Reforming Bodies in the Monastic Community of Saint-Germain (Auxerre)

Thomas A. E. GREENE

Assistant Professor of History, 3820 Mundy Mill Rd., Oakwood, GA 30566 USA
thomas.greene@ung.edu
University of North Georgia

I.

The entry in the *Gesta abbensis sancti Germani* (*Gesta*) for Thealdus, abbot of the monastery of Saint-Germain in Auxerre from around 1020 until 1032 is remarkably short, running just over 100 words. The author emphasizes the regularity of Thealdus's election and locates his term as abbot in relation to both kings and popes. Even within such a sparse biography, however, we learn that Thealdus had a reputation as a reformer at Moutiers before he came to Saint-Germain. Thealdus "restored the monastery of Moutiers, and built up both its buildings and its possessions, and adorned [it] with many gold and silver furnishings."[1] Once at Saint-Germain, Thealdus "strove to improve the monastery both spiritually and temporally."[2]

When remembering Thealdus, the author of the *Gesta* chose only to emphasize two things about his reform of Moutiers: enhancements to the fabric of the monastery and the restoration of territorial possessions. So, what does it mean to reform a monastery? Scholars have sought to answer this question in seemingly innumerable ways, without reaching a consensus. Indeed, the question itself is not as straightforward as it appears. "Reform" carries multiple meanings, both in

[1] *Les Gestes des Abbés de Saint-Germain d'Auxerre*, N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER éds. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2011, 22: "Hic Thealdus tempore Heldrici Meleredense monasterium reparauit ac sublimauit tamque edificiis quam posessionibus ac supellectili auri et argenti plurimum decorauit."

[2] N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, "statum monasterii tam spiritualiter quam temporaliter studuit agmentare." For the little that is known about medieval Moutiers, which was confirmed as a dependency of Saint-Germain in 864, see Noëlle DÉFLOU-LECA, *Saint-Germain d'Auxerre et ses dépendances (Ve-XIIIe siècle): un monastère dans la société du haut Moyen Âge*, Saint-Étienne, Publications de l'Univ. of Saint-Étienne, 2010, 516-523.

the past and for historians. Just as significant, but often uninterrogated, is how to think about the place of reform, the monastery.

Thealdus's entry in the *Gesta* underscores the importance of closely interrogating the way historians understand reform. The description of his activities at Moutiers and Saint-Germain should be read as parallel accomplishments. The highlight of Thealdus's temporal improvement at Saint-Germain was, with the help of the bishop of Auxerre, to recover the church of Annay. The absence of similar details for Moutiers is unsurprising given the purpose of the abbatial *gesta* as a genre and the contested nature of the rights of Annay. As Consatnce Bouchard has argued for the closely related episcopal *gesta* from Auxerre, one of the functions of the text was to explain "in as much detail as possible, how the see of Auxerre had acquired its property and exactly what that property was."[3]

But what about the spiritual improvements? Furnishing Moutiers with gold and silver objects was the equivalent of enhancing the spirituality of Saint-Germain. The key to resolving the incongruity of this pairing comes in the use of the verb *decorauit*. Describing gold and silver objects as adornment or beautification acknowledged their aesthetic appeal, rather than their crass materiality. It forced the reader to consider those who experienced these objects, and forces us in turn to consider that experience; that is, we must consider how monks would have seen those objects, and how their materiality related to the context of that seeing, to the monastery as a place of spirituality.

[3] Constance BOUCHARD, "Episcopal Gesta and the Creation of a Usable Past in Ninth-Century Auxerre," *Speculum* 84, 2009, 29. I consider abbatial *gestae* to be similar to their episcopal counterparts, and I follow Bouchard's work on the episcopal *gesta* of Auxerre to understand the purpose and utility of that for abbots. See also Walter GOFFART, *The Le Mans Forgeries: A Chapter from the History of Church Property in the Ninth Century*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966 and N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, ix-l.

I answer the question of monastic reform by considering the relationship between the built environment and the people who experienced it, that is, between the monastery and the monks. To think about reform from an experiential perspective is to consider the effect that reform must have had on the monastic *habitus*. To use *habitus* as a shorthand for "monastic way of life" is to recognize that monks should be understood as bodies-in-environment. As reform altered that environment, it altered the way that monastic bodies experienced it.

II.

The historiography of monastic reform is too extensive to summarize here, and there are as many approaches as there are historians. One of the most significant problems that confronts historians of reform is the tendency to relate successive instances of reform to each other. This problem is particularly acute for the late-eleventh/early-twelfth century "Gregorian" reform, which has its own historiographic gravity; events that took place earlier look ahead to it and anything that happened after lives in its shadow.[4] The problem of defining reform is just as complex. As Bouchard emphasizes, the broad definition that most scholars work with of "an attempt to return to the *vita apostolica* of the early Church or to find a new means of institutionalizing the purest way of life" had taken place continuously "since the beginning of Christian monasticism."[5]

In recent years scholars have sought to add nuance to an older understanding of reform by reassessing the reforming dynamic, by interrogating the progress of reform over time, and by considering reform as just one aspect of an individual's monastic career. A context that seems to favor the implementation of top-down reform, for example, proves to have been otherwise upon

[4] Constance BOUCHARD, *Sword, Mitre, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2008, 87-89.

[5] C. BOUCHARD, *op. cit.*, n.4, 88.

closer investigation.[6] Despite significant princely, episcopal, and papal pressure on the Lombard and Norman region of southern Italy, Valerie Ramseyer shows that the reform of the Principate of Salerno blended the "Gregorian" reforming impulse with local traditions and customs. Sometimes, as with clerical marriage, those customs ran directly counter to the overarching goals of reformers.[7] In southern Italy reform was a compromise between overarching and intrusive institutional authority and the goals of entrenched local elites.

To break away from the older view of reform as a singular, spectacular event, Steven Vanderputten encourages scholars to approach it instead as a process that unfolds over time. He questions the usefulness of thinking about reforming movements as aggregate phenomena and instead seeks to reveal the fortunes of individual reformed houses over a long period of time. Even when the credit for beginning reform in multiple houses fell to the same individual, Vanderputten argues that monastic foundations followed their own, unique paths as they worked to implement a locally specific program of reform.[8] This has the effect of minimizing the disproportionate weight given to the charismatic instigators of reform.

A third way to rethink monastic reform is to focus on the individuals who were known as reformers, but place reform in the wider context of their lives. Lauren Mancia mines John of Fécamp's *Confessio theologica* to argue for his central role in an earlier development of "affective piety" than typically thought. John brought his particular understanding of the role of emotional prayer in monastic life to Fécamp. Mancia detects the echoes of John's emotional theology

[6] Valerie RAMSEYER, *The Transformation of a Religious Landscape: Medieval Southern Italy, 850-1150*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2006, 111-124.

[7] V. RAMSEYER, *op. cit.*, n.6, 95-97, 111-115. She finds evidence for married clergy into the thirteenth century.

[8] Steven VANDERPUTTEN, *Monastic Reform as Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900-1100*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2013.

throughout the manuscript sources generated in eleventh-century Fécamp, and argues that John led an energetic and sustained effort to reform the devotional practices of the monks subject to his authority as abbot.[9]

All of these refreshing and stimulating new approaches rest, still, on a reified concept of reform. Reform becomes almost tangible, whether the stimulus was internal or external, or, as it came to Salerno, some combination of the two, whether immediate and disruptive or, as with Vanderputten, drawn out and complex. Aggregated together, reforms mark out specific periods in the history of medieval Europe. Even Mancia wraps her treatment of Fécamp in the narrative of the emergence of "affective" piety, pushing its origins back to the late tenth century. Few studies of reform start by considering reform as a lived experience, from the perspective of those whose daily lives were affected by it.

The groundbreaking work of Lynda Coon on gender in Carolingian monasticism inspired this approach. In *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West*, Coon places a notable Carolingian monk, Hrabanus Maurus, and his literary output, deliberately in conversation with the architectural world that he inhabited.[10] Coon notes the importance of sensory phenomena to monastic life. Most of these linkages, however, relate to her argument about monastic gender and the queerness of monastic space. The male monastic gaze, for example, encompassed the crucified body of Christ, of course, but also the bodies of other monks, potentially desirable but forbidden. Touch could be similarly subversive. Proximity to other male bodies threatened to disrupt the chaste monastic *corpus*, and Carolingian interpreters of the *Rule* advised

[9] Lauren MANCIA, *Emotional Monasticism: Affective Piety in the Eleventh-century Monastery of John of Fécamp*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2019, 83-115.

[10] Lynda COON, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

monks not to come into bodily contact, not even to wake each other for devotional activities. For this, Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel deemed the sound of tapping on the boards of a bed safer than a nudge or a shake. Given the significance of the monastic body to monastic gender, it makes sense to think about embodied phenomena in all aspects of the monastic experience.

III.

The historiography of reform in Auxerre describes two separate reforming impulses, one in the late 980s and another at the end of the eleventh century.[11] Both of these efforts at monastic renewal arose under the aegis of comital and episcopal power and drew from Cluny for inspiration and personnel. The history of reform at Saint-Germain that emerges from these sources is well known, and is described in detail by Deflou-Leca.[12] The ninth century is considered the golden age of the monastery (despite what is always characterized as lay interference), and never considered in discussions of reform. Yet the intellectual product of Saint-Germain's monastic school was not the same at the end of the ninth century as it was in the 840s. Since the abbatial Gesta was written in the thirteenth century and starts with Abbot Heldric at the end of the tenth century, the writings of the Auxerrois masters is the only possible source for embodied reform, and the last of those masters, Remigius, as a reformer.

Remigius can be thought of as a reformer in two ways. In the first, he inherited the intellectual legacy of his teacher, Heiric of Auxerre. Heiric himself had been educated at Saint-Germain by Haimo, but had left for Soissons at some point in the mid-ninth century. In 865 Heiric was back in Auxerre, and Haimo became the abbot of Cessy-les-Bois (*Sasceium*), a dependency of Saint-

[11] C. BOUCHARD, *op. cit.*, n.4, 104-106; N. DEFLOU-LECA, *op. cit.*, n.2, 211-228, 281-306. N. DEFLOU-LECA & Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, xxvi-xxxii. See N. DEFLOU-LECA, *op. cit.*, n.2, 136-137, for a discussion of the possibility of a reform of Saint-Germain by Balthild in the mid-seventh century (not considered here).

[12] C. BOUCHARD, *op. cit.*, n.4, 104-106. N. DEFLOU-LECA, *op. cit.*, n.2, 199-228, 281-306.

Germain.[13] Deflou-Leca postulates that Haimo's promotion to abbot of what was at the time Saint-Germain's only dependency indicated the importance of Cessy.[14] This certainly is a possibility. Cessy seems to have moved in and out of the control of Saint-Germain, and sending the illustrious master of the monastic school to be abbot may have cemented the relationship between the two foundations. Whether exile or promotion, the translation of the relics of St. Baudèle that took place around the same time marked the occasion as an important one.[15]

The political context of the early 860s, however, offers a second possible explanation. Heiric replaced Haimo at a pivotal time in the foundation's history. In 860, Charles the Bald witnessed the translation of the relics of St. Germain, an event that he considered important to his military success in that same year. By the middle of the decade, however, St.-Germain's lay abbot Hugh, whom Janet Nelson described as a "trusted man" during the events of 860, fell out of favor with Charles and was expelled from his kingdom.[16] Saint-Germain continued to reside at the center of royal politics, including the confirmation of the properties held by Saint-Germain at the important Council of Pîtres in 864, and the installation of Charles's son Carloman as abbot in 866.[17] Haimo's relocation to Cessy and Heiric's assumption of his place as schoolmaster coincided with Charles's scrutiny and the change in the monastic power structure.

[13] N. DEFLOU-LECA, *op. cit.*, n.2, 95-97. John CONTRENI, "Haimo of Auxerre, Abbot of Sasceium (Cessy-les-Bois), and a New Sermon on I John V, 4-10" *Revue bénédictine* 85, 1975, 303-320.

[14] N. DEFLOU-LECA, *op. cit.*, n.2, 95.

[15] N. DEFLOU-LECA, *op. cit.*, n.2, 97-99

[16] Janet NELSON, *Charles the Bald*, New York, Longman, 1992, 179, 189-90.

[17] J. NELSON, *op. cit.*, n.16, 207-209. For a facsimile of the confirmation charter, see http://www.cn-telma.fr/originaux/charte720/

Janneke Raaijmaker's study of Fulda provides a comparative example. For Fulda, like all monasteries, "what mattered most was surviving inner and outer threats and safeguarding the existence of the community."[18] She suggests that the transition in 802 from the abbacy of Baugulf to that of Ratger was less than smooth. Baugulf resigned, and unusual occurrence, and after his abbacy he moved to Wolfsmünster, a small monastic cell outside of, but controlled by, Fulda. In a letter to the community at Fulda, Alcuin insinuated that Baugulf's resignation might not have been voluntary; an illness might have made him unable to live as rigorously as he was supposed to.[19] This implies that smaller satellite cells could have served as places to sequester potentially divisive individuals.

Haimo's situation did not match Baugulf's exactly. Haimo was not abbot, and no ancillary evidence such as Alcuin's letter survives from Saint-Germain. Cessy, however, stood in the same dependent relationship to Saint-Germain as Wolfsmünster did to Fulda. Haimo was a sharp critic of Charles the Bald, and the timing of the schoolmater's departure coincided with Charles exerting himself in Auxerre. Just as importantly, the interplay between tradition and innovation or change that Raaijmakers finds in the textual production at Fulda could just as easily apply to Heiric's reappearance as Hamio's replacement. She described the monastery as a place of "constant friction," circumstances which "produced the most informative and self-conscious" formulations of monastic identity.[20] Remigius's liturgical exegesis offers an opportunity to think about the reform of Saint-Germain at a time not usually included in the traditional narrative.

---

[18] Janneke RAAIJMAKERS, *The Making of the Monastic Community at Fulda, c.744-c.900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 6.

[19] J. RAAIJMAKERS, *op. cit.*, n.18, 96-97. A reference to younger monks in the same letter also points to generational conflict within Fulda.

[20] J. RAAIJMAKERS, *op. cit.*, n.18, 6.

There was ninth-century precedent for the use of exegesis in the context of a message of reform. Miriam Czock has written about the connection between exegetical argumentation and the Carolingian reform. Sumi Shimahara argues that Haimo of Auxerre, who sits at the beginning of Remigius's own intellectual lineage, wrote his *Brevium in Daniel* as a courtly critique, and to advocate for a reformist agenda.[21] John Contreni similarly notes the entanglement of exegesis, this time the *Commentary on Ezechiel* and the context in which Haimo wrote it.[22] Furthermore, the mass was a Carolingian preoccupation for the entirety of the ninth century. Aside from Charlemagne's well-known concern with chant, the celebration of the liturgy was an important enough subject that the 829 Aachen council legislated about its performance. The ninth century witnessed the production, in Yitzak Hen's estimation, of "scores" of such works by anonymous authors as well as well-known luminaries.[23] Remigius of Auxerre was one of those who devoted himself to this task, the last in a long line of Carolingians to do so.

Carol Symes argues persuasively that medieval authors wrote texts relating to the liturgy, much like the sources for reform, to control and regulate liturgical practice, not to innovate.[24] She cites the emergence of the well-known *Quem quaeritis* liturgical drama as an example. Its appearance

[21] Miriam CZOCK, "Creating Futures through the Lens of Revelation in the Rhetoric of the Carolingian Reform ca. 750 to ca. 900," in Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, M. GABRIELE and J. PALMER eds., New York, Routledge, 2019, 101-120; Sumi SHIMAHARA, "Le succès de l'Annotation brève sur Daniel d'Haimon d'Auxerre, texte scolaire carolingien exhortant à la reform." dans *Études d'exégèse carolingienne: autour d'Haimon d'Auxerre*, S. SHIMAHARA ed., Turnhout: Brepols, 2007, 123-164.

[22] John CONTRENI, "'By Lions Bishops are meant; by wolves, priests': History, Exegesis, and the Carolingian Church in Haimo of Auxerre's Commentary on Ezechiel," *Francia*, 2002, 29-56.

[23] Yitzak HEN, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877)*, London, Boydell Press, 2001, 7. Hen ends his study before Remigius wrote his commentary. See pp. 8-15 for a review and critique of liturgical studies from Mabillon through the twentieth century as well as an argument for a contextual approach to liturgical evidence. Hen notes specifically the authorship of Amalarius, Agobard and Florus of Lyons, Walahfrid Strabo and Hrabanus Maurus.

[24] Carol SYMES, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices" in Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation, H. GITTOS and S. HAMILTON eds., New York, Routledge, 2016, 241-44.

in texts in the late tenth century does not coincide with its creation. Rather, clergy caused to be recorded a specific version of the *Quem quaeritis* performance in order to stabilize its form. This allowed for them to exert authority over a practice that Symes sees as having existed previously in multiple, unwritten versions. In one instance that she discusses, monastic reform is the context of such a text. As part of his desire to standardize monastic practices, Aethelwold of Winchester included a *Quem quaeritis* trope.[25]

Remigius's liturgical exegesis, then, signals some underlying issue, debate, of conflict, even if the details are now invisible to historians. To understand the importance that Remigius attached to the sensory experience of the mass, one need do no more than read the first few lines of his commentary. After affirming the traditional nature of the content and offering two explanations for the etymology of the word *missa*, Remigius defends the choice to begin the mass not with a scriptural passage "but instead with singing and playing/psalmody" (*sed potius canendo et psallendo*).[26] Remigius must have chosen this language intentionally, for it echoes, and thereby receives justification from, Ephesians 5,19. In that chapter of the letter Paul explained how to be followers of God. The list of acceptable behaviors included "speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody (*cantantes et psallentes*) in your hearts to the Lord."[27] Remigius duplicated the Pauline language, but he departed somewhat from the sense. Paul advised the Christians at Ephesus to sing in their hearts. Remigius thought too about

[25] C. SYMES, op. cit., n.24, 242.

[26] Remigius, "De celebratione missae et ejus significatione", in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, J.-P. MIGNE, ed., Paris, Migne, 1844-1891, 110:1247.

[27] http://drbo.org/chapter/56005.htm

the hearts of those attending the mass, but he expected singing to affect them, not take place within them.

Remigius's preoccupation with the salutary effect of liturgical sound differs from the example set by his predecessors at Saint-Germain. As I have elaborated upon elsewhere, Haimo and Heiric exhibited a distrust of sensory phenomena, with the two earlier masters differing from each other by Heiric's characteristic denunciatory vigor.[28] The difference between Remigius and his intellectual forefathers is most striking in Haimo's exegesis of the same passage in Ephesians that inspired Remigius. The kind of internal singing advocated for by Paul, Haimo argued, allowed the signer to focus more intensely on the meaning of the words being sung. This allowed them to avoid the danger of caring too much about how well they were singing and how pleased the audience was with their performance.[29] Haimo's sensory suspicion extended beyond singing to include hearing as well, as he continued to explain in his exegesis of Ephesians 5,19. The bodily senses, generally, served to guard individuals from dangers that could imperil their soul. Those listening to the wrong kind of singing endangered their souls just as much as those who sang incorrectly.

This certainly did not mean that Haimo expected his brethren to sing silently, for he closed his admonition by referencing the Rule of Benedict and the coming together of the community in order to sing.[30] Rather, Haimo's suspicion of singing and hearing led him to emphasize the importance

[28] Thomas GREENE, "Softening the heart, eliciting desire: experiencing music in a Carolingian monastery", in *Emotions, communities, and difference in medieval Europe: essays in honor of Barbara H. Rosenwein*, M. MILLER and E. WHEATLEY eds., New York, Routledge, 2017, 46-58.

[29] Haimo, "In divi Pauli epistolas exposito", in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, J.-P. MIGNE, ed., Paris, Migne, 1844-1891,117:728: Ideo dixit in cordibus vestris, quia multi sunt qui cantant ore, quorum mens non concordat voci, et qui magis attendunt ad sonoritatem vocis, ut auditoribus placeant, quam considerent mente quid dicunt.

[30] Haimo, *op. cit.*, n.29, 728: Sic stemus ad psallendum, ut mens nostra concordet voci nostrae.

of singing intentionally, meditating on the words being sung at the moment of their vocalization. He would repeat this advice in a homily as well, ensuring that his preference for following loyally both Paul's and Benedict's advice reached an audience wider than those who would read his Ephesians commentary.

Even if one sang with voice and mind in agreement, not all songs deserved to be sung. In one of his homilies, Haimo itemized the kinds of songs that he found acceptable in response, again, to Ephesians 5,19.[31] He explained the meaning of *psalmus* and *hymnus*, as well as the difference between psalms and *cantantes*. He castigated worldly songs, lifting up instead as suitable those of Moses, Anna, Deborah, Isaiah, Ezekiel and the rest of the prophets. In addition to these he allowed hymns composed by Ambrose and Hilary and other *clarissimi viri*.[32] Of note is Haimo's explanation that the thing that distinguished songs from psalms was the use of instrumentation to accompany the latter.

Music mattered, as it turns out, because of its effect on the emotions of the listener. In his commentary on Isaiah, he cited unnamed *doctores* to argue that the "power of the musical arts" is such that "if it finds men happy, it makes them happier; but if sad, it increases their sadness."[33] In

[31] This time, he explained the first half of the verse: Loquentes vobismetipsis in psalmis, et hymnis, et canticis spiritualibus

[32] Haimo, "Homiliarum sive concionum ad plebem in evangelia de tempore et sanctis", in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, J.-P. MIGNE, ed., Paris, Migne, 1844-1891,117:807. Psalmi dicuntur a psallendo, quia in psalterio inveniuntur. Hymnus Graece, Latino eloquio sonat laus Dei. Hymnus autem si componitur et cantatur in laudem Dei, tunc est hymnus. Hymnos autem apud Latinos, praecipue Ambrosius et Hilarius, clarissimi viri composuerunt. Unde igitur cum dixit canticis, subiunxit spiritualibus, quia sunt cantica quae non sunt spiritalia, neque in laudem Dei cantantur. Sicut sunt cantica saecularium hominum. Cantica autem spiritalia sunt, quae composuerunt prophetae Spiritu sancto afflati et repleti, ut sunt cantica Moysi, canticum Annae, canticum Deborae, canticum Isaiae, canticum Ezechiae, caeterorumque prophetarum. Hoc vero distat inter canticum et psalmum, quia canticum ne solummodo profertur, sed et decantatur: psalmus autem addito quodam instrumento musicae artis, id est psalterio.

[33] Haimo, "Commentariorum in Isaiam libri tres", in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, J.-P. MIGNE, ed., Paris, Migne, 1844-1891,117:828. Dicunt enim doctores: Quia vis est artis musicae, ut si hominem laetum invenerit, laetiorem reddat. Sin autem tristem, tristitiam illi augeat.

the context of the church, then, music served to induce a specific emotional response. "The singers of the holy church," Haimo explained, "who with their singing provoke the hearts of the listeners to the love of God."[34]

Heiric never cited Ephesians 5,19 in his extensive homily collection, nor did he draw from Haimo's homily that covered Ephesians 5, 15-21. But he did preach about the importance of the senses in the context of the mass. At the end of his homily for Holy Thursday (*In cena domini*), Heiric reflected on the things that made his brethren worthy to receive the Eucharist. He built upon the story of Jesus washing of the Apostles' feet, specifically the words of Simon Peter in John 13, 9 (Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head). Despite Jesus's reply that washing the feet alone sufficed, Heiric proclaimed that the faithful not only should ask him to attend to their exterior state, but also to cleanse their mind "from the hidden dregs of wicked thoughts."[35] To accomplish this, Heiric petitioned Jesus to "wash" his brethren by altering their sensorium, both external and internal:

> let him divert the eyes of the body, lest they look upon vanity; let him give light to the eyes of the mind, that we might never slumber in the sleep of death; let him block our ears, lest they hear blood, that is, lest they participate in sin; let him open our ears, that we might hear him just as a teacher; let him stop up nostrils, lest we delight in the fumes of sin; let him release interior fragrance, so that we might hasten after him in the odor of spiritual ointments; let him place a guardian on our mouths, lest we digress into evil speech; let him open our lips, that our mouth might sing his praises; let him cause us to wash our hands in the blood of sins, that is to castigate our bodies reflecting on the damnation of the reprobate; let him constrain

[34] Haimo, *op. cit.*, n.33, 823. cantores sanctae Ecclesiae, qui suis modulationibus corda audientium ad amorem Dei provocant.

[35] Heiric, *Homiliae per curriculum anni*, R. QUARDI, ed., Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis, vols. 116, 116A-B. Turnhout: Brepols, 1992, 116A, 640. id est non solum ab exteriroibus terrenae conuersationis sordibus expiet, uerum etiam ab occultis prauae cogitationis fecibus mentem emaculet.

> our feet, lest we hasten towards iniquity; let him align our feet on the path of peace, towards all safety about to be proclaimed.[36]

By beginning his mass commentary by defending and advocating for "singing and playing", not in the heart but to affect the heart, Remigius therefore accomplished two things. First, by choosing *canendo et psallendo* he referenced Paul's own *cantantes et psallentes* in the letter to the Ephesians, grounding his claim solidly in scriptural authority. Second, he signaled an abandonment, or at least a qualification and contextualization, of the tradition of suspicion found at Saint-Germain, which potentially could have led to a different sensory experience of the mass. For earlier generations of monks at Saint-Germain, singing and instrumentation during the mass were perhaps suspect, and certainly needed to be interrogated to determine their suitability. For Remigius and his fellow inmates, they were a fundamental part of the aural experience of the divine service. Moreover, listening to song and music was not just pleasing but salutary, for it made available the "healing words of the Gospel."[37]

The mass engaged most of the other senses as well, although to a somewhat different end. Sight, smell, and touch all instructed the congregation. Sight helped the participants unlock the sacred meaning of the liturgy by interpreting the numerous visual cues contained therein. The mass as was a meticulously staged and choreographed performance. The cross-shaped dalmatic encouraged self-examination and self-criticism for "vices and desires" (*vitiis et concupiscentis*), while it's white background and red streaks called to mind chastity and the divine blood shed at the crucifixion. As the celebrant approached the altar, the light in the church would have changed, as the candles preceding him approached as well. Remigius expected this to remind everyone of

[36] Heiric, *op. cit.*, n.35, 116A, 640-641.

[37] Remigius, *op. cit.*, n.26, 110:1247.

the coming of the light of the Word into a world living in the shadows of sin. Aligning them from south-north reinforced this message by reassuring them of God's pity for them. Changing that alignment to east-west later in the mass so that God's metaphorical light shone in all directions. The priest preached the homily facing north, with both himself and the words that he spoke protecting the congregation from the devil because, Remigius wrote "that by the north the Devil is indicated the prophet shows, saying: *O Lucifer, thou saidst in thy heart: I will sit in the sides of the north*." No element was too small to convey meaning to the watchful eyes of those in attendance.

Smell and touch played less frequent, but no less important, roles in the sensory experience of the mass. The burning of incense reminded the congregation that just as they enjoyed it, so too they should petition God to receive their prayers in the same manner. Finally, bodies came together for the kiss of peace. The mass, then, engaged the entire sensorium, and the body in its entirety was affected by the experience. Bodily comportment is the final link between Remigius and his predecessors at Saint-Germain. "We ought," wrote Haimo of Auxerre in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:29, "to advance to that terrifying sacrament with fear and trembling."[38] The *sacramentum terribile* was the Eucharist, of course, and in his mass commentary Remigius mentioned the same bodily perturbation, although Remigius he associated fear and trembling instead with praising and adoring God.

Haimo did not elaborate on this statement, being more concerned in that part of his Corinthians exegesis with discerning what was taking place at the altar during consecration. Remigius, however, marshalled an impressive list of scriptural citations, for his focus was squarely on bodily

[38] Haimo, *op. cit.*, n.29, 574: "Cum timore et tremore debemus accedere ad illud sacramentum terribile". This is the scriptural passage that inspired Heiric's excursus on the senses discussed above.

experience. He began with Job 26, 11 (*the pillars of heaven tremble, and dread at his beck*). Remigius explained that this was not a punishment, for the trembling of the pillars of heaven was "not in fear, but in wonder."[39] He then addressed the congregation directly, asking rhetorically "Therefore, man should remark that there should be in the heavens such great devotion of praise, veneration of adoration, trembling of adoration, man of whom it is said *why is earth and ashes proud?*"[40] After this monitory quote from Ecclesiasticus, Remigius concluded by citing Paul's Letter to the Philippians, in which the apostle advised the recipients to *with fear and trembling work out your salvation*. With this we have come full circle to the beginning of the commentary, for the mass was a salvific exercise. When writing about it, Remigius thought as much about the sensory experience as he did about the mechanics of the mass, the prayers, the interaction between the celebrant and the congregation. That is, Remigius payed attention to monastic bodies, and so should we.

IV.

Remigius didn't stay in Auxerre. Another argument for viewing Remigius as a reformer lies in his personal history after Saint-Germian, when he moved to Reims. The connection between Remigius and Reims is well known. Fulk, Archbishop of Reims, recruited the Auxerre master to revitalize the cathedral school after the sack of Reims in 882. Fulk also procured the services of Hucbald of Saint-Amand. Even though both were probably no longer in Reims after 900, they transformed it into a tenth-century center of learning.[41] The school at Reims produced a number of tenth-century

[39] Remigius, op. cit., n.26, 1254. non timoris est, sed admirationis. The only time Heiric mentioned Job 26,11 he followed both Haimo and Bede in associating it with divine judgment.

[40] Remigius, op. cit., n.26, 1254. Cum igitur in coelestibus tanta sit devotio laudantium, veneratio adorantium, tremor admirantium, consideret hoc homo, cui dictum est: *Quid superbis, terra et cinis* (Ecclesiasticus 10,9).

[41] Edward ROBERTS, *Flodoard of Rheims and the Writing of History in the Tenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 5.

authors, including Seulf, Archbishop of Reims from 922-925, Hildebold, Abbot of Saint-Miheil, and Blidulf, Archdeaon of Metz. Jason Glenn suggests that these last two later carried out their own programs of reform.[42] Furthermore, the connection between Reims and Auxerre did not end with Remigius. Hugh, who had been installed by his father as Archbishop of Reims when he was a teenager, was driven out of the city. He returned in 940, after the political fortunes of Reims shifted yet again. While away, he had been sent to Auxerre to be educated.[43] Although no sources survive to illuminate this schooling, Hugh's educational history emphasizes both the continuing link between Auxerre and Reims and the mutual influence of their respective intellectual cultures.

Other medieval authors connected to Auxerre wrote about reform in a way that highlighted its sensory aspect. The well-known depiction of early eleventh-century reform by Rodulfus Glaber is an example of the effect that monastic change had on the sensorium. This part of Rodulfus's text has long resonated with historians, and he must have anticipated a similar reaction from his contemporaries. In Chapter 13 of Book 3 of his *Histories*, Rodulfus describes the spate of church construction that took place immediately after the year 1000. In a passage that has long been more cliché than memorable, he tells his readers that across the landscape of Italy and Gaul, "it was as if the whole world were shaking itself free, shrugging off the burden of the past, and cladding itself in a white mantle of churches."[44] He may enjoy a dubious reputation for accuracy, but here that is not the point. It doesn't matter whether there was or was not an upsurge of church construction at

[42] Jason GLENN, *Politics and History in the Tenth Century: The Work and World of Richer of Reims*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 61.

[43] Geoffrey KOZIOL, "Flothild's Visions and Flodoard's Histories: A Tenth-Century Mutation?, *Early Medieval Europe* 24, 2016, 176; J. GLENN, op. cit., n. 40, 217; E. ROBERTS, op. cit., n. 39, 36-47.

[44] Glaber, Histories, 116-117. Dominique IOGNA-PRAT, La Maison Dieu: Une histoire mounumentale d l'Église au Moyen Âge, Éditions de Seuil, 2006, 327. He rightly points out that historians have repeated Rodolfus "*ad nauseum*."

the time, or if they were white (or bright or radiant or however else you want to translate *candida*). For Rodulfus, the result of reform, indeed the evidence that it was successful, was a change in the visual landscape. After all, as Duby wrote years ago, in the eleventh century "the Lord was to be praised not only through prayer but also through offerings of beauty."[45]

Rodulfus aside, studying Saint-Germain after Remigius's departure to the cathedral in Reims is problematic. As expected, post-Carolingian sources are rare, and localizing those sources that do exist presents challenges. Scholars have postulated only a few characteristics of what might be considered an Auxerrois script. No list of manuscripts produced at the scriptorium at Saint-Germain (or the cathedral of Saint-Étienne) exists, and catalogs like Bischoff's only make tentative identifications. There are three later sources, however, that prove useful when thinking about embodied reform in Auxerre: a *gesta* of the bishops of Auxerre; a *gesta* of the abbots of Saint-Germain; and a cartulary that contains authentic earlier material.

The most important source for the history of reform at Saint-Germain is the *Gesta abbatum sancti Germani Autissiodorensis* (hereafter *Gesta*). Gui du Munois, who first becomes visible as a member of the monastic community in 1266 and who later served as its abbot from 1285-1309, wrote the text sometime during his abbacy.[46] Gui also compiled the monastery's cartulary after 1266, as well as a smaller one once he had completed the *Gesta*.[47] Taken together, these three texts represent a concerted effort at memory-making for the thirteenth-century brethren.

[45] Georges DUBY, *The Age of Cathedrals: Art and Society, 980-1420*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, 59.

[46] N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, ix. The date of 1266 comes from Gui being asked by his abbot, Jean de Joceval, to compile the cartulary for the monastery.

[47] Auxerre, BM, ms. 161G and Auxerre, BM, ms. 162G respectively.

Embodied reform allows for a different reading of these sources, and of the memory of reform encoded within each abbot's entry. It revitalizes the biography of an abbot that largely conforms to the traditional view of monastic reform, such as that of Heldric, the first abbot in the *Gesta*. Before Gui launched into paragraph after paragraph of possessions aggregated to the monastery by Heldric, he praised his zeal, and the renewed adherence to the Rule that he instilled in Saint-Germain.[48] While unrecoverable, this must have meant reorienting in some way the bodies of the monks, altering their sensorium and changing the way that the pursued their monastic vocation on a daily basis.

Similarly, a detail noted in a property transaction recorded during the abbacy of Odo stands out more sharply when viewed from an embodied perspective. Odo secured the church of Sainte-Cecilia, a place also where criminals were punished.[49] With the help of the monk Aufredus, he oversaw the construction of two oratories at the site, along with "all of the other suitable structures for monks."[50] Changing the built environment to include sites of devotion to Mary and John the Baptist, as well as creating what sounds like a new monastic enclosure, would have profoundly affected the inmates of this foundation, what they saw and heard and spoke. Whether or not these devotional activities took place in relationship to the ambiguous punishment mentioned by the text, knowing this other use of the site may have resonated affectively with the monks as well.

Other abbots, such as Thealdus, with whose short entry I led off this paper, emerge as potentially more significant than he might be thought of otherwise. Changing the visual environment within

[48] N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, 10.

[49] N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, 26, plateum in qua malefactores puniebantur. A footnote on p. 27 indicates that today this is Châtillon-en-Bazois, département Nièvre.

[50] N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, 26, cum omnibus officinis monachis aptis.

the monastery would have changed in turn the meaning of that environment for the monks as they encountered and "read" each new object. On the other hand, the devastation that occurred in Auxerre during the priory of Boso and the later abbacy of Rotlan would have altered the everyday lives of monks just as fundamentally. When the city burned again, the Gesta specifically mentioned that Saint-Germain lost "many ornaments" (*multa ornamenta*).[51] The text does not mention how, or even if, they were replaced, but such a drastic alteration of the built environment must have affected the monks as they worshipped and prayed.

Just as the homiletic and exegetical output of the monastic school at Saint-Germain framed the experiences of its inmates in the ninth century, thirteenth-century thought about the nature of the natural world and the connection between it and the divine intensified the significance of the encounter between the monks and the built environment. William of Auxerre (a coincidence, since he was educated in Paris) wrote approvingly of the use of the spiritual senses as a means of knowing God. Faith activated the spiritual sensorium, and when couples with cognition allows for experience to lead to knowledge of God.[52] Whether, and if so, how, William's theology came to Saint-Germain requires more investigation, but the monks who would have known the details that Gui related in the Gesta inhabited a world that increasingly "sought access to God by experiencing him in matter."[53]

V.

[51] N. DÉFLOU-LECA et Y. SASSIER, *op. cit.*, n.1, 32.

[52] Boyd COOLMAN, *Knowing God by Experience: The Spiritual Senses in the Theology of William of Auxerre*, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America Press, 2004.

[53] Sara RITCHEY, *Holy Matter: Changing Perceptions of the Material World in Late Medieval Christianity*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2014, 3. Ritchey traces the seeds of the reevaluation of the material world back to the late twelfth century.

To call an event, even if it stretches out over a period of time, a reform is to accept a claim made by one person or party. This rhetorical fashioning matters, since it "shapes thought and action."[54] What looks like reform form one perspective could easily appear as unnecessary interference from another. The sources that we use to write the history of monastic reform, whether narrative or normative, almost always come from the side of those claiming its necessity. To label a monastery as reformed is to accept both the judgment that it was necessary and the legitimacy of the one carrying it out. Reform, that is, was always about power, and scholarship on reform is about the both the rhetoric and the exercise of power.

Embodied reform inverts the framework in which we write the narrative of reform by focusing scholarly attention on the monks, not on the reformers. So much of what was written in sources such as the abbatial *gesta* is devoted to the recovery and acquisition of property. Thinking about reform from a sensory perspective offers another lens through which to read these documents, but perhaps more importantly such thinking forces us to look beyond them. At a minimum, we should recognize that, as I have presented it, reform is a concept that goes beyond taking inventory of the property of a monastery or the accident of lay or ecclesiastical control. More broadly, focusing on the body forces us to focus on how the ninth century, or the thirteenth, understood the relationship between affect, the sensorium, and the emotions, and the worldly and the divine. Finally, embodied reform attempts to recover those who experiences reform rather than those who promulgated and enforced it. Monastic reform is not just a question for institutional history, but for social and cultural history as well.

[54] Levi ROACH, "Apocalypticism and the Rhetoric of Reform in Italy around the Year 1000," in M. GABRIELE and J. PALMER, *op. cit.*, n.19, 178. See also S. VANDERPUTTEN, *op. cit.*, n.8, 186-187.