

diplomacy in Rome and the functioning of the order of precedence. While it often is assumed that churchmen were the preferred candidates for diplomatic roles in Rome, my research demonstrates that, in fact, there were good reasons to appoint laymen to such positions. I discuss some of these findings in a chapter entitled 'Performing Henry at the court of Rome' for a forthcoming collection on Henry VIII and the Tudor court, and will consider them further in a second article, to be completed mid-2011.

A key focus for my term as Rome Fellow was the development of a book for a broad audience based on my doctoral research. I had long thought that there was scope for such a project, and with the encouragement of colleagues at the BSR I drafted a proposal and some sample chapters, carrying out a small amount of additional background research to support this work, notably in the Archivio Storico Capitolino and in the Vatican Archives. I am pleased to report that I have had a positive response to my proposal for *Our Man in Rome*, and it will be published by Bodley Head in 2012. In the course of my Fellowship, I also co-edited and contributed an article to a special edition of the *Journal of Early Modern History* on the subject of family networks in early modern diplomacy (December 2010). I further wrote a short chapter on 'The city of Rome as a space for diplomacy' and drafted chapters for two books: one on the domestic interior in early modern Italy and the other on Old Saint Peter's basilica. I am grateful both to my fellow scholars and to the many visitors to the BSR who took the time to discuss these projects with me over the year. Their input has taken my work in new directions, and that promises to continue in the future, as I develop a new project on the public history of the Italian Renaissance.

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An edition and study of seventh-century papal letters, and a study of Carolingian Nonantola's manuscripts

The Carolingian renaissance of the eighth and ninth centuries saw the flowering of scholarship across Charlemagne's empire, scholarship that was often nurtured within monasteries. Although Charlemagne conquered Italy in 774, the monastery of Nonantola, near Modena, rarely features in discussions of this renaissance. Similarly, the seventh century has been one of the least discussed in the history of the papacy. It generally has been considered a period of intellectual decline. By indulging my two great interests, namely study of manuscripts and of Latin texts, I worked in Rome to show the other side of each story.

Nonantola's political and economic importance in the eighth and ninth centuries has long been recognized. Its cultural activity, however, has been somewhat more difficult to define, except that it produced a number of manuscripts. During my doctoral work, I had discovered swaths of annotations in Nonantolan manuscripts now in Rome. These annotations revealed engagement with ideas current in other parts of the Carolingian realm, suggesting that Nonantola, too, had participated in the Carolingian 'renaissance'. During my post-doctoral fellowship in Rome, I continued work with Nonantola's

manuscripts, in preparation for a book on cultural activity in Carolingian northern Italy. I achieved some successes: finding more annotations in, for example, Rome B.N.c.R. V.E. 1357, containing Saint Augustine's sermons, and particularly in B.N.c.R. Sess. 40.

The latter manuscript previously had yielded an exciting new find for understanding Nonantola's cultural connections, one that ultimately came to shape my time in Rome. It contains a wholly unstudied copy of Heito of Reichenau's *Visio Wettini*, a text composed in 825 that describes a sick monk's vision of the afterlife. By conducting a detailed codicological, palaeographical and textual analysis of the manuscript, I showed that this was one of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the text. My conclusion (published in *Revue Bénédictine* 120 (2) (2010)) was that Nonantola and Reichenau must have had previously unremarked cultural links during the Carolingian period.

During this work, I also identified almost 60 surviving manuscripts of the *Visio Wettini*, meaning that it was a highly influential precedent to Dante. However, in comparing Sess. 40 to other *Visio Wettini* manuscripts, I discovered that there was almost no serious scholarship on the textual tradition of the *Visio*. To understand the text's influence, in northern Italy and across Europe, a thorough investigation of the textual history was needed, namely a critical edition. I began this edition, using Sess. 40, the microfilm collection of the Centro Nazionale per lo Studio del Manoscritto, and also travelling to Milan, London, Oxford and Chicago to collate manuscripts. This work will not just present a new version of a text with significant literary impact, but also trace intellectual communication across the Alps and all over Carolingian Europe.

The *Visio Wettini*, being a shorter text with nearly-contemporary manuscripts, seemed to offer a way to hone my editorial skills for the much more complicated papal letter project. This work, of course, continued in parallel, mainly in the form of collating manuscripts, and background work on the letters themselves. One of the most interesting outcomes has been outlining the activity of Bonifatius *consiliarius*, one of the few papal officials from the seventh century for whom we have both a name and at least one known work. By examining Bonifatius's Latin prose style and vocabulary in minute detail, and comparing these to existing papal documents, it was possible to show that Boniface's activities were quite specialized, and that papal officials with similarly high levels of rhetorical, theological and legal training may have been much more numerous than previously supposed.

The library of the British School at Rome became my personal study in the course of this research, which would not have progressed very far without the support of Valerie Scott and the other librarians there, or without the learned encouragement of Dr Robert Coates-Stephens. But it is my fellow award-holders who made the BSR a truly wonderful place to work: knowledge, advice, support, encouragement, friendship, and Roman memories to last a lifetime.

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