

‘Et hoc considerat episcopus, ut ipsi
presbyteri non sint idiothæ’:
Carolingian local *correctio* and an
unknown priests’ exam from the early
ninth century

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Sometime in the years around 800, an archbishop – possibly Arn of Salzburg – composed a letter of instruction to his suffragan bishops, listing the decisions of a synod that he wished to be passed on to the secular clergy in each diocese under his supervision.¹ This text, which we now know as Arn’s *Instructio pastoralis*, is clearly a product of the Carolingian reforms, because just like the *Admonitio generalis* of 789 it shows, among other things, how the entire secular ecclesiastical hierarchy was mobilised to ‘correct’ and ‘emend’ the lives of all lay Christian Franks.² Local priests played a key role, for they lived among the laity as representatives of the Church. Who better than they could therefore teach the lay population how to live their lives so that they would please God and find their way to heaven after death? Like many contemporary texts,

¹ The text was originally edited in the *MGH Conc.* 2.1, but this edition has been superseded by that of R. Étaix, who identified more and earlier manuscripts of the text. See R. Étaix, ‘Un manuel de pastorale de l’époque Carolingienne (Clm. 27152)’, *Revue Bénédictine* 91 (1981), 105–30, pp. 115–23. Instructions written by archbishops to their suffragans are rare in this period; see S. Steckel, *Kulturen des Lehrens im Früh- und Hochmittelalter. Autorität, Wissenskonzepte und Netzwerke von Gelehrten* (Cologne, 2001), pp. 132–3.

² This title *Instructio pastoralis* is a fabrication of Albert Werminghoff, the editor of the *MGH* edition. In the manuscripts it reads: ‘Incipit qualis esse debet pastor aecclisiae’, or simply ‘Incipit pastoralis’. See Étaix, ‘Un manuel de pastorale’, p. 116; H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes and M. Glatthaar (eds), *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Grossen*, *MGH Fontes iuris* 16, esp. cc. 68f., pp. 220–38.

the *Instructio* highlights the role of local priests as teachers and preachers (c. 5), their role as living examples of good Christian behaviour within their lay communities (c. 6), and their responsibility for the salvation of the souls of their lay flocks (c. 12).³ The precondition for the success of all of this, so Arn warns the addressees of his letter, was that the bishops should make sure that their priests were well-equipped for these tasks: 'And the bishop should take care of this, that these priests are no *idiothae*, but that they read the sacred writings and understand them.'⁴ The term *idiothae* is interesting here – it does not mean 'idiots' in the modern sense of the word, but something far worse to the minds of ninth-century bishops: an *idiota* was ignorant, uneducated or even illiterate.⁵ Arn's warning is therefore not a bit of throwaway rhetoric, but should be taken seriously, for the danger was real: how could an ignorant priest guide his flock and show them the way to heaven? Arn and his contemporaries were convinced that a lack of education of the clergy and laity alike could do serious damage. A botched-up baptismal ritual was thought to be invalid, for instance, in the same way that a mass offered by a priest who had defiled himself with forbidden pleasures (such as women or alcohol) would not be heard by the Heavenly Father. By the same token, laymen could endanger their souls without even knowing it, for instance by having sex when they should not, by invoking the names of non-existing angels or by worshipping in the wrong place.⁶ All in all, then, local priests needed to know about all these matters in order to fulfil their role as preachers and teachers – in the days of *correctio* and *emendatio* there was clearly no room for *idiothae* in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Such ignorance, real or perceived, was exactly what the Carolingian reformers were trying to eliminate: as Peter Brown has emphasised, Charlemagne and his learned advisers fought their battle of *correctio* and *emendatio* first and foremost against ignorance.⁷ Arn of Salzburg played his part with his *Instructio*, and explains briefly what to his mind were

³ *Instructio*, ed. Étaix, 'Un manuel de pastorale', pp. 118–21. On the role of local priests in the Carolingian reforms, see C. van Rhijn, *Shepherds of the Lord. Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period* (Turnhout, 2006).

⁴ *Instructio*, c. 4: 'Et hoc consideret episcopus ut ipsi presbyteri non sint idiothae, sed sacras scripturas legant et intellegant', p. 117.

⁵ See for instance Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden, 1976), p. 508.

⁶ Warnings against this kind of behaviour out of ignorance are all over the *capitularia*, conciliar proceedings and *capitula episcoporum* of the period. See for instance Mordek *et al.*, *Admonitio generalis*; and Theodulf of Orléans's first episcopal statute in P. Brommer (ed.), *MGH Cap. Ep.* 1, 73–142.

⁷ P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, AD 200–1000*, 2nd edn (Malden, MA, 1997), p. 426.

the most important things a priest needed to know. After his warning against *idiothae*, the archbishop continues by pointing out that the priests' knowledge of the *sacra scriptura* should equip them first and foremost for three crucial tasks: teaching the laity, celebrating Mass and baptising.⁸

In texts of the same period, these three subjects recur time and again as cornerstones of priestly knowledge. They turn up not only in high-level prescriptions such as royal capitularies and the proceedings of conciliar meetings, but especially in lower-level texts that bishops devised for the admonishment and education of their local priests. It is via such texts that we can understand how high-level ideals of *correctio* reached their local audiences, for bishops reworked such ideals into practical texts especially suited for local priests and, via them, for local lay communities. In the course of the ninth century, bishops composed some fifty episcopal statutes for this purpose, which survive today in over 200 early medieval manuscripts, many of which are books once owned or used by local priests.⁹ Here, local priests found instructions about their ministry and solutions to practical problems, as well as high standards for their own behaviour and detailed directions for their education of the laity by word and example. Like the *Admonitio generalis*, the tone of these texts is generally that of admonishment: priests were encouraged to heed their bishops' advice in everybody's best interest. But not all was fatherly *admonitio*. Some bishops believed in a more hands-on approach to ensure that they did not appoint *idiothae* in their diocese, which brings us to a small and little-studied group of texts that are also products of Carolingian *correctio*, that of the priests' exams.¹⁰

Priests' exams consist of a series of questions, sometimes with the answers, by which a bishop could test the (future) priest's knowledge of what he considered to be the essentials of the ministry. Such texts could be used to examine candidates for the priesthood, but also to check whether the abilities of

⁸ *Instructio*, c. 4: 'et populos sibi commissos docere, missas secundum consuetudinem caelebrare sicut romana traditio nobis tradidit. Baptismum publicum constitutis temporibus per duos uices in anno fiat'; p. 117.

⁹ See R. Pokorny (ed.), 'Handschriften', *MGH Cap. Ep.* 4, 103–6. On the manuscripts for local priests see now C. van Rhijn, 'The local church, priests' handbooks and pastoral care in the Carolingian period', in *Chiese locali e chiese regionali nell'alto Medioevo: Spoleto, 4–9 aprile 2013, Settimane 61* (Spoleto, 2014), 689–706.

¹⁰ E. Vykoukal, 'Les examens du clergé paroissal à l'époque Carolingienne', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 14 (1913), 81–96. This category of texts has not been generally recognised, and therefore a number of priests' exams have been edited as episcopal statute. See C. van Rhijn, 'Karolingische priesterexamens en het probleem van *correctio* op het platteland', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 125:2 (2013), 158–71.

ordained priests were not getting too rusty, for instance during a local synod or an episcopal visitation. Additionally, they could have a didactic function once they were copied into manuscripts composed for that purpose (see below).¹¹ So far, nine exams have come to light, five of which have been edited in the *MGH Capitula episcoporum*.¹² Compared to the dozens of episcopal statutes surviving in a couple of hundred manuscripts, then, such exams met with only limited success in the Carolingian period, for the nine texts survive in no more than twenty-two ninth-century manuscripts, with clear concentrations in southern France and Bavaria. With just one exception, all of them were composed around the year 800, so also in this sense we are dealing with a limited phenomenon that clearly belongs to the early phase of the Carolingian reforms.

This article is about one such priests' exam, which I will call the *Dic mihi pro quid* (hereafter *Dic mihi*) after its first words. It dates from the late eighth or early ninth century, and it was probably composed in the south of France. Although it survives in ten manuscripts, the earlier six of which date from the ninth century, it has never been edited in full before (see below). In what follows, I will take this text and its manuscript context as a starting point to explore a few aspects of Carolingian local *correctio*. First of all, we shall look at the contents of the exam and think about the implications of the questions and answers for what was expected of priests, as well as the knowledge and education they presuppose. This leads, secondly, to a brief examination of two manuscripts in which the text has survived, for most of these are books once owned by priests or used in their education. Thirdly, the variants in the different manuscripts should be taken into consideration, for what does it mean if a question about a fundamental aspect of the priestly ministry gets different answers depending on the manuscript one looks at? At the end of this article there is a new critical edition of the text on the basis of its six Carolingian manuscripts.

¹¹ The possible functions of these texts were first inventorised by Vykoukal, 'Les examens', but he did not take the manuscript context of these texts into account.

¹² The exams in the *MGH Cap. Ep.* are: *Capitula Frisingensia* 1 and 2, in *Capitula episcoporum*, *MGH Cap. Ep.* 3, 204–5 and 201–11; *Capitula Moguntiacensia* (*MGH Cap. Ep.* 3, 179–80); *Interrogationes examinationis* (*MGH Cap. Ep.* 3, 214–15); and the 'episcopal statute' by Waltcaud of Liège (*MGH Cap. Ep.* 1, 45–9). Vykoukal, 'Les examens' prints one more exam, the *Primum omnium qualis*. Finally, W. Hartmann, 'Neue Texte zur bischöflichen Reformgesetzgebung aus den Jahren 829/830: vier Diözesansynoden Halitgars von Cambrai', *DA* 35 (1979), 173–92, edits an exam called *Primitus cum venerit*. The *Dic mihi pro quid*, subject of this chapter, has not been edited before.

Required reading

At first glance, the *Interrogatio ad sacerdotes*, as the *Dic mihi* is called in a couple of manuscripts, may not seem overtly demanding on those questioned. The questions are short, the answers concise and the subjects rather basic. Compact as the text may be, however, it presupposes knowledge and understanding of other texts. The first question, for instance, asks why the candidate has been ordained as a priest. The answer quickly lists the central responsibilities of the priestly ministry: spreading the word of God, and administering the sacraments of baptism, penance and Mass. This seems straightforward enough, but these duties imply quite substantial knowledge. In order to live up to this, the priest needed to be able to preach and teach, to know and understand a baptismal ritual, to have the ability to use a handbook of penance and to be familiar with the rituals of penance and reconciliation, as well as knowing a variety of masses for different occasions. Interestingly, the texts needed to acquire such knowledge feature regularly as required reading in other priests' exams and episcopal statutes of the early ninth century; witness for instance the early-ninth-century *Capitula Moguntiacensia*, which lists eleven texts every priest should know and have access to: the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Psalms, the Mass and its prayers, the gospels, Scripture readings, homilies, the office of baptism, a handbook of penance, a handbook of *computus*, and canon law.¹³ The priests were required to know some of these texts by heart. One short question, then, implies familiarity with a whole series of texts and rituals.

In order to give adequate answers to the questions of the *Dic mihi*, however, the priest needed to know more than just how to perform these rituals in the right way. The answer to 'Why do you sing Mass?', for instance, is a very boiled-down version of what one might find in a Carolingian Mass commentary.¹⁴ After all, the priest needed to do more than go through the motions; he should understand what he was doing and why he was doing it, and be able to explain this to his lay audience. In a similar vein, the sixth question implies understanding of the meaning of the baptismal ritual, for

¹³ *Capitula Moguntiacensia*, MGH Cap. Ep. 3, pp. 179–80.

¹⁴ The meaning of Mass and all its aspects is explained in many texts that circulated in the period, for instance the very popular anonymous commentary *Dominus vobiscum*. It was once, but is no longer, attributed to Amalarius of Metz; see Amalarius, *Amalarii episcopi opera liturgica omnia*, 2 vols, ed. J.-M. Hanssens, Vol. I (Vatican City, 1948), pp. 284–338, and C. Nason, 'The Mass commentary *Dominus vobiscum*', *Revue Bénédictine* 14:1 (2004), 75–89, who thinks Alcuin was its author, but his arguments are not entirely convincing. The text is important here, for it survives in many manuscripts that also contain a priests' exam.

which one needed to study a baptismal exposition.¹⁵ The answers may be short, but they all refer to longer texts that the candidate could reasonably be expected to know, as well as to the living examples by which he would have learnt what the ritual should be like in practice. All in all, then, a priest submitted to this short interrogation would ideally have studied a small library. Although we know very little about where and how exactly future priests were educated, there are indications that the diocesan bishop was responsible for this, which would put future priests in his entourage for some years, or in a local monastery that fell under his supervision.¹⁶ This would mean, first of all, that they had access to a library, which included the texts listed above; secondly it means that the bishop could ask the questions of his exam with some confidence, for he knew how the priest had been educated and what could therefore be expected of him.

Not only did a priest need to know a whole series of texts, he also needed to own some in order to be able to do his job. Although some texts (such as the liturgy of baptism, a variety of masses and prayers) were no doubt learnt by heart as the episcopal statutes prescribed, a priest needed to be able to consult a handbook of penance, for instance, or a collection of canon law, or a *computus* with which he could calculate the Easter date, quite apart from the texts he needed for the liturgy. That priests often owned such books is well known from early medieval church inventories.¹⁷ Less well known are the surviving manuscripts that once belonged to local priests, or were probably used for their education. Both Susan Keefe and Rudolf Pokorny identified a number of such manuscripts, and more have been discovered since.¹⁸ This means that we do not only have access to texts listing requirements for priestly knowledge, we also have the actual books they studied and worked with. Interestingly, it is exactly in these kinds of manuscripts that we find the *Dic mihi*.

¹⁵ Susan Keefe has gathered all Carolingian baptismal expositions and explanations, editing over sixty such texts. See S. Keefe, *Water and the Word. Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire*, 2 vols, Vol. II (Notre Dame, 2002), *passim*. Many of these texts, again, survive in manuscripts together with priests' exams.

¹⁶ See, for instance, the first episcopal statute by Theodulf of Orléans, in which he directs intelligent boys (explicitly called 'the priest's nephews or other relatives') to local monasteries for their education; *MGH Cap. Ep.* 1, c. 19, p. 115.

¹⁷ See C. Hammer, 'Country churches, clerical inventories and the Carolingian renaissance in Bavaria', *Church History* 49 (1980), 5–19; and Van Rhijn, 'The local church'.

¹⁸ Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I, pp. 160–3; Pokorny, *MGH Cap. Ep.* 4, p. 9.

Manuscripts for priests

The six ninth-century manuscripts in which the *Dic mihi* survives are all collections of up to two dozen texts that are directly related to local priests, their ministry and their education. Keefe classifies them as either '(instruction) readers', meaning handbooks for local priests, or 'schoolbooks'.¹⁹ Even though it is sometimes impossible to tell both kinds of books apart, they clearly belong to the world of (future) priests, for as a rule these manuscripts contain nothing that relates to either monastic or canonical life, or to the specific duties of bishops, but include only texts relevant to local priests. Even though the *Dic mihi* started out as an exam, it was also deemed useful as didactic material. Two brief examples will show in what kind of context the text has survived, beginning with manuscript Albi, Bibliothèque municipale 38bis.

This southern French manuscript dates from the middle of the ninth century, and, going from its contents, was most probably used for the education of secular clerics. It consists of 65 folia, measures 235 × 167 mm and was written by at least ten different hands. The *Dic mihi* appears right after the *Collectio Sangermanensis*, a well-known early Carolingian didactical text about matters ecclesiastical.²⁰ This text, part of which comes in question/answer form as well, discusses both basic knowledge and backgrounds of subjects such as the various ecclesiastical grades, the different components of Mass, different kinds of masses, the church building and its contents, sinners and penitents – to mention only a few examples. The contents of the rest of the manuscript are well suited as background reading for priests as well: it contains, amongst others, the entire canon law collection known as the *Collectio Vetus Gallica* (filling nearly half of the manuscript); a handbook of penance; expositions on the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; sermons; computistic texts with a calendar; and a series of short texts such as two about the clerical grades, papal legislation about marriage and a brief interrogation about the Holy Trinity.²¹ The

¹⁹ Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I, pp. 160–3.

²⁰ See M. Stadelmaier (ed.), *Die Collectio Sangermanensis XII titulorum. Eine systematische Kanonessammlung der frühen Karolingerzeit; Studien und Edition* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004). The description of this manuscript is on pp. 86–9. For its didactic nature see H. Siems, 'Die Collectio Sangermanensis XII titulorum – Kanonessammlung oder Unterrichtswerk?', *DA* 65:1 (2009), 1–28.

²¹ On priests owning collections of canon law see Y. Hen, 'Knowledge of canon law among rural priests: the evidence of two Carolingian manuscripts from around 800', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 50:1 (1999), 117–34. Descriptions of the contents of this manuscript can be found in Stadelmaier, *Die Collectio Sangermanensis*, pp. 86–9; Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. II, pp. 3–7; and H. Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform*

manuscript shows traces of use by many different people over a rather long period of time, such as glosses, corrections, *probationes pennae*, and added bits and pieces in the margins – for instance a line added at the bottom of a partly empty folio about the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. All in all, I think we should interpret this manuscript as study material, useful for various people but especially for (future) priests. If we put the contents of Albi 38bis next to the ‘required readings’ of the *Capitula Moguntiacensia* mentioned above, there are six direct overlaps and a few more indirect ones, in the sense that this manuscript does not, for instance, provide the reader with the actual text or *ordo* of Mass, but does discuss the function and meaning of its components.

The second example is Laon, Bibliothèque municipale 288, an eastern French manuscript from the first third of the ninth century that contains only a fragment of the *Dic mihi*. In all probability this was a handbook once owned by a local priest.²² It is 91 folia long, and measures 210 × 140 mm. Four hands wrote the manuscript, and at least one later, well-trained Carolingian hand corrected parts of it.²³ Roughly the first half of the manuscript is made up of texts providing the reader with background knowledge: there are expositions of the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed (both the Apostles’ and the Athanasian version) and Mass; explanations about baptismal liturgy; and a set of questions and answers about clerical matters. It is here that we find the fragment of the *Dic mihi*, which has in this context become part of a longer whole. The second half of the manuscript consists of homilies with subjects suitable for a lay audience: there is one about good and bad Christians, one about paradise, one about the importance of penance, one about Christmas, one about false friends. This manuscript, too, contains many traces of use. That parts of it invited *correctio* and *emendatio* by a well-trained Carolingian writer is not surprising in view of its rather creative Latin. The scribes in this manuscript

im Frankenreich. Die Collectio Vetus Gallica, die älteste systematische Kanonessammlung des fränkischen Gallien (Berlin, 1975), pp. 269–71. My summary is based on these three descriptions plus my own study of the manuscript. The manuscript can be consulted online at http://archivesnumeriques.mediatheques.grand-albigeois.fr/_app_php_mysql/app/recherche_alpha_cles.php (accessed 8 October 2014).

²² The first systematic attempt to define a priest’s manuscript on the basis of size and contents was made by N. Rasmussen, ‘Célébration épiscopale et célébration presbytérale: une essay de typologie’, in *Segni e riti nella chiesa altomedievale occidentale, 11–17 aprile 1985, Settimane 33* (Spoleto, 1987), 581–603. Rasmussen’s typology was further elaborated by Y. Hen, ‘A liturgical handbook for the use of a rural priest (Brussels, BR 10127–10144)’, in M. Mostert (ed.), *Organising the Written Word. Scripts, Manuscripts and Texts* (Turnhout, 2014). I would like to thank the author for giving me access to his article years prior to its publication.

²³ For a description see Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. II, pp. 26–9. My remarks about this manuscript are based on her description and my own findings.

did not distinguish between *sit* and *xit*, for instance, did not understand the use of the ‘h’ at the beginning of words very well, and sometimes simply messed up, for instance when one scribe meant *diabolus* and wrote *diabubulus*. Els Rose calls this ‘Latin in transition’, for it seems to bear many traces of a living, spoken language.²⁴ However, its Latin notwithstanding, I think this manuscript should be considered as a ‘*correctio*-dossier’, intended to equip the local priest for what we earlier called the ‘cornerstones’ of his ministry according to the Carolingian reformers: teaching and preaching, baptism and Mass.

In both manuscripts the *Dic mihi* has been preserved not as an exam, but as part of a dossier meant to contribute to, or support, the working knowledge of local priests. Other manuscripts do present the text as *interrogatio*, which implies that the text could have various uses under various circumstances.²⁵ What these two examples show as well is that literate priests who owned such a manuscript and were familiar with its contents would pass an episcopal *interrogatio* like the *Dic mihi* without much trouble.

The meaning of variation

Although the questions in the *Dic mihi* are rather straightforward, the answers they get in the different manuscripts show variations. Many of these are orthographic or concern word order, some variations appear in the addition or omission of biblical quotations, but in one specific case a more fundamental change appears. This alteration occurs in the description of the ritual of baptism, which may seem rather surprising in the context of Carolingian *correctio*, and it therefore deserves special attention here. After all, the exam deals with the basics of priestly knowledge and abilities, so a certain degree of uniformity may be expected, especially where it comes to a subject as important as the ritual of baptism.²⁶ Let us therefore look at the answers to the question ‘How do you baptise?’ in the *Dic mihi* (see below, question 7).

²⁴ For comments on such Latin see E. Rose, ‘Getroost door de klank van woorden: het Latijn als sacrale taal van Ambrosiaster tot Alcuin’ in G. Rouwhorst and P. Versnel-Mergaerts (eds), *Taal waarin wij God verstaan. Over taal en vertaling van Schrift en traditie in de liturgie* (Abdij van Berne, 2015). I thank the author for giving me access to this article ahead of its publication.

²⁵ See the edition below.

²⁶ The subject of baptism was considered to be particularly important by the court; witness the questions about the ritual that Charlemagne himself sent to his bishops in 813. The dozens of answers, as well as related texts, have been edited by Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. II. For a good introduction to the subject and extensive bibliography, see Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I.

The Wolfenbüttel manuscript answers:

In the name of the Holy Trinity, that is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, I thrice submerge [him or her] or pour oil and chrism over [him or her] with a bowl. I wash [his or her] feet following the Lord's example. I dress [him or her] in white clothes according to the custom of priests. I give [him or her] the body and blood, as the Lord says: *Unless you shall eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you shall not have Eternal Life.*²⁷

Both Albi manuscripts and the Paris manuscript largely follow this ritual, whereas the fragment in the Laon manuscript does not contain this question. In the manuscript from St Gallen, however, we find a different answer:

'I baptise in the name of the Holy Trinity, that is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I submerge [him or her] three times and anoint [him or her] with oil and chrism. I give [him or her] the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ according to what He says: *Unless you shall eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink you shall have no part of me.*'

Both the foot washing and the white clothes, part of the baptismal ritual in the *Missale Gothicum* (see below), have disappeared, and the biblical quotation at the end has been altered as well. Clearly, this is not just an omission. Leaving out the *pedilavium* and the white clothes changes the contents of the ritual of baptism in important ways. Where most manuscripts of the *Dic mihi* follow the ritual according to the *Missale Gothicum*, the manuscript from St Gallen restyles it so as to conform to another version of the ritual. By the time the *Dic mihi* was copied into this manuscript, foot washing and white clothes clearly played no role in the ritual of baptism that was followed in this region (if they ever had), and the text was altered to reflect local practice.

This is just one example, but an important one all the same. That we find no strict uniformity in the various manuscripts of even an ultra-short description of the ritual of baptism is telling, for it shows how we should not try to interpret local *correctio* in terms of strict homogenisation of religious rituals and practices. In this case, there clearly was consensus about the importance of baptism in general as a central duty of local priests, but how exactly the ritual took shape in different regions was another matter. There was, in other words, room for local practices: as long as priests took care that all lay Franks were baptised by triple immersion, many details could be filled in as was seen fit locally. Such a situation sits well with Susan Keefe's conclusions

²⁷ See Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I, p. 111.

about the dozens of baptismal expositions of this period that she has studied and edited: the basic ingredients of the ritual show little variation; the details are different everywhere.²⁸

Conclusion

A priests' exam such as the *Dic mihi pro quid*, then, represents one step in the transmission of ideals of *correctio* from the royal court to the localities, and therefore tells us about authors and recipients both. The text itself shows what its author considered to be the cornerstones of the priestly ministry, while it is clear that the candidate needed an education in order to be able to answer the questions. Even though the questions and answers of the exam are boiled down, they presuppose knowledge and understanding that can only have been the result of studying the relevant texts and learning by example. Yet, by looking at one notable variant in the St Gallen manuscript, we see that there were no fixed answers to the questions that would be acceptable everywhere in the Frankish empire. Thus, we are reminded that local *correctio* was applied to a world in which religious practices varied widely, and consensus about how things should be done centred on no more than general aspects of ecclesiastical rituals and priestly duties discussed in high-level circles. What mattered was that people were baptised by triple immersion on the right days – whether the priest washed the candidate's feet or not for the occasion was deemed less relevant.

The key to successful *correctio* was education and knowledge, some degree of which priests were expected to bring to the rural communities they served. All this is, of course, no evidence for a Carolingian empire filled with well-educated clergy, for surely in this sense too there was variation. All the same, the extant manuscripts for priests in which texts such as the *Dic mihi* survive show a wide distribution over the empire, which means that bishops everywhere did their best to provide sufficient education for their secular clergy. Moreover, the fact that so many bishops wrote episcopal statutes or exams for their priests demonstrates how important they found the presence of well-trained priests. Archbishop Arn, with whom this chapter started, was not alone, then; texts such as the *Dic mihi* enabled his colleagues to tell good priests apart from *idiothae* who would undermine the ideals of a Christian-Frankish society by their ignorance.

²⁸ Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I, p. 132: there are sixty-four different baptismal instructions in her collection.

Edition of the *Dic mihi pro quid**Date and provenance*

Three factors are of importance for the dating of the text. First of all, the earliest manuscripts – Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 288 (*L*) and Wolfenbüttel, Herzog Augustbibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 91 Weiss. (*W*) – date back respectively to the first third and first half of the ninth century. The latest date of composition possible is therefore the early ninth century when the first extant manuscripts were produced. Secondly, there is a quotation in the text of a letter once (but no longer) ascribed to Germanus of Paris.²⁹ Philippe Bernard, the most recent editor of the letter, thinks that the *Dic mihi* was one of its sources. He therefore dates the *Dic mihi* to the 770s, about a decade prior to the composition of the letter.³⁰ This date, in turn, is based on the analysis of Francesc Xavier Altes y Aguiló, who in 1979 published a transcription of the *Dic mihi* from a tenth- or eleventh-century manuscript from Girona, which is now in Barcelona.³¹ Unfortunately, his dating of the exam to *c.* 770 rests on shaky foundations, even though he interprets the text as a product of the Carolingian reforms, for he assumes that it cannot have been written after the *Sacramentarium Hadrianum* reached the court of Charlemagne in the late 780s – in his opinion, this sacramentarium immediately replaced all older liturgy.³² At this point, the third factor becomes important, for the ritual of baptism in the seventh question contains foot washing (see above), which was part of the liturgy of baptism in the Gallican liturgy but had no place in any Carolingian baptismal ritual.³³ Altes y Aguiló, and Bernard with him, have recognised the liturgy of baptism in question seven as the one described in the *Missale*

²⁹ The editor of the text sees more parallels with the *Dic mihi*, but the other instances he notes consist mostly of rather common biblical quotations that are not necessarily derived from the *Dic mihi*. See P. Bernard (ed.), *Epistolae de ordine sacrae oblationis et de diversis charismatibus ecclesiae Germano Parisiensi episcopo adscriptae* (Turnhout, 2007), *Epistola Prima, prologus*, lines 9–11, p. 337, and pp. 56–8 for other possible parallels that I find less convincing.

³⁰ *Epistolae de ordine*, p. 96. The relationship between the two texts, however, seems to be the other way around: to my mind, the *Dic mihi* quotes a sentence from Pseudo-Germanus.

³¹ F. Altes y Aguiló, 'Un qüestionari sinodal sobre la litúrgia Gallicana en un manuscrit Gironí', *Revista catalana de teologia* 4 (1979), 101–16.

³² Altes y Aguiló, 'Un qüestionari', p. 113.

³³ See Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I, p. 112.

Gothicum, and therefore assume that the *Dic mihi* must predate the arrival of the *Sacramentarium Hadrianum* and the subsequent reform of the liturgy.³⁴ Susan Keefe, however, shows convincingly that a great variety of baptismal rituals coexisted in the Carolingian empire, including those with ‘non-Roman elements’ such as foot washing.³⁵ The fact that the *Dic mihi* was copied including the *pedilavium* in all but two of the ninth-century manuscripts supports Keefe’s conclusion here.

What remains of these attempts to date the *Dic mihi* is, then, very little indeed. Even if Pseudo-Germanus’s letter is Merovingian, as Yitzhak Hen argues, the *Dic mihi* seems to be quoting from it rather than being a source for it.³⁶ Moreover, in view of Keefe’s conclusions about the coexistence of many different baptismal rituals in the late eighth and ninth centuries, a *terminus ante quem* of the late 780s, when the *Sacramentarium Hadrianum* reached the Frankish royal court, cannot be maintained. The only thing we are left with is, all in all, the extant manuscript evidence plus a fourth factor: that of context. All other priests’ exams we know were composed in the (very) early ninth century or, in one instance only, a couple of decades later. This, too, is the time in which episcopal statutes and other tools for local *correctio* started to see the light, and the *Dic mihi* makes perfect sense in this context. As in similar texts of the time, priests’ knowledge of the Mass, baptism and penance are the most prominent subjects, which is typical for such texts in the early phase of the Carolingian reforms.³⁷ The fact that it mentions foot washing in the majority of its manuscripts may simply mean that the text was composed in an area where rituals similar to the one described in the *Missale Gothicum* were common, most likely the south of France, from which we still have two manuscripts containing the *Dic mihi*. In these and in two other manuscripts we find the *pedilavium* as part of the baptismal ritual. In another manuscript, the exam seems to have been edited to conform to other practices: the foot washing has disappeared from St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 40 (G).³⁸

³⁴ Altes y Aguiló, ‘Un qüestionari’, p. 108; *Epistolae de ordine*, p. 156.

³⁵ Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. I, pp. 112–13.

³⁶ Y. Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul. To the Death of Charles the Bald (877)* (London, 2001), p. 7. Here I follow Altes y Aguiló, ‘Un qüestionari’, pp. 112–13.

³⁷ Van Rhijn, *Shepherds of the Lord*, Chapter 3.

³⁸ See Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. II, pp. 112–13. Note that the manuscript from Laon does not contain this question.

In the light of the dates of the manuscripts and the context in which the *Dic mihi* was most probably composed, I think a plausible date for the text suggests itself that does not lean on the arrival in Aachen of the *Sacramentarium Hadrianum*. If we take into consideration that the two oldest manuscript witnesses (*L* and *W*) show marked differences and have clearly been copied from earlier ones, I think we can reasonably date the text to the late eighth or the early ninth century.

The manuscripts

Thus far, ten manuscripts containing the *Dic mihi* have been identified: eight with the full text and two with a fragment. Of these ten, six are Carolingian, and these have been used for the critical edition below. The Wolfenbüttel manuscript (*W*) is the basis for the edition, for it presents the oldest complete version of the text.

These six manuscripts can be divided into two groups on the basis of the order of the questions. The two earliest manuscripts, *L* and *W*, but also *G*, present the questions in the order of the edition below, whereas the other three manuscripts (and also the younger ones not used for this edition) organise the questions differently: 1, 6, 7, 2, 3, 4, 5. As noted above, it is remarkable how free the copyists have felt to make changes in the text.

As described above, the Carolingian manuscript context in which the text has survived is without exception didactic, although later manuscripts present it (again) as an exam. All of the Carolingian manuscripts were clearly designated for the secular clergy, either as handbooks (*A2*, *L* and *P*) or as books probably used for their education (*A1*, *W* and *G*).³⁹

³⁹ For this classification in 'instruction-readers' and 'schoolbooks' see Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. 1, pp. 160–2. Keefe does not know manuscript *W* though. The identification of part of this manuscript as a handbook for a local priest can be found in W. Haubrighs, 'Das althochdeutsch-lateinische Textensemble des Cod. Weiss. 91 ("Weißenburger Katechismus") und das Bistum Worms im frühen neunten Jahrhundert', in R. Bergmann (ed.), *Volkssprachig-lateinische Mischtexte und Textensembles in der althochdeutschen, altsächsischen und altenglischen Überlieferung. Mediävistisches Kolloquium des Zentrums für Mittelalterstudien der Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg am 16. und 17. November 2001* (Heidelberg, 2003), 131–73. I would like to thank Miriam Czock for this reference.

*Manuscripts used for the edition*⁴⁰

- W Wolfenbüttel Herzog Augustbibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 91 Weiss., s.IX^{1/2}, Weissenburg⁴¹
- A1 Albi, Bibliothèque municipale 38bis, s.IX^{med}, southern France
- A2 Albi, Bibliothèque municipale 43, s.IX^{4/4}, southern France
- G St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 40, s.IX^{2/2} and ^{3/3}, Switzerland⁴²
- L Laon, Bibliothèque municipale 288, s.IX^{1/3}, Eastern France/Belgium (fragment)
- P Paris, BnF, lat. 1008, s.IX/X, France

Post-Carolingian manuscripts not used for the present edition

- Barcelona, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Barcelona 228, s.X^{ex}/XIⁱⁿ⁴³
- Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 256, s.XI
- Madrid, El Escorial Q III 10, s.XII^{ex}
- Paris, BnF, lat. 13092, s.XI (fragment)

Earlier editions

The two questions about baptism (6 and 7 below) have been edited by Susan A. Keefe, *Water and the Word. Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire*, 2 vols, Vol. II (Notre Dame, 2002), text 49, pp. 576–7, including the post-Carolingian manuscripts (but not W).

In this edition, punctuation and the use of capitals have been standardised; direct quotations from the Bible are in italics. The questions have been numbered following the order in W.

⁴⁰ For the dating and provenance of the manuscripts I have relied on Keefe, *Water and the Word*, Vol. II, unless otherwise stated.

⁴¹ I would like to thank Steffen Patzold for discovering the text in this manuscript and sharing this find with me. The *Dic mihi* from this manuscript was published (without any comments) by R. Schnurr, *Katechetisches in vulgärlateinisch und rheinfränkischer Sprache aus der Weissenburger Handschrift 91 in Wolfenbüttel* (Greifswald, 1894), pp. 14–15. See now M. Czock, ‘Practices of property and the salvation of one’s soul: priests as men in the middle in the Wissembourg material’, in S. Patzold and C. van Rhijn (eds), *Men in the Middle. Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe* (forthcoming, Berlin, 2016).

⁴² A full transcription of the text from G can be found in A. Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902), p. 343 n.1.

⁴³ A full transcription of the *Dic mihi* from this manuscript can be found in Altes y Aguiló, ‘Un questionari’, pp. 114–16.

<1.> Dic mihi pro quid es presbyter benedictus.

Ad adnuntiandum uerbum diuinum et ad tradendum baptismum uel lauacrum penitentiae, et hostias offerendum omnipotenti Deo pro salute uiuorum ac requie defunctorum.

5 <2.> Pro quid cantas missa?

Pro commemoratione mortis Domini, quia mors Christi facta est uita mundi, ut offerendo proficeret in salute uiuentium et requiem defunctorum atque medilla animarum et corporum.

<3.> Quomodo cantas missa?

title INTERROGATIO SACERDOTALIS A2 IOCA EPISCOPI AD SACERDOTES G Incipit interrogatio ad presbiteros P

1 INT *add.* A1; INTERROGATIO *add.* A2 G; Dic mihi *om.* L; es] est A1; es presbyter] dititur L; benedictus] ordinatus G

2 RP *add.* A1; RESPONSIO *add.* G; R *add.* P; Ad adnuntiandum] Benedictus dititur ad adnuntiandum L; adnuntiandum] annuntiandum A2 adnunciandum G; ad² *om.* L; tradendum] trahendum A2baptismum] bapismum P

3 penitentiae] paenitentiae G; lauacrum penitentiae] paenitentiam lacrimarum A1 penitentia lauacrum A2 penitentie lauacrum L poenitentiae lauacrum P; et²] *om.* A1; hostias] hostiis A1 ostias A2 hostiam G; offerendum] offerentem A1 offerendo A2 P offerre G hoferendum L; omnipotenti deo] omnipotente domino A2 deo omnipotenti G omnipotentem domino L; Deo] Domino P

4 ac requie] et requiem A1 A2; requie] requiae G requiem L P; defunctorum] defunctorum A2 L

5 INT *add.* A1 P; INTERROGATIO *add.* G; missa] missam L

6 RP *add.* A1; RESPONSIO *add.* G; R *add.* P; pro] in A1 A2 P; commemoratione] commemorationem A1 P commeratione A2 commemoratione G cummorationem L commemoratone *a.c.* W; mortis] morti L; domini] deum A2; quia] et quia A1 A2 P que L

7 ut] et ut A1; mundi ut offerendo] mundauit offerendum L; offerendo proficeret] proferentium proficiat A1 offerret mortem et profitiat P; proficeret] profitiat A2 proficiat L; in salute uiuentium] ad salutem uiuorum L; salute] salutem A2 G; uiuentium] uiuorum A2 P uiuencium G; et requiem defunctorum] defunctorum et morientium A2 P

8 atque] adque A2 L P; medilla] medella A1 A2 G L medellam P

8/9 1 Cor. 11.24

6/7 *Pro commemoratione-defunctorum* is a direct quotation from the first letter of Pseudo-Germanus of Paris.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See P. Bernard (ed.), *Epistolae de ordine sacrae oblationis et de diversis charismatibus ecclesiae Germano Parisiensi episcopo adscriptae* (Turnhout, 2007), Epistola Prima, prologus, lines 9–11, p. 337.

- 10 Offero panem in corpore Christi, ipso dicente, *accipite et manducate, hoc est corpus meum*. Offero uinum in sanguine Christi, sicut ipse dixit, *hic est sanguis meus qui pro uobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum*.

<4.> Quomodo offeres sacrificium?

- 15 Vinum autem cum aqua mixtum offero secundum quod in cruce de latere Christi processit sanguis et aqua. Panem sicut dixit: *Ego sum panis uiuus*.

<5.> Quid per sanguinem et aquam?

9 INT *add. A1 P*; INTERROGATIO *add. A2 G*; Quomodo cantas missa] Quid cantis missa *L* Quomodo offers sacrificium *P*

10 RP *add. A1*; R *add. P*; dicente] dicente ad apostolos *A1 A2 P* dicente ad apostolos *L*; manducate] manducate ex hoc omnes *A2*; accipite et manducate *om. P*

11 est] est enim *A2 L*; meum] meum quod pro uobis tradetur *P*; in] quasi in *L*; sanguine christi] sanguine eius *A1* sanguinem eius *L*; sicut ipse dixit] ipso dicente *A1* ipso dicente ad apostolos *L*; hic est] hic enim *L*

11/13 Offero uinum–peccatorum] *om. A2*; offero aetiam uino similiter ad exemplum Domini sicut ipse dixit apostolis suis, hic calix noui testamenti est, in meo sanguine. In sanguine autem intellego uinum et in panem carnem eius. *P*

12 effundetur] effundetur *L*; remissionem] remissione *A1*

14 offeres sacrificium] offers sacrificium *P*

14/16 Quomodo offeres–panis uiuus] Vinum autem cum aqua mixto offero, in hoc est sancte trinitatis *L*

14 INT *add. A1*; INTERROGATIO *add. G*; Quomodo] Quomodo autem *G*; Quomodo–sacrificium *om. A2*

15 RP *add. A1*; RESPONSIO *add. G*; autem] *om. G*; cum aqua] aquam *A1*; mixtum] mixto *A2*; latere] latus *A1*

16 et] cum *A1*; Panem] Panem uero *G*; sicut dixit] sicut ipse dixit *G*; Panem–uiuus] *om. A1 A2 add. sub l. W*; uiuus] qui de celo descendi *add. G*; sanguis et–uiuus] Sicut dicit euangelista, tunc unus ex militibus lancea latus eius perforauit et statim exiuit sanguis et aqua et per sanguine redemptionis reparamus ad uitam, per aquae lauachrum mundamur a crimine. Credendum est quod ante tribunal christi et tremendi iudicis accipiant iusti requiem et impii subplitium aeternum. *P*

17/21 Quid per–regnum dei] Per sanguinis redemptionem reparamus ad uitam per aquae lauachrum mundamur a crimine. Credendum quod resurrectionem dominicam iustis requiem dedit uita. EXPLICIT *A1* Pro sanguine redemptionis reparamus ad uitam, pro aqua lauachrum mundemur a crimine *A2*; *om. L*

17 INTERROGATIO *add. G*

11/13 cf. Matt. 26.28

16 John 6.51

- 20 Per sanguinem uero redemptio nostra de morte ad uitam intellegitur. Per aquam baptismum intellegitur quia in ipso mandamur a crimine, sicut ipsa ueritas ait, *nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu sancto non potest uidere regnum dei.*
<6.> Pro quid baptizas?
- 25 Pro omnia peccata quae committuntur in mundo tam quae ex Adam originaliter contraximus quam quae ante baptismum nos ipsi comisimus. Secundum quod Christus sanctificauit aquas in suo baptismo ut aqua lauaret omnia peccata cum chrisma et spiritu sancto.
<7.> Quomodo baptizas?

18 redemptio] redempcio G; de morte–intellegitur *om. G*

19/21 quia in–regnum dei] Per panem corpus Domini figuratur G

22 INT *add. A1 P*; INTERROCIO *add. G*; Item. Dic mihi *add. A2*; Dic mihi *add. P*; Pro] Propter G; baptizas] babtizas P

23 RP *add. A1*; RESPONSIO *add. G*; R *add. P*; Pro] propter A1; in mundo tam] et G; quae¹] que A2 G L P; committuntur] comnituntur A2 admittuntur G cummituntur L commituntur P; mundo] mundum A1 A2 mundum L; tam *om. P*; quae²] quam A1 que L P; ex *om. P*

23/26 originaliter–spiritu sancto] originali peccato G

24 originaliter] generaliter A1; contraximus] traximus A1 P *om. A2* trasimus L; quae] et A1; quam quae] quod et A1 et qui L quod P; baptismum] baptissimum A2 babtismum P; nos ipsi comisimus] in nobis ipsis gerimus L; comisimus] commisimus A1 conmisimus A2

25 Secundum quod] et secundum hoc que L; quod] hoc quia A2 P; suo baptismo] suum baptismum A1 A2 L suo babtismo P; ut] ita A1; aqua *om. L*

26 peccata] peccato L; chrisma et spiritu sancto] crismate spiritus sancti L crismate in spirito sancto P; chrisma et] crismate in A2; chrisma] xrisma A1

26/32 *om. L*

27 INT *add. A1*; INTERROGATIO *add. A2 G P*; baptizas] babtizas P

20/21 cf. John 3.3 and 3.5

22/23 cf. John 6.54

- 30 In nomine sanctae trinitatis, id est Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, trinam facio mersionem aut conca perfundo cum oleo et chrisma. Lauo pedes ad exemplum Domini. Induo ueste candida more sacerdotali. Trado ei corpus et sanguinem sicut Dominus dixit, *Nisi manducaueritis carnem Filii Hominis et biberitis eius sanguinem non habebitis uitam aeternam in uobis.*

28 RP *add. A1*; RESPONSIO *add. G*; In nomine] Baptizo in nomine *G*; id est–sancti *om. A1 A2 P*

29 facio] fatio *A2*

29/30 aut conca–more sacerdotali] et unguam eum, oleo et crisma *G*

29 aut conca perfundo] in conca fontis *A1 A2 P*; chrisma] xrisma *A1* crismate *A2 P*

30 exemplum] ad exemplum *A1*; ueste candida] uestem candidam *A1*; more] morem *A2*; sacerdotali] sacerdotalem *A1 A2*; trado] et trado *A2 P*

31 sanguinem] sanguinem domini *A1 A2 P*; sicut dominus dixit] quia dominus dixit, Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu sancto non potest intrare in regnum celorum et iterum dixit *A1*; quia dominus dixit, nisi qui renatus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu sancto non potest introire in regnum caelorum. Et iterum *A2 P*; domini nostri ihesu christi propter hoc quod dixit *G*

32 eius sanguinem–in uobis] non hebentis partem mecum *G*; habebitis] abebitis *P*

28/32 This closely resembles the ritual of baptism in the *Missale Gothicum*, no. XXXIII, 260–3.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ See E. Rose (ed.), *Missale Gothicum e codice Vaticano reginensi latino 317 editum*, CCL 159D (Turnhout, 2005), p. 450.