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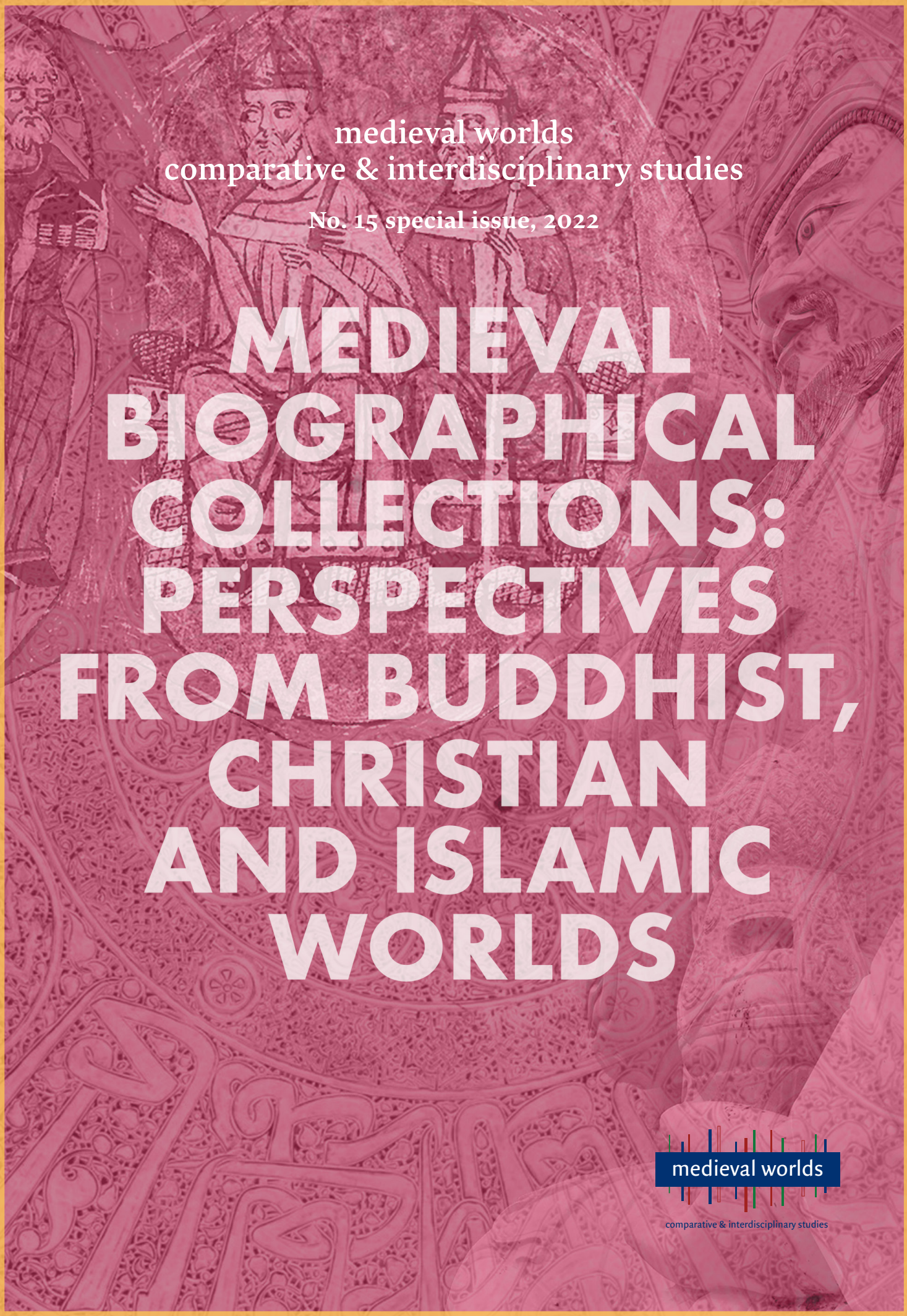

MEDIEVAL BIOGRAPHICAL COLLECTIONS: PERSPECTIVES FROM BUDDHIST, CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC WORLDS

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Medieval Biographical Collections: Perspectives from Buddhist, Christian and Islamic Worlds

Guest Editors:
Daniel Mahoney, Diarmuid Ó Riain
and Giorgia Vocino

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Editorial

Walter Pohl and Ingrid Hartl

It is with great pleasure that we introduce a new additional format to our *Medieval Worlds* volumes – the special issue. It will provide a platform for publishing the proceedings of conferences and specially edited collections of studies which not only form a thematic unit but also engage in comparative or interdisciplinary discourse with each other. In this way, these dedicated studies distinctively further the aims of our journal.

This is what our first special issue does with great skill. Seven case studies examine medieval biographical collections from different cultural and religious backgrounds – Buddhist, Christian and Muslim. Their findings form the basis of three comparative chapters, in which the authors of the case studies present aspects of comparison which emerged from their joint discussions. The introduction and conclusion form an overall framework that provides our readership with a broader comparative overview.

We will publish our special issues in addition to our regular volumes, apart from the usual publication dates of 1 July and 1 December. In order to maintain our policy of open access to research we will ask the guest editors of the special issues either to copy-edit the manuscripts themselves or to pay a modest fee.

We welcome proposals for possible future special editions – and for now we hope that you enjoy our very first special issue.

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Medieval Biographical Collections in Comparison

Daniel Mahoney and Giorgia Vocino*

This volume offers a comparative approach to collections of biographical texts from the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic worlds in the period 400-1600. It examines how both common and diverse compilation and literary strategies could be employed within and across different regions and religions. Throughout history, remarkable men and women stood out in a way that triggered an often-complex process of retelling their lives and preserving their memory through written narratives, and as a result they could become examples and sources of inspiration and identification for communities. This special issue looks at instances where such stories were preserved and presented within wider collections of biographies, where they could acquire new meanings and significance within an overarching narrative. The volume combines specialist case-studies on specific biographical collections from different regions with a number of co-written comparative essays that draw on and expand upon the conclusions of the individual studies. Within this comparative framework, the writing and compilation strategies of medieval compilers and the reception and audience of biographical collections are discussed at length. The particular potential of biographical collections to allow compilers across different cultures to evoke and promote particular ›visions of community‹ is teased out throughout the special issue.

Keywords: transcultural comparison, biography, compilation, authorship, seriality, reception, manuscript transmission, community, identity

Medieval communities that perceived themselves as a coherent whole often identified in their past remarkable individuals, for whose lives they carried out a complex, often long, process of retelling on behalf of both contemporaries and future generations. How and what societies chose to remember are, as a matter of fact, crucial for understanding what brings and keeps communities together. As Jan Assmann observed, cultural memory »fixed fateful events of the past and was maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)«.[1] Cultural memory is thus fixed »in immovable figures of memory and stores of knowledge«, but, at the same time, is a never-ending reconstruction. The lives of extraordinary individuals constituted knowledge defined and preserved through cultural memory. Learnedness, valour in battle, a peculiar

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1 Assmann, Collective Memory, 129.

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lifestyle, holiness and piety are but a few of the domains in which a person – both historical and fictional – could become a source of inspiration and set a normative ideal for the communities exposed to the retelling of his or her life. When a specific category of individuals is identified by a community as remarkable or meaningful, the possibility arises of bringing life stories together to celebrate and commemorate a politically or religiously defined group whose representation had acquired an essential ideological or socio-cultural function. This volume focuses on one way these stories were preserved and presented, that is, as collections of biographies, which when compiled together became part of a larger textual whole with new meanings and significance, and sometimes subsumed within overarching narratives. In other words, a medieval biographical collection is a group of biographical tracts brought together in the period 400-1600 CE by one or more compilers, who either used previously written texts, wrote them anew or a combination of both. This encompasses collections of multiple stand-alone texts, single texts containing multiple biographies, or more complex works containing biographies alongside or intermeshed within, for example, chronographical and genealogical texts.

The serial form has always been a popular storytelling mode, and a powerful one, as present-day media eloquently demonstrates. However, serial biographies are not an invention of the modern, industrial world in which repetition and reproduction feature so prominently.[2] In fact, the majority of the biographies that survive from ancient times were parts of a series or were transmitted as such. The major biographers from the Greek and Roman world – Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch and Suetonius – juxtaposed lives to encourage comparative readings and provide a way for readers to reflect on their own lives and societies as they read about outstanding individuals from the past.[3] Far from the ancient Mediterranean world, Sima Qian (c. 145-87 BCE), the first grand Chinese historian, also chose to collect in his *Records* the biographies of the most remarkable individuals who lived from the Xia dynasty (c. 2700-1600 BCE) up to his own time.[4] Biographies of remarkable religious individuals were presented in collections from the earliest centuries of the three medieval cultures that constitute the areas of research of this volume: written in the 4th century, Jerome's *De viris illustribus* soon became a model for later works in the Christian world;[5] in 6th-century China, where Buddhism had just taken root, Baochang and Huijiao compiled the oldest extant collections of Buddhist nuns' and monks' biographies;[6] *ṭabaqāt* (generations/classes of individuals) works already started to be written in early Islamic historiography in the 2nd/8th century, with collections initially focused on scholars and poets.[7]

2 Eco, Innovation & Repetition.

3 Beneker, Individual and Collected Lives in Antiquity.

4 Brown, The Chinese Sense; Jialin, Inception.

5 See the contribution of Ward and Wieser to this volume.

6 Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China,* 10-11.

7 Makdisi, Ṭabaqāt-biography.

The biographical collections examined in this volume emerge from varied origins within the medieval Buddhist, Christian and Islamic worlds, which in turn engenders a broad diversity in terms of their purposes, audiences and uses.[8] Consequently, the collections may be classified under various terminologies within these traditions, such as hagiographies or *ṭabaqāt*. But the focus of this volume is not to compare the biographical collections on this level. That is, the intention is not to stress the context of their previously determined historiographic genre. Such types of collections – such as Buddhist genealogies, Islamic biographical dictionaries and Christian *Gesta episcoporum* – rely on theoretical frameworks, genre definitions and vocabularies that are the products of centuries-long research within separate academic traditions. This is not to say that research on these separate traditions have not influenced each other.[9] Nonetheless, the comparative emphasis of this volume lies on closer examination of how the processes of writing, organising and ultimately receiving these collections of individual biographies channelled a greater sense of identity for the community in which they were created. This analysis shows that the collections could provide a sense of belonging to the communities, which in turn integrated them into their own social, cultural, political, religious and liturgical traditions. Thus, these narratives offered specific visions of community that highlight the connections between the past and the present and conveyed a sense of history for its members. Biographical collections constructed as lineage histories were often chosen in Buddhist Tibet to assert the identity and authenticity of a specific school or religious tradition, as this typology of texts outlined the series of its authorities.[10] The *Gesta episcoporum* and the *Gesta abbatum* celebrated churches and monasteries conceived as institutions whose history took the form of an unbroken series of Lives, one following the other.[11] The need to certify the reliable transmission of *ḥadīth*, reinforced by interest already shown for genealogy, poetry and the early followers of Muhammad, appears to be among the driving forces behind the success of *ṭabaqāt*-literature as a historical genre in classical Islam.[12] The juxtaposition of life stories to build larger narratives is thus a long-standing textual strategy shared by Buddhist, Christian and Islamic literary cultures, despite the absence of an *Urtext* or a discernible shared tradition.

8 The interest and pertinence of comparing biographies from different religious cultures has been recently demonstrated by Conermann *et al.* (eds.), *Narrative Pattern and Genre*; for a comparative approach to Latin, Byzantine and Buddhist collected biographies, see Palmer, The Global Eminent Life.

9 For instance, the current methodology and categories for studying hagiography and its features (e.g., formulaic nature, *topoi*, role of topography, edifying purpose, performative practices etc.) originally emerged as a product of European modern history and more particularly, the Catholic Reformation. However, these approaches have influenced the theoretical and hermeneutic frameworks applied to the analysis of biographical texts in both Buddhist and Islamic studies. See the introductory remarks on the assimilation of Buddhist genres to hagiographic literature by Kleine, Portraits of Pious Women, as well as Gilks, Hagiography (Buddhism). For the comparison of hagiographic themes and literature from the Christian and Islamic worlds, see Renard, *Islam and Christianity*, 193-198.

10 Roesler, Operas, 123-127.

11 Sot, *Gesta episcoporum.*

12 Cooperson, Biographical Literature; Hafsi, Recherches; Khalidi, Islamic Biographical Dictionaries; al-Qāḍī, Biographical Dictionaries.

Although these biographical collections were composed within distinct historiographical traditions, they share notable similarities. For example, these include the ways in which the biographies were brought together and organised in comprehensive, coherent and carefully laid out works, as well as how they were circulated and often updated to respond to similar literary strategies and textual practices. Moreover, these collections actively participated in processes of community-building and social consolidation. They cemented the identity of the groups and nourished a sense of belonging often through defining the communities by both opposition (*us* vs *others/them*) and assimilation (present communities mirrored by and seeing their reflection in past communities). These textual and socio-anthropological features are not restricted to a single religious culture and therefore make comparative research possible. The biographical collections written within the three medieval cultures and the texts compared in this volume do not present the same structure, width and richness of detail in the life stories they incapsulate: the vignettes in the *Singular Volume of the Rlangs*, Jerome's bio-bibliographies and al-Khazraji's obituaries select and squeeze biographical information into short dense texts, while the compilers of the *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani* and *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* relied particularly on the articulate and broad narrative of the bishops' Lives comprised in their collections. Despite differences in length and content across the texts, medieval authors and compilers built on individual life stories to shape the history of a community across time and space: the collection became something more than the sum of its parts. Thus, the research object of this volume is situated at the intersection between the biographical material presented via separate sections dedicated to explicitly identified individuals and the wider, coherent and meaningful narratives constructed through and upon them. While the analysed collections were written at different times – from the 4th to the 15th century – and vary greatly in scale and dissemination, they are not meant to be representative of their respective genres and historical regions. Rather, they were chosen to provide an entry point to discuss literary strategies and socio-political contexts in a cross-cultural comparison. In fact, this comparative endeavour was devised and pursued under the umbrella of a large collaborative and interdisciplinary project which sparked the questions that kick-started the research in this volume: how and why did authors and compilers from Buddhist Tibet, Christian Europe and Islamic South Arabia shape their visions of communities through collections juxtaposing life stories?

The Comparative Process

The biographical collections discussed in this volume come from the three religious cultures that provided the fields of research for the FWF Special Research Programme (SFB) *Visions of Community* (VISCOM) conducted by the University of Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW). VISCOM brought together researchers from historical and social anthropological backgrounds working on the societies and cultures of medieval Europe, South Arabia and Tibet, thus providing the fertile humus in which the research of this volume was first conceived and then carried out. The transversal discussions encouraged by VISCOM provided the frame for the comparative research of the group. The medieval biographical collections project was born out of the cross-cultural working group *Enclaves of Learning*, which compared Christian monasteries, Tibetan ›gompa‹ and South Arabian ›hijras‹ as hubs of education and knowledge.[13] Regular meetings and daily exchange among the project

13 Results of this working group's research are published in Hovden *et al.*, *Meanings of Community,* 271-467.

members revealed that, in separate academic institutions and individually, many of us were confronted with a similar typology of texts, namely collections or narratives building on or made of biographical units. As a matter of fact, biographical collections of scholars, saints and teachers are important sources in Buddhist, Christian and Islamic literatures and thus offered a viable and promising field of comparison. The methodological and hermeneutic approaches to these texts were set within the boundaries provided by another transversal research theme in VISCOM focusing on *Historiography and Identity*.[14] The analysis of the socio-political functions of history-writing as a means to construct and shape identities was applied to medieval biographical collections to explore the contribution of these texts to the construction and the communication of ›visions of community‹.

Despite the obvious differences between biographical collections produced in Christian Europe, Buddhist Tibet and Islamic South Arabia, a productive dialogue was easily started. A new working group specifically dealing with medieval biographical collections saw the light in 2014, in which year the topic, research interests and methodology behind this volume were first discussed. Textual criticism immediately revealed itself as the approach that enabled us to describe, explain and ultimately compare our sources, despite their historical heterogeneity. Several group meetings were held to allow each project member to present his or her source and bring out cross-cutting themes. Research interests naturally crystallised around the study of medieval biographical collections as means to establish norms, define identities, enhance social cohesion, and strengthen authority and legitimacy. Instead of focusing on individual life-stories, the working group decided to reflect on the added value of the serial nature of the sources. This resulted in asking such questions as: how did collections shape the texts and enhance the narrative? Were they composed as a response to specific needs? Did they lend themselves to particular purposes?

A methodology privileging an analytical approach combined with the deconstruction of academically characterised concepts and genres into their structuring principles and defining features cleared the way for fruitful comparative research on biographical collections across the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic worlds. In order to set boundaries and common vocabulary in our comparative endeavour, the same questions had to be asked and the same interpretative tools applied to the texts. Consequently, a research questionnaire was created to orient the analysis and further facilitate interdisciplinary discussion. An analytical framework was articulated through the selection of a set of main themes of shared interest: the role of models and traditions; the use of specific literary devices to build a coherent collection out of a plain juxtaposition of lives; the exposure of the purposes behind the writing and the identification of the audience(s) targeted by the texts; the issues of authorship and authoriality; the role of biographical collections as nodes in intertextual networks;[15] the use of techniques of persuasion to build textual authority. The comparative co-authored articles that constitute the first three chapters of this volume condense the results of the research structured through this conceptual framework and offer a comparative reading of the compilation strategies, the writing techniques, the audiences and the *Fortleben* of the texts.

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14 A series of six volumes on *Historiography and Identity* is the result of this collaborative endeavour. For the analysis of history-writing across Eurasia see, in particular, Pohl *et al.* (eds.), *Historiography and Identity IV*.

15 Intertextuality is the phenomenon in which a meaning of a text is discovered or fully understood through its relation to other texts. On the definition and history of the theory of intertextuality, see Gordon, Intertextuality and Comparative Approaches.

The seven case studies were discussed several times in the course of the regular meetings of the working group and on the occasion of an internal VISCOM workshop; the research on both the individual texts and the analysis in a comparative setting have greatly benefited from the feedback provided not only by the members of the working group but also by the entire VISCOM team, and particularly its project leaders.[16] The individual studies were then presented at an international conference held in Vienna in 2017; each paper was read and commented on by two respondents from two distinct fields of studies, which in turn facilitated exchange and discussion among researchers coming from different disciplines and academic traditions.[17]

Structure and Contents of the Volume

This volume consists of three sections: three comparative chapters, seven case-studies and a concluding synthesis. The different sections are very much interconnected: the results of the individual case-studies form the basis for the comparative dialogue in the three preceding chapters, while the case-studies were themselves shaped by the comparative framework governing the overall project.

The first section is a group of three short chapters that comprise an explanation of the points of comparison undertaken in the project and the results derived from this process. The first, compilation strategies, compares arrangements and techniques used by medieval compilers across different regions and religions to mould individual texts into a cohesive whole and imbue biographical collections with unified messages. The second, writing strategies, discusses questions of literary genre, models and traditions in respect to medieval biographical collections, as well as exploring the textual strategies and rhetorical devices used by authors/compilers across the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic worlds to shape and give coherence to their collections. The third, audience and reception, investigates the relationship between the author/compiler and the audience of medieval biographical collections and considers how subsequent alterations to such collections could create new meanings and audiences, both intended and unintended.

The second section of the volume comprises the seven case-studies, which feature individual analyses of the works used for the comparison. Each case-study investigates in more detail how individual works address the above stipulated comparative points concerning medieval biographical collections. They furthermore demonstrate, overall, how the texts are reflections of the members and values of the community featured within them as well as, occasionally, an active agent that points to a more ideal vision of what the community may become.

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16 There are a number of VISCOM project members that also worked on the topic of medieval biographical collections but are not represented in this volume, and we are grateful for their contribution to the discussion within the group: Manu Radhakrishnan discussed with us the little-studied 14th-century Latin legendary known as *Pronuntiamentum de sanctis*; Eirik Hovden analysed the biographies of the Zaydi imams of the 12th-century Muṭarrifiyya sect; Vincent Eltschinger examined Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and the medieval Tibetan translation of the *Lives of the 84 Siddhas*. Christina Lutter and Birgit Kellner offered precious feedback as respondents in internal VISCOM meetings. Their input has been fundamental to building the shared theoretical and methodological framework of this research.

17 We would like to thank the discussants who participated in the conference and whose feedback has nourished the preparation of this volume: Max Diesenberger, Vincent Eltschinger, Clemens Gantner, Phyllis Granoff, Daniel König, Konrad Petrovsky, Florian Schwarz, Marta Sernesi and Jo Van Steenbergen.

In the first case-study, Rutger Kramer examines the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium*, written at Redon in Brittany in the 9th century and discusses the community-building message inherent to the author's retelling of the exploits of the monastery's first generation of monks. In the second case-study, Reinier Langelaar investigates how the biographies in a likely 14th-century genealogical work, associated with a contemporary ruling house in central highland Tibet, situate and naturalise this group's position at the top of the socio-political hierarchy of the wider population in the region. For the third case-study, Graeme Ward and Veronika Wieser explore the continuations of Jerome's *De viris illustribus* written by Gennadius of Marseilles and Frechulf of Lisieux in the 5th and 9th centuries, respectively, and highlight how each compiler reinterpreted Jerome's bio-biographical catalogue to respond to contemporary contexts and to create new communities across time and space. In the fourth case-study, Johann Heiss focusses on two works from late medieval Yemen and compares how the two different biographers shaped the life stories of some of the same individuals to suit the overriding agendas and foci of their collections. In the fifth case-study, Diarmuid Ó Riain examines a collection of Salzburg hagiographical and historiographical texts apparently compiled at Benedictine Admont in the 12th century and discusses how the work shines light on the special relationship between the Salzburg archepiscopal see and the Styrian monastery. For the sixth case-study, Daniel Mahoney investigates how a collection of obituaries from an early 15th-century state chronicle from Yemen provides a more expansive, yet over time increasingly personalised, vision of the political landscape comprising and surrounding the court of the sultan. In the final case study, Giorgia Vocino looks at how an anonymous cleric skilfully arranged the lives of Milanese bishops to create a glorious history of the episcopal city that boosted the authority and prestige of an institution and nourished the sense of identity of the communities gravitating around it.

The third section comprises a conclusion, written by Ó Riain, which incorporates the results of the previous chapters into a discussion of the diverse purposes and aims of the compilers behind medieval biographical collections, the potential for such works to carry particular messages, propagandistic or otherwise, and the relationship between biographical collections and processes of identity- and community-formation.

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Compilation Strategies

Daniel Mahoney and Diarmuid Ó Riain*

This chapter compares the various arrangements and techniques used by medieval compilers across different regions and religions to mould individual texts into a cohesive whole and imbue biographical collections with unified messages. It examines the structure and ordering of the particular biographical collections under consideration in this volume in the wider context of their respective genres. The chapter discusses the different principles compilers used to arrange the individual texts and looks at the devices, such as prologues and titles, they employed to tie the component parts of the collections together. Due to the multiplicity of biographical tracts, the special potential of such compilations to deliver messages of a specific type to their readers is considered, most notably in regard to the authority, legitimacy and historical continuity of particular institutions. The comparison of compilations from different regions and religions highlights the many options available to the compiler and the creativity involved in crafting collections of old or new biographical texts in the medieval period.

Keywords: compilation, collection, biography, titles, prologues, comparison

This volume's focus on medieval biographical collections places the whole rather than the parts centre stage. Accordingly, the content and narrative strategy of the individual texts or biographies are primarily of interest insofar as they can be related to the broader questions of the overall structure, aims and meaning of the relevant collections. This distinction is a crucial one, as the volume seeks to identify, describe and evaluate the potential offered by this multiplicity and thus to determine how the juxtaposition of several biographical texts might have opened up new avenues to an author or compiler in conveying his or her vision of a particular community. This introductory section outlines the range of compilation strategies employed in the different collections within the wider context of the norms of their respective genres and source regions. It focuses on the ways in which the various collections were structured, the techniques that were used to tie the biographies or different sections together and the authorial or creative dimension to the overall process. Finally, the question of the motivation and intended meaning, the overall message that determined the choices and methods adopted by a compiler is also discussed.

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The individual collections under consideration in this volume are arranged according to a number of different principles. Some follow a more or less strict chronological framework, in which the biographies appear according to the sequence of their subjects' deaths. In the *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani* (*De situ*), for instance, the lives of the six Milanese archbishops follow the order of their succession, while in the *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* (*De episcopis*) there is also a discernible chronological progression from texts concerning Salzburg's origins and early prelates to those dealing with a later period. Although the sequence is not unbroken in the latter case, the compilers' interest in the correct succession of the Salzburg bishops and archbishops is nonetheless made clear by the inclusion of a list containing all prelates from the foundation of the see up to the time of writing, which ends with a sentence giving 30 as the total number of bishops. This chronologically based quantitative focus, *»das zählende Element«*, as Kaiser puts it, is a staple of the *Gesta episcoporum* (»Deeds of the bishops«) genre, to which *De situ* and, to a lesser degree, the *De episcopis* can be said to belong.[1] As Sot argues, »concern with the catalogue and with chronology is fundamental to local history«, as exemplified by *Gesta*-type compilations.[2]

Beyond an underlying historiographical impulse, the interest in chronological accuracy and the correct succession of office-holders up to the present day would have been tied in with the potential legitimising function of such works. This is true also of works with a dynastic focus, such as the chronicle of *al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya* (*al-ʿUqūd*), where familial rather than episcopal lineage serves as the structuring element for the work as a whole. Here the biographies take the form of obituaries (*wafayāt*), which are mainly given at the end of the chronicle's annual entries, following a pattern that first appeared in 12th-century Islamic historiography in Ibn al-Jawzī's history of the Muslim world (*Muntaẓam*).[3]

Indeed, the multiplicity of biographical tracts characteristic of such collections provided compilers with a ready means of establishing and emphasising historical continuity and thereby affirming the unbroken authority and legitimacy of the relevant institution or dynasty. In a European context, the early medieval *Liber pontificalis* and the 12th-century *Kaiserchronik* are good examples of the strength of biographical collections in conveying a message of historical continuity and legitimate authority.[4] In the case of Jerome's late antique *De viris illustribus* (*De viris*), the chronological sequence and sheer number of biographical tracts has the effect of asserting the intellectual weight and, by extension, authority of the Christian church from its beginnings, with the updated version of Gennadius only adding to this sense of historical continuity. On the other hand, Frechulf's 9th-century reworking of *De viris*,

1 Kaiser, Die Gesta episcoporum, 464. In the same regard, Reuter points to the fact that medieval historians often also wrote computistic texts; Reuter, »Past, present and no future«, 34-35. The Salzburg *De episcopis* provides an example of a collection where historiographical/hagiographical and computistic texts appear together. On the *Gesta episcoporum* genre, see Sot, *Gesta Episcoporum*; idem, Local and institutional history; Kaiser, Die Gesta episcoporum.

2 Sot, Local and Institutional History, 108.

3 Irwin, Mamluk History, 160.

4 On the *Liber pontificalis*, see Gantner, *Freunde Roms*, 16-38 and *passim*; Deliyannis, *Liber pontificalis*. On the *Kaiserchronik*, see Shaw, Kaiserchronik; Matthews, *Kaiserchronik*.

which ends with Gregory the Great (pope from 590 to 604), seems to intentionally convey a sense of discontinuity, marking off an extended Patristic Age from the Carolingian present, arguably in keeping with contemporary notions of a *renovatio*, which encouraged the preservation of and reverence for the literary products of a long-elapsed ›golden age‹.[5] The effect of canonising a particular set of authors, texts or knowledge inherent to biographical compilations such as the different versions of *De viris* can again be seen as one of the benefits of the collective nature of the format.[6]

The added value of medieval biographical collections arising from this multiplicity is, however, not necessarily predicated on the collections exhibiting a diachronic structure. As in the case of the first generation of monks portrayed in the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* (*GSR*), for example, an author or compiler can create an impression of a ›golden age‹ through the inclusion of the biographies of a series of worthy contemporaries. Furthermore, other collections such as *De viris* and *De episcopis*, which purvey a sense of historical continuity while at the same time highlighting a narrower period of time through a profusion of biographical subjects from a particular era, demonstrate that both a sense of continuity and that of a ›golden age‹ can be evoked by the arrangement of texts in a single compilation. Indeed, even in the absence of any discernible chronological framework, a biographical collection can, as in the case of the *Singular Volume of the Rlangs* or *Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru* (*Singular Volume*), create through its timelessness a sense of a never-ending ›golden age‹, the multiple tales of extraordinary feats giving the impression that a particular institution or dynasty had been forever marked by a particular excellence or authority. Whereas other biographical collections such as the Salzburg *De episcopis* and the Milanese *De situ* stake their claims to legitimacy and permanence by detailing historical events, the *Singular Volume* demonstrates that dehistoricisation or *Entzeitlichung* can also be employed with the same ends in mind.[7]

The encyclopaedic quality associated with the type of alphabetically, generationally and geographically arranged collections spoken of in Heiss' comparison of *al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk* (*al-Sulūk*) and *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ ahl al-ṣidq wa-l-ikhlāṣ* could also lend the compilations an authority-building or legitimising character, depending on the profile of the individuals featured in the biographies, although works of this type belonging to the *muʿjam* and *ṭabaqāt* traditions in Islamic historiography often do not exhibit these ideological aims.[8] In fact, new research approaches have begun to look at biographical dictionaries in the Islamic world as archives to be mined for a deeper understanding of the societies they reflect, while also keeping in mind the intent of their compilers.[9] Large, calendrically

5 Contreni, Patristic Legacy, esp. 524-535; Otten, Texture of Tradition; also, for a wider approach, McKitterick, *History and Memory*, esp. chap. 10.

6 Regarding the canonising effect of compilations, see, for example, Thier, Aus Altem ein Neues.

7 On this latter strategy, see Rehberg, Die stabilisierende »Fiktionalität«, 401: »Diese Geschichte ist mythisch, die eindrucksvolle Präsenz des »Immer-schon-so-Gewesenseins« beruht auf einer geschichtsmächtigen »Enthistorisierung« (…) Dauer und Entzeitlichung ergänzen sich, und dem Vergangenen wird jede Kontingenz genommen, der *status quo* zum Endpunkt einer langen Verkettung von »Notwendigkeiten«.«

8 For examples of the variety of motives for writing biographical collections in medieval Islamic historiography, see Gibb, Islamic Biographical Literature, 54-55, and Khalidi, Islamic Biographical Dictionaries, 54-58.

9 See Hirschler, Studying Mamluk Historiography. Prosopographic analyses of these collections have also received a boost due to recent breakthroughs in the ability to digitally recognise and organise the contents of these texts; see Romanov, Algorithmic Analysis.

structured compilations, as exemplified by the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, a collection of over 500 saints' Lives that features prominently in the reception story of the Salzburg *De episcopis*, are also encyclopaedic in character. Similar to *De viris*, this enormous hagiographical compendium offers a vision of a shared and continuous Christian past and of a universal Church.[10] Indeed, by adding local saints to such universalist legendaries, a community was in a way incorporating their own church or region into the history of Christianity. Heiss' contribution also highlights the possibility of the arrangement of a biographical collection along occupational, religious or class lines, while in the *Singular Volume* the biographical tracts are divided into two groups according to whether they are non-salvational (martial) or salvational figures, although this format was generally uncommon in Tibetan texts.

This division according to theme or genre is often found in collections of Christian saints' Lives or legendaries, the most frequent type of biographical collections compiled in the European Middle Ages, where biographies can be grouped according to categories such as apostle, martyr and confessor or on the basis of gender, i.e. female *virgines* appearing separately from male saints.[11] While the sequence of categories often reflects entrenched perceptions of the hierarchy within sainthood – for example, the precedence of apostles over other saints – the context of a collection's production and the perspective of its compiler could also have an effect on the perceived hierarchies and consequently on the order chosen. Where, for example, such a hagiographical collection was produced in a nunnery, the group of female virgin saints might be afforded an atypical level of prominence, as in the case of a 13th-century legendary from the Cistercian nunnery of St. Thomas an der Kyll in the Rhineland, where the female saints precede their male counterparts.[12] Biographical collections also offered their compilers the possibility of highlighting the particular importance of certain individuals, for example, the patron saint of a monastery or the prophet Muḥammad, by giving precedence to these figures within a sub-category or an overall series.[13] The *Singular Volume* offers a reminder, however, that the sequence need not always reflect the precedence of categories within a biographical collection. In this case the non-salvational texts appear first, but are expressly described as »the great base« of the collection, whereas the subsequent salvational tales are referred to collectively as »the noble ornament«.

In addition to the method of structuring the group of biographies or texts, various devices were available to the compiler in order to add coherence to a collection and express or reinforce the overall message that he or she wished to convey. These include titles, prologues, epilogues and intermediary passages between the individual texts. Because autograph copies of texts from medieval Europe are rarely preserved, it can be difficult to determine what – if

10 See Ó Riain, *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, 91.

11 Philippart, *Les légendiers*, 85-99; Dolbeau, Notes sur l'organisation, 15-20; Degl'Innocenti, I leggendari, 138-139, 141.

12 Mons, Bibliothèque Centrale de l'Université de Mons-Hainaut, Cod. 26/210/8402; Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum, 263-269.

13 For example, the most prominent late medieval collections of Irish saints' Lives begin with the vita of St Patrick, ›the apostle of Ireland‹; Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives,* 111-115, 240, 251. One of the earliest biographical collections in Islamic historiography, Ibn Saʿd's 9th-century *Kitāb al-ṭabaqat al-kabīr*, begins with an extended biography of Muḥammad and then continues with accounts of his companions and followers; Al-Qāḍī, Biographical dictionaries, 97-99.

any – title a text or a collection of texts was originally given.[14] The customary title of a medieval work today is often one that was attached to it at a much later date. The title *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium*, for example, can be traced no further back than Mabillon's edition of 1680, the opening section of the work not having been preserved in either of the medieval text witnesses. Interestingly with respect to the text's early modern reception, the inherent focus on the deeds of the group of saints is absent from a slightly earlier title, *Histoire de la fondation de Redon*, ascribed to the text in a manuscript copy dating to 1660. The earliest transmitted title of *De situ*, the all-encompassing *History of the description and name of the Milanese city, of the visitation of the most blessed apostle Barnabas, who had been divinely directed there, and also of the venerable man Anatelon, who was his co-apostle and contemporary, and was consecrated in that very place by his (i.e. Barnabas's) episcopal blessing, and also of some of his successors*, also classes the work as a *historia* as well as offering a succinct summary of the contents with a particular emphasis on Barnabas and the origins of the see.[15] The title used here for the Salzburg collection, the descriptive *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* (*On the bishops of Salzburg*) first appeared in the printed edition of the work published by Heinrich Canisius in 1602. Indeed, in its earliest manuscript witness, an Admont codex that may even contain the autograph copy, neither the collection as a whole nor the constituent texts bear a title, and this is true of most subsequent copies. The title of *De viris illustribus* is Jerome's own and is of particular significance for the fact that it locates the work within an existing genre, represented most notably by Suetonius' 2nd-century work of the same name on Roman authors, a compilation specifically mentioned by Jerome in his prologue. The title would thus have had the potential to shape readers' expectations and also provided an immediate indication of the propagandistic quality of the work, the Christian authors being implicitly compared to their pagan Roman counterparts in stature, with this purpose then being made explicit in the prologue. Interesting too is Jerome's subsequent admission in a letter to Augustine of Hippo that the more instructive *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* (*On Writers of the Church*) would have been the appropriate title for his work, whereas the title *De auctoribus* (*On authors*), which some »ignorant« copyists had applied to it, did not meet with his favour.[16]

Of the biographical collections under consideration in this volume, the *al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya* (*The Pearl Necklaces of the History of the Rasūlid Dynasty*) boasts perhaps the most evocative title, and one whose authenticity is attested through its use by the actual compiler. In fact, the problem of lost original titles is not as acute in the Islamic world, where there are indices of book titles from booksellers and libraries, which indeed include ample works that are today no longer preserved. The common practice of medieval Tibetan authors and compilers mentioning titles within their works means that original titles are also more likely to be preserved in this region. The motif of linked pearls

14 On the titles of medieval works, see Lehmann, Mittelalterliche Büchertitel; Fredouille *et al.* (eds.), *Titres et articulations*.

15 *Historia de situ et vocabulo urbis Mediolanensis seu beatissimi apostoli Barnabe visitatione ad eandem divinitus directa nec non et venerabili viro Anatelon eius coapostolo atque coetaneo ab eodem epischopali benedicione inibi consecrato vel quibusdam eius successoribus.*

16 The opening page was missing from the copy acquired by Augustine, who inquired with Jerome as to the correct title of the work; Augustine, *Epistula*, 40.2, ed. Goldbacher, 71; Jerome, *Epistula*, 112.3, ed. Hilberg, 370. For a recent discussion of these letters, see Vessey, Augustine among the Writers.

or some other sort of gemstone, as used in the title of *al-ʿUqūd*, is one commonly applied to compilatory works in the historiography of the Islamic world as well as being well attested in medieval Europe and Tibet.[17] In this case, it explicitly highlights the carefully curated and constructed nature of a text meant to not only preserve but also celebrate the institutional memory of the glorious achievements of the Rasūlid sultans during a period of time in which their power has diminished. The compiler of the *Singular Volume* provides a further instance of the use of the motif of preciousness in respect of a biographical collection in describing his work as a »gter-ma« or »treasure« text. *Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru*, which literally means *The Rhinoceros Book of Rlangs* is another evocative title, again authenticated through its use by the compiler. The figurative meaning is rather *The Singular Volume of the Rlangs*, the single horn of the rhinoceros symbolising the perceived oneness of the collection's contents, comprising both a genealogy and an ›archive‹ of greatness and virtue, perhaps hinting that it was compiled out of originally separate documents.

Al-ʿUqūd and the *Singular Volume* are also but two of the biographical collections under consideration to have an effusive prologue or, in the case of multi-volume works, a series of prologues. In the former the compiler used the prologue, consisting of genealogical, poetic and narrative elements, to emphasise the main message of the overall collection: the continuity and legitimacy of Rasūlid rule as extending out from a long line of pre-Islamic rulers of South Arabia. Similarly, the preface to the biographical vignettes in the *Singular Volume* reinforces the overall message of the collection in stressing the excellence of the dynasty's lineage. The conventional purpose of a prologue is, of course, to explain the purpose of a work.[18] In the case of *De viris* and *De situ*, the authors explicitly refer to the earlier works that had provided models or inspiration for their projects in order to help elucidate the function and form of, as well as the need for, the composition of the relevant collection. The prologue to the biographical book of the *GSR* explains the purpose of the text along familiar hagiographical lines, namely that it should preserve the memory of the saintly individuals and provide edification for the reader. The *De episcopis* lacks any prologue, which is not necessarily surprising, considering that it, unlike the other European collections under consideration, is not the work of a single author but rather a compilation of largely pre-existing texts. Indeed, the classic biographical collection in medieval Europe, the saints' legendary comprising collections of pre-existing hagiographical texts, is rarely furnished with a prologue.[19] Of the collections under consideration, only the *Singular Volume* features formal epilogues at the end of both books, where the theme of the dynasty's great lineage and connections to exalted figures of the past is again rehearsed. While not an epilogue, the final entry to *De viris*, Jerome's description of his own literary activity, provides the collection with an ending emphasising

17 Hathaway, Compilatio, 43. On the evocative nature of titles in medieval Islamic historiography, see Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, 66-72. A Tibetan example, albeit of 19th-century date, is the »Jewelled Beryl Rosary« or »Rin-chen-baiḍūrya'i-phreng-ba«, compiled by Kong-sprul-Karma-ngag-dbang-yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, that is cited in Langelaar's contribution to this volume.

18 On medieval prologues, see Lake (ed.), *Prologues*; Hamesse (ed.), *Les prologues médiévaux*.

19 Dolbeau, Les prologues, 347-351.

the theme of historical continuity. This is also true of the decision of Gennadius to imitate the original by ending his continuation with an entry on himself. Again, though not a formal epilogue, the last lines of the final item in *De episcopis* date the composition of this text and probably of the compilation as a whole to the year 1186 and, in adding that this was 563 years since the death of Salzburg's first bishop, reinforce the theme of historical continuity and longevity emphasised throughout the collection.

Just like prologues, intermediary passages between the different texts can help to add coherence to a collection, perhaps highlighting the work's message and clarifying the place of the individual biographies within the overall scheme. Among the biographical collections under consideration, the *Singular Volume* and *al-Sulūk* contain such elements, with the lines that separate each biography again focusing on dynastic and scholarly lineages to varying degrees and in different ways and helping to legitimise their political authority and aspirations. In the case of the other biographical collections, it is intertextuality and thematic convergence that fosters an element of ›seriality‹ as well as the coherence of the collections. In *De situ*, for example, the serial nature of the individual Milanese bishops' succession to office is heightened by the new bishops generally being introduced as the disciples of their predecessors. Ultimately the coherence of each collection is a product of the overall chronological or other principles by which it is arranged as well as of the individual texts' adherence to the overriding thematic focus.

This thematic convergence was a product of the biographies having been deliberately chosen or written because they each contributed to the overall message the compilers wished to convey. It is this potential to construct an overriding narrative and reinforce through repetition the central message that marks a compilation out from a single text. It offers an ideal means of creating and cementing tradition and of highlighting the repeated demonstration of a place's importance or sanctity, or of a dynasty's authority and legitimacy. Essentially, it is a ›vision of community‹ that is being conveyed, an idealised picture of particular groups or institutions. Not all biographical collections, of course, fell into the propagandistic bracket typical of the collections under scrutiny in this volume, offering either a different message or lacking any identifiable central theme due to their eclectic nature. This, however, takes nothing from the potential offered by the genre to strategic compilers. In order to search for the meaning of biographical collections, to understand their place in the *Sinngeschichte* of their communities, we must therefore consider both the tendency of the collection as a whole and how the individual ›selected‹ texts fit into the general picture.[20]

Drawing a clear line between author and compiler is not always easy, considering that many medieval authors from all historiographic regions reworked existing sources and many compilers edited, embellished or otherwise altered existing texts. This is quite evident in the biographical tradition of South Arabia, specifically, and of the Islamic world in general, as these collections developed and grew over time. If we look at classical and medieval use of the words *compilator* and *compilare* in European sources, it is clear that the terms were often applied to what we would now consider authors and authorial works.[21] This was despite the negative etymological connotations of the verb *compilare*, which means to pillage

20 Assman, *Ägypten*, 9-12; Pohl, Identität.

21 Hathaway, Compilatio; Rouse and Rouse, Ordinatio, 119-123.

or plagiarise, the pejorative sense of the word only slowly dissipating over the course of the early medieval period. There can be no denying the creative dimension of compilation, even where the compiler incorporated the existing texts into his or her collection with little or no amendment.[22] In choosing and arranging the texts, a compiler is acting as creator, meeting the underlying definition of the word *auctor*, which is exactly the term the compiler of *De situ* applies to himself in the work's prologue.[23] As has been argued in relation to the biographical collections under scrutiny in this volume and by others with respect to different collections, the process of compiling provides the opportunity to convey a particular message, imbuing pre-existing texts with a new meaning by reusing them in a different context.[24] This is, in effect, a moment of simultaneous reception and inception. Indeed, the adaptation and reframing of earlier texts was very much a consequence rather than a diminution of the permanence and enduring authority of the written word.[25]

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22 Van Nuffelen puts it thus: »Compilation is, moreover, never wholly passive: it implies choices in selection and invariably entails reworking the original material into a new order and narrative. As such, it always implies an authorial voice as well as a recognition of the authority of the antecedent text«; Van Nuffelen, Introduction, 393. For a good study of the role of the compiler, here with respect to the works of Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel (d. after 826), see Ponesse, Standing Distant.

23 *»Non loquatur auctorem retexens rei geste tenorem«*; *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 6.

24 See, for example, Diesenberger's study of how contemporary concerns are reflected in the content of a particular hagiographical collection from early medieval Salzburg: Diesenberger, Der Cvp 420.

25 Cf. Boyle and Hayden, Introduction, xvii-xix.

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Abbreviations

al-Sulūk: al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk
al-ʿUqūd: al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya
De episcopis: De episcopis Salisburgensibus
De situ: Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani
De viris: De viris illustribus
GSR: Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium
Singular Volume: Singular Volume of the Rlangs (Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru)

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Writing Strategies

Reinier Langelaar, Giorgia Vocino and Veronika Wieser*

For biographical collections to form a coherent whole, literary choices had to be made and writing strategies applied to the individual segments (lives) of what was conceived as an overarching narrative or a textual ensemble. In this chapter we analyse the genres, models and traditions upon which authors, compilers and editors relied to assert the authority of the text and create a product meeting the expectations, tastes and textual practices of the community within which and for whom the biographical collection was written. We furthermore explore authoriality to establish the ways in which an author's opinions, social entanglement and participation in scholarly networks contributed to shaping not only the content but also the style of his or her work. The comparative analysis of the written texts studied in this volume shows that authors also made consistent use of strategies of persuasion. These constituted powerful tools to build and convey a sense of trustworthiness encompassing both texts and authors: modesty (*topos humilitatis*) and self-confidence were, for example, put on show to strengthen the authority of a text, while prophecy provided a means to boost the legitimacy of the institution, the dynasty or the community celebrated by the biographical collection. Tropes and rhetorical devices can be identified in texts written in distant cultural regions – from Carolingian Brittany to the 14th-century Tibetan Plateau – as they allowed authors and compilers to showcase their learning and make sure to arouse and keep their audience's attention. Focusing on writing strategies thus, surprisingly, reveals an unexpected degree of literary proximity between texts composed across Medieval Eurasia.

Keywords: genres; literary traditions; authoriality; style; strategies of persuasion; tropes.

Writing history through the lives of exceptional individuals is one of the most ancient cross-cultural narrative strategies and one that enjoys never-ending popularity, as modern-day best-selling novels and films show.[1] If retelling the story of a single person already offers the opportunity to provide a much larger representation of the world in which that individual was born, lived and died, the extraordinary potential of gathering more than one biography is self-evident.[2] The analysis of such works across Buddhist, Christian and Islamic cultures reveals that it is not only the choice of the narrative mode that ties biographical collections

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1 Cf. for instance Custen, *Bio/pics*.

2 See Howes, Collective Lives.

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together but also the literary strategies employed by their authors and compilers to ensure their compositions form a coherent whole, that is, something more, and something else, than a mere juxtaposition of lives. The threads that keep together biographical collections are woven into and through their individual biographies, and to recognise such threads sheds light on the authors' and compilers' agenda as well as on the patterns in which earlier material was received and transmitted.

Moreover, literary choices were a powerful means to bolster the prestige of texts and collections, as these could be designed, either explicitly or implicitly, after authoritative models and traditions. The authority of texts could also be enhanced by their authors' personal reliability and prestige, and the ways in which they were written into biographical collections reveal unexpected parallels between chronologically and spatially distant cultures. Finally, literary tropes and rhetorical devices need to be considered as well. These not only contributed to the cohesiveness of biographical collections but were also applied to ensure the aesthetic quality and apparent trustworthiness of the written text, in the process increasing its chances of being passed on to the next generation. Exploring writing strategies thus proves to be a pertinent hermeneutic approach for comparative research on communities which, despite their obvious historical differences, ultimately shared an essential and constituent element of their structure, namely the textual quality of their cultures.

Genres, Models and Traditions

The biographical collections studied in this volume are all heirs to pre-existing literary traditions. Jerome of Stridon (d. 420), for instance, the late antique theologian who can be considered the initiator of the Christian tradition of biographical collections with his influential *De viris illustribus* (*De viris*), did not invent a new genre but knowingly reused and adapted the model of Suetonius' popular biographical collection of Greek and Roman authors.[3] With his literary endeavours, Jerome can be banded together with a wider group of late Roman Christian theologians and historians who started to experiment with various genres, ranging from universal and ecclesiastical histories to chronicles, exegesis and hagiography. Their aim was to develop a Christian vision of history and to appropriate the past of the Roman Empire.[4] Jerome's catalogue of prominent Christian authors and their works thus had an important impact on the thriving and diverse fields of ›Christian literature‹.[5] With his biographical collection, he efficaciously responded to the needs of an increasingly Christian-dominated society, in which a new canon of authoritative authors and texts was progressively being established. In a retailored Christian dress, the ancient model of biographical collections (Plutarch, Suetonius) enjoyed lasting success across the Middle Ages, with Latin continuations being written in the 5th (Gennadius of Marseilles), 7th (Isidore of Seville and Ildefonsus of Toledo), 11th (Sigebert of Gembloux), 12th (Honorius of Autun) and 13th centuries (Ps.-Henry of Ghent).[6]

3 Withing, Jerome's *De viris illustribus.*

4 Vessey, Reinventing History.

5 Cameron, *Christianity*, 141-143.

6 Baus, *From the Apostolic Community,* 20.

A similar pattern can be observed in the South Arabian tradition of the *ṭabaqāt* in respect of Ibn Samura's seminal book on Yemeni learned men. His collection reused well-established models and itself became a base for later authors to consult and use as a source of information and material to be inserted into larger biographical collections, such as those of al-Janadī studied by Heiss.[7] Striking for its idiosyncratic features, the *Singular Volume of the Rlangs* (S*ingular Volume*) adopts and adapts different literary traditions, combining the Tibetan ›treasure-text‹ genre, genealogy and biography as well as snippets of archaic literature and perhaps even epic traditions. This peculiar work does not accord to any single literary model, although the fabled 11th- or 12th-century treasure text *bKa'-chems-ka-khol-ma* attributed to Srong-btsan-sgam-po may be its closest antecedent. This latter work, in parallel to late Roman Christian historiographies, put forward a vision of history that was moulded by religious concerns, casting the Tibetan past as one pervaded by Buddhist actors and motives.

The medieval biographical collections presented in this volume thus tend to combine a variety of literary genres to help artfully construct the »memorableness of history«, as Aleida Assman labelled it.[8] These include hagiography and wisdom literature as well as anecdotes, miracle stories, prophecies and quotations from sacred scriptures, which are abundant in the examined works. They not only enabled emphasis on the individual remarkability of each life but also created repetitive threads that contributed to a collection's cohesiveness. Easily dismissed for their fictional nature, these narrative and literary devices fulfilled important functions that are largely shared by the analysed texts. The use of the Bible and the abundance of miracle stories in the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* (*GSR*) for one, not only turned many lives into one story but also offered efficacious didactic tools. For face-to-face communities, scenic stories provided examples of correct behaviour and confirmed the validity of societal norms.[9] They also helped shape the symbolic capital of the individuals celebrated in the biographies, to whom the present community was directly connected. The monastic community of Redon could thus see itself reflected in the biographical vignettes of the first generation of monks and find in them a source of inspiration, moral edification and a model of order.

Moreover, quotations from the Qur'ān, the Bible and even from popular poetry were effective mnemonic devices in communities in which the written and oral dimensions of literacy were largely intertwined. The identity of these social groups, which Brian Stock would call »textual communities«, was cemented by a shared understanding of authoritative texts and access to these was often mediated by orality.[10] The integration of Qur'ānic verses and references to the life of the Prophet Muhammad in the South Arabian biographies may thus be compared to the use of the Psalms in saints' Lives: because they were recognisable to a wide audience, they tapped into a broader shared cultural memory.[11]

7 On the genre of the *ṭabaqāt*, see Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought.*

8 Although created in relation to Shakespeare's plays, the concept can also be fruitfully applied to medieval history-writing; see Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, 70.

9 See Isaïa, L'hagiographie, 17-42. On Tibetan Buddhist literature, see Roesler, Operas, 113-139. On wisdom literature (*ḥikma*) in Arabic, see Gutas, Wisdom Literature, 49-86. On Islamic hagiography, see Renard, *Friends of God*.

10 Stock, *Implications of Literacy*; *idem*, *Listening for the Text.*

11 The work of the influential 10th-century historian al-Ṭabarī is a good illustration of the ways in which Qur'ānic material could be woven into historiographical literature; see Shoshan, *Poetics of Islamic Historiography*, esp. chap. 3, 85-107.

Pre-existing verses were also included in the *Singular Volume*, parts of which seem to have been learned by heart by its readers and would likely have been recited on fitting occasions. Borrowings from verse literature reveal the extent to which the examined texts were produced within and for communities in which poetry also played an important didactic role.[12]

The prevalence of hagiographic and exemplary elements differs from one medieval biographical collection to the next. The *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani* (*De situ*) and *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* (*De episcopis*) are clearly built on and around saints' Lives and therefore naturally accommodate hagiographic features, namely miracle stories and the information necessary for liturgical commemoration. Islamic *ṭabaqāt* associated with Sufi communities also make space for miracles showing God operating through his friends (*awliyā'*), including at their burial places, in ways that can be compared to the Christian understanding of saints, and through their bodies, as vessels for the manifestation of the divine. The *Singular Volume* combines the lives of saintly figures, who engage in miraculous events and are sometimes explicitly identified as Buddhist emanations, with violent martial episodes from the lives of mighty warriors.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Jerome's bio-bibliographies and many of the obituaries included in al-Khazrajī's collection rely on a more standardised, apparently more neutral and factual, format, and are thus almost entirely devoid of hagiographic features. Instead, the latter illustrated the exemplarity and reputation of the individuals associated with the Rasūlid dynasty through, for example, their moral qualities and their intellectual stature, as shown through direct testimony, anecdotes, positions acquired and the literary or architectural products they created and sponsored. The Christian authors collected in Jerome's *De viris* were reputable scholars and, with few exceptions, champions of orthodoxy; at the same time, many of them were already venerated as saints and doctors of the Church, and references to their hagiographic legends are often included.

The varying length and narrative complexity of each biography does not obliterate another essential feature of biographical collections: their formulaic nature. In most cases, the absence or overabundance of detailed information and the distance in time between the author and the individual whose life is narrated often resulted in the redaction of stereotypical portraits, which resemble a catalogue entry more than they do a biographical account. One exception in this volume is provided by the shorter biographies in al-Khazrajī's collection that appear to have been personally composed by him. These stand in contrast to the earlier biographies in his work, whose more fully fleshed-out content was extracted from previous collections. And yet, the narrative strategies adopted reveal the extent to which biographical collections were conceived of as a whole and not as a mere hodgepodge of unconnected Lives. Narrative organisation along the lines of, say, a lineage, as has been noted in the context of Tibetan Buddhist biographical collections, serves to locate »the place of the individual within the pattern of the tradition and is meant to represent the identity of the school as a coherent whole«.[13] Indeed, in a bid to paint a compelling picture, the author(s) or compiler(s) of the *Singular Volume* added many figures apparently unknown from other literary sources to the smaller mix of Rlangs

12 Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, 66.

13 Roesler, Operas, 393.

characters well-attested in Tibetan historiography. Although most of these life stories are brief, their insistent reiteration of the individuals' affiliation to the Rlangs clan of old clearly serves to build up the descent group as a whole. Jerome, for his part, could not avoid mentioning authors that were largely unknown to him, and authors of *Gesta episcoporum* could not simply omit those early bishops about whom little more than their names was known.

As a matter of fact, references to origins play a central role in these texts, regardless of whether the authors refer to a more distant past, such as primeval and legendary times, or a more recent one, such as the first generation of monks at a recently founded monastery. The Prophet, ecclesiastical and dynastic founders, and the revered Buddhist missionary Padmasambhava represent undisputed sources of correct doctrine, norms, order and moral values on which the identity and the social cohesion of the present community relied. Through them, authors and compilers were confronted with the evanescent time of origins, an age of men and women whose contours often dissolved into legend.[14] Biographical collections focusing on long-lived religious or political communities naturally privileged a diachronic approach. Through the creation of a chronological line, separate individuals were placed in a clear historical continuum relevant to readers living in the present. The Milanese *De situ* reused the prestigious model of the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* (Book of Pontiffs), in which the history of the papacy from the time of its first bishop, St Peter, unfolded. Jerome was able to demonstrate the learnedness and accomplishments of Christian writers – among whom he placed himself – while at the same time creating an idealised image of the past, the origins of which likewise went back to apostolic times. Similarly, the edited compilation of historiographic texts and biographies in *De episcopis* created a sense of historical continuity connecting the present to highly significant and politically charged moments in the history of the archiepiscopal see of Salzburg. A glorious past is also evoked by al-Khazrajī in his compilation of obituaries found in a chronographical work describing the emergence and evolution of the Rasūlid sultanate. Building on an already existing tradition, it provided an ideological framework to legitimise Rasūlid rule in South Arabia by tracing the rulers' genealogical origins back to ancient Yemen, even though the dynasty actually possessed Turkman roots. Although it does not privilege a strict diachronic perspective, even the chain of biographical vignettes in the *Singular Volume* anchors the history of a ruling dynasty to an authoritative past.

As this brief comparative overview illustrates, the authors, compilers and editors of the biographical collections examined in this volume skilfully exploited the features of the literary genre(s), models and traditions available to them; these allowed them to assert the authority of the text, to make sure it responded to the cultural (and often political) expectations and tastes of the audience and, last but not least, helped create a fitting product for the textual practices of the community.

14 See Schneidmüller, Constructing the Past, and for a larger comparative approach the articles gathered in Lincoln, *Discourse*.

Authors and Authoriality

When authors, compilers or editors of a biographical collection started to engage with their texts, they not only intended to recount the outstanding deeds of holy men and women or the virtues and vices of rulers but also to use these narratives to present a particular version of history.[15] In their works, the authors and compilers enter into negotiations with their past as well as with the present community they were living in and writing for. Unfortunately, not all authors allow us to gain as much insight about themselves, their education and background as for instance Jerome did, when he ended his collection on a lengthy auto-biographical note, carefully selecting the information he wanted his audience to remember.[16] The author of the Milanese *De situ*, for example, deliberately chose to stay anonymous in order to let the story he was telling take centre stage. He was hardly unknown to the earliest readers of *De situ*, who most likely were fellow clerics at Milan cathedral, and yet in the prologue he provided only enough personal yet rhetorically formulaic information to indicate his affiliation to the cathedral clergy and prove his competence and learnedness. Even less information may be provided in respect of collections written in a monastic context. The author of the *GSR* reveals no more about himself than that he belonged to the monastery of Redon, while it is only through study of the content and manuscript transmission of *De episcopis* that we can locate its compiler(s) to the monastery of Admont. Nevertheless, the authors or compilers are continuously present in their works as witnesses to the events they describe or as learned readers of the books they commented on.

Furthermore, authorial information given by the author himself does not always prove to be helpful or informative. Gennadius' auto-biographical entry, for instance, has to be read critically because it cannot be verified by other sources. Indeed, anonymity could help to support a particular author's standing. The person writing or compiling the *Singular Volume* seeks to disappear behind the words of more reliable people of the past, to whom the work is attributed and who should guarantee its authority. Though refusing to reveal his name, the anonymous writer of *De situ* is a recurrent voice in the text as he comments on the events described, connects the past episodes to the present and sews the individual parts into the overarching narrative. By effacing his personal historical identity and by recalling the episcopal command at the work's inception, the author actually enhances the authority of his text as he creates an official history of the Church and the city of Milan that was bound to transcend the specific moment in space and time in which it was written.

While the examined authors and compilers made different authorial choices, and addressed and emphasised distinct political, religious or intellectual issues, many of them reflected on their own position and integrated themselves into the communities they were depicting and shaping in their texts. Jerome, who was an outstanding intellectual, started to write his catalogue because it was his personal goal to prove the worthiness of renowned Christian authors, among whom he counted himself. The historian al-Khazrajī, who was working with the Rasūlid court, mentions a few times his presence at various types of events in conjunction with it, such as the lavish ceremony surrounding the circumcision of the sultan's sons, as well as recalling being hired by the sultan to teach recitation of the Qu'rān at a local mosque. Sometimes, indeed, authors and compilers divulge information about

15 Vessey, Reinventing History; Clark, Rewriting, 61-68.

16 Vessey, Reinventing History.

themselves unknowingly. Despite his attempts to remain ›unseen‹ in the *Singular Volume*, the author's use of particular toponyms and certain cultural and linguistic particularities of the text suggest he was associated with a specific region in the east from which the dynasty's forebears originally hailed. At Redon, the stories about the first monks shaped the past of the author's own community and the region he came from. By elaborating on the saintly deeds of the community's founding fathers, the author tried to safeguard the monastery's interests and its future.

The ways in which authors selected, organised and presented the content of the lives they chose to retell also differ from text to text. Characteristic of some of the examined collections are short biographical entries providing pre-selected information, which is sometimes fragmented and lacking in depth and completeness. In some of Gennadius' biographies, for instance, it can even be difficult to discern the person about whom the author was writing, thus making the collection's contents harder to interpret. The *Singular Volume* is also characterised by its telegrammatic style, including both grammatically dense sentences as well as cultural references whose proper understanding requires acquaintance with a cultural context largely absent from the text itself. However, in longer entries it is easier to trace the author's sources, the information available to him, and to analyse his authorial choices and methodology. The lengthiest biographical entry in the *Singular Volume*, for instance, offers many clues about the text's composition as it includes numerous toponyms as well as culturally and politically specific content that is absent from the work's briefer entries.

Besides the information the author gives or withholds in a collection's prologue about the motives and goals of composition, he often emerges in the text as commentator, eyewitness or interlocutor, revealing particular interests or reflecting on specific problems. The monks at the monastery of Admont, for instance, paid great attention to chronological accuracy in *De episcopis*, and it seems no coincidence that a new set of annals and a world chronicle were produced at the Styrian monastery in the same period of the 12th century. Specific interests and agendas also come to the fore in Al-Sharjī's and Gennadius' works: on the one hand, Al-Sharjī's states that his work emerged from the need to promote in the Islamic biographical tradition the existence and actions of Sufis in Yemen, who had been neglected in previous collections; on the other hand, Gennadius' interest in heresiological treatises and his tendency to mainly add authors to his compilation who shared and supported his own orthodox views can be understood as a reaction to the diverse and controversial religious landscape of late antiquity. Indeed, both he and Jerome used the collection to deprecate theologians and scholars they did not approve of. A similar permeability of biographical collections to contemporary doctrinal disputes has also been observed in South Arabia, and particularly in respect of the popular religious movement of the Muṭarrifiyya that spread in Yemen from around 1000 to the early 13th century.[17]

It was not only the author's opinions, assignment or awareness of traditions that shaped the content and rhetoric of a collection; his social entanglement, his participation in elite scholarly networks and access to a well-stocked library played crucial roles as well. Having a copy of Jerome's *De viris* to hand informed the content of Frechulf's history of the Church, albeit he weaved his source into a new narrative, in what was itself a prestigious scholarly

17 Heiss and Hovden, Competing Visions.

exercise. The compiler of the Milanese *De situ* indulged in the use of figures of speech appealing to the tastes of his learned audience, and he chose as a literary model a late antique author (Ennodius of Pavia) whose work was locally available but did not circulate widely outside Milan and northern Italy. In contrast, the *Singular Volume* has particular foci and pieces of information that seem to have enjoyed limited to no currency in the circles of the ruling house that the work buttressed, hinting at a degree of separation between the author (or his sources) and the championed community.

Strategies of Persuasion and Tropes

A variety of tactics were employed by authors and compilers to boost the credibility of their literary productions. At heart, most of these revolve around one and the same concern, namely to convincingly establish some sort of proximity, and thereby congruence, between the author and the described events. Naturally, such attempts to limit any perceptible rift between the narrative and the narrator would, if successful, bolster the work's reliability and thus enhance the degree to which the work could serve its social agenda. This rather uniform underlying strategy may, however, manifest itself in quite different literary forms and narrative choices.

In the *GSR*, for instance, the author seeks to gain the trust of his readership by plainly noting his own presence during recorded episodes or his acquaintance with key players in those events. Al-Khazrajī, as stated above, also references his own witnessing of events, including the completion of the recitation of al-Bukharī's Ṣaḥīḥ and the unusual rocking of a recently installed woman's gravemarker that attracted attention from many at the time. Additionally, he occasionally notes other eyewitnesses to different events, in whose reporting he claims to have great confidence. In the same vein, both Jerome and Gennadius marked themselves out as in the know by mentioning that they were personally acquainted with some of the contemporary authors they described or that they had read their works. These relatively minor notes establish a compelling ambience of first-hand testimony, which for the readers comes as close to direct knowledge as they may ever expect to enjoy. Interestingly, the same objective of establishing a tangible link between the author and the episodes related by him gave rise to a strikingly different solution in the case of the *Singular Volume*. By the time of composition (or compilation) in the late 14th or early 15th century, the author or compiler was far removed from the archaic ancestral events he (or they) described. Accordingly, it was out of the question to write himself into the narrative as an eyewitness. For this reason, it was the text itself that was presented as an allegedly archaic »treasure« text (*gter-ma*) composed by some of the very illustrious forebears it depicts. Despite the use of a radically different strategy – namely to remove, rather than to insert, the author – the underlying goal is very much the same: to directly tie historical events to their written narration.

Moreover, we also find analogous contrasts in the demeanour with which texts present themselves. Whereas the author of *De situ* plays himself down as somebody who produces »poor writing« and thus employs the traditional *topos humilitatis* to inspire an air of integrity and truthfulness, the *Singular Volume* simply boasts itself to high status. The latter work's repeated grandiose self-references and claims of ritual efficacy hammer home the fact that this document transmits grand powers of times gone by – a characteristic that can only be associated with a trustworthy account.

Both textual modesty and textual self-confidence seek to establish authority: in the first case, this was done by suggesting that the material perfectly and without distortion reflected existing sources of tradition, whereas, in the second, the text builds up its own clout by presenting itself as the words of a commanding cultural figure. In the first category we may include works such as the South Arabian biographical collections or the 15th-century Tibetan *Religious History of lHo-rong*,[18] which sometimes cite the exact sources they rely upon. Gennadius, too, repeatedly commented on how he had obtained information, whether aurally or in written form.[19] Such intertextual references served to display the bridges that linked the depicted past to the author's present. The second category, in turn, might be exemplified by the most influential Christian biographical collection, the Roman *Liber Pontificalis*, whose compilation was traditionally considered to have been initiated by Pope Damasus (d. 384) at the prompting of Jerome of Stridon.[20] This strategy of persuasion can also be observed for famous Tibetan treasure texts such as the perhaps 12th-century *bKa'-chems-ka-khol-ma*, which reports on the lives of some key figures of the Tibetan empire (7th-9th c.) and notably claims to have been composed by an emperor himself. Whereas the first set of works may push their self-effacing modesty quite far, the latter aim to establish authority by claiming proximity or even identity with the persons and events celebrated in the narrative.[21] Although doing so in drastically different ways, both strategies – self-effacement and self-absorption – strive towards the same goal, namely intimate association with the sources of tradition.

Perhaps the *topos humilitatis* is, on an abstract level, pushed furthest in straightforward compilations such as the Salzburg *De episcopis*, where older texts are simply collected and placed side-by-side rather than being incorporated into a new narrative. In doing so, the eternal risk of corruption that is inherent in rephrasing and repackaging materials is largely undercut by foregoing any semblance of authorship altogether. This approach breathes life into a trope regularly encountered in Buddhist literature, where authors note, with obligatory modesty, that they lack any literary skill and did not compose anything new or innovative. That is to say, they claimed to be mere copyists, passing on authoritative words without taking the risk of tarnishing them.

Another powerful strategy of persuasion was provided by prophecy. Al-Khazrajī's prologue, for one, starts out with a pre-Islamic prophecy on rulership in South Arabia, a position of authority eventually taken over by the Rasūlid rulers, thus presenting them as the (partial) fulfilment of this prediction. In the Milanese *De situ*, prophecies connecting past and present contribute to explain local happenings and place them within a divinely ordered and sanctioned wider history. Prophecy also takes on a dominant role in the Tibetan work, in which ancestral gods, Padmasambhava and an important ancestor all provide future visions that carve out a teleological niche into which the dynasty's rulers neatly fitted.

18 rTa-tshag-Tshe-dbang-rgyal, *lHo-rong-chos-'byung*.

19 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, 81, 89, 91, ed. Richardson, 89; 92; 93.

20 On the writing of this influential text, see now McKitterick, *Rome*, esp. chapter 1.

21 For more general information on literary strategies and hagiography, see Talbot, Hagiography.

In a nutshell, all these strategies seek to establish close affiliation between the contemporary text, its associated community (or communities) and the events set out in the narrative. No matter how this is done – by situating the author within the described events, by attributing authorship to somebody who was present, by recording scholarly links through citations, by including the text's transmission history or by posing a teleological channel of prophetic ordainment – it invariably involves an attempt to solidify ties with the past. As such, they all share a distinct genealogical agenda that seeks to establish epistemological kinship between the work, its associated community and whatever past it looks back to.

Tropes could be used in a somewhat similar fashion, as they could create a familiar atmosphere and thus signal affiliation with established traditions and sources. Depending on the socio-religious context in which a work was composed, different themes could be appropriate. Ancestors in the *Singular Volume*, for instance, are repeatedly credited with feats familiar from the life stories of tantric Buddhist masters, such as hanging one's robes from a sunbeam or stopping the passage of the sun to stretch the day's duration. These feats, then, are at once extraordinary *and* comfortably familiar, allowing the work's impressive claims to piggy-back on the standing of firmly established religious conceptions.

Stylistic techniques of persuasion, such as the rhetorical flourishes highlighted by Vocino, can be distinguished from the different strategies described above. The *De situ* uses both ornamented and elaborate phrasing, which was not only pleasing to the reader or listener's trained ear, but also encouraged trust by signalling the author's membership of one of the text's intended audiences, a community of highly educated men trained in the local cathedral school, that is, one of the most reputable educational institutions in medieval Europe. Rhetorical devices are also put to use by both the South Arabian biographical collections and the *Singular Volume*, which contain similarly structured entries in which repetition provides both emphasis as well as narrative orientation to varying effect. The author of the *De situ*, moreover, brings up, again and again, the evocative metaphor of the sea journey to describe the act of writing not only for its obvious aesthetic quality but also to accompany the reader and help him through the transitions from one Life to the next or from a digression back to the main narrative thread. Besides displaying an author's literary skills, such stylistic guidance thus also helps keep the audience's attention.

When focusing on the writing strategies employed by the authors and compilers of the works examined in this volume, historical, religious and political contexts seem to move into the background, as the texts unveil a surprising degree of literary proximity. Biographical collections obviously do not belong to a particular culture or civilisation: if the Gospels and the Lives of Suetonius and Plutarch are considered to be the quintessential models that influenced the development of the genre in Western culture, we should not forget that biographical collections of equal, if not greater, antiquity and lasting popularity existed outside the world shaped by Judeo-Christian thought and Graeco-Roman culture.[22] Given the shared space of intellectual production across Eurasia during the late antique and early medieval period, it is not entirely surprising to observe a certain degree of familiarity and influence between Christian and Islamic medieval biographical collections. Yet history-writing in Tibet after the so-called ›later spread‹ of Buddhism (from the

22 In Ancient China, for instance, Sima Qian compiled a monumental gallery of biographies between the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. His *Shiji* would greatly influence subsequent Chinese historiography.

late 10th through 12th century) responded to the political, religious, cultural and social frameworks of a rather different religious world, which did not experience substantial influence from contemporary Christian and Islamic societies. Regardless, the examination of the *Singular Volume* unveils the use of literary and narrative devices that are similar to the ones observed in works produced in Europe and South Arabia. These similarities cannot be explained by reference to a shared influential »Ur«-model or tradition, which is probably why a comparative approach to biographical collections compiled in different cultural and literary traditions has not been pursued by philologists and specialists of literary theory.[23]

The obstacles to such comparative research are both obvious and sizeable, and they include the need to overcome a variety of language barriers, to understand different historical and cultural contexts and to develop an acquaintance with the vocabularies of distinct academic traditions. However, a focus on the strategies of writing, combined with a historical and socio-anthropological approach to the contexts of textual production, reveals that the redaction of biographical collections not only often responded to similar needs and goals but also triggered the use of comparable literary strategies and rhetorical devices.

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23 For a comparative study of hagiographies (life writings) from Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, see Conermann and Rheingans, *Narrative Pattern*.

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Abbreviations
De episcopis: De episcopis Salisburgensibus
De situ: Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani
De viris: De viris illustribus
GSR: Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium
Singular Volume: Singular Volume of the Rlangs (Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru)

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Audience and Reception

Rutger Kramer and Graeme Ward*

This chapter sketches a basic conceptual framework for identifying and analysing the audiences and receptions of the kind of medieval biographical collections studied in this special issue. To do so, it sets out the range of approaches taken by the contributors and situates these approaches in relation to previous scholarship on the reception and interpretation of textual sources. Particular attention is given to the dynamic relationships between those who wrote texts and those who read and utilised them, relationships which are especially pertinent for studying compilations. In the process of transmission and reception, old texts were imbued with new meanings as later readers excerpted, copied and compiled them into novel collections. It is argued that by exploring biographical collections in the light of audience and reception, it is possible to uncover some of the different ways that authors/compilers sought to articulate notions of community.

Keywords: audience, reception, transmission, compilation, biography, community, literacy

Whenever a text is being conceived, the moment a quill is put to parchment or a pen to paper, we – the readers – enter the realm of authors and their authority.[1] From there, the leap to the audience can be deceptively easy: it may be construed as either the people an author or compiler had in mind while crafting a text or as the people who ended up reading, editing and using the composition over the centuries.[2] Whatever the case, it is worth asking to what extent the audience of a text (intended or otherwise) can be construed as a community – whether a given text was intended to build a community from scratch, consolidate one in times of crisis or rally its readers to continue to face the unknown together. The texts and compilations under scrutiny in this volume each have their own relation to the communities they addressed; authors both imagined and appealed to a pre-existing community, if only because of the language they used or the discourse they shared with their audience. Crucial aspects and dimensions of community, upon which our assembled biographical collections variously touch, are brought into focus when analysed in the light of fundamental questions concerning the intended and actual audiences of texts and compilations, the manner in which texts were read and received, and the way a given story changed meaning over time, as it was appropriated or repurposed.[3]

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1 Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 77-114.

2 Foucault, What is an Author?.

3 Gurevich, Historical Anthropology.

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Reception and Conception

Reception connects authors or compilers to the audiences of their works. The study of the phenomenon is rooted in literary history and hermeneutics, and its principal goal is to shift the focus of investigation from the author onto the reader, often by way of looking at the material or medium through which this connection would have occurred.[4] According to this approach, the historical meaning of a text was constructed by its audience. Given the plurality of audiences over time and space and in differing historical, social and cultural contexts, meaning thus became ambiguous, multivalent and subject to the way communities ended up remembering the past and recording those memories.[5] Broadly speaking, the key terms when discussing reception are *Rezeptionsgeschichte* and *Wirkungsgeschichte*, and both concepts sprang from German literary theory in the course of the 1960s. They refer to histories of reception and influence/effect respectively. Although, according to Peter Burke, the »distinction between *Rezeption* and *Wirkung* remains unclear«,[6] it is possible to distinguish one from the other. Leidulf Melve, for instance, argued that »*Wirkungsgeschichte* is concerned with large time-spans in order to delineate the changing appreciation (or reception) of a text. *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, on the other hand, is more interested in the immediate reception of a text and thus outlining the ways a given audience interprets it«.[7] There is, nonetheless, an overlap in meaning between reception and ›effect‹, and both *Rezeptionsgeschichte* and *Wirkungsgeschichte* tend to trace influences exerted by canonical works and canonical thinkers, paying particular attention to changes in the ways texts were interpreted.

Although the paradigms of *Rezeptionsgeschichte* and *Wirkungsgeschichte* provide a helpful model to analyse audience and reception after the fact, some of the sources treated in this volume show that it is not always useful to create sharp distinctions between authors/compilers and readers.[8] These are often instances in which the production of sources simultaneously embodied writing and reading in an ongoing process of studying, interpreting and writing ›new‹ sources that continues as long as there is an audience for any given text, in any given context. The compiled texts treated here thus add a third dimension to these two concepts, as the act of creating a collection of previously existing texts represents, with respect to transmission, an end and a new beginning – a new text to find an audience and a vessel that shows how older compositions continued to exert their influence.[9] Seen from this perspective, the case studies in this issue each deal with reception one way or another. We are either dealing with compilations built upon excerpts and paraphrases from earlier

4 See, among many others, Driscoll, Words on the Page.

5 For convenient summaries, see Holub, *Reception Theory*; Thompson, Reception Theory; Burke, History and Theory of Reception (many thanks to Anya Raisharma for this reference). For more emphasis on the Middle Ages, see: Melve, Intentions, Concepts and Reception; Briggs, Literacy, Reading, and Writing; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 1-86.

6 Burke, History and Theory of Reception, 25.

7 Melve, Intentions, Concepts and Reception, 388.

8 For a classic statement, see Jauss, *Aesthetic of Reception*, 3-45.

9 See further Comfort, Scribes as Readers, 28-34. Cf. the famous essay by Barthes, Death of the Author, 148: »The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination«.

texts, or with texts that were themselves known only as a result of later authors continuing pre-existing narratives or scribes copying texts wholesale, as in the case of the *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium (GSR)* described by Kramer, the only extant versions of which are copies made centuries after the moment of inscription. Moreover, as the authors and compilers of biographical collections were themselves also readers, composition and compilation go hand-in-hand with interpretation: both are rooted in reception and dependent on the agency of the audience.

The study by Ward and Wieser offers a focused example of the sort of extensive reception history that could be written about the *De viris illustribus* (*De viris*). Jerome's catalogue of celebrated Christian authors would come to be widely disseminated after it was sent out by its author near the end of the 4th century. It was added to and revised at later historical moments for new social and cultural contexts, spawning imitators who consciously and creatively shaped new bio-bibliographical collections in its mould; it also provided material to be utilised in new literary contexts such as chronicles. As such, Jerome's *De viris* became a source for the Milanese *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani (De situ)*, the focus of Vocino's study into the intentions behind and effects of a text that aimed to anchor the lofty ideals of Christianity to a single city. The references and allusions built into its ›textual fabric‹ reveal the sources the author had read and utilised when penning the biographies of the bishops of Milan, which in turn also reveal its intended audience. Vocino's essay, furthermore, gives clear examples of the way *De situ* itself, having initially been the product of one author's engagement with their »resources of the past«, had a distinct reception history, dependent upon the needs and concerns of later readers.[10] Remarkably, one context in which the Milanese episcopal biographies ended up – separately and stripped of the introductory panegyric to Milan – was the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, a vast collection of hagiographical texts ordered around the liturgical calendar, in which entries from Ó Riain's Salzburg collection, *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* (*De episcopis*), also appear. Unsurprisingly, this was not a phenomenon restricted to the Christian world. Heiss' diachronic study of South Arabian biographical literature, via a comparison of the collections of al-Janadī and al-Sharjī, shows how texts, by virtue of gaining an audience, become part of an ever-expanding set of resources which subsequent authors, including al-Khazrajī (as discussed by Mahoney), could use to make their points about the present.

10 Ganter *et al.* (eds.), *Resources of the Past*.

Audience(s)

The question of reception is thus intimately connected with that of audience. The audience comprises those who read written texts or listened to them being recited.[11] If texts thus become a conduit through which to engage with people, actual audiences are more difficult to reconstruct, not least because our sources often do not supply us with the necessary information to do so. Figuring out potential audiences remains a central interpretive obstacle that studies into the nature of a composition must struggle to overcome. Audiences could be real or imagined, intended or incidental.[12] They can be approached institutionally or spiritually, i.e. they can be exclusive, defined by a bounded and pre-existing community, or potentially all-encompassing, the text being aimed at everybody who would heed its message. Indeed, often it would be a combination of these categories: the isolated status of small, defined communities, such as monasteries, courts or schools, frequently only exists in idealised scenarios, with the communities they contain often continuing to defy attempts at categorisation by modern scholars. The communities implied in the *GSR* or *De situ* fall into this category: readers and listeners are invited to use their knowledge of a specific pre-existing community or previous experiences to reflect on the ideal presented in a text.[13] Even in such isolated cases, the community would be embedded into a larger social, political or religious context. The audience, subsequently, is encouraged to consider whether they are on the outside looking in, or on the inside looking out.

As the setting of the narrative increases in scale, so do the requirements of the readers. Authors that claim to speak for a political or religious community in its entirety would have to take their audience on faith. Their vision of community would be a projection – an attempt to convince their readers or listeners that they were part of a community that went far beyond the local level. Even if it did not always feel as such, this implied a certain level of inclusivity and community-building as well. The intended audience for Jerome's description of a Christian intellectual elite encompassed the highly educated classes in the Mediterranean, who were part of the growing world of Western Christendom. Reading this compilation allowed Jerome's readers to imagine themselves to be part of that community. On the Tibetan Plateau, the *Singular Volume of the Rlangs* (*Singular Volume*) analysed by Langelaar sailed a more proactive course, arguing for the establishment of a new socio-political order under the leadership of the Rlang clan. At the same time, the description of the deeds of the dynasty's earlier exponents appears to be vying for the audience's acceptance rather than presenting Rlang overlordship as a *fait accompli.* The political message of Mahoney's *al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī tārīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya* (*al-ʿUqūd*), on the other hand, appears to have

11 See the helpful comments in Magennis, Audience(s); Foot, Internal and External Audiences; articles in Caillet *et al.* (eds.), *L'audience*; Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr*; Hirschler, *Written Word*; Behrens-Abouseif, *Book in Mamluk Egypt and Syria*. On preaching, see Diesenberger *et al* (eds.), *Sermo doctorum*, together with Berkey, Audience and Authority and Bauer, Muslim Exegete.

12 A helpful division into »types« of audience is presented by Rabinowitz, Truth in Fiction, who proposed four audiences: the actual audience (»the flesh-and-blood people who read the book«); the authorial or intended audience (for whom the author makes »certain assumptions about [their] beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with conventions«); the narrative audience (an »imitation audience« to whom the author is speaking in the voice of the in-story narrator); and the ideal narrative audience (»for which the narrator wishes he were writing«). On this division and its usefulness for the study of medieval narratives, see now Novokhatko and Kramer, Dead Authors.

13 Barth, Anthropology of Knowledge, argues from a trans-cultural anthropological perspective that the experience of knowledge is based in the interconnectedness between canon, communication and social relations.

been directed at a wider audience of educated elites, just as the expanse of the authority of the Rasūlid dynasty in Yemen was waning. Here, the memory of past lives was aimed at consolidation; the inclusion of many of the obituaries of political elites, scholars and members of the broader public filled out and expanded the ways the sultanate had reached and influenced the inhabitants of the region beyond the main chronographic narrative of the text overall.

There are several different ways in which ›audience‹ can be equated with ›community‹. These depend in part on whether we are dealing with the immediate or ›intended‹ audience of a text, or with a later audience standing at a considerable temporal or spatial remove from the original work. The initial ground for writing biographical narratives (in collections or otherwise) may be found in crises of identity as perceived by the author.[14] These would be put in a logical sequence and thereby projected onto their intended audience with a view towards making them part of a community.[15] Such crises, in turn, could be a catalyst for strengthening a community or form the core of a new category of belonging. Similar conclusions can be reached, however, without focusing on crises *per se*.[16] Communities, after all, are not simple, fixed groups but rather are fluid, dynamic and ever-changing.[17] They regularly need to be maintained, reaffirmed and reoriented, and not only in times of heightened stress. Focusing on the moment of inscription of single compositions or the moment of compilation of multiple texts may be a step towards a (comparative) model that takes into account the discrepancies between the original intent of an author and the later uses of his or her writings – even, or especially, if the choices made during the composition of a life story do not reflect the expectations of the audience, setting in motion a renewed cycle of looking for meaning.[18]

When considering audiences as communities, several (overlapping) conceptual models can be applied, each of which focuses on a different starting and end point. Stanley Fish presented the idea of »interpretative communities«, in which he argued that, for any given audience, textual meaning is socially and culturally constructed.[19] From a Western medievalist perspective, Brian Stock influentially wrote of »textual communities«: »micro societies organized around the common understanding of a script«.[20] Constant J. Mews and John N. Crossley edited a collection of essays under the title »communities of learning«, which are understood as »the framework in which ideas are developed and exchanged« and each one of these communities »attached particular importance to some discipline and to some set of texts«.[21] Moving away from looking at the interdependent relations existing between and through texts, sociological approaches such as Robert Wuthnow's »communities of discourse« emphasise the importance of debates as a catalyst for spreading knowledge.[22]

14 Pohl, History in Fragments.

15 See White, *Value of Narrativity*, and White, Question of Narrative.

16 For example, Pössel, Consolation of Community.

17 Pohl, Comparing Communities.

18 Baumeister and Wilson, Life Stories.

19 Fish, *Authority of Interpretive Communities*.

20 Stock, *Implications of Literacy*; quotation here from Stock, *On the Uses of the Past*, 23; see also p. 150, where a textual community is »an interpretive community, but it also is a social entity«.

21 Mews and Crossley, Introduction; see also Vocino's contribution to this volume.

22 Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse*.

In order to emphasise the social processes of learning, Steven Vanderputten and Micol Long have fruitfully utilised the model of »communities of practice« pioneered by Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger to gauge the extent to which the transmission of knowledge engendered a »continuous and potentially endless process of personal improvement« and to examine how communities are strengthened through the communication practices between peers, students and teachers.[23] In each case, the underlying notions of community have been helpful in linking authors to their audiences, but at the same time the ›fuzzy‹ nature of ›community‹ underpinning these models has sometimes obfuscated the extent to which this factored into the writing or compilation process at all. While this need not be a problem when dealing with single (small-scale) communities or developments within a given large-scale community, it does become an issue when attempting to make comparative statements across cultures.[24]

Texts and Contexts

Given that the collections under scrutiny are in the end ›snapshots‹ of ongoing processes of community or identity formation and actualisation, the question of temporal or indeed geographical distance from their sources and intended audiences becomes salient.[25] This affects our reading and analytical practices in two notable ways. On the one hand, proximity to a community implies that authors would have had an idea about how their texts would be received – and let this affect their style and register. Writing for a literate audience who will read and carefully scrutinise a text is different from writing for an audience whose primary method of partaking in its contents is to listen to the words being read aloud.[26] Between these two extremes, grey areas such as literate listeners or readers with various levels of erudition need to be considered, of course, but depending on the style and register of a narrative it may be possible to parse the author or compiler's appreciation of a potential intended audience.[27] Equally important for our understanding of the choices made by the author is the question of what the audience would be expected to know about the subjects in a given text or collection. How much liberty would an author be allowed to take with the memory of the audience? How much liberty was expected? Would subversions of what actually happened be acceptable if the lessons contained within the story were ultimately deemed to be more important than the ›truth‹, i.e. if the *topoi* and rhetorical devices used produced a result that lived up to what the audience believed anyway?[28] In part, these considerations even play into the idea that any narrative of necessity marks off a series of happenings from its wider context and in doing so embeds it within the larger corpus of collective memory.[29] As this happens, as

23 Long, Communities of Practice, 44; Vanderputten, Commentary, 455-456.

24 Cf. the remarks by Van den Braembussche, Historical Explanation; Conermann and Rheingans, Narrative Patterns; following Hannken-Illjes, Making a Comparative Object, who notes that the ›fuzzy‹ nature of the relation between texts and audiences is precisely what makes it a fruitful comparative issue.

25 See Pohl, Comparing Communities, esp. 23-25.

26 See for instance Innes, Memory; Hirschler, *Written Word*; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 71-73.

27 Mostert, Communication.

28 Otter, Fiction in Historical Writing

29 See the introductory remarks (on historiography) in White, *Metahistory*.

it is being read, the audience might make assumptions about – or at least have to reconcile their assumptions with – the intentions of the author. The author, conversely, may try to write towards the expectations of the audience. Reception, on this scale, is what happens at the interface between these intentions and expectations. The community is what shapes the narrative and allows its written version to exist.[30]

Distance, on the other hand, initially raises the question of why a long view had to be developed in the first place; why did authors or compilers opt to reach back into unknowable, mythological pasts foreign to their audience, while at the same time invoking the familiar and thus creating an image of past lives which ultimately deepened bonds among communities in the present?[31] In such cases, the persistence of institutions or political entities rather than small-scale communities may be at stake, as if a proportional relation exists between temporal distance and the size of the potential audience or underlying community. The differing institutional characters of the texts under scrutiny here – addressing face-to-face monastic communities or projecting ideals onto the more ephemeral idea of a universal audience – provide different clues about authorial intention and regarding the group of people to whom a given text applied whether they wanted it or not.[32] The tension between authorial intentions and audience assumptions concerning the meaning of ›community‹ for each party implies that, for every text, the dynamic between author and recipient would be subtly different. Attempts to study these dynamics would thus help showcase the standards to which authors held their respective communities. Life stories collected in support of the archiepiscopal see of Salzburg, the Rasūlid court or the Phag mo gru ruling house invoke a form of ›institutional memory‹, but only to the extent that they called for support to secure their continued existence or impressed upon the audience the need to accept the emotional and temporal nature of their community. In the overlap between religious and secular or even institutional thought, this issue takes on a special meaning within the genre of ›life writing‹, as the death of individuals may be a signal that the foundations of an overarching community are weakening or be used to invoke the memory of these people, thus seeking to strengthen the community implied by the audience.

The Tibetan *Singular Volume* appears most explicit in communicating its combination of worldly and spiritual concerns to the audience: the author seems to have been aware that the audience expected martial prowess as well as religious purity of its potential leaders. The monks listening to the stories in the *GSR*, on the other hand, would be presented with a vision of the wider world as an obstacle between them and their salvation, a series of challenges intended to test their mettle. A diachronic perspective on the South Arabian *ṭabaqāt* shows how priorities shifted from author to author as they each needed to link an essentially immutable series of lives to the concerns of the present. Conversely, the lives of the bishops of Milan or Salzburg could be used to provide a stable bedrock – a timeless foundation which served as a jumping-off point to create a new image of a city, for example by highlighting the spiritual prowess of individual saints to a universal audience.

30 See the opening remarks on belief and falsity in Eco, *Serendipities: Language & Lunacy*, 1-22.

31 Cf. Hen *et al.* (eds.), *Uses of the Past*; Gantner *et al* (eds.), *Resources of the Past*.

32 Lake, Authorial Intention.

As we have seen, variations in the contents and manuscript contexts of these collections arise in the course of their transmission. This, in turn, showcases the versatile nature of the hagiographical or biographical genre. On the one hand, their reception (combined with the perceived intentions of their respective authors) depended on the needs of both author and audience. On the other hand, the fact that people may have been aware of this versatility also raises questions about the way separate stories would be perceived as part of a collective or as narratives of exemplary individuals.

Collective Endeavours

The link between author and audience as defined through the texts themselves is thus an idealised construct, a medium that in a practical sense was shaped by the context of its inception and the social logic behind its communication – which would have included the awareness that different audiences would have differing experiences when engaging with the stories within.[33] Texts could be composed, or later compiled or even serialised, in order to be recited to an assembled group or to be read by individuals within a larger collective. They might be geared towards the moral edification of an audience or designed as reference works to be consulted in the context of private study. The observation that authors and compilers self-consciously engaged with these questions shaped the use of such works – both regarding their intended function and their reception in practice. Depending on how well a compiler succeeded in conveying the intended message or how popular a given reading proved to be, this engagement with the actual compilation – the new narrative as it was repurposed – could end up providing a prescriptive framework for the form subsequent compositions ought to take. The reception (and indeed the survival) of single narratives would be shaped by their place in a larger compilation, whereas the composition of new stories might be influenced by the existence of serialised frameworks rather than hagiographical or biographical genres *per se*. As such, the decision to incorporate single stories into larger, composite stories becomes a central part of how we should consider the transmission and reception of narratives large and small.[34] The existence of purposely made collections affected the discursive role of individual life stories – and *vice versa*.

The reception of *De viris* in the 9th-century West shows how monastic libraries produced manuscripts collecting together all versions of the text (Jerome's original plus his continuators) fully aware that it was itself a collection comprised of smaller texts. In part, the idea was that these meta-compilations together presented an archive of a potential original; but an equally important goal was for them to be used as lists against which to check their institutions' library holdings. Thereby, such collections provided a valuable service in fostering or preserving the self-worth and thus resilience of an institution. As this example shows, compiling – the conscious gathering of life stories – thus stretches not only the concepts of community but also of time and place in the eyes and ears of the audience. Adding multiple

33 Spiegel, Social Logic; Hirschler, *Written Word*; see especially the methodological remarks in Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints*, 11-59.

34 ›Appropriation‹ might be part of this process as well, as this too relies on the use and reuse of texts and traditions with a view towards establishing authority: Ashley and Plesch, Cultural Processes of Appropriation.

life stories makes a text as a whole more flexible, more adaptable to specific needs at a given time and thus more likely to be taken as a reflection of a community by its members. By expanding the time described beyond a single life, a history is created. By embedding people from various times and places in a single narrative, the audience is being made part of something bigger than their immediate surroundings. By highlighting the deeds (and deaths) of certain people, they are being confronted with more than one ideal and given more incentive to become part of the network of mutual obligations that is a community. At its most basic, adding more people to a story shows that a community is only as strong as its members: a logical point, perhaps, but one worth keeping in mind.

These points converge whenever a series of lives is also a collection of previously existing narratives. On the one hand, there need not be an essential difference between single texts by individual authors and later compilations with respect to authorial intent and audience perception. On the other hand, collections of older works are not the same as standalone works, and, as has been made clear in the preceding sections, the differences between writing goals and compilation goals need to be taken into account. Nevertheless, the simple observation that compiling, adapting or continuing texts is both an act of reception and of (re)creation bears repeating. For all intents and purposes, there is an audience built into any collection, any *réécriture* and any deliberate continuation of a pre-existing work.[35] Beyond the recognition that the decision to incorporate a given work into a larger textual whole is a form of conservation or archiving, there is the awareness that this action taps into a whole new audience whose perception of any part of the work changes accordingly.[36]

As such, the mere act of compiling calls for a reassessment of the intended audience, now seen in the context not of the initial composition but of the time the decision was made to recast a narrative into a different format. Works such as the *ṭabaqāt*, the different versions of the rise of the Rlang dynasty as well as *De situ*, *De episcopis* or the many adaptations of Jerome's *De viris* thus become a testament to the author/compiler as audience. They provide a lasting proof that people continued to engage with texts in more elaborate ways than rereading or copying them. The various uses of the collective biography of the bishops of Milan provide an especially illustrative example of the ways in which »authorial« intentions could be adapted to new contexts from one manuscript to the next. Conversely, the development of texts such as the *Singular Volume* or *al-ʿUqūd* as a function (or reflection) of their overarching political context shows how the same core of information could be read and represented differently: even if the text or its form stayed the same, it could take on new meaning as the circumstances around it changed.

35 See Goullet and Heinzelmann (eds.) *La réécriture hagiographique.*

36 Dierkens, Quelques réflexions; comparatively, see for example Lee, Role of Buddhist Monks.

The exertion of authority over the audience becomes an apparent factor here. The communal nature of a collection could be made to defend a present by hearkening back to a past full of virtues and wonders, essentially creating a »community of memory« – memories which are then projected onto a better future.[37] On the other side of that same coin, those perceived as threatening the coherence of a community or transgressing its norms could be excluded from remembrance; political or religious opponents could likewise be excised from pre-existing collections, their excision a warning to those who want to belong.[38] In either case, someone needed to make that decision, and enough people needed to accept it for this new version to become valid. The future of a collection would thus depend on being inclusive as well as exclusive: if so many great individuals had come before, imagine how many more might follow. One need not even read the entire work for this message to be impinged upon those willing to accept it: the material and visual aspects of a collection, encompassing the way a single story was embedded in a manuscript containing more of them, evoked a powerful ›vision of community‹ in and of themselves. The choice to keep certain life stories, and to collect and compile these into coherent narratives was thus an attempt to represent the future of a community by bequeathing a collective history to the next generation.[39] And regardless of the discourse underlying the choices made, regardless of whatever (real or idealised) community drove an author to start compiling in the first place, in the end we are looking at narrative constructions that allow us »to glimpse what it meant to experience and engage in contemporary political culture«.[40]

It is the lure of an audience that continues to drive the will to conserve and impart knowledge, and it is the role of an audience to receive and digest knowledge. Nevertheless, in any given case it remains to be determined whether that audience has become a community because a text has been written for them, whether a narrative is constructed because there was a community waiting for it or whether the resulting compilations themselves represent a community better than any individual (text or author) could ever hope to achieve.[41]

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37 Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 275, talks of an »Erinnerungsgemeinschaft«.

38 Savant, Iran's Conversion; Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 131-135, points out that such »memory sanctions« were also meant as a warning to those who aspired to remain a part of the community. See also, more generally on the deliberate use and non-use of available knowledge, Dürr, Introduction.

39 Lifschitz, Beyond Positivism.

40 Glenn, Political History, 162; at 163-164, he also helpfully remarks that the historiographer Richer of Reims »was no mere observer of the world around him. And it is too simplistic to suppose that he served as mouthpiece for the man to whom he dedicated his work, expressed some shared set of family or factional ideals, or represented the views of other people within his community or of a larger Frankish nation. He was an individual within a dynamic community.«

41 Cf. for instance Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 210: »Representational practices, too, are real actors in the social world«.

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Abbreviations
al-ʿUqūd: *al-luʾluʾiyya fī tārīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya*
De episcopis: *De episcopis Salisburgensibus*
De situ: *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani*
De viris: *De viris illustribus*
GSR: *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium*
Singular Volume: *Singular Volume of the Rlangs* (*Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru*)

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Many Lives, One Story: The *Gesta sanctorum Rotensium* and the Making of Redon

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This article takes a fresh look at the composition of the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* (*Deeds of the Saints of Redon*), a late 9th-century monastic narrative which tells of the foundation of Redon, in the south-east of present-day Brittany. This story is exceptional because not just the abbot but the entire first generation of monks is lauded for their sanctity and their contribution towards building a community. I will argue that the author, rather than presenting these lives as examples for subsequent generation of monks to follow, intended for these vignettes to serve as a confirmation of the sanctity of the community as a whole. The series of biographies that form the first part of the *GSR* show that Redon, in the eyes of the author of the *GSR*, was a place where an individual's holiness could come to full fruition – not because that was a given, but because of the fact that members of the community always helped their brethren become the best version of themselves, both during their lifetime and especially in the close examination of their lives after death.

Keywords: monasticism, hagiography, biblical culture, Brittany, Carolingian empire, education

A good life should only be properly evaluated after somebody dies. This observation underpinned the famous story by the Greek historian Herodotus about the meeting between the Athenian statesman Solon and Croesus, king of Lydia, but it remained a staple of many hagiographical texts in the early medieval West.[1] Especially when it came to the determination of holiness, this was a matter of life and death: a life well lived, a good death and, most importantly, a story that preserved someone's memory for subsequent generations were *conditiones sine qua non* for the establishment of somebody's status as a saint – regardless of whether these people had actually been part of the narrated events, or indeed had existed at all.[2] The death and subsequent remembrance of such exemplary figures opened up the possibility of his or her life being written about, an act which effectively placed the protagonist in an ever-present stasis that allowed their story to start living a life of its own.[3] In so doing,

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1 Emilsson, On Happiness and Time, 223-225; generally, see also Armstrong, Ethics as the Study of Ideals.

2 See Mulder-Bakker, The Invention of Saintliness.

3 Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 79-91.

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the story of the saint – as well as their physical relics, if available – may become a central point to which a burgeoning community gravitates and around which its religious practices were shaped.[4] However, due to the revered status of saints in the Christian West, their appeal went well beyond the boundaries of individual communities: they exemplified the best that humanity had to offer and, as such, their stories were meant to appeal to humanity in general.

In this contribution, the interplay between life, death, (exemplary) holiness and community will be explored in examining a collection of saints' lives known as the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* (*Deeds of the Saints of Redon*, henceforth *GSR*), a late 9th-century text from the monastery of Redon, which lies in the present-day *département* of Ille-et-Vilaine in Brittany.[5] In the course of this text, through a series of vignettes about the first generation of monks within the community, the author explores the way each of these »saints« has contributed to the establishment of his community. In doing so, he also sets out to explore the meaning of life itself and invites his audience to imagine with him what that meaning could be.[6]

It was a theme that had been on the mind of the foremost thinkers of Western Christendom for centuries. The 5th-century bishop Augustine of Hippo (354-430), for instance, in his sermon *De Disciplina Christiana*, reassures his listeners that: »He cannot die badly who has lived well«.[7] Living well, according to this influential Church Father, meant striving for »discipline«, which in turn is quite literally a matter of learning (*discere*).[8] »What is learned is how to live a good life; how to live a good life is learned to enable you to live forever; the ones who learn this are Christians; the one who teaches it is Christ«, Augustine preached, explaining that living a disciplined life was not just to follow the will of God in a way similar to that of the martyrs of old, dying a good death and being rewarded with eternal life long afterwards. It also meant passing on those teachings along the way, making sure that the seeds sown by Christ were heard by everybody.[9] Then, it would be up to them to act accordingly. Augustine's words invoke the idea that the Church, the community of believers, should be seen as a garden or a field sown by farmers. Using agricultural metaphors was fairly common in Christian hagiographical literature, and Augustine here used this idea to impress upon his audience the importance of learning and of teaching at the same time, even if the odds seem against them:

> We too, in speaking, are casting the seed, scattering the seed. There are people who ignore us, people who find fault with us, people who mock us. If we are afraid of them, we are reduced to sowing nothing, we are reduced to going hungry at harvest time. So let the seed reach the good soil. I know that those who hear, and hear well, both fall away and make progress; they fall away from iniquity, make progress in the truth; they fall away from the world, and make progress in God.[10]

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4 Choy, *Intercessory Prayer*, 170-171; generally, see Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, 1-57.

5 *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium*, ed. and trans. Brett, 106-219 (henceforth *GSR*).

6 Cunningham, Hagiography and Imagination.

7 Augustine, *De Disciplina Christiana*, c. 12, ed. Vander Plaetse, 220.

8 See Pollmann, Augustine's Hermeneutics.

9 Compare Augustine, *De Disciplina Christiana*, c. 1, ed. Vander Plaetse, 207: »Qui discunt?« to his conclusion in c. 13, ed. Vander Plaetse, 221: »Qui discunt, Christiani sunt«, where he goes on to liken the role of good Christians to that of sowers – a recurring theme throughout this *sermo*.

10 Augustine, *De Disciplina Christiana*, c. 14, ed. Vander Plaetse, 222.

Augustine's words still resonated five centuries later with intellectuals in the Carolingian realm, which came into being around the 750s and persisted until the early 10th century.[11] This was not simply due to the impact Augustine made in the early medieval West or to the enduring influence of his thoughts on models for ascetic and monastic living.[12] Throughout the 8th and 9th centuries, the elites at the court of Charlemagne (r. 768-814), his heir Louis the Pious (r. 814-840) and his many grandsons had an increased sense of responsibility impressed upon them, underpinned by the idea that those in a position of authority within the *imperium Christianum* would be accountable for the salvation of every Christian under them.[13] It was a mentality that led to an almost programmatic movement aimed at harnessing local religious changes in order to create a common sense of responsibility and a shared liturgy to serve as the glue holding the disparate regions within the empire together.[14] It thereby aimed at sharing the burden of salvation among as many people as possible, giving everyone a stake in the Church by handing them the tools for reform at a local level.[15] From the vantage point of the Carolingian court, local priests, episcopal centres and monastic communities became the main proponents of these reforms and often provided the impetus for further developments parallel to the court's attempts to impose its own vision.[16] The subsequent debate about reforms bolstered the self-confidence of the empire.[17] The court benefited from taking a position as arbiter and propagator, even if they were not wholly justified in taking credit for all the changes wrought; in turn, local actors and communities saw their prestige increase if they participated in the general efforts to improve the state of the Church.[18] In doing so, everybody involved would also see themselves as working on the »good soil«, cultivating those who would heed their teachings, and resist the mockery and criticism of those who chose to ignore them. And, after many long days of working the (metaphorical) land, they could look back on a life well lived and hope that their memory would inspire the next generation to continue to care for the fields with the same zeal as they had.

This view of the Carolingian apparatus of reform and personal correction, of course, presents an ideal scenario.[19] As with any such ideals, the vicissitudes of life and reality in a broader sense would continuously lurk in the shadows, ready to throw even the most well-intentioned monk or bishop off their path.[20] As the *GSR* explains to its readers, the goal of its author had been to »commit to humble parchment« the »struggles of the holy men who battled unceasingly night and day against the invisible enemy« in a way similar to the way »old emperors« wrote about their worldly victories: »so that they would not be consigned to oblivion«.[21] It is interesting to note that the author explicitly points out that he was putting quill to parchment, as it draws attention to the act of inscribing and reading as much as to the

11 Generally on the Carolingians, see Costambeys *et al.*, *The Carolingian World*.

12 On the persisting legacy of Augustine, see Contreni, Carolingian Era, Early and Kelly, Carolingian Era, Late.

13 On this term, see Alberi, Evolution; Van Espelo, A Testimony of Carolingian Rule?; Nelson, Kingship and Empire.

14 De Jong, *Sacrum palatium et ecclesia.*

15 Guillot, Exhortation; Davis, A Pattern of Power.

16 Van Rhijn, Priests and the Carolingian Reforms.

17 De Jong, The State of the Church.

18 Walsham, Migrations of the Holy.

19 Barrow, Ideas and Applications of Reform.

20 Nelson, On the Limits of the Carolingian Renaissance.

21 *GSR* 2, prologue, ed. and trans. Brett, 144-147.

text itself: as these words are read, a monk is holding the book as an object. It is this action which »evokes the memory of the saints, provides edification of the mind for the faithful, and shows honour to the monks«. A book needed to be written, the author states, so that he could »figuratively« emulate the work of a farmer and eventually reap what he has sown. In other words: it is acknowledged that the act of writing has a function that is essentially separate from the deeds of the saints themselves, or even from the stories told about them – but is no less important for it.[22] To emulate the saints in their battle against the darkness is to ensure one's own salvation, the author states, but to write it down and inspire future generations is to take these seeds and cultivate them so that the virtues of these monks will work their way into the hearts and minds of the audience. Preserving the deeds of saints thus became as much a part of the cultivation of good Christianity as the virtues described. The physicality of the book is what anchors this to the community. The act of reading, out loud or quietly, is to adhere to the ideals exemplified by the saints who had lived so well in the past.[23]

The *GSR*, which so eloquently describes this purpose, is a narrative which describes how the monastery of Redon was established in the face of opposition from without and within.[24] It is essentially a foundation legend, in which the origins of the monastery and the exploits of the first generation of monks are retold in the course of three books, interspersed with a plethora of moral exhortations to the audience. It tells the story not by focusing solely on the development of the community or on the deeds of its succession of abbots, as it often the case, but also by presenting a series of short stories about the lives of the first generation of monks in the second book: once the monastery has been founded and obtained imperial sponsorship, but before it became a suitable vessel for receiving the relics which would establish the community as a viable ›holy place‹ in the region, it would be up to these first monks to meet the expectations of the world around them – to live a life worth retelling and imitating.

This collection of short ›embedded hagiographies‹ within the overall composition of the *GSR* will be the focus of the remainder of this article. Following a short description of the work as a whole and the »social logic of the text« at its »moment of inscription«, I will show how the biographical vignettes in the second book function both individually and as an overarching series of life stories.[25] In doing so, and in drawing attention to the author's emphasis on the finite nature of life and the finality of these stories, I will explain how the text was intended to strengthen the resolve of individual monks – with the ultimate aim of strengthening the community.

22 The relation between the written word and the truth it conveyed was on the mind of 9th-century intellectuals: Dutton, Why did Eriugena Write?; see now also Kramer and Novokhatko, Dead Authors and Living Saints.

23 Cf. the comments on the reception of Merovingian hagiography by Kreiner, *The Social Life of Hagiography*.

24 Generally, see Brett, Redon, abbaye carolingienne.

25 On these two theoretical concepts, see Gabriele Spiegel, History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text.

Context and Contents

The *GSR* was composed by an anonymous author belonging to the second generation of monks at Redon.[26] Considering that the monastery was founded in the 830s and that the author claims to have known the founding abbot personally, this would place its composition in the later 9th century. Internal evidence as well as the subsequent history of the community itself allows us to pinpoint the date to the 880s, but given that both the preface to the first book and the ending of the third are missing due to damage to the manuscripts over time, we remain in the dark about the identity of the author, the exact time of writing, what intentions he might have stated and whether or not there was an over-arching arc to the narrative.[27]

The *GSR* is extant in five manuscripts, two of which are from before 1500, as well as three early modern printed versions that allude to further manuscripts which are no longer extant. While all manuscripts postdate the moment of inscription by several centuries, the work itself is rooted in the late 9th century. This was a time when political turmoil characterised the relations between the Frankish empire and the semi-independent polity of Brittany in the north-western corner of present-day France, and Viking invaders made life difficult for everybody.[28] This colours the narrative, from the trouble the abbot had to go through to prove to the Carolingian emperor Louis the Pious that his community would subscribe to the Frankish political theology, to Redon's vulnerability to Viking attacks due to the fact that it existed between these spheres of influence.[29] Thus, while there is no indication as to whether the *GSR* was written at the behest of a patron or at the initiative of the author, it is clear that the author was aware of (and perhaps even lived through) the political turmoil in the area in the 830s, when the monastery was first founded – and that he was able to use this awareness as the basis for a ›coming-of-age story‹ for the community as a whole. The *GSR* tells of the origins of the community and the struggles it went through during its development from a small *cella* into a full-fledged ›imperial‹ monastery in the course of a process that is explicitly compared to the travels of the Chosen People in the Desert.[30] In doing so, the author combined hagiographical tropes and *topoi*, biblical imagery and saintly stereotypes with a keen awareness of the turbulent political situation both at the time of writing and during the period described – meeting the expectations of his many intended audiences (monks of the community; local aristocracy; members of the imperial court) in the process.[31] The political boundary between Brittany and the Carolingian empire is visible, but it does appear to be more of a hindrance to the monks than something to enforce: the universal *ecclesia* seems paramount here, rather than Breton identity.[32]

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26 For an overview of the dating, sources and manuscript transmission of the *GSR*, see the introduction to the edition by Brett, 20-62. Moreover, for an overview of the influences on early medieval Breton hagiographical texts, see Kerlouégan, Les citations d'auteurs latins profanes; *idem*, Les citations d'auteurs chrétiens; Wright, Knowledge of Christian Latin poets and historians in early medieval Brittany.

27 On the hagiographical dossier of Redon and its first abbot, Conwoion, see especially Poulin, *L'Hagiographie bretonne*, 85-98.

28 Bley, Viking defilement.

29 Cassard, Avant les Normands; McNair, Vikings and Bretons?.

30 Kramer, Pharaoh in Carolingian Monastic Narratives, 148-154.

31 See the methodological remarks by Pohl, History in Fragments, 343-354.

32 Already noted by Riché, Les Hagiographes Bretons et la Renaissance Carolingienne.

This was an interesting authorial strategy, which if nothing else shows the sensitivity of the author towards the many different audiences his work might encounter.[33] Perched as it was on the border between Breton and Frankish interests, the region around Redon had lived through a long history of violence, scheming and conflict.[34] According to Frankish historiography, the Bretons had been subservient to the Franks since the early Merovingian era at least; the 6th-century bishop Gregory of Tours (538-594) already claimed as much, which set a precedent for treating the ongoing warfare in the region as a rebellion and the Bretons as inherently untrustworthy, in a way not dissimilar to the treatment of the Saxons – or any of their more resilient enemies for that matter – in Carolingian narratives.[35] The dynamics differ from case to case, however, and it should be noted that, while there is no clear narrative counterpoint coming from within Brittany, the region could boast long political, religious and literary traditions that were consciously different from Frankish conventions. The distinct ›Celtic‹ character of the Breton language and identity gave the culture in the region a resilience that may have been bewildering to onlookers from the other side of the frontier.[36]

During the 9th century, the cultural differences between the Bretons and the Franks were made more prominent, as the Carolingian expansion and the ambitions they harboured for their burgeoning empire caused them to formulate ever more sophisticated strategies of distinction and inclusion.[37] Under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, the combination of the plunder economy and an increased emphasis on border protection meant that the existence of a peripheral principality that refused to acknowledge their overlordship became a problem indeed.[38] This would be exacerbated by the fact that Breton rulers also occasionally formed alliances with Viking invaders, despite being themselves often harried by them, opening the empire up to this threat.[39] Thus, a straightforward solution seemed to be the conquest of the peninsula and the subjugation of its people – something which was repeatedly attempted, but never seemed to stick, as local leaders seized upon the internal turmoil in the empire to go their own way time after time. The most successful among these was the count of Vannes, Nominoë (r. 819-851), one of Brittany's ›founding fathers‹ and one of the main sponsors of Redon during its first years.[40]

33 Riché, En relisant l'*Histoire des Saints de Redon.*

34 Most clearly analysed in the still unsurpassed study by Smith, *Province and Empire.*

35 Smith, Confronting Identities; on early medieval views of the Saxons, see most recently Flierman, *Saxon Identities.*

36 On this and, more generally, the role of the region in the intellectual and trade network that linked the Western Mediterranean to the North Atlantic, see Le Duc, La Bretagne.

37 Garault, L'abbaye de Saint-Sauveur de Redon. Generally on the use of »strategies of distinction« for early medieval scholarship, see Pohl, Introduction: Strategies of Distinction, with reference to the Bourdieusian origins of the idea on pp. 5-6. See also, *idem*, Introduction – Strategies of Identification.

38 Noble, Louis the Pious and the Frontiers.

39 Smith, *Province and Empire*, 105-107; 197-205.

40 Guillotel *et al.*, *La Bretagne*, 229-246.

As the 9th century progressed, Carolingian expansionism and idealism combined with the internal struggles of the Breton polity (called a »kingdom« in local sources, but a »principality« or »duchy« by the Franks) to create a state of permanent instability in the region.[41] Nominoë's successors, Erispoe (r. 851-857) and Salomon (r. 857-874), managed to impart a degree of stability to their realm and could even afford to be cautiously ambitious.[42] For instance, when Salomon attempted to convince Pope Nicholas I (r. 858-867) to create a new archbishopric in Dol in the 860s, he did so to free the region from the influence of Tours, one of the most significant religious centres within the Frankish empire.[43] When Salomon was murdered in 874, however, the region fell into disarray again as aristocrats from various factions vied for rulership over the entire region.[44] Interestingly, even during this period, which roughly lasted until Alan II (r. 938-952) brought the region more or less under control in the 930s, Brittany was neither completely subjugated by Viking invaders nor fully absorbed into the Frankish political sphere of influence.[45] It would take until the early 16th century for Brittany and France to be formally unified, with the region steering its own course between England and France in the intervening centuries.[46]

The foundation of Redon in the 830s was thus something of a gamble, perhaps even part of a concerted effort to create a new beacon of stability – as represented by the Carolingian empire – in an otherwise contested region.[47] It was by no means the only monastic foundation on the peninsula, of course, and neither was it the only one to start compiling a hagiographical dossier in the later 9th century. Compared to the other Breton churches, however, Redon claimed the least chronological distance between foundation and composition, and the *GSR* appears to be the only Breton hagiographical narrative that openly courted a Carolingian connection, whereas the rest of the religious communities in the region remained oriented towards Britain and Ireland and the rule of Saint Columbanus.[48] The community of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys, for instance, situated about 70 kilometres west of Redon, could already boast three centuries worth of history by the 9th century. Unfortunately, we know only precious few details about this monastery due to the fact that the monks, like those of Redon, were forced to relocate under pressure of Viking attacks; what little we can glean from the archaeological record and manuscript transmission, however, points to a rich intellectual life.[49] On the north coast of the peninsula, both Dol and Saint-Pol-de-Léon similarly traced their origins back to the 6th century with the claim – stemming from hagiographical

41 Smith, *Province and Empire*, 117-118.

42 Guillotel *et al.*, *Bretagne*, 201-352.

43 De Fougerolles, Tours, Dol et les droits du métropolitain.

44 Davies, *Small Worlds*, 13-22.

45 Price, Viking Brittany; see also, *idem*, *Vikings in Brittany*.

46 Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron*, 349-350.

47 On monastic institutions as carriers of royal authority, as exemplified in the liturgy (*cultus divinus*), see Garipzanov, *Symbolic Language of Authority*, 44-100.

48 Generally, see Brett, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, 100-179. On the Carolingian »shift« from Columbanian to Benedictine monasticism, see Diem, The Carolingians and the *Regula Benedicti*.

49 Valéry, La bibliothèque de la première abbaye; *idem*, Autour de l'antiquité du monastère.

dossiers that, like that of Redon, came to fruition in the course of the 9th century – that they were founded by a saint, Samson and Paulus Arelianus respectively, who had crossed the Channel from Wales.[50] In the latter case, the resulting *vita*, written by Uurmonoc of Landévennec, also betrays the influence that the author's monastery on the far west coast of Brittany had on religious life in the peninsula at the time. This influence, in turn, might account for the fact that, in 818, Louis the Pious seemed particularly keen on reforming Landévennec and ensuring it turned away »from the Irish« to join the *universalis aecclesia* – and then using Landévennec's acquiescence as an example for the other communities and bishops on the peninsula.[51]

Between its foundation in the 830s and the composition of the *GSR* about five decades later, Redon was thus exceptional more for its embrace of the Carolingian connections to the region than for its existence *per se*.[52] Nevertheless, the foundation did leave a marked imprint on its surroundings and might have upset the existing order to a greater degree than the existing sources allow us to see. The *GSR*, in that case, also reflects the memory of these uncertainties and would have given the monks a boost of self-confidence that came with the presentation of the monastery as a community of saints.[53] Given the political context of the late 9th century, when the *GSR* was written, its emphasis on the authority of the Carolingians might even be construed as nostalgia for a time when there still was such a thing as a singular ecclesiastical ideal, as the world at the moment of inscription appeared to be crumbling around the community.[54] This supposedly pro-Carolingian (though not necessarily pro-Frankish) stance should not be taken for granted, however: the Frankish and Breton polities had already been at loggerheads well before the establishment of the Carolingian empire in the course of the 8th century, and it is rather curious that the author positions Redon between the Carolingian ideology propagated by the imperial court and the local interests of his community's immediate neighbours.[55] Given the fact that the empire was under noticeable pressure by the end of the 9th century, the decision to subscribe to the all-inclusive Carolingian political and religious vision for their community reflects a conscious choice on the part of both the founding abbot, Conwoion, and the author describing his deeds.[56] From a local perspective, it may even be seen as a call to action for local authorities to fill the sizeable shoes left by the Carolingians.

50 On Paulus Aurelianus, see Kerlouégan, La *Vita Pauli Aureliani,* as well as the other contributions to that same volume. On Samson of Dol and his *vitae*, see the contributions in Olson, *St Samson of Dol*, especially the chapters by Brett, The Hare and the Tortoise?, and Wooding, The Representation of Early British Monasticism.

51 Flechner, *Libelli commentarii aliorum*, citing Borderie, *Le Cartulaire de Landévennec*, 75-76.

52 In many ways, it makes more sense to group the *GSR* in with Carolingian *Gesta abbatum* composed around the same time, with the *Gesta abbatum Fontanellensium* from the community of Saint-Wandrille being perhaps the most obvious example among many: Becher, Die Chronologie der Äbte von Saint-Wandrille; Pradié, L'historiographie à Fontenelle. The place of the *GSR* among (near-)contemporary hagiographical collections from the Frankish realm, however, is another story for another time, as this article is focused on its internal logic.

53 Astill *et al.*, *A Breton Landscape*, 107-110.

54 Generally, see MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, esp. 1-11, in which the author explains how the idea that the Carolingian empire was in a state of collapse was more a result of modern historiographical interpretation than a reflection on the contemporary source material.

55 Dumville, Writers, Scribes and Readers, 49-65.

56 Cf. Nelson, Kingship and Royal Government, 416.

For the monks of Redon, the political entropy in the world around them culminated in the 920s. After having already been forced, under pressure from Viking attacks, to leave Redon for the *villa* of Plélan in the 870s, even this refuge was proving too unsafe by the early 10th century, and the monks moved on to stay as guests in other, safer communities – first in Auxerre and later Poitou – before returning to Redon in the late 10th century.[57] Given that the community persisted in exile for well over a century in total, it is not surprising to see how their reappearance in Redon was marked by a reinvention of their history and identity.[58] The compilation of the Redon Cartulary, an 11th-century collection of charters reaching back all the way to the foundation of the community and one of the most important parallel sources to the *GSR*, took place around the same time, probably starting under the auspices of Abbot Almod (1062-1084), but with additions being made well into the 12th century.[59] Additionally, in the early 11th century, parts of the *GSR* were used as the basis for a shorter, more conventional saint's Life known as the *Vita Conwoionis*, a version of their foundation legend focusing almost exclusively on the first abbot, Conwoion. Both these texts should be seen in the context of their return and their attempts to rebuild or reform, but definitely re-establish their community in its original spot, as if continuity was a given despite their long absence.[60] Considering that the abbey flourished in the first centuries after its re-establishment, it seems safe to assume that the monks succeeded in their ploy.

Life Stories

The three books of the *GSR* each contain their own narrative arc. The first book details the foundation of Redon by the abbot Conwoion, the community's interaction with the local nobility and how it came to acquire imperial sponsorship. The second book tells of the exploits of the first generation of monks and explains how the monastery acquired the relics of several local saints as well as those of the martyred pope Marcellinus (r. 296-304). Finally, the third book is a collection of miracles performed through these relics, demonstrating the rise to prominence of the community as a pilgrimage destination and holy place. The final extant chapter details a Viking attack, which was thwarted by the saints, and then the narrative breaks off, leaving us in the dark about how this story was meant to end.

57 Smith, Making of a Holy Place, 370-371. Another rather underappreciated source for this period is a fragmentary set of annals »apparently composed by a member of the Redon community in the first half of the tenth century«; *ibid.*, n. 39. These *Annales Rotonenses*, which unfortunately fall outside the scope of the current article, have been edited by Bischoff, *Annales Rotonenses*.

58 Garault, L'abbaye de Redon.

59 Guillotel, Les cartulaires de l'abbaye de Redon; Davies, Composition of the Redon Cartulary; apart from representing a reassertion of the community's identity, this project also fits in with the general trend towards composing cartularies discernible in the high medieval West: Declerq, Originals and Cartularies.

60 See Cross, Why Emphasize Viking Disruption?, for a number of helpful comparative observations on this way of implying continuity and change, albeit focused on Britain and Normandy in the later 10th and early 11th centuries.

The importance of Redon's saints and relic collection shows how the author tried to cement the monastery's status as a religious powerhouse in the region.[61] Through these relics, the power of Redon allegedly rivalled that of Rome, Carthage or even Jerusalem.[62] To the author, Redon as a community was meant to be a shining light to its surroundings. This adds depth to his narrative: the guidance provided by the »saints« and the relics was supposed to keep the monks on the straight and narrow, and that in turn ensured that the community continued to be accepted as a cultural, economic and religious powerhouse in the region.

The *GSR* appears to have been composed by a single author, seemingly without significant interruption. The individual narratives/biographies throughout the text would therefore have been placed there deliberately, as part of the composition. It is noteworthy that the author presents himself as having witnessed some of these events,[63] or having known the protagonists,[64] or basing his stories on the testimony of reliable witnesses,[65] thus lending an air of credibility to the narrative. Here, the *GSR* serves a twofold function. As a whole, the narrative presents the story of the rise of a community in a politically contentious area. The image presented to the audience would be one of a community that is here to stay, with divine and imperial support, regardless of who would rise against it. In fact, the mere existence of Redon already improved the region's moral makeup: as told in the *GSR*, local aristocrats opposing the foundation meet their grisly demise,[66] and those supporting it are portrayed as having near-saintly qualities.[67] The fact that Conwoion put a lot of effort into securing Carolingian/imperial sponsorship (as is clear from the description of his many travels and travails in Book 1, cc. 8-11) suggests that the author wanted to show to any potential ›Carolingian‹ readers that Redon actively pursued the interests of the Carolingian state and its ecclesiastical framework, rather than dwelling on the more localised Breton identity.[68] The trans-regional perspective flaunted by the author is interesting when compared to the image that emerges from the Cartulary of Redon.[69] The extant older charters show how the community actually was and remained deeply embedded into its surroundings.[70] The veneer of reliability created by the narrator should therefore be treated with caution: the *GSR* is a text with an agenda that was affected by recent history and the position of Redon at the time of writing – and which had set out to improve both.

61 Smith, Making of a Holy Place.

62 *GSR* 3 c. 8, ed. and trans. Brett, 206-213.

63 *GSR* 2, c. 1, ed. and trans. Brett, 150-151.

64 *GSR* 3, preface, ed. and trans. Brett, 184-185.

65 *GSR* 2, preface, ed. and trans. Brett, 144-145.

66 *GSR* 1, cc. 6-7, ed. and trans. Brett, 124-131; for context, see Davies, On the Distribution of Political Power; Davies, People and Places.

67 *GSR* 1, c. 3, ed. and trans. Brett, 114-119.

68 *GSR* 1, cc. 8-11, ed. and trans. Brett, 132-143; see Gravel, *Distances, rencontres, communications*, 7-24.

69 Generally, see Guillotel, Cartulaires bretons médiévaux.

70 Davies, *Small Worlds*, 1-2; *Cartularium Rotonensis*, ed. De Courson.

Although the monks are omnipresent in the *GSR* and we read about their exploits throughout all three books, the second book is the closest to a ›biographical collection‹. Here we find the stories about the monks who were the first to follow Conwoion. Taken separately, these individual narratives seem to be aimed ›inwards‹, at the members of the community itself.[71] They are exemplary stories about exemplary men, whose virtue makes them conduits for God's grace on earth. Central to these biographies are not the lives of the monks themselves, but rather the miracles that God performs through them and the way these »could be harnessed as a means of social control«.[72] The stories themselves are quite conventional, although it is noteworthy that they are prefaced with several explicit quotations from the Bible that may have helped a monastic audience make sense of the different episodes.[73] This has been cleverly done: the citations at the start and end of these biographies served to guide the audience's expectations and would help them give a moral context to the narrative; additionally, some of these quotations are actually ›coded‹ patristic quotations, adding an extra layer of depth to their use. The miracles themselves are, with a few exceptions, also ›biblical‹ (curing the blind, walking on water, raising the dead), which lends an evangelical agenda to the *GSR*.[74] Quite possibly, the individual chapters under scrutiny here were intended to serve as an aid for composing sermons or, indeed, for reading during mealtimes.[75] This interpretation is bolstered by the fact that in some cases the death dates of the monks are also given, probably for commemorative purposes and thus for reading on that given date, similar to hagiographical collections such as the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, mentioned in Ó Riain's contribution to this volume.

If the texts were indeed meant as *lectiones* during mealtimes, their normative power over the immediate intended audience will have been considerable. However, rather than setting behavioural norms, the agenda seems to have been more contemplative – showcasing instances of the perfect Christian life which the monks could aspire to, but also commenting on the ideals represented by the saints through the biblical quotations that accompanied them.[76] These quotations, in turn, establish the depth of the *GSR*: occasionally, the author apparently renders a verse incorrectly, but in misquoting the Bible actually invokes a patristic or exegetical source that gives direction to the biblical passage.[77] In that sense, the text draws an implicit boundary between the ›community of learning‹ of those able to understand the allusions made and those for whom the moral or political narrative is the more important one. To those in the latter category, the *GSR* presents Redon as a community distinguished by a very clear (almost literal) boundary that is protected by God and emperor, which one could cross at one's own peril.[78] To those readers with a more advanced level of understanding, the narrative would open up the possibility of reflecting on the meaning their community held for them, the various ways in which they could pursue the road to salvation or how to overcome the many difficulties that would be thrown in their way.

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71 Generally, Prinz, Aspekte frühmittelalterlicher Hagiographie. For comparable cases of the interplay between hagiography and community, see Licciardello, La fonction normative dans l'hagiographie monastique.

72 Smith, Oral and Written, 340.

73 See Cochelin, When the Monks were the Book.

74 For these examples, see *GSR* 2, cc. 1, 2 and 8 respectively (ed. and trans. Brett, 146-153 and 166-171).

75 Smith, Making of a Holy Place, 379, n. 72.

76 Cf. the remarks on the multivalent nature of the genre itself in Prinz, Hagiographie und Welthaltigkeit.

77 Already noted by Ohly, Vom geistigen Sinn des Wortes im Mittelalter; Kaczynski, Edition, Translation and Exegesis; specifically on the *GSR*, see Kramer, In divinis scripturis legitur.

78 *GSR* 1, c. 11, ed. and trans. Brett, 140-143.

The stories of the saints of Redon can be read separately, but the sequence in which they are presented within the *GSR* also lends a serial aspect to the second book. Each chapter is an episode in a longer story, and as such the individual chapters have a meaning and message of their own while also, through repetition, reinforcing the overall purpose of the work. Moreover, the serial nature of the *GSR* also allowed the audience to become familiar with the storytelling mode and the protagonists, while at the same appreciating the variety of purposes given to each story.[79] By and large, within the variation found between the chapters, the overall goal appears to have been mostly to emphasise the communal identity of Redon and give the new generations of monks food for thought. Eschewing a strictly chronological order, the author shows how the community of Redon was founded by a group of saints, whose power and authority do not just derive from their collective appearance but are equally dependent on their individual sanctity. In that sense, there is a meta-narrative of mutual support visible, not only between the »saints« themselves, but also from the narrative of the *GSR* – which would be supposed to teach the brethren – to the monks who keep the memory of their founding fathers alive. This adds to the serial nature of the readings: if these were indeed tied to liturgical functions or specific dates in the calendar, the *GSR* would be a reminder of what made the community great, not just for individual readers of the entire text but also for the communal audience at specific points during the year, for example on the day of death of the individual saints.

The Quick and the Dead

With this in mind, the stories told in the second book of the *GSR* make sense both as individual anecdotes and as the constituent parts of a larger story. Most of the chapters situate a monk within the community and narrate one or several miracle stories involving him. The notable exceptions are a story which tells how the dormitory collapsed without injuring any of the brethren and the final two chapters about the theft of relics, first from the neighbouring city of Angers and eventually from Rome.[80] The remaining chapters all fit into the scheme set out in the preface: they contain lessons that are taught as a function of the life of the monk in question, and in reading these lessons, the community is strengthened. This shows how the author built a degree of flexibility into the *GSR*, as the value of each individual lesson did not decrease in isolation, whereas they did show a monastery in action when taken together.

The first chapter is about the abbot Conwoion and symbolically opens the eyes of the audience by showing how he emulated Christ by curing a blind man. The exemplary function of the story is emphasised by the biblical quotations that bookend the passage – they all deal with the power of light and the importance of witnessing miracles for the illumination of one's soul, whereas the final quotation is Christ's promise to »his disciples and also all the faithful: ›All the works which I do, they will do them also, and greater than these‹«.[81] This is confirmed in chapter 2, which shows the monk Riouuen unwittingly crossing the River

79 On these aspects of seriality, see the observations by Eco, Innovation and Repetition; see also the introductory remarks by Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints and Modern Screens*, 11-63.

80 *GSR* 2, cc. 7 and 9-10, ed. and trans. Brett, 166-167 and 170-183; although no mention is made of Redon, Geary, *Furta Sacra* still offers the best introduction to the phenomenon of relic theft and provides a context for this narrative.

81 *GSR* 2, c. 1, ed. and trans. Brett, 146-151, at 151.

Vilaine in order to perform Mass in the monastery church. It is a charming story, emulating not only the pericope repeated in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and John, but also a very similar story from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, in which one of Saint Benedict of Nursia's pupils performs the same feat.[82] In each case, the supernatural element of the story is supposed to show God's mastery over the elements. Both Gregory and the *GSR* emphasise the humility of the monks following their miracle, while the *GSR* makes the point even more explicit by reminding the reader, with John 15:5, that »You can do nothing without me [i.e. Christ]«.[83]

With the eyes of the audience now open, the *GSR* continues with the gardener Condeluc, whose virtuous conduct enables him to expel an infestation of very hungry caterpillars from his carefully cultivated garden.[84] Belonging to a long tradition of garden miracles, Condeluc's story not only shows that Redon – symbolised by the garden – enjoys divine protection against incursions from outside, but also reminds readers that this protection had to be earned through faith and good works.[85] While nobody can do anything without Christ, the biblical quotations imply that requests made in good faith, in the name of God, will be granted. This includes wishing for the well-being of the community: divine protection should in no way imply that the individual monks can forget that they are part of a bigger whole.

»This is my commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you«; the author paraphrases another passage from the Gospel of John in the next chapter, before telling the stories of the two brothers Conhoiarn and Fidweten. Conhoiarn, in the liturgical act of washing the feet of the poor, cures a paralytic – and then, interestingly, forbids him to tell anyone about this.[86] This vignette again hearkens back to the work of Gregory the Great, who explains this as being part of the unspoken covenant between God and the faithful: good deeds should be performed out of love for one's fellow man, in total and unquestioning humility.[87]

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82 *GSR* 2, c. 2, ed. and trans. Brett, 150-153. See Madden, *Jesus' Walking on the Sea*, and for a reading of its reception, Adalbert de Vogüé's commentary to Gregory the Great, *De vita et miraculis sancti Benedicti*, trans. Costello and de Bhaldraithe, 49-51; Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cults*, 38-47. On the lingering influence of Gregory the Great among the Carolingians, see Meens, Ritual Purity.

83 *GSR* 2, c. 2, ed. and trans. Brett, 151.

84 *GSR* 2, c. 3, ed. and trans. Brett, 152-155.

85 Müller, Diabolical Power of Lettuce.

86 *GSR* 2, c. 4, ed. and trans. Brett, 156-161, at 157.

87 Gregory the Great's views on the matter, which he explains in his *Dialogi* 1.9, ed. de Vogüé, II, 80-83, trans. Gardner, 33, deserve to be quoted in full: »All that which our blessed Saviour wrought in his mortal body, he did it for our example and instruction, to the end that, following his steps, according to our poor ability, we might without offence pass over this present life: and therefore, when he did that miracle, he both commanded them to conceal it, and yet it could not be kept in, and all this to teach his elect servants to follow his doctrine; to wit, that when they do any notable thing whereof glory may arise to themselves, that they should have a desire not to be spoken of, and yet for the good of others, contrary to their own mind, they should be laid open and known: so that it proceed of their great humility to desire that their works may be buried with silence, and yet, for the profit of others, it should fall so out, that they cannot be concealed. Wherefore our Lord would not have anything done which he could not effect: but what his servants ought to desire, and what also, contrary to their minds, was convenient to be done, like a good master he taught us by his own example.« Generally, see Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, 131-188.

This includes not being boastful about miracles, as it will in the end be in God's interest to ensure that these acts are made public anyway. This is then confirmed in a second miracle performed post-mortem by Conhoiarn. Healing a young man from an unspecified disease, he does this on the condition that he »must go and proclaim the power of our Lord Jesus Christ everywhere, and be a faithful friend to this holy place« all the days of his life.[88] Rather than forcing people into silence, as he did while alive, Conhoiarn has taken his place in Heaven and becomes a more proactive force for good – and for the community. After all, the author confirms, quoting the Gospel of Matthew, »He is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living«. The saints of Redon still have a mission.

A similar reversal of the narrative befalls Fidweten in the next chapter.[89] According to the lost part of the first book, alluded to here, he had already established himself as a holy man in his own right. Now, his story continues, he »desired in his heart to despise his homeland« and become a *peregrinus*, a voluntary exile usually seen as part of a specifically Irish ascetic tradition.[90] He is thwarted by Nominoë, however, who pleads with him not to leave »their homeland« but to enter the monastery of Redon instead. Fidweten agrees, and his mere presence seems to elevate his brethren, who »began to imitate his life with all their heart«.[91] When he wants to leave again, it is the community that stops him, together with the abbot, as they convince him that they need his example to encourage them to keep doing better. His importance for the community becomes clear when he has a vision of a demon sitting at the feet of one of the brethren, Osbert – who does end up fleeing the monastery, »loving the world, as an untamed horse without a rider«.[92] Although Osbert eventually ends up in a monastery in Pavia, the message to the readers in Redon is clear: life in a monastery might not be easy, but it is preferable to the dangers of the world, where lack of (self-)control could easily lead sinners astray.[93] This is also the *Leitmotif* of the chapter that follows about the scribe Doethen, who, at the instigation of the Devil, leaves the monastery but is then paralysed after the abbot prays for his salvation. »Do not delay in rendering to God what has gone out from your lips, for it would be better not to make vows than not to fulfil them after making them«, the author admonishes his audience, explicitly reminding them of the monastic vows they made when entering the monastery and implicitly calling to mind the importance of those vows for the integrity of their community.[94]

88 *GSR* 2, c. 4, ed. and trans. Brett, 159.

89 *GSR* 2, c. 5, ed. and trans. Brett, 160-165.

90 Johnston, Exiles from the Edge?; Charles-Edwards, The social background to Irish *Peregrinatio*. It was a phenomenon that would have appealed to a high medieval audience as well: Ó Riain, *Schottenklöster*. On the question of the ›Irishness‹ of the tradition, see Hayes-Healy, Irish pilgrimage.

91 *GSR* 2, c. 5, ed. and trans. Brett, 161-163.

92 *GSR* 2, c. 5, ed. and trans. Brett, 163: »... et sicut equus indomitus sine gubernatore totus fertur infraeceps saeculum diligens.« The phrase »equus indomitus« appears to be an invocation of Sirach 30:8: »equus indomitus evadit durus et filius remissus evadit praeceps«.

93 He ends up in the monastery of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, in Pavia. According to the very final entry in Bede's *Chronica Maiora*, chapter 66 (ll. 2061-2066) of his *De Temporum Ratione*, ed. Jones, 466; trans. Wallis, 237, this was the final resting place of the relics of Saint Augustine, and, according to the late 8th-century historian Paul the Deacon, it was one of many churches restored by the erstwhile Carolingian ally King Luitprand (r. 712-744): Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum*, 4, c. 58, ed. and trans. Schwarz, 340. See Stone, *St. Augustine's Bones* It is also noteworthy that »Osbert« is one of the few monks who had a non-Breton name, possibly denoting his provenance from one of the kingdoms across the Channel: Smith, Confronting Identities. 181.

94 *GSR* 2, c. 6, ed. and trans. Brett, 164-167: »In diuinis scripturis legitur: ›Quod egressum est de labiis tuis, ne moram facias Deo reddere: melius est enim non uouere, quam post uotum non reddere‹.« See De Jong, *Imitatio morum*; Choy, Deposit of Monastic Faith.

With the exception of the abbot Conwoion (and the errant Osbert), all the life stories end with the deaths of their protagonists. Sometimes they suffer a debilitating illness – a trope that may denote them being prepared for Heaven – and sometimes it is merely noted that they have died.[95] In each case, however, it was important to show that their exemplary life led to their salvation, that the performance of a miracle doubled as a divine ›mark of approval‹ for each individual monk and that being part of the community would enable the monks in the audience to achieve the same. While their regular lifestyle would not protect them from the vicissitudes of life in the early Middle Ages, the author wanted to show that they were all in this together, under the watchful eye of God and his vicar, the abbot. It is for this reason that we hardly learn any personal information about the saints: these were not deeds in the sense that they could actively be imitated. What mattered was the place of these stories within the collection and, *mutatis mutandis*, the place of the individuals within the collective. This is made clear in the chapter that immediately follows the moral programme exemplified by the monks. As they are together building their dormitory, the structure collapses – but, miraculously, nobody is injured. It is a stark reminder that death lurks everywhere, while at the same time standing as a monument to their collective efforts at building a better life for themselves. Building and continuously improving a monastery is an essential aspect of life in any monastic community.[96] Moreover, it is likely that monastic readers would have had the oft-used metaphor of the »living stones« on their mind as they read this short chapter: just as their brethren were building an actual building, they themselves were being used to construct the Church at large.[97] And as long as they were doing this, they could not really die; their saintly behaviour would ensure them a place in the light, allowing them to continue the battle against the darkness alluded to at the beginning of the book, and the author of the *GSR* has, in composing this work, preserved their memory so that their example would live on.

The Curious Case of Condeluc's Cultivated Community

One of the monks helping with the construction of the dormitory may have been Condeluc, mentioned above as the gardener of the monastery. His case is interesting in that he is among the few monks in the *GSR* who is mentioned in both the first and the second book. While there is an internal coherence to each of the books, taking a closer look at his particular story shows how the work as a whole functions and how the first two books work to establish Redon as a holy place worthy of relics with an ›international‹ appeal.[98]

Condeluc first appears in the *GSR* as part of a delegation sent from the monastery to appeal for imperial protection for Redon.[99] As Louis the Pious resided in Tours at this point, Conwoion and his monks travel there and make their case. They meet with failure. The emperor refuses their petition, and Conwoion is »immediately thrown out« for his trouble. Seemingly unfazed by this setback – he encouragingly quotes John 16:33, that the monks

95 On the importance of illness in the establishment of saintliness, see Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh*, 109-137 and 167-171.

96 A sentiment that would have been valid in the early 12th century as much as in the 9th: Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, 91-93.

97 Meyer, *Soziales Handeln*, 221-223; see also Czock, *Gottes Haus*, 244-264.

98 Condeluc is treated in greater detail in Kramer, *In divinis scripturis legitur.*

99 *GSR* 1, c. 9, ed. and trans. Brett, 134-137.

»will have oppression in the world« but should persist in their faith – the abbot orders Condeluc, a »venerable man«, to sell the gift of candle wax they had brought for the emperor, so that it could benefit the community in another way.[100] On his way to the market, Condeluc is confronted by a prostitute, who is, incidentally, the only woman in the entire *GSR*.[101] She tries to coerce him to come home with her – perhaps with impure intentions, but also because, as she claims, »they were brought up in the same home and in the same family« and »he was her slave and she his mistress«. The poor monk is eventually rescued from this »snare of the Devil« by »two priests from the monastery of Saint Martin«, who »berated that harlot with great indignation, so that she would never dare to do such a thing to the Saints of God again«. After this adventure, Conwoion and Condeluc return home »sorrowfully«. The emperor had refused them. However, as the author to whom we owe this story reminds us, quoting Sirach and Paul's Second Letter to Timothy in quick succession, »the fire tests the potter's vessel and trials and temptations tempt righteous men«, and »only he who competes fairly will be crowned«. There may be hope for Redon yet.

Several chapters later, we encounter Condeluc again.[102] Redon has since obtained Carolingian sponsorship and, despite his unfortunate run-in with the prostitute in Tours, Condeluc has been put in charge of the monastery garden. Given that he was a »simple, upright man«, who »flourished in virtues«, his vegetable patch thrives along with the community, until one day it was »reduced to almost nothing« by a certain type of worm. Not despairing, Condeluc addresses the worms in the name of the Trinity and asks them to leave – which they promptly do. Thanking God for this miracle, the gardener sees this as a reminder of Christ's mercy and benevolence towards his servants. The story finishes by explaining how Condeluc »persevered in the highest sanctity« until he received a vision of his upcoming death, which occurred as foretold on a Sunday, »the week before the ides of November (i.e. the 6th of November)«. The gardener, so the chapter concludes, now »exults with the angels, rejoices with the archangels, and happily awaits the day of resurrection. Amen«.

Between them, these two anecdotes, linked by the name of the monk, are typical of the way the *Deeds of the Saints of Redon* has been composed, when looked at on a saint-by-saint basis. While the *GSR* is, at its core, the story of the community of Redon rather than that of its monks, it also presents us with an idiosyncratic collection of hagiographical vignettes about individual members of the community, especially in the second of its three books. Given that the *GSR* as a whole relies heavily on tropes common to early medieval Latin hagiography, the idiosyncrasies are striking.[103] In his description of the interaction between abbot and empire, the anonymous author shows himself a master at using intertextual references and quotations to add layers of meaning to his narrative. Moreover, the *GSR* tells its own story by

100 On the importance of wax (for lighting and other purposes), see Fouracre, Eternal Light and Earthly Needs.

101 On the *topos* and function of prostitutes in medieval hagiography, see generally Karras, Holy Harlots; Coon, *Sacred Fictions*, 71-94. Both these works centre on the redemptive arc usually associated with prostitutes; this episode in the *GSR*, in which a woman threatens the purity of a monastic community by appealing to both sexual and familial connections, warrants further investigation.

102 *GSR* 2, c. 3, ed. and trans. Brett, 152-155; this story falls under what Alice Rio, in a recent publication, called the ›nearly-not-a-miracle‹-category (known as #crapmiracles on social media), reflective of a »context which valued the ability to marvel at, to be enchanted by, and to see the work of God in all things, no matter how apparently mundane«: Rio, Nearly-Not Miracles of the Carolingian Era.

103 Generally, see Van Uytfanghe, *Stylisation Biblique et Condition Humaine*, both on the use of the Bible and on the narrative strategies employed in such texts. See also Poulin, *L'idéal de Sainteté.*

presenting the tale of Redon neither as a conventional foundation history nor in the equally popular genre of the *Gesta abbatum*, which focuses on the deeds of successive generations of abbots.[104] Instead, the author has elevated the entire first generation of monks to saintly status and gives each of them a place in the sun. As such, this biographical collection reminds its primary intended audience – the current crop of monks at Redon – of the exemplary role played by their founding fathers. It is a strategy that culminates in the third book, which focuses on the miracles performed through the monastery's relics rather than by its monks. Once the monks of Redon have established their community as a holy place, they are turned into the saints that, together with the relics they acquired, will anchor the monastery to the region itself. In constructing a memory of the first generation of monks, the *GSR* creates a framework that gives an extra layer of meaning to the reality for future generations.[105]

Condeluc's story, too, is one of surmounting challenges, of building the monastery in the face of aristocratic interventions and the Devil's best efforts. The first two books of the *GSR* essentially argue that the monastery became receptive to the relics (the protagonists of the final book) by overcoming enemies from outside the community and, once that had been accomplished, by defeating the enemy that lurked inside each individual monk. Conquering a fear of death was part of this battle – and the assurance that their teachings and examples would persist may have helped alleviate those fears.

The life story of Condeluc is thus also a story of the community of Redon. It shows how his exemplary life is part of a larger whole and how it has contributed to the construction of the community. While part of the function of his story – and those of the other named saints in the *GSR* – was to commemorate him personally, it is in the seriality of the biographical vignettes that the author shows his strength as a narrator. The memory of Condeluc as a historical person was made subservient to the confirmation of his exemplary life. It might not be possible to actually imitate the deeds of this saint of Redon, but in order for Redon to keep on existing as a community it was vital to heed the lessons taught through the venerable examples that form the backbone of the text.

Living Well is the Best Defence

As with many hagiographical texts from the early medieval West, it is difficult to ascribe a single function to the *GSR*. Consequently, its audience will have had different reading experiences, which may have been taken into account during the composition of the text. In that sense, the author made his points not only by latching onto existing genre conventions in his presentation of a series of hagiographical stories but also by placing the work in its entirety in a venerable tradition reaching back to the Old Testament. To read or listen to the *GSR* was to be immersed in two worlds: the world of the community of Redon, with all its pitfalls and possibilities, and the world outside the walls of the cloister, which was definitely the more dangerous one but also the world that had most to gain from the guidance of the monks.

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104 On this genre, see Sot, *Gesta Episcoporum.*

105 Smith, Making of a Holy Place; cf. *eadem*, Einhard and the Uses of Roman Martyrs.

Within a monastery, the goal of any individual was to achieve salvation – by taking personal responsibility and speaking out against the iniquity of others. In that sense, the fact that the *GSR* acts both as a series of individual life stories and as a single story of many parallel lives strengthens the idea that the saints of Redon formed a collective that would ideally also act as a community if the situation called for it. Taken as a whole, the text would thus have been meant to resonate with its audience on a personal as well as a communal level. Acting as a conduit between those two narrative levels, Condeluc's individual garden miracle could thus also be read as a metaphor for the development of the community. Throughout the first two books of the *GSR*, we have seen monks walking on water, curing the blind and even raising the dead. However, taking into account the many biblical and patristic intertextual references made by the author, Condeluc's faith and virtuous behaviour are part and parcel of the continuing existence of Redon. Through his virtues he has repelled a dangerous invasion, just as the community, through its collective virtues, should repel the very real invasions by the ever-so-hostile nobility – or any other threats to their continuing existence, for that matter. With this story, he has come full circle. Condeluc had been able to reach that level of sanctity thanks to the protection offered by the walls of his cloister, which in turn had been protected by the Carolingian empire and the Church it claimed to represent.

It is here that the juxtaposition of life, death and text emerges as one of the most salient features of the *GSR*. What little information may be gleaned from the text itself shows that the author was aware of the significance of his composition. He was effectively safeguarding the saints of Redon for posterity. The flexibility of his audience's experience notwithstanding, the author put the first generation of monks in a stasis, with only the setting and the names of the monks anchoring the stories to the past reality seen in the Cartulary. It would be this composition, rather than the actual lives of the actual saints, which gave Redon a history, thereby preparing its individual members for the future and their inevitable end. This is why the stories focus on the confirmation of holiness through the miracles, and on the lessons gleaned from those, rather than on the actual behaviour of the historical persons. If witnessing the deeds of the saints should motivate new generations of monks to do the best they could, learning about their deaths gave meaning to their own lives and the long history they were part of. The realisation that death would come for everyone, after all, was the ultimate community-builder; it would be up to the living community to demonstrate enough discipline to join the community of saints as well. They should aspire to lead a life worth writing about.

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Abbreviations
GSR*: *Gesta Sanctorum Rotonensium

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Biography and Hierarchy: The Tibetan Ruling House of Phag-mo-gru and the *Singular Volume of the Rlangs* (*Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru*)

Reinier Langelaar*

This article details how the Tibetan ruling house of Phag-mo-gru employed biography within a 14th-century genealogical work as well as how its later representatives would reflect on and adapt the work in its reading tradition. Addressing the genealogy's dating, structure and the various influences at play within its pages, the author argues that the work's initial composition involved a mash-up of contemporary political and cultural sensibilities, archaic material and also traditions drawn from the ruling house's ancestral homelands in the eastern region of Khams. A critical look at individual biographies within the work illustrates how these life stories provided a canvas on which respectable ancestry could be painted, with the creator(s) not shying away from including anachronistic and fantastic content. The article concludes with a broader theoretical look at how this work's biographical collection, and similar compilations in general, may serve to affirm social hierarchies by rephrasing them in a language of long-standing moral relations.

Keywords: biography, genealogy, hagiography, clans, ancestry, bKa'-brgyud *Buddhism,* gter-ma

Introduction

In all likelihood composed in the late 14th century, the *Singular Volume of the Rlangs [Clan]* (*Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru*)[1] is a renowned genealogical work that is associated with the Phag-mo-gru ruling house, which rose to hegemony over large swathes of the central Tibetan Plateau in the 1350s. Institutionally grounded in a fortress in the Yar-lung valley as well as in influential Buddhist monasteries of the *bKa'-brgyud* school, their ascendancy constitutes a key period in the plateau's political history. In a pivotal development, the house's expansion

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1 Parts of this work are available in English translations-cum-summaries in Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, c. 1. A detailed study and near-complete translation can now also be found in Langelaar, *Bones and Thrones*. There is also a complete translation of the text into Chinese in Zan la a wang and She Wan zhi, *Lang shi jia zu shi*, 1-65. Concerning the work's title, incidentally, the *bse-ru* translates literally as »rhinoceros« or »rhinoceros horn«. Because the Indian species has but a single horn and is considered an admirably solitary creature, the term is occasionally used to convey singularity.

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during the reign of Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan (1302-64) sounded the death knell for the political dominance of the prelates of Sa-skya monastery, who had risen under the aegis of Kubilai Khan's (r. 1260-94) Mongol empire and had continued their administration under the succeeding Mongol-led Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). The scions of Phag-mo-gru, once at the helm, were to retain at least a nominal degree of power into the latter half of the 17th century, when their authority finally met with its permanent, legal end. Their initial dominance had however already abated after severe internal discord in 1434 and waned yet further after 1480, when a ministerial house rose to eclipse them.[2]

The house's arcane genealogy, a motley record of their ancient pedigree and their ancestors' biographical milestones, played a pivotal role in constructing their literary image. Claiming to be of ancient date and tracing the house's lineage back to the old and divinity-descended clan of the Rlangs[3] and beyond, the work was readily used by Phag-mo-gru dignitaries of the early 15th century as a source for their new literary creations.[4] It was also cited, albeit almost always indirectly, by several important subsequent historians. As such, it developed into a key literary piece for buttressing and remembering the Phag-mo-gru-pa and their rule. The work's colourful and often difficult contents, moreover, have a bearing on a variety of matters of scholarly interest besides political authority and life-writing, and range from literary and cultural history to epic studies and ethnography. It therefore constitutes a source of ample significance.[5]

In the context of this volume, however, questions of particular relevance concern the nature and provenance of the materials selected by this ruling house to portray itself. What types of lives were depicted in the *Singular Volume* and why? Where were the selected narrations drawn from? How were these templates subsequently handled and used by members of the house? These issues also constitute an important touchstone for the nature of Tibetan genealogical life-writing in general, whose exact social and cultural origins have often gone under-scrutinised. Consequently, these works have often been treated as documents of rather straight-forward historical value, only shrouded by a layer of mythologisation.[6] In exploring these issues at the interface of community and text, the current article contextualises this complex work in a bid to demonstrate how biography was employed by this important house and how its legacy of life-writing was handled by subsequent generations.

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2 For an admirably encyclopaedic study of the history of the Phag-mo-gru-pa, see Czaja, *Medieval Rule*.

3 I use the term ›clan‹ in this paper to reflect the source text's emic ideal of a deep-rooted descent group, defined by shared patrilineal descent from a common apical ancestor, whose exogamy is implied, though not made explicit. I apply the term ›lineage‹ to the similarly constituted but smaller subgroup (lHa-gzigs) within the overarching clan. In ethnographic reality, it seems to have been the lHa-gzigs that constituted the actual clan of the ruling house in their homelands in the eastern region of Khams; their affiliation with the better-known Rlangs (var. Rlang, Glangs, Glang, etc.) was almost certainly a convenient fiction (see Langelaar, *Bones and Thrones*, 105-128).

4 bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fols. 483-504; Wang-Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, Chig-rgyud, ed. Chab-spel-tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs.

5 For a more extensive study of the work, see Langelaar, *Bones and Thrones*.

6 In the case of the work under consideration, note Rudolf Kaschewsky and Pema Tsering's argument for accepting the text as a partially ancient composition and the main protagonist as a historical figure (Historizität des Helden Gesar, 392-398), the suggestion that this »ancient genealog[y]« could, with due care, be employed for study of 10th- and 11th-century Khams (Vitali, Monograph, 144-145), or the confusion of the ancient Rlangs with the ruling house itself, evident in the argument that one of the text's »semi-mythical« biographical accounts »impl[ies] that the Phag mo gru rulers once asserted their authority over parts of Central Bhutan«; Ardussi, Preliminary Investigation, 14, n. 26.

Dating

Unique among the works discussed in this volume, the *Singular Volume* is asserted to be a recovered ancient document, being presented as a so-called »treasure« text (*gter-ma*). It allegedly stems, at least in part, from Tibetan imperial times (7th-9th century),[7] the golden age of later Tibetan historiography, during which divine emperors oversaw the introduction of Buddhism to the plateau. Despite the work's own claims and the inclusion of some archaic phrases and imperial figures, its status as a work of considerable antiquity must be rejected, as Rolf Stein already illustrated. Nevertheless, the latter's findings have not met with unanimous scholarly acceptance, and some lack of clarity continues to linger in the literature as to the work's dating, a matter that consequently must first command our attention.

Initially, based on related texts and the work's political features, Stein estimated that the work's material was largely redacted between 1350 and 1450, during the height of Phag-mo-gru power[8] – an assessment that was followed and elaborated upon by several scholars.[9] Others, however, have argued for earlier dates for parts of the work or its historical core, sometimes even accepting the text's own claims of archaic authorship.[10] More recently, Olaf Czaja suggested that pre-existing materials, which may even contain »authentic data of the 10th century«, were updated with politically charged revisions during the house's political apex.[11] Complicating matters further, Stein himself later changed his dating, summarily suggesting that the work's final redaction took place around 1500 instead – albeit that parts of the work could antedate this moment by a century.[12] In sum, uncertainty surrounding the work's dating has persisted.

Fortunately, a clear *terminus post quem* for the work as reflected in our extant witnesses[13] is provided by the inclusion of the mid-14th-century ruler Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan in the pedigree section of the text, which refers to him by a title (*ta'i-si-tu*)[14] that he only received in 1358.[15] This dating latch-pin has too been drawn into doubt, however, by the observation

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7 The opening passage of the first part, for instance, asserts that the *Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru* was uttered during the consecration ceremony of the first Tibetan monastery, bSam-yas, in the 8th century; PSI: fols. 98.3-99.3; PSII: fols. 2.2-3.1; PSIII: 1; PSIV: 2.11-3.1. This claim gives rise to many text-internal contradictions, however, not least because its second part elaborately depicts the life of an early post-imperial ancestor.

8 Stein, Une source ancienne, 99-101.

9 Uray, Vom römischen Kaiser, 532; Sørensen, *Rare Texts*, 16, n. 10.

10 Tsering, Historische, epische und ikonographische Aspekte, 164-166; Kaschewsky et al., Historizität des Helden Gesar, 392-398. Various other publications have also suggested such pre-Phag-mo-gru-pa dates for the work (e.g. Chab-spel-tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, rTsom-pa-po'i-lo-rgyus-rags-bsdus, 1; Martin, *Tibetan Histories*, 24, lemma 2).

11 Although Czaja does not provide a consolidated discussion of the text's origins and dating, his stance can be gleaned from the notes in *Medieval Rule*, 27, 29-30, 52, 64. A reviewer of Czaja adopts a similar position to him (Vitali, Monograph, 144-145).

12 Stein, Introduction, 11. The later date is, it seems, largely based in Stein's mistaken identification of related but later texts as intrinsic parts of the *Singular Volume* itself.

13 At least eight witnesses are extant, of which I have been able to consult six in full. These six display many scribal but no substantial editorial variants, and none of the eight pre-date 1948. The textual evidence can be divided into two main lines of transmission. One of these may stem in its entirety from a manuscript from the 'Bras-spungs library. Witnesses of this line include PSI, PSV and a copy of PSV in the possession of Per Sørensen (PSVI), which he had made in the 1970s and kindly placed at my disposal. These three all appear to go back to a single witness, a photocopy of which is still held at the Toyo Bunko (Yamaguchi, *Catalogue,* 172), but which I was not able to consult. Though less closely related to this (South Asian) cluster of witnesses, PSIV is also part of its broader line of transmission.

14 PSII, fol. 52.1; PSIII, 25.6-7.

15 Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 158, n. 154.

that the passage is missing from one witness. On this basis, Czaja identified the section as a politically inspired »elaboration« and thus concluded that the *Singular Volume* was »revised at the end of the 14th century« rather than newly composed.[16] Yet this section's absence from the witness in question in fact reflects a later haplographical error, in which two key lines were demonstrably omitted by a scribe.[17] As we will see below, the inclusion of a chain of prophecies that predict the house's hegemony as well as the appearance of several would-be anachronisms all confirm that the work indeed dates to the mid-14th century or afterwards.

Additionally, it is possible to derive a sturdy latest possible date for the composition of the work from the rather extensive summaries of the text found in the *Thousand Lights that Open the Eyes* (*Mig-'byed-'od-stong*), a religious history composed in the year 1418.[18] Furthermore, the fact that an influential Phag-mo-gru hegemon, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1374-1432, r. 1385-1432), does not appear in the genealogy and was thus forced to pen an addendum in order to attach himself and his father to the work's pedigree suggests that the text in its current redaction was completed before he took office, or at least before he was old enough to actively affect the house's literary representation.[19] Consequently, the work was likely composed in the latter part of the 14th century, perhaps to fortify the house's stature and memorialise Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan[20] in the wake of his death in 1364. To be sure, the period of the house's hegemony was characterised by its extensive cultural and textual production, a constellation into which the *Singular Volume* neatly fits.[21]

The Structure of the Work

The work contains two separate chapters with quite different content. The first and shorter one is a genealogy of immense depth that documents the house's ultimately divine origins and is titled the *Pedigree of the Rlangs [Clan] of Divine Stock* (*lHa-rigs-rlangs-kyi-skye-brgyud*). It covers a total of 44 generations[22] and includes some collateral branching as well as narrative portions. The second and longer part, referred to as the *Records of the Greatnesses and Virtues of the Rlangs of Divine Stock* (*lHa-rigs-rlangs-kyi-che-dge-yig-tshang*), henceforth

16 Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 30. This discrepancy between the witnesses was also noted by van der Kuijp, On the Life, 317.

17 In PSI, the genitive particle that follows the omitted passage still reflects its old phonetic context, where *gi* would correctly follow not *dpon-khro-bo-'phan* (fol. 153.1), but *gnyan-thog*, the name with which the absent passage ended (PSII, fol. 51.4-52.2 and PSVII, fol. 20a4-b1). The closely related PSV, as well as PSIV, neither of which Czaja had access to, hypercorrect the spelling of the particle to *gyi* (PSIV: 33.14, PSV: 25.8); this inadvertently formed sentence, however, remains awkward in meaning.

18 bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fols. 483.2-494.6; Sørensen, *Rare Texts*: 10; Sernesi, Manual, 142, n. 37.

19 Wang-Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, Chig-brgyud, 101. Note that some authors have argued that this appendix suggests that the work was redacted during, rather than before, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan's rule; Stein, Une source ancienne, 100-101; Sørensen, *Rare Texts*, 16, n. 10; Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 30.

20 As Stein concluded, and as we will see below, the work was written for the greater glory of this important hegemon; Stein, Une source ancienne, 87.

21 Sernesi, Manual, esp. 141-143. On the house's art production, see Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, c. 8.

22 In its summary of the *Pedigree*, the Mig-'byed-'od-stong (f. 484.6) inserts a generational representative, dPal-lha, who is missing from the *Singular Volume*'s extant witnesses (PSI: fol. 111.4-5; PSII; fol. 13.4-5; PSIII: 6; PSIV: 10.6-7). If correctly reflective of an older witness, this would bring the pedigree's original number of generations to 45.

the *Records*, is wholly narrative in nature. It documents 54 mainly brief stories that detail the marvellous feats of various mythical scions – all male – of the house's ancestral Rlangs clan as well as of one of its sub-branches, the lHa-gzigs lineage, from which the house members hailed. It is this second chapter that constitutes the biographical collection which forms the central subject of this article.

As already noted, the *Singular Volume* as a whole professes to be an ancient work. Such »treasure« texts, an established genre in Tibetan literature, are supposed to have been hidden in bygone days by figures of authority, only to be revealed again by a worthy saint of later generations. This choice of genre is intimately tied to claims that the work is more than mere writing. Sustained by associations with revered cultural figures such as the deified 8th-century Buddhist missionary Padmasambhava and the coeval Emperor Khri-srong-lde-btsan, the work contains several self-laudatory passages that detail the text's great potential, where it is described as both a secretive »special teaching« (*khyad-chos*) as well as a central object for religious practice (*yi-dam*) for the house's ancestral clan.[23] The purported benefits accruing from using and revering it include the stamping out of human and livestock diseases, general auspiciousness[24] and, more sweepingly, the ability to »accomplish anything«.[25] In keeping with treasure-text genre conventions, the work ends with an attempt to boost its own trustworthiness by documenting its transmission history.[26]

The biographical collection itself, then, is arranged into two broad thematic sections, most aptly described as covering ›worldly‹ and ›salvific morals‹. The first segment is presented as »the great base« (*gzhi-che-ba*) and consists of 24 ancestral narratives that conform to the »human code« of conduct (*mi-chos*). These stories mainly relate successful martial endeavours – in some cases featuring episodes of extreme violence – and the obtainment of special spoils of war. They however also include references to the settling of new soil, historical leadership roles, wealth, patronage and even beauty. The second segment is presented as »the noble ornament« (*rgyan-dam-pa*) to the preceding foundation and depicts 30 ancestors who followed the »divine (or noble) code« (*lha-chos*), i.e. salvational traditions. This term predominantly denotes Buddhism, although a dash of the Bon religion is also included, a non-Buddhist tradition that despite large doctrinal and ritual overlaps with Tibetan Buddhism looks back to a different foundational figure and claims more ancient roots.[27] Although this second series of salvific life stories has a similar amount of biographies as the first mundane set, it eclipses it in sheer length, chiefly due to the inclusion of one disproportionately long biography.

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23 For example, PSI, fols. 105.5-106.1, 337.1-4; PSII, fols. 8.3-8.4, 211.4-212.1; PSIII, 4.2-4, 99.9-13; PSIV, 6.17-19, 125.4-10. Interestingly, the work contains several references to written materials functioning as a *yi-dam*, a term that usually denotes a tutelary meditational deity: see also PSI, fols. 217.4-5 & 334.5-335.3; PSII, fols. 109.4 & 210.1-3; PSIII, 54.10-11 & 98.15-19; PSIV, 68.18-19 & 124.7-11. Note that prior to the relevant phrase *yi-dam-gyis*, PSI: fol. 337.4 & PSIV: 125.9 confusingly hyper-correct the coordinative particle *la* to *lha*.

24 PSI, fol. 329.3-330.1; PSII, fol. 205.4-206.1; PSIII: 96.15-19; PSIV: 121.18-122.4.

25 PSI, fol. 105.5-106.3; PSII, fol. 8.3-8.5; PSIII, 4.2-6; PSIV, 6.17-7.3.

26 PSI, fols. 334.2-337.1; PSII, fols. 209.2-211.4; PSIII, 98.9-99.8; PSIV: 124.1-125.4. On the legitimisation strategies used in this genre, see Gyatso, Logic of Legitimation. For an important reorientation of focus from the genre's innovative aspects towards its more conservative modular nature, see Mayer, *gTer ston* and Tradent.

27 On the Bon religion, its history and especially its treasure-text tradition, see Martin, *Unearthing Bon Treasures*.

Indeed, most of the recorded tales are quite unembellished in regard to biographical details and as such constitute brief profiles or vignettes more than they do strict ›biographies‹. The large majority relate only a single landmark episode and do not contain any references to life processes such as birth, death or aging. Access to the protagonists' mental worlds, by way of either direct speech or thought, is also but rarely offered. The decisive exception to this cursory style is the biography of a key forefather of the Phag-mo-gru-pa, the apical ancestor of the narrower lHa-gzigs lineage, named Byang-chub-'dre-bkol. This biography reports not only on the protagonist's life and death but also on his extensive travels, religious activities and adventures, interactions and procreation. Through its inclusion of substantial versified portions, it also deviates in literary form.

An additional interesting formal feature of this set of biographies is that they are presented in an isolated and unlinked fashion, largely divorced from a chronological, historical or genealogical framework. When we compare the *Singular Volume* with genealogical sources of other Tibetan ruling houses, with religious histories or indeed with genealogies from other cultures, this disjointed structure is striking.[28] Generally, lineages provide a framework of generational strings onto which representatives' accomplishments are woven directly, but the *Singular Volume* almost completely severs the genealogy (the *Pedigree*) from its members' feats (the *Records*). Although many of these figures can in fact be found in the preceding genealogical chapter, the *Records* presents them as actors in a vague and largely unspecified past, which we can partly, though certainly not exclusively, understand as the period of the Tibetan empire.[29]

The clearest literary device to create coherence between these lives, then, is not generational change or narrative development but simply the repetitive and incessant reference to the protagonists' clan affiliation. Virtually all stories begin with the name of the protagonist, which in Tibetan is preceded by the clan name Rlangs. Similarly, the tales uniformly conclude with formulaic endings that briefly recapitulate the ancestor's greatness and then fold him back again into the greater ancestral descent group, reiterating the name of the clan. Beginning and ending nearly each biography, the clan name is thus in a quite literal sense the alpha and omega of these individual narratives.

Biography in the Service of Phag-mo-gru

In line with the work's period of composition, its life stories reflect the preoccupations of the newly hegemonic dynasty as well as some broader cultural aspects of 14th- or early 15th-century life on the Tibetan Plateau. Most strikingly, as alluded to above and already noted in the literature, the biographies incorporate a series of politically charged prophecies that teleologically foreshadow the house's supremacy.[30] The first such prophecy in the *Records* occurs in the life story of one of the most well-known Rlangs figures, dPal-gyi-seng-ge. Already associated with the widely revered missionary Padmasambhava centuries before the

28 See, for instance, Roesler, Operas, 123-127, and Spiegel, Genealogy, 103-107.

29 Some biographies include references that unambiguously set them in the imperial period (e.g. PSI, fols. 176.4-5, 184.1; PSII, fols. 73.4, 80.2-3; PSIII, 37.4-5, 40.5-6; PSIV, 46.16-17, 50.17-18; see also bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fol. 494.4-5), whereas some others clearly play out in later times.

30 Stein, Une source ancienne, 87ff., Kaschewsky *et al.*, Historizität des Helden Gesar, 394-395.

Singular Volume was written, this biography again closely associates the two by noting that it was the Rlangs scion who had invited the missionary to the plateau in the 8th century.[31] This amicable affiliation allows the work to enlist Padmasambhava to first bless the entire Rlangs clan and to then prophesy that an emanation and »spiritual son« of his, called »Byang and Chub«, would appear in his pupil's descent group in the future.[32]

This prophetic statement, as the work clarifies later on, presages Byang-chub-'dre-bkol, the ancestor of the narrower lHa-gzigs lineage from which the Phag-mo-gru hegemons hailed.[33] His extensive life story is included later in the work and, besides detailing his grand acts, reiterates his spiritual unity with Padmasambhava multiple times to firmly secure his standing.[34] Now thoroughly imbued with the saint's aura, powerful spiritual beings known as ḍākinīs also foretell that his descendants shall become »masters of the kingdom of Bod«[35] – the plateau's historical heartlands. Extending this chain of prophecies yet further, the lineage ancestor himself goes on to convey similar forecasts to his offspring, adding additional detail. His testament, for one, proclaimed that in the 13th descending generation a scion would appear who would resemble him and »place the kingdom at [his] feet.«[36] Unsurprisingly, we find that Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, the luminary under whom the house actually rose to such dominance in the mid-14th century, actively identified as a descendant of this figure.[37] The clout provided by these prophecies was, furthermore, readily mobilised by subsequent literature, which repeatedly cited them in bids to shore up the house's legitimacy.[38]

Naturally, there are more subtle indications as well for the text's association with the Phag-mo-gru-pa's concerns and pursuits. We encounter, for instance, an ancestor named rGod-lding, a »lord of the Rlangs« (*rlangs-rje*), who built a lavish temple replete with a Tibetan Buddhist canon (*bka'-'gyur*), and who is described as having been »the earliest of [the plateau's Buddhist] patrons« (*yon-bdag-gi-snga-ba*).[39] Several other forefathers, too, are reported to have sponsored or written such sets of Buddhist scripture in golden ink.[40] These

31 This figure appears in various earlier sources, such as PT307 (Dalton, Early Development) – where he appears side by side with Padmasambhava (who had not yet risen to his later stature) – and Nyang-ral-Nyi-ma-'od-zer, *Chos-'byung*, ed. Chab-spel-Tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs and Ma-grong-Mi-'gyur-rdo rje, 310-13.

32 »slob-dpon-padma'i-zhal-na-re/ khyod-lha-rigs-rlangs-kyi-mi-brgyud-de/ mi-brgyud-lha-las-grol-ba-yin/ theg-pa-yar-la-'dzeg-pa-yin/ khyod-rlangs-kyi-mi-brgyud-skal-ldan-la/ nga-yis-thugs-rjes-khyab-par-byed/ khyod-ni-skyes-bu-skal-ldan-yin/ khyod-lha-rigs-rlangs-kyi-mi-brgyud-la/ byang-dang-chub-zhes-bya-ba-yi/ mi-brgyud-khyad-du-'phags-pa-yong-/ de-ni-nga-yi-thugs-kyi-sras/ gsungs-nas …«; PSI, fol. 184.2-5; PSII, 80.4-81.1; PSIII, 40.8-13; PSIV, 51.1-7. All Tibetan citations given in this article are eclectic readings based on PSI, PSII and PSIV, with quirks in the spelling and grammar respected as long as these do not hinder comprehension.

33 Cf. Stein, Une source ancienne, 87, 105, n. 27.

34 For example, PSI, fols. 191.1-2, 210.4-212.1, 230.5-231.2; PSII, fols. 86.5, 103.4-104.5, 120.1-2; PSIII, 43.11-12, 51.14-52.5, 59.14-16; PSIV, 54.14-15, 65.7-66.1, 75.6-9.

35 »bod-kyi-rgyal-khams-bdag-po-byed/«; PSI, fols. 230.5-231.3; PSII, fol. 120.1-3; PSIII, 59.14-18; PSIV, 75.6-11.

36 »nga-nas-mi-rabs-bcu-gsum-na/ nga-yi-brgyud-pa-nga-'dra-yong-/ des-ni-rgyal-khams-zhabs-su-tshud/ gsungs-pa'i-zhal-chems-yang-byung-/«; PSI, fols. 328.5-329.2; PSII, fol. 205.2-3; PSIII, 96.12-3; PSIV, 121.15-16.

37 Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, gSol-'debs-thung-ba, ed. Chab-spel-Tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, 388.1-8.

38 For example, bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fol. 490.4-7, which was copied by rTa-tshag-tshe-dbang-rgyal, *lHo-rong-chos-'byung*, 352.6-11. Also see Anon., Dri-lan-nyer-gcig, ed. Khedup Gyatso, fols. 347.4-348.1, 349.3-350.2, rGyal-dbang-lnga-pa-chen-po, *dPyid-kyi-rgyal-mo'i-glu-dbyangs*, 119.22-120.5, 121.7-10, 122.20-123.1.

39 PSI, fols. 174.2-175.3; PSII, fol. 71.3-72.2; PSIII, 36.2-11; PSIV, 45.9-46.1.

40 PSI, fols. 179.4-5, 266.2-3; PSII, fols. 76.2-3, 150.2-3; PSIII, 38.11-12, 73.2-3; PSIV, 48.11-12, 92.9-11.

large canonised collections, however, arose only in the early 1300s and grew increasingly popular in subsequent centuries.[41] This renders the claims found in the *Records*, which transplant these canons into a deep ancestral past, decidedly anachronistic. Yet these accounts do mirror activities reported for Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan and also reverberate with the sumptuous religious patronage furnished by subsequent Phag-mo-gru dignitaries such as Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan.[42]

In like manner, reports that Rlangs-dPal-gyi-seng-ge »erected a multitude [of statues of] *bKa'-brgyud* lamas«[43] deepens the Phag-mo-gru-pa's warm historical association with this school of Buddhism, so central to their religious identity. Yet this forebear's aforementioned ties with Padmasambhava betray that he must have been active in the latter half of the 8th century, hundreds of years before the Buddhist school he supposedly championed even came into being as a self-conscious tradition. Accordingly, this claim too is anachronistic and was surely included to drive home the intimate ties between the Phag-mo-gru rulers, their lineage and their favoured Buddhist school. Evidently, then, these life stories do not reflect pre-existing historical traditions but provided a useful surface on which contemporary cultural and political preoccupations could be projected back into a consciously constructed, deep biographical past.

Along similar lines, we find an additional interesting claim that too may have been intended to boost the sectarian religious clout of the Phag-mo-gru-pa's ancestral lineage. The lHa-gzigs ancestor is said to have received extensive land donations from a minister of the Khasa kingdom,[44] a polity centred around present-day western Nepal that flourished in the first centuries of the second millennium. This biographical reference evokes Khasa's historical role as patron of gDan-sa-mthil, the central monastery of the Phag-mo-gru-pa. Historically, this royal sponsorship had been initiated at an important affiliated bKa'-brgyud monastery under a religious prelate ('Jig-rten-mgon-po, 1143-1217) who was unrelated to the later Phag-mo-gru-pa hegemons.[45] With this history in mind, the *Records*' biographical assertion – set in a still deeper past – may have been an attempt to subtly inscribe this important relationship's incipience onto the early history of the ruling house's biological lineage, or to at least intimately associate the two.

Yet another contemporary political and literary aspect of the work may come to the fore through a brief look at another treasure text with a very similar background, the *Padma-bka'-thang*. This famous work was retrieved in 1352, the very period in which the Phag-mo-gru-pa were on the ascent and briefly before the composition of the *Singular Volume*. The site of its alleged find, furthermore, was located in the mountains directly west of the Phag-mo-gru fortress of sNe-gdong, in the very heartland of their authority. Moreover, this work also mobilised Padmasambhava to channel politically charged prophecies which touched on the rise of the Phag-mo-gru-pa. Thematically, too, the two texts display overlaps in content.[46]

41 Eimer, *Ein Jahrzehnt Studien*, xiii-xiv.

42 bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fol. 496.2, rTa-tshag-tshe-dbang-rgyal, *lHo-rong-chos-'byung*, 372. Also see Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, bKa'-chems, ed. Chab-spel-tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, 179.6-8.

43 PSI, fols. 179.4, 182.3; PSII, fols. 76.2, 78.5-79.1; PSIII, 38.10-11, 39.14; PSIV, 48.10-11, 50.1.

44 PSI, fol. 267.2-3; PSII, fol. 151.2; PSIII, 73.10-11; PSIV, 93.1-2.

45 Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 90-91.

46 Stein, Une source ancienne, 91.

Indeed, historiographical sources of far later date, though perhaps relying on older sources, even go so far as to suggest that the *Padma-bka'-thang*'s discoverer, O-rgyan-gling-pa, ran into trouble with the Phag-mo-gru ruler,[47] allegedly due to »a prophecy which contained an insinuation«[48] included in the text.[49] The historicity of their clash remains quite uncertain, and the prophecy in question certainly need not have been intended as a straightforward slight of the Phag-mo-gru-pa.[50] Yet both this prophecy's phrasing and its placement in a patterned series of predictions would certainly have left something to be desired on the part of the hegemons. To wit, the house's rise was included in a list of almost exclusively negative and even catastrophic events – disease, famine, rains of blood, the decline of the *dharma* – that foretold the rise of individual treasure revealers. The appearance of O-rgyan-gling-pa himself would be signalled by the emergence of a king in the Yar-lung valley, the rather crude image of »pigs« (Tib. *phag*, short for Phag-mo-gru) uprooting the »earth« (*sa*, short for Sa-skya) and the ominous-sounding rise of 108 bulwarks.[51] Especially when taking this passage's broader context into consideration, a more flattering prophecy could be imagined. The *Singular Volume*, to be sure, presented the reader with a less bellicose, unequivocally positive and authorised alternative.

In another parallel, it is noteworthy that the *Padma-bka'-thang* paints a decidedly unfavourable picture of the Rlangs ancestor dPal-gyi-seng-ge, further aggravating his already unflattering depiction in the earliest recension of a 12th-century text that this work built upon.[52] In this mid-14th-century work, he not only miserably fails at his royally assigned task of bringing the Buddhist teachings to Tibet but also ends up being stubbornly disobedient, dishonourably killed off and possibly in hell, while his failure to return to court is used as a pretext by evil imperial ministers to banish his more virtuous companions who did survive

47 Kong-sprul-Karma-ngag-dbang-yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, gTer-dang-gter-ston, 87.

48 Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School*, vol. 1, 777.

49 Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School*, vol. 2, n. 1035 (note that the author's original Tibetan does not add any details on what specific prophecy is supposed to be at play). Kapstein deems these later traditions of O-rgyan-gling-pa's persecution plausible; Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation*, 166.

50 For one, O-rgyan-gling-pa seems to have welcomed the fading of Mongol influence associated with the Phag-mo-gru-pa's ascendancy. He described Mongol-Sa-skya law as »dark on the inside, white on the outside« (*nang-gnag-phyi-dkar*) and linked their hegemony to a steep decline in »the karmic merit of Tibet« (*bod-kyi-bsod-nams*) (462.18-463.1). In contrast, the rise of the Phag-mo-gru-pa is accompanied by the appearance of »an emanation of Vajrapāṇi in the Yar-lung valley« in another passage, likely a reference to Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan (*yar-klungs-nang-nas-phyag-rdor-sprul-pa-'byung:*) (445.3-4). In addition, the prophecy under scrutiny was later even cited, albeit stripped from its larger context, by the fifth Dalai Lama to buttress the authority of the house; rGyal-dbang-lnga-pa-chen-po, dPyid-kyi-rgyal-mo'i-glu-dbyangs, 128.1-4.

51 »yar-klungs-mthil-nas-rnam-smin-bskyed-rgyal-'byung: phag-gis-sa-slog-dbus-khams-sa-hor-za: btsan-rdzong-brgya-dang-rtsa-brgyad-phyogs-su-'byung: shel-gyi-brag-phug-sbas-pa'i-gter-ka-'di: mi-bzhag-'don-pa'i-rtags-der-[read: de-]bstan-nas-byung: gter-ston-u-rgyan-gling-pa-zhes-bya-ba-'byung:«; U-rgyan-gling-pa, *Padma-bka'-thang*, ed. dByangs-can, 466.18-467.03, cf. Toussaint, *Le dict de Padma*, 385.

52 Doney, *Zangs Gling ma*, 145-146, ZLh fols. 45a.3-46a.1. Also see Nyang-ral-Nyi-ma-'od-zer, *Chos-'byung*, ed. Chab-spel-Tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs and Ma-grong-Mi-'gyur-rdo rje, 310-13. Cf. Gu-ru-U-rgyan-gling-pa, rGyal-po-bka'i-thang-yig, 131-2, 203-4.

their Indian mission.[53] This inimical image is offset in the *Singular Volume*, which pits him as a successful missionary, military hero, builder of temples and the person responsible for inviting Padmasambhava.[54] All in all, then, it is quite conceivable that the *Singular Volume* was partially inspired by this mid-14th-century text, with which it shared many structural features but whose depictions of the Phag-mo-gru and their ancestor could have been deemed to be in need of a substantial soft-power touch-up.

Rewriting Ancestry and the Work's Heterogeneous Origins

Although the *Singular Volume* certainly painted an agreeable picture of the house's forebears, we nevertheless encounter a number of small but interesting discrepancies when we compare the work with somewhat later sources directly attributable to agents of the ruling house. Within decades of the work's appearance, these authors already displayed a distinct unease with parts of the material that documented their own ancestry and attempted to rid their pedigree of any elements and figures apparently perceived as heterodox. This incongruity raises important questions regarding the origins of these different attitudes. Were they rooted in natural, gradually evolving notions of what house members believed to constitute respectable ancestry? Or, alternatively, is it possible that these discrepancies reveal a pre-existing disconnect between Phag-mo-gru dignitaries and the traditions contained in their genealogy? And if this were so, where could these traditions have been drawn from?

One subtle example of such Buddhist rewriting is encountered in the way in which the *Thousand Lights* of 1418, a *bKa'-brgyud* Buddhist history written by a Phag-mo-gru prelate at the behest of the house's administrator, also his brother, presents a string of forebears engaged in salvific traditions. The author was instructed to include information on the house's pedigree[55] and accordingly gave quite some detail from the *Singular Volume*, listing, for one, twelve of the *Records*' first fourteen religious figures along with their feats.[56] Yet in doing so, he notably omitted the alleged introduction of Bon to Tibet by a Rlangs scion.[57] Although this was a cultural milestone by any standard, it was apparently not one he wished to broadcast in a partisan history of a Buddhist school with which the Phag-mo-gru-pa were so closely aligned. This editorial omission, incidentally, successfully rippled through in the author's legacy, as most of these ancestors were later also copied into one of his own biographies with the Bon reference still missing.[58] The audience of these slightly later texts, therefore, was presented with an ancestry of the house that had been successfully purged of this non-Buddhist ancestor, even when the *Singular Volume* itself had included multiple references to ancestral Bon practitioners.

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53 U-rgyan-gling-pa, *Padma-bka'-thang*, ed. dByangs-can, 374-79.

54 PSI, fols. 177.3-186.1; PSII, fols. 74.2-82.2, PSIII, 37.12-41.3, PSIV, 47.5-52.1. Interestingly, Padmasambhava's invitation had in fact also been attributed to one dPal-gyi-seng-ge in the *Padma-bka'-thang*, but that namesake hailed from a different clan, by the name of Shud-pu; U-rgyan-gling-pa, *Padma-bka'-thang*, ed. dByangs-can, 292-293.

55 Sørensen, *Rare Texts*, 15-16.

56 bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fol. 493.1-494.4.

57 PSI, fols. 176.5-177.1; PSII, fol. 73.4-5; PSIII, 37.5-8; PSIV, 46.17-47.1.

58 Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan, bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan-gyi-rnam-thar, fols. 187.5-189.4. On this biography, see Sernesi, Manual, 129-130.

Along very similar lines, we find further features of both chapters of the *Singular Volume* that were found to be unsatisfactory and subjected to reinterpretation, omission or elaboration. One example is the *Pedigree*'s cosmogonic and genealogical beginning, which was associated with non-Buddhist traditions. Given that it claims that the first human ancestor appeared from an egg that had itself arisen from elemental materials,[59] its inclusion was quite striking for a house so intimately associated with scholastic Buddhist institutions. Such narratives, to be sure, had been castigated as non-Buddhist by some Tibetan Buddhist authors as far back as the 12th century.[60] Indeed, soon after the house first embraced the *Singular Volume*, we find members altering or ignoring this passage. The *Thousand Lights* explicitly styles it a »Bon tradition« (*bon-lugs*) and presents a somewhat tweaked Buddhist version (*chos-lugs*) instead.[61]

Similarly, the latter work also muzzled a tradition of the Tibetans' ethnic origins that is predominantly associated with non-Buddhist traditions.[62] The powerful Phag-mo-gru ruler Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1374-1432) himself, in an overview of his ancestry, wholly dropped both contested sections by simply omitting the entire first portion of the work's pedigree.[63] Although the remaining section certainly was a source of pride that deserved repeating, the first part, to all appearances, was not. The *Singular Volume*'s heterodox associations, moreover, continued to perturb parts of its audience, as indicated by a text from the early 1570s that was forced to respond to charges that the text displayed distinct Bon influences.[64]

Simultaneously, the *Singular Volume* had notably failed to include a biographical tradition found in other contemporary Buddhist sources, which held that there was a Rlangs ancestor – sometimes known as Khams-pa-go-cha – among the first seven Buddhist monks ordained on the Tibetan Plateau.[65] Although the *Records* does contain a brief, generic line on this ancestor's role in bringing the Buddhist teachings to the region,[66] the specific cultural capital associated with presenting him as one of the very first monks is not laid claim to.[67] The terseness of this biographical vignette is surprising when we consider the almost encyclopaedic nature of the work, and it only grows more striking when we see that from at least the mid-14th century onward key Phag-mo-gru figures were very much aware of this forebear and proactively mentioned him in writing. In fact, they seem to have treasured him over any other imperial ancestor. Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan repeatedly mentioned him in the 14th century,

59 PSI, fol. 107.3-108.1; PSII, fol. 9.5-10.3; PSIII, 4.17-5.1; PSIV, 7.15-8.3.

60 Karmay, Black-Headed Man, 248-249.

61 bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fol. 483.3-6.

62 Langelaar, Chasing the Colours, 344-345.

63 Wang-Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, Chig-rgyud, ed. Chab-spel-tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, 100.11ff.

64 Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 31, n. 18. The dating of this work is based on its abbatial lineage of gDan-sa-mthil, which halts after the later *spyan-snga* Grags-pa-'byung-gnas (Anon., Dri-lan-nyer-gcig, ed. Khedup Gyatso, fol. 359.3-4), whose tenure ended in 1570 and was followed by a brief hiatus; Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 459, appendix 1.

65 van der Kuijp, Remarks, 177-184.

66 PSI, fols. 176.4-177.1; PSII, fol. 73.4-74.1; PSIII, 37.04-8; PSIV, 46.16-47.02.

67 As already noted in van der Kuijp, Remarks, 178-179.

and the Thousand Lights readily added the assertion that he was among the first monks to its summary of the *Singular Volume*'s biographies.[68] The *Singular Volume* itself, on the contrary, had showered far more attention on another imperial ancestor, dPal-gyi-seng-ge, which may well be a function of the work's rNying-ma Buddhist influences.[69] This discrepancy may constitute further evidence of a disconnect between the composition of the work and the traditions current among the ruling house's contemporaneous high-ranking members.

Indeed, the work displays multiple additional features – toponymic, cultural and linguistic – that point away from the Phag-mo-gru-pa's heartland on the central stretches of the Tibetan Plateau. First of all, the text's narratives display a far higher toponymic density on certain swathes of the eastern plateau, located some 400-odd km northeast of the Yar-lung valley as the crow flies – some three to four weeks of travel distance in the pre-modern period.[70] Indeed, the *Singular Volume* locates the incipience of the house's lHa-gzigs lineage in this region of Upper Khams. The detail of individual toponyms provided for distinct plains, sites and temples located there – whether in the rTa-shod and Sog-shod Valleys or along the River lCi-chu – make for a stark contrast with the work's generic references to other regions. A sizeable number of these small-scale toponyms, moreover, are still in use today,[71] and their inclusion demonstrates the authorial voice's rather intimate familiarity with the topography of these eastern Tibetan areas.

Certain cultural aspects, too, seem to point in an easterly direction. Take the appearance of King Ge-sar of Gling in the *Records*, the protagonist of what was to become a grand epic tradition centred on the eastern plateau.[72] In contemporaneous sources from the plateau's heartland, such as the *bKa'-thang-sde-lnga*[73] or the *Padma-bka'-thang*, as well as in a legal document associated with the Phag-mo-gru house, the name Ge-sar still appeared solely as a vague king or polity, often encountered in a centuries-old political scheme of the four cardinal directions.[74] The *Records*, in contrast, is the earliest surviving source to remove the name Ge-sar from abstraction and involve him in face-to-face interactions on the plateau. This personalised Ge-sar, furthermore, already seems to have been an established figure in the milieu of the *Records*. He makes several appearances as an important benefactor; unearths treasures for Byang-chub-'dre-bkol; has an entourage whose names we recognise as

68 Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan invoked his memory during political negotiations, alluding to an episode where both he and a Sa-skya ancestor were among the first seven monks; van der Kuijp, Remarks, 178; Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, bKa'-chems, ed. Chab-spel-tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, 205.17-20. He also mentioned him – and no other imperial ancestor (!) – in a brief overview of his forebears; Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, gSol-'debs-thung-ba, ed. Chab-spel-Tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, 388.1-2. In the *Mig-'byed-'od-stong*, Khams-pa-go-cha is discussed on fol. 493.2-4, which gives more detail than the *Singular Volume.* Also see rJe-thams-cad-mkhyen-pa-Tsong-kha-pa-chen-po, sPyan-snga, 224-225.

69 Besides repeatedly mentioning the »old« (*rnying-ma*) mantras and translations, this treasure text looks back to (the circles of) Padmasambhava, a general feature of works of a *rNying-ma*, not *bKa'-brgyud*, Buddhist bent. On treasures in the *bKa'-brgyud* context, see Ducher, bKa' brgyud Treasure.

70 Ryavec, *Historical Atlas*, 18-19, map 6.

71 Some examples are lHa-khang-thang in rTa-shod, in Khyung-po (in Dengqen, Qamdo, TAR, PRC), or Ra-dza-rdzong along the river lCi-chu, in Nang-chen (Nangqen, Yushu, Qinghai).

72 On some of the links between the epic and this text, see Stein, Une source ancienne, and *idem*, Introduction. For a recent overview of the scholarship on the epic, see FitzHerbert, Ge sar of Gling.

73 Stein, Introduction, 13.

74 Toussaint, *Le dict de Padma*, 164, 176, 410, 415 (the latter passage is wrongly translated, cf. U-rgyan-gling-pa, *Padma-bka'-thang*, ed. dByangs-can, 500.8); Anon., *Khrims-yig-zhal-lce-bco-lnga*, ed. bSod-nams-tshe-ring, 142.10-11.

supporting characters from later epic traditions; and is even identified as an incarnation of an imperial *dharma* king[75] – an unlikely claim for a figure without cultural resonance. It is therefore doubtful that this character would have had his roots in written literature from the central regions, where, so it appears, he remained but a shadow for a long time to come.[76]

Connections to the east may also extend to the level of literal phrases, tropes and linguistic features. For instance, what may strike one as a singularly peculiar passage, which features a Rlangs ancestor preventing a snow mountain from crumbling with the crown of his head, we actually find mirrored in a mythological work that has been connected to Khams.[77] The same holds for another abstruse line on Ge-sar bringing a horse of some description to China.[78] Similarly, the aforementioned ethnic genealogy – which details the shared origins of the Tibetans, Chinese and Mongols – is attested predominantly in works from the east.[79] A recurring grammatical peculiarity, in which the particle na- is used as an allative case marker, is considered incorrect in standard Classical Literary Tibetan,[80] yet is attested in multiple sources from western Khams.[81] Certain anomalous choices in vocabulary, lastly, may also be tied in with such an origin.[82]

It is certainly relevant to point out that the ruling house's lHa-gzigs lineage originally hailed from Upper Khams.[83] Accordingly, we should allow for the possibility that some traditions current in their native regions may have found their way into the work. The exact channel through which such an eastern influx may have occurred, however, remains unclear.

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75 PSI, fols. 195.5-266.4; PSII, fols. 91.1-150.4; PSIII, 45.11-73.3-5; PSIV, 57.8-92.13.

76 Stein noted that even in the east, from which all subsequent early written attestations stem, »no trace of the epic (as we have it now) can be found before ca. 1550 (or eventually 1500 A.D.).« (Stein, Introduction, 11).

77 Anon., dBu-nag, ed. Karmay and Nagano, 110.7; PSI, fol. 165.3 (added in margin); PSII, fol. 63.3; PSIII, 31.17-18; PSIV, 40.12.

78 Anon., dBu-nag, ed. Karmay and Nagano, 108.20-109.1; the line also occurs in ritual manuals of ancestor cults from the east (e.g. 'Gyur-med-rnam-rgyal, *lHa-thog-rgyal-rabs*, 45); PSI, fol. 197.3-4; PSII, fol. 92.4; PSIII, 46.5-6; PSIV, 58.7-8.

79 Langelaar, Colours of the Rainbow, 357, n. 114.

80 For example, Tournadre, Classical Tibetan Cases, 98.

81 PSI, fols. 243.4-5, 278.2, 279.5, 335.4-5; PSII, fols. 130.4, 161.1, 162.3-4, 210.4; PSIII, 64.11, 77.11, 78.4, 98.21-99.1; PSIV: 81.15-16, 98.4-5, 99.2-3, 124.14. This feature also appears in Anon., dBu-nag, ed. Karmay and Nagano, fols. 17a.1-2, 19b.1, rTa-tshag-tshe-dbang-rgyal, *lHo-rong-chos-'byung*, 352.19, 407.19-20, 802.7-8, etc., an unpublished biography on bSod-nams-dpal-'dren from Upper Khams (e.g. »khyod-skyid-pa-[read: sa-]cig-na-mi-'gro-nas/ sdug-sa-gcig-na-'gro-bas-dga'-ba-e-yin-shus-[*read*: zhus-]pas/«, Suzanne Bessenger, personal communication, my emendations) and other works from the region.

82 Perhaps most fascinating is the hardly attested term *rus-mkhar*, literally »bone (or clan) fortress«; PSI, fol. 170.1; PSII, fol. 67.4; PSIV, 43.4, PSV, 33.2. Emended to *jus-mkhar* in PSIII: 34.1, it has been translated simply as »stronghold« (Ch. *yao sai*) or »fortress«; Zan la a wang and She Wan zhi, *Lang shi jia zu shi*, 24.11; Czaja, *Medieval Rule*, 54; Everding, Herrschaft, 18. Yet the term *rus-mkhar* is actually attested in texts from Upper Khams, where it refers to ritually buried ossuaries used in a heretofore undocumented ancestor cult (Langelaar, Clan Castles, 84).

83 The early lHa-gzigs figures Grags-pa-'byung-gnas and mKhan-chen-phu-ba, for instance, were both born in the lCi (var. sPyi) Valley (bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, fol. 456.2-6; rTa-tshag-tshe-dbang-rgyal, *lHo-rong-chos-'byung*, 795.18-19), an area largely in contemporary southern Nang-chen. Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, too, pinpointed his apical ancestor to this area; Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, gSol-'debs-thung-ba, ed. Chab-spel-Tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs, 388.2-8. For more on the geography of the lHa-gzigs lineage and the *Singular Volume*, see Langelaar, *Bones and Thrones*, especially 130-160.

It is possible that such traditions, perhaps indeed in the form of older written documents,[84] had been held by the house itself and were refashioned in the late 14th century for inclusion in the work. Alternatively, the *Singular Volume* may have been an outside creation by an unidentified adulator that, in spite of its imperfections, had willingly been adopted by the Phag-mo-gru-pa for its archaic flair and political potency. The latter scenario would perhaps offer a better explanation for the continued presence of certain cultural quirks in the work. Yet, either way, judging by the work's variegated contents – which display 14th- and 15th-century Central Tibetan political sensibilities, apparently eastern traditions and archaic phrases – it is beyond doubt that the genealogy's composer(s) drew inspiration from multiple sources and social fields.

Given this heterogeneity, it is not at all surprising that the content of the Phag-mo-gru-pa's genealogy soon presented those house members actually invested in the work with a number of small yet thorny issues. Subsequent reflections on the *Singular Volume* accordingly remodelled and updated both biographical and genealogical elements that no longer, or perhaps never had, quite fitted the social and political niches the work was to address. Indeed, this reading tradition of the *Singular Volume* elegantly demonstrates that such collections of lives lead a life of their own too.

Biography and Hierarchy: Forging a Political Community

Genealogy, as David Jackson has shown, has long been an important domain of oratory in Tibetic-language-speaking areas, where pedigrees of rulers would often be recited at a variety of formal and festive occasions they attended. Written works, furthermore, could serve as inspiration for such addresses.[85] It takes but little imagination to suppose that the biographies of the *Singular Volume*, too, would have been put to such use. It is certainly relevant here to point out that much of the text's content, including boasts of the clan's grandeur, are, in fact, presented as oral addresses. Moreover, citations-cum-paraphrases from the work found in later Phag-mo-gru sources, which maintain the passages' verse form but change their phrasing, may indicate that these passages were reassembled from memory and had been pro-actively studied.[86] In any case, active usage of the work would certainly have helped spread its politically charged message while simultaneously consolidating the house members' self-understanding as proud scions of ancient and elevated stock.

At this point in our conclusion, then, it is instructive to take another, broader conceptual look at the work's biographies. The wide-ranging nature of the activities reported in the life stories of the clan members, both on a geographic and conceptual level, should be read as yet another sign of the work's concern with the house's political standing. The scenery for these ancestral acts includes territory in contemporary India (Bodhgayā), Nepal (Svayambhūnāth),

84 It is, moreover, conceivable that material was sourced from oral traditions. The *Singular Volume* contains several supposedly oral addresses set in front of assemblies, and genealogy has long been a staple of formal oral performances (see n. 85). Many references in the text, moreover, seem to presuppose rather specific cultural background knowledge. Also note that the *dBu-nag-mi'u-'dra-chags*, with which the *Singular Volume* has several overlaps, is presented as consisting of »songs«; Karmay, Black-Headed Man, 263.

85 See the examples cited by David Jackson from various periods and regions; *Mollas*, 24-25, 58-62, 63-64, 79-80, 83-90.

86 For example, Anon., Dri-lan-nyer-gcig, ed. Khedup Gyatso, fols. 347.5-348.1 and cf. PSI, fol. 121.2-3; PSII, fol. 22.3-4; PSIII, 10.15-17; PSIV, 15.16-16.1. Anon., Dri-lan-nyer-gcig, ed. Khedup Gyatso, fols. 348.5-350.1 is a hodgepodge of phrases found throughout the *Singular Volume* (e.g. PSI, fols. 328.5-329.2; PSII, fol. 205.2-3; PSIII, 96.12-13; PSIV, 121.15-16). Also consider, for instance, bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, Mig-'byed-'od-stong, ed. A-mgon-rin-po-che, f. 487.1-2 and cf. PSI, fol. 135.2-4; PSII, fol. 35.2-4; PSIII, 16.8-11; PSIV, 13.13-18.

entire swathes of the Tibetan Plateau and regions beyond, such as China and Oḍḍiyāna. One ancestor's meditation site at western Mt. Kailash is over 3000 km away from Chinese Mt. Wutaishan, where another forefather had a vision of a revered *bodhisattva*.[87] On a cultural and historical level, too, the ancestors' achievements were monumental. They turned back invading Chinese armies, sparked the light of Buddhism and, for good measure, that of the Bon religion too. They were among the very first sponsors of the most revered Buddha statue of the plateau as well as of a renowned pilgrimage site in the Kathmandu Valley. One of their scions tamed the esteemed deity Mahākāla, and yet others rendered multiple areas safe from roaming evil spirits and bandits, thus not only saving countless lives but also making these regions fit for human habitation and travel.

In staking out such major claims, the *Singular Volume* catalogues how the house's ancestors were not merely important but rather fundamental to the macro-region's current constellation, carving out a place in history as an enduring social agent to whom the Tibetan Plateau's populations would forever be obliged. Such a sense of biographically manufactured obligation, actively instilled in audiences that read or heard the great acts of a ruler's ancestors, has understandably been described as a sense of »indebtedness«.[88] This economically connoted term, however, does not quite fit the bill. Debts, after all, can be repaid and the associated obligation undone. These grand acts of yore, in contrast, did not take place on an everyday plane of reciprocity or exchange, fit to counter favours or recompense. Instead, they were constitutive of the very social and cultural fabric of the plateau. Accordingly, to borrow the late David Graeber's phrase, one cannot »even conceive of a squaring of accounts« between the protagonists and their surrounding populations.[89] The balance is forever skewed and calls a lasting hierarchy into life.

This conceptual dynamic operates in the background of many Classical Tibetan genealogies and, indeed, biographical collections at large. The notion that such great deeds can never truly be squared, for one, is voiced explicitly in one of the genealogies of the Sa-skya houses. This work notes that the protagonists' »benevolence«, which included reviving Buddhism from a precipitous decline, »cannot [ever] be repaid«. The only option the author and the audience are left with, consequently, is to »join palms and reverently prostrate« to the house's scions.[90] The term translated here as »benevolence« (*bka'-drin*) already carries strong connotations of hierarchical asymmetry, as it is associated mainly with benign rulers, saintly figures and selfless parents. In the *Singular Volume*, for instance, this top-down benevolence describes the relation between the helpless »blind men of Tibet« and an accomplished missionary of the Rlangs, who opened their eyes by converting them to Buddhism.[91]

87 PSI, fols. 320.1-4, 196.4-5; PSII, fols. 197.5-198.2, 91.5-92.1; PSIII, 93.8-12, 45.19-20; PSIV, 117.15-19, 57.18-19.

88 Jackson, *Mollas*, 89.

89 Graeber, *Debt*, 112.

90 »… de-lta'i-bka'-drin-gzhal-du-ma-mchis-pa'i// sngags-'chang-bla-ma-kun-dga'-rin-chen-dang-// gang-de'i-thugs-sras-'jam-dbyangs-sku-mched-la// snying-nas-thal-sbyar-gus-pas-phyag-'tshal-lo//« (Ngag-dbang-kun-dga'-bsod-nams, *Sa-skya'i-gdung-rabs*, vol. 1, p. 38).

91 »bod-dmus-long-thams-cad-chos-la-btsud-nas-bka'-drin-che-bas/ bka'-drin-che-ba'i-grub-thob-dpal-gyi-seng-ge-de-yang-/ rlangs-kyi-grub-thob-chen-po-yin/«; PSI, fol. 185.5-186.1; PSII, fol. 82.1-2; PSIII, 41.1-3; PSIV, 51.18-52.1.

In depicting such deeds, therefore, the *Singular Volume* did not seek to inspire mere indebtedness – an unstable inequality after all – but rather to engender a sense of a deep-rooted social hierarchy.[92] In doing so, the biographical collection comes full circle. Prefacing the series of biographies, an oral address by the house's lineage ancestor directed at members of the greater clan had sketched out the descent group's social universe. With religious leaders occupying an eminent position, »the people of the kingdom« were firmly situated »below« the clan.[93] The life stories that follow this oratory both reaffirm and justify this vision of society. They establish the ideal of a political community in which the Phag-mo-gru-pa, heirs to the infinite store of grace that their Rlangs ancestors had bestowed upon the Tibetan Plateau, would forever enjoy pre-eminence. The work's biographical collection, in sum, naturalised reigning socio-political relations by recasting the ruling house's political dominance in a language of long-pedigreed moral relations.

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92 Here I follow the line of thought in Graeber, *Debt*, 109-110, 120-121.

93 »lar-nga-lha-rigs-'phan-po-che-rlangs-kyi-mi-brgyud-la/ gong-na-yod-pa-bla-ma-dkon-mchog bla-mchod-bdag-gi-'dren-pa-yin/ 'og-na-yod-pa-rgyal-khams-kyi-mi-yin/«; PSI, fol. 161.5-162.1; PSII, fol. 60.2-3; PSIII, 30.6-8; PSIV, 38.11-13.

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Abbreviated titles in footnotes

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PSIII = lHa-rigs-rlangs-kyi-skye-rgyud & Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru-che-dge-yig-tshang-dang-mi-rgyud-grol-thabs, in: Chab-spel-Tshe-brtan-phun-tshogs (ed.), *Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru-rgyas-pa* (Lhasa, 1986) 1-99.

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Reading Jerome's *De viris illustribus* in the Post-Roman World: Cataloguing Community in Gennadius of Marseille and Frechulf of Lisieux

Graeme Ward and Veronika Wieser*

Catalogues of the names and writings of religious authors and authorities were one of the most enduring forms of biographical collection in the Middle Ages, with rich and varied traditions surviving in both Christian and Islamic contexts. In the Christian world, Jerome's *De viris illustribus* (*On Illustrious Men*) was foundational. Written in 392/393, Jerome's catalogue of authorities was frequently read and used as a source of information for over a millennium; furthermore, its list of authors was variously expanded and continued. In this chapter, we focus on two moments in the long history of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*: the Late Roman Empire and the Carolingian world respectively. More specifically, we examine two particular instances of this reception: Gennadius of Marseille's late 5th-century continuation of Jerome's original list of ›illustrious men‹ provides the first case study; the Carolingian historian Frechulf of Lisieux, who was critical reader of Jerome's catalogue, is the subject of the second case study. In each of these case studies, we analyse – individually and then comparatively – the reworkings and reinterpretations of Jerome's bio-bibliographic compendium in order to gain to a better understanding of the thematic structure, the authorial choices and the genre-related methodological problems presented in the texts of Gennadius and Frechulf. We examine the tensions that are inherent to such continuations and reworkings, between the thematic foci and agenda introduced by different author-continuators and between groups represented within the texts and the specific authors and audiences writing and reading them.

Keywords: church history, hagiography, Christian history writing, manuscript studies, late Roman Empire, Carolingian empire, Jerome, Gennadius of Marseille, Frechulf of Lisieux

Introduction

In 313/314, Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, compiled a *Church History* which traced the origins of the development of early Christian communities in the Roman Empire from the times of Jesus Christ and the Apostles down to his own days. Eusebius set out in his prologue the main focal points of his history, putting particular emphasis on apostolic succession, significant ecclesiastical events and important Christian actors and authors, »who by preaching

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or writing were ambassadors of the divine word«[1]. Biography, apostolic genealogy and history all coalesce in Eusebius' scheme, in which the Christian past is seen through the lives of men, as individuals and within communities scattered across the Roman Empire, east and west. Eusebius gathered a huge amount of information, combining many different fragments into a compendium of early Christian history, whose influence upon later Christian writers cannot be understated. Some eighty years later, in 392/393, Jerome completed a much shorter, though no less influential, project of codifying four centuries' worth of Christian authors and authorities, narrating the Christian past and present through their literary works. His *De viris illustribus* (*On Illustrious Men*) became the most influential Christian biographical collection. It survives in a huge number of medieval manuscripts and was in effect a dictionary of Christian ›bio-bibliography‹, that is biography characterised by an individual's literary output.[2] Jerome collected together 135 (mainly) Christian authors, and through it he combined classical Greco-Latin biographical traditions with Christian apologetics.[3] Mark Vessey has described Jerome as »a connoisseur of Roman … traditions of author-portraits … and collective biography«, and his *De viris illustribus* as »the first ›multi-author‹ Christian bibliography ever produced«.[4] It looked back to the »serial encomiastic biography« of the ancient world: Jerome explicitly set his catalogue of authors in the tradition of classical biographical collections, name-checking a range of ancient authors, the first of whom was Suetonius, from whose own *De viris illustribus* (1st century CE) the title of Jerome's little book derives.[5] Although Jerome had no obvious Christian template to imitate, he did acknowledge one literary model: in compiling his *De viris illustribus*, he said, »Eusebius Pamphilus, in the ten books of his Church History, has been of the utmost assistance«.[6] This assistance is reflected not only in the contents but also in the structure of his work: an easily accessible list charting Christian preachers and teachers and the communities to which they were attached.

Jerome stated that his main purpose was »to do for our [i.e. Christian] writers what [Suetonius] did for the illustrious men of letters among the Gentiles«. This point was reiterated a few lines later, when Jerome noted that while Cicero had listed the famous Latin orators in his *Brutus*, he wanted to compile a similar collection for the ecclesiastical writers whose texts »founded, built and adorned the Church«.[7] Roman collective biography was concerned above all with the virtues and vices of its subjects; Jerome, on the other hand, laid

1 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, I. 1. 1, ed. Schwartz et al, 6-7; trans. Williamson, 1. See Johnson, Lists, Originality, and Christian Time; for a detailed study of the *Ecclesiastical History*, Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire*.

2 Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson; English translation by Halton and for a German translation with comprehensive commentary see Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed and trans. Barthold. See also Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. and trans. Ceresa-Gastaldo. We use Richardson's edition because it contains the texts of both Jerome and Gennadius. 173 complete manuscripts survive from up to the 15th century. This number jumps to 451 if manuscript fragments and excerpts are taken into account. For more information on the manuscript transmission, see Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, 429-457 and Feder, *Studien*. For a new edition of Gennadius with commentary, see Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Sottocorno.

3 For a broader analysis of Greek, Roman and Christian traditions of collective biography in the 4th century, see Cox Miller, Strategies of representation, 209-254.

4 Vessey, Reinventing History, 279; *idem*, Augustine amongst the Writers, 242.

5 Vessey, Augustine, 241-243.

6 Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, pref., ed. Richardson, 1; trans. Halton, 1.

7 Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, pref., ed. Richardson, 2; trans. Halton, 1-2.

particular emphasis on writing.[8] His distinctive vision of history put all known Christian writing in a common tradition that emerges from, and can be traced back to, the Bible. Jerome's main criterion for inclusion within his catalogue was that an individual had »published anything memorable on the Holy Scriptures from the time of Christ's passing down to the 14th year of the emperor Theodosius«, that is the year in which *De viris illustribus* was completed.[9] This substantial cohort began with those who wrote the various texts of the New Testament, extended through the Greek writers of the first three Christian centuries – the accounts of almost all of whom were culled and translated from Eusebius' *Church History* – reaching writers closer to Jerome's own time, up to and including Jerome himself.

The biographies range in length and detail, from the briefest of notices to more extensive entries (the longest of which, in Latin, is still under 500 words). Despite this variety, Vessey observed that the »catalogue entries follow a pattern: (1) author's name, (2) office or status (e.g. bishop, monk, layman) and other distinctions, (3) literary works«.[10] Jerome's presence is palpable throughout the work, not least in the final chapter, which he devoted to himself. He, at least in part, used the work as a vehicle to approve or disapprove of fellow theologians and to settle doctrinal conflicts, many of which he himself was involved in. The catalogue was thus a record of both orthodox and heterodox writers, as defined by Jerome, its compiler. As such, it functioned in late antiquity as »a reference work that Christian authors could consult to learn about authors whom others referenced in the course of Christian disputes«.[11] The source's particular form, furthermore, made it highly adaptable, and it spawned numerous continuations between late antiquity and the early modern period.

In this chapter, we are not concerned with Jerome's original intentions but rather with the reception of his *De viris illustribus*, both as a form of biographical collection to be emulated and as a textualised way of understanding Christian history. As desirable as it would be, a full investigation of the *Nachleben* of Jerome's catalogue is not possible within the confines of this article. Instead, we present two focused case studies, which not only represent two very different contexts within which Jerome's bio-bibliographical catalogue was read and developed but which also signal two very different approaches to the *De viris illustribus* tradition. Each case study, furthermore, reflects the research interests of the co-authors. In the first part, Veronika Wieser looks in detail at Gennadius of Marseille, who sometime in the later 5th century produced the very first (but by no means the last) continuation of Jerome's catalogue. Particular attention is paid not only to how Gennadius imitated and distinguished himself from Jerome but also to how his catalogue was shaped by the political and ecclesiastical transformations that occurred in southern Gaul at the end of the Western Roman Empire. In the second part of the chapter, which jumps from post-imperial Gaul to Carolingian Francia, Graeme Ward considers how Jerome's *De viris illustribus* could be expanded instead of continued. His focus is the Carolingian historian Frechulf of Lisieux, whose *Histories* (completed c. 829) reproduced Jerome's *De viris illustribus* almost in its entirety. Frechulf also repackaged its distinctive form as historical narrative in a way that betrays his 9th-century perspective as much as Gennadius' continuation reflects his 5th-century vantage point.

8 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 223.

9 Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, pref., ed. Richardson, 1: *omnes qui de Scripturis Sanctis memoriae aliquid prodiderunt*; trans. Halton, 1.

10 Vessey, Introduction, 17.

11 Whiting, Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, 46.

Our approach, to be sure, leaves conspicuous gaps, not least with regard to the creative uses of the bio-bibliographic model in 7th-century Visigothic Iberia, first by Isidore of Seville and then by Ildefonsus of Toledo.[12] By looking, however, at two very different moments in the broader reception history of Jerome's genre-defining source, we not only seek to embrace the collaborative spirit of this special issue but also to offer two complementary snapshots of the vitality and adaptability of a text that would remain an enduring presence in the Latin West. Some broader observations, which stem from our respective case studies, are set out in the chapter's conclusion.

Constructing a Mediterranean Church Community: Reading Gennadius' Continuation of Jerome's De Viris Illustribus

Sometime in the last decades of the 5th century, Gennadius, a priest (*presbyter*) in Marseille, decided to continue Jerome's collection of Christian authors into his own days.[13] To that end, he added 101 new chapters to the work, focusing on the writers of the Catholic Church, the doctrinal disputes they were involved in and the development of the Church in general, but with particular emphasis on ascetic communities in Gaul.[14] He used church councils and the reigns, successions and deaths of Roman Emperors (e.g. cc. 1, 20, 21, 49, 61, 62, 63) as his chronological framework. Following in Jerome's authoritative footsteps, Gennadius' collection can be read as a guidebook to the diverse religious landscape of late antiquity that had taken shape after Jerome. The flourishing of ascetic and monastic practices in the 5th century had not only created new forms of spiritual life but also entailed theological controversies and ecclesiastical rivalries; debates about the nature of grace and original sin, and about the Trinity and Christology (i.e. Pelagianism, Arianism and Nestorianism) were widespread, but were especially heated in southern Gaul. Thus, Gennadius provided contemporary readers with instructions to find their way through a world of competing theological doctrines and interpretations and of sprouting monastic communities.

12 The Iberian material is well studied: see Wood, Playing the Fame Game.

13 The dating of the collection's composition cannot be determined conclusively and several dates have been suggested. Because this discussion sheds light on the compilation process and other unresolved questions, a short overview is provided here: the work might have been written at any time between the early 470s, or even the late 460s, and the 490s before Gennadius' death, cf. Vessey, Peregrinus against the heretics, 533 (before 470); Schürer, Teil I: Darstellung, 132 with n. 31 (for 475); McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 223 (for 480) and Wood, Playing the Fame Game, 613-640 (for the 490s). The process of compiling the collection was a gradual one, although is not entirely clear whether Gennadius composed the collection in one go, revising it at a later date and including additional chapters, or collected the entries over a longer period of time, which would place the date of the composition within a wider time frame. The latter seems to be more plausible, rendering all three mentioned dating possibilities relevant, with the 480s being Gennadius most productive time (Larue, Gennadius von Massilia, 464; Czapla, *Gennadius als Litterarhistoriker*, 207-209). Eugenius, bishop of Carthage, died in 505, and his death therefore serves as a *terminus ante quem* (c. 97). Moreover, there is information about Cerealis (c. 96), who appears as bishop of Mauretania Caesariensis on an episcopal list of 484 (Whelan, *Being Christian*, 75, with n. 104), and Julianus Pomerius (c. 98), who was still alive when Gennadius was writing his catalogue and died c. 505. Timotheus' return from exile in 475 is also reported (c. 73). In the collection's last entry about Gennadius himself, a letter which he sent to Gelasius, the then bishop of Rome between 492 and 496, is mentioned (Salisbury, Gelasius, 399).

14 The chapter numbers vary in the manuscript tradition, however, due to the different strands of transmission. For a more detailed discussion of the manuscript tradition, see Pietri, Gennadius von Marseille, 376-78; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 201 with n. 98; Bernoulli, Textkritische Untersuchung, XVI-XXVIII. The chapter numeration in this article follows Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson and Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson.

Whereas we have a lot of information about Jerome at our disposal, either from himself or from his contemporaries, we know very little about Gennadius.[15] The only contemporary information about him and his works is contained in the last entry to the continuation. Formulated in the first person, it echoes the layout of Jerome's last entry, highlighting the literary merits of the catalogue's composer. Therein five major works and one letter, which mainly deal with different heresies and topics of eschatology, were attributed to Gennadius, either by himself or, shortly after his death, by someone who knew him and his works very well:[16]

> I, Gennadius, priest of Marseille, wrote eight books against all heresies, and six books against Nestorius, and ten books against Eutyches, and three books against Pelagius, and a tractate on one thousand years, ›On the Apocalypse of the blessed John‹; and I have sent this work, and a letter ›On My Faith‹, to the Blessed Gelasius, bishop of the City of Rome.[17]

Almost all of Gennadius' above-listed works seem to have been lost, although some fragmentary material may have survived in different medieval collections as well as the treatise *De dogmatibus ecclesiasticis*, which had been attributed to Augustine originally.[18] Taken together with the slight reservations around the authenticity of the collection's last entries, including Gennadius' own, the available information about the compiler and his ecclesiastical background in Marseille remains shadowy. While, from the knowledge displayed in the catalogue, we can safely assume that Gennadius was well connected to the ascetic circles at Marseille and in southern Gaul, no affiliation to a specific local church or monastery can be deduced conclusively for the *»presbyter«*.[19] Therefore, it is difficult to access the author's motives and background as well as the context of the catalogue directly. Nevertheless, we do have circumstantial evidence about the world in which Gennadius was writing, and we are also able to assess the author's place in the religious landscape through his selection and comments on Christian authors and their beliefs.

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15 For example, see the short entries in Ferguson, Gennadius, 366, and Frank, Gennadius von Marseille, 1234.

16 For a discussion about the authorship of the last chapters, 94-99, see Vessey, Peregrinus against the heretics, 535; Schanz, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, vol. 4/2, 553; Feder, *Zusätze des gennadianischen Schriftstellerkatalog*, 381-83. On recent manuscript findings, see Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*, 309 with n. 5.

17 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 101, ed. Richardson, 97 (All translations from Gennadius' text are taken from Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, trans. Richardson).

18 Vessey, Peregrinus against the heretics, 535 with n. 13 and 14; McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 173. For a more detailed discussion of the treatise, which was originally attributed to Augustine, see Morin, Le *Liber dogmatum* and Sottocorno, *De dogmatibus ecclesiasticis*.

19 A long-held supposition, which is first encountered in the catalogue (c. 62; ed. Richardson, 82), is that Cassian, an Egyptian monk, founded two monasteries in Marseille, one for men and one for women, sometime in the 420s. It is often assumed that Gennadius was closely linked to them. However, as Goodrich has shown, the existence of these two monasteries is uncertain and therefore Gennadius' monastic background is questionable; Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, 211-214, 226-230. It seems more likely that Gennadius was affiliated with the community at the shrine of Saint Victor, although knowledge about the beginnings of this church is also sparse. For more information, see Lebecq, The role of the monasteries, 125 with n. 10; Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*, 308 with n. 8. On Marseille's significance as a Christian centre, see Loseby, Marseille, 165-185.

The 5th-Century Political Context of the Western Roman Empire and Gaul

In the approximately hundred years between Jerome's and Gennadius' biographical collections, the political landscape of the Western Roman Empire had undergone a series of changes, set in motion by civil wars and military conflicts.[20] In Gaul, Spain and North Africa, in the aftermath of the barbarian invasions of 406/407 and 409/410, new political orders were established. The settlements and kingdoms of the Visigoths in Aquitaine, the Sueves and Alans in Galicia, and the Vandals in North Africa gradually increased in power, while imperial authority diminished in these territories.[21] These developments were commented on in literary works, causing contemporary authors to engage with questions about God's agency in the world and the role of barbarian peoples. When in 439 the Vandal king Geiseric sacked Carthage, Salvian, an exile and refugee in Marseille, started working on his much-read *De gubernatione Dei* (*On the Government of God*).[22] Writing for clergy, monks and pious lay people, his work provided a gloomy commentary on recent political developments and expressed both hopes and fears for the future of the Empire and for the Roman community in particular.[23] Salvian was featured in Gennadius' catalogue (c. 68), which described him to be still living and »at good old age«.[24] Gennadius praised the clarity of his theological treatises and his books about religious virtues and the *ecclesia*.[25] Salvian's reflections on the imminence of God's judgment and punishment for human sins, as presented in the *De gubernatione Dei* (given as *De praesenti iudicio/On Judgement in the Here and Now* in the catalogue), may have concerned a topic of interest shared by Gennadius. He himself addressed questions of salvation and the End Times in two treatises on the *Revelation* and on the one-thousand-year kingdom, thereby engaging with the biblical-prophetic meaning of the political developments.

20 For an overview of the political transformations, see Collins, The western kingdoms, 31-59. For a discussion about the perceptions of these profound changes in modern scholarship, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*; Pohl, Christian and Barbarian Identities, 1-46.

21 On the establishment of the Visigothic settlements, see Mathisen and Sivan, Forging a New Identity, 1-62; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 200-234. On the rise of barbarian kingdoms in Spain, see Kulikoswki, The Suevi in Gallaecia, 131-145, as well as fn. 26-27. On the Vandals, see Steinacher, *Die Vandalen.*

22 Brown, Salvian of Marseille.

23 See Elm, New Romans, 1-28.

24 Besides Salvian, the contemporary theologians mentioned by Gennadius are Iulianus Pomerius (d. 500), who composed a spiritual guide, the *Vita contemplativa*, for clerics and pious lay people, and John, a »grammarian« and presbyter. Additional information about his conflict with Cyril of Alexandria suggests that this John was probably the patriarch of Antioch of that name who served from 429 to 441. This information is problematic, however, insofar as John could then hardly have been »said to be still living and preaching« (c. 93) in Gennadius' time. Maybe a different John is being referred to here, and the information about the theological conflict is a later mix-up by someone who was not familiar with the original context.

25 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 68, ed. Richardson, 84-85. In this entry, his major work *De gubernatione Dei* is entitled five books *De praesenti iudicio* (On the present Judgment); see Brown, Salvian of Marseille.

Between Salvian's composition of *De gubernatione Dei* and Gennadius' enterprise, the political landscape in Gaul had once again been transformed, particularly in the decades between the 460s and 470s with the defeat of the Roman armies and the breakdown of imperial rule in the Western Roman Empire, the increase of Visigothic dominion and, in the 480s, the rise of the new power of the Franks in northern Gaul.[26] In the 470s, in the wake of Visigothic expansion in Gaul, Gennadius' hometown of Marseille fell under the control of King Euric (*reg.* 466/467-484), and remained a part of the Visigothic kingdom until 507.[27]

It is against this background that Gennadius started working on his catalogue. Of course, the catalogue of accomplished Christian authors was not intended to be a source of information on the political changes that had taken place, and there are, indeed, no explicit details provided concerning the shift from Roman to Visigothic rule in southern Gaul. It was nevertheless entangled in the political transitions and theological controversies happening at the author's doorstep, and we do find echoes of contemporary political developments. In the first chapter on James the Wise, we learn in passing about the fighting between Roman and Sasanian armies and the subsequent surrender of Nisibis (modern Nusaybin in Turkey) under Emperor Jovian in 363,[28] and in chapter 85 we are told of the sack of Rome in 455 via details embedded into the account of the chronicler Prosper of Aquitaine:

> Prosper of Aquitaine, a man scholastic in style and vigorous in statement, is said to have composed many works, of which I have read a *Chronicle*, which bears his name, and which extends from the creation of the first man, according to Divine Scripture, until the death of the Emperor Valentinianus and the taking of Rome by Geiseric king of the Vandals.[29]

Throughout the catalogue, there is intermittent mention of the active involvement of bishops and priests in ecclesiastical controversies and of their connections to the imperial court as preachers or advisors (cc. 21, 97), as experts or intermediaries in religious debates, as participants at church councils (cc. 16, 73) or simply as outspoken opponents. We can observe that imperial history becomes relevant primarily when it provides the background and cause for an author's literary engagement. In particular, this concerns the resistance of holy men to the ›pro-Arian‹ preference of barbarian rulers, with ›Arianism‹ being one of the main contemporary theological controversies, which divided Christian communities for more than 200 years until the 6th century.[30] Three entries deal with North African Catho-

26 On the developments in Gaul in the 470s and 480s, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 257-278, and Staderman, uno fumavit Gallia tota rogo. Concerning the political developments after 508, see Mathisen, Clovis, Anastasius, and political status, 79-110.

27 The Visiogothic kingdom of Toulouse controlled the regions in south-western Gaul from 418 to 507. The years between 473 and 484, in particular, saw the expansion of their rule in this area and in the Tarraconensis. In 473, the *civitates* of Arles and Marseille were conquered by Euric, who probably held the latter city until the peace treaty with Emperor Julius Nepos in 475 and took it back a year later after Nepos' deposition; Wolfram, History of the Goths, 172-246, esp. 184-188; Gillett, The Accession of Euric.

28 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 1, ed. Richardson, 61-62.

29 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 85, ed. Richardson, 87.

30 Arianism refers to a fierce controversy that polarised the Christian community for almost two centuries. It broke out in the late 310s over the teachings of Arius, a priest in Alexandria, about the substance of the Trinity, especially of Christ as Son of God, and culminated at the Council of Constantinople (381); Heil, The Homoians; Smith, The Trinity, 109-122. On the connection between Arian creed and barbarian rulers, see Steinacher, *Die Vandalen*, 109-118 and the contributions in Berndt and Steinacher (eds.), *Arianism.*

lic bishops (cc. 78, 95, 97) and their opposition to the Vandal court, specifically to King Geiseric (*reg.* 428-477) and his successor, Huneric (*reg.* 477-484).[31] There are several more entries to the catalogue that refer to this theological debate, and they were included because of the relevant author's anti-Arian attitude, which Gennadius shared (cc. 1, 14, 16, 79, 86, 98). While his attacks on representatives of the Arian creed are a prominent narrative strand throughout the catalogue, only some Vandal and no Visigothic kings are explicitly mentioned therein. We nonetheless have to keep in mind that King Euric's rise to power in the regions of southern Gaul and the influence of the Visigothic court at Toulouse form a background layer to Gennadius' catalogue. Euric, as many other rulers, used new appointments to episcopal sees to create his own ecclesiastical network of loyal supporters in order to bolster his political standing and to diminish the influence of non-cooperative ecclesiastical elites, a development all the more significant when the new ruler followed a different creed.[32] Although it may be pushing the evidence beyond its limits to consider the catalogue's composition as an act of resistance against Euric and his court, Gennadius' emphasis on the importance of orthodox belief can be seen, to some extent, in the light of this new situation. Reminding his audience, fellow bishops and priests of the necessity to adhere to the Nicene faith was not only a matter of theology but also of strengthening the local orthodox community. In the catalogue, Gennadius stressed this point by praising the works of orthodox Gallic writers, such as Vincent of Lérins' collection of heresies and ecclesiastical disputes (c. 65) and Faustus' book *Against the Arians and Macedonians* and his letter to Graecus (c. 86). He criticised those who, in his opinion, divided the community: they had »left the Catholic faith, [and] had gone over to the Nestorian impiety«, just as the abovementioned Graecus, bishop of Marseille (c. 460-475), had.[33]

In pointing out orthodox and heretical authors, Gennadius aimed to provide his audience with guidance on how to navigate contemporary ecclesiastical conflicts against the background of a new political situation. His catalogue was therefore far from being only a tool for preserving knowledge. The snippets of information about political developments and ecclesiastical debates, such as on Arianism, formed the backdrop to the literary accomplish-

31 These entries are about Victor, bishop of Cartenna, and Honoratus, bishop of Constantina in Africa (c. 96). For a broader discussion of exiled bishops, Catholic resistance and the political attitude of Vandal rulers towards religion, see Whelan, *Being Christian*, 85-138, 143-164, and Steinacher, *Die Vandalen*, 109-118, 246-258.

32 On Euric's establishment of local power bases, see Lee, *From Rome to Byzantium*, 184-188, Fernández, Persuading the Powerful. Euric's attitude towards Catholic bishops is a complex topic. Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*, 322, points out that it seems likely that Euric acted harshly towards Nicene bishops and tried to prevent the election of Catholic bishops mainly for religious reasons. The exile between c. 477-485 of Faustus, bishop of Riez from 460/462 on, for instance, is often attributed directly to Euric's policy, although this is difficult to substantiate. We know that he returned to his bishopric shortly after Euric's death in 484; see Müller, Freundschaften, and also Mathisen, Barbarian ›Arian‹ Clergy, and Heil, The Homoians. Although we cannot rule out this aspect conclusively, Euric's involvement in disputes with bishops, leaving some sees vacant, does not in any case necessarily imply a deliberate church policy. Wolfram *The History of the Goths*, 200, explains that Euric tried to achieve a »shutdown of the ecclesiastical institutions, but he did so without proselytizing« and that he stopped his initially anti-Catholic policy after his conquests had been officially accepted by the Roman Empire. A similar example of an emperor's involvement in theological debates and ecclesiastical matters can be found in Magnus Maximus' participation in the Priscillian controversy; see Wood and Natal, Playing with fire and n. 65 below.

33 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 86, ed. Richardson, 84-85. In this chapter, Gennadius referred to a theological controversy between Faustus of Riez and Graecus, bishop of Marseille, who was accused of misinterpreting Augustine (Mathisen, Introduction, 1-50). Interestingly, in the entry Graecus is only addressed as a »certain deacon« not as a bishop, probably to degrade his position.

ments of Christian writers and created another, dynamic narrative layer linking together authors, fellow-theologians, bishops and rulers. Such treatises, written from the viewpoint of a follower of the Nicene creed, had a strong interest in presenting their opponents in a less favourable light, brandishing them as ›heretics‹. While the catalogue's contemporary audience would have been well aware of present debates and conflicts, especially of those taking place in southern Gaul, some of Gennadius' references might not have been apparent or meaningful to readers consulting the text centuries later. Thus, his depiction of orthodox and heretical writers would become less verifiable but at the same time authoritative. It is therefore important to be aware of the contemporary background of political change and fierce theological controversies when examining Gennadius' approach to continuing and re-contextualising Jerome's collection in his own day.[34]

Gennadius as an Author

Gennadius' aim was to continue, update and complement Jerome's work. He tried to fill in gaps and offer explanations for missing information or for the absence of entries concerning teachers who were important to him. But first, writing about Christian authorities, he also had to establish himself as an authority, as someone who was qualified to collect these biographies and to continue Jerome's work. To examine Gennadius' approach and methods more closely, the first entry of the continuation, on James, bishop of Nisibis in the first half of the 4th century, is a good example. The bishop, whose oeuvre comprised 26 books, was characterised as an opponent of Arianism and a key figure in the Nicene controversy but had not been included in Jerome's catalogue. According to Gennadius, the only reasonable explanation for his omission was a language barrier rather than a matter of the bishop's worthiness. The fact that, as Gennadius stated, Jerome's information on Syrian bishops had been drawn from Greek translations, suggested that he – unlike Gennadius himself, it seems – could not read Syriac:

> That the blessed Jerome mentions this man in his Chronicle as a man of great virtues and yet does not place him in his catalogue of writers, will be easily explained if we note that of the three or four Syrians whom he mentions he says that he read them translated into the Greek. From this it is evident that, at that period, he did not know the Syriac language or literature and therefore he did not know a writer who had not yet been translated into another language.[35]

34 For more information on rulership, religious controversies and ecclesiastical competition in Gennadius' local context, see Eisenberg, *Building Little Romes*.

35 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 1, ed. Richardson, 61-62. In chapter 73 (ibid., 86), Gennadius also hints at his excellent language skills, stating that he was able to translate a theological work written by Timotheus, bishop of Alexandria, from Greek into Latin. However, it is very likely that Gennadius cast his own linguistic abilities, at least his skills in Syriac, in a more favourable light than his choice of sources to include would allow. The text of James the Wise might simply have been translated at a later date into Latin or Greek. Also, in the entry on Macarius (c. 10; ibid., 64-65), Gennadius mentions only one letter written by the author. This is surprising because Macarius was a renowned writer of numerous homilies and more than ten letters have been preserved. Indeed, the letter Gennadius mentions had been translated into Latin, whereas the majority of Macarius' others works were written in Syriac or Greek. This would encourage a different perception of Gennadius' skills as a translator than that which he wished to impress upon his readers (Marriott, Gennadius of Marseilles on Macarius of Egypt, 347-349).

Actively reflecting on his predecessor's choices and sometimes even adjusting them to the focus of his own compilation was an important part of Gennadius' work.

In his additions to Jerome's catalogue, which focus on bishops and teachers of the Church, Gennadius augmented the scope of *De viris illustribus* by emphasising Christian ascetic and monastic practices.[36] This meant going back chronologically to the second half of the 4th century, earlier than the 392 end date of Jerome's catalogue. In the first chapters of Gennadius' continuation, the Desert Fathers of Egypt, the heartland of monastic asceticism at the time, play a prominent role. Pachomius, monk and abbot of Tabennisi (d. 348), who is considered one of the founding fathers of the Egyptian monastic tradition,[37] his successor at the monastery, a fellow monk as well as two other Egyptian ascetics, Macarius and Evagrius, are portrayed.[38] In comparison to Pachomius' literary achievements, which include treatises on monastic life, a monastic rule and several educational letters, the works of the other monks affiliated to his monastic foundation were less notable. They seem to have only written letters to other monasteries and works of which Gennadius did not know the titles (cc. 8-9). Jerome's catalogue does not mention Pachomius and his literary achievements because he was probably not yet aware of them, his translation of the latter's rule not being completed until some twenty years later, c. 404. The works of the other monks affiliated to Pachomius' monastic foundation were also excluded from the catalogue, either because he did not know of them or they were simply less notable.[39] Gennadius, on the other hand, had a keen interest in the proponents of monastic life, being influenced by the context in which he was living, working and writing, and especially by the Egyptian monastic practices that had been emulated in southern Gaul.[40]

Starting with the ascetic foundations that sprang up in the second half of the 4th century in Aquitaine, southern Gaul had become a hotspot of asceticism in the West by the turn of the century.[41] Inspired by the coenobitic life of monks and nuns in Egypt and Palestine, the Gallic communities adopted and re-interpreted their ideas in Lérins, Marmoutiers, Primuliacum and Marseille, developments that are reflected in Gennadius' catalogue.[42] At Marseille, in particular, Cassian's visions of a poor and strict monastic life modelled on the first apostolic communities circulated. In the catalogue (c. 62), Gennadius provides a lengthy account of

36 Jerome included only one account on a monk, Anthony (c. 88; ed. Richardson, 45); his other entries deal with bishops and theologians. See Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus* for a more detailed analysis of the writers' geographical origins.

37 On the first monastic communities in Egypt see Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*.

38 The chapters treat Pachomius (c. 7), Theodorus (c. 8), Oresiesis (c. 9), Macarius (c. 10) and Evagrius (c. 11).

39 Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, 97-101.

40 In the following centuries, Gennadius' entries about Pachomius, his treatises on monastic life, his rules and his calculation of the date of Easter became particularly important for the medieval Carolingian reception and for the transmission of information on ascetic life and monastic communities in the Eastern parts of the Roman Empire to the Latin West in general (Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, 118).

41 On the role of Egyptian monks, the transmission of ascetic ideas into the Western parts of the Roman Empire and the first monastic communities, see Dunn, Western monasticisim; Salzman, *Making of a Christian Aristocracy*, 88-90. On the ascetic movement in Gaul, see Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 57-114. On the trend among Gallic aristocrats in the last quarter of the 4th century to convert and found ascetic communities, see Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, and Diefenbach, "Bischofsherrschaft".

42 On these first monastic communities see Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 411-432, 433-453; Elm, Ascetics and Monastics, 309-315; Alciati, And the Villa Became a Monastery; Helvétius, Les premières îles monastiques, and the contributions in Codou and Lauwers (eds.), *Lérins*.

the monk Cassian, who, after spending many years at the Egyptian monasteries of Nitria, Kellia and Scetis, came to southern Gaul sometime in the 420s. In Marseille, at the request of the city's bishop, Proclus, Cassian allegedly founded two monasteries, one for men and the other for women.[43] His two seminal works, *Concerning the Institutes of the Coenobites and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Vices* (short: *Institutes*) and the *Conferences of the Fathers*, elaborate on the spiritual teachings of the Desert Fathers and aim to provide monastic rules less difficult and more readily applicable than that of Pachomius.[44] Cassian's works and influence resound strongly in Gennadius' catalogue. He mentions fellow ascetics, friends (c. 70) and critics (c. 85), and shows that Cassian's ideas, in particular his anti-Nestorian writings, were still influential decades later (c. 86).[45] These entries also highlight the connections between the monastic communities of Marseille and Lérins, including Eucherius (c. 64), monk of Lérins and later bishop of Lyons (c. 435-450), who was the dedicatee of Cassian's *Collationes patrum*, and Salvian (c. 68), who was connected to both centres.[46] Gennadius also incorporated proponents of early asceticism in Gaul who were associated with the first ascetic hotspots, such as those initiated by Paulinus of Nola (c. 49), Sulpicius Severus (c. 19) and Hilary of Arles (c. 70), that were established around the turn of the 5th century.[47]

Apparently, it was very important to Gennadius to inscribe Cassian onto the Marseille community, thereby claiming his theological legacy and buttressing a monastic tradition in Gaul with him as a central player. Cassian served as an important intermediary to connect the local monastic context of Marseille and southern Gaul, represented mainly by the circle of Lérins, with the earlier, authoritative Eastern monastic traditions depicted in the accounts of Pachomius and his monks. Furthermore, hagiographers like Hilary of Arles with his *Life of*

43 Gennadius' entry on Cassian not only highlighted his achievements, his involvement in doctrinal debates and his participation within the ascetic networks of southern Gaul but also obscured them. The information on Cassian's Scythian origin (»*... natione Scytha*«) is rather peculiar yet persistent. His affiliation with the church in Marseille (»*apud Massiliam presbyter*«) is unclear, and his above-mentioned foundation of two monasteries and their continuance have become less certain (see n. 19). This leaves us wondering why Gennadius did not provide better, clearer information on Cassian, if the latter had indeed been such an integral part of the Marseille community. It also points to a characteristic challenge faced in using the catalogue, namely the difficulty in verifying some of the information provided there and the need for additional information with regard to some entries. As the snippet about Cassian's alleged Scythian origin and about his foundation of two monasteries shows, later users would treat the catalogue as an objective and reliable source of information, although this might not be the case for all entries. For a critical discussion of Gennadius' entry, see Goodrich, Contextualizing Cassian, 211-214, 226-230. Seiler argues that Gennadius' work is very much focused on Cassian; Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*. On Cassian's biography and his experiences of Egyptian monastic communities in general, see Goodrich, John Cassian.

44 Cassian's works aimed to demonstrate to Gallic monks how to lead an authentic ascetic life and included discrete criticism of the existing local communities; see Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, 8-32, 97-101.

45 In this letter to Graecus (c. 86), Faustus used Cassian's arguments against Nestorius; see Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*, 315.

46 Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*.

47 See Leyser, This Sainted Isle, 188-206; Diefenbach, »Bischofsherrschaft«, and Bully and Destefanis, The Archaeology of the Earliest Monasteries. Paulinus was born in Bordeaux and his family possessed vast estates and fortunes in Aquitaine. After the foundation of his monastery in Cimitile/Nola and as bishop of the town, he had close ties to fellow-ascetics in Gaul and became an ascetic role model for likeminded members of the Roman upper class. In his letter exchange between 395-407 and 422-425, Paulinus documented the flourishing of asceticism in Gaul (with Sulpicius Severus, Aper and his wife Amanda, Bishop Delphinus of Bordeaux and his successor Amandus, Bishop Florentius of Cahors and his brother Alethius, Sebastianus, a hermit in Aquitaine, Eucherius and his wife Galla, who settled into an ascetic life at the island Lero, close to Lérins); see Mratschek, *Der Briefwechse*l, esp. 19-48 on Gaul.

Honoratus (c. 70) and Sulpicius Severus with the *Vita sancti Martini* and *Dialogi* (c. 19) provided the narrative models for leading an ascetic, holy life. Teachers of the Church (*doctores*) like Cassian, translators like Rufinus, who had also been a monk at the Egyptian monastery of Nitria, and Gennadius himself can be seen as conduits for transferring knowledge between the Greek literature and the Latin audience.[48]

Comparing the catalogues of Gennadius and Jerome, it seems that the former's entries contain, on the whole, less biographical and context-related information than the latter's. Gennadius, for instance, portrays Macarius simply as »another monk« in chapter 2 and speaks of »another John«, bishop of Jerusalem, in chapter 31.[49] The shortage of information in some of Gennadius' entries sometimes makes it difficult to even clearly discern the person in question, thus making use of the catalogue difficult. What Jerome and Gennadius have in common, however, is their interpretation of biographical and bibliographical information as a means to criticise theologians and scholars of whom they did not approve. Helvidius (c. 33), for instance, against whom Jerome had written a treatise, is described by Gennadius as a mediocre writer, who wrote a book »with zeal for religion but not according to knowledge … polished neither in language nor in reasoning«.[50] While Gennadius seems to have endorsed Jerome's assessment of Helvidius, he did not share Jerome's opinion of Rufinus and in his entry particularly praises the works translated by the latter (c. 17). Gennadius referred to the conflict between the two and even criticised Jerome, although without mentioning him by name (he simply referred to him as a »detractor«):[51]

> Moreover he [Rufinus] responded to a detractor of his works, in two volumes, arguing and proving that he exercised his talent with the aid of the Lord and in the sight of God, for the good of the church, while he, on the other hand, incited by jealousy had taken to polemics.

There are more entries where Gennadius' role not only as compiler but also as commentator and corrector becomes evident, especially where he adds information about his own reading experiences: »I have only read one of [Bachiarius' books]«[52] or »I have read also three books *On faith*, which bear his [Theophilus of Alexandria's] name but, as their language is not like his, I do not very much think they are by him«.[53] Such comments, which appear sporadically throughout the catalogue, serve to bolster Gennadius' credibility as compiler and author, and authenticate the works he quotes. Moreover, they create a personal perspective connecting compiler, the authors mentioned and their works.

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48 In chapter 17, Gennadius praises Rufinus for opening »to the Latin speaking church the greater part of the Greek literature«.

49 On the lack of information about Macarius, see n. 35.

50 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 33, ed. Richardson, 73.

51 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 17, ed. Richardson, 67-68. On the well-known conflict between Rufinus and Jerome, which revolved around the debate concerning Origenism and heresy accusations in general but was incited by different elite networks and scholarly ambitions, see Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society*, 433-445.

52 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 24, ed. Richardson, 71.

53 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 34, ed. Richardson, 73-74.

Much of what Gennadius included was not only selected and modified according to his authorial choices but also depended on the sources of information at his disposal. Despite the political changes of the 5th century, Marseille, as a port city, had maintained many of its connections with the eastern part of the Empire, and Gennadius could have obtained his information from travellers, pilgrims or messengers.[54] In addition, he most likely had access to the stories and knowledge contained in private libraries and local monasteries, probably including Cassian's books and letter collection.[55] Also, exiled bishops and theologians, who play an important role in the catalogue, would have carried letters and works from other authors, thereby connecting the different regions around the Mediterranean Sea with each other. This can be seen especially in the last entries to the catalogue, which feature Nicene North African bishops that had come to southern Gaul, such as Eugenius, bishop of Carthage (c. 97), who was exiled to Albi, or Julianus Pomerius (c. 98).[56]

From the end of the 4th century on, however, Gennadius on occasion seems not to have been very well informed about some regional communities in Gaul. He made for instance Faustus, the later bishop of Riez and his contemporary, first abbot of the monastery of Lérins, omitting Maximus and its founding members Honoratus, Eucherius and Galla.[57] Also, the personal information provided in his entry on Sulpicius Severus (c. 19) reveals some (minor) gaps in his knowledge:[58]

> He wrote to his sister many *Letters* exhorting to love of God and contempt of the world. These are well known. He wrote two to the above mentioned Paulinus Nolanus and others to others, but because, in some, family matters are included, they have not been collected for publication. […] In his old age, he was led astray by the Pelagians, and recognising the guilt of much speaking, kept silent until his death, in order that by penitent silence he might atone for the sin which he had contracted by speaking.

Sulpicius Severus had written many more letters to his friend Bishop Paulinus of Nola than the two mentioned,[59] and the sister referred to was most likely his mother-in-law, Bassula, called his »sister-in-Christ« in their letters.[60] While this information might not seem all that important, Gennadius' accusation that the »*presbyter*« Sulpicius embraced Pelagian ideas is potentially more significant but cannot be verified conclusively.[61] We have to treat this snippet of information with caution, as Gennadius' entry is the only extant source to contain it.[62] What we do know is that we lose trace of Sulpicius sometime after the invasions of 406/407, when

54 Loseby, Marseille.

55 Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*, 310.

56 On exiled bishops, see Whelan, *Being Christian*, 143-164. On the transmission of saints' cults between Africa, Gaul, Spain and Italy, see Conant, Cult of Saints.

57 Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 411.

58 Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, c. 19, ed. Richardson, 69.

59 None of Sulpicius Severus' letters to Paulinus, which were written on a regular, annual basis, have survived. However, we are fortunate to have thirteen of Paulinus' replies in his letter collection, numbered 1, 5, 11, 17, 22, 23, 24, 27-32. For more information, see Skeb, Einleitung, esp. 74-80; Mratschek, Der Briefwechsel, 19-48, 80-81, 106, 457-63.

60 For more information on Bassula, see Wieser, »Like a Safe Tower«.

61 See the short discussion in Glover, Sulpicius Severus and Gennadius.

62 See Stancliffe, *St. Martin and his Hagiographer*, 16 with n. 5, on the information presented by Gennadius.

his regular letter exchange with Paulinus of Nola broke off.[63] Thus, Sulpicius' date of death, sometimes alleged to have been between 420 and 425, cannot be determined with precision, and neither can his involvement in the Pelagian controversy be attested, although he would have shared central points of Pelagius' teachings on poverty, original sin, free will and the grace of God. Sulpicius' conversion to asceticism and his disposal of his wealth and possessions were done in the belief that it would facilitate his own salvation.[64] In this respect there might be a connection with Pelagius' teachings, which spread quickly in the western half of the Roman Empire, but Gennadius' entry may also be the result of confusion with the controversy of Priscillian, in which Martin of Tours and Sulpicius were involved and which reverberated among Gaul's ecclesiastical elites long after Priscillian's execution in 385/387.[65] While this entry might not tell us much about Sulpicius' actual fate, it sheds light on the religious debates in Gaul.[66] The debate on Pelagius and his teachings, which were centred on the fundamental questions of original sin and on the efficacy of good deeds for attaining salvation, especially gained momentum in the 420s and 430s. Cassian and his supporters tried to find a more moderate position after Jerome's and particularly Augustine's rebuttal of Pelagius, but they were soon labelled as Pelagians themselves.[67] The ensuing controversy was long-lasting. Many decades later, Gennadius' compendium still contained reflections of this debate, which involved not only theological positions but also questions of ecclesiastical authority and rivalry, notably between Cassian and Augustine's supporters.[68] Gennadius tried to navigate between

63 When Paulinus of Nola renewed his letter exchange with friends in Gaul, he did not write again to Sulpicius. The latter might therefore have already been dead at that point, or he might have retreated to a more secure monastery, such as Marmoutier or even Marseille, to escape the »rising tide of violence«, see Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 420; see also Stancliffe, *St. Martin and his Hagiographer*, 15.

64 Wieser, Reading the Past into the Present. Sulpicius could have heard of Pelagius' teachings via Paulinus of Nola, who was in touch with Pelagius in Italy.

65 On Martin's involvement and Sulpicius' narrative, see Wieser, Reading the Past; on the trial, see Liebs, *Summoned to the Roman Courts*, and Reimitz and Esders, After Gundovald, before Pseudo-Isidore; on the accusations of hereticism, see Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic.*

66 Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*. Vincent of Lérin's *Commonitorium*, a guidebook to heretical positions composed sometime after the turn of the 5th century, gives a good overview of the fragmented religious landscape; Vincenz von Lérins, *Commonitorium*, ed. Fiedrowicz, trans. Barthold. The councils of Turin (after 397), Riez (439), Orange (441) and Vaison (442) dealt with reprimanding and punishing clerics who had acted too autonomously and with their integration into the church community; see Van Dam, Leadership and Community; Hillner, Confined Exiles.

67 Pelagius' teachings were well received in aristocratic-ascetic circles in Italy but were met with fierce criticism and opposition from Augustine; see Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 308-21; *idem*, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 82, 83-114. On the spread and debate of Pelagius' positions among ascetics and church authorities in Gaul, see Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*.

68 For an overview, see Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 27-43; Markus, The Legacy of Pelagius; Sottocorno, Semipelagianismo y disciplina monástica. Mathisen shows in an article how easily a theological controversy could become an ecclesiastical conflict and how questions of orthodoxy could be treated together with tangible interests and efforts to increase one's own influence and authority; Mathisen, Caesarius of Arles. The author also stresses the tendency of Gallic bishops to seek support from the bishop in Rome against their opponents. This might be echoed in Gennadius' sending of his catalogue to Bishop Gelasius (492-496), whose name is linked to 6th-century *Decretum Gelasianum* (see ed. Dobschütz).

the different camps: he criticised and condemned Pelagius, his teachings and supporters in several entries (cc. 19, 43, 45, 60, 65) and mentioned those who argued against him, including himself (cc. 31, 40, 44, 99); at the same time, Gennadius was critical of Pelagius' most severe accuser, Augustine (c. 39), and included those who defended Pelagius or tried to find a compromise, such as the bishops Julianus of Eclanum and Faustus of Riez (cc. 46 and 86).[69]

Gennadius' catalogue of Christian writers is inextricably embedded in the complex religious landscape of Gaul in the 5th century and reflects strongly his own position and involvement in contemporary doctrinal disputes and ecclesiastical conflicts.[70] The catalogue aims to define and promote orthodoxy and at the same time bolster Gennadius' and Cassian's authority and position. We can see overall that, although separated by space and time, Gennadius' decision to continue Jerome's collection connected the writers and communities of his day to Jerome's world. The topics of doctrinal dispute and orthodox faith string both collections together. Both compilers offered their own sequence of authorities, which presented the specific representation of the past they wished to highlight and thereby generated a more coherent picture of various Christian theological and monastic communities than would in reality have been the case.

While Jerome's approach, following Eusebius, was Roman and imperial, Gennadius focused on the developments across the Gallic Churches and added a second thematic strand by emphasising the monastic traditions that had gained momentum in his day. Eastern monastic practices resound across his catalogue, from the first monasteries in Egypt to the reception of these ideas in the Latin West, with Marseille and Lérins being the centres most prominent in the catalogue. Gennadius showed how these communities had absorbed Eastern monastic traditions while creating their own ones at the same time. By adding a perspective born out of the monastic developments to the collection, Gennadius rewrote and reoriented the documented writers, situating his work at the intersection of compiling and authoring.

From Late Antiquity to the Carolingian World

Although Gennadius' continuation of Jerome's *De viris illustribus* articulated a novel vision of Christian community, the two catalogues, transmitted together, became a common foundation on which later continuators built. Connecting more than 200 writers, their past communities and the collections' later audiences to each other, they created literary traditions and conduits of knowledge transfer spanning several centuries. The texts were picked up and taken in new directions in 7th-century Iberia, firstly by Isidore of Seville and then by Ildefonsus of Toledo.[71] There follows a conspicuous 500-year gap: no new *De viris illustribus* texts were produced

69 See Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus* for a more detailed discussion. Especially noteworthy is the entry on Faustus, as Gennadius was full of praise for the bishop and his treatise *On Grace* (c. 471), while Augustine's entry in the catalogue is conspicuously short, missing a lot his works, such as *The City of God*, the *Confessions* and, in particular, those concerning his ideas on grace.

70 The Pelagian dispute is a dominant strand but not the only contemporary controversy to be aired in the catalogue. Christological debates, involving the doctrines of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople (cc. 54-56, 58, 60, 62, 82, 93, 94, 99), and Eutyches (cc. 67, 71, 72, 83, 85, 89, 94, 99), are also prominent but cannot be discussed here in detail. See therefore Seiler, Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris inlustribus*, for more information.

71 Wood, Playing the Fame Game; Whiting, Jerome's *De viris illustribus*.

until the turn of the 12th century.[72] A lack of direct emulators, however, should not be taken as a lack of interest or influence. There is, for instance, plenty of evidence for subsequent authors utilising Jerome's and Gennadius' *De viris illustribus*, often as a pair. In 6th-century Italy, Cassiodorus produced an influential guidebook for Christian study, in which he advised his pupils to read the catalogues of Jerome and Gennadius together as a pair to help get to grips with Christian history.[73] Bede, an 8th-century Northumbrian monk, not only drew upon the combined entries of Jerome and Gennadius when compiling his so-called *Greater Chronicle* but also made the completion of the text a historical event in and of itself when he wrote that: »Jerome, the translator of sacred history, wrote a book about the most illustrious men of the Church, which he brought down to the fourteenth year of Theodosius' reign«.[74]

The manuscript evidence is even more revealing. Two codices containing Jerome together with Gennadius are attested from as early as the 6th century, and the works continued to be copied together in the 7th and 8th centuries. There is then a notable spike in the production and survival of manuscripts in the later 8th and 9th centuries. This coincided with the age of Carolingian rule, when the Western Empire was resurrected upon Charlemagne's coronation as emperor in 800 and a massive project of cultural and religious reform was undertaken.[75] As part of this project, the writings of Latin late antiquity were copied en masse in ecclesiastical centres of learning throughout western Europe. Even if there were no 9th-century continuations of the *De viris illustribus* tradition, these were amongst the many texts which were transcribed and studied by Carolingian monks and clerics.

Copying old texts was not a mere religious pastime. Rosamond McKitterick has argued that the intense interest in reproducing the late antique bio-bibliographical catalogues of Jerome and Gennadius reinforced notions of Christian orthodoxy; Carolingian churchmen not only copied the catalogue but also drew on both Jerome and his late antique continuators to consolidate a defined canon of religious authorities. McKitterick situated her evaluation of Jerome-Gennadius within Carolingian communities of learning, arguing that *De viris illustribus* texts played a significant role in the formation and organisation of library catalogues and collections.[76] McKitterick, furthermore, argued that the tradition contributed to a distinctive book-based way of thinking about the past, one that looked back to Jerome but also to his main source, Eusebius' *Church History*.[77] For the second case study of this chapter, the example of one specific Carolingian intellectual, Frechulf of Lisieux, will be used to illustrate how the reception of Jerome's *De viris illustribus* exists at the intersection of these two strands, that is of canon formation and the understanding of history. Read in relation to Gennadius' direct continuation, it reveals a very different type of engagement with the bio-bibliographic form.

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72 In general, see Lehmann, Literaturgeschichte im Mittelalter, 82-113; Blum, *Literaturverzeichnung*, cols. 137-208; Bertini, Continuatori medievali, 127-138. On the 12th-century texts, see now Byrne, Cutting out the Camel-Like Knees of St James. Despite its title, Notker the Stammerer's *Notatio de illustribus viris* (written late 9th century) does not follow the model of Jerome-Gennadius: see Rauner, Notkers des Stammlers *Notatio de illustribus viris*, 34-69 and Kaczynski, Reading the Fathers.

73 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, I.17.2, ed. Mynors, 57; trans. Halporn, 151.

74 Bede, *Chronica*, ed. Jones, 513: *»Hieronimus sacrae interpres historiae librum, quem de Inlustribus ecclesiae viris scribit, usque ad xiiii totius imperii theodosii annum perducit«*; trans. Wallis, 218.

75 The best introduction is Costambeys *et al.*, *The Carolingian World*. On reform, see Brown, Introduction; Leyser, Late Antiquity in the Medieval West, 30-35.

76 McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 200-5, and *eadem*, *History and Memory*, 236-238. For a wider medieval perspective, Rouse and Rouse, Bibliography before Print.

77 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 218-244, esp. 221-6; *eadem*, *Perceptions of the Past*, 61.

Frechulf of Lisieux

Frechulf was the bishop of Lisieux, an episcopal see in modern-day northern France, a position which he held from c. 824/825 until his death c. 850/852.[78] Around 829, he finished his *Histories*, a massive Christian universal chronicle composed in two complementary parts.[79] Part I stretched from the world's creation to the birth of Christ; part II, which will concern me here, took the story forward from the beginning of the Church through to the turn of the 7th century. Curiously, Frechulf's narrative stopped some two centuries before his own day. He was therefore no chronicler of contemporary events or persons, nor was he interested in narrating or interpreting the recent past. Rather, he was a compiler of authoritative historical knowledge. His *Histories* were fashioned out of excerpts from much earlier historiographical and biographical works, most of which were composed in the 4th and 5th centuries, an age of renowned Roman emperors and illustrious Church Fathers. »Imperial deeds and ecclesiastical acts« were for Frechulf the very stuff of history, and Jerome's *De viris illustribus* spoke directly to this theme.[80] It was indeed so pertinent to his own project that in part II of his *Histories* Frechulf integrated verbatim the lion's share of Jerome's 135 chapters.[81] While Gennadius' example shows how the bio-bibliographic tradition could be continued to reflect the needs of new Christian communities in 5th-century southern Gaul, Frechulf's reception offers a much later, but nevertheless complementary perspective on *De viris illustribus*' influence. Frechulf shows that the catalogue, almost in its entirety, could be reproduced in a novel narrative context.[82]

This narrative was both Christian and Roman. The story of the Christian church in part II unfolded within the Roman Empire, from its beginnings in the reign of the first Roman emperor, Augustus, until Phocas (*reg.* 602-610), the last named emperor in the *Histories*. The successive reigns of Roman rulers existed as chronological units in Frechulf's sources and in turn offered him hooks off which he was able to hang his various excerpts. This can be seen in his engagement with Jerome's *De viris illustribus*. For example, Frechulf devoted five chapters to the reign of Nero, one of which dealt with the Apostle Paul, who was beheaded »in the fourteenth year« of that emperor. This was taken from c. 5 of *De viris illustribus*. Nero's reign was infamous in Christian history because he was considered the instigator of the first of ten imperial Christian persecutions.[83] Later, after narrating the fifth persecution, launched by Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla (*reg.* 193-211 and 198-217 respectively),

78 Allen, *Prolegomena*, 11*-17*.

79 Frechulf of Lisieux, *Historiarum libri XII* (hereafter, *Histories*), ed. Allen; Ward, *History, Scripture and Authority*. For comparative treatment of universal history writing, see Marsham, Universal Histories, 431-456.

80 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 2. 2, ed. Allen, 498: *»tam de gestis imperatorum quamque et de ecclesiasticorum actibus«*.

81 Allen, *Prolegomena*, 210*-212*; Feder, *Studien*, 86; Blum, *Literaturverzeichnung*, 138-139.

82 Frechulf's exemplar of *De viris illustribus* presumably also contained Gennadius' continuation, but, with the exception of James of Nisibis (II. 4. 8, 628-629), Frechulf did not draw on it: see pp. 115 below.

83 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 1. 17, ed. Allen, 471; Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 5, ed. Richardson, 10.

Frechulf filled a chapter with nineteen »illustrious individuals« (*inlustres*) who at that time »flourished in…[Christian] teaching«.[84] This chapter comprised cc. 36-54 of *De viris illustribus*. Within this group, only the barest of details were known for several of the figures. For example: »In the reign of the emperor Severus, Sextus wrote a volume, *On the Resurrection*«.[85] Even by Jerome's day, this was the sum total of knowledge about this person, yet it was enough for Frechulf to fashion something meaningful.

Indeed, the strength of *De viris illustribus* lay not in its individual entries but in its cumulative effect. The overall message of Jerome's bio-bibliographical catalogue was conveyed through the collection; by breaking-up and re-assembling it within a narrative, Frechulf was able to augment and further emphasise this message. For example, he introduced the block of entries from the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla by tying them to the story of Christian persecution that the immediately preceding chapters had narrated.[86] He thus invested his excerpts from *De viris illustribus* with a narrative force that originally was only implicit. Read in context, this chapter testified to the vitality of the Christian religion at a time when it was oppressed by the Roman state. After Constantine's conversion to Christianity c. 313, moreover, the reigns of those emperors who promoted the faith witnessed bursts of literary activity, which underscored the productivity of periods of Christian orthodoxy. Frechulf dedicated chapters to »the various doctors who flourished under Constantine« (comprising nine chapters from Jerome) and to those »men who were famous in divine writings in the reign of Theodosius« (comprising seven chapters).[87] A final grouping (comprising twelve chapters) enumerated »the illustrious men who, in the reigns of Arcadius and Honorius [the sons of Theodosius], shone in the churches like twinkling stars«.[88]

Frechulf included Jerome amongst this last band of brilliant ecclesiastics. Jerome's auto-bio-bibliography was written »in the fourteenth year of Theodosius« (i.e. 392/393), but he would be active for almost another three decades, until his death in 420. Frechulf updated Jerome's incomplete account of himself accordingly.[89] Whereas Jerome had ended his text by noting that many of his commentaries on the prophets were »on hand« but »not yet finished«,[90] Frechulf rendered the present tense of Jerome's Latin into the perfect and provided the names of some of the books of the Bible on which Jerome had subsequently written commentaries: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Matthew plus many more »little works« (*opuscula*).[91] Frechulf's reception of *De viris illustribus* should not, therefore, be seen as simply a matter of cut-and-paste. He engaged carefully with his source, grouping excerpts together to link Christian literature within the bigger picture of Christian history and at times modifying the bio-bibliographies he copied. Moreover, he even fashioned additional entries for prominent figures who lived long after Jerome had died. Of these, Pope Gregory the Great (*sedit* 590-604) was the most prominent.

84 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 2. 22, ed. Allen, 545: *»quique inlustres in nostro floruerunt dogmate«*.

85 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 2. 23, ed. Allen, 551; Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 50, ed. Richardson, 31; trans. Halton, 72.

86 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 2. 20-21, ed. Allen, 542-544.

87 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 3. 21, ed. Allen, 608-611 and II. 4. 29, 664-665.

88 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 5. 3, ed. Allen, 676-680.

89 For earlier reworkings of the final chapter of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, see Feder, *Studien*, 111-155.

90 Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, c. 135, ed. Richardson, 56; trans. Halton, 168.

91 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 5. 3, ed. Allen, 679-680; cf. Allen, *Prolegomena*, 67*.

Between the 7th and early 9th centuries, several biographies of Gregory had been written. All contain summaries of Gregory's writings, though only one comfortably fits the bio-bibliographic model and can be found in Isidore of Seville's own 7th-century *De viris illustribus*.[92] Frechulf seemingly did not know any of them or at least did not consult or allude to them when he came to compile one of the very last chapters of his *Histories*, titled »Concerning the Blessed Gregory and his Deeds«.[93] For the narrative material relating to Gregory's life, Frechulf drew on the terse reports he found within Bede's *Greater Chronicle*. Gregory's deeds were divided across the consecutive reigns of Tiberius (*reg*. 574-82), Maurice (582-602) and Phocas (602-610); they included his debates against a heretical bishop in Constantinople, the summoning of a major synod in Rome in 595 and his sponsoring of the mission to convert the English to Christianity.[94] Before noting that he died in the reign of Phocas, Frechulf inserted a list of Gregory's writings, something which Bede had not provided:

> Guided by divine inspiration, [Gregory] wrote the *Moralia in Job*, and set out most clearly his *Pastoral Rule*; moreover he transmitted to future readers his *Dialogues*, which were addressed to the venerable men of his own time to imitate. He created the very splendid work *In Ezekiel*, and his *Homilies* offer up for [our] enjoyment the healthiest spiritual food. His many extant letters are useful to readers, on account of the tasks for which they were written.[95]

There is much that is subtly striking about this chapter. It fits Jerome's mould, summarising the life and writings of an illustrious man within a Roman imperial chronology. Yet Frechulf effectively fashioned it himself, presumably drawing on his own knowledge of the works of Gregory he cited. His decision to do so hints at the considerable influence that Jerome's bio-bibliographic approach had on Christian historiographical consciousness: for Frechulf, a renowned ecclesiastical life was deemed incomplete without accompanying literature.

Frechulf placed the death of Gregory towards the very end of his *Histories*. This is significant. By the Carolingian period, Gregory's world had come to represent a patristic frontier of sorts: although later writers such as Isidore and Bede were venerated as authorities in the 8th and 9th centuries, Gregory, after Augustine of Hippo and – of course – Jerome himself, was regarded as the last of the preeminent Church Fathers.[96] This pre-eminence can be sampled by turning briefly to Carolingian library catalogues. Several 9th-century catalogues have come down to us, including remarkably rich examples from the monasteries of Lorsch

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92 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 27, ed. Codoñer Merino, 148-149. See also Wood, Playing the Fame Game and *idem*, A Family Affair. The other biographies are *Liber pontificalis*, c. 66, ed. Duchesne, vol. 1, 312; Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, II. 1, ed. Colgrave and trans. Mynors, 122-135 (esp. 126-129); *Vita Gregorii*, ed. and trans. Colgrave (see esp. cc. 24-27, 31, ed. Colgrave, 116-125, 134-137); Paul the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii*, ed. Tuzzo (esp. cc. 8 and 12, ed. Tuzzo, 11 and 21-23); *Ordo Romanus XIX*, ed. Semmler, 53-63, at 59-60.

93 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 5. 24, ed. Allen, 720-721 (chapter title on p. 671).

94 For historical context, see Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* and Neil and Dal Santo (eds.), *A Companion to Gregory*.

95 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 5. 24, ed. Allen, 721: *»Qui Moralia in Iob gratia diuina inspirante conscripsit, librum etiam Pastoralem luculentissime edidit, Dialogorum uero ad imitandos uenerabiles uiros qui per haec tempora claruerunt libros dictans ad nostram porrexit legendos posteritatem. In Ezechihel opus praeclarum condidit, Omeliarum eius liber saluberrimas et spiritales gustantibus ministrat dapes, epistolae uero exstant eius plures pro negotiis quibus sunt compositae legentibus utiles.«*

96 On the Carolingian Gregory, see Leyser, Memory of Pope Gregory.

and St Gall, located in the Rhine Valley and on Lake Constance respectively.[97] Both of these catalogues contain defined sections devoted to Gregory's writings: in the case of Lorsch, the Gregorian canon appears after the writings of Augustine and Jerome; at St Gall, it precedes them.[98] In both cases, the works listed match up exactly with those given by Frechulf.[99] Both catalogues counted Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, together with Gennadius' continuation, amongst their holdings.[100] By the end of the 9th century, moreover, both libraries had come into possession of Frechulf's *Histories*.[101]

There are some tantalising connections here. The evidence points to the importance of ecclesiastical centres – especially monasteries – as sites for the creation and consumption of knowledge. Within these ›enclaves of learning‹ the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers underpinned almost all intellectual undertakings.[102] As noted above, McKitterick argued that *De viris illustribus* not only helped shape the ›canon of knowledge‹ taught and studied in such centres but also offered Frankish churchmen insights into the historical contexts in which the various parts of the canon were produced.[103] Frechulf's *Histories* neatly connect both these arguments: he embedded Jerome's potted biographies within an expansive narrative. The work was consciously compiled from texts that were considered ›required reading‹ for educated Christians, and Jerome's catalogue of authors was copied over in near enough its entirety. This in turn gave Frechulf's text a bookish character: his narrative of the struggles and triumphs of Christianity was shot through with bibliography. Jerome, however, concluded his bio-bibliographical dictionary with him himself; for Gregory the Great to be counted amongst the illustrious men whose writings »founded, built and adorned the Church«,[104] and the 9th-century library catalogues clearly show that he was, Frechulf needed to employ a little creativity to locate Gregory's authoritative writings within the overall narrative of Christian history. This was innovation, but in the name of well-established tradition.

Conclusions

Jerome's *De viris illustribus* offered later readers and communities a remarkably flexible and ostensibly all-encompassing model of Christian community. Taking the Christian scriptures as its starting point, Jerome's bio-bibliographical catalogue defined a canon of knowledge that could be expanded and augmented to accommodate an ever-growing body of ecclesiastical literature and shifting notions of religious authority. In this chapter, we have so far examined two very different examples of the reception of Jerome's text. By way of conclusion, we shall consider how the two case studies intersect, before sketching some of the wider implications that considering the two cases simultaneously brings to light.

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97 Lorsch: Häse, *Bücherverzeichnisse*. St Gall: Lehmann (ed.), *Bibliothekskataloge*, 71-82. For context, Becker, Präsenz, Normierung und Transfer, 71-88; Grotans *et al.*, Understanding Medieval Manuscripts, 955-980.

98 Häse, *Bücherverzeichnisse*, 154: *OPUSCULA SANCTI GREGORII PAPAE*; Lehmann, *Bibliothekskataloge*, 72: *DE LIBRIS BEATI GREGORII PAPE*.

99 On Frechulf's links to the monastery of Fulda, see Allen, *Prolegomena*, 12*-15*.

100 Häse, *Bücherverzeichnisse*, 151; Lehmann, *Bibliothekskataloge*, 73.

101 Häse, *Bücherverzeichnisse*, 165; Lehmann, *Bibliothekskataloge*, 79.

102 For ›enclaves of learning‹, see part 4 of Hovden *et al.* (eds.), *Meanings of Community*. See also Kaczynski, The Authority of the Fathers.

103 McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 200-205; *eadem*, *History and Memory*, 245-246; *eadem*, *Perceptions of the Past*, 61.

104 See above, n. 7.

While Frechulf incorporated almost all of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, Gennadius' continuation is mostly absent. The bishop of Lisieux integrated only a single bio-bibliography from Gennadius' catalogue, namely the very first entry on James of Nisibis. It was included in a chapter which recounted »the memory of the noble writers and their miraculous accomplishments« (*memoria nobilium scriptorium ac mirabilium patratorum*) from the reign of Constantius II (d. 361).[105] This chapter followed the general pattern of Frechulf's grouping together of ›illustrious men‹: James was presented as one of 12 renowned authorities active at the time, with the other 11 being copied over from Jerome. Gennadius' original entry was both expanded and redacted. Frechulf added a fuller narrative of James's defence of Nisibis against the Sasanian ruler Sapor II, which he extracted from the *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita*, a translation and compilation of three 5th-century continuations of Eusebius' *Church History*. At the same time, he stripped the entry of its sly dig at Jerome and thus of its authorial self-fashioning. As noted above, Gennadius used his chapter on James to establish his own authority by incorporating someone who, he claimed, Jerome had failed to include in his original »catalogue of writers« (*catalogo scribarum*) on account of his lack of knowledge of Syriac.

Frechulf's highly circumscribed use of Gennadius helps bring into focus broad differences that separate our two case studies. Of these differences, the transition from the Western Roman Empire to the Carolingian Empire is the most obvious, but there are others which are no less important. The overarching Christian narrative that the *De viris illustribus* tradition helped shape begins in the eastern Mediterranean and moves gradually westwards, a shift which is also reflected in the transformation of the languages of religious authority. Jerome's project was built upon excerpting and translating passages of Eusebius' *Church History*, and his own achievements as a translator were enshrined in his work. Gennadius likewise laid emphasis on his own linguistic skills, as seen clearly in his abovementioned entry on James of Nisibis. He also highlighted authors, such as Rufinus, who had translated Greek texts into Latin. In the catalogue his individuality as author and compiler stands out, and it is further enhanced by the repeated use of the first person. For Frechulf, by contrast, this non-Latin world could be entered only indirectly. The Greek titles that populate Jerome's *De viris illustribus* were often simply ignored, presumably because they were not understood; the Greek title by which Gennadius referred to James of Nisibis's *Chronicle* was given by Frechulf only in a Latinised form.[106] The changes that occurred between Gennadius' Gaul and Frechulf's Francia ought to be assessed not only in relation to political transformation but also as regards changing cultural frameworks and educational horizons.

Gennadius' collection reflects the specialised context of later 5th-century southern Gaul, and from this perspective his *De viris illustribus* can be read as a guidebook to the diverse religious landscape of late antiquity, providing its readers with instructions with which to find their way through a world of competing theological doctrines and interpretations, and the many new ascetic movements and communities that had sprouted. In late antiquity, many crucial religious debates were active, not historical issues. Jerome and then Gennadius were themselves actors in some of these debates and wrote their catalogues with them in mind,

105 Frechulf, *Histories*, II. 4. 8, ed. Allen, 624-630.

106 On Frechulf's knowledge of Greek, see Allen, *Prolegomena*, 193*-194*, 210*-211*.

electing to describe specific disputes or heresies and their outcome. While they often included representatives of both sides of a theological controversy and thus helped to preserve to a certain degree of knowledge of them, their works were nevertheless geared towards a specific interpretation of these debates, emphasising the learnedness and superiority of orthodox theologians over their dissident counterparts. This skewed image, moreover, was then transmitted throughout the centuries: the writings of the losers in doctrinal debates were often not preserved, surviving only in the very catalogues that were written to challenge them. The context of disputation which shaped the activities of Jerome and then Gennadius continued through to the Carolingian world, but it took on new forms.[107]

For Frechulf, the religious controversies which energised the late antique Church were long resolved, and their successful conclusion was already inscribed deep into the past. What is more, Frechulf's Christian and Roman perception of the past gave short shrift to the authorities and issues that were so central to Gennadius' project. Frechulf traced the political transformations of the 5th-century Western Empire in broad brushstrokes, but without reference to the ecclesiastical context of southern Gaul. In the world of emperors and ecclesiastics that populated part II of his *Histories*, monasticism – eastern or western – was not a focus. Likewise, terms such as ›Nestorian‹ or ›Arian‹ with which Gennadius labelled those he deemed heretical, were also absent. To this end, Frechulf's Carolingian world looked more the imperial Roman model of Jerome than the focused and regional model articulated by Gennadius.

Not only the contexts but also the audiences for whom bio-bibliographical catalogues were written could differ remarkably. As the catalogues often spoke to specific, local audiences which might have been conscious of and sensitive to the ongoing controversies described, they could be used to remind or admonish local communities to adhere to one specific argument or practice. In this respect, catalogues could be used as a means to establish various different forms of cohesion: social, cultural, doctrinal. While contemporary readers could have been familiar with the specific local contexts the relevant authors were working and living in, later audiences accessed the world of late antiquity through the lens of the compilers. The audiences that were built into the catalogues by the compilers were not necessarily the same as the audiences who read or worked with the texts. For this reason, each collection ought to be understood in its own light, and each response to Jerome's catalogue reveals its own differences and peculiarities. This in turn helps highlight the great diversity of communities and contexts present in these sources. In keeping with Susan Stewart's suggestion that »the collection marks the place where history is transformed into space«[108], Gennadius' continuation of Jerome's *De viris illustribus* and its reuse and reinterpretation by Frechulf of Lisieux created new contexts and new communities as much as they reflected on contemporary existing ones.

Finally, the *De viris illustribus* tradition presented an archive of received and lost knowledge and allowed otherwise unknown authors to remain part of Christian literary communities. For both Gennadius and Frechulf, it is not at all clear how many of the texts preserved by Jerome were actually available to be read. Even for Jerome, much of the record of the earlier Greek past was already a memory. By the 5th century and even more so by the 9th, the vast

107 See the articles collected in De Jong and Van Renswoude (eds.), *Carolingian Cultures.*

108 Stewart, *On Longing*, 152-153.

bulk of the assembled literature would certainly have been known only through Jerome's catalogue (or Eusebius' *Church History*). Most of the authorities listed in the catalogues were long since dead and could no longer be linked to a particular political community or religious institution. Yet, the loss of so much of the corpus evidently did not preclude or diminish the value in copying the catalogue; this was as true in the 5th century as it was in the 16th.[109] It was surely satisfying when specific tracts or treatises could be checked against Jerome's and Gennadius' lists, but that should not draw attention away from appreciating that the collected body of Christian writing formed a key part of the Church's ›corporate self-awareness‹.[110] Jerome's *De viris illustribus* was as much a record of what had been written as of what could and should be read. Gennadius' decision to continue Jerome's catalogue confirmed its authoritative character and relevance for the Christian community and thus contributed to its later reuse and continuation. From this perspective, the nature of the collection was absolutely central: the success of the text and the genre as a whole lay in the accumulation of authority.

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109 On the latter, see Vessey, Jerome's Catalogue.

110 Markus, Church History, 1; and n. 77 above.

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Shaping Community through Biographical Collections from South Arabia: A Comparison of Two *Ṭabaqāt*-works

Johann Heiss*

This article investigates and compares the origins, intentions and contents of two biographical collections from South Arabia. The first, *al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk*, was written by al-Janadī, who held important legal and administrative positions for the Rasūlid court during the first part of the 8th/14th century. This collection mainly emerges from an earlier Yemeni historiographical work, which described the lives of religious figures in South Arabia in the Islamic period, but sees new entries being added from the author's own research and time. It encompasses both the lives of learned men and of political dignitaries and overall aimed to induce readers to remember and imitate the exemplary lives found in the history of al-Janadī's beloved Yemen. The second collection, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ ahl al-ṣidq wa-l-ikhlāṣ*, was composed by al-Sharjī, a 9th/15th-century legal scholar who was motivated by his visitations of the graves of Sufis in Yemen as well as by the observation that these individuals had been left out of previous collections describing the Sufis in other parts of the Islamic world. As a result, he utilised the earlier Yemeni biographical collections, including al-Janadī's, to put together a representation of the lives of the Sufis of South Arabia. Towards the end of this article there is a detailed comparison made between the alternative biographies of the same man found in the two collections, thus illustrating the differences apparent in the respective foci of these two historians.

Keywords: Rasūlid, Sufi, historiography, biography, Yemen, Islamic world

Introduction

Collections of biographies composed at different times and in different languages were usually designed to remind the contemporaries of the author about the exemplary behaviour and positive characteristics of the people described. The author presented them as role models, encouraging contemporaries to emulate them and imitate their actions. Biographies also often belong to an exhortative genre of literature. Consequently, in many cases, collections of biographies deal with memory. But at the same time the persons an author introduces in

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biographical collections share some common traits: they may be exemplars of virtue, paragons of justice, pious followers of the right belief or just members of the same vocational group. The common and usually positively described traits of the persons included renders them a circumscribed or a defined community in the eyes of the authors of many biographical collections.

To give an example from Syria in late antiquity: Theodoretos (who lived around 393-458), bishop of Kyrrhos[1], wrote a collection of biographies that he gave the title »God-loving History or Ascetic Community«, in which he described the pious and ascetic lives of 30 saintly men (ten of them still alive in his time) living in the northwest of Syria, among them Symeon Stylites.[2] In the introduction to his collection, he declares in highly rhetorical language that his book is meant as a »remedy repelling evil« and »an aid to memory«.[3] It is the memory (*mnēmē*) of the »God-loving men« of the northwest of Syria in the author's time, where one of the centres was the still impressive memorial pilgrimage complex of Symeon Stylites (now called Qalʿat Simʿān). These »God-loving men«, fierce ascetics, are the community forming the core of Theodoretos' collection of biographies, presented by him as holy men with characteristics »worthy of possessing and worthy of love« or, indeed, worthy of imitation.[4] The examples from South Arabia which are discussed in this article certainly concern similar groups of holy men and undoubtedly share the aim of aiding memory and encouraging imitation.

An early influential figure in the tradition of medieval biographical collections in South Arabia or Yemen[5] was Ibn Samura (born 547/1152, date of death unknown).[6] His biographical collection, called *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ al-Yaman* (Generations of the Legal Specialists of Yemen), begins in the time of the prophet Muḥammad and ends with the year 583/1187.[7] As discussed in the introduction to the volume, *ṭabaqāt* (sing. *ṭabaqa*) as a biographical genre comprise ranks or classes of people who are enumerated according to the connections between them, such as teacher-pupil relations. Twice, Ibn Samura characterises his work as an abridgement (*mukhtaṣar*), suggesting that he had originally composed a more detailed version of the work, which is not preserved.[8]

1 Situated in the very northwest of Syria, near the Turkish border, it is now called Kūrus and lies near modern Nabī Hūrī.

2 Theodoretos, *Philótheos Historía*, ed. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; mostly referred to as »Historia Religiosa« or »Religious History«.

3 Theodoretos, *Philótheos Historía*, 1, ed. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen, 126-127.

4 Theodoretos, *Philótheos Historía*, 1, ed. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen, 124-127.

5 The southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula was already called Yemen in early Islamic times. The name has the connotations of »the right side«, »the south« and »lucky«, or »felix« in Latin and »εὐδαίμων« in Greek. This region, the »Arabia Felix« of antiquity, the geographical parameters of which fluctuated over the centuries, is in the following understood as Yemen, without equating it to the modern nation-state.

6 The last year mentioned in Ibn Samura's work is 587/1191 (Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ*, ed. Sayyid, 189). It concerns the death of a certain learned man not mentioned at the end of the book.

7 Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ*, ed. Sayyid, 239, 245, 246.

8 Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ*, ed. Sayyid, 1, 142.

Ibn Samura lived at a restless time in the history of Yemen.[9] This period saw the troubles caused by the Banū Mahdī or the Mahdids and the arrival of the first representative of the Ayyūbids (the family of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the Saladin of the European Crusaders) in Zabid in the Tihama of Yemen on 7 Shawwāl 569/11 May 1174. The somewhat earlier spread of the Ismaʿiliyya, a Shiʿi branch of Islam that follows a living imam, and, in the north, the emergence of the Zaydiyya, also a Shiʿi branch of Islam that follows the fifth imam, named Zayd (lived 80-122/695-740), further contributed to the political and religious unrest of the time. Ibn Samura included a kind of autobiography in the preface to his book that mainly concerns his education and the roots of his family.[10] He does not tell us *expressis verbis* why he wrote his *ṭabaqāt*; perhaps the restlessness of the times contributed to his motivations. His main concern was obviously to show the establishment and spread of the Sunni-Shafiʿi school of law (*madhhab*) in Yemen. At least to a certain degree, the adherents of this school were the intended audience of the author; they were the community he had in mind when he carefully documented the teacher-pupil relations constituting the *ṭabaqāt*. At the same time, he recorded the diffusion of the Sunni-Shafiʿi school of law, reaching back in time to the beginnings of Islam and connecting it with the present.

Two of the successors of Ibn Samura will be presented and compared in this article. Both lived at the time of the Rasūlids (626-858/1229-1454), the dynasty that followed the Ayyūbids, and the still later Ṭāhirids (858-923/1454-1517).[11] Both authors died in Zabid on the coastal plain of the Red Sea, having spent at least some years living and teaching there. The different aims which the authors pursued in their biographical works will be highlighted below and the different communities they wrote for described. The effect that their divergent aims had on the structure of the collections and on the single biographies will be shown by comparing the authors' respective biographies of the same individual.

Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Yaʿqūb al-Janadī

The first and older author is Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Yaʿqūb al-Janadī. Around ninety years after his death, al-Janadī was characterised by his biographer al-Khazrajī as mainly an expert in law (*faqīh*) and as a historian.[12] His hometown was al-Janad, then an important town not far north-east of Taʿizz. He was judge (*qāḍī*) in Mawzaʿ, a Tihama-town near the Red Sea, and held the position of a market-inspector with policing functions (*muḥtasib*) at the important harbour-town of Aden.[13] From 715/1315 onwards, he held the same office in the administrative, economic and scientific centre of Zabid, which also served nearly every year as one of the two locations of the Rasūlid court: Zabid during the winter months and Taʿizz in the summer. Al-Janadī's functions and places of residence suggest that he held an

9 A valuable account of the developments of this time and later centuries in the Yemeni Tihama (the coastal plain on the Red Sea) is provided in De Pierrepont, *Espaces*.

10 Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahāʾ*, ed. Sayyid, 1-4.

11 The year 923/1517 marks the beginning of the first Ottoman occupation of southern Arabia.

12 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbadī *et al.*, 4: 2097-2098.

13 al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 2: 396-397: al-Janadī did not include an autobiography, but he provides many autobiographical remarks throughout his work.

influential position in Rasūlid politics at the time of al-Malik al-Muʾayyad Dāwud (r. 696-721/1296-1322) and al-Malik al-Mujāhid ʿAlī (r. 721-764/1322-1363). In tandem with carrying out his public functions, al-Janadī was also teaching. Al-Khazrajī had no information about the date of al-Janadī's death, but since the latter's work, discussed below, breaks off early in its account of the Islamic year 730/January-February 1330, al-Khazrajī supposed that al-Janadī died suddenly in that year. The usual date given for his death, 732/1332, seems to be little more than a guess.

The full title of al-Janadī's book is *al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk* (*The Threads of the Generations of Learned Men and Kings*).[14] It is a large *ṭabaqāt* work, in which the author cited and reworked biographies from, among others, Ibn Samura and al-Rāzī's (d. 460/1068) *Taʾrīkh Madīnat Ṣanʿāʾ* (*History of Ṣanaa*), while adding new and more recent ones.[15] It took the author years to write his book; from references in the text one can deduce that he worked on the collection mainly between ca. 719/1319 and 730/1330.[16] Al-Janadī tried to place the different individuals in their historical and political context not only by mentioning historical events in the course of each biography but also by including long historical sections. These would play a similar exemplary role for later historians as the biographies played for later biographers. Al-Janadī explained the method used by him in his work, at the same time revealing one of his main motives for writing:[17]

> I am – praised be God! – one of [the inhabitants of Yemen] by birth and home. Added to that is the love of one's homeland, known to the public and recognised by the distinguished … At that time[18] I wanted to write a book to collect in it most of [Yemen's] learned men and to mention all that is established of [a single] one's circumstances together with his birth, good traits and death, after having combined with that a reminder of those I believe it would be worth keeping in mind and an advantage to obey. I depended on that by coming close to the reminder and by hoping for assistance from God. Then it came to my mind to [not only] name the learned men (*ʿulamāʾ*) but to present together with them the dignitaries (*aʿyān*), and I would speak about what is worthwhile of their circumstances. Then I attached to that a section of reports on the rulers[19], from which I made a condensed version (*mukhtaṣar*). With that, I wanted the book to join the reports of the two factions and the heads of the two houses.[20] I shall begin with the learned men because of God the exalted's saying: »… and the angels and those who are endowed with knowledge.«[21]

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14 For al-Janadī's work, his motives and the organising principles of his work, see also Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 49-53.

15 al-Rāzī, *Taʾrikh*, ed. al-ʿAmrī.

16 Usually al-Janadī writes something like: »… exists until our time which is the year XX«, cf. e.g., al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1:124 (year 722), 1:329 (719), 1:343 (724), 1:350 (723), 1:359 (723), 1:391 (723), 2:260 (723), 2:443 (728), 2:444 (725), 2:445 (723), 2:447 (723), 2:449 (723), 2:457 (726), 2:476 (724), 2:555 (729). The dates show that the author had periods of more intensive writing (e.g. in the year 723), and that he inserted certain passages retrospectively.

17 al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1:62.

18 Meaning that when al-Janadī became aware of his love for the homeland (*ḥubb al-waṭan*) he felt the urge to write his book.

19 Al-Janadī is referring here to the historical part of his work.

20 The two factions (*farīqayn*) and the two houses (*dārayn*) are obviously the way al-Janadī describes two parts of the elite of his society, the learned men or the men of the pen (*ʿulamāʾ*) and the dignitaries or the politicians (*aʿyān*).

21 Qurʾān 3:18, modified from transl. Asad.

Al-Janadī's motive for writing *al-Sulūk* was, on first sight, the surprisingly modern and in a certain sense pre-nationalist thought of love for his homeland (*ḥubb al-waṭan*). The author briefly informs us of the data that he wishes to include in each biography and at the same time of their structure. Then he explains why he deemed it necessary to add condensed historical sections, which was a new feature, at least in South Arabia, and was introduced there by al-Janadī himself. The remaining structure of the *ṭabaqāt*-part of the work is similar to that of Ibn Samura's. Al-Janadī frequently cited Ibn Samura but strove to be more detailed than the earlier author. As already observed in the case of Ibn Samura, al-Janadī's book was often used by later authors. The account of al-Janadī that al-Khazrajī gives in his own biographical collection, for instance, includes the following tribute:[22]

> If not for [al-Janadī's activities of] collecting, examining and investigating, I would not have embarked on the writing of this, my book, and I would not have found the right way to anything of it [...] He was the one who emboldened me to [do] that and showed me the way to what is there.

In his preface, al-Janadī anticipated the accusation that his undertaking was of no use and declared:[23]

> One who is ignorant or pretends to be ignorant would ask: what are the beneficial results from the mention of those I shall present and the telling of the stories of those I have in mind? Firstly, I would greet them politely and then [state] that there are two benefits. One I mentioned in the beginning, namely what the Qurʾān says for the prophets and their communities (*umam*), the bygone periods and who follows them; and the second is that when someone later on takes an interest in the report of the distinguished men before him or hears how they got ready and approached this interest in knowledge and the quest for it, his soul will yearn to imitate them[24] and he will take their way and will realise their high esteem and adornment.

Furthermore, al-Janadī argues here that the benefit of reading or hearing the biographies of famous and distinguished people lies to a great extent in the encouragement they offer to imitate these people. His main sources, al-Janadī says, were the books authored by Ibn Samura and al-Rāzī. In the latter's history, the lives of some of the most famous early Islamic inhabitants of the town Sanaa are depicted.

22 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbadī *et al.*, 4:2097; he adds the following rhyming lines: »In times of peace, he is my teacher and imam, in times of war my shield and sword (*ḥusām*)«.

23 al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1:65-66.

24 Compare with the quote from Theodoretos on p. [2].

Regarding the methods he used for gathering and presenting his data, al-Janadī writes:[25]

> I took what I shall set forth from its most likely locations and travelled from al-Janad, searching for this, to far-away regions. Then, together with the naming of one of the learned men (*ʿulamāʾ*), the mention of one of the dignitaries (*aʿyān*) was presented. So, I produced in his account what satisfies the soul and what eliminates uncertainty as far as possible. Together with that the goals reach different ones. Whoever wants a history of the learned men (*ʿulamāʾ*) also wants the regents (*mulūk*) and also wants the dignitaries (*aʿyān*) and a summary (*mukhtaṣar*), according to my ability.

Therefore, al-Janadī not only used written sources to compose his remarkable collection but also travelled around Yemen to gather data for his work, to visit graves and to interview people at the different locations where he stayed.[26]

Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Sharjī al-Zabīdī

In his collection of biographies called *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ fī aʿyān al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (The Shining Light concerning the Dignitaries of the Ninth Century), the Egyptian biographer, hadith-specialist and younger contemporary of al-Sharjī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (lived 831-902/1427-1497), characterised al-Sharjī as a hadith-specialist (*muḥaddith*), man of letters (*adīb*), poet and follower of the Ḥanafi school of law.[27] Al-Sharjī was born on the night of Friday the 22nd day of Ramaḍān in the year 812 (27 January 1410) in Zabid. Together with his brother, al-Sharjī was instructed by famous teachers of his time, some of whom were followers of the Shafiʿi school of law. With one of his later teachers, the *shaykh* Abū l-Qāsim al-ʿUsluqī, the author made the pilgrimage to the holy places of Mecca and Medina in the year 835/1431-32.[28] Later he taught in Zabid and is still recorded in this role in the year 887/1482-83. One of the works of al-Sharjī quoted by al-Sakhāwī is the biographical collection called *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ ahl al-ṣidq wa-l-ikhlāṣ* (The Generations of People of Distinction and Sincere Devotion). Alongside this work, al-Sakhāwī mentions an abridgement of *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī composed by al-Sharjī.[29] Al-Sharjī used different opportunities to visit the graves of famous Sufis. On the pilgrimage to Mecca in the year 835/1431-2, al-Sharjī passed through Ḥalī[30] and visited there the grave of the famous ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṭawāshī.[31] Ten years later, in 855/1451, the author visited the grave of Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Khayr al-ʿImrānī in Dhī al-Sufāl not far from Taʿizz.[32] He died on 11 Rabīʿ II 893/24 March 1488 in his hometown of Zabid.

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25 al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1:68-69.

26 e.g., al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1:385.

27 al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʿ*, 1:214-215.

28 The information concerning his instruction by al-ʿUsluqī and the joint pilgrimage is contained in his biography of the latter in his *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*; al-Sharjī, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 400-402.

29 Al-Bukhārī was an author who lived 194-256/810-870 and wrote one of the most influential collections of hadith. Al-Sharjī also authored a compendium of anecdotes, poems and funny stories called *Nuzhat al-aḥbāb* (Entertainment of Sweethearts), a work which possibly earned him the characterisation as *adīb* by al-Sakhāwī.

30 A settlement and harbour on the eastern border of the Red Sea north of Jazan, today in Saudi Arabia. As was usual for many pilgrims coming from Yemen, the author took the boat northwards in the direction of Mecca.

31 Al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 201.

32 Al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 365.

In spite of its title, al-Sharjī's *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ* is not structured like a classical *ṭabaqāt*-work, where the biographies are ordered in a temporal sequence, each generation of pupils and teachers providing the opportunity to introduce separations into chapters or classes, i.e. *ṭabaqāt*; Ibn Samura's work is a good example of this. Al-Sharjī ordered his biographies simply – and contrary to the original sense of *ṭabaqat* – alphabetically. In his preface he justified his procedure with the assertion that this arrangement facilitates reading and use:[33]

»Know, my brother, that I composed this book according to the letters of the alphabet in order to make it easy to deal with, and I followed the method of the historians (*muʾarrikhūn*) in the arrangement of the names one after the other, for example, in letting Ibrāhīm precede Aḥmad …«. As a source, the author preferred al-Janadī's *al-Sulūk*, followed by works of Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh al-Yāfiʿī (lived 698-768/1298-1367), a famous Yemeni Sufi who spent the greater part of his life in Mecca, and Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn al-Ahdal (d. 855/1451). Al-Ahdal's main source was also al-Janadī, of whose book he made an updated *mukhtaṣar*, which was completed in the year 867/1463.[34]

Al-Sharjī begins his preface with four examples from outside of Yemen, four writers who presented biographies of the Sufi »friends of God« (*awliyāʾ*). Having observed that these authors named no Yemeni at all, he states that this shortcoming provided the motive for the writing of his own biographical lexicon:[35]

> I saw a number of books mentioning friends of God (*awliyāʾ*) the most high and enumerating their virtues (*faḍāʾil*), their miracles (*karāmāt*) and their exploits (*manāqib*), for example, the book *The Epistle* by *imām* Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī,[36] the book of *The Experts* by *shaykh* Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhruwardī,[37] the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya by shaykh* Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī,[38] the *Exploits of the Faithful* by Ibn Khamīs[39] and others. Not one of them I saw turned his attention to the mention of an inhabitant of Yemen from among the truthful Sufi masters (*sāda*) and the practising and ascetic learned men. On the contrary, they mention [only] inhabitants of Syria, Iraq, North Africa[40] and so on. For somebody who has no knowledge about the actual circumstances in that blessed region (*al-iqlīm al-mubārak*, i.e. Yemen), this could possibly instil the wrong impression that nobody who is worthy of mention and nobody who is distinguished by the qualities of the friends of God (*awliyāʾ*) lived there. This happens

33 al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 40.

34 al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 423.

35 al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 35.

36 Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī al-Naysabūrī al-Shāfiʿī (376-465/986-1072) wrote a *risāla* that is usually called *al-risāla al-Qushayrīya fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf* (Qushayrī's epistle on Sufism). The first part of it consists of short biographies of famous Sufis.

37 Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Suhruwardī (539-632/1143/44-1233/34), a Sufi author, wrote *al-ʿawārif wa-l-maʿārif* (Experts and Knowledge).

38 Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (325-412/937-1020/21) wrote *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīya*.

39 Muḥammad b. Naṣr b. Khamīs (466-552/1072-1157) wrote *Manāqib al-abrār wa-maḥāsin al-aḫyār* (Exploits of the faithful and merits of the excellent ones); see Ibn Khamīs, *Manāqib*, ed. al-Jādir.

40 Al-Shām, al-ʿIrāq and al-Maghrib respectively correspond to Syria in the older sense, the modern Iraq – possibly including Persia – and North Africa.

> despite the major part of the inhabitants of the Yemen being people of true faith, heedful and gentle hearts, evident probity and intrinsic honesty, attesting the word of the prophet – God bless him and grant him salvation: »The inhabitants of the Yemen are of most gentle and most agreeable hearts. The faith is Yemeni, and the wisdom is Yemeni«,[41] and other traditions of that kind where [the prophet] – God bless him and grant him salvation – is an authority about the virtues [of the Yemenis] in general. Just imagine how many men among them are men of theoretical and practical knowledge, of letters and of *aḥwāl*.[42]
>
> There is a tradition about the *imām*, the learned about God, Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. ʿUjayl, that he was asked about the friends of God (*awliyāʾ*) that are mentioned in the books, and there was cited a person from Egypt, a person from Balkh and others, but a person from the Yemen was not named. He – God have mercy on him – said, »This is rather because of their great number, because they are groups after groups.«

Having set out his reason, the neglect of South Arabian candidates worthy of biographies in the collections from other regions of the Islamic world, the author outlines who, in his expectation, should be the audience of his biographical collection:[43]

> In any case, the authors of Syria (al-Shām) and Iraq do not mention them (i.e. the Yemeni pious men, *awliyāʾ*) because of the distance to them and they do not realise their existence. Since this is as it is, I want to compose a book which I assign especially to the mention of the *awliyāʾ* among the inhabitants of Yemen to demonstrate in it their circumstances (*aḥwāl*), sayings, virtues and miracles (*karāmāt*).

Al-Sharjī's main intention was, therefore, to present examples of saintly men from Yemen to demonstrate that there lived as many, if not more, exemplary virtuous people there as in other Islamic regions. This stated purpose puts the work in the same »pre-nationalist« bracket as the undertaking of al-Janadī, who gave his *»ḥubb al-waṭan«* as a reason for writing. At the same time, al-Sharjī's book bears witness to the age-old South Arabian need for appreciation and acclaim and is but one of many expressions of perceived neglect and discrimination by the rest of the Islamic world.[44] In order to pursue his goal, al-Sharjī centred on the lives and miracles of Sufi people from Yemen, especially from the Tihama.[45] He extracted biographies from his predecessors, whom he named in his preface and elsewhere (mostly al-Janadī and al-Yāfiʿī). Al-Sharjī usually shortened the biographies written by them, as the forthcoming example shows, because details of the lives of the saintly individuals were less important to him than reports of miracles worked by God through his friends (*awliyāʾ*), the holy men,

41 hadith: compare, for example, in the above mentioned *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, nr 4388.

42 Sg. *ḥāl*: denotes the special states that Sufis endeavour to attain.

43 al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 36.

44 Whole books, like ʿUbayd b. Shariyya's *Akhbār al-Yaman* (History of the Yemen) (ʿUbayd, *Akhbār*, ed. Krenkow, 323-499), already seem to more or less serve this purpose, while other instances of these tendencies can be found in: al-Hamdānī, *Kitāb al-iklīl al-juzʾ al-awwal*, ed. Löfgren, 3-4; al-Hamdānī, *Kitāb al-iklīl al-juzʾ al-thāmin*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 213; al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifat jazīrat al-ʿArab*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 230.

45 Al-Sharjī sometimes explicitly mentions the miracles as a cause for including certain persons in his collection of biographies, e.g.: al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 157, 347.

showing them to be distinguished by God. The signs of God (*āyāt Allāh*) form his main interest in his Sufi-centred book, along with information on the graves of the holy men for the purpose of pilgrimage (*ziyāra*, »visit«). According to the author, he composed his book mainly for people outside of Yemen. This would account for his explanation of words of South Arabian origin, whether actual or reputed. For example, al-Sharjī elucidates the word *sirdāb* (meaning, »a subterranean structure, for the summer […] or a narrow place into which one enters […] a cellar or subterranean vault, in which anything is put to be kept cool…«), describing it as a term used by Yemenis. In fact, the word is originally Persian.[46]

The Structures of the Biographies

The Structure of al-Janadī's biographies

The structure of the individual biographies in al-Janadī's collection is quite variable, more so than with al-Sharjī. Certainly, miracles were less important for al-Janadī than for al-Sharjī. On the other hand, historical events that influenced the decisions of the people described are mentioned more frequently by al-Janadī. The importance that the author attaches to these historical events is in keeping with the urge he felt to include standalone historical sections in his biographical collection.

1) Geographical introduction (sections 1-2 in the following table): in his *ṭabaqāt*, al-Janadī sub-divided his different classes according to geography and, as a result, introduced each biography with some topographical details, naming and describing the site of the villages where a person lived, was born or died.
2) Explanation of the name (section 4): in many cases, al-Janadī described the genealogical origin of the relevant person.
3) Intellectual career, teachers (sections 6-9): Al-Janadī enumerated the subject's teachers, the places where he was educated and, occasionally, the books he studied under the guidance of his teachers.
4) Ṣūfī networks, pupils and migrations (sections 10-20): historical events were included by al-Janadī here, together with the mention of pupils. The locations to which the person had to travel and the people who hosted him were also named.
5) Praise of the subject and the highlighting of his achievements (section 22): other biographers like al-Sharjī tended to insert such sections of praise at a much earlier point in their biographies.
6) Death and burial (section 23-24): the place of burial is important, because it was and, in places, still is a destination of pilgrimage, where one could go to receive a share of the dead person's *baraka* or blessing and his intercession with God.
7) Progeny, successors, marital status, asceticism, the location of successors (sections 25-27 and 33): the networks of teachers and learned men were often maintained by successors of the saintly persons. They, mostly sons or, more rarely, daughters of the dead, served the pilgrims and maintained the burial places.
8) Anecdotes (section 28-32): al-Janadī strove to write »complete« biographies, i.e. he usually presented all the material he could find. He makes only occasional mention of miracles.

46 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1347c; Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:647b. The word is explained by al-Sharjī at *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 94.

The structure of al-Sharjī's biographies

In his endeavour to confine himself to content adapted to his specific aims, al-Sharjī used a simple and recurring structure for his biographies with only a few variations. As he repeatedly emphasises, his most important aim by far was to report the miracles performed by the holy and usually Sufi men. In contrast to Ibn Samura or al-Janadī, for example, details concerning the lives of the subjects and their teachers and pupils remain rather in the background. The standard structure of the biographies of al-Sharjī consists of:

1) Description using conventional hagiographic formulae (see the following example, section 5): these conventional formulaic adjectives and participles include, for example, important *shaykh*, expert or educator. A whole set existed for ready use, and they were used to characterise and idealise the subjects of the biographies. Al-Sharjī was not alone in using them: they were applied in a very similar, nearly interchangeable way in many of the *ṭabaqāt* works throughout the Arabic-speaking world.

2) Mention of asceticism and seclusion (here in section 34 at the end of the biography): an ascetic style of life frequently adds to a saintly life but is not obligatory. It is typically evoked by repeated references to spiritual exercise, solitariness or seclusion. Celibacy is also possible, as in our example, but is not as highly valued and frequent as in Christian societies.

3) Occasional mention of teachers and Sufi networks (see sections 16-22): reference to the teachers of the relevant person may follow, as well as to the friends and people he met. With these intellectual lineages (which can be used as indicators of intellectual networks) al-Sharjī aims to give special Sufi genealogies of initiation in Yemen.

4) Occasional enumeration of disciples (section 20 mentioned above, and section 27): the next step is the naming of the disciples of the relevant person. The diachronic dimension of the Sufi-network stretching back into the past is thus complemented by one reaching into the future. This establishes a Sufi community over time, a community of remembrance and at the same time a community of expectation.

5) Reports on *karāmāt* and *āyāt* (miracles and signs given by God) and other anecdotes (sections 28-33): this is the most important issue for al-Sharjī. The »people of distinction and sincere devotion« that are the subject of the author's biographies are predominantly Sufi personalities, and *karāmāt* and *āyāt* (and sometimes *mukāshifāt* or revealings) are *topoi* connected with and important for Sufis. For those authors who were not Sufis, miracles had a far less important place in the biographies.

6) Death (section 34): the date and place of death is usually given by the author. As mentioned above, the great importance of the place of the burial stemmed from the custom of pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to get *baraka* or blessing and to pray, a practice which was abhorred and fought against by other Islamic denominations like the Zaydiyya. In other words: the practice of visiting graves (*ziyāra*) was used for the construction of boundaries between groups.

7) Occasional mention of progeny, successors (also section 34): often sons (rarely daughters or wives) take the place of their fathers as saintly persons, guaranteeing that the memory of the holy man lingers on. Kinship and marriage can be important for keeping up a saintly lineage over time, and genealogies of kinship can, through marriage, arise out of genealogies of learning. The locations of the successors of holy men can become important pilgrim destinations.

8) Concluding formulae (section 34, last sentence): These formulae have an even more unspecific and conventional character than the beginning of a biography, e.g. »God may be of help through them (sc. the holy men)« or *amīn* (a word which corresponds closely in its use and in its etymology to the »amen« used in Christian contexts).

Case-Study: Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī's Biographies by al-Janadī and al-Sharjī

As an example of how biographies written with different intentions can vary and to compare the use a later author makes of a biography written by an earlier one, here follows a biography of one and the same person, called al-Sibāʿī. The text written by al-Janadī, on the left-hand side, is contrasted with the version reworked by al-Sharjī, on the right-hand side.

	Al-Janadī's text[47]	Al-Sharjī's text[48]
1	Then from among the regions whose inhabitants became known for jurisprudence (*fiqh*) [is] the region of Ḥajja:[49]	
2	There is a village known as al-Mikhlāfa,[50] from which a group of outstanding jurists came forth.	
3	The first of them whom we confirmed was ʿAlī b. Masʿūd b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Muḥarram b. Aḥmad al-Sibāʿī, then al-Kuthbī, then al-Qudamī.	Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Masʿūd b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sibāʿī,
4	al-Sibāʿī is a *nisba*[51] from his grandfather whose name was al-Sibāʿī, and to him a group are traced back to those who are called Banū al-Sibāʿī. Al-Kuthbī is another grandfather.	a *nisba* belonging to a group of Hamdān who are called Banū al-Sibāʿī.
5		The mentioned was a jurist, a learned and a practical one, famous for the excellence of his knowledge and the abundance of his veneration and piousness.
6	His first occupation was in the previously mentioned Ḥarāz,[52] where he read the seven ways of reciting and was partly instructed in jurisprudence.	

47 al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 2: 319-321.

48 Cf. al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 220-221.

49 Ḥajja, a highland city at around 1800m altitude, is today the capital of an eponymous district in Yemen, lying ca. 130 km north-west of Sanaa.

50 According to the Yemeni editor al-Akwaʿ, this village lay south of Ḥajja. He equates it with al-Hamdānī's al-Mikhlafa, which is a market for people from the highlands and the Tihāma on the western rim of the highlands.

51 A *nisba* is a name indicating a person's origin. In this case, it relates to a location, but in other cases it relates to a tribal affiliation or a place in a genealogy (e.g. of the prophet).

52 A mountainous region between the Yemeni capital and al-Ḥudayda, a Red Sea harbour of today.

7	Then he returned to his hometown and went to the jurist Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Nuzayl[53] to Jabal Tays.[54] He is the one whom Ibn Samura mentioned[55] among the companions of the shaykh Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Khayr,[56] whom I also mentioned.	
8	Before him he recited the *muhadhdhab*.[57]	
9	Then he came to the previously mentioned town of Jabā[58] and studied the *bayyān*[59] with the jurist Abū Bakr, and he studied with Abū Bakr al-Ḥajūrī[60] who will be mentioned.	
10	Then he returned to al-Mikhlāfa, where he served as the head and taught.	
11	When the imam ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza[61] appeared and achieved supremacy in the region of the settlement, this jurist left with all his students, who were some 60, and went to the Tihama.	
12	He passed by a place in the regions of al-Mahjam[62] which is known as Bayt Khalīfa, and there was in those days the *shaykh* ʿImrān b. Qubḥ, the *shaykh* of the Qarābulīs[63] at that time.	His residence was at first in al-Mikhlāfa in the region of the mountains of the town al-Mahjam.

53 For a very brief mention, see Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahā' al-Yaman*, ed. Sayyid, 198, where Jabal Tays is also given as his dwelling place; cf. also: al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1:344-345.

54 Jabal Tays lies north-west of Sanaa.

55 cf. Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahā' al-Yaman*, ed. Sayyid, 198.

56 A very famous teacher of the time, Yaḥyā b. Abī l-Khayr, received a whole *faṣl* or section in Ibn Samura's work; Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahā' al-Yaman*, ed. Sayyid, 174-184.

57 *al-Muhadhdhab fī al-fiqh* (The Refinement in Jurisprudence); al-Shirāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, ed. al-Zuḥaylī. This basic text was used for instruction, especially in the Sunnī regions in Yemen, and was written by Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Shīrāzī (b. 393/1003 in Fīrūzābād near Shīrāz, died 476/1083 in Baghdad), who is also the author of a biographical collection which Ibn Samura used as his model.

58 The location of this town is unclear; if it was written Jaba', it would be a town west of Ta'izz.

59 *al-Bayyān fī madhhab al-Shāfiʿī* (The Explanation of the School of al-Shāfiʿī) was written by Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Khayr b. Sālim al-ʿImrānī al-Yamanī (b. 489/1096 in Maṣna'at Sayr near Aden, d. 3 April 1163 in Dhū al-Sufāl); al-ʿImrānī, *al-Bayyān*, ed. al-Nūrī. He was one of the most important learned men among the early Sunni-Shafiʿis in Yemen, if one follows Ibn Samura. His *Bayyān* was and still is a basic book of instruction.

60 Not mentioned by Ibn Samura.

61 This Zaydi imam reigned from 585/1187 until his death in 614/1217.

62 al-Mahjam in Tihāma.

63 Instead of ʿImrān b. Qubḥ, one should read ʿImrān b. Qubayʿ. They were a family of shaykhs in Wadi Surdud; De Pierrepont, *Espaces*, 1:418.

13	He had taken up quarters there in a kind of camp. The *shaykh* entertained him and all his companions as guests for three days. Then he asked him to stick to him and to teach in his village. He complied with this request and stayed with him for a number of years.	
14	This was in the year 718.[64]	
15	When ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza had died and the power of the Zaydiyya decreased, the jurist returned to his town.	
16	He stayed there for a span of time during which the previously mentioned *shaykh* Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl[65] came and built a *ribāṭ*[66] there.	There came to him the *shaykh* Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl and built at his place a *ribāṭ*.
17	They both stayed helping each other for a time.	They both stayed in friendship and mutual help for the true belief (*ḥaqq*),
18	Then, when Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn[67] appeared and the power (*shawka*)[68] of the Zaydiyya became stronger, they both left the town and returned to the Tihama, where the jurist ʿAmr already stayed.	until Imam Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn appeared, the *imām* of the Zaydiyya, and their power (*shawka*) became stronger. So, they went down to the Tihama.
19	The *shaykh* Abū al-Ghayth settled with the jurist ʿAṭāʾ who was previously mentioned,	The *shaykh* Abū al-Ghayth stayed to live at [the place of] the jurist of ʿAṭāʾ, as will be reported in his biography, God willing.[69]
20	and the jurist settled with his pupil ʿAmr and stayed with him until he died.	ʿAlī b. Masʿūd stayed to live with the jurist ʿAmr al-Sibāʿī,[70] because he was his pupil, as will be mentioned in the biography of the jurist ʿAmr.[71]
21		The jurist ʿAmr had bought a place in the region of Bayt Ḥusayn and took his abode there.

64 The death of ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza occurred on 18 Muḥarram 614/27 April 1217, but the year 718 begins a hundred years later on: 4 March 1318. This incorrect date may be attributable to a reading error on the part of a copyist.

65 On this individual, see De Pierrepont, *Espaces*, 1:397-409.

66 A biography of Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl, called Shams al-Shumūs (»Sun of the suns«), appears in al-Sharjī; *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 406-410. He died in the year 651/1253 in Bayt ʿAṭāʾ. A *ribāṭ* is a convent of Sufi adepts. For Bayt ʿAṭāʾ, see De Pierrepont, *Espaces*, 1:406-408.

67 Imam al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, who reigned 646-656/1248-1258.

68 The author uses a metaphor: *shawka* literally means »thorn, spike«.

69 See his biography in al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 406-410; according to this account, the jurist was Aḥmad b. ʿAṭāʾ. The village in Wadi Surdud was named Bayt ʿAṭāʾ (after the father of Aḥmad), who has no biography in al-Sharjī; *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 407.

70 In all probability, this is Abū Muḥammad ʿAmr b. ʿAlī b. ʿAmr b. Muḥammad b. ʿAmr b. Saʿd b. Jaʿfar b. ʿAbbās al-Tibāʿī; cf. al-Sharjī (*Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 247-248); Sibāʿī can be mistaken for Tibāʿī palaeographically (or the other way round).

71 Cf. al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 247.

22	This jurist was a big imam with many disciplines, and the jurisprudence was broadly disseminated by him in the region of Ḥajja and in other regions, and widespread groups studied jurisprudence with him.	Then the jurist ʿAlī b. Masʿūd settled down and spread the knowledge.
23	His death occurred around the year 610 and 650.[72]	
24	The *shaykh* Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl arrived at [the place of] his pupil, the jurist ʿAmr, to console him and those of his people who were present.	
25	He had given the jurist ʿAmr a daughter of his brother in marriage,	
26	but he himself did not get married before he died. He was questioned because of that, and he said: »It would distract me from knowledge!« or whichever way he would put it.	
27	His study-circle brought together 30 students of jurisprudence, most of them poor and with alms.	So, he became famous in these regions, and his circle [of study] united around 200 men who were taught, the greater part of them men of poverty[73] and piety.
28	It is related that a crisis occurred which led to great suffering [of starvation].	It is transmitted that a severe crisis occurred in a certain year, which led to great suffering [of starvation].
29	Some inhabitants of the village were aware of that, but in his village there was not enough food to send to all of them.	One day one of the inhabitants of the village sent a loaf of bread as food to one of their men because they had seen his need.
30	So, they sent a loaf of bread to one of them. [That person] offered this to a companion, then this other one offered it to another one, until it came back to the one who gave it in the beginning.	But that man offered it to a companion from the group believing that he would fulfil his wishes from another place. But that man offered it to another companion, and they continued that until the loaf came back to the one into whose hand it had fallen the first time.
31	He came with it to the jurist and told him the story.	He came with it to the jurist and told him the story.

72 This unusually long period for a date of a death begins 22 May 1213 and ends 13 March 1252.

73 »dhū faqr«; cf. faqīr (»poor«), a term especially for Sufi adepts at that time.

32	He was amazed and said: »Praised be God who gave among my companions the peculiarity (*ṣifa*) of the people of the bench[74] (*aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa*) and of the helpers (*anṣār*) of our prophet Muḥammad – God bless him and grant him salvation – when he, the supreme, said: ›They give preference over themselves, even though poverty be their own lot.‹«[75] Then he drew together his students and distributed the chunks between them according to their number.	He was amazed about that and said: »Praised be God who gave among my companions one of the peculiarities of the companions of the messenger of God – God bless him and grant him salvation – about whom God said: ›They give preference over themselves, even though poverty be their own lot.‹« Then he drew together his students and distributed the loaf among them.
33	It can be ascribed to his asceticism that he never collected a *dīnār* or a *dirham*.	What was narrated about his asceticism is that he did not collect a *dīnār* or a *dirham.*
34		His death was in the year 650 and something. The *shaykh* Abū al-Ghayth came to console because of him, and the jurist ʿAmr followed him [as his successor], because he had no offspring. He never married a woman. He was asked his reason for that and said: »It distracts me from knowledge!« God, the supreme, have mercy on him, *āmīn.*

In accordance with their distinct needs, al-Janadī and al-Sharjī arranged their biographies differently. This divergence is already apparent at the start of their respective biographies of ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī. Because al-Sharjī arranged his collection alphabetically, the name precedes, whereas al-Janadī arranged the *ṭabaqāt* of the learned men in chronological order. As in the case of ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī, al-Janadī might further subdivide the people within one *ṭabaqa* according to geographical sub-categories.[76] Al-Sharjī, on the other hand, believed that the alphabetical arrangement made his book easier to use.[77]

74 For the »people of the bench« and the helpers of the prophet, see further down.

75 Quotation from Qurʾān 59:9.

76 In our case, al-Janadī writes of the region of Ḥajja, and in that region of the village al-Mikhlāfa, which was a village famous for its learned men and therefore a centre of learning at the time of al-Janadī. From al-Mikhlāfa alone, al-Janadī writes about eleven persons. But for the village mentioned before al-Mikhlāfa called al-Ghuṣn (whose location the Yemeni editor does not know), he reports on just one learned man. The next region al-Janadī proceeds to in his description is al-Mahjam on the coastal plain of the Red Sea, west of Ḥajja.

77 al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 40.

The *nisba* al-Sibāʿī is explained differently by the two authors. For al-Sharjī, it leads to a group of the federation of Hamdān[78], which is possible: a group with this name lives just south of Saʿda in the north of the country. Al-Sharjī may have found al-Janadī's version implausible: the latter speaks of a grandfather (or ancestor) of the *faqīh* who is said to have had the name al-Sibāʿī. Al-Janadī adds two other *nisba*s, of which one, al-Qudamī[79], would also point to the north of the country.

The next passage is to be found only in al-Sharjī and contains conventional formulaic and rhetorically embellished material, here with a popular metathetical play on the roots *ʿ-l-m/ʿ-m-l*. Formulae like those used here appear at a comparable place in almost every biography in al-Sharjī's collection.

Al-Sharjī obviously had al-Janadī's text in front of him when he wrote this biography and, by the way, many others: in the course of his collection he quotes al-Janadī 91 times. But al-Janadī's remarks about the youth and early career of ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī were not interesting enough for al-Sharjī, who skips them. Al-Janadī was interested in the relations between the learned men and focused on the teaching genealogies of his subjects.

Citing Ibn Samura,[80] al-Janadī mentions two famous books which Shafiʿi pupils had to learn: *al-Muhadhdhab* (by al-Shirāzī, Ibn Samura's model) and *al-Bayyān* (written/collected by Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Khayr al-ʿImrānī, a contemporary of Ibn Samura).[81] Both books are not mentioned by al-Sharjī: this divergence between al-Janadī and al-Sharjī again points to the different objectives of the two authors.

Al-Sharjī erred in relation to the locality of the *faqīh*'s youth, as will be seen below. While al-Mikhlāfa was near Ḥajja (northwest of Sanaa) according to al-Janadī, al-Sharjī placed the village in the mountains near the Tihama-town of al-Mahjam. Al-Sharjī confused al-Mikhlāfa near Ḥajja with Bayt Khalīfa, which lies near al-Mahjam,[82] to where ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī migrated from al-Mikhlāfa (we are not told why in this case). There, he met a *shaykh*, a certain Qarābilī. After an initial offer to stay for three days, which was the traditional length of a period of hospitality, the *shaykh* invited him to remain and teach in Bayt Khalīfa. This is again not referred to by al-Sharjī, who shows little interest in extended descriptions of biographical developments and scientific careers. A date cited by al-Janadī cannot be right: 718/1318 is too late by slightly more than 100 years. Indeed, the reign of the Zaydī Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza, whose accession along with the strengthening of the Zaydiyya had led ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī to leave his village near Ḥajja, spanned the period from 583/1187 until his death on 18 Muharram 614/27 April 1217. After the death of this imam and the waning of Zaydī power, the *faqīh* returned to his village. Another famous *shaykh*, Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl, then came to the *faqīh*.

78 See the beginning of al-Sharjī's biography above (and al-Hamdānī, *Kitāb al-iklīl al-kitāb al-ʿāshir, ed. al-Khaṭīb*, 228) for a high-ranking group in the Hamdān genealogies, Sibāʿ (or Subāʿ) b. Dhaʿfān.

79 The genealogy of Qudam b. Qādim can be found in al-Hamdānī, *Kitāb al-iklīl al-kitāb al-ʿāshir*, ed. al-Khaṭīb, 102.

80 Ibn Samura, *Ṭabaqāt fuqahā' al-Yaman*, ed. Sayyid, 198.

81 See al-Shirāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, ed. al-Zuḥaylī; al-ʿImrānī, *al-Bayyān*, ed. *al-Nūrī*.

82 Both names use the same root kh-l-f, a fact that could have facilitated the confusion.

Once the power of the Zaydiyya became stronger again under the imam al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (r. 646-656/1248-1258, the date of his death), both the *faqīh* ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī and Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl left the village again to return to the Tihama. There Abū al-Ghayth b. Jamīl settled with the *faqīh* Aḥmad b. ʿAṭāʾ, the son of the founder of the village Bayt ʿAṭāʾ (holy men appear repeatedly as founders of villages, e.g. modern Bayt al-Faqīh). For this *faqīh*, al-Janadī has a biography, but al-Sharjī does not.[83] The *faqīh* ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī settled with the *faqīh* ʿAmr, one of his pupils. This is obviously of interest to al-Sharjī, who provides slightly more detail than al-Janadī, giving the host's *nisba*, namely ʿAmr al-Sibāʿī. His biography can be found in al-Sharjī's collection,[84] where he is called al-Tibāʿī instead of al-Sibāʿī, a misreading which is easy to explain paleographically.

After reporting the death of ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī, al-Janadī provides further biographical details. The reason the subject gives for having never married – that marriage would have diverted him from knowledge – can be seen as another sign of his saintliness. While marriage was not usually a problem for saintly Muslims, there are some cases of celibacy among holy men.

The end of the biography shows a rather balanced picture, although al-Sharjī writes of 200 students instead of just 30. He also mentions that the greater part of them were »*dhū faqr*«, with which Sufis could be meant; this would fit in with al-Sharjī's endeavour to mainly include Sufi holy men or present holy men as Sufis.

The story that follows in both works is not a typical Sufi miracle story but rather an anecdote used on other occasions by different authors. It was designed to portray the temperance and selflessness of these Sufi circles. The crisis was obviously a famine.

In al-Janadī's text, a reference to »the people of the bench (*ṣuffa*)« follows, an allusion to a place in the mosque of Medina were the poor people used to pray and to live on a bench in the mosque at the time of the prophet Muḥammad. Sufis regarded these people as the first Sufis and an embodiment of the ideal of poverty, and their behaviour is quasi-sanctified by a quotation from the Qurʾān. Al-Janadī's version certainly is the *versio* or *lectio difficilior*, whereas al-Sharjī typically omits any reference to the people of the ṣuffa, instead speaking of companions of the prophet (the helpers) and thus avoiding the potential need for complicated and lengthy explanations. Al-Janadī's play on words between *ṣifa* (description; peculiarity) and *ṣuffa* (bench) (in written form both are practically the same in Arabic) is lost in the process.

That the saintly man did not touch money, al-Janadī ascribes to his asceticism (*zuhd*). In Al-Sharjī's book there follows a typical ending of a biography, with only an approximate date of death given. Because the manner of succession is attributed to ʿAlī al-Sibāʿī's childless status, al-Sharjī adds here the anecdote concerning the subject's reluctance to marry. The biography ends with common phrases.

83 al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. al-Akwaʿ, 1: 406-410.

84 al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 274- 278.

Conclusion

Both authors of the biographies presented here were motivated by a desire to do something for their homeland (*waṭan*). Al-Janadī was ultimately stimulated by his love of the homeland (*ḥubb al-waṭan*), as he himself formulated in a positive way. His main purpose seems to have been to induce readers of his work to remember and to imitate the exemplary men whose lives he presented. The »God-loving community« of al-Janadī consists of saintly men, teachers and judges who lived in the Sunni southwest of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, the main community the author wrote his book for was that of his Yemeni contemporaries, while he also wished to reach and enlighten an audience outside of South Arabia.

Al-Sharjī formulated his own intentions rather negatively: Yemenis were not included in any earlier biographical collection from outside of Yemen (as examples he names the collections of al-Qushayrī, al-Suhruwardī, al-Sulamī and Ibn Khamīs). Therefore, al-Sharjī wanted to show that there were Yemenis in great numbers who were equally worthy of mention in biographical dictionaries dealing with Sufis but had hitherto been neglected outside of Yemen. The communities al-Sharji had in mind when writing his book were those of Sufis living in the Sunni regions of Yemen before his time. Therefore, for him, miracles were of great importance. He saw them as the distinguishing feature of the Sufis. His target audience comprised people uninformed about the accomplishments of Yemeni Sufis inside Yemen and especially outside of it.

Both authors extracted their material from two sources. Firstly, they drew on earlier compilations, transforming and editing the biographies according to their special aims. This was al-Sharjī's principal means but certainly not his only one. The second source of material derived from interviewing informants. Al-Janadī mentions travels in the course of which he visited the graves of saints and questioned people, often relatives of the saintly man. One can certainly confirm what Bray says about Arabic biographies in general: they were, »at least in part, the result of compilation from earlier sources as well as of information-seeking from living informants where possible.«[85]

South Arabian biographical collections like the ones studied here were aimed at building and maintaining different communities, ranging from that of the Sunnis-Shafiʿis in Yemen to the Sufi community in and outside the region to Southern Arabians as a whole. Inside South Arabia in al-Janadī's time, this could mean taking the side of the Rasūlids politically. Al-Janadī at least, if one considers his positions and his closeness to the Rasūlid court, certainly understood his task of writing a biographical collection in this sense. Maintaining and reinforcing the boundaries of and between groups, South Arabian biographical collections clearly had a role in shaping the identities of the communities in question.

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85 Bray, Literary Approaches, 244.

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Abbreviations

al-Sulūk: al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk
Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ: Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ ahl al-ṣidq wa-l-ikhlāṣ

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Compiling the Deeds of Salzburg Saints: The 12th-Century *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* and the Monastery of Admont

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This chapter examines *De episcopis Salisburgensibus*, a late 12th-century collection of texts concerning the bishops and history of Salzburg that was seemingly compiled by monks belonging to the Benedictine monastery of Admont in Styria, Austria. It discusses the structure, sources, manuscript tradition and reception of this little-known collection, which focuses primarily on the ›glorious‹ early centuries of the archiepiscopal see but through the inclusion of the Lives of later bishops and a bishops' list also stresses continuity in the sanctity and importance of the Salzburg institution. This latter message was particularly apt at the time of writing, which followed decades of upheaval due to conflict between the Salzburg archbishops and Emperor Frederick I. The compilation of this propagandistic collection by Admont monks was in keeping with the close historical and cultural relationship between the monastery and the archepiscopal see and the long-standing role of Admont as a centre for the composition and compilation of hagiographical and historiographical works concerning Salzburg and its bishops. Building upon a detailed appraisal of the manuscript evidence, this chapter shines light on the compilation strategies employed by the compilers of *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* and discusses the collection in the context of the special relationship between Salzburg and Admont.

Keywords: Salzburg, Admont, hagiography, historiography, manuscript transmission, institutional history, compilation strategy, monastic identity

At some point in or shortly after 1186 a group of ten texts relating to the history of the archiepiscopal see of Salzburg was included in a manuscript compiled for, and probably at, the Benedictine monastery of Admont, located within the then Duchy of Styria. Admont was founded as an *Eigenkloster* or proprietary monastery of Salzburg in 1074 by Archbishop Gebhard and lies in the middle of the Ennstaler Alps, just over 100 kilometres southeast of the see. Aside from this Admont codex, today in private hands in Salzburg, the collection of texts is preserved in six manuscripts dating from the 12th to the 16th centuries. While manuscript copies of the

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collection have in modern times been used for the purposes of editing many of its constituent texts, the compilation as a whole has received little scholarly attention, despite being published no less than twice by the antiquarian Heinrich Canisius in the early 17th century.[1] In the absence of a title for the work within the manuscript tradition, I will adopt that given to it by Canisius: *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* (»On the bishops of Salzburg«). In this article, I wish to investigate the circumstances surrounding the compilation and reception of this collection and will look at its structure, sources and manuscript witnesses with the aim of casting light on the motivations behind the enterprise. I aim to show that a study of this medieval biographical collection adds to our knowledge of the nature of hagiographical and historiographical activity at both Salzburg and Admont in the final decades of the 12th century and also illuminates the relationship between the Benedictine house and the archiepiscopal see a century after the establishment of the *Eigenkloster*. This study will argue, namely, that the compilation of *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* was bound up in the complex conceptions of identity and community that existed within the high medieval Salzburg-Admont axis.

The Content of the Compilation

In its original form, as can be reconstructed from the Admont manuscript (*A*), *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* (henceforth *De episcopis*) comprised the following ten Latin texts:

1) *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*[2]: »The conversion of the Bavarians and Carinthians«
2) *Breves notitiae*[3]: »Brief notices«
3) *Translatio sancti Rudberti* (BHL 7403)[4]: »The translation of St Rupert«
4) *Vita et miracula sancti Virgilii episcopi* (BHL 8680-8682)[5]: »The life and miracles of St Virgil the bishop«
5) *Vita et miracula sancti Eberhardi episcopi* (BHL 2362, 2364)[6]: »The life and miracles of St Eberhard the bishop«
6) *Vita et miracula sancti Hartwici episcopi* (BHL 3759)[7]: »The life and miracles of St Hartwig the bishop«
7) *Translatio sancti Martini episcopi ad Iuvavum* (BHL 5659)[8]: »The translation of St Martin the bishop to Salzburg«

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1 *De episcopis Salisburgensibus*, ed. Canisius (1602), 247-323; ed. Canisius (1604), 1138-1252; reprinted in Canisius and Basnage, *Thesaurus* 281-315, 338-344, 393-448, 462-474. The extended title in the 1602 volume reads *»De episcopis Salisburgensibus. Auctore S. Eberhardi Archiep. Salisburgensis discipulo«*, Canisius incorrectly attributing the entire collection to the author of one of the texts, the *Vita I Eberhardi* (see below). The witnesses of *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* copied by Canisius will also be discussed below.

2 *Conversio*, ed. Wattenbach, 4-14; ed. Wolfram, 58-80; ed. Lošek (1997), 90-135.

3 *Breves notitiae*, ed. Lošek, 88-118.

4 *Translatio sancti Rudberti*, ed. Wattenbach, 8, n. 32.

5 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 86-95.

6 *Vita I Eberhardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 77-84. *Miracula Eberhardi*, ed. Canisius (1604), 1206-1214; ed. Canisius and Basnage (1725), 414-418; ed. Wattenbach, 101(from chap. 7)-103 (this edition is missing the final *declamatio*).

7 *Vita Hartwici*, ed Wattenbach, 95-97.

8 *Translatio Martini*, ed. Canisius (1602), 316-318; ed. Canisius (1604), 1221-1223; ed. Canisius and Basnage, 311-312, 423-424.

8) *Annales breves*[9]: »Brief annals«
9) *Nomina et ordo successionis Saltzpurgensis episcoporum*[10]: »Names and order of succession of the bishops of Salzburg«
10) *Computationes de tempore sancti Rudberti* (BHL 7401)[11]: »Calculations on the time of St Rupert«

De episcopis is not solely a biographical collection, containing as it does a combination of historiographical and hagiographical tracts. The boundaries between hagiography and historiography are generally quite fluid, and this is certainly true of *De episcopis*, both as a whole and in its different parts.[12] For example, the first chapter of the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* (henceforth *Conversio*) constitutes a rewriting of the lost original Life of Rupert of Salzburg, while the *Vita Virgilii* is based entirely on the information concerning the saint in the *Conversio*.[13] Two of the texts, the *Translatio Rudberti* and the *Computationes de tempore sancti Rudberti* (henceforth *Computationes*) are hagiographical works, insofar as they concern the life and cult of Rupert, but considering that their overriding interest lies in determining the correct dates of his death and translation, it seems a desire for historical accuracy was their prime motivator. This interest in the chronology of events also accounts for the *Annales breves* and the *Nomina et ordo successionis Saltzpurgensis episcoporum* in *De episcopis*. Unlike some of the other collections discussed in this volume, *De episcopis* is a compilation composed predominantly, if not solely, of existing texts, rather than an authorial work in the conventional sense.

Looking at the overall content, *De episcopis* amounts to something approaching an institutional history, with a clear emphasis on the early history of the Salzburg bishopric and its role in the conversion of parts of Bavaria, Carinthia and Pannonia in the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries.[14] The early bishops Rupert and Virgil are the most prominent figures in *De episcopis*, and the multiplication of historiographical and hagiographical texts concerning this period creates a sense of a ›golden age‹ in the history of Salzburg. Yet there is no overlooking a second facet of the overall collection, namely the sense of historical continuity evoked by the choice of texts, which serves to link this glorious past to the late 12th-century present. This is done in part through the figures of Hartwig, a late 10th/early 11th-century archbishop, and one of his successors, Eberhard, who died as late as 1164. Hartwig's mooted role in the translations of Rupert and Martin also helps to bridge the chronological divide.

Moreover, the sense of continuity in *De episcopis* is reinforced by the inclusion of the *Nomina et ordo successionis Saltzpurgensis episcoporum* or bishops' list. Beginning with Rupert and ending with the then incumbent, Adalbert III of Bohemia, and with all prelates regarded as saints given the prefix *sanctus*, the list provides a synopsis of the history and sanctity of

9 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 85, n. 3.

10 *Catalogi archiepiscoporum*, ed. Holder-Egger, 353-354.

11 *Computationes*, ed. Wattenbach, 15-16 (column B); ed. Sepp, 412-415.

12 Lotter, Methodisches, 307-314; Dolbeau, Les hagiographes; Lifschitz, Beyond positivism; van Uytfanghe, Die Vita im Spannungsfeld.

13 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 52-53; *idem*, Zu Biographie, 350-351.

14 On this genre, see Sot, Local and Institutional History.

Salzburg in a single frame. Unsurprisingly, the two imperially appointed anti-archbishops of Salzburg, Berthold of Moosburg (1085-1106) and Henry of Berchtesgaden (1174-1177), are omitted from this *»généalogie spirituelle«*, and thus evidence of discontinuity and the disruption of the archiepiscopal succession suppressed.[15] The final text, the *Computationes*, again concerns Rupert and the beginnings of the see, but in stating the number of years between Rupert's floruit and the year of writing, 1186, the text highlights the longevity and endurance of the Salzburg tradition. Furthermore, it was the reported finding of the grave of Virgil in 1181 that gave rise to the writing of his and Hartwig's Lives, and the miracles accompanying both *vitae* and that of Eberhard are presented as happening up to the time of writing. If one looks at the long list of miracles attributed to the three saints, it is noticeable that those pilgrims who are said to have witnessed them were drawn to Salzburg from places as far away as Aquileia, Bohemia, Hungary and Saxony.[16] By this means the texts reaffirm for the late 12th century that which is extolled in the *Conversio* and other texts dealing with the origins of the bishopric: the sanctity and regional importance of Salzburg. The significance of place in hagiography is well known, sanctity being bestowed on specific places through their role as settings for events in the lives of holy men or women.[17] Including a series of saints associated with a particular locality obviously gives rise to a multiplier effect in this respect, enhancing the propaganda value already inherent to individual hagiographical texts.[18]

Date of Compilation

The *terminus post quem* for the completion of *De episcopis* is 1186, the year in which the final text, the *Computationes*, was written. The *terminus ante quem* is provided by the bishops' list, which ends with Adalbert III (d. 1200). Close investigation of the earliest witness of *De episcopis*, the Admont manuscript *A*, may allow us to narrow this date-range down further, however, as there is reason to believe that it is the autograph copy of the collection. *A* contains, namely, the earliest witness of the 1186 *Computationes*, and there is evidence to suggest that this new version was first composed during the course of the production of the Admont codex. The 1186 *Computationes* is an updated version of a text written in 1129, which, thanks to a change in the basis of the calculations, saw a new year, 623 rather than 544, being determined as the year of Rupert's death.[19] The year 623 is also given for Rupert's death in the *Breves annales*, which precede the *Computationes* in the collection in *A*, but it

15 Quotation from Picard, *Le souvenir*, 571; for a discussion of the genre of episcopal lists, see *ibid*., 537-572.

16 See *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 92, 94.

17 See, for example, Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, 448-449; Geary, Saints, 22. On the importance of place in the wider cult of saints, see Thacker and Sharpe, *Local Saints*.

18 On the propagandistic nature of hagiographical texts, see Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, 438-450; Prinz, Hagiographie; Geary, Saints. Lhotsky refers to the post-1181 Lives and miracles of Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig as *»eine Art Propagandaschrift«*; Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde*, 219.

19 *Computationes*, ed. Wattenbach, 15; ed. Sepp, 408-411.

is clear, tellingly, that this and other dating details are written *in rasura* by another, roughly contemporary, hand.[20] The erasures suggest that the original annal had contained different dating specifics, whether reliant on the 1129 or another earlier version. The new calculations of the 1186 *Computationes* would then have necessitated deletion of the original details.[21] This would appear to provide crucial evidence that the 1186 *Computationes* was actually composed as the last element in the compilation process, thus dating both *A* and *De episcopis* itself to that year.[22]

The glorification of Salzburg in *De episcopis* is striking when placed in the context of the prevailing circumstances at the archiepiscopal see. The construction of a new cathedral in Salzburg circa 1181 had been made necessary by the destruction of the previous church in 1167 in the course of the long-running struggle between the Salzburg archbishops and Emperor Frederick I (1152-1190).[23] The conflict stemmed from Salzburg's relatively steadfast support for Pope Alexander III (1159-1181), despite the emperor's recognition of a succession of anti-popes. This ultimately led to the appointment of an imperial anti-archbishop of Salzburg, Henry of Berchtesgaden, in 1174, and it was only with the Treaty of Venice in 1177, which saw the underlying conflict resolved in Alexander III's favour, that stability could return to Salzburg under Archbishop Conrad III of Wittelsbach (1177-1183). Having been overlooked at Venice, Adalbert of Bohemia, the papally sanctioned archbishop of Salzburg from 1168 onwards, would have to wait until 1183 to return to the seat, which he then held until his death in 1200. As in the case of the hagiographical activity occasioned by the 1181 discovery of Virgil's tomb, *De episcopis* could be seen as an attempt to reassert the regional primacy and enduring sanctity of Salzburg as it emerged from decades of upheaval. In this context, centuries-old texts such as the *Conversio* and the *Breves notitiae* that documented Salzburg's former glories and legitimised its status were now of renewed interest and importance, and could be usefully redeployed to convey a message to a late 12th-century audience.[24]

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20 This situation was already remarked upon by Franz Martin in his article on the manuscript; Martin, Admonter Handschrift, 279.

21 Curiously, while the obsolete dating details appear to have been promptly erased, there is evidence that the insertion of the ›correct‹ information did not happen immediately. Instead the crucial sections were left blank for a time. This can be determined by reference to the reading of the annal in the three (*Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*) witnesses of *De episcopis*: Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 14, fol. 32v; Melk, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 100, fol. 249v; Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 15, fol. 33r: *Anno ab incarnatione domini sexcentesimo decimo quarto, ab ordinatione pape secundo, et regni Heraclii imperatoris octauo, post obitum magni Gregorii xiii annis, et v mensibus euolutis die dominice resurrectionis ut legimus beatus Rutbertus primus Iuuauensis* (Heiligenkreuz: *Uiuauensis*) *episcopus migrauit ad dominum.* Of particular importance here is the strange absence of the name of the relevant pope. Because there is significant evidence to suggest that the compilers of the *MLA* used *A* as a direct source (see below), it seems highly probable that the missing pope stems from his name having been previously deleted in *A*. It seems likely that there was also still a blank space in *A* at the point where the year of Rupert's death had been written. The 614 year given in the *MLA* witnesses does not accord with any other known version of the *Computationes*, and Easter did not fall on 27 March in that year (the basis for the calculation of the correct year was the belief that Rupert's date of death, March 27, had been the date of Easter Sunday in the relevant year; *Computationes*, ed. Sepp, 408-411). It could, of course, also be the case that the scribe of the lost original *MLA* exemplar followed his template and left a number of blank spaces, only for the scribe of a later copy to fill or eliminate some of the gaps.

22 While not aware of the existence of *A*, Bernhard Sepp recognised the concordance of the 1186 *Computationes* and the preceding annals in the other witnesses, which led him to speculate that the author of the *Computationes* might be identical with the compiler of *De episcopis*; *Computationes*, ed. Sepp, 409, n. 5.

23 On the destruction of the cathedral and the conflict in general, see Hödl, Erzstift Salzburg; Dopsch, Salzburg, 278-301; *Historia calamitatum*, ed. Zeller.

24 On the increasing interest in the early Salzburg texts at the turn of the 13th century, see *Conversio*, ed. Wolfram, 39-40.

The propagandistic quality of the collection's content might lead one to expect that it was a product of the very institution it sought to legitimise and exalt. Furthermore, it might be assumed that *De episcopis* was designed to embolden and encourage cohesion among a Salzburg audience at a time of division and relative uncertainty. Yet a study of the transmission and reception of the work points to it having been compiled by monks from Admont and suggests that its readership was initially restricted to the Styrian monastery. Indeed, a copy of the work cannot be shown to have made its way to Salzburg itself until the second half of the 13th century. The following discussion of the compilation process, manuscript tradition and reception of *De episcopis* will culminate in a response to the question of why a Salzburg *Propagandaschrift* might have been produced at and for Admont and consider how the work fits in with the vibrant intellectual climate that prevailed at the monastery in the final decades of the 12th century.

The Admont Manuscript

The abovementioned evidence that *A* is the autograph copy of *De episcopis* has significant implications for the interpretation of the collection. Before outlining these, let us look more closely at the context of *De episcopis* within *A*. The contents of the manuscript are as follows:

Fol. 1r-18v: *Passio sancti Thomae Cantuariensis* (BHL 8201, 8171)
Fol. 19r-92v *Liber gestorum Barlaam et Iosaphat* (BHL 979)
Fol. 93r-113v: *Vita sancti Malachiae episcopi* (BHL 5188)
Fol. 114r-187v: *Vita sancti Bernhardi Claraevallis abbatis* (BHL 1217, 1218, 1220)
Fol. 188r-190v: *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*
Fol. 190v-199r: *Breves notitiae*
Fol. 199v: *Translatio sancti Rudberti* (BHL 7403)
Fol. 200r-208r: *Vita et miracula sancti Virgilii episcopi* (BHL 8680-8682)
Fol. 208r-216v: *Vita et miracula sancti Eberhardi episcopi* (BHL 2362, 2364)
Fol. 216v-218v: *Vita et miracula sancti Hartwici episcopi* (BHL 3759)
Fol. 219r-219v: *Translatio sancti Martini episcopi ad Iuvavum* (BHL 5659)
Fol. 220r: *Annales breves*
Fol. 220r: *Nomina et ordo successionis Saltzpurgensis episcoporum*
Fol. 220v-221r: *Computationes de tempore sancti Rudberti* (BHL 7401)
Fol. 222r: *Decretum Gregorii papae VII. qui et Hiltebrandus*[25]
Fol. 222r-222v: *Epistola Heinrici regis contra Hiltebrandum et repulsa papatus eius*[26]
Fol. 222v: *De Wichberto quem rex H[einricus] papam constituit expulso Hiltebrando, qui et Gregorius*[27]
Fol. 223r-224v: *Decretum Wicberti qui et Clemens*[28]

25 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 190, vol 1, ed. Nass, 324-326. The title given here for this and the subsequent items is that which is found in the manuscript.

26 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 188, vol 1, ed. Nass, 319-322.

27 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 192, vol 1, ed. Nass, 327-329.

28 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 193, vol 1, ed. Nass, 329-336 (*ad* 334, l. 5).

Fol. 224v-225r: *Epistola Heinrici tercii imperatoris ad H[einricum] filium suum, quando coniuratio super eum facta est, et regalia insignia filio reddere compulsus est*[29]
Fol. 225r-226v: *Epistola H[einrici] imperatoris ad Ludwicum regem Francorum quando a filio suo depositus est, satis flebiliter descripta*[30]
Fol. 226v-228r: *De synodo Remis celebrata sub Kalysto papa, et anathemate Heinrici regis Vti*[31]
Fol. 228v-229r: *Decreta synodi*[32]
Fol. 229v-231v- *Epistola Iohannis presbiteri et regis Indorum ad Manuelem Constantinopoli*[33]

Franz Martin, who discovered the manuscript in the library of the counts of Kuenburg at Jungwoschitz (now Mladá Vožice) in Bohemia in 1915, published a description in which he identified three different scribal hands at work.[34] Hands A and B were responsible for the first four texts and for *De episcopis*, with a Hand C making a minor contribution to the latter. Hand A alone transcribed the subsequent eight items concerning the Investiture Conflict and the final Prester John letter. It appears therefore that the manuscript represents a single unit, presumably written without any major interruption, with Hand A beginning and completing the task.

The presence of the codex at Admont in the medieval period is clear from owner-marks and from its appearance in library catalogues dating to 1376 and 1380.[35] That the manuscript was also written specifically for the Benedictine monastery is strongly suggested by Martin's identification of Hand A as the scribe responsible for another Admont manuscript dating to the second half of the 12th century, Cod. 125.[36] Moreover, evidence for the use of the codex at Admont in the late 12th century will be presented below. Whether the manuscript was written at Admont or at Salzburg is, however, another question. *De episcopis* will be shown, namely, to have been compiled from numerous Salzburg manuscript sources, while the inclusion of the Life of Thomas Becket in the codex is also potentially indicative of a Salzburg provenance for some or all of the sources used. The presence of a relatively early copy of

29 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 238, vol 2, ed. Nass, 396-398.

30 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 240, vol 2, ed. Nass, 400-405.

31 *Hessonis scholastici relatio*, ed. Wattenbach, 21-27; *Codex Udalrici*, no. 324, vol 2, ed. Nass, 544-552 (ad 551, l. 12).

32 *Hessonis scholastici relatio*, ed. Wattenbach, 27-28; *Codex Udalrici*, no. 324, vol 2, ed. Nass, 544-552 (ab 551, l. 13; the first section of the text, the actual *decreta*, is not present in the *Codex Udalrici*).

33 *Epistola Iohannis presbiteri*, ed. Zarncke, 909-922.

34 Martin, Admonter Handschrift, 268 et passim. Regarding the date of Martin's visit to Jungwoschitz, see Koller, Franz Martin, 26. The manuscript is now in private hands in Salzburg, with a microfilm copy available to consult at the Salzburger Landesarchiv (SLA, HS 907).

35 Möser-Mersky, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge*, 26, 51; 1376: *»Item passio s. Thome Cantuariensis et aliorum«* (»Also the Passion of St Thomas of Canterbury and of others«). A note written in a 15th-/16th-century hand in the upper margin of fol. 2v in *A* reads *»Iste liber attinet monasterio Admontensis«* (»This book belongs to the monastery of Admont«). There is also a small parchment table of contents affixed to the front cover of the codex which is written in a hand belonging to the second half of the 13th century and which ends with the number XXV and designation *Admund*; see Martin, Admonter Handschrift, 267.

36 Martin, Admonter Handschrift, 268. Whether Hands B and C also belonged to Admont monks cannot be determined at this point. On Cod. 125, see manuscripta.at/?ID=26015 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

Becket's Life at Salzburg would be explained, namely, by the friendship between the Canterbury martyr and Archbishop Conrad III of Salzburg (1177-1183).[37] One element of the manuscript pointing to it having been written in whole or in part at Admont is the pair of items entitled *De synodo Remis celebrata sub Kalysto papa, et anathemate Heinrici regis V^ti* and *Decreta synodi*, which constitutes the final part of the collection of Investiture documents.[38] The text of these two units in *A* has namely been shown to be dependent on the witness in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), Cod. 629, a mid-12th-century Admont manuscript containing the so-called Admont letter collection (*»Admonter Briefsammlung«*).[39] This suggests that this pair of items and, by extension, the only subsequent text, the *Epistola Iohannis presbiteri*, were transcribed at Admont. It thus becomes likely that some or all of the remainder of the manuscript, including *De episcopis*, was also compiled at the monastery, with the necessary source materials having been brought there from Salzburg and, perhaps, elsewhere.

How should we view the manuscript's composition? Four hagiographical works precede *De episcopis*, which is followed by a short collection of Investiture documents and the Prester John letter. It is arguably possible to identify a broad ›Church versus State‹ theme that binds the *Passio Thomae, Barlaam et Iosaphat*, the Investiture letters and both certain texts within *De episcopis* (*Vita I Eberhardi, Translatio Martini*) and, given the historical circumstances of its composition, the Salzburg collection as a whole. While not quite ›Church versus State‹, the *Vita Malachiae* shares a wider theme of ecclesiastical reform. Even the final text, the *Epistola Iohannis Presbiteri* can be argued to fit this concept, ending the manuscript with the vision of a glorious Christian kingdom where members of court hold both ecclesiastical and secular office. It is therefore possible to posit a strand linking most if not all of the texts within *A*. In this scenario, the history and bishops of Salzburg would have been deliberately set within a wider context of Church reform and of the relationship between ecclesiastical and secular powers. An alternative approach to the manuscript context would be to isolate *De episcopis* and the Investiture documents as two discrete, cohesive collections. The five remaining texts can all be classed as relatively recent works, with three dealing with saints who died in 1148 (Malachy), 1153 (Bernard) and 1170 (Thomas Becket), respectively, and both the legend of Barlaam and Josephat and the *Epistola Iohannis Presbiteri* not being found in any manuscripts dating to before the second half of the 12th century.[40] Therefore, the main criterion underlying the choice of these texts may have been their novelty, the items being designed to supplement the existing library holdings at Admont. In the case of the saints'

37 That Becket's cult was promoted in Salzburg is shown by Conrad's consecration of a chapel dedicated to him in the cemetery of the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter in 1178; see Steinitz, Erzbischof Konrad III..

38 *Codex Udalrici*, no. 324, vol 2, ed. Nass, 544-552.

39 Martin, Admonter Handschrift, 280-281; Hödl, Admonter Briefsammlung, 423-424; *Codex Udalrici*, no. 324, vol 2, ed. Nass, 544-552, at 545 and 551, fn. a. On Cod. 629, see manuscripta.at/?ID=9979 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

40 Dapelo, Il romanzo Latino, 186-193. The witness of the *Epistola* in *A* can be assigned to the B_{2b} sub-group within the manuscript tradition, according to the scheme devised by Wagner; Wagner, *›Epistola presbiteri Johannis‹*, 167-170. *A*, which was not known to Wagner, may actually provide a new *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the B redaction of the text, depending on whether the 1186 dating of the *Computationes* applies to the manuscript as a whole. The existing *terminus* for the B redaction is 1191 (*ibid*., 167).

Lives, the texts might also have been chosen with an eye to their inclusion in the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, an enormous hagiographical collection in planning or in progress at the monastery.[41] Whether an isolated collection within the manuscript or part of a project with a wider theme, there is no doubt that *De episcopis* constitutes a coherent Salzburg compendium and, as will be shown, the subsequent manuscript tradition demonstrates that later copyists viewed it as such.

Compilation Strategy: The Structure of the Salzburg Collection

Though lacking a title or preface, the juxtaposition of the Salzburg texts and their shared focus marks them out as a discrete collection. We have seen that there were three hands at work in the transcription of *De episcopis*. Whether one of more of these scribes is also to be regarded as the compiler of the collection is difficult to determine.[42] It could be that another individual was directing the scribes as to which texts to include. Looking at potential structuring elements, the arrangement can be said to adhere largely to a chronological sequence. *De episcopis* begins with two texts, the *Conversio* and *Breves notitiae*, concerning the early history of the episcopal see, including its role as a staging-post for missionary activity in Bavaria, Carinthia and Pannonia.[43] The two were written in or around 870 and 798, respectively.[44] *De episcopis* includes only the first nine of the 14 chapters of the *Conversio*, the scribe in A breaking off midway through the first sentence of chapter 10.[45] St Rupert, the bishop of Worms who appears to have been charged with instituting a new see at Salzburg around 700 and founded the abbey of St. Peter there, features strongly in the two historiographical tracts and is also the subject of the third text, the short *Translatio Rudberti*. The man responsible for the first translation of Rupert in 774, Bishop Virgil, is then the focus of the succeeding text, the *Vita et miracula sancti Virgilii*. This text was written after the discovery of Virgil's tomb in 1181 and, as mentioned above, the Life is largely composed of sections lifted from the *Conversio*. While this Life shares the focus of the three previous texts on the early history of the Salzburg see, it is also strongly linked to the two subsequent texts, the *Vita et miracula sancti Eberhardi* and the *Vita et miracula sancti Hartwici*. Numerous annals for the year 1181 report, namely, the sudden occurrence of diverse miracles associated with Virgil and Archbishops Eberhard I and Hartwig:

> … in this year Archbishops Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig became renowned for different signs and wonders in Salzburg metropolitan church, and [similarly] St Vitalis at [the monastery of] St. Peter[46]

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41 See below, pp. 163-165.

42 In his palaeographical study of five historiographical manuscripts from late 12th-century Admont, Gonsa identified one scribe across all of the codices, who, judging by the nature of his contributions, occupied the role of overseer or director in respect of their composition; Gonsa, *Einige paläographische Beiträge*, 64-67 et passim.

43 On these texts and their historical background, see Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, 193-336; *Conversio*, ed. *idem*; ed. Lošek (1997); *Breves notitiae*, ed. Lošek.

44 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 5-6; *Breves notitiae*, ed. *idem*, 33-39.

45 Wolfram argued that this abrupt discontinuation points to a contemporary lack of interest in the Pannonia-related content of the final chapters; *Conversio*, ed. Wolfram, 44; for a contrary opinion, see *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 8.

46 »*… hoc anno in metropolitana ecclesia Salzburge signis et prodigiis diversis claruerunt Virgilius, Eberhardus, Haertwicus, archiepiscopi, et apud Sanctum Petrum sanctus Vitalis; Continuatio Cremifanensis«;* ed. Wattenbach, 546. See also *Annales Sancti Rudberti*, ed. Wattenbach, 777; *Chronica collecta a Magno*, ed. Wattenbach, 507; *Continuatio Admuntensis*, ed. Wattenbach, 585-586; *Continuatio Claustroneoburgensis secunda*, ed. Wattenbach, 617; *Continuatio Mellicensis*, ed. Wattenbach, 505.

These reports are linked to a flurry of hagiographical activity at Salzburg. The above-mentioned Life and miracles of Virgil, which specifically refer to the 1181 discovery of his tomb, were composed shortly after this date. The Life and miracles of Eberhard (d. 1164; BHL 2363-2364) were also written in or around the same time.[47] Wattenbach assigned the Lives and miracles of both Virgil and Eberhard and of Hartwig (BHL 3759) to the same author, an anonymous Salzburg cleric writing after 1181.[48] The appearance of the three Lives and miracles in sequence in ÖNB, Cod. 339, a manuscript from Salzburg cathedral dating to circa 1200 provides support for the theory that they were written in tandem.[49] That the author belonged to Salzburg is also suggested by a reference to Virgil as *pater noster*, his citing of *annales nostri* for information on the life of the saint and his claim to have witnessed at least some of Eberhard's posthumous miracles.[50] While the miracles of Virgil and Eberhard certainly include ones post-dating 1181, the Life and miracles of Hartwig (d. 1023) contains no clear dating evidence, albeit the almost complete lack of knowledge the author possesses regarding the details of the archbishop's life and the fact that he expressly bemoans how the *antiqui* carelessly failed to record Hartwig's works for posterity would certainly be consistent with a late composition.[51]

The appearance of the Lives of Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig in sequence in *De episcopis* is, in any event, likely to stem from their hagiographical association after 1181. Interestingly, it seems that the various 1181 annals are actually dependent on the same association, rather than vice versa. Indeed, there is strong evidence to suggest that the collection of annals that contained the original 1181 entry was compiled at Admont using *De episcopis*, presumably the witness in *A*, as a source of information.[52] The version of the 1181 annal contained in the

47 The text includes an account of Archbishop Conrad III (1177-1183), Bishop Henry of Brixen (1178-1196) and Margrave Diepold of Vohburg (Diepold VI, d. after 1181) witnessing one of Eberhard's posthumous miracles; *Miracula Eberhardi*, ed Wattenbach, 102; regarding the date of Diepold VI's death, see Küss, *Die älteren Diepoldinger*, 58-61. A reference to *beatus Virgilius* is also suggestive of a date after 1181; *Miracula Eberhardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 102.

48 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 84-85; see also Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde*, 219; Haarländer, *Vitae Episcoporum*, 506-507, 510; Rener, *Hagiographie*, 432-433, 440-442.

49 On Cod. 339, see manuscripta.at/?ID=9734 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

50 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 87, l. 14; 88, l. 38; *Miracula Eberhardi*, ed Wattenbach, 101a, ll. 54-57; see Haarländer, *Vitae Episcoporum*, 510.

51 *Vita Hartwici*, ed. Wattenbach, 97, ll. 10-12.

52 In his 1998 study on the »Alpine Annals«, comprising manuscripts from Admont, Salzburg and Garsten, Beihammer posited a lost Admont original, compiled between 1177 and 1181, as the progenitor of the group; Beihammer, Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 253-327; see also Klebel, Fassungen. It seems, however, that this lost *Stammhandschrift* needs to be re-dated to slightly later. Beihammer mentions, namely, the compiler's frequent use of the *Vita II Gebehardi* (BHL 3294) as a source; Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 312-313, 327. This Life is datable to after 1181, as it mentions the occurrence of miracles at Eberhard's tomb, which can be taken as a reference to the post-1181 *Miracula Eberhardi* (BHL 2364); *Vita II Gebehardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 34, 44; Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde*, 215; Haarländer, *Vitae Episcoporum*, 506-507; Rener, *Hagiographie*, 421-422. It appears, moreover, that the compiler of the annals also made use of the post-1181 *Vita Hartwici*, as this furnishes the date of the latter's consecration, a detail in the mooted *Stammhandschrift* for which Beihammer (Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 302-303) could identify no source. It seems highly likely, therefore, that the 1181 entry to the *Stammhandschrift* was also derived from the post-1181 hagiographical works concerning Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig. Considering that the Admont manuscript, our *A*, contains the relevant texts and has a *terminus post quem* of 1186, it seems that the *Stammhandschrift* was also written shortly after this date. An examination of the entries in the *Stammhandschrift* regarding the date of Rupert's death (*ibid*., 273, n. 94) confirms this suspicion. It is recorded under 623. This is namely the incorrect year of death calculated in the 1186 *Computationes*! On the issue of the Garsten copy of the *Stammhandschrift*, which has traditionally been dated to 1181, see the following footnote.

Garsten exemplar of this annalistic collection is probably closest to the original, and strongly suggests that the details are based on the written Lives and Miracles of Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig, complete with reference to the wide geographical spread of those who are said to have witnessed the saints' miracles:

> 1181. At Iuvavum, i.e. Salzburg, the [body of the] saintly bishop Virgil, the eighth after the blessed Rupert, is discovered through a revelation of the Lord. With that, and the other saintly bishops Vitalis, Hartwig and Eberhard and the first and most excellent of them, St Rupert himself, having become renowned for many miracles, they are constantly thronged by many, not just by local people but also those from far-distant regions.[53]

Regarding the hagiographical association of Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig, it must be noted that the Life of Eberhard found in *De episcopis* is a different recension (BHL 2362) to that contained in the above-mentioned Cod. 339 (BHL 2363). It is a work written after 1177 by an *antiquus disciplinus* of Eberhard, who had been a monk at the Benedictine monastery of Biburg during the latter's abbacy. If we are to accept Wattenbach's thesis that the Lives and miracles of Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig were written in tandem, then the compilers of *De episcopis* must have rejected this recension (BHL 2633) of the *Vita Eberhardi* in favour of another (BHL 2362), while retaining the same set of miracles (BHL 2364). Perhaps the greater focus on Eberhard's monastic career in the latter Life was the reason for the compilers' preference. Why the order of the saints in *De episcopis* should break with the chronological sequence of Virgil-Hartwig-Eberhard found in the mooted source, Wattenbach's tripartite collection, is unclear.

53 *»1181. Apud Iuvavum id est Salzburch sanctus Virgilius episcopus, octavus a beato Ruperto, Domino revelante reperitur. Cum quo et alii sancti pontifices, Vitalis, Hertwicus, Eberhardus, et ipse primus et precipuus eorum sanctus Rupertus, multis miraculis declarati, a cunctis fere non solum vicinarum sed a longe positarum regionum populis frequentantur; Continuatio Admuntensis«;* ed. Wattenbach, 585-586. This entry is found in the Garsten version of the annals: ÖNB, Cod. 340; manuscripta.at/?ID=5879 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021). Beihammer and, before him, Klebel considered Garsten to be the only surviving copy of an original 1181 version of the »Alpine Annals«, with two later recensions from 1187 and 1197 providing the templates for the remaining representatives of this particular group of codices; Klebel, Fassungen, 130-135; Beihammer, Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 261-263. This theory rests on the fact that a note with the words *»Hoc anno hec cronica scripta in Garsten«* (»In this year this chronicle was written in Garsten«) appears in the margin next to the 1181 annal; ÖNB, Cod. 340, fol. 2v; *Continuatio Admuntensis*, ed. Wattenbach, 586. While the original scribe, who had written all entries down to 1181, also marked out the year-headings to 1188, the entries for 1182-1188 were written by an uncertain number of different hands, including the original scribe himself; Klebel, Fassungen, 53, 135. Whatever the outcome of any future palaeographical examination, the fact that the evidence mentioned earlier for the use of the post-1181 *Vita II Gebehardi*, *Vita Hartwicii* and *Computationes* is also present in the Garsten exemplar suggests that the above-cited *marginalium* should not be taken to date the Garsten manuscript, and that that the mooted 1181 version of the »Alpine Annals« is no more than a mirage. Indeed, considering that both Klebel and Beihammer assert that the annals in the Garsten manuscript agree with those in the other representatives of the annals up to the year 1187, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was also copied from the (original) 1187 version; Klebel, Fassungen, 135; Beihammer, Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 262-263. For a recent overview of the Austrian annalistic tradition and its historiography, see Haltrich, Annals.

There is the consideration that the seventh text in *De episcopis*, the *Translatio Martini*, follows on neatly from the *Vita Hartwici*. Indeed the divide between the *Translatio* and the *Vita Hartwici* is blurred by its author expressly assigning the episode to the *gesta* (deeds) of Hartwig, he being credited in the *Translatio* with the rediscovery of Martin's tomb at Salzburg.[54] Codicologically, the *Translatio* is removed from the *Vita Hartwici* in *A*, beginning with an illuminated initial on a new folio, but – as in the case of all *De episcopis* texts in *A* – lacking a title. Perhaps significantly, the *Translatio* does not appear in conjunction with the *Vita Hartwici* in the Wattenbach tripartite collection. Indeed, the *Translatio* in *A* is the earliest known witness and the text is not transmitted outside of *De episcopis* before the 15th century, when it was excerpted for inclusion in various miscellanies and Bavarian chronicles. It may be, therefore, that that the *Translatio* was first appended to the Life of Hartwig in the context of the compilation of *De episcopis*.

The text that follows the *Translatio* is the short set of annals (*Breves annales*) for the years 623, 767, 773 and 782. This harks back to the content of the historiographical texts at the beginning of *De episcopis*, which deal primarily with Rupert and Virgil. Its inclusion at this point in the collection is somewhat incongruous, unless we should see it as a prelude to the complete list of Salzburg bishops and archbishops that follows. The latter runs from Rupert to Adalbert III (1168-1177; 1183-1200) providing a succinct overview of the history of the Salzburg see and the figures that appear in the other texts of *De episcopis*. The final text, the *Computationes*, again looks back to Rupert but ends with the year of composition, 1186, thereby dating the *Computationes* text and, as has been argued above, perhaps also *De episcopis* as a whole.

In sum, the focus on Salzburg shared by all ten texts marks them out as a coherent collection. The placement of the texts does not appear to be random, the arrangement broadly following chronological lines, beginning with the earliest texts concerning Salzburg and ending with the year 1186. The first four texts are interrelated, each dealing with the early period, the *Vita Virgilii* then attracting the associated Lives of Eberhard and Hartwig, the latter in turn drawing the *Translatio*. The annals could be seen to serve as a preface to the bishops' list, the latter and the final *Computationes* both linking the early Salzburg past to the late 12th-century present.

54 *Hec ideo huius patris nostri gestis inscripsimus, ut dum bona quę fecit attendimus, cum utrisque Martino scilicet et Hartwico de terrenis ad cęlestia meritorum uice transferri curemus*. (We assign therefore these matters to the deeds of this forefather of ours, Hartwig, for as long as we pay attention to the good which he did, we might manage to be conveyed with both Martin, namely, and Hartwig from earth to heaven on account of their merits.); *Translatio Martini*, ed. Canisius (1602), 318; ed. Canisius (1604), 1223; ed. Canisius and Basnage, 312, 424.

Compilation Strategy: The Sources of the Individual Texts

Conversio: the most recent editor of this work, Fritz Lošek, concluded that the text in *A* was dependent on that in ÖNB, Cod. 596, either directly or via a lost intermediate copy.[55] The ÖNB manuscript is composed of two parts, dating to the 10th and 12th centuries, respectively, and originally belonged to the library of Salzburg cathedral canonry. The witness of the *Conversio* in *A* is notable for its wide range of omissions and additions compared to the *ÖNB* codex. These might be assumed to be the work of the *De episcopis* compilers, but there is reason to believe that some, at least, of these changes were already present in their template. As Lošek noted, the author of the post-1181 *Vita Virgilii* used as his main source a copy of the *Conversio* containing the changes present in *A*.[56] Given that the *Vita Virgilii* actually appears together with the *Conversio* in *A*, it seems that the author must have used *A*'s template as his source, unless we are to assume that the *vita* was first written during the compilation of *De episcopis*.[57] It seems therefore, that the direct source of the *Conversio* in *A* was a lost intermediate manuscript rather than Cod. 596.

Breves notitiae: the only surviving witnesses of the *Breves notitiae* are all contained within the manuscript tradition of *De episcopis*.[58] It is not therefore possible to determine the source of the text. That there was still a copy of the *Breves notitiae* at Salzburg in the high medieval period is clear from its use as one of the sources of Recension C of the Life of Rupert (the *»Communis legenda«*; BHL 7392), a text written there in or before the 12th century.[59]

Translatio Rudberti: because this short text is not attested outside of the *De episcopis* manuscript tradition, its source is unclear. It may be that *A* represents the autograph of the text, a possibility strengthened by reference to the earlier observations concerning the composition of the *Computationes*. Both texts belong, namely, to the computistical genre and may both be the product of the compilers' interest in chronological accuracy. A description of Hartwig as *beatus et sanctissimus* in the text also suggests that the *Translatio* was composed no earlier than the – presumably post-1181 – *Vita Hartwici.*

Vita et miracula Virgilii, Miracula Eberhardi, Vita et miracula Hartwici: Wattenbach divided the manuscript tradition of the Lives and miracles of Virgil, Eberhard and Hartwig into two groups, with *De episcopis* belonging to the B-strand and the abovementioned Cod. 339, originally from Salzburg cathedral library, representing the earliest witness of the A-strand.[60] Both A- and B-strands are derived independently from a lost template, which, according to Wattenbach's thesis, was a tripartite collection written by a single author, a Salzburg cathedral cleric, after 1181.

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55 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1982), 18, 19 (*stemma codicum*); *Conversio,* ed. Lošek (1997), 16 (*stemma*). On Cod. 596, see manuscripta.at/?ID=9951 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

56 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1982), 23; ed. *idem* (1997), 53; *idem*, Zu Biographie, 351.

57 The evidence outlined in the previous section regarding Wattenbach's tripartite collection makes this latter scenario seem unlikely.

58 *Breves notitiae*, ed. Lošek, 18.

59 On the sources of the *Communis legenda*, see Levison, Älteste Lebensbeschreibung, 302-303. The earliest witnesses of the text appear to date to the 12th century. This includes Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5513, a codex placed by Levison and Sepp in the 11th century but now dated by Klemm to the third quarter of the 12th; *Vita Rudberti*, ed. Sepp, 53-59 (with list of manuscripts); Klemm, *Die romanischen Handschriften*, 182. For the most comprehensive overview of the manuscript tradition of the C recension, see now Fraundorfer, *Das literarische Nachleben*, 39-43.

60 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 84-86.

Vita I Eberhardi: aside from the *De episcopis* witnesses, the text is only contained in a single manuscript, ÖNB, Cod. 602.[61] This early 13th-century codex probably belonged to the Benedictine monastery of Garsten in Upper Austria originally and contains other hagiographical works, including the Passion of Thiemo (BHL 8134), a late 11th-century Salzburg archbishop. It is clear from Wattenbach's edition that the texts in *De episcopis* and in Cod. 602 derive independently from a lost template.[62]

Translatio Martini: this text is unknown outside of *De episcopis* before the 15th century.[63] There is, however, an account of the legend in a late 12th-century manuscript from Salzburg cathedral library, now ÖNB, Cod. 289.[64] It is contained within a description of relics held at Salzburg, which carries the title *Qualiter pignora s. Hermetis Salzburgam translata sunt*.[65] Here the legend is told in different words to the *Translatio* in *De episcopis*, with the narrative sometimes embellished, sometimes simplified, and the exact relationship between the two versions remains to be established. As regards the *Translatio* in *De episcopis*, there are clear indications that it was composed in the last third of 12th century, and it may be that this version was written or rewritten specifically for inclusion in the collection.[66] Considering that the *Translatio* does not appear with the *Vita Hartwici* in ÖNB, Cod. 339, the earliest witness of Wattenbach's mooted tripartite collection, the express assignment of the text to the *gesta* of Hartwig found in the *De episcopis* version probably constitutes a new departure.

Annales breves: these short annals do not appear to have been copied from an existing set. This is certainly true regarding the first, which, as discussed above, gives the year 623 as that of Rupert's death, the date determined by the 1186 *Computationes*.[67] The second annal, which has 767 as the year in which Virgil commenced the building of Salzburg cathedral and which places its consecration as well as the translation of Rupert in the year 773, was also added almost verbatim to the lower margin of one of the pages of the *Conversio* text in *A* (fol. 189v).[68] While 767 is the year given for Virgil's consecration in the *Conversio*, the source of the information on the construction and consecration of the cathedral is unclear.[69] The 782

61 On Cod. 602, see manuscripta.at/?ID=9957 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

62 Interestingly, *A* includes on fol. 208r between *consecratur* and *vbi docilis* (*Vita I Eberhardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 78, l. 16) the following words absent from the Cod. 602 witness: *»et in Babinbergensi ecclesia liberalibus rudimentis traditur imbuendus«*. This line appears verbatim in the other Life of Eberhard (BHL 2633). It seems that the compiler here used the latter recension to embellish his copy of BHL 2632. (This line is present in all exemplars of *De episcopis* but nonetheless absent from Wattenbach's edition).

63 For a full discussion of the text and its manuscript tradition, see Ó Riain, Pushing the Boundaries.

64 On Cod. 289, see manuscripta.at/?ID=9689 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021). A second witness of this text is found in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 12642, fol. 41r–42r, a 14th-century manuscript from the Augustinian canonry at Ranshofen, c. 50km north of Salzburg.

65 *Qualiter*, ed. Dümmler.

66 Ó Riain, Pushing the Boundaries.

67 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 85, n. 3.

68 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 108.

69 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 100. On the question of the date of Virgil's consecration, see Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, 258-263.

annal concerning the consecration of the basilica on an island in Chiemsee is also found in annals deriving from the Admont *Stammhandschrift* mentioned above. Because this date is otherwise unattested, the likelihood is that *De episcopis* was again the source for this entry.[70] The source for the *De episcopis* annal, presumably a Salzburg manuscript, cannot be determined.

Nomina et ordo successionis Saltzpurgensis episcoporum: The list of bishops in *De episcopis* can be easily located within a long manuscript tradition thanks to the Holder-Egger's 1881 edition, which traces the development of this source-type at Salzburg from the 11th century onwards.[71] A comparison with the edited texts shows the list in *A* to be closest to that found in Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 350, a 12th-century manuscript that originated at the Benedictine monastery of St. Lambrecht in Styria.[72] A glance at the other texts in the Graz codex suggests that it and *A* probably both descend from a one or more shared manuscript sources of Salzburg origin.[73]

Computationes: The 1186 *Computationes* in *De episcopis* represents a rewriting of an earlier text, composed in 1129. As argued above, it seems likely that *A* contains the autograph copy of the 1186 version. Comparison of *A* with the witnesses used by Wattenbach and Sepp suggests that the 1186 *Computationes* was based on that contained in a 12th-century Salzburg cathedral library manuscript, ÖNB, Cod. 596 – which actually constitutes a slightly divergent version of the 1129 text, written in 1132 – or on an intermediate copy.[74] As mentioned above, Lošek concluded that the *Conversio* witness in *A* was copied directly or indirectly from the same manuscript.

The original sense of the word *compilare* was to plunder and it was by plundering the library of Salzburg cathedral that *De episcopis* was created.[75] There seems little doubt that the compilers sourced their materials at the cathedral, which was served by canons regular. In the cases of the *Conversio* and the *Computationes*, a potentially direct manuscript source with that provenance has been identified (ÖNB, Cod. 596). Interestingly, while the

70 See Klebel, Salzburger Geschichtsquelle, 42-43, n. 30; Beihammer, Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 290, n. 165.

71 *Catalogi archiepiscoporum*, ed. Holder-Egger, 350-351, 353-354

72 Kern, *Handschriften*, 1, 207-208; manuscripta.at/?ID=23444 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021). The only difference in the sequence of bishops is the placing of Virgil after rather than before Bertricus in *A*. In fact, Bertricus had actually been omitted from the list in *A* by the original scribe (fol. 220r) and was then inserted in the wrong position by a second, contemporary hand. The list in Cod. 350 actually ends with Conrad I (1106-1147), despite having clearly been compiled after the death of Archbishop Eberhard I. (1147-1164), some of whose posthumous miracles are included in the manuscript (see the following note).

73 Among the other items is a *Gesta miraculorum s. Eberhardi archiepiscopi Salisburgensis*, which amounts to a short collection of miracles related to those found in the *Miracula Eberhardi* (BHL 2364), a text that appears in *A*; *Miracula Eberhardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 102, n. 15. Wattenbach suggested that this was an older version of the *Miracula*, while Poncelet speculated that the Graz version and BHL 2364 descended from a shared template; [Poncelet], Miracles, 177-181. Interesting also is the presence of a copy of the *Liber gestorum Barlaam et Iosaphat* (BHL 979), again a text also found in *A*.

74 Both Wattenbach and Sepp used the *S*, *V* and *M* witnesses of the *De episcopis* for their editions of the *Computationes*. The affinity between the ÖNB, Cod. 596 and the *De episcopis* witnesses is clear from the reappearance of all unique variants of the former in the latter (with the exception of obsolete dating details); see *Computationes*, ed. Sepp, 413 n. (o), (r), (s); 414 n. (w), (bb), (hh), (nn), (pp). On the manuscript tradition of the different recensions, see *ibid.*, 409-412; *Computationes*, ed. Wattenbach, 15. A further copy of the 1129 *Computationes* is found in ÖNB, Cod. 289, fols. 101v-102r.

75 On the changing connotations of *compilare*, *compilatio* etc., see Hathaway, Compilatio.

Computationes directly precedes the *Conversio* in Cod. 596, thus serving as something of an introduction to the latter, the two texts were broken up by the *De episcopis* compilers. This may again point to a certain significance being attached to the placing of the *Computationes* with its terminating dating line at the end of *De episcopis*. In respect of the Lives and miracles of Virgil and Hartwig and the miracles of Eberhard, the closest sister manuscript (ÖNB, Cod. 339) belonged to Salzburg cathedral, with the archetype probably written by a Salzburg cathedral cleric. The only account of the translation of Martin to Salzburg outside of *De episcopis* is also found in a manuscript from the cathedral library (ÖNB, Cod. 289). The St. Lambrecht manuscript that offers the closest parallels to the bishops' list in *De episcopis* is also likely to go back to a common source at Salzburg cathedral. The compiler or compilers were selective in their use of sources, most notably choosing to break up Wattenbach's tripartite collection of Lives and miracles by opting for an alternative version of the *Vita Eberhardi*, while seemingly incorporating some readings from the other Life (BHL 2633). A number of the texts contained within the text may have been written or rewritten specifically for the collection rather than copied from an earlier source. This is true of the *Translatio Rudberti*, the *Translatio Martini*, the *Annales breves* and the *Computationes*, which are all unique to *De episcopis*. The evidence that the 1186 *Computationes* was written specifically for the collection strengthens the possibility that other texts were also new compositions based on sources available in the cathedral library.

Manuscript Tradition

The manuscript tradition of *De episcopis* can be divided into two sub-categories. There are three manuscripts other than *A* that hold the complete or almost complete collection, while there are a further three, all exemplars of the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, which contain only six of the ten texts. As will be demonstrated, all six complete or partial copies of *De episcopis* are stemmatically descended from *A*. The lack of evidence for a strand of transmission independent of *A* again points to it having been the autograph of *De episcopis* and not the copy of an existing exemplar.

The three manuscripts containing most or all of *De episcopis* are:

S: Salzburg, Stiftsarchiv St. Peter, Cod. A IX 30, 1r-35r (late 13th century)[76]
V: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), Cod. 3662, 155r-179v (15th century)[77]
M: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1276, fol. 7r-114r (circa 1500)[78]

The manuscript from the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter (*S*) was written between 1284 and 1290 and contains only *De episcopis*, but extends it by the addition of one final text, the *Vita II Gebehardi archiepiscopi* (BHL 3294). Despite its Salzburg provenance, *S* does not provide evidence of a Salzburg strand of transmission independent of *A*. Instead, as multiple

76 manuscripta.at/?ID=38237 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

77 manuscripta.at/?ID=6250 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

78 Halm, *Catalogus codicum latinorum* 1.1, 248.

studies have shown, the text of *De episcopis* in *S* is undoubtedly descended from the Admont witness.[79] That *S* is almost certainly a direct copy of *A* is made especially clear by a comparison of their respective bishops' lists. The list in *A* originally ran as far as Adalbert (d. 1200), but later hands extended it as far as Frederick of Leibnitz (d. 1338). In *S* the list includes four names after Adalbert, namely Eberhardus, Wodezlaus, Fridericus and the then incumbent, Rudolfus (d. 1290). This mirrors the sequence in *A*, but actually constitutes a very incomplete list, seeing as there were no less than three holders of office between Eberhard (1200-1246) and Wlodizlaus (1265-1270), namely Burkart of Ziegenhain and Nidda (1247), Philipp of Spanheim (1247-1257) and Ulrich of Seckau (1257-1265). It seems, therefore, highly probable that the deficient list in *S* is attributable to its direct dependence on *A*.[80] The probability that *S* was copied from *A* is also strengthened by reference to the text added to *De episcopis* in *S*: Gebhard was not only an archbishop of Salzburg but also the founder of the monastery at Admont. Two Lives of Gebhard (d. 1088) were written at Admont, the second of which, dating to after 1181, was copied into *S*.[81]

Cod. 3662 of the Austrian National Library (*V*) belonged originally to the Benedictine monastery at Mondsee in Upper Austria and dates to the later 15th century. The studies of Wattenbach and Lošek have shown the text of *De episcopis* in *V* to be dependent on that in *S*.[82] It also retains the additional *Vita II Gebehardi,* but only four of its chapters. This reductive tendency also manifests itself in the omission of the *Annales breves*, the bishops' list and the *Declamatio* at the end of the *Miracula Eberhardi*. Moreover, the codex contains only the first two chapters of the *Conversio* and the first and seventh chapters of the *Breves notitiae*.[83] The two *Breves notitiae* chapters actually appear independently on fol. 159r and fol. 160r-160v, respectively, with the *Computationes* and *Translatio Rudberti* placed between the two excerpts, before the original sequence recommences with the *Vita Virgilii*. *De episcopis* forms one section of this composite manuscript, the others containing multiple hagiographical texts. Around 1519, a Mondsee scribe, Leonhard Schilling, prefixed *De episcopis* with a short text entitled *De archiepiscopis Salisburgensibus*, which recounts events from the time of Rupert up to the time of writing.

Clm 1276 of the Bavarian State Library (M) contains the original version of *De episcopis*, but without the opening text, the *Conversio*. It dates to circa 1500 and originally belonged to the cathedral library at Passau in Bavaria. It shares the manuscript with a copy of Josef Grünpeck's *Vitae pontificium sancte Salzburgensis ecclesie*, which ends after the accession of Archbishop Leonhard of Keutschach (1495-1519).[84] Lošek's studies have shown the text of

79 Martin, Admonter Handschrift, 274-279; *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1982), 16-18, 19 (*stemma codicum*); ed. *idem* (1997), 15, 16 (*stemma*); *Breves notitiae*, ed. *idem*, 18.

80 The similar orthography of the four names in both manuscripts would support this conclusion.

81 It appears from Wattenbach's edition of the *vita* that the witness in *S* is not dependent on the only other complete surviving witness, Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 475 from the earlier 13th century; *Vita II Gebehardi*, ed Wattenbach, 34-49; manuscripta.at/?ID=26934 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021). It may, however, have been transcribed from the lost archetype of the *vita* at Admont.

82 *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 84-85; *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 13, 16 (*stemma codicum*).

83 The two chapters of the *Breves notitiae* are appended by the sentence *»Ottilo dux habuit sororem pippini regis nomine Hilttrut ex quibus natus est Thassilo dux piissimus«*; ÖNB, Cod. 3662, fol. 160v. This is based on the second sentence of chapter 11; i.e. *Breves notitiae*, ed. Lošek, 102).

84 According to Lhotsky, this the earlier of only two copies of Grünpeck's work; Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde*, 458

the *Breves notitiae* in *M* to descend from *A* rather than *S*.[85] Indeed, there is a tell-tale sign of *M*'s dependence on *A*. At the end of the *Translatio Martini* in *A* the scribe began to copy an account of a miracle, but he broke off the transcription at the beginning of the second line, presumably having quickly realised that this exact miracle was already contained in the foregoing *Vita Virgilii*. These lines do not appear in any copies of *De episcopis* other than in *M*, where they were faithfully copied from A or a lost intermediary by the uncritical scribe.

If we look at the three copies together, the reception would seem to largely support the interpretation that *De episcopis* should be considered a coherent collection. This is particularly true of *S* and *V*, where the extended *De episcopis* is the sole item in a codex or in one section of a composite manuscript. Although in *V* and *M De episcopis* is reduced slightly in content and, in the case of the former, shares the manuscript with other texts, the integrity of the collection is unthreatened. These omissions as well as additions are typical of the kind of emendation associated with the transmission of medieval biographical collections. The changes in the order of the texts undertaken by the Mondsee copyist, inserting the *Computationes* immediately before the *Translatio Rudberti*, presumably represented an improvement to the structure of the collection in his eyes, the two computistical texts concerning the Salzburg patron saint now being juxtaposed. Because *V* was dependent on *S*, the original, potentially significant placing of the *Computationes* with its final dating line at the end of the collection had already been lost in transmission through the appending of the *Vita II Gebehardi*. It is not clear why the compiler of *V* should have made the other change to the sequence, separating the two excerpts from the *Breves notitiae*. Although the changes made to *De episcopis* during transmission were relatively minor, the addition of Gebhard's Life to *S*, the continuation of the bishops' list in all witnesses and the omissions from *M* and *V* show that the collection was not regarded as static or sacrosanct. Leonhard Schilling's insertion of a text also entitled *De archiepiscopis Salisburgensibus* before *De episcopis* in *V* is a further example of such emendation. The status of *De episcopis* as a standalone collection was reinforced in the early 17th century through its twofold publication by Canisius, firstly on the basis of *V* in 1602 and again in 1604 after *S*.[86]

Connections with Admont and/or Salzburg would appear to explain the interest in *De episcopis* at St. Peter's, Mondsee and Passau. St. Peter's is located right next to Salzburg cathedral, was founded by St Rupert and had strong historical connections with their fellow Benedictines in Admont as well as with the see.[87] Indeed, the first monastic community at Admont after its foundation in the later 11th century arrived there from St. Peter's. *S* is, of course, the earliest witness of *De episcopis* from Salzburg itself, although the erstwhile existence of older Salzburg copies cannot be excluded. Interestingly, through the addition of the *Vita II Gebehardi*, the Salzburg-Admont links that underlay the compilation

85 *Breves notitiae*, ed. Lošek, 18.

86 See n. 1 for references. Wattenbach correctly identified *V* as the source of Canisius' original printed version of the collection; *Conversio*, ed. Wattenbach, 3. The *Annales breves* and bishops' list are therefore absent from the published *De episcopis*, with some of the other texts incomplete and the deviant sequence of *V* followed. *S* was the *»Codex manuscriptus in Monasterio sancti Petri«* that provided Canisius with the template for the 1604 publication; *De episcopis Salisburgensibus*, ed. Canisius (1604), 1138. He followed the manuscript faithfully, except for including both the *Annales breves* and *Computationes* twice – in their correct position and between the *Breves notitiae* and *Vita Virgilii.*

87 Amt der Salzburger Landesregierung, *St. Peter in Salzburg*; Hahnl and Hermann, Salzburg, St. Peter.

of *De episcopis* are more strongly pronounced in the Salzburg manuscript than they are in the earlier Admont one. Indeed, it is somewhat curious that a Life of Gebhard was not included in the original *De episcopis*.[88] While it seems that *De episcopis* might predate the *Vita II*, the *Vita I* (BHL 3293) could easily have been added to the collection. Mondsee, while situated in the diocese of Passau, was in close geographical proximity to Salzburg, being less than 25km distant. It may have been at the fellow Benedictine monastery of St. Peter's in Salzburg that its exemplar of *De episcopis* was copied. Passau and Salzburg were episcopal rivals throughout the medieval period. The appearance of *De episcopis* along with Grünpeck's *Vitae pontificium* in *M* suggests that despite, or perhaps because of, this rivalry, a certain interest in the history of Salzburg was current at Passau around the turn of the 16th century.

Besides *A*, *S*, *V* and *M*, another Munich manuscript containing parts of the collection needs to be considered. It is Clm 14894 of the Bavarian State Library, which includes all or part of five of the original *De episcopis* texts together with other material relating to Salzburg and Bavaria.[89] The codex dates to between 1466 and 1482 and once belonged to the Benedictine monastery of St. Emmeram in Regensburg. It contains sections of the *Conversio*, *Breves notitiae* and *Vita Virgilii* and the complete texts of the *Translatio Rudberti* and the *Translatio Martini*. In addition, the manuscript includes one section of the *Vita II Gebehardi*. The *De episcopis* texts do not appear in unbroken sequence and the excerpts from both the *Conversio* and the *Breves notitiae* are divided into separate blocks, which in the case of the latter do not respect the original order of the chapters. As Lošek has argued in relation to the *Conversio* and *Breves notitiae* excerpts, the *De episcopis* texts in Clm 14894 are descended, perhaps via a lost intermediary, from *S*.[90] Nonetheless, because these texts are mostly incomplete and are interspersed with numerous other tracts within a Bavarian miscellany, we can scarcely speak of this as an actual copy of *De episcopis*. Instead this must be treated as an independent collection that mined *De episcopis* among other sources.

More faithful copies of *De episcopis*, albeit including only six of the ten constituent texts, are found in the following codices, all of which are volumes belonging to different exemplars of the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum* (*MLA*):

H: Heiligenkreuz ,Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 14 (late 12th century)[91]
Z: Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 15 (early 13th century)[92]
Me: Melk, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 100 (15th century)[93]

88 The absence of any Life of Gebhard from the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum*, which, as I argue below, was almost certainly compiled at Admont, is equally curious; see Ó Riain, *Magnum Legendarium*, 133, n. 145 & 143, n. 178, but note that the author was here mistaken in stating that Admont Cod. 475 contains an autograph copy of the *Vita II*. The witness in the codex is, in fact, datable to 1231 at the earliest; Mairold, *Die datierten Handschriften*, 60-61.

89 Halm *et al.*, *Catalogus codicum* 2.2, 248-249.

90 *Conversio*, ed. Lošek (1997), 13-14; *Breves notitiae*, ed. *idem*, 18.

91 manuscripta.at/?ID=30305 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

92 manuscripta.at/?ID=31626 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

93 manuscripta.at/?ID=36450 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

The *MLA* is the largest surviving hagiographical collection from high medieval Europe, containing over 500 texts that were originally divided into four calendrically arranged volumes.[94] The compilers of the *MLA* jettisoned the two historiographical tracts, the *Conversio* and *Breves notitiae*, from *De episcopis* as well as the two texts dealing with the dating of the translation and death of St Rupert, the *Translatio Rudberti* and *Computationes*. The order of the remaining texts was retained and they were included in the legendary at 25 November, the feastday of Bishop Virgil.

The archetype of the *MLA* is not preserved, the collection being transmitted in seven copies held at Admont, Göttweig (Benedictine), Heiligenkreuz (Cistercian), Lilienfeld (Cistercian), Melk (Benedictine), Zwettl (Cistercian) and the Austrian National Library.[95] The incomplete nature of the surviving exemplars means that the section containing the *De episcopis* texts is only extant at Heiligenkreuz, Melk and Zwettl. This author's research on the stemmatical relationship between the different exemplars has shown only the Admont one to have been copied directly from the archetype, whereas the remainder all descend from a second, lost copy.[96] Furthermore, none of the Heiligenkreuz, Melk and Zwettl exemplars is a copy of the other, all going back independently to the lost template.

Where the *MLA* was compiled has long been a matter of debate, but a substantial body of evidence now points to Admont as the place of origin, with the current study of the transmission of *De episcopis* going a long way to resolving the issue.[97] The six *De episcopis* texts in the *MLA* are, namely, without doubt dependent on the Admont manuscript *A*. This can be particularly well demonstrated by reference to the manner in which marginal and interlinear additions made to the texts in *A* were incorporated into the *MLA* archetype, as can be reconstructed on the basis of the three surviving witnesses. One example is provided by a reading in chapter 4 of the *Vita Virgilii*, where the foundation of two new missionary churches in Carinthia is narrated and the three *MLA* witnesses all offer a unique variant. While all other manuscripts include the placename *Liburnia*, it is rendered *Libzolurnia* in the *MLA* codices.[98] The explanation for this unique placename can be found on the relevant folio of *A*. Here, a second hand has inserted the gloss *»zol«* above *Liburnia*, mistakenly equating the latter with the Carinthian area of Zoll(feld), which was, in fact, some 50km distant from the correct site.[99] The scribe of the original *MLA* clearly thought *zol* was a missing syllable rather than a gloss and inserted it into the placename. Two other examples of the dependence on *A* resulting in idiosyncrasies in the *MLA* witnesses are found in the *Vita I Eberhardi*. In both cases

94 [Poncelet], De magno legendario; Ó Riain, *Magnum Legendarium*; *idem*, Neue Erkenntnisse. See also the comprehensive database at mla.oeaw.ac.at/ (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

95 The exemplar in the Austrian National Library probably belonged to the Augustinian canonry at St. Pölten; Simader, Ein Buchmaler.

96 Ó Riain, *Magnum Legendarium*, 139-158.

97 See Ó Riain, Neue Erkenntnisse, 8-12, where the findings of the current study concerning the *MLA* are first published.

98 Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 14, fol. 21v; Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 100, fol. 229r; Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 15, fol. 24r: *»Qui uenientes Karantanis dedicauerunt ibi ecclesiam* (Heiligenkreuz: *ecclesiam ibi*) *sancte Marie, et aliam in Libzolurnia ciuitate«*. See *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 87 for the relevant section of the edited text.

99 Salzburg, private holding, Codex *A*, fol. 201r. The error on the glossator's part is probably attributable to the mention in the same sentence of the founding of the church of St Mary (*ecclesia sancte Mariae*), which was, indeed, located within the Zollfeld. On the location of Liburnia, see Eichert *et al.*, Von der *metropolis Norici*, 39-43; *Conversio*, ed. Wolfram, 128-129.

the scribe of *A* omitted sections of text which were then added in the margins. In the first instance, the scribe left the word *exempla* out of the phrase *»omnia mala exempla ex rebus bonis orta sunt«* in chapter 8.[100] In the *MLA* witnesses the word *exempla* is incorporated into the text, but it is mistakenly placed after *sunt*.[101] This error is attributable to the confusion regarding the correct placement of the word that arose from its position in the margin of the *MLA* scribe's template, *A*. The second example concerns a longer section of text in chapter 8: *»sed ex eius fetore archiepiscopus noster simul cum Ratisponense episcopo de sede sua propulsus est«*.[102] These words were again omitted by the scribe of *A* and then added in the margin together with a somewhat indistinct symbol to indicate that they should follow *»visus est«*. Again, the *MLA* witnesses of the text include the missing words, but insert them at the wrong point, namely after *»locus non sit«*.[103] Further to these examples, we have in the case of the *Annales breves* already seen an instance where a deletion rather than an addition to one text in *A* led to a unique reading in the three *MLA* witnesses. The evidence shows clearly the dependence of the *MLA* on the Admont manuscript, which in turn constitutes strong evidence for the legendary having been compiled at the Styrian monastery.

The *De episcopis* texts are without parallel within the context of the *MLA* insofar as the group of biographies was not broken up and each Life allocated to the feastday of the relevant saint. The Salzburg Lives thereby acquire a unique prominence within the collection, which, owing to its sheer scale and the fact that it includes saints from all eras and parts of Christendom, is arguably somewhat impersonal in its universalism. There seem to be two potential reasons for the decision not to break up the *De episcopis* Lives in the *MLA*. In the light of its probable Admont provenance and the historical connections between the monastery and the archbishopric, the inclusion of the Salzburg block within the collection might be interpreted as an isolated exercise in personalisation on the compilers' part, the collection being thus provided with an Admont/Salzburg stamp. Another, more mundane possibility, is that *De episcopis* was only acquired late in the compilation process, at which point the April-June volume, which should have accommodated Eberhard at his feastday of 22 June, was already completed. Even if this would account for Eberhard's appearance with Virgil, it would not explain Hartwig's, whose feastday was 5 December. The prominence afforded Salzburg by the retention of *De episcopis* Lives seems therefore to have been deliberate. This impression is strengthened by reference to the *Annales breves* and the list of Salzburg bishops, whose incorporation into the *MLA* is otherwise difficult to explain. While the six texts were now removed from their original context as part of a Salzburg historical compendium, their propaganda value and concerted Salzburg focus were to a certain extent preserved within their new setting. The privileged position of the Salzburg Lives within the *MLA* is, of course, in keeping with the Admont interest in Salzburg affairs that is demonstrated by the very compilation of *De episcopis*.

100 Salzburg, private holding, Codex A, fol. 211r. See *Vita I Eberhardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 81 for the relevant section of the edited text.

101 Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 14, fol. 27v; Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 100, fol. 240r; Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 15, fol. 29r.

102 Salzburg, private holding, Codex A, fol. 214r. See *Miracula Eberhardi*, ed Wattenbach, 102 for the relevant section of the edited text.

103 Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 14, fol. 29v; Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 100, fol. 243v; Zwettl, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 15, fol. 30v.

Use and Purpose: Recording and Remembering

The incorporation of the *De episcopis* Lives into the *MLA* is just one of the ways the former collection was used at Admont. Beyond additions to the bishops' list, the text of *De episcopis* in *A* actually shows little physical sign of use after the initial compilation process, when marginalia were quite frequent. Two numerical sequences added to the margins of the *Vita Virgilii* to divide up the text may have had a liturgical purpose, but they do not correspond to the *lectiones* demarcated in ÖNB, Cod. 339 (and used by Wattenbach in his edition) nor, for the most part, tie in clearly with ›natural‹ divisions in the content of the Life.[104]

In contrast to the paucity of physical evidence for its use, external sources point to *De episcopis* having served extensively as a source for other works produced at Admont. As we have seen, aside from its use by the compilers of the *MLA*, it was almost certainly a source for a set of annals compiled at Admont after 1186, providing dates and historical information to allow the compilers to supplement their base-text.[105] The author of the contemporary *Vita II Gebehardi*, written at Admont, also shows familiarity with the *Conversio* and the episcopal Lives in *De episcopis*, which strongly suggests that *A* served as a source. It is clear that Admont was a hotbed of hagiographical and historiographical activity in the late 12th century, with an apparent emphasis on new compilations.[106] Indeed, the composition of a *Chronicon mundi* or world chronicle commenced at Admont in 1187, the first part of which is preserved in Cod. 15.[107] The creation of *De episcopis* very much ties in with these developments, constituting a further Admont compilation and serving as a source for other projects at the Styrian monastery.

The compilers of *De episcopis* had created a history of Salzburg, a reference work for the library at Admont. Given the intellectual climate at Admont in the late 12th century, there seems little doubt that the compilers knew that their work would be used as a historical source-book. This is unlikely to have been the sole *causa scribendi* or, rather, *causa compilandi* of the work, and the learned group within the Admont community not its only target audience. This brings us to the fundamental question: why was this Salzburg *Propagandaschrift* compiled at and, at least in part, for the monastery of Admont? The answer would appear to lie in the entangled histories of the two ecclesiastical centres. As mentioned above, Admont was founded by Archbishop Gebhard as an *Eigenkloster* or proprietary monastery of the see of Salzburg in 1074. The first group of monks were sent there from St. Peter's in Salzburg, an institution whose long history was intertwined with that of the cathedral. While the rights of the archbishop in relation to Admont were reduced over the course of the 12th century, the legal and cultural connections between monastery and see persisted.[108]

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104 The first sequence runs from II to VIII with the II positioned at approximately *Vita Virgilii*, ed. Wattenbach, 86a, l. 45 (*Et quia …*) and the VIII at p. 87b, l. 15 (*Mortuo autem …*). The second begins with I at p. 88, l. 29 (*Quadam …*) and with VIII at p. 89b, l. 28 (*Cum vero …*).

105 See above, pp. 154-155, 158-159.

106 The *Vita II Gebehardi* also amounts to a collective biography, ending not with the death of Gebhard in 1088 but rather providing accounts of his successors up to the year 1177.

107 Wattenbach, Handschriften, 632-633; Wichner, *Catalogus*, 15-16, Gonsa, *Einige paläographische Beiträge*, 35-46; Tomaschek, Geschichtsbewusstsein, 161; http://manuscripta.at/?ID=25872 (Retrieved on 9 May 2021).

108 On the history of the Benedictine monastery at Admont, see Naschenweng, Admont. On Admont in the 12th century, see Mezler-Andelberg, Die rechtlichen Beziehungen; Arnold, Admont; Seeberg, *Illustrationen*, 6-21; Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 65-103; Lutter, *Geschlecht & Wissen*, 52-62 et passim.

Shared involvement in initiatives concerning the reform of monasteries and canonries in the region and the creation and renewal of confraternities between the Admont monks and the cathedral canons were reflections of and catalysts for these close ties.[109] Admont housed the tomb of Archbishop Gebhard and served as a place of refuge in times of political turmoil for archbishops such as Thiemo (*archiep.* 1090-1098), Conrad I (*archiep.* 1106-1147) and Conrad II (*archiep.* 1164-1168).[110] Connections to Salzburg were also enjoyed by members of the female community that was established at Admont in the 1120s. An account of the life of the first *magistra* of the Admont nunnery reveals her to have been the daughter of a ministerial family of the Salzburg see, who had first entered the claustral life at the Benedictine nunnery on the Nonnberg in Salzburg.[111] Just as the first Admont monks had come from St. Peter's in Salzburg, the founding group of nuns arrived from the Nonnberg convent, reinforcing the status of Salzburg as the fountainhead of monastic life at Admont.

The most interesting aspect of the relationship between the two ecclesiastical centres from our perspective is Admont's involvement in recording the history of Salzburg. Lives of Archbishops Gebhard and Thiemo were written there during the course of the 11th and 12th centuries.[112] The first Life of Gebhard was preceded by a collective biography of previous Salzburg bishops in verse form, while the second Life, as was mentioned above, was composed at Admont after 1181/1186 and includes accounts of the lives of his successors up to 1177. Moreover, the so-called »Alpine Annals« compiled at Admont in the 1180s show a particular interest in Salzburg affairs, to the extent that they were long mooted to have extracted much of their content from a lost »Salzburg compilation«.[113] Indeed, there is evidence that the cathedral library at Salzburg acquired a copy of the »Alpine Annals« immediately after they were completed in 1187, where they would form the basis of the Salzburg annalistic tradition throughout the later medieval period.[114] The production of *De episcopis* fits neatly into this field of Salzburg hagiography/historiography at Admont, again highlighting the role played by the monastery as something approaching a *»Werkstatt der Erinnerung«* (»workshop of remembrance«) for Salzburg.[115] When one looks at the uncertain political climate that prevailed at Salzburg in the decades before the work's compilation, the Admont initiative to document the illustrious history of the see certainly appears to have been a timely and efficacious one. Indeed, of the ten component texts of *De episcopis* four, the *Breves notitiae*, *Translatio Martini*, *Annales breves* and *Computationes*, are transmitted only within the *A*-dependent *De episcopis* tradition.

109 Weinfurter, *Salzburger Bistumsreform*, 158-169.

110 *Vita II Gebehardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 34-49, at 40-41, 46-47; Dopsch, Salzburg, 259, 287; Naschenweng, Admont, 74, 80-81.

111 *Vita cuiusdam magistrae*, ed. Lutter, 227; trans. Lyon, 157.

112 *Vita II Gebehardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 34-49; *Vita I Gebehardi*, ed. Wattenbach, 19-28; *Thiemonis passio metrice scripta*, ed. Wattenbach, 28-33; *Passio Tiemonis*, ed. Wattenbach, 52-62; Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde*, 214-217; Haarländer, *Vitae Episcoporum*, 506-507, 539-543; Rener, *Hagiographie*, 421-422, 426-429; Eldevik, Thiemo of Salzburg.

113 For a discussion of earlier scholarship on the subject, see Beihammer, Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 254-261.

114 Klebel, Fassungen, 64-65, 134-135, 165; Beihammer, Alpenländische Annalengruppe, 262-263.

115 Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung.*

Considering the substantial links between Admont and Salzburg, there should therefore be nothing surprising in members of the Admont community producing a work on the history and saints of the Salzburg see. It seems clear that the compilers would not have regarded their subject as foreign one but instead held the history of Salzburg to be their own: the Salzburg past was part of their own monastic identity. The compilation of *De episcopis* can therefore be seen as a product of their own particular identity, in which the ties to Salzburg were a fundamental factor, and to have contributed to the shaping of their sense of community. The internal audience is also likely to have included the female members of the *Doppelkloster*, whom we know from multiple studies to have been engaged in collaboration and manuscript exchange with their male counterparts.[116] Indeed, in the abovementioned 12th-century Life of the Admont *magistra*, her special devotion to St Rupert is twice stated, and there seems little doubt that the attachment to Salzburg that was born out of historical, cultural and familial connections also applied to the Admont nuns.[117] The absence of evidence for the presence of a copy of *De episcopis* at Salzburg before the late 13th century need not exclude the possibility that such a manuscript once existed. Indeed, the prompt dissemination of the Admont »Alpine Annals« to Salzburg reminds us of the cultural interconnection of monastery and see. This and the whole disposition of the collection make it seem unlikely that a Salzburg audience was not also intended and indeed reached by the compilers.

It has been argued that *De episcopis Salisburgensibus* was a work designed to celebrate the history of the Salzburg see and to assert its continuing importance for the late 12th century. The multiplicity of its constituent biographies and historiographical texts and their broadly chronological arrangement allowed the continuity of the Salzburg tradition to be emphasised and the underlying message of the place's sanctity and importance to be many times repeated. *De episcopis* constitutes an institutional history, and its content can be shown to have been collected within the institution itself, in the cathedral library. Yet all of the available evidence points to the anonymous compilers having belonged not to the cathedral canonry but rather to the Styrian monastery of Admont. As has been illustrated, it is the complex relationship between Admont and Salzburg that is central to understanding the reasons for the *De episcopis* compilation. It is a work that belongs to the long-standing tradition of the history of Salzburg being documented at the Benedictine monastery and testifies to the role of the Admont community as the keeper of Salzburg's memory.

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116 Seeberg, *Illustrationen*, 18-26; Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 65-103; Lutter, *Geschlecht & Wissen*, 97-104; *eadem*, Normative Ideals, 92-109.

117 *Vita cuiusdam magistrae*, ed. Lutter, 227, 229; trans. Lyon, 157, 160-161.

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Abbreviations

BHL: *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, 4 vols, Subsidia Hagiographica 6, 12, 70 (Brussels, 1898-1901, 1911, 1986).

MGH: Monumenta Germaniae Historica

MGH SS: Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores

MLA: Magnum Legendarium Austriacum

Manuscripts

Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 15

Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 125

Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 475

Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 350

Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 14

Melk, Stiftsbibliothek Cod. 100

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1276

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5513

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 12642

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14894

Salzburg, private holding, no shelf-mark (Codex A, *olim* Admont)

Salzburg, Stiftsarchiv St. Peter, Cod. A IX 30

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 289

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 339

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 340

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 596

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 602

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 629

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Obituaries in Service of the Rasūlid Sultanate in Yemen at the Turn of the 9th/15th Century

Daniel Mahoney*

Al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya, a chronicle describing the events surrounding the lives of seven Rasūlid sultans as they strove for dominance over the inhabitants of South Arabia, was completed shortly after the death of the last of these rulers, al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl, by court historian Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Khazrajī. It aimed to depict the potency of the sultans' divinely guided rulership after a period of time during which the sultanate's territory and influence had decreased. As a result, it comprised idealised chronographical reports based on earlier works of Rasūlid historiography as well as end-of-year obituaries that depicted the lives of notable individuals who were part of the political community over which the sultan ruled. This article first looks at how the relationship between al-Khazrajī and al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl affected the production of *al-ʿUqūd* as well as how earlier biographical collections in Yemen laid the groundwork both in content and political perspective for the work's own unique presentation in chronicle format. Then it examines the formulaic content of many of the obituaries as they follow along similar modes of presentation according to frequently occurring types of individuals, such as religio-legal specialists or military administrators. Finally, it shows how the obituaries change during the chronicle's depiction of the reign of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl, which ultimately reveal a more personal side of his rulership at the end of the 8th/14th century.

Keywords: Rasūlid, Yemen, Islamic world, political history, historiography, biography

He rose in the command of God after its signposts were effaced,
    and its stars had set.
He strove to implement his plan of the sublime,
    pulling from its extremities while it pulled him.
He made safe those who were afraid and drew near those who had grown distant.
    He dominated all of creation when his moustache had not yet grown.[1]

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1 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 847. This poem comes from the diwan of Ibn al-Muqrī; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 845. I provide the translation.

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Introduction

These verses come from an elegy mourning the death of Sultan al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl in 803/1400 at the very end of *al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya* [The Pearl-Strings of the History of the Rasūlid Dynasty].[2] He was the seventh ruler of the Rasūlid dynasty in Yemen as well as the patron and possible co-author of this historiographical volume. In elegant summation, this poetry describes his role as sultan to be to take up the command of God, re-establish just rule in a divinely righteous alignment and gather those around him into a community under his protection. In short, he is cast as a messianic renewer of order and vigilant shepherd over those in his dominion. The exacting description of the endeavors and responsibilities of rulership found in this final poem serves as a fitting bookend for a volume that recounts the events surrounding the lives of the first seven Rasūlid sultans from the first half of the 7th/13th century until the end of the 8th/14th century; and here it also provides an initial indication of how the framing of this piece of historical writing aims to portray the potency of this dynasty and its rulers, even though the time of its production at the turn of the 9th/15th century followed decades of political infighting, rebellion and the loss of territory.[3]

The Rasūlid family first came to South Arabia as part of the Ayyūbid military at the end of the 6th/12th century, and in the following decades they were appointed as governors over different regions in the highlands and coastal plains. In 626/1229, the Ayyūbid ruler of Yemen left to take up a new post to the north, but a replacement was not sent from Egypt. Consequently, the Rasūlid military officer who had been left in charge decided to take power into his own hands and consolidate his own authority through military and diplomatic actions across Yemen. In 632/1234, he received the diploma of investiture from the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Mustanṣir who recognised his independent rule, after which he took on the title of al-Manṣūr. Over the next century, the Rasūlid sultans expanded their authority across South Arabia through violent conflicts and the apportionment of territory, from which they collected taxes, as well as through the patronage of religious elites, some of whom worked in the many mosques and madrasas that they had built.[4] At the same time, the sultans also acquired great amounts of wealth and interregional influence through control of the important ports of Aden and al-Shihr for the Red Sea-Indian Ocean trade.[5] However, after there was a challenge for succession following the death of al-Muʿayyad in 721/1321, the Rasūlid sultanate began to disintegrate over the course of the remaining century.[6] Losing control of Sanaa in 723/1323 and Dhamar in 739/1339, their territory shrank as tribal rebellions increased along the southern Red Sea coast and highlands, while the Zaydi imamate in the northern highlands expanded and became more aggressive in its incursions into the south.

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2 The edition of al-Ḥibshī is based primarily upon two manuscripts (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 22-23). The first, whose date is uncertain, comes from the library of Khadabkhush Bitna in India and served as the basis for the first edition of *al-ʿUqūd* by Muḥammad Basyūnī ʿAsal. The second manuscript, which is evaluated as »old«, originates from the manuscript collection of the Sanaa Mosque (*al-maktaba al-gharbiyya*).

3 For reference, here is a list of the seven Rasūlid sultans in *al-ʿUqūd* in chronological order: al-Manṣūr ʿUmar (d. 647/1250), al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf (d. 694/1295), al-Ashraf ʿUmar (d. 696/1296), al-Muʾayyad (d. 721/1321), al-Mujāhid ʿAlī (d. 764/1363), al-Afḍal al-ʿAbbās (d. 778/1377) and al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl (d. 803/1400).

4 For further context, see, for example, Sadek, *Rasūlid Architecture*; Varisco, Unity; *idem*, Reading Rasūlid Maps.

5 For further context, see, for example, Kenney, Treasuring Yemen; Margariti, Mercantile Networks; Sadek, Custodians; Vallet, *L'Arabie Marchande*; *idem*, Sultans; *idem*, Diplomatic Networks.

6 For further context, see, for example, Varisco, Trials.

Despite this reduction in power in Yemen, the Rasūlid sultans remained engaged with disparate parts of the Islamic world and beyond during the latter half of the 8th/14th century, as demonstrated in part by the continued intellectual activities at their courts. For example, broad awareness of the social complexities to the north is evidenced by al-Afḍal's production of the so-called *Rasulid Hexaglot*: a glossary that matches Arabic vocabulary to terms in Persian, Turkic (in three dialects), a dialect of colloquial Byzantine Greek, a dialect of Western Armenian and a dialect of Mongol.[7] Additionally, *al-ʿUqūd* contains numerous reports about the sultans' diplomatic receptions and exchanges, such as a copy of a letter from across the Indian Ocean in the year 795/1392, in which the qadi of Calicut requested permission from al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl to recite the Friday prayer in his name.[8] Moreover, *al-ʿUqūd* contains various reports recounting events from outside of Yemen which do not directly involve the sultans. For example, a report from 796/1393 provides a glimpse of their knowledge concerning the perception of the Timurid expansion out of Central Asia: an announcement describing the arrival of Timur's army at Baghdad and then continuance on to Syria contains a rumour that among its soldiers are some 30,000 cannibals who are corralled at night out of safety.[9] Additionally, the reactions of the sultans to these reports from abroad are occasionally described, revealing further their personal worldviews. For example, when news arrived at the beginning of 802/late 1399 about the death of Egyptian Sultan al-Ẓāhir Barqūq, he was prayed for in the congregational mosque in Zabid on Friday Muharram 3/September 5, and al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl ordered recitation of the Qurʾān in his name for seven days in Taʿizz, Zabid and Aden.[10]

Nonetheless, the main thrust of the narratives in *al-ʿUqūd* focuses on the internal politics of South Arabia and in particular the sultans' pursuit of dominance over it. Consequently, most of the reports focus on military expeditions against their opponents or punishment (and occasional clemency) for those who disrupt public order via rebellions, sedition or other crimes. Thus, these events reflect the sultan taking on his role of (re-)establishing the command of God and providing justice to the community over which he rules. This chronicle, however, also follows a pattern found in medieval Islamic historiography, in which at the end of each year, after the reports about events (*ḥawādith*), there are obituaries (*wafayāt*) for notable individuals who have died. Consequently, within the framework of *al-ʿUqūd*, the utilisation of this format enables a type of world-building that constructs a much larger representation of this political community through narrating the lives of remarkable persons who comprise it. Some of these biographies explicitly include or reference the sultan and his court, while others more subtly demonstrate how the efforts of his divinely guided rulership has created a space in which they thrive in less connected ways. In both cases, this historiographic feature provides an implicit link back to and support for *al-ʿUqūd*'s overall theme of bolstering the righteous power of the sultan and sultanate.

7 Golden (ed.), *King's Dictionary.*

8 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 767-769.

9 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 783.

10 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 833. There is also a much earlier report that describes al-Muʾayyad's celebration upon learning from an envoy about the Egyptian victory against the Ilkhānids in 702/1303 at Marj al-Ṣaffar outside Damascus (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 403-404).

This article will first examine the authoriality of *al-ʿUqūd* and its relationship to earlier works of medieval South Arabian historiography. Then, it will look more closely at how the form and content of its obituaries creates a broader and more diverse vision of the political community of the Rasūlid sultanate beyond the main narratives of the sultan-centric event reports. Finally, it will focus on how the historical writing of *al-ʿUqūd* changes during its narration of the reign of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl, including new approaches to obituary construction that manifest in a more idiosyncratic and personal depiction of Rasūlid rulership and those under it.

The Authoriality and Formation of al-ʿUqūd

While *al-ʿUqūd* was written during a period in which the sultan strove to maintain authority over a smaller region of South Arabia, limited to parts of the southern highlands and coastal plains, the Rasūlid court itself remained a place of extravagant ceremonies, cultural production and intellectual activity. In fact, the author attributed to *al-ʿUqūd*, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan b. Wahhās al-Khazrajī, is said to have been involved in the decoration of the madrasa al-Afḍaliyya and Dār al-Dībāj palace in Thaʿbat for the sultan.[11] Alongside his historical efforts, medieval biographers also describe him as a composer of genealogy and poetry, both of which incidentally feature in *al-ʿUqūd*.[12] Additionally, other information about his life and close connection to the Rasūlid court is found in the reports of *al-ʿUqūd*. At the end of the obituary for the mother of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl, it is stated that he was asked to undergo the hajj to Mecca on her behalf, for which in return he received 4,000 dirhams as well as a tax exemption on his land and date-palms in perpetuity.[13] In 791/1389, al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl also arranged for him to serve as instructor of Qurʾanic recitation at the Grand Mosque of al-Mimlāḥ, and he was so amazed by the preparations of the other teachers that he composed a poem about it.[14] Finally, in 794/1392 al-Khazrajī also cites his presence at the elaborate celebration for the circumcision of the sons of the sultan, during which he was deeply impressed by the performances of the poets in attendance.[15] Less is known about his education or family life. But another report from 801/1399 provides a hint by describing how he witnessed the completion of the recitation of al-Bukharī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and afterwards received an *ijāza* certificate for himself, his children and grandchildren.[16]

11 al-Burayhī, *Ṭabaqāt*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 290-291. For more information on his background as a painter, see Sadek, Notes, 231-232.

12 al-Maqrīzī, *Durar*, ed. al-Jalīlī, 2:551-552; Ibn Hajar, *al-Majmaʿ*, ed. al-Ruʿashay, 3:181-182; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʿ*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, 2:441; al-Sakhawī, *al-Ḍawʿ*, 5:210.

13 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 690.

14 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 720-723.

15 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 758-760.

16 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 830.

In addition to *al-ʿUqūd*, two other related chronicles have been attributed to al-Khazrajī: *al-Kifāya wa-l-iʿlām fī man waliya al-Yaman wa-sakana-hā fī al-Islām* and *al-ʿAsjad al-masbūk fī sīrat/akhbār al-khulafāʾ wa-l-mulūk*.[17] Both of these include the reports about the Rasūlid dynasty found in *al-ʿUqūd* as well as reports about the preceding medieval rulers of Sanaa, Aden and Zabid, with the former organised by reign and the latter by year. However, shades of uncertainty regarding the authorship of these works have arisen because al-Khazrajī in his own biographical collection, and other medieval biographers, attribute *al-ʿUqūd* and *al-ʿAsjad* to al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl.[18] Also another work of very similar content, which ends one year before his death (801/1399), has also been assigned to him.[19] Furthermore, in his biographical entry, al-Khazrajī describes the method of the sultan for the production of his works: he lays out the idea and its limits, sends out someone to implement the research, and then upon receiving the results he edits them, removing and adding what he wants.[20] It remains uncertain the extent to which this working method applied to the creation of *al-ʿUqūd* as well as how much its description is exaggerated flattery of him because, in the end after the sultan's death, al-Khazrajī did change its authorship to himself.[21] Nonetheless, no matter the precise details, this intensely political context of the creation of *al-ʿUqūd* provides a clear base from which extends its deeply ideological message promoting Rasūlid rulership over South Arabia.

Even before narrating the reports of the reigns of the Rasūlid sultans, al-Khazrajī's portrayal of them as the political saviours of the inhabitants of South Arabia is established in a prologue, which connects them to the primordial rulers of South Arabia: Sabāʾ, Kahlān and Ḥimyar. This section begins with the decipherment of an esoteric poem by a pre-Islamic soothsayer that foretells their arrival in the letterist-coded year of *khāʾ* and *lām*.[22] Then al-Khazrajī narrates an origin story which presents the ancestors of the Rasūlids as having been among the many tribes who left South Arabia after the fall of the Ma'rib dam, only to circumambulate back millennia later in the designated year to restore rightful rule in South Arabia. This story also includes a fabricated genealogy that ascribes South Arabian ancestry to the Rasūlids instead of their actual Turkmen roots.[23] Thus, in this initial presentation, they are

17 Sadek, Notes, 231; Sayyid, *Maṣādir*, 152-156; Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 63-66.

18 al-Kharzajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbādī *et al.*, 1:527; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar*, ed. al-Jalīlī, 1:404; al-Sakhawī, *al-Ḍawʿ*, 2:299. They additionally credit the sultan with producing a history on the caliphs and kings as well as works of grammar and astronomy among others.

19 *Fakihat al-zaman fī akhbār man waliya min al-Yaman*; al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl, *Fakihat*, ed. Muʿalyī

20 He also describes his education to include such disciplines as grammar, fiqh, history and mathematics.

21 Additionally, further evidence of this ambiguity is found at the beginning of the reign of al-Mujāhid, where this section is attributed to al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl (*qāla al-Ashraf Abū al-ʿAbbās Ismāʿīl …*) in contrast to the other reigns, which are credited to al-Khazrajī; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 507. Here, in a footnote, al-Ḥibshī tries to reconcile this by offering the following scenario: al-Khazrajī wrote *al-ʿUqud* and *al-ʿAsjad* during the lifetime of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl and ascribed them to him, but after the death of the sultan he completed their writing and re-attributed them to himself. A similar explanation is also given in a footnote by the editors of al-ʿIqd; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbādī *et al.*, 1:237.

22 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 35-39.

23 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 61-62. A late 7th/13th-century version of this genealogy was compiled by an earlier Rasūlid sultan, al-Ashraf ʿUmar, in *Ṭurfat al-aṣḥāb fī maʿrifat al-ansāb* (ed. Zettersteen). For a more detailed examination of the genealogies found in these works, see Mahoney, Writing.

not only set up as guided by God in their leadership but also as reclaiming an ancestral right to rule over the tribal population. Afterwards, the remaining part of this prologue section describes their involvement in the Ayyūbid occupation of Yemen and sees al-Khazrajī begin to weave in information from a variety of earlier sources of South Arabian historiography. Here he creates a more idealised version of events for the sultans in a highly literary style which often eschews direct attestations of sources; this is a synthesising practice he continues for a great amount of the so-called 'Grand Chronicle' of the Rasūlids.[24]

Much of the knowledge of the events of the Rasūlid dynasty of the 7th/13th and 8th/14th centuries comes primarily from chronicles written by authors close to the court who helped administer political and military affairs for their sultans during periods of expansion and dominant political control over much of South Arabia: Ibn Ḥātim's *Kitāb al-simṭ al-ghālī al-thaman fī akhbār al-mulūk min al-ghuzz bi-l-Yaman*,[25] Idrīs al-Ḥamzī's *Kanz al-akhyār fī maʿrifat al-siyar wa-l-akhyār*,[26] Ibn ʿAbd al-Majīd's *Bahjat al-zaman fī taʾrīkh al-Yaman*[27] and al-Janadī's *al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk*, which comprises both a biographical collection and a shorter chronicle at its end.[28] Despite only occasionally citing them, these works are the building blocks from which al-Khazrajī constructed the narratives of his event reports in *al-ʿUqūd* until the last of them, *al-Sulūk*, ends in 730/1330.[29] After this point in time, the sources of the information al-Khazrajī uses in his writing are less clear beyond his own experiences and that of his near contemporaries.[30] Some indication may come from al-Khazrajī's citation of first-hand reports, for example from his father or other scholars.[31] These, however, usually provide colour or commentary to the main narratives in the writing rather than drive them forward.

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24 For a more in-depth analysis of the nuances in the narratives of events between *al-ʿUqūd* and other Rasūlid chronicles, see Mahoney, Evolving Rasūlid Narratives; Smith, Ayyubids and Rasulids; Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 65-67.

25 Ibn Ḥātim, *al-Ṣimt*, ed. Smith. Ibn Ḥātim came from a politically influential Isma'ili family that lived in Sanaa and became part of al-Muẓaffar's inner circle of elites. As a result, in the chronicle he regularly cites his first-hand experiences of court affairs, which include acting as a mediator for the Rasūlids with tribal and Zaydi groups (Smith, Ibn Ḥātim's *Kitāb al-simṭ*).

26 Idrīs al-Ḥamzī was a member of a Zaydi tribal family as well as of the court of Sultan al-Muʾayyad and refers to his military expeditions in his writing (Idrīs al-Ḥamzī, *Kanz*, ed. al-Mudʿij, 7-11).

27 Ibn ʿAbd al-Majīd, *Bahjat*, ed. al-Sanabanī. Ibn ʿAbd al-Majīd worked in the chancellery of al-Muʾayyad, but he wrote this chronicle for an opponent of al-Mujāhid in the fight for succession after the death of his father (Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 46-48).

28 Al-Janadī was a legal scholar who served as a *muḥtasib* in a few cities for the sultanate (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbādī *et al*., 4:2097-2098). For further information on the life and work of al-Janadī, see the Heiss article in this volume.

29 In *al-ʿUqūd*, for example, Ibn Ḥātim is referred to as *ṣāḥib ʿIqd* or *ʿIqd al-thāmin* on pages: 97, 101, 131, 260, 261, 280, 325; Ibn al-Majīd: 131, 404, 508, 510; Idrīs al-Ḥamzī: 370, and al-Janadī: 131, 167, 511, 540, 544 (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī). The final direct citations of al-Janadī in the event reports of *al-ʿUqūd* occur in the year 725/1325 (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 540, 544). However, there are report corollaries to the chronicle section of *al-Sulūk* up until the end of 730/1330 (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 564).

30 The birth year of al-Khazrajī (732/1331-1332) is revealed when he mentions sharing it with another individual, for whom he writes an entry in his biographical collection (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbādī *et al.*, 3:1362.). A similar issue arises with the younger al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl's birth in 761/1360 (al-Sakhawī, *al-Dawiʿ*, 2:299). Interestingly, although many births of the sons of sultans and amirs are reported in *al-ʿUqūd*, the birth of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl is not.

31 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqud*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 535, 572, 747.

Regarding sources for the obituaries, he extensively utilised the biographies in al-Janadī's *al-Sulūk* as well as a collection formed later on in the 8th/14th century by the very academically prolific al-Afḍal: *al-ʿAṭāyā al-saniyya wa-l-mawāhib al-hanīyya fī manāqib al-yamaniyya*.[32] Beyond providing information about individuals from the past, both of these works clearly had enormous influence on al-Khazrajī's own work, as they portrayed their own visions of the community of the Rasūlid Sultanate by combining elements of the military-political sphere with that of the legal-religious sphere.[33] In fact, al-Khazrajī openly attests that the work of al-Janadī inspired and taught him how to approach his writing in his own biographical dictionary *al-ʿIqd al-fākhir al-ḥasan fī ṭabaqāt akābir ahl al-Yaman.*[34] Al-Janadī's initial goal in *al-Sulūk* was to continue the work of a previous compiler, Ibn Samura, whose collection (*Ṭabaqat al-fuquhāʾ al-Yaman*) traced the spread Shafiʿi legal scholars (*fuqahāʾ*) in Yemen during the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries. Consequently, the structure of al-Janadī's work was organised around the successive generations of these scholars as they emanated from specific geographical locations. However, alongside them he also goes on to record the lives of the political elite who served as administrators or rulers. Thus, while altogether this extensive and meticulous collection ends up presenting an edifying portrayal of the power of the sultanate through individuals associated with the pen and with the sword, it also comes with the important stipulation that the first presented are those who transmit the religious knowledge that underlies the legitimacy of those who use force. Al-Afḍal incorporated many of the individuals from *al-Sulūk* into his *al-ʿAṭāyā*, in addition to adding more from his own time and entourage. But here, instead of focusing on the progression of generations that historically reconstruct the transmission of knowledge and power, he decided to put them in alphabetical order. Utility-wise, this organisation made it much easier to find a figure by name, but also from an ideological standpoint each of the individuals are at least initially presented on equal footing, although the length of some biographies in contrast to the brevity of others often reveal their overall significance even before delving into their contents.[35] Also alphabetically arranged, al-Khazrajī's *al-ʿIqd* encompasses 1,500 figures from the entire range of Islamic history in Yemen, building on the content and message of both the earlier works. But al-Khazrajī also adds individuals, both from his own time as well as from earlier periods of Islamic South Arabian history, producing a more universal statement on the unified religio-political space of Yemen as it had developed over the centuries.

Returning to *al-ʿUqūd* and comparing it to *al-ʿIqd*, the biographies from the collection tend to be longer than those in the chronicle. Neither, however, contains all the entries of the other nor do the biographies for the same individual always precisely match. That is, although the collection seems to have been produced after the chronicle because there is no evidence of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl's involvement in or ownership over it, there does not appear to have been simple, direct copying between them during their production. Similarly, most

32 Al-Afḍal, *al-ʿAṭāyā*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 5-42. For further discussion on the scholarly practices of al-Afḍal, see Vallet, L'Historiographie Rasūlide, 55-57.

33 Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 49-53, 58-61.

34 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿIqd*, ed. al-ʿAbbādī *et al.*, 4: 2097. This collection also goes by the name *Ṭirāz aʿlām al-zaman fī ṭabaqāt aʿyān al-Yaman*.

35 Vallet also points out that, in another type of mirror-for-princes work of al-Afḍal, he reveals his belief in the importance of reading about the lives of the ancients to learn good practices and wisdom, perhaps intentionally imparting the motivation for creating his own biographical collection; Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 60-61.

of the earlier biographies in *al-ʿUqūd* appear to have come from *al-Sulūk* and *al-ʿAṭāyā*, but their transfer was also a mindful practice in which al-Khazrajī sometimes explicitly comments on them. For example, in the midst of the obituary for Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Asʿad b. Muḥammad b. Musā al-ʿAmrānī from the chronicle year 695/1295-6, al-Khazrajī notes that he was the first in the Rasūlid Sultanate to hold both the offices of the *wazīr* (vizier) and the *qāḍī al-quḍāʾ* (chief judge) at the same time, and he follows this with a list of the few others who gained the same status through the course of subsequent reigns up until the year 802/1399-1400.[36] Consequently, this amendment to the obituary shows not only that al-Khazrajī was editing the original obituary to contextualise the importance of this accomplishment but also that he made this modification of a fairly early entry in the work at a very late date, revealing that there was an ongoing process of wholesale editing of the document and not just updates as time passed.

In the end what is at stake in the movement of the biographies of largely religio-legal specialists into a work organised around the lives of the sultans is its reframing of the appearance of this political community into an essentially top-down perspective of authority rather than one in which the legal scholars provide the basis for legitimacy for the establishment and continuity of the sultanate. As Vallet states, instead of a perception of power that is modelled on religious knowledge and letters, »the world of the 'ulama' merges into a framework dictated by the very constitution of the state of the sultan«.[37] Thus, what remains to be examined are the individuals that al-Khazrajī chose to comprise this political community under the sultans as well as how the depictions of their lives contribute to the ideological messaging of the chronographical part of *al-ʿUqūd*, which presents the sultans as not just the leaders ruling over them but also the protectors who bring them together.

The Obituaries of al-ʿUqūd *as a Representation of the Political Community under the Rasūlid Sultanate*

In the introduction to *al-ʿUqūd*, al-Khazrajī clearly lays out its structure: »I have organised each reign [of the sultans] through the arrangement of the years which occurred in it. In each year, I report the obituaries of the elite (*aʿyān*) as well as the foremost (*ṣudūr*) of the dignified (*jilla*) and the general public (*jumhūr*).«[38] Al-Khazrajī here is describing an organisation of event reports (*ḥawādith*) and obituaries (*wafayāt*) that initially emerged in the 6th/12th century under Ibn al-Jawzī, who as a Ḥanbalī preacher in Baghdad began to append the obituaries of religious scholars to his universal chronicle *Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*.[39] Then his grandson Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī took up this format of events succeeded

36 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 344.

37 Vallet, Historiographie Rasūlide, 67.

38 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 33-34.

39 Irwin, Mamluk History, 160; De Somogyi, Kītāb al-muntaẓam, 62-64.

by obituaries for each year in his 7th/13th century chronicle *Mirʾat al-zamān fī taʾrikh al-aʿyan*, and was followed by many other historians across the Islamic world, where it became standard practice to incorporate all types of people.[40] Moreover, the content of these obituaries often includes the same types of information as are found in entries to explicitly biographical dictionaries.[41]

Although the contents of the roughly 520 obituaries in *al-ʿUqūd* vary, they primarily begin with the phrase »in this year, passed away« (*fī hādhihi al-sanna tuwuffiya*) to establish the temporal framework and mortuary context of the report. Next, an initial descriptor for the individual is provided. For the most part, these include, from most to least frequent, *faqīh* (jurist), *qāḍī* (judge), *amīr* (military leader), *shaykh* (a Sufi, or occasionally, tribal, leader) and *ṭawāshī* (palace eunuch). This does not preclude the person from taking on multiple roles in his or her lifetime, as often, for example, a *faqīh* may take up a judgeship later in life or a *qāḍī* may provide teaching or engage in other intellectual activities. However, the rest of the contents of the biographies often take on a pattern that extend from these particular descriptors, demonstrating that they appear to function as familiarly coded, externally ascribed identifications for the individuals and were not intended to portray their more complex, multi-dimensional and over-lapping identities and lives. From here, after the full name is given, there is much more variation in the details provided for each individual. These may include, for example, his or her date and place of birth, tribal or geographical association, family including spouses and children, venerable qualities, career activities or accomplishments, movement within, into or out of South Arabia, notable colleagues or teachers as well as interactions with court officials including the sultans themselves, such as appointments to offices or sentencing to punishment. Finally, the obituary often then ends with the exact or approximate day and month of death and with the phrase: »May God almighty have mercy on him« (*rahimahu Allāh taʿālā*). Overall, the obituaries can vary considerably in length due to the expansion of any of these parts or the addition of other elements, such as elegiac poems or anecdotes. Often the best examples of these supplementary elements come from the obituaries of the Rasūlid sultans themselves, which are found after the reports of their deaths at the end of their reigns. Some of these, partly in consequence of these additions, become the longest found in *al-ʿUqūd.* This is, however, to be expected considering these seven men are the central focus of the political community of the Rasūlid Sultanate.

Returning to other types of individuals found in these biographies, when gathered into categories according to their content, the most frequent in descending order include: religio-legalist (*faqīh-qāḍī*), military-administrator (*amīr-malik*), Sufi shaykh (*shaykh*), household eunuch (*ṭawāshī*) and female member of the Rasūlid family. Because these are the types of individuals al-Khazrajī most often chose to represent the members of the political community of the Rasūlid Sultanate, a summary of the general content of their entries will be provided to highlight the type of criteria employed to demonstrate their significance.

40 Guo, Mamluk Historiographical Studies, 31-32. Guo argues that this development was initially associated with the ›Syrian school‹ of Arabic historiography in the late medieval period and thus more affiliated with ›ulama‹ historians than with the military elite, as was mainly the case in Egypt.

41 For a review of the general contents and structures found in the Islamic tradition of biographical dictionaries, see, for example, Hafsi, Recherches I; *idem*, Recherches II; Khalidi, Islamic Biographical Dictionaries; al-Qāḍī, Biographical Dictionaries; Young, Arabic Biographical Writing. Recent studies on Arabic biographical collections of the late medieval period include, e.g., Gharaibeh, Narrative Strategies; Romanov, Algorithmic Analysis.

The most frequent type by far were the religio-legalists, primarily comprising jurisprudents (*fuqahāʾ*) and judges (*quḍāʾ*). This category is focused especially on the intellectual chains between students and teachers, attributes of goodness and knowledge, the production or study of specific works and appointments to positions in mosques and madrasas as they moved throughout or beyond Yemen. For example, here is a typical but content-rich obituary:

> [In this year], *al-faqīh al-ṣāliḥ al-fāḍil* ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Aḥmad b. Asʿad al-Khaṭṭābī passed away. He was a clever *faqīh*, and a contemporary of ʿAlī b. al-Ḥassan al-Aṣābī. He studied *fiqh* with Muḥammad b. Maḍmūn and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Jadīl. He was appointed to judgeships in al-Suḥūl, al-Mushayrq, and Waḥāḍa. He lived in the village of al-Jaʿāmī, in which the imam Zayd al-Fāʾishī was living. When he married his offspring, he then went to Hudāfa and he married into the progeny of al-Haytham of the people of al-Hudāfa, who have Arab origins, which are called: Banū Khaṭṭāb, living in Ḥāzat al-Qahma. He passed away in Hudāfa in the mentioned village.[42]

The next most frequent category of the obituaries is the military-administrator (*amīr*, *malik*). The obituaries of the individuals in this group are focused on the characteristic of strength in warfare and on their role in the collection of taxes, the construction of religious buildings or other acts of patronage or charity. They also occasionally contain anecdotes about interactions with the sultan or poetry that they have written. A representative example is:

> In this year, *al-amīr al-kabīr* Shujāʿ al-Dīn ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Taghlabī passed away. He was a senior *amīr*. His origin was his town Jabal Dhakhir. He was wealthy and high-ranking. Most of his wealth was from commerce. He was an *amīr* in the city of Zabīd. He acted as an *amīr* in Aden [...] If pilgrims who were coming on their way back from the hajj passed by a town he was in, he would clothe them and give them what enabled their return to their town. If they were from the town which he was in, he would give them what would assuage the hardship of travel. [Sometimes] people might dress up like pilgrims and come to him, and he would give to them what they needed.[43]

The main contents of obituaries for Sufi *shaykh*s usually consist of their positive attributes, the orders to which they belonged, persons they followed or associated with, travel itineraries, education or other career ambitions and sometimes poetry or anecdotes describing wonders or miracles they performed. Here is an example:

> In this year, Shaykh Fāḍil Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasān al-Qudsī passed away. His father was from a Damascus family and his mother was from Ashkelon. They met in Jerusalem and resided there. He married her and she bore for him this son in 604/1207-8, or it has been said in 606/1209-10. He moved to Umm Ubayda when he was twelve years old and became acquainted with Shaykh Najm al-Dīn, known as al-Akhḍar, who is from the offspring of the righteous Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī. He pledged allegiance and was educated by him. When he saw his maturity,

42 Al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 102.

43 Al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 197-198.

> he ordered him to enter Mecca and make the pilgrimage, and then enter Yemen to expand the Rifaʿiyya order there.[44] He informed him that he will meet there a man who will benefit him in his religion and mundane affairs. So, he did that. When he entered Yemen, he met *faqīh* ʿUmar b. Saʿīd al-ʿUqaybī. He resided with him in Dhū ʿUqayb for some days in 649/1251-2. ʿUmar made him famous and venerated him. Then he gave him a place to reside near him known as al-Muʿar. Then he moved from there to many places and built many ribats in them for him until the final ribat where he lived was al-Dhuhūb below the city of Ibb. He continued until he passed away after the Rifaʿiyya order was spread by him, especially in the area of al-Mikhlāf.[45] His death occurred on Friday night when eight days remained of the month of Rabīʿ/April-May from the mentioned year.[46]

The household eunuch (*ṭawāshī*) category is not very different from the military-administrator, because they often undertook similar tasks. They were frequently more intimately connected to the sultan and his family, however, especially the females.[47] Common parts of their obituaries include positive attributes, which often comprise their military prowess and generosity, relations with the sultanic household and sponsorship of religious building or other forms of charity. A sample obituary is:

> In this year, *al-ṭawāshī* Amīn al-Dīn Ahyaf al-Mujāhidī passed away. He was a servant who was prudent, strong of mind, recalcitrant, a shedder of blood, lethal, crude, coarse, prudent, resolved, clever, proud, great of prestige, and strong of self. He was courageous and brave in war and a counsellor for the sultan. He served four of the sultans. They are: al-Muʾayyad, al-Mujāhid, al-Afḍal, and al-Ashraf. He honoured the ulama and respected them. He had noble characteristics and righteous faith. He served as the ruler of Zabid for 15 years, except for a few days. He did not covet the property of people, but rather was pious. He had complete purity. He did not know anything of hypocrisy. However, he was reckless with his sword, which killed many people, correctly and incorrectly. May God pass over [without punishing] him.[48]

The final main category among the obituaries were the women connected to the sultans' households as wives, daughters, sisters and mothers. The main aspects of their obituaries discuss their relationship to the sultans, positive attributes, patronage for the construction and staffing of religious mosques and madrasas with *waqf*, and often elegiac poetry.[49] Here is a brief example:

> In this year, *al-ḥurra al-maṣūna* Maryam, daughter of *al-shaykh* al-Shams Ibn al-ʿAfīf and the wife of Sultan al-Muẓaffar passed away. She was among the most knowledgeable of the women, chaste, wise, and intelligent. She [sponsored the construction of] many good structures. Among them is the madrasa in Zabīd, called al-Sābiqiyya. Many of the people call it the madrasa Maryam. It is among the best madrasas. She arranged for it: an imam, muezzin, caretaker, instructor, orphans to learn the Quʾrān, a teacher

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44 It literally states: to spread the Rifaʿiyya cloak.

45 This placename can also be read as a geographical term (*mikhlāf*), meaning the region or territory.

46 Al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 303. Which month of Rabīʿ is not specified in the text edition.

47 For more information on the relationship between Rasūlid women and eunuchs, see Moorthy-Kloss, Eunuchs.

48 Al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 699-700.

49 For more information on the involvement of women in practices of patronage, see Sadek, Rasūlid Women.

> for the *fiqh* of the *madhhab* of imam al-Shāfiʿ, may God be pleased with him, a tutor, and students. She established a good waqf to support their maintenance. She built in Taʿizz a madrasa in al-Maghriba in a neighborhood called al-Humayrāʾ. She established a good waqf for it. She has a madrasa in Dhū ʿUqayb – it is the one she is buried in – and Dār Mudayf. Her passing away was in Jibla in Jumāda I in the mentioned year. May God almighty have mercy on her.[50]

Altogether, encompassing a broad swath of traits and activities, these different types of obituaries demonstrate the variety of ways a person may be distinguished and valued within the political community of the Rasūlid sultanate. Nonetheless, examination of the quantities of these types over time reveals a trend that involves the religio-legalist category of obituary being the most prevalent for the first six sultans but largely dropping off in proportion in favour of other types during the reign of al-Ashraf Ismāʾīl. This provokes the questions of how and why the obituaries from the years of this reign differ from what precedes them.

The Untethered Writing of al-Khazrajī on Life and Death

After the reports of the chronicle section of al-Janadī's *al-Sulūk* ended in 1330/730, al-Khazrajī no longer had any texts upon which to base his writing and so was free to construct and fill it of his own accord. Initially, for the rest of the reign of al-Mujāhid and that of the following al-Afḍal, much of the content and style of the event reports appear similar to what came before, although their length and quantity does lessen. Two notable exceptions are a report about the premature birth of a child with uncommon features and another about the disappearance of a corpse from a grave.[51] At the outset of the description of the reign of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl, however, a new way of presenting the actions of the sultan emerges.

One of the first features that becomes noticeable in al-Khazrajī's writing for this period is that the reports generally continue to get shorter and appear to follow something more akin to a cyclical itinerary of activities in which the sultan took part, evoking sometimes new or more intense aspects of his rulership: repeated visits to the palm-groves outside of Zabīd – sometimes for an inventory or tax collection – many more receptions of guests to the court from all over Yemen and beyond, increased reports of deliveries of tax revenues, gifts or horses to the sultan and precise descriptions of his travel routes. Also, there are often decrees regarding a reduction in the prices or taxes for the general population, which either reflect the more difficult economic reality of the period or are intended to highlight the generosity of the sultan.[52] Additionally, every year it is reported when the hajj leaves and arrives as well as in which city the sultan fasts during Ramadan. There is also a large increase in reports

50 Al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 468.

51 Al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 587-88, 625-626.

52 Al-Khazrajī does not hesitate to compliment the sultan, e.g., on his clemency when releasing a prisoner from jail; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 685-686.

about deadly natural disasters such as fires, floods, locusts and earthquakes along with other natural phenomena, often relating to the stars. Furthermore, he incorporates primary documents into his writing, such as the previously cited letter from India and another one from Mecca,[53] while also utilising new historiographical tropes, such as a report on the dreams of the sultan about visiting with Muḥammad, ʿUmar, Abū Bakr and ʿAlī for the apparent purpose of underscoring his antagonism towards the Zaydi imam.[54]

Finally, al-Khazrajī also presents reports about the visitation of unusual graves, perhaps reflecting a renewed interest of his, or the community in general, in funerary remains or the commemoration of the dead.[55] The first is reminiscent of stories from the earlier 4th/10th century work by the Yemeni polymath al-Hamdānī about the exploration of ancient tombs and their contents.[56] It describes a group examining the corpse of a man covered in extravagant clothing and with a body that appears completely preserved except for wounds exposing how he was killed. The region's inhabitants concluded this to be the grave of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, but al-Khazrajī comments that he believes the deceased had been an ancient scholar or Himyarite king. A second report describes the grave of a woman who had remained on hajj in Mecca for seven years and now the stone slab upon the grave sways back and forth, attracting crowds, which include not only al-Khazrajī but also local elites and the sultan himself.[57]

Along with these changes in the event reports, al-Khazrajī's approach to writing about the recently deceased alters as well.[58] While some obituaries continue to follow the formulaic content described in the previous section, others are now severely abbreviated, especially towards the end of the reign, even when longer entries are found in al-Khazrajī's biographical collection.[59] Consequently, in the most extreme scenario, the content of an obituary may solely comprise a few lines listing the admirable attributes or teachers of the deceased. Moreover, obituary reports also begin to appear in the chronological context of their occurrence rather than placed at the end.[60] As a result, they come more to resemble death reports among other occurrences in the year rather than a historiographical device designated for reporting on the lives of notable individuals. This placement even applies to longer obituaries, such as the extensive entry on the wife of al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl.[61] But even here the report is interspersed with information about the mourning of the sultan rather than solely concentrating on aspects of her life. In fact, descriptions of the death or the funerary ceremony afterwards also become more frequent and the central focus of the reports, such as in an obituary for the son of the sultan.

53 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqud*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 749-750.

54 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 747-748. Here, again, al-Khazrajī compliments the sultan, whose dream of good-tidings would not occur to anyone else but him.

55 There is also a report on a sultanic decree that prohibits women from following funeral processions and wailing over the dead as well as declaring that their graves should not be covered with a textile; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 838. This focus on stipulating funerary protocols, however, is not entirely new as the son of al-Muʾayyad also gave specific instructions to his father for his burial, such as no horse sacrifices over his grave, although al-Muʾayyad only followed some of them; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 462-463.

56 For an analysis of these reports, see Mahoney, Medieval Reports.

57 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 827.

58 This pattern, however, also is present for some *amīr* obituaries during the reign of al-Afḍal, e.g., in the years 766/1364-1365 and 771/1369-1370; al-Khazraji, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 647, 661.

59 For example, the two entries for Rāḍī al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. al-Haddād in *al-ʿUqūd* (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 821) and *Ṭirāz* (ed. al-ʿAbbādī *et al.*, 2385).

60 For example, the year 795/1392-1393 contains biographies in the middle and at the end (al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 770-773).

61 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 774-777.

> On Saturday, the 22nd of Rajab from this year, *mawlānā al-malik* al-Fāʾiz, son of *mawlānā al-sulṭān al-malik* al-Ashraf passed away. He was the oldest of his children. He was intelligent, possessing patience and devout tranquility. May God almighty have mercy on him. He was buried beside his mother in the reported tomb. All of the people of Zabīd of all kinds and the rest of the military attended his burial. A number of quadrupeds were sacrificed upon his grave. The recitation upon him was for seven days and was completed at the end of the month of Rajab.[62]

At the same time, other obituaries are almost entirely devoid of the formulaic types of information and patterns of the earlier obituaries and instead describe other more personal aspects of their lives. Here are two obituaries of Sufis whose deaths occurred within a very short time of each other. For the most part they do not conform to the standard criteria of a capsule biography but rather appear as literary micro-stories.

> On 16 Shawwāl 795/25 August 1393, *al-faqīh* Muḥammad b. Shāfīʿ passed away. He was a companion of *al-shaykh* al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm al-Jabartī. He attended on that day a listening session (*samāʿ*) for the poor. When the singer (*mughannī*) performed, he became impassioned. He rose from his spot and sat beside the singer for an hour. Then he threw himself upon the singer and embraced him for an hour until his strength abated and he fainted. They left him for an hour, only to then uncover his face and find him dead. He was a benevolent man, striving to fulfill the needs of the people. He loved bestowing happiness upon them. His house was a shelter for whoever wanted among the poor. He did not have a son or a wife. In his house, there were approximately 30 cats, both male and female. He would feed and look after them. May God almighty have mercy on him.[63]

> On 21 Shawwāl 795/30 August 1393, Abū Bakr al-Silāsilī passed away. He was a man among the people of Zabid. He lived the life of an ascetic. He accompanied the Sufi and exerted himself (*jāhada*). He would wander until he threw off his clothes and then walk in the city naked with nothing on, circulating through the streets and pathways like that. If someone were to put a robe or shirt on him, he would not keep it on for more than one day and discard it. He continued like that until the mentioned date. When it was the night of the 21st/30th of that month, he arrived at his sister's house in the city. He knocked on the door, and when they opened it, they found that he had thrown himself on the ground. So, they carried him into the house. He gestured for the bed, and they placed him on it. He spent the night with them there on that bed. When the morning came, he was dead. He was buried in the cemetery of Bāb al-Qartab, close to the gate. A large collection of people of Zabid attended his funeral. The ruler of Zabid and his leaders attended. He was not ill before that night. God knows best. May God have mercy on him.[64]

62 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 784.

63 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 771.

64 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 771-772.

A change can also be perceived in those who are seen as important enough to be memorialised, a choice that al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl himself would have had at least some influence over in the creation of this work. There is a clear trend away from the more religio-legal elements of the court and towards other individuals in or associated with it. These include not just the representatives that the sultan chose to serve him in the provinces (*amīr*, *malik*) or in his households (*ṭawāshī*).[65] Instead, it also comprised more unusual personal figures in his entourage beyond his family members,[66] such as a Jewish doctor who arrived accompanying a gift from Egypt.[67] But perhaps the most extraordinary notice is for a horse named Ṣaʿūd, whom al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl mourned, shrouded and buried.[68] However, while these figures may reveal more intimate sides to the sultan and his persona, they appear to stray from the established criteria for the selection of exceptional individuals from within the political community of the sultanate. This provokes the more general question regarding the historical writing of this reign compared to that of the previous sultans. Because it was written during the same time-period in which the events actually occurred, enough distance may not yet have accumulated in order for the broader notions of a collective memory and a more idealised form of political community to develop. Nonetheless, these persons may still be conceived of as part of the community that is shepherded by the sultan as he concomitantly protects and unites them to maintain his ideal rulership.

Conclusion

This case-study has examined the changes in the ways obituaries in *al-ʿUqūd* relate to the political agenda of the work's main narrative promoting Rasūlid rulership over South Arabia. Little is known about the reception of *al-ʿUqūd* beyond its mention in some biographies of al-Khazrajī or al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl and evidence of its position within the Yemeni historiographical tradition of transmission via copying or paraphrasing. Al-Khazrajī used, in part, previously written biographies and chronographies by other authors in the compilation of his text; in turn, demonstrating its role as a historiographical work, information from some of *al-ʿUqūd*'s reports is found in later bibliographic compilations and chronicles, such as: the 9th/15th-century collections of *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ ʾahl al-ṣidq wa-al-ikhlās*, *Ṭabaqāt ṣulaḥāʾ al-Yaman*, and *Tuḥfat al-zaman fī tārīkh al-Yaman*[69]; the 10th/16th-century

65 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 699-700, 738, 753.

66 Other than the sultan's wife and son, there are additional obituaries for his mother and younger son; al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 689-690, 820.

67 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 838.

68 al-Khazrajī, *al-ʿUqūd*, ed. al-Ḥibshī, 820. This love of horses may extend, in part, from his grandfather, al-Mujāhid, who wrote a book about them; al-Mujāhid, *al-*Aqwāl, ed. Al-Jabbūrī.

69 al-Sharjī, *al-Khawāss*, ed. al-Ḥibshī; al-Ahdal, *Tuḥfat*, ed. al-Ḥibshī; al-Burayhī, *Ṣulaḥāʾ*, ed. al-Ḥibshī.

collection of *Taʾrīkh thaghr ʿAdan*[70]; the 9th/15th-century chronicle *al-Kitāb al-Ẓāhirī fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-rasūliyya fī al-yaman*[71]; the 10th/16th-century *Qurrat al-ʿUyūn bi-Akhbār al-Yaman al-maymūn*.[72] Following along the same historiographic lines as other Arabic chronicles during this period, which lauded their rulers through a combination of chronography and biography, *al-ʿUqūd* was very much of its time in providing statements of political strength to whichever domestic or foreign audience took them up.[73]

In *al-ʿUqūd*, this mood is immediately established by an extensive prologue containing an origin story that portrays the Rasūlids to be carrying out the task of defending South Arabia, which was allotted to their ancestors by the region's primordial ruler Sabāʾ, to whom they are connected via a false genealogy that depicts this Turkmen family as originally possessing roots in South Arabia. Further methods of promoting legitimacy at work in this text seek to establish the Rasūlid sultans as true Muslim rulers in both the chronicles and their obituaries: they are perceived to be legitimate because they possess the attributes of what was thought to make up good rulers, fulfilling both their religious and military obligations. The biographies of the other individuals within the sultanate's political community also contain this same sort of exhibition of the characteristics and actions that make, for example, a notable Sufi shaykh or household eunuch. Altogether, this writing about lives and deaths constitutes a political act whereby the obituaries collectively serve to construct a vision of the political community of the Rasūlid Sultanate, for which the sultan is focused on both establishing just rule in the command of God and uniting his people together in safety and purpose. From this perspective, *al-ʿUqūd* becomes almost a playground for al-Khazrajī to work with different historiographical genres, including origin stories, genealogy, chronography, biography and even metaphorical burial uncovering texts. Through his manipulation of these various genres, he succeeds in producing a cohesive work of historiography that persuasively argues for the strength and righteousness of the Rasūlid sultans in their pursuit of divinely sanctioned dominance over South Arabia.

Furthermore, focusing on the framework and contents of the individual biographic entries themselves provides another layer of analysis beyond the pure teleology communicated in the overall text's ideology of rulership. Most of the obituaries follow a similar formula, but once there are no longer sources upon which to base his historical writing al-Khazrajī's authorial voice becomes clearer. The obituaries become shorter, more interspersed with the other reports and there is more of an emphasis on either the death or burial of the individual. Moreover, the types of lives described move beyond the standard categories of the previous dynasties and reveal a more private side of rulership, even if they do not appear to qualify as ideal representations of persons belonging to the political community of the sultanate. Thus, while this work served the highly ideological purpose of supporting the legitimacy of the Rasūlid dynasty, in the end it also became a nuanced personal project through which al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl was able to communicate what was of special importance to him and his family.

70 Bā Makhrama, *Taʾrīkh*, ed. al-Hamīd.

71 al-Maṣrī, *al-Kitāb*, ed. al-Ḥibshī.

72 Ibn al-Daybaʿ, *Qurrat*, ed. al-Akwaʿ.

73 There was an increase in elite and non-elite readership of Arabic documents in Egypt and Syria beginning in the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries; Hirschler, *Written Word*.

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al-Ashraf Ismāʿīl b. al-Afḍal al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAlī b. Dāwūd b. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Rasūl, *Fakihat al-zaman fī akhbār man waliya min al-Yaman*, ed. ʿAlī Ḥassan ʿAlī ʿUmar Muʿalyī (Adan, 2014).

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Creating a Sense of Glorious Destiny. Mastery of Speech in the *Libellus de Situ Civitatis Mediolani* (Late 10th-Early 11th Centuries)

Giorgia Vocino*

In the decades around 1000, an anonymous cleric at Milan Cathedral wrote a booklet on the history of his city which he built as a collection gathering, in chronological order, the Lives of the local bishops. The unfinished work not only testifies to the learning and culture of the author but also to the historical relevance of an ambitious text commissioned to support the political claims and the legitimacy of the Milanese church in its quest for primacy in the kingdom of Italy. This chapter explores the refined style of the author and the ways in which he constructed a coherent and cohesive narrative by sewing together individual biographies. The medieval reception of this biographical collection also shows the ways in which the text was repurposed to fulfil different functions and multiple goals, both within and beyond the city of Milan. Finally, this study analyses the text in the light of two interpretative concepts borrowed from the field of social anthropology. *De situ* clearly appealed to the literary tastes of the scholars trained in the cathedral school, thus addressing an audience shaped as a specific »community of learning«. More generally, the collection contributed to nourishing the sense of identity of the clergy and the people of Milan, that is a »textual community« which, through the acts of reading and listening to the text, felt it belonged to that glorious history and expected to see its reflection in the present.

Keywords: medieval Italy, Church history, hagiography, institutional history, manuscript studies, textual transmission, rhetoric, communities of learning, textual communities, history of origins.

The history of the early Christian origins of the city of Milan was first narrated in the so-called *Booklet on the description of the city of Milan (Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani*, henceforth *De situ*), which was written by an anonymous compiler between the late 10th and the early 11th century.[1] *De situ* retraces the history of the foundation and organisation of the Milanese metropolitan Church from apostolic times up to the early 4th century by focusing on the episcopacies of its early bishops, whose Lives are ordered chronologically and presented

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1 The sources pertaining to the history of the apostolic origins of Milan have been thoroughly studied by Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*. The edition of *De situ* used throughout this chapter was prepared by Alessandro and Giuseppe Colombo and published in 1952 as part of the collection *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 2nd edition, tome I, part 2.

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in separate chapters. Unfortunately, the compilation is incomplete, ending abruptly before the death of the sixth Milanese bishop, Maternus (*ep.* 316-28). This sudden interruption appears to be accidental, however, judging by the dedicatory letter introducing *De situ*, where the author explicitly declares his intention to continue the narrative up to the present times and to the episcopacy of the archbishop who commissioned the work from him.[2]

As far as can be reconstructed from the surviving manuscript evidence, *De situ* comprises a dedicatory letter outlining authorial strategies and goals, a historical preface dedicated to the description of the city of Milan, the story of the latter's evangelisation by the apostle Barnabas and the biographies of the first six local bishops. Interestingly, only one 15th-century manuscript (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H 56 sup.) contains the text in its entirety, while all the other sixteen *codices* include only a selection of the different chapters: in some cases they are presented in the original chronological order, in others the individual sections have been reshuffled and integrated into different collections such as hagiographic legendaries and liturgical handbooks.[3]

De situ belongs to a popular historiographic genre in Christian medieval Europe: the *Gesta episcoporum* (*Deeds of bishops*).[4] According to the typology of this source, the narrative follows the succession of bishops in a given city from the foundation of the local episcopal church up to the time of writing. The *Gesta episcoporum* thus firmly anchored history in the urban landscape and contributed to shaping influential ideas and ideals concerning the ways in which a bishop should take care of the community entrusted to him, how he should administer his church's wealth and the ecclesiastical province under his authority, and also how he should represent, defend and promote the interests of his institution in the larger geopolitical arena. The earliest and most influential work of this genre was produced in 6th-century Rome: the *Liber Pontificalis* (*Book of Pontiffs*) recounted the Lives of the bishops of Rome, i.e. the popes, presenting them in chronological order from the time of St Peter, and was more or less regularly updated until the end of the 9th century.[5] The wide dissemination of the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* across medieval Europe ensured its popularity, which also relied on the authority and the prestige of the papacy, and it thus set an influential example of the ways in which the history and memory of a local episcopal church could be shaped, preserved and promoted.[6] The Milanese *Gesta episcoporum* therefore builds on a long-standing and authoritative tradition of local institutional histories which identify the city and its most powerful urban institution (the episcopal church) as their main focus and object of interest.[7] The compiler of the Milanese *De situ* explicitly acknowledges that he is working within the framework of this genre in his dedicatory letter, in which he declares to have followed the model of the Roman *Liber Pontificalis*:

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2 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 4. All translations provided in this chapter are my own.

3 For an overview of the manuscripts transmitting *De situ*, see Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 19-30. On manuscript transmission, see also below, 204-206. For an introduction to hagiographic collections, see Philippart, *Les légendiers latins*, while the relevant liturgical books are treated in Martimort, *Les »ordines«*.

4 On this literary genre, see Sot, *Gesta episcoporum* as well as the articles gathered in the more recent volume Bougard and Sot (eds.), *Liber, Gesta, Histoire*.

5 On the genesis of the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* see McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy*; Geertman, La genesi del *Liber Pontificalis* and Verardi, *La memoria legittimante*, while on the influence of this work, see McKitterick, La place du *Liber Pontificalis*.

6 See again Geertman, La genesi del *Liber Pontificalis* as well as Noble, Literacy and the Papal Government. For an example of the ways in which papal biographies could be written to respond to present-day challenges, see McKitterick, Papacy and Byzantium.

7 Sot, Local and Institutional History, 89-91.

> In like manner, the most famous Pope Damasus once wrote a text on the catalogue of the Roman episcopal city at the request and with the encouragement of St Jerome, the most skilled interpreter of the Holy Scripture, [and wrote that] in the same way in which he [i.e. Jerome] had diligently written »On the illustrious men«.[8]

The anonymous author declares that the preservation of memory and presentation of worthy models for the benefit of future generations are the main goals of writing history. He furthermore insists on the importance of eloquence in the retelling of the past:

> Admirable feats and deeds deserving the greatest of praise acquire further merit thanks to the ability with which they are narrated. If a dry source of words sets about to illustrate the deeds of the most excellent [men], their memory is either completely extinguished by the passing of time or is entrusted to posterity vitiated and deformed, beyond what is acceptable, by vile grammatical mistakes. It thus happens that lacking credibility the amount of praise annuls the testimony and detracts from them as much glory as it adds in falsity going beyond what is appropriate.[9]

The careful and skilful construction of *De situ* testifies to the learning of its author, who was most likely a cleric educated and trained at Milan cathedral.[10] His taste for archaic and rare words, the mastery of speech he displays through the use of a varied range of literary and rhetorical devices, and the skilful use of his sources constitute the red thread sewing the individual chapters together into an overarching narrative. The elegant and refined style conjugated with the borrowing of images, expressions and specific words from authoritative sources also tell us something about the audience targeted by the anonymous author and the milieu in which he was operating.[11] The celebration of the glory of the episcopal see of Milan – a church destined for greatness from the very beginning of its history and a city almost equal to Rome according to the testimony of *De situ* – places the writing in a historical context characterised by competition with other Italian metropolitan sees (Ravenna, Aquileia) and close collaboration with the German emperors ruling over the kingdom of Italy between 962 and 1024.[12] While acknowledging the primacy of Rome, the churches of Milan, Aquileia and Ravenna had been competing for centuries for the right to occupy second place in the hierarchy of the metropolitan sees of Italy.[13] Ravenna and Aquileia could already count on

8 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 5: *Fecit quidem huiusscemodi textum de episcopali urbis romane catalogo famosissimus papa Damaseus eiusdem ecclesie, hortante ac flagitante peritissimo Sacre Scripture interprete Yeronimo, qualem ipse pridem de viris illustribus naviter ediderat*. On Jerome's *On Illustrious Men* (*De viris illustribus*), see Wieser and Ward in this volume.

9 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 3-4: *Res mirabiles ac non sine maximo cumulo laudis geste proferantur accipere facultate virtutem. Si qua nempe de excellentioribus ad explicandum gesta inobs verborum vena processit emanare, aut in totum alluvione temporum abolita deperire notitie, aut vilibus dedecora soloecismis deformiora quam decuit ad posteros devenere, fit vero nonumquam ut fide carens cumulus prerogativam disipet laudum et eis tantum decerpat glorie, quantum plus iusto aliquid falsitatis adiecerit.*

10 On the different attempts at identifying the anonymous author and the time of writing of *De situ*, see Tomea, Le suggestioni dell'antico.

11 The rhetorical quality of *De situ* has been highlighted by Schmidt, «Colores rhetorici», 8-9.

12 On the historical context in which the text was written see the classical study by Violante, *La società milanese*.

13 This antagonism is for instance reflected in the fluctuating order of the archbishops' subscriptions in 9th- to 11th-century conciliar proceedings, cf. Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 367-384.

authoritative apostolic traditions that created a direct connection with Rome: both churches claimed to have been founded by disciples of St Peter. The writing of *De situ* therefore constituted an attempt to bypass both metropolitan sees by establishing through St Barnabas – the companion of St Paul chosen by the Holy Spirit – a different apostolic genealogy that could almost rival that of the Roman papacy in honour and prestige.[14]

De situ was therefore commissioned to support the political ambitions and the legitimacy of the Milanese Church, an institution that was playing a leading role in the late 10th- and early 11th-century kingdom of Italy. In consideration of that, it does not surprise that it was written at the direct request of the local archbishop, possibly to be identified with Arnulf II (998-1018), who repeatedly tried to assert and strengthen the authority of the Milanese church and its primacy within the Italian kingdom.[15] The choice of a particular literary genre (local history in the form of the *Gesta episcoporum*), the learned construction of the text and the themes developed in the compilation all contribute to shape a powerful narrative appealing to the sense of identity of a community (narrower or wider according to the different levels of understanding and experience of the text) whose pride, claims and ambitions are mirrored and further boosted by *De situ*. This chapter will focus on some of the choices made by the compiler to create a coherent and overarching narrative that built on the individual segments (the bishops' Lives) to convey a powerful image of the city and the Church of Milan. It shall thus shed light on the ways in which the text played on the sense of identity of the Milanese clerical community (the cathedral and diocesan clergy) and the city's inhabitants, and how it was read and understood across time and space. In the last section the discussion shall focus on the possible ways in which readers could access and understand *De situ*: the notions of *community of learning* and *textual community* will be brought forward as useful interpretative tools for the comprehension of the compiler's writing strategies and for their contextualisation within the cultural and social milieux in which the Milanese *De situ* originated and circulated.

The Author's Signature: Rhetoric and Style in De situ

No doubts can be raised concerning the attribution of *De situ* to a single author in the light of the distinct style and the recurrent *topoi* that dominate the fabric of the text. A poetic and elegant metaphor is repeatedly used and alluded to throughout the unfolding of the narrative, to the point that it could almost be considered the author's signature: the metaphor of the sea journey. This beautiful image describes the act of writing and is first evoked in the closing lines of the dedicatory letter.[16]

14 On the apostolic traditions promoted in early medieval Italy, see Vocino, Caccia al discepolo.

15 Bertolini, Arnolfo. On the dating of *De situ*, see Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 418-431. The same chronological window is proposed by Picard, *Le souvenir*, 450-459. A slightly later dating to the last quarter of the 11th century has been suggested by Busch, Barnabas, Apostel der Mailänder.

16 On nautical metaphors describing the act of writing – a common *topos* in ancient and medieval literature – see Curtius, *Europäische Literatur*, 138-141.

The author writes:

> I have stated all this in the prologue as if at the beginning of a journey by ship, since I am struck with the fear of an upcoming extraordinary navigation, so that, if by accident I drive the stern into steep sandbanks, indulgence might come easier in consideration of the fact that I so tenaciously asked to be excused for my ignorance.[17]

The same metaphor, accompanied by a direct address to the archbishop who commissioned the work and to the readers, is picked up again in the chapter dedicated to the Life of Castritian (third Milanese bishop), in which the compiler extensively borrows from an exegetical commentary written by the late 4th-century Church Father, St Jerome:

> I shall thus obey your requests, o glorious father, and with the Holy Spirit blowing – for which I humbly beg – I hoist the sails of this ship [which], if driven by your prayers, might be able to reach the longed-for harbour. For this, I insistingly ask that you repeat this little verse »Awake, o north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the scents of our patrons may flow out«[18]. To which I shall indeed add the words of the prophet saying »Come Spirit from the four winds and blow upon the prow of this swaying ship«[19]. Moreover, to the fastidious reader, or rather to the one who will read our work with hostile spirit, I announce that I shall place in reverse order that which I need to say first, so that if by any chance there is someone who does not believe the things that he is reading, he shall examine what is recounted in other Roman and Greek chronicles, and if they agree he should not scoff at the present work. I declare that indeed I am not weaving and did not weave the whole fabric of this history, but almost as placed in a mirror I transmitted it to those willing to know the testimonies of ancient history.[20]

Later on, the transition from the Life of Castritian to that of Calimerus (third and fourth bishops of Milan) is marked by the author's direct address to his audience, in which he defends and clarifies his writing strategies focusing on content rather than virtuosity, while nonetheless using an evocative and flamboyant style:

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17 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 6: *Hec in proemio velud ad ingressum carine, navigationis insolite ancipitem formidans eventum, idcirco premisi ut michi, si forte in abrupta sircium pupim impigero, facilior adsit indulgentia, quia tam pertinaciter excusare volui de impericia.*

18 Cf. Song of Solomon 4.16.

19 Cf. Ezekiel 37.9.

20 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 38: *Obsequar igitur tuis, pater almifice, iussis, et navis huius, adhuc flante Sancto, ut supplex imploro, Spiritu, vela suspendam, si forte agat ad desiderata litora portus, tuis inpulsam precibus. In quibus ut sepius illum versiculum repetas, obnixe deposco: »Surge aquilo et veni auster, perfla ortum meum et fluent aromata nostrorum patronorum«. Quin et ego subinseram interpellans cum propheta et dicens »A quattuor ventis veni Spiritus, et insuffla super vacillantis proram navicule«. Porro fastidioso lectori, ut quod prius dicere debui prepostero ordine ponam, sive animo perduelli cuipiam nostra lecturo illud ultra supraque denuntio, quatenus in his que relegit, si forte minus credulus existit, perquirat aliarum tam romanorum quam graiorum chronicarum commenta, et si consonant presentia non suggillet. Me autem fateor non plenam hystorie texere vel texuisse materiem, sed quasi in speculo positum nosse cupientibus rei antique indicia protulisse.* For the comparison with Jerome's preface to Book XII of his commentary on Ezekiel, which the anonymous author used for the redaction of the passage from *Obsequar* to *denuntio*, see Hieronymus, *Commentarii in Ezechielem*, XII, ed. Glorie, 549.

> I leave out his [i.e. Castritian's] other very admirable deeds for the necessity of abbreviation, as I am approaching other matters. And yet, it would be more prudent to turn this poor writing away from such great deeds given that, whether they read or hear them, present-day scholars enjoy sentences sounding almost like tinkling cymbals and the rhythms of harmonised syllogisms much more than they appreciate the value of the [narrated] deeds. For this reason, we shall direct the naval journey towards those things which are in sight, because we undertook the exploration of the city towards which we sailed not to describe one by one the enormous construction of the ramparts, and its many fortified pinnacles or the defensive machines surrounding its strong walls, but rather to describe briefly the entrance and exit through the gates, and to observe rather than to measure the metal drawbridges. Come then, it is time to consider carefully the nature and greatness of the next gate.[21]

The metaphor of the sea journey not only describes the act of writing but also clarifies the object of the text: the author declares that he decided to focus neither on the fortifications nor the walls of the city but on its gates and more precisely on the entrance and exit through them. Using highly figurative speech, he identifies the bishops with the gates of the imagined city under examination, while the moments of their accession to the episcopacy and their death are presented as the specific objects of the narrative. In the episcopal biographies, the anonymous author indeed focuses on illustrating the circumstances which led to the election of each bishop and those of his death. The last sentences of each individual segment of the narrative (i.e. each Life) thus indicate how many years the bishop held the episcopate and duly note the day of his death and the place of his burial. These coordinates were necessary to make sure the deceased would be actively remembered in the prayers of the local Christian community.[22] They also provided two essential pieces of information for the promotion of a new cult: a date for the liturgical commemoration of the late bishop's true birth into eternal life (*dies natalis*) and a burial place where his remains constituted a powerful contact point between earth and heaven, thus turning into powerful relics.[23]

In the same passage, the compiler describes his audience and addresses those *novelli auditores* fond of a highly rhetorical style and less attentive to the content of what they read or listen to. The use of the word *auditores* (listeners) and the description of their preferences interestingly identify the specific context in which the compiler expected his work to be read: a group of highly trained scholars whose tastes reflect an advanced education most likely

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21 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 46: *Reliqua vero miranda virtutum illius gesta solius causa compendii transeo, quia ad alia festino. Quamquam hic vilior stilus a tam magnis declinare tutius, eo quod presentium temporum novelli auditores vocalioribus sententiis quasi tinnientibus cymbalis multo amplius delectentur, et silogismorum magis consonantium modulis, queque legerint vel audierint, quam rerum gestarum pondere metiantur. Quam ob rem, ad ea que in prospectu sunt navalem cursum dirigamus, quia urbis quam adnavimus exploratum, non inormes propugnaculorum materies, et turrite illius multiplices minas, vel circum ductas muris fortissimis machinas viritim describendas, sed portarum solummodo introitus et egressus brevi calamo designandos, cataractasque fusiles potius adnotandas quam dimetiendas suscepimus. Age ergo, porta que sequitur qualis quantaque sit attentius perpensetur.*

22 The practice of reciting the names of dead bishops during the liturgy of the Mass is attested since late antiquity: episcopal catalogues inscribed on diptychs and recorded in various types of manuscripts are believed to have been later developed into the new medieval genre of the *Gesta episcoporum*, to which *De situ* also belongs; see Sot, Local and Institutional History, 94-96. However, it should be noted that simple catalogues of bishops continued to be kept and updated across the Middle Ages regardless of the production of local *Gesta episcoporum*.

23 On the ways in which new saints were created and how their cults were validated, see Klaniczay, Using Saints.

achieved in the local cathedral school, that is in one of the major centres of learning in the Italian kingdom.[24] Even when pointing out the risks of an exceedingly grandiloquent style, the author could not avoid operating in a cultural, intellectual and literary framework in which sophisticated rhetorical writing was common currency; his many references and quotations to those classical and late antique authors that formed the early medieval curriculum of studies (universally studied authors such as Virgil and Isidore of Seville are joined by more local ones such as Ennodius of Pavia and Paul the Deacon) clearly situate him in the school traditions and didactic programmes of his time.[25] However, the borrowings from a varied range of texts and their skilful weaving into the narrative pattern transcend a pure demonstrative display of the author's culture and learning: they substantiate a particular image of the city and the community that are celebrated in *De situ*.

A History of Glorious Origins and Unbroken Continuity

The unity and cohesion of *De situ* is not only based on the literary and stylistic uniformity of its writing but also on the stress put on the unfolding of an unbroken timeline grafting the origins and the early centuries of the Milanese church onto the sacred history of salvation. This history started with Jesus Christ's coming and was continued by the divinely sanctioned early apostolic missions entrusted with the preaching of the Gospel across the world.[26] The mission of St Barnabas, the founder of the Milanese church, started in the East within the small community of Christ's disciples in Jerusalem, as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.[27] But the Bible did not reveal what had happened to Barnabas from the moment he parted from St Paul's company. Developing an early Christian tradition that located Barnabas in Rome, the compiler turned him into the first Apostle to preach in the imperial capital, thus presenting the founder of the Milanese Church as the predecessor by some 20 years of the Roman patron saints, Peter and Paul.[28] From Rome Barnabas finally reached the imperial city of Milan, where he met a pious man of Greek descent, Anatelon, whom he eventually designated as co-apostle and consecrated to the episcopal office while also sanctioning the primacy of the Milanese see in the region.[29] The metropolitan rank of the city is therefore directly linked to its apostolic origin, a connection that many cities strove to establish in order

24 Regarding Milan as a leading centre of learning and culture in the 11th century, see Cowdrey, Anselm of Besate, and for a wider chronological frame Viscardi, La cultura milanese. For an analysis highlighting the abundant local manuscript production before the year 1000, see Ferrari, Manoscritti e cultura, while on the 11th and 12th century *eadem*, Produzione libraria.

25 On the literary borrowings integrated into the dedicatory letter attached to *De situ*, see for instance Tomea, Le suggestioni dell'antico. Citations from earlier texts – although more can be identified today with the help of databases – are signalled in the apparatus of *De situ*'s critical edition.

26 The historical narrative of *De situ* starts precisely with the ascension of Jesus Christ and the miraculous conversion of St Paul as it is related in the Acts of the Apostles; *De Situ*, ed. Colombo, 14-17. For an overview of the many possible uses and developments of the biblical episode focusing on the parting of Christ's disciples (the so-called *divisio apostolorum*), see Levillayer, *L'usage du thème apocryphe*.

27 While St Paul only briefly mentions Barnabas in his letters (I Cor. 9.6; Col. 4.10 and Gal. 2.1.9 and 13), the Acts of the Apostles offer more information on his travels (Act. 4.36-37; 9.27; 11.22-30, 12.25; 13.1-51; 14.1-28 and 15.1-39).

28 On the probable use by the author of Greek catalogues listing Christ's disciples and their respective missions, see Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 323-334.

29 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 20.

to justify their legitimacy and jurisdiction over large ecclesiastical provinces. Such political operations often originated in situations of open competition with rival Churches that were mostly concerned with juridical and jurisdictional issues.[30] A similar historical scenario – Milan trying to assert its rights in northern Italy at the expense of the metropolitan churches of Aquileia and Ravenna – constitutes precisely the context in which *De situ* saw the light.[31]

Moreover, the link between local (Milanese) history and the universal sacred history of salvation rests on the consecration of the first bishop of Milan by an apostle who had directly been invested with his mission by the Holy Spirit. Barnabas chose Anatelon for his moral virtues (honesty and faith) and mentored him, thus establishing a relationship in which legitimacy and orthodoxy are passed on from teacher (*magister*) to disciple. It is on the unbroken succession of teachers and disciples that the compiler built the line of continuity and inscribed the Milanese Church onto the apostolic genealogy that connected it directly to Christ – and hence the source of revelation – through Barnabas' mission. The second Milanese bishop, Gaius, whom the compiler describes as Anatelon's co-disciple (*condiscipulus*), is first elevated to the order of priesthood and then designated by Anatelon to succeed him in the episcopal office. Among Gaius' disciples is Castritian; he was ordained a priest by the bishop and was elected to succeed the latter after his death with the consensus of both the clergy and the local Christian people (*consensu universus clerus et omnis christicolarum populus*). Similarly, Calimerus is co-opted by Castritian and integrated into the group of his disciples. He is later chosen for the episcopal office because in him the Milanese community saw the reflection of the same virtues and orthodox doctrine of his master. A connection between master and pupil based on education, righteous morality and orthodox doctrine is also said to underlie the following episcopal succession (Calimerus-Monas), while the transition from Monas to Maternus – the last one to be narrated in *De situ* – is described by reference to the biblical prophets Elijah and Elisha, the latter disciple and spiritual son of the former.[32] Why would the compiler insist on presenting each Milanese bishop as the disciple of his predecessor? The importance attached to the continuity of the episcopal lineage and the handing over of orthodox doctrine from bishop to bishop clearly strengthened and added legitimacy to the connection between the Church of Milan and the source of revelation springing from the very place (Jerusalem and Palestine) where the history of Christianity originated.[33] No disruption endangered the progression of the *ecclesia Mediolanensis* on the path to salvation, and the carefully laid out structure of the narrative enhances this sense of glorious destiny inscribed in the unfolding Christian history of Milan. Moreover, the main duty of a bishop, namely to be a teacher to the clergy and the community under his care, is thus brought to the fore, presenting an ideal portrait in which the pastoral quality of the episcopal office emerges as a prominent feature.[34]

30 See again Vocino, Caccia al discepolo.

31 Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 367-384.

32 As Elisha had been blessed by God with a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2), similarly Maternus had inherited the virtues of Monas in double proportion, thus deserving to be chosen by the Milanese clergy; *De situ,* ed. Colombo, 63.

33 The construction of narrative unbroken lines of succession connecting local churches to Christ is a feature often observed in hagiographies produced in early medieval Italy; see for instance the Life of St Syrus of Pavia – the capital of the Italian kingdom and a city within Milan's metropolitan jurisdiction – composed in the context of competition with Milan; Vocino, Caccia al discepolo, 378-382; *eadem*, La leggenda dimenticata.

34 It is worthy of note that the Church Father and patron saint of Milan, St Ambrose (d. 397), believed indeed that teaching was the main duty attached to the episcopal office, as he stated in Ambrose, *De officiis* I, trans. Davidson, 119.

The same strategy can be observed in the progressive institutionalisation of the Milanese Church and the transition from the pagan to a Christian topography of the city. In the description of Milan used as a preface to the historical narrative, the author recalls the local urban landmarks delineating the pre-Christian city: the palaces, theatre, amphitheatre, baths and gardens built by Roman emperors are offered as evidence of the high rank of Milan in the hierarchy of the imperial towns. These are progressively substituted by holy places (e.g. miraculous wells), sanctuaries and churches, which defined the topography of the Christian city born thanks to Barnabas' preaching and thriving under his successors. A similar narrative development can be observed in the drawing of the steadily growing metropolitan province over which the jurisdiction of Milan stretched and of the progressive institutionalisation of the episcopal Church that accompanied the organisation of the ecclesiastical orders and the many offices related to the functioning of a metropolitan see (e.g. the mention of the rather specialised office of the *primicerius lectorum*, i.e. head of the minor order of the lectors, held by Maternus prior to his episcopal election).

The stress put by the compiler on continuity and the careful construction of an overarching plot allow the city of Milan to emerge as the main character of *De situ*. This indicates that the work was meant to be something more that the juxtaposition of episcopal biographies ordered according to a chronological principle. As demonstrated by the title of the compilation recorded in the manuscript preserving the entire text,[35] *De situ* was composed to provide a testimony to the glory of Milan and its Church through the recounting of its Christian history, which was articulated in individual chapters dedicated to the city's leaders, that is the bishops. The visibility given in the narrative to Milan – an ancient imperial capital and a key political centre in the 10th-century kingdom of Italy – perfectly locates *De situ* within the genre of local histories. Their popularity in politically fragmented worlds is not exclusive to the Christian West and their composition is a phenomenon that can be observed across Eurasia: for instance, the historiography produced in post-Carolingian Europe shows interesting parallels with the works written in the Islamic post-Abbasid world.[36] One can only agree with Franz Rosenthal, eminent specialist of Islamic historiography, who in 1952 wrote: »local history has at all times been a favourite literary expression of group consciousness«.[37] Face-to-face communities whose identities are firmly rooted in a given geographical and institutional landscape (a monastery, an episcopal city, a religious sect etc.), would therefore naturally privilege the writing of histories in which the chronologically arranged narrative enhances the visibility of the most prominent local actors and landmarks. As people and places become quintessential, the integration of biographies emerges as a viable and a pertinent choice available to the authors. In this sense, *De situ* shares the same ordering principles of other works analysed in this volume, and its analysis highlights the historiographical dimension of biographical collections: the overarching history transcends the individual lives weaved into the narrative fabric and confers unity and cohesion to the whole.

35 See below n. 40.

36 In the same period, the *Ta'rīkh Jurjān* was written by Al-Sahmī (d. 1045); local pride is here explicitly derived from the settlement in Jurjān of the Companions of the Prophet, who in a cross-cultural comparison could be set side by side with the apostles. On local historiography in the medieval Islamic world, see Robinson, *Islamic historiography*, 138-142.

37 Rosenthal, *A History*, 150.

Once we recognise that the stress is placed on the history of Milan and its Church (infallibly geared towards salvation) rather than on the individual biographical segments, the literary and narrative construction of *De situ* can be easily accounted for. The bishops' Lives are not meant to be full-fledged biographies but carefully chosen segments focusing on the crucial moments of transition in which the episcopal office was handed over from one holder to the successor. Each link needed to be securely welded to the next one in an unbreakable episcopal chain. Moreover, if we consider *De situ* to be an interconnected coherent historiographical work, the introductory presentation of Milan, dedicated to the retelling of its pre-Christian origins (Gallic and Roman, ethnic and imperial) together with the enumeration of the many qualities of the city and its inhabitants, also emerges as the obvious first chapter in the glorious history of Milan (the ›stage zero‹ of the narrative plot).[38] *De situ* can therefore be rightfully located within the genre of Christian historiography (the *Gesta episcoporum* being a form of local history, as stressed above), and this is confirmed by the author's indirect comparison of his work to those of other chroniclers (*chronographi*).[39] And yet, the reception of this history of Milan demonstrates that the original authorial design was only respected in a few cases. The complex textual transmission of *De situ* is a reflection of its flexible narrative structure and composition, which lent themselves to different readings, functions and uses, to which we shall now turn.

The Multiform Medieval Reception of De situ

Of the 17 extant manuscripts and two incunables transmitting *De situ* and produced in the Middle Ages, only one still contains the work in its entirety.[40] The manuscript (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H 56 sup.) is a late witness of the text, dating to the 15th century and copied from an early 15th-century exemplar (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 26 inf.), which most likely also originally contained the entire compilation (the first 25 sheets are now lost and the manuscript as preserved starts in the middle of the Life of the sixth Milanese bishop, Maternus).[41] Interestingly, this mutilated early 15th-century copy was assembled by a Milanese humanist, Michele Pizolpasso, to be offered to his uncle, the archbishop of Milan Francesco Pizolpasso (1423-35).[42] It is not by chance that *De situ* in its entirety was preserved

38 This section of *De situ* is modelled on a popular rhetorical genre in medieval Italy, the so-called »Praises of cities« (*Laudes urbium*). On its features, see Fasoli, La coscienza civica as well as Granier, La *renovatio* du modèle rhétorique.

39 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 3.

40 For an overview of the entire manuscript transmission of *De situ*, see Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 19-33.

41 Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 28-29. On the relation between the two manuscripts, see also Ferrari, Un bibliotecario milanese, 204 n. 95 and 211-212. For the description of both *codices*, see Colombo, I codici ambrosiani e austriaci, CVIII-CXII.

42 Its content can be reconstructed through a comparison with its later copy (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H 56 sup.):
ff. [1r-25v]: Dedicatory letter addressed by Michele Pizolpasso to his uncle Francesco Pizolpasso, archbishop of Milan, followed by *De situ* introduced by the title »History of the description and name of the Milanese city (*Historia de situ et vocabulo urbis Mediolanensis*), of the visitation of the most blessed apostle Barnabas, who had been divinely directed there, and also of the venerable man Anatelon, who was his co-apostle and contemporary, and was consecrated in that very place by his (i.e. Barnabas') episcopal blessing, and also of some of his successors«.
ff. 26r-31v: [Life of] Maternus (316-28), i.e. the final chapter of *De situ*. The Life is mutilated at the beginning.
ff. 31v-38v: On the exile and death of saint Dionysius, *bishop of Milan (349-55).*
ff. 39r-41v: Life of saint Eustorgius, *bishop of Milan (c. 343-49).*
ff. 42r-55r: Life of saint Ambrose, *bishop and patron saint of Milan (374-97).*
ff. 55v-88v: Chronicle of the Milanese archbishops written around 1318.

in a book entirely dedicated to the history of the Milanese bishops. The manuscript built namely on the narrative of *De situ* by adding the Lives of the three following bishops (Dionysius, Eustorgius and Ambrose) and an early 14th-century chronicle covering the entire series of episcopal Lives from Barnabas to Aicardus (d. 1339). The internal organisation of the manuscript responds to the declaration contained in *De situ*'s dedicatory letter in which the compiler voiced his intention to bring the narrative up to the present times. Michele Pizolpasso thus decided to develop the history of the Milanese church from the point in which *De situ* stopped by adding pertinent texts and placing them in chronological order. The decision to compile such a book and offer it to the Milanese archbishop in response to the latter's request also mirrors the circumstances that led to the composition of *De situ* in the first place.

If two out of the 17 medieval manuscripts preserving *De situ* seem to have respected the intention of the author and the original vocation of the text, the large majority of the extant witnesses used the work in pursuit of other strategies and purposes. The earliest surviving copy (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C 133 inf.) is a miscellaneous manuscript produced in 11th-century Milan, possibly in the cathedral scriptorium.[43] The first codicological unit contains the chapters dedicated to Barnabas and the six bishops, but does not include the dedicatory letter and the description of Milan that constitute the first two narrative segments of *De situ*. The account of St Barnabas' coming to Milan is here preceded by an episcopal catalogue recording the names of the Milanese archbishops from Anatelon to Tedaldus (d. 1085), a list that was updated by different hands until the 15th century. The Life of Maternus (last chapter of *De situ*) is followed by two Lives of St Dionysius (4th-century bishop of Milan), a funerary speech written by St Ambrose (d. 397) in honour of his brother Satyrus (who enjoyed a Milanese cult), a few texts dedicated to St Martin of Tours (venerated in Milan), a number of sermons and hagiographic texts celebrating locally venerated saints (the martyrs Nazarius and Celsus, St Laurent, St Cyprian, St Eusebius) and a series of homilies illustrating passages from the Gospels.[44] *De situ* seems here to fulfil a very different purpose: the manuscript could be described as a hybrid homiliary-legendary collecting sermons and hagiographic texts celebrating Milanese local saints and feast days[45]. It is not surprising that we are dealing with a book produced in the local cathedral scriptorium.

A different possible understanding and use of *De situ* is shown by yet another Milanese manuscript copied in the 12th century (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, I 152 inf.), which contains the so-called *Ordo et caerimoniae Ecclesiae Ambrosianae Mediolanensis* (a guide to the liturgical ceremonies to be performed by the archbishop at the Milanese cathedral) compiled by Beroldus, one of the cathedral officials (*custos et cicendelarius*).[46] While the manuscript gathers a heterogeneous group of texts (the *Ordo*, sections of *De situ*, but also explanations and commentaries on various rites and prayers as well as descriptions of clerical vestments

43 Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 21.

44 For a full description of the contents of the manuscript see the online catalogue of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana: ambrosiana.comperio.it/opac/detail/view/ambro:catalog:30119 last accessed on 31 March 2022.

45 The hagiographic treatment and use of *De situ* in the manuscript is also confirmed by the continuation and completion of the Life of Maternus in the margins by a later hand, which included the fundamental reference to the saint's *dies natalis* (date of death for liturgical celebration).

46 On Beroldo's *Ordo* and its earliest copy, see Ferrari, Valutazione paleografica and Forzatti Golia, Le raccolte di Beroldo.

and orders), the choice and organisation of the material nonetheless disclose a homogeneous and coherent design. The dedicatory letter, the description of the city of Milan, the coming of St Barnabas and the Life of the first Milanese bishop, Anatelon, are the only sections of *De situ* copied in the manuscript, showing that this time it was the *History of the Christian origins of Milan* that mattered to the book's designer. The stress is put on the illustration of the institutional rank of the Milanese church, the origins of and justification for which are linked to the imperial past of the city and the apostolic foundation of its Church. Within the scope of this particular manuscript, *De situ* offered the necessary evidence for the pre-eminence of the metropolitan see of Milan and exalted its identity, honour and prestige by celebrating the apostolic foundation of the Milanese bishopric. The manuscript can therefore be understood as a collection supporting the legitimacy of the Church of Milan and strengthening its institutional identity; the dignity of its archbishop, the organisation of its clergy, its unique liturgy and understanding of the rituals are brought forward as the many features defining and distinguishing the Church and city of Milan within the Italian landscape. The insertion of the first chapters of *De situ* was therefore a pertinent choice as they naturally supported and substantiated the ecclesiological ideology underpinning the overall design of this 12th-century manuscript.

If the three manuscripts briefly discussed are Milanese products, it should not be forgotten that *De situ* also circulated outside the city of Milan. The individual episcopal biographies were also transmitted as part of very comprehensive hagiographic collections, such as the legendary of the Premonstratensian canonry of Windberg in Lower Bavaria (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 22242, 12th century), the *Magnum Legendarium Austriacum* (henceforth *MLA*, with manuscripts from Heiligenkreuz, Zwettl, Lilienfeld and Melk) and the »Klosterneuburg Legendary«, a 14th-century collection derived from the *MLA*.[47] In these hagiographic collections the chronological timeline of *De situ* was broken and the individual biographical chapters were reshuffled and ordered according to the position of the bishops' feast days in the liturgical calendar. The episcopal biographies were thus no longer nourishing the pride of the local Milanese community, but they were nonetheless considered relevant material to be integrated in a hagiographic compilation with a prominent encyclopaedic vocation such as the *MLA*.[48]

De situ therefore enjoyed a considerable dissemination within and beyond medieval Milan and proved to be an extremely versatile text as it fulfilled different functions and was used for multiple goals (political, ecclesiological, liturgical, historiographical). In the last section of this chapter I shall finally briefly discuss *De situ* in light of two particular social anthropological concepts applied to the community in which the text existed. The work will thus be situated in the political, social and cultural framework in which it originated and that it contributed to shaping.

47 Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 23-25 and 28-29.

48 On this collection, see Ó Riain, The *Magnum Legendarium*; *idem*, Neue Erkenntnisse.

Communities of Learning *and* Textual Communities: *A Social Anthropological Approach to* De situ

While a political, religious or social approach is often privileged, the cultural framework in which a community exists and its contribution to the strengthening of a sense of shared identity and belonging have increasingly come to scholarly attention in the last decades. In this regard, the introduction to a volume published in 2011 provides the following definition of a key concept: a *community of learning* is »the framework in which ideas are developed and exchanged« and each one of these communities »attached particular importance to some discipline and to some set of texts«.[49] Alongside this idea there is the notion of a *textual community* first developed by Brian Stock in his study of heretical groups, among which he singled out the popular movement known as Pataria that led to civil war within the 11th- and 12th-century city of Milan.[50] Stock's *textual communities* can be roughly defined as »societies organised around the common understanding of a text«: the contact with this authoritative text is often oral, its understanding is an educative process and the purpose of the reading is to historicise the community by giving it a past, which identifies it in the present.[51]

Some features of *De situ* indicate that the text did indeed exist within specific *communities of learning* and *textual communities* within which it was accessed, experienced and understood. As I pointed out in the first section of this study, *De situ* is an impressive concentration of references and allusions to other texts. The work is not extraordinary in this respect as more or less explicit borrowings from other texts are a constant feature in medieval works.[52] And yet, the ways in which references and allusions are integrated into the text fabric tell us something about the cultural and intellectual framework in which the author operated. The model used for the compilation is spelled out (the Roman *Liber Pontificalis*), thus lending authority to *De situ*, and the Bible is – unsurprisingly – often quoted and alluded to. However, these are not the only texts put to use by the anonymous compiler and, despite the fact that he never explicitly identifies them (for instance providing the name of the author or the title), he relied on them for both content and style. In some cases the Lives of the Milanese bishops develop upon information that was available in the hagiographies dedicated to saints venerated in neighbouring cities (Innocent of Tortona, Syrus of Pavia, Faustinus and Iovita of Brescia), but in most cases the compiler used his sources primarily as cultural and stylistic references.[53] The prologue to the Life of St Epiphanius of Pavia is for instance repeatedly alluded to in *De situ*; the text was written by Ennodius, an early 6th-century bishop of Pavia

49 Mews and Crossley (eds.), *Communities of Learning*, 1.

50 Stock, *Implications of Literacy.*

51 Stock, *Listening for the Text*, 23-26.

52 On the ways in which hagiographers collected and used their sources for the production of new texts, see for instance Dolbeau, Les hagiographes au travail.

53 Schmidt, «Colores rhetorici», 7-10; Tomea, Le suggestioni dell'antico; *idem*, *Tradizione apostolica*, 334-366.

who had been trained in Milan and was considered to be one of the last paragons of classical culture and learning.[54] It is precisely Ennodius' elaborate and highly rhetorical prose that is imitated in *De situ*. The same can be said for two other popular hagiographies, written in the 5th and 6th centuries, from which the Milanese author borrowed sentences and vocabulary without openly referencing the sources: the epistolary preface to the Life of St Martin by Sulpicius Severus and the Life of St Hilary compiled by the Italian poet Venantius Fortunatus.[55]

Far from being a passive and unoriginal approach revealing a lack of creativity on the part of the author of *De situ*, the ways in which he borrowed from these texts and reused their vocabulary shows a skilful handling of the sources, which are transfigured into a new original compilation. It would be naive to think that this was done without the assumption that at least part of his audience (the bishop who commissioned the work and the community that would read *De situ*) would be able to recognise those stylistic references and furthermore to appreciate the literary allusions to precisely those saints' Lives (St Martin and St Hilary) and authors (Ennodius of Pavia) known for their connection to Milan. After all, hagiographic texts were most likely read at least once every year on those saints' feast days, and the Milanese clergy was undoubtedly familiar with them. The same could be said also for those individuals who had been trained in the city cathedral and lived alongside clerics without having themselves been ordained. The choice of works reused in *De situ* therefore appealed not only to the grammatical and rhetorical skills of the target audience but also to their cultural identity, which rested on the shared knowledge of a set of texts, the awareness of which strengthened their sense of belonging to the same *community of learning*. This community would be aware and proud of its inheritance of a highly refined classical and late antique culture, embodied by authors such as Ennodius, and therefore undoubtedly applauded the inscription of its own history into widely acknowledged, long-standing and prestigious literary traditions.[56]

Furthermore, if we direct our attention to the author's addresses to the potential audience of *De situ* and analyse the rhetorical construction of the text, we can safely assume that he expected his work to be read by skilled scholars in the arts of speech (grammar, rhetoric and dialectic) capable of detecting, weighting and criticising the literary qualities of his work – and maybe even of learning something from its analysis.[57] Those readers could only belong to the group of learned men trained in the cathedral school, which, at the time, provided the most advanced education in the liberal arts, as shown by the literary products of those authors who are known to have been instructed there in the 10th and 11th centuries.[58] *De situ*

54 On Ennodius and his cultural refinement, see Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*. For the text of the *Vita Epiphanii*, see Ennodius of Pavia, *Vita Epiphanii*, ed. Cesa.

55 For the borrowings integrated into the dedicatory letter, see again Tomea, Suggestioni dell'antico.

56 The social prestige attached to refined rhetorical culture in early 11th-century Milan is illustrated by the career and literary output of Anselm of Besate, a cleric trained in the Milanese cathedral, who became chancellor of the German emperor Henry III (1046-1056). He wrote a handbook for the study of rhetoric, which unfortunately has not survived, as well as a fictional controversy written according to the genre and techniques of classical oratory; see Violante, Anselmo da Besate and Bennett, Teaching Classical Rhetoric.

57 *De situ*, ed. Colombo, 46, see above n. 15.

58 An extensive description of the education provided at the cathedral inner and outer schools can be read in the *History of Milan* written by Landulf Senior in the late 11th century; see Landulf Senior, *Historia Mediolanensis*, ed. Bethmann and Wattenbach, 70-71, cf. Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, 121 and 124-126.

could be and most likely was approached in two ways: the author clearly expected his work not only to be read but also to be listened to. The use of literary devices such as prose rhythm (the *cursus*) and specific rhetorical figures (e.g. alliteration, anaphora) were most efficacious when it came to oral reading performances, and this in turn invites the possibility that those »listeners« (*auditores*) who did not possess the advanced learning and skills for an autonomous reading and full understanding of *De situ* could still access and experience the text. Although such ›passive readers‹ might not have been equipped to fully appreciate the rhetorical and stylistic qualities of the text – but could nonetheless be impressed by its sophisticated nature – they too would have participated in the transmission and sharing of the ideas heralded in *De situ*. Origin stories were powerful narratives, and their impact in the construction of medieval communities and in the strengthening of their identities has been convincingly demonstrated.[59] The history of the apostolic origins of Milan could serve a similar function, rallying the Church and the city of Milan behind the banner of St Barnabas in a time of open competition with rival metropolitan sees in northern Italy.[60] *De situ* therefore presumes the existence of a *textual community* in which oral communication was a powerful medium: the cathedral community and more generally the Milanese community of the faithful attending the cathedral's services (for instance the liturgical commemoration of local saints) could both, despite their different degrees of understanding and social articulation, be considered *textual communities*. Through a combination of literacy and orality, a Milanese community including learned and less skilled readers and listeners could come to know and understand its own history, which in turn nourished its sense of identity by giving it a glorious past, the reflection of which could be found in the present.

The concepts of *community of learning* and *textual community* thus provide two useful interpretative tools for the comprehension of the historical context, the social milieu and the cultural framework within which *De situ* was composed and read. The construction of a cohesive historiographical narrative articulated as a series of biographies naturally lent itself to the representation of a community, both idealised and real, to which the author and its audience adhered. The lasting success of *De situ*, which is surprising given its unfinished form, resided in the efficacious construction of both a powerful overarching narrative and compelling biographical stories which spoke to multiple communities: an institutionalised community (as organised in the Milanese cathedral), a restricted but less formalised grouping (the *community of learning* of the scholarly elites) and finally a larger, socially comprehensive community (the *textual community* of the clergy and the faithful inhabitants of Milan). The anonymous compiler of *De situ* was indeed a master of speech and, beyond his skilled use of rhetorical devices, his most impressive achievement comprised the ability to communicate at various levels, to reach different audiences across time and place and to make his work fit for multiple strategies, functions and goals. And it cannot be an understatement to say that the main ingredient for such a successful recipe resided precisely in the *one and many-in-one* narrative structure of that complex work of literature and historiography that is the *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani*.

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59 It is sufficient to recall here the studies dedicated to the historical genre known as the *Origines gentium*: the belief in a common origin and the sense of a shared history constitute strong criteria cementing the solidarity of ethnic societies, groups and peoples; see for instance Pohl, Strategies of Identification. The same function was fulfilled across medieval Europe by hagiographic foundation legends providing local urban, ecclesiastical and monastic communities with a shared history and identity; the articles gathered in this volume provide ample evidence for this phenomenon.

60 See the concluding remarks in Tomea, *Tradizione apostolica*, 418-431.

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Abbreviations
MLA: Magnum Legendarium Austriacum

Manuscripts
Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 133 inf.
Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS D 26 inf.
Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS H 56 sup.
Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS I 152 inf.
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 22242.

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Communities and Contexts: Concluding Thoughts on Medieval Biographical Collections

Diarmuid Ó Riain*

This article reflects on the content of the previous chapters and offers concluding observations on medieval biographical collections from a transcultural comparative perspective. It looks at the fundamental desire to commemorate the illustrious dead that underpins such works, while also considering how compilers and authors moulded their collections to fit the particular circumstances of their time and place, and how the historical context could determine the aims and messages of individual compilations. The chapter highlights the relationship between biographical collections and processes of identity- and community-formation and concludes that across the medieval world such collections offer us a glimpse of compilers and communities in negotiation with their collective past, present and future.

Keywords: transcultural comparison, remembrance, historical contexts, propaganda, community, identity

The medieval biographical collections discussed in the preceding chapters were chosen on the basis of the individual contributors' familiarity with the sources and their expert knowledge of the historical context in which they were compiled. They are by no means intended to be representative of their respective genres or regions. A very broad definition of »biographical collection« applied and this was designed to ensure that only a low threshold needed to be crossed in order to engage in productive transcultural comparison and that potential problems posed by differences in genres between and within the medieval Buddhist, Christian and Islamic worlds could be circumvented.[1] The aim of the endeavour was to use deep analysis of the individual works to study the role that biographical collections could play in particular historical circumstances across different regions and religions in the medieval period. The transcultural comparative perspective of the volume thus has two main goals: firstly, the contributions seek to cast new light on the different strategies that individual compilers and authors across diverse medieval regions had at their disposal and implemented in producing biographical collections; secondly, the volume aims to reveal the historical processes that gave rise to the creation of such works and to elucidate the message or meaning they could convey. Rather than attempting to construct transhistorical models, this is an exercise in the »transcultural comparison of historical processes and phenomena«.[2]

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1 On the use of low-threshold vocabulary to aid comparative endeavours, see Lutter, Comparative Approaches; Kramer, Introduction, 280-283; Gingrich, Medieval Eurasian Communities, 474-475.

2 Pohl, Introduction, 3.

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In particular, the question of the potential for the collections to be understood as expressions or visions of community was a central issue, the volume having been born out of the »Visions of Community« Special Research Programme (SFB) that ran in Vienna from 2011 to 2019. The following paragraphs discuss the fruits of the overall comparative exercise, the »pearl necklace« that is formed by linking together the insights gained from the individual studies, to borrow from the evocative title of the biographical collection discussed by Daniel Mahoney. They build on the introduction and three comparative chapters earlier in the volume, but the focus is now more on the ›why?‹ than the ›how?‹, on the potential purposes, messages and effects of medieval biographical collections. As will be illustrated, no one single reason for writing or compiling should or can be ascribed to the works under consideration, as indeed is true of perhaps all narrative sources from the medieval period.

People Worth Remembering

By its very essence, the act of writing or compiling multiple texts, passages or notes of a biographical character required that the author or compiler wished that the individuals in question be remembered, their deeds or aspects of their lives and character chronicled. In the prologue to his *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ*, al-Sharjī makes it clear that he wished to specifically remember the deeds of Sufi »friends of God« (*awliyāʾ*) from Yemen who had been omitted from previous biographical collections produced in the Islamic world. The desire to rescue the memory of holy individuals from oblivion is a common trope of Christian hagiography and is often cited as a *causa scribendi* in the prologue to saints' Lives. It is also writ large in the dedicatory letter to *De situ*, where the self-assured author furthermore argues pointedly that:

> Admirable feats and deeds deserving the greatest of praise acquire further merit thanks to the ability with which they are narrated. If a dry source of words sets about to illustrate the deeds of the most excellent [men], their memory is either completely extinguished by the passing of time or is entrusted to posterity vitiated and deformed, beyond what is acceptable, by vile grammatical mistakes.[3]

The documentary function inherent to this act of remembrance can be primary, an author recording the deeds of the individual for the first time – though rarely without at least some sources to work from – or secondary, a compiler incorporating a pre-existing biography into a later collection. The archival aspect of memory-keeping comes to the fore in the latter activity, and indeed the preservation of biographical and other texts was so often secured by their inclusion in much later compilations in the medieval period, sometimes preserved only in single manuscripts.[4]

3 See the contribution of Vocino to this volume, p. 197.

4 The preservation of a large part of the corpus of Latin hagiography from Ireland thanks to the incorporation of earlier Lives into the late medieval »Dublin«, »Oxford« and »Salmanticensis« compilations is a case in point; Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*. On biographical collections as archives, see Hirschler, Studying Mamluk Historiography, 175-180.

In respect of the individuals recalled in the collections studied in this volume, it is striking that almost all are men, a picture that reflects but at the same time very much exaggerates the actual bias towards men as the subjects of medieval biographies. Only in the case of *al-ʿUqūd* can the treatment of female and male subjects by a compiler be juxtaposed. The fact that the women deemed worthy of being remembered were generally close relations of the ruling sultans and that the content of their obituaries focuses primarily on their acts of patronage reminds us that most of the biographical subjects we encounter here and elsewhere belong very much to an elite. Indeed, while a format involving multiple biographies can create the impression of a communal past, it is one that is largely populated and imagined by elites, whether secular, ecclesiastical, spiritual or intellectual. Indeed, as our examples show, the collections were also written by and largely for members of the (literate) elite, and though the potential of oral transmission to reach a wider audience cannot be ignored, the ›trickle-down effect‹ would have had its limits.

Single biographical works are often expressly ascribed exemplary functions by their authors or compilers, and there can be little doubt as to their potential in this regard. This effect is multiplied in biographical collections, which provide a range of model lives, albeit often schematic in their conception. This didactic quality is made very explicit, for example, in the prologue to Al-Janadī's *al-Sulūk*:

> … when someone later on takes an interest in the report of the distinguished men before him or hears how they got ready and approached this interest in knowledge and the quest for it, his soul will yearn to imitate them and he will take their way and will realise their high esteem and adornment.[5]

Indeed, the characteristics of a mirror of princes or bishops could be ascribed to the *al-ʿUqūd*, *De episcopis*, *De situ* and the *Singular Volume*, the biographies of the exalted predecessors providing a template for their contemporary successors. While an exemplary function can be assumed, the exceptional qualities and feats attributed to the dynasts and bishops, whether martial or miraculous, suggest that the expectation of *imitatio* should not be exaggerated.[6] Even in the case of the *GSR*, the stories of the first generation of monks at Redon present a difficult template for later generations to follow due to their often miraculous nature.

The Greater Scheme

The biographical tracts written or chosen for inclusion in the collections are not textual elements floating independently of each other but rather part of a historiographical scheme that seeks to present a particular vision of the past and to shape collective memory. In selecting who and what should be remembered – and, of course, who and what should, or simply could, be omitted or forgotten – the authors or compilers were shaping a specific image of earlier times and necessarily mediating between the past and the present. The past offered medieval authors and compilers a means by which to interpret, orientate and frame their

5 See the contribution of Heiss to this volume, p. 129.

6 For a sceptical view on the exemplary function of hagiography, see Geary, Saints, 22.

present.[7] As the individual chapters have shown, medieval biographical collections were often propagandistic in character, intended to promote and legitimate a particular order. The chapters of Langelaar and Mahoney demonstrate how collections of biographical accounts of dynastic predecessors embedded within a wider historiographical framework could be designed to support the current hegemony of the relevant dynasties. Similarly, the collections of biographies of Milanese and Salzburg archbishops promoted the past, present and future greatness of the respective sees. The propagandistic quality of Jerome's *De viris*, on the other hand, had universal application, being expressly intended to exalt the distinguished writers of the Christian Church as a whole. The selection of biographical subjects for al-Sharjī's *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ* had an expressly patriotic motivation, the author wishing, as mentioned above, to remedy the hitherto neglect of the Yemeni *awliyāʾ*. The author of the *GSR* wished to establish Redon as a holy place through his recounting of the deeds of the model first generation of monks at the monastery. The multiplier effect inherent to biographical collections made it an ideal means of emphasising the sanctity of a particular place by highlighting its association with several holy individuals and their miraculous feats. The collections studied in this volume certainly do nothing to disprove Patrick Geary's assertion that »the study of historical memory is a study of propaganda, of the decisions about what should be remembered and how it should be remembered«.[8]

To a greater or lesser extent, therefore, medieval biographical collections could allow an idealised past to be drawn upon to provide succour and authority for the *status quo*, the current order. Indeed, it can be said with regard to almost all the collections that the compilers saw their presents as part of a continuum encompassing the glorious past depicted. In keeping with Carolingian ideology, only in the case of Frechulf's use of *De viris* can a compiler be said to see a historical distance or »gap« between his own time and the era of the individuals depicted.[9] Behind the sense of continuity promoted by the other collections lies the fact that the compilers can be said to be very much insiders and therefore beneficiaries of the current order. That said, the example of the special relationship between Admont monastery and the Salzburg see that appears to have predicated the compilation of *De episcopis* shows that the boundary between inside and outside is often so fluid as to defy demarcation. The *Singular Volume*, also, reveals the different possible shades of ›inside‹, with the textual evidence pointing to the compiler(s) occupying the periphery rather than the core of Rlangs dynastic circles.

The multiplication of laudatory biographies of secular or ecclesiastical figures associated with a particular institution ensured the image of a past peopled by exceptional people could be created. Compilers could use the juxtaposition of biographies to create the impression of a golden age or generation, but even more important, and perhaps the central argument of most of the collections studied, was that an unbroken continuity could be shown to exist between this exalted past and the compiler's present: that the current incumbents within an institution were the rightful successors of these glorious predecessors and drew their authority from them. The portrayal of all Milanese archbishops from the legendary origins of

7 Cf. Thier, Aus Altem ein Neues, 250, where the author discusses history as a *»zentrales Medium der Orientierung«* when it comes to text and identity in the medieval period.

8 Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 9.

9 On such »gaps« between past and present in the minds of medieval scholars, see Diesenberger, Introduction, 4.

the see up to the present intended by the author of *De situ* is a salient example of such an institutional *Eigengeschichte*, while the inclusion of a complete bishops' list with the Salzburg *De episcopis* nicely illustrates the theme of continuity.[10] Using the past to frame the present in this way encouraged the belief that the current order was the natural one and had always been in place: things had always been this way, the idea of *»immer-so-gewesen sein«*.[11]

The correlation drawn between continuity and legitimacy necessarily means that the length of time over which the order can be claimed to have prevailed is of crucial importance. At the end of final text in *De episcopis*, the exact number of years between the death of St Rupert – the founding father of the episcopal see – and the time of writing, 563 years, is stated. In *De situ* the origins of the Milanese Church are traced back even further, to the Apostle Barnabas, thus creating a direct connection to the beginning of Christianity and to Christ himself and enhancing Milan's claims to primacy within the Italian kingdom. When it comes to legitimacy in the medieval period, origins are important, and the *al-ʿUqūd*, for example, makes sure to give the Rasūlid dynasty a spurious South Arabian genealogy to enhance their claims to be the natural hegemons of the region.

Contexts and Communities

In many instances it was times of uncertainty or decline, if not crisis, that seem to have prompted the »backward look«.[12] The waning fortunes of the Rasūlids in South Arabia, interdiocesanal competition in Milan and political transformation in Gaul provide the backdrop for the *al-ʿUqūd*, *De situ* and *De viris*, respectively. In the cases of *De episcopis* and the *GSR*, the reimagining of the past followed times of considerable upheaval, and the collections can be viewed as part of the process of consolidation. Depending on the circumstances, the compilers of these collections can be seen to be operating anywhere between boldly offering a glorious past as a template for future prosperity and being forlornly *à la recherche du temps perdu*. In either case, the collections generally present an old rather than a »new reality«[13], defending rather than challenging the consensus and *status quo*. This, of course, ties in with the general position of the authors and compilers as insiders, as beneficiaries of the current order.

However stable or instable the times actually were, it is clear that structured biographical collections of the type studied in this volume had the potential to promote social cohesion by providing narratives that groups could identify with, »shared beliefs about the past«[14] that strengthened their connection to an institution and to each other. These works can build the sense of belonging of a group, the *Wir-Gefühl* that binds it together and helps constitute a community. Communities are here understood very broadly as groups »sharing some practical, emotional or ideological affinity with each other to varying degrees«.[15] Because this volume is a child of the »Visions of Community« Special Research Programme, questions regarding the relationship between text and community loomed large in the interpretative framework within which the individual authors operated, and diverse manifestations of the link between medieval biographical collections and community have been highlighted in the different chapters.

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10 On institutional *Eigengeschichten*, see Rehberg, Die stabilisierende »Fiktionalität«, 401-402.

11 Rehberg, Die stabilisierende »Fiktionalität«, 401.

12 Boyle and Hayden, Introduction, xlii; cf. O'Connor, *The backward look*.

13 Diesenberger, Introduction, 12.

14 Innes, Using the Past, 1.

15 Gingrich and Lutter, Visions of Community, 2

Perhaps the most significant variable when it comes to the relationship between the collections under consideration and community is scale. In most cases the works can be shown to have been written for a particular community by a member of that same community. These communities, however, range in size from the monastic brethren of Redon to the entire Christian community, or at least its literate members, targeted by Jerome and his continuators. The spread thus extends from small, ›face-to-face‹ groups right through to communities of universal scale.[16] Arguably, the strength of the identity- and community-building messages transmitted by the collections stand in direct correlation to the scale of the group addressed. In respect of both its exemplary function and its favourable portrayal of the first generation of monks at Redon, for example, the potential of the *GSR* to shape the identity of and encourage cohesion among contemporary and future monks reading or listening to the narrative certainly seems more immediate than that of a work with a much wider reach and larger target audience.

The inclusion of multiple biographies within a collection creates a vision of the past populated by the individuals in question, a sort of community within the text. Although these individuals will often belong to elite groupings and be credited with feats beyond the ordinary person, the effect on the community outside the text may increase when there is a visible community with which to identify within. In the context of a collection, the exemplary function of medieval biographical texts can expand to encompass a model community. Despite or perhaps because the community presented is an idealised or imagined one full of individuals behaving in an exemplary way, the vision transmitted can help to set the norms of behaviour for the community outside the text. *Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ* offers a good example of the potential educative and exhortative quality of biographical collections, and such a ›vision of community‹ can also help set the boundaries of the external community through the inclusion and exclusion of individuals or groups. Through his choice of subjects for the obituaries he includes in *al-ʿUqūd*, al-Khazrajī was creating a vision of the political community of the Rasūlid sultanate and thereby giving the community outside the text an indication as to who did or did not belong. Through the manner in which they treated the divergent views of Christian authors in their versions of *De viris*, Jerome and Gennadius were also sending a signal to readers regarding orthodoxy and the true boundaries of the Christian community.

The relationship between biographical collections and communities can also be interpreted with the aid of the concepts of ›communities of learning‹ and ›textual communities‹, as discussed by Kramer/Ward and Vocino. The reading of these collections can play a constitutive role in community formation, bringing ›insiders‹ with a particular understanding of the text together or binding through the exchange of ideas. Indeed, the conception of a ›community of learning‹ can also be extended beyond the initial period of reception. In common with all medieval texts, the manuscript transmission of the collections did not occur in a vacuum but rather was situated within and constitutive of networks of exchange that were essential for the circulation of ideas that is a hallmark of ›communities of learning‹.[17] Manuscript tradition and reception are relevant to the notion of community in another respect also.

16 On different levels of community, see for example Kramer, Introduction, 277-283.

17 Cf. Ó Riain, Neue Erkenntnisse, 1-2.

Manuscript transmission can add chronological depth to processes of identity and community formation, and alterations made to texts as they circulated can signal changes in the norms and orthodoxies of communities over time. Because they contain multiple stories, biographical collections were seen as ripe to shorten, extend or amend over time, as best illustrated by the Ward/Wieser study of the reception of *De viris*. The common central message of continuity could also encourage later scholars to bring the work up to date and thereby revise the ›vision of community‹ presented by the work to suit a contemporary audience.

The preceding chapters have demonstrated that detailed studies of individual biographical collections, though from diverse regions and heterogenous in scale, date and genre, can provide plenty of food for comparative thought. Using very wide definitions of the terms ›biographical‹ and ›collection‹ and approaching the different works with a broad range of questions, it was possible to engage in productive comparison and in the process open new avenues for the study of medieval biographical collections. The chapters have illustrated how compilers and authors could and did mould their collections to fit their particular circumstances, how these works were received by contemporary and later audiences, and how biographical collections were capable of transmitting a range of messages and having a role in processes of identity- and community-building. Regardless of the region and time in which they were created, the biographical collections offer us a glimpse of medieval compilers and communities in negotiation with their collective past, present and future.

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Abbreviations
al-Sulūk: al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-mulūk
al-ʿUqūd: al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluʾiyya fī taʾrīkh al-dawla al-Rasūliyya
De episcopis: De episcopis Salisburgensibus
De situ: Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani
De viris: De viris illustribus
GSR: Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium
Singular Volume: Singular Volume of the Rlangs (Rlangs-kyi-po-ti-bse-ru)
Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ: Ṭabaqāt al-khawāṣṣ ahl al-ṣidq wa-l-ikhlāṣ

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