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# The *Visio Baronti* in its Early Medieval Context

Michelle Lucey-Roper

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Oxford
Trinity Term 2000

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# The *Visio Baronti* in its Early Medieval Context

Michelle M. Lucey-Roper, Corpus Christi College, Trinity Term 2000

## Abstract

The focus of this thesis is the *Visio Baronti* (*VB*), an account of a seventh-century monk's journey to the other world. This text serves as a metaphoric fulcrum to support a more extensive study of early medieval conceptions of the other world and the historical context in which visionary accounts were produced. Chapter 1 contains an introduction to ideas of the other world, a survey of types of visionary experiences, their uses, limitations and historiographical responses to them. Chapter 2 focuses on medieval and modern responses to visions. This chapter includes a survey of the terminology for dreams and visions found in theoretical writings, compares dream theory with otherworld visions and identifies medieval methods of determining the validity of a visionary experience. Chapter 3 investigates the manuscript tradition of the *VB*, in order to illuminate medieval receptions and treatments of this text. Because the text appears unusual for the seventh century, chapter 4 provides an analysis of the grounds for dating the *VB* to the seventh century, while chapter 5 treats the *VB* in its seventh-century monastic context and assesses what influences shaped this text. Chapter 6 compares Barontus's vision with ninth-century visions and other Carolingian writings to consider Carolingian interest in the *VB* in light of their contributions to the genre. Chapter 7 examines the artistic response to this text through an examination of the illustrations which accompany the text in the ninth-century St Petersburg manuscript. A brief conclusion to this study follows.

# Acknowledgements

Robert Browning wrote that, '...a man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for.' The catalogue of thanks to all who have extended my grasp in order that I might study heaven is long and inevitably incomplete.

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Were I ever to be granted my own tour of the other world, I fully expect to see the 'developers' of Microsoft Word, the bell-ringers of Stapleford and the directors of Persimmon Homes and Ashridge Construction Company keeping company with those damned in a lower hell filled with unending noise run on an auto-correct program. The community of the blessed, I know, will include the rest of those mentioned above.

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*'The historian's task is to complicate not to clarify.'*

Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*

CHAPTER

# ONE

## Introduction: Vision Literature, its Historiographical Tradition and the Aims of this Thesis

> 'Ego Ioannes ...fui in spiritu in dominica die, et audivi post me vocem magnam tanquam tubae, dicentis: Quod vides, scribe in libro: et mitte septem Ecclesiis...[1]'

The idea of an afterlife, and the concealed world in which it was lived, has long captured human imagination, while the inevitability of death has ensured its universal appeal. A full knowledge of this spiritual realm was not however open to all since this other world was thought to be accessible only through death, through dreaming or through a journey which tested the limits of human endurance. Furthermore, although the boundary between this world and the next was frequently penetrated, no mere 'wish to visit' was sufficient to

[1]Rev. 1. 9-11.

ensure passage. Accordingly, revelations of the world beyond have been carefully preserved by Indo-European cultures for over four millennia.[2]

## 1.1 Heaven, Hell and Places of Purgation

The Judeo-Christian tradition preserved the idea of an other world in many different forms. Earliest Jewish texts (sharing ideas from classical cultures) conceptualised the world in three parts: an upper realm for the deity, the earth on which they lived and a subterranean region known as Sheol which was perceived as an undefined area in which the souls of the dead resided in sadness but not pain. This conception of the underworld gave way to allow for the reward of those who had been blessed whilst on earth or had lived heroically.[3] The celestial realm developed under the influence of the Greco-Roman traditions of Elysian Fields but had three principal forms in biblical literature: as a kingdom, a garden paradise and a city, and was characterised by light and order. The region found its most detailed but abstract descriptions in Christ's parables,[4] while John's revelation added more concrete imagery in his description of the heavenly Jerusalem which was composed of walls and gates, bejewelled and sparkling like glass.[5]

However not all souls merited reward and thus the other world came to accommodate a place of punishment for those who did not merit a place among the good.[6] This infernal

[2] *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (trs. M.G. Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* [Stanford, CA, 1989]) is a surviving record of a journey to a world beyond and dates from *ca.* 2000 BC. There is also a rich tradition of journeys to the otherworld preserved in Greek and Latin literature. See for example, Homer, *The Odyssey*, books 11 and 24 (trs. R. Lattimore, [New York, 1967]); Plutarch's vision of Thespesius, *Moralia* VII, 56e (trs. P. H. de Lacy and B. Einarson, *Plutarch's Moralia, with an English Translation*, Loeb Classical Library, [London, 1959], pp. 269-99); Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Bk. IV (trs. F. J. Miller, *Metamorphoses, with an English Translation*, 2 vols. [London, 1966], vol. I, 208-11); Plato, 'Vision of Er', *The Republic* 614-20 (trs. D. Lee, *The Republic* [Harmondsworth, 1955]) and Virgil's *Aenid* VI (trs. A. Mandelbaum, [Berkeley, 1971]).

[3] For a more detailed outline of the history of these regions, see: C. McDannell, and B. Lang, *Heaven: A History* (London, 1988) and J. B. Russell, *A History of Heaven. The Singing Silence* (Princeton, NJ, 1997).

[4] For example, Mt. 13.1-52.

[5] Rev. 21.10ff.

[6] The most recent and thorough survey is: A. E. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (London, 1993).

region became known as Gehenna, Tarturus or hell and was most often characterised by torment which came in the form of pain, darkness, fire, smoke, filth, putrefaction and extreme heat or cold or a combination of both.[7] The Old Testament recorded a variety of images associated with this region ranging from a pit,[8] to the jaws of a monster,[9] a cauldron[10] and a place of fire and pain.[11] The New Testament added the imagery of a furnace or oven and a prison.[12]

Thus Judeo-Christian ideas attested to the existence of at least two or sometimes more distinct realms,[13] but Christian speculation on life after death was not long satisfied by the reticent descriptions provided by the Old and New Testaments. Otherworldly revelations such as the second-century *Apocalypse of Peter* and the third-century *Apocalypse of Paul* (*AP*) rapidly began to supply detailed pictures to supplement the nebulous Scriptural outlines, particularly on the fate of those who died before the Last Judgement.[14] Biblical contradictions and profound uncertainty about the afterlife allowed for the development of two competing models of salvation. The first did not require the idea of an active afterlife for the soul before the Last Judgement but did not preclude it. It grew out of the concept of a judgement in which an individual would be held accountable solely on grounds of the

[7]H.P. Bonner, *The Christian Hell from the First to the Twelfth Centuries* (London, 1913), p. 33 noted that the idea of a cold hell came from Norse mythology while a hot hell originated in the Mediterranean. H. Fichtenau (*Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, trs. P. Geary, [Chicago, 1991], p. 314) repeated this idea but neither author notes the chronology of this belief nor addresses the influence of Scripture on conceptions of Hell. Further complicating Bonner's appealing asserting, it should be noted that a cold hell is not necessarily from Norse mythology since it is well-attested in Irish sources.

[8]Ez. 26.31 and Is. 14.15.

[9]Job 41.14-19.

[10]Job 41.19-21.

[11]Deut. 32.22 and Ps. 116.8.

[12]Mt. 13.50 and Rev. 20. 1-3, 7.

[13]Notably, the spatially indeterminate bosom of Abraham in which the souls of the blessed reside before entering heaven (Lk. 16.22). See 4.2 below for a further discussion.

[14]For an edition of the second-century *Apocalypse of Peter*: M.R. James, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924, rpt. 1955), pp. 504-21; for the *ca.* third-century *AP*: T. Silverstein, ed., *Visio Sancti Pauli: The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts*, Studies and Documents 4 (London, 1935) and T. Silverstein and A. Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions* Cahiers D' Orientalisme XXI (Geneva, 1997). Also see Z. Hayes, *Visions of a Future: A Study of Christian Eschatology* (Wilmington, DE, 1989), p. 163.

deeds, confession and penitential discipline undertaken during his or her lifetime. In this model the individual was responsible for and independently capable of ensuring his or her soul's salvation and it is this model which is the basis for some early medieval visions such as Gregory the Great's *Vision of Peter* and Bede's *Dryhthelm.*[15] This message indirectly challenged the Church's authority to provide for the soul after death, but the eidetic imagery of rewards and suffering and the tantalising idea of otherworldly retribution found in these visions was useful to homilists and not easily abandoned. It was the task of redactors to marshal such ideas into serving the Church's aims.

The second model of salvation was part of a later tradition and became attached to the idea that a soul would initially face a minor or personal judgement at the moment of his or her death and then another judgement before the end of time when all of humanity would be judged. This notion, also recorded in the works of Gregory the Great, allowed for the development of the idea of purgatorial suffering from which release was possible and thus a place or places in which souls would be kept during their purgation.[16] Purgatorial suffering in turn led to the idea that the living could seek mercy for the soul once it had passed to the other world. Visions which described souls being released through the celebration of a Mass showed that intercession by the living could bring about the salvation of the sinful dead.[17] However, this model also had its drawbacks. Fear of damnation had great

[15]Stephen: *Dialogues*, IV. 37,5 (ed. de Vogüé, pp. 128-130) Dryhthelm: *HE*, V.12 (ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, pp. 488-498).

[16] J. Le Goff (*The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. A. Goldhammer, [London, 1984, rpt. Aldershot, 1990]) notes that the word 'purgatorium' did not exist before the twelfth century and therefore advances the theory that we cannot speak of 'purgatory' until this time. Early medieval visions, which he largely dismissed, certainly attest to regions in which souls suffer for a period of time but can hope to merit release either through the passage of time or the intercession of the living. It is true that we may not find the word 'purgatorium' in these texts, but the early medieval other world (especially Dryhthelm's) certainly had areas reserved for this function. For revisions of Le Goff, see R.W. Southern, 'Between Heaven and Hell', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 18 July 1982, pp. 651-2; A.E. Bernstein, 'Book Review: Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du Purgatoire*', *Speculum* 59 (1984), pp. 179-182; G.R. Edwards, 'Purgatory: "Birth" or Evolution?', *JEH* 36:4 (1985), pp. 634-646 and B. McGuire, 'Purgatory, the Communion of Saints, and Medieval Change', *Viator* 20 (1989), pp. 61-84.

[17]Such as the fragmentary *Vision of a Monk* recorded in the correspondence of Lull: *Epistola* 115, ed. M. Tangl, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, *MGH Epistolae selectae* I (Berlin, 1916), pp. 247-250.

social utility and the concept of intercession taken to its greatest extreme could undermine this. While the Church wished to encourage intercession, it needed to package ideas about the afterlife suitably to avoid encouraging an anarchic society which took for granted the belief that all wrongs committed could be erased by the prayers of a later generation.[18] Vision literature bears witness to the coexistence of these two models of the afterlife and all accounts reported that more than just sleep would precede the Last Judgement. The diversity of beliefs such revelations encompass reveal both an uncertainty of what would follow death and a social need to abrogate this uncertainty.

## 1.2 Revelations

Revelations of the world beyond assumed many forms even within the Christian tradition. Modern attempts to classify visions have allotted terms to differentiate these experiences and introduce limits to the study of an otherwise vast body of literature. These include: apocalyptic visions; otherworld visions; voyages; apparitions; mystical or ecstatic trances and allegorical dream visions.[19] Although the medieval sources do not always maintain a strict adherence to modern terms and definitions, these distinctions are nonetheless useful to introduce the types of visionary experiences which are recorded. Apocalyptic visions, the primary example of which is John's revelation in the New Testament, are set in the other world and take place at the end of time but do not discuss the separation of the visionary's soul from his body.[20] They were often produced in times of political turmoil and focus on historical events which will mark the end of the world.[21] Concerned with

[18]For Gregory the Great's compromise see *Dialogues* IV. 46. 6-9 (pp. 164-6) also IV. 52 (p. 176).

[19]P. Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliterature im Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 23 (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 29ff; his *Revelationes* (Turnhout, 1991) p. 16ff., and his 'Vision Literature', in F.A.C. Mantello and A.G. Rigg (eds.), *Medieval Latin: an Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington, D.C., 1996), pp. 688-693.

[20]For example, the account of Paul's tour of the other world (the *A*P) does not mention that the visionary was ill. In keeping with the ambiguity he expressed in 2 Cor. 2.2-4, Paul is unaware if he is in or out of his body when he sees the vision.

[21]B. McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979), p. 15.

linking the future and the present[22] these visions were thought to contain signs which, if properly interpreted, could be used to predict when the world would end. They were most popular during the period dating from 200 BC to 200 AD. Otherworld visions, such as the seventh-century *Visio Baronti* (*VB*),[23] are closely related to apocalyptic visions, but they are more concerned to describe a soul's unsolicited journey from its body, its fate and that of other souls after death and the topography of the regions beyond. The structure of these accounts will be discussed in detail below. This particular form of vision literature was composed from roughly the sixth to the early thirteenth century. Although there are earlier examples of vision literature, Gregory the Great has traditionally been viewed as standing at the beginnings of the tradition, since his record of visions gave the genre papal authority. The *Vision of Thurkill* (1206) marks the virtual end of the tradition since it was the last to be recorded until Dante's highly literary *Divine Comedy* in 1321. Both apocalyptic and otherworld visions featured in early Christianity and were produced throughout the Middle Ages. Voyages or *immrama* rewarded the seer with a view of the other world but the accounts take the form of perilous sea journeys, do not involve the separation of the soul and body and were always voluntarily undertaken to reach paradise. Textual evidence for *immrama* dates back to the eighth century,[24] and are particularly associated with the Irish. Perhaps the best-known of these accounts is the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*.[25] Another type of visionary experience was the manifestation of apparitions. These were sightings of agents from the other world which appear in this one, often bearing a message for the visionary. Apparitions, such as the soul who appears to Balthere,[26] were frequent occurrences throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. Mystical visions, such as

[22] Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 196.

[23] *Visio Baronti monachi Longoretensis*, W. Levison (ed.), in B. Krusch (ed.) *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 368-94.

[24] D.N. Dumville, 'Two Approaches to the Dating of the *Navagatio Sancti Brendani*', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd Ser., 29(1988), 87-102. The vernacular *Immram Brain* is also from the early eighth century.

[25] C. Selmer, ed., *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (Notre Dame, IN, 1959). See also C.M. Löffler, *The Voyage to the Otherworld Island in Early Irish Literature*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature. Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, 103 (Salzburg, 1983).

[26] Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, lines 1320-1400, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH PLAC* 1 (Berlin, 1881), pp. 198-200.

those seen by Elisabeth of Schönau, became increasingly popular from the twelfth century although there were earlier precedents for this type of revelation.[27] In these revelations, the visionary seeks wisdom and union with the divine. While these visions sometimes include descriptions of the other world, the mystic does not travel within the landscape. Instead the experience is characterised by rapture and spiritual passivity. It is internalised, repeatable and usually occurs during prayer. Such visions contain no pronouncement of judgement on the mystic's soul,[28] and unlike other types of visions, mystical visions are not primarily didactic but psychic experiences.[29] Finally there are dream visions which are a different category altogether and became popular as a genre particularly during the thirteenth and later centuries. These accounts, such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, were strictly literary devices (having no basis in an altered state of consciousness as was the case in otherworld visions, apparitions and mystical experiences) in which the dreamer used allegory to veil an often very political message.[30]

Other world visions provided popular images of heaven and hell in the early Middle Ages and are therefore the most significant of these genres in the Frankish world.[31] These texts were often highly metaphorical, contrasting darkness and light, height and depth to paint a vivid image. For the early Middle Ages, visionaries were drawn from all orders of society while their redactors were exclusively clerical. These visions were didactic and hortatory in intent and became somewhat formulaic.[32] The *VB* is a representative example: Barontus fell ill and was presumed dead, and like many of these visionaries, he experienced

[27]F.W.E. Roth, ed., *Die Visionen der hl. Elisabeth und die Aebte Ekbert und Emeche von Schönau* (Brünn, 1886). E. Underhill, *Mysticism* (New York, 1965), pp. 12-24; and B. McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism. From Gregory the Great to the Twelfth Century* (London, 1994), esp. pp. 325ff.

[28]R. Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (London, 1984), pp. 150-179.

[29]Dinzelbacher, concisely makes this point in his *Revelationes*, pp. 33ff which he treated at length in his *Vision.*

[30]K.L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy and Literary Form* (Stanford, 1988).

[31]See below, especially chapter 6.

[32]The structure of these accounts and their modern parallels are discussed by C. Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times* (Oxford, 1987), especially pp. 45-94.

the separation of his soul from his body.[33] His soul was then taken on a tour of the regions of the other world guided by a psychopomp, in this case the Archangel Raphael.[34] Because the focus of otherworld visions is on the fate of the individual soul,[35] otherworld accounts frequently culminate in a personal judgement being passed on the visionary which served as an admonition to reform sinful behaviour[36] or affirmation of sanctity[37] for the visionary before he or she is returned to earth. Barontus likewise underwent judgement and was given strict instructions on the penance he was to undertake once he returned to his body.[38] Upon returning to earth the visionary is then compelled to translate the ineffable visual, auditory and olfactory experience into words which would subsequently have been refined by a clerical amanuensis.[39]

Narratives of travel to the other world are widely found in medieval sources, having been recorded in such disparate genres as *vitae*,[40] sermons,[41] letter collections[42] and annals or histories[43] and even existed as autonomous texts (such as the *VB*) which had no other narrative framework. The resulting record of the vision was often a mixed text – for example, part biography, part community expectation and part imagination. The variety of contexts in which these texts are found leads to speculation on the function and audiences of these

[33] *VB*, 1-4 (pp. 377-81).
[34] *VB*, 8-18 (pp. 383-92).
[35] Again we see that otherworld visions differ in focus from apocalyptic visions in which cataclysmic events at the end of time are described, mystic visions in which the visionary beholds God, and dream visions which are often constructed allegories with a more overtly political tone. However, the boundaries between visions and dreams were not and are not mutually exclusive.
[36] Steven in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, 4. 37. 5 (pp. 128-130); and, among others, the *VB*, the visions Fursey (*VF*), Wetti and Charles the Fat.
[37] For example, Anskar is assured in his vision that he will wear the martyrs crown.
[38] *VB*, 12-13 (pp. 386-8).
[39] *VB*, 2-3, 19-22 (pp. 378-9, 392-4).
[40] *Vita S. Aldegundis*, ed. J. Ghesquière and C. Smet, *Acta Sanctorum Belgii Selecta*, 4 (Brussels, 1787), pp. 315-324 and the *Vita Fursei*, M.P. Ciccarese, *Visioni dell'Aldilà in Occidente. Fonti, Modelli, Testi* (Florence, 1987), pp. 190-224.
[41] Aelfric, 'On the Greater Litany, Tuesday XXII', ed. B. Thorpe, *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, The First Part*, vol. 2 (London, 1846), pp. 332-56; and Blickling Homily IV, ed. R. Morris, *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century* (London, 1880), pp. 38-53.
[42] Boniface and Lull ed. M. Tangl, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, *MGH Epistolae selectae* I (Berlin, 1916), pp. 247-250.
[43] For example Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the *Annals of St Bertin.*

texts, a topic which will be discussed throughout this thesis.

The acceptance and propagation of such texts is, in itself, revealing of a society's values, but the influence of daily life on dreams and visions meant that visions themselves became repositories of culturally and temporally specific concerns.[44] To take one example, a Scandinavian vision incorporated the belief that the soul was transported to hell on skis.[45] The other world was also shaped by societal changes: visions of the thirteenth century stress courtly life with class divisions being perpetuated in Heaven.[46] The architecture of Heaven in these visions is frequently described as a castle. Correspondingly, with increased urbanisation in this same century, there was a greater frequency in describing the realm of the blessed in an urban context which drew on the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem.[47]

## 1.3 Limitations of the Genre

The use of visionary literature as an historical source is rewarding, if highly problematic.[48] Foremost is the indefinite nature of the visionary experience, a problem recognised even in the Old Testament.[49] Visions elude most historical parameters as they occur outside of earthly geography, time[50] and human experience. The integrity of the experience is itself ultimately unverifiable.[51] Within the accounts, time does not run chronologically and successive experiences in the other world are often reported in vision texts as if they occurred simultaneously. Furthermore the written records of the journey were influenced

[44] Le Goff, *Purgatory*, pp. 2-4.

[45] Dating from the thirteenth century, this image was recorded in the ballad on the death of Henry, Bishop of Uppsala. *Piispa Henrikin Surmavirsi*, ed. and trs. U. Vento (Helsinki, 1967), p. 9, cited by Dinzelbacher, 'Way', p. 78.

[46] P. Dinzelbacher, 'Klassen und Hierarchien im Jenseits', *Miscellanea mediaevalia* 12 (1979), p. 33.

[47] McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, pp. 69ff.

[48] The problems are discussed at length by Holdsworth, ('Visions and Visionaries in the Middle Ages', *History* 48/163 [1963], p. 141ff) who nonetheless called for greater use to be made of this genre.

[49] On false dreams see Jr. 14.4.

[50] Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, p. 45. The difference in the passage of time for the visionary and for those left behind is even more of a feature in *immrama*.

[51] See chapter 2.

by the rules of the genre which encouraged intertextuality (or the deliberate recycling of stock images) and the casting of visions into a familiar form.[52]

The surviving texts of visions were rarely written by the visionaries themselves but by redactors thereby further separating the vision from the text which has come down to us.[53] Often very little is known about the visionary him or herself, for example, the Poor Woman of Laon (*VPW*).[54] The date of the texts are also often unknown and may in any case be remote from the reported vision, as in the case of the *Fís Adamnáin.*[55] This account was written in the tenth and eleventh centuries but the subject of the text was a seven-century saint.[56] Lack of early manuscript witnesses also introduces the possibility of later interpolations. Thus the cultural imprint and specific eschatology which could be fruitful for research are often corrupted by cross-cultural pollination and the recycling of material throughout the Middle Ages.

Cicero (and Macrobius after him) had already noted that what was experienced during our waking hours could be seen again in the world of dreams,[57] and modern scientific research has confirmed that dreams and hallucinations are products of the visionary's ex-

[52]Similar criticisms have been made of *vitae.* For a discussion of the limitations and usefulness of hagiography for history, see J.T. Schulenberg, 'Saints' Lives as a Source for the History of Women', in J.T. Rosenthal, ed., *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History* (London, 1990), p. 302; for the early Middle Ages in particular, see P. Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), pp. 3-38.

[53]The twelfth-century visionary, Alberic, had had a vision as a boy which a redactor had helped him to record. When he later became literate and found the text of his vision, he accused his redactor of lying and immediately set about redrafting the account because the first redactor had so transformed his vision. 'Visio Alberici', *Bibliotheca Casinensis* V, 1 (Montecassino, 1894), p. 191. The issue of the rôle of the redactor is considered by P.G. Schmidt, 'The Vision of Thurkill', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtald Institutes*, 41 (1978), pp. 50-64.

[54]We learn nothing else about her in the *VPW:* ed. H. Houben, 'Visio cuiusdam pauperculae mulieris. Überlieferung und Herkunft eines frühmittelalterlichen Visionstextes (mit Neuedition)', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 124, nf 85 (1976) pp. 41-42. On the shadowy identity of visionaries: A.B. van Os, *Religious Visions: the Development of the Eschatological Elements in Mediaeval English Religious Literature* (Amsterdam, 1932), p. 24.

[55] C.S. Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante. A Study of the Vision of Heaven and Hell Ascribed to the Eighth Century Saint Adamnan, with Translation of the Irish Text* (London, 1908).

[56] D. Dumville, 'Towards an Interpretation of Fís Adamnáin', *Studia Celtica* 12-13 (1977-1978), pp. 62-77.

[57]Macrobius, *Comentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, III, 5 (ed. J. Willis, [Leipzig, 1963]).

perience.[58] Thus those who journeyed to the other world brought with them some very earthly concerns and experiences which became part of the visionary record. Visions are however a problematic source, and we must bear in mind the genre's limitations when using them for historical enquiry. Nevertheless, intrusion of the material world within these narratives means that visions contain material important to historians,[59] and thus makes them invaluable as historical sources.

## 1.4 Historiography of Vision Literature

A variety of responses to this body of literature has been recorded. In contrast to medieval audiences who interpreted visions as significant, and medieval authors such as Bede and Gregory of Tours who recorded visions in their *Histories*, the post-Reformation climate eschewed the use of visions. The tradition of otherworld visions had long since ceased, but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they again attracted particular attention from professional historians whose repugnance for visions was reinforced by Protestant theology. Their response was to denounce the genre strenuously, interpreting these texts as part of the medieval Church's exploitation of its believers. The following quotation from Wright is representative. He wrote that otherworld visions were:

> '...originally invented by the popish clergy to strike terror into the laity and impress upon them certain doctrines which required more than the force of preaching: spending money on prayer and Masses for the dead, paying tithes regularly, and warning of the danger of robbing the church and monasteries.'[60]

[58] R.K. Siegel, 'Hallucinations', in J.M. Wolfe (ed.) *The Mind's Eye* (New York, 1976, rpt., 1986), pp. 109-116.

[59] Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 4.

[60] T. Wright, *St Patrick's Purgatory* (London, 1844), p. 104. This attitude can be traced back to philosophers of the enlightenment and before: M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, trs. P. Mairet (London, 1960), p. 23. See also E. Becker, *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of the Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell, with Special Reference to the Middle-English Versions* (Baltimore, 1899) for a reveiw of

Editors of medieval texts meanwhile took issue with these visions which they saw as irrational. The bowdlerised late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions of *vitae* and chronicles attest to the fact that some scholars thought visions weakened the historical veracity of the source in which they occurred. For example in their editions of two seventh-century saints' lives, the *Vita Fursei* (*VF*) and the *Vita Aldegundis* (*VA*),[61] the *MGH* editors removed or only briefly summarised the visionary content of these texts. This practice continued later as can be seen in editions of the twelfth-century *Chronicon Malleacensis* in which visions were silently expunged.[62] Exclusion from and denigration of the genre in historical studies continued until recently. Visions of the other world were entirely ignored by Ariès for example in his study of the history of cultural expectations of life after death.[63] Clark meanwhile used the visions contained in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great as evidence to argue against Gregory's otherwise learned authorship. He refused to believe that a theologian of Gregory the Great's calibre could possibly have approved of such visions.[64]

While some scholars were registering their distaste for these texts, others were simultaneously developing an interest in medieval visions because of their relationship to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The rediscovery of individual texts led to editions being produced such as Meyer's article on the early tenth-century *Vision of Laisren* in 1899[65] and Napier's on the late eleventh-century *Vision of Leofric* in 1909.[66] These studies enabled histories of the genre to be produced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of

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the historiography.

[61]For example the visionary content was expunged from the *Vita Aldegundis, abbatissae Malbodiensis* (ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 6, pp. 79-90); similarly Krusch included only brief summaries of Fursey's visions in his edition of the *Vita Fursei* (*MGH SRM* 4 [Hanover, 1902], pp. 423-440).

[62]P. Marchegay and É. Mabille, *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou* (Paris, 1869).

[63]P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes Towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* trs. P.M. Ranum (London, 1974, rpt. 1994) and his *The Hour of Our Death*, trs. H. Weaver (Harmondsworth,1981, rev. 1983).

[64]F. Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1987), esp. pp. 644-5.

[65]K. Meyer, ed., 'The Vision of Laisren', *Otia Merseiana* 1 (1899), pp. 113-9.

[66]A.S. Napier, ed., 'An Old English Version of Leofric, Earl of Mercia', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 1907-1910 (1909), pp. 180-187.

the twentieth which spanned the apocalypses of the early Christian period to Dante and consequently were characterised by a broad treatment of the texts. There was interest in the texts themselves but underlying it was a desire to see their relationship to the *Divine Comedy* and to assess if Dante was derivative or original, influenced by scholasticism or by popular religious beliefs. The intent of this scholarship is clear from its titles: D'Ancona's *I Precursori di Dante*,[67] and Dods's *Forerunners of Dante: An Account of Some of the More Important Visions of the Unseen World, from the Earliest Times*,[68] Boswell's study on the *Fís Adamnáin*, called *An Irish Precursor of Dante*[69] and Rüegg's *Die Jenseitsvorstellungen vor Dante und die übringen literarischen Voraussetzungen der 'Divina Commedia'*.[70] These visions were thus studied in terms of their contribution to the history of visions leading up to Dante.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, considerable scholarly effort has been dedicated to unearthing points of intersection among various visionary accounts and cataloguing the similarities. This has continued to be one of the most popular approaches to visionary literature, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. The works of Becker in 1899[71] and van Os in 1932[72] are representative of this approach. Indeed some strikingly close parallels can be found in widely disparate times and places, a fact which continues to interest scholars. These parallels have been explained more recently through psychological and anthropological approaches which see them as evidence of a world soul or collective consciousness.[73] Historians meanwhile continue to speculate about a common text which

[67](Florence, 1874).
[68](Edinburgh, 1903).
[69]Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante.*
[70]2 vols. (Einsiedeln-Cologne, 1945).
[71]Becker, *Contribution.*
[72]van Os, *Religious Visions.*
[73]For psychological explanations see C.G. Jung, *Dreams*, trs. R.F.C. Hull, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Princeton, 1974), S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trs. J. *Strachey, vols.* 4 and 5 of the *Standard Edition* (New York, 1965). For western medieval and modern comparisons see J. Kroll and B. Bachrach, 'Medieval Visions and Contemporary Hallucinations', *Psychological Medicine*, 12 (1982), pp. 709-721, and Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys.* For anthropological studies see J. S. Lincoln, *The Dream in Primitive Cultures* (London, 1935), S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, III (Bloomington, IL,

might explain the similarities. This has at times resulted in the production of highly speculative theories such as the circulation of Buddhist literature in Anglo-Saxon England.[74] More recent efforts, such as Patch's study in 1950 and Morgan's in 1990,[75] have continued to emphasise the interrelationship of the genre seen through the use of *topoi*,[76] but are more restrictive in geographical and chronological comparisons.

Seeking parallels between accounts and identifying precedents are useful exercises; however excessive use of this method has led to some misleading conclusions, in particular for the study of early medieval visions. The *Divine Comedy* stood at the end of the tradition of vision literature and studies have been made which analyse Dante's borrowing of earlier material, but more often it has been portrayed as the inevitable destination towards which all accounts strove to reach. Thus earlier accounts are not just compared with the *Divine Comedy*, but are measured in terms of their literary merit and assigned a value in terms of how close they came to this pinnacle.[77] Some of these studies have suggested that all visions were highly derivative and that there was no real change between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries other than an increase in length and detail,[78] and that all medieval visions advanced chronologically.[79] This theory was later refined to interpret the history of vision literature as chronologically developmental, but with two minor 'peaks' or points of discontinuity on the otherwise smooth graph. These were the Carolingian period which

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1956), 7-37; Eliade, *Myths*; J. Campbell, *Primitive Mythology* (New York, 1976); W. Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusion and Other Realities* (Chicago, 1984); and B. Tedlock, ed. *Dreaming Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* (Cambridge, 1987).

[74]For example, van Os, *Religious Visions*, pp. 8-13.

[75]A. Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World* (Cambridge, 1990).

[76]H. Patch, *The Other World According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA, 1950), especially p. 320.

[77]Van Os, *Religious Visions*, p. 11 is representative; but for continuing evidence of this thinking, see J.M. Ziolkowski (*Talking Animals. Medieval Latin Beast Poetry 750-1150* [Philadelphia, 1993], p. 80): 'Of all the visions produced in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, Walahfrid's 'Wetti's Vision' comes closest to Dante's *Commedia* in two ways...'. is representative.

[78]Becker, *Contribution*; Van Os, *Religious Visions*, and Patch, *Other World.*

[79]F. Brunhölzl, *Histoire de la Littérature Latine du Moyen Âge*, vol. I: *L'époque Mérovingienne*, trs. H. Rochais (Turnhout, 1990), pp. 140ff is not as teleological but still is interested in charting greater coherence in later accounts.

has been identified as witnessing the re-awakening of late Antique practices with the politicisation of visions,[80] and the twelfth century when, it has been argued, otherworld visions changed dramatically to include: the portrayal of individuals and their personalities especially through the use of dialogues with the inhabitants of the other world; increased detail in the accounts which in turn led to greater consistency and a more mappable, integrated other world; and the shift from largely monastic visionaries to lay visionaries.[81]

From the nineteenth century until the present, the study of visions has thus largely been kept in the domain of literary historians, and the studies they produced are invaluable for having identified the corpus of visions which were recorded in medieval sources, for building up a general picture of the genre, for providing a general assessment of the date of these texts and for developing criteria by which one may begin to judge what is authentic or suspect and means for assessing undated texts. However one needs to exercise a degree of caution in using their approach which seeks development, assesses each text in terms of future transformations in the genre and avoids contextualising these accounts within their historical background. While many of the observations about the changes in visions of the ninth and twelfth centuries are generally valid, they should not blind us from recognising that some of these features occur in earlier visions and that not all visions evolved along a linear path. Untidiness or backsliding was part of the tradition of vision literature.

In the second half of the twentieth century, historians began to awaken to the genre's potential for their own discipline as a source for the history of the Middle Ages. Historians have taken an interest in visions (especially in the non-theological beliefs they record) because they offer a possible window through which they hope to glimpse lay belief. The two

[80]Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (London, 1994), p. 38.

[81]See for example the *Vision of Tundal* (*ca.* 1149), ed. A. Wagner, *Visio Tnugdali, lateinisch und altdeutsch* (Erlangen, 1882). For this theory of dramatic twelfth-century change, see Morgan, *Dante*, p. 3; Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*. Dinzelbacher, *Vision*, notes the twelfth century for the development of mystical visions.

main proponents of this approach are Le Goff and Gurevich[82] who agree that visions were neither exclusively lay nor clerical but that both cultures played a part in the creation of these accounts.[83] Le Goff has furthermore sought to link the changes he sees in conceptions of the other world (preserved in a variety of sources including visions) with those occurring in a wider historical context, in particular the 'birth' of a third place called purgatory at a time when medieval society had become tripartite. Dinzelbacher's scholarship has contributed greatly to heightening awareness of the historical material included in visions and their usefulness for social, cultural, religious, political and art history as well as sources for the study of mentalities and women's history. His 1981 study entitled *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*, is a wide-ranging survey of vision literature in which he posits the existence of two types of visions: the first was otherworld visions which dominated the period from the sixth to twelfth centuries, and the second was mystical visions which flourished from the twelfth century into the later Middle Ages. His approach is chronological and thematic but does not seek a neat pattern of advancement.

Overall, the historiographical tradition has underrated the variety of imaginative proposals for the arrangement and treatment of sinners and saints which are preserved in otherworld visions. For example, although the spatial relationship between heaven and hell as an up and down dichotomy was set out in Amos 9.2, even this aspect of belief was subject to modification in medieval visionary accounts. Where this variation has been mentioned at all, it has been forced into a strict chronology which the sources themselves do not obey.[84] Furthermore, only rarely in modern scholarship do we find any consideration of material evidence such as the manuscript traditions of these texts or the artistic images of the other world which may have influenced visionaries. Finally, few studies discuss the audience of

[82]Le Goff, *Purgatory*, and his 'The Learned and Popular Dimensions of Journeys in the Otherworld in the Middle Ages', in *Understanding Popular Culture*, ed. S. Kaplan (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 19-37; A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, tr. J. Bak and P. Hollingsworth (Cambridge, 1988).

[83]They disagree as to the proportional amount each contributed.

[84]Noted by Carozzi, 'Geographie', although he emphasised the greater richness and clarity found in Carolingian visions as opposed to their earlier accounts.

visions. Instead historians have engaged in assessing the degree to which each account was reflective of an historical reality, while literary historians have approached these texts under the assumption that they had been carefully constructed by each author and therefore can be assessed on grounds of literary merit.

## 1.5 The Historiography of Early Medieval Visions

Otherworld visions dating from the sixth to the ninth centuries (which are briefly summarised in Appendix A) have particularly suffered in general studies because scholars have seen no real development occurring during this period. The recent histories of heaven produced by Russell, McDannell and Lang, and Le Goff's work on purgatory, demonstrate that the visions produced in the period from the end of the patristic age to the beginning of the twelfth century have been largely ignored. Le Goff went so far as to label the period as one of 'doctrinal stagnation and the riot of the imagination.'[85] Ciccarese and Carozzi have given sensitive treatment to sixth- and seventh-century visions, but both are interested in the literary quality of the texts and both again sought to find progress and have assessed these texts in light of later developments in the genre. Consideration of these texts has largely been confined to the production of critical editions or else they have been plundered for small details which were often inadvertently included in the text. What little historiographical interest has fallen on these early texts has been directed towards Carolingian visions. For example, Dutton, in his *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire*, excerpts Carolingian visions from the tradition at large, using them to illustrate a particular use made of these texts in the late eighth and ninth centuries, but he does not consider earlier precedents.[86] Comprehensive surveys of visions which do address the early Middle Ages

[85] Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 96.

[86] Dutton, *Politics*, p. 253: 'Within a century the Carolingians had recovered a part and reinvented other features of a tradition of political oneirocriticism that had lain largely dormant since late-antiquity'. The

also identify the ninth century as a watershed.[87] It was this century which seemingly first witnessed the development of these texts as a genre,[88] the writing of literary accounts,[89] the composition of autonomous vision accounts, the creation of visionary collections[90] and the politicisation of the other world.[91] In many cases, earlier precedents from the sixth and seventh centuries are only begrudgingly acknowledged in footnotes.[92]

Berschin is one of the few to argue that the crucial phase in the history of visions is the seventh century.[93] Although his study is devoted to the genre of biography, he briefly noted the wide diversity preserved by seventh-century texts. Brown has also contributed to the identification the seventh century's importance for the history of eschatology and included vision literature among his body of sources.[94]

Historians have begun to recognise the value of early medieval otherworld visions, but have not looked at pre-ninth-century visions specifically, nor have they addressed them in the context of the thought world in which they were seen, redacted and later recopied. Instead these texts have tended to be treated as part of the development of the history of the genre as a whole. Where they have warranted specific attention, they have been seen as part of an amorphous pre-twelfth century group of visions. No one has yet evaluated this

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use of the word 'largely' signals it was not new and not without exception.

[87]See for example: Rüegg, *Jenseitsvorstellungen*; Patch, *Other World*; Dinzelbacher, *Vision*; Morgan, *Dante* and Carozzi, *Voyage.*

[88]Y. Hen, 'The Structure and Aims of the *Visio Baronti*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 47:2 (1996), pp. 477-97.

[89]Traill, *VW*, pp. 13, 16-17 on the *VW* as the first literary vision.

[90]Hen, 'Structure', p. 485. Also Traill, *VW*, p. 13.

[91]Especially van Os, *Religious Visions*; Patch, *Other World*; Morgan, *Dante*, p. 3 and Carozzi, *Voyage.* For a study of the gradual politicisation of the other world, see W. Levison, 'Die Politik in den Jenseitsvisionen des frühen Mittelalters', in his *Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit* (Düsseldorf, 1948), pp. 229-246 (originally published in *Festgabe Friedrich von Bezold* [Bonn, 1921] pp. 81-100).

[92]See for example, Hen ('Structure', p. 485).

[93]W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter.* vol.II *Merowingische Biographie, Italien, Spanien und die Inseln im frühen Mittelalter, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters*, 9 (Stuttgart, 1988), 109.

[94]P. Brown, 'The Decline of the Empire of God: Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages', in C. W. Bynum and P. Freedman, ed. *Last Things. Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2000), pp. 41-59, esp. 51ff.

assumption thoroughly.

## 1.6 Choice of the *Visio Baronti*

The aim of this thesis is to contextualise the *VB* within its specific historical setting and within a wider context of the genre of early medieval vision literature, but is not intended as a sweeping history of the genre. The *VB* was chosen because it exists in an illustrated as well as textual form, making it both an exceptionally rich but also a seemingly atypical source. It is also the earliest autonomous otherworld vision text written in the medieval West by over 150 years and survives in an unusually large number of manuscripts.[95] I will consider possible literary, political and religious influences on the text and why its unique formulation appealed to subsequent generations. Visual images are intrinsic to visionary accounts and thus artistic depictions will be used to fortify discussions. My reasons for this approach have emerged in reaction to the treatment most early medieval visions have received. Through a case study of one vision and its relationship to other early medieval visions, in its initial moment of composition and the subsequent life of the text, many of the weaknesses found in earlier scholarship can be obviated and some of the assumptions which have been made can be tested.

In the general historiography of the early Middle Ages, the *VB* has rarely figured prominently. Scholars have been unanimous in simultaneously describing and dismissing the vision with the word 'strange'.[96] In many respects it does seems to merit this epithet. The *VB* has been recognised by Whiggish historians as a precursor to many of the 'developments' the Carolingians would incorporate into vision literature which include the composition of

[95] Chapter 3 and Appendix B discuss these manuscripts.

[96] P. Riché (*Education and Culture in the Barbarian West. Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trs. J. Contreni, [Columbia, SC, 1976], originally published as *Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare, vie-viiie siècles*, [Paris, 1962], p. 364) refers to 'the strange Vision of Barontius' [sic]; R. McKitterick (*The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751-987*, [London, 1983], p. 143) describes it as 'a strange vision of hell.' I.N. Wood (*The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* [London, 1994], p. 77) calls it '... a curious visionary text...'.

longer, more literary texts and the incorporation of pointed political criticism.[97] The text also preserves a plethora of very specific details ranging from short biographies of fourteen monks from the visionary's monastery to monastic practices at Longoretus and its sister foundation and even the precise date on which the vision occurred.[98] Comparison with other visions reveals that this is unparalleled in other visions from this period. With an anonymous author, lacking a well-known figure in hell, composed in 'barbaric Latin' and not conforming to the expected pattern of the genre, the *VB* has largely escaped even the attention of vision scholars, often appearing as an exception to the various paradigms of visionary literature set out by scholars. The *VB* has recently started to receive attention in visionary circles, following a lengthy hiatus which began after Levison published a critical edition of the text in 1910. Since 1981, the *VB* has been the subject of articles by Ciccarese[99] and Hen,[100] a book chapter by Carozzi[101] and a short study by Brown.[102] I have taken a somewhat different view from Brown of the significance of the individual versus the community in the text but I have tried to ask some of the same questions.

The chronological parameters of this thesis were dictated primarily by the genre itself but also by its historiography. I will refer to the late sixth-century visions of Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great since they form the beginning of the tradition of early medieval vision literature, but my study of the *VB* is primarily confined to the seventh to ninth centuries. As the purported date of the *VB* is 678/9, the seventh century is

[97] Ciccarese, 'Visio Baronti'.

[98] Chapter 4 discusses the dating of this vision.

[99] 'La *Visio Baronti* nella tradizione letteraria delle visioni dell'aldilà', *Romanobarbarica* 6 (1981/2), pp. 25-52. In this article, Ciccarese examined the text from a literary angle, stressing its borrowings from earlier visions and recognising it as the first free-standing vision of the otherworld, she sought to place the *VB* in what she sees as an evolving genre.

[100] Hen, 'Structure'. This article on the *VB* explores the text as a piece of didactic literature, almost entirely divorcing it from its visionary context.

[101] Carozzi, *Voyage*, esp. pp. 139-186. His study considered the *VB* from many angles but especially for its political dimension. He too seeks to chart the steady progress of visions as a genre throughout the Middle Ages but is not dismissive of early medieval contributions.

[102] P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 161ff.

an obvious starting point, while the ninth century forms a natural end for this study for several reasons. First among them is that the tenth and eleventh centuries saw a pause or marked diminution in the composition of visions.[103] When the genre was resurrected in the twelfth century, it emerged as something different from the early medieval accounts. The second reason for making this division comes from the manuscript record, which also shows a change in patterns of copying and in the *VB*'s associated contents occurring around the tenth century. The third and final reason was dictated by the historiographical tradition: the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries has already been the focus of intensive study, but the early medieval period, and in particular before the ninth century, has not been subject to the same degree of scrutiny.

Even within this specific chronological framework, further limitations must be placed on the material under consideration. I will largely omit references to apparitions, apocalyptic visions, early Christian visions of the other world as they are outside the chronology of this thesis. My focus will be concentrated on the Frankish heartlands, thus I will also exclude otherworld visions which are not in Latin: for example the Irish *Fís Adamnaín*[104] and the *Vision of Ioasaph*,[105] a text dating from the middle of the eighth century, but originally composed in Greek. Both works lie beyond the cultural focus of this thesis. Valerius of Bierzo's three visions only receive cursory attention since they do not seem to have exerted much influence east of the Pyrenees in the early medieval period. Furthermore, theological writings which pertain to heaven and hell will only figure briefly since in content, concerns and style they were often very distant from visionary accounts.

To distinguish between different groups of early medieval visions, I shall use the terminology of *earlier visions* to denote those which occurred before the late eighth century and

[103] See table 3.1 on page 65.
[104] For the text and literature, see n. 55 and n. 56 above.
[105] The text can be found in G. R. Woodward, and H. Mattingley, *John Damascene, Barlaam and Ioasaph* (London, 1914), pp. 469-73.

*later visions* or *Carolingian visions* to refer to those which occurred during the late eighth and ninth centuries.

CHAPTER

# TWO

## Somnia and Visiones

'Senes vestri somnia somniabunt,
Et iuvenes vestri visiones videbunt.'[1]

## 2.1 Introduction

Dreams and visions were recognised as an intermediate state in which transcendence or even individual contact with the supernatural was possible. Dream divination – that is reading meaning into the appearances of specific objects in dreams – was wide-spread in both the ancient world and Late Antiquity.[2] Medieval sources record many, often opposing reactions

[1] Joel 2.28 and Acts 2.17.

[2] This practice no doubt continued into the early Middle Ages for Charlemagne issued legislation against dream divination in the *AG* 65, ed. Boretius, *MGH Cap.* 1, pp. 58-9. On Late Antique dream divination, see P. Miller, *Dreams and Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 8ff.

to dreams and visions: they were both valued and encouraged but also mistrusted and suppressed. The first response ensured many such visions were preserved and circulated, while the second sparked numerous attempts to identify theoretical grounds for assessing the veracity of a reported revelation and provoked a general level of scepticism.

Within the early Christian tradition, revelatory experiences were largely welcomed[3] and deemed to be a means of direct and continuing access to God.[4] As noted in chapter 1, revelations could take many forms. Whether in a dream, vision or apparition, they were thought to be able to offer solace,[5] issue warnings[6] and criticism,[7] prove sanctity,[8] give spiritual instruction,[9] reveal future events and expose concealed information. For the visionary, dreams and visions could provide needed motivation[10] or the authority to deliver a message.[11] Significant dreams were thought to be accessible through sleep, illness[12] or ecstasy and could be induced by prayer and fasting.[13] The agents of revelation included demons, angels, saints or the Godhead. While Tertullian wrote that most people get their knowledge of God from dreams,[14] and in fact there are numerous recorded instances in which unbelievers were converted to Christianity through a revelation,[15] there was also something

[3]E. Bentz, *Die Vision. Erfahrungsformen und Bilderwelt* (Stuttgart, 1969), p. 474.

[4]J. Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trs. A. Goldhammer (London, 1988), pp. 193ff.

[5]*Dialogues*, IV. 17. 1 (p. 68). The examples of this are numerous but see also Book 2 of the *Dialogues* and Perpetua: *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, ed. H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972), 106-30. See also Holdsworth, 'Visions', pp. 146-148 on the usefulness of visions for their seers.

[6]The *Vision of Stephen*: *Dialogues* IV. 37.5 (p. 128), and the *Vision of the English Presbyter* (pp. 18-19).

[7]*VB*, 11 (pp. 385-6) and 17 (pp. 391-2); *VW*; and the *VPW* (pp. 41-42).

[8]*De vita sanctae Radegundis libri duo*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 364-95; *VA*, pp. 315-324; and *Vita Sadalberga abbatissae Laudunensis*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 40-66.

[9]Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* Book IV repeatedly makes this point.

[10]For example, Dryhthelm enters the religious life following his vision. Dinzelbacher (*Vision*, p. 117) comments that the missionary activities of the early Church were directed by visions. The *Vita Anskarii* provides ample evidence of this observation.

[11]*VPW* and *Visio Bernoldi.*

[12]Save Macrobius who thought illness prevented serious revelation.

[13]R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York, 1987), pp. 382, 386, 389.

[14]Tertullian, *De Anima*, 47.2 (ed. J.H. Waszink, [Amsterdam, 1947], p. 65). He was of course writing at a time when dream divination was *de rigueur.*

[15]For example St Paul, Constantine and Augustine. The spurious Donation of Constantine makes effective

of an uneasy alliance between the Church and this seemingly unbridled, largely unmediated source of continuing revelation, which was technically open to everyone who dreamt. This would seem to have been particularly true for visions which conveyed reproaches, supposedly heavenly in origin, of the earthly Church,[16] but also developed in reaction to competing forms of religious belief such as Gnosticism which relied heavily on revelations of secret knowledge.[17]

Dreams and visions boasting claims of divine sanction could indeed have disruptive effects, as Theodulf of Orléans in the *LC* makes plain.[18] They had the potential to undermine the Church's authority to mediate between God and man, and also weakened ecclesiastical defenses against outside criticism. A further problem arose from false dream and vision accounts which could be erroneously interpreted, intentionally misleading or even inspired by demons.[19] Left unchecked, visions and dreams could potentially lead to heresy. Ecclesiastical authorities recognised the need to introduce some way of stemming the endless flow of oneiric revelations by separating the orthodox from the fanciful, and the fanciful from the dangerous.

Scripture warned of the possible dangers of prophetic dreams and inveighed against them repeatedly.[20] Churchmen took it upon themselves to monitor what Rüegg termed

use of the rôle visions can play in conversion.

[16]Dutton (*Politics*, pp. 39-40) discusses an episode recorded in the *Codex Carolinus*, 88 (ed. W. Gundlach, *MGH Ep.* 3 [Berlin, 1892], pp. 624-5) in which a monk named John approached Charlemagne and recounted two of his dream-visions which he interpreted to signify not only that he, John, was divinely sanctioned, but also that his dreams revealed that Christianity was dead. It was decided that because the second dream's imagery was unorthodox both dreams were merely apparitions or *phantasmates*.

[17]Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, pp. 205-207.

[18]*LC* 3.26 (pp. 158-61) in which Theodulf argues against the practice of using dreams to support belief in the worshipping of images, a position held by Theodore, bishop of Myra, in reference to his archdeacon's dream. Theodulf's authorship of at least most of this text has been established: A. Freeman, 'Further studies in the Libri Carolini', *Speculum* 40(1965), pp. 203-89 and her 'Further studies in the Libri Carolini III; the marginal notes in Vatican lat. 7027', *Speculum* 46(1971), pp. 597-612.

[19]*Dialogues*, IV. 50. 3 (p. 172) and *LC*, III. 26 (p. 158). Also P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 247, L. Bittel, 'In Visu Noctis', *Journal of Religious History* 31(1991), 39-59 and for Carolingian wariness, Dutton, *Politics*, esp. pp. 38-44.

[20]Sir. 34.7, Lev. 19.26, 2 Cor. 12.4 and Ecclus. 34.7: 'multos enim errare fecerunt somnia et exciderunt

these 'weeds in the garden of Christian thought'.[21] In theological writings, ecclesiastical authorities attempted to devise classification systems and standards of testing for the significance and veracity of dreams and visions. Redactors of visionary texts meanwhile offered alternative means of testing the dream or vision's source and meaning.

Early medieval onierologic writings approached the problem of establishing the authority of dreams and visions by focussing on the causes of visionary experiences and developed a vocabulary of terms used to describe revelatory experiences. This chapter thus considers the terms *somnium*, *visio*, and *visum* in both a theological and literary context. To begin, we shall consider theoretical (and theological) conceptions of dreams and visions through the writings of Macrobius, Augustine and Gregory the Great (2.2). For each of these authors I shall provide a brief overview of their theory, the terminology he used and comment on the distinctions which can be drawn between these words. Modern arguments on the meanings of these terms will also be included. I will then assess what influence these theoretical tracts had on the dreamers and visionaries of the early medieval period by investigating the use of these words within vision texts (2.3). While a complete survey of the use of these terms in the early Middle Ages would be a thesis unto itself, I have limited myself to the use of these words within dream-vision texts. Finally I will consider audience responses to these experiences (2.4 - 2.5). This comparison between the theoretical and the practical is revealing but has been largely unexplored by scholars.

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sperantes in illis.'

[21] Rüegg, *Jenseitsvorstellungen*, vol. 1, p. 197. Modern scholars have often exaggerated this position of antipathy towards visions as we have seen in chapter 1.

## 2.2 Terminologies

### Macrobius

Questions still surround Macrobius's identity, but there is some consensus that he lived from roughly 360-410.[22] In his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* Macrobius used the word 'dream' as a broadly encompassing term which incorporated both *somnium* (an enigmatic dream) and *visio* (a prophetic revelation of future events) as well as *oraculum* (oracular revelation in which the dreamer is told by someone from the other world what is to come), *insomnium* (a nightmare) and *visum* (an apparition).[23] In his classification, o*racula* were held in highest regard. It is significant that he did not see these terminologies as mutually exclusive; Scipio's dream was said to belong to three of these categories – the oracular, the prophetic and the enigmatic.[24]

Although Macrobius's writings measurably influenced later medieval authors including Chaucer[25] and appeared in numerous manuscripts throughout the Middle Ages, Peden has shown that Macrobius's terminological distinction never exercised a 'profound influence on the form, structure and content of medieval dream and vision literature.'[26] Perhaps the most convincing evidence to support this claim is the fact that Macrobius stated that illness and death were conditions for non-significant dreams,[27] and otherworld visions were almost always experienced when the visionary was gravely ill. Furthermore, subsequent authors made no use of Macrobius's distinction between the word *visum* and *visio*. As we shall see,

[22]The debates which cover Macrobius's origins, his mother tongue, his religious affiliation and whether or not he can be identified with a high-ranking official by the same name, are summarised by Stahl in his introduction to Macrobius's *Commentary*. W. H. Stahl, ed. and trs. *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio by Macrobius* (New York, 1952, 1990), pp. 4-9.

[23]Macrobius, *Comentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, III. 2 (ed. J. Willis, [Leipzig, 1963, rpt. 1994], p. 8)

[24]Macrobius, *Comentarii*, III. 12 (ed. Willis, p. 11).

[25]S. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 57-8 and A.M. Peden, 'Macrobius and Medieval Dream Literature', *Medium Aevum* LIV:1 (1985), 59.

[26]Peden, 'Macrobius', 59. Kruger (*Dreaming*, p. 62) also contends that Macrobius's classification was probably less well known than those of Augustine and Gregory the Great.

[27]Macrobius, *Comentarii*, III. 4-5 (ed. Willis, p. 9). Also pointed out by Peden, 'Macrobius', 63.

*visum* was used to signify the experience, not just the 'thing perceived' or the 'apparition' in both theological and literary writings.

**Augustine**

Unlike Macrobius, Augustine (354-430) is not directly concerned with terminology. His oneiric theory is intimately linked to the sense of sight. He is more concerned with distinguishing between types of perceptions in an attempt to discern not only the significance of the dream but also its relation to other ways of seeing.[28] Augustine sets out a hierarchy of kinds of vision by classifying perception into *visio corporalis* (corporeal vision), *visio spiritualis* (spiritual or imaginative vision) and *visio intellectualis* (intellectual vision).[29] Put in simpler terms, his distinction is between seeing with one's eyes, imagining with one's mind and understanding imageless concepts with one's spirit.

Corporeal vision is what one experiences through the eyes when awake. Spiritual visions are associated with sleep. When asleep, we generally experience ordinary dreams, in which we see images (or visions) which are a product of the imagination.[30] These dreams are composed of remembered images, are subjective, can be affected by corporeal processes, are unlikely to be revelatory and may be deceptive. Intellectual visions, which may be revealed in dreams, are far superior to ones seen with the eyes of the body and those imagined. Untainted by corporeality, they are pure interpretations of the images produced,[31] but themselves have no images.[32] Only these visions do not lie. A further complication in terminology lies in the fact that under this system, one man (Augustine uses the example of Pharaoh) may have had merely a dream (somnium), but when he relates his dream to one

[28]For Augustine's theories of dreams and visions, see M. Dulaey, *Le rêve dans la vie et la pensée de Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1973) and Kruger, *Dreaming*, p. 36.

[29]The three types are outlined in: *De Gen Ad Lit*, XII. 6. 15 (cols. 458-9).

[30]*ibid.*, XII. 23. 49 (col. 474) '...sive cum a dormientibus somnia videntur, vel nihil vel aliquid significantia.'

[31]ibid., XII. 9. 20 (col. 461).

[32]ibid., XII. 6. 15 (cols. 458-9).

with the gift of prophesy (Joseph) the same dream may thus become a spiritual vision.[33]

Augustine takes St Paul's experience of being caught up to the third heaven as the starting point for his exposition on visions in Book XII of *De Genesi Ad Litteram*, giving his dream theory a specifically Christian interpretation.[34] Because St Paul himself was unsure of the circumstances of his visionary experience, Augustine argues that the source and significance of visions are often unknowable. He offers three possibilities for the experience of heaven and hell: one's soul can be in the body as it is in sleep, ecstasy or wakefulness; the soul may actually leave the body as it does in death or it may remain in the body while the mind is carried off to see the vision.[35]

He is not troubled by distinctions between dreams and visions. For him visions can appear in dreams. He is concerned with the way that the images of things in dreams or visions are perceived, for we can easily be mistaken in dreams.[36] Introducing a great deal of ambivalence, he warns that dreams, visions, divinations and apparitions are sometimes false and sometimes true. Thus the important distinction to be made is between the false and the prophetic, not between the types of experience themselves since both dreams and visions can come from God. For Augustine, it is the type of sight or perception that determines the veracity of the revelation, not the source, cause, physical or mental state of the visionary or dreamer. Only intellectual vision cannot deceive; all other types can.[37]

Augustine makes few semantic distinctions beyond that of his three-tiered hierarchy of visions. He uses *visum* (Macrobius's apparition) to refer specifically to the immaterial image of a thing seen in a vision or sleep, as in *visa dormientium*,[38] but this term too could

[33]Gen. 41.1, 'vidit Pharao somnium.' also thoughout the text, 41.5, 41.15. But see Augustine's interpretation *De Gen Ad Lit* XII. 9. 20 (col. 461).
[34]C. Erickson, *The Medieval Vision: Essays in History and Perception* (New York, 1976), pp. 37-8.
[35]*De Gen Ad Lit* XII. 5. 14 (col. 458).
[36]*ibid.*, XII. 2. 4 (cols. 455/6).
[37]*ibid.*, XII. 14. 29-30 (col. 465).
[38]Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 21.10, ed. E. Hoffman, CSEL 41 (Vienna, 1900), pp. 537-9.

be employed to mean the perception of a vision as well. Augustine seems unconcerned with the specific implications of the term *somnium*. In his *De Cura Pro Mortuis Gerenda*, he writes that similar to dreams are some of the visions of people who are awake.[39] A dream was an all-encompassing term embodying many types of vision. However, all visions need not be confined to sleep. Spiritual and intellectual visions can occur in bodily sleep but ecstasy is an awakened revelation or a vision occurring outside of a dream. Ecstasy occurs when the attention of the mind is carried off completely and turned away from bodily senses. The visionary's eyes are open but nothing is seen or heard, as in the case of St Paul. Thus he had a vision without having a dream.[40] To complicate the picture further, Augustine reminds his audience that even prophesies given by those possessed by the devil are not always untrue and delusive.[41]

Regarding visions of the other world, we are told that often times the visionary himself, like St Paul, does not know if he is in the body or out at the time of the visions. However, Augustine maintains only that visions in which the soul does depart from the body are a 'more vivid experience' than a dream, but less vivid than if the person had died.[42] The intensity of these visions leads Augustine to a discussion of the corporeality and incorporeality of the other world, a theme which was to dominate Book IV of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.

### Gregory the Great

Like Macrobius and Augustine, Gregory the Great (*ca.* 540-604) recognises the importance of determining the significance of revelatory experience and thus offered a classification

[39] *De Cura Pro Mortuis Gerenda ad Paulinum* 12.14 (ed. J. Zycha, CSEL vol. XXXXI [Vienna, 1900], 643): 'Similia sunt autem somniis nonnulla etiam visa vigilantium, qui turbatos habent sensus, sicut phrenetici vel quocumque furentes modo.'

[40] *De Gen Ad Lit* XII. 2. 4 (col. 455) and XII. 12. 25 (col. 463).

[41] He makes no distinction in his terminology in this section. ibid., XII. 13. 28 (cols. 464-5).

[42] *ibid.*, XII. 32. 61 (col. 481).

scheme for dreams in two works, his *Moralia in Job* and the *Dialogues.*[43] While Macrobius's influence on Gregory the Great's writings is at best debatable,[44] Augustine's is more discernible.[45] Gregory however placed more attention on the source of causation, rather than the vision obtained, as the basis for identifying the dream's significance and integrity. Although each author considered the dichotomy of objective versus subjective, Gregory commented on this most directly.

Augustine philosophically noted the body's encroachment on the soul's visionary capabilities whereas Gregory took a more physiological approach. He differentiated between dreams caused by a full stomach, an empty stomach, illusions mixed with thoughts, revelations and illusions mixed with revelations. If a disturbing 'revelation' could be attributed to a bad case of indigestion – of subjective origin – the information contained in the vision need trouble the dreamer no further. Gregory added morality into the already complicated conception of dream theory.[46] He discussed the demonic source behind illusions mixed with thought and the angelic influence in thought mixed with revelation and pure revelation.

Gregory noted that since dreams have a variety of causes and it is often difficult to discern their source, the audience was warned not to put great faith in them.[47] Gregory and Augustine together stand firm on one point: only saints, or those with the gift for God to discern truthful revelation, can absolutely distinguish revelation from mere illusion.[48]

[43] *Moralia in Job*, VIII. 24. 42-3 (ed. M. Adriaen, *Moralia in Job libri I-X* CCSL 143 [Turnhout, 1979] pp. 414-5), and *Dialogues*, IV. 50, 2-6 (pp. 172-6).

[44] R. Sorrell, 'Dreams and Divination in Certain Writings of Gregory the Great' (unpublished BLitt Thesis, Oxford, 1978), p. 9. M. McC. Gatch, 'The $4^{th}$ Dialogue of Gregory the Great: Some Problems of Interpretation', *Studia Patristica Texte und Untersuchungen* X (1970), 80-1 argues there are greater similarities between the two.

[45] Sorrell, 'Dreams', iii.

[46] *Moralia in Job*, VIII. 24. 41 (ed. Adriaen, pp. 411-3). Also: M. McC.Gatch ('The $4^{th}$ Dialogue', pp. 80-1) notes that Gregory is following in the footsteps of other patristic authors in endeavouring to reinterpret pagan dream theory in a Christian context.

[47] *Dialogues*, IV. 51 (p. 176).

[48] *Dialogues* IV. 50. 6 (pp. 174-6) and *De Gen Ad Lit* XII. 13. 28 (col. 465).

Through his *Dialogues*, Gregory the Great was to have a profound and lasting influence on the genre of visionary accounts.[49] Not only did he consider dreams and visions in a theoretical context, he also incorporated them into his writings. Much of the fourth book of his *Dialogues* recounted and discussed various dreams and visions and the three visions of heaven and hell which he included became indispensable models for all subsequent accounts.[50] However it was the visions he recounted and not his classification scheme or terminology that exerted this profound influence on the literary genre of vision narratives.

Gregory also made use of the terms 'revelatio'[51] and 'extasis,'[52] augmenting the already complicated terminology of oneiric accounts. Revelations implied gaining new knowledge, be it through dreams or visions.[53] Ecstatic revelations and visions of the other world can occur in dreams, but also 'non per somnium, sed vigilando praelibare.'[54] Just as it appears that Gregory saw the need for a distinction between the two terms, we read:

> '*Petrus*: "Doceri velim si hoc quod per nocturnas visiones ostenditur debeat observari."
>
> *Gregorius*: "Sciendum, Petre, est quia sex modis tangunt animam imagines somniorum..." '[55]

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[49] One need only consider the *VB* (17, p. 391), and the *VW* (lines 284-5, p. 193) in which the visionaries invoke the *Dialogues* by name. Bede also recalls Gregory's teachings on the benefits of dreams in his *HE* V. 13 (pp. 500-502) and Hincmar compares the *Vision of Bernold* to those in Gregory's *Dialogues*. For secondary literature, see Patch, *Other World*, p. 95; M.P. Ciccarese, 'Le più antiche rappresentazioni de purgatorio, dalla "Passio Perpetuae" alla fine del IX secolo', *Romanobarbarica* 7 (1982/3), pp. 33-76 and chapter 5 below for a discussion of the influence of the *Dialogues*.

[50] The *Vision of Peter*, *Dialogues* IV. 37. 3-4 (pp. 126-8), the *Vision of Stephen*, *Dialogues* IV. 37. 5-6 (p. 128), and the *Vision of a Soldier*, *Dialogues* IV. 37. 7-14 (pp. 130-4).

[51] for example in the same passage he wrote, 'Et nisi aliquando somnia ex mysterio revealtionis orirentur...' *Dialogues*, IV. 50. 4 (p. 174).

[52] *Dialogues*, II. 3. 9 (p. 146). He, like Augustine, was influenced by St Paul's vision in 2 Cor. 12. 1-11.

[53] *Dialogues*, IV. 27. 4 and 27. 9 (pp. 88 and 92).

[54] *ibid.*, IV. 27. 9 (p. 92).

[55] *ibid.*, IV. 50. 1-2 (p. 172). Throughout the remainder of his answer in *Dialogues* IV. 50. 3-6 (pp. 172-6), he consistently refers to *somnia* even though Peter's question regarded visiones.

Further, in his *Moralia*, we find that in the passage '...terrebis me per somnia et per visiones horrore concuties...' (Job 7.14), Gregory did not differentiate between the two terms in his discussion.[56] In fact, Gregory was not alone in his synonymic use of dreams and visions. We find this pattern even in Scripture: Senes vestri somnia somniabunt, Et iuvenes vestri visiones videbunt.[57] While there may be a difference between *somnia* and *visiones*, it is not always made explicit.

**Later Writers**

Only with the Carolingians is there a concerted effort to distinguish semantically between the term *somnium* and other revelations, especially *visiones*. The *Libri Carolini* (*ca.* 793/4) were the Carolingian response to the growing debate over the Iconoclast Controversy which was ignited by the Second Council of Nicaea.[58] In the *LC*, Theodulf tried to clarify the Frankish Church's own position regarding the use and veneration versus adoration of images. The relevance of this treatise for dream theory hinges on part of the Council's proceedings in which Theodore, the bishop of Myra, used his archdeacon's dream as proof of heavenly approval for his side's argument. In the dream, an angel revealed to the archdeacon that it was right to worship images. This revelation served as a catalyst for Theodulf to explore the merit of dreams versus visions.

Theodulf makes no obvious use of Macrobius's terminology but instead uses Augustine's three-tiered distinction and also incorporates Macrobius's and Gregory the Great's ideas that the corporeality of the body with its attendant preoccupations and temptations can affect dreams. Thus they can be besmirched and so lead to error. According to Theodulf both dreams and visions can contain revelations, but if the revelation was contentious or nonsensical (for example the worshipping of images) then it was to be understood as merely

[56] Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, VIII. 43 (ed. Adriaen, pp. 414-5).
[57] Joel 2.28 and Acts 2.17.
[58] *LC* 3.26 (pp. 160-161).

a subjective dream and therefore false. He writes that dreams (*somnia*) can be caused by demons but true revelations (*veraciores revelationes*) are the work of angels.[59] This pithy statement has attracted much scholarly attention,[60] but Theodulf's conclusion is not that simple.

Theodulf ultimately had to concede that the words of the Bible make it clear that this distinction does not always hold. Some dreams are the work of angels. For example: Mariae sponsum, ut ablato puero in Aegyptum fugeret, per somnium angelus admoneret.[61] The prophets and the Magi all had had significant *dreams* which could not be discredited. Like Augustine and Gregory before him, Theodulf too stops short of offering a foolproof means for testing the source and veracity of the dream or vision. It seems that no absolute distinction in the terms was possible.[62]

Although each author produced his own schema for dream or vision classification, only Macrobius and Theodulf of Orléans saw fit to distinguish specifically between *somnia* (as the term more likely to denote something insignificant) and other *revelationes*. This differentiation has, however, become a focal point for modern scholars whose theories on dreams and visions we shall now survey.

**Modern Scholarship**

Modern scholars have been preoccupied with distinguishing dreams and visions but have fared little better than the early medieval authors on making steadfast distinctions between the types of experiences. In fact they appear rather to be at variance with early medieval thought. The questions which occupied patristic authors – on the significance and source of

[59] *ibid.* (p. 160).
[60] P. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (London, 1994), p. 59; Peden, 'Macrobius', 62; Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 41-2.
[61] Matt. 2.13-14.
[62] H.J. Kamphausen, *Traum und Vision in der lateinischen Poesie der Karolingerzeit* (Bern, 1975), pp. 49-57.

the dream or vision – is less of a modern preoccupation because medieval dream and vision narratives have innate value as historical documents.[63]

Chapter 1 has already noted modern distinctions made between types of revelatory experiences. We now turn in more detail to the modern distinction between dreams and visions. In general, we find that unless modified by the word 'day,' the word 'dream' or *somnium* necessarily carries with it a connotation of occurring only in a soporific state. Defining and limiting the word 'vision' or *visio* offers greater difficulties, for problems begin with the word itself. Its definitions include the 'sense of sight', or 'something seen', the 'experience of a perception' or even 'an apparition'. Lane Fox has observed that unlike dreams which occur only in sleep, visions are generally an unsolicited or spontaneous occurrence which take place in a trance.[64] Furthermore, unlike the dreamer whose sensory perception is still functioning, the visionary's bodily senses are non-operative (the visionary is often catatonic or mistaken for dead) and only the soul maintains corporeal sensations.[65] Lynch suggests that visions occur when man is between stable physical states, neither of the body nor removed from it, a liminal state which was first described by St Paul when he was caught up to the third heaven.[66] In his comprehensive work on vision literature, Dinzelbacher has attempted to clarify these theories. He argues that there is an identifiable transference in visions. While an apparition is an image or thing intruding into this world from the other world and the seer's body and soul remain unseparated, a vision occurs

[63] Although the value of these accounts has not always been recognised as we have seen in certain editorial practices which negated them, see sections 1.4–1.5.

[64] Lane Fox, *Pagans*. Echoing this definition, D. Price-Williams ('The Waking Dream in Ethnographic Perspective', in B. Tedlock (ed.) *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* [Cambridge, 1987], p. 251) adds that visions 'often burst through' into the individual's ordinary consciousness. Note however that this argument does not hold for Perpetua who was able to request vision to be granted to her. Her brother reminded her of this, 'Domina soror, iam in magna dignatione es, tanta ut postules visionem et ostendatur tibi an passio sit an commeatus.' Perpetua responds that she would and says 'postulavi, et ostensum est mihi hoc...'. *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, 4. 1-2 (ed. and trs. H. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* [Oxford, 1972], p. 110).

[65] Dinzelbacher, *Vision*, pp. 46-50. There is also a good general discussion in Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 41-49 and B. Roest, 'Divination, visions and prophesy according to Albert the Great', *Media Latinas* 28 (1996), p. 323.

[66] Lynch, *High Medieval*, pp. 49-50.

when a person is transferred by an exterior force from his natural environment into another place where hidden things are revealed.[67] Thus the visionary is 'invaded' by someone or something which has crossed from the other world into this one and summons the soul of the visionary to experience a foretaste of the unseen world.[68]

Other modern scholars have sought not only to define revelatory experiences but to assign relative values to the various types. Benz, for example, argues that dreams were considered of lesser value than visions.[69] Dulaey has taken exception to this and in a survey of Late Antique texts shows that there is no differentiation of vocabulary within the sources.[70]

Such concrete definitions offered by modern scholarship are not without merit, but because many of the circumstances of early medieval vision and dream accounts (such as the mental or physical condition of the subject, or whether his eyes are open or shut) are not recorded in the texts,[71] these distinctions ultimately remain debatable.

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[67]Dinzelbacher, *Vision*. However useful this distinction is, it cannot account for visionary uncertainty; Augustine cautioned that even St Paul was unable to determine whether he was in or out of the body during his vision of heaven. *De Gen Ad Lit*, XII. 2. 5 (col. 455).

[68]P. Dinzelbacher, 'Die Visionen des Mittelalters: ein geschichtlicher Umriss', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 30 (1978), pp. 117-118, and repeated in his 'Vision Literature', pp. 688-693.

[69]Benz, *Vision*, pp. 109-111.

[70]Dulaey, *Rêve*, pp. 49ff.

[71]Kroll and Bachrach ('Medieval Visions', p. 718) have compared medieval visions with modern hallucinations and found that non-industrialised societies 'focus on the social meaning of the hallucination rather than the process by which it occurs...'.

## 2.3 Practical Application of the Terminology in Visions

### The Fifth through Seventh Centuries

Despite the creative attempts by the Church Fathers, the distinction between dreams and visions, true and untrue, significant and insignificant or subjective and objective remained an exercise reserved for early medieval academic circles to debate. Both visionaries and their amanuenses seemed untroubled by these recondite arguments, even when the redactor of a visionary account was also the author of a dream-treatise, such as Gregory the Great[72] and Augustine.[73] I shall now evaluate the terms *somnium*, *visio* and *visum* within the context of early medieval dream-vision narratives and consider what authors of these texts may have meant by their use of these words. This exercise will potentially yield a more incisive index of the wider medieval understanding of what constituted each experience and so redress the gap left by modern historiographical analysis.

It is instructive to begin with Augustine and Gregory the Great as they not only authored theological works on dreams and visions, but also recorded some of these experiences in their writings. Augustine was certainly aware of visions of heaven and hell.[74] He acknowledged that his opinions on the corporeality of the other world were gleaned from such visions.[75] In his accounts of visions, he favoured the word *visio* but does not classify the visions he recounts into corporeal, spiritual or intellectual.[76]

Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* became an acknowledged textual authority and the

[72] For references, see above, n. 50.
[73] Augustine, *Confessions* III, 11 (ed. L. Verheijen, *Confessiones*, CCSL XXVII).
[74] *De Gen Ad Lit*, XII. 17. 37-38 (cols. 468-9).
[75] *ibid.*, XII. 32. 60 (col. 480).
[76] For example, in his account of the vision of Curma: *De Cura Pro Mortuis Gerenda ad Paulinum* XII. 15 (ed. J. Zycha, CSEL vol. XXXXI [Vienna, 1900]).

visionary content of Book IV was widely influential.[77] Although the authorship of this work has been frequently debated, it was likely to have been composed towards the end of Gregory's life and was thus completed by 604, but probably in 593/4.[78] Few of the visions he recounts are so labelled in the text. Gerontius[79] is one of the few exceptions: 'At night, in a vision, he saw men in shining white robes...'.[80] Although Gregory liberally sprinkles his texts with the words *visio* and *somnium*, he avoids using the terms to identify the three visions of heaven and hell that he records in his *Dialogues*.[81] Gregory's usage of the terms for vision, dream and a sight are interchangeable both in his theory and in his redactions of oneiric experiences.

Gregory of Tours recorded several visions in his *Decem Libri Historiarum* (*DLH*), a work almost contemporary with the *Dialogues*. The text of the visions dates from the third quarter of the sixth century and was written (at least) by 591. The saintly Sunniulf was led to the other world 'per visum' after which he awoke.[82] Gregory recounts his own vision of Chilperic's fate in the other world to Guntram: 'Quod ut dicam, valde hoc per visionem somnii inspexi...'. The King answered, 'Vidi et ego aliam visionem...'.[83] Both the King and Gregory attempt to invoke high authority through the use of visions. However the two prophetic visions are contradictory and despite employing the term *visio* for both accounts, Gregory does not attempt to reconcile the differences.

*Sopor*, s*omnia*, *visiones* and *visa* are not mutually exclusive, nor is any clear distinction

[77] Gregory the Great, *Dialogi de Vita et Miraculis Patrum Italicorum*, Books I-III (ed. A. de Vogüé and P. Antin, *Grégoire le Grand Dialogues*, vol II, SC 260 [Paris, 1979]);
Book IV (ed . A. de Vogüé and P. Antin, *Grégoire le Grand Dialogues*, vol III, SC 265 [Paris, 1980]). On their influence, see above, n. 49.

[78] P. Meyvaert, 'The Enigma of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*: A Response to Francis Clark', *JEH* 39:3 (1988) p. 335ff.

[79] Ironically, for our present inquiry, since Gerontius was later to be associated with a dream.

[80] '...quidam frater ante decennium Gerontius dicebatur, qui cum gravi molestia corporis fuisset depressus in visione nocturna albatos viros et clari omnimodo habitus in hoc ipsum monasterium descendere de superioribus aspexit.' *Dialogues* IV. 27 (p. 88).

[81] *Dialogues*, IV. 37. 5-14 (pp. 128-134) which records the three visions does not contain the word *visio*.

[82] *DLH*, IV. 33 (p. 166).

[83] *DLH*, VIII. 5 (p. 374).

made among them. In his most detailed account of a vision of heaven and hell, the vision granted to Salvius, the experience is not identified as a *somnium* nor a *visio*, but as a mystery. According to Gregory, Salvius exclaimed, 'Vae mihi, quia talem misterium ausus sum revelare'.[84] Although the tour of heaven and hell fit the formal structure of the genre of visions (that is: sickness and supposed death of visionary, his guided tour of the other world, his return and recounting of the experience), it was not so labelled.

Fursey's visions are thought to have occurred *ca.* 627, but they were preserved in two later sources: the *vita* of the saint (*VF*) *ca.* 656/657 and in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*HE*), written by 732. The author of the *VF*, used the word visio and likewise Bede, in his later rendering of the *VF*, is not hesitant to use the term *visio*.[85] More will be said of Bede's redaction of visions below.

Turning to the *VB*,[86] a text which has traditionally been dated to 678/9, we find that the account combines many of the terms and components of the visionary experience which theorists both early medieval and modern had and have sought to distinguish. We learn that in the monastery of Longoretus near Bourges, Barontus was struck down by illness which brought him close to death. The account noted that the vision occurred within sleep,[87] but that Barontus felt his soul wrenched or plucked out of his body.[88] We find a variety of terms were applied to his account throughout the Middle Ages. It was called a *revelatio* in the oldest redaction of the account but was also labelled a *visio* in the explicit of an early manuscript.[89] As with earlier accounts, Barontus's description of his bodily illness

[84] *DLH*, VII. 1 (p. 326).

[85] This word appears only after the visions are related: thus for this section of the text, see the *Vita Fursei* (ed. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 4 (Hanover, 1902), p. 436). Bede appears to follow the language of the *vita* closely: Bede, *HE*, III. 19 (p. 274).

[86] See Appendix A for a more detailed summary of the contents of this and other visions mentioned in this thesis.

[87] *VB*, 3 (p. 379): 'tunc subito somno gravatus obdormivi.' He describes the experience with the words 'quasi ex gravi somno evigilans' a borrowing from Gen. 45. 26.

[88] 'sensi animam meam evulsam a corpore meo' *VB*, 4 (p. 380).

[89] Compare St Petersburg Lat. O. v. I, 5 '*Revelatio*' with St Gallen 573 '*visio*'. The manuscripts will be discussed more fully in chapter 3 and Appendix B.

and fever may have been included to satisfy something of the distinction made by dream theorists although in so doing completely invalidates the veracity of his revelation.

The *VA ca.* 684 closely follows the *VB* in chronology. Aldegund's *Life* is largely a collection of visions, but these are identified as *visiones* even when they describe apparitions which speak and instruct her.[90]

Many more examples could be given, but we must take stock of what can be discerned. Despite the fact that visions, apparitions and significant dreams were such frequent occurrences in the early Middle Ages, the word *visio* was used sparingly in the accounts of prophetic dreams and visions. The word *visio* was often found in the context of *vitae* and this usage accorded with Gregory the Great's contention that saints were privileged with visions. However, revelations could be and were granted to the laity especially as cautionary tales. *Revelatio*, *somnium* and *visum* can also be found in these texts, although the experience is not always specifically named. To redactors, it was the content of the revelation which was important, not the identification of the type of experience.

### The Eighth and Ninth Centuries

Bede included several visions in the *HE* which had occurred in the seventh century, but since we are looking at the language used to describe them, they will be considered among those of the eighth and ninth centuries. As discussed above, he freely uses the term *visio* in relation to Fursey. We find that he does not reserve this word simply for saints, but uses the word *visio* to describe the layman Dryhthelm's account,[91] (elsewhere termed a *miraculum*[92]) as well as for the sinful Mercian soldier's vision.[93] Bede seems to eschew the

[90] *VA*, 315-324.
[91] Narrabat autem *visiones* suas etiam regi Aldfrido... *HE*, V. 12 (p. 496).
[92] *HE*, V. 12 (p. 488).
[93] At contra fuit quidam in prouincia Merciorum, cuius *uisiones* ac uerba, non autem et conuersatio, plurimus, sed non sibimet ipsi, profuit. *HE*, V. 13 (p. 498).

word *somnium* and includes few significant prophetic visions granted in sleep. He makes special note of the visionaries' extreme illnesses or the separation of the soul from his body.[94] In what might be construed as a Macrobian influence, Bede also includes the word *oraculum* in his dream-vision vocabulary.[95]

Two other visions were redacted in the eighth century: Boniface's *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock* (716) and Lull's *Vision of a Monk* (757), of which only a fragment survives. Boniface repeatedly refers to the monk's experience in the plural as *visiones*.[96] Although the beginning of the account is no longer extant, Lull uses the terms *revelatio* and also *visio*.[97]

The ninth century witnessed a flowering of vision literature; on the Continent alone twelve additional otherworld visions emerged. These include: the *Vision of Rotcharius*, the *Vision of Fulrad*, the *VPW*, two versions of the *Visio Wettini*, the *Vision of Seneca*, the *Vision of Alberic*, the *Vision of the English Presbyter*, the *Vision of Louis the Younger*, the *Vision of Bernold*, the *Vision of Anskar* and the *Vision of Charles the Fat*.[98] Dutton has argued that, 'though the distinction between dreams and visions is admittedly artificial and phenomenologically inaccurate, *Carolingian writers meant something by it.* They meant, above all, to designate a divinely inspired dream by labelling it a vision.'[99] Did this added attention to dreams and visions mean that the Carolingians were more cautious with their use of words, particularly in the distinction between empty dreams and inspired visions? To answer this question, I shall turn to the uses of *somnium* and *visio* in Carolingian sources in an effort to evaluate their word usage and thus to compare it with the earlier texts discussed

[94] Except for Æthelhun who learned of Egbert's prayer in a vision whilst asleep. However, this exception can be tempered by the fact that Æthelhun was suffering from plague and died the next night. *HE*, III. 27 (p. 314).

[95] *HE*, II. 12 (pp. 174, 176). The *oraculum* came in the form of a mysterious spirit who provided a timely revelation for Edwin.

[96] *Wenlock*, (p. 8 lines 5 and 14, p. 15, line 21).

[97] *Vision of a Monk*, (p. 249 lines 14 and 17).

[98] See Appendix A for a summary of each account and bibliographic references.

[99] Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 42-3.

above.

In the *LC*, we have already seen Theodulf's attempts to distinguish between dreams and visions. However dreams also feature in Carolingian legislation. The *Admonitio Generalis* (*AG*), a comprehensive statement of Carolingian aims, included a prohibition against dream divination. In the language employed, no differentiation between dreams and visions was made: 'Item habemus in lege Domini mandatum: ... in deuteronomio: "nemo sit qui ariolos sciscitetur vel somnia observet vel ad auguria intendat"...'.[100] This though is a citation of the Bible and stands outside the ordinary rules of Carolingian usage. Dutton's argument is supported by Walahfrid Strabo, who is quick to exalt visions over dreams in the introduction to his versification of the *VW*. Having already labelled the account a 'visio' he then wrote '... Comperimus etenim quosdam esse qui hoc nil amplius vanis somniis diiudicantes nec habere vel credere aut audire dignantur'.[101] While revealing a bias against dreams which may be 'empty', Walahfrid in fact touches on the issue of credibility – a much weightier concern than word usage and one to which we shall return in section 2.4.

Turning now to a lengthy excerpt taken from the *VW* which records a vision within the vision, we will consider whether following the provisions set out in the *LC*, Carolingian writers were more conscientious in maintaining separate categories of dreams and visions. In brief, this excerpt is the visionary Wetti's recounting of a cleric named Adam's dream in which Adam saw Waldo, an abbot, suffering in an open-sided shack.[102] Waldo asks Adam to obtain help from Adalhelm, his bishop, to obtain intercessory prayers which would alleviate the abbot's suffering. However the bishop does not take the dream seriously and as a result, Wetti is shown that Adalhelm is subsequently suffering purgation for failing to help a needy brother. The account continues:

[100] *AG*, c. 65 (pp. 58-9). The Carolingians had to stop short of complete ban on dream divination since there was a scriptural precedent.
[101] *VW*, dedication (p. 187).
[102] *VW*, lines 400-445 (pp. 196-7). The characters' names are embedded in Walahfrid's poetry as acrostics.

'The angel added that there was a certain bishop, who ought to have helped the abbot with prayers and acts of kindness in accordance with the instructions which the abbot had given when he appeared to a cleric in his dreams (somnia). The abbot had urged the cleric to report to the bishop what he had told him. But the bishop, thinking these were the empty lies of an ordinary dream (soliti mendacia inania somni), did not give the instructions serious consideration and ignored the love he owed his brother. Lazy, dimwitted, and slow to assist, he was now subjected to the grim violence of the rack, and allotted the punishment for his sin... [The dream] is described in the words of the man who actually saw it:

"When I had fallen asleep," he said, "I dreamt I saw ("Orsus," ait, "dormire ... videbam...") the abbot sitting in his appointed place in a crude hut, his shins and calves streaming with blood. He started to speak: 'My son, take this message to your superior. You see this house: there are two of us bidden to share it. It is filthy, for there are two counts who are in the habit of washing themselves in the pool and swimming in its hot waters. Their splashing infects this house with the smell of the fatal plague, so that we wretched inmates are quickly driven outside. Ask him to send around the monasteries, requisition prayers of intercession (which they offer free) so that their prayer can block up the gap where there is no wall, and relieve the great affliction of the stench and our distress.[103] Please, my son, do not forget this message!' " When the bishop later heard the whole story from the cleric's own mouth, he said, "This I believe was mere fantasy; so I give no credence to the imaginary message."

(... "Haec," inquit, "Fantasmata credo fuisse
Idcircoque fidem verbis non commodo fictis.")

... The vision (visum) which I have recounted briefly above was previously un-

[103]Paralleled in *Dialogues*, IV. 37. 9 (p. 130), noted by Traill, *VW*, p. 142.

known to Wetti ...'[104].

While this account was included in the *VW* foremost to demonstrate the importance of intercessory prayers, it also sheds light on the differences in contemporary attitudes towards dreams and visions. Even allowing for poetic license in the choice of words, this passage shows that the bishop took the hard-line official approach to the oneiric account he was presented with, but was punished for failing to recognise the importance of a true revelation. He thought it was 'the empty lies of an ordinary dream.' But this was not so; it was a dream which was accorded the status of a vision. The account highlights ambivalence in word usage, and this was perhaps one of the messages Walahfrid was trying to convey. The text shows not only the importance of *visa* in contrast to *somnia* but also the difficulty in vetting them and the need for criteria to assess these accounts. In the end, by not employing the word *visio* and insisting on the importance and veracity of the revelation, Walahfrid seems to be suggesting that it is the significance of the content of the account which is most important, not merely the semantic difference between the labels of *somnium*, *visum*, and *visio*.

Confusion or ambivalence in the terminology can be found throughout later Carolingian texts as well. The following examples are representative. In the 874 Annals of Fulda, we read that while he (that is the king) was spending time in prayer, '...vidit quadam nocte *in somnis* genitorem suum Hludowicum imperatorem in angustiis constitutum qui eum hoc modo latino affatus est eloquio:...Hac ergo *visione* perterritus epistolas per cuncta regni sui monasteria destinavit...'.[105] Further in the *Annals of St Riquier* for 888, the *Vision of Charles the Fat* incorporates the separation of the soul from the body and a tour of heaven and hell within a dream. None of the terms associated with dream theory appear in the account and again visio and somnium are both used with little distinction.[106]

[104] *VW*, lines 400-430 (p. 196). The translation is by Traill, *VW*, pp. 53-4.
[105] *Annales Fuldenses*, F. Kurtze (ed.) *MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1891), p. 82.
[106] 'Visio quam vidit Karolus...ego Karolus...post celebratum nocturnarum horarum divinum officium,

Finally we turn to the *Vita Anskarii*, written by Rimbert after 865. Visions granted to saints are a common feature in hagiographical literature and this *vita* is no exception. Rimbert includes some of the multitude of visionary experiences which were granted to Anskar. In addition to visions he saw of his mother, the abbot of Corvey and the soul of a boy, Anskar has visions of Mary, Christ, St Peter and St John the Baptist whom he is able to recognise without being told. In an aside which surely would have troubled Theodulf of Orléans, Anskar recognises the saints from their physiognomy and dress which matched that of the iconography of artistic images.[107] Anskar had visions both at night and during the day. Rimbert made use of the extensive oneiric vocabulary to describe the variety of visionary experiences Anskar experienced. Rimbert uses the terms *visio, revelatio,* but also *somnium* and *visum.*[108] These words are of course to be expected within the context of hagiography; as discussed above, Gregory the Great and Augustine had concluded that in the potentially deceptive world of dreams and visions, the only steadfast certainty is that saints know the difference between revelation from illusion.[109] However, in the case of Anskar, we find that his vision of the martyr's crown was in fact not one of the *veraciores revelationes.* His hagiographer is left to reconcile the discontinuity between the martyrdom promised to Anskar in a vision and the reality of his peaceful passing. Fortunately for him, Anskar's visionary powers provided that answer: at the end of his life, Anksar received another celestial communication. In this vision he is told that it was not his fault that the martyr's crown would be withheld but his life of hardship in itself had been a continuous martyrdom.

It would appear that the authors of dream and vision accounts, among whom we may

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dum irem repausationis cubitum, et vellem dormitionis carpere somnum, venit vox ad me terribiliter dicens...'. Hariulf, *Chronique de L'Abbaye de Saint-Riquier (v^e siècle-1104)*, F. Lot (ed.) (Paris, 1894), pp. 144-5.

[107] *Vita Anskarii*, 2 (p. 20).

[108] ...ita ut fere omnia quae ei proventura erant antea semper sive per somnium sive per intimam revelationem in mente sive per excessum ipsi cognita fierent. *Vita Anskarii*, 36 (p. 70). Elsewhere, the terms *visio, visum*, and *revelatio*, are used. See for example, pp. 20, 21, 24.

[109] See the footnote n. 48 earlier in this chapter.

count some dream theorists, wrote their accounts as if ignorant of the academic debate over classifications and sources of visions. Peden argues that medieval audiences knew what to expect from dream and vision accounts and therefore would be able to judge the account's relative worth from the details recounted and the structure it assumed.[110] Thus, while Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* are mentioned as supporting evidence for the veracity of the *VB*, *VW* and the *Visio Bernoldi*, none of the redactors bothered to set out a classification of these accounts in 'Gregorian' terms by such means as emphasising the sanctity of the visionary (Barontus was not acknowledged as a saint at the time of his vision and Bernold was never to achieve this status). None of the accounts refer to other elements in dream theory such as the visionaries' having empty stomachs to ensure that the vision was not the product of overeating.

It is true that the accounts generally made some mention of the body and health of the visionary prior to experiencing the vision. To take one example, Gregory of Tours recounts that Salvius had for some time before his vision lived as a recluse in constant fasting. Just before his he saw his vision, he lay on his bed with a high temperature. His condition worsens as his vision unfolds and the monks begin preparations for his burial. After recovering, he takes no food or drink for three days.[111] These details may have been intended to pre-empt scoffers by suggesting that the contents of the vision he then related could not have been tainted by a full stomach. But the mention of ill health would seem to counter dream theory since the visions produced under these conditions would decrease the likelihood that they were significant according at least to Macrobius.[112] Instead the conventions of hagiography seems to have exerted the greater influence, for illness and its associated suffering contributed to the sanctity of the visionary.[113]

[110]Peden, 'Macrobius', 62.
[111]*DLH*, VII. 1 (pp. 324-6).
[112]Macrobius, *Comentarii*, III. 4-6 (ed. Willis, p. 9).
[113]E. Cohen ('Towards a History of European Physical Sensibility: Pain in the Later Middle Ages', *Science in Context* 8:1 [Spring 1995], pp. 47-74, especially pp. 52-3) notes the pervasive medieval idea that pain could lead to knowledge of God. She focusses primarily on the later Middle Ages but the model can be found earlier. Thus the descriptions of the illness and pain the visionary experiences may be tied into societal

A survey of these accounts shows that word usage was fluid. Terminological distinctions made by dream theorists did not impinge upon dreams and visions themselves. The overall failure of dream theory left room for scepticism and the need for authentication.

## 2.4 Scepticism

Theoretical writings failed to provide an adequate vetting procedure for the truthfulness of dreams and visions. These classifications may have registered in the backdrop of the medieval mind, but perhaps because each theory ultimately fell short and the combined theories did not coalesce into a single verifiable system, dream theory was not more readily invoked in dream-vision narratives. This lack of resolution did influence dreamers and visionaries in one significant way: it left them to develop their own methods of appraisal.[114]

While it has long been recognised that visions conferred special spiritual authority upon the visionary,[115] little attention has been paid to the scepticism which greeted visionaries and how visions were initially vetted. Scepticism of otherworldly revelations had a long history.

Accounts of visions themselves demonstrate that there was and had been a constant need for providing confirmation of their truthfulness. Gregory of Tours wrote that he was afraid that his account of Salvius's vision would seem incredible.[116] Bede recorded Egbert's scepticism: 'Audiens autem verba visionis Ecgberct, praecepit fratri, qui retulerat, ne cuiquam haec alteri referret, ne forte inlusoria esset visio.'[117] In the preface to the *VW*,

perceptions or preconceptions of pain.

[114]For an early example, see the *Vita S. Antonii*, 43 (ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, *Athanase d'Alexandrie, Vie d'Antoine*, SC 400 [Paris, 1994]) for Antony's warning that one should first doubt an apparition and then pose a list of questions to it to discern if it is from God or the Devil. Those from God do not mind the interview but those from the Devil shrink away from it.

[115]For example, following his visionary revelation, Dryhthelm has repeated audiences with King Aldfrith. Bede, *HE*, V.12 (p. 496).

[116]*DLH* VII.1 (p. 327).

[117]Earlier Bede noted that this 'visio' had been seen during sleep. *HE* V. 9 (p. 479).

Walahfrid writes that he was aware people might judge the vision to be nothing more than empty dreams.[118] Repeatedly we find visionaries registering fear that their accounts would not be believed. The Poor Woman was understandably reluctant to deliver her message concerning the emperor's questionable fate in the other world. Because of the scepticism this visionary thought she might likely face, she had to be harangued by her angelic guide, threatened and finally blinded before she would share her revelatory vision.[119]

Thus we can observe that the veracity of a visionary perception was immediately questioned. Scepticism of otherworldly revelation was the first and obvious response and could almost be seen as a *topos* of the genre. Its continuance throughout the accounts of the early Middle Ages suggests it was a likely audience reaction and medieval authors developed a range of methods to dispel it through authentication.

## 2.5 Visionary Proof and Authentication

It appears that the Divine was cognizant of the wariness with which the visionary would be met and always girded the chosen visionary with some weapon or evidence to combat such difficulties. Common techniques included physical injuries or illnesses being cured during a visit to the other world, hidden knowledge being revealed or predictions being given.[120] In the *Vision of a Monk* recorded by Lull, we find many of these methods combined: intimate friends of the visionary learned of secrets; scorners of the vision were to be deprived of its contents and to confirm the veracity of the revelation the visionary predicted his own recovery from bodily illness.[121] The visionary's body may bear physical signs of a visit

[118] *VW*, dedication (p. 187).
[119] *VPW* (p. 42) Also see the *Vision of Alberic* for a similar example. Einhard, *Translatio SS Marcellini et Petri* III. 13 (ed. G. Waitz,*MGH SS* 15, pp. 252-3).
[120] For cures: *Vision of a Monk* (p. 249); for hidden knowledge revealed: *Monk of Wenlock* (pp. 13-4) and the *VPW* (p. 41), in which the visionary was girded with a secret shared only by Louis and his deceased wife. For future predictions see *Wenlock* (p. 15).
[121] *Vision of a Monk*, (pp. 249-50).

to the other world, as in the case of Fursey, who receives burns from his journey through purgatorial flames, or Salvius whose tongue swells up as evidence of heavenly displeasure at his revelation.[122] Supernatural gifts could also be bestowed on visionaries. Gregory the Great recounts that the servant Armentarius visited the other world and was given the gift of speaking in tongues to prove he had really been in heaven.[123] The *Vision of Alberic* records that the Archangel Gabriel who appears to him is ready for scepticism and opposition and gives Alberic a supernatural power to light candles spontaneously (without introducing another source of fire) which will convince even the most obdurate.[124]

Occasionally we find an illuminating detail on other means employed to authenticate visions. This was accomplished in earlier medieval texts in a variety of ways: Augustine wrote that his mother was able to smell the difference between her fanciful dreams and God's true visions![125] There appears to have been a professional 'quality-control' inspector of visions and prophetic dreamers. Haedda, the bishop of Lichfield at the time of the Wenlock vision, had a notary who claimed to be able to detect bogus prophets, 'for he said he had lived among the Irish, and there had seen false hermits and pretenders of various religions, whom he found able to predict the future and perform other miracles, but he knew not by what power'.[126] In Eigel's *Life of Sturm* we have a description of another unusual practice for authenticating a vision, 'Lull... who was bishop there, did not wish to believe in the revelation until the man who had seen the vision had placed his hand upon the altar and taken an oath on the veracity of what he had seen...'.[127]

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[122] A possible echo of Gen. 32. 22-32.

[123] *Dialogues* IV. 27. 11-12 (pp. 92-94).

[124] Einhard, *Translatio* (ed. Waitz, pp. 252-3.)

[125] *Confessiones* 6, 13.23 (ed. Verheijen, p. 89).

[126] Sims-Williams (*Religion*, p. 247) discusses the text taken from *Felix's Life of St Guthlac*, c. 46, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 142-4. The myth of the 'visionary Celt' appears to have had very early origins. However, P. Sims-Williams, 'The Visionary Celt: The Construction of an Ethnic Preconception', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 11(1986), pp. 71-96 argues that the Irish were wrongly perceived to be more frequent traffickers in things other-worldly. For more on this see chapter 5.

[127] Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, 15 (ed. G.H. Pertz, *MGH Scriptores*, 2:365-77), Translation from 'Eigil's Life of Sturm', trans. by C.H. Talbot, in *Soldiers of Christ*, ed. T. Noble and T. Head (University Park, PA, 1995), p. 179.

Given the Carolingians' supposed increased attention to word usage, false dreams and true visions, we may expect to find that their accounts preserve a heightened consciousness of authenticating visions. But we see that while the desire for authentication indeed was a prominent feature within their visionary accounts, it was not a Carolingian invention. While the Carolingians may have expanded the range of vetting procedures to which a vision could be subjected, they most often relied upon earlier proofs of authenticity.

Vision literature contained a response to its critics (present and future) by incorporating some detail on how the vision had silenced its sceptics at the time of its occurrence. But there were other, more intangible forces at work in ensuring the acceptance of a vision. By definition, visions of the other world stood outside the jurisdiction of any earthly authority. Since a vision's validity could not be determined objectively, its authority appears to have been primarily achieved in two ways: through the consensus of the visionary's community and through imitation of the genre of vision literature.

Being both transcendent and revelatory experiences, visions were often ambiguous and so allowed a certain flexibility of interpretation. Like relic cults, miraculous cures and the outcome of ordeals, visionary accounts had to be interpreted and relied on societal consensus.[128] While the visionary may have initially articulated a personal experience, it was the visionary's circle which could reject, shape, accept and propagate the content of the vision to fit expectations.[129] By giving its imprimatur, the visionary's community could

[128]For the operation of societal consensus and ordeals, see C. Morris, '*Judicium Dei*: The Social and Political Significance of the Ordeal in the Eleventh Century', in D. Baker (ed.), *Church, Society and Politics*, *SCH*, vol. 12 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 95-111 and P. Brown, 'Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change', in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982), p. 317. For later medieval visions, see P. Schmidt, 'The Vision of Thurkill', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978), pp. 50-64. Kroll and Bachrach ('Medieval visions,' p. 710) note that the charge of insanity was not a limitation for visionaries in the Middle Ages. However the content of visions was limited since 'authors had to write what was generally credible to their contemporaries: it would not enhance the reputation of a saint...to have unbelievable stories told of them.' Opposing these conclusions, M. Aubrun ('Caractères et portée religieuse et sociale des *visiones* en occident du VI$^{e}$ au XI$^{e}$ siècle', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 23: 2[1980], pp. 123-4) argues that the visionary had no limitation on what s/he could say.

[129]The clearest evidence of heavy recasting can be found in the *Vision of Alberic* in which a boy has a vision and later becomes a monk. He subsequently learns to read and after finding the text of his vision,

and did provided the vision with its much-needed validation. The vision's initial authority was thus obtained through the consensus of its first audience.[130]

The dreaming process was then to a degree consensual. There was no doubt room for negotiation between visionary and his community and between the visionary and his redactor. A revealing comment is made by Bede when recounting Dryhthelm's vision. He records that Haemgisl, now a hermit living in Ireland, used to visit Dryhthelm and engage him in repeated questioning about the sort of things he saw when out of the body.[131] Similarly the monk of Wenlock was told by angels in his vision to find a priest named Begga and to tell him his vision '...et postea, quemadmodum ab illo [Begga] instructus fieret, hominibus pronuntiaret...'.[132]

Sometimes this formative process between visionary and confessor was exploited. The *Annals of Fulda* record that there was a woman, named Thiota, who had disturbing apocalyptic visions. This 'pseudoprophetissa' saw visions which served her own purpose, but the account notes that she admitted to having been counselled by a priest.[133] This example further attests to this same process of a visionary discussing and consulting with a priest, although in this case the story records an abuse of this relationship and also the power of revelations themselves.

The visionary account must have entered into a very fluid period between the time it occurred and the time it was first written down. It should also be noted that even when the oral testimony of a vision was committed to parchment, it could still be subtly transformed

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he expresses his displeasure with what his redactor had recorded. See Schmidt, 'Vision', p. 51. For further evidence of textual manipulation see A. Gurevich, 'Oral and Written Culture of the Middle Ages: Two "Peasant Visions" of the Late Twelfth- Early Thirteenth Centuries', *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* xvi (1984-1985) 51-66.

[130] For the community's rôle in ordeals, see Morris, '*Judicium Dei*'.

[131] *HE*, V.12 (p. 496).

[132] *Monk of Wenlock* (p. 14). On the Church as a mediator for visionaries see Sims-Williams, *Religion*, p. 248.

[133] Annal for 847 (ed. Kurtz, pp. 36-7).

in successive copying or even redrafting. The numerous redactions of the *AP* attest to the former, the versification of the *VW* demonstrates the later. The *VB* itself has survived in a variety of redactions which differ quite substantially in grammar, length and content.[134]

It was then the job of the redactor, by adhering to the rules, language, imagery and basic structure of the genre, to produce a literary account of the vision that was plausible and hence authoritative once it was disseminated beyond the visionary's community.[135] Contact with the visionary was important to the redactor as we see from the many accounts which include provide a provenance for the vision, giving details of the redactor's relationship and proximity to the visionary.[136] While probably stopping short of pure invention, a redactor could carefully manipulate and order the raw material of a vision to recast potentially damaging or even unorthodox material, embellish the account with Biblical citations and distribute just rewards and punishments to those in authority by locating well-known figures in heavenly or infernal regions.[137] The *VB* is one such case since it includes both an exaltation of Barontus's monastic community and condemnation of two local bishops.[138]

To bolster the authority of a visionary account once it had left the immediate community in which it had occurred, the genre form itself was made to provide the necessary machinery to prove the vision's authenticity. For example, in the *Vision of Bernold*, Hinc-

[134]For instance, the truncated version of the twelfth and later centuries, on which see section 3.2.

[135]Several visions even boast of their similarity to older, accepted visions. As previously discussed, the *VB* 10, 17 mention the *Dialogues* by name, as do the *Visio Bernoldi* (col. 1118C) and the *VW*, lines 282-287 (p. 193). For the tradition of tracing the influence of older visions on more recent ones: Becker, *Contribution*, p. 3, Holdsworth, 'Visions', p. 149 and van Os, *Religious Visions*, p. 12.

[136]For example, Gregory of Tours acknowledges the audience's expected scepticism but hopes to silence their disbelief since he had heard the account from the visionary himself. *DLH* VII.1 (p. 326). In his account of Fursey's vision, Bede, (*HE*, III.19 [p. 270]) refers his readers to the book of his life (*VF*) which contains a fuller account. But desiring to verify the vision further, Bede notes that a brother at his own monastery had met a man who had heard Fursey's visions from his own mouth. Boniface writes that while he had learned of the Monk of Wenlock's visions from Abbess Hildelida, he later heard them from the visionary himself and was thus in a better position to relate them faithfully (*Monk of Wenlock*, p. 8). The relationship between the oral and written accounts is thoroughly explored by Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 493-529.

[137]Levison, 'Politik', pp. 229-46 and Dutton, *Politics*.

[138]For example, the monks in *VB*, 8 and 10 versus the bishops in *VB*, 17 (pp. 383, 385 and 391).

mar states that the vision is authentic because it resembles others he has heard.[139] Age was one of the hallmarks of authenticity and ensuring that a vision conformed to earlier accounts aided its acceptance.[140] This can be seen in the repetition of certain elements such as the angel guide or the trial bridge. The genre was indeed derivative. Conformity to some degree was necessary, but the hunt for similarities which has long occupied scholars should not blind us to the variations which can be found among the corpus of visions as they responded to changing historical circumstances. Each vision depicts a different other world, and even within the work of a single author we find variation.[141]

## 2.6 General Conclusions

The distinction between false and true revelations has long occupied the minds of theologians and scholars as well as visionaries themselves. The Bible's ambiguous usage of the terms *somnia* and *visio* and its equivocal stance on their significance and delusiveness generated a proliferation of dream theories in the Middle Ages. From the Church's standpoint, the assessment of the message revealed in dreams and visions was essential.

Patristic and Late Antique authors suggested various schema for classifying dreams and visions. It was implicit in their works that if the type or source could be discerned, its veracity could be determined. Each theorist assigned his own terminology to describe these types. Following in the footsteps of earlier dream theorists, the Carolingians also entered into the attempt to classify visions from dreams, truth from deception. The Carolingian distinction between dreams and visions was, I would argue, confined to a relatively small circle of theological minds. Their theoretical writings stressed that *visiones* and *revelationes* merited higher esteem than *somnia*, but even Theodulf in the *LC* had to concede that this point was open to further scrutiny. Carolingian devotion to the Bible may have

[139]Hincmar, *Visio Bernoldi* (col. 1118C).
[140]See chapter 4.
[141]See sections 3.8 and 6.2.

contributed to their ultimately foiled attempts to distinguish strictly between dreams and visions. Macrobius, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Theodulf and others expressed cautions on the deceptive possibilities of demonic revelations and dreams tainted by subjectivity or bodily processes, but none provided a satisfactory methodology to accomplish this. As a result there was never a full-scale acceptance of the precise terminologies offered in theoretical writings.

Setting out the difference between dreams and visions seems ultimately to have been an intellectual pursuit. Oneirocriticism dealt with the categorisation of dreams and visions, with each author contributing further twists and turns in the already formidable labyrinth of dream-assessment. But an examination of dream and vision accounts does not record that they had been subjected to scrutiny on classificatory grounds; the precise terminology of the experience seems to have been all but irrelevant in revelatory experiences. The frequent descriptions of the visionaries' illnesses further show that these theories in fact did little to influence the terminology of the vision-narratives produced throughout the early Middle Ages since illness would have ruled out the veracity of many of these near-death revelations. Modern classifications also fail because the circumstances of the vision were frequently not recorded. Thus we can never make the absolute distinction that for a vision to occur, the soul must leave the body, whereas no separation occurs in dreams. The lack of consensus among medieval and modern scholars further demonstrates that the distinction between dreams and visions is one not easily made.[142] The uncertainty and fluidity in the technical vocabulary of oneiric descriptions remained; it was the criteria of reception, content and significance which mattered and is important to us in revealing the thought world in which they occurred.

[142]On our ultimate inability to distinguish between dreams and visions, see J.S. Hanson, 'Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity', in E. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II: *Principat*, 23,2 (Berlin, 1980), pp. 1407-8 and Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, pp. 199-231.

However great the thirst for knowledge about the future or the after-life was, visions or dreams purporting to carry revelations were not naïvely accepted[143] at any time during the period under consideration. There had always been some need to prove validity against the charges of sceptics. Recording disbelief was more than a *topos*. It is arguable that the rampant scepticism which dreamers and visionaries encountered was attributable to the fundamental lack of means for testing validity and was the vision-narratives' alternative to classification. Where theological writings offered theoretical systems of classification, visionary accounts offered practical systems for vetting. Both had the same aim, and at times even the same authors, but the theory and practice of dreaming was kept separate through the conventions of genre.

While the structure of this chapter may seem to have set high-minded theological treatises in opposition to popular vision narratives, I do not wish to suggest a stark dualism between the 'high' theoretical writings of theology and the 'low', or common genre of vision literature. Furthermore I do not wish to suggest that there were two distinct audiences for these texts. Even Augustine appreciated what the vivid record of dreams and visions could offer to the imagination. He, like Gregory the Great, Boniface, Bede, Hincmar and Alcuin, included visions among his writings. Regardless of the ultimate failure of dream theory to provide concrete methods of testing visions and the scepticism recorded by visionaries themselves, the genre continued to flourish especially in the hands of leading churchmen. It appears that both societal consensus and conformity to the genre ensured the written account was found credible once it left the visionary's community. What was expected and reasonable passed and thus the theory behind dreaming was never cited even when redactor of an otherworld account was himself a dream theorist.

Redactors and theorists show the Church's involvement in visionary literature throughout the early medieval period. Many of the early medieval visionaries were themselves in

[143]That is, they were not accepted purely on grounds they were from the beyond.

holy orders and clerical amanuenses ensured that the Church played a rôle in the written form of the vision. The ecclesiastical nature of the surviving evidence may slant the picture, but it seems that lay visionaries sought out priests to help them make sense of their revelation. The impression conveyed by much of the evidence is that the Church actively participated in the redaction of visions and mediating between the revelation given to the visionary and the message he proclaimed. Chapter 3, which considers the manuscript tradition and dissemination of the *VB* adds further evidence for the need to reassess the assumption that the Church discouraged visions and marginalised visionaries, as some modern historiography has emphasised.[144] This was only one of a variety of responses to dreams and visions.

[144]See for example Rüegg, *Jenseitsvorstellungen*, Aubrun, 'Caractères', p. 129.

CHAPTER

# THREE

## Textual History: The Manuscripts and Codicological Contexts of the *Visio Baronti*

> 'Et respondit mihi Dominus, et dixit:
> Scribe visum, et explana eum super tabulas,
> Ut percurrat qui legerit eum.'[1]

## 3.1 Introduction

Visions had a separate, largely unrecoverable existence in the oral tradition, of which the written accounts have left some hints: according to Bede, Dryhthelm frequently performed retellings of his vision for crowds of the faithful which even included King Aldfrid.[2] Yet

[1] Habakkuk 2.2.
[2] *HE*, V. 12 (p. 496).

there was a desire to preserve these revelations which went beyond that which could be provided by successive retellings. Thus before the end of her life, Aldegund had a book of her visions made so that they could be read to her community even after she was no longer there to retell her visions.[3] Boniface alluded to the fact that he had been asked by Abbess Eadburga of Thanet to provide a transcript of the Monk of Wenlock's vision.[4] The yearning to obtain and preserve these revelations is attested to and demonstrated by the manuscript evidence. In this chapter, I will survey the *VB*'s extensive manuscript tradition and the codicological contexts in which the text is found. This case study will aid us in assessing the text's varied receptions in the centuries following its composition, particularly in the early Middle Ages, as well as shedding light on its possible function and intended audiences.

## 3.2 The First Redaction of the *VB* and its Manuscripts

In order to comment on the first redaction of the *VB*, it is necessary to examine the content of the vision which inspired the written account.[5] Barontus, a wealthy nobleman in the secular world had recently converted, entering the monastery of St Peter Longoretus (present day St-Cyran-en-Brenne) with his son, Aglioaldus. After observing Matins with his fellow monks, he fell gravely ill and called for his son to fetch help. The deacon Eudo arrived and attempted to drive away evil spirits with the sign of the cross and with holy water (c. 1). The monks gathered round his bedside and then divided themselves into groups so that they could take turns praying for him without interruption day and night. Barontus grew worse throughout the night but miraculously revived at cockcrow (c. 2). Upon waking, he immediately began to recount his vision.

[3] *VA*, 18 (p. 321).
[4] *Monk of Wenlock* (p. 8).
[5] A complete summary of the vision without analysis appears in the appendix.

There had been a struggle for his soul at his deathbed which lasted all day and towards evening St Raphael convinced the demons to allow the heavenly tribunal to decide Barontus's fate. The visionary's soul was wrenched from his body, but Raphael noted that he left the spirit in the body in case Barontus was to recover. Barontus's soul appears in the form of a small chick, as it emerges from its shell. It is endowed with its senses (especially in its ability to feel pain), but was limited in its ability to speak. The traditional imagery which represents the soul as a dove probably played a part in this description. As the bell to signal Vespers rang at the monastery's church, the visionary and his guide embarked upon their journey. Their way was immediately hindered by demons unwilling to risk losing this soul (cc. 3-4). In a detour from their intended journey, Barontus and Raphael first travelled twelve miles to Millebeccus (Méobecq), a neighbouring monastery, where Barontus recognised the whole congregation of brothers celebrating vespers together (c. 5) (See map below for the relative locations of these monasteries). At Méobecq, Raphael performed a miracle by reviving the saintly abbot Leodaldus (c. 6). The two then began their ascent towards heaven, but along the way Barontus was assaulted by more demons. Passing near the entrance to hell, the group finally arrived at the first gate of Paradise (cc. 7-8). There Barontus saw many of the deceased brothers of his monastery, awaiting the day of judgement. The text listed the deceased monks' names and their stations: Corbolenus, Fraudolenus, Austrulfus and others. The brothers were saddened that one of theirs was in jeopardy of losing his salvation and asked Raphael if they may accompany Barontus to judgement to intercede for him (c. 8). Beyond the second gate was a realm set aside for the chaste and innocent and countless virgins and children inhabited this realm (c. 9). The third gate of Paradise was made of glass (evoking Apoc. 21:18), and passing though it Barontus noted that there was a region of mansions and thrones reserved for saints and priests. The monk Corbolenus informed Barontus that a mansion was being prepared there for the current abbot of the monastery, Francardus. His renunciation of earthly wealth and good works on earth were being literally transformed into heavenly riches. At

the fourth gate, the visionary met Betolenus, yet another brother of the monastery, who censured Barontus on behalf of the monastery for carelessness which allowed the lamps in the monastery's church to go out when they should have been lighted continuously. This dereliction of duty in the earthly monastery had been observed by the heavenly community. Barontus was prevented from travelling further into Paradise and was almost blinded by the region's light (c. 11). The inability to articulate what the visionary sees in the highest heaven is a typical motif in this genre, and preserves the spiritual idea of the incarnate deity who must only be symbolically represented, in this case by pure light.

All the while, Barontus was plagued by a pack of demons pressed their claim for his soul. Raphael alone could not free Barontus from them and so sent for St Peter. The apostle was not only a powerful ally, but also the patron saint of Barontus's monastery. St Peter arrived and held a trial in which Barontus's sins and virtues were measured against one another. The demons stubbornly pressed their claim for Barontus's soul and St Peter was left with no alternative but to threaten to beat the devils with his keys. They took this threat seriously and vanish (c. 12). St Peter then confronted Barontus with an unconfessed sin, that of withholding money from the monastery after becoming a monk. Had the devils known about it, the judgement would have been tipped in their favour. Peter assigned Barontus a penance of distributing 12 *solidi* (the entire sum he had withheld) to the poor. He was to donate one *solidus* each month for a year, beginning on the $1^{st}$ of April. If Barontus fulfills this penance, he will be absolved. Two youths then escorted Barontus back to the first gate of Paradise (c. 13).

At this gate, Barontus was reunited with his brothers. They appointed one of their number, Framnoaldus, to escort him back to his monastery. In exchange for this service, Barontus promised to clean the monk's tomb every Sunday while repeating Psalm 50 'Miserere mei' (c. 14). Barontus was then given a candle which he was to ask another monk, Ebbo, to bless. This candle and its symbolically-charged blessed light would protect Baron-

tus against demons. Ebbo was found consecrating the eucharist in a church in heaven (c. 15). He asked that Barontus be shown hell and prepared him with instructions for his journey. Between paradise and hell, Barontus saw Abraham sitting on a throne (c. 16). Barontus was then led on a brief tour of hell. Barontus was unable to see much because of the fog and steam. Again metaphor becomes part of Barontus's reality as the darkness of sin is contrasted with the shining brilliance of heaven. the visionary saw communities of sufferers sitting in a circle of lead seats. These included clerics and even some of his relations, and like the *AP*, all were grouped according to their sin: for example, murderers with murderers, perjurers with perjurers. Contraposing the virgins in the second heaven, foolish virgins suffered in hell. Only the wicked bishops Wulfoleodus of Bourges and Dido of Poitiers were specifically named and singled out for castigation. Barontus learnt that those who had done some good while on earth had their suffering alleviated with manna each day at the sixth hour (c. 17). Barontus then joined a group of heavenly pilgrims, on their way to the shrine of St Hilary in Poitiers. Framnoaldus returned Barontus's soul to the doors of the church at Longoretus (c. 18) where a wind blew it back into his body. Barontus woke to recount his story to the monks gathered around his deathbed (c. 19).

The story of the vision itself represents a very personal story of a shaky convert who hedged his bets on the future of the monastery by squirrelling away some money which could be used in an emergency. The very personal details regarding Barontus's sins and virtues, his illness and his son are part of a specific story attached to a specific person and would have appealed to a small but growing class of wealthy, older nobles who were themselves converting to the monastic life in the late seventh century. However the text which the redactor left us was a much more enduring cautionary tale which integrated lessons for a wider audience, general approbations and condemnations, quotations from the Church Fathers and political references to the king and his regnal years. These additions place the vision in a wider context and require an analysis of these features. The vision's continued popularity also demands an exploration of what this text conveyed to audiences separated

by time and distance from Barontus himself. It is to these matters that we now turn.

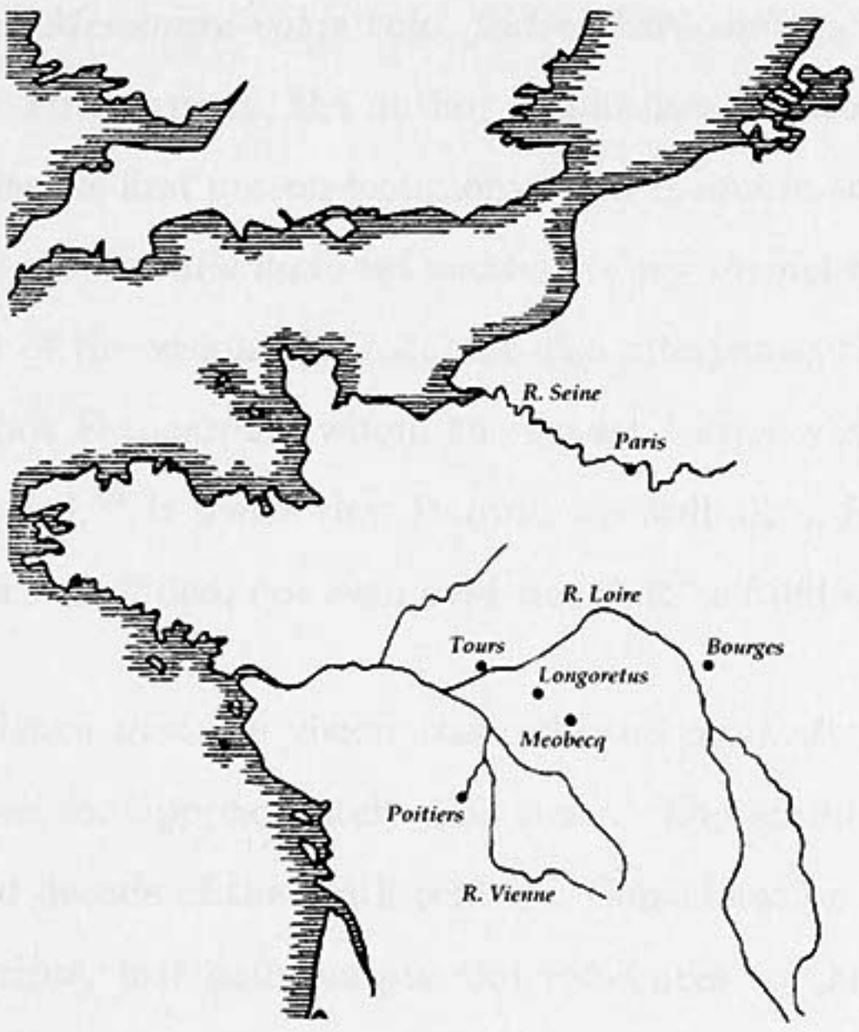



Figure 3.1: *The location of the Longoretus monastery and surrounding bishoprics.*

The text of Barontus's vision ends with a dating clause which dates the vision's occurrence to 25 March 678/9,[6] and the surviving written text contains several indications that it was redacted soon after. The excursus of cc. 5-6 suggests that the text was composed by a monk from the neighbouring monastery of Millebeccus, present-day Méobecq (as shown in the map in figure 3.1). Furthermore, the text appears not to be overly contrived since the narrative of events or places is at times confused, which corresponds closely with a visionary experience.[7] The vision narrative mixes events in this world with those of the

[6]The date is considered further in chapter 4.

[7]Noted by Levison, 'Politik', p. 233. This point is explored at length by Gardiner, 'Offering Evidence'. She argues that the more confused the vision account is, the more likely it is to resemble the visionary's oral account. N. Frye (*The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* [London, 1976], p. 110) discusses the special quality of 'dream language'. Specifically referring to the *VB*, M. de Laugardière

other world. For example the ringing of the church bell and the saying of Psalms which occur on earth are also heard by the visionary whilst in heaven. The opening lines suggest the very recent past: *Memorare vobis volo, fratres karissimi, per ordinem, quid moderno tempore contigit...*[8] Furthermore, the author emphasises his close proximity to Barontus and the vision includes his first person testimony: *Ista et omnia superius memorata ego, qui scriptitare praesumsi, non ab alio dicta vel audita, sed per memet ipsum ad praesens probata didici.*[9] In the midst of the vision, the redactor also interjected that he himself was raised from infancy by Abbot Francardus, whom the reader learns was alive at the time of the vision but has since died.[10] It seems that Barontus is still alive, for no further information on the visionary's life is included, not even evidence that he fulfilled his prescribed penance.

Despite the evidence that the vision was redacted soon after its occurrence, there is no manuscript witness for approximately 140 years. The earliest manuscript of the *VB* dates from the second decade of the ninth century. Consideration of both the total number of surviving manuscripts, lost manuscripts and references to the text found in medieval library catalogues implies that 27 manuscripts of the *VB* were made between the ninth and fifteenth centuries,[11] a number superseding Levison's original list of 23 (revised in 1951 to 25).[12] Twenty-one of the manuscripts are still extant, (although London, B.L. Cotton Otho A. XIII survives only in charred fragments) and of these I have examined 15.[13] Appendix

(*L'église de Bourges avant Charlemagne* [Paris, 1951], pp. 189ff) argues that the original hallucinatory account has been given a very literary treatment which includes quotations from the *Bible* and Gregory the Great. The confusion in the account seems to me to be the more persuasive evidence.

[8] *VB*, 1 (p. 377).

[9] *VB*, 1 and 20 (pp. 377 and 393). This point is discussed by de Laugardiére, *L'église*, p. 189 and Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 140.

[10] *VB*, 10 (p. 385).

[11] This list was compiled from Levison, *MGH SRM*, V, pp. 372-6; *MGH SRM* VII, p. 846 and Michael Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England,' in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes.* ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 33-89. This figure does not include the excerpt of the text found in the *Chronicle of St Maixentus* which is discussed below.

[12] *MGH SRM* VII, p. 846.

[13] I was unable to consult Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 1412 (S. XI/XII); Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I 3207 (S. XII); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 579 (S. XIII); Naples, Bibliotheca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, VIII B. 10 (S. XIV) and VIII B. 27 (S. XV).

B provides a more detailed descriptions of the manuscripts, their provenance, codicology, decoration and signs of use. A complete list of *VB* manuscripts and references to lost copies of the text is shown in table 3.1.

| Number | Family | Call Mark | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | 1a | St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia Lat. O. v. I, 5, fol. 2-21. | S. IX |
| II. | 1a* | Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale 1412, fol. 96-110v. | S. XI/XII |
| III. | 1b | London, Lambeth Palace 173, fol. 192-202. | S. $XI^{in}$ |
| IV. | 1c | London, British Library Cotton Otho A. XIII. | S. IX/X |
| V. | 2 | St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 573, pp. 370-398. | S. IX/X |
| VI. | 3a | Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 6293 fol. 136-147v. | S. IX |
| VII. | 3b | Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I 3595 (antea 8216-18), fol. 50v-60. | S. $IX^{in}$ |
| VIII. | $3b^1$ | Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 14,364 (St. Emmeram D 89), fol. 138-150. | S. IX |
| IX. | $3b^2$ | Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 23,591 (ZZ. 591), fol. 61-68v. | S. XI |
| X. | $3b^3$ | Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 579 fol. 28-34v. | S. XIII |
| XI. | $3b^4$ | London, British Library Cotton Tiberius C. XI, fol. 25-27v. | S. $XI^{ex}$ |
| XII. | 3c | London, British Library Harley 4719, fol. 117v-120. | S. XII |
| XIII. | 3c* | Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Urb. Lat. 396, fol. 162-165v. | S. XV |
| XIV. | $3c^1$ | Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Lat. 5411, fol. 277-279v. | S. XII |
| XV. | $3c^2$ | Paris, Bibliothèque National 12596, fol. 160v-165v. | S. $XI^{ex}$ |
| XVI. | $3c^3$ | Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, VIII B.10, fol. 174-179. | S. XIV |
| XVII. | $3c^{3*}$ | Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, VIII B. 27, fol. 84-87. | S. XV |
| XVIII. | 3d | Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Reg. Lat. 479, fol. 25-32v. | S. IX/X |
| XIX. | 4a | Paris, Bibliothèque National 2846, fol.125v-135. | S. X |
| XX. | 4b | Paris, Bibliothèque National 11885, fol. 16v-20v. | S. XII |
| XXI. | ? | Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I 3207 (antea 8623-26), fol. 52-60v. | S. XII |

Table 3.1: *Families, call marks and dates of manuscripts containing the* Visio Baronti.

Medieval library catalogues mention five additional manuscripts of the *VB* which do not survive:

**XXII** The *VB* is listed in the catalogue of new acquisitions donated or commissioned by Reginbert, the librarian at Reichenau between 835-842 (but was not in the original book catalogue from 821 or 822): *In quinto libro continentur libri Praegnosticorum III,* (Julian of Toledo) *et IV. liber Dialogorum* (Gregory the Great), *et liber Fursei de visione eius et nonnullae visiones excerptae de libris gestorum Anglorum Bedae et de visione Barontii monachi. Et liber visionis Wettini fratris nostri, cet.*[14] The no longer extant Reichenau manuscript of the *VB* was probably closely related to St Gallen 573 (V, above) as both manuscripts contain several of the same vision texts.

**XXIII** '*Visiones Wettini et Baronti*' are listed in St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 267, a copy (without marginal notation but with some additions) of the original book catalogue of the library of St Gallen (St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 728) compiled *ca.* 850-860 by Grimald (841-872).[15] The *VB* was thus added to the abbey's holdings during Grimald's time as abbot. In his discussion of the *VW*, Houben convincingly argues on codicological and palaeographical grounds that this entry is probably *not* referring to the late ninth-century or early tenth-century St Gallen 573 above.[16] The same arguments apply to the *VB* and thus establishes that there was an additional (earlier) copy of the *VB* at St Gallen.

**XXIV** St Michael, Bamberg book catalogue written under Abbot Wolfram, (1112-1123)

[14]The catalogue was preserved in a seventeenth-century copy made by J. Egon. See P. Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge* I, 244-52 for the 821/2 list, and for additions made by or under Reginbert, 257-262, esp. p. 259 also G. Becker, *Catalogi Bibliothecarum Antiqui* (Bonn, 1885), p. 20; Levison, *VB*, p. 374.

[15]Printed in F. Weidmann, *Geschichte der Stiftsbibliothek von St Gallen* (St Gallen, 1841), pp. 364-96; Becker, *Catalogi,* pp. 43-53 and Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge*, pp. 66-82 for the first (cod. 728), but pp. 87-9 adds Grimald's collection which Hartmut had a hand in gathering. Superscription: *Hos libros patravit Grimoldus abba in monasterio s(an)c(t)i Galli in dieb(us) Hludouui(ci) regis Germanie cu(m) adiutorio Hartmoti p(re)positi sue p(er) annos XXX et unum.* On the manuscripts themselves, see G. Scherrer, *Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek von St Gallen* (Halle, 1875).

[16]Houben, 'Visio', p. 33.

Bamberg, Michelsberg MS XXVII (S. XII) mentions the *Visio Paronti*[sic].[17]

**XXV** Worcester book list, now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 367, fol. 48v. (S. XI$^{med}$).[18]

**XXVI** Peterborough Abbey booklist (S. XII$^{in}$), now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163 (S.C. 2016).

Finally, fragments of the vision text are found in:

**XXVII** Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 23757. (Z.Z. 757), fol. 190 (s. XI).[19] This folio seemingly dates from S. XI although the codex was compiled in S. XV. It contains selections from the *Vitae Patrum*, *De S. Barontio*, *Vita S. Antonio* and the 'Speculum regum compositum per magistrum Gotfridum Viterbiensem.'

**XXVIII** Part of the vision is also found in the *Chronicle of St Maixent (Chronicon Malleacensis)*,[20] Paris, Bibliothèque National 4892. (S. XII).

The print culture of this vision is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the text was published first by Henschen and Papebroch in the seventeenth century as *Visio S. Baronti*

[17]The booklist is reproduced in H. Bresslau, 'Aufzeichnungen zur Geschichte der Bibliothek des Klosters Michelsberg bei Bamberg', *Neues Archiv*, XXI (1896), 165-7. The *Visio Paronti* [sic] is listed on 166, item 121.

[18]A short booklist in which all but two of the works are in English; all the rest are 'spiritual classics'. See Lapidge, 'Surviving booklists', no. IX; and R. Gameson, 'Book production and decoration at Worcester in the tenth and eleventh centuries', in *St Oswald of Worcester. Life and influence*, ed. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt, p. 217, n. 72 and p. 238.

[19]C. Halm and G. Meyer, *Catalogus Codicum Latinorum Monacensis* vol. II, 4 (Munich, 1881, rpt. Wiesbaden, 1969), p. 91.

[20]The Chronicle's excerpt of the *VB* is also preserved in Vatican BAV Reg. Lat. 554 (S. XV) and was printed by P. Labbe, *Nova bibliothecae manuscriptorum librorum* (Paris, 1657) vol. 2, pp. 193-4 and was used in the *AASS* edition of the *VB*. As mentioned in chapter 1, more recent editions have omitted the visions from the text: see for example the edited version by Marchegay and Mabille, 'Chroniques'; J. Verdon, (ed.) *La chronique de Saint-Maixent* (Paris 1979) includes the other visions which occur in the Chronicle but not the *VB* since he begins his edition of the *Chronicle* with the Carolingians. For secondary literature on this chronicle, see L. Halphen, 'Note sur la chronique de Saint-Maixent' *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes'* LXIX, (1908), 405-411.

in the *Acta Sanctorum.*[21] This text represented an amalgamation of Brussels BRA 3595 and Vatican Reg. Lat. 479 (family 3 [b and d]) and the excerpt recorded in the *Chronicle of St Maixent.* A year later Mabillon printed an edition of two Paris manuscripts, BN 11885 and 2846 (family 4 [a and b]) .[22] As noted above, Levison published a critical edition of the *VB* in 1910. The text has most recently been published by Ciccarese in an edition which reproduced Levison's text but added an Italian translation and some notes.[23]

## 3.3 Recensions of the *VB*

Levison's critical edition of the text includes a stemma (reproduced, with some alterations, below) in which he identifies four families and ten distinct variants of the vision-text. His stemma indicates that there are many missing exemplars.[24] Within these four families, there are three principal versions of the text but slightly confusingly, they occur in families **1** and **3** only. Levison's family **2** is very close to **1** but lacks some of its details,[25] and family **4** is merely a deterioration of the third.[26] The first and oldest redaction is found in the ninth-century St Petersburg manuscript, (**1a** in the stemma). But the latinity of the oldest manuscript, Brussels BRA 3595 (8216-18), (**3b** in the stemma), distinguishes it from the oldest redaction; the text bears many more classical constructions, such as the greater use of the passive voice and thus it represents a revised version of the text.[27] The Münich codex, clm. 6293 (**3a**), is from the same family but bears hundreds of grammatical corrections on

[21] *AASS Martii* III (Antwerp, 1668), 570-574.
[22] *Acta sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti II* (Paris, 1669), pp. 828-830.
[23] Ciccarese, *Visioni.*
[24] Levison, *VB*, p. 376. For an overview of the theory and practice of drawing up stemmata, see L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford, 1968, second ed. 1974), esp. pp. 186-201.
[25] Notably the pilgrimage to St Hilary's shrine at Poitiers made by the monks in heaven: *VB*, 18 (p. 392).
[26] Levison, *VB*, p. 376.
[27] *VB*, 1 (p. 377) Compare the constructions in 1a) 'ad extremum funere deductus, coepit magnis doloribus exagitare...' with 3b) 'ad extremum funus perductus, coepit magnis doloribus exagitari...'

top of the 'revised' Latin of the other manuscripts in its family.[28] Interestingly, the *topos* of the redactor's self-deprecating apology for his Latin prose was nonetheless preserved in both versions.[29]

The late eleventh-century BL Cotton Tiberius C XI (**3b**[4]) is a unique shortened version of the text, but by the mid-twelfth century we find the third distinct family of redactions (**3c**) which consists of a compressed version of the *VB*.[30] This variant differs from the others largely in the opening chapter. Its beginning is a précis of the older *VB* which curiously adds the detail that the vision occurred on a Sunday. Levison has reproduced this alternative introduction separately in his edition, noting that 25 March 678/9 was not a Sunday in either year.[31]

[28]These corrections have been painstakingly recorded and described by M. Manitius, 'Collationes ad SS. Augustinum Leonem Caesarium: Baronti Visionem', *Analecta Bollandiana* XXIII (1904), 276-288, esp. 283-88.

[29] *VB*, 20 (p. 393): 'Si quis aliquis hunc opusculum a me factum legendum in manibus acciperit, potest me de rusticitatem verbi reprehendere...'.

[30]Whereas other early medieval visions such as the *Monk of Wenlock* or the *VF* were sometimes preserved in redactions stripped of their specifics (such as contemporary political references, specific persons seen in the other world or the temporal context) copies of the *VB* always maintain its highly detailed content. See Sisam, ('An Old English Translation', pp. 258-9) who discusses an eleventh-century copy of the *Monk of Wenlock* which had references to King Ceolred and the beginning and end of the letter removed in order to expunge all 'personal touches and exact notes of time and place.'

[31]Levison, *VB*, pp. 373-4.

Levison assessed the textual variants and produced the following stemma to which I have added the manuscript call marks for ease of reference:

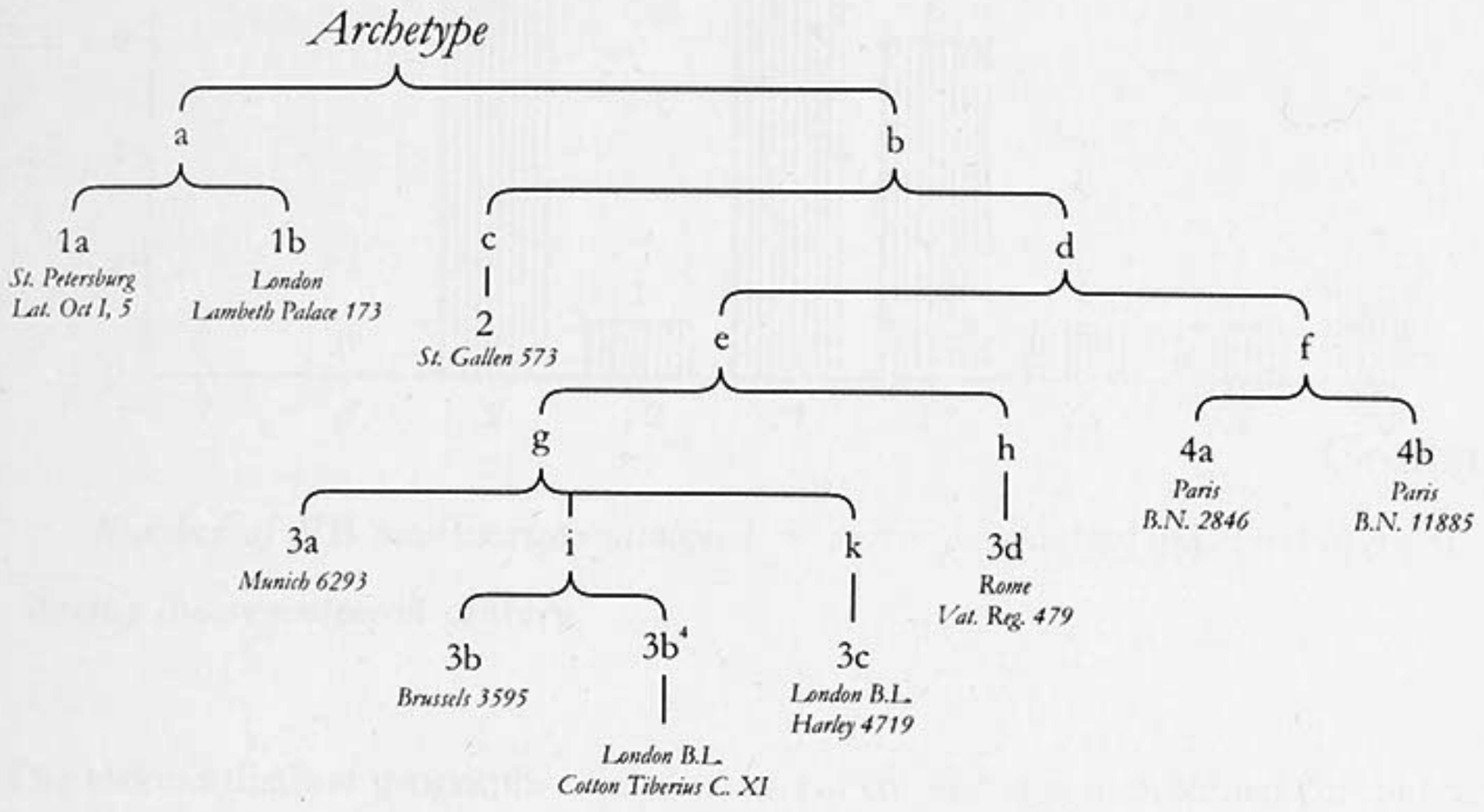
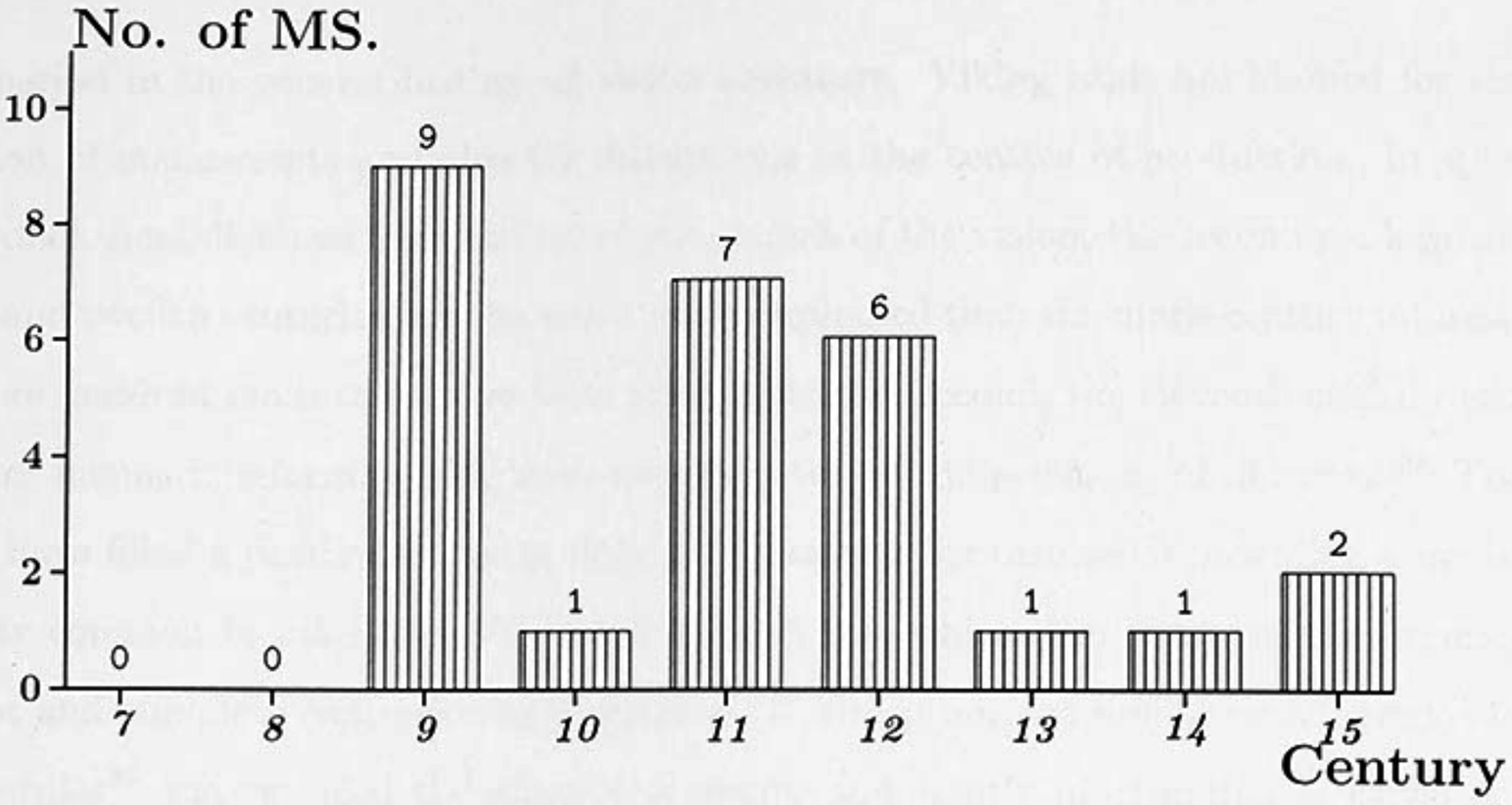



Figure 3.2: *Stemma adapted from Levison*

## 3.4 Chronological Distribution of the *VB*

The text of the *VB* became more widely available during the Carolingian period (see chart below: at least nine manuscripts of the *VB* are known from this period). In contrast, for the later tenth century, only one manuscript of the text was produced. Interest in the text surged again in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and copying gradually tapered off after this period. Such a schematic representation is however somewhat problematic given the difficulty of dating manuscripts on palaeographic grounds; furthermore division by centuries imposes a degree of artificiality since many of the dates of the manuscripts are not precise and straddle century divisions.




*Number of* VB *manuscripts analysed by century – the text appeared in print during the seventeenth century.*

The vision's distinct geographical and temporal context was maintained throughout its various textual incarnations,[32] and the very detailed content of the vision raises questions regarding the interest in and demand for this text in later centuries.[33] As we can see from the above chart, greatest interest in the text occurred in the ninth century and chapters 6 and 7 will investigate why the text was of interest to audiences at this time. The dearth of manuscripts after the beginning of the tenth century is mirrored by the general pattern of manuscript production in this century[34] and also represents a compositionally unpro-

[32]For example, in cases in which the dating clause was dropped, the incipit preserves details of the account: 'Incipit Visio Baronti monachi de monasterio Sancto Petri, qui situs est in loco qui dicitur Longereto in partibus Galliae, quod vidit temporibus Francardi Abbatis.' See Levison, (*VB*, p. 373-4) for alternate introductions.

[33]See chapter 5.

[34]The caesura in book production at this time is observable in many centres: for Worcester in the first half of the tenth century, see Gameson, 'Book production', p. 196; for Fleury, A. Davril, *Les manuscrits de Fleury, (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire)* (Orléans, 1980) and M. Mostert, *The Library of Fleury: A Provisional List of Manuscripts* (Hilversum, 1989); for St Emmeram, J. D. Kyle, 'The Monastic Library at St Emmeram (Regensburg)', *Journal of Library History* 15:1 (1980), pp. 2, 6. For the disruption of Aquitanian monasteries and destruction of manuscripts during this century, see R. Collins, 'Pippin I and the Kingdom of Aquitaine', in P. Godman and R. Collins, (eds.) *Charlemagne's Heir. New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious* (Oxford, 1991), p. 365. However, as Fichtenau (*Living*, p. 288) has noted, some libraries –such as the cathedral library at Vich– did grow in size during this century.

ductive period in the general history of vision literature. Viking raids are blamed for the destruction of manuscripts and also for disruptions at the centres of production. In spite of its chronological distance from the temporal origins of the vision, the second peak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries may be more easily explained than the ninth-century interest. First, more material tends to survive from later centuries, second, the eleventh century was a period of monastic reform, which 'gave new impetus to the provision of libraries.'[35] The *VB* may have filled a particular gap in didactic literature, for instead of providing a model of sanctity common to *vitae*, the *VB* was a sinner's tale which demonstrated the urgency of prompt and complete confession and penance. It also promoted assiduous adherence to monastic rules[36] and revealed the efficacy of prayer and saintly intervention in salvation. As we shall see in chapter 5, the text was eminently suitable for monastic reformers. The third factor was the deliberate attempt to create a cult of the visionary in Montalbano, near Pistoia.

Evidence of the formalised attempt to create or revive the cult of Barontus comes from the eleventh-century *Vita S. Baronti et Desiderii*, written in Italy. Italian interest in Barontus is tied to a tradition that after his vision, the visionary went on pilgrimage to Rome and then retired to a hermitage near Pistoia with a fellow hermit named Desiderius. In 1018 a monastery was built on the site where the two hermits had lived, and on 27 March of that year, the monastery was dedicated to them and their remains were translated there. This event probably furnished the occasion for the commissioning and composition of Barontus's *vita*.[37]

[35] B. Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trs. D. O'Cróinín and D. Ganz (Cambridge, 1990), p. 213.

[36] See chapter 5, especially section 5.6.

[37] *Acta SS Baronti et Desiderii*', *AASS* March III, p. 570.

The author of the *vita* drew heavily on the *VB* itself. However, unlike many early medieval visions,[38] the *VB* provides no further information on the visionary's life, reformed or unreformed, following his return from the dead. Judging only from the evidence for his life preserved in the vision, Barontus does not seem an obvious subject for a *vita*. The *VB* makes it clear that prior to the vision he had neither exceeded in personal virtue, nor had he performed any miracles; only his almsgiving and decision to become a monk saved him from outright damnation.[39] He suffered through the visionary experience as a reprimand for his sinfulness so Barontus's hagiographer, after recounting the vision, supplemented it with details drawn from the life of a Montalbano hermit named Barontus. It likely that the vision of the Longoretus-Barontus was grafted onto another historical person of the same (or similar) name but it is of course possible that the visionary did indeed live out the remainder of his life as a hermit in Tuscany.[40] A reference to a Saint Barintus who narrates his own visionary voyage to Paradise in the *Nauagatio Sancti Brendani* is initially suggestive that his cult eventually reached Ireland, however closer analysis reveals a more local connection and thus a better explanation. [41] The cult appears to have exerted some successful influence for the visionary since he was entered into the Roman martyrology of 1583-4; his absence from all early medieval calendars and martyrologies[42] suggests he was

[38]E.g. those recorded by Gregory the Great, the *VF*, or Bede's Dryhthelm, *HE*, V, 12 (pp. 488-98). In *HE*, V. 13 and V. 14 (pp. 498-504), Bede writes of visionaries who do not or cannot reform in time.

[39]Hen ('Structure', p. 484) notes that the *VB* was not a hagiographical text. See n. 42 below for further references.

[40]Levison, *VB*, p. 372 records all the evidence for the Tuscan Barontus but he casts doubt on the validity of this material. Also see the entry for Barontus by L. Cottineau, in *Répertoire Topo-Bibliographique des Abbayes et Prieurés* (Mâcon, 1937), in which it is argued that the *vita* represents a conflation of two people. This opinion is reiterated by J. Prelog, 'Visio Baronti', *Lexikon des Mittelalters* VIII (Munich, 1997), 1730.

[41]*Nauagatio Sancti Brendani*, ed. Selmer, pp. 3-9. The name Barintus is the Latinisation of the Irish name Barrind (or Barrfhind) which means fair-headed. While there is a linguistic similarity to the name Barontus and many other minor textual parallels between the *VB* and the *Nauagatio* including the metaphor of swarming bees, the cockcrow and the sounding of a church bell, we needn't look so far for an explanation. There is early medieval Irish evidence of a Barrfhind who probably was the Barinthus in question. See W. Stokes, (ed.) *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee: Félire Óengusso Céli Dé* Henry Bradshaw Society 29 (London, 1905), Notes 21 May. I thank Thomas Charles Edwards for his help with this analysis.

[42] Further evidence that Barontus did not fit the early medieval conception of sanctity becomes apparent in the fact that he was never entered into martyrologies or calendars even in houses which composed these texts and had the vision in their libraries. For example: the Martyrology of Usuard at St Germain des Près, and the St Gallen calendar. There is no reference to Barontus in Anglo-Saxon Litanies: M. Lapidge,

not previously recognised as a saint until this belated push to create a cult for him.

The cult of Barontus was probably responsible for the increased circulation of the *VB* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as it rejuvenated his memory. The rather limited manuscript circulation of the *vita* in comparison with the *vision* can perhaps be explained by the circulation of the *VB* in the previous century. While the cult increased desire for knowledge of the saint, the relatively widespread *VB* was already in place to provide. Thus the *vita* and the associated cult probably played a part in the manuscript history of the vision, despite the two texts never appearing together.[43]

## 3.5 Comparison with Other Visions

Conservation of early medieval visions demonstrates continued interest in such accounts, but the sheer number of *VB*'s manuscripts show particular interest in this text. For purposes of comparison, let us juxtapose the number of manuscripts of the *VB* with those of other early medieval visions. The manuscripts of this vision cannot compare in number with either those recorded in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, nor with those found in Bede. Their works exist in innumerable manuscripts, and for the *Dialogues* at least, there was a copy in almost every library by the later Middle Ages.[44] However in both cases, these visions were embedded in

*Anglo-Saxon Litanies* Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 106 (Woodbridge, 1991). Sigiramnus, the founder of the monastery, meanwhile merited entry into the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* ed. G. Rossi and L. Duchesne, *Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana,* Nov. 2, 1 (Paris, 1894), rev. ed. H. Quentin and H. Delehaye *AASS* Nov. 2, 2 (Brussels, 1931) but Barontus does not appear there, nor in the martyrologies prepared by Florus of Lyons, Hrabanus of Mainz, Wandalbert of Prüm or Ado of Lyons. For Martyrologies in general, see J. Dubois, *Les Martyrologes du Moyen Age latin* (Turnhout, 1978) and for Usuard, see J.L. Nelson, 'The Franks, the Martyrology of Usuard, and the Martyrs of Cordoba', ed. D. Wood, *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, *SCH* 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp. 67-80.

[43]Manuscripts of the *vita* include Rome, Biblioteca Alexandria n. 92, and 94 (S. XVII); and Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana (from the Oratory of Pistoia), in the collection of Anthony Gallonius H2 (Gallonii A) and H4 (Gallonii D) (S. XVI and XVII); these manuscripts formed the basis of the *Vita* printed in the *AASS*.

[44]The total number of manuscripts of the *Dialogues* has yet to be counted. For an estimate, see de Vogüé, *Dialogues*, vol. 1, SC 151, p. 164. He notes that it is easier to count where the text is not found than to tally the number of manuscripts.

a longer work which was copied for reasons other than its visionary content.

This survey will thus exclude these visions for we must look beyond the uncharacteristic circulation of the *Dialogues* and the *HE* to assess an independent vision-text properly, for in comparison with them, the ten early medieval manuscripts of the *VB* look fairly paltry. However when we turn to the rest of the corpus of early medieval visions, especially those which, like the *VB* were self-sufficient or autonomous texts, its numbers stand in stark contrast. While allowances must be made for the serendipity of manuscript survival, a striking contrast emerges. For example, the Latin translation of the *AP* survives in only three copies from before the tenth century. In its *strictly* hagiographical context, *Fursey*'s vision also survives in only three manuscripts from the ninth century and none from before this.[45] Seven copies of Boniface's redaction of the *Monk of Wenlock*'s vision were made, but only two manuscripts date from the late ninth or early tenth century[46] and the fragment of a vision recorded by Lull is found in only one ninth century manuscript.[47] The *Vision of the English Presbyter* in the *Annals of St Bertin* was preserved in two ninth-century copies and one in the tenth century.[48]

Among self-sufficient accounts, that is those not needing a narrative frame to explain their context, the *VB*'s numbers become very significant. There were seven manuscripts of Walahfrid's versification of the *VW*, but only three of these date from the ninth to tenth

[45]The total number according to Krusch is 36. *VF* ed. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 4 (Hanover, 1902), pp. 429-431. It must of course be noted that when one takes into consideration the transmission of Fursey's visions from Bede, the numbers far outstrip the *VB*.

[46]Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek lat. 751 (by 870) and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm. 8112 (S. IX/X). Later: Karlsruhe Landesbibliothek, Rastatt 22 (Durlacher 94) S. XI? Paris BN lat. 9376 S. XI (with visions from Bede) and three copies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[47]Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 751. (imperfect)

[48]Prudentius's original *Annals of St Bertin* was copied by Hincmar. There were 'no other manuscripts of the complete work in the ninth century.' Nelson, ed. *Annals of St Bertin*, p. 15. The following later manuscripts are thought to contain the 839 annal which recorded the vision: a tenth-century manuscript no longer extant but apparently it was copied at St Vaast, Arras; three copies from the eleventh century: MS Douai Bibl. publique 795; MS Saint-Omer, Bibl. munic, 706, MS Bruxelles, Bibl. royale 6439-51; one from the seventeenth century.

centuries.[49] Similarly, there is evidence of nine manuscripts of the *VPW*, only three of which date from before the eleventh century.[50] Finally only two copies of the *Vision of Rotcharius* were ever made (both as it happens in the ninth century)[51] and the *Vision of Bernold* survives in only one twelfth-century manuscript.[52]

Thus the profusion of early medieval manuscripts of the *VB* is unusual when contrasted with other visions of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, and the total number of Barontus manuscripts is a whole order of magnitude larger than other free-standing early medieval vision-texts. This number is particularly noteworthy for a text which was never translated into the vernacular.[53] We now turn our attention to some of these manuscripts, beginning with where they could be found.

## 3.6 Geographical Dissemination

Although Barontus's vision occurred in the Aquitanian monastery of St Peter Longoretus, (present day St Cyran-en-Brenne), there are no Aquitanian manuscripts of the *VB*, or even references to the vision in this region, for almost 500 years. The twelfth-century *Chronicle*

[49]However Traill (*VW*, pp. 18-23) has speculated that the textual variants of the *VW* suggest many more existed at one time. The same argument can be made for the *VB*. Manuscripts which preserve Walahfrid's *VW* are: St Gall 869 (S.IX$^2$), St Gall, 573 (S. IX last quarter), Valenciennes 411 (S. IX last quarter), Vatican BAV Reg. Lat 356 (S. X) Oxford Laud Misc. 410 (S. X/XI), Munich Clm 18628 (S. X$^2$), Brussels 10615-10729 (S. XII). For the manuscript tradition of this text, see Dümmler, *MGH PLAC* II (Berlin, 1884), pp. 301-33 and Traill, *VW*, pp. 19-23.

[50]Karlsruhe Landesbibliothek Cod. Aug. Perg. III (S.IX); St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 573 (S. IX); Munich Clm. 18564 b (900); and Clm. 536 (S. XI); Brussels BRA MS 10615-10729 (1100); Rein Stiftsbibliothek Cod. Perg. 51 (S. XII); Chicago Newberry Library Ry 6 (S. XII); Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek MS 262 (S. XII); and Heiligen Kreuz Stiftsbibliothek MS 11-14 (S. XII). Houben, 'Visio', p. 36 provides a chart detailing manuscripts and their contents.

[51]The text was found in (the no-longer extant) London, BL, Cotton Otho A xiii, and in St Petersburg, Lat O. v. I, 5.

[52]Brussels, BRA 4087-4100, noted by J. Devisse (*Hincmar, archevêque de Reims [845-882]*, vol. 2 [Paris, 1975], p. 821. The text was however known by Flodoard: *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae* 3 and 18, ed. M. Stratmann, MGH SS 36 (Hanover, 1998), pp. 193-4 and 255-6.

[53]The influence of the vernacular is apparent: compare for example the 243 manuscripts of Tundal from S. XII-S. XVI (154 of which are in Latin). With Dante's Divine Comedy, the numbers are staggering: 600 manuscripts from S. XIV alone, 1200 from S. XV.

*of St Maixentius* is the earliest witness to the *VB* in Aquitaine, but it only contains a portion of the vision.[54] The overall dearth of Aquitanian manuscripts of the *VB* may be explained by the 'disproportionate loss of manuscripts from the region' following the Viking raids.[55]

However, the unique form of the *VB* which is preserved in the *Chronicle* opens the possibility of reconstructing an episode of the text's early history in Aquitaine. The *Chronicle* is interspersed with a collection of other visions,[56] including Dryhthelm's and both Walahfrid and Heito's *VW* and Fulrad's,[57] but includes only a version of the *VB*'s subscription clause[58] and up to the seventh chapter of the *VB*. This means that the *Chronicle* includes only the details of Barontus's illness, the separation of his soul and body, the voyage he and Archangel Raphael take to Millebeccus (Méobecq) and the miracle Raphael performs for the Abbot there. Two questions are raised: why were only the first seven chapters and the subscription clause preserved in the *Chronicle* and why was the text available at St Maixentius? It seems unlikely that if the twelfth-century author of the *Chronicle of St Maixentius* had had access to the full text of the *VB*, he would have chosen to ignore Barontus's actual vision on heaven and hell which is described in cc. 7-19. Such drastic editing is not consistent with a copyist who took pains to include both versions of the *VW* in his *Chronicle*. It is of course possible that later quires of the vision were separated from the beginning chapters during the centuries which separate the *VB* from the *Chronicle* but it is peculiar that the subscription clause which occurs at the end of the vision was preserved. Clues to the form in which the *VB* survives may lie in the early history of Longoretus and the *VB*.

[54] *Acta SS Baronti et Desiderii*, *AASS* March III, 568.
[55] Collins, 'Pippin I', pp. 365, 368.
[56] Labbé, *Nova*, pp. 193ff; *Acta SS Baronti*, p. 568 and Verdon, *Chronique*, p. xiii.
[57] See F. Dolbeau, 'Une vision adressée à Heito de Reichenau dans la *Chronique de Saint-Maixent*', *Analecta Bollandiana* 98 (1980) p. 404.
[58] It gives a different year for the vision, claiming it occurred in the fourth year of Theuderic's reign; this was probably a scribal error which transposed IV for VI.

Méobecq was the sister foundation of Longoretus and probably provided the redactor for Barontus's vision. The redactor notes that Abbot Francardus of Longoretus had educated him as a boy, but the lengthy and peculiar excursus in which Raphael takes Barontus to visit the monastery of Méobecq, cc. 5-7, suggests the scribe (or at least his loyalty) was now at Méobecq.[59] It is possible that Méobecq possessed not only a writer but also facilities for the copying of a manuscript. They may have chosen to circulate only the section of the vision which was relevant to their foundation to the nearby monastery of St Maixentius, located near present-day Fontenay-le-Comte. Geographical proximity may have been only one factor in the choice of St Maixentius. Alternatively we may look to the agency of Bishop Ansoald of Poitiers. As Dido's successor to the see of Poitiers, he was likely to have been acquainted with the *VB* for its condemnation of Dido. Also serving as Abbot of St Maixentius, he may have ensured his foundation received a copy of this vision, especially one purged of negative references to Dido, although this explanation does not account for the break in the text at the seventh chapter.

The *Chronicle* is the single source for the history of the text of the *VB* in Aquitaine. Nothing about its early history is known. The first manuscript witness to the *VB* is from the ninth century by which time the text had travelled far from its origins. The earliest surviving manuscript of the vision occurs in a copy of the *Vitae Patrum* dating from 819 (BRA 8216-18).[60] It was copied by a Regensburg scribe who included a colophon which reads: *Hic liber fuit inchoatus in Hunia in exercitu anno Domini DCCCXVIIII III N(onas) Iun. et perfinitus apud Sanctum Florianum II. Id(us) Sept(em)b. in ebd(omada) XVma.*[61]

[59] *VB*, 10 (p. 385) records the redactor claim to have been educated by Abbot Francardus. For the Méobecq connection, see Levison, *VB*, p. 368.

[60] J. Van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, vol. VI (Brussels, 1906), pp. 1-2.

[61] This refers to a campaign waged against the Avars from 2 June to 12 September 819 in response to the revolt of Ljudovit, Duke of Lower Pannonia: *Royal Frankish Annals*, for 819 F. Kurze, *Annales regni Francorum 741-829 MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1895); for secondary literature: Levison, *VB*, p. 372 and his references. The manuscript is discussed in: E. M. Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (Oxford, 1912) pp. 406-7; B. Bischoff, *Die Südostdeutschen schreibschulen und bibliotheken in der Karolingerzeit*, vol 1, *Die Bayrischen Diözesen* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 199-200; and T. Glorieux-De

There have been varying opinions on the location of this St Florian, but it is thought to refer to the monastery by that name in what is now Austria.[62] This colophon may, however, only refer to the *Vitae Patrum* since the quire signatures do not match the section in which the *VB* occurs although the *VB* folios seem to be closely related in script and layout with this text. It is also inserted into the text with no incipit, as if it were thought to be part of the *Vitae Patrum*.

The history of the text during the late seventh and eighth centuries is not recoverable, but there appears to have been some connection between the *VB* and missionary centres. Seventh- or eighth-century missionaries en route from Aquitaine to East Frankish territories may have been responsible for the transmission of the text to this area. Even if the colophon of BRA 8216-18 does not refer to the *VB*, there is another witness to the text in this region from the first half of the ninth century, Munich clm. 14,364. This manuscript was part of the library of St Emmeram, Regensburg, and is both textually and codicologically related closely to BRA 8216-18.[63]

One can envisage vision literature providing powerful imagery for missionary preaching and this is perhaps significant for the text's dissemination. The next chronological manuscript witness was found at Reichenau. Reichenau was not in itself a missionary monastery as Regensburg was, by reason of its position, but no great Carolingian monastery could escape working indirectly towards the missionary endeavour of the empire as a whole. The *VB* had reached Reichenau by 842, when it was catalogued by Reginbert in his booklist (see item **XXII** on page 66 and Appendix B). This booklist, which details books donated

Gand and A. Kelders, *Formules de Copiste les colophons des Manuscripts datés* (Brussels, 1991), p. 55.

[62]I. Strnadt ('Die Passio S. Floriani II', *Archivalische Zeitschrift Neue Folge* IX [1900], 217) versus B. Krusch, *Neues Archiv* xxviii, 603ff and echoed by Levison, *VB*, p. 373, n.1. The debate over location continues: Glorieux-De Gand, *Formules*, p. 55. The text of the *Passio S. Floriani* may have some connection with the *VB*: see n. 116, chapter 4.

[63]See Appendix B. Most of Regensburg's surviving manuscripts were moved in 1812 to the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich-Codices latini monacensis (Clm) 14,000-15,028. Kyle, 'Monastic Library', p. 7. Brunhölzl (textitHistoire, p. 141) briefly notes the wide dissemination of the text in the Carolingian period, especially in Bavaria beyond Lake Constance, but fails to provide any references.

by or commissioned for Reginbert, indicated that he had a strong personal interest in vision texts,[64] having himself acquired and copied a large collection of them for Reichenau's library.[65] While this at first looks like a coherent policy of acquisition attributable to Reginbert, it must be remembered that the monastery was already a repository for many visions. Reichenau was the setting of the *VW* and its abbot Heito, amanuensis of the *VW*, was also probably behind the composition of the *VPW*. Furthermore it is likely that the monastery was responsible for the redaction of the *Vision of Rotcharius*.[66]

The two great Swabian monasteries of Reichenau and St Gallen have been dubbed the 'dream factory' of the Carolingian Empire.[67] The copy of Grimald's booklist (St Gallen 267) identifies that a copy of the *VB* had reached St Gallen during Grimald's abbacy, thus by 872. Most probably, the late ninth or early tenth century St Gallen 573 represents a second copy of the text made at the monastery which may have been based on part of Reichenau's (now lost) collection of vision texts.[68] This text is considered by Levison to be an older recension of the *VB* than that found in the earliest Brussels manuscript, suggesting a lost exemplar ('b' on the stemma) had reached this area even earlier.

St Gallen's interest in the text may have come from its geographical proximity and close links to Reichenau[69] which would have facilitated knowledge of the text, but it may have also harboured a secret desire to possess a revelation which depicted bishops in hell. In 756 Pippin, under pressures from Counts Ruthard and Warin, ordered the removal of the monastery's abbot, Otmar. For nearly a century, the foundation was placed under

[64] McKitterick, *Carolingians*, p. 181.

[65] P. Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz* (Munich, 1918), pp. 240-52.

[66] Dutton (*Politics*, p. 62-3 and n. 38) provides evidence for this supposition from memorial books, but Wattenbach, *VR* (p. 74) has argued that the vision was set at Fleury.

[67] Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 63-79.

[68] Houben, 'Visio', p. 33. From the letters of Lupus of Ferrières which are sprinkled with references to requests and loans of texts, it is known that there was a lively book exchange between monasteries as early as the Carolingian period: E. Dümmler, *MGH Ep.* VI (Berlin, 1902) nos. 6, 8, 91, 93, 16, 69, 62, among others.

[69] McKitterick, *Carolingians*, p. 182.

the jurisdiction of the bishopric of Constance, a diocese which also controlled Reichenau.[70] The monastery was then suffering from lost autonomy and had made complaints against its episcopal overlords.[71] St Gallen's beleaguered position continued in the ninth century and may in part explain the monastery's interest in obtaining and disseminating the vision. While the Carolingian visions carried pro-episcopal messages critical of royal policy,[72] the *VB* reminded bishops of the possibility of damnation and celebrated the sanctity of abbots.

St Petersburg Lat. O. v. I, 5, the oldest recension, is the next chronological witness of the text.[73] Its origins are not known for certain but it is likely that the text was copied and given colour illustrations at St Remigius, Rheims in the last quarter of the ninth century. Rheims in the late ninth-century must also have had a vision-collection for Hincmar refers to many visions in his redaction of the *Vision of Bernold.* Thus we find that the *VB* is not found where it originated but where there was greatest Carolingian interest in vision literature.

Two other manuscripts, BL Cotton Otho A. XIII and Vatican reg. lat. 479 date from roughly the same time but their provenance is obscure. There followed nearly a century of silence. The eleventh century witnessed an increase in the text's geographical dissemination. We can establish from booklists that the text had reached England, specifically Worcester, by *ca.* 1050. The vision appeared with a collection of texts in Old English, although almost certainly still in its original Latin.[74] It is interesting to note that eleventh-century Worcester was another 'dream centre' much like ninth-century Reichenau.[75] Further evi-

[70] J.M. Clark, *The Abbey of St Gall* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 4-5; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 44.
[71] Clark, *Abbey*, p. 5.
[72] See Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 157-194 and below, chapter 6, especially section 6.3.
[73] A. Staerk, *Les manuscrits Latins du V^e au XIII^e siècle conservés à la Bibliothèque Impériale de Saint-Petersbourg*, vol. I (St Petersburg, 1910, rpt. Hildesheim, 1976), pp. 43-4.
[74] Lapidge ('Surviving Booklists', pp. 33-89) argues that as the title of the vision is recorded in Latin, there is little reason to suspect that the vision was ever translated into the vernacular.
[75] K. Sisam, 'An Old English Translation of a letter from Wynfrith to Eadburga (A.D. 716-7) in Cotton MS. Otho C.1', *Modern Language Review* 18 (1923), pp. 257-8 discusses a manuscript produced at Worcester which contained a copy of the *Dialogues* and Boniface's vision of the Monk of Wenlock. Worcester also the setting for the *Vision of Leofric.*

dence of the *VB* in England comes from a late-eleventh or early-twelfth-century booklist from Peterborough, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163.

Surviving manuscript evidence shows that the vision text was disseminated south of the Alps by at least the twelfth century,[76] although the text must have been known to the Italian author of the *Vita S. Baronti* by 1018. There is no indication that the text reached Spain during the Middle Ages.

## 3.7 The Audience of the *VB* and its Manuscript Treatment

While some otherworld visions may shed light on lay piety, the *VB* seems thoroughly monastic in its conception and intended audience. The inclusion of numerous biographical sketches of former inhabitants of both Barontus's monastery and the nearby monastery at Millebecus[77] would seem to serve poorly as a lay devotional aid. It might be thought that because Barontus had so recently converted to monastic life his vision would be particularly revealing of lay piety. Whatever the case, however, it contains much material which was specific to the spiritual and liturgical shortcomings of the Longoretus monastery[78] and would have been of interest to other monastic audiences as it specifically addressed concerns over monastic discipline. Furthermore a plethora of Biblical images are interwoven into the account such as Abraham's bosom (Lk. 16.22),[79] the miraculous appearance of manna (Ex. 16.24)[80] and images of boys dressed in white stoles (Rev. 7.9)[81] and gates resembling glass (Rev. 21.18).[82] Like most other early medieval visions, the *VB* does not contain any condemna-

[76] Vatican, BAV, Lat. 5411, and also London, BL Harley 4719. Levison (*VB*, p. 374) notes the twelfth-century Harley MS. was written in Italy.
[77] See *VB*, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17 and 19 (pp. 381, 382, 383, 384-6, 388-390, 391, 392-3).
[78] Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 247.
[79] *VB*, 16 (p. 390).
[80] *VB*, 17 (pp. 391-2).
[81] *VB*, 13 (p. 388).
[82] *VB*, 10 (p. 384).

tion of heresy, magic or idolatry,[83] but instead is most concerned with those in monasteries or bishoprics who have not completely renounced the world.[84] Thus the vision can only be seen as resting in the 'popular' end of a spectrum of 'official'[85] theological writing. In his assessment of the audience for the Blickling Homilies (which contain descriptions of the other world and visions), McC. Gatch asserts that monastic sources were not always adapted to the needs of the secular audience to whom the material was read.[86] Thus we cannot exclude the possibility that it reached a lay audience, but it must be seen as a monastic text. Chapter 5 will consider this issue more fully.

Once written down, vision-texts probably functioned much like *vitae*, being read to a monastic audience on the anniversary of the vision's occurrence.[87] The emergence of a more 'classicised' text of the *VB* was probably a consequence of Carolingian educational reforms and further suggests that this text was intended for a monastic audience at least by the ninth century.[88] As discussed above, textual evidence within the *VB* suggests that it was also initially designed for a monastic audience.

In general the text received very good treatment, and in one case it was rendered into

[83]J.N. Hillgarth ('Popular Religion in Visigothic Spain', in E. James, *Visigothic Spain*, [Oxford, 1980], pp. 15-16) argues that popular belief is traceable through sources such as Church councils and law codes. He notes that these issues were what most concerned the Councils of Visigothic Spain.

[84]Hence the punishment of the bishops in *VB* 17 (p. 391). For 'unbelievers' see *VB* 6, 20 (pp. 382 and 393) but note that the text is twice addressed to the 'fratres karissimi' (*VB*, 1 and 20, [pp. 377 and 393]) suggesting it was not primarily concerned with the unconverted but with those who might disbelieve the vision's veracity.

[85]This term is used by Hillgarth ('Popular Religion, p. 4) to distinguish between the voices present in different genres which had all been recorded by clerics.

[86]Milton McC. Gatch, 'The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies', *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989), pp. 99-115.

[87]M. Van Uytfanghe, *L'Hagiographie et son Public à l'Époque Mérovingienne*, in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 16 (Berlin, 1985), pp. 54-62.

[88]M.L.W. Laistner (*Thought and Letters in Western Europe. A.D. 500 to 900* [Ithaca, 1931, rev. 1957], pp. 281ff) and K. Heene ('Merovingian and Carolingian hagiography. Continuity or Change in Public and Aims?' *Analecta Bollandiana* 107 [1989], pp. 419-420) discuss Carolingian revision of the Latin of Merovingian *vitae*. Heene (p. 423) notes evidence that in some cases Merovingian versions of *vitae* were used for the edification of the laity while Carolingian Latin versions were written for a clerical audience.

an illustrated manuscript.[89] In most of the earlier manuscripts, the text was very heavily corrected, revealing that it had been compared to other 'better' copies of the text and thus signalling a desire to obtain a 'correct' text.[90] The early manuscripts in particular were well thumbed with much marginal annotation.[91] Marks made in the margins note that there was particular interest in the form of Barontus's soul, his judgement and his vision of hell. Appendix B provides further details of the individual manuscripts.

The intimate scale of some of the manuscripts certainly suggests they were designed to be read privately. The illustration of St Peter's keys in five of the manuscripts[92] – a feature which was called for by a phrase within the text[93] gives further support to this conclusion because none of the manuscripts which contain this illustration was large enough to be seen from a distance.[94]

There is plenty of evidence which suggests that other visions were used in homilies. Bede's visions, for example, were excerpted from the *HE*, translated into Anglo-Saxon and incorporated into Aelfric's sermons.[95] The text of the *VB* itself forms a complete homiletic address; even its opening which addresses the *fratres karissimi* announces its motive.[96] Thus from its beginning the *VB* appears to have assumed the form of a sermon. One would

[89]St Petersburg, Lat. O.v. I, 5. It was often introduced by enlarged initial with several coloured lines of display script; sometimes a pointing hand was included to make the beginning of the text more conspicuous: e.g. BRA 8216-18 and Munich clm. 6293 but the text was always rendered in keeping with other texts in the same manuscript.

[90]Esp. notable in St Gallen text in which even the number of miles between the monasteries was amended. The importance of correcting books had been called for in Carolingian legislation: *AG*, c. 72 (p. 60).

[91]For example: Lambeth Palace, 173. Marginal annotation generally points out factual details such as the monastery's name and the abbot, or else themes such as obedience.

[92]Space is left for them in St Gallen 573.

[93]'habentes similitudinem hanc'. *VB*, 12 (p. 387).

[94]See Appendix B for manuscript measurements.

[95] Aelfric used visions in his homilies (ed. Thorpe, *Homilies*, vol. 2, pp. 332-57; as did the Blickling Homilist (ed. Morris, *Blickling*, pp. 38-53). Le Goff (*Medieval Imagination*) discusses visions used as exempla and T.L. Amos ('Early Medieval Sermons and their Audience', in *De L'Homélie au Sermon: Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, ed. J. Hamesse and X. Hermand [Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993], esp. p. 11) notes the prevalence of the themes of heaven, hell and the afterlife in sermons.

[96]First noted by Levison, then Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 145 and expanded upon by Hen, 'Structures', p. 485.

thus expect to find the text located within the context of sermon collections, but this is not generally the case. Furthermore, finding stress marks for reading, the division of the text block would indicate that the work was intended to be used as a lectionary or that it had been used for some sort of public recitation, but none of the manuscripts contained a single stress mark and where there was any division of the text at all, it was not reflective of chapters but instead occurred where the beginning of a sentence naturally began a new line. That medieval compilers had envisaged a different use for this text is further indicated by the codicological evidence.

## 3.8 Codicology

Consideration of the associated contents of a manuscript can be very useful for making connections among various recensions of a text, as well as for shedding light on how a text was valued and used.[97] References to the text in booklists or library catalogues are only partially useful,[98] since in only very rare cases can we reconstruct the contents of individual codices from the list of the monastery's holdings. However the general position in which visions are listed reveals something of their intended use since these lists were formulated in terms of a hierarchy of authority and then subdivided in terms of the function or place in which they would have been found in the monastery. In this way, booklists can be useful in assessing monastic attitudes towards the *VB*. Generalising from the five booklists which include reference to the vision, we find it catalogued among *vitae* or with other visions. A section of the Reichenau booklist is reproduced in Appendix B and would have been preceded by Scripture, theological writings, monastic rules and *vitae*, followed by liturgical

[97] Useful on this subject is P. Gehrke, *Saints and Scribes: Medieval Hagiography in its Manuscript Context* (Berkeley, 1993).

[98] These lists have however been analysed by R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989); J. D. Kyle, 'The Monastic Library at St Emmeram (Regensburg)', *Journal of Library History* 15:1 (1980), pp. 1-21 and K. Christ, *The Handbook of Medieval Library History* rev. A. Kern, trs. T. Otto (London, 1984). Each has offered a pattern of organisation which is discernible in most of the monastic libraries for which we have inventories and one which was also followed in later centuries.

books.

Much has rightly been made of manuscript organisational schemes which are found in medieval library catalogues (of which Reichenau's is an example) and the organisation of composite manuscripts.[99] But less attention has been given to the way in which the organisational schemes exerted some influence on the codicological organisation of composite manuscripts. In other words we can find the same principals of organisation on the macroscopic level of library cataloguing as on the microscopic level of individual codices. For example the vision is never bound with the Bible or with Classical texts, grammars or even manuals of dream theory but instead is most often found with other visions and hagiographical texts especially the *Life of Fronto*[100] and the Latin translation of the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of Macharius the Roman.*[101] This pervasive hagiographical context could be construed as the influence of Barontus's cult but I think this highly unlikely since we find it in a hagiographical context long before the composition of Barontus's *vita* in 1018.[102] Instead it points to obvious crossovers between visions and hagiography as biographical and miraculous sources and thus apposite companions.[103]

In eight manuscripts ranging from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, the text appears with a specific group of *vitae*, known collectively as the *Vitae Patrum.*[104] This work is made

[99]For book lists, see n. 98 above; for composite manuscripts, see R. McKitterick, 'The Audience for Latin Historiography in the Early Middle Ages Text Transmission and Manuscript Dissemination,' in A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter, *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (1994) and Gehrke, *Saints.*

[100]The association between these two texts may be connected with the St Gallen calendar which commemorated Fronto (unusually) on VII Kal April and Barontus's vision was dated to VIII Kal April.

[101]The *VB* shares many affinities with this early Christian *vita*, most especially in sharing Raphael as a guide for a journey to the other world.

[102]*De SS. Baronto et Desiderio*, *AASS* 25 March, pp. 567-570.

[103]Berschin, *Biographie*, p. 106ff.

[104]Brussels BRA 8216-18, Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 14,364, Paris BN 12596, London BL Harley 4719, Vatican City BAV lat 5411, Brussels BRA 8623-26, Naples BN VIII B.10 and Naples BN VIII B. 27, but also finds itself with the *Vitae Patrum* in compilations of an unspecified date such as: Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 23,591; Munich Clm 23,575 and Paris BN 11885. It is perhaps noteworthy that it is the family of 3b and c – the corrected Latin text – which ends up with *Vitae Patrum.* We could perhaps suggest that this was due to two Carolingian tendencies: correcting the Latin of the Merovingian texts, and legislating on the observance of the *RB* which had noted the suitability of these writings for

up of the lives of the early monastic fathers in the Egyptian desert. The vision's association with these *vitae* may have had implications both for the popularity of the text as well as for its audience. The *Rule of the Master* and the *RB* both specifically mention the *Lives of the Fathers* as a model for monastic behaviour and as the ideal type of private reading material for monks.[105] As a pre-eminently monastic vision, the *VB* was thematically related to these *vitae*. But early medieval compilers regarded it as a work which could sit nicely amidst this collection of wisdom in the *Lives of the Fathers*. This is a complement indeed for such a relatively recent text.[106] Furthermore finding a vision in this context should, as we have seen in chapter 2, lead us to reconsider the long-held assumption that the Church regarded visions as generally unacceptable and potentially dangerous.

The *VB*'s inclusion within the highly popular *Vitae Patrum* may have contributed to the vision's wide dissemination. In a sense, this association could be thought of in terms of being included within a best-seller. It may not be coincidental that Boniface's *Monk of Wenlock* and later Carolingian visions which were not circulated with the *Vitae Patrum* had a more limited transmission. Alone, this piece of evidence cannot fully explain the oddities of the manuscript transmission of the *VB*, for the *Lives of the Fathers* was a fluid collection of texts and furthermore the collection is more often found without the *VB* than with it. The eight volumes which contain both the *Vitae Patrum* and the *VB* preserve six different recensions of the Barontus text and slightly different selections from and ordering of the *Vitae Patrum*. This leads us to conclude that the eight manuscripts which contain both were not merely copies derived from a single exemplar. In ninth- and tenth-century manuscripts, the *VB* is also found with selections from patristic authors such as Augustine, Gregory the Great, Isidore and Jerome. Again, the *VB*'s codicology speaks of the text's

monastic reading.

[105] *RM* LXIII (ed. A. de Vogüé, *La Règle du Maître*, SC 105-6, [Paris, 1964-5], p. 288) *RB* 42. 3 (SC 182, p. 584).

[106] This appears to be another example of a trend identified by McKitterick ('Eighth-century foundations' p. 690) from a study of Corbie's collection of texts which shows that 'local Frankish saints are commemorated alongside saints and martyrs of early Christianity.'

status for Carolingian audiences.

Let us move from this general picture to the more specific surroundings in which we find the text. Visions are not often found in a separate volume on their own[107] but they are frequently found in clusters, and thus form what I would term visionary *libelli* within a longer codex. In other words, their immediate neighbours are other visions, but they occur in the middle of larger volumes, sometimes in separate quires. Many of the codices which currently house the *VB* were compiled at a later date and thus introduce uncertainty as to the original codicological context. However St Gallen 573, dating from the ninth century, is a particularly good example since both its provenance and original codicological form are secure. The volume begins with poetic *vitae*, then we find Heito's prose version of the *VW*, Walahfrid's versification of this same text, the *VPW* followed by the *VB*. The volume then returns to poetry and *vitae*.[108] Such a compilation seems to fulfil library organisational schemes, yet it is interesting to note that within the collection of visions, chronological ordering – which was also a frequent method of medieval book organisation – is almost completely ignored.[109] This pattern of visionary *libelli* within a larger context, generally of *vitae*, was found in sixteen of the twenty-one manuscripts for which I could determine the contemporary codicology with some degree of confidence,[110] and was observable even in the early manuscripts of the *VB*. The chart at the end of Appendix B demonstrates this point.

We turn now to these *libelli* specifically. There is a certain amount of repetition within them, but it is important to note here that all of these visions, with one exception are early medieval visions, a point to which I will return shortly. Within these *libelli*, the *VB*

[107] The one exception being St Petersburg Lat. O.v.I,5 a codex which contains only two visions.
[108] See Appendix B for details.
[109] McKitterick (*Carolingians*, pp. 180-1) notes that chronological ordering is observable in other sections of library catalogues.
[110] Of the five which did not contain any other visions, four contained the *Vitae Patrum* and one was a handbook devoted to Last Things. Compare with the manuscripts of the *VPW* which all contained other visions.

appears with the seventh-century *VF* eight times,[111] both Heito's and Walahfrid's versions of the ninth-century *VW* eight times.[112] It appears in five different manuscripts with Bede's vision of a soldier (V.13) and vision of a monk (V.14), visions dating from the 690's.[113] The *VB* is bound with the fourth book of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* three times,[114] the seventh-century *VA* once,[115] the late seventh-century *Vision of Dryhthelm* twice[116] and the ninth-century *Visio Rotcharii* twice.[117] It appears once with the ninth-century *VPW*,[118] once with the tenth-century V*ision of Fulrad*[119] and once with the twelfth-century *Vision of Tundal.*[120]

Despite the repetitions, this list illustrates the variety of texts which the *VB* appears with. Each manuscript's codicology reveals a slightly different selection and arrangement of visions. Furthermore different recensions of the *VB* sometimes find the same company in very unrelated manuscripts. However, as can be seen from the chart in Appendix B, even when the *VB* was copied directly as in case of St Petersburg codex (**1a**) and the Rheims MS 1412 (**1a***), principals of selection were exercised. The choice was made not to copy the second vision, the *Visio Rotcharii*, from the St Petersburg manuscript into the later Rheims manuscript. Instead in the later manuscript the *VB* appears with Bede's redaction of the *VF*, and three other visions from his *HE* (book V. chapters 13, 14, 15). One of the Vatican manuscripts[121] is an exact copy of the *VB* text found in Harley 4719 and yet in the Harley

[111] Reichenau book catalogue, Cotton Otho A. XIII, Lambeth Palace 173, Rheims 1412, Harley 4719, Vatican Urb lat. 396, Naples VIII B. 10 and VIII B. 27. (As well as Paris BN 11885 but contents may not be medieval).

[112] Reichenau book catalogue, St Gallen book catalogue, St Gallen 573, BL Cotton Otho A XIII, Lambeth Palace 173, Vienna 579, Naples VIII B. 10 (Heito) and Naples VIII B 27 (Heito)

[113] Reichenau book catalogue; Rheims BM 1412; London BL Harley 4719; London Lambeth Palace 173.

[114] Reichenau book catalogue; Munich Clm 6293; Paris BN 12596.

[115] Her *vita* is almost entirely composed of visions. The *VB* is found with the *VA* in Paris BN 11885 but this codicological arrangement may not be medieval.

[116] London Lambeth Palace 173 and Vatican BAV Urb. lat. 396.

[117] St Petersburg Lat O.v. I, 5 and London BL Cotton Otho A. XIII.

[118] St Gallen 573.

[119] London Lambeth Palace 173.

[120] Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 579.

[121] Vatican, BAV Urb. lat. 396.

manuscript the vision appears with the *VF* and Bede's vision of a soldier,[122] whereas the compiler of the Vatican manuscript selected only the visions of Barontus and Fursey.

Whilst it is clear that the *VB* did not circulate within only one visionary context, this survey shows that something like a canon of early medieval visions had formed. It appears that only certain otherworld visions were likely to circulate outside of their original context, and only these could keep company with each other. For example, in these manuscripts we never find the *Vision of the English Presbyter*, nor Anskar's vision nor the visions of Sunniulf and Salvius in such a collection, but we do find the *VF* taken from Bede and sometimes his *vita* and the free-standing Carolingian visions of *Wetti*, the *Poor Woman* and *Rotcharius* in this context. Furthermore, there is no cross-over between the apocalyptic visions like those of Paul and Peter, or apocrypha like the Gospel of Nicodemus and otherworld visions. This is particularly interesting in cases where we know that a scriptorium –for example St Gallen – had such texts at their disposal.[123]

That this canon of early medieval visions is sustained even in later medieval manuscript of the *VB* seems particularly significant since the corpus of visions from which a compiler could have chosen had grown. There seems to have been some tacit recognition that there was a line of demarcation between early Christian visionary texts and early medieval visions, and another between earlier and later medieval visions. The one exception to the rule is the juxtaposition of the *Vision of Tundal* and the *VB*, but there is a possible explanation for this which will be discussed in 4.2.

This is in fact a remarkably homogeneous canon and what is particularly interesting is that the visions which accompany Barontus's are always found in a slightly different order, or with a slightly different selection of texts. As we found with the *Vitae Patrum*, there is a combination of similar, but not the same texts, representing a common ideology and thus

[122] *HE*, V.13 (pp. 498-502).
[123] The *AP* survives in two ninth-century St Gallen manuscripts: St Gallen, MS 317 and MS 682.

rules out theories that a single sourcebook of visions was the exemplar behind the creation of all of these manuscripts. The existence of this canon, which is as true for ninth-century manuscripts of the *VB* as for those of the fifteenth, becomes the more remarkable when some of the endless influences at work in the creation of a codex are factored in, such as the personal taste of the compiler, the oral tradition and the availability of texts.

Visions are of course thematically related to one another and carry superficial resemblances especially in the general structure of the account. It was a genre in which originality was not encouraged. Yet each of the visions present multifarious and often conflicting conceptions of the other world. There was no comprehensive picture or single image of the other world. Even what we think of as universal archetypes were subject to variation in early medieval visions: hell for example, was sometimes hot sometimes cold or both at the same time; heaven and the shape of the soul were equally subject to great variety.[124] Thus to collect these different accounts into one sourcebook seems to be an exercise in drawing attention to their diversity. We can only offer some speculation on why these collections of visions were made and for this we turn to evidence from the genre itself.

As discussed in chapter 2, there were various means for authenticating a new visionary experience, but one method was to point out similarities between it and older, accepted accounts. Some of these *libelli* reveal the compiler's desire to find parallels. It seems manuscript compilers were responding to this desire to highlight similarities or at least offer a catalogue of other references for otherworldly revelations. This practice is very understandable for texts which share common conception of the other world such as the *Visions of Fulrad* and *Dryhthelm.* In fact we find the texts themselves do this – for example, the Visions of Barontus and Wetti explicitly name Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* as the source for some of their imagery, and the *Vision of Bernold* is given credibility by the redactor's comment that it is believable since it is so similar to the visions recorded by

[124]These themes will be addressed in section 6.2.

Bede, Boniface and Gregory and the vision seen by Wetti.[125]

It was probably a natural outgrowth of this literary practice of finding comparisons which led to the excerpting of visions from their hagiographical or historical context and compiling them. A collection of visions may also have functioned as a book of exempla for homilists – a ready catalogue of crimes, torments and rewards.[126] It must however be noted that although so many visions draw from or cite the *Dialogues* directly, they are rarely bound together. Therefore we must be aware that we cannot easily resolve all of the codicological organisation medieval manuscripts preserve.

This manuscript evidence seems to suggest that we have pinpointed the ninth century as the period in which visions emerge as a separate genre,[127] evidenced by the composition of autonomous texts and these *libelli*. However the stand-alone form of the *VB* contradicts the first claim, as does the *AP*, and furthermore the collecting of visions was a practice which predated the ninth century. Visions which bore no similarities to one another had already been gathered into a single work from a very early date. For example Bede's *HE* contains four otherworld visions, but he also hints at the existence of books of visions which he used to write his history.[128] Before this the *VA* records that her visions had been collected into a book. Similarly Valerius of Bierzo had preserved several visionary accounts in his writings, as had Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues* and Gregory of Tours in his *DLH*.

[125] *Vision of Bernold* (col. 1118C).

[126] The *AP* was compressed for this purpose in the Middle Ages: D.D. R. Owen, 'The 'The "Vision of St Paul"', *Romance Philology* 12 (1958), pp. 33-51. Aelfric used Bede's visions for his sermons (see n. 95).

[127] For example, Hen ('Structure', p. 485) takes the view that the *VB* and the *VF* are exceptions, but he does not consider that Fursey's visions appeared within a *vita*. He ignores the *AP* which was a free-standing text.

[128] Bede, *HE*, IV. 10.

## 3.9 Conclusions

Little of the *VB*'s early history as a text is recoverable. It is first recorded in early ninth-century manuscripts and enjoyed great popularity in this and later centuries.[129] A survey of the text's manuscripts raises some interesting questions about the demand for this text in later centuries, particularly in light of different devotional trends[130] and the dramatic transformations which the genre of vision literature itself underwent during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In the early manuscripts, the *VB* shares the company of saints' lives, homiletic material and patristic writings on eschatology, suggesting that in some communities the text was thought to carry authority equal to that of the Church Fathers, or to be illustrative of their writings. The *VB*'s orthodoxy was perhaps increased by these associations. The *VB*'s early context shows that it was indeed taken seriously and was not a literary backwater.

Within the varied content of the *VB*'s manuscripts, we find the presence of visionary *libelli*. While the availability of texts and the motives and predilections of individual scribes and compilers may be used to explain some of the visionary collections we find,[131] these factors alone can completely account for the patterns we have described above which are observable in manuscripts from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries across the Frankish Empire, Italy and England. Manuscript evidence from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries for the *VB* points to a distinction being made between early medieval visions and post-tenth century visions, not one between Merovingian and Carolingian, Anglo-Saxon and Continental, dependent or independent accounts.[132]

[129] I hold to my view of the manuscript history of the *VB* despite the contra views expressed by Professor L. Nees, presented at the Alcuin conference at York, July 1998 and at the $35^{th}$ International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, May 2000.

[130] Especially the development of mysticism: Kiekheffer, *Unquiet Souls;* McGinn, *Growth of Mysticism.*

[131] For example, Grimalt, Reginbert and Hincmar, in the *Vision of Bernold,* intimates that he has access to many vision texts.

[132] This observation may not hold for the more universal visions of the early Middle Ages whose codicology

In collecting visions into *libelli* visionary contradictions were underscored. It is intriguing that medieval audiences saw no need to resolve these visions into a single, coherent authoritative image of heaven and hell. Indeed they seem to have been comfortable with, and desirous of comparing variant or even discordant models of the other world.

In ninth and tenth century manuscripts, the *VB* joined company with then-contemporary Carolingian visions – a tradition with which it had much in common but one in which it became fossilised. A notable change in codicological context occurred between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This was a period of codifying and collecting texts and I believe monastic audiences developed something of an antiquarian interest in the *VB*. With the one exception of the Vienna manuscript which includes the *Vision of Tundal* with the *VB*, it was no longer allowed to share the company of more recent visions, nor the company of sermons and other theological writings. Its historical framework, which was doggedly maintained throughout its various incarnations, and perhaps its latinity, may have dated the text in the eyes of later medieval audiences. This segregation of the text signals a change in contemporary attitudes toward earlier vision texts.

It is possible that the *VB*'s specific dating and local colour made it seem a very dated text as compared with the more timeless visions of Gregory the Great or Fursey. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the nature of heavenly revelation had changed. Spiritual nourishment was being provided by a new type of mysticism which brought with it its own tradition of visions which drew upon different themes for devotion such as the saints, angels and the eucharist.[133] It is at this time we find the 'old-style' heaven and hell vision texts segregated with other similar vision texts. The *libelli* of otherworld visions become shorter and were almost exclusively found within hagiographical collections. The dearth of notes and annotations in some of these later manuscripts further confirms a change in the focus,

is yet to be studied.

[133]Dinzelbacher, *Vision*; Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, p. 165.

readership and purpose of the text.[134]

However the conservation of early medieval visions throughout the Middle Ages demonstrates continued interest in such accounts. The *VB*, like other early visions, was still being copied well into the fifteenth century.[135] Furthermore we cannot ignore that the second peak of production for the *VB* occurred in the eleventh and twelfth centuries which probably coincided with the increased interest in Barontus's cult. But the manuscript tradition shows that this text was of particular interest in the ninth century. Before turning to ninth century interest in the text, we must first examine its seventh-century origins.

[134]See especially the pristine copy of the text in Vatican BAV Urb. lat. 396.
[135]For example the *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock* is found in two copies of the sixteenth-century and one of the seventeenth.

CHAPTER

# FOUR

# The Date of the *Visio Baronti*: Its Literary and Political Context

## 4.1 Introduction

The *VB* was one of the few texts to be accepted as authentically Merovingian after having been subjected to close scrutiny by Krusch and Levison.[1] Their criteria for dating texts included: locating an early manuscript of the work; finding any references to or citations of the text in other dated or datable sources; evaluating it within its genre; assessing the quality of its latinity and finally checking for historical inaccuracies or anachronisms within

[1]From the Merovingian period, the works of Gregory of Tours, Venantius Fortunatus and Jonas of Bobbio and approximately 15 other *vitae* have been accepted as genuine Merovingian texts. W. Wattenbach and W. Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter, Vorzeit und Karolinger* 1, ed. W. Levison (1952) pp. 97-138, specifically for the *VB*, p. 135. For this reference and much of the following argument, I have followed I.N. Wood, 'Forgery in Merovingian Hagiography', *MGH Schriften* 33: Fälschungen im Mittelalter V (Hanover, 1988) pp. 369-85.

the text.[2] For Levison, the *VB* was deemed to be above even a whisper of the charge of 'forgery' since it fulfilled so many of his criteria,[3] and subsequent scholars have not questioned the vision's purported date.

As discussed in chapter 3, the *VB* contains many suggestions that it was written down soon after the vision's occurrence. The foundation for the text's traditional date is the clause with which the vision concludes: Acta sunt haec omnia VIII. Kal. April. in sexto anno regnante Theoderico regem Francorum (25 March 678/9). The clause is found in several of the early manuscripts.[4] Furthermore, the *VB*'s linguistic formulation and eschatological conceptions support the traditional date since they bear some relation to the *VB*'s near contemporary, the *VF*.[5] The *VB*'s authenticity is further established by its self-proclaimed 'rustic' latinity[6] which is soundly representative of late Merovingian Latin.[7] Lastly, the text's historicity is confirmed by its factual detail. Levison has shown that the subscription clause is trustworthy because its specificity is consistent with internal evidence which records the deaths of Bishops Wulfoleodus[8] and Dido.[9] Since it is known that they died before 672,[10] Barontus is chronologically within his rights to recognise them installed in hell.[11]

In his work on *vitae*, Delehaye wrote that legend '...has of necessity an historical or

[2]Wood, 'Forgery', pp. 372-3 provides a clear overview of Krusch and Levison's methodology as well as a masterful argument for the re-evaluation of some of the texts labelled 'forgeries'.

[3]Levison, *VB*, 369-377.

[4]Including the earliest manuscript of the vision, Bruxelles, MS. 3595 (8216-18) and the earliest recension of the vision, St Petersburg, MS Lat. oct. I, 5. As discussed in chapter 3, we find that the dating clause was dropped in some later manuscripts, perhaps in an effort to make the text more universal.

[5]The *VF* dates from about 656-7. For the similarities, see below, esp. footnote 67 in this chapter.

[6] *VB*, 20 (p. 393) 'Si quis aliquis hunc opusculum a me factum legendum in manibus acciperit, potest me de rusticitatem verbi reprehendere, non potest de mendacii culpam redarguere.'

[7]Levison, *VB*, pp. 370-1.

[8]On Wulfredus L. Duchesne, *Fastes*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1900) p. 29, Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 143.

[9]On Dido see: *Liber Historiae Francorum (LHF)*, c. 43, *Additamentum Nivialense di Fuilano,* (ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 4 [Hanover, 1902], p. 451); *Passio Leudegarii* I, 1 (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 [Hanover, 1910], pp. 282-322); also Cabrol and Leclercq, *DACL*, vol. xiv, pt. 1, cols. 1276, 1282ff; and J.M. Picard, 'Church and Politics in the Seventh Century: the Irish exile of King Dagobert II', in Picard (ed.), *Ireland and Northern France* (Dublin, 1991), pp. 27-52.

[10]Levison, *VB*, p. 370.

[11] *VB*, 17 (p. 391).

topographical connexion. It refers imaginary events to a real person, associates fanciful stories with an existing place.'[12] Indeed the author of the *VB* several times linked himself with the visionary and his monastery (a standard visionary topos), but rather unusually we find that he went to great lengths to link the literary text which he created with a particular historical context. Are these features a deliberate attempt to mask the true date of the composition of the vision? Although there is substantial evidence for the vision being of the late seventh century, definitive proof of the text's early date is lacking. None of Levison's criteria are completely conclusive or reliable and other aspects of the text raise further suspicions. Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 3, there is an absence of manuscripts of the vision before the ninth century.

The *VB* has been identified as one of the first 'political' visions of the other world,[13] and in this chapter we will look to the politics of the late 670's to contextualise the vision's occurrence and to re-examine the question of when it was written. We shall begin by reassessing the textual grounds for dating the *VB* (section 4.2) before considering the style of the dating clause (4.3), the potential significance of both the date of the $25^{th}$ of March (4.4), and the years 678/9 (4.5) and finally the historical significance of the third quarter of the seventh century (4.6). In opening up the question of the vision's date, we shall investigate the suitability of the third quarter of the seventh century as the chosen context for the vision and what political factors might have contributed to the composition of the text.

[12]H. Delehaye, *The Legend of the Saints*, trs. D. Attwater, $4^{th}$ ed. (London, 1962), p. 7.

[13]Levison, 'Politik', pp. 233-4. Although primarily didactic, the vision has been subject of various political readings. For example see Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 142-144 and Hen, 'Structure', pp. 493-497.

## 4.2 Textual Methods of Dating a Vision

### The Manuscript Tradition

The manuscript tradition can help to fix the *terminus post quem* for the composition of a text especially when independent witnesses are lacking. As I discussed in chapter 3, the earliest manuscript of the *VB*, (although by Levison's reckoning this is not the earliest recension) is found in a manuscript which includes a colophon dating it to 819.[14] The next independent witness to the *VB* occurs in a book list drafted by Reginbert at the monastery of Reichenau sometime between 835-842.[15]

The hiatus between the purported date of the vision and its first manuscript or manuscript witness does not necessarily mean that the text is from this later period.[16] It would be after all more unusual to find a Merovingian manuscript preserved.[17] But here it must be noted that there is no independent witness to the *VB* in any form dated before the ninth century. Given the popularity and self-referential nature of the genre of visionary literature, we can assume that the *VB*'s circulation in the eighth century was somewhat limited, perhaps owing to the fact that it had not yet reached one of the centres devoted to the production and dissemination of visions.[18] The text's appeal was certainly recognised in the ninth and later centuries.

[14]Bruxelles MS n. 3595 (8216-18).

[15]Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskatalogue*, pp. 84, 87-89.

[16]This is the case made by Clark, *Pseudo-Gregorian*, and opposed by Meyvaert, 'Enigma'. See n. 20 below.

[17]Only one copy of the Chronicle of Fredegar and two hagiographic texts of those edited and vetted by the *MGH* survive in Merovingian manuscripts: P. Fouracre and R. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996), p. 64, n. 138. This argument must also take into account the relative number of surviving manuscripts from the Merovingian and Carolingian periods. R. McKitterick, 'The Scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul: A Survey of the Evidence', in H.B. Clarke and M. Brennan, *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism* (Oxford, 1981), p. 173 notes that there are only 300 manuscript fragments from France which date from the fifth to the eighth centuries.

[18]As discussed in chapter 1.

**Genre**

The *VB* is considered to be the first medieval vision which stands on its own as a work of literature. It does not appear within a longer text but is independent, supporting its own narrative framework.[19] It locates itself chronologically after the visions recorded by Gregory the Great (*ca.* 594),[20] Gregory of Tours (*ca.* 591)[21] and the *VF* (*ca.* 633-650's).[22] The *VB* was closely followed by the visions of Aldegund (*ca.* 684),[23] the visions recorded by Valerius of Bierzo (*ca.* 695),[24] and Bede's *Dryhthelm* (*ca.* 692).[25] Unlike the *VB*, visions from this period were generally cast in the form of a short précis of the visionary experience, often fragmentary in nature and always part of a longer work which provided some narrative framework for the account. Except for the *AP* and the *VB*, there is a remarkably smooth progression of the genre from brief accounts to full-scale independent visions. Boniface's redaction of the *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock* in the early eighth century is a fuller account although like earlier visions, it is still located within a larger (in this case, epistolary) framework. It is only in the ninth century that we find other substantial visionary accounts which were composed as independent texts,[26] not merely included as part of *vitae*, chronicles and letters. As an independent and lengthy visionary text, the *VB* fits into a ninth-century context.

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[19]The free-standing *AP* is an early-Christian predecessor: Ciccarese, '*Visio Baronti*', pp. 36ff, and Dinzelbacher, *Revelationes*, p. 89. Its possible influence on this text is difficult to assess since the first manuscript of the vision in Latin is of the eighth century and had limited circulation even in the ninth: Silverstein, *Visio Pauli*.

[20] Dialogues, bk IV, ed. A. de Vogüé, P. Antin, *SC* 256 (Paris, 1980). For an alternative, and in my estimation incorrect, view to the date and authorship of the *Dialogues*, see Clark, *Pseudo-Gregorian*. Here he argues that the *Dialogues* so contradict Gregory's other writings that they cannot be by the same author. This work must be read in conjunction with Meyvaert's important and cogent refutation of Clark. Interestingly the *VB*'s explicit references to the *Dialogues*, see n. 44 below, have not been used by either Clark or Meyvaert. If we accept the *VB* as authentically and purely a seventh-century text, it offers much weight to the legitimacy of the *Dialogues*.

[21]*DLH* IV. 33 (p.166); VI. 29 (pp. 295-7); VII. 1 (pp. 323-6); and VIII. 5 (p. 374).

[22]An edition of the vision is found in Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 679-692.

[23]*VA*, 5-8, 12-14, pp. 315-324.

[24]*PL* 87 col. 451ff.

[25]*HE*, V. 12-14 (pp. 488-504).

[26]Heito's *Visio Wettini* of 824 appears to be the next vision text complete unto itself.

### Dated Visionary Sources

Many early medieval visions which have been incorporated into annals or other historical works are datable. However age was one of the hallmarks of authenticity in the genre of visionary literature; texts like the *VB* which include elaborate efforts to fasten themselves to a particular time or place often have something to hide,[27] as we shall see in the case of the *AP*. There are no antecedents for the *VB*'s subscription clause in the corpus of early medieval visionary literature, but three other visions do include a specific temporal reference: the *AP*, Walahfrid Strabo's poetic rendering of the *VW*,[28] and the *Vision of Tundal*.[29] The *VB*, the *VW* and *Tundal* references are to the date of the occurrence of these visions, while the *AP* refers to the date of the discovery of the text.

The closest parallel to the *VB*'s dating clause occurs in the twelfth-century *Visio Tundali*.[30] It appears at the end of the text and its close verbal similarities to the *VB*'s subscription clause are immediately apparent: *Acta sunt hec omnia ... aprilis anno vi° iii nonas Novembris*.[31] This vision was composed at Regensburg, where the *VB* had been both preserved and copied. It obviously does not shed light on the *VB*'s early history, but attests to the *VB*'s later influence and was the possible reason it is the only later medieval vision to appear in a visionary *libelli* with the *VB*.[32]

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[27] Meyvaert, 'Enigma', p. 373 makes this point regarding the authenticity of the *Dialogues*; the absence of a dedicatory letter is evidence of their authenticity.

[28] *VW*, lines 183-188 (p. 191).

[29] *Visio Tnugdali* (ed. A. Wagner, pp. 4-5).

[30] The problem of dating the vision was initially tackled by St. J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* XXXVII(1924-1927), 93-4. More recently, E. Gardiner ('A Solution to the Problem of Dating in the *Vision of Tundale*', *Medium Ævum* 51 [1982], pp. 86-91) has sought to demolish Seymour's 'scribal error' theory and has proposed an alternative way to surmount the apparent discrepancies which these four events recorded. See also J.-M. Picard and Y. de Pontfarcy, *The Vision of Tnugdal, translated from the Latin* (Dublin, 1989) and N.F. Palmer, *Visio Tnugdali The German and Dutch Translations and their Circulation in the Later Middle Ages* (Zürich, 1982), p. 17ff.

[31] However the redactor goes on to date the vision not only in years after the incarnation but also provides an extensive catalogue of historical events to fix the vision in time including the year of the Crusade of Conrad, the year of Pope Eugenius's reign, and the death of two bishops. *Tundal* (ed. Wagner, pp. 4-5).

[32] Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 579. See Appendix B for the manuscripts with a Regensburg provenance. It is not inconceivable that the *VB*'s innovative dating clause went on to influence other visions

Each of these dated visions are *independent* texts. It is therefore possible that the date was included since the visions had nothing anchoring them to a particular time or place. The *AP*'s dating is potentially very revealing as it raises issues for the *VB*. To mask the spurious invention of the text, the author of the *AP* incorporated an elaborate story of the text's discovery.[33] The redactor of Barontus's vision may have thought that adding a specific historical context would lend credibility to the events described in the vision. A dating clause could certainly lend an air of authenticity to the document, but it should be noted that in the case of the *AP*, the 'date' was added to conceal the vision's actual century of composition – clearly a case of Delehaye's 'historical necessity'.

These visions are not however the source for the *VB*'s style of dating. The *AP* and the *VW*'s dating occur at the beginning of the visions, the *VB*'s at the end. None are likely to have influenced the composition of the seventh-century *VB*. Although the *AP* was perhaps translated into Latin by the fifth or sixth century, it was only widely known from the ninth,[34] while the *VW* dates from 824 and *Tundal* from the twelfth century. The ninth century seems to be the period in which the three dated vision texts of the early Middle Ages either became widely known or were composed. This fact may explain why the *VB*'s clause was preserved in ninth-century manuscripts and at the same time shows how comfortably the *VB* fits into a ninth-century context.

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as well. Looking further afield, there is a twelfth-century *Letter of St Waldef* which contains a record of an awakened dream in which punishments of the other world are described. It ends with Explicit. Anno dominice in carnationis mclix. Oxford, Bodelian Library MS Fairfax 17, fol. 80.

[33]See the Long Latin redaction (L1), c.1. (T. Silverstein and A. Hilhorst, [ed.] *Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions* [Geneva, 1997], Cahiers D'Orientalisme XXI ) for the passage which provides specific information on the date and provenance of the discovery of the text, and was designed to give authenticity to this highly spurious work which blatantly contradicted scripture (2 Cor. 12. 1-5). This passage is fully discussed by T. Silverstein, 'The Date of the "Apocalypse of Paul"', *Medieval Studies* xxiv (1962), 335-48.

[34]T. Silverstein, 'The Date', p. 348. Also useful in this context is his *Visio Sancti Pauli: The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts* (London, 1935), Studies and Documents 4, especially chapter 4.

## Historical Eschatology

It has long been accepted that vision literature was deeply influenced by the place and time in which it was redacted and that the visionary was influenced by his surroundings and experiences.[35] Eschatological 'fingerprints' left on these texts have been used by historians to identify the geographical and chronological provenance – or at least to assess the general cultural milieu – of visions.[36]

The author of the *VB* was most anxious to align the text with the *Dialogues*.[37] Indeed, the contribution of Gregory the Great's writings to the eschatology of the early medieval Church and the *mentalités* of the early Middle Ages cannot be overstated.[38] For Gregory, salvation of one's immortal soul must be the focus of human existence and earthly life was a mere transient moment in which we have the opportunity to earn eternal life among the blessed. Every action must be inspired by a longing for the world to come and must be lived in the sure knowledge of the coming judgement.[39] Gregory was certain that the world was in old age and that the end was fast approaching.[40] The seventh century was receptive to this message and many of the texts produced then show an increasingly eschatological

[35]For example, see McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*. They construct a survey of heaven (ignoring the early medieval period) which reflects historical developments. Also, Le Goff, *Purgatory*, attributes the development of the concept of purgatory to historical factors.

[36]St John D. Seymour (*Irish Visions of the Other-World* [New York, 1930], p. 15ff) uses the clear progression of Irish eschatology to date the Fis Adamnan.

[37] *VB*, 10, 17 (pp. 384-5, 391). The author here cites Gregory; at other places Barontus's vision intersects with those in the *Dialogues*. See further chapter 5.

[38]Meyvaert, 'Enigma' and Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon* England (London, 1972, rpt. 1991). For Gregory's influence on vision literature, see Patch, *Other World*, and M.P. Ciccarese, 'Le più antiche rappresentazioni del purgatorio, dalla *Passio Perpetua* alla fine del IX sel.', *Romanobarbarica* 7 (1982-1983), pp. 38-44.

[39]*Homiliae in Evangelia* I. 15,2 (*PL* 76, col 1132B): 'Ecce transit omne quod agitis, et ad extremum iudicium sine ulla momenti interpositione quotidie volentes nolentesque properatis.' For a fuller exploration of Gregory's eschatological beliefs, see J.N. Hillgarth, 'Eschatological and Political Concepts in the Seventh Century' in *Le Septième Siècle Changements et Continuités* ed. J. Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth (London, 1992), pp. 215ff.

[40]*Dialogues* III. 38.3 (p. 430) 'Hac in terra, in qua vivimus, finem suum mundus non iam nuntiat, sed ostendid...'.

world view.[41]

Gregory's *Dialogues* include three visions which profoundly influenced the genre.[42] In these visions the souls undergo an immediate judgement which is distinct from the Last Judgement.[43] All subsequent visions of heaven and hell demonstrate belief in a minor, immediate judgement and support the expectation that as the soul awaits the Last Judgement it will experience more than just sleep.

The *VB* incorporates this belief in a minor or particular judgement which occurred immediately after death in addition to belief in the Last Judgement.[44] In c. 8, Raphael and Barontus came to the first gate of paradise 'ubi plures vidimus ex fratribus monasterii nostri, qui erant congregati, praestolantes diem iudicii, ubi gaudia aeterna plenissimam recipiant.'[45] Barontus's own soul, we read, is being taken for immediate, personal judgement. As Barontus is escorted, a crowd of heavenly virgins cry out in one voice, 'Anima vadit ad iudicium. ...et non diabolus ipsam (animam) ducat in tartarum.'[46] Thus we clearly have two judgements awaiting each soul after death; one to determine the soul's immediate fate and the second to mark the end of time.

Beyond this, there are relatively few parallels to be found between the organisation of Barontus's other world and any other seventh-century accounts. His vision includes four heavens as well as a separate place he calls the *sinus Abrahae.* This is a reference to another

[41] Pseudo-Methodius, *Revelationes Sancti Methodii*, ed. E. Sackur, *Sybillinische Texte und Forschungen* (Halle, 1989, rpt. Turin, 1963), pp. 59-96; Hillgarth, 'Eschatological', p. 228ff. and M. Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes* (Paris, 1979), pp. 414ff.

[42] See chapter 5.

[43] *Dialogues* IV. 37, 3-14 (pp. 126-134).

[44] On the two systems of eschatology, see A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 119. Ariès, *Western Attitudes* argues that this model does not come into being until the end of the Middle Ages but as previously mentioned, he neglected to look at the corpus of visionary literature.

[45] *VB*, 8 (p. 383).

[46] *VB*, 9 (p. 384).

vision, but one far more ancient than the seventh century.[47] Barontus does not distinguish between hell and a place of purgation from which souls could be freed. In the developmental histories of heaven and hell, this undifferentiated lower world would confirm an early date, well as the influence of Irish eschatology.[48] However, the Fire of Doom,[49] which featured so largely in Irish visions and the *VF*, is not part of Barontus's hell which is instead made unbearable by steam and fog. But his other world does not seem to have been influenced by the Frankish tradition either; the cauldrons of Guntram's vision, Sunniulf's riverside 'house painted white' and Salvius's cloud[50] are no where to be found in Barontus's vision. There is a reference to bees entering a hive which was recorded in Sunniulf's vision as well as Barontus's, but the trial bridge which is the focus of Sunniulf's account (and a prominent feature of Gregory the Great's visions) is not found in the *VB*.[51] It is possible that Barontus was influenced by the idea that the other world was composed of seven heavens and was trying to resolve his tour of four regions, paradise, the bossom of Abraham and hell into this numerical expectation, but in any event, we are a long way from Irish eschatology.

But three factors prohibit easy comparisons from being made between texts and a history of eschatological belief from being written: terminology in the early middle ages was not yet crystallised,[52] the texts are fragmentary[53] and visionaries did not all address the same issues. Some visionaries did not ascertain whether release from damnation following the minor judgement was possible before the end of time, nor did each reveal the effect

[47]Lk. 16.19-31.

[48]Seymour, *Irish Visions*, pp. 39-61 has argued that the division of hell and purgatory occurred in Irish eschatology only after the tenth century. This subject is a source of continuing debate.

[49]Seymour, *Irish Visions*, p. 20ff.

[50]*DLH* IV. 33 (p. 166) and VII. 1 (p. 325). There is evidence of at least four seventh-century manscripts of this text, (H. Omont and G. Collon, *Grégoire de Tours. Histoire des Francs. Texte des manuscrits de Corbie et de Bruxelles* [Paris, 1886-93, rpt. 1913] and L. Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours. The History of the Franks* [Harmondsworth, 1974], p. 55) a significant number but not proof that it would have been known to Barontus nor his redactor.

[51]Compare *DLH* IV.33 (p. 166) and *VB*, 17 (p. 391).

[52]See chapter 2 for a discussion of the fluidity of visionary terminology. Le Goff, *Purgatory*, is also relevant here for his book highlights the twelfth century's contribution to the terminology of the other world.

[53]Seymour, *Irish Visions*, p. 16.

of intercession by the living on the souls in torment. Although certain trends can be discerned,[54] the form that the disembodied soul took, the torments or pleasures it experienced and the organisation of the other world, were all subject to considerable variation.

Visions may have been repositories of culturally-specific eschatological details, but because of the wide diffusion of certain visions and the accidental nature of dissemination and manuscript survival we cannot use eschatology as a safe criterion for dating a vision in the early middle ages. Surveys of shared eschatologies show the recycling of material, offer contrasting views and demonstrate the absence of a clear chronology of beliefs during this period. Attempting to trace patterns of influence is further complicated by the potential effects of the oral tradition.[55] The only conclusion which emerges is that variations in eschatological expectations were at least accommodated, if not encouraged.[56]

### Textual Citations and Parallels

In contrast to the vagaries of eschatological expectations, textual affinities would seem to provide more concrete evidence of a text's date. Unfortunately there are no early independent witnesses to the *VB* in the form of direct citations, but confirmation of the vision's date may be sought through literary comparisons with the visions which preceded it.

Eschatology aside, numerous textual and thematic parallels can for example be made between the *VF* and the *VB*.[57] Both visionaries fall deathly ill,[58] and they experience a

[54] See chapter 6.

[55] This topic will largely remain outside the scope of this thesis but see M. Richter, *The Oral Tradition in the Early Middle Ages*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, fasc. 71 (Turnhout, 1994) for a general introduction to the use of oral history.

[56] B. Grogan, 'Eschatological Teaching in the Early Irish Church', in *Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution*, ed. M. McNamara (Dublin, 1976), p. 48 notes this variety in the early Irish Church but the same can be said of the Continental Church as this survey of visions shows.

[57] Various similarities have been catalogued by Levison in his edition of the text. Subsequently, Carozzi, in both 'Geographie', pp. 440-1 and his *Voyage*, pp. 154-157; Hen, 'Structure', p. 483 and M. Picard, 'Aquitaine et Irland', pp. 28-9 have each reiterated them.

[58] *VF*, 2, 4-5 (pp. 192, 196); *VB*, 1 (pp. 377-8).

painful separation of their souls from their bodies. Both revive to the cockcrow, a signal of the end of their vision,[59] and are physically attacked by demons on their journey from earth to heaven and are defended by angel guides.[60] Both visions include long arguments between the demons and angels over the fate of the souls in their custody with penance as their central theme. There are also resemblances between the two visionaries: both are monks of noble birth,[61] and both incur trouble over the issue of private property.[62] However for all these similarities, the otherworldly terrain which Fursey encounters bears little resemblance to the one described by Barontus; the amanuensis of Fursey's vision was intent on describing the action not the setting of his visionary's experience. Barontus's, on the other hand, describes his setting, includes less action and offers virtually no description of the torments he sees.

Dating from *ca.* 684, Aldegund's visions closely follow the *VB* chronologically, but they seem to belong to another tradition entirely. The *VA* is an allegorical vision, containing mystical images of the house of wisdom with its seven decorated columns,[63] for example, a contrast to the *VB*'s concrete images which owe much to Gregory the Great's *Dialogues.* The *Dialogues*, as we have seen, had an important influence on the *VB.*[64]

The cataloguing of textual parallels and shared eschatological conceptions is a flawed means for dating texts, and yet this methodology's potential lures historians like a metaphorical Siren. Chasing the elusive quality of textual influence is seldom fruitful. Parallels may be easy to find, but without knowing if the early text was accessible to the later author, the identification rarely provides certain results and the argument becomes circular.[65] For

[59] *VF*, 4 (p. 194) *pullorum cantu*; *VB*, 2: *ad pullorum cantum* (p. 379).
[60] *VF*, 5-8 (pp. 196-202); *VB*, 7-8 (pp. 382-2).
[61] 'Erat autem vir iste de nobilissimo genere Scottorum...' Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 270.
[62] Fursey had accepted a gift from a sinner in order to lighten his penance, and it is for this Fursey is burned; Barontus was punished for maintaining private property while a monk.
[63] *VA*, 5 (p. 317).
[64] See n. 37 above.
[65] T. Silverstein, 'Dante's Heavenly Rose: An Analogue or a Borrowing?', *Harvard Theological Review*, XLII:2 (April, 1949), 149-54.

example, the *VB* incorporates the idea of a respite for the souls, first recorded in the *AP*, but this text is not thought to have been known widely on the Continent during the seventh century. Is this parallel a sure sign of textual dependence or merely a sign that the idea was prevalent at the time of the *VB*'s composition? Or was the respite idea added by a later redactor of the *VB*? In cases involving two texts with uncertain dates, the question of dependence can even be inverted. Arguing a case for the *VB*'s seventh century date on literary or eschatological grounds becomes a futile exercise when one sees that just as many resemblances can be identified between the *VB* and ninth-century visions.[66] In the end, the search for textual parallels brings us no closer to confirming the date of the *VB*.

Because of their highly derivative nature, visions cannot be dated securely on grounds of textual affinities.[67] Furthermore, comparisons between the *VB* and the *VF* or even the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great only prove that the *VB* was written *after* these visions. It seems far more significant that the *VB* does not appear to have exerted influence on any other visionary account until the composition of the ninth-century *VW*,[68] and no extant homily ever incorporated the vision.[69] Like the manuscript tradition and eschatological comparisons, textual evidence does not provide support for an early date and leads only to the conclusion that the *VB* seems to have had a very limited influence and circulation until the ninth century.

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[66] See chapter 6.

[67] Sims-Williams (*Religion*, pp. 250ff) illustrates this problem in his analysis of the vision of the Monk of Wenlock. It is unclear if it was influenced by the Vision of Fursey or by the *Visio Pauli* since Fursey was influenced by the *AP*.

[68] This vision is discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

[69] The nearly contemporary *VF* enjoyed this fate; it was later incorporated by Aelfric into his Homilies. See Seymour, *Irish Visions*, p. 16. However it must be admitted that the *VF* was incorporated into Bede's best seller and this must be taken into account when evaluating differences between the *VB* and the *VF* in circulation and influence.

### Latinity

The latinity of a text is another criterion on which texts – including the *VB* – have been dated.[70] The Carolingians endeavoured to reform the written language of Latin, consciously imitating what they believed was purer and more Roman in spirit.[71] It has been argued that in general, a text which does not conform to the norms of Classical Latin is most likely a Merovingian text, while one which shows an awareness of antique constructions, follows classical grammar and adheres to regularised orthography almost certainly originated in the Carolingian period.

The debate over the date of the separation of proto-Romance from Latin continues, highlighting, for our purposes, the difficulty in writing a straight-forward history of the development of Latin.[72] It has more recently been recognised that not all seventh-century Latin is uniformly rustic and ungrammatical; correspondingly, not all ninth-century Latin is elevated and grammatical.[73] In light of this, value judgements based on latinity become more ambiguous: careful imitation of earlier styles or a writer's own lack of sophistication or distance from court could result in a misattribution. Lexigraphical and grammatical simplicity has also been construed as the mark of a genuine Merovingian text. However this too cannot be substantiated since some Carolingian scribes preserved or even composed in a more direct style to suit their audience.[74] Thus this criterion also evaporates under

[70]Meyvaert, 'Enigma', p. 336 dismisses latinity as a means of evaluating the date of a text. But for the opposite view, see Clark, *Pseudo-Gregorian*, pp. 687-717.

[71]For the classical statement on the Carolingian contribution to Latin writing, see Laistner, *Thought and Letters*, esp. p. 176. The degree to which the Carolingians reformed the language is still debated: M. Van Uytfanghe, 'Latin mérovingien, Latin carolingien et rustica romana lingua: continuité ou discontinuité?', *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles* (1977), 65-88; R. Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian Francia* (Liverpool, 1982); for a differing view see P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985).

[72]See for example the divergence of opinions between R. Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (Liverpool, 1982) and M. Banniard, *Viva voce: Communication écrite et communication orale du IV^e^ au IX^e^ siècle en Occident latin* (Paris, 1992).

[73]Wood, 'Forgery,' p. 373.

[74]A practice dating back at least to Augustine. For a clear discussion of the issues and a plethora of examples, see P. Fouracre and D. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 75-7; Heene, 'Merovingian and

scrutiny.[75]

The Latin of the *VB* has been analysed by Levison in his introduction to the text and deemed to be in keeping with its purported date.[76] His critique shows, and a reading of the text confirms, the language is sometimes awkward and in many ways departs from Classical norms and conforms to typical Merovingian Latin. Furthermore these 'merovingianisms' are not confined to any one section of the text but occur throughout. In light of the problems outlined above we can see latinity is not a secure guide to the date of the text.

The *VB* contains evidence that suggests it was written for a reading audience. The text calls for an illustration of Peter's keys and includes the phrase: *similitudinem hanc.*[77] On the grounds that the vision-text was meant to be read privately, there is evidence for placing the text in a Carolingian context. Heene has argued that pre- and post-Merovingian hagiographical texts were designed primarily for readers, while Merovingian *vitae* were intended for a listening audience.[78] However even on this point the evidence is not straightforward since the introduction and conclusion of the vision takes on the form of a sermon which would indicate a listening audience. There is more ambiguity here than Heene's model suggests. It seems the text's overall character and simplicity in style was meant for reading aloud while some sections may have been intended for reading privately.

The history of visionary literature cannot be written in terms of a linear and progressive

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Carolingian Hagiography', pp. 415-428.

[75]See for example Krusch on why the 'correct' Latin of the *Passio Leudegarii* meant it was unlikely to be seventh century. *MGH SRM* 5, pp. 323-56. This opinion has been reversed: Meyvaert, 'Enigma', p. 366ff notes the futility of dating on grounds of latinity.

[76]Levison, *VB*, pp. 370-1.

[77] *VB*, 12. Five of the manuscripts (St Petersburg Lat O.v. I, 5; Lambeth Palace 173; Munich clm. 6293; Paris BN 2846 and Paris BN 11885) contain drawings at this point in the text. In *VB* 20 the redactor speaks of the text being taken up and read but the phraseology is equivocal since it does not specify whether it is being read aloud or privately.

[78]K. Heene, 'Audire, legere, vulgo: an attempt to define public use and comprehensibility of Carolingian hagiography', in R. Wright (ed.) *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1991), pp. 148-51.

development.[79] For this reason, literary style, eschatological resemblances, textual borrowings and latinity do not provide certain proof of a vision's date. A text's acceptability often relies on its similarity to other visionary accounts, but these influences could have been imported from any existing and authenticated vision; visions after all were not subject to the fast-paced rhythms of fashion. In terms of literary and textual techniques for dating a vision, the only reliable evidence for the *VB*'s date comes in the ninth century.

## 4.3 The Language of the Subscription Clause: Purpose and Parallels with Other Genres

We turn now to the historical record for confirmation of the *VB*'s purported date. The text contains a subscription clause claiming that the vision occurred on the VIII Kalends of April in the sixth year of Theuderic's reign. The king in question has been identified as Theuderic III, and the corresponding calendar date has been calculated to be 25 March 678 or 679. Wright believed the subscription clause referred to Theuderic IV,[80] which would push the vision's occurrence to 727 and the text's date of composition to this year or later. The *LHF* ends by dating itself to the sixth year of the reign of this Theuderic and also includes mention of Archbishop Dido who makes an appearance in the *VB*. Thus it could be possible to argue that this text was the source from which the *VB*'s subscription clause was derived, and that the *VB* thus dates from the second decade of the eighth century. However this source lacks mention of Wulfoleodus. Levison has offered a simpler explanation by correcting Wright's attribution. He dates the vision to the reign of Theuderic III; his sixth regnal year (678/9) is more closely contemporary to the dates established for the other historical anchors found in the *VB*. As to the actual year, we cannot be more specific since we are able to place the

[79] pace Morgan, *Dante*.

[80] Wright, *St Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 106 R. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the* Liber Historiae Francorum (Oxford, 1987), p. 66 notes the difficulties of relying on regnal years in royal catalogues, but this fact has not been discussed in reference to the *VB*. The *Chronicle of St Maixentius*, a later source, dates the vision to the fourth year of Theuderic's reign (see chapter 3).

date of the death of Chlothar III (and thus the beginning of Theuderic's reign) only between 10 March and 15 May in 673[81] and because VIII Kal. April (25 March) falls between these parameters. A later tradition linked the occurrence of Barontus's vision with a Sunday but the $25^{th}$ of March did not fall on a Sunday in either 678 or 679 (nor in 727!).[82]

The peculiarity of the subscription clause raises questions: could it be incorrect[83] or intentionally contrived?[84] It looks to have been either inspired by or perhaps drawn from a legal source. Furthermore, the vision contains details of a fine given in terms of *solidi*, the record of a trial and judgement.[85] These features beg comparison with legal documents. In this section we shall compare it to a variety of other sources to locate a source for its wording and shed light on its intended function. I have already assessed it against other examples of dating in the genre of visionary literature 4.2, and will now compare it with other genres which contain dates: law codes, *placita*, charters, immunities, councils, *vitae* and wills.

Barontus's penance is a monetary fine.[86] For his sin he is forced to pay out one *solidus* every month for a year at which time his money will run out. Fines in *solidi* can be found among law codes and *placita*. St Peter is specific in his directions and states that Barontus is ransoming himself from damnation, stating that twelve *solidi* is the price for rich man and poor. While contradicting what is contained in early medieval law which distinguishes between the orders of society and their respective ability to pay fines, this precise direction

[81] B. Krusch 'Chronologica Regum Francorum Stirpis Merowingicae', *MGH SRM*, 7 (Hanover, 1920) pp. 495-7.

[82] Later recensions begin with a condensed introduction proclaiming the vision occurred on Sunday: Levison, *VB*, 373. The $25^{th}$ of March was a Thursday in 678 and a Friday in 679.

[83] Medieval authors do not always get their dates right – Jonas places Theudebert as ruler in 610 which contradicts Fredegar and he identified Childebert as Sigebert in the *Vita Columbani*: I.N. Wood, 'Jonas, the Merovingians, and Pope Honorius: *Diplomata* and the *Vita Columbani*', in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History, Essays Presented to W. Goffart*, ed. A. C. Murray (Toronto, 1998), pp. 101, 108.

[84] Wood, 'Jonas', p.110 discusses the possibility that Jonas's factual inaccuracies were deliberate attempt to downplay royal involvement in Columbanus's mission.

[85] *VB*, 12-13 (pp. 386-8).

[86] His penance will be discussed in terms of evidence from penitentials in chapter 4.

seems to bespeak some awareness of the codes' social distinctions, but is far more evocative of Rom. 2.11.

The Theodosian Code has *solidi* penalties and is very specific about the date of legislation. In it we find a variety of forms some of which are close to the *VB*'s subscription clause. At the conclusion of each section we read for example, 'Dat III Non. Jul. Mediolani Constantio A. VIII. et Juliano Caes. Coss'.[87] The idea for dating the vision in terms of the month, day and regnal years may have been inspired by the Theodosian Code. The author of the vision could have been familiar with this law code since it may have been in force in Aquitaine,[88] the geographical location of Barontus's monastery. But the Code's influence on subsequent law codes meant that the *Leges Burgundionum* is similarly dated,[89] as is the Breviary of Alaric, providing alternative models for the *VB*'s dating clause.[90]

*Formulae*, such as Marculf's, provide models of documents which require dating clauses.[91] None of Marculf's models seem sufficiently close to the wording of the *VB*'s clause to have acted as its direct source. However such documents may well have contributed to the idea of adding a dating clause to the *VB*, but more direct similarities can be found with *placita*.

In both form and content *placita* are perhaps the most suitable Merovingian documents to compare with the *VB*.[92] They contain records of courtroom trials and judgements and

[87] G. Haenel, *Codex Theodosianus* (Bonn, 1842), p. 242; also ed. T. Mommsen and P. M. Meyer, *Codex Theodosianus* (Berlin, 1904-5).

[88] I.N. Wood (ed.), 'The Code in Merovingian Gaul', *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity* (London, 1993), esp. pp. 166, 169.

[89] Liber Constitutionum, *Leges Burgundionum* (ed. L.R. de Salis, *MHG Leges* in quarto [Hanover, 1892], p. 30.) The dating of this text is discussed by I.N. Wood, 'Disputes in late fifth- and sixth-century Gaul: some problems', in Davies and Fouracre, *The Settlement of Disputes*, p. 10.

[90] The Breviary of Alaric carries a date: it was promulgated (probably) on 2 Feb 506 by the king in the presence of a council. *Breviarium Alaricianum. Lex Romana Visigothorum*, ed. G. Haenel (Leipzig, 1847-). H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. T. J. Dunlap (London, 1988), p. 196.

[91] *Marculfi Formularum Libri Duo*, ed. and trs. A. Uddholm (Uppsala, 1962).

[92] Although it should be noted that these documents continue to be produced in the Carolingian period, with little change in their form. See J.L. Nelson, 'Dispute Settlement in Carolingian West Francia', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre, ed., *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 49.

conclude with a dating clause: the denouement of the vision is devoted to a record of Barontus's trial and judgement.[93] The date of the *VB* even corresponds to the period which saw the greatest production of *placita*, that is *ca.* 670-716.[94] Although searching for links is a somewhat artificial exercise since visions belong securely in the realm of literature and *placita* to diplomatic, the form and content of judicial documents may have contributed to the formulation of the vision, especially in a period which did not draw such sharp distinctions between forms of composition.

Initially there seem to be a number of similarities between the earthly court with which Barontus and his fellow visionaries may have been familiar and the otherworldly court they envisaged. Extracting only the most relevant details, we can summarise the judicial procedure as follows: a case is brought against a defendant by a plaintiff in a tribunal made up of magnates and presided over by the king. Evidence is presented and argument between the two sides follows. There is a summation of the transactions and then judgement is passed by the king and magnates.[95] Transferring this to a visionary context, we find that the plaintiff (or group of demons) stands before the court and accuses the defendant (the visionary) of crimes (sinfulness and/or failure to perform sufficient penance). We should note that the demons are not adversarial but controlled once they reach the court. The demons and angels also double as witnesses to the soul's sins and good works. The accused is always prevented from defending or justifying himself, instead relying on his attorney (the psychopomp) to counter the charges of sinfulness with a record of good works, prayers, alms giving, confession and penitential practices undertaken. For example, in the *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock*, the visionary's good and bad deeds become personified and appear during the trial to accuse or defend him accordingly.[96] With Barontus, demons and Peter

[93] For a discussion of the origins of the imagery of the celestial tribunal in Christian literature, see J. Amat, *Songes et visions l'au-delà dans la littérature latine tardive* (Paris, 1985), esp. pp. 381-2.

[94] Fouracre, '"Placita" and the settlement of disputes in later Merovingian Francia', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre, eds., *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 26.

[95] This synopsis is heavily based on the discussion by Fouracre, 'Placita', p. 24.

[96] *Vision of Wenlock*, pp. 9-10.

exchange charges and counter-arguments.

In a detailed discussion of the judicial procedure, Alcuin's *Rhetoric* sheds more light on the mechanics of the earthly court, albeit from a later date. Alcuin records that the judge sits in the judgement seat, and before him in the middle of the courtroom the claim is argued. The plaintiff is on the left, the defendant on the right and witnesses are located in the rear of the room.[97] Visions which contain details of the judgement scene reflect this arrangement – for example, the *VB*, *Monk of Wenlock* and *VW* carry the suggestion to a greater or lesser degree that the angels and virtues are on one side, the demons and vices are on the other. The inhabitants of heaven are behind and come forward to intercede for the soul. In the centre and seated above is the Just Judge – for Barontus it is Peter, but the other two are judged by God. For many of the other visions like those of Dryhthelm, Anskar or Charles the Fat, it was equally acceptable not to expect such an earthly trial. In each of these cases, the guides leave their visionaries in a place of purgation and appear alone to ascertain the fate of their charges.

Earthly court procedures may have contributed to the description of the court of heaven or may have informed the imagery used but ultimately there are a great many differences. After this initial, ordered presentation of the evidence and the cases for and against are given, the judicial process in heaven departs dramatically from its earthly counterpart. On earth, the authority of the court and the force of the verdict rested on the observance of correct procedure.[98] This was clearly not the case in heaven. Though dishonourable by earthly standards, the heavenly side is permitted to cheat and break the rules in order to win salvation for the soul. To take but one example, the *VB* records instances of intercession by high-ranking saints, the withholding of damning evidence from the prosecution and even threats of physical violence against the plaintiff.[99] The accusing demons in the *VF* know

[97] *The Rhetoric of Alcuin and Charlemagne,* trs. and intro. W. S. Howell (Princeton, 1941) pp. 94-6. I thank David Ganz for drawing this work to my attention.

[98] Fouracre, 'Placita', pp. 24, 34.

[99] Intercession by Raphael and Peter: *VB*, 3 (p. 379, line 20) and 12 (p. 386, lines 5ff); threats of violence:

the law – they quote Scripture at length – and they leave the tribunal in disgust at the lack of justice in heaven.[100] But in this way, the angels and saints are able to demonstrate the limitlessness of their power in matters of salvation and the boundless mercy of God, provided the soul has some redeeming qualities. Departing from earthly experience gives force to the suspension of rules in heaven, but as these judgements depart from earthly reality, they become the domain of literature.[101]

Thus the comparison between earthly courtrooms and heavenly judgements ultimately falls short. The degree to which earthly experiences of royal or episcopal court contributed to visionary conceptions of trials and judgements is hard to quantify, but it appears that *placita*, with their emphasis on proper procedure were not a significant source in the redaction of Barontus's judgement. A brief survey of their dating clauses only serves to highlight the differences between these two types of documents.

*Placita* conclude with dating clauses that record the place the trial was held and the fact that the king had issued the judgement. For example, 'Data quod ficit minsus Augustus dies XII. Anno primo rigni nostri. Captunnaco feliciter.'[102] Linguistically this clause bears only a slight resemblance to the *VB* and its type was probably not the source of the vision's subscription clause, though these documents may have provided the idea for such a clause.

Charters also preserve dating clauses. However, a survey of Theuderic III's royal charters reveal no close cognates between the wording of the charters he issued and the concluding clause of the *VB*. Royal charters commonly use the wording: *Data sub die segundo kalendas Iulias. Annum vi rigni nostri Lusareca. In Dei nomene feliciter.*[103] When held against royal charters, the *VB*'s clause is very irregular, even down to the spelling of Theud-

12 (p. 387, lines 4-5); withholding of evidence: 13 (p. 387, lines 12ff).
[100] *VF*, 9 (p. 204).
[101] Frye, *Secular Scripture*, p. 123.
[102] G. H. Pertz, *Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merowingica*, *MGH Diplomata Imperii* 1 (Hanover, 1872), no. 59, p. 53.
[103] Pertz, *Diplomata*, vol. 1, no. 49, p. 45.

eric's name.[104] It lacks many of the features of a royal charter's subscription, for example the phrase *In Dei nomine feliciter* and any form of the verb *subscribere.* However, the language is very typical of private charters. The rich charter tradition preserved in Noirmoutier, provides similar examples of such subscription clauses and thus a context for the vision's redactor.[105] The presence of the subscription clause in this vision remains surprising.

The text of the *VB* refers frequently to property and land holdings[106] and also mentions lighting, a feature which is commonly found in immunities. Could the preponderance of legal elements in the vision perhaps signal that the text had a litigious purpose at heart?

The *VB*'s mention of lighting[107] accords well with its Merovingian date since references to lighting and oil for lamps feature frequently in Merovingian texts.[108] The interest of the reference to lighting for our purposes comes from its connection with immunities. Provisions for lighting were a formulaic element in immunities.[109] Might the inclusion of the subscription clause, the reference to the monastery's laxity in keeping the church lit (probably due to the expense or perhaps dearth of oil) lead us to suggest that the *VB* was a

[104]Orthographic difference to be found in Theoderic's name versus Theuderic in charters may signify the author's distance from court, or merely a regional difference in pronunciation. Mario A. Pei, *The language of the Eight*[sic]*-Century Texts in Northern France: A study of the original documents in the collection of Tardif and other sources* (New York, 1932), p. 71: diphthong eu frequently appears in form eo in words of germanic and Latin origin. In Germanic proper names the alternation appears constantly. Still it seems strange that all charters have THEUDERIC and *VB* has Theoderic in all mss. See ChLA for reproductions of the original charters. One charter of donation from Uuademir and his wife Ercamberta to the churches and monasteries of northern France has 'Theoderice' ChLA number 571. Pronunciation as an explanation is discussed in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p.73.

[105]J. Tardif, *Monuments historiques*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1866) and J. Tardif, *Facsimile de chartes et diplmes mrovingiens et carlovingiens sur papyrus et sur parchemin compris dans l'inventaire des Monuments historiques par M. Jules Tardif* (Paris, 1866).

[106]See chapter 5.

[107] *VB*, 11 (p. 385). A monk from Longoretus, Betolenus, who in heaven had received the care of lamps of the churches throughout the world, criticised Barontus because his monastery lacked illumination at night and was not lit up continuously.

[108]P. Fouracre, 'Eternal Light and Earthly Needs: Practical Aspects of the Development of Frankish Immunities', W. Davies and P. Fouracre, eds., *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 69

[109]Fouracre, 'Eternal Light'.

document with a clear legal purpose in mind? Theuderic III was generous to monasteries[110] and it is recorded that he gave a grant to St Wandrille for oil. The connection between the commodity and this king had been made before.[111] Complaints on lack of lighting in the vision may have been intentionally included to attest to the poverty and neediness of the monastery, thus making it the more worthy of a grant of immunity and royal support or protection to defend its property holdings.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the vision does proclaim the message that the community could govern itself. Since the seventh century saw the beginnings of the limitation of episcopal power and the issuing of the first monastic immunities,[112] it is just possible to suggest that the monastery was looking to the king for protection and was seeking a limitation to episcopal jurisdiction over them.[113]

The evidence provided by the vision is too sparse to maintain that the vision-text was an elaborately masqueraded immunity. While Barontus's monastery may have been seeking revenue for oil, or protection of its lands by appealing even to shaky royal authority through the composition of this vision (see section 4.6), the lack of specific references to the location of monastic properties suggests that the vision text was probably not primarily meant to serve as an immunity. The question of audience for the vision-text is of course essential here. As a primarily didactic text cast in the form of a sermon,[114] it is unlikely to have served as a muniment although covering similar issues and aims to legal documents (e.g. disputes, judgements, property and lighting requirements), may have inspired the scribe to add the dating clause as a flourish.

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[110] For example he was involved in the endowment of Fleury-sur-Loire. He also returned some confiscated lands to the monastery of Bèze. Pertz, *Diplomata,* 46. See Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 231.

[111] See for example the *Vita Ansberti episcopi Rotomagensis*, 9 (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM*, 5 [Hanover, 1910], p. 625). On this text and lighting, see Fouracre, 'Eternal Light', p. 70.

[112] B. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), pp. 42-96.

[113] This is discussed at length in chapter 5.

[114] See 3.7 - 3.8 for possible uses and audience for the text.

Turning to the ecclesiastical record, we find two types of Merovingian sources which may have inspired the addition of a subscription clause in the *VB*: council proceedings and *vitae*. The Council of Latunense (St Jean-de-Losne), again roughly contemporary with the *VB* (673-675) includes the words: ... *quod evenit in anno quarto decimo regnante domno nostro Childerico rege*...[115] but this clause occurs in the middle of the proceedings and it is a long stretch to see this as the source or kind of source for the *VB*'s dating clause. In hagiographical texts we can dimly discern a parallel to the *VB*'s clause as *vitae* occasionally conclude with the date on which a saint 'migrated from this life' no doubt to preserve the day for celebration.[116] Interestingly two later *vitae* provide closer parallels. In an *explicit* of a tenth-century Chartres manuscript of the *Passio beatissimi Gregorii martyris*, we find *Acta sunt haec in provincia Capadocia in civitate Melet sub Daciano imperatore, regnante.*[117] This formula is also found in the ninth-century *Passio* of Columba of Sens: *Acta sunt hec Senona civitatem pridiem Kl Ianuarius in nomine domni nostri Iheu Christi ... Amen.*[118]

The subscription clause does resemble the will of St Amandus, both linguistically and chronologically and concludes with a subscription which reads: *Facta epistola in monasterio Elnone anno secundo regni domni nostri Teuderici gloriosi regis sub die XV Kl. Mai.* (A variant in one manuscript makes it *Theoderici* which concurs with the *VB*'s orthography.)[119] A will and a vision are obviously two different genres but finding such a cognate to the clause may shed light on the author's intention for adding it to the vision. Amandus's Aquitanian heritage may also have contributed to this style of dating. For the will, this clause would

[115]Concilium Latunense c. 11, *Concilia Galliae A. 511- A.695*, ed C. de Clercq ,CCSL 147A (Turnhout, 1963) p. 316.

[116] For example the simple formula *Migravit de hac vita VIII k. Apr.* in the *Vita Ermenlandi MGH* SRM 5 (p. 710). The subscription is closely mirrored in the late eighth-century *Passio Floriani*: Acta sunt haec tempore Diocletiani ...regnante vero domino Iesu Christo ...(*MGH SRM* 3 [Hanover, 1906], p. 71) but this may have been based on the *VB*, since the earliest manuscript of the vision text had a connection with St Florian's.

[117]*Analecta Bollandiana* 8 (1889) p. 175

[118]G. Chastel, *Ste Colombe de Sens* (1939) or *Catalogus hagiographicus Bruxellensis*, vol i, pp. 302-6.

[119]'This letter was drawn up in the monastery of Elnone in the second year of our Lord the Glorious King Theuderic, on the 15$^{th}$ Kalends of May' (674/5). B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* V, p. 484.

have been intended to act as a hallmark of authenticity and a plea that royal authority might protect the wishes of the author. Is it then possible that the *VB*'s clause was also included for claims of authenticity and as a request for protection and a declaration of allegiance to the king? Again this parallel points to the issue of property, and again the document appeals to the authority of the king to support the text's claims.

It appears that the cumulative impact of the use of dating in documents, especially early law codes such as the Theodosian Code or Breviary of Alaric –which were part of Aquitaine's history– gave rise to its inclusion. It is also possible that the *VB*, unique in its status as an independent text, is the only surviving example of a literary tradition which dated visions for their inclusion in historical writing.[120] We can conclude that the wording of the dating clause is evocative of official texts and especially private charters and was written by a scribe with some notorial training.[121] The judicial or official components of the *VB* may signal that it was a document which aimed to protect the monastery from real or potential abuses. Given the Church's involvement in defending property rights, it is possible that the *VB* was a innovative effort to seek acknowledgement of the monastery's status and identity through the production of a written source which documents supernatural support of their claim, their brother and their community. In the preceding sections of this chapter, we have established the tradition which gave rise to the formulation of the subscription clause as well as other possible influences on its inclusion, but in a text so rich in symbolism, it is desirable to look beneath the surface for the meaning of the specific date on which the vision occurred.

[120]For example, the visions of Salvius and Sunniulf appear in the historical writings of Gregory of Tours, Fursey's was recorded in the *Annals of Ulster* for s.a. 627 and appeared again with Dryhthelm's vision in Bede's *HE*.

[121]D. Ganz, private correspondance.

## 4.4 The $25^{th}$ of March

The calendar date on which the vision was said to have occurred had symbolic significance and may have been chosen as part of a specific agenda now concealed. The $25^{th}$ of March was commonly used as the beginning of the year in at least some parts of early medieval Europe, although Poole notes that the Franks used the $1^{st}$ of March as their year's beginning.[122] The date was imbued with religious significance for it was believed to be the date on which Christ was both conceived and crucified,[123] and thus the date may have been chosen or studiously maintained in later manuscripts for its allegorical potential. Writing in the last decades of the sixth century, Martin of Braga, always vigilant in his efforts to stamp out pagan practices, also wrote a stinging attack on the celebration of the new year on the $1^{st}$ of January in favour of the $25^{th}$ of March. He wrote that as it was the equinox and day and night were of equal length, the date had sacred importance being linked to the day God divided light from darkness.[124] Barontus's vision also emphasises the division of light and darkness in the regions of heaven and hell.

More than just the beginning of the year was observed on the $25^{th}$ of March. It is also the festival of the Annunciation.[125] Nearly as much as the moveable feast of Easter, the day of Christ's conception was symbolic of mankind's salvation and thus was a fitting date on which to set a vision. The first recorded celebration of the Annunciation dates from *ca.* 634-638 in Jerusalem,[126] and was celebrated in Rome by the reign of Pope Sergius

[122]R.L. Poole, *Medieval Reckonings of Time* (London, 1918), p. 42, and C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 388-9, n. 110.

[123]Tertullian, *Adv. Judaeos*, c. viii, Augustine, *De Trinitate*, iv. 5. The day was kept as a feast day at least by the end of the seventh century and is recorded in the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries. C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources* (Washington, DC, 1986), p. 69, but not in the Bobbio Missal.

[124](Gen. 1.4) Martin of Braga, *De castigatione rusticorum*, ed. C.W. Barlow, *Martini episcopi Bracatensis Opera Omnia*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, 12 (New Haven, CT, 1950) pp. 189-190.

[125]Poole, *Medieval Reckonings*, pp. 41-7.

[126]R. A. Fletcher, 'Celebrations at Jerusalem on March $25^{th}$ in the Sixth Century A.D.', *Texte und Untersuchungen* vol 80 (1962) *Studia Patristica* V:3, pp. 30ff.

I (687-701).[127] Such an important day could even have been deliberately chosen by the redactor or subsequent scribe as a way of ensuring the Annunciation would be celebrated despite usually occurring during Lent. Fletcher argues that the date had been chosen to celebrate 'those whom tradition revered for preserving intact the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation in the face of the attacks of the heretics' for it was recognised as the day on which Christ was conceived.[128] Being granted a miraculous vision on such a day placed Barontus on the side of orthodoxy, as did the vision's emphasis on St Peter (see "Rome and St Peter", chapter 5).

The $25^{th}$ of March could fall on Maundy Thursday but it did not in either 678 or 679.[129] Finally, the date may have been significant within a monastic setting as the *Rule of Ailbe* notes that this was the date on which monks were to recite the rule,[130] while the *Rule of Columbanus* uses this day as one of the two which determine the schedule of psalm singing.[131]

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[127] Appears as one of the feasts of the Virgin in the Old Gelasian Sacramentary. This Sacramentary was also widely used in Gaul. C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: an Introduction to the Sources*, trs. W. G. Storey and N. K. Rasmussen (Washington, D.C., 1986), pp. 69, 95. Appears as one of the feasts of the Virgin in the Old Gelasian Sacramentary. This Sacramentary was also widely used in Gaul.

[128] Fletcher, 'Celebrations', p. 33.

[129] 25 March did fall on a Thursday in 678, and there is a tradition that Thursdays, especially in Lent, were connected with alms-giving; the *Hucusque* of the Supplement to the *Hadrianum* mentions this practice. See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, p. 87. Given the *VB*'s emphasis on alms, this makes 678 the more likely of the years for the vision. An argument has been made that Dante knew Barontus's vision occurred on the $25^{th}$ of March and thus chose this day for his vision simply out of deference to the *VB*: de Laugardiere, *Église*, The likelihood seems remote, (and E. Moore, 'The Date Assumed by Dante for the Vision of the *Divina Commedia*', *Studies in Dante*, $3^{rd}$ Series [Oxford, 1903, rpt. 1968] argues on historical and astronomical grounds that 25 March was not the date at all!) but other scholars have persisted in looking for similarities between the *VB* and the *Divine Comedy*, most recently Morgan, *Dante*.

[130] See the eighth-century 'Second Rule of Ailbe' in E. de Bhaldraithe, ed., 'Irish Monastic Rules', in *Hallel: a review of monastic spirituality and liturgy* 15:1 (Spring, 1987), p. 59. The significance of parallels found between the *VB* and monastic rules will be discussed in chapter 5.

[131] *Regula Monachorum* VII (ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani*, p. 130)

## 4.5 The Sixth Year of the Reign of Theuderic III (678/9)

The subscription clause's date of 678/9 is confirmed according to Levison by external evidence for the deaths of two inhabitants of hell: Bishops Dido (by +677) and Wulfredus (+672). Wood has convincingly shown however that factual accuracy within a text such as a *vita* is not enough proof to ensure a text's early date of composition. At the same time, factual inaccuracies are not sufficient grounds to reject its authenticity.[132] Early medieval sources are notoriously unreliable with dates and it has been shown that even contemporary events in reliable sources are sometimes recorded inaccurately.[133] Thus factual accuracy should be noted but cannot be admitted as definitive proof of its early date.

Factual accuracy in vision literature can be particularly suspect since it is a frequent trope to place persons, still living at the time of the vision, in heaven or (more frequently) hell. Visionary time runs differently from human time and liberties were taken with the historical facts which find their way into visions.[134] For example, in the vision of the monk of Wenlock, the visionary reported that he saw King Ceolred already being tormented in hell despite the fact that, '...there is no doubt, [he] was still in the flesh when this vision was seen.'[135] In this example, the vision text openly acknowledges that this detail does not agree with earthly history. In the ninth-century *Visio Bernoldi,* Hincmar, the redactor of the vision (perhaps over-exercising his poetic license) recorded that the visionary saw an archbishop already in heaven. Hincmar identifies himself as this archbishop, despite the logical difficulties which arise from this.[136] These examples demonstrate that inhabitants of the other world need not be dead to appear there. Thus the inclusion of contemporary

[132] Wood, 'Forgery'.
[133] W. Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, NJ, 1988); Wood, 'Jonas'.
[134] As discussed above, the author of the *AP* predates the vision concocting an elaborate tale to account for the discovery of the apostolic text in the fourth-century: Silverstein, 'Date', 335-348.
[135] *Monk of Wenlock* (p. 14).
[136] *Vision of Bernold*, cols. 1116D-1117A.

references in a vision text should not be taken as absolute assurance of a text's date, but do point to the reign of Theuderic III rather than that of Theuderic IV.

## 4.6 The Political Context of the Text

### The National Level

We can look to the political context of the late seventh century to help explain the inclusion of the subscription clause, the persons mentioned in the text and the occasion for the vision itself. As we shall see, the political events from this period provide an appropriate context for the vision and thus support the claim of the text's purported date.

This decade was marked by political crises and therefore was a suitable time for an eschatological dream-text to be produced. From the *Passio Leudegarii*, we learn of the events following the death of Childeric II in 675: 'a great storm arose in the fatherland as they raged with mad fury and things were so bad that it was openly believed that the coming of the Antichrist was nigh. Those who should have been the rulers of the provinces rose up against each other... and since no king sat firmly on the throne, each saw as right whatever he himself wished to do, and that is how they began to act, without fear or discipline...'.[137] A comet appeared and the 'earth is convulsed with hunger, with the swift succession of kings, with the movement of peoples, and the clashing of swords threatens it.' This passage is evocative of apocalyptic literature with its reference to the Antichrist, an astrological phenomenon and wars. Troubles in the political sphere may have contributed to the production of both apocalyptic writings and otherworld visions. An 'eschatological crisis' in the literature written at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century, has been identified by scholars who cite the production of the *VB*, sermons on the day of

[137] *Passio Leudegarii* I, 15 (ed. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5). The translation is that of Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p. 231.

Judgement by Pseudo-Ephrem and Eligius, and the composition and rapid translation into Latin of Pseudo-Methodius's predictions on the coming of the end of the world, among other examples.[138]

Let us turn now to an outline of the political events which preceded the composition of the *VB*. By looking at events in the kingdoms of Neustria-Burgundy and Austrasia, we shall attempt to locate the relevance of the three historically traceable figures mentioned in the *VB*: Theuderic III and Bishops Dido and Wulfoleodus.

Theuderic III owed the first part of his interrupted reign to the political engineering of Ebroin, the *maior domus* of the Neustrian-Burgundian kingdom.[139] Without consulting the leading magnates, Ebroin chose Theuderic to succeed Chlothar III in 673. However, the *maior*'s attempts to the block magnates' access to the king led to a Neustrian uprising and to the king's being deposed, tonsured and sent into exile in St Denis.[140] Ebroin suffered a similar fate and was imprisoned at Luxeuil.[141] The king of Austrasia, Childeric II, was then invited to rule Theuderic's kingdom of Neustria.[142] Childeric reigned the joint kingdoms of Austrasia and Neustria-Burgundy from 673-675. His approach to governing the Neustrians did not meet with favour since he was predisposed to favour Austrasia, or more specifically the Austrasians, at court. Leudegar, nephew of Bishop Dido, became the leader of a group of disaffected Burgundians and helped orchestrate an uprising in 675. During the collapse which followed, he was sent to Luxeuil where he joined his long-standing enemy Ebroin. In the midst of civil unrest that same year, Childeric and his wife, Bilichild, were assassinated

[138] Although it must be observed that these works cover a relatively lengthy time span: Rouche, *L'Aquitaine* (1979) pp. 409-16. Also see C. Carozzi and H. Taviani-Carozzi, *La Fin des Temps Terreurs et prophéties au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1982) pp.181-183; for Pseudo-Methodius, Brunhölzl, *Histoire de la Littérature Latine* (Turnhout, 1990) pp. 141-142.

[139] For Ebroin's career, see P. Fouracre, 'Merovingians, Mayors of the Palace and the Notion of a 'Low-Born' Ebroin', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. LVII, No. 135 (May 1984), 1-14.

[140] Two main sources for the reconstruction of these events: *LHF*, c. 45ff and the *Passio Leudegarii*. I, 5 (ed. Krusch, p. 287). For recent consideration of these events, see Gerberding, *Rise*, pp. 62-88; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 234ff and Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 21-26.

[141] *Passio Leudegarii*, I, 5 (ed. Krusch, p. 287).

[142] ibid.

by a Neustrian contingent. Following their murders, civil war broke out in Neustria. In the upheaval which resulted, Ebroin and Leudegar escaped from Luxeuil. Leudegar rescued Theuderic from St Denis first, while Ebroin raised a pretender to the throne, Clovis, son of Chlothar III.[143] Clovis had a weaker claim to the throne and it is possible that his reign was not accepted by the Neustrians, for soon after Ebroin moved to re-establish his control of the treasury and of Theuderic. He had the then mayor, Leudesius, murdered and he captured Theuderic in the process.[144] The subscription clause which includes Theuderic's regnal years reaffirms that his kingship dated from the death of Chlothar III,[145] and that the tally of regnal years was not disrupted by his exile. Here surely is a documented case of history being edited by the victors.

At the time the vision was said to have occurred Dagobert II was king of Austrasia. Events in his kingdom also have potential significance for the *VB* since they have been used to explain the condemnation of Dido. Dagobert's reign had not begun easily. Shortly after the murder of Fursey's brother Foilan in 650, Dido, archbishop of Poitiers, and Grimoald, *maior* of the Austrasian palace, met at Nivelles where it is thought they discussed the succession to the throne of Austrasia.[146] Dagobert, Sigebert's natural son and heir to the throne, was taken to Ireland by Dido who had arranged for his exile and tonsuring.[147] Thus after the death of Sigebert III 1 Feb 656,[148] Grimoald raised his own son to be the king, bestowing on him the Merovingian royal name of Childebert. It appears to have taken

[143]ibid., I, 19 (ed. Krusch, p.300-1).

[144]*LHF*, c. 45 (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 2 [Hanover, 1888], pp. 317-9) omits mention of the pretender. For a reconstruction of these events see Gerberding, *Rise*, pp. 69-71, Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 234ff, Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, pp. 18-26.

[145]The *Passio Leudegarii*, I, 5 (ed. Krusch, p. 287) records this event but suggests a very limited public audience at Theuderic's elevation. See Gerberding, *Rise*, p. 69 and Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p. 222, n. 106.

[146]*Additamentum Nivialense de Fuilano*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM*, 4 (Hanover, 1902), pp. 449-451.

[147]Evidence is sketchy but see *LHF*, 43 (ed. Krusch, pp. 315-6) and Stephanus's *Vita Wilfridi*, 28 (*The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trs. B. Colgrave [Cambridge, 1927, rpt. 1985], p. 54) also mentions Dagobert's exile. See P. Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique', *Analecta Bollandiana,* LXXV (1957), pp. 391-392; J. Picard, 'Church and Politics in the Seventh Century: the Irish Exile of King Dagobert II', *Ireland and Northern France AD 600-850,* ed. J. Picard (Dublin, 1991), pp. 27-52.

[148]Although Gerberding, *Rise*, pp. 47-53 argues for the date of 651.

the Neustrians some time to rally their forces but in 662 their anger over this illegitimate political manoeuvre led them to seize Grimoald, and send him to Paris where he was tortured and killed.[149] Childeric II's reign in Austrasia began after these events, ending with his murder in 675. Then Dagobert II was recalled and returned from Ireland to be crowned king in 676. It is unclear which of the many leading factions in Austrasia were responsible for his re-instatement.

In the midst of war with Theuderic, Dagobert was murdered in 679. Little trace of his reign has been left in either contemporary or later Carolingian sources,[150] and it has been suggested that his memory was intentionally erased.[151] The Austrasian court dissolved on his death. Theuderic then ruled the kingdoms of Neustria, Burgundy and Austrasia, from 687, under the increasing influence of the Austrasian Pippinids.[152]

Dido's presence in hell has thus been linked to his interference in the Austrasian royal succession.[153] The details of the life of his companion in hell, Bishop Wulfoleodus, are less well known but we do know that he tried to call a synod without obtaining royal permission.[154] Condemning him may have been a way of signifying loyalty to the office of the king.[155] Thus politics and loyalty to the court may have motivated his condemnation, although it seems both bishops had good reputations overall.[156]

Neglecting the significance of the subscription clause, Hen has pursued this line of argument. He argues that Longoretus was a royal foundation 'in a sense'.[157] He argues

[149]Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 222.
[150]Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, cc. 28 and 33; Pertz, *Diplomata*, I, 45, p. 42. (Pertz, *Diplomata* I, 44 was issued by Dagobert III and not Dagobert II). See Gerberding, *Rise*, p. 81-2, and n. 76.
[151]Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 231, esp n. 76.
[152]Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, pp. 23-4.
[153]Hen, 'Structure', p. 496.
[154]MGH *Epistolae* III, p. 212. Discussed in Krusch's introduction to the *Vita S. Sulpicii MGH SRM* 4, p. 365 and Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 143.
[155]Hen, 'Structure', pp. 494ff.
[156]See de Laugardière, *L'église*, pp. 193-4, 199.
[157]Hen, 'Structure', p. 495.

that by including the damnation of two bishops who had interfered with the royal dynasty, the monastery may have been looking for royal support.[158] However, given the uncertainty and turbulence faced by kings of the third quarter of the seventh century, we could question 'the real significance of royal support in this period'.[159] In light of such considerations, reading the vision and its subscription clause as an immunity may initially look less likely, but in actuality such turbulent times would have called for support – from whatever corner – all the more.

If we try to construct an explanation on a national level, the details of the vision are extremely complicated to rectify. The condemnation of the Burgundian-born Dido makes the vision seem pro-Austrasian, yet he was obviously closely aligned with Neustrians and was bishop of an Aquitanian city. His links with Grimoald may make the text anti-Pippinid. He clearly demonstrates the 'supra-regional factionalism' which characterised the political climate of the late seventh century.[160] It was not one region against another, but a constant readjustment of power between interest groups.[161] What has been consistently overlooked is the fact that Dido was damned with Wulfoleodus. This then removed him from the context in which he was best known: for his rôle in the exile of Dagobert II. We would be on far more secure grounds in seeking a common reason for the two bishops' damnation, but we have lost any context which links them. There are of course other possible common denominators, one of which – the geographic propinquity of the bishoprics – will be discussed in chapter 5.

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[158] *ibid.*, pp. 494-7.

[159] P. Fouracre, 'The Work of Audoenus of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon in extending Episcopal Influence from the Town to the Country in Seventh-Century Neustria', in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, *SCH* 16 (1979), p. 90 makes this point.

[160] Fouracre, 'Notion', esp. p. 5; and Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 236-7.

[161] This is part of the general picture built up by Gerberding in his *Rise*, esp. p. 73; and Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p. 254.

**The Regional Level: Aquitaine**

In seeking an explanation for the condemnation of bishops whose identity and spheres of influence encompass the Neustrian, Burgundian and Austrasian factions, scholars have had to look further afield for answers. Focussing on the geographical location of Barontus's monastery, Carozzi (following Rouche's analysis of the region) has argued that the *VB* was a product of Aquitanian pride emerging during this period of turmoil.[162] However, there is very little evidence for the push for regional autonomy and renewed awareness of ethnic identity Rouche claims to have identified.

Aquitainian regional pride has erroneously been used to explain the treatment of the inhabitants of Barontus's other world. Dido [of Poitiers], a native of Burgundy and bishop of an Austrasian city, and Wulfoleodus of Bourges, a member of a Neustrian-Burgundian party were both condemned. Sigiramnus, the founder of the monastery and a Burgundian, was ignored. Only Barontus – who has been linked to the Aquitanian duke by the same name who ruled before Felix – is deemed superior in deserving divine help in his salvation.[163] Carozzi argues that the visionary escaped from the political fray to the safety of the monastery.[164] But the *VB*'s subscription clause, by acknowledging Theuderic's authority and kingship, indicates that the monastery did not support Aquitaine's bid for independence. The seventh-century evidence for Aquitaine's independence from Merovingian rule in any case is scant and we run the risk of over-inflating it. Aquitaine's independence movement is far more pronounced in the eighth and ninth centuries,[165] a period which coincides

[162]Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 142-4.

[163]This Barontus, first count of Limoges then duke of Toulouse, is mentioned in Fredegar, IV, ch. 78, ed. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its continuations* (London, 1959). For the connection between the duke and the visionary, see Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, p. 414 and Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 143-4. For more on Duke Barontus, see H. Ebling, 'Barontus', *Prosopographie der Amtsträger des Merowingerreiches*, Beihefte der Francia 2 no. LXIII (Munich, 1974) pp. 71-3.

[164]Carozzi, 'Geographie', p. 440. The evidence for this comes only from Barontus's name. This tradition may have been influenced by the eleventh-century *Vita Baronti*.

[165]Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms* pp. 100-1 and 281-4.

with the increased circulation of the *VB*, but seemingly only outside Aquitaine.[166]

The arguments put forward by Carozzi and others who interpret the *VB* in a political light offer an intriguing possibility, but they seem both overly subtle and also flawed in a variety of ways.[167] Perhaps the most obvious objection to raise is that if the text were a carefully crafted piece of Aquitanian propaganda, why is there no mention of St Martin? The souls in heaven embark on a pilgrimage to St Hilary's in Poitiers, not the perhaps more evocative destinations of Marmoutier or Tours.

Further, the elaborate argument suggesting the damnation of Dido shows a particular political slant to the text falls apart if we look at how the two bishops were described. If it were the intention of the author and visionary to make a political statement, why include Wulfoleodus and why dress the bishops in rags and call them liars? This is not a particularly condign or even readily recognisable punishment for political sins.[168] These two bishops were named and condemned for their conduct as individuals, not because they represented a faction. Similarly the city of Bourges is criticised for its moral laxity, not for political reasons. If the vision were meant to reflect political culture, why did Barontus not see Ebroin's place reserved in hell?[169] There were precedents for otherworldly visions to include pointed political criticisms,[170] yet there is no condemnation of members who predominantly operated in the political sphere – not even of Grimoald, Dido's fellow conspirator in the exiling of Dagobert II. If the source was a formal complaint against Neustrian overlordship of Aquitaine, why does the text acknowledge the kingship of Theuderic in its subscription

[166]However, see n. 55 on page 77: Aquitaine's manuscripts suffered particularly in the Viking raids and the surviving evidence must be interpreted in light of this.

[167]Hen, 'Structure', has also attacked Carozzi's argument but for different reasons.

[168]In Gregory of Tours's account of Guntram's political vision of Chilperic bound for damnation, he is chained as a prisoner: *DLH*, VIII. 5 (p. 374). This is a far more likely symbol of wrong-doing in the political sphere than beggars' garments, which in the later *Vision of Bernold*, are an inverted punishment for excessive wealth. See section 5.10 for a discussion of the bishops' punishment.

[169]This question stands even if the vision occurred before Ebroin's demise in 680 for as we have seen, even the living may be seen in the other world. Ebroin also escaped censure in the *LHF*: Gerberding, *Rise*, p. 74.

[170]for example, Gregory of Tours, *DLH* VIII, 5. See also Levison, 'Die Politik'.

clause? If it were a plea for Aquitanian autonomy, why does Barontus allude to any of his family members – presumably good Aquitanian stock – being located among the damned, and why is his heaven only populated by monks, priests and virgins?[171] There seem to be far too many specific details preserved in the text to allow for the use of the argument that later editing and re-copying can account for the many lacunae on which Carozzi's argument rests.[172] These details suggest that politics were not of prime importance to the visionary or redactor; other agenda were at work.

The vision is a record of the period which was dominated by shifting personal loyalties and witnessed the collapse of royal power. The multiple regions represented by the two bishops attest to this fact.[173] It is difficult to reconstruct the historical moment of the vision's occurrence and even more of a challenge to reconcile it with later events in the political sphere.

A Carolingian context might help to explain why the vision had its dating clause preserved. The *Annals of Metz* for 690 (687) preserve a negative view of Theuderic's reign. The claim is advanced that Pippin had to fight the Battle of Tertry against Theuderic in order to protect the Church: 'he was incited by the complaints of priests and the servants of God who have very often approached [him] to help them... to intervene or even to fight, for the possessions of their churches, illegally taken. He said, "Very frequently through ambassadors I humbly besought Theuderic for them, whence I managed to receive nothing but a pompous response full of pride..."'[174] Further aspersions are cast on Theuderic's character and despite peace offerings, the battle of Tertry was fought.

The Carolingians could have been amenable to preserving and disseminating a text

[171] *VB*, 17 (p. 391).
[172] Although some texts were simplified; see the differences between the earlier and later recensions of the *Vita Audoini* and *Passio Praejecti*: Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p. 47.
[173] Gerberding, notes the complexities of trying to track the rapid shifts in factional loyalties: *Rise*, p. 77.
[174] *Annales Mettenses Priores*, ed. B. von Simson, *MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1905) The translation is that of Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p. 356.

which was suggestive of the fractious state of the church during the pre-Pippinid reign of Theuderic. The vision may have been relished by successive waves of Church reformers for it records not only the damnation of bishops and the moral depravity in the city of Bourges, but also the careless observance of the monastic rule at Longoretus.[175]

Thus far it appears that the vision portrays a picture wholly in keeping with a Carolingian viewpoint. But the damnation of Dido for his political activities is potentially antithetical to a pro-Carolingian interpretation. Although they may have later backed Dagobert II, it is unlikely that the Carolingians would have wished to commemorate the Grimoald coup in which Dido played a part. It was the dynasty's first attempt to seize power and it failed.[176] Dagobert's murder[177] may have been a sign that all was not well between king and his nobles and the silence of his reign may have been the result of later Carolingian editing.

The Carolingians may instead have wished to have seen Dido among the blessed. Dido's condemnation is confusing in light of other later sources. The bishop had a good reputation according to the *Additamentum Nivialense* which calls him 'venerable'.[178] It is possible that he has been wrongly identified. After all, there are three other Didos roughly contemporary with Dido of Poitiers,[179] others with far worse reputations. Diddo of Chalons for example lost his bishopric and was vilified in the *Passio Leudegarii*.[180] He was an opponent of Dido of Poitiers and thus if the text actually refers to him, it would render the *VB* a pro-Pippinid text.

A deeper understanding of the political circumstances of this period of Merovingian

[175] See chapters 5 and 6.
[176] Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 223.
[177] Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, 33 and Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 233.
[178] *Additamentum Nivialense de Fuilano*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM*, IV (Hanover, 1902), p. 451.
[179] Diddo of Chalon, Dido of Albi, and Dido of Tours. Duchesne, *Fastes Épiscopaux*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1894-1915).
[180] *Passio Leudegarii* I, 26.

history may help to peel away some of the layers of this text, and concomitantly a deeper understanding of the vision could shed light on the political sphere. For example, the vision immortalised many of the monastery's monks who hailed from prestigious local families; needing to fulfill its hortatory function, it only vaguely condemned some of Barontus's relatives.[181] In so doing, the monastery appears to have been looking to invest its loyalty locally, where the strongest support was likely to be found, but the subscription clause attests to the fact that the potential value of royal power was not to be ignored. Each of these readings of the text depend on too many unknowns, and is too dependent on invoking the ravages of time to explain loose ends and notable absences in the text.

The political context of the late seventh century does not definitively confirm the text's date, but then the *VB* was not predominantly a politicised vision of the type more commonly found in the ninth century.[182] Regionalism or factional politics may have influenced some elements in the composition or preservation of the vision, as we might expect from a time in which bishops acted in a secular sphere and monasticism was linked to the aristocracy. But the text can be more readily understood as a product of a monastic community struggling against the intrusion of the world. We can reconcile the peculiarities of the text and its cast of characters, as well as the ambiguities left by a political reading of the vision by evaluating it in its monastic context. It is to this subject that we shall turn in the next chapter.

## 4.7 Conclusions

The subscription clause was probably added to provide authenticity and an historical anchor for the vision, but instead its very presence and specificity seems defensive and raises the questions that it most likely hoped to silence. The grounds on which the *VB* has been traditionally dated – parallels to earlier vision texts, latinity, the subscription clause and

[181] See chapter 5.
[182] Levison, 'Die Politik'.

internal accuracy of historical details in the text – have been shown to be inadequate as a means of confirming the text's early date. The fact that the *VB*'s influence on vision literature was only measurable from the ninth century, and that no manuscript of the text dates from earlier than the ninth century at least opens up the possibility that the earliest surviving text represents a later recension. During the intervening centuries, it may have gathered accretions, perhaps passing through several stages of evolution before reaching the form in which we now find it. Even once it reached written form, like most texts, it continued to be adapted to the specific needs of the community to which it was read. To consider just three examples, the specificity of a pilgrimage to Poitiers[183] occurs in some redactions, and not in others. Similarly the lengthy theological justification for the text,[184] perhaps not of interest to all communities, is not included in all versions of the text. Furthermore, the late eleventh or early twelfth century saw the composition of a compressed version of the text in which the beginning chapters were amalgamated into one sentence.

Whilst the lack of an early manuscript of the text allows us to question the authenticity of the text, it is these manuscripts, specifically their pattern of dissemination, which indirectly supports an early date for the text. For there to have been nine manuscripts of the text or references to it in a widely diverse area of Europe in the ninth century suggests that the *VB* was in circulation during the previous century.[185]

When compared with other visions, the *VB*'s peculiarities prevent us from claiming with certainty that it is a pure unexpurgated work of this period. The charge of forgery is however a serious one and not the conclusion which should be reached from the preceding study. One would need to find a specific reason for its forgery in the ninth century and this seems wholly lacking. Furthermore, the awkwardness this vision poses to linear histories

[183] *VB*, 18 (p. 392). This detail is not found in redaction 2 for example.
[184] *VB*, 21, 22 (pp. 393-4).
[185] Meyvaert ('Enigma', pp. 341-2) argues a similar case for the manuscript history of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.

of the genre should not prejudice us against seeing it as a seventh-century text. Instead this exercise was undertaken to demonstrate that although certain proof is lacking, the text generally fits nicely within its assumed seventh century context. That the *VB* fits comfortably into other, later contexts demonstrates that it is a text of enduring interest. Acceptance of its early date emphasises the nonlinearity and great variation within the genre of early medieval vision literature and makes us aware of the continuities between the seventh and ninth century.

The possibility of later interpolations should not prevent us from using the *VB* as seventh-century evidence. Nothing in it is incompatible with a seventh-century date, and the myriad of Merovingian details especially the dates of both bishops establish Theuderic III's reign as its most likely period of composition and suggest the text is at the very least based on a core late seventh-century text. The manuscript evidence which shows the vision widely disseminated in the ninth century lends further weight to the acceptance of an early date. The next chapter will consider the *VB* in its seventh-century monastic context and the two chapters subsequent to that will investigate Carolingian interest in this text.

CHAPTER

# FIVE

# The Merovingian Monastic Context of the *Visio Baronti*

## 5.1 Introduction

As neither the material evidence which can be gleaned from the manuscript tradition nor external references to the *VB* may be adduced as absolute proof of the text's early date, we turn now to consider whether the internal, monastic evidence recorded in the vision supports the text's alleged date of composition and to investigate possible influences on the composition of this text. Barontus's other world was populated by monks, virgins, clerics and bishops, a definite indication that the *VB* was a monastic vision.[1] Having examined the *VB* in its literary and political context in the previous chapter, I will now evaluate the

[1]Carozzi, *Voyage* p. 165 speculates that the absence of monks in hell shows that the *VB* was designed to encourage vocations.

vision in the context in which it occurred, was redacted and was subsequently used.

The *VB* mirrors much of the imagery and dramatic structure of other early medieval visions,[2] but as we have already seen, it also contains a host of peculiar features. In addition to its subscription clause, the vision distinguishes itself in the listing of daily monastic practices and its overwhelming emphasis on community and commemoration. To contextualise these features, I will begin with what we know of Barontus's monastery (5.2) and follow with a general overview of seventh-century monasticism and what external sources tell us about the monastery (5.3). I will then compare this picture to the monastic observances recorded in the vision (5.4-5.5). These sections may initially seem to point to a falsely dichotomous picture of seventh-century monasticism, but they have been conceived of as a response to the secondary literature which touches on the form of monasticism recorded in the *VB*. In (5.6), I propose a new way of interpreting the evidence. A discussion of the text's unusually heavy emphasis on commemoration and the rôle of the community in the death and salvation of the individual will follow (5.7). Finally I will offer comments on how the monastery might have used the vision's authority and content when external and internal exigencies arose (5.8-5.10).

## 5.2 Barontus's Monastery

The monastery of St Peter Longoretus was founded *ca.* 640-650 by a certain Sigiramnus.[3] Barontus's vision occurred in 678/9, relatively early in the monastery's history. The founda-

[2] See chapters 1, 2 and 4.

[3] *Vita Sigiramni abbatis Longoretensis* (ed. B. Krusch *MGH SRM* 4 [Hanover, 1902], pp. 603-25). For the early history of the monastery and its founder, see also Levison, *VB*, p. 368; Wattenbach-Levison, *Geschichtsquellen* I, p. 135; B. Krusch, 'Zur Florians- und Lupuslegende', *Neues Archiv*, XXIV (1899), 541ff, Longnon, *Géographie de la Gaul,* (Paris, 1878), Kenney, *Sources* I, p. 490 and de Laugardière, *L'Église*, p. 188. F. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung* (Darmstadt, 1988), map VIIA, places its construction between 641-660. A spurious charter of Méobecq (G. Pertz, *MGH Diplomatum imperii*, I, pp. 145-6) claims it was founded in the time of Dagobert I in 632. This chronology would make Longoretus's date of foundation earlier as well.

tion was rededicated to St Cyran (Sigiramnus) upon the installation of his relics probably in the eighth century, although the date of his translation is difficult to pinpoint.[4] The monastery faded into obscurity during the Carolingian period and the intervening centuries have concealed all other knowledge of its early history. It is known to have survived at least into the eighteenth century before being dissolved in 1712.[5] A twelfth-century tower, now integrated into a farm-house is all that remains above ground at the site. We are left with only three early medieval sources which yield specific information about the monastery: the *VB*, the *ca.* late ninth or tenth-century *Vita Sigiramni* (*VS*) and a spurious charter.[6]

This monastery has been recognised by scholars as one of the earliest to adopt the *Rule of St Benedict* (*RB*) and thus has acquired significance for monastic historians.[7] The monastic observance recorded in the *VB* has also been used to demonstrate the widespread influence of Columbanian monasticism. The issue of whether Longoretus followed the *RB*

[4]Because the vision refers to and makes use of the dedication of the monastery's church to St Peter, it is likely that the relics of St Sigiramnus were installed after the date of the vision. Krusch (*VS*, p. 604) suggests that the translation probably occurred in the eighth century. The translation is recorded twice the Hieronymian Martyrology. It occurs in the Wolfenbüttel manuscript of the twelfth century for 4 December: *Longorito monast. transitus sci. Siranni.* (*AASS* Nov. II, 1, p. 150) and in the St-Avold of Metz redaction of the same martyrology for 26 October: *In territurio Beturico monasterio Longoreto translatio Siggerani et deditio [sic] basilice ipsius.* (*AASS* Nov. II, 1, p. 135). From the episcopal lists compiled by L. Duchesne, *Fastes Épiscopaux de L'Ancienne Gaule*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1894-1915), there is no common ground between any bishop Sigobald and Archbishop Anghilramnus. For further discussion of the possible date of the translation: Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 142. The monastery's subsequent history demonstrates that the cult of Sigiramnus remained localised.

[5] *Gallia christiana*, ed. D. Sammarthan, vol II (Paris, 1720), 18, 131, 169 and 1152-1153. The monastery's second name, St-Cyran, received later attention as it became synonymous with Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, the seventeenth-century Jansenist reformer who served as its abbot. A. Gazier, *Histoire générale du mouvement janséniste: depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1922), vol. 1, p. 8.

[6] The complete text of the *VS* survives in one manuscript of S. XI: Brussels, BRA 8550-1. Fragments of the text are also found in two manuscripts of S. XVIII. For details, see Krusch, *VS*, p. 605 and below, section 5.9 and n. 30 below.

[7] *Gallia Christiana*, II, 130, although Prinz (*Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 267-8) notes that until the 660's/670's, the only recorded instance of the *RB*'s being observed as the sole *Rule* is in Altaripa. However, both Cottineau and Coigent argue the monastery was Benedictine: L. Cottineau, *Répertoire topo-bibliographique des abbayes et prieurés* (Mâcon, 1937) vol. 2, col. 2647 and Coignet, 'Barontus' *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* ed. A. Baudrillart (Paris, 1932), vol. 6, p. 883. This idea has been reiterated even in recent times. For example Hen argues that Longoretus was Benedictine at the time of the vision. See also de Laugardière, (*L'église*, p. 183) who more specifically outlines the monastic practices described in the vision.

or the *Rule of Columbanus* has dominated much of the work done on the *VB*.

In the following sections we will weigh the evidence to ascertain if a conclusion about the rule observed at Longoretus at the time of the vision can be reached. Interestingly none of the *VB*'s scholars has yet acknowledged that seventh-century monasticism was not necessarily Benedictine nor Columbanian, nor have they used the monastic evidence contained in the text to date the composition of the vision, nor suggested that the Benedictine elements might represent an interpolation of later norms, nor even moved on from this polarised debate to use the details preserved in the *VB* as a means of shedding light on what constituted late seventh-century monastic observances, expectations and behaviour. These then will be the aims of this survey. In the course of this chapter I will directly address the overly simplistic dichotomy of Benedictine v. Columbanian monasticism which has been made and repeated in the secondary literature on the *VB*.

## 5.3 Seventh-Century Monasticism

During the seventh century, Francia witnessed the multiplication and intermingling of different forms of monasticism.[8] Early forms of monasticism were primarily eremitical[9] or cenobitic in nature.[10] While borrowing heavily from earlier monastic traditions, Western European monasticism modified and transformed early monastic rules. The more rigorous climatic conditions of Western Europe in some part contributed to the development of community-based organisations located in predominantly urban settings.[11] In the late

[8]Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, is essential to this subject.

[9]The model is set out in *Athanasios: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellus*, trs. and intro. by R. C. Gregg (London, 1980). The Greek text can be found in *PG* 26 (1887), 835-976 and the Latin translation by Evagrios is in *PL* 73:125-70.

[10]A. Veilleux, *La Liturgie das le cénobitisme pachomien au quatrième siécle* (Rome, 1968); also P. Rousseau, *Pachomius: the Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley, 1985).

[11]C. Courtois, 'L'Evolution du Monachisme en Gaule de St Martin à St Columban', *Settimane di Studio* iv (1957), 47-72. See also E. John, ' "Secularium Prioratus" and the Rule of St Benedict', *Revue Bénédictine* 75 (1965), pp. 214-6; H.B. Clarke and M. Brennan (eds.) *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR. International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983) p. 63ff;

sixth and early seventh centuries, the region witnessed an influx of Irish missionaries and Merovingian monasticism was to be particularly influenced by the arrival of the Irish monk, St Columbanus *ca.* 590.[12] He and his followers introduced their own form of monasticism[13] which co-existed alongside native Frankish monastic observances based on a plethora of earlier Rules like those of Pachomius, Augustine, the Master and Cassian.[14] Columbanus's monastery at Luxeuil served as a prototype for other foundations. For social, religious and economic reasons, Columbanian monasticism became intimately tied to the Neustrian court and its nobility.[15] These monasteries were organised on a manorial model, characterised by rural locations and devotion to missionary work.[16] This model encouraged lay aristocrats to alienate land to endow private monasteries. The nobility of the seventh century recognised the usefulness of a private foundation, for it could provide a place in which to deposit their land holdings which could yield a perpetual investment return in the form of prayers for their salvation. In a society which understood gift exchange, a symbiotic relationship based on the bonds created between donor and recipient was created and flourished.[17] Monks benefited from the endowments, buildings, and protection given to them by lay aristocrats and the aristocrats benefited from salvific prayers offered on their behalf by monks,[18] as

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and J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Oxford, 1987), p. 113.

[12]Jonas, *Vita Columbani* (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 4 [Hanover, 1905], pp. 148-224). See also D. Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin writings*, ed. M. Lapidge (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 1-28.

[13]*Regula coenobialis* (ed. and trs. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*).

[14]Augustine, *Rule* (ed. L.Verheijen, L*a Règle de Saint Augustin* [Paris, 1980], pp. 417-37); John Cassian, *Institutes,* ed. and trs. J.-C. Guy, *SC* 109 (Paris, 1965) and *Conferences*, ed and trs. E. Pichery, *SC* 42, 54, 64 (Paris, 1955-9); also C.V. Franklin, I. Havener and J.A. Francis, eds. *Early Monastic Rules: the Rules of the Fathers and the Regula Orientalis* (Collegeville, MN, 1982).

[15]There is a vast bibliography on this subject but for an introduction see F. Prinz, 'Aristocracy and Christianity in Merovingian Gaul', ed. K. Bosl, *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Literatur: Rezeption und Originalität im Wachsen einer europäischen Literatur und Geistigkeit* (Stuttgart, 1975).

[16]F. Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories East of the Rhine', ed. H.B. Clark and M. Brennan, *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 76-77 and M. Lapidge, ed., *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings,* (Woodbridge, 1997).

[17]M. Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London, 1954, rpt 1966, 1969), especially pp. 54ff.

[18]Prinz, 'Aristocracy', p. 159; M. de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism: the Power of Prayer', *New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. R. McKitterick vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 647-651.

well as having a place to lodge infirm or awkward family members.[19]

Two forms of monastic observance dominated the early Middle Ages, and they have often been historiographically cast as opposites. In his extensive work on Columbanian monasticism, Riché has isolated three 'original contributions' of the movement: a missionary impulse, close relations with the papacy and the renewal of spiritual life in Gaul brought about through the practices of asceticism, prayer, sacred readings and private penance.[20] A thumbnail sketch of Columbanian monasticism derived from its Rules reveals a system which demanded 'obedience, silence, fasting, chastity, mortification and penance.'[21] Many of these features can also be found in other forms of monasticism. Current scholarship has instead emphasised that the defining characteristic of Columbanian monasticism was its independence from, but not antagonism to, the local episcopate and ecclesiastical structures.[22]

On the other hand, Benedictine monasticism is characterised not by asceticism and rigour but by tempered, communal observance of a Rule. While this formulation has been called into question, some contrasts between the *RB* and other rules can be identified.[23] Benedict's *Rule* was composed in Italy *ca.* 550; its influence can be detected in Francia from around 625, although it may have been known earlier.[24] The *RB* is notable for its thoroughness in covering all situations and eventualities, unlike other rules which were more *ad hoc* lists of regulations. Obedience to a superior for the benefit of the individual and the community is the focus of much of the Rule.[25] The *RB* sought to preserve the power of the

[19]See Bede's Letter to Ecgberht of York for his complaints on the inappropriate use of monasteries by lay patrons (ed. Plummer, *Opera*, I, 413).
[20]Riché, 'Columbanus', pp. 66-71.
[21]*ibid.*, p. 67.
[22]J. O'Caroll, 'Monastic Rules in Merovingian Gaul', *Studies* 42 (1953) p. 412. Compare I. N. Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia* 1 (1982), and J. Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', ed. M. Lapidge, *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 207ff.
[23]Most notably by E. John, '*Secularium Prioratus* and the Rule of St Benedict' *Revue Bénédictine* 75 (1965) pp. 212-239.
[24]Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum.*
[25]John, '*Secularium*', pp. 219, 223.

abbot whilst removing him from worldly contamination. The *RB*'s emphasis on the value of manual labour seems to distinguish it from all other forms of monastic observance.[26]

The early date of the *VB* makes strict observance of the *RB* potentially anachronistic. Wormald has catagorically stated that 'no seventh-century monastery could be described as "Benedictine" in quite the modern sense'.[27] Indeed there are no unmistakable details from the *RB* directly cited or incorporated into the *VB*, but neither are there any from the *Rule of Columbanus*. John and others have argued that it is not necessary to see a dichotomy between Irish and Benedictine monasticism.[28] Far from opposing the precepts of the *RB*, Columbanian houses adopted the *RB* from a very early period.[29] Instead it is important to recognise that each system of monasticism was basically striving toward spiritual development and ultimately the same spiritual goal.

**External evidence**

Apart from the scattered details of monastic life which can be gleaned from the *VB*, the *ca.* late ninth or tenth-century *VS* is our main source of information on the monastery and is the origin of the Benedictine claim on the Longoretus monastery.[30] From this source, we learn that Sigiramnus was born in Bourges, to a noble family of Berry, headed by his father, Sigelaïcus (Siclaicus). Sigiramnus served as cupbearer at the court of Chlothar II (613-629)[31] where he was placed under the protection of the powerful Flauchadus who was to become mayor of the palace of Burgundy.[32] Sigiramnus made a pilgrimage to Rome with Faílbe

[26] *ibid.*, p. 237.

[27] Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', p. 142. Also see Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 267-8.

[28] John, '*Secularium*'. De Vogüé, *Benoît* I, pp. 163-9 has argued that Columbanus knew the *RB*, and Prinz, *Frühes* pp.263-92 argues that the network of Columbanian monasteries helped spread the *RB*.

[29] John, '*Secularium*'; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 59 and Riché, *Education and Culture*, p. 335.

[30] For manuscript references, see n. 6 above. See also B. Krusch, 'Zur Florians- und Lupus-Legende. Eine Entgegnung', *Neues Archiv* 24 (1899), pp. 542-547. It should be noted that the *VS* does not circulate with the *VB*.

[31] *VS*, 32-33 (p. 607).

[32] Continuator of Fredegar, bk IV *MGH SRM* II, pp. 165-168, H. Ebling, 'Flaochadus' *Prosopographie der Amtsträger des Merowingerreiches*, Beihefte der Francia 2 (Munich, 1974), pp. 150-1 and Carozzi, *Voyage*,

or Flavius, an Irish missionary bishop.[33] With his court connections and pious intentions, Sigiramnus was well placed to receive the use of the probably fiscal lands which had been granted to Flauchadus.[34] On land in the forests of Brenne,[35] Sigiramnus constructed two monasteries, one at Millebeccus (present day Méobecq) and a second on the royal estate of Longoretum,[36] also land donated by Flauchadus (recall the map shown in figure 3.1 on page 62). According to the *VS*, he instituted the *Rule* of St Benedict (*RB*) at St Peter Longoretus, and became abbot.[37] Sigiramnus was later driven out of his monastery during a revolt by his monks.[38] The *VS* was heavily inspired by Ursinus's rendering of the *Passio Leudegarii*[39] and was re-edited by a Carolingian copyist. The author ends his text with insistence that this *vita* was taken from an earlier text which had become almost illegible though age and had to be rewritten.

While the *VB* paints clear biographies of many of the brothers, as well as providing details of monastic life at both Millebeccus and Longoretus, it never mentions Sigiramnus.[40] This possibly intentional omission is a feature to which I shall return later.[41]

Sigiramnus's pilgrimage to Rome with Flavius would only have provided him with the opportunity to observe mixed rules,[42] but the author of his *vita* explicitly refers to his

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p. 141.

[33] *VS*, 9-10, (pp. 611-12).

[34] Ebling, (*Prosopographie,* pp. 150-1) summarises the varying traditions associated with Flaochadus.

[35] *VS*, 11-12 (pp. 612-613).

[36] *VS*, 12 (p. 613). Also *Gallia Christiana*, vol. IV, 828. Neither site appears to have been excavated and the references made to the monastery's buildings does not permit a conclusion on the type of plan on which Longoretus was constructed.

[37] *VS*, 13 (p. 614).

[38] *VS*, 21 (pp. 618-9). His career follows the pattern of other aristocrats at this time such as Audoenus and Ansbert of Rouen, Philibert of Jumièges, Wandregisel of St Wandrille, etc. See Prinz, 'Columbanus', p. 78.

[39] Krusch, *VS*, pp. 604-5.

[40] de Laugardière, *L'église*, p. 187 and Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 169ff

[41] Section 5.9.

[42] de Laugardiere (*L'église*, p. 183) argues that he would have been exposed to the *RB* whilst in Rome, but this was not the case: G. Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the History of the Monasteries and Convents at Rome from the V through the X Century.* Studi di antichità cristiana, vol. 23 (Vatican City, 1957).

adoption of the *RB* at St Peter Longoretus. There is a long tradition beginning with the *Gallia Christiana* which has unquestioningly accepted the *VS*'s claim that the *RB* was in force at the Longoretus monastery.[43] The source for this information is however ultimately unreliable since the *VS* was substantially revised by a Carolingian redactor during a time in which adherence to the *RB* was normative[44] and who thus had his own agenda for seeking or deliberately 'finding' evidence of widespread acceptance of the *RB* in earlier periods of history.[45] For this reason, it is quite possible that the later redrafter of the *VS* added a reference to Benedictine monasticism to this work specifically because it was lacking (compare sections 5.4 with 5.5). Bearing this in mind, we turn next to the Benedictine elements of the monastic discipline described in the *VB*.

## 5.4 Evidence of the *RB*

### Obedience

Unlike the twelfth-century *Vision of Tundal* which contains three quotations from the *RB*, the *VB* does not contain direct quotations from the *RB*. Arguments in the secondary literature have however been made for the direct influence of Benedictine monasticism on the text.[46] In a recent MA thesis on the *VB*, Curry has used the theme of obedience found in the text as testimony to the vision's Benedictinism. She argues that St Peter is depicted in the guise of a Benedictine abbot in being 'stern and loving', and thus his character represents

[43] *Gallia Christiana* II, 130.

[44] Moves had been made to impose the *RB* on monks in 742, in 794 and in 802 at the Council of Aachen: *Capitularia*, nos. 36-41 (105-118, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.*). McKitterick (*Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 109-124) considers the Carolingians' promotion of the *RB*.

[45] For example, the ninth-century legend of St Maurus bringing the *RB* to Gaul in the mid-sixth century. *Vita Mauri, AASS* 15 Jan, (Antwerp, 1643), pp. 1038-1050. McKitterick (*Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 109-110) discusses this text and the *RB*'s reception in Gaul.

[46] For the influence of the *RB* on the *Vision of Tundal*, see St J.D. Seymour, 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* XXXVII (1924-1927), 88, 102.

a departure from earlier forms of monasticism.[47] However, a closer reading instead emphasises the power of St Peter as a patron saint and symbol of Rome (see 5.5). He is depicted as an all-powerful ally who breaks rules and loses his temper in order to save Barontus. He is symbolic of salvation and demonstrates the power of intercession and the benefits of patronage to a saint, but is not a model Benedictine abbot. There is some validity to Curry's argument, but surely a discussion of abbatial behaviour should also have included a look at the descriptions of the vision's two earthly abbots, Francardus and Leodaldus. They are praised for their humility and good works, thus providing a living example of the model prescribed in *RB* 2.12. Francardus is further exalted for his fear of God, his learning, his education of the monks under his charge as well as his ability to provide for their needs.[48] Emphasis on abbatial behaviour is in keeping with the spirit of Benedictine monasticism, and Francardus and Leodaldus fit comfortably into the *RB*'s prescriptions for abbots. However their attributes are also rather generic.[49] Curry further notes that the angels who respond to Raphael's call are the model of obedience a Benedictine monk would show to his abbot.[50] In this analysis, she has overlooked two other prime examples. Great obedience is shown in the way the angel responds to Raphael's command to fetch St Peter.[51] The way the dead monks organise themselves to help Barontus return safely to earth via Hell[52] appears to correspond closely with the obedience which Benedict sought to foster among monks (*RB* 71). But surely disobedience could hardly be expected among members of the heavenly community. Furthermore obedience is surely not a feature unique to Benedictinism, for as Mayr-Harting has pointed out, 'all monastic rules of course stressed

[47] J. R. Curry, 'The Illustrated Visio Baronti A Model Book for Carolingian Monastic Reform', Unpublished MA Thesis (University of Florida, 1996), pp. 42-3.

[48] *VB*, 5, 10 (pp. 381, 385).

[49] Humility and service were two very common motifs in hagiography of the seventh and later centuries. Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* particularly emphasises the sanctity of the humble and the poor. See L. Cracco Ruggini, 'The Crisis of the Noble Saint: The "*Vita Arnulfi*"', in J.N. Hillgarth and J. Fontaine, eds. *Le Septième Siècle* (London, 1992), esp. pp. 127, 136.

[50] Curry, 'Illustrated Visio Baronti'.

[51] *VB*, 12 (p. 386).

[52] *VB*, 16, 18 (pp. 390, 392).

obedience to the abbot.'[53]

## Manual Labour

Manual labour is another of the foundation stones of the *RB*. While at the time of the vision, Barontus himself is too ill to participate in work at the monastery, yet he is required to undertake the weekly task of cleaning the tomb of Framnoaldus whilst repeating Psalm 50 (one of the seven penitential psalms) in its entirety.[54] Furthermore, he sees one of the Millebeccus brothers gathering greens from the garden in preparation for dinner.[55] This may be a veiled reference to Benedict's precept that 'No one is to be excused kitchen duty' (c. 35) or that brothers 'must not become distressed if local conditions or their poverty should force them to do the harvesting themselves.' (c. 48) It is one of several episodes in the *VB* which specifically seeks to diminish class distinctions.[56] This message is amplified in Peter's proclamation that the penance he gives Barontus is 'the same price for rich man or for poor'. From the instructions on cleaning and other teachings on monastic behaviour, it appears that the *VB* was in part designed to provide the monks with lessons in humility. These might be particularly poignant reminders for a community of nobles. The cleaning and herb-gathering episodes are suggestive not only of Benedictine obedience but also of Benedictine disregard of social class, but these instances remain discordant with the abundant references to the nobility of the monks which occur throughout the vision and more in line with Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* on Benedict, of which more later.[57]

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[53] H. Mayr-Harting, 'The Venerable Bede, the Rule of St. Benedict and Social Class', *Jarrow Lecture* (1976), p. 9. Also compare Rule of Columbanus c. IX (ed. Walker, p. 156) and *RB*, c. 5.

[54] *VB*, 14 (p. 389). A story recounted by Gregory of Tours (*Liber in gloria confessorum*, c. 90 ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 1:2 [Hanover, 1885], pp. 744-820) also records a connection between visions and cleaning. St Lusor appeared to a poor man in a vision and ordered him to clean a small room. After completing the task, the man was miraculously remunerated for his cleaning; Barontus on the other hand was rendering service for safe conduct back to his body and thus had already received his gift.

[55] However, de Laugardiere (*L'Eglise*, p. 190) has more entertainingly interpreted this scene as being the Millebeccus redactor's protest at the comparatively less austere diet followed by the Longoretus monks.

[56] For a discussion of the *RB*'s handling of social distinctions see Mayr-Harting, 'Venerable Bede', esp. p. 11.

[57] *VB*, 1, 10 and 15 (pp. 377, 385, 389). For further discussion, see below, section 5.10.

### Private Property

Hen makes a case for the Benedictinism of the Longoretus monks when he states that the author of the *VB* was using the *RB* in the chapter which deals with Barontus's withholding of property after becoming a monk.[58] Indeed the *RB* does contain specific legislation on this issue,[59] but it need not be the source for the author's preoccupation against the maintenance of private property. Maintaining private property was forbidden by almost all early monastic rules including the *Rule of the Augustine*, the *Rule of the Master* and the *Rule of Columbanus*.[60] Ecclesiastical legislation takes the prohibition of private ownership by monks as a given and offers further prohibitions against the practice.[61]

### Summary

With its strong emphasis on community (see 5.7-5.9), the *VB* reads, on one level, as a tribute to Benedictine monasticism at the expense of a more eremitical form of monasticism. There is little in the *VB* which is directly incompatible with any of the regulations of the *RB*. The *VB* even seems to endorse some Benedictine precepts. For example, the two portraits of the saintly abbots of Longoretus and Millebeccus are indicative of Benedictine ideals. However if the monasticism of the *RB* is distinguished by its attention to averting social tensions in the monastery by erasing social distinction[62] and emphasised hospitality to travellers, then we must consider that this was not the exclusive rule under which Barontus was living.

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[58] *VB*, 13 (pp. 387-8) and Hen, 'Structures', p. 483.

[59] *RB*, 33.

[60] *Rule of Augustine* (Epistle 109) c. 1 and 8 (ed. Verheijen, *La Règle de Saint Augustin* 82. 18-24); *La Règle du Maître*, (ed. de Vogüé, *SC* 105, pp. 338-40); and Columbanus, *Regula coenobialis*, II (ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani*, pp. 142, 146-7).

[61] See for example the rulings of the early sixth-century Council of Orléans, c. 19. (ed. C. de Clercq, CCSL 148A [Turnout, 1963], p. 11).

[62] Mayr-Harting, 'Venerable Bede', pp. 1-18.

## 5.5 Evidence of Columbanian Monasticism

Successive waves of Iromania have affected scholars in different ways from as early as the ninth century.[63] It has become fashionable to see Columbanian influence behind all rural Frankish monasteries founded in the second half of the seventh century and Longoretus has not escaped from such revisionism.[64] Indeed there are a number of reasons to seek Columbanian influence. It was a force strongly felt at the Neustrian court, the very court at which Sigiramnus served.[65] Columbanian monasticism influenced a generation of nobles who donated land or pledged themselves to this form of monastic life.[66] Sigiramnus would have come into contact with Irish monasticism in another context as well. As mentioned above, he was greatly influenced by an Irish bishop, Flavius, who had accompanied him to Rome.[67] Sigiramnus himself travelled a great deal – a fact which signals something less than Benedictine stabilitas.[68] Given Sigiramnus's close association with Flavius, the widespread influence of Luxeuil in the seventh century and the strong Irish presence in Aquitaine,[69] it seems entirely plausible that Millebeccus and Longoretus most likely were founded on a Columbanian model.

In addition to details of Sigiramnus's life and the cultural milieu of Aquitaine in the

[63] E. James, 'Ireland and Western Gaul in the Merovingian period', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. Dumville (Cambridge, 1982) gives a refreshing historiographical overview of this issue.

[64] Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 140-1 argues Columbanian influence helped found the two monasteries. His map VIIA also identifies them as Columbanian. Riché (*Education and Culture*, pp. 330, 332) identifies Longoretus as one of the centre of Columbanian culture in Gaul, which did not adopt the *RB* but fails to provide his sources or reasons for this assumption. Interestingly, Roussel who was overly optimistic in classifying all monasteries of the seventh century as Columbanian, appears to have believed the *VS*'s claim of Benedictine observance at St Peter Longoretus. A list of (the probable, mixed with the possible) Columbanian monasteries is tabulated in E.J. McCarthy's introduction to C.F.R. Montalembert, *St Columban* (St Columbans, NE, 1927), pp. 224-5.

[65] Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 136, 140-1.

[66] Picard, 'Aquitaine et Irlande', p. 24

[67] *VS* and Wattenbach-Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter, Vorzeit und Karolinger* 1 (1952), pp. 134-5.

[68] de Laugradière, *L'église*, p. 188 notes this fact but still argues that the monastery was under the *RB*.

[69] Picard, 'Aquitaine et Irlande'.

mid to late seventh century, the monastery's Irishness has been sought in the following areas: the *VB*'s treatment of bishops, texts cited by the redactor of the *VB*, the vision's eschatology and its emphasis on penance and pilgrimage.

## The Damnation of Bishops

The condemnation of two bishops in the *VB* has been used as evidence of Longoretus's Rule. Rural monasteries, like Longoretus, because of their remote location often remained largely outside the jurisdiction of the episcopate and in the hands of the abbot and founder.[70] Historians had associated the introduction of the practice of repeatable penance, administered by priests not bishops, with Columbanian monasticism and thus have chosen to see Columbanian monasticism in conflict with local bishops,[71] althought recently this has been seen not to have been the case after 629.[72] The *VB* clearly demonstrates the virtue of repeated confession and thus support of this Irish practice. By applying the theory that Irish monasticism was antagonistic to episcopal authority, Hillgarth makes the case that the punishment of the bishops in hell could be explained by the monastery's 'Irish' objection to episcopal overlordship.[73] Thus the damnation of bishops Dido and Wulfoleodus seems to be further evidence of the *VB*'s Irish heritage. But here we must note that the vision does not condemn the episcopacy generally, but two of its members specifically. The general implications of Hillgarth's view have moreover recently been challenged.[74] Columbanus himself was not anti-episcopal and episcopal opposition to Columbanus could not have been as pronounced as has been thought. As Rosenwein succinctly argues, Columbanus's ac-

[70] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 61ff.

[71] Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. xxv. T. M. Charles-Edwards ('The Penitential of Columbanus', ed. M. Lapidge, *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* [Woodbridge, 1997] pp. 237-8) cogently argues this was not the case.

[72] Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*.

[73] Hillgarth, *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 182. Their punishment is discussed in greater detail below.

[74] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 65, Charles-Edwards, 'Penitential', pp. 237-8; and Wood, '*Vita Columbani*', p. 73ff.

tions do not '[spell] out a *policy* of limited episcopal jurisdiction.'[75] Here again seemingly solid arguments demonstrating Columbanian influence on the *VB* evaporate under closer scrutiny.

The link between the arrival of the Irish on the Continent and the development of monastic immunities cannot be denied,[76] but the condemnation of these two bishops cannot be construed an unequivocal sign of the monastery's Columbanian heritage. Relations between monks and bishops were a perennially thorny issue as the two offices functioned in different spheres with different aims. Much of the history of the Church, from the Council of Chalcedon in 451 onward, records the friction generated by shifts in the balance of power between monks and bishops.[77] The damnation of the two bishops in the *VB* must be understood as part of both this more general background of the history of the Church, as well as resulting from local circumstances. It is not attributable simply to the Rule that was followed at Longoretus.[78]

### Learning and Customs

The *VB*'s community bears witness to a spirit of learnedness often associated with the Irish. For example, a case has been made that the abbot of the Longoretus monastery provided a lay eduation for the sons of nobles.[79] The erudition of the community is evident in the fluency and ease with which the redactor incorporates quotations from the *Bible* and the works of Gregory the Great. The redactor uses pastoral writings especially popular amongst

[75]Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, p. 66.

[76]Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 64-73 and W. Levison, 'Die Iren und die fränkische Kirche', *Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit* (Düsseldorf, 1948), pp. 255-258.

[77]Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 59.

[78]For a fuller discussion of this issue, see below, section 5.11.

[79]Riché, *Education and Culture*, pp. 324-336, esp. p. 330. Here he notes that in the *VB* 10 (p. 385) we learn that Abbot Francardus educated the sons of the noblility at Longoretus but that we cannot deduce if they received this education as oblates or as children who would return to the world.

the Irish.[80] Further, we should note the special reverence paid to St Hilary of Poitiers by the heavenly community also suggests an Irish connection since he was a saint of particular importance to the Irish.[81] The case for Irish influence can be further strengthened by details in the *VB* which mirror Irish practices. The Irish practice of blessing lights[82] is also found in the *VB*.[83] The sign of the cross also had special significance and again the *VB* makes frequent references to the power inherent in this sign.[84] Furthermore, 25 March (the date of Barontus's vision) is a significant date for the Irish. It is the date they calculate Easter from and the date on which Easter cannot be celebrated before as it was thought to be the vernal equinox, whereas in Italy and Gaul it was recognised as 21 March.[85] As noted in the previous chapter, at least one Irish *Rule*, the *Rule of Ailbe*, recorded that monks were to recite the *Rule* on this date each year.[86] It may have been especially significant for a Columbanian monk since the monks' routines were altered on this date under the provisions of this *Rule*.[87]

However, under closer examination, much of this evidence melts away. The learnedness of the redactor is of course not proof of the monastery's Irish heritage. Tours monasticism in the sixth century cannot be ignored in such an assessment. Furthermore, the vision's inclusion of a pilgrimage from heaven to St Hilary's at Poitiers may have been invoked purely as another connection with orthodoxy given the saint's battle against Arian heretics. In addition the 25th of March had significance outside of Columbanian circles: it is mentioned

[80] For an overview of the Irish literary tradition see M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe* (Cornell, 1931), pp. 141-149. For the *VB* specifically, see Riché, *Education and Culture*, p. 364; and J.-M. Picard, 'Aquitaine et Irlande dans le Haut Moyen Age', in his, *Aquitaine and Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 28-9.

[81] Picard, 'Aquitane et Irlande', pp. 23-4.

[82] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* i, 17, Adamnan, *Vita S. Col* iii, 11-12. The Council of Mâcon denounced habits of the Irish including signs of the cross made on common implements. Concilium Matisconense 626-627 (ed. C. de Clercq, *Concilia Galliae 511-695*, CCSL 148A [Turnhout, 1963], p. 299). Cf. Riché, 'Columbanus', p. 63.

[83] *VB*, 15 (p. 389).

[84] *VB*, 1, 6, 15, 16 (pp. 378, 382, 389-90).

[85] Columbanus, *Regula coenobialis*, c. vii (ed. Walker, pp. 128-133).

[86] De Bhaldraithe, 'Irish Monastic Rules', p. 59.

[87] *Regula monachorum*(ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani*, p. 130).

specifically in the *Rule of the Master* as the date to change semi-annual observances.[88]

### Penance in the Seventh Century

Private or secret penance has long been associated with the Irish; therefore a consideration of penitential material in the *VB* has implications for Columbanian influences at work in the Longoretus monastery. Whereas Benedictine monasticism focussed not on penance but on correction for punishment,[89] it was such a central tenet of Columbanian monastic observance that $1/10^{th}$ of Columbanus's rule was devoted to a penitential.[90] Penitential discipline was to take on an increased significance for Irish monks in the generation following Columbanus.

The vision's emphasis on penance initially seems a clear indication of an Irish monastic context, but unfortunately even this conclusion is equivocal. Modern scholarship thinks a system of secret penance was already in place in Gaul when the Irish arrived.[91] The emphasis on penance which we find in the vision is probably merely a reflection of its time of composition since secret penance had been promoted by the Council of Chalon-sur-Saône in 647-53[92] and was probably not only accepted but encouraged as a practice in Francia by 678/9.

Penance was inextricably linked to the afterlife since it was undertaken to increase one's chances of obtaining salvation. It is unsurprising that the *VB* is replete with penitential allusions: the choice of Raphael as angelic guide (see below), the listing of confessing to

[88] *Regula Magistri*, 33.28 (ed. de Vogüé, p. 182).
[89] W. Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe. The Architecture of the Orders*, trs. A. Laing (London, 1972, rpt. 1980), p. 27.
[90] *The Irish Penitentials* (ed. Bieler, pp. 96-107) or *Sancti Columbani Opera* (ed. Walker, pp. 168-81). For a comprehensive discussion of Columbanus's contribution to early penitentials and the compilation of his penitential see Charles-Edwards, 'Penitential', pp. 217-239, esp p.219, and Braunfels, *Monasteries*, p. 23.
[91] A.J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1983), c. 2 and Wood (*Vita Columbani*, p. 73) points out Caesarius's contribution to the history of private penance.
[92] *Concilia Cabilonense*, c. 8 (*Concilia*, ed. de Clercq, p. 210).

priests and doing penance as one of Barontus's few virtues which prevented his damnation, Barontus's duty to recite a penitential psalm (Ps. 50) and finally the detailed penance Barontus is given as he is returned to his body.

For all his failings, Barontus was not given a penance of mortification or any other austere act,[93] but only told he had to show that which he should not have secretly withheld and then give it away. Beginning on the $1^{st}$ of April, he was to give away one *solidus* every month for one year at which time he would be left penniless. His other sins – that of committing adultery and having taken three wives[94] and 'other sins' – were ignored or considered forgiven. If Columbanian monasticism is characterised by its austerity and penitential discipline, and if he were a Columbanian monk, Barontus seems to have received a light sentence. In certain cases of the very sick, the Penitential of Cummean (*ca.* 650) allowed for penance to be commuted to alsmgiving.[95] Perhaps the penance given to Barontus by St Peter suggests the Longoretus monastery's adherence to this Penitential. Barontus, as we are told in the opening of the narrative of the vision, was on his deathbed and it is perhaps for this reason that he was not asked to fast, only to say psalms for a deceased monk and to give alms to the exact value of the money he had hidden. St Peter notes that Barontus must complete this penance before he could consider his sin forgiven.

As previously mentioned, there is no parallel to the twelve *solidi* fine in the Theodosian Code, nor within the corpus of Salian Laws, nor in any of the Irish Penitentials [96]. The *Lex Salica* contains numerous references to fines in terms of *solidi* and for our case the closest is the fifteen *solidi* fine given for various thefts and for swearing a false testimony.[97] Is it

[93] On Irish penitential discipline see Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, p. 411 and Riché, 'Columbanus', esp. p. 68.

[94] The Pseudo- Roman Penitential specifically addresses the penance for those thrice married and calls for a fast of three weeks: *Poenitentiale Pseudo-Romanum*, 20 (ed. F.W.H. Wasserschleben, *Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche nebst einer rechtgeschichtlichen Einleitung* [Halle, 1851], p. 375).

[95] *Poenitentiale Cummeani*, viii 25-7 (ed. Bieler, *Penitentials*, p. 124).

[96] See section 4.3.

[97] *Lex Salica* XLVII and XLVIII, (ed. K.A. Eckhardt, *MGH Legum* I, vol. 4: 2 [Hanover, 1969]). Fines are given in the following amounts: 3, 6, 15, 35, 45, $62\frac{1}{2}$, 100, 200 or more *solidi*.

possible that Barontus's sin against his community – a theft and false testimony of sorts – was calculated to be equivalent to a fine under secular law? Alms given for commutation of penance were sometimes reckoned in *denarii* and *solidi*. Like law codes, penitentials often made allowances for the social status of the sinner and commutation was also calculated accordingly.[98] Perhaps Peter's dictate that twelve *solidi* 'was the price for rich man or for poor'[99] was included as a protest against the practice of levying fines according to the sinner's ability to pay, indicating a movement away from secular law and a desire to return to the spirit of Paul's letter to the Romans that 'there is no respect of persons with God'.[100] We should note further that in Peter's words, there was to be no differentiation between monk and layman. This signals another possible link with the Penitential of Cummean which did not make such distinctions.[101] Is it possible that the author of the *VB* specified an amount in order to prevent bishops from charging penitents crippling sums or differing amounts for forgiveness?

However, we may be reading too much into this figure. It could equally have been chosen because twelve was a common unit of measurement of money: the traditional roman *solidus* weighed twenty-four *siliquae*. Frankish coinage in 575 was divided into eighty-four *solidi* to the pound,[102] and twelve *denarii* to the *solidi*. This more pedestrian suggestion could also explain the additional instructions Peter gives to Barontus. The twelve *solidi* are to be distributed as alms in the form of a coin,[103] which was to be weighed and marked

[98] For a specific example of class distinctions and fines in *solidi*: the *Poenitentiale Pseudo-Romanum*, prologue: Si quis forte non potuerit jejunare, et habuerit, unde dare possit ad redimendum, si dives fuerit, pro septem hebdomadibus det solidos XX; si autem non habuerit tantum unde dare possit, det solidos X; si autem multum pauper fuerit, det solidos III. (ed. Wasserschleben, *Bussordnungen*, p. 362). See also Charles-Edwards, 'Penitential', pp. 217-239.

[99] *VB*, 13 (p. 388). Interestingly, the price was apparently higher in ninth-century Freising: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm. 6293 gives the price as 23 *solidi*.

[100] Rom. 2.11, cited in penitential legislation as well: *Concilia Cabilonense*, c. 34 (ed. Leclercq). Also relevant is Gal. 3.28.

[101] As noted above, this is potentially a sign of Cummean influence according to the history of penitentials set out by Charles-Edwards, 'Penitentials', esp. pp. 218, 238.

[102] James, *Franks*, p. 195.

[103] This seemingly unusual practice is also attested to in the *Passio Prajecti*, which records a scene in which the distribution of alms is in the form of coins. *Passio Prajecti*, 6 (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 [Hanover,

by a priest. Barontus, it seems, was not going to get away with donating an adulterated coin. It is also possible that this specification was added as a result of the contemporary problem of the debasement of the gold content in coins.[104] A further suggestion for this specific amount will be discussed below (5.6).

The *VB* carries only a suggestion that the monks underwent frequent and private confession and penance. Peter intimates that Barontus had a previous opportunity to confess and the angels defend Barontus by claiming that he had confessed his sins. However confession was part of both Benedictine and Irish monasticism.

***Peregrinatio***

It is arguable that the frequent references to pilgrimages could suggest that the monks at Longoretus and Millebeccus were not bound by the Benedictine rule[105] and indeed supports the claim that these communities were influenced by the Irish system. While hospitality and *stabilitas* were among the foremost aims of the Benedictines, p*eregrinatio* was one of the ideals of Columbanian monasticism.[106] Under the Columbanian system, the purpose of pilgrimage was 'earthly abandonment in pursuit of heaven'.[107] It was also widely given as a penance.[108] We have already mentioned that evidence in the *VS* signals that Sigiramnus himself travelled widely after becoming a monk. In the *VB* Barontus describes his sister monastery which he visits with Raphael. His familiarity with Millebeccus suggests that this was not his first visit there. This long excursus on the Millebeccus monastery suggests that

1910]). This scene and its parallels is discussed in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian*, p. 277, n. 68.

[104] James, *Franks*, p. 198.

[105] de Laugardiere, *L'église*, p. 185.

[106] K. Hughes, 'The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage', *JEH* 11(1960), pp. 143-151; Walker, *Columbanus*, xvi; J. Leclercq, *La spiritualité au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1961), pp. 57-60 and T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish Peregrinatio', *Celtica* 11 (1976), pp. 43-59;

[107] Hughes, 'Changing Theory', p. 148.

[108] K. Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London, 1966), p. 63 and C. Vogel, *Le pèlerinage pénitentiel Pellegrinaggi e culto dei santi in Europa fino alla prima crociata* (Todi, 1963), pp. 38-94.

the vision's likely author was a monk from Millebeccus, again indicating travel between the monasteries. The connection between these monasteries may suggest links between the two and their shared sense of community. However the *VB* carries many more references to pilgrimages which amplify the theme of penance. Barontus's vision is itself a pilgrimage to the other world and carries with it danger, attacks from devils and a departure from one's community. The vision also includes the pilgrimage to St Hilary's tomb in Poitiers on which the dead monks embark as they return Barontus to earth.[109] Elsewhere the use of the term *peregrinus* elsewhere in the text potentially signals a familiarity with Irish practice.[110] But the travel which is recorded in the *VB* is all between monasteries or between monasteries and the other world, not to secular locations; such movement was allowable, possibly necessary, even under the more restrictive prescriptions of the *RB*.

### Eschatology

In chapter 4 we saw how the *VB* borrowed its eschatology from various traditions and rendered it into its own unique formulation. Barontus describes a highest heaven which he is forbidden from entering and which will be inhabited after the Last Judgement. Departing from the Irish system of three regions in the afterlife and the Anglo-Saxon four-region organisation, Barontus describes a six-fold division: four regions of heaven, a place called the *sinus Abrahae* and hell. His other world has no mention of a specific place of purgation from which souls will be freed; there is only heaven which offers gradations of happiness and hell with its variety of torments. Most significantly for our current line of argument, there is no mention of Irish purgatorial fire.

Despite the *VB*'s unique eschatology, some scholars have seen the *VB* as symptomatic

[109] *VB*, 18 (p. 392). Mention of this visit to Poitiers demonstrates the popularity of pilgrimage and support for Hilary's cult.
[110] *VB*, 13 (p. 388).

of Irish preoccupation with eschatology[111] and the marvellous,[112] arguing that the Irish presence in Aquitaine combined with the eschatological crisis in the region in the late seventh and eighth century may have provided the impetus for the composition of the *VB*.[113] Sims-Williams however has convincingly shown this view of the Irish as being especially preoccupied with the marvellous to be false.[114] Furthermore, there are textual links between the Frankish *VF* and the *VB*,[115] although they seem minor in comparison with those which can be made between the *Dialogues* and the *VB*. Moreover there was no Irish tradition of vision literature before the Irish began to settle on the Continent.[116] Fursey may have experienced his vision in Ireland but the text of the vision was composed on the Continent, *ca.* 656-7.[117] The Irish may however have contributed to another more tangible influence on the text of the *VB*: the works of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.

mind and refers to them by name to ensure his audience notes the similarities between them and what Barontus witnessed. The *VB* should then be seen as a literary flower sprung from seeds imported from the garden of Gregory the Great. These seeds were cultivated in Frankish soil and were at most fertilised by Irish missionaries. The tradition of vision literature for the early Middle Ages originated in Rome, and it is to Rome that we must look for the influences which shaped the *VB*.

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[111]B. Grogan, 'Eschatological Teaching in the Early Irish Church' ed. M. McNamara, *Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution* (Dublin, 1976) pp. 46-58, esp. p. 47.

[112]Rüegg, *Jenseitsvorstellungen*, I, p. 293; Picard, 'Aquitane et Irlande', p. 28 and his 'The Marvellous in Irish and Continental Saints' Lives of the Merovingian Period', *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H. B. Clarke and M. Brennan (Oxford, 1981), pp. 91-103. This belief has been reiterated in the otherwise excellent analysis of visions by Berschin (*Biographie* vol. II, 106-7) although he admits the Gallic literary tradition played a part in the creation of the *VF*.

[113]Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, pp. 414-22.

[114]P. Sims-Williams, 'The Visionary Celt: the Construction of an Ethnic Preconception', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 11 (1986), pp. 71-96.

[115]The similarities are discussed in "Textual Citations and Parallels", section 4.2.

[116]Picard ('Marvellous', p. 96) writes of Fursey's vision that 'This type of vision, which is not an isolated case in the continental texts that were in circulation in the seventh century, is not found in Irish Lives of the period. It will appear only later in works like the *Fis Adomnáin* (tenth century)...'.

[117]Berschin (*Biographie*, pp. 106-7) and Picard ('Marvellous', pp. 95-6) do their best to maintain the connection between the Irish and the supernatural. In his treatment of the subject, Picard even ignores the visions in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* and argues that although vision literature was not an Irish import, the genre was found in Irish milieux on the Continent.

**Rome and St Peter**

Deference to Rome and the papacy is detectable throughout the vision. The basilica at Longoretus was dedicated to St Peter and in the vision he is shown to have more power in heaven than the archangel Raphael: he frees Barontus and banishes the demons, a feat Raphael alone could not perform.[118] The prominence of St Peter could also be a further clue as to the monastery's allegiance, for the Irish had a special connection to Rome and are credited with bringing the Merovingian church into contact with the papacy.[119] However, the emphasis placed on St Peter in the *VB* may also be representative of the saint's particular link with the dead[120] and to be symbolic of the text's preoccupation with penance and thus the symbolism of the power of the keys.[121] The prominence of St Peter and thus the papacy can be explained by the influence of and deference to Gregory the Great which we have already noted and the papacy, and not as a result of the community's allegiance to Irish monasticism.

[118] *VB*, 12.

[119] Riché, 'Columbanus', pp. 65-66. Judging from pilgrimages to and book requests from Rome its influence must have been pervasive, although certainly more limited than it would become under the Carolingians. For an assessment of Rome's influence see: Wallace-Hadrill, 'A Background to St Boniface's Mission', ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes, *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 35-48, esp. 37-8; K. Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen der bonifatianischen Wirksamkeit im Frankenreich', *Sankt Bonifatius Gedenkgabe* (Fulda, 1954), pp. 320-61; and Riché, *Education and Culture*, pp. 334-5 for evidence of Rome as a source of manuscripts. Another Aquitinian, St Amandus (d. 675) also had a special connection with Rome and St Peter: *Vita S. Amandi, episcopi et confessoris*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 428-449, esp. c. 6, 7 and 12 for the saint's visions of St Peter and pilgrimage to Rome.

[120] On the funerary links to the feast of the Throne of Peter, and St Peter as the key holder to heaven and solicitor for souls, see D. Iogna-Prat, 'The Dead in the Celestial Bookkeeping of the Cluniac Monks Around the Year 1000', ed. B. Rosenwein and L. Little, *Debating the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 355-357, especially p. 355, n. 94.

[121] B. Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*, trs F. Courtney (London, 1964), pp. 145ff. See chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of penance, the keys and St Peter.

**Raphael**

The author of the *VB* rejects other angelic guides in favour of the archangel Raphael,[122] a choice which raises questions. Of the archangels, Michael is the more frequent guide for visionaries[123] due to the part he plays in the weighing of souls. Michael was more popular than Raphael in Irish texts.[124] Raphael's connection with the Irish can only be indirectly found through his connection with penance: his name translates to mean 'medicine of God,'[125] and penance was often referred to (metaphorically) as 'medicine for the soul.'[126] In his *Homiliae in Evangelia*, Gregory, reiterating Jerome's commentary on Daniel, writes: 'Archangels are distinguished by personal names to indicate by the word the service they are able to perform... Raphael means "the healing of God"... interpreted... because when he touched Tobit's eyes, as if in performance of a healing service, he wiped away the darkness of his blindness...'[127] The theme of this apocryphal book – alms-giving for salvation from death – neatly fits the context of the *VB* in which Barontus is told he can rescue his soul through almsgiving.

The author cites from the Book of Tobit in the vision, confirming that it must have been the source for the choice of Raphael.[128] In the Book of Tobit, Raphael serves not only

[122]For background see J. Michl, 'Engel VIII', T. Klauser, ed., *Reallexikon für Antike und Christendum*, V, 252-254; G. Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels* (New York, 1967) p. 240; and K. Eisenbichler, 'Devotion to the Archangel Raphael in Renaissance Florence' ed. S. Sticca, *Saints: Studies in Hagiography* (Binghamton, NY, 1996), pp. 151-267.

[123]Michael is also the most frequently sighted angel: B.M. Serpilli, '*L'Offertorio della Messa dei Defunti* (Rome, 1946), pp. 92-94; H. Leclecq, 'Michel' , *DACL* vol II, 903-7; M. Rouche, 'Le combat des saints anges et des démons: La victoire de saint Michel', *Santi e demoni nell' Alto Medioevo occidentale, Settimane di Studio* 36 (Spoleto 1989) pp. 533-60.

[124]Grogan, 'Eschatological', pp. 53-4.

[125] *VB*, 6, '...S. Raphael qui interpretatur Dei medicina...' St Jerome, Commentarii in Danielem bk 2, chapter 8, Isidore, Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX (bk 7, chapter 5 paragraph 13), see n. 127 below.

[126]See for example, the *Concilia Cabilonense* (ed. Leclercq) which uses this terminology. For a general discussion of the linking of penance and medicine, see T. P. Oakley, 'Celtic Penance: Its Sources, Affiliations and Influence', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 52 (1938), p. 591, and McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks*, pp. 44-6.

[127] *PL* 76, Bk 2, hom. 34, c. 9, line 1, 'Raphael vero dicitur medicine dei...'.

[128]Tobit 4.11 in *VB*, 12.

as the healer of Tobit's blindness and Sara's demonic possession, but also as Tobias's guide. Although infrequently appearing as a psychopomp, he is eminently suitable since he is one of the seven angels in the Book of Revelations[129] and acts as an intermediary between God and Tobias and his family.[130] Subsequent history has witnessed the emphasis of his role as a guide. He has become the angel most associated with pilgrims and is iconographically distinguished by his pilgrim's staff.[131]

Raphael also appears in the apocryphal book of Enoch in which he serves as a guide in Sheol (I, 22)[132] and he is one of four guides in the early Christian *Vita Macarii*.[133] Thus he is symbolic not only of healing and penance but also of pilgrimage and most especially intercession. The VI Redaction of the *AP* names Raphael as the psychopomp replacing Michael. In this redaction, the sinners are not only granted a respite as they are in those with Michael, but are carried into Paradise. However, this switch occurs in a ninth-century redaction of the *AP* and thus post-dates the *VB*. In this context, it makes a case for the *VB*'s subsequent influence instead of helping to explain the choice of Raphael in the *VB*,[134] although it is of course possible that Raphael's presence in the *AP* redaction and *VB* demonstrates a common early medieval tradition.[135]

## 5.6 A *Rule* for the Monastery

Is it possible to speculate on the actual practices underlying the idealised monastic model presented in the vision? Once we overcome the problems posed by the genre – that it was an imaginative tale drawing on earlier traditions – we must admit that the evidence points

[129]Rev. 8.6.
[130]Tobit 12.17-18, and the discussion of his function in Eisenbichler, 'Devotion', p. 254.
[131]Davidson, *Dictionary of Angels*, p. 240.
[132]Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha of the Old Testament* (1913, 1964), vol 2
[133]*PL* 73, 422Dff.
[134]Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 59 calls this redaction unrecognisably modified!
[135]Raphael was also chosen as the angelic guide for the *Vision of Gunthelm* but here again this vision of the twelfth century post dates the period under consideration.

in different directions. While there is nothing in Barontus's picture of monasticism which directly originates from either the *RB* or the *Rules of Columbanus*, neither is there anything which is directly incompatible with either *Rule*. If we look further, we find there could be elements of many different *Rules* in the *VB*, a fact which attests most strongly to the overlap among early *Rules* in general.[136] This heterogeneous mixture of observances also reinforces what we now know to be common among seventh-century monasteries: individual foundations and abbots adapted extant rules to their own needs.[137] Endeavouring to trace the origins of specific practices serves to demonstrate the similarities between Rules rather than to help us to determine what was observed at Longoretus. For example the *RB* prohibits private ownership. The archetype for this prohibition is the condemnation of Ananias and Sapphira in the Acts of the Apostles (5.1-6) for secretly keeping the proceeds from a land sale rather than sharing it with the community, after they had claimed to have given up all their property. Allusions to Ananias and Sapphira were no doubt familiar within a monastic context: the *Rule* of St Augustine is a commentary on the apostolic ideal of communal sharing described in Acts 4.32.[138] Bede returned to the dramatic tale of Ananias and Sapphira in his letter to Ecgberht in which he urgently called for the reform of monasteries in England.[139] Reference to them is not explicit but is certainly implicit in the *VB*: like Barontus, they had withheld money from their community, and like him had found that St Peter was on hand to bring swift judgement upon them.

This example advances our understanding of the *VB*. For while it may prove impossible

[136]The various attempts to date the *RB* and the *RM* have revealed what has been called the shared 'community of material' found in these rules, and the same is demonstrable for other rules as well: Dunn, 'Mastering Benedict', pp. 572-3.

[137]Perhaps the most telling example is that even at the important monastery of Luxeuil, Columbanus's *Rules* were combined with the *RB*. McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 109ff.

[138]Verheijen, *Règle*; Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', p.142; and D. Ganz, 'The Ideology of Sharing: Apostolic Community and Ecclesiastical Propriety in the Early Middle Ages', ed. Davies and Fouracre, *Property and Power*, pp. 17-30.

[139]Bede, Letter to Ecgberht (ed. Plummer, *Opera*, I, 413). Elsewhere they appear specifically in the genre of vision literature in the *VW*, lines 374-5 (p. 195) where they and their sin are named in connection with a monk withholding property. See n. 266 below.

to pinpoint the source of this reference in monastic rules, it points us in other directions. Closer in chronological time and creative spirit to the *VB*, we find reference to Ananias and Sapphira in Book 2 of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*,[140] and it is this source which holds the key to the image of monasticism presented in the *VB*.[141] The author of the *VB* cites the visions of Gregory's Book IV but many of the themes and details found in the *VB* can be found in Book II which was an account of the Life of Benedict. More than any of the individual forms of monasticism discussed above, the monasticism recorded in the *VB* is reflective of the spirit of Benedict filtered through the writings of Gregory the Great. Thus in Book II of the *Dialogues*, we find references to visions,[142] the nobility of Benedict's monks,[143] monastic obedience,[144] penance,[145] making the sign of the cross[146] and a discussion of miraculous travel which enables Benedict to be transported great distances in an instant.[147] We also find the story of a monk who kept private property hidden,[148] the separation of the soul from the body in the form of a bird[149] and finally a chapter involving the miraculous appearance of twelve *solidi*, the exact amount of Barontus's penance.[150] Furthermore, as we shall see below, the rituals observed at Barontus's deathbed are also closely aligned with those which were undertaken at Gregory's monastery at the deathbed of the monk Theodore.[151] If the influence of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* was not direct in each of these cases, at least there is quite an arresting closeness.

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[140] *Dialogues*, II. 30. 3 (p. 222).

[141] This work, Gregory himself and Rome in particular, fired the imagination of English monks contemporary with Barontus: Wormald ('Bede and Benedict Biscop', pp. 141-169, esp. 149) makes the case for there being Frankish analogies to England's devotion to Rome and Gregory.

[142] *Dialogues*, II. 22ff (pp. 202-4).

[143] *VB*, 1, 15 (pp. 377, 389)and *Dialogues* II. 3. 14 (p. 150); II. 17. 1 (p. 192) and II. 20.1 (p. 196).

[144] *Dialogues* II. 7. 3 (p. 158).

[145] *VB*, 12, 13 (pp. 386-8) and *Dialogues*, II. 8. 7 (p. 72).

[146] *VB*, 1, 15 (pp. 378, 389) and *Dialogues*, II. 9.1 (p. 170); II. 20. 2 (p. 196).

[147] *VB*, 5 (p. 381) and *Dialogues*, II. 22. 4 (p. 204).

[148] *VB*, 13 (pp. 387-8) and *Dialogues*, II. 19.2 (p. 196).

[149] *VB*, 4 (p. 380) and *Dialogues*, II. 34. 1 (p. 234).

[150] *VB*,13 (pp. 387-8) and *Dialogues*, II. 27. 1 (p. 214).

[151] VB 1-2 (pp. 377-9) and *Dialogues* IV. 40. 1-5 (pp. 138-42). There is a textual parallel here too in the command: 'Recedite'. Theodore is discussed below, see page 168.

By linking the monastery with Gregory and Rome, the redactor could emphasise his community's orthodoxy. This theme emerges frequently in the *VB*, from its date of the $25^{th}$ of March and reverence for St. Hilary of Poitiers, to its frequent citations of the works of Gregory, and the prominent rôle assigned to St Peter and his keys.

It has been observed that the *VB* contains more mundane details on life and conduct in a monastery than it does comment on the theology of heaven and hell.[152] As many of the practices mentioned in the text cover primary issues of ascesis for monasteries, may it not be possible that the vision also served as a compendium for a monastery that did not have a written rule?[153] Three monastic rules note the significance of the $25^{th}$ of March for changes in monastic practices and the reading of the rule.[154] Thus the redactor of Barontus's vision-cum-rule may have strategically chosen this date for its connection to monastic rules.

Rules prior to *RB* were not as complete but more often a collection of details for monastic life.[155] In the case of Columbanus, the *Regula coenobialis* 'was perceived to be just as much a penitential as a monastic rule.'[156] In the same way, the *VB* combines rules with a heavy emphasis on the need for confession and the value of penance. The *VB* is not systematic but carries within the narrative a collection of reminders for specific observances such as the keeping of the offices, funerary rites, the importance of the psalms and penitential discipline, the prohibition of private possessions and other pedestrian details of daily life in a monastery. Through the instructions Barontus receives on keeping the lights burning in the monastery's church, the giving of alms, the sweeping of his brother's tomb, and on the

[152] J. Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism 350-750* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 182; Ciccarese, '*Visio Baronti*', pp. 51-2, n. 67, and Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 247.
[153] Early monastic rules have often had a connection with visions: the author of the *RM* knew and used the *AP* (*RM* i, 206-220, 221-5); although Benedict conscientiously removed references to the *AP* in his rule. See Silverstein and Hilhorst, *The Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 12 and Dunn, 'Mastering Benedict', p. 571.
[154] *Rule of Ailbe,* (ed. de Bhaldraithe, 'Irish Monastic', p. 59) *Regula Monachorum* VII (ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani*, p. 130); and the *Regula Magistri*, 33.28 (ed. de Vogüé, p.182).
[155] Ryan, *Irish*, p. 13.
[156] Charles-Edwards, 'Penitential', p. 226.

singing of penitential psalms, emphasis is consistently placed on the need for discipline and penance as a means to achieving salvation.

The chastisement Barontus receives at the hands of his brothers in heaven might suggest that ascesis was lacking in the monastery. This reminder of the need for greater discipline is initially problematical; it signifies a division between the idealised heavenly community and the flawed earthly one. Why would a record of shortcomings be included in a text which sought to bolster the image of the monastery? Beneath the surface, the text reveals a system of discipline in place: the censure Barontus receives validates abbatial practices of discipline and authority and suggests that the custom of accusation, confession and penance (which may have inspired his whole experience) was well-established at St Peter's.

A complicated picture of monastic observance at Longoretus emerges. The abbot obviously played a substantial part in the discipline of his monastery, which reflected the *regula mixta* commonly observed by seventh-century rural monasteries.[157] None of the 'Benedictine' elements featured in the *VB* is drawn from the *RB*. Given the author's familiarity with the writings of Gregory, I think we can safely attribute the Benedictine elements of the *VB* to the influence of Gregory's *Dialogues*, the Columbanian elements to the social and historical circumstances of the time and the reference to Benedictine monasticism in the *VS* to its later author.

## 5.7 The Rôle of the Community

The *VB* was however more than a monastic rule, and certainly more than just a lightly disguised piece of political propaganda. It was primarily a work which offered guidance for the care of the soul and hope of salvation (especially for the sinful). During the early middle

[157] Prinz (*Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 286-9) and Wormald ('Bede and Benedict Biscop', p.143) note that combining rules was common. For the *regula mixta* in Columbanian foundations: Prinz, 'Columbanus', p. 77.

ages, there was a growing awareness within the Christian community that salvation was no longer assured. It depended first on an individual's merit during his or her life and then on the prayerful intercession by the living after the individual's death.[158] The living were encouraged to pray for the dead in order to assist the soul in the after-life. Thus salvation became intimately bound to the idea of participation in a community which could offer assurances of prayer on behalf of the dead.[159] Monastic communities in particular came to bear a primary obligation for the liturgical commemoration of the dead,[160] and the *VB* is evidence of such behaviour.

**Deathbed**

The *VB* makes it clear that the individual had some responsibility for his or her salvation. This was also the message of roughly contemporary Irish penitentials.[161] A vision, being an intensely personal record of an individual's deeds, has, as its denouement, the particular judgement undergone by a soul at the moment of his or her death.[162] In many accounts the visionary is judged *individually* by God[163] or a member of the celestial hierarchy such as St Michael or St Peter. Moreover for didactic ends, visionaries began to identify various

[158]Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, p. 77; M. McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 178-249.

[159]McLaughlin, *Consorting*, pp. 29-37, 46, 53, and for the later Middle Ages: Voaden, 'All Girls Together', p. 81.

[160]P. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), p. 131.

[161]Hughes, *Church*, pp. 54-5; Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, p. 13.

[162]Several of the visions such as the *AP*, the *VB*, Dryhthelm and the *VW* are written either entirely or partly in the first person singular. For a discussion of the role of the individual's soul in eschatological conceptions, see K. Rahner, 'Eschatology', *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology* vol. II (London, 1968), 242-246. Morgan (*Dante*, p. 2) discusses the origins of this emphasis on the individual. According to her the change was introduced with the New Testament in which the individual was responsible for his eternal destiny rather than the nation as was the case in the Old Testament.

[163]Chapter 6 considers these judgements in more detail.

inhabitants of the other world.[164] Because visions of the other world focus on the fate of a single soul, record the identity of inhabitants of the other world and usually result in a transformation of the visionary's life,[165] some recent scholarship in the field has argued that an awareness of the individual can be detected in these early-medieval texts.[166] Gurevich in particular has highlighted importance of the individual in early medieval visions and eschatological conceptions,[167] while Le Goff has reserved the emergence of the individual for the twelfth century.[168] The hunt for the individual in visions has led some scholars, but not all, to overlook the presence and power of communities in these same sources.[169] A degree of ambivalence towards the relative importance of the individual and community exemplified in the texts has been touched upon by Brown although he places a heavy emphasis on the individual in the *VB*.[170]

A more nuanced reading of the *VB* and other early medieval visions reveals not just the importance of the individual, but also the importance of the groups they belonged to and their ubiquity both on earth and in heaven.[171] The community assumes responsibility for the individual after death in preserving memory and alleviating purgatorial suffering.[172] Whilst the community often remained an indistinct feature of the landscape of heaven and

[164]The story of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16. 19-31) already showed belief that individual identity was maintained in the other world. Identifying inhabitants was a method commonly in use from at least the third century: for a detailed analysis of the cast of characters in each vision, divided into Biblical, historical, and contemporary inhabitants, see Morgan, *Dante*, pp. 68,74-77.

[165]Dryhthelm being a prime example.

[166]A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* tr. J. Bak and P. Hollingsworth (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 138-139, and his *The Origins of European Individualism*, tr. K. Judelson (Oxford, 1995), pp. 100-109, esp. 105.

[167]Gurevich, *Origins*, p. 104.

[168]Le Goff (*Purgatory*, p. 233) notes that the development of Purgatory in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries 'fostered individualism' and was a concept lacking in earlier periods.

[169]P. Dinzelbacher ('Klassen und Hierarchien im Jenseits', *Miscellanea mediaevalia* 12(1979), pp. 20-1, 24ff) explores the idea of individuality in the other world but sees groupings as a more prevalent image.

[170]Brown, *Rise*, p. 162: 'These stories insist, above all, on the fate of each individual soul... It was no longer enough to be a member of a massive "people of God" '.

[171] *VB*, 1,2,3,5,8,10,11,13,14,15,18,19 all mention either specific monks from Barontus's monastic community or refer to the community itself. Chapter 2 discussed the probable rôle of the community in the redaction of vision accounts.

[172]Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination* p. 77 and Rowell, *Liturgy*, p. 68.

hell, its presence was both reassuring and expected. For Barontus, the community played a leading rôle both in his earthly life and his heavenly vision. Nowhere do we see the individual allowed to act alone.

The vision preserves a detailed description of the rituals monks performed prior to the death of one of their brothers.[173] Liturgical sources record that steps were taken to prevent a monk from dying alone.[174] None of these rituals are specifically recorded in the *VB* but the text does show that Barontus would not die alone. His fellow monks began by sprinkling holy water in his cell to combat the presence of the evil spirits who would be lurking like vultures around fresh carrion.[175] Patristic sources record the threat of demons ready to seize a soul at the moment of death and this gave rise to the preference for dying amongst a community devoted to prayer.[176] Thus Barontus's brothers gathered to weep and pray to God on his behalf, thus emphasising the importance of intercession by the living for the dead or dying.[177] The monks divided themselves into groups and took turns reciting the Psalms continuously, breaking only for the evening service.[178] They continued through the night and ceased only when Barontus awoke and began to tell them of his voyage to the other world.

Barontus assigns the ringing of the church bell particular significance. The sounding of the bell for vespers signalled that the brothers were going to pray for Barontus's soul during the service and thus the demons were ordered by Raphael to withdraw.[179] As Barontus

[173] For the ideology behind these practices: McLaughlin, *Consorting*, pp.181ff.
[174] Rowell, *Liturgy*, pp. 57-8; For the Merovingian liturgical death rituals see F. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: the Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1990), pp. 47-69.
[175] *VB* 1 (p. 378).
[176] These are catalogued and discussed in J. Rivière, 'Rôle du démon au jugement particulier chez les pères', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 4 (1924), pp. 43-64; A.C. Rush, 'An Echo of Christian Antiquity in St Gregory the Great: Death a Struggle with the Devil', *Traditio* iii (1945) 369-80.
[177] This was a practice inherited from Late Antiquity. For the history of rituals and liturgical practices for the dead: D. Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort dans l'église latine des origines à la réforme carolingienne* (Westfalen, 1978); Paxton, *Christianizing Death;* and McLaughlin, *Consorting*, pp. 55-67.
[178] *VB*, 1-2 (pp. 377-8).
[179] *VB*, 5 (pp. 381).

and Raphael ascend into heaven, we learn that where the prayers and ministrations of the living brothers leave off, the heavenly community's begin. They offer to intercede for Barontus's soul, provide navigation as well as explanations for what Barontus observes and also accompany him through hell and on the return to his body. Thus communal responsibility and commemoration is even undertaken by the dead. Finally we learn that Barontus is to sweep the tomb of a deceased brother and repeat a penitential psalm for him. The vision therefore resonates with two messages: discipline was at the heart of an effective, cohesive community, and participation in a community was necessary for protection, identity and ultimately salvation.

The interaction between the individual and his or her community is described in other early medieval sources, especially at the moment of death and in the afterlife. Gregory the Great, in his *Dialogues*, describes Theodore, a restless young monk, who was close to death and saw demons and a dragon about to carry him off.[180] Like the deathbed scene in the *VB*, the power of the sign of the cross is noted and the dying monk's brethren gather around him to pray fervently for his release. Theodore suddenly shouts out, 'Gratias Deo. Ecce draco, qui me ad devorandum acceperat, fugit. Orationibus vestris expulsus est, stare non potuit.'[181] Even after death, the soul's fate rested not just on God's mercy but on the community's intercessory powers. It became an expectation that a soul would rejoin his or her community in the afterlife. Almost a century later, but still relying on the authority of a vision, Alcuin (*ca.* 795) confidently wrote, '. . . For I believe that the souls of our brotherhood must be reunited in heaven as [we have learnt] from our boy Seneca's vision. . . '[182]

Finally the very language and intent of visions served not so much the individual as

[180] Gregory recounts this story three times: *Hom. in Evan.* I. 19. 7 (*PL* 76, 1158-9); *Hom. in Evan.* II. 38. 16 (*PL* 76, 1292-3); and *Dialogues* IV. 40 (pp. 138-142). The episode, and Gregory's repetition of it, is discussed by Rush, 'Echo', pp. 370-1.

[181] *Dialogues*, IV. 40. 5 (p. 142).

[182] Alcuin, Ep. 42, ed Dümmler, *MGH Ep.* IV, p. 86. He recounts more of Seneca's vision in his poem *On the Saints of the Church of York*, lines 1623ff.

the community which was the audience for the vision. Again in Gregory's *Dialogues* we read, 'Sciendum quoque est quia nonnumquam animae adhuc in suis corporibus positae poenale aliquid de spiritalibus vident, quod tamen quibusdam ad aedificationem suam, quibusdam vero contingere ad aedificationem audientium solet.'[183] The *VB*, an example of Gregory's latter category, makes it clear that this vision was given to Barontus primarily for the benefit of his brothers: '...et sic postea omnia superius memorata retuli per singula, quantum mihi praeceptum fuit, fratribus nostris.'[184] The text even begins with a homiletic address to the brothers, 'Memorare vobis volo, fratres karissimi,...quid moderno tempore contigit...'.[185] Other visions revisit the theme of a community's importance, for as we see several Carolingian visions incorporate the idea of heavenly communities interceding for souls.[186] But while communities made frequent appearances in visions and other sources describing death and the beyond, for this period, the *VB* is unparalleled in its detailed characterisations of and emphasis on both the earthly and heavenly monastic community of the visionary and we will now look to the reasons why.[187]

### Commemoration and Intercession

We turn now to the *VB*'s commemorative function. The *VB* carries liturgical overtones. The text begins with the word *Memorare*, and as the first word, it often received special scribal attention in manuscripts of the text.[188] The rhetoric of the narrative of the *VB* is substantially devoted to the naming of deceased monks: ...venimus primam portam paradysi, ubi plures vidimus ex fratribus monasterii nostri, ...Quorum nomina hic inserta

[183] *Dialogues*, IV. 40. 1 (p. 138).
[184] *VB*, 19 (p. 393).
[185] *VB*, 1 (p. 377). The intended audience of the vision is discussed in section 3.7.
[186] *Monk of Wenlock* (pp. 8-15); *VW*, lines 540ff, esp 564-5 (p. 199); and *Vision of Bernold* (1116B). This will be discussed in chapter 6.
[187] The community is far more frequently part of and significant for later medieval visions, particularly those seen by women. For a discussion of women's communities and their appearance in the visionary literature of the later middle ages, see Rosalynn Voaden , 'All Girls Together: Community, Gender and Vision at Helfta', in Diane Watt (ed.) *Medieval Women in their Communities,* (Cardiff, 1997), pp. 72-92, especially p. 81.
[188] See Appendix B.

tenentur, id sunt: Corbolenus presbyter, cui Deus bona in saecula praestavit; Fraudolenus presbyter, qui dies suos bene custodivit; Austrulfus diaconus, qui a momento de saeculo iusso Dei discessit; Leodoaldus lector, quem Deus proprio benedixit; Ebbo lector, Dei servus electus.'[189] The listing of names itself is not new; it is a device which has a long and venerable history stretching back to the tales of the heroic age.[190] While sagas no doubt exerted some influence on the composition of *vitae* and visions, I would suggest that in the case of the *VB*, the listing of names is serving a specifically commemorative function.

Diptychs which contained the names of the living and the dead were read during the liturgy of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.[191] Initially containing only the names of emperors, bishops, martyrs and confessors ordered by rank, they were soon made more inclusive by being transformed to include lists of living and deceased members of the Christian community. The lists soon became too long to read out. The sixth, seventh and eighth centuries were a period of fluid experimentation in forms of commemoration. The seventh century also witnessed ever lengthening necrologies,[192] and by the eighth century there is evidence of prayer confraternities in which the names of monks were circulated to other monasteries so that they would be prayed for outside of their community.[193] In his recounting of the miracle at Selsey, Bede *ca.* 680-685 notes the existence of a memorial book in which the burial of the dead is annotated.[194] Thus the creation of the list in the written

[189] *VB*, 8 (p. 383).

[190] See H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity,* pp. 226-7 for a discussion of the parallels between heroic literature and Willibald's description of Boniface's martyrdom.

[191] F. Cabrol, 'Diptyques, (Liturgie)' ed. F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. IV/1 (Paris, 1916), 1045-94; G. Constable, '*Remiremont's Liber Memorialis*', *Speculum,* xlvii (1972), 261; G. Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial* (London, 1977); and McLaughlin, *Consorting,* pp. 91-2.

[192] K. Schmid and O. Oexle, 'Voraussetzungen und Wirkung des Gebetsbundes von Attigny', *Francia* 2 (1974), pp. 71-122.

[193] In Bede's prefatory letter to his Life of Cuthbert, he speaks of having his name placed in the register of Edfrid's congregation ... *ut in albo uestrae sanctae congregationis meus nunc quoque nomen apponeret. Two* Lives *of St Cuthbert,* ed B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940, reprinted 1985), p. 146. Lull also sent names of the dead to the Archbishop of York so that their memory would be preserved. This is discussed in Levison, *England and the Contintent*, p. 102.

[194] *HE* IV.14.

text of Barontus's vision might have been inspired by such practices. Of further interest to the question of the Irishness of the *VB*, it should be noted that the Irish in particular are credited with an interest in the preservation of names for liturgical commemoration.[195]

The Synod of Attigny held in *ca.* 762 marked the official beginnings of large-scale commemoration schemes which called for the celebration of Masses. At the synod, bishops and abbots promised to offer one hundred Masses and one hundred psalters for each other when they died.[196] This formal arrangement is not found in the *VB* recorded some eighty years previously; the monks in heaven owe no penitential debt. But the link between commemoration and the celebration of Masses is present in the *VB* (perhaps a tie over from Gregory's *Dialogues*)[197] for Barontus notes that he saw one of his monks celebrating a Mass in Heaven![198]

Even in the great age of monastic commemoration and Carolingian efforts toward standardisation, the *libri memoriales* and *Totenannalen* attest to the variety of forms which existed for the commemoration of the dead by monastic communities.[199] The name-list form of commemoration in the *VB*, the celebration of a Mass in heaven and Barontus's promise to sing psalms over the grave of one of his brethren would fit as comfortably in the context of seventh-century commemorative practices as in those of the ninth. More evidence of commemoration survives from the ninth century and we will apply the use made of it to shed light on this feature of the *VB*.

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[195] For a discussion of the Salzburg confraternity book which recorded names from the beginning of the eighth century and its Irish influence, see Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, p. 100 and n. 22. The English also contributed to the use of litanies in the liturgy: Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies*.

[196] MGH, *Concilia*, ii, 72.

[197] *Dialogues*, IV. 57, 8-16 (pp. 188-194).

[198] *VB* 15, line 17 ... frater Ebbo misteria apostolorum in ecclesia caelebraret.

[199] Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, pp. 102-3 states that the earliest existing confraternity books belong to the end of the eighth century. His argument that they originated in England has been rejected in view of the Late Antique examples which have emerged. See J. Wollasch, 'Les obituaries, témoins de la vie clunisienne', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, XXII (1979), 139, and O.G. Oexle, 'Memoria und Memorialüberlieferung im frühen Mittelalter', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 10(1976) p. 70ff and the seminal work of K. Schmid and J. Wollasch, eds., *Memoria: Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 48 (Munich, 1984).

The *VB* contains fourteen named individuals, a feature so important that the text later refers back to this collection of names. The names were always preserved in subsequent manuscripts.[200] As discussed above, the identification of inhabitants of the other world for didactic purposes is not unique to the *VB*. While this practice was effective when the person identified was well-known (such as Dido and Wulfoleodus), it is a less satisfactory explanation for the inclusion in the *VB* of the names of obscure monks.[201] The text preserves their names, ecclesiastical rank, a brief epithet or even a more extended biographical sketch in the case of the abbots of Méobecque and Longoretus and of Barontus himself. However the crucial fact is that, with the notable exception of the two named inhabitants of hell and the abbot of Longoretus's sister monastery, the individual is commemorated exclusively for his participation in the Longoretus community.

The listing of names within a vision has only one counterpart in the genre of early medieval vision literature; the ninth-century *VW* opens with a list of abbots at Reichenau, Wetti's monastery. Traill has suggested that the list was taken from a ninth-century abbots' list.[202] Together with a precise description of the geographic setting of Reichenau, this 'dynastic history' introduces the vision and places it firmly in context. However the Reichenau list is used in the framing device of the account as a means of introducing the visionary; the abbots do not appear in the visionary landscape. In contrast, the *VB* list occurs within the vision itself.

Although possible, as Reichenau had a copy of the *VB*,[203] the list in the *VW* was seemingly not influenced by that in the *VB*. Both redactors may have included such details to support the vision's claim to authenticity. But a more probable explanation is a shared

[200] Whereas Bede, in his redaction of Fursey's vision, dropped the names of the two bishops Fursey saw in heaven. Compare *HE* iii. 19 with *VF* 10 (p. 208).
[201] *VB*, 18: the brothers who are named above ...
[202] *VW*, lines 27ff, p. 188. Traill discusses the list in his notes on the text, pp. 92-3.
[203] Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge*, pp. 84, 87-89.

emphasis in Reichenau and Longoretus on the commemoration of the dead.[204] The language of the *VB* suggests that these names are recorded for commemorative purposes: '*Quorum nomina hic inserta tenentur, id sunt ...*'[205] In its emphasis on the brothers, not merely abbots or benefactors of the monastery or kings, this seemingly unnecessary excursus of names and rank is unrivalled in the corpus of early medieval visions of heaven and hell. This list, which could have been easily lengthened or revised while the vision was circulated orally or read aloud, perhaps was intended as an inchoate prayer-register for the monastery. As in diptychs, the names are ranked: priests, deacons, and then readers.[206] Once circulated to other monasteries, the list of names could serve in a commemorative or liturgical function, as the names of the dead of St Peter's could have been read out during a homily or other occasion for reading the vision-text, or prayed for during the private reading of the text.

The listing of names also preserved something akin to a genealogy of the monastic family at Longoretus.[207] This is especially observable in the more detailed portraits of Francardus and Ebbo.[208] That the listing of names did not become a standard feature in vision literature can be explained by the fact that from the eighth century there were rapid developments in commemorative practices in which a separate record of names to be remembered representing a wider section of society was kept.

Recent studies of the Fulda *Totenannalen* lend further weight to the idea that this list

[204] On the *liber memorialis* of Reichenau, see K. Schmid and J. Wollasch, 'Die Gemeinschaft der Lebenden und Verstorbenen in Zeugnissen des Mittelalters', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1(1967), 365-405. Liturgical commemoration is one of the themes of the *VW*, although the names do not assume the list form taken in the *VB*. See especially lines 905-918 ed Traill, p. 206, which record letters Wetti dictated on his deathbed to his friends in which he requests their intercession.

[205] *VB*, 8 (p. 383).

[206] For hierarchical ordering in litanies, see Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies*, pp. 59-60.

[207] On the use of the family as a model for the monastic community, see Mayr-Harting, 'Venerable Bede', esp. pp. 15ff.

[208] This list could have served as a mnemonic device which could then be developed into a longer history. See for example the subsequent historiographical use of episcopal lists in B. Arnold, 'Epsicopal Authority Authenticated and Fabricated: Form and Function in Medieval German Bishops' Catalogues', ed. T. Reuter, *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Karl Leyser* (London, 1992), pp. 63-78.

of monks represents a form of commemoration of the dead, and a comparison between the *VB* and the *Totenannalen* can be profitably made. In both cases, the names are listed but with no accompanying day of death as one might find in a necrology or martyrology. While the late ninth- and tenth-century entries in the *Totenannalen* demonstrate the extension of the monastic community to include lay patrons, families of patrons and secular leadership, the earlier entries are mainly confined to monks.[209] Thus the listing, which excludes laymen and even the founder, is reflective of a seventh-century practice which strictly limited its definition of a community and indicated that the vision's intended audience was strictly monastic.

In the face of internal difficulties and external adversity, community cohesion was necessary. It validated, strengthened and increased the group's own importance. Prayer, as a form of gift exchange, could create a social network as we learn from the histories of Fulda and Reichenau.[210] At these monasteries, detailed records survive and we find that tensions between the monastery and the outside world were cause for widening the confraternity of the prayer network to include lay patrons and potential aggressors.[211] From this evidence, it can be argued that a prayer confraternity or other form of community commemoration such as a necrology was an instrument to be invoked during a crisis and to be used to cultivate an image which demonstrated monastic unity to those outside the walls. In limiting the list to just the monks at Longoretus, the vision seems to attest to an early period in the history of commemoration in which internal harmony was of supreme importance.

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[209]That is until the abbacy of Sigihard. See F- J. Jakobi, 'Die geistlichen und weltlichen Magnaten in den Fuldaer Totenannalen', ed. K. Schmid and G. Althoff, *Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda im Früheren Mittelalter,* vol. 2/2 (München, 1978) pp. 841ff. There is a helpful review of this monumental work of Schmid and Althoff by H. Mayr-Harting, *EHR*, xcvi (1981), 374-379, further discussed in his *Ottonian Book Illumination*, vol II (London, 1991), p. 153ff.

[210]Oexle, 'Memoria', p. 89 and his 'Memorialüberlieferung und Gebetsgedächtnis in Fulda von 8. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert', in Schmid and Althoff, *Die Klostergemeinschaft*,vol. I, pp. 136-77 explores the external crises which called for large scale confraternity networks. For an anthropological overview of gift exchange, see Mauss, *Gift*, esp. pp. 26, 58.

[211]Or even enemies: see E. Bishop, 'Some Ancient Benedictine Confraternity Books', *Downside Review*, January, 1885) reprinted in his *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford, 1918), pp. 349-361, esp. p.356; and Oexle, 'Memoria'.

The idealised image of the closely-knit community at St Peter Longoretus functioned on multiple levels. The authority of a unified, prayerful and penitent community could have provided hope for salvation which would have been a powerful incentive to foster internal harmony. This image of community may also have been used as ammunition in the battle against worldly tendencies or even the abuse of episcopal privileges which may have affected the monastery's early history. We can only speculate on the circumstances which gave rise to this image of community and the text's efficacy in each of these areas. The vision most likely served a specific function at the time of its occurrence, but the text also had a wider appeal as the manuscript tradition reveals.

## 5.8 Social Memory

In its emphasis on commemoration, the *VB* reveals natural anxieties about the threat of anonymity or oblivion from memory.[212] In addition to its lesson on servitude and humility, the cleaning of the tomb[213] has further significance in this respect, for it suggests that without a formal apparatus for commemorating the dead, a grave, even one at the threshold of a church, was not enough to ensure that an individual's memory would be maintained.[214] Encouraging interaction between the living and the dead,[215] the story exhorted its audience to commemorate those who had passed away. Framnoaldus's call for the sweeping of his tomb must not have arisen from the monk's desire or need for intercession since he and his brethren were already dwelling in heaven; instead it was a reminder to preserve the monastery's social memory and thereby create a bond of dependence between the living and the dead.[216]

[212] *Contra* Schmidt, *Ghosts*, p. 5 who argues that commemoration is a misnomer since this practice was undertaken to confine the memory of the dead and relegate them to anonymity.
[213] *VB*, 14 (p. 389).
[214] It seems clear that this vision dates from the period in which graves were unmarked; the monk must show Barontus where his tomb was. See Bullough, 'Burial', pp. 195-201 for a discussion of the changes in burial over the next two centuries.
[215] Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 173.
[216] Mauss, *Gift*, p. 58.

Through this list of monks, the community was clearly trying to order and create its social memory,[217] to preserve a family history which contained proof of the sanctity of its clan and to keep the memory of its most venerable monks alive for future generations.[218] The repetition of their names would preserve their memory.[219] As noted earlier, Sigiramnus, the founder and first abbot of St Peter Longoretus is not to be found in Barontus's other world. His absence is notable since the family of the founder of a monastery (and donor of the land on which the monastery was constructed) usually remained influential in its subsequent history.[220] It is possible that he is overlooked either because his political affiliation was out of favour at the time of the vision,[221] (his birthplace of Bourges certainly was not thought well of by the redactor!)[222] or because he represented an undesirable part of the monastery's past.[223] It is also possible that his name was once included but later removed in subsequent redactions of the vision.[224]

Carozzi has argued that the monastery began to observe a different rule after Sigiramnus's death and thus counted the abbacy of Francardus as its new beginning.[225] But often those names we might expect to find are actually missing from commemoration lists, such as Boniface's at Fulda.[226] Whatever the reason for Sigiramnus's absence, the omission and hence lack of commemoration of the monastery's original founder illustrates that there was

[217] A good introduction to the subject is J. Fentress and C. Wickham *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992).
[218] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 86.
[219] Oexle, 'Memoria' and P. Geary, 'Exchange and Interaction between the Living and the Dead in Early Medieval Society', in his *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (London, 1994), pp. 87-89.
[220] Prinz, 'Columbanus', p. 76 and his *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 121ff.
[221] Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 143-4.
[222] *ibid.*, pp. 143-4.
[223] From the *VS*, 21 (pp. 618-9) we learn that Sigiramnus was driven out of the community. de Laugardière (*L'église*, p. 191) argues this signalled discord among the monks. According to Carozzi (*Voyage*, pp. 170-1) Abbot Francardus (whose biography is encapsulated in the vision) is intentionally portrayed as the monastery's founder; although the author of the vision, fully aware of this duplicity, is careful to stop short of applying the term 'founder' to Francardus.
[224] For other abbots missing from their monastery's historical record: I. Wood, 'Saint-Wandrille and its Historiography', ed. I.N. Wood and G.A. Loud, *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to John Taylor* (London, 1991), pp. 6-7.
[225] Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 170-1.
[226] Constable, 'Remiremont', p. 277.

flexibility in creating social memory and in defining the identity of a community. Moreover this absence also indicates that the redactor was allowed to play with living memory to create an ideal of a meaningful community. Maintaining social memory stabilises and legitimises members of a group who may not know each other, and thereby links the unborn with the dead. Through the repeated recounting of this vision, which detailed the exalted status of the brothers in heaven and on earth, the monastery's community constructed its own importance as it celebrated its participation in sacred history.[227]

## 5.9 The Members of the Monastic Community

Throughout the *VB*, the author continually emphasises the monastery's importance in a variety of ways. Only a few of Longoretus's monks are noble according to the *VB*, but status was very much on the mind of the redactor for Barontus's noble blood was mentioned even before his name in the second line of the text,[228] and another of the monks, Ebbo, was also recorded to have been of high birth.[229] Nobility and sanctity were intertwined in this period and was a *topos* of seventh-century hagiography,[230] yet apart from these two references, there is a notable absence of nobility; the redactor of the *VB* has to clutch at links, such as the abbot – whose own lineage is not remarked upon – who educated the sons of nobles, in order to show the importance of Longoretus in the local community. Silences in

[227] For cogent insights into the function of social memory in a wider community, see B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983, rpt. 1991), pp. 10-13. See also G. Kirsch and D. Roen, *A Sense of Audience in Written Communication* (London, 1990), p. 17 for the implications of creating a textual record in the preservation of social memory.

[228] 'Frater quidam nobilis progeniae, Barontus nomen,...' *VB*, 1 (p. 377). This is a factor which a Benedictine author writing for a Benedictine monastery should not have noticed: *RB*, 2.18 (p. 444).

[229] *VB*, 15 (p. 389).

[230] Merovingian saints' lives are laden with references to the nobility of the saints: for example, *Vita Sanctae Radegundis*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 358-395; the *Passio Leudegarii I*, ed. B. Krusch *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 282-322; *Vita Sanctae Gertrudis*, ed. B. Krusch *MGH SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 791-7: Prinz, 'Aristocracy', p. 159; and his 'Columbanus', p.82; Cracco Ruggini, 'Crisis', 116-153, esp. 118.

the *VB* and the *VS* lead us to speculate that, at the time of the vision, the monastery was not a significant repository of relics, nor does the monastery seem to have been particularly well-connected or influential within the world.

The *VB* reflects the message that heavenly sanctity was what mattered. The text contained much evidence of its members in heaven, some entrusted with important rôles in heaven such as celebrating the Eucharist and caring for the lights in the churches of the world.[231] No brother had ever been refused entry to heaven. Sanctification in heaven was not dependent on the monks' worldly power, talents and prestige. Thus the intention of the text was to glorify the community of Longoretus.

Barontus's vision specifically proclaims the sanctity of the current abbot Francardus,[232] and records a miracle performed for the saintly abbot, Leodoaldus of Millebeccus.[233] Barontus himself was considered important enough to warrant both St Raphael's visit and St Peter's intercession to ensure his salvation. Producing heavenly affirmation of a brother's privileged standing as well as the saintliness of one's own abbot were significant steps towards elevating a monastery's spiritual standing. Where declarations of high birth were thin on the ground, favour from heaven could garner prestige and authority for the monastery.

The emerging picture of the monastery in the third quarter of the seventh century is one of a newly formed monastery, with apparently no great prestige, no acknowledged saint as its founder, lacking strong episcopal or royal protection and perhaps self-conscious about its own lax discipline.[234] Many of these small family monasteries like Longoretus and Millebeccus did not survive much longer than a generation or two after their foundation.[235] Indeed the Longoretus monastery seems to have largely faded into obscurity following Barontus's

[231] *VB*, 15 and 11 (pp. 389-385).
[232] *VB*, 10 (p. 385).
[233] *VB*, 5-6 (pp. 381-2).
[234] As articulated by the monk Betolenus, *VB*, 11.
[235] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 60. He goes on to describe the difficulties these small monasteries had in preserving their land holdings, pp. 131ff, esp. p. 138.

vision.

## 5.10 Jurisdiction and Property: The Occasion for the Production of the Vision

The historical moment in which the vision occurred has been lost to us but details in the text and the wider historical context can help to unravel the possible circumstances of its production and shed light on the redactor's emphasis on what noble blood there was at Longoretus, the sanctity of its brothers, the closeness of the community and the damnation of the two bishops.

The arrival of Irish monks on the Continent in the last quarter of the sixth century ushered in a new form of monasticism which sought to evangelise the relatively neglected countryside. The rural monastic settlements which Irish monks had founded were not necessarily under the jurisdiction of the local bishop who would have functioned largely within an urban centre.[236] The condemnation of the city of Bourges and two bishops bespeaks of the tensions between rural and urban centers of devotion. As monasteries began to feel the pressure of the expansionist policies of local bishops upon their relatively autonomous communities or on their lucrative land holdings, tensions between the two sides were bound to escalate. For our purposes, it is the episcopal progression into the countryside[237] which helps to explain not only the *VB*'s depiction of the two bishops, but also may unlock the reason behind the production of the text itself.

Although a perennial issue, the clash over the extent of episcopal jurisdiction over individual monasteries was renewed in the mid-seventh century. The Council of Chalon-

[236] Prinz, 'Columbanus', p. 76.

[237] Fouracre, 'Audoenus and Eligius' and Wood, 'Merovingian Devotion' both discuss the progression of episcopal power into the countryside.

sur-Saône (649-653)[238] was in large part a repetition of the Council of Orleans (541) as it reaffirmed the bishops' right of jurisdiction to exclude secular officials from encroaching on monastic property.[239] The repetition of this material signals a heightened awareness of interference, possibly resulting from the increased temptation offered by the proliferation of newly-endowed rural monasteries, and suggests that bishops were endeavouring to extend their control beyond their immediate metropolitan areas.[240] This move had implications for relations between monks and bishops as well.

The influx of Irish monks, products of a different monastic ethos, triggered further consideration of such issues. It is with the second generation of Columbanian disciples in the early seventh century that we find exemptions from the jurisdiction of diocesan bishops being granted by the pope.[241] This is not to suggest that the Irish were necessarily anti-episcopal but merely to illustrate the general climate of struggles and readjustments in the balance of power which can be witnessed in part through immunities.

Three features are common to most immunities: the right of monasteries to protect their endowments, their right to free abbatial elections and their choice to grant or refuse permission to host ceremonies. Since Barontus and his redactor are full of praise for the two abbots and nothing is spoken about the monasteries' being overburdened as hosts, it is reasonable to assume that property was at the crux of the monastery's complaint against the two condemned bishops. Two modern scholars of the *VB*, Levison and Hillgarth, have in fact suggested as much although neither develops reasons for their suppositions.[242] The text of the *VB* itself supports the conclusion that property was a central issue for the visionary

[238] *Concilia Galliae* 511-695 (ed. C. de Clercq CCSL 148 A 1963 pp. 302-10). Note that Wulfoleodus is present at this council.

[239] Canon 5 expressly states that laymen must not encroach upon the property and control of rural parishes. Fouracre, 'Audoenus', pp. 78-9. J. Semmler, 'Episcopi potestas und karolingische Klosterpolitik', in A. Borst (ed.), *Mönchtum Episcopat und Adel zur Gründungskeit des Klosters Reichenau* (Sigmaringen, 1974), pp. 305-95.

[240] Fouracre, 'Audionus', pp. 79-83.

[241] In 628 Honorius granted an exemption to Bobbio. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, p. 67.

[242] Levison, *VB*, p. 370, and his 'Politik', p. 234; Hillgarth, *Christianity*, p. 182.

and his community. For example, Francardus is noted to have attracted land grants and it is he who is promised a heavenly mansion of gold and jewels. Furthermore, the homiletic conclusion warns against the dangers of greed and attachment to the world which lead to eternal damnation.[243] In this it may have been referring to more than Barontus's sin. Worldly issues such as the jeopardisation of land grants or immunities were often the impetus for miracles or visions.[244] The text of the *VB* could then be seen as a muniment, its written production a way of protecting the monastery's property rights. The subscription clause which links the vision with Theuderic III makes sense in this context since, although he was no Dagobert, he was acknowledged as a king who generously donated to monasteries, including perhaps Longoretus.[245] The monastery was located mid-way between Poitiers and Bourges (although part of the diocese of Bourges), thus making it a potential target for dispute between these two powerful bishoprics,[246] and thus their damnation may have been the result of their having threatened Longoretus's land or perhaps even a gift given by Theuderic to Longoretus. Apart from geographical proximity, there is no other surviving evidence which provides a plausible link between the two bishops – who otherwise had good reputations – and the description of their punishment.[247]

The exact nature of episcopal power over rural monasteries and monastic attitudes towards it is a contentious issue; but during this period rural monasteries, such as Barontus's,

[243] *VB*, 21 and 22, esp. lines 17-19. (p. 394).

[244] For example, the *Vision of Euchar,* (ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, *MGH Capitularia* 2 [Hanover, 1907], pp. 432-433), and the *Vita Remigii*, c. 25 (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 3, pp. 321-22) in which Pippin the Short had a dream in which St Remigius appear and whipped the king soundly merely for having the idea that he might take rent from the villa of Anizy-le-Chateau near Laon which had been pledged to the saint. For further discussion of *vitae* as documents to defend property rights, see Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 49.

[245] See n. 110 on page 118.

[246] Two things must be observed here. First, episcopal jurisdictions in the Merovingian kingdoms were not as clearly defined as they would later become: Breukelaar, *Historiography* and Rosenwein, *Negotiating*, p. 58. Second, the land holdings of a monastery (or bishopric for that matter) did not necessarily have to be located nearby. See Wallace-Hadrill on the widely scattered holdings of St Denis, *Frankish Church*, p. 128. Thus it is possible that a monastery may be divided between two surrounding bishoprics.

[247] de Laugardière, *L'église*, pp. 193-4.

were not necessarily subject to episcopal jurisdiction.[248] While this must have allowed for great autonomy within the monasteries, those without powerful aristocratic or episcopal patrons were vulnerable and could have suffered economically during the frequent redistribution of land.[249]

No specific charter evidence from this period can be found to support Levison and Hillgarth's tantalising suggestion that the bishops were damned for stealing Longoretus property. However a later spurious charter for Longoretus and Millebeccus monasteries does attest to the difficulties these monasteries experienced in attempting to preserve their privileges.[250] Furthermore, Wulfoleodus's presence in hell could have been sparked by his attendance at the Council of Chalon, which on the one hand legislated to protect monasteries from lay interference, but on the other had sought to increase episcopal jurisdiction over monasteries.[251]

I would further argue that the vision is in part a vehicle for an invective against any outside forces which threatened the monastery. In the fight to establish authority, an image derived from a divinely inspired vision which depicted the damnation of two bishops and the sanctity of the deceased monks of St Peter's and the glorification of the monastic community could serve as a powerful statement of the monastery's autonomy and authority. The monks could wield the vision-text to prick the conscience of succeeding bishops. However church land was not only at risk from other ecclesiastics, but also subject to spoliation by laymen. Thus the vision was a potent weapon to fight against any encroachments, especially in

[248]For the Irish background to the movement, see Hughes, *Church*, pp. 63-78. While much of what she says relates specifically to Ireland, the organisation of *paruchia* may have been borrowed for Continental monasteries founded on the Irish model. For the Continent: Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 55ff, and esp Wood ('*Vita Columbani*', pp. 63-80) who argues against the idea that Columbanian monasticism was necessarily antagonistic to the episcopacy since rural monasteries were not necessarily subject to episcopal jurisdiction.

[249]E. Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France* 6 vols in 7 (Lille, 1910-1943), and Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 131ff.

[250]G. Pertz, ed., *MGH Diplomatum imperii* vol. I (Hanover, 1872) no. 28, pp. 145-6

[251]*Concilium Cabilonense* (ed. Leclercq, p. 308 line 135): Bituriue Vulfoleudus episcopus ecclesie his constitutionibus subscripsi.

subsequent eras which were noted for the difficulties of retaining church land.[252]

Appeals to supernatural authority were a common practice in dispute settlement.[253] Here our previous discussion of the subscription clause can be put into better context. Perhaps the damnation of the bishops combined with the subscription clause signifies the monastery's attempt to seek protection from external agents or perhaps a direct appeal for exemption from episcopal jurisdiction.[254]

The intention of the text, however, may be a more general stinging condemnation of the worldliness which plagued all levels of the Frankish church, and was a problem not confined to the seventh century. Vulfoleodus was 'deceptione damnatus cum turpissima veste similitudinem mendici' with Dido sitting next to him.[255] Ciccerese has interpreted this punishment more broadly than Levison and Hillgarth, as a *contrappasso* fitting for these bishops who had become wealthy through fraudulent means.[256] From her theory, I would argue that the bishops' punishment could be interpreted more symbolically as an inversion of the pleasure they took in their worldly wealth, or of the material temptations more readily available in urban centres, and thus not necessarily an indication of their greed for monastic property. This interpretation finds further support from the themes addressed in the *VB* and if we allow for the author's familiarity with the *AP*, for in it men and women dressed in rags were 'the ones who seemed to renounce the world, wearing our habit; but the snares of the world made them miserable... and held them back. They showed no charity...'.[257] The

[252]Particularly an eighth-century issue. Lesne, *Histoire* is the starting point, but also see D. Herlihy, 'Church Property on the European Continent, 701-1200', *Speculum* 36(1961) pp. 81-99; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 123-142; and McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms,* p. 41, on Hincmar's blaming of Charles Martel for secularisation of church land.

[253]For example, ordeals: Bartlett, *Trial*, and Morris, '*Judicium Dei*'.

[254]Rosenwein (*Negotiating*, pp. 53ff) discusses this idea in the context of Holy Cross convent at Poitiers in which the power of relics, the king, and bishops in other diocese were all invoked against local diocesan bishop's authority.

[255]VB, 17 (p. 391).

[256]Ciccerese, *Visioni*, p. 274.

[257]*AP*, X. The punishment of being dressed in rags as a punishment for being uncharitable also occurs in the earlier *Apocalypse of Peter*, ed. M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 504-21.

unholy city of Bourges twice comes in for criticism in the *VB*,[258] making the vision attest to the greater spiritual benefits of rural monasticism in contrast to the evils of its urban counterparts.[259] The laymen who are punished next to the bishops are seated in a circle on seats of lead. This punishment was according to Gregory the Great, symbolic of *avaritia*, another worldly sin.[260] Barontus's transgression is also related to the temptations of worldly possessions, even though he is cloistered in a rural monastery. The two concluding chapters of the *VB* also return to the theme of the dangers of worldly wealth, making it the theme of the vision.[261] We can conclude from this evidence that the visionary's community was acutely aware of the threat this world posed to monks and bishops alike.

The material world may have vitiated spiritual life but it was also financially necessary to support the spiritual life of monks. Proper management of a monastery's assets was a central concern. For a monastery without great influence, the social standing of the monks and their local aristocratic affiliations in the outside world was of supreme importance to its outward influence and survival, particularly in the battle to preserve privileges or new land grants. The occurrence of Barontus's vision was doubtless an important, and perhaps timely, event for the community at Longoretus. The *VB* told of the blessedness of its departed brethren and of a noble visionary who, although a sinner, had received supernatural support. By disseminating news of this vision, the monastery of St Peter Longoretus could fend off threats against its properties and perhaps attract even more donations of land as well as more prestigious recruits.

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[258] Not only in the damnation of its bishop *VB*, 17 (p. 391), but also in praise of Abbot Leodaldus. Raphael remarks 'Visitemus hunc servum Dei verum, qui eger iacet in isto monasterio et est dispar humilitate et opere ceteris in urbem Beturivae'. *VB*, 5 (pp. 381-2). Perhaps Bourges's reputation was still suffering for having produced the pseudo-Christ who had over 3,000 followers including members of the clergy in his sway. Gregory of Tours, *DLH*, X.25 (pp. 517-519). The redactor of Barontus's revelation would certainly want to distance Barontus's *revelatio* from such prophesy.

[259] Although the whole question of just how divorced from the world rural monasteries founded on family land really were has recently been highlighted by J. Percival, 'Villas and Monasteries in Late Roman Gaul', *JEH* 48:1 (1997), p. 16.

[260] *Moralia* XIV. 63. (ed. Adriaen, pp. 414-419). Also Carozzi, *Voyage,* p. 167.

[261] *VB*, 21-22 (pp. 393-4)

The author's focus on the strength of the community suggests that it was thought to be the source of the monastery's power, and preservation of the harmonious community is really at the heart of the *VB*. He highlighted the sanctity and high earthly social status of members of the community, the heavenly rewards granted to brothers in the celestial community, the cohesion between the living and dead members of the community and finally the holy community life enjoyed by the monks at the Longoretus monastery. However this over-emphasis continually reiterated throughout the text perhaps leaves room for us to ponder how idealised this vision of the community was. While we have considered the potential external threats which may have affected the monastery, we turn now to the possibility that an internal conflict may have been the cause of the text's heavy accent on fellowship.

Barontus's own sin of withholding some of his wealth despite having taken his vows exemplified a common problem. This sin is mentioned twice, confirming its importance to the vision's overall message. Initially St Peter argues with the demons that Barontus merits salvation on account of his having given up all of his possessions for God.[262] Once they are banished, he then accuses Barontus of having withheld some of it.[263] Had they known of this sin, Barontus would not have been given a second chance to repent. The noble composition of the monastery meant that it was likely that other monks had property and wealth at their disposal.[264] Not forsaking all earthly attachments was a grave sin against the community.[265] The detailing of Barontus's unconfessed sin and the rôle St Peter played in this drama would be a forceful warning against the danger of sinning against one's own community for those who heard or read the vision.[266]

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[262] *VB*, 12 (p. 386) 'et omnia propter Deum dereliquid et semet ipsum in servitio Christi tradidit'.
[263] *VB*, 13 (pp. 387-8) see above, n. 58.
[264] J. McNamara, *The Ordeal of Community* (Toronto, 1993).
[265] See section 5.6
[266] Note that this sin was understood to be against one's community, not merely an issue of personal salvation. Bede, *Letter to Ecgberht* (ed. Plummer, I, pp. 420, 422). In the *VW*, an explicit connection is made between heavenly concerns over monks maintaining private property and the story of Ananias and Sapphira. *VW*, lines 363-389 (p. 195).

This particular sin is also found in the *Dialogues*, in which the author of the *VB* was, as we have seen, close in many things.[267] Gregory the Great recounts how a monk in his own community, named Justus, confesses on his deathbed that he had withheld money from the monastery. He wrote:

> 'Quod mox ut mihi nuntiatum est, tantum mali de fratre qui nobiscum communiter vixerat aequanimiter ferre non valui, quippe quia eiusdem monasterii nostri semper regula fuerat, ut cuncti fratres ita ommuniter viverent, quatenus eis singulis nulla habere propria liceret.'[268]

Justus confessed on his deathbed but was deprived of the consolation of his brethren and denied forgiveness of his sin. He was buried with his three gold pieces in a dung heap; a potent symbol to the living and a just punishment for the deceased.[269]

As with the story of Justus, the *VB* illustrates the penalties of private possession within a monastic community and the danger of damnation for not confessing sins. Whereas Barontus is sent back to earth to do his own penance, Justus's fellow monks intercede for him by celebrating thirty masses for his soul. Like Barontus, he too returns to earth – though in spirit only – to inform his brethren that through their help he had attained salvation at last. Gregory adds a final postscript to the story to demonstrate what a powerful lesson Justus had been for his community. He tells us that after Justus's burial, the monks, fearful of Justus's severe fate, began to return all the items they had in their possession, even things which were allowed them under the Rule.[270] Merely leaving a sin unconfessed

[267] Gregory is cited specifically in *VB*, 10 and 20 (pp. 384 and 393).
[268] *Dialogues*, IV. 57.10 (p. 188). Ironically Gregory himself maintained several farms for more than a decade after becoming a monk. For a further discussion see C. Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 47, and J. Richards, *Consul of God: the life and times of Gregory the Great* (London, 1980), p. 36.
[269] *Dialogues*, IV. 57. 12 (p. 190).
[270] *Dialogues*, IV. 57. 13 (pp. 190-192).

could endanger one's salvation,[271] but Gregory's emphasis on his monks' returning of private property illustrated that for him, the more serious transgression was maintaining private property. This was a sin which could jeopardise the cohesion of the community and thus was treated as seriously as theft. Thus as a good 'Gregorian' monk, Barontus is not sent back to earth merely to confess his sin, but to show everyone the secreted money and then give it as alms.[272]

Throughout the *VB* the themes of obedience, discipline and service all recur. While these telling details on the lack of discipline have the ring of truth, the glorified image of the community was probably composed of earthly hope rather than a monastic reality. Limiting one's independence and relinquishing worldly wealth for a life of asceticism was not always a smooth or easy transition.[273] The spirit of charity was at times inadequate to overcome the tensions which arose within a socially diverse community.[274] Worldly rank and status could and did hinder cohesion within the monastery, as the revolt led by some royal members of Radegund's Holy Cross nunnery demonstrates.[275] In this infamous episode, Chrodieldis, the daughter of King Charibert and Basina, daughter of King Chilperic, revolted and refused to accept the authority of the low-born abbess who was chosen by Radegund to succeed her. The *VB* would have certainly discouraged monks from keeping sins or private property hidden. With its image of an idealised community, the vision-text may have been used as an instrument designed to inculcate a spirit of fellowship through repetition and discussion

[271] Although it was the dangers of 'hidden sin' which was the focus of Book II of Columbanus's *Vita*. See Charles-Edwards, 'Penitential', pp. 219ff.

[272] *VB*, 13 (pp. 387-8) 'Cum ad propria peregrinatione redieris, illud, quod quando ad conversionem venisti et sine comiatum absconsum retenuisti, omnibus patefac et duodecim solidos cum festinatione donare non tardes'.

[273] For all of its heavenly aspirations, western monasticism created an abnormal social grouping. L. Milis, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men: Monasticism and its Meaning to Medieval Society* (Woodbridge, 1992), p. 136. See also A. de Vogüé, *Community and Abbot in the Rule of St Benedict*, tr. C. Philippi (Kalamazoo, MI, 1979), esp. pp. 13-25 which describes the function of the Rule in bringing monks together. B. McGuire, *Friendship and Community* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1988), p. 39, and McNamara, *Ordeal*, p. 5, also discuss the ascetic communalism of monasticism in terms of a radical social experiment which set challenging ideals.

[274] McNamara, *Ordeal*.

[275] *DLH* IX.39-43 (pp. 460-475).

of its meaning within the monastic community. When not being read, a manuscript of the *VB* could have lain on the altar preserving the memory of the blessed monks in heaven whilst also fulfilling the monastery's need for recognition of its land rights. We should note that issues over jurisdiction were still not permanently resolved in the eighth and later centuries[276] which may have been a factor in the continuing popularity and relevance of the *VB*.

## 5.11 Conclusions

The contents of the vision support its purported date, although conclusive confirmation is still lacking. Nothing in the *VB* is obviously out of character with seventh-century monasticism, especially when the supposedly 'Benedictine' elements can be explained in light of Gregory's portrait of Benedict in the *Dialogues*.

The writings of Gregory the Great exerted a significant influence on the *VB*, as on later visions. To be effective propaganda, a vision had to conform to the formula of visions which had been accepted. Thus the *VB* borrowed much from Gregory and the standard form of otherworld visions, but included a heavy emphasis on the community of St Peter Longoretus. The importance of participation in a community was to be expected in this period,[277] for comfort in the face of death and salvation itself was intimately linked to participation in a community. It was through inclusion in a community that the bereaved looked for solace, the dead intercession and the sinner hope. The return of the visionary from death to life underscored the continuum between this world and the one beyond, and Barontus's experiences confirm that even death could not sever the bonds nor responsibilities of one's community.

[276] See for example Eigil's *Life of Sturm* – Fulda goes from monastic autonomy to episcopal overlordship and then to being under royal jurisdiction.

[277] Brown, *Rise*, pp. 161-2 discusses the *VB* in the context of salvation. He argues that Barontus is saved in part by his almsgiving and because of the merits of his monastic community.

Individual salvation was the primary focus of the church's efforts in liturgy and penance. Thus the overwhelming emphasis on the community and its monastic observances in the *VB* does seem out of proportion with what one would expect from other visions. It seems to have been fulfilling a specific function. Because the St Peter Longoretus monastery seemingly had no weighty royal or episcopal affiliation on which to depend, the monastery constructed its own sense of identity and authority outside the jurisdiction of this world. Being a rural monastery, it most likely had little spiritual support or pastoral guidance in trying times. Thus, the disciplinary reminders contained in the vision are highly suggestive of a monastic rule while Barontus's judgement amplified the importance of penitential discipline by showing that that even hidden sins would eventually be revealed.

The text was an important reminder of the need for obedience to avoid damnation and the need for internal cohesion in the face of external aggression. With this vision, the Longoretus monks could claim a prestigious link with heaven and had proof of the power of their special patron. The vision records that St. Peter rushes to the aid of a brother in trouble and even bends the rules of judgement for him while powerful bishops were damned. Whilst the image of the earthly community's internal harmony fortified the monks against present or future troubles within the monastery, the image of the heavenly community and their patron saint could be wielded against any potential aggressors who threatened the benefices of St Peter's. The vision demonstrates the authority and power a community was thought to have in both earthly and heavenly politics. Whether highly idealised rhetoric, literary folly or partially representative of a seventh-century reality, the *VB* contributes to our understanding of the expectations, benefits and responsibilities of inclusion in a group and illuminates the deliberate creation of identity in the early Middle Ages.

This assessment of the *VB* in its monastic context shows that the vision was a very local product which only later found a wider audience because of the universal themes it addressed. The names commemorated in the *VB* are confined to monks at Barontus's

monastery, and represent an early form of commemorative practice, but also anticipated the explosion in commemoration under the Carolingians. The notable omission of Sigiramnus again supports a claim of authenticity for the text's early date since by at least the tenth century, the reputation of the monastery's founder (if it had ever been besmirched) had been resurrected.

The general form of monasticism observed by the monks gave the vision its generic interest. It probably had a practical function in the maintenance of the monastery's land holdings, a pedagogical one as a rule for the monastery and a commemorative one as a register of its members. It also contained timeless advice on charity, humility and obedience, which taken together with its message about the virtues of alms giving and penance, meant the text appealed to later monastic reformers and succeeding generations of monks.

Some features within the *VB* foreshadowed transformations within the genre of vision literature which would become increasingly standardised in the Carolingian period. We shall now turn to those elements of this text which fit most comfortably in a later, ninth-century context.

CHAPTER

# SIX

# Carolingian Transformations of the Genre of Otherworld Visions and Ninth-Century Interest in the *Visio Baronti*

## 6.1 Introduction

The significance of any text is not merely confined to its moment of composition, but also includes the subsequent occasions on which it was copied and used.[1] With this in mind, we thus turn to the next stage in the history of the *VB*: the ninth century. This period has traditionally been seen as important and transitional by historians of early medieval visions,[2] and it is from this time that we find the earliest extant manuscripts of the text as

[1] Geary (*Living*, p. 23) argues for the need to consider the hagiographic tradition in its textual tradition. This observation is equally relevant for vision literature.

[2] For example, Morgan, *Dante*; Dutton, *Politics*, recall also section 1.5.

well as its most luxurious codicological treatment.

In chapters 2 and 3 we have already seen that the Carolingians actively participated in the debate on dream and vision classification and that they made a significant contribution to the preservation and transmission of vision texts. In addition, this epoch also witnessed the composition of many new vision texts,[3] despite the active discouragement of dream divination by Carolingian legislation[4] and the general scepticism that greeted such experiences.

Ignoring Carolingian interest in dream theory and the manuscript evidence, historiographical interest has instead focussed on two features of these texts: their length and the fact that they name inhabitants of the other world. Modern studies of vision literature have frequently sought to impose an evolutionary or progressive approach when constructing a history of the genre, in which Carolingian visions were placed above earlier visions. Indeed a comparison between an earlier vision such as Gregory the Great's redaction of the *Vision of Stephen* in the *Dialogues* with that of the ninth-century *VW*, indicates that an evolution or advancement has occurred.

Earlier visions, such as Stephen's, were highly personal, usually brief and therefore included in a longer work. The visionary might meet family members or neighbours in the other world and the decision about his or her fate after death was the focus of the account.[5] Visions of the sixth and seventh centuries were generally granted to individuals like Sunniulf, Fursey and Barontus whose behaviour was in need of reform. Their visions, although personal and specific, were also beneficial for a wider audience in their call for reform in the guidance of a religious community, the behaviour of monks or the performance

[3]Appendix A outlines the date of composition for each of the principal early medieval visions. There is an overall rise in the number of visionary accounts in the ninth century, but this observation must be tempered by an awareness that earlier visions may have suffered more from the ravages of time than their later counterparts.

[4]This was an on-going concern: See n. 100, page 42.

[5]For example, the visions of Stephen, Salvius, Barontus and Aldegund, among others.

of the rituals of religious life.

In contrast, later Carolingian visions assumed the form of lengthy accounts which could circulate on their own, and not merely as an interlude in a longer work such as a *vita* or chronicle. The ninth century in particular witnessed the harnessing of the genre's potential for political criticism and the creation of texts designed for the correction of princes. Apocalyptic visions had always carried veiled references to identifiable political figures who appeared in the guise of the Anti-Christ; Carolingian writers notably imitated this practice by locating contemporary political figures in hell.[6] Boniface's eighth-century redaction of the *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock* recorded that the visionary saw King Ceolwulf suffering torment. The ninth century *Vision of Rotcharius*, *VW* and *VPW* also openly named political figures in the midst of the other world. These famous inhabitants were most often observed among those suffering in hell for crimes they had committed against the Christian duties of their office. Charlemagne in particular was repeatedly singled out for castigation because of his licentiousness. This was an unpardonable offense for a Christian leader, particularly in the ascetic climate which characterised the early reign of Louis the Pious.[7] With the exception of Anskar's visions, all of the remaining principal ninth-century otherworld accounts (the visions of *Bernold, the English Presbyter*, *Louis the Younger* and *Charles the Fat*), include political figures. This change in content signals that the purpose and audience of visions had changed. Thus these 'developments' have been interpreted as part of a radical transformation which brought the genre closer to its apogee, the *Divine Comedy*.[8] For this reason, ninth-century seers and their redactors have been credited with advancing visionary literature.

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[6]On apocalyptic texts McGinn, Carolingian politics, Dutton Carozzi.

[7]For example, Charlemagne in the *VW*, lines 446ff. (p. 197). On the character of Louis the Pious's reign, see T.F.X. Noble, 'Louis the Pious and his Piety Reconsidered', *Revue Bénédictine* 86 (1976), pp. 235-50; and P. Godman, 'Louis "the Pious" and his Poets', *FMS* 19 (1985), esp. p. 271: 'The model provided by the poetry of Charlemagne's lifetime no longer fitted the altered conditions of Louis the Pious's reign.

[8]For this interpretation, see Morgan, *Dante*.

Such a teleological view should be questioned. This chapter will therefore offer a comparison between visions of the sixth and seventh centuries with those of the eighth and ninth. We will begin (section 6.2) by specifically addressing four representative visionary themes in both the earlier and later groups of visions. The Carolingian dynasty ushered in a period of great church reform and visions of this period provide wider evidence of the Church's concerns to link secular with ecclesiastical power. We will thus look at the possible effects of this reforming spirit on visions (6.3). The remainder of the chapter (6.4-6.5) will be devoted to a further explanation of the relevance of the *VB* to the Carolingians and conclude with a survey of the many parallels between the *VB* and Carolingian capitularies, since this body of literature contains a direct formulation of eighth and ninth-century ideology.

## 6.2 Comparative Studies

We now turn to a more detailed look at four specific areas to assess Carolingian transformations of the genre of vision literature. These subjects, the landscape which the visionaries describe, their judgement, the shape of the soul and its attributes in Merovingian and Carolingian sources and the soul's sensory capacity, were chosen because they consistently received the most marginal annotation (and in one case an artistic rendering) in manuscripts of the *VB* and thus seemed a potential index of medieval interests.[9]

### The visionary landscape

For all the otherworldliness of heaven and hell, visionaries and their redactors throughout history have drawn heavily on elements of their earthly experience to aid them in their task of describing the ultimately ineffable. Earthly settings and corporeality were among the tactics employed to achieve an enduring image of the afterlife. However, during the

[9]See especially BL Cotton Tiberius C. XI.

course of the ninth century, the genre would undergo identifiable transformations through the strategies of churchmen who sought to tame the other world.

Both paganism and Christianity paid close attention to nature. Studies of nature were undertaken for eschatological predictions,[10] and the imagery of the Garden of Eden inspired earlier visionaries to see heaven as a land of rivers, fruit trees and flowered plains.[11] Natural imagery was very important in early medieval visions, which will be considered in chronological order.

Emphasizing the continuum between the landscape of this world and the next, Gregory the Great specifically connected the active volcanoes of Sicily with the entrance to hell's burning pits.[12] The visions he recorded also made use of images of the natural world. Purgation was carried out in fire and in a foul river filled with horrible creatures. This river was spanned by a trial bridge which tested the merit of souls.[13] Gregory's soldier's vision described a meadow filled with fragrant flowers whose scent was enjoyed by a company of souls. In this idyllic landscape, he also saw the mansions promised in the Bible, and houses on the bank of the river which were affected in varying degrees by the stench which flowed by.

Gregory of Tours also relied on a mixture of elements but the natural world predominated in his redactions of otherworld visions. Sunniulf saw a trial bridge and a house for the blessed, but compared the movement of souls to bees and beheld a river of fire.[14] In his vision of heaven, Salvius also reported seeing a bridge and a gate, but God appeared to him as a luminous cloud.[15] Natural imagery was also the focal point in the visions of

[10] Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 188.
[11] The earliest being the *AP*.
[12] *Dialogues*, IV. 36 (p. 236). Gregory's visions of the other world use natural imagery but in his *Hom. in Ev.* 2. 38.2 and 2.38.10 (PL 76, 1282-3 and 1288) he notes that the Church is both the kingdom as well as the entrance court to heaven.
[13] *Dialogues* IV. 37, 7-14 (pp. 128-34).
[14] *DLH*, IV. 33 (p. 166).
[15] *DLH*, VII.1 (p. 325).

Baldarius and Maximus recorded by Valerius of Bierzo where heaven was described either in Edenic terms or as a high mountain.[16]

The natural world also played a part in the duration of Fursey's vision; it began at sunset and ended at cockcrow. His other world was not well defined but contained a valley and fires. Similarly Barontus's narrative spared little time describing the landscape, but his other world bore more signs of human endeavour. It was punctuated by paths and gates, thrones and mansions all of which one might associate with being man-made.[17] The only natural imagery he used was in the fog and steam he saw in hell and the dew-like manna he saw coming from paradise. Barontus's vision has hints of what would become ninth-century trends, the consequences of which will be discussed below.

Chronologically following Barontus's vision, Dryhthelm's details a landscape which bore almost no trace of construction. His heaven and hell combined many elements of the natural world: rivers and streams ran through the effulgent landscape, flowery meadows constituted terrestrial paradise and purgation occurred in a valley of fire, hail and snow.[18]

The survey of visions above reveals that chronological ordering does not always yield straight-forward results. Even in earlier visions, natural imagery is sometimes punctuated by man-made structures, especially the trial bridge. Nevertheless some overall patterns do emerge when these earlier visions are juxtaposed with Carolingian visions: the early medieval varied and natural landscape of flowering meadows and rivers became transformed into a landscape dominated by architecture, man-made structures such as walls and most especially churches.

In ninth-century compositions, architecture graces the abode of the blessed while natural imagery is reserved almost exclusively for the regions of the damned. These fed into

[16]Baldarius, (*PL* 87, cols. 435-6) and Maximus, (*PL*, col. 431-3).
[17] *VB*, 9, 10 (pp. 384-5).
[18]Bede, HE, V.12.

the tradition of employing bestial imagery to intensify descriptions of demons which was maintained throughout the period.[19] For example, Wetti saw mountains of marble surrounded by a river of fire in his tour of the regions of punishment and a bishop is tormented by severe weather.[20] But in heaven he sees a structure – built, he tells us, by nature but curiously reminiscent of palace or church architecture – which had arches of gold and silver, decorated with sculpture and containing a throne.[21] The Poor Woman reports that Queen Ermengard was punished by having three boulders gripping her like teeth, while a wall with golden letters marks the entrance to paradise.[22] Charles the Fat sees purgation occurring in deep and fiery valleys, flaming mountains with lakes and burning rivers. The English Presbyter described heaven exclusively as a church in which boys read from a book which detailed the virtues and sins of Christians.[23] Bernold's other world contained three buildings, one of which was for purgation, one was meant to symbolise terrestrial paradise, while the last was the church in which Hincmar celebrated the Mass. The action of this vision hinges on the celebration of intercessory Masses in heaven. The presence of churches in heaven conveys a none too subtle reminder of the central importance of offering Masses to gain salvation and simultaneously calls attention to the church as a portal to the heavenly kingdom.

The representation of heaven as a church may have its origin in the temple within the walled city in John's *Apocalypse*, only in ninth-century visions it had been transformed into a centre of Christian worship recognisable to a Frankish audience. Overall the literary images correspond closely to the contemporary artistic renderings, thus anchoring the visionary landscape in ninth-century culture. The ninth-century mosaics of St Prassede in Rome, with its depiction of heaven as a jumble of walls and towers, are one such surviving example. A

[19] See for example, *AP*, 11. For a history of demons and their depictions, see L. Link, *The Devil, the Archfiend in Art* (London, 1995).
[20] *VW*, line 312 (p. 194); lines 392-395 (pp. 195-6).
[21] *VW*, lines 527-539 (p. 198).
[22] *VPW* (p. 42).
[23] *English Presbyter* (p. 433).

more precise analogue between the descriptions of heaven and hell in visions and illustrations can be found in the Utrecht Psalter (*ca.* 820-830) with its profusion of architecture and fiery ovens. These parallels are perhaps an example of the interaction of word and image, but that such a noticeable trend in the history of visionary conceptions accords with contemporary artistic evidence suggests that these changes are instead representative of the Carolingian thought world.

Carozzi contends that we can observe Carolingian innovations and diversification in the geography of the Carolingian other world.[24] He notes that beginning with Dryhthelm's vision, which was brought to the Carolingian court by Alcuin, we can trace the direction which the visionary travelled. More attention was paid to creating a mappable journey through the other world. Carozzi also asserts that from the Carolingians until the twelfth century, a new horizontal organisation of the geography of heaven and hell was formulated. This horizontal ordering of space differed from the vertical imagery found in Psalms[25] which the Church Fathers and earlier visionaries espoused. The older traditional formulation located the region of torment below the earth while above the earth the saintly partook in a pleasurable union with God and His angels.[26] For example, Dryhthelm saw a valley and a pit, both of which signal descent,[27] whereas in *Bernold*, the sense is conveyed that the visionary wandered across the landscape, not up or down. The horizontal arrangement could better accommodate features like the trial bridge which connected heaven and earth and spanned a river of purgation. Although not in the context of a visionary revelation, John Scottus Eriugena went so far as to argue that heaven and hell were not spatially differentiated for they are beyond such categorisation.[28] But many visions are not as clear

[24] Carozzi, 'Geographie', esp. p. 456.

[25] Particularly Ps. 139.8 and 85.13.

[26] E.g. Gregory the Great *Dialogues*, IV.44, and his *Moralia,* XII.13. For the origins of this division of space, see Russell, *History*, pp.12-13, 22.

[27] The demons drag souls downward: 'Trahentes autem eos maligni spiritus descenderunt in medium baratri illius ardentis...'. *HE* V.12 (p. 492).

[28] *De Praedestinatione*, *PL* 121, cols. 423, 436c ff and his *Periphyseon, PL* 122, 538b ff. See D. Moran, 'Nature Man and God in the Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena', in R. Kearney, (ed.) *The Irish Mind:*

as Carozzi would have us believe since visions often used verbs with no implicit spatial orientation.[29]

A survey of the visionary landscape between the seventh and ninth centuries reveals that natural and man-made elements were often intermingled in a landscape where visionaries wandered through, up, down and across. The chronological awkwardness posed by the *VB*'s architectural landscape and geographical orientation in relation to Carolingian 'innovations' demonstrates that vision literature did not develop in a strictly linear manner. Trends, like the preference for seeing churches in Carolingian visions of heaven can be identified, but hard and fast generalisations and clear chronologies are difficult to sustain.

### Judgement

Changes have also been perceived in the judgement scenes of early medieval visions. Judgement was often the climax of the visionary experience. However, visions record a variety of models for judgement. A courtroom judgement is not a feature in early Christian visions like that of St. Perpetua.[30] In these early Christian texts, the soul was immediately fought over by demons and angels as the body exhaled its last breath. The soul may have faced torment as it tried to ascend, but once it reached heaven it underwent no other trial. During the late sixth and seventh centuries, a trial or judgement of the visionary's soul was often incorporated into the visionary account and became the climax of the vision. In the visions recorded by Gregory the Great, the test bridge which determines the fate of the souls is a

*Exploring Intellectual Traditions* (Dublin, 1985), p. 92.

[29]None of the visions recorded in Gregory the Great suggest that the visionary descended to see torment and rose to see paradise. In the *VB*, Barontus was concerned that demons would carry him off, and plunge him into the depth of hell. ...in foveam inferni *demergerent.* (*VB*, 7, lines 19-20). But in his tour of the landscape, he reports that he comes to (*venire*) various gates, a verb with no implicit spatial orientation. E.g. *VB* 8, line 5 ...venimus primam portam paradysi...or *VB* 9, line 8 ...venimus ad secundam portam paradysi...The direction of his travel is not clear after he leaves his body. Carozzi however imposes his interpretation on this text and provides a vertical diagram of Barontus's vision in his *Voyage*, p. 157.

[30]See for example, Perpetua (ed. H. Musurillo, pp. 106-30). Furthermore, Paul does not undergo a judgement in the *AP* and in the *Dialogues*, neither the wrongly-summoned visionary named Stephen, nor the soldier ever learn of their fate although their judgement was imminent.

central feature. Stephen the blacksmith is seen being tugged in opposite directions as he attempts to cross it. Guided by angels but harassed by demons, Fursey passes through fires which he is told will only burn him if he has committed the sin they represent. Here the journey itself is a form of judgement. The *VB* combines torment of the soul on the journey heavenwards with a judgement scene. Dryhthelm is tormented by demons and does not appear before a heavenly judge but does learn of his eternal fate through the agency of his guide. In many of these earlier visions, the visionary is central to the story; his judgement, in whatever form it takes, represents the turning point of the narrative.

With visions of the ninth century, the climax of the vision tale is not necessarily the judgement of the visionary. In the *VPW*, we notice that important figures are named in hell with their presence broadcasting the results of their judgement;[31] but we find that the woman's name and her soul is of no consequence. She herself does not undergo a judgement, nor does she see anyone familiar to her. By failing to communicate her vision to the king, she is threatened by her guide and finally loses her sight, but the question of her salvation is never discussed. The souls of Rotcharius and the English Presbyter are also not judged and Bernold's truncated judgement is far from being an important feature of the narrative. His judgement scene lacks the drama of earlier visions and ultimately is not even conclusive: his soul returns to his body before his fate is decided. It seems to be merely a token attempt to fulfil one of the criterion which defined the genre of otherworldly accounts. Judgement of the visionary, the former focus of the account, was thus subordinated to the political and reformist messages which Carolingian visions contained.

The omission of the judgement of the visionary from Carolingian accounts may seem innovative, but as we have observed, such a scene was not included in all earlier works. The Carolingians were thus returning to a pre-existing vision formula.

[31] Vision is a complaint against Louis's treatment of Bernard. K.F.Werner, 'Gouverner l'empire chrétien,' *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious* (Oxford, 1990), p. 45, n. 147.

### The Shape of the Soul

The shape of the soul is another area which reveals the extraordinary richness of the genre and the transformations it underwent during the early Middle Ages. The soul was long held to be the animating principle which enabled the body to move and breathe, yet there was little consensus beyond this. Among the Antique philosophies regarding life after death, Hellenistic Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul while the Jewish tradition supported the idea of the resurrection of the body.[32] Emerging from these traditions, Christian theologians grappled with this dual inheritance regarding the afterlife of the soul. They formulated a compromise in which a corporeal soul would be re-united with its body during the Last Judgement.[33] By the early Middle Ages, there was general acceptance of the idea of an active afterlife for the soul in which it experienced salvation, torment or damnation as it awaited bodily resurrection.[34] The soul's fate was determined in the first instance according to the life it led on earth, but the duration or severity of the judgement could be altered by suffrages offered by the living on its behalf.[35]

The concept of an immortal soul made possible the Church's influence over both the living and the dead.[36] Such power was enhanced by visions which described the corporeality of the soul and the intense pain which unconfessed souls would endure. Corporeality of the soul forged strong bonds between the living and the dead, and this too worked to the Church's advantage. A recognisable human soul which had maintained its earthly identity, status and physiognomy and was able to endure untold amounts of pain was a memorable

[32] O. Cullman, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, trs. F. Filson, 3rd ed. (London, 1962); S. Tugwell, *Human Immortality and the Redemption of Death* (London, 1990); C.W. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York, 1995).

[33] M. Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma*, and Russell, *Heaven*, p. 39.

[34] This doctrine was to be among the first taught to converts according to Alcuin, *Ep.* 110 (ed. Dümmler).

[35] J. Ntedika, *L'evocation de l'au-delà dans la prière pour les morts* (Paris, 1971); Paxton, *Christianizing Death*.

[36] For an early formulation of the soul as having a bodily semblance, Augustine, *De Gen Ad Lit*, 12.33, cols. 480-2. For the Church's use of this concept: Bernstein, *Formation*, on aug at end of bk; Le Goff, *Purgatory*, pp. 98-9.

image, more likely to be rewarded with intercessory Masses, alms-giving and prayer than a soul which was portrayed as something impalpable. This depiction of an increasingly corporeal soul coincided with the development of the liturgy of the dead,[37] increased interest in the relics of the saints and thus secured its place as part of the pastoral message. While the soul's existence was unquestionably accepted, its appearance and attributes (often very anthropomorphic) were subject to continual interest, discussion and redefinition over time.[38]

A prominent and often defining feature of visions of the other world was the separation of the visionary's soul from his or her body and thus most included some discussion of the soul's appearance. The soul in earlier vision material manifested itself in various guises and often lacked mobility, needing to be carried by angels.[39] When seen leaving the body, it could appear as a bird, most often a dove, as we read in Gregory's account of Saints Eulalia and Scholastica.[40] For the purposes of transportation to the other world, the winged form had its usefulness, but we find that souls appeared as birds even within the realm of the other world. The *Vision of the Monk of Wenlock* recorded that men's souls shaped in the form of black birds were seen suffering on the edge of the pit of purgation.[41] The soul also was also described as a spark,[42] a globe of fire,[43] a bee[44] and a bubble.[45]

Uniformity was not a concern, for the same author may record the soul's appearance

[37]Oexle, 'Die Uberlieferung'; Carozzi, 'Les Carolingiens dans l'au-dela in Haut Moyen Age'; Mclaughlin, *Consorting*; Paxton *Christianizing Death*; and K. Schmid and J. Wollasch (ed.), *Memoria: Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 48 (Munich, 1984), pp. 33-4.

[38]Whilst the Gospels suggest a corporeal soul (Mk ix. 43-8), the Church Fathers were less clear. On the conflicts within the early Latin writings, see Amat, *Songes*, pp. 386-7.

[39]There are innumerable examples in hagiographical literature. One visionary representative is Salvius who was raised up by two angels to the highest pinnacle of heaven. *DLH*, VII.1 (p. 325). F. Cumont, *Lux Perpetua*, pp. 293-4 sees a development in the history of the soul from that of a bird to that needing to be carried by a bird, or later angels.

[40]*Dialogues*, II. 34. Also IV. 11. Also: *Vita Antonii*, c. 66.

[41]in similitudine nigrarum avium, Wenlock (p. 11).

[42]*HE*, V. 12 (p. 490).

[43]*Life of Cuthbert*, V, p.69. and Gregory's Benedict sees the Bishop of Capua in this way.

[44]Sunniulf, *DLH* IV. 33 (p. 166).

[45]Bynum, *Resurrection*, pp. 279-317, esp. 294.

as two different images even within the same source. In the *VB*, there is a great emphasis on the visionary's soul and the author is able to link the idea of a bird-soul with what would become the norm, the small human (often child-like) form.[46] His soul changes in appearance and ability between leaving its body and appearing for judgement. As it is pulled from Barontus's body he reports that the soul has his head, eyes and the rest as well as its five senses but could not speak and is as small as a bird when it first emerges from an egg. Subsequently he receives a body made of air similar to the one he left (...et corpus de aere recipiat, simile quod hic reliquit) in which he receives his judgement and tours the regions of the other world.[47] He is then rent from this aerial body and needs a gust of wind to blow the non-corporeal soul back into his body.[48]

Most visions from the time of Gregory the Great through to the end of the ninth century carried at least a tacit confirmation that the soul possessed a bodily semblance. For instance, we read of souls plunged into a fiery river up to their knees, armpits or even lips.[49] Le Goff has labelled the corporeality of the soul as 'paradoxical,'[50] and indeed, given the Church's antipathy towards the flesh, a bodily soul needs some explanation, particularly as other symbolic alternatives such as the bird or spark had been in use. The theological roots for this idea may be found in Paul's letter to the Romans in which he says 'Therefore sin must no longer reign in your mortal body, exacting obedience to the body's desires. You must no longer put any part of it at sin's disposal, as an implement for doing wrong...'[51] This text may in turn have inspired prayers which mention parts of the body such as those found on Irish breast plates.[52] Alcuin, as mediator of insular traditions to the court of Charlemagne,

[46]Probably influenced by Matt 18.3: 'unless you become like little children...you will not enter the kingdom of heaven'.

[47] *VB*, 4. For aerial bodies, see the bodies of angels and demons in the Trier Apocalypse in which the artist represented them as a sort of blue gas.

[48] *VB*, 18-19 (pp. 392-3).

[49]Soldier, *Dialogues*, IV. 3, 14 (p. 134); Sunniulf, *DLH* IV. 33 (p. 166).

[50]Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, pp. 83-5.

[51]Rom. vi, 12-13. See also A. Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St Paul* (Oxford, 1927).

[52]Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 184 discusses one such example which appeared in the Book

could have facilitated Carolingian acceptance of Irish interest in and attention to the body. His request for Augustine's writings on the origins of the soul shows he had an interest in the subject.[53]

Figure 6.1: *The Utrecht Psalter* ca *820-830, fol. 93*

The conception of soul as somatomorphic may also have been influenced by apocalyptic illustrations which depicted the resurrection of the body. It is not clear whether this image is based, as is so much else, on Late Antique precedents. Such images appeared with some

of Cerne (For the text see Kuypers, *Cerne*, pp. 209-10.) The prayer *Mane cum surrexero* also appears in the Antiphonary of Bangor (ed. Warren, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, II, 84-5). The added interest in pain and parts of the body may also be a reflection of Irish lorica prayers and their Continental tradition.

[53]Alcuin, letter 121 (ed. Dümmler, *MGH Ep.* 4), p. 309. Also Letter 110 (ed. Dümmler, *MGH Ep.* 4), pp. 157ff on instructing converts on the immortality of the soul.

regularity in the art of the Carolingians and Ottonians and may thus have planted the idea of souls in human form in the minds of visionaries[54], as we see in figures 6.1 and 6.2.

Figure 6.2: *Pericopes book of Henry II, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452, fol. 201v (*ca. *1007-1012).*

The *VB* contained a detailed description of the human form of the soul. This form was to make later appearances in Carolingian vision literature, but the myriad of possibilities offered by earlier visions disappeared in these later sources. After the *Vision of the Monk*

[54]The history of the iconography of the scene is discussed by Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung* who also includes some reproductions. See also Bynum, *Resurrection*, pp. 188ff and Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian*, vol. I, p. 15 who notes many examples including those above and frescoes in the Church at Müstair *ca.* 800 which also contains an illustration of the dead rising at the Last Judgement.

*of Wenlock* (*ca.* 716), the soul in visions of heaven and hell is found without exception in human form. The somatomorphic soul which was to become the accepted norm[55] does appear in earlier visions but it was the Carolingians who adopted it and made it standard. This extended metaphor may have been influenced by the ideas of the resurrected body in the New Testament and had a powerful appeal to the early medieval imagination in both literature and art.

The Biblical tale of Dives and Lazarus provided evidence that this immortal spirit was endowed with a sensory capacities for pain and thirst which was akin to human experience on earth.[56] The image of the weighing of the soul also contributed to an understanding of the soul as material.[57] Corporeality was introduced into visionary accounts in a variety of ways which became increasingly imaginative in Carolingian visions: we read for example, of sensations such as sweet and fetid odours,[58] the refreshing and satisfying taste of manna,[59] the pain of searing heat, unbearable cold, the sound of sweet music and tortured screams.[60]

The *Monk of Wenlock* takes the idea of corporeality to greatest extremes. During the visionary's judgement, his virtues and vices are personified and appear as if on a stage to laud or accuse him respectively.[61] Such extremes were not repeated in the visions which followed, but ninth-century visions were unique in their detail of and homogeneous insistence on the human characteristics of the soul[62] and allowed the visionary to recognise other souls,

[55]Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, employs this term to describe a soul which has the appearance of a human body and has the ability to experience corporeal sensations.

[56]Lk 16.19-31.

[57]M. P. Perry, 'On the Psychostasis in Christian Art', *Burlington Magazine*, 22 (1912-1913), pp. 94-104 and 208-218.

[58]Dryhthelm twice mentions the fragrance of heaven, while sufferers complain to Wetti of the putrid smell of the bath water which flows past their hut. Interestingly this last noisome image may have been inspired by the monk Arsen who had a bucket of fetid water in his cell to remind him of the stink of Gehanna. For an earlier version of this see: *Vitae Patrum*, 1.3, 39 *PL* vol 73, col. 740.

[59] *VB*, 17 (pp. 391-2).

[60]Dryhthelm, *HE*, V. 12 (pp. 488-99).

[61]Personified sins and virtues may originate from Romans 2.15-16. Sims-Williams (*Religion and Literature*, p. 258) has commented that this scene has obvious resonances of the Psychomachia but that there is no other obvious evidence of knowledge of Prudentius's text in the vision.

[62]Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 294 dates the appearance of individual persons in the other world to the

and meetings between the souls provided an opportunity for didactic messages to be aired. The emphasis on corporeality also demonstrated that earthly identity, gender, family, rank and affiliations were nearly always maintained in the hereafter.[63]

Such corporeality of the soul demanded clothing. Despite being a material object, clothing was not only maintained in the Carolingian other world but was made to serve a symbolic function. Clothing which carried readily identifiable meanings such as the alb and dalmatic or the luxurious robes of the nobility could make a soul instantly recognisable to an audience. For example, in his vision Anskar recognises St John the Baptist and St Peter by their garments, height and beards.[64] Clothing and haircuts also had implications for artistic depictions of the other world as they provided a visual vocabulary which made images more readable.[65]

The clothing in which the soul was accoutred revealed either its social status in the case of monks in their habits, bishops with their mitres, or kings with their crowns, or else it could reveal the soul's spiritual fate in the other world.[66] The elect were clothed in shining white garments (a literal interpretation of the Biblical image of being clothed in righteous deeds?)[67], while the damned were issued blackened rags or were further humiliated by being deprived of clothing all together. Clothing needed to be maintained but sartorial extravagances among bishops, monks or even queens were not to be tolerated, much less encouraged. Ninth-century visions seemed to have had a fascination with beards for they were featured not only in Anskar's vision but also in Bernold's. Here, however, the image

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thirteenth century, but visionary literature indicates that conceptions of the soul as an identifiable individual was the norm at least by the ninth century. Her dating is probably due to her avoidance of the period stretching from the early Christianity to the twelfth century.

[63] Bynum, *Resurrection*, p. 297.

[64] *Vita Anskari*, 3. Fifth-century mosaics already characterise these saints iconographically. See for example figure 7.5 on page 248.

[65] The readability of images of the other world will be discussed in chapter 7.

[66] Schmidt, *Revenants*, p. 202.

[67] The symbolic link between good deeds and linen or clothing is frequently made in the Bible: Job 29.14, Ps. 139.9, Is. 61.10 and especially Rev. 19.8.

of bearded bishops was meant to be symbolic of their worldly contamination.[68] As an inverse to the splendour with which they surrounded themselves, the forty-one bishops were punished not only by the squalor of their conditions but also by being kept perpetually in need of a shave, an outward sign that a man was 'at odds with himself and society'.[69] The visionary learned that his intercession on behalf of the bishops had been successful because he returned later in the same vision to find them clean-shaven[70] and freshly clothed. Like clothing and facial hair, haircuts were also maintained in the other world. Souls with tonsures appeared frequently in visions not only because they were easily recognised, but also as a sign that monastic vows taken on earth were indissoluble.[71]

### Sensory Experience and Pain

Corporeality was put to greatest use in the regions of the damned.[72] Graphic torments of the soul were particularly emphasised for their persuasive argument to prepare one's soul for the afterlife[73] and descriptions of torment were facilitated by the existence of corporeal souls. Pain was intimately bound to the notion of sin and could be borne on earth through illness or would be endured as torture in the afterlife.[74] In the *VW*, Walahfrid Strabo unequivocally links the experience of pain in this world with that of the hereafter. The only distinction to be made between the sensory perceptions of the body on earth and the soul

[68] On the symbolic meaning and function of hair in the Middle Ages: G. Constable, introduction, in R.B.C. Huygens, ed., *Apologiae duae* (Turnhout, 1985) and R. Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages', *TRHS*, series 6, 4(1994), pp. 43-60.

[69] Constable, *Apologia.* This particular punishment may have been derived from a Western reaction against the Eastern Church's priests who sported long beards, or else an allusion to 1 Cor 11:14 'if a man grows his hair, it is a dishonour to him'.

[70] The shaven face as a reward may be tied into the beardless faces of angels and the purity of boys: Constable, *Apologiae*, p. 60.

[71] For example, Dryhthelm sees a soul tonsured like a cleric.

[72] Cohen, 'Towards a History', pp. 48ff notes that in the Judeo-Christian tradition, pain was associated with the punishment given by God for Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. P. Binski (*Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* [London, 1996]) notes that in heaven 'numbness' prevails.

[73] A. Bernstein, 'Esoteric Theology: William of Auvergne on the Fires of Hell and Purgatory', *Speculum* 57, 3 (1982), pp. 509-531, esp. pp. 509-10.

[74] Cohen, 'Towards a History', pp. 54-7.

in hell was that of magnitude.[75]

The ninth-century visions under consideration are lengthier than those of earlier centuries and thus afforded more opportunities to focus on imaginative torments. What these sources illustrate, however, is ways of suffering which are not necessarily more imaginative, but more corporeal.

Earlier visions use the pain induced by fire or the fear caused by darkness and choking sulfurous smoke to great effect. The souls in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* who are pulled off a bridge by demons into a river of torture are certainly suffering bodily, as is Barontus who is assaulted repeatedly by demons. The pain Fursey experiences in his vision when a burning soul is thrown at him is so vivid and corporeal that his body bears the scars once his soul returns to it. However, when we turn to the Carolingian sources, we read of punishments being directed at specific regions of the body. Charlemagne suffers genital mutilation for his licentiousness,[76] while other souls suffer dismemberment, are tortured by stench or force-fed gold. The monk Rotcharius witnesses his fellow monks in hell with their feet scorched by fire and heads simultaneously burnt by boiling water. In each case, the specificity of body parts is necessary for punishment.

The somatomorphic form of the soul carried obvious implications of materiality. This increased physicality, polluting the purely spiritual realm of the afterlife, provoked the ire of some Carolingian theologians. They were wary of such corporeality, for the changeable material world represented everything that the other world was not.[77] John Scottus Eriugena seems to have spearheaded attempts to draw the other world away from the material in his vehement arguments for a purely spiritual one.[78] He offered an alternative formulation in

[75] *VW*, lines 662-671 (p. 201).
[76] *VW*, line 449 (p. 197).
[77] See for example Russell, *History*, p. 23ff for an overview of the relative locations of heaven and hell.
[78] John Scottus Eriugena, *De praedestinatione*, *PL* 121.

which the incorporeal soul could only undergo psychological pains[79] of loneliness and loss.

It is possible that Anskar, whose vision of the other world dates from the latter half of the ninth-century, was responding to concerns over the increasingly material other world. In the midst of his apocalyptically inspired vision of the 24 elders sitting on thrones, he interjects, '...when I spoke of the elders sitting, I meant that in a certain sense they were sitting. For there was nothing material there, nothing possessed any body, although there was an appearance as of a body which I cannot describe...'[80]

Nevertheless, the idea of a corporeal soul was too powerful an image for the Church to abandon and became the iconographical standard in art. Artistic representations of the soul leaving the body as a small, genderless human being further reinforced the connection between the society of the dead and that of the living. But in art, as in Barontus's vision, souls frequently underwent a change between leaving the body and entering the regions of heaven or hell. Once in the other world, they were frequently depicted not only gendered but also accoutered in contemporary costume as we find, for example, in the Stuttgart Psalter[81] and the illustrated *VB*. Such a depiction no doubt over-reaches the text, but it would have added greater intensity[82] and reinforced belief in the desirability of intercession. Although gender was later to be stripped from illustrations of the soul,[83] it would retain its human form in both the art and literature of the other world.

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[79] Carozzi, *Voyage*, p. 386. On Eriugena's psychological approach, see Bernstein, 'Esoteric', p. 521.

[80] *Vita Anskarii*, 3 (p. 23). Et cum seniores sedentes dixerim, in ipso quodammodo sedebant. Nam nihil corporeum erat ibi; sed erant cuncta incorporea, licet speciem corporum habentia et ideo ineffabilia.

[81] Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek MS. cod. lat. 23.

[82] Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories*, p. 7.

[83] Most frequently depicted as a small naked child: A. Didron, *Christian Iconography*, trs. M. Stokes and E. Millington, vol. II (New York, 1965), 173-9.

## 6.3 Carolingian Contributions: A Reshaping of the Record?

Historians who seek progress have seemingly been mesmerised by the presence of highly recognisable names in these texts, the involvement of leading churchmen in their composition and have been further distracted by the length (and therefore increased detail) of Carolingian otherworld accounts.[84] In these areas, Carolingian visions have received credit from modern scholars for a degree of originality that we might do well to reconsider. The preceding case studies reveal how the Carolingians experimented with existing models and motifs of vision literature, but also that in many cases earlier (pre-Carolingian) precedents exist. Such precedents may also be found for many of the other Carolingian 'innovations' identified by scholars, for example the claim that the Carolingians politicised visions of heaven and hell. Their other world included amongst other real-life players Charlemagne, Ermentrude and Charles the Bald. While the emphasis of Carolingian visions is frequently political criticism, they were not the first to include political commentaries in visions of the other world.[85] In a narrative which attested to the immediacy of justice in the afterlife, Gregory the Great recounts that a hermit had a brief vision of King Theoderic of Italy thrown into a crater by Pope John and the Patrician Symmachus, two of Theoderic's recent victims.[86] Furthermore Gregory's *Vision of a Soldier* reported that Peter, the pope's steward, was seen suffering under a great weight. Gregory of Tours recorded that Guntram had a vision of the recently deceased King Chilperic chained by three bishops and thrown into a cauldron of boiling water for his sins.[87] Barontus saw and named two bishops suffering in hell. These early appearances of identifiable figures in the other world were, of course, only sporadic but Carolingian visionaries seized upon this idea and exploited it by locating at various times most of their ruling dynasty in the regions of torment, and by incorporating

[84] See sections 1.4 and 1.5
[85] Levison, 'Die Politik'.
[86] *Dialogues*, IV. 31-3 (pp. 104-112).
[87] *DLH*, VIII. 5 (p. 374).

pointed criticism of political behaviour in their revelations.[88]

Historians have noted that the Carolingians were the first to recognise visions as a genre and create free-standing texts. However both the *AP* and the *VB* are examples of longer texts, dating from centuries before the Carolingians, which could and did circulate independently. An argument has been made that in the Carolingian period, bishops recognised the potential of the genre and became involved in the redaction of visions, apparently for the first time. Earlier visions are thus seen as produced under monastic jurisdiction, whilst later Carolingian visions were episcopal. This 'development' has been used to explain various characteristics found in visions at this time.[89] Changes between seventh and ninth century visions are undeniable, but episcopal interest in the genre predates the Carolingians and monks like Walahfrid continued to play a part in the visionary record. Whilst Boniface's and Hincmar's rôles in redacting visions should not be ignored, Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours were responsible for redacting six visions in the pre-Carolingian period. These earlier redactors may not have written visions which were as overtly ecclesiastical as their Carolingian counterparts, but bishops were certainly involved with the genre and its preservation and were aware of its uses well in advance of the Carolingians.

The presence of the written word in heaven was thought to have been a direct influence of Carolingian commemorative practices and the increased levels of literacy in the ninth century.[90] For example the Poor Woman is told to read names inscribed on a wall, and the English Presbyter describes angels reading from a book containing the sins of the living. Yet the presence of the word in the hereafter also can be traced back to a pre-Carolingian period, for example in both the Book of Revelations and the *AP*.[91] Little if anything appears in Carolingian visions for the first time and the structure and much of the content of these

[88] Aubrun, 'Caractères', p. 121.
[89] Morgan, *Dante*, p. 3.
[90] Dutton, *Politics*, p. 73.
[91] Rev. 20.15 and 21.12. The *AP* records a gate with golden pillars full of golden letters. They are the names of the righteous at the entrance to the third heaven.

later visions themselves exhibit no decisive break with earlier tradition.

We should not however dismiss all later visions as purely derivative. In assessing Carolingian transformations of the genre, we must consider the appearance of metrical visions of heaven and hell. In his introduction to Walahfrid's *VW*, Traill identified the text as the first literary account of the other world.[92] His point is well made but he failed to note the precedent had already been set by another writer closely associated with the Carolingian court, Alcuin. Alcuin's versification of Bede's *Vision of Dryhthelm* (written before he left York in 782) was one of two poetic visions of the other world included among his writings. The second, a far shorter effort, was his *Vision of Seneca.*[93] The appearance of Walahfrid's lengthy poetic rendering of an already extant vision[94] with its plea for patronage at court attests to a new degree of literary consciousness not found in earlier vision texts.[95] In this recasting of visions, we have moved a long way from what had gone before. Bede may have summarised the *VF* for his *HE*, but this reportage was different to the literary treatment visions received during the Carolingian age. Visionary literature of the later ninth century could still be found in the rough prose and sometimes confused state of its earlier predecessors, but Walahfrid and Alcuin's poetic efforts mark the triumph of form over content. Visions were now seen not only as records of revelation but as subjects suitable for heroic verse.[96]

This tendency to open visions to literary treatment can also be seen in the composition of satirical visionary accounts. Walahfrid Strabo was here again instrumental. His poem 'To Erluin' described a visionary who was carried to heaven on the back of an eagle.[97] Before

[92]Traill, *VW*, pp. 16-17.

[93]Alcuin, *Versus,* lines 1600ff, (ed. Dümmler, p. 205). His *Vision of Balthere*, is not strictly a vision of heaven and hell, but was also rendered in verse.

[94]Godman notes that Walahfrid closely followed Heito's version,( 'Louis "the Pious"', p. 273) but he did however create an additional message against appointing widows as abbesses. *VW* (lines 762ff), p. 171.

[95]Walahfrid's innovative contributions to Carolingian poetry has already been discussed by Godman, *Poets*, pp. 130ff.

[96]Kamphausen, *Traum.*

[97]Walahfrid Strabo, *De quodam somnio ad Erluinum*, Carmen 19, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 2: 364-5.

he reached heaven, he suffered motion-sickness and fear and needed to relieve himself. His eagle guide instructed him on how to do this but then immediately returned him to earth since his pollution had sullied the celestial realm. The visionary awoke in his bed and found that the dream had had a very tangible consequence. Kamphausen has argued that in this poem Walahfrid was reacting against the excesses of Carolingian belief in dreams,[98] his enthusiasm for visions having waned since he composed the *VW*. But this interpretation only takes us part of the way, for it is arguable that such a treatment would not have been possible had the genre not already been subjected to literary treatment and used as a request for patronage. Whatever Walahfrid's motivation for composing such a text, the poem denoted greater liberties being taken with the genre at this time. A *revelatio* was still to be taken seriously, but it was also now possible to parody the genre.

Change also seems to have been realised in the uniformity of the message these visions convey and to some degree, in the message itself. The choices made in their texts work together and appear programmatic and strategically chosen. What is more striking is that they were not gradually introduced, but occur simultaneously in ninth-century visions. As such, they could not be simply accidental but were more likely undertaken systematically with the intention of creating a genre more suited to episcopal reformers and their aims. Perhaps this unity was due in some part to the further opening of the oneiric record to the reshaping hand of the redactor as can be seen in the poetic rewriting and parodying noted above. However, the copying and circulation of earlier visions meant that the desired uniformity was only partially achieved.[99]

Ninth-century churchmen had brought these texts more firmly into their sphere, ensuring that they carried less ambiguous ideological statements. Souls in the other world

[98] Kamphausen, *Traum*, pp. 199-202.

[99] The same has been observed in many other areas of Carolingian history. For a discussion of the lack of uniformity in liturgical practices see R. McKitterick, 'Unity and Diversity and the Carolingian Church', *SCH* 32 (1996), pp. 59-82.

assumed a bodily shape and needed prayers to free them from the torments they endured. These torments were largely derived from the untamed natural world, while the reward of heaven was to receive shelter in the celestial church. The *English Presbyter*'s vision was itself set in a church in heaven. The vision was granted to the priest so that he might return to earth and lobby for stricter adherence to 'fulfil the precepts of the divine books since they were not being fulfilled.'[100] This tendency to ground visions in an ecclesiastical setting reached an almost absurd level in the *Vision of Bernold.* In each episode of the vision, Bernold was asked to find people who would go to church to obtain intercession for those suffering in the afterlife. We have entered a world in which bishops (and in particular Hincmar of Rheims) were engineering a monumental reform movement and saw themselves responsible for not only the souls of the faithful and other churchmen, but also for emperors themselves. We find the entire *Vision of Bernold* was constructed to revolve around Hincmar's own power to act as an intercessor in heaven. He was not content merely to substitute an earthly man of God for an angelic guide or to draw attention to the Church as a portal to heaven, but had himself (in advance of his death) already installed in heaven celebrating Mass.

The Church's rôle in mediating between the laity and the divine is repeated, with some modifications, in each Carolingian vision. The importance of prompt confession and penance is a theme which emerges in Alcuin's *Vision of Balthere.*[101] The celebration of the Mass was brought into sharp relief where once it was only a minute (or optional) element of the vision. It must be stressed that this feature, as with so many of those discussed above, did not appear in Carolingian visions for the first time.[102] The importance of preserving

[100] *English Presbyter* (ed. Waitz, p. 19).

[101] Alcuin, *Versus* (ed. Dümmler,pp. 198-200).

[102] It is celebrated by one of Barontus's fellow monks in heaven. *VB,* 15. The *AP* records that there is an altar in the middle of the City of Christ and that David sings praises in heaven whilst Mass is celebrated on earth. We also read of the power of Masses in other visions such as Dryhthelm, the *Monk of Wenlock*, *VPW*, and the *VW*, but do not see it celebrated in heaven again until the *Vision of Bernold.* There is also external evidence that this is a Carolingian concern. See for example, the illustrations of the celebration of Mass accompanying the Drogo Sacramentary, *ca.* 845 and J. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its*

the memory of the deceased through votive masses in order to alleviate their suffering had already been recorded in earlier texts like the *Dialogues.*[103] The Carolingians however, emphasised the power of the Mass at every opportunity. In Lull's *Vision of a Monk*, for example, the visionary witnesses souls floating off to heaven as Masses were being said for them.[104] Bernold's vision repeats this message by also demonstrating the immediate effects of intercessory Masses while Wetti's guide tells him Masses must be celebrated with due reverence in churches.[105]

Whilst some Carolingian visions show evidence of development, there was a great deal of continuity. Even the apparently 'new', overtly political *VPW* still carries stark reminders of the Church's centrality to the individual's salvation. First the visionary is given a monk as her heavenly guide in place of the conventional angel-guide. This is perhaps the first earthly psychopomp recorded in Christian vision literature and is a feature which again emphasises the importance and authority of the temporal Church in relations with the other world. Secondly, her guide tells her that Charlemagne can be released from torment only after Louis has seven memorial services celebrated for him. Thirdly, at the centre of heaven, the Poor Woman sees and reads from a wall carved with the names of the saved. She is told that only those with their names inscribed on the wall may enter heaven. This imagery was perhaps directly inspired by the memorial books being composed across the Frankish Empire which sought to ensure commemoration through the celebration of Masses.[106] The theological statement which underlies the vision's political criticism is plain: it is the penance done on earth which will allow Louis to save himself; but after his death, he like his father, must rely on the commemorative prayers and Masses offered by the living to ease any remaining purgatorial sufferings.

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*Origins and Development*, trs. F.A. Brunner (New York, 1951).

[103] *Dialogues* IV.57 (pp. 188-95). In this episode, the monk Justus is released from torment after 30 Masses were offered for him. He appears to a brother in the community in a vision proclaiming the efficacy of Mass offerings.

[104] *Vision of a Monk* (ed. Tangl, p. 248).

[105] Interestingly this point is made more forcefully in Heito's *VW* than in Walahfrid's version.

[106] Also noted by Dutton, *Politics*, p. 73.

Carolingian visions incorporated both the desire for commemoration and belief in the power of the written word. The presence of the writing in these accounts may be a result of the Carolingian educational program, but it is also reminiscent of the Apocalypse.[107] Commemoration and intercession are themes intrinsic to visions, but the ubiquity of their appearance in Carolingian visions and the emphasis placed on the Mass are features which correspond to Carolingian initiatives which sought to crystallise memorial practices and led to the proliferation of prayer confraternities in the ninth century.[108]

Carolingian visions had a much smaller circulation than earlier visions, especially in comparison with those which were incorporated into the medieval bestsellers like Bede's *HE*.[109] This could lead us to conclude that earlier visions and Carolingian visions had different purposes and perhaps different audiences. Earlier visions, vetted by their antiquity, were probably considered 'safe' and could be presented to a wider audience, high or low, especially one hungry for details of the other world. Carolingian visions which contained pointed attacks on contemporary or near contemporary rulers, including the founder of the ruling dynasty, were perhaps kept for a more restricted audience.

Visions themselves record a shift in their expected (or merely intended) audience. For example, in his preface to the *VW,* Walahfrid addressed his work to Grimald, who was at the time chaplain at the Court in Aachen.[110] The Poor Woman was given her vision so that she would report what she had seen to Louis the Pious. The Archangel Gabriel appeared in a vision and specifically instructed the visionary Alberic to remember his revelation and to have it written down and presented to Louis the Pious.[111] As previously mentioned, Æthelwulf of Wessex was involved in sending the *English Presbyter* to Louis. Many no

[107]The *VPW* for example records that the names of the saved must appear on a wall in paradise before they are allowed entrance. Dutton, *Politics*, stresses the influence of memorial books on the presence of the written word in heaven, but this imagery is found in John's vision of the Last Judgement esp. Rev. 20.15.
[108]See n. 219 on page 176.
[109]See chapter 3.
[110]*VW*, dedication, (p. 187).
[111]Einhard, *Translatio* (ed. Waitz, p. 252).

longer focused on monastic communities as was the case in the *VB* but came to include teachings on the proper behaviour of a Christian ruler. The transgressions of the laity were added to or in some cases replaced monastic sins, and visions changed from giving general lessons in moral behaviour[112] to include specific teachings on the proper observance of Christianity – including the importance of the Eucharist, Mass offerings, confession, penance and alms-giving.[113]

What does emerge from a study of Carolingian visions is that while monks and bishops may still have acted as visionaries and amanuenses, their eyes were no longer trained on the Church and heaven alone. They now looked beyond monastic enclosures into the world and especially the court.[114] Kings were now held fully responsible for the welfare of the Church and the salvation of the souls of those they ruled.[115] While this was a message that had already been formulated in other genres, particularly Mirrors for Princes, we find that visions of the ninth century now contained direct and prominent criticism of the political order and called for Christian behaviour from them.[116] This is expressed most clearly in the punishments the imperial personages suffered but is also approached from a different angle as the preface to the *English Presbyter* demonstrates. The vision itself contained a warning that cataclysmic suffering could only be averted if the Christian people did penance and assiduously returned to following Scripture. However in the preface, Æthelwulf, or the annalist, makes it very clear that the Emperor was ultimately responsible for his people and their salvation.[117] Unlike previous visions such as the *Vision of Rotcharius* or the *VW*, this visionary does not admonish the Emperor's own morality; instead, the vision is interpreted

[112] For example, see Dryhthelm or the Dialogues.
[113] *English Presbyter*, ed. G. Waitz, p.19. The message he is given to preach on earth is to do penance, observe the Lord's Day in a stricter way, undertake fasting, prayer and alms-giving.
[114] Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 77-80.
[115] H. Mayr-Harting, 'The West: The Age of Conversion 700-1050', *Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, pp. 101-110, and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p. 62. Also Ullmann, *Kingship*, and Morrison, *Two Kingdoms*.
[116] H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1968). For a fuller discussion of visions as Mirrors, see Dutton, *Politics*.
[117] *English Presbyter* (p. 18).

as a charge for Louis to fulfil his responsibility to correct his people in their observance of Christianity.

By focussing their gaze on the court, Carolingian visionaries transformed the genre from one which told of personal judgements to one which reminded kings not only of their accountability for their people, but also their subordination to the authority of the Church, and most especially the episcopate.[118] This is conspicuously articulated in the *Vision of Bernold*, in which Charles the Bald, suffering in the other world, is made to speak these words with regard to his faithful adviser, Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims:

> 'Vade ad Hincmarum episcopum, et dic ei, quia illius et aliorum fidelium meorum bona consilia non obaudivi, ideo ista quae vides, pro culpis meis sustineo. Et dic illi, quia semper in illo fiduciam habui, ut me adjuvet, quatenus de ista poena sim liberatus...'.[119]

Here under the heavy hand of a redactor, most probably Hincmar himself,[120] the king admits that he was wrong not to follow episcopal advice, and furthermore, in the other world he is wholly dependent on the archbishop for his salvation and release from ignominious purgation.

In certain respects, the other world of Gregory the Great, Barontus and Bede had been effectively turned upside down. Gone was the security offered by participation in a monastic community. Barontus may have seen clerics in hell but he had already learnt from his fellow brothers in heaven that the devil had never presumed to ensnare any soul from

[118]Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 255-256.
[119]Vade ad Hincmarum episcopum, et dic ei, quia illius et aliorum fidelium meorum bona consilia non obaudivi, ideo ista quae vides, pro culpis meis sustineo. Et dic illi, quia semper in illo fiduciam habui, ut me adjuvet, quatenus de ista poena sim liberatus,... *Vision of Bernold* (col. 1116).
[120]Dutton, *Politics*, p. 307, n.106. Devisse, *Hincmar*, is silent about the authorship of this text.

that monastery.[121] We contrast this with Rotcharius's fellow monks who are seen damned in hell even before they have died.

Gone too was the assurance given to Dryhthelm that to ensure salvation you need only live virtuously.[122] The perpetual conflict between the deeds-based judgement, and the judgement alterable through intercession was not resolved and the message of early ninth-century visions was carefully modified to emphasise that there was no certainty in either model of salvation. Wetti epitomises Carolingian awareness of the two models and the Church's aim to amalgamate them. His angelic guide tells him that while much can be achieved through prayer, no one should be confident that intercession alone can ensure that one will be saved from purgatorial fires. One must atone before death.[123] What is crucial is that both atonement and intercession were only possible under the aegis of the church.

Perhaps these texts were signs that the Frankish Church was waking up to its duty to instill orthodox teachings and standardise practices and recognised this genre as a highly suitable medium to attain this goal. Visions from the late eighth and ninth centuries repeatedly called for stricter observance of the Sabbath and the written law of the Church. Carolingian visions thus were more securely harnessed to serve the Church's purpose, with each vision portraying an image of the faithful (and that most especially included kings) subordinated to the authority of the Church. This message was of course not confined to vision literature alone. One is here reminded of images contained in the Drogo Sacramentary[124] and its ivories which similarly depict the liturgy in six of its historiated initials.[125] Carolingian enthusiasm for the Mass had thus overflowed into the realm of art. With these

[121] quod numquam diabulus de eodem monasterio laqueare praesumpsit ullam animam. *VB*, 8 (p. 384).
[122] 'si actus tuos curiosius discutere, et mores sermonesque tuos in rectitudine ac simplicitate seruare studueris, accipies et ipse post mortem locum mansionis inter haec quae cernis agmina laetabunda spirituum beatorum.' *HE*, V. 12 (p. 494).
[123] *VW*, lines 439-445 (pp. 196-7). The question of whether salvation was possible for all and the necessary balance between good deeds and predestination was one of the key issues in the predestination controversy.
[124] Paris, BN MS. lat. 9428 (Metz, 844/55).
[125] Dodwell, *Pictorial Arts*, p. 60 discusses this work.

visions we find that the earthly Church had invaded the other world, consciously undertaking to draw unmediated revelations into the context of the terrestrial church. What better way to emphasise the importance and efficacy of attending Mass and participating in the sacraments than to record souls being released through Masses and to describe the heavenly landscape abundant with churches? The effectiveness of this deliberate reshaping of the visionary record cannot be judged, but the deliberateness is unmistakable.

Changes in the historical background, specifically the further Christianisation of the Carolingian empire, may shed light on the reason for the selectivity exercised by ninth-century redactors. By argument, coercion, threats of physical force and teaching by example,[126] the missionary efforts of churchmen[127] in the late seventh and eighth centuries had brought much of the population of Francia to a post-baptismal state. Thus the Carolingians inherited an earthly landscape which was nominally Christian and a population which was substantially baptised.[128] Even at the peripheries of the empire where the darkness of paganism was thought to lurk, it appeared that Carolingian missionaries generally faced a semi-pagan population. Within the heart of the empire, the energies of the Church were being redirected. The ideal sought was no longer merely baptism and a rudimentary education in Christian belief, but the standardisation of orthodox Christian practice carried out under the jurisdiction of the Church.[129] Visions, like capitularies, were co-opted as tools for achieving this desired reform, as we shall see section 6.5.

Other changes in historical circumstances may additionally explain the unified message we find in visions. As we have seen, almost all Carolingian visions accentuate the centrality of the Church and its ministers in mediating between the laity, including the king, and the

[126] R.E. Sullivan, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', *Catholic Historical Review* xlii:3 (October, 1956), pp. 273-274; and R.A. Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface: Christianity and Paganism in Gaul', J.N. Hillgarth and J. Fontaine, ed., *Le Septième Siècle: Changements et Continuités* (London, 1992), pp. 159-164.

[127] Visions have a connection with missionaries themselves. Boniface acted as a redactor of the vision of the Monk of Wenlock, while Fursey and Anskar were both missionaries who had visions. See also chapter 3 for a discussion of vision manuscripts at missionary centres.

[128] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 143.

[129] *AG*, c. 70 (p. 59): '...ut nulli sacerdotum liceat ignorare sanctorum canonum instituta'. *AG* c. 82 (p. 61) also warns that priests were not to preach new or non-canonical subjects.

divine. Individual unmediated prayer or good deeds were not enough to ensure salvation. This altered emphasis may have emerged as a reaction to circumstances which had given rise to the predestination controversy in which the Church's rôle in the individual's salvation was questioned.[130]

## 6.4 The *VB* in the Carolingian World

In assessing the Carolingian transformations of the genre in form, message and audience, one may wonder why the ninth century returned to the *VB*. The great chasm between sixth- and ninth-century visions can however be bridged through a detailed study of visions from earlier centuries. By contextualising Carolingian visions, we can see them as part of a long, continuous tradition which was not so much more *inventive* as more *selective* in its use of older material, leading to greater uniformity. That antecedents for many of the Carolingian motifs can be found shows that ultimately there was more on the side of continuity than change in the visionary record at large. The message of eighth- and ninth-century visions had also been aired long before the Carolingians assumed power.

We must further temper the received understanding of Carolingian changes to the genre by recalling that in the midst of this successful push to tame the unruly world beyond and reach audiences at court, older texts were not only still in circulation, but were actively being copied in the very scriptoria which produced new Carolingian visions. This factor reveals that Carolingian audiences continued to see these earlier visions as valid, relevant and part of the continuous tradition of revelation.

Visions of the ninth century certainly followed the same basic format of earlier visions (illness, separation of soul from body, a tour of one or more regions of the other world and

[130]Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 364ff; and D. Ganz, 'Theology and the Organisation of Thought', in McKitterick, ed., *New Cambridge Medieval History*, pp. 767-773.

the return to the body). Many other early visions also contained elements which would find their way into Carolingian visions, but the *VB* – perhaps more than any other earlier vision – specifically prefigured the form and content that ninth-century visions would take and embodied many Carolingian concerns.

In a myriad of ways, the *VB* sits comfortably in the ecclesiastical world of the Carolingians. As a nobleman and a non-thaumaturgic saint, Barontus easily blended into Carolingian hagiographical expectations.[131] Furthermore, with its discription of two venerable abbots and monks in need of reform, the *VB* was very relevant during the era of powerful abbots and the ecclesiastical reforms of the ninth century. Barontus's vision not only assured monks of the value of community for salvation, but also called for the renewed conversion of half-hearted monks to their monastic profession, the withdrawal of worldly bishops from secular entanglements, and the reform of discipline in the practice of Christianity at large. Although monastic in focus, the vision contained a message applicable to a wider audience. In teaching about the practices of confession and penance, the giving of alms and the importance of prayer, the vision provided rudimentary instruction on essential Christian practices.

The eternal themes of chastity, obedience to authority, community cohesion, harmony, commemoration, and intercession, as well as specific monastic issues such as discipline and the hostility of monks to bishops all appear in the *VB* and serve to explain why later generations returned to the text of the vision. It had practical nuggets of advice for cleaning the church, protecting property, ringing the church bell, as well as sound teachings on alms giving, praying, celebrating Mass and remembering the dead. The text was probably a good source for preaching and the early manuscripts of the text show it was regularly consulted. Its specifically Merovingian context would have gradually had less relevance, but the drama of the story itself ensured its popularity.

[131] For general comments on nobility and sanctity, see Cracco Ruggoni, 'Crisis of the Noble Saint'.

It is in the genre of vision literature itself that parallels between the *VB* and its ninth-century counterparts becomes most evident. A cursory comparison between the *VB* and Heito's ninth-century *VW* is illustrative. Both are lengthy (prose) accounts dependent on images drawn from the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, a work mentioned explicitly by both visionaries.[132] In both texts, the visionaries' brothers kept vigil and sang psalms for their brother on his deathbed. The monastic crime of withholding money from one's community is treated at length.[133] Like Barontus, Wetti does not describe an easily mapped, well-delineated landscape, nor does he find a four-fold division of the other world as we find for example in Dryhthelm's other world. Wetti's other world is described as a series of vignettes. His hell consists of sinners identified in terms of their type of sin. Barontus also orders his vision of hell by categories of sinners. Wetti's heaven consists of the throne of God, a place for the assemblies of priests, another for blessed martyrs and a separate place for holy virgins. These are similar to Barontus's gated regions of heaven in which groupings of brothers, children, virgins, saints and martyrs are gathered. Both visionaries display an awareness of judicial procedures in describing their judgement. Wetti faces a personal judgement in the presence of all the inhabitants of heaven, mirroring the Barontus motif of heaven as a courtroom in which a continuous trial of souls occurs. During Wetti's trial, the inhabitants of heaven play an active role supplicating before the throne of God,[134] while in Barontus's they must pray for his release outside of the place of judgement.

The poetical rendering of the *VW* contains even more similarities with the *VB* than does Heito's prose *VW*. As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, Walahfrid's *VW* contains specific information about the time and setting of the vision and thus bear resemblance to the *VB*. Further, there is a detailed list of names again making it similar to the *VB*.[135] The similarities between this or any other Carolingian vision and the *VB* should not however lead

[132] *VB*, 10 and 17, *VW*, lines 283-5 (p. 193).
[133] *VB*, 13 and *VW*, lines 363-389 (p.195).
[134] A possible image drawn from Rev. 7.11-12.
[135] See section 5.7 above.

us to think that the *VB* was the source from which all Carolingian visions were derived. In his edition of Walahfrid's *VW*, Traill also noted many similarities between the two visions but warned that looking for questions of influence was an often futile exercise.[136] His warnings are well-founded and while the shared ordering of the space of heaven and hell in the *VB* and *VW* may suggest that Wetti, Heito or Walahfrid knew the *VB*, such similarities more readily demonstrate an identifiable and expected continuity in the genre between the seventh and ninth centuries.

The repeated copying and interest in the text during the Carolingian period which we have seen in a survey of the *VB*'s manuscripts indicates that it was a text that ninth-century readers considered still relevant. It is for this reason that we now seek to place it in a wider Carolingian context.

## 6.5 Evidence from Capitularies

The comprehensive and unified message offered in Carolingian visions was also voiced in other contemporary writings, for example, capitularies. Capitularies were decrees intended to bring about the education of the populous in matters of the faith and its basic doctrine, but more importantly in morals and ethics.[137] Interwoven with this aim was the desire to standardise practices and construct hierarchies. As a consequence, legislation promulgated by the Carolingians often encompassed themes such as: an insistence on monastic reform and maintenance of the regular life; the delineation of jurisdictional boundaries between bishops and monks as well as those between the clergy and laity; condemnation of various social ills, abuses and crimes and the methods introduced to deal with offenders. They also addressed various everyday issues such as prohibitions against embroidering on Sundays[138]

[136]Traill, *VW*, pp.12, 14.
[137]McKittterick, *Frankish Church*, pp. 207-8. The standard introduction to the Capitularies remains F.L. Ganshof, *Recherches sur les Capitulaires* (Paris, 1958).
[138]*AG*, c. 81 (p. 61).

and ensuring that church altars were inaccessible to dogs.[139]

Their aim was to correct sinful or unlawful practices within the Christian community. As with visions, they became another tool used by Churchmen to reform the Frankish Church and society. Both were indices of social concerns and both were subordinated to the aims (and often scriptoria) of Church reformers. Visions of hell could almost be seen as a sequel to what was described in capitularies since they depicted the destinies in the afterlife of those who broke the law. The two genres functioned hand in hand to bring a unified and authoritative message to their audiences. Similarities are almost to be expected since both genres represented idealised formulations of society. For example, the capitularies, among other genres especially penitentials,[140] inveighed against adultery, sodomy (repeatedly)[141] and other types of fornication.[142] Similarly visions of the ninth-century often included references to celibacy and sexual crimes, especially among the monastic orders. On eight occasions, Wetti was reminded of the evil of sodomy and shown the torments suffered by monks who had committed sins of the flesh.[143] It seems what the Carolingians decreed, heaven was quick to concur. Another capitulary called for the proper observance of the Lord's Day,[144] and the *English Presbyter* later related that the same message was proclaimed in heaven.

While it is easy to identify parallels between Carolingian visions and Carolingian capitularies, it is more instructive for our purposes to note the parallels which exist between

[139] *AG*, c. 71 (p. 59).

[140] McNeill and Gamer discuss parallels between penitentials and capitularies, *Handbooks*, p. 18.

[141] For example, see *AG*, c. 49 (p. 57).

[142] This deadly sin was evidently high on the Carolingian agenda. Alcuin's letters continually return to a discussion of the sins of vanity, sexual excess. For the treatment of sodomy in the penitentials, see A. Frantzen, 'Between the Lines: Queer Theory, the History of Homosexuality, and the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26:2 (Spring, 1996), pp. 255-296.

[143] *VW*, lines 635ff (pp. 200-1) and 779-784 (p. 203). Note that such repetition may have been a conscious imitation of the Book of Revelations which contains the same pattern of a guide repeating his admonition three times during John's vision.

[144] *AG*, c. 15 (p. 55) (to keep holy the Lord's Day), and c. 81 (p. 61) (activities not to be undertaken on the Sabbath).

the *VB* and Carolingian capitularies. The *AG*, dating from 789, contains a comprehensive programmatic statement of many Carolingian aims; its provisions were reiterated in much of the legislation which followed. We will thus use it for a small case study to compare the *VB* with Carolingian legislation to shed further light on the Carolingian thought world and its interest in this text.

The *AG* contains provisions for commemoration and its appropriate expression;[145] the relevance of this subject to the *VB* has already been discussed at length in chapter 5. The emphasis on heaven's lack of distinction between social groups is also found in the *VB* and the capitularies. St Peter ended his judgement of Barontus with the words that the alms Barontus must give is 'the same price for rich or poor.' In its advice to judges, the *AG* citing Deuteronomy repeated this message as a guideline for earthly judgement, 'Judge what is just, ... let there be no distinction between persons, for the judgement is God's.'[146] Both also condemn perjury.[147] While the *Bible* may be cited as the common source here, other similarities between the *VB* and capitularies cannot be so easily explained such as the decree that hospitality was to be offered by monks for travellers and *peregrini*.[148]

Additional elements found in the *VB* consonant with a Carolingian context which will be treated in greater length include: the reform of monastic houses and the observance of the *RB*, the ownership of private property by monks and canons, episcopal jurisdiction over monastic houses, hierarchies, the choice of a canonical archangel as a guide, veneration for Rome and St Peter, the weight given to proper confession and penance and the importance of alms-giving.

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[145] *AG*, c. 54 (p. 57) (do not read names out).
[146] Deuteronomy 1.16-17, *AG*, c. 63 (p. 58).
[147] For example, Capitulary of Herstal, 779 (Boretius 20) c. 10; *AG*, c. 64 (p. 58). Perjurers were also singled out as one of the categories of the damned in the *VB*, 17 (p. 391).
[148] *AG*, c. 75 (p. 60) and *VB*, 10 (p. 385).

### Monastic reform and the *RB*

Monastic reform and discipline, one of the key themes in the *VB*, was an issue ever present within the Church throughout the early Middle Ages, but one which received official attention under Carolingian leadership. The *AG*, like the *VB*, does not specify a particular monastic rule to be followed but does call for those living under a monastic rule to observe it.[149] Pippin III (741-68), Charlemagne (768-814) and most especially Louis the Pious (814-840) all legislated on the duties of monks, the need for reform and on the pre-eminence of the *RB*. Earlier attempts to make the *RB* standard began with Boniface, and culminated in the 816 and 817 reforms.

Such Church reform was seen as a way of effecting a wide cultural improvement through education which was to be conducted in monasteries.[150] The Church itself was aware of the perennial need for reform. Vision literature, especially those visions which were seen by monks, also contained frequent calls for monastic reform. The *Vision of Sunniulf* for example, was a plea for stronger abbatial control over monks.[151] Ninth-century vision literature also embraced the theme of monastic discipline. Both the *VW* and the *Vision of Bernold* contain long invectives against monastic abuses.

As we have already discussed in chapter 5, the form of monastic observance recorded in *VB* was sufficiently vague to fit any of the existing monastic rules in circulation, but the Benedictine flavour of much of the *VB* may also have facilitated the text's acceptance during the Carolingian period. The single element which could be construed as most Benedictine about the *VB* is its *emphasis* on community.[152] In the age in which observance of the *RB*

[149] *AG*, c. 73 (p. 60) 'Simul et hoc rogare curavimus, ut omnes ubicumque qui se voto monachicae vitae constrinxerunt monachice et regulariter omnimodis secundum votum suum vivant...'.

[150] 'Karoli Epistola de Litteris colendis', ed. Boretius, 29, *Capitularia* I, *MGH Legum*, sectio II (Hanover, 1883), pp. 78ff.

[151] *DLH*, IV. 33 (p. 166).

[152] The *RB* is implicitly for a community with rules for calling the community together for counsel (c. 2), for communal dorms (c. 22), communal prayer (c. 8ff) and communal dining (c. 41-2). However Columbanus

became normative, we find this theme frequently revisited. Eigil's *Life of Sturm* included many episodes on the theme of monastic harmony,[153] and the *Supplex Libellus* is particularly relevant as a ninth-century cousin to the *VB* since was concerned with community, this time in the form of a detailed complaint from the community on its being prevented from performing its customary commemoration of their dead twice each day.[154] Nothing in the *VB* was obviously out of keeping with the *RB* and as such the vision, with its message of monastic discipline and reform and emphasis on the community, would have been well received.

### The ownership of private property by monks and canons

According to the emphasis of the text of Barontus's vision, the monk's major sin was the withholding of private property after taking his vows, a sin which was compounded by his delayed confession of this grievous sin. The relevance of Barontus's sin for others in holy orders would continue far into the ninth century. The issue was addressed under the monastic reform initiated by Pippin, which prohibited monks and nuns from maintaining private property. While the *RB* expressly forbade private ownership,[155] the *ordo canonicorum,* an alternative tradition followed by some of the oldest communities like St Denis, permitted the possession of personal property.[156] A *Rule* was drafted by Chrodegang of Metz in 755[157] which offered an alternative to the *RB* on the issue of ownership. Unlike monks, canons were permitted to maintain private property. The foundations of St Hilary of Poitiers, St Martin at Tours, St Martial at Limoges,[158] St Denis, St Maur des Fosses and

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also called for his monks to live in a community. 'Let the monk live in a community...' *Sancti Columbani Opera* (ed. Walker, p. 140).

[153] *Vita Sturmi* (ed. Pertz, pp. 365-77).

[154] *Supplex Libellus*, ed. J. Semmler in K. Hallinger, ed., *Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum* I (Salzburg, 1963), 319-27.

[155] *RB*, 33.1-8 (p. 562).

[156] de Jong, 'Power', p. 631.

[157] *Regula canonicorus*, PL, LXXXIX.

[158] McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 111.

Stavelot-Malmédy all followed the *Regula canonicorum*, which allowed private property.[159] The difference between monks and canons thus became an area of focus and decisions had to be made on which rule to follow. At the Synod of Ver (755),[160] the distinction emerged most clearly and became a 'principle theme of Frankish monastic ordinances.'[161]

The *AG* called for those in orders to be 'vel veri monachi... vel veri canonici.'[162] The Synod of Aachen in 816 made these articles binding on all cathedral chapters, but the issue was still alive in later decades of the ninth century, for Benedict of Aniane's reforms were particularly targeted at monasteries which had lapsed into following canonical practice with regard to private ownership. The *VB*'s emphasis on a monk sinfully spiriting away property would therefore also have had relevance to the monastic reform movements of the ninth century.

The issue of private ownership for those who had taken monastic vows was as germane to the Carolingians as it was to the seventh century and demonstrates continuities in the monasticism of the early Middle Ages.

### The Church's land and episcopal jurisdiction over monasteries

Monastic independence versus episcopal jurisdiction remained a matter of dispute in the ninth century, especially during this fluid period in the history of privileges, immunities and protection.[163] The background to these issues is too complicated to address properly in this context; we must merely note that it remained topical and found a voice in the capitularies as well as other genres.[164] Diverse opinions have been expressed as to the secularisation

[159] Only St Maur des Fosse is known to have possessed a manuscript of the *VB*, and this dates from the late eleventh century.
[160] ed. Boretius, 14, *Capitularia*, cc.11 and 35.
[161] McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 110.
[162] *AG*, c. 77 (p. 60).
[163] Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 42-144.
[164] *AG*, c. 31 (p. 56).

of ecclesiastical land and questions have arisen as to whether there actually was spoliation of Church land, when the practice began, the extent of secularisation and who was most responsible.[165] That there was competition for this limited resource is undeniable and attempts to protect or defend the possession of land led to bitter complaints, the creation of wild stories about the fate of those who stole (or were thought to have stolen) church land and the forgery of documents to secure (or fabricate) claims.[166] For Hincmar of Rheims, the practice of secularisation began with the Carolingians[167] but modern scholarship has shown that the practice had had much earlier origins[168] and continued to varying degrees throughout the reigns of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald. Given the long history of this subject it is understandable and even to be expected that we find complaints over issues of land in visionary literature.[169] It is a theme, with few variations, played repeatedly in the early Middle Ages.

The Carolingian period witnessed the extension of the hierarchical church which affected monasteries, and bishops were often recorded as posing threats to monasteries' liberties and land rights. While no early medieval vision of the other world takes up the issue of free abbatial elections, visions do express a degree of anti-episcopal sentiment for an often unspecified offense.

In the *VB* property, or specifically its possession, is a theme which does emerge at several points in the vision. Tied to the issue of land was the restructuring of the Frankish Church. Land issues are never expressly connected with the two bishops Barontus sees in hell. However as we have explored in the previous chapter, the *VB* need not necessarily be

[165]There is a vast bibliography but two key studies for the subject are E. Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en Frnace* (Lille, 1910-43) and D. Herlihy 'Church Property on the European Continent, 701-1200', *Speculum* 36 (1961), pp. 88-102.

[166]Goffart, *Le Mans Forgeries,* pp. 208, 210.

[167]Hincmar of Rheims singled out Charles Martel for his spoliation of church lands in the *Vision of Eucher* (ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, *Capitularia* 2 [Hanover, 1907], pp. 432-3). Wallace-Hadrill ('Background', p. 46, n. 3) noted that Boniface does not criticise Charles for this; the first indication is with Hincmar.

[168]Rouche dates the secularisation back to the reign of Dagobert. M. Rouche, 'Religio calcata et dissipata ou les premières sécularisations de terres d'Eglise par Dagobert' in Hillgarth and Fontaine, *Seventh Century,* pp. 238-46.

[169]Dutton, *Politics*, pp. 157-194.

read strictly as a complaint over the breached jurisdiction of Longoretus's land holdings by local bishops. The text's anti-episcopal sentiment could therefore have appealed to a more generalised audience, especially in monasteries which had less than amicable relations with their episcopal overlord or those which desired to have an allegiance only to Rome and to the king.[170]

The *VB* would have looked natural in a Carolingian setting which saw a shift from independent monastic foundations to monasteries under the control of bishops. From the manuscript history of the *VB*, we know that the text was present at some of the monasteries having problems with their local bishops. For example the text had reached St Gall by the 840's. The history of the monastery may hint at possible reasons for its interest in obtaining this vision text, one of the very few to condemn bishops. The monastery had enjoyed relative independence from episcopal control under Abbot Otmar, but Pippin placed the monastery under the jurisdiction of the bishopric of Constance.[171] The monastery tried to free itself from its episcopal overlords for the next hundred years.

**Hierarchies**

Capitulary legislation addressed hierarchical ordering through the specifications of ranks, duties and jurisdictions of each order of society.[172] Carolingian awareness of and interest in hierarchies can also be demonstrated in a multitude of contexts. These range from the use of different scripts to denote the type of document being recorded to the cataloguing of books in monastic libraries into ordered groups.[173] Carolingian preoccupation with hierarchical

[170]Despite the seemingly endless opportunities, only the *VB*, the *VW*, the *Vision of Bernold* and *Charles the Fat* contain sightings of bishops in hell.

[171]Clark, *Abbey*, pp. 4ff.

[172]*AG* 8, 9 (p. 54) set out the relationships between metropolitan, suffragan and auxiliary bishops. *AG* 11 (p. 55) confined a bishop's responsibilities and powers to his diocese. See G. Duby, *The Three Orders Feudal Society Imagined*, trs. A. Goldhammer (London, 1980).

[173]See chapter 3 but also Scrivner, 'Carolingian Monastic Library Catalogs', esp. p. 433, and McKitterick, *Carolingians*, pp. 196-7.

ordering can further be observed in the commissioning of Eriugena to translate Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchies* in the 860's[174] and in Hincmar's *De Ordine palatii* (882)[175] a work which described the hierarchical ordering of the Carolingian court. There was a sense that this ordering was an earthly means for imitating the divine order. The pervasive influence of this idea on the thought world of the ninth century can also be seen in Carolingian art, particularly in two iconographical depictions of heaven found in sacramentaries. The images accompanying the Agnus Dei provided artists with the opportunity to illustrate a hierarchical heaven. The early ninth-century Adoration of the Lamb in Trier, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 31, fol. 18v depicts nineteen angels with their scrolls located under the Lamb, and beneath them are the twenty-four elders; a similar ordering is found in the (*ca.* 800) Trier Apocalypse, Stadtbibliothek MS 31, fol. 23.[176] The sacramentary of St Denis (*ca.* 870) fol. 5v contains an image of paradise which also represents the idea of hierarchy as the proper order of heaven. In this image, there is an orderly gathering of angels around St Michael.[177] This strict hierarchical ordering of the heavens anticipates the iconography for the Feast of All Saints which finds its most striking formulation in the Fulda sacramentaries of the late tenth century, for example the Göttingen Sacramentary (*ca.* 970), fol. 111.[178] The iconography of this image depicts the ordered ranks of heaven, from angels to queens, laity to monks.

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[174]Emperor Michael the Stammerer gave a codex of Pseudo-Dionysius's writings to Louis the Pious in 827. Abbot Hilduin of St Denis first attempted to translate the texts, but in the 860's Eriugena returned to the task. The Greek text of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies* is found in *PG* 3, cols 369D-565D, the *Celestial Hierarchies* can be found in *PG* 3, 120A-340B. Both are translated in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trs. C. Luibheid (London, 1987). For his influence on the Latin West, see A. Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (London, 1989), pp. 120-127. On Pseudo-Dionysius's neo-platonic conception of hierarchy, see G. Gould, 'Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in the Thought of Pseudo-Dionysius', *The Ministry. Clerical and Lay*, SCH 26 (Oxford, 1989), pp. 29-41. For Frankish interest in Pseudo-Dionysius, see Duby, *Three Orders*, pp. 69 and 110-119 esp. p. 111.

[175]Hincmar of Rheims, *De Ordine palatii*, ed. T. Gross and R. Schieffer, *MGH Fontes* (Hanover, 1980).

[176]The first image is reproduced in Emmerson and McGinn, *Apococalypse*, p. 106 and the second in Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, bk II, 150.

[177]Duby, *Three Orders*, p. 112.

[178]The development of this iconography is discussed by Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, bk II, 148-153; the images are reproduced here too.

This awareness of the strict stratification of society is also found in the *VB* and the Carolingian art which accompanies it in the St Petersburg manuscript.[179] This vision preserves the belief that earthly social status is maintained in the other world[180] and that souls do not move freely between the different regions of heaven but are subjected to strict ordering. The names of the brothers commemorated in the vision are arranged according to their rank, an organisational scheme also found in litanies.[181] In his tour of heaven, Barontus finds the souls are ranked by their virtue. Heaven is divided into regions for virgins, saints, priests and martyrs.[182] The vision also contains the expectation and acceptance of authority based on hierarchy. The Archangel Raphael alone is unable to fend off the attacks of the demons who have pursued him from his deathbed, but instead summons angels of a lower rank to find St Peter, who arrives and is able to dispense judgement and free Barontus from the demons' claims. Peter's importance is highlighted in the illustrations which accompany the text, in which he is one-third larger than any other figure.[183] This specific hierarchical ordering would have been received with interest by the Frankish Church which looked increasingly to Rome, while the general picture of hierarchy and order would have appealed to the Carolingian court which took the *Celestial Hierarchies* as a model for structuring its governance.[184] While the *VB*'s damnation of two bishops may not have immediately been appreciated by episcopal audiences, satisfaction could be found in the text's assurance that heavenly authority was based on hierarchy.[185]

### Angels

Barontus's psychopomp is the Archangel Raphael. As one of the archangels named in the Bible, he represents unquestionable orthodoxy. Here again, the vision was in keeping

[179] See chapter 7.
[180] For example, the two bishops in hell. Other visions also record social status: Lull, *Vision of a Monk* (ed. Tangl, pp. 247-50) reports sightings of queens and counts. See Dinzelbacher, 'Klassen'.
[181] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies*, pp. 59-60.
[182] *VB* 10 (pp. 384-5).
[183] These will be discussed in chapter 7.
[184] Duby, *Three Orders*, p. 113.
[185] The text may have been especially appealing in the case of the St Petersburg manuscript in which the *VB* was coupled with the *VR*, a vision which describes monks suffering damnation.

with Carolingian concerns for the *AG* legislated against the invention of new archangels, recognising only Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.[186] This legislation was echoed in other texts. Although appearing in the guise of St Marcellinus, it was the canonical Archangel Gabriel who appeared in the vision granted to Alberic in Einhard's *Translation of Saints Marcellinus and Peter.*[187] The earliest Latin translations of the *AP* which are preserved in ninth-century redactions featured the Archangel Michael as the intercessory angel who successfully pleaded with Christ to grant some refreshment to those in torment. Interestingly, one of the ninth-century redactions of this text substituted Raphael for Michael.[188] The ninth-century's further interest in Raphael is shown by his appearance in *Muspilli*, a ninth-century apocalyptic text.[189]

### Rome and St Peter

The links between the Merovingian Church and Rome were briefly noted in chapter 5 to explain the influence of Gregory the Great on the *VB* and the prominent rôle St Peter played in the vision. However, is it the Carolingian period that witnessed increased contact between Rome and the Franks, especially in connection with the Carolingian royal dynasty.[190] Initial royal legitimisation of the Pippinids was sought through connection with Rome. This connection was facilitated in the first instance by Boniface and was solidified in 751 when

[186] *AG*, c. 16 (p. 55). Omnibus. Item in eodem concilio, ut ignota angelorum nomina nec fingantur nec nominentur, nisi illos quos habemus in auctoritate, id sunt Michahel, Gabrihel, Rafahel.

[187] Einhard, *Translatio* III. 13 (ed. Waitz, pp. 252-3). See also the *Annals of Fulda* for 874, which refers to Gabriel's revelation (ed. Kurze, p. 82).

[188] Redaction VI (S. IX/X). Since the distribution of manna is also a feature of the *VB*, it has been suggested by Ciccarese (*Visioni*, p. 270, n. 4) that the switch from Michael to Raphael occurred in this redaction as a result of the *VB*'s influence.

[189] The text survives in a single manuscript from ca. 850. See A. R. Bell, 'Muspilli: Apocalypse as Political Threat' *Studies in Literary Imagination* 8 (1975) pp. 75-104, and C. Edwards, 'German vernacular literature: a survey', in McKitterick, *Carolingian Culture*, pp. 148-150.

[190] Secondary literature on this topic is immense. See for example W. Levison, *England*, pp. 78-94; W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955). For the early history of Franco-papal relations, see T. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter. The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984), esp. pp. 61-98, 138-183. The close connections can also be demonstrated for Louis the Pious's reign ( J. Fried, 'Ludwig, Papsttum und Kirche', in Godman and Collins, ed., *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 231-273) as well as for Charles the Bald's (See J.L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 237ff).

the Carolingians sought the Pope's approval for deposing the last of the Merovingians.[191]

Rome was recognised as the metaphorical head of the Carolingian Church. It defined what was orthodox and Charlemagne thus sought to bring the Frankish Church into line with Roman practices (or what were thought to be Roman practices).[192] There are many instances which attest to the importance the Carolingians placed on Rome. These include: the translation of Roman saints' relics as carried out by Einhard and Chrodegang of Metz;[193] Pippin and Charlemagne's commissioning of Roman, and specifically Gregorian, liturgical texts;[194] the adoption of the *RB* since Benedict (and thus his *Rule*) was 'perceived as distinctively "Roman"'[195] and the celebration of 22 February, the Chair of St Peter, which commemorated his authority as the head of the church.[196] Further, Chrodegang introduced Roman chant to Metz and increased contact between his monastery and Rome.[197]

St Peter, whose centrality in Barontus's story has already been observed, also played an intrinsic rôle in Frankish identity.[198] The prominent place accorded to the saint in the *VB* would have struck a familiar chord for Carolingian audiences, especially the prominence given to the power of his keys with which he banishes the demons. The call for a depiction of the keys is preserved even in manuscripts which did not ultimately receive artistic treatment.[199]. The dramatic use of the keys in the vision and their artistic representation in several of the manuscripts may have reminded audiences of the ceremonies in which the keys to St Peter's tomb were given by popes to kings (such as those given by Pope Gre-

[191] *Annales regni Francorum*, for 749 (ed. Kurze, p. 8); and the *Continuator of Fredegar*, c. 33 (ed. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 102).
[192] J. Semmler, 'Pippin III und die fränkischen Klöster', *Francia*, III (1975), 138-144.
[193] McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 45; Geary, *Before France*, p. 218; and his *Furta Sacra*.
[194] See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 80-1 on Charlemagne's procurement of the Gregorian Sacramentary.
[195] Dunn, 'Mastering Benedict', 588.
[196] Benedict of Aniane added the Mass for this feast to the Supplement of the *Hadrianum*: Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, p. 89 and 388, n. 107.
[197] Riché, *Education and Culture*, p. 445. Also *AG*, 80 (p. 61) on Roman chant.
[198] On the Franks and St Peter, see T. Zwölfer, *Sankt Peter, Apostelfürst und Himmelspförter, Seine Verehrung bei den Angelsächsen und Franken* (Stuttgart, 1929); Wallace-Hadrill, 'Background', pp. 37-8 and G. Brown, 'Carolingian Renaissance', in McKitterick, ed. *Carolingian Culture*, p. 7.
[199] For example, St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 573

gory III to Charles Martel in 739) symbolically linking the papacy with other kingdoms.[200] Ninth-century art also proclaimed his centrality to the Franks as well as the papacy. A mosaic located on the triumphal arch in the Triclinium of the Lateran Palace depicted St Peter in the centre, with Charlemagne kneeling on his left and Pope Leo III kneeling on his right. St Peter hands a pallium to the Pope and a decorated standard to Charlemagne. This image thus represented St Peter as the source of both sacred and worldly power.[201]

Rome, St Peter and his keys which had the power to bind or absolve one from sin were each thematically linked to judgement in the afterlife and penance and pilgrimage in this world. Pilgrimage had been a popular undertaking in earlier centuries, but the number of pilgrimages to Rome grew considerably especially in the eighth century when close political ties between the Frankish empire and Italy were forged.[202] The *VB* records hospitality to pilgrims being offered at his monastery and pilgrims seem to have been an omnipresent feature of the landscape between the seventh and ninth centuries. However the drive to impose the *RB* (with its prescribed stability and enclosure) throughout the Empire meant that pilgrimage for those in orders was actively discouraged by the ninth century. The popularity of pilgrimages also seems to have posed some challenge to social control and capitulary evidence records attempts to quell the tide of pilgrims during the late eighth century by prevent pilgrimages from being assigned as punishments[203] and required all those on pilgrimage be properly authorised.[204] Even legislation did not stop the practice of undertaking pilgrimages,[205] and also in this period the composition of fantastic voyages became more popular.[206] The *VB*, as the record of a pilgrimage and with its frequent

[200] *Fredegar*, 22 (ed. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book*, p. 96). On the practice in general, Geary, *Before France*, p. 218.
[201] The scene was recorded by J. Grimaldi, *De aula Lateranensi*, ed. P. Lauer, *Le palais de Latran* (Paris, 1911), pp. 581-2 and has been analysed by Deshman, 'Exalted Servant', p. 394 and n. 36 and Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, pp. 323-4.
[202] Poschmann, *Penance*, p. 151 and n. 82.
[203] *AG*, c. 79 (pp. 60-1).
[204] *AG*, c. 3 (p. 54).
[205] Poschmann, *Penance*, p. 152.
[206] Hughes, 'Changing Theory', p. 150.

references to pilgrims, was again in representative of eighth- and ninth-century popular interests and practices, although in this case not reflective of capitulary prescriptions, but prohibitions.

### Penance and Alms giving

Penance, another major theme of the *VB*, was of importance to both the Merovingians and the Carolingians.[207] References to penance appear in the *AG* which called for those in a 'perilous state' to seek reconciliation.[208] Confession of sins was also specifically mentioned as a suitable topic for sermons.[209] The specific references to penance found in the *VB* also had relevance in later centuries. The first reference comes from the explanation given of Raphael's name meaning the 'divine medicine.'[210] This linked him with penance which was known as medicine for sin. This metaphor was probably borrowed from the writings of Gregory the Great,[211] however penance as medicine for sin was still used in ninth-century writings.[212]

The importance of alms giving was also recorded in both the *VB* (which gives specific instructions for the giving of alms) and in the capitularies (which designate almsgiving as an approved topic for preaching). As one of the perennial themes in Christian literature this parallel is perhaps unsurprising. What is particularly interesting is that the practice of giving alms as a penance described in the *VB* anticipates Carolingian liturgical aims. Carolingian reforms had insisted on strictness in penance but such severity proved imprac-

[207] For Carolingian evidence, see McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, p. 5.
[208] *AG* c. 34 (p. 56), Item in eodem de his qui in periculo constituti sunt et convertunt se ad Deum, ut canonice requirant reconciliacionem, et canonice reconcilientur.
[209] *AG* c. 82 (p. 62) ...de...confessione peccatorum suorum...
[210] *VB*, 6 (p. 382).
[211] Other sources have been listed (see p. 161 and following). Gregory (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 34, 9 [*PL* 76]) is a likely source, given the Gregorian influences on this text.
[212] For example, the ninth-century *Pseudo-Roman Penitential*, prologue (ed. Wasserschleben, *Die Bussordnungen*, p. 361). For a study of this phrase, see J.T. McNeill, 'Medicine for Sin as Prescribed in the Penitentials', *Church History* I (1932), 14-26.

ticable. Halitgar gave directions for the commuting of fasts through almsgiving[213] and this is the very penance Barontus himself receives.

## 6.6 Conclusions

In some ways Carolingian visions seem to us less foreign and more obvious in their intent than their earlier counterparts.[214] Locating Charlemagne and other members of his dynasty in hell makes them attractive texts for the historian, but the accessibility of Carolingian visions has proved detrimental to the study of sixth and seventh century visions. Previous historiography of early medieval vision literature has overlooked continuities between Carolingian and earlier visions and has instead given prominence to the obvious developments and innovations made by Carolingian dreamers and writers who sought to rationalise the fragmentary nature of the visionary experience and in the process created longer free-standing visions. The Carolingian practice of rewriting already extant visions also signalled a difference in approach to otherworldly revelations. By reining in some of the more imaginative elements found in earlier visions, the content and underlying impetus of these later texts seems to diverge from earlier visions. In a climate of concern for orthodoxy and unified procedures within a nominally Christianised empire, they associated heaven with the form of a church or at least drew attention to the churches seen in the landscape of heaven. They recognised the usefulness of a somatomorphic soul and cultivated it exclusively by maintaining and elaborating its capacity to feel pain. Their visions incorporated vociferous criticism of bad rulership which was intended to reach the court, if not royal ears.

Despite this catalogue of differences, similarities between ninth-century visions and the *VB* are apparent. The Barontus text is a lengthy autonomous text which records that souls in the other world existed in a small human form. Barontus's heaven is architectural,

[213] Poschmann, *Penance*, p. 150.

[214] Brown ('Decline', p. 59) has made this same argument for the seemingly more abstruse Late Antique visions versus their more 'modern' and therefore accessible early medieval relations.

borrowing motifs from John's apocalyptic vision.[215] The *VB* also contains criticism of local bishops and therefore seems to anticipate Carolingian visions which frequently contained condemnation of those in authority. Contextualising the *VB* within Carolingian visions has shown that many of its motifs became part of the prevailing model adopted by eighth and ninth-century visionaries. Beyond the literary similarities between the *VB* and Carolingian visions, we find that even the spiritual aims of Carolingian reform legislation aligned closely with themes expressed in this text. Because the *VB* contained features which sat equally well in both the seventh and ninth centuries, there emerges most clearly from this exercise a continuity of the Merovingian and Carolingian monastic traditions. As discussed in chapter 4, definitive proof of the *VB*'s early date is lacking and the preceding comparisons which underscored the similarities between it and Carolingian Church reforms, vision literature and capitularies may seem to suggest re-opening the question of whether or not the text bears any evidence of Carolingian fingerprints. This question is ultimately unanswerable, but the intention of this study was to demonstrate that Carolingian considerations help to explain the resurgence of interest in this vision during the ninth century.

By drawing comparisons between earlier and later visions and citing precedents for some of these innovations, this chapter has sought to draw attention to some of the thematic continuities found among otherworld visions dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries. It is important to see that many of the supposed transformations in the genre had precedents. Through this exercise, we see that the sum total of Carolingian transformations more closely represents a manipulation of motifs borrowed from their predecessors and a pruning of some of the more diverse elements which characterised earlier visions.[216] This point is particularly significant in light of the fact that more evidence is likely to have survived from this period and thus we might expect to find greater diversity. But most importantly, we find that their other world was not so foreign as to have been unrecognisable

[215] Rev. 21.18 and *VB* 10 (p. 384).

[216] This diversity is illustrated in Amat's study of late antique literature: *Songes*, esp. pp. 381- 402.

to Barontus for the Carolingians did not turn their back on all aspects of the whole of the Merovingian past.

The continued significance of its material has already been seen in our general survey of the *VB*'s manuscript tradition. As we shall see in the next chapter, the creation of an illustrated manuscript of the vision reveals that there was particular interest in this text during the second half of the ninth century.

CHAPTER

# SEVEN

## Visualising Heaven and Hell in the Early Middle Ages: St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5

## 7.1 Introduction

Thus far this study has been concerned with the translation of visual images seen during a visionary experience into written accounts. This chapter examines the translation of a written visionary account back into visual images. The ninth-century St Petersburg manuscript is the unique surviving example of an illustrated, early medieval otherworld vision. The ninth-century illumination of this seventh-century text adds further weight to the evidence already provided by the manuscript tradition that this text had relevance for a later audience.

During this period, the iconography of the other world was nascent and very fluid.

This chapter will begin with a brief description of the iconographic history of images of heaven and hell to provide an overview of the artistic models available to the artist of the St Petersburg manuscript and some of the aesthetic strategies used to resolve the ineffability of the visionary experience (7.2). This will be followed by a description of the images in the manuscript which will contextualise the pictorial content of the vision within its textual framework and suggest its place of production (7.3). Finally there will be a consideration of the specific interest in the text and the influence of the Carolingian thought world on the formulation of the images which accompany the text (7.4).

## 7.2 Iconography of Heaven and Hell

The origins of iconography of heaven and hell are still hazy,[1] but the earliest depictions of the other world represented its regions minimalistically, as individual elements. For example, hell was portrayed as a pit or as a personification of Hades, derived from Anastasis iconography.[2] In the early Middle Ages it was also rendered as a zoomorphic image of the mouth of a monster, an image possibly derived from Leviathan in the book of Job or alternatively from the further influence of Anastasis iconography. The ninth-century Utrecht Psalter illustrates hell as personified pits on fol. 53v (Ps. 91) in which human souls and demons are tossed together into a chaos of flames emitted from the monster (see figures 7.1 and 7.2 below).

Other single-element representations of hell can be found including a boiling cauldron sitting in flames[3] into which demons drive naked souls; the gates of Hell as in the ninth-

[1]The subject is not treated by Grabar in his *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (London, 1969). He notes the overall lack of scholarship on the topic in his article, 'L'Iconographie du Ciel dans l'art chrétien de l'Antiquité et du haut Moyen Age', *Cahiers Archéologiques* 30 (1982), pp. 5-24.

[2]A.D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* (Princeton, NJ, 1986); J. Osborne, 'The Painting of the Anastasis in the Lower Church of San Clemente, Rome: A Re-examination of the Evidence for the Location of the Tomb of Cyril', *Byzantion*, 51 (1981), p. 261.

[3]L. Twining, *Symbols and Emblems of Early and Medieval Christian Art* (London, 1885), p. 172; Didron, *Christian Iconography.*

Figure 7.1: *Utrecht Psalter (fol. 53v)*

century Stuttgart Psalter (fol. 29v) (Ps. 24.7); and as a fiery oven on also in the Utrecht Psalter (fol. 84v). Heaven too was represented through suggestive individual motifs, such as stars or clouds,[4] or the hand of God appearing within an aureole or emerging from the clouds (see figure 7.3 below). These models were a visual statement of God's exalted and remote position.[5] More complex images of the other world were developed for scenes to accompany the Agnus Dei and the Feast of All Saints in Sacramentaries.[6]

The other world received its most developed and large-scale treatment in scenes of the Apocalypse. The development of visual representations of the Apocalypse had implications for visionaries, for it is in these representations that the idea of judgement enters the art of the otherworld for the first time. From surviving evidence, it appears that judgement scenes were rare in the first centuries of Christianity.[7] Early Christian art included only

[4]Grabar, 'L'Iconographie'.
[5]Grabar, *Iconography*, p. 116.
[6]Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, pp.148ff.
[7]B. Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrhunderts, Studien zur*

Figure 7.2: *Detail of Utrecht Psalter, above*

hints of the coming judgement through the metaphoric illustration of rams and sheep (Mt. 24.5). One of the earliest representations of this scene is the sixth-century mosaic in S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna which illustrates Christ separating the sheep from the goats flanked by angels on either side.[8] Full-scale Last Judgement scenes originated in the East but the first Western example, found in the church of St Johann in Müstair, dates from only *ca.* 800.[9] There are other close contemporary examples including the Trier Apocalypse,[10] and an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon ivory, now at the Victoria and Albert museum. This carving shows a hell-mouth in the lower right corner devouring the damned, whilst on the left is a doorway through which an angel leads those who will be saved. See figure 7.4 below.

*Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes* (Vienna, 1966), pp. 74ff.

[8]Brenk, *Tradition.*

[9]No others seemingly survive until the eleventh century mosaic of the Last Judgement in the cathedral of Torcello: Brenk, *Tradition.*

[10]Trier, Stadtbibliothek, Trier Apocalypse, MS 31.

Figure 7.3: *Drogo Sacramentary initial for* The Ascension *Paris, BN Lat. 9428, fol. 71v.* ca. *844-55.*

The visionary realm allowed for the intermingling of the spiritual with the material world and therefore artistic imagery has been considered for its influence on visions. Images were central to both visionary and artist alike. Occasionally the influence of pictorial representations on visionaries was revealed directly as when visionaries were able to recognise saints from their portraits.[11] Anskar's vision of heaven in which he saw the elders offering crowns to God may have been inspired by a visit he made to the palace chapel at Aachen which contained a mosaic of this scene. However he also reported seeing John the Baptist as a youth with a flowing beard and brown curly hair who appeared with Peter who appeared much older and had long straight hair.[12] Mosaics found in a baptistery in

[11] Dodwell, *Pictorial Arts*, pp. 33-34.
[12] *Vision of Anskar* (p. 22).

Figure 7.4: *Anglo-Saxon ivory, now in the Victoria and Albert museum (*ca. *eighth century)*

Ravenna combine the effulgent light he describes, the elders offering praise and both St Peter and John the Baptist. This scene may have been common to baptisteries, but its remarkable similarity to Anskar's vision suggests that iconography exerted some influence on his vision of the other world. See figure 7.5 below.

Other parallels between artistic and literary images of the other world can also be found. For example, Dryhthelm reported seeing a pit of hell and this was a typical motif found in art. A cauldron was illustrated in the Stuttgart Psalter and was also seen in Guntram's vision of Chilperic and Charles the Fat's vision. As discussed in chapter 6, the hierarchical ordering of the heavens were recorded in both art and visions. Individual apocalyptic elements also appear in otherworld visions. For example, Barontus described

Figure 7.5: *Mosaic of the Arian baptistry, Ravenna (sixth century). Note that St. Peter appears in the upper left corner.*

one of the gates of heaven as appearing like glass.[13] However surviving evidence suggests that this sort of parallel had no iconographical precedent in early medieval art and thus the reference was most likely the result of textual transmission and not the product of visual depictions Barontus had seen. Furthermore, literary visions of the otherworld long predated the first artistic renderings of the Last Judgement.

The iconography of heaven and hell was best known through apocalyptic imagery of the

[13]'porta habebat similitudinem vitri', *VB*, 10 (p. 384).

Last Judgement,[14] but its influence on early medieval visionaries is difficult to establish. Apocalyptic illustration was perhaps most closely related to otherworld visions, but the two types of visions belonged to separate traditions. John's Apocalypse was set at the end of time and concerned the judgement of humanity while otherworld visions focussed on personal judgement and were set at an intermediate time.

There is little evidence that literary accounts of the other world had any direct influence on artistic conceptions during the early Middle Ages; this is a very different situation from the dialogue between the art and literature of heaven and hell found in the later Middle Ages.[15] The Stuttgart Psalter illustration of a soul being judged indicates this with a set of scales fol. 9v (Ps. 9.4) and fol. 166v (Ps. 67.4), yet this feature is never found in vision literature of this time. Dinzelbacher reached a similar conclusion and noted that images showing the soul carried to heaven in a cloth were common, but this mode of transport is never referred to in vision literature.[16]

The artistic representation of a visionary account presented certain difficulties, for what may have been meant metaphorically[17] was given concretness through artistic representation.[18] The artist was left to suggest the illusoriness of dreams and hallucinations,[19] to rely on their imagination to fill in gaps in the account, to give substance to vague impressions suggested by the text and resolve what was left ineffable. Prior to the illustrated *VB*, there was seemingly little crossover between artistic and visionary images of heaven and hell, and no known depictions of battles between angels and demons for the fate of an individual

[14]R. Hughes, *Heaven and Hell in Western Art* (London, 1968).

[15]P. Brieger, M. Meiss and C.S. Singleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1969) and Morgan, *Dante*, pp. 166-195.

[16]Dinzelbacher, 'Way', p. 74; Gurevich (*Medieval Popular Culture*, pp. 104ff) also notes the disparity between visionary literature and artistic renderings of the other world.

[17]See the metaphorical interpretation of otherworld visions offered by Gregory the Great following the three visions he recounted. *Dialogues,* IV. 37, 15-16 (p. 134).

[18]M. Shapiro, 'On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs', *Semiotica* 1:3 (1969), p. 13; R. Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (London, 1970), esp. pp. 236-8.

[19]O'Flaherty, *Dreams*, p. 282 suggests Western devices used to achieve this illusion.

soul as described by visionaries in the early Middle Ages. Thus the artist commissioned to illustrate Barontus's vision had no direct or obvious model on which to draw for his images and the St Petersburg manuscript is thus significant for what was chosen to be illustrated and the formulation these scenes received.

## 7.3 Description of the St Petersburg Manuscript

The St Petersburg manuscript is of special interest since it is an exemplar of the oldest surviving text and is the only known fully illustrated manuscript of an otherworld vision in the early Middle Ages. The manuscript measures 160 × 120mm and was produced on good quality parchment. The text is written in one column with 16 lines per page. The script is a carefully executed, Continental Caroline miniscule with club-like ascenders and very occasional ligatures. Levison assigned the manuscript to S. IX/X. However despite the attempt at visual clarity in script and layout, the word division is not pronounced in places and this is the weightiest reason for suggesting the earlier side of this date.

In form it is very similar to the *libelli* of illustrated *vitae* described by Wormald although he specifically excludes this manuscript from discussion.[20] In style and dimension, this manuscript can be compared with private prayer books and thus suggest that this manuscript was designed for private reading.[21]

The manuscript contains five polychromatic figural illustrations and a decorated initial page. It opens with a full-page depiction of heaven and hell which concisely represented the first eleven chapters of the vision (see figure 7.6). It is framed by a rapidly executed egg and dart motif, but it appears to have been trimmed with the resulting loss of the inner

[20] Wormald, 'Some Illustrated', p. 254. He provides no reason for excluding this manuscript.

[21] Compare with two known private prayerbooks – Naples Biblioteca Nazionale MS suppl. grec. 12 and the prayerbook of Charles the Bald measure 164 × 143mm and 137 × 102 mm respectively Deshman, 'Exalted Servant', p. 395.

margin and is now ragged from wear at the bottom. This miniature faces an initial page which contains a decorated ME ligature.

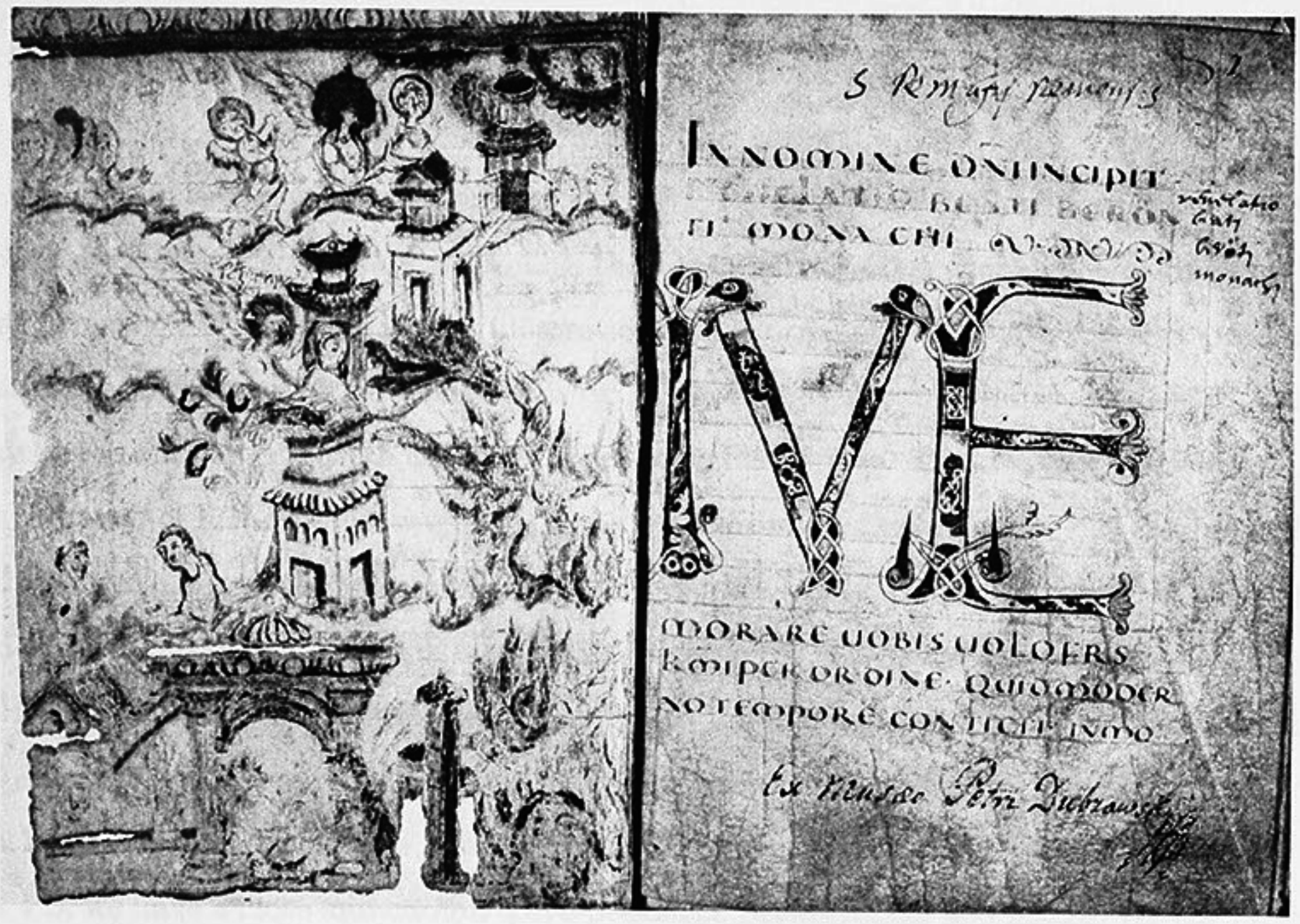


Figure 7.6: *St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5, opening*

The decorated initial is Merovingian in inspiration.[22] The mimicking of Merovingian letter decoration signals an awareness of the text's seventh-century origins, while the Carolingian figural drawings which accompany it speak of its continuing relevance for ninth-century audiences. It is possible that the scribe/artist copied these letter forms from a Merovingian exemplar (of this vision or else from another Merovingian manuscript at his scriptorium), or else was aware of the subscription clause which dated the vision to the

[22]Compare, for example, the bird motifs found in Merovingian decorated initials collected and discussed in J.J.G. Alexander, *The Decorated Letter* (New York, 1978).

seventh century and did his best to draw attention to the text's venerable history. It may also be a play on the concept of memory, and remembering times past. Less ambiguity surrounds the choice of the word Memorare for special artistic treatment: such attention signalled the importance of commemoration and remembering, one of the foremost messages of the vision.

In a departure from most visionary accounts, Barontus and Raphael first visit a nearby monastery of Méobecq before beginning their tour of the other world,[23] and this part of their itinerary is recorded in the illustration of an ornamented archway which probably represents the gate of either Longoretus or Méobecq and the small house to the left. This may be the abbot's cell in which Raphael performs his miracle. The two then passed close to the entrance of hell on their way to heaven.[24] Accordingly, the artist has closely integrated hell and heaven into the full-page miniature with heaven on the left and hell on the right, and the remains of a gate to hell can just be discerned.[25] The small and heavily worn image of Hell deserves much attention as it appears to be an early Continental depiction of this subject. Flames emerge from what is probably meant to be the pit of hell, in which there is a large and monstrous face. Barontus however did not describe hell in these terms.[26] In the *VB*, we have a close and careful correspondence between text and image, yet the images are not literal translations of text to image; there is some degree of interpretation. The face in the flames may be an adumbration of the more developed mouth of hell found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the tenth century,[27] but is more similar to the personification

[23] *VB*, 5 (pp. 381-2).

[24] Et iuxta inferno iter habuimus et custodes infernorum vidimus. *VB*, 7 (p. 383).

[25] Shapiro, 'Some problems', p. 233 notes God's right and left is reversed from the perspective of the viewer. Therefore the orientation was often arbitrary in medieval art. Schmitt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell* (London, 1995), p. 128 notes that the lower right-hand corner became the traditional position of the hellmouth in scenes of the harrowing of hell in the thirteenth century. The St Petersburg manuscript (which he does not discuss) thus prefigures this trend by centuries.

[26] This addition to the text was also noted by Curry, 'Illustrated Visio Baronti', p. 31.

[27] Schmitt (*Iconography*, p. 32) traces this iconographical image to tenth-century England but the linking of the mouth and damnation had long associations. In the *Dialogues*, Theodore was saved from being swallowed by a dragon (*Dialogues*, IV. 40, 1-5 [pp. 138-42]). Schmitt briefly discusses this imagery and some of its early history. See instead the excellent and more wide-ranging thesis by J. Galpern, 'The Shape of

of Hades found in the Utrecht Psalter as shown in figures 7.1 and 7.2 above).

After their excursion to Méobecq, Raphael and Barontus enter the first gate of heaven, represented by a three-storied architectural element. Just beneath this gate, the half-figure of Barontus is depicted speaking with another brother. This scene represents his interview with the dead monks of Longoretus, although only one of the community is shown. Next is the second gate of heaven. Barontus describes that countless virgins and children inhabit this realm but the artist chose to draw only a receding band of clouds. Within the image, the asymmetrical arrangement of the elements linked by a double line (perhaps representing the 'semitam parvulam' prepared for Raphael and Barontus, specified in the text)[28] act as visual aids to lead the eye from left to right, bottom to top.

Another band of clouds divides the picture into the third region with another gate. At this level, there is an angel's head, shoulder and wings again supporting a bust (or perhaps the soul as a little bird) of Barontus. The inscription *scs p apo dei* was added above this angel. The identification was probably made on grounds of the dark nimbus (in which St Peter is represented in subsequent scenes), but it does not correspond with the text nor with the other images. St Peter does not appear in the vision until the fourth gate of heaven in the text and he is not otherwise shown with wings in the remaining images. It is Raphael who leads Barontus through this region of heaven on their way to judgement.

On this lateral plane, another angel pushes two winged demons into the flames of Hell which uncharacteristically extend into the space of heaven, creeping up the right side of the page to the height of the third register. This seems to be an imaginative attempt to represent the text in which Barontus is pursued by devils to the fourth gate of heaven. Upon reaching the fourth gate of paradise, Barontus meets a monk of his monastery who voices concern over monastic negligence. In this register, we see half-figures of five nimbed

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Hell in Anglo-Saxon England' (Ph.D. thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1977).

[28] *VB*, 9 (p. 384).

saints on the left. In the centre are two full figures of angels, one stretching forth its arms bearing the nimbed soul of Barontus upwards. The composition culminates in a quarter circle set into the upper right-hand corner. It contains two nimbed heads set in a dark void apparently meant to represent the fourth heaven which Barontus would be judged.

As is standard in illustrations of the Tree of Jesse, the full page miniature depicting Barontus's description of his journey through heaven is designed to be read from bottom to top, probably reflecting an earth-centric view of heaven in which the vertical ascent theme is emphasised. It is a 'climactic' arrangement which differs from most compositions which work on a downward vertical.[29] Models for the full page miniature in the *VB* may have drawn on conceptions of heaven in registers such as we see in the Agnus Dei scene iconography, but overall the *VB*'s miniatures are specific to the vision. From a cursory comparison between the text and the accompanying images, we find that they have been radically simplified, particularly in the image of heaven and the exclusion of the *sinus Abrahae*.[30] This practice was necessary to translate the text into a readable image.[31] According to the account Barontus gave to his redactor, heaven was teaming with inhabitants and crammed with mansions and gates, but the artist could only incorporate specific details from the text into his language of forms.

The artist's interpretation can further be seen in his choice of scenes illustrated, offering a possible window onto ninth-century interest in text. The half-page drawings which share the page with text are unframed; the artist utilised all available space for his compositions and the result is that the figures interject into the text block and into the margins with wings, keys and nimbi. See fol. 8v for example, as shown in figure 7.7. This fluid boundary between text and image clearly demonstrates that the text blocks were conceived of in relation to

[29] Shapiro, 'On Some Problems', p. 231.
[30] For which there was an iconographical precedent on the door of the church of Sainte Trophime in Arles.
[31] S. Lewis, 'Vision and Revision on "Seeing" and "Not Seeing" God in the Dublin Apocalypse', *Word and Image* 10:3 (1994), p. 20.

the pictorial space. As such, one cannot isolate the miniatures from their textual context; they must be analysed as part of the organic whole of the book.[32]

Figure 7.7: *St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5, fol. 8v*

Smaller illustrations of fols. 8v, 9r, 9v, and 10v (according to current foliation) are individual vignettes and illustrate a single chapter of the text: *VB*, 12. These pages do not follow the typical division of the page into three registers with the text forming an upper and lower frame for the centrally placed image (for which many examples can be found

[32]Pächt, *Book Illumination*, p. 32.

in other Carolingian and Ottonian manuscripts). Instead the placement of the images was intentionally chosen to depict speech acts. This can best be seen by comparing the placement of the images within the text. The troublesome demons force Raphael to seek help from the highest echelons of heaven. Raphael in turn summons angels to fetch St Peter for the coming battle over Barontus's soul. This illustration (figure 7.7) portrays five winged and nimbed figures who gently stand on the undulating illusionistic landscape. The ground is punctuated with clusters of vegetation, most likely meant to represent the flowers of a paradisical field although this is not mentioned by the text.[33] Raphael stands on the far left with his hand stretched forth, expressively summoning one angel who has already come forward from the group of four at the right and commanding this angel to call St Peter. The composition of the image corresponds to the details of the written text, while its thematic subject matter represents direct speech. This image carries an additional message of ready obedience and a visual manifestation of the hierarchical ordering of the society in heaven. It closely follows the text and was as we have seen, a theme which would have found favour with earthly hierarchies in both political and monastic settings.

The next image is also strategically incorporated into the text block. At the top of the picture, the text breaks off mid-line with the word *dicens* and beneath the image, the text acts as a caption which reads, 'Quid est frater Raphahel quod me arcessire fecisti?'[34] (See figure 7.8). Appearing to be almost twice the size of Raphael, St Peter, nimbed and bearing two keys, is solidly depicted in three-quarter view as is Raphael who, to account for their difference in height, stands on a hill opposite him.[35] The dramatic break in the middle of the line of text served as a textual arrow pointing to the image, but note that the image is *under* the word. The image's placement was probably not accidental, given Carolingian attention to the relationship of word and image. This image, like the preceding one, was

[33] Although drawn with a much heftier line, this landscape appears similar to that found in the Utrecht Psalter and was a style inherited from Antiquity. Pächt, *Book Illumination*, p. 169

[34] *VB*, 12 (p. 386).

[35] On size as a signifier of importance, see Shapiro, 'On some problems', pp. 235-6.

probably chosen for two reasons: first, each of these small scenes illustrates intercession on behalf of a sinner and second, because it depicts the action of speech and thus accorded with Carolingian interest in the didactic, rather than iconic purpose of images.[36]

Figure 7.8: *St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5, fol. 9r*

Although these two intercalated drawings (figures 7.7 and 7.8 on fols. 8v and 9r)

[36]R. McKitterick, 'Text and Image in the Carolingian World', in McKitterick, ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 297-318.

function as independent compositions, the two-page, lateral band of illustrations can also be read from left to right following the action of reading and the action of the narrative and thus the images conform to the expectations of language.

The text which continues on fols. 9v to 10v records the trial in which St Peter and the demons argue over the virtues and sins of Barontus's life in an effort to determine his ultimate fate in the other world. The next image (figure 7.9, on fol. 9v) is heavily damaged, but illustrates the demons' literal and judicial claim on Barontus's soul. St Peter stands on the left holding his keys like a bat while two demons, whose faces have been erased, grasp Barontus firmly. The practice of effacing images of demons can be seen in other manuscripts and suggests the evocative nature of this imagery for medieval audiences.[37] The text beneath this drawing is St Peter's direct questioning to the demons on the grounds they have for claiming one of his monks.[38] They stubbornly refuse to accept a favourable judgement for Barontus and the next image depicts Peter's growing impatience with them. In the final image (figure 7.10), he resorts to the threat of violence against them by wielding his keys as if to strike them on the head.[39] It is most significant to note that the text not only departs from common iconography with its specific mention of three keys but also that it actually calls for an illustration: 'beatissimus Petrus, tres claves, habentes *similitudinem hanc* in manu tenens...'[40] Here the author acknowledges the importance of the image in conveying the reality of the vision. Interestingly, the four other manuscripts which contain depictions of these keys each represents them differently, an indication of the desire to follow the instructions of the textual archetype.[41]

This fourth illustration is again meant to be read left to right with the oversized and

[37] Common, but see for example: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 644 f. 152-153. (A Beatus Apocalypse) This practice is discussed by Williams, 'The Apocalypse Commentary of Beatus of Liébana', in Emmerson and McGinn, ed., *Apocalypse*, p. 225.

[38] *VB*, 12 (p. 386).

[39] This scene might have been the inspiration for the later illustration of a demon being struck on the nose by St Peter in the Stowe Missal (London, BL Stowe 944, fol. 7r) from Winchester *ca.* 1020-1030.

[40] *VB*, 12 (p. 387).

[41] Other manuscripts which contain an illustration of the keys: London, Lambeth Palace 173, Munich clm 6293; Paris lat 2846; Paris lat. 11885

Figure 7.9: *St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5, fol. 9v*

nimbed St Peter brandishing three enormous keys in his right hand as the tiny Barontus cowers under St Peter's extended and protecting left hand. A single demon with outstretched wings is captured in the act of fleeing from his hillside towards the right-hand side of the page into a pit of flames. Here the illustration anticipates the text which follows on the next folio.

There are several points of contact between this manuscript and other ninth-century manuscripts. The Stuttgart Psalter, produced in the 830's at St German-des-Prés contains depictions of the soul in contemporary dress (fol. 94, Ps. 77. 56-8). Iconographically

Figure 7.10: *St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5, fol. 10v*

souls were most often represented as small, naked human beings[42] but in this case it is accoutered in secular clothing, with a cape and leggings. Further similarities between these two manuscripts can be found. In both the St Petersburg manuscript and the Stuttgart Psalter, the word *anima(s)* was inscribed above the image and was written in the same style of capitals to identify the illustration of a soul. This is found above the two half-length portraits in the full page miniature (figure 7.6) and in the Stuttgart Psalter's depiction of Ps. 42, fol. 23, shown in figure 7.11. This addition perhaps demonstrates the Carolingian

[42]See "The Shape of the Soul" in my Chapter 6, above, p. 201 ff.

idea that words gave validity to images.[43] This similarity is particularly striking in view of the fact that the St Petersburg manuscript is known to have been at St Germain-des-Prés, although we do not know when.[44] Demons begin to appear in art with greater regularity during the ninth century[45] and their specific appearance in the *VB* manuscript is interesting. They differ from other contemporary illustrations of demons such as those portrayed in the Stuttgart Psalter, but like the artistic rendering of the soul in both manuscripts, the demons are clothed in contemporary garments. They are also given feathery angel wings, and their overall appearance was perhaps meant to carry a subtle suggestion on the deceptive power of evil.[46]

The gates of heaven which Barontus passes through resemble telonia, or toll stations, an Eastern doctrine which held that the soul would be subjected to examination on his ascent through the heavens. It is possible that the gates were inspired by the idea of telonia, as the East was a source for the developing iconography of scenes of heaven and hell, and it is thought that Byzantine models were not only available but were imitated at the court of Charles the Bald.[47] However the architecture drawn in the full-page miniature appears to be very closely related to building types found in the Utrecht Psalter.

The posture and gestures of the figures and the excited style of the illustrations are also reminiscent of the Utrecht Psalter, produced in Rheims, *ca.* 830. The script too is characteristic of the Rheims style,[48] and from a later medieval *ex libris*, we know that the

[43]On word and image in the Carolingian period, see McKitterick, 'Text and Image'. On the function of words in pictures, see M. Camille, 'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History*, 8:1 (March, 1985), pp. 32-4.

[44]See Appendix B for further details on the manuscript's provenance.

[45]T. Brunius, 'Enter the Devil', in A.A. Schmid (ed.), *Riforma religiosa e arti nell'epoca Carolingia* (Bologna, 1979), pp. 147-150.

[46]This sort of illustration accords well with the developmental history of the devil Link has traced: L. Link, *The Devil: The Archfiend in Art. From the Sixth to the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1995).

[47]Deshman, 'Exalted Servant', pp. 395-398 and his references in n. 40. On the concept and function of toll stations in the other world, see G. Every, 'Toll Gates on the Air Way', *Eastern Churches Review* viii (1976), 139-151. Sims-Williams, *Religion*, p. 255, n. 54; Rivière, 'Role'; Ntedika, 'Evocation', pp. 259-60 and J. Stevenson, 'Ascent through the Heavens', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 5 (1983) pp. 21-35.

[48]Carey, 'Scriptorium of Reims', p. 48.

Figure 7.11: *Stuttgart Psalter, Ps. 42.3-5, fol. 23,*

manuscript was either made at or for St Remigius. This still leaves open the place and date of origin and circumstances of its commissioning. Although the manuscript has generally been excluded from studies of Rheims manuscripts,[49] the scriptorium at Rheims seems the most likely place of production.

[49]F. Mütherich, 'Carolingian Manuscript Illumination in Rheims', in *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art: Picturing the Psalms of David*, ed. K. van der Horst, W. Noel, and W.C.M. Wüstefeld (Utrecht, 1996), pp. 105-119. Although the St Petersburg manuscript has generally been ignored by art historians who have considered it to be too unpolished to be a product of Rheims's scriptoria. L. Nees is preparing a study of the art in this manuscript.

## 7.4 Occasions for the Production of the Manuscript

In his redaction of the *Vision of Bernold*, Hincmar wrote that he believed Bernold's account since it bore similarities to a host of other visions, including Gregory's *Dialogues*, the visions in Bede, the vision recorded by Boniface and the *VW*.[50] This list and the composition of the *Vision of Bernold* demonstrates that Rheims was a visionary center at this time. It follows that there would have been both a desire to collect the *VB* and the *VR* and perhaps enough interest in visions to warrant the illustration of such an account. The *VB*'s link with illustration is called for by the text itself in the depiction of St Peter's keys and Berschin has speculated that the requirement of this illustration prompted the artistic treatment of the whole text.[51]

Barontus's monastery was dedicated to St Peter and the *VB* was a testimony of St Peter's power to ensure salvation even of sinful and unconfessed monks. The emphasis on St Peter and his links with penance and Rome may have contributed to Carolingian interest in the text, but the illustrations of the *VB*, which included three illustrations of St Peter, always the most exaggerated in size, drew particular attention to him. It is possible that the manuscript was a commission destined for a monastery dedicated to him, possibly even one of the two dedicated to St Peter in the city of Rheims.

The four smaller illustrations each relate to the climax of vision, Barontus's judgement. Through the choice of scenes illustrated, the artist of the *VB* reveals an abiding interest in the immediate judgement a soul was expected to undergo at the moment of death and thus offers clues to the ninth-century interest in this text. The small format of the St Petersburg manuscript, which is suggestive of private reading, may be explained in light of the text's

[50] *Vision of Bernold* (col. 1118c).
[51] Berschin, *Biographie*, p. 107.

emphasis on penance and the prescription in the *RB* that every monk was to receive a book from the library to read at the beginning of Lent and was to read it at a specific time set aside each day during this part of the liturgical year.[52] The *VB*'s penitential themes and description of confession and penance might very well warrant the luxurious treatment of this vision in one of the scriptoria at Rheims. The format of this small, private book suggests it was used for personal devotion. Contemplation of its images would have led the reader to imagine his or her own judgement, and might have encouraged the undertaking of stricter penitential discipline in order to avoid having to rely on divine mercy. Emphasis on keys in both the text and images shows an awareness of the importance of penance, especially in connection with Peter, and suggests the importance of following orthodox, Roman practices of secret penance.

The practice of penance received particular attention during the ninth century. A conflict had grown over the use and proliferation of non-scriptural penitentials. There were repeated prohibitions against these texts at councils held in Châlon, Tours and Paris and attempts were made to standardise practices.[53] Penitential practice was a particular concern in Rheims during the ninth century as evidenced by the fact that the impetus for a resolution to the problems caused by simultaneous use of many unauthorised penitentials came from Ebo, archbishop of Rheims. Ebo commissioned Halitgar, bishop of Cambrai, to compile a revised penitential which could then be accepted as the standard.[54] Halitgar selected the so-called 'Roman' penitential onto which he grafted British and Irish sources including selections from the penitentials of Columbanus and Gildas.[55]

Codicology also provides a suggestion for the manuscript's use. The *VB* was bound only with the *VR* in this manuscript, a textual association also made independently in BL

[52] *RB* 48.14-16 (p. 602).
[53] Oakley, 'Celtic Penance', p. 597 and Watkins, *Penance*, pp. 712, 764.
[54] Watkins, *Penance*, p. 630.
[55] *ibid*, p.708, and A. J. Frantzen, 'The Tradition of Penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1983), pp. 36-37.

Cotton Otho A. XIII. Both texts carry a reference to the exact day on which they occurred and both contain specific names of monks and inhabitants in the other world. There is another reason the two may have been linked: whereas the *VB* exalts the status of monks, the *VR* inverts this image and could have worked to check monkish superbia after reading the *VB*.

While it appears that many of the surviving manuscripts of the *VB* were destined for monastic audiences, the luxurious St Petersburg manuscript may have been intended for a wider (possibly episcopal) audience.[56] Within the vision, monks are exalted and bishops condemned. Given this textual content, it is tempting to consider that this manuscript may have been a 'gift' from a monastery to its local bishop, perhaps presented at an opportune moment when relations between the two were not harmonious. However much depends on what was known of the reputation of the two condemned bishops was known in the ninth century. The political situation which developed in the ninth century between Charles the Bald and Hincmar of Rheims over the use and abuse of benefices would also have provided a suitable context for this text, which deals also with the themes of property and ownership. The simultaneous circulation of the *Vision of Bernold*, in which the visionary recognises Hincmar already installed in heaven (even while still on earth!), places the Archbishop high above the criticism levelled against bishops in the *VB*.

Stylistic and thematic considerations point to Rheims as the centre for the production of this manuscript and Rheims's particular interest in this vision. However the *VB*'s text and images also carried implications for a wider Carolingian context. The interpretation of the images in this manuscript depend on its date which is impossible to fix precisely, but there were many likely moments for its creation in the course of the mid to later ninth-century.

[56]The Utrecht Psalter, a good comparison with the St Petersburg manuscript in date, scriptorium and decoration is thought to have been commissioned by a ruler. See Deshman, 'Exalted servant', p. 412 following P. Lasko, *Ars sacra 800-1200* (Baltimore, 1972), p. 34.

The subjects chosen for illustration and the arrangement of the images within the text are potentially significant in this respect. The images in this manuscript, each of which depicts a speech act (including the frontispiece) seems to represent faithfully the Carolingian theory on the relationship of text to image.[57]

Word versus image had become an issue for the Carolingians following the Iconoclasm controversy which had drawn attention to the use of images as well as dreams. In the *LC*, Theodulf formulated a Carolingian response in which he expressed wariness in the use of images as tools for religious instruction. In addition to the narrative and didactic function of art, images were to inspire devotion. It was to aid the viewer's memory, and could function decoratively.[58] The didactic function of art was to be preferred over its iconic use, but for the Carolingians, the word was exalted over image.[59] The Carolingians, however, asserted that the image was to have no intrinsic quality worthy of worship. Fear of ambiguity in images led to the inclusion of *tituli* which were to insure proper interpretation so that, for example, an illustration of Venus was not mistaken for the Virgin Mary.[60] Applying words to images was thought to instill an image with credibility.[61] For the Carolingians, the quality of texts and clarity of script were ranked above illumination.[62] The iconographic program of the codex bears this out: the intertextual images, each of which depict speech, serve Carolingian interests as they intentionally or unintentionally act as a visual reminder of art's subservience to the written or spoken word. It is potentially significant in this respect that ninth-century Rheims possessed a copy of the *LC*.[63]

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[57] On word and image, see: W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Word and Image', in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. R.S. Nelson, R. Schiff (London, 1992), pp. 47-57; McKitterick, 'Text and Image', and Camille, 'Seeing and Reading'; and for the words and images in visions, O'Flaherty, *Dreams*, pp. 260-296, esp. p. 285

[58] *LC*, III.16 (p.176) 'non ad adorandum sed ad memoriam...'.

[59] *LC*, III. 13 (pp. 151-3) on the inability of artists to express the richness of texts and the falsehoods contained in art. McKitterick, 'Text and Image in the Carolingian World', in her *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 297-318.

[60] *LC* IV.16 (p. 204).

[61] Camille, 'Seeing and Reading', p. 33.

[62] McKitterick, 'Text and Image'; Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne as a Patron of Art', *The Church and the Arts*, ed. D. Wood, *SCH* (Oxford, 1992), p. 50.

[63] Ganz,'Theology', p. 774 citing A. Freeman, 'Further Studies in the *Libri Carolini*',*Speculum* 40(1965),

Finally we turn to the full-page frontispiece of heaven and hell, for clues as to the circumstances of production. This miniature is noteworthy in its formulation of the spaces of heaven and hell. Few early medieval images combine both regions of the other world in a single composition. The Utrecht Psalter illustrations which do grapple with the placement of the regions, locates hell beneath heaven, in accordance with the geographical understanding of the locations of the other world set out in Amos 9.2.[64] But as we have seen in the preceding survey of vision texts, variations in geography were possible.

The St Petersburg manuscript's horizontal arrangement of heaven and hell was possibly linked to the predestination controversy of the mid-ninth century. This theological debate primarily sought to address the socially disruptive suggestion made by Gottschalk concerning whether God predestined some souls to damnation, and others to salvation. If this were the case, then human action had little influence on the fate of the soul in the afterlife. Hincmar's commissioning of John Scottus Eriugena to refute Gottschalk's claims meant that the see of Rheims was an epicentre for the controversy.[65] The issues spilt over into a questioning of the places reserved for the blessed and the damned. The uncodified theology of heaven and hell was challenged by John Scottus Eriugena's argument that hell was simply the absence of eternal bliss and not spatially defined.[66] In his mystical conception of the other world, the same fire which tormented the damned warmed the blessed. Evil was merely an illusion and hell was not a place but a mental construct in which the wicked continued to prevent themselves from enjoying the grace of God. His theory found sympathy in both the image and the text for the depiction of flames reaching into heaven and account of the intrusion of the demons into the fourth level of heaven suggest that there were few barriers between the realms of heaven and hell. Demons were of course not

pp. 203-89.

[64] On the up/down dichotomy see Shapiro, 'Some Problems', pp. 223-42, esp. p. 230. He argues that our everyday existence is horizontal so the unknown world would therefore occupy the regions above and below us.

[65] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 364.

[66] John Scottus Eriugena, *De Praedestinatione*, *PL* 121 (cols. 432, 436c and following) and his *Periphyseon*, *PL*, 122 (col. 538b and following).

confined to hell. They regularly appeared on earth, but their presence in holy places seems untheological.[67] The free movement of demons was an idea also formulated in the 873 *Annal of St Bertin.* Here the devil appears in the guise of an angel of light. He attempts to deceive Charles, the visionary, by claiming that if he had not been sent from God, he would not be able to enter a church. However, evil knows no bounds and the Devil is able to enter not only the church but also Charles himself.[68] Thus we see that the idea of two distinct realms for the blessed and the damned which had figured prominently in early Christian vision literature was subject to greater variation in the ninth century. Since the manuscript was produced in the heartland of the Carolingian Church,[69] this miniature of heaven and hell might very well reflect the Carolingian interest in the predestination controversy.

## 7.5 Conclusions

The St Petersburg manuscript is important for a number of reasons not least of which is that it is an early illustrated non-scriptural text. Its full-page miniature of heaven and hell is the most significant aspect of its iconography, however the other images are also intriguing for their highly complex message especially on the relationship between word and image, and the function of art within a text. The specifically Carolingian themes of the subservience of image to word, the didactic function of art, and the organisation of the other world further demonstrate that a seventh-century text could be made to speak to a ninth-century audience and make it a rich source for historical enquiry of this period.

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[67] Augustine, *De Gen Ad Lit* III, 10 (col. 285) argues that fallen angels were driven down into the atmosphere below. They are not permitted to inhabit the celestial realm.

[68] For a discussion of this vision and its political implications: J.L. Nelson, 'A Tale of Two Princes: Politics, Text and Ideology in a Carolingian Annal', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 10 (1988), p. 130.

[69] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 364

CHAPTER

# EIGHT

## Conclusions

The *VB* is richly symbolic and closely follows the visionary genre in structure. The text is devoted to exonerating a recent convert to monasticism to his community. In so doing, the text has preserved many intriguing historical asides, ambiguities and observations, thus ensuring its interest to subsequent generations of believers, readers and scholars. My thesis has closely focused on the textual witness to Barontus's vision, the influences which acted upon the composition of this text, the historical context in which it was set and the later circumstances in which it was found. The first two chapters provided some background for early medieval visions of heaven and hell. Chapter 1 initially discussed early conceptions of the other world before defining the different types of revelatory experiences. The uses and limitations of otherworld visions were considered within a survey of the historiographical approaches to these sources. Chapter 2 assessed the terminology used to describe visions and pointed out the distinctions which existed between theoretical writings on dreams and

visions and the dream/vision accounts themselves. This chapter subsequently described medieval procedures for testing the veracity of revelations, the rôles of the visionary's amanuensis and the visionary's community. It also noted the part played by the ecclesiastical hierarchy (such as Gregory the Great, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Hincmar) in the redacting and dissemination of these texts. This survey asserted that dreams and visions were part of a complex debate on the nature of the afterlife and that the terminology used was fluid and contradictions abounded.

The remaining five chapters were dedicated to a closer analysis of the *VB*. Chapter 3 studied the manuscript tradition of the vision, which illustrated lengthy chronological interest in the text and its wide geographical dissemination. These manuscripts showed the care taken in preserving, editing and even illustrating this early medieval vision throughout the Middle Ages. Codicological evidence for the *VB* demonstrated that the organisation of library collections in the Middle Ages exerted some influence on the contents of individual volumes. A survey of the *VB*'s codicological contexts revealed that in the early medieval period, it was most often found with other visions which were then located within longer collections of *vitae*. The desire to collect even conflicting revelations of heaven and hell again underscored a diversity of beliefs which the early medieval Church saw no need to resolve. The contents of these visionary *libelli* showed that a distinction was made between visions dating from the centuries preceding the tenth century and those from later centuries. Later manuscripts of the *VB* attested to a shift in the use of this text to a more purely hagiographical context.

The manuscript tradition of the text cannot establish the text's existence before the early ninth century. The date of the vision is important both for the historical context of the *VB* as well as the development of the vision tradition. Chapter 4 addressed some of the peculiarities of the *VB* as a different approach to establish the text's date. The *VB* was the first autonomous otherworld vision composed in the Latin West by over a century and is also

considered peculiar for its subscription clause and rich ninth-century manuscript tradition. Furthermore, it foreshadows many Carolingian 'developments' and stands as an exception to the history of the genre. However, the modern assessment of the *VB* as 'strange' rests on certain historiographical preconceptions. This chapter concluded that despite the oddities of the *VB*, the weight of the evidence suggests its traditional seventh-century date was likely. The inclusion of a dating clause at the end of the vision and the naming of two bishops within the text possibly signalled a political dimension to the text, but this was not the primary sphere of influence on the vision.

Chapter 5 considered the seventh-century monastic context which shaped the text, and in particular, the influence of the second book of the *Dialogues* on the picture of monasticism it portrayed. The unusually heavy emphasis on Barontus's community found in this vision suggested the importance of commemoration. Historical factors which may have led to the production of this text, such as threats to the monastery's property, were also considered.

Chapter 6 assessed Carolingian interest in the *VB*, in light of the historiographical assumption that Carolingian visions represented a discontinuity in the genre. Their visions have been credited with many 'advancements', but this chapter contextualised a sample of them within the lengthy tradition of vision literature and located precedents for many features. Transformations of the genre did occur but it was achieved largely in the standardised message visions offered and in the audience targeted by visions, and overwhelming emphasis on politics in visions, not in their creation of stand-alone texts, nor in being the first to introduce a political dimension to visions. They made selective use of older material which they still saw as vibrant. Parallels between the *VB* and visions of the ninth century and similarities between the *VB* and the *AG* underscored continuities between these epochs and suggested that overall these later visions were less pivotal than some historiography has asserted.

Chapter 7 examined the illustrations accompanying the vision found in the ninth-century St Petersburg manuscript, and considered the context for this manuscript which particularly attested to ninth-century interest in the *VB*. Ninth-century Rheims was the most likely centre for the production of this manuscript and there is evidence of a lively interest in visions there at this time. The penitential theme of the *VB* had resonance for Rheims where Ebbo had commissioned Halitgar to study and select an orthodox penitential and the placement of the illustrations and their subject matter demonstrates attention to the debate over word and image. The full-page miniature of heaven and hell in this manuscript has a possible link to the writings of John Scottus Eriugena and the debate over predestination.

The potential of the genre has been recognised in recent years for its contribution to our understanding of early medieval eschatological expectations and the historical details preserved in such texts. While previous approaches to visions of the other world have described a neat, ascending history of the genre, I have intended to show through this study that the overall picture for the early Middle Ages is more dynamic than previously recognised.

As we have seen, the *VB* operated on many levels and its longevity demonstrates this plainly. It was a polysemic text which encompassed universal issues and one which, while hortatory, also enhanced the authority of monks throughout the Middle Ages. On the one hand, the open-endedness of the text's date in the eyes of scholars suggests continuities in cultures and cultural expectations. The recopying of this text, and other frequently copied early medieval visions, further illustrates its vibrancy. On another, we must acknowledge that asking if the text has been wrongly placed chronologically arises from a historiographical discomfort in acknowledging a lengthy and complex vision text could have emerged in a rural monastery in the late seventh century.

This thesis has shown that the persistent interest in the *VB* during the early Middle Ages and the similarities this text shares with other visions of the seventh, eighth and ninth century suggests the need to revise certain assumptions held about the development of the genre as a whole. The fact that the *VB* was as appropriate to the seventh century as it was to the ninth should warn against the formulation of a strict developmental history of visions. The boundaries which have been set up between genres, centuries and types of evidence are artificial and limiting. Attention must be paid to the nuances which exist within this group of visions for they did not develop systematically, nor are they merely part of an amorphous pre-twelfth-century group. Changes did occur during this period, but they were subtle and do not always conform to our expectations. Furthermore, advancements in the length and detail of otherworld visions were not necessarily linked to a historical chronology.

There is a need to soften the divide implied by labelling visions as 'Merovingian' or 'Carolingian'; such periodisation is unhelpful. As we have observed early medieval visionaries and their redactors did not ignore what had gone before them. Revisiting of themes and the recopying of early texts throughout this period calls for the reassessment of the chronological development paradigm.

My study has focused closely on this one text and it would be instructive to see if the pattern observed pertains to other visions or is specific to the *VB*. There is a need for more case studies of individual texts and greater use of manuscript evidence to assess how these texts were categorised and used. Each vision needs to be examined first in its discrete moment of occurrence to tease out contemporary history which they preserve, but also in the contexts in which they were later redacted. Further reflections are required before we may reassess the perceived pattern of development which so dominates our understanding of vision literature. We need also to conduct further research to see what effect Carolingian transformations of the genre had on vision literature, for the forcing of visions into the reform plans of the Carolingian Church seemed to have the effect of fossilising the genre. Finally

we must examine the tenth century context to explain the dearth of vision literature before reattempting to write an overview of the genre or confidently label the *VB* as a peculiar text. Until then this text should be treated as a record of its time, removed from the preconceptions of what the genre would become. The subsequent treatments given to the *VB* reveals a medieval audience comfortable with conflicting images of heaven and hell and desirous of collecting and maintaining revelations once they had been vetted. The visionary record for this period has shown that the early Middle Ages was not a period of stagnation but one of great experimentation, full of contradictions and continuities.

APPENDIX

# A

## Summary of the Principal Visions, Dreams and Apparitions Discussed in this Thesis

### Alberic

Einhard recorded a miraculous vision granted to a blind man named Alberic. The visionary 'saw' the Archangel Gabriel, who appeared to him in the guise of St Marcellinus. Gabriel dictated a revelation he wished Alberic to pass on to Einhard who would in turn deliver to the Emperor. Gabriel endowed the visionary with supernatural powers to light candles without a flame in order to convince his audience of the validity of his revelations. The twelve books of Alberic's vision redacted by Einhard do not survive but they are referred to in another vision. (See *Louis the Younger*, below).

Einhard, *Translatio SS Marcellini et Petri* III. 13, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* 15, pp. 252-3.

**Aldegund**

While most of Aldegund's visions took the form of apparitions, one was a journey to the other world. In this vision, she was led to a gate of a house with seven decorated columns. The mystical scene was sparsely described but included ornaments which were fragrant with the aroma of Christ. At the conclusion of the vision, she was promised to receive Christ's celestial gift. She reported her visions to Subino, abbot of Nivelles who collected her visions into a book which later formed the basis for Aldegund's *vita*. The vision cannot be dated with certainty but occurred before Aldegund's death in 684 and survives in her *vita* which probably dates from the late seventh-century.

*Vita Aldegundis*, ed. J. Ghesquière and C. Smet, *Acta sanctorum Belgii selecta* 4 (Brussels, 1787), 315-324.

**Anskar**

Anskar (bishop of Hamburg then Bremen, and missionary to Denmark and Sweden) was granted many visions which were collected and redacted by Rimbert, a monk at Corvey in his *Vita Anskarii*. The lengthiest of his visions took the form of a tour of the other world. He fell into a death-like state and called upon Saints Peter and John the Baptist to help him. His soul was taken to a place of purgation where he was left for some time in the choking air while his guides went to inquire about his fate. He was then shown a vision of paradise which was infused with apocalyptic imagery, a parallel noted in the account. Anskar saw ranks of saints, twenty-four elders offering praise, brightness at the centre of the scene and a rainbow which was emitted from the throne of God. God spoke to him revealing that he was to return to his body but would later receive the crown of martyrdom. This vision must have occurred before Anskar's death in 865, but its connection with the death of Charlemagne and position in the *vita* suggests it occurred earlier in his life.

*Vita Anskarii*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 55 (Hanover, 1877), pp. 21-24.

**Baldarius**

A boy named Baldarius had a vision in which his soul was carried by three doves to a mountain, on which Christ was seated in majesty. The visionary was mystified and needed to be told who he saw. Christ ordered that the boy be returned to his body after sunrise but Baldarius was first given a brief vision of the whole world and an understanding of its secrets. The vision ended as he opened his eyes to find he had returned to earth. This vision was redacted by Valerius, abbot of Bierzo, in 656.

Valerius of Bierzo, 'Dicta beati Valerii ad beatum Donadeum scripta', in *Sancto Valerii Abbatis opuscula. PL* 87, cols. 435-6.

**Balthere**

Alcuin recounted this vision of a soul who fell to earth. St Balthere was deep in prayer when he heard demons pursuing the soul of a deacon. Balthere clasped the soul to his bosom and learnt that the deacon had once laid his hands on a woman's breasts but had been afraid to confess his sin whilst on earth. His failure to confess meant that the demons had a claim on his soul. Balthere interceded for the soul and it was then carried to heaven in the arms of angels.

Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, lines 1320-1400, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH PLAC* 1 (Berlin, 1881), pp. 198-200 also ed. P. Godman, *Alcuin, The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 104-109.

**Barontus**

The *VB* is a detailed account of a seventh-century nobleman's journey to the other world and the surviving text is approximately 4700 words. The protagonist, along with his son Aglioaldus, had recently entered the monastery of St Peter Longoretus (present day St-Cyran-en-Brenne). After observing Matins with his fellow monks, he fell gravely ill and called for his son to fetch help. The deacon Eudo arrived and attempted to drive away evil spirits with the sign of the cross and with holy water (c. 1). The monks gathered round his bedside and then divided themselves into groups so that they could take turns praying for him without interruption day and night. Barontus grew worse throughout the night but miraculously revived at cockcrow (c. 2). Upon waking, he immediately began to recount his vision.

There had been a struggle for his soul at his deathbed which lasted all day and towards evening St Raphael convinced the demons to allow the heavenly tribunal to decide Barontus's fate. The visionary's soul was wrenched from his body, but Raphael noted that he left the spirit in the body in case Barontus was to recover. The visionary and his guide began their ascent but their way was hindered by the demons (cc. 3-4). Barontus and Raphael first travelled twelve miles to Millebeccus (Méobecq), a neighbouring monastery, where Barontus recognised the whole congregation of brothers celebrating vespers together (c. 5). At the monastery, Raphael performed a miracle and revived the saintly abbot Leodaldus (c. 6). The two ascended towards heaven but along the way Barontus was assaulted by more demons. Passing near the gate to hell, the group finally arrived at the first gate of Paradise (cc. 7-8). There Barontus saw many of the deceased brothers of his monastery, awaiting the day of judgement. The text listed the deceased monks' names and their stations: Corbolenus, Fraudolenus, Austrulfus and others. The brothers were saddened that one of theirs was in jeopardy of losing his salvation and asked Raphael if they may accompany Barontus to judgement to intercede for him (c. 8). Beyond the second gate was a

realm set aside for the chaste and innocent and countless virgins and children inhabited this realm (c. 9). At the third gate of Paradise, made of glass, was a region of mansions and thrones reserved for saints and priests. The monk Corbolenus informed Barontus that a mansion was being prepared there for the current abbot of the monastery, Francardus. There was a pause in the narration of the journey for an encomiastic passage which details Francardus's life and deeds (c. 10). At the fourth gate, the visionary met Betolenus, yet another brother of the monastery, who censured Barontus on behalf of the monastery for carelessness in not keeping the lamps in the monastery's church lighted continuously—a dereliction of duty which had been observed by the heavenly community. Barontus was prevented from travelling further into Paradise and was almost blinded by the region's light (c. 11).

All the while, Barontus was plagued by a pack of demons who had a claim on his soul. Raphael alone could not free Barontus from them and so sent for St Peter. The apostle was not only a powerful ally, but also the patron saint of Barontus's monastery. St Peter arrived and held a trial in which Barontus's sins and virtues were measured against one another. The demons stubbornly pressed their claim for Barontus's soul and St Peter was left with no alternative but to threaten to beat the devils with his keys. They took this threat seriously and vanish (c. 12). St Peter then confronted Barontus with an unconfessed sin, that of withholding money from the monastery after becoming a monk. Had the devils known about it, the judgement would have been tipped in their favour. Peter assigned Barontus a penance of distributing 12 *solidi* (the entire sum he had withheld) to the poor. He was to donate one *solidus* each month for a year, beginning on the $1^{st}$ of April. If Barontus fulfills this penance, he will be absolved. Two youths then escorted Barontus back to the first gate of Paradise (c. 13).

At this gate, Barontus was reunited with his brothers. They appointed one of their number, Framnoaldus, to escort him back to his monastery. In exchange for this service,

Barontus promised to clean the monk's tomb every Sunday while repeating Psalm 50 (c. 14). Barontus was then given a candle which he was to ask another monk, Ebbo, to bless. This candle would protect Barontus against demons. Ebbo was found consecrating the eucharist in a church in heaven and an account of his holiness is given (c. 15). He asked that Barontus be shown hell and then gave him instructions for his journey. Between paradise and hell, Barontus saw Abraham sitting on a throne (c. 16). In a very brief tour of hell, Barontus was unable to see much because of the fog and steam, but he saw communities of sufferers sitting in a circle of lead seats. These included clerics and even some of his relations, and like the *AP*, all were grouped according to their sin: for example, murderers with murderers, perjurers with perjurers. Contraposing the virgins in the second heaven, foolish virgins suffered in hell. Only the wicked bishops Wulfoleodus of Bourges and Dido of Poitiers were specifically named and singled out for castigation. Barontus learnt that those who had done some good while on earth had their suffering alleviated with manna each day at the sixth hour (c. 17). Barontus then joined a group of heavenly pilgrims, on their way to the shrine of St Hilary in Poitiers. Framnoaldus returned Barontus to the doors of the church at Longoretus (c. 18). A wind blew his soul back to his body. Barontus woke to recount his story to the monks gathered around his deathbed (c. 19). Following the vision, there was a prolix conclusion on the dangers of worldly temptations and the power of penance which was added by the redactor (cc. 20-22) to make the didactic message of the vision apparent. In several of the manuscripts, the vision was concluded with a subscription clause from which the seventh-century date for the text has been derived.

*Visio Baronti monachi Longoretensis*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 377-94.

### Bernold

The *Vision of Bernold* was redacted by Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims. The visionary was first led to a place of torment in which he saw forty-one bishops left unshaven and dressed in rags. Ebbo, one of the bishops gathered there, begged to have alms given, prayers said and holy offerings made on their behalf. Bernold then proceeded with his guide to a palace filled with the people of these bishops. When Bernold returned to the bishops, he found them miraculously freed from torment. Bernold next came upon Charles the Bald, suffering as worms gnawed at his face. He begged the visionary to find Hincmar to plead for his intercession. The visionary journeyed to a pleasant place in which the saints dwelt and there he visited a church. Inside he discovered Hincmar, who at the time of the vision was still alive, was ready to begin saying Mass. After delivering the message from Charles, Bernold revisited the king. He found that Hincmar's intercession had worked and released Charles from torment. Bernold was then assailed by two noblemen, Jesse and Count Othar. They asked him to help them and to ensure that money entrusted to Othar's friend would be donated to the church on his behalf. This was achieved and the nobles were freed from torment. Finally Bernold saw a nobleman and a peasant arguing over the fate of the visionary himself. Bernold's soul was returned to his body as he was being given the Eucharist, and before his fate was decided. The redaction dates from *ca.* 878.

Hincmar, 'De visione Bernoldi presbyteri', *PL* 125, cols. 1115-1122.

### Bonellus

A monk named Bonellus experienced several visions, falling in and out of trances. He was first by an angel to a dwelling. It was a golden cell made of gems which he was promised if he leads an exemplary life. In a second vision, he was dragged to hell and saw demons tossing souls into a fire. He recognised a man he once tried to help. At the bottom of

the abyss Bonellus saw a chained devil although he was not Satan. The visionary was not shown a lower more terrible pit of hell. Demons shot arrows at him, but Bonellus was able to fend them off by making a sign of the cross. He then returned to earth. The account dates from 656, one of three recorded by Valerius of Bierzo.

Valerius of Bierzo, 'Dicta beati Valerii ad beatum Donadeum scripta', in *Sancto Valerii Abbatis opuscula. PL* 87, cols. 433-5.

**Charles the Fat**

The Carolingian ruler, Charles the Fat, was reported to have had a vision in which he visited hell and saw archbishops and bishops standing in ponds of boiling pitch, sulphur, wax and lead because they had sown discord and had loved killing and robbing. Demons and dragons tried unsuccessfully to seize the visionary. He then saw a valley of purgation with both boiling and freezing conditions in which his father (Louis the German) resided. Finally Charles approached paradise and saw saints sitting on topaz thrones, here he was told that his nephew must carry on the line. He was then given a shining ball of thread to find his way through hell. This vision dates from *ca.* 885-888, and was possibly written in Provence, however the earliest surviving accounts are from the twelfth century.

Hariulf, *Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Riquier*, ed. F. Lot (Paris, 1894), pp. 144-148.

**Chilperic**

Gregory of Tours recorded how both he and King Guntram experienced visions of the other world in which they saw King Chilperic (of Neustria). Gregory saw him tonsured and carried on a throne covered in black cloth, while Guntram saw three bishops leading Chilperic in chains and arguing over his fate. In the end, Chilperic had his bones broken

and his remains thrown into a cauldron of boiling water in which he dissolved. The visions must have occurred soon after Chilperic's death in 584 and were redacted before 591, the last year recorded in Gregory's *DLH*.

Gregory of Tours, *DLH*, VIII. 5, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 1:1 (Hanover, 1951), p. 374.

**Dryhthelm**

Dryhthelm was a layman living in Northumbria with his wife and family before he received his vision. One night he was presumed dead and was taken from his body and shown three regions: first he saw a valley which was flanked by fire on one side and snow on the other; tormented by these extremes, souls travel between them. Then he was led into hell where he saw a cleric, a woman and a man being led in chains by devils. Finally he was escorted to paradise before returning to his body. He then gave away his possessions and entered the monastery of Melrose. The vision occurred *ca.* 690 and was first recorded by Haemgisl whose work Bede used in what is the first surviving account, written by 735.

Bede, *HE* V.12, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 488-499.

**English Presbyter**

An English priest was granted a vision of the other world in which he saw a landscape of buildings including a church. He entered it to find the souls of saints in the form of children reading from a book with alternating lines of black ink and blood. His guide explained that the lines written in blood record sins which must be atoned for and corrected if disasters were to be averted. According to the preface to this vision, the vision was written down

and King Æthelwulf of Wessex sent to the Frankish court. It was subsequently preserved by Prudentius of Troyes in the *Annals of St Bertin* for the year 839.

*Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 10 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 18-19.

**Fulrad**

Abbot Fulrad of St Denis experienced an awakened dream, filled with great uncertain about the nature of the experience. He recounted sufferings in purgatory which included alternating between extremes of heat and cold, being torn apart by animals, the terror of thunderstorms, and deprivation of heaven. The text of the vision was dedicated to Heito and thus makes a ninth-century date likely.

*La chronique de Saint-Maixent*, ed. J. Verdon (Paris 1979), pp. 38-45.

**Fursey**

Fursey was a seventh-century Irish monk who was granted several visions of the other world whilst still living in Ireland. His soul was carried by three angels to a great height where he heard angelic singing. He was then returned to his body. Again his soul left his body and he was led by the three angels but this time demons also appeared. A dispute over his fate ensued and it was decided that Fursey would be judged by God. Fursey was given a vision of the earth from above and saw four fires burning, each of which represented a type of sin and which would consume those who had committed such offences. The angels then led him through the fires while still being pursued by demons who argued that they had a claim to Fursey. Souls from heaven came to fend off the demons and Fursey was then allowed a vision of heaven where he met two fellow countrymen. The visionary was then sent back to earth but on his way, the soul of a man whose confession Fursey had heard was

thrown at him and burnt him. Fursey had accepted a garment from the man in remission for his sins and for this the saint was culpable. His body retained the scars which his soul received after he recovered from his vision. He died *ca.* 649-50 and his *vita* which preserved an account of his visions was written at Péronne in *ca.* 656 or 657. The vision was later excerpted from the *vita* by Bede in the *HE* (*ca.* 735).

*Vita sancti Fursei*, ed. M. P. Ciccarese, *Visioni dell'Aldilà in Occidente. Fonti, Modelli, Testi* (Florence, 1987), pp. 190-224.

### Louis the Younger

Louis the Younger had a vision of his father, the emperor, who was suffering torment in the other world. He pleaded with his son to have his suffering alleviated and Louis responded by requesting that all the monasteries in the kingdom offer prayers for the repose of his father's soul. It was noted that the emperor might have avoided some of the torment if he had heeded the warnings of Alberic's revelations from Archangel Gabriel. The vision was said to have occurred during Lent in February of 874, and the account was preserved in the *Annals of Fulda.*

*Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SRG* (Hanover, 1891), p. 82.

### Maximus

Maximus, a seventh-century monk, was led by an angel to paradise where saw magnificent flowers, smelt ambrosia and drank from a river which flows through the landscape. He then saw the pit of hell and heard souls in torment. He awoke as his own funeral was about to begin. The vision was redacted by Valerius of Bierzo in a letter to Donadeus in 656.

Valerius of Bierzo, 'Dicta beati Valerii ad beatum Donadeum scripta, *Opuscula*, in *Sancto Valerii Abbatis opuscula. PL* 87, cols. 431-3.

**Monk of Bernicia**

A recalcitrant monk was shown a vision of hell in which Caiaphas, Satan and others suffered in flames. Next to them, he sees a place for himself reserved. He briefly returned to life but died unrepentant. This vision was redacted by Bede in his *HE* by 735.

Bede, *HE* V. 14, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 502-4.

**Monk**

The beginning of this visionary account has been lost, but the surviving text recorded that the visionary saw sinners tormented by fire, penitential pits, and a brief view of heaven. Queens, counts, a king and knights were all named. The vision was recorded in a letter written by Lull, Bishop of Mainz and occurred some time after 757.

Lull, Ep. 115, ed. M. Tangl, *MGH Epistolae selectae* I (Berlin, 1916), pp. 247-250.

**Monk of Wenlock**

A monk in the abbey of Wenlock, Shropshire recounted that he was granted a vision of this world and the one beyond as his soul was carried by angels. The visionary was first tormented as he passed through flames which surrounded the earth. He witnessed souls leaving the bodies of men and women on earth and the disputes between angels and demons for these souls. The visionary's own vices and virtues were personified and came forward in turn during his judgement. He saw the pits of hell in which souls in the form of black birds wailed. Beneath these was an even lower hell in which souls were kept for eternity. He was then led to paradise. Later he saw a trial bridge over which souls must cross. Beyond

this bridge was the heavenly city of Jerusalem. He was able to look upon the earth and its inhabitants and returned with much secret knowledge. His eyes were blistered for weeks after his return to life and thus his body bore physical signs of his traumatic vision much as Fursey's did. The vision probably occurred in 715 or 716, and was recorded by Boniface in a letter to Eadberg of Thanet, abbess or nun at Wimborne in Wessex, *ca.* 719.

Bonifatius, Ep. 10, M. Tangl (ed.) *MGH Epistolae selectae* I (Berlin, 1916), 8-15.

**Paul**

This visionary account was based on Paul's account of his ecstatic trance mentioned in 2 Cor. 12.1-5. An account of the miraculous discovery of the text at Tarsus was later added to the account. Paul's vision began with his witnessing the judgement of souls of the recently departed. He then visited the dwellings of the righteous, the Land of Promise and the heavenly city enclosed by twelve golden walls. He then saw the realm of torment. The damned were immersed in fiery water, and suffered from ice, snow, pitch and brimstone. Some were suspended by their hair, others were sealed in a pit; their punishment was in keeping with their sins. Paul begged for some mercy to be shown to those in torment and this request was granted. He then visited paradise. The text was probably composed in the third century in Greek and was translated into Latin perhaps by the fourth or fifth century. The oldest Latin manuscript dates from the eighth century.

T. Silverstein, '*Visio Sancti Pauli': the History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts* (London, 1935), pp. 131-47.

**Peter**

A Spanish monk died and was taken on a tour of hell as a reminder to reform his sinful ways. He recognised well-known figures being tormented in the flames. An angel rescues him and reminds him to consider how he lives his life. He returned to life and undertook strict regime of discipline and became a hermit. The vision was redacted by Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues.*

Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, IV. 37, 3-4, ed. A. de Vogüé and P. Antin, SC 265 (Paris, 1980), pp. 126-8.

**Poor Woman of Laon**

An unknown lay woman was granted this vision, but it was very clearly ear-marked for a royal audience. She first visited hell, guided by a man dressed as a monk where she saw Charlemagne among other notable inhabitants. She was told that if Louis the Pious would have seven memorial services said for his father, Charlemagne would be released from torment. She was then led to paradise where she was shown a wall containing the names of the blessed. Although illiterate, she was able to read and saw that Louis's name was all but obliterated. She was told that his name used to be the clearest among those who were assured salvation, but it had been effaced after Louis ordered the murder of Bernard, his nephew. The woman was sent back to earth with strict instructions to relate her vision to the king but she had to be thrice threatened and finally blinded before she related her vision. This vision was redacted by Heito, bishop of Basel (803-23) and abbot of Reichenau (806-23) *ca.* 814-823.

H. Houben, 'Visio cuiusdam pauperculae mulieris: Überlieferung und Herkunft eines frühmittelalterlichen Visionstextes (mit Neuedition)', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 124, NF 85 (1976), pp. 41-2.

### Rotcharius

On the morning of the $6^{th}$ of May, the monk Rotcharius, already suffering from an illness, fell deeply asleep in the infirmary. He was led along a pleasant path by an angel to the other world which consisted of three buildings. In the first mansion shaped like a throne he saw a multitude of saints who shone with an intense reddish light. In the middle of the saints who were ranked by virtue, he saw Charlemagne. The Emperor identified himself to Rotcharius and made it known that he had been in the place of purgation but through prayers of the faithful, he had been freed from torment and now resided among the saints. The visionary moved to the second mansion where he was told that Christ resided. A blinding light prevented the visionary from looking upon Him. The third dwelling, located beneath the others, was the place reserved for the punishment of the wicked. Here the visionary observed a crowd of clerics and the laity. In the midst of the crowd, Rotcharius saw three of his fellow monks, who were specifically named: Isachar, Gaudius and Winemundus. Though still alive, the souls of the three monks were already being punished in this dark place. The sinners had fires set at their feet and boiling water poured over their heads by a demon. Rotcharius then returned to his body. The account is thought to date from the early ninth-century and the text has possible links to both Fleury and (more likely) Reichenau, but the exact date and place of its occurrence have not been established.

*Visio Rotcharii*, ed. W. Wattenbach, 'Aus Petersburger Handschriften', *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit* 22(1875), pp. 73-4.

### Salvius

The Abbot (and later bishop) Salvius suffered a high temperature and appeared to be dead. His body was prepared for burial and during a night of mourning, he revived but refused to explain what had happened to him. After three days of fasting, he then revealed what he

had seen. His soul had been carried by two angels to highest heaven where he saw the earth and the galaxy beneath him. He passed through a gate into a building bright with gold and silver. It was filled with souls who were neither male nor female. The angels lead him forward and he saw a cloud through which God spoke. He reported that he was greeted by the souls of martyrs and saints, some of whom were dressed in priestly garments. He was nourished by a heavenly perfume and given his judgement to return to earth but was told that his salvation was assured. Having revealed this to his fellow monks, Salvius's tongue developed ulcers and became swollen which he took as a heavenly indication that he should have remained silent about what he had seen. Gregory of Tours assigned the vision to 584 and he recorded it in his *DLH* by 594.

Gregory of Tours, *DLH*, VII.1 ed. B. Krusch and W. Levision, *MGH SRM* 1:1 (Hanover, 1951), pp. 324-6.

**Seneca**

Alcuin recorded the visions of Seneca, a boy at his monastery in York. Seneca first saw an apparition whilst praying. A man in white read from a book and told the visionary that he still had longer to live. Some months later, stricken with plague, the boy died in Alcuin's arms. His soul left his body and was taken to a beautiful place in which he saw a multitude of people, notably the brotherhood of the monastery who had been gathered together in the other world and welcomed him. In a letter to the community at York, written *ca.* 795, Alcuin referred to the vision's occurrence and the reassuring image of the reunion of the brothers in heaven.

Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, lines 1600ff, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH PLAC* 1 (Berlin, 1881), p. 205; also ed. P. Godman, *Alcuin: The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 130-2; and Alcuin, *Ep.* 42, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Ep.* IV, p. 86.

**Soldier [from the writings Gregory the Great]**

An unnamed soldier died during a plague. He was transported to the other world and saw a river which emitted vapours and a stench, over which was a bridge. On the opposite bank was a meadow in which people dressed in white were gathered. Each had his or her own house there, built of gold bricks. Some houses were located on the bank of the putrid river. He learnt that all must cross this bridge on which the sinful would fall and suffer purgation. In the river he saw the pope's steward, Peter, while a priest crossed the bridge easily. This vision occurred *ca.* 590 in Rome and was recorded by Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues.* It was linked to another in the *Dialogues* since the soldier also saw Stephen, another visionary (see below), trying to cross.

Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, IV. 37.7-14, ed. A. de Vogüé and P. Antin, SC 265 (Paris, 1980), pp. 128-134.

**Soldier [from the writings of Bede]**

Bede recounted a vision which a soldier saw on his deathbed. Angels first visit him bringing a small book which contained a record of his good deeds. The demons then appear at his bedside carrying a large book which recorded all of his sins. The two sides briefly discuss who will receive his soul when he dies, but the demons win without a fight. The visionary suffers pain from blows being delivered from demons as he is about to die, unrepentant.

Bede, *HE*, V. 13, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 500-502.

**Stephen**

A high-ranking layman named Stephen, died and was brought to a court in hell. The judge explained that this was the wrong Stephen; he had wanted Stephen the blacksmith. This man is later mentioned in the vision of the Soldier (above). This vision is found in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues.*

Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, IV. 37. 5-6, ed. A. de Vogüé and P. Antin, SC 265 (Paris, 1980), p. 128.

**Sunniulf**

Sunniulf, the abbot of Randau (near Clermont), received a vision in which he was led to a river of fire. Men plunged like bees into the river and were submerged in the flames to various depths. Across the river there was a trial bridge over which souls must cross and a white house stood on the other side. Sunniulf himself underwent no judgement but awoke and sought an interpretation of the message of his vision. He was told it was an admonition that if he must rule his monks with discipline to merit a place in the house across the bridge. This vision took place *ca.* 571 and was recorded by Gregory of Tours in his *DLH* at least by 594.

Gregory of Tours, *DLH*, IV. 33, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 1:1 (Hanover, 1951), p. 166.

**Wetti**

Wetti was a monk of Reichenau who received a vision just before his death in 824. The account was first redacted by Heito, bishop of Basel and abbot of Reichenau. It was then

lengthened and versified by Walahfrid Strabo by 827. The vision recorded that Wetti fell ill and asked to have Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* read to him. Shortly thereafter, Wetti visited a region of purgation where he saw members of the clergy suffering for sexual sins, their attachment to worldly goods and failure in their ministry. He saw a river of fire and a purgatorial mountain on which Charlemagne was tormented by animals mutilating his genitalia. Wetti was then led to the heavenly city where saints, martyrs and virgins interceded for him before the throne of God. Wetti is given specific messages on the power of intercessory Masses and alms-giving and many warnings against sexual sins which he was to reveal once he returned to earth. He died shortly after recounting his vision.

Heito: *Visio Wettini*, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH PLAC* 2 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 267-275.

Walahfrid: ed. and trs. D. Traill, *Walahfrid Strabo's Visio Wettini: Text, Translation, and Commentary,* Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 2 (Bern, 1974), pp. 187-207.

APPENDIX

# B

## The Manuscripts of the *VB*

Below is a list of manuscripts and manuscript references to the *VB* in a roughly chronological order, and using the same roman numerals for identification as in table 3.1 on page 65. Where possible, I have included a brief description and characterisation of the manuscripts. There are a great number of uncertainties regarding place of production and provenance and details have been included only where known. Similarly, only a sample of the codicological contents is included, especially where there are parallels with other codices.

While catalogues of manuscripts detail what is contained in a manuscript at present, many volumes have been rebound and represent either later medieval or modern libraries' amalgamations. Therefore an attempt has been made to include only those texts which appear to have been associated with the *VB* from an early period.

## VII: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I 3595 (antea 8216-18), fol. 50v-60.[1] (3b)

**Date:** S. IX$^{in}$

**Size:** 288 × 190mm

**Provenance:** Origins of the folios containing the *VB* are unclear but the codex contains a colophon written by a scribe from St Emmeram, Regensburg which says the manuscript was copied during an expedition against Avars from 2 June to 12 September 819 in response to the revolt of Ljudovit, Duke of Lower Pannonia. The manuscript ended up in the monastery of St Florian, near Linz in Northern Austria. By 1600 it was part of the Jesuit library at Ingolstadt (O Ms. 5). Later it became part of the collection of the BRA in Brussels where it is now considered to be one of the earliest datable manuscripts in this collection.

**Codicological context:** *VB* has its subscription clause. It is likely, but not certain that the *VB* and surrounding texts were part of the current volume. The codex is predominantly composed of selections from the *Vitae Patrum* for instance, the *Verba seniorum* (BHL 6531) and the *Responsa egyptiorum patrum* (BHL 6535). The *VB* appears within, 'inserted' into a longer collection of *Vitae Patrum* texts, and is followed by excerpts from Rufinus's *Historia Monachorum.* The script and layout of the *VB* suggest it was closely connected to these other works. The remainder of the volume includes the lives of saints and hermits dating from the third and fourth centuries. The current volume possibly represents an amalgamation of two volumes. There is a blank page with neumes now bound with the *VB* mid-way through the first volume. The *Vita S. Antonii* on fol. 244 begins the second volume which also contains the beginning of the much later *Vita S. Frontonii* (BHL 3190).

**Decoration and script:** It was written in a tremulous hand[2] and has numerous cor-

[1] van den Gheyn, *Catalogue*, vol. VI, pp. 1-2.
[2] For a sample of the hand, see Thompson, *New Palaeographical*, plate 31.

rections. The text begins with a three-line high initial F(rater), but contains no further decoration or illustrations. The line of the text which calls for the depiction of St Peter's keys has been removed. The double c form (cc) is used for 'a'.

**Signs of use:** There is evidence of at least two contemporary punctuators and the many diples bear witness to heavy usage over a long period. Corrections in the text can be found above and below the text block. It was also rewritten in parts. A later medieval pointing hand was drawn in the margin to mark the beginning of the text. This manuscript appears to have been a functional monastic book. It was copied to be read and consulted, not merely to be display or presented as a commissioned work.

## VIII: Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 14,364, fol. 138-150. ($3b^1$)

**Date:** S. IX

**Provenance:** Copied by Regensburg scribes. It contains the pressmarks of St. Emmeram (D 89); in 1812 it became part of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek's holdings.

**Codicological context:** The *VB* appears as part of a sermon collection, including Caesarius's *Homilia de igne purgatorio*, and other *vitae* and *historia*.

**Decoration and script:** Decoration is minimal.

**Signs of use:** Text block is broken up with the extension of *litterae notabiliores* in the margins.

## XXII: Reichenau book catalogue entry[3]

**Date:** 835-842

**Provenance:** Monastery of Reichenau

**Codicological context:** The *VB*'s codicological context in a now lost volume (or volumes) included Julian of Toledo's *Prognosticon*, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, Book IV, the *VF*, the *VB*, visions from Bede and both Heito and Walahfrid's *VW*.

## VI: Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 6293, fol. 136-147v.[4] (3a)

**Date:** S. IX

**Provenance:** Freising

**Codicological context:** The *VB* is coupled with the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, theological works and several sermons.

**Decoration and script:** The beginning of the text is made conspicuous with a pointing hand. The initial M for Memorare is in red.

**Signs of use:** Detailed corrections, which are evidence for a deep concern to possess an accurate text.[5]

[3]Lehmann, *Mittlelaterliche Bibliothekskataloge*, pp. 240-52, with Reginbert's additions on pp. 257-262, esp. p. 259.

[4]Halm, Thomas and Meyer, *Catalogus codicum Latin. Monac.* vol. 3:3 (Munich 1873), pp. 86-7.

[5]The corrections are published by Manitius, 'Collationes', 283-288.

## XXIII: St Gallen book catalogue entry:

## St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 267.[6]

**Date:** 841-872

**Provenance:** Monastery of St Gallen

**Codicological context:** The *VB* was included in the booklist with the *VW*.

## V: St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 573, pp. 370-398.[7] (2)

**Date:** S. IX/X

**Size:** 190 × 135mm

**Provenance:** Copied (possibly from Reichenau) and maintained at St Gallen.

**Codicological context:** *Vitae*, including Sulpicius Severus's *Life of St Martin*, poetry by Paulinus of Nola, *vita* by Venantus Fortunatus, Heito's *VW*, Walahfrid Strabo's *VW*, the *VPW* and the *VB;* Bede's *Carmen de die Iudicii* and poetic *vitae*. See the chart below for details.

**Decoration and script:** Word division was variable, the text block is broken up only by letters extending into margin where a new sentence begins a line. Space was left for the keys to be drawn.

**Signs of use:** This text of the *VB* bears many corrections. Much of the text has been

[6]Scherrer, *Verzeichniss*, pp. 233-5 on the oldest book St Gallen booklist: codex 728; and p. 100 on St Gallen 267, the copy which lists the *VB*. See also Houben, 'Visio', p. 33 against Levison, *VB*, p. 372, n. 4 who argues this is a record of St Gallen 573.

[7]Scherrer, *Verzeichniss*, pp. 185-7.

erased and written over, while other correctors have cancelled letters and written variant spellings over the original hand. Even details such as the number of miles St Raphael and Barontus flew to reach their neighbouring monastery has been amended by a later hand from XXII to XII, the figure which appears in all of the other surviving manuscripts. This later emendation may suggest that this text was compared to another exemplar[8] and thus testifies to the Carolingian practices of trying to obtain a 'correct' form of a text. Here again, these observations allow us to conclude that the *VB* was not preserved merely out of antiquarian interest. This text was consulted and used. The sections on almsgiving, the shape of Barontus's soul, the land donations and monastery's hospitality to pilgrims are marked, the scene in which Peter forgives Barontus receive an asterix (p. 388). The text ends imperfectly at chapter 20 (Levison's ed. p. 393, line 17) in the words *ad inferna detrahant*, and ends *Explicit visio Barontis monachi.*

## I: St. Petersburg, (Saltykov-Schedrin)

## National Library of Russia

## Lat. O. v. I, 5, fol. 2-21.[9] (1a)

**Date:** S. IX/X

**Size:** 160 × 120mm

**Provenance**: The manuscript had an early connection with St Remigius, Rheims, and bears this ex libris in a later medieval hand. It was then moved to St Germain-des-Prés. In the eighteenth century, it ended up in the collection of Peter Dubrowski,[10] and then became

[8]However, the spelling of Longoretus was maintained as 'Longoredus' throughout. This spelling does not occur in any other manuscript.

[9]Staerk, M*anuscrits*, (St Petersburg, 1910, rpt. Hildesheim, 1976).

[10]The library of St-Germain-des-Prés in Paris was looted during the French Revolution and the monastery was suppressed. While some of its manuscripts were transferred to the Bibliotheque National, others were stolen. A large number of the missing volumes ended up in the collection of a Russian diplomat, Peter

part of the Russian National Library's collection.

**Codicological context**: The *VB* is bound only with the *VR*.

**Decoration and script**: The text opens with a full-page miniature (fol 1v) depicting heaven and hell and compresses the vision into one composition. Opposite this is a decorative initial page. The incipit is written in uncial letters, followed by an ME ligature for (Me)morare (composed of beast-headed terminations and interlace), and then continues for three more lines with uncial letters. The middle line of these three was painted in blue and the ligature in light yellow and blue. Within the text, there are four smaller drawings illustrating Raphael summoning the angels, Raphael conversing with St Peter, St Peter facing the demons who hold Barontus captive and finally Barontus, supplicating before St Peter as the saint wields his keys at the demons. The drawings were executed in a great variety of colours, including blue, dark and light brown, purple, red and green. There is even a hint of gold still remaining in the haloes of the saints. These illustrations were discussed in chapter 7. Stylistically, the illustrations point to a Rheimsian school of illumination with its activity, expressiveness and shakey lines. The text itself is written in Caroline miniscule. The layout of the text block renders the text easy to use. Like the St Gallen text, the scribe has inserted the *litterae notabiliores* into the margin when the sentence begins a new line.

**Signs of use:** The frontispiece has sustained heavy wear and the lower part of the page has disintegrated slightly. The faces of the demons have been very intentionally mutilated. The pages of text shows signs of having been very well thumbed. The text was carefully corrected by at least three different hands. Grammatical errors have been emended and punctuation has been added.

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Dubrowsky, who was in Paris in 1780 and had an interest in illustrated manuscripts. In 1805 he bequeathed his collection to the city of St Petersburg. O. Arngart (*Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, vol. II [Copenhagen, 1952], p. 32) discusses the provenance of the Leningrad Bede, but given the *ex libris* of the *VB* manuscript, it is likely to have followed the same path.

## IV: London, British Library Cotton Otho A. XIII.[11] [ largely destroyed by fire ], fols. 71-87v. (1c)

**Date:** S. IX/X

**Codicological context:** It appears that the first half of the manuscript dated from an earlier time (S. IX/X) whilst the second half included texts from a much later date.[12] This first section contians lives and passions of early saints and martyrs including Eustachius, Cassian, Saturnus and Thecla—early Christian visionaries; the *Vita et Visio S. Fursei*, the *VB*, the *Visio Rothario* [sic], and lastly the *VW*.

## XVIII: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Reg. Lat. 479, fol. 25-32v.[13] (3d)

**Date:** S. IX/X

**Size:** 207/212 × 143/147mm

**Codicological context:** The manuscript contains a seventeenth-century compilation of eight fragments, including *vitae*, descriptions of miracles; fragments of sermon collections and the *VB*. The *VB* forms its own quire of eight, was written in a different hand from surrounding texts and was heavily trimmed to fit into the current codex. Some division of the text block was made through the extension of *litterae notabiliores* into the margins.

**Signs of use:** The text has been corrected at a later time and fol 28 sustained water(?) damage.

[11] T. Smith, *Catalogus librorum mss. bibliothecae Cottonianae* (1696), pp. 67-8. The manuscript is not discussed in the more recent catalogue of the Cotton manuscripts.

[12] Including the *Life* of Edward the Confessor and conciliar legislation from the time of Henry III.

[13] A. Wilmart, *Codices Reginenses Latini*, vol. 2 codices 251-656 (Vatican, 1945), p. 652.

## XIX: Paris, Bibliothèque National 2846, fol. 125v-135. (4a)

**Date:** S. X

**Provenance:** Composite S. IX/X.

**Codicological context:** The *VB* (with subscription clause) is found within a collection of sermons, theological writings, *vitae* and histories. The composite volume contains Augustine's *De predestinatione sanctorum*, sentences drawn from Jerome, Isidore, Augustine and Gregory the Great on the mortification of the body and the Last Judgement.

**Decoration and script:** Contains a drawing of St Peter's keys.

**Signs of use:** No section division but well punctuated.

## III: London, Lambeth Palace 173, fol. 192-202.[14] (1b)

**Date:** S. XI$^{in}$

**Size:** 240 × 115mm

**Codicological context:** This manuscript is made up of three sections. Section 1 contains Eugippius's History, book 5; Section 2 contains a collection of *vitae* and *visiones*; and Section 3 is a sermon for the feast of All Saints. Section 2 was probably spent some period of time as a separate booklet. The first page (fol. 157) of this section, in which the *VB* is

[14]H. J. Todd, *A Catalogue of the Archiepiscopal Manuscripts in the Library at Lambeth Palace* (London, 1912), p. 21 lists the contents of the manuscripts while more detail is provided in M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace: The Medieval Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 272-274.

located, is blank and it was written in a different hand from the preceeding section. Section 2 contains the *Vita S. Abrahae* and the *Vita S. Pelagiae*, the *Vita Fursei*, the *Vision of Fulrad*, the *VB*, the *VW*, the *Vision of Dryhthelm*, and two other visions of Bede which occurs in *HE*, V. 13 and *HE*, V.14 and finally the life of Antigonus and Eufraxia which ends imperfectly. A second scribe took over at the beginning of the *Vita Fursei*. This text is particularly well placed since it acts as a bridge between the previous hagiographical texts and the visions which follow. The *vita* of Antigonus and Eufraxia has several points of contact with the *VB* and may have been chosen intentionally. It contains lessons on the necessity of poverty within a monastic community, mention of church lamps and oil, lessons on humility despite nobility and their feast was celebrated in March.

**Decoration and script:** There is no section division in the *VB* and no subscription clause. The *VB* begins with a nine-line high red initial 'M'. Each of the vision-texts began with a large decorated initial although the initial has been torn out at the beginning of the *VF*. The *VB* also contains an illustration of St Peter's keys on fol 197v. Most letters have been retouched in blacker ink.

**Signs of use:** In comparison with the other visions contained in this manuscript, the *VB* has the fewest corrections and marginal notes. There is however evidence of several different readers who have left their own distinct set of markings in the margins of the text. Raphael's healing the abbot of Méobecq, the battle for Barontus's soul with the demons, his soul being lifted up by Raphael, the chanting Barontus hears on his way to heaven, the details of Barontus's penance and the names of the bishops in hell are all episodes which received attention from later readers. A much later hand (*ca.* S. XV?) has scribbled upside–down in some of the margins of the pages. The content is unrelated to the text.

## IX: Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 23,591 (ZZ. 591), fol. 61-68v.[15] (3b$^2$)

**Date:** S. XI

**Provenance:** From the collection of Ludovic de Keller.

**Codicological context:** This is a composite manuscript in which the *VB* was inserted into the *Vitae Patrum*.

## XXVII: Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 23,757. (Z.Z. 757), fol. 190.[16]

**Date:** The one folio fragment of the vision dates from S. XI but is found in a book compiled in S. XV.

**Codicological context:** The *VB*'s present codicological context was not its original one given the variety of texts found in the manuscript however it is closely representative of other manuscript contents in which we find the VB: it contains selections from the *Vitae Patrum*, *De S. Barontio*, *Vita S. Antonio*, etc. and the 'Speculum regum compositum per magistrum Gotfridum Viterbiensem.'

[15]Halm, Keinz, Meyer and Thomas, *Catalogus codicum Latin. Monac.*, vol 2:2 (Munich, 1876), p. 162.
[16]Halm et al., *Catalogus codicum Latin. Monac.* II: 4, p. 91.

## XXV: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 367, fol. 48v.[17]

**Date:** S. XI$^{med}$

**Provenance:** Worcester booklist

**Codicological contents:** The verso of one folio of this manuscript contains a booklist thought to have been from Worcester Cathedral. The list included a Passional in English, Gregory's *Dialogues* in English, an English martyrology, a pastoral and the *VB*. All other works were in English.

## XI: London, British Library Cotton Tiberius C. XI, fol. 22v-24r, now fol. 25-27v.

**Date:** S. XI$^{ex}$

**Size:** 285 × 195mm

**Codicological context:** an early shortened version of the text but one which was unique (not that found in the family of 3c). The incipit provides details contained in the opening chapters of the text: *Visio baronti monachi longoretensis coenobi* and the subscription clause has also been left off. Initially the manuscript would seem to provide an interesting codicological context for the *VB*.[18] In this manuscript the text is preceeded by Einhard's Life of Charlemagne and followed by musical notation, a commentary on the Holy Trinity, the Chronicle of Regino of Prum and the *Annales Xantenses*. However, examination of the manuscript reveals that the *Vita Caroli Magni* is not contemporary with the *VB*, and

[17]M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Cambridge Corpus Christi College*, vol. II (Cambridge, 1912), p. 200.
[18]Smith, *Catalogus*, pp. 25-6.

the numes and texts which follow the *VB* are in a different hand. Furthermore, each folio has been separated and integrated into a paper boarder. Thus any evidence for the *VB*'s medieval codicological context has been lost.

**Decoration and script:** The text has some decoration. The incipit is in red. The 'M' of Memorare is a two-line high letter in red with silver filling (partially effaced) in the gaps formed by the letter. Display capitals are used to the end of the first line. There may have been other decoration which has been cut out now. The text is executed in a neat, upright hand which contrasts with the irregularity of the parchment's size and shape and ruling. There are capital letters for the start of each sentence but beyond this there is no division of the text. The text has been corrected carefully in several places.

**Signs of use:** The description of the soul leaving the body is underlined, but it is impossible to date when this was added to the text. some corrections; underlining on one page only—the sections on the tribunal, soul's appearance and removal from body.

## XV: Paris, Bibliothèque National 12596, fol. 160v-165v. ($3c^2$)

**Date:** S. $XI^{ex}$

**Provenance:** Contains pressmarks of St Maur des Fosses (88), afterwards St Germain des Prés (n. 1109, then n. 1042)

**Codicological context:** A compiler made the obvious connection between Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* and the *VB*. The *Life of Fronto* immediately preceeds the *VB* and it is followed by other *vitae*, however the current codicology was not original since the *VB*'s quire and hand is different from surrounding texts although contemporary with them. The contents of this volume exemplify what would become a typical context for early visions in the late eleventh through fifteenth centuries.

**Decoration and script:** Not decorated and no illustration of the keys.

**Signs of use:** Many annotations made but were subsequently scribbled out (esp. 158r). Next to *VB* 13 (on obedient servants) there is a large decorated X.

## II: Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale 1412, fol. 96-110v. (1a*)[19]

**Date:** fol. 1-79 (S. XI); fol. 80-120 (S. XII)

**Provenance:** Manuscript was at St Thierry, Rheims (no. 64). A sixteenth-century note on fol. 80 notes a connection between these texts and an older manuscript at St Remigius). The codex was later transfered to the municipal library.

**Codicological context:** The earlier section contains the *Life of John the Baptist* and fragments of a sermon to which was added the later section of the manuscript (copied from a codex of St Remigius's) in which the *VB* is preserved. This section contains Bede, *HE* V. 13-15, his redaction of the *VF* (*HE* III.19), then the *VB* with subscription clause and Paul the Deacon's *History* (BHL 8121).

## XVI: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163 (S.C. 2016)[20]

**Date:** S. XII$^{in}$ (c.1100)

**Provenance:** St Peter's monastery, Peterborough; given by John Barneston in 1605 to the Bodleian.

[19]H. Loriquet, *Catalogue Général des Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques de France*, vol. XXXIX, Reims (Paris, 1904), 647-9.
[20]Madan and Craster, *Summary Catalogue*, p. 165.

**Codicological context:** Fol. 251 contains a list of seventy books probably representing the library holdings of Peterborough Abbey.

## XII: London, British Library Harley 4719, fol. 117v-120.[21] (3c)

**Date:** S. XII

**Size:** 380 × 240mm

**Codicological context:** This manuscript contains the compressed version of the *VB*. It is composed of six books divided thematically: Book I contains Egyptian *Lives of the Fathers*. Book II, quotations on paradise; Book III *vitae*, including Fronto, Macarius of Egypt, and Antony. Book IV, prophesies on the future, Book V is devoted to visions and VI to the lives of holy women. A more detailed look at Book V shows that it contains the V*ita S. Macharii Romani*, a sermon of Bede on the living and the dead, a series of visions including the *VB*, the *VF*, Bede's vision of a soldier (*HE* V. 13) and a short tract on penance.

**Decoration and script:** It was executed and corrected in a neat, even hand and was written in Italy. The text block was divided into two columns but the text itself was not divided into chapters. Each sentence which begins at the start of a line has its *litterae notabiliores* extended into the margin. The rubric refers to the text as a *visio* and spells Barontus as *Baruncius*. In addition to the rubric, the text is also decorated by an eight-line high D at the beginning of the text (Dum sacratissimo). The belly of this letter is foliated with a green, red, blue and yellow pattern.

**Signs of use:** The text has few corrections in the form of cancelled letters. They appear to be contemporary, and overall the text reveals no apparent signs of use.

[21] *Catalogue of the Harleian MSS.* vol III, p. 195 and W. Levison, 'Aus Englischen Bibliotheken', *Neues Archiv*, XXXII (1906-7), pp. 381-5.

## XIV: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana lat. 5411, fol. 277-279v. ($3c^1$)

**Date:** S. XII

**Codicological context:** Contains over 50 *vitae* including Maurus and Fronto and the *VB*. A fragment of the *Vita Antonii* continues where the vision ends.

**Decoration and script:** Italian,[22] exceedingly grand in proportion but not in manner it was executed. The text begins with a four-line hight initial D which begins the shortened version of the *VB*. Space was left for the rubric to be added but was never completed.

**Signs of use:** The truncated text of the *VB* was highly abbreviated and contained no diples. This is to be expected since the large format suggests it was not designed for practical handling. It was a volume of poor quality parchment, stained with ink.

## XX: Paris, Bibliothèque National 11885, fol. 16v-20v.[23] (4b)

**Date:** S. XII

**Provenance:** From St Wandrigesil, then St Germain-des-Prés.

**Codicological context:** This composite manuscript contains material dating from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. The manuscript's content has been dramatically altered by a modern binding technique of combining many different manuscripts. As far as could be reasonably establish through quiring and script, the *VB* had been bound on either side with *vitae* at the time of its copying but it is interesting to note that this collection includes the *VF* and the *Vita Aldegundis*.

[22]Levison, *VB*, p. 374.
[23]Krusch, *Neues Archiv* XVIII, pp. 583 and 596 discusses the Paris mss. in which the *VB* appears.

**Decoration and script:** The text begins with a large decorated M in red and blue, in keeping with surrounding texts. St Peter's keys have been painted in the margin and a cross in the text marks where they belong. The final line of each page has decorative descenders.

**Signs of use:** The text contains much underlining and marginalia, marking the names included, Barontus's ill health, the penance he receives (fol. 19r) and the bishops in hell. There are many modern annotations in the margins of the *VB*. The subscription clause on fol. 20v was marked 'nota'.

## XXIV: Bamberg, Michelsberg, MS XXVII, Book Catalogue of the monastery of St Michael.[24]

**Date:** The date of catalogue is S. XII; written under Abbot Wolfram, (1112-1123) but this gives no indication of the date of the *Visio Paronti*[sic].

**Provenance:** Bamberg

**Codicological context:** The *VB* is listed as a single work, preceded by a Greek Psalter and is followed by Cassiodorus on the Psalter. The list does not provide any further details as to the text's codicology.

## XXI: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I 3207, fol. 52-60v.[25]

**Date:** S. XII

[24] Becker, *Catalogi*, p. 193, n.162; Bresslau, 'Aufzeichnungen', p. 166, n.121.
[25] formerly n. 8623-26. See Van den Gheyn, *Catalogue*, vol. V (1905), pp. 182-3.

**Size:** 276 × 188mm

**Provenance:** Mariam Biburch, Collegii Societatis Iesu Ingolstad, Bollandists

**Codicological context:** It appears within a collection of the *Vitae Patrum* and *verba seniorum*. The *vita* of Fronto is included. No other visions are found in this manuscript.

## X: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 579, fol. 28-34v. ($3b^3$)

**Date:** S. XIII

**Codicological context:** This codex contains the *Visions of Tundal*, *Wetti*, the *VB* and the *Visio Beati Esdrae*, a Latin translation of a vision which is very closely affiliated with the *Vision of Tundal*. This was very much a thematic collection in which the scribe was attuned to parallels between visions.

## XVI: Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, VIII B.10.[26] ($3c^3$)

**Date:** S. XIV

**Size:** 311 × 256mm

**Codicological context:** The *VB* appears in its now familiar place. It is nestled within a small collection of visions but surrounded by selections from the *Vitae Patrum*. A more

[26] A. Poncelet, 'Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum Bibliothecarum Neapolitanarum', *Analecta Bollandiana* 30 (1911), pp.173-177.

detailed look at the contents shows that the text again finds company with some of the same *vitae* it was first bound with. These include: Evagrius's *Vita S. Antonii*, *Vita S. Pachomii*, *Vita S. Frontonii*, *Vita et conversatio servi Dei Macharii Romani heremitae* (in which Raphael appears as a guide in the other world). There follows several other early saints' lives including Macarius of Alexandria before we find the cluster of visions: the *VB*, Walahfrid's *VW* and the *Vita vel obitus Fursei.* The *lives* of women saints including Marina, Eufrosina, Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, Euphraxia, etc. then follow. Interestingly the collection also includes the *History of Barlaam and Iosephat*, a ninth-century Greek text which also contained a voyage to the other world although influenced by a very different tradition to those with which this thesis is concerned.

## XIII: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

## Urb. lat. 396, fol. 162-165v. (3c*)

**Date:** S. XV

**Provenance:** *VB* was copied from BL Harley 4719.

**Codicological context:** The *VB* appears within collection of *vitae* and a vision of Bede's, along with excerpts from Gregory of Tours's *Life of the Fathers* and poetry on paradise.

**Decoration and script:** The text was copied onto fine paper in italic script. This manuscript is notable primarily to show that there was still interest in the text and in copying it as late as the fifteenth century.

**Signs of use:** The text bears no signs of use.

## XVII: Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, VIII B. 27.[27] (3c[3]*)

**Date:** S. XV

**Size:** 265 × 236mm

**Codicological context:** This manuscript is an almost identical to Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, VIII B.10, above.

[27]Poncelet, 'Catalogus', pp. 181-184, esp. 183.

# A schematic representation of a sample of the *Visio Baronti (VB)*'s textual companions

| cension of *VB*: | 3b | ? | 2 | 1a | 1a* | 1b |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MS.** | Brussels BRA 8216-18 | Reichenau Booklist | St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 573 | St Petersburg Lat. O.v. I, 5 | Rheims BM 1412 | London Lambeth Palace 173 |
| **Date** | S. IX$^{in}$ | S. IX | S. IX$^{ex}$ | S. IX | S. XI | S. XI$^{in}$ |
| **Contents** | *Vitae Patrum* | | misc. *Vitae* (in Verse) | | Vision from Bede (*H.E.* v.13) | *Vitae Patrum* |
| | " | Julian of Toledo *Prognosticon* | Heito's *Visio Wettini* | | Vision from Bede (*H.E.* v.14) | |
| | " | Gregory the Great *Dialogi Book IV* | Walafrid Strabo's *Visio Wettini* | | Vision from Bede (*H.E.* v.15) | *Vita Fursei* |
| | " | *Vita Fursei* | *Visio cuiusdam pauperculae mulieris* | | Bede's *Visio Fursei* | *Visio Fulradi* |
| **Location of VB** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** |
| **Contents** | *Vitae Patrum* | Visions from Bede | Bede's *Carmen de die Iudicii* | *Visio Rotcharii* | writings of Paul the Deacon | Heito's *Visio Wettini* |
| | " | Heito's *Visio Wettini* | *Vita S. Leudegarii* (in Verse) | | | 3 visions from Bede |
| | " | Walafrid Strabo's *Visio Wettini* | misc. *vitae* | | | *Vitae Patrum* |

| cension of *VB*: | 1c | 3c | 3c | 3b$^3$ | 3c$^3$ | 3c$^{3*}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MS.** | London, BL, Cotton Otho A. XIII. | London BL Harley 4719 | Vatican Urb. lat. 396 | Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 579 | Naples BN VIII B.10 | Naples BN VIII B.27 |
| **Date** | S. IX/X | S. XII | S. XV | S. XIII | S. XIV | S. XV |
| **Contents** | *Vitae Patrum* | *Vitae Patrum* | *Vitae Patrum* | | *Vitae Patrum* | *Vitae Patrum* |
| | " | Prophesies | " | | " | " |
| | " | *Vita (S. Macarii)* | misc. *Vitae* | *Visio Tnugdali* | *Vita S. Macharii Romani* | *Vita S. Macharii Romani* |
| | *Vita et Visio Fursei* | Sermon of Bede | *Vision of Drychthelm* | *Visio Wettini* | *Vitae Patrum* | *Vitae Patrum* |
| **Location of VB** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** | ***VB*** |
| **Contents** | *Visio Rotcharii* | *Visio Fursei* | *Visio Fursei* | *Visio Beati Esdrae* | Heito's *Visio Wettini* | Heito's *Visio Wettini* |
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