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»oratio periculosa«. Weiter stellt der Autor die Karolingische Liturgiereform – wie es selbstverständlich richtig ist – als Unifizierung der abendländischen Liturgie mit Hilfe der römischen dar. Aber es ergibt sich auch die Frage, wieso und seit wann sich politische Herrscher direkt und persönlich um Liturgiebücher kümmerten, solche in ihren Herrscherkapitularen zu befolgen geboten, während offenbar die Päpste daran weniger Interesse hatten. Hier wäre die wenigstens einmal erwähnte »théologie du *rex et sacerdos*« (S. 81) weiter zu entfalten gewesen.

So ist ein durchaus begrüßenswertes und im Ansatz nützliches Buch entstanden, aber die versprochene »ouverture la plus large possible à la dimension historique des sources liturgiques, leur signification pour l'histoire de l'Église, des mentalités, l'histoire sociale« (S. 25) wird nicht eingelöst, und so bleibt das Stichwort von einer »histoire totale« de la liturgie« (S. 41) zu vollmundig.

Arnold ANGENENDT, Münster

Gisela MUSCHIOL, *Famula Dei. Zur Liturgie in merowingischen Frauenklöstern*, Münster (Aschendorff) 1994, LI-396 p. (Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinertums, 41).

This is a very detailed and important book. It is, to the best of my knowledge, the first major study of the liturgy of the Merovingian nunneries, and as such it is much to be welcomed.

The book contains four sections, each divided into smaller chapters. In the first section, after some introductory remarks which set the study of nuns' liturgy in relation to other works done in the field, Muschiol provides a survey of all the sources she intend to use in her research – monastic rules, canons, penitentials, saints' lives, liturgical compositions, and any other written document which might shed further light on the question. In the absence of any detailed and exhaustive source which describes the liturgical practices of the nuns in Merovingian Gaul, Muschiol had to assemble her evidence from various bits and pieces of information. Yet, she is also well aware of the defects in her sources and of the various problems they pose. Thus, she stresses the gaps in her evidence, the problematic dating of several texts and the differences between the various convents throughout Gaul. Most importantly she emphasises the ambiguity of the sources in relation to reality, that is, whether they are the documentation of practical reality or norms aimed at by the authors and legislators.

The rest of the introduction is dedicated to the role of women in the Merovingian period and to the different types of religious women referred to by the sources from Gaul. While the former is simply a bibliographical survey, the latter is particularly interesting. Muschiol detects two phases in the development of female ascetic life in Gaul. Although the sources betray very little on the status, consecration or everyday life of religious women before the sixth century, it seems that those religious women, referred to by the sources as *Deo sacrata*, were not attached to nunneries, but lived their lives in the community under the supervision of the bishop. However, during the sixth century, with the institutionalisation of ascetic life in Gaul, a new phase began in the life of religious women. Nunneries were founded throughout the Merovingian kingdoms, first in urban centre and later even in the countryside. Rules for these nunneries were composed. It seems that from the sixth century onwards all religious women in Gaul were enrolled in some way or another in these new institutions.

The second section of the book takes as its main subject the liturgy of the hours. It reviews various types of liturgical prayers, such as singing Psalms, readings from the Scriptures, and silent meditation, as well as the daily cycle of prayers as reflected by the various monastic rules for nuns. In this section Muschiol also explores the physical location where the nuns performed their liturgical activities, and she concludes with a short survey of the occasions on



which liturgical services were offered by the nuns. Although this is a descriptive section, in which little analysis or interpretation is to be found, it is most useful and meticulously documented.

More analysis is invested in the third section of the book, where Muschiol is discussing four liturgical events of importance for the life of the nuns in Gaul – the eucharistic celebration, penance and confession, initiation ceremonies, and the liturgy of the dead. She concludes this section with a discussion of children in nunneries, as far as the questions of baptism and godparenthood are concerned. The fourth and last section of the book is designed as a conclusion to the study, and in it Muschiol explores the theme of ascetic life and liturgical devotion as attributes of sanctity, a theme which occurs repeatedly in the *Vitae* of saintly women from the Merovingian period.

For a pioneering study of the liturgical practices of the Merovingian nunneries, this study is extraordinarily detailed and clear. The picture which it reveals is doubtless true insofar as the sources used by Muschiol permit. But there are some puzzling omissions.

First, Merovingian liturgical compositions, from which Muschiol chose to mention only the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, are conspicuous by their absence from the discussion. The short dismissal of all liturgical sources as irrelevant to her study (p. 31–2) is entirely unconvincing and unacceptable in a study of liturgy of any kind. These Merovingian compositions have several extremely relevant sections in them, such as the *benedictio vestimentorum viduae* of the Missale Francorum, or the *ordo ad consacrandas monachas* of the Bobbio Missal. Furthermore, the vast majority of liturgical manuscripts from Merovingian Gaul were composed, or at least copied, by nuns. In a brilliant paper from 1992 (*Francia* 19/1, p. 1–35) Rosamond McKitterick has pointed out that most of the liturgical production of late seventh- and early eighth-century Gaul can be assigned to the Seine basin constellation of convents. It is true that McKitterick's paper was published too late to be considered by Muschiol. Yet, some of these manuscripts were already discussed by McKitterick in a paper from 1989 (*Beihefte der Francia* 16/2, p. 395–432), and even before McKitterick, Ulla Ziegler, Bernhard Bischoff and Leo Mohlberg had argued that the Old Gelasian Sacramentary and the Old Gallican Missal are the production of the *scriptorium* of Chelles. Surely, the production of liturgical manuscripts in relation to the nuns' liturgical practices should have been discussed. Even if one does not accept the argument that those manuscripts were produced in nuns' *scriptoria*, the fact that all of them contain sections which refer to widows, virgins, nuns and abbesses merits further investigation into the reasons of such occurrences and their liturgical implications. It might shed a new light on the relations between nunneries and bishops in general, and on the degree to which bishops were involved in the convents' liturgical practices in particular.

Second, the crucial question of double monasteries is scarcely touched on, and again the scepticism and the short dismissal (mainly on p. 65–66) is not enough. Whether by double monastery one means a monastery where men and women lived together, or a convent of nuns which depends materially as well as spiritually on a nearby separate male community, the existence of such monastic forms and their possible influence on the liturgical practices of the nuns should have been explored. Moreover, one has to remember that nunneries in Merovingian Gaul offered the inhabitants of the region the same spiritual care which any other urban or countryside church offered. Accordingly, the liturgy of the nunneries had to fulfil this function as well, and it is worth asking how it did so.

Lastly, Muschiol ignores a whole set of liturgical activities, that is, the celebrations in honour of saints, their *translatio*, and the *adventus* of their relics. It is enough to look at the relic labels from Chelles or to read Gregory of Tours to realise that saints, their commemoration and their relics had a central and crucial role in the life of the convent, and by implication in its liturgy.

Yet, the most disconcerting aspect of this study is the almost total lack of engagement with the cultural, political and historical context against which the nuns' liturgical practices should



be understood. The liturgy of Merovingian nunneries did not developed *ex nihilo*. It was firmly anchored in the cultural and religious development of the Merovingian period. Further precision about the liturgy's origins, historical evolution and connections with other forms of liturgy is needed. That such an investigation now has a secure base, is thanks to Muschiol's scholarly, absorbing and most useful study. It synthesizes a great amount of primary sources and recent research (though, oddly enough, Paxton's book is absent from the discussion of death rituals), and it should be the starting point for anyone embarking on the study of liturgical practices in Merovingian nunneries.

One last point to the series' editors. The fact that Muschiol is using the abbreviation system of the TRE, does not absolve from the necessity to provide a proper abbreviation list at the beginning of the book. The reading would be more enjoyable and the footnotes much more comprehensible, if one does not have to run to the TRE for every MLJb, SMBO or HLW.

Yitzhak HEN, Cambridge/Jerusalem

Rudolf SCHIEFFER, *Die Karolinger*, Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln (Kohlhammer) 1992, 8°, 260 S. (Urban-Taschenbücher, 411).

Après les Mérovingiens traités par Eugen Ewig, il y avait tout naturellement place pour les Carolingiens dans une collection qui, sous la forme du livre de poche, offre de véritables manuels, confiés aux meilleurs spécialistes. Agrémenté de bons tableaux généalogiques, centrés sur la dynastie et à qui une place limitée interdit de faire pressentir tous les liens familiaux noués avec la haute aristocratie (p. 244–250), et complété d'une excellente bibliographie (p. 229–243), l'ouvrage de Rudolf Schieffer a, comme l'on pouvait s'y attendre, intégré les plus récents travaux pour présenter une histoire linéaire, chronologique, de la famille carolingienne au pouvoir, de Tertry à Compiègne, de 687 à 987. Famille qui précisément permet de prolonger en amont et en aval, en prologue et en conclusion, l'histoire politique par celle des généalogies imaginaires: celle que l'on compile à Metz peu après 800, celles que se donnent de nombreux princes médiévaux, et pas seulement les Capétiens chez qui les Français connaissent bien la hantise du *reditus ad stirpem*, mais encore chez les Wittelsbach face aux Habsbourg qui donnent, eux, dans l'ascendance mérovingienne. Famille aussi qui, à l'aide des travaux les plus récents sur la »Sippe« et le »Geschlecht«, sur la mémoire des morts et l'enracinement dynastique, sur la morale du mariage et la dénomination des enfants, sur les jeux de pouvoir et d'alliances avec la haute aristocratie du royaume franc, occupe délibérément le discours, jusqu'à imposer un découpage par générations (onze générations au pouvoir et presque autant de chapitres). Le parti est enrichissant pour une compréhension historique, il aboutit inévitablement à un déséquilibre entre les différentes parties, quand un pâle Louis V doit faire contrepoids à la grande figure de Charles. L'éditeur a imposé le principe d'une »saga« familiale. Menée de main de maître dans tous les prolongements possibles, elle fourmille de données et remplit donc au mieux son rôle. Elle amène inévitablement à lire entre les lignes quand l'on s'interroge sur la culture et la religion, la richesse et l'administration, les rêves du clerc et les appétits du Grand.

Olivier GUYOTJEANNIN, Paris

Jean-Pierre DEVROEY, *Etudes sur le grand domaine carolingien*, Hampshire (Variorum) 1993, XII-305 S.

Zu Beginn stellt sich unweigerlich die Frage: Warum eine Sammlung von Aufsätzen zur frühmittelalterlichen Grundherrschaft, die aus den Jahren 1976–1991 stammen und zudem meist einschlägig publiziert sind? Doch nimmt man die teilweise exzellenten Studien (wieder)