CAROLINGIAN MONASTICISM

Sessions organized by the Network for the Study of Late Antique and Early Medieval Monasticism

Friday, May 15 2015
Anianian Reform of Monastic Property?
The Puzzle of Early Medieval Cartularies

Hans Hummer
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Abstract
Long ago, Alfons Dopsch proposed that initiatives to document ecclesiastical properties, from the imperial Brevium exempla to monastic cartularies, were the fruits of the Anianian reforms pronounced in 817. Wolfgang Metz saw the phenomena as outgrowths of imperial reform; and Patrick Geary speculated that the selective appearance of these codices in the east, both those that are extant as well as those known to have existed, might be connected to the activities of Louis the German. This presentation will investigate the connection between the production of monastic cartularies as a regional adaptation of Carolingian reforms in the east during the first third of the ninth century, the relationship between a monastery’s social networks and the documentation of properties, and the diversification of this “technology” during the civil strife of the second third of the ninth century.

Research interests
Hans Hummer is currently working on a book on kinship in the early middle ages, 400-1000. In the study, he explores the origins of medieval kinship studies in the nineteenth century, admits that kinship as an autonomous social reality has no basis in medieval sources, but then authorizes himself to study the phenomenon anyway. Even though kinship was never reified into a social object, we can nevertheless examine conscious expressions of it as means to explore the indigenous social cosmologies that encompassed heaven and earth.

Select Publications
Benedict of Aniane Remembers the Monastic Past

Martin Claussen
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Abstract
Although Carolingian historians now speak more often of correctio and emendatio than ‘reform’, one can perhaps argue that reform was one of Benedict of Aniane‘s main goals. His two great compilations, the Codex regularum and the Concordia regularum, present a version of the history of cenobitic monasticism, beginning with Pachomius, and continuing through seventh century, and ranging geographically from Egypt and Asia Minor to North Africa, Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Historians have traditionally linked these two works to the series of great councils held by Louis the Pious early in his reign. But if Benedict‘s Concordia was in fact written in the 780s or 790s, rather than at the end of his career, we should examine the circumstances which might have led to its creation. In this paper, I trace Benedict‘s developing interest in monastic history from the period of his ‘conversion’ through the first decades of Aniane, and I argue that Benedict was eager to learn about the monastic past, both for its own sake, and for how that knowledge might be applied to change Frankish monasticism for the better during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.

Select Publications
• The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the Regula canonicorum in the Eighth Century (Cambridge 2004).
Benedict of Aniane Goes to Court

Rutger Kramer
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Abstract
Despite generally being seen as one of the most influential figures in the Carolingian correctio-movement, Benedict of Aniane himself remains an elusive figure. His works—chief among the massive and influential compilations known as the Codex Regulorum and the Concordia Regularum—show him to be a powerful voice in the monastic world of the early ninth century, but otherwise, the extent of his influence as a member of the court of Charlemagne and especially Louis the Pious is still unclear. Was he “the emperor’s monk”, doing the bidding of a ruler who had his mind set on reforming the state of the Church under his responsibility, or was Louis “the monk’s emperor”, whose ultimate goal was to apply a “monastic model” to his empire? This paper will attempt to shed further light on this issue by focusing not on Benedict of Aniane as a person, but rather on the persona created by his hagiographer, Ardo, to whom we owe the near-contemporary Vita Benedicti Anianensis, a work that, in its various narrative strands, goes beyond the standard tropes of the genre, and gives us an intriguing picture of the Carolingian court as seen from the outside looking in.

Research Interests
Rutger Kramer currently works as the project coordinator of the SFB Visions of Community (F42) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In addition to this he studies Carolingian intellectual culture, with a special emphasis on monastic and episcopal intellectuals. Having recently defended his dissertation, Great Expectations: Imperial Ideologies and Ecclesiastical Reforms from Charlemagne to Louis the Pious (813-822), he is currently working on several followup projects, all of which deal with the intersection between historiographical/narrative trends and ecclesiastical culture in the eighth to eleventh centuries.

Select publications
• ‘Teaching Emperors: Transcending the Boundaries of Carolingian Monastic Communities’, in Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia, eds. Walter Pohl, Christina Lutter and Eirik Hovden, (Leiden 2015 (forthcoming)).
Leaks, Lies and Lessons Learned
The Preliminary Acts of the Council of Aachen in Context
Matthew Ponesse
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Abstract
There is little debate among modern scholars that the Carolingian monastic reform failed to achieve its goal of imposing one rule and one practice on all monks. Many texts produced in the wake of late eighth and early ninth-century church councils appear to oppose the efforts of reformers, challenging the validity of the new ideal imposed on monks. More famous documents, such as the Plan of St Gall and Hildemar’s commentary on the rule of St Benedict, present a vibrant and dynamic practice of monasticism that runs counter to the rigid observance articulated in the official legislation. Even so, the question that has dominated recent studies on Carolingian monasticism – to what extent did the reform succeed or fail? – must be re-framed in light of the evidence. An analysis of a preliminary report on the legislation of Aachen reveals that the most vociferous reactions to the efforts of reformers were based on a rigid perception of reform that was never accepted or implemented. Other commentaries on the official legislation were based solely on personal observations of model Benedictine communities, the practice of which had very little to do with imperial edict. In this paper I will consider not one, but three different streams of reforming activity in an attempt to correct modern misconceptions surrounding the Carolingian monastic reform. I will contend that one must first reconsider the central elements of this movement before attempting to determine whether reformers were ultimately successful in their efforts to restore and reinvigorate the life of monks.

Research Interests
Matthew Ponesse’s research focuses on the education and practice of monks in eighth and ninth centuries. He also publishes articles on the transmission and reception of patristic learning in Carolingian Europe.
**Smaragdus and Hildemar on Mutual Obedience:**

**Studying Benedict’s Chapter 71**

**Terrence Kardong**

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**Abstract**

My paper at Kalamazoo will be a comparative study of two chapters in early commentaries on the Rule of Benedict. Since the Hildemar Project is well underway (see below), and of course Smaragdus has been available for some time, we are now able to easily see what each of them has to say on the problematic text that stands at the center of this presentation: *Regula Benedicti* 71, which stipulates “That the Brethren Be Obedient to One Another”.

**Research Interests**

Terrence Kardong OSB is a monk of Assumption Abbey (Richardton, ND). He has published extensively on various aspects of the Regula Benedicti, and is currently studying a seventh-century text known as the Regula Cuiusdam Patris ad Virgines. He has prepared several articles on this fascinating text, which are due to appear soon.

**Select publications**

- ‘The Sources of Smaragdus’ Commentary on RB 3: Calling the Brothers to Council’, in *The American Benedictine Review* 60 (2009), 253-275
As a result of the sessions on Negotiating Monasticism in the Early Middle Ages at the 2011 Kalamazoo conference, we decided to establish a research network for scholars who work primarily on the history of monasticism in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The purpose of this network is to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information and to encourage collaboration and discussion. We also organize conference sessions in Leeds and Kalamazoo.

The network has more than 120 members. Any scholar working on early monasticism (roughly within the first millennium A.D.) is invited to participate, particularly young scholars who work on Ph.D. projects and those in the early stages of their careers.

To join the network, please contact Albrecht Diem (adiem@maxwell.syr.edu).

For more information, see http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/

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The first project of the Network has been the production of a collaborative English translation of Hildemar of Corbie’s Expositio Regulae Sancti Benedicti, a massive Carolingian commentary to the Regula Benedicti and a key source on Carolingian monasticism and the impact of the monastic reforms under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. It is unlikely that one person will ever translate the entire work (ca. 650 pages in print). To that end, Julian Hendrix, Corinna Prior, Albrecht Diem, Bruce Venarde and Mariëlle Urbanus asked about 60 Latinists, Theologians and Historians to adopt a chapter or a section of a chapter) and produce a translation.

The translations have been published on a website which will also serve as a platform for future research on the Hildemar Commentary and other Commentaries on the Regula Benedicti. The project is now nearly completed and a complete translation of the commentary may be found online: http://www.hildemar.org. The next step will be turning the website into a digital research tool with hyperlinks to digitized manuscripts and a synoptic presentation of all three versions of the commentary. For more information, please contact Albrecht Diem (adiem@maxwell.syr.edu).
BENEDICT OF ANIANE RECONSIDERED

Friday May 15
1:30 PM – Schneider 1345

SMARAGDUS, HILDEMAR AND MONASTIC REFORM

Friday May 15
3:30 PM – Schneider 1345

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