

**THE MONASTIC RULES OF  
VISIGOTHIC IBERIA: A STUDY OF  
THEIR TEXT AND LANGUAGE**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is concerned with the monastic rules that were written in seventh century Iberia and the relationship that existed between them and their intended, contemporary, audience. It aims to investigate this relationship from three distinct, yet related, perspectives: physical, literary and philological. After establishing the historical and historiographical background of the texts, the thesis investigates firstly the presence of a monastic rule as a physical text and its role in a monastery and its relationship with issues of early medieval literacy. It then turns to look at the use of literary techniques and structures in the texts and their relationship with literary culture more generally at the time. Finally, the thesis turns to issues of the language that the monastic rules were written in and the relationship between the spoken and written registers not only of their authors, but also of their audiences. This is concluded with an investigation into the employment of Latin synthetic passive and deponent verb forms in the texts and its implications for the study of language change and language use in early medieval Iberia.

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I am grateful to the AHRC for providing the funding that made this PhD project a possibility.

### List of Abbreviations

<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptiorum Latinorum</i> (Berlin, 1862 - )
<i>EMI</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Medieval Iberia</i> (Eds. M. Gerli & S.G. Armistead. London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2003)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (Ed. J-P. Migne. Paris: 1844 - 1855)
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germanicae Historica</i> (1819 - )
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt</i> (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972 - )
<i>Sp.</i>	Spanish
<i>Ptg.</i>	Portuguese
<i>Cat.</i>	Catalan
<i>CS</i>	Church Slavonic
<i>Rus.</i>	Russian
<i>Pol.</i>	Polish
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig, 1900 - )

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## **Introduction**

### **0.1 Outline of thesis**

This thesis is concerned with the three surviving monastic rules that were written in seventh-century Visigothic Iberia: the Rule of Isidore, the Rule of Fructuosus and the Common Rule. It will investigate what they can reveal about issues of language-use and literary culture amongst their intended audience. The thesis has three principal research aims. First, to locate the monastic rules in their contemporary historical context and determine how they might have been used; second, to investigate the position of the monastic rules in the history of Latin literature and explore some of their literary techniques, including how these techniques relate to their use; third, to investigate what help the monastic rules can offer in contributing to debates on language change in the early medieval world and the relationship between written and spoken registers in the period.

Chapter One introduces monastic rules more generally and discusses why the *De institutione uirginum et de contemptu mundi*, written by Leander of Seville, should not be counted as a monastic rule. Chapter Two continues to focus on the Visigothic monastic rules and places them in their historical context. Chapter Three goes on to investigate what kind of role monastic rules might have played in Visigothic monasteries and what their use might reveal about questions of literacy and textual culture. Chapter Four investigates their literary context, studying their literary technique, and wider heritage and influence of the monastic rules. Finally, Chapters Five and Six investigate aspects of their language from a linguistic perspective, looking at aspects of the language they were written in and attempts to elucidate the relationship between the spoken language of the listeners and the written language of the

texts? This includes a comparison of the use of Church Slavonic and Latin as liturgical languages, a critique of the Wright thesis and a case-study of the use of synthetic verb forms, namely the Latin passive and deponent forms, in the texts.

## **0.2 Context of Thesis**

Studies on early medieval monasticism have gained ground in recent scholarship.<sup>1</sup> However, despite earlier activity,<sup>2</sup> interest in early western monastic rules has generally lagged behind. This has become especially apparent following the publication of the five-volume collection of Byzantine *typika* (Thomas & Hero 2002), which has been a great aid for students of eastern monasticism. The neglect for specialised scholarship of monastic rules is arguably symptomatic of the more general neglect of the literature and culture of the early medieval period. The situation has changed considerably following the ‘Brownian’ revolution almost forty years ago, a story that has recently been narrated (Rebinich 2009). Indicative of this is the recent slew of publications, both academic and popular, that focus on the post-Roman period in Western Europe.<sup>3</sup> Previous academic landscapes and historical approaches have therefore not been particularly favourable to the study of monastic rules. Rather than try to fit monastic rules into these academic models, approaches which might seem always to view them as somewhat minor and subsidiary historical and literary texts, it seems better to try and understand them from a new approach: looking at the general discourse between text and audience.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, de Vogüé (1991-2008); Helvétius & Kaplan (2008); Harmless (2008); Caner (2009).

<sup>2</sup> For example Plenkers (1906).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Moorhead (2001); Smith (2005); Wickham (2006, 2009); Innes (2007); Olson (2007); Wells (2008).

Discourse is a polyvalent word, although this has probably been the cause of its popularity; the term “has perhaps the widest range of possible significations of any term in literary and cultural theory, and yet it is often the term within theoretical texts which is least defined” (Mills 1997: 1). The term in an academic sense refers typically to some kind of relationship, whether this is between people, linguistic forms or texts. One point of view is that the term refers to what is “largely a matter of negotiation between writer (speaker) and reader (hearer) in a contextualized social interaction” (Verdonk 2002: 18), a phrase easily re-interpreted to a matter of negotiation between A (i.e. a text) and B (i.e. its reader). In the light of modern re-interpretations of ancient literate culture, the term ‘reader’ is used here to refer to both someone reading a text, whether aloud or in silence, as well as a listener. The situation is often the latter, and it is predominantly with the Latin etymon *audio*, ‘to hear’, in mind that this thesis approaches the topic. As such, studying the discourse between text and audience implies for the purposes of this thesis an approach that seeks to understand the relationship between a text and its audience, a relationship that can take place on a number of levels.

How is ‘discourse’ different from ‘interaction’? This is a valid question because it would be superfluous to add yet another layer to the vocabulary if it serves little or no purpose: the necessity for Occam’s razor should never be too far from any study such as this.<sup>4</sup> Discourse is a fitting term for two principal reasons. First, ‘interaction’, as described by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is a “reciprocal action; action or influence of persons or things on each other”. This cannot be the kind of relationship that concerns this study because there is no reciprocity on behalf of the text: the text does not react to the audience, but rather vice

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<sup>4</sup> Thus Schmitz (2007: 4), “many of those who, in the 1980s or early 1990s, were climbing higher and higher into the unknown realms of theory, have now safely returned to the firm ground of the literary texts”.

versa. The interest stems from the relationship between the text and its audience on a variety of levels, but always from the point of view of audience reaction. In this sense the text must be seen as an immutable participant in the relationship between it and its audience, and any mutability of experience is wholly one-sided. Second, discourse in the Foucauldian tradition, at least, is implicit of a relationship of authority, and this fits nicely with the idea of a monastic rule as a preceptive text. Of course, many of the ideas of Foucault have been subject to criticism and this thesis does not aim to be a philosophical critique (for which, see Schmitz 2007: 140-158). However, it is important to recognise that at least some theories of discourse give the nod to an integrated relationship of power and authority.

The terms ‘text’ and ‘audience’ are by their nature mutable. Even within the confines of a seventh-century Visigothic monastery, which at first sight constitutes a rather limited audience, both must be understood to refer to a range of meanings. The text, in this case, refers of course to the monastic rule. However, this was just as likely to be a written document that was read personally and silently, as a text that was encountered by some of its audience on an oral basis in a group setting, being read aloud by someone else. The concept of ‘audience’, moreover, is one that has generally been the subject of invigorating discussion, and various scholars have all asked the question of whom works were intended to communicate with and how they achieved this.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, an appreciation for audience interpretation rather than authorial intention now seems to be a prominent part of mainstream academia rather than the anthropological sideline it perhaps once was, and this is a healthy development.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Lawless (1987: 135-147); Silvan (1988); Cunningham (1990: 53-64); McKitterick (1989: 227-243); Van Egmond (1999); Taylor (2002); Kotzé (2004); Maxwell (2006).

For this thesis, the problem seems to be initially relatively straightforward. Quite simply, monastic rules are texts intended for a Visigothic monastic audience. This audience was primarily localised, perhaps to a specific institution, and there is no evidence that the authors intended the rules to be used outside their region, let alone the Iberian Peninsula. Beyond this, however, the concept of the intended audience becomes weakened because Visigothic monasteries did not, of course, like many communities, comprise a homogeneous collection of people, but instead were a mixture of ages, education, experience and even sex. These kinds of variations in audience must always be taken into account and will constitute a thematic backbone of this thesis.

### **0.3 Rationale of the Thesis**

There are a number of important questions involved in this thesis, in particular issues of literary culture and language-use, as well as the *Kontinuitätsproblem* as a whole within the Late Antique and early medieval world. These are all topics that arguably deserve a thesis by themselves and are subject to increasing popularity (recently, Rousseau & Papoutsakis (2009); Rousseau (2009)). In light of this, it could be argued perhaps that any thesis that seeks to provide such a wide-ranging overview of different, albeit related, topics, can only ever provide a cursory view of historical reality. This is perhaps true. However, the reason that such a scope can justifiably be argued to be employed here is that the context is very specific, dealing primarily with Visigothic monasteries, and this limitation means that such a scope is viable. The traditional neglect of Visigothic monasticism in Anglophone scholarship, and indeed of much of continental monastic history outside of an Anglo-Saxon context, means that such an approach is, in the author's eyes, justified. As such, although the

thesis is in some senses a wide ranging conspectus of issues, the end result is the first in-depth English-language study of the Visigothic monastic rules, and so a more holistic approach was therefore felt to be appropriate.

The thesis is also unashamedly centred on the Iberian Peninsula, an approach that carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. Collins (2002: vii-x; see also Hillgarth 1985a; Bowes & Kulikowski 2005: 1-26) provided an accurate account of the problems that face historians of Iberia, and many of the same problems apply to this study. Historiography has become much kinder to the region, and the most recent academic generations have produced a milieu of work focussing on the Late Antique and early medieval period (Thompson 2002; Barbero & Loring 2005; Wickham 2005 and 2009; see also Ferreiro 1988, 2006). Nevertheless, the region has received less attention in scholarship concerning its post-Roman literary output in particular when compared to Gaul or Italy, for example, despite being one of the most productive.<sup>6</sup> The reasons for this are complex. Spain's political aperture over thirty years ago did little to attract it to university syllabi, and still today relatively few universities offer ancient or medieval Spanish or Portuguese history courses.<sup>7</sup> Many students also lack the necessary linguistic skills, and Spain's nationalist tendencies, moreover, are often reflected in its academic practice. Thus, Catalan scholars often study

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<sup>6</sup> Raby (1927: 125-131), for example, dedicated whole chapters to the poets of Gaul, Africa and Italy of the seventh century, and yet the Iberian writers are relegated to only six pages. Indeed, it was not until 2006 that an English translation of Isidore's *Etymologies* appeared, despite being one of the most important and influential works of the Middle Ages (Barney et al. 2006). Curtius (1997: 450-457) provides a noteworthy exception.

<sup>7</sup> The situation could be compared to the study of Eastern Europe, a region where, despite only being ten years or so behind Spain in its political aperture, the post-Solidarity academic landscape of western academia is generally little changed from its Communist-period predecessor outside of specialised centres of Slavonic studies (Davies 2006).

Catalan history and write in Catalan, and the same is true for Galicia, Castile and the Basque country. This fracturing of the academic landscape means that it can often prove initially inaccessible to researchers. It also means that important secondary sources can often appear in academic journals that are kept only by regional university libraries and are written in minority languages.

The issue of regionalised studies has recently been discussed by Humphries (2009), whose opinion it was that: “it is important to keep those tensions between cohesion and fragmentation in view if we are not to arrive at a simplistic account of the events that constitute the traditional grand narrative of Late Antiquity, in which the Roman Empire is dismembered by foreign invaders” (*ibid*: 104). Indeed, one of the principal disadvantages of this approach is that by studying Visigothic Iberia in isolation, it detaches the peninsula away from its neighbours and thus inadvertently plays into the views of the post-Roman world as one in discord, where the unity of Empire had disappeared. Although Rome might not have been the centralising force that it once was, this is not to say that studying Iberia in isolation implies that that the region was in anyway isolated from the wider world; far from it. This was a region that hosted frequent Church Councils that drew participants from beyond its borders; the writer Martin of Braga was an émigré from the east who had settled here; Leander of Seville had conversely been sent east to Byzantium as an ambassador; the peninsula played host to African refugees; the northwest coast was recipient of a number of displaced British who created their own diocese. The list could go on, but it is hoped that the specific focus on Iberia does not hint at its isolation from its wider European context.

The presence of regionally-specific studies is also one that has an established popularity in historical studies, and this is no less true for varied aspects of Late Antique and early medieval Iberia. A cursory glance over a sample of the English-language myriad alone shows that this is in no way the product of a current historical trend (Ziegler 1930; McKenna 1938; Thompson 1969; Collins 1983 and 2004; Kulikowski 2004; Bowe & Kulikowski 2005). The same is true not only of other works in other languages, but also works on other regions. As such, the geographical limitations were felt to be justified due not only to the current poor state of Iberian studies, but also the viable tradition of regionalised studies.

In some cases, presumably, regionalisation cannot be avoided: a study of the Pirenne thesis cannot help but have the Iberian Peninsula at centre stage, whilst the student of Pompeii cannot help but study a region of Italy. In both of these cases, regional location is a matter more of coincidence rather than active choice. This thesis, however, could very easily have been concerned with the monastic rules of Gaul, Italy or Africa; a larger monograph, presumably, all of them. The fact that it is concerned with those of Iberia is an active choice of the author, both because this is the area and subject matter with which he is most comfortable and because it is a region that deserves far more attention than is currently awarded it. In this sense, focussing on Iberia arguably is part of the methodology and is reflective of both the authors' interests and training. However, it is also reflective of the constraints imposed by word-limits; no study can ever expect to encompass everything, and the limitations mean that, for a PhD at least, focussing on one region simply makes sense.

#### **0.4 Terms and Definitions**

To any student of Iberian history it becomes apparent quickly that most works which deal with the geographical peninsula as a whole are more often than not labelled 'Spanish',

regardless of modern political sensibilities. Sometimes there is a reason for a more localised title, such as *The Archaeology of Early Roman Baetica* (Keay 1998) or *La Navarre du IVe au XIIIe siècle* (Larrea 1998). However, normally a more generalising nomenclature is employed, such as *Spain in the Middle Ages. From Frontier to Empire, 1000-1500* (MacKay 1977); *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (Curchin 1991), *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000* (Collins 1983), or *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (Kulikowski 2004). One work, *Death, Society and Culture: Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Gaul and Spain, AD 300-750* (Handley 2003), even uses the Roman ‘Gaul’ on the one hand, and the modern ‘Spain’ on the other. All of these deal not with Spain as the recognisable political entity that it has been for the past five-hundred years or so, but rather the Iberian Peninsula more generally. This frustrates Portuguese and other readers in the same way as it would the Welsh reader finding chapters about Wales in a book entitled ‘The History of England’. Not only do these titles defy modern political boundaries, but they would have made much less sense for the people they are writing about: Isidore of Seville certainly understood the word *Spania*, but he would not have recognised this necessarily to be a separate entity contrasted with *Portugallia*, for example (Pohl 2006).

The term *Hispania* is an attractive alternative, especially when dealing with the Roman period, but its adjective ‘Hispanic’ is nowadays too culturally and politically loaded to refer with any clarity to specifically early medieval topics, and it is more likely to be found in works concerning modern North American culture. Indeed, phrases such as ‘Hispanic monasticism’ or ‘Hispanic authors’ seem far too fuzzy to be used with any clarity. Since it was the Roman term for the peninsula, it also refers to a political situation that was very distinct from the Visigothic one. Instead, by far the easiest terms are ‘Iberia’ and ‘Iberian’ and these have been used throughout: since it is a geographical term, it avoids most ethnic

and cultural problems. The term ‘Spanish’ has therefore been purposefully avoided, unless the topic is of specifically modern relevance; the same is true for Catalan, Portuguese and Galician etc. The exception to this is in linguistic discussions, especially when these terms naturally reflect modern sensibilities. In this context, ‘Spanish’ has been preferred to ‘Castilian’ for the reason that it might lead to a virtually never-ending list of languages or distinct dialects that need to be accounted for: Aragonese, Extremeño, Andalusí etc. In this sense, ‘Spanish’ does not equate with ‘Castilian’, but rather is used in lieu of otherwise potentially complex nomenclature and with a nod to the linguistic debates surrounding dialect and cultural continuums and differences.

A similar problem occurs with the term ‘monk’, which is often used as a catch-all term for a variety of ascetic activity. As Mayer (2009: 10) recently observed: “the term ‘monk’ [...] may have little validity in the third century and can mean quite different things in the fourth or sixth centuries, as well as describing a distinctly separate phenomenon in each of Egypt, Syria, Ireland or Gaul”. Indeed, whilst the fourth-century author Jerome is still able to ask: “*interpretare uocabulum monachi, hoc est nomen tuum: quid facis in turba qui solus es?*”,<sup>8</sup> his contemporary Augustine suggested conversely that a monk can live within a group of people (Leyser 2000: 10). Since monastic terminology was prone to semantic variation in antiquity (Lorié 1955: 24-33), the definitions of the terms associated with ‘monk’ as used in this thesis need to be defined clearly. Their use is as follows:

(a) *asceticism* is used to refer to the practice of general worldly renunciation. An ascetic need not necessarily live outside a secular community or even in isolation;

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<sup>8</sup> *Epistula ad Heliodorum monachum* 14.

(b) *eremitism* and *anchoriticism* are treated as synonymous, referring to an ascetic who desires to retreat from society and live in solitude.<sup>9</sup> This could be either for a limited period of time or for longer, substantial periods; the ninth-century monk Habentius, for example, lived in isolation within the monastic community of St. Christopher, near Cordoba;<sup>10</sup>

(c) *cenobiticism* refers simply to a group of ascetics who live amongst each other in a single community, although this need not imply any formal hierarchical or legislative structures. Palladius, for example, describes the community at Lake Maria, near Mount Nitria where he lived, as one of “5,000 men with different modes of life, each in accordance with his own powers and wishes, so that he is allowed to live alone or with another or with a number of others”.<sup>11</sup> A similar picture is painted by Sulpicius Severus, who describes a group of eighty monks who lived in proximity to Saint Martin in his imitation;<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This synonymy is not without its basis. As Díaz y Díaz (1970: 50) noted: “anacoretas son los que se retiran al desierto después de haber llevado vida cenobítica para mejor vacar a la contemplación una vez que su espíritu ha sido debidamente formado en la escuela impar de la vida en común, mientras que los eremitas son aquellos que lejos de la mirada de los hombres buscan el yermo y las soledades del desierto. Diferencia, como vemos, puramente circunstancial que nos mueve a considerar indistintamente en las fuentes visigodas los términos anachorita y eremita, casi totalmente ausente este último de la literatura monástica de este periodo”.

<sup>10</sup> Eulogius *Memoriale sanctorum* 2.4.3.

<sup>11</sup> *Lausiaca History* 7.2.

<sup>12</sup> *Life of Martin* 10.

(d) *monasticism* implies a cenobitic community that lives under the guidance of a monastic rule (or rules) and under the authority of an abbot or abbess, interpreted as “the superior of an independent monastery [...] in which he exercises full spiritual and temporal power within the limits drawn by law and monastic regulations” (Derwich 2000: 6; see also Salmon 1967; Veilleux 1968; Merton 1968). The legislative position of the abbot is a defining feature of monasticism. Within cenobitic communities, the position of the *abbas* was typically a figure of authority and prestige, but not one who held any legislative authority; instead, his power was wielded more through orthopraxis than orthodoxy. The differences between a *coenobion* and a *monasterium* were always hazy in ancient writers, often being used interchangeably in the earliest periods. However, in the same way that there exists a difference between the Anglo-Saxon minster and monastery (Blair 2005: 80-83; on the use of the words *monasterium*, *ecclesia* and *coenobium* in Bede in particular, see Cubitt 2005), these two terms must be seen as representing different phenomena and a monastery can be called such only when there is both an abbot who possesses legislative authority and a monastic rule or rules by which the monastery was run.

## Chapter One: Preceptive Literature and Monastic Rules

“The more enclosed a community, the simpler it is to live either wholly by the book or wholly without the book: at one extreme, the remote traditional village, with little contact with outsiders, untouched by writing, where norms of behaviour, allocation of resources, and methods of resolving disputes are regulated according to self-renewing memory and custom; at the other extreme, an organised monastic community” (Franklin 2002: 143)

### **1.1 Introduction**

The idea of legislating cenobitic communities with written precepts seems to have been first undertaken by the Coptic monk Pachomius for his *laurai* in the mid-fourth century AD at Tabenninsis in the Egyptian Thebaid (Rousseau 1999). Palladius, the historian of early monasticism, wrote that this occurred after an angelic visitation, informing Pachomius how to organise his community:

καθεζομέω οὖν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ ὤφθη αὐτῷ ἄγγελος κυρίου, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, ‘Παχώμιε, τὰ κατὰ σκυτὸν κατώρθωσας· περιττῶς οὖν καθέζη ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ τούτῳ· δεύρο τοῖνον, ἐξελθὼν συνάγαγε πάντας τοὺς νεωτέρους μοναζοντας καὶ οὔκησον μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ κατὰ τὸν τύπον ὃν δίδωμί σοι οὕτως αὐτοῖς νομοθέτησον’· καὶ ἐπιδέδωκεν αὐτῷ δέλτον αλκὴν ἐν ἧ ἔγεγραπτο ταῦτα<sup>13</sup>

The subsequent rise of organised cenobiticism was concomitant with the rise of the monastic rule, or *regula* in the Latin west and τυπικόν in the Greek east, a text that has been said to have played a crucial role in the evolution of the ascetic movement away from the anchoritic practice of the earliest *akathistoi* to a world of the organised *koinobion*, a choice between *Freiheit* and *Zwange* (Rousseau 1978: 51). This initial Pachomian adventure was followed by a literary tradition that was subsequently evoked by writers in order to add

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<sup>13</sup> *Lausiatic History* 32.1.

authority and legitimacy to preceptive literature. Indeed, Isidore of Seville opened the preface to his monastic rule with the sentence “*plura sunt praecepta uel instituta maiorum*”, and he was correct: the tradition of preceptive literature was vast.

What was the purpose of having a monastic rule in the first place? In the first instance, the idea of codifying regulations pertaining to religious and social life was in no way alien to early Christians, and catechizing texts have enjoyed popularity throughout the religion’s history. Isidore of Seville’s statement that a *regula* is something that “*normam recte uiuendi praebeat*”<sup>14</sup> is perfectly applicable to early Christianity, a movement that had a need for works that taught converts the correct way of behaving according to the Scriptures; as a ‘religion of the book’, Christians became increasingly differentiated in terms of practical methods from their Jewish counterparts, which clung to a tradition of oral teaching inherent amongst Rabbinic practice (Millard 2000: 185-196; Jaffe 2001). This is not to suggest that early Christianity was not almost wholly oral in its teaching, but that certainly within two centuries after the death of Christ, written texts had acquired a sacred position in Christian communities. This will be a topic discussed in Chapter Three.

The tradition of committing the Divine Word to writing was inherited by the Christian movement from its Jewish origins; even in the Old Testament, the revelations revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai were codified through being written down,<sup>15</sup> and the presence of a textual culture remained important to Jewish religious practice in Roman Palestine (Heszer 2001). This practice was still current in the period of the earliest ascetics. It has already been

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<sup>14</sup> *Etymologies* 6.16.1.

<sup>15</sup> *Exodus* 19.

noted how Pachomius, for example, was inspired by the visit of an angel who gave him a written copy of precepts for his group of ascetics. There continued to be an audience for such preceptive texts such as the *Didache* and the *Regula Fidei* of Tertullian and Origen (Outler 1939; Hall 1992: 61-63). Indeed, the later use of the *Disticha Catonis* from the early medieval period onwards shows just how widespread the popularity of such texts could become (Surtz 2003). The popularity of preceptive literature is particularly apparent in monastic institutions, which throughout the medieval period, at least, were fond of preceptive literature in the form of customaries that regulated not only daily life, but also liturgical matters (Donnat 2000).

## 1.2 The Need to Regulate Monastic Life:

Shakespeare declared infamously that “*cucullus non facit monachum*”.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the regulation of the monastic profession was a problem that had necessitated some type of legislation centuries before the medieval mendicant fraudsters, who would dress as monks in order to beg for money (Jotischky 2002: 66).<sup>17</sup> The need for a monastic rule amongst cenobitic communities is made clear by the ancient authors and their dismissal of unorthodox practices, a topic that will be discussed further in Chapter Two. Isidore of Seville, for example, makes mention of *sarabaitae* or *remobothitae*, a type of monk which he describes as “*teterrimum atque neglectum*”.<sup>18</sup> The reason for this is precisely because they lived outside accepted regulation: “*Construunt enim sibi cellulas, easque falso nomine monasteria*

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<sup>16</sup> *Twelfth Night* 1.5.48.

<sup>17</sup> Many ‘real’ medieval monks were also seen as corrupt. The fourteenth-century *Libro de Buen Amor* (503), for example, relates, “*Yo vi a muchos monges en sus predicaciones, Denostar al dinero et a sus tentaciones, En cabo por dinero otorgan los perdones, Assuelven el ayuno, ansi fasen oraciones*”.

<sup>18</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.9.

*nuncupant, liberique ab imperio seniorum, arbitrio suo uiuunt*".<sup>19</sup> Isidore was not alone in his repudiation of this type of 'pseudo-monk'.<sup>20</sup>

The reason why the presence of a monastic rule was thought necessary was made clear by Isidore, again in his preface, when he explains that it is easy to lose both one's path and the name of monk: "*Qui uero tanta iussa priorum exempla nequierit, in huius limite disciplinae gressus constituat, nec ultra declinandum disponat, ne, dum declinatus appetit inferiora, tam uitam quam nomen monachi perdat*". He later goes on to add that if God were willing to strike down those Israelites still ignorant of His laws in the desert, His punishment for those who know His laws and yet still do not respect them would be even worse: "*si enim illis paruulis adhuc in lege et rudibus nequaquam indultum est, quanto magis iis qui perfectionis legem perceperunt non parcat, si talia gesserint*".<sup>21</sup> In this sense, monastic rules were an important element in the implementation of a monastic orthodoxy, a necessity brought home by the frequent complaints of 'pseudo-monks' and the like by other writers of the period.

There was evidently a need for legislated cenobitic organisation, not only in order to best achieve an ascetic ideal, but also to protect the reputation of the monasteries themselves. Isidore again hints that the acts of some pseudo-monks can bring into disrepute the legitimate

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<sup>19</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.9.

<sup>20</sup> For example, *Common Rule* 1, "*Solent enim nonnulli ob metum gehennae in suis sibi domibus monasteria componere [...] Nos tamen haec non dicimus monasteria, sed animarum perditionem, et ecclesiae subuersionem*"; *Rule of Benedict* 1, "*Tertium uero monachorum taeterrimum genus est sarabaitarum, qui nulla regula approbati*".

<sup>21</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.

ones: “*Cum interea ubicunque in factis suis malis ac uerbis deprehensi fuerint, uel quoquo modo innotuerint, sub generali nomine monachorum propositum blasphematur*”.<sup>22</sup> The various Visigothic Church Councils also frequently make allusion to problems that can occur within the monastic profession. The Fourth Council of Toledo in 633, for example, says that monks were prone to try and escape back into the secular world,<sup>23</sup> whilst the First Council of Braga in 561 states that some co-inhabited with women.<sup>24</sup> More generally, the need for a monastic rule should be seen as a shift in cenobitic life from what Carruthers (1998: 1) highlighted as orthopraxy to orthodoxy, i.e. a change from the devotional practice of seeking to emulate the acts of a leader or group of founders to one on reproducing the experience through texts. No longer did Christian literature have a need to be principally protreptic, seeking to convert its listeners (Cook 1994). Instead, the need was to teach the monk how to live their lives so as to achieve the ascetic ideal. In this way, the creation of the monastic rule should be seen as being concomitant with an institutionalisation of practice.

### **1.3 Defining a Monastic Rule**

Monastic rules were just one of the many nascent literary forms that were patronised by early Christianity; García de la Fuente (1994: 325-351) has provided a useful synthesis of both new genres and those existing genres that were adapted to Christian needs. Within this development it has long been established that practices associated particularly with asceticism gave rise to various literary adventures (Gould 1993; Caner 2002; Harmless 2004),

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<sup>22</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.7.

<sup>23</sup> 52, “*Nonnulli monachorum egredientes a monasterio non solum ad saeculum reuertuntur, sed etiam et uxores accipiunt*”.

<sup>24</sup> 15, “*Si quis clericorum uel monachorum praeter matrem aut germanam uel thiam uel quae proxima sibi consanguinitate iunguntur alias aliquas quasi adoptiuas faeminas secum retinent et cum ipsa cohabitant, sicut Priscilliani secta docuit, anathema sit*”.

which Louth (2004) has divided recently into three categories: (a) ‘traditional’, including the earliest works concerning the Desert Fathers; (b) ‘heretical’, associated with the Eustathian and Massalianian heresies, including Basil of Ancyra’s *On the true integrity of virginity* and the homilies of Macarius the Great; (c) that which was ‘eccentric to Egypt’. Most monastic rules would fall within the third, rather large, category.

Significantly, the question of defining a monastic rule is one that has remained unsatisfactorily explored, despite other peculiarly Christian genres having received considerably more attention.<sup>25</sup> An important reason for this is that the early medieval period passed down its own definition of what constitutes a monastic rule in the *Codex Regularum* of Benedict of Aniane, compiled in the early-ninth century. This collection of monastic rules presents to the modern scholar a relatively easily pre-defined delineation of pre-Benedictine monasticism. However, Diem (*forthcoming*) has questioned the extent to which the collection should be viewed not as a compilation of monastic rules, but rather the result of a conscious selection: “The texts Benedict had assembled and chosen to insert into his collection have served modern historians as evidence of the normative basis of early monasticism” (*ibid.* unpaginated). In a previous work, the same scholar (2005: 379-380) also highlighted the existence of another collection, produced in Fleury around the same time as Benedict’s *Codex*, and which contains further writings not included by Benedict. Benedict’s list, therefore, should not necessarily be treated as definitive.

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<sup>25</sup> This is especially the case for hagiography, which has enjoyed various studies regarding its structures and canons; see especially Baños Vallejo (1989: 17-27); Van Uytfanghe (1993); Castillo Maldonado (2002: 31-44).

Any observation on the theme of defining a textual genre must necessarily recognise the concept of genre itself to be fluid, whose reception is entirely dependent upon audience reception and context (Frow 2006: 1-5). As such, only rarely is it possible to speak of fixed boundaries of a genre (Fowler 1979 and 2002; Miller 1994). In addition, these boundaries are often fixed no more by ancient constraints than by modern ones: “if genres are confined to the classes of texts that have been historically perceived as such, their classification is inevitably bound to the ideology of a society that chooses to encode only certain forms as genres [...] genre is thus the site of a constant renegotiation between fixed canons and historical pressures, systems and individuals” (Rajan & Wright 1998: 1). This is even more so the case for Christian literature, which “saw different forms used as vehicles for a single given tradition of Christian argument” (Young 2004b: 254). Nevertheless, the key to a genre is convention and so it is only right to look for textual aspects of the monastic rules that both set them apart from other works, as well as homogenise them to some extent with each other. It is from this point of view that the study begins: “the study of genre has to be founded on the study of convention” (Frye 1957: 96).

The most prominent figure in monastic studies of the twentieth century, de Vogüé, has to date been the most vociferous scholar in defining a monastic rule (1977; also useful are his 1985 and 1989). De Vogüé proposed a literary schema constituting eight generations of texts that he classed as monastic rules, beginning with what he termed the ‘mother rules’ of Pachomius, Basil and Augustine. The subsequent generations were organised chronologically and end with the eighth generation in the seventh century, comprising the Rule of Fructuosus, the Rule of Donatus and the Rule of Waldebert. Elsewhere, he further distinguished that “les règles peuvent se répartir approximativement en trois groupes, suivant quelles donnent la priorité à la vie commune, à la consécration personnelle ou à l’obéissance”

(1980: 30). In addition to De Vogüé, Dubois (1970) distinguished three types of what he called ‘normative acts’: (a) monastic rules that describe the ‘spirit and main principles’; (b) customaries which convey details pertaining to the practice of everyday life; (c) institutions such as canonical, liturgical and disciplinary directives.

The late-fourth-century Rule of Augustine is generally considered to be the first western monastic rule and, according to De Vogüé, one of the three ‘mother rules’ alongside Basil and Benedict.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, its literary progenitors cannot be ignored and it was certainly not a creation *ex nihilo*. If the basic idea of a monastic rule is defined as that of a preceptive text, then it is essential to acknowledge an entire cornucopia of literature which, although not monastic rules per se, were nevertheless texts that were important in the process of the normativization of western monastic practice (Burton-Christie 1993; Chitty 1995).

Amongst these texts could be included literature as diverse as the many writings of Evagrius Ponticus (Sinkewicz 2003), Palladius’ *Lausiaca History*, Jerome’s correspondence with Eustochium, Cassian’s *Institutions* and many writings by figures such as Augustine, who besides his own monastic rule also wrote his *De opere monachorum* to impart teachings of suitable behaviour for monks. Indeed, so important was Athanasius’ hagiographic *Life of Saint Antony* that Gregory of Nazianus called it “του μοναδικου βιου νομοθεσίαν ἐν πλάσματι διηγήσεως”.<sup>27</sup> Even though these texts may not be monastic rules in an explicit sense, they would still have had the power to inspire and guide their readers and so, despite being

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<sup>26</sup> Note also Sheldrake (2007: 50), “monasticism has been dominated by three Rules, St. Basil in Eastern Christianity, and St. Augustine and St Benedict in the West [...] The so-called Rule of St. Augustine is the earliest western Rule”.

<sup>27</sup> *Oratio* 21.5.

different in much of their form and content, earlier writings nevertheless satisfied much of the same purpose, and were the forerunners of the later monastic rules.

It is therefore necessary to envisage two different types of ascetic preceptive writings: (a) *normative*, that is, a text that contained teaching or moral exempla about living as an ascetic; (b) *regular*, that is a monastic rule that contained teaching about living as a monk. Within this framework, what distinguishes a regular text from a normative one? Di Berardino (1996: 498) stated that “il genere letterario è molto fluido, non è sempre facile dire se un testo è una regola oppure no”. At a very basic level, a monastic rule is normally described very generally as something like an “ensemble des normes régissant le fonctionnement des instituts religieux” (Le Tourneau 2005: 536), or “el documento constitucional de una orden religiosa” (Gribomont 1998: 1879). For de Vogüé, at least, “les règles monastiques anciennes (400-700) forment un ensemble compact et relativement homogène, mais difficile à définir et à delimitier. On entend par là tout écrit latine destiné à un groupe de moins ou de moniales et présentant un certain caractère législatif” (1985: 11).

Immediately distinctive is that the regular texts are monastic texts; that is, they are designed for use within a cenobitic community that is under the legislative control of an abbot or abbess. Normative literature, despite being ascetic, could equally well apply to life outside an organised community, such as for virgins who remained living at home or solitary hermits. In addition to this must be the assertion that monastic rules are specifically Christian texts; that is that they find no classical pagan counterpart and arose purely from the needs of

Christian communities.<sup>28</sup> In terms of content, regular texts also include purely pragmatic elements that are not normally necessary in normative texts. These were intended to provide a tangible guide regarding the day-to-day activities of various aspects of a monastic community and might include issues such as canonical hours, sleeping arrangements, what type of clothes are appropriate and what type of food a monk should eat.

Notwithstanding function, it is generally in their form that monastic rules find their most obvious description. One of the clearest features of their diachronic evolution is that the length of a monastic rule becomes progressively longer with each generation, culminating in the fourth and fifth generations of de Vogüé with lengthy rules such as that of Benedict, with its seventy-three chapters. This increase in textual length witnessed naturally a concomitant increase in content, and whilst earlier texts are likely to occupy themselves with basic practical matters, later ones are additionally much more pragmatic in their content, dealing with far more daily and down-to-earth addenda of monastic life. For example, chapter nine of the Common Rule, which concerns those monks who are charged with looking after the flocks of a monastery, and chapter thirteen of the Rule of Isidore, which deals with the topic of a monk “*qui nocturno delusus phantasmate fuerit*”. These are topics not touched upon by other monastic rules. This is no doubt reflective of the establishment of monastic centres and the growth of the monastic movement as a whole, since the genre was no longer aimed solely at relatively small groups of ascetics, but also at larger communities that necessitated such organisational management.

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<sup>28</sup> Monastic rules are not just features of Christian monasticism, but also find a counterpart in the form of Buddhist monastic rules (Boisvert 1992). Islam, on the other hand, forbids ascetic practices: the Qur’an. 57:27 states, “[...] *We sent Jesus, son of Mary: We gave him the Gospel and put compassion and mercy into the hearts of his followers. But monasticism was something they invented- We did not ordain it for them – only to seek God’s pleasure, and even so, they did not observe it properly*”.

The monastic rules also display a general unity in their overall structural composition. Each one is made up of relatively short chapters, rarely exceeding a few paragraphs; each could be read comfortably within an assembly, especially if this were out loud to a group; and the organisation means that it would have been relatively simple to refer to individual chapters if necessary, an especially useful feature in the mixed-rule codex that was to become popular in early medieval monasteries. This organisation is common throughout all the twenty-five or so surviving rules from antiquity. With regard to the Visigothic monastic rules, the content finds little in the way of major deviations between the three texts, with expected topics such as fasting, prayer, work, reading, sleeping, travelling, eating and social customs being the shared norm.

What, then, makes a monastic rule? De Vogüé proposed the following: “leaving aside directories written for individuals [...] we shall consider only the documents which are written for monastic communities, and among those we shall retain only those which have a certain legislative character, excluding those texts which are simply hortative or descriptive” (1977: 175). Essentially, this is correct, but it is possible to delineate more clearly its definition using the literary model proposed above. There are various core features that a text must satisfy. First, it must be preceptive in nature, outlining at least to some extent pragmatic matters regarding the day-to-day activities of a monk. Second, it must refer to a monastic community, understood to signify a cenobitic community of men or women, or both, under the authority of an abbot or abbess. Third, the overall form of the text should comprise continuous prose divided into short chapters; quotations, sayings and ‘yes or no’-style literature do not qualify. These three tenets serve to offer a basic outline of the genre. Naturally, beyond this monastic rules will differ amongst themselves; some contain far more

pragmatic information than others; some are lengthy pieces of work, others comparatively short, and so on.

Such a perspective requires a re-evaluation of the literary sources. Normative literature will therefore include works such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Evagrius Ponticus' *Sententiae ad Monachos* and *Sententiae ad Virginem*, Jerome's *Life of Paul the Hermit*, Cassian's *Conferences* and *Institutions*, Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, Rufinus' Latin translation of the *History of the Monks of Egypt*, Palladius' *Lausiac History*, Theodoret's *Religious History*, Abba Isaiah's *Asceticon*, Martin of Braga's *Sententiae* and Sulpicius Severus' *Life of Martin* and *Dialogues*. Also included within this are the *Rule of Pachomius* and Basil of Caesarea's *Longer Rules* and *Shorter Rules*. This is because, like the other aforementioned texts, they provide guidance and inspiration for an ascetic way of life, in this case cenobitic, not monastic, but they do not take on the textual form of the regular genre. Whilst some of the texts have been written specifically for a community, others were important in providing inspiration and a guide to those aspiring to an ascetic ideal.

Regular literature, according to the definition posited above, can be said to begin with the Rule of Augustine. However, many monastic rules were in circulation and in use up until the end of the seventh century, a century that heralds the appearance of the first monastic rules to be written in a vernacular in Ireland (O Maiden 1980; 1996). Thus far, a definition has been offered to suggest the features that homogenise the regular genre in antiquity and mark its writings out as peculiar within the category of ascetic, and particularly preceptive, literature. Beginning with Augustine, the literature that qualifies as regular is as follows:

- The Rule of Augustine (c. 397)
- Rules of the Four Fathers (c. 400-440)
- Second Rule of the Fathers (c. 420's)
- Rule of Macarius (c. 462)
- Third Rule of the Fathers (c.530)
- Rule of the Master (c. 500-525)
- Rule of Eugippius (early-sixth century)
- Caesarius of Arles' Rule for Men (c. 512)
- Caesarius of Arles' Rule for Women (c. 512)
- Oriental Rule (mid-sixth century)
- Rule of Benedict (c. 550)
- Aurelian of Arles' Rule for Monks (mid-sixth century)
- Aurelian of Arles' Rule for Nuns (mid-sixth century)
- Rule of Tarn (late-sixth century)
- Rule of Ferreol (late-sixth century)
- Rule of Paul and Stephen (late-sixth century)
- Columbanus' Communal Rule (late-sixth century)
- Columbanus' Monastic Rule (late-sixth century)
- Rule of Isidore (early-seventh century)
- Rule of Fructuosus (mid-seventh century)
- Rule of Waldebert (early-mid-seventh century)
- Rule of Donatus (c. 626-658)
- Common Rule (mid-seventh century)

#### 1.4.1 The *De institutione uirginum et de contemptu mundi*

The *De institutione uirginum et de contemptu mundi* (henceforth the *De institutione uirginum*) deserves special attention amongst the examples of Visigothic regular literature due to the debate over whether it can be classified as a monastic rule or not. This section will argue that the text should not be included as a monastic rule. Written by Leander of Seville<sup>29</sup> sometime between 580 and 600 AD, it is one of the earliest Visigothic ascetic texts and also the one that stands out the most from the regular tradition. It was written specifically to Leander's sister, Florentina, who was a nun likely somewhere in the north of the peninsula, and it contains a lengthy epistle and theological treatise on virginity, rather than the practical content found in other monastic rules.

De Vogüé, in his schema of eight generations of monastic rules, did not include the *De institutione uirginum* and clarifies his position in the statement: “ce traité n'est pas, à proprement parler, une règle, mais il se rapproche des règles monastiques” (2007: 83). De Vogüé had here echoed the thoughts of Cocheril (1966: 41), who had stated: “ce texte [...] n'est pas une règle monastique à proprement parler, mais plutôt un traité rédigé par l'évêque pour l'édification de sa soeur qui était religieuse”. Elsewhere, Velazquez (1979: 29) opined that the *De institutione uirginum* “nunca tiene la pretensión de convertirlo en una auténtica regla monástica con poder de obligar” and Barlow (1969: 179) felt that “its terms are so

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<sup>29</sup> Leander of Seville (c. 540-601) was the elder brother of Isidore of Seville, although very few details remain of him (see Collins 2003). Despite being “eclipsado muy pronto por su hermano Isidoro” (Domínguez del Val 1981: 19), he was an important figure in the Visigothic Church, particularly for his struggle against Arianism, in which he was influential in the conversion of King Reccared in 586.

broad [...] that it has often been taken as a general set of rules for nuns [...] but it is not a detailed way of life for nuns, for it does not consider a daily and hourly regimen”. Others have been less explicit through the absence of any reference to the work, such as Atienza (1994: 82-85), who discusses Visigothic nunneries with no mention of it.

However, other scholars have adopted a different stance. In their critical edition of the monastic rules of Visigothic Iberia, Ruiz and Melia (1971) included the *De institutione uirginum* in their conspectus and Hillgarth was of a similar opinion (1980: 57): “The main monastic rules coming from Spain are by Leander of Seville [...] Isidore of Seville [...] Fructuosus of Braga [...] and the anonymous *Regula monastica communis*”. Wygalak (2006: 197) also argued it to be “dzieło [...] uważane przez wielu badaczy za regułę dla dziewczyc”. There is evidently some discrepancy here: whilst some of the most authoritative monastic scholars deny the text its place as a monastic rule, other individuals consider it to be just that.

Why does the *De institutione uirginum* of Leander pose such a problem? Ostensibly, the text satisfies the requirements for consideration as regular literature: it is aimed clearly at someone within a monastic setting and it is divided into thirty-one small chapters that relate to the everyday realities of a nun’s cenobitic life. Yet be this as it may, there are aspects of the text that clearly differentiate it: the first half is a lengthy epistle of almost two-hundred and seventy-eight lines and many of the chapters do not deal with pragmatic aspects of monastic life, but rather are much more philosophical. These two points require to be considered in turn

### 1.4.2 The Epistle

Firstly, the problem of the epistle. Whilst none of the surviving monastic rules contain anything more than a substantial preface, it is possible that Leander was seeking to imitate an otherwise unattested tradition of ‘epistolary rules’: Isidore of Seville informs his readers of Osius, the mid-fourth-century bishop of Cordoba, who had written a letter to his sister called the *De laude uirginitatis*,<sup>30</sup> and also of Severus, the late-sixth-century bishop of Malaga, who had composed something similar (a *libellus*) to his sister.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, both of these works have now been lost, but the idea should not be dismissed that Leander knew about these texts and was influenced by them. There was certainly nothing novel in Leander writing about virginity, a topic that already had an established literary presence amongst the Church Fathers; Ambrose in particular had written various works specifically for his sister on the topic and Jerome’s ascetic correspondence with Paula and Esutochium is well-known (Adkin 2003). However, if the *De institutione uirignum* can be established as a monastic rule, then it would place it as one of the first monastic rules to be written solely with nuns in mind, rather than an adaption or companion to one written for monks.

The first important observation is that the epistle is very clearly intended for a sole recipient, indicated in the first line by Leander’s invocation “*soror charissima Florentina*”; the constant repetition throughout of the personal pronoun *tu* and its associated morphological forms means that its readership was, in the first instance, Florentina herself. The high-register of language it is written in also presumes an educated reader, who would

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<sup>30</sup> *De uiris illustribus* 5.

<sup>31</sup> *De uiris inlustribus* 43.

understand references to philosophy<sup>32</sup> and be able to take pleasure in Leander's classicising literary style that stands in contrast to the lower-register language of most other monastic rules. As it continues, the epistle is replete with biblical quotations and allusions and is above-all a treatise on the benefits of virginity. Leander consistently brings home the transient nature of corporeality. For example, line four: "*aurum et argentum de terra est et in terra reuertitur; fundus et patrimonium reditus uilia et transitoria sunt*". Such an admonitory tone continues throughout and Leander makes use of the typical *topoi* associated with such a theme: Christ as a bridegroom and husband, the original sin of Eve, the honoured position of virgins in heaven, the sins of earthly desires, both material and sexual, the pain of childbirth etc. In itself, the epistle offers nothing novel in terms of a theology of virginity, and Leander borrowed heavily from biblical and patristic writings for his inspiration (Ruíz & Melia 1971: 12-16).

Why, then, would Leander have written the letter if it contains nothing of novelty or anything that could not be included in the main text of the monastic rule? Perhaps the answer lies in Leander's own admission that he did not want to endow his sister with earthly goods, lest she should think him to be an enemy rather than a brother: (*Epistle* line 35) "*inimicum me non parentem deberes aestimare*".<sup>33</sup> The composition date of the *De institutione uirginum* places it at the very end of Leander's life, and perhaps knowing his life to be at an end, he wanted to leave an inheritance to his sister and thought such a text to be the best gift. This is indeed a possibility, but it seems more likely that Leander was leaving an inheritance not because he thought he was leaving the earth, but rather because he was leaving Iberia.

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<sup>32</sup> For example the possible Neo-Platonic reference in chapter twenty-four, "*unde et illa uera est sententia philosophorum: Ne quid nimis*". See Harnack (2008: 125).

<sup>33</sup> '*parens*' here should be taken as 'relative', rather than the Classical Latin 'mother' or 'father' (hence Sp. *pariente*).

Isidore reveals that some prominent Catholics were expelled from the peninsula around 580 following the pro-Arian stance of the Gothic King Leovigild,<sup>34</sup> and elsewhere he names Leander as one of them.<sup>35</sup> It is certainly true that Leander was a prominent figure in the struggle against Arianism and following his expulsion he travelled east to Byzantium, where he was to make acquaintance with Gregory the Great. Although Leander was nevertheless back in the peninsula within six years, it must have been a time of uncertainty. His old age perhaps gave him the impression that it would be a one-way trip.

Whatever Leander's impetus, he was hardly in a position to bequeath material wealth; as a bishop he was unlikely to have been in possession of much, and since Florentina was a nun herself she would have been permitted only the smallest of items for personal use, let alone anything of value. Although little is known about the family, it also seems clear that the relationship between the two siblings is a close one, and such a text would have perhaps been most fitting. All four siblings were involved in the church: most famously, Leander and Isidore in their various guises, but also Florentina as a nun and the youngest brother, Fulgentius, as a monk (Fontaine 1983). The topic is therefore extremely relevant. Yet the very personal character of the epistle may also be representative of the close ties in the family. It is known that Leander's parents were forced to flee their home in *Carthago Nova* (modern Cartagena) following the Byzantine invasion, and the influences of this refugee status and undoubtedly difficult period might have given Leander, as the elder sibling, a much stronger bond and status amongst them. Later on, in chapter thirty-one of the text, he talks passionately about his worry for Fulgentius and his younger brother Isidore, as well as

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<sup>34</sup> *Historia Gothorum* 50.

<sup>35</sup> *De uiris inlustribus* 28.

recalling memories of their mother. It may well be then, that Leander wished to leave a very personal inheritance to his sister.

However, there is a recurring theme throughout the epistle, almost selfish in its nature. There can be no doubt that whilst Leander was concerned for the well-being of his sister, he was also just as concerned for his own personal salvation. There are a couple of hints that Leander thought himself to have sinned, perhaps through some sort of previous sexual activity prior to entering the Church, and his perceived proximity to death may have prompted him to re-evaluate the effects of his earthly life on his standing with God. There is no evidence to suggest that Leander had read Augustine's *Confessions*, but exomologesis through confessional literature was something that both they and other writers shared in common (Taylor 2008: 13-46). Although there are no detailed references, Leander on a few occasions refers overtly to the possibility of a less-than-holy past: *Epistle* line 78, "*non sum idoneus eloqui [...] praemia uirginitatis*"; *Epistle* line 120, "*qui etsi in me non habeo quod in te perficere uolo, perdidisse me doleam quod te tenere desidero*"; *Epistle* line 138, "*atque in illo terribili metuendoque iudicio, ubi de factis ac dictis uel de commissis discussio fuerit, ubi de meis dispendiis, heu mihi, sum cogendus reddere rationem*". Whatever Leander may or may not have done (and it might be possible that this is an example of nothing more than excessive Christian *humilitas*), he clearly sees Florentina as key to his entrance into Heaven and absolution for his earthly sins; "*et uindicata quae mihi debetur pro negligentia mea, forte castitatis tuae sedabitur intercessione*". Indeed, lines 120-162 represent nothing more than an all-out exhortation for the salvation of Leander's soul through the chastity of Florentina.

In answer to the question, then, of why Leander would attach an epistle to the start of a monastic rule, rather than a normal preface, it seems clear that it satisfies various functions: it allows him to write a small treatise on virginity which, although nothing novel, is the type of literature that such a figure might be interested in writing; it allows for a personal correspondence from a brother to a sister whom he cares greatly for, possibly as his final action or gift for her owing to his old age; it permits Leander to seek atonement for his earthly sins and ask Florentina to pray for his entry into Heaven, relying on her own holiness; finally, it may be that Leander was imitating previous examples of ‘epistle-rules’, although any evidence of these have now been lost. In itself, the presence of the epistle cannot be taken to imply that the text is not a monastic rule; it does not constitute the main part of the text, and is at best an interesting addition rather than something that defies categorisation completely. However, its importance lies in the fact that it clearly sets out the work to be for a individual, Florentina, and not for a monastic community in general. An important question arises from this; namely, to what extent might Leander have meant it to be seen only by his sister, or did he ever have a wider audience in mind?

There is nothing unexpected in a writer from antiquity addressing correspondence to an individual whilst having the intention of distributing it to a much wider audience; such a practice was frequent during the Greco-Roman period and continued in the post-Roman world (Ebbeler 2009).<sup>36</sup> If for nothing else, it makes practical sense; parchment was expensive and producing written work was a timely activity, and it is therefore sensible that such an investment of both material and time should benefit as many as possible. The fact

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<sup>36</sup> The use of an epistle in technical literature in general is well attested. Thus, Langslow (2007: 220), “a polar distinction is between letters serving as dedications or prefaces, and those standing as treatises in their own right. The technical letter as a treatise is attested to in both Latin and Greek”.

that Florentina is also frequently referred to as the sole addressee should not cause concern; it was one thing to dedicate a work to someone, and quite another to wish to see it read elsewhere. On the other hand, the contents of the epistle are distinctly very personal in their nature and Leander as a bishop may not have wished to have seen its contents too widely disseminated.

Overall, the presence of an epistle should not in itself cause too much of a problem. Moreover, it would be oxymoronic to recognise the difficulties of defining a monastic rule and then to remove certain texts on the basis that they do not fit a prescribed definition. However, the problem comes from the fact that the epistle marks the *De institutione uirginum* out very much as a piece of personal correspondence, and it is difficult to see that Leander actually intended his piece to be put to use within a monastic setting as a monastic rule. Instead, it seems far more likely that he set out to write a theological treatise for his sister but used the structure of a monastic rule to do so.

### **1.4.3 Pragmatism**

A second issue is one of the pragmatism of the text, namely the fact that the main body of the piece, which constitutes thirty-one individual chapters instructing a nun on how to live, are not as practical as other similar works. Whilst the Rule of Donatus, written over a century later for a community of nuns, contains chapter headings such as ‘How the old and infirm are to be governed’, ‘Concerning women who hide things in their beds’ and ‘How suppliers and other men may enter the monastery’, the *De institutione uirginum* boasts chapter headings such as ‘*Ut carnaliter non debeat legere Uetus Testamentum*’ and ‘*Qualiter uita fugiatur priuata*’. There do exist some more practical chapter headings, such as ‘*De usu*

*uini*' and '*De habitu uirginum*', yet even these offer little information that could be put to practical use but rather are replete with theological musings. This presents difficulties for asserting the text to be a monastic rule because, using the definition offered above, a monastic rule should act as a regulatory text and offer guidance for everyday living, both spiritual and practical.

There are a couple of points that can be made with regard to this issue. First, how does one define 'pragmatic'? The Oxford English Dictionary gives its meaning as "dealing with matters in accordance with practical rather than theoretical considerations or general principles" and from this it is clear that pragmatism is not strictly defined. Some monastic rules offer regulation in comparatively minute detail; a useful comparison are the chapters concerning clothing in the monastic rule of Isidore of Seville (chapter twelve, *De habitu monachorum*) and the *De institutione uirginum* (chapter ten, *De habitu uirginum*). Isidore states details such as the fact that a monk should never wear pure cloth, hoods or cloaks; he will have a maximum of two outer garments; bed socks should only be used in the winter or whilst undertaking journeys; and that all monks should cut their hair at the same time and in the same style, "*nam reprehensibile est diuersum habere cultum ubi non est diuersum propositum*". Leander, however, has a different approach, urging Florentina to choose clothing that "will delight the only son of the heavenly Father" and warning her that she will "be truly decorated if you delight the clothes not of the exterior, but of the interior". Whilst Leander advises to wear simple clothes that cover the body, there is no practical information beyond this. However, other monastic rules are similarly diverse: the Rule of Augustine for nuns merely recommends: "*non sit notabilis habitus uester, nec affectetis uestibus placere*

*sed moribus*”;<sup>37</sup> the Rule of Donatus, borrowing from Augustine, states simply: “*non sit notabilis uester, nec affectetis uestibus placere sed moribus, quod uestrum decet propositum*”;<sup>38</sup> the Rule of Ferreolus advises no more than two tunics for each monk, unless the winter weather deems it necessary;<sup>39</sup> neither the Rule of Waldebert nor Columbanus’ Common Rule even mention the subject.

Despite such variances in how practical the information regarding clothing actually is, all of the above texts are classified as monastic rules. Essentially, this demonstrates that not every monastic rule will offer the necessary practical information to regulate fully every single possible topic of day-to-day activity. There are a couple of important reasons for this. First, monasteries were diverse institutions and the abbot or abbess was normally elected by the congregation. It therefore follows that each abbot or abbess would possess different interpretations of the monastic precepts, with some no doubt enforcing a much stricter lifestyle and others being more lenient. These guidelines also had to cope with basic issues such as diversity of climate, which meant that whilst Isidore’s advice for clothing might have been suitable for a monk in southern Spain, it would need adapting for a monk in a cooler climate. However, Leander’s guidelines are so vague and philosophical that they do not offer guidelines on how to run even the most basic of day-to-day activities. Whilst there can be no doubt that the monastic rules could vary in the level of practicality that they offered, there is very little that the content of the *De institutione uirginum* could be used for in the practical running of a community.

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<sup>37</sup> *Rule of Augustine* 4.1.

<sup>38</sup> *Rule of Donatus* 62.

<sup>39</sup> *Rule of Ferreolus* 14.

#### **1.4.4 Overall Conclusion: A Monastic Rule?**

Deciding whether the *De institutione uirginum* can be classified as a monastic rule or not has always been constrained by the lack of a definition of what a monastic rule actually is. However, the classification used in this study is consciously broad owing to the flexibility of literary genres, but requires a text to satisfy two points: first, it must be intended for a monastic audience; second, it must contain pragmatic information that can be used to organise everyday life. The latter in particular is perhaps especially vague, but does not require a text to be able to legislate *all* aspects of daily monastic life, but rather asks that at least some clear precepts are offered that can be put into daily practice. In both of these aspects, the *De institutione uirginum* fails; whilst it was written for somebody within a monastic environment, it was not written for the community as a whole. Neither could it feasibly be put to use to help organise a monastic community; whilst the second half of the text might be organised along the lines of monastic rule, divided into small chapters, its contents are almost wholly theological. The implication must therefore be that De Vogüé was correct and with reference to the schema outlined above, the text belongs certainly to the ascetic literary tradition but is normative rather than regular. As such, it will not be treated in the discussion of the Visigothic monastic rules.

## **Chapter Two: The Visigothic Monastic Rules and Their Visigothic Context**

*“I had chosen what used to be considered the darkest of all “Dark” Ages, the seventh century, Spain under the Visigoths” (Hillgarth 1985b: vii)*

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will introduce the Visigothic monastic rules and investigate briefly what the monastic rules can reveal about historical aspects of Visigothic monasticism. Since this chapter is primarily background material, fuller historical investigations of Visigothic monasticism can be found elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> Whilst it is true that Visigothic Iberia is no longer as dark as Jocelyn Hillgarth, above, had found it once to be, the history of its monasticism is still not as widely studied in the Anglophone world as its Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon contemporaries (for example, Clarke & Brennan 1981; Foot 2006). An understanding of the Iberian context is particularly important because of the minor role the Rule of Benedict had there. Indeed, Benedictinization of the peninsula occurred primarily from the eleventh and twelfth centuries and was “a slow, stubbornly resisted process” (Bishko 1984: 1). This has impinged undoubtedly upon the historiography of Iberian monasticism.<sup>41</sup>

Although the adoption of the Rule of Benedict elsewhere was certainly neither a uniform nor necessarily rapid process in the early medieval period (Dunn 2000: 130-131), the

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<sup>40</sup> For example, Pérez de Urbel (1933-1934); Cocheril (1966); Linage Conde (1977); Bishko (1984); de Cortázar, de Aguirre & Casuso (2006). For a discussion of economic and social aspects of Visigothic monasteries in particular, see de la Cruz Díaz Martínez (1987).

<sup>41</sup> In the sense that non-Benedictine monasticism is too often treated as liminal; thus Elm (1994: 8), “the historiography of monasticism as a whole, regarding its history both before and after Benedict, remains dominated and deeply influenced by the notions exemplified by Benedictine monasticism and its related concerns [...] the notions [...] broadly defined as Benedictine monasticism continue to be the privileged vantage point from which everything else is defined as liminal”.

Iberian Peninsula is of interest because of the prolonged presence of non-Benedictine forms of monasticism in a period normally characterised by its adoption. The reasons behind this situation have been discussed elsewhere,<sup>42</sup> though it would last until at least the eleventh century and reforms such as those brought in under the Council of Coyanza in 1050, which promoted the use of the Rule of Benedict, and the Council of Burgos in 1080, when the Hispanic rite was replaced by the Roman one (Mattoso 2003: 578). It prompts the question, then: what kind of monasticism was there instead.<sup>43</sup> This is a question that concerns not only modern scholars; even Charlemagne had posed the question of how monastic life was ordered before Benedict.<sup>44</sup>

## 2.2 The Visigothic Monastic Rules

In total, there are three remaining monastic rules left from Visigothic Iberia (Gil 1994): the Rule of Isidore of Seville; the Rule of Fructuosus of Braga; the Common Rule.<sup>45</sup> The *De institutione uirginum* of Leander of Seville was dismissed as a monastic rule in Chapter One. The Rule of Isidore of Seville was written at the start of the seventh century (Mullins 1940). Its eponymous author is the best-known protagonist of Visigothic literary

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<sup>42</sup> The problem was first discussed fully by Plaine (1900), and later by Linage Conde (1973), who advised a distinction between the *marca Hispanica* and the rest of the peninsula: “[hay una] distinción ineludible entre la Marca Hispanica, de la que sí puede predicarse una benedictinización en el siglo IX, y el resto más tardío” (*ibid.*: 86).

<sup>43</sup> For comparative purposes, the analysis of the Rule of Benedict found in Dunn (2000: 114-130) is useful.

<sup>44</sup> *Capitula tractanda cum comitibus episcopis et abbatibus* 12.

<sup>45</sup> All three are available in the *PL*. A Spanish translation and critical Latin edition of all three can be found in Ruiz & Melia (1971). The Rule of Fructuosus and the Common Rule have previously been translated into English by Barlow (1969), whilst the Rule of Isidore is available in Allies (*forthcoming* 2010).

culture. A possible *terminus ante quem* for its composition is provided by the tenth canon of the Second Council of Seville in 619, over which Isidore presided as bishop of the city, which mentions the “*coenobia nuper condita in prouincia Baetica*”, taken to refer to the monasteries for which it was written (Ruiz & Melia 1979: 79). Isidore’s close friend, Braulius of Zaragoza, in his *Renotatio librorum diui Isidori*, also places the monastic rule between 615 and 619. It is as yet still unclear for whom the monastic rule was written, although two of the manuscripts carry the dedicatory titles *honorianensi* and *honorienti* (Ruiz & Melia 1974: 81). The site of this monastery is yet to be identified.

The Rule of Fructuosus of Braga was composed probably for the monastery of Compludo, founded in 646.<sup>46</sup> Fructuosus was certainly one of the most accomplished founders of monasteries in early medieval Iberia, and communities at Compludo, San Pedro de los Montes, San Felix de Visona and Peonense can be associated with him. Indeed, in his *Life* there are named nine monasteries specifically, and in addition it is noted that “*monasteria plurima fundauit*”.<sup>47</sup> Fructuosus was clearly an educated individual, the son of a high-ranking military father who achieved some kind of education.<sup>48</sup> The sole surviving letter from Fructuosus to Braulius of Zaragoza is also revealing, in which he asks to be sent Cassians’ *Institutiones* and the *Lives* of Honoratus and Germanus by Hilary and Venantius

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<sup>46</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 3, “*Nam construens coenobium Complutensem, iuxta diuina praecepta, nihil sibi reseruans, omnem a se facultatis suae supellectilem eiiciens et ibidem conferens, eum locupletissime ditauit, et tam ex familiae suae, quam ex conuersis e diuersis Hispaniae partibus sedulo concurrentibus, eum agmine monachorum affluentissime compleuit*”.

<sup>47</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 1, “*ducis exercitus Hispaniae proles [...] tonsoque capite cum religionis initia suscepisset, tradidit se erudiendum spiritualibus sanctissimo uiro Conantio episcopo*”.

Fortunatus respectively.<sup>49</sup> Evidently this was a man of considerable learning who was involved in the wider Visigothic academic scene; “very likely the most important figure in Visigothic church history after the death of St. Isidore of Seville” (Bishko 2003: 342).

The Common Rule has been attributed traditionally to Fructuosus of Braga due to the fact that it is found attached to two of the manuscripts of the Rule of Fructuosus (Ruíz & Melia 1979: 165). This was a correlation also made by Benedict of Aniane, who ascribed the Rule to Fructuosus in his *Codex Regularum*. However, such an assertion has been challenged by some scholars who prefer to see it instead as anonymous (De Almeida Matos 1978-79). Barlow (1969: 150-151) felt that even if it were not written by Fructuosus, it was probably based on the practices of his monastic communities following the establishment of new foundations in the same region. This seems a sensible approach and is one adopted in this thesis.

Notwithstanding the surviving examples, there may have been other monastic rules that have not survived. Isidore reports that John of Biclaro also wrote a monastic rule, although if this is true, it is now lost.<sup>50</sup> Another possible author of a monastic rule, posited by Díaz y Díaz (1992: 161), may also have been Justin of Valencia.

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<sup>49</sup> “*Specialiter tamen, domine mi, quod in hac regione in qua degimus, non inuenitur, supplex suggero ut pro mercede tua de Collectionibus Cassiani illumines monasteria ista et uitam sanctorum uirorum Honorati atque Germani*”.

<sup>50</sup> *De uiris inlustribus* 31. Campos (1960: 32-41), argues that it is possible to determine the content of the rule through studying the Rule of the Master, of which he posits that John of Biclaro was the author. In this aspect he agrees with de Urbel (1940). The arguments for this are based primarily on the similarity of Biblical quotes and structure to other Iberian rules; thus Campos (1960: 34), “Aunque el Maestro saca de San Benito muchos de sus capítulos y sigue el plan de su Regla, el régimen

### 2.3 Visigothic Monastic Literature

More generally, seventh-century Visigothic Iberia produced a substantial body of work concerned with monasticism. Some of the most important of these are the writings of the late-seventh-century monk Valerius of Bierzo, who wrote many works that are concerned principally with monastic matters (collected in Fernandez Pousa 1944). Among these are his *De uana saeculi sapientia*, an apologia for an eremitic existence, his *De Bonello monacho*, the *Uita Frontinii* and his *De genere monachorum*. Isidore of Seville had also concerned himself with monastic life elsewhere outside his monastic rule (Fontaine 1961). For example, in his *Sententiarum libri tres* he dedicates chapters eighteen to twenty-one to the qualities a monk should possess, whilst in his *Differentiarum libri duo* he extols the differences between a life of contemplation and a life of secular work. There is also discussion of monks in chapter two of his *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*. Many of the Visigothic hagiographical works date from this century as well (Fear 1996), which are often concerned with monastic adventures. All the while, the seventh-century literary achievements built on earlier adventures. Martin of Braga, for example, was an important figure in this period and had produced a translation of Pachomian sayings in the form of his *Sententiae Patrum Aegyptiorum*, possibly in lieu of a formal monastic rule (Barlow 1969: 5-6), and later encouraged his pupil Paschasius to do the same (Barlow 1969: 17-34, 113-176).

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alimenticio de su monasterio, la observancia, la organización del oficio divino, en fin, la fisonomía toda de su comunidad, se parecía, mucho más que a Montecasino, a los monasterios gallegos de San Fructuoso y a las comunidades béticas de San Isidoro”. Suggestions that this may be traceable through the Rule of Macarius are rejected by de Vogüé (1978).

Despite the high quantity of literature produced in the Iberian Peninsula, autochthonous regular literature appears only relatively late in the seventh century. The first explicit mention of the presence of a monastic rule in Iberia is made by Ildefonsus, who suggests that it was the African monk Donatus who brought the first monastic rule to Iberia and who built a monastery at Servitanum;<sup>51</sup> it has been suggested that this was actually the Rule of Augustine (Manrique Campillo 1969). This is questioned by Fear (1997: 112), who supposes that monastic rules must have been present in the peninsula before this date; *contra* Collins (1983: 81), who believes that “we possess no grounds for doubting Ildefonsus’s word”. Donatus was not the only outsider to have a role in the development of Iberian monasticism. Victorianus of Asan, for example, founded various monasteries in the Pyrenean region of Iberia (Díaz 1999: 171-172), and the presence of Gallic influence has often been stated. Indeed, in discussing the issue of monks who are ordained priests, the Council of Lérida in 546 had decreed that the third canon of the Council of Orleans in 511 and Agide in 506 were to be followed in relation to monastic matters.<sup>52</sup>

Whether or not Ildefonsus was correct, it does seem to be a peculiarly late date for the introduction of a monastic rule; since there was an Iberian monastic movement before this

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<sup>51</sup> *De uiris illustribus* 3. The Iberian Peninsula had historically enjoyed strong links with North Africa throughout antiquity, on which see Arce (2004). Certainly Isidore’s library possessed copies of various African writings, including the treatise on Catholicism written by the exiled African bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe, as well as writings by Possidius, Verecundus, Ferrandus, Victor of Tunnuna and Facunda of Hermaine (Isidore *De uiris illustribus* 8, 9, 25; Collins 1983: 60). The *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 2.2, also suggests that it was African monks under Nactus which established the monastery at Cauliana, eight miles from Merida. The reasons behind this migration are often attributed to the Three Chapters Controversy (Barbero de Aguilera 1992: 136-167) and the effect of the Berber incursions.

<sup>52</sup> “*De monachis uero id obseruare placuit quod synodo Agathensis uel Aurilianensis noscitur decreuisse*”.

date, it would make sense that there existed Iberian regular literature. Fear's argument that the existence of cenobitic communities by this period suggests the concomitant existence of monastic rules seems sound. However, the lack of surviving texts should not be taken as an indicator to the fact that they did not once exist, and a possible comparison could be made with the situation a couple of centuries later. The ninth-century writer Paul Albar, who was active in Al-Andalus at the time of the Cordoban martyrs, noted that his friend and contemporary, Eulogius of Cordoba, was accustomed to visiting monasteries and composing monastic rules;<sup>53</sup> presumably this must have occurred on at least a few occasions, but no evidence remains of any text. This kind of *ad hoc* regular literature is also attested to elsewhere and seems to have been relatively common before the widespread acceptance of the Rule of Benedict.<sup>54</sup> It is also possible that the monastic rules might have been destroyed purposefully in the wake of the Benedictinization of Iberian monasticism, when pre-Benedictine monastic rules were perhaps no longer considered orthodox, or perhaps even a threat to the growing establishment of the Cistercians in particular. This occurred elsewhere, for example with the Rule of the Templars.<sup>55</sup>

#### **2.4 The Monastic Rules and Their Historical Context**

The three monastic rules present, from the perspective of their authors, an idealised form of regulated monastic life. However, the extent to which they can be used as a basis to

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<sup>53</sup> *Life of Eulogius* 3, “*exhinc cepit se [...] monasteria frequentare, cenobia inuisere, regulas fratrum componere*”.

<sup>54</sup> For example Bede *Historia Abbatum* 2, notes that abbot Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop composed their own monastic rules.

<sup>55</sup> This text was written in the early twelfth century following the Council of Troyes in 1129. There exist no original manuscripts of the so-called Primitive Rule, which constituted the core text, despite the fact that it would have been widely available at the time; unfortunately, all copies were purposefully destroyed at the time of the Templar's demise (Upton-Ward 1992: 11).

reconstruct actual monastic life is a different matter. The fact that not all monasteries functioned along the guidelines set out by the monastic rules is made clear by the fact that some Visigothic commentators felt strongly that monastic life was rotten. Take, for example, the complaint of Valerius of Bierzo:<sup>56</sup>

*“et cum in ista ultimae extremitatis Occiduae partis confinia rara, uidelicet, et exigua pullularent sacrae religionis crepundia, a paucis electis et perfectis uiris in desertis locis rara ope Domini constructa sunt monasteria, ex quibus multas animas redemptor expiatus fece peccaminum suscepit in regna coelestia. Et quia discedente et ad finem extremante mundi tempore refrigescit charitas, accrescit saeuissima iniquitas, et inexplebilis uoraxque exardescit mundana cupiditas, atque infestior inuidens inualescit daemonum atrocitas, in [quibus] sacratissimis locis paucissimi tamem reperiuntur electi uiri, qui de toto corde conuertantur ad Dominum. Et ne ipsa monasteria desolata desertaque remaneant, tolluntur ex familiis sibi pertinentibus subulci, de diuersisque gregibus dorseni,<sup>57</sup> atque de possessionibus paruuli, qui pro officio supplendo inuiti tondentur et nutriuntur per monasteria, atque falso nomine monachi nuncupantur.”*

Valerius had started the paragraph before this section with “*dum olim*”, a vague phrase that reveals nothing about when he is actually referring to, but that even at the ends of the earth (“*ad finem extremante mundi*”), monasticism had once flourished and monasteries

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<sup>56</sup> *De genere monachorum* 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Dorseni* is a seeming hapax. It is probably related to *dorsualis*, and so mean literally someone who does manual labour, i.e. a worker or servant. However, it may also be influenced by *Dorsenus*, an ancient Latin writer whose characters became a by-word for unpleasant attributes (Horace *Epistle* 2.137). In this context, *subulci*, *dorseni* and *paruuli* are likely synonymous, whilst *de diuersisque gregibus* is metaphorical.

were built (“*constructa sunt monasteria*”). In his time, however, he says that slaves, shepherds and small children were forced to be tonsured and called monks in false name, in order that the monasteries did not remain empty. Valerius was not the only writer to make such claims. The first two chapters of the Common Rule testify to the authors’ perceptions of contemporary malpractice, centred specifically on the notion of independent monasteries that cater for the whims of their founder, the very essence of heresy: “*inde surrexit haeresis et schisma et grandis per monasteria controuersia. Et inde dicta haeresis eo quod unusquisque suo quod placuerit arbitrio eligat et quod eligerit sanctum sibi hoc putet et uerbis mendacibus defendat*”.<sup>58</sup>

It is possible that a fear of independent monasteries, in the north-west of the peninsula, at least, was bolstered by Priscillianism (d’Alès 1936; Blázquez 1991), a heresy that had been particularly strong in this area of the peninsula, even in the sixth century, and whose practice was linked with asceticism, and in particular with unsupervised and isolated communities and church-villas (Bowes 2001). In short, although some of the scenes present a rather bleak picture, writers such as Valerius nevertheless reveal that monasticism was very much a feature of religious life in Visigothic Iberia, and even if the content of the monastic rules cannot be applied to all cases, they are important sources of evidence for what their authors wished to be the case.

## **2.5 Daily Monastic Life: The Opus Dei**

*“Primum incumbere orationi nocte ac die et praefinitarum horarum obseruare mensuram; nec uacare ullatenus aut torpere a spiritualibus quemquam operum exercitiis*

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<sup>58</sup> *Common Rule* 1. The author is perhaps referring here to the Greek etymon, αἵρεσις, ‘choice’.

*diuturnis temporibus*". Thus begins Chapter One of the Rule of Fructuosus. The author's simple polarisation of monastic life into the *opus Dei* and the *opus manuum* shows that Visigothic monasticism continued to prescribe a life that was faithful to the ideals of the earliest Christian hermits. In the first instance, spiritual activity, or the *opus Dei*, remained an important element of a monk's daily routine, as it had been since the earliest Desert Fathers. In particular, this revolved around the performance and institutionalisation of communal synaxes, actions that were common across the early Christian world: "*has horas canonicas ab oriente usque in occidentem catholica, id est, uniuersalis indesinenter celebrat ecclesia*".<sup>59</sup>

All three of the monastic rules are unanimous in their requirement for monastic offices and assemblies, explaining in varying detail the structure they must take.<sup>60</sup> Spiritual activity also included *lectio*, often translated awkwardly as 'reading'. Both of these topics will be discussed further in Chapter Three. The phrase of Fructuosus above, "*nocte ac die*", is an accurate reflection of the continual presence of spiritual activity throughout a monk's day. Such a demanding regime suited well the desire for physical humility and religious *devotio*, especially a theological impetus to shun the corporeal world. Isidore, for example, labels as heretical a category of monks he speaks of called the *νόσταγεξ* who rested during the night as they believed it not to be a time of work.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, later medieval sources reveal that the daily offices could be physically exhausting for monks, often to the extent of being detrimental to their health (Kerr 2009: 55-57). The Common Rule also adds that a monk must not feel himself bound only to this *cursus*, but can pray at other times as well.<sup>62</sup> It also advises that if a monk is absent from the monastery, he should prostrate himself on the

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<sup>59</sup> *Common Rule 2.*

<sup>60</sup> *Rule of Isidore 6, 7; Rule of Fructuosus 2, 3; Common Rule 10, 13.*

<sup>61</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis 1.22.* The word in Greek means 'the sleepy ones'.

<sup>62</sup> *Common Rule 10.*

ground at the set times.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the other monastic rules make it clear that spiritual reflection in the form of prayer, chanting or meditation was expected from a monk throughout the day outside formal synaxes.<sup>64</sup>

Outside the office, monks would come together during mealtimes and for assembly, and both of these activities could also include aspects of the *opus Dei*. The assembly, which Isidore advised took place three times a week, was a time often given to listening to readings of the Church Fathers and the Bible and group learning,<sup>65</sup> whilst in the Common Rule, the monks are to meet once a week on Sundays before Mass in order to be scrutinised spiritually by the abbot.<sup>66</sup> Mealtimes, moreover, were a time both for eating and for fasting or abstinence from wine, continuing a monk's dedication to God. A monk's year was divided between times of varied dining practice, and the monastic rules set out clearly the necessary schedules of fasting.<sup>67</sup> It was also the case that on certain festival days, for example, meat was permitted, whilst other times of the year the monks lived off a rather meagre diet.<sup>68</sup>

## 2.6 The Opus Manuum

Notwithstanding spiritual labour, the monastic rules reflect on matters focussed pragmatically on the physical work of a monk, the *opus manuum*. Since the earliest Desert

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<sup>63</sup> *Common Rule* 10.

<sup>64</sup> For example, *Rule of Isidore* 5, “*Monachi operantes meditare uel psallare debent ut carminis uerbique dei delectatione consolentur ipsum laborem*”; *Rule of Fructuosus* 6, “*cum operantur non inter se fabulas uel cachinnos cosnerant siue luxurientur; sed operantes intra se recitent taciti. Illi uero qui pausant, aut psallant aliquid aut reicitent pariter*”.

<sup>65</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 7.

<sup>66</sup> *Common Rule* 13.

<sup>67</sup> For example, *Rule of Fructuosus* 18; *Rule of Isidore* 9.

<sup>68</sup> Thus *Rule of Isidore* 9, “*Per omnem autem hebdomadam fratres uiles olerum cibos ac pallentia utantur legumina. Diebus uero sanctis interdum cum oleribus leuissimarum carniuum alimenta*”.

Fathers, physical labour had been associated with asceticism, often as a theological reaction to the importance of physical hardship in a monk's life (Ward 2003: x-xi). Take, for example, the reply of the third-century ascete John the Dwarf upon being asked the purpose of being a monk: ἐαυτον βιάζεσθαι (Gould 1993: 98). This was a notion that continued into the Visigothic period. Isidore, for example, advised: *“per otium enim libidinis et noxiarum cogitationum nutrimenta concresecunt, per laboris exercitium uitia nihilominus elabuntur. Nequaquam debet dedignare uersari in opere aliquo monasterii usibus necessario”*.<sup>69</sup> The connection between Christian humility and manual labour in the Bible was also commented upon frequently by various figures in the early Church and in early monastic circles (Ovitt 1987). Indeed, reference to the physical jobs of biblical figures is often made in support of the idea that a monk should be occupied with physical work. Isidore, for example, cites the Bible when he warns: *“qui non uult laborare non manducet”*,<sup>70</sup> whilst the Common Rule warns its audience not to complain in the face of tending flocks, referring them to the manual jobs of Joseph and the Disciples.<sup>71</sup> Isidore continues: *“si igitur tantae auctoritatis homines in laboribus et operibus etiam rusticanis inseruierunt, quanto magis monachi quibus oportet non solum uitae suae necessaria propriis manibus exhibere, sed etiam indigentiam aliorum laboribus suis reficere”*.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Rule of Isidore 5.

<sup>70</sup> 2 Thessalonians 3.10, Rule of Isidore 5, *“Monachus operetur semper manibus suis ita ut quibuslibet uariis opificum artibus laboribusque studium suum inpedat, sequens Apostolorum qui dicit: neque panem gratis manducauimus, sed in labore et fatigatione nocte et die operantes. Et iterum: qui non uult laborare non manducet”*.

<sup>71</sup> Common Rule 9, *“quia patriarchae greges pauerunt et Petrus piscatoris gessit officium et Ioseph iustus, cuius uirgo Maria desponsata exstitit, faber lignarius fuit”*. Note the similarity to the Rule of Isidore 5, *“Nam patriarchae greges pauerunt et gentiles philosophi sutores et sartores fuerunt et Ioseph iustus, cuius uirgo Maria disponsata extitit faber ferrarius fuit”*.

<sup>72</sup> Rule of Isidore 5.

In such a vein, manual labour was an important part of many monastic lives, an association that would later connect monasticism with various aspects of technological innovation. It also led arguably to economic success: “Ascetic work ethics and rational design of work roles made the medieval monasteries the most efficient production organizations of that time. They accumulated immeasurable wealth which trapped those monks who strove for the monastic ideal of an ascetic life led in poverty, and brought about severe conflicts. Thus the medieval monastery became the first bureaucratic ‘iron cage’” (Kieser 1987: 104).

Notwithstanding theological concerns, the presence of physical labour satisfied other rationale. Both the theology and practice of early asceticism had originally been one of isolationism, a desire to be both *μόνος* and a *contemptor mundi*.<sup>73</sup> Although in time, ascetic communities were to become important features of the medieval economic and cultural landscape, removal from the surrounding *saeculum* continued to be a theological foundation of the monastic existence.<sup>74</sup> In order for a community to exist on the margins of society, it made sense for monasteries to be largely self-sufficient, which explains on a simple level the need for agricultural activity and manual work. As such, there was recognition of a monastery as a self-sufficient community where everybody was required to work for the

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<sup>73</sup> For example, Isidore, *Rule of Isidore* 25, calls the monks “*serui Dei, milites Christi, contemptores mundi*”. It is possible that this trend of secular and corporeal renunciation, at least in the earliest Egyptian monasticism, had been influenced by the theology of Gnosticism (Burton Christie 1993: 37-39).

<sup>74</sup> For example, Isidore *Monastic Rule* 1, “*Imprimis, fratres karissimi, monasterium uestrum miram conclauis diligentiam habeat, ut firmitatem custodiae munimenta claustrorum exhibeant; inimicus enim noster diabolus, sicut leo rugiens, circuit ore patenti, quaerens unumquemque nostrum, quem deuoret*”. Note the allusion to 1 Peter 5.8.

community,<sup>75</sup> and the monastic rules are quick to admonish any monk who feigns illness or neglects his work.<sup>76</sup> Self-sufficiency was a pragmatic solution to a community that aimed to have as little interaction as possible with society.<sup>77</sup>

All of the Visigothic monastic are explicit about the importance of manual labour in the life of a monk. Chapter twenty-one of Isidore's monastic rule, entitled "*Quid ad quem pertineat*", gives an impression of the kind of roles that monks were occupied with and activities that took place in a monastery:

*“Ad praepositum enim pertinet [...] satio agrorum, plantatio et cultura uinearum, diligentia gregum, constructio aedificiorum, opus carpentariorum siue fabrorum. Ad custodem sacrarii pertinebit [...] ordinatio quoque linteariorum, fullonum, calceariorum atque sartorum [...] Ad eum qui cellario praeponitur pertinebit [...] horrea, greges ouium et porcorum, lana et linum, de area sollicitudo, cibaria administrandi pistoribus, iumentis, bobus et auibus, industria quoque calceamentorum, cura pastorum, seu piscatorum [...] Ad hortulanum quoque pertinebit munitio custodiaque hortorum, aluearia apum, cura seminum diuersorum, ac denuntiatio quid quando oporteat in horto seri siue plantari”.*

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<sup>75</sup> For example, the *Rule of Isidore* 5, "*Quaecumque autem operantur monachi minibus suis praeposito deferant, praepositus autem principi monachorum [...] nullus monachus amore priuati operis inligetur, sed omnes in commune laborantes patri sine murmuratione obtemperare debent*".

<sup>76</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.

<sup>77</sup> A comparison on this level could be made with some Amish communities, which are similar to early medieval monasteries in various ways. For example, in its strictest adherence, both seek to remain as a separate society and practice self-sufficiency and live according to a set of pre-defined regulations. In reality, adherence to these practices varies from community to community. However, agricultural self-sufficiency and the ability to carry out manual work successfully is essential in many Amish communities in order to have as little contact as possible with the rest of society.

Isidore's description shows a community that utilised heavily agricultural production, for there is mention of viticulture and the planting and sowing of crops. The presence of wine in monasteries is confirmed elsewhere.<sup>78</sup> Linked to this, Isidore also mentions threshing, and elsewhere confirms that the grinding of corn and baking of bread was a monastic activity.<sup>79</sup> The fact that Isidore's description was comparable to practices in other monasteries is suggested by the Common Rule, which, when talking about children, states: "*a pistrino et coquinarum uice excusentur et ab agro et duro labore quieti uacentur*".<sup>80</sup>

Earlier on in his monastic rule, Isidore had mentioned a "*hortulus*", and the gardener here is also given responsibility for apiculture. The *hortulus*, the home of bees and seedlings and an area that Isidore had previously linked physically to the cloister,<sup>81</sup> is presumably in contrast to the *agri*, which were the location of open farmlands outside of the monastery. It is also in these *agri* that one might expect the plethora of animals Isidore refers to, amongst them sheep, pigs and mules, which could be used both for manual work and meat. Isidore's mention of "*lana et linum*" also suggests the use of sheep for making textiles in particular.

The rearing of animals seems to have been widespread, since it is mentioned also in the Rule of Fructuosus and the Common Rule. Valerius of Bierzo also mentions that one monastery lived in fear of cattle raids.<sup>82</sup> Apart from clothing, animals also provided food, including dairy products. The Common Rule suggests that these constituted an important

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<sup>78</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 2.10.

<sup>79</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 21, "*Ars autem pistoria ad laicos pertinebit; ipsi enim triticum purgent; ipsi ex more molant; massam tantum idem monachi conficiant et panem sibi propriis minibus ipsi faciant*".

<sup>80</sup> *Common Rule* 10.

<sup>81</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 1, "*Monasterii autem munitio tantum ianuam secus habebit et unum posticum per qua eatur ad hortum*".

<sup>82</sup> *Ordo quaerimoniae* 9.

part of a monk's diet due to the otherwise poor agricultural conditions.<sup>83</sup> The consumption of meat, however, was regulated. Vegetarianism was an important issue for early Christianity, and had been linked especially to Priscillianism (Ferreiro 2008), and its practice was rooted primarily in a search for corporeal purity, rather than animal welfare;<sup>84</sup> Fructuosus, for example, still permits the eating of fish and meat, as does Isidore. Isidore permitted only a very small amount on Saint's Days and, even then, abstinence from meat was still permissible. At other times, a monk's diet was to be vegetables and beans.<sup>85</sup> An exception to this was a sick monk, who was permitted "*deliciora [...] alimenta*", which probably included meat.<sup>86</sup> The Common Rule is not explicit about the consumption of meat, although the notion that it was limited is suggested by the fact that the elderly monks were expressly permitted it due to their old age.<sup>87</sup> The Rule of Fructuosus is more forthright in its vegetarianism: "*carnem cuiquam nec gustandi neque sumendi est concessa licentia*".<sup>88</sup> Fructuosus makes reference to a theological point of force behind vegetarianism, noting that the practice was "*utilis et apta*", whilst at the same time acknowledging the need for flexibility, especially if a monk is travelling, sick or in the presence of guests.<sup>89</sup> If a monk violated this order, he was subject to confinement to his cell and penance for six months.

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<sup>83</sup> *Common Rule 9, "et insuper uix tribus mensibus per pleraque monasteria abundarentur, si sola cotidiana fuissent paxamacia in hac prouincia plus omnibus terris laboriosa"*.

<sup>84</sup> Note, for example, Isidore of Seville *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.65, "*Non igitur quia carnes malae sunt, ideo prohibentur, sed quia earum epulae carnis luxuriam gignunt, fomes enim ac nutrimentum omnium uitiorum, esca uentri, et uenter escis*"

<sup>85</sup> *Rule of Isidore 9, "Per omnem autem hebdomadam fratres uiles olerum cibos ac pallentia utantur legumina. Diebus uero sanctis interdum cum oleribus leuissimarum cranium alimenta [...] Quicumque ad mensam residens carnibus uel uino abstinere uoluerit non est prohibendus"*.

<sup>86</sup> *Rule of Isidore 22.*

<sup>87</sup> *Common Rule 8, "et carnes et uinum propter imbecillitatem moderate eis praebeantur"*.

<sup>88</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 5.*

<sup>89</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 5, "Non quod creaturam dei iudicemus indignam, sed quod carnis abstinentia utilis et apta monachis extimetur, seruato tamen moderamine pietatis erga aegrotorum necessitudines"*

In addition to the production of food, physical labour also included the many industries required to keep the monks clothed and sheltered. In addition to carpentry and building work, there was a need for a fuller (*fullo*), shoemaker and cobbler (*calcearius, sutor*) and weaver (*lintearius*). A monastery also needed to be run smoothly, and as such the monastic rules describe the day-to-day administration of the community. For example, the sacristan was responsible for loaning books,<sup>90</sup> and Isidore mentions a monk “*cui dispensationis potestas commissa est*”,<sup>91</sup> suggesting a role best translated as ‘bailiff’ or ‘steward’.

## 2.7 Monasteries in Visigothic Society

As Kulikowski (2004: 304) observed, Visigothic society was played out over three fora: the city, the country and ‘the wilderness’. He highlighted that although Visigothic urbanism had indeed changed since the Roman period, political and social life remained, in many aspects, urban. Christianity, however, had given the rural environment an *auctoritas*<sup>92</sup> of its own through, for example, the construction of churches in association with villas, which could attract great congregations: “The wilderness was an alternative locus of power and authority to the city-based, and thus essentially social power of the bishop” (Kulikowski *ibid.*: 304; see also Percival 1997; Ripoll and Arce 2000; Chavarría Arnau 2004: 83-84). The urban episcopate was also mirrored by the powerful figure of the rural hermit. Indeed,

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*uel longe profiscentium qualitates. Ut et uolatilium esibus infirmi sustententur et longinquo itinere destinati, si aut a principe uel episcopo sperantur pro benedictione et obedientia, degustare non metuant”.*

<sup>90</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 8.

<sup>91</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 21.

<sup>92</sup> Activities associated with *desertum/eremus* and *solitudo* were often portrayed positively. However, this must still be contrasted with words such as *rusticus* and *paganus*, which are often negative.

Isidore had warned that paradoxically, the further one attempts to escape from secular life, the more famous one becomes.<sup>93</sup>

Monasteries need to be seen in this context and it should not be doubted that some individuals did try, to the best of their ability, to retreat to isolated areas and remain relatively free from external influence. Much of Visigothic hagiography, for example, talks of individuals who sought to distance themselves as far as possible from the world. This often invokes the *topos* of the reluctant hermit-bishop, removed forcibly from isolation: saint Aemilian, who spent forty years in the wilderness until he was forced to return by Didymus, bishop of Tarazona,<sup>94</sup> and Fructuosus himself, whose attempts to remain hidden in the wilderness were thwarted by a gossiping murder of crows.<sup>95</sup> The remoteness of some monasteries is also given credence by their descriptions in primary sources. For example, concerning Fructuosus' monastery at Nono, his *Life* says: "*Denique in abdita uastaque et a mundana habitatione remota solitudine praecipuum et mirae magnitudinis egregium fundauit cum Dei iuuamine coenobium*".<sup>96</sup> He was eventually followed by Benedicta, for whom he created another settlement, after she had arrived at the monastery "*imperuia et ignota errando deserta*".<sup>97</sup> Fructuosus also founded Rufianum, "*in excelsorum montium finibus*".<sup>98</sup> The description by Valerius of this monastery confirms that it was in a remote location.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 19, "*Nam reuera omnis qui pro quiete a turbis discedit quanto magis a publico separator tanto minus lateat*".

<sup>94</sup> *Life of Saint Aemilian* 12.

<sup>95</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 8.

<sup>96</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 14.

<sup>97</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 14.

<sup>98</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 6.

<sup>99</sup> *Residuum* 1.

In this sense, the monastic rules are clear that monasteries were, to some extent, self-regulating, and decisions on punishment or community matters were made internally. In some cases, the right to settle matters internally had been decreed by the Church councils. The Council of Lérida in 524, for example, recognised the rights of a monastic founder,<sup>100</sup> and the Ninth Council of Toledo in 655, had acknowledged a founder's right to present an abbot.<sup>101</sup> In general, spiritual authority was focussed on the abbot, who needed to be a figure that would instil through his example the *praecepta* of the Fathers; all three of the monastic rules are keen to emphasise that an abbot should be of outstanding and proven moral character.<sup>102</sup> The abbot was also the supreme head of a monastery, with the Common Rule suggesting that monks should be "*obedientes [...] abbati usque ad mortem*".<sup>103</sup> The spiritual power of the abbot in the community is hinted at by the Common Rule, which complains that those monasteries which were "*uulgares et ignari*" elected similarly debauched abbots who could legitimise their actions through their blessings.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, obedience was owed to any monk who was an elder due to their spiritual authority.

As a functioning community, a monastery also required pragmatic legislative structures; since large parts of the monastic rules are taken up with punishments for monks who behaved inappropriately, it seems probable that legislative matters had to be frequently enforced. Indeed, Visigothic Iberia is well-known for its law-making, and the authors of the

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<sup>100</sup> Canon 3.

<sup>101</sup> Canon 2.

<sup>102</sup> For example: *Common Rule* 10, "*talem sibi consuetudinem debent facere abbates ut omnem cupiditatem et auaritiam a se radicitus arceantur*".

<sup>103</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

<sup>104</sup> *Common Rule* 1, "*Ac qualiter haec disrumpant in prima dudum conuersatione excogitant, et uulgares et ignari cum sint, talem praeesse sibi abbatem desiderant ut ubi se uoluerint conuertere quasi cum benedictione suas uoluntates faciant*".

monastic rules demonstrate that they are aware of certain legal aspects by making reference to secular law when comparing what happens in a monastery.<sup>105</sup> Examples of bad behaviour ranged from, in modern eyes at least, minor transgressions such as drunkenness, telling jokes or eating secretly, to the more serious, such as sexual abuse. Whilst the monastic rules set out guidelines for punishing such crimes, they also reveal how control was kept in Visigothic monasteries. Although the abbot was the head of the monastery, there existed a hierarchical power system: “*iuiores in decanis, decani in praepositis, praepositi in abbatibus*”.<sup>106</sup> The priors were in control primarily of administrative matters, although they could also exercise authority on a par with the abbot.<sup>107</sup> The deans, meanwhile, were in charge of groups of ten monks, who administered to daily moral and practical needs.<sup>108</sup> Finally, there were regular assemblies held in order to hear complaints, deal punishment to monks, or administer forgiveness to monks once they had received punishment.

Nevertheless, it was not always the case that monasteries remained isolated. Some were simply famous and attracted converts; Valerius, for example, had purposefully sought out the monastery of Compludo.<sup>109</sup> Famous hermits also attracted followers. A certain John,

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<sup>105</sup> For example, *Common Rule* 19, “*In lege habetur ut quis cui quantum intulerit damnum, aut fecerit caedem, aut commouerit ultionem, iudicis dirimatur iudicio; et de numerositate solidorum ad suum reducatur arbitrium, ne fortasse persona potens damnet oppressum, et qui legali censura centenarium habebat incurrere damnum, tertiam reddat, quod de liberis continetur*”; *Rule of Isidore* 20, “*Abbati uel monacho monasterii seruum non licebit facere liberum: qui enim nihil proprium habet, libertatem rei alienae dare non debet. Nam sicut saeculi leges sanxerunt, non potest alienari possessio, nisi a proprio domino: ita et omne quod in monasterio in nummo ingreditur, sub testimonio seniorum accipiendum*”.

<sup>106</sup> *Common Rule* 12.

<sup>107</sup> *Common Rule* 11, “*In potestate habeant praepositi omnem regulam monasterii, et tales praepositi eligantur quales et ipsi abates dinoscantur*”.

<sup>108</sup> *Common Rule* 12.

<sup>109</sup> *Ordo quaerimoniae* 1.

for example, attracted a *conuersus* called Saturnino “from faraway lands”. His hut, where he lived as hermit, was later burnt down by a forest fire, stoked in part by the dry manure left on the ground by the animals used by people to come and visit him.<sup>110</sup> One must also question how isolated such communities really were when a certain monk called John was decapitated by a possessed local peasant (*rusticus*) whilst praying in a monastery.<sup>111</sup> There is no indication that it was particularly difficult for the peasant to gain access to the community. In another tale, a layman called Basil went to a monastery to visit the monk Saturnino, mentioned above, because of a medical problem with his hand.<sup>112</sup>

As a Christian institution, moreover, monasteries could not exist unchecked by the wider Church authorities, a situation which could quickly lead to heresy; this was a situation, in fact, that had been the complaint made by the opening chapters of the Common Rule. The role of the various Church councils for which Visigothic Iberia is famous for has been studied recently (Stocking 2000; also Vives 1963), and it is clear that these gatherings sought, in some cases, to regulate monastic life. These councils were made up primarily of bishops, who, since the Council of Chalcedon in 451, had been given authority over monasteries. The First Council of Barcelona in 540 reaffirmed this for a Visigothic audience,<sup>113</sup> whilst the third canon of the Council of Lerida in 546 stated that monastic rules had to be approved by a bishop.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, in medieval historiography, abbatial authority is a position that is often synonymous with episcopal authority, a notion that is often upheld even in the early medieval

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<sup>110</sup> Valerius of Bierzo *Replicatio* 7.

<sup>111</sup> Valerius of Bierzo *Replicatio* 14.

<sup>112</sup> Valerius of Bierzo *Replicatio* 12.

<sup>113</sup> Canon 10, “*De monachis uero id obseruari praecipimus quod synodus Chalcedonensis constituit*”.

<sup>114</sup> “*ubi congregatio non colligitur uel regula ab episcopo non constituitur, ea a diocesana lege audeat segregare*”.

primary sources.<sup>115</sup> In some cases, the monastic rules themselves specify that external authority had to be sought; the Common Rule, for example, states that if a complaint is issued against the monastery itself, then the abbot must turn over its investigation to a qualified layman.<sup>116</sup>

The question also deserves to be asked: if monasteries were potentially rearing flocks, farming and exploiting the land, where were they doing this? Areas of impenetrable wilderness do not generally lend themselves to agriculture, yet some monasteries seem to have also been communities that could own large amounts of land. References to keeping cattle and flocks or agricultural activities must presume at least a small amount of land, but when monks complained that they spent so long away from their duties of *opus Dei* shepherding flocks that they would lose their heavenly reward, it must be imagined that these comprised sizeable estates (notwithstanding, of course, complaints driven by monks with an aversion to physical effort).<sup>117</sup>

In her masterly study, Wood (2006) has traced the development of the proprietary Church and shown that endowment and patronage was alive and well in Visigothic Iberia (*ibid.*: 18-25; also Dodds (1990: 12); an in-depth and comparative study of the topic in early medieval Italy can be found in Costambeys (2007)). Despite the lack of surviving cartulary

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<sup>115</sup> For example, Bede in reference to Lindisfarne (*Life of Cuthbert* 16), “*Neque aliquis miretur, quod in eadem insula Lindisfarnea, cum permodica sit, et supra episcopi, et nunc abbatis ac monachorum esse locum dixerimus; reuera enim ita est*”. However, this was not always the case, and Gregory the Great had gone so far as to oppose vehemently such a union. For a discussion of the historical evolution of the abbot, see Salmon (1972: 3-48).

<sup>116</sup> *Common Rule* 3.

<sup>117</sup> *Common Rule* 9, “*et quia solent nonnulli qui greges custodiunt murmurare et nullam se pro tali seruitio putant habere mercedem cum se in congregatione orantes et laborantes minime uidentur, audient quid dicunt patrum regulae*”.

evidence, which has been used skilfully for later periods to help reconstruct the historical context (e.g. Davies 2007), Visigothic literature suggests substantial levels of patronage and benefaction and the construction of monasteries on private land. Indeed, the Common Rule reveals that monasteries and churches were being created on private estates, a process reminiscent of the *ad hoc* creation of early churches in Late Roman *villae*.<sup>118</sup> Valerius also reveals that he was taken to a church on an estate owned by a certain Ricimer.<sup>119</sup> It is also apparent from a story concerning a certain Paul, a bishop of Merida, that private donations to the church did occur. Having miraculously cured a woman of an illness, she and her husband donated half their land to the bishop, with the other half to be donated once they had died. Although Paul at first refused the donation, the lands given to him were of such size that he became a great landowner.<sup>120</sup> Although there is no explicit mention of Paul founding a monastery, he was certainly involved in a monastic orbit, since he later sent his long-lost nephew to a monastery as an oblate.<sup>121</sup> There is also a story of a chapel being built at a monastery “through the munificent bounty of good Christians”.<sup>122</sup> The influence of patrons or bishops meant that monasteries could also play a role in the political landscape. For example, the sixth-century saint Desiderius was banished to an island monastery after being accused falsely of rape by a mentally ill woman called, ironically, Iusta.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *Common Rule* 1, “*Solent enim nonnulli ob metum gehennae in suis sibi domibus monasteria componere et cum uxoribus filiis et seruis atque uicinis cum sacramenti conditione in unum se copulare et in suis sibi ut diximus uillis et nomine martyrum ecclesias consecrare et eas tale nomine monasteria nuncupare*”.

<sup>119</sup> *Ordo quaerimoniae* 4.

<sup>120</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 4.

<sup>122</sup> Valerius of Bierzo *Replicatio* 9.

<sup>123</sup> Sisebut *Life of Desiderius* 4.

The monastic rules, in addition, reference the fact that monasteries were in some instances institutions that were far from isolated from the rest of society. The presence of external guests is much attested. Admittedly, a portion of this traffic could have been visitors who were already involved in the monastic orbit, such as visiting monks or abbots, or members of the monastery who were setting out on their own journey. Certainly the monastic rules make it clear that monks might travel to other monasteries,<sup>124</sup> or even to courts and palaces.<sup>125</sup> It also occurred that monks themselves mixed with society outside of the monastery. Reference to trips ‘into town’ are common, and Isidore even refers to a monastic cell located inside the town that was to be watched over by a chosen monk with two young helpers, nominally for as long as the monk is able.<sup>126</sup> The Rule of Fructuosus also sets out punishment for those monks who attempt to visit surrounding villages or farms without permission.<sup>127</sup> One is perhaps reminded of the ninth-century monk Isaac, who was the first to give his life in the martyrs of Cordoba incident after insulting the Islamic prophet Mohammed whilst on a trip into town from his monastery in Tabanos.<sup>128</sup>

Importantly, the monastic rules suggest that the congregational make-up of the *sanctus coetus* attracted converts from throughout the social spectrum. There are complaints

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<sup>124</sup> Isidore, for example, details how a monk should behave when visiting other monasteries: *Monastic Rule 24*, “*monachus dum ad alium monasterium mittitur uisitandum quamdiu cum eis fuerit ad quos destinatus est, ita eum ibi oportet uiuere sicut reliquum coetum sanctorum uidet*”.

<sup>125</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 5*, “*si aut a principe uel episcopo sperantur pro benedictione et obedientia, degustare non metuant, seruantes apud se de reliquo continentiam consuetam*”.

<sup>126</sup> *Monastic Rule 21*, “*ad custodiendam autem in urbe cellam unus senior et grauissimus monachorum cum duobus paruulis monachis constituendus est, ibique si culpa caret conuenit eum perpetim perdurare*”.

<sup>127</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 23*, “*Ceterum uicos uillasque cicuire adque ad saecularem possessionem accedere non licebit*”.

<sup>128</sup> Eulogius of Cordoba *Memoriale sanctorum 2*.

of converts who have lives so lowly in the secular world that they seek fame as a monk;<sup>129</sup> of rich converts who decide quickly to return to the secular world and demand their wealth be returned;<sup>130</sup> of entire families entering a monastery;<sup>131</sup> of old converts who simply want to be well looked after.<sup>132</sup> The Common Rule suggests the true spectrum: “*siue liberi siue serui [...] diuites an pauperes, coniugati an uirgines, stulti an sapientes, inscii an artifices, infantuli an senes*”.<sup>133</sup> It seems also to have happened that runaway slaves requested entry to escape their servitude.<sup>134</sup>

Both the rule of Isidore and the Rule of Fructuosus seem to have been written in the first instance for male communities, for there is no mention of female ascetics. However, in each case it is extremely likely that both authors came into contact with female communities: Isidore mentions them elsewhere<sup>135</sup> and his sister Florentina was a nun, whilst Fructuosus, if his *Life* is to be believed, attracted female followers such as Benedicta, who in turn attracted a following of some eighty nuns in the wilderness.<sup>136</sup> The Common Rule makes explicit

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<sup>129</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 19, “*nam plerique proinde reclusi latere uolunt ut pateant; ut qui uiles erant aut ignorantur foris positi sciuntur adque honorentur inclusi*”.

<sup>130</sup> *Common Rule* 18, “*Conperimus per minus cauta monasteria qui cum facultaticulis suis ingressi sunt, postea tepefactos cum grande exprobatone repetere*”.

<sup>131</sup> *Common Rule* 6, “*Cum uenerit quispiam cum uxore uel filiis paruulis id est infra septem annos, placuit sanctae communi regulae ut tam parentes quam filii in potestatem se tradant abbatis*”.

<sup>132</sup> *Common Rule* 8, “*Solent plerique nouicii senes uenire ad monasterium et multos ex his cognoscimus necessitatis inbecillitate polliceri pactum non ob religionis obtentum*”.

<sup>133</sup> *Common Rule* 4.

<sup>134</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 20, “*Abbati uel monacho monasterii seruorum non liceat facere liberum*”; *Common Rule* 4, “*Quod si serui sunt non recipiantur, nisi libertatem a proprio domino prae manibus adtulerint praesentendam*”.

<sup>135</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.16.17, “*Simili quoque modo exstant et coenobia feminarum Deo solliciti casteque seruentium, quae in habitaculis suis segregatae ac remotae a uiris quam longissime pia tantum sanctitatis charitate iunguntur, et imitatione uirtutis*”.

<sup>136</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 15.

mention of double monasteries, the only Visigothic monastic rule to do so, and chapters fifteen, sixteen and seventeen are devoted to promoting the absolute segregation of monks and nuns in such communities, and enforcing harsh punishments for those who do not do so.<sup>137</sup> In other regions, double monasteries were frequent, and the Common Rule suggests that at least in some parts of Iberia this may also have been the case.

Apart from adults, children were also present in Visigothic monasteries, a situation which must have been relatively frequent due to the act of child oblation. Oblation was widely practiced in the early medieval period, arising from both a theological impulse to dedicate a child to God and, no doubt in some cases, from economic necessity in overstretched families (Quinn 1989; de Jong 1996). The practice is widely attested in Visigothic Iberia (Orlandis 1963). The Fourth Council of Toledo (633), for example, had discussed the presence of child oblates,<sup>138</sup> and it was later agreed that they must be no older than ten years old.<sup>139</sup> As will be seen below, it is possible that these children were sometimes subject to sexual abuse, although other references to them in the monastic rules are less sinister. For example, the Common Rule refers to parents bringing their children when they convert, after

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<sup>137</sup> *Common Rule* 15, “*Et qui talia facere praesumat, cum cautione admoneatur, quod abusiue habuerit monachorum praecepta, et hanc secundo geminauerit culpam uerberatus denuo carceri mancipetur; aut si poenitere noluerit, foras proiiciatur*”. Interestingly, saint Aemilian was slandered because he lived with female helpers when he was eighty and older, who bathed him: *Life of Aemilian* 23, “*Nam quia in tanta peruenerat longa aetate, eo peruenit necessitatis, ut cum hydropis laboraret inualetudine, ab eisdem sanctis feminis corpus suum lauare sineret, et ipse ab omni illicito sensu alienus esset*”. This situation is reminiscent of the *subintroductae* of antiquity, who were also often chastised (Cloke 1995: 77-81)

<sup>138</sup> Canon 49, “*monachum aut paterna deuotio aut propria professio facit*”.

<sup>139</sup> Tenth Council of Toledo, canon 6, “*Parentibus sane filios suos religioni contradere non amplius quam usque ad decimum aetatis eorum annum licentia poterit esse*”.

which they are to be trained in the way of life of the monastery,<sup>140</sup> and Isidore notes that they were to eat alongside the monks.<sup>141</sup> The presence of children is also suggested in other sources. Ildefonsus of Toledo, for example, mentions two monks called Iustus and Eugene, who had both been brought up as children in the monastery of Agali.<sup>142</sup>

Notwithstanding those who were dedicated to a religious life, Visigothic monasteries were also occupied by other inhabitants. Lay members (*laici*) are accounted for, who worked and lived alongside the monks and held specific responsibilities. Isidore, for example, notes that fishing was a practice that belonged to lay people, who also had to grind corn. Monks could then make the bread for themselves, but lay servants would also make bread for guests and the sick.<sup>143</sup> Monks also worked alongside lay workers. For example, when building a new chapel, one monastery needed to bring in hired workmen.<sup>144</sup> Sometimes they were thought to have been a bad influence. Isidore, for example, mentions that secular workers would sing “*amatoria turpia*” and tell stories whilst they worked, an act which monks should rise above by meditating or chanting.<sup>145</sup> Isidore also notes that the *laici* were not permitted to eat together with the monks.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *Common Rule* 6.

<sup>141</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 9.

<sup>142</sup> *On the Lives of Famous Men* 7, 12.

<sup>143</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 21, “*ars autem pistoria ad laicos pertinebit; ipsi enim triticum purgent, ipsi ex more molant; massam tantundem monachi conficiant et panem sibi propriis manibus ipsi faciant. Porro hospitibus uel infirmis laici faciant panes*”.

<sup>144</sup> Valerius of Bierzo *Replicatio* 9.

<sup>145</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5, “*Si enim saeculares opifices inter ipsos labores suorum operum amatoria turpia cantare non desinunt atque ita ora sua in cantibus et fabulis implicant ut ab opere manus non subtrahant, quanto magis seruui Christi qui sic minibus operare debent, ut semper laudem dei in ore habeant et linguis eius psalmis et hymnis inseruiant*”.

<sup>146</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 9, “*Laici ministri mensis monachorum nullatenus intereunt, neque enim poterit illis mensae communis esse locus quibus est diuersus propositus*”.

## 2.8 Regional Variation and the Peculiarity of ‘Galician’ Monasticism

By the seventh century, the Visigothic kingdom had officially adopted Catholicism following the conversion of King Reccared in 587, although the extent of the impact of Arianism has nevertheless always been one of debate (Collins 2004: 64-69).<sup>147</sup> However, this fact should not suggest an underlying cultural unity, and monastic practice was bound to differ across the peninsula. In the first instance, the Iberian Peninsula is very large, covering almost 600,000 square kilometres, and contains diverse landscapes and climates that would give rise naturally to variations in daily habits and diet. In addition to geographical variation, the Visigothic period was witness to a diverse cultural landscape, ranging from a more urban and previously romanized south to a previously less romanized and rural north (Hillgarth 1980: 6).

Nevertheless, the north-west of the peninsula stands out as being a particularly active centre of monastic activity. As Barlow (1969: 149) noted: “The general works on monastic history neglect the important fact that in almost every respect Galician particularism departed from the peninsular norm”. It is true that the evidence that survives for the history of the early church and monasticism in Visigothic Iberia is particularly favourable towards the

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<sup>147</sup> It seems clear that hierarchies co-existed for both Arians and Catholics in Iberia, and their presence here is not to be doubted. Canon nine of the Third Council of Toledo in 589, for example, makes reference to Arian churches which found themselves in a new diocese after the conversion to Catholicism. Arianism did not seem to have an impact on the rise and establishment of asceticism. There seemed to have existed no barriers between Arian theology and ascetic practice, a fact observable from the pro-active attempts of writers such as Athanasius to dissuade Arians from such a path in works such as his *History of the Arians* and a possible earlier pamphlet (Brakke 1995: 129-141).

region of Gallaecia: the Rules of Fructuosus and the Common Rule are attributed to this region, and are complemented by the *Life of Fructuosus*; Martin of Braga was active in this region and wrote about it; the region produced notable writers such as Orosius, Hydatius, Valerius of Bierzo and John of Biclario; the monastery at Dumio produced notable writers such as Paschasius of Dumio and so on. For a region that is often considered to be at the edge of the Roman world, in the Visigothic period it is positively cosmopolitan. Notwithstanding the émigré Martin of Braga, both Orosius and Egeria, if her Iberian origin is accepted, had travelled from there. There was even a see called Britonia, founded in Galicia by Britons fleeing the Germanic migrations in the sixth century (Tovar 1972; Young 2003); their bishop, Mailoc, signed the Acts of the Second Council of Braga in 572.

However, Barlow's phrasing is unfortunate. It cannot be known whether Galician practice diverted from a peninsular norm, if indeed there ever was any widely established Iberian 'normal' practice, or whether simply more evidence survives, or perhaps was written in the first place, for the Galician example. On a very general level, the monastic rules are very similar, including to those which were written outside the peninsula. This is especially the case in the importance attached to the monastic office and the *opus Dei*. The Rule of Isidore in particular mentions certain areas of a monk's life that are not discussed in the other monastic rules, but that must have nevertheless been a part of daily life. His chapter twenty-five, for example, concerns what happens when a monk dies, a situation referred to only in passing by the Rule of Fructuosus, which mentions that monks might die in their sleep.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 2, "ut fidem suam puram coram domino ostendentes, si quod dubium non est, fieri uel accidere ut nocturno quisquam tempore euocetur e corpora, commendatam iam suam fidem et criatam ab omni scandalo conscientiam proferat ante dominium"*.

However, there are some noticeable differences which could have given rise to regional variation detectable in the monastic rules. The Rule of Fructuosus certainly presents peculiarities in daily life that are not seen elsewhere in the Visigothic monastic rules: the monks are permitted to wear trousers, although Fructuosus admits that this does not happen in other monasteries;<sup>149</sup> there is mention of the keeping of flocks due to the poverty of the soil which, although mentioned in the Rule of Isidore, is heavily emphasised in Fructuosus; there is reference to the eating of salt-water fish, presumably not readily available to monasteries far from the coast or tidal rivers.<sup>150</sup>

In many aspects, the Common Rule and the Rule of Fructuosus are far harsher than the Rule of Isidore, leading some to postulate a harsher ascetic existence in the north. The employment of physical punishments such as beatings and floggings and solitary confinements are referred to in the Rule of Fructuosus, whereas they are largely absent in Isidore. Thus, a monk who is frequently quarrelsome is to be corrected severely with blows and fed only small amounts of bread and water, whilst those who lie, steal, strike or swear falsely must, if they remain unreformed, be flogged severely and be secluded in a cell for three months.<sup>151</sup> The Common Rule encourages children to be whipped.<sup>152</sup> That such punishments did occur is suggested by a scene in the *Lives of the Fathers of Merida*, where an

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<sup>149</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 4, “*Femoralium usus cuiquam est permittendus, maxime his qui ministerio altaris implicatur. Sed et hoc qui studere noluerit reprehendendus non erit cum nunc usque constet pleraque hunc usum monasteria etiam in his regionibus non habere*”.

<sup>150</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 5, “*Uiuant enim solis oleribus et leguminibus raroque pisciculis fluuiialibus uel marinis*”.

<sup>151</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 16.

<sup>152</sup> *Common Rule* 6, “*Quodsi in aliquot quae diximus deprehensi fuerint, continuo ab ipso suo decano uirga emendentur*”.

abbot orders the wayward monk Renovatus to be flogged, placed on rations and detained in a cell.<sup>153</sup>

However, although Isidore also refers to the use of whips, especially for the punishment of children, he places far more emphasis on the use of excommunication as a deterrent. Indeed, approaches to punishment can sometimes be very different between monastic rules. In discussing the punishment for monks who engage in sexual acts with *adolescentes*, for example, Fructuosus demands the following:

*“Monachus paruulorum aut adolescentium consecrator, uel qui osculo, uel qualibet occasione turpi deprehensus fuerit inhiare, comprobata patenter per accusatores uerissimos, siue testes, causa, publice uerberetur; coronam capitis, quam gestat, amittat, decaluatusque turpiter opprobrio pateat; omniumque sputamentis oblitus in facie, probraque aequae suscipiat; uinculisque arctatus ferreis, carcerali sex mensibus angustia maceretur; et triduana per hebdomadas singulas refectione panis exigui hordeacei uespertino tempore subleuetur. Post deinde expletis his mensibus, aliis sex mensibus succedentibus sub senioris spiritalis custodia, segregata in corticula degens, opere manuum et oratione continua sit contentus; uigiliis et fletibus, et humilitate, subiectus, et poenitentiae lamentis ueniam percipiat; et sub custodia semper et sollicitudine duorum spiritalium fratrum in monasterio ambulet, nulla priuata locutione uel concilio deinceps iuuenibus coniungendus.”*

Fructuosus might be referring here to homosexual practices between two adults, rather than the sexual abuse of children. *Adolescentia*, at least according to Isidore, was a period from fourteen to twenty-eight years of age, and so the implication here might be of a

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<sup>153</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 2.8.

relationship between an elder and junior monk, or of an oblate that had grown up in the monastery. In addition, references to homosexual practices between monks are relatively frequent in the monastic rules, and this was a situation echoed throughout many early medieval monasteries (Boswell 1984: 169-206). The use of the word *paruulus*, however, presumably intended to refer to those who were not yet *adolescenti*, is more concerning and could imply something sexually more sinister. Indeed, the sexual abuse of children had been a feature even of the earliest Egyptian monasticism (Schroeder 2009). The point here, however, is not that the abuse of children merited punishment, but rather that Fructuosus demands a comparatively harsher punishment than does Isidore, who also talks of older monks attempting sexual advances towards *paruuli*. However, in his monastic rule this crime is treated as being equal to theft, punishment and scorning a superior and merited excommunication.

The pastoral role of a monastery was similarly subject to variation. Isidore, for example, is very explicit in his warning that a monk must not be ejected from a monastery, “*ne forte qui poterat per diuturna tempora paenitentiam emendari, dum proicitur ore diaboli deuoretur*”.<sup>154</sup> The Common Rule, on the other hand, advises that those monks who do not reform their bad behaviour are simply to be expelled from the monastery.<sup>155</sup> Similarly, Isidore makes it relatively simple to join a monastery, requiring only a three month period as a postulant, to be spent in the service of hospitality.<sup>156</sup> The Rule of Fructuosus and the Common Rule, however, make it decidedly more difficult. The Rule of Fructuosus demands

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<sup>154</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 16.

<sup>155</sup> *Common Rule* 14, “*Quod is in malo perseuerans perdurauerit et prona uoluntate paenitentiam agere noluerit [...] in conlacione deductus exuatur monasterii uestibus et induatur quibus olim adduxerat saecularibus; et cum confusionis nota a monasterio expellatur ut ceteri emendentur, dum fortasse solus tali correptione ille delinquens corrigitur*”.

<sup>156</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.

that a potential convert stand by the door of the monastery for ten days in prayer and fast, and then spend a subsequent year residing in a special cell outside the inner sanctuary (from which he is prohibited from entering) and in the service of hospitality.<sup>157</sup> The Common Rule demands a postulant to spend three days and nights outside the gates of the monastery, subject to continual rebuke from existing monks.<sup>158</sup>

The Common Rule, however, stands out as being of particular interest for two reasons. In the first instance, it is the only Visigothic monastic rule that refers to meetings of local abbots, hinting at some sort of local *confoederatio*:

*“Secundo ut per capita mensium abbates de uno confinio uno se copulentur loco et mensuales laetantias strenue celebrent et pro animabus sibi subditis auxilium domini implorent. Quia de ipsis in tremendo iudicio cum grandi discussione sperent se Deo reddere rationem. Tertio qualiter cotidie uiuere debeant ibi disponant et tamquam a saionibus comprehensi ad cellas reuertant reuoluant subplaciti”*.<sup>159</sup>

This is the only reference in the Visigothic sources to hint at the existence of group communality outside an individual monastery. It is known that Fructuosus was an avid founder of monasteries, and it seems only sensible that monasteries sharing the same founder, and possibly monastic rule, might have recognised aspects of a shared heritage. However, there is no explicit evidence from Visigothic Iberia for the transferral of monastic rules from one institution to another, or at least the adoption of a stated monastic rule by a founder or abbot.

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<sup>157</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 21.

<sup>158</sup> *Common Rule* 4.

<sup>159</sup> *Common Rule* 10.

In the second instance, one of the principle differences often suggested for Galician monasticism is the presence of pactualism. The *pactum* is the name given to a document attached to the end of the Common Rule that constitutes a contract between the novitiate and the abbot, highlighting precisely the expectations of both. It has been translated by Barlow (1969: 207-209). The issues raised by pactualism are complex and have aroused substantial debate, shaping the entire outline of pre-Cistercian Iberian monastic history (for a fuller discussion, see Bernaldo 1991). Herwegen (1907) was the first to focus attention on the issue, identifying a total of six pactual texts. He presumed the oldest, and hence original, to be that attached to the Common Rule. Amongst the other texts he included was the *Consensoria monachorum*, a similar text that was once attributed to Augustine but now widely held to be contemporary with the *pactum* (Bishko 1948a). He proposed three central tenets: *Gründungsformel*, the foundation of an ascetic community; *Professformel*, the commitment, or *traditio*, of the convert to ascetic life; *Wahlinstrument*, the declaration of the choice of abbot. For Herwegen, the pact mirrored the Germanic warrior habit of swearing an oath before the collective leader, and so “the Luso-Gallegan monastic pactum [...] embodied the substitution of Germanic juridical concepts for the Roman law principles of normal monasticism, and brought into being a peculiarly bilateral or synallagmatic contractual cenobial policy, in sharp contrast with that founded upon the canonical monarchical abbatiates” (Bishko 1984: 4). It was his opinion that pactualism disappeared under the rise of Benedictinisation in the eleventh century.

Bishko (1984) took Herwegen’s theory one step further after having identified even more pactual texts and noting its rather sudden appearance in ninth- and tenth-century La Rioja and Castile. It was his opinion that pactualism originated in north-west Iberia but was

spread elsewhere in the peninsula following the repopulation of eastern areas (or even ‘population’ of no man’s land border areas) after the Reconquest by the movement of monks into those regions. This was a popular tactic not only in the Christianisation of the regions but also as establishments for the military orders that were involved in the conflict. However, Mundò (1957) radicalised the theory by suggesting that all Iberian monasticism prior to 711 was pactual, based on earlier references to a ‘*pactum*’, such as that of the “*pactum uirginitatis*” in the thirteenth canon of the Council of Elvira. He even ascribed one pactual text to Isidore himself, and therefore saw the Galician version to be an adaption or innovation, rather than an original. Finally, Pérez de Urbel (1963) adapted Mundò’s theory and proposed that not only was all Iberian monasticism pre-711 pactual, but that its sudden appearance in the later middle ages in the central peninsula was due to the presence of monastic refugees from the south fleeing the Muslim invasions.

Whatever its origins, pactualism appears to be both a confined and peripheral phenomenon, existing in antiquity perhaps only in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula (Díaz 2001). In this sense it is one of the many factors that distinguish Visigothic practice from other parts of Western Europe. It is also an important factor during the Middle Ages, when the isolation of the peninsula under Muslim rule may have fostered the consolation of pactualism, and it was important during the repopulation of Castile when there is evidence that pactualism was exported to the newly conquered regions (MacKay 1977: 22-24). The history of pactualism after the Visigothic period is an interesting story and may reveal something about its status in early peninsular history. The Common Rule signifies the end of autochthonous regular literature until the anonymous *Libellus a regula sancti Benedicti subtractus*, composed in Rioja Alta in the ninth century and chronologically outside the scope of this study. However, it is significant because during the repopulation of regions taken

from Muslim control, it would appear that new monastic foundations included elements of practicalism in their regular literature. This led Bishko (1948a) to argue that not only was practicalism wide-spread in the northern peninsula but that it was preferred over Mozarabic monastic structures.

Nevertheless, the origins of practicalism have traditionally divided the major scholars of Hispanic monasticism. This debate has been silent over the last few generations, mainly due to the fact that the position of Mundò and his followers is difficult to uphold in the face of the lack of evidence for it. However, any idea that the inhabitants of seventh century Galicia were simply more democratic is without basis, and exactly why this form of monasticism should take place in this region and not elsewhere is difficult to explain. It was the opinion of Bishko (1984: 22) that practicalism not only helped to attract converts to an otherwise failing monastic initiative, but also served to alleviate the pressures of the arguing and troubled episcopate that had caused trouble in the region by localising power and authority to the abbot.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Bishko (1984: 22). He draws upon evidence from Valerius's *De genere monachorum*, some passages from which have been used in this Chapter, which talk about the problems facing monasticism in this corner of the Iberian Peninsula.

## 2.9 Conclusions

The Visigothic sources make it clear that monasticism was a marked feature of seventh-century Iberia. The monastic rules, meanwhile, present a picture of monastic practice that in some ways remained faithful to the ideals of the Desert Fathers, yet in others had developed substantial differences. In the first instance, the notion of the *opus Dei* seems to have been alive and well, although monastic rules were also aware of the pragmatic needs of the monastery. As such, the lives of monks were taken up with physical work for both the good of the community and their souls. Monasteries, moreover, were institutions that had developed a long way past individual collections of anchorites in the wilderness. Instead, they were communities that existed as part of the Visigothic landscape, rather than detached from it. In many senses they were not closed communities but could possess substantial links with the outside world and a congregation made up of all the social strata.

Seventh-century Visigothic monasticism was subject to some degree of variation in its practice throughout Iberia. Exactly how life was played out in the ‘unofficial’ monasteries is impossible to be clear about, but monks in those monasteries which followed one of the three surviving monastic rules were likely to experience different approaches to monastic life in varying scales. In many ways, however, the issue of regional differentiation is a difficult one. The fact that any given practice is only mentioned in one monastic rule, for example, does not necessarily exclude the practice from occurring elsewhere: absence of evidence does not signify evidence of absence. That said, many scholars have been quick to define Galician monasticism in particular as being characterised by certain attributes not found elsewhere.

However, the lack of primary evidence means that such models of practice unfortunately cannot be reconstructed for other parts of the peninsula.

### **Chapter Three: Literacy, Monastic Rules and Textual Communities**

*“ego homo rusticus sum et terrenis operibus iugiter occupatus sum; lectionem diuinam nec audire possum nec legere”*<sup>161</sup>

#### **3.1 Introduction: Literacy, Monasticism and Visigothic Iberia**

Isidore, in his *Sententiae*, stated that: *“Melius est enim conferre quam legere”*.<sup>162</sup> The reason behind his preference for speaking (‘conferre’),<sup>163</sup> rather than reading (‘legere’), was the following: *“cum est utilis ad instruendum lectio, adhibita autem collatione maiorem intelligentiam praebet”*.<sup>164</sup> The quote suggests two important points: first, that orality held an important place in Visigothic society, and that it was easier in some circumstances to communicate orally, perhaps because the audience could not read (whatever the semantics of this suggestion); second, that in spite of this, reading (‘lectio’) was also useful (‘utilis’), implying that it played equally an important role in Visigothic society.

Isidore’s statement summarises neatly the *status quaestionis* of early medieval literacy: traditionally, it was a topic largely dismissed by scholars, who preferred the image of Dark Age decline and Renaissance recovery, with the ‘illiterate’ Middle Ages in-between (Everett 1999: 543); yet the late-twentieth century saw scholars begin to challenge seriously this idea and show how important written culture actually was. The area is now notable instead for its vitality in modern scholarship, particularly thanks to series such as the *Utrecht*

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<sup>161</sup> Caesarius of Arles *Sermo* 63.

<sup>162</sup> *Sententiae* 3.14.1.

<sup>163</sup> Latin *confero*, ‘to discuss, interchange ideas’, has a far wider semantic range than simply referring to speech. However, this use is attested throughout the Classical period. For example, Cicero, *Philippics* 2.38, “*An ille quemquam plus dilexit, cum ullo aut sermones aut consilia contulit saepius?*”

<sup>164</sup> *Sententiae* 3.14.1.

*Studies in Medieval Literacy*.<sup>165</sup> The study of literacy in the ancient world, meanwhile, is marked by both its relative novelty as a subject of serious academic study and the divided opinions it creates. Harris (1989) was amongst the first to tackle seriously the issue from a wide diachronic perspective and, although his study sparked various responses, the subject is likewise particularly active in modern scholarship.<sup>166</sup>

In light of modern developments in scholarship, this chapter will investigate the role of monastic rules as written documents in Visigothic monasteries. In doing so, it will take into account two important factors. First, an important change that took place between the classical Greco-Roman period and Late Antique and early medieval society was the rise of Christianity. As McKitterick (1989: 1) stated: “in societies whose religion was one of the book and whose government and legal practices were founded, to a greater or lesser extent, on the written word, it cannot be maintained that they were purely oral societies”. Indeed, the study of early Christianity, often labelled as a ‘religion of the book’, has raised important questions about the way written texts were approached and used by early Christian communities, in particular from linguistic and sociological perspectives. The former approach will be dealt with later in this thesis; with regard to the latter, it is sufficient to state here that the debates surrounding issues of literacy and the use of the written word in early Christian communities include some of the most exciting of modern historical scholarship.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> For example, see McKitterick (1989) and (1990); Pryce (2006) Thompson (1939); Wormald (1977); Bäuml (1980); Clanchy (1979); Shieffer (1996); Mostert (1999); Everett (2003). An excellent overview of the topic can be found in Briggs (2000).

<sup>166</sup> For example, Havelock (1981), Humphrey (1991); Bowman & Woolf (1994); Morgan (1998); Johnson & Parker (2008).

<sup>167</sup> For example, Botha (1992); Jefferey (1996); Haines-Eitzen (2000).

Second, of particular relevance to this thesis is the common historiographical *topos* of the union between monastic life and medieval literacy. This can be gleaned from two quotes: “Because of the need to read the Bible and the Rule and to chant psalms, it was essential that monks be literate, and therefore monasteries became centres of literacy and education. Even as early as the fifth and sixth centuries, it was becoming clear that the Roman level of literacy was disappearing. Monasteries became refuges for learning” (Butt 2002: 123); and, “one must, in the monastery, possess books, know how to write them and read them, and, therefore, if it be necessary, learn how to read” (Leclercq 1996: 17). The concept of the ‘scholar-monk’ has been linked often to the Celtic fringes in particular (Cahill 1995; Charles-Edwards 1998), and has also tended to downplay the large role played by Arabic scholars in the retention of classical literature and knowledge (Gutas 1998).<sup>168</sup>

### **3.2 Understanding literacy**

One of the biggest methodological problems in studying literacy is the presence of an acceptable definition of the term itself. To take an example: in 1873, the Danish Ministry of War undertook to gauge the literacy levels of its recruits. In doing so it recognised six different levels: (1) ability to compose a text; (2) the ability to sign a name and to read both print and handwriting; (3) the ability to sign a name and to read only print; (4) the ability to read both print and handwriting but not to sign a name; (5) the ability to read print only and not sign a name; (6) the ability to sign a name but read no text (Vincent 2000: 17). The point here is that the ability to read and write operates on a scale, and working with a strict dichotomy between ‘literacy’ in opposition to ‘illiteracy’ can be distinctly unhelpful. Distinctions understood by modern Western concepts simply do not translate diachronically.

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<sup>168</sup> This was perhaps particularly the case in Iberia, where post-Reconquest society was sometimes guilty of proactively rebuking Arabic learning. The case of some 80,000 Arabic volumes being burnt in the squares of Cordoba by Cardinal Ximenez in 1499 is a case in point (Tāha 1989: 2).

Today, many countries aim for 100 % literacy rates, and some achieve it, and in western society the vast majority of the population possess extremely high literate abilities; anything less is viewed somewhat negatively. In addition, of course, there is the fact that in the modern west one has to be literate in order to appreciate literature. However, the ancient world did not require its inhabitants to possess literate ability in order to engage with, for example, Homer or Virgil, because so much of its literary culture was oral-based.

The understanding and study of early medieval literacy has been transformed in the past half-century by various scholars working in anthropological and historical disciplines. Much of this work stems from the 'linguistic turn' and a wider re-interpretation of literacy and its role in society, beginning in particular in the mid-twentieth century with scholars such as Goody & Watt (1963), Goody (1968) and Ong (1981). Importantly, this led to an understanding of the importance of the continuity of textual culture from the Classical into the early medieval period, rather than it being lost in Late Antiquity and re-found in the Carolingian renaissance. It is not the place here to present a full investigation of modern historiography on the topic, which can anyway be found elsewhere (Baüml 1980; Hen 1995: 29-33; Briggs 2000; Melve 2003). It is sufficient instead to state that literacy and the use of written texts is now better understood as a dynamic and complex scale of 'literatecies', rather than a strict dichotomy between literate vs. illiterate. This includes acknowledging the importance of both the written and spoken word. As such, to best understand literacy in the early medieval world requires a sympathetic and open approach.

### 3.3 Literacy and Early Christianity

Monasteries were Christian communities, and early Christianity was a religion that is understood traditionally to have been focussed heavily on the written word, regardless of whether or not its adherents could read those words. As Gamble (1995) stated: “it may seem paradoxical to say both that Christianity placed a high value on texts and that most Christians were unable to read, but in the ancient world this was no contradiction” (*ibid.*: 8). In particular, the rise of Christianity was contemporary with certain revolutions of the written word. For example, unlike the situation that had existed throughout much of Greco-Roman antiquity, the act of reading came, in some circumstances, to become a much more individual act of spiritual reflection, rather than public performance. Indeed, Isidore of Seville expressed his preference for silent reading, an act that was largely at odds with Roman practice.<sup>169</sup> Whilst on the one hand this may have constituted a purely spiritual rationale, on the other hand there were also other factors that led to an increased preponderance for silent reading, or at least silent reflection, in this period. These include, in particular, the advent of punctuation and the rise of the codex.<sup>170</sup>

Although it may seem relatively easy to accept the presence of written texts as suggestive of high levels of literacy, the debate has traditionally divided scholars. In reference to Augustine’s preaching, for example, Houghton (2008a: 27) wrote: “references to reading at home imply that a fair proportion of the congregation was literate”. This seems to

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<sup>169</sup> *Sententiae* 3.14.9, “*Acceptabilior est sensibus lectio tacita quam aperta*”. A more often cited example is that of Augustine’s surprise reaction to the sight of Ambrose, who was reading in silence on a road outside of Rome (*Confessions* 6.3.3). See also Gilliard (1993) who argues *contra* Achtemeier that although silent reading may not have been the norm, there is still evidence for its existence in earlier periods of Roman history.

<sup>170</sup> Parkes (1992: 20-29). On the codex, see also Roberts & Skeat (1983); Gamble (1995: 42-81); Cavallo (1999); Haines-Eitzen (2000: 91-96); Hurtado (2006: 43-94); Parker (2008: 13-20).

be a sentiment echoed by Augustine himself on a few occasions, and one certainly thought probable by MacMullen in his study of the preacher's audience (1989: 510). However, the problem cannot be so clear-cut for early Christians in general and Augustine, as a highly literate polymath, is far from a typical specimen. Obviously, the issues of literacy in the earliest Christian communities and those of a seventh century Visigothic one are not always the same, but overall a cautious approach should always be employed when dealing with the concept of literacy within a 'religion of the book'. Vessey (2005: 140) argued that historians of the period need more studies of the "functions and ideology of writing in late antiquity", as well as a fusion of literary and socio-historical approaches. Focussing too narrowly on a single author or groups of authors to discuss early Christian literacy, and especially to apply that to society at large, is dangerous for the fact that Augustine and his audience are not necessarily representative.

One problem in particular is that of equating issues of Christianity with issues of the Late Antique and early medieval world in general. It is clear, for example, that in Visigothic Iberia there still existed pockets of paganism. Martin of Braga's missionary activity to the Sueves (Ferreiro 1980) and the penning of his *De correctione rusticorum* are indicative of such, and there are many other references to paganism continuing up until the eighth century in Iberia (McKenna 1938; Hillgarth 1980). This minority cannot be understood to have functioned in the same orbit of literacy. As such, early Christian literacy must sometimes be separated from Late Antique and early medieval literacy because they are not necessarily one and the same. This is especially so the case for earlier periods of the Later Roman Empire.

### 3.4 “In nomine Patria et Filea et Spiritua Sancta”: Literacy and Linguistic Contexts

To talk meaningfully of any kind of literacy, ancient, medieval or, Visigothic, is made more difficult by the chronology and variety of cultures that are included under such banners; the uniformity of nomenclature should not give an impression of a uniformity of culture. Indeed, seventh-century Iberia was a kaleidoscope of cultures. An important issue arising from this must be that of language use, even amongst those who were converted to Christianity. Indeed, the quotation that begins this section, apparently reflective of an incorrect baptismal formula overheard by the eighth-century St. Virgil, is used often to show that even early medieval priests could not be presumed to possess a perfect knowledge of Latin.

Late Antique and early medieval language use, and its relationship with the written word, is a complex issue. Throughout this period in Western Europe, for example, Latin-speaking Christianity was approached by many as a foreign-language religion: Irenaeus in the second century complained about the need to speak Celtic to his congregation, and it can hardly be expected that the same people would study at home with Latin scripture.<sup>171</sup> Later on during the Merovingian and Carolingian periods, moreover, the presence of both Germanic and Latin dialects must be taken into account. For example, the monk Notker of St. Gall was a native Germanic speaker (Thorpe 1969: 23). Although Notker wrote in Latin, there were converts in the eastern regions of the Empire who could not have done so. Early Irish and Anglo-Saxon Christianities are further examples where a Latin culture existed alongside a linguistically native one. In some cases, then, Latin literacy and the use of texts written in Latin must be seen in a different, and even more complex, context than in cultures where the spoken language constituted a collection of idiolects of the same language.

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<sup>171</sup> *Contra hareses* 1.3

Similar problems can be posited for the Iberian Peninsula. The seventh-century *Forum Iudiciorum* uses an interesting phrase when it says: “*Nullus prorsus ex omnibus regni nostri, praeter hunc librum qui nuper est editus, atque secundum seriem huius amodo translatum librum alium legum, pro quocumque negotio in iudicio offerre pertemet*”.<sup>172</sup> What exactly is meant by “*amodo translatum*” is impossible to confirm. Latin *transfero* can imply ‘to copy (books)’, and so the phrase probably refers to forthcoming or updated editions (“henceforth translated”). Scott (1910), however, interpreted the phrase to mean “an authorised translation”. Since the law code was first written in Latin, it can be supposed that Scott thought this to refer to a language other than Latin. The probable inference is Gothic. However, although the *Forum Iudiciorum* was written in the mid-seventh century, it comprised previous law-codes dating back to those first put down into writing by Euric in the fifth century when Gothic was likely to have been far more common. It may be, then, that this phrase is simply a piece of legalese. Although it is this author’s opinion that the phrase probably does not refer to linguistic usage, Scott’s translation nevertheless draws to attention that fact that the use of languages other than Latin needs to be accounted for in any study of Visigothic Iberia.

In monasteries, it must be imagined that any literature would have been almost certainly written in Latin, rather than Greek. A certain level of knowledge of Greek was evidently still available in Iberia during the Visigothic period, in no small part due to the fact that a minority of it was in the hands of a Byzantine enclave (Previale 1951). Additionally, Martin of Braga was a native Greek-speaker from Pannonia and had translated from Greek into Latin the Sayings of the Desert Fathers in his *Sententiae*. Leander, Isidore’s elder

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<sup>172</sup> *Liber Iudiciorum* 2.1.9.

brother, had been in Constantinople on a diplomatic mission and no-doubt possessed a pragmatic ability of the language at least. Indeed, the presence of Greek-speakers from the East was to continue for a few centuries yet; in the ninth century, for example, a certain monk named George came from Palestine to Cordoba.<sup>173</sup> That is not to say, however, that Greek would have been particularly widespread; Isidore himself could probably not speak or read Greek. Various errors in his *Etymologies* with regards to his Greek knowledge bring into question his ability to use it properly, leading Brehaut (1912) to conclude: “it appears certain [...] that he was completely cut off from that world of thought, both Christian and pagan, which was expressed in the Greek language” (*ibid.*: 20).<sup>174</sup> Since knowledge of Greek was scant amongst even the most learned Visigoths, then, it cannot be normally expected from those lower down the social strata.

It is doubtful that there existed monoglot Gothic-speaking Iberians in the peninsula in any large number by the seventh century, if many Gothic speakers at all. However, it was clearly still spoken in the Late Roman west: Sidonius, for example, complains of having to listen to it in his villa,<sup>175</sup> and it was still possible for Cyrila, a fifth century Arian bishop, to pretend that he knew no Latin when under fire from his Catholic counter-part.<sup>176</sup> An interesting comment from the *Chronica pseudo-Isidoriana* suggests that king Recceswinth (649-72) was “*sapientissimus in lingua barbara*”, suggested by Ferreiro (1987: 303) to imply Germanic. However, overall there is not a strong case for its widespread retention in the

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<sup>173</sup> Eulogius *Memoriale sanctorum* 2.10.23, “*sed cum ibidem uapulare asperius Dei Ecclesiam incursatione tyrannorum reperisset, Hispaniam quoque eorum, quibus missus fuerat consult, aggreditur*”.

<sup>174</sup> Henderson (2007: 6) describes Isidore as a “Latinate Christian authority who had no Hebrew and little Greek”, which is further qualified in a footnote (20), “next-to-no-Greek”.

<sup>175</sup> *Poems* 12.

<sup>176</sup> Victor of Vita *Historia persecutionis* 2.55.

early medieval west in a bilingual-setting (Flobert 2002; Amory 2004: 86-108). In Iberia, at least, there is very little evidence for its use. The remnants of Germanic in Ibero-Romance are principally lexical (Penny 2002: 14-16), and the linguistic evidence suggests that Gothic was not sustained in a state of bilingualism with Latin long enough to exert an influence over morphology: “la lengua importada por los pueblos germánicos [...] no afectó en absoluto la estructura gramatical” (Conde de Cevallos 1985: 64).<sup>177</sup>

It is possible that Celtic could still have been heard in the centre and north-west of the peninsula. Celtic languages had been indigenous to this region before the Roman conquest, and pre-Roman tongues could still be heard during the Empire (García y Bellido 1967). Even by this period, the reflection of prior levels of Romanization persisted, with indigenous, pre-Roman, culture still evident in the north-west, in particular in areas such as artistic practice and architecture (Nicols (1987); Santos Yanguas (1991); Curchin (1991)). The presence of non-Latin languages may have been bolstered in the early Visigothic period, particularly during the fifth century, which was witness to the immigration of Celtic-speaking peoples from Britain (see p. 53).

The dialects of Basque would also have presented somewhat of a problem, which in the early medieval period were spoken over a larger area than today. The impact of Christianity amongst the Basque in this period is problematic, and references to paganism continue to be

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<sup>177</sup> Rickard (1992: 22) was much more positive about Germanic influence in Gaul; “there is in fact every reason to believe that Germanic influence went much deeper and led to very profound modifications, changes which eventually had the effect of distinguishing the speech of northern France very sharply from the speech of any other Romance area”. Apart from vocabulary, Penny (1991: 15-16; 263-264) notes the introduction of a new declension of nominative *-ā* and plural *-ānes*, the introduction of the adjectival suffix *-engo* and the possible introduction of a patronymic suffix, *-ez*, *-oz*.

made up until the tenth century (Trask 1997: 13). Nevertheless, Christianity existed in the Ebro Valley from an early date and a bishopric in Pamplona dating from 589 suggests that there must have been Basque-speaking Christians during the Visigothic period (Larrea 1996). Therefore, similar to the situation that faced Irenaeus, it cannot be taken for granted that any audience would have been able to understand a Latin text, even if they could read the letters.

It is known that at least some Christian literature was available in languages other than Latin. The best example of this is Gothic from the Bible of Wulfila, but there is nothing to suggest that anything similar existed for Celtic and Basque. Indeed, there is no surviving evidence of anything written in Gothic from Visigothic Iberia. This was a problem noted by Lane Fox (1985), who even places the difficulties of the spoken language before those of the written word in early Christianity: “in Christianity’s spread, the relevant question [...] is not whether Christians exploited all possible literary languages for their Scripture, but whether they were hampered by ignorance of spoken dialects in their missionary work” (*ibid.*: 284).

In light of these potential linguistic contexts, and also of relevance for audiences who potentially were not able to engage with a text through reading it personally, it is important to focus on aspects of audience experience of early Christian texts that do not rely on any literate ability, or even ability to understand the language itself: a manuscript does not necessarily have to be read in order to influence. Petrucci (1995), speaking about books in the sixth and seventh centuries, commented that: “the book itself had gradually been transformed from an instrument of writing and reading, into an object of adoration and a jewel-box of mysteries, not to be used directly and thus closed” (*ibid.*: 29). Hurtado (2006) contributes another important point regarding the mere presence of written texts: “indeed, perhaps especially for those unable to decipher them, texts can hold a certain, almost

mysterious, aura. It is entirely likely that a good many semiliterate or illiterate early Christians would have regarded with particular favour, even awe, those texts that were treated as scripture in their gatherings, and might well have welcomed a chance to view with reverence the written words” (*ibid.*: 113). Maxwell (2006: 67) has also suggested that audiences might prefer religious texts that were written in an undecipherable script since it added a sense of mystery to proceedings. This is an important point that will be turned to below in a discussion concerning *lectio divina*. Overall, then, a cautious approach is required that questions the presence of literacy amongst early Christians, taken here to include the population of Visigothic Iberia, and one that does not permit automatically too high a level on the basis of the prominence of texts in their religion alone.

### **3.5 Approaching Visigothic Literacy**

To Visigothic and early medieval Iberia in particular, it has been customary to attribute a comparatively high literacy rate when compared to other regions in the west; even Ward-Perkins (2005: 165), who otherwise paints a generally negative picture of the period, acknowledges a seemingly higher level of literacy in Visigothic Iberia than elsewhere in the post-Roman west. Johnson (1970) painted a particularly balanced picture, stating: “one bright cultural spot in the seventh century was Christian Spain. Despite the fact that much of the population was illiterate, there were cultural centres in the larger cities, and several religious groups that served as schools or training corps for priests” (*ibid.*: 115-116). In the first instance, it is clear that within ecclesiastical circles there was an appetite for writing, demonstrated by the huge amount of letters and other texts that survive from the Visigothic period. This desire for learning was also reflected, in some cases, amongst the lay nobility; the case of King Sisebut is often cited, who was tutored by Isidore and who authored various works (Martyn 2008).

Trying to estimate literacy rates in the ancient world has been comparatively problematic. In one of its most important studies, Harris (1990) estimated that literacy levels never rose above 10-15% in the Greco-Roman world,<sup>178</sup> although this level probably fluctuated from region to region. Curchin (1995), in a study of literacy in Roman central Spain, drew on Harris' conclusions and suggested a similar, if perhaps not a slightly higher level, of literacy rate in Roman central Spain: "the evidence of the inscriptions [...] shows that the illiteracy rate in Central Spain was relatively high. On the other hand, the graffiti, the large number of lower-class inscriptions, and the frequent finds of materials on archaeological sites combine to suggest that literacy (or some degree of it) may have been more extensive than the 5 to 10 percent predicted by Harris" (*ibid.*: 473).<sup>179</sup>

Similarly, Fear (1995) paints a positive picture through the example of a certain Lucius Memmius Probus, a second-century AD *grammaticus Latinus* from the small town of Tritium Magallum (modern Tricio, La Rioja). Fear highlights as important the fact that there was there a *grammaticus Latinus* in a small, provincial, town like Tritium Magallum. He also draws attention to the example of the late-first-century / second-century AD *Lex Vipasca*,

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<sup>178</sup> This work has attracted polemic: "the great weakness of W.V. Harris' book, I fear, is that it does not attempt to go beyond the evidence" (Cornell 1991: 33). Nevertheless, it is true that mass literacy in a modern Western sense never did exist, and indeed could not ever have existed, in the ancient world, and although Harris' position might have attracted heated discussion, it is not one that generally attracts outright refutation from scholars. Rather, different approaches tend to be loaded slightly one way or the other and as such it is a scenario that is certainly not without merit.

<sup>179</sup> The use of epigraphic evidence as a source for the decline of literacy is problematic. Handley (2003) argued for the existence of substantial epigraphic evidence that has been hitherto ignored or unknown by scholars of the period. Also, scholars of cultural change and Romanization in particular have questioned the extent to which epigraphic remains can be indicative of literacy. Bodel (2001: 15-30), discusses the extent to which inscriptions were meant to be read by an audience.

which dealt with the regulation of a mining community at Aljustrel in modern Portugal. This law exempts school masters from civic duties, again hinting at the fact that an education was available even in such a remote and industrial community (*ibid.*: 59).

Lay literacy in the Visigothic period is particularly well attested thanks to the *pizarras visigodas*, or inscribed Visigothic slates. These are comparable to the Vindolanda tablets, the North African Albertini tablets, and the Novgorod *gramoty*,<sup>180</sup> which are often taken as indicators for sustained pragmatic literacy levels (Garrison 1999; Conant 2004). A new critical edition and translation of the slates has recently been published (Velázquez Soriano 2004). The one hundred and sixty three slates, dating primarily from the sixth and seventh centuries, cover a variety of topics, including letters and legal writings. However, they include importantly far more “ephemeral written topics” (Ward-Perkins 2005: 164) outside formal, judicial, texts, that suggest a sustained use of literacy throughout many levels of society. These include the famous *notitia de kaesos*, as well as other lists concerning items such as cattle, prayers and curses. These texts have survived because of the durable conditions of the material upon which they were written, and they require the question to be asked: how much evidence has been lost that was written on less durable materials that would otherwise support such literacy rates amongst the lay population? Elements of lay literacy are suggested further by scenes such as that found in the *Life of Fructuosus*, when it is retold how the saint’s father, a military leader, sat down with a shepherd and discussed his records.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> These are a collection of around one thousand texts, including letters, school exercises and official documents, written on birch bark and found preserved in the boggy soil of the Russian city Novgorod that have come to light since the 1950s. The collection has been digitised and is available on-line at <http://gramoty.ru/>.

<sup>181</sup> 1, “*pater autem suus greges describat et pastorum rationes discutiebat*”.

A further area associated with a literate culture is that of the library. By the seventh century, the boast of Petronius' Trimalchio in second-century Italy to have had two libraries, one Greek and one Latin, is indicative of a different era from the Visigothic period;<sup>182</sup> the public libraries that appear in the ancient sources were by now certainly no longer in existence and it is doubtful whether they had ever existed in Roman Hispania at all.<sup>183</sup> Private libraries, however, are a different matter altogether. They were popular throughout the ancient world; Seneca, for example, had commented that, "*inter balnearia et thermos bibliotheca quoque ut necessarium domus ornamentum expolitur*".<sup>184</sup> Some early Christians would have maintained small collections for their communities and there are even records for specifically Christian libraries in the period after Constantine (Tanner 1979; Gamble 1995: 144-203). In Visigothic Iberia, private collections of books were still in existence. For example, a collection of books brought to Iberia by the African monk Donatus in AD 569 is mentioned by Ildefonsus,<sup>185</sup> and Isidore likewise seemed to have possessed a substantial private collection (Escolar 1990: 152-159). Braulius also mentions a certain Laurentius, who

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<sup>182</sup> *Satyricon* 48.

<sup>183</sup> Lançon (2000: 149) comments on the dedication of two public libraries in the sixth century in the Forum of Trajan. However, public libraries were rare outside Rome throughout Imperial history; see Kenyon (1932); Wendel (1949); Casson (2002). For a specifically Iberian study, see Hanson (1989) and Díaz y Díaz (1995: 169-180). Harris (1989: 228) is nevertheless hesitant about the extent to which public libraries would have influenced literacy levels amongst the general public: "It would, however, be crudely anachronistic to suppose that the sum of these efforts had any large-scale effect on the diffusion of the written word".

<sup>184</sup> *De Tranquillitate* 9.7.

<sup>185</sup> *De uiris illustribus* 3, "*Hic uiolentias barbararum gentium imminere conspiciens, atque ouilis dissipationem et gregis monachorum pericula pertimescens, ferme cum septuaginta monachis copiosisque librorum codicibus nauali uehiculo in Hispaniam commeauit*".

is reckoned to possess a collection of books<sup>186</sup> and suggests that printed copies of Isidore's *Etymologies* had been widespread but in corrupted editions.<sup>187</sup>

Visigothic Law is a further source of evidence for the role of written texts in Visigothic Iberia (Muñoz-Arraco 2002; Collins 2004: 223-239). The seventh-century *Lex Iudiciorum*, for example, is one of the most substantial of the various legislative works composed in the post-Roman kingdoms, and is itself built upon other, previous, legal texts. It contains many sections that are of interest to historians of literacy. Indeed, Marlasca (1998) noted that: “en cuanto a los negocios jurídicos, el derecho visigodo adoptó la escrituriedad como forma preferable de los mismos” (*ibid.*: 564). Unfortunately, not all examples of this can be cited here, although for current purposes a few examples will suffice.

In the first instance, it is clear in its aim that it will be the only book used by judges, and so understands that it will have a potentially widespread readership. Importantly, it requires that any legal texts pre-dating it should be destroyed, implying a circulation of such works.<sup>188</sup> Elsewhere, it states that a witness will not be permitted to give testimony by letter,

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<sup>186</sup> *Epistle 25*, “*Uerumtamen, quaeso ut quia librum Aprincii Pacensis episcopi tractatum Apocalypsin quaero et non inuenio, a uobis ad transcribendum accipiam directum, facile enim uobis erit propter amplissimam potestatem uestram, et celebritatem urbis, etiam si eum non habeatis, perquirere a quo habeatur, ut nobis per uos praesentetur. Sane in tempore apud Laurentium comitem dudum eum fuisse noui*”.

<sup>187</sup> *Epistle 5*, “*Ergo et hoc notesco, libros Etymologiarum, quos a te domino meo posco etsi detruncatos corrososque iam a multis haberi sciam*”.

<sup>188</sup> 2.1.9, “*No one of our subjects, whosoever, shall presume to offer to a judge as authority, in any legal proceeding, any book of laws excepting this one, or an authorized translation of the same; and any person who does this shall pay thirty pounds of gold to the treasury. And if any judge shall not at once destroy such a prohibited book when it is offered him, he shall undergo the above named penalty. But we decree that those shall be exempt from the operation of this law, who have cited*

but rather in person;<sup>189</sup> an entire section is given over to ‘valid and invalid documents’,<sup>190</sup> and it also mentions slaves writing contracts;<sup>191</sup> another section concerns forgers of documents.<sup>192</sup> The list could continue, but the meaning should be clear that a widespread use of the written word is implied.

In a similar vein to the law codes, the various Church Councils of the Visigothic period hint at the importance of the written word; their role in the legislation of monastic communities was referred to in Chapter Two. The records of the thirty-seven Councils that remain, edited by Vives (1963), suggest the importance of committing to writing the content discussed. The Thirteenth Council of Toledo, for example, finished thus: “*Huius igitur legis nostrae decretum, quod in confirmationem huius sacri concilii noscitur promulgatum, gloriosae manus ad nostrae exaratione subscripsimus et ad perennem memoriam ualorem ei perpetuum innodamus*”. The words “*perennem memoriam*” and “*ualorem [...] perpetuum*” hint at the importance attributed to the written word for preservation and its sense of authority.

In short, there is strong evidence that Visigothic Iberia was a society that awarded a central position to the use of the written word in many areas, and that this usage was not restricted to ecclesiastical or noble circles. This evidence is in keeping with modern re-interpretations of the important role of literacy and written texts in many aspects of early medieval society.

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*former laws, not for the overthrow of ours, but in confirmation of causes which have previously been determined*’.

<sup>189</sup> 2.4.5.

<sup>190</sup> 2.5.

<sup>191</sup> 2.5.6.

<sup>192</sup> 7.5.

### 3.6 Visigothic Oral Culture

Although textual culture appears to have played such an important role in Visigothic society, the monastic rules suggest the presence of a culture, as elsewhere in Europe at this time (Richter 1994), that also made use of an oral tradition on a wider scale. In the first instance, it is clear that the communities described in the monastic rules are not silent communities as might be found in other institutions, such as the later medieval Cluny (Bruce 2007): despite a few references to specified times of silence, Visigothic monastic society seems to have been based on the idea of group oral activity and interaction (below). Silence, where recommended, is seemingly pragmatic in nature. For example: “*ante somnum [...] cum omni cautela et silentio requiescendum est*”;<sup>193</sup> “*post deinde adeuntes cubilia summo cum silentio et habitu tacito gressuque quieto*”;<sup>194</sup> “*audiant patrem studio summo et silentio*”;<sup>195</sup> “*nemo comedens loquatur*”.<sup>196</sup>

The monastic rules are careful to chastise the oral activity of monks during manual work, implying that this took place. This often includes berating the *fabulae* that monks were wont to tell. For example: “*Cum operantur, non inter se fabulas uel cachinnos conserant*”;<sup>197</sup> “*Similiter aut decanus alius, aut quisquam e fratribus bene probatus assistat in secessu communi, quousque quieti se tradant cuncti; ne aut fabulas inter se uentilent uanas, aut ridiculis studeant, aut quodlibet noxiale uitium consuescant*”.<sup>198</sup> Isidore, meanwhile, is quick to belittle the ‘dirty love songs’ (*amatoria turpia*) of secular workers: “*Si enim saeculares*

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<sup>193</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 6.

<sup>194</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 2.

<sup>195</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 7.

<sup>196</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 5.

<sup>197</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 4.

<sup>198</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 2.

*opifices inter ipsos labores suorum operum amatoria turpia cantare non desinunt, atque ita ora sua in cantibus et fabulis implicant, ut ab opere manus non subtrahant, quanto magis serui Christi, qui sic manibus operari debent, ut semper laudem Dei in ore habeant, et linguis eius psalmis et hymnis inseruiant”.*

It is difficult to determine exactly what these *fabulae* or *amatoria turpia* entailed. However, the continuance in this period of pagan *diabolicas* [...] *carmina*, alluded to by Martin of Braga, would indicate the possibility that monks may have known pre-Christian tales and songs from their secular life;<sup>199</sup> the distinctly un-Christian activities of the monks suggested by the monastic rules would also indicate that some were not averse to his kind of behaviour. This is, however, pure speculation; it is entirely possible that the *fabulae* may have included the simple re-telling of hagiographical or folk stories for example, yet it is difficult to see why these should have been so vehemently banned. Instead, the rules recommend chanting or silent praying in their place. Alternatively, *fabulae* may allude to the idea of gossiping or idle ‘chit-chat’, but this would have implied a semantic extension to the word that does not function either diachronically or synchronically; all Romance reflexes of *fabula* are tied in with the idea of a ‘tale’ or ‘story’ (Meyer-Lübke 1935: 3124).

These *fabulae*, *amatoria turpia* and *diabolicas carmina* all point to an oral tradition of story-telling and songs. Of course, this should not detract from any importance attributed to the use of the written word in Visigothic society, but rather show that there still existed in seventh-century Iberia elements that are associated traditionally with oral activity.

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<sup>199</sup> *De correctione rusticorum* 16.

### 3.7 “*Lectio tibi sit adsidua*”:<sup>200</sup> The Role of Literature in Visigothic Monasteries

The association of monasticism with a community that is focussed highly on the written word and literate culture is one found in the earliest sources. The early-fifth-century *Life of Martin*, for example, in reference to a community near Tours, makes reference to monks copying books (“*ars ibi exceptis scriptoribus nulla habebatur*”) and notes, importantly: “*ut plerisque monachis moris est*”.<sup>201</sup> Even Egeria, the itinerant fourth-century ascetic whose Latinity is often the subject of derision, was reported to be an avid reader of the Bible.<sup>202</sup> Importantly, it is also a notion found frequently in the Visigothic sources. The example of Bonellus, as retold by Valerius of Bierzo in his *De Bonello monacho*, is typical of the idea of the literate monk. In this small work reminiscent of Boethius’ *De consolatione philosophiae*, the tale is told of how the monk was taken by an angel to an “*amoenissimum iucunditatis locum*” where, amongst jewels and precious gems, there were books piled high in small insets in the wall: “*et in lateribus eius hinc indeque in uoluminibus zetulae exstructae*”.<sup>203</sup> The implicit parity of jewels and books implies that for Bonellus, the presence of the books merited rejoicing just as much as any other treasure.

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<sup>200</sup> Leander of Seville *De contemptu mundi* 15.

<sup>201</sup> *Life of Martin* 10.

<sup>202</sup> Valerius of Bierzo *Epistola beatissime Egerie laude conscripta* 19-20, “*quanto plus sancto dogmate indepta, tanto amplius inexplicabilis estuabat in corde eius sancti desiderii flamma: cuncta igitur Ueteris et Nouis Testamenti omni indagatione percurrens uolumina*”.

<sup>203</sup> *De Bonello monacho* 20.

There are further examples that could be cited: Fructuosus, for example, suffered the incident of his books falling into a river whilst he was travelling;<sup>204</sup> Braulius of Zaragoza complains that he had lost his desire to write his *Life of St. Aemilian* until, searching through a pile of books, he found a lost manuscript;<sup>205</sup> bishop Paul of Merida, upon meeting his nephew, had him tonsured, and “*in templo Domini diebus ac noctibus strenue erudiuit, ita ut infra paucorum curricula annorum omne officium ecclesiasticum, omnemque bibliothecam Scripturarum diuinarum perfectissime docuerit*”,<sup>206</sup> the monk Donatus is said to have fled Africa to Spain “*cum septuaginta monachis copiosisque librorum codicibus*”.<sup>207</sup> The ‘autobiographical’ works of the ascete Valerius of Bierzo provide several references to literate culture: he refers to works he had copied being stolen by a priest called Flainus;<sup>208</sup> he mentions writing a “*libellum praecipium*” for a child whom he had reared,<sup>209</sup> and later suggests that he had mentored other youths;<sup>210</sup> he says explicitly that he taught a child his letters;<sup>211</sup> upon travelling to the monastery at Rufiana, he says that he took various books with him that were used in the office and also writings of saints that were used for the purposes of edification.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> *Life of Fructuosus* 12, “*accidit die quadam puerulum cum caballo, qui codices ipsius uiri Dei gestabat, dum transmeare cum caeteris collegis suis nititur, in amnis fluentia profundissima cecidisse*”

<sup>205</sup> *Life of St. Aemilian* 1.

<sup>206</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 4.4.1.

<sup>207</sup> Ildephonsus *De uiris illustribus* 3.

<sup>208</sup> *Ordo querimoniae* 3.

<sup>209</sup> *Replicatio* 3.

<sup>210</sup> *Replicatio* 4, “*ueniebant quidem tranquillo tempore adulescentuli multi meae quoque se mancipientes doctrinae*”.

<sup>211</sup> *Replicatio* 6, “*Cum autem paruulum quondam pupillum litteris inbuerem*”.

<sup>212</sup> *Residuum* 2, “*Librorum uero uolumina tam quae quotidiano officio quam pro sanctarum festiuitatum per ordine pertinent anniuersario uel etiam diuersarum sanctarum scripturam quod ad edificationis profectum atque industriae documentum proficit animarum, utraque altariorum sanctorum iuuante Domino plenarium accelebraui compendium*”

The coupling of monastic life with literacy and, in many cases, scholarship, is one that can be traced back through a pedigree of figures such as Jerome, Cassian, Basil and Isidore of Seville. Indeed, the letters of Braulius of Zaragoza, a contemporary of Isidore, demonstrate aptly just how ‘literate’ ecclesiastical circles could be; his letters are peppered constantly with references to books, both pagan and Christian.<sup>213</sup> The image is summarised by Clanchy (1999: 12): “all Christianized medieval societies conferred extraordinary prestige on writing and devoted remarkable resources to the production of books and documents. Investments in monks and illuminated manuscripts may have consumed as large a proportion of the wealth of these societies as investment in schooling and information technology occupies in our own”.

The literary sources, then, suggest that literate culture was an important part of Visigothic monasticism. Moreover, references throughout the monastic rules, and not just the Visigothic examples, draw attention to the fact that the presence of the written word was a crucial part of the monastic experience (Mundò 1967). All three of the Visigothic monastic rules make consistent reference to reading, both in private and as a group activity. For example: “*qui si uolunt lectioni uacare ut non operentur ipsi lectioni contumaces existent*”;<sup>214</sup> “*alio autem tempore id est autumnno et hieme siue uere a mane usque ad tertiam legendum [...] est*”;<sup>215</sup> “*post uigilias autem usque ad matutinum requiescendum aut aliquid*

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<sup>213</sup> For example, in letter 11 he makes reference to knowledge of Classical authors: “*ne habeat ingrates fabula nostra iocos secundum Ouidium ac secundum Appium caninam uideamur exercere facundiam*”. He also frequently makes reference to the copying and reading of books in his letters to Isidore. The letters have been collected in Riesco Terrero (1975).

<sup>214</sup> *Rule of Isidore 5.4.*

<sup>215</sup> *Rule of Isidore 5.6.*

*perlegendum erit*”;<sup>216</sup> “*omnes codices custos sacrarii habeat deputatos a quo singulos singuli fratres accipiant quos prudenter lectos uel habitos semper post uesperam reddant*”;<sup>217</sup> “*quod quidem et aestate post uesperam conseruetur ut priusquam compleant liber legatur*”;<sup>218</sup> “*iuniores uero coram suis residentes decanis lectioni uel recitationi uacant*”;<sup>219</sup> “*ter per omnem hebdomadam [...] regulae patrum legendae*”.<sup>220</sup>

The Rule of Isidore is also quite clear that a collection of books could be expected to be present in monasteries from which monks could borrow texts; he explains in chapter eight of his monastic rule, entitled ‘*De codicibus*’, that all books should be looked after by a *custos* and that they could be taken out by a monk at the beginning of the day and returned by the monk after evening vespers.

It was seen above that substantial monastic libraries were not unheard of in early medieval Iberian sources. If a catalogue of manuscripts from a monastery in ninth-century Córdoba is taken as a likely indicator of the kinds of works that might have been available to a monk, he could expect to be exposed to the likes of Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Avienus, Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrosius, Cassian, Juvencus, Sedulus and Draconius.<sup>221</sup> This catalogue probably represents an unusually substantial collection, but nevertheless is indicative of the possible size and scope of at least some monastic collections. A couple of centuries later, the ninth-century Eulogius of Cordoba tells the story about the martyrdoms of the monks Peter and Walabonsus, who had come to the monastery of the Virgin Mary at

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<sup>216</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 6.5.

<sup>217</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 8.1.

<sup>218</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 3.

<sup>219</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 3.

<sup>220</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 20.

<sup>221</sup> After González Muñoz (1996: 21-25). The catalogue is reproduced in Gil (1973: 707-708).

Cuteclara, west of Cordoba, specifically to study;<sup>222</sup> this hints that there was probably a good collection of books there. Obviously these sources are somewhat later in date than the Visigothic monastic rules, but there is no reason to doubt that a similar situation could not have occurred a couple of centuries earlier.

This was a situation that was reflected throughout the Christian west: the Gallic Rule of Ferreolus is perhaps the most vociferous in this assertion with the statement: “*omnis qui nomen uult monachi uindicare litteras ei ignorare non liceat*”.<sup>223</sup> Elsewhere, the Rule of Donatus requests that time is set aside each day for reading: “*A secunda hora usque ad tertiam, si aliqua necessitas ut operentur non fuerit, uacent lectioni; reliquo uero spatio diei faciant opera sua, et non se fabulis occupent*”;<sup>224</sup> the Rule of a certain father to the virgins notes: “*Sic tamen operi manuum insistendum est, ut lectionis fructus non omittatur*”;<sup>225</sup> the Irish Rule of Ailbe says: “*The son of God should be invoked in all lectio*”.<sup>226</sup> It is clear, then, that throughout the evidence of early medieval monasticism that remains, literate activity was awarded an important place in day-to-day activity.

A further testament to the importance of the written word in monastic circles is the *pactum*, discussed in Chapter Two. In the first instance, this text suggests the importance of the written word in administrative matters; like the various Visigothic law codes, the act of binding a monk’s novitiate into writing suggests a certain prestige and importance given to written texts. It contains two explicit references to the monks’ writing, in both cases referring

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<sup>222</sup> *Memoriale sanctorum* 2.4.2, “*E quibus Petrus sacerdos in urbe Astigitana progenitus et sanctus Walabonsus diaconus ab Eleplensi ciuitate exortus [...] Cordubam studio meditandi adeuntes*”.

<sup>223</sup> *Rule of Ferreolus* 9.

<sup>224</sup> *Rule of Donatus* 20.

<sup>225</sup> *Rule of a certain father* 12.

<sup>226</sup> *Rule of Ailbe* 20.

to those names 'written below': "*Proinde diuino ardore accensi ecce nos omnes qui subter notandi sumus, Deo et tibi Domino et patri nostro tradimus animas nostras*"; "*Haec sunt nomina qui manu sua unusquisque subscriptionem uel signum in hoc pacto fecit*". The *pactum* is further evidence of the importance that the written word and textual culture possessed in Visigothic monasteries.

### 3.8 Uses of Literacy

The most common activity involving written texts in monastic daily life was *lectio*. There is no explicit indication in the monastic rules that *lectio* should necessarily be a solitary activity, as later medieval *lectio divina* often was, although some evidence suggests that it was not always a group activity. For example, when Isidore mentions checking books out, he says: “*omnes codices custos sacrarii habeat deputatos a quo singulos singuli fratres accipiant*”.<sup>227</sup> Alliteration aside, the implication here is perhaps of individual monks checking books out for individual study. The idea of *lectio* more generally is present in most of the monastic rules and is far more widespread than a sole monastic practice. Augustine, for example, recommended it to the wife of Antoninus,<sup>228</sup> and before Christian practice, it had been a Jewish one (Lawless 1987: 48). The activity is also especially prevalent in the Rule of Benedict, where its purpose was paraenetic: “in the monasteries, the reading of theological texts for the edification of the listening monastic community was a spiritual discipline” (Dunphy 2004: 113). As such, the reading of pagan writings was generally frowned upon, a fact specifically referred to by Isidore when he warns that “*gentilium libros uel haereticorum uolumina monachus legere caueat*”.<sup>229</sup>

There exists no explicit evidence in the monastic rules as to what kind of material would have been read during *lectio*, although this lack of dogma perhaps better indicates the reading of a wide range of texts. It was noted above that pagan readings were frowned upon and in most cases banned, and some scholars have liked to see the contents of the *Nag*

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<sup>227</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 8.

<sup>228</sup> *Epistle* 20.3, “*illud sane admonuerim religiosissimam prudentiam tuam, ut timorem dei non inrationabilem uel inseras infermiori uasi tuo uel nutrias diuina lectione grauique conloquio*”.

<sup>229</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 8.3.

*Hammadi* library as being indicative of the monastic literary diet.<sup>230</sup> Most probably, the Bible was read widely. Leander of Seville, for example, warns against reading the Old Testament literally (“*carnaliter*”), but implies nevertheless that it is to be read.<sup>231</sup> The monastic rules certainly make it clear that a monk was expected to be exposed to the Bible, and it will be suggested in Chapter Four that the use of biblical allusions in the monastic rules was a method of helping the reader or listener become better acquainted with The Book. Chapter ten of the Common Rule may also shed some light on the topic. It says that abbots of a particular region are advised to meet once a month, when they shall study the acts of the Holy Fathers through scripture for advice on how to act themselves. If this were suitable reading for abbots, then there is no reason why a monk should not also be exposed to it.<sup>232</sup>

It is difficult to estimate how widespread individual copies of the whole Bible were in Visigothic Iberia, although an early possible candidate is a seventh century codex from León (McGurk 1994: 2). It was certainly possible for monasteries to own whole Bibles; Cassiodorus, for example, says that a large pandect, the *codex grandior*, existed at his monastery at Vivarium.<sup>233</sup> In addition, monasteries were often associated with their production. The *Codex Amiatinus*, for example, was produced in the monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Certainly the Bible had been present in Iberia from an early date

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<sup>230</sup> This is a collection of forty-six Coptic documents found on the banks of the Nile within sight of the Pachomian monastery at Phbow. The texts are varied and contain Christian writings, as well as a copy of Plato’s *Republic*; see Gamble (1995: 171-173).

<sup>231</sup> *De contemptu mundi* 16, “*Uetus Testamentum legens, non miseris temporis illius nuptias sed prolis numerositatem considera*”.

<sup>232</sup> Later evidence from the medieval period can be illuminating, although we must be wary of the five hundred years or so that separate the two monastic cultures. A mid-eleventh -century custumal from Farfa abbey gives a list of sixty three books issued to monks, including copies of Cassian, hagiographies, and historical works such as Eusebius and Josephus; see Lawrence (2001: 101)

<sup>233</sup> *Institutiones* 1.14.2.

(Williams 1999: 180-181). Jerome had sent a copy of his translation of the Old Testament to a certain Lucinius Baeticus in the late-fourth century, who had converted recently his estate into a monastery. Jerome, in addition, presumes that Lucinius already possessed a copy of his Septuagint translation.<sup>234</sup> Isidore was also associated with a copy of the Bible (de Bruyne 1914). Elsewhere, bishop Iohannes of Zaragoza in the early-seventh century commissioned a Bible.<sup>235</sup>

A further activity where the use of the written word was important was the daily office. Indeed, the Rule of Isidore, along with Book One of his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, is the most important primary source remaining for the Visigothic Office. By the seventh century, the *cursus* of the office was already more or less uniform across the three monastic rules, with services taking place throughout the day and night and at primarily universal hours, such as at dawn and at set hours of the day. In chapter six of Isidore's Rule, the office is structured on a framework of vespers, compline, vigils, matins, terce, sext and none. The framework presented by the Rule of Fructuosus in chapter two makes reference to matins, prime, terce, sext, none, duodecima, vespers, vigils and compline.<sup>236</sup> Chapter Ten of the Common Rule, meanwhile, sets out a *cursus* of prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, midnight and cockcrow.

It was seen above that Valerius of Bierzo took books with him to the monastery of Rufiana that he considered to be useful for the monastic office. There is no evidence in the monastic rules to suggest exactly which texts were used in the office. The most probable

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<sup>234</sup> Jerome *Letter* 71.

<sup>235</sup> MGH 15, 238.

<sup>236</sup> For the Rule of Fructuosus in particular, see Pinell (1968) and the monograph of Rocha (1980).

texts employed were hagiographic and biblical. Isidore states bluntly what he believes to be appropriate reading: “*autem lectiones in Christi Ecclesiis de Scripturis sanctis. Constat autem eadem sacra Scriptura ex ueteri lege et nova*”. Elsewhere, Braulius of Zaragoza, in his preface to the *Life of Aemilian*, asks that the text be recited on the same solemn occasion as Mass: “*Quocirca dictaui ut potui, et plano apertoque sermone, ut talibus decet habere, libellum de eius sancti uita breuem conscripsi, ut possit in missae eius celebritate quantocius legi*”.

The liturgy in seventh-century Iberia is often suggested to have been more flexible than its Roman and Gallican counterparts. Indeed, canon thirteen of the Fourth Council of Toledo had given the freedom to compose new hymns. Braulius, again, gives another example. In the same *Life*, he writes to the priest Fronimianus, informing him that he has sent a hymn written in Senaric iambics for the feast of the Holy man. He adds, interestingly, that he composed a hymn rather than a sermon because he did not want to bore the audience with something too lengthy: “*Hymnum quoque de festiuitate ipsius sancti, ut iussisti, iambico senario metro compositum, transmisi. Sermonem autem de eodem die superfluum dictare putauit, cum nulla maior mihi esse uideatur exhortatio quam uirtutum eius narratio: et tantam horam occupet, ut si hoc adlectum fuerit audientium animos oneret*”.

Apart from religious texts, the monastic rules were presumably documents to which a Visigothic monk was also exposed. As such, it is fitting to question what role they occupied in a monk’s *lectio*. This is made most explicit in the Rule of Isidore and the Common Rule: “*praecepta patrum regularia recensenda sunt ut qui necdum didicerunt percipient quod sequantur; qui uero didicerunt, frequenti memoria admoniti, sollicite custodiant quod*

nouerunt”;<sup>237</sup> “sed inter utrosque foueantur quousque quantulumcumque regulam cognoscant et semper instruantur ut siue sint pueri siue puellae, monasterio prouecentur ubi habitare futuri erant [...] et ipsi infantes suum habeant decanum qui plus de eis intelligit, ut regulam super eos obseruet; et ab eo semper admoneantur ne aliquid absque regula faciant aut loquantur”.<sup>238</sup> Elsewhere, the Rule of Fructuosus suggests a more general reading of monastic rules: “ter per omnem hebdomadam [...] regulae patrum legendae”.<sup>239</sup> As such, the monastic rules make it clear that a monk was required to understand the rules of the monastery. However, beyond suggesting that monks were to know them, they offer little to explain explicitly how the monastic rules might have been used.

Interestingly, activity surrounding written texts seems to have been focussed primarily on their reception, rather than their creation, since there is no explicit evidence in the monastic rules for a *scriptorium*, or the activity of writing. This is despite the fact that *scriptoria* were known to have existed in early medieval monasteries. Cassiodorus, for example, mentions a *scriptorium* at his monastery in Vivarium,<sup>240</sup> whilst Jerome suggested that selling the products of a *scriptorium* could bring in revenue to a monastery. Braulius also suggests that he has access to a monastic *scriptorium* in one of his letters, after sending a Frominianus a commentary with *adnotationes* in the margin (Abad León 1999: 291). In addition, it was seen above how Valerius of Bierzo makes various references to the copying of written texts, as well as original writing.

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<sup>237</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 7.

<sup>238</sup> *Common Rule* 6.

<sup>239</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 20.

<sup>240</sup> *De Institutione Diuinarum Litterarum* 30.

In truth, many of the early medieval monastic rules do not make explicit reference to the act of writing or the existence of a *scriptorium*, although in some cases it is implied. The Rule of Ferreolus, for example, suggests that “*ut paginam pingat digito, qui terram non praescribit aratro*”,<sup>241</sup> playing on the physical difficulty of writing. The Rule of Benedict, meanwhile, says famously: “*Oratorium hoc sit quod dicitur, nec ibi quicquam aliud geratur aut condatur*”.<sup>242</sup> The Latin *condo* can imply either ‘to store’ or ‘to write’, and so its sense here could imply writing. However, although the monastic rules do not describe explicitly the act of writing, other sources of evidence, such as those discussed above, would seem to suggest that such activity did take place in some monasteries.

### **3.9 Illiteracy and Auality in the Visigothic Monastery**

The evidence suggests that a culture surrounding the use of written texts was extremely important in Visigothic monasticism. This might also imply that literacy rates were fairly high, influenced by the later medieval notion of *lectio divina*, implying a solitary reading exercise. However, it is fitting to question the extent to which this ideal of the literate monk is appropriate: can the fact that the written word might have been particularly widespread in certain monasteries really imply that all those in the communities relied or even made use of it in through personal reading?

Notwithstanding the importance attributed to written texts, the monastic rules also present some evidence for the illiteracy in monastic communities. Indeed, even the Rule of Benedict caters for the fact that some monks might not be able to read: “*Si quis uero ita negligens et desidiosus fuerit ut non uelit aut non possit meditare aut legere, iniungatur ei*

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<sup>241</sup> *Rule of Ferreolus* 28.

<sup>242</sup> *Rule of Benedict* 52.

*opus quod faciat, ut non uacet*".<sup>243</sup> The Rule of Isidore, for example, makes it clear that not all converts were able to declare their devotion in writing, when it compares the recruitment of a monk with the recruitment of a soldier: "*Sicut enim ii qui ad saecularem promouentur militiam in legionem non transeunt nisi antea in tabulis conferantur, ita et ii qui in spiritualibus castris caelesti militae sunt signandi nisi prius professione uerbi aut scripti teneantur in numerum societatemque seruorum Christi transire non possunt*".<sup>244</sup> In its chiding of some conversational material, the Common Rule mentions the claim to be able to read and write as being something that was boasted about by monks: "*et quasi nihil a Deo acceperint de propriis uiribus extollentur, et cum laudatores non inueniunt ipsi sibi in suis laudibus prosiliunt [...] alius de legendo, alius de scribendo*".<sup>245</sup> Also, in one of the sentences from the *pactum*, quoted above, there is reference to monks who may not be able to sign their name, and so have to leave a mark (*signum*) instead: "*Haec sunt nomina qui manu sua unusquisque subscriptionem uel signum in hoc pacto fecit*".

In themselves, these pieces of evidence do not necessarily imply that illiteracy was widespread: there is far more evidence in the monastic rules of activity relating to a literate culture than an illiterate one. However, it seems a sensible assumption that postulants would have constituted a range of literate ability. On the one hand, there could have been postulants who represented extremes of the scale, such as high literate abilities or perhaps none at all; on the other hand, those in between, ranging from basic pragmatic literate abilities and onwards. In such a scenario, even if one could adopt an idealistic approach, whereby there existed some kind of internal educational structure for new converts, perhaps during the novitiate, it would nevertheless take some time before all converts were of a reading ability sufficient to

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<sup>243</sup> *Rule of Benedict* 48.

<sup>244</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.2.

<sup>245</sup> *Common Rule* 13.

allow them to participate in private *lectio*, in the sense that they could read and understand the texts perfectly for themselves.

However, evidence for education in the monasteries in this period is scanty. None of the monastic rules themselves mention adult education explicitly. During the ‘probation’ periods advised by Isidore and Fructuosus there is no mention of any kind of education; indeed, the Rule of Fructuosus advises that a new convert should instead undertake manual tasks and not be mixed with a congregation for a whole year: “*sicque anno integro uni spirituali traditus seniori*”.<sup>246</sup> He continues to mention a kind of internship with a dean following the year’s probation, although the content of this internship is left open:<sup>247</sup>

If there existed varying levels of literacy within a monastery, what of the strong presence of textual culture? Innes (1998) has said: “The written word needs to be related to the mass of non-written practices which surround, envelop and rival it. Anthropologists and historians have demonstrated the adaptability, durability and frequent vitality of orality as a medium for communication even after the advent of writing. Indeed, the heroic view of a triumphant literacy pushing previous practices aside is being replaced by an understanding of the ways in which oral practices survive the challenge of literacy, and can indeed shape the cultural and social contexts within which literacy is adopted” (*ibid.*: 4).

It is important to mention that the monastic way of life evidenced by the monastic rules entailed a large amount of orality. The Rule of Benedict begins tellingly with the famous phrase: “*Obsculta, o filii, praecepta magistri et inclina aurem cordis tui*”; the use of the verb

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<sup>246</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 20.

<sup>247</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 21.

*obsculto*, along with the noun *auris* is indicative of the importance placed on oral transactions. The idea of orality in monastic rules has recently been touched on by Moorhead (2005), who asserts that in the Rule of Benedict, “Scripture is something which speaks and can be heard [...] it seems that for Benedict, the primary way in which Scripture exhorts humans is through their sense of hearing” (*ibid.*: 10; see also his 2008).

In the Visigothic monastic rules, the majority of instances of *lectio* occur within a group context, where only one person need necessarily be reading. Isidore reveals that the Rules of the Fathers were to be recited during assembly: “*cunctis pariter congregatis praecepta Patrum regularia recensenda sunt*”,<sup>248</sup> and then also reveals that oral group work was to be undertaken so as to ensure that the texts were not misunderstood: “*de his autem quaestionibus quae leguntur, nec forte intelliguntur, unusquisque fratrum aut in collatione aut post uesperam abbatem interroget et, recitata in loco lectione, ab eo expositionem suscipiat ita ut dum uni exponitur, caeteri audient*”.<sup>249</sup> Fructuosus suggests the use of public readings: “*sedentibus cunctis, unus medio residens releget librum, et ab abbate uel a praeposito, disserente caeteris simplicioribus quod legitur patefiat*”.<sup>250</sup> The Common Rule suggests both reading and listening to Scripture: “*Illi manna manducando mortui sunt, et isti scripturas legendo et audiendo spirituali fame quotidie moriuntur [...] et liquide audiant quod obseruare debeant*”.<sup>251</sup> It also suggests that those who complain about having to care for the flocks should listen to what the rules of the Fathers have to say on the matter: “*Et quia solent nonnulli qui greges custodiunt murmurare, et nullam se pro tali seruitio putant habere mercedem, cum se in congregatione orantes et laborantes minime uident, audiant quid dicunt*

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<sup>248</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 7.2.

<sup>249</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 8.2.

<sup>250</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 3.

<sup>251</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

*Patrum regulae, tacentes recogitent*".<sup>252</sup> The use of *audiant* rather than perhaps *legunt* is interesting here, implying that the *regulae Patrum* were texts that were listened to.

In addition, there are various instances of assemblies or lessons where instruction appears to be wholly oral. For example: "*Ad audiendum in collatione patrem tribus in hebdomada uicibus fratres post celebrationem tertiae, dato signo, ad collectam conueniant; audiant docentem seniore, instruentem cunctos salutaribus praeceptis; audiant patrem studio summo, et silentio, intentionem animorum suorum suspiriis et gemitibus demonstrantes. Ipsa quoque collatio erit uel pro corrigendis uitiis, instruendis moribus, uel pro reliquis causis ad utilitatem coenobii pertinentibus*";<sup>253</sup> "*Caeterum uero talem consuetudinem facere mandamus, ut si in unam collationem ad audiendum uerbum salutis fratres et sorores copulati fuerint, iuxta uiros sorores sedere non audeant, sed uterque sexus diuisis choris sedeat*".<sup>254</sup>

The use of the term "*caeteris simplicioribus*" in one of the quotations above is interesting. Elsewhere in Latin, the term *simplex* often refers to something being 'simple, not difficult',<sup>255</sup> although it can also refer to people, to mean 'simple, uneducated'.<sup>256</sup> In this sense, the term probably means the latter, referring to monks who do not understand the spiritual message of what is being read to them. However, it might also imply monks being read to who cannot read for themselves. Indeed, "recent studies have shown that medieval

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<sup>252</sup> *Common Rule 9.*

<sup>253</sup> *Rule of Isidore 7.*

<sup>254</sup> *Common Rule 17.*

<sup>255</sup> For example, Ammianus Marcellinus *Res Gesta* 26.2, "proinde pacatis auribus accipite, quaeso, simplicioribus uerbis, quod conducere arbitror in commune"

<sup>256</sup> For example, Jerome *Expos. s. Hieronimi in lib. Cant. Cant 8*, "Hi ergo tales uiri, exponendo diuinam legem, ostendunt simplicioribus occultas insidias daemonum"

textual communities were formed of literate, semiliterate and illiterate members; those unable or just learning to read were expected to participate in textual culture” (Irvine 1991: 185). Early medieval monasteries attracted converts from all social levels; “although [monasteries] provided centres in which manuscripts could survive, they were primarily centres where Christians from all ranks of society sought to pursue the highest levels of spiritual life” (Parkes 1992: 171).

A simple frequency analysis of the employment of terms relating to acts of hearing and reading might prove useful. Below are the frequency counts for forms related to *lego*, *recito*, *confero* and *audio* in the monastic rules. It reveals the following results:

	<i>lego</i>	<i>recito</i>	<i>Confer</i>	<i>audio</i>
Rule of Isidore	5	5	4	3
Rule of Fructuosus	1	2	0	7
Common Rule	3	11	0	3

Of course, the verb *lego* is problematic because it can refer as much to personal reading carried out alone and in silence as it can reading out aloud to a group of listeners. Despite the wide semantic range of *lego*, the point here is to demonstrate that references to activities that involve orality are commonplace, suggesting the importance that should be given to oral activities in companion with textual activity.

Other sources contemporary with the monastic rules confirm a continued employment more generally of orality alongside written texts in Visigothic Christianity. The Common Rule, for example, implies that people listened to, rather than read, the Gospels, when it says: “*si omnia fecerunt quae in Euangelico uoce ueritatis audierunt*”,<sup>257</sup> meanwhile John, a bishop of Zaragoza, was said to be “*uir in sacris litteris eruditus, plus uerbis intendens docere, quam scriptis*”.<sup>258</sup> Isidore, in his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, paints an interesting picture of, on the one hand, the importance of written texts in Christian worship, and on the other, the importance of orality: “*Est autem lectio non parua audientium aedificatio. Unde oportet ut quando psallitur, psallatur ab omnibus; cum oratur, oretur ab omnibus; cum lectio legitur, facto silentio, aequae audiatur a cunctis. [...] nec putes paruam nasci utilitatem ex lectionis auditu*”.<sup>259</sup> The importance of an oral performance is also noted by Isidore. When talking about lectors, he notes: “*Sicque expeditus uim pronuntiationis tenebit, ut ad intellectum omnium mentes sensusque promoueat, discernendo genera pronuntiationum, atque exprimendo sententiarum proprios affectus, modo indicantis uoce, modo dolentis, modo increpantis, modo exhortantis, siue his similia secundum genera propriae pronuntiationis*”.<sup>260</sup>

All of the evidence above suggests that, whilst written texts were important, if not crucial, to Christian worship more generally, and monastic worship more specifically, a culture of orality persisted. This meant that an inability to read texts such as the Bible or hagiography perfectly did not exclude the participant from being part of a culture that focussed heavily on the use of the written word.

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<sup>257</sup> *Common Rule* 4.

<sup>258</sup> Ildelfonsus *De uiris illustribus* 5.

<sup>259</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.10.

<sup>260</sup> *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.11.

### 3.10 Visigothic Monasteries as Textual Communities

Given the evidence presented in the monastic rules, two important factors need to be taken into account. First, Visigothic monasteries can be interpreted as ‘textual communities’, a phrase popularised by Stock (1983). Although Stock was referring to much later medieval communities, the term nevertheless has significance for this study. It signifies, at its most simple level, a community where written texts occupy a central role in the quotidian existence of its members. However, importantly this need not imply necessarily that all members of that community are capable of reading, but rather require this ability only from a few key members of the group: “what was essential to a textual community was not a written version of a text, although that was sometimes present, but an individual who, having mastered it, then utilized it for reforming a group’s thought and action” (Stock 1983: 90). As such, “their ‘literacy’, then, was not predicated on being able to read, but in their willingness to assign authority to texts and their ability to interpret the messages contained therein” (Briggs 2000: 405).

This is a notion that has attracted interest for the study of communities in both Late Antiquity and the medieval period (Haines-Eitzen 2009). The early medieval evidence also demonstrates that participation in textual culture did not require literacy. A famous example is that of Pope Gregory I, who describes the following story of a man called Servulus:<sup>261</sup>

*“Nequaquam litteras nouerat, sed scripturae sacrae sibimet codices emerat, et religiosos quosque in hospitalitatem suscipiens, hos coram se studiose legere faciebat. Factumque est ut*

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<sup>261</sup> *Dialogues* 4.14.

*iuxta modum suum plene sacram scripturam disceret, cum, sicut dixi, litteras funditus ignoraret. Studebat semper in dolore gratias agere, hymnis Deo et laudibus diebus ac noctibus uacare”.*

Stock himself stated that a textual community used texts “to structure the internal behaviour of the group’s members and to provide solidarity against the outside world [...] the text itself was re-performed orally, and as a consequence, interaction by word of mouth could take place as a superstructure of an agreed meaning” (1983: 90). Such a scenario is perfectly applicable to the Visigothic monasteries, where written texts constituted a core feature of daily life but where it cannot be imagined that all monks would have been able to engage with them on a literate level. Indeed, the sources clearly show that written texts were important to monasteries and it has already been made clear that Visigothic society of all levels was not alien to written culture.

The second factor that needs to be taken into account is the nature of monastic *lectio*. Colombas (1975: 349) is at ease to say: “no perseguía la *lectio divina* un fin científico o literario, ni era tenida por una actividad puramente intelectual. Los monjes más simples, con tal que supieran leer, podían y debían aplicarse a ella”. This is all very well, but what about those monks who did not know how to read? The answer to this lies in the definition of *lectio* as being a ‘reading’ in the wider sense of the word, and beyond this as being of a specifically Christian type. The Latin *legere* was often related to *meditari* during antiquity, and within the Christian orbit, *lectio* was similarly not always an academic pursuit but one of a meditative nature. The concept of reading in the works of Augustine, for example, has been the subject of some discussion and similar conclusions have been reached (Stock 2001). Indeed, it is important that modern scholars do not distance themselves from the fact that

“where monastic texts do refer to reading, the forms they prescribe are intensive rather than extensive, meditative rather than scholarly” (Williams 2006: 177).

The notion of a ‘sacred’ reading must be allowed for, as exemplified by *lectio divina* and this had always been the case for early Christians. As Lane Fox (1994: 145) stated, “in the absence of personal reading, we must allow for the power of sacred literacy in Christian’s other senses”; and Gamble (1995: 141), “for Christians, texts were not entertainments or dispensable luxuries, but the essential instruments of Christian life. One cannot imagine a Christian community in antiquity, even the earliest, that would not have relied upon texts [...] texts had a constitutive and regulative importance for Christian thought and action [...] thought not every Christian could read, every Christian regularly heard reading”.

Perhaps an interesting and illuminating comparison could be made with the Muslim holy book, the Qur’an; “for the Muslim believer the Qur’an is the primary source on matters theological and legal, but in addition to that it is a daily presence in the life of the community and its individual members” (Allen 1998: 83). The idea of a text occupying a position of authority, both spiritual and pragmatic, is incidentally something transferable to the monastic rules. Ideally, Muslims are required to learn the entire text by heart in the original Arabic and commit it to memory, just as the monastic rules state should be done by a monk. More often than not, Qur’anic Arabic differs significantly to modern Arabic dialects and although the text might be recited aloud it is not necessarily understood; rather, importance is placed on correct pronunciation. The comparison here is that some modern Muslims do not necessarily understand the text of the Qur’an when it is placed in front of them, although they might have learnt the text to recite orally. It does not necessarily imply silent reading, although this would no doubt have taken place with monks who possessed the literacy ability.

In terms of literary activity, the group nature of much of the *lectio* should also be emphasised; group discussion or the reading of texts to a group by an individual seems to have been just as common as private or solitary reading. Moreover, when the monastic rules advise a monk to read, the act of reading itself it is often one of two or more options available. Isidore, for example, speaks of a monk applying himself to ‘prayer and reading’,<sup>262</sup> whilst Fructuosus on a couple of occasions advises a monk of a choice between reading or praying and chanting whilst in his cell.<sup>263</sup> The employment of terms such as prayer, reading and chanting together hint again that *lectio* could relate to spiritual reflection just as much as the physical act of reading.

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<sup>262</sup> 5.6, “*Propriis autem temporibus oportet operari monachum et propriis orationi lectionique incumbere*”.

<sup>263</sup> 6, “*siue lectioni intentus aut in orationis contemplatione defixus*”.

### 3.11 Conclusions

Irvine (1994) discussed the problem of early monastic textual communities and came to the following conclusion: “the Rule of Benedict presupposes and promotes grammatical culture even though it does not explicitly prescribe an educational programme [...] the simplicity of monastic life, with its detachment from secular institutions, is the simplicity of the cultured, literate classes, not that of the poor and powerless” (*ibid.*: 191). Irvine perhaps goes too far for the Visigothic examples; it was shown in Chapter Two that Visigothic monasteries were not necessarily detached from secular institutions, and archaeological and literary evidence also suggests that the ‘poor and powerless’ need not necessarily be detached from literate activity in the lay world. However, it is true that the Visigothic monastic rules do not detail explicitly an education programme.

Since acts of literacy are constantly promoted in the monastic rules it is not the case that the importance of the use of texts in these communities needs to be re-thought; the evidence clearly points to the fact that the presence of texts was central. Rather, two factors need to be taken into account. First, Visigothic monasteries can be called textual communities in the truest sense of the word, in that they were communities where written texts occupied an important centrality, but also acts of orality and aurality played a central role; second, the idea of monastic ‘literacy’ needs to be replaced with the idea of monastic *lectio*. Since the importance of written texts cannot be done away with, it is instead the interpretation of how those texts were used that needs to be redefined. The evidence from the monastic rules shows a community where a large proportion of *lectio* seems to have been carried out aloud, in a group setting. This means that only one person needed to be able to read that text aloud in order for everybody to participate in literate culture. In this sense, recognition needs to be given to the oral culture of monastic life alongside the presence of

literate culture focussed on written texts. This meant that literate inability did not prohibit inclusion into a textual community.

## **Chapter Four: Literary Technique and Style in the Monastic Rules**

*“sanctos et apostolicos uiros non uerborum compositionibus describere, sed sensum ueritate gaudere, nec per arte Donati sed per simplicitatem currere Christi”*<sup>264</sup>

### **4.1 Introduction**

The monastic rules can be best described as victims of a literary postcode lottery. They were written in a period associated popularly more with cultural decline than with literary prowess,<sup>265</sup> and scholars of Classical Latin, tentatively set by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* to end at AD 200, have viewed traditionally with a negative outlook the literary achievements of the post-Roman world. In particular, one of the biggest prejudices against early Christian Latin is emphasised by the quotation that starts this chapter: it was a theological point of force, and later a literary topos, of early Christians that the message of God be intelligible to all, and this had to be reflected in its language. Isidore of Seville, amongst other prominent Church writers, was a proponent of this view: *“fastidiosis atque loquacibus scripturae sanctae minus propter sermonem simplicem placent. Gentili enim eloquentiae comparata uidetur illis indigna”*.<sup>266</sup> There was widespread acknowledgement of the *simplicitas* of much of Christian Latin when compared with Classical Latin, even from the Christians themselves. This will be a topic explored further in Chapter Five. Add to this the general disregard for the literary output of the Visigothic period and the end result is often a less than favourable start.

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<sup>264</sup> Paul Albar, *Letter to John* 1.2.

<sup>265</sup> For example Wendell (1921: 441): “To the literary traditions of Europe, the seventh century added nothing that has generally been remembered”.

<sup>266</sup> *Sententiae* 3.13.7. See also, for example, Augustine *De doctrina Christiana* 2.13.19, *“melius in barbarismo nostro uos intellegitis quam in nostra disertitudine uos deserti eritis”*.

This chapter will focus firstly on the place of monastic rules within Latin literature as a whole, and secondly on the literary methods employed by the monastic rules to communicate with their intended recipients. It will ask the question: what kind of literary relationship might have existed between the monastic rules and their audience? In essence, are these texts without literary pretensions and, if not, what does this mean for their understanding? It will be argued that the monastic rules are important texts for the study of post-Roman and early Christian literature, representative not only of a tradition of technical texts written in a lower-register of language, but also of the literary training of their authors. Above all, it will be suggested that their literary discourse is perfectly suited to a community centred on auralty and oral *lectio*, as described in Chapter Three.

## 4.2 Monastic Rules and the Concept of Literature

Monastic rules are included only rarely in works of literary history. Their absence seems problematic on two levels. In the first instance, a major problem in this judgement is that the term ‘literature’ has long been attacked by scholars as a viable term with which to study written texts.<sup>267</sup> In addition, Roman and, subsequently, Visigothic, concepts of literature were very different from those of the modern period. In antiquity, texts were often conceived as literary based on their conformity to a defined genre, canons for which had existed since the Hellenistic period; *imitatio* was central to the Roman literary output,

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<sup>267</sup> For example, Sparshott (1978: 5), “literature is not a word [...] that has a long and honourable history of debate behind it. Reference to the Oxford English Dictionary is disheartening: the history of the word is brief and inglorious”; Blanchot (1959: 242), called it a “mot tardif, mot sans honneur”.

including stylistic techniques and form (Lyne 1989; Finkelberg & Stroumsa 2003).<sup>268</sup> This dichotomy between style and functionality demonstrates how a text can successfully fit into an existing canon, even if it might fall short of modern notions of acceptable standards of ‘literariness’. Indeed, until relatively recently, the distinction between genres of writing was blurred; thus, Virgil’s *Georgics* are a comfortable mix of agricultural theory and myth and even Gibbons’ *Decline and Fall* can read more like historical fiction than an academic text.<sup>269</sup> Of course, academic texts are still subject to deviation from what is now an expected style; as an example, Henderson (2007) has been subject to criticism due to his use of language.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> In that sense, a work could be still be considered literary and part of a canon, even if it would not be so today. Some of the epigrams of Martial, for example, would probably today be considered as smutty one-liners rather than literature proper (Watson & Watson 2003: 21-23), whilst other examples of Latin literature, such as Catullus, were deemed so unsuitable by modern critics in the past for its content that they would not even translate it in the Loeb series until relatively recently.

<sup>269</sup> For example, the start of his chapter twenty-two about Julian the Apostate opens with: “Impatient to visit the place of his birth and the new capital of the empire, he advanced from Naissus through the mountains of Haemus and the cities of Thrace. When he reached Heraclea, at the distance of sixty miles, all Constantinople was poured forth to receive him; and he made his triumphal entry amidst the dutiful acclamations of the soldiers, the people and the senate”. The descriptive language can read almost like the opening of a novel rather than an academic treatise.

<sup>270</sup> See the review by Burrows (2008: 229): “Examples are piled on top of each other in rapid – and sometimes irritating – succession, e.g. 'Magicians are the ones commonly called mafiosi on account of their mega-felonies' (p. 117) and 'Thus rutting rapist starts a pagan pagoda poem which closes a chastening Christian book' (p. 122). It's a heady and entertaining ride, very different from the measured and neutral language of the usual scholarly treatise, especially on matters medieval. And yet the very cleverness and playfulness tend to obscure Henderson's argument, and it becomes hard to see how much substance lies behind the superficial brilliance. Has he done anything more than demonstrate that Isidore's *Etymologies* embody a combination of Christian and Classical worldviews, and that they model an approach to knowledge based on the origins and meanings of words? One thing is certainly clear: this reading is largely a-historical, with little real attempt to locate Isidore in the context of his own time and little real analysis of his debt to – and influence on – other writers”.

The rise of the term ‘literature’ in the nineteenth century to represent a perceived cultural apex led to a polarisation in value between the definition of ‘high’ literary texts and low ‘non-literary’ ones, distinctions which had previously been somewhat less fixed. The English Association, for example, upon being founded in 1906 declared literature to be ‘the best that is thought and known in the world’, and henceforth popular notions of literature linked it with classic works that were deemed worthy, often confined to a limited taxonomy of genres.<sup>271</sup> In an effort to define what separated literary works out from their non-literary counterparts, it was widely acknowledged that artistic works were written in an artistic language; that is, in a style that identified them as being literary, and therefore different from the everyday language.

Such an idea found favour in the early twentieth century with the theories of the Russian Formalist movement, and later by the Prague School. This movement maintained that literary language constituted a ‘defamiliarisation’ (остранение) of its spoken form, or a purposefully constructed strangeness (Lemon & Reis 1965; Selden 2005). However, modern scholars have generally dismissed this idea.<sup>272</sup> In its place it is now generally accepted amongst modern theorists that “there is no ‘essence’ of literature whatsoever” (Eagleton 1996: 9); whole books have been dedicated to the problem of definition, none of them

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<sup>271</sup> Even recently, Gray (1998: 163) promulgated such a limiting taxonomy with his definition of literature as being “a vague, all-inclusive term for poetry, novels, drama, short stories, prose: anything written, in fact, with an apparently artistic purpose, rather than to communicate information; or anything else written and examined as if it had an artistic purpose”.

<sup>272</sup> Thus García Berreiro (1992: 39), “it has not been very long since one of the most solid traditional principles on which the artistic condition of literary and poetic texts was founded collapsed, or at least fell into a state of turmoil and debate [...] all of the linguistic features considered especially artistic are also represented in the most habitual communicative use of language”.

conclusive (Hernardi 1978; Robson 1982; Attridge 2004; for a perspective from classical authors, see Too 1998; Haliwell 2002; Martindale 2005).

A general consensus in modern theory is that literature should be defined as any written work that is highly valued by an individual: “value is a transitive term: it means whatever is valued by certain people in specific questions, according to particular criteria and in the light of given purposes” (Eagleton 1996: 11). The success of a piece of ‘literature’ is reliant upon an individual’s experience upon reading it, and what delights and interests one person may be utterly un-delightful to the next. This is where the definition must end, since further investigation meets with little consensus, whether this be in the taxonomy of ‘literary’ genres or devices, specifically language, that make works literary. As Martindale noted: “conservatives today habitually try to ring-fence literature with some notion of ‘literarity’ [...] the frequent claim that ‘non-literary’ language is purely instrumental [...] is simply false” (2005: 73). He continues: “among the arts ‘literature’ (itself a historically variable category) is often said to be among the more impure, and certainly it is bound up, in complex ways, with most of the discourses and practices that comprise a culture” (*ibid.*: 122).

This thesis is not a suitable forum to expound a definition of ‘the literary’, a process that would nevertheless appear to be impossible. However, it is sufficient to state that ‘literature’ is a term that more often than not creates more problems than it solves. If it is accepted that the concept of literature is un-helpful due to its lack of definition, then the damage of employing such boundaries to categorise sources is immediately apparent.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Hurtado, for example, in discussing early Christian manuscripts, wrote, “I have restricted myself here to texts that can be regarded as ‘literary’, but even so I have been a bit generous” (2006: 24). Exactly what he meant by such ‘generosity’ is unclear, but the example nevertheless demonstrates the vacuity that operates in agreement as to what is ‘literature’: it is all too often based upon a vague

Nevertheless, monastic rules have been victim to considerations that they do not belong to works of literature. With the exception of very few articles (for example, Allies 2010), no English-language publications focussing on aspects of literary style in the Visigothic monastic rules have so far been produced; where works have been dedicated to their study, they are normally simple translations and historical commentaries. It is not just monastic rules that have been subject to this un-literary label, and individual judgement values concerning other, specifically early Christian, texts, have consistently divided them according to a perceived literary value.<sup>274</sup> The narrow impositions set out by modern scholarship have thus defined areas of academic study, and those genres which do not fall into the boundaries of what is both more generally and individually accepted to be literary have been to a large extent ignored by many works.

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definition according to individual scholars, who struggle over a concept that not even literary theorists can define adequately.

<sup>274</sup> An obvious example is hagiography. Auerbach, for example, struggled in his definition of the *Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, commenting: “perhaps it will be argued that the Acts of Perpetua are not a literary document. That is true; they were not” (1953: 63). His remarks have echoed throughout the scholarly world, and hagiography for a long time was a genre that was often thought of as undeserving for literary study. The Christian epistolary tradition is yet another example. Despite having long been recognised as an important part of the ancient literary corpus, Deissman (1908) dichotomised between the ‘letter’ and the ‘epistle’, only one of which constituted what he labelled a *Kunstbrief*. As Jeske (1977: 596) later remarked, “in the analysis of early Christian letters, it is essential to acknowledge when the borderline towards ‘literature’ is breached, whether actual literary pretension is present, and to what extent publication itself corresponds to the intention of the author”. Even the Vulgate itself was long banished to what Overbeck had labelled *Urliteratur*. Recently, however, this has been counter-argued by scholars such as Howlett, who have sought to promulgate the idea of biblical style and the importance of its influence throughout Christian writing: “ignorance of Biblical style has misled many scholars to infer that texts composed in it are corrupt or formless. By recognising Biblical style we may acquire first a valuable textual critical tool for selecting correct readings among variants of corrupt texts, second a window into the minds of authors who have been misapprehended and misprized, and third new insights into an unrecognised tradition of composition which spans millennia” (1995: 25).

It would be churlish to abandon the concept of literature altogether: 'literature' clearly does exist as a concept, albeit a rather fuzzy one with no set boundaries. In addition, it is a term that is engraved in modern mentalities. Nevertheless, to talk of literature is to talk of a word that defies definition, and this cannot be a tenable position from which to study. Instead, the challenge must be met not with new terminology but with new approaches. Just a couple of generations ago, black-and-white concepts of periodization provided seemingly workable and comfortable models for historians, yet they clearly ignored the intricacies of social change and personal identities. Such clear-cut approaches are today no longer possible, and it is largely recognised that periodizations provide a useful framework of study, but are subject to inconsistencies and may in reality reflect very little, if anything, of contemporary culture. It is from this aspect that literature must be viewed, a necessary term but a concept that is prone to varying interpretations, each one not necessarily more correct than another, and whose modern sensibilities may reflect little of those of the intended audience.

In this thesis, the following approach has been adopted. The study of literature is understood to imply the study of the relationship between a text, its writer and its audience; texts are understood to imply simply written documents of any kind, from graffiti to scratching to drawn-out prose. Perhaps it could be argued that this definition is too broad, but it is nevertheless better to be inclusive than exclusive; after all, this study hopes some way to right the wrongs that an approach of exclusivity has so far encouraged. This definition also allows for a far better position from which to study holistically literary development because it does

not exclude any texts on the basis of modern value judgements.<sup>275</sup> This standpoint is not itself without problems, and some might balk at the notion of including epigraphy alongside Virgil. However, what could then be made of the lines of Virgil scrawled over Pompeian walls; are these not graffiti but also lines of literature (Horsfall 1999: 252)? Indeed, some of the graffiti at Pompeii are one-liners that are arguably just as witty as anything Martial wrote.<sup>276</sup>

It is therefore correct to be inclusive: literature cannot, and should not, constitute the imposition of an individualistic definition, especially upon texts that are separated from modern culture by some fifteen-hundred years from their cultural genesis. Indeed, judging them upon the morals of modern literary expectations would be as absurd as judging modern literature by the expectations of a Visigothic audience. Leeman (1963: 12) expressed this problem in his remark that, “an oration of Cicero read in the same way as we read an oration of Churchill creates a feeling of being plunged into a borderless ocean of words, grasping for some scarce driftwood of meaning”. Monastic rules should be treated no differently.

### **4.3 The Monastic Rules as Technical Literature**

As with any other scholarly enquiry, it is necessary to categorise monastic rules within the literary landscape in order to be able to study them better. In studying the literary

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<sup>275</sup> Correa Rodríguez (2006: 219) went so far as to include numismatic evidence as a type of literature: “la humildad de estos ‘textos’ viene adornada con tres verdaderas joyas: datación exacta, localización precisa y ausencia de transmisión [es] un documento de dos ‘páginas’ redactado en el latín de la época”.

<sup>276</sup> For example, CIL IV 1904, “I admire you wall, for not having collapsed at having to carry the tedious scribbling of so many writers”, or CIL IV 8408, “Lovers, like bees, lead a honeyed life. I wish”. For a fuller list, see George & Cooley (2004: 77-79).

style of the monastic rules, it would be particularly unhelpful to compare them with authors writing in a high-register of Classical Latin prose, despite this being the consistent benchmark for modern aesthetic judgement; there are important differences in both writer and audience. Immediately distinctive is the fact that, unlike much of Classical Latin literature, the monastic rules are not written in metre, but rather a standard, non-rhythmic prose; this immediately distinguishes it from much Classical Latin literature. Whilst some genres of Classical Latin literature can be defined by their metre (epic, for example, is almost always in hexameter; lyric was often in Sapphic metre etc.), it is well-established that later Latin was generally witness to a move away from metrical *clausulae* to those based on a rhythmical *cursus*.<sup>277</sup> Indeed, if the ninth-century Paul Albar were to be believed, knowledge of Latin metre had been completely lost in the peninsula by his time.<sup>278</sup>

A further difference between monastic rules and earlier, Classical literature, is that there is necessarily a lack of a presumed knowledge on behalf of the author from the audience

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<sup>277</sup> Thus Raven (1965: 38): “in the medieval period accent gradually superseded quantity as a basis for rhythm”. See Álvarez Campos (1993); Orlandi (2005). It has been proposed that the *cursus mixtus*, a mix of both metrical and accentual forms, arose in the third century, primarily out of a need to cater for an audience that could not understand the artificial metre. Thus Hall & Oberhelman (1986: 525): “In the second century AD prose rhythms consisted of the narrow canon of Ciceronian forms that had evolved in the previous two centuries [...] But in the first half of the third century, in the writings of Minucius and Cyprian, accentual rhythms are demonstrably present. As we have shown elsewhere, accentual patterns first appeared in the *clausulae* of African authors so as to accommodate their audience, who would have appreciated rhythm structured along the natural word-stress but not artificial metrical patterns taken from Greek patterns”.

<sup>278</sup> *Life of Eulogius* 4, “*Ibi metricos quod adhuc nesciebant sapientes Hispaniae paedes perfectissime docuit*”. This is likely to be untrue; certainly in the seventh century King Sisebut, a tutee of Isidore, composed a poem in classical hexameter entitled the *De eclipsis lunae*<sup>278</sup> and the mid-seventh-century Euginius, bishop of Toledo, also composed two epitaphs to king Chindaswinth and Reciterga, the former in elegiac couplets and the latter in dactylic hexameter (Constable 1997: 24-25).

concerning other literature, and in this way it makes impossible the expected end result of *imitatio* on which so much of Greco-Roman literature depended. Whilst Virgil, for example, could scatter his Aeneid with literary, historical and mythological references that he knew would be received and understood by his primary audience (the court of Augustus), the authors of the monastic rules could not make any presuppositions on behalf of their audience due to its varied backgrounds. It has been demonstrated that monastic audiences were made up of people from throughout the social spectrum, and it cannot be presumed that all monks would have possessed knowledge of preceding or contemporary literature.

A monastic rule is a didactic, informative and authoritative text. Although a Christian innovation, this is not to say that the kind of text that they represent do not have progenitors in earlier Latin writers. Didactic poetry, for example, is a well-established classical genre that demonstrates aptly how technical subjects can be displayed successfully in a literary guise.<sup>279</sup> Beyond didactic poetry, there are works that capture much more perfectly the textbook approach of the monastic rules: technical literature. Technical literature is defined here as prose written on a specialised topic for a specialised audience, typically by an author with a specialised expertise. The term ‘specialised’ in this case need not necessarily imply the presence of formal training or education, although the audience will by default normally have had knowledge of or a specific interest in matters that would not be widely-known or available to a more general audience. As the etymology of ‘technical’ implies (Greek τέχνη, ‘skill’), most often this specialisation is one of a certain skill or talent, although it can also apply to social groups who communicate regarding matters in a language specific to their concerns that would be alien to outsiders. Christian audiences in particular have been cited as

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<sup>279</sup> See recently Volk (2002). A sense of literary style can also be perceived in much more purposefully didactic works. See, for example, Déprez Masson (2006) and Rodgers (2004: 27-29).

examples of this, a topic that will be discussed further in Chapter Five. The idea of technical literature more generally is one that has been applied to a wide range of texts (Powell 2005), and is a field that has in recent years witnessed something of resurgence, particularly relating to Latin literature (for example, Adams 1995; Langsow 2000; Formisano 2001; Santini 2002).

Technical texts are normally written in a low-register of language. This is not to say that they were written in a language seen as ‘wrong’ by their audience, but rather that the language was generally lacking the manipulated and artificial nature of higher-register literary prose, such as archaic or poetic vocabulary and heavily manipulated syntax for the purposes of literary adornment (Allies 2009). This has meant they have rarely enjoyed the attention lavished on other works that are generally seen as being more ‘literary’.<sup>280</sup> It has been noted that “el estudio de este campo [i.e. technical literature] de la literatura latina ha gozado, tradicionalmente, de un escaso interés y ha vivido casi siempre bajo las consideraciones más bien peyorativas de los principales estudiosos, que no tan solo le han dedicado relativos pocos esfuerzos, sino que, cuando lo han hecho, han producido opiniones no demasiado favorables” (Gómez Pallarès 2003: 127).

Added to this problem is the wider methodological issue of anachronism, since for Roman audiences there existed “no sharp generic distinction between *Kunstliteratur* and *Fachliteratur*” (Powell 2005: 234). This means that the modern divisions of literary

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<sup>280</sup> For example, it was only in 2004 that a new edition of Frontinus’ *De Aquaeductu Urbis Romae* was published, replacing the last edition of 1722 (Rodgers 2004). Similarly, an English-language edition of the Isidore’s *Etymologies* appeared only in 2006, despite being a work of major importance and influence in the medieval period (Barney et al. 2006).

importance do not necessarily translate diachronically to reflect the interests or concerns of the culture that is attempted to be understood. As such, modern academic writing dedicated to ancient technical literature can prove elusive.<sup>281</sup> Nevertheless, despite a lack of interest for their literary heritage, technical texts have normally been studied principally for their philological insight: “technical authors had [...] long been recognised as being of great importance for the study of the later Latin language, but they had been [...] treated chiefly as evidence for popular, or ‘vulgar’, Latin” (Langslow 2000: 1).

#### **4.4 Cato’s De Agricultura and the Monastic Rules: A Stylistic Comparison**

The literary techniques of the monastic rules will be discussed below, but first attention turns to their style. A distinction must be made in the study of a text’s style and a text’s technique. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, style includes “those features of literary composition which belong to form and expression rather than the thought or the matter expressed”; technique, however, is the “manner of artistic execution or performance in relation to formal or practical details”. All written texts are stylistic, in the sense that they possess features of organisation or language that are typical of them. The literary theorist Terry Eagleton brought into question the extent to which a bus timetable could be considered as stylistic, an issue that recently came into public debate when it was discovered that a similar type of text was being included on an English literature exam paper.<sup>282</sup> Literary technique, however, is something entirely different, if by the phrase is understood a

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<sup>281</sup> It is surprising, for example, that Cato’s *De agricultura* is not included in the relevant chapter of the new Blackwell’s *A Companion to Latin Literature* (Goldberg 2005), despite the fact that elsewhere it is normally recognised as the first surviving example of Latin prose literature (Gratwick 1982a: 141).

<sup>282</sup> The BBC reported the story on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008; it can be found at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7715362.stm>.

purposeful ‘manipulation’ of the text put there by the author in a conscious attempt to achieve an effect. The situation sums up neatly the fact that ‘style’ is not confined to high-register language.

It will be a useful exercise to compare the monastic rules with other technical texts, to see if elements of commonality can help illuminate aspects of the text’s stylistic nature; Cato’s *De agricultura*, an agricultural handbook written c. 160 BC, will be taken here as an example. There is no specific reason for choosing this text above any others, apart from the fact that, with the monastic rules, they represent some of the first and last examples of Latin technical prose written by an author who had a language recognisable as Latin as their native tongue. The fact that a comparison can emphasise similarity through such diachrony seems fitting, and despite their differences in age, audience and author, the similarities between them will prove insightful. As with most technical texts, it is for its language that the *De agricultura* has been most purposefully studied (Till 1968). With the exception of the short preface, which is generally accepted to be purposefully stylistic and possibly drawing upon Greek rhetorical practice, Cato’s text has been described as “plain in the extreme” (Astin 1978: 190), and one that “has no place for literary ornaments” (Gratwick 1983: 88).

There are certain traits of Cato’s prose style that are of interest which highlight features indicative of what might be called an oral style. An oral style is taken here to imply the fact that if a work is written in a less-manipulated register of language then it may, consciously or unconsciously, make use of elements that are more reflective of the spoken language rather

than formal prose.<sup>283</sup> This might either be because of the inability of the author to write in a learned high style, or through an active choice to do so for consideration of the abilities or preferences of the intended audience. Elements of this oral style include the frequent use of verbal and lexical repetition, as well as repetition of content; reducing or short colas, or, as Lindholm (1931: 52) puts it, ‘rhetorical decrease’; synonymy; lexical redundancy in the form of, for example, *nemo homo*; the frequent employment of grammatical structures such as the imperative; and the use of personal phrases such as *ut supra dixi*.<sup>284</sup>

There must, of course, exist a distinction between oral *literature* and oral *style*, since the two are very different concepts. Oral literature does not concern the current study; monastic rules were written documents, sometimes read aloud and sometimes read personally. Oral literature, however, implies an unwritten tradition, often with an element of theatrical performance. This aspect has also been termed ‘word-power’ by some recent scholars, “a convenient abbreviated way of referring to sententious, rhythmically charged language that is uttered in a heightened register” (Niles (1999: 29). See also Foley (1992) and Lord (2002)).

Two features in particular of Catonian prose stand out. First, there is the issue of parataxis, or *breuitas* as it may sometimes also be called, meaning the employment of an economy of language, devoid of ornamentation and with short, stand-alone sentences. This style is indicative of didactic or admonitory texts, and one is reminded of the prohibitive lists

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<sup>283</sup> For a discussion on some of the wider traits of an oral style, and its relationship with the spoken language, see Koch (1995).

<sup>284</sup> For a full review, see Till (1968: 33-38).

placed in public places informing readers what behaviour is and is not suitable: ‘do not run’, ‘no smoking’, ‘silence’ etc. However, this feature should not automatically “be confused with a low stylistic standard” (Von Albrecht 1989: 6) since it was recommended by ancient writers who wrote in much higher registers of Classical Latin (Curtius 1997: 487-494). Indeed, the *breuitas Sallustiana* was celebrated as virtually canonical (Von Albrecht 1997: 445). This contrasts with Catonian *ubertas*, a style that is seemingly confused and peppered with superfluous repetition of content (the so-called ‘doublets’), an accumulation of synonyms, and the insertion of apparently unrelated topics such as recipes. Nevertheless, it remains clear that influences of oral language are strong in the *De agricultura*. As Till stated in his authoritative study: “l’elemento della lingua parlata costituisce una parte fondamentale del linguaggio catoniano” (1968: 33). He continues, “Ciò si spiega col fatto che nella prima metà del II secolo a.C. il ‘sermo cotidianus’ e la lingua scritta non erano ancora così separati e diversi l’uno dall’altra come, per esempio, al tempo di Cicerone” (*ibid.*: 33).

Ostensibly, it is this very style that has led to technical works being considered as un-stylistic, and, historically, little studied. In a similar vein to the authors of the monastic rules, in particular Isidore (see below), it is known that Cato was capable of writing in a much more elevated style, demonstrated especially in his *Origines*. It is true that “some forms of technical writing [...] show more regular ‘lapses’ from classical norms, in part due to simple lack of control of the artificial rules and conventions on the part of the authors concerned, who clearly struggle at times to ‘raise their game’ on the basis of a limited literary and rhetorical education” (Clackson & Horrocks 2007: 217). However, caution must be employed in applying this statement too freely. The fact that the *De agricultura* is written in such a way, for example, is indicative not of the inabilities of its author, but rather of a choice of diction and style fitting to the text and its intended audience. Cato was perfectly capable

of writing in a much higher register of Latin prose, and the same was true of Isidore and Fructuosus.

The question deserves to be asked, then: in what sense can a text be called un-stylistic simply because it does not correspond with the expected ideals of Classical Latin prose? If those ideals have been rejected consciously by an author, then are there features that are instead purposefully and uniformly used? Essentially, if by ‘stylistic’ is implied simply the recurrence of features, then a text does not have to be written in a high-register to qualify as such.

Von Albrecht’s assertion that there must exist a careful differentiation between ‘oral style’ and ‘artlessness’ applies equally well for the investigation of monastic rules. In many aspects, the style of the monastic rules is summed up by its frequent use of personal phraseology and imperative clauses; whilst to Cato are attributed archaisms, the monastic rules instead boast a language reflective of their own times in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures; sentences are often short and straight to the point; synonyms and repetition abound. There exist striking similarities between these texts, existing as they do at the beginning and the end of Latin writing in the ancient world. This oral style, whilst not ‘artless’, is reflective instead of functionality and the purpose behind the text. As Van Albrecht (1997) points out: “lengua y estilo tienen en la literatura técnica una función auxiliar. Ambos están subordinados al fin de la enseñanza” (*ibid.*: 533). Fuhrmann (1985) added: “toda literatura científica quiere enseñar y difundir conocimientos, y puede cumplir este objetivo de forma óptima si se sirve tanto de un estilo claro como de una estructura transparente y sistemática” (*ibid.*: 242).

There are a couple of important points to be taken from this discussion. First, despite the fact that the monastic rules stand out as a peculiarly Christian literary innovation, precedents for their literary style had existed since the earliest Latin literature. Second, the fact that they do not compare well to texts written in Classical Latin does not mean that they are not stylistic. Their style is a result not of incompetence or inability on behalf of the author, but is rather functional for its purpose. The idea about fitting a text specifically for an intended audience is not new. Mayer (2005), for example, noted that: “[when Vitruvius] decided to compose an unprecedented monograph on architecture [...] he had two fundamental needs: first, a plan on which to organize his material, and secondly, a prose style that would prove agreeable to his preferred audience” (*ibid.*: 195). Vitruvius is a fitting example, since the author consciously worries about his style throughout his work.<sup>285</sup> The overall purpose of a text, then, should be seen as influential in its style. As Mayer points out later in his article, the Latin prose style was not sufficiently developed into the mature medium required to serve a range of purposes, and as such writers were required to deviate from it if their audience was not suitable for such a style. This is a failing in the development of the Latin literary style rather than its authors.

#### **4.5 The Literary Abilities of Isidore and Fructuosus**

It has been noted that within the tradition of Latin technical writing, the use of an oral style, often confused with ‘artlessness’, is prevalent due to the intended nature of the texts. Before analysing the language of the monastic rules from a literary point of view, it will be

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<sup>285</sup> For example, *De Architectura* 1.1.18, “*peto, Caesar, et a te et ab is, qui ea uolumina sunt lecturi, ut, si quid parum ad regulam artis grammaticae fuerit explicatum, ignoscatur*”.

useful to note the literary abilities of their authors. It was suggested above that the ability of the authors, especially Isidore, to write in different, specifically much more elevated styles, should not be in question. Maltby (2006), for example, has demonstrated how Isidore was able to adapt his writing style through his study of the frequency of the gerund in Isidore's works and how it varies depending on the nature, secular or Christian, of the work. He was clearly a flexible writer and the difference can be highlighted with a small example.

Like Cato's preface, the preface to Isidore's *Historia Gothorum*, entitled traditionally the *Laus Spaniae*, is seen normally as being of a text of high-register (Merrils 2005:185-196). The first two paragraphs are reproduced here:

*“omnium terrarium, quaeque sunt ab occiduo usque ad indos, pulcherrima es, o sacra semperque felix principium gentiumque mater Hispania. Iure tu nunc omnium regina prouinciarum, a qua non Occasus tantum, sed etiam Oriens lumina mutuatur. Tu decus atque ornamentum orbis, illustrior portio terrae, in qua gaudet multum ac largiter floret Geticae gentis gloriosa fecunditas.*

*Merito te omnium ubertate gignentium indulgentior natura ditauit. Tu baccis opima, uis proflua, messibus laeta, segete uestiris, oleis inumbraris, uite praetexeris. Tu florulenta campis, montibus frondua, piscosa littoribus. Tu sub mundi plaga gratissima sita, nec aestiuo solis ardore torreris, nec glaciale rigore tabescis, sed temperata coeli zona praecincta, zephyris felicibus enutriris. Quidquid enim arua fecundum, quidquid metalla pretiosum, quidquid animantia pulchrum et utile ferunt parturis. Nec illis annibus posthabenda, quos clara speciosorum gregum fama nobilitat”.*

This can be compared with two typical paragraphs from his monastic rule:<sup>286</sup>

*“Monasterii autem munitio tantum ianuam extrinsecus habeat, unumque posticum, per quem eatur ad hortum. Uilla sane longe remota debet esse a monasterio, ne uicinius posita aut laboris inferat periculum, aut famam inficiat dignitatis. Cellulae fratribus iuxta ecclesiam constituantur, ut possint properare quantocius ad officium.*

*Locus autem aegrotantium remotus erit a basilica, uel cellulis fratrum, ut nulla inquietudine uel clamoribus impediatur. Cellarium monachorum iuxta coenaculum esse oportet, ut secus positum sine mora mensis ministerium praebeatur. Hortulus sane intra monasterium sit inclusus, quatenus, dum intus monachi operantur, nulla occasione exterius euagentur”.*

There are clearly differences here, most notably in syntax and vocabulary. In the monastic rule, transitive verbs are normally side-by-side with their subject and there is a lack of schemes such as hyperbaton that might otherwise distort sentence structure. However, in the *Laus Spaniae* the word order is fluid, subjects are not next to their verbs and adjectives do not immediately qualify their nouns. In its vocabulary the *Laus Spaniae* also uses words typical of Classical Latin poetry, which certainly in Isidore’s time would have been archaicising: *saltus* (‘forest’), *amnis* (‘river’), *eleus* (‘Olympian’), *zephyrus* (‘the west wind’) and *uolucer* (‘bird’). All of these are words drawn from a poetic vocabulary, normal in writers such as Virgil or Ovid but not associated with lower-register language.<sup>287</sup>

Fructuosus has not bequeathed the quantity of texts to modern scholars as Isidore, but a section from his letter to Braulius of Zaragoza is useful:<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 1.2.

<sup>287</sup> For a discussion of the poetic lexicon in Latin, see Coleman (1999b: 51-63).

<sup>288</sup> *Epistula ad Bralionem* 2.

*Hic solus nuntius arentia mentis nostrae saepe uiscera pascit, et uestrorum felicitate gestorum inter raucisona spumantis sali freta, atque Oceani gurgites, et aequora inquieta humilitatis nostrae mulcet auditus, quod Caesaraugustam uestram uestra iugis augusta doctrina nobilitat, et florens per dies singulos uestri culminis uita tanto affluit diuinae legis studio, quanto et bonorum operum iugi atque sedulo uallatur praeconio.*

In the first instance, this long sentence, with its many clauses, is far from the parataxis associated normally with oral language. There is also here use of words reflecting a poetic register. Phrases such as *arentia ... uiscera* to mean ‘dried flesh, vital parts’,<sup>289</sup> *Oceani gurgites*, ‘whirlpools of the ocean’ and *aequora inquieta*, ‘restless seas’ all evoke classical prose, rather than the *simplicitas* of many Christian writers, both because of the employment of the poetic *Oceanus* and *aequor*, as well as the use of synonyms in lieu of a single word. The phrase *raucisona spumantis sali freta*, ‘raucous swellings of the frothing sea’ is also rather poetic, both for its descriptive element, as well as the used of the poetic *salum*, ‘sea’. The phrase in addition employs an ABBA construction, which is not typical of spoken speech and suggests a purposefully manipulated construction. There are other indications of purposeful manipulation, such as the collocation of the possessive pronouns *uestram uestra*, each looking to a different noun (*Caesaraugustam uestram* and *uestra [...] augusta doctrina*).

There is not space here to investigate fully the literary backgrounds of Isidore and Fructuosus. However, the demonstration above shows that both were involved in the literary circles of their time and were capable of writing in various registers of Latin, both higher and lower. This is an important fact that will need to be taken into account in the analysis of the monastic rules.

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<sup>289</sup> Compare, for example, Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7. 54-56, “*uiscera torrentur primo, flammaeque latentis indicium rubor est et ductus anhelitus; igni aspera lingua tumet, tepidisque arentia uentis ora patent, auraeque graues captantur hiatu*”.

#### 4.6 The Oral Nature of the Language of the Monastic Rules

The use of stylistic techniques concomitant with such an oral style need not be suggestive of a completely un-stylistic work, although this is a problem that spreads far beyond the Latinists' domain.<sup>290</sup> Nevertheless, there are elements of the language, as would be expected, that are in keeping with the spoken language in the sense that they often depart from the complexities of a synthetic elevated language and are much more in line with what would be expected in more natural syntax. Examples of anastrophe do not occur, and nouns and adjectives, for example, are very rarely separated. In place of complex sentences, there is a tendency towards parataxis in their language, with short cola of the type: "*locus autem aegrotantium remotus erit a basilica*";<sup>291</sup> "*monachi operantes meditari aut psallere debent*";<sup>292</sup> "*uestimenta non multa nec superflua sint*";<sup>293</sup> "*hebdomaradarii per singulas sibi succedant hebdomadas*";<sup>294</sup> "*solent plerique nouitii senes uenire ad monasterium*";<sup>295</sup> "*in potestate habeant praepositi omnem regulam monasterii*".<sup>296</sup>

Whilst this is in keeping with traits typical of the spoken language, short and to-the-point sentences are also stylistically fitting for didactic works. Indeed, long clauses are infrequent within the monastic rules, with many rarely exceeding two lines in length.

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<sup>290</sup> Miles Foley (1991), for example, with reference to Anglo-Saxon poetry has written: "the critical tendency to overlook the role of oral tradition – even in manifestly written composition – has led to faulty assessments of the poetry at virtually all levels, from the philological through the aesthetic" (*ibid.*: 141).

<sup>291</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 1.3.

<sup>292</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.5.

<sup>293</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 4.

<sup>294</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 9.

<sup>295</sup> *Common Rule* 8.

<sup>296</sup> *Common Rule* 11.

Another feature prevalent within such *breuitas* is the employment of list structures, often used for attributes that should be either sought, or else avoided, by a monk. Although sometimes anaphoric in character, they can also be simple sentences of lists: “*grauiori autem culpa obnoxius est si temulentus quisquam sit; si discors; si turpiloquus; si feminarum familiaris; si seminans discordias; si iracundus; si altae et rectae ceruicis; si mente tumidus uel iactanti incessu immodaratus; si detractor; si susurro uel inuidus; si praesumptor rei peculiaris; si pecuniae contagio implicitus; si aliquid praeter regularem dispensationem superfluum possidens; si fraudator rei acceptae aut commissae sibi aut minus commissae*”;<sup>297</sup> “*abbas uel praepositus e propriis semper coenobii monachis eligantur; uir sanctus, discretus, grauis, castus, charus, humilis, mansuetus et doctus*”.<sup>298</sup> Sometimes these might also be numbered: “*primum horas canonicas, id est, primam, missis operariis in uineam; tertiam, sanctum Spiritum in apostolos descendisse; sextam, Dominum in crucem ascendisse; nonam, spiritum emisisse; uesperam, Dauid cecinisse*”.<sup>299</sup>

The employment of lists also gives rise to examples of both asyndesis and polysyndesis: “*autumni uero uel hiemis tempore, usque ad tertiam legant, usque ad nonam operentur, si tamen est quodlibet opus quod fiat. Post nonam iterum usque ad duodecimam legant, a duodecima meditentur atque ad uesperam*”;<sup>300</sup> “*cautela et moderatio et pudicitia et fides et sinceritas ornant habitum monachi*”.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 17.

<sup>298</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 20.

<sup>299</sup> *Common Rule* 10.

<sup>300</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 6.

<sup>301</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 12.

The monastic rules often speak informally to their audience. Sometimes this will take the form of direct evocations of the type: “*imprimis, fratres charissimi, monasterium uestrum miram conclauis diligentiam habeat*”.<sup>302</sup> The more normal way of fostering this sense, however, is through the use of third person plural conjugations, with sentences of the type: “*monachi, qui ob religionis obtentum monasterium ingredi petunt, primum ante foras tribus diebus et noctibus excubent, et ex industria iugiter ab hebdomadariis exprobrentur*”;<sup>303</sup> “*omnes decani a suis praepositis admoneantur ut cuncti fratres a minimo usque ad maximum diebus Dominicis in monasterio uno loco congregentur*”;<sup>304</sup> “*uerno uel aestate, dicta prima, commoneantur decani a praeposito suo quale opus debeant exercere atque illi reliquos admoneant fratres*”.<sup>305</sup> The employment of the third person plural is indicative of spoken language and contrasts with the use of an impersonal *qui* that occasionally, though rarely, also appears: “*qui in monasterio prior ingreditur, primus erit in cunctis gradu uel ordine*”;<sup>306</sup> “*qui prius in monasterio conuersus fuerit, primus ambulet*”.<sup>307</sup> The use of a relative clause would perhaps be more indicative of a formal or elevated type of language, whereas the use of the third person plural certainly lends a sense of familiarity and colloquialism to the style.

At times the writers will try and engage with their audience through the use of personal renderings of verbs. This is something that is found in most monastic rules: “*haec igitur, o serui Dei et milites Christi, contemptores mundi, ita uobis custodienda uolumus, ut maiora*

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<sup>302</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 1.1.

<sup>303</sup> *Common Rule* 4.

<sup>304</sup> *Common Rule* 13.

<sup>305</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 6.

<sup>306</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.3

<sup>307</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 23.

*praecepta potius seruetis*”;<sup>308</sup> “*nos tamen haec non dicimus monasteria, sed animarum perditionem et ecclesiae subuersionem*”;<sup>309</sup> “*mihi credite, non potest toto corde habitare cum Domino qui mulierum saepe accessibus copulatur*”.<sup>310</sup> In addition to these, the Common Rule in particular makes frequent use of shorter personalised phrases of the type: *ut (supra) diximus* and *quae supra perstrinximus*.

It is often the more subtle reflections of the spoken language that give the monastic rules an overall sense of colloquialism. Features such as redundancy of pronouns, referred to by Palmer (1954: 75) as “the product of a speaker’s anxiety to hammer his point home”: “*illi perierunt manna manducando [...] illi manna manducando mortui sunt et isti scripturas legendo et audiendo spirituali fame quotidie moriuntur*”;<sup>311</sup> “*neque enim aliquid imperasse cuique licebit quod ipse non fecerit*”;<sup>312</sup> “*si quid deest in mensa, is qui praeest signo dato uel nutibus silenter petat et indicet ministranti quid inferri uel quid auferri sit a mensa necesse*”;<sup>313</sup> impersonal phrases of the type: “*in utrisque temporibus refectio mensae tribus erit pulmentis, olerum scilicet et leguminum et, si quid tertium fuerit, id est, pomorum*”;<sup>314</sup> “*quod si in malo perseverans perdurauit et propria uoluntate poenitentiam agree noluit et saepe ac saepe contumax et murmurator patule contra seniore[m] uel fratres in facie perstiterit [...] in collationem deductus exuatur monasterii uestibus*”;<sup>315</sup> “*nec quisquam e monachis*

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<sup>308</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 24.3.

<sup>309</sup> *Common Rule* 1.

<sup>310</sup> *Common Rule* 15.

<sup>311</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

<sup>312</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 2.2.

<sup>313</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 5.

<sup>314</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 9.9.

<sup>315</sup> *Common Rule* 14.

*suum asserens dicat: codex meus, tabulae meae uel reliqua*<sup>316</sup>; the so-called ‘*tractio inversa*’:<sup>317</sup> “*monachi, qui ob religionis obtentum monasterium ingredi petunt, primum ante foras tribus diebus et noctibus excubent*”.<sup>318</sup>

The repetition of ideas and concepts is something that is frequent in texts of an oral style, and its use in Cato has already been alluded to. Similar traits appear in the monastic rules, when instructions are repeated: “*placuit etiam patribus a die Natalis Domini usque ad diem Circumscisionis solemne tempus efficere licentiamque uescendi habere*” [...] “*tertium sequitur quotidianum ieiunium ab octauo Kalendas Octobris usque ad Natalem dominicum, in quo quotidiana ieiunia nequaquam soluntur. Quartum item quotidianum ieiunium post diem Circumscisionis exoritur peragiturque usque ad solemnia Paschae*”;<sup>319</sup> “*nec quisquam e monachis suum asserens dicat: codex meus, tabulae meae uel reliqua. Quod uerbum si de ore eius effugerit, poenitentiae subiacebit, ne uelut propria quaelibet in monasterio habere uideatur*” [...] “*quia abominatio monachis est et infamia quidquam possidere superfluum aut reseruare proprium uel occultum, quod non longe ab Ananiae et Saphirae exemplo segregatur*”;<sup>320</sup> “*tempore conuescentium fratrum omnes disciplinae gerant silentium*” [...] “*nullus ad mensas clamor excitetur*”.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 4.

<sup>317</sup> Till (1968: 35) describes this as a sentence “in cui il sostantivo viene anticipato come idea fondamentale e si unisce nel caso al relativo seguente”.

<sup>318</sup> *Common Rule* 4.

<sup>319</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 10.2, 11.2.

<sup>320</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 4, 8.

<sup>321</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 9.2, 9.3.

The employment of these techniques is arguably reflective of the contextual usage of the monastic rules. It was suggested in Chapter Three that although written texts played a crucial role in Visigothic monasteries, their reception was often aural. All of the techniques listed above lend themselves to an oral reading, suggesting that the authors had this in mind when composing the texts. This is confirmed further by the fact that Isidore and Fructuosus were capable of writing in a much more formal style, and so the use of such techniques appears conscious, rather than due to the lack of an ability to write in a language of higher register.

#### **4.7.1 “Не къ невѣдущимъ бо плшемъ, но преизлѣха насыщшемся сладости книжныя”:<sup>322</sup> The Use of Formal Literary Techniques**

There often exists a mental correlation between didactic works and a lack of literary polish. It has already been suggested that simply not writing in an accepted higher-register does not mean that texts cannot have a style. However, attention now turns to look at the existence of formal literary techniques in the monastic rules. In addition to stylistic features that are reflective of an oral style, there are also elements that appear much more conscious and influenced by the literary fashions of the period. Modern scholars have tended to highlight the importance of continuity in discussions about educational structures in the post-Roman west, as opposed to the rather more dramatic theories of collapse of previous generations. Various works have all served to better the understanding of post-Roman education and to highlight, above all, a pervading sense of continuity (Murphey 1974; Riché

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<sup>322</sup> “*For we write not for the untutored but for those thoroughly steeped in the delight of books*”. A quote from the eleventh-century Ilarion of Kiev, *Sermon on Law and Grace*; from Fennel & Obolensky (1969: 2).

1962; Law 1997. For a specifically Iberian focus, Bartolomé Martínez 1992; García y García 2000; Puertas Moya 2000). Education in its more general sense has been discussed above, but it seems clear that the central role of rhetoric was largely retained and there must be dismissed any notion that the authors of the monastic rules could not have received some education in both the Christian tradition and the classical pagan literary ideals.

As Ogle pointed out: “Christianization [did not] greatly alter the methods of instruction, however much it may have altered the matter” (1926: 191). Furthermore, Miller added that scholars of literary theory are ever more so seeing the Late Antique period as “a return to the explicit study of rhetoric, understood as the investigation of figures of literary speech rather than the study of the art of persuasion” (2001: 6). That there are rhetorical techniques employed in the monastic rules has been observed by other scholars; it was noted, in reference to the Rule of Isidore, for example, that “difícilmente se entiende cómo Isidoro advierte que escribe en plebeyo y rústico. Por humildad literaria y cortesía” (Álvarez Campos 1993: 203). In this way, the monastic rules should not necessarily be viewed of as persuasive by nature; their ideal here is not the *pistis* of their audience, as there should be no need to convince an audience that has already dedicated itself to asceticism to live by its ideals. Instead, the use of rhetorical techniques has become purely stylistic.

However, since it has been argued that the audience of the monastic rules constituted a varied group, including those who were not necessarily literate, the question could be raised, therefore: why utilise rhetorical techniques? The answer firstly lies in pure euphony; the rhetorical influence is most readily felt in schemes that function on a phonological level. As such, they are often techniques “accessible on the surface, although they are no less interesting for this” (Cairns 1974: 4). It must be remembered that the monastic rules were

texts that were often read aloud, and a listener has no need of education or literacy in order to be able to take pleasure from phonological *Wortspiel*. Second, the question may well be not why would the authors make use of rhetorical techniques, but rather why wouldn't they? The principles of rhetorical writing were something that pervaded Latin literature of all genres, even technical writing (Till 1968: 52-59), and the centrality of a rhetorical education, even in the Visigothic period, meant that it is perfectly valid to expect some aspect of it to shine through in the monastic rules. It was this process of so-called *literaturizzazione* that saw 'primary' rhetoric used for the arts of persuasion turn into 'secondary' rhetoric, no longer used to persuade but instead pervasive throughout early Christian literature (Kennedy 1980).

Here begins, then, a review of some of the most common surface-level rhetorical techniques used in the monastic rules. The selection below is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather indicative.

#### **4.7.2 Alliteration:**

Alliteration is a technique with a long history in Latin literature, and was employed frequently as a rhetorical scheme (Evans 1921; Greenberg 1980). Unlike other rhetorical schemes, however, caution must be observed since "l'allitération est un fait universel. Elle peut être accidentelle [...] non voulue par l'écrivain" (Marouzeau 1946: 45). Differentiating between purposeful and accidental alliteration can be a difficult, if not impossible, task. As an example, the phrase *faber ferrarius* occurs in reference to Joseph,<sup>323</sup> and it is a pleasant enough thought that this might have been purposeful in the minds of the writers, employed as a phonologically pleasing epithet. However, in terms of synonymy there is little that could be

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<sup>323</sup> *Rule of Isidore 5.2, "faber ferrarius fuit"*.

changed here in the Latin, and whilst it would be pleasing to see this as thought-out alliteration, it could very well be the case that the phrase is written as such merely because it is reflective of the spoken language or a literary borrowing since the phrase was also used by his elder brother Leander.<sup>324</sup> In short, the intentionalist fallacy must always be accounted for.

Nevertheless, there are examples of alliteration in the monastic rules that do appear to be purposeful: “*carnem cum Christo crucifigere*”;<sup>325</sup> “*et sicut publice peccauerunt publice poenitere et poenitenda ultra non commitere*”;<sup>326</sup> “*hebdomadarii per singulas sibi succedant hebdomadas*” (note also the use of hyperbaton: *singulas [...] hebdomadas*, which would normally be expected to be together);<sup>327</sup> “*aliis sex mensibus succedentibus sub senioris spiritualis custodia*” (note the use of inversion for what might normally be expected: *sub custodia senioris spiritualis*);<sup>328</sup> “*quibus melius esset si diuitas suas cum humilitate in saeculo fruerentur, quam ut iam pauperes effecti de earum distributione elatione superbiae extollantur*”;<sup>329</sup> “*speciosam uel variam suppetilem monachuum habere non licet, cuius stratus erit storea et stragulum*”.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> *De institutione uirginum* 23, “*faber ferrarius fuisse legitur*”.

<sup>325</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

<sup>326</sup> *Common Rule* 19.

<sup>327</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 9.

<sup>328</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 16.

<sup>329</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.4.

<sup>330</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 13.1.

### 4.7.3 Anaphora:

The use of anaphora has already been mentioned in the use of list-type sentences, reflective of the spoken language. As both a rhetorical technique and also indicative of the spoken language, anaphoric sentences are frequent in the monastic rules. More often than not, it is found in the repetition of prepositions, and normally in small groups of three or four occurrences: “*patri honorem debitum referentes erga seniores obedientiam, erga aequales incitamenta uirtutum, erga minores boni exempli magisterium conseruabunt*”,<sup>331</sup> “*proinde isti non debent despiciere quas delegates oues habet, quia exinde non unam sed multas consequuntur Mercedes, inde recreantur paruuli, inde fouentur senes, inde redimuntur captiui, inde suscipiuntur hospites et peregrini*”,<sup>332</sup> “*qui prius in monasterio conuersus fuerit, primus ambulet, primus sedeat, primus eulogiam accipiat, primus communicet in ecclesia*”.<sup>333</sup> Anaphora of this type is to be found readily.

However, sometimes the authors of the monastic rules make use of extended anaphora; for example, ten uses of *et* in the Common Rule: “*Si certe aliquis insecutor monasterii accesserit, et aliquid auferre conauerit, et per uim tollere uoluerit, uni de laicis causam iniungat, et ipsi fidelissimo Christiano, quem uita bona commendat, et fama mala non reprobatur; qui et res monasterii absque peccato iudicet, et quaerat; et si usus iurandi est, hoc faciat sine iuramento et poena; et non tantum pro rerum lucro, sed ut persecutorem humilem et mansuetum ad ueniam postulandam reducat*”,<sup>334</sup> and twenty seven uses of *alius de* in the Common Rule: “*alius de genealogia, et de sua gente fatetur esse principes: alius de*

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<sup>331</sup> *Rule of Isidore 3.2.*

<sup>332</sup> *Common Rule 9.*

<sup>333</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 23.*

<sup>334</sup> *Common Rule 3.*

*parentibus, alius de germanis, alius de cognatis, alius de fratribus et consanguineis, et idoneis, alius de diuitiis, alius de specie iuuentutis, alius de bello fortitudinis, alius de perlustratione terrarum, alius de artificio, alius de sapientia, alius de assertionis eloquentia, alius de taciturnitate, alius de humilitate, alius de charitate, alius de largitate munerum; alius de castitate, alius de uirginitate, alius de paupertate, alius de abstinentia, alius de orationum frequentia, alius de uigilantia, alius de obedientia, alius de abrenuntiatione rerum, alius de legendo, alius de scribendo, alius de uoce modulationis”.*<sup>335</sup>

#### **4.7.4 Hyperbaton:**

Hyperbaton is a perhaps otherwise unexpected technique in the monastic rules, given that the argument so far has been to promulgate the idea that the texts are to a large extent reflective of spoken language. However, unlike hyperbaton in other writings, and despite being atypical of the oral registers of any given language, the examples in the monastic rules do not dislocate the overall sentence structure in as an extreme way as found in other texts. The first sentence of Augustine’s *De ciuitate Dei*, for example, bears witness to a type of seriously extended hyperbaton that would be most out of place in the monastic rules, where the two main verbs *suscepi [...]defendere* are separated by one line, and the noun, *gloriosissimam ciuitatem Dei*, separated by five lines. Recent research has suggested that hyperbaton is primarily a stylistic device, and its use varies depending on author and literary style of the work, with more frequent employment in works of an elevated register (Devine & Stephens 2006: 602-604). Where hyperbaton is found in the monastic rules, it is normally in the form of ‘pre-modifier’ inversion (*ibid.*: 540-562): “*in medio consistens dormitorio*”;<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> *Common Rule* 13.

<sup>336</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 3.

“*prima noctis hora*”;<sup>337</sup> “*reliquos admoneant fratres*”;<sup>338</sup> “*horas enim debet habere monachus congruas*”;<sup>339</sup> “*recitata in loco lectione*”;<sup>340</sup> “*planam ostendimus uiam*”.<sup>341</sup> With this type of hyperbaton, “it is very difficult to find examples of the adjective that cannot be read with focus” (Devine & Stephens 2006: 548).

#### 4.7.5 Polyptoton:

Polyptoton is a technique especially popular in the Rule of Fructuosus: “*proinde Christi seruus, qui cupit esse uerus discipulus, nudam crucem ascendat nudus*”;<sup>342</sup> “*nemo neminem iudicet, nemo neminem detrahat*”;<sup>343</sup> “*in lege habetur ut quis cui quantum intulerit damnum aut fecerit caedem aut commouerit ultionem, iudicis dirimatur iudicio*”.<sup>344</sup> A specific type of polyptoton is the figura etymologica, also found in the monastic rules: “*et de innumerositate peccaminum in misericordissimi iudicis pendet arbitrio nostri peccati debitum*”.<sup>345</sup>

#### 4.7.6 Antithesis:

The employment of antithesis also finds a place, often where the two opposing fields are placed immediately next to each other: “*abba interea deligendus est institutione sanctae*

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<sup>337</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 2.

<sup>338</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 4.

<sup>339</sup> Rule of Isidore 5.6.

<sup>340</sup> Rule of Isidore 8.2.

<sup>341</sup> Common Rule 6.

<sup>342</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 1.

<sup>343</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 12.

<sup>344</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 19.

<sup>345</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 19.

*uitae duratus [...] ac transcendens aetatem adulescentiae in iuuentute sua senectutem tetigerit*<sup>346</sup> (note also the employment of *gradatio*, with the three stages of life following the path from young to old);<sup>347</sup> “*tunc enim libera seruitute Deo quisque famulatur, quando nullius carnalis conditionis pondere premituri*”,<sup>348</sup> “*proinde Christi seruus, qui cupit esse uerus discipulus, nudam crucem ascendat nudus, ut mortuus sit saeculo, Christo uiuat crucifixo*”,<sup>349</sup> “*uestimentum uero et calceamentum sic eis praebeantur, ut absque foco frigoris ab eis asperitas arceatur*”.<sup>350</sup> A further type of antithesis, and perhaps *gradatio*, can be found in the Rule of Fructuosus: “*cuiusque tanta debet sermonis et uitae consonantia esse, ut id quod docet uerbis, confirmet operibus sedulis, et bis acuto praecedent gladio, quidquid alios informat uerbo, iugi ipse great studio, ut nec sermonem operatio destruat, nec e contra operationem bonam sermo inconueniens frangat*”.<sup>351</sup>

#### 4.8.1 Figurative Language

The use of techniques such as metaphor and simile is a significant feature of many prose styles and one that is especially prevalent in Greco-Roman authors; the monastic rules are no exception. Ancient views on the subject were that the appropriate use of metaphor in particular was “one of the chief sources of charm and grandeur in style” (D’Alton 1931: 92)

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<sup>346</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 2.1.

<sup>347</sup> Compare *Etymologies* 11.2: “*Gradus aetatis sex sunt: infantia, pueritia, adolescentia, iuuentus, grauitas atque senectus*”. For Isidore, *adolescentia* refers to the ages of fourteen to twenty-eight; *iuuentus* refers to the ages of twenty-eight to fifty; *senectus* is any age above of seventy.

<sup>348</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.3.

<sup>349</sup> *Common Rule* 1.

<sup>350</sup> *Common Rule* 8.

<sup>351</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 12. This is possibly a reference to the belief that the ‘pen was mightier than the sword’, e.g. *Ad Hebraeos* 4.12, “*uiuus enim est Dei sermo, et efficax et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipati*”.

and a discussion of such techniques can be found throughout ancient literature (Kirby 1997). Notwithstanding sole stylistic purpose, figurative tropes are particularly popular in didactic works since such techniques can be of importance for the purpose of clarification and reinforcement: “through metaphor, complex abstractions may achieve concrete semantic reality” (Walde 2006: 788). Added to this is the fact that understanding such tropes often requires little or no sophisticated knowledge on behalf of the listener, a feature that Cicero was keen to highlight: “*sic uerbi translatio instituta est inopiae causa, frequentata delectionis. Nam ‘gemmare uites’, ‘luxuriam esse in herbis’, ‘laetus esse segetes’ etiam rustici dicunt*”.<sup>352</sup>

Isidore opens his monastic rule with a description of a monastery likening it to a prison and demonstrating clearly the extent to which it should be removed from the secular world: “*Inprimis, fratres charissimi, monasterium uestrum miram conclauis diligentiam habeat ut firmitatem custodiae munimenta claustrorum exhibeant*”.<sup>353</sup> Elsewhere, the content of similes is wide-ranging but with a couple of recognisable themes. Also popular are comparisons to weapons and violence: prudence must be maintained as though there were a nocturnal thief coming to slay the monk’s body: “*tanta ibique debet esse astutia, quantum fur nocturnus in pectore nostro Christo occidere festinate et non corpora sed animas iugulare desiderat*”,<sup>354</sup> speaking to a nun is compared to shooting an arrow into a mortal heart: “*quod si fecerint, sciant se rumpere Patrum instituta et cordis uitalia mortis infixisse sagittam*”.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> *De Oratore* 3.155.

<sup>353</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 1

<sup>354</sup> *Common Rule* 15.

<sup>355</sup> *Common Rule* 15.

#### **4.8.2 Figurative Language in the Common Rule: A Case Study**

In order to help study the use of figurative language, it will be useful to concentrate on a single text in particular; in this case, the Common Rule. Throughout the Common Rule, there are some notable themes, in particular the use of imagery concerning medical and sickness themes, and canine imagery. The use of medical imagery is one of the most prevalent, and a theme that has been noted elsewhere. Constable (2003: 8), for example, noted: “the Rule of Benedict includes so much medical terminology that some scholars have suggested that the author had medical training”. There are also other examples in the monastic rules. Isidore, for example, likens covetousness to a deadly plague: “*indecenter quoque uel notabiliter non incedat, philargyriae contagium, ut lethiferam pestem, abhorreat*”.<sup>356</sup>

In the Common Rule, there are a total of four instances of medical imagery:

*“Quia per LXX et eo amplius annos abrupte peccauerunt; et ideo congruum est ut arta paenitentia coarceantur. Quia et medicus tantum profundius uulnera abscidit quantum putridas carnes uidet. Tales ergo per paenitentiam ueram corrigantur, ut si noluerint excommunicatione continuo emendentur”*<sup>357</sup>

*“Ita ut ante missarum sollemnia sollicite ab abbate percunctentur, ne fortasse aliquis aduersus aliquem odio liuoris stimuletur, aut malitiae iaculo uulneretur, ne intestinum uirus quandoque aperto in superficiem cutis perrumpatur, et inter palmarum fructus myrrae amaritudo demonstretur”*<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> Rule of Isidore 3.3.

<sup>357</sup> Common Rule 8.

<sup>358</sup> Common Rule 13.

*“Qui grauioribus culpis et criminibus se deliquisse cognoscunt primum in eos optamus regulae colla submittere, sub probatissimo abbate in monasterio desudare, et cuncta retroacta peccata tamquam aegrotos medico spirituali seniori manifestare, et sicut publice peccauerunt, publice paenitere, et paenitenda ultra non committere”*.<sup>359</sup>

*“quia et tunc medicus ab incisione suspendet, aegrotum, cum eum per medicamina cognouerit esse sanandum; cibos uero tales ei praeberere mandamus qui nec lasciuiam nutriant, nec nimis corpus affligant”*.<sup>360</sup>

On the one hand, the use of medical imagery presents clear biblical parallels. Both Jesus and his disciples were portrayed as being involved heavily in healing, with seventy-two accounts of healings or exorcisms throughout the four Gospels (Porterfield 2005: 21). The importance of healing in Christian mythology, therefore, might suggest medical metaphors to be popular on that basis alone. On the other hand, medicine in particular is a topic that would probably have been familiar to the authors of the monastic rules. Isidore had dedicated book four of his *Etymologies* to the topic of medicine, and so had certainly given thought to the topic (Fletcher (1919); Ferraces Rodríguez (2005)). In addition, all three monastic rules make reference to infirmaries, suggesting that sickness and ill-health had a substantial presence in Visigothic monasteries. This connection is suggested elsewhere. For example, the bishop Masona was said to have *“xenodochium et monasteria aedificat”*.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> *Common Rule 19.*

<sup>360</sup> *Common Rule 19.*

<sup>361</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida 5.3.1.*

Elsewhere, Valerius of Bierzo, in his autobiographical *Replicatio*, suggests that some monasteries played a spiritual role in the medical care of lay members. For example, in discussing a local monk called Saturninus, Valerius says that when he was injured in the foot whilst working on building a new chapel, he went to make an offering to God in the monastery.<sup>362</sup> In another tale, the same Saturninus is approached by a local layman, Basil, for help because his arm had become paralysed.<sup>363</sup> It seems the case that religious belief was often intertwined with rational medicine. This is demonstrated by stories such as that of Theodora, who, having been mortally gauged by a one-horned bull, was saved not by the mortal attempts of her companions, but by a divine visitation of an angel of Saint Felix.<sup>364</sup>

There also exists a recurring theme of figurative language involving canines, in particular wolves and dogs. Animal imagery more generally is one that is used in the monastic rules. For example, Isidore describes a monk as a wild mule that has been set free with no master: “*onager enim liber dimissus monachus est sine dominatu et impedimento saeculi Deo seruiens*”.<sup>365</sup> In the Common Rule, moreover, people are described as being

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<sup>362</sup> *Replicatio* 10, “*Dum quadam die lapides desuper imminente rupe abscideret subito erupta ingens acutissima lapis praecipitata deorsum, eius percutiens pedem illius usque ad ossa penetrans, neruos et uenas incidit. Dum esset formidis ne debilis factus gressum amitteret, aut mortem incurreret, mox siccato sanguine se decubans, in lectulo continere non potuit, sed solita consuetudine se ad sacrificium Domino offerendum, licet debilis, cum nimio labore necessitatis semipes attraxit*”.

<sup>363</sup> *Replicatio* 12, “*Alio quoque tempore quidam saecularis nomine Basilius, cum ingenti necessitudine coactus debilis ad eum uenisset, cum dextera manus eius et brachius contractis neruis, arefacta turgens obriguerat, illico miserationis pietate compulsus, benedixit oleum et eius debile membra orans perunxit. Confestim ope Domini eius pristinae sanitati restituta sunt membra. Et sic benedicens Deum incolumis cum omni exultatione ad proprium reuersus est domum*”.

<sup>364</sup> *Replicatio* 3.

<sup>365</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.3.

consumed like clothes by a moth: “*Alii uero tristitiae morbo interius consummuntur et tamquam uestimentum a tinea intrinsecus mentis suae auiditate deuorantur*”.<sup>366</sup>

However, a comparison that is used often draws on wolves and dogs. For example, some monks are described as pining for their possessions like wolves: “*Et pro suis pigneribus more luporum doleant*”;<sup>367</sup> or else returning to the secular world like a dog to its vomit: “*Conperimus per minus cauta monasteria qui cum facultaticulis suis ingressi sunt, postea tapefactos cum grande exprobatione repetere et saeculum quod reliquerant ut canes ad uomitum reuocare*”;<sup>368</sup> some people, as though conducting an investigation, tear apart the servants of Christ with the teeth of dogs: “*et alios more iustigationis diiudicant, et seruos Christi dente canino dilaniant*”;<sup>369</sup> others are described as barking against the church, like pupils of the Antichrist: “*et ut sunt Antichristi discipuli, contra Ecclesiam latrant*”.<sup>370</sup>

Once again, there are biblical parallels here. In the Bible, dogs are presented as sinful and unclean and are typically presented in a negative image by early Christianity (for example, Deuteronomy 23:18; Psalms 22:20, Revelation 22:15, 1 Kings 14:11, 21:19), or as metaphors for evil (Isaiah 56:10; Isaiah 56:11). Wolves are likewise presented negatively, linked with the Devil (John 10:12), false teaching (Matthew 7:15) and wicked rulers (Zephaniah 3:3). The image of the dog returning to its vomit in particular is an image found on a couple of occasions in the Bible (2 Peter 2:22; Proverbs 26:11). Their imagery in the monastic rules is similarly always negative.

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<sup>366</sup> *Common Rule* 13.

<sup>367</sup> *Common Rule* 1.

<sup>368</sup> *Common Rule* 18.

<sup>369</sup> *Common Rule* 1.

<sup>370</sup> *Common Rule* 1.

It is also notable that such descriptions draw on imagery that would have been recognisable and common to a monk, or indeed any early medieval person. Like aspects of disease and sickness, the Visigothic monk would also probably have been familiar with dogs and wolves. Although it is impossible to comment accurately of the role, if any, of dogs in monasteries, the *Life of Fructuosus* reveals that dogs were used for hunting by laymen. In a scene from the *Lives of the Fathers of Merida*, dogs also come to steal the food left by a monk who had since passed out through drunkenness.<sup>371</sup> In addition, wild wolves would have been present in large parts of the peninsula (Curchin 1991: 3).

Overall, the use of figurative tropes is an expected feature of the monastic rules primarily because as didactic texts they are useful in illustrating and reinforcing points for listeners. In this way it functions in a similar fashion to higher registers of literary language; when Vergil famously describes the Greek soldier Androgeos, being surprised by a group of Trojans in disguise, as recoiling back like a man who accidentally treads on a snake, he does so because it adds imagery to the tale and helps listeners picture better the scene.<sup>372</sup> Through the use of such figurative language, the monastic rules are able to implant images in a listener's mind to help him better visualise and remember what is being taught.

#### **4.9.1 Synonymy and the *Tumor Africus***

The employment of synonyms is of particular interest because in later Latin their use becomes a well-noted feature (Lausberg 1967: 142-143; 181-183). Roberts (1985: 148-160),

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<sup>371</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 2.12.

<sup>372</sup> *Aenied* 2.378-382, “*obstipuit retroque pedem cum uoce repressit. Improuisum aspris ueluti qui sentibus anguem pressit humi nitens trepidusque repente refugit attollentem iras et caerulea colla tumentem, haud secus Androgeos uisu tremefactus abibat*”.

in his study of biblical epic writers in Late Antiquity, offers an interesting perspective to the problem. Although his emphasis is clearly on the stylistic qualities of the texts, including the characteristic methods seen above such as alliteration and anaphora, part of the treatise concentrates on what he terms ‘synonymic amplification’: “in order to amplify a text without changing its sense [...] the same thing must inevitably be said twice: that is, some form of synonymy must be used” (*ibid.*: 148). He adds that through employing these techniques, the authors were “bringing their original into conformity with contemporary canons of literary taste” (*ibid.*: 148). There are a couple of important points here. Firstly there is the issue of not changing a text, since Christian writers would have been especially conscious that they might not alter the sense of scriptural writings in particular. Such a practice finds its roots in the translation practices surrounding holy texts and the desire for “maximal literalness” that was especially prevalent in the process of Hebrew to Greek *targum* (Drettas 2006). The use of synonyms offered a method to build on a text whilst avoiding changing its meaning *stricto sensu*.

Synonymy, most often in the form of dicolons, was historically common throughout classical and later Latin literature; in Medieval Latin the use of tricolons in a single phrase was to become more frequent. The occurrence of synonyms is a fact that is recognised in both ancient and modern commentators.<sup>373</sup> Whilst some dedicated whole works to the subject, such as Nonius Marcellus’ *De differentia similum significationum* and Isidore’s *De differentiae*, discussion of synonymy can otherwise be seen in various Latin writers, including Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae* 11.12.1), Martinus Capella (*De nuptis Philologiae et*

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<sup>373</sup> For ancient commentaries, see García Jurado (2003); Amsler (1989); Magallón García (1996). More modern perspectives and good introductions can be found in Ogilvie & Souter (1901); Menge (1977); Moussy (1994). For later Latin and early Romance, see Elwert (1954); Pizzorusso (1957); Biville (1994).

*Mercurii* 5.535) and Fronto (*De Eloquentia* 2.5). Ancient views on the subject, as modern ones, were generally homogenous, summarised aptly by Quintilian's description that synonyms were words that have the same meaning, "*iam sunt aliis alia honestiora, sublimiora, nitidiora, iocundiara, uocularia*".<sup>374</sup>

The employment of synonyms can be traced back to the earliest examples of Latin writing, and it has been noted that they are particularly a feature of judicial and administrative texts, liturgical pieces, rhetorical works and archaising authors (Gaertner 2005: 31).<sup>375</sup> Lucilius, "*flebile cepe simul lacrimosaeque ordine tallae*";<sup>376</sup> Ennius, "*caelicolae mea membra dei, quos nostra potestas officiis diuisa facit*";<sup>377</sup> the Twelve Tables, "*si quis occentauiisset siue carmen candidesset, quod infamiam faceret flagitiumue alteri...*";<sup>378</sup> Cato, "*Mars pater te precor quaesoque*".<sup>379</sup> This observation is in keeping with what might be expected from works where they might be used for clarity and emphasis, such as in legalese, demonstrated in English phrases such as 'forever and eternity'.

Notwithstanding the emphatic function of synonyms, ancient rhetorical treatises recognised their importance for the sole purpose of rhetorical *delectatio*. This was typically based on something similar to the Theophrastan model of the selection of appropriate words, the employment of figures and the composition of sentences.<sup>380</sup> In a similar fashion,

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<sup>374</sup> *Institutiones* 8.3.16.

<sup>375</sup> The same also occurs in Ancient Greek works; for example, the opening paragraph of the fifth-century BC *The Constitution of Athens*, which is rife with repetition. See Palmer (1980: 161).

<sup>376</sup> *Fragments* 5.216.

<sup>377</sup> *Varia* 9.

<sup>378</sup> Twelve Tables 8.1a.

<sup>379</sup> *De Agricultura* 141.2.

<sup>380</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Isocrates* 3.1.

Quintilian quipped how a speaker who uses ornament “*nec fortibus modo sed etiam fulgentibus armis proeliatur*”.<sup>381</sup> The use of such a technique extended far into other genres that were not written with the sole purpose of literary delight; a commentary on Tacitus’ *De vita Agricolae* notes an “accumulation of virtual synonyms”, listing a total of fifteen examples (Ogilvie & Richmond 1967: 22); the use of synonymic repetition in the works of Cicero was ascribed to be a particular feature of old Latin; “the profusion of words borders on pleonasm and, for the sake of concinnity, the same idea is repeated in different words” (Von Albrecht 2003: 117); the use of synonymic repetition has been seen as a particular feature of the speech of elderly characters in Terence (Karakasis 2005: 68-73); Lucretius is in the habit of enforcing an idea in different words nearly the same in meaning (Bailey 1947: 146); and Virgil especially draws upon synonyms, indicative just as much of a particular style as “the resources of the language available to the poet seeking variation” (Horsfall 1999: 222).

Synonymic repetition is widely used and frequently found in the monastic rules: “*locus autem aegrotantium remotus erit a basilica uel cellulis fratrum, ut nulla inquietudine uel clamoribus impediatur*”;<sup>382</sup> “*quietus atque pacificus per amorem fraternae dilectionis de cunctorum gaudeat meritis*”;<sup>383</sup> “*si igitur tantae auctoritatis homines laboribus et operibus etiam rusticanis inseruierunt, quanto magis monachi*”;<sup>384</sup> “*propterea enim quisque conuertitur, ut Deo seruiens laboris habeat curam, non ut odio deditus inertia pigritiaque pascatur*”;<sup>385</sup> “*post deinde adeuntes cubilia summo cum silentio et habitu tacito gressuque*

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<sup>381</sup> *Institutiones* 8.3.2. See Kirchner (2007).

<sup>382</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 1.3.

<sup>383</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 3.4.

<sup>384</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.3.

<sup>385</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.3.

*quieto*”;<sup>386</sup> “*pius enim et oblectabilis, humilis atque modestia esse debet affectus monachi*”;<sup>387</sup> “*sermone et colloquio castigetur*”;<sup>388</sup> “*iuniores senes et corpore non nimium inbecilles ex se ipsos ministros religant, qui tam senioribus reliquis quam etiam et aegrotis uicissim ministrant et languetibus suo obsequio pietatis et beniuolentiae opus inpendanti*”;<sup>389</sup> “*ipsi fures et latrones Dominica uoce adtestantur*”;<sup>390</sup> “*sed cum aliqua occasio pro aliquo a suo abate monasterii **distringendi** aut **emendandi** accesserit, continuo in superbiam surgit, et acediae spiritu inflatus, monasterium fugiens derelinquit*”;<sup>391</sup> “*omnes decani a suis praepositis admoneantur ut **cuncti** fratres a minimo usque ad maximum diebus Dominicis in monasterio uno loco congregentur*”.<sup>392</sup>

#### **4.9.2 Synonyms and Learned / Unlearned Vocabulary**

There is, perhaps, another reason why synonyms would be employed beyond a purely stylistic reason, namely that since a monastic rule is a didactic text, they might be used to for reasons of linguistic clarity. Politzer recognised the ‘mushrooming’ of synonyms and concluded that this may have been representative of a learned and unlearned vocabulary, and following this, evidence of Latin-Romance bilingualism (1961: 487). Thus, the author opines some examples of synonymy to exist within two different linguistic registers, one high and one low. The writings of Wright can be useful here, who defined a learned word as those that “appear to be exceptions to the general regularities of phonetic change: they have not evolved as much as phonetically analogous words usually did” (1982: 4). As such, they are lexical

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<sup>386</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 1.

<sup>387</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 8.

<sup>388</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 14.

<sup>389</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 23.

<sup>390</sup> *Common Rule* 2.

<sup>391</sup> *Common Rule* 4.

<sup>392</sup> *Common Rule* 13.

items borrowed from Latin into Romance at a later date, and not ones that remained in contemporary speech. In essence then, Politzer argued that synonymic repetition, besides a stylistic function, could also be a gloss, using Romance words to explain Latin words to an uneducated audience.

Unfortunately, the argument is hampered by the lack of necessary linguistic methodology, and the use of obscuring words such as ‘quasi-bilingualism’ (Politzer 1961: 487) detracts from the argument. Concentration on Longobardic and Merovingian legal texts, rather than literary pieces, means that the study is also confined to an area where such repetition might be expected. What is more, glossing a word need not necessarily imply that it is from a different language, but merely a different register of the same language. If a modern English speaker, for example, needed ‘celestial’ to be explained to him with the synonym ‘heavenly’, this is not to say that he cannot speak English.

The argument is, however, an interesting one. It is entirely possible that in some cases an author may have chosen a word of a much lower register in order to help clarify a word that may have been perceived as ‘difficult’, especially in texts such as monastic rules that were aimed at an audience that may have included uneducated monks. However, the position is nevertheless very difficult to prove because it is very tenuous in many cases to decide which words might have been considered ‘difficult’ and which ones might have been considered ‘easy’. Also, the fact that so many synonymic pairs do not fit Politzer’s model means that it must otherwise be left to one side. Given the pragmatic and technical nature of the texts, it is additionally hard to understand why an author would purposefully use a word that he knew would be difficult for his listeners, only to have to gloss it subsequently with a synonym.

However, it is worth noting that more generally, the one exception where this might occur is with cases of bilingualism, the so-called *synonymie interlinguistique* (Biville 1994: 48). This was especially commonplace in Latin technical works, which employed Greek (and other) words when there existed a lack of a suitable equivalent in Latin: “les traits techniques [...] présentent fréquemment des mises en equivalence de dénominations grecques et latines” (*ibid.*: 48).<sup>393</sup> Early Latin Christianity, which it must be remembered had its roots in an eastern, Greek-speaking, movement, made use of plenty of Greek vocabulary to translate concepts that did not exist in Latin. Indeed, when it comes to the spread of otherwise foreign religious concepts, it is perfectly commonplace to find the incorporation of foreign loanwords to deal with concepts otherwise non-existent in the indigenous language or mentality. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Within the Visigothic rules, there is only one example of ‘interlinguistic synonymy’, from the Common Rule: “*lectum tamen sternere mandamus corio aut psiatho, quod Latine storea nuncupatur*”.<sup>394</sup> This is an especially interesting example since it shows the influence of Greek in the lexis of Christian Latin. There is nothing in the text to hint at a Greek provenance of the author, and if the Common Rule was indeed written by Fructuosus, then we certainly have no evidence of any Greek connection. In addition, the monastic rule was not written for a Greek-speaking audience. Quite probably there might have been a desire to

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<sup>393</sup> Note, for example, Pliny’s use of foreign words for concepts that lacked an equivalent in Latin. This extended not just to Hellenisms, but also borrowings from Celtic, Iberian and other languages; see Healey (1999: 81-97). Other writers such as Lucretius *De Re Natura* 1.136-139, also found cause to complain: “*nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta difficile inlustrare Latinis uersibus esse. Multa nouis uerbis praesertim cum sit agendum propter egestatem linguae et rerum nouitatem*”.

<sup>394</sup> *Common Rule* 19.

include a Greek word simply because the use of such vocabulary was typical of Christian Latin, and the author was complying with the literary tradition.

### 4.9.3 The Tumor Africus

The prevalence of synonyms is not something that in itself links monastic rules explicitly with other Latin literary traditions; synonymy is a feature of all languages and, although their use is characteristic of the later literary language, it has been shown that it is not restricted to it. However, a rather more specific feature of synonymy is the so-called *tumor Africus*, part of the perceived exuberance of later African Latin (*Africitas*), first labelled as such by Sittl (1892). The term refers to what was thought by him to be a peculiar feature of *Africitas*, namely the pairing of synonymous words that are morphologically linked and that function as a stand-alone clause; examples include ‘the fury of anger’, ‘the lust of lechery’ and ‘the assembly of a crowd’. Sittl’s idea came from a study of various later Latin writers of African provenance, including Apuleius, Tertullian, Augustine and Fronto. However, despite an initial following the notion of *Africitas* was attacked by critics, leading even Sittl himself to later refute the theory.<sup>395</sup> As Löfstedt (1959: 42) pointed out, many of the features of *Africitas* are simply the common features of later Latin rhetorical prose, and it is not solely an African, nor specifically even a later, phenomenon. Even the *tumor* is not strictly a later phenomenon, but also rarely appears in classical authors.<sup>396</sup> Subsequently, within a couple of generations of scholars it was possible to admit that, “this ogre [i.e. African Latin] was shot and buried some little while ago” (Dietrich 1966: 191). However, the same author continues, “its body is not entirely lifeless [...] and its spirit yet haunts some

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<sup>395</sup> For studies of the phenomenon and its historiography, see Monceaux (1894); Norden (1898: 588-631); Brock (1911: 161-185); Lancel (1985); Hayes (2004); Adams (2007: 516).

<sup>396</sup> Examples appear in Cicero *De oratione* 1.10.41, “*omnis sermonis disputatio*”; Curtius Rufus 3.3.3, “*habitus vestis*”; Ennodius 375.15 “*tanta multitudinis frequentia*”.

modern histories” (*ibid.*: 191). Indeed, scholarship might have demonstrated Sittl’s *Africitas* argument to be unpersuasive, but the notion of the *tumor* is nevertheless sound and merits discussion.

Examples of the *tumor* are to be found in the monastic rules: “*circa omnes quoque servans iustitiam, contra nullum liuore odii inardescens*”;<sup>397</sup> “*torporem somni atque pigritiam fugiat*”;<sup>398</sup> “*liuore quoque invidiae de fraternis profectibus nequaquam tabescat*”;<sup>399</sup> “*qui graviter peccasse noscuntur, graui seueritate coerceantur*”;<sup>400</sup> “*sub praetextu infirmitatis nihil peculiare habendum est, ne lateat libido cupiditatis sub languoris specie*”;<sup>401</sup> “*et non Christi amore prouocati a populi uulgo incitati*”;<sup>402</sup> “*ipsi uero infirmi tanta sollicitudine admoneantur, ut de ore eorum nec quantuluscumque uel leuis sermo murmurationis procedat*”;<sup>403</sup> “*ne fortasse aliquis aduersus aliquem odio liuoris stimuletur*”.<sup>404</sup>

The employment of the *tumor* as a literary technique is fairly widespread in Isidore’s writings in particular. He was an author who had demonstrated his interest in the synonym in both his *De differentibus uerbiis* and his *Etymologiae*, and Fontaine (1983: 284) considered its use to be a “signature isidorienne typique: celle du style ‘synonymique’ que le Moyen Age

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<sup>397</sup> *Rule of Isidore 2.3.*

<sup>398</sup> *Rule of Isidore 3.4.*

<sup>399</sup> *Rule of Isidore 3.4.*

<sup>400</sup> *Rule of Isidore 17.3.*

<sup>401</sup> *Rule of Isidore 22.3.*

<sup>402</sup> *Common Rule 2.*

<sup>403</sup> *Common Rule 7.*

<sup>404</sup> *Common Rule 13.*

*continuera d'associer au nom d'Isidore*".<sup>405</sup> It is certainly spread widely throughout his writings; in his *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum*, for example, there is found *saeuissimus feritate*;<sup>406</sup> *ingenti magnitudine*;<sup>407</sup> *libere licenterque*;<sup>408</sup> *robore corporis ualidi*.<sup>409</sup> It is also to be found in other Christian writers, such as Arnobius: *gentes populi nationes*;<sup>410</sup> *aeuitas temporis*;<sup>411</sup> *formidinis horror*;<sup>412</sup> *uetustas prisca*;<sup>413</sup> and Cyprian: *concordia pacis*;<sup>414</sup> *lapsus ruinae*.<sup>415</sup> As a device that is superbly tautological, Isidore's brother, Leander uses the phrase *pertimesco formidine*, giving rise to considerable translation difficulty. Already the main verb carries the emphatic prefix *per-*, and the attachment of the second segment serves simply to augment the feeling of dread.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> This is a sentiment echoed by other scholars. For example, Sage (1943: 89): "starting with the love of many words common among the earlier writers of the Peninsula, and which is clearly evident in the Mozarabic Liturgy, for some reason Isidore conceived the idea of creating a new literary style formed by a three- or four-fold repetition of each word, or phrase, or clause, using as many synonyms as possible. This trick of style is pursued rigorously to the end, and is so disconcerting to a modern reader that he finds it difficult to follow the thought".

<sup>406</sup> *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum* 14.

<sup>407</sup> *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum* 26.

<sup>408</sup> *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum* 41.

<sup>409</sup> *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Wandalorum et Suevorum* 67.

<sup>410</sup> *Adversus Nationes* 1.54.

<sup>411</sup> *Adversus Nationes* 2.2.

<sup>412</sup> *Adversus Nationes* 2.29.

<sup>413</sup> *Adversus Nationes* 3.29.

<sup>414</sup> 220.17.

<sup>415</sup> 721.17.

<sup>416</sup> *De institutione uirginum* 31. See especially Haverling (2000: 349): "PER = a common prefix, underlining the completeness of an action, found in all periods of Latin". The semantic development of the prefix is still to be adequately explored, and the period when it lost its emphatic nature is yet to be fixed; its lack of etymons in Romance indicate that at some point it evidently did. However, an interesting observation arises – it could be that *per-* has lost some of its emphatic purpose by this date, and so *(per)timesco* would be therefore roughly synonymous; *pace* Milham (1959: 69): "another

On a stylistic note, there must be a careful distinction between tautology and pleonasm, a mistake of which some scholars are guilty: “the *tumor Africus* [...] shows itself in pleonasm and extravagance of every kind” (Brock 1911: 208); “pleonasm refers to expressions and constructions in which a particular notion is expressed more than once and in a manner different from which strict logic demands” (Gaertner 2005: 31). For a long time, semanticists have debated about whether it is linguistically possible for two lexical items to be absolutely synonymous with each other; as one scholar noted, “languages abhor absolute synonyms just as nature abhors a vacuum” (Cruse 1986: 270). Indeed, very few lexical items are completely interchangeable in any given context, without the slightest alteration in objective meaning, feeling, tone or evocative value. Because of this, some scholars have spoken of a ‘collocation range’, that is, “the set of contexts in which it [i.e. synonymy between two lexical items] can occur” (Lyons 1996: 62). This is a helpful notion because it acknowledges the fluid nature of synonymy; so, for example, ‘dark’ and ‘obscure’ are synonymous in the sentence ‘the room was dark/obscure’. However, they convey different senses in the sentence ‘he has a dark/obscure sense of humour’, the first implying that the sense of humour is somehow morally deviant, the second implying that it is not generally well understood. This situation was summed up by one scholar, “although in principle word meaning may be regarded as infinitely variable and context sensitive, there are nonetheless regions of higher semantic ‘density’ [...] forming, as it were, more or less well-defined ‘lumps’ of meaning with greater or lesser stability under contextual change” (Cruse 2002: 300). Since words are generally only likely to be partially synonymous within a given collocation range, it would be wise to avoid describing the *tumor* as pleonastic; “often expressions are condemned as pleonastic prefix which often loses all force in late Latin is *-per*”. The question holds little relevance for our study, since the two verbs would nevertheless be synonymous, but for a point of emphasis. Nevertheless, it is an interesting semantic question.

which in fact actually contain important nuances of meanings or add stylistic emphasis” (Crystal 1992: 305).

The employment of the *tumor* is a reflection of the Asianist style and a reflection of later Latin prose. It is verbose, repetitious and lexically superfluous, and the phrase “immense profusion and exuberance of words” would seem fitting (Purser 1910: 78). This quote is taken from a work detailing stylistic techniques in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, that “sophistic novel” (Harrison 2000: 210), and has been alluded to here for good reason. He is an author whose flagrant writing style has been subject to criticism; the Elizabethan William Adlington, for example, noted that Apuleius wrote “in so dark and high a style, in so strange and absurd words and in such new invented phrases, as he seemed rather to set it forth to show his magnificent prose than to participate his doings to others” (quoted in Graves 1950: 9). The rather farfetched notion that he wrote like this because he was “a priest-pious, lively, exceptionally learned, provincial priest- who found that the popular tale gave [him] a wider field for [his] description of contemporary morals and manners [...] than any more respectable literary form” should be dismissed (*ibid.*: 10). Instead, Apuleius was a herald of the Second Sophistic, and champion *par excellence* of the Asianic style that had come to play such an important role in the development and self-definition of Roman literature.

Asianism, developed as an antonym of the traditional and simple Atticist style, was used by its opponents to denigrate the so-called ‘*cacozelon*’ seen to typify its stylistic techniques.<sup>417</sup> This typically included verbosity, elaborate language, neologisms, widened

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<sup>417</sup> Quintilian *Institutiones* 8.3.56, “*cacozelon, id est mala adfectio, per omne dicendi genus peccat; nam et tumida et pusilla et praedulcia et abundantia et arcessita et expultantia sub idem nomen cadunt*”.

semantic implications and artificiality; it was not a strictly Roman debate but rather one that extended back to the Hellenistic period (Horrocks 1997: 97-98). These two competing forms, which had begun to manifest themselves concomitantly with the rise of a Roman literary culture in the second century BC, held a special place in the Roman literary psyche; Norden, in his *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, went so far as to define the entire development of Roman literature as a struggle between the two styles, and long before the Visigothic period the concepts had ceased to convey mere geographical distinction, instead serving to define two varied and opposing styles. This is a well-trodden theme that has been much discussed, and one that does not need reiterating here; the literature surrounding the topic is abundant (Fairweather 1981: 243-303; Colvin 2001; Whitmarsh 2005). However, it is important to emphasise that the Asianic style found its inspiration in the stylistic ideals of ancient rhetoric, and as long as the teaching of rhetoric continued, so did its influence.

In many ways, the *Africitas* of Sittl's writers stems from this formative period, and could be especially innovative. Fronto is an excellent example due to his promotion of the concept of the *elocutio novella*, normally translated as 'novelty of expression'. He sought to reinvent the vivacity of the Latin language, which he perceived to have become dry and lifeless with the writings of the Atticist purists. His Latin is characterised by unusual and unexpected words, as well as verbal abundance, and his writing is known for its flamboyant style. Naturally such comments must be made with a certain amount of caution, but it can be said, without too much polemic, that Asianism to a large extent won over the Roman west. Neither did it disappear along with the collapse of central Roman government; "the so-called Silver Age is the age of rhetorical poetry, and this poetry lasted as long as the schools of rhetoric and their successors existed in the West, that is until the end of the Middle Ages" (Raby 1927: 25). However, it is unfortunate that the dismissal of the concept of *Africitas* led

to the concomitant dismissal of the tumor, which has an important role to play in post-classical Latin writing. As a literary trope, it is perfectly in fitting with the kind of technique expected from Asianic writers, and the influence of such a style was always close to writers at this time. The *tumor* is a technique perfectly fitting with the Asianising tendencies of post-classical Latin writers. Its provenance lies in rhetorical word-play, but the feature had by the seventh century become a stylistic technique drawn on popularly by Latin writers.

#### **4.9.4 Semitic Influence**

It should be noted that another suggested origin for the *tumor* is as a Semitic borrowing; since much scripture was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, it follows that the Greek *koine* into which they were translated was subject to the influence of Semitic (Palmer 1980: 194-196; Horrocks 1997: 92-96). Sittl, for example, opined that its origins lay in Semitic influence, since it is well established that Hebrew, as well as other Semitic languages, regularly uses what is known as a *paronomastic genitive* to denote a superlative or to add value to a noun (Reckendorf 1909).

This was a popular opinion of nineteenth-century scholars, who believed the Greek of the New Testament to have been heavily Semiticised. Since translators would have been careful in their work not to alter meanings or texts, it is natural that syntactic and lexical features might be transposed into Greek; “even though the New Testament was composed in the main by men without a higher education [...] it was nevertheless written in an area where Aramaic was the first language of the majority, and some books at least are probably translations from Aramaic originals” (Horrocks 1997: 92; see also Greenspoon 2003). It is

useful to remember that the idea of the holy text in Jewish culture was deeply entrenched, and there existed a respect for the written word of sacred scripture that would later come to be transferred into Greek patristic literature. This meant that translation of holy texts (Hebrew, *targum*), especially if carried out by Jews, would have been done on the basis of “maximal literalness” (Drettas 2006: 890).<sup>418</sup> The main influence came in the form of lexical borrowings, either in full Hebrew forms, or else Graecised-forms of the Hebrew ones. This lexical influence is still noticeable in the Latin of Christian writers, including numerous forms in the monastic rules, such as *gehenna*, ‘hell’. There exist also some possible syntactic influences.<sup>419</sup>

However, it would be dangerous to attribute these too readily to Semitic influence. The pro-Semitic tendencies of nineteenth-century academics soon gave way to the much more rounded view of scholars such as Deissmann, who advocated the opinion that New Testament Greek was instead more reflective of the general spoken koine (Janse 2006). Naturally, given the sociolinguistic situation of the Roman East many Jews spoke Greek, but often did so monolingually. As such, the situation is often one whereby such features were already in existence in Greek: “many of these [Semitisms] could equally well reflect contemporary Hebrew or Aramaic [...] but many can also be paralleled in low-level Koine documents from Egypt [...] and so presumably reflect either more general tendencies of colloquial Greek

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<sup>418</sup> The idea of textual clarity is one echoed throughout Christian exegesis. The medieval scholar, Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet 7, Question 6: On the Senses of Sacred Scripture, 1.1*, advises, “it is not proper to use words at any one time in unrelated or different ways. But many senses give many different utterances. So there cannot be many senses implicit in any one utterance of sacred scripture”.

<sup>419</sup> See Viteau (1879); Thackery (1909); Bayer (1961); Whittaker (1969: 150-153); Maloney (1981). On the more general problems of semantic interfaces between Greek and Hebrew, see Barr (1961: 21-205).

which were reinforced by Jewish bilingualism in Palestine, or accidental correspondences between Coptic and Hebrew/Aramaic” (Horrocks 1977: 92). As such, the position of Semitisms in Christian Greek can be surmised by the following: “semitismos en sentido estricto son muy pocos los que existen en esa sintaxis. Lo normal, en cambio, es que las raíces, muchas veces exiguas, de una construcción, adquirieron desarrollo como resultado de la influencia semita” (Lasso de la Vega 1968: 151-52). In other words, rather than being novel linguistic features in Greek, many supposed Semitisms appear in the language beforehand, but are perhaps encouraged or reinforced by Semitic influence.

However, despite this usage increasing in Christian literature, the *tumor* is still able to be found in other, earlier, Greek writings, as well as other ancient Indo-European languages. Lasso de la Vega (1968: 441-455) gives a useful list of examples, labelling it the *genitive of identity*. It is also true that similar grammatical tropes are found in Latin writers long before the coming of Christianity. Therefore, the *tumor* cannot be seen as either a Christian novelty or a specifically Semitic borrowing: “pleonasm consists in the repetition of an idea which has already been expressed in the sentence, not for any rhetorical purpose [...] nor because of carelessness, but as a consequence of certain habits of speech” (Blass & Debrumer 1961: 256). However, the increase in usage evidently had its source somewhere, and it is not improbable that Semitic influence encouraged its use, rather than initiated it.

Discussion of the *tumor* has implications for the understanding of monastic rules on two levels. First, it is important because it is demonstrative of the processes of later literary continuity, and the influences exerting themselves on a writer such as Isidore. Since the *tumor* is a stylistic trope indicative of Asianist influence, then its appearance in a seventh-

century monastic rule shows just how far such an influence can make itself felt. The continuance of a system of rhetorical education in Visigothic Iberia has already been alluded to, and employment of the *tumor* is indicative of this. Second, it is important because it serves to re-define perceptions of monastic rules as being ‘un-literary’. Any stylistic features associated with a monastic rule are normally those of a technical text, facile to relate to similar low-register examples found in earlier Roman writings. However, as a literary technique associated with the Second Sophistic in particular, the appearance of the *tumor* leads to the necessity of reinterpreting a monastic rule as being something more than a mere ‘textbook’.

#### **4.10 Biblical Borrowings**

In common with so many other early Christian texts, all monastic rules quote from the Bible, and the Visigothic examples are no exception. The reason for this is to be found in the central position that the Bible occupied in Christian life and teaching: “s’il est vrai que la Bible est souvent la source littéraire et la plus fréquemment citée dans les texts normatifs” (Chartier 1984: 306). The biblical quotes can count amongst them: the Rule of Isidore, eleven quotations; the Rule of Fructuosus, four; and the Common Rule, twenty-four.

The pattern of preferred choice is to quote primarily from the New Testament, and this is a pattern followed in all of the monastic rules. The reason for this phenomenon is probably due to the preference for the New Testament in Late Antique writers. Although the Old Testament certainly constitutes a larger part of scripture than the New Testament and it is highly likely that both were available to the authors, the reason is hinted at by Leander when he talks about the difficulties of Old Testament exegesis and the fact that it must not be read

literally (*carnaliter*).<sup>420</sup> This is reaffirmed by Isidore, who says: “*quidem ideo non recipient Uetus Testamentum, pro eo quod aliud in tempore prisco, quod agatur in Nouo. Non intelligentes quod Deus quid cuique congruent tempori magna quadam distributione concessit*”.<sup>421</sup> It is possible that the relative distance between the Visigothic world and that of the Old Testament was simply too great, whereas the New Testament provided examples that were much closer, and therefore relevant, to the mindset of a Visigothic monk. The culture of the Old Testament in particular was far removed from the contemporary one, and centuries of the development and establishment of orthodox practice meant that the activities of some characters were against Christian teaching. The concept of Biblical literality had plagued earlier Church writers such as Origen and Theophilus, and had even been raised to an issue of heresy, a point also raised in the Rule of Benedict (Dawson 2001).

References to the Bible should be seen from a two-fold perspective. First, as a text written within the Christian tradition, it is entirely expected that frequent reference should be made to biblical writings. The Bible was the key text in the lives of Christians in the period (Smalley 1978; Lobrichon 2003: 28-54; Ferrante 1992). Second, the monastic rules are didactic texts, and biblical references function as an aid not only to support the instruction and teaching, but are also educational at the same time for the listeners: “authoritative exposition of Scripture recorded for posterity is therefore one of the characteristic features of Christian literature of this period. Such exposition often gathers up elements of contemporary controversy, deducing ‘orthodox’ teachings, warning against ‘heretical’ interpretations; but it also underlies moral maxims and garners ‘types’ of the spiritual or moral life” (Young 2004b: 257).

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<sup>420</sup> *De institutione uirginum* 16.

<sup>421</sup> *Sententiae* 1.20.1.

It cannot be imagined that all converts necessarily would have entered the monastery with a good knowledge of the Bible, and the employment of direct quotations and references would have been a method of highlighting and imparting important figures and stories. As Young (2004a) stated: “there was, of course, a massive need to re-educate with the stories of the Bible a populace whose minds were filled with the myths of the Gods” (*ibid.*: 465). Even in the sixth century, Martin of Braga in his *De correctione rusticorum* was able to highlight the continued presence of the old religion as being especially prevalent amongst those living in the countryside (also McKenna 1938; Hillgarth 1980). Notwithstanding purely exegetical purposes, biblical references also satisfied the need for moral exempla. Ancient literature offered the encapsulation not only of mythological cycles but also guidance on the gods, illustrating not only examples of *hubris*, but also of its aftermath. In short, Greco-Roman mythology gave its listeners heroes, on whom they could base behaviour, even if it were only ideological. Early Christians also required such a viewpoint. Biblical examples, therefore, also possessed a purely paraenetic purpose: “les héros bibliques offrent en effet des leçons de morale capables de guider les moins” (Chartier 1984: 313).

Direct quotations must be separated from allusions to biblical characters in a much wider sense, which monastic rules often use to support their teaching. It has been noted that allusions are “cultural products” (Conte 1986: 53), and the frequent use of biblical characters, rather than allusions to other Scriptural writings or Church Fathers, must be indicative of the important position of the text in monastic society. This includes the expected core examples of figures such as Mary and Joseph, Christ,<sup>422</sup> the Apostles<sup>423</sup> and Moses.<sup>424</sup> However,

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<sup>422</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 6.

<sup>423</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.3.

reference is also made to characters such as Loth, Susanna, Solomon and Anianus and Saphira.<sup>425</sup> Generally, the quotations and references should be seen not necessarily as literary tropes, but rather as educational devices, serving to support the teachings of the monastic rules, and also no doubt to impart knowledge of the Bible.

#### **4.11 Patristic Borrowings**

The authors of the monastic rules also freely draw upon earlier sources, nominally the Church Fathers, throughout their writings. The Rule of Isidore has received the most in-depth studies regarding its sources and borrowings (Díaz y Díaz 1963; Susín Alcubierre 1967), perhaps because of the overall importance of its author, although it has also been demonstrated that there exist substantial borrowings between the monastic rule and his *De officiis* and the *Sententiae* (Robles 1997: 42-43). Unfortunately, there exist no other writings from Fructuosus to make such a comparison, save two letters.<sup>426</sup> However, what is clear is that all three monastic rules draw upon earlier writings, and borrowing would seem to have been a feature of regular literature. Where they do occur, borrowings are not normally verbatim but rather paraphrased; in discussing Vulgate citations in Augustine, Houghton (2008b) has defined recently the useful terms ‘primary citation’ and ‘secondary citation’, referring to those taken from a codex and those derived from memory. As might be expected, many of these borrowings are taken from other ascetic literature and Augustine is the most popularly cited, perhaps unsurprisingly so given his the popularity of his writings and the close contacts between Iberia and North Africa in antiquity. However, Jerome in particular is also fairly frequent, as are occasional borrowings from the other Visigothic monastic rules.

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<sup>424</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

<sup>425</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 6; *Common Rule* 2, 4.

<sup>426</sup> The *Epistola ad Braulionem* (PL 80, 690-692) and the *Epistola ad Recesinthum regem* (MGH epist. 3, 688-689).

Isidore frequently cites from Augustine, most notably from his *De opere monachorum* and his *Regula ad seruos Dei*. For example,

*De opere monachorum* 16.19

*“sic debent et ipsi praeceptis eius  
obedire, ut compatiantur infirmis,  
et amore privatae rei non illigati  
manibus suis in commune laborare,  
praepositis suis sine murmure obtemperare”*

*Rule of Isidore* 5.7

*“nullus monachus amore priuati operis illigetur  
sed omnes in communi laborantes patribus  
sine obmurmuratione obtemperare debent”*

*Regula ad seruos Dei* 7

*“ut occulte ab aliqua litteras uel quaelibet  
munuscula accipiat”,*

*Rule of Isidore* 17.1

*“qui occulte ab aliquo litteras uel  
quodlibet munus acceperit”*

*Regula ad seruos Dei* 3

*“hoc uersetur in corde,  
quod profertur in uoce”*

*Rule of Isidore* 6.2

*“sed hoc meditetur corde, quod psallitur ore”*

The Rule of Fructuosus, meanwhile, draws heavily on Jerome's translation of the Rule of Pachomius. For example,

Rule of Pachomius 35

*“Ministri absque his, quae in commune  
Fratribus praeparata sunt,  
nihil aliud comedant,  
nec mutatos cibos sibi audeant praeparare”*

Rule of Fructuosus 18

*“Ministri, siue praepositus, cum fratribus  
reficient et mutatos sibi cibos  
praeparare non audant”*

Rule of Pachomius 3

*“Quicumque autem monasterium primus  
ingreditur, primus sedet, primus ambulat,  
primus psalmum dicit, primus in mensam  
extendit manum, prior in ecclesia  
communicat”*

Rule of Fructuosus 22

*“Qui prior in monasterio conuersus fuerit  
primus ambulet, primus sedeat, primus  
eulogiam accipiat, primus communicet in  
ecclesia”*

The Common Rule continues the reference to Jerome, often echoing phrases found in his letters. For example,

Epistle 58.2

*“nudam crucem ascendat nudus”*

Common Rule 1

*“nudam crucem ascendat nudus”*

Naturally, it cannot be presumed that the average listener would have noticed such borrowings, have read, or have even been aware of the full scope of Patristic literature that lay before the writers. Nevertheless, in the writer's mind the inclusion of material from earlier sources may have added a sense of kudos, even if this were not pertinent to the immediate audience. Conversely, the notion cannot be dismissed that borrowings are simply indicative of the act of literary *mimesis*.<sup>427</sup> Fear (2007) makes an interesting point about the use of patristic sources in the open letter of St. Patrick, written to petition the excommunication of the followers of the pirate Coroticus; "[Patrick's Epistula] is peppered with biblical and patristic quotations and allusions. These are designed precisely to give the impression that he is doing no more than what is required by sacred scripture" (*ibid.*: 326). Exactly the same sentiment could be equally applied to the teachings of the monastic rules.

The presence of biblical and patristic borrowings in the monastic rules should be seen from various perspectives: first, they are representative of the importance placed upon these texts within the Christian literary diet of the time; second, they serve to add weight to a text, since they would no doubt have imparted value; third, they are educational. Although biblical exegesis formed an important part of a monk's life, those who did not know the Scripture perhaps as well as was to be expected could take advice and place it into context from the actions of biblical characters and the teachings of the Church Fathers.

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<sup>427</sup> Indeed, borrowings, where they occur, are not normally direct literal borrowings, but rather textual similarities. In this sense, they are perhaps not aimed to impress the readership, but are instead indicative of the reading and education of the authors.

#### 4.12 Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to answer various questions. This has included attempting to place the monastic rules in the proper context of their literary history, and also investigating the types of literary techniques utilised by their authors. The answer to the first question is that first and foremost the monastic rules are examples of technical literature, perhaps a peculiarly Christian genre, but one that has literary antecedents throughout Latin (and, indeed, Greek) literature. In common with many technical texts, they are written in a lower register of language than much Classical prose, meaning that their language often has more in common stylistically with the spoken language. However, this is not to say that they do not have higher pretensions, and some of the literary techniques employed are ones that can be found in more formal, higher register texts of all periods. Nevertheless, the literary techniques employed are normally restricted to those that were suitable for the audience: phonologically pleasing or else word-play on a typically superficial level.

In this sense, they are texts that possess both style and literary technique and are, moreover, perfectly suited to their audience. There would be little point in writing a school science textbook, for example, in Shakespearian English because it would likely alienate most of its audience and, worse, fail in its educational aim. Similarly, there was no point in Isidore writing his monastic rule in a metrical imitation of Virgilian prose, regardless of his capabilities to do so or not, because it would fail in its aim of instructing most of its audience. If their posthumous judgement can be ascertained from their absence from modern scholarly inquiry, then it seems to be an unfair judgement seeing as the texts were only ‘doing their job’ and, it can be supposed, succeeding in it. Not only is this judgement unfair, but it is also unfounded: the monastic rules might not be, for most tastes, august Classical Latin, but they are certainly not without their literary merits. They are rich in techniques that would appeal

to their audience and, as demonstrated by the discussion surrounding the *tumor*, influenced by contemporary literary and educational movements and as such are reflective of literary developments of the time.

Literary histories, then, have not been kind to monastic rules. As one of the few examples of a genre that was created by Christianity, rather than a pre-existing one that was simply adapted by it, they perhaps deserve more recognition merely on this basis alone. Their style and techniques are such that they have been employed purposefully by their authors with the intended audience in mind and in this sense it would appear that even the most uneducated listener would have been able to have some sort of discourse with them in terms of literary reception. Recognition of this is concomitant with the acknowledgement that they are very suited for a community centred on oral recitation and aural reception, as was proposed in Chapter Three. The above review has been consciously brief, but nevertheless demonstrates that the monastic rules have much to divulge to their investigators regarding literary culture of the time, highlighting not only issues of continuity with the classical past, but also features of synchrony, placing them firmly as products of their time with much to reveal about the culture from which they came.

## **Chapter Five: Issues of Language in the Monastic Rules**

“καὶ ἐκεῖ δεξιούται παρὰ τῆς μακαρίας Μελάνης τῆς Ῥωμαίας. Πάλιν τοῦ διαβόλου σκληρύναντος αὐτοῦ τὴν καρδίαν, καθάπερ τοῦ φαραῶ, ὡς νέψ καὶ σωριγῶντι τὴν ἡλικίαν, γέγονε πάλιν ἐνδυσσμος, καὶ ἐδυσψύχησε μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἰρηκῶς. κακεῖσι πάλιν ἐξαλλάσσωσιν τοῖς ἱματίοις, καὶ ἐν τῷ διαλέκτῳ καρούμενος ὑπὸ τῆς κενοδοξίας”<sup>428</sup>

### **5.1 Introduction**

The principle aim of these final two chapters is to investigate aspects of the language of the monastic rules, both meta-linguistic and linguistic, and place them in the wider context of arguments concerning language use and language change in early medieval Europe at the time. The reason why the monastic rules are important for these issues is because the period in which they were written was a time of important linguistic change, considered often to be a transitional stage between the divergence of spoken Latin from written Latin and the emergence of Romance. It is certainly true that within a couple of centuries from the composition of the monastic rules, the first evidence for a written language recognised today as no longer being Latin would appear: the late eighth-century Indovinello Veronese from Italy, the Strasbourg Oaths of 842 and the glosses of San Millán de la Cogolla from 977 (Dionisotti & Grayson 1949: 1-3; Olarte Ruiz 1977; Ayres-Bennett 1995: 16-30).

### **5.2 Language Consciousness in the Ancient World**

Palladius, in the quotation that starts this chapter, reveals that upon meeting the noblewoman Melania in Jerusalem, the young Evagrius Ponticus was so enflamed by his sexual desires, the very reason for which he fled Constantinople originally, that he changed

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<sup>428</sup> Palladius *Lausiaca History* 38.8.

his clothes (τοῖς ἱματίοις) and his habit of speech (ἐν τῷ διαλέκτῳ) back to his old ways. Whatever the exact meaning of this assertion, it is indicative of the fact that the ancient world recognised the act of speech to be subject to change. Indeed, Greco-Roman writers were at times capable of being very acute observers of language variation;<sup>429</sup> these processes in the ancient world have received increasing attention from modern scholars.<sup>430</sup> In the last century, modern linguistics has likewise demonstrated language change and variation to occur over three different aspects: between different geographical areas (diatopic); over time (diachronic) and contemporarily between different speakers in the same place (sociological).

Since the ancients recognised language change and variation to occur, they possessed naturally terms to describe it. Augustine, for example, described his ideal of *Latinitas* as “*obseruatio incorrupte loquendi*”;<sup>431</sup> this was one of many discussions found in the Roman world (Vainio 1999). Included within such a concept were various scales described by different adjectives: *sermo politus, rusticus, uulgaris, cottidianus*, and even *italianus*. All of these are likely to have possessed different meanings, or at the very least different nuances, to Latin speakers writing in Republican and Imperial Rome and the early medieval period (Chin

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<sup>429</sup> For example, Aristotle, *On Rhetoric* F.1408a 10-32, observed the differing use of language between gender and social status; Cicero, *De oratore* 3.45, remarked on the conservatism of female speech; Boethius, *Consolationes* 2.7.25-29, noted the diversity of speech over geographical space; Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, *Expositio sermonum antiquorum*, noted its variation over time; Aulus Gellius noted the story of the philosopher Flavorinus, *Noctes Atticae* 1.10, who was said to have spoken with such old words, as though he were talking to the mother of Evander, a prominent figure in early Roman myth.

<sup>430</sup> For the Greek world, see Gera (2003). This variation naturally included purposeful stylistic and literary registers, bilingualism and contemporary variation (Krostenko 2001; Adams 2003, 2007). The Latin of Praenestine has offered particularly good examples; see Coleman (1990). A useful study on women’s speech can be found in Gilleland (1980).

<sup>431</sup> *Ars breuiata* 1.1.

2008: 30-35; Burton 2010). Similarly, it is also apparent that ancient writers were fully aware that there existed correct and incorrect ways of writing. This is attested by the existence of texts such as the *Appendix Probi*, a list of correct and incorrect spellings, many of which suggest the presence of Romance features already in the fourth century (Quirk 2005).

With regard to diachronic variation, Roman writers in the Imperial period had commented that some texts written in Latin were incomprehensible to them centuries before the supposed break between Latin and Romance advocated by the *thèse unitaire* (see below). Typically, this was because those texts were written a substantial amount of time previously and so the language had undergone substantial diachronic change. Polybius, for example, admitted that he could not decipher a late-sixth-century BC treaty written between Rome and Carthage,<sup>432</sup> whilst Varro had recognised such a change when he coined the maxim “*consuetudo loquendi est in motu*”.<sup>433</sup>

The sixth and seventh centuries also produced Visigothic writers who remained concerned with issues of language, just as their Roman predecessors had done. Isidore of Seville, as author of the *Etymologies*, is often cited as having an interest in linguistic issues. Indeed, Isidore is the best source for Visigothic Hispanisms in this period, often noting popular usage with phrases such as “*quod uulgi dicunt*” or “*quod Spani uocant*”. What exactly these terms mean is a matter of debate, but they nevertheless show that Isidore was aware of issues of language variation and professed an interest in the topic (Sofer 1930;

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<sup>432</sup> *Histories* 3.22.3.

<sup>433</sup> *De lingua latina* 9.17.

Maltby 2002; Velázquez Soriano 2003). Apart from local usage, Isidore also notes features of language use outside of Iberia, pointing out accents and other linguistic habits.<sup>434</sup>

As elsewhere in Europe, grammatical treatises also continued to be produced, including, amongst other important works (Vineis & Maierù 1994), the *Ars grammatica* of Julian of Toledo (Maestre Yenes 1973) and commentaries on Donatus, such as the anonymous text written in Toledo in the late-seventh century (Collins 2004: 157). Although the grammatical texts are heavily indebted to the Donatian tradition, Isidore in particular demonstrates a much wider interest, aiming not for “novelty but authority, not originality but accessibility, not augmenting but preserving and transmitting knowledge” (Barney 2006: 11). As such, he shows a patent curiosity not only in linguistic factors shown in works such as his *Etymologies*, but also in wider meta-linguistic aspects as shown in his *Differentiae*, or collections of synonyms. Indeed, Iberia in the seventh century was particularly active in the Latin-speaking west in its production of works concerned with language (Law 1982: 11-41).

### **5.3 Modern Definitions of the Language of the Monastic Rules**

The first task is to determine what name should be given to the language in which the monastic rules are written. This is an important process for the simple fact that nomenclature matters, and it has arguably influenced modern historiography. Latin, with a written history of over two-thousand years, is prone naturally to problems of linguistic and historical typology, and its periodizations and typologies have attracted the attention not only of various modern scholars, but have also been the subject of increasingly mature linguistic complexity within recent decades (Lloyd 1991; Wright 2002a: 36-48). This is a problem that is also

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<sup>434</sup> For example, *Etymologies* 9.20, “*Mozicia, quasi modicia, unde et modicum; Z pro D, sicut solent Itali dicere ozie pro hodie*”.

reflected in the ancient sources. Cicero, for example, had noted the “*uerborum uetustas prisca*” of old legal texts.<sup>435</sup> Isidore, meanwhile, gives a detailed description of the four ‘ages’ of Latin in his *Etymologies*:

“*Latinas autem linguas quattuor esse quidam dixerunt, id est Priscam, Latinam, Romanam, Mixtam. Prisca est, quam uetustissimi Italiae sub Iano et Saturno sunt usi, incondita, ut se habent carmina Saliorum. Latina, quam sub Latino et regibus Tusci et ceteri in Latio sunt locuti, ex qua fuerunt duodecim tabulae scriptae. Romana, quae post reges exactos a populo Romano coepta est, qua Naeuius, Plautus, Ennius, Uergilius poetae, et ex oratoribus Gracchus et Cato et Cicero uel ceteri effuderunt. Mixta, quae post imperium latius promotum simul cum moribus et hominibus in Romanam ciuitatem inrupit, integritatem uerbi per soloecismos et barbarismos corrumpens*”.<sup>436</sup>

Much of the Latin written in and around the period of the monastic rules has found itself traditionally to be at the bottom of a value-laden list of Latinity. Even for Isidore, the *latina mixta* of his time was corrupt with barbarisms and solecisms. Many traditional histories of Latin employed an elitist view of the development of the language, along the lines of ‘Old Latin’, ‘Classical Latin’, ‘Silver Latin’ and ‘Late Latin’ (Rettig 1963: v). This immediately creates a somewhat biased view of decline into “one of the darkest ages of Latinity” (Coleman 1987: 50) that needs to be avoided.

In describing the language of texts from the period of the monastic rules, various options have traditionally been available to modern scholars. Some of the most common of these include: post-Classical Latin, Late Latin, and Christian Latin. Sometimes, more

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<sup>435</sup> *De oratore* 1.193.

<sup>436</sup> *Etymologies* 9.6-7.

specific terms are used to describe the language of certain texts, such as Liturgical Latin, which will be discussed in Chapter Six. The term Merovingian Latin is also sometimes found (for example, Furman Sas 1937; Calboli 1987; Herman 1992; Fouracre & Gerberding 1996: 58-78). There is very little that is peculiar to the Latin used in Merovingian Gaul that makes it stand out particularly to that used in Visigothic Iberia or Ostrogothic Italy, for example. Rather, the term is more often used to suggest a divide between Merovingian and Carolingian Latin, on the basis that “the former was corrupter than the latter and thus the original corruptions of the Merovingian texts were perpetuated by Carolingian scribes who would never have dreamed of committing such monstrosities of their own” (Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 110). The term thus suggests a distinctiveness that is not apparent linguistically when compared to contemporary texts from other regions.

A further term has so far been omitted from the list: Vulgar Latin. Only a few years ago, this term would have been a viable possibility, since it enjoyed once popularity with even the most eminent of Latinists, and functioned as a blanket label for any type of Latin not written in the high literary style of the classical period.<sup>437</sup> Vulgar Latin is a term that is likely to be avoided in modern scholarship on Latin philology;<sup>438</sup> the latest English-language work on the history of Latin (Clackson & Horrocks 2008: 229-264), for example, avoids the term altogether, opting for the nevertheless problematic ‘sub-elite’ Latin instead.<sup>439</sup> This is not the place to enter into a discussion on the limitations of the term ‘Vulgar’, but needless to say that features associated traditionally with such a style need not have been confined to the

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<sup>437</sup> For example, Herman (2000: 1-8), who acknowledged the difficulties of this term for his own work. Other prominent examples include Grandgent (1907) and Väänänen (1963).

<sup>438</sup> Although not always; see, for example, Kramer (2007).

<sup>439</sup> In a way, this term nevertheless implies that it was a language not used by the educated elite, and so still suffers from some of the problems of Vulgar Latin.

speech of the non-elite, and the term is employed with no true consensus as to its interpretation. Notwithstanding the synchronic difficulties in such a term, it is also problematic diachronically; works on Vulgar Latin tend to highlight certain features indicative of the term, as though the spoken language were somehow petrified for centuries at a time. Naturally this cannot be the case, as features now considered to be ‘vulgar’ would no doubt have come and gone quickly into a Roman’s speech. In sum, to speak simply of Vulgar Latin in opposition to Classical Latin ignores the sociolinguistic complexities that are present in any language, and when combined with the negative image that the term traditionally attracts, it is a typological domain best left alone: “the much-used term ‘Vulgar Latin’ is multivalent and best avoided” (Wright 1982: 52).

Of the terms mentioned above, the most popular are perhaps post-classical Latin, Late Latin and Christian Latin. Importantly, the last term should not be treated as interchangeable with the others: an author could be a Christian but write in the period of classical Latin, or else be a pagan writer active within a predominantly Christian literary society.

The label of Late Latin is perhaps the most popularly attested, but attracts polemic on a number of grounds. First, features which are seen as indicative of Late Latin are sometimes found in other periods of Latin literature, but may be simply less frequent or rare. It is not unknown, for example, for features of the earliest Latin writings to disappear in classical prose, only to reappear in post-classical texts. This is a phenomenon referred to as the ‘Classical Gap’ (Coleman 1993). Included amongst examples of this could be the verb *fabulari*, ‘to speak’, found in some of the earliest Latin works, absent from classical texts, yet present in Romance reflexes such as Sp. *hablar* and Ptg. *falar* (Palmer 1954: 171-172). It

also includes the use of substantives ending in *-tor* and *-trix*, and verbs compounded with *-ad* (Karakasis 2005: 35-36). This is also an identical problem for the term post-Classical Latin, and it therefore follows that some of these defining features are rather fluid and to label them as Late or post-Classical Latin is misleading. The other issue with late or post-Classical Latin is that many authors writing in these periods actually write in a variety of classicizing styles, and in many there is a clear tendency to emulate, often successfully, classical standards. Therefore, to use the term post-classical or Late Latin as a chronology is often oxymoronic because the Latin is distinctly classical.

The term Late Latin, moreover, ties into a notion of linguistic periodization that is frankly uncomfortable, implying an ‘end-stage’ of the language prior to its disappearance. Such a notion, of course, is completely unfounded, because the spoken form of Latin never did die; its speakers simply recognised its diversity from literary Latin and it was fated a different path to its literary cousin. Indeed, some Romance-speakers continue to speak ‘Latin’.<sup>440</sup> It also, perhaps, promotes a negative image of a language ‘on the way out’, and even if not complicit with, does not challenge, previously held beliefs of decline. Languages can of course be born (for example, Esperanto), or disappear (for example, Coptic as an everyday spoken language in the face of Arabic), but Latin is not an example of this. It is telling that for all the books discussing when Latin stopped being Latin, there are no books discussing when Latin was born. The reason for this is not only does the evidence not permit an answer, but also there is no answer: the first written evidence for Latin, the inscribed

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<sup>440</sup> A reference to Ladino, the Romance language of the Shephardic Jews expelled from Iberia; see Alvar (2000: 19-26).

*Manios med vhe vhaked Numasioi*,<sup>441</sup> is not indicative of the language's birth; likewise, there is no death.

A final problem is that, as with many attempts to ring-fence, the definition of Late Latin is wholly individualistic, with no *communis opinio* as to its delineations. Löfstedt highlighted the difficulties of terminology, and noted the general consensus that, already by the early-second century, there existed a different style from “the great Roman tradition” (1959: 1). The two major English-language linguistic histories of the Latin language avoid explicit use of the term at all (Palmer 1954; Clackson & Horrocks 2007), whilst Karakasis (2005:16) posits Late Latin to mean the period from AD 200 to the sixth century, although suitable nomenclature for what then comes after the sixth century is not provided. Posner (2004: 102-103) takes the point of view that things took a turn for the worse after AD 14, and manages to use the moribund terms Vulgar Latin and Dark Ages in her discussion, whilst Wright (1982: 52) similarly avoids the term, but instead uses the rarer ‘Imperial Latin’. Perhaps important for historiographical purposes is that any implication that Late Latin was an ‘end-stage’ in the language in many ways obscures the fact that the mid-first millennium was in reality an extremely important period for both the development of the Latin language and its literature. Not only was there likely to have existed a greater degree of Latinization amongst the population in Western Europe than half a millennium earlier, but the spread of Christianity promoted new literary genres and further uses of the language (Berry 2004). Indeed, Banniard (1999: 228) noted that Christianisation may have been an important factor in the Latinization of some language groups: “l’irruption du christianisme et l’expansion de missions chrétiennes provoquent un bouleversement profond de la latinité”.

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<sup>441</sup> CIL i. 2. 3, c. 600 BC.

#### 5.4 Christian Latin

In contrast to the terms above, Christian Latin is much more tangible in its definition. The notion that there existed a specific Christian *Sondersprache* is neither novel nor surprising; as Boethius had noted a century or so prior to the monastic rules: “*cum sint arcana fida custodia tum id habent commodi, quod cum his solis qui digni sunt conloquuntur*”.<sup>442</sup> Löfstedt echoed the sentiment a millennium and a half later: “the new system of thought [i.e. Christianity] called for and created not quite a new language, but certainly new forms of expression” (1959: 68). The existence of ‘special languages’, especially in a religious context, has been investigated often and there are parallels here with, for example, the argument as to whether Spanish Jews spoke a peculiar version of Castilian in Medieval Spain.<sup>443</sup>

The idea of a Christian Latin, that is, a Latin peculiar to Christians, sprung from the Nijmegen School in the early twentieth century, expounded by its two principal advocates, Jos Schrijnen and Christine Mohrmann (for example, Schrijnen 1932; Mohrmann 1958). The initial premise of these two scholars and their followers was not only that “the new song of the *logon* demanded new *logoi*” (Mohrmann 1957: 13), but that beyond this there existed a language peculiar to early Christians not only in its vocabulary, but also in its syntax,

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<sup>442</sup> *Tractates* 3.5.

<sup>443</sup> See, for example, Marcus (1962). It was his opinion that there was a peculiar Jewish form of Castilian; (*ibid.*: 129) “d’abord parce que leur vie sociale se trouvait être relativement isolée, et ensuite à cause de leur religion qui les avait habitué à se servir en famille de termes particuliers et d’expressions différentes de ceux qui étaient en cours dans les milieux nouveaux où ils se trouvaient après leur dispersion”.

primarily under the influence of Greek, and to a lesser extent Hebrew: “l’influence grecque dans le domaine de la syntaxe n’est pas négligeable, quoique à première vue, elle pût sembler moins radicale [...] a côté de l’influence il faut tenir compte d’une influence hébraïque” (Mohrmann 1956: 45).

Such a view has been met generally with scholarly temperance; as Sidwell (1995: 5) stated: “the term ‘Christian Latin’ has no linguistic validity. There was no ‘special language’ which only Christians used, distinguished clearly from that employed by pagans”.<sup>444</sup> Indeed, whilst it is clear that lexical development plays an important role in Christian Latin, changes in syntax and morphology are less clear-cut, yet earlier commentators were wont to emphasise exactly these areas as being peculiarly Christian; such a description has been labelled a “misuse of language” (Löfstedt 1958: 68). It would, indeed, be erroneous to understand Christian Latin as a form of *langue spéciale*, understood only by other Christians, or even only used by Christians, as proposed by Palmer: “the early Christian communities lived their lives in conditions eminently those which are creative of a special language. With a new outlook which penetrated and transformed their whole world, living an intense and highly organised community life with its ritual and common meals, rejecting the traditional paganism and all its works, driven in on themselves by persecutions, the early Christians became almost a secret society, evolving a species of Latin which was largely incomprehensible to outsiders” (1954: 183). The development and peculiarities of such a

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<sup>444</sup> Burton (2008: 168-69) proposes a new and more positive approach in his work on the frequency of employment of certain (not necessarily Christian) words in Christian authors: “I would suggest that the earlier emphasis on radically new departures – the coinage of new words, and the creation of new senses for existing words – may have led us to overlook the specialization and the increasing frequency with which some words are used within Christian Latin. There is still very much to be explored here”.

style of speech have been subject to various excellent syntheses, and there is little need to re-list them here (see De Ghellinck 1939; Palmer 1954: 181-208; Löfstedt 1959: 68-87; Loi 1978; Burton 2000: 153-154; Clackson & Horrocks 2007: 284-292).<sup>445</sup>

Although the Christian *Sondersprache* theory in its full form has received a cool welcome in some quarters, it has always been acknowledged that the Latin vocabulary was considerably altered by Christian use in the form of neologisms, borrowings and calques, and semantic changes. The most common features that are used to define it, in particular its neologisms and semantic expansions, are often related to the spread and development of Christianity itself and, moreover, represent linguistic innovations in the Latin tradition. In this way, the term actually has significance in relation to tangible linguistic developments. In addition, the growth and development of early Christianity is far easier to ring-fence chronologically, since scholars are mostly in agreement as to the dating and authorship of most Christian writings. Even if there are debates concerning the linguistic features of Christian Latin, it is much easier to discern whether whoever wrote something was in fact Christian, or was at least writing for a Christian audience. Therefore, defining the term from a typological and linguistic perspective is a far less complicated process than it is for Late Latin.

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<sup>445</sup>The last work in particular demonstrates the potential confusion that can arise from abuses of such a term; the authors begin the study with their intention to study Egeria's *Peregrinatio* "to illustrate the effects Christianity had on Latin" (*ibid.*: 286). However, they then continue to highlight features of syntax and morphology that arguably have nothing whatsoever to do with religious affiliation but rather the emergence of Romance features; for example: "the preposition *de* takes over many of the functions of the pure ablative and genitive" (p. 290). This is true, but can hardly be attributed to the influence of Christianity.

The term also has an advantage in the sense that it captures to a large extent the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. Christian authors were often well aware that they were writing within a new literary tradition, which boasted new and altered genres and canons from the pagan one; this fact that could prove a source of both great pride and great distress. Indeed, Christian self-definition had been an important part of the Church since the very beginning, and use of the term Christian Latin reflects better a contemporary dichotomy and consciousness of new literary adventures. However, there is no evidence for a conscious recognition from authors of the Late Antique and post-Roman world that they were writing in a 'late' stage of their language, in the same way that Chaucer would not have thought himself to be writing in 'Middle' English, rather than Old or Modern English.

Out of the traditional potential terms used to describe the language of the monastic rules, then, Vulgar Latin has been rejected outright. Similarly, Late Latin and post-Classical Latin have been shown to present too many difficulties in their definition and implications to be a valid term of description. Christian Latin would seem to be the most suitable for such a purpose. The term works well for literary studies; the authors of the monastic rules and, presumably, their audience, were all Christian. However, not everybody who was exposed to literary texts in the Visigothic period would have necessarily been so. Christian Latin also works less well for some works, written by Christians, which are distinctly classicizing and include few or no features that would be identifiable as Christian. The difficulties presented by such a term as Late Latin should not suggest that some sort of division is not feasible; evidently, the Latin of later periods is different, on various levels, to the Latin of the earlier Classical authors. As such, the term later Latin is preferred. This term is not itself without polemic, but does serve to confront the principle issue of an invalid 'end-stage' implication and any derogatory image that has come to be associated with it. Perhaps the most important

feature of any discussion of linguistic periodization and typology is that it cannot be done away with and later Latin is a *pis-aller* in order to permit its effective study. Later Latin certainly presents its own difficulties as a term, but considerably less so than Late Latin. ‘Structural fallaciousness’ cannot be avoided. Instead, it is important simply to recognise the deficiencies of such an approach and account for it as best as possible in any discussion.

### 5.5 **Ancient and Modern Sensibilities towards Language**

An important problem in studying issues of language-use and language change is a methodological one stemming from the relatively modern phenomenon of imposing national language standards. Modern nations have sought to homogenise a recognised, standard language, with the result that, regardless of idiolect, there is always a perceived ‘correct’ way of speaking a language that is associated typically with a national standard, and by which individual speech-acts are judged. In some cases, the actual realisation of this is an extremely modern phenomenon, such as in Italy, where although the *questione della lingua* has been debated since the medieval period, widespread standardisation has begun to occur only within recent memory (Devoto 1999). Indeed, the issue of language use has been of supreme importance in modern historical narrative and political action, especially so in those countries where foreign oppression or influence might mean that the language spoken privately in the home became an overriding factor in national identity. This has happened in various European countries such as in the Ukraine in the face of Russian or the Celtic languages in Britain and France, or in the case of heritage speakers of languages whose only link to the country of their ancestors is that of the language spoken at home.

Perhaps the most problematic issue for historical methodology is that language use has become a potentially central factor in the construction of some modern ethnicities, meaning that it can carry political connotations. Indeed, language use can often be one of the principal, if not sole, characteristic features that differentiates a group identity between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Edwards 1985; Gudykunst 1988; Fishman 1999). In many ways, this has always been the case throughout human history. In a story that has counterparts in many other cultures, for example, the Polish Duke Łokietek, upon re-taking the city of Kraków from the Germans in 1312, relied on a shibboleth to confirm Polish identity, forcing inhabitants to quote Polish tongue twisters. Those who could not do so adequately were beheaded (Richmond 1995: 62). Nevertheless, whilst language use might have always been an important factor behind historical identity, the issue of correct language standards, and especially national language planning, is a relatively modern phenomenon.

The danger behind this is that language use is often contextually important to modern researchers, and since modern typologies are normally imposed on ancient perceptions, historians can be guilty of what has been termed the ‘structuralist fallacy’, or “the assumption that if there happens to exist now a single name for a linguistic state, in the past there must have existed then a complete single language system which that name is used to refer to” (Wright 1999: 26). This constitutes a presumption that the issues which preoccupy modern scholars must have some reflection in the preoccupations of their historical subjects. As Stock (1990) remarked: “in pushing *Weltanschauung* back into the Middle Ages, students often made the assumption that the term *society* in a medieval content corresponds to what we know as ‘industrial’ or ‘American’ society” (*ibid.*: 22). Lucian, amongst many other

ancient writers, had long ago stated the ideal kind of approach a historian should practice,<sup>446</sup> but this is a feat easier said than done: although scholars will naturally study what is of interest or importance to them, it is always vital to recognise that methodological approaches are often contextual to the scholar's society.

In this way the issue mirrors the explosion of the scholarly study of identity, ethnicity and, in particular, 'Romanization', topics that started to become enormously popular around thirty years ago. Arguably, this fashion was a result of a generation of scholars brought up in an environment of, for example, post-World War II ethnic diasporas, enhanced racial tensions in the West, the social and political reassertion of fringe nations in Britain and the oppression of others in the USSR. The extraordinary social situations of these generations gave way to scholarly approaches that were vastly different from those fostered, for example, by scholars working at the height of the British Empire (Woolf 1998: 4-16; Jones 1997).

Modern academic approaches to the Late Antique and early medieval period in particular have obsessed over nomenclature and typologies that support the notion of liminality, a teleological approach that tends to categorise language by its end product, no matter how distant that might have been to contemporary speakers. This is because these are important issues to modern scholars, who advocate the empirical study of linguistics in a

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<sup>446</sup> *How to Write History* 41, "That, then, is the sort of man the historian should be: fearless, incorruptible, free, a friend of free expression and the truth, intent, as the comic poet says, on calling a fig a fig and a trough a trough, giving nothing to hatred or to friendship, sparing no one, showing neither pity nor shame nor obsequiousness, an impartial judge, well disposed to all men up to the point of not giving one side more than its due, in his books a stranger and a man without country, independent, subject to no sovereign, but reckoning what this or that man will think, but stating the facts".

world where language registers have become normalised and *Austand*-processes have dichotomised between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ ways of speaking and writing. In short, modern linguistics has necessarily catalogued languages and their features in order to describe and study them and these preoccupations and methods are naturally reflected in the study of ancient languages, despite the fact that they were not necessarily reflected in the concerns of the ancient societies.

## 5.6 The Context of Language Use and Language Change in the Seventh Century

Around the period in which the monastic rules were written, there had begun to appear expression of a consciousness of language diversity that is not typical of earlier Roman authors. The Anglo-Saxon monk Boniface, for example, is often cited in the mid-eighth century for his discomfort at the disparity between his Latin, acquired as a learned second language, and that spoken as a first language in Rome (Wright 2002), whilst the Council of Tours in 813, in a phrase normally taken to be the first evidence of Romance, also speaks of conversing in the ‘*rustica romana lingua*’.<sup>447</sup>

Although an established Christian *topos* (Curtius 1997: 79-105,) proclaiming to have written in a lower register of language retained a practical use, since there existed a genuine concern that some higher registers of Latin had become unintelligible to those who were not educated. One of the most well-known examples, Gregory of Tours, noted famously: “*philosophantem rhetorem intellegunt pauci, loquentem rusticum multi*”.<sup>448</sup> Indeed, Gregory

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<sup>447</sup> Thus Ewert (1935: 16): “the Strasburg Oaths represent the earliest extant piece of continuous prose in the vernacular of Gaul, and, in fact, in any Romance vernacular”.

<sup>448</sup> *Historia Francorum* preface.

proves himself to be an author who was most concerned with issues of language (Hen 1995: 26-27; Heinzelmann 2001: 95-100).

Yet the problem was, by Gregory's time, already an old one. Over a century earlier, Augustine had proposed an answer: "*melius est reprehendant nos grammatici, quam non intelligant populi*". In such a vein, recent works have continued to show how some authors during this time employed consciously elements in their writing that made them more accessible to their audience. Venantius Fortunatus, for example, wrote his saints' Lives in a much lower register of Latin than his poems because he wanted them to be understood clearly by the audience (Collins 1981; Hen 1995: 26), whilst Caesarius of Arles has been shown to employ purposefully vocabulary associated with a lower register of language in his sermons (Campetella 2001).

### 5.7 **Sermo Plebeius uel Rusticus: Language Consciousness in the Monastic Rules**

Martin of Braga opens his *De correctione rusticorum* in the following way: "*Sed quia oportet ab initio mundi uel modicam illis rationis notitiam quasi pro gustu porrigere, necesse me fuit ingentem praeteritorum temporum gestorumque siluam breuiato tenuis compendii sermone contingere et cibum rusticis rustico sermone condire*".<sup>449</sup> This hints clearly at the fact that Martin felt the 'rustic speech' (*rustico sermone*) to be itself a recognisable register of language. Indeed, since periodizations, such as those discussed above, are normally a *post factum* innovation, the authors of the monastic rules would not have considered themselves to

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<sup>449</sup> *De correctione rusticorum* 1.

be writing in ‘later Latin’. This raises the question: how might they have viewed the language the monastic rules were written in?

Whilst the Rule of Fructuosus does not refer explicitly to language use, the Common Rule does so only in its mention of interlinguistic synonymy: “*lectum tamen sternere mandamus corio aut psiatho, quod Latine storea nuncupatur*”. Whatever the meaning behind this phrase, it says little about the author’s concept of the language, other than it is not Greek. However, in the preface to the Rule of Isidore there is a very interesting phrase, where the author professes to have written the text “*sermone plebeio uel rustico*”:

*“plura sunt praecepta uel instituta patrum maiorum, quae a sanctis patribus sparsim prolata reperiuntur, quaeque etiam nonnulli altius uel obscurius posteritate composita tradiderunt, ad quorum exemplum nos haec pauca uobis eligere ausi sumus, usi sermone plebeio uel rustico, ut quam facillime intelligatis quo ordine professionis uestrae uotum retineatis”.*

In this passage, Isidore contrasts his use of the “*sermo plebeius uel rusticus*” with the “*altius uel obscurius*” language of some predecessors, so that the audience might be able to understand most easily (“*ut quam facillime intelligatis*”). This profession to have written in a lower register of language is in many ways typical of early Christian writers, and highlighting the language as such was an act of humility that extended back further into the Latin tradition (Auksi 1995). It certainly remained widespread in Visigothic hagiography. To cite a few examples: Braulius of Zaragoza notes in his *Life of St. Aemilian*: “*Melius siquidem est ut uera minus erudite quam ut ficta enarrentur eloquenter, quod in Euangeliiis Saluatoris perfacile*

*intelligitur, quae populis sermone simplici praedicantur*”;<sup>450</sup> Sisebut remarks in his *Life of Desiderius*: “*quaeque nostrae cognitioni fidelis fama innotuit, sicco magis stylo, quam uerbis onusto faleratis innotui*”;<sup>451</sup> the author of the *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* starts: “*Omittentes phaleratas uerborum pompas, et praetermittentes garrulas facundiae spumas, nunc etiam ea, quae omnibus modis uera sunt, simpliciter ueraciterque narramus; nam si ea quae luce clariora esse noscuntur obscuris sermonibus inuoluere uoluerimus, audientium animos non instruimus, sed fatigamus, quia, cum multorum imperitorum minus intelligit sensus, fatigatur auditus*”;<sup>452</sup> Ildefonsus of Toledo, at the start of his *De uiris illustribus*, noted that Jerome, Gennadius and Isidore of Seville were prone to “*stylo euidenti conscribens*”.<sup>453</sup>

However, although clearly writing within a Christian tradition that affirmed frequently to be writing in a low register of language, it remains to be seen exactly what Isidore meant when he used the adjectives *plebeius* and *rusticus*. Is it possible that Isidore’s use of the terms extends beyond a literary *topos*? The Latin adjectives at first sight present little difficulty in their translation. *Plebeius*, ‘of the plebs, common masses’, is attested in Classical Latin and often used to imply a distinction in social class; for example, Cicero uses *plebeius* in direct contrast to *patricius*, ‘noble’: “*siue patricius siue plebeius*”.<sup>454</sup> *Rusticus*, ‘of or belonging to the country, rural’ is similarly attested in Classical Latin, sometimes implying

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<sup>450</sup> *Life of St. Aemilian* 5.

<sup>451</sup> *Life of Desiderius* 1.

<sup>452</sup> *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 4.1

<sup>453</sup> *De uiris illustribus* preface.

<sup>454</sup> *Pro Scauro* 34.

a lack of refinement and contrasted with its antonym *urbanitas*. Cicero again, for example, says: “*deponendae tibi sunt urbanitates; rusticus Romanus factus es*”.<sup>455</sup>

In the first instance, Isidore compares this style of writing with the “*altius uel obscurius*” style of some of the Fathers of the Church, and this distinction is clearly intended. In many senses, this is more a case of early Christian *claritas*, rather than a literary *topos*. The struggle between the need to communicate ideas to the uneducated and the requirement to write in ‘good’ Classical Latin had been epitomised by the accusation levelled famously against Jerome in a dream of being a *Ciceronianus*, rather than a *Christianus*.<sup>456</sup> This was a topic discussed above.

*Plebeius* and *rusticus*, however, are in this case difficult words to translate idiomatically into English, despite the obvious ‘plebeian and rustic’ coming to mind. It can hardly be expected that Isidore was writing in a language that was on the one hand typical of the poor or rural population, yet on the other completely alien to the urban elite.<sup>457</sup> Moreover, features associated with language registers used by one group are not necessarily exclusive to the other. Neither can it be the case that by writing in the lowest common denominator of language, i.e. *plebeius*, Isidore would be intelligible to all; many dialects associated with non-standard registers can often be quite unintelligible to those not versed in

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<sup>455</sup> *Ad familiares* 16.21.

<sup>456</sup> *Epistle* 21.

<sup>457</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the English Romantic poet, had in the early-nineteenth century noted that such a distinction was of little value: “A rustic’s language, purified from all provincialism and grossness, and so far reconstructed as to be made consistent with the rules of grammar [...] will not differ from the language of any other man of common sense [...] except so far as the notions which the rustic has to convey are fewer and more indiscriminate” (quoted in Connell & Leask 2009: 5).

them.<sup>458</sup> It would be misguided, therefore, to take these two adjectives in their literal sense, and rather a phrase such as ‘in plain and simple language’ or ‘without literary adornment’ would suffice better.

It is possible that in using the term *sermo*, which is by this period associated particularly with Christian usage (Burton 2007: 27), Isidore was referring to the idea of ‘speech’ rather than ‘language’; that is, the quotidian spoken and conversational idiom rather than the institutionalised, principally written, *lingua*. That the two differ is a mainstay of modern linguistics, whereby speech is equivalent with spoken language as opposed to language, which is the written form (Trask 1999: 284). This is a dichotomy that is also reflected in the vocabulary of many other languages.<sup>459</sup>

However, in Classical Latin, there existed many forms to denote ‘speech’, including the nouns *lingua*, *sermo* and *oratio*, and the verbs *loquor*, *dico*, *ait*, to name the most obvious. The semantic realities in Latin were not so simple that *sermo* referred to the spoken language in contrast to other nouns, which referred to the written language. Examples from later Latin in particular show that the use of the word *lingua*, in phrases such as the *lingua rustica* or its variants, was employed frequently to refer to what could be classed as a lower register standard of spoken language. The Strasbourg Oaths, for example, differentiate between *romana lingua* and *lingua rustica / uulgaris / inerudita* (Lawrence & Edwards 1927), and yet

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<sup>458</sup> For example, the Glasgow ‘patter’ is famously incomprehensible to outsiders, a fact played on in the BBC comedy series *Rab C Nesbitt*, whose comedic value often stemmed from the fact that the lead characters were purposefully unintelligible to audiences.

<sup>459</sup> For example, German *Sprache* and *Rede*; Spanish *lengua* and *habla*; Polish *mowa* and *język*, Basque *hizkuntza* and *mintzaldi*.

it is referring to what is undoubtedly, in the case of *lingua rustica, uulgaris* and *inerudita*, primarily a spoken, rather than written, form. Similarly, the Council of Tours differentiates famously between *lingua romana et teudisca*; if *romana* refers to a variety of Latin and *teudisca* to a Germanic vernacular, then the latter certainly did not refer solely to a written heritage.

However, even in the ancient authors there appeared to have existed a general consensus that *sermo* referred most popularly to spoken language, often limited to conversation. A cursory glance at the Oxford Latin Dictionary, for example, shows that despite occasionally being used synonymously with *lingua*, *sermo* referred more frequently to spoken conversation.<sup>460</sup>

The monastic rules employ various words to imply speech, including the verbs *loquor*, *dico* and *fabulor*. There is, surprisingly, an absence of *parabalo*, which was to become one of the Romance etyma (It. *parlare*, Fr. *parler*). The normal nouns used to refer to the act of talking include *sermo*, *lingua*, *locutio* and *colloquio*. It is interesting to note that all of these terms, save *lingua*, were destined to be lost as unlearned etyma from the Romance vernaculars. Note also that by this period the term *oratio*, which had once meant ‘speech’, had undergone a semantic shift and was now used to denote ‘prayer’; likewise, *orare* had become wholly equitable with the Christian usage of ‘to pray’ (Löfstedt 1959: 72-73). However, later Latin still exhibited various ways in which to communicate the idea of the act

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<sup>460</sup> Especially *Auct. Her.* 3.13.23, “*sermo est oratio remissa et finitima cottidianae locutio*”. However, *sermo* could less frequently be used where *lingua* might be expected, as in *sermo Latinus*, e.g. Cicero *De Oratore* 3.11.42. *Oratio* most frequently referred to the idea of a public speech or talk.

of speech, as shown by the example in Leander of Seville: “*uirgo conscientiam tantum debet habere liberam, non uocem, non sermonem [...] sit mente apud Deum segura, uoce uero sermone atque aspectu humilis et uerecunda [...] memor sit Susannae castissimae, quae adulteris accusatoribus non respondit ore iustitiam, quam corde gerebat*”.<sup>461</sup>

An even more rhetorical element can be found in a short passage from the late-seventh-century *Life of Columba* by St. Aidan, which counts seven terms conveying the idea of speech: “*Quam cum ille duro ualde et stolido retentaret animo, sanctus ad eum loquutus hoc profatur modo [...] et hoc coram Bruideo rege dicens domum egressus regiam ad Nesam uenit fluium. De quo uidelicet fluio lapidem attollens candidum: ‘Signate’, ait [...] et hoc effatus uerbum consequenter intulit, inquiring [...]*”.<sup>462</sup>

What can be said concerning the use of the nouns in the monastic rules? As expected, *oratio* is used only in the sense of ‘prayer’, a semantic change that is typical of the later Latin. For example: “*Propriis autem temporibus oportet operari monachum, et propriis orationi lectionique incumbere*”;<sup>463</sup> *Primum discant uoluntates proprias superare, et nihil suo arbitrio uel minimum aliquid agere; nihil loqui nisi ad interrogata, et cogitationes de die in diem nascentes cum ieiunio et oratione expellere, et suo abbati nunquam celare*”;<sup>464</sup> “*Priusquam ad mensam conuenient, praecedat oratio*”.<sup>465</sup> *Colloquium* is used just twice in the monastic rules, once tautologically with *sermo*: “*Lasciuus, petulans et superbus, saepius suspendatur*

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<sup>461</sup> *De institutione uirginum* 7.

<sup>462</sup> *Life of Columba* 28.

<sup>463</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.6.

<sup>464</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

<sup>465</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 3.

*a cibo, et biduanis siue triduanis maceretur inediis, operisque adiectione conficiatur; sermone et colloquio castigetur”;*<sup>466</sup> “*Absque ullo solatio uel colloquio fratrum sedeat, nisi quem abbatis uel praepositi, cum eo praeceperit auctoritas ut loquatur”*.<sup>467</sup>

In themselves, these terms pose little problem. The important questions for this section are: in what ways is *sermo* employed and, does there exist, perhaps, a contrast between *sermo* and other nouns? Apart from *sermo*, *lingua* is also used frequently. Interestingly, however, *sermo* is more widely used than *lingua*, being employed seven times; *lingua*, meanwhile, is found only four times, and all of these are in the Rule of Isidore. *Sermo* is used in the following cases:

“*Unus tamen in medio residens, benedictione accepta, de Scripturis aliquid legat, caeteri uescentes tacebunt, lectionem attentissime audientes, ut sicut illis corporalis cibus refectionem carnis praestat, ita mentem eorum spiritualis sermo reficiat”;*<sup>468</sup>

“*Ipsi uero infirmi tanta sollicitudine admoneantur, ut de ore eorum nec quantuluscumque uel leuis sermo murmurationis procedat, sed in sua infirmitate cum hilari mente sine intermissione, et tulta murmurationis occasione, et uera cordis compunctione, semper Deo gratias agant”;*<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 14.

<sup>467</sup> *Common Rule* 14.

<sup>468</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 9.2.

<sup>469</sup> *Common Rule* 7.

“Lasciuus, petulans et superbus, saepius suspendatur a cibo, et biduanis siue triduanis maceretur inediis, operisque adiectione conficiatur; sermone et colloquio castigetur”,<sup>470</sup>

“Cuiusque tanta debet sermonis et uitae consonantia esse, ut id quod docet uerbis, confirmet operibus sedulis, et bis acuto praecedent gladio, quidquid alios informat uerbo, iugi ipse gerat studio, ut nec sermonem operatio destruat, nec e contra operationem bonam sermo inconueniens frangat”,<sup>471</sup>

“Ter per omnem hebdomadam collecta facienda est, et regulae Patrum legendae, disserendum, uel a seniore uel a praeposito et castigatio ac sermo aedificationis proferenda ad fratres”.<sup>472</sup>

Lingua is used in the following examples: “Abstineat se etiam a furore, et a detractioe parcat monachus linguam”,<sup>473</sup> “a turpibus uerbis uel otiosis linguam auertat, atque indesinenter cor mundum labiaque exhibeat”,<sup>474</sup> “qui erga senioem linguam non represserit; qui lasciuus in lingua fuerit, [...] Haec igitur et his similia triduana excommunicatione emendanda sunt”.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 14.

<sup>471</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 19.

<sup>472</sup> Rule of Fructuosus 19.

<sup>473</sup> Rule of Isidore 3.2.

<sup>474</sup> Rule of Isidore 3.3.

<sup>475</sup> Rule of Isidore 17.1.

From these examples, it seems that in most cases *sermo* suggests clearly a daily spoken language, rather than an institutionalised and formulaic register. Arguably, however, so does *lingua*. In addition, in a couple of the examples from the *Rule of Isidore*, or the final example from the *Rule of Fructuosus*, *sermo* here is linked to the idea of ‘sermon’ more generally.

Perhaps a much clearer image can be gleaned from how Isidore uses the terms *sermo* and *lingua* in his *Etymologies*, book nine of which includes a discussion of the languages of the earth:

“*Linguarum diuersitas exorta est in aedificatione turris post diluuium. Nam priusquam superbia turris illius in diuersos signorum sonos humanam diuideret societatem, una omnium nationum lingua fuit, quae Hebrae uocatur; quam Patriarchae et Prophetae usi sunt non solum in sermonibus suis, uerum etiam in litteris sacris* [...] *Et sunt in obseruatione Graecae linguae eiusmodi certa discrimina; sermo enim eorum ita est dispertitus* [...] *Omnes autem Orientis gentes in gutture linguam et uerba conlidunt, sicut Hebraei et Syri. Omnes mediterraneae gentes in palato sermones ferunt, sicut Graeci et Asiani. Omnes Occidentis gentes uerba in dentibus frangunt, sicut Itali et Hispani. Syrus et Chaldaeus uicinus Hebraeo est in sermone, consonans in plerisque et litterarum sono* [...] *Philistaei ipsi sunt Palaestini, quia P litteram sermo Hebraeus non habet, sed pro eo Phi Graeco utitur*”

Isidore’s phrasing is important here. In the first instance, he contrasts clearly the speech of the Patriarchs and Prophets (“*in sermonibus suis*”) with their holy writings (“*in litteris sacris*”). He then talks about *linguae Graecae*, whose *sermo* he describes as *dispertitus*, ‘divided’. Earlier he had mentioned the Greek dialects, noting that *koinè* was

used by everyone, whilst Attic was used by all Greek authors. He notes that Doric was used by Egyptians and in Syria, but does not explain further the remaining two, Aeolic and Ionic. His specific mention of Attic as a literary register suggests that the others are spoken registers. The final part of the passage refers clearly to spoken language, since Isidore is talking about sounds, suggesting that the Greeks and *Asiani* spoke from their palate (“*in palato sermones ferunt*”), whilst Syrian and Chalcedonian are close to Hebrew in their speech (“*uicinus in Hebraeo est in sermone*”), mentioning the sound of their letters (“*sono litterarum*”).

It seems, then, that Isidore understood *sermo* to mean more generally the spoken language. This is important not only because it fits well with the idea of the monastic rules as being texts that were involved in oral recitation. It also suggests that the decision taken by Isidore to write *sermone plebeio uel rustico*, rather than in the *altius uel obscurius* style of some of his predecessors, demonstrates a conscious step to dissociate from a one style of writing and associate with another that was more reflective of the spoken language.

## **5.8 Language Standard and Choice of Linguistic Register**

There are various systems available to modern scholars to study the use of linguistic registers. One of the most useful is that posited by the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin’s view of language and literature was, in many ways, similar to those of the Formalist school (Dentith 1995: 22-40). Bakhtin proposed that language was ‘dialogic’, meaning that all language use was contextual and addressed to an audience (even if that audience were the speaker himself). However, language is in reality an amalgamation of

different idiolects, meaning that it is ‘heteroglossic’. With each speech act, then, a speaker identifies his audience and couches his language in the appropriate format, which is called his ‘speech genre’. Artistic expression, meanwhile, came from the ‘parodic’, or rather subversion or displacement of the normal constraints speech (Schmitz 2007).

This model is useful for various reasons. In the first instance, it recognises the contextual and varying nature of language use: “What we call by the abstract name of ‘language’ really is a variety of different levels: literary and everyday usage, different forms of language used in different professions and social strata, forms of language used in historical periods” (Schmitz 2007: 67). In the second instance, it recognises that the speech genre, in this case Isidore’s *sermo plebeius uel rusticus*, is a conscious choice selected over other options available: “Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure [...] These we may call speech genres” (quoted in Verkholantsev (2008: 133)).

It seems clear, then, that there was some recognition of register on the part of Isidore and an investigation begs the question of exactly what would have been ‘standard’ language for a writer such as him and Fructuosus; like Martin of Braga, who had to change his register of speech, they clearly wrote their monastic rules in a different type of language when compared to Classical Latin; the examples given in Chapter Four show that both were capable of writing in a high register of language, but chose not to. However, the fact that

their monastic rules were not written in this high register does not mean that this language would have been perceived as somehow ‘incorrect’ or ‘bad’ Latin. The problem of using terms such as ‘standard’ versus ‘non-standard’ is that they are multivalent; any author, or indeed speaker in general, will have as many standards of language as audience. In essence, whether a language is standard or not is entirely in the expectations and abilities of the recipient. Take, for example, the opening lines of Apuleius’s novel, *The Golden Ass*:

“*At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram auresque tuas benivolas lepido susurro permulceam — modo si papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam non spreveris inspicere — figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se rursus mutuo nexu refectas ut mireris [...] En ecce praefamur veniam, siquid exotici ac forensis sermonis rudis locutor offendero. Iam haec equidem ipsa vocis immutatio desultoriae scientiae stilo quem accessimus responderet*”.

Apuleius here makes reference to his *sermo Milesius*, to the Egyptian way of telling stories and to his exotic speech. Yet despite the apologia, Apuleius highlights well that the only reason it might sound strange is because it is not written in the register expected by the listeners (*exotici ac forensis sermonis*).

If the idea of language ‘standard’ is too vague for academic study, then the idea of ‘register’ is not. When early Christian authors use the various adjectives to describe their language, they are roughly synonymous: *simplex*, *plebeius*, *pedestrius*, *humilis* etc. These hint not at what might have once been called a ‘vulgar’ language, but rather one that remains unaffected by a heavily adorned literary style, widely intelligible and therefore more reflective of the spoken language than other, more unnaturally manipulated, texts. A couple

of points need to be made here. First, the use of an adjective such as *plebeius* by an author is not immediately synonymous with a lower-register of language; the concept of Christian *humilitas* and literary *topos* needs to be taken into account. Second, no text can ever be fully representative of the spoken language for the simple fact that there exist so many standards of speech; rather, in order to be understood a text must use features that are recognisable to all, although not necessarily used by all. At best, then, a written text can illustrate features that were perhaps common in spoken varieties or indicative of it, rather than be a true representation (Allies 2009).

Importantly, it is not the case that the authors of the monastic rules were writing in a language distanced from the classical norm because they did not know how to write in such a style. As such, the monastic rules were purposefully written in a lower register not through an inability to write in any other, but rather because of a choice to do so. This is an important differentiation because, like many other early Christian writings, the monastic rules were written to be understood by their audience. With regard to their language, then, it is suggested that the monastic rules are reflective to a large extent of the language that was expected to be spoken by their audience. This theme will become important in Chapter Six.

How, then, might both audience and author have viewed the language of the monastic rules? It is probable that they were recognised by both parties to be in a language that was not reflective of Classical Latin prose. Instead, they were written in a language of a relatively low-register, meaning that they lacked many of the manipulated aspects of higher-register literary Latin writing and were thus more in line with what might be expected from natural Latin speech of the period. However, the context of the texts means that this would not have

been seen as ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’ Latin, partly because there already existed an established tradition of writing in such a way and partly because it was reflective of daily speech habits. In the discussion, then, of linguistic consciousness in the monastic rules, it would seem clear that the authors would have been aware that they were not writing in a language that would now be termed as Classical Latin. However, this is not to say that they would have deemed the language to be somehow incorrect; rather, they would have probably recognised it to be a lower register of Latin, more akin to the spoken language and purposefully intelligible to the uneducated, but nevertheless still conforming to some sort of widely-recognised standard.

## **5.9 The Latin of the Monastic Rules**

It is often the case that discussions on the Latinity of later Latin texts focus on divergence. That is to say, they seek either to highlight the differences between later Latin and Classical Latin texts, or to demonstrate the presence of a language already displaying elements of Romance, and thus being distinct from Latin. To take the lead from Harris (1988: 2-3): “during the period between the collapse of the Empire and the emergence of the first Romance vernacular texts in various parts of Europe, one must envisage a situation in which this ever-present variation within Latin was accentuated as the language developed in ever more divergent ways in different localities”. This concentration on divergence has become commonplace and is in many ways perfectly understandable, an approach typical of pedagogical circumstances in particular. As Blaise (1994) remarked at the start of his manual on Christian Latin: “all students now study Latin starting from the time of the classical writers; so it is by referring to classical usage that the reader will find here what is at variance with it” (*ibid.*: xv); another wrote: “in this book [Medieval Latin] is treated as a series of divergences from Classical Latin” (Sidwell 1995: 2).

However, too much focus on divergence can be misguided. It leads to an overtly pragmatic approach to the subject, with works seeking out proactively facts with which to distance the language from its classical predecessor. Thus, many works merely cite examples of phenomena typical of later Latin, an exercise that can sometimes encourage neglect of the debate over the wider linguistic issues.<sup>476</sup> An even larger issue is that such a focus on divergence can often be misleading about the true extent of linguistic continuity between Classical and later Latin, and, indeed, Latin and Romance. Histories that concentrate merely on what makes related languages historically different from each other run the risk of ignoring issues of linguistic continuity and homogeneity, just as interesting and worthwhile in their own right. The traditional comparative method of language classification, which is in many respects reliant upon the *Stammbaum* model, has been shown to have areas of methodological weakness (Fox 1995: 122-128). Thus, defining and studying language individuality in the early medieval periods is to view very differently how their speakers may have viewed the situation. Problematically, linguistic classification does not necessarily bear relation to mutual intelligibility and *Austand* political processes of linguistic distancing and, in the modern world, national language planning, are often just as influential.

The two approaches to the history of Latin have been encapsulated by the most recent English-language histories. As with most histories, Clackson & Horrocks (2007) approach the language as a fixed entity with defined boundaries, from its earliest Indo-European origins until Late Antiquity. As such, the study focuses teleologically on Latin as a historical

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<sup>476</sup> For example Rettig (1963) and Carlton (1973) which, despite being comprehensive catalogues of linguistic features, nevertheless reveal very little regarding the sociolinguistic issues surrounding language change.

entity as understood from a modern perspective, and there is little contextual study of its history and development into Romance. On the other hand, Adams (2007) places Latin in its wider context as both a historical literary language and a spoken language that constituted dialect continua. Nevertheless, if works on the history of Latin are guilty of teleology, this is reflected amply in most works on the linguistic histories of vernacular languages. Indeed, most usually begin with the first evidence for a language, and perhaps with an introductory paragraph or two to its Latin origins before that, but normally little else.

In this respect it is important to highlight initially that there are numerous instances where the Latinity of the monastic rules both differs and is similar to that typical of Classical Latin. It is not the intention here to provide a complete catalogue of such features; fuller investigations for other texts of the same period are available, which share similar features (for example: Garvin (1946); van Uytfanghe (1976); Rose (2004)). However, a brief review of some of the most interesting features will be useful. It is important to express that the presence of these features in the Latin of the monastic rules does not suggest that they are specific features of later Latin. The problem of the ‘Classical gap’ should always be accounted for, as well as the fact that the often archaic and codified Latin of classical authors means that features that may have been common in the spoken language were masked in the written language.

There is also no discussion here of phonological features. There are two reasons for this. First, such a study is done best through manuscript analysis, and this could be arguably an entirely new thesis in itself in order to do such a study justice. Second, phonological analyses are complex and it is very difficult to ascertain how reflective features of later

manuscripts in particular are of the speech of the time the text was composed originally. For these reasons, a study of phonological developments in the monastic rules has been avoided.

### 5.10 Verbal Morphology

Aspects of verbal morphology relating to synthetic passive and deponent verbs will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six. However, it is sufficient to note here that the Latin of the monastic rules continues to employ correctly the Classical Latin verbal conjugations, including the use of synthetic forms where Romance, and other later Latin texts, might expect analytic alternatives. This includes the constant employment of the synthetic future throughout the texts, whereas the Romance future is normally understood to be the result of an analytic periphrasis.<sup>477</sup> The Classical gerundive is also used, rather than a periphrastic formation as was to become established in Romance. Compare, for example: “*nec quaerendum est si diues an pauper, seruus an liber, iuuenis an senex, rusticus an eruditus*”,<sup>478</sup> with a construction found in a contemporary Hiberno-Latin text: “*necesse habuit fluium transire Nesam*”,<sup>479</sup> or even that found in Martin of Braga: “*necesse me fuit ingentem praeteritorum temporum gestorumque siluam breuiato tenuis compendii sermone contingere*”.<sup>480</sup> Structures such as the Classical future participle are also found: “*Et quod per*

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<sup>477</sup> The Latin future, which hypothetically underwent a shift from synthesis to analysis and back to synthesis: Latin *dabo*, ‘I will give’, became \**dare habeo*, which gives modern Romance, e.g. Spanish *daré*. The use of a periphrastic construction to indicate futurity, especially with verbs of volition or need, is fairly common, such as found in Rumanian (Sala 2005: 119) and Modern Greek. The replacement of the Latin future form with a Romance one has been subject to relatively in-depth studies (Fleischman 1982: 41; Coleman 1971 and 1976; Gratwick 1972; Clackson & Horrocks 1997: 62).

<sup>478</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.

<sup>479</sup> *Adomnan Life of Columba* 28.

<sup>480</sup> *De correctione rusticorum* 1.

*singulos menses expensum fuerit, per omnium capita mensium rationem suo abbati faciat, et hoc cum tremore, et simplicitate, et uera cordis humilitate, tanquam redditurus Domino rationem*”;<sup>481</sup> “*Cumque hac se professione astrinixerit, subiiciatur supradictis, per bonorum operum industriam quandoque Domino placiturus.*”<sup>482</sup> In short, the verbal morphology used in the monastic rules offers very little to set it apart from Classical Latin. This includes the use of forms that were to be lost eventually from Romance.

### 5.11 Prepositional Syntax

As with many later Latin texts, there is an extended use of prepositions in lieu of inflected desinence alone. Many of these reflect systems that would be manifested eventually in Romance (Penny 2002: 241-245). Of all the prepositions available in Classical Latin, *de* undergoes perhaps the most significant semantic changes. In later Latin, it came to function frequently as a possessive, or to imply source or origin, replacing *ex* and *ab*. This is sometimes found also in Classical Latin, but is rare.<sup>483</sup> This is the form that would survive into Romance (Sp. *de*, It. *di* etc.), reflecting the almost complete disappearance of *ab* and *ex* by the time of Old Spanish, for example. The more classical usage of *de* + ablative, ‘concerning’, is attested amply, usually in chapter headings: *De rebus monasterii, De orationibus* etc.

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<sup>481</sup> *Common Rule* 11.

<sup>482</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 21.

<sup>483</sup> For example, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 4.30, “*et tota illa prolata de formonsitatis aemulatione fabula*”.

However, it is also found where Classical Latin might expect *ab* or *ex* to express provenance. For example: “*Grande malum de Aegypto exire*”,<sup>484</sup> “*Quod uerbum si de ore eius effugerit, poenitentiae subiacebit*”,<sup>485</sup> “*Hi qui de paupertate in monasterio conuertuntur non sunt despiciendi ab eis qui saeculi diuitias reliquerunt*”,<sup>486</sup> “*Satisfactio delinquentium haec est: in officio fratribus constitutis, peracto poenitentiae tempore, uocatus is qui excommunicatus est, soluet statim cingulum, humique extra chorum prostratus iacebit, agens poenitentiam, quousque expleatur celebritas, cumque iussus fuerit ab abbate de solo surgere, ingrediensque in chorum, data oratione pro eo ab abbate, et respondentibus cunctis amen, surgat*”. Note that the last two examples both attest the continuance of *ab*, ‘by’. The use of *ex* is also still attested, despite coming to be replaced in Romance by *de*. For example: “*Qui ex paupertate ad monasterium ueniant, non extollantur in superbiam, quia se ibi aequales aspiciunt iis qui aliquid in saeculo uidebantur*”.<sup>487</sup> Here, *ex* is being used in exactly the same sense as the example given above: “*Hi qui de paupertate in monasterio conuertuntur non sunt despiciendi ab eis qui saeculi diuitias reliquerunt*”.

The monastic rules, then, show that *de* has undergone the changes associated with later Latin, primarily coming to largely replace *ab* and *ex* in some instances. However, it seems that although *ex* and *ab* would be eventually lost in Romance, this has not yet occurred, and the examples taken from the monastic rules show the fluid nature with which they continue to be used.

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<sup>484</sup> *Common Rule 5.*

<sup>485</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 11.*

<sup>486</sup> *Rule of Isidore 4.*

<sup>487</sup> *Rule of Isidore 4.*

Throughout the monastic rules, *ad* is employed frequently to mean ‘to, towards’. This is not strictly a later usage, since Classical Latin also uses the construction alongside the ablative, or *in* + accusative. In the monastic rules, however, *in* is used generally only to express geographical position, and inflection alone is not used to signify movement towards somewhere. This suggests that *ad* had by this period won out over *in* for the purposes of expressing movement towards somewhere, whilst *in* had undergone semantic restriction. Such a change is reflected in the Romance reflexes.

An interesting use of *ad* also occurs in the phrase: “*Speciosam et uariam supellectilem monachum habere non licet, cuius stratus erit storea et stragulum, pelles lanatae duae, galnapis quoque, et facistergium, geminusque ad caput puluillus”.*

The ‘double pillow’ (“*geminusque puluillus*”) is described as being for the head (“*ad caput*”). *Ad* is used here where Classical Latin might expect the dative (‘*capito*’) or *pro* + ablative; it is well attested that *ad* in later Latin also takes on the role of the genitive and dative (Clackson & Horrocks 2008: 277).

The pronominal usage of the monastic rules therefore demonstrates well some of the changes that are reflected not only in contemporary later Latin texts, but also changes that would take hold in Romance.

## 5.12 Pronominal Syntax

Pronouns, in particular *ille*, often lend a sense of tautology. In Classical Latin, their use is sometimes attributed to emphasis, and in Chapter Four it was suggested that this may

be a result of technical language. However, it is possible that their employment may also signal their use as a definite article. Classical Latin lacked both a definite and indefinite article and the Romance reflexes appear following the grammaticalization of demonstrative pronouns such as *ille* or *ipse*, suggesting that these were favoured in the spoken language throughout the Latin-speaking world. The use of pronouns in the monastic rules is often not only tautologous, but sometimes appears very similar to how it is used in Romance. For example: “*Ille enim potior, qui Deo proximior, iudicandus est*”;<sup>488</sup> “*Quod si aliquis, ut diximus, ex ore eorum murmurationis processerit scrupulus, ab abbate increpentur, et ne talia supradicta facere praesumant, admoneantur, ita ut ille eos accuset, qui hoc ministerium iniunctum habet*”;<sup>489</sup> “*Si quando abbas uel praepositus alicubi proficiscuntur, ille ferat fratrum sollicitudinem, qui est praepositus secundus in ordine*”;<sup>490</sup> “*Et ipse cellarius eis pedes et uestimenta lauet*”;<sup>491</sup> “*Omnem uero monasterii substantiam praepositi accipient dispensandam; et si quispiam captiuorum aliquid alimenti petierit abbatem, aut pro quacumque causa, ipse praepositus hoc prouideat*”.<sup>492</sup>

### 5.13 Conjunctions

It is well-attested that the employment and semantics of the various Latin conjunctions undergo various changes in later Latin. In the first instance, many disappear and are not found in Romance; out of all the Latin particles that possessed a disjunctive function (*aut, uel, an, siue, seu* and the enclitic – *ue*), *aut* was the principal survivor into

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<sup>488</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 22.

<sup>489</sup> *Common Rule* 7.

<sup>490</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 24.

<sup>491</sup> *Common Rule* 6.

<sup>492</sup> *Common Rule* 11.

Romance, with only a few exceptions such as those found in Provençal *sivals* and Romanian *sau* (Meyer-Lübker 1935: 9117a). Indeed, it is the sole etymon of Castilian *o* and prevocalic *u*, Catalan *o*, Portuguese and Galician *ou* (Penny 2002: 245). Similarly, out of all the Latin copulatives (*et*, *atque*, *ac* and the enclitic *-que*), only *et* survived. However, a simple frequency count of copulatives in the monastic rules demonstrates a tendency towards *et*, suggesting that its predominance in Romance was already underway:

	<i>ET</i>	<i>ATQUE</i>	<i>AC</i>	<i>-QUE</i>
<i>Rule of Isidore</i>	34	21	8	29
<i>Rule of Fructuosus</i>	185	21	12	31
<i>Common Rule</i>	440	5	8	7

The disjunctive is a particularly interesting example. The particle *uel* appears frequently in Latin writing of all genres and in all periods, and is typically defined by its relationship with *aut* (Kohlmann 1898; Kirk 1921; Weston 1933): *aut* is normally promoted as an exclusive disjunctive (i.e. a choice between *p* or *q*, but not both), and *uel* as an inclusive disjunctive (i.e. a choice between *p* or *q*, or perhaps both; see Kennedy (1879: 318); Ernout & Thomas (1972: 446); Weston (1933: 47)).

Commentators from the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth century began to note an expanded semantic use of *uel* in later Latin texts as a copulative, synonymous with *et*. Bonnet (1890: 315) notes the phenomenon in the works of Gregory of Tours; Löfstedt (1911: 198) informed that: “im Spätlatein [...] eine disjunktiv Partikel statt einer kopulativen eintreten kann”, and (1959: 21): “in Late Latin *uel* is often in the sense of *et*”; Leumann & Hofmann (1925: 676) highlight the distinction, stating simply: “im Spätlatein ist *uel* = *et*”, and quoting various examples; Souter (1949: 437) illustrates how *uel...uel* = *ET...ET*; De Climent (1963: 114) notes that, “en el latín decadente asume con frecuencia una acepción copulativa, y por tanto *uel=et*, *uel...uel= et...et*”. The reasons behind this change have been explored more fully than is possible here in Allies (2008). However, sufficient to say that by the seventh century, *uel* possessed three functions: an exclusive disjunctive particle; an inclusive disjunctive particle; and a copulative particle. This polysemy led to a greatly increased frequency in its use, a feature that is now accepted as indicative of later Latin.

This phenomenon is seen in the monastic rules, which make use of both *aut* and *uel* as follows:

	<i>AUT</i>	<i>UEL</i>
<i>Rule of Isidore</i>	50	81
<i>Rule of Fructuosus</i>	37	74
<i>Common Rule</i>	35	29

Examples of *uel* as an inclusive disjunctive include: “*Uiuant enim solis oleribus, et leguminibus, raroque pisciculis fluuiialibus, uel marinis*”;<sup>493</sup> “*Post uespertinum autem, congregatis fratribus, oportet, uel aliquid meditari, uel de aliquibus diuinae lectionis quaestionibus disputare*”;<sup>494</sup> “*Cum uenerit quispiam cum uxore uel filiis paruulis, id est, infra septem annos, placuit sanctae communi regulae ut tam parentes quam filii in potestatem se tradant abbatis, qui et ipse abbas omni sollicitudine quid obseruare debeant rationabiliter eis disponat*”.<sup>495</sup>

Examples of *uel* as an exclusive disjunctive include: “*Quilibet ex monachis ieiunium soluere non praesumat, nec priusquam in commune reficiant cum caeteris, uel postquam refecerint*”;<sup>496</sup> “*Qui autem ad mensam tardius uenerit, aut poenitentiam agat, aut ieiunus ad suum opus, uel cubile recurrat*”.<sup>497</sup>

Examples of *uel* as a copulative: “*Autumni uero uel hiemis tempore, usque ad tertiam legant, usque ad nonam operentur*”;<sup>498</sup> “*In Dominicis uero diebus, uel festiuitatibus martyrum, solemnitatis causa singulae superadjiciendae sunt missae*”;<sup>499</sup> “*Cum ita quarto fuerit tentatus, et in humilitate fuerit probatus, et fortis fuerit ut ferrum inuentus, postmodum ecclesiam ingrediatur, et cingulum in manibus gestans, abbatis uel fratrum pedibus cum lacrymis prouoluatur*”.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 3.*

<sup>494</sup> *Rule of Isidore 6.3.*

<sup>495</sup> *Common Rule 6.*

<sup>496</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 3.*

<sup>497</sup> *Rule of Isidore 9.1.*

<sup>498</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 4.*

<sup>499</sup> *Rule of Isidore 6.4.*

<sup>500</sup> *Common Rule 14.*

From these examples, it can be seen that the use of conjunctions in the monastic rules is reflective of changes that took place elsewhere in later Latin. The reason behind these changes has been explored fully in Allies (2008), where it was suggested that the semantic expansion of *uel* was due to its flexibility as an inclusive disjunctive, whose polysemy would lead eventually to its disappearance from Romance.

#### 5.14 Quod

Another conjunction of interest is *quod*, which in later Latin acquires a range of semantic expansions beyond the Classical Latin ‘because of’. The polysemous nature of *quod* in later Latin was noted by Herman (2000: 90), who called it a “universal conjunction”. He continued to remark on its following possible meanings in later Latin: *quod* of purpose (‘in order that’); *quod* with a consecutive meaning (‘so...that’); *quod* as a comparative (‘as’); *quod* as a temporal meaning (‘when’) (*ibid.*: 91). Finally, *quod* meant simply ‘that’, as in the phrase *dico quod*. In this way, it was synonymous with later Romance reflexes such as Sp. *que* and It. *che*.

The monastic rules demonstrate a wide ranging employment of *quod*. By far the most frequent are examples of the ‘what-*quod*’, which would survive into Romance but is not found in Classical Latin: “*Abbas uel praepositus diuinis semper officiis et uigiliis intersint, et prius ipsi agant quod alios doceant*”;<sup>501</sup> “*Iste quod habet tribuat, et communicet, in quantum potest, non ex tristitia, aut necessitate*”;<sup>502</sup> “*Comedant sine querela quidquid eis appositum fuerit; uestiant quod acceperint*”.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 2.*

<sup>502</sup> *Rule of Isidore 21.*

<sup>503</sup> *Common Rule 12.*

## 5.16 Vocabulary

The vocabulary of the monastic rules is noteworthy in particular because a language's lexis is one of its most tangible elements. The presence of a specifically Christian lexicon more generally has already been attested, and is one of the most tangible features of Christian Latin. Moreover, the monastic rules employ vocabulary that would not be expected outside of specialised monastic circles. There are numerous lexical items used in the monastic rules that reflect a Christian Latin, meaning that they are Christian neologisms, or else have undergone a semantic expansion to take on a meaning that is not found in Classical Latin. For example:

Vocabulary associated with ecclesiastical hierarchy: *apostolus*, 'apostle': "*De talibus Apostolus ait [...]*";<sup>504</sup> "*Monachus semper operetur manibus suis ita, ut quibuslibet uariis opificum artibus laboribusque studium suum impendat, sequens Apostolum, qui dicit [...]*";<sup>505</sup> *episcopus*, 'bishop': "*Si aut a principe, uel episcopo sperantur, pro benedictione et obedientia degustare non metuant, seruantes apud se de reliquo continentiam consuetam*";<sup>506</sup> *frater*, 'brother, monk': "*Quisquis frater pro qualibet negligentia uel reatu arguitur, uel excommunicatur, et tamen humiliter ueniam petit, uel confitetur lacrymabiliter, congruam ei remissionis et indulgentiae medelam tribuatur*";<sup>507</sup> *soror*, 'sister, nun': "*Proinde ergo cum tali castitate fratres et sorores uiuere debeant, ut non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram*

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<sup>504</sup> *Common Rule* 18.

<sup>505</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 5.

<sup>506</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 3.

<sup>507</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 9.

*hominibus bonum testimonium habeant, et superstitibus sequacibus sanctitatis exemplar relinquant*”.<sup>508</sup>

Vocabulary associated with Christian ritual and mythology: *ecclesia*, ‘church’: “*Qui nocturno delusus phantasmate fuerit, tempore officii in sacrario stabit, nec audebit eadem die ecclesiam introire*”;<sup>509</sup> *conuerto*, ‘to convert’: “*Qui non rigida intentione conuertuntur, cito aut superbiae morbo, aut uitio luxuriae subduntur*”;<sup>510</sup> *psalmus*, ‘psalm’: “*Ad orationes diurnas, qui ad primum psalmum non occurrerit, introire in oratoriu cum caeteris non audeat, sed poenitentiae delegabitur*”;<sup>511</sup> *pascha*, ‘Easter’: “*Ab octauo decimo Kalendas Octobris usque ad Pascha sollicite ieiunandum est, et in Quadragesima uino et oleo penitus abstinendum*”;<sup>512</sup> *pentecoste*, ‘Pentecost’: “*A Pentecoste usque ad octauo decimo Kalendas Octobris interdiana ieiunia retinenda sunt*”;<sup>513</sup> *gehenna*, ‘hell’: “*Solent enim nonnulli ob metum gehennae in suis sibi domibus monasteria componere*”;<sup>514</sup> *diabolus*, ‘devil, Satan’: “*Quod si minime fecerit, non se putet effugere diabolum*”;  
*christus*, ‘Christ’: “*nam et multi antiquorum Patrum his diebus in eremo abstinuisse, nec aliquando ieiunia soluisse, leguntur, nisi tantum diebus Dominicis propter resurrectionem Christi*”<sup>515</sup>; *dominus*, ‘Lord, God’: “*Nocturnum tempus peculiaribus orationibus et sacris uigiliis maxima ex parte ducendum est, propter lucifugas daemones, seruorum Domini deceptores*”;  
*responsorium*, ‘responsory’: “*In tertia, sexta, uel nona tres psalmi dicendi sunt, responsorium unum, lectiones ex Ueteri*

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<sup>508</sup> *Common Rule* 17.

<sup>509</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 13.

<sup>510</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 4.

<sup>511</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 17.

<sup>512</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 17.

<sup>513</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 17.

<sup>514</sup> *Common Rule* 1.

<sup>515</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 10.

*Nouoque Testamento duae, deinde laudes, hymnus atque oratio*"; *excommunicatio*, 'excommunication': "*Si biduana uel triduana fuerit excommunicatio eius, mittat senior qui eum excommunicauit unum de maioribus, quem probatum habet, qui eum uerbis contumeliosis increpet, quod non ob religionis uenerit occasionem, nec pro Christi amore, nec gehennae pauore, sed simplicium fratrum facere disturbance*".

Vocabulary associated with Christian world view: *haeresis*, 'heresy': "*Inde surrexit haeresis et schisma, et grandis per monasteria controuersia*";<sup>516</sup> *saeculum*, 'the secular world': "*Ut presbyteri saeculares non praesumant absque episcopo, qui per regulam uiuit, aut consilio sanctorum Patrum, per uillulas monasterium construere*";<sup>517</sup> *uana gloria*, 'vain glory': "*Uana gloria, superbia, contemptusque turgidus, et effrenatae locutionis usus abdicetur ab omnibus*";<sup>518</sup> *militia Christi*, 'army of Christ': "*Qui relicto saeculo ad militiam Christi pia et salubri humilitate conuertuntur, omnia sua primum aut indigentibus diuidant, aut monasterio conferant*".<sup>519</sup>

Notwithstanding a more general Christian vocabulary, there exist also lexical features that distinguish the monastic rules as technical literature, if by this term is interpreted the use of vocabulary specific to the intended audience and not in common currency, or perhaps even understood, outside this audience. Such terms found in the monastic rules include:

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<sup>516</sup> *Common Rule 1.*

<sup>517</sup> *Common Rule 2.*

<sup>518</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 8.*

<sup>519</sup> *Rule of Isidore 4.1.*

*coenobion*, ‘monastery’: “*Ipsa quoque collatio erit uel pro corrigendis uitiiis, instruendisque moribus, uel pro reliquis causis ad utilitatem coenobii pertinentibus*”;<sup>520</sup> *abbas*, ‘abbot’: “*Abbas interea eligendus est in institutione sanctae uitae duratus*”;<sup>521</sup> *hebdomadarius*, ‘weekly elected reader’: “*cibi tamen quibus reficiantur, teneri et molles ex industria ab hebdomadariis coquantur*”;<sup>522</sup> *praepositus*, ‘prior’: “*Abbas uel praepositus e propriis semper coenobii monachis eligantur*”;<sup>523</sup> *iunior* and *senior*, ‘junior and elder monk’: “*Iuniores senes et corpore non nimium inbecilles ex se ipsos ministros religant, qui tam senioribus reliquis quam etiam et aegrotis uicissim ministrent et languentibus suo obsequio pietatis et beniuolentiae opus inpendant*”;<sup>524</sup> *decanus*, ‘dean, monk in charge of groups of ten other monks’: “*Quod si in aliquo quae diximus deprehensi fuerint, continuo ab ipso suo decano uirga emendentur*”;<sup>525</sup> *monasterium*, ‘monastery’: “*Conuersum de saeculo Patrum decreta docent non suscipiendum in monasterio*”;<sup>526</sup> *cellula*, ‘monastic cell’: “*Nullus peculiariter separatam sibi ad habitandum cellulam expetat*”.<sup>527</sup>

The lists above are by no means exhaustive, but intend to demonstrate the presence of a Christian lexis. Some of the words, such as *saeculum* and *dominus*, are not Christian neologisms, but rather Classical Latin words that have taken on a new semantic value. Other words, such as *psalmus* and *gehenna* are lexical borrowings, typically borrowed from Greek or Hebrew. All of these demonstrate the monastic rules to be texts whose Latinity was

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<sup>520</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 7.1.

<sup>521</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 2.1.

<sup>522</sup> *Common Rule* 8.

<sup>523</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 19.

<sup>524</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 23.

<sup>525</sup> *Common Rule* 6.

<sup>526</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 10.

<sup>527</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 19.2.

influenced by Christianity. Moreover, there are certain terms that are specific to a monastic context, such as *abbas*, *praepositus* and *hebdomadarius*. These terms are unlikely to be found outside ascetic circles, and so demonstrate the specialised audience of the monastic rules.

### 5.17 Three Interesting Borrowings: Paximatium, Monophagia and Saio

One of the most interesting features associated with the lexis of the monastic rules is the presence of loan words. Of course, many of the words typical of Christian Latin are borrowed from Greek, or sometimes from a Semitic language via Greek. This notion is far from novel. However, there are a couple of lexical items that merit particular attention. The first is *paximatium*, ‘daily bread’, a term borrowed from the Greek *παξιμάδιον*, ‘a small loaf of bread’. It is used twice in the Common Rule: “*Cum excommunicatur aliquis pro culpa, mittatur solitarius in cellam obscuram, in solo pane et aqua, ut in uespera, post coenam fratrum, medium accipiat paximatium, et non ad satietatem aquam, et hoc ab abbate exsufflatum, non sanctificatum*”,<sup>528</sup> “*Et insuper uix tribus mensibus per pleraque monasteria abundaretur, si sola quotidiana fuissent paximatia in hac prouincia plus omnibus terris laboriosa*”.<sup>529</sup> Cassian reports that amongst some of the Desert Fathers, this was part of the daily food allowance for a monk.<sup>530</sup> This is a rare word found primarily in Cassian and only a few times elsewhere. In this sense, then, the term *paximatium* is a very technical one, and is both a Greek borrowing and one that is peculiar to a monastic experience.

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<sup>528</sup> *Common Rule 14.*

<sup>529</sup> *Common Rule 9.*

<sup>530</sup> For example, *Institutes* 4.14, “And although each one of them may bring in daily by his work and labour so great a return to the monastery that he could out of it not only satisfy his own moderate demands but could also abundantly supply the wants of many, yet he is no way puffed up, nor does he flatter himself on account of his toil and this large gain from his labour, but, except two biscuits”.

The second is *monophagia*, ‘a single meal’. This union of two Greek words, μόνος + φαγεῖν, the aorist infinitive of ἐσθίω, ‘to eat’, is very rare in Latin sources.<sup>531</sup> It is found once in the Rule of Fructuosus: “*Ieiuniis ista oportet tempora obseruare, a Pascha usque ad Pentecostem reficiendum ad sextam est; et monophagia, idem conseruanda per diem*”.<sup>532</sup> It is found also in the *Appendix Probi*, which lists *monofagium* as a misspelling of *homfagium*, the latter coming from either ὀμφάκιον, ‘verjuice’, or ὀμοφαγία, ‘meat eaten raw’. In the Rule of Fructuosus, however, the use most probably refers to ‘a single meal’, and also in the *Appendix Probi* it seems that homophony led to a judgement of ‘misspelling’, when in reality they are two different terms (Powell 2007: 692).

The use of these two terms, *paximatium* and *monophagia*, is interesting because in the first instance it highlights well the Greek roots of the origin of much of the Christian Latin lexis. It seems clear that these Greek words would have been by now thoroughly Latinised, especially given that the audience of the monastic rules could probably not understand Greek. It also shows just how far such linguistic innovations could spread. The north-west peninsula existed on the edge of the then known world, but its literary culture was clearly receptive to influences from the wider world.

Notwithstanding Graecisms, another source of borrowing is Germanic, from which various words have remained in modern Romance. Other texts demonstrate a much higher frequency of Germanic loan-words than the Visigothic monastic rules; see, for example, the

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<sup>531</sup> The word can be found only rarely in the Brepolis library of Latin texts.

<sup>532</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 17.

analysis of Longobardic words in the early medieval Italian law codes by Everett (2003: 114-129). The presence of Germanic in the Iberian Peninsula has been discussed in Chapter Two. However, that the monastic rules do not contain such borrowings is probably due to their production in a primarily Latin-speaking environment and the fact that neologisms or borrowings were not needed to describe monastic phenomena; a language normally borrows out of need.

However, there does appear a particular word of interest, not found in Classical Latin: the term *saio*, *-onis*. This is attested twice in the Common Rule: first, in a simile suggesting that abbots should return to their monasteries, following a monthly meeting, “*tamquam a saionibus comprehensi*”,<sup>533</sup> second, suggesting that some monks, having left the monastery and returned to the secular world, proceed to “*iudices saeculares requirere et cum saionibus monasteria dissipare*”.<sup>534</sup> Souter (1949: 361) defines *saio*, *-onis* as “a Gothic public official responsible directly to the king”. It is a word of Gothic origin that suggested originally retainer of the king; by the fifth century, however, the term had undergone a semantic expansion and suggested a retainer of any lord. However, in seventh-century usage it had expanded even further, and in Visigothic texts can mean simply a judge or official (Wolfram 1990: 242). The word remained in currency in medieval Spanish, where the office of *saio* was a feature of judicial life. In itself, the presence of the word in the Common Rule does not suggest explicitly an Iberian origin, since it is also attested elsewhere during this period. However, the word is clearly indicative of later Latin, and was evidently in use in Iberia.

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<sup>533</sup> *Common Rule* 10.

<sup>534</sup> *Common Rule* 18.

## 5.18 Regionalisms

An interesting point of departure is the presence of lexical features that could be described as specifically Iberian. It is often remarked by modern observers how few references there are by Roman authors to the diversity of spoken Latin. Unfortunately, this is usually taken to imply that there was none. Modern linguistics teaches that this is considered highly unlikely, if not an impossibility; there is absolutely no reason why Latin should have been able to retain diatopic homogeneity over such vast distances. Instead, it is perfectly possible that the Romans did not write about the topic because it was considered to be of no interest. Those who were capable of observing and writing on such a theme would have been able to travel from one end of the empire to the other communicating only in their learned and educated Latin with other educated speakers. The average peasant from Galicia who might have found it difficult to understand the average peasant from Pannonia has unfortunately not left any records for posterity.

Adams (2007) has demonstrated recently to be incorrect the view that Latin was immutable, despite the fact that the homogeneity of written Latin shows it to have been *prima facie* resistant to substantial diatopic variation. He begins his study: “It has sometimes been thought paradoxical that the Latin of the Roman period seems to lack regional variations yet was able to generate in little more than a millennium a diversity of Romance tongues that are usually classified as different languages” (*ibid.*: xv). However, he continues throughout his study to demonstrate the presence of regionalisms, concluding that “we should get away from the idea that Latin was monolithic until a very late date, when some catastrophic event caused

it to ‘split up’, or that it only showed regional diversification from the Empire” (*ibid.*: 725). The neglect of such a topic is, however, the result of a wider scholarly trend.<sup>535</sup>

Nevertheless, whilst studies regarding regionalisms in Latin are relatively scarce, they can only ever achieve a certain amount of success, no matter what the sympathies of the author, due to the lacunose nature of the evidence. However, there is evidence that the Latin spoken in Iberia did possess regionalisms during the Roman period (Carnoy 1906; Adams 2007: 372-402). Most difficult to elucidate are phonological traits, although it seems clear that there did exist a ‘Spanish accent’. For example, Hadrian, born in Baetica, was laughed at whilst “*agrestius pronuntians*”;<sup>536</sup> the rhetor M. Porcius Latro could not unlearn his Spanish accent;<sup>537</sup> Aulus Gellius tells of a certain Antonius Julianus, who spoke “*Hispano ore*”.<sup>538</sup>

The most notable traits of Iberian Latin, however, are thought generally to have been archaic elements, or rather remnants of the language spoken by the soldiers during the conquest of some areas of the peninsula in the second century BC, which were later not used in the spoken language by the time of conquests elsewhere.<sup>539</sup> Apart from these forms that

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<sup>535</sup> “The issue of variation has until relatively recently been rather neglected within linguistic theory, which has been concerned with idealised synchrony” (McMahon 1994: 225).

<sup>536</sup> *Historia Augusta Hadriani* 3.1.

<sup>537</sup> Seneca *Conr.* 1 praef. 16.

<sup>538</sup> *Noctes Atticae* 19.9.2.

<sup>539</sup> These includes the adverb *demagis*, which has survived into Ibero-Romance and some Gallo-Romance dialects (> Sp. *demás*); Latin *cauus*, ‘hollow’, which has survived in elsewhere in Romance (> It. *cavo*), but in Ibero-Romance reflects an older phonology of \**couos* (Sp. *cueva*, Ptg. *cova*); Latin *gumia*, ‘glutton’, possibly an Umbrian word that survives only in Spanish *gomia*; on a similar note, Latin *comedo*, ‘glutton’, which survives solely in Spanish *comilón*; Latin *perna*, ‘upper part of a pig’s

are perhaps peculiar to the Iberian situation, there existed also lexical peculiarities that would have occurred naturally throughout the Empire. Substrate lexical inference is often the result of second-language acquisition, although also occurs for purposes of linguistic need. In Iberia, Celtic borrowings are the most popularly attested.<sup>540</sup>

However, the monastic rules display very few linguistic features that betray a peculiarly Iberian origin, such as words found solely in Iberia or of a known Iberian origin. If the list compiled by Adams (*ibid.*) is taken as a reference, none of the features mentioned by him as being Iberian regionalisms occur in the monastic rules. Nevertheless, although there may not be a great deal of vocabulary use that betrays an Iberian origin, much of the vocabulary is reflective of later Latin and, moreover, a lexis that would become manifest eventually in Romance. To give a few examples:

*platea*, ‘street, square’ (> Sp. *plaza*, Ptg. *praça*): “*Hi tales sicut de suis lucris, sic de nostris gratulant detrimentis; et quod non audierunt aduersum nos quid falsum proferant, omni contentione componunt, et quod non facientes cognoscimus, quasi in crimine deprehensi publice per plateas annuntiantes, defendunt*”.<sup>541</sup> This word is not a later Latin phenomenon, and is attested in Plautus and Terence, where it meant originally a street rather than strictly a

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leg’, which has been extended semantically in Ibero-Romance only to signify ‘leg’ more generally. It has been suggested that this is an old Latin military use dating from the Republic (Skutsch 1985: 463).

<sup>540</sup> For example, *arrugia*, ‘drainage ditch’; *balux*, ‘gold-dust’; *brisa*, ‘refuse of grapes after pressing’; *lausia*, ‘stone slab’; *paramus*, ‘plateau’; *ternagus*, ‘mining shaft’ etc. Many of the borrowed terms are of a technical register, describing mining practices that may not have been found elsewhere.

<sup>541</sup> *Common Rule 2.*

square.<sup>542</sup> It is also found intermittently, although rarely, in Classical Latin.<sup>543</sup> The reading here could be ‘street’, as translated by Barlow (1969: 181). Alternatively, it could be ‘square’, and the idea of ‘*publice ... annuntiantes*’ could be argued to reflect more a public square or gathering place, rather than a street per se. Given both its restricted use in Classical Latin and its survival into Romance, the use of *platea* in the monastic rule is perhaps evidence of its use in everyday language.

*manduco / comedo*, ‘to eat’ (> Sp. *comer*, It. *mangiare*). These are the two forms attested most popularly in the monastic rules. Since they were not the preferred forms in Classical Latin, their use here must assume that they were the dominant forms used in the spoken of the seventh century: “*Comedant sine querela quidquid eis appositum fuerit*”;<sup>544</sup> “*qui cum excommunicato locutus fuerit, orauerit, aut comederit [...] tridua excommunicatione emendanda sunt*”;<sup>545</sup> “*A sancto Pascha usque octauo Kalendas Octobris manducant per singulos dies quatuor uices*”;<sup>546</sup> “*Illi perierunt manna manducando, et isti in monasterio murmuratores Scripturas recitando. Illi manna manducando mortui sunt, et isti scripturas legendo et audiendo spirituali fame quotidie moriuntur*”;<sup>547</sup> “*Grande malum, de Aegypto exire, mare transuadasse, tympanum cum Moyse et Maria, Pharaone submerso, tenuisse, manna manducasse, et terram repromissionis non intrasse: malum peius, de Aegypto istius saeculi exire, mare baptismi cum poenitentiae amaritudine cotidie pergere, tympanum*

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<sup>542</sup> For example, Plautus *Trin.* 4.1, “[in hac habitasse platea dictum est Chrysidem](#)”.

<sup>543</sup> For example, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 4, “*iamque per plateas commeantem populi frequentes floribus sertis et solutis adprecantur*”.

<sup>544</sup> *Common Rule* 12.

<sup>545</sup> *Rule of Isidore* 17.1.

<sup>546</sup> *Common Rule* 6.

<sup>547</sup> *Common Rule* 5.

*pulsare, id est carnem cum Christo crucifigere, et manna, quod est coelestis gratia, manducare; et coelestis regionis terram non intrare.*<sup>548</sup>

*mulier, 'woman, wife' (> Sp. mujer, Ptg. mulher): "Mihi credite, non potest toto corde habitare cum Domino, qui mulierum saepe accessibus copulatur. Per mulierem quippe aucupatus est serpens, id est diabolus, primum nostrum parentem";<sup>549</sup> "et non matrem, non germanam, non uxorem, non filiam, non propinquam, non extraneam, non ancillam, non quaecunque genus mulierum uiris ministrare in infirmitate mandamus";<sup>550</sup> Nullus in praeterita castitate confidat, quia nec Dauide sanctior, nec Salomone poterit esse sapientior, quorum corda per mulieres deprauata sunt".<sup>551</sup> All of these examples come from the Common Rule, in which the Classical Latin *uxor*, 'wife', continues to be used alongside *mulier*. Although *mulier* is used in Classical Latin, its use is often subordinated to synonyms such as *uxor* and *femina*. Its use here four times is therefore perhaps reflective of its use in the spoken language.*

*germanus*, 'brother' (> Sp. *hermano*, Cat. *germà*). The Classical Latin *frater* in the monastic rules implies typically 'brother' in a monastic usage, and so it might be expected that a synonym is used to imply a fraternal relationship. The Ibero-Romance form comes from *\*fratre germanu*, 'brother who shares both parents' (Penny 2002: 14), although this form was apparently not used everywhere, since other Romance languages retained *frater*. The term occurs twice in the Common Rule and once in the *pactum* attached to it: "*Alius de*

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<sup>548</sup> *Common Rule 5.*

<sup>549</sup> *Common Rule 15.*

<sup>550</sup> *Common Rule 17.*

<sup>551</sup> *Common Rule 17.*

*genealogia, et de sua gente fatetur esse principes: alius de parentibus, alius de germanis, alius de cognatis, alius de fratribus et consanguineis, et idoneis*”;<sup>552</sup> “*et non matrem, non germanam, non uxorem, non filiam, non propinquam, non extraneam, non ancillam, non quaecunque genus mulierum uiris ministrare in infirmitate mandamus*”;<sup>553</sup> “*Si quis sane ex nobis contra regulam occulte cum parentibus, germanis, filiis, cognatis, uel propinquis, aut certe cum fratre secum habitante consilium de absente supradicto Patre nostro inierit, habeas potestatem in unumquemque qui hoc facinus tentauerit, ut per sex menses indutus tegmine raso aut cilicio, discinctus, et discalceatus, in solo pane et aqua, in cella obscura excommunicatus sit*”.<sup>554</sup> In one of these cases, the term is used alongside *frater*. This is possibly a case of synonymy, or possibly because it had some other meaning. It nevertheless still clearly indicates some sort of family relationship.

With regard to vocabulary, then, the monastic rules offer some interesting insights. First, they can be seen to be texts that are fully reflective of the period in which they were written. This includes the use of vocabulary associated in particular with Christianity, but also Germanic borrowings. Second, their language, which previously in this chapter had been argued to be reflective of the spoken register, shows many changes that are either indicative of later Latin prose more generally, or else reflective of changes that would eventually occur in Romance. Third, despite these phenomena, the Latinity of the monastic rules nevertheless has much in common with its classical counterparts, a detail that will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

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<sup>552</sup> *Common Rule 13.*

<sup>553</sup> *Common Rule 17.*

<sup>554</sup> *Pactum.*

## **5.20 Conclusions**

This chapter has demonstrated the utility of the monastic rules as linguistic documents in the investigation of issues relating to language use and language change in Visigothic Iberia. It has established that the texts can be taken as representative, at least to some extent, of the spoken language of the period in which they were written. The brief study of their Latinity has shown that on the one hand, they have much in common with Classical Latin, and issues of continuity between different stages of the Latin language should not be disregarded. On the other hand, they also reflect changes in the language that agree with the evidence of other studies of later Latin, as well as the linguistic evidence demonstrated by eventual changes in Romance.

## **Chapter Six: Latin or Romance? Latin Synthetic Passive and Deponent Verb**

### **Forms in the Monastic Rules**

*“Without widespread education, consciousness of the norms of classical Latin would no longer act as a brake on oral transmission. Besides the weakening of scholarly tradition and memory, two other forces will have fostered the break-up of Latin as a single language.*

*One is that all over its range, Latin had speakers who were in positions of influence but whose parents had grown up speaking something else, most often a Germanic language. The other stemmed from the breakdown of the centralised systematic administration and the rise of feudal society” (Ostler 2005: 308-309)*

#### **6.1 “No one knows exactly when it ceased to be Latin”:<sup>555</sup> Approaches towards Latin and Romance**

This chapter will investigate the employment of deponent and synthetic passive verb forms in the monastic rules. It will place the results within a wider analysis and understanding of language use and language change in the early medieval period. In particular, this will include an investigation of the Wright thesis. Previous theories of spoken Latin and its development into early Romance have been discussed elsewhere, and there is no need to reiterate them fully here (see instead, for example, Politzer 1949; Löfstedt 1959: 11-38; Väänänen 1963; Hall 1978; Herman 2000: 109-124). However, it will be useful to summarise the *status quaestionis* regarding this topic.

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<sup>555</sup> Williams (1962: 13).

Traditionally, approaches have tended to focus on a simple question, put forward famously by Lot (1932): *a quelle époque a-t-on cessé de parler latin?* In this sense, there existed always preponderance towards liminality, a date in which Latin stopped being Latin and became Romance. This is a theoretically difficult starting point, highlighted by Richter (1983) to be “une question mal posée”. Indeed, such a black and white approach ignores the sociolinguistic intricacies of language use and language change. Nevertheless, it has long been understood that the Romance languages descend from the spoken, rather than literary, Latin. Therefore, the problem of the Latin to Romance transformation was one of proximity between two different, and perhaps increasingly divergent, registers of the spoken and written language. Romance was born when the two became so distanced as to be no longer mutually intelligible.

This ‘two-norm’ theory provided a framework for the ‘split’ between written Latin and spoken Romance (Wright 1982: 1-4). However, the chronology of this process divided scholars: on the one hand, some believed that such a division occurred only after the collapse of a centralised Roman government, implying a large degree of homogeneity during the Roman period; on the other hand, there were those who believed that such a distinction could be made from a much earlier date, dating possibly from the institutionalisation of the Latin literary language itself in the mid-Republic. These have been termed respectively as the ‘*thèse unitaire*’ and the ‘*thèse différentielle*’ (Väänänen 1982).

The two-norm theory found an advocate in the concept of diglossia. Diglossia is “the state of affairs in which two quite distinct languages or language varieties are spoken in a single community, with a high degree of specialization between the two, so that each variety

is perceived as appropriate for certain functions” (Trask 2000: 92). These varieties are normally divided into High and Low registers, each with a well-defined remit of usage. It was proposed initially by Ferguson (1959) in relation to registers of a single language (‘classic diglossia’), adopted subsequently by many scholars, and then later expanded by Fishman (1967) to include two or more distinct languages (‘extended diglossia’, or rather, ‘diglossia with bilingualism’). Within such a schema, written Latin was perceived therefore as “[a] literary language, in the strict sense of the term, [a] conventional medium for the expression of literature [...] it is artificial; it is a conscious selection from the whole resources of the language, based (normally) on the usage of one region and one class” (Vlasto 1986: 344). In this way, the artificial and codified written language was distinct from the day-to-day spoken language, which was subject to diachronic, diatopic and sociological change and variation.

Diglossia is often posited as a useful term for the period when Medieval Latin existed alongside the various vernacular languages in Europe, and in this situation it functions well. However, diglossia also poses various methodological problems, especially when dealing with situations of classic diglossia. First, most speakers will employ various registers of language on complex scales of sociolinguistic register, depending on their situation. Linguistic situations are therefore often too complicated to explain away with a strict dichotomy of High and Low usage. Second, the understanding of High and Low registers of language often depends on a speaker’s perception of these registers. Therefore, a High register for one speaker may not necessarily be a High register for another. Third, although diglossia functions as a potential model for language use, it cannot help to explain its diachronic development. For example: how close were spoken and written Latin in the Classical period? To what extent could a non-educated native Latin speaker contemporary

with Vergil have fully understood the language of the Aeneid? When dealing with language change over such a large geographical area, one must also take into account whether these changes occurred at steady paces, or whether they varied depending on region and time period. Diglossia, therefore, is a useful schema, but one that answers few questions.

The topic of language change in the early medieval period has been revitalised over the past few years, largely on the basis of two scholars: Michel Banniard and Roger Wright. Their respective theories will be discussed below.

## **6.2 The Thesis of Michel Banniard**

The work of the French scholar Banniard (1990, 1992) remains relatively little talked of in English-language scholarship, or else has received rather negative reviews (for example, O'Donnell 1995). Banniard's theory relies on the two-norm schema, and advocates the *thèse unitaire*, i.e. a late and rapid transformation from Latin into Romance in the late-eighth century, a period he noted for the "abandon de la compétence passive" (1992: 241). The reason why this was able to occur, according to Banniard, lies in the distinction between 'active competence' in a language, roughly synonymous with idiolect and meaning a speaker's daily ability to use the language, and 'passive competence', meaning a speaker's ability to understand aspects of the language used by other speakers that are not necessarily within his own linguistic competence or common usage (Banniard 1995: 703-704). It is Banniard's view that throughout the Roman and post-Romance world, active competence may have been subject to sociolinguistic variation, but the spoken registers were nevertheless sufficiently homogeneous as to permit a state of general passive competence between

speakers until the eighth century: “Les rapports entre la langue parlée et la langue écrite ne furent pas si relâchés que l’une et l’autre aient cessé d’appartenir au même diasystème (que j’appelle le latin parlé tardif – LPT) avant le VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle” (1992: 238).

Banniard distinguished three critical stages of communication: ‘vertical’ communication referred to that between an author and their (illiterate) audience; ‘horizontal’ communication referred to that between writers of different regions; a third state referred to vertical communication between an author and an (illiterate) audience outside their primary target. The beginnings of Romance, for Banniard, could be traced back to when there was a rupture in passive competence within vertical communication (for active competence was deemed to have occurred some centuries before), an event which he thought to have occurred in the eighth and ninth centuries in Iberia. Banniard draws heavily on the literary culture of early Christianity and its debates on audience intelligibility. He deems that writers such as Augustine, Isidore and Gregory of Tours expected their Latin to be fully understood by its audience, even if this understanding functioned on a purely passive level.

### **6.3 The Thesis of Roger Wright**

How were written texts used in an environment where the spoken language was different, if not increasingly divergent from, the spoken language of the audience? Banniard claims that the written and spoken varieties, at least in the seventh century, were sufficiently similar to mean that there was no problem. However, approaches to this question have been transformed in recent decades by a school of thought led by Roger Wright (especially 1982, 2002). The Wright thesis is one of the most important for the study of later Latin and the

early medieval spoken language of the twentieth century, not only for understanding how a change from Latin to Romance might have occurred, but more importantly also for understanding how texts were used in such a context. The Wright thesis has been widely lauded in Anglophone scholarship, although this is not to say that it is without criticism (Quilis Merín 1999: 169-228). Modern literature shows the danger that some scholars have come to accept the Wright thesis as fact, as though the problems of language in the early Middle Ages were now a virtual closed book.<sup>556</sup>

Wright's basic thesis is that in pre-Carolingian communities there existed no conceptual distinction between Latin and Romance and that everyone spoke a regionalised dialect of the vernacular; those who had access to education learnt how to write in an often archaic way, not necessarily reflective of their speech habits, for example with the use of inflectional morphology and pre-defined spellings. However, when a text was read, potentially archaic or disappeared forms, which were no longer current in the spoken language, were glossed into appropriate forms. Since only those who were educated sufficiently were able to read, they would have been educated sufficiently to be able to gloss the forms.

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<sup>556</sup> Thus Smith (2005: 24) notes that “regional divergences in the spoken *lingua romana* gradually became even stronger in Antiquity, and pronunciation changed too, but not so much as to cause incomprehension between speakers from different regions. That started to happen only around 1200”. Presumably, the author was making reference to Wright's dates of the Lateran Council of 1215 and the Council of Valladolid in 1228, to which he places the beginning of the Latin and Romance distinction. Since Wright is not even referenced in the section, there is a suggestion that Wright's theory has been presumed to be fact. López-Morillas (2000) discusses the history of Latin in the Iberian Peninsula prior to the Arab invasions and bases the entire article on the Wright thesis, without reference to its problems. Lloyd (1984: 377) in an early review of Wright's work, wrote: “it all seems so clear and obvious now, as Wright has explained it, that I can only wonder why anyone ever thought any differently”.

Accordingly, there was no need for a distinction between written Latin and spoken Romance until it was brought about forcibly through the reforms of the English monk Alcuin, who was active intellectually at the court of Charlemagne in the last part of the eighth century: “This book examines the implications of a single hypothesis: that “Latin” as we have known it for the last thousand years, is an invention of the Carolingian Renaissance” (Wright 1982: ix). Alcuin had been surprised at the difference between his Latin as a learnt, second-language, and that of the Latin spoken natively at the Carolingian court. His *De Orthographia*, which served to standardise Latin orthography and pronunciation, created a sudden and conscious divide between Latin and the spoken language and heralded the conceptual birth of Romance. In Iberia, this process occurred much later, c. 1080 at the Council of Burgos, following educational reforms and the decision to replace the Visigothic liturgy with the Roman one.

That is the Wright thesis in its most basic form. In many ways, Wright and Banniard share a common approach: both believe that, up until the Carolingian period, there were few problems in intelligibility between text and audience. Where they differ, however, is that the Wright thesis suggests that there were indeed differences, but these were masked by the active glossing of written forms that were no longer present in the spoken language. Banniard, meanwhile, suggests that such differences did not exist, or rather, did not exist to the extent so as to impede intelligibility. One of the greatest attractions, and also weaknesses, of the Wright thesis, then, is that it satisfies both of the two-norm assumptions: either people have always been speaking Romance but simply writing in Latin (*thèse différentielle*), or else the actual distinction occurred only in the Carolingian period (*thèse unitaire*).

#### **6.4 Latin / Romance and its Relevance to the Monastic Rules**

It was stated above that this chapter will investigate and critique the Wright thesis. The historical context of the Wright thesis places it in the Carolingian period, two or three centuries after the composition of the Visigothic monastic rules. However, it is important to this thesis for a variety of reasons. First, the Wright thesis is a way of explaining how and when Latin became Romance, and the monastic rules were written and used in the period that is seen as transitional in the context of this development. Second, although the Wright thesis concentrates on the Carolingian period in particular, it has a diachronic implication because the situation of ‘writing in Latin / reading in Romance’ had presumably been occurring before then, extending back arguably to the seventh century. It thus provides an important insight into how Visigothic texts, and so the monastic rules, might have been used. Third, in addition to language change, the Wright thesis attempts to explain how written texts functioned in communities where the spoken and written languages were not necessarily the same, and since the monastic rules were written in this transitional period, they potentially existed in the same context. Fourth, the Wright thesis is one of the most important of the twentieth century with regard to early medieval linguistics, and for this reason alone deserves to be appraised in light of the evidence offered by the Visigothic monastic rules.

#### **6.4 The Importance of Synthetic Passive and Deponent Verbs and Their Disappearance**

A fundamental tenet in the linguistics of the Latin and Romance languages is the dichotomy between the synthesis of the former and analysis of the latter. Whilst analytic

languages are those in which “auxiliary words are the chief or sole means of expressing grammatical relationships of words, to the total or partial elimination of inflection”, synthetic languages are those in which the “grammatical relationships of words are expressed principally by means of inflections” (Pei & Gaynor 1954: 212). The heavily analytic nature of Latin, as opposed to the preponderance towards analysis in Romance, has been long observed; one scholar summed up, in a description of Latin and its vernacular descendents in later periods: “Medieval Latin was a synthetic language in an analytic world” (Rigg 1996: 89).

It is in verbal morphology where the shift from synthesis to analysis is best documented. This is especially the case outside the simple present, preterit and future, which have remained synthetic in Romance. Deponent verbs were subject to two processes, although in each case they disappeared from use. In some cases, their use was replaced instead with a normal active synonym. For example: Lat. *osculator* > *basiare* > Sp. *besar*, Ptg. *beijar*; Lat. *uescor* > *comedere* > Sp., Ptg. *comer*. In other cases, deponent verbs were levelled through analogy with normal active forms. For example: Lat. *sequor* > Sp., Ptg. *seguir*; Lat. *fabulor* > Sp. *hablar*, Ptg. *falar*.

The passive voice, in contrast, has been retained in Romance, although the Latin synthetic passive has not survived in any Romance language.<sup>557</sup> Instead, it was replaced with

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<sup>557</sup> Interestingly, linguists have not yet been able to reconstruct a passive voice in Proto-Indo-European. Presumably, some method of constructing a passive voice did exist, but it is possible that it was formed using particles rather than a verbal conjugation. Lehmann (1993: 184-45) posits a comparison with Quechua, which also uses particles to mark the passive voice, rather than a verbal conjugation.

a periphrastic construction, primarily made up of the verb ‘to be’, plus a participle. For example, Lat. *amatur* > Sp. *está amado*; Lat. *uidetur* > Sp. *está visto*. The verb ‘to be’ can sometimes be replaced by other verbs; for example, Sp. ‘*como viene dicho en el párrafo anterior*’, or ‘*más de 450.000 personas se han visto afectadas por la contaminación del agua potable*’ (Butt & Benjamin 1994: 368). Otherwise, the passive can be formed using a reflexive, pronominal, form. This is especially true of Romanian, where the ‘be passive’ is a fairly recent introduction (Posner 2000: 181).

The reason why synthetic passive and deponent verb forms are important for discussion of language-use in the seventh century is two-fold. On the one hand, they are features that appear in Latin and not Romance, and so they are important for studies of the changes that took place in the period leading up to the first evidence of Romance. Already almost a century ago, Muller (1921) noted, with reference to synthetic passive forms: “The Latin passive system is a vital part of the Latin language. As long as the Latin passive forms were used and understood, Latin can be said to have been a living language; when this ceased to be the case, Latin became a dead language” (*ibid.*: 69). The very same could be said for deponent verbs.

On the other hand, acknowledgment of this fact poses a potential problem for the Wright thesis: if synthetic passive and deponent verb forms are not part of Romance, how were they accommodated by a reader ‘glossing’ Latin into Romance as he read? Since the Wright thesis has been so influential, this is a topic that merits discussion. Wright sets out clearly his stance: [synthetic forms would have been given a Romance pronunciation and] “the morphological endings preserved on paper (e.g. –ITUR, –ABIS, –IBUS) would have

formed a subsection of the passive vocabulary of those who could read and write, comparable to English forms as *-eth do now*" (1982: 42). Their employment is not discussed at any length by Wright, although subsequent scholars have sought to show how their use could have functioned in Wright's model (Green 1991).

## **6.5 Dating the Disappearance of Synthetic Passive and Deponent Forms**

The disappearance of synthetic passive and deponent forms has, to date, been centred on two principal and opposing schools of thought, which to a large extent also reflect the positions of Banniard and Wright in the Latin / Romance debate. The first position, surmised by Muller (1924) and Flobert (1975), argues for a relatively late survival rate of deponent and passive forms in the spoken idiom, possibly up to the early-ninth century. This view is based quite simply on the survival of the forms in texts up until this period throughout the Latin-speaking west. It is therefore roughly in agreement with the Banniard view of the spoken language. The second, headed originally by Politzer (1961a), posits that such forms disappeared from the spoken language much earlier. This standpoint drew on the same documentary evidence as the former, but suggested that the continued use of correct classical orthography, and therefore presumed phonology, indicates that these are what Wright phraseology would call 'learned' forms, since they have not undergone the expected phonological changes as other lexical items. Therefore, for Politzer this implies that they are artificial features and not reflective of the contemporary spoken speech.

The fact that deponent and passive forms continue to appear in later Latin texts up until the eighth and ninth centuries is suggested by Politzer to signify one of three

possibilities: first, that the author is sufficiently competent in a learnt, classical, Latin, that he is able to use the forms correctly; second, that the author's speech patterns and classical Latin are in agreement; third, that the author's speech patterns and classical Latin are so far removed from each other that the use of learned forms such as deponents can no longer interfere (1961a: 209-210). The second option was rejected by Politzer, who preferred the third. Wright has also argued that 'archaic' morphology was accessible only to those educated in the written word, and that "no one, however educated, actively used the old morphology in their speech" (1982: 42). Presumably, then, the argument would have to be made that anyone reading such forms would actively gloss the deponent or passive into a suitable vernacular alternative.

The theory of Politzer is problematic on two main levels. In the first instance, even if it were correct that synthetic passives and deponents were no longer in use in the seventh century, this does not answer the question of when they disappeared, and so the problem still remains, albeit pushed further back in time. In the second instance, if deponent and synthetic passive forms were dropping out of use in the spoken language of the post-Roman period, then it would be expected that their usage begin at least to fluctuate in the texts, sensibly becoming less frequent, especially in those texts that are more representative of the spoken language. However, it will be shown that not only do deponent neologisms continue to be coined in later Latin, but they remain omnipresent in texts of all registers, including those Christian texts that were specifically concerned with communicating in a lower-register of language. It is interesting, for example, to note that in a study of a legal document written by a certain John, bishop of Pisa in the eighth century, Everett (2003: 144) highlights its Latinity to be imperfect compared to those of the biblical quotations the author had clearly copied. He notes, however, that he nevertheless "shows an acquaintance with some classicising

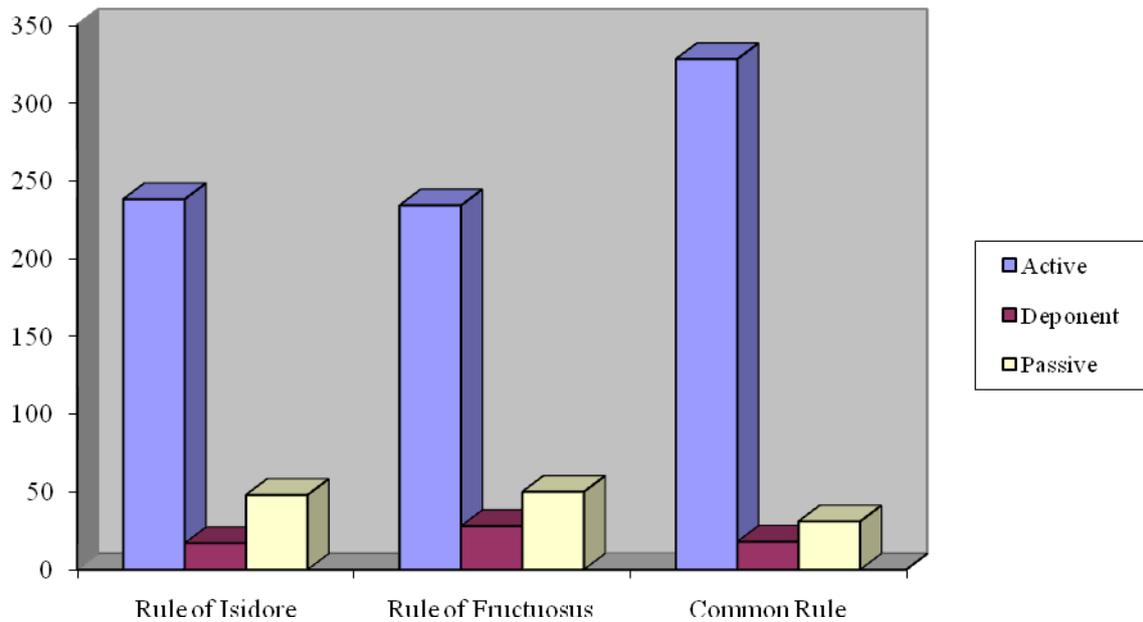
forms, such as the correct use of deponent verbs and the future tense” (*ibid.*: 146). Indeed, throughout the language’s two-thousand year recorded history, texts of all registers witness their use, and the only definite evidence that the literary sources can provide is that they have perhaps ceased to be used by the time of the first Romance texts.

## 6.6 The Evidence of the Monastic Rules: Frequency Analysis

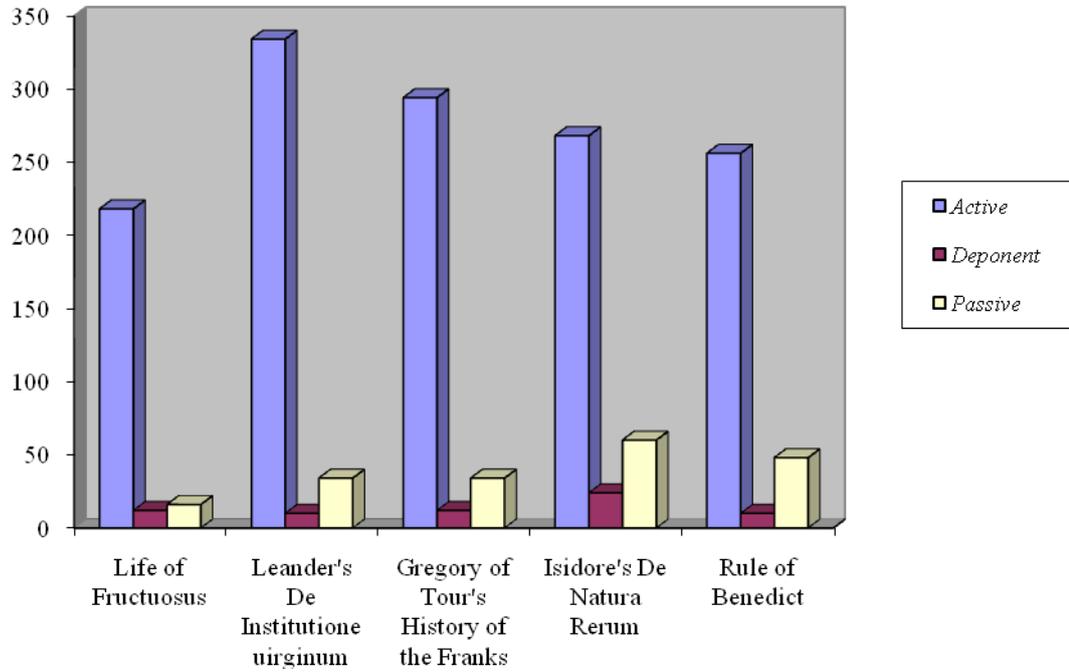
In Chapter Five, and also in Allies (2009), it was argued that the monastic rules are representative of a low-register of language. It therefore follows from this that the monastic rules are useful texts to determine whether deponent and synthetic passive verb forms were still in use, or at least expected to be understood, by a seventh-century Iberian audience.

In the first instance, a cursory glance at the texts demonstrates that synthetic passives and deponent verbs remain an integral part of their Latinity. A useful initial approach is to note simply their rates of occurrence. The information below is taken from a survey of six hundred lines from each text, as presented in the critical edition of Ruiz & Melia (1974). The total number of lines was divided into three sets of two-hundred lines, taken from the different sections of the work, in order to ensure a more balanced survey. For the purpose of this analysis, all tenses and moods have been included in the count, including infinitives. However, it has not included present participles, gerunds or the supine, such as deponent *loquens*, *loquendi* and *locutum* and active *amans*, *amandi* and *amatum*. This is because of the similarity between these forms in deponent, passive and active verbs, meaning that it cannot be guaranteed that any reader or listener would necessarily be able to differentiate them, even

if the writer could. Where a verb has both active and deponent forms, it has been counted as the form used in the text. The results can be seen in Graph One (p. 239).



	Active	Deponent	Passive
<i>Rule of Isidore</i>	238	17	48
<i>Rule of Fructuosus</i>	234	28	50
<i>Common Rule</i>	328	18	31



	Active	Deponent	Passive
Life of Fructuosus	218	12	16
Leander's <i>De Institutione uirginum</i>	334	10	34
Gregory of Tour's <i>History of the Franks</i>	294	12	34
Isidore's <i>De Natura Rerum</i>	268	24	60
<i>Rule of Benedict</i>	256	10	48

Overall, the results are fairly similar throughout all three texts and demonstrate that both deponent and passive verb forms are an integral part of the text's Latinity. The only noticeable variation is the high proportion of active verbs in the Common Rule, which is due to an idiomatic style of the text, which tends to use two verbs in a structure such as *monachus non debet festinare*, whilst the other two prefer to use subjunctive verb forms such as *monachus non festinet*. Otherwise, the results seem to be fairly stable.

However, the monastic rules cannot be treated in isolation and it is necessary to compare them to a number of other texts to place them in context. As such, a number of other texts have been subjected to the same analysis. Metrical texts have been avoided since the desire to fit a rhythm may have influenced a writer's choice of vocabulary, meaning that they may have used words that were not their natural choice. These results are shown in Graph Two (p. 240).

How do these results correlate? In the first instance, they demonstrate that frequency levels of deponent and passive verbs in the monastic rules are more or less in agreement with other contemporary texts, including those of different genre and style. This suggests that the frequency rates in the monastic rules are typical for this period. In the second instance, the results also suggest that there does not exist a correlation between register and frequency. It has been suggested that the use of the synthetic passive in particular could be indicative of a higher register of language. For example, Green (1991: 93) suggested that Egeria, in her

*Perigrinatio*, used synthetic passive forms to ‘raise the tone’ of her writing: “Though Egeria is not exactly stuffy, she is certainly aware of her dignity, and her use of the passive [...] seems designed to raise the level of discourse of what is, after all, a travelogue, to that of a more formal, dignified, register”.

If it was the case that deponent and synthetic passive forms were no longer in use in the everyday spoken language, it would be a sensible argument to suggest that the higher a register of language, the more frequently they would appear. However, the results from the above sample show that this is not necessarily true. Isidore’s *De Natura Rerum*, for example, is written in an extremely stylised language. However, it uses only a slightly larger number of synthetic passives than the others, but nothing to suggest any real dichotomy of usage.

It is interesting to compare these results to those found in the analysis of Flobert (1975), to date the only large-scale and systematic study of deponent verbs undertaken for Latin literature. Flobert incorporated a far greater diachronic range, studying texts written over the course of a millennium, ranging from Plautus up to the eighth century. His study resulted in the following average frequency rates of usage in Latin texts: 74 % active; 19 % passive; 7% deponent (quoted in Laughton 1979: 91). This compares more or less favourably with the monastic rules, which give the following frequency rates:

*Rule of Isidore:*                      76% active; 15% passive; 5% deponent;

*Rule of Fructuosus:*                75% active; 16% passive; 9% deponent;

*Common Rule:*                      87% active; 8% passive; 5% deponent.

This suggests further that the monastic rules employed deponent and synthetic passive verb forms in a frequency that was not only comparable with contemporary texts, but also suggests a stability of usage that can be found throughout Latin literature.

Since the monastic rules have been argued to be representative of the spoken language, the evidence would appear to agree with the hypothesis that their presence implies their continued use, or for Banniard, at least, a passive competence even if they were not used actively by all speakers. Since there is little difference from other texts, both contemporary and historically throughout Latin literature, this suggests a stability of usage that is reflected in their employment. Nevertheless, although the Muller position is attractive, namely that their presence in a text implies their use in the spoken language, it is too simplistic: the simple presence of forms in written texts cannot imply automatically their use in the spoken language because of the differences between the two. Therefore, the situation must be explored further.

## **6.7 Further Analysis of Appearance**

The often classical Latinity of the monastic rules has already been noted. To demonstrate the wide range of deponent and synthetic passives used, here follows a list of all those employed in the monastic rules. Note that where a verb is used more than once, this is indicated in brackets. In the first instance, deponent verbs: *adipiscor*, *amplector* (x 2), *anxior*, *attestor*, *commoror*, *comprobo*, *confiteor*, *conor*, *consector*; *consequor*, *consolor*, *delabor* (x 4), *dedignor*, *dignor*, *egredior* (x 2), *elabor* (x 2), *euagor* (x 6), *exsecror*, *fabulor*,

*famulor, fateor, fruor, gradior, imitor (x 4), immoror, ingredior (x 5), loquor (x 19), meditor (x 5), miror, morior (x 3), morior, nutrior, operor (x 22), patior, percunctor (x 2), perfruor, polliceor (x 2), proficiscor (x 2), profiteor, progredior (x 5), prosequor, reminiscor, sequor (x 4), tueor, utor (x 3), uescor (x 2).*

The following active verbs are found in a synthetic passive form: *abdico, abundo, adaequo, adicio, administro, admoneo (x 6), adnoto, aestimo, ago (x 2), appono, arceo, arguo (x 3), auerto, capio, castigo, celebro (x 4), celo, coerceo (x 4), cogo, commoneo, comparo, comprobo, confero, conficio, confodio, congrego (x 3), conlaudo, conseruo, consumo, constituo (x 2), consurgo, contineo, conuenio (x 2), conuerto (x 8), conuinco, copulo (x 3), coquo, corrigo (x 5), corripio, curo, debilito, deduco, defendo, defero, delego (x 4), demonstro, deprehendo (x 2), deuoluo, deuoro (x 2), dico (x 2), dirigo (x 2), dirimo, discutio, dispenso (x 2), distribuo, diuido, do (x 3), dono, duco (x 3), efficio, eleuo, eligo (x 3), emendo (x 6), eo, erogo (x 2), erudio, euoco, excito (x 4), excommunico (x 2), excuso (x 2), exerceo, expello, expono, exprobo, extollo, exuo (x 2), ferio, flagello, foueo (x 4), frango (x 2), frequento, habeo (x 3), honoro (x 3), ignoro, impedio, impleo, implico, increpo, incurro, induo (x 2), inferro (x 2), inflammo, inligo, iniungo, inquieto, inspicio, instruo, intellego, intermitto, interrogo, interrumpo, intono, introduco, laudo, laxo, lego (x 4), macero, mancipo, mergo, mitto, moeno (x 2), moueo, nosco (x 4), nuncupo, obseruo (x 3), offero, ommitto, opprimo, ostento, pasco, perago, perdo, planto, polluo (x 2), pono (x 2), praebeo (x 7), praecipio, praeparo (x 2), praepono, premo, prohibeo (x 2), proicio (x 4), promo, protendo, prouoco, prouoluo, psallo, quaero, quiesco, rapio, recipio (x 7), recito, recludo, redimo, reduco (x 2), refero, reficio, repello, reperio, requiro, reseruo, roboro, salueo, saucio, scandalizo, scio, segrego, separo, sepelio, sero, seruo (x 2), sollicito (x 2), soluo, sperno, stimulo, subdeo, subiacio, subleuo, sumo, superadiicio, suscipio (x 2),*

*suspendo, sustineo* (x 3), *tempero, teneo* (x 2), *tracto, trado, tribuo* (x 2), *uaco, uerbero* (x 2), *uideo* (x 2), *uito, unio, uulnero*.

It can be seen from this list that there are many examples of such verbs. In some cases, the verbs are typical of later Latin, representing in some cases neologisms not found in Classical Latin, or else have a wider semantic meaning specific to a Christian, or monastic, context. Examples could include *famulor, meditor* and *psallo*. In any case, the lists above give an indication of how widely used deponent and synthetic verb forms are in the monastic rules.

This brief survey also raises interesting points. Some of the deponent verbs give Romance reflexes, following levelling through analogy into a normal active form. For example: *operor* > Cat. *operar*; *morior* > Sp. *morir*; *sequor* > Sp. *seguir*; *meditor* > Sp. *meditar*; *miror* > Sp. *mirar*. In this sense, they can be attributed both Latin and Romance histories. It can also be seen that deponent verbs continue to be used, even when there exist normal active synonyms that could be used instead. If deponent verbs were no longer in use in the spoken language, it is difficult to understand why, in such cases, an author would use a deponent verb when there existed synonyms that were potentially, and hypothetically, easier for an audience to understand. This is particularly the case when the deponent form did not survive in Romance. For example, none of the deponent verbs that imply motion towards somewhere left reflexes in Ibero-Romance (*egredior, gradior, proficiscor* etc.), and yet they are found in the monastic rules. If they were not in use in the spoken language, it would surely make sense to use simply *eo* or *uado*, the eventual Ibero-Romance etyma.

These points are of particular importance because it was demonstrated previously that a characteristic feature of the monastic rules is their desire for clarity. On the one hand, this is typical of technical language, whose didacticism does not necessarily rule out literary polish, but does require that information be conveyed appropriately in a manner that is intelligible to its audience. On the other hand, it was shown in Chapter Five that Isidore in particular was explicit about his monastic rule being easier to understand than the writings of some of his predecessors (*ut facillime intelligatis*). It would make little sense, then, to use forms that may not be understood by their audience.

## **6.8 Further Analysis of Use**

The monastic rules employ verbs that possess both an active and deponent form: *nutrio / nutrior*; *reuerto / reuortor*; *mereo / mereor*; *uenero / ueneror*; *luxurio / luxorior*; *perscruto / perscrutor*; *scisito / scisitor*. There is nothing unusual in this, since it appears that deponent verbs in Latin were prone to instability from the earliest evidenced period of the language, with many deponent forms having active counter-parts: *arbitror / arbitro*; *auguror / auguro*; *muneror / munero*; *populor / populo* (after Clackson & Horrocks 2007: 224). In addition, some verbs possessed semi-deponent forms, with a present active but a perfect passive form, like the example of *audeo*, but *ausus sum*, and *fido*, but *fisus sum*.<sup>558</sup> This suggests instability between the two forms from an early period. Alteration between deponent and normal active forms of the same verb is evidenced in Classical writers, and is

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<sup>558</sup> The reason for this is probably because they descended from a Proto-Indo-European middle form, although it is impossible to state why they were not generalised as active forms like the others, or else a middle voice retained alongside the passive and active as in Greek and Sanskrit (Baldi 2002: 395-396; see also Lehmann 1974; Parker 1976).

therefore not specifically a feature of later Latin. Aulus Gellius, for example, tells the story behind the popularity of *adsentio*, instead of the normal *adsentior*, after it was first used by a certain Sisenna in the senate;<sup>559</sup> the sentiment echoed that of Quintilian, a century or so before.<sup>560</sup> However, the fact that deponent verbs remained in popular use in the later Latin period is suggested by the fact that Christian writing was responsible for a trend of deponent neologisms: *dominari*, *infirmari*, *iacturari*, *potentari*, *principari*, *profetari* (Burton 2000: 182); even in the eighth century it is still possible to note the use of some eight-hundred and eighty-eight deponent verb forms (Justus 2008: 500).

In the case where a verb possessed both a deponent and a normal active form, it makes little sense why a writer would choose a deponent form over its active counterpart if it were no longer in use, or at best likely to be confused by a reader or listener. For example: “*qui segregati a coetu fraterno ob negligentiam suam fuerant **merentur** indulgentiam*”.<sup>561</sup> Neither are they likely to use a passive form of such a verb if the listeners were not able to disassociate it from the deponent: “*confestim in conspectus totius congregationis adductus, **sciscitabitur** ab abbate utrum liber an seruus*”.<sup>562</sup> It can be established, then, that on a written level at least, that the authors of the monastic rules were perfectly capable of manipulating correctly the deponent and passive verb forms. This is especially shown in

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<sup>559</sup> *Noctes Atticae* 2.25.9, “*Inde M. Uarro in eodem libro: Sentior, inquit, nemo dicit et id per se nihil est, adsentior tamen fere omnes dicunt. Sisenna unus adsentio in senatu dicebat et eum postea multi secuti, neque tamen uincere consuetudinem potuerunt*”.

<sup>560</sup> *Institutiones* 9.3.7, “*Quod minus mirum est quia in natura uerborum est et quae facimus patiendi modo saepe dicere, ut "arbitror", "suspikor", et contra faciendi quae patimur, ut "uapulo": ideoque frequens permutatio est et pleraque utroque modo efferuntur: luxuriatur luxuriat, fluctuatur fluctuat, adsentior adsentio*”.

<sup>561</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 1.

<sup>562</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 21.

examples where deponents and passives are used within the same sentence. In these situations, it is normally the case that the grammar behind deponent and synthetic passive verbs has to be understood on both a morphological and semantic level in order for a sentence to make sense. This is made obvious in examples throughout the monastic rules where they are employed. For example:

*“nequaquam debet monachus dedignari uersari in opere aliquo monasterii usibus necessario”*<sup>563</sup>

“a monk should in no way think it unworthy (*deponent infinitive*) to be engaged (*passive infinitive*) in any work necessary for the profit of the monastery”;

*“qui prior in monasterio conuersus fuerit [...] prior loquatur cum interrogantur fratres pro aliqua quaestione”*<sup>564</sup>

“he who was first converted into the monastery [...] shall speak (*deponent present*) first when the monks are examined (*passive present*) over any inquiry”

*“Proinde isti non debent despiciere quas delegatas oues habent; quia exindi non unam, sed multas consecuntur mercedes. Inde sustentantur infirmi, inde recreantur paruuli, indi*

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<sup>563</sup> *Rule of Isidore 5.2.*

<sup>564</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus 22.*

*fouentur senes, inde redimuntur captiui, inde suscipiuntur hospites et perigrini, et insuper uix tribus mensibus per pleraque monasteria abundaretur, si sola cotidiana fuissent paximatia in hac prouincia plus omnibus terris laboriosa*".<sup>565</sup>

“Following this, those who tend to the sheep should not disdain their duty, since they obtain (*deponent present*) not one, but many rewards. From them the sick are sustained (*passive present*), from them the young are restored (*passive present*), from them the elderly are nourished (*passive present*), from them captives are redeemed (*passive present*); from them, guests and travellers welcomed (*passive present*); and, moreover, many monasteries would scarcely have enough food (*passive present*) for three months if they only had the daily bread of this region, which is the most difficult to work of all provinces”.

In these examples, deponent verbs (*dedignari / loquatur / consector*) are employed alongside synthetic passive forms (*uersari / interrogantur / sustentantur / recreantur / fouentur / redimuntur / suscipiuntur / abundaretur*) within a single clause. It is impossible to understand properly the sentences without an understanding of deponent and synthetic verbal systems.

Written material is always going to be a problematic source of evidence for the spoken language. However, since the monastic rules were texts written in a lower-register of language, which were expected to be understood by their audience, the conclusion reached by the investigation above is that seventh-century Iberian audiences were generally expected to

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<sup>565</sup> *Common Rule 9.*

be able to understand the forms, leading to the suggestion that they were still in use, at least on a passive basis, in the spoken language. Since the forms were seemingly not in use by the time of the appearance of the first texts in Ibero-Romance in the tenth century, the conclusion must be that at some point in those three centuries they disappeared. The evidence presented in this thesis, then, supports the theory of Banniard over those of Wright.

### **6.9.1 Traditional Approaches to the Loss of Synthesis**

After investigating the evidence presented by the monastic rules, attention will now turn to the wider issue of the disappearance of the deponent and synthetic passive verb forms. Traditionally, the disappearance of the synthetic passive has been attributed to confusion between the passive perfect and the passive present: “under the influence of *carus est*, etc, *amatus est* came to mean ‘he is loved’, etc. Hence, *amatus fuit* signified ‘he was loved’” (Grandgent 1907: 51). Certainly by the time of the glosses in the tenth-century Códice Emilianense, there is a tendency to gloss the synthetic verbs. Hagemann (2008: 538) has argued recently: “the glosses [...] do not merely state the grammatical structure of the Latin sentence or the graphical form of the words, rather they change the structures by giving the arguments new functions and / or adding new arguments through the glosses. Thereby the glosses change the language of the sermon and the structure of the sentences, and it would be fair to suppose that these changes reflect contemporary usage”.

However, it is apparent that reflexive forms with passive meanings, as in Romance, were in use in earlier periods: for example, Pliny: “*Myrina quae Sebastopolim se uocat*”;<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> *Natural History* 5.121.

Palladius: “*mela rotunda, quae orbiculata dicuntur, sine cura toto anno seruare se possunt*”,<sup>567</sup> and Ambrosiaster: “*natura enim de ipsa se nouit*”.<sup>568</sup> Therefore, the problem of the why and when deponent and synthetic passive forms might have disappeared is not as clear-cut as it may at first appear, and it is not sufficient to merely posit a *terminus ante quem* for their disappearance in the first Romance writings.

Whilst there has been a ubiquitous acknowledgement of these paradigms, it has been coupled with a paucity of investigation. This is especially true concerning the question of why or when such forms disappeared from the spoken language, a problem that is particularly prominent in works on historical Romance linguistics, which rarely include discussion of the topic; the reason for this is presumably that since they are not a feature of Romance, there is supposedly little need for their investigation. This is evident following a quick review of the majority of textbooks on the subject.<sup>569</sup> Studies on Latin linguistics, meanwhile, tend to list the linguistic features in later texts that make them different from Classical Latin. Such an approach has typically been the mainstay of the two different camps, satisfying both Romance linguists who seek out nascent features of the vernacular languages, and Latinists in their hunt for features that differentiate the language from its classical predecessor. These two separate approaches have fostered the idea of a linguistic no-man’s land for the period, marking it out as the responsibility of neither. As Wright (1993: 77) stated, “the

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<sup>567</sup> *De Re Rustica* 3.25.18.

<sup>568</sup> *Quaestiones Ueteris et Noui Testamenti* 125.9.

<sup>569</sup> For example, Poulter (1990: 52) states simply that “inflection for the passive voice disappeared”; Rickard (1974: 13) notes that “[in Vulgar Latin] the synthetic passives are badly known and comparatively little used”; Lathrop (1980) ignores the subject altogether, and Mattoso Camara (1972) sidelines the subject with little discussion. These are just four examples, but represent an overall general pattern.

sociolinguistic nature of the Latin-speaking community of western Europe in the period between the Roman and Carolingian empires has recently been the subject of a remarkable diversity of scholarly research and opinion. The most noticeable divide has been between the textual historians and the Romance historical linguists, who have often preferred to ignore each other”.

### **6.9.2 Political Decline and Simplification**

Traditional approaches to the topic tended to view the loss of synthesis as being synonymous with simplification, and in this way it was easy for scholars to correlate the supposed decline and barbarity of the later Roman world with the supposed decline and barbarity of its language. As one gentleman observer wrote in *The Edinburgh Review* (1848: 7): “The Latin language, after the fifth century, became more and more barbarous”. The idea of decline continues to be true for non-specialists in the field,<sup>570</sup> who often perpetuate the factoid.<sup>571</sup> There exists, of course, a difference between grammatical reduction and a loss of structure: Romance obeys its own structural laws, just as Latin does. Nevertheless, the nexus between perceived cultural superiority and linguistic prestige remains widespread, and has

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<sup>570</sup> It is sobering reading, for example, that the first entry for ‘Latin’ in the index of the *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1, is “bastardised in Gaul/Francia” (Fouracre 2005: 947). The problem continues in other works: “the further [a] text’s grammar has travelled down the road from classical to colloquial forms, the later it is likely to be, although the decline into vulgar Latin was not linear” (Christys 2002: 86). Even a recent work on Late Antiquity was able to state that “the graffiti found at Pompeii [...] suggest that in everyday usage Latin was already evolving into less grammatically structured Romance” (Heather 2005:18). Of course, Heather’s work is not a linguistic one, and a historian cannot be expected to be an expert linguist as well. However, such a statement continues the factoid of a decline to the non-specialist reader who does not know to question it.

<sup>571</sup> Factoid is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* thus: “Something that becomes accepted as a fact, although it is not (or may not be) true”. The term is therefore useful in describing many of the theories associated with language change in the early medieval period.

always been so throughout history, as the etymology of the word ‘barbarian’ testifies (Heath 2005: 199-201).

Modern history has witnessed a similar type of linguistic imperialism amongst scholars, a sensibility highlighted perfectly in Bodmer (1944), a testament to the time in which it was written. Chapter ten of his work, entitled ‘The Diseases of Language’, is a panorama of the historical development of Indo-European languages, acknowledging that “during the past 2,000 years there has been a universal drift among Aryan languages towards reduction and regularization of flexion” (1944: 410). For Bodmer, the ‘superiority’ of what he terms ‘Anglo-American’ is evident in its grammatical simplicity or streamlining; this is mirrored by the ‘backwardness’ of languages that have retained more of the Indo-European grammatical categories, such as Slavonic: “it is a commonplace that Russian collectivism originated in a country which was in backward phase of technical and political evolution. It is also, and conspicuously, true that it originated in a country which was in a backward stage of linguistic evolution” (1944: 415). Such a view is extraordinarily misleading and neglects, in the case of Russian specifically, the archaising influence of Church Slavonic and the fact that there is at least some element of diachronic loss of synthetic elements.

Although distinctly problematic, Bodmer nevertheless raises an interesting point: ‘complexity’ is at best a difficult term for linguists, particularly following the development of creole and pidgin linguistics.<sup>572</sup> One of the most debated questions is that of the language

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<sup>572</sup> Much of the debate has been borne out of the distinction between creoles and pidgins, of which only the former constitutes a fully-fledged language. The second typically represents a highly limited form of spoken communication that arises out of social necessity, e.g. for trading reasons between two

cycle, or rather whether languages can be attributed lifespans or periods of gestation. In essence, are some languages more ‘mature’ than others? This is a fiendish debate, often reliant upon principles of perceived grammatical complexity, on which work still continues (see Dahl 2004; Miestamo, Sinnemaki & Karlsson 2008: 7-9). It also begs the issue of what constitutes complexity? A comparatively simple morphological system does not necessarily mean that the language might not have additional complexities elsewhere where others do not. For example, the verbal system in Mandarin is extremely transparent when compared to Indo-European languages because it has no morphological tenses. It does, however, have a complicated tonal system that is absent in Indo-European.

Kusters (2003b: 5-6), in a study concerning the social impetus behind historical language change, offered an interesting analogy. He suggested that languages be likened to forests; whilst one forest might be ancient and a mixture of breeds of trees and flowers, dense and thick, the other might be planted artificially with uniform and spacious lines of the same breed of tree. At first sight, the former might appear to be the most complex, but both would contain similar amounts of biodiversity. Whilst some animals might prefer the dense vegetation of the former, others will prefer the latter. Indeed, many who function better in the former might find it difficult to survive in the latter.

As such, “complexity is not a simple predicate attributable to language but a relation between two entities: a language and someone who evaluates a language” (2003b: 6). The first issue with linking the decline of Rome with the decline of its language, then, is that

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different cultures. A pidgin normally has an unnaturally limited grammar and vocabulary, depending on the demands of its use; see Winford (2003:268-314).

ascertaining linguistic complexity, and hence suggesting some languages to have ‘declined’, is difficult, if not currently impossible, because the problem is still under fruitful debate as to whether languages can, indeed, be more complex than others. Added to this, of course, is that complexity is entirely in the eyes of the beholder. The other issue is that there is no reason why a breakdown of an Empire need imply the breakdown of a language: English children do not speak a simpler language than their grandparents, simply because the British Empire no longer exists, and neither is modern Spanish less complex than its sixteenth century forerunner. Therefore, political decline cannot sensibly equate with linguistic ‘simplification’.

### **6.9.3 Contact Linguistics**

It is also possible that the loss of synthesis could have been brought about by contact, and subsequent convergence, with an analytic language. It was once widely believed that “a language’s morphology tends to be especially stable, by contrast to its syntax and phonology and, in particular, to its lexicon [...] the morphology is supposed to be immune to contact-induced language change” (Thomason 1981: 359). However, such scenarios are entirely plausible on a linguistic level, and it is well evidenced how external factors can effect internal language mechanisms (Trask 1996: 102-132). There is evidence that such contact can level synthetic forms to analysis, such as the case of a Polish dialect spoken in Romania which has replaced the normal synthetic comparative with an analytic equivalent borrowed from the Romanian form, e.g. *nowszy* > *maj nowy*, ‘newer’ (Heine & Kuteva 2006: 76). The process could also have been hastened by the second-language learners who spoke an analytic language other than Latin as their first tongue: “It has long been recognised that learners’ versions of a [target language] are subject to varying degrees of influence from their native or

primary language” (Winford 2003: 209). If this were the case, then presumably learners would favour recognisable analytic forms in their second language, to the extent that perhaps they replaced previous synthetic forms with an analytic analogy, as in the case of the passive, or else simply rejected forms such as deponents.

However, there are fundamental problems with such an approach. First, exactly which language(s) would have caused this kind of change in Latin? If it were true then it would constitute a major reform of the grammatical system, and this is no mean feat. Latin had been in contact with probably hundreds of different languages in its history, many of them in a state of sustained bilingualism (MacMullen 1966; Adams 2005), and it seems odd that such changes would take place at so late a date. The main competitor for the Late Antique period would presumably be Germanic, although it will be demonstrated below that this appears to have retained synthetic forms in restricted cases.

A second issue is that for such a contact-induced change to take hold over the entire Romance-speaking area is difficult to imagine given the sheer geographical distances involved. It is highly likely that contact-induced change would have had an impact on spoken Latin in some form, especially within the speech of people for whom Latin was a second language; such a situation of native language influence on a second language is widely recognised within sociolinguistics (Winford 2003: 208-219). However, it is unlikely that this would lead to the loss of an entire morphological system. Since the development of analytic forms in lieu of synthetic ones seems to be, to some degree, fairly common in many Indo-European languages (see below), it therefore follows that there may be some underlying process that is not just isolated in Latin.

#### **6.9.4 The Linguistic Cycle**

Another alternative is known as the ‘linguistic cycle’. Promulgated in the 1970’s by Charles Hodge in particular (1970), the linguistic cycle theory proposes that languages evolve naturally on a cyclical basis from synthesis to analysis and vice versa. The basis for this lies in the fact that modern languages are predominantly analytic, ancient ones predominantly synthetic, and reconstructed Proto-Indo-European is largely analytic. Hodge argued that the synthesis to analysis shift was a natural progression, and that eventually Indo-European languages would return to synthesis. Such an approach is interesting, but purely hypothetical. Hodge’s main argument comes from the study of Egyptian, namely Old Egyptian and Coptic. The long documented history of this language enabled him to recognise changing morphological forms over time, from synthesis to analysis and back to synthesis. Perhaps if there were records of the language that would become Latin from three thousand BC, then a similar case could be made; however, not only is Egyptian an Afro-Asiatic language rather than an Indo-European one, but there is no evidence of such a cycle in Indo-European. Therefore, the linguistic cycle hypothesis is problematic on a number of methodological levels.

#### **6.9.5 Ecological Linguistics**

A large amount of recent work has focussed on so-called ecological linguistics, or the application of Darwinian evolutionary concepts to historical linguistic processes (Mühlhäusler 2005). This approach sees a language as equatable with a species, an analogy that can often be quite useful: both can become extinct and neither currently have any method

for ascertaining a specific time of inception but are instead identified *post factum* (Mufwene 2008: 11-28). It is also an approach that has prompted interest in manuscript studies, where the application of phylogenetic principles is currently being tested on tracing textual relationships (Spencer, Davidson & Barbrook 2004). If a language is treated as a species, an idiolect is similarly treated as an individual organism. From this perspective, the theories of language change draw heavily on the theories of evolutionary biology, especially the principle of survival of the fittest, implying that a language changes for competitive reasons and in order to suit better the condition of its speakers.

In many ways, the principle of ecological linguistics works well. However, in other ways the comparison to biological evolution is a misguided one. Evolutionary biology posits that changes to an organism are elicited out changes in environment, such as climatic changes or a constant ‘survival of the fittest’, and some languages certainly change as the direct result of a changing environment: linguistic borrowings, neologisms and semantic extensions would be good examples of this. Nevertheless, a language also changes for far less pressing reasons. A child will not speak exactly the same language as their parent, often for little more reason than to purposefully differentiate themselves. Thus, colloquialisms and slang come and go in the spoken language, and although the slang of generation X will be understood by generation Y, it might seem outmoded and a signal of a previous generation’s identity. In this way, language is constantly changing and not necessarily for reasons of survival.

A further problem is that organisms presumably evolve to become better, hence the Darwinian concept of survival of the fittest. Modern linguistics, however, teaches that all

languages are grammatically as capable as others of satisfying the same role. As such, a language normally gives way to another, either through death or suicide, to another because of social pressures, such as lack of social prestige, rather than inherent linguistic weaknesses (Crystal 2002: 68-91). A final problem, and perhaps the biggest as far as this topic is concerned, is that there is no reason why deponent verbs and the synthetic passive should be seen as a hindrance to a language. Many languages, including those with which Latin was in contact, made use of synthetic grammatical systems, as will be discussed below.

There is perhaps a tendency amongst speakers of analytic languages to suggest that analysis is equatable with transparency, and hence is easier than synthesis. It is not surprising, for example, that the American Foreign Service Institute (FSI) labels individual languages on a scale of one to three, depending on their ‘difficulty’ for learners. However, this is not necessarily the case and perceptions of language difficulty are purely subjective. Analytic forms are not without their problems for learners and speakers will naturally prefer those systems to which they were natively exposed whilst learning a language as a child. Learners of Italian, for example, often struggle with the choice between the analytic perfect constructions with *essere* or *stare*, yet have less difficulty with the synthetic present tense, whilst a native Russian speaker will have far less difficulty in comprehending the Latin case system because it is reflected in their language. As such, care must be taken not to impose individual linguistic sensibilities onto other speakers, ancient or otherwise, and although ecological linguistics can provide a useful analogy, it must be used with caution.

#### **6.10 A New Proposal for the Loss of the Passive**

It will now be proposed that the loss of the synthetic passive and deponent verb forms was a two-stage process: first, the synthetic passive was lost as a result of a wider historical

trend within Indo-European languages, possibly due to underlying socio-historical factors; second, that deponent verbs disappeared as a result of loss of analogy. It is important not to treat the loss of synthetic elements in Romance in isolation. Many modern Indo-European languages contain predominantly analytic grammatical features, despite the fact that some of them are descended from languages that were once largely synthetic: “[proto-Indo-European] had a relatively complicated morphological structure. The most commonly found change is therefore that of the *disappearance* of morphological categories” (Beekes 1995: 90). This is a situation that merits further exploration. An interesting comparison is that of Latin / Romance with Old English / Middle English, where the English language seemed to have lost many of its synthetic elements and changed more in the few centuries between, for example, the Beowulf epic and Chaucer in the fourteenth century than it has in the almost six-hundred or so years that separate the latter from today.

This is a perplexing situation, and one that has been approached by various scholars. Clark (1957: 110-116; also Van Gelderen 2006: 91-154) devoted considerable space to the problem. For him, the answer lies in the fact that Old English is a literary language, not necessarily reflective of the much more analytic speech. The Norman Conquest and subsequent domination of Anglo-Norman meant that English was no-longer used as a literary language and so its development was not restrained by a written standard. When it came to be used again by writers such as Chaucer, the written language was now based on spoken norms, rather than that of an older standard. The appearance of a language quite changed from Old English was therefore a direct result of 1066 and the subsequent disappearance of an archaic and codified literary form. Interestingly, Pulgram (1975) proposed that the influence of an external language, in this case Greek, could have contributed to a literary language further removed from spoken speech: “I venture to suggest that the discovery of

Greek language and literature, and the subservience of Latin grammarians to Greek models, strengthened or restricted an already waning prosodic system; had a classical Latin language and literature arisen a century or two later than it did, it would have evolved out of the then current spoken Latin” (*ibid.*: 288).

Such an approach is interesting, yet Latin was never ousted in the west, as English was, as a literary language. There still exists the problem of placing the issue in the wider orbit of Indo-European languages. Szemerényi (1966: 230-231) highlighted that some Indo-European languages have relatively complicated, ‘maximalist’, verbal systems, such as Greek with its three voices, four moods and seven tenses. Others have much simpler, ‘minimalist’, systems, such as Hittite, with two voices, two moods and two tenses. This implies two hypotheses; (a) either maximalist verbal systems are representative of a proto-Indo-European norm, and the simpler systems are due to a process of impoverishment, or (b) minimalist verbal systems are representative of a proto-Indo-European norm, and the maximalist systems are regional peculiarities of enrichment. The latter is unlikely; not only is a language atypically made *more* grammatically complex by its speakers through the addition of forms, but remnants of earlier, now obsolete, forms are still present in minimalist languages.<sup>573</sup>

The replacement of certain synthetic grammatical forms with analytic ones is a tangible feature of some of many languages whose written sources permit sufficient diachronic historical investigation. Three examples will serve to illuminate this.

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<sup>573</sup> For example, the Latin *sim* and *uellim*, which Szemerényi classes as remnants of an obsolete optative form. The only time when a language might add further grammatical forms is hypothetically through external influence for reasons of, e.g. prestige, rather than because the language needs them.

• **Germanic** Very early written records of Germanic do not exist (Ringe 2006). However, the earliest evidence for Gothic shows that it retained a synthetic passive (Wright 1910: 19; Robinson 1992: 62), although it was seemingly only available in the third person present tense, e.g. John 1.5, *gabaírada*, ‘he is born’, Mark 10.38, *dáupjada*, ‘he is baptised’, Luke 1.76, *jah þu, barnilō, praúfētus háuhistins háitaza*, ‘and you, oh child, shall be called prophet of the highest’. With a few exceptions, such as Old English *hätte*, Old Norse *heita*, ‘is/was called’ and modern Scandinavian vernaculars, no Germanic language retains such synthetic forms, and arguably they must have been at some point lost prior to the first evidence of the Germanic dialects. Incidentally, even by the time of Ulfila, the passive could be otherwise formed by a periphrasis of *wáisþan*, ‘to become’ or *wisan*, ‘to be’, plus the past participle. It is this form that finds reflexes in the modern Germanic vernaculars. This overall loss of verbal synthesis is matched by a scaled loss of other grammatical forms such as use of the gender, which has been lost completely in English but retained, for example, in German.

• **Slavonic** Slavonic languages, represented here by Polish, are typically heavily synthetic and much more so than, for example, Romance. In respect to their verbal morphology, they are fairly similar to their Romance counterparts, but beyond this they retain a fairly complex system of nominal declension lost elsewhere, including features such as an instrumental case. Nevertheless, despite this normally heavy range of synthesis, especially so in its verbal and nominal morphology, the passive voice is analytic and constructed again in a similar way to Romance. The reflexive participle *się* (cognate with Russian *ся*, which in that language is normally an enclitic suffix) can be used, as in *jak to się pisze po polsku?*, ‘how is this written in Polish?’ (compare Spanish *cómo se escribe este en polaco?*). Typically

however, the form *być*, ‘to be’, is used + past participle, e.g. *praca jest skończona*, ‘the work is finished’, *dom był budowany*, ‘the house was built’.

• **Greek** Finally, the development of periphrastic forms is also evident in Greek, one of Szemerényi’s maximalist languages in its classical form. The modern language still retains synthetic forms such as a middle voice, yet has developed an analytic form in both its future simple continuous forms. The development of analysis was evident already in antiquity, especially in Byzantine Greek when futurity was implied with a periphrasis of ἔχω (I have) or μέλλω (I intend, am about to) plus infinitive; this replaced the synthetic classical form, e.g. Classical Greek ἔξεις ‘you will have’ (Horrocks 1997: 229). From the early modern period, however, Greek employed θέλω ἵνα (literally ‘I want in order that’); this gave rise to the Modern Greek compound θά, which is used with the indicative present, e.g. θά εἶς, ‘you will have’ (Browning 1983: 8; also Hesse 2003). The eventual success of θέλω may be due to the influence of the Balkan *Sprachbund*, which sees the same verb being used in the other languages that make up this group (Sobolev 2004: 62).

The situation is thus one of complexity. Some languages, specifically the Germanic and Romance ones, show a substantial loss of synthetic forms in favour of analysis; others show a preference for a fully functioning synthetic system but with analytic elements, such as Polish and Greek. One issue that is clear is that most languages exhibit a degree of both and arguments for a European *Sprachbund* have consistently reinforced this fact; “Die europäischen Sprachen sind wohl alle zu den flektierenden zu rechnen – die ja durchaus nicht die Regel bilden” (Lewy 1964: 26). Of course, arguing for and delineating such a *Sprachbund* is controversial and highly difficult (Heine & Kuteva 1996; Haspelmath 2001), but if a survey of synthesis were to be carried out of Indo-European languages, the picture

that would emerge would be a varied one, not only on a synchronic level, but importantly on a diachronic one as well. Latin and its Romance vernaculars are therefore not the only languages to undergo such changes, and it seems clear that there may be some kind of underlying linguistic process: “Not many of the world’s languages have a richly recorded history, but many that do have undergone morphological simplification” (Lightfoot 2006: 101).

An explanation for this variation was offered by Kusters (2003a), in another interesting paper, where he suggested that socio-historical factors are of upmost importance in the loss of complex verbal systems. His theory is that “the more second language learning has taken place in a speech community, the more internal dialect contact and migrations occurred, and the less prestige a language has, the more transparent and economic the verbal inflection will become” (2003a: 275). Such a view was also shared by Bodmer (1944: 204): “like other formative processes, levelling or regularization by analogy [of synthetic forms into analytic ones] waxes in periods of illiteracy and culture contact, waning under the discipline of script”. Kusters takes his evidence from Classical Arabic and Old Norse and their descendents. Thus, Icelandic is extremely conservative in its morphology and syntax, and to a large extent highly comparable to Old Norse. This is because of Iceland’s geographical isolation, the position of the language as one of prestige amongst its own communities, social stability and the lack of second language learners. He compares this with Norwegian Bokmål, which witnessed considerable loss of synthesis from its grammatical system due to the complex movement of peoples, the political subjugation of the country and the position of its language as non-prestigious, relegated to a spoken idiom of a principally peasant population. He also argues effectively that modern Arabic dialects differ in proximity to Classical Arabic depending on their social history; thus, the Arabic of Najd, a

sparse and remote desert region, is more synthetic than the Arabic of more urban Morocco. In a similar vein, it has also been suggested that inflexions were lost in Old English due to the problems of communication between Old English and Old Norse speakers (Townend 2002: 197).

The implications of such a proposal are interesting because if spoken Latin lost some of its synthetic elements in the post-Roman world, then it certainly fits Kuster's hypothesis of social factors. This was a time of population movements and widespread re-settling of ethnic groups; it must be imagined that a great number of these people approached Latin as a second language, perhaps speaking a form of Germanic as their native tongue. Whilst Classical Latin still retained prestige, the spoken idiom was becoming increasingly distanced from this and would have to wait another thousand years or so before it was even considered a language worth writing literature in.

There are some wider methodological problems with this approach: if it were the case that languages become more transparent under such social duress, then it follows that Latin had been subject to such changes from the beginning of Rome's expansion. Presumably, archaic Latin speakers in the late Iron Age used synthetic passives and deponents without cause for concern, and problems only started following military expansion. In the thousand or so years between that point and the post-Roman world, it seems that such social factors had been prominent throughout, especially in the case of second-language learners. If this were the case, then it is difficult to see why Latin would not have become more grammatically transparent beforehand. In response to this, it is possible that the changes were taking place, just rather slowly. It has already been noted that there was some apparent

instability between deponent and active forms, and analytic passive forms are known in Cicero. It is not unusual to see features in archaic Latin that disappear, only to subsequently re-appear in Romance; perhaps the social factors of the post-Roman world were merely the final death blow. Alternatively, the nature of the Latin sources may mean that analysis was actually far more popularly used, but it simply is not reflected in the literature.

In answer to why synthetic passive was lost, then, no historical linguistic theory is entirely safe from argument. Neither can it be said that any argument is a priori an answer. However, it appears that there were two important processes at work. The first is a process apparently common in many Indo-European languages to increase grammatical transparency over time, and in this way Latin cannot be treated as an isolated example. The second process involves the complex social factors at play in the post-Roman west. It would be out of touch with modern linguistic theory to suggest that the loss of synthetic forms occurred ‘just because’, which besides being improbable is also a rather unsatisfactory answer. If there are no apparent linguistic reasons behind the change, then it makes sense to look towards social reasons, and those studies by scholars such as Kuster on other languages such as Arabic and Old Norse have demonstrated how social factors can impact on an increase in grammatical transparency.

## 6.11 The Relationship between Synthetic Passive and Deponent Verbs

If the disappearance of the Latin synthetic passive can be illuminated by comparison to similar processes in other languages, what of the deponent verbs? Deponent verbs were, of course, synthetic, but functioned along the same basis as normal active verbs and so there seems less reason for them to disappear. Indeed, many languages possess different synthetic verbal conjugations and some have still retained a deponent verb system. The different endings in the first person singular Polish verbs *kocham*, ‘I love’ and *kupię*, ‘I buy’, for example, seem no more difficult for a learner than *amo* and *mercor*, whilst to this day deponent verbs are found in languages such as Danish and Swedish, which have historically been subject to loss of synthesis (Hird, Huss & Hartman 1980: 110; Allen, Holmes & Lundskær-Nielsen 2000: 100). Interestingly, however, those Germanic languages that have retained deponent verbs have also retained a synthetic passive (Laanamets 2004). Likewise, Irish Gaelic was witness to a substantial diachronic preference towards analysis, including the loss of most of its synthetic passive apart from the third-person singular. This loss has been dated to around the ninth- and tenth-centuries, which was also when Old Irish deponent verbs began to disappear from use (Strachan 1893).

It is therefore proposed that the disappearance of the deponent verbs was linked to the loss of the passive. This is not because of any kind of grammatical relationship that might have existed in the minds of Latin speakers, but rather because of the loss of an analogical relationship. Deponent verbs had existed as what might be termed a grammatical isolate, a feature that had always been present in Latin but that had existed as a minority form and one that was anyway prone to alternation with normal active forms. The loss of the synthetic passive, which mirrored and hence served to reinforce the deponent conjugation, was a fatal

death blow for them because there no longer existed this analogy. As such, deponent verbs disappeared from use, either coming to be completely forgotten and replaced by a normal active synonym, or else analogically levelled with their normal active counterparts.

There are two main questions here: why and how did the synthetic passive and deponent verbs disappear? Both of these questions are very difficult to answer because of the superficial nature of the textual evidence, which can only be used as limited evidence. The most important notion is that Latin is not alone in its loss of synthesis, but part of a wider Indo-European trend in shifts from synthesis to analysis. Why this should occur is still a matter of debate, and no doubt will be for many years to come. It is not the aim of this thesis to explore the complex historical linguistic factors behind this change, although it seems possible that there exists a relationship between a preference for analysis and large-scale social factors. It is clear that the loss of the synthetic passive is equatable with this preference towards analysis. It is suggested that the loss of deponent verbs was linked with the loss of the Latin passive form. The question of when they disappeared is equally as problematic, but an investigation of the monastic rules shows at least that both still appear to have been in use in the Iberian Peninsula at the start of the seventh century, and so arguably their disappearance occurred after this date.

## **6.12 The Monastic Rules and the Wright Thesis**

In many ways, the Wright thesis sits well with the Latinity of the monastic rules and their cultural context. It was shown in Chapter Three that Visigothic monastic society seems to have been as aural as it was literate, and the idea of one person glossing forms in an oral

recitation to make them comprehensible to a listening audience is relatively easy to fathom. It is also clear that many Latin sentences would be fairly easy to read aloud as Romance because they shared a virtually identical syntax, vocabulary and grammar. Such an assertion poses few problems. Walsh (1992: 205-206) gives the following example from a mid-eleventh-century document (his translation into Modern Spanish follows):

*“Et quando dedit domno Migael Citiz illa casa ad illo abbate, ille jacente in suo lectu, uenit filio de Rodrigo Moniiz et suo uassallo et prendiderunt suo clerigo ad sua uarua et souarunt illum et jactarunt eum in terra ad te suos pedes de illo abbate”*

“Y cuando dio dueño Miguel Cidez la casa al abad, él yacente en su lecho, vino el hijo de Rodrigo Moniz y su vasallo y prendieron su clérigo a su barba y sobáronlo y echáronlo en tierra ante [?] los pies del abad”.

In this instance, it would be relatively easy for any reader to gloss the text into a Romance form, and Walsh’s translation shows how close Latin can be to Modern Spanish.

However, this sentence works particularly well because of the use of pronouns and other markers such as prepositions, which are absent in many earlier Latin texts. Where features may be recognisable or easily assimilated, there is much to be said in favour of the Wright thesis. However, the problem arises when forms appear that are not recognisable or easily assimilated. Many sentences in the monastic rules, for example, would present much

more difficulty. To take a random example from the monastic rules (the Modern Spanish translation follows taken from Melia & Ruiz (1971): 155):

*“Quisque frater pro qualibet neglegentia uel reatu arguitur uel excommunicatur et tamen humiliter uel petit ueniam uel confitetur lacrimabiliter, congruam ei remissionis et indulgentie medellam tribuetur”*.<sup>574</sup>

“A todo monje que es castigado o excomulgado por alguna fragilidad o culpabilidad, pero humildemente pide perdón o lo reconoce con lágrimas, se le otorgará el remedio conveniente del perdón e indulgencia”.

Clearly in this case, the Modern Spanish translation is not as close as that of Walsh’s example above. It is, of course, far from clear what a ‘Romance’ pronunciation might have looked like in the seventh century, but the point should be understood: reading as Romance will work better with some sentences than others.

Whilst it is relatively simple to gloss words in terms of their pronunciation, such an exercise will prove fruitless if it is glossing whole grammatical forms that no longer exist in the spoken language and are not recognised by its readers. This is especially important for the case of deponent and synthetic passive verb forms: since they do not appear in Romance, anyone reading a text that came across them would presumably find them either unintelligible

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<sup>574</sup> *Rule of Fructuosus* 16.

and have to gloss the form with a Romance alternative that may or may not be correct, or else they would have had to have learnt the forms formally. This incongruity in the history of synthetic passives and deponents in early Romance is one of extreme importance. Despite this, neither of the terms appear in the index to Wright's most important works (1982, 2002). His explanation that they would have been subject to a 'Romance' pronunciation, but perhaps unintelligible, reveals little about their history and is in many ways unsatisfactory.

Whilst it is one thing to accommodate recognisable archaisms, it is quite another to accommodate forms that might be utterly alien. A fitting example could be taken from the Lord's Prayer, as it is written in the King James Bible of 1611. The first lines are familiar to many English-speakers: "*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.*" The form of early modern English used here is still largely intelligible, albeit through passive competence, and it possesses a bookish and archaic feel to it that some of the higher-register Latin literature might have possessed to a Latin-speaker. However, it is understandable only to a certain extent. Probably the majority of listeners would understand "art" to be part of the verb 'to be', likely, but erroneously, the third person singular, and would recognise "thy" to be equivalent with 'your'.<sup>575</sup> Few listeners, if questioned, would be

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<sup>575</sup> Incidentally, "art" is the present second person singular of the verb 'to be' and was a relic of the earliest English translations from Latin, which uses the second person "*qui es in caelis*". In itself, this is sufficient to cause confusion. In a recent internet blog written by an academic linguist, the blogger admits: "When I was a kid in Newfoundland, we said the Lord's Prayer every morning at school [...] I knew 'art' was a verb, in 'Our Father, who art in heaven', but I understood it as some verbal counterpart of the noun 'art', as in skill, work, magic, the opposite of the 'dark arts' -- you know, arcane, mysterious *art*. 'To art' in this sense would mean something like, 'to work (magic)'. So I thought we were intended to be addressing 'Our Father, who works (magic) in heaven...' It wasn't until much later that it occurred to me that this was in fact just an arcane, mysterious form of the verb 'to be'." (<http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/003856.html>).

able to explain why it is ‘thy’ and not ‘thou’, or why, later on in the Lord’s Prayer, ‘thine’ replaces ‘thou’ in the line: “For thine is the Kingdom”.

This constitutes, therefore, a passive competence distanced clearly from active competence, to the extent that the sentences are intelligible, but only with severe limitations; most listeners would probably group together ‘thee’, ‘thou’, ‘thine’ and ‘thy’ into a general lexical group meaning ‘you’ or ‘your’, depending on the context.<sup>576</sup> One can imagine a similar situation in Latin, whereby listeners might associate passively, for example, any verbs with –ns – or – nt – at the end to be a present participle, regardless of whether they could decline correctly the endings themselves, or else only use the relative pronoun ‘quod’ within their own speech (> Sp. *que*), but passively recognise all of its declensions in Latin.

In this respect, Walsh (1991), in a volume edited by Wright, highlighted the difficulty of Wright’s position in this respect: “I suspect, perhaps out of a desire to take a position diametrically opposed to the traditional one [Wright] pushed the point a little too far, at times even ignoring the thrust of his own evidence” (*ibid.*: 205). Indeed, the very fact that the Latin passive and deponent verbs are not really discussed by Wright does seem strange given his typically clear and informed arguments.

Some scholars, however, have attempted to study the passive and deponent synthetic forms within the context of the Wright thesis. Green (1991), for example, took a pro-Wright

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<sup>576</sup> *Thou* is actually the nominative form, whilst *thee* is accusative. *Thy* and *thine* are the attributive and predicative genitive forms respectively.

stance in his discussion focussed primarily on the Latin passive, although his results have little to offer. He used evidence from the early-second-century letters of Claudius Terentius, in which the use of synthetic forms in letters, which he deemed to be in a “slightly slangy, jokey” language (*ibid.*: 93), meant that they must have been in use in spoken language. Conversely, the fourth century *Peregrinatio* of Egeria apparently used synthetic forms to try and “raise the tone” of her writing. Exactly why the synthetic forms might indicate ‘formality’ is an interesting methodological point, yet not discussed. If it were the case that by a certain date (for Green, the sixth century), only higher registers of language made use of synthetic forms, then the fact that they are still appearing in the Visigothic slates some centuries later, traditionally used as evidence for the spoken language, means that Green’s interpretation is flawed (Velazquez Soriano 2004: 535).

His final interpretation is that deponent forms existed in a ‘half-life’ for a long period, unintelligible to some and glossed by others who knew how: “*portarum* had to be read as [de las ‘pwertas] and *cantatur* as [es kan’tado] or [se ‘kanta]” (1991: 96). He then adds, “the sheer mental agility required must make us wonder how consistently this feat could have been performed” (*ibid.*: 96). Indeed, such a feat was unlikely to have been consistently achieved. What is more, ‘half-life’ is a fuzzy and misleading metaphor that reveals little about both sociolinguistic and historical linguistic problems.

### **6.13 The Wright Thesis: General Conclusions**

The Wright thesis recognises that questions such as ‘when is Latin no longer Latin’ are unhelpful, and draws instead upon a much more advanced avenue of enquiry, seeking

when people became conscious that the language they spoke was no longer Latin. However, even this more holistic approach raises its own issues. First, linguistic awareness does not correlate necessarily with linguistic fact, and even if Alcuin's reforms did create a sudden awareness of extended diglossia, this reveals comparatively little about when it may actually have occurred. Also, the diatopic and sociological variations of Latin as a spoken language meant that its speakers were often aware of differences between speech registers and the written language. This was shown in Chapter Five, in the discussion concerning Isidore's linguistic register. The question could be asked, then: why would the reforms of Alcuin create such an impact, when the idea of differences between the written and the spoken language were perhaps already well established?

A second problem is that Wright would declare that in the period of the monastic rules, people might have been writing in Latin, but they were reading in Romance. As such, he denies the differentiation between Latin and Romance: "Proto-Romance was the speech of all; it is unnecessary to postulate anything else" (1982: 44). The negation of any difference between the two, whether linguistic or conceptual, is an important element of his thesis. However, the problem with such an assertion is clearly that Latin and Romance are not the same language, and there are many features that are typical of one but not shared with the other; the synthetic passive and deponent verb forms are examples of such features. Wright is overtly a scholar of Romance, not Latin, and despite his claim that Romance and Latin are one and the same, such treatment would lead to the ignoring of many independent aspects of the history of both Romance and Latin.

A third problem is that most of Wright's work concerns the post-Roman and medieval worlds, but he never ventures to suggest for how long had people been speaking Romance and writing Latin? Did the classical Roman writers really make use of so many deponent verbs and synthetic passives, only to view them as archaic or gloss them when they were reading? This seems unlikely, and even if were true that deponent verbs and the synthetic passive were archaic to classical authors, then they must have been in use in the spoken language at some point, and so when did they drop out of use? In essence, it cannot be sufficient to treat the Alcuin reforms merely as a *terminus post quem* without any reference to the prior thousand years or so of written history and sociolinguistic nuances of the Latin language, and the Wright thesis does little to address this history.

A hypothetical scene will suffice to demonstrate this. In the second century AD, there existed a monoglot Latin-speaking slave in Italy, who had been captured and taken from his family as a baby following a war outside of the boundaries of the Empire. This slave had been raised in Italy and knew only his spoken variety of Latin, with which he was able to communicate effectively and fluently with all other Latin-speakers of all social levels. However, he lacked any form of literate education. Whilst serving dinner one evening, he overheard some works of the Roman poet Ennius being recited to his master and his friends. Despite not knowing what he was listening to, he recognised the language as a form of Latin but he was otherwise unable to understand it perfectly due to its often arcane and archaic vocabulary and purposefully altered and manipulated syntax. This would imply that the slave recognised that his Latin was sufficiently different from the Latin of the text he heard being recited so as to impede intelligibility. However, this consciousness did not mean that the slave deemed himself to no-longer be Latin-speaking. The example is admittedly hypothetical, but could have happened. The importance lies in the fact that the existence of a

linguistic consciousness of the variant nature between the spoken and written registers of Latin could have occurred hundreds of years earlier than Wright's hypothesis. Importantly, even when it did occur, it does not necessarily imply that the listener would presume that they no longer spoke Latin, no more so that the modern reader of Shakespeare would presume that they no longer spoke English.

A fourth problem is that if Latin and Romance are not the same language, then there is incongruity in the suggestion that an audience or reader could simply make relatively easy changes to Latin elements in order to make them into Romance because there are some Latin forms that are too distanced from their Romance counterparts in order to make that change with any ease or without training. Where there exists such morphological incongruity, as is the case of deponents and the synthetic passive, Wright would have a speaker either analogically level a deponent verb into an active form, or else replace completely the passive form with a Romance periphrasis, perhaps having to use a different verb. This might have been possible for some readers who were educated to a relatively high level, as some of them must have been. Nevertheless, it cannot be taken for granted that all readers would have possessed such abilities. Of course, all of the monastic rules refer to the literate abilities of monks; even if only one in ten monks could read, this presumably means for adherents of the Wright thesis that one in ten monks would be able to gloss the forms, which would perhaps be sufficient for when they were being read out loud. However, the difficulty of such a task should not be underestimated, and the ability to carry it out would require a considerably high reading confidence.

In its totality, then, the Wright thesis reveals only a few sides of the multifaceted story of the Latin to Romance transition, principally that of pronunciation. What it does reveal, however, it does so very well. It has also been extremely successful in forcing scholars to question the relationship between spoken language and orthography. This author does not have a problem with the idea that a Visigoth would read Latin with a regional accent, or even incorporate features that were indicative of his spoken language whilst he was reading. In fact, this seems entirely sensible. However, he would argue that, in a similar vein to Church Slavonic (below), the audience of the monastic rules would not consider them to be written in a language that was different from their own, merely perhaps bookish or archaic, but nevertheless perfectly accessible. This agrees with Wright, who would say that a reader or listener would consider themselves to be reading and speaking Latin; the difference is that they were actually speaking Romance. However, this author would argue that they were actually speaking in a language sufficiently similar to the written text to be the same language: Latin, not Romance.

As one Galician scholar has stated: “o problema da aceptación das teses de Wright é [...] mais de índole cuantitativa que cualitativa, dado que nos documentos compostos por e para persoas máis iletradas [...] quedarán sen entender completamente” (López Silva 2000: 91). From the perspective of synthetic passives and deponents, then, the Banniard thesis works better than that of Wright, and it seems likely that the written and spoken varieties were still sufficiently homogenous in the seventh century to permit intelligibility.

#### 6.14 “Loquendum est Russice et scribendum est Slavonicae”<sup>577</sup>

Some important questions have been raised in this thesis concerning language. These include, importantly, questions about how written texts were used in a society where the spoken language was not necessarily similar to, and perhaps even increasingly divergent from, the written language. These are such important questions that those who study them cannot afford to do so without an interdisciplinary approach. It therefore seems fitting to conclude this section with a suggestion for further study.

Church Slavonic, also sometimes called Old Church Slavonic or Old Bulgarian (Matthews 1950: 466-467), is the name given to the language created by the ninth-century missionaries Cyril and Methodius based on an old Macedonian dialect<sup>578</sup> that is still used today in the Orthodox Church. Following the acceptance of Christianity by Prince Vladimir in 988, the use of Church Slavonic spread throughout both Kievan and Muscovite Rus', and subsequently played a large role in the standardisation of various Eastern Slavonic literary languages (primarily Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Ruthenian).

To date, scholars generally have not made the comparison between Latin and Church Slavonic. Part of the reason why is that Slavists consistently warn against it. For example: “The role of Church Slavonic in Russia and other Orthodox Slav lands looks similar to that of Latin in the parts of Europe dominated by the patriarchate of Rome; but the resemblance is superficial” (Milner-Gulland 1997: 140). This is because Latin and vernacular in the

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<sup>577</sup> A famous dictum taken from the preface of Wilhelm Ludolf's (1690) *Grammatica Russica*.

<sup>578</sup> It has recently been argued by Orłóś (2005) that Church Slavonic was also heavily influenced by Moravian dialects, where it was initially used as a preaching tool.

medieval west were recognised as two different languages; Church Slavonic and vernacular were not: “unlike Latin among west and central Europeans, it was not sensed by its users as “other” [...] This would have astonished an early Russian, who did not even have the term Church Slavonic at his disposal. Far from being linguistically alien to him, what we call Church Slavonic was perceived as the time-hallowed, lofty register of Russian” (Milner-Galland 1998: 5). A further reason why the Latin / Church Slavonic comparison does not sit well for Slavists is that Church Slavonic, unlike Latin, was a specifically created literary language primarily for liturgical reasons. In the earliest periods, much of its literature therefore comprised literal translations of Byzantine religious texts, and autochthonous literature does not appear until the eleventh century.

However, whilst a comparison to the relationship between vernacular and later Medieval Latin may be unwise, there are reasons to compare it with the situation of spoken and written Latin in the early medieval period. First, both Latin and Church Slavonic in the early middle Ages were liturgical languages, meaning that they were both the first language of liturgy, but not necessarily the same as those native vernacular speakers who attended church. As such, they are notable for certain characteristics that are peculiar to these kinds of languages (Keane 1997; Sawyer 1999). Second, both are in a large way representative of an archaic and codified form of a regionalised version of the spoken dialects that functioned within a model of classic diglossia over a large geographical area that was made up of speakers of related, yet distanced, vernaculars (Worth 1978).<sup>579</sup> In the case of Latin, this was

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<sup>579</sup> The exception to this is in areas such as modern-day Romania, which used Church Slavonic up until the eighteenth century. Its loss was concomitant with the incorporation of the Latin alphabet, replacing the Cyrillic one, and the promotion of Latin rather than Slavic vocabulary (Berend 2003:

the region of Latium in central Italy; for Church Slavonic, a southern Slavonic dialect from the area around modern Macedonia.

It is interesting to note that the conscious understanding of a divergence between the spoken and written language in the case of Church Slavonic is understood to have come about through orthographic reform. In Russia it was due to the reforms of Peter the Great (1672-1725), whose cultural revolutions saw a simplification of Cyrillic orthography, as well as a drive towards the creation of a new standardised Russian language that was intelligible to all, not just those steeped in Church Slavonic: “It was a language purged of the more recondite Slavonic grammatical forms, stock words and phrases, and esoteric scribal devices, and written in a more straightforward Russian vernacular style [...] Meanwhile, Church Slavonic [...] was soon frozen in its traditional role as the formal language of the official church and some of its sectarian offshoots. And so it has remained” (Cracraft 2003: 104). Clearly, there are important differences here from what Wright is proposing. Although in Russia the distinction is more gradual and co-ordinated, the important role of orthographical reform nevertheless rings true for both.

Church Slavonic and Latin were also probably used in a similar context of literacy. Literacy levels in medieval Rus’ attract similar debate as those in the early medieval west (Franklin 1985; Marker 1990). Discoveries such as the Novgorod *gramoty*<sup>580</sup> provide a

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53-54). Here, of course, there would have been a case of bilingualism since the primary audience were Romance-speaking.

<sup>580</sup> These are a collection of around one thousand texts, including letters, school exercises and official documents, written on birch bark and found preserved in the boggy soil of the Russian city Novgorod

similar context to the Visigothic *pizarras* or Albertini *tablettes*, and suggest a complex situation, at least in some regions, with strong elements of pragmatic literate ability amongst the lay population. Views on medieval Russian literacy have changed considerably in the last century or so, especially in the understanding of pre-Christian literacy, but in a similar scenario within the early medieval west, it seems likely that there existed in some cases substantial pragmatic literacy and use of the written word outside of ecclesiastical circles. In addition, just as in the early medieval west, the written word was an integral part of the religious culture, whether or not its adherents were able to read (Sapunov 1978: 218-220).

Importantly, the interplay between reading and listening remained just as complex in Muscovite Rus' as it did in Visigothic Iberia: the two verbs in Old Russian were not only related, but could also be synonymous: слушать, 'to listen' and читать, 'to read' (Franklin 1985: 9). In its sum then, whilst comparisons between Church Slavonic and Latin may be less appealing for the later medieval period, it is a valid comparison for the early medieval period: both cultures did not yet appear to view the written language as distinct from their spoken version: both examples existed in a linguistic region characterised by different, yet mutually intelligible, dialects; in both cases the literary language was associated with the liturgy and as such was a sacred language; literacy levels seemed to have been more or less similar between them.

Like the situation that can be supposed of spoken Latin in antiquity, it is generally agreed that in the early medieval period, the Slavonic language family was sufficiently

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that have come to light since the 1950s. The collection has been digitised and is available on-line at <http://gramoty.ru/>.

homogenous as to permit the southern dialect that formed the basis for Church Slavonic to function as a more or less acceptable vehicle for Slavonic-speakers elsewhere (Horálek 1992: 29-43). However, it is also possible from the earliest manuscript evidence in the tenth and eleventh centuries to see recensions that betray a sense of regionalism; again, like its Latin counterpart, “the history of the Slavonic languages [...] is a development from unity to plurality” (Auty 1964: 258; Vinokur 1971: 62-64; Stankiewicz 1987).

The incorporation of regionalisms, which led to various geographical recensions, created from the eleventh century onwards various literary languages. One of the most important is known as Old Russian, essentially a Russified version of Church Slavonic: “the Old Russian literary language was essentially the product of hybridisation and amalgamation in which the Slavonic book language and everyday eastern Slavonic were mingled” (Vinokur 1971: 29). This language was the vehicle for most literature until the Petrine reforms, which saw widespread changes in Russian orthography and standardisation, after which it formed the basis of modern standard Russian and became increasingly divergent from Church Slavonic (Cracraft 2004: 1-39). Old Russian had existed in a state of classic diglossia with the everyday, spoken vernacular (Uspensky 1984; Lunt 1987). In many aspects, the scenario reads very much like early medieval Latin, namely a codified literary version of the language that was used in literature and church compared with the everyday spoken version, but not necessarily thought of as being a different language.

A useful analogy is to look at how contemporary speakers approached this diglossia. It has already been mentioned how Latin-speakers did not seem to recognise the written and spoken registers as being different languages until relatively late, according to Wright, at

least, in the eighth century. Exactly the same happened amongst the inhabitants of Rus', who did not recognise a system of bilingualism, but rather of different registers of the same language. This is despite the fact that the two could be considerably different and in some cases the Church Slavonic could not be perfectly understood by the audience. Indeed, the sixteenth century Polish Jesuit, Piotr Skarga, had bemoaned Church Slavonic in his *O jedności kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem*, because no one could understand it fully (Plokhy 2006: 294):

*“Z słowieńskiego języka nigdy żaden uczonym być nie może. A już go teraz przecie prawie nikt doskonale nie rozumie. Bo tey na świecie naciey nie masz, któraby im tak, jako w księgach jest, mówiła a swych też reguł, gramatyk i kalepinów do wykładu niema, ani już mieć może. Ztąd popi waszy, gdy co w słowiańskim chcą rozumieć, do polskiego się udać muszą po tłumactwo”*.<sup>581</sup>

Ivan Vyshenskiy, in his “Knyzhka” reacted to this, arguing that it does not matter if the language of liturgy cannot be understood:

“И што нѣкоторые наши на словенский язык хулят и не любят, да знаеши запевно, як того майстра дѣйством и рыганем духа его поднявши творят. Ато для того диявол на словенский язык борбу тую мает, зане ж ест плодоноснѣйший от всѣх языков и богу

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<sup>581</sup> “No one can ever be a learned man through the Slavonic language. And almost nobody understands it perfectly now. For there is no nation in the world that would speak it the way it is in the books; and this language has not, and can no longer have, its rules, grammars and Calepinos. Hence your priests have to turn to Polish for translations if they want to understand anything”.

любимший: понеж без поганских хитростей и руководств, се ж ест граматик, рыторык, диалектик и прочих коварств тщеславных, диявола вомѣстных, простым прилежным чтанием, без всякого ухищрения, к богу приводит, простоту и смиренне будует [...] Мнѣ ся видит, лѣпше ест ани аза знати, толко бы до Христа ся дотиснути, который блаженную простоту любит и в ней обитель собѣ чинит и там ся упокоивает. Тако да знаете, як словенский язык пред богом честнѣйший ест и от еллинскаго и латинского.”<sup>582</sup>

It is interesting here to note that Vyshenskiy deems it better not to know *aza* (лѣпше ест ани аза знати), the first letter of the Church Slavonic alphabet, and know Christ, rather than neither. Since this is in reply to Skarga’s attack on the use of Church Slavonic in the liturgy when no one could understand it, the presumption here must be that intelligibility of the liturgy was not the prime concern of Vyshenskiy. This issue raises an important consideration. It shows that audiences do not have to always understand fully the texts that they are listening to or reading, and so perhaps modern scholars try too hard to create models of usage in which texts of differing linguistic registers are understood fully or accommodated.

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<sup>582</sup> If anyone from among ourselves condemns Slavic language and doesn’t love it, let him know that it is they that are making real the master activity of his spirit. It is because of this that the devil began his fight against the Slavic language because it is the most plentiful from among the rest of the languages and the most pleasant to God. It is without pagan craftiness and decree, that means without any grammar, rhetoric, dialectic or other low worthy craftiness, that contains in themselves the devil. The simple and diligent reading without any cunning leads towards God, creates simplicity and humility [...] It appears to me, that it is better not to know *aza*, but the Christ’s approach, that loves the blessed simplicity and in it He creates His dwelling where He dwells. Because of this, know that the Slavic language has more glory in front of God than Greek and Latin”.

Lower-registers of language were not permissible in religious works because it was considered blasphemous,<sup>583</sup> and this was an issue that was further confounded by the popularity of Hesychasm in medieval Rus', which advocated 'pure' speech as being divine (Sedlar 1994: 437-438). Nevertheless, nomenclature remained fluid and *slovenskij* (Slavonic) was used interchangeably to refer to the spoken language, whilst the *prosta mova* ('simple language') could refer equally to the higher literary register (Uspensky 1984: 366). Even in a society, then, where two languages were used that might now be considered linguistically as different languages, this was not recognised as such at the time. Presumably, then, early medieval Latin speakers need not necessarily have recognised their speech as being different from the literary written language, even if modern historians speculate that it may very well have been.<sup>584</sup>

This is illuminating because Wright proposes that even if there were substantial differences between a spoken 'Romance' and written 'Latin', there did not exist a conceptual distinction in the minds of its speakers. Part of the reason for this must lie in the fact that the

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<sup>583</sup> Some medieval thinkers thought that the spoken language had become distanced from Church Slavonic due to the influence of the Devil. Indeed, the Devil and demons were the only characters presented as speaking in Russian rather than Church Slavonic in literature and the Devil was said to have shirked at the Church Slavonic name *bes* and preferred the Russian *čert* (Uspensky 1984: 384).

<sup>584</sup> Even today, the Slavonic languages continue to provide a unique example. Textbooks from the period of the USSR, for example, are likely to talk about Eastern Slavonic languages (Ukrainian and Belorussian) simply as dialects of Russian. Today, however, processes of language consciousness are currently taking place that may be comparable to Latin speakers in the early middle Ages. Whilst Belorussian is effectively in decline in the face of Russian, Ukrainian is undergoing resurgence in the face of political independence from Russia. Nowadays, especially in Western Ukraine, Ukrainian has become firmly established and consciously distinct from Russian. Hence, Ukrainian has transformed from dialect to language in the minds of its speakers, despite minimal linguistic change and the retention of a large degree of mutual intelligibility with Russian.

two would have been nevertheless similar and, in many cases, easily reconcilable. This is certainly the case for Slavonic, and it is interesting to note that something similar to the Wright thesis has also been postulated elsewhere. Worth (1999) has noted that medieval Russian-speakers would have not necessarily seen Church Slavonic as a foreign language for the fact that not only was there little difference between the vernaculars, but it would have been relatively easy to convert Church Slavonic forms to Russian. Auty (1977) also notes that “the differences between [Church Slavonic] of the Bulgarian variety and the East Slavonic vernacular of Rus’ must at that period have been very slight, particularly as the language will certainly have from the outset been pronounced by the Russians in accordance with the phonological system of their own language” (*ibid.*: 10).

Another useful analogy is to see how Church Slavonic and vernacular Russian forms might have interacted, especially if a listener was not completely *au fait* with Church Slavonic forms. Syntactical variation is perhaps the most superficial and generally the easiest to adapt to. Variations in morphology, on the other hand, can cause larger problems but are less of an issue in Russian than in Latin and Romance because there is less diachronic change in its forms. Whereas Romance, for example, loses many of the synthetic elements of Latin, Russian continues to be largely synthetic and many of the developments are less noticeable (Vlasto 1986: 81-187).

The clearest picture can be gained from vocabulary and its associated pronunciation, since this is where the difference is most obvious. It was observed above that many differences were generally easy to reconcile by Russian speakers and this can be demonstrated by using some examples given by Vinokur (1971: 61; Church Slavonic

versions first): градъ – городъ, ‘town’; свѣшта – свѣча, ‘candle’; надежда – надежа, ‘hope’. Presumably, inferring the former forms if only the latter were generally used in everyday speech would have been relatively easy and a similar situation could be hypothesised for early medieval Latin (here, Latin and Spanish): *ciuitas* – ciudad; *pietas* – piedad; *murus* – muro; *niger* – negro etc. This would have been the case even more so if a single reader were able to orally adapt words to a Romance pronunciation. Church Slavonic forms were also indicative of higher literary registers, a scenario again seen in literary and spoken Latin: *caput* – testa; *domus* – casa; *equus* – caballus etc. Sometimes there also existed semantic differences between these synonyms rather than solely one of register. In the pair храмъ – хоромъ, ‘house’, for example, the former is normally used to refer to a church (i.e. God’s house) and the latter to a house in general. Similarly, in the pair врагъ – ворогъ, ‘devil’, the former is only ever used to refer to the Antichrist, and the latter as an insult to describe a person (Vinokur 1971: 63). This observation is similar to Politzer’s theory of synonymic doublets that was discussed in Chapter Three, whereby learned and unlearned vocabulary was employed side by side.

The way in which these two registers might have interacted, then, can illuminate how the situation might have been in early medieval written and spoken Latin. One of the most important points is that the methodological problems in the Latin / Romance debate are in no way confined to this language group and by casting a wider philological net, useful comparisons can be drawn. Another crucial point, and one which lends support to the Wright thesis, is that the case of Slavonic highlights well how diglossia, perhaps even that which is now recognised as being extended diglossia, i.e. between two separate languages, by modern linguists, can function without conscious recognition by its historical users. It also highlights the processes through which two different registers of the same language can become two

separate languages through a combination of diachronic change and language reform, in this case the reforms of Alcuin and Peter the Great. This overview of Church Slavonic has been necessarily short, but, if anything, it highlights not only how unsuitable a black and white approach of liminality is to the problem of relationships between written and spoken languages in the early medieval period, but also that help can be drawn from comparisons to other languages and their history.

### **6.15 Monastic Rules and Other Texts**

It was demonstrated previously that a monk might have come into contact with various texts in a monastery. Notwithstanding monastic rules, these include hagiography and, above all, readings from the Bible. It was also noted in Chapter Five that the Latinity of the monastic rules often has very little to differentiate it from other contemporary and preceding Classical texts. This is particularly true for its morphology. It is fitting to enquire whether the evidence presented by the monastic rules fits with the evidenced supplied from other texts. There is not enough space in this thesis, of course, to scrutinise the language of texts that might have been included in the office, for example, or even that of the Bible itself. However, some brief remarks will be pertinent.

In the first instance, many of the linguistic features, and even peculiarities (at least when compared with much Classical Latin literature), of the monastic rules were shared with other texts with which a monk might have come into contact. This was due on the one hand to the period in which they were written (for example, the copulative use of *uel*, or the extended use of the pronoun), and on the other hand to the influence of Christianity (for example,

lexical expansions, restrictions and neologisms). With regards to the Bible, Burton (2000), in his study on the Latinity of the Old Latin Gospels, noted similar features as those listed in Chapter Five. Of course, biblical texts were written in a Latinity representative of a period a few centuries before the monastic rules. However, the evidence suggests that deponent verbs and synthetic passive forms, for example, were still in use. With regards to the deponent verbs in particular, Burton noted that: “it is still difficult to regard the survival and continuing productivity of the deponential system as wholly artificial” (*ibid.*: 182).

It is impossible to know exactly which texts were read in a monastery. However, many likely contenders display similar levels of Latinity as the monastic rules. To take an example at random, many of the texts written by Valerius of Bierzo seem to have been destined for a monastic audience. For example, he writes in his *De monachis perfectis*: “*Iam dudum animis nostris insedit, dilectissimi fratres, monachorum singularis uitae propositum declarare, atque omnium meritorum praeconia recensere quo et ipsi maiore studio in melius crescant et aliis forma sint et exemplum*”. The Latinity of Valerius’ writings have been studied elsewhere, and the results demonstrate a language system that is very similar to those of the monastic rules (Puerto 2005). Of course, this is just one author out of many possible, but the point should be clear that many texts would present to a Visigothic listener or reader similar linguistic contexts.

The practice of the liturgy, meanwhile, is a difficult issue to study, if only because it can never be absolutely certain which texts were used.<sup>585</sup> However, the topic deserves

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<sup>585</sup> Thus Díaz y Díaz (1980: 61), “The Visigothic liturgy [...] developed in its various non-Biblical sections with great freedom all through the seventh century, and beyond”.

mention at least because Liturgical Latin has been brought recently to attention. Liturgical Latin is a specific type of Christian Latin promoted by Mohrmann (1957) in particular that was used to describe the Latin of liturgical texts. For Mohrmann, this Latin was a hieratic language that people were unwilling to change due to its perceived sanctity. This meant that it was more immune to change than the spoken language, and even other written genres: “This language was far removed from that of everyday life, a fact which was certainly appreciated, since, at the time, people still retained the *sens du sacré*” (*ibid.*: 54).

Rose (2003) has recently criticised this approach through her study of the *Missale Gothicum*, and instead has argued that liturgical texts can be a fruitful source in the investigation of linguistic and literary issues in the period in which they were written. The texts of the Visigothic liturgy have certainly not been ignored in modern scholarship; Díaz y Díaz in particular has contributed to both their literary and linguistic study (1965; 1980). However, the work of Rose has certainly drawn to attention the fact that there is much more research to be done here: “Without exaggeration once can state that the study of liturgical Latin is a wasteland” (*ibid.* 97).

It is interesting to note, however, that a recent work on the Visigothic liturgy has taken the opposite view. Dell’Ellicine (2008) says the following about its language: “el vocabulario, sin embargo, vuelve a mostrarse ajeno al cotidiano; la sintxis se apega a las formas clásicas; a nivel retórico hallamos nuevamente figuras elaboradas como paralelismos y anástrofes e incluso, en algunos casos, se insertan pasajes de profundo contenido lírico” (*ibid.*: 3). Dell’Ellicine proposes instead that audiences were involved in the liturgy not

necessarily through a close understanding of its language, but rather through communal repetition of phrases, the accumulation of repeated words and phrases, and metaphor.

This thesis, which concerns monastic rules, unfortunately cannot enter into a detailed discussion about the liturgy and the language in which it was couched. However, the two approaches above illustrate not only that there is potentially exciting research to be done in this area, but also that a monk would have probably had contact with texts of varying linguistic registers and literary styles. The linguistic implications of this need to be at least acknowledged. This thesis has centred explicitly on the monastic rules, but what of other texts? Many hagiographical and other preceptive texts, such as that of Valerius above, came from a similar geographical and linguistic context. The Bible, however, was written some centuries before, whilst certain Church Fathers, such as Augustine, presented varying levels of Latinity.

It would seem, then, that a monk would have come into contact with various texts. Although this chapter has critiqued the Wright thesis through the evidence of the monastic rules, the same conclusions cannot necessarily be reached for every other text which a monk might have read or heard read aloud. Nevertheless, the conclusions reached in this chapter suggest two important points. First, that the audience of the monastic rules most probably possessed at least a passive understanding of the synthetic passive and deponent verb forms. The difficulties of the Wright thesis with regard to this point have been highlighted, and from this perspective, the theory of Banniard has been preferred. Second, this chapter has aimed to show through the monastic rules that the question of language use in the early medieval

period is still a long way from being understood fully, and there is more work to be done here.

## **6.16 Conclusions**

This chapter has attempted to explore the issues of language use and language change within the specific confines of a certain linguistic problem, using the evidence presented by the monastic rules. It has perhaps veered slightly from the topic of the monastic rules in its more wide-ranging discussions, but this was intended. This final chapter aimed to use the monastic rules as evidence through which to explore these wider issues, and they have functioned as a launch-pad for this purpose.

Although drawing on arguments concerning the state of the contemporary language, this chapter does not purport to offer a new theory of the Latin to Romance transition. Instead, it aims to show that current understanding of it, and specifically the Wright thesis, is still not entirely satisfactory. New approaches to the subject, therefore, remain necessary and it continues to be, to a large extent, an open book.

However, it would be worth offering some preliminary remarks. The history of spoken Latin and Romance is one of a change from a situation of classic diglossia to one of extended diglossia. This change can be recognised when the passive competence of a Latin-speaker was no longer sufficient to be able to understand the written language of later Latin. Clearly, this is not a straightforward process: some contemporary speakers, even from the same region, will possess higher levels of competence than others due to factors such as

education. From the perspective of deponent verbs and the synthetic passive, the Banniard model of vertical communication and passive competence functions better than the Wright thesis. It seems clear that many of the Late Antique and early medieval Christian writers expected their audience to be able to more or less understand their texts, and it is been argued that this was certainly the case for the authors of the seventh century Visigothic monastic rules.

The evidence of deponent and synthetic passive forms therefore suggests that the audience of the monastic rules would have been speakers of a language identifiable as Latin. Although this language may have contained elements that are regarded now to be features of Romance, as it had done for many centuries, it also contained important elements that distinguished it from what scholars would now call Romance, such as the presence of deponent verbs and the synthetic passive. Issues of early medieval language use can never be about creating strict dichotomies of language use because this is an impossible task and one with which even dialectologists studying modern languages struggle. Rather, it must be asked when accommodation between the written and spoken forms had become impossible. There can be no doubt that this would have occurred at different speeds in different regions but the evidence of the monastic rules points to the fact that any linguistic discourse that took place between a Visigothic audience and the text did so in a language that can be properly called Latin, not Romance.

## Concluding Remarks

Naturally, there is much more that is yet to be achieved with regard to the topics discussed in this thesis. Each chapter has ended with its own concluding remarks and so there is no need to reiterate them here; to echo the words of Braulius of Zaragoza: “*iam autem finem sermoni faciam, ne tedium legenti ingeram*”.<sup>586</sup> Nevertheless, some more general concluding comments will be useful. This thesis has tried to begin to readdress an imbalance within modern scholarship through the study of the monastic rules of Visigothic Iberia from a number of approaches. The rationale behind this was that current historiographical approaches consider them too much to be minor or subsidiary texts and the study intended to demonstrate not only that monastic rules are texts that deserve, and require, far more scholarly attention than is currently awarded them, but also to highlight the type of information that can be gleaned from them if this attention is applied. In this sense, the principal end result is hopefully clear: monastic rules were important documents to their intended audiences and, if scholars wish to truly understand that audience, then they must also seek to understand what was important to them. In this sense, academic approaches to monasticism arguably require more focus on monastic rules.

Beyond this, however, are the fruits that monastic rules can offer as objects of study in their own right. This thesis has centred around two principal themes, literacy and language, which has required substantial reviews of issues surrounding textual culture and linguistic theory more generally. Both of these are of increasingly important concern to historical studies of all periods, although they are particularly popular in current research of

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<sup>586</sup> *Epistle* 19.

the Late Antique and early medieval worlds. In itself, then, any review of such topics could be considered a positive action and even if readers do not agree with the conclusions of this thesis, the attention drawn to the monastic rules as previously neglected evidence has by and large satisfied at least one of its aims. With regard to questions of literacy, the most important conclusion was that monastic *lectio* is best understood as a term with far wider connotations than simply 'reading'. It seems clear that *lectio* and a culture based on written sources was an important part of Visigothic monastic life, but also that textual culture included large elements of oral recitation and aural reception.

Building on the theme of 'textual communities', it is also clear that a Visigothic monk need not be literate in order to take part in literate culture. This is not only because the idea of *lectio* encompasses far wider activities than simple solitary reading, but also because the manner in which the monastic rules were written means that any hearer or reader is exposed to the literary sensibilities of the period. Whilst it is true that the monastic rules are technical texts and written in a low register of language, this does not mean that there are not literary influences at play, the direct result of the education of their authors and the place of the monastic rules in the development of Latin literature more generally; as such, the very act of hearing the text would have exposed the reader to this culture, whether they were aware of it or not. It also emphasises the fact that these texts are part of a literary history and contemporary culture that belong to a much wider landscape, and to remove them from this landscape is to fail to understand them fully.

Turning from one kind of language of the literary variety to another of the linguistic variety, it should be clear that there are still many questions that need answering. Perhaps the

problem is that they can never be answered, at least to the level that is required by scholars more used to working with historical records than with abstract linguistic theory. However, once again it is the case that even if readers do not agree with the conclusions of this thesis, the fact that it has brought into question issues of linguistic continuity and the problems of the relationship between Latin and Romance means that it has, in part, succeeded. There is a clear case that, in the eyes of the author, linguistic issues continue to remain outside mainstream historical studies, despite constituting an important part of the daily lives of the people or communities studied. Indeed, how can one fully study a society without understanding the language its inhabitants spoke, thought and wrote in? The reason for this neglect is perhaps that any conclusions are invariably too hazy to be attractive to most scholars, but this does not mean that they do not merit discussion. The success enjoyed by Roger Wright and his theory has varied depending on the academic field, but it does seem to be increasingly the case that his theory, although clearly not fact, is now an accepted factoid by many scholars within historical disciplines. This is an unfortunate situation because there still remain substantial problems with his interpretation, one of the biggest of which, the problem of deponent and synthetic passive verbs, has been discussed in this thesis.

Notwithstanding individual conclusions for each section, what seems to be very clear from this thesis is the necessity to understand audiences on a micro-level and the need to be careful with overarching generalisations. The most problematic term is perhaps that of ‘monastic’ itself, which can surely encompass a whole spectrum of communities. When talking about *lectio*, for example, it cannot even be taken for granted that each monk would have had access to the same materials or scriptural reading, and so the ability of different audiences to take part in *lectio* must have varied. The same can be said for issues surrounding literary culture and linguistic situation: each individual was different and so

would have experienced the monastic rule, and other texts with which he may have come into contact, in a slightly different way. Thus, what might seem odd syntax or vocabulary to one listener might have seemed less odd to another; whilst one monk might have picked up on a biblical allusion because he was better acquainted with the passage in question, it may have completely passed another by. Of course, this creates more problems than it solves because individual experiences, unless noted down, can never be known. However, sensible extrapolations can be made and if nothing else, scholarly approaches to any aspect of ‘audience’ must recognise that there are as many possibilities of reception as there are members of the audience and this vitality should always be accounted for.

This thesis has survived various disciplines. In a sense, this is perhaps its main weakness: since some of the topics are quite diverse from each other, it could be the case that any reader thinks that they are not treated sufficiently in-depth as important topics in their own right. Hopefully this is not the case, and the various topics of language and literacy are sufficiently related so as to form a coherent thrust of argument. However, there are two reasons why such an approach was felt to be justified. First, the fact that monastic rules are so little studied in modern scholarship means that a more holistic approach was perhaps even necessary to be able to take that first step towards a better understanding of their role in Visigothic monastic communities. Second, the various linguistic issues, as mentioned above, are very rarely subject to discussion in works of a historical nature, despite being an important part of the subjects’ daily lives. In this sense it was felt important to include them in order to bridge a gap that is not bridged as often as it perhaps should be.

A final point should be brought to attention: the lack of women in this thesis. Naturally, women occupied an important role in Visigothic society, and not just as a domestic ‘silent voice’: the Visigothic Brunhilda, for example, ruled alongside King Theuderic so badly that she met her end by being paraded naked on a camel before being dragged apart by horses.<sup>587</sup> The position of nuns was also important and clearly female monasticism did exist. This was discussed in Chapter Two. Unfortunately, the study of early medieval nuns and convents is still lagging behind that of their male counterparts, despite some recent excellent publications (McNamara 1996; Bitel 2002: 95-153). This was an issue that the author was continuously aware of whilst writing it and he hopes that the use of terms such as monk and abbot rather than nun and abbess are not seen as being purposefully exclusive. Part of the reason for this was simply because of ease of terminology; no doubt many of the experiences of both monks and nuns were similar, and so the use of a single term is in many ways meant to be widely encompassing. Another reason was that there is far less evidence of female asceticism in Visigothic Iberia, and so it did not seem right to include the terms when the evidence did not explicitly apply to them. The evidence, at face value, would seem to justify proclivity towards the male-centred experience, at least for a preliminary study such as this thesis.

It was stated above that I hoped to offer in this thesis a coherent thrust of argument. What is this argument? Starting with the premise that monastic rules are largely neglected texts, the aim of the thesis was essentially to look at the experiences of an audience with regard to the texts from a number of discourse approaches: what role did monastic rules have in the daily life of a monk? Were they important and how were they used? How did they

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<sup>587</sup> *Life of Desiderius* 21.

communicate with their audience, both in terms of literary function and from a linguistic perspective? Was the language they were written in the same language as that of their audience? The outcome has been, it is hoped, not only to attempt to answer these questions but also to demonstrate that monastic rules can be a valuable source to historians as primary texts in their own right and by trying to answer these questions, various other issues that are currently being addressed within academic circles have been re-evaluated in the light of their evidence.

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