



24.01.12 Kramer et al. (eds.), Monastic Communities and Canonical Clergy in the Carolingian World (780-840)

Kramer, Rutger, Emilie Kurdziel, and Graeme Ward (eds). *Monastic Communities and Canonical Clergy in the Carolingian World (780-840): Categorizing the Church*. Medieval Monastic Studies. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2022. Pp. 454. €120 (hardback). ISBN: 978-2-503-57935-1 (hardback).

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At the outset, it is nice to recognize that this book is dedicated to Miriam Czock and Janneke Raaijmakers, two young colleagues who have made substantial contributions to the subject of the volume and who have been taken from us prematurely.

The series of articles and case studies published here, on the one hand, on the Carolingian Church Reform and on the distinction between monks and monastic communities, and, on the other hand, on the so-called *clerici canonici* and their communities, were presented, discussed, and developed during two workshops. The first was held in Vienna in May 2017, sponsored by the SFB “Visions of Community,” and the second in Poitiers in October 2018, sponsored by the Centre d’études supérieures de civilisation médiévale and by the program “Aquitania Monastica.” Further results of this same project will soon appear in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* (2023). The advances in research on monastic and canonical communities in Carolingian Europe are presented in sixteen contributions, divided into four parts: “Origins”; “Old Norms, New Boundaries”; “Reception and Reflection”; “Reform in Practice”. The table of contents is available at <https://www.brepols.net/products/IS-9782503579351-1>. The subject of this book is, above all, the canonical clergy, given the problematic definition of their status and their role in the Church.

The introduction by Rutger Kramer, Emilie Kurdziel, and Graeme Ward (“Institutions, Identities, and the Realization of Reform: An Introduction”) highlights recent research regarding the definition of identities both monastic and canonical, the re-examination of texts and the taking into account of hitherto neglected ones, and the attention given to local initiatives in the process of reform and the study of sources; and it comments on the main texts produced or used by the reformers (mainly the *Regula Benedicti* and the *Institutio canonicorum*). Charles Mériaux (“The Monastic Reforms of 816-819: Ideals and Reality”) skillfully reviews the historiographical results of previous research carried out since the founding works of Josef Semmler on reformist writings and writings resulting from the reform, the reception of the reform, and the relations between monasticism and society. His chapter is meant to build a sort of historiographical bridge between the approaches that Semmler developed, and the approaches that are currently popular among scholars in France.

Regarding the first and rare occurrences of the term *canonicus* in sixth century Merovingian Francia, Sebastian Scholz’s contribution (“The Organization of the Clergy and the *canonici* in the Sixth Century”) cleverly closes the debate. Recalling that Rudolf Schieffer had clarified that there could not be a community based on a written norm but only a community created by the daily celebration of worship in common, Scholz shows that when the sources refer to a *vita communis*, they make no mention to *canonici*; therefore, the term only seems to designate clerics in registers maintained by bishops, of which the *mensa canonicorum* is only one aspect.

Albrecht Diem (“Choreography and Confession: The *Memoriale qualiter* and

Carolingian Monasticism”), instead, studies an early Carolingian text transmitted in thirty-nine manuscripts. Despite its success and spread, the *Memoriale qualiter* has received little attention apart from a study by Claudio Morgand; here instead it is discussed in detail. Addressed to a community of monks, it is divided into two parts that put a lot of stress on a liturgized daily routine that requires monks to confess five times a day.

The recurrent question discussed in the volume of differentiation vs confusion between monks and canons in Carolingian times is sometimes answered with comments on texts that might be differently translated or interpreted. This is the case of Brigitte Meijns (“Confusion and the Need to Choose? A Fresh Look at the Objectives Behind the Carolingian Reform Efforts in Capitularies and Conciliar Legislation [c. 750–813]”), who analyses Alcuin’s famous letter of 802 mentioning a *tertius gradus*, and Amalarius of Metz’s remark that *nostra ecclesia habet separatim degentes in contemplativa vita, ut sunt monachi, et habet separatim morantes in activa vita, ut sunt canonici*. Translating the last part of the quotation by a mix of those who live a contemplative life and those devoted to an active life, she underlines that there is no confusion or crisis in the Carolingian Church in this regard, but only a will, in their categorization process, by the ecclesiastical authorities to impose a choice between the two ways of life.

In her successful attempt to define what in the Carolingian period a *canonicus* was, Emilie Kurdziel (“What is a *canonicus*? The Carolingians and the Rethinking of Ecclesiastical *ordines*”) clearly shows the equivalence of the two terms in the normative texts and concludes that the reform begun in the 740s was new and imposed common life on the *canonici* combined with the performance of the divine office, which induced architectural and urban changes. Her definition seems crucial, given the apparently fluid use of the terms *canonici* and *clerici* in normative sources.

Another sensitive question raised in the volume is that of the public targeted by the *Institutio canonicorum*. Rutger Kramer and Veronika Wieser (“Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Episcopal Self-Reflection and the Use of Church Fathers in the *Institutio canonicorum*”) advance very convincing arguments to affirm that this text was written for the bishops, responsible for the communities of canons, and not for the communities themselves.

In Michael Eber’s contribution (“Loose Canonesses? (Non-)Gendered Aspects of the Aachen *Institutiones*”), the close relationship between the two texts *Institutio canonicorum* and *Institutio sanctimonialium*, intended to regulate those religious communities not subject to Benedict’s Rule, is explored. There is some evidence that immediately after 816 the two *Institutiones* texts were transmitted together, creating a sort of unified normative framework that is here read and discussed in conjunction.

Stephen Ling (“Superior to Canons, and remaining inferior to Monks: Monks, Canons and Alcuin’s Third Order”) interprets the already mentioned quote of the Amalarius of Metz’s remark in a different way, translating it as “there were those who mix these ways living contemplative and active life.” For him, Alcuin and Amalarius share the same tripartite vision of community life, and the third category described by Amalarius is that of those who mix the two lifestyles. Therefore, the reforms of 816/817 would express the condemnation of this mixed way of life.

Cinzia Grifoni’s comparison (“This is a Cleric: Hrabanus Maurus’s *De institutione clericorum*, Clerical Monks, and the Carolingian Church”) between the *Institutione canonicorum* and the *De institutione clericorum* shows that Hrabanus Maurus’s concept of an ideal cleric was tailored for clerical monks, who in the *Institutio canonicorum* had received no mention; the Carolingian intellectual also regarded clerical education as the crucial issue, producing a companion which could support monks who had been entrusted with liturgical and pastoral care in the fulfilment of their duties.

Ingrid Rembold (“The ‘Apostates’ of Saint-Denis: Reforms, Dissent and Carolingian Monasticism”) deals with conflicts and attempted reforms in early ninth century, picking up the case study of Saint-Denis, where the reformed Benedictine monks chose to identify with their own distinguished liturgical tradition and on the practice of

the *laus perennis*, rather than the Aachen councils.

Johanna Jebe (“Debating the *una regula*: Reflections on Monastic Life in Ninth-Century Manuscripts from St Gall”) puts a lot of emphasis on codex Sang. 914 and its *Regula Benedicti*, a copy of a lost Reichenau manuscript that is supposed to have been very close to the original Benedictine Rule sent to the court by Montecassino, but also on later Carolingian copies of the *Regula* in the manuscript production at the St Gall scriptorium, especially in Sang. 915. Analysis on this last codex clearly shows that monks in St Gall did not consider the Benedictine version as the exclusive rule, but dynamically collected rules and texts that offered spiritual instructions for godly life.

Miriam Czock’s main interest (“Monks Pray, Priests Teach, Canons Sing and the Laity Listens: The *Regula Benedicti* and Conceptual Diversity of Sacred Space in Carolingian Discourse”) is the spatial separation of the monks from the outside world to perform the power of spiritual purity in their prayers; she devotes her attention to the analysis of Chapter 52 of the *Regula Benedicti* and its influence on the Carolingian debate on the church as a sacred space.

Renie Choy’s contribution (“Cathedral and Monastic: Applying Baumstark’s Categories to the Carolingian Divine Office”) deals again with practical aspects of the reform. Her interest is mainly focused on the development of daily prayer in the Western tradition and on the Carolingian changes to the Divine Office; she discusses novelties and changes through a detailed comment on Walafrid Strabo’s *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, a history of liturgy’s development from the middle of the ninth century when, according to Walafrid, liturgy had attained a perfection.

Graeme Ward (“Implementing Liturgical Change in Ninth-Century Lyon: Authority, Antiphoners, and Aachen 816”) offers a different case-study from early Carolingian Lyon, focusing his attention on Archbishop Agobards’s substitution of Amalarius of Metz and on the resistance of the local clergy, namely of deacon Florus, who produced seven polemical texts. One of them, *De divina psalmodia*, which stresses the importance of performing correctly divine singing by diligently follow the antiphoner locally adopted in the time of Agobard, is considered as the expression of local resistance to Amalarius and to emperor Louis the Pious.

Even the last article that closes this volume is dedicated to liturgy and gives further evidence through another case study. Arthur Westwell (“Ordering the Church in the *Ordines Romani*”) offers comparative analysis on early Carolingian manuscripts that show how permeable boundaries were between classical liturgical texts and monastic rules. Moreover, in his contribution, he challenges the idea that Carolingian liturgical reform was carried out with the imposition of Roman texts by the imperial court on a passive audience; evidence through manuscripts of the *ordines romani* shows that liturgical texts were newly edited and conceived to meet local needs.

Even if in this review I have decided to shortly highlight every high-quality contribution for the sake of completeness, the book is more than a simple juxtaposition of articles; most of the papers have been discussed among specialists during the workshops and afterwards, as it is clearly stated at the beginning of nearly each article. One might expect a final contribution giving provisional synthesis, if not conclusions, but the multifaced aspects of the Carolingian Reform discussed in the volume, and the different points of view that have been raised, could hardly be summarized in a final article. Scholars will find in this solid and rich volume a re-assessment of the goals and the impact of the Carolingian Church Reforms in many respects, while other characteristics will certainly emerge in the monographic forthcoming issue in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*.

