Sacred time, sacred space. history and identity in the monastery of Fulda (744-856)
Raaijmakers, J.E.

Citation for published version (APA):
Raaijmakers, J. E. (2003). Sacred time, sacred space. history and identity in the monastery of Fulda (744-856)
Amsterdam: in eigen beheer

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
God's ecclesia

The catalyst of the conflict in the community of Fulda, discussed in the former chapter, was the construction of a new abbey church. One of the requests of the monks, who had appealed to the emperor, was to ensure 'that immense (immensa) and superfluous (superflua) buildings and other useless (inutilia) projects are given up, through which the brethren get extremely exhausted and the familia foris perish.'¹ This request, expressed by the Supplex Libellus, must refer to the construction of the abbey church that had been initiated under the abbacy of Baugulf in 791 or 792.² For its construction the abbot had employed Ratgar, still a monk of Fulda, to lead the building project.³ In 802 the master builder himself had become abbot and continued the building project during his abbacy. The result is well known; Louis the Pious deposed the abbot around 817. Eigil succeeded him and finished the church.

Building could indeed have a very disruptive influence on life in a monastery. The construction of a church was an enormous undertaking, and its completion was not a foregone conclusion.⁴ It depended upon the continuing availability of the necessary resources, namely: finance, land, infrastructure, materials and components, manpower and tools.⁵ It

¹ 'Ut aedificia immensa atque superflua et cetera inutilia opera omissantur, quibus fratres ultra modum fatigantur et familiae foris dispereunt', Supplex Libellus c. 12, p. 324. Familiae foris probably refers to the dependants of the monastery, who lived outside the monastic complex.
² Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi, (A.D. 791, 792). Corradini, 'Zeiträume -Schrifträume', p. 150; Freise, Die Anfänge, p. 38. The manuscripts of the AFa differ concerning the date of the building.
³ 'templum [...] constructum studio Ratgeres', Gesta abbatum, p. 272. Binding has argued that Ratgar was involved in the organisation of the building-project, rather than that he was a building master himself. Günther Binding and Susanne Linscheid-Burdich, Planen und Bauen im Frühen und Hohen Mittelalter nach den Schriftquellen bis 1250 (Darmstadt 2002), p. 564.
⁴ To mention one famous example of a church of which the completion took a long time: the cathedral church of Cologne. The building was started around 1248. Its choir was completed and consecrated in 1322, but after that construction came to a halt, till the 1350s. Around 1560 construction work completely stopped again, until the original plans of the church were discovered in the nineteenth century. Because of a renewed interest in the gothic style the building of the church was started in 1842. The church was completed in 1880.
required all the attention of the person in charge - in this case Ratgar. In retrospect Ratgar's attempts to combine the running of a monastery with the mobilising of all the necessary manpower, knowledge, material and patronage that the building of the church required almost seem to have been doomed to failure.

For Ratgar undertook an enormous church. It was an edifice with two apses, with a three-naved basilica in the east and a large, stretched out transept in the west. The total length from apse to apse was almost a hundred metres; the width of the basilica around thirty-five metres and the transept in the west measured almost eighty metres by twenty (See figure 5: the abbey church of Fulda (791-819)). In regard to its size the church was comparable to the great basilicas in Rome: the Santa Maria Maggiore, St Peter's, the basilica of St John Lateran and St Paul's, though the width of the nave in Fulda was smaller. The abbey church of Fulda outmatched contemporary examples in the Frankish empire such as the church of St Denis (768-775), the abbey churches of St Riquier (790-799) and of Reichenau (816) and, nearer to home, the abbey church of Lorsch (767-774), and the church of St Alban in Mainz (787-805), where Queen Fastrada (†794), wife of Charlemagne, was buried. Even compared to the largest church of the world in our days, the seventeenth-century St Peter's in Rome, which is 186 metres long and 97 metres wide, it was still an impressive building. In the end it took the monks of Fulda almost thirty years to build it.

No wonder that the authors of the Supplex Libellus lost sight of the sense of such a colossal church and condemned it, and the accompanying projects, as being *immensa, superflua* en *inutilia*. Possibly the fact that the church of Sturmi had already been a large church influenced their judgement. The old church was big enough to hold the approximately a hundred and thirty monks that probably lived in the mother convent when Baugulf became abbot of Fulda. If it was not solely lack of space,
what then were the ideas behind the new abbey church of Fulda? The first part of this chapter will go more deeply into the question of why Baugulf and Ratgar replaced the old church of Sturmi. The point of departure will be the architecture of the abbey church itself, in comparison with the architectural trends of that time. With the architecture the creator(s) of the project had wanted to make a statement, I believe, towards both the outside world and the monks who lived in Fulda. The patron of the church had at his disposal a wide choice of architectural shapes, compositions and solutions to build a church that fitted the needs of the community: hall churches, basilica's with or without side-aisles, transepts, ring crypts and corridor crypts to mention only a few. As said above Ratgar built a church consisting of an ailed basilica in the east and a large, stretched out transept in the west, with two apses and hall crypts in both the east and the west. What do the architectural forms tell us about the intentions and views of its creator?

Whatever the original intentions of the patron of the church were, during the decade of conflict described in the previous chapter, the basilica must have become a visible embodiment of tyranny, unrest and discord to a large group of monks, which exceeded those who had written the Supplex Libellus. When Eigil became abbot of Fulda in 818, he had to deal with the legacy of the recent crisis. Part of this legacy was the almost finished abbey church that had caused the monks so much grief. In the Vita Aegil, which was written around 840, Candidus shows how Eigil, by means of the relics of saints, tried to turn the church from a symbol of crisis, into an icon of new unity, peace and prosperity. The biography of Eigil in itself is also an attempt to demonstrate that under Eigil, Fulda had become a true ecclesia again. This is what the second part of this chapter deals with, namely the attempts of both men to change the meaning of the abbey church. Contrary to the first part that has the architecture of the church as its starting point the second section is about the perception and the meaning of the abbey church in written sources and about the use of the remains of the holy dead.

Landesbibliothek Hs B 1 fol. 62r-v, that probably represents the file of monks living in the mother convent. See Schmid, ‘Mönchlisten’, pp. 583-7 and 630-1.

Architecture

The ground-plan

In studying the architecture of the abbey church of Fulda we have to take into account that it is highly unlikely that nothing changed about the original ideas and building style as the years elapsed, since it had taken the monks almost thirty years to build it. Three abbots would succeed each other (in a span of thirty years) before the church would be finished. Because of a lack of sources it is unfortunately impossible to outline the dynamic of the building process in detail, including the influence of these three individual abbots on this process. But from a passage from the Gesta abbatum, a list of abbots of Fulda and their contributions to the monastery from the beginning of the tenth century, we know that the church was built in two phases. The passage reads:

With honour he [Baugulf] built a sanctuary in the east that admirably was constructed through the efforts of the very energetic man Ratgar. [...] When he had become abbot the third abbot Ratgar, the wise architect, has connected the western sanctuary with the other and has made one church [that was] of miraculous artistry and immense magnitude.

The monks started to build the first part in 791 or 792. The eastern part of the abbey church was an aisled basilica with an apse in the east. The total width was 35.50 metres and the length of the church was more than 67 metres (see figure 5: the abbey church of Fulda (791/2-819)).

When Baugulf retired to Wolfsmünster (cella Baugolfi) in 802, the church was not yet finished. The work was continued under Abbot Ratgar who added the sanctuary in the west. It was a long continuous transept with colonnades at the ends and an apse. The length of the

---

12 Even though several 'Ratgar's' are listed in the annales necrologici, I think that Ratgar the architect and Abbot Ratgar are the same. I have translated iam accepta potestate with 'with the aforementioned ability' ('aforementioned' referring to the former paragraph) and not as 'als er schon die Abtswürde innehatte', as Binding has translated it. Binding and Lünscheid-Burdich, Plänen und Bauen, here p. 565. See also Mechthild Sandmann, 'Die Folge der Äbte' in: Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda 1, p. 183.
14 Oswald and Fischer, 'Baugeschichte' p. 274.
15 Gesta abbatum, p. 272.
God’s ecclesia

The transept was 78 metres and its width was 17 metres. The radius of the apse was 8.80 metres, thus 1.3 metres wider than the radius of the eastern apse, which was 7.5 metres.\(^{16}\)

![Abbey Church of Fulda (791-819)](image)

**Figure 5: the abbey church of Fulda (791-819)**

About the time Louis the Pious deprived Ratgar of his abbacy, somewhere between August 816 and August 817, the church was almost finished. His successor Eigel put the finishing touches to the work in the years following his appointment. He thoroughly cleaned the church, paved the floor, put up altars and ordered the monk-architect Rachulf to build two hall crypts, one in the east and one in the west.\(^{17}\) Due to construction of the baroque Dom in the beginning of the eighteenth century the Carolingian crypts have unfortunately been largely destroyed. Figures 6 and 7 are thus interpretations of what the crypts might have looked like, made by Heinrich Hahn, who excavated part of the crypts in 1953 and 1977, and therefore need to be treated carefully.\(^{18}\) Most is known about the eastern crypt, which appears to have been a triple-apsed hall crypt.\(^{19}\) Only the middle apse has been laid bare.\(^{20}\) The western crypt

---

17 Candidus, *Vita Aegil I*, c. 14, p. 15; *Vita Aegil II* c. 15, pp. 53-4.
19 Candidus mentioned the presence of three windows in this crypt, *Vita Aegil II*, c. 15, p. 53-4.
God's ecclesia

might have had three or five apses, as it was bigger than the eastern one. Of this crypt solely a side-apse has been excavated. From Fulda's written sources we know that this crypt had entrances to its north and its south.

At the request of Egil and monks of Fulda Archbishop Haistulf dedicated the church on 1 November 819.

![Figure 6: The eastern crypt of the abbey church (817-819)](image)

The creators of the abbey church wanted it to be something special. This much is clear from the size of church, which as we have seen, was imposing and indeed must have impressed everybody who envisaged it. It was the biggest church within two hundred kilometres. The church that Charlemagne had built in Paderborn (793/4 -799) and that has been praised as an *ecclesia minae magnitudinis* was not this big. Impressively
contemporary churches such as the ones in Salzburg (767-774) and St Emmeram in Regensburg (791) in Bavaria, the one of Basel (before 824) in Alemannia or St Mary in Aachen (ca. 780-ca. 800) in Francia were not as large as the one in Fulda. The nearest church above the Alps that could compete with Fulda as to size was the cathedral church of Cologne.

Figure 8: the church of Sturmi in comparison with the church of Ratgar

The eastern part of the church

To build the eastern part of the abbey church, Ratgar had precisely cited the layout of Sturmi’s abbey church: the proportions were the same, only the absolute measures were different. The new nave was twice as long as the distance between the apse and Boniface’s tomb in the old church. As a result, the grave where Boniface had been buried in 754 came to lie at the centre of the church, namely exactly in the middle, between the apse and the western wall of the church and both side-aisles. However, this was only a temporary solution. When the church was completely finished the body of the martyr would be moved to the western transept.

In the days of Sturmi a basilica with three naves had been rather uncommon in the east Frankish empire, but in the late eight century this

---

24 Heinrich Hahn has ascertained the width of the abbey church and the fact that the church had two side-aisles. He assumes that on each side probably eight columns supported the church as this was the case in Hersfeld. Hahn, ‘Eihloha’, pp. 71 and 75. See also Eigil, *Vita Sturmi* c. 21, p. 156.
kind of architectural model was no longer a rarity.\textsuperscript{25} Ratgar deliberately adhered to the example of Sturm i, as the founder of Fulda and the first abbot of the monastery. By citing the layout of the old church in the construction of the new one Ratgar created a visible continuation with the past of the monastery and with its foundation in particular. In the early days of the monastery Sturm i and Boniface had built the basilica now to be replaced, and Boniface himself had dedicated the church only a couple of years before he died a martyr.\textsuperscript{26} The meaning of the old church for the monks of Fulda is obvious, and this is what the architect of the new church responded to in its creation. The fact that the architect enlarged the church in such a manner that the original grave of Boniface came to be right in the centre of this part also suggests a respect for tradition and a focus on the old history of the monastery. Even though Boniface eventually got a new sepulchre elsewhere in the church, with an altar dedicated to the Holy Cross now standing on the place were he had been buried, this spot continued to remind the monks of their patron's original shrine. This becomes clear, for example, from Hrabanus Maurus' poem, \textit{Ad crucem, ubi martyr Bonifacius primum fuerat tumulatus.}\textsuperscript{27}

The need to create a visible, tangible structure, which embodied the connection of the present-day community with its foundation through architecture, must have been closely connected with the rapid growth of the monastery and the related radical changes in the community in this period. As explained earlier, Fulda had become a large, important monastery with branches in Thuringia, Eastern Francia and even in far away regions such as Frisia and Italy. The monks of Fulda seem to have managed a lot of this property themselves. As a result some of the brethren lived at quite a distance from the mother convent. In addition to this, because of the reputation of the monastery, the number of monks had grown substantially. Amongst the new recruits there were many young oblates, which also had implications for the organisation of the monastery. To bind together a heterogeneous community that lived dispersed across a vast territory and to increase the power and status of the monastery, it was important to clearly point out where the centre of the organisation lay and

\textsuperscript{25} Other examples of three-naved basilicas with a circular apse east of the Rhine are the abbey church of Lorsch (767-74), the abbey church of St Maurice d'Agaune (770), St Alban in Mainz (787-805), and the cathedral in Salzburg (767-74). They were all erected in the years following Sturm i's alterations to the abbey church. Other churches like Eichstätt (741/2) or Niedermünster in Regensburg (750) that were built in preceding decades still were hall churches with square choirs. Jacobsen, 'Die Abteikirche in Fulda', p. 109.


\textsuperscript{27} Candidus, \textit{Vita Aegil}, c. 20, p. 66, l. 807-10. 'Membra beata senex Bonifacius hic sua clausit, / postquam martyrio astra superna petit. / Qui translatus abhinc precibus tamen adstat honestis / munera uice sui multa reliquit et hic.'
where the heart of worship was. While the eastern part of the abbey church embodied this need to create continuity with the monastery’s own past, the western part expressed a link with the age of the apostles and martyrs, by recalling the early Christian church in Rome.

The western transept

As abbot of Fulda, Ratgar continued with the second part of the church, that is the transept in the west. For this, Ratgar had not been inspired by old architectural traditions in Fulda itself, but by examples on the other side of the Alps: the early Christian basilicas in Rome with their enormous size, wide openings of the apses and the columns with composite capitals. Yet, when Ratgar built the western transept he did not envisage a general type of an early Christian Roman basilica, but he wanted to build up a church that reflected one particular church in Rome: St Peter’s.

![Diagram of St Peter's church](Figure 9: St Peter’s (319-329))

Richard Krautheimer was the first to demonstrate conclusively that the western transept in Fulda was indeed intended to be a citation of the transept of the basilica of Rome’s most famous apostle. For there was only one church in Rome that had a long continuous transept in the west with colonnades at the ends of the transept as was built in Fulda and that was St Peter’s. Moreover, Krautheimer has shown that the measures of both transepts match almost perfectly. Without doubt it had been Ratgar’s original intention to imitate the example from Rome closely but due to

---

God's ecclesia

misunderstandings the end result differed slightly from its model. On the basis of calculations Krautheimer has come to the following explanation for the deviations. Probably someone in Rome had measured the size of the transept of St Peter's on behalf of the monks in Fulda. He had taken the measurements of the transept with the unit of measure he knew to be in use in Fulda, namely in Carolingian feet, and had taken the measurements in clear. The person in question reported his findings to the monks of Fulda, perhaps in a letter. The monks of Fulda used the same figures as in Rome but thought that the measurements were taken in Roman feet - for this was the standard in Rome - and assumed that the measurements were taken from wall axis to wall axis, while their contact in Rome had measured width and length in clear. Krautheimer has calculated that, if one takes into account that the foot scale and the measure points differ, the transept of the church in Fulda was a perfect citation of its example in Rome. The long continuous transept between the western apse and the nave of the church with the colonnades at both ends of the transept clearly were supposed to invoke an image of St Peter's.

That Ratgar looked towards Rome, and especially St Peter's, as a source of inspiration and authority for the construction of his church represents a continuation with the close bond that Fulda had with Rome from its foundation onward. This was first of all due to the efforts of Boniface. The bishop himself had worked under the authority of the Apostolic See and he had turned to Rome as his guide and source of authority during his activities on the Continent, as is evident from the frequent correspondence between Boniface and the pope. When Sturmi and his brethren decided to follow the Rule of Benedict, Boniface had sent the abbot to Italy to study the rules and observances of certain monasteries. During his year-long sojourn in Italy, Sturmi had also paid a visit to Rome. Only a couple of years after Sturmi's visit to Italy Boniface would ask the pope to grant the monastery the papal privilege (751).

30 Krautheimer, 'Carolingian revival', p. 11, n. 83.
31 This is exceptional because people in the Middle Ages normally cited what in their eyes was significant about a building. One never imitated a building in its entirety, but chose some of its outstanding elements. Additionally, one did not necessarily use the citation in the same context as the construction the element was cited from. Krautheimer, 'Introduction', pp. 6-8, and 18; Lex Bosman, 'De sensus allegoricus van middeleeuwse gebouwen, of: architectuur-iconologie in historisch perspectief' in: Bouwen en Duiden. Studies over Architectuur en Iconologie, eds. E. den Hartog, R.E.Th.M. Rijntjes, R.J. Stöver and E.G. van Welie (Alphen aan den Rijn 1994) pp. 1-14.
33 Eigil, Vita Sturmi c. 14, p. 146; Rudolf, Vita Leobae c. 10, p. 125.
34 Bonifatius, Epistolae nr. 89, pp. 203-5.
From that moment onward the monastery fell under the jurisdiction of the Holy See, which meant that no priest of any other church than the Apostolic See had any rights in the monastery, not even to celebrate mass there, except by invitation of the abbot. The pontiff only granted this right of episcopal exemption special religious communities such as Farfa, Bobbio and St Denis. The privilege created an exclusive link between the bishop of Rome and the community of Fulda (and the royal court, which saw to it that the privilege was observed) that still had not lost its value during the construction the new abbey church. In 800 Abbot Baugulf was called to the royal court to represent his community in a case against the bishopric of Würzburg. Bernward, bishop of Würzburg, had questioned the validity of the papal privilege. In the presence of Charlemagne the case was settled in favour of the monks of Fulda. This was neither the first nor the last time that the bishop of Würzburg (like the archbishop of Mainz) would challenge the power of the privilege. Each time it must have reminded the monks of the significance of their bond with Rome. When Eigil wrote the *Vita Sturmi* around the time the church was finished, he did not fail to mention the granting of the privilege and the relation with Rome that was so important to the monks. By building of church like St Peter’s in Fulda Ratgar seems undeniably to have been attempting to evoke this special bond between the community of Fulda and Rome, more specifically between the monastery on the one hand and St Peter and his successors on the other.

---

35 'Igitur quia postulasti a nobis quatenus monasterium Salvatoris a te constructum situm in loco, qui vocatur Bochonia, erga ripam fluminis Fulda privilegii sedis apostolicae infilis decoretur, ut sub iurisdictione sanctae nostrae, cui Deo auctore deservimus, ecclesiae constitutum nullius alterius ecclesiae iurisdictionibus submittatur: pro qua re piis desideriis faventos hac nostra auctoritate id quod exposcitur effectui mancipamus. Et ideo omnem cuuislibet ecclesiae sacerdotem in praefato monasterio ditionem quamlibet habere hac auctoritate praeter sedem apostolicam prohibemus, ita ut, nisi ab abate monasterii fuerit invitatus, nec missarum ibidem solemnitatem quispdam praesusmat omnimodo celebrare, ut profecto iuxta id, quod subjecti apostolici privilegii consistent, inconcusse dotatus permaneat.' pp 203-5. Ever since the granting of the privilege its content and significance have been discussed. It is not clear whether monasterium included all the churches and other property of Fulda, and what ‘rights’ are precisely meant here. For a good survey of the discussion amongst historians see Hussong, ‘Studien 1’, pp. 61-85.

36 See the introduction of this thesis.

37 *Epistolarum Fuldensium Fragmenta*, nr. 26, p. 528.

38 Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, c. 20, p. 155.
The Carolingians and Rome

Apart from the fact that Fulda had been connected with Rome from its foundation onward, there was also a general interest in the Apostolic City among members of the Carolingian court, to which Ratgar also responded. Rome was the most sacred space within the Carolingian realm. Here the apostle Paul had preached, SS Peter and Paul had been martyred and buried, and here the Christian emperors had resided. The bodies of many holy martyrs lay in the cemeteries outside its city walls. Its bishop, as vicar of St Peter, was believed to carry the apostolic tradition. For the Carolingians, whose political ideology looked back at the glorious Roman past of the Christian emperors and whom the pope in legitimising their ascent to kingship, had backed, Rome was the most powerful *porta caeli* and source of authority.\(^{39}\) Charlemagne turned to Rome as a source of authoritative texts in his attempts to reform the Frankish church and to unify his empire. In 774 pope Hadrian sent Charlemagne the *Dionysio-Hadriana*, a revised version of the canon law collection brought together by Dionysius Exiguus († ca. 556).\(^{40}\) The king also asked for a copy of the Rule of Benedict and a copy of the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great.\(^{41}\) Around 786-791 Charlemagne received a codex of what was thought to be the Sacramentary of this great pope.

The Carolingians especially felt a strong connection with St Peter's.\(^{42}\) In the *Vita Karoli* we can read that Charlemagne:

Loved the church of St-Peter the Apostle more than all other sacred and venerable places in Rome; by way of a gift to [this church] a great wealth of gold, silver, and even gems has been collected [by Charlemagne]. He [also] sent a vast number of gifts to the popes. During his whole reign he regarded nothing as more important than to restore through his material help and labor the ancient glory of the city of Rome. Not only did he protect and defend the church of St-Peter, but with his own money he even embellished and enriched it above all other churches.\(^{43}\)

---

43 'Colebat praeceteris sacrificis et venerabilibus locis apud Romam ecclesiam beati Petri apostoli; in cibus donaria magna vis pecuniae tam auro quam in argento necnon et gemmis ab illo congesta est. Multa et innumera pontificibus missa. Neque ille toto regni sui tempore quicquam duxit antiquius, quam ut urbs Roma sua opera labore vetere polleret auctoritate, et ecclesia sancti Petri per illum non solum tuta ac defensa, sed etiam suis opibus praec omnibus ecclesias esset ornata atque dita.' Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, 104
Every time Charlemagne visited Rome (in 774, 781, 787 and 800), he always first prayed at what was believed to be the tomb of St Peter before entering the city of Rome on the left bank of the Tiber. After each visit into the city he returned to the Vatican hill, where the Frankish ruler presumably had his lodgings.  

The interest in Rome at the Carolingian court is also witnessed in the field of architecture. Frankish builders cited from their Roman examples what to their minds was most typical and representative of the early Christian architecture of the holy city, especially St Peter's, namely the basilica-shape, the long continuous transept and the ring crypt. Until the fifth century we find what Krautheimer has called 'the basilica of the T-type' (a basilica with a transept) hardly anywhere in Europe, apart from Rome. After 500 there were no churches shaped like the early Christian basilica with transept built in Europe at all, till this architectural form became popular again in the late eight-century. The first time a Northern architect copied the T-shaped basilica again was in St Denis. In 754 the pope had anointed Pippin king of the Franks. In the same year Pippin ordered the building of a church in honour of Dionysius, which was realised and dedicated under his sons Charles and Carloman in 775. It was an aisled basilica with, in imitation of St Peter's, a continuous transept with apse and ring crypt, with the difference that the transept was built in the east and not in the west, as in Rome. Here in St Denis, the traditional burial site of the Merovingian kings, a new dynasty of rulers expressed...

---


45 One Anglo-Saxon example is Bede. Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum V, c. 21. In this chapter Bede described that Naitan, the king of the Picts, had asked for architects who could build a stone church iuxta morem Romanorum. For the king wanted to build his church ad exemplum sanctae Romanae et apostolicae ecclesiae. Bede continued: 'Sed et architectos sibi mitti petit, qui iuxta morem Romanorum ecclesiam de lapide in gente ipsius facerent, promittens hanc in honorem beati apostolorum principis dedicandam.'


47 Examples are: St Peter's, St John Lateran and St Paul's. Krautheimer, 'Carolingian revival', p. 2.

48 Heitz has suggested that the western construction was a western choir and that consequently St Denis was a double church. Yet, as Jacobsen has argued, there is no proof that there ever was an altar in the western part of the basilica. Jacobsen, Klosterplan von St. Gallen, p. 237.
God's ecclesia

their bond with Rome in architectural forms that were modelled after one of its main churches.\textsuperscript{49}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Figure10.jpg}
\caption{St Denis (765-775)}
\end{figure}

The architect of the church of St Denis had cited from his Roman example what he considered to be most significant of St Peter’s: the continuous transept with the apse and ring crypt. These elements he assimilated into a church that suited the liturgical needs of the local community and that came up with the expectations of its patrons, the Carolingian rulers. One did not necessarily use the copied element in the same context as it was derived from. In this case, the church had a continuous transept and ring crypt, but not in the west as in St Peter’s and not with the same proportions and measurements. To cite Richard Krautheimer: ‘The architect of a medieval copy did not intend to imitate the prototype as it looked in reality; he intended to reproduce it \textit{typice} and \textit{figuraliter}, as a memento of a venerated site and simultaneously as a symbol of promised salvation’.\textsuperscript{50}

The only other Carolingian example of a church with a transept in the west that was built before the construction of the abbey church of Fulda is St Maurice d’Agauine (finished in 787). The church had a western transept with ring crypt in imitation of St Peter’s and was, like St Denis, closely linked to court.\textsuperscript{51} St Maurice d’Agauine, which lay some forty kilometres from the Great Saint Bernard Pass, was a strategic place between Italy and the kingdom of the Franks. Due to its strategic position


\textsuperscript{51} See Jacobsen, ‘Die Abteikirche in Fulda’ p. 118, footnotes 35 and 36 for more literature on both churches.
the abbey had played an important role in the history of the Carolingian dynasty and their rise to power. Here Pippin III and Pope Stephan III had met in 753 and here Charlemagne’s son Charles welcomed the pope before he brought the pontiff to the Frankish ruler in 804.52

Figure 11: St Maurice d’Agaune (ca. 787)

From the late eighth century on no churches with western transept were constructed, apart from the abbey church of Fulda, until the 830s.53 The cathedral church of SS Mary and Kilian in Paderborn, which Charlemagne had built around 799, got a transept in 836 after the translation of St Liborius (the second bishop of Le Mans, 348-397?) from Le Mans. The church of Reichenau was originally a three-naved basilica. When in 830 the monks of Reichenau obtained the relics of St Valens, they extended the current basilica with a western transept and a right-angled choir.54 In the 860s-870s Cologne got a cathedral church that had a western transept with apse and ring crypt in imitation of St Peter’s (building phase VII). Recently Lex Bosman has argued that bishop Gunthar, whom the pope had excommunicated for supporting Lothar II to divorce Theutberga, had deliberately cited St Peter’s in his cathedral church as an attempt to be reconciled with St Peter and his vicar, the pope.55


53 The only other ascertained examples of churches with two apses from the early Middle Ages are the abbey church SS Peter and Willibrod in Echternach (739-882) and St Theodul in Sitten (unknown), but until now it has been impossible to date them. On the basis of Hrabanus Maurus tituli Hersfeld (831-850) as well, but there is no archaeological proof. For the dating of the churches see Jacobsen, Klosterplan von St. Gallen, pp. 202-3, 212-6, 221, 223. Also for churches that are addressed as double church without any archaeological evidence idem, pp. 223-38.

54 Jacobsen, Klosterplan von St. Gallen, p. 239.

Roman liturgy

Around the time Charlemagne asked the pope for an ordo of Roman liturgy, the monks of Fulda started to build the new abbey church. Can this merely have been a coincidence? Could it be that the construction of a western transept in Fulda not only originated from a wish to cite St Peter’s, but was also connected with a wish to follow the liturgical ordo of Rome? Most churches built in Rome before 400 had a western apse, of which the basilica of St John Lateran and St Peter’s are the most famous ones. Liturgical practices were adapted to this architectural direction. The priest(s) celebrated mass from behind the main altar, which stood on the edge of the western apse, facing east towards the faithful in the nave of the church. Frankish churchmen who wanted to imitate the liturgical practices of these great Constantinian basilicas in their own churches ran into difficulties because the churches in the Frankish empire had eastern apses. The ivory plates on the cover of the Sacramentary of Bishop Drogo of Metz (835-855) show the awkward position of the celebrant, in this case the bishop, who followed the Roman directions concerning the papal liturgy in an east-oriented church.

Figure 12: Sacramentary of Bishop Drogo of Metz (835-855)


I am very grateful to Els Rose for her comments on this paragraph.


God's ecclesia

The plates show the bishop facing east. Since the bishop had to face east during important moments in the liturgy, he stood with his back towards the altar and almost against the wall of the apse.50 The advantage of a western transept was that the arrangement of the liturgy of St Peter's could be imitated without these practical difficulties.61 Was this then another reason for the monks of Fulda to build the western transept with apse?

There are indeed some references that point to the adaptation of Roman practices in the monastic liturgy of Fulda. Unfortunately there are no liturgical sources in Fulda from the first half of the ninth century. Only one passage in the Vita Aegil indicates some Roman influence in the liturgy. The context in which the quotation needs to be read is the dedication of the new abbey church in 819 by the archbishop of Mainz. The archbishop just consecrated the building and proceeded with the translation of Boniface's body to his new sepulchre in the western transept:

His ita perceptis gressum porrect ad aram  
Pontificalis apex, magnó comitatu honoré  
In parte occidua Romano more peractum  
Elevat interea populari voce repente  
Advena plebs kyrié eleison...

Often the passage has been interpreted as if Boniface was buried in the west Romano more, in imitation of St Peter, whose grave was believed to be also in the west of the church. The advocates of this theory consider peractum to be a mistake of the author and rectify it as peractam.63 But, whether or not Boniface himself had chosen to be buried in the west in imitation of St Peter, in this passage Romano more refers to the liturgy. Peractum is no mistake from the hand of Candidus, the author of the Vita Aegil. It is a supinum that should be translated as in order to act, relating to the liturgical proceedings. This results in the following translation:

After he had received this, the bishop [literally: the mitre or head of the bishop] proceeded to the altar, with [escorted by] great honour, to perform [the liturgical acts] the Roman way in the western part. In the

---

50 This direction goes back to the apostles. De Blaauw, Met het Oog op het Licht, p. 27.
51 De Blaauw, Met het Oog op het Licht, p. 29.
52 Candidus, Vita Aegil II, c. 17, p. 59, l. 669-73.
53 For example Richter, Beiträge, p. xiii; and following him, Krautheimer, ‘Carolingian revival’, p. 11 footnote 84.
God's ecclesia

meanwhile the people present suddenly raised their voice and sang the Kyrie eleison...64

The passage of the Vita Aegil indicates Roman influence in the liturgy of the monastery, though it does not specify whether or not the monks followed the liturgical ordo of St Peter’s in detail. Please note that it was the archbishop of Mainz who performed the liturgy on this special occasion. Had it been the archbishop who decided to follow Roman directions as it suited the solemnity of this particular feast, or was the liturgical performance Romano more standard practice in Fulda? 65

Apart from the passage in the Vita Aegil only a small fragment of a ninth century sacramentary from Fulda has been handed down to us (Kassel, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek 2o ms. Theol. 54 fol. 1r), which seems to have been part of an Old Gelasian, a Roman liturgical book dating from the middle of the seventh century which was intended for either titular or parish churches. 66 A letter of a certain Theotrochus, a monk-deacon, who might be identified with Theotrochus Abbot of Lorsch (864-76), refers to the performance of the ordo of mass in Fulda according to the Roman rite, possibly around the middle of the ninth century, but we do not know for sure whether Theotrochus was indeed identical to the abbot of Lorsch. 67 It is an attractive suggestion that cannot be proved nor disproved.

The first complete sacramentary of Fulda that has survived dates from the last quarter of the tenth century. It is the Sacramentary of Fulda (Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek cod. theol. 231), a composite sacramentary (a fusion of the Hadrianum with the Old Gelasian Sacramentary) written around 975. 68 It was an illustrated showpiece of the rich liturgical traditions under the Carolingians and presumably a

64 Candidus, Vita Aegil II, c. 17, p. 59. With many thanks to Louk Meijer, who has helped me translating this passage.
65 With thanks to Mayke de Jong, who pointed the importance of the presence of the archbishop at the occasion out to me.
God's ecclesia

response to the romano-germanic pontifical composed in Mainz around 960 at the request of Otto I (936-973). The pontifical, like the Sacramentary of Fulda, seems to have been intended as a monument of the glorious past under Carolingian rule, but the pontifical dealt with the episcopal ordines, while the sacramentary contained the formulae relevant to mass in a monastic church, including a large collection of votive masses and blessings. Eric Palazzo has argued that the Sacramentary of Fulda was thus not intended for normal liturgical use, but as a memorial of the Carolingian past, made for export. Therefore one can question the suitability of this sacramentary as a source of liturgical practice in Fulda, certainly with respect to the early ninth century.

Thus there are some indications of Roman influence in the liturgy of Fulda, but there is no solid evidence that the reason to construct the western transept was the desire to imitate the papal liturgical practices in Fulda, nor do we know what Candidus precisely meant when he wrote that the archbishop of Mainz performed the liturgy Romano more. As we have seen, the influence of Rome in the Frankish church is a complex and controversial issue. A possible wish to celebrate the liturgy as in Rome certainly was not the only reason to build the western transept. Apart from the fact that the western transept was inspired by one of the most important shrines of Christendom, it also defined the area of the main shrine within the abbey church: the sepulchre of Boniface who in this period became the patron saint of the monastery.

The patron saint Boniface

In 754 Boniface had been martyred. The monks of Fulda buried his body in the western part of the church, near the entrance that lay people used to enter the church and opposite the altar of the Holy Saviour, as Boniface himself had requested while still alive, even though this was rather an uncommon place to bury such an important person. Often patrons of religious communities lay near the high altar, their sepulchres enriched

---


70 Palazzo, Les Sacramentaires de Fulda, p. 180. Henry Mayr-Harting, following Georg Richter claims that the sacramentary was not meant for export, but that it might have stayed in Fulda for a long time, as 'a treasured symbol and venerated ancestor' of other sacramentaries that were made for export. Mayr-Harting, Ottonian Book Illumination. II Books pp. 134-6. Mayr-Harting also points at the importance of the Carolingian traditions in Ottonian Fulda.
with richly decorated superstructures. Boniface's shrine, however, was at a respectful distance from the liturgical centre of the church.\footnote{Also Pippin the Younger was buried at the entrance of a church, namely of St Denis, in 768. Louis the Pious wanted to be buried in a similar way. Jacobsen, 'Die Abteikirche Fulda', p. 111; Janet L. Nelson, 'Carolingian royal funerals' in: Rituals of Power. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, eds. Frans Theuwts and Janet L. Nelson (TRW 8: Leiden/Boston/Cologne 2000) pp.131-84.}

The cult of Boniface took off rapidly after his burial in Fulda in 754. Already at his burial many people from distant and widely scattered districts, especially the faithful and clerics from Mainz had been present.\footnote{‘Tantaque omnibus aliunde advententibus vel etiam eiusdem urbis civibus’, Willibald, \textit{Vita Bonifatii}, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover/Leipzig 1905) c. 8, p. 54.} The author of the \textit{Vita Sturmi} did not refrain from stressing the importance of Boniface for the well being of the community. ‘After the coming of the martyr the holy place chosen by God began to increase, its reputation was enhanced and the monastery grew in numbers, because many nobles vied with each other in going there and offered themselves and their goods to the Lord.’\footnote{‘Coepit deinde post adventum sancti martyris sanctus et electus a Deo crescere locus et magnus apud omnes haberi et monasterium augeri, ut potè quoniam multi nobles certatim et concite properantes se suasque omnia ibi Domini tradiderunt’. Eigil, \textit{Vita Sturmi}, c. 16 p. 150. Translation by Talbot in: \textit{Soldiers of Christ}, p. 179, slightly altered by me.}

To add force to this development, Sturmi enriched Boniface's sepulchre with a \textit{ciborium} (a canopy) made out of silver and gold, called a \textit{requiem} by the monks, somewhere after 765.\footnote{Eigil, \textit{Vita Sturmi} c. 21, p. 156. This must have happened somewhere after Sturmi had returned from his exile in Jumièges, thus after 765. The decoration of the superstructures with gold, silver and precious stones was a common feature in Gaul and Germany. When Lull translated the body of Wigbert to Hersfeld in 780 he adorned his tomb ‘in the same way as for those of the other saints throughout Gaul and Germany, with gold, silver and other suitable metals’; ‘quo more per Gallias Germaniamque ceterorum sanctorum usuntur, auro et argento neecob reliquis congruentibus metallis exornandu m curauit’. Lupus of Ferrières, \textit{Vita Wigberti Abbatis Frieslariensis}, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 55 15:1 (Hanover 1887), c. 25, p. 43. Translation of Crook, \textit{Architectural Setting}, p. 252.} Around the same time or a bit later the abbot placed a golden altar at Boniface's grave.\footnote{Both the canopy and the altar were still there when Eigil wrote his \textit{Vita Sturmi}. Eigil, \textit{Vita Sturmi}, c. 21, p. 156.} The addition of both the canopy and the golden altar already emphasised the growing importance of Boniface's grave as a focus within the church and his increasing meaning for the community of Fulda and their relations with the outside world. This development only became stronger in the following years. Around 800 Alcuin wrote a mass for the martyr. In the accompanying letter he wrote: ‘Stand around his sepulchre, for he offers your prayers to the almighty God’.\footnote{‘State circa sepulchrum eius, quatenu s ille preces vestras offerat omnipotent e Deo’. Alcuin, \textit{Epistolae}, nr. 250, pp. 405-6. Alcuin also urged other communities to revere and}
that every Monday the monks, prostrated in front of Boniface's shrine, offered God their prayers on behalf of the benefactors of the monastery. Boniface's dies natalis was an important event for people would visit Fulda to attend the festivities. Often the celebration of Fulda's patron saint was also the occasion to donate goods to the community that took care of Boniface's cult.

Even the dispositions of the charters reflect the ever-growing importance of Boniface as patron saint of Fulda. At first Boniface had been remembered in the charters as one of the founders of Fulda who was also buried in the monastery, but then the disposition changed into 'I or we donate ad monasterium sancti Bonifatii, quod dicitur Fulda'80; sancto Bonifatio archiepiscopo et martyrii81; sancto Bonifacio82; ad sanctum Bonifatium83; and ad monasterium quod dicitur Fulda quod est in honore sancti Bonifatii et sancti Salvatoris constructum84. Slowly, though never completely, Boniface displaced the Holy Saviour as patron saint of Fulda. Every now and again Fulda was called monasterium sancti salvatoris.85 Yet, what distinguished Fulda from other religious communities was Boniface. He was put first when the relation of Fulda with the outside world was defined.86


77 ‘pro omnibus eleemosynas nobis tribuentibus […] tota congregatio iuxta corpus beati martyris simul prostrata’, Supplex Libellus c. 1, p. 321.

78 Supplex Libellus c. 14, p. 235: ‘Quando autem plures simul aduenerint, ut in missa sancti Bonifatii.’

79 See for examples the dates of the charters: 5 juni 803 (nr 207); 4 juni 804 (nr 219); 8 juni 806 (nr 213); 5 juni 811 (nr 258); 5 juni 812 (nr 265); 4 juni 815 (nr 311); 6 juni 815 (nr 312); 6 juni 823 (nr. 413) etc. CDF, pp. 110, 115-6, 113, 132, 134, 151-2 and 186. Lübeck, Das Bonifatiusgrab zu Fulda (Fulda 1947) p. 106; Kehl, Kult und Nachleben, p. 46. To one of his students Hrabanus Maurus explained that the abbot of Fulda naturally had to be present on this day, unless he had to carry out a very important order for the emperor. This Lupus of Ferrières wrote in a letter to Einhard (836): Epistolae, ed. L. Levillian, Loup de Ferrières. Correspondance I: 829-847 (Paris 1927) nr. 5, p. 42.

80 ‘to the monastery of Boniface that is called Fulda’. For example CDF, nrs. 436, 438 and 441, pp. 194-6.

81 ‘to the holy archbishop and martyr Boniface’, for example UBF nr. 167, pp. 254-6.

82 ‘to the holy Boniface’, for example UBF nr. 170, p. 257.

83 ‘to the holy Boniface’, for example CDF nrs. 403, 406 and 407 pp. 182-4.

84 ‘to the monastery, that is called Fulda and that is built in honour of St. Boniface and the Saviour’. UBF nr. 245, pp. 351-2.

85 For example CDF nrs. 401, 402 and 405, pp. 181-3.

86 In a charter from Lorsch Fulda is called sanctus Bonifacius in: Codex Laureshamensis II Kopialbuch 1 Teil: Oberhessen-, Lobden-, Worms-, Nixne- und Speiergau, ed. K. Glöckner (Arbeiten der Historischen Kommission für den Volksstaat Hessen: Darmstadt 1933) nr. 199, p. 19. Fulda is also referred to as sanctus Bonifatius in Hersfeld: Urkundenbuch der Reichsaubtei Hersfeld, nr. 26, pp. 44-9. See also Carolingian regulations such as the Notitia de servitio monasteriorum (819). In it Fulda is called monasterium sancti Bonifatii. MGH Cap. 1, p. 350. More examples can be found in the codices of prayer bonds between religious communities such as the confraternity book of Reichenau. The confraternity book lists Fulda as congregatio sancto Bonifatii. Most abbeys were called by their geographical name.
Alongsideto the bond with Rome it was also this growing importance of the patron saint of the monastery that Ratgar had wanted to represent in his construction with the western transept. A scribe of Fulda already called the church ‘the church of Boniface’ before the building was finished. It had been the last wish of the martyr to be buried in the west of the church of Fulda. The transept defined the area where his body rested. Thus the new abbey church was in several ways a monument to commemorate Boniface. The eastern part was a reference to the old church that Boniface himself had dedicated. In the apse stood the altar of the Holy Saviour to which the bishop had dedicated the church. Moving from this altar to the west, where Boniface’s new sepulchre was situated, one passed the altar of the Holy Cross in the middle of the basilica, where the martyr had been buried before the translation. In the west the long

some were designated through their patron saints. Some other examples are Hersfeld (monasterium sancti Wigherti) and Lorsch (monasterium sancti Nazarii).

87 ‘initium ecclesiae sancti Bonifatii’ AFa, (A.D. 791, 792).
88 In 751. Bonifatius, Epistolae nr. 86, p. 193. By then the church was not finished yet. Willibald, Vita Bonifatii, c. 8, p. 46; Rudolf Vita Leobae, c. 17, p. 129.
God's ecclesia

transept with large apse highlighted the main liturgical focus of the church and the centre of attention: the new sepulchre of Boniface.  

Boniface’s translation to the western transept of the church had great implications for his cult. His translation not only reflected his ever-growing importance for the monastery of Fulda, but it was also an attempt on the part of the community to enhance and direct this development. Now there were two choirs, that is, two liturgical centres, providing locations for two altars of equal status at either end of the church. In the eastern apse stood the altar of the Holy Saviour, while the western altar contained the body of Boniface. It is significant that the western apse was bigger than the eastern one, which points to a liturgischer Umpolung as Werner Jacobsen called it. Via this architectural change, which Boniface’s increasing importance had caused, an opportunity was created for Boniface to become the patron of Fulda.

A master plan?

On the basis of the fragment from the Gesta abbatum discussed earlier many architectural historians, archaeologists and historians have drawn the conclusion that the new abbey church of Fulda was the result of two different designs. In their view the three-nave d basilica was the original plan of Baugulf. When Ratgar became abbot of Fulda he decided to alter the building and add a western transept. To Werner Jacobsen, the Baugulf basilica is an example of Fulda’s traditionalism and its strong need to create continuity with the past by citing the lay-out of the church of the olden days. Jacobsen depicts Baugulf as a ‘conservative’; by contrast Ratgar was the innovative abbot who radically broke with the old traditions in Fulda and added a western transept as a reference to the Apostolic See. But does ‘traditionalism’ exist in an age in which the past was always an important source of authority and guide for the present?

89 The body of Boniface lay in the altar of the western choir, which had ‘feet’. ‘Hoc summno in capite duris praem viribus aram / Fortiter insistens, pedibus nam sustinet, in qua / Christi martyris existim nunc membra locata […]’ Candidus, Vita Aegil II, c. 15, p. 54. 1. 537-9. According to the Gesta abbatum the place that Eigel had prepared for Boniface a tumulus: Eigel […] tumulum statuen au ro argentoque paruit et corpus sancti Bonifacii ibi requiescendum transfuit’. See also Werner Jacobsen, ‘Saints’ tombs in Frankish church architecture’, Speculum 72:2 (1997) pp. 1137-8. Thus Boniface was not buried in the crypt, but in the choir of the church. I will come back to the crypts in the second half of this chapter.


God's ecclesia

To my mind the new abbey church was not necessarily the result of two different, clashing and incongruous visions of monastic architecture. I would argue that the two parts together formed an entity. In respect of its ambitions and size Ratgar's building project was indeed exceptional; this abbot had combined different architectural forms in one church, but not necessarily in order to break with time-honoured monastic customs. On the contrary, Ratgar elaborated on existing traditions in Fulda and emphasised all-important ties of the monastery with Rome. The hypothesis that it had been Ratgar's original intention to build a church with two apses does not necessarily exclude the possibility that Ratgar perhaps out of practical reasons had decided to construct his church in two phases. This could well have been the case.

Unfortunately excavation reports do not give any clear answers to the questions raised above. They offer no evidence for the existence of either two separate building projects, and neither for the opposite: one plan carried out by one and the same person, Ratgar. As can be seen on figure 2 the junctions between the basilica and the transept have not been excavated. In addition to this, no one to my knowledge has yet investigated the masonry and the use of stones, which might reveal something about the phases of the church.

If Ratgar intended indeed to build a church with two apses before 802, he would have been the first to plan a church with two apses in advance. This is less unlikely than it may seem, for there are more examples of impressive building projects from that period. For the last decade of the eighth century saw the creation of some ambitious building projects, to which the abbey church of Fulda belongs. In the 790s Charlemagne ordered the building of a palace in Aachen, including a church dedicated to the Holy Virgin, which already in its own days was recognised as a piece of technical ingenuity and praised for its remarkable building techniques. The church was dedicated in 798. In the same period the king supported the construction of an impressive and unique monastic complex at St Riquier, including three churches, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, by his courtier Angilbert. Together with his advisers and entourage Charlemagne created an environment in which the construction

---


of a church such as the one built in Fulda would have been possible, as early as in the 790s.95

Most likely Ratgar used architecture to express the ambitions of his monastery to be a holy place and as an important political, cultural and economic centre that could be ranked among the major royal abbeys. As we have seen Fulda had already become a royal abbey under Sturmi. Ever since, the ties between the monastery and the Frankish ruler had been close. The connection with the Carolingians raised Fulda above a merely regional status and connected the monastery to a supra-regional network centred at the royal court.96 Both Baugulf and Ratgar moved in court circles.97 They both knew that the possession of an impressive church could gain a religious community valuable patronage, demonstrating its superiority as mediator between the faithful and God. Transferring examples of authentic early Christianity to the north, be it relics of martyrs, books or architectural designs, of which many were found in Rome, conferred prestige upon the imitators and their communities.98 It was not only the exterior of the church that needed to evoke the presence of Rome and its holiness in Fulda. As Chapter Five will demonstrate relics of Roman martyrs played an important role too.

Considering the prominent position that Fulda held in Carolingian society we need to seek the audience of this abbey church not only inside the monastery but obviously also outside its walls.99 Not for nothing did the monks of Fulda decide to build a new abbey church at a time in which the monastery established itself as an important political and social centre. From the 780s, 790s onward donors, accompanied by their relatives, friends and clients, started to travel to the monastery to offer their gifts. Before then gifts from the Middle Rhine valley were written up at

---

95 In this period, the late 780s and 790s Charlemagne spent a lot of time in the eastern part of his empire, with expeditions against the Avars and the Saxons. See the *Royal Frankish Annals*. Perhaps the relatively closeness of the king partly stimulated the construction of the abbey church in Fulda, that was situated near the regions that Charlemagne tried to annex.

96 Mathew Irnes, 'People, places and power in Carolingian society' in: *Topographies of Power*, pp. 397-437.

97 Baugulf, probably of high birth, was a friend of one of the most prominent courtiers of that time, Alcuin. As abbot of Fulda he visited court at least once. In 782, after a diet in Lippe on the Rhine, Charlemagne returned via Hersfeld. At request of Baugulf the king also visited Fulda. ‘Qui Magnum Karolum monasterio uocatum suspensione et dato honorauit et apud eum Achazuillam et Dienenheim acquisuit’, *Gesta abbatarum*, p. 272. Wehlt, *Reichsabtei*, p. 235. In the late 780s, 790s Charlemagne sent Baugulf his famous *Epistola de litteris colendis*. Ratgar came from an important East Frankish family.

98 For the same reason for example Einhard cited Rome in Seligenstadt (831-40) Smith, "Emending evil ways and praising God's omnipotence".

Mainz. It can hardly have been a coincidence that the monks of Fulda started to build the new church around the same time that gifts were more frequently written up in the monastery itself. One of the reasons to build the new abbey church must have been to impress the visitors.

Even though the regulations concerning the reception of guests became more stringent in the course of the ninth century, lay people still visited the abbey on certain occasions. On important feast-days, monks, prominent churchmen, and lay people from the region gathered in Fulda to participate in the festivities. Pilgrims from near and far away places visited the shrines of the saints in the church. Apart from the dies natalis of Boniface the most important feast day had been the dedication of the abbey church on 1 November 819 (All Saints day). In the Vita Aegil we can read that for this occasion Eigel had invited ‘many bishops, abbots, priests and counts’, in other words the upper echelons of society. Thus, the architectural message of the abbey church was not only aimed at the monks of Fulda, but also at these colleagues and superiors of the abbot who were invited for the occasion of the dedication and who, to different degrees, must have understood the architectural language and the meaning of the symbolism of the church well.

Thus, the abbey church that Ratgar built in Fulda was in many ways a remarkable church. It reflected the royal status of a major abbey that had strong connections with the Carolingians, the importance of the martyr Boniface as patron of the monastery, the bond with the most holy city of Rome, and, most of all, the ambitions of its Abbot Ratgar. It was a monument to the past of Sturm and Boniface, a witness to the sanctity of the monastery, a trophy of its fame and an earthly representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem. But it was also a church that had demanded many sacrifices. A difficult period of epidemic, unrest and strife in the years before its dedication must have besmirched its eventual grandeur. Because of the thirty years it had taken the monks to build this enormous edifice, the monks must have lost sight of its usefulness. What could Eigel do with this magnificent and almost finished church that at least part of the monks had grown to hate so much?

100 Innes, 'People, places and power in Carolingian society', pp. 413-4.
101 Witness to the strengthening of the claustrum is for example the Vita Leobae by Rudolf of Fulda. Its author, writing around 836, clearly had difficulties to match the life of this nun, who during her lifetime had travelled frequently and to far away places, with the standards of claustralisation of his own time. See also Smith, 'Women at the tomb', pp. 163-80.
102 See for example Rudolf, Vita Leobae c. 21-3, pp. 130-1; and Supplex Libellus c. 13, p. 325.
103 ‘uenerunt nihilominus alii quam plurimi episcopi, abbates, presbyteri, comites ab abbate monasterii honorifice invitati’, Candidus, Vita Aegil I c. 15, p.15. Also: Vita Aegil II c. 17, pp. 55-9.
A symbol of new unity

Eigil and the abbey church

When Eigil became abbot of Fulda in 818 the abbey church was almost finished. The exterior of the basilica and transept were complete. Eigil only had to clean the church, pave the floor, put up altars and add two crypts underneath the eastern and western apses (figures 6 and 7, p. 98). Eigil dedicated the crypts to the fathers of both eastern and western monasticism, thereby creating a monastic programme, as Gereon Becht-Jördens has already noted. The altar of the eastern crypt was dedicated to the hermit Anthony, to his biographer Athanasius, to Paul of Thebes (according to tradition the first Christian hermit, whom Anthony visited and buried), to the monk Sabas (father of the monks in Palestina, founder of Mar Saba, †532) and Theodosius abbas, also called Theodosius Koinobiarches (appointed abbot over all the monasteries in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem in 494 by patriarch Salustios, †529). In the west, underneath the sepulchre of the patron saint of the monastery, the altar was consecrated in honour of Benedict, Honoratus and Columbanus, founders of authoritative monasteries in the west, respectively Montecassino, Lérins and Luxueil. Together the crypts, the foundations of the abbey church, displayed the traditions of eastern and western monasticism, the golden age of religious austerity and prayer and the basis of monastic life, providing models for all the monks to emulate.

To Becht-Jördens the presence and contents of crypts represent the influence of the reform movement of Benedict of Aniane, who had wanted to base the monastic way of life in the Carolingian monasteries on the entire monastic tradition of east and west, on the layout of the church. Becht-Jördens interprets Eigil's additions to the abbey church as a statement against Ratgar and his pompous, monstrous church that had caused the monks so much grief. The new abbot supposedly did not

---


106 Candidus, Vita Aegil, c. 20, pp. 64 and 68; Becht-Jördens, 'Text, Bild und Architektur', pp. 91 and 94.

107 Benedict of Aniane had brought together all monastic rules known to him in the Codex Regularum. In the Concordia Regularum he set the Rule of Benedict alongside other monastic rules. Becht-Jördens, 'Die Vita Aegil', pp. 42-4.


approve of the new church, as it was not in accordance with the demands of simplicity and austerity of the Aachen reform councils of 816 and 817 and its attempts to isolate the monks from the world. But to demolish the church and build a new one was no option. Its construction had already absorbed too much time and energy of the monks. Eigil, Becht-Jördens reasons, added then two crypts to impress his own ideas about monasticism on the new abbey church.

Also Jacobsen thinks that Eigil was guided by the reforms of Benedict of Aniane when he built the crypts. Crypts were often an architectural solution to the problem how to offer pilgrims an opportunity to venerate the saints while not disturbing the religious community in the performance of the liturgy. According to Jacobsen, Eigil, following Benedict of Aniane, who wanted to separate monks from laity, had added crypts to the church.

No doubt that Eigil used the crypts to put his own stamp on the church, which he could only alter little, but I wonder whether the construction of crypts should be interpreted as evidence of Eigil’s affinity with 816/817, or as a statement against Ratgar's supposedly ‘worldly’ brand of monasticism. First of all, even though the presence of crypts can indicate a wish to separate the faithful from the community of monks, it is no decisive proof of a certain type of monastic movement, *casu quo* the monastic policy of Benedict of Aniane. Crypts appear in many forms over the centuries and in many different religious communities. They are practical solutions for particular circumstances. The ‘model church of Aniane monasticism’ that Louis the Pious had built in Inden (later called Kornelimünster) was a very small, modest church without any crypts and as a matter of fact without any relics. It was dedicated to the Holy Saviour. Neither did the churches of Aniane, where Benedict of Aniane started his career as church reformer, Argelliers (780-799) and Maursmünster, both dependencies of Aniane have crypts. Their main characteristics are also the relatively smallness and the fact that they had tri-cellular, triple-apsed rectangular choirs.

---

112 Crook, *Architectural Setting.*
Second, it seems unlikely that Ratgar wanted to turn the monastery into a public attraction without any respect for the holiness of the monastery and the ideal of seclusion of its inhabitants. Of course Ratgar had considered the visits of pilgrims to Fulda when he planned the church, for his creation was in all respects intended to honour Fulda’s most important saint, and to be a site of veneration. Even though the message of his construction was for a broader public than only the monks of Fulda, the creation of a transept implied a spatial separation between the monastic community and the lay visitors. The transept belonged to the exclusively monastic territory, bordering on the claustrum, as I shall discuss below. As we have seen, it was Ratgar who prohibited monks to work in the cellae outside and to perform the ministeria inside the monastery. Ratgar’s measures, including possibly the construction of the transept, need to be understood as attempts to separate monastic pursuits as prayer more strictly from secular occupations, tying the monks closer to the cloister.

To understand Eigil’s actions as abbot, it is more useful to view him as an inspired and clever manager, rather than trying to place him in terms of ‘Anianische’ reform. Both he and the monks of Fulda were confronted with the following problems: to restore harmony in a disrupted community; to maintain continued existence; to take up the thread of prayer and commemoration; and to centralise the administration of widespread property. Eigil had an almost finished, but reviled church at his disposal. Now it was his challenge to bind the monks once more to the central monastic site and to make sure that they would look upon this hated church as their own. If we are to believe Candidus, Eigil tackled this problem skilfully. In the Vita Aegil we read that the abbot involved the monks in the decision-making regarding the church, even though in practice there was little to decide. Most of the work had already been done. Together with the monks, Eigil organised a grand event to which the abbot invited many important guests. In the presence of all the monks of Fulda, their families, friends, benefactors, competitors, clientele and servants the once despised building was turned into a house of God. The following day the crypts were consecrated, their content reminding the monks of the basic principles of their way of life. Candidus would later describe this at length.

In the Vita Aegil we also see the abbot at work as skilful manager with regard to the building of a new cloister. In the old days Sturmi had built a cloister south of the abbey church. From here, the monks had direct access to the abbey church, using the southern entrance. Eigil decided to build a new cloister and asked the monks for their advice. They could

---

115 See Chapter Two.
choose between a cloister south of the church *iuxta morem prioris* or to the west, *Romano more*. The monks decided to have a cloister bordering on the western transept because of its closeness to the martyr, which emphasised Boniface's prominent position within the community of Fulda.\(^\text{116}\) Apart from the wish to be as close to Boniface as possible, the site of the monastery must also have played a part in the decision-making concerning the new location of the cloister. South of the monastery flowed the Waidesbach; its course obstructed the extension of the monastery in southern direction.\(^\text{117}\) This cloister was Eigil's creation, yet Ratgar must also have previously considered a relocation of the cloister; the old one partly had to be destroyed for the construction of the new abbey church. Yet, what was an inevitable move, Eigil seems to have presented as a communal decision by all the monks of Fulda.

![Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 15:** the cloister of Sturmi and the one of Eigil and Hrabanus

Eigil succeeded to finish the abbey church, to add a new cloister and even to construct a funerary chapel (all this within four years time!) without causing a serious conflict as had happened under Ratgar. This might have had to do with the abbot's ability to reach consensus. It is also due to the efforts of Eigil's biographer that we have this positive image of the abbot. In his *Vita Aegil* Candidus used the abbacy of Eigil as an example of good

---

\(^{116}\) *Uocantur ad consilium frater, quacesitum est, in quo loco aedificatio claustrorum congruentius potuisse aptari. Quidam dederunt consilium partem meridianam basilicae iuxta morem prioris, quidam autem Romano more contra plagam occidentalem satius poni confirmant propter uicinitatem martyris, qui in ea basilicae parte quiescit*. Candisus, *Vita Aegil I*, c. 9, p. 17. It is not clear if the monks had a Roman example in mind, and if so, which one. Perhaps the monks compared their cloister to the western atrium of St Peter's. But likely Günther Binding who stresses that *Romano more* in this case only means 'in western direction' and that the written references have no further consequences for the architecture, is right. They do not seem to have followed a specific Roman example. Krautheimer, 'Carolingian revival', p. 11; Binding, *Planen und Bauen*, p. 564.

\(^{117}\) Hahn, 'Die drei Vorgängerbauten des Fuldaer Doms', p. 185.
government, as the next chapter shows. The author also elaborated on the attempts of Eigel to turn the abbey church of Fulda, which at first must have reminded the monks of a very distressful period, into a positive symbol of the identity of the monastery. This is what the following deals with.

The \textit{Vita Aegil: an opus geminatum}

Bruun, better known as Candidus, was a priest-monk who had been raised and trained in the monastery of Fulda.\footnote{He called himself 'Bruun' only once in the \textit{Vita Aegil}; \textit{Vita Aegil II}, c. 17, p. 60, l. 693. Elsewhere in the text he called himself Candidus.} Abbot Ratgar sent him for further education to Einhard 'the most learned doctor of manifold arts' at the royal court.\footnote{\textit{Vita Aegil} II, c. 17, l. 135, p. 60. Christine E. Ineichen-Eder, 'Künstlerische und literarische Tätigkeit des Candidus-Bruun von Fulda', \textit{FG} 56 (1980) p. 201.} Probably Einhard taught his pupil not only in the discipline of the written word but also in the artistic crafts, for Candidus seems to have been a talented painter.\footnote{Candidus, \textit{Vita Aegil II} c. 17, l. 133-7.} According to his own testimony, he painted the western apse of the abbey church.\footnote{Brouwer made engravings of the three extant illustrations: \textit{Antiquitatum Fuldensium libri IV}, pp. 90 and 170. The \textit{titulus} of chapter 18 of \textit{Vita Aegil II} reads \textit{Suplicatio pictoris et poetae}, p. 61. This is the only reference of Candidus to the existence of pictures. If Becht-Jördens is right to claim that the pictures that accompany the \textit{Vita Aegil} in Brouwer's manuscript, are compositions of Candidus himself, the \textit{Vita Aegil} is the oldest illustrated \textit{Vita in Western Europe}. Becht-Jördens, \textit{Die Vita Aegil}, p. 10; idem, \textit{Vita Aegil}, pp. xxix-xxx. See also Barbara Abou-El-Haj, \textit{The Medieval Cult of Saints. Formations and Transformations} (Cambridge 1997) p. 26. The author shows that illustrated saints' lives are a feature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, though she does mention earlier examples. However, she does not refer to the \textit{Vita Aegil}. Further: Anton Schmitt, \textit{Die Fuldaer Wandmalerei des Frühen Mittelalter} (Fulda 1949) pp. 24-6; E. Heinrich Zimmermann, \textit{Die Fuldaer Buchmalerei in Karolingischer und Ottonischer Zeit} (Halle 1910), especially pp. 95-7. Berschin and Löwe think that Modestus made the paintings. \textit{Biographie und Epochenstil II}, 243; Löwe, \textit{Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Vorzeit und Karolinger VI}, eds Wattenbach and Levinson (Weimar 1990) p. 697.} Candidus possibly also illustrated the \textit{Vita Aegil}.\footnote{A charter of 811 and one of 813 are written by a \textit{cancellarius} called Brun. \textit{CFD}, nrs. 254 and 292, pp. 130-1 and 144 (also: nrs. 336 and 344, pp. 163 and 165, but these charters are not dated).} Apart from the \textit{Vita} of Eigel and Baugulf, Candidus also wrote some charters\footnote{Now in the university library of Würzburg: M. p. th.q. 22, fol. 57r. \textit{Libri Sancti Kyliani. Die Würzburger Schreibschule und die Dombibliothek im VIII. Und IX. Jahrhundert}, eds. Bernhard Bischoff and Josef Hofman (Würzburg 1952) p. 110.} and there exists a manuscript of the Rule of Benedict of his hand, in insular minuscule.\footnote{Under that year his name was written down in the \textit{annales necrologici}.} Candidus died in 845.\footnote{Under that year his name was written down in the \textit{annales necrologici}.}
When Candidus wrote the *Vita Aegil* he was already an old man. He did not live in the mother convent at that time, but perhaps performed a *ministerium* in one of Fulda's dependencies. The *Vita Aegil* was written at the end of the abbacy of Hrabanus (822-842), that is, somewhere after 839 and before the summer of 842. This was more than twenty years after the crisis preceding Eigil's abbacy, which nonetheless must still have been a painful subject. Ratgar had died only five years before; some of the monks who had witnessed the events of his abbacy were still alive.

The *Vita Aegil* is an *opus geminatum*, a work in both prose and verse. The custom of writing texts both in prose and in verse was a classical Roman rhetorical tradition, adopted by early Christian writers. Juvenecus (fourth century), Caelius Sedulius (fifth century) and Arator (sixth century) were the most influential representatives of this genre on the Continent. In Anglo-Latin literature Bede was the first to apply this form to a hagiographical subject. This resulted in the *Vita Cuthberti*, a text that leans heavily on the work of Arator. Candidus put himself in this tradition of scholarship, an intellectual lineage with branches on the continent and in the Isles. In his introduction Candidus mentions Hrabanus as his chief example, but from the *Vita Aegil* it is clear that his work is indebted to a much broader intellectual network. Not only did Candidus cite from or paraphrase *De laudibus sanctae crucis*, and other work of Hrabanus Maurus, especially his poems, he also used the work of Alcuin (the *Vita Willibrordi*, and also his poems and *Versus de patribus regibus et sanctis Euboricensis ecclesiae*), Bede (most of all the *Vita Cuthberti*) and Aldhelm (Anemig and *De virginitate*). Moreover the *Vita Aegil* contains references to the poetry of Juvenecus, Sedulius, Arator, alongside Venantius Fortunatus, Paulinus of Nola and Virgil. Candidus only quotes these authors in the metrical *Vita Aegil*, as the following chapter demonstrates, for the prose is based on different sources.

---

127 Candidus remembered Reccheo senior, a monk of Fulda who had just died: 'Reccheo et senior iam functus'. *Vita Aegil* II c. 7, l. 205, p. 41. In the *Annales necrologici* Reccheo's name is inserted under the year of 839.
128 Candidus calls Hrabanus abbott, thus he must have written the text before the summer of 842. Perhaps Louis the Pious was still alive when the *Vita* was written. He died 20 June 840. Praef. I, 1, p. 3, l. 19-25.
130 Alcuin, ed. Godman, pp. lxxxii-lxxxv.
131 See the *similarium apparatus* of the edition of Becht-Jördens *Vita Aegil* II, pp. 79-99. For an understanding of the *apparatus* see Becht-Jördens, *Vita Aegil*, pp. xiv-xlvi.

---

124
Both the verse and prose Vita Aegil narrate the same story, but each text puts the emphasis differently. Whereas the prose version is mostly concerned with the election of the new abbot, the metrical one concentrates on the dedication of the new abbey church. The prose Vita Aegil, a mirror and an admonition for abbot and monks alike and a portrayal of an ideal monastery, had a clear moral-didactic agenda, as the next chapter will show. The metrical life should be read in the sensus allegoricus, revealing the eschatological meaning of Fulda’s history. Contrary to the prose Vita Aegil that Candidus had written for a broader audience, he composed the poem for the initiated only. By using poetry Candidus directed his poem to an audience that was trained to read these references to the spiritual meaning of the history of the monastery, namely the advanced students who used the text for private meditation in their cells. Candidus wrote for the brilliant students who like himself had passed through education successfully, who had lived and had been instructed in the monastery since childhood and had mastered the basis subjects of monastic study (grammar) and the other artes. Among them were the clever monks who would occupy the senior posts in the monastery, including the abbacy of Fulda. It is in the metrical Vita Aegil that Candidus elaborated on Eigil’s attempts to turn the abbey church of Fulda (referring to the community of monks) into a true ecclesia.

The poet

Candidus deliberately chose the form of verse for the composition of the second Vita Aegil, because it suited his message: whereas the monks had wandered from the right path, during Ratgar’s tenure, Eigil turned the monastery into a true ecclesia once more. To Candidus history was the hidden expression of the will of God, not an arbitrary sequence of

132 See also Alcuin, who wrote both a prose and metrical Vita Willibrordi: ‘et duos digessi libellos, unum prosaice sermone gradientem, qui publice fratribus in ecclesia, si dignum tuae videatur sapientiae, legi potuisset: alterum Piereo pede currentem, qui in secreto cubili inter scolasticos tuos tantummodo ruminare debuisset’. Alcuin, Vita Willibrordi ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM 7 (Hanover 1920) prologue, p. 113; ‘I have obeyed your [Beornrad, bishop of Sens and abbot of Echternach] command, and have set down two books. One walking along in prose, can be read publicly by the brothers in church, if it seems worthy to your wisdom. The other, running with the muse of poetry, your pupils can read over and over again privately in their rooms’. The translation is of C.H. Talbot, Soldiers of Christ, pp. 191-2. See also Wood, The Missionary Life pp. 81-90. Lapidge, ‘Bede’s metrical Vita S. Cuthberti’, pp. 77-93; De Jong, In Samuel’s Image, pp. 240-1.

133 Mastery of the letters was necessary for a good understanding of the spiritual sense of the bible. See for example Epistola de litteris colendis, MGH Cap. I, p. 79, l. 30-3: ‘Quamobrem hortamur vos litterarum studia non solum non negligere, verum etiam humillima et Deo placita intentione ad hoc certatim discere, ut facilius et rectius divinarum scripturarum mysteria valeatis penetrare.’

125
following earlier examples such as Bede, he considered poetry to be a suitable medium for revealing this deeper significance behind Fulda’s history. To Bede the prose and verse versions of the *Vita Cuthberti* were two halves of one whole. He intended them to be read together. Whereas the prose version described the events of Cuthbert’s life, the poem revealed their allegorical meaning, turning the history, in which Cuthbert took part, into an endless struggle between good and evil. The focus of the metrical version of the *Vita Cuthberti* was on the figural significance of the events; its aim was meditation on the life and significance of St Cuthbert.

Like Bede Candidus stimulated his reader to search for the eschatological meaning of this specific episode in the history of the monastery during the abbayies of Ratgar and Eigil. Therefore the author would make use of the same tools that bible commentators used to fathom the mysteries of the divine scriptures, the *sensus mysticus*. Candidus employed images and scenes from the bible, which exegetes had acknowledged to be types of the *ecclesia*; he made use of numerology, most of all in regard of the table of contents; and Candidus presumably added paintings to his text. On certain occasions the author explicitly explained how his text should be read. At the apogee of the metrical version, the translation of Fulda’s patron saint to his new resting place, he wrote: ‘Now, brother, see with eyes of the mind’, in other words do not use the *sensus historicus* but the *sensus mysticus*.

The good and the bad architect

In his *Vita Aegil* Candidus depicted Ratgar as the bad abbot. The author considered Eigil, not Ratgar, to be the true *sapiens architectus* as Ratgar was called in the *Gesta abbatum*. The first time Ratgar is mentioned in the

---

135 That poetry was something special to Candidus is confirmed by the fact that he referred to the poems of Hrabanus in his prose *Vita Aegil*, but only includes them in the metrical *vita*. See also Mary Garrison, ‘The emergence of Carolingian Latin literature and the court of Charlemagne’ in: *Carolingian Culture*, pp. 111-40.  
137 Becht-Jördens is the first to have seen the allegorical aspects of the metrical *Vita Aegil*. See *Die Vita Aegil*, especially pp. 35-48.  
138 This table of contents and the division of chapters is from the hand of Candidus, contrary to the *Vita in prose*, which Dümmler had divided into chapters. Becht-Jördens, *Die Vita Aegil. Edition*, p. xlvii.  
metrical *Vita Aegil* is in Chapter Five.\textsuperscript{140} The trained reader immediately understood that the number '5' symbolises sin and worldly behaviour.\textsuperscript{141} The chapter is accompanied by an illustration:

![Figure 16: the unicorn](image)

To the left we see the much despised abbey church. Ratgar stands in a porch, fully dressed as an abbot. He has turned his back on the altar, which we can discern through the windows. Inside the church it is dark. Only the altar and the abbot are illuminated. A pillar separates the abbot from a unicorn that is about to attack a flock of frightful sheep, though it seems that like a centaur the abbot and the unicorn merge.\textsuperscript{142}

The poem explains what can be perceived from the picture. Candidus wrote:

> Because, after he [Baugulf] had left, the monohorn succeeded him  
> - a terrible affair is now to be told -  
> [the monohorn] that, with a front [referring to Ratgar’s pride] I do not know [how great],  
> persecuted the flock, which was entrusted to him, with foolish torments  
> until he, forced by a great power, left the pasture and the rich wells

\textsuperscript{140} For a full analysis of Candidus' use of allegory, examples from the bible and numbers see Becht-Jördens, *Die Vita Aegil*, pp. 40-8; and his introduction to the edition of the *Vita Aegil*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.


\textsuperscript{142} Hrabanus Maurus had once also depicted Ratgar as savage and bestial in his behaviour. In his poem *Metrum de transitu monachorum* Hrabanus wrote: 'He has grown harsh in his soul and does not know how to give up. Grim he drove away the sheep, slaughtering he wounded [them]. He pitied no one and was furious with everyone'. 'Durescit qui animo, et cedere nescit / trux deturbat oves, caede cruentat / nullius miseret, saevit in omnes'. *Hrabani Mauri Carmina*, nr. 40, pp. 204-5.
God's ecclesia

- the places were sweet and the stables were sublime -
and fled from the ancestral realms.\(^\text{143}\)

From the poem it is clear that Ratgar is not only portrayed as abbot, but that he is also the unicorn. *Monoceros* is his nickname. Often the unicorn has a positive significance, but not in Candidus' poem.\(^\text{144}\) The horn symbolises the lust for power and Ratgar's pride. In addition to this, the picture of the attack by the unicorn is a figure of psalm 21, in which a discouraged David prays in great distress to God: 'Rescue me from mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the unicorns'.\(^\text{145}\) The educated readers of the metrical *Vita Aegil* understood this metaphor perfectly well. The psalm prefigures the passion and resurrection of Christ and the redemption of the church.\(^\text{146}\) The unicorn and the lion signify the enemies of Christ and His Church. Rather than being *Christi vicarius* according to the Rule of Benedict Ratgar was depicted as His persecutor.

Candidus did not only use psalm 21 to portray Ratgar as persecutor of Christ but also to hint at the rescue of the monks, the sheep that this unicorn attacks. For the psalm is not only about the suffering of Christ, but also about His resurrection and the redemption of mankind. With the *Vita Aegil* Candidus showed that in the darkest hour God comes to the aid of his flock. What the monks cannot accomplish on their own, happens through the grace of God. By the grace of God the emperor 'who always had been a lover of the better life [i.e. monastic life] and who loved the monks with holy love' came to the rescue of the monks.\(^\text{147}\)

Candidus portrayed Eigel as the saviour of the monks. In the *commemoratio* at the end of the metrical *vita* Candidus described the moment that Eigel took office as abbot of Fulda:

Here is the ornament, here is the protector and the glory of our life,
here is [the ornament, the protector and glory] of our work and our effort,

\(^{143}\) 'Hoc nam cessante successit monoceros, qui / forte gregem sibi commissum, res faeda
refertur, / nescio, qua fronte, stimulus agitabat ineptis, / donec ui nimia pastum
fontesque fluentes / dulcia namque loca et stabula alta coactus / deserit atque fuga
regnis decessit auitis.' Candidus, *Vita Aegil* II, c. 4 and 5, pp. 38-9, l. 147-50.

\(^{144}\) For the positive (the unicorn can also symbolise Christ), and negative meanings of the
unicorn, see for example Cassianus, *Collationes*, II, xvi, c. 2; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in
Job* XXXI, 15; Hrabanus Maurus, *De Universo*, Pl. 111 (1852) liber 8 c. 1 *De bestis*, col. 218-20.
See also J. W. Einhorn, *Spiritualis unicornis. Das Einhorn als Bedeutungsträger in Literatur
und Kunst des Mittelalters* (Munich 1976), p. 82.

\(^{145}\) Ps. 21, 21.

\(^{146}\) See for example Hrabanus Maurus explanation in *De Universo*, liber 8 c. 1 *De bestis*,
col. 218-20.

\(^{147}\) Candidus, *Vita Aegil* II c. 6, p. 40; Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, ed. M. Adriaen,
God's ecclesia

in this house of God, together with the salutary dogma of Noah.\textsuperscript{148}

As Becht-Jördens has shown the 'dogma of Noah' probably refers to the Ark and Noah’s role in the redemption of humanity.\textsuperscript{149} Earlier in the poem, in chapter 17, Candidus vividly had described the moment of salvation of the monks.\textsuperscript{150} The number '17' symbolises the Ark of Noah, in itself a signum of the ecclesia. Thus possibly Candidus also referred to the Ark of Noah in the commemoration of Eigel. As Noah preserved mankind from total extermination, Eigel rescued the monks from the crisis they were in and guided them to eternal life.\textsuperscript{151}

While Candidus revealed the universal symbols of goodness and evil in the history of Fulda and used the events of the past for the spiritual education of his readers, he also reinterpreted the meaning of the abbey church.

A new abbey church

At the centre of Candidus’ poem were the dedication of the abbey church and the translation of Boniface.\textsuperscript{152} Unlike the funerary chapel of St Michael, whose allegorical meaning Candidus had extensively explained in the prose \textit{Vita Aegil}, the monk did not linger a word on the structure of the abbey church.\textsuperscript{153} Candidus only depicted Eigel’s part in its construction, in close collaboration with Hrabanus, and did so extensively; chapters 15 till 20 are about the design of the two crypts, the dedication of the church, and the translation of Boniface, including the altar \textit{tituli} that Hrabanus wrote for the occasion. What the author already explained in prose, he elaborated on in verse: Eigel was the rightful \textit{sapiens architectus}, not Ratgar, for Eigel perfected the abbey church and made the building truly a house of God.

In the prose \textit{Vita Aegil}, by means of a speech of Louis the Pious, Candidus reminded his audience that:

\begin{quote}
Behold, they who build \textit{martyria} and decorate churches seem to do good work, but only when they also guard the other justice of God, when the poor rejoice in their goods, when they do not make the goods of others
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{148} 'Hic decus, hic nostrae fautor et gloria uitaec / exstitit, hic operis nostri nostrique laboris / in hac sede Dei salubri cum dogmate Noe'. Candidus, \textit{Vita Aegil} II c. 25, l. 1050-2, pp. 76-77.
\textsuperscript{149} Becht-Jördens, \textit{Die Vita Aegil}, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{150} See the following paragraph.
\textsuperscript{151} See Becht-Jördens, 'Die Vita Aegil', p. 46.
\textsuperscript{152} Candidus, \textit{Vita Aegil} II, c. 15-20, pp. 53-68.
\textsuperscript{153} For the architecture exegesis of Candidus see \textit{Vita Aegil} I, c. 17, p. 16.
their own through violence. Know that they build for the glory of God. If however they do not serve the other justice of God, if the poor do not rejoice in their goods, if they make the goods of others their own through violence or fraud, who then would be so unwise not to understand that they do not build these buildings for the glory of God, but because of esteem among the people? What kind of justice is this, to reward the dead and plunder the living, to take away the blood of the miserable ones and offer this to God? People live in buildings and God lives in holy people.

Exuberantly decorated churches meant nothing to God if they contained no people for Him to live in, meaning people who obey his laws. Further on in the text Candidus quoted St Paul and wrote: ‘the church of Christ is made out of living stones, namely holy people’. Eigil was not only a good abbot, who obeyed the laws of God, as Candidus demonstrated in prose, the abbot also literally filled the church with holy people. Eigil arranged the altars in the basilica and provided it with relics, he organised the translation of the martyr Boniface and the dedication of the church. In addition to this, under Eigil’s guidance the monks had returned to the holy monastic way of life. Thus thanks to the new abbot the abbey church of Fulda truly became a dwelling place of God.

With vigour Candidus approached to the climax of his poem. The author narrated that when Eigil had finished the last preparations, he invited the archbishop of Mainz to consecrate the church. Rumour spread quickly and many faithful gathered to witness the ‘magnificent and holy feast’: bishops, abbots, counts, and also less well-to-do people, in unum Candidus stressed. After the dedication ritual the procession, as one

154 Here Candidus quotes Johannes Chrysostomus: "Ecce enim", inquit, "qui martyria aedificant, ecclesias ornant, bonum opus faciunt sua, scito, quia ad gloriarn Dei aedificant. Si autem alisius iustitiae Dei non servant, si de bonis eorum pauperes gaudent, si aliorum bona per uiolentiam non faciunt sua, scito, quia ad gloriarn Dei aedificant. Si autem alisius iustitiae Dei non servant, si de bonis eorum pauperes non gaudent, si aliorum bona faciunt sua aut per uiolentiam aut per fraudem, qui satis insensatus est, ut non intelligat, quia non ad gloriarn Dei faciunt aedificia illa, sed propter aetestationem humanam?". Vita Aegil I, c. 10, p. 12, l. 22-9.

155 ‘Qualis est illa iustitia munerare mortuos et spoliare uiuentes, de sanguine miserorum tollere et Deo offere?’ Idem, c. 10, p. 12, l. 32-3.


157 ‘habitaculum Dei’, ‘de ecclesia Christi ex lapidibus uius, hoc est sanctis hominibus, compaginata’ see the Candidus’ piece of architecture exegesis of the chapel of St Michael, Vita Aegil I, c. 17, p. 16. See also Hrabanus Maurus, De Universo XXI, c. 3 p. 561A: ‘quia dicuntur lapides vivi, hoc est sancti, qui ad coelestem constructionem habiles sunt’.

158 Candidus, Vita Aegil II, c. 16, p. 55, l. 565-6.

God’s ecclesia

congregation (collectus in unum), led by Haistolf and Eigil, strode to the grave of Boniface. The martyr was elevated from his old sepulchre, while the faithful proclaimed the Te Deum, and was carried to the western apse, where Eigil and the monks had prepared him a new burial place. When the procession reached the altar where Boniface was to be buried, Candidus wrote:

Meanwhile the people who had gathered
suddenly burst out in the “Kyrie eleison” with a voice of the people,
the cry of the Christians rose to the stars,
they burn completely through the new glow of the infused divinity
- what a miracle! Truly you know [that it is] contrary to the wont
the voice of praise is brought about by all similarly [and at the same time]:
the joy [felt] in [their] hearts evokes tears;
jubilations, crying and singing amalgamate in one.160

As peace and harmony had returned in the community of monks after the distress under Ratgar, all present intensely felt the relief and joy during the ceremony of the translation of the patron saint of Fulda. In Candidus’ account of the event, the abbey church, which for so long had been a symbol of oppression and tyranny, but which now was understood as being ‘made out of living stones’, became a sign of salvation and new beginning. From an empty building it had become the ecclesia Christi. The infusion of the Holy Spirit at the supreme moment was a sign of God’s presence in the church of Fulda and thus of its transformation into the true ecclesia.

Accordingly the church did not only become a token of salvation, Candidus also depicted it as a memorial of monastic tradition. The author highlighted that Eigil had dedicated the crypts, ein Stein gewordener Codex regularum as Becht-Jördens has called it, to the representatives of eastern and western monasticism. Apart from a detailed description of the design of the crypts, Candidus inserted the dedication and altar tituli that Hrabanus Maurus wrote for the abbey church into his text, the latter in a specific order.161 The monk started with the eastern crypt and ended in the


161 That the order of the altar tituli was a deliberate creation of the author of the Vita Aegil is suggested by the only other manuscript tradition of the poems. In the manuscript that Brouwer used for his edition of Hrabanus poems the order of the altar tituli is different from Candidus’. The anonymous compiler of Hrabanus’ carmina stressed the patrons of the monastery, namely Boniface and Sturmi. Becht-Jördens, Die Vita Aegil. Edition, p. xlix.
west. As said above the altar in the eastern crypt was dedicated to Anthony, Athanasius, Paul of Thebes, Saba and Theodosius. The altar in the western crypt Eigel consecrated in honour of Benedict, Honoratus and Columbanus. As in a procession the reader of the *Vita Aegil* travelled from eastern monasticism to the western tradition. In this way the focus of the text remained on the crypts. That Eigel had dedicated the crypts to the representatives of both monastic traditions was important to the author, who himself in the *Vita Aegil* in prose had used texts of the fathers of both western and eastern coenobitism, Benedict and Pachomius. On this wide-ranging monastic tradition Candidus founded his image of the identity of the monastery of Fulda. Thus Candidus transformed the church initiated by a tyrannical abbot that had caused so much distress in the community into a triumphant symbol of salvation, a monument of monastic tradition, a memorial of a new beginning, an honour to God and a token of the identity of the Fulda monastery.

**Conclusion**

Ratgar had construed a church that was composed of features only to be seen in Rome and, since the third quarter of the eighth century, also in St Maurice d’Agaune and St Denis, which had been closely linked to the Carolingians. By adding a western transept Ratgar cited St Peter’s in Rome and made Fulda’s relationship with Rome visible. The fact that only a few churches in this period had a western transept simply strengthened the message: this was a church closely associated with Rome. The abbey church further referred to a wish to maintain continuity with the age of foundation; it also reaffirmed the increasing importance of Boniface, the patron saint of the monastery. The translation of Boniface to the western transept mirrored and lent force to the increasing importance of the martyr for the community. Within the liturgical landscape of the church Boniface’s grave had become a centre of its own. Because of the size of the apse and the presence of a western transept that defined the area of the main shrine it commanded more attention than the eastern apse where the altar of the Holy Saviour stood. The extravagant size of the church expressed the strong competition between religious communities for patronage and power, the position that the monastery of Fulda fulfilled within Carolingian society, its expectations for the future and the celebration of the glory of God.

Eigel had finished the church. During his abbacy peace was restored in the community, which had been disrupted by the conflict with Ratgar.

---

162 Becht-Jördens has demonstrated that Candidus used Benedict of Aniane’s *Codex regularum*. ‘Die Vita Aegil’, p. 42.
While strengthening the cohesion of the community and re-establishing harmony, the new abbot turned the abbey church into a symbol of monastic tradition, new unity, peace and prosperity. For this Candidus remembered Eigil in the *Vita Aegil*, his work itself also being a contribution to the transformation of the meaning of the new abbey church.