

Monks and Missionaries

Sources

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I. Political Context

A. “Middle Ages”

1. Between the ancient & modern eras
2. “Dark Ages” → overstated, but some spiritual application

B. Carolingian Empire (700s-800s)

1. Carolingian Dynasty
 - a. Extended kingdom of the Franks
 - b. Height: Charlemagne (Charles the Great)
2. Extent
 - a. Covered modern France
 - b. Also western Germany & northern Italy
3. Key event: Crowning of Charlemagne (Christmas 800)
 - a. Crowned by the pope
 - b. Provided a *western* emperor
 - 1) Trying to recreate “Roman” empire
 - 2) Two swords theory (Luke 22:38): Pope (spiritual) and emperor (temporal) as ruling Europe
4. Carolingian Renaissance: Minor revival of learning

C. Holy Roman Empire (founded 900s)

1. Essentially Germany
2. Attempt to continue providing the West an emperor
3. Constant friction of pope and emperor

D. New Kingdoms

1. England
 - a. United by William the Conqueror (1066)
 - b. Also subdued Ireland
2. France
 - a. Arose from Franks & Carolingian Empire
 - b. Grew from 900s to 1400s
 - c. Increasing role in church affairs
3. Spain
 - a. Formed very late (later 1400s)
 - b. Reconquista: Retaking peninsula from Muslims

II. Later Monasticism

A. Character

1. Regular clergy

- a. Live under a “rule” (*regula*)
 - b. Benedictine rule dominant
- 2. Monastic Vows
 - a. Poverty
 - b. Celibacy
 - c. Obedience
- 3. Work of the Monks
 - a. Physical labor
 - b. Missions
 - c. Scholarship: Mss., education
- 4. Also women’s orders (nuns)
- B. Cluniacs (900s-1100s)
 - 1. Reform order
 - 2. Agenda
 - a. Abolish simony (sale of church offices)
 - b. Enforce clerical celibacy
 - c. Promote obedience to the pope
 - 3. Typical of “monastic cycle”: reform → success → wealth & laxity → decline
- C. Cistercians (founded c. 1100)
 - 1. Devotional order
 - 2. Major Leader: Bernard of Clairvaux
 - a. Preacher
 - b. Hymnwriter
 - c. Devotional writer
- D. Mendicant (“begging”) Orders: Friars
 - 1. Franciscans (Friars Minor)
 - a. Founder: St. Francis of Assisi
 - b. Advocated poverty & simplicity
 - c. Split after Francis’s death
 - 1) Majority: Allow the order to hold property
 - 2) Minority: “Spiritual Franciscans”
 - a) Preserved Francis’s view of poverty
 - b) Became critics of papacy & church
 - 2. Dominicans
 - a. Founder: St. Dominic
 - b. Teaching order
 - 1) “Order of Preachers”
 - 2) Original goal: Reach Muslims & refute Albigensians
 - c. Staffed new universities
 - d. Famous member: Thomas Aquinas
 - 3. Both mendicant orders commissioned by Innocent III
- III. Medieval Missions
 - A. Common Theory
 - 1. Convert the king → baptize the people
 - 2. Bring masses under tutelage of the church
 - 3. Evangelism through catechism or social pressure?

B. Pattern

1. Missionaries → monks
2. Benedictine rule for monks created an ordered, centralized, connected network
3. Not individual work (cf. Patrick) but sending of groups/teams

C. Leaders

1. Boniface
 - a. “Apostle to the Germans”
 - b. Founded monasteries: Centers of learning & evangelism
 - c. Efforts based on persuasion but appealing increasingly to the govt.
 - d. Reformed chaotic Frankish church
 - e. Represented *Rome* as well as Christianity → Promoted unity of Franks & papacy
2. Case of the British Isles
 - a. Pioneer: Patrick → Irish
 - b. Island of Iona
 - 1) Monastery for missions
 - 2) Founder: Columba → Scots
 - c. Augustine of Canterbury
 - 1) Sent by Gregory the Great → A Roman mission
 - 2) England already had a Christian community
 - 3) Won some pagans
 - 4) Focus on converting kingdoms
 - 5) Effort eventually brought all English Christianity under Rome