transmission can contribute to the social and political history of the early medieval west by diving deeper into Carolingian cultural practices.

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Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity. By Julia Hillner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2015. xx + 422 pp. £75; $115. ISBN 9780521517515.

This rich and carefully argued book discusses the uses of monastic seclusion as a form of punishment in the late antique world, focusing particularly on the sixth century, an age in which the emperor Justinian legislated to this effect and the correspondence of the Roman pontiff Gregory the Great amply illustrates the practice. However, in seeking to explain how monasteries ended up as places of penitential exile for criminals, the book covers a much broader time frame and discusses a variety of related topics. It starts with a discussion of punishment as education. Punishment was often regarded as pure retribution, a phenomenon highlighted by Theodor Mommsen, but it was also seen as a form of education, which the Romans called *emendatio*. The latter view was closely related to ideas about the role of teachers and fathers, who punished to educate. Already Plato regarded wrongdoing as a disease that needed medication and punishment as a form of remedy for the soul, and his views influenced Roman conceptions of justice and education. In the imperial age, the emperor could be regarded as a father and consequently *emendatio* could be extended to his 'family'. Particularly Seneca and Cassius Dio emphasized such a paternalistic approach towards justice. Such views received a particular twist in Christian thought. Christian thinkers regarded punishment in this world as an incentive to seek forgiveness and reconciliation in order to escape eternal punishment in the hereafter. For Augustine, for example, physical punishment such as flogging, could be indicated by the term *emendare*. Laws were, in his words, like fathers to undisciplined sons and for those among them who would not be educated by words, punishment was necessary. Such punishment was meant, however, to bring the sinner to contrition and confession, and after the culprit had confessed his sins, there was no longer a real need for retribution. Such an approach to punishment seems at odds with the severity that we encounter in late Roman legislation, which was inspired by ideas about deterrence and retribution. It is likely, however, that this harshness was mostly rhetorical and was meant to educate rather than be put into practice. Moreover, imperial pardon offered a

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means to mitigate the harshness of the law. In the fifth century, submitting to ecclesiastical penance occasioned imperial pardon in specific cases and this principle was subsequently more generally formulated as law by Justinian.

The book then continues to discuss the Roman prison, exile and other forms of detention. Although Roman legislation sought to regulate detention in prisons carefully in order to prevent abuse, this was not always successful in practice as detention in prisons was often employed as a punitive and coercive measure, whereas it was legally only admitted to prevent criminals from fleeing trial or execution. Using imprisonment as a form of punishment was partly motivated by a desire to safeguard society against criminals, but in the fourth century also by a Christian concern with the avoidance of bloodshed. Imprisonment was also used regularly as a means to coerce people to pay their debts or to force them to adhere to the proper form of religion. In the Roman household the *pater familias* could expel children from the household when conflicts arose in order to avoid corporal punishment. Women, however, were often subject to special regulations of spatial confinement within the household. Slaves in the household could also be punished by being detained in a special place, *in vincula*, a term that could designate imprisonment as well as forced labour or enchainment. There are no indications, however, that such imprisonment was executed in anything resembling a formal prison on the scale that historians such as Olivia Robinson had once believed. Another institution resembling the family that could punish its members by imprisonment was the monastery. Isolating some member from the rest of the community was used as a form of punishment, or rather *emendatio*, in monastic rules, for example in the Rule of Benedict. Yet before the seventh century, when we find references to a *carcer* or φυλακή in monastic texts, there are no indications that monasteries had any kind of formal prison space.

Punishment by exile was a privilege of the elite that did not affect their bodily integrity. The emperor Theodosius had ruled that Christians who did not adhere to the Nicene Creed were to be exiled and such banishments left a rich trail of documentation in letters, historical works and hagiography. This documentation is carefully scrutinized by Hillner and the information is systematically presented in an appendix comprising some thirty pages. It shows that dissenting clerics, mostly men invested with religious authority such as bishops or monks, were often banished to the margins of the empire, preferably to places under the control of a loyal bishop. In these regions conflicts could occur between the ruling bishop and the incoming dissident bishop or monk, who, sometimes assisted in this process by his status as an exile, was able to attract a group of followers. When the local bishop felt threatened by

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his rival, this could lead to the exile being more strictly supervised and therefore confined to specific locations such as mines or fortresses. The ample documentation regarding clerical exiles makes it possible to reconstruct some of the personal experiences of exiled dissidents, and they shed special light on the literary strategies employed to blacken their opponents, for example by likening them to persecutors in the times of the Christian martyrs. Yet, the fact that some of these exiles, such as Eusebius of Vercelli, were able to remain in contact with their home front through letters, at the same time demonstrates that practical circumstances did not always correspond to their literary representation.

The final part of the book discusses monastic penance as a disciplinary measure, which was first prescribed by early fifth-century councils in Gaul. Gregory the Great used this form of discipline in a great many cases, as his correspondence demonstrates. The emergence of this form of confinement is certainly linked to fundamental changes in monasticism that we can observe in the same period, in which stability and regularity gained importance. Justinian introduced the penalty of monastic seclusion into imperial legislation, not only in cases related to religious dissent or clerical disobedience, but also in cases of marital offences. He did so only after the year 542, in a period in which the emperor was deeply concerned with the proper order of Christian society. Monastic penance served a number of purposes. It could prevent the dissemination of unwanted ideas, it could defend culprits from the harsh penalties decreed in secular law, it could be a face-saving device, and it could provide proper satisfaction for the offended party. This flexibility must have been one of the advantages of this new method for dealing with law breakers.

This rich book contains a lot more information than has just briefly been presented. It provides evidence for the manifold ways in which late antique rulers dealt with lawbreakers and it is clear that confinement at times was used as a way to 'correct' a convicted person in order to prepare him or her for re-entering society. These experiments therefore are presented in this book as part of the history of the prison. Such a perspective runs the risk of easy generalizations and teleological reasoning, but these pitfalls have been avoided in this rewarding and refreshing study.

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Bede's Temple: An Image and its Interpretation. By Conor O'Brien. Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2015. xiv + 242 pp. + 3 b/w figures. £65. ISBN 9780198747086.

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