



Dunn, M. (2008) Columbanus, charisma and the revolt of the monks of Bobbio. *Peritia*.

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/3826/>

Deposited on: 12 November 2007

Columbanus, Charisma and the Revolt of the Monks of Bobbio

Marilyn Dunn

Abstract. The account of the revolt of the monks of Bobbio against Columbanus' successor Attala by Jonas of Bobbio gives only some clues as to why it took place, but suggests that Attala was lacking charisma. Jonas fails to mention the subsequent introduction of the Benedictine *Rule* to Bobbio and its combination with Columbanian traditions in the *Rule of the master*; he is also reticent about the development of cells, or sub-monasteries, partly as a result of the revolt. It is suggested here that the monastic rule currently known as the *Rule of Eugippius* was compiled for these cells and that the *Rules of the fathers*, currently dated to an earlier period, might also be associated with attempts to pacify the monks' revolt.

Keywords: Columbanus, Bobbio, Attala, charisma, routinisation, Amtcharisma, Rule of St Benedict, Rule of the master, Regula Eugippii, Rules of the fathers.

Marilyn Dunn,
Department of History (Medieval), University of Glasgow, Glasgow G 12 8QQ
mdu@arts.gla.ac.uk.

Peritia 20 (2006) 1–27

ISBN 978-2-503-51576-2

In 615, the great Irish monastic leader, Columbanus, died in Italy at his monastery of Bobbio. In the previous two and a half decades, he had pursued a dynamic and often controversial monastic career. He had arrived in Francia in 590 or 591 with a few companions as a *peregrinus pro Christo*, that very special Irish class of monastic exiles for the sake of Christ. There, he was at first welcomed by the Frankish kings who allowed him to settle and create the triple monastic community of Luxeuil-Annegray-Fontaines in Austrasia. His success in attracting recruits and in preaching and teaching antagonised some of the Frankish episcopate, some of whom at one stage had regarded him as their confessor; he survived their attacks, which included criticism of the divergent Irish system of calculating the date of Easter, only to fall out eventually with a section of the Frankish royal family which engineered his expulsion from their kingdom. Before he left Francia, however, Columbanus had succeeded in popularising his monastic ideals amongst the Frankish aristocracy and his own cluster of monasteries, now headed by one of his disciples, Eustasius, was strong enough to survive his departure. Initially settling near Bregenz with a group who had been expelled from Francia or chosen to leave with him, Columbanus and his fol-

lowers once more departed because of political developments, travelling on to Italy c.613. Again, he was welcomed by royalty: although the Lombard ruler Agilulf was nominally an Arian and his wife a schismatic Catholic not in communion with Rome. Columbanus was given the ruined church of St Peter at Bobbio in the Appenines and there he founded the monastery where he died. He was succeeded as superior by his lieutenant, Attala, who had accompanied him in his expulsion from Francia. But Attala soon found himself confronted by a major revolt in which many of his monks left the monastery to lead independent religious lives. This revolt is crucial to our understanding of many of the fundamentals of monastic life in the sixth and seventh centuries: the nature of the Columbanian monastic rules and of charisma and religious leadership; the significance and diffusion of the Benedictine *Rule*; and the origins, meaning and chronology of the early western monastic rules known as the *Regula Eugippii* and the *Rules of the fathers*.

Columbanus left behind a number of writings in the form of sermons, letters, two monastic rules and a penitential, many of which are relevant to an understanding of the revolt: however, our primary descriptive information about events at Bobbio is drawn from his *Life* by the Italian monk, Jonas of Susa.¹ This text continues into a second book containing the *Lives* of Attala and Bertulf of Bobbio and Eustasius of Luxeuil. It also includes what Jonas calls the ‘miracles of Evoriac’, narrations of a succession of events which he claims occurred at Faremoutiers, the first Columbanian nunnery to be founded in Francia. The *Life* is an elliptical piece of writing, the meaning of which is still being elucidated by scholars: on the one hand, it is acknowledged as giving us valuable information; while on the other Jonas stands accused of only hinting at some very important matters and remaining totally—and misleadingly—silent on others.² Jonas has

1. G. S. M Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, SLH 2 (Dublin 1957); M. Lapidge (ed) *Columbanus: studies on the Latin writings* (Woodbridge 1997). Latin text of the *Life* in B. Krusch (ed), *Ionae Vitae sanctorum, Columbani, Vedastis, Johannis*, SRG us (Hannover-Leipzig 1905). English translations of some sections of the *Life* appear in D. C. Munro (ed & tr), *Life of St Columban by the monk Jonas*, ii no 7, in *Translations and reprints from the original sources of European history* (Philadelphia PA 1895; repr.Felinfach 1993); Thomas Head (ed), *Medieval hagiography: an anthology* (New York & London 2001) 111–35 (this contains Jonas’ description of the revolt); and in J. A. McNamara & J. E. Halborg with E. GordonWhatley, *Sainted women of the Dark Ages* (Durham & London 1992) 155–75.

2. C. Stancliffe, ‘Jonas’s *Life of Columbanus and his disciples*’, in J. Carey, M. Herbert & P. Ó Riain (ed), *Studies in Irish hagiography: saints and scholars* (Dublin 2000) 189–220; T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early christian Ireland* (Cambridge 2000) 344–90.

1 even been charged with deception: it seems clear, to take one important exam-
 2 ple, that he exaggerates the bad relations between the Frankish ruler Theuderich
 3 and Columbanus.³ He also deliberately obscures the circumstances of a very
 4 important event in the history of the Columbanian congregation, namely, the
 5 attack mounted on its traditions by the monk Agrestius, with significant epis-
 6 copal and political support. Jonas alleges that at the synod of Mâcon in 626
 7 Agrestius attacked the Irish style of signings and crossings along with some
 8 aspects of Columbanian intercessory practice. However, it is likely that the real
 9 issues at stake were the Irish tonsure and, most important, the method of calcu-
 10 lating the date of Easter.⁴ The discrepancy between Columbanian and Frankish
 11 practice in this last and highly important area had remained unresolved since
 12 Columbanus' own days and it seems very likely that Eustasius and the Frankish
 13 Columbanian monasteries were forced into conformity in 626. But Jonas makes
 14 no mention of this, suggesting instead that Eustasius mounted a successful
 15 defence of Columbanian traditions in the areas of signing and blessing and of
 16 liturgical prayer. Examination of his version of Agrestius' attacks has led to the
 17 recognition of the fact that Jonas, writing in 642 for the Columbanian congrega-
 18 tion, was setting out deliberately to obscure any departure from the founder's
 19 ideals and practice.⁵ This article suggests that Jonas was attempting to preserve
 20 the memory of the charisma of Columbanus and that, where the revolt of the
 21 monks against Attala was concerned, he also concealed important organisational
 22 developments after the death of Columbanus as they, too, represented a sig-
 23 nificant departure from what he saw as the ethos of pure Columbanian mona-
 24 sticism.

25 As portrayed by Jonas, Columbanus is a classic charismatic leader who corre-
 26 sponds very well to the model put forward many years ago by Max Weber in his
 27 *Theory of social and economic organisation*.⁶ Weber set out a number of character-
 28 istics which define or describe his concept of the charismatic.⁷ He should have

3. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 388, notes that Jonas 'stands accused of deception' in more than one area.

4. Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life*', 205–11; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 364–67.

5. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 345–46.

6. See S. N. Eisenstadt (ed), *Max Weber on charisma and institution building* (Chicago 1968) esp. 46–80, 253–93.

7. In a Marxist analysis Peter Worsley (*The trumpet shall sound* (London 1957) 294) suggests that Weber's concept is a datum rather than explanatory while the theologian J. Milbank (*Theology and social theory: beyond secular reason* (Oxford 1990) 85–86) categorises his theory of charisma as based on *a priori* assumptions and observes that 'No doubt ... religions do undergo something

1 superhuman or supernatural powers—and Jonas presents us with an impressive
 2 array of miracle-stories which demonstrate Columbanus' God-given abilities and
 3 his powers over nature. To take only one or two examples, he is able to make
 4 water flow from a rock; he successfully forbids a bear to eat a dead stag or deer;
 5 he makes loaves multiply; and he miraculously replenishes the monastic granary
 6 when his community is struggling for survival.⁸ According to Weber, a charis-
 7 matic also tends to be an 'outsider'. Jonas demonstrates graphically how Colum-
 8 banus functioned on the margins of authority, both secular and also eccle-
 9 siastical. Although initially welcomed in Francia by the ruling Merovingian
 10 dynasty, Columbanus effectively marginalised himself by his ultimate repudia-
 11 tion of some of their values. He refused to bless the children of a royal concu-
 12 bine, an act that would lead to attempts—ultimately successful—to expel him
 13 from Frankish territory.⁹ In addition, his Frankish foundation, the triple com-
 14 munity of Luxeuil-Annegray-Fontaines, was literally marginal: it was situated
 15 near the borders of more than one diocese, much to the chagrin of the local
 16 bishops whose authority he eventually undermined and defied. When Columba-
 17 nus was eventually driven out of Francia and arrived in Italy, his status as an out-
 18 sider allowed him to occupy the margin between the Lombard monarchy (where
 19 an Arian king was married to a schismatic Catholic queen) and Rome and to
 20 enjoy the support of both, even though contact with the schismatic bishops of
 21 Northern Italy at one stage led him to accuse the pope of the heresy of Nesto-
 22 rianism!¹⁰ In this complex and emotionally-charged situation, Columbanus con-
 23 sciously manipulated his supposed marginal status to enhance his own authority
 24 and grant him the *parrhesia* which is the privilege of the charismatic. Writing to
 25 pope Boniface IV, he emphasised that he came from the edge of the known
 26 world and attempted to turn this to his own advantage by proudly claiming that
 27 the Irish had never been guilty of any heresy.¹¹ Finally, Weber also suggests that
 28 'outsider' status may be emphasised by shamanistic behaviour. Jonas' account
 29 gives us glimpses of this type of performance in his descriptions of Columbanus'
 30 periodic withdrawal from his communities in order to refresh his spiritual

like a routinisation of charisma (it did not take sociology to observe this) but it is not metaphysi-
 cally inevitable in the way that Weber makes it'. Perhaps, but Weber equips us with some valuable
 heuristic devices in this context.

8. *Vita Columbani*, I 9, I 17 .

9. *ibid.* I 18.

10. Letter V, Walker, 37–57.

11. Letter V 3, Walker, 8–9.

1 powers through a period of eremitic isolation.¹² Such characteristics are also to
 2 be found or paralleled in the life of Columbanus' contemporary Colm Cille of
 3 Iona and the everyday reality of Irish monastic life in the sixth century must have
 4 been created and dominated by such charismatic figures and practices.¹³ The
 5 authority that leaders such as Columbanus and Colm Cille exercised over their
 6 communities was based on what Weber characterises as an emotional form of
 7 communal relationship, in which the individual monks were bound to the
 8 monastic saint by his charismatic qualities. The nature of this authority was
 9 founded in an intensely personal relationship, a recognition by disciples or fol-
 10 lowers of the reality of the leader's charisma.

11 Jonas certainly strives to recreate the essence of a communal relationship in his
 12 description of the initial arrival of the saint and his Irish followers in Francia:

13
 14 So great was his humility and that of his followers, that just as children of this
 15 world seek honour and authority, so they on the contrary vied with one another in
 16 the practice of humility ... Such piety and love dwelt in them all, that for them
 17 there was only one will and one renunciation. Modesty and moderation, meekness
 18 and mildness adorned them all in equal measure. The evils of sloth and dissension
 19 were banished. Pride and haughtiness were expiated by severe punishments. Scorn
 20 and envy were driven out by faithful diligence. So great was the might of their
 21 patience, love and mildness that no-one could doubt that the God of mercy dwelt
 22 among them. If the found that one among them was in error, they strove in com-
 23 mon, with equal right, to restrain the sinner by their reproaches. They had every-
 24 thing in common. If anyone claimed anything as his own, he was shut out from
 25 association with the others and punished by penances. No-one dared return evil
 26 for evil, or let fall a harsh word; so that people must have believed that an angelic
 27 life was being lived by mortal men.¹⁴

28 Jonas' portrait of the Columbanian group appears to reflect part of the teach-
 29 ing set out in Columbanus' own *Monks' rule*. This short text is prefaced by the
 30 gospel instruction to love God, with the whole heart and mind and strength, and
 31 then one's neighbour as oneself (Mt 22:37 and 39).¹⁵ This biblical injunction

12. *Vita Columbani* 18–9.

13. Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St Columba*, ed. & tr. R. Sharpe (Harmondsworth, 1995) passim; but see, for example, II 17–18; II 33; II 26; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, ch. 7.

14. *Vita Columbani*, 15: translation by Munro, 20–21.

15. See also the use of this idea in Basil, *Long rules*, Q, 1 in Sister M. Monica Wagner (tr), *St Basil: ascetical works* (Washington DC 1950); and also T. O. Clancy & G. Márkus, *Iona: the earliest poetry of a Celtic monastery* (Edinburgh 1995) 96–115, for evidence of Basil's influence on Irish monasticism as reflected in the *Amra Choluimb Chille*.

1 provides Columbanus with his essential mission-statement and the remainder of
 2 the *Monks' rule* furnishes us with very little in the way of detailed information or
 3 instruction about the day-to-day life of the Columbanian monk, except in mat-
 4 ters of diet and, more particularly, liturgy.¹⁶ In contrast to sixth-century monas-
 5 tic writers such as Cæsarius of Arles and Benedict of Nursia, Columbanus sets
 6 out no detailed hierarchies of monastic officials or structures of command.
 7 Instead, he relies on this core idea of love of God and neighbour, concentrating
 8 mainly on discussing the qualities which the individual monk should perfect.
 9 These are obedience, silence, poverty, the overcoming of greed and vanity,
 10 chastity, discretion which enables the monk to weigh his actions in what Colum-
 11 banus calls 'the scales of justice', and mortification, that is, the willingness to
 12 submit completely to the judgement of a senior. Such technologies of the self are
 13 not enlisted simply in the service of the individual, but are related to communal
 14 life as a whole. For example, a monk who answers back is guilty not only of dis-
 15 obedience but also, by setting a bad example to others, is the 'destroyer of
 16 many'. Columbanus' consciousness of *communitas* in this respect seems even
 17 greater than that of his model, Basil of Caesarea, whose *Long rules* simply refer to
 18 the disobedient monk as the destroyer of his own soul.¹⁷

19 Both *Monastic rule* and Jonas' description seem to correspond to what another
 20 modern theorist of the religious life, Victor Turner, has characterised as *com-*
 21 *munitas*, an essential unity of spirit between persons in which the sense of indi-
 22 viduality is dissolved and conventional structures and hierarchy are rendered
 23 redundant.¹⁸ However, Turner's theory of *communitas* has been criticised for its
 24 lack of attention to the possibility of conflicting motivations and perceptions
 25 within supposedly united groups and Jonas' description of the community's life
 26 looks to be similarly idealised.¹⁹ The teaching of the *Monastic rule* may stress a
 27 communal ethos but it is also noticeable that obedience as the first quality required
 28 in a monk, it is clear that Columbanus exacted unquestioning obedience from
 29 his disciples: the *Vita Columbani* depicts Columbanus arriving one day in
 30 Luxeuil and commanding his monks, who had been struck down by various
 31 illnesses, to rise from their beds of sickness to thresh the harvest.²⁰ The essence of
 32 the Columbanian community during the saint's lifetime thus appears to have

16. *Regula monachorum*, ed. Walker, 122–43.

17. *Long rules* Q. 28, tr. Wagner, 290.

18. V. Turner, *The ritual process* (New York 1969) ch. 4.

19. See, for example, M. J. Sallnow, 'Communitas reconsidered', *Man* 16 (1981) 163–82.

20. *Vita Columbani*, I 12.

involved not only Weber's emotional communal relationship, but also recognition of and submission to the charismatic through obedience. However, even during Columbanus' own lifetime, the bonds of obedience might be broken though Jonas, in giving his idealised picture of the Columbanian community, could not bring himself to record any disobedience or lack of recognition of Columbanus' charisma if he could possibly avoid it. Thus he passes over in complete silence an incident recorded in a later source, the *Life* of Columbanus' disciple Gall. Gall had accompanied Columbanus from Francia to the Bregenz region, but when Columbanus set out again for Italy, Gall, who was suffering from a fever, refused to accompany him. Columbanus punished him, according to the earliest version of the *Life* by excommunicating him or, according to a later one, by forbidding him to celebrate mass as long as he—Columbanus—was alive.²¹ And Jonas makes no mention of the discords outlined in Columbanus' own fourth letter where Columbanus laments that not all monks in his Frankish monasteries were prepared to accept the strictness of his rule and that some had become rebellious.²²

The existence of a rule (or rules) created by Columbanus himself points to a stage in the evolution of a charismatic community which Weber himself alludes to and which has also been perceived by others. As well as the *Monastic rule*, there is also a *Communal rule* which sets down penances and punishments for errant monks. Whether this was composed at the same time, or whether the written version might perhaps have been a posthumous production based on memories of Columbanus' administration of penitential discipline within the monastery is not clear.²³ But even the composition of the *Monastic rule* alone would fit in with Weber's concept of the 'routinisation' of charisma, an institutionalisation of the original charismatic group. Weber himself focused mainly on the process by which a charismatic's followers and staff seek to establish their group's continuation or their own authority on his departure or death and also on the choice, designation or discovery of a successor to the leader.²⁴ Pierre

21. See *Vitae Galli vetustissimae fragmentum* cap. 1; Wettinus, *Vita atque virtutes beati Galli* 1 9, 26; Wahlafrid, *Vita beati Galli*, 1 9, 26 in B. Krusch (ed), *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi merovingici* MGH SRM 5 (Hannover & Leipzig 1910) 251–52, 261–62, 270–71, 291, 304–05.

22. Letter IV 4, Walker, 28–31.

23. See the discussion and references in A. de Vogüé, *Saint Colomban: règles et pénitentiels monastiques* (Bellefontaine 1989) 75–119; Walker, 141–69. There are also some provisions for punishment of errant monks at the end of the *Penitential* ascribed to Columbanus (see Walker, 178–81; de Vogüé, *Saint Colomban: règles et pénitentiels*, 151–60).

24. Eisenstadt, *Weber on charisma*, 54–61.

1 Bourdieu links the process to an earlier stage in the evolution of such bodies,
 2 suggesting that a certain degree of symbolic closure is already present within
 3 charismatic groups, as the leaders, who set their personal authority over estab-
 4 lished norms or customs begin to perpetuate their own ideas. Thus charisma
 5 does not consist entirely in originating, as Weber suggests, but begins to routi-
 6 nise itself, an idea which perhaps finds a parallel in Victor Turner's theory of
 7 'normative *communitas*'.²⁵ Columbanus's *Regula monachorum* is a good example
 8 of a charismatic's attempt to put together a rule. Rather like Francis of Assisi's
 9 earliest and now lost rule, it is brief and derivative and is also based to some
 10 extent based on gospel injunction. However, as Weber points out and as the
 11 cases of Pachomius in fourth-century Egypt and of Francis of Assisi in thir-
 12 teenth-century Italy also demonstrate, the transfer of authority to the successors
 13 of a charismatic founder frequently creates difficulties for religious groups. At
 14 Bobbio, Columbanus' successor Attala was soon faced by a major revolt on the
 15 part of what appears to be a substantial number of his monks.

16 Jonas introduces his account of the rebellion with an observation on Attala:

17 *Ergo cum egregie post beatum Columbanum supradictum coenubium regeret et in omni*
 18 *disciplina regularis tenoris erudiret* 'he was ruling the aforesaid monastery with dis-
 19 tinction in succession to the blessed Columbanus and was guiding it in every dis-
 20 cipline consonant with the tenor of a monastic rule ...'.²⁶

21 There is no good reason to suggest that Jonas is not referring here to the
 22 Columbanian rules—understood as comprising both the *Monks' rule* and the
 23 penitential discipline set out in the *Communal rule*—rather than just 'a' rule or
 24 the 'regular life'.²⁷ We have no way of knowing for certain whether some of the
 25 rebels were recent Italian recruits rather than members of the original group of
 26 Irish and British monks which had arrived with Columbanus in Italy, or whether
 27 the Bobbio revolt represents a continuation of the discords which began in

25. Pierre Bourdieu, 'Legitimation and structured interests in Weber's sociology of religion', in *Max Weber, rationality and modernity* (London 1987) 119–36. Bourdieu, arguing principally on the basis of two texts written between 1911 and 1913 (chapter VI of *Economy and society* (devoted to religion); and chapter XV of the 'Sociology of domination', in the same work) criticises Weber's oppositional categories of 'priestly' and 'prophetic' tradition, which are not employed here, although it would be easy—facile?—to do so on the basis of the clash between Columbanus and the Frankish bishops. Turner, 132.

26. *Vita Columbani* II 1; English translation in Head *Medieval hagiography* by I. Wood, 119.

27. A. de Vogüé, *Jonas de Bobbio: Vie de Saint Columban et de ses disciples* (Bellefontaine 1988) 178, has '... l'observance intégrale de la discipline régulière'.

1 Francia and are referred to in Columbanus' fourth letter. Whoever the rebels
 2 were, were, Jonas characteristically attributes their actions to the influence of the
 3 devil. He states that they accused Attala of excessive zeal and brutal discipli-
 4 narianism:

5 ...the subtlety of the old serpent began to spread the fatal virus of discord with
 6 injurious blows, exciting the hearts of some of his subordinates against him so that
 7 they claimed that they could not bear the precepts of excessive ardour and that
 8 they were unable to sustain the weight of harsh discipline ...²⁸

9 What did Jonas mean by the 'precepts of excessive ardour' and 'the weight of
 10 harsh discipline'? Columbanus admits his own strictness and it is likely that what
 11 is meant here is the custom of punishments for a variety of offences codified in
 12 the *Communal rule*. These range from the obligation to recite additional psalms
 13 for trivial faults to severe beatings for serious ones:

14 Thus him who has not kept grace at table and has not responded Amen, it is
 15 ordained to correct with six blows. Likewise him who has spoken while eating, not
 16 because of the wants of another brother, him is ordained to correct with six ...
 17 And him who has not blessed the spoon with which he sups, and him who has
 18 spoken with a shout, that is talked in a louder tone than the usual, with six
 19 blows...²⁹

20 For infringements of a more major nature—uttering a loud speech without
 21 restraint, unfairly criticising the porter (doorman)—a monk might have silence
 22 imposed upon him, but equally might be subject to no less than fifty blows.³⁰
 23 Monks who received the Eucharist with dirty hands suffered twelve blows, any-
 24 one forgetting to make the oblation until he was actually going to mass received
 25 no less than one hundred.³¹ Apart from corporal punishment, an erring monk
 26 might, as we have seen, have silence imposed upon him, or the obligation of
 27 reciting a large number of psalms, or be told to spend several days on a bread
 28 and water diet. All in all, this amounts to a strict penitential code.

29 As Columbanus' fourth letter reveals, even he seems to have experienced prob-

28. *Vita Columbani*, II 1: '... contra eum antiqui anguis versutia loetiferum discordia virus noxiis ictibus laxare coepit, excitans aliquorum contra eum subditorum, qui se aiebant nimiae feroris auctoritatem ferre non posse et arduae disciplinae pondera portare non valere'. Wood's translation, 119.

29. *Communal rule* I, Walker, 146–47.

30. *ibid.* V and VI, Walker, 150–51.

31. *ibid.* IV, Walker, 148–49.

1 lems because of the harshness of his rules and Attala struggled to a much greater
 2 degree with rebellious monks. According to Jonas, he was a noble Burgundian
 3 who had originally been educated in the household of bishop Arigius of Lyon
 4 before entering the famous island monastery of Lérins, off the coast of southern
 5 Gaul. But although he stayed there for a while (*diu vitam degens*), he saw that his
 6 fellow-monks did not as Jonas puts it, ‘submit their necks to the rein of the dis-
 7 cipline of a rule’³² and so left for Luxeuil. Columbanus’ fourth letter reveals that
 8 when was on the point of being sent back from Francia to Ireland after refusing
 9 to bless king Theuderic’s illegitimate children, he had left Attala in charge of his
 10 communities. Even so, he did not see his own strength of character in his fol-
 11 lower worrying about the possibility that ‘fate has kept me away from you and
 12 Attala is not strong enough to govern you ...’.³³

13 After writing this letter, Columbanus was, in fact, reprieved—miraculously
 14 according to Jonas—and was able to return to his monasteries for a time. When
 15 he finally left Francia, Attala was one of those who accompanied him to Italy.
 16 Jonas tells us that he ‘was appointed’ to succeed Columbanus’ Bobbio when the
 17 latter died, by which he may mean that Columbanus designated him as his suc-
 18 cessor.³⁴ As Weber indicates, designation of a successor is one of the means by
 19 which a charismatic confers legitimacy on a successor.³⁵

20 But neither the trust which the great holy man eventually invested in him nor
 21 the evident affection which Jonas felt for him can disguise Attala’s relative lack of
 22 charisma. In contrast to the impressive series of miracles which he lists for
 23 Columbanus, Jonas can offer only a few for Attala: the diversion of the flooded
 24 river Trebbia, the restoration of a thumb accidentally cut off by a monk while
 25 ploughing, the curing of a sick child at Milan, and foreknowledge of his own
 26 death.³⁶ Of these, the first three were allegedly shrouded in secrecy at the time of
 27 their performance and one suspects that Jonas had to work hard to assemble
 28 such evidence of special powers. Elsewhere in the text, Attala emerges as cautious
 29 administrator rather than inspiring leader. And although Jonas says nothing
 30 specific on these matters, it is possible that Attala took a more rigid and bureau-

32. *Vita Columbani* II 1: ‘...regularis disciplinae ... abenis ...colla submittere’.

33. Letter IV 9, Walker, 36–37.

34. In *Vita Columbani*, II 1 Jonas uses the term *suffectus* which in its original sense means one appointed to replace someone who has fallen ill or died. Wood translates this term as ‘elected’, while de Vogüé, *Jonas de Bobbio*, 177, simply says that when Columbanus died he had Attala as successor.

35. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber on charisma*, 55.

36. *Vita Columbani*, II 2–5.

1 cratic approach to the penances and punishments of Columbanian monastic dis-
 2 cipline than his charismatic predecessor. While Columbanus admits his own
 3 strictness, is possible that he also relaxed penances on occasion as Adomnán
 4 maintains Colm Cille of Iona did, when his insight into the condition of a
 5 monk's soul satisfied him that he had done sufficient penance.³⁷ But set down in
 6 writing and rigidly administered by a less charismatic figure than Columbanus
 7 himself, the punishments of the *Communal rule* might well have seemed even
 8 more insupportable to some of the monks of Bobbio.

9 Nevertheless, Attala eventually saw off the revolt. How was he able to weather
 10 the rebellion and continue in office? Jonas' account begins with a description of
 11 Attala's attempts to bring the rebels to heel:

12
 13 *At ille, sagaci ut erat animo, pia fomenta praeberet et salutaris antidoti, quo sanies*
 14 *putrefacta abscideretur, potum dare studens, mollire tumidia corda nitebatur* 'But he,
 15 being of a wise mind, was anxious to provide holy poultices and to give a health-
 16 giving antidote, by which the putrefied scab might be removed and he strove to
 17 soften the hearts of the arrogant'³⁸

18 The use of medicinal imagery—*fomenta* (dressings), *sanies putrefacta* (infected
 19 discharge, rather than scab) and above all *salutaris antidoti* (a health-giving
 20 antidote)—suggest that Attala's first thought had been to put down the rebellion
 21 by penitential discipline, as the medical concept of 'curing contraries with con-
 22 traries' is a classic description of the administration of the Insular system of
 23 penance.³⁹ Despite Jonas' characterisation of Attala as wise, this was not an
 24 entirely sensible move. The continued penitential approach does not seem to
 25 have met with success and Jonas reveals that Attala was forced to implore the
 26 rebels not to leave him:

27
 28 *Diu castigatos cum secum tenere non valeret, merore animi turbatus, multis precibus*
 29 *cum pietatis obsequio prosequeretur, ut se non relinquerent et ardui itineris calle non*
 30 *deviarent, meminiscerentque patres per mortificationem et contemptum praesentis vitae*
 31 *regna caelorum possidere* 'For a long time while he was not strong enough to keep
 32 control of those he castigated, disturbed by the sorrow of his mind, he followed
 33 them with many prayers and with the indulgence of piety so that they would not
 34 leave him, nor deviate from the arduous path and that they should remember that

37. *Life of Columba*, tr. Sharpe, 121.

38. *Vita Columbani*, II 1; Wood's translation.

39. M. Dunn, *The emergence of monasticism* (Oxford 2003) 150–51.

1 the fathers came into possession of the kingdom of heaven through mortification
2 and contempt for the present life'.⁴⁰

3
4 But his efforts were to no avail:

5
6 *Cum nihil iam proficere cerneret nec alibi trahentes animos suae societatis abenis*
7 *inretiri posse vidisset, pertinaces ire sinit; qui postquam segregati ab eo, alii eorum*
8 *marinis sunt sinibus recoepti, alii locum heremi ob libertatem habendi petierunt* 'When
9 he saw it was of no use and realized that those souls who were turning elsewhere
10 could not be held back by the reins of his community, he allowed the pertinacious
11 ones to leave and of those who departed from him, some afterward were received
12 by marine hiding places and others sought the region of the desert in order to gain
13 liberty'.⁴¹

14 Finally, however, Jonas records triumphantly that, although the rebels resided
15 in these places and 'savagely wounded the man of God by their slanders' (*virum*
16 *Dei suis detractionibus laniarent*), divine punishment fell upon them. One of
17 their leaders, Roccolenus, fell mortally ill of a fever, declaring just before he died
18 that he wished to return to Attala and 'assuage the evil of his crime by the medi-
19 cine of penance' (*criminis damna paenitentiae medicamento lenire*). His death,
20 according to Jonas, prompted many of his fellow-rebels to return to Attala, who
21 welcomed them back as lost sheep. Not everyone returned, however, until the
22 sudden deaths of another three, one by axe-blow and two in bizarre drowning
23 accidents, provoked a further weakening in the resolve of their companions.
24 Then Attala was able to receive the remainder of the by now chastened muti-
25 neers back into the fold.⁴²

26 Thus, according to Jonas, it was essentially divine intervention and punish-
27 ment which put an end to the revolt and he says no more about it or about its
28 consequences for Bobbio. Yet we might suspect that there was more to the rebel-
29 lion, in particular its aftermath, than he tells us: after all Attala died in office
30 some time later (probably in March 626).⁴³ What effect did the rebellion have
31 on the community and relations between monks and superior—could they, after
32 this major confrontation, remain exactly as before? On this question, as on many
33 other important issues, Jonas says nothing.

40. *Vita Columbani*, II 1; Wood's translation; Head, *Medieval hagiography*, 119.

41. *ibid*; Wood's translation.

42. *Vita Columbani*, II 1.

43. Charles-Edwards, *Early christian Ireland*, 364.

1 If we examine the history of Bobbio up to the 640s, it is clear that a very sig-
 2 nificant development about which Jonas is silent had taken place. This was the
 3 arrival and use the *Rule of St Benedict* in the monastery. A bull issued in 643 by
 4 pope Theodore refers to the use of the rules of both Benedict and Columbanus
 5 at Bobbio.⁴⁴ It is likely that the papal document of 643 has in mind here the rule
 6 known as the *Rule of the master*. This contains a number of important Colum-
 7 banian elements in its liturgical instructions, its Trinitarian teaching, its dating
 8 of the equinoxes, its rituals for blessing and in some of its terminology. It also
 9 employs a number of features drawn from the Benedictine *Rule* in order to
 10 create hierarchies and structures within the community and to buttress the
 11 authority of its head.⁴⁵ We know that the Benedictine *Rule* had reached the
 12 Frankish part of the Columbanian congregation by this date: as a monastic rule
 13 which had originated in southern Italy, it is easy to imagine that it was trans-
 14 mitted to Luxeuil via northern Italy and Bobbio, even if we cannot trace its pre-
 15 cise route.⁴⁶ Thus it could have been known in Bobbio in the years when Attala
 16 was head of the community (615–26) and used by him or his supporters to
 17 create the *Rule of the master*.

18 The Benedictine *Rule*, composed in the mid-sixth century, is one of the most
 19 remarkable documents of monastic history. It might be characterised as the polar
 20 opposite of the Columbanian *Monks' rule* in conception and structure, present-
 21 ing us with seventy-three chapters of detailed, carefully thought out, and highly
 22 organised instructions on how to run a monastic community. We know nothing
 23 of its writer apart from what we can deduce from the rule itself: the most ob-
 24 vious conclusions being that he was the head of a monastic community, that he
 25 wrote his rule in Italy in the 550s, and that the type of monastery he envisaged
 26 when writing the rule was rural and estate-based. He was not the Benedict of
 27 Book II of the *Dialogues* traditionally, and incorrectly, attributed to pope
 28 Gregory the Great, a charismatic preacher and teacher and christianiser of the
 29 surrounding countryside, who used his monastery as a pastoral centre. The

44. C. Cipolla (ed) *Codice diplomatico del monastero di S. Colombano di Bobbio* i, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 52 (Rome 1918) §XIII 104–12.

45. A. de Vogüé, *La règle du maître* SC 105–07 (Paris 1964–65), English translation by L. Eberle, *The rule of the master* (Kalamazoo MI 1977.) These argue for pre-Benedictine origins for *RM*. Against this, M. Dunn, 'Mastering Benedict: monastic rules and their authors in the early medieval West', *Engl Hist Rev* 105 (1990) 567–94; see also A. de Vogüé. 'The Master and St Benedict: a reply', *Engl Hist Rev* 107 (1992) 95–103; and M. Dunn, 'The Master and St Benedict: a rejoinder', *ibid*, 104–11; see also 'Tánaise ríge' the earliest evidence' *Peritia* 13 (1999) 249–54.

46. Dunn, 'Tánaise ríge'; eadem, *Emergence*, 182–84.

1 *Dialogues* appear to have been composed in England in the third quarter of the
 2 seventh century to help with the process of christianisation⁴⁷ and their general
 3 ethos reflects a very different monastic reality and use of the Benedictine *Rule*.
 4 Unlike the Benedictine community depicted in the *Dialogues*, the community
 5 visualised in Benedict's *Rule* is one where the possibility of dangerous and con-
 6 taminating contact with the outside world is very carefully regulated.⁴⁸

7 In contrast to the Columbanian *Monks' rule*, Benedict's *Rule* organises com-
 8 munal life in great detail, setting out a hierarchy of monastic officials—deacons,
 9 cellarer, porter or doorkeeper, prior—with specific duties and obligations. It
 10 pays tribute to tradition in its acknowledgment that the eremitic life is a higher
 11 form of monastic life than the cenobitic and it recommends the reading of
 12 masters of monastic spirituality such as Cassian and Basil. But it also states
 13 unequivocally that the strongest form of monastic life is community life under a
 14 rule and an abbot. The supreme authority in the Benedictine monastery is God;
 15 next, there is the rule itself, which may not be infringed; and below both, but
 16 with very few other restraints placed on his actions, there is the abbot, the repre-
 17 sentative of God in the monastery. The *Rule's* characterisation of the abbot as
 18 'taking the place of Christ' creates for him a charisma of office which earlier
 19 monastic writings had not found necessary to formulae.⁴⁹ Chapter 2 of the
 20 Benedictine *Rule* gives the abbot very extensive powers (so extensive that it has to
 21 remind him not to abuse them); and chapter 3 shows that while he may assem-
 22 ble the monks to consult them on important matters, he is not obliged to take
 23 their advice (although it is suggested that he might want to confer with seniors
 24 on minor matters relating to the administration of the monastery's temporal
 25 possessions).

47. Dunn, *Emergence*, 130–36; eadem, 'Reading the Dialogues', *Studia Patristica* (to appear).

48. See for example *RB*, chapters 51, 66, 67.

49. A. de Vogüé, *La communauté et l'abbé dans la règle de saint Benoît* (Paris 1960) recognises (145) that the abbot of *RB* is invested with charismatic authority, referring to this as traditional. Yet his own treatment of earlier rules' view of the abbot's position (*La communauté*, ch. 2) reveals the originality of Benedict's characterisation of the abbot as representative of Christ in the monastery, its only parallel being in *RM* (see in particular 112–21). If the superior is singled out by earlier writers—Orsiesius Orosius?, Augustine, Cæsarius—it tends to be as shepherd of his or her flock. In *La communauté*, de Vogüé has decided in favour of the *Regula magistri* as one of Benedict's sources, a view he would later amplify in his editions of *RM* and *RB*. His picture of the evolution of cenobitic life and the sequence of western monastic rules presented in all these works, as well as in his editions of the *Rules of the fathers*, differs in many fundamental respects from that presented here.

1 The sections setting out the role and powers of the abbot indicate that the
 2 Benedictine *Rule* was created to underpin the authority of abbots who did not
 3 possess the charisma of the great monastic founders and fathers: for further con-
 4 firmation of this thesis we have only to look at the trepidation and reluctance
 5 with which Benedict, in chapter 65, outlines the possibility of appointing a
 6 prior, who to him is a potential threat to and subverter of abbatial authority.
 7 The *Rule's* detailed provisions for a network of monastic officials and for the
 8 day-to-day running of the monastery substitute structure, organisation and rou-
 9 tine for the spontaneity and *communitas* associated with the charismatic group.⁵⁰
 10 This is not to say that *communitas* was forgotten altogether, but it is revealing
 11 that the gospel command to love God and then one's neighbour occurs at the
 12 beginning of chapter 4 and its impact is somewhat vitiated by the series of
 13 injunctions, the 'Instruments of good works', which make up the rest of the
 14 chapter.⁵¹ (It also appears in a negative way in that punishments for offenders
 15 include separation from the community—excommunication—or as a last resort,
 16 expulsion.)

17 The originality and power of the Benedictine *Rule*⁵² lies in its creation and
 18 underpinning of non-charismatic authority and therefore in its capacity to en-
 19 sure the continuation of monastic life even when there are no charismatic leaders
 20 to renew it.⁵³ It is the work of an author who recognised the ways in which
 21 monastic life had evolved in the western empire since the fourth century and also

50. De Vogüé (*La communauté*, 143) views the cenobium (apparently both pre- and post-Benedict) in terms of the spiritual relationship between each one of its members and the abbot who is the representative of Christ. From this primary vertical relationship, in his belief, springs in turn a horizontal link which unites all the disciples of the same master. He does not see Benedict's rule either as innovatory or as a response to new ecclesiastical or social needs: see *La communauté*, 17, and also n 52 below.

51. The classic biblical text used in relation to the common life, Acts 4:32, is introduced by Benedict in chapter 33 in a discussion of private ownership.

52. De Vogüé (*La communauté*, 15–20) suggests that modern monastic commentators before himself had tended to view the Benedictine rule from a prejudiced point of view, cutting it off from its original sources and (in his opinion, incorrectly) claiming an innovatory intention on Benedict's part. He considers that previous approaches stemmed from filial Benedictine piety and also paid too much attention to the emergence of the Benedictine *Rule* as the premier western monastic rule—something which, as he rightly points out, did not happen for several centuries. However, his characterisation of Benedict as a modest monastic legislator taking up traditional themes and institutions misses the point that in response to social and monastic change Benedict often transformed them.

53. Turner *Ritual process*, 107–08 presents *RB* as an example of *communitas*, based on a rather selective reading of the rule.

1 the necessity of providing the means to dealing with potential threats to com-
 2 munal stability. To avoid the latter, it attempts to create an *Amtscharisma*, a
 3 charisma of office, for the abbot together with a stable hierarchy and routine to
 4 support him.⁵⁴ It is easy to see why Jonas, self-appointed guardian of both the
 5 memory of Attala and the charisma of Columbanus never refers to the use of the
 6 Benedictine *Rule* at Bobbio. Once again he stands accused of deliberate conceal-
 7 ment, omitting reference to yet another departure from strict Columbanian tra-
 8 dition. As Jonas must have seen, Columbanus' conception of the nature of a
 9 monastic rule and the nature of his own charismatic authority was very far
 10 removed from Benedict's detailed legislation and careful strategies for creating
 11 charisma and for reinforcing abbatial authority.

12 By contrast, the *Rule of the master* takes up these strategies with enthusiasm. It,
 13 too, presents the abbot as taking the place of Christ in the monastery.⁵⁵ It fol-
 14 lows Benedict in its esteem for the cenobitic life under a rule and abbot (and
 15 elaborates Benedict's castigation of sarabaites and gyrovagues, monks who are
 16 subject in practice to neither, at considerable and savagely sarcastic length).⁵⁶ It
 17 also follows him very closely in type of hierarchy of officials it sets up to preserve
 18 the abbot's powers—although it goes further than Benedict does by dispensing
 19 altogether with the potentially troublesome figure of the prior (Benedict's *prae-*
 20 *positus*), counselling, in addition, that the abbot should not appoint a successor-
 21 designate until he is on his deathbed.⁵⁷ It fails to take up Benedict's reference to
 22 the possibility of the abbot's consulting seniors on minor matters, instead
 23 emphasising that where decisions concerning the monastery's temporal posses-
 24 sions are concerned the abbot may convoke the entire community. It makes it
 25 very clear that the decision to call any such meetings is his alone, stressing that
 26 he does not need to take advice (and suggesting that such gatherings are sanc-
 27 tioned for the technical reason that the property of the monastery is held in
 28 common).⁵⁸ It also takes further Benedict's idea that the abbot may promote or

54. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber on charisma*, xxi.

55. *RM* chapter 1 also discusses the abbot as shepherd of his flock in terms of the prophets, apostles and teachers of the bible as pastors of the churches and of the *schola* (i. e. monasteries). Christ, in effect, commands through such teachers, who train their followers to abandon their own wills. Similarly *RM* ch. 14, 19–22. *RM* ch. 11 advances the idea that the hierarchy of bishops, priests, deacons and clerks in the secular church is paralleled by that of abbots and *praepositi* in its own monastic structures. See de Vogüé, *La communauté*, 129.

56. *RM* ch 1.

57. *RM* ch. 92; see also Dunn, 'Tánaise rí'.

58. *RM* ch. 2. De Vogüé (*La communauté*, 189 and 205) asserts that *RB* is more complex in its

1 demote individuals according to their conduct and recommends that he con-
 2 stantly vary their status. In this way, the *Rule* argues, monks will no neither
 3 cherish expectations of office if their behaviour is consistently good nor, if it is
 4 consistently transgressive, refuse to amend because they are permanently last in
 5 the pecking order. The *Regula magistri* combines hierarchical structures with or-
 6 ganisational ones, giving even more minutely detailed instructions for the daily
 7 routine of the monastery than does Benedict.

8 It is possible to imagine a rule such as this being compiled at Bobbio in the
 9 wake of the monks' revolt either by Attala himself or on his behalf. Even if the
 10 rebels had lost heart on the deaths of their leaders and returned to the fold
 11 believing, as Jonas suggests, that God was against them, Attala needed to put in
 12 place the sort of support that the Benedictine rule so obviously supplied in order
 13 to avoid recurrences of similar problems. It is noticeable that the *Rule of the*
 14 *master* does not incorporate the penitential provisions of the Columbanian *Com-*
 15 *munal rule*. This does not necessarily mean that they were abandoned altogether,
 16 but suggests a change of approach as they would now have functioned in the
 17 context of a new set of general disciplinary instructions as well as that of a more
 18 structured monastic community. But what the text does contain is highly sugges-
 19 tive. It opens with a remarkable prologue:

20
 21 You who are reading, first of all, and then you who are listening to me as I speak,
 22 dismiss now other thoughts and realise that I am speaking to you and that through
 23 my words God is instructing you. We must willingly go to him, the Lord our
 24 God, by good deeds and right intentions, lest by disregarding our sins we will be
 25 summoned and snatched away by death against our will.

26 You, therefore, who hear me speaking, listen through what is written here to what
 27 is being said not by my mouth but by God From now on therefore, before you
 28 leave the light of this world, observe what you are hearing, because after you have
 29 departed, you will not return until the resurrection; if you have lived a good life
 30 during your time here, at the resurrection you will be assigned to eternal glory
 31 with the saints. If, on the other hand, you do not put into practice what is here
 32 written and which I am going to read to you, you will be consigned to the eternal
 33 fire of hell with the devil whose will you prefer to follow.⁵⁹

visualisation of two different kinds of meeting (one with the whole community, the other with seniors alone) than *RM* and that this provides confirmation that *RB* is the later of the two works. His detailed comparison of the two rules with other sources does not consider the possibility that *RM* might represent a modification of *RB* on this and many other points and that here, a consultative element present in *RB* is now being omitted in *RM* to increase the control of the abbot.

59. *RM*, Prologue.

1 Imbued with references to sin, disobedience, and death, this is more urgent
 2 and more threatening in tone than the prologue to the Benedictine *Rule* and
 3 seems to reflect a perceived need to impose obedience on readers and listeners.
 4 The insistence throughout the rule that it was divinely inspired—most chapters
 5 are introduced with a ‘disciples’ question’ and the declaration ‘the Lord replied
 6 through the master’—also lends credence to the suggestion that it was produced
 7 after the revolt in an attempt to safeguard the authority of the superior who can
 8 claim divine sanction in following its prescriptions. The rule thus attempts to
 9 create its own charisma.

10 Another important development at the monastery which Jonas fails to mention
 11 directly, but which is also indicated in pope Theodore’s bull of 643, is the emer-
 12 gence of monastic cells, small sub-monasteries situated in the countryside which
 13 here seem to have acted as both agricultural and pastoral centres. The papal
 14 privilege indicates that they were involved in baptism and the process of minis-
 15 tering to rural areas where christianity was not deeply implanted and pope
 16 Theodore exempts Bobbio from episcopal control, ordering the local bishop to
 17 provide chrism for the cells on demand.⁶⁰ There is evidence that some forms of
 18 pastoral care were provided by such cells in both Ireland and Scotland in the
 19 sixth and seventh centuries.⁶¹ The first papal exemption granted to any mona-
 20 stery had been given to Bobbio by pope Honorius I in 628 and makes no men-
 21 tion of cells, but it may be significant that, according to Jonas, it was granted to
 22 Attala’s successor Bertulf in response to attempts by the bishop of Tortona to
 23 dominate Bobbio.⁶² It is possible that the existence of cells in his territory gave
 24 him some pretext for interference in Bobbio’s affairs. There are also suggestions
 25 that some of these small communities may have been created at the time of the
 26 revolt. Jonas reveals that some of the rebels had gone to live by the sea (*alii*
 27 *eorum marinis sunt sinibus recoepti*)⁶³ and the 643 exemption, granted by the
 28 pope at the request of the Lombard king and queen, was for Liguria, newly con-
 29 quered by king Rothari from the Byzantines and a region with an extensive sea-
 30 coast. Had the some of the rebels, like Irish *peregrini* who encountered pagans on
 31 their travels, settled down by the Ligurian coast and begun to baptise and chris-
 32 tianise as well as to pray and till the soil? And did some of these cells survive the

60. See n 44 above.

61. Dunn, *Emergence*, chapter 7.

62. *ibid.* 181.

63. *Vita Columbani*. II 1.

1 revolt as dependencies of Bobbio? A number of years ago the historian of Bob-
2 bio, Michele Tosi, answered both questions in the affirmative.⁶⁴

3 Tosi's arguments may be supported further by the existence of a second rule
4 currently edited by Villegas and De Vogüé as the *Rule of Eugippius*.⁶⁵ Its oldest
5 manuscript version is contained in the seventh century Paris, BN, lat, 12634, a
6 codex of Italian origin which was transferred before 700 to Corbie, circum-
7 stances which suggest that it was copied in Bobbio. The rule itself is a compila-
8 tion work, prefaced by the Augustinian *Ordo monasterii* and *Regula tertia*⁶⁶ and
9 then made up of extracts taken from Basil, Cassian, Jerome, the Pachomian
10 *Rules*, the text known as the *Sentences of Novatus*, the *Rule of the four fathers* and
11 from the *Rule of the master* itself. De Vogüé regards it as the work of Eugippius
12 of Lucullanum, but his thesis rests on the dual circumstances that it contains ex-
13 cerpts and that it opens with Augustine—traits which he claims reveal the hand
14 of Eugippius who was responsible for a compilation of excerpts taken from the
15 works of Augustine and who, according to Isidore of Seville in the seventh
16 century, wrote a rule for his monks. This is all, in turn, based on the assumption
17 that the *Rule of the master* is an early sixth-century work.⁶⁷ The argument is in
18 itself flawed and does not take into account the nature and structure of the com-
19 munity for which the rule was created. A closer look at the collection of texts
20 suggests that it was composed for cells or dependencies and that an important
21 part of its function was to regulate their relationship with a central house.

22 The two texts with which the assemblage begins, the *Ordo monasterii* attribu-

64. M. Tosi, 'I monaci colombaniani del secolo VII portano un rinnovamento agricolo-religioso nella fascia littorale Ligure', *Archivum Bobiense* 14 (1992) 5–106.

65. F. Villegas & A. de Vogüé (ed), *Eugippii Regula*, CSEL 87 (Vienna 1976).

66. For the vast literature and complex debates surrounding these texts, see G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his monastic rule* (Oxford 1987), esp. appendix II which is a discussion of research on the *Ordo*. This manuscript represents the earliest known complete version of both *Ordo monasterii* and the *Regula tertia*, although the passages taken from both in his *Rule for virgins* might suggest that bishop Cæsarius of Arles had seen a paired version of the texts in the same order at an earlier date. This circumstance, together with the presence of both texts in Paris BN lat. 12634 has led eminent scholars to make a tentative ascription of the *Ordo* to Augustine, as Cæsarius was an admirer of the great African bishop and theologian, having been introduced to his writings by Julianus Pomerius. Even so, it is impossible to say with complete certainty that the *Ordo* is Augustine's own work (and it is not entirely clear whether it is explicitly identified as such in the manuscript). Its opening declaration is more reminiscent of Basil as is its idea of selling the work produced in the monastery.

67. See *Eugippii regula*, vii–ix; A. de Vogüé, *Le maître, Eugippe et saint Benoît* (Hildesheim 1984), parts I and II.

1 ted to Augustine and his *Regula tertia* are both suited to a certain type of com-
 2 munity, one in which both the monastic tradition of love of God and neighbour
 3 and the traditional monastic communitarian ethos are acknowledged and highly
 4 valued. The *Ordo monasterii* opens with the injunction

5
 6 Love God above all else, dearest brothers,
 7 then your neighbour also,
 8 because these are the precepts
 9 given us as primary principles ...⁶⁸

10 while the *Regula Tertia* emphasises that

11
 12 The chief motivation for your sharing life together
 13 is to live harmoniously in the house
 14 and to have one heart and soul seeking God ...
 15 Do not call anything your own
 16 possess everything in common ...
 17 For you read in the Acts of the Apostles
 18 ‘They possessed everything in common’...⁶⁹

19 As well as emphasising the horizontal bonds of community, the two rules taken
 20 together also provide for a variety of circumstances in which there may be con-
 21 tact with the outside world: provided community members do not go out alone,
 22 this is allowed for ‘any purpose’, for the selling of goods produced by the com-
 23 munity⁷⁰ and in the *Regula tertia*, composed in fourth-century Hippo, for visits
 24 to baths for reasons of health.⁷¹ Crucially for an organisation involved in pastoral
 25 care and the service of churches, the *Regula tertia* allows visits to a church or
 26 churches to which the public are admitted.⁷² The *Ordo monasterii* allows time
 27 for reading and also for manual work while its apparently venerable liturgy pre-
 28 scribes relatively spare daytime offices, which allow time for other tasks. At the
 29 same time, as in the Columbanian liturgy and that of the *Regula magistri*, the
 30 psalmody of the night office varies according to the seasons, though once again it
 31 is comparatively light.⁷³ The use of the two rules together creates the degree of

68. *OM* 1, in Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo*, 74–75.

69. *RT* 1, 2–3, *ibid.*, 80–81.

70. *OM* 8, *ibid.*, 76–77.

71. *RT* 5, 7, *ibid.* 96–97.

72. *RT* 4, 6, *ibid.* 90–91.

73. *OM* 2 and 3, *ibid.*, 74–75.

1 flexibility required by a monastic dependency with a mixed population of monks
 2 and clerics who are involved in a range of activities from manual work and craft
 3 production on one hand to the service of churches on the other.

4 The terminology for those at the head of the community is slightly different in
 5 each rule. The *Ordo* names a *pater* and *praepositus*, while the *Regula tertia* refers
 6 to a *praepositus* and also to a priest (*presbyter*) who technically has the greater
 7 authority, presumably by virtue of the fact that he is in orders, although it is
 8 clear that the day-to-day running of the community is the responsibility of the
 9 *praepositus*.⁷⁴ (It may be that in the pastorally-orientated dependencies for which
 10 the compilation rule was designed that the *praepositus* was in any case a priest.)
 11 The overall status of the *praepositus* is only clarified in the extracts which follow,
 12 which flesh out and adapt the older and more basic structures of the *Ordo mona-*
 13 *sterii* and *Regula tertia*. Chapter 26 on the *praepositus* is an adaptation of part of
 14 Jerome's Latin version of the Pachomian *Rules*.⁷⁵ By using this particular text,
 15 the compiler is now sending out clear signals about this official. He is not the
 16 *praepositus* of the *Regula magistri*, where two officials of this name occupy posi-
 17 tions analogous to those of the *decani* of the Benedictine *Rule*, supervising
 18 groups of ten monks.⁷⁶ Nor is he the same as Benedict's *praepositus*, the second-
 19 in-command of a sizeable community.⁷⁷ In Jerome's translation of the rules of
 20 the Pachomian *koinonia*, *praepositi* were heads of individual houses within a
 21 monastery and might best be described as 'housemasters', under the control of
 22 the head of the monastery.⁷⁸ So both the *praepositus* and his community as
 23 described in the *Ordo* and *Regula tertia* are clearly subordinated to the authority
 24 of the abbot of a central monastery, whose responsibilities and qualities are set
 25 out in a chapter drawn directly from the *Regula magistri* itself. The most obvious
 26 comparison to be made here is to the practice of contemporary Iona, whose
 27 sixth- and seventh-century abbots appointed *praepositi* to act as superiors of sub-
 28 ordinate houses.⁷⁹

74. *OM* 6, *ibid.* 76–77; *RT* 7, 1–2, *ibid.*, 100–01.

75. This is drawn, with omissions and changes which are not indicated in the current edition of *Eugippii regula* from Jerome's *Regula Pachomii*, chapter 159, which in turn is based on the Pachomian *Praecepta et instituta*, 18.

76. Chapter 21, which adapts *Regula magistri* ch. 73, reveals that the cells have also have at least one *decanus*.

77. *RB* 65.

78. See A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia II: Pachomian chronicles and rules* (Kalamazoo MI 1981) 141–95.

79. Charles-Edwards, *Early christian Ireland*, 250–51.

Chapter 34, which is closely based on Cassian's *Institutes*, further underlines the ultimate authority of the abbot as it indicates that he alone may permit the reconciliation of monks whose breaches of discipline and failure to make public penance have led to their suspension from communal prayer.⁸⁰ While regular confession of impure thoughts is simply to be made to a 'senior', following Cassian's model, there is no doubt that the long arm of the abbot stretches into the cells to control many other aspects of everyday life. Although references to his *physical* presence have naturally been omitted from chapters copied from the *Rule of the master*, his authority is omnipresent. He issues warnings to latecomers to office, only he can give permission for extra prayer or fasting, and it is he who excommunicates monks who have failed to amend after being warned three times about their conduct by their *praepositus*.⁸¹ The cell itself has no separate corporate existence from the monastery. Its interests are subsumed to those of the monastery, its threshold is referred to as the threshold of the monastery and its monks labour *pro utilitate monasterii*, for the temporalities of the monastery, just as those of the main house do (see chapters 20–21)

Agriculture and crafts play an important part in the compilation of the rule: this is highlighted by the way the compiler uses Basil, who envisaged one of the functions of a monastery as a centre of craft production (though his original conception also involved any profits being used for the benefit of the christian community as a whole rather than for the monastery alone). It uses parts of Basil's *Rules* and of the *Rule of the four fathers* along with Chapter 16 of the *Rule of the master* in order to emphasise the sacred nature of the monastery's property as well as the role of the cellarer, who exercises ultimate control of all implements and tools (ch. 2). The second is taken from the *Regula magistri* and states that all implements are to be stored in one place, controlled by a single monk whose diligence is known to the abbot (another example of the abbot's control of the main community reaching out into the cells) (ch. 3). The following two chapters are taken entirely from Basil and refer to the practice of crafts, while the ninth, also from Basil, deals with the area where crafts are practised and the possibility that pilgrims may enter it. These chapters also introduce the Basilian supervisor(s) of daily work or craft activities (*is qui praeest / ii qui praesunt*).

80. Cassian, *Institutes*, ii 15–16.

81. Ch. 32, cf. Cassian *Institutes*, iv 9. In ch. 21, the abbot also issues severe warnings to latecomers to offices in church, as he does in ch. 73 of *Regula magistri*. However, in the latter, he is present and can indicate by a nod of the head that he wishes to see the offender in private. For permission for extra austerities, see ch. 21 and for excommunication, see ch. 38

1 Here we have yet another text whose content suggests that it might well have
 2 been composed in the wake of the revolt of the Bobbio monks. While Jonas tells
 3 us that the rebels returned to a state of obedience, it would not have been easy to
 4 dismantle the new cells, even assuming that Attala had wished to do so: there-
 5 fore, their continued existence had to be regulated in some way. It looks as
 6 though Attala, while prudently avoiding mention of the controversial provisions
 7 of the *Communal rule* also thought it politic to manifest his respect for the com-
 8 munitarian elements of Columbanian monastic thought and practice. Thus the
 9 inclusion of two rules which enshrine references to the Jerusalem community
 10 described in the Acts of the Apostles as well as to love of God and neighbour
 11 would have been acceptable to anyone who valued this particular aspect of the
 12 Columbanian tradition. The sting came in the lengthy tail of excerpts in which
 13 the reality of the abbot's power over Bobbio's dependencies was made clear: in
 14 addition to the many chapters which detail his powers of control or intervention,
 15 it contains a large number of condemnations of unacceptable monastic beha-
 16 viour, including a pared-down version of the *Regula magistri's* denunciation of
 17 sarabaites and gyrovagues (ch. 27)

18 The establishment of cells, which after all carried out pastoral care, was at least
 19 tolerated, if only on certain terms. Those who chose another path found them-
 20 selves condemned out of hand. Jonas tells us that that some of the rebels had
 21 sought a hermit's existence (*alii locum heremi ob libertatem habendi petierunt*). The
 22 freedom of the eremitic life was roundly denounced in the *Rule's* concluding
 23 chapter, which is an adaptation of part of Jerome's Letter 125 and lays down
 24 severe strictures against any monks who wish to become hermits.(ch. 42). Un-
 25 controlled eremitism is also condemned in the first chapter of one of the two
 26 other monastic rules contained in BN lat. 12634, the *Rules of the fathers*. The
 27 *Rule of the fathers* and the so-called *Second rule of the fathers* have long attracted
 28 discussion. Although they purport to be the deliberations of fathers of the Egyp-
 29 tian desert they have been recognised for some time—together with a short series
 30 of related rules—as the products of western monasticism. Their actual place and
 31 date of origin has been ascribed variously to southern Gaul in the second half of
 32 the fifth century; or to Rome either in the second quarter of, or about the mid-
 33 dle of, the fifth century; or, in the case of the earliest of the series, the *Rule of the*
 34 *[four] fathers* itself, to Lérins between 400 and 410.⁸²

82. Edited by A. de Vogüé, along with the *Third rule of the fathers*, the *Regula macarii* and the *Regula orientalis* as *Les règles des saints pères*, SC 297–98 (Paris 1982): this edition discusses theories about their origins (i 91–155). For an English translation, with different chapter numeration, see

1 Any one of the dates and attributions which have been offered for these texts
 2 over the last few decades would place them amongst the earliest western mona-
 3 stic rules.⁸³ However, a number of factors strongly suggest that they, too, should
 4 be associated with the revolt of the monks of Bobbio and that they may be the
 5 product of Attala's very first attempts to deal with the revolt of the Bobbio
 6 monks and the emergence of separate cells and hermitages and to re-establish his
 7 authority. The *Rule of the fathers* pleads with its readers that they should live in
 8 'one house' in unanimity and joy; and it describes the essence of cenobitism nei-
 9 ther in terms of love of God and neighbour nor of the Jerusalem community but
 10 instead primarily in terms of obedience to a superior.⁸⁴ It goes on to deal in
 11 some detail with the role of the superior; the manner of singing the psalms; the
 12 reception of postulants and disposal of their property; guests; fasting and work;
 13 the admission of monks from other houses and of clerical visitors; and, finally,
 14 correction and punishment. In many places, it echoes Benedict or at least the
 15 scriptural quotations used in his rule and has thus been seen as one of the texts
 16 which he knew and copied from.⁸⁵ But the presumption of the anteriority of the
 17 *Rule of the fathers* is undermined by the level of structure, order and hierarchy
 18 which it creates. A comparison of *Rule of the fathers* with the rules composed for
 19 monks and nuns not only by Benedict but by his contemporary Cæsarius of
 20 Arles would demonstrate not only Benedict's originality but also the level of pre-
 21 cision contained in this allegedly primitive rule in terms, for example, of its
 22 regulations for disposal of property on entry to the community.⁸⁶

C. V. Franklin, I. Havener and J. A. Francis, *Early monastic rules: the rules of the Fathers and the Regula orientalis* (Collegeville 1981)

83. They have been treated as such in Dunn, *Emergence of monasticism*, 85–90, but the acceptance there of earlier theories about their origins and purpose is here explicitly rejected. The whole question of the origins both of these two rules and their derivatives and relations is overdue for serious re-consideration.

84. Ch. 1 in de Vogüé's division of the text, which is used here.

85. Examples of this run throughout the entire rule. De Vogüé's Latin edition with French translation lists a number of correspondences, several of which also find parallels in *RM*: *RIVP* 1, 16 – *RB* 5, 7–8 – *RM* 7, 7–8; *RIVP* 2, 10 – *RB* 47, 2–4 – *RM* 46, 1–2; *RIVP* 2, 11 – *RB* 47, 2 and 63, 4; *RIVP* 2, 26 – *RB* 58, 8 – *RM* 90, 3; *RIVP* 3, 41 – *RB* 53, 9–11 and 56, 1 – *RM* 84, 1; *RIVP* 2, 42 – *RB* 38, 9 – *RM* 24, 19 and 34–37; *RIVP* 3 26–7 – *RB* 31, 8; *RIVP* 4, 4 *RB* 61, 13–14; *RIVP* 4, 9 – *RB* 63, 8; *RIVP* 5, 1 – *RB* 24, 1 – *RM* 12, 4. There are also some correspondences between *RIVP* and *RM* alone: *RIVP* 4, 14–15 – *RM* 83, 18; *RIVP* 5, 4–5 – *RM* 9, 49, 51 and 50, 25, 42; *RIVP* 5, 6 – *RM* 19, 13–17, 25, 12 and 80, 7–8; *RIVP* 5, 12–13 – *RM* 2, 16–19. The major monastic sources for this rule, apart from Benedict, are Cassian, Basil, and the Augustinian *Praeceptum/ regula tertia*.

86. cf. *RIVP*, 2; *RB*, 58; Cæsarius, *Rule for virgins*, chs 5, 6 and 52.

1 The *Rule of the fathers* claims to be the product of the deliberations of four
 2 major names associated with Egyptian monasticism—Paphnutius, Serapion and
 3 the two Macarii. It has long been acknowledged that the rule is not the work of
 4 the four famous Egyptian fathers, who were all, in any case, leaders of eremitic
 5 rather than cenobitic monasticism. An explanation for this appropriation of
 6 venerable authority lies in the rule's attempts to create an *Amtscharisma* for a
 7 single monastic superior. The fathers instruct not only that: '... we desire that
 8 the brothers live harmoniously in a house pleasantly'⁸⁷ but also that 'We desire
 9 that one preside over all, that no-one deviate perversely from his advice or com-
 10 mand, but all obey in happiness as though it were the work of the Lord'.⁸⁸

11 The way in which the rule's composer felt it necessary to establish the authority
 12 of the head of the community by reference to a faked Egyptian tradition indi-
 13 cates that the latter's personal authority was seen as insufficient, requiring legiti-
 14 mation by charismatic pronouncement, circumstances which suggest origins in
 15 time of conflict and opposition. That this situation may have been the revolt of
 16 the Bobbio monks is indicated not just by its concern to reinforce the authority
 17 of the superior but also in the way in which the original version of the text dis-
 18 plays the same marked anti-eremitical bias we find in the compilation rule
 19 above: 'the desolation of the desert and the terrors of various monsters do not
 20 permit us to live singly'.⁸⁹ Note also its outlining of a 'lasting peace' between
 21 monasteries regarding the transfer of monks from one house to another.⁹⁰ This
 22 recalls Jonas' statement that Attala and Eustasius 'exchanged those subject to
 23 them according to mutual agreement'.⁹¹

24 The so-called *Second rule of the fathers*, also copied in BN lat. 12634, can be
 25 read not, as it has been seen up to now, as a slightly later derivative of the *Rule of*
 26 *the fathers* for an autonomous community (there are no regulations for admis-
 27 sion or profession), but as an accompanying set of instructions for those living in
 28 cells or dependencies of a monastery under the headship of a *praepositus* who is
 29 also an ordained priest.

30 If this argument is in outline correct and these rules are all to be associated
 31 with Bobbio, their creation would suggest that a community formerly headed by
 32 a charismatic and recently rocked by dissent over the nature of authority and dis-

87. *RIVP*, 1.

88. *ibid.*

89. *ibid.*

90. *RIVP*, 4.

91. *Vita Columbani*, II, 23; tr. Wood, 124.

1 cipline was initially hostile to the imposition from above of Benedict's more
 2 obvious structures. It looks as though this had been done initially in a limited
 3 way and by subterfuge in the shape of the *Rule of the fathers* and the *Second rule*
 4 and failed—not jut on the grounds of opposition to Benedictine notions of
 5 hierarchy but possibly because of lack of overt reference to the more acceptable
 6 parts of the Columbanian legacy. The imposition of abbatial authority in a more
 7 obvious form with the creation of the *Rule of the master* and its derivative, the
 8 compilation rule known currently as the *Rule of Eugippius* (which might be
 9 called *Rule of the cells*) appears to be a product of the ending of the revolt. Yet
 10 despite the initial difficulties of establishing Benedictine ideas at Bobbio, their
 11 arrival and use there marks a very significant stage in monastic history.

12 We have no certain knowledge of how the Benedictine *Rule* arrived in Bobbio,
 13 but its presence there allowed it to be transmitted to the Frankish houses of the
 14 Columbanian congregation by the 620s. It was known to Waldebert, Luxeuil's
 15 third abbot, who used it as the basis of the rule he composed for the nunnery of
 16 Faremoutiers (at the same time attempting to preserve the core Columbanian
 17 concept of love of God and neighbour). Slightly later, bishop Donatus of Besan-
 18 çon, who had been a child oblate at Luxeuil, excerpted it along with Colum-
 19 banus and Cæsarius in a rule which he devised for his mother's community of
 20 Jussamoutier.⁹² The possibility, which has been raised by scholars from Mabillon
 21 onwards, that Columbanus himself knew the *Rule* of St Benedict is still dis-
 22 cussed: it has quite recently been suggested that when Jonas referred to the use of
 23 the Columbanian *regula* at these double houses, he actually meant a combina-
 24 tion of the two rules.⁹³ But it is more plausible to suggest that in his references to
 25 Columbanus alone Jonas was once again avoiding admission of the fact that the
 26 founder's own rules, while a true expression of the spirit which created Colum-
 27 banian monasticism, had, on their own, proved less than adequate at sustaining
 28 it. It may even be the case that Eustasius of Luxeuil, who was Attala's con-
 29 temporary, both knew and used the Benedictine *Rule* in support of his own
 30 authority. Jonas suggests quite otherwise when he ends book I of the *Vita*
 31 *Columbani* with a section in which Eustasius visits Columbanus in Italy and is
 32 warned 'not to forget his own labours and work, to keep the band of brethren
 33 learned and obedient, to increase their numbers and educate them according to

92. Both rules are translated into English (not always completely accurately) as a pair in J. A. McNamara, *The ordeal of community* (Toronto 1993); see Dunn *Emergence*, 173–77.

93. *Vita Columbani*, I, 14 and II 11; Charles-Edwards, *Early christian Ireland*, 383–89.

1 his instructions'.⁹⁴ But Jonas may be protesting too much. And the revolt of the
2 monks of Bobbio, however much he may have striven to conceal its outcomes,
3 marked a turning-point in the history of European monasticism as it provides a
4 background to the dissemination and excerpting of the Benedictine *Rule* in
5 Francia as well as in Italy. While the charismatic inspiration of Columbanus pro-
6 vided the religious impetus behind the initial the expansion of Frankish monasti-
7 cism, it was Benedict who would supply the essential structures in the 'mixed'
8 rules which emerged on the Continent during the seventh century, playing a
9 vital role in sustaining the aristocratic communities which had emerged under
10 Columbanian influence.⁹⁵

94. *Vita Columbani*, I 30.