Rites of passage and selfhood in the Early Middle Ages

Discovering the self?

Jacob Buckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860) – ‘individualism’ only developed in the Italian Renaissance.


Richard Corradini, Matthew Gillis, Rosamond McKitterick, and Irene Van Renswoude (eds), *Ego trouble: Authors and their identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2008), especially surveys by Walter Pohl and Rosamond McKitterick.

**Guibert and Augustine**


Book 1, chapter 3, pp. 41-2.

‘Thou didst vouchsafe to me birth and rebirth also, on the day that is the highest of all days and best-loved by Christian people’.

‘On that very day when I was put into the baptismal font – as I was so often told as a joke in boyhood and even in youth – a certain woman tossed me from hand to hand. “Look at this thing,” she said. “Do you think such a child can live, whom nature by a mistake has made almost without limbs, giving him something more like an outlined than a body’.

‘All these things, my Creator, were signs of the state in which I now seem to live. Could truth in thy service be found in me, O Lord? I have shown no firmness toward Thee, no constancy. If to the eye any work of mine has appeared good, many times crooked motives have made it slight. God of supreme love, I have said that Thou gavest me hope, or a faint likeness of some little hope, out of the promise of that joyous day on which I was born and reborn’.

2. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *Confessions*:

‘Rejoicing in faith, I praised Your name. And that faith suffered me not to be at rest in regard to my past sins, which were not yet forgiven me by Your baptism’ (9.4.12)

‘We were baptized and solicitude about our past life left us. Nor was I satiated in those days with the wondrous sweetness of considering the depth of Your counsels concerning the salvation of the human race. How greatly did I weep in Your hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the voices of Your sweet-speaking Church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the truth was poured forth into my heart, whence the agitation of my piety overflowed, and my tears ran over, and blessed was I therein’ (9.6.14)

**The Annals of Lyons**

769: In this year I was born.

782: In this year I came from Spain to Narbonne in Gaul.

792: In this year Agobard was first in Lyon.

804: I, unworthy, was blessed.

816: In that year in the month of October, the cathedral triumphed.

840: An eclipse of the sun occurred in the days of Lent 3. Nonas May 4, feria. Around the eighth hour of the day, and remain to about midday; so dark was it, that the stars in heaven appears very brightly. In this year Agobard on holy memory, bishop of Lyon, died 8. Id. Iun. Also Louis the Emperor was dead on 12 Kal. Iul; and a memorable and manifest building, which was called the ‘old forum,’ toppled over in Lyon, on the very day that autumn began; which had stood from the time of the Emperor Trajan for around 700 years.

841: Amolus, the deacon of the aforementioned bishop, was ordained bishop of Lyon 17 Kal. Febr. And a lamentable battle between the sons of the Emperor Louis not far from the city of Auxerre, in which the Christian people on both sides struck down each other in mutual slaughter on the 7 Kal. Iul. At the beginning of that same year, at the hour of night, a great light emerged from the north and spread far and wide and with fatal portent was seen to turn night almost by day.

Full details and bibliography: https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/317

On minor annals more generally, see The Medieval Chronicle 14: Special Issue – the Frankish Minor Annals, ed. Sören Kascke and Bart van Hees (forthcoming, summer 2021).