La réforme monastique lotharingienne de le Vie de Jean de Gorze aux Gestab Gemblacensis

Anne Wagner, University of Franche-Comte

The Gorze reform is known thanks to two contemporary texts: the life of abbot John and the Miracles of St. Gorgon - mainly concerning properties. The life of Chrodegang, written at Gorze too, shows a desire of affirmation, at a time when the first fervor was probably dwindling, perhaps in a time of identity crisis during the abbacy of the austere Immo. The second phase of Gorze success was during the abbacy of Henry who had a large network of support from both family and bishops. The reform, as Kassius Hallinger demonstrated with too much ardour, affected practically the whole of the Empire. But locally what was the memory of the first Gorze? Nothing? At the abbey of Saint-Arnoul the life of John was attributed to Abbot John – of Saint-Arnoul. But in fact, it was not forgotten: Sigebert of Gembloux wrote the Vita Wichberti and the Gesta, in which Gorze is given the foremost place: Guibert, who founded Gembloux on property belonging to his family, left the direction of the abbey to his friend Erluin and became a monk in Gorze where he died in 962/984. The monks of Gembloux managed to recover the body, then considered to be a relic. Why? I’ll try to answer ...

Hagiographic discourse and monastic reform: the case of the hagiographic dossier of Gerald of Aurillac

Sebastien Fray, University de St. Etienne

In this paper we shall outline serious reasons for not following the revision proposed by Mathew Kuefler of the hagiographic dossier of Gerald of Aurillac. From there, the Vita Geraldi (VPP, circa 930, BHL 3411) and its rewritings in Aurillac (Vita Brevior, middle of the tenth century, BHL 3412-3414; Liber Vite, before 972, BHL vacat; Liber miraculorum, between 972 and 988, BHL vacat) allow us to explore a case of implicit hagiographic reform discourse. Unlike the Vita Odonis (BHL 6292), the Vita Geraldi doesn’t explicitly narrate the reform of Aurillac by Odo. In fact, the narrative projects instead the result of reforming action by the abbot, who was also the hagiographer Odo of Cluny, at the time of the foundation by Gerald. The rest of the dossier shows how the monks of Aurillac appropriated this version of the story, with the result that the memory of the reformatory action of Odo in Aurillac was reduced. Taking into account all available documentation (including charter evidence and gesta abbatum) shows however, the extent of the Odonian break: the comparison of hagiography of Aurillac with texts from neighbouring abbeys, such as St Vivien of Figeac (Translatio et miracula sancti Viviani, BHL 1327-1328) or St Foy of Conques (Liber miraculorum sancte Fidis, BHL 2943-2962). This accentuates certain features of the form of monastic life at Aurillac, linked with reform, despite the fact that St Geraud was never included in the ecclesia cluniacensis.
‘How is the gold become dim!’ Narrating disasters and proposing reform in Carolingian church councils, 840-909

Julia Barrow, University of Leeds

The decrees of the Council of Trosly (909) are relatively unusual for Carolingian church council texts in their prolixity and extensive theological underpinning. The latter includes the quotation from Lamentations 4, 1 above, itself cited within a much longer quotation from Gregory I’s Homilies on the Gospel comparing the dimming of the gold of the sanctuary with bad deeds by priests obscuring former spiritual glory. The bishops at Trosly used this to reflect on decay of monastic life, damaged not only by Viking attacks but also by lay abbots, and to propose restoring it to its original and best order (the verb used for ‘restore’ here is reformare). The themes discussed at Trosly fit into well-established patterns within Carolingian church councils, including how to respond to attacks by Vikings and what to do about oppression by ‘false Christians’. The need to correct monastic observance also occurs frequently, though styling changes to it as ‘reform’ is much less usual. Nonetheless, Trosly had forerunners on this point too and this paper will try to contextualise these.

Canon Law on the Peripheries: Narratives of Reform in Legatine councils in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries

Kathleen G. Cushing, University of Keele

Canon law has been a fundamental part of ‘master narratives’ on the nature of religious reform during the eleventh and early-twelfth centuries since the publication in 1931-32 of the exceptionally influential (perhaps too much so) Histoire des collections canoniques en occident depuis les Fausses Décéutals jusqu’au Décret de Gratien by Paul Fournier and Gabriel Le Bras. This instrumental quality was further underlined in the controversial work by Harald Berman, Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition (1983), which, like other ‘classic’ narratives of reform and the investiture conflict (Fliche, Tellenbach), argued that the reform papacy had a definitive role in a revival of legal learning and its dissemination via councils and new canon law collections that promoted a new ideological approach underpinned by early scholastic methods. Yet much recent work on canon law, canonical collections and conciliar activity during this period does not exactly fit these interpretative frameworks. By focusing on eleventh- and early twelfth-century century legatine councils (and – for comparative purposes – papal councils held outside Rome), this paper seeks to assess the nature of ‘reform’ conciliar activity in partibus and asks: to what extent did local and regional issues and initiatives shape the business of the councils and the reform of religious institutions? To what extent were the agendas shaped by the presiding papal legate? How far did the ‘centre’ and the peripheries work in partnership and under what circumstances?

Bishops, land and monastic identity: narrative in the closing folios of Hemming’s Cartulary

Francesca Tinti, University of the Basque Country

This paper will focus on the construction of narrative in the final section of Hemming’s Cartulary, produced at Worcester in c. 1096. These are the folios in which the cartulary’s compilers turn their attention to relatively recent events, occurred during the episcopates of the
last two English bishops of Worcester, namely Ealdred (1046-62) and Wulfstan II (1062-95). The interest of this closing section relies primarily in the ways in which narrative passages and charters are interwoven to build a powerful narrative aiming at demonstrating the rights of the monks of Worcester on a number of properties which the two bishops had obtained or recovered for the cathedral’s monastic estate. The paper will highlight the role that in the resulting narrative is played by St Oswald, the tenth-century reforming bishop who had introduced the Benedictine rule at Worcester, and the strategies employed to build a coherent story highlighting the efforts made by Ealdred and Wulfstan to protect and expand the monks’ properties. Special attention will be paid to the process of selection, re-elaboration or outright forging of charters which lies behind these folios. This will be done bearing in mind the insecurities and preoccupations that the death of Wulfstan in 1095 brought about for the Worcester cathedral community and the efforts made by Hemming and his colleagues to defend and promote its monastic identity.

Re-formes et supports narratifs dans la 'chronique versifiée' ou 'livre des privilèges' de Saint-Martin-des-Champs (1076-1077)

Eliana Magnani, CNRS-Paris

En 1079, dans un acte passé à Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, le roi capétien Philippe Ier donnait à l'abbé Hugues de Cluny le lieu (locum) de Saint-Martin-des-Champs, communauté de chanoines réguliers fondée par son père, Henri Ier, en 1060, sur la place d'un ancien sanctuaire-nécropole mérovingien. Pour la communauté canoniale, reconnue par ses usages réguliers, ce changement signifie non seulement le passage vers le monachisme mais aussi la perte du rang d'abbaye et d’un abbé, pour devenir un prieuré clunisien. Cette transformation qui n'est justifiée par aucun indice dans l'acte de 1079, est précédée de peu d’années de la réalisation par les chanoines d’un libellum, désigné par l’historiographie de ‘chronique versifiée’ ou ‘livre des privilèges’ de Saint-Martin-des-Champs. Ce petit manuscrit (London, British Library, Add 11662, fol. 4r-8r), est articulé autour de trois diplômes royaux – charte de fondation, confirmation d’une donation, acte de dotation lors de la consécration de l’église –, commentés et suppléés par des images synoptiques et de passages versifiés intercalés. Cette composition pose d’emblée la question des supports narratifs entrecroisés, tandis que son contexte global évoque l’idée multiforme de réforme : les reformes construites par l’historiographie et les « re-formes » implicites d’un discours indigène qui s’affirme plutôt sur la continuité voulue, posée en miroir aux souverains – patrons terrestres éphémères–, face à saint Martin, – patron spirituel et éternel – dont les chanoines sont l’avatar. Dans cette communication, l’analyse des procédés narratifs en présence dans le manuscrit (textes et images) servira de support à la réflexion sur la polysémie de la notion de réforme.

A Series of Providential Events: Brief and Broken Narratives in Religious Reform around the Turn of the Millennium

Theo Riches, University of Meunster

This paper will look at the absence of longer narratives about reform in texts of the late tenth and early eleventh century. First, two descriptions of the religious reforms of Archbishop Adalbero of Reims will be looked at. Both sources describe the changes as positive, although they differ significantly in detail. The accounts are, in effect, free-standing episodes and meet only the minimum definition of narrative. The paper will argue that while the episodic nature of
such narratives is in part explicable as the outcome of a providential view of history, translating these micro-narratives into a secular structure for modern academic work necessarily fails to eliminate the moralistic purpose of the original stories. The paper will also look at two cases of criticism of religious innovation, of the Peace of God and of Cluniac monasticism respectively, also from the archdiocese of Reims. It will be argued that because unwelcome reform was more difficult to fit into providential narratives, such cases must always be included in any attempt to analyse narratives of reform, and, then, to write a modern narrative of religious change. Two consequences will in conclusion be highlighted: the importance of maintaining an etic perspective so as not simply to rewrite medieval narratives as modern secular histories, and that of including historical ‘failures’, dead-ends and ‘roads not taken’ as comparanda to the stories of success.

Notions of reform in the histories of Flodoard of Reims

Edward Roberts, University of Liverpool

Recent work has shown that the sources of the ‘long tenth century’ do not furnish any consistent, programmatic terminology or narrative of ‘reform’. This is especially the case when it comes to historiography. But do the historians of this period have any conception of a responsibility (on the part of rulers, bishops, monks or others) to improve, correct or renew? This paper examines two of the best-known contemporary narratives of the tenth century, the Annals and History of the Church of Reims by the canon Flodoard of Reims (d. 966), in order to determine the author’s attitude to reform and change. In these works, Flodoard displays a noticeable lack of interest in the spread of ‘monastic reform’ across the West Frankish kingdom and Lotharingia. I argue that Flodoard’s view of reform needs to be understood in the context of a wider pessimism about his times. Based on his personal experiences as a canon of the conflict-ridden church of Reims, Flodoard was often sceptical about the motives of ‘reformers’. He was, however, very interested in visions, which he sought out and recorded regularly in his histories, and this interest suggests that Flodoard did believe that change was urgently needed. For Flodoard, this seems primarily to have been an episcopal rather than royal responsibility. The paper also briefly surveys attitudes to reform among Ottonian historians such as Adalbert of Magdeburg and Thietmar of Merseburg, whose opinions appear to resemble Flodoard’s.