

LIVING RELIQUARIES: MONASTICISM AND THE CULT OF THE SAINTS  
IN THE AGE OF LOUIS THE PIOUS

by

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ABSTRACT

**Living Reliquaries: Monasticism and the Cult of the Saints in the Age of Louis the Pious**

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At the genesis of this dissertation is the observation that numerous Carolingian monasteries of the ninth century were more than just enclaves for a spiritual elite following the Rule of St. Benedict but also functioned as popular religious shrines. These communities almost invariably identified with a patron saint particular to their institutions, whose bodily remains they protected and memorialized, and whose cults they actively promoted. This contrasts sharply with the early Merovingian period when monasteries and the shrines of the saints were mostly separate endeavors. My study aims to understand how and why this development came about, and what, if anything, the cult of the saints and their relics had to do with the monastic life and its ideals. It also serves to complicate the prevailing view that Carolingian monasteries were essentially “Benedictine” and functioned foremost as “powerhouses of prayer” for the aristocratic society that supported them.

A preliminary chapter provides historical context and introduces key themes by analyzing Queen Balthild’s decision, ca. 650, to organize the premier saints’ shrines of the Frankish realm as monasteries. The remaining chapters are then devoted to detailed case studies of the

monastery-shrines of Saint-Wandrille, Saint-Denis, and Saint Gall, and are based on close readings of hagiographical works composed during the early decades of the ninth century in the midst of major institutional transformations. While scholars have previously focused on the adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict by these communities in the context of an imperially sponsored monastic reform, the changes are shown here to have been much more comprehensive, entailing large-scale building projects, artistic enhancements, liturgical renewal, and the production of new hagiographic literature. The larger aim, it is argued, was to create integrated complexes of sacred space, more worthy of the relics housed within, as the basis for Christian communities that comprised more than just their monks. The reformed monasteries themselves are represented, in effect, as living reliquaries, whose sacred duty was to protect, honor, and mediate the power of the relics entrusted to their care.

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For me the solitude afforded by academic research and writing is among its most appealing aspects. Still, no man is an island, and there are many individuals and institutions who assisted me along the way without whom this project would never have come to fruition.

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When I first came to Toronto eight years ago, I myself was a monk, a member of the Benedictine community of Saint Meinrad in Indiana. This dissertation would not have been possible without their support, both financial and spiritual. I am especially indebted to Father Harry Hagan, who as novice master encouraged my interest in things academic and provided me the time to study and learn the languages I would need.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| AASS               | <i>Acta Sanctorum</i>   |
| AASS OSB           | <i>Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti</i> . Edited by Jean Mabillon. 9 vols. Paris, 1668–1701.   |
| BHL                | <i>Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis</i> . Subsidia hagiographica 6. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1901. |
| CCM                | <i>Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum</i>  |
| CSEL               | <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>   |
| MGH Auct. ant.     | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores antiquissimi</i>   |
| MGH Capit.         | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Capitularia regum Francorum</i>   |
| MGH Conc.          | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Concilia</i>  |
| MGH DD Kar.        | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata Pippin, Karlmann und Karl der Große</i>   |
| MGH DD LdF         | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata Ludwig der Fromme</i>   |
| MGH DD Mer.        | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata Merowinger</i>  |
| MGH Epp.           | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae (in Quarto)</i>   |
| MGH Poetae         | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Poetae Latini medii aevi</i>  |
| MGH SS             | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores (in Folio)</i>   |
| MGH SS rer. Germ.  | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi</i>   |
| MGH SS rer. Merov. | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>   |
| PL                 | <i>Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina</i> . Edited by J.-P. Migne. 221 vols. Paris, 1841–1864.  |

## INTRODUCTION

The Plan of Saint Gall, an extraordinary drawing of an ideal monastery produced around the year 830, is one of the most iconic documents of the Carolingian age. Not surprisingly, it has been the basis for numerous studies about ninth-century monastic life.<sup>1</sup> The Plan depicts a sprawling complex that incorporates the monastic living spaces with spaces that are more mundane, such as various workshops, animal stables, a school, alms house, and lodgings for distinguished guests, lay workers, and managers of the abbey's estates. At the center of the Plan lies a quadrangular cloister—an arrangement of the four principal monastic buildings (church, dormitory, refectory, and store room) that form a sequestered inner court reserved exclusively for monks and serving to buffer them from the activities of the world outside.<sup>2</sup> Modern scholars have seen in this *claustrum*, which was an innovation in its day, the epitome of Carolingian monasticism. On the one hand, it provided

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include Walter Horn and Ernst Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Richard E. Sullivan, "What Was Carolingian Monasticism? The Plan of St. Gall and the History of Monasticism," in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History: Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander C. Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 251–87; Giles Constable, "Carolingian Monasticism as Seen in the Plan of St. Gall," in *Le monde carolingien: Bilan, perspectives, champs de recherche. Actes du colloque international de Poitiers, Centre d'Études supérieures de Civilisation médiévale, 18–20 novembre 2004*, ed. Wojciech Falkowski and Yves Sassier (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 199–217. Although the Plan was likely not intended to be built as drawn, Saint Gall did construct a sizeable new church during the abbacy of Gozbert (816–836), to whom the Plan is dedicated; on this, see Chapter 4 below.

<sup>2</sup> An interactive reproduction of the Plan along with schematic interpretations can be viewed at the website: [http://www.stgallplan.org/en/index\\_plan.html](http://www.stgallplan.org/en/index_plan.html).

a stable inner environment where the monastic ideal of the secluded pursuit of Christian perfection—increasingly identified with observance of the Rule of St. Benedict—could flourish; on the other, it facilitated the close assimilation of monasteries within a society for which they now played a vital part.<sup>3</sup>

There is still another dimension to the Plan, however, that deserves our consideration. Not only are its monastic quarters juxtaposed with the secular world outside. They are also integrated with a sacred world imagined to exist beyond. One side of the cloister is formed by a grand basilica of monumental proportions, 300 feet in length and 40 feet wide, containing within its sanctuary a memorial to honor and protect the remains of the abbey's founder and patron, St. Gallus. Christian belief held that the souls of such saints, although dead in body, lived on in heaven with God, making their relics a privileged point of contact between the earthly and the divine.<sup>4</sup> On the drawing, the main approach to this church is designated as a road for the crowds of pilgrims expected to come and offer their devotions.<sup>5</sup> Upon entering the structure, they were to be led down an aisle of side altars dedicated to various saints before arriving at the tomb itself in the crypt below the main altar. Here they might hope for a miracle of the kind described in the *Vita et miracula sancti Galli*, composed

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<sup>3</sup> See especially Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, c. 750–900, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 636–40; Sullivan, "What Was Carolingian Monasticism?" Both articles remain the most widely cited introductions to ninth-century monastic life. On the origins of the monastic cloister, see Michel Lauwers, "Constructing Monastic Space in the Early Medieval West (5th–12th Centuries)," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism*, ed. Alison I. Beach and Isabelle Cochelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Arnold Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien: Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994), 102–22.

<sup>5</sup> "The way to this holy temple is open to all the crowds, by which they may bring their vows and afterwards return home gladdened (*omnibus ad s[an]c[tu]m turbis patet haec via templum; quo sua vota ferant unde hilares redeant*)." See Horn and Born, *Plan of St. Gall*, vol. 1, 128.

about the same time as the Plan.<sup>6</sup> This building, the largest on the diagram, is certainly more than the simple oratory prescribed by the Rule of St. Benedict, which Saint Gall at this time purported to follow.<sup>7</sup> As conceived by contemporaries, the institution was not just a monastery but more importantly, if size is any indication of value, a popular religious shrine.

The Plan of Saint Gall is one of a kind, but monastery-shrines like Saint Gall in the Frankish empire were far from unique. Examples abound from the seventh to the ninth centuries of monastic life instituted at ancient pilgrimage sites,<sup>8</sup> of long-established monasteries building shrines of their own,<sup>9</sup> and of communities brought into being coincident

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<sup>6</sup> On this text by Walahfrid Strabo, see the discussion in Chapter 4 below.

<sup>7</sup> “Oratorium hoc sit quod dicitur, nec ibi quicquam aliud geratur aut condatur (The oratory should be what it is called [i.e., a place of prayer], and nothing else should be done or kept there).” *Regula Benedicti*, ch. 52 (De oratorio monasterii), ed. Timothy Fry in *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981), 254.

<sup>8</sup> Queen Balthild, ca. 657, prescribed that monasteries be established at the “senior basilicas of the saints,” referring to **Saint-Martin of Tours**, **Saint-Denis of Paris**, **Saint-Germain of Auxerre**, **Saint-Aignan of Orléans**, **Saint-Médard of Soissons**, and **Saint-Pierre-le-Vif of Sens**; see Chap. 1 below. Other basilical shrines that by the end of the ninth century are attested to have established monastic communities include **Saint-Avit of Orléans**, **Saint-Crépin-le-Grand of Soissons**, **Saint-Evre of Toul**, **Saint-Germain-des-Prés of Paris**, **Saint-Géry of Cambrai**, **Saint-Loup of Troyes**, **Saint-Lucien of Beauvais**, **Saint-Ouen of Rouen**, **Saint-Remi of Reims**, and **Saint-Vaast of Arras**.

<sup>9</sup> **Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire)**, founded in 651, by the turn of the eighth century was claiming the body of St. Benedict of Nursia. **Centula (Saint-Riquier)**, founded ca. 625, translated the body of its founder Richarius from the saint’s former hermitage sometime around the turn of the eighth century. **Elnone (Saint-Amand)**, founded in 634, established a shrine for its founder Amandus around the turn of the eighth century. **Fontenelle (Saint-Wandrille)**, founded ca. 649, established a shrine for its founder Wandrille of Verdun in 707; see Chap. 2 below. **Ganda (Sint-Baafs)** was founded by St. Amandus in the 630s; around the turn of the ninth century the relics of St. Bavo (d. 676), a hermit associated with the early monastery, were translated there from his hermitage. **Lobbes**, founded in 660, established a shrine in 823 for its second abbot, St. Ursmar (d. 713). **Subterius (Sainte-Glossinde)** in Metz, founded ca. 603, translated the relics of its foundress Glodesind to a shrine within the monastery church in 830. **Sithiu (Saint-Bertin)**, founded ca. 640, established a shrine for its second abbot Bertin most likely in 832 when the abbey was divided into separate communities of monks and canons. The abbey of **Prüm**, established in 721, acquired the bodies of the martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria from Rome in 844. **Sarchinium (Saint-Trond)**, established in 658, elevated the relics of its founder Trudo in 877. **Inden (Kornelimünster)**, the imperial abbey founded by Benedict of Aniane in 814, acquired the body of the martyred Pope Cornelius (d. 254) in 875. **Corbie**, founded by Queen Balthild ca. 657, in 893 procured the relics of St. Gentien (one of the founders of the church of Amiens, d. ca. 300).

with a new cult.<sup>10</sup> Dozens of monasteries in this period orchestrated the translation or elevation of saintly relics, constructed new churches to house them, adorned older sanctuaries with art and precious materials, commemorated their patron's memory with liturgical offices, staged annual feasts in their honor, recalled their deeds in a written Life, and compiled volumes of the posthumous miracles performed at their tombs. By the close of the Carolingian era there was scarcely a monastery that did not form its identity around the memory of a patron saint unique to its community, whose full corporeal relics it claimed to possess, and whose cult it actively promoted beyond the cloister walls.<sup>11</sup>

What did the veneration of relics have to do with the monastic life, traditionally understood as the pursuit of Christian perfection in seclusion from the outside world? This dissertation aims to more fully understand the close connection between monasticism and the cult of the saints in the early medieval Frankish kingdom which led to the emergence of monastery-shrines such as we find at Saint Gall. Not every case, of course, was the same. The cult of a founding saint likely meant something very different for its community than one based on relics imported from elsewhere, and there was great variation in the attention and resources invested by monasteries in venerating and promoting their peculiar saints. For this reason, concepts such as "monasticism" and "cult of the saints," useful though they may be, must give way to the study of specific monasteries and individual cults. In what follows, therefore, I limit my scope to detailed case studies of three institutions: Fontenelle (Saint-

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<sup>10</sup> Chrodegang of Metz in 765 obtained the bodies of St. Nazarius and St. Gorgon from Rome respectively for the newly established monasteries of **Lorsch** and **Gorze**. A monastery established at **Andage (Saint-Hubert)** in 817 at its founding obtained the body of St. Hubert (d. 727), former bishop of Tongres-Maastricht, from the cathedral of Liège. The monastery of **Glanfeuil** likely came into existence in 830 at the same time as the relics of St. Maurus (disciple of St. Benedict of Nursia) were allegedly discovered there.

<sup>11</sup> The examples given in the above notes are illustrative but hardly exhaustive of this phenomenon.

Wandrille), Saint-Denis, and Saint Gall. These were chosen because of the abundance of available sources as well as the unique situation each represents. Saint-Denis had long existed as a popular religious site dedicated to the memory of St. Dionysius (d. ca. 250), founder of the Parisian church, before the Merovingian monarchs in the seventh century established a permanent community there. Fontenelle, conversely, was founded in 646 as a monastery, and only in the eighth century did it institute a shrine based on the relics of its founder St. Wandrille and begin to promote his cult to a wider public. The history of Saint Gall is more ambiguous, for while the abbey was situated at the former hermitage and burial site of a seventh-century monk named Gallus, a permanent community developed only much later and appears to be posterior to the shrine itself. While the origins of these institutions and their relationships to their respective patrons are quite different, at the same time during the early decades of the ninth century each underwent a similar process of transformation. Not only did this include the reform of their monastic communities according to the Rule of St. Benedict but also an effort to enhance the prestige of their shrines by means of extensive building projects and the prolific production of new hagiography. It is this period of change, which culminated during the decade of the 830s, that will be the focus of the three case studies, and these will especially highlight the connection between the two aspects of monastic reform and the material enhancement of a cult.

Historians of monasticism have thus far had surprisingly little to say about the subject of monasteries as religious shrines or their setting for the cult of relics. Marilyn Dunn devoted several pages of her survey of early medieval monastic history to what she calls “basilical monasticism,” referring to the establishment of monasteries at the basilicas of major saints’ shrines, a practice prevalent in the Frankish kingdom from the middle of the

seventh century; Dunn's narrative stops, however, before the Carolingian period.<sup>12</sup> Albrecht Diem in several publications has contrasted the monasteries associated with St. Columbanus, where he argues the perception of sanctity was generated through the community's regular observance, with later developments in Frankish monasticism, whereby this sanctity came to be supplied by relics.<sup>13</sup> Julia M. H. Smith, historian of the cult of the saints, saw a prejudice in early monasticism (meaning the Egyptian-Lérins tradition) against the shrines of the saints which began to turn after the middle of the seventh century, a process she attributed to shifting attitudes in Christianity concerning the place of the dead among the living.<sup>14</sup>

Interpretations of Carolingian monastic life remain heavily influenced by the foundational work of Benedictine scholars from the early modern period to the twentieth century, who traced the origins of their religious order to the reforms of Charlemagne that raised the Rule of St. Benedict (*Regula Benedicti*) to the exclusive standard of monastic life in the West.<sup>15</sup> Subsequent research, both by lay and monk scholars, focused on the imperial

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<sup>12</sup> *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 90–93.

<sup>13</sup> See especially “Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man,” *Speculum* 82 (2007): 558–59; “The Rule of an ‘Iro-Egyptian’ Monk in Gaul: Jonas’ *Vita Iohannis* and the Construction of a Monastic Identity,” *Revue Mabillon* 80 (2008): 44–48.

<sup>14</sup> “Women at the Tomb: Access to Relic Shrines in the Early Middle Ages,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 163–80. There are also numerous studies from the perspectives of political history, social history, and historical anthropology that have investigated the cults of particular saints in their institutional settings (often, but not exclusively, monasteries), but the interest of these efforts is not on the development of monastic ideals or institutions for their own sake; excellent examples are Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of the Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Janneke Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda, c. 744–c. 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> For the historiography of early medieval monasticism, see Albrecht Diem and Claudia Rapp, “The Monastic Laboratory: Perspectives of Research in Late Antique and Early Medieval Monasticism,” in *Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism*, forthcoming; Giles Constable, “The Study of Monastic History Today,” in *Essays on the Reconstruction of Medieval History*, ed. Vaclav Mudroch and G. S. Couse (Montreal: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1974), 23–26. For an example of the older Benedictine approach, see Philibert Schmitz, O.S.B., *Histoire de*

legislation regulating monasticism, especially that of the Synod of Aachen held by Charles's son Louis in 816/817, considered as a program for monastic reform, and its key personality Benedict of Aniane, regarded as the second founder of the order after Benedict of Nursia, author of the Rule.<sup>16</sup> The second Benedict, through his own writings, also contributed to an understanding of subsequent Benedictinism within the tradition of the Desert Fathers and their ideal of the secluded pursuit of perfection through asceticism, prayer, and strict obedience to an abbot and normative rule of life.<sup>17</sup>

The phenomenon of monastery-shrines, with their focus on devotion to relics through elaborate liturgy, material splendor, and an openness to pilgrims and their care, in many ways confounds this desert ideal. The canon of monastic literature through which it was conveyed, in fact, has a rather negative appraisal of relic veneration and notions of the miraculous in general.<sup>18</sup> The conclusion of the *Life of Antony*, for example, represents the saint on his deathbed vehemently warning his disciples to bury him in a hidden place to prevent his

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*l'Ordre de Saint-Benoît*, vol. 1, *Origines, diffusion et constitution jusqu'au XIIIe siècle* (Les éditions de Maredsous, 1948).

<sup>16</sup> See especially the influential work of Josef Semmler (a lay scholar): "Benediktinische Reform und kaiserliches Privileg: Die Klöster im Umkreis Benedikts von Aniane," in *Società, istituzioni, spiritualità: studi in onore di Cinzio Violante*, vol. 2 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1994), 787–823; "Benedictus II: *Una regula – una consuetudo*," in *Benedictine Culture, 750–1050* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983), 1–49; "Die Beschlüsse des Aachener Konzils im Jahre 816," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 74 (1963): 15–82; "Zur Überlieferung der monastischen Gesetzgebung Ludwigs des Frommen," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* (1960), 309–88. For a polemical critique of this reform approach, see Sullivan, "What Was Carolingian Monasticism?" 258–59.

<sup>17</sup> See Philip Rousseau and Albrecht Diem, "Monastic Rules (4th–9th Centuries)," in *Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism*, forthcoming; Albrecht Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule: Some Observations on the History of Monastic Normative Observance in the Early Medieval West," in *Western Monasticism Ante Litteram: The Spaces of Monastic Observance in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Hendrick Day and Elizabeth Fentress (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 53–84.

<sup>18</sup> See Smith, "Women at the Tomb," 166–71.

remains from becoming the object of popular veneration, a practice he strongly detests.<sup>19</sup>

Romanus, a product of the Lérins circle (by which the eastern monastic tradition penetrated the West) and abbot of the Jura monasteries, similarly is said to have specifically requested burial some distance from his monastery because he feared the crowds of pilgrims and attendant disturbance his relics would attract.<sup>20</sup> John Cassian, theologian of the desert experience, went out of his way in both his major writings, the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*, to deter those engaged in the monastic discipline from being distracted by the miraculous, which “apart from awe contributes nothing to instruction in the perfect life.”<sup>21</sup>

The Rule of St. Benedict, for its part, has nothing to say about the cult of relics or

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<sup>19</sup> “The Egyptians love to honor with burial rites and to wrap in linens the bodies of their worthy dead, and especially the holy martyrs, not burying them in the earth, but placing them on low beds and keeping them with them inside, and they intend by this practice to honor the deceased. Antony frequently asked a bishop [presumably the author, Athanasius] to instruct the people on this matter, and he similarly corrected laymen and chastised women, saying, ‘It is neither lawful nor at all reverent to do this.’” Subsequently on his death bed, he instructed the two disciples attending on him, “Do not permit anyone to take my body to Egypt, lest they set it in houses. . . . You know how I always corrected the ones who practiced this and ordered them to stop that custom. Therefore, perform the rites for me yourselves, and bury my body in the earth. And let my word be kept secret by you, so that no one knows the place but you alone.” Athanasius of Alexandria, *The Life of Antony*, c. 90–91, trans. Robert C. Gregg (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980), 96–97.

<sup>20</sup> “Nosti enim quod mihi indigno et non merenti Dominus Deus meus gratiam tribuit curationum, multique per impositionem manus meae ac virtutem crucis dominicae a diversis languoribus sunt erepti. Erit autem concursus ad tumulum meum, si ab hac luce migravero. Ideoque rogo, ut eminus a monasterio requiescam. (As you know, the Lord God has granted me, unworthy and undeserving, the grace of healing, and many have been rescued from various illnesses by the laying on of my hands and the power of the holy cross. There will be a crowd at my tomb when I have departed from the light of this life. Therefore I ask that I may rest at a distance from the monastery.)” Gregory of Tours, *Vitae Patrum*, 1.6, ed. and trans. Giselle de Nie, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 20–21. Cf. Smith, “Women at the Tomb,” 166–68. Smith sees Romanus’s attitude as a result of his training in the milieu of Lérins, whose monastic authors distanced themselves from relic cults and miracles, “developing a spirituality generally hostile to thaumaturgy,” citing Marc Van Uytfaenge, “La controverse biblique et patristique autour du miracle, et ses répercussions sur l’hagiographie dans l’antiquité tardive et le haut Moyen Age latin,” in *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IVe–XIIe siècles: Actes du colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris, 2–5 mai 1979* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1981), 212, 215, 220.

<sup>21</sup> “[Mirabilia et signa] praeter admirationem nihil amplius ad instructionem perfectae vitae conferunt,” *De institutis coenobiorum*, preface, 7. Cf. *Collationes* 18.1.1, ed. E. Pichery in *Jean Cassien: Conférences XVIII–XXIV*, Sources Chrétiennes 64 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1959), 11–12. Cf. Van Uytfaenge, “La controverse,” 212; Smith, “Women at the Tomb,” 168.

monasteries as popular religious shrines. Neither does the Aachen legislation nor the writings by or about Benedict of Aniane.<sup>22</sup> Undoubtedly these biases have affected the direction taken in the research and help explain why the efflorescence of the cult of the saints in its monastic setting has not received due attention in scholarly discussions about Carolingian monastic life.

The recent trend, however, has been to break away from these old constraints and approach early medieval monasticism from points of view other than its internal constitutional development, with methodologies that deconstruct rather than synthesize their sources, and to revisit texts that were formerly discarded or passed over by the older narrative.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore it is now considered more appropriate to emphasize diversity in monastic life and speak of “monasticisms” in the plural, with different and sometimes competing ideals rather than a single unanimously agreed upon Benedictine brand from which everything else deviated.<sup>24</sup> Along these lines, there is a current tendency to interpret the imperial reform program as a failure, in so far as it did not achieve its purported aim of a uniform monastic order adhering to an *ad litteram* observance of the Rule.<sup>25</sup> This study, however, will challenge some of the ways that Carolingian monastic reform and its reception at the local level has previously been understood.<sup>26</sup> It will argue that the Rule and the reform

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<sup>22</sup> For more on this, see Chapter 3 below.

<sup>23</sup> See Diem and Rapp, “The Monastic Laboratory,” forthcoming.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; Albrecht Diem, “Merovingian Monasticism: Voices of Dissent,” forthcoming; Hendrick Dey, “Bringing Chaos Out of Order: New Approaches to the Study of Early Western Monasticism,” in *Western Monasticism Ante Litteram*, 19–40.

<sup>25</sup> This is the conclusion of the recent dissertation by Kristina Marie Hosoe, “*Regulae* and Reform in Carolingian Monastic Hagiography,” PhD diss., Yale University, 2014. ProQuest (UMI 3580711).

<sup>26</sup> Rutger Kramer’s recent study does something similar, but approaches reform from the perspective of the Carolingians; see “Great Expectations: Imperial Ideologies and Ecclesial Reforms from Charlemagne to Louis the Pious (813–822),” PhD diss. (Free University of Berlin, 2014); also Kramer, “Sacred Foundations: Monasticism, Reform and Authority in the Carolingian Era,” in *Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism*, forthcoming.

ultimately proved flexible enough to be applied in a variety of contexts and adapted to different monastic traditions than just the desert ideal.

One of these, and the focus of this study, was the long-held tradition of what I call relic-oriented monasticism.<sup>27</sup> While the Lérins crowd and those influenced by them shunned the shrines of the saints, we also find cases like Paulinus of Nola who in 395 established his monastic residence at the tomb of the martyr St. Felix in southern Italy, where he served as impresario for the cult;<sup>28</sup> or the community of monks founded by the king of Burgundy in 515 at the shrine of St. Maurice in Agaune, charged with chanting psalms day and night;<sup>29</sup> or the martyrial basilicas in Rome where in the seventh century the popes instituted monasteries that, like Agaune, primarily served a liturgical function.<sup>30</sup> Beyond these prominent examples we also encounter numerous monks and nuns in the late antique and early medieval West making pilgrimages to various shrines and in some cases even taking up permanent residence there.<sup>31</sup> I do not wish to suggest that these examples were antithetical to the desert tradition or that together they constituted a coherent movement with a shared program; they do betray, however, an understanding of the monastic life that was based not on the cultivation of the self and personal perfection but on devotion to a particular saint or a holy place. The purpose

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 90–93.

<sup>28</sup> Dennis E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 160–97; Joseph T. Lienhard, *Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism* (Cologne: P. Hanstein, 1977).

<sup>29</sup> On Saint-Maurice of Agaune with citations to further literature, see Ch. 1, pp. 33–34 below.

<sup>30</sup> Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 93; Guy Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the History of the Monasteries and Convents at Rome from the V through the X Centuries* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1957), 365–75 (ch. 3, “Roman Basilical Monasteries”).

<sup>31</sup> Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300–800* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Specific examples are also cited by Hélène Noizet, “Les basiliques martyriales au VIe et au début du VIIIe siècle,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Eglise de France* 87 (2001), 329–355.

of this study is not to construct a linear history of this tradition of relic-oriented monasticism but to show how it influenced the development of monastic institutions and ideals in the medieval Frankish kingdom and especially its flowering with the advent of monastery-shrines like that portrayed in the ninth century on the Plan of Saint Gall.

Although the three case studies in this thesis focus on events taking place in the early ninth century and culminating in the 830s, the transformations of the communities they describe must be seen against the background of broader changes between the seventh and ninth centuries in the political and religious spheres. The barbarian Franks, converts to Christianity who assumed control over post-Roman Gaul, were developing the institutions that made possible not only a stable, unified kingdom but also one capable of expanding its military and cultural influence into new regions. Among these institutions were monasteries and the shrines of the saints which, as still generally separate endeavors, progressively came under royal authority. Within this context, monasticism itself was evolving: from a suspect practice undertaken on the fringes of society to a prestigious way of life at its center; from fleeting communities drawn to charismatic holy men to permanent establishments governed by written rules and customs.<sup>32</sup> It is a similar story with the cult of the saints where we observe a shifting preference for posthumous over living sanctity, and one that was increasingly tied to a specific place, localized in bodily remains housed in permanent memorials.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Diem, “Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity.”

<sup>33</sup> On the cult of relics in the Carolingian period, see especially Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, revised ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 35–43; Paul Fouracre, “The Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate the Cult of Saints,” in *The Cult of the Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, ed. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 143–65; Pierre Riché, “Les carolingiens en quête de sainteté,” in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (IIIe–XIIIe siècle): Actes du colloque organisé par l’École française*

The chapters that follow are arranged around different aspects of these developments. Chapter 1, which serves as an historical introduction to the case studies, considers the efforts of Merovingian rulers in the seventh century to institute monastic communities at the kingdom's ancient shrines, which up till then had been administered by (non-monastic) clerics under the authority of the bishops. This culminated with Queen Balthild's decree, ca. 650, that the *seniores basilicae sanctorum* be organized as *monasteria*, exempt from episcopal oversight and funded by the royal treasury, whose members were to live *sub sancto regulari ordine*. The primary duty of these communities, whose members appear to have been bound exclusively and permanently to the shrines they served, was to perform elaborate liturgical services and care for the poor who congregated there. This form of organization, it will be shown, was based on a combination of monastic models that had first developed in Burgundy, namely at Saint-Maurice of Agaune and Luxeuil, modified to meet the peculiar needs of the Frankish basilicas.

Apart from influencing the monasticism of the basilical communities in the Merovingian kingdom, Luxeuil also became the model for numerous monasteries of lasting legacy established there in the course of the seventh century. The monastic ideal of its founder, the Irish ascetic Columbanus, was strongly influenced by the desert tradition.<sup>34</sup> None of the monasteries founded by him or his disciples had anything to do with the veneration of relics or popular saints' shrines (at least not until much later in their

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*de Rome avec le concours de l'Université de Rome «La Sapineza». Rome, 27–29 octobre 1988* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991), 217–24.

<sup>34</sup> For a summary of Columbanus's monastic ideal and its influences, see most recently Alexander O'Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio and the Legacy of Columbanus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 57–67.

histories).<sup>35</sup> Thus we find certain authors associated with the Columbanian movement (notably Jonas of Bobbio and Audoin of Rouen) expressing their reservations about the application of monasticism in such a context. For Audoin especially, the shrines of the saints and monasteries were both holy institutions worthy of elite patronage, but they were enterprises that were to remain strictly separate from each other (and under the authority of the bishop, not the king, for that matter). This view may have had some influence in the short term, but after the turn of the eighth century we begin to find, in addition to the basilical communities, a number of established monasteries beginning to promote popular relic cults of their own.

One of these was the abbey of Fontenelle, later known as Saint-Wandrille, whose case forms the subject of Chapter 2. The earliest Life of the monastery's founder, Wandrille of Verdun, was composed by the community in the late seventh century not long after his death and aimed to immortalize the abbot's memory and authority in his absence. It is a text written for a spiritual elite, presenting Wandrille as an ascetic athlete whose life was a model for monks to imitate, and emphasizing his monastery's separateness from the world. It has nothing to say about the saint's relics or a popular cult centered on his grave. In the meantime, Fontenelle grew into a prosperous royal abbey with close bonds to its surrounding society. A turning point in its history came in the eighth century when the body of Wandrille was raised and translated to a new shrine accessible to devotees of what was now promoted as a public cult. The community of Fontenelle came to represent more than just its monks, but embraced a larger constituency of all those with a stake in the institution. A revised version of the *Vita Wandregiseli*, composed in the 830s, reflects the implications of these

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<sup>35</sup> O'Hara discusses the role of relics (or lack thereof) in Columbanian tradition; *ibid.*, 231–35.

developments. It downplays the saint's ascetic deeds and suppresses his monastic teaching in favor of his activities as a miracle worker, both while he lived and afterwards from the grave. The new text further shows the degree to which the monastic ideal at Fontenelle had shifted from the pursuit of personal perfection to the corporate perfection of the liturgy centered on the veneration of the relics of its saint. The Carolingian *Life of Wandrille* was produced in the context of a reform that was intended to materialize these ideals. This included the community's adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict, to be sure, but also building and artistic projects meant to enhance the cult of Wandrille and create a shrine worthy of his relics.

A key moment in the emergence of Carolingian monastery-shrines coincides with a general revival of enthusiasm for saintly relics that took place during the reign of Louis the Pious beginning around 826, and which saw large numbers of early Christian martyrs acquired from Rome and transported north, an intensified interest in honoring the relics of traditional Frankish saints through staged translations and elevations, and the prolific production of hagiography including the emergence of *Miracula* collections and *Translatio* accounts as distinct genres.<sup>36</sup> In Chapter 3, I reassess the case of Saint-Denis against this background. While the series of outside interventions endured by the community between 806 and 832 that ultimately resulted in its adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict has previously been treated as the outcome of the imperial monastic reform movement associated with the 816/817 Synod of Aachen, I incorporate the added context of the cult of St. Dionysius and its

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<sup>36</sup> On the enthusiasm for Roman relics, see Julia M. H. Smith, "Old Saints, New Cults: Roman Relics in Carolingian Francia," in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 317–39. On the emergence of *Miracula* and *Translationes* as distinct genres of hagiography at this time, see the studies by Martin Heinzlmann: "Une source de base de la littérature hagiographique latine: le recueil de miracles," in *Hagiographie cultures et sociétés, IVe–XIIe siècles: Actes du Colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2–5 mai 1979)* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981), 237–59; *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes* (Brepols: Turnhout, 1979).

sensational refashioning by Abbot Hilduin (814–840), who was at the forefront of the relic movement of the 820s/830s. A close reading of the *Gesta Dagoberti*, a foundation legend of the church produced under Hilduin’s direction, reveals how the abbot attempted to justify the community’s adoption of the *Regula Benedicti* in the present with reference to its legacy of serving the saint and his shrine in the past. The Rule thus proved itself adaptable to monastic traditions other than that of the Desert Fathers.

In Chapter 4, I return to the case of Saint Gall, where we encounter another significant moment in the development of relic-oriented monasticism in the Carolingian empire. This is illustrated not only by the visual evidence of the Plan but also through the elaboration of a theological justification for the monastic community in the service of the shrine of St. Gallus. The latter is articulated by Walahfrid Strabo, who in 833 was commissioned by Abbot Gozbert to revise the *Vita sancti Galli* in the context of the monastery’s adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict simultaneous with a major enhancement to the architectural setting for the cult of Gallus. Drawing on the work and theories of the art historian Cynthia Hahn, I show how the community of Saint Gall was portrayed, in essence, as a “living reliquary,” whose sacred duty was to protect, honor, and communicate the power of the relics entrusted to its care.

A key theme of this study, suggested by the example of the Plan of Saint Gall and the metaphor of the monastic community as a reliquary, is that of sacred space. Scholars in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and religious studies have shown how the experience of a site as holy entails a combination of physical boundaries, artistic ornamentation, ritual behavior, informing narratives, and other sensory indicators to mark it as exceptional.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> An excellent starting point for the concept of sacred space, although somewhat dated now, is Joel P. Brereton, “Sacred Space,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd. ed., vol. 12, ed. Lindsay Jones

Sacred places, in other words, are never intrinsic as such. In each of the cases considered here, the transformations undergone by particular institutions in the ninth century went far beyond monastic reform and the adoption of the Rule of St. Benedict, but also entailed monumental building projects, artistic commissions, enhancements to the liturgy, and the writing of hagiography. Together such elements—including the presence of a monastic community observing the Rule—contributed to the perception of these shrines, and indeed of the relics themselves that were at their center, as privileged sites where divine power was manifested.

There is, however, a paradox that presents itself when considering sacred places. Although on one level they must be considered social constructions, at the same time they also appear to constitute or bring into being the very societies that construct them. Mircea Eliade, the comparative historian of religion who pioneered the concept and study of sacred space, theorized that in traditional cultures a holy place represented the center of the world—“our” world—by linking the community to the realm of the gods and thus providing its social orientation.<sup>38</sup> To use the image of Jonathan Z. Smith, a sacred place for a community serves as a lens, “focusing attention on the forms, objects, and actions” circumscribed within and

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(Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7978–86 (this article was written in 1987). On the application of theories of sacred space in a medieval context, see Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, “Defining the Holy: the Delineation of Sacred Space,” in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Hamilton and Spicer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 1–26; the authors note that while much has been written about the physical attributes of sacred space in the Middle Ages, much less attention has been given to how that space was defined and constructed. Some exceptions in the historiography of early medieval monasticism include Albrecht Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, 332–34, who has examined the role of monastic chastity or sexual purity in creating the cloister as a sacred space; Lynda Coon, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 134–65, has looked at how gendered practices of the Rule of St. Benedict inscribed themselves into Carolingian sacred space.

<sup>38</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 20–65.

revealing them as “bearers of religious meaning.”<sup>39</sup> Joel Brereton summarizes that “these symbols [1] describe the fundamental constituents of reality as a religious community perceives them, [2] define a life in accordance with that view, and [3] provide a means of access between the human world and divine realities.”<sup>40</sup> One outcome of the present study is a better understanding of how early medieval monasteries contributed to the construction of relic shrines as sacred places, and the role that this served in creating Christian societies that extended outside of and beyond the monastic cloister.

There are two key arguments I propose in this respect. First, the Frankish monastery-shrines of the ninth century represent a shift away from monastic communities as enclaves for a spiritual elite leading a separate existence from the rest of the church and society to monasteries that were wholly embedded in that society—not only in a world of human relationships but even more in a society linked through the relics of the saint to a world beyond. Second, the principal role of monastic communities in this economy was that of mediator: physically as gatekeepers of the shrines and their relics; spiritually through their practices of intercessory prayer and the distribution of alms; and symbolically through their collective embodiment of the virtues of the saints they represented and the hopes and needs of the pilgrims and poor who sought their assistance. Carolingian monastic reform and even the observance of the *Regula Benedicti* cannot be fully understood apart from this wider social and religious context. But before treating these observations in detail, we must first consider the separate developments of the cult of the saints and monasticism in the early Merovingian period and how these institutions first converged.

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<sup>39</sup> As summarized in Brereton, “Sacred Space,” 7978; see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 88–146.

<sup>40</sup> Brereton, “Sacred Space,” 7978.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Relic Shrines and Monasteries in Merovingian Francia

Queen Balthild, who ruled the Frankish kingdom as regent from 657 to 665, is remembered for her patronage of monasticism. The author of the *Vita Balthildis*, composed not long after the queen's death in 680, credits her with founding the communities of Corbie and Chelles (where she would end her life as a nun) while providing endowments for Jumièges, Fontenelle, Jouarre, Faremoutiers, and others. "Even more," he adds,

we should not pass over what she prescribed in her zeal for God on behalf of the senior basilicas of the saints, [that is,] of Lord Dionysius, Lord Germanus, Lord Medardus, St. Peter, Lord Anianus, St. Martin, and wherever else her notice reached. For she sent letters to the bishops and abbots persuading them that the brothers in these places should live according to a holy regular order (*sub sancto regulari ordine*). That they might consent to this, she ordered [the prelates] to confirm a privilege [of exemption from episcopal authority], and she further granted [the basilicas] immunities [from royal taxation], making it more pleasing for [the brothers], on behalf of the king and for the sake of peace, to entreat the mercy of Christ, who is the highest king.<sup>1</sup>

The "senior basilicas of the saints (*seniores basilicae sanctorum*)"—identified in the *Vita* as Saint-Denis near Paris, Saint-Germain of Auxerre, Saint-Médard of Soissons, Saint-Pierre-le-

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<sup>1</sup> "Preterire enim non debemus, quod per seniores basilicas sanctorum domni Dionisii et domni Germani vel domni Medardi et sancti Petri vel domni Aniani seu et sancti Martini, vel ubicumque eius perstrinxit notitia, ad pontifices seu abbates suadendo pro zelo Dei praecepit et epistolas pro hoc eis direxit, ut sub sancto regulari ordine fratres infra ipsa loca consistentes vivere deberent. Et ut hoc libenter adquiescerent, privilegium eis firmare iussit, vel etiam emunitates concessit, ut melius eis delectaret pro rege et pace summi regis Christi clementiam exorare." *Vita Balthildis*, 9, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 3 (Hanover, 1896), 498–99.

Vif of Sens, Saint-Aignan of Orléans, and Saint-Martin of Tours—were among the most ancient and prestigious religious shrines in the early medieval Frankish kingdom. They also represented an important source of power. The queen’s directive that their residents be organized as monastic communities (as *sub sancto regulari ordo vivere* is generally interpreted to mean) in exchange for economic privileges and exemption from their local bishop is justly understood as a political move, the key component of what has been termed her *Klosterpolitik*.<sup>2</sup> Although not entirely without precedent, this established the institution of “royal monasteries” which would play a key role in the later Carolingian empire and its cultural renaissance.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it represented the application of organized monastic life to a new context, the popular religious shrines associated with the tombs of particular

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<sup>2</sup> Contemporary charters survive from Saint-Denis and Saint-Pierre-le-Vif identifying their communities as *monasteria* and confirming their episcopal exemption in accordance with Balthild’s prescription. The other institutions are likewise identified as monasteries in subsequent documents. See note 213 below. On Balthild and her monastic policy, see Eugen Ewig, “Das Privileg des Bischofs Berthefrid von Amiens für Corbie von 664 und die Klosterpolitik der Königin Balthild,” *Francia* 1 (1973): 62–114; Janet Nelson, “Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History,” in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 67–72; Alain Dierkens, “Prolégomènes à une histoire des relations culturelles entre les Îles britanniques et le continent pendant le Haut Moyen Âge: La diffusion du monachisme dit columbanien ou iro-franc dans quelques monastères de la région parisienne au VIIIe siècle et la politique religieuse de la reine Bathilde,” in *La Neustrie: Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. Harmut Atsma, vol. 2 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1989), 388–92; Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, “*Vita Domnae Balthildis* (The Life of Lady Balthild, Queen of the Franks),” ch. 2 in idem, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography, 640–720* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 107–12.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of royal monasteries is a modern construct used to describe a specific relationship between medieval rulers, especially in the Frankish and Germanic kingdoms, and certain monastic institutions in the territories under their control. John W. Bernhardt, summarizing Josef Fleckenstein, defined royal monasteries as those “which enjoyed the special, in contrast to the general, protection of the king and were, at least partially, royal proprietary churches or appurtenances of the realm.” *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c. 936–1075* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 71. While the “senior basilicas” were not explicitly regarded as proprietary churches of the king, the economic support afforded them and their special connection with the royal dynasty appear to warrant this identification, but should, as with all such constructs, be used with caution. See also Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 221–30; Mayke de Jong, “Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, c. 750–900, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 623–27.

saints, and this would profoundly, if slowly, shape the monastic model and its associated ideals that prevailed in succeeding centuries. Balthild's monastic policy thus proved to have lasting consequences, not only for the development of the Frankish kingdom but for the history of monasticism as well.

This chapter, intended to provide context for the case studies that follow, addresses both of these aspects. It investigates the historical and political background to Balthild's reform of the major basilicas, as well as the meaning of the *sanctus regularis ordo* as a model for the monastic life. Part one looks at the origins of the basilical shrines in the political void that followed upon the disintegration of the western Roman Empire, primarily through the example of Saint-Martin and the writings of Gregory of Tours. Founded to further the ambitions of the Gallic bishops and the early Merovingian kings, the shrines of the saints were known as places of asylum, healing, and relief for the poor. They attracted supplicants from all strata of society who were tended to by a revolving host of clergy under the direction of the bishop. At no time before the seventh century, however, were the basilical shrines in the north of Gaul considered by contemporaries to be monasteries. Part two looks south to the kingdom of Burgundy, and its distinct religious institutions: first, Saint-Maurice of Agaune, a cooperative project between the newly baptized king and the Burgundian bishops that incorporated a permanent monastic community at the tomb of the Theban martyrs, the intention of which was to bring stability and peace to the kingdom through perpetual liturgy; also considered is the new monasticism associated with Luxeuil and the Columbanian movement, contrasted with Agaune and the less rooted monastic tradition of the north. Part three examines the application of these Burgundian monastic models in Neustria following King Chlothar II's unification of the two kingdoms in 613, particularly his son Dagobert's

project at Saint-Denis. This culminated in the 650s with Balthild's monastic policy, which I argue should be seen as a collaborative endeavor among various stakeholders in the Frankish lands to find an institutional basis for a peaceful, unified, and enduring Christian kingdom that could overcome the perennial divisions plaguing Gaul since the days of Clovis. Part four, finally, considers the reservations of some involved in the Columbanian movement with this conveyance of monasticism, which combined elements of the Luxeuil and Agaune traditions, into the political sphere and its application at the shrines of the saints. This can be seen through close readings of Jonas of Bobbio's *Life of Columbanus* and Audoin of Rouen's *Life of Eligius*. Although both implicitly advocate the separation of monasticism from the popular cult of relics, their model was not the one that ultimately prevailed.

*The shrines of the saints before the seventh century*

Beginning in the fifth century, at a time when Roman civic institutions were failing and coercive power passed to barbarian kings, the Christian bishops of the north of Gaul acted to consolidate their authority around the memories of their holy and distinguished predecessors. The public shrines they erected at the gravesites of these saints were promoted as local centers of cult and popular devotion, while serving as an important basis for the sovereignty of the bishop in his city.<sup>4</sup>

By far the best documented example, owing to the writings of Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Périgueux, and, above all, Gregory of Tours, is the basilica of Saint-Martin. Although bishop of Tours from 371 until his death in 397, Martin began his career as a monk and it was in ascetic circles that he first gained fame, owing to the Life by his disciple

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<sup>4</sup> See Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 167–72.

Sulpicius.<sup>5</sup> This was published in 395 while Martin still lived and was intended to be a general defense of the monastic life and a critique of the Gallic bishops, not publicity for a cult based on his relics.<sup>6</sup> Following his death Martin's body was claimed by the citizens of Tours rather than his former monastic community at Marmoutier.<sup>7</sup> Bricius (d. 444), who succeeded Martin as bishop, in 437 built a small chapel over the gravesite where nearly all the succeeding bishops of Tours would be buried.<sup>8</sup> Not until a generation later, however, did these bishops begin to promote this tomb as a place of miracles and focus of local devotion. This was the work of Perpetuus (ca. 460–490), who raised a significant basilica in place of the former chapel (by then deemed “unworthy of the miracles” being performed there),<sup>9</sup> commissioned a metrical version of Martin's *Vita* to which a brief account of his posthumous miracles was appended,<sup>10</sup> had an office of vigils composed for the feast commemorating his death on November 11,<sup>11</sup> and established a second feast on July 4 memorializing both Martin's ordination to the episcopate and the translation of his relics from the original tomb to a shrine in the new basilica.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, ed. Jacques Fontaine in *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de Saint Martin*, Sources Chrétiennes 133 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968). On Sulpicius, see Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); Richard J. Goodrich, “Introduction,” in *Sulpicius Severus: The Complete Works*, Ancient Christian Writers 70 (New York: Newman Press, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> On the early cult of St. Martin, see Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 13–28; Allan Scott McKinley, “The First Two Centuries of Saint Martin of Tours,” *Early Medieval Europe* 14 (2006): 173–200.

<sup>7</sup> On the fate of Martin's body, see Sulpicius Severus, *Epistola* 3.18–21, in *Sulpice Sévère*, ed. Fontaine; Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum decem*, 1.48, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 1.1, *editio altera*, (Hanover: Hahn, 1951), 32–34.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 10.31, p. 528.

<sup>9</sup> “indignam talibus miraculis.” *Ibid.*, 2.14, p. 63; 10.31, p. 529; Gregory of Tours, *Libri quatuor de virtutibus Martini*, 1.6, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 1.2, *editio nova* (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 142–43.

<sup>10</sup> Paulinus of Périgueux, *De vita Martini*, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 16 (Vienna, 1888), 17–159.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 10.31, p. 530.

<sup>12</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 1.6, pp. 142–43; *Libri historiarum*, 2.14, p. 63.

Perpetuus's activity in promoting St. Martin's cult at Tours should be seen in the context of a larger development taking place in the cities of northern Gaul during the fifth and sixth centuries as political control passed from Roman to barbarian rule, with the Franks ultimately establishing themselves as the prevailing power. The bishops, who continued throughout this period to be drawn from the Gallo-Roman upper classes, had emerged as *de facto* representatives of their cities with the collapse of Roman civil authority.<sup>13</sup> Shrewdly, in this time of transition and uncertainty, they moved to consolidate the unity and identity of their respective towns around the memory of one of their celebrated predecessors whom they raised to cultic status. Their control of the shrines they established, which were perceived to be sources of spiritual power, along with their own self-identification with the saint whose office and legacy they inherited, enhanced the bishops' authority, enabling them to rally their cities against the intrusions of barbarian warlords and, eventually, Frankish kings.<sup>14</sup>

In this way, the bishops and their cities were able to maintain their effective independence. Perpetuus, for example, was able to exploit Martin's association with Hilary of Poitiers, highly regarded for his defense of Catholic orthodoxy, to undermine attempts by the Arian Visigoths from gaining control of Tours.<sup>15</sup> In Auxerre, an oratory originally dedicated to the martyrs of Agaune, founded by bishop Germanus (d. 448), who was

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<sup>13</sup> On the role of bishops in the cities of late antique/early medieval Gaul, see Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 184–86; Hartmut Atsma, "Les monastères urbains du nord de la Gaule," *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* 62 (1976): 163–64. More generally, see Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> On the political role of the early Merovingian cult of bishops, in addition to Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 167–72, see Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London: Longman, 1994), 73–75; Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," in *The Church in Town and Countryside. Papers Read at the Seventeenth Summer Meeting and the Eighteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 61–76.

<sup>15</sup> Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles*, 17–18, 20–21; cf. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, 2.37, p. 86.

remembered for having fought the Pelagian heresy in Britain, was rechristened as Saint-Germain following his burial there and subsequently served as the main necropolis for the bishops of Auxerre.<sup>16</sup> Likewise at Orléans, the tomb of Bishop Anianus (d. 453), who in 451 had famously turned away Attila the Hun from the gates of the city, became the rallying point for episcopal identity and the origins of the basilica of Saint-Aignan.<sup>17</sup> At Paris, the same Huns were stopped by the prayers of a young girl, St. Genevieve (d. 512), who later in life, having been consecrated to the religious life by Germanus of Auxerre, initiated the building of a basilica to commemorate St. Dionysius (d. ca. 250), the martyred first bishop of Paris, with the help of that city's clergy.<sup>18</sup> Other examples before the end of the fifth century of basilicas housing the relics of holy bishops whose cults were employed to defend local interests include Saint-Hilaire of Poitiers (est. 5th c.),<sup>19</sup> Saint-Nizier of Lyons (after 449),<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Gesta pontificum Autissiodorensium*, 7, 8, ed. Michel Sot in *Les gestes des évêques d'Auxerre*, vol. 1 (Paris: Belles lettres, 2002), 39, 51; Heiric of Auxerre, *Miracula Germani*. 1.37, ed. L.-M. Duru in *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne*, vol. 2 (Auxerre, 1863), 132. A *Vita Germani* was composed by Constance of Lyon around 470, ed. R. Borius in *Constance de Lyon, Vie de saint Germain d'Auxerre*, Sources Chrétiennes 112 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965). See also Noëlle Deflou-Leca, *Saint-Germain d'Auxerre et ses dépendances (Ve–XIIIe siècle): Un monastère dans la société du haut Moyen Âge* (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2010), 63–65.

<sup>17</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris apologized to Anianus's successor, Bishop Prosper, for not having fulfilled his request for an account of Anianus's "virtutes," *Epistolae* 8.15 ed. Christian Lütjohann in *MGH Auct. Ant.*, vol. 8 (Berlin, 1887), 147. The first *Vita Aniani* likely dates from the sixth century, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rerum Merov.*, vol. 3, pp. 108–117. Gregory of Tours reports that Bishop Namtius (d. 587) was buried in Saint-Aignan, *Libri historiarum*, 2.7, 48–50. Also see Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of the Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 20–21.

<sup>18</sup> *Vita Genovefae*, c. 18, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 3, p. 222. The first *Passio Dionysii* is believed to be a later reworking of a fifth- or sixth-century text, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH Auct. ant.*, vol. 4.2 (Berlin, 1885), 101–105; cf. Michael Lapidge, *Hilduin of Saint-Denis: The Passio S. Dionysii in Prose and Verse* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 612–26.

<sup>19</sup> Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita et virtutes Hilarii*, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH Auct. ant.*, vol. 4.2, pp. 1–11.

<sup>20</sup> A *Vita Nicetii* dates from before the time of Gregory of Tours, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 3, pp. 518–24; on the basilica of Saint-Nizier, see Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum*, 8, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 1.2, pp. 240–52.

Saint-Symphorien of Autun (452),<sup>21</sup> Saint-Loup of Troyes (after 479),<sup>22</sup> Saint-Victour of Le Mans (after 490),<sup>23</sup> and Saint-Martial of Limoges (ca. 500).<sup>24</sup> All of these cults involved the building of a basilica, the liturgical celebration of a feast day, the writing of a *Vita*, and in some cases the recording in writing of the miracles performed at the tomb.<sup>25</sup> The bishops' success is betrayed a century later when Chilperic (r. 561–584), one of the Frankish kings (who by then had converted to the bishops' religion), was given to complain that the property these churches had accumulated was beyond his reach to tax: "All our wealth has been given over to the churches; the bishops alone now rule; the honor we ourselves once enjoyed has passed to the bishop in his city."<sup>26</sup>

Yet at the same time, the Frankish kings were getting in on the act by creating shrines of their own. The early Merovingians in the principal cities under their control constructed basilical churches, adorned with relics, which served as memorials for themselves and their

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<sup>21</sup> The *Passio Symphoriani* dates from around 475, ed. in AASS Aug., vol. 4, 496–98; on the basilica, see Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 2.15, p. 64.

<sup>22</sup> *Vita Lupi*, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 7 (Hanover: Hahn, 1920), 284–302. Elie Griffe has argued, contrary to Krusch, that this was written by a contemporary of the saint, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine*, vol. 2, *L'Eglise des Gaules au Ve siècle* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1966), 301–302. On the shrine, see Gregory of Tours, *Gloria Confessorum*, 66, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 1.2, p. 337.

<sup>23</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Gloria Confessorum*, 55, p. 330.

<sup>24</sup> The *Vita Martialis antiquior* dates from the ninth century, ed. Ch.-F. Bellet in *La prose rythmée et la critique hagiographique. Nouvelle réponse aux Bollandistes, suivie du texte de l'ancienne vie de saint Martial* (Paris, 1899), 43–50. On the cult and the shrine, see Gregory of Tours, *Gloria Confessorum*, 27–28, pp. 314–15.

<sup>25</sup> Written miracle collections survive for Saint-Martin of Tours and Saint-Hilaire of Poitiers; Gregory of Tours further mentions such collections existing for Saint-Aignan of Orléans, Saint-Médard of Soissons, and Saint-Nizier of Lyon. For more examples of episcopally sponsored literary works and building projects promoting the cult of saints in fifth-century Gaul, see Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 169. The tradition continued into the sixth century with, for example, Saint-Evre of Toul (founded 507) and Saint-Remi of Reims (567).

<sup>26</sup> "Ecce divitiae nostrae ad ecclesias sunt translatae; nulli penitus nisi soli episcopi regnant; periet honor noster et translatus est ad episcopus civitatem," Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 6.46, p. 320.

families who were buried there.<sup>27</sup> Clovis, founder of the dynasty, following his death in 511 was interred at Paris in the basilica of the Holy Apostles that he and his wife, Queen Clotild, had built, and which would soon house the relics of the above-mentioned St. Genevieve (for whom it was rechristened).<sup>28</sup> The queen along with one of their daughters (also named Clotild) and two grandchildren (the assassinated sons of Chlodomer) would also be buried there.<sup>29</sup>

One of Clovis's sons, King Childebert I, was also buried at Paris, but chose to establish his own place of entombment. The basilica of Saint-Vincent (later Saint-Germain-des-Prés) was initially founded to house the tunic of St. Vincent of Saragossa and other relics Childebert had acquired while fighting in Spain in the 540s.<sup>30</sup> The church was consecrated on the day of the king's burial in 558 by St. Germanus, bishop of Paris, and would afterwards serve as the main necropolis for several generations of Merovingian rulers (as well as Bishop Germanus himself for whom it was renamed).<sup>31</sup> Childebert's brother, Chlothar I (d. 561), who ruled from Soissons, likewise built his own funerary basilica. In 557 he acquired the body of the recently deceased Medardus, first bishop of Noyon, and erected a church on his estate to house the relics. Saint-Médard of Soissons was completed by Chlothar's son and successor King Sigebert (d. 575), and both were buried there next to the shrine of the saint.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The fundamental study on royal burial in early medieval western Europe is Karl Heinrich Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts; ein historischer Katalog* (Munich: W. Fink, 1971).

<sup>28</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 2.43, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.10, p. 107; 3.18, p. 119; 4.1, p. 135.

<sup>30</sup> *Liber historiae Francorum*, 3.26, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 2 (Hanover, 1888), 284.

<sup>31</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 4.20, p. 152. In addition to Childebert, Saint-Vincent/Saint-Germain des Prés contains the tombs of King Chilperic I (d. 584) and his wife Queen Fredegund (d. 597), King Chlothar II (d. 629) and his wife Queen Bertrude (d. 619), and King Childeric II (d. 675).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.19, p. 152.

Still another son of Clovis, Theuderic I (d. 534), whose capital was Metz, may have been behind the basilica of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens at the periphery of his territory. A later tradition attributes its foundation to his daughter St. Theudechild, who was buried there in 560 and subsequently venerated as its patron saint (although the church retained its original dedication to St. Peter the Apostle).<sup>33</sup> If Theudechild indeed built this basilica, it was most likely in cooperation with her brother, King Theudebert I (d. 548), whom Gregory of Tours remembered as especially favorable towards the Church.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps it was intended to be a family shrine, although the actual burial site of Theudebert and his son Theudebald are not known. Thus, Clovis and his heirs (with the exception of Chlodomer, whose line was extinguished), emulating the practice of the bishops, each founded their own shrine, identified with the tomb of a saint or some other important relic and which served as their own funerary basilica, in order to further their dynastic ambitions in a city or territory that they controlled.<sup>35</sup>

In every case, whatever the circumstances of their founding, the early basilical shrines were organized and administered by the bishop and his clergy. They were not considered to be monasteries. All the sources prior to the middle of the seventh century consistently and

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<sup>33</sup> The full founding legend is only first related in a twelfth-century chronicle and identifies Theodechild as a *daughter* of Clovis. A charter from 659 issued by Bishop Emmo of Sens, which has been judged genuine, does however attribute the foundation to a certain “domna Teodechildis regna.” No. 7 in *Cartulaire général de l’Yonne*, vol 1, ed. Maximilien Quantin (Auxerre, 1854), 10–12. Constance Bouchard has shown that Theodechild was not a daughter of Clovis, but (with certain reservations) identified her as a granddaughter, a child of Theuderic. “Queen Theuchildis of Sens,” *Medieval Prosopography* 26 (2005): 1–12. The meaning of the epitaph “le Vif” is uncertain, although the nineteenth century historian Honoré Fisquet believed it to be a corruption of the Latin *vicus*. *La France ponticale (Gallia Christiana)* (Sens, 1865), 201–02.

<sup>34</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 3.25, p. 123.

<sup>35</sup> It is interesting that with the exception of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif, where Theudechild was venerated, the royal funerary basilicas all acquired relics from elsewhere.

unequivocally refer to them as *basilicae* ministered by *clerici*.<sup>36</sup> Nor did these clergy live the equivalent of a monastic lifestyle. An older scholarly tradition wished to see the *domus basilicae*—the living and administrative quarters attached to these churches—as a kind of clerical equivalent to a *monasterium* (which in the sixth century was still largely a lay enterprise), governed by an abbot and following its own peculiar rule.<sup>37</sup> From this perspective, the religious communities attached to the major basilicas in the fifth and sixth century would have anticipated the Benedictine abbeys or houses of regular canons they would become in the later Middle Ages. The evidence, however, does not support such an assessment.<sup>38</sup> Apart from a few officials who were in charge of the church, its maintenance, and the reception of pilgrims, there is nothing in the sources to suggest a permanent community of clerics who lived at and identified themselves with the shrine, let alone who were organized according to a regulated order of life.

In this regard, most of our information again concerns Saint-Martin. Gregory of Tours, bishop of the city from 573 to 594, who continued the work of his predecessors in promoting Martin's cult, wrote an extensive account of the miracles taking place at the

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<sup>36</sup> See the comprehensive study by Hélène Noizet, “Les basiliques martyriales au VIe et au début du VIIe siècle,” *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France* 87 (2001): 329–55; also Luce Pietri, “Les abbés de basilique dans la Gaule du VIe siècle,” *Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France* 69 (1983): 5–28; Atsma, “Les monastères urbains,” 163–87. The discussion of the key terms involved by Léon Levillain, while dated in some of its interpretations, is still helpful as well. “Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque mérovingienne,” *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 86 (1925): 44–84. One possible exception is to be found in the *Vita Germani urbis Parisiacae* by Venantius Fortunatus, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 7, pp. 372–418. Prior to becoming bishop of Paris, Germanus had been in charge of Saint-Symphorien where several references are made to *monachi*. Noizet makes the case, however, that these were most likely monks on pilgrimage and not specifically attached to the basilica of Saint-Symphorien. “Les basiliques martyriales,” 338–39.

<sup>37</sup> This theory was championed by Levillain, “Études” (1925), 74–78, who thought that the way of life introduced by St. Martin in his monasteries of Ligugé and Marmoutiers also prevailed at the basilica in Tours, and that this served as the model for the other *seniores basilicae*. Pietri, “Les abbés,” 28, also made the case for common, regulated life at Saint-Martin.

<sup>38</sup> See Noizet, “Les basiliques martyriales,” 335.

saint's tomb. *The Four Books of Martin's Virtues* is essentially a history of the shrine from its establishment through the end of Gregory's episcopate. Unlike the miracle collections from the ninth century (and later) where religious communities are prominently featured, the clergy in the *Virtues* of Saint-Martin remain conspicuously in the background. Gregory never refers to the presence of an actual community (*congregatio, coetus, grex*, etc.). Only on one occasion does he even speak of a cleric who was specifically in the service of the shrine; unfortunately for him, having lost his sight, he was unable to continue working and was required to return to his original home.<sup>39</sup> It is further telling that the several recipients of miracles who were consequently inspired, so we are told, to become clerics themselves also invariably returned to their own homes after receiving the clerical tonsure; they are never said to have taken up residence at the church nor joined a community.<sup>40</sup>

Only two figures with certainty are known to have lived at the shrine of Saint-Martin. Gregory speaks first of an *aedituus*—a warden responsible for the buildings—and while it is not definitive that this would have been an ordained cleric, elsewhere, in his *History of the Franks*, Gregory names a *presbyter* responsible for the opening and closing of the church, duties likely to have belonged to such a warden.<sup>41</sup> In one episode, a certain priest arrived in the middle of the night seeking help from St. Martin for his afflicted servant but was unable to awaken the *aedituus* who was fast asleep in his *cellula*.<sup>42</sup> The other official with his own cell at Saint-Martin was the *abbas (cellula abbatis)*.<sup>43</sup> The presence of an abbot at these

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<sup>39</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 3.28, p. 189.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.7, p. 143; 2.4, p. 161; 2.15, p. 164; 2.33, p. 171; 2.53, p. 177.

<sup>41</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 1.2, p. 138; Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 7.22, p. 341. For Saint-Denis, Gregory refers to *custodes* in charge of the shrine. *Gloria martyrum*, 71, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH rer. Merov.*, vol. 1.2, p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 4.25, p. 205.

<sup>43</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 7.29, pp. 348–49; Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 4.11, p. 202.

shrines was the main evidence used to support the older belief that the basilical churches were already monasteries in the sixth century. It has now been well demonstrated, however, that prior to the seventh century the title of *abbas* was common to the heads of both monasteries and other important non-monastic churches.<sup>44</sup> At the major basilicas, the abbot essentially served as the bishop's agent, responsible for its clergy and material well-being, as well as the reception of important guests. The position of basilical abbot, in fact, was often a stepping stone to the episcopal office itself.<sup>45</sup> Apart from the warden and the abbot, no other clergy are known with certainty to have lived at Saint-Martin or any of the other major basilicas. In the case of Saint-Denis, the church was reported to have been plundered on one occasion because no custodians were present.<sup>46</sup>

Certainly priests and other ordained ministers would have been necessary to perform the expected liturgical services. Celebration of the liturgy, however, at least initially, was not the chief function of the basilical churches, but rather a role that fell to the cathedrals.<sup>47</sup> While Gregory's writings make frequent reference to the celebration of mass at Saint-Martin and the other basilicas, the evidence for the regular performance of the Divine Office is much more sparse. On the occasions when Gregory relates that he prayed the Office when visiting Saint-Martin or elsewhere, it is implied that he did this privately or together with the clerics in his personal entourage; never is it described as an elaborate ceremony involving a regular community. It is only on the two feasts of St. Martin that the *Book of Virtues* speaks of "night vigils" taking place at the shrine for which large crowds would gather to participate,

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<sup>44</sup> Pietri, "Les abbés"; Levillain, "Études" (1925), 55–62.

<sup>45</sup> See the list of abbots of the major basilicas who became bishops in Noizet, "Les basiliques martyriales," 331–32.

<sup>46</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Gloria martyrum*, 71, pp. 85–86.

<sup>47</sup> Levillain, "Études" (1925), 44, citing L. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1898), 386–89; Noizet, "Les basiliques martyriales," 333.

including clergy from neighboring churches.<sup>48</sup> The presence of outside clergy on these feasts speaks to the stational nature of the liturgy at Tours and perhaps other dioceses at this time. Bishop Perpetuus a century earlier had instituted a calendar stipulating vigils and fasts to be kept at different churches in the city on specific solemnities. The cathedral was home to nearly all the most important universal feasts, while the basilica of Saint-Martin, in addition to the two feasts of its patron, was responsible for hosting the vigils of St. John the Evangelist, the Ascension, St. Symphorien, St. Bricius, and St. Hilary.<sup>49</sup> The task of celebrating the major liturgical offices, then, did not fall to the individual churches but was regarded as a communal function of the entire diocese and its clergy, with the cathedral at the center.<sup>50</sup> Saint-Martin therefore would not have needed a permanent community of clerics dedicated to the full-time performance of the liturgy.

There is, however, one sense in which we might speak about a community of Saint-Martin at the end of the sixth century that in certain respects did resemble a monastery, although perhaps not in the ways we might expect. This was not composed of professed monks or ordained clerics, but of those whom Gregory of Tours calls the *benedicti pauperes*—the poor, the sick, and the displaced who gathered at the tombs of the saints seeking relief from their afflictions. Many of those who were healed at Martin’s shrine, Gregory reports, responded by entering into the service of the basilica as lay men and

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<sup>48</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 2.12, pp. 162–63; 2.34, p. 171; 2.42, p. 174; 2.49, p. 176.

<sup>49</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum*, 10.31, p. 530.

<sup>50</sup> Variations on the theme of the stational liturgy at this time can also be found at Cologne and Auxerre. Gregory of Tours describes that it was the custom of the bishop of Cologne and his clergy to make the rounds at each of the shrines in his diocese every Sunday (*die dominico loca sancta ex consuetudinem cum suis clericis circuiret*). *De virtutibus Martini*, 1.2, p. 138. At Auxerre, Bishop Aunarius prescribed the churches of his diocese to supply clerics on a rotating basis for the performance of a daily litany and vigils at the cathedral. See *Gesta pontificum Autissiodorensium* under the notice for Aunarius, c. 19, pp. 62–85.

women.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, those still waiting to be healed are sometimes described as serving there, as they were able, often for long periods of time.<sup>52</sup> Gregory refers to a special *custos* or guardian in charge of the *matricula*—the official list of poor registered with the church. He was reportedly appointed by the *pauperes* themselves to manage the alms received by the basilica and distribute them as needed.<sup>53</sup> Especially important for understanding who resided at the shrine is Gregory’s claim that, apart from his own experience, these guardians were the principal source of his information for the miracles he records.<sup>54</sup> Besides Saint-Martin of Tours, *matriculae* and the presence of *pauperes* are attested at several of the major basilicas, including Saint-Denis.<sup>55</sup> According to a study of the institution by Egon Boshoff, those enrolled on the *matricula* (known as *matricularii*) comprised a privileged group, a mix of those waiting to be cured and others allowed to remain and live off the church’s alms in return for doing service at the shrine, forming a kind of unofficial community. “The *matricularii* became servants of the church, provided for its cleaning, guarded the doors, rang

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<sup>51</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 1.26, p. 153; 2.9, p. 162; 2.13, p. 163. These should be distinguished from those who responded by becoming clerics, but did not remain at the church. The verb *servire* and its related forms is the most common word used in this regard.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.13, p. 163.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.31, p. 153.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.45, p. 193.

<sup>55</sup> See Levillain, “Études” (1925), 69–70. For Saint-Denis, see the charters issued by King Dagobert, all of questionable authenticity (although not without value), ed. Theo Kölzer in *MGH DD Mer.*, vol. 1 (Hanover: Hahn, 2001): no. 50, pp. 129–30; no. 58, pp. 143–45; no. 59, pp. 145–46. The *Gesta Dagoberti*, a ninth century text that purports to be based on older documents, also makes reference to King Dagobert’s generosity to the *matricularii*. On this text, see Chap. 3 below. For the *matricula* in general, see Egon Boshof, “Armenfürsorge im Frühmittelalter: Xenodochium, matricula, hospitale pauperum,” *Vierteljahrschrift für Soziale- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 71 (1984): 153–74; Michel Rouche, “La matricule des pauvres. Evolution d’une institution de charité du Bas Empire jusqu’à la fin du Haut Moyen Âge,” in *Études sur l’histoire de la pauvreté*, ed. Michel Mollat, vol. 1 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1974), 83–110. It should be noted that *matriculae* were not limited to just the basilical shrines but were a feature of the cathedrals and other important churches as well.

the bells, took care of the sick, and made preparations for the dead.”<sup>56</sup> Those who were too sick to perform such service, we learn from Gregory, laid the entire day between the altar and the tomb offering their prayers.<sup>57</sup> A later source, a formulary from the eighth century originating from Saint-Martin, even describes the *matricularii* as gathering each morning as a community in the church to celebrate the liturgy.<sup>58</sup>

The communities of the poor who took up residence at the shrines of the saints are not identified in contemporary sources as monastic, but it is worth considering that the functions just described resemble those that later would be associated with communities of monks. The connection may not be coincidental. In Chapter 3, we shall see how the community of Saint-Denis, when forced to justify its identity as a monastery in the ninth century, drew as much from the memory of its *matricularii* and their witness of poverty, service, and veneration at the tomb of their patron saint as they did from the clerics or from the eastern ascetic tradition.

#### *The influence of Burgundy: Saint-Maurice, Saint-Marcel, and Luxeuil*

To the southeast, in Burgundy, an alternative model for the organization of a basilical shrine prevailed. In 515, Sigismund, the native Burgundian king, built a new church at Agaune over the shrine of St. Mauritius and the Theban martyrs (d. 287). At the same time, novelly, the king instituted a community of monks whose main task was to perform perpetual liturgical services “day and night” (sometimes referred to as the *laus perennis*, although a

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<sup>56</sup> “Die matricularii waren zu Kirchendienern geworden, hatten für die Reinigung der Kirche zu sorgen, die Tore zu bewachen, die Glocken zu läuten, auch die Krankenpflege und Totenwache zu übernehmen.” Boshof, “Armenfürsorge,” 172.

<sup>57</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus Martini*, 1.38, p. 156.

<sup>58</sup> “Formulae Turonenses,” ed. Karl Zeumer, no. 11 in *MGH Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi* (Hanover, 1886), 141.

term not used by the sources).<sup>59</sup> Significantly, the lay men and women who formerly lived there were removed.<sup>60</sup> When the Burgundian royal line was extinguished by the Franks in 523, Sigismund was buried at Saint-Maurice where he came to be venerated as a martyr.<sup>61</sup> Another Burgundian foundation, Saint-Marcel of Chalon-sur-Saône, although less documented, shares a similar history with Saint-Maurice of Agaune. In 584, King Guntram (d. 592) built a new basilica to house the relics of St. Marcellus, an obscure second-century martyr, where the king and his family would later be buried. Likewise, he instituted a monastery that was specifically modelled, by all accounts, after the pattern of life practiced at Agaune.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum* 3.5, pp. 100–101. On Saint-Maurice of Agaune, see Jean-Marie Theurillat, “L’acte de fondation de l’abbaye de saint-Maurice d’Agaune,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 110 (1952): 57–88; Theurillat, “L’Abbaye de St-Maurice d’Agaune des origines à la réforme canoniale, 515–830 environ,” *Vallesia* 9 (1954): 1–118; F. Masai, “La ‘Vita patrum iurensum’ et les débuts du monachisme à Saint-Maurice d’Agaune,” in *Festschrift Bernhard Bischoff zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. J. Autenrieth and F. Brunhölz (Stuttgart, 1971), 43–69; Barbara Rosenwein, “Perennial Prayer at Agaune,” in *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society*, ed. Sharon Farmer and Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 37–56; Rosenwein, “One Site, Many Meanings: Saint-Maurice d’Agaune as a Place of Power in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Frans Theuws, Mayke B. de Jong, and Carine Van Rhijn (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 279–90; Albrecht Diem, “Who is Allowed to Pray for the King? Saint-Maurice d’Agaune and the Creation of a Burgundian Identity,” in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 47–88.

<sup>60</sup> “Maximus Genavensis urbis antistes . . . devotionem [regis] Sigismundi praecordia incitavit, ut de loco illo, quem pretiosa morte Thebaei martyres . . . ornaverant, promiscui vulgi commixta habitatio tolleretur, et illic ubi splendor vitae per passionis atrocitatem fuerat acquisitus, nitor habitantium remearet. . . . Igitur . . . visum est, ut omnes mulieres de loco eodem tollerentur, et remotis familiis secularibus, Dei inibi, hoc est monachorum, familia locaretur. . . .” *Vita abbatum Acaunensium*, c. 3, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 3, p. 176.

<sup>61</sup> On the cult of Sigismund, see Frederick S. Paxton, “Power and the Power to Heal: The Cult of St. Sigismund of Burgundy,” *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (1993): 95–110.

<sup>62</sup> On the foundation of Saint-Marcel see the “Council of Valence (22 June 585),” ed. Friedrich Maassen in *MGH Conc.*, vol. 1 (Hanover, 1893), 162; Fredegar, *Chronica*, 4.1, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 2, p. 124; see also the introduction by Constance Brittain Bouchard in *The Cartulary of St.-Marcel-lès-Chalon, 779–1126* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1998), 1–2.

Even after the Frankish takeover of the Burgundian kingdom, Saint-Maurice and Saint-Marcel belonged to different power networks with different political contexts than those that prevailed in the north of Gaul during the sixth century. In fact, the first hundred years of Merovingian rule is most characterized by its divisions. There was not a single, unified Frankish kingdom, nor even several territorial kingdoms, but rather what is better described as competing personal lordships.<sup>63</sup> Clovis had been strong enough to unite the various Frankish factions under his sole rule, but after him (per Germanic custom) power was divided among his four sons, and after them the four sons of their eldest survivor, and throughout the sixth century they engaged in internecine wars.<sup>64</sup> The familiar territorial kingdoms of the seventh century, Neustria and Austrasia, had yet to congeal.<sup>65</sup> Each king established his “palace” in a different city—Paris, Soissons, Metz or Reims, and Orléans—from where they exercised personal rule. Apart from their individual prowess as war leaders, they had few institutions at their disposal to extend their power outside these strongholds, and their authority was essentially limited to wherever they happened to make their presence felt.<sup>66</sup> This fragmented and particularized state of affairs is similarly reflected in the religious institutions we have been considering. Whether founded by bishops or by kings, each of the major basilicas in the north was intended in the first place as a basis for local authority while serving the religious needs of a local Christian congregation.

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<sup>63</sup> See Raymond Van Dam, “Merovingian Gaul and the Frankish Conquests,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1, ca. 500–ca.700, ed. Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 199.

<sup>64</sup> On the divisions of the Frankish kingdom, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 55–60.

<sup>65</sup> Van Dam, “Merovingian Gaul,” 202–3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

Conditions were different in Burgundy.<sup>67</sup> Here royal institutions already had a chance to develop before the coming of the Franks, and even afterwards the region maintained its separate and independent character.<sup>68</sup> The founding of Saint-Maurice of Agaune was a cooperative endeavor between the king (only recently converted from Arianism) and the Burgundian episcopate, and based on models of religious institution—the flourishing monasticism of the Rhône basin—already existent there.<sup>69</sup> That of Saint-Marcel, likewise, was ratified at a synod of bishops convoked by the king. These shrines represented the interests of the wider realm and were both a source for and symbol of its unity. The main advisor for the barbarian King Sigismund in the foundation of Saint-Maurice was Maximus of Geneva, a Gallo-Roman bishop from outside the shrine’s diocese;<sup>70</sup> the community’s monks and abbots were recruited from various established monasteries in the region;<sup>71</sup> its stated mission was “to obtain the most secure protection from [the Theban martyrs] for the

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<sup>67</sup> On the Burgundians and the Burgundian kingdom, see Ian Wood, “Misremembering the Burgundians,” in *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen: von der Bedeutung des frühen Mittelalters*, ed. Walter Pohl (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 139–48.

<sup>68</sup> While King Sigismund was captured and eventually killed in 523 by Chlodomer, the Frankish king based in Orléans, Sigismund’s brother Godomar assumed the throne and for a time was able to maintain Burgundian independence. It was not until 534, following the Burgundian kingdom’s loss of support from the Ostrogoths of Italy, that the sons of Clovis acting together were able to defeat Godomar and incorporate Burgundy into the Frankish realm. The Frankish king of Burgundy, however, continued to rule from the fringes at Orléans.

<sup>69</sup> See Diem, “Saint-Maurice d’Agaune,” 51–52. It is also noteworthy that Agaune was not an episcopal city. On the cult of the saints in Burgundy apart from Agaune, see Ian Wood, “Constructing Cults in Early Medieval France: Local Saints and Churches in Burgundy and the Auvergne, 400–1000,” in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 160–64.

<sup>70</sup> *Vita abbatum Acaunensium*, 3, p. 176.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, p. 176. On Burgundian monasticism before the seventh century, see Ian Wood, “A Prelude to Columbanus: The Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories,” in *Columbanus and Monasticism*, ed. H. B. Clarke and Mary Brennan (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 3–32.

king and his kingdom” with the result that “the divine generosity bestowed blessings upon the monastery of Agaune, the [surrounding] region, and the [entire] kingdom.”<sup>72</sup>

It would be another century before similar institutions and collaboration would appear in the north of Gaul. In 613, Chlothar II (d. 629), king of the emergent Neustrian kingdom centered on Paris, defeated Sigebert II of Burgundy and Austrasia thereby uniting each of the core Frankish territories under a single ruler. For the remainder of the Merovingian era Neustria and Burgundy would be ruled by the same king.<sup>73</sup> Chlothar’s victory also brought an end to the incessant civil wars among the descendants of Clovis that had plagued the first century of Merovingian rule. It further initiated a cooperative effort between king, landed aristocracy, and urban episcopate to forge a territorial kingdom that was more than a collection of independent cities and revenue-generating estates, but reflective of a broader consensus of interests.<sup>74</sup>

Monasticism was to be a key pillar of this endeavor. It is probably no coincidence that in the years immediately after the rapprochement of the kingdoms, we encounter for the first time in Neustria models of religious institutions that had first developed in Burgundy. On the one hand, Saint-Maurice and Saint-Marcel presented new possibilities for the urban basilicas of the north. On the other, the monastery of Luxeuil, founded between 585 and 590

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<sup>72</sup> “. . . hisdem patrocinantibus [=Thebai martyres] et regno et regni integritate tutissime potiretur. . . .” *Vita abbatum Acaunensium*, 3, p. 176. “. . . omnia bona temporibus eius et monasterio Acaunensi et regno et regioni largitio divina concessit.” *Idem*, 8, p. 178.

<sup>73</sup> Austrasia, formerly joined to Burgundy, would henceforth have its own king after the death of Chlothar’s son Dagobert I in 639. See Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 140–58.

<sup>74</sup> See Paul Fouracre, “Francia in the Seventh Century,” in *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1, pp. 371–96.

by the Irish ascetic St. Columbanus (d. 615), served as an example for large-scale rural monasteries founded as joint ventures between kings and aristocrats.<sup>75</sup>

When Columbanus and his Irish companions arrived in the north of Gaul sometime around 585, they did not encounter a thriving culture of monasticism. Jonas of Bobbio, the biographer of Columbanus, reports that “the virtue of religion [i.e., the monastic life] was held to have nearly been abolished on account of the frequent appearance of enemies from without and the negligence of the bishops.”<sup>76</sup> While certain scholars have dismissed this claim as rhetoric,<sup>77</sup> the evidence for monks and monasteries in the north of Gaul before this time is actually quite meagre.<sup>78</sup> Gregory of Tours, in his extensive corpus of writings,

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<sup>75</sup> On Saint-Maurice, Saint-Marcel, and Luxeuil (in addition to Lérins) as the model monasteries named in the monastic foundation charters and privileges of the seventh century, see Albrecht Diem, “Was bedeutet *Regula Columbani*?” in *Integration und Herrschaft: Ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Maximilian Diesenberger (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), 82; Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 68. On Columbanus and the Columbanian movement, see most recently Alexander O’Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio and the Legacy of Columbanus: Sanctity and Community in the Seventh Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Yaniv Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul: Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>76</sup> “ubi tunc vel ob frequentia hostium externorum vel neglegentia praesulum religionis virtus pene abolita habebatur.” Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani*, 1.5, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Germ.*, vol. 37 (Hanover: Hahn, 1905), 161.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, the introduction by Alexander O’Hara and Ian Wood to their translations of the *Life of Columbanus*, *Life of John of Réomé*, and *Life of Vedast* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 9–16; Felice Lifshitz, *The Norman Conquest of Pious Neustria: Historiographic Discourse and Saintly Relics, 684–1090* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1995), 74–75.

<sup>78</sup> Hartmut Atsma claims that there were an equal number of documented monasteries in the north and south of Gaul prior to the year 600, citing his own unpublished catalog, “Les Monastères urbains,” 168. Without having seen his full data, it seems to me that most of the communities he cites were either not regarded as monasteries until a much later date, were first referenced in much later sources, or referred to places where *monachi* or *sanctimoniales* were somewhere mentioned but without necessarily referring to a formal community. Marilyn Dunn and Ian Wood have both cited Atsma to suggest that monasticism in the north flourished before the arrival of Columbanus; see Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 158, and Wood, “Entrusting Western Europe to the Church, 400–750,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (2013): 41. See also O’Hara and Wood, introduction to *The Life of Columbanus*, 12–15, where the examples cited to refute Jonas’s claim, in fact, are all

mentions only two monasteries north of the Loire.<sup>79</sup> This contrasts with at least 43 references to monasteries in the south (as identified by Viellard-Troiekouff). Admittedly, Gregory was much more familiar with the southern half of Gaul, but at the same time he makes mention in his writings of numerous basilicas and other churches in the north.<sup>80</sup> This dearth of monastic life in the north of Gaul relative to the south during Late Antiquity is confirmed by Hartmut Atsma's study of inscriptions as evidence for monasticism in Gaul before the seventh century: of the 69 he records, only two derive from the north (Paris and Amiens).<sup>81</sup> This is not to say that monasticism was unknown north of the Loire prior to Columbanus, but it is noteworthy that we are informed about the few Neustrian monasteries that traced their histories back before 600 only from much later sources.<sup>82</sup> It should not be surprising, then, that Columbanus, who had arrived on the Continent via Brittany, passed quickly through

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from the south. Whatever monasteries did exist before the seventh century, they appear to have been small, occasional communities located within the walls of the cities, under the direction of the local bishop; there was nothing yet comparable to the permanent institutions that flourished after Columbanus.

<sup>79</sup> The first was near Le Mans (thought to be Saint-Calais) where a son of King Chilperic I was sent to be educated as a cleric. Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum* 5.15; see also May Viellard-Troiekouff, *Les monuments religieux de la Gaule d'après les œuvres de Grégoire de Tours* (Paris: H. Champion, 1976), 249. The other was La-Ferté-sur-Chiers, east of the Ardennes, which Gregory visited in person. Here St. Vulfoaic once lived atop a pillar in the fashion of Simeon the Stylite, although with less fanfare. Gregory, *Libri historiarum* 8.15–16; Viellard-Troiekouff, 120–21. Viellard-Troiekouff also identifies monasteries mentioned by Gregory at Besné (near Nantes) and La Perche (between Le Mans and Chartres), but these seem to have been no more than personal hermitages.

<sup>80</sup> Gregory of Tours, however, is virtually silent about the far northern dioceses of Rouen, Amiens, Therouanne, Noyon, Laon, Arras, and Tournai where the Columbanian-style monasticism flourished in the seventh century.

<sup>81</sup> Hartmut Atsma, "Die christlichen Inschriften Galliens als Quelle für Klöster und Klosterbewohner bis zum Ende des 6. Jahrhunderts," *Francia* 4 (1977): 6–9. The majority are clustered in the area around southern Burgundy and Provence. Two others listed come from German territories (Trier and Boppard).

<sup>82</sup> For example, Saint-Martin-de-Vertou and Cerisy-la Forêt in the diocese of Bayeux; Saint-Evroult, diocese of Evreux; Saint-Liphard of Meung and Saint-Mesmin of Micy, diocese of Orléans; Saint-Crépin-le-Grand, diocese of Soissons; Saint-Cloud, diocese of Sens; Saint-Thierry-au-Mont-d'Or and Saint-Basil of Verzy, diocese of Reims. There are also suburban basilicas such as Saint-Ouen of Rouen, Saint-Remi of Reims, and Saint-Avit of Orléans whose later traditions (anachronistically) wish to see the establishment of a monastic community in the sixth century.

neighboring Neustria and instead went to the king of Burgundy from whom he obtained land for his monastic foundations at Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaine.<sup>83</sup>

The cooperation of the king (Jonas says Sigebert I, but more likely it was his son Childebert II) in Columbanus's initial foundations reflects a long tradition in Burgundy of royal involvement in the establishment of monasteries, a practice that may have dated back even before King Sigismund's foundation of Saint-Maurice, and which was continued by his Frankish successors in the sixth century.<sup>84</sup> Such cooperation between monarch and monastery seems to have come with the expectation that the king and other important nobles would have unimpeded access to the sanctuaries of these foundations, perhaps best attested by the practice at Saint-Maurice and Saint-Marcel of royal burial. Columbanus appears to have violated this expectation, for Jonas reports King Theuderic of Burgundy complaining that the Irish monks broke with custom by "not permitting entrance to all Christians within the monastic enclosure (*septa secretoria*)."<sup>85</sup> For this indiscretion Columbanus was expelled from the kingdom.<sup>86</sup>

Columbanian monasticism thus differed from the tradition of Agaune in its understanding of the right relationship between monastery and ruler. It also kept a friendly distance from episcopal oversight, as evidenced by its tendency to favor rural locations over

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<sup>83</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.6, pp. 162–63.

<sup>84</sup> In addition to Saint-Maurice of Agaune and Saint-Marcel of Chalon-sur-Saône, Burgundian royalty may have been involved in the foundation of Saint-Pierre of Lyon (ca. 490) and Saint-Michel of Lyon (before 506), although the sources for these are admittedly late. See Wood, "Prelude to Columbanus," 11. Queen Brunhild (d. 614) is also thought to have founded several monasteries; see Albrecht Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man," *Speculum* 82 (2007): 523n63.

<sup>85</sup> "intra septa secretiora omnibus Christianis aditus non pateret." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.19, p. 190. On the use of this phrase, see Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity," 537n92; his preferred translation is "inner parts."

<sup>86</sup> See Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity," 521–59.

cities (except in the case of female communities) and, significantly, to avoid established sites of religious cult, including the shrines of the saints, a topic to which we will return below.<sup>87</sup> Although Columbanus fell out of favor with the royal family and was generally held with suspicion among the Burgundian bishops, his style of monasticism did appeal to the landed aristocracy.<sup>88</sup> The first monasteries patterned after the model of Luxeuil and following Columbanus's rule were founded by the sons of Waldelenus, a Burgundian duke for whom Columbanus had interceded.<sup>89</sup> The eldest, Donatus, who was educated at Luxeuil before becoming bishop of Besançon, founded a monastery on the site of a dilapidated palace (known as Palatium), while his younger brother Chramelenum made a foundation in the Jura forest (Novisona); Waldelenus's widow Flavia likewise founded a monastic community for women in Besançon (Jussamoutier).<sup>90</sup> Aristocratic involvement would be a key feature of the Columbanian-movement as it spread to other parts of Gaul.<sup>91</sup>

It was in the years immediately after King Chlothar unified the crowns of Neustria and Burgundy in 613 that the influence of these Burgundian religious institutions first began to make their impression in the north. The first monastery outside Burgundy to be organized according to Columbanus's rule (apart from the saint's own foundation at Bobbio in northern

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<sup>87</sup> Archeologists have interpreted recent excavations of Luxeuil and Annegray as working against the desert motif employed by Jonas. The Roman villas these monasteries appear to have occupied, however, can hardly be compared to walled cities and did not have the same legal constitution. The dichotomy of rural versus urban is not entirely invalid. For a summary of this archaeological work, see the contribution of Eleonora Destefanis and Sébastien Bully, "The Archaeology of the Earliest Monasteries in Italy and France (5th-8th c.)," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism*, ed. Alison I. Beach and Isabelle Cochelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), forthcoming.

<sup>88</sup> "Ibi [=Luxeuil] nobilium liberi undique concurrere nitabantur, ut, exspretā falera menta saeculi et praesentium pompam facultatum temnentes, aeterna praemia caperent." Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.10, pp. 169–70.

<sup>89</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.14, pp. 174–76.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. On Palatium and Jussa, see Marquise de Maillé, *Les cryptes de Jouarre* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1971), 51–52.

<sup>91</sup> On this, see Fox, *Power and Religion*.

Italy) was a women's community established at Evoriacum (later known as Faremoutiers) to the east of Paris during Chlothar's reign in the early 620s; this was followed a few years later, around 630, by nearby Jouarre, another female establishment.<sup>92</sup> Both projects were initiated by Neustrian noblemen who had come into contact with Columbanus during his exile.<sup>93</sup> Chlothar himself was not an active patron of religious institutions, and no monastic charters issued in his name have been preserved. But it is telling that the two monasteries known from later traditions to have received privileges from his hand were Luxeuil and Saint-Maurice.<sup>94</sup> These, along with Saint-Marcel of Chalon-sur-Saône, would be the "model" institutions that founding charters for Frankish monasteries would look to for the remainder of the seventh century.<sup>95</sup>

### *The Merovingian "Klosterpolitik"*

It was Chlothar's son Dagobert I (629–639), rather, who was the first important royal patron of Frankish religious institutions in the north. In addition to providing land for new

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<sup>92</sup> On the female Columbanian establishments, see Maillé, "Les monastères colombaniens de femmes," ch. 1 in *Les cryptes de Jouarre*, 13–57.

<sup>93</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 2.7, p. 243; 1.26, p. 210. Jonas is explicit that these communities followed the *regula* of Columbanus.

<sup>94</sup> For Chlothar's patronage of Luxeuil, see *Vita Columbani*, 1.30, p. 223; on Saint-Maurice, see Friedrich Prinz, who cites the ninth-century chronicle of Agaune. *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert)* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1965), 163.

<sup>95</sup> See note 75 above.

monasteries at Solignac,<sup>96</sup> and possibly Rebais-en-Briès<sup>97</sup> and Elnone,<sup>98</sup> each founded according to the model of Columbanus's Luxeuil by aristocrats associated with his court, he was also a benefactor of the basilicas of the saints.<sup>99</sup> According to the Life of his royal treasurer, Eligius of Noyon, Dagobert commissioned a costly reliquary for the tomb of Saint-Martin of Tours, while at the same time granting the church an exemption from royal taxation.<sup>100</sup> The king was also probably behind Eligius's crafting of new reliquaries for several other important shrines.<sup>101</sup>

Above all, King Dagobert was famous for his devotion to the shrine of Saint-Denis, whose fate would ever after be linked to the fortunes of the Frankish (and later French) ruling dynasty. The *Gesta Dagoberti*, composed in the 830s and admittedly unreliable as a source for the seventh century, relates that upon becoming king, Dagobert fulfilled a vow he had made in his youth to honor the memory of St. Dionysius, whose cult was being neglected by the clerics in charge of the shrine.<sup>102</sup> According to the *Gesta*, he orchestrated a translation of the body to a new site where he built a grand basilica from the ground up and honored the saint

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<sup>96</sup> Foundation charter for Solignac, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 4 (Hanover: Hahn, 1902), 746–48. On this privilege, see Diem, “Was bedeutet *Regula Columbani*?” 75–77.

<sup>97</sup> Foundation charter for Rebais, ed. Theo Kölzer, no. 49 in *MGH DD Mer.*, vol. 1, pp. 126–28. This charter appears to have been falsified in the surviving manuscript which is itself late, but there continue to be debates about its degree of authenticity. For a summary, see Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, 67n29–30. See also the exemption granted by Bishop Burgundofaro of Meaux in 636 that also references Dagobert, ed. J. M. Pardessus in *Diplomata: chartae, epistolae, leges aliaque instrumenta ad res Gallo-Francicas spectantia*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1849), no. 275, pp. 40–41.

<sup>98</sup> *Testamentum Amandi*, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 5 (Hanover: Hahn, 1910), 484. See also the foundation charter (likely falsified) ed. Theo Kölzer, no. 45 in *MGH DD Merov.*, vol. 1, pp. 117–19.

<sup>99</sup> The charter for Rebais also makes reference to the models of Saint-Maurice and Saint-Marcel.

<sup>100</sup> Audoin of Rouen, *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, 1.32, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 4, p. 688.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> The *Gesta Dagoberti*, however, is likely based on sources that are much older. On this text, see Chap. 3 below.

with an opulent new tomb.<sup>103</sup> While modern archeologists have expressed doubts that Dagobert really moved the original church or built an entirely new structure, seventh-century sources at least corroborate the king's role in its refurbishment and his revitalizing of the cult.<sup>104</sup> The *Life of Eligius* credits Dagobert with commissioning a gem-encrusted mausoleum sheltered by a large marble canopy, along with other embellishments to the church.<sup>105</sup> The chronicle of Fredegar, composed around 658, further adds that the king endowed the church "with such wealth and so many rural estates and possessions in various places that many were amazed."<sup>106</sup> A number of charters, albeit of varying degrees of authenticity, confirm Dagobert's generosity in providing for the material upkeep of Saint-Denis. The *Gesta Dagoberti*, if it can be trusted, relates a number of other economic privileges, including the right to host a trade fair during the celebration of the feast of Dionysius.<sup>107</sup> According to Fredegar, King Dagobert in 639 died at Saint-Denis, where he had gone to recover from an illness, and was buried in the church.<sup>108</sup> From that time on, with certain exceptions, Saint-Denis would serve as the main funerary church of the Frankish

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<sup>103</sup> *Gesta Dagoberti*, 17, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 2, p. 406.

<sup>104</sup> The archeological evidence used to refute the claim that Dagobert built a new church, however, is not as definitive as it is sometimes presented to be. See Sumner McKnight Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis from Its Beginnings to the Death of Suger, 475–1151* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 13–27; Michaël Wyss, *Atlas historique de Saint-Denis. Des origines au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1996), 30–32.

<sup>105</sup> *Vita Eligii*, 32, pp. 688–89.

<sup>106</sup> "Tante opes ab eodem et villas et possessiones multas per plurema loca ibique sunt conlate, ut miratur a plurimis." Fredegar, *Chronica*, 4.79, p. 161. On the authorship and dating of the Chronicle, the fundamental article remains that of Walter Goffart, "The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered," *Speculum* 38 (1963): 206–41.

<sup>107</sup> The charters are edited by Theo Kölzer in *MGH DD Merov.*, vol 1: no. 26, pp. 71–72; no. 27, pp. 73–75; no. 29, pp. 78–81; no. 31, pp. 85–87; no. 36, pp. 97–99; no. 39, pp. 104–105; no. 40, pp. 106–107; no. 41, pp. 108–10; no. 42, pp. 110–11; no. 43, pp. 112–14; no. 44, pp. 115–16; no. 48, pp. 125–26; no. 50, pp. 129–31; no. 52, pp. 132–33; no. 54, pp. 136–37; no. 55, pp. 137–40; no. 56, p. 141; no. 57, p. 142; no. 58, pp. 143–45; no. 59, pp. 145–46; no. 66, pp. 166–68; no. 67, pp. 168–69; no. 72, pp. 184–86. See also Dagobert's Testament as found in the *Gesta Dagoberti*, 37, 39, pp. 414–15, 416–19; the annual fair is referenced in c. 34, p. 413.

<sup>108</sup> Fredegar, *Chronica*, 4.79, p. 161.

kings. Fredegar adds one more key detail relative to Dagobert's patronage of Saint-Denis: "He directed that psalmody be instituted there patterned after the monastery of the saints of Agaune. Unfortunately," the author concludes, "the weakness of Abbot Aigulf is known to have thwarted its establishment."<sup>109</sup>

Dagobert's choice of Saint-Denis to be the premier royal basilica, along with his material generosity and the model of Agaune, taken together suggests that the king envisioned an institution that would transcend the particular, local interests of the other Neustrian basilicas and, similar to Saint-Maurice, serve as a symbol for a unified Frankish kingdom. In the first place, the cult of Dionysius had a more universal appeal than those of the bishops venerated at other shrines.<sup>110</sup> To be sure, St. Dionysius was regarded specifically as the first bishop of Paris, but he was also a martyr whose mission to Gaul was remembered as having been commissioned by the Pope and so was linked to the Roman church.<sup>111</sup> The author of the first *Passion* of Dionysius and his two companions Rusticus and Eleutherius, which was possibly composed at the time of Dagobert's intervention at Saint-Denis, stresses the unity of these three martyrs, held to be an earthly image of the Trinity—perhaps hinting at the desired unity the king was hoping to promote within his kingdom.<sup>112</sup> Further, the new church (whether remodeled or built from the ground up), similar to Saint-Maurice, was

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<sup>109</sup> "Sallencium ibidem ad instar monastiriae sanctorum Agauninsium instetuerre iusserat; sed facillitas abbatis Aigulfi eadem instetucionem nuscetur refragasse." Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> It was also located some distance away from Paris where the bishops preferred to be buried.

<sup>111</sup> The association of Dionysius of Paris with Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in the Bible is not made explicitly until the late eighth or early ninth century, but it may have been part of a much earlier oral tradition. Cf. Lapidge, *Hilduin of Saint-Denis*, 83.

<sup>112</sup> "The 'Ancient *passio*' of St. Dionysius (BHL 2171)," ch. 3, ed. Lapidge, *Hilduin of Saint-Denis*, 651–53. Lapidge dates the earliest *Passio* to the middle of the eighth century, although there is good reason to suppose that earlier versions existed. A *vita* is mentioned in the sixth-century *Vita Genovefae* (Lapidge, however, believes this to be a later interpolation). See Lapidge, *Hilduin of Saint-Denis*, 612–26.

meant to be “the wonder of its day,”<sup>113</sup> replacing a dilapidated *aedicula*,<sup>114</sup> aimed at drawing pilgrims and sight-seers from beyond just Paris and its suburbs. Finally, the institution of perpetual chant would have been an unrivaled cultural phenomenon in seventh-century Neustria. In addition to adding to the splendor of the church and promoting its fame, it would have also trumped the liturgical program of the cathedral church in Paris while raising the prestige of the king in the religious sphere.<sup>115</sup>

The fact that the institution of perennial psalmody was initially unsuccessful, as Fredegar suggests, indicates that the kingdom may not yet have had the organizational capacity to make it function. When King Sigismund had introduced monastic life at Saint-Maurice of Agaune a century earlier for the same purpose of instituting a program of perennial prayer, he had been able to draw on a tradition of monasticism in Burgundy that was already long established, particularly in the Rhône valley. The first abbot, Hymnemosus—whose name implies his proficiency in liturgical music—came from the monastery of Grigny, while his lieutenant, Ambrosius, was a monk from Île Barbe in Lyon, and they were accompanied by disciples from other Burgundian monasteries.<sup>116</sup> Neustria, at the time when King Dagobert wished to institute the perennial prayer of Agaune at Saint-Denis, by contrast, did not have a similarly rooted tradition to draw on. The king was an enthusiastic patron of Columbanian monasticism, but the houses he supported were still in the nascent stages of their development and so unlikely to be able to contribute to the grand project at Saint-Denis. It is only a generation later, during the reign of Dagobert’s son Clovis

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<sup>113</sup> “. . . ut paene singulare sit in Gallis ornamentum et in magna omnium admiratione usque in hodiernum diem.” *Vita Eligii*, 32, p. 689.

<sup>114</sup> *Gesta Dagoberti*, 3, p. 402.

<sup>115</sup> See Nelson, “Queens as Jezebels,” 68.

<sup>116</sup> *Vita abbatum Acaunensium*, 4–8, pp. 176–78.

II and his wife Balthild, that the monastic tradition in Neustria seems to have matured sufficiently to be applied in other contexts such as the major basilical shrines.<sup>117</sup>

Balthild was an especially influential queen in this respect. The monastic policy she initiated, described at the beginning of this chapter, was not entirely her own program, as should be clear, but actually the culmination of a policy initiated under Chlothar II after 613, intensified under Dagobert I, and given its most extensive articulation by Balthild during the reigns of her husband Clovis II and their son Chlothar III. The *Life of Balthild* places her favor towards religious institutions in the context of her efforts to achieve unity and harmony among the three kingdoms, Neustria, Burgundy, and Austrasia, indicating the continuity of her monastic policy with her royal predecessors.<sup>118</sup>

She did more than simply perpetuate their actions, however, but took the royal patronage of monasticism to a new level. In addition to continuing the practice begun by Dagobert of cooperating with the Frankish aristocracy in founding rural monasteries on the model of Columbanus's Luxeuil and providing for their endowments, she was also the first Frankish monarch to make foundations of her own: Corbie with monks from Luxeuil, and Chelles with nuns from Jouarre (likewise part of the Columbanian network).<sup>119</sup> In her

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<sup>117</sup> Diems, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity," 558.

<sup>118</sup> ". . . et regno quidem Francorum in pace consistenti. Tunc etenim nuper et Austrasii pacifico ordine, ordinate domna Balthilde, per consilium quidem seniorum reperunt Childericum, filium eius, in regem Austri; Burgundiones vero et Franci facti sunt uniti. Et credimus, Deo gubernante, iuxta domnae Balthildis magnam fidem ipsa tria regna tunc inter se tenebant pacis concordiam (And the kingdom of the Franks remained at peace. For the Austrasians not long ago peacefully received Childeric, the son of Lady Balthild, as king in Austrasia through her arrangement and the agreement of the elders, while the Burgundians and the Franks [=Neustrians] were united. And we believe that with God's governance and in accordance with the great faith of Lady Balthild, the three kingdoms afterwards kept the harmony of peace)." *Vita Balthildis* (A), 5, pp. 487–88.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, pp. 489–91.

dealings with the basilicas of the saints, she again went a step further by introducing monastic life and securing privileges of episcopal exemption.

The stated purpose in the *Vita Balthildis* of the queen's policy towards the basilical shrines was that they be able to pray for peace and God's mercy on behalf of the kingdom.<sup>120</sup> This had also been the motivation of King Dagobert for introducing perennial psalmody at Saint-Denis in the 630s after the model of Agaune, but this failed, we are told, because of the personal shortcomings of the abbot.<sup>121</sup> Balthild's prescription that the basilicas adopt what her biographer describes as the *sanctus regularis ordo* might best be seen as an attempt to create an institutional basis to support the performance of perpetual prayer rather than relying on the organizational abilities of a single individual.

What this *regularis ordo* entailed, however, has been a matter of some debate, especially the question of whether it is to be equated with the Rule of Columbanus (and thus whether the basilical shrines should be seen as "Columbanian").<sup>122</sup> The reality is somewhat more complicated, especially if we understand the terms *regula* and *regularis* in the early Middle Ages to usually mean something other than a written text of binding norms, but rather a certain ethos or an ideal about the organization and practice of monastic life in general.<sup>123</sup> In this wider sense, the *regularis ordo* at the senior basilicas, especially in the case of Saint-

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<sup>120</sup> See note 1 above. On monastic intercessory prayer, see the recent study by Renie S. Choy, *Intercessory Prayer and the Monastic Ideal in the Time of the Carolingian Reforms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>121</sup> See note 109 above.

<sup>122</sup> Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, 274–75; Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels," 68; Dierkens, "Prolégomènes," 388–89.

<sup>123</sup> For a reassessment of the assumption that following a rule in early medieval monastic life meant adhering to the norms of a written text, see Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule: Some Observations on the History of Monastic Normative Observance in the Early Medieval West," in *Western Monasticism Ante Litteram: The Spaces of Monastic Observance in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Hendrick Dey and Elizabeth Fentress (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 53–84; Philip Rousseau and Albrecht Diem, "Monastic Rules (4th–9th Centuries)," in *Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism*, forthcoming.

Denis, appears to have more in common with what we might call the “Rule of Agaune.” According to the *Vita abbatum Acaunensium*, a sixth-century text that describes the founding of the monastery at the tomb of St. Maurice, the community was instituted according to the *regula psallendi et subsistendi*.<sup>124</sup> While the desire of the Merovingian royalty to emulate the perpetual psalmody of Saint-Maurice is well known (*regula psallendi*), the other appealing innovation of Agaune, something that has been overlooked, was the stability and continuity of its community (*regula subsistendi*). That the basilicas of the saints in the north did not have such permanent communities at the end of the sixth century has been demonstrated above from the writings of Gregory of Tours, and this is likely why the perpetual psalmody instituted by Dagobert initially failed to take hold. The charter issued under the name of King Clovis II in 654 that ratified episcopal exemption for Saint-Denis (presumably granted in answer to Balthild’s policy), in fact, echoes this two-fold sentiment of the “Rule of Agaune”: “Let it be permitted to that holy community . . . to remain [there] perpetually and to pray ceaselessly for the stability of our kingdom,” “just as at the monastery of Saint-Maurice of Agaune.”<sup>125</sup>

This consideration for a stable, permanent community is likely behind the episcopal exemptions and economic privileges granted by Balthild to the basilicas. In the first place, exemption from the bishop’s authority meant that the basilical communities were permitted

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<sup>124</sup> “Sic iunctus sanctis martiribus, mira caritatis gaudia cunctis in congregatione eadem fratribus cumulavit. Psallendi interim vel subsistendi regula instituta [abbati] sancto Hymnemodo a coetus episcoporum, qui illic ad constituendum monasterium venerant, traditur.” *Vita abbatum Acaunensium*, 7, p. 178.

<sup>125</sup> “sed liciat ipsi s(an)c(t)e congreg[acioni] . . . perpeter possedere et pro stabiletate regni n(ostr)i iugeter exorare. . . .” “sicut ad monasthirium s(an)c(t)i Mauricii Agaunis. . . .” Charter issued 22 June 654 by Clovis II confirming the privileges recently granted Saint-Denis by Bishop Landericus, ed. Theo Kölzer, no. 85 in *MGH DD Mer.*, vol. 1, p. 219. One meaning of *possedere*, according to Lewis & Short, is “to occupy, abide in (a place).”

to live a monastic life undisturbed by the burdens imposed on other clergy. All the surviving charters of exemption for these churches make reference to the ancient Synod of Carthage and the writings of St. Augustine in this regard:

The holy synod of Carthage . . . does not prevent monks from living according to their own privilege, and the books of St. Augustine concerning the ecclesiastical orders teach that monks living peacefully under a rule ought to derive this peace from their own unique law and remain undisturbed from all the disruptions of clerics, lest the noise of the outside world should do harm to those who are governed by the strict rule of the Lord's service.<sup>126</sup>

King Clovis's confirmation of 654 similarly forbade the bishop of Paris specifically from exercising authority over the monastic community.<sup>127</sup> Such considerations would have prevented the bishops from employing the monastic clergy of the basilicas for other duties in their diocese, leaving them free for their exclusive duty of intercessory prayer at the shrines of the saints.

There was also an economic factor involved. The desired liturgical program would have required not only communities sufficiently large enough to be divided into *turmae*—rotating shifts of choirs who kept the psalmody going around the clock, day and night (if indeed this was what was meant by perpetual prayer)—but also wealthy enough so that their

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<sup>126</sup> “. . . sancta Carthaginensis synodus . . . non prohibeat monachos sub privilegio proprio residere, vel sancti Augustini libri de ecclesiasticis gradibus doceant monachos quiete regulariter viventes sua singulari lege debere quiescere, et ab omni infestatione clericorum intrepidus permanere, ne saecularis strepitus eos laedat quos districta regula servitutis Domini moderatur.” Charter from Bishop Landry of Paris for Saint-Denis (652), ed. Pardessus in *Diplomata*, no. 320, pp. 95–96. For other examples of this clause, see Ewig, “Das Privileg,” 69–72. The charter refers to the acts of the 525 Synod of Carthage which drew this precept from Augustine's *De vita et moribus clericorum suorum* (really a compilation of his sermons 355 and 356). See Conrad Leyser, “Augustine in the Latin West, 430–ca. 900,” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 458–60.

<sup>127</sup> “. . . nullus ep(iscop)orum nec praesentes nec qui futuri fuerint successores aut eorum ordenatores vel quali[bet] persona possit . . . aequa potestate sibi in ipso mona[s]thi[ri]o usurpare. . . .” Kölzer, 85, p. 218.

sole concern would be the performance of the chant, without the burden of having to do other work for their livelihood.<sup>128</sup> King Dagobert I seems to have made provision for this concern with his generous grants of landed property to Saint-Denis and economic privileges to Saint-Martin.<sup>129</sup> So long as these churches remained under the temporal authority of their bishop, however, there was no guarantee that these resources would go towards supporting their communities. Perhaps this is another reason why the perennial prayer of Agaune initially failed to take hold at Saint-Denis. Balthild's policy of episcopal exemption might be seen then as a safeguard for protecting the royal investment. The charter issued by Bishop Landry of Paris in 654 that granted Saint-Denis its independence lists the specific properties and their boundaries that the bishop and his clergy were renouncing their rights to, while Clovis's confirmation charter of that same year forbids the bishop from using the material goods of the church to serve other purposes.<sup>130</sup>

Saint-Denis and the other senior basilicas, however, were not carbon copies of Saint-Maurice of Agaune. The *sanctus regularis ordo* prescribed by Queen Balthild likewise has its affinities with the *regula Columbani*—although not precisely the two texts attributed to Columbanus that together have circulated under that name, but in the broader sense of the term as it has been aptly described in a series of studies by Diem, on which much of what follows is based.<sup>131</sup> While neither charter issued by Saint-Denis in the wake of the queen's

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<sup>128</sup> For a hypothesis on how the perpetual psalmody of Agaune functioned, see Masai, "La 'Vita patrum iurensium'," 66. On use of the term *turmae*, see Diem, "Saint-Maurice d'Agaune," 72–75.

<sup>129</sup> See notes 100 and 107 above.

<sup>130</sup> Pardessus, 320, pp. 95–97; Kölzer, 85, pp. 218–19. Landry's charter is known from a later interpolated copy believed to reflect a genuine document; the confirmation of Clovis II survives as an original.

<sup>131</sup> These include, "Was bedeutet *Regula Columbani*?", "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity," and "Die '*Regula Columbani*' und die '*Regula Sancti Galli*': Überlegungen zu den Gallusviten in ihrem karolingischer Kontext," in *Gallus und seine Zeit: Leben,*

directive (Bishop Landry's exemption and Clovis's confirmation) mentions the model of Luxeuil or the rule of Columbanus explicitly,<sup>132</sup> both do closely follow the language and form of charters that have survived from other Columbanian foundations.<sup>133</sup> The provisions in the Saint-Denis documents regarding the community's independence from episcopal oversight, the integrity of its goods and property, and its charge to pray for the king, the kingdom, and the Church are common to a whole series of privileges issued in the seventh century to monasteries within the Columbanian network.<sup>134</sup> As Diem has demonstrated, the meaning of the term *regula Columbani*, as it was used in the seventh century, was as much a program for the place of monasteries within the power structures of Church and society as it was an understanding of how to live the monastic life.<sup>135</sup> A key term that sums up this program of Columbanian monasticism with reference to the outside world, and which links these charters together, is *quies*—a state of being “undisturbed.”<sup>136</sup> In the specific case of Saint-Denis, Clovis states that he is bestowing his privilege “for the *quies* of the servants of God and the congregation at that venerable place,” providing a kind of protective bubble so

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*Wirken, Nachleben*, ed. Franziska Schnoor, Karl Schmuki, Ernst Tremp, Peter Erhart, and Jakob Kuratli Hüebli (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof St. Gallen, 2015), 65–97.

<sup>132</sup> The exemption given by Bishop Emmo of Sens for Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in 657, however, does reference Luxeuil (as well as the Rule of St. Benedict), “sub regula Benedicti et modo Luxoviensis monasterii”. No. 7 in Quantin, *Cartulaire général de l'Yonne*, 10–12. While this charter has been judged genuine based on its similarities to certain other original documents from that time, it is known only from a seventeenth-century copy of an eleventh-century cartulary. It is very possible that the references to the Rule of Benedict and Luxeuil were later interpolations. On this charter, see Bouchard, “Queen Theuchildis of Sens,” 5n13.

<sup>133</sup> Among the most important are the foundation charter for Solignac (see note 96 above), the episcopal exemption for Rebais (see note 97 above), and the royal immunity for Corbie, ed. Theo Kölzer, no. 86 in *MGH DD Merov.*, vol. 1, pp. 220–24.

<sup>134</sup> Diem, “Was bedeutet *Regula Columbani?*,” 78. In addition to the charters for Solignac, Rebais, and Corbie, there are also episcopal exemptions issued for Rebais (637), Saint-Maur-des-Fosses (643), Sainte-Colombe (660), Saint-Pierre-le-Vif (657), Hautvillers (662), Sithiu (662), Corbie (664), Saint-Dié (669), and Montier-en-Der (692). For references, see Diem, 78n105.

<sup>135</sup> Diem, “Was bedeutet *Regula Columbani?*” 71.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. *Quies* and *quiesco* appear in the clause referencing the synod of Carthage and the writings of Augustine found in many of the charters of exemption. See note 126 above.

that, undisturbed by outside interference, a community could form and be at peace to pray on behalf of the king and kingdom.<sup>137</sup> From the standpoint of their external constitution, therefore, Saint-Denis and the other basilical monasteries were indeed very much “Columbanian.”

There is another aspect that would have made the Columbanian model appealing for the basilical shrines in the context of Balthild’s *Klosterpolitik*. As it pertained to the inner life of the monastery, the focus of Columbanus’s rule was less on the individual and his ascetic practice, as in certain older forms of monastic life, than on the creation of a holy community.<sup>138</sup> This communal aspect—which goes beyond the idea of the *regula subsistendi* of Agaune—is true of the *regula Columbani* whether we encounter it in the two texts that together bear that name or in Jonas of Bobbio’s *Life of Columbanus*. The *Regula monachorum*, for example, mitigates many of the individualistic ascetic practices associated with the desert-style monasticism, while orienting them towards the requirements of communal living.<sup>139</sup> The *Regula coenobialis*, further, takes the form of a penitential for various offenses that mostly have to do with sins against the common life; it begins with the instruction to make a confession of these two times daily—a kind of relief valve for the tensions that inevitably build up within a close community.<sup>140</sup> Jonas, for his part, in addition to numerous stories in the *Vita Columbani* that stress cooperation and charity among the

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<sup>137</sup> “pro quiet(e) servorum D(e)i vel congruencia locis venerabilebus inperitur petitio.” Kölzer, 85, p. 218.

<sup>138</sup> Here I follow Diem, “‘*Regula Columbani*’ und die ‘*Regula Sancti Galli*’,” 67–73. For an alternative view that maintains the individualistic severity of Columbanus’s monasticism, see O’Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio*, 57–62.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 68–69. Cf. chs. 8–10 (“De discretione,” “De mortificatione,” and “De perfectione monachi”) in *Regula monachorum*, ed. G. S. M. Walker in *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 134–42.

<sup>140</sup> Diem, “‘*Regula Columbani*’ und die ‘*Regula Sancti Galli*’,” 69–70. Cf. *Regula Coenobialis*, ed. Walker in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 142–68.

brothers, goes further by representing the various communities living according to the rule of Columbanus as the true heirs (rather than his relics) of the saint's holiness and miracle-working prowess.<sup>141</sup> This communal emphasis of the Columbanian program is likewise reflected in Clovis's charter for Saint-Denis, where the monastic community is referred to as a *sancta congregatio*.<sup>142</sup> For Queen Balthild, who had ample examples of established Columbanian communities to draw on, this aspect would have been appealing for the institutions—the basilicas of the saints—that were supposed to symbolize the aspirations for a wider community of the Frankish realm. The *sanctus regularis ordo*, then, appears to be a combination of the values and ideals associated with both Luxeuil and Saint-Maurice, and we can agree with Diem that Balthild appears to have forged “a synthesis between Columbanian monasticism and older forms of relic-based monastic life.”<sup>143</sup> We shall encounter similar values and ideals when our attention turns to the monastery-shrines of the ninth century in the case studies that follow.

### *Columbanian monasticism and the shrines of the saints*

The royal initiative that introduced monasticism at the basilical shrines of Neustria may well have been intended to forge an institutional and symbolic basis for a unified and enduring Christian kingdom. Nevertheless, this policy, although successful in the long run, did not entirely find unanimous acceptance. The resistance, mild though it was, came from within the circles of the Columbanian movement. The monasteries founded by Columbanus and his disciples, while certainly benefitting from royal patronage, at the same time remained

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<sup>141</sup> See Diem, “Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity,” 554–555.

<sup>142</sup> See note 125 above.

<sup>143</sup> Diem, “Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity,” 558.

suspicious of direct royal involvement. Moreover, these institutions had little to do with the cult of relics or the public shrines of the saints. While it would be going too far to say there was explicit and hostile opposition to the Merovingian *Klosterpolitik*, if we read our sources closely we can detect some of the tensions and reservations it aroused among certain Columbanian leaders.

We see this first of all in Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*. Jonas, a former monk of the saint's foundation at Bobbio, addressed his work specifically to the abbots of Luxeuil and Bobbio, and it was clearly meant to circulate among a wide network of monasteries mentioned in the text that were founded after their model.<sup>144</sup> At the same time, there is also reason to believe that apart from its monastic audience, the work was intended to be disseminated among court and aristocratic circles as well.<sup>145</sup> As Diem has argued, the *regula Columbani* that was promoted by Jonas in his *Vita Columbani* was also a rule for the outside world—a set of expectations for those who would deal with Columbanian institutions, narrated through Columbanus's interactions with kings and other powerful people.<sup>146</sup> Jonas's *Life* was not an objective history of events but a constructed work, and, written as it was between 639 and 642, a possible context (among others) would have been the recently deceased King Dagobert's (d. 639) enthusiasm for the new monasticism, especially as it related to his project at Saint-Denis. Jonas may have wished to advise the king's successors about the limits to their patronage while suggesting that saints' shrines and monasteries should remain separate institutions.

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<sup>144</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, prologue, p. 144.

<sup>145</sup> Alexander O'Hara, "The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul," *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009): 127–28.

<sup>146</sup> Diem, "Monks, Kings and the Transformation of Sanctity," 528–29.

To begin with there are passages in the *Vita Columbani* that may have served as a veiled critique of King Dagobert's substantial gifts to Saint-Denis and other monasteries in exchange for their communities' spiritual favor and prayer.<sup>147</sup> Jonas portrays Columbanus as resistant to the efforts of various monarchs to gain influence over him by settling him and his followers at a place of the king's choosing and funding them out of the royal treasury. King Sigebert, the first king he encounters, promises to provide "anything he asked for," but Columbanus replies that he does not want "to enrich himself on the wealth of others."<sup>148</sup> Instead, the Irish monks are allowed to find an out of the way place in the "wilderness" to establish their community, implying that while the king permitted them to set up their foundation in his territory, which would require obtaining land from the royal fisc, he did not otherwise materially endow it. This does not mean that Columbanus declined all forms of outside help—he and his followers frequently rely on the generosity of others in the Life—but he refuses to become beholden to anyone, not least the king.

The second king Columbanus has contact with is Sigebert's grandson, Theuderic, whom he reprimands for his "adulterous relations with concubines."<sup>149</sup> It is not difficult to see here an underhand reference to Dagobert, who had a reputation for womanizing and took multiple wives.<sup>150</sup> Columbanus again refuses a royal gift, this time in the form of Theuderic's luxurious hospitality, which the saint interprets as a bribe.<sup>151</sup> Further, it is Theuderic whom he specifically forbids access to the monastic enclosure (*septa secretoria*),

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<sup>147</sup> On Columbanus's ambivalent relationship with ruling powers, as portrayed by Jonas, see O'Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio*, 243.

<sup>148</sup> "omnia quae eius voluntas poposcisset se paraturum." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.6, p. 163; "non se aliorum opum fore ditaturum." Idem.

<sup>149</sup> "quor concubinarum adulteriis misceretur et non potius legitimi coniugii solamina frueretur?" Ibid., 18, p. 187.

<sup>150</sup> Fredegar, *Chronica*, 58–60, pp. 48–50.

<sup>151</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 19, p. 189.

which the king claims to be a right enjoyed by all Christians.<sup>152</sup> Perhaps this was meant to be another oblique rebuke of Dagobert, who was buried in the sanctuary of Saint-Denis after having established a monastic community there. Indeed, it is Theuderic's refusal to accept this boundary that eventually leads, according to Jonas, to the king's downfall.<sup>153</sup> Theuderic responds to Columbanus's denial of access by threatening to withhold any future gifts and support he might provide, but again the saint wants nothing to do with these.<sup>154</sup>

Finally, in his dealings with King Chlothar II, Dagobert's father, who is portrayed more favorably than Theuderic, Columbanus refuses the king's request that he settle in Neustria and later turns down his invitation to even come visit there.<sup>155</sup> The saint proposes that if Chlothar wishes to honor him, he should instead patronize his Burgundian foundation of Luxeuil.<sup>156</sup> Columbanus will not allow himself to come under the thumb of any king, and if it is permissible to interpret Jonas's Columbanus as a metonym for Columbanian monasticism in general, then these passages serve to instruct Chlothar's descendants that while it is one thing to respect and defend the monasteries in their realm, establishing their own foundations subject to royal authority is beyond the parameters of acceptable patronage.

Even more problematic in Jonas's world is to do so at the basilicas of the saints. The *Vita Columbani* makes a clear distinction between a holy community of monks obedient to the Rule of Columbanus and the shrines of dead saints and their relics, the former even being more efficacious in granting requests for prayer, healing the sick, and performing miracles. This begins with the portrayal of the living Columbanus. Jonas describes how after founding

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. See Diem, "Monks, Kings and the Transformation of Sanctity," 533–34.

<sup>154</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 19, p. 190.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 24, p. 207; 30, p. 223.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 30, p. 223.

his first monastery at Annegray, “a multitude of people and crowds of the sick began to visit [Columbanus] for the restoration of their health, and they sought relief from their infirmities.” “Relying on the divine assistance, through the medicine of prayer he cured the illnesses of all those who came to him.”<sup>157</sup> This has obvious parallels to the crowds of afflicted drawn to the tomb of St. Martin, as portrayed by Gregory of Tours (with whose works Jonas was likely familiar) just a few decades before.<sup>158</sup> Jonas, in fact, has Columbanus himself visit the shrine of St. Martin during a stayover at Tours following his expulsion from Burgundy. After sailing down the Loire and making shore, Columbanus “came to the tomb of blessed Martin and spent the whole night there in prayer.”<sup>159</sup> After returning to his boat, he discovers that his companions had been robbed that night which prevented them from giving their usual alms to the poor.<sup>160</sup> “Having heard this, Columbanus hurried back to the tomb of the blessed confessor where he complained that he had not spent the night before his relics (*excubias*) so that he and his brothers should suffer such an outrage.”<sup>161</sup> As soon as Columbanus makes his rebuke the thieves are found out and the money restored. Jonas reports that this “miracle struck terror in all, such that afterwards all who heard of it did not dare touch anything belonging to the man of God [Columbanus], as if it were sacred.”<sup>162</sup> The

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<sup>157</sup> “Coepit exinde frequentia populi et infirmantium cohortes ob sanitatem redintegrandum ad eum frequentare et omnium infirmitatum suffragium quaerere . . . orationum medicamine cunctorum ad se venientium infirmitates, divino fultus auxilio, curando subveniebat.” Ibid., 1.7, p. 166.

<sup>158</sup> On Jonas’s knowledge of Gregory of Tours, see Albrecht Diem, “The Rule of an ‘Iro-Egyptian’ Monk in Gaul: Jonas’ *Vita Iohannis* and the Construction of a Monastic Identity,” *Revue Mabillon* 80 (2008): 16–22.

<sup>159</sup> “Egressus sane, ad sepulchrum beati Martini accedit; tota ibi nocte in oratione excubat.” Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.22, p. 201.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>161</sup> “Quo audito, ad sepulchrum beati confessoris repetat questusque se non idcirco ad eius excubasse exubias, ut ille sua ac suorum siniret damna patrati fratrum.” Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> “Quod miraculum omnibus terrorem incutit, ut deinceps qui ista audierant velut sacrata omnia quae ad virum Dei pertinebant attingere non auderent.” Ibid.

miracle is attributed to Columbanus, not Martin, and the contrast between the one's power and the other's limitations is very clear.

We might expect that Jonas was simply laying the foundation for his own hero's relic cult, but this was not the case.<sup>163</sup> Apart from a passing reference at the end of the first book to Columbanus's remains being kept at Bobbio "where in the decoration of their virtues they remain powerful," the *Life* has nothing else to say about a shrine or posthumous miracles.<sup>164</sup> As Diem has pointed out, it was not the saint's bones that inherited the ability of his intercessory and miracle-working prowess but the various communities of monks and nuns obedient to his rule and teachings, and it is this which forms the subject of Jonas's second book.<sup>165</sup> The model-monastery of Luxeuil, not the shrine at Bobbio, received the mantle of Columbanus's legacy.<sup>166</sup> Jonas thus makes a neat distinction between the spiritual power of Columbanian monasteries and that of the basilicas of the saints (and their miracle-working relics), representing them as alternative and seemingly incompatible institutions.

For the time at least, it was his view that prevailed. Dagobert's experiment at Saint-Denis failed to take hold. And the monasteries that comprised the "first generation" of the Columbanian network, which is to say those that are named in the *Vita Columbani*, were not royal monasteries, they were not located at the shrines of the saints, and they did nothing to promote public relic cults of their own. Like Luxeuil and Bobbio, each was dedicated to a universal saint—typically SS. Peter and Paul for the men's communities and St. Mary for the

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<sup>163</sup> On the place of relics in Jonas's narrative and the Columbanian tradition in general, see O'Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio*, 231–35.

<sup>164</sup> "Reliquiaequae eius eo habentur in loco conditae, ubi virtutum decore pollent." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.30, p. 224.

<sup>165</sup> Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity," 546–49.

<sup>166</sup> Diem, "Rule of an 'Iro-Egyptian' Monk," 46; for a different view, see O'Hara, *Jonas of Bobbio*, 239.

women's—and was identified by the name of its location, almost invariably, apart from the foundations for nuns, an isolated and out of the way place:<sup>167</sup> Evoriacum, Habendum, Solignac, Jouarre, Rebais-en-Brie, Palatium (near Besançon), Novisona, Jussamoutier, Marmande, Guadiacum, Charenton, and Elnone.<sup>168</sup> This is also generally true of the second generation Columbanian monasteries founded by monks from Luxeuil or another associated house: Grandval, Fontenelle (later Saint-Wandrille), Sithiu (later Saint-Bertin), Stavelot, and Jumièges.<sup>169</sup> Apart from Sadalberga's foundation in Laon, none of the first generation establishments remembered their founders with hagiography, or at least did not do so until much later.<sup>170</sup> And while several second-generation houses, such as Grandval, Fontenelle, and Jumièges did, none of these texts, including the *Life of Sadalberga*, was intended to promote the relic cult of their subject, having very little, if anything, to say about the saint's body or posthumous miracles.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> The theme of the wilderness and Columbanus's continual efforts to withdraw and escape the crowds that came to him is a primary theme of the *Vita Columbani*. Archeological evidence has suggested his monasteries were not as isolated as the literature suggests—usually the foundations were made on existing villas—but these were by no means the walled cities or suburbs where monasticism in Gaul had previously flourished. See note 87 above.

<sup>168</sup> Several of the women's communities located within cities named in the *Vita Columbani* are identified by their patron saint—Saint-Jean in Laon, Saint-Martial in Paris, Notre-Dame in Bruges—but these are universal saints and were not the object of a relic cult. Evoriacum and Habendum would later be known respectively as Faremoutiers and Remiremont after their founders (Burgundofara and Romaric), but this seems to be a ninth-century attribution at the earliest; similarly with Elnone which was rechristened Saint-Amand.

<sup>169</sup> On the limitations of understanding Fontenelle as “Columbanian,” however, see Chapter 2 below, pp. 76–80.

<sup>170</sup> Elnone produced a *Vita Amandi* sometime after 700; the Lives of Burgundofara (Evoriacum), Romaricus and Amatus (Habendum), and Agilus (Rebais) are all from the ninth century.

<sup>171</sup> The *Vita Germani Grandvalensis* does conclude with two short chapters that report several miracles witnessed at the saint's tomb, but these come after the doxology that concludes the section on Germanus's martyrdom and burial, and appear to be a later interpolation (the earliest manuscript witness is from the tenth century).

Further, while several of these received royal donations, by and large they were all private enterprises. Luxeuil and Bobbio, Columbanus's own foundations, both obtained their land from the king (the Lombard Agilulf in the case of Bobbio), but there is no evidence for any other royal involvement, such as influence over the selection of abbot or expectation of services owed, as in the case of the later Carolingian royal abbeys.<sup>172</sup> The same is true for Solignac and Rebais which received their initial endowment from King Dagobert. The initiative for Solignac came from Eligius, future bishop of Noyon, that for Rebais from Audoin, future bishop of Rouen; both were members of Dagobert's court and were in a position to request his resources.<sup>173</sup> The other first generation Columbanian monasteries, however, show no traces at all of the king's participation. Evoriacum,<sup>174</sup> Habendum,<sup>175</sup> Jouarre,<sup>176</sup> and Saint-Jean of Laon<sup>177</sup> were all founded on personal estates and initiated by those connected with Luxeuil; the family of Waldelenus established several monasteries in the area of Besançon out of their own resources (Palatium, Novisona, Jussamoutier);<sup>178</sup> likewise the nobleman Babelenus for his several foundations near Bourges (Marmande, Gaudiacum, Charenton).<sup>179</sup> The same pattern also holds true for the next generation of Columbanian houses. Some received their land from the royal fisc (Elnone,<sup>180</sup> Stavelot,<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> On King Agilulf's involvement at Bobbio, see Michael Richter, *Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages: The Abiding Legacy of Columbanus* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), 20–22.

<sup>173</sup> Audoin's *Life of Eligius* portrays the founding of Solignac as initiated by Eligius who persuaded Dagobert to grant him a villa in the Limoges for his monastic project. *Vita Eligii*, 1.14–15, pp. 680–81.

<sup>174</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 2.7, p. 243.

<sup>175</sup> *Vita Romarici*, 5, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 4, p. 223.

<sup>176</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.26, p. 210.

<sup>177</sup> *Vita Sadalbergae abbatissae Laudunensis*, 12, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 5, p. 56.

<sup>178</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, 1.14, pp. 175–76.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.10, p. 256.

<sup>180</sup> *Testamentum Amandi*, 484.

<sup>181</sup> *Vita Remacli*, 10, ed. in *AASS Sept.*, vol. 1, p. 694.

Fontenelle,<sup>182</sup> and Jumièges<sup>183</sup>) but were not “royal monasteries”<sup>184</sup> strictly speaking, while others were supported by private donations (Marchiennes,<sup>185</sup> Grandval,<sup>186</sup> and Sithiu<sup>187</sup>).

In sum, the monasteries of the early Columbanian movement, in accord with Jonas’s vision, had nothing to do with relics and were not centers of a public cult. After King Dagobert’s failed effort in the 630s to establish a monastic community at the basilica of Saint-Denis, it was not until Queen Balthild’s foundations of Corbie and Chelles in the 650s and her institution of monastic life at the senior basilicas of the saints around the same time that we see the Frankish monarchy itself taking the initiative in the monastic movement and the distinction between monasteries and relic shrines becoming blurred.

This appears to be one of the contexts for the *Life of Eligius* by Audoin of Rouen, composed shortly after its subject’s death in 660.<sup>188</sup> Eligius and Audoin (d. 686), whose careers paralleled one another, were among the group of courtiers around King Dagobert who were early promoters of the Columbanian movement and were later raised to the episcopacy.<sup>189</sup> Diem has already noted how Audoin, following Jonas’s principle, portrayed

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<sup>182</sup> *Vita prima Wandregiseli*, 14, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 5, p. 19. The land was secured by Audoin of Rouen, who had been a former courtier.

<sup>183</sup> *Vita Filiberti abbatis Gemeticensis et Heriensis*, 6, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 5, pp. 587–88.

<sup>184</sup> On the concept of royal monasteries and its limitations, see note 3 above.

<sup>185</sup> *Vita Rictrudis*, 16, ed. in *AASS May*, vol. 3, p. 85.

<sup>186</sup> Bobolenus, *Vita Germani abbatis Grandivallensis*, 7, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 5, p. 86.

<sup>187</sup> *Vita Audomari*, 10, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 5, pp. 759–60.

<sup>188</sup> Audoin, *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, ed. Bruno Krusch in *MGH SS rer. Merov.*, vol. 4, pp. 669–772; the lacunae of this edition can be supplied by that in *PL* 87, col. 481–592. The text as we have it is likely from the ninth century, but it is generally thought to reflect Audoin’s seventh-century version. See introduction to the (partial) English translation by Jo Ann McNamara in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 137–40.

<sup>189</sup> On Eligius and Audoin, see Paul 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*, 77–91.

his friend “both as a fervent supporter of the cult of relics *and* of Columbanian monasticism, however clearly separating the two forms of devotion.”<sup>190</sup> Eligius himself was not a monk, but his life with Audoin at the court of Dagobert is depicted as quasi-monastic and he was second to no monk in his ascetic virtue.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, he had a great devotion to Luxeuil, which he visited frequently,<sup>192</sup> and this served as the model for the several monastic foundations he initiated, all following Columbanus’s Rule, including Solignac,<sup>193</sup> a women’s community at Paris,<sup>194</sup> and, after becoming bishop, one in his episcopal city of Noyon,<sup>195</sup> along with “many other monasteries built by him or his disciples.”<sup>196</sup>

As bishop he maintained supervision of these foundations through visitation, but what preoccupied him most was promoting the cult of the saints.<sup>197</sup> He restored the basilica of Saint-Martial in his hometown of Limoges in conjunction with an elaborate translation of the saint’s relics;<sup>198</sup> he embellished the tombs of St. Martin and St. Dionysius, and built reliquaries for many others;<sup>199</sup> and he initiated a nearly obsessive quest to find the lost body of St. Quentin, which when discovered was commemorated with an extravagant new shrine.<sup>200</sup> Audoin says that his “tongue does not suffice to tell the story of all the other

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<sup>190</sup> Diem, “Rule of an ‘Iro-Egyptian’ Monk,” 46.

<sup>191</sup> *Vita Eligii*, 1.12, 679–80.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.21, p. 685.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.15, pp. 680–81.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.17, p. 682. Eligius’s foundation of Solignac and the community in Paris are also both known from the *Vita Columbani*, 2.10, p. 255.

<sup>195</sup> *Vita Eligii*, 2.5, p. 697.

<sup>196</sup> “Sed et alia multa monasteria, quaeque eius opere, quaeque vero institutione a discipulis eius constructa, hodie intra Gallias noscuntur.” *Ibid.*, 2.5, p. 697.

<sup>197</sup> On his visitations, see *ibid.*, 2.15, p. 703.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.18, p. 684.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.32, p. 688.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.6, pp. 697–99. He followed this up with a quest for the martyr St. Piaton, and then discovered the bodies of SS. Crispin and Crispinian at Soissons. *Vita Eligii*, 2.7, 699–700.

devotions [Eligius] paid to the memories of the saints.”<sup>201</sup> While Jonas, a monk, had implied that Columbanian monasticism was something religiously superior to the shrines of the saints, Audoin, a bishop like Eligius who claimed oversight of both, accords them equal value. What Eligius’s patronage of the saints never entailed, however, was the establishment of monastic communities at their shrines. As with Jonas, monasteries and the shrines of the saints were to remain strictly separate institutions.

Audoin expressed his reservations about royal involvement as well, particularly in the aftermath of Balthild’s establishment of monasticism at the basilicas of the saints. There is a telling story at the end of the *Vita Eligii* concerning the fate of the deceased bishop’s relics.<sup>202</sup> Queen Balthild wishes to recover Eligius’s body for her monastery of Chelles, but it staunchly refuses to be moved from the spot he had chosen for his burial in the cathedral.<sup>203</sup> Later the saint appears to the queen in a dream and persuades her to donate the gold that will be used to forge his reliquary.<sup>204</sup> The role of monarchs, as Audoin would have it, was to show honor and reverence to holy places through their donations, monasteries and saints’ shrines alike, but leave their management to the bishops, and the two should certainly not be mingled. The cooperation between crown and miter in the project of Frankish monasticism thus had its limitations.

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<sup>201</sup> “Set et alias quam multas memoriis sanctorum inpendit diligentias, quae nunc non sufficit narrantis evolvere lingua.” *Ibid.*, 2.7, 700.

<sup>202</sup> On Eligius’s “*rigor mortis*,” see Diem, “Merovingian Monasticism: Voices of Dissent,” forthcoming; Diem, “The Stolen Glove: On the Hierarchy and Power of Objects in Columbanian Monasteries,” in *Shaping Stability: The Normation and Formation of Religious Life in the Middle Ages*, ed. Krijn Pansters and Abraham Plunkett–Latimer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 65–66.

<sup>203</sup> *Vita Eligii.*, 2.37, pp. 721–22.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.41, pp. 724–25.

It was the ideal shared by Dagobert and Balthild, however, not Jonas and Audoin, that would ultimately prevail in Frankish monasticism.<sup>205</sup> Although the evidence is sparse for the century after the queen's prescription that the basilicas of the saints organize as monasteries, we possess exemption charters for Saint-Denis<sup>206</sup> and Saint-Pierre-le-Vif,<sup>207</sup> and can infer them for Saint-Martin<sup>208</sup> and Saint-Médard.<sup>209</sup> Perennial prayer was re-instituted at Saint-Denis<sup>210</sup> and possibly established at Saint-Martin<sup>211</sup> and Saint-Germain of Auxerre.<sup>212</sup> And the succeeding charters that have survived for all these institutions after the middle of the seventh century refer to them consistently as *monasteria* and their inhabitants as *monachi*.<sup>213</sup> Further, while the original Columbanian communities would long resist becoming royal abbeys and adopting relic cults of their own, there was already a small group of monasteries (Centula, Nivelles, Ouche, Fontenelle, and Saint Gall) at the end of the seventh century and

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<sup>205</sup> Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity," 558.

<sup>206</sup> See note 130 above.

<sup>207</sup> See note 33 above.

<sup>208</sup> In 674 Pope Adeodatus issued a bull confirming the (lost) privilege of exemption for the monastery Saint-Martin given by Bishop Crotbert (653–674), no. 374 in Pardessus, pp. 163–64

<sup>209</sup> Ewig has inferred a privilege for Saint-Médard based on the signature of Bishop Drauscus of Soissons on comparable privileges for Saint-Pierre-le-Vif, Corbie, and Sithiu. "Das Privileg," 108.

<sup>210</sup> Kölzer, 85, p. 219.

<sup>211</sup> The ninth-century *Gesta Dagoberti*, purportedly based on earlier sources refers to perennial prayer at Saint-Martin, 35, pp. 414; 43, p. 421; 51, p. 425.

<sup>212</sup> A ninth-century tradition recalls the basilica of Saint-Germain being first dedicated to Saint-Maurice. *Gesta pontificum Autissiodorensium*, c. 7, p. 29.

<sup>213</sup> For Saint-Pierre-le-Vif, see charters 7, 9, and 10 in Quantin, *Cartulaire général*, pp. 10–12, 22, 24. For Saint-Germain of Auxerre, see charter 14 in idem, p. 29; the ninth-century *Gesta pontificum Autissiodorensium* begins to refer to Saint-Germain as a *monasterium* with the abbacy of Palladius (622–657). For Saint-Martin of Tours, see Bishop Ibbo of Tours' renewal of Saint-Martin's exemption in *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti*, vol. 2, ed. Jean Mabillon (Paris, 1704), 693–94; see also the list of charters (some which have been lost) identified by Émile Mabille in *La pancarte noire de Saint-Martin de Tours brulée en 1793 restituée d'après les textes imprimés et manuscrits* (Paris, 1866). For Saint-Denis, see the numerous charters, most thought to be genuine, edited by Theo Kölzer in *MGH DD Merov.*, vol. 1: nos. 85, 88, 89, 93, 94, 95, 122, 123, 131, 136, 137, 138, 142, 143, 156, 157, 159, 166, 167, 168, 170, 187, 194. For Saint-Aignan, see the ninth-century Testament of Leodebodus, ed. Maurice Prou and Alexander Vidier in *Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire* (Paris: A. Picard, 1907), 5; cf. Head, *Hagiography*, 8n12.

turn of the eighth that betrayed a devotion to the physical remains of their patron saint and an openness towards the promotion of a public cult. The basilical monasteries of the seventh-century, however, were not yet the fully developed monastery-shrines that we will encounter under the Carolingians in the ninth. These communities had yet to self-reflect on how their identity and purpose as *monasteria* was bound up with their saint and the poor who visited his tomb, and to integrate the theological insights of this into the material and constitutional structures of their institutions. Queen Balthild's *Klosterpolitik*, nevertheless, marks an important stage in this process. The next chapter will examine further this transition from Merovingian to Carolingian monasticism and its changing attitudes towards the cult of relics through a case study of the community of Fontenelle.