
Science and Intellectual Life of the Abbey Corbie in the 9th century

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Résumé

The Northern French abbey of Corbie, founded in the second half of the 7th century, became one of the main literary and cultural centers of the Carolingian Empire by the beginning of the 9th century. Adalard (ca. 751–827), perhaps its most famous abbot, was related to the family of Charlemagne and acted as the implementer of the reforms of the Carolingian Renewal in Corbie. Under him the principles of a new, more readable and clear script (a prototype of Caroline minuscule) were developed, a script, that became widespread in the 9th century; spelling corrections of manuscripts were carried out according to new rules; the monastery library was replenished with ancient precious manuscripts acquired by him in Italy.

However, the "Golden Age" of intellectual and scientific activity in Corbie is associated with his successors in the first half of the 9th century – the abbot Paschasius Radbertus, the teacher and theologian Ratramnus of Corbie and the chief librarian (*custos librorum*) Hadoard. Many studies are devoted to the results of their work; as a matter of fact from the point of view of modern ideas about scientific ethics, some points can be subject to reasonable criticism (for example, the destruction of late antique manuscripts after copying them or their likely production of legal falsifications). Nevertheless, if we proceed from the ideas about history and literary tradition in the minds of Carolingian intellectuals, we can find quite reasonable justification for these deeds and even a spirit of innovation in their work.

Since a significant part of the medieval manuscripts from the abbey Corbie is now located in Saint Petersburg and has not been studied in depth yet, the main emphasis of the presentation will be placed on this corpus of sources and their contributions to the sciences of their time: What sciences were practiced? To what degree are there innovations?

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