractions. Thus, a monk who has a pure heart will have peaceful sleep, [155] whilst a monk who is still striving for perfection will be troubled with erotic dreams, the seductive torment which created terrible anxiety for monks.[156] Avoidance of the physical result of erotic dreams, nocturnal emission, was an incessant and serious concern.

Cassian's thought concerning the origin of dreams was a product of Greek medical theory. Most early Greeks thought that the gods sent dreams, and that they were oracular in nature. Sleep was a time of passivity in which the sleeper was more receptive to the divine.[157] Greek doctors, on the other hand, thought there could also be

[155] Cf. *Conl*. 12.10.2; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 136-7.
[156] Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1998), p. 15; Conrad Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', in D. M. Hadley (ed), *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 103-4; David Brakke, 'The Problematization of Nocturnal Emission in Early Christian Syria, Egypt, and Gaul,' *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 3 (1995), p. 435; and Foucault, 'Le Combat', p. 21.
[157] Philip Van Der Eijk, 'Aristotle on Cognition in Sleep', in Thomas Wiedemann and Ken Dowden (eds), *Sleep* (Bari, 2003), p. 25.

natural explanations for dreams, ranging from the state of the body to the activities of the previous day. There was still significant cross-over, however, and doctors would advocate for oneirocriticism in discovering the diagnosis and prognosis of the patient.[158] Asclepius, the god of healing, enjoyed a cult following, and people seeking medical advice through dreams would sleep in his temple.[159] By the second century AD, oneirology had imbibed the idea of natural explanations as a possibility for the origin of dreams. For instance, Artemidorus of Daldis, a Greek oneiromancer, identified the state of the dreamer with the dream: a passionate man dreams of his lover, a hungry man of eating, a fearful man of what frightens him most, and so on.[160]

Early Christian thinkers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Evagrius, continued to affirm the divine nature of at least some dreams, considering some to have a predictive nature, being, in essence, sleeping visions.[161] Christians, however, now added a third possible explanation for the origin of dreams: the devil may be the author. Just as the Desert Fathers and Mothers believed that demons could insinuate evil thoughts (*logismoi*) into the monastics' waking minds, they also believed that demons could send evil dreams whilst they slept. The *Apophthegmata* are rife with examples of dreams of divine and demonic origins, describing dreams of angelic visitations, prophecy, divine correction, and dreams which led to conversion, as well as demonic dreams of temptation and torment, especially the erotic dream, which could lead to the physical manifestation of nocturnal emission.[162]

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[158] Galen was particularly keen on this in his medical practice, having been healed as a result of a dream himself. He wrote a treatise, 'On Diagnosis from Dreams'. Casiday, 'Tradition and Theology', pp. 13-14.
[159] The orator and statesman Aelius Aristides sought dreams from Asclepius in his temple during a long illness; later, he wrote about his dreams and his healing in 'Sacred Tales' (*Hieroi Logoi*). See Casiday, 'Tradition and Theology', p. 13. For more on the cult of Ascelpius, see Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 109-17.
[160] William Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009), p. 274.
[161] Casiday, 'Tradition and Theology', pp. 18-21.
[162] See Casiday, 'Tradition and Theology', pp. 21-22

As noted above, Cassian devotes much space to discussions concerning nocturnal emission, its cause and prevention. Though today we may find this subject embarrassing, it was a point of deep concern for monks, and Cassian addresses it directly and in depth.[163] He was not the first to do so, however. The Greeks and Romans were not concerned with the moral culpability of erotic dreams as later the Christians would be (more on this below), but they were concerned with the health implications of nocturnal emission. There was a belief that the emission of semen, whether during intercourse or an erotic dream, left the man in a weakened state, and there was a slew of medical advice to help men limit the negative effects of it.[164] Men should avoid sex to avoid weakening themselves, and some see this advice as the reason for the decline in birth rates amongst elites in the later Roman Empire.[165] Erotic dreams, whilst weakening, were not considered to have a divine origin. Instead, they had natural causes. The fluid inside the body had become too hot and frothy, which resulted in the erotic dream, which then led to the emission. Therefore, it was the condition of the body which led to the emission, with the dream being part of the process rather than the original cause. [166] The condition of excessive heat and moisture was the result of an imbalance in the body's humours, it was thought, from too much hard labour or activity. The solution was a lifestyle adjustment, including a special diet.

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[163] Cassian talks very matter-of-factly about the subject, thereby putting into action his advice of *Conl*. 12.7 (ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 132) where he says that, if matters of procreation must be dwelt upon, one should think about them with the same amount of passion as one would think about brickmaking. Kardong, 'Perfect Chastity', p. 19, n. 10.

[164] Aline Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*, tr. Felicia Pheasant (New York, 1988), p. 20. Not all doctors agreed: Rufus of Ephesus argued that sex was healthy.

[165] Rousselle, *Porneia*, p. 20.

[166] Maithe Armido Aroesja Hulskamp, 'Sleep and Dreams in Ancient Medical Diagnosis and Prognosis' (Ph.D. thesis, Newcastle University, 2008), pp. 189-90.

Because the erotic dream was thus seen to have a natural, physical explanation, Romans were not concerned about the dream in and of itself. Christians, however, were. Jesus' saying in Matthew 5:28 – 'But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart' – made Christians anxious about whether they were morally culpable for their dreams.[167] Monks were concerned particularly in the event of nocturnal emission because of the threat of being excluded from celebrating or participating in communion, taking the concern further into the category of ritual defilement.[168] Athanasius, in a letter to a monastic superior, taught that nocturnal emission was sinless, and that monks ought not to worry about it or be kept from communion.[169] Augustine, as well, argued that people were not responsible for what happened in their dreams.[170] Others, such as Antony the Great and Evagrius, believed differently.[171] Antony thought that a person's body could cause an erotic dream, but that the soul had to consent. For Evagrius, the vividness of the dream indicated the depth of the sin; even still, the soul of one who experienced emission without an accompanying erotic dream was only 'somewhat healthy'.

Cassian drew from all of these traditions. He believed that dreams had three causes: they could be divinely inspired, demonically inspired, or they could come from the person's own mind – a dream inspired by events or memories, or physical explanations, a reframing of what the Greeks thought of as natural causes. Erotic dreams fell into the latter two categories, but the causes for experiencing a nocturnal emission could be

[167] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 81-2.
[168] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 81-2.
[169] Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, p. 17.
[170] For a discussion of the theological implications of Augustine's belief concerning the sinlessness of nocturnal emission, see Simon Wei, 'The Absence of Sexual Dreams in the Writings of Augustine and Cassian', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 6 (2012), pp. 362-78.
[171] Brakke, 'Problematization of Nocturnal Emission', pp. 419-60, especially p. 438.

broken down further. Likewise, Cassian denoted three possible causes for nocturnal emissions. Firstly, it could be caused by the devil, even without an accompanying erotic dream. Cassian tells of a monk who did not experience nocturnal emission except in the night before he was to receive communion.[172] The monk goes to the elders, explaining that, though he does not dream, he continues to have emissions. The elders are able to discern that it is the devil causing the emissions with the purpose of keeping him from communion, and they decide that he should participate regardless. In this, Cassian underlines the discernment of the elders as a vital part of his spiritual programme.

The second and third causes of nocturnal emission are both attributed to the person who experiences the emission. In some cases, the person experiences emission without an erotic dream, like in the story above. Usually, in this situation, the cause of the emission is physical, and the solution is modifying the diet. It is related to the sin of gluttony rather than to the sin of fornication. Like the Greeks and Romans, Cassian believed that a body which was excessively hot and moist would produce emissions. Therefore, a scant diet of dry food – Cassian recommends so much bread and water per day – will prevent what he terms an *egestionis simplex qualitas* or a *simplici fluxus egestione*. He uses the adjective *simplex* to denote emissions which are not the result of erotic dreams.[173] Cassian does not recommend putting lead plates upon the genitals at night, as some scholars have claimed; this idea is based on a misreading of the text.[174] In a discussion of Paul's passage comparing the Christian life to an athletic competition,

[172] *Conl.* 22.6.1-4; ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 121-3.
[173] He also uses *simplex* to describe erections which occur without lustful thoughts instigating them (*simplici commotio carnis*).
[174] See, for instance, Wei, 'Absence of sin', p. 370, where he says that 'The wearing on the loins of metal armour was perhaps the most distinguishing feature of Cassian's monks and his monasteries(!)'. Also, Elliott, *Fallen Bodies*, p. 17; Rousselle, *Porneia*, p. 170; or Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford, 1995), p. 95. Cf. Cassian, *Inst*. 6.7-8; ed. Guy, pp. 270-2. Stewart, however, reads it correctly. Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, p. 73, n. 91.

Cassian notes that the Greek athletes of the past used this method to prevent nocturnal emissions and the believed loss of strength which would incur. If athletes were so intent on winning that they would attempt to control their bodies in this manner, how much more ought monks to seek to control their bodies? Controlling the body with a lead plate, however, is merely an external stratagem, with which Cassian had no interest. Whilst it might preserve the strength of an athlete, it would not preserve the 'strength' of the soul. The goal was not to repress emission, but to eliminate the cause of it.

The last cause of emission was the monk's mind. A mind which indulged upon impure thoughts would expose itself at night with an erotic dream accompanied by an emission. During the day, a monk was to strive to control his thoughts, never dwelling on a thought which would lead to sin. At night, however, the monk had no control over his thoughts/dreams. It was his dreams, therefore, which gave the true measure of his heart's purity. Any hidden areas of sin would come to the surface; any moments during the day in which a monk had been less than diligent in controlling his thoughts would be exposed in his dreams. The outward physical measure of purity, therefore, was the presence or absence of nocturnal emissions. This is why, as noted above, the total absence of nocturnal emissions is the seventh, pinnacle level of chastity. Not dwelling on lustful thoughts in the daytime was only the second level.[175] In order for the heart to be pure, the hidden areas must be expunged, scrubbed clean by the scouring brush of the Word of God. Dreams, especially erotic dreams, revealed the last secret pockets of

[175] The levels of chastity in Cassian's estimation are: not fornicating, not dwelling on lustful thoughts, not experiencing physical 'movement' when beholding a woman, not experiencing any 'simple' movement when awake, not assenting to the idea of pleasure when human generation must be discussed, not experiencing erotic dreams, and a complete absence of nocturnal emission. Most scholars describe Cassian's scheme as having six levels, conflating the absence of nocturnal emissions and the lack of erotic dreams. The complete absence of nocturnal emissions, however, represents a rare, seventh level – seven being the number of perfection. This level was only achievable by God's grace, and Cassian only describes one person, Abba Serenus, who had achieved this state. See *Conl.* 12.7.6; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 132-3.

sinfulness in the heart. Erotic dreams were not in themselves sinful – in this Cassian agreed with Athanasius and Augustine – but they were rather evidence of residual sinfulness.[176] Nocturnal emissions -- when not merely a physical need, a problem fixed with diet -- or lack there of, helped the monk to track his progress toward perfection and heralded his arrival.

Thus, in Cassian's metric, it is during sleep that the true state of a monk's heart is revealed. Though scholars have fruitfully discussed this in the context of nocturnal emissions,[177] there is a particular connection which has been overlooked. Nocturnal emissions provide a negative measure for purity of heart: the lack of emissions indicates a lack of hidden areas of sin. No sin in the heart in this measure equals a holy heart. There exists, however, a positive measure for a pure heart. Cassian tells us that true understanding of the scriptures can only be had by the perfect.[178] Whilst all are to read and memorise, and whilst the Word of God dwelt upon will drive out vice, even without a fullness of understanding, only the pure of heart will be able to divine the complex levels of meaning in a passage. They alone will have access to the four levels of interpretation, outlined above. When the monk is still in the practical stage of his spiritual journey, however, sleep has the power to open up new meaning in scripture to him, provided he controls his mind during the day:

> Hence the successive books of Holy Scripture must be diligently committed to memory and ceaselessly reviewed. This continual meditation will bestow on us double fruit. First, inasmuch as the mind's attention is occupied with reading and with preparing to read, it cannot be taken captive in the entrapments of harmful thoughts. Then, the things that we have not been able to understand because our mind was busy at the time, things that we have gone through

[176] *Conl.* 6.6.4; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 226.
[177] See Brakke, 'Problematization of Nocturnal Emission', for his discussion of how Cassian's theology concerning nocturnal emissions contributed to the interiorisation of purity; Conrad Leyser discusses nocturnal emission in Cassian in the context of the creation of a measure of suitability for power. See Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux', pp. 103-20.
[178] *Conl.* 14.9.2-3; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 192-3.

> repeatedly and are laboring to memorize, we shall see more clearly afterward when we are free from every seductive deed and sight, and especially when we are silently meditating at night. Thus, while we are at rest and as it were immersed in the stupor of sleep, there will be revealed an understanding of hidden meaning that we did not grasp even slightly when we were awake.[179]

The first benefit of continual meditation on the Word of God is the directing of the mind toward God, leaving no room for sinful thoughts. The second benefit is that, with the Word of God in his memory, the monk will be able to return to it at anytime, especially at night and even whilst asleep. This takes Cassian's daytime programme and applies it to the night. The Word of God fills the mind, even at night, so that it is undisturbed by sinful thoughts or dreams at night, thus having the capacity to contemplate and understand the fuller meaning of the passage of scripture which was memorised. The greater understanding of scripture therefore provides a positive measure of a monk's purity of heart. Here, however, there is no physical, outward sign. When we come to discuss Caesarius, though, we shall see how sleep-speech becomes the outward sign of a truly pure heart, and nocturnal emission is left behind.

John Cassian had designed a programme which, if followed, would allow a person to rid themselves of every vice and reach perfection through their own effort combined with the grace of God. This perfect state was necessary in order to understand the words of God and practice *theoria*. This was ‘seeing God’ – the end goal of the ascetic. He advocated the careful control of speech and the prodigious use of silence as tools to reach perfection, including the confessional speech promoted by the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Reading and memorising the scriptures was the core of his method, directing the mind away from sinful thoughts onto God. These activities straddled the boundary

[179] *Conl*. 14.10.4; ed. Pichéry, 2, pp. 196-7; tr. Ramsey, pp. 514-15.

between speech and silence; the scriptures were recited aloud, but the voice heard was God's and the reader effectively becomes the listener. Though anyone anywhere could follow his programme and achieve results, Cassian's focus was on monastics, envisioning a move from the *cenobium*, with an environment of semi-solitude, to an eremitic life of more complete solitude. He did not specifically address women, nevertheless, they were likely some of his first readers. His focus on male monastics, however, becomes clear in his discussion of the ultimate metric for holiness: the nature of dreams and presence of nocturnal emissions. This unbiased metric provided a method for male ascetics to prove their level of holiness. Cassian's emphasis on the necessity of a teacher to be perfect, combined with his metric for assessing perfection, undergirded the authority of monks seeking bishoprics, such as those of Lérins. In the next chapter, we shall see how one of those Lérinian monks-turned-bishop, Caesarius of Arles, used Cassian's ideas in the changing context of southern Gaul in the sixth century.

Chapter 3: Caesarius of Arles

The popularity of Cassian's monastic works spread throughout Gaul during the rest of the fifth century, and his programme, designed for a late-antique context and incorporating many traditions from his era, was adapted for a new generation in which changes were occurring thick and fast. In the late fifth century was born a man who would go on to become a great disciple of Cassian's monastic theology, developing it in a way all his own. This man was Caesarius of Arles. Caesarius was not outspoken in his love for Cassian, preferring to uphold Augustine as his theological mentor, and with good reason, as we shall see below. Nevertheless, whilst Augustine left his mark on Caesarius, it was Cassian who undergirded his thought.[1] Caesarius believed that for the ascetic to draw close to God, he or she needed a pure heart. Purification was a process which came through controlling the mind by constant rumination upon the word of God. Just like Cassian and other late-antique ascetic authors, Caesarius saw speech and silence as means to allow this slow banquet, but also as reflections of the current state of the heart. Caesarius, however, did not have such stringent requirements for teachers, and also required teaching on a scale which would have made Cassian uncomfortable. He brought Cassian into his greatest project, the monastery for women which he founded, and applied his programme to women, whom Cassian had never addressed. The writers of his *vita*, influenced by both Caesarius and Cassian, continued to adapt late-antique ideas for their own use, particularly within the female context of St. John's.[2] Here, they modified Cassian's ultimate metric for holiness – the lack of nocturnal emission – into the gender-neutral metric of sleep-speech. This chapter also

[1] Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 83.
[2] Cyprianus, Firminus, Viventius, Messianus, and Stephanus, *Vitae Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis libri duo*; ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SRM* III (Hanover, 1896) pp. 457-501; tr. William Klingshirn, 'The Life of Caesarius', *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters* (Liverpool, 1994), pp. 9-65.

considers how three little-studied authors – Caesaria II, Aurelianus of Arles, and Florentius, author of the *Vita Rusticulae* – used Cassian to their own ends, deploying his programme within their own changing contexts. Finally, a look at Radegund and the Convent of the Holy Cross will show the development of Cassian's ideas in a Frankish context, demonstrating the continuity of late-antique ideas outside of the Gallo-Roman setting.

Caesarius of Arles

Caesarius has left to posterity many works which allow us to gain a picture of his thought. There are seven extant letters, in addition to fifteen which have been written to him. His testament survives, as well as a large collection of sermons. Thanks to the diligent work of Dom Germain Morin, who spent 50 years painstakingly combing collections of sermons to find those which in his view Caesarius had written, and which had been misattributed to others, the collection of Caesarius's sermons now stands at 238.[3] Many of his sermons travelled under others' names because Caesarius had the habit of adapting sermons belonging to others and adding his own introductions or conclusions. The adapted sermons could be quite different from the original through changes in foci or certain words. He also would make sermons – both adapted sermons and his own – applicable to general use by omitting references to particular feasts or places.

[3] Leyser, however, has questioned Morin's methodology, stating that it had no objective basis. He has issued a challenge to reassess the manuscript tradition of Morin's attributions, but so far no one has taken up the challenge. Conrad Leyser, 'Caesarius the Preacher: Do We Really Know What He Said?' (unpublished paper, delivered 16 March 2013, World of Caesarius of Arles Conference, University of Edinburgh).

Caesarius also wrote several documents specifically for monastics. He wrote a letter to his sister, Caesaria I, which is commonly referred to as *Vereor*.[4] The letter was written before the foundation of St. John's, so it addressed Caesaria and her nuns when they were presumably still living in Caesaria's household. It can be seen as a prototype of the *Rule* Caesarius was later to give the nuns upon the foundation of the monastery. This later *Rule*, known as the *Regula ad virgines*, contains two parts. The first part of the *Rule* was given upon the opening of the monastery in 512. The second part is known as the *Recapitulatio*, and it revised the *Rule* to reflect the actual functioning of the convent. In this part, Caesarius underlines what he sees as the most important features of the *Rule*. Caesarius later adapted the *Regula ad virgines* for male monastics, and this is known as the *Regula ad monachos*. It is much shorter than its female counterpart, and more organised, having benefited from the years of experience which accompanied the writing of the *Regula ad virgines*. Being so highly derivative, scholars have given it less attention. For which monastery Caesarius wrote this *Rule* is not known; Klingshirn speculates that it was for a monastery in Arles.[5] Later, Caesarius's nephew Teridius passed the rule on to other monasteries outside of Arles,[6] but it was the *Regula ad virgines* which was to have the most lasting influence. Beyond these sources, Caesarius also wrote six sermons directed specifically toward monastics, though all of his sermons would likely have been read devotionally in monastic settings, particularly St. John's.

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[4] Caesarius, *Vereor*; ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Joel Courreau, *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres Monastiques I*, *SC* 345 (Paris, 1988), pp. 294-336; tr. William E. Klingshirn, 'Letter 21: Caesarius to Caesaria the Elder', *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters* (Liverpool, 1994), pp. 129-39.
[5] William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 252.
[6] Klingshirn, *Community of a Community*, p. 252.

Caesarius was born in 469/70 to Gallo-Roman parents in Chalon.[7] The names of his parents are lost, but we know that he had a sister (Caesaria), a nephew (Teridius),[8] and another close relation, probably a niece (Caesaria II). All of these relatives were involved in the monastery for women he was later to found in Arles. His most famous relative was Aeonius, his own predecessor as bishop of Arles, c. 485-501/2. As a young man, Caesarius was consecrated to a monastic life, and likely lived in the bishop of Chalon's household. After living there for more than two years, Caesarius desired a more ascetic way of life, and left Chalon for the island monastery of Lérins.[9] Lérins still maintained in this period its reputation for learning and spirituality, as well as its reputation for providing Gaul with church leaders, particularly bishops.[10] The monastery was an obvious choice for a young aristocrat, particularly if he were ambitious. At Lérins, Caesarius would have become deeply familiar with the works of both Augustine and Cassian, and the tensions between the two.

After some time at Lérins, Caesarius became sick and his abbot sent him to Arles to recover. The city of Arles was renowned for its physicians.[11] It also had close ties to Lérins, as the monastery had supplied bishops for it before, and, more interestingly, Caesarius's own relative, Aeonius, was bishop at the time. During his time in Arles, Aeonius obtained Caesarius' release from Lérins, and he was ordained deacon and priest, though he continued in his observance of the monastic regularity he had learned at Lérins. In 498/9, Aeonius sent him to become the abbot of a suburban island

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[7] For the dates of Caesarius's birth, consecration, and death, see William E. Klingshirn, 'Church Politics and Chronology: Dating the Episcopacy of Caesarius of Arles' *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 38 (1992), pp. 80-88.
[8] At the time of Caesaria II's promotion to abbess, it is plausible that Teridius was appointed its *provisor*. See William Klingshirn, 'Caesarius's Monastery for Women in Arles and the Composition and Function of the "*Vita Caesarii*"', *Revue Bénédictine* 100 (1990), p. 445.
[9] *VCae* 1.5; ed. Krusch, p. 459.
[10] Klingshirn, *Making*, p. 20.
[11] See William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters* (Liverpool, 1994), p. 13, n. 11.

monastery near the city, probably on the Île de la Cappe.[12] He stayed there until Aeonius's death in 501/2, after which he was elected bishop.[13]

During his episcopate, Caesarius became embroiled in the same controversy concerning grace which had so animated Prosper against Cassian. By the early sixth century, it seems that more people were beginning to see things Prosper's way. The Pseudo-Gelasian Decree, probably an early sixth-century text, warned readers away from Cassian's works.[14] A bit later in the century, Cassiodorus would highly recommend Cassian, but with one warning: Prosper was right about Cassian going too far when it came to free will.[15] Though Gennadius had declared at the end of the fifth century that the church found Cassian work beneficial, the tide was beginning to turn.[16] In 528, Bishop Julianus of Vienne called the Council of Valance to solve a theological issue.[17] Caesarius, though invited, did not go on account of illness, and sent Cyprianus of Toulon in his place.[18] At the council, Julianus and most of the other bishops argued that the faith of a person came from their own nature, rather than from grace. This was the

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[12] See Klingshirn, *Life and Letters*, p. 15, n. 19.
[13] Though the *Vita Caesarii* describes Caesarius's election as unanimous, Klingshirn points to the gap between Aeonius's death in August 501 or 502 and Caesarius's consecration in December of 502 as possibly indicating contention. To bolster this theory, he brings to light a list of bishops in Arles which lists an otherwise-unknown Johannes as bishop at the same time as Caesarius. This is only one of several lists, and, as none of the rest contain the name, scholars generally follow Louis Duchesne, who considered it an interpolation. Klingshirn, however, postulates that Johannes may have been a rival bishop set up by a party who opposed Aeonius and Caesarius. See *VCae* 1.14; ed. Krusch, p. 462. Cf. Klingshirn, 'Church Politics', pp. 80-88. Also see Louis Duchesne, *Fastes Épiscopaux de l'Ancienne Gaule*, vol. I (Paris, 1984), p. 250, n. 8.
[14] Ps-Gelasius, *Decretum Gelasianum*, *PL* 59 (1847), col. 163B. For further discussion, see Ps-Gelasius, *Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*, ed. Ernst von Dobschütz (Leipzig, 1912).
[15] Cassiodorus, *Institutiones divinarum litterarum*, *PL* 70 (1865), col. 1144A.
[16] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus*, 85; ed. Richardson, p. 90. Though much work has been done recently to rescue Cassian from the seventeenth-century charge of 'semi-Pelagianism', the exact reasons as to how and why the church turned against his theology in the sixth century is yet unknown and would be a fruitful topic of study.
[17] The date of this council is unknown, but it occurred between the Council of Carpentras in November of 527 and the Council of Orange in July of 529, so 528 is the most probable date, though it could conceivably have been early in 529.
[18] Klingshirn, *Making of a Community*, p. 140. Cyprianus was a great friend and ally of Caesarius, and also the principal author of his *vita*.

position commonly held in Gaul, as Markus demonstrates.[19] This was also Cassian's position. Cyprianus and other supporters of Caesarius argued against this for a more Augustinian position, but did not win the day. Caesarius, therefore, was portrayed as an extreme predestinarian, someone whose theology was in question. We must keep in mind, however, that Julianus and Caesarius were not great friends; Julianus had seen Caesarius expand his metropolitan power farther and farther into his diocese in the previous five years.[20] Accordingly, it is reasonable to view this as a political move. Certainly, Caesarius's enemies had used the allegations of heresy against him before whilst harbouring political motives.

As a consequence of the accusation of predestinarianism, and in order to establish his own orthodoxy, Caesarius called the Council of Orange in 529. Fourteen bishops and eight *viri illustres* met for the dedication of the new basilica in Orange, before delving into the theological controversy. These eminent men would provide Caesarius with the support he needed to settle the dispute, a settlement which would go unchallenged until Gottschalk of Orbais reignited the controversy in the ninth century.[21] Caesarius had brought with him a set of *capitula* drawn from the works of Augustine and sent from Rome. Augustine's name, it seems, held some weight in Rome. These *capitula*, though Augustinian in origin, did not give an accurate picture of Augustine's beliefs, but, rather, were more of a compromise between the Augustinian position and the Gallic position.[22] The first eight canons of the Council of Orange used these *capitula* almost

[19] See Markus, 'Legacy of Pelagius', pp. 214-34.
[20] Klingshirn, *Making of a Community*, p. 140.
[21] Leyser, 'Semi-Pelagianism', p. 765.
[22] Markus, 'Legacy of Pelagius', p. 225.

verbatim, thereby establishing the Augustinian orthodoxy of the Gallic church.[23] Thus, by demonstrating that predestinarianism was a misunderstanding of Augustine, Caesarius vindicated his own moderate position which was closer to the beliefs of the other Gallic bishops. The weight of papal backing could only have helped. In the end, two major tenants were upheld, one Augustinian, the other Cassianic. The first was that no one could ascend to God without God granting grace first: this starting point would make Augustine proud. The second was certainly a departure from Augustine: that the grace bestowed at baptism allowed a person to persevere in the good, with only a small amount of divine help. Here we find Cassian's theology upheld. Cassian is not mentioned in the canons, but he is present all the same. Caesarius now had a sanctioned working definition of faith which would authorise his monastic and pastoral theology, allowing him to preach the value inherent in the good works his monastics and congregants sought to accomplish.[24] The Council of Orange demonstrates how the Bishop of Arles upheld Augustine in word, but how it was Cassian's theology which undergirded his practice.

A venture which occupied Caesarius for much of his episcopacy was the female foundation of St. John. Convents were not common during this period; there were none at all in northern and central Gaul at the beginning of the sixth century, and only a handful in the south.[25] That is not to say that there were not female religious. Instead of living in formal convents, however, female religious tended to continue to live in their

[23] For the canons of the Council of Orange, see *Canones Aravsicorvm*, ed. C. de Clercq, *CCSL* 148A (Turnholt, 1963), pp. 55-76. For the *capitula*, see *Capitula Sancti Augustini in urbem Romam transmissa*, ed. Fr. Glorie, *CCSL* 85A (Turnholt, 1978), pp. 243-73.
[24] Klingshirn, *Making of a Community*, p. 142.
[25] Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500-900* (Philidelphia, 1985), p. 154.

own households, alone or in groups, attending services at their local church.[26] Caesarius had a different plan. Unlike Cassian and the late-antique desert ascetics, he did not envision a cenobitic programme to help the nuns reach perfection before releasing them into the wilderness in order to pursue a life of contemplation. On the contrary, Caesarius did not intend for the nuns to leave the convent – ever. Instead, they would be committing to a life lived in community, fostering holiness in one another. The convent, however, would not follow Augustine's model of the city of God on earth. Rather, the monastic theology which underpinned Caesarius's writings was distinctly Cassianic.

Caesarius had imbibed Cassian's beliefs concerning the monastic life. He believed that the purpose of the monastic life was to move a person toward perfection. Progression – and perfection – in the spiritual life was possible, he maintained, through the sustained effort of the monastic:

> But the accomplishment of so holy and so excellent a perfection will depend upon a considerable effort of soul. For without effort, who can withdraw his tongue from slander, put an end to murmuring or idle conversations, reject impure thoughts with an exceedingly vigilant heart, refrain from cursing or swearing as from deadly poison, resist vanity, reject wrath? ...Who, I repeat will accomplish all these things without the grace of God and great purpose of heart?[27]

To maintain his Augustinian orthodoxy, Caesarius adds in at the end the necessity of God's grace, but it is an afterthought in this context. Effort is the main ingredient for successful progression towards perfection.

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[26] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Lamont, 1988), p. 263.
[27] Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 236.4, ed. G. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis: Sermones*, *CCSL* 103-4 (2 vols, Turnhout, 1953), 2, p. 943; tr. Mary Magdeleine Mueller, *Sermons* (3 vols, Washington, 1956-1973), 3, pp. 213-14.

Slackening that effort for even a moment was dangerous and would cause regression.[28] The devil is always on the prowl, searching for someone to devour,[29] so monastics could never let their guards down. Caesarius shared Cassian's view that the monastic life was an ongoing spiritual battle with the devil.[30] In the *Regula ad monachos*, he states that 'as long as we are living in the body, day and night, with the help and under the direction of Christ, we fight back against the devil.'[31] The battle will rage twenty-four hours a day, because the enemy is relentless. The battle was an internal one which took place within the mind. Caesarius's concern was for the thought-life of his monks and nuns. The devil would try to insinuate thoughts into the monastics' minds, attempting to get their focus off God.[32] Caesarius's solution was the same as Cassian's – meditation upon the Word of God.

Over and over again, Caesarius stresses the importance of focusing the mind upon God through reading, listening to the scriptures being read, and through meditation on the scriptures.[33] Reading was so important that in the *Regula ad virgines* Caesarius stated that all must learn how to read.[34] The first two hours of the day were set apart for reading,[35] and the nuns were read to at other points in the day as well, such as when they were working or eating.[36] In the *Regula ad monachos*, the monks were required to begin the day with three hours of reading. Why the men were required to spend an hour longer in private, devotional reading than the women were is unclear. It may have to do

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[28] Caesarius of Arles, *Regula ad monachos* 26, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Joel Courreau, *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres Monastiques*, *SC* 398 (2 vols, Paris, 1994), 2, pp. 222-4.
[29] Cf. 1 Peter 5:8.
[30] *RMon* 19; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 2, pp. 214-18.
[31] *RMon* 26; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 2, p. 224.
[32] *Sermo* 238.3; ed. Morin, 2, p. 951.
[33] For example, see *Sermo* 238.2-3 (ed. Morin, 2, pp. 950-2); *Sermo* 237.3 (ed. Morin, 2, pp. 946-7); *RMon*. 9 (ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 2, p. 208.
[34] *Reg virg* 18; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 192.
[35] *Reg virg* 19; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 192-4.
[36] *Reg virg* 18 and 20; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 192 and 194.

with the differing financial states St. John's and the male monastery in Arles, which likely had a bigger, more secure endowment. Its larger endowment is signified by its longevity: it preceded Caesarius's abbacy and was still functioning after his death.[37] Nowhere is Caesarius concerned for the financial state of this monastery. The nuns of St. John's, on the other hand, may not have been able to afford to hire lay help, meaning that the nuns had more work to accomplish in a day.[38] It could also be that the male monastery, which was not established by Caesarius, had its own traditions which did not include as much work as Caesarius would have liked. Alternatively, as the *Regula ad monachos* was written after even the *Recapitulatio*,[39] it may reflect an increase in the weight Caesarius put on holy reading, regardless of gender. Whatever the reason, both *Rules* stress reading to a high degree, demonstrating the place it had in Caesarius's monastic programme.

Caesarius believed that reading the scriptures was an activity which brought about transformation. A monk who was excommunicated was to spend time doing directed reading with an elder until he came to a place where he could ask forgiveness.[40] The idea was that the scriptures would reveal the monk's sin to him and bring him to repentance so that the vice would be removed from his life. The way that holy reading brought about transformation was through squeezing out evil thoughts and replacing them with thoughts directed towards God. This faithfully parallels Cassian's programme. Caesarius employs Cassian's analogy of the mental millwheel, constantly grinding whatever thoughts a person may entertain:

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[37] Cf. *VCae* 1.12; ed. Krusch, p. 461.
[38] See below for more on the financial state of St. John's.
[39] Adalbert de Vogüé has shown that the *Regula ad monachos* was based on the *Regula ad virgines*, including the *Recapitulatio*. See Adalbert de Vogüé, 'La Règle de Césaire d'Arles pour les Moines: Un Résumé de sa Règle pour les Moniales', *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, 47 (1971), pp. 369-406.
[40] *RMon*, ch. 23; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 2, p. 222.

> Our mind seems to have the likeness of those mill-stones which are continually turned by the force of water, for, just as those stones cannot be quiet, so, too, human minds are never entirely at rest. However, with God's help it lies in our power to determine what we will devise in those mill-stones or in our minds.[41]

Caesarius then goes on to develop Cassian's analogy by melding it with one of his own favourite analogies concerning the scriptures as food:

> If you put wheat into [the mill-stone], that rocky stone will grind it, but if you put in chaff, mud, or thorns, it doubtless is reduced to flour. Similarly, if we send holy, pious thoughts into the mill of our mind which cannot be idle, we grind spiritual wheat, as it were, with which we prepare a banquet for Christ, who deigns to remain and dine with us. However, if we introduce thoughts which are idle and in no way edifying, we grind chaff, as it were. If we admit thoughts which lead to quarrels, avarice, or wickedness, out of thorns and thistles we prepare a sort of flour on which the Devil feeds. Moreover, if we think of something lustful or dissolute, we provide ourselves with food from the mire or a sewer. Everyone should know that what he has willed to grind in the mill of his heart in this world will supply his food afterwards in the future life.

Meditating upon holy reading, then, is like supplying the mind with grain which will be turned into healthful food, and even invites Christ to the feast. Alternatively, occupying the mind with sinful thoughts invites the devil to supper. Moreover, this psychic banquet is the food on which the person will be feeding for eternity. Caesarius directly links a person's thought-life to the rewards he or she can expect in heaven.

Full understanding of the scriptures, however, was something which could only come after the soul had reached perfection. This perception paralleled Cassian's programme. Caesarius stated that first all vice must be removed from a person's life and replaced with virtue. He describes the process with a farming analogy:

> First, the thorns should be torn out, that is, evil thoughts (*cogitationes malae*). Next, the stones should be removed, that is, all malice and harshness ought to be taken away. Then, our hearts (*cor*) should be broken up and cultivated by the plough of the Gospel and the ploughshare of the Cross: shattered by repentance, softened by almsgiving, and prepared by charity for the Lord's sowing. When the soil of our heart has been cleared and well cultivated, it can with joy receive

[41] *Sermo* 8.4; ed. Morin, 1, p. 44; tr. Mueller, 1, pp. 52-3. Cf. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 96-7.

> the seed of the word of God and bring forth fruit, not only thirty-fold, but even sixty- and a hundred-fold.[42]

Caesarius's plan is cumulative. Learning to control the mind first, the vices – here denoted by 'all malice and harshness' – are to be removed. Virtues are added next – in this case, repentance, generosity to the poor, and love. The continued inpouring of the Word of God – the 'plough of the Gospel and the ploughshare of the Cross' – occurs throughout, guiding the process. The end result is that the soul is ready to take in the Word of God and bring forth the 'fruit' of true understanding. Elsewhere, Caesarius discusses how vice and love of the world make the hearer unable to absorb the scriptures.[43] Caesarius's belief that only the pure of heart could fully understand scripture mirrors Cassian's, as discussed in Chapter Two.

In Cassian's programme, once a monk had rid himself of all the vices and replaced them with virtue, he was to leave the *cenobium* and move into the wilderness in order to practice *theoria*. The goal of this contemplation was fiery prayer, an ecstatic union with God. This is where Caesarius diverges from Cassian and the late-antique desert ascetics. Never having spent time as an anchorite himself, he did not see the need for the perfect to leave the cenobium, and, as we saw in Chapter Two, Cassian himself gave examples of elders who preferred the cenobium over the eremitic life. Though both Cassian and Caesarius saw the spiritual life as a battle, Caesarius, unlike Cassian, viewed the cenobium as a safe place away from the world, a place where monastics could make better progress because they were free from the dangerous temptations of the world. In the monastery, monastics could focus on the smaller sins and temptations, enabling them to make true progress. He refers to the monastic life as a 'quiet harbour (*portum*

[42] *Sermo* 6.7; ed. Morin, 1, pp. 34-5; tr. Mueller, 1, p. 43. Cf. Mark 4:3-8.
[43] *Sermo* 7.3; ed. Morin, 1, p. 39.

quietis)',[44] and vividly tells the nuns of St. John's that they have escaped the 'jaws of the spiritual wolves' by entering the convent.[45] The monastery, however, provided safety in another way. During Caesarius's tenure as bishop of Arles, the region was in the midst of wars between Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Franks. The devastation was terrible; at one point, the convent Caesarius was building for Caesaria outside the walls of the city was destroyed. When work began again, Caesarius moved the location inside the city walls for protection. In a climate such as this, Caesarius would have seen more risk than benefit for monastics living independently in the wilderness, particularly for female monastics.

The casualty of all this safety is Cassian's fiery prayer, which Caesarius does not mention. He stresses contemplation of the scriptures to a high degree, but ecstatic prayer and union with God is no longer the end goal. The perfect enjoy a fuller knowledge of God through reading His Word, but individual time for contemplation must fit into the schedule which Caesarius had worked out and must be accomplished in a corporate setting. Abba John in Cassian's *Conlatio* 14 comments on the fact that ecstatic prayer cannot be achieved in the *cenobium*.[46] Perhaps because Cassian admits that this type of prayer could only be achieved temporarily anyway, Caesarius felt that the benefits of remaining in a cenobium far outweighed the risks of releasing monastics into the solitary life. He was so intent that monastics remain committed to the cenobitic life that in his *Regula ad virgines* he commands the nuns to never leave the convent.

[44] *RMon* 26; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 2, p. 222.
[45] *Reg virg* 2; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 180; tr. McCarthy, p. 171.
[46] *Conl.* 19.5; ed. Pichéry, 3, pp. 42-3.

This requirement of the *Rule* is the feature which has attracted the most attention from scholars.[47] Once they entered the convent walls, the nuns were not allowed to leave again for their entire lives, for any reason. Other sources demonstrate that the nuns of St. John's were faithful to the injunction.[48] Enclosure was a fundamental part of Caesarius's monastic program for the nuns, and a fundamental part of his monastic theology. In creating a space in which the nuns entered and could never leave save through death, he created a sort of 'waiting room' for heaven, a place of safety in which the nuns could pursue the ways of perfection free from many of the dangers and temptations of the outside world.[49] In this way, Caesarius sought to reconcile the emphasis on divine grace of Augustine and the striving for one's own salvation of Cassian. The enclosure protected the nuns called by the grace of God and gave them a safe space to strive for perfection. Enclosure protected the nuns from contact with most men (excepting the *provisor* and some members of the clergy), thereby protecting them from their own lust and from the lust of others. It kept them away from the distractions of the secular world so that they would be able to concentrate their minds fully upon God.

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[47] For examples, see Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, 'Strict Active Enclosure and Its Effects on the Female Monastic Experience (ca. 500-1100)', in John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank (eds), *Medieval Religious Women*, (2 vols, Kalamazoo, 1984), 1, pp. 51-86; and Donald Hochstetler, 'The Meaning of Monastic Cloister for Women according to Caesarius of Arles', in Thomas F. X. Noble and John J. Contreni (eds), *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 27-40.

[48] See, for instance, the *VCae* 2.26 (ed. Krusch, p. 494), where the nuns remain inside the convent even when it catches fire. Also, as a later example, see the *Vita Rusticula*, in which Rusticula invokes the *Rule* in order to refuse the king's summons. Florentius, *Vita Rusticulae sive Marciae abbatissae Arelatensis*, in ed. B. Krusch, *MGM, SRM* 4 (Hanover, 1902), 10; tr. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whatley, 'The Life of Rusticula, or Marcia, Abbess of Arles', in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, 1992), p. 128.

[49] Diem, '*…ut si professus*', p. 197. In *Sermo* 237.4 (ed. Morin, 2, p. 947-8), however, speaking to both male and female monastics, Caesarius points out the danger of the monastery providing false security.

Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, however, argues that enclosure caused the economic decline and hardship of a number of smaller houses.[50] Certainly, the economic independence of St. John's occupied Caesarius greatly. Unlike most monastic founders, Caesarius could not supply for the needs of the monastery from his own property; he had given up his inheritance when he entered Lérins.[51] The only funds at his disposal belonged to the church, and he had already used all the church plate in order to ransom captives. The church still owned property, but there was a problem: the alienation of church property large enough to support the monastery was not allowed, and the sale of small properties had to have the support of two or three local bishops.[52] Granting *ususfructus* – the use and profits of a property without transferring ownership – was allowed, but after 508 this was limited to the support of clerics, *peregrini*, and captives.[53] Caesarius did all he could to obtain property for his monastery. He gave what small lands he could to the monastery. Then he applied to Pope Symmachus for an exemption from the rule alienating large amounts of property if it were for the sake of supporting a monastic foundation. Symmachus denied the exemption, but did allow for the monastery to have the right of *ususfructus* for as long as it existed. This was helpful, but did not provide the same security as ownership. Right after Symmachus died in 514, Caesarius sold some church lands and gave the money to St. John's, a move which was prohibited by church law. He then wrote to the new pope, Hormisdas, to ask for an exemption for what he had already done. Hormisdas granted it, but told him he was not to do it again. In 535, he asked for another exemption from Pope Agapitus, and was refused outright.

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[50] Schulenburg, 'Strict Active Enclosure', p. 78.
[51] *VCae* 1.4; ed. Krusch, p. 458.
[52] This law came into effect at the Council of Agde in 506.
[53] This rule was agreed upon at a synod at Rome in 502. The Ostrogoths, who by this time controlled Arles, took the harder line of Rome, so that even though the Council of Agde would have allowed the monastery to have the *ususfructus* of church property, it was not allowed under the Ostrogoths. See Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', p. 457.

In his *Testamentum*, Caesarius designates the monastery as his heir, trying to protect is with some anxiety from other bishops and even his own kinsmen.[54] He also directs the nuns to seek assistance from their bishop if they require anything 'necessary for bodily sustenance',[55] indicating that he anticipated they might at some point be unable to supply for themselves financially. He anxiously and repeatedly entreats the bishop to look after the nuns: 'I ask you again and again, holy bishop, through divine grace, that above all you treat the monastery of holy virgins as having been entrusted to your very great care, and that you kindly allow the community of women to be provided for.'[56] He goes on to inform his successor, whoever he may turn out to be, that he cannot undo what Caesarius has done, as it was ratified by other bishops and even the pope. Then he reminds him that he had doubled the income of the church, no doubt countering any objection that Caesarius had impoverished the church in order to enrich the convent. All of this shows the precarious financial position of the monastery. In fact, the whole purpose of the *Testamentum* was to confirm the financial arrangements he had made to ensure the independence of St. John's.[57]

Despite his difficulties with the endowment of St. John's, Caesarius had been careful to supply the nuns with a *Rule* which, if they abided by it, would help them grow in holiness. Silence was an important part of monastic life for Caesarius, and he commanded monastics to go about their days mainly in silence. Unnecessary talking, even praying out loud, would distract others from their own meditations and prayers,

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[54] Caesarius, *Testamentum Sancti Caesarii* 4 and 6; ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Joel Courreau, *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres Monastiques*, *SC* 345 (Paris, 1988), 1, pp. 380 and 382; tr. William E. Klingshirn, 'The Testament of St. Caesarius', *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters* (Liverpool, 1994), pp. 72 and 73.
[55] Caesarius, *Testamentum*, 7; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 382; tr. Klingshirn, p. 73.
[56] Caesarius, *Testamentum*, 8; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 382; tr. Klingshirn, p. 74.
[57] Klingshirn, *Life and Testament*, p. 67.

thereby hindering their ability to keep their focus on God. Instead, Caesarius advised the nuns of St. John's, 'Let your prayer proceed so silently (*cum silentio*) from your heart that it is scarcely heard in your mouth.' [58] Outside times of corporate prayer, silent prayer was to be the norm. Because they were in a community setting, without even their own cells, the nuns must manufacture their own artificial solitude through silence. It was in these times of silent prayer when the nuns were to rout out vice or grow in contemplation. Listening to someone read aloud from the bible helped to direct their thoughts to God, and was like hearing God's voice speaking. Even when the reading stopped, however, Caesarius commanded the nuns to continue meditating in silence. During meals, in order to maintain silence, the one presiding will indicate a need to the servers with a nod of the head rather than words.[59] Again, Caesarius compares hearing the scriptures read to food for the soul, admonishing the nuns to nourish their souls as they nourish their bodies. Since they were without the distraction-free environment of the wilderness, the nuns required as few disturbances as possible in order to focus their minds on prayer and contemplation so that they might progress in the spiritual life.

Caesarius stressed that the appropriate posture for hearing the Word of God read and preached was attentive silence. We can see from the sermons he preached to his lay congregation that he believed silence was necessary for the absorption of the Word of God preached. Again and again he reminds his congregants at the beginning of his sermons to listen in silence.[60] He even devotes an entire sermon to the subject, *Sermo* 78, entitled 'An Admonition to Observe Silence in the Church'.[61] Silence was not the

[58] Caesarius, *Vereor*, 7; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 320; tr. Klingshirn, p. 135. Cf. *Sermo* 72.2; ed. Morin, 1, p. 304.
[59] *Reg virg* 18; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 192.
[60] Caesarius, *Sermones* 19.3, 92.1, 116A.1, 118.1, 138.1, 196.4.
[61] '*Ammonitio ut silentium in ecclesia praebeatur*', *Sermo* 78.

only requirement, however; listening with an attentive heart focused on what is being heard was crucial. Words washing over the ears would do the hearer no good, and, in fact, would be harmful. To counter the commonly held idea that the benefit of church attendance was solely in participation in the Eucharist, Caesarius shockingly tells his congregants that listening inattentively to the Word preached is as terrible as dropping the consecrated host.[62] Caesarius seemed to think that women especially necessitated additional warning to be silent and attentive in church. He found they lolled around in church, actually lying down on the floor, and were prone to gossip during the sermon, distracting others.[63] When he describes the new-found virtues of the repentant Ninevites once they had heard the preaching of Job, he tells that there was now silence among the women.[64] In highlighting the silent attitude of women as a virtue, Caesarius was no doubt referring to Paul's instruction about women keeping silent in church.[65] That it was his view that women particularly needed reminding of this is revealed by the fact that the *Regula ad virgines* contains many more clauses directed toward the need for silence than the *Regula ad monachos*. The consistency between his sermons to lay people and his sermons to monastics concerning the necessity to listen in silence demonstrates the applicability Caesarius saw in Cassian's programme to people of all different vocations.

Silence is also necessary for developing humility, which Caesarius considered to be the highest virtue. [66] Monastics were not to answer back when being reprimanded, neither

[62] *Sermo* 78.2; ed. Morin, 1, pp. 323-3.
[63] *Sermo* 78.1; ed. Morin, 1, p. 323.
[64] *Sermo* 143.1; ed. Morin, 1, p. 588.
[65] 1 Corinthians 14:34.
[66] *Sermo* 233.5; ed. Morin, 2, pp. 927-8. Cf. Caesarius, *Vereor* 3; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 320. Even though Caesarius states, along with Augustine, that love is the highest virtue, in practice for him it is humility, just as it is for Cassian. Cf. *Sermo* 234.2-3 (ed. Morin, 2, pp. 933-4), and *Sermo* 235.6 (ed. Morin, 2, p. 939).

were they to murmur, even within their own hearts.[67] Their silence must be all pervasive. A silent tongue, extending to a silent heart in the face of orders or teaching from authority, not only requires humility, but also demonstrates it. In this way, silence acts as both an instrument to foster the growth in virtue of the monastics as well as revealing their progress in eradicating sin.

Silence can also be healing. Caesarius brings into play medical metaphor when he discusses how to treat a quarrelsome or garrulous person: the 'healing remedy of [keeping] silence (*medicamentum taciturnitatis*)' ought to be applied.[68] This method will 'restore health'. More often, however, he uses the metaphor to describe the danger of silence. When a person has committed sin, silence is dangerous and indicates an unrepentant attitude. Sin, Caesarius tells us, is a wound, and to remain silent when we ought to confess is to allow the wound to fester.[69] Confessional speech brings healing. Furthermore, to remain silent in the face of someone else's sin is to sin ourselves. If a snake were to bite someone and we failed to help, that would be sin. Since sin is like a wound, Caesarius admonishes monastics to rebuke each other, or be party to their sin. [70] Choosing to rebuke the offender is like saving him or her from mortal danger. As silence can both heal and harm, discernment is necessary. This is why Caesarius tells us that both talking more and keeping silence more than we ought are sins which must be carefully dealt with.[71] The final verdict, however, comes down in favour of silence. Silence is the preferred state for monastics, and Caesarius saw no difference between male and female monastics in this regard.

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[67] *Sermo* 233.6; ed. Morin, 2, pp. 928-9. Also, *Reg virg* 13, 17, 28, 31, 32, and 35; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 190, 192, 206-8, 210, 210-12, and 216-18.
[68] *Sermo* 156.6; ed. Morin, 2, pp. 640; tr. Mueller, 2, p. 353.
[69] *Sermo* 59.1; ed. Morin, 1, p. 259.
[70] *Reg virg* 24; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 200-2.
[71] *Sermo* 179.3; ed. Morin, 2, pp. 725-6.

In the letter Caesarius writes to his sister, it becomes immediately apparent as to the importance Caesarius places on controlling the tongue. He lays out the steps for success in the religious life, and much of it has to do with restraining speech. First, he says, the nuns must conquer drunkenness and gluttony, along with the pride which comes from having accomplished this. Next, 'the soul should lay down the foundations of deep humility'. Along with fleeing envy and ensuring modesty of dress, the nuns are to do this by checking the tongue, rejecting slander, and eschewing idle speech, including listening to such speech. For the final step, Caesarius expounds upon one of his favourite themes, the reading of scripture. Once these sins are gone, the void must be filled with the Word of God:

> [the soul] should frequently read a passage itself or listen to someone else's reading with an avid heart. It should constantly draw the water of salvation from the fountains of divine scripture, that water about which the Lord speaks, 'Whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from within him'.[72] The holy soul should constantly try to adorn itself with the flowers of paradise, that is, with the contents of the holy scriptures. From these it should uninterruptedly hang precious pearls from its ears. From these it should arrange rings and bracelets by doing good works. There it should seek the remedies for wounds, the spices of chastity, the sacrifices of remorse.[73]

Caesarius uses one of his favourite images to distinguish between pure and impure speech. He describes impure speech as able to inflict wounds, whilst pure speech provides the cure to these wounds, as well as other maladies. Some women, he says, 'prefer to inflict wounds by disparaging one another and murmuring (*murmurando*) against their superior than to prepare spiritual remedies'.[74] These remedies are supplied through 'holy conversation (*sancta conloquia*)'. The state of the heart will be reflected in their speech:

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[72] John 7:38
[73] Caesarius, *Vereor*, 3; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 304; tr. Klingshirn, p. 131.
[74] Caesarius, *Vereor*, 6; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 316; tr. Klingshirn, p. 134.

> For if nothing evil is thought in your heart, whatever comes forth from your mouth is holy. As it has been written: "The mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart." For the tongue is accustomed to say whatever the conscience has provided from the workshop of the heart. And so if you wish to bring forth good things from your mouth, always think holy thoughts in your heart.[75]

Whilst most of the surviving sermons were directed toward a lay audience, he also wrote some specifically for a monastic audience, including one directed towards monks and nuns.[76] In this sermon, he also used the imagery of wounds and medicine to describe speech. He writes, 'Let us not be of the number of those who not only refuse to heal wounds that have been inflicted by exceedingly bitter tongues, but even strive to injure those that are healthy.'[77] He links impure speech with inattention to divine reading:

> The ancient enemy…first encourages God's servants or handmaids whom he knows are lukewarm and careless to be occupied with idle gossip (*otiosis fabulis*), invites them to disobedience through murmuring (*murmurando*) or detraction (*detrahendo*), and makes them very sluggish in listening to reading. Then when he has introduced into their hearts insensibility and, so to speak, the dross of tepidity, he prepares them for any kind of wicked deed and compels them unhappily to serve all sorts of vice and carelessness.[78]

An unguarded heart, one which is not filled with divine learning, is open to the distraction which impure speech brings. These sins of speech, sins which stem from the condition of the heart, lead into sins of deed. A pure heart, on the other hand, will yield up virtue through the mouth: 'Happy, then, are those souls that through the gift of Christ strive to fill their hearts with the spices of different virtues in such a way that

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[75] Caesarius, *Vereor*, 6; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 320; tr. Klingshirn, p. 135. cf. Matthew 12:34.
[76] *Sermo* 237. This sermon is addressed '*ad servos vel ancillas dei*' (*Sermo* 237.1; ed. Morin, 2, p. 944). This choice of address is repeated elsewhere in the sermon as well. When we consider that Caesarius's sermons were recorded and passed on as exemplars for other preachers, it becomes apparent that Caesarius intended this sermon to be preached to both male and female monastics. He makes no distinction, therefore, between the genders in the advice he gives concerning the ascetic life in this sermon.
[77] *Sermo* 237.1; ed. Morin, 2, p. 945; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 215.
[78] *Sermo* 237.3; ed. Morin, 2, p. 946; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 216.

nothing but charity and humility ever proceeds from their lips, nothing but chastity and meekness and obedience.'[79]

Memorising the scriptures is of prime importance to Caesarius. Having the scriptures stored up in the monastic's memory makes good grain available for the millstones of the mind. In another of his monastic sermons, Caesarius says that there is no excuse for not memorising the scriptures. Indeed, monks are lying if they give the excuse of a poor memory, for God has given to all 'a room' in which to put 'God's coin' – the treasure that is the Word of God.[80] Scripture laid up in the heart gives the monks the weapons they need to fight against the devil: 'The psalms are the weapons of the servants of God. The man who clings to the psalms does not fear the enemy.'[81] The battlefield is the mind of the monastic, and it is there that the scriptures must reside through memorisation. He writes, 'If we return to our psalms rather frequently, brethren, we shut off the approach to worldly thoughts; the spiritual song dominates, and carnal thoughts depart…[the devil] suggests adverse thoughts, in order that he may kill us if he can; on the other hand, we have right thoughts, if we read the psalms aloud quite frequently.'[82] Speaking the scriptures out loud, as in the reading or the recitation of psalms, is especially powerful because it is God's words which are being spoken, and therefore like God Himself is speaking.

Speech can also have power against the devil. Caesarius encourages monastics to speak scriptural truth directly to the devil in order to resist him and cause him to flee. He preaches, '…say to the one who is tempting us: Do not persuade me, devil, to defile the

[79] *Sermo* 237.5; ed. Morin, 2, p. 948; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 218.
[80] *Sermo* 238.1; ed. Morin, 2, p. 950; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 220.
[81] *Sermo* 238.2; ed. Morin, 2, p. 950; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 221.
[82] *Sermo* 238.2; ed. Morin, 2, p. 950; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 221.

image of my God by listening to you. He suffered for me, He was covered in spittle for me, He was struck with blows on the cheek for me. He was scourged for me, He was hung on a cross for me. This the servant of God should say to his tempter: Truly, you are not persuading me to do what you are urging.'[83] Confessing scriptural truth out loud fills the ears of the monastic with pure words and blocks out the impure, tempting words of the devil.

The pure words of scripture were Caesarius's main defence against the devil, and he sought to have not just monastics but also his lay congregants build up this spiritual blockade. Aeonius had complained about his unruly church, hoping that Caesarius would be able to bring about some order once he became bishop.[84] Caesarius's reforms included teaching the laity to fill their mouths, ears, and minds with divine words through the memorising of psalms and the singing of hymns and antiphons in the manner of Caesarius's ascetic clergy. [85] He had instructed his clergy to observe the monastic offices in the public basilica so that the laity might participate,[86] thereby bringing a small part of the ascetic life into their reach, a move of which Salvian would have approved. The purpose of this was to direct the minds and mouths of the laity away from gossip – in other words, from impure speech. It was Cassian's same programme, applied in a more general context due to the wider pastoral concern of Bishop Caesarius.

[83] *Sermo* 238.2; ed. Morin, 2, p. 951; tr. Mueller, 3, p. 222.
[84] *VCae* 1.13; ed. Krusch, p. 461.
[85] *VCae* 1.19; ed. Krusch, pp. 463-4.
[86] *VCae*, 1.15; ed. Krusch, p. 462.

Monastics, however, were in the safe port of the monastery, and therefore more able to focus on the smaller sins of speech.[87] When they, through diligent effort, had employed the Word of God to crowd out all vice from their minds, the result was an infilling of the holiness which was the very essence of the scriptures which now resounded within their hearts. Here, we find that silence and speech are irrevocably interconnected. Silence is in truth the silencing of the monastic's own thoughts – thoughts which were idle or introduced by the devil – for the purpose of creating a space which might be filled by the speech of God – either direct speech through the reading or reciting of the scriptures, or thoughts concerning God from the Word preached or the monastic's rumination. Silence was never an emptiness, an absence of words, but rather it was an active suppression of some words in favour of others, whether they were spoken aloud or not.

That the Word of God expounded was a desirable filling for the silent space inside the disciple was a foundational belief of Caesarius. As the late-antique desert ascetics filled the minds of their disciples with sayings and spiritual conferences, so Caesarius sought to fill the minds of monastics with his preaching. This extended, not just to monastics, but also to the laity of Arles, and even to all of Christendom, as far as he could extend his influence. He believed that, as a bishop, he had the divinely-appointed role of watchman, and the obligation to call attention to the sin of his people.[88] Unlike other bishops who saw preaching as a burden which they unloaded onto their priests, Caesarius saw preaching as his responsibility before God. Caesarius had acquired a good education in Latin grammar as a young man in Chalon. It may seem surprising,

[87] *Sermo* 234.4 (ed. Morin, 2, p. 934-5). Also cf. *Sermo* 235.1-2 (ed. Morin, 2, p. 936-7), where Caesarius describes the monastery as a safe port.
[88] See, for instance, *Sermo* 1.11 or 231.2; ed. Morin, 1, p. 7 or 2 p. 916. Cf. Ezekiel 33:7-9.

then, to discover the unusual simplicity of his writing, particularly of his sermons. Caesarius had spent some time as a teacher of grammar,[89] and he also later studied under Pomerius, a famed rhetorician who had fled Africa during Vandal persecution and had come to Arles in the late fifth century.[90] The simplicity of style and syntax in his sermons was a conscious theological choice. Preaching was for communicating, and if the majority of his congregation – the uneducated laity – could not understand, then he had not fulfilled his role as a watchman, commissioned to cry out without ceasing.[91] Thus, Caesarius favoured plain speech. Whereas Augustine advocated for changing rhetorical style to suit the intended purpose of the speaker, Caesarius adapted his style to the ability of his audience. When he wrote for a more educated audience, such as in his letters or his monastic sermons, his style was of a higher variety. The simplicity of language in his sermons, however, was not without conscious rhetoric, and there is a certain eloquence which comes from the subject under discussion rather than from the style.[92] Despite his training, however, his writing is almost completely devoid of classical references; the two that do appear are enough to hint at a classical education typical of the period.[93] For Caesarius, though, there were no 'safe' classics – all of pagan learning was useless.[94] He maintained that there was no difference between 'high' and 'low' pagan culture, no difference between the rhetorician and the sacred grove.[95] For Caesarius, there could be no synthesis of secular and sacred learning. His

[89] He apparently taught Florianus. See Klingshirn, *Making of a Community*, p. 19.
[90] *VCae* 1.9; ed. Krusch, p. 460.
[91] Isaiah 58:1.
[92] Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West*, tr. John J. Contreni (Columbia, 1976), p. 92.
[93] There is one quotation from Juvenal in *Sermo* 222, and a reference to Virgil which is used in three sermons (*Sermones* 50, 152, and 207). Riché, however, thinks that the Virgil reference was borrowed from a Church Father, and notes Jerome's use of it in *Ep*. 14.4. See Riché, *Education and Culture*, pp. 114-5.
[94] Alberto Ferreiro, '"*Frequenter Legere*": The Propagation of Literacy, Education, and Divine Wisdom in Caesarius of Arles', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1992), p. 11.
[95] See, for instance, *Sermones* 1, 4, 7, and 8. Also see Ferreiro, 'Missionary Tactics', p. 236.

purpose for preaching was to bring about holiness in his listeners, and pagan references would not help in that objective.

The reason that such a large number of Caesarius's sermons remain to us today is that Caesarius himself promoted their promulgation. He would send texts of his sermons with people who passed through Arles, whether they asked for copies or not.[96] According to his *vita*, he sent sermons throughout Gaul, Italy, and even as far away as Spain, and today's manuscript evidence corroborates this.[97] He hoped that by sending his sermons far and wide, bishops and clerics would read them to their congregations, thereby fulfilling their calls to be the watchmen of the church. It was not enough for him to fulfil his duty; he was compelled to help others fulfil their duty as well. Caesarius declared that books kept shining and immaculate on the shelves do no one any good.[98] His sermons ought to be read, taught, transcribed, and passed on. He was not, however, merely trying to promote his own works. As mentioned above, he would also include in his collections sermons written by others, such as Augustine, Jerome, and Faustus. He would change them to suit his audience as necessary. His goal was to provide sermons which anyone could preach, even uneducated deacons. When a bishop, for whatever reason, could not preach, someone else needed to take his place, because the people still needed to hear. He himself practiced this, having members of his clergy preach if he was too ill.[99]

[96] *VCae* 1.55; ed. Krusch, pp. 479-80.
[97] *VCae* 1.55; ed. Krusch, p. 480. His sermons are found in the *Homiliary of Toledo* from Visigothic Spain. See Ferreiro, 'Missionary Tactics', p. 228.
[98] *Sermo* 2; ed. Morin, pp. 18-19.
[99] *VCae* 1.54; ed. Krusch, p. 478.

Caesarius, therefore, laid great importance on teaching. Unlike the late-antique desert ascetics, however, he did not have stringent requirements for who could take up the post. They believed that teaching should – and, indeed, could only – be done by spiritual masters, those who had already reached the state of perfection. How could someone teach what he did not already know?[100] Caesarius, on the other hand, believed in the power of the message more than in the necessity of a pure heart. In this, he was an Augustinian. Truth for him was truth, no matter whose mouth it came out of, and the efficacy upon the hearer was the same whether it came from a householder, a bishop, or an ascetic. In this way, Caesarius endorsed even non-ascetics as teachers. Caesarius taught a plain speech whose authority came from the truth it contained rather than from the character of the speaker. This departure from the insistence upon spiritually-perfect teachers suited Caesarius's circumstances and objectives better: he was a bishop, responsible for monastics as well as the laity with their uncommitted desire toward holiness, and he aspired to turn the whole group of spiritually diverse people into a Christian community. This was a challenge which the late-antique desert ascetics did not face.

Caesarius's solution was to extend the teaching station to everyone. He admonished the laity to read the scriptures at home and discuss them.[101] If someone did not know how to read, surely, Caesarius said, he could find someone who could read the scriptures for him; he even advocated the illiterate to hire someone to read to them.[102] It was not just the bishops who were the watchmen of the church – every Christian was a watchman.[103] Heads of households, he declared, must go home and teach what they had learned to

[100] *Conl.* 14.9; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 194.
[101] *Sermo* 6.8; ed. Morin, 1, pp. 44-5.
[102] *Sermo* 6.2, 8; 8.1; ed. Morin, 1, pp. 39-40, 44-5; 49-50.
[103] *Sermo* 225.4; ed. Morin, 2, p. 890.

their children or relatives who could not attend church, because they were responsible for their souls, too.[104] The people ought to discuss his sermons together, reminding each other about what had been preached, so that, in that way, they would be able to remember the whole. Monastics are to be constantly advising one another towards love, humility, and obedience.[105]None of this depended upon the character of the teacher, but upon the all-important holiness of the Word read and preached. The speaking of holiness – from mouth to ear to heart – by every person at every level of society was the method Caesarius believed would bring about the transformation of the city of Arles. This method was so much a part of his legacy that it would be mentioned again and again by his biographers.[106]

Aurelianus of Arles

After Caesarius's death in 542, and after the short tenure of Caesarius's successor Auxanius, Aurelianus was selected to be the bishop of Arles in 546. A very well-connected young man, he was the son of Sacerdos, Bishop of Lyon,[107] and, at twenty-three, was actually too young to be bishop, which had a minimum age of thirty.[108] King Childebert personally made the selection of Aurelianus, whose father supplied the king with important political support.[109] The relationship between Childebert and Aurelianus continued, and, in 547, soon after Aurelianus's ascension, they together founded one of the first royal monasteries, the monastery of St. Peter in Arles. Childebert endowed it

[104] *Sermo* 130.5; 74.4; ed. Morin, 1, p. 538; pp. 308-9. He told them that they were responsible for their slaves' souls, as well. See *VCae* 1.61; ed. Krusch, p. 482.
[105] *Sermo* 237.1; ed. Morin, 2, pp. 944-5.
[106] *VCae* 1.15, 17, 18, 45, 54, 59; 2.5, 6, 33, and 34; ed. Krusch, pp. 462, 463, 463, 474, 478, 481; pp. 485, 486, 496, and 496.
[107] Martin Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien* (Munich, 1976), pp. 136-7.
[108] See, for instance, *Concilium Agathense* a.506, cap. 17, ed. C. Munier, *CCSL* 148 (Turnholt, 1963), p. 201: '*Presbyterum uero uel episcopum ante triginta annos, idest antequam ad uiri perfecti aetatem ueniant, nullus metropolitanorum ordinare praesumat*'.
[109] Klingshirn, *Making of a Community*, p. 262.

financially, but the prestige of royal patronage would have been the most important element of its foundation. They furnished the monastery with a dazzling array of relics: those of the holy cross, John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, local Gallic saints, St. Genesius (a patron of Arles), all the apostles, Stephen, Hilary (probably of Poitiers), Martin, and Caesarius himself.[110] Aurelianus had no monastic history himself, and was one of the first people to found a monastery without either being a monk or intending to become one himself.[111] Despite his inexperience, he wrote a *Rule* for St. Peter's, known as the *Regula ad monachos*. This *Rule* was based on Caesarius's *Regula ad monachos*, but included parts of his *Regula ad virgines.* In particular, Aurelianus stipulated that the monks be fully enclosed, never leaving the monastery once they had entered. This is the only monastic rule for men with such a requirement. The monks, like the nuns of St. John's, were not even to pray publicly in church, though the monks had their own basilica into which outsiders were not allowed, whilst the nuns were not allowed into the basilica adjoining their convent.[112]

Aurelianus's *Rules* tend not to attract much scholarly attention. He often quotes Caesarius verbatim, and almost everything in them is taken from Caesarius. Also, his *Rules* commanded little influence; only one other rule, the *Regula Ferrioli*, uses it.[113] Its lack of influence is also apparent in the fact that it only survives in Benedict of Aniane's *Codex Regularum*, a ninth-century collection of monastic rules.[114] The differences between the *Rules* of Aurelianus and Caesarius, though small, are still

[110] Aurelianus of Arles, *Regula ad monachos*, *PL* 68 (1866), col. 396.
[111] Diem, '*…ut si professus*', p. 196.
[112] Aurelianus, *Regula ad monachos*, 14, *PL* 68, col. 399; *Reg virg* 3; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 182.
[113] Diem, '*…ut si professus*', p. 192.
[114] Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 28118. There is also a fifteenth-century copy of this manuscript: Cologne, Stadtarchiv W 231. Some fragments of the *Rules* can also be found in Benedict's *Concordia Regularum* and Smaragdus of St. Mihiel's *Expositio in Regulam S. Benedicti*. See Diem, '*…ut si professus*', p. 193.

significant. Aurelianus's *Regula ad monachos* is stylistically superior to Caesarius's. It is organised, and lacks the anxiety which pervades Caesarius's *Rule*. Where Caesarius's *Rules* were written and adapted in response to the needs of living communities, Aurelianus's *Rule* was written for the foundation of a community, neither reflecting a living community nor any monastic experience on the part of the author.[115] It is organised by theme, with enclosure taking the prime place. The Latin is of a higher variety, as Aurelianus did not share Caesarius's desire for simple language.[116]

Aurelianus also founded a female monastery, the convent of St. Mary. The foundation date for this institution is unknown, though Klingshirn thinks it likely that it was founded in the same year as St. Peter's.[117] He also suspects that Childebert helped to found St. Mary's, but there is no evidence to support this. His name is conspicuously missing from the prologue of the *Rule* Aurelianus wrote for the nuns, which makes his involvement highly doubtful. [118] Recently, Albrecht Diem has argued that the convent of St. Mary was located right next to the convent of St. John, attached to the same basilica, the Basilica of St. Mary, located within the walls of Arles.[119] The basilica was the location of Caesarius's tomb, so it had already become the location of his cult. Why Aurelianus would build his convent directly next to Caesarius's is not clear, nor why he

[115] Diem, '…*ut si professus*', p. 207.
[116] Aurelianus used rhyming prose. See Schmidt, *Zur Komposition der Mönchsregel II*, p. 18 (cited in Diem, '…*ut si professus*', p. 206, n. 92).
[117] Klingshirn, *Making of a Community*, p. 262.
[118] The beginning of the prologue of the *Regula ad monachos* states that Aurelianus founded the monastery *jubente rege Childeberto*'; in contrast, the beginning of the prologue of the *Regula ad virgines* states that he founded it '*Deo jubente*', with no mention of Childebert. Aurelianus of Arles, *Regula ad virgines*, *PL* 68, cols. 399-406. Also see Diem, '…*ut si professus*', pp. 214-5.
[119] Diem, '*...ut si professus*', p. 211. Diem's argument is convincing. He maintains that, as Mary was an uncommon patron saint in this period, it is unlikely that there were two basilicas dedicated to her in the same city. Further, we know that the door to the convent of St. John was inside the basilica, and that the nuns of St. Mary prayed all their hours in the basilica. Thus, the two foundations were attached to the same church. As for locating the basilica inside the walls, he notes the address in the prologue to the *Regula ad virgines*: '*Sanctis et in Christo venerandis sororibus in monasterio Sanctae Mariae quod deo iubente* intra muros *Arelatensis urbis fecimus constitutis*…' (emphasis mine).

did not endow St. John's instead. Diem speculates that St. John's may have been at capacity, and that another foundation was needed; indeed, Caesarius's *vita* tells us that there were already 200 nuns at St. John's 30 years after its foundation.[120] This, however, does not justify the foundation of a second convent directly next to the first, as it meant there would have been room for an expansion of St. John's. Caesarius had gone to great lengths to ensure that the bishop would not interfere at St. John's,[121] which would have stifled any changes Aurelianus might have wished to make. This was a compelling reason for a new convent, especially in the light of Caesarius's insistence that his *Rule* not be changed. In order to mould a convent according to his own ideas, Aurelianus would have had to found his own.

The Convent of St. John's had brought prestige to the city, but it was heavily associated with Caesarius. The royal patron of Aurelianus's male foundation overshadowed him. Aurelianus wanted an institution which would bring prestige to himself. In order to do this, he wanted a group which could be seen and heard. The people knew that the nuns of St. John's and the monks of St. Peter's were there, but it is easy to forget what you do not regularly see. Though his *Regula ad virgines* is very similar to his *Regula ad monachos*,[122] there is one addition of great significance: Aurelianus's nuns were to pray publicly in the basilica.[123] With multiple public performances each day, the voices of the praying nuns would demonstrate to the city of Arles their bishop's paternal benevolence in providing them with divine protection.

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[120] *VCae* 2.47; ed. Krusch, p. 500.
[121] There are injunctions against episcopal involvement in the *Reg virg*, as well as it being a main theme of his *Testamentum*.
[122] There are 55 chapters in the *Regula ad monachos* and only 40 in the *Regula ad virgines*, but nearly all of the *Regula ad virgines* is merely taken from the *Regula ad monachos*.
[123] Diem, '…*ut si professus*', p. 212.

In founding his new female convent right next to St. John's, Aurelianus may also have been mindful of the fact that St. Mary's basilica was the final resting place of Caesarius. Without the prestige of royal patronage for his convent, Aurelianus sought the patronage of his holy predecessor. With the nuns praying over top of Caesarius's grave, Aurelianus created a connection between his foundation and the holy saint, and, by extension, with himself. When Caesarius decreed that he be buried in the basilica of St. Mary, it was his last act of protection for his monastery.[124] The cult that would arise on the site would keep the nuns of St. John's from being forgotten. He could not have conceived that within a few years another convent would have been erected directly next to his own.

The frequent public performances in the basilica marked a big difference between the nuns of St. Mary's and the nuns of St. John's, and points to the big difference between the monastic theologies of Aurelianus and Caesarius. Childebert would have had influence into the organisation of St. Peter's, so it is St. Mary's which truly reflects Aurelianus's theology. Whilst Caesarius conceived of enclosure as a safe haven for his nuns, a place where they were protected from some aspects of the spiritual battle which was the ascetic life, Aurelianus regarded the ascetic life as a sacrifice rather than a battle.[125] Entering into an enclosed monastery without the chance of ever returning to the world was a great sacrifice, but keeping the nuns completely out of the public eye was going too far for Aurelianus. There was much to be gained by their presence in the basilica, and Aurelianus stipulated that all of the monastic hours were to be celebrated there.[126] The monks of St. Peter's were kept completely away from the public eye, and

[124] Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', p. 471.
[125] Diem, '*...ut si professus*', pp. 200-3.
[126] Only in the case of extreme cold were the nuns allowed to celebrate in their own oratory. Aurelianus, *Regula ad virgines*, 38, *PL* 68, col. 400.

this suited their royal patron just fine; it was as though the monastery existed solely for the sake of Childebert and his pious wife Ultrogotha. The convent of St. Mary, however, was a project all Aurelianus's own, and he did not want to hide his nuns completely from the eyes of the public. Instead, their public displays of prayer served to remind the people that their bishop supplied the city with the supernatural protection of the virgins' prayers, thereby increasing his prestige and reputation amongst the people. As their voices filled the basilica, their purity was proclaimed for all to hear, and thus the efficacy of their prayers. As a successor to Caesarius, young and inexperienced, he must have felt himself in the shadow of the great saint. In order to further his own reputation in the city, he harnessed the holy power of Caesarius through the use of his *Rule* and relics and put them on display through the presence of his praying nuns. Any prestige he would have gained was short lived, however, as he died young in 551.

The *Vita Caesarii*

Aurelianus's new convent, with its nuns whose voices rang out in prayer and psalmody over the tomb of the saint, threatened to push the nuns of St. John's into obscurity behind their walls. Caesaria II, now abbess of St. John's, decided to take action.[127] She therefore commissioned the *Vita Caesarii*, a work which highlights Caesarius's connection with her convent and which was written within seven years of his death. Klingshirn points out that the amount of space the *vita* devotes to the theme of Caesarius as founder was highly unusual for the time, especially considering that he never resided within the convent.[128] The *vita* also reminded readers that Caesarius's

[127] Caesaria II was abbess from c. 523 to her death, sometime before 561. She succeeded Caesaria I, who was probably her aunt.
[128] Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', p. 465.

relics belonged to St. John's, and therefore not to the nuns of St. Mary's.[129] Linking the monastery to St. Caesarius's cult in the minds of the people would perhaps bring patronage and recruits to the convent, diverting them from St. Mary's. As the financial situation of St. John's was so tenuous, rich donations from wealthy patrons were necessary; even better would be the lands bestowed upon the monastery when a wealthy young virgin entered. The monastery must be seen as worthy of the rich daughters of the citizens of Arles in order for the ranks of the convent to grow. The *Vita Caesarii* seeks to show just that.

The authors were a group of bishops and clerics who knew Caesarius well.[130] The text is divided into two parts. The first part was penned by three bishops, Cyprianus, Firminus, and Viventius, and contains the more 'official' aspects of Caesarius's life: his beginnings, his monastic ventures, his works as bishop. Two clerics, Messianus and Stephanus, wrote the second book containing his miracles and an account of his last illness and death. This book is more personal, as the cleric-authors lived in Caesarius's own household. Though split into two books with several authors, the whole *vita* has an overall structure which spans both books and points to a single architect, likely Cyprianus.[131] After a lengthy introduction, the *vita* begins with a long narrative about Caesarius's early life, up until about 514. Next comes a section about his miracles, some dateable, but not in chronological order. A shorter section follows containing

[129] *VCae* 2.50; ed. Krusch, p. 501. Though he was buried in the Basilica of St. Mary, the *vita* is careful to define this as 'where the holy bodies of the nuns from his monastery are buried.'
[130] Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', p. 442.
[131] There is evidence that Cyprianus wrote most of the first book, probably chapters 1-58, with Firminus and Viventius writing 69-63. He was also the senior bishop of the three, and a close friend of Caesarius. See Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', p. 450. The overall structure was first identified by Samuel Cavallin (see Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', pp. 448-9) who saw Book 1 as modelled after Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini* and Book 2 as modelled after the *Dialogues.*

miracles which occurred after his death, and the *vita* ends with a narrative of his final illness and death.

Though one of Caesaria's main purposes in commissioning the *vita* was likely to reclaim the cult of Caesarius for St. John's, it was not the only purpose for the work; with so many authors, multiple purposes were envisioned. [132] Other bishops were intended to benefit, and much space in the *vita* is given to Caesarius as the model bishop. Childebert and other members of the Frankish royal family were expected readers; Childebert comes off well in the *vita*, whilst Caesarius's good relations with the Franks are emphasised.[133] The miracle stories were aimed at all levels of society as Caesarius heals important aristocrats, members of the clergy, and members of the laity. Everyone was intended to read and benefit from Caesarius's *vita*. The nuns of St. John's, however, would have received specific instruction for the ascetic life from the example of Caesarius as conveyed by the authors.

The authors were disciples of Caesarius,[134] and right from the beginning of the work his influence is apparent. The introduction describes Caesarius's way of writing as being unadorned, preferring to imitate fisherman than rhetoricians.[135] The authors then go on to say that they intend to do the same. Though the pleading of uneducated style is a universal trope, the preface goes beyond mere commonplace when it appeals to Caesarius's own example. Caesarius as teacher is an important theme of both books, and the preface sets this up.

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[132] Klingshirn, 'Caesarius' Monastery', p. 452.
[133] One example of this is his ransoming of Frankish captives, despite opposition and the fact that the Franks were still mainly pagan at the time. See *VCae* 1.32-33; ed. Krusch, p. 469.
[134] *VCae* 1.1; ed. Krusch, p. 457.
[135] *VCae* 1.2; ed. Krusch, pp. 457-8.

Caesarius teaches and preaches constantly in the *vita*. Clerics, bishops, and all kinds of people come to see him, and he uses the opportunity to exhort them.[136] He especially reproaches and warns bishops to preach, quoting Isaiah 6:5: 'Woe to me because I was silent!'[137] In this way, the Caesarius of the *vita* is similar to the real Caesarius. On deeper inspection, however, the authors do not hold to the same belief that all people should teach. Their emphasis, rather, is on the teaching of Caesarius as a bishop made effective by his holy character. Others are not shown teaching, and though he encourages others to teach, these are bishops or priests who may read the works of other bishops, like himself or Augustine. For Cyprianus and the other authors who had already admitted to valuing plain speech, the message was still dependent upon the character of the speaker. They are careful to tell us that Caesarius only taught what he already did by example, a foundational requirement for Cassian.[138] Furthermore, they also stress that Caesarius sent his sister Caesaria I to a convent in Marseille 'to learn what she would teach, and to be a pupil before becoming a teacher'.[139] The Caesarius of the *vita*, it seems, was not as *avant garde* as his model. Though he pushes priests to read sermons prepared by bishops, the words they are speaking are really based in the character of the bishops, rather than in their own. Thus, the kind of teacher the authors envisioned was more akin to Cassian's version than Caesarius's.

The authors do, however, carry on Caesarius's, and therefore the late-antique Cassian's, emphasis upon the importance of controlling thoughts through the continuous recitation of scripture. They remark upon Caesarius's incredible memory and how he was

[136] *VCae* 1.17; ed. Krusch, p. 463.
[137] *VCae* 1.18; ed. Krusch, p. 463.
[138] *VCae* 1.46; ed. Krusch, p. 475. *Conl.* 14.9; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 194.
[139] *VCae* 1.35; ed. Krusch, p. 470; tr. Klingshirn, pp. 26-7.

endlessly filling it with divine words.[140] They tell of how he fled his classical studies in terror after a dream in which a snake wound itself around him and bit his arm which was resting upon a classical book given him to study by Pomerius.[141] He would not allow influence from a pagan source to compete for space in his mind with the scriptures. Instead, whenever he was not meditating or preaching, he would have the scriptures read to him,[142] thereby filling those moments with the voice of God as well.

Remembrance is stressed in the *Vita Caesarii*. To facilitate this, the authors pick up upon Caesarius's penchant for describing the Word of God as food, describing how he required food for both the body and the soul at meal times, when the scriptures were read for a 'double feast'.[143] Messianus and Stephanus describe how Caesarius would quiz the clerics at his table about what they had just eaten, but in reference to what they had just heard rather than what food they had consumed.[144] This habit of his caused his clerics to sigh, because, whilst they could not remember what had been read, they could anticipate his response. Caesarius says,

> I know that if I asked you what we ate for dinner and even what you had for the afternoon meal, you would remember. But if we asked what was read at table, you would not remember. From this it is to be understood that we remember what tastes good to us. But we do not remember what not only seems insipid on the palate of our heart but perhaps even disgusts us.[145]

Caesarius's response shows that for the authors of the *vita*, listening could not be a passive activity. Furthermore, the state of the heart governs how the divine reading is

[140] *VCae* 1.16; ed. Krusch, pp. 462-3.
[141] *VCae* 1.9; ed. Krusch, p. 460. Ferreiro points out the similarity of this dream to Jerome's vision, but notes that Caesarius, unlike Jerome, seems to have maintained an avoidance of classical learning afterwards. See Ferreiro, 'Missionary Tactics', p. 235.
[142] *VCae* 1.45 and 1.46; ed. Krusch, pp. 474 and 475.
[143] *VCae* 1.62; ed. Krusch, p. 483.
[144] *VCae* 2.31; ed. Krusch, p. 495.
[145] *VCae* 2.31; ed. Krusch, p. 495; tr. Klingshirn, p. 58.

received. Not being able to speak what was heard reveals the lukewarm heart of the listener, and the authors here use the forgetful clerics to underscore Caesarius's holiness.

For the authors, however, the ultimate indicator of true holiness is found in sleep. Cassian's metric used the sleeping mind as the supreme measuring stick for purity of heart, believing that when the mind was at rest and unguarded it would reveal any residue of sinfulness, manifesting itself through impure dreams and resulting in nocturnal emission. The authors of the *Vita Caesarii* took the Cassianic idea of the sleeping mind revealing sinfulness or purity, but conceived of another method of measurement: sleep-speech. Cyprianus, Firminus, and Viventius describe how Caesarius used to meditate even in his sleep: 'No hour of the day passed him by without meditation (*meditatio*) on the divine word, not even when he was sleeping; indeed, he frequently seemed to sleep and meditate at the same time, so that he might rightly and truly say, "The meditation of my heart is always in your sight"'.[146] That others understood Caesarius to be meditating rather than merely sleeping indicates that the meditation in which he was employed was not silent. This is supported by Jean Leclercq's study of the meaning of *meditatio*, which he describes as referring to the continual repeating aloud of a text in order to memorise and comprehend it.[147] Caesarius's mind was so filled with the Word of God that when he spoke in his sleep – or at least in a drowsy state – he would recite scripture.

[146] *VCae* 1.46; ed. Krusch, p. 475; tr. Klingshirn, pp. 32-3. Psalm 19:14.
[147] Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, pp. 15-17.

The authors of the second part of the *vita*, Messianus and Stephanus, used the same measure. They relate how Caesarius's sleep-speech was a frequent occurrence, manifesting in forms beyond *meditatio*:

> He had [God] in his heart not only in prayer and entreaty, but also at meals and on journeys, in conversation and in solitude, and in prosperity and adversity; even in his sleep he always had him with him. Indeed, we ourselves and our fellow servants who stayed in his cell know what we are talking about. Between the interruptions in his sleep that his age not only required but also sometimes demanded because of sickness – his spirit being ever vigilant – he used to say, "Come now, speak," as though he were advising someone to recite a psalm. No one doubts that he used to sing psalms spiritually with the saints or that he certainly fulfilled that saying of the prophet, "I sleep, and my heart remains on watch".[148] Frequently while asleep he used to preach about the future judgment and the eternal reward.[149]

This passage gives an intimate look at Caesarius's dream-life as mediated through somniloquy. Whilst in the above passage, the authors allow that he may not have been fully asleep, here there is no doubt. We hear him instructing and directing others, listening to scripture, singing psalms, and even preaching – all whilst asleep. All of this, the authors declare, is because Caesarius has God always in his heart. The authors use Song of Songs 5:2 to explain the connection between Caesarius's pure heart and his sleep-speech. The state of his heart is revealed through his speech as he dreams.

Stephanus goes on to relate a particular incident which he himself witnessed.[150] Entrusted with the duty of watching until it was time to awaken the other clerics of Caesarius's household for the night office, Stephanus hears the bishop whispering in his sleep, 'There are two places, there is no middle place, only two: either one ascends into heaven or descends into hell.' When he awakes, he tells Stephanus that he had been dreaming that he was exhorting someone concerning heaven and hell. Stephanus then

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[148] Song of Songs 5:2.
[149] *VCae* 2.5; ed. Krusch, p. 485; tr. Klingshirn, p. 45.
[150] *VCae* 2.6; ed. Krusch, pp. 485-6; tr. Klingshirn, pp. 45-6.

writes, ‘I replied, “You make it your habit to call out unceasingly [Isaiah 58:1].” At that moment, as a sinner myself, I thought he was always speaking about God and with him.’ Stephanus here provides the interpretation for Caesarius’s dream – he is always in conversation with or about God, and there is no moment when this is not the case. His somniloquy reveals his close relationship with God, which can only occur due to Caesarius’s one-track focus upon the words of God, either speaking them or hearing them.

Thus, the purity of the heart is now measured through sleep-speech focused solely upon God rather than on a lack of nocturnal emissions. The *vita*’s gauge is a positive one rather than a negative one, the presence of sleep-speech over the absence of nocturnal emissions. This difference reflects the development of the communal monastic community. Stephanus tells us that he was with several other clerics in Caesarius’s cell, which contrasts with the late-antique view of the cenobium as a gathering of separate cells with one or maybe two monks in each. Whereas tracking the frequency of nocturnal emissions would have been a task relegated to the individual, the monitoring of sleep-speech could be witnessed by anyone present. Because he lived in a private cell, a monk could choose whether or not to disclose the occurrence of an emission; sleep-speech, occurring in a communal context, provided a proof of purity which was witnessed by others. Furthermore, sleep-speech had the potential for happening every time someone slept, and indeed the *vita* portrays Caesarius speaking out in his sleep even several times a night. On the other hand, the wait to discover the purity of someone who had not had an emission was long – one emission-free night did not guarantee a heart free from sin. The sleeping mind is still the place where a person’s hidden sin will be revealed, but instead of an emission flowing from the body to

indicate sin, there is now the flow of God's own words – whether the recitation of scripture or the Word of God preached – to indicate purity. Using Cassian's metric, it could take months to discover the true state of one's own heart. As we have seen above, Cassian taught that the sleeping mind of the pure will comprehend the deeper meanings of scripture; here we see how the sleeping mind of the pure is manifested in scripture spoken aloud. As we shall see, later authors will use this development with efficacy to measure the holiness of the nuns of St. John's.

Caesaria II

Caesaria would have approved of the late-antique model of holiness the *Vita Caesarii* provided her nuns. She herself wrote a letter which reveals her to be a disciple of Caesarius and Cassian as well.[151] Queen Radegund had written to her for advice, a letter which has unfortunately been lost; this letter was her reply. The date of the letter is unknown, but she is thought to have written it around 550, when Radegund was founding her own monastery of the Holy Cross.[152] It was addressed to Richild and Radegund, Richild probably being the birth name of Agnes, the first abbess of the Holy Cross.[153] The letter gives a picture of what St. John's was like at the time of writing.

Caesaria II would likely have been a nun under her aunt, Caesaria I. Caesaria I, as mentioned above, spent time in a convent in Marseille, which may have been the one John Cassian founded.[154] Even if it was not, she must have drunk deeply of Cassian's

[151] Caesaria II, *Dominabus Sanctis Richildae et Radegundi Caesaria Exigua*, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé and Joël Courreau, *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres Monastiques*, I (Paris, 1988), pp. 476-95; tr. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whatley, *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, 1992), pp. 114-18.
[152] Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whatley, *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, 1992), p. 113.
[153] See De Vogüé's arguments in *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres Monastiques*, ed. Joel Courreau (2 vols, Paris, 1988), 1, pp. 451-4.
[154] This is the assumption of most scholars, probably because there is no record of another female monastery in Marseille at the time. See, for instance, Klingshirn, *Life and Testament* (Liverpool, 1994), p.

works, because his monastic theology pervades the whole of Caesaria II's letter. She stresses over and over again to Radegund the importance of a pure heart, saying that changing clothes – ie. conversion into a monastery – is not enough.[155] It is the state of the heart which matters. Outward virtues, even virginity, are second to purity of heart. She writes, 'Virginity of the flesh has no value where wrath lives in the heart.'[156] She warns Radegund against extreme ascetic behaviour, probably having heard of some of her exploits.[157] She speaks reason to Radegund, explaining why punishing the body is unwise: 'if you fall ill through excess, which God does not will, afterwards you will need delicacies and you will lose time and you will not be able to govern the blessed ones.'[158] It is not outward acts of great asceticism which impress God, but rather purity of heart gained through an intense study of the scriptures. The *Regula Caesarii*, which Caesaria sends along with the letter, will help to moderate her behaviour.

At the beginning of the letter, immediately after praising Radegund for choosing the life of a nun, she launches in to the major theme of the letter: the importance of reading the scriptures. She prays, 'May the Lord our God…lead you in the right way, teach you to do His will, grant that you may walk in His precepts and keep His commandments and meditate on His law.' From here, she moves into a series of biblical quotations extolling the importance of meditation upon scripture. Reading is of such importance that Caesaria recommends that Radegund not admit anyone into their convent who cannot read.[159] This underlines the importance Caesaria placed on reading, as Caesarius's *Rule*

27, n. 54; also, G. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis: Sermones*, *CCSL* 103-4 (2 vols, Turnhout, 1953), p. 96, n. 1.

[155] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 117.

[156] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 2, p. 116.

[157] For instance, see *VRad* 1.26 (ed. Krusch, p. 373), where Radegund purposefully brands herself twice with the sign of the cross.

[158] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 117.

[159] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 116.

allows for girls as young as six or seven to enter the monastery.[160] The age requirement is in place because that is the age when children can learn to read, write, and obey. Caesaria, however, wanted her nuns to be literate upon entrance.

The nuns should drink deeply of the scriptures. They should memorise them and meditate upon them. It is clear that Caesaria did this herself, as her letter is so full of biblical quotations that they seem to flow from her as though they were her own words. She discusses listening to scripture being read, telling Radegund that she should listen intently.[161] As Caesarius's biographers stress, this is not to be a passive exercise: 'Let the precepts of the Lord have your whole mind, your whole thought, your whole meditation.'[162] The mind must be entirely focussed on what is being read. Delving deep into scripture is more important than anything else the nuns do. Caesaria writes, 'Holy and good and laudable is the rule you have chosen to live by; but there is no teaching greater or better or more precious than the reading of the Gospel.'[163] The Lord is the ultimate teacher. Reading or listening to the scriptures being read is not enough. This is only the first step to filling the heart with God's word: scripture must be memorised. She mandated that all must memorise the psalter.[164]

Caesaria shared Caesarius's belief that the state of the heart is reflected in speech. This becomes apparent when she discusses the importance of enclosure and the complete avoidance of society with men. She reproduces a passage from Caesarius's letter to his sister, telling Radegund,

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[160] *Reg virg* 7; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 186.
[161] Ceasaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 115.
[162] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 115.
[163] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 115.
[164] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 116.

> If you want to maintain chastity, avoid familiarity with men as much as you are able. Nor say to anyone: "My conscience satisfies me, whatever anyone else cares to say about me." This is a poor enough excuse and hateful to God. For if your conscience is secure when you speak thus, you have not looked at that conscience![165]

The nun who speaks in this manner, betrays the impurity of her own heart. Perhaps Caesaria had heard about Radegund's close relationship with Venantius Fortunatus, which will be discussed below.[166]

Caesaria shared the monastic theology of her uncle, conceiving of the ascetic life as a spiritual battle. She warns Radegund that 'all that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.'[167] God rejoices over their conversion, but the Devil laments it, and will attempt to cause them to stumble. Therefore, they must be in constant prayer in order to resist the devil. The nuns must fight like men against the devil: 'For just as you would fight your enemies strongly and manfully, if you were a man, lest your body be stricken, so you must fight constantly and manfully against the Devil lest evil counsels and thoughts should kill your soul.'[168] But they are not alone in the fight; she also counsels Radegund to cry out to God for help against temptation. Further, the convent's enclosure is a 'haven' to which God has called them.[169] Away from the 'darkness of worldly ways' and the 'shadows of the world', they will 'begin to see happily the light of Christ.' This said, however, they will continue to struggle for the rest of their lives, as the devil is 'a roaring lion…seeking whom he may devour.'[170] This view differs markedly from Aurelianus's, but instead is derived from Cassian. The devil's main

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[165] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 118. Cf. Caesarius, *Vereor*, 3; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 307; tr. Klingshirn, pp. 131-2.
[166] Though their friendship was platonic, Fortunatus hints in one of his poems that some gossip had arisen concerning their relationship. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 11.6; ed. F. Leo, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*, 4.1 (Berlin, 1881), pp. 79-80.
[167] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 115; cf. 2 Timothy 3:12.
[168] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 115-6.
[169] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 117.
[170] Caesaria II, *Dominabus*; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 117; cf. 1 Peter 5:8.

weapons are evil thoughts insinuated into the minds of the nuns. The nuns' weapon is the Word of God. In this, Caesaria was the student of Cassian as mediated through Caesarius.

Rusticula

After Caesaria II's death in 559, Arles fell into the hands of Chlothar I, Radegund's husband. Though living in strict cloister, the convent was not isolated from the world; in fact, it managed to play its own role in the political scheming and violence of the time. After the death of Chlothar, his kingdom was divided amongst his sons – Charibert, Guntram, Sigibert, and Chilperic – and Arles fell to Guntram as king of Burgundy. Not long after Charibert's death in 567 and Guntram's own wife's death, Charibert's widow Theudechild sent word to Guntram that she would be willing to marry him and add her treasure to his coffers.[171] Liking the idea of the treasure better than marrying Theudechild, Guntram deceptively agreed. She travelled to meet him, but when she arrived, Guntram took her treasure and had her confined against her will in a monastery in Arles, likely St. John's.[172] Jo Ann McNamara, John Halborg, and Gordon Whatley speculate that Liliola, the abbess at the time and successor to Caesaria II, cooperated with Guntram in this enterprise because the convent needed the money Guntram would surely have paid to keep his prisoner confined.[173] The provision left by Caesarius would likely have dwindled by this point, leaving the abbess casting about for income. Liliola would have had to work hard for this investment, however, as Theudechild was not an easy prisoner. Despite the prohibition against sending letters,[174]

[171] The story of Theudechild is told in *HF*, 4.26; ed. B. Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, pp. 157-9.
[172] Gregory states that Guntram had Theudechild confined in a convent in Arles, without specifying which one. St. John's adherence to Caesarius's *Rule* of complete enclosure would have made it a more convenient choice for Guntram than St. Mary's.
[173] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 119.
[174] *Reg virg* 25 and 54; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 202 and 240.

she managed to contact another man and offer her hand in marriage again, though this time she could bring substantially less to the union. Liliola caught her trying to escape, and she was beaten severely. After this, she was locked up and lived the rest of her life confined in the convent, 'worn away by no middling passions'.[175]

We learn more about Liliola and her successor Rusticula in the latter's *vita*. The *Vita Rusticulae* was written soon after Rusticula's death in c. 632 by a priest named Florentius and was commissioned by Celsa, her successor.[176] Krusch believed it to be written later because of the high quality of the Latin, but Riché points out that the region's Roman literary heritage could still be witnessed at this point, thus negating his argument.[177] Scholarly consensus now upholds the contemporary nature of the *vita*.[178] The *vita* covers Rusticula's unusually long tenure as abbess – almost 60 years – revealing her to be a zealous adherent of Caesarius's *Rule* as well as late-antique ideas concerning speech and silence.

The *vita* points to just what an enterprising abbess Liliola was when it came to bringing in an income for St. John's. In about 561, a young heiress named Rusticula was kidnapped by someone intending to marry her when she came of age and thus acquire her fortune.[179] Through unclear means, Liliola rescued the five-year-old child and had her brought to the convent. At first this seems charitable, even heroic, but the picture is not so rosy once we discover that Liliola had no intention of returning the little girl to

[175] *HF* 4.26; ed. Krusch and Levison, p. 159; author's translation.
[176]Riché speculates that Florentius had personal knowledge of Rusticula and St. John's, perhaps through having been reared there or through having been at her death or funeral. See Pierre Riché, 'La Vita S. Rusticulae', *Analecta Bollandiana* 72 (1954), p. 376.
[177] See Krusch, p. 338; Riché, 'La Vita S. Rusticulae', pp. 376-7. In his article, Riché also plausibly refutes Krusch's arguments based on content.
[178] See McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 119.
[179] *VRus* 3; ed. Krusch, p. 341.

her family. Her widowed mother wept at the gates of the convent but Liliola remained unmoved.[180] Her mother even petitioned King Guntram to obtain the release of Rusticula, but to no avail. Here he had the opportunity to return the favour Liliola had done him in becoming prison guard to Theudechild.[181] Though we are told that Rusticula herself desired to stay at the convent, and Liliola used this as the excuse for not releasing her, the abbess's motives must be questioned. The *Rule* expressly forbade children younger than six or seven from entering the convent,[182] and it is not likely that convents or monasteries would take such young children without their being given by their parents. An heiress to a large fortune, Rusticula would have been compelled to sell her inheritance when she came into it, and often this money was donated to the convent itself.[183] Liliola probably saw Rusticula in much the same manner as the avaricious abductor did. In the end, though, Rusticula was happy to live in the convent, and later went on to become abbess upon Liliola's death in 575 at just eighteen years old.[184] Interestingly, this was around the age at which she would have had to choose whether or not to take vows, and the post may have been incentive for her to remain at St. John's, with her fortune.[185]

Rusticula's term as abbess spanned a tumultuous time for Arles politically, and it is not clear the extent to which she may have been involved. Guntram had ruled Arles until his death in 593, at which point Arles fell into the hands of his nephew Childebert II.

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[180] *VRus* 5; ed. Krusch, p. 342.
[181] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 120.
[182] *Reg virg* 7; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 186.
[183] *Reg virg* 6 and 21; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, pp. 184-6 and 194-6. By the time of Rusticula's tenure, the convent was doing well financially, as evidenced by the multiple building programs she engaged in. See *VRus* 8; ed. Krusch, p. 343. Perhaps this can be attributed to the influx of money from Guntram and Rusticula's inheritance.
[184] *VRus* 7; ed. Krusch, p. 343.
[185] For the age at which girls brought up in convents would have been expected to take vows, see Mayke De Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1996), p. 19, and also n. 20.

Though Childebert and Guntram had sometimes been at odds with one another, they had signed a peace treaty a few years before Guntram's death. The same treaty also made Childebert his heir. Thus, there is reason to believe that the loyalty which Liliola had shown Guntram was extended to Childebert through Rusticula, and thence on to his son, Theuderic II, who took the throne upon his father's death in 596.[186] Theuderic was just nine years old, and so his grandmother, Brunhild, ruled Arles and surrounding Burgundy for him. There is another, more compelling, reason to believe in the continued loyalty of St. John's to this branch of the Merovingians. In 613, Chlothar II, mortal enemy of Brunhild, managed to finally annihilate her whole line – save Theuderic's son Childebert who escaped but who never raised his head again – including Theuderic and the queen herself. Arles now fell into the hands of Chlothar, and anyone who had sided with Brunhild's family was now considered a traitor. Florentius tells us that at this time, Rusticula herself was charged with treason, accused of supporting Childebert who should have been king after his father.[187] Florentius takes the opportunity to proclaim Rusticula's innocence, which is verified by both her holy character and miraculous signs.[188] As Chlothar's descendants would have been in power at the time of his writing, Rusticula's loyalty to the correct ruling party would have been paramount.

The *vita* demonstrates the continuing importance of meditation upon scripture as the means to obtaining a pure heart. Right from her entrance into the convent as a small child, Rusticula exhibits an amazing memory with her capacity for memorising

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[186] This is suggested by Riché, '*Vita Rusticulae*', p. 374.
[187] *VRus* 9; ed. Krusch, p. 344. Patrick Geary states that she was involved in the plot to assassinate Clothar which occurred in 613. If this was suspected (or even true), then proclaiming her innocence would have been of the utmost importance. See Patrick Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence: The Rhône Basin at the Dawn of the Carolingian Age* (Stuttgart, 1985), p. 102.
[188] *VRus* 15; ed. Krusch, p. 346.

scripture. Florentius tells us that very shortly after her arrival, she had memorised all the psalms, as well as the rest of the scriptures.[189] Rusticula constantly recited, read, and sang the scriptures. For Florientius, Rusticula's purity of heart had a motherly component which overflowed with the wisdom she had gleaned from meditating upon scripture:

> When the flock met to celebrate the holy offices together, she watered every heart from the rising font of celestial doctrine. I cannot express how she corrected them with such sweet words and pious charity that she did not punish them like a mistress but with a mother's loving kindness instructed them with beneficial advice. I declare I can barely think about it let alone describe it. Oh, truly blessed! Love for Christ filled her whole heart![190]

Rusticula's speech teemed with godly teaching, which she delivered with motherly love. Her words reflected the purity of her heart and the divine knowledge she had stored there. Even as she lay dying, she used all her strength to continue reciting scripture, 'as was her custom', and never stopped praising God.[191]

Florentius certainly displays Rusticula's holiness through her speech, but he also employs Cassian's ultimate measure of holiness – the sleeping mind as revealed through speech. He tells of how as a child a nun would whisper psalms into Rusticula's ear as she slept; upon awakening, she would recite the psalms from memory. Even as she slept, her heart was naturally attentive to the scriptures being read. Though Rusticula does not speak in her sleep, it is her verbal recitation upon awakening which divulges that her mind had been employed in listening attentively to the scriptures whilst she slept. No sin is present in her mind to block the reception of the scriptures, and her mind assimilates them in a way which is akin to what Cassian envisioned when he discussed the pure mind gaining a deeper understanding of scripture whilst asleep.

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[189] *VRus* 6; ed. Krusch, p. 342.
[190] *VRus* 22; ed. Krusch, p. 348; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 133.
[191] *VRus* 23; ed. Krusch, p. 349; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, pp. 133-4.

The attention her mind gives to the Word of God even as she sleeps reveals the state of her heart in the same way as Caesarius's sleep-speech does in the *Vita Caesarii*. In fact, Florentius also uses Song of Songs 5:2 to explain the phenomenon, just as the authors of the *Vita Caesarii* did.[192] For Florentius, the sleeping mind remained the greatest indicator of Rusticula's holiness, just as it did for Cassian.

The main action of the *vita* comes when Rusticula is accused of treason against King Chlothar.[193] A bishop named Maximus and a nobleman named Ricomer lead the attack against her and find her guilty without a trial. The king summons her, but she refuses to leave the convent on the grounds that the *Rule* will not allow it.[194] The local governor, charged by the king's man to bring her out or forfeit his life, persuades her with tears to come out that he may not die. Her travel and appearance before the king are accompanied by miracles, but most illuminating for our discussion is the way Florentius describes her speech throughout the episode. Rusticula's words are full of truth, in contrast to her enemies. When the men come to arrest her, Maximus starts 'to rather heap up threats than to inquire into the truth of things'.[195] Her enemies use 'lying words' and 'bear false witness'. More lying occurs as Ricomer sends messengers to the king to inform him that Rusticula has been found guilty. Rusticula, though being forced to transgress the *Rule* against her will, remains calm. Finally, when she is before the king, she is allowed to speak, and Florentius tells us that 'once her own presence rather than common gossip testified for her', the king began to show her proper respect.[196] She swore with God as her witness that the charges were all false. The veracity of her words

[192] *VRus* 6; ed. Krusch, p. 342. *VCae* 2.5; ed. Krusch, p. 485.
[193] *VRus* 9-18; ed. Krusch, pp. 344-7.
[194] *VRus* 10; ed. Krusch, p. 344.
[195] *VRus* 9; ed. Krusch, p. 344; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 127.
[196] *VRus* 15; ed. Krusch, p 346; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 130.

was borne out as God brought about the death of the king's son as punishment for mistreating the holy abbess. Her truthful speech reveals her holy character.

Though Rusticula is the obvious focus of the *vita*, the background characters of the faceless group of nuns over whom she presides also provide the readers with another exemplar. Unlike in other *vitae*, no nuns are portrayed in sinful acts, but all are submissive and loyal to their abbess. Florentius shows the nuns following Rusticula, honouring her, fighting for her in prayer during her ordeal before the king, rejoicing upon her return, and grieving upon her death, and their tool of choice is psalm-singing. When Rusticula is arrested, the nuns respond by turning their psalm-singing into a divine weapon: 'When the holy flock saw their mother attacked with such lying words, in their usual way they seized weapons of celestial grace. Modulating their voices in psalms, they called upon the heavenly defender who sent Saint Daniel to save Saint Susanna from the condemnation of the impious.'[197] This war of words reveals the hearts of those on either side – lying words show the sinfulness of Rusticula's enemies, whilst the holy words of the psalms show the purity of the nuns' hearts. When Rusticula returned to St. John's, the nuns greeted her with hymn-singing; she responded by singing passages from Psalms 34 and 113.[198] As Rusticula lay dying, the nuns, in their grief, could not bring themselves to sing their psalms, but each repeated them in silence.[199] The abbess told them to sing them aloud so that she might be comforted by them. Obediently, the nuns sang, ministering to the dying woman. After her death, whilst Rusticula's body is being carried from the convent, the nuns weep and sing psalms.[200] The nuns' reliance upon singing the psalms is something they learned from

[197] *VRus* 9; ed. Krusch, p. 344; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, pp. 127-8.
[198] *VRus* 17; ed. Krusch, p. 347.
[199] *VRus* 23; ed. Krusch, p. 349.
[200] *VRus* 25; ed. Krusch, p. 350.

Rusticula, who in turn learned it from Cassian through Caesarius's legacy. This idealised and perfectly faithful community which valued obedience and voicing the scriptures provided another model of holiness for the nuns of St. John's.

Radegund

Having followed the Convent of St. John through four abbesses, let us now turn to another convent, that of the Holy Cross in Poitiers. Radegund had founded the Holy Cross, taking advice from Caesaria II and implementing Caesarius's *Regula ad virgines*. Radegund was a Thuringian princess, the daughter of King Bertichar.[201] The Thuringian house was as violent as the Franks were, and Bertichar's brother Hermanfrid killed him in battle and took Radegund, then only a young child, into his household. Then, in 531, her uncle offended the Franks and thereby reaped the violence which he had sown. Clothar I and his brother Theuderic I killed Hermanfrid and slaughtered the entire Thuringian royal house, leaving only Radegund and her younger brother alive.[202] The brothers cast lots, and, as the winner, Chlothar took Radegund as booty to be brought up in his household as his future wife.[203] Fortunatus's poem, *De excidio Thoringiae,* written in Radegund's voice, depicts the trauma of those events.[204] Chlothar married Radegund in 540, but she longed for the life of a religious and spent her time, money, and energies in serving the poor. After Chlothar killed her last remaining brother, she left him and retired to a villa in Saix where she lived as a nun. Later (the date is unclear), she founded a convent at Poitiers with the help of her

[201] Fortunatus, *Vita sanctae Radegundis* 1.2, ed. B. Krusch, *MGM, SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), p. 365; tr. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whatley, 'The Life of the Holy Radegund, Book I', in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, 1992) p. 70.
[202] *HF* 3.7; ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 103-5.
[203] The parallel with Rusticula's story is unavoidable.
[204] Fortunatus, *De excidio Thuringiae* (Appendix 1).

husband and his brother, Duke Austrapius.[205] She installed her niece Agnes as abbess, but she herself did not become a regular nun. Often using Fortunatus as her emissary, she wrote to kings and advisors, petitioning for peace within the kingdom. She maintained a network of both influential ecclesiastics as well as secular people. By campaigning for and securing a piece of the True Cross from the Byzantine Emperor Justin II, she thereby improved the bond between the Merovingian kingdom and the Byzantine empire. Her *vita* shows both sides of her life: the faithful, ascetic nun and the politically-minded queen.

Radegund is one of the best documented saints of the Merovingian era. Gregory of Tours knew her personally, and wrote about her in several places.[206] Gregory copied out in full a letter Radegund wrote to a group of bishops concerning her convent, which prove her to be a skilled writer. As mentioned above, she was also close friends with Fortunatus, who wrote poetry both to her and on her behalf. The poetry he wrote to her reveals the deep friendship he, Radegund, and Agnes had together, a friendship rooted in a shared spirituality. The three of them would eat together, compose poetry together, and send each other gifts. His poems reveal Radegund to have been well educated, telling us that she read the Church Fathers, including Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose, and that she herself wrote poetry. Two poems survive in the Fortunatus corpus which are written in Radegund's voice.[207] The poems are framed as letters to her relatives, the purpose of which was actually to communicate her high status to Justin II when petitioning for a piece of the True Cross.[208] Some scholars, such as Marcelle Thiébaux,

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[205] See *HF* 9.42; ed. Krusch and Levison, p. 470. Also see Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450-751* (London, 1994), p. 184.
[206] See Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*, ed. B. Krusch, MGH, SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885), p. 104. Also, *HF*, 3.4, 7; 9.2, 39, 40; ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 99-100, 103-5; 415, 460-3, 464-6.
[207] *De excidio Thuringiae* (Appendix 1) and *Ad Artachin* (Appendix 3).
[208] Judith W. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford, 1992), p. 165.

Peter Dronke, and Karen Cherewatuk believe Radegund to have written these poems herself.[209] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill believes that Fortunatus wrote them, as does Judith W. George, who bases her opinion on a comparison with his other poems.[210] Jane Stevenson, along with McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, see the poems as a collaborative effort.[211] Certainly, the personal nature of the poems required Radegund's extensive input. Since the poems were composed for such an illustrious person and occasion, it seems likely that Radegund would have had Fortunatus, a professional poet, write them, a view which the technical arguments of George support.

Unusually, two *vitae* survive which were written shortly after her death, both by people who knew her personally. The first, which Fortunatus wrote, concentrates on her zealous asceticism and acts of charity. The second was written shortly after the first and was intended as a supplement to it. It was written by Baudonivia, a nun at Radegund's convent, and gives a better glimpse into Radegund's life in the community and her relationship with the nuns.[212] John Kitchen compares the two lives, looking for evidence of different versions of sanctity in the male and female authors, but finds none.[213] He argues that Baudonivia was not as gender conscious as we are today, and that her work was intended to complement Fortunatus's and give a fuller, not different,

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[209] See Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Writings of Medieval Women* (New York, 1987), p. 25 ff.; Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 27, and 86; and Karen Cherewatuk, 'Radegund and the Epistolary Tradition,' in Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethaus (eds), *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre* (Philadelphia, 1993), p. 21, n. 3. Dronke is tentative in his assertion, admitting that it is difficult to tell how much Fortunatus might have been involved, but maintaining that Radegund is at least the 'partial author'.
[210] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 84-5; George, p. 116, n. 21.
[211] See Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2005), p. 88; McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 65, n. 22.
[212] Baudonivia, *Vita sanctae Radegundis*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGM, SRM*, II (Hanover, 1888), pp. 377-95; tr. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whatley, 'The Life of the Holy Radegund, Book II', in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, 1992), pp. 86-105.
[213] Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*.

picture of Radegund. Baudonivia, he says, wrote for the nuns of the Holy Cross and intended to show an imitable Radegund, whilst Fortunatus wrote with a public audience in mind; this accounts for the differences in foci.

Other scholars have questioned his methodology, at least to some extent;[214] Simon Coates in particular suggests that Kitchen employs gender stereotypes without nuance.[215] Unlike Florentius, neither Fortunatus nor Baudonivia put much emphasis on their subject as the mother of the nuns of Holy Cross, or show her as displaying particularly motherly attributes. Fortunatus tends to focus in on Radegund's individual actions in isolation from the nuns, whilst Baudonivia stresses her special status in the convent and her didactic proclivity. Yet despite the differences between the two *vitae*, both show that the influence of the late-antique Cassian was strong at the Holy Cross, but that it was an influence that was shaped by Caesarius. As we have already seen the applicability of Cassian's programme to female as well as male monastics, the rather gender-neutral light in which Radegund's biographers – who, as we shall see, were influenced by Cassian when it comes to revealing holiness – place her should perhaps not be wholly surprising.

As is conventional in hagiography, neither author discusses the development of Radegund's spirituality; she appears as a fully-sanctified person from childhood. There are only two instances in which Radegund learns from others. The first happens before

[214] For example, see reviews by Thomas Noble, *History of Religions*, 40 (2001), pp. 398-402; Raymond Van Dam, *Catholic Historical Review*, 85 (1999), pp. 597-8; and Kathleen Ashley, *Speculum*, 76 (2001), pp. 183-5.
[215] Simon Coates, 'Regendering Radegund? Fortunatus, Baudonivia and the Problem of Female Sanctity in Merovingian Gaul,' in R. N. Swanson (ed), *Studies in Church History* 34 (1998), p. 49. Bonnie Effros also believes Kitchen ignores the nuances of the selective male imagery Fortunatus and Baudonivia employ. See her review of Kitchen in *Church History*, 68 (1999), pp. 972-4.

she is consecrated to religious life, whilst she is still Chlothar's acting queen. Fortunatus tells us that whenever a holy man came to see her, after washing his feet herself, she would sit and listen the whole day to his teaching.[216] This picture of Radegund, eschewing the business of the household in order to hang on the words of the holy man, makes her akin to Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus and letting Martha do all the work.[217] Her status as queen, however, makes her an unusual disciple, as all of her teachers were below her in rank. Consequently, Fortunatus tells us that '[t]here was no resisting her.'[218] There is here an inversion of the authority present in the master-disciple relationship of the desert. The second instance comes from later in Radegund's life, after she founds her convent. Baudonivia relates Radegund's *modus operandi* whenever a 'servant of the Lord' came to visit the convent: 'she would question him closely about his manner of serving the Lord', and thereafter implement any new thing she found out.[219] Here, we see Radegund's insatiable desire to continue moving forward in her spiritual life, but we do not see a meek disciple sitting at the feet of a master. Instead, Radegund actively seeks out information that will potentially help her and her community. In fact, the context of this episode is Radegund's leadership and teaching within the community. In both instances, Radegund is no submissive student, but rather an active agent. She does not learn in silence, but seeks out specific answers to her questions.

Whilst neither *vita* devotes much space to describing Radegund as a disciple, Baudonivia gives much more to the picture of Radegund as a teacher. Fortunatus tends

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[216] *VRad* 1.8; ed. Krusch, p. 367.
[217] John Kitchen argues that Fortunatus portrays Radegund as the new Martha in contrast to Baudonivia, who portrays her as Mary, but this passage demonstrates that he saw her as both Mary and Martha. See Kitchen, *Saints Lives*, p. 156.
[218] *VRad* 1.8; ed. Krusch, p. 367.
[219] *VRad* 2.9; ed. Krusch, pp. 383-4.

to concentrate on Radegund's acts of charity, service, and asceticism. He skips over most of Radegund's life as the spiritual leader of community, even neglecting to mention her founding of the convent. He never mentions her teaching, and Fortunatus's Radegund rarely speaks in direct dialogue.[220] He is more concerned with showing her as a living martyr, willingly giving up her queenly status for the sake of her own salvation.

Baudonivia's picture is different.[221] Radegund is the leader of the community of the Holy Cross. Agnes is hardly mentioned; it is Radegund who teaches and exhorts the nuns. In fact, Radegund describes the community as though she designed it for herself, as her own special vocation. She tells the nuns, 'Daughters, I chose you. You are my light and my life. You are my rest and my happiness, my new plantation. Work with me in this world that we may rejoice together in the world to come.'[222] Throughout the *vita*, Baudonivia shows Radegund to be pure of heart through her pure speech, making her therefore qualified to be a spiritual teacher. Whilst neither author writes of Radegund's silence, Baudonivia does tell us that 'she never uttered any slander or lies, or curses against anyone. And not only did she speak no slander herself, she would not patiently listen to slander either. For she always prayed for her persecutors and taught others to do the same.'[223] Not only did she never let impure speech issue from her lips, but she used the occasion of others' impure speech to instruct. Her actions do not contradict her speech, as she follows her own teaching.[224]

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[220] She does admonish people occasionally, such as Bishop Médard when he hesitates to consecrate her. See *VRad* 1.12; ed. Krusch, p. 368.
[221] For a discussion of the gendered readings of the two lives, see Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*, pp. 135 ff.
[222] *VRad* 2.8; ed. Krusch, p. 383; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 91.
[223] *VRad* 2.8; ed. Krusch, p. 383; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 91.
[224] 'Whenever a servant of the Lord visited, she would question him closely about his manner of serving the Lord… she would immediately implement it first upon herself and then she would teach her congregation with words what she had already shown them by her example.' *VRad* 2.9; ed. Krusch, p. 383; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 91.

As Caesarius commands in his *Rule*, Radegund constantly focuses her mind on Christ by incessantly reading, reciting, or listening to the scriptures being read. Baudonivia tells us that often she would be intending to call out another nun's name in order to get their attention, but would call out 'Hallelujah' instead. 'She did that a thousand times,' Baudonivia says, 'but she never uttered any slander or lies, or curses against anyone.'[225] Radegund's speech revealed the purity of her heart in that, just by opening her mouth, praises to God poured out.

This is contrasted immediately with what did not come out of her mouth. Baudonivia is careful to specially emphasise Radegund's ability to focus her mind on God, and Bruno Krusch, the nineteenth-century editor of her *vita*, postulated that the term *mens intenta* is a Latin translation of the name Radegund.[226] A literal translation of the name seems to be 'war counsel' or 'war advice', with 'Rad' coming from the German 'rath' and 'gund' from the Old High German for war. Krusch focuses on the first part of her name, connecting it to the idea of an intent mind because *mens* can sometimes be substituted for *consilium*.[227] It does seem that Baudonivia uses the term '*mens intenta*' as a sort of pun on Radegund's name. She uses it seven times, and it always appears in the nominative, even where one might expect it in the ablative – 'with her mind intent on Christ, paradise, God, etc.'. For instance, she writes:

> Suedas in villa dum esset, devoto ac fideli animo mens intenta ad Christum reliquias sanctorum omnium plena devotione habere cupiens, ea orante, advenit vir venerabilis Magnus presbiter cum reliquiis domni Andreae et aliorum quam plurium.[228]

[225] *VRad* 2.8; ed. Krusch, p. 383; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 91.
[226] Krusch, *Vita sanctae Radegundis Libri Duo*, *MGH, SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), p. 380.
[227] Krusch, *Vita Radegundis*, p. 567.
[228] *VRad* 2.13; ed. Krusch, p. 386.

In another place, she writes, '…*ut mens intenta Deo terrenum iam nec requireret cibum*'.[229] Again, she puts *mens intenta* as either the subject or in opposition to the subject. Fortunatus also uses it once, where it could likewise be construed as her name:

> Item nocturno tempore cum reclinaret cum principe, rogans se pro humana necessitate consurgere, levans, egressa cubiculo, tam diu ante secretum orationi incumbebat, iactato cilicio, ut solo calens spiritu, iaceret gelu penetrata, tota carne praemortua, non curans corporis tormenta mens intenta paradiso, leve reputans quod ferret, tantum ne Christo vilesceret.[230]

That Radegund was able to focus her mind on the scriptures so much that her biographers may have referred to her using '*mens intenta*' as a nickname underscores her drive to purify her heart through sustained attention to the scriptures. The phrase *mens intenta* is a relatively rare combination which is not commonly used in Merovingian hagiography. A similar phrase does, however, appear in Cassian's *Collationes* when he is discussing the need to concentrate the mind on reading. He writes, '*dum in legendis ac parandis lectionibus occupatur mentis intentio, necesse est ut nullis noxiarum cogitationum laqueis captiuetur*.'[231] Cassian specifically uses the phrase *mentis intentio* to describe how the mind should be fully engaged when reading lest other thoughts distract and harm. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he frequently uses the analogous phrase, *cordis intentio*. A mind that can focus its attention on Christ, like Radegund's, will not allow those thoughts to take root, thereby purifying itself.

Baudonivia links Radegund's supreme teaching ability to the fact that her mind was constantly focused on Christ. She tells us:

> Her mind was so concentrated on Christ [*mens intenta ad Christum*] that even while asleep she would often preach of the future judgment and the eternal reward. And when she awoke, she would say to us: 'Gather, gather the harvest

[229] *VRad* 2.8; ed. Krusch, p. 383.
[230] *VRad* 1.5; ed. Krusch, pp. 366-7.
[231] *Conl.* 14.10.4; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 196.

> of the Lord. For truly I say to you that you will not have long to gather it. Mark what I say! Gather it! For one day, you will be seeking this time and the days you have wasted and you will earnestly desire to have them again.'[232]

Baudonivia interprets this as a prophecy referring to the time after Radegund's death, when the nuns would no longer be able to benefit from her instruction. This strange picture of the nuns gathered around her whilst she sleeps, listening to her preach, and continuing to learn from her when she awakens underlines the value the nuns put on her teaching. Baudoniva combines two passages from the *Vita Caesarii* in the writing of this, linking a passage about Caesarius preaching about judgment in his sleep with the passage about gathering in the harvest.[233] Just as the authors of the *Vita Caesarii* did, Baudonivia employs Cassian's sleeping-mind metric to display Radegund's holiness. She uses the *Vita Caesarii* as a guide, but continues the motif in her own manner. Elsewhere in the *vita*, she tells us that Radegund would have someone read the lesson to her whilst she slept. To demonstrate that Radegund was listening even then, she tells us that if the reader, getting sleepy herself, would stop, Radegund, 'whose mind was intent on Christ [*mens intenta ad Christum*], as if to say, "I sleep but my heart waketh"', would instantly awake and order her to continue.[234] Here, as in the *Vita Rusticulae*, Baudonivia upholds Radegund's purity by showing how she was able to concentrate her mind on scripture even whilst asleep. Like Florentius and the authors of the *Vita Caesarii*, she calls on Song of Songs 5:2 to make plain the association between the state of her heart and the absorption of scripture whilst sleeping. Furthermore, Baudonivia emphasises the connection between Radegund's sleep-speech and her singular focus on Christ by utilising the phrase *mens intenta*. In both of the above passages, the phrase substitutes for Radegund's name.

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[232] *VRad* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 391; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 101.
[233] Cf. *VC*ae 2.5 and 2.32; ed. Krusch, pp. 485 and 495-6.
[234] *VRad* 2.9; ed. Krusch, p. 384; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 92.

The fact that both Florentius and Baudonivia use the sleeping mind as the ultimate gauge of purity for their female protagonists demonstrates the way these authors sought to take Cassian's metric and apply it to the female gender. The monitoring of nocturnal emission, in addition to the limitations described above, is not a useful metric for women. The scrutinising of sleep-speech, on the other hand, can be applied to both genders. Baudonivia, in particular, in her mimicking of Caesarius, establishes the pan-gender quality of sleep-speech. Both male and female monastics could recall and dissect their dreams for evidence of latent sin, but now both sexes were equally able to prove the purity of their hearts through an unbiased mechanism. As is the case for Caesarius, sleep-speech also worked well with the communal nature of the Convents of St. John and the Holy Cross.

Very shortly after Radegund's death in 587, an event occurred which shows that the harmonious picture of the Convent of the Holy Cross which her *vitae* describe was not completely accurate, an event which certainly shaped Baudonivia's writing. A group of discontented nuns rose up against the abbess Leubovera, Agnes's successor, and left the convent. The group was led by Clotilde, daughter of King Charibert,[235] and included her cousin, Basina, daughter of King Chilperic I and his first wife Audovera. Apparently, the conditions of the convent did not live up to the standards which some of the nuns desired. Consequently, they left the convent and travelled 60 miles to Tours to complain about the abbess.[236] Instead of waiting for a trial, however, several of the nuns took

[235] Though Gregory may intend to cast doubts upon the legitimacy of Clotild's claim to be the daughter of King Charibert, the claim was probably true. The events of the rebellion seem to show that Clotild was considered to be a part of the royal family. Erin T. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines: Gregory of Tours and Women of the Merovingian Elite* (Leiden, 2015), p. 64.
[236] Though Agnes was still alive at the time of Radegund's death, she must have died shortly afterward.

husbands instead. Then, before the council of bishops which King Guntram had promised could meet, the remaining nuns decided to return to Poitiers and hole up in St. Hilary's church. Clotild gathered around her a gang of men, who assaulted the bishops when they came to meet with the nuns. The bishops then excommunicated them. The group must have been a terror to the townspeople, and Gregory relates that not a day went by without a murder.[237] Running low on supplies, Clotild sent her men to take over the lands belonging to the convent and bully the workers into working for her instead. Throughout the ensuing months, there was violence, riots, and continual complaints from both the rebels and convent to the king and the bishops. Clotild made threats upon the life of the abbess, which culminated in sending her thugs to take Leubovera by force and bring her to St. Hilary's. They stormed the convent and seized Leubovera, let down her hair, and paraded her through the streets to the church. Then they returned, lit a bonfire and by its light looted the convent. They left the Holy Cross bereft of its leader, its wealth, and its security.

The kidnapping of Leubovera finally stirred the bishop of Poitiers, Maroveus, into action. As it was Holy Week, he threatened not to hold any services for Easter if she was not released. This had no effect. The kings also finally moved decisively, setting up a trial to investigate the charges. Gregory was one of the bishops appointed to preside. With everyone finally in the same room together, Clotild and Basina brought their formal charges. They accused Leubovera of various sexual misconducts, including keeping a man dressed in women's clothes in the convent and surrounding herself with eunuchs. The accusations were found to be without grounds. The other charges they

[237] *HF* 10.15; ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 501-5.

brought reveal the true reasons for their discontent. Here are the charges, according to the trial record which Gregory copied out:

> They said that they could no longer endure the poor food, the lack of clothing and, indeed, the harsh treatment. They disapproved of the fact that other people shared their bathroom. The Abbess played backgammon. Lay visitors ate with her. Occasionally engagement-parties were held in the nunnery. She was so lacking in reverence that she made dresses for her niece out of a silken altar-cloth.[238]

Leubovera was able to counter every charge.[239] The nuns always had enough food and the nuns had more clothing than was necessary. Radegund had decreed that the servants were to use the new bathroom whilst there was a smell of new plaster, which she thought unhealthy for the nuns; Leubovera did not know that they continued to use it, but she did disapprove of it. She had played backgammon under Radegund, who did not consider it a sin, but would do penance for it if the bishops so desired. The engagement party was attended by bishops and dignitaries, who did not seem to find anything wrong with it. The gifts for her niece came from her own portion. The bishops ruled that Leubovera be reinstated as abbess.[240] Basina returned to the convent, but Clotild instead – probably to the relief of Leubovera and the other nuns – decided to retire to a family estate.[241] The incident not only highlights the expectations of some of the nuns – including the abbess and even, to at least some extent, Radegund – at the Holy Cross for a life of ease rather than harsh asceticism, but it also demonstrates the lack of holiness of the rebel nuns. Their speech is characterised by lies, slander, immodesty, selfishness, and anger.

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[238] *HF* 10.16; ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 505; tr. Lewis Thorpe, *The History of the Franks* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 571.
[239] *HF* 10.16; ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 505-9.
[240] *HF* 10.16; ed. Krusch and Levison, p. 507.
[241] *HF* 10.20; ed. Krusch and Levison, p. 513.

Baudonivia was living in the convent at the time of the revolt. As she only knew Radegund as a child, and since the revolt happened about two years after her death, we know that Baudonivia would have still been rather young when it happened, but old enough to remember the events which must have been terrifying to a child. Assuming that the rebellious nuns had no reason to take a child with them, she would have remained in the convent with the nuns who were faithful to the abbess. The life of the convent was completely disrupted for a whole year, which would have made it very difficult for the nuns to keep their minds focused on Christ. Financial hardship probably affected their supplies when Clothid commandeered the convent's lands.[242] When Clotild's gang of thugs broke into the convent and abducted Leubovera, Baudonivia would have heard if not witnessed the mob, as well as the looting of the convent thereafter. In the attack, the gates of the convent were broken down, and for the first time since her enclosure, Baudonivia and the other nuns would have been completely vulnerable. It is not clear at what point the convent was enclosed again, but it is conceivable that the nuns were exposed for some time.

The fear Baudonivia would have felt during this period seems to have left its mark on her. In writing her instalment of Radegund's *vita*, she hoped to hold up Radegund as a model of a person whose mind was so intent on Christ (*mens intenta*) that she had no room in her heart for the kind of sinful attitudes which led to the rebellion. Whereas Clotild complained about sharing a bathroom with the servants, Radegund cleaned out the bathrooms herself.[243] Clotild complained about inadequate food and clothing;

[242] In response to the charge of not supplying adequate food, Leubovera 'denied that they had ever gone short, especially if one considered what hard times these were.' *HF* 10.16; ed. Krusch and Levison, p. 505-6; tr. Thorpe, p. 572. This was in reference to the time before the rebellion. If the times were hard, the nuns remaining at the Holy Cross may well have gone short when their lands were taken away.
[243] *VRad* 1.23; ed. Krusch, p. 372.

Radegund fasted to extremes and wore a hair shirt.[244] Baudonivia also determines to show how Radegund focuses her whole mind on God, and how that is demonstrated by her speech. Radegund never slanders, never speaks idly, and divine teaching rolls off her tongue at all times. There is a wall around her heart keeping it pure in the same way there is a physical wall around the nuns. Baudonivia has seen what happens when that wall is broken down, and she desired the nuns to maintain that wall around their hearts, as well as the wall around the convent. She is careful to underline the fact that the nuns in Radegund's time never left the convent. When it came time for Radegund's funeral procession, she writes: 'Since it was ordained that no living person should issue out of the gates of the monastery, the whole flock stood on walls while they bore the holy body with psalms beneath the walls.'[245] The nuns do not leave the convent for the internment. By staying inside the convent, according to the *Regula ad virgines*, the nuns remain safe, and their hearts pure.

As we have seen, it was Cassian's late-antique theology of progression toward perfection which formed the basis of Caesarius's and his followers' practice. Scripture reading and memorisation was vitally important as tools to focus the mind on Christ and drive out vice. God's Word was to permeate the monastic's whole being as it did Caesaria II's, until the monastic's own voice, both external and internal, was silenced in favour of God's. Speech continued to expose the monastic's holiness, and Aurelianus used the voices of his praying nuns to proclaim their holiness publicly and thereby increase his own reputation. Whilst Caesarius himself advocated for teaching based on

[244] *VRad* 1.4; ed. Krusch, p. 366.
[245] *VRad* 2.24; ed. Krusch, p. 393; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 103.

the truth of the message rather than the holiness of speaker, a position which reflected his pastoral concerns as a bishop, the others represented here held to the late-antique desert ascetics' belief that the message would be clouded when spoken by a person of imperfect character. The sleeping mind remained the place where true perfection was revealed, but the manner of revelation had changed from Cassian's negative measure of the absence of nocturnal emission to the positive measure of holy sleep-speech, characterised particularly by reciting scripture or preaching. This change, first seen in the *Vita Caesarii*, was better suited to the communal nature of monasteries which featured common sleeping areas, thereby providing witnesses to the sleep-speech. Furthermore, sleep-speech was a metric that could be experienced by both genders, and the authors of Rusticula's and Radegund's *vitae* are therefore all able to employ it to demonstrate their protagonists' holiness. In the next chapter, we shall see how late-antique ideas continued to form the basis for monastic practice in the new context of Columbanian monasticism.

Chapter 4: Columbanus

Around 590, when the rebellion at the Holy Cross was finally being resolved, an Irish monk named Columbanus and his twelve companions quietly landed on the shores of Brittany. This unobtrusive moment in time marked the beginning of a new monastic movement which would spread across Merovingian Gaul and beyond.[1] The new initiative was deeply founded in late-antique ascetic tradition. The writer who had the most influence on Columbanus was the late-antique John Cassian, whose impact can be seen in the theology which subtends his thought.[2] Though his concern was primarily with the regulation of the lives of cenobitic monks, Columbanus preserved the vertical axis of the relationship between the individual monk and God as paramount, outstripping the importance of relationships between the members of the community.[3] He also maintained Cassian's idea that progress could be made towards God through the purification of the heart. Instead of stressing a focus on scripture, however, as a way to effect this progress, Columbanus used silence and the speech-act of confession in ways which go beyond what Cassian had envisioned. Whilst Cassian moved toward purity of heart by leaving sin behind, Columbanus felt sin needed to be atoned for through penance before a person could move closer to God, and silence could be used as penance for this purpose.[4] Silence was also integral to the key Columbanian virtue of obedience, allowing for right-hearing amongst the monks. Though Columbanus wrote

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[1] I use the terms ‘movement’ and ‘Columbanian movement’ to indicate the spread of ideas and practices influenced by Columbanus. In no way do I mean to imply a coherent organisation or movement with a homogeneous observation of the religious life, nor that there were no outside, or even Frankish, influences involved.

[2] Clare Stancliffe, 'Columbanus's Monasticism and the Sources of His Inspiration: From Basil to the Master?' in Fiona Edmonds and Paul Russell (eds), *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law: In Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2011), p. 21.

[3] Stancliffe, ‘Sources of Inspiration’, p. 19. For this focus on Cassian, see Markus, *Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 163-8.

[4] For more on penance in this period, see Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200* (Cambridge, 2014).

solely for male monastics, the author of his *vita*, Jonas of Bobbio, writing for a much broader audience, was able to apply Columbanus's innovations to both male and female monastics, adapting as needed to the somewhat volatile conditions in which the saint left the movement upon his death. In this chapter, I first consider how Columbanus adapted monastic traditions on speech and silence for use within the context of the rural expansion of monasticism in the north of Francia. Next, I look at the way Jonas of Bobbio differs from Columbanus, and how he deals with the challenges arising from the different contexts of his male and female disciples. Whilst Jonas relies on public speeches to reveal the holiness of the abbots, the problem of the more private sphere of the nuns of Faremoutiers is solved through the well-witnessed death-bed speeches which provide Jonas's primary focus for women. Finally, I consider the different method of portraying holiness through speech in the *vitae* of two nuns from Chelles, Balthild and Bertilla.[5] The authors of these *vitae*, with purposes distinct from that of Jonas, ensure the alignment of their protagonists' speech to the *Regula Columbani* in order to depict their holiness. All of this reveals the endurance of late-antique ideas of speech and silence well into the seventh century.

Columbanus

Born c. 550,[6] Columbanus spent time in two monasteries in Ireland before heading out on *peregrinatio*. This self-exile was a popular form of devotion which the Irish

[5] *Vita Sanctae Balthildis*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1988), pp. 482-508; tr. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, E. Gordon Whatley, 'Life of the Blessed Queen Balthild', in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*, pp. 268-78. Florentius, *Vita Rusticulae sive Marciae abbatissae Arelatensis*, in ed. B. Krusch, *MGM, SRM* 4 (Hanover, 1902), pp. 337-351; tr. Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg, and E. Gordon Whatley, 'The Life of Rusticula, or Marcia, Abbess of Arles', in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, 1992), pp. 122-36.

[6] The commonly given birth year of 543 is based on inference from the poem *Ad Fidolium* supposedly written by Columbanus but now considered spurious. For a mid-century date, see the well-reasoned argument of Donald Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 1-3.

considered to be akin to martyrdom. Landing in Brittany, he and his companions struck out immediately for the Merovingian royal court. With the backing of King Sigebert, he founded the monastery of Annegray, in the Vosges mountains. The new, highly ascetic foundation attracted so many monks that in short order he founded two more monasteries nearby, Luxeuil and Fontaines. For reasons which are unclear, he soon fell afoul of the king, who then sent him into exile, finally attempting to send him back to Ireland. Columbanus escaped at the last moment, and headed to Lombard territory. There, under the patronage of the Arian King Agilulf, he founded Bobbio, his final monastery and resting place.

The church in Ireland from whence Columbanus came was largely rural, and so it seems natural that Columbanus would seek to found monasteries in the countryside rather than in cities. There was, however, another reason why he would act in such a manner. By the seventh century, the cities were no longer brokers of wealth.[7] The tax system of the Roman Empire, so dependent upon cities, had collapsed, and the aristocracy had moved to the country.[8] Wealth was now tied directly to the land, bypassing the cities. Even royalty no longer lived in cities, so Columbanus, who sought out royal patronage soon after arrival,[9] had better reason to remain in the countryside rather than to set up in a city like earlier monastic founders. By halfway through the

[7] Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography, 640-720* (Manchester, 1996), p. 1.
[8] The claim that the tax system continued is unconvincing – although this is not the place to discuss this extensively. See further J. Durliat, *Les Finances Publiques de Dioclétien aux Carolingiens (284-889)* (Sigmaringen, 1990), with the critique of Chris Wickham, 'La Chute de Rome n'aura pas lieu', *Le Moyen Âge* 99 (1993), pp. 107-26.
[9] Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani abbatis et discipulorumque eius*, 1.6; ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SS rer. Germ.* 37 (Hanover, 1905), p. 164; tr. Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood, 'The Life of Columbanus and His Disciples', in *Jonas of Bobbio:* Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, *and* Life of Vedast (Liverpool, 2017), p. 107.

seventh century, new monasteries tended to be set up in rural areas over urban, and those in the north over the south.[10]

Columbanus and his followers were known for their asceticism. Living in the wilderness of Francia, the monks faced challenges with which monastics in the cities did not have to deal. Jonas records how the monks would fast for long periods, not because they chose to, but because there was no food.[11] The protest of Augustine against the moral superiority of ascetics had long since been silenced, and the laity now saw these newcomers as the freshest representation of the spiritual ideal.[12] Thus, the nobility poured both financial and human resources into the movement.[13]

There was further motivation for the lay nobility's interest in founding monasteries, which had previously been primarily the realm of bishops. A peculiar feature of the seventh century was the desire of the nobility to increase their own families' renown with the creation of family saints. This century saw a much higher number of *vitae* written by a wider variety of authors in order to immortalise the virtues of various noblemen and women connected to the various factions operating in the world of Merovingian politics.[14] Hagiography could be used to justify political means and to slander opponents, as was the case in the earliest *Passio Leudegarii*.[15] Noble families

[10] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 5 and 8.
[11] *VCol* 1.7; ed. Krusch, p. 164.
[12] Markus, *Ancient Christianity*, p. 214.
[13] The Columbanian movement was not the only insular-influenced monastic movement from which the nobility could choose when looking to patronise a new foundation. Erchinoald patronised the Irish Fursey (d. 650), and, later, the Anglo-Saxons Willibrord and Boniface worked on behalf of Pepin II.
[14] Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 246-7.
[15] Leudegar was involved in the overthrowing of Ebroin, mayor of the palace of Neustria, in 673, whom he banished to Luxeuil – another case of a monastery being used as a prison. Failing to hold onto power, he himself was banished to Luxeuil. When King Childbert III was assassinated, however, both men broke out of the monastery to make a bid for power. Ebroin eventually won, and Leudegar was tortured and killed. See *Passio Leudegarii episcopi Augustodunensis I*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 282-322.

founded convents and monasteries, often putting a member of their own family as abbess or abbot, and subsequently passing the position on to other family members.[16] They endowed the foundations with large amounts of land, which increased their standing within the church without their having to relinquish control.[17] As McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley put it, 'Poverty, one of the three traditional monastic virtues, was no recommendation for a Merovingian saint.'[18] Merovingian kings strengthened their own positions through the giving of immunities, delighting to participate in the creation of untouchable, holy spaces.[19] The nobility's great interest in founding monasteries, along with the fascination of many nobles with Columbanian asceticism, allowed for the rapid spread of the Columbanian movement across the north of Francia. Of the monasteries which existed in 700, well over half of them were founded in the seventh century, demonstrating the huge increase in interest the Merovingian nobility had during this period in setting up foundations.[20]

Columbanus's influence was immense, and his disciples founded many monasteries and convents after his death. Though Columbanus himself only seems to have engaged in missionary preaching to a small degree, his disciples took up the challenge of converting the new pagan realms which the Merovingian kings had conquered at the northern edges of their kingdoms. Newly conquered areas lacked any kind of ecclesiastical structure, and missionary monastics were ready to fill the gap.[21] From the monasteries they set up in these areas they were able to preach to the local people.

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[16] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 7.
[17] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (Oxford, 1996), p. 254.
[18] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 7.
[19] Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 74-96.
[20] There are about 550 monasteries which are known to have existed by 700 in Francia; 320 of these were founded in the seventh century. See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 5.
[21] This will be discussed in fuller detail in Chapter 5.

Presumably, the Merovingian kings thought that a Christian populace would be easier to control, and thus the missionary monks were an important part of their expansion schemes.[22]

Jonas gives us some idea of how quickly Columbanian monasticism spread by listing various monasteries and convents which had been founded by the time of his writing.[23] Jonas makes mention of several significant figures in the movement: Eligius, bishop of Noyon and monastic founder; Berthoara, founder of a convent; Babelenus, founder of four monastic communities;[24] Ado, founder of the convent of Jouarre; Dado, his brother, founder of Rebais;[25] Amatus and Romaric, abbots of Remiremont;[26] Burgundofara, founder and abbess of Faremoutiers;[27] and Sadalberga, monastic founder.[28] Later, Queen Balthild (c. 626-680) would found several monasteries in the Columbanian tradition, including Corbie and Chelles, where she eventually retired. Columbanus's disciples from these monasteries continued in their missionary efforts, spreading the movement throughout Francia and beyond.

There are a number of works extant which are confirmed to have been written by Columbanus, and also a number which have been ascribed to him with reasonable certainty. G. S. M. Walker, in his 1957 edition of the works of Columbanus, continues to provide the best critical edition, but a new one is overdue. Walker's work was controversial from its publication, with several scholars disagreeing strongly with his

[22] Amand (c.584-679) even attempted forcible conversion with the backing of Dagobert I, demonstrating how important conversion was to the Merovingian kings. See Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Harlow, 2001), p. 40.
[23] He gives a list, but also mentions others elsewhere (see below). *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, pp. 255-6.
[24] Eligius, Berthoara, and Babelenus are mentioned in *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, pp. 255-6.
[25] Ado and Dado are mentioned in *VCol* 1.26; ed. Krusch, p. 210.
[26] Amatus and Romaric are mentioned in *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, pp. 252-6.
[27] *VCol* 1.26, 2.7, 10, and 11-22; ed. Krusch, pp. 209, 241-3, 253, and 257-79.
[28] *VCol* 2.8; ed. Krusch, pp. 244-5.

choice of ascriptions.[29] More recently, Michael Lapidge has edited and contributed to an important collection of essays from Columbanian scholars reassessing the authenticity of the works which Walker or others have attributed to Columbanus.[30] Clare Stancliffe has argued convincingly for the authenticity of the thirteen sermons, called *Instructiones* in the manuscript tradition, attributed to Columbanus, and though they had previously been the subject of strong debate, her arguments are cogent.[31] The sermons were most likely written at Bobbio and delivered to his monks as a series on successive days.[32] Columbanus also wrote five letters which, though only attested to in two seventeenth-century transcriptions, have never had their authorship questioned.[33] He wrote to three different popes, a council of bishops, and his monks at Luxeuil. It is from these letters we learn of his involvement in the dating of Easter controversy; *Epistula* 4 also reveals the tensions within the monastery of Luxeuil and the dissatisfaction of some of his monks with the strictness of the *Rule*. There also exists another work, referred to as *Epistula* 6 though it lacks an epistolary dedication, which is included in the transcriptions, but which also exists in other manuscripts along with

[29] For a summary of the controversy, see the preface to Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. vii-x. Cf. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957).
[30] Lapidge (ed), *Latin Writings*.
[31] Clare Stancliffe, 'The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship', in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 93-202. In his review of the book, Yitzhak Hen states that 'Stancliffe's superb analysis and discussion lay to rest, at least for the time being, one of the most burning debates in Columbanian studies.' See review in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 73 (2000), pp. 1023-5. Following Stancliffe, I will be treating the *Instructiones* as authentic. Cf. Columbanus, *Instructiones*, ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 60-121 (facing-page translation here and wherever this volume is cited).
[32] Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. xlii.
[33] In St. Gall Stiftsbibliothek 1346, Jodoc Metzler transcribed a Bobbio manuscript which is now lost. In addition, Patrick Fleming published the letters in *Collectanea Sacra* (Louvain, 1667), having transcribed them from another lost Bobbio manuscript with a similar manuscript tradition to the one Metzler had transcribed. Johannes Wilhemus Smit, however, argues that Metzler only had access to Fleming's transcription. See Johannes Wilhemus Smit, *Studies on the Language and Style of Columba the Younger (Columbanus)* (Amsterdam, 1971), pp. 33-8. Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 2-59.

better-attested Columbanian works.[34] Neil Wright, in his highly-technical discussion of *Epistulae* 1-5, touches only briefly on *Epistula* 6, long enough to deem it likely to be authentic.[35] It is a succinct address to a young monk concerning monastic conduct and virtue.

Columbanus wrote two *Rules*, the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis*, as well as a *Paenitentiale*.[36] These three works seem to be working documents more than finalised codifications, and all three exist in two versions.[37] Walker argues for the authenticity of the first, and scholars concur with him. Jane Stevenson points out that, Columbanus having a penchant for Greek words, the differing foci of the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis* correspond to the Greek meanings of '*monachus*' and '*cenobium*'.[38] *Monachus* comes from the Greek *monos* meaning 'one', which is an appropriate name for the *Rule* which deals with the individual. *Cenobium* means 'common life' from the Greek *koinobios*; the *Regula coenobialis* in turn dictates the interactions of the monastics. The *Regula coenobialis*, containing two parts, has multiple authors. Columbanus is the author of the first part, but after his death his disciples continued to add to it, giving it an interesting, progressive nature which reflects the development of Columbanian monasticism.[39]

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[34] In Turin Bibliotheca Nazionale G. V. 38, it comes after the *Regula Monachorum*, the *Instructiones*, and the *Paenitentiale*; in the related Turin Bibliotheca Nazionale G. VII. 16, it travels with the *Instructiones* and the *Penitentiale* and is sandwiched between them.
[35] For Wright's discussion of the authenticity of *Epistula* 6 and its relationship with Columbanus's other works, see Neil Wright, 'Columbanus's *Epistulae*', in Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 58-9.
[36] Columbanus, *Regula monachorum*, ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 122-143. Columbanus, *Regula coenobialis*, ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 142-169. Columbanus, *Paenitentiale*, ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 168-181.
[37] Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. lxvi.
[38] Jane Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', in Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), p. 206.
[39] Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, l-li.

The *Paenitentiale* is likewise a composite work. Walker believed it to contain, like the *Regula coenobialis*, an initial section (A) which Columbanus himself wrote pertaining solely to monastics, with a second section (B) written by his disciples after his death and covering sins committed by clerics and laymen, as well as monastics. T.M. Charles-Edwards, however, posits a more complicated composition, identifying five parts – a monastic penitential, a clerical penitential, and a lay penitential, as well as two short sections on minor offenses for monastics. He argues that Walker's section A was likely not written by Columbanus, but that he brought it with him from Ireland when he came to the continent. Walker's section B, on the other hand, is more likely to have been Columbanus's work, or his disciples. Charles-Edwards divides the *Paenitentiale* by assigning chapters 1-9 to Columbanus, the next two chapters to his immediate successors, and the other three parts to his later disciples. Charles-Edwards's work is well-researched and detailed,[40] using comparisons with other early Irish penitential works. Though the authorship of the various parts of the *Rules* and the penitential is still a matter of some uncertainty, they are assuredly part of the Columbanian tradition and even the earliest manuscript attests to this.[41]

There have been several poems attributed to Columbanus as well, though Lapidge and Johannes Smit have argued convincingly against the metrical poems, describing only the rhythmical poems as authentic.[42] There are, then, three extant poems, *Mundus iste*

[40] Perhaps sometimes too detailed. One wonders why he speculates as to placement on particular folios of various parts of the *Paenitentiale*: in the end, he argues for a chronology (and placement) which matches its current form, making conjecture along these lines needless. See T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Columbanus', in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 225, 235-6.
[41] The earliest manuscripts are Paris, BN lat. 4333B (s. VIII-IX) for the *Reg coen* and Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale G. V. 38 (s. IX-X) for the *Reg mon.*
[42] Michael Lapidge, 'Epilogue: Did Columbanus Compose Metrical Verse?' in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 274-85. Lapidge argues

transibit, Precamur patrem – a hymn written before he left Ireland – and most likely the prayer known as the *Oratio Sancti Columbani*.[43] Columbanus wrote many more works which are unfortunately no longer extant, including a commentary on the Psalms as a young man in Ireland and a treatise against Arianism whilst living in Bobbio.[44] Though we of course mourn the loss of these works, the ones remaining are varied and rich enough to provide us with a picture of his monastic theology and orthopraxy.[45]

Columbanus's single greatest influence was John Cassian,[46] and, as a result, his monastic theology is an outgrowth of the *Conlationes* and the *Institutiones*. Progression toward heaven was possible, and Columbanus designed his monastic programme to eradicate sin and vice that the monastic might move closer to God. He conceived of the ascetic life as a spiritual battle, as Cassian and Caesarius did, a battle against sin and self. He wrote:

> …it requires great violence to seek by toil and to maintain by enthusiasm what a corrupted nature has not kept. But yet, though blessedness is lost, it has not lost the choice of free will. Thence we now force the kingdom of heaven by strength and violence, and this we snatch somehow, as it were, from amidst our enemies' hands in the middle of the field of strife, and as it were in the blood-stained soil of battle, while we are too hardly assailed not only by our foes but by ourselves…[47]

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that Columbanus did not have the knowledge of Latin meter necessary to write the metrical poems, nor did he have the classical learning the poems employ. Also see Smit, *Studies on Language*, pp. 223-49.

[43] For the authenticity of *De mundi transitu*, see Dieter Schaller, '"De mundi transitu": A Rhythmical Poem by Columbanus?', in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 240-54. For *Precamur patrem*, see Michael Lapidge, '"Precamur Patrem": An Easter Hymn by Columbanus?', in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 255-63. For *Oratio Sancti Columbani*, which Walker listed as a dubious attribution, see Michael Lapidge, 'The *Oratio S. Columbani*', in Michael Lapidge (ed), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 271-3. Cf. Columbanus, *Oratio*, ed. and tr. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 214-15.

[44] *VCol* 1.3; ed. Krusch, p. 158.

[45] Indeed, Columbanus left behind more sources than any Irish author before him, and for a long time afterward. Westley Follett, *Céli Dé in Ireland: Monastic Writing and Identity in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 40.

[46] Follet, *Céli Dé*, pp. 41-5; Stancliffe, 'Sources of Inspiration', pp. 20-22.

[47] *Instr.* 10.3; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 102-5. Cf. Matthew 11:12. This motif is of course not exclusive to Cassian and Caesarius.

In this passage, Columbanus reveals how the monastics are to approach the spiritual life – with a fierce passion and determination which stems from their own free will. With this attitude and approach, the monastic battles against the devil, but also against his own self and his vices. This is an ongoing battle.

Though Columbanian monasticism is cenobitic, and Columbanus himself addressed his works to cenobites, his monastic programme was, like Cassian's, a two-part programme. Entry-level monastics were to live in monasteries, fighting their vices and seeking perfection. Once they had progressed far enough, the spiritually-mature monks were to head out into the wilderness, living as hermits much the same way as Cassian had envisioned. Their prize was contemplation, the mystic union with God which only the perfect could seek and obtain. To describe this, Columbanus employs the distinction between the active life represented by Martha and the contemplative life represented by Mary, a distinction which Cassian himself employed.[48] He writes, 'But we require purity of feeling (*puritate…sensus*) by the grace of God, that we may understand spiritually what are those few gifts of love which are offered to Martha by the Lord.'[49] The gifts which Jesus holds out to Martha are the gifts which Mary had already taken – to sit at His feet and listen raptly to His teaching. In order to accept these gifts, Columbanus says, purity is necessary.

Contemplation, however, does not feature strongly in Columbanus's writings, and it is only almost incidentally that we learn that contemplation is a part of his monastic programme at all. Apart from the hint mentioned above about the gift of contemplation

[48] Luke 10:38-42. Cf. *Conl.* 1.8; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 85-7. Also, see Follett, *Céli Dé*, p. 45.
[49] *Reg mon* 4; ed. Walker, p. 126.

held out to Martha, his *Rules* do not contain mention of this sort of prayer. The *Oratio Sancti Columbani,* a prayer which seems to be a model prayer for monks in the same genre as the Lord's Prayer, also makes no mention of contemplation. The *Oratio,* if not written by Columbanus himself, at least embodies the spirit of Columbanian monasticism as set out by its founder,[50] and is brief enough to quote here:

> O Lord God, destroy and root out whatever the Adversary plants in me, that with my sins destroyed Thou mayest sow understanding and good work in my mouth and heart (*in ore et corde*); that in deed and truth I may serve Thee only, and understand how to fulfil the commands of Christ and seek Thyself. Grant memory, grant charity, grant chastity, grant faith, grant all that Thou knowest to pertain to the profit of my soul. O Lord, work good in me, and provide me with what Thou knowest that I need. Amen.[51]

This prayer demonstrates Columbanus's belief that the eradication of sin is ultimately accomplished through the grace of God. It also reveals his belief that pure speech will result from a pure heart and thus be an indicator of such. Overall, however, the prayer is clearly meant to aid those who are still fighting their vices, and therefore does not contain any movement toward contemplation or unity with God Himself.

There are two places in Columbanus's writings which allude to his own contemplative life, and they both come in prayers at the end of *Instructiones* 12 and 13. The other *Instructiones* do not end with prayer, but the subject matter as he finishes his preaching in 12 and 13 is so high that it leads him naturally into prayer. Indeed, the transition occurs so seamlessly that it seems that Columbanus cannot help himself. His prayer in *Instructio* 12 is a yearning plea for unity with Christ: 'that Thy charity may possess all our inward parts, and Thy love may own us all, and Thine affection may fill all our sense, so that we may know no other love apart from Thee Who art eternal'.[52] In order

[50] Lapidge, '*Oratio*', p. 273.
[51] Columbanus, *Oratio*, ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 214-15.
[52] *Instr.* 12.3; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 114-15.

to achieve this state, he prays that 'we may love Thee only, love Thee alone, desire Thee alone, contemplate Thee alone by day and night, and ever hold Thee in our thoughts'.[53] These few lines reveal Columbanus's contemplative life as being of a different order completely from the sort of prayer life he was teaching his disciples.

In the prayer of *Instructio* 13, Columbanus cries out for Christ to 'wound' (*vulnera*) their souls with His love that they may be healed.[54] This is a reference to Song of Songs, where the beloved endures a beating for the sake of her love.[55] He also uses the language of thirsting and imbibing, giving the picture of one who can never be satiated but must have more and more of God Himself. In both prayers, Columbanus quotes from Song of Songs, the favourite book for mystical interpretations of union with God in the Middle Ages. These two prayers differ significantly from the *Oratio* in that there is an absolute focus on God rather than on a purification of self. Here, Columbanus's supplication is for unity with Christ, not relief from sin. He has turned his entire attention toward God and left none for himself.

One might ask, if contemplation was indeed the second part of Columbanus's monastic programme, why is it nearly undetectable in his writings? The answer seems to be that Columbanus, whilst technically holding to a two-part programme, did not readily admit to the spiritual maturity of his monks. Obtaining a release from Columbanus was a difficult endeavor and does not seem to have happened frequently. In the *Vita Columbani*, we read of a monk named Autiernus who desired to go as a *pereginus* to

[53] *Instr.* 12.3; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 114-15.
[54] *Instr.* 13.3; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 120-1.
[55] Cf. Song of Songs 5:7-8.

Ireland.[56] Columbanus takes him and another monk into the wilderness in order to spend time in prayer and ascertain whether Autiernus's desire was the will of God. After fasting for twelve days, Columbanus tells the two monks to go to a specific location and bring back the food they would find. They found three live fish in a fish trap, along with two dead ones. They brought back the live fish, but Columbanus, with the 'foreknowledge of divine grace', sent them to retrieve the dead fish of which they had not told him. The story ends here, without revealing Autiernus's fate, but we can deduce from the contrast between him and the Spirit-filled Columbanus that his master did not deem him ready for the eremitic life. Thus, a long fast and an eremitic trial under the watchful eye of Columbanus himself was at least part of the ordeal a monk would have to endure in order to advance to the stage of hermit, but, even then, the bar was set high and Autiernus, at least, failed to pass. Jonas also reveals the difficulty Columbanus himself had had to convince his own abbot to allow him to become a *peregrinus*, though he frames the long wait as the abbot's desire to keep the loveable Columbanus by his side.[57]

Contemplation was also downplayed as part of Columbanus's programme because there was another, though not conflicting, goal for his monks. As mentioned above, the Columbanian movement had a strong missionary focus, and the monks who 'graduated' from the monastery were allowed to leave for the purpose of mission work. Though the word *peregrinus* at this point does not necessarily connote a missionary, the meaning

[56] *VCol* 1.11; ed. Krusch, pp. 170-2. A ninth-century manuscript, Metz, Grand Séminaire 1, does not contain either the name of the monk or the word Ireland, merely stating the desire to leave the monastery *peregrinandi causa*. See O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio:* Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, *and* Life of Vedast (Liverpool, 2017), p. 118, n. 154.
[57] *VCol* 1.4; ed. Krusch, p. 159.

does encompass it, and by the ninth century the two ideas are synonymous.[58] At this point, however, it is better to imagine a blend of the two – monks living solitary lives of contemplation combined with periods of the missionary work which was so valuable to the expansion policies of the Merovingian kings.[59]

The fact that it was so difficult for a monastic to progress to the eremitic life of contemplation under Columbanus becomes clear after the saint's death. In the very first chapter of Book Two of the *Vita Columbani*, as Jonas begins to tell the story of Columbanian monasticism after the death of the founder, Columbanus's successor at Luxeuil, Athala, faces revolt from the monks. Though Jonas frames this as an unwillingness to submit to the harshness of the *Rule*, we catch a glimpse of an underlying reason for the discord when he tells us that they 'sought the wilderness in order to achieve their liberty.'[60] Instead of returning to a secular life or seeking out a less-strict monastery, these monks sought out hermitages of their own. The exodus of a number of monks soon after Columbanus's passing indicates that he may have busily suppressed their desire to progress to the desert, probably thinking them unworthy.

All the monks, however, would have been well aware of the desert goal of Columbanian monasticism from watching their master himself. Columbanus, though the abbot of a flourishing network of monasteries, managed them from afar. He spent much of his time at a hermitage about seven miles distant from Annegray.[61] From this

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[58] Thomas L. Amos, 'Monks and Pastoral Care in the Early Middle Ages', in Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni (eds), *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, 1987), p. 168.
[59] Giles Constable, 'Monasteries, Rural Churches and the *cura animarum* in the Early Middle Ages', in *Cristianizzazione ed Organizzazione Ecclesiastica delle Campagne nell'Alto Medioevo: Espansione e Resistenze*, 28 (1980), 1, pp. 356-7.
[60] *VCol* 2.1; ed. Krusch, p. 231; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 180.
[61] For the location of Columbanus's cave, see O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, p. 113, n. 128.

cave, he would direct the happenings at the monasteries through a young servant who acted as messenger.[62] Later in life, he had another hermitage near Bobbio, and, in all likelihood, he was there when he died, which would explain Jonas's lack of detail concerning the saint's death.[63] In a letter to Gregory I, Columbanus wrote about his love of seclusion;[64] Gregory, himself a monk, could be expected to sympathise. Despite, however, his own love for solitude and therefore his recognition of its value, he was still suspicious of monks who desired to go off on their own. In another letter, he asks Gregory what should be done with monks who leave against the will of their abbots in order to become hermits. Somewhat unexpectedly, in asking, he admits to the godly motives of the monks. He writes:

> …please tell me now, if it is not troublesome, what is to be done about those monks who, for the sake of God, and inflamed by the desire for a more perfect life, impugn their vows, leave the places of their first profession, and against their abbots' will, impelled by monastic fervour, either relapse or flee to the deserts.[65]

Columbanus here reveals his conviction that the eremitic life is 'more perfect', and therefore the place of desired progression for a monastic. He also displays his anxiety over the fact that, whilst monks are leaving their monasteries without permission, they are doing so because they wish to progress in their spiritual lives. Perhaps we are here getting a glimpse of the internal conflict Columbanus may have experienced on this issue. As the subject exploded into a mass rebellion according to Jonas, we know that Columbanus continued to err on the side of retaining monks whose maturity he thought was in question.

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[62] *VCol* 1.9; ed. Krusch, pp. 167-8.
[63] O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, p. 169, n. 365.
[64] *Epist*. 4.4; ed. Walker, p. 28.
[65] *Epist*. 1.7; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 8-9.

For the vast majority of Columbanian monks who remained within the monasteries, daily life flowed with the rhythms of the offices. The offices as described in the *Regula monachorum* are deeply indebted to Cassian.[66] Like Cassian and unlike the *Regula Benedicti*, Columbanus retains a vertical axis between the individual monk and God, even during communal activities such as the daily offices.[67] For instance, at the end of chanting psalms together, all are to kneel down and repeat silently three times Psalm 70:1, the verse Cassian recommended monks to repeat continuously to drive away sinful thoughts.[68]

In between the offices, silence was to be the dominant condition of the monks. Silence was so important to Columbanus that he made it to the subject of the second chapter of his *Regula monachorum*. It is entitled '*De taciturnitate*'; *taciturnitas* denotes a silence which is maintained, so Columbanus here stresses the ongoing nature of the silence he expects from his monks. That the chapter's placement is second only to the chapter on obedience not only highlights the importance of *taciturnitas*, but also its relationship to the virtue of obedience. An obedient monk will maintain silence. Obedience is the highest virtue for Columbanus,[69] and a monk's silence reveals the obedient state of his heart. When a monk breaks his silence with murmuring, even whilst outwardly obeying, the murmuring speech reveals his true attitude. He writes, 'Therefore, if anyone murmurs (*murmuraverit*), and he is obedient, not outside his vow, he is recognised as disobedient.'[70] Columbanus held that silence was direct evidence of purity. To endorse

[66] Stevenson, 'Monastic Rules', pp. 212-13.
[67] Stancliffe, 'Sources of Inspiration', pp. 19-20.
[68] *Reg coen* 9; ed. Walker, p. 158. Cf. *Conl.* 10.10; ed. Pichéry, 2, p. 85.
[69] For Columbanus, obedience is the ultimate imitation of Jesus: 'But up to what measure is obedience laid down? Up to death it is assuredly enjoined, since Christ obeyed the Father up to death for us.' *Reg mon* 1; ed. and tr. Walker, p. 124-5.
[70] '*Si quis vero murmuraverit, et ipse tanquam non ex voto obediens, inobediens putandus est*'. *Reg mon* 1, ed. Walker, p. 124.

this view, he elicits the help of Isaiah 32:17: 'the nurture of righteousness is silence (*silentium*) and peace.'[71] A righteous monk is one who is pure of heart, and this purity will result in silence. Columbanus then turns this principle around and states that monks should therefore be silent lest they become guilty of the many sins a myriad of words can bring. In saying this, Columbanus turns silence from an indicator of holiness into an instrument for the creation of holiness. He is, however, careful to state that silence can be an evil when words are required but not spoken.

Whilst silence is the general rule for Columbanian monks, there were certain instances in which speech was not only acceptable but needful. For Cassian, confession was one of those times which required a monastic to break his silence, and the same was true for Columbanus. Cassian required monks to share every thought, good or bad, with the elders so that the more spiritually mature elders would be able to discern the origin of the thoughts for the less mature disciples. As we saw in Chapter 2, this was a kind of holy speech act, the complete verbal disclosure of the whole mind without regard for consequence.

Columbanus's focus on the rite of confession (*confessio*) formalised this act, turning it into a ritual. In the *Conlationes*, Cassian treats us to an enactment of how he envisions the disclosure he promotes happening; Germanus voices his questions, thoughts, and struggles in a natural way, producing them organically in the context of the spiritual conferences with the elders. Instead of the more spontaneous relationship Cassian envisions, Columbanus sought to ensure that this vital part of the disciple's formation was not neglected. In the *Regula coenobialis*, he decrees that confession should happen

[71] '*Cultus autem iustitiae silentium et pax*'. See *Reg mon* 2; ed. Walker, p. 125.

everyday at some opportune time, suggesting before meals or bed as possibilities.[72] Unlike Cassian, however, the confessional speech Columbanus requires does not encompass every single thought, but is limited to confession of sins. Whilst Cassian did not trust his disciples to determine the spiritual origin of their thoughts – God, the devil, or themselves – Columbanus was not concerned about this level of minutiae. Sin seems to have been an obvious concept to Columbanus, requiring no definition. Instead, he expected his disciples to identify their own sinful thoughts and actions before willingly exposing them to himself or his delegate during a specified time of confession.

The purpose of confession was different for Columbanus than it was for Cassian. For Cassian, breaking the silence in which a sin was hidden also broke the power of the devil over the speaker's life. As in the case where the young Abba Serapion habitually stole food for clandestine consumption, once the sin was publicly acknowledged, the unendurable temptation ceased.[73] Once speaking it aloud had broken the power of this sin for Abba Serapion, he was never bothered by it again and was therefore free to concentrate upon God. Thus, confession for Cassian allowed the disciple to gather the knowledge and opportunity he needed to repent, turn back to God, and continue moving forward in his spiritual journey.

Columbanus, on the other hand, viewed the purpose of confession in another way. Though Columbanus expected his monks to scrutinise their thought-life as well as their actions,[74] confession was not meant to determine the origin of their thoughts, but rather their level of sinfulness. Speaking out his various sins, the monastic then awaited the

[72] *Reg coen* 1; ed. Walker, p. 144.
[73] *Conl*. 2.11; ed. Pichéry, 1, pp. 121-4.
[74] For instance, see *Reg mon* 9; ed. Walker, p. 138.

decision of the confessor as to what penance would atone for those sins. The confessor had recourse to the *Paenitentiale* Columbanus had written, or to the *Regula coenobialis*, which includes substantial sections on penance as well. He also, presumably, had the power to impose whatever penance he thought appropriate if the sin fell outside of the written guidelines. The penance the confessor assigned must then be completed before the monk could continue his spiritual journey. Columbanian confession, therefore, was a matter of atonement rather than discernment. Columbanus had taken confession, formalised and ritualised it, and combined it with the Irish penitential system. The daily times of confession would allow the monk to lay bare his soul, and the prescribed penance would cleanse it again. Without this revealing-cleansing ritual, the monk's heart would accumulate sin like a dirty window. Once cleansed, he would be able to see through the window of his heart to behold God.

The *Paenitentiale* and the *Regula coenobialis* typically use only a handful of penances for the myriad of offenses. The variety usually comes in the length of the penance. For instance, coughing during a psalm merits six blows, whilst eating without a blessing merits twelve.[75] Silence is a common penance. It is prescribed in some, but by no means all, cases involving sins of speech. Interestingly, it was considered to be a somewhat harsh penance by Columbanus, who usually gave a choice between a '*superpositione silentii*' and fifty blows.[76] Columbanus's successors considered it particularly harsh. They only use it in one instance as penance, and give the alternative of a hundred blows.[77] The length of time someone who is prescribed a *superpositio silentii* was to keep silent is not spelled out specifically. An idle word merits two hours of silence or

[75] *Reg coen* 4, 3; ed. Walker, p. 148.
[76] '*superpositione silentii*'. Cf. *Reg coen* 4, 5, 6; ed. Walker, pp. 148-50.
[77] *Reg coen* 15; ed. Walker, p. 164.

twelve blows;[78] a word spoken intentionally against another warrants a *superpositio silentii*, but if spoken during a dispute, the speaker must keep silent for a week.[79] Thus, the length of the *superpositio silentii* was longer than a few hours, but less than a week, perhaps three days.

That Columbanus and his successors considered periods of silence as penance for various sins indicates their belief that silence in and of itself could cleanse the heart from sin. Speech-sins, such as arguing, disputing, idle speech, and unkind words, could be erased through the application of the opposing virtue of silence. Both the *Paenitentiale* and the *Regula coenobialis* declare that the punishment for talkativeness be silence without a prescribed time period.[80] Thus, Columbanus believed that silence could cure the heart from committing sins of speech, not merely suppress them. This corresponds with Cassian's belief in the power of silence to nurture virtue.

On the other hand, Cassian did not hold to the idea that silence in itself could purify the heart. Silence for him was a tool which freed the mind to ruminate upon scripture, or to absorb the teaching of an elder. The words which filled the silent mind directed the monastic's thoughts towards God, thereby driving out the sinfulness inherent in the heart. Thus, it was not silence itself which drove out sin, but the focus of the mind during the periods of silence. This differs distinctly from Columbanus's use of silence

[78] *Reg coen* 9; ed. Walker, p. 154.
[79] *Paen.* A.9; ed. Walker, p. 170. Here we find another example of how a *superpositione silentii* was considered a worse punishment than blows: '*Verbum vero contra verbum simpliciter promptum, L plagis vindicandum est, vel si ex intentione, silentii superpositione; nam si rixa, septimana paeniteatur*.' Keeping silence is a greater penance than fifty blows.
[80] *Paen*. A.12; ed. Walker, p. 170. *Reg coen* 15; ed. Walker, p. 166.

as an instrument which had a direct effect on sin. For him, silence directly nurtured righteousness, as per Isaiah 32:17.[81] Cassian, however, does not make use of this verse.

Although Columbanus does not give specifics about how a monk should focus his mind upon God, we can catch a small glimpse of the importance of reading and meditating upon scripture in his works. Reading was a part of the daily routine of his monks – we see this through a rule which censors monks who prefer reading to obedience.[82] Sometimes, psalm-chanting is given as a penance for sins of speech.[83] For instance, slandering a brother requires a penance of twenty-four psalms. Speaking holy words in this way cleanses the tongue and heart of the unholy words which were spoken. A pure heart should speak God's words, so speaking them in penance resets, as it were, the heart to where it was before the slanderous words were spoken. This method of applying the opposite virtue to cure a vice, as seen above with silence, was one Columbanus favoured.[84] Psalm-chanting is not frequently given as a penance for sins other than sins of speech.[85] It is notable, however, that it is given as a penance to cleanse a monk from a '*visione nocturna*'. The extra chanting is given 'on account of a night dream (*visione nocturna*), because of a devilish delusion (*inlusione diabolica*), or because of the nature of his dream (*modo visionis*)'.[86] For Columbanus, then, erotic dreams are not mere indicators of the state of the dreamer's heart, as they are for Cassian. They are treated as sin, requiring cleansing through penance. Interestingly, however, he does admit to the possibility of the dream arising from the devil rather than

[81] *Reg mon* 2; ed. Walker, p. 124.
[82] *Reg coen* 15; ed. Walker, p. 166.
[83] *Reg coen* 10, 15; ed. Walker, pp. 160, 164.
[84] For instance, he writes, 'The talkative is to be punished with silence, the restless with the practice of gentleness, the gluttonous with fasting, the sleepy with watching, the proud with imprisonment, the deserter with expulsion.' *Reg coen* 15; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 166-9.
[85] It does appear as a penance for forgetting items outside which should be brought in. *Reg coen* 10; ed. Walker, p. 160.
[86] *Reg coen* 9; ed. Walker, p. 154.

the dreamer's own sinfulness, though it is not clear whether or not Columbanus believes the dreamer is complicit in some way and therefore culpable. He applies psalm-chanting as penance both for erotic dreams arising from the unclean nature of the monk's own heart and also for those arising from demonic activity. In both cases, psalm-chanting was an activity which would direct the monk's thoughts back to God. This would drive out sinful or disturbed thoughts, as well as protect the mind from demonic attacks. Outside of this one passage, Columbanus does not seem to have developed a theology concerning the sleeping mind in the way that Cassian does. It is clear, however, that he believed that speaking God's Word could affect the monk even whilst he slept. Though Columbanus does not make obvious the extent to which he relies on the use of scripture reading and memorisation to focus the mind on God, we get a better picture of his *modus operandi* in Jonas's work, which we will discuss below.

Where Columbanus does agree completely with Cassian is in the realm of what qualifies someone to be a teacher. For Columbanus, someone who was to be a teacher should not claim the office with theoretical knowledge only.[87] The teacher must first have learned it himself and have practiced it. Otherwise, no one would pay any attention to him, and the teaching would be in vain. It is the practical component which is necessary, and which brings power to the words of the teacher. That power allows for meaningful communication, without which the disciples will not be able to learn the skill themselves. The perfection expected from a teacher explains why it was so difficult for Columbanian monks to move from the monastery to the role of missionary. Columbanus just did not consider many worthy for the task.

[87] *Epist.* 2.4; ed. Walker, p. 14.

Columbanus's own teaching was grounded in what he considered to be truth, and it was that truth which gave him the confidence and licence to speak in the way he did. A mere abbot, he was unafraid to censure and advise kings,[88] bishops,[89] and even popes.[90] The best way to demonstrate this is by looking at his letters. In these letters, he writes boldly, even rudely to men who are far above his status in the church. In *Epistola* 5, Columbanus writes concerning the unity of the church in the face of the Three Chapters Schism. The Three Chapters Schism was a result of Pope Vigilius agreeing to Justinian's condemnation of the writings of three fifth-century theologians, Theodore, Theodoret, and Ibas. Many in the west disagreed, and a rival papacy was set up in Aquileia. Columbanus, though refusing to align with the Aquileian pope, wrote in support of the condemned works and here urges Vigilius's successor Boniface to call a council and publicly declare his negation of Vigilius's stance.[91] His zeal for his subject is evident, but it is not his zeal which causes him to write in such a manner. Rather, his writing is controlled and intentional. Columbanus takes on the role of the ancient philosopher who spoke from without the established order, his position as such giving him licence to speak freely. He acknowledges that this licence (or *libertas*) was based on his position as a foreigner, a *peregrinus*:

> Who could listen to a greenhorn [*glabrum*]?[92] Who would not say at once: Who is this bumptious babbler, that dares to write such things unbidden?...To such a man I answer before he speaks, that there is no impudence where there is an agreed need for the edification of the church; and if he takes exception to my person, let him consider not the character of the speaker, but the matter of my

[88] *VCol* 1.18, 1.24; ed. Krusch, pp. 187, 207.
[89] *Epist.* 2.
[90] *Epist.* 1, 3, and 5 are all addressed to popes.
[91] For more on the Three Chapters Schism, see Patrick T. R. Gray and Michael W. Herren, 'Columbanus and the Three Chapters Controversy – A New Approach', *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1994), pp. 150-70. Also see C. Chazelle and C. Cubit (eds), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean* (Cambridge, 2007).
[92] Literally, 'hairless'. Walker translates this as 'greenhorn', but, according to Van Renswoude, it is possibly a reference to his monastic tonsure and therefore position as an ascetic, rather than his inexperience. See Van Renswoude, 'Licence to Speak', p. 231, n. 121.

> speech (*non quis dico, sed quid dico*). For how shall a foreign Christian suppress (*tacebit*) what your neighbour Arian has long been shouting? Better indeed are the wounds of a friend than the treacherous kisses of a foe.[93]

Though he invites the pope to reflect upon his message rather than his character when assessing its worth, he is actually leaning heavily on his character as a friendly foreigner. He goes on to declare that 'it is not for vainglory or for impudence' that he dares to write, highlighting his position as someone who has nothing to gain from his intercession. The licence Columbanus takes, therefore, is based on the truth of the message but also on the character of the speaker. It is not his holiness, however, to which he appeals, but his status as an outsider, like the early Greek philosophers and the holy men of the late antique period.[94]

Jonas of Bobbio's Columbanus

A few short months after Columbanus's death in 615, his future biographer, Jonas of Bobbio, entered the saint's last foundation. Originally from Susa in northern Italy, he received a liberal education before entering the monastery.[95] It was about twenty years later that he wrote the saint's life, and in those twenty years he had come into contact with many people from whom he gathered first-hand accounts of Columbanus. In the late 630s, Jonas embarked upon missionary work with Amandus in Flanders. It was during this time that he wrote the *Vita Columbani*. At some point during his missionary activity, Jonas became an abbot, though of which monastery it is uncertain.[96]

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[93] *Epist*. 5.2; ed. Walker, p. 36.
[94] Van Renswoude, *Free Speech*, pp. 151-2.
[95] Riché, *Education and Culture*, p. 344. O'Hara speculates that the political affinities of Susa at the time may have meant that the ancient Roman school system was still in operation. Alexander O'Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio and the Legacy of Columbanus: Sanctity and Community in the Seventh Century* (Oxford, 2018), p. 92.
[96] See Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Iohannis abbatis Reomensis*, 1 Prae.; ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SS rer. Germ.* (Hanover, 1905), p. 326, where he is referred to as abbot.

Though Jonas himself has not garnered much attention traditionally, more recently several scholars have devoted their energies to his study. Alexander O'Hara, in particular, has done a thorough study of Jonas, providing the medieval author with his first dedicated monograph.[97] He has also produced, along with Ian Wood, the first English translation of the *Vita Columbani*, a wonderful feat, when one considers the difficult style in which Jonas wrote.[98] Ian Wood's 1982 article demonstrated the *Vita Columbani*'s place in Merovingian hagiography, making it no longer possible for scholars simply to mine the *Vita Columbani* for historical information without consideration for the genre.[99] Clare Stancliffe, following Wood, was one of the first scholars to consider deeply Jonas's purposes for writing.[100] Albrecht Diem and Marilyn Dunn have studied the conflicts which arose within the Columbanian movement, particularly after Columbanus's death, and how Jonas sought to invent a picture of what 'true' Columbanian monasticism looked like.[101] My own work relies upon the context which Diem and Dunn have clarified, though my focus is different. Whilst the above scholars tend to concentrate on what Jonas is attempting to do in the wider Columbanian movement, this study is particularly concerned with how Jonas, as an author writing for a primarily monastic audience, sought to help and encourage his readers in their own spiritual journeys.

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[97] O'Hara, *Legacy of Columbanus*.
[98] Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio:* Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, *and* Life of Vedast (Liverpool, 2017).
[99] Ian Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), pp. 63-80.
[100] Clare Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and His Disciples*', in John Carey, Máire Herbert, and Pádraig Ó Riain (eds), *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 189-220.
[101] Amongst his other articles, see especially Albrecht Diem, 'Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man', *Speculum* 82 (2007), pp. 521-59. Also see Marilyn Dunn, 'Columbanus, Charisma, and the Revolt of the Monks of Bobbio', *Peritia* 20 (2008), pp. 1-27.

As Dunn and Diem have shown, the Columbanian movement after the saint's death was threatening fracture. Both the monasteries of Luxeuil and Bobbio claimed Columbanus's inheritance, both seeking the lead position in the movement.[102] Furthermore, as Columbanus's own writings hinted, there was dissension amongst the monks concerning the severity of their ascetic life. Finally, Columbanus's insistence on holding to the Irish method of dating Easter and the Irish tonsure had caused the community to come under pressure from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and it would be safe to assume that not all monks, especially the non-Irish ones, were in agreement with his stance.[103] By the time Jonas was writing, however, things had changed. The Columbanian movement had adopted a 'mixed rule', moderating the *Regula Columbani* with the *Regula Benedicti*.[104] The monasteries also adopted the Victorinus dating of Easter over the Irish one and probably also the conventional tonsure.[105] These changes allowed the movement to flourish with ecclesiastical support, but it was left in the somewhat difficult position of having a founder who had stood against these things.

Jonas wrote the *Vita Columbani abbatis et discipulorumque eius* to help resolve the situation. He composed it in two parts. The first book focuses on Columbanus, whilst the second book chronicles what occurred after his death. In the first part, Columbanus looms larger than life, his frenetic energy leaving the reader breathless as he bounds across Europe, founding monasteries and getting himself into trouble with the Frankish king. Jonas mentions people with whom he had spoken who had personally known

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[102] Diem, 'Monks and Kings', pp. 551-2, n. 177.
[103] *Epist.* 4 may point to conflicting views amongst the monks at Luxeuil concerning Easter. *Epist.* 4.3; ed. Walker, p. 28. See Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*', pp. 203-4.
[104] Stancliffe suspects that this was the doing of Eustasius, after the death of the unbending Athala. See 'Jonas's *Life*', pp. 210-5 for a discussion of the implementation of the mixed rule.
[105] Stancliffe notes that Jonas himself uses the Victorinus calendar in his prologue to the *Vita Iohannis*, but as the author refers to himself in the third person, it is unlikely that Jonas wrote the first part of the preface. See Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*', p. 210; Also, O'Hara, *Legacy of Columbanus*, p. 113. Cf. Jonas, *Vita Iohannis* Prae; ed. Krusch, p. 326.

Columbanus.[106] He also seems to have had contact of some sort with Burgundofara and the nuns of Faremoutiers, perhaps being present at some of their deaths.[107]

Jonas, however, makes no mention of several issues which would have put his saint in a questionable light. He is utterly silent on Columbanus's position on the Easter controversy, likely because, at the time of his writing, Pope Honorius had come down against the Irish method of dating, and it is likely that both Luxeuil and Bobbio had adopted the method accepted by Rome.[108] The issue of the Irish tonsure and Columbanus's stance on the Three Chapters are downplayed and skipped lightly over. In this way, Jonas's Columbanus comes across as perfectly theologically orthodox, and a fine foundation on which to build the burgeoning Columbanian monastic movement.

In the second book, Jonas goes on to define what this monastic movement looks like. In his view, Columbanian monasteries are monasteries that continue the *Regula Columbani*. What the *Regula Columbani* is exactly is unclear; Jonas never defines it. Diem argues that Jonas cannot be referring to the two *Rules* which Columbanus wrote, as these are not comprehensive enough. Instead, he makes the case for the *Vita Columbani* to be the *Regula Columbani,* arguing that the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis* are not sufficient and that Jonas wrote the *Vita Columbani* as a narrative form of a rule.[109] The *Vita Columbani*, however, is also not comprehensive enough to be described as the *Regula Columbani*. For instance, confession and penance,

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[106] *VCol* 1.11 and 15; ed. Krusch, pp. 172, 178.
[107] O'Hara, *Legacy of Columbanus*, pp. 115-6 suggests that Jonas may have had Faremoutiers in mind when writing *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* for Marchiennes because it mentions thrice daily confession, which he also mentions in conjunction with Faremoutiers in *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 272.
[108] Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*', p. 208.
[109] Diem, 'Monks, Kings', p. 527. Also, Albrecht Diem, 'Disputing Heritage: The *Regula cuiusdam patris*', in Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood (eds), *Columbanus and the People of Post-Roman Europe* (New York, 2018), p. 260.

hallmarks of Columbanian monasticism, really only receive treatment in regards to the nuns of Faremoutiers. The real vigour of Columbanus's asceticism is revealed in the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis* and only hinted at in the *Vita Columbani*. Though Jonas describes some aspects of Columbanian monasticism, his focus is not to create a guidebook for those wishing to follow the Columbanian way of life, but rather to create a unity between those who already do. Instead, the *Regula Columbani* probably refers to a way of life which encompassed Columbanus's two *Rules* but which also allowed for change. As discussed above, both the *Regula monachorum* and the *Regula coenobialis* were added to by Columbanus's disciples. Stancliffe argues that shortly after Columbanus's death the *Regula Benedicti* began to be incorporated into Columbanian monasteries, thereby lightening the ascetic load for the wearied monks.[110] Furthermore, in the *Vita Columbani,* Columbanus states that it is against their '*regularis disciplinae*' to allow the laity access to the living areas within the monastery, yet there is no mention of this in either of the written *Rules*, indicating that there were unwritten rules.[111] *Regula*, in fact, means 'norm': it does not need to refer to a written text. Thus, the *Regula Columbani* was a way of life which embodied the spirit of Columbanus primarily, but also encompassed a set of specific rules which were expanded and modified by his successors.

Jonas's two-book structure for the *Vita Columbani* was unique in the hagiographical genre. Though other *vitae* had been composed in two parts, no previous hagiographical work had covered both a saint and his followers after his death.[112] Jonas probably modelled this aspect of his work directly upon the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the

[110] Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*', pp. 210-5.
[111] See *VCol* 1.19; ed. Krusch, p. 190.
[112] For instance, the *VRad*, discussed in Chapter 3. Two authors, however, are responsible for this work, each having their own book.

Apostles; Luke wrote the first to chronicle the life of Jesus and the second to follow the deeds of His disciples.[113] Jonas's second book is in five sections. The first section is devoted to Athala, abbot of Bobbio after Columbanus, and is essentially a *vita* within a *vita*. The second section is dedicated to Eustasius, abbot of Luxeuil, but is mainly concerned with the rebellion of Agrestius, a monk of Luxeuil. The middle section is long – twelve out the twenty-five chapters – and details the deaths of several nuns at Faremoutiers under Burgundofara. The fourth section tells of the life of Bertulf, the current abbot of Bobbio, and the final section records miracles which the monks of Bobbio wrought. Whilst this is the order in which Bruno Krusch published the sections, it does not appear as such in any manuscript. In fact, all five sections do not appear anywhere together, begging the question as to whether or not Jonas had finalised his work. Stancliffe, however, has carefully studied the variations in the different manuscript traditions, and has convincingly concluded that Krusch's order was probably the correct one.[114] Jonas's focus on the abbots and monks of Bobbio whilst making Eustasius of Luxeuil out to be the key figure in the movement was likely his way of resolving the tension between the two monasteries concerning which one was to take over Columbanus's mantle.[115]

The *Vita Columbani* exists today in 187 manuscripts,[116] a number which demonstrates its abiding influence throughout the Middle Ages. Two of these manuscripts come from the ninth century.[117] Jonas also wrote two other *vitae* which survive with a much

[113] O'Hara, *Legacy of Columbanus*, p. 158.
[114] For the details of her reasoning, as well as the historiography on the issue, see Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*,' pp. 192-201.
[115] Diem, 'Monks and Kings', pp. 551-2, n. 177.
[116] O'Hara, *Jonas and Legacy*, pp. 267-73. O'Hara includes an index of 168 manuscripts, pointing the reader to Alain Dubreucq's forthcoming edition for *Sources Chrétiennes* for the full list.
[117] St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 553, as well as the previously mentioned Metz, Grand Séminaire, 1.

smaller circulation. He wrote the *Vita Vedastis episcopi Atrebatensis*, which survives in about twelve manuscripts, and the *Vita Johannis abbati Reomaensis*, of which there are only two extant copies. Further to these three works, Albrecht Diem has recently postulated that Jonas was the author of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*,[118] a *Rule* which has until now been attributed to Waldebert, third abbot of Luxeuil. The attribution to Jonas, though subscribed to by Alexander O'Hara,[119] is still theoretical, being based mainly upon the fact that the author of the *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines* and Jonas both obviously knew the *Regula Benedicti* but refused to quote from it.[120] The ascription of authorship to Waldebert is based on the mention of his writing of a *Rule* for the nuns of Faremoutiers in the *Vita Sadalbergae*;[121] also, the *Rule* prescribes thrice daily confession,[122] which was the practice at Faremoutiers.[123] Both authors seem likely candidates in the face of the scarcity of evidence. Scholars can look forward to Diem's forthcoming critical edition and translation for a deeper discussion which may tip the balance in favour of Jonas.

Because Jonas was intent on creating unity within the Columbanian monastic movement, he had to display Columbanus's holiness in a manner which was at once inimitable and imitable. Inimitable, because the founder of such an important

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[118] For a preliminary study, see, Diem, 'Disputing Columbanus's Heritage', pp. 259-306.
[119] Whilst O'Hara thinks the attribution likely, he goes further to argue that Jonas of Bobbio should be identified with Abbot Jonatus of Marchiennes, an identification first made by Jean Mabillon in the seventeenth century. He then attempts to draw comparisons between the rule and the archaeological findings at Marchiennes-Hamage. Whereas the arguments he makes for Jonas and Jonatus being the same person are fairly convincing, the link between the rule and Jonatus/Marchiennes still requires more support. See O'Hara, *Legacy of Columbanus*, pp. 113-120. For arguments against the identification of Jonas as Jonatus, see Ileana Pagani, 'Ionas-Ionatus: A proposito della biografia di Giona di Bobbio', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd series, 29 (1988), pp. 45-85.
[120] Albrecht Diem, 'New Ideas Expressed in Old Words: The *Regula Donati* on Female Monastic Life and Monastic Spirituality', in *Viator* 43 (2012), pp. 1-38.
[121] *Vita Sadalbergae abbatissae Laudunensis* 12, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), p. 56.
[122] *Regula cuiusdam ad virgines*, *PL* 88 (1862), 6, col. 1059.
[123] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 272.

movement had to inspire obedience with a holiness which demonstrated his close relationship with God, and imitable because the movement was to find its cohesiveness through following that same founder. What we find, then, is a holiness in Columbanus which is imitated by his disciples in the second book to a lesser degree.

Throughout the *Vita Columbani*, Columbanus's speech sets him apart from other characters. When he first arrives in Gaul with his Irish companions, he immediately starts preaching the Gospel, but his words are given power through the evident virtue of his life.[124] Jonas tells us that 'he was well received by the people because the example of his virtues confirmed at the same time what the exercise of eloquence embellished, through the enlightening doctrine of preaching.' Thus, Jonas based the truth of the message in the character of the speaker. Jonas, however, believed the power of Columbanus's speech was enhanced by its eloquence, a stance to which Caesarius, with his emphasis on the responsibility of all to teach, did not hold. We will see below how eloquence is important to Jonas's conception of holy speech.

Jonas's Columbanus and his monks achieved purity of heart by following a programme involving the progressive and tireless routing out of vice:

> For them, the sin of indolence and discord was detestable, while they struck at the haughtiness of arrogance and vainglory with the harsh blows of chastisements, and the poisons of anger and of envy were routed by their keen diligence. So great was their virtue of patience, their tenderness of love, their cultivation of gentleness that you could not doubt that the gentle Lord dwelt openly among them.[125]

Jonas showed that it was through the monks' hard work that they were able to root out vices and obtain purity, and that it was because of their pure state that God lived among

[124] *VCol* 1.5; ed. Krusch, p. 161; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 106.
[125] *VCol* 1.5; ed. Krusch, p. 161-2; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 107.

them. The purity they were able to attain through their ascetic programme is what attracted the nobility and brought patronage to the movement, and Jonas goes on to demonstrate how speech was a key factor in this.

Jonas makes great use of speech as an indicator of holiness throughout the *Vita Columbani*, but he does not employ sleep-speech and he does not discuss nocturnal emission. The idea that the sleeping mind is the definitive revealer of a person's purity did not leave a mark on Jonas, just as it does not seem to have been important to Columbanus. Instead, Jonas is deeply concerned with proving his characters' purity through speech which is witnessed by many people. When Columbanus speaks, there are always witnesses, and usually those witnesses are not just monastics. Noblemen, laity, churchmen, and soldiers are often employed as witnesses. By making Columbanus's audience as broad as possible, Jonas gives greater credence to his holiness and increases his reputation. Just as the authors of the *Vita Caesarii*, the *Vita Rusticulae*, and the *Vita Radegundis* required witnesses for the incidences of sleep-speech, so Jonas knew the value of witnesses for the speech of his characters.

When Jonas's Columbanus speaks to kings, he employs the frank speech of the ancient philosophers, often sounding rude and insubordinate as he speaks the truth to authority. For instance, Columbanus openly criticises King Theuderic II, telling him that he ought not to keep concubines, but rather marry properly and have legitimate children.[126] He should not be 'seen to emerge from whore-houses'. Instead of being put off, however, Theuderic agrees to put away his concubines. Columbanus speaks boldly, but he is not insubordinate – like the holy men of the fourth century, he is an outsider, someone

[126] *VCol* 1.18; ed. Krusch, p. 187.

without political ties. His right to do so is confirmed by his status as a *peregrinus*, a profession which Jonas, in keeping with the beliefs of the real Columbanus as we shall see below, only allows to the perfect.[127]

According to Jonas, Brunhild, Theuderic's grandmother, who does not want a rival at court, cannot tolerate Columbanus's influence over the king. She therefore invites Columbanus to bless the illegitimate princes, knowing that he will not. He does not disappoint her, but tells her, 'You should know that these boys will never become kings because they have come out of whore-houses.'[128] This is a public insult, and Brunhild is furious. Though Columbanus knows the effect his words will have, he is compelled to speak anyway. Again, he does not attempt to soften the truth he feels he must share, but speaks fearlessly, confident in the veracity of his statement. Theuderic, however, upon hearing about the situation, seeks to reconcile with the monk and sends him food that was prepared for the royal table. Columbanus speaks out boldly, refusing the food as not fit for the servants of God because of the giver. The power of these words immediately shatters the containers holding the food and drink, frightening the messengers. Though we can only really go by Columbanus's letters in order to know how he would have spoken to people of such rank as popes and bishops, we can see that Jonas's portrayal of him was not likely far off the mark. The real Columbanus, however, combined his bold speech with a rhetorical skill and self-abasement which softened the hardness of his message, unlike Jonas's Columbanus.[129] Nevertheless, in

[127] Van Renswoude points out that Columbanus's right to speak to the king in such a manner is directly linked with his ability to offer intercessory prayer on his behalf. Van Renswoude, *Licence to Speak*, p. 229. Theuderic used to petition Columbanus to pray for him. See *VCol* 1.18; ed. Krusch, p. 186.
[128] *VCol* 1.19; ed. Krusch, p. 188; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 134.
[129] Van Renswoude, p. 237.

concentrating on Columbanus's fearless speech, Jonas underlines his holiness in a way which his readers would have understood from a long and venerable tradition.

The most striking incidence of holiness being revealed through speech is Jonas's use of prophecy. Prophecy was understood as words coming directly from God, and therefore was not a tool one could use to create holiness, but rather an indicator of it. Cassian does not discuss prophecy as a part of his programme, and Caesarius and his followers put little emphasis on it. Jonas, however, uses this particular speech-act throughout both parts of his *vita* in order to demonstrate Columbanus's holiness. In this, he is in line with Sulpicius, who used prophecy to great effect in communicating Martin's purity, as we saw in Chapter 1. Columbanus prophesies several times throughout the *Vita Columbani*, and Jonas is careful to let us know that the prophecies come true. Sometimes, Columbanus's prophetic speech involves foreknowledge of rather mundane things, such as the presence of fish in a trap, as discussed above. At one point, he prophesies the location of his missing glove, which had been stolen by a raven.[130] These instances have only monks as witnesses. When Columbanus' troubles with King Theuderic begin, however, prophecy begins to flow on a grander scale. Though Brunhild had put injunctions upon Luxeuil preventing the free movement of monks, Columbanus is not deterred from his remonstrations of the king. Theuderic, Brunhild having swayed him against the monk, discontinues his patronage and questions the Columbanian way of life within the monastery. Columbanus's reaction is to pronounce a terrible prophecy: Theuderic's kingdom will be destroyed and his children killed. Throughout the ongoing conflict, as Columbanus experiences imprisonment, exile, and escape, he reiterates this prophecy a number of times in response to the continued

[130] *VCol* 1.15; ed. Krusch, pp. 178-9.

ungodly actions of other characters.[131] Each time he prophesies, the reader is aware that God Himself is speaking through Columbanus, and his purity is therefore put on display in a dramatic way.

Columbanus's prophecies tend to have an element of justice to them. Theuderic dares to defy Columbanus's commands, so he loses his kingdom and his dynasty. To the man who leads him into exile, he prophesies, 'You will have Chlothar, a man you now despise, for your lord within three years.'[132] To a guard who strikes one of Columbanus's companions in a boat, he prophesies his death in the same place; the man shortly drowns in the same harbour.[133] When Chlothar II aids the monk, on the other hand, Columbanus's prophecy now appears in a vindicating light: he will gain both his brothers' kingdoms within three years because he supported Columbanus in his exile.[134] In this way, Columbanus's prophecies not only reveal his own holiness – his words come true because they are upheld by God – but also the state of the heart of the one who hears them. The contrast only serves to underline Jonas's goal to show his protagonist as the absolutely holy founder of the Columbanian monastic movement.

Jonas also uses speech to demonstrate the superior faith of the founder. When Columbanus speaks, he does so with a faith which excels that of his companions, particularly when he commands. For instance, he commands animals with the full expectation that they will obey, and they do. The raven who stole his glove returns it and even awaits punishment for its misdeed.[135] A bear vacates the cave which

[131] *VCol* 1.22; ed. Krusch, pp. 200-5.
[132] *VCol* 1.20; ed. Krusch, p. 198; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 144.
[133] *VCol* 1.21; ed. Krusch, pp. 198-9.
[134] *VCol* 1.24; ed. Krusch, p. 207.
[135] *VCol* 1.15; ed. Krusch, p. 179.

Columbanus chose for his hermitage;[136] another does not eat the fruit Columbanus put aside for the monks.[137] It is when he commands the monks, however, that the greatest lessons in faith are learned. During one harvest, rain threatens to destroy the crop.[138] Columbanus prays for good weather, then orders the monks to cut the grain. No one dares to contradict him, but they wonder at his command. As they cut, the rain falls on all sides, but the field remains dry and the harvest is saved. Likewise, on another occasion, almost all the monks of Luxeuil are ill, so that the only monks who are not are required to nurse their brothers.[139] Columbanus, the situation having been divinely revealed to him whilst he is at his hermitage, returns and orders all the sick monks to get up and begin threshing grain. Those who do are healed as they go; those who do not remain sick for a year and almost die. Columbanus speaks with a faith which the monks could not equal. Through obedience, they are able to obtain the benefits of his faith. The paramount importance which Columbanus lays on the virtue of obedience has already been noted above, but here we see the extreme obedience which Columbanus commands is the requirement for their participation in the miracles of faith which he performs. This is in line with the real Columbanus's teaching of obedience 'up to death'.[140]

The stress which Jonas places on absolute obedience also underlines his belief about the nature of a teacher. Jonas, like Columbanus, believed that the teacher must have already reached perfection before he could teach. When he describes Columbanus's training at the monastery of Bangor, Jonas tells us:

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[136] *VCol* 1.8; ed. Krusch, pp. 166-7.
[137] *VCol* 1.27; ed. Krusch, p. 216.
[138] *VCol* 1.13; ed. Krusch, pp. 173-4.
[139] *VCol* 1.12; ed. Krusch, pp. 172-3.
[140] *Reg mon* 1; ed. and tr. Walker, pp. 124-5.

> Columbanus began to dedicate himself completely to prayer and fasting, and to take up the yoke of Christ (which is light for those who bear it), and to follow Christ by denying himself and taking up his cross, so that he, who would become a teacher to others, should, by enduring mortification in his own body, show more fully by example what he himself had learned from religious teaching, which he had taught should be enacted by others.[141]

Later in the *Vita*, Jonas informs us of the *Rule* which Columbanus had written, and states that 'the sensible reader or listener realizes in this the excellence of the holy man and the extent of his religious instruction.'[142] The abbot's works were the guide for the monks to reach perfection. If Columbanus himself had not already been perfect, the works would have provided flawed instruction, because they reflect the holiness of the author.

Jonas does not employ silence or solitude as themes in his work, yet he still gives glimpses into the importance they played in Columbanus's life. He is often in his hermitage[143] or in the wilderness with a small number of companions.[144] Solitude is more often used as an occasion for displays of the abbot's miraculous powers. Jonas's Columbanus, however, is usually speaking, commanding, preaching, or prophesying. He gives no indication as to the importance which silence played in Columbanian monasteries amongst the monks. Likewise, at least in the first book, Jonas does not emphasise confession.[145] This, however, will change in the second book.

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[141] *VCol* 1.4; ed. Krusch, pp. 158-9; tr. O'Hara and Wood, pp. 102-3.
[142] *VCol* 1.10; ed. Krusch, p. 170; tr. O'Hara and Wood, pp. 117-18.
[143] *VCol* 1.8, 9, 12, and 27; ed. Krusch, pp. 166-7, 167, 172, and 216.
[144] *VCol* 1.11; ed. Krusch, pp. 170-2.
[145] There is some talk of the laity seeking 'the medicines of penance' (eg. *VCol* 1.10; ed. Krusch, p. 170; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 117) but no instances of monastics confessing, formally or otherwise.

Columbanus's Male Disciples in the *Vita Columbani*

As discussed above, in writing the *Vita Columbani abbatis discipulorumque,* Jonas was attempting to demonstrate that Columbanus's spirit was present in all Columbanian monasteries which followed the *Regula Columbani*, or the Columbanian way of life. One of the ways he did this was by using the same indicators of holiness when describing his disciples that he used to describe Columbanus himself. In particular, he used speech to reveal the holiness of Athala and Eustasius, the abbots of Bobbio and Luxeuil respectively.

Athala's section chronicles his life from his first entrance into monastic life until his death. In order to display Athala's holiness, Jonas focuses on the abbot's ability to teach. He tells us that Athala is 'wise in solving and countering questions' as well as 'active and firm in dealing with the storm of heretics'.[146] In the context of listing Athala's virtues, Jonas writes that 'right teaching flowed into his disciples.'[147] It is because of his great virtue that Athala's teaching 'flowed' without hinderance, allowing his disciples to grow in virtue as well. Athala's main virtue is obedience to Columbanus's way of doing things, including refusing to diminish the harshness of the *Rule*. Therefore, Jonas uses one of Columbanus's most important speech-acts to demonstrate his holiness – his effective teaching which reflects the virtue of his life.

Jonas uses speech to reveal Eustasius's holiness as well, but his focus for this abbot is different. Like he did with Athala, Jonas uses a speech-form he had used in Book I to indicate Columbanus's holiness, but for Eustatius he chooses to use the frank speech of

[146] *VCol* 2.4; ed. Krusch, p. 236; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 185.
[147] *VCol* 2.4; ed. Krusch, p. 236; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 185.

the ancient philosophers. Whilst Athala's section constitutes a short *vita*, Eustasius's section does not cover his familial ties or monastic beginnings. Instead, it launches into action, with Eustasius, the very embodiment of Columbanus, striding through the country, visiting kings and admonishing noblemen. Jonas tells us that Eustasius was on his way to see King Chlothar when he stops to visit Chagneric, Burgundofara's father. Chagneric and his wife Leudegunda were big supporters of Columbanus, and the saint had consecrated Burgundofara as a young girl to the monastic life.[148] Chagneric appears to have had qualms about this, however, and had arranged his daughter to be married. The consequence of this, according to Jonas, was that the girl contracted an eye infection that would soon be fatal. Eustasius, finding this situation upon his arrival, rebukes Chagneric, telling him that it is his fault that his daughter is suffering so greatly. Chagneric was the head of an important clan, and his powerful status would likely have been known to contemporary readers. That Eustasius is able to speak to him in such a way is a clear indication of his holiness. As noted above, Jonas believed that in order to speak with this kind of directness, the authority of a pure heart and a truthful message was necessary. This incident recalls Columbanus's earlier encounter with King Theuderic, making the link between the holiness of the saint and his disciple. Like his master, Eustasius continues in his stance against the sin of the great. When Burgundofara recovers, Chagneric engages her once again. When Eustasius finds out, he returns in order to rescue Burgundofara and rebuke Chagneric 'terribly'.[149]

Like Columbanus, Eustasius's speech acts are public, with an audience which stretches beyond monastics. Eustasius's section is nearly entirely focused on his conflict with the

[148] *VCol* 1.26; ed. Krusch, p. 209.
[149] *VCol* 2.7; ed. Krusch, p. 240-3; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 190.

rebel monk Agrestius. Agrestius was a monk at Luxeuil under Eustasius who, after leaving the monastery, became an advocate for the Aquileian side of the Three Chapters Schism.[150] Jonas uses the events in this section to contrast Eustasius's holiness with Agrestius's wickness primarily through their speech. The contrast begins right as Agrestius enters Luxeuil. He desires to go out again and preach to the pagan *Baioarii*,[151] but Eustasius refuses him permission because of his immaturity. Unable to keep him, Eustasius eventually allows him to leave. Agrestius, however, is unable to convert anyone with his preaching. As we have seen above, effective preaching is for Jonas directly linked to the purity of the preacher, and Agrestius's failure in his missionary efforts therefore proves the impure state of his heart. This is in direct contrast to Eustasius, who had preached to and converted many *Baioarii* in the previous chapter.[152]

As the story continues, Agrestius takes up the cause of the schismatics and attempts to persuade Columbanian abbots and bishops to side with him. Unable to convince Athala, Eustasius, or anyone else because of his 'lack of skill', he resorts to attacking the *Regula Columbani*, 'prattling (*garriens*) against his rule with the teeth of a butcher, and grunting (*grunniens*) like a filthy pig'.[153] As we saw above with Columbanus, eloquence was important to Jonas and a sign of holiness. Interestingly, Jonas is able to underscore Agrestius's inarticulacy in a display of his own eloquence by choosing such vivid and similar sounding words.[154] Agrestius is the opposite of eloquent, and the only people he is able to convince are those 'whose arrogance was similar to his'. These,

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[150] O'Hara and Wood point out that Columbanus's stance gives him much in common with Agrestius, but Columbanus was never a schismatic. See O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, pp. 194-5, n. 564. Cf. *Epist.* 5.
[151] Bavarians. O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, p. 191, n. 544.
[152] *VCol* 2.8; ed. Krusch, p. 244. Cf. *VCol* 2.9; ed. Krusch, p. 246-7.
[153] *VCol* 2.9; ed. Krusch, p. 248; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 195.
[154] In this Jonas signals his own holiness, and therefore his own trustworthiness as a narrator of these events.

initially, were bishops, about whose holiness Jonas was unconcerned. At the Council of Mâcon, Eustasius and Agrestius go toe-to-toe in a full-on battle of words, and Eustasius comes out on top. Agrestius speaks 'with trembling lips, having no authority or eloquence (*eloquium*)', able to only bring forward trivial accusations.[155] Juxtaposed to this, Eustasius calmly and rationally answers each point, confounding Agrestius, which just increases his 'evil chattering (*garrulitatis noxam*)'.[156] The conflict ends when Eustatius employs prophecy against Agrestius, sentencing him to plead his case before God Himself before the end of the year.[157] As with Columbanus, the speaking of prophecy here underscores Eustasius's holiness.

Jonas also contrasts the sound mind that Eustasius's speech reveals with the 'irritated (*exasperatas*)' minds of Amatus and Romaric of Remiremont, another Columbanian monastery.[158] Because the two men retained hurt feelings from an earlier chastisement which Eustatius delivered, their minds were impure and therefore open to receive the lies which Agrestius came to tell soon after Mâcon. He does not, however, have the same luck with Burgundofara, whom he tries next. Her speech also reveals her purity as she 'confounds him with her response' and immediately recognises his speech as 'poison (*veneno*)'.[159]

In typical Jonas fashion, divine punishment soon falls. Rabies, suicide, and lightening take the lives of those who succumbed to Agrestius's arguments. Furthermore,

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[155] At least Jonas makes them appear trivial. Jonas may be hiding references to the serious objections against the dating of Easter and the harshness of the *Regula Columbani* in Agrestius's claims about different customs and 'heretical traditions.' *VCol* 2.9; ed. Krusch, p. 249; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 196.
[156] *VCol* 2.9; ed. Krusch, p. 251; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 198.
[157] *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, p. 251.
[158] *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, p. 252; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 200.
[159] *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, p. 253; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 200.

Agrestius himself dies at the hand of his servant, thereby fulfilling the prophecy Eustastius spoke at Mâcon. Amatus and Romaric reconcile with Eustastius, as do the bishops who had supported Agrestius at Mâcon, and many more Columbanian monasteries are founded and flourish. Jonas depicts this as a direct result of God's vindication of Eustasius's position. Thus, in this episode, Jonas has used the same speech-markers of holiness – the frankness of the ancient philosophers, eloquence, and prophecy – for Eustasius as he had for Columbanus.

As mentioned above, after Columbanus's death there was a dispute between Luxeuil and Bobbio over which monastery would have the preeminent place in the Columbanian movement. Jonas, whilst honouring Bobbio through his treatment of two abbots – including the one who had recently died[160] – as well as describing miracles performed by the monks of Bobbio,[161] assigns this position to Luxeuil by depicting Eustasius as an Elisha figure. Elisha was Elijah's protégé, whom he trained to be his successor. Just before Elijah is taken up to heaven in whirlwind, Elisha asks him for a double portion of his spirit.[162] He leaves Elisha with his cloak, which immediately after Elijah's ascension he uses to preform the same miracle Elijah had performed minutes before. He strikes the river Jordan with it, the waters part, and he walks through on dry ground. In the following chapters of 2 Kings, Elisha performs the same miracles Elijah did, and he performs twice as many. This corresponds to the 'double portion' for which Elisha had asked, and confirms the fact that Elisha had both literally and figuratively taken on Elijah's mantle. To show that Eustasius had taken on Columbanus's mantle, he uses the same speech-indicators of holiness for him as he does for the saint.

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[160] Bertulf, one of the commissioners of the *Vita Columbani*. Jonas tells the account of his life in *VCol* 2.23; ed. Krusch, pp. 280-6.
[161] *VCol* 2.24-5; ed. Krusch, pp. 286-94.
[162] 2 Kings 2:9.

Eustasius prophesies, speaks with eloquence and skill, is an effective preacher and converts many to the Christian faith, and speaks with frankness to noblemen and kings. In contrast, Athala's speech is limited to effective and godly teaching, which is restricted to his own monks. Eustasisus's speech, conversely, is witnessed by the same groups of people which witnessed Columbanus's speech – laity, nobility, royalty, and bishops, as well as monks. Finally, Jonas employs the principle of the 'double portion' in two ways. Columbanus heals one blind person,[163] and consecrates one girl – Burgundofara – to the monastic life.[164] Eustasius both restores Burgundofara's sight and reconsecrates her after her father engages her to be married.[165] In the next chapter, he goes on to restore the sight of Sadalberga, also consecrating her to the monastic life.[166] By juxtaposing the two healings and consecrations, Jonas proves to his audience that Eustasius has indeed received a 'double portion' of Columbanus's spirit, making him the saint's successor.

In Eustasius's final scene, Jonas underscores the abbot's holiness. As he awaits his death, Eustasius spends all his time reading and contemplating holy texts and directing his mind toward God. Jonas writes:

> Now waiting for the blessed departure from this life, he exerts all his intention to contemplating writings of sacred prayers with all intention and pouring out prayers he directs them to God alone with an intent mind.
>
> (*Iamque beatum de hac vita exitum praestolans, omnem intentionem ad contemplanda misticorum praeconiorum documenta omni intentione desudat solique Deo mente intenta preces fundens dirigit*.)[167]

[163] *VCol* 1.21; ed. Krusch, p. 200.
[164] *VCol* 1.26; ed. Krusch, p. 209.
[165] *VCol* 2.7; ed. Krusch, pp. 240-3
[166] *VCol* 2.8; ed. Krusch, pp. 244-5.
[167] *VCol* 2.10; ed. Krusch, p. 256; author's translation.

Jonas uses the word *intentio* three times, which was no doubt calculated.[168] He also uses it a fourth time in the next sentence, again describing the way in which he is devoted to his work.[169] As we have seen above, a *mens intenta* was an important part of Cassian's programme to purify the mind so that the monastic could see God.[170] Here, as Eustasius approaches death – the point at which he will come before God – we see him participating in a programme like Cassian's, using techniques from Late Antiquity to purify himself in preparation. Jonas's use of the same phrase exposes his adherence to the same method of purification which Cassian espoused. He further underlines this with three more uses of *intentio,* twice combined with the modifier *omnis*. Eustasius's mind is wholly intent on what he is reading – texts which direct his attention towards God alone (*soli Deo*). Though we only catch glimpses of the importance of reading as a means to direct the mind and create purity in Columbanus's writings, here we see clear evidence that it was used in Columbanian monasticism.

In the end, however, Jonas employs a further method of purification related to penance. Whilst Eustasius spends his final years meditating upon sacred writings, shortly before death he has a vision. In it, he is asked if he would rather be fully cleansed through mild afflictions for forty days, or harsher afflictions for thirty. He chooses the latter, and so, for thirty days, he suffers in order that his soul be fully purified before his death. Jonas thus emphasises Eustastius's sanctity by allowing him a prophecy of the time of his own death, a mark of holiness which is important in Columbanian circles, which we

[168] O'Hara and Wood note the repetition, however, they admit to being unclear as to the purpose. See O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio,* p. 203, n. 615.
[169] '*Cumque iam per multorum circulis annorum in hoc opere intentio vacaret…*'
[170] Jonas was familiar with Cassian's writings, as well as those of Fortunatus, who, as noted above, also used the term *mens intenta*. See O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, p. 46. For Jonas's knowledge of Fortunatus's writings, see *VCol* 1, *Prae*; ed. Krusch, p. 152; also, Alexander O'Hara, 'Between Metz and Überrlingen', in Alexander O'Hara (ed), *Columbanus and the People of Post-Roman Europe* (Oxford, 2018), p. 214, nn. 59-60.

shall see below. He also reveals his belief that Cassian's programme is not enough – there will always be some sin left in the heart, even in a saint such as Eustasius. Penance is required for complete purification, and Jonas depicts the period of intense suffering before death as a gift from God. Cassian believed that a person would always battle sin in this lifetime, but he did not provide a method for a final purification before death. Jonas solves this problem with a period of concentrated penance.[171] For this, confession is not even necessary; the suffering will purify every unacknowledged or even unrecognised sin. Whilst for Cassian the sleeping mind would reveal if there were areas of hidden sin within the heart of a monastic, Jonas did not have a mechanism for that kind of revelation. Instead, because there was no way to truly know if any residual sin remained, general penance through suffering was essential to wipe clean the heart. Perhaps this is why Columbanus and his followers were so wary of letting monastics move from the monastery into the eremitic life or mission work – they lacked an ultimate metric of holiness such as Cassian and the Caesarian authors had.

Columbanus's Female Disciples in the *Vita Columbani*

Though Columbanus had not founded any convents, by the time Jonas was writing, there were many Columbanian convents in existence.[172] Therefore, as Jonas wrote in order to bring cohesion to the Columbanian monastic movement, it was prudent for him to incorporate female monastics into his narrative. This criterion he met with the inclusion of a section on the nuns of Faremoutiers. He tells the reader that his purpose for including it is 'for the encouragement of [God's] female servants'.[173] This could

[171] On this issue in general, see F. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1990).
[172] In addition to Faremoutiers, Jonas mentions convents founded by Babelenus, Berthoara, and Romaric, and refers to the one which Sadalberga founded. See nn. 24, 26, and 28 above.
[173] *VCol* 2.11; ed. Krusch, p. 257; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 204.

refer to the nuns at Faremoutiers, but it is more likely that he is referring to female monastics in general. As he may have been the abbot of the double monastery of Marchiennes-Hamage, this seems even more likely. Faremoutiers is the only convent which Jonas discusses. His choice was probably dictated by the fact that Columbanus consecrated Burgundofara, the foundress of Faremoutiers,[174] as a child, and so the convent had a direct link to the saint.

Jonas's section on Faremoutiers is quite different from his earlier narratives concerning Athala and Bertulf of Bobbio or Eustasius of Luxeuil, or even the section concerning the monks of Bobbio. Burgundofara is a minor figure in her own *vita*, with most of the attention being given to death-bed scenes of Faremoutiers nuns. The abbess floats in the background, an 'anxious mother',[175] whilst the dying nuns take centre stage. Whilst Jonas's male monastics accomplish supernatural deeds and convert pagans with their preaching, nothing of this sort is available to announce the holiness of the nuns. The prophetic voices of the monks proclaim their own holiness publically as they preach and prophesy. For Jonas, in order to depict the holiness of his male characters through speech, there had to be witnesses. We have seen how Columbanus and Eustasius, the leaders of the Columbanian movement, spoke out with power in the hearing of royal, lay, and episcopal ears, in addition to those of their own monks. Athala's, Bertulf's, and the monks' of Bobbio speech was witnessed primarily by monks, with the exception of Bertulf's interaction with the pope. As with Caesarius's sleep-speech, witnesses were vital.

[174] Faremoutiers, originally called Evoriacum (or Eboriacum), was renamed so after its foundress. Jonas refers to it by its original name.
[175] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 273; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 220.

In each of the above instances concerning Columbanus's male disciples, Jonas provides a male witness. Even when speaking to women, as in the cases of Burgundofara and Sadalberga, men are on hand to observe. Though Burgundofara does not feature much in the Faremoutiers section, Jonas provides her with a stirring speech earlier in the narrative during her confrontation with Agrestius.[176] Nuns, however, did not lead the same kind of public lives as monks, and so Jonas faced the problem of a dearth of credible witnesses. Women, it appears, were not trustworthy witnesses in Jonas's view. Since he valued the idea that speech reflected the purity of a person's heart, he had to find some way of providing dependable witnesses for his nuns' speech. The answer upon which he landed was the death-bed scene. This provided an ideal solution to the problem because male priests were often present; at the very least, large groups of nuns gathered, and perhaps, for Jonas, the women's credibility was increased through sheer numbers. Jonas only recounts one story of a nun whose death was unwitnessed, whether by priest or nun. Instead, angelic singing is heard to emanate from the room, appropriately singing Psalm 51:7-8 which speaks of purity. The angels, then, effectively become witnesses to the woman's death and purity of heart.[177]

Despite the different circumstances, the kind of speech which Jonas uses to display the purity of a nun's heart is similar to that which he uses with his male characters. Though there is no preaching or teaching, prophecy is extremely common. The nuns prophetically predict their own deaths in most cases, just as Eustasius and Athala had. This was a very important marker of sanctity. As it was usually followed by a period of intense illness, the prophecy revealed to everyone that the nun was suffering, not as a

[176] *VCol* 2.10; Krusch, p. 253.
[177] *VCol* 2.14; Krusch, p. 264.

result of some hidden sin, but as a preparation for death.[178] Their holiness was therefore underscored rather than undermined. Additionally, some nuns also spoke prophetically concerning their fellow nuns, revealing secrets they could not have known otherwise. For instance, on her death-bed, Ercantrudis tells the nuns to separate out the 'dead woman'.[179] She is referring to a particular nun who breaks down and confesses a secret attachment to the world. Likewise, the dying Willesuinda singles out a nun who admits to not confessing all her sins from before she had entered the convent.[180]

Beyond prophetic utterances, for Jonas, the feminine alternative to the public speech of his male characters was confession in line with the *Regula Columbani*. As well as encouraging the confession of hidden sins in others as just mentioned, the nuns were sure to confess their own sins. Though this is implicit in some cases, Jonas only telling us of a period of preparation or penance before their deaths, he makes clear the cruciality of spoken confession. At one point, Burgundofara was consumed by a fever; the nuns thought she would die. [181] A nun and relative of the mother, Gibitrude, asked God to take her instead. God agreed, and Gibitrude died whilst Burgundofara recovered. God soon sent Gibitrude back, however; the nun had unresolved conflicts with three other sisters, and she was given time to settle them. Jonas writes:

> Wonderful to say, returning, and having been restored to her former life, she recounted with sad cries the sentence that had been passed, confesses (*confiteor*) her crime, calls the companions against whom she had borne hostile feelings, and asks their pardon lest, due to this silent (*tacita*) deceit, she might incur the loss of eternal life.[182]

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[178] Jonas tells of a few nuns whose suffering was on account of concealed sins; the outcome was either confession of the sins or death. See *VCol* 2.19 and 22; ed. Krusch, pp. 271-5 and 277-9.
[179] *VCol* 2.13; ed. Krusch, p. 263; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 210.
[180] *VCol* 2.17; ed. Krusch, p. 269.
[181] *VCol* 2.12; ed. Krusch, pp. 260-1; tr. O'Hara and Wood, pp. 207-8.
[182] *VCol* 2.12; ed. Krusch, pp. 261; tr. O'Hara and Wood, pp. 208.

Gibitrude, in spontaneously giving her life up, had not had time to prepare for death, including the confession of the guilt she was harbouring. Jonas here demonstrates the importance of spoken confession; remaining silent, in contrast, was deadly. Gibitrude receives a six-month reprieve before heading back to heaven. Another nun, who Jonas tells us never attempted to come under the *Rule*, was struck by a fever so that she lay senseless.[183] Coming to, she called frantically for Burgundofara to come so that she might confess her sins. This confession is what saves her from damnation, and she is granted a short period in which she is 'under the reproof of fever' before she dies. On the other hand, a nun to whom great grace was given – a sparkling ball of light was spotted in her mouth during psalm-singing – refused to confess the sin of pride which the event had stirred in her; she is struck with a fever and dies.[184] The glorious death to which she would have been entitled is given to two little girls instead. Spoken confession of sin was a necessary part of preparation for death as it helped to purify the heart. Unconfessed sin could not be cleansed.

Confession of sin is an integral part of the period of preparation or penance that the nuns of Faremoutiers undergo before death. Just before the illness strikes which precedes her death, Leudeberta has a dream in which God warns her to adhere strictly to Burgundofara's teachings, which includes thrice daily confession.[185] Confession, however, as noted above, was not enough to fully cleanse the soul. This is why every nun of Faremoutiers experiences a period of preparation before dying. Most often this period is marked by illness, Jonas often emphasising fever because of the purifying

[183] *VCol* 2.22; ed. Krusch, p. 279.
[184] *VCol* 2.16; ed. Krusch, pp. 266-8.
[185] *VCol* 2.18. Cf. *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 272.

nature of fire.[186] Jonas also, however, gives us another glimpse into how the method of using scripture to focus the mind on God and drive out sin was used during this time of preparation for death. As Bithildis lay dying, she reads the scriptures constantly, even throughout the night.[187] Another nun, Willesuinda, recites the entire bible from Genesis to John in order.[188] Beyond these specific examples, there is also an instance of a dying nun requesting Burgundofara to recite the Creed and the Lord's Prayer for her.[189] Though Jonas may have believed in the power of using scripture to focus the mind and rid the heart of sin, these instances are not enough to demonstrate the use of this method outside of the special preparation period preceding death.

In contrast to the rest of Jonas's narrative, the section on Faremoutiers is rife with the supernatural.[190] Whilst his male figures do participate in some miracles, they pale next to the fantastic and extraordinary events that the nuns of Faremoutiers experience at their deaths. Two nuns go to heaven before being sent back to finish period of penance or confess sins.[191] A cloud with glittering red lightning covers the bed of another at the moment of death.[192] Angelic singing was heard after the deaths of several nuns,[193] and a smell of balsam occurred after the death of four.[194] Visions were common, with five nuns experiencing them,[195] and nearly all of the nuns foretell the time of their deaths.[196]

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[186] He uses the term *igne febris* to make clear the link. Amongst other references to fire in the context of fever, see *VCol* 2.13 and 22; ed. Krusch, pp. 263 and 279. Cf. Numbers 31:23; Isaiah 48:9-11.
[187] *VCol* 2.21; ed. Krusch, p. 276.
[188] *VCol* 2.17; ed. Krusch, pp. 268-9.
[189] *VCol* 2:15; ed. Krusch, p. 266.
[190] Some scholars have seen the influence of Gregory I's *Dialogues*, where the first three books concentrate on miracles and the last book on deathbed visions. See, for instance, O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, pp. 204-5, n. 625. See also Peter Brown, *Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015).
[191] *VCol* 2.11, 12; ed. Krusch, pp. 257-8, 260-1.
[192] *VCol* 2.20; ed. Krusch, pp. 275-6.
[193] *VCol* 2.11, 13, 14, 17, and 20; ed. Krusch, pp. 259, 264, 264, 270, and 275-6.
[194] *VCol* 2.12, 16, and 21; ed. Krusch, pp. 261, 267, and 277.
[195] *VCol* 2.11, 13, 15, 17, and 18; ed. Krusch, pp. 259, 263-4, 266, 270, and 271.
[196] *VCol* 2.11, 12, 15, 16, 17, and 18; ed. Krusch, pp. 258-9, 261, 265-6, 268, 270, and 271.Of the remaining four, only one's death seems to have been unexpected, as there was no one around when it

Jonas uses these miraculous events to bolster the sanctity of the nuns, proving to the reader that following the *Rule* results in holiness and an immediate passage to heaven upon death.

As following the *Rule* is the prerequisite for holiness according to Jonas, he helpfully gives some examples of those who do not follow the *Rule* and what becomes of them. He tells us of a group of nuns who attempt to escape Faremoutiers in the dead of night.[197] These nuns are novices, and thus, according to Jonas, more easily tempted. They wish to return to their former life, but Jonas does not say specifically what it is they do not like about life at Faremoutiers, or what part of their former life they feel they are missing out on. A sudden ball of fire in the dormitory awakens everyone, and causes the discovery of the escaping novices. Terrified by the thundering noise which accompanied the fire, the novices try to turn back but find they cannot move. It is then through spoken confession of their sin to the abbess that the recalcitrant nuns are reconciled to the community and able to return to the convent. Jonas here demonstrates for us what the opposite of holiness looks like, and also how to regain the path toward perfection. The women who give into the temptation from the devil to leave the Columbanian regular life are met with 'divine punishment' even when they wish to return; it is only through speaking their repentance through confession that they are allowed back.

happened (*VCol* 2.14; ed. Krusch, p. 264). For the remaining three, though the narrative does not explicitly state that they foretold their deaths, it does imply that the deaths were expected, and the death-beds were surrounded by witnesses (*VCol* 2.13, 20, and 21; ed. Krusch, pp. and 277).

[197] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, pp. 271-2.

Jonas follows this story with another example which does not end as nicely. Two nuns succeed in their escape attempt,[198] making it all the way back to their homes. Prior to the escape, Jonas notes, the women would never participate properly in confession, neither giving a full or true confession as to their previous, worldly lives, nor 'of what daily fragility had attracted in thought, word, and deed'.[199] The women were not following the *Rule* of the monastery 'that each of them should purge her mind through confession three times a day, so that whatever stain the mind had attracted by its frailty, righteous exposure would wash it away', so that no 'medicine of penance' could be applied to them.[200] This was a very dangerous behaviour for them to engage in, and Jonas underscores this by making their lack of confession the starting point for the disastrous episode which follows.

Burgundofara sends a search party for them, which brings them back to the convent.[201] As opposed to in the previous story, the two nuns do not come happily. Next, the women are subjected to censure as per the *Rule*, but this has no effect on them, even over a 'long time'. Finally, God intervenes and strikes them with divine punishment, the nature of which Jonas does not reveal, but which seems to be some type of illness as the two are soon at death's door. As they lay dying, Burgundofara begs them to confess their sins, particularly in association with the escape. Jonas treats us to a graphic scene in which demons in the form of Ethiopians come to seize their souls whilst the two nuns

[198] Whilst Yaniv Fox speculates that these two nuns may have been the only ones who escaped during the breakout attempt of the first story, there is nothing in the narrative to indicate that the two escape attempts were the same. See Yaniv Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul: Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elites* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 201.
[199] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, pp. 272; O'Hara and Wood, p. 220.
[200] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, pp. 272-3; O'Hara and Wood, p. 220.
[201] According to Fox, Burgundofara was 'displaying the kind of behaviour that we would expect from a secular lord, forcefully pursuing her local interests'. He suggests that the search party was authorised to use force and was 'very convincing'. Fox, *Power and Religion*, p. 201.

'jabber and gnash their teeth' and scream out in refusal of the Eucharist.[202] They die without confession, and if anyone is in doubt of their final destination, Jonas goes on to describe the disturbances that happen at their graves. A ball of fire would often appear there and voices could be heard shrieking in torment, until, six months later, Burgundofara decides to dig up their bodies. Jonas tells us that 'she finds that the inside of the grave had been completely burnt with fire on the inside, and that nothing of the corpses remained in the earth, but the trace of ashes.' He concludes,

> The severity of the sentence that had been imposed lasted for three years so that the terror of the damned should strike fear into their remaining companions, and so that salvation might be spread by the religion and zeal of action of the living, as a result of the punishments imposed on the dead, whether destroyed by negligence, lukewarmness, or rather stubbornness of mind.[203]

Jonas delivers this severe warning for any reader who might consider going against the *Rule*. It was the women's rejection of the Columbanian custom of confession which began their story and which sealed their fate. Following the *Rule* as a marker of holiness would also be important for the authors of the *vitae* of the nuns at another Columbanian convent, Chelles.

Chelles

In the early sixth century, Clothilde, wife of Clovis I, founded a convent at a royal villa called Chelles. The community was short-lived and soon petered out. Later, in 658, Queen Balthild, wife of Clovis II, refounded the convent, after which it quickly became well-established and influential, enduring until the eighteenth century. We have two *vitae* which were written for the nuns of Chelles in the late seventh century, one belonging to Balthild, and the other to Bertilla, the first abbess. These sources reveal a

[202] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 274; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 221.
[203] *VCol* 2.19; ed. Krusch, p. 275; tr. O'Hara and Wood, p. 222.

different measure for holiness than the ones which Jonas used. Instead of the public proclamation of the gospel he used for men, or even the prophetic death-bed speeches he used for women, the *vitae* of Chelles measure women's purity of heart through the humility of their speech.

Though both works are anonymous, the authors were contemporaries and intimate with their subjects. The exact dating of the *Vita Bertillae abbatissae Calensis* is uncertain because the dates of Bertilla herself are uncertain. She was abbess at Chelles for forty-six years from its foundation until her death,[204] but the precise date of foundation is unknown. It may have been as early as 646, but certainly no later than 660.[205] The *Vita Bertillae* was written within a few years of her death, making it late seventh- or early eighth-century.[206] It may have been derived from several sources, including the *Vita Balthildis*.

The *Vita Balthildis* was written during the lifetime of Bertilla, who may have commissioned it. The dedication is somewhat confusing for scholars. The author addresses it to the '*dilectissimi fratres*', a mysterious choice. The obvious candidate for authorship is a nun from Chelles; the author clearly knew Balthild well, knowing intimate details about her life and activities.[207] If that were the case, however, why would the nun-author address the work to the male contingent of the monastery? This is the perplexing point for McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, who see a problem with the

[204] *VBert* 7; ed. Levision, p. 108.
[205] In 660, St. Eligius died, and Balthild conferred his relics upon Chelles. See f Rouen, *Vita Elgii episcopi Noviomagensis*, in B. Krusch (ed), *MGH, SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1902), 2.37.
[206] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 279.
[207] Some scholars attribute the work to a male monastic or cleric, but the personal access the author must have had to Balthild makes a nun the more likely scenario. For an argument against, see Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 115.

nun-author writing for the monks of Chelles 'who were certainly subordinate to the abbess and the nuns in the community.'[208] It is possible, however, the male side have been established only after the death of Balthild, that the nun-author wrote to them to acquaint them with the foundress they would not have known. Wemple thinks the '*dilectissimi fratres*' could have been the monks of Corbie, a male monastery which Balthild had also founded.[209] This is a distinct possibility, if the purpose of the *vita* was to begin to establish Chelles as a cult centre. Readers with a prior connection to the saint would presumably have been a friendly audience, and Corbie's great scriptorium had the potential to send copies of the work to other places. Chelles's own scriptorium could be thus employed, as well, of course. Bertilla may have thought the composition of a life of Balthild that highlighted her connection with Chelles would strengthen her cult connection with the nunnery over and above Corbie, who could also claim a connection with her.[210]

The abbess of Chelles was an enterprising woman, and she did much to enhance the reputation and prestige of her convent. Upon taking up the position of abbess, Bertilla was put in charge of convent's considerable wealth, some of which she used to adorn churches and altars.[211] She also expanded the convent into a double monastery, a venture which occurred after Balthild's death.[212] It was under Bertilla that monks and nuns from Chelles went forth to England to found monasteries and convents at the

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[208] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 268, n. 20.
[209] Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p. 183.
[210] Balthild's feast day was one of the few on which extra rations were given, indicating the importance of the day for the monks in the Carolingian period. David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen, 1990), p. 27.
[211] *VBert* 5 and 6; ed. Levision, pp. 105 and 106.
[212] There is no indication in the *VBalt* that Chelles was a double monastery; there are, however, several in the later *VBert*. This has led to the reasonable conclusion by Wemple that the expansion happened after Balthild's death. For a discussion of the evidence, see Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, pp. 182-3, and esp. n. 55.

request of the Saxon kings.[213] This not only reflects the convent's great reputation, but also contributed to the spread of it. Whilst Balthild certainly had an interest in her former country and had (or forged) political ties, Chelles's missionary success should be attributed to Bertilla. As the expansion of the convent only occurred after the death of Balthild, and as the Saxon kings are recorded as requesting both male and female religious from Chelles, Bertilla must have continued and enhanced the convent's connections with foreign royalty of her own accord. Chelles also had a flourishing scriptorium, and Bertilla sent many books to help the new monasteries.[214] Chelles's reputation could only be enhanced by a strengthening of its connection with the memory and cult worship of St. Balthild.

Balthild is well-attested in contemporary sources, including several *vitae* of other saints and the anonymous *Liber Historiae Francorum*, as well as charter evidence.[215] Of Anglo-Saxon origins, she came to Francia as a slave and was acquired by Erchinoald, the mayor of the palace in Neustria under Clovis II. Somehow, she caught the eye of Clovis and became his queen.[216] No doubt this was a boon to the career of Echinoald to have supplied the king with a wife. After his death in 657, she ruled as regent for her

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[213] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106. This is corroborated by Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, *PL* 95 (1861), cols. 128-32. He also mentions other members of a Saxon royal family who lived (or intended to live) at Chelles, cols. 208-12.

[214] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, pp. 106-7.

[215] Jonas, *Vita Iohannis*, pref. (ed. Krusch, p. 326); Dado of Rouen, *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis* 2.37 and 41, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH*, *SRM* 4 (Hanover, 1902), pp. 721 and 724; *Passio Leudegarii I* 2 and 4 (ed. Krusch, pp. 284 and 286; *Vita Filiberti abbatis Gemeticensis et Heriensis* 6, ed. W. Levison, MGH, SRM 5 (Hanover, 1910), p. 587f; *Vita Ansberti episcopi Rotomagensis* 1, ed. W. Levison, MGH, SRM 5 (Hanover, 1910), p. 619; *VBert*, 4 and 7 (ed. Levison, pp. 104 and 107; Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi I episcopi Eboracensis* 6, ed. W. Levison, MGH, SRM 6 (Hanover, 1913), p. 199; *Acta S. Aunemundi alias Dalfini episcopi*, ed. P. Perrier, Acta Sanctorum, Sept, 7 (Antwerp, 1760), 3. Also see, *Liber Historiae Francorum* 43 and 44, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH, SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 315-16. For charter evidence, see 'Chlothacharii III, no. 33', ed. K. Pertz, *MGH, Diplomatum imperii tomus* 1, p. 31-2. Also see, Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century: The Ford Lectures* (Oxford, 1946), p. 9, n. 4.

[216] Exactly how this happened is unclear. The account given in *VBalt* 3 (ed. Krusch, pp. 484-5) of her hiding in a pile of rags to avoid marrying Erchinoald and subsequently marrying the king is somewhat bizarre and unsatisfying. See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 99.

son Clothar III. Her other two sons, Childeric and Theuderic, also became kings. How Balthild – a woman of no family connections in Francia and someone who started off as a slave – was able to secure and hold the rule of the kingdom as regent is a mystery, though the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* relates that she was from Saxon nobility.[217] When her husband died, she became regent for her young son Childeric II. Her time as regent was one of relative stability, though there was a change in the faction which held sway at court. Echinoald had died shortly after Chlothar, and Balthild seems to have transferred her favour to the opposing faction headed by Ebroin, who became mayor of the palace.[218] This favour is evidenced by a number of appointments she made of bishops from families associated with Ebroin's faction.[219] When Childeric came of age, however, there seems to have been a change of allegiance on Balthild's part, the cause of which is unknown. We see her being instrumental in the appointment of Leudegar of Autun, a member of the faction which opposed Ebroin and later his contender for the position of mayor of the palace.[220] Around the same time, Bishop Sigobrand of Paris, who was not a member of Ebroin's faction but was a favourite of Balthild, was murdered 'against her will' by Ebroin's faction. This incident, combined with the appointment of Leudegar, seems to be the reason why she was 'escorted' to Chelles for retirement.[221] Retirement from politics, however, was only a matter of degrees for Balthild, just as it was for Radegund, and she continued to exert her influence through letters and gift-giving. She died at Chelles in 680.

[217] *LHF* 43; ed. Krusch, p. 315.
[218] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 108.
[219] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 112.
[220] *Passio Leudegarii I* 2; ed. Krusch, p. 284.
[221] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 113.

Balthild never met Columbanus, but she was drawn to and supported Columbanian monasticism. When she founded Chelles, she selected Bertilla, a nun from Jouarre, to be the abbess. Jouarre had been founded by Ado, one of the three sons of Authari and Aiga whom Columbanus consecrated as children. When Ado built Jouarre, he placed it under the *Rule* of blessed Columbanus (*beati regula Columbani*)[222] and installed his cousin Theudechildis as abbess, and it was she who sent Bertilla to Chelles at Balthild's command.[223] Bertilla was trained under the Columbanian *Rule* at Jouarre and would have brought the *Rule* with her to Chelles when Theudechildis sent her to begin the foundation.[224] The convent soon flourished under Balthild's patronage. The *Vita Balthildis* tells us that Balthild founded Chelles with the intention of entering it herself, as soon as her son was old enough to rule himself and she was no longer needed as regent.[225] It seems, however, that she may have been forced to retire to Chelles. It was the murder of Sigobrand and the fear of her retribution which, according to her *vita*, led those in power to suddenly release her from political duties and allow her to enter Chelles.[226] The enclosure of a person within the walls of a monastery, as we have seen, was an effective way of disposing of a political enemy.[227] Whether Balthild intended to enter Chelles at that time, or indeed ever, is uncertain, but her *vita* does give us glimpses that the transition was not exceptionally smooth, either for Balthild or for the community. The author of her *vita* writes,

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[222] As above, the *Rule of Columbanus* more likely meant following a way of life rather than the particular rules set out by Columbanus. *VCol* 1.26; ed. Krusch, p. 210.
[223] *VBert* 4; ed. Levison, pp. 104-5.
[224] V*Balt* 8; ed. Krusch, pp. 492-3. Theudechildis also sent other nuns from Jouarre who had been trained in the same manner to provide the first contingent for the new convent.
[225] *VBalt* 10; ed. Krusch, pp. 495-6.
[226] 'Fearing that the lady would act heavily against them, and wish to avenge him, they suddenly relented and permitted her to enter the monastery.' *VBalt* 10; ed. Krusch, p. 495; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 273.
[227] Some of the people against whom this tactic was used include Theudechild (see Chapter 3), Ebroin and Leudegar (both exiled to Luxeuil), Theuderic III (Balthild's son, exiled to St-Denis), and Dagobert II (exiled to a monastery in Ireland).

> And conducted by several elders, she came to her aforesaid monastery of Chelles and there she was received into the holy congregation by the holy maidens, as was fitting, honorably and with sufficient love. But at first she had no small complaint (*querela*) against those whom she had so sweetly nurtured. For they suspected her of false motives or else simply attempted to return evil for good. Hastily conferring with the priests about this, she mercifully indulged them in the delay and begged that they would forgive the commotion in her heart (*commotio cordis*). And afterwards by the largesse of God, peace was fully restored within them.[228]

This fascinating passage is the author's attempt to gloss over the disturbance caused by Balthild's sudden arrival at the convent.[229] The fact that she was escorted to the convent indicates that she was not going there willingly.[230] Furthermore, that she had to apologise for 'the commotion in her heart' also shows that she did not arrive quietly. The manuscripts do not all agree here as to whether it was the nuns or those of the ruling faction against whom she harboured resentment, but in either case she was not displaying the quiet and humble attitude a nun would be expected to display.[231] The nuns of Chelles were unconvinced that Balthild would be a suitable member of their community, and, unlike other Merovingian monasteries, they did not want their convent to be a prison.[232] The author tactfully assigns blame to both the nuns and the queen, before absolving all parties and proclaiming peace between them. Bertilla, abbess at the time, may have led the protest, but she is dexterously left out of the story. It would not do to have two future saints at loggerheads.

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[228] *VBalt* 10; ed. Krusch, p. 495-6; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 274.
[229] It also points to the early date of writing. Some of the readers would have remembered the event, which could therefore not be ignored. Instead, the author tries to help the nuns to remember it in a light which is more flattering to Balthild.
[230] A woman would not have travelled on her own, especially one of Balthild's rank; thus, explicitly mentioning her escort makes it most likely an indication of force.
[231] Krusch, *Vita Balthildis*, p. 496. '*Habuit enim tunc non modicum querelam contra eos/eas, quos/quas ipsa dulciter enutriverat…*' Most manuscripts have *eos, quos*, with a variant reading *eas, quas*.
[232] Many monasteries and convents, including possibly St. John's in Arles (discussed above), were compelled to act as prisons for members of the Merovingian royal family.

This passage reveals a problem which the author had to surmount in order to fashion Balthild into a saint: how does one sanctify the speech of a queen? As a queen and the founder of the convent, Balthild was not about to come under the authority of the abbess or the *Rule* in the same way as the other nuns. Like Radegund before her, she fell into a special category which allowed her special privileges. For instance, her *vita* tells us that she 'consulted' with the abbess on everything. Reading between the lines, it seems that Balthild had strong opinions as to what needed to be done and in what way, and, as the queen and founder, it was unlikely that she would be disobeyed or ignored. Furthermore, Balthild was not content to stay out of politics now that she had taken vows, but she again 'consulted' about giving gifts to royalty and nobility in order to secure the good reputation of the convent. Finally, we are told that she 'frequently attended divine reading', indicating that it was her choice whether or not to attend. This points to the ability to set her own schedule throughout the day. Both Balthild's and Bertilla's *vitae* insist upon the great love between the two women, but it is likely that tensions existed. Balthild was used to ruling – she had ruled a whole kingdom as regent for her son, after all – but so was Bertilla, having ruled Chelles for years before Balthild arrived. Though the author tries to frame Balthild's behaviour in a good light, it seems likely that she did not follow the rules of the convent or bow to the authority of the abbess.

Balthild was no larger-than-life saint. The author had a great challenge as to how to communicate her sanctity. The author was writing during the lifetime of people who had known Balthild well, and was thus limited in terms of creative licence. This was a different challenge than the one faced by Jonas when writing about the nuns of Faremoutiers: whereas Jonas was hampered by a dearth of witnesses, the author of the

Vita Balthildis had perhaps too many. The author could not claim miracles for Balthild; she did not prophesy, nor did she perform healings during her life. The only supernatural occurrences which the author records are Balthild's vision foreshadowing her death[233] and the glittering brightness of her room upon her passing.[234] The vision was only revealed after Balthild's death; Bertilla and the other nuns had been surprised that Balthild should die without warning, as it seems that there was an expectation of foreknowledge in the case of the death of a saint.[235] In the absence of miraculous proofs of sanctity, the author of the *Vita Balthildis* had to find a different way than Jonas to communicate Balthild's holiness. The solution was the same one Jonas had employed – focus on her adherence to the *Rule*. This was difficult; as we have already seen, Balthild does not seem to have actually put much stock in it herself. Undaunted, however, the author stresses in a number of places that Balthild is a model for the other nuns to follow.[236] As for the women in the *Vita Columbani*, devotion to the *Rule* is the ultimate measure of holiness.[237] In order to demonstrate her obedience to it, the author employs the metric of holy speech.

This must be done carefully, of course, as no nun could really get away with acting or speaking the way that Balthild did. For instance, we are told that Balthild was constantly advising the abbess. The author then writes, 'She gave her astute advice (*consilia*) and -- example of great humility-- she provided a pattern of piety in her service to her sisters.'[238] The author labels Balthild's attitude as humble, and then, in translating her behaviour for the other nuns, puts it in the category of service.

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[233] *VBalt* 13; ed. Krusch, p. 499.
[234] *VBalt* 14; ed. Krusch, pp. 500-1.
[235] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 276, n. 55.
[236] *VBalt* 1, 12, and 16; ed. Krusch, pp. 482, 497-8, and 502-3.
[237] Also like in the *VCol*, what the '*Rule*' precisely indicates is uncertain.
[238] *VBalt* 12; ed. Krusch, pp. 497-8; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 274.

Therefore, nuns following Balthild's example are to serve others, not necessarily advise the abbess. Further, the author also says, 'She showed that everything should be done as a result of consultation (*consilium*) and that nothing should be done without consent but that all actions should be temperate and rational.'[239] Again, the author reframes Balthild's words in a milder way, turning what was likely commands into consultation.

Surprisingly, there is no mention of one of the most important marks of Columbanian speech – confession.[240] This is especially unexpected as we know from the *Vita Bertillae* that confession was part of life at Chelles. Though the author of the *Vita Bertillae* even depicts Bertilla herself confessing, as we shall see below, perhaps the author of the *Vita Balthildis* did not want to draw attention to Balthild's confessional practices. If she did not consider Bertilla her superior, which there is a good chance she did not, she may not have been in the habit of daily confession. On the other hand, the need to confess implies sinfulness, and the author's primary goal was demonstrating Balthild's sanctity. Though Jonas and Columbanus saw confession as necessary for everyone, even saints, the author of the *Vita Balthildis* may have seen the cleansing of latent sin as superfluous to her holiness, perhaps even undermining her believability as a saint.

Since about half of the *Vita Balthildis* covers Balthild's life before entering the convent, the author is sure to point out how holy her speech was before her religious life began. The author highlights her attitude when she was a slave, telling us that she did every

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[239] *VBalt* 16; ed. Krusch, p. 503. '*... ut cuncta per consilium et nihil sine commeatu omnino esset faciendum, sed temperata et rationabilia fieri universa*.'

[240] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley translate '*confessionem puritatis*' as the example of 'pure confessions' which Balthild leaves behind. The phrase would better be translated 'confession of purity' and refers rather to her pure speech and holy character rather than Columbanian confession. See *VBalt* 16; ed. Krusch, p. 503; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 276.

service without grumbling (*murmurio*).[241] As noted above, according to the *Regula monachorum* murmuring is a sign that a person is inwardly disobedient. As obedience is the prime Columbanian virtue, the author here demonstrates Balthild's virtuousness through her silence whilst serving. Mostly, however, the author concentrates on Balthild's speech as she could not have kept silence as is expected in the Columbanian *Rule*. Though the author tells us that there was no frivolity in her speech (*non levis in eloquio*),[242] we again see Balthild's penchant for advising when we are told how she humbly and continually (*humiliter et assidue*) proposes things to the king for the benefit of the church and poor.[243] As above, the author frames her advice to her husband as displaying her humility, but her assiduousness in this matter demonstrates her continual persistence in petitioning him – a feature of speech which it would not do to imitate within the nunnery, but one that here is at least done for the benefit of religion. She is also shown exhorting younger women in their religious studies; exhortation, of course, is not considered idle speech under the *Rule*. The author does not, however, extol her teaching capabilities, so it seems that teacher was not a role she ever fulfilled. By sanctifying Balthild's speech even before her arrival at the convent, the author manages to fit her early life into the stereotypical mould of the saint who is perfect from childhood.

As we have seen, the foretelling of one's own death was an important indication of holiness in Columbanian circles. That is why Bertilla and the other nuns were astonished to find that Balthild had died without warning.[244] The author explains this, however, by stating that Balthild had had a vision which warned her about her

[241] *VBalt* 2; ed. Krusch, p. 484.
[242] *VBalt* 2; ed. Krusch, p. 483.
[243] *VBalt* 4; ed. Krusch, p. 486.
[244] *VBalt* 15; ed. Krusch, pp. 501-2.

impending death, but had chosen to not to share it, ordering it to be concealed until after her death. Thus, the author follows Jonas's method of revealing holiness through prophetic speech in order to bolster the sanctity of Balthild. Though she did not make the vision public, she spoke it to someone or it would not have been known at all. The fact that there were no witnesses to the vision worked in the author's favour – no one could contradict it.

The author of the *Vita Bertillae* believed that speech revealed the nature of the heart. Like Balthild, Bertilla was no imposing saint, though, admittedly, she presented her biographer with fewer challenges. Coming from a noble family in Soissons, Bertilla was a young girl when she entered the convent at Jouarre.[245] Her *vita* is fascinating for the absolutely mundane picture it presents of the saint, lacking in characteristics beyond the reach of other nuns.[246] Bertilla provides the ultimate figure for imitation, and in reading her *vita*, the readers would feel as though they, too, could be saints. Outside of the one miracle which the author feels compelled to add, she is presented as a normal person who rose through the ranks of the convent by the might of her increasing sanctity. Unlike inimitable saints such as Columbanus, Bertilla's *vita* provides a realistic model of holiness for imitation. The author tells us that she made 'daily advances in her exercises', and that she 'kept the fear of God always before her eyes, walking with a heart perfected by the purity of confession'.[247] Confession, as it is for all Columbanian monastics, was a crucial part of the process of perfection.

[245] *VBert* 1; ed. Levison, pp. 101-2.
[246] McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, p. 280.
[247] *VBert* 2; ed. Levison, p. 102; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 281.

The only miracle recorded in the *vita* demonstrates the importance of confession, as well as Bertilla's 'normalness'.[248] A sister speaks 'wrathful words' to the abbess, to which she responds by calling down God's judgment on her. The women resolve their dispute, but Bertilla is still troubled by the fact that she had called down judgment. Soon after, the sister dies of an asthma attack. Bertilla, upon hearing of the death, raises the sister back to life in order to confess her own wrong-doing and beg her forgiveness, which the sister readily gives. The sister then requests that Bertilla now release her, as she wants to go back to God but can't until she has Bertilla's permission. The author sees both the calling back and the releasing as miracles, and they are evidence of the great faith Bertilla has. What is interesting is the depiction here of a saint who became angry and spoke rashly, and who later regretted her words. Though able to resurrect the dead, Bertilla is still fallible. Unlike Balthild, she still requires confession. This demonstrates a continuity with Columbanus's and Jonas's belief in the importance of confession.

Bertilla, above all, is a saint to be imitated. She did not leave a slew of miracles in her wake, but the relation of miracles is not her biographer's intent: 'For as long as [a life] presents an example of good behavior to others, it should move every voice to praise.'[249] Cassian would have agreed; miracles have little worth in creating holiness in the reader.[250] The author of the *Vita Bertillae*, therefore, continually mentions the value of Bertilla's example.[251] Though the author lists Bertilla's many virtues, he or she goes beyond this to describing how Bertilla developed them. Bertilla progressed toward purity by following a programme Cassian would have recognised:

[248] *VBert* 3; ed. Levison, pp. 103-4.
[249] *VBert* 1; ed. Levison, p. 101; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 280.
[250] *Inst.* Prae. 7; ed. Guy, p. 28.
[251] *VBert* 2, 5, 6, and 7; ed. Levison, pp. 102-3, 105-6, 106-7, and 107-8.

> In the holy community, she behaved herself so admirably and praiseworthily under the norms of the holy rule, that she soon achieved senior status in holy obedience. She hastened devoutly with fervent mind (*fervore mentis*) to prayers and to the divine office. She behaved properly with all gravity, gentleness and temperance, winning the admiration of the holy congregation. She kept the fear of God always before her eyes, walking with a heart perfected by the purity of confession (*puritate confessionis*). Humble and obedient, she was always pleasant to her seniors and served her elders in every way, as the mother ordered her. She strove to do everything most faithfully with a willing spirit, trusting in the consolation of divine grace and did all that was enjoined upon her without a murmur (*murmurio*). Thus she profited, making daily advances in her exercises.[252]

This passage provides clear instructions for the reader as to how to achieve purity of heart. The author demonstrates how she strictly follows the Columbanian *Rule*, and this particularly includes confession. Bertilla, saintly though she was, still required confession to purify her heart. A focused mind is essential, and Bertilla ensured her mind was always focused, whether on prayers – private or corporate – or just by keeping God before her at all times. Humility and obedience to elders is emphasised, not merely to those whom the author seems to indicate were not actually more spiritually mature than Bertilla, but also to the abbess. Finally, one trusts in God's grace to give the strength to fulfill every command of the *Rule* without murmuring. If a monastic were to follow this programme, he or she could expect to make daily advances toward purity just as Bertilla did.

The author gives more specifics about how Bertilla used this monastic programme to achieve perfection. She is described as being very careful in her reading of the scriptures, indicating that she spent much time employed thusly.[253] The attention she gave to the scriptures was what likely enabled her to focus her mind on Christ so intensely. Whilst the author does not use the term *mens intenta* as Cassian, the

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[252] *VBert* 2; ed. Levison, p. 102; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, pp. 281-2.
[253] *VBert* 2; ed. Levison, p. 102.

Caesarian authors, and Jonas do, he or she does use the analogous phrase *mens inconcussa* twice in order to depict the sheer concentration with which Bertilla keeps her mind focused on Christ. Her mind is unshaken, her concentration is complete, she is not distracted. We are told that she is always peaceful because her mind is *mens inconcussa*.[254] Because she is able to remain so focused on Christ, she is like the Stoics – not swayed by circumstances, neither joys nor sorrows. Her mind is at peace. In case there is any doubt as to what causes her mind to remain in such a peaceful state, the author uses the same phrase to tell us on whom she stays her mind: *inconcussa tenebat mente semper ad dominum Iesum Christum*.[255] Through directing her mind constantly toward God and using scripture as a tool to help her, Bertilla is able to purify her own heart. It is a programme like the late-antique Cassian's which she uses to do it, a fact which is underlined by the author's choice of words.

The author of the *Vita Bertillae* also believed in the necessity of a person being pure of heart before becoming a teacher. Bertilla's teaching capability is emphasised, but her character is the reason for the power behind her teaching: 'She carefully taught religious customs to her subjects not only through holy speech but even more through her own sanctity'.[256] As the abbess of a double monastery, the author underscores her ability to teach both men and women, an unusual mark of ability for a woman.[257] Whilst Jonas did not see a way to apply his holiness metric of public preaching to Burgundofara or the nuns of Faremoutiers, the author of the *Vita Bertillae* highlights Bertilla's public ministry, including taking confession and giving penance not only to

[254] *VBert* 2; ed. Levison, p. 103.
[255] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106.
[256] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106; tr. McNamara, Halborg, and Whatley, p. 285.
[257] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106.

the male and female monastics of Chelles, but also to the people who lived nearby.[258] It was not merely male monastics who were concerned with the salvation of souls, as Jonas's work might suggest,[259] but the author here shows Bertilla's efforts to convert both men and women were not limited to her own neighbourhood – she even sent missionaries across the Channel to the Anglo-Saxons.[260] The reason the author gives for foreign kings being interested in missionaries which Bertilla had trained is that they were aware of her own 'learning and holy instruction'. Again, her holiness is stressed in conjunction with her teaching ability, demonstrating the author's belief in the necessity of purity in a teacher.

Columbanus's monastic theology was inspired by Cassian's.[261] He viewed the ascetic life as a spiritual battle, and he believed that monks had to discipline their minds in order to make progress. To ensure this, he prescribed silence and obedience, as well as confession, the formalisation of Cassian's master-disciple relationship sketched in the *Conlationes*; we can also see traces of a method like Cassian's use of scripture to focus the mind on God. Columbanus, like Cassian, and indeed like Benedict, believed in the progression of monastics from the cenobium to the solitary life, which Columbanian monks combined with missionary work on the outskirts of the Merovingian kingdoms. He was, however, excessively hesitant to release his monks to the eremitic life; as he had not adopted Cassian's belief in the sleeping mind as the ultimate metric of holiness – whether measured through a lack of nocturnal emissions or through Caesarian sleep-

[258] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106.
[259] Perhaps Jonas's seeming unfamiliarity with the role women were able to play in missionary work is an argument against him being identified as Jonatus of Marchiennes.
[260] For women as missionaries, see Jo Ann McNamara, 'Living Sermons: Consecrated Women and the Conversion of Gaul,' in John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank, *Medieval Religious Women,* vol. 1 (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 19-37.
[261] Stancliffe, 'Sources of Inspiration', pp. 19-23

speech – he had no way of confirming a monk's perfection, thereby making him tremendously cautious. His own holiness he displayed through his frank speech when speaking with kings, bishops, and popes, a performance which rested upon his holy character as a *peregrinus* as well as the truth of his message, like the holy men of old. His biographer, Jonas, also used rhetorical performance to display the holiness of Eustasius, Columbanus's successor as leader of the Columbanian monastic movement, incorporating prophetic speech as Sulpicius did for Martin. The public nature of these speeches was essential, which caused him some problems when he sought to reveal the purity of the Faremoutiers nuns, who were not active in the public sphere. His solution was the deathbed scene, complete with heavenly witnesses. He also focused on the nuns' adherence to the Columbanian custom of confession, a speech-act which both purified and displayed the purity of their hearts. At Chelles, the authors of the *vitae* of Balthild and Bertilla both chose to demonstrate how their protaganists' speech conformed to the Columbanian rule as the way to reveal their purity, Balthild's biographer having to do some considerable reframing in order to employ this method. Throughout all the examples presented here, we see the authors making use of a late-antique-style programme with the intention of creating holiness in their readers and teaching them how to measure the purity of their own hearts through speech and silence. In the next chapter, we will examine how an author using a different genre of writing – the florilegium – did the same.

Chapter 5: The *Liber scintillarum*

We have seen how late-antique ideas concerning the use of speech and silence to create holiness in and reveal the heart of monastics continued to be used throughout the Merovingian period, specifically, through a survey of the works of Caesarius and Columbanus and their followers. Whilst many of their ideas accorded with Cassian and other late-antique writers, the Merovingian authors developed them to suit their own contexts. The final work under consideration brings us to the end of the Merovingian period: the *Liber scintillarum*. This is the name commonly ascribed to a certain florilegium from the late seventh or early eighth centuries. Also known as the *Liber sententiarum*,[1] it is a collection of short excerpts from various authors arranged under 81 topic headings. The *Liber scintillarum* was immensely popular throughout the Middle Ages, and even into the early modern period, with hundreds of manuscripts and early printed editions still extant. Though it was compiled three hundred years after Cassian's era, the same late-antique ideas pervade the work. Unlike the Caesarian and Columbanian authors, however, the author of the *Liber scintillarum* did not look to Cassian as his (or her) primary point of reference. The *Liber scintillarum* is a witness to the breadth and depth of the late-antique tradition on speech. Of course, its author adapts late-antique ideas to his (or her) own context. The world of the early eighth century is very different from the early fifth-century world, yet the *Liber scintillarum* demonstrates remarkable continuity in thought.

[1] Early manuscripts do not use the title *Liber scintillarum*. In the 1950's, Henri Rochais published the first (and only) critical edition which he titled *Liber scintillarum*, and thenceforward it has been known under that name. I will use the same title to avoid confusion. See Defensor of Ligugé, *Liber scintillarum*, ed. H.-M. Rochais (Turnhout, 1957). The work is also known by its incipit, *De caritate, Dominus dicit in evangelio*. See Lesley Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page: Manuscripts of Theology in the Latin West to 1274* (Notre Dame, 2001), p. 92.

The *Liber scintillarum*, probably because it is a florilegium instead of a completely original work, has not garnered much scholarly interest despite its popularity. The only author who has given it sustained attention is Henri Rochais, who published a critical edition in 1957,[2] as well as a number of articles.[3] Considering the sheer number of extant manuscripts, Rochais's work in creating a new edition is monumental; however, whilst most scholars have uncritically accepted his attribution of the work to a certain monk named Defensor of Ligugé,[4] others have questioned it.[5] Surprisingly, the *Liber scintillarum* has rarely been studied for its own sake. A few scholars have looked briefly at the early manuscript tradition in relation to their own areas of interest. Felice Lifshitz has looked particularly at the earliest manuscript, which was copied by a woman;[6] Jacques Elfassi has examined it in relation to his study of Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma;*[7] and Matthew Hussey has concentrated specifically on the early transmission in Anglo-Saxon England.[8] As the *Liber scintillarum* is long overdue some

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[2] He followed this up with a facing-page translation in French: Defensor of Ligugé, *Livre d'Étincelles*, ed. and tr. H.-M. Rochais (2 vols, Paris, 1961). All references are to this edition.

[3] H.-M. Rochais, 'Le "*Liber scintillarum*" Attribué à Defensor de Ligugé', *Revue Bénédictine*, 58 (1948), pp. 77-83; 'Les Prologues du *Liber scintillarum*', *Revue Bénédictine*, 59 (1949), pp. 137-56; 'Contribution à l'Histoire des Florilèges Ascétiques du Haut Moyen Âge Latin. Le *Liber scintillarum*', *Revue Bénédictine*, 63 (1953), pp. 246-91; 'Defensoriana', *Sacris Erudiri*, 9 (1957), pp. 199-264; and 'Apostilles à l'édition du *Liber scintillarum* de Défensor de Ligugé', *Revue Mabillon*, 60 (1981), pp. 267-93.

[4] For instance, see Jacques Elfassi, 'Defensor of Ligugé, Lecteur et Transmetteur des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville', in Gregorio Hinojo Andrés and José Carlos Fernández Corte (eds), *MVNVS QVAESITVM MERITIS: Homenaje a Carmen Codoñer* (Salamanca, 2007), pp. 243-53; L. Smith, *Sacred Page*, p. 91; and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr., 'The Reception of Defensor's *Liber scintillarum* in Anglo-Saxon England', in Silvana Serafin and Patrizia Lendinara (eds), '*…un tuo serto di fiori in man recando': Scritti in onore di Maria Amalia D'Aronco* (Udine, 2008), pp. 75-89.

[5] Felice Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za: Women, Manuscripts, and the Question of Historical Proof', in Walter Pohl and Paul Herold (eds), *Vom Nutzen des Schreibens: Soziales Gedächtnis, Herrschaft und Besitz* (Vienna, 2002), p. 85; also, Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 207, n. 59. Though Yitzhak Hen does not reject Defensor as the author outright, he does express hesitation ('Defensor, if that was indeed his name…'). See Yitzhak Hen, 'Defensor of Ligugé's *Liber scintillarum* and the Migration of Knowledge', in Stefan Esders, Yaniv Fox, Yitzhak Hen, and Laury Sarti (eds), *East and West in the Early Middle Ages: The Merovingian Kingdoms in Mediterranean Perspective* (Cambridge, 2019), p. 221. Strangely, however, he accepts the Defensor prologue as genuine and bases his argument from there.

[6] Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', pp. 87-96.

[7] Elfassi, 'Lecteur et Transmetteur', pp. 243-53.

[8] Matthew Hussey, '*Transmarinis litteris*: Southumbria and the Transmission of Isidore's *Synonyma*', in *Journal of English and German Philology*, 107 (2008), pp. 141-68.

attention, this chapter will first consider the evidence again for the identity of the compiler in light of the historical context, manuscript evidence, and purpose of the work. It will argue against Defensor's authorship, proposing a composition in an area of the north under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries with a purpose of ministering to the local population. This rural, monastic, mission-focused context, then, shaped the author's use of late-antique ideas, though the result is a consistency which is both surprising and logical.

Historical Context

In order to understand the manuscript tradition, it is important that we first look at its late-seventh- or early-eighth-century context. Christianity was still spreading as the Merovingians consolidated land and established bishoprics in towns to the north and east of the Rhine. This urban religion began making inroads into rural areas with the help of the Irish missionaries, present since the late sixth century. Columbanus and his followers were a large part of this force, but other Irishmen, such as Fursey and Kilian, as well as many Franks, were also involved.[9] In the late seventh century, Anglo-Saxon missionaries, led by Willibrord and Boniface, took up the mission, and many monasteries were founded, particularly in the north. In fact, the seventh century saw a huge explosion in the number of monastic foundations. Of the 550 monasteries which existed by 700, 320 of them had been founded in the seventh century.[10] Political power shifted northwards as the Frankish courts established themselves at Paris, Soissons, Reims, and, later, Metz.[11] The centre of culture also moved north, following the royal courts and the monasteries, which, as the producers and copiers of most texts, played a

[9] Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 190.
[10] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 5.
[11] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 8.

key role in maintaining and creating literary culture. Most of the new monastic foundations in this period were in the north.[12] Monasteries were getting wealthier and wealthier as patrons, royal or otherwise, continued to gift them with land.[13] Though we have concentrated on ascetic traditions, there was much variety in the manner in which monastics practiced their religious beliefs.

A large proportion of the newly-established monasteries were for women.[14] Some of the convents founded in the late seventh century, such as Faremoutiers, were already mentioned in Chapter 4; others include the convents of Nivelles, Maubeuge, and Karlburg. Female monasteries were almost completely populated by the aristocracy, which had a very different view of consecrated women than did some churchmen.[15] The nobility thought of female consecration as a way for noble women to show their piety, whilst also protecting family property and maintaining control over their interests. They conceived of it as a way for aristocratic women to live out their religious devotion without being divested of their usual comforts.[16] The women who founded these communities brought with them other women who were subordinated to them because of their social standing in the secular world, and it was that social standing which remained the most important factor within the convent.[17] The status of the members

[12] In the seventh century, 90 monasteries were founded in the south, but 230 were founded in the north. See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 8.
[13] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 5.
[14] Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 191. Also, Michèle Gaillard, 'Les Foundations d'Abbayes Féminines dans le Nord et l'Est de la Gaule, de la Fin du VI^{e} Siècle à la Fin du X^{e} Siècle', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France* 196 (1990), p. 7.
[15] Hochstetler, *Conflict of Traditions*, pp. 119-20. Also see pp. 122ff for evidence of the difficulties between the aristocracy and the church when it came to the ideal of equality within convents.
[16] Michèle Gaillard, 'Female Monasteries of the Early Middle Ages (Seventh to Ninth Century) in Northern Gaul: Between Monastic Ideals and Aristocratic Powers', in Janet Burton and Karen Stöber (eds), *Women in the Medieval Monastic World* (Turnhout, 2015), p. 92. Gaillard mentions the 'extreme austerity' of Faremoutiers, but considers it an exception, and even suggests that Jonas of Bobbio may have exaggerated it.
[17] Hochstetler, *Conflict of Traditions*, p. 127. References to royal or noble blood are rampant amongst the hagiography of women in this period, demonstrating the importance of status. See Catherine Rosann

attracted other noble women, and parents entrusted them to raise their own daughters in what could be looked upon as religious finishing schools. Parents from other kingdoms would send their children to these aristocratic foundations, knowing that their daughters would be living amongst their own class.[18] Faremoutiers even attracted foreign royalty.[19] The foundation was usually on property which had been donated by the abbess's family, and she controlled it to her family's advantage. Faremoutiers was founded on Burgundofara's family's property, and her *Testament* shows that she retained control over family property, and even willed some to her family members.[20]

The foundation of double monasteries also began in this period.[21] We have already encountered double monasteries in the last chapter; Chelles and Faremoutiers, for instance, were double monasteries. The term 'double monastery' does not have one distinct meaning, but can refer to several different arrangements between two houses, one male and one female.[22] Often there is an abbess in charge over both houses, but sometimes there is also an abbot who ultimately rules over the abbess.[23] Scholars have generally thought that double monasteries came about under the influence and

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Peyroux, 'Abbess and Cloister: Double Monasteries in the Early Medieval West' (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1991), p. 251.

[18] Jan Gerchow, 'Early Monasteries and Foundations (500-1200)', in Jeffery F. Hamburger (ed), *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York, 2008), p. 17; also, Hochstetler, *Conflict of Traditions*, p. 127.

[19] Bede tells us that the Anglo-Saxons sent their daughters to the abbeys of Faremoutiers, Chelles, and Andeleys. The king of Kent's daughter, Earcongota, was a nun at Faremoutiers, and a daughter and stepdaughter of the king of the East Angles were abbesses there as well. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, cols. 128-32.

[20] *VCol* 2.7; ed. Krusch, p. 243. Also, Burgundofara, *Testamentum Burgundofarae, in gratiam monasterii ebor acensis conscriptum*, *PL* 87 (Paris, 1851), cols. 1137B-1140A.

[21] Peter Brown calls double monasteries 'unprecedented departures' in which 'the sense of the status of the Frankish *potentes* won out over old-world Southern scruples on the mixing of the sexes'. See Brown, *Western Christendom*, p. 165.

[22] Gaillard, 'Female Monasteries', p. 77.

[23] This was the case for the double monastery of Remiremont, which was founded by Count Romaric and St Amatus, who was the first abbot. Though there was an abbess, the abbot ruled over her and both houses. This lasted through three abbots, after which the office of abbot was abolished and the abbess ruled over the whole. On the other hand, we know that the abbess of Faremoutiers ruled both houses alone. See Gaillard, 'Female Monasteries', p. 83.

encouragement of Columbanus, whose arrival in Gaul in the late sixth century coincided with the beginnings of these foundations, even whilst admitting that the saint did not found any such houses himself.[24] More recently, however, the Columbanian influence is being questioned, and scholars are showing the influence of other, non-Irish traditions. Michèle Gaillard points to the non-Columbanian practice of the *laus perennis* at Remiremont as an example of how Columbanian monasteries absorbed outside influences. [25] Catherine Peyroux concludes that double monasteries were likely not the result of the influence of one particular figure, such as Columbanus, but rather 'the result of a wider dialogue between aristocratic interests and a monastic form.'[26] Aristocratic foundations served the church by providing the means necessary to carry on missionary and other expansion activities. The aristocracy benefited their eternal souls whilst promoting their family interests in the secular world. Generally, double monasteries provided aristocratic women, whose status and training came with expectations of authority, with a community over which they could rule. [27] There is some question, however, as to the nature of the male house in double foundations, with it being posited that the men were merely intended to serve the female house, interacting with the outside world on their behalf and in charge of spiritual services.[28] Be that as it may, women were usually in charge of both sexes in a double monastery: we need to reckon with this in any discussion of Merovingian patriarchy.

[24] See, for example, Gerchow, 'Early Monasteries', p. 16.
[25] Gaillard, 'Female Monasteries', pp. 82-3; for more on the *laus perennis*, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 183.
[26] Peyroux, 'Abbess and Cloister', pp. 246-50, 264.
[27] Peyroux, 'Abbess and Cloister', p. 251.
[28] Gaillard, 'Female Monasteries', p. 87. Gaillard goes further and questions the appropriateness of the notion of 'double monasteries' at all.

Consecrated nobles, both male and female, often did not adhere to the notion of monastic poverty or a severing of familial ties. Frequently, they held onto private property, which they controlled under the guise of it being owned by the community. Family ties were maintained through letters and visits.[29] They also had no problem accepting gifts, even quite luxurious ones.[30] The monastery of Corbie received from the royal family imported olive oil, luxury food stuffs, leather, and Egyptian papyrus on a regular basis.[31] The *Testamentum* of Burgundofara, foundress and abbess of Faremoutiers, demonstrates that abbesses were able to retain vast familial lands even after consecration.[32] Certainly not all monasteries were places of comfort, but it is clear that at least some monastics felt perfectly able to pursue a religious life without the rigours of a harsh asceticism.

Other monastics had quite different priorities. Many monasteries were founded in the seventh century on the fringes of Merovingian territory with an eye to evangelising the rural population. Columbanus and his followers were the first to successfully stir the Frankish kings to support missionary ventures.[33] Whereas monasteries previously had

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[29] Nuns were frequently reminded in rules such as Donatus's *Regula ad virgines* and Caesarius's *Reg virg* that letter writing to family members was forbidden, demonstrating how keen they were to maintain relationships with the outside world. See Donatus, *Regula ad virgines* 53, *PL* 87 (Paris, 1851), col. 290. *Reg virg* 25; ed. De Vogüé and Courreau, 1, p. 202. Caesarius's *Rule* was often used in conjunction with other rules for convents in this period.

[30] Radegund, in the sixth century, is known to have accepted baskets of strawberries as well as poetry from Fortunatus. Brown, *Western Christendom*, p. 153.

[31] Brown, *Western Christendom*, p. 165.

[32] Peyroux, 'Abbess and Cloister', p. 228, n. 9. Faremoutiers is the convent which was noted for its 'extreme austerity'.

[33] Prior to Columbanus, the Merovingian kings seemed to have little interest in missionary activity. Avitus of Vienne had called for the evangelisation of the outer realms, but no one heeded him. Pierre Riché, 'Columbanus, His Followers and the Merovingian Church', in H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan (eds), *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism, BAR International Series* 113 (Oxford, 1981), p. 65. Whilst some scholars now doubt that Columbanus was directly involved in much missionary work himself (see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 191), or call Irish missionary activity 'accidental' (see M.A. Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the* Regula canonicorum *in the Eighth Century* [Cambridge, 2004], p. 61), Riché argues that it was always his intention. He quotes a letter from Columbanus in which he writes, '*Mei voti fuit gentes visitare et evangelium eis a nobis praedicari*'. Certainly, his followers were involved in missionary work. Riché, 'Columbanus and His Followers', p. 65. Cf. *Epist.* 4.5; ed. Walker, p. 30.

been built on the private lands of nobles, Columbanus, as was discussed in Chapter 4, determined to found his communities in remote places on the edges of the kingdom with the backing of the royal court. The Merovingian kings found the alliance with the missionary-monks to be a fruitful relationship, allowing for the consolidation of their new territory.[34] These monks impressed the locals with their feats of asceticism: fasts, long periods of prayer with arms extended, submersion in ice-cold water.[35] Churchmen were less impressed, attempting to stop or limit their ascetic activities, but the monks' rigorous asceticism influenced many so that this 'new monasticism' spread throughout Francia. Many new monasteries were founded under Columbanian influence, and others were reformed under it.[36] This 'new monasticism', however, is better understood as 'Hiberno-Frankish' rather than purely Irish, as the Franks and the Irish worked together.[37]

In the late seventh century, the first Anglo-Saxon missionaries arrived. The focus was initially on Frisia under Willibrord; soon after, missionary work began east of the Rhine under Boniface. The missionary-monks founded many monasteries in these outlying areas, and they forged even further north and east than did the Irish, also working with the Merovingian kings.

Though limited in ways which men were not, women also worked as missionaries. Abbesses worked at recruiting other women for their convents, or, in the case of double

[34] D.H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 325.
[35] Riché, 'Columbanus and His Followers', pp. 66-7.
[36] Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 185-9, p. 191. Within a hundred years of Columbanus, there were more than 100 Franconian monasteries organised after the Columbanus pattern. See Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 124.
[37] Green, *Language and History*, p. 327.

monasteries, they recruited both men and women.[38] Family members were often objects of recruitment. Furthermore, though unable to preach in public, nuns did not lack for public appearances. They regularly interacted with the community through their almsgiving and caring for the poor.[39] McNamara calls these nuns 'living sermons', teaching with their actions more than with their words.[40] In all of these manners, women were able to teach Christian values and holiness to lay people of both genders.

Many monasteries had flourishing scriptoria in the seventh century. As more and more monasteries were founded, the demand for books grew steadily, and the scriptoria of the monasteries strove to keep up with demand. A late-eighth-century library catalogue from Würzburg demonstrates what Rosamond McKitterick calls 'a quick and perhaps not wholly uncoordinated response to the need for books.'[41] Books were brought into the kingdom, as well as sent abroad, in order to furnish monasteries with the necessary resources.[42] Palaeographical evidence shows how English and Frankish scribes worked side by side in their own traditions, and that a wide variety of scripts were considered acceptable, even within the same scriptorium.[43] Scribes were allowed to make their own distinctive contribution, influencing and being influenced by the different training of those working with them. Both male and female communities had scriptoria, and double

[38] The *VBert* tells us that Bertilla sent both men and women to found monasteries in Anglo-Saxon England. See *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106.
[39] McNamara, 'Living Sermons', pp. 32-33.
[40] McNamara, 'Living Sermons', p. 32.
[41] Rosamond McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Reflections on the Manuscript Evidence', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 9 (1989), p. 303. The catalogue can be found in a manuscript in Oxford: Oxford Bodleian Laud misc. 126.
[42] Levison, *England and Continent*, p. 137. The *VBert* mentions that Chelles sent books to monasteries in Anglo-Saxon Britain. *VBert*, 6; ed. Levison, p. 106. See McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon Missionaries', pp. 291-329, for numerous examples of manuscripts imported into Francia in this period. Boniface is one person we know who brought books with him when he came to the Continent. See McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon Missionaries', p. 291.
[43] McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon Missionaries', pp. 315, 317.

monasteries may have had scriptoria in which the monks and nuns worked together.[44] The monastic scriptoria were of paramount importance in the diffusion of culture and literature both on a local and an international scale. Peter Brown argues that with trade networks having declined and Islam pressing in from the south, the churches of the seventh century were becoming increasingly regionalised.[45] This led churches to feel as though they needed to encompass the whole of Christian learning within themselves, and therefore led to the desire for more books, particularly books which summed up all past learning, such as Isidore's *Etymologies*. Not only were books copied in scriptoria, but this was also where many new books were written. The seventh century has been called 'the century *par excellence*' for the creation of saints' *vitae*.[46] These saints' *vitae* were often part of a strategy to augment a particular family's prestige. Peyroux argues that monasteries were places to memorialise families through the donation of property and family members who could retain control over the property and ensure the writing and rewriting of *vitae* of the 'particularly efficacious members of the kin'.[47] Scriptoria thus not only spread Christian and monastic culture, but they also created it.

Not all people living in religious communities were monks or nuns. There were also groups of clerics who fused the monastic and the secular world in ways which did not make monastics quite comfortable.[48] These clerics – often called canons - lived together in the bishop's household or in the basilica, and did not seem to follow a particular rule which governed their way of life as monastics generally did. Instead, their lives could

[44] Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', p. 85.
[45] Brown, *Western Christendom*, pp. 218 ff.
[46] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 7. Though written in barbarous Latin, the hagiography of this period shows a strong knowledge of appropriate style and conventions. See Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 247.
[47] Peyroux, 'Abbess and Cloister', pp. 265-5.
[48] Julia Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe c. 800-c.1200* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 71.

be quite secular, in that they could own property or even have wives. Though by the late fourth century clerics had begun to observe a form of the office at regular intervals as monks did, the practice varied greatly. Some bishops, such as Augustine, Eusebius of Vercelli, and Martin of Tours, tried to make their priests live more ascetic lives; Augustine had his monastery of priests in his own household. It seems likely, however, that most bishops did not enforce the ascetic life upon their clerics.[49] Clerics did not spend much time contemplating their own vocation, as monastics did, so monastics took it upon themselves to advise clerics concerning the proper way for clerics to live.[50] Still, it was not until Chrodegang of Metz's reforms under the Carolingians that clerical communities consistently began to follow a rule in a manner more akin to monks.

Prior to Chrodegang's reforms, the orders of canons and monks could be confused.[51] This was abetted by the fact that monastics often took up the pastoral care roles usually associated with priests.[52] Certainly monasteries often gave up their monks to serve as bishops; no fewer than eight monks of Lérins became bishops of Arles alone between 420 and 600. Luxeuil also gave bishops for the sees of Laon, Noyon, Therouanne, and Besançon.[53] Conciliar decrees of the fifth and sixth centuries specifically allowed for monks to become bishops and priests, meaning that it was not at all unusual for monks to leave their monasteries and engage in pastoral work.[54] When the Irish monks arrived in Francia and began their missionary work, it often took the form of preaching, which

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[49] Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, p. 74. Riché writes that Merovingian clerics 'had little inclination for asceticism'. Riché, 'Columbanus and His Followers', p. 66.
[50] Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, pp. 71-2.
[51] Claussen, *Frankish Church*, p. 60.
[52] There has been debate amongst modern scholars as to whether or not early medieval monks participated in pastoral care. *Vitae* show that they did, yet councils issued decrees against it. The very fact that conciliar decrees were issued demonstrates that it was an ongoing issue. Amos points out that the modern scholars who argue against monastic participation in pastoral care are monastics themselves seeking to promote a purely disengaged life for modern monks. See Amos, 'Pastoral Care', pp. 165-6.
[53] Ganz, *Carolingian Renaissance*, p. 18.
[54] Amos, 'Pastoral Care', p. 166.

was a distinctly clerical function.[55] The Irish abbots became bishops in the new areas which their missionary activities had opened up, and their monks helped them to administrate in their cathedrals. Monasteries also became centres for pastoral care, serving the inhabitants of the rural countryside around them. This was natural for the Irish monks, as, the church being largely monastic in Ireland, they were used to the idea of monastic priesthood and participation in pastoral care. Columbanus's *Paenitentiale,* added to by his successors, addresses not only monastics but laity and clerics as well.[56] The Anglo-Saxon monks, when they arrived, also carried out preaching as a large part of their missionary activity, thus adding to the confusion between clerics and monks.[57]

The seventh century was also a period in which some aspects of religious practice became more of a private affair. Prior to 600, penance was a public act which could only be performed once in a lifetime and involved the entire Christian community.[58] Now, however, reparation for sin had become intensely personal, requiring a spiritual guide in the form of a trained holy person.[59] This holy person had the ability to hear confession and met out penance according to the individual nature of the sins committed. Penitentials, beginning with Columbanus's as we saw in Chapter 4, addressed the laity as well as the monastic, and were meant to lay out every possible eventuality, with the holy person adjusting the penance according to the specific situation.[60] As monasteries were the enclaves of such holy persons, particularly in the outlying regions of Francia, priest-monks would have been involved in the hearing of

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[55] Amos, 'Pastoral Care', p. 168.
[56] See Charles-Edwards, 'Penitential', pp. 217-39, for a thorough discussion.
[57] Claussen, *Frankish Church,* p. 61.
[58] Brown, *Western Christendom,* p. 157.
[59] Brown, *Western Christendom,* p. 158.
[60] Brown, *Western Christendom*, p. 159. Also, Riché, 'Columbanus and His Followers', p. 67. Wood asserts that Columbanus was instrumental in spreading the idea of private penance, but that the idea had been growing anyway. See Wood, 'Merovingian Hagiography', pp. 72-4; also, Meens, *Penance.*

confession and giving of penance to the laity, particularly the nobility. The idea was that it was better to deal with sins now than to have them purged in the afterlife; confessional speech could reduce the suffering they would experience later. Though the theology of purgatory was not yet fully formed, Columbanus taught that there would be a fire to pass through before the Judgment, so it was best to purge sins before death.[61] People who were serious about their spiritual lives but did not want to enter a monastery could now have their sins purged through private penance administered by a holy person.

The seventh century and the beginning of the eighth century, therefore, saw a large variety in monastic practice. Some foundations were more ascetic than others; some were founded by comfort-loving aristocrats; whilst some were profoundly influenced by Irish or Anglo-Saxon missionary-monks who brought along their own ideas about the religious life. Some combined these elements in ways which are not entirely clear to us today. Monastic and clerical communities sometimes overlapped, and monastics took on a larger role in the pastoral care of the laity in the regions they evangelised. All of these things can provide us with insight into the creation of the *Liber scintillarum*.

Content and Sources

The word *scintillarum* refers to 'little sparks', which the author of one of the extant prologues likens to the many little sentences of which the work is composed.[62] This compilation of excerpts is probably the most successful in the genre of *florilegia*; most *florilegia* exist only in unique manuscripts, but there are more than 360 extant

[61] Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (London, 1984), p. 100; and now also Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*. Cf. *Instr*. 9.1; ed. Walker, p. 98.
[62] *LS* Prologue; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 48.

manuscripts containing the *Liber scintillarum*.[63] The quotes are compiled under different headings according to subject. *Florilegia* can contain conflicting sentences even under the same heading, with the intention being a broad spectrum rather than a firm stance on a particular issue.[64] An example of this can be seen in the chapter on laughter, where joy and rejoicing are portrayed as good in some sentences and evil in others.[65] The author does not have to make a decision as to whether laughter itself is good or evil, but rather can allow the tension to exist.

The range of topics and the wide audience make the purpose of the *Liber scintillarum* hard to pin down. The huge variety of subjects (there are 81 chapters) mean that monastics and secular leaders, and everyone else in between, could benefit from the sparks of wisdom contained within. Topics range from the consideration of various vices and virtues to discussions of various professionals. The work begins, logically, with *De caritate*, the highest Christian virtue. The topic choice and wording are greatly influenced by the chapter headings of Isidore de Seville's *Sententiae*, particularly the second and third books.[66] Many of the headings are the same, including more verbose ones such as '*De acceptione personarum*' and '*De brevitate huius vitae*'.[67] Conspicuously missing, however, is any chapter on matters of doctrine; Isidore, on the other hand, whilst generally choosing practical topics, does not shy away from predestination, a deeper discussion of conversion, and a gradation of the different kinds of sin. The writings of Isidore would likely have been the most recent acquisition of

[63] L. Smith, *Sacred Page*, p. 91.
[64] I am indebted to Conrad Leyser for my understanding of the nature of florilegia.
[65] See for example, *LS* 55.6, 8, 18, etc.; ed. Rochais, pp. 142, 142, 144, etc.
[66] Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae*, ed. Pierre Cazier, *CCSL*, 111 (Turnhout, 1998).
[67] *LS* 59 and 80; ed. Rochais, pp. 148 and 300. Isidore, *Sententiae*, 3.57 and 65; ed. Cazier, pp. 308 and 326.

author's library, and he[68] was particularly enamoured with them: a fifth of all excerpts come from Isidore, with nearly three-quarters of those coming from the *Sententiae*. The final chapter of the *Liber scintillarum* is called '*De lectionibus*' – another title taken from the *Sententiae* – and focuses on the importance of reading the scriptures.

Many of the topics in the *Liber scintillarum* do not pertain specifically to monastics. As monastics had a predilection for advising others how to live, this is not necessarily surprising.[69] It includes chapters on doctors, judges, rulers, servants and masters, amongst others. Some of the chapters may have applied to monastics living a less ascetic life; consecrated aristocrats could find meditation material in chapters such as those on honouring parents, tithing, or riches and poverty. Priests, as well, are addressed, with the interesting assertion that 'whatever is said of monks, overflows onto priests.'[70] Monks sought to impose a more regular life upon clerics in this period, and this statement is illustrative of that purpose.

Considering the role monastics had in pastoral care, the *Liber scintillarum* may have had a pastoral purpose. Many of the topics it includes would have made useful study for preaching to the laity. There is only one topic directed specifically to monks (*De monachis*); the rest of the book would be useful raw material for sermons. The author addresses virtues and vices, prayer, confession, right friendships, and alms-giving, amongst many others. The guidance for Christian living contained within the *Liber scintillarum* would be useful to all Christians, not just monks. Furthermore, Lifshitz

[68] The gender of the author was probably male, though I leave open the possibility that the *LS* was written by a woman (see below for my arguments concerning authorship). For the sake of simplicity, therefore, I will refer to the author throughout as male.
[69] See above, n. 51.
[70] *LS* 40.17; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 54. '*Quidquid in monachis dicitur, redundat in clericis*.' Cf. Jerome, *Epistola*, 54.5.4.

argues that the content of the *Liber scintillarum* is not ascetic in nature.[71] She points to the priority the book shows for the spirit over the flesh, noting the lack of ascetic influence in all sentences concerning fleshly pleasures. Asceticism, however, a term which is difficult to nail down, does not merely refer to actions of the flesh. The ascetic Cassian and his followers, as we have already seen, were more concerned with the purity of the heart than with any particular discipline. Moreover, Cassian advocated for moderation in all things, noting that extreme practices were more harmful than helpful in creating holiness.[72] The *Liber scintillarum*, then, cannot be described as anti-ascetic on this basis. Nevertheless, the *Liber scintillarum* was probably not created for an unengaged monastic community but was more likely a work meant to provide guidance to people from all walks of life.

There is nothing in the *Liber scintillarum* to suggest that it was aimed at female monastics as well as male ones; that said, the content is not so male-centric as to exclude a female audience. We know from the *Vita Bertillae* that abbesses could be involved in pastoral work with both men and women, particularly when in charge of a double monastery.[73] Bertilla is even said to administer penance to the laity, and there is good reason, given her monastic leadership of both sexes, to suspect she ministered to both the male and female laity. The *Liber scintillarum*, then, would have been useful as a pastoral tool for women as well as for men. In fact, the oldest manuscript, Würzburg, Univers., Mp. th. f. 13, comes from the scriptorium of Karlburg, a nunnery.[74] It is also rare in that it is signed by the copyist, who was a woman named Guntza or Gunza, in

[71] Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', pp. 94-5.
[72] *Conl.* 1.20.4; ed. Pichéry, 1, p. 103.
[73] *VBert* 6; ed. Levison, p. 106.
[74] For provenance at Karlburg, see Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', pp. 70-1, 75. Rochais located the provenance at St-André, but Lifshitz points out that the community did not exist at the time. See Rochais, 'Defensoriana', p. 250.

two places.[75] Thus, we know that women read the *Liber scintillarum* and found it useful enough to copy it.

The sources from which the author pulls his quotations are quite extensive, displaying both a well-read mind and access to a large library. No fewer than 38 authors can be found in his pages, and more may well be identified in the future as some quotes are still unidentified.[76] Many of these authors yield quotations from multiple works, expanding the author's library even more.

The primary source for the *Liber scintillarum* is the Bible, including deuterocanonical books such as Ecclesiasticus, which provides more than a third of all biblical quotations. The bible accounts for just under half of all quotations in the *Liber scintillarum*, and the author makes sure to begin each chapter with several. This lays the foundation for the authorities which he summons in the further quotations.

After the bible, the author's most common group of sources are the Church Fathers, specifically, Isidore (the most by far), Gregory, Jerome, and, to a lesser extent, Augustine. Augustine's name is used more frequently than he is actually cited, as the author seems to use it as a fallback attribution: he frequently cites Augustine as the author of excerpts from Origin, Jerome, Pseudo-Augustine, Fulgentius, and Cassian,

[75] Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', p. 75.
[76] Much of what follows can be gleaned from the 'Index des Auteurs' in Rochais's Latin-French edition, *Livre d'Étincelles*, vol. 2, pp. 332-42. Since Rochais's list of unidentified excerpts was published (see vol. 2, pp. 343-4), others have identified more passages. See H. Crouzel, 'Les Citations d'Origène dans le *Livre Scintillarum* de Defensor de Ligugé', *Augustinianum* 24 (1984), pp. 385-94; Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Sentences d'Isidore et Autres dans une Lettre Attribuée à Césaire d'Arles', *Sacris Erudiri*, 27 (1984), pp. 209-20; and Leslie S.B. MacCoull, 'More sources for the *Liber scintillarum* of Defensor of Ligugé', *Revue Bénédictine*, 112 (2002), pp. 291-300.

amongst others.[77] This group makes up 40% of the authors cited. When combined with the excerpts from the Bible, the two groups account for 83%.

The remainder of the quotes come from a myriad of sources. Three classical authors – Hesiod, Terence, and Aristotle – are present, but this, I believe, is misleading. All three are quoted by the writers to whom the author attributes the excerpt: Jerome quotes Hesiod and Terence, whilst Isidore quotes Aristotle. Thus, the author's attributions in this case are logical and correct.[78] This example shows that the author's library may have been smaller than originally thought. Rochais's list of authors cited does not make this clear (nor does it intend to). A quick look at his list will not illuminate the reader as to which books the author had actually read.

The author of the *Liber scintillarum* cites a number of Gallic authors, though, interestingly, quite often under other names. The authors he cites are as follows: Hilary, Cassian, Prosper, Eusebius Gallicanus sermons, Faustus of Riez, Porcarius of Lérins, Pomerius, Caesarius, and Eligius. Cassian, Porcarius, Caesarius, and Eligius all appear under Augustine's name, as does Prosper. Porcarius appears quite often under Basil's name. Pomerius is attributed to Ambrose, but Hilary is correctly credited. Therefore, it does not seem to be the case that the author was particularly attracted to Gallic writers. On the other hand, the Gallic authors do account for a third of the remaining quotations.

[77] See MacCoull, 'More Sources', p. 298. The *LS* cites Cassian 10 times without ever naming him: twice with the phrase '*in collationibus dixit*', once under Augustine, twice under Jerome, once under Gregory, and four times under the *Vitae Patrum*, a catch-all phrase the *LS* uses for early desert fathers and monastic authors such as Basil, Palladius, etc.
[78] This point is missed by Hen, 'Migration of Knowledge', p. 224.

Some of the sources the author uses were written with a clerical audience in mind, for instance, Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, or Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa*.[79] Many of the authors are bishops or priests. Additionally, there are several works on pastoral care amongst his sources, such as Isidore's *Sententiae* and Gregory's *Regula pastoralis*. Furthermore, there are works which are aimed at a specifically monastic audience, such as Caesarius of Arles's *Regula monachorum* and the *Vitae patrum*. Beyond these, many, many sermons and letters are used with a variety of audiences in mind.

This survey of the sources the author used in compiling his 'little sparks' shows his desire to ground his work in the Bible first and foremost, and then to use the Church Fathers as his next layer of support. This is indeed how he tends to arrange his chapters: Bible first, Church Fathers second, and any other authors come after these.

Manuscripts, Dating, and Attribution

As mentioned above, the most recent author quoted in the *Liber scintillarum* is Isidore of Seville. His death in 632 is taken by scholars as the earliest possible date at which the work under discussion could have been composed. Fortunately, we also have a very early manuscript, Würzburg, Univers., Mp. th. f. 13, which can be dated to 750 at the latest. Rochais believes this manuscript was not the original, but was based on the

[79] Pomerius was a priest and grammarian, and teacher of Ceasarius of Arles. His *De vita contemplativa* was aimed at clerics who sought a balance between the pastoral care of their charges and the attention they should be paying to their own souls. He was involved with other clerics interested in the ascetic life. See Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 67. He also advocated for common property amongst clerics. See Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, p. 74.

original.[80] For these reasons, in combination with Rochais's arguments for authorship,[81] the date of composition is usually given as 700.

More than thirty manuscripts of the *Liber scintillarum* are extant from before 1000, demonstrating the popularity of the work. A further proof of its popularity is that seven of these manuscripts are from the eighth century, before the noticeable increase in manuscripts in the Carolingian period.[82] Interestingly, all seven of these manuscripts seem to come from the north of the Merovingian realm, though they were quite spread out across the north, from Lille in the extreme north to Freising and Benedikbeuern east of the Rhine.

All this leads to a discussion of the author. Rochais proclaimed it to be Defensor of Ligugé, a monk at the Abbey of Saint-Martin in Ligugé, outside of Poitiers. Rochais, himself a monk at Ligugé, based his argument on three pieces of evidence. First, there are several manuscripts containing prologues which declare the author to be Defensor; these can be divided between the shorter version of the prologue, which Rochais designates as the RB (Recension Brève), and the longer version, designated the RL (Recension Longue). Whilst the RB names the author as Defensor and also names

[80] H.-M. Rochais, 'Prooemium' in Defensor of Ligugé, *Liber Scintillarum*, ed. H.-M. Rochais, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, 117 (Turnhout, 1977), pp. xv-xvii. Also see Felice Lifshitz, *Religious Women in Early Carolingian Francia: A Study of Manuscript Tradition and Monastic Culture* (New York, 2014), p. 57.

[81] See below for more on Rochais's arguments for a late-seventh-century author named Defensor of Ligugé.

[82] Würzburg, Univers., Mp. th. f. 13, Karlburg; Kassel, Landesbibl., Theol. 4^0 10, north-east of France (Lowe), but Bischoff gives 'Bourges?' (see B. Bischoff, 'Frühkarolingische Handschriften und ihre Heimat', *Scriptorium* 22 [1968] p. 309); Munich, Clm 4582, Benediktbeuren; Munich, Clm 6433 (Fris. 233), Freising; Zurich, Zentralbibl. C65 (287), Switzerland, north Alemannic area; Reims, Bibl. Mun., 435 (E 345), St-Denis; and St. Gall, Stiftsbibl., 124, Lille in the far north of France. The last two manuscripts are dated to the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth centuries. On the boom in manuscripts in the Carolingian era, see Rosamond McKitterick, 'Carolingian Book Production: Some Problems', *The Library, Sixth Series* 12 (1989), pp. 1-33.

Ursinus as his *nutritor*, the RL goes a step further and locates Defensor as a monk at the Abbey of Ligugé. The manuscripts containing the RL all come from Italy, and Rochais argues that Ligugé was such an unimportant and small priory at the time of their composition that scribes in Italy would not have thought to make up a connection and fabricate the prologue.[83] Additionally, he believes that the grammar of the RL is Merovingian, whilst that of the RB has been 'updated' to classical grammar in the Carolingian manner. Therefore, he insists, it is very likely that the RL was the original prologue.

Secondly, Rochais argues that there is evidence of a late-seventh-century Ursinus at Poitiers.[84] There exists a *vita* from this time entitled the *Passio Leudegarii II*. It was written by a monk named Ursinus and dedicated to Ansoald, Bishop of Poitiers (676-c. 696) to mark the celebration of the translation of St Leudegar to Poitiers from Autun.[85] Rochais argues that this Ursinus had become the abbot of Ligugé and is Defensor's *nutritor*.

His third piece of evidence is archaeological, and also confirms the existence of a late-seventh-century Ursinus.[86] A funerary stone was found at Ligugé with the monogram

[83] The Latin name for Ligugé is *Locutiacinse* (among other variations – see Louis Rédet, *Dictionnaire Topographique du Département de la Vienne Comprenant les Noms de Lieu Anciens et Modernes* [Poitiers, 1881], pp. 230-1), but the four manuscripts containing the RL spell the name in three words '*locuti ac inse*'. Rochais argues that the copyists spelled the name in this way because it had become unintelligible to them by the eleventh century. By this point in time, the monastery at Ligugé had become of such little consequence it would not have been known in Italy. Ligugé seems to have disappeared from the historical record in 732, presumably destroyed during the Battle of Tours in which the Saracens destroyed many monasteries in the area around Poitiers. It does not reappear until the beginning of the eleventh century, and this on a modest scale. See Rochais, 'Introduction', in Defensor of Ligugé, *Livre d'Étincelles*, ed. and tr. H.-M. Rochais (2 vols, Paris, 1961), p. 18. Also see, J. Coquet, 'L'inscription tumulaire de Ligugé (fin du VII^{e} siècle)', *Revue Mabillon* 44 (1954), p. 104.
[84] Rochais, 'Prooemium', p. viii.
[85] Ursinus, *Passio Leudegari II* Prae; ed. Krusch, pp. 323-4.
[86] Rochais, 'Introduction', p. 21.

'VRSINVS' engraved upon it.[87] This dates to the founding of the basilica at Ligugé in the mid-seventh century. Thus, there is evidence that an Ursinus existed in the Ligugé-Poiters area at the time of the composition of the *Liber scintillarum*. These three pieces of evidence – the mention of Defensor, Ursinus, and Ligugé in the RL, the dateable existence of an Ursinus, author of the *Passio Leudegarii II*, at nearby Poitiers, and the mid-seventh-century monogram on the funerary stone at Ligugé – together make Rochais's case for the RL being the original prologue, thereby making Defensor, a monk under the abbot Ursinus of Ligugé, the late-seventh-century author of the *Liber scintillarum*.

There are, however, significant problems with Rochais's argument. First, none of the early manuscripts mention Defensor. In fact, no manuscript prior to the eleventh century attributes the *Liber scintillarum* to Defensor. It is at that point which we find four manuscripts mentioning Defensor, all Italian and all closely related.[88] That means that there is a nearly 400-year gap between the writing of the *Liber scintillarum* and the first mentions of Defensor, Ligugé, and Ursinus, and all of these mentions are extremely localised. Other, earlier attributions exist, though none before the ninth century, and all of them impossible or, in the case of an attribution to Isidore, unlikely.[89] Therefore, as far as we can tell, the *Liber scintillarum* travelled

[87] See Coquet, 'L'inscription tumulaire', pp. 97-104.
[88] These manuscripts are: Milan, Ambrosiana, H.190inf. (s. XI); Monza, Biblioteca Capitolare, b. 23/14 (s. XI); Monte Cassino, 214 L (s. XI); and Monte Cassino, 443 M (s. XI). Monza is less than 20 km from the basilica in Milan. Additionally, Milan, Ambros., H.190inf and Monte Cassino, 443 are both in Beneventan script. Since Beneventan script is primarily associated with southern Italy and particularly with Monte Cassino, it seems reasonable to suspect that Milan, Ambros., H.190inf originated at Monte Cassino, thereby giving a common heritage to all four manuscripts containing the RL. Lifshitz points out that Rochais himself considered the manuscripts of these prologues to be so corrupt as to be unusable for establishing the original text. See Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za,' p. 74.
[89] The ninth-century attributions are: Basil (Würzburg, Univers., Mp. th. f. 48); Paterius (Munich, Clm 6314); and Isidore (Bamberg, Staatsbibli. B.V.18 [102]). Tenth-century attributions are: Álvaro of Córdoba (Madrid, Bibli. Nac., 112); and Hucbaldus (Bamberg, Staatsbibli., B.V. 25 [134]). Rochais notes a case made for Paterius by 'the author of a text copied at Innsbruck', but dismisses it as weak without

anonymously for the first few centuries after it was written. Any later attribution is questionable at best.

Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding also give reason to doubt the attribution to Defensor. They point out the circular nature of Rochais's evidence.[90] In a 1948 article, Rochais suggested that Defensor's *nutritor* was Ursinus, author of the *Passio Leudegarii II*.[91] This, Fouracre and Gerberding claim, encouraged J. Coquet to interpret a monogram on the funerary stone found at Ligugé as 'VRSINVS', a debatable interpretation, as the authors argue that the inscription which follows is 'ninth-century in form'. Furthermore, after Coquet published his interpretation in 1952,[92] J.C. Poulin then used both attributions to bolster his claim that the author of the *Passio Leudegarii II* was an Ursinus from the seventh century.[93] This fact, on which the claims of both Rochais and Coquet hinge, is hardly established. Fouracre and Gerberding argue that, although the *vita* is dedicated to Bishop Ansoald (676-c. 696), it is unlikely to be contemporary with Ansoald. The author refers to Ansoald as 'mayor of the palace', a mistake unlikely to have been made in the seventh century as this was a purely secular office. Further, the author corrects the Latin of the earlier *vita* on which this one is based (the *Passio Leudegarii I*) in a style characteristic of the Carolingian Renaissance. Finally, the author seems to describe an event from the *Continuation of the Chronicles of Fredegar*, not written until the mid-ninth century. Moreover, Krusch, editor of the

elaborating. See Rochais, 'Les Prologues', p. 143. In any case, Paterius died in 606, before the publication of the *Synonyma*. Isidore, though he did write a book of sentences excerpting other authors (the *Sententiarum libri tres*), did not excerpt his own material. Additionally, there is no Spanish manuscript evidence for the *LS* before the tenth century, and the attribution to Isidore is not found in any of the Spanish manuscripts. I have not seen any scholar who supports the idea of Isidore as author of the *LS*.

[90] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 207 ff.

[91] Rochais, 'Le "*Liber scintillarum*"', p. 80.

[92] Coquet, 'L'inscription tumulaire', pp. 167-200.

[93] J.C. Poulin, 'Saint Léger d'Autun et ses premiers biographes (fin VIIe-milieu IXe siècle)', *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest*, fourth series, 16 (1977), pp. 178-9.

Passio Leudegarii II, held to a Carolingian date.[94] Therefore, the positing of a seventh-century Ursinus from the *Passio Leudegarii II* is baseless. Taken together, all this means that the *Passio Leudegarii II* can hardly be used to establish a seventh-century date for the *Liber scintillarum*.

Lifshitz also takes issue with an attribution to Defensor of Ligugé.[95] She argues that the content of the *Liber scintillarum* could not flow from the ascetic community at Ligugé. Lifshitz concludes that, since the content is not ascetic and even anti-ascetic in places, 'the florilegium's compiler did not value celibacy, ascetic practices, or even sexual segregation.'[96] Instead of a monk from Ligugé, she puts forward as the author an unknown person from the 'non-celibate, non-ascetic clergy' of the Trier region.[97] Certainly, some of the content of the *Liber scintillarum* would not have been aimed at monastics. As we have seen above, however, monastics did have a penchant for instructing others how to live, so the inclusion of this material is not necessarily surprising. In addition, monastics were involved in pastoral work, so the material would have been pertinent to them in any case. Furthermore, not every monastic community held the same ascetic values, such as the aristocratic foundations discussed above. It seems unlikely, though, that a member of the non-celibate clergy would include chapters on virginity and abstinence whilst eschewing any discussion of marriage, as the author of the *Liber scintillarum* does.[98] This, combined with the fact that the work

[94] See B. Krusch, *Passio Leudegarii II*, p. 323, n. 2.
[95] Lifshitz rather unfairly accuses Rochais of having 'invented' both the author (Defensor) and the title (*Liber scintillarum*), but he is not the first one to put forward these names. J.-P. Migne published the work as the *Scintillarum liber* under Defensor's name, and even earlier Jean Mabillon discovered one of the Monte Cassino manuscripts containing Defensor's prologue. Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, p. 57. Cf. Defensor of Ligugé, *Scintillarum liber*, *PL*, 88 (1862), col. 597; also, L. Smith, p. 91.
[96] Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', p. 95.
[97] Lifshitz, 'Demonstrating Gun(t)za', p. 96.
[98] See *LS* 13 (*De virginitate*; ed. Rochais, 1, pp. 224-30) and *LS* 11 (*De abstinentia*; ed. Rochais, 1, 196-206).

does not pass over ascetic passages altogether – witness Rochais's long appendix in which he lists ascetic terms the author employs[99] – leads us away from Lifshitz's hypothesis.

Her speculation, however, that the *Liber scintillarum* was compiled in the north is compelling, especially in light of the weakness of Rochais's arguments for Ligugé. The geographic representation of the earliest manuscripts makes an origin in western Francia unlikely. The oldest manuscript comes from Karlburg, on the far east side of Francia.[100] The other eighth-century witnesses are also from east of the Rhine (Benediktbeuren, the north Alemannic area, and Freising) and one from the north-east of Francia.[101] The two late-eighth-/early-ninth- century manuscripts are both from the north of the Seine: Lille and St-Denis.[102] This geographic spread fits with the shift northward of both the political and cultural centres of Francia in the seventh century.[103] It does seem unlikely, then, that the *Liber scintillarum* would have been produced in Ligugé, but spread first in northern Francia.

The problem of geography goes deeper. It has to do with the transmission of Isidore's works, works which form a major part of the *Liber scintillarum*.[104] Whilst most of Isidore's works were well-known throughout Europe at the time of the writing of the *Liber scintillarum*, his *Synonyma* were not. This is significant because such a large

[99] Appendix 4 in Defensor, *Liber scintillarum*, pp. 257-307.
[100] Würzburg, Univers., Mp. th. f. 13.
[101] East of the Rhine: Munich, Clm 4582; Zurich, Zentralbibl. C 65 (287); and Munich Clm 6433 (Fris. 233), respectively. North-East of Francia: Kassel, Landesbibl., Theol. 4º 10. Bischoff's uncertain choice of provenance for the Kassel manuscript would put it at Bourges, which is in the middle of France, south of the Seine.
[102] St. Gall, Stiftsbibl., 124; and Reims, Bibl. Mun., 435 (E 345).
[103] Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 8.
[104] Excerpts from Isidore compose 20% of the total work.

number of excerpts from Isidore come from the *Synonyma*.[105] John Henderson points out that outside of Spain, the *Synonyma* were only known in Anglo-Saxon England and areas of Germany which were influenced by Anglo-Saxon missionaries until the Carolingian Renaissance.[106] As at least two of the early manuscripts are written in an Anglo-Saxon miniscule or majuscule – including the earliest manuscript, Würzburg Mp. th. f. 13[107] – it seems likely that Isidore's *Synonyma* were introduced to the western part of Francia under Anglo-Saxon missionaries, embraced, and then used by a local author to compile the *Liber scintillarum*. This would likely push the date of composition past 700 to the early part of the eighth century, as missionaries did not start to operate in the area until after 690.[108]

The picture given above concerning the transmission of Isidore's *Synonyma,* however, is incomplete. Jacques Elfassi has done tremendous work on the manuscript transmission of the *Synonyma*.[109] He posits two recensions beginning even before the death of Isidore. From his own draft, Isidore made a corrected version and sent it to Braulio of Zaragoza sometime between 619 and 631.[110] This recension (which Elfassi terms Λ) eventually made its way to the British Isles. Later, Isidore made another corrected copy from the same draft, which was published after his death.[111] This recension (termed Φ) went directly to Francia. His hypothesis also explains the different

[105] Twenty-five percent of the Isidore excerpts are from the *Synonyma*.
[106] John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 3. Also see Hussey, '*Transmarinis litteris*', p. 147.
[107] The other is Munich, Clm 6433 (Fris. 233), from the end of the eighth century.
[108] And that in Frisia, under Willibrord. See James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690-900* (Turnhout, 2009), p. 3. Also, Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 57; Levison, *England and Continent*, p. 53. Boniface did not begin his mission further up the Rhine until the 720s. See Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 59.
[109] See Isidore of Seville, *Synonyma,* in ed. Jacques Elfassi, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, 111B (Turnhout, 2009)
[110] Jacques Elfassi, 'Introduction', in Isidore of Seville, *Synonyma,* ed. Jacques Elfassi, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, 111B (Turnhout, 2009), p. lxiii.
[111] Elfassi, 'Introduction', p. lxiv.

prologues and even titles of the two recensions.[112] We would expect the *Liber scintillarum* to have used the Λ recension if it was compiled east of the Rhine using an Isidorian manuscript brought over by Anglo-Saxon missionaries; this, however, is not the case. The table in Appendix 1 demonstrates that, on the whole, the *Liber scintillarum* follows the Φ recension. The table lists where the passages in the *Liber scintillarum* significantly differ between recensions; it leaves out passages where readings differ in regard to mere additions or omissions of single words, as this could easily be the fault of the scribe.[113]

In seventeen of twenty-five cases, the *Liber scintillarum* follows the Φ recension. Though that is about two-thirds of the passages listed, it still leaves a significant number of passages which follow the Λ recension. Verse 58.58 of the *Liber scintillarum* exhibits the conflation of the two recensions effectively in that it seems to combine the two readings into one.

In light of the evidence, I would like to propose another conclusion. The *Liber scintillarum* was compiled in the north of Francia in a monastery under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries. These missionaries brought over copies of the *Synonyma*, a

[112] The work is called *Sinonima* in the Λ recension, and *Liber soliloquiorum* in the Φ. See Elfassi, 'Introduction', p. lxiv.

[113] Elfassi lists many of these sorts of single-word omissions or additions as a result of the two different recensions, but they are not convincing proof. Alexander Andrée agrees. See his review of Elfassi's edition in *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 21 (2011), p. 274. Passages of the *LS* which contain single-word additions or omissions corresponding to either the Λ or the Φ recensions not listed in the table are 19.24, 24.50, 32.101-102, 58.34, 58.55, 79.11, and 81.41. Elfassi himself has also compared the *LS* with the two recensions of the *Synonyma*. His methodology, which sees single-word omissions or additions as proof of different recensions, skews the result toward the Φ recension. As he uncritically accepts Defensor's authorship, he makes no conclusions along the line of provenance, despite the presence of passages from the Λ recension. See Jacques Elfassi, 'Lecteur et Transmetteur', pp. 246-8.

text which Boniface himself found so useful.[114] There are three extant copies of the work which are Anglo-Saxon in origin or betray Anglo-Saxon influence in copying, and which are associated with Bonifacian monasteries; all of them are eighth century.[115] One of them, Fulda, Bibliothek des Bischöflichen Priesterseminars, Bonifatus 2, is one of the earliest manuscripts in the Φ recension,[116] and, indeed, one of the earliest manuscripts of the *Synonyma* at all. This manuscript is Frankish, written in Luxeuil minuscule, but contains insular features as well as early-eighth-century Anglo-Saxon glosses.[117] It demonstrates just how early the Φ recension was available in northern Francia. Furthermore, the other two manuscripts, Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. f. 79 and St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Q. v. I. 15, both originate in England and represent the Λ recension.[118] Thus, from an early date, scribes in northern Francia had access to manuscripts of the *Synonyma* from both recensions.[119] That the author of the *Liber scintillarum*, then, used a copy of the *Synonyma* which was corrupted through a combination of both recensions is unsurprising, if he were located in northern Francia.[120]

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[114] Boniface quoted from the *Synonyma* in works written before leaving England. See Matthew T. Hussey, 'The Franco-Saxon *Synonyma* in the Ragyndrudis Codex: Anglo-Saxon design in a Luxeuil-Scripted Booklet', *Scriptorium*, 58 (2004), p. 227, n. 3.

[115] Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Mp. th. f. 79; St. Petersburg, Russian National Library Q. v. I. 15; and Fulda, Bibliothek des Bischöflichen Priesterseminars, Bonifatus 2, also known as the Ragyndrudis Codex, the book which tradition holds Boniface used to defend himself at his martyrdom.

[116] Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's* Synonyma *in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2008), p. 73.

[117] Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Diffusion of Insular Culture in Neustria between 650 and 850: The Implication of the Manuscript Evidence', in Hartmut Atsma and Karl Ferdinand Werner (eds), *La Neustrie. Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850* (2 vols., Sigmaringen, 1989), 2, p. 415; Hussey argues that the *Synonyma* section of the codex particularly displays indications of a Frankish-Anglo-Saxon collaboration. See Hussey, 'Franco-Saxon *Synonyma*', pp. 235-6.

[118] Di Sciacca, *Finding*, p. 69.

[119] The same was true in England, where the Λ recension is supposed to have been sent. London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xiv, which originated in north or north-east Francia, was in England sometime before 912. See Di Sciacca, *Finding*, p. 68. Clearly, the *Synonyma* recensions crossed the Channel in both directions at an early date.

[120] Considering the popularity of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon circles, one might wonder if it could have been written in England. Bremmer, however, tells us that there is no manuscript evidence for the *Liber scintillarum* in Anglo-Saxon England before the late eleventh century. He soundly refutes possible quotations in the works of Felix and Alcuin – the only two Anglo-Saxon authors who have been put

Furthermore, the manuscript tradition of the *Liber scintillarum* supports it having been compiled in the north. As it was pointed out above, all the earliest manuscripts are from the northern and north-eastern areas of Francia. These areas correspond to areas of Anglo-Saxon missionary efforts, and several of the monasteries from which the manuscripts come were founded by Anglo-Saxon missionaries.

In addition, the content of the work would support northern missionaries in their pastoral ministries. Monks and clerics living in monastic-like situations carried out pastoral roles in the new sees which were founded as a result of Anglo-Saxon missionary efforts. The sentences collected in the *Liber scintillarum* would have been useful to the monastic missionaries as they supported their abbot-bishop and pastored their new flock. Though the later spread throughout Europe demonstrates the usefulness of the work in many different contexts, the monastic-pastoral context of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries of the early eighth century fits the content well and supports the manuscript evidence given above.

In conclusion, Rochais's evidence for the attribution of the *Liber scintillarum* to Defensor of Ligugé does not hold up. Instead, the manuscript evidence points to a compiler from a monastery in northern Francia under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the early eighth century. This conclusion is supported by the manuscript transmission of Isidore's *Synonyma* as well as the content of the *Liber scintillarum* itself.

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forward as having been influenced by the *Liber scintillarum* – as being based on the original authors. See Bremmer, 'Reception', pp. 80-87.

Speech and Silence

Despite the *Liber scintillarum* having been compiled in the rural north of the eighth century, it stays astonishingly true to ideas from Late Antiquity. Because of the disparate contexts in which late-antique ascetics lived, it was not necessarily expected that all ascetics would be monastics, and therefore some of the methods for purification which the late-antiques employed could be translated for the context for which the *Liber scintillarum* was written. For example, though Cassian wrote for ascetics, he was well aware of the wide variety of situations in which ascetics may live. Not all were solitaries in the desert; neither were they necessarily living in *cenobia*. Whilst he believed that these settings were ideal for the implementation of his programme, as discussed in Chapter 2, he deemed his programme applicable in any situation. Thus, although the context of the *Liber scintillarum* differed greatly from that of the *Institutiones* and the *Conlationes*, the ideas which shaped the latter works continued to be relevant. The fact that the monastics of the north were now working within a missionary context ministering to the newly-Christianised laity meant that they needed a method for creating and deepening holiness in people who would live outside of the monastery. Like the ascetics of Late Antiquity, the author of the *Liber scintillarum* is more concerned with internality than with externality. A list of rules as to what to do and when would not be practical for the average lay person. Since holiness is a matter of the heart rather than external actions, even a lay person could expect to grow in holiness if following a late-antique-style programme.

The author of the *Liber scintillarum* is concerned with the development of a heart which is pure, perfect, and able to lead the person to God. It is the pure of heart who will see

God,[121] so this is the goal. Through his choice of excerpts, the author reveals his belief that a person can move along the path to perfection. It is a choice to move along this path, and progress depends upon the decision to focus one's thoughts upon God. For instance, the author quotes Isidore, saying, 'It ought not to be feared if good things or bad things come in meditation; but, if the mind discerns the bad from the good with understanding reason, the greater ought to be glorified.'[122] If bad thoughts arise when meditating, it is the choice of the person to decide to dwell on them. Dwelling on the good thoughts will glorify the good. A quote from Gregory describes the outcome of dwelling on the bad thoughts: 'For when the will is not checked in meditation, it is dominated by action.'[123] If individuals do not control their thinking by turning from the bad, their actions will inevitably follow their thoughts – their own will – revealing their hearts. Furthermore, Gregory is also quoted, saying, 'The malignant spirit constricts the soul on all sides when it repeats the sins not only of his works, but also of his speech (*locutio*) and his thoughts (*cogitatio*).'[124] Here, the author highlights how a soul can be 'constricted' – in other words, a person can not only progress but also regress on the pathway to perfection. Though there is an emphasis on the monastic's own effort to bring out purity, the author balances this by maintaining the importance of God's own role in the process. He quotes a verse from Proverbs: 'Show your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be put in order.'[125] When a person does good works to the Lord, He in turn will lead and order his or her thoughts, which will further him or her on the pathway to perfection. The process is a joint one, dependent upon the grace of God.

[121] *LS* 38.1; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 34. Cf. Matthew 5:8.
[122] *LS* 38.39; ed. Rochais, 2, pp. 40-2. Cf. Isidore, *Sententiae*, 2.25.9.
[123] *LS* 38.28; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 30. Source unknown.
[124] *LS* 38.30; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 38. Cf. Gregory I, *Homiliae XL in Evangelia*, 39.4.
[125] *LS* 38.12; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 36; author's translation. Cf. Proverbs 16:3.

The *Liber scintillarum* divides the world into three types of people. The first group are the foolish, which are those who have no interest in becoming perfect, those who are spiritually immature. The second are the wise, those who are already perfect or spiritually mature. The final group are those who are seeking to become perfect, the disciples. The fools provide the foil for the wise and a warning to the disciples, instructing them by demonstrating what kind of behaviour they should avoid. As we now see, the kind of behaviour most in focus is rhetorical comportment.

The author of the *Liber scintillarum* uses speech and silence as tools for the creation of holiness as well as metrics for determining the purity of one's heart. The role of silence, however, is downplayed; it just was not practical to expect the laity to keep silent. The sixteenth chapter is entitled '*De silencio*', yet despite the title, much of the chapter has to do with right speech, or with the decision to choose speech or silence rather than with the benefits of silence itself. The first quotation of the chapter immediately demonstrates this. The author quotes Matthew 12:35: 'a good man offers forth good treasure, and an evil man offers forth evil treasure'.[126] Good or wise speech, therefore, cannot come forth from a heart which is mired in sin. The heart dictates the words and puts the speaker's purity (or lack thereof) on display. Even if a person is very careful with his words, his true character will be revealed by his speech. That this is the first passage quoted in a chapter entitled '*De silentio*' demonstrates the lack of emphasis which the *Liber scintillarum* put on the discipline of silence.

Though the author restrains his use of silence as a tool to generate holiness, he does not eschew it altogether. He recognises the importance of silence as a necessary part of the

[126] *LS* 16.1; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 248; author's translation. Cf. Matthew 12:35.

discipleship process because it helps one learn to control one's tongue. As Jerome says, 'At length he learns to keep silence who never learned to talk'.[127] The foolish – what the disciples were before beginning their spiritual journey – do not know how to speak because they only speak foolish or idle words. In a posture of silence, disciples are able to listen and absorb the wisdom of those who have already reached spiritual maturity.[128] Whilst they are guarding their mouths, they protect themselves from sinning and thus regressing in their journey toward perfection.[129] Silence will aid them and protect them as they seek purity of heart, but speech will not. Thus, the author values silence primarily for the protection it provides against sin and the space it creates for the disciple to hear the words of a wise teacher.

Disciples, however, must be careful about the kind of speech to which they attend. Listening to God's word or the teaching of a pure and wise elder is beneficial, but there are some things which a disciple cannot hear without taking injury. The author includes a whole chapter to address this entitled '*De detractionibus*'. He quotes a warning from Jerome: 'Beware lest you have itching tongue or ears; that is, either lest you yourself slander any others, or listen to slander.'[130] Jerome warns against both the act of slander and the hearing of slanderous words; both are sinful. Related is an excerpt from Isidore: 'Each commits a similar sin, whoever hears slander and he who slanders.'[131] Isidore's view is that listening to slander is just as sinful as actually doing the slandering oneself. Ironically, speaking slander reveals the faults of the speaker himself: 'Never slander anyone. We often accuse what we ourselves do and so against ourselves we find our

[127] *LS* 16.38; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 254. Cf. Jerome, *Adversus Helvidium* 1.
[128] *LS* 16.23 and 35; ed. Rochais, 1, pp. 252 and 254. Cf. Ecclesiasticus 18:19 and 32:10-12.
[129] *LS* 16.17 and 22; ed. Rochais, 1, pp. 250 and 252. Cf. Proverbs 19:16 and Ecclesiasticus 14:1.
[130] *LS* 41.10; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 62. Cf. Jerome, *Epistola* 52.14.1.
[131] *LS* 41.15; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 62. Cf. Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.52.

own vices.'[132] If someone listening to slander is as the slanderer himself, the listener also reveals the state of his heart in continuing to listen. The *Liber scintillarum* gives the final word on the topic to the *Vitae Patrum*: '…so he who slanders his brother, destroys not only his own soul, but also the soul of the listener.'[133] This excerpt makes a distinction between the sinfulness of the slanderer and the one who listens, giving the responsibility for the listener's destroyed soul to the speaker. The listener, however, still ends up with a destroyed soul. Thus, not only in speaking impurely, but also in listening to impure speech can a person reveal the impure nature of his heart. As lay disciples lived amongst people of many differing levels of spiritual maturity – and, indeed, many of those people no doubt lacked any interest in becoming holy – they were bound to regularly encounter slanderous speech and gossip. This chapter helped the monastic missionaries teach them how to deal with this sort of sinful speech in others.

Though the author of the *Liber scintillarum* appreciated the usefulness of silence in creating and reflecting holiness, it was not practical to expect the laity to keep silent all of the time, and he does not set silence up as a virtue in and of itself. Thus, throughout the work, he devotes an abundance of quotations to right speech. He sets up a contrast between the speech of the wise and the speech of the foolish. Those who are fools speak using many words,[134] idle words,[135] or harmful words, such as gossip or slander.[136] The wise speak as well, but their speech is different. They use few words[137] and speak only at appropriate times.[138] The content of their speech is different as well. Their speech

[132] *LS* 41.8; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 62. Cf. Jerome, *Epistola* 125.18.1.
[133] *LS* 41.6; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 60. Cf. Sapientia 1:10.
[134] *LS* 16.5, 43, and 29; ed. Rochais, 1, pp. 248, 256, and 252. Cf. Proverbs 10:19, Isidore, *Synonyma* 49, and Ecclesiasticus 20:5-8.
[135] *LS* 16.3; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 248. Cf. 1 Timothy 5:13.
[136] *LS* 16.25 and 28; ed. Rochais, 1, pp. 252 and 252. Cf. Ecclesiasticus 19:5 and 37:21.
[137] *LS* 16.27 and 43; ed. Rochais, 1, pp. 252 and 256. Cf. Ecclesiasticus 19:23 and Isidore *Synonyma* 49.
[138] *LS* 16.46; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 256. Cf. Pseudo-Basil, *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem* 16.

edifies[139] and teaches sound doctrine.[140] They hold their tongues in silence, unlike the fools, but they also take opportunities to speak, choosing their timing and words carefully. When they do speak, their speech exhibits a pure heart. On the other hand, when fools speak, their speech shows the world their impure heart. Though the author does not expect disciples to always remain silent – witness his choice of the word '*silencium*' for the title of his chapter on silence over Columbanus's choice of '*taciturnitas*' in the *Regula monachorum* denoting a silence which is maintained – through his juxtaposition of wise and foolish speech he warns them that speech must always be carefully measured.

Disciples should also be aware that there are no neutral words. Speech either forwards them on their spiritual journey or it hinders them. In going about their everyday life, the lay disciple may not consider that every word he or she speaks has spiritual consequences in spite of its apparent mundanity. The *Liber scintillarum* contains many warnings along these lines, including a whole chapter on idle words (*De verbis otiosis*). This chapter comes right near the end, as if the author wanted to warn his readers that, despite all he had collected concerning obviously harmful speech, no speech was without danger.[141] Readers are told to avoid 'empty tales (*inaniles fabulas*)' and 'incautious words (*incauta verba*)'.[142] An excerpt from Gregory elaborates: 'Leave unsaid a word that does not edify the ears. He who does not restrain idle words (*otiosa verba*), quickly crosses over to sin.'[143] Speech that does not edify its hearers is better

[139] *LS* 16.46; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 256. Cf. Pseudo-Basil, *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem* 16.
[140] *LS* 16.4; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 248. Cf. Titus 2:1.
[141] *De verbis otiosis* is the 79th chapter, and it only has two chapters following it. Both are chapter headings from Isidore's *Sententiae* (*De brevitate huius vitae* and *De lectionibus*) and appropriate for the conclusion of his work. The author's arrangement of these chapters shows a clear move toward wrapping up his work.
[142] *LS* 79.3 and 79.9 (ed. Rochais, 2, pp. 296 and 298), respectively. Cf. 1 Timothy 4:7; Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.45.
[143] *LS* 79.11; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 298. Cf. Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.46.

not spoken at all; choosing silence over idle words protects the speaker. There is a very good reason to be so cautious, and it has to do with the final judgment. The first excerpt in this chapter is from Matthew 12:36-37: 'But I say to you, men will render an account to God of every idle word (*verbum otiosum*) they will have spoken on the Day of Judgment. For each one will be justified by his words or condemned by his words.'[144] This is a serious warning, as Christians anticipated the Day of Judgment with both fear and joy. Jerome also warns, 'you will have to return an account of idle speech (*verbum otiosum*).'[145] According to the *Liber scintillarum*, all words have spiritual value, and everyone – not just monastics, but also the laity – will be judged according to their words.

As we have seen, female monastics were some of the earliest readers and copyists of the *Liber scintillarum*. The profusion of double foundations and convents in the north demonstrates the effectiveness of mission work amongst women. As it was with the women influenced by Cassian, Caesarius, and Columbanus, so late-antique ideas concerning the purification of the heart were as relevant to early-eighth-century women as to men. By employing these ideas, the many women whom the nuns reached in their mission work, both as new converts to the monastic life and as recipients or observers of acts of charity, could increase in purity in the hope of seeing God. Speech in the *Liber scintillarum* is a gender-neutral indicator of holiness, one which abbesses could employ as well as abbots. As the *Liber scintillarum* does not offer an ultimate, unbiased metric, such as Cassian's nocturnal emissions or Caesarius's sleep-speech, right speech itself must suffice.

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[144] *LS* 79.1; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 296; author's translation. Cf. Matthew 12:36-7.
[145] *LS* 79.5; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 296. Cf. Jerome, *Epistola* 60.12.1.

The monastics in the north of Francia who supported the Anglo-Saxon missionaries, whether they were monks teaching the laity in public or nuns teaching new converts in their convents, had to be effective teachers. The importance the author of the *Liber scintillarum* lays upon teaching reflects this, and is underlined by the fact that his chapter '*De doctoribus sive rectoribus*' is one of the longest in the book.[146] He gives an excerpt from Gregory to illustrate the necessity of the wise to be teachers: 'Just as incautious speech lures into error, so indiscrete silence leaves behind in error those who could be taught.'[147] When this happens, the wise unhelpfully avoid teaching and correcting others, who then do not have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Having attained purity of heart, it is now the responsibility of the wise to teach those who wish to be wise. An excerpt from Augustine makes this clear: 'Rather indeed, you are not innocent, if your brothers, whom you can correct with judging, you permit to die in silence.'[148] It is actually sinful to keep silent if by teaching and correcting a wise person can help someone. The author quotes the Book of Proverbs in order to underline the importance of the teaching of the wise: 'The lips of the righteous man teach many; but those who are unlearned wither away in poverty of heart.'[149] The pure in heart would not be loving if they did not teach, and would therefore forfeit their progress in favour of selfishness.

Teaching must be done by the wise and pure in heart, not merely by the learned, because the teacher must pick his words carefully. Jerome advises, 'When you speak concerning God, you ought to temper your speech, so that you may restore those

[146] At 110 excerpts, it is the second longest chapter after '*De sapientia*', which has 111.
[147] *LS* 79.7; ed. Rochais, 2, pp. 296-8. Cf. Gregory I, *Regula pastoralis* 2.4.
[148] *LS* 32.23; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 392. Cf. Augustine, *Praeceptum* 7.
[149] *LS* 32.11; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 390; author's translation. Cf. Proverbs 10:11.

listening with diverse foods, and each one may receive fit nourishment according to the capacity of his own stomach.'[150] The teacher must be able to discern the needs of his listeners in order to teach effectively. Gregory also warns of the need for the teacher to use discernment in regards to his audience: 'Therefore, he who strives to speak wisely fears greatly, lest the unity of the listeners be confounded by his eloquence.'[151] There is a chance that the teacher's own learnedness – in the form of great speaking skills – could cause division in his or her hearers if they are confused. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to have holy fear when they speak, and a humility which puts the needs of their listeners above their own desire to speak fancy words. The author quotes Isidore, saying, 'For the good soul of the listener the speech of the teacher is bestowed.'[152] The wise teacher is more concerned with the understanding of the listeners than with his own eloquence. This focus on the necessity for understanding in the hearers is another indication of the pastoral purpose of the *Liber scintillarum*.

That the *Liber scintillarum* stressed holiness as a requirement of being a teacher worked to undergird the authority of the monastic within the wider community, just as it did for the monk-bishops of Lérins when Cassian wrote. In the seventh century, it was generally believed that, because of their consecrated status, monastics were closer to God than the general population. The author, however, gives warnings to the monastic teacher: even the best teaching is not effective if the actions of the teacher are at odds with his words. Jerome warns, 'He loses the authority of teaching whose speech is destroyed by his act.'[153] Gregory puts it in a positive manner: 'The preaching of the priest is confirmed by his works, so that what he teaches with words he instructs by

[150] *LS* 32.31; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 394. Cf. Jerome, *In Evangelium Matthaei* 13.31.
[151] *LS* 32.71; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 406. Cf. Gregory I, *Regula pastoralis* 2.4
[152] *LS* 32.108; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 414. Cf. Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.44.1.
[153] *LS* 32.40; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 396. Cf. Jerome, *Epistola* 69.8.4.

example.'[154] The teaching must flow from a heart that already puts it into practice. The pure in heart will speak pure words, and they will act in a pure manner. Another excerpt from Gregory underlines the idea: 'Preaching resounds more with actions than with words.'[155] If someone does not have a pure heart, his actions will deny his authority to teach, whilst a person with a pure heart will act in accordance with his words. This synergy gives teachers authority and makes their words meaningful to their listeners. Whilst their position as monastics might give them authority with the laity, they must not depend upon this; their real authority comes from the status of their hearts.

Hence, we return to late-antique ideas concerning teachers. Since they were to be teachers, monastics had an even greater responsibility to seek holiness, but fortunately they had access to a tool for focusing the mind on God: the scriptures. God is the ultimate teacher, and reading His Word is akin to hearing Him speak. God's speech is always pure, holy, and perfect, and it always benefits the hearer. The more a person listens to God speak through reading the scriptures, the more his or her own heart is changed toward the perfect. The author of the *Liber scintillarum* highlights the importance of reading scripture by entitling the last chapter of his work '*De lectionibus'*. Whilst the Merovingian secular and religious elite were literate,[156] the excerpts in this chapter are more likely aimed at monastics themselves. Monastics had the benefit of regular, scheduled times of private reading, as well as being read to during other activities during the day, such as eating or working. Scripture was often read out loud, and so the parallel between reading scripture and hearing God's voice was vivid. This chapter is a collection of excerpts about the good of reading scripture

[154] *LS* 32.49; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 398. Source unknown.
[155] *LS* 32.50; ed. Rochais, 1, p. 398. Cf. Gregory I, *Regula pastoralis* 3.40.
[156] Ian Wood, 'Administration, Law, and Culture in Merovingian Gaul', in Rosamond McKitterick (ed), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 80-1.

and tips for reading to squeeze out as much benefit as possible. An excerpt from Isidore outlines the method of communication between the reader and the Lord: 'Prayer is us speaking to God; reading is God speaking to us.'[157] The idea that reading is the same as listening to God is underlined by an excerpt from Gregory: 'Reading is like listening to God – where there is the spirit of reading (*legentis*), divine speech (*divina eloquia*) is lifted up.'[158] The author lists some helpful tips for readers who are seriously interested in improving the condition of their hearts. For instance, he quotes Gregory, saying, 'However much a person penetrates the scriptures is how much he profits from them.'[159] Monastics must meditate over the scriptures, taking their time and returning again and again. Furthermore, he adds an excerpt from Isidore, saying, 'Reading will not yield anything if you just run through it; you have to use a sense of internal understanding (*sensu interioris intelligentiae*).'[160] Reading scripture must engage the mind and heart; it cannot simply be an exercise in the recitation of words. The final word on reading, and hence in the entire book, sums up the author's view of the human heart. He quotes Basil: 'For just as the flesh is nourished by fleshly meat, so also is the interior man nourished and fed by divine speech (*divina eloquia*).'[161] Again, we see the focus on the importance of internal holiness. This chapter, placed at the end of the *Liber scintillarum*, demonstrates how important reading was to the formation of holiness in the readers themselves – the monastic missionaries – and encouraged them to pick up the scriptures with renewed enthusiasm. In so doing they would grow in purity and, therefore, in effectiveness as teachers.

[157] *LS* 81.17; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 310. Cf. Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.8.2.
[158] *LS* 81.16; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 310. Cf. Gregory I, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 7.9
[159] *LS* 81.14; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 310. Cf. Gregory I, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 1.7.8.
[160] *LS* 81.34; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 316. Cf. Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.12.1.
[161] *LS* 81.45; ed. Rochais, 2, p. 318. Cf. Pseudo-Basil, *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem* 12.

To conclude: the sheer number of surviving manuscripts of the *Liber scintillarum* demonstrates its significance to the people of the medieval period; thus, it is long overdue some attention. A close examination of the manuscript evidence and content of the florilegium leads to the conclusion that Rochais's attribution to Defensor of Ligugé is incorrect. Instead, the work was likely written in the north of Francia in the early eighth century in an area under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries. The *Liber scintillarum* would have been a useful tool for monastics to employ when ministering to the laity in the newly-conquered lands of the north. As such, the author deploys a programme with late-antique roots for creating holiness in a way which is applicable to both monastics and non-monastics, both male and female. Silence, as a result, though still valued, is downplayed in favour of passages which teach right speaking and right hearing. Holy speech as a metric for holiness remains crucial even in a lay context. For the author of the *Liber scintillarum*, holiness is a vital characteristic for a teacher; this stance would reinforce the authority of the missionary monastics within the community. In order to achieve true purity, the author prescribes another tool which was important in Late Antiquity: scripture reading. This he emphasises by placing it as the final topic. Overall, though the *Liber scintillarum* was created for a much different context than Late Antiquity, the author applies a programme which, in essence, late antique.

Conclusion

The Gaul of the fifth century and the Gaul of the eighth century, on the surface, are very dissimilar. Whereas the former was in the midst of witnessing the fracturing of the Roman Empire and the incursion of barbarians, the latter had settled down under the barbarian rule of the Merovingian kings. Monasticism had changed significantly, as well, from urban ascetic households of elites to rural cenobitic monasteries under the guidance of written rules. The contrast of these two pictures could lead us to conclude that there had been a decisive break when the Roman Empire fell in the West, but to conclude thusly would be rash. A deeper look reveals the strands of continuity laced throughout the centuries. The ideas which shaped the late antique period were not abandoned when imperial power receded, but rather developed and evolved. Ideas concerning speech and silence are a prime example of this process. The underlying principle of seeking interior purity through focusing the mind on God is present even as methods develop throughout the centuries.

In the first case study, we saw that the method Cassian provided for an ascetic to advance toward perfection was a two-part system. The first part, ridding oneself of all vices, was best done in the *cenobium*. It involved focusing the mind on the Word of God, thereby forcing all other thoughts out and keeping the mind solely occupied with God. This required an internal silence to create the space to rightly hear God's words, even if they themselves were the ones speaking them. Those seeking perfection ought to open all their thoughts before a spiritual elder who could discern for them their origin. This kind of confessional speech, already common amongst desert ascetics, required the speaker to hold nothing back, no matter the consequences. Once ascetics had reached

perfection and could discern their own thoughts for themselves, they could progress onto the solitary life where they could practice the second part of Cassian's programme: *theoria*. This also involved meditation on the scriptures, but now, because of their perfect state, they would be able to understand the scriptures properly and draw close to God in prayer as they had not been able to do before. Though Cassian focuses on cenobitic and eremitic male monastics, he calls attention to the fact that people do not need to be monastics to use his programme. Neither must they be male; though he does not address women specifically, the nuns of the convent he founded likely read his works.

Though Augustine was bothered by the idea that ascetics were considered morally superior to other Christians and sought to discredit the idea, Cassian, conversely, sought to prove their greater purity through unbiased measurement.[1] He held that someone with a pure heart would speak pure words, and that holiness could therefore be gauged by speech. The best way, however, to measure a man's purity was through assessing the frequency of his nocturnal emissions. The mind relaxed in sleep was the one point at which all hidden sin would rise to the surface, manifesting itself in erotic dreams with the accompanying nocturnal emission. A man who experienced an emission two or three times a year or less was one who was completely perfect and pure. Since Cassian advocated for the necessity of perfection in all teachers, achieving this high standard verified a man's perfection and provided the necessary qualifications to teach; this was a great advantage for ascetics who sought politically powerful episcopal positions, such as the monks of Lérins. This metric had limitations, though: it was male-centric, and, furthermore, it required honesty on the part of the ascetic, who would have to admit to

[1] Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 34-5.

what happened at night in his solitary cell, for even *cenobia* at this time were made up of cells for one or, at most, two people. The underlying theory, however, of the sleeping mind being unable to hide the true state of the heart was one which his followers would later adapt to their own circumstances. Because of his great influence, Cassian provides a link between the thought of the late-antique era of which he was a part and that of the Merovingian period which followed.

Caesarius of Arles was one of those who was greatly influenced by late-antique ideas. He held to Cassian's practical theology that progress could be made in the spiritual life and that the spiritually mature could guide the less mature on that path. But unlike Cassian, he believed that people of differing spiritual maturity could live together. Therefore, the path of the monastic was not from coenobium to desert, but rather a lifetime of communal living. Caesarius agreed with Cassian and the Desert Fathers and Mothers that both speech and silence reflect the level of purity in the heart, but he had different ideas when it came to teaching. Cassian believed that in order to be a teacher, one must be perfect – you cannot teach what you do not practice. Caesarius, on the other hand, believed that anyone could be a teacher, and even had the responsibility to teach others. For him, the credential came from the message rather than from the teacher's character. Thus, Caesarius employed and advocated for plain speaking in sermons. This view developed in the context of his role as pastor-bishop. He took the idea that it was a sin to remain silent when another person was in need of rebuking, and emphasised it and applied it to a wider audience. These two innovations –the perpetual communal environment and the responsibility for all to be teachers – demonstrate the development of late-antique ideas in Caesarius's own circumstances.

Caesarius himself had a wide and long-lasting sphere of influence, particularly with his *Regula ad virgines* and his *Sermones*, but this study focused on contemporary examples in order to underscore the continued influence of late-antique ideas in the sixth century. Specifically, the texts associated with the Convent of St. John, which Caesarius founded, the *Rules* of Aurelianus of Arles, and the texts associated with the Convent of the Holy Cross were all directly influenced by Casearius and show the continued development of late-antique ideas concerning speech and silence.

The *Vita Caesarii*, a work which would become influential in its own right, contains the understanding from Cassian that a person's true level of holiness is only witnessed in sleep when the mind can no longer remain vigilant. Instead, however, of turning to the lack of nocturnal emission as the sign of true purity, the *Vita Caesarii* uses sleep-preaching and sleep-meditation. Sleep-speech was a verbal sign, as witnessed by the community around Casearius, which demonstrated to all that there was no dark, hidden corner of his mind which was not focused entirely upon God. Caesarius's monastic theology, in contrast to Cassian's, required monastics to take a vow of stability when entering the monastery. The resulting difference in circumstances allowed for the development of sleep-speech as a more appropriate sign of purity. The change was from the lack of a physical event specific to males to a positive mark which could also be universal to both genders, and was a development which was picked up by the authors of the *Vita Rusticulae* and the *Vita Radegundis*. Cassian's idea of the sleeping mind as being the ultimate revealer of the heart is retained, but the method by which it is known is changed; witnesses also become important, and the cenobitic environment provides this. Speech always requires hearers, which is why Aurelianus mandated the pure speech of his nuns be heard in the public basilica several times each day. As he had

never been a monk, however, his monastic theology differed from Caesarius's, being concerned more with his nuns' external marks of holiness than their internal progress toward perfection, with the aim of his own self-promotion. Despite his *Rules* having been based on Caesarius's, they lack the Cassianic influence associated with Caesarius's monastic theology. Thus, Aurelianus represents a break with late-antique thought, but it is his goal of self-promotion and his being a foreigner to the monastic life that provide the reason for the break.

A man whose theology was more in line with late-antique ideas was the monk Columbanus. He was deeply versed in Cassian's works, and this is evidenced in his own theology. Columbanus, unlike Caesarius, held strictly to Cassian's programme of the spiritually pure teaching the spiritually immature, who should remain silent. Silence and solitude play an important role for Columbanus. Silence is important for people of all levels of spiritual maturity, but solitude is reserved only for a few. Whilst Cassian saw the monastic life as a natural progression towards solitary living, Columbanus was wary of allowing disciples to go off on their own to the extent that it seems to have rarely happened.

Whilst subscribing to Cassian's practical theology, Columbanus further developed late-antique ideas about speech and silence, integrating an emphasis on confession. Confession was integral to Columbanian spirituality, and there is evidence that formal confession was taken in Columbanian monasteries at least three times a day. The speech-act of confession was the formalisation of the late-antique desert's traditional relationship between the discerning master and the mind-baring disciple, in combination with the penitential system.

Columbanus's sermons and letters also demonstrate the continued use of speaking truth to power. Though Columbanus spoke boldly to popes and bishops, unlike Caesarius, he did not speak plainly, but eloquently. His basis for speaking boldly, however, was his character, both his purity of heart as well as his position as an outsider. Thus, his manner of speaking reflected a continuation but also a development of late-antique pure speech.

Columbanus's followers continued to develop late-antique ideas to suit their own contexts. His biographer, Jonas of Bobbio, wrote during a time of fracture within the Columbanian movement. In order to establish a cohesive picture of Columbanian monasticism, he wrote the *Vitae Columbani abbatis et discipulorumque eius*. Throughout his work, Jonas demonstrates the holiness of his protagonists through their speech. The audiences for the speech acts go beyond the monastic communities, usually including lay people, royalty, or clerics. Columbanus prophesies, speaking divine judgment on King Theuderic. In so doing, Jonas depicts Columbanus as employing frank speech, which is also evident in Columbanus's own writings, though Jonas's Columbanus is rougher and less diplomatic. Jonas's other male characters, Attala, Eustasius, and Bertulf, also preach to a public audience, thereby demonstrating their holiness through speech. Jonas contrasts the speech of Eustasius with that of the dissident monk Agrestius, whose evil nature becomes known as he begins to speak. The trouble with Agrestius, Jonas tells us, begins when Eustasius thwarts his desire to leave the monastery for the solitude of the wilderness because he is not ready. Here we also learn that the solitary is also expected to teach, and Agrestius was not fit for the task.

Jonas runs into a problem when he comes to describing female monasticism. There is no indication that Columbanus himself ever thought about female monastics, but this did not prevent the foundation of several Columbanian convents by Jonas's time. Jonas needed to include female monastics in his picture of the Columbanian movement, so he chose the Convent of Faremoutiers to represent them because Columbanus had consecrated its founder, Burgundofara, as a child. His problem becomes evident when faced with the differing spheres of the male abbots and Burgundofara and the women of Faremoutiers. Because he held to the idea that speech reflects the purity of heart, but Burgundofara did not preach publicly nor was she involved in politics, he had to find another venue in which the women could speak. He chose to focus on the death-bed scenes of a number of Faremoutiers nuns. The last moments of the women were well-witnessed by the other nuns and sometimes male clerics, making for as public a setting as could be expected under the circumstances. The barrier between earth and heaven is breached, and the holiness of the dying women is on full display. Often involved in these scenes is verbal confession, underlining its importance in Columbanian monasticism, but also the purity of dying women, who have any residual sins cleansed through the act.

The authors of the *vitae* associated with the Columbanian convent of Chelles also demonstrate the continuation of late-antique ideas about speech but suited to their own contexts and purposes. Faced with the same problem as Jonas for the portrayal of female sanctity in a private world, the authors of the *Vita Balthildis* and the *Vita Bertillae* land upon a different solution. They choose to define holiness as adherence to the rule of Columbanus, keeping speech as a key indicator of that holiness. The author of the *Vita Balthildis* is faced with the difficult task of sanctifying the speech of Queen

Balthild, who lived a less-than-quiet life within the convent. Columbanian confession is crucial to their sanctification, making speech not only the barometer, but also the instrument of their increasing purity. In this way, the authors adapt late-antique ideas to female monasticism and, along with Columbanus and Jonas, reveal the continuing influence of these ideas in the seventh-century Merovingian context.

Late-antique ideas continue to have influence in the early eighth century, as we can see from the *Liber scintillarum*. The developments which the Caesarian and Columbanian authors employed are not present, making the *Liber scintillarum* surprisingly consistent with late-Roman ideas despite the separation of nearly 300 years. This florilegium, though previously attributed to Defensor of Ligugé, should be viewed as a product of the monasteries under the influence of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the north of Francia. Most likely created with the intent of helping monastics minster to the lay population in the areas which had recently come under the dominion of the Merovingian kings, many of the extracts deal with issues and situations specific to the laity. What lies underneath it all, however, is the late-antique desert's fundamental belief that, with effort, people can increase in purity. The *Liber scintillarum* demonstrates the wide applicability of late-antique monastic ideas, a feature at which Cassian hinted but which was never fully realised until this point. Women, too, read and found useful the *Liber scintillarum*, as they, too, were involved in missionary work. The author prescribes speech-control as a technique for creating holiness, and also for marking it. Silence, on the other hand, he does not demand on the same scale as Cassian or the Caesarian or Columbanian authors; it just was not a practical recommendation for the laity. The author does not discuss an impartial metric for holiness such as nocturnal emission or sleep-speech; perhaps he did not think it necessary for a lay context. The

admonition to focus the mind on God, however, is throughout, and encouraging the missionary monastics to teach this method for attaining holiness to the laity through focusing the mind on scripture. The author also believed that teachers must be perfect, a belief which, as in the time of Cassian, bolstered the authority of the missionary monastics to teach amongst the laity. The *Liber scintillarum* ends with a chapter which encourages reading, thereby underscoring late-Roman methods for focusing the mind on God through scripture with an end of creating that perfection which a teacher required.

Thus, we can see that throughout the Merovingian period, from the beginning of the Frankish incursions at the time of Caesarius to the rise of the Carolingians, interior purity remained important. Late-antique ideas concerning speech and silence represent ways of achieving this which continued to be employed and taught, though with variation and evolution according to the changing circumstances of the authors in each context. Women, though not always addressed specifically, and even the laity, came to be full participants in seeking perfection through this method of focusing on scripture. In this way, by the early eighth century, we can observe the continuing endurance of late-antique thought.

Appendix 1

Liber scintillarum	*Synonyma*
4.40 *esto omnium novissimus et ultimus*	2.20 Φ = *esto omnium ultimus et nouissimus* Λ (omitted)
4.41 *Descende ut ascendas*	2.21 Φ = *Descende ut ascendas* Λ (omitted)
4.45 *'Pulvis es', in pulvere sta, sed et: 'Cinis', in cinere vive.*	2.24 Φ = *Puluis es, in puluerem sede; Cinis est, in cinerem uiue* Λ (omitted)
6.27 *Esto tantum pronus ad lamenta quantum fuisti pronus ad culpam. Qualis fuit tibi ad peccandum intentio, talis sid ad paenitendum devotio. Gravia peccata grandia lamenta desiderant.*	2.24 Φ *Tanto sis promptus ad lamenta, quanto fuisti pronus ad culpam; qualis tibi fuit ad peccandum intentio, talis sit ad paenitendum devotio….Grauia peccata grandia lamenta desiderant.* Λ (omitted)
9.71 *Secundum morbum impendenda est medicina; iuxta vulnus adhibenda remedia*	2.24 Φ = *Secundum morbum inpertienda est medicina; iuxta uulnus adhibenda remedia.* Λ (omitted)
16.45 *finis plus habet honorem.*	2.73

	Φ = *Finis plus habet honorem* Λ (omitted)
24.50 *Ignorantia enim, quid sit culpae dignum, non sentit. Insipiens assidue peccat.*	2.65 Φ = *Per inperitiam namque multi peccant.* Λ = *Ignorantia enim, quid sit culpa dignum, non sentit…Insipiens assudue peccat.*
32.99 *Antea esto auditor et postea doctor.*	2.67 Φ = a*ntea esto auditor, postea doctor* Λ (omitted)
32.101-102 *quae verbis doces exemplis ostende* *Et sic instrue alios, ut te custodias*	2.68 Φ = *quie uerbis doces, exemplis ostende* Λ = *quae ore doces, exemplis ostende* Φ = *Sic instrue alios ut te custodias* Λ (omitted)[1]
32.106 *Varii voluntate diversam doctrinam desiderant.*	2.69 Φ = *Variae uoluntates diuersam disciplinam desiderant.* Λ (omitted)
34.10 *Nulla tam gravis culpa quae non habeat veniam.*	1.54 Φ = *Nulla tam grandis est culpa quae non habeat ueniam* Λ (omitted)

[1] Again, the weak evidence of the first part of the passage is given here as noteworthy in light of the stronger evidence of the second part of the passage.

39.20 *Esto in verbo verax*	2.55 Φ = *esto uerax* Λ = *esto in uerbo uerax*
neminem mentiendo fallas.	Φ (omitted) Λ *Neminem mentiendo fallas*
Non aliud loquaris et aliud facias; non aliud dicas et aliud in animo teneas	Φ (omitted) Λ *Non aliud dicas et aliud facias, non aliud loquaris et aliud animo teneas.*
49.95 *Qui cum tristitia manum porrexit fructum remunerationis amittit.*	2.97 Φ = *qui cum tristitia manum porrigit fructum remunerationis amittit.* Λ = *qui cum tristitia lagitur remunerationis not recipit fructum.*
52.14 *Secreta conscientia tristitiam*	2.61 Φ = *Secura mens tristiam* Λ = *Secura conscientia tristitiam*
Reus animus numquam securus est	Φ = *nunquam securus est reus animus* Λ = *reus animus nunquam securus est*[2]

[2] The substitution of one word or the mixing up of word order is not strong evidence on its own, but when combined in the same verse, as it is here, it is worth noting.

58.58 *Potestas cito ruinam patitur.*	2.89 Φ = *Cito ruinam patitur.* Λ = *Cito periclitatur potestas.*
63.17 *Periculosum est vitam cum malis ducere, pernitiosum est cum his qui pravae voluntatis sunt sociare.* *Sicut multa bona habet communis vita sanctorum, sic plura mala affert malorum*	2.44 Φ = *Periculosum est uitam cum malis ducere, perniciosum est cum his qui prauae uoluntatis sunt sociari* Λ = *Famam tibi nutris, si indignis te sociaueris* Φ = *Sicut multa bona habet communis vita sanctorum, sic plurima mala societas affert malorum.* Λ (omitted)
65.24 *cum diu cogitaveris, tunc fac quod probaveris*	2.63 Φ (omitted) Λ = *Cum diu cogitaueris, tunc fac quod probaueris.*
70.18 *omitte curam quae ad causam tuam non pertinet*	2.52 Φ = *omitte curam quae ad causam tuam non pertinet* Λ = *omitte curas alienae uitae*
79.11 *Retice verbum quod non aedificat aures.*	2.46 Φ = *Retice uerbum quod non aedificat audientes* Λ (omitted)

80.12 *Toto animo et odi et damna quod diligit mundus.*	2.95 Φ = *Toto animo et odi et damna quod diligit mundus.* Λ (omitted)

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