Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages

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The Conversion of the Physical World

The Creation of a Christian Landscape

John M. Howe

"My Kingdom is not of this world." Christ's disavowal to Pilate evokes cognitive dissonance in anyone who has ever traveled through a traditional European landscape where Christian territory is proclaimed by steepled churches, imposing religious houses, monumental crosses, ornate cemeteries, votive plaques, and even crosses with plastic flowers marking the sites of traffic accidents. In the Middle Ages such omnipresent *tropaea* established hegemony. This is apparent, for example, in the account of Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem, written by the Muslim historian Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233), which climaxes with a symbolic reversal: "When the Muslims entered the city . . . some of them climbed to the top of the cupola [of the Dome of the Rock] to take down the cross. When they reached the top a great cry went up from the city and from outside the walls, the Muslims crying the *Allāh akbar* in their joy, the Franks groaning in consternation and grief. So loud and piercing was the cry that the earth shook."[1]

Although religious conversion is normally thought of as a personal process involving a reorientation of soul, it also transforms the surrounding world. Conversion of large numbers of people requires conversion of their cult centers. It may lead to the reinterpretation of geography itself. Historians of religion describe natural "heirophanies," revelations of the divine through numinous natural features.[2] Because religious traditions mediate these perceptions, changes in belief require interpretive changes. Thus an understanding of Christian conversion in the Middle Ages would not be complete without a look at Christian landscape. How was it created? In what ways did it develop? How was it important to medieval religion? A brief survey of Christian religious geography may help to correct such common beliefs as that it appeared late, suddenly, or only in the context of the initial evangelizing of a region. Sacred space in the medieval Latin West continued to develop as internal and external frontiers were converted into Christian territory.

Christianity always had sacred geography. This assertion contradicts scholars such as Robert Markus, who champions Christianity's "indifference to place" and maintains that it occupied "a spatial universe spiritually largely undifferentiated" until it gradually created a new sacred geography through the cult of the martyrs.[3] In fact, Christianity began as a Jewish heresy, part of a tradition that saw God acting in history, preserving a special land for a special people, centering his sacrificial cult on a single temple. Although local Jewish religious life was based on synagogues, people also worshipped at the tombs of patriarchs, prophets, and would-be messiahs.[4] Christ, who was said to have fulfilled and transcended this old order, inevitably created new sacred space by his earthly presence. The Mount of Calvary, for example, was symbolically transfigured to such an extent that even Hadrian's superimposition of a temple to the Capitoline Venus could not reclaim it.[5] Informed traditions about Christ's tomb circulated in the second century.[6] An elaborate Christian sacred geography in the Holy Land emerged just as soon as Christian pilgrimage became publicly acceptable.[7]

Like Judaism, Christianity had its sacred tombs. One wall underlying the *memoria* for Peter in Rome has been claimed to be as early as about 90 A.D., although the evidence of mid–second-century construction is clearer.[8] Avoidance of such burial honors may underlie the request to the Romans made by Ignatius of Antioch (d. ca. 107), who asked them to pray that the wild beasts "may become a sepulchre for me; let them leave not the smallest scrap of my flesh" so that "there is no trace of my body for the world to see."[9] It was allegedly the Jews who attempted to secure the destruction of the body of Polycarp (d. ca. 155), but they were unable to stop the Christians of Smyrna from gathering his bones, laying them to rest "in a spot suitable for the purpose," and assembling there regularly to celebrate the day of his martyrdom.[10] It is hard to resist the conclusion that these early geographical elements represent an ongoing tradition appropriated from Judaism.[11] The tombs of martyrs would have become more prominent after the middle of the third century, once more general persecutions had mass-produced them. Nevertheless, the resulting geography was somewhat arbitrary: the persecutors, not the Christians, determined the places where the martyrs were executed (normally the larger cities where officials were empowered to judge capital crimes); the burial customs of antiquity required that their tombs be located outside city walls, at some distance from largely urban early Christian communities.[12]

Another sort of sacred geography centered on churches. Like the Jews, Christians clustered into their own neighborhoods. Their meeting places, such as the "upper room" (Acts 1:13), were Christian forums where a new type of assembly (*ecclesia*) replaced the old loyalties of the citizen assemblies of the *poleis*. In such assembly rooms, wandering apostles and prophets gradually became less important than bishops, geographically defined overseers whose *cathedrae* on raised platforms in front of congregations clearly marked ecclesiastical power. Since the geography of the churches differed from the geography of the martyrs, there could be tension between them, as is hinted at, for example, in Origen's description of the Alexandrian Church. He describes how during the Severan persecution (shortly after 200), Christians living and martyred could assemble together spiritually but not physically:

> That was when one really was a believer, when one used to go to martyrdom with courage in the Church, when returning from the cemeteries whither we had accompanied the bodies of the martyrs, we came back to our meetings, and the whole church would be assembled there, unbreakable. Then the catechumens were catechized in the midst of the martyrdoms, and in turn the catechumens overcame tortures and confessed the living God without fear.[13]

With Constantine's triumphs came churches fit for an emperor, including some basilicas with incomes like those of small provinces. Equally important, however, was the merging of sacred geographies. In the post-Constantinian Church, imperial support overcame any popular reluctance about mingling the living and the dead and made feasible the translations of holy bodies into urban churches.[14] Translations allowed persecuting cities to showcase their treasuries of relics in places other than suburban sanctuaries. They allowed newer cities such as Constantinople to achieve higher status by importing the remains of saints on a massive scale. They enabled bishops to enhance their own power through the cult of relics.[15] The sacred geographies did not always merge successfully: the network of rural shrines to the martyrs in Donatist northern Africa resisted elite attempts to impose order.[16] In the eastern countryside, especially in Egypt and Syria, holy men emerged as successors of the martyrs and established their cells and pillars as new decentralized loci of the sacred.[17] In the West, however, the usual effect of translations of the saints was to create coherent patterns of sacred geography, a process codified by canon laws requiring that every altar contain relics.[18] This shift strengthened ecclesiastical organization. Without it, Christian cult in the West might have been privatized like almost all other parts of the public sphere; with it churches retained some independence, since each had a heavenly owner, the saint "residing" in the altar, whom potential oppressors would often hesitate to make angry.

The system of churches backed by relics was spread in many ways. Powerful men established private churches on great estates. Bishops counterbalanced them with strong baptismal churches. These initiatives provided a basis for a fully articulated parish structure, even though in some regions it was not complete until the twelfth century.[19] Interrelated systems of churches were carefully and deliberately established by missionary efforts, some of which are described in other chapters of this volume. Translations of saints reinforced bonds between old and new Christian regions.[20] The great monasteries favored by the Carolingians and rejuvenated by the monastic reforms of the tenth and eleventh centuries did much to enhance the cult of relics and popular pilgrimage.[21]

Beneath and beyond the sacred grid of saints and their churches existed a sacred geography based upon nature. Christians did not start with a *tabula rasa*. The religious geography of the ancient Mediterranean and Transalpine worlds had been powerful. According to Robin Lane Fox, "Prophetic places were as abundant as ever in the Imperial period. . . . From Gaul to Palmyra, gods and heroes gave guidance . . . at their shrines and sacred springs. . . . Wherever there was water, indeed, there was a possible source of prophesy. . . . Uncanny places were everywhere."[22] Celtic and Germanic religion also relied heavily on groves, caves, mountains, and other numinous sites.[23] Mountain peaks had sacred resonances.[24] Fountains were major sites for worship—and for miracles.[25] Forests were awesome.[26] When these natural features occurred together, their power was enhanced.

From the beginning, Christians saw non-Christian sacred space as potentially or actually demonic. In Mark's Gospel, Christ proclaims, "The Kingdom of God is at hand" and then exorcizes a possessed man, commanding the unclean spirit who had cried out, "Jesus of Nazareth, Art thou come to destroy us?" to "Speak no more and go" (Mark 1:15–26). Mark describes sixteen more exorcisms. As territory is reclaimed from the spirits of evil, the Kingdom of God becomes immanent. Little wonder then that the desert fathers fought monstrous demons who looked suspiciously like Egyptian gods.[27] In eastern Rome, rioting Christians destroyed temples, dismaying the pagan Libanius, who held that shrines were "the very soul of the countryside."[28] Sts. Martin of Tours, Benedict, and Boniface chopped down sacred trees in the West; John of Ephesus did so in the East. In fact, the destruction of sacred groves became so common in the Carolingian world that synods legislated the appropriate procedures.[29] As Christianity expanded, demonic territory contracted. According to Walafrid Strabo, when St. Gall built his hermit hut at Lake Constance, the fleeing demons moaned that they would soon have no place left to them on earth.[30]

Unless wilderness springs, wells, forests, and mountains were specifically claimed for Christ, their pagan resonances remained. The canons of local councils and the penitentials, all the way up through the time of

Burchard of Worms in the early eleventh century, repeat injunctions against going "to temples, to fountains, to trees, or to cells"; they forbid leaving offerings, candles, "little houses," etc.[31] Bishop Atto of Vercelli (d. 964) had to admonish even his priests against visiting groves and springs.[32] The chronicler Rodulfus Glaber (d. ca. 1047) made no secret of his own belief in the demons who inhabited such places.[33] Miracle stories tell how people encountered evil spirits associated with certain plants or geographical features.[34]

Pagan geography had to be converted into Christian geography. Here I would take issue with Robert Markus's thesis that there was "no simple substitution of a Christian for a pagan religious topography"; that "between the two lies a slow attrition of Christian belief in the unholiness of pagan holy places, and the emergence, only slightly faster, of a readiness to envisage the possibility of holiness attached to particular spots."[35] Although a reductionist identification of the cults of saints with those of pagan gods oversimplifies, Christian sacred geography was linked to older sacralities.[36] In the fourth and fifth centuries, "countershrines" had begun to arise on or near old pagan sites.[37] In central Italy, temple sites were converted into the two greatest monasteries, Farfa and Monte Cassino. The most famous instruction on such recycling is the letter sent by Pope Gregory I to Abbot Melitus:

> The idol temples of that race [the English people] should by no means be destroyed, but only the idols in them. Take holy water and sprinkle it in these shrines, build altars and place relics in them. For if the shrines are well built, it is essential that they should be changed from the worship of devils to the service of the true God. When this people see that their shrines are not destroyed they will be able to banish error from their hearts and be more ready to come to the places they are familiar with, but now recognizing and worshipping the true God.

Gregory goes on to encourage the missionaries to substitute picnics for sacrificial meals, so that people can continue their old habits but "with changed hearts."[38] Adam of Bremen in the eleventh century described churches established in Scandinavian sacred groves.[39] The extent of this process is suggested in recent work by Mary and Sidney Nolan, who attempted to catalogue all the major current western European pilgrimage sites: most are associated with features that have some aura of traditional natural sanctity, especially mountains and water sources.[40]

The conversion of temples and awesome natural sites was not completed during the first phases of missionary activity. In his profile of medieval Rome, Richard Krautheimer shows that even in the very center of western

Christendom, it was well into the 600s before Christians routinely dared to turn pagan temples into churches.[41] The Tiber island with its healing fountain of Aesclepius was not fully converted to Christian use until around the turn of the millennium when Otto III constructed the church of San Bartolomeo.[42] Although in France the vast majority of the more than six thousand sacred springs that have been identified are now dedicated to saints, most of these Christian dedications are apparently Carolingian or later.[43] To convert the landscape completely took centuries.

One way to see the process in action is to study geographical references in hagiography. *Lives, miracles,* and other texts provide a series of snapshots witnessing cultic developments over time. A few examples taken from them illustrate how sacred geography expanded:

Bishop Germanus of Auxerre (d. 450), who, his biographer Constantius specifies, had *no* hermitage ("he . . . inhabited the desert while dwelling in the world"), had acquired one before Auxerre's *Gesta Episcoporum* was written in the ninth century.[44]

The young Wandregisilus (d. ca. 668) retreated to a hermitage known to the author of the *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium,* in a section written prior to 830, only as "quodam in loco" but which the so-called *Vita Secunda*, written just a few years later, identified as Saint-Ursanne.[45]

In the *Life* of Gerald of Aurillac (d. 909) written by Abbot Odo of Cluny (d. 942), Gerald was a monkish count not associated with any special geographical sites. However, once the monastery that Gerald had attempted to found during his lifetime finally prospered, amassed property, and needed his sacrality, he came to be honored at the hill where he is said to have died; at three fountains where he allegedly worked miracles; and even at a tree, the "arbre de Saint Géraud."[46]

In the first surviving *Life* of the seventh-century hermit Rodingus, written by Richard of Saint-Vannes (d. 1046), he is said to have dwelt in an unknown "place of horror and vast solitude" about a half a mile from the monastery; in the closely related but slightly later second *Life,* the hermitage is located and is announced as available for tours.[47]

In the hagiography associated with the seventh-century hermit Bavo of Ghent, no hermitage site is specified until the fourth edition of the *Life,* ca. 1100, when he became a forest dweller in a hollow tree, a place of popular veneration "where now Mass is frequently offered."[48]

In most of the above examples, hermits could Christianize wilderness by dwelling within it. It may be more than coincidence that the wave of popularity of hermit saints in tenth–eleventh-century Italy and late eleventh–early twelfth-century northern Europe correlates with expanding population moving into former wilderness areas. In central and southern Italy, for example, the era of encastellation seems to have witnessed a new wave of cave christenings. This is a region where cave sanctuaries such as those at Subiaco, Monte Tancia, and Monte Gargano had been important foci of early medieval spirituality. Now, however, Dominic of Sora (d. 1032), who founded a dozen monasteries in the high Appennines, took up eremitical residence in three different caves, which, except for two sites that claimed his relics, became his most important cult centers (his monasteries without relics or caves relatively quickly disappeared).[49] Amicus of Monte Cassino (d. ca. 1045) lived on Monte Torano in a cave that was later opened up for tours.[50] The Christianization of forests also seems to have accelerated in the eleventh century. Forest sites in Italy were donated to Romuald of Ravenna and Dominic of Sora. The forest of Craon between Brittany and Normandy was filled with hermits. The Cistercians happily acquired such "deserts." Also impressive are the oak trees in which hermit saints such as Bavo of Ghent or Gerardus of Falkenburg (12th century) were supposed to have lived. Oaks, pines, beeches and other trees of the ancient forests appear in sacral contexts. For example, it was while sitting on an oak log that Columbanus (and many imitators) had prophetic visions.[51]

Awesome places were Christianized not only to neutralize their pagan associations but also to appropriate their power. Romuald of Ravenna (d. ca. 1027), out hunting before he became a hermit, exclaimed, "O how well hermits would be able to dwell in the recesses of the woods, how nicely they could meditate here away from all the disturbances of secular strife."[52] St. Bruno (d. 1101), after founding the Carthusian order, abandoned it for a Calabrian hermitage, about which he rhapsodized, "Where can I find the words to describe its charms, its healthy climate, or the wide and beautiful plain that stretches into the mountains where there are green pastures and meadows filled with flowers?"[53] Bernard of Clairvaux, in his letter to Henry Murdoch, exhorted, "Believe me, you will find more in forests than in books. The trees and the rocks will teach you what you cannot hear from teachers."[54] Places relevatory for the ancient world were relevatory for Christians too—so long as they could be presented in a Christian context and carefully surrounded by Christian symbols.

This rapid survey of Christian geography has thus far, for the sake of convenience, treated churches, shrines, relics, caves, and so forth as though they had meaning in themselves. In reality, sacred space requires audience interaction—human beings to comprehend, explain, and animate it. A space can only be numinous *to someone.* Interrelated churches, relics, and natural sites had to be manifested by and through people.

Geographical foci usually made crowds part of the pageant. Churches drew multitudes on their saints' days.[55] Even the most inaccessible, awesome natural sites could attract annual crowds.[56] Relics brought pilgrims.[57] All participants became symbols themselves, part of the entourage of the saints. Since Late Antiquity such symbolic roles had been easy for the clergy, who had clerical garments, tonsures, and other distinctives. Although in his *Rule* Benedict seems to have envisioned simple monks dressed in modest local costume, even his monks had become rather elegant by Carolingian times. Reformers worked to put penitents, pilgrims, and hermits into recognizable uniforms. Simple lay people could wear special "church clothes," although it is unclear how far down the social ladder this would be customary or even possible. They could at least carry scarves, banners, medals, and staffs for pilgrimages and other special occasions. Guilds and confraternities used their insignia in festival roles.

Processions expanded sacred space outward. Christian processions had many precedents, including Christ's entry into Jerusalem with hosannas and palm branches. From Late Antiquity onward, individual cities such as Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople developed elaborate annual liturgical parades.[58] Translations of relics came to be choreographed like imperial *adventus* ceremonies.[59] Statue reliquaries, which began to appear in the late Carolingian period, became popular in the last half of the tenth century and in the eleventh.[60] These "majesties," which were excellent for processions, proliferated just when the proponents of the Peace of God movement began bringing collections of relics to regional meetings.[61] Processional activity was associated with all ecclesiastical rites that could be carried on out of doors, including blessings, penitential rituals, exorcisms, and ordeals. In the later Middle Ages, the great Corpus Christi parades show that these traditions could still be adapted to new forms of piety.[62]

Processions brought monastic sacred space into the world. At Saint-Riquier in the ninth century, and at Cluny in the tenth, monks traveled from one church to another during certain offices.[63] Although detailed liturgical information is lacking for the vast majority of houses, it seems reasonable to suppose that similar processions graced megamonasteries such as ninth-century Farfa, which contained six churches in its monastic precincts, or ninth-century San Vincenzo al Volturno, which had eight. Monks sang psalms on their way to formalized, sometimes *pro forma,* manual labors.[64] Those traveling on business might sing the monastic hours on the way, either on foot or on horseback.[65] Traveling Cluniac monks were even supposed to stop at the appropriate hours, prostrate themselves, and ritually beg pardon.[66]

Western medieval church architecture also extended the sphere of the sacred outward. Suffice it to note that bell towers are a western innovation, appearing early at St. Martin's and St. Peter's, and soon becoming widespread. In Italy dozens of older churches had added campaniles during the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Both Romanesque and Gothic architecture tried for extraordinary height effects, including elaborate entrances and bell towers, the only functions of which were to dominate the world visually and audially. Monumental crosses, rural shrines, and other structures proclaimed Christian territory.

The Christianization of landscape has significance far beyond medieval Europe. Lionel Rothkrug has drawn attention to the role of sacred geography in the Reformation—to the way German regions with many shrines and saints, such as Bavaria, remained loyal to the traditional church, while less favored regions rejected it.[67] Eamon Duffy emphasizes the dynamic role that ecclesiastical furniture, imagery, and ceremony played in the piety of England's "old religion."[68] Terrence Ranger's study of the creation of a Christian landscape in twentieth-century Zimbabwe deals with these patterns from a contemporary anthropological standpoint.[69] Cross-cultural comparative studies show promise.[70] Perhaps there are more edifying ways to view the Church than to see it as a body firmly rooted in the earth, extending itself outward like a patch of crabgrass on a lawn. But the message the Church conveyed was not always sophisticated. Medieval people expressed ideas concretely in gestures, images, and physical structures. In churches, shrines, and sacred places, western European churchmen made the kingdom of God immanent to their congregations—and to themselves.

NOTES

1. Francesco Gabrielli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 144.

2. The standard discussion of hierophanies is in Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958). Clarifying reflections include Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, vol. 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 88–89. For a brief supplement, see Laurence E. Sullivan, "Nature," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols. (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1987), 10:326. Note also Bryan S. Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade: Making Sense of Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

3. Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 139–55; "How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places," *Journal of Early Christian History*, 2 (1994): 258–71.

4. John Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert Ousterhout, Illinois Byzantine Studies 1 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 41–53.

5. David Golan, "Hadrian's Decision to Supplant 'Jerusalem' by 'Aelia Capi-

tolina,'" *Historia* 35 (1986): 226–39. Note, however, the problems highlighted in Annabel Jane Wharton, "The Baptistery of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Politics of Sacred Landscape," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 321–22.

6. John Wilkinson with Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185*, Hakluyt Society, 2d ser., 167 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), 34.

7. Because the evidence for Christian pilgrimage is sketchy prior to the fourth century, the extent and even the existence of earlier traditions are fiercely debated. Continuity with earlier Jewish-Christian traditions is argued by Günter Stemberger, *Juden und Christen im Heiligen Land: Palästina unter Konstantin und Theodosius* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987), esp. 61–73; Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places," 41–53; and Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), esp. 46–64. Origin *de novo* in the fourth century—a thesis that, however elegantly stated, ultimately struggles to establish an *argumentum ex silentio*—is championed by Peter Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 7–15; Wharton, "The Baptistery of the Holy Sepulcher," 313–25; Kenneth G. Holum, "Hadrian and St. Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage," in *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Ousterhout, 66–81; and Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), esp. 314–20.

8. References to the archaeological literature are noted in Joseph D. Alchermes, "Petrine Politics: Pope Symmachus and the Rotunda of St. Andrew at Old Saint Peters," *Catholic Historical Review* 81 (1995): 3–5.

9. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Romans* 4, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, in *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1987), 86.

10. *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18, trans. Staniforth, in *Early Christian Writings*, 131.

11. On Jewish glorification of martyrdom, see W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Garden City: New York University Press, 1967), 22–63. Details on Christian developments are given in Hyppolyte Delehaye, *Les Origines du culte des martyrs*, 2d ed., Subsidia hagiographica 20 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1933).

12. Letizia Pani Ermini, "Santuario e città fra tarda antichità e altomedioevo," *Santi e demoni nell'alto medioevo occidentale (secoli V–XI), 7–13 aprile 1988*, 2 vols., Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 36 (Spoleto: Il Centro, 1989), 2:837–81.

13. Origen, *Homily on Jeremiah* 4.3, trans. in Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 241.

14. John McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and 'Dialogues' of Pope Gregory the Great: A Lexicographical Study," *Traditio* 32 (1976): 145–46; Martin Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*,

Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 33 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 17–27; Hunt, "The Traffic in Relics: Some Late Roman Evidence," in *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Sergei Hackel, Studies Supplementary to *Sobornost* 5 (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981), 171–80.

15. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

16. W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 52–56; "Donatist and Catholic: The Organization of Christian Communities in the North African Countryside," *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo: espansione e resistenze, 10–16 aprile 1980*, 2 vols., Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 28 (Spoleto: Il Centro, 1982), 2:616–20, 632–34.

17. Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80–101, reprint in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), 103–52. His later reflections are in "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1 (1983): 1–25, and "Arbiters of the Holy: The Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in his *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 55–78.

18. On altar relics, see Cyril E. Pocknee, *The Christian Altar in History and Today* (London: A. B. Mowbray, 1963), 37–41; Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, 27–28; and McCulloh, "Cult of Relics," 178–79. North African canon law seems to have been the earliest to insist that all altars have relics: see *Registri Ecclesiae Carthaginensis excerpta* 73, ed. C. Munier, *Concilia Africae a. 345–a. 525*, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 149 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974), 204–5. The continued force of such legislation is demonstrated by, for example, *Capitulare Aquisgranense*, ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Leges 2/1*: 170.

19. For a brief English survey, see George W. O. Addleshaw, *The Development of the Parochial System from Charlemagne (768–814) to Urban II (1088–1099)*, 2d ed., St. Anthony's Hall Publications 6 (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1970). On the importance of the Carolingian contribution, see also John J. Contreni, "From Polis to Parish," *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan*, Studies in Medieval Culture 23 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1987), 155–64. Studies on the particular patterns of parish development found in Italy, France, England, Germany, and Eastern Europe are in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione*. Note also Joseph Avril, "La paroisse médiévale: Bilan et perspectives d'après quelques travaux récents," *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 74 (1988): 91–113.

20. Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, 43–66. On particular problems involved in relic acquisition, see Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), and John McCulloh, "From Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change in Papal

Relic Policy from the 6th to the 8th Century," in *Pietas: Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting*, ed. Ernst Dassmann and K. Suso Frank, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband 8 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1980), 313–24.

21. Bernhard Töpfer, "The Cult of Relics and Pilgrimage in Burgundy and Aquitaine at the Time of the Monastic Reform," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 41–57.

22. Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 204–7. For further development of these ideas, see Sabine MacCormack, "*Loca Sancta:* The Organization of Sacred Topography in Late Antiquity," in Ousterhout, *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, 7–40.

23. H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Myths and Symbols in Pagan Europe: Early Scandinavian and Celtic Religions* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 26, 115.

24. Diana Eck, "Mountains," *Encyclopedia of Religion* 10:130–34.

25. Aline Rousselle, *Croire et Guérir: La foi en Gaule dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris: Librarie Arthème Fayard, 1990), 31–49, 181–86, solidly surveys pagan Gallo-Roman fountain lore. The flood of pertinent material, too extensive to cite here, is not always so critically analyzed or analyzable.

26. For recent survey introductions to sacrality of forests, see Réginald Grégoire, "La foresta come esperienza religiosa," *L'ambiente vegetale nell'alto medioevo, 30 marzo–5 aprile 1989*, 2 vols., Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 37 (Spoleto: Il Centro, 1990), 2:663–703, and Roland Bechmann, *Trees and Man: The Forest in the Middle Ages*, trans. Katharyn Dunham (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 276–82.

27. Violet MacDermot, *The Cult of the Seer in the Ancient Near East: A Contribution to Current Research on Hallucinations Drawn from Coptic and Other Texts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 76–80.

28. Libanius, *Declamation* 30, ed. Richard Foerster, *Libanii Opera*, 12 vols. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1903–23), 6:623.

29. *Concilium Francofurtense* 43, ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Concilia* 2 (1):170. On the destruction of sacred groves, see Richard E. Sullivan, "The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan," *Speculum* 28 (1953): 720–21, 736, reprint in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages*, Variorum Collected Studies (London: Variorum, 1994).

30. Walafrid Strabo, *Vita Galli* 1.12, ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* 4:293–94.

31. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer introduce the relevant penitential literature in their *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal 'Libri Poenitentiales' and Selections from Related Documents*, Columbia University Records of Civilization Sources and Studies 29 (1938; reprint ed., New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965), 276, 331, 390, 419–21. An attempt at listing all the surviving citations and penitentials is Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio Uberlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1979), 320–24. On how

to evaluate them, see Heinrich Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen des 10. Jahrhunderts: Studien über Denkart und Existenz im einstigen Karolingerreich,* 2 vols., Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 30 (1–2) (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1984), 2:412–15, trans. (without notes) by Patrick Geary as *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentality and Social Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 314–16.

32. Atto of Vercelli, *Capitulare* 48, in Jean-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina* 134:38 (later cited as *PL).*

33. Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiae* 4.8, ed. John France (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 185.

34. For example, note the demon who inhabited the thermal baths at Aachen before Pepin III and Charlemagne developed the place, who is mentioned in Notker the Stammerer, *Charlemagne* 15, trans. Lewis Thorpe in *Two Lives of Charlemagne* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 160–61, or the demons in the Vienne who had to be banished by St. Martial, who are described in his *vita* 15, ed. Laurentius Surius, *De Probatis Sanctorum Vitis,* 4th ed., 12 vols. (Cologne, 1618), 6:369.

35. Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity,* 139–55, and "How on Earth?" esp. 259, 263–64.

36. On the saints as successors of the gods, see Raoul Manselli, "Resistenze dei culti antichi nella pratica religiosa dei laici nelle campagne," in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione,* 2:65.

37. Fox, *Pagans and Christians,* 206; Clare E. Stancliffe, "From Town to Country: The Christianization of the Touraine, 370–600," in *The Church in Town and Countryside: Papers Read at the Seventeenth Summer Meeting and the Eighteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society,* ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 47–49, 56; Ian N. Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," ibid., 74.

38. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* 1.30, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 106–9.

39. Adam of Bremen, *Historia* 2:48, trans. Francis J. Tschan, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen,* Columbia University Records of Civilization Sources and Studies 53 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 87.

40. Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe,* Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 82, 290–338, esp. 301–3, 306; M. L. Nolan, "Shrine Locations: Ideals and Realities in Continental Europe," *Luoghi sacri e spazi della santità,* ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano and Lucretta Scaraffia (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990), 23–35.

41. Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 107–8, 114–15, 141.

42. Francesco Gandolfo, "Luoghi dei santi e luoghi dei demoni: il riuso dei templi nel medio evo," in *Santi e demoni,* 1:913–15.

43. Jean Hubert, "Sources sacrées et sources saintes" (1967), reprint *Arts et vie sociale de la fin du Moyen Age: Études d'archéologie et d'histoire. Recueil offert à*

l'auteur par ses élèves et ses amis, Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société de l'École des Chartes 24 (Geneva: Droz, 1977), 3–9, esp. 6–7. For a detailed example, see Michel Roblin, "Fontaines sacrées et nécropoles antiques, deux sites fréquents d'églises paroissiales rurales dans les sept anciens diocèses de l'Oise," *La Christianisation des pays entre Loire et Rhin, IVe–VIIe siècles: Actes du Colloque de Nanterre publiés avec le concours de l'Université de Paris X,* = *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 62 (1975): 235–51.

44. Constantius, *Vita Germani* 6, trans. from F. R. Hoare, *The Western Fathers* (1954; reprint New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 290; Louis Maximilien Duru, *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne, ou collection de légendes, chroniques et documents divers pour servir à l'histoire des différentes contrées qui forment aujourd'hui ce département,* 2 vols. (Auxerre: Perriquet, 1850–63), 1:318.

45. Compare the *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii,* ed. Fernand Lohier and Jean Laporte, Société de l'histoire de Normandie publication 55 (Rouen: A. Lestringant, 1936), 38, to *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti* 2:537 (later cited as *ASOSB*). An analysis of the texts in question will appear in *Francia,* in John Howe, "*Sources hagiographiques de la Gaule* (*SHG*): The Hagiography of Fontenelle (Province of Haute-Normandy)."

46. E. Joubert, *Les saints de la Haute-Auvergne* (Aurillac: U.S.H.A., 1973), 26–27.

47. Compare Richard of Saint-Vannes, *Vita Rodingi* 2, ed. *Acta Sanctorum: Sept.* 5:516 with the later version in 5:509.

48. For an illustration of Bavo in his oak tree, see Albert D'Haenens, "Bavone di Gand, santo," *Bibliotheca Sanctorum,* 13 vols. (Rome: Istituto Giovanni XXIII della Pontificia università Lateranense, 1961–70), 2:981–86. Bavo's cult is discussed in Adriaan Verhulst, "Saint Bavon et les origines de Gand," *Saint Géry et la christianisation dans la nord de la Gaule, Ve–IXe siècles: Actes du Colloque de Cambrai, 5–7 octobre 1984,* ed. Michel Rouche = *Revue du nord* 68 (1986): 455–70.

49. John Howe, *Church Reform and Social Change in Eleventh-Century Italy: Dominic of Sora and His Patrons* (forthcoming, University of Pennsylvania Press).

50. *Acta Sanctorum Nov.* 2 (1): 94.

51. Some eleventh-century illustrations of forest sacrality are described in John Howe, "Greek Influence on the Eleventh-Century Western Revival of Hermitism" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1979), 1:53.

52. Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi* 1, ed. Giovanni Tabacco, Fonti per la storia d'Italia 94 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1957), 14.

53. Bruno, *Letter to Radulphus,* ed. Anselme Hoste, in *Lettres des premiers chartreux I,* Sources Chrétiennes 88 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), 68.

54. Bernard, *Letter* 106, ed. *PL* 182:242.

55. Ian N. Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," in Baker, *The Church in Town and Countryside,* 65–68; Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 1000–1215* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 34. For Greek areas, see Speros Vryonis,

Jr., "The *Panëgyris* of the Byzantine Saint: A Study in the Nature of a Medieval Institution, Its Origins, and Fate," in Hackel, *Byzantine Saint,* 196–226.

56. E.g., Robert Hertz, "St. Besse: A Study of an Alpine Cult," and Pierre Sanchis, "The Portuguese *Romarias,*" in *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History,* ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 55–100, 261–89.

57. Franco Cardini, "Reliquie e pellegrinaggi," in *Santi e demoni,* 2:981–1041.

58. Processions are surveyed in John Francis Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy,* Orientalia Christiana Analecta 228 (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987). For the most-articulated and best-studied example, see Victor Saxer, "L'Utilisation par la liturgie de l'espace urbain et suburbain: L'exemple de Rome dans l'antiquité et le haut moyen âge," *Actes du XI^e^ Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne: Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève et Aoste (21–28 septembre 1986),* Collection de l'École française de Rome 123, Studi de Antichità cristiana 41 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1989), 917–1033. Elaborate festal processions for Centula and its associated monastery of Saint-Riquier, described by Angilbert (d. 814), are discussed in Rosamond McKitterick, "Town and Monastery in the Carolingian Period," in Baker, *The Church in Town and Countryside,* 99–102. On the Roman-style stational liturgy developed at Metz in the late eighth century, see Roger E. Reynolds, "Metz, use of," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages,* 8:301–2.

59. On the *adventus,* see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West,* Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For an example of its application to saints, see Kenneth G. Holum and Gary Vikan, "The Trier Ivory, *Adventus* Ceremonial, and the Relics of St. Stephen," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979): 113–33.

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61. Geoffrey Koziol, "Monks, Feuds, and the Making of Peace in Eleventh-Century Flanders," in Head and Landes, *Peace of God,* 253–54, and *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 297, 304, 313–14.

62. Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 243–71.

63. André Vauchez, *La Spiritualité du moyen âge occidental, VIII^{e}–XI^{e} siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), 40–41.

64. Udalrich, *Consuetudines Cluniacenses,* ed. *PL* 149:675–77.

65. Examples of public psalming include the hermits Marinus (fl. 10th century) and Bruno of Querfurt (d. 1009) in Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi* 4 and 27, pp. 20–21 and 57; Odo of Cluny in John of Salerno, *Vita Odonis* 2.5, ed. *ASOSB*

5:165, trans. Gerard Sittwell, *St. Odo of Cluny: Being the Life of St. Odo of Cluny by John of Salerno and the Life of St. Gerard of Aurillac by St. Odo* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1958), 47; and Wulfstan of Worcester in William of Malmsbury, *Vita Vulstani* 2.10 and 3.5, ed. Reginald R. Darlington, Camden Society Publications, 3d ser., 40 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1928), 33, 49 (cf. 96), trans. Michael Swanton, *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Ser. B., 10 (New York: Garland Pub., 1984), 117, 131–32.

66. Udalrich, *Consuetudines Cluniacenses*, ed. *PL* 149:739. For context see Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, 183 and passim.

67. Lionel Rothkrug, "Popular Religion and Holy Shrines: Their Influence on the Origins of the German Reformation and Their Role in German Cultural Development," in *Religion and the People, 800–1700*, ed. James Obelkevich (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 20–86.

68. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

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70. For example, Boesch Gajano and Scaraffia, *Luoghi sacri*; Jean Holm, ed., *Sacred Place* (London: Pinter Press, 1994); Ann Grodzins Gold, "Magical Landscapes and Moral Orders: New Readings in Religion and Ecology," *Religious Studies Review* 21 (1995): 71–77.

And the early middle ages. Seeing and Believing. EDITED BY.Â This book began from a set of papers presented at a symposium on conversion in late antiquity at Princeton's Davis Center for Historical Studies in the fall semester of 1999, and it' gathered a complementary essay Oulia M. H. Smith's) the following spring. Thus the editors wish first to thank the organizers, Susanna Elm and Peter Brown, and the contributors to the symposium, as well as the many participants'in,discussions both on that day and throughout the Davis Center's concentration upon the theme of conversion between 1999 and 2001.Â the religious and cultural atmosphere of Roman Hellenism in the second century. Farming methods in the Merovingian and Carolingian periods were primitive and crop yields too low to permit any recovery. As early as 800 and more dramatically after 950, improved climatic conditions, the disappearance of deadly diseases, and the development of improved agricultural techniques set the stage for the.Â The breakdown of royal authority in the 10th century coincided with the beginning of a long era of population growth and economic expansion. Population had fallen sharply after the end of the Roman Empire, not only because of the periodâ€™s political disruptions but because of a series of epidemics and other disasters.