Royal Politics in Small Worlds

Local Priests and the Implementation of Carolingian *correctio*

Carine van Rhijn (Utrecht)

Let us begin with an early ninth century manuscript now in the Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe. The modest-sized codex contains no more than a rather worn second half of the ›Regula pastoralis‹ by Gregory the Great and was described as ›Gregorii M. regulae pastoralis tertia et quarta pars‹ in the library catalogue of 1906[1]. The book is more or less the size of a modern-day paperback, measuring approximately 24 by 15 centimetres, and the main text was written by one well-practiced hand. It is not a »low budget« book, for the page lay-out is generous, with wide margins, and there are some elegantly decorated and coloured initials. Many other hands glossed, corrected and sometimes added short comments to the manuscript up to centuries later, which shows how it was intensively used during a long period of time. A codex containing just this incomplete text may in first instance sound rather unexciting, but the volume comes with a rather extraordinary story. Unlike the majority of early medieval manuscripts, we know a bit more about its past than what can be gathered on the basis of palaeographical evidence and its primary contents. At some point in the early ninth century, a priest called Engelbert wrote his name on the first folio[2], and it is probably the same Engelbert who turns up as the generous donor of this liber pastoralis in the section of the monastic library catalogue of the Reichenau that recorded such gifts between 823 and 838[3]. Here we

1) Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. CCXX, digitally accessible via http://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/blbhs/content/pageview/203548 (03.03.2015). For the description of the manuscript, see Alfred Holder, Die Handschriften der Großherzoglich-Badischen Hof- und Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe, vol. 5: Die Reichenauer Handschriften, Leipzig 1906, pp. 501–503.

2) Engelbert wrote part of a so-called »Ordinal of Christ« on folio 1r; see Roger E. Reynolds, The Ordinals of Christ from their Origins to the Twelfth Century (Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 7), Berlin/New York 1978, p. 69.

3) The Reichenau library catalogue of 823–838 mentions Gregory's ›*librum pastoralem*‹, donated to the library by an *Engilpreht presb.*, and the fact that the first folio of the Karlsruhe manuscript contains a short text on the ecclesiastical grades copied out by one Engilbert suggests that this is, indeed, the same manu-

have a manuscript, in other words, that once belonged to a priest, something we cannot often establish with such certainty as in this case. Since he is labelled as priest, and not, for instance »monk and priest« in the catalogue entry, Engelbert was probably no inhabitant of the monastery, but ministered to a community of laymen somewhere in the vicinity of the monastery as a secular cleric[4].

Presumably, the book stayed in the Reichenau library for a while after Engelbert handed it over, but then something else happened. On the verso of the first folio, we find another entry, now in a well-practiced eleventh-century hand. It was written by a second priest, this one called Richardus. Richardus identifies himself as *Scinensis prespiter*, which refers to a place nowadays called Schienen, not even twenty kilometres from the monastery of Reichenau. His text, which fills the entire page, declares that he donated this manuscript to his colleague priests of the region, in the hope that they may profit from it. Apparently, it is at this juncture that the first two books of the ›*Regula pastoralis*‹ became separated from the second two: Richardus relates how he divided the work into two volumes in order to make sharing easier, and stipulates that one year, each of two groups of priests should have one half, after which both halves should be swapped at a set date. As reasons for his gift Richardus states that Gregory's ›*Regula pastoralis*‹ is like a mirror (the word he uses is *speculum*), a so-called »Priesterspiegel« then, that would be beneficial to every priest. Secondly, he mentions how he hopes that his colleagues would help each other read and understand the text, so that those who lack knowledge might learn – although, he adds, he knew of no fellow-priest in the area unable to read[5]. Richardus, then, built on what he inherited from his predecessor Engelbert, and even though this article will focus on the ninth and not the eleventh century, it is important to note these continuities here before we take our leave of Richardus. Both priests were literate, they both owned and read the ›*Regula pastoralis*‹, both were concerned with

script as the Karlsruher Aug. perg. CCXX. See Gustav Becker, Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui, Bonn 1885, no. 8, manuscript 62. Alfred Holder, however, dates Engilbert's hand to the tenth or eleventh centuries, although it is not a very trained hand and therefore hard to date at all. See Holder, Handschriften (as n. 1), p. 503.

4) About the changing role of monasteries in the organisation of pastoral care between circa 800 and 1200, see now Julia Barrow, The Clergy in the Medieval World. Secular Clerics, their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe c. 800–c.1200, Cambridge 2015, esp. cap. 10, pp. 310–343.

5) The text Richardus wrote down is printed in full in Holder, Handschriften (as n. 1), p. 502. The first to notice this text and comment on it was Helmut Maurer, Die Hegau-Priester. Ein Beitrag zur kirchlichen Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte des früheren Mittelalters, in: ZRG Kan. 61 (1975), pp. 37–52. This example of priests in a substantial region working together and meeting regularly, as Richardus describes, is an important – and thus far unique – example of early structures of collaboration between priests who ministered in local churches. According to Maurer, the confraternity book of St Gall indicates that the priests of this region formed a community of prayer at an even earlier date than Richardus'. Although local priests operated alone, then, they can be seen to have been part of wider structures already in the Carolingian period.

teaching and preaching in a community of laymen, and both had some connection with the monastery of Reichenau – to which the manuscript returned yet again at some point after Richardus' time.

This small story about one (half-)manuscript and its two owners takes us directly into the »small worlds« of the early middle ages and the priests who served such lay communities as local preachers, teachers and experts in all that concerned Frankish Christendom. Engelbert possessed a still complete, rather high-quality ›*Regula pastoralis*‹ in the first decades of the ninth century, which would have certainly pleased the bishops of his day. Two priest's exams from the region of Freising that date from the same period explicitly demand that priests know the ›*liber pastoralis*‹ among a substantial list of other texts[6]. We even know that Engelbert knew how to write – although his hand is perhaps not the most beautiful and well-practiced ever – for he copied out part of a so-called »Ordinal of Christ« on folio 1 recto of the Karlsruhe manuscript, stating at the end that »I, Engelbert, have written this«[7]. In this sense, Engelbert can stand for a much larger group of Carolingian local priests, the improvement of whose knowledge and abilities were high on the agenda of the royal court from the late eighth century onwards[8]. Since the Carolingian programme to reform, emend and correct was meant to reach the entire people, it stands to reason that priests were given such special attention by the court since there was no doubt that these local churchmen were the key to the lay population of the empire. Local priests lived all over the realm in (often small) secular communities, and who better could therefore communicate with the lay Frankish population and implement royal initiatives of *correctio* locally?

Much time, parchment and energy were, therefore, devoted to the education of future local priests, and new kinds of texts saw the light to help them fulfil their many tasks and duties. After all, the more a priest knew and knew how to do well, the better it was for the higher purpose of creating the Christian Frankish people envisaged by Charlemagne and his counsellors; the better their education, the more capable they would be to function as channels for the ideals of local *correctio.* From the late eighth century onwards, therefore,

6) Capitula Frisingensia prima, ed. Rudolf Pokorny (MGH Capit. episc. 3), Hannover 1995, c. 13, p. 205, and the related Capitula Frisingensia secunda, ibid., c. 7, p. 211. Both texts date back to the early ninth century. On priest's exams see Carine van Rhijn, Karolingische priesterexamens en het probleem van *correctio* op het platteland, in: Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis 125 (2012), pp. 158–171.

7) See n. 2.

8) Rosamond McKitterick, The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms (789–895), London 1977; Charles Mériaux, L'»entrée en scène« du clergé rural à l'époque carolingienne, in: L'empreinte chrétienne en Gaule du IV^{e} au IX^{e} siècle, ed. Michèle Gaillard, Turnhout 2014, pp. 469–490; Steffen Patzold, Bildung und Wissen einer lokalen Elite des Frühmittelalters. Das Beispiel der Landpfarrer im Frankenreich des 9. Jahrhunderts, in: La culture du haut moyen âge, une question d'élites?, ed. François Bougard/Régine Le Jan/Rosamond McKitterick, Turnhout 2009, pp. 377–391; Carine van Rhijn, Shepherds of the Lord. Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period, Turnhout 2007.

long lists of prescriptions began to be issued by the court and by individual bishops, all aimed at improving the Frankish priesthood, and, via them, the local lay population[9]. That such attempts had effects beyond the royal court, and indeed reached the localities is exemplified by Engelbert, and we know that many of his colleagues had books and knew how to read and write[10]. What is more, some two centuries after Engelbert, the manuscript was still being read and studied by priests of the region, which gives us just one example of how long such books, written in the heyday of Carolingian *correctio*, might have stayed important and useful. Similarly, Richardus' personal note shows how ideals of well-educated local priests outlived the Carolingian period by a long time[11]. In discussions about the Carolingian efforts to emend and correct the Frankish population, however, such books have thus far not played any role of significance. The reason for this lies, it seems, primarily in the development of the debate, and it is worth outlining it briefly here in order to show why manuscripts for local priests have been considered to be of only marginal importance.

I. From Carolingian Renaissance to correctio

That something rather extraordinary happened in the days of the Carolingians has been well-known among scholars for the past century and a half, but how this »something« should be interpreted and what term fits it best have been, and are still, subjects of discussion. Manuscripts have been at the centre of these discussions throughout, for it was manuscripts that first caught the attention of researchers. The idea that there might have been such a thing as a »Carolingian Renaissance« was born only a few years after Jules Michelet introduced the term »Renaissance« for the Europe-wide rebirth of Antiquity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries[12]. A possible rebirth of interest in the inheritance of

9) These were the episcopal statutes, now edited in four volumes of ›MGH Capitula episcoporum‹. For a discussion of the corpus, see Peter Brommer, Capitula episcoporum. Die bischöflichen Kapitularien des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts (Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 43), Turnhout 1985, and more recently Rudolf Pokorny, Die Textgattung Capitula episcoporum, in: MGH Capit. episc. 4, hg. von Dems., Hannover 2005, pp. 1–69; Van Rhijn, Shepherds (as n. 8).

10) Many examples of manuscripts in local church inventories are given by Carl Hammer, jr., Country Churches, Clerical Inventories and the Carolingian Renaissance in Bavaria, in: Church History 49 (1980), pp. 1–17. For priests active as scribes and/or subscribers of charters see now: Men in the Middle: Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe, ed. Steffen Patzold/Carine van Rhijn, Berlin 2016, especially the chapters by Thomas Kohl, Bernhard Zeller, Marco Stoffella and Miriam Czock.

11) Barrow, Clergy (as n. 4), p. 5 states that the Carolingian period shaped the outlines of ecclesiastical institutions and clergy for the rest of the Middle Ages.

12) The term »Renaissance« as a general term for the period in which Europe as a whole left the Middle Ages in the 15th and 16th centuries was first coined by Jules Michelet, Histoire de France, 9 vols., Bruxelles 1833–1844; the first use of the term in early medieval context was, according to Paul Lehmann, Das

Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries was not even such a wild idea in view of the manuscripts studied at the time. The focus of attention was with Carolingian codices containing carefully copied texts from Antiquity, high standards of Latin, beautiful illumination, signs of sophisticated intellectual debate and scholarship – and all this in a time that was generally considered to be a Dark Age. Scholars at the time wondered: could this ninth-century »Renaissance« have been a precursor to the later, »real« Renaissance[13)]? Much research was undertaken to comb manuscript collections for survivors of Roman (and occasionally Greek) literary culture, revealing a real interest on the part of early medieval intellectuals in classical authors both pagan and Christian. It was not until much later, in the second half of the twentieth century, that it began to be generally accepted that the concept of a »Carolingian renaissance« (now usually spelled in lower case) was, perhaps, mostly in the eye of the beholder. In 1964, Percy Ernst Schramm was the first to propose to drop the term »renaissance« altogether and substitute it with a word that was much closer to what, in his eyes, Charlemagne really intended: »die karolingische *correctio*«[14)]. A little over a decade later, Rosamond McKitterick published her highly influential monograph ›The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms‹, thereby establishing a concept that has found wide acceptance since[15)].

In the past half-century or so, the frame of interpretation has thus moved from »Carolingian renaissance« to »Carolingian *correctio*« to »Carolingian reforms«. The main reason for this shift was a growing awareness that the Carolingians did not primarily intend to unleash a renaissance, but were far more interested in *correctio* and improvement of their Christian empire[16)]. The classical inheritance that was so carefully preserved in Carolingian codices turned out to be not the heart of the matter, but an important side-

Problem der karolingischen Renaissance, in: I problemi della civiltà carolingia, ed. Giuseppe Ermini (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 1), Spoleto 1954, pp. 309–358, at p. 310, by Jean-Jacques Ampère, Histoire littéraire de la France avant le XII[e] siècle, 3 vols., Paris 1839. See Erna Patzelt, Die karolingische Renaissance, Berlin 1924 for a discussion of the way in which the term »Renaissance« became commonplace. See Marios Costambeys/Matthew Innes/Simon MacLean, The Carolingian World, Cambridge 2011, pp. 143–146 for some useful comments on this debate.

13) For instance in Patzelt, Renaissance (as n. 12); Lehmann, Problem (as n. 12), pp. 310–357; Garry W. Trompf, The Concept of the Carolingian Renaissance, in: Journal of the History of Ideas 34 (1973), pp. 3–26.

14) Percy Ernst Schramm, Karl der Große: Denkart und Grundauffassungen – Die von ihm bewirkte »correctio«, in: HZ 198 (1964), pp. 306–345, at p. 341.

15) McKitterick, Church (as n. 8).

16) Giles Brown, Introduction. The Carolingian Renaissance, in: Carolingian Culture. Innovation and Emulation, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, Cambridge 1994, pp. 1–51; Rosamond McKitterick, Charlemagne. The Formation of a European Identity, Cambridge 2008, p. 310; and see her fundamental study: Ead., The Carolingians and the Written Word, Cambridge 1989; Susan A. Keefe, Water and the Word. Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire, 2 vols., vol. 1: A study of texts and manuscripts, vol 2: Editions of the texts, Notre Dame 2002, vol. 1, pp. 1–2.

effect of efforts that were primarily aimed elsewhere. Generally speaking, what Charlemagne *cum suis* set into motion turned out not to be a purely cultural phenomenon, but rather a religious and political one with cultural aspects. Still, the debate about terminology continues to this day. A recent addition to the discussion argues against »reform« as an appropriate term for the Carolingian programme, for *reformare* was rarely used in the period itself and does not contain the element of looking back to the Christian past, which was essential to intellectuals of the time. This, again, brings us back to *correctio*, a term used – albeit infrequently – in the Carolingian period itself to describe intentions to change and improve, which always carried connotations of an early Christian »gold standard«. *Correctio* as it is used by modern scholars involved change that looked ahead by looking back, with as its benchmark the days of the early church, the early councils and the writings of the Fathers[17].

Of these terms, *correctio* seems to be the more precise, while »reform« is used more generally. I will use both in what follows, and my focus will be on specific parts of what is now recognised as a complex, many-faceted phenomenon. Since it is my purpose to show in what shape Carolingian *correctio* reached the local levels of the Carolingian empire, I will hereafter focus on Carolingian *correctio* as a comprehensive, empire-wide programme for the moral improvement of the whole population via education by word and example. This programme was based on ideas about good Christianity and behaviour as set out in, most importantly, the ›*Admonitio generalis*‹ of 789, which was thought out at Charlemagne's court[18].

This text – to a large extent made up of early canon law – was copied and distributed widely, and its ideas continued to resonate throughout the ninth century and after[19]. The fact that this programme was intended to reach and affect the entire population is important here (the ›*Admonitio*‹ is explicit on this point), the ultimate purpose of the oper-

17) Julia Barrow, Ideas and Applications of Reform, in: The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 3: Early medieval christianities, c. 600 – c. 1100, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble/Julia M. H. Smith, Cambridge 2008, pp. 345–362.

18) Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen, ed. Hubert Mordek/Klaus Zechiel-Eckes/Michael Glatthaar (MGH Fontes iuris 16), Hannover 2012, esp. pp. 1–17. The literature on the Carolingian »reforms« is vast, so only a few key publications can be mentioned here: Brown, Introduction (as n. 16); John Contreni, The Carolingian Renaissance. Education and Literary Culture, in: The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 2: Ca. 700 – ca. 900, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, Cambridge 1995, pp. 709–757; Philippe Depreux, Ambitions et limites des réformes culturelles à l'époque carolingienne, in: Revue historique 623 (2002/3), pp. 721–753; fundamental is still McKitterick, Church (as n. 8).

19) For the new edition of the text, 20 out of 36 known manuscripts from between the late eighth and the fifteenth century have been used, see Admonitio generalis (as n. 18), pp. 63–81, with a stemma on p. 111. On the reception of this text during Charlemagne's rule, see ibid., pp. 112–147; see also Bernward Schmidt, Bibliothekserweiterung durch kanonistische Praxis. Zu Überlieferung und Verarbeitung der Admonitio generalis im 9. Jahrhundert, in: Die Bibliothek des Mittelalters als dynamischer Prozess, ed. Michael Embach/Claudine Moulin-Fankhänel/Andrea Rapp, Wiesbaden 2012, pp. 19–32.

ation being the creation of a veritable Christian people that would be pleasing to God, so that His wrath would not endanger the continuation into all eternity of the empire itself. Although it has been pointed out time and again that the bulk of what Charlemagne promulgated via the ›*Admonitio*‹ was not exactly new, it was the most forceful and focussed expression to date of a set of ideas that emphasised the importance of improving moral standards, of education and learning at all levels of society – small worlds included[20].

While this intended impact of the reform-efforts at all levels of Frankish society has been well-known for some time, Carolingian correctio has thus far mostly been approached via texts and manuscripts produced at the court or at intellectual centres, and hardly ever via the codices used by local secular clergy in their churches[21]. This is partly due to the fact that much of this material lurks undiscovered in manuscript collections, but in the age of digitalisation, this is changing fast. The idea that the Carolingian reform-efforts never left the court and its direct entourage, or had, at best, very limited impact in the wider world, can in any event no longer be maintained[22]. What is more, I hope to show in the following that a different image of Carolingian correctio starts to show once manuscripts for local clergy are considered too. As it turns out, there is quite a lot of evidence for this grass-roots level of correctio, even if it is coming to the light only slowly and even though we are yet far from understanding of what it was, exactly, that the Carolingians achieved regarding the education and moral improvement of the Frankish population as a whole.

Let us now go back to the »small worlds« of Engelbert and his colleagues and look at the Carolingian efforts from a local perspective. After all, whatever one wishes to call the programme, it does not change an important question that has not been asked, let alone pursued, often enough: if the Carolingian court wished to reach the entire population in order to educate and correct, in how far did it succeed in doing so? The local priest Engelbert, the first owner of the ›*Regula pastoralis*‹, could surely read and write (although his Latin was not flawless), he owned at least one book and knew a little Latin text that explained the ecclesiastical grades. This implies at least some degree of education and ac-

20) Continuity with old traditions of canon law, as well as with the capitularies of Charlemagne's predecessors in, among others, Brown, Introduction (as n. 16), pp. 4–6; Contreni, Renaissance (as n. 18), pp. 709–710.

21) There are, however, exceptions, for instance Yitzhak Hen, Knowledge of Canon Law among Rural Priests. The Evidence of two Carolingian Manuscripts from around 800, in: Journal of Theological Studies, New Series 50/1 (1999), pp. 117–134 and Patzold, Bildung (as n. 8).

22) For instance Chris Wickham, The Inheritance of Rome. A History of Europe from 400 to 1000, London 2009, p. 415; Philippe Depreux, Ambitions (as n. 18), at 750–751. A more optimistic view can be found in Matthew Innes, Introduction to Early Medieval Western Europe, 300–900. The Sword, the Plough and the Book, London/New York 2007, pp. 474–477.

cess to texts or perhaps a library. What we see in this example is, I think, one far end of the spectrum that extended between the small, highly learned circles of court intellectuals on the one hand, and the more elusive literate, more pragmatically educated village-dwellers such as this priest and his colleagues. The extant manuscripts follow this spectrum between the densely annotated learned codices of the court library and other intellectual centres, and the books used locally by an increasing number of secular clergy in the Carolingian period. As for instance Susan Keefe has shown, the late eighth and ninth century produced substantial numbers of manuscripts for the education of men who would minister to lay communities, and handbooks for their local use. In her important studies of baptismal tracts and of Creed commentaries, she has identified dozens of extant manuscripts once owned by local priests or used in the education of secular clergy[23]. Texts about baptism or about the central prayers of Christianity did, in other words, not only end up in monastic or episcopal libraries to be studied there, but also travelled to rural churches and their local secular clergy. What Keefe discovered in both instances, moreover, can in no way be called marginal or insubstantial: she found more than sixty different explanations of baptism, and around four hundred different explanations of the Creed, all copied or, in most cases, composed in the wake of the call to correct and educate in the years after about 800.

These manuscripts and texts have understandably never played a role in debates about the Carolingian Renaissance, and have not been taken into account very much in the subsequent ones about reform or *correctio.* They are, after all, often not very well-made or well-written, their Latin may be rather un-classical, their contents are perhaps not very exciting in intellectual terms, and most of what they contain is anonymous, repetitive, very basic or all three at the same time[24]. Still, I think that all this material taken together may shed new and important light on aspects of the program of Carolingian reform that have thus far remained all but invisible. It is there, I think, that we find how *correctio* went local and came to the small worlds of the Carolingian empire. In what follows I will of course not try and discuss the full range of this material, but rather attempt to show what there might be to discover about local aspects of *correctio* on the basis of a few examples.

23) Keefe, Water 1 (as n. 16); Ead., A Catalogue of Works Pertaining to the Explanation of the Creed in Carolingian Manuscripts (Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia 63), Turnhout 2012.

24) Some single manuscripts have, however, been interpreted as evidence bearing witness to the local effects of reform-efforts, see for instance Hen, Knowledge (as. n. 21), pp. 117–134; James McCune, The Sermon Collection in the Carolingian Clerical Handbook, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 1012, in: Mediaeval Studies 75 (2013), pp. 35–91; Owen M. Phelan, The Importance of Reading and the Nature of the Soul. Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C64 and Christian Formation in Carolingian Europe, in: Viator 42 (2011), pp. 1–24.

II. Manuscripts for local priests

That manuscripts for local priests from the ninth century survive has been generally known for decades; that there are so many is, as we have just seen, a more recent discovery[25]. Thanks to the tireless efforts of many to digitise manuscript collections in past years, more are coming to the light regularly. The criteria that are generally used to recognise manuscripts for priests are first of all based on contents, but also on material characteristics, the idea being that a simple rural priest would need certain texts, but could probably not afford *de luxe* manuscripts[26]. If a manuscript contains texts about matters directly (and only) relevant to priests, such as for instance baptism, preaching, penance, or teaching the laity, and does not include (much) material concerning specific episcopal duties, monastic life or that of communities of *clerici canonici*, it seems safe to conclude the codex might well have been intended for priests. Building on the work of Keefe, Pokorny and others, we now know of about seventy, and the list is growing steadily[27]. At the same time, it is clear that the manuscripts intended for priests only tell part of the story, since codices such as Engelbert's half-›*Regula pastoralis*‹ but also biblical and liturgical manuscripts may be so generic that they can hardly ever be linked specifically to local use, even though we know that there were many of such books in Carolingian rural churches[28].

What follows will focus exclusively on compendia of texts likely to have been put together with the express purpose of either teaching (future) local priests, or to serve as handbooks, or both. In her work about baptismal tracts, Susan Keefe has proposed to distinguish between »schoolbooks«, used for the education of future priests in monasteries or at episcopal courts, and so-called »instruction-readers«, handbooks for those already in office[29]. Even though it is, in practice, rather difficult always to see a sharp distinction between these two categories, the division is nevertheless useful here. As it

25) See McKitterick, Church (as n. 8); Raymond Étaix, Un manuel de pastorale de l'époque carolingienne (Clm 27152), in: Rev. Ben. 91 (1981), pp. 105–130. Recent awareness of larger numbers of priests' manuscripts in Keefe, Water 1 (as n. 16), pp. 160–163; Pokorny, Textgattung (as n. 9), p. 9; Keefe, Catalogue (as n. 23), pp. 201–391.

26) Attempts at classification have been made by Niels K. Rasmussen, Célébration episcopale et célébration presbyteriale. Un essai de typologie, in: Segni e riti nella chiesa altomedievale occidentale (Settimane di Studi sull'alto medioevo 33), Spoleto 1987, pp. 581–603. Rasmussen's typology is further elaborated by Yitzhak Hen, Liturgical Handbook for the Use of a Rural Priest (Brussels, BR 10127–10144), in: Organising the Written Word. Scripts, Manuscripts and Texts, ed. Marco Mostert (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 2), Turnhout, forthcoming. I would like to thank Yitzhak Hen for allowing me to read his article prior to its publication.

27) Steffen Patzold and I intend to dedicate a research project to these manuscripts in the near future.

28) Many are mentioned in Hammer, Churches (as n. 10); evidence for the presence of manuscripts in local churches can be found in many other regions of the Carolingian empire, see: Men (as n. 10).

29) Keefe, Water 1 (as n. 16), pp. 23–31.

turns out, schoolbooks and handbooks often address the same subjects and often contain overlapping sets of texts, but they seem to have functioned in different ways. Once ordained, so it seems, some priests copied useful texts from their schoolbooks into private manuals for future reference, or maybe a bishop gave out such handbooks at a priest's ordination. Via such locally used manuscripts, in other words, it is possible to follow knowledge and ideas from ecclesiastical centres where clergy were educated to local communities. Before we now take a further look at some manuscripts, there are two considerations about this material that need to be addressed.

The first issue is that of variation. Although the list of what all priests should know and know how to do, as for instance explained in the ›*Admonitio generalis*‹ and reiterated in more detail in many episcopal statutes seems to be rather straightforward, the books intended to teach and support priests are far from uniform. Such variation, moreover, extends beyond the use of different texts that explain, for instance, what exactly the Lord's Prayer means, or, at even a more basic level, what the ecclesiastical grades are[30]. If one reads what the different texts about such seemingly straightforward subjects actually say, it turns out that the explanations, expositions and commentaries show marked differences that sometimes even have theological implications. This produces an interesting contradiction that touches the centre of our understanding of *correctio* as a programme. While on the one hand much emphasis was put on *correct* prayer and liturgy in prescriptions issued by court and episcopate, which has often been taken as attempts to establish uniformity of practice everywhere, this seems, on the other hand, to have left plenty of space for variation[31]. Does this mean there were many ways to do something »in the correct way«? And if this was indeed the case, and we should therefore abandon the idea of uniformisation as a purpose of *correctio*, how then are we to interpret this variety?[32]

30) See Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16), pp. 135–148; the standard work on so-called »Ordinals of Christ«, mostly brief texts which list and explain the ecclesiastical grades, is Reynolds, Ordinals (as n. 2).

31) The creation of (liturgical) uniformity is much emphasised by Brown, Introduction (as n. 16), but also by, for instance, Susan Rankin concerning liturgical chant: see Susan Rankin, Carolingian Music, in: Culture (as n. 16), pp. 274–316; against the idea of uniformisation and romanisation: Yitzhak Hen, Liturgische hervormingen onder Pepijn de Korte en Karel de Grote. De illusie van romanisering, in: Millennium 15 (2001), pp. 97–133 and Id., The Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877), London 2001; Carine van Rhijn, Zoeken naar zuivere geloofspraktijken. Romanisering en uniformering van de liturgie onder Pippijn de Korte en Karel de Grote?, in: Millennium 26 (2012), pp. 5–21.

32) As an alternative to »uniformity«, Stefan Weinfurter proposes the concept of »Eindeutigkeit«, unambigiousness, to describe Charlemagne's efforts to correct and reform. While this idea leaves space for variation and improvisation, it presupposes what Karl Ubl calls »ein Großprojekt der Vereindeutigung«, for which there is no evidence – moreover, terms such as *unitas* and *concordia* are themselves part of political rhetoric, not necessarily a reflection of practice. Indeed, while prescriptions may sound unambigious (»baptise in the correct way«), variety and ambiguity surface as soon as one looks for details (which liturgy should be used? In what order should the ritual be performed? Are the washing of feet and white clothes

Secondly, the very fact that there was so much variation means that we should not imagine some kind of centralised planning about the education of secular clergy, important as they might have been for the creation of a Christian people. No set reading lists were issued by the court, no details were given about exactly which texts everybody should study, and the manuscripts for priests are therefore a very mixed bag[33]. Clearly, then, the court provided no more than general outlines, stating, for instance, that priests should »hold the right faith«, and left it up to diocesan bishops to provide the details[34]. The texts chosen for the education of future priests about the subjects they should master, moreover, was not only a matter of a bishop's personal tastes, but also simply of the texts available locally plus what could be produced on the spot. What we find in every single manuscript is, therefore, a bit like a snapshot, in the sense that its contents show what was considered the best way of teaching a series of subjects at a given time and place, making use of the resources available.

The first example is a manuscript now in Bamberg (Staatsbibliothek, Lit. 131), labelled »schoolbook« by Keefe, and given its contents it was clearly intended to educate future priests. According to Bischoff it is originally from southern Germany, and it probably dates to the middle, or the second half of the ninth century[35]. It is not a very big codex, measuring nearly 20 by nearly 13 centimetres, but it is substantial with 177 folia. The whole manuscript has been written by one clear, well-practiced hand, and the clustering of subjects indicates planning of what should be included before the actual writing started. The scribe even identifies himself at the end of the manuscript as »Reginpold the cleric«, and expresses some relief that he has brought the project to a good end in an elegant little postscript[36]. The manuscript also shows signs of use and study, in the form of

necessary?). See Stefan Weinfurter, Karl der Große. Der heilige Barbar, München/Zürich 2013, c. 9, pp. 178–204; Karl Ubl, Karl der Große und die Rückkehr des Gottesstaates. Narrative der Heroisierung für das Jahr 2014, HZ 300 (2015), pp. 374–90. Ambiguity in the details of the baptismal ritual can be easily found in Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16).

33) Some bishops, however, did issue such lists, see for instance the episcopal statute by Waltcaud of Liège, ed. Peter Brommer (MGH Capit. episc. 1), Hannover 1984, pp. 43–49.

34) Admonitio generalis (as n. 18), c. 68. Cf. Van Rhijn, Shepherds (as n. 8).

35) Date post quem is Walahfrid Strabo's ›*Libellus de exordiis et incrementis*‹, which he composed between 840 and 842. See Walahfrid Strabo, Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum, ed. and transl. Alice L. Harting-Correa (Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 19), Leiden 1995. On palaeographical grounds the manuscript has been dated to more or less everything between the second quarter of the ninth and the tenth century. The manuscript can be consulted online via http://bsbsbb.bsb.lrz-muenchen.de/~db/0000/sbb00000132/images/index.html (03.10.2015). In what follows I use the manuscript description by Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16), pp. 16–17 as well as my own findings.

36) This little text at the end of the last page was written in the so-called »bfk-Geheimschrift« and reads: *Quam dulcis est navigantibus portus, ita scriptori nouisimis uersis. Legentes in libro isto conscripto, orate pro ipso ut ueniam mereatur a Christo, quam prestat uobis ab ipso. Pro indigno clerico Reginpoldo, quia ipse*

corrections, interlinear or marginal glosses that explain difficult words, and here and there a few nota-signs in the margins. Both the practiced, well-educated scribe and the contents of this book suggest it was put together in a place with a rather well-stocked and up-to-date library, in all probability a monastery or an episcopal court.

The subject-matter of the entire book is liturgical and para-liturgical, addressing topics such as the Mass, baptism, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and *computus.* It uses substantial excerpts of texts by highly regarded Carolingian scholars such as Amalarius of Metz, Walahfrid Strabo, Alcuin of York and Theodulf of Orléans, but most of the material included is shorter and anonymous. The manuscript does not contain the relevant liturgical texts themselves, but offers explanations and background information that would only make sense to those already familiar with these rituals. For instance, a text called ›*Expositio missae*‹ does not give the texts of the prayers of Mass, but simply tells the reader that, for instance, »First in the order of Mass an antiphon *ad introitum* is sung«, which presupposes that the reader knows what that is and how it is done. The explanation continues by stating what the word *antiphona* means in Greek, what its Latin translation would be, and what alternating chant is[37]. Such expositions as these, which are often included in these »schoolbooks«, are dense texts, full of details that go way beyond a basic level of understanding of the subject at hand. In the course of studying such a commentary as this one »*expositio missae*«, a future priest would become acquainted with ideas of important authorities, in this case amongst others John Cassian, Augustine and Gregory the Great. He would, in passing, pick up some Greek and even a bit of Hebrew, learn about etymological explanations of words and about biblical precedents of some elements of Mass.

However, this *expositio* is not the only text in the manuscript that explains or comments on various aspects of Mass. Various other writings widen the horizon of the student of this subject, including for instance a commentary of a different kind of mass, an explanation of liturgical vestments, and a short text on the correct pronunciation of the name of Jesus[38]. The manuscript treats more subjects in more than just one text. There

laborauit in isto libro. On the use of such scripts, that are usually called »secret scripts«, but better understood as ways of showing off high-level knowledge, see Andreas Nievergelt, Geheimschriftliche Glossen, in: Die althochdeutsche und altsächsische Glossographie. Ein Handbuch 1, ed. Rolf Bergmann/Stefanie Stricker, Berlin/New York 2009, pp. 240–268.

37) Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Lit. 131, f. 30v–31r: *Primum in ordine missae antiphona ad introitum canitur. Antiphona enim grece, latine uox reciproca interpretatur. In quo genere cantionis duo uicissim chori reciprocanda melodiorum cantus alternant. Vel unius uox reflexuose alteri reciprocatiterque respondet.* This commentary has been edited several times, but never with this manuscript. See Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16), p. 16, n. 3.

38) The manuscript opens with the ›*Eclogae*‹ of Amalarius of Metz, which comments on the prayers of the so-called »old episcopal« Mass, as edited by Jean Michel Hanssens, Amalarii opera omnia 3 (Studi e testi 140), Città del Vaticano 1950, pp. 229–265 which takes on board this manuscript. About liturgical vestments: Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Lit. 131, f. 50r–52br which seems to be a text similar to, but not the same

are, for instance, two different explanations of the Creed, four of the Lord's Prayer and three texts concerning baptism, as well as two different episcopal statutes with prescriptions about the desired knowledge and behaviour of priests and laymen. In offering a rather rich collection of material for study, the Bamberg manuscript is not exceptional: many priests' manuscripts contain different texts about the same, seemingly straightforward subjects. In view of the questions posed earlier about local *correctio* and variety, it is worth to pause and see by way of one small example what exactly such differences could entail.

A case in point are two brief, anonymous expositions of the Lord's Prayer, copied one after the other in this manuscript, both of which give compact explanations of the prayer line by line. The text (but not the orthography!) of the prayer itself is the same, but the explanations move in different directions. As an explanation for »*Pater noster qui es in caelis*« we first find:

> »That means that you hope to be worthy to be a son of the church. Heaven is there, where sin ends. In heaven are the souls of the saints, as is written in the psalm: ›the heavens shew forth the glory of God‹[39], that is, the holy apostles and the martyrs of Christ«[40].

The second explanation offers something rather different:

> »We invoke God the Father in heaven, because we have all been created by one God. Whoever does the will of God, rightly praises God the Father in heaven«[41].

Both explanations were clearly accepted interpretations of the first line of the Lord's Prayer, and considered useful study material for future priests, whose task it after all was to teach laymen this prayer and make sure they understood what it meant[42]. These two short explanations offer different, but complementary information in their focus on »heaven« and »God« respectively. The two mass commentaries in the same manuscript, moreover, include two more expositions of this prayer that are different again. There was, in other words, no set interpretation of this important prayer, and students of this

as the relevant passages in Hrabanus Maurus ›*De institutione clericorum*‹. About the name of Jesus: this is a fragment from a letter sent by Amalarius of Metz to Jeremiah of Sens, see Jean Michel Hanssens, Amalarii opera omnia 2 (Studi e testi 139), Città del Vaticano 1948, pp. 386–387, in the manuscript on f. 161v–162r.

39) Ps 18,2.

40) Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Lit. 131, f. 107r: *Pater noster qui es in celis. Hoc est ut tu filius esse merearis aecclesiae. Caelum est ibi, ubi culpa cessat. Caeli sunt animae sanctorum. Sic enim in psalmo scriptum est. Caeli enarrant gloriam dei, hoc est sancti apostoli et martyres christi.*

41) Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Lit. 131, f. 108v–109r: *Pater noster qui es in caelis. Patrem inuocamus deum in caelis, quia omnes ab uno deo creati sumus. Ille recte confitetur deum patrem in caelis quicumque fecerit uoluntatem dei.*

42) On the crucial role of the Lord's Prayer in the creation of a Frankish Christian people, see now Steffen Patzold, *Pater noster.* Priests and the Religious Instruction of the Laity in the Carolingian *populus christianus*, in: Men (as n. 10), pp. 199–221.

manuscript were offered a range of possibilities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there were at least twenty other explanations of the Lord's Prayer in circulation in the Carolingian empire[43]. The implications of this small example are important for our understanding of what actually happened locally with the oft-repeated prescription that all know and understand the Lord's Prayer, which was considered essential for every single Christian. Clearly, the idea that knowledge of this prayer and its meaning mattered, was a widely shared one; how exactly it was explained and taught to the laity, however, was a different matter – here, variation was possible. What this adds up to is that many laymen might have known the prayer, but understood it in a variety of ways.

This example is perhaps a rather innocent one, but it is emblematic all the same. There are innumerable instances of similar variations among the many expositions, commentaries, prescriptions and explanations in circulation. And not only the explanations vary, the rituals themselves were different throughout the realm. In different regions, different kinds of Mass were said, different rites of baptism were used, different handbooks of penance were consulted. What it boils down to, I think, is that Frankish Christianity shows widely shared general ideas, for instance: all should know the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, or: baptism is essential, or: all should understand the Holy Trinity in the right way, or: sin should be remedied by penance. Beyond these rather broad outlines, however, there was a lot of flexibility where it came to their practical side. Different rituals could do the job of baptising Franks equally well, just as various interpretations of prayers worked fine – as long as a few shared ideas were respected, variety simply does not seem to have been an issue since one text could have several, equally correct, interpretations.

The second example is a handbook for a local priest. The manuscript Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale 288 is of uncertain provenance, possibly northern France, and dates back to the first third or second quarter of the ninth century. That it is so difficult to date and localise, is characteristic for many handbooks for local priests, since they were usually not written by practiced scribes in a hand that can be connected to a recognisable scriptorium. This particular handbook was a co-production of four different people, who together filled 77 folia of about the same size as the Bamberg manuscript. One later, well-trained hand added corrections in some parts of the manuscript at a later stage in the ninth century. Unlike the Bamberg »schoolbook«, this handbook is filled almost entirely with anonymous texts, the longest of which fill some seven or eight folia (in the Bamberg manuscript, the longest texts cover up to 25 folia). Like the Bamberg manuscript, this book was clearly planned as it shows thematic organisation: first there are expositions on

43) Keefe has found some fifteen different ones in her manuscripts which contain material about baptism but does not count explanations of the prayer included in a mass commentary, as they often were. See Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16), pp. 141–142 and Patzold, *Pater noster* (as n. 42).

the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed, then two short mass commentaries, thirdly there is some explanation of the prayers of the baptismal ritual, and the rest of the manuscript is filled with sample homilies[44]. Additionally, there is a short set of questions and answers about religious subjects, such as »why do you baptise?« or »what is the body of Adam made of?« – fortunately with answers given[45]. Clearly, then, there is substantial overlap with the themes of the schoolbook just discussed, but here, other choices have been made. Texts included here are brief and to the point, and most of all directly useful for a local priest's daily practice; one commentary on the Lord's Prayer and one on the Athanasian Creed even appear in both manuscripts.[46] Although there is no direct connection between the Bamberg schoolbook and this handbook, it shows how both kinds of manuscripts were put together from similar »pools« of texts, a tendency that can be observed for many other priests' manuscripts. Ideas of what priests needed to know and understand were, in broad lines, very similar everywhere, but schoolbooks and handbooks served different purposes and were therefore compiled in different fashions. Many handbooks contain homilies, for instance, which are usually lacking in the manuscripts used primarily for educational purposes[47]. Including a range of different explanations of the same ritual or prayer, moreover, was typical of »schoolbooks«: in the Laon handbook one explanation of the Lord's Prayer was considered sufficient, and one explanation of each version of the Creed. Like the schoolbooks, manuscripts like the Laon example do presuppose availability of other manuscripts, however. Explanations of the prayers in the *ordo* of baptism, for instance, cannot have been very useful if the text of the *ordo* itself was not at hand.

The overlap in contents between schoolbooks and handbooks suggests that both kinds of books for local priests were in all probability composed in those places where priests were educated. This is, in other words, how knowledge about the ins and outs of the Christian religion, its rituals, its morals and ideas about »good Christian behaviour« travelled: future priests were trained in local centres, and some of these priests took (or

44) See Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16), pp. 26–29. In what follows I have used this description of the manuscript as well as my own findings.

45) This first question is part of a priest's exam known from a number of other manuscripts. For discussion and an edition, see now Carine van Rhijn, *Et hoc considerat episcopus, ut ipsi presbyteri non sint idiothae.* Carolingian Local *correctio* and an Unknown Priests' Exam from the Early Ninth Century, in: Religious Franks. Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms. Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong, ed. Rob Meens et al., Manchester 2016, pp. 162–180.

46) The commentary on the Lord's Prayer has not been edited (*Oratio dominica propriae dicitur* […] *uel a diabulo et ab omni hopere malo uel de inferno*), see Keefe, Water 2 (as n. 16), p. 26 and n.1. The exposition on the Athanasian Creed is Ead., Catalogue (as n. 23), no. 269, known as the ›Fortunatus commentary‹, ed. Andrew E. Burn, The Athanasian Creed and its early Commentaries, Cambridge 1896, pp. 28–39.

47) McCune, Sermon Collection (as n. 24), p. 37 explains how sermons and homilies in clerical handbooks were not necessarily meant to be read out in church, but rather served as sources of inspiration for preachers.

were given) compendia of useful texts with them once they were ordained in a local church. What is more, manuscripts intended as handbooks show the same underlying ideas as the schoolbooks, as well as the layer of variation. The priest who owned the Laon manuscript could explain the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, knew what he was doing while saying Mass and baptising, and had a handsome collection of homilies at hand to inspire his sermons. That was not to say, however, that his colleague fifty kilometres down the road would baptise, preach and sing Mass in the same way. Neither would any local priest of the period teach and preach in flawless classical Latin. This aspect of *correctio*, that of cleaning errors out of non-Classical Latin, was not practiced with equal rigour everywhere. Priests mastered a more functional Latin, called »barbarian« or »obscure« by previous generations of scholars who had classical Latin in mind, but recently discussed as »Latin in transition«[48]. The language in which the manuscripts for priests were written shows influence of the vernaculars and was, in this sense, a living language with which people could work and communicate in the Romance-speaking parts of the empire. It is this Latin that was the language of local Christendom in all but the most carefully corrected liturgical texts.

III. Conclusion

If the production of manuscripts like the ones just discussed are anything to go by, Carolingian *correctio* was by no means confined to small circles of highly educated intellectuals, but indeed reached local audiences. With the growing awareness that rural priests were the ideal channels to implement a moral programme throughout the Frankish empire, substantial resources were put into their education and into the production of the books that were so sorely needed for them to do their jobs. Via educated priests, good ritual became available to local communities, as well as the knowledge every Christian needed to lead a life pleasing to God and ruler.

So: yes, Carolingian *correctio* had local effects, but this was not *correctio* defined in terms of correct classical Latin, uniform liturgy or standardised forms of knowledge and education. What the priests' manuscripts show are many different responses to the call to correct and emend. The exact shape and form they took reflects local interests of those in

48) Important work on this subject has been done by Els Rose, see for instance Els Rose, Liturgical Latin in Early Medieval Gaul, in: Spoken and Written Language. Relations between Latin and the Vernacular Languages in the Earlier Middle Ages, ed. Mary Garisson/Arpád Orbán/Marco Mostert (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 23), Turnhout 2013, pp. 303–313 and Ead., Getroost door de klank van woorden. Het Latijn als sacrale taal van Ambrosiaster tot Alcuin, in: Taal waarin wij God verstaan. Over taal en vertaling van Schrift en traditie in de liturgie, ed. Gerard Rouwhorst/Petra Versnel-Mergaerts, Heeswijk 2015, pp. 63–88. I would like to thank the author for making this last article available to me ahead of publication.

charge, and availability of texts. Variety is the key in all of this, and I think it should be central to our understanding of the local impact of the royal court's programme. The emperor and his advisers, after all, did not go beyond setting out general principles that could count on *consensus*, and it is these that run like a red thread through schoolbooks and handbooks alike. By the late eighth century, nobody seriously doubted the importance of baptism, or underestimated the need to teach the basic prayers of the Christian faith to all laymen. There was agreement that people should pray, go to Mass, do penance, celebrate Christian feast days, understand the Holy Trinity in the right way and know that Christ was not adopted by God the Father – to mention only a few matters considered of importance at the time. Such were the outlines for the moral improvement of all Franks, and it is this that priests were trained to impart – in many different ways.

Summary

This article discusses Carolingian manuscripts for local priests as evidence for the local effects of *correctio*, court-driven efforts to improve the lives and morals of the entire Frankish population. The priests who served the many small churches that dotted the countryside had a key function in the success of this operation, since it was they who were the primary teachers and preachers who ought to show their lay flocks the way to heaven. Their books, therefore, can tell us much about the kind of knowledge and admonishments they had on offer, and indicate their own level of education. Through these thus far understudied manuscripts, which were used either for the education of future priests, or for use »in the field« once they had been ordained, it is therefore possible to assess to what extent the ideals of correctio indeed reached local populations of Christian Franks. In addition, these manuscripts show that, contrary to what has been thought before, *correctio* was not about attempts at implementing uniformity in religious rituals and beliefs. What these books show most of all are many variations in approach and interpretation of shared themes, such as the way to perform the ritual of baptism, or how exactly the Creed and the Lord's Prayer should be understood.