

TEXTUAL TRIAGE AND PASTORAL CARE IN THE CAROLINGIAN AGE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE *RULE OF BENEDICT*

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The sixth-century Rule of Benedict became a foundational text for the practice of Christian monasticism in medieval Europe, but its utility extended outside of the monastery as well. In the Carolingian period church prelates repurposed parts of this influential monastic handbook for the purpose of pastoral care. In the decades around 800 CE, excerpts from the rule appeared in several composite manuscripts made for the instruction of parish priests and by extension their lay audiences. Benedict's fourth chapter on the "Instruments of Good Works" was deemed particularly useful in the context of preaching to lay people not only because of its ecumenical message to love God and one's neighbor but also due to its formulaic and repetitive idiom. This study examines the redeployment of extracts of the Rule of Benedict for the cura animarum in Carolingian parishes with particular attention to the role of Bishop Theodulf of Orléans (ca. 760–821) in disseminating Benedict's teachings beyond the walls of the cloister.

The *Rule of Benedict* was without doubt the most important text for the practice of Christian monasticism in the Middle Ages.¹ Composed in the sixth century by Abbot Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480–ca. 550), this concise handbook comprised a prologue, seventy-two short chapters, and an epilogue that combined theoretical rumination on the virtues of the cloistered life with practical recommendations for the organization and orchestration of a modest religious community based on the first-hand experience of its author. Benedict's rule was one of many dozens of

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The following abbreviations are used in the notes of this paper: CLA = *Codices latini antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*, ed. E. A. Lowe, 11 vols. and supplement (Oxford, 1934–1971); and RB = *Regula Benedicti*, cited by chapter and line number from the edition of Adalbert de Vogüé, *La règle de saint Benoît*, 7 vols., SC 181–87 (Paris, 1971–72).

¹ Adalbert de Vogüé's *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 2005), 9:103–55 remains an excellent introduction to the *Rule of Benedict*.

monastic handbooks written in Latin between the fourth and the seventh centuries, so its survival into the Middle Ages was not assured.² From early on, however, it held a distinct advantage over its competitors. Unlike other abbots, Benedict tempered his ascetic program with a sense of moderation, a consideration of contingencies like climate, and a compassionate approach to human weakness. The intrinsic utility and adaptability of the *Rule of Benedict* accounted for its rising popularity in the eighth century, when the *Concilium Germanicum* (742) recommended its adoption in monasteries throughout the Frankish heartlands.³ This enthusiasm for Benedict's handbook gained even more momentum in the ninth century.⁴ At the Aachen assemblies of 816/817, Louis the Pious and his monastic advisor Abbot Benedict of Aniane promoted the adoption of one rule and one custom (*una regula, una consuetudo*) in all Frankish abbeys: the one rule was the *Rule of Benedict*; the one custom was Benedict of Aniane's own supplementary regulations to it.⁵ While this legislation was not entirely successful owing to resistance from monasteries reluctant to give up their local customs, by the end of the first millennium Benedict's authority on all matters related to the cloistered life was unassailable. In a sermon delivered in the early tenth century at the abbey of Fleury-sur-Loire on the feast day of the saint, Abbot Odo of Cluny (d. 942) exhorted an audience of monks to respect the letter of the rule and to esteem its author as a law-giver comparable to Moses himself.⁶

² Adalbert de Vogüé, *Les règles monastiques anciennes (400–700)*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental 46 (Turnhout, 1985); and Albrecht Diem and Philip Rousseau, "Monastic Rules (Fourth to Ninth Century)," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*, ed. Alison I. Beach and Isabelle Cochelin (Cambridge, 2020), 1:162–94.

³ *Concilium Germanicum* 7, ed. Albertus Werminghoff, MGH, *Concilia* 2.1 (Hannover and Leipzig, 1906), 4.

⁴ In 811 Charlemagne himself was said to have asked whether someone who followed a rule other than that of Benedict deserved to be called a monk. See *Capitula tractanda cum comitibus, episcopis et abbatibus* 12, ed. Alfredus Boretius, MGH, *Capitularia regum Francorum* 1 (Hannover, 1883), 161–62; with Josef Semmler, "Karl der Große und das fränkische Mönchtum," in *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, ed. W. Braunsfels (Düsseldorf, 1965), 2:255–89, esp. 262–67. Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume 2, c. 700–c. 900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 622–53 remains the most accessible introduction to the centrality of monasticism to the political ambitions of the Carolingians. On the adjustments made to adapt a sixth-century rule for monks to the realities of monastic experience in the ninth century, see Albrecht Diem, "The Carolingians and the *Regula Benedicti*," in *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong*, ed. Rob Meens et al. (Manchester, 2016), 243–61.

⁵ Joseph Semmler, "Die Beschlüsse des Aachener Konzils 816," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 74 (1963): 15–82; and idem, "Benedictus II: Una regula, una consuetudo," in *Benedictine Culture, 750–1050*, ed. Willem Lourdaux and Daniël Verhelst (Leuven, 1983), 1–49.

⁶ Odo of Cluny, *Sermo de sancto Benedicto abbate*, PL 133.721–29, esp. 724c: "Et hunc quidem beatissimum patrem legislatio specialiter Moysi comparat."

This millennium-old reverence for the *Rule of Benedict* and its author has had an impact on modern perceptions of its use in the Middle Ages. Critical editions and translations of the rule have isolated Benedict's handbook from the manuscript contexts that gave it meaning for generation upon generation of monastic readers, further abetting the tendency of modern scholars to "essentialize" rather than "historicize" the rule, that is, to treat the text as complete and sufficient unto itself rather than to consider the manuscript evidence for its use. The Carolingian period (ca. 750–950) was, in fact, a time of considerable creativity among monastic authors, whose approach to the *Rule of Benedict* was characterized as much by their reverence for the letter of the text as by their inventive pragmatism with regard to its utility for a variety of didactic and devotional purposes. In other words, the age of the Carolingians was a time of experimentation, when scribes often performed acts of "textual triage," separating out the parts of the rule most pertinent to their needs and reapplying them with new meanings in new contexts.

Many aspects of the creative reuse of the *Rule of Benedict* in the early Middle Ages have been well studied. For example, it is well known that late Merovingian compilers of rules for male and female religious actively quarried parts of Benedict's handbook and braided them with complementary chapters from other works of monastic legislation to create what historians have called "mixed rules." The *Rule of Donatus*, compiled in the middle of the seventh century by Bishop Donatus of Besançon at the request of Abbess Gauthstrude of Jussamoutier, is probably the best-known example.⁷ Similarly, Carolingian hagiographers sometimes plucked passages from the *Rule of Benedict* to accentuate the virtuous attributes of their saintly subjects. Around 750, the anonymous author of the *vita* of Pardoux of Guéret rendered that holy abbot's austerity with respect to diet and hygiene and his habits of liturgical devotion with whole sentences lifted directly from the rule.⁸ And lastly, the overseers of houses of religious women did not hesitate to adapt the *Rule of Benedict* for use in female communities.⁹ At the turn of

⁷ *Monastica 1: Donati Regula, Pseudo-Columbani Regula Monialium (fr.)*, ed. Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl, CSEL 98 (Berlin, 2015), 3–181. See also Albrecht Diem, "New Ideas Expressed in Old Words: The *Regula Donati* on Female Monastic Life and Monastic Spirituality," *Viator* 43 (2012): 1–38.

⁸ *Vita Pardulfi* 7, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* (Hannover and Leipzig, 1920), 7:19–40, at 28–29. Arbeo of Freising's near contemporary *Vita Corbiniani* redeployed passages from the *Rule of Benedict* in a similar way. For a summary of the evidence, see James Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900* (Turnhout, 2009), 191. For another example involving a female saint, see *Vita Bertilae abbatis Calensis* 2 and 6, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* (Hannover and Leipzig, 1913), 6:95–109, at 102–103 and 106–107.

⁹ Katrinette Bodarwé, "Eine Männerregel für Frauen: Die Adaption der Benediktsregel im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert," in *Female 'Vita Religiosa' between Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages*, ed. Gert Melville and Anne Müller (Vienna, 2011), 235–74. More generally on

the first millennium, Abbess Uta (990–1025) commissioned a lavish copy of the rule with full page illuminations of Benedict and herself for the convent of Niedermünster in Regensburg.¹⁰ In this case, the interventions consisted not of choosing relevant parts of Benedict's handbook for use, but of changing all of its male pronouns and nouns to their female equivalents. Barely a generation later, a scribe made subtle modifications to these adaptations when the abbey of St. Michael, a male house, appropriated the manuscript during the reign of Emperor Henry II (973–1024).¹¹

One aspect of the redeployment of excerpts from the *Rule of Benedict* in the Carolingian period remains unstudied, however: its utility as a resource for the instruction of priests and lay people. The ninth century witnessed a veritable cottage industry in the production of manuscripts designed specifically for the education of parish priests and, by extension, their lay parishioners.¹² Historians have identified more than twenty such manuscripts, which Susan Keefe has called “instruction-readers,” and there are undoubtedly many more that await discovery

the adaptation of the *Rule of Benedict* for female communities, see R. Mohr, “Der Gedankenaustausch zwischen Heloisa und Abaelard über eine Modifizierung der *Regula Benedicti* für Frauen,” *Regulae Benedicti Studia* 5 (1976): 307–33; and L. de Seilhac, “L’utilisation de la Règle de saint Benoît dans les monastères féminins,” in *Atti del 7° Congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto Medioevo: Norcia, Subiaco, Cassino, Montecassino, 29 Settembre-5 Ottobre 1980: San Benedetto nel suo tempo* (Spoleto, 1982), 2:527–49.

¹⁰ Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek MS Lit. 142, fols. 2–57v; and *Katalog der Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg*, ed. Friedrich Lietschuh and Hans Fischer (Bamberg, 1895), 1:292–94.

¹¹ *Krone und Schleier: Kunst aus Mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern*, ed. Jutta Frings (Munich, 2005), 186 (no. 26), where the manuscript is dated “um 990.”

¹² See Steffen Patzold, “Correctio an der Basis: Landpfarrer und ihr Wissen im 9. Jahrhundert,” in *Karolingische Klöster: Wissenstransfer und kulturelle Innovation*, ed. Julia Becker, Tino Licht, and Stefan Weinfurter (Berlin, 2015), 227–54; Carine van Rhijn, “The Local Church, Priests’ Handbooks and Pastoral Care in the Carolingian Period,” in *Chiese locali e chiese regionali nell’alto medioevo (Spoleto, 4–9 aprile 2013)* (Spoleto, 2014), 689–710; eadem, “Manuscripts for Local Priests and the Carolingian Reform,” in *Men in the Middle: Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Steffen Patzold and Carine van Rhijn (Berlin, 2016), 177–98; and eadem, “Royal Politics in Small Worlds: Local Priests and the Implementation of Carolingian correctio,” in *Kleine Welten: Ländliche Gesellschaften im Karolingerreich*, ed. Thomas Kohl, Steffen Patzold, and Bernhard Zeller (Ostfildern, 2019), 237–54. Case studies of particular manuscripts include Frederick S. Paxton, “*Bonus liber*: A Late Carolingian Clerical Manual from Lorsch (Bibliotheca Vaticana MS Pal. Lat. 485),” in *The Two Laus: Studies in Medieval Legal History Dedicated to Stephan Kutner*, ed. Laurent Mayali and Stephanie A. J. Tibbetts (Washington, D.C., 1990), 1–30; Yitzhak Hen, “Knowledge of Canon Law among Rural Priests: The Evidence of Two Carolingian Manuscripts from around 800,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 50 (1999): 117–34; and Laura A. Hohman, “Carolingian Sermons: Religious Reform, Pastoral Care, and Lay Piety” (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 2016), which examines Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 265; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Latin 2328.

and analysis.¹³ Keeping with the aims of Carolingian reformers to correct and control religious belief in the countryside, these books were typically *florilegia* of extracts and summaries of texts related to the Christian faith. In the words of Maurine Miller, “[c]ommonly they will include some canon law, an exposition of the mass, sermon exempla, and sundry liturgical materials (masses, prayers, *ordines* for visiting the sick or burying the dead).”¹⁴ Small and modest, idiosyncratic and anonymous, these compilations provide unparalleled insight into the ambitions and limitations of the Carolingian reforms and the degree to which, to paraphrase Carine van Rhijn, parish priests were both the products and protagonists of Christian *correctio*.¹⁵

At least one Carolingian manuscript that seems to have been compiled for a non-monastic audience (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 6330) begins with excerpts of chapters from the *Rule of Benedict*.¹⁶ The significance of this manuscript cannot be overstated because evidence for the reception and utility of Benedict’s handbook among priests and lay people is vanishingly rare in the Middle Ages. After providing some examples of the ways in which Carolingian monks dissected the *Rule of Benedict* for their own devotional purposes, this article examines the use of the rule in the instruction of lay people, beginning with an investigation of the contents of this early ninth-century *florilegium*. In particular, it considers which chapters of the rule were chosen for inclusion in this manuscript and explains why the language and message of these chapters made them particularly appropriate for pastoral use. While the selection of excerpts from the *Rule of Benedict* as pastoral tools seems to point to the agency of monks not only in compiling this manuscript, but also in preaching its contents among lay parishioners, there is in fact almost no evidence for monk-priests serving in this capacity in the Carolingian countryside. As a result, we have to look beyond the cloister for the individuals responsible for the dissemination of parts of the *Rule of Benedict* in books that priests used in their duties with the laity. As I argue here, prelates trained in monastic schools before pursuing careers in the church were the people most likely to repurpose the rule for pastoral use. The

¹³ Susan A. Keefe, *Water and the Word: Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire* (Notre Dame, IN, 2002), 1:23–26 and 160–63 (Table 1). See also eadem, *A Catalogue of Works Pertaining to the Explanation of the Creed in Carolingian Manuscripts* (Turnhout, 2012).

¹⁴ Maureen Miller, “Reform, Clerical Culture, and Politics,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. John H. Arnold (Oxford, 2014), 305–22, at 313.

¹⁵ van Rhijn, “Manuscripts for Local Priests,” 190.

¹⁶ For descriptions of the manuscript and its contents, see *Die vorkarolingischen und karolingischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, ed. Katharina Bierbauer (Wiesbaden, 1990), 1:108 (“Theologische Sammelhandschrift”); Bernhard Bischoff, *Südost-deutschen Schreibschulen und Bibliotheken in der Karolingerzeit*, 3rd ed. (Wiesbaden, 1974), 1:145–46 (“Varia excerpta ecclesiastica”); and idem, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts (mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen)* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 2:239 (no. 3054).

article concludes by showing how the *First Capitulary* of Bishop Theodulf of Orléans (ca. 760–821) served as an important vehicle for disseminating the teachings of Benedict’s handbook beyond the walls of Carolingian abbeys.

DISMEMBERING THE RULE FOR A MONASTIC AUDIENCE

It was not common for Carolingian monks to copy individual chapters of the *Rule of Benedict* for their own devotional purposes, but two examples of this practice from the eighth and ninth centuries suggest that it may have been more frequent than historians have supposed. In each case, the manuscript compilers chose to excerpt and include as an independent text the entire fourth chapter of the rule, the so-called “Instruments of Good Works” (*Instrumenta bonorum operum*). In this chapter, Benedict distilled from the anonymous *Rule of the Master* a list of short, hortatory directives urging the reader to cultivate virtues and avoid vices.¹⁷ Most of these statements had been borrowed directly from the Old and New Testaments. The chapter began with an exhortation from the Gospels to love God and neighbor: “First of all, love the Lord God with all of your heart, with all of your soul and with all of your strength, then love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt. 22:37 and 39; Mark 12:30–31; and Luke 10:27).¹⁸ There followed a series of maxims that complement and support these two commandments. For example, “Do not do to someone else what you do not want done to you” (Tob. 4:16 and Matt. 7:12); “Do not repay one wrong with another” (1 Peter. 3:19); “Endure persecution for the sake of justice” (Matt. 5:10); and “Do not be arrogant or drunken” (Titus 1:7).¹⁹ Some passages resounded with the apocalyptic tone of the literature of the desert, in particular the *Lives of the Fathers* and the work of John Cassian, to lend urgency to the admonition to live and act well: “Fear the day of Judgement, be terrified of Hell, desire eternal life with all of your spiritual longing, hold death before your eyes every day, keep watch on the actions of your life at all times, know that God can see you for certain wherever you are.”²⁰ The chapter concluded with

¹⁷ See *Regula Magistri* 3–6, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, in *La règle de Maître*, SC 105 (Paris, 1964), 1:364–80. The spiritual inspiration of this list of directives was probably the *Didache*, a treatise on Christian ethics dating from the late first century. See Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, 2002), 90–95.

¹⁸ RB 4.1–2: “In primis dominum Deum diligere ex toto corde, tota anima, tota uirtute; deinde proximum tanquam seipsum.”

¹⁹ RB 4.9: “Et quod sibi quis fieri non vult, alio ne faciat”; RB 4.29: “Malum pro malo non reddere”; RB 4.33: “Persecutionem pro iustitia sustinere”; and RB 4.34–35: “Non esse superbum, non vinolentum.”

²⁰ RB 4.44–49: “Diem iudicii timere, Gehennam expavescere, vitam aeternam omni concupiscentia spiritali desiderare, mortem cotidie ante oculos suspectam habere. Actus vitae suae omni hora custodire, in omni loco Deum se respicere pro certo scire.”

the promise of a heavenly reward for those who make use of these “tools of the spiritual craft.”²¹ The setting for this work is clearly the cloister. The final sentence makes this plain: “The workshop where we diligently work at all these tasks is the enclosure of the monastery, in the stability of the community.”²² For Benedict, these instruments of good works were propaedeutic to the three chapters that followed on the benefits of obedience, silence, and humility for monks, but clearly they could also stand on their own as a guide to virtuous behavior couched in the ancient language of the Scriptures for personal rumination.²³

At least two Carolingian manuscripts included Benedict’s “Instruments of Good Works” as an independent text, but the contents of these codices suggest that their intended audiences were monastic rather than clerical or lay. The earliest of these is Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barberini Latini 671, a late eighth-century miscellany produced in Italy.²⁴ This collection comprises a series of short excerpts from the Old Testament as well as a large number of patristic homiletic texts that fill in the gaps between two much longer works: Isidore of Seville’s *On the Catholic Faith* (fols. 1v–69v) and a corpus of Latin translations of treatises by Ephraim the Syrian, including *On the Day of Judgement* (fols. 125v–150v).²⁵ Toward the end of the manuscript (fols. 160r–160v), we find the excerpt from the *Rule of Benedict* under the

²¹ RB 4.75: “Ecce haec sunt instrumenta artis spiritalis.”

²² RB 4.78: “Officina vero ubi haec omnia diligenter operemur claustra sunt monasterii et stabilitas in congregatione.”

²³ Indicative as well of the interest of Carolingian monks in Benedict’s *Instrumenta bonorum operum* is the attention that this chapter received from commentators on the *Rule of Benedict*, as witnessed in a fragmentary eighth-century commentary discovered by Kassius Hallinger as well as in the better known ninth-century commentaries of Smaragdus of St. Mihiel (ca. 760–ca. 840) and Hildemar of Corbie (fl. ca. 845). See Kassius Hallinger, “Das Kommentarfragment zu Regula Benedicti IV aus der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts,” *Wiener Studien* 82 (1969): 211–32; Smaragdus, *Expositio in Regulam S. Benedicti* 4, ed. A. Spannagel and P. Engelbert, *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum* 8 (Siegburg, 1974), 86–148; and Hildemar, *Expositio regulae sancti Benedicti* 4, ed. Rupert Mittermüller, in *Vita et Regula SS. P. Benedicti una cum Expositio Regulae a Hildemaro tradita* (Regensburg, New York, and Cincinnati, 1880), 138–84. See also *Glosae in regula Sancti Benedicti abbatis ad usum Smaragdi Sancti Michaelis abbatis*, ed. Matthieu van der Meer, CCM 282 (Turnhout, 2017), 35–46.

²⁴ The early history of this manuscript is unknown, but by the thirteenth century it had found its way to the abbey of San Salvatore in Settimo, near Florence, and by 1635 it belonged to Carolus Strozzi. These statements of ownership are clear on fol. 2. See August Reifferscheid, *Bibliotheca Patrum Latinorum Italica* (Vienna, 1870), 1:166–70, and CLA 1:20 (no. 64).

²⁵ There is no modern edition of Isidore’s *De fide catholica*, so PL 83.449–538 must suffice. Likewise, there is no modern treatment of the Latin translations of the work of Ephraim, even though his influence is equally well attested. See Albert Siegmund, *Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum 12.*

rubricated title “What are the Instruments of Good Works?” (*Que sunt instrumenta bonorum operum*) without any direct reference to Benedict himself. There are several indications that this collection was made for a monastic community rather than for a parish priest. First, the inclusion of a contemplative treatise in Latin attributed to Basil of Caesarea called *Admonition to a Spiritual Son* (fols. 123v-125r) strongly suggests an audience of monks rather than laymen.²⁶ Second, the manuscript does not have any didactic texts related to the fundamental aspects of Christian belief, like explanations of the Creed or the Lord’s prayer, which are common in Carolingian books for parish priests. Lastly, several of the texts have decorative adornments. For example, the scribe has rendered the opening letter Q of the title of the “Instruments of Good Works” and the first letter of the first line (I) as hounds grabbing hold of multicolored letters.²⁷ This kind of artistic conceit is simply not found in the modest and pragmatic “instruction-readers” produced in the decades around 800.

Another example of Benedict’s “Instruments of Good Works” in a Carolingian manuscript is Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek MS 281, a sprawling collection of ascetic and homiletic texts made in Switzerland or northern Italy at the turn of the ninth century.²⁸ The excerpt from the *Rule of Benedict* holds pride of place as the first document in this compilation. The opening words are adorned in red, yellow, blue, and green, as is the long, braided letter I that begins the text proper.²⁹ There follows a large number of diverse treatises and sermons suitable for private rumination or public reading in the refectory. These include short homiletic works by Cyprian, Augustine, Caesarius, and others, as well as excerpts from John Cassian and the *Lives of the Fathers*. The compiler of this manuscript

Jahrhundert (Munich, 1948), 67–71; and David Ganz, “Knowledge of Ephraim’s Writings in the Merovingian and Carolingian Age,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 2 (1999): 37–46.

²⁶ *De admonitione S. Basilii ad filium spiritualem*, ed. Paul Lehmann (Munich, 1955), who followed André Wilmart in accepting the treatise as an authentic work by Basil. See Wilmart, “Le discours de saint Basile sur l’ascèse en Latin,” *Revue bénédictine* 27 (1910): 226–233. More recently, Adalbert de Vogüé has argued convincingly that *Admonition to a Spiritual Son* was not an authentic work of Greek asceticism translated into Latin in late antiquity, but rather an original Latin composition made in the decades around 500 by Abbot Porcarius of Lérins. See de Vogüé, “Entre Basile et Benoît: L’admonitio ad filium spiritualem de Pseudo-Basile,” *Regulae Benedicti Studia* 10/11 (1981/1982): 19–34.

²⁷ In addition, “some larger initials show the human figure and animals, often surrounded by red dots.” CLA 1:20 (no. 64).

²⁸ Gabriel Meier, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum qui in bibliotheca monasterii Einsiedlensis servantur, Tomus I* (Leipzig, 1899), 255–59 (no. 281: “Ascetica varia”); and CLA 7:12 (no. 875): “Written no doubt in a Rhaetian centre, to judge by the script.” As noted by Lowe in the CLA entry, a section almost one hundred pages in length has been removed from this manuscript and bound into a near contemporary collection of acts of church councils: Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 199, 431–526.

²⁹ The same is true of many other initials in the manuscript, which are decorated with “the interlace or rope pattern and the fish motifs, including the dolphin.” CLA 7:12 (no. 875).

also favored didactic texts written in a question and answer format, like the *Warnings of Saint Porcarius* (*Monita Porcarii*) and the so-called *Pastimes of the Monks* (*Ioca monachorum*), a literary genre of Greek origin presenting questions and answers related to biblical and hagiographical trivia.³⁰ Like MS Barberini Latini 671, this manuscript does not seem to have been intended for clerical or lay consumption. The attention to decoration, the ascetic and contemplative content of the manuscript, and the absence of texts related to instruction in the fundamental aspects of the Christian faith all point to a monastic rather than a lay audience for Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek MS 281.

TEXTUAL TRIAGE IN MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MS CLM 6330

An exclusively monastic audience cannot be presumed, however, of a compact, modestly adorned, and well-worn compilation of theological and pastoral texts assembled in southwestern Germany at the beginning of the ninth century, now Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 6330.³¹ This manuscript opens with Benedict's "Instruments of Good Works" with a rubricated title, now much faded, and a hastily sketched capital I at the beginning of the first sentence (fols. 1r–2r). There follows (fols. 2r–4v) another short text entitled "The Twelve Steps of Saint Benedict" (*Grados duodecim sancti Benedicti*). This is yet another extract from the *Rule of Benedict*, a copy of a good portion of the seventh chapter, which outlines the twelve steps by which an individual may achieve the heights of the virtue of humility. After these Benedictine excerpts, we find a series of patristic sermons and letters on the virtues and the vices, some drawn from the works of influential Latin authors like Augustine, Caesarius, and Columbanus, others translated from the Greek of their eastern counterparts Basil of Caesarea and Ephraim the Syrian.

Up to this point, the contents of the manuscript betray no indication that this collection is anything more than a monastic *florilegium*, but the final twenty folios beckon to a different audience. After two short biblical excerpts from the books of Ecclesiastes and Revelations (fols. 51r–53v), the focus of MS Clm 6330 shifts from Benedictine and patristic extracts to texts relevant to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. These include a Latin translation of the Athanasian Creed (fols. 55r–55v); an exposition of the faith ascribed to Jerome (fols. 54v–55v); another statement of faith entitled *Symbolum*, a word understood in the

³⁰ *Monita Porcarii*: A. Wilmart, "Les Monita de l'abbé Porcaire," *Revue bénédictine* 26 (1909): 475–80. *Ioca monachorum*: Charles D. Wright and Roger Wright, "Additions to the Bobbio Missal: *De dies malus* and *Joca monachorum* (6r–8v)," in *The Bobbio Missal: Liturgy and Religious Culture in Merovingian Gaul*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Rob Meens (Cambridge, 2004), 79–139, at 104–22.

³¹ For a description of the manuscript and its contents, see n. 16 above.

Carolingian period to mean the Creed (fols. 55r–55v); a treatise on Christian belief called *Sacred Dogmas of the Church* commonly linked to Augustine or Gennadius, but here attributed to Jerome (fols. 55v–66r); a model sermon on the truth of Christian doctrine (fols. 66r–70r); a translation of the *Pater Noster* into a Bavarian dialect of Old High German (fols. 70v–71r); and lastly, on the final page of the manuscript, a collection of pithy statements of faith (fols. 71r–71v).³²

The content of the final twenty folios of MS Clm 6330 strongly suggests that the manuscript was not produced specifically for a monastic audience, but may have, in fact, been compiled for the edification of a parish priest and, by extension, his lay parishioners. But what role would the “Instruments of Good Works” have for anyone other than a monk? There are two aspects of Benedict’s fourth chapter to consider in this context: first, the content of his message, and second, the mode of his presentation. The applicability of the “Instruments of Good Works” to Christians in general is clear when we recall that the entire chapter is a list of maxims constructed around the complimentary commandments to love God and one’s neighbor. In his magisterial commentary on the rule, Adalbert de Vogüé devoted several pages to what he calls “le caractère indécis, et finalement peu monastique, de ces maximes.”³³ In short, Benedict’s “Instruments of Good Works” were potentially useful to a parish priest because, unlike other parts of the rule, they were not limited in their application to monks alone. Instead, they provided a list of hortatory directives around a theme of love that was central to any Christian’s faith.

The idiom of the “Instruments of Good Works” was also an important factor in their inclusion in a manual for the instruction of a parish priest and his congregation. This chapter of Benedict’s rule was nothing more than a formulaic and repetitive list of concise sayings characterized both by anaphora (words repeated at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences) as well as by epistrophe (in this case, word endings repeated at the end of a clause or sentence). For example,

Non esse superbum

³² Only a few of these texts have been edited and studied. *Expositio fidei*: “Fides Romanorum (I),” ed. J. Armitage Robinson, in *Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, Volume 4.1: The Athanasian Creed and its Early Commentaries* (Cambridge, 1896), 61–62; *Dogma ecclesia (sic) sancta*: C. H. Turner, “The *Liber Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum* attributed to Gennadius,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1907): 78–99, with idem, “The *Liber Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum*: Supplenda to J.T.S. vii. 78–99,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1907): 103–14; the model sermon: ed. W. Scherer, “Eine lateinische Musterpredigt aus der Zeit Karls des Grossens,” *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 12 (1865): 436–41. On the meaning of *symbolum* in the Carolingian period, see Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum* (Oxford, 2014), 169–71. On the Lord’s Prayer in Old High German, see Bischoff, *Die südoostdeutschen Schreibschulen und Bibliotheken* (n. 16 above), 144–45.

³³ See the commentary of Adalbert de Vogüé, in *La règle de saint Benoît*, SC 187 (Paris, 1972), 7:126–28 (quotation at 126).

Non vinolentum

Non multum edacem

Non somnulentum

Non pigrum

Non murmuriosum

*Non detractorem.*³⁴

The result was a cascade of discrete messages that was not only emphatic in its expression, but also easy to remember for the preacher and his listeners alike. Thus, it was both the ecumenical message of the “Instruments of Good Works,” which spoke not just to monks but to all Christians, as well as their simple, yet effective cadence that appealed to the compiler of this ninth-century manuscript. The pairing of the “Instruments” with a portion of Benedict’s chapter on the twelve steps of humility raises one final question, however. Unlike the fourth chapter of the rule, the “Twelve Steps” conveyed its admonitions in a more robust, involved Latin than the simple maxims of the “Instruments of Good Works.” Although it was borrowed from the same text, this excerpt of the *Rule of Benedict* spoke in a different register than its adjacent counterpart. While the “Instruments” allowed the priest to address his lay audience with salvific advice about how to govern their lives as practicing Christians, the “Twelve Steps” was the voice of Benedict speaking directly to the preacher himself. It was nothing less than a reminder that the priest was just as vulnerable to sins as his parishioners. In fact, in his role as a messenger of the truth of Christian doctrine, the danger to the preacher’s soul was even greater, for it was especially when speaking that he was most likely to succumb to the sin of pride.

The compiler of MS Clm 6330 was not alone in recognizing the utility of Benedict’s “Instruments of Good Works” as a tool for pastoral care in the Carolingian period. An “instruction-reader” compiled in the later ninth century in western Francia repurposed the same text as a homily attributed to “the holy fathers” (*omelia sanctorum patrum*).³⁵ A canny medieval reader recognized the source of the homily, noting in the margin: “Caput est IV regulae sancti Benedicti” (fol. 28r). Similarly, a collection of patristic sermons, synodal statutes, and excerpts from the *Book of Sparks* (*Liber scintillarum*) by Defensor of Ligugé and Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Care* created at Freising in the first half of the ninth

³⁴ RB 4.34–40.

³⁵ MS Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale 116, fols. 28r–29v. See *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, Tome XII: Orléans*, ed. C. Cuissard (Paris, 1889), 45–48 (no. 116), esp. 45 where it is called “Mélanges théologiques, abrégé de la doctrine chrétienne et explication du canon de la messe”; and Keefe, *Water and the Word* (n. 13 above), 2:61–64.

century likewise included an unattributed copy of the fourth chapter of Benedict's rule.³⁶ In this manuscript, likely created for the use of a bishop, the exhortations of the "Instruments of Good Works" offered a practical complement both to the homily on the acquisition of heaven directly preceding it and to the homily on the day of Judgement following immediately thereafter. In both cases, the compilers of these manuscripts appreciated the utility of Benedict's "Instruments" for the purpose of pastoral care.

PREACHING WITH BENEDICT'S RULE

The association of excerpts from *The Rule of Benedict* and other texts of monastic origin with statements of faith, especially those translated into the vernacular, in MS Clm 6330 strongly suggests that the manuscript was intended to play some role in the preparation of priests for the *cura animarum* in Carolingian parishes. The most likely agents of this act of textual triage were not monks themselves, but rather church prelates trained at an early age in monastic schools, who imbibed the literature of the cloister and took it with them when they departed the abbey to assume their positions in the world as clerics. The circumstances in which these chapters of the rule were curated for pastoral use, the practical challenges of obtaining copies of them, and the institutional support behind the construction of manuscripts like MS Clm 6330 are largely unknown, but Carine van Rhijn has proposed that "[a] scenario in which priests compiled their own manuscripts, alone or as a 'team' and working in an episcopal or monastic library, is . . . thinkable."³⁷

While the identity of these priests cannot be reconstructed with any certainty, one well-known Carolingian thinker seems to have played an important role in appropriating portions of Benedict's handbook for use in the *cura animarum* and disseminating them to a much wider audience: Bishop Theodulf of Orléans.³⁸ An immigrant from Spain, Theodulf emerged in the later eighth century as an important theologian at the court of Charlemagne. He earned the monarch's favor by authoring a large portion of the *Opus Carolini*, the Carolingian

³⁶ Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 28135, fols. 54v–57r. See Hermann Hauke, *Katalog der lateinischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München: Clm 28111–28254* (Wiesbaden, 1986), 31–37. On the *Liber scintillarum*, see most recently Yitzak Hen, "Defensor of Ligugé's *Liber Scintillarum* and the Migration of Knowledge," in *East and West in the Early Middle Ages: The Merovingian Kingdoms in Mediterranean Perspective*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yaniv Fox, Yitzhak Hen, and Laury Sarti (Cambridge, 2019), 218–29.

³⁷ van Rhijn, "Manuscripts for Local Priests" (n. 12 above), 183.

³⁸ There is no modern study of Theodulf. For a sketch of his career and works, see the article by Hans Sauer in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1997), 8:647–48, s.v. "Theodulf, Bischof von Orléans, Abt von Fleury, Theologe und Dichter (um 760–821)," as well as the extensive and much more current bibliography listed on the website "Geschichtsquellen des deutschen Mittelalters" (www.geschichtsquellen.de) s.v. "Theodulfus episcopus Aurelianiensis" (accessed 12 May 2020).

response to the decisions of the Second Council of Nicea (787) on the issue of Byzantine iconoclasm.³⁹ Shortly after his appointment as bishop of Orléans in 798, Theodulf issued his first episcopal capitulary, in which he set out his expectations of the responsibilities of the parish priests in his diocese.⁴⁰ Over the course of forty-five short chapters, he exhorted his audience to live up to the dignity of the priesthood by leading righteous lives, to read constantly and pray frequently in an effort to fortify themselves against sin, to observe the decorum expected during the performance of the mass, and to regulate their interactions with their parishioners, especially women.

The twenty-first chapter of Theodulf's capitulary repurposed Benedict's "Instruments of Good Works" for an audience of priests and by extension their lay parishioners.⁴¹ The bishop explained his rationale for appropriating this excerpt from a monastic handbook in the following way:

Although the pages of all the sacred scriptures are crowded with instruments of good works and the weapons by which vices are curbed and virtues are nourished can be found strewn throughout the fields of holy writings, it is pleasing to us to include in this, our capitulary, the judgement of a certain father concerning the instruments of good works, which contains in considerable brevity what should be done and what should be avoided.⁴²

Theodulf followed this with the litany of admonitions found in the fourth chapter of the *Rule of Benedict*, but he made two small yet significant emendations to the text with his clerical and lay audience in mind. First, in a passage where Benedict exhorted his reader to "obey the commands of the abbot in all things" (*praeceptis abbatis in omnibus oboedire*), the bishop changed the passage to read: "Obey the commands of the priest and the teacher in all things" (*praeceptis sacerdotis et praeceptoris in omnibus oboedire*).⁴³ Second, Theodulf omitted the final sentence of Benedict's chapter: "The workshop where we diligently work at all these tasks is the enclosure of the monastery, in the stability of the community."⁴⁴ It is

³⁹ Thomas F. X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009).

⁴⁰ Theodulf, *Capitula prima*, ed. Peter Brommer, MGH, *Capitula Episcoporum, Pars I* (Hanover, 1984), 73–142, at 103–42. The bishop issued a second set of *capitula* later in his career (ed. Brommer, 143–84), but these decrees made no reference to the *Rule of Benedict*. For context, see Carine van Rhijn, *Shepherds of the Lord: Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period* (Turnhout, 2007), 101–38.

⁴¹ Theodulf, *Capitula prima* 21, ed. Brommer, 117–19.

⁴² Theodulf, *Capitula prima* 21: "Cum ergo omnium sanctorum scripturarum paginae instrumentis bonorum operum refertae sint et per sanctorum scripturarum campos possint inveniri arma, quibus vitia comprimantur et virtutes nutriantur, libuit nobis huic nostro capitulari inserere sententiam cuiusdam patris de instrumentis bonorum operum, in qua magna brevitate, quid agi quidve vitari debeat, continetur." ed. Brommer, 117.

⁴³ Compare RB 4.61 and Theodulf, *Capitula prima* 21, ed. Brommer, 118.

⁴⁴ RB 4.78: "Officina vero ubi haec omnia diligenter operemur claustra sunt monasterii et stabilitas in congregatione."

clear that he did so because the monastic context for the cultivation of good works enshrined in the *Rule of Benedict* was not relevant to the bishop's audience of priests and their parishioners.

Theodulf's capitulary was thus very likely a primary conduit for the dissemination of Benedict's teachings beyond the cloister and its application to the *cura animarum* of ordinary Christians. Although it was written specifically for the priests of the bishop's local diocese, this text proved to be immensely popular in the Carolingian period and beyond, surviving in whole or in part in forty-nine manuscripts dating from the ninth to the seventeenth centuries.⁴⁵ Later compilers of episcopal capitularies, like Benedictus Levita (fl. ninth century) and Regino of Prüm (d. 915), disseminated the contents of Theodulf's work even further afield by bundling parts of his collection with other materials "to create entirely new corpora of normative law that reflected the needs of the episcopacy."⁴⁶ Theodulf's capitulary circulated in Anglo-Saxon England as well, where prelates deemed it so useful that it was translated into Old English not once, but twice, in the eleventh century.⁴⁷ With the success of this collection of practical advice for parish priests, the Benedictine chapter it contained spread further and further from its place of origin in the cloister.

In conclusion, MS Clm 6330 provides an illuminating example of the purposeful reuse of excerpts of the *Rule of Benedict* for the edification of parish priests and by extension their lay congregations in the Carolingian period. Braiding monastic and patristic extracts with explications of Christian doctrine and statements of the faith in Latin and Old High German, the compiler of this manuscript deployed a chapter of Benedict's rule in the service of pastoral care. As we have seen, the abbot's "Instruments of Good Works" were particularly well-suited for this purpose. This list of maxims concerning the cultivation of virtues and the avoidance of vices, framed by the dual directive to love God and one's neighbor, was not specifically monastic in its content and thus could appeal to a wide audience of the faithful, religious and lay. Moreover, the delivery of their message in concise, rhythmic sentences made these maxims much easier to understand and retain in memory, especially for listeners whose Latin proficiency may not have been very strong.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Peter Brommer, "Die Rezeption der bischöflichen Kapitularien Theodulfs von Orléans," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung* 92 (1975): 113–60. For a survey of the manuscripts, see the introduction to Brommer's edition, 76–99.

⁴⁶ John Eldevik, *Episcopal Power and Ecclesiastical Reform in the German Empire: Tithes, Lordship, and Community, 950–1150* (Cambridge, 2012), 77.

⁴⁷ Hans Sauer, *Theodulfi Capitula in England: Die altenglischen Übersetzung zusammen mit der lateinischen Text* (Munich, 1978). I am grateful to Drew Jones for drawing my attention to this study.

⁴⁸ By the Carolingian period, Latin was "a language at arm's length" for all but the most educated individuals. See Carin Ruff, "Latin as an Acquired Language," in *The Oxford*

While a handful of manuscripts from the decades around 800 bear witness to the repurposing of the “Instruments of Good Words” for pastoral use, the widespread redeployment of the fourth chapter of Benedict’s rule for the purpose of the *cura animarum* in Carolingian Europe and beyond owes a great deal to the popularity of Theodulf of Orléan’s capitulary for the priests of his parish. This reforming bishop redeployed the “Instruments of Good Works” as the twenty-first chapter of his capitulary, recognizing in its considerable brevity (*magna brevitate*) a valuable tool for the instruction of lay people. Theodulf did not bother to attribute this work to Benedict by name, referring to it instead as “the judgement of a certain father” (*sententiam cuiusdam patris*), with the result that many of the priests who drew upon the lessons of this text while preaching to their parishioners probably did so unaware of its monastic origins.

As I have argued elsewhere, the act of textual triage — “the pragmatic disarticulation and creative redeployment of written materials” — was a common feature of literary culture in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.⁴⁹ Compilers of *florilegia* in particular were motivated far more by pragmatism than by any reverence for the sources they pillaged for useful content to serve the purpose of whatever enterprise their text supported. For this reason, a ninth-century bishop did not pause to incorporate into his precepts for parish priests the moral maxims originally compiled by an Italian abbot in the sixth century to motivate cloistered monks to pursue virtue and abandon vice because these teachings suited his pastoral purpose. In doing so, Theodulf disseminated the tenets of the *Rule of Benedict*, the foundational text of medieval monasticism, far beyond the cloister to the parishes of Christian Europe, to the hearts and minds of ordinary Christians.

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Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature, ed. Ralph J. Hexter and David Townsend (Oxford, 2012), 47–62 (quotation at 47).

⁴⁹ Scott G. Bruce “The Dark Age of Herodotus: Shards of a Fugitive History in Early Medieval Europe,” *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 94 (2019): 47–67 (quotation at p. 66).

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