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Review of Faith, Art, and Politics at Saint-Riquier: The Symbolic Vision of Angilbert, by S.A. Rabe

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Archbishop Theodore has some worthwhile insights, though none perhaps as groundbreaking as those which Lapidge by himself had articulated in earlier works.

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Faith, Art, and Politics at Saint-Riquier: The Symbolic Vision of Angilbert. By SUSAN A. RABE. Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. \$36.95.

This work deals with Angilbert (about 755–814), abbot of the monastery of Saint-Riquier from about 789, and with the relation of his artistic vision to the theological controversies and ecclesiastical politics of the day. Because of the importance of Angilbert (he was married to one of Charlemagne's daughters and carried out major diplomatic missions for the emperor), he and his abbey have garnered much attention, and Rabe starts the book with a concise discussion of previous scholarship. She moves on next to outline "the theological issues of the 790s," providing a clear and helpful outline of the impact Spanish adoptionism had on the Carolingians and the relation of this to the use of the *filioque* in the creed. She has relied upon the latest scholarship, particularly in stressing the pivotal role of Alcuin in interpreting the issues. These issues led the Carolingians to emphasize Charlemagne as the orthodox imperial defender of the Trinity, an emphasis which went beyond the theological sphere and into the liturgical and artistic.

Angilbert stepped in to meet these new demands, and the rest of the book deals largely with his efforts. Rabe provides a sketch of Angilbert's life but concentrates on his intellectual background, for example, his understanding of Charlemagne's conquests as ordained by God and the impact of Augustine, notably his *De Doctrina Christiana*, on Angilbert's concept of symbols; the section on Augustine is especially lucid. The abbot applied an Augustinian understanding to the artistic and liturgical programs at the monastery, stressing the significance of Charlemagne's kingship and of the Trinity.

It was inevitable for Rabe to demonstrate in detail how Angilbert pursued his program in detail. Alas, dear reader, all of us have done this kind of thing, piling on examples to illustrate and prove a point, and no matter how conclusive to an argument such an approach can be, it does slow down a text considerably. Suffice it to say that Rabe has assembled an impressive amount of evidence to make her case, including a large collection of *tridua*—three churches, an atrium with three portals to three chapels with three altars to the three archangels, "(t)hree hundred monks in three chantries chanted the offices with three choirs of thirty-three boys" (pp. 133–134), and so on. Apparently Angilbert did not believe in subtlety.

Rabe also provides several helpful illustrations and diagrams as well as two appendices, a text of the Athanasian Creed as known to the Carolingians, and

a poem of Paulinus of Aquileia outlining the theological arguments against the adoptionists. This well-organized, well-documented study of a major figure has a concentrated focus, and thus it will appeal primarily to specialists in early medieval and Carolingian history or in iconography. Students of the history of *Augustana* will also profit from it.

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The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 2, c. 700–c. 900. Edited by ROSAMOND MCKITTERICK. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995. xxi + 1081 pp.

This volume covers most of the period of Frankish and Carolingian domination in western Europe, a time of relative political and cultural coherence combined with diverse and formative developments in every sphere of life. The related volumes in the old *Cambridge Medieval History* were “The foundations of the western empire (c. 500–c. 814)” and “Germany and the western empire (c. 814–c. 1000),” published in 1913 and 1922 respectively. These contained only a few chapters covered in the present volume, and were conceived when little was available in English on the early Middle Ages. The older series was also blighted by the unhappy legacies of the Great War, when political enmities intruded into the scholarly enterprise. This new series, most welcome eight decades after the former series, reflects a great community of interests among medievalists of all disciplines and nationalities. The authors consider developments in Europe as a whole, from Ireland to the Bosphorus and Iceland to Gibraltar.

In the introduction Rosamond McKitterick provides an essay on sources and interpretation in which she discusses the interdependence and interweaving of oral and written sources. Together with a caveat on accepting the written histories literally as they stand, she also encourages the reader to see behind the fanciful in hagiography to locate the essential religious expectations and moral aspirations of those who wrote them. After discussing the use of the many letters that survive from this period, the editor gives attention to legal systems as a mirror of society, pointing out that laws usually tell us what ought to be done, not what was being done. Perhaps the most interesting suggestion is that up until now it was assumed that since the vast bulk of our sources are in Latin, there existed a major divorce between a tiny educated clerical elite and a huge illiterate and nonlatin lay population. Since Latin was in constant flux, including its oral expression, the surviving texts from these centuries are in practice vernacular, and it seems mistaken to divide society between a literate elite and the “voiceless” masses. The editor is especially known for her work on literacy in Carolingian culture.

This volume is divided into four parts: part 1 in fourteen chapters encompasses the events and political developments in the various cultural