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"DISCIPLINE BY BROTHERS". THE MENDICANT COMMENTARIES ON SAINT AUGUSTINE'S NORMS OF CORRECTION

Abstract. – This paper examines the reception of Saint Augustine's Rule in the Middle Ages. More specifically, it analyses how mendicant authors understood the obligation, prescribed by the Rule, of brothers to correct one another. Two sources are considered: the *Expositio regulae*, written by the Dominican friar Humbert of Romans in the mid-thirteenth century, and the *Liber vitasfratrum*, composed by the Augustinian Hermit Jordan of Quedlinburg in the mid-fourteenth century. Both authors comment on the value of private admonition, denunciation, the binding force of the Rule, and the relationship between the prior and the community. In this context, they provide insight into the ways in which members of the new and innovative religious orders used older norms to shape their own conceptions of deviation, sin, law, tradition, virtue, and punishment. They also offer valuable information on the ways in which the historical development of public procedures of correction and adjudication affected monastic disciplinary systems.

Introduction

The ancient Rule of Augustine enjoyed considerable popularity from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. During this period, many religious communities adopted it as their normative basis. A major spiritual reason for this was the Rule's emphasis on apostolic life and fraternal love. Moreover, because many of its provisions were formulated in general terms, it allowed medieval communities to devise their own legislation and combine it with Augustine's precepts.[1] While the dissemination of the Rule is a well-known phenomenon, the ways in which its prescriptions were understood and applied in medieval contexts require further scholarly attention. This paper analyses the appropriation of the Rule's principle

[1] For more on the place, significance, and impact of the Rule of Augustine on medieval *vita religiosa*, see Melville–Müller (eds.) 2002.

of fraternal discipline within the mendicant orders. This constituted an essential disciplinary norm in the Rule and concerned the obligation of brothers to monitor and correct one another's behaviour. Augustine envisaged the superior's authority as the basis of monastic governance, but he also insisted that the brothers themselves should participate in the exercise of discipline when dealing with transgressions.[2]

Emerging in the thirteenth century, the mendicant orders introduced important innovations into the *vita religiosa*. These included both the ideal of living the *vita activa* rather than the *vita contemplativa*[3] and the granting of greater responsibilities in governance to ordinary brothers.[4] It is therefore important to examine how the Rule's disciplinary norms, based on mutual supervision, corresponded to broader mendicant ideas of fraternal responsibility. The present analysis concerns two mendicant orders that adopted the Rule of Augustine: the Dominicans and the Augustinian Hermits. Among the former, Humbert of Romans wrote an extensive commentary on the Rule in the mid-thirteenth century.[5] Among the latter, Jordan of Quedlinburg produced, a century later, a hybrid work combining hagiographical excerpts from the lives of exemplary brothers, commentary on the Rule, and paraenetic instruction.[6] Both texts contain passages on fraternal discipline and reveal how ancient norms functioned within a medieval conceptual framework.

The Rule of Augustine

The Rule addresses the procedure of fraternal discipline, its relationship to the superior's authority, and its conceptual foundations. According to Augustine, if a monk sees a fellow member of the community committing a fault, he is obliged to admonish the transgressor. If the transgressor disregards the warning and repeats or denies the offence, the admonishing brother must inform the superior and bring the matter before two or three other monks. These monks serve as witnesses and may, if necessary, testify against the transgressor. Fraternal correction also includes

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[2] On discipline exercised by the brothers, see *Regula Augustini*, 426–427; on the superior's authority throughout the text, see 417–437.

[3] The mendicant orders understood their earthly mission in terms of a pastorally oriented life of preaching and the care of souls, rather than a purely cloistered life centred solely on the salvation of members of an enclosed community. On mendicant innovations in general, see Melville 1999, 1–23.

[4] In contrast to traditional monasticism, representatives of the 'common' brothers were entitled to participate in mendicant governance and in the oversight of the provinces. These developments were to a large extent pioneered by the Dominicans. See Showalter 1973, 556–574; Cygler 1999, 416–420; Melville 2016, 29–43. On the influence of the Dominicans on other mendicant orders, see Cygler 2014, 239–250.

[5] Hereafter: *Expositio regulae*.

[6] Hereafter: *Liber vitasfratrum*.

public denunciation. Such denunciations are to be made before the entire community by monks acquainted with the offence, namely the aforementioned witnesses. The superior then determines guilt and imposes the punishment. If the transgressor refuses to perform penance, the brothers expel him from the community.[7]

Clearly, Augustine conceived monastic discipline not as a rigid punitive system, but as a form of continual mutual care. Its fundamental elements were private warning (individual admonition) and the involvement of a small group of brothers (the monks assembled *ad hoc* as 'witnesses'). These elements enjoyed disciplinary primacy and were, ideally, sufficient to resolve the transgression. Augustine's disciplinary system therefore rested heavily on 'horizontal' responsibility, whereby one brother corrected another, and on the power of conscience.[8] Discipline was thus understood both as a communal obligation and as a system in which correction was prompted by one's own conscience and carried out with the aim of acting upon the conscience of others.

As indicated above, another crucial disciplinary element was public denunciation.[9] This, however, was conceived as a means of dealing only with those unwilling to correct themselves. In other words, denunciation constituted a secondary stage in a progressive disciplinary procedure, to be employed when the offender's conscience had not been sufficiently stirred by private admonition.

Public denunciation was not, however, a judicial process.[10] Augustine speaks simply of bringing the matter before others. At this point, his concern lies more with the communication of knowledge. By making a denunciation, the brothers concerned were, in the first instance, informing the rest of the community about the transgression. In this way, fraternal discipline reminded the community of what was right and wrong; that is, it helped the community to renew its knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate forms of observance.[11]

Augustine was also concerned with preventing further transgressions. In the public forum, fraternal discipline undoubtedly sought to activate the offender's internal restraints through the public disclosure of guilt.

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[7] *Regula Augustini*, 426–427.

[8] On the meaning and role of conscience in the *vita religiosa* more generally, see Breitenstein 2016, 19–55.

[9] *Regula Augustini*, 427.

[10] Procedures conducted in the public forum gradually acquired a more juridical character during the High Middle Ages. See Bellini 1986. See also the discussion below.

[11] Here I draw on Durkheim's well–known argument that deviance can have positive effects on society. Durkheim 1982, 97–104, suggested that by correcting an offender in accordance with prescribed norms, a society reaffirms both its understanding of and its attachment to its preferred system of values, as embodied in those same norms.

Such a ritual was also intended to affect those witnessing it, by demonstrating that correction and punishment could not be evaded.

Another form of communal involvement was, as noted above, expulsion. Augustine provides no details, and we know nothing about the procedure itself. It is nevertheless evident that he empowered the community to take such a radical step. Fraternal discipline could thus develop into a harsher disciplinary mechanism. In the case of recalcitrant monks, it could ultimately become an executive instrument of exclusion.

Fraternal discipline did not diminish the role of the superior; rather, the two disciplinary mechanisms coexisted. The Rule understood the superior's role in broadly conventional monastic terms. It regarded the superior as God's representative, so that disobedience to the prior implied disobedience to God.[12] In keeping with this conception, the prior was authorised to govern the community with considerable autonomy, to regulate matters within the monastery, such as the distribution of goods and basic necessities, and to exercise his disciplinary authority.[13] The latter was most clearly manifested in the public forum, where the prior determined the transgressor's guilt.[14]

The determination of guilt constituted an important boundary between the prior's authority and fraternal discipline. This limitation on the scope of fraternal discipline accords with the very nature of the disciplinary mechanism. As indicated above, fraternal discipline was intended either to prompt self-correction by acting upon the conscience or to initiate a public disciplinary process. In either case, it was not itself an executive or punitive mechanism, but rather one that led to correction carried out by others, whether by the transgressor himself or by the superior.

The Rule nevertheless envisaged cooperation between the prior and the monks in the process of admonition. We are not informed of the details, but Augustine stipulates that the prior must become involved after the first admonition has failed and before the denunciation is made public.[15]

As regards its conceptual background, Augustine's understanding of fraternal discipline found validation in Scripture itself:

> *Si autem peccaverit in te frater tuus, vade, et corripe eum inter te, et ipsum solum. Si te audierit, lucratus eris fratrem tuum. Si autem te non audierit, adhibe tecum adhuc unum, vel duos, ut in ore duorum, vel trium testium stet omne verbum. Quod si non audierit eos: dic ecclesiae. Si autem ecclesiam non audierit, sit tibi sicut ethnicus et publicanus.* (Mt 18:15-17)

[12] *Regula Augustini*, 435–436. Other rules contain a similar conception. See, for example, *Benedicti regula*, 21, 38–41.

[13] *Regula Augustini*, 417–437.

[14] *Regula Augustini*, 427.

[15] *Regula Augustini*, 427.

Additionally, Augustine speaks of discipline in medicinal terms:

> *Nec uos iudicetis esse maliuolos, quando hoc indicatis. Magis quippe innocentes non estis, si fratres uestros, quos indicando corrigere potestis, tacendo perire permittitis. Si enim frater tuus uulnus haberet in corpore, quod uellet occultare, cum timet sanari, nonne crudeliter abs te sileretur et misericorditer indicaretur? Quanto ergo potius eum debes manifestare, ne perniciosius putrescat in corde?*[16]

Evidently, Augustine presented fraternal discipline as a means of spiritual healing and of preventing further 'rotting of the heart'. The disclosure of a transgression is, moreover, presented not as an act of cruelty but as one of mercy, intended to help the wounded man. Similar rhetoric was employed when Augustine discussed expulsion. Here, communal involvement was explained as a merciful act that prevented the spread of the 'contagious plague' of sin and the downfall of the community:

> *Quam si ferre recusauerit, etiam si ipse non abscesserit, de uestra societate proiciatur. Non enim et hoc fit crudeliter, sed misericorditer, ne contagione pestifera plurimos perdat.*[17]

In this way, discipline by brothers received additional validation through the idea that monks, acting as merciful physicians, helped the community to preserve its spiritual health.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that Augustine did not conceive of the community simply as a group of obedient monks. This is indicated at the very beginning of the Rule, where he defines the community as a spiritual brotherhood of 'one heart and one mind in God' (cf. Acts 4:32).[18] Within this vision, Augustine went beyond a purely vertical system of disciplinary relations dominated by the superior.[19] Instead, he involved the brothers themselves and complemented the prior's authority with a system of shared responsibility. In this way, Augustine brought his conception of discipline into closer alignment with his conception of the community. Consequently, the sense that a more 'horizontalised' form of discipline fitted naturally within Augustine's vision of communal life provided discipline by brothers with a stronger conceptual foundation.

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[16] *Regula Augustini*, 426–427.

[17] *Regula Augustini*, 427.

[18] *Regula Augustini*, 417. On the use of this apostolic principle in religious texts, see Schreiner 2002, 1–47.

[19] On this typical model of interpersonal relations within monastic communities, see Felten 1988, 147–296.

Humbert's Commentary

Humbert's *Expositio regulae* was composed with two purposes. On the one hand, the author sought to educate his fellow friars in Augustinian spirituality. On the other, he demonstrated the usefulness of the Rule for a pastorally oriented order.[20] With regard to fraternal discipline, Humbert approached the Rule not rigidly but functionally. He combined fidelity to the Rule with a more flexible interpretation of its provisions, while also showing a readiness to go beyond it by introducing normative additions or, in some cases, setting its prescriptions aside altogether.

Public forum and denunciations

Such flexibility can be seen in Humbert's categorisation of faults. Whereas the Rule prescribed the same procedure for every case of transgression, Humbert maintained that different transgressions required different procedures. He first distinguished between public and hidden faults (see Diagram 1). Public faults had to be referred directly to the public forum without prior admonition. Hidden faults, by contrast, were divided into further categories: Humbert distinguished between minor and major faults. In the case of minor faults, admonition was not necessary, although it could be employed. Major faults were further divided into two categories: venial and mortal. In neither case was admonition automatically required. Instead, the brothers were first to assess the most effective means of correction and then decide which course of action would best serve the transgressor's salvation.[21]

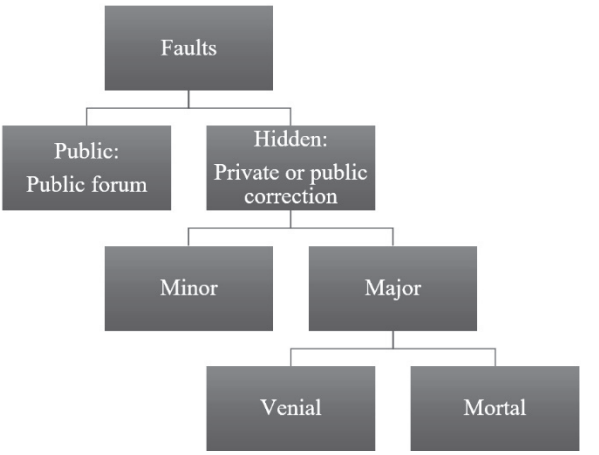


Diagram 1: Division of faults according to Humbert

[20] For further details, see Brett 1984, 117–133; Schnakenberg 2020.
[21] *Expositio regulae*, 298–306.

Humbert's approach was not surprising. The disciplinary systems of medieval religious orders were based on the differentiation of faults and the corresponding imposition of penalties. This tendency was particularly evident in the collections of statutes produced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in which we regularly find catalogues of faults accompanied by a variety of disciplinary procedures.[22] This practice was grounded in the principle that 'the punishment must fit the crime'.[23] The codifications of Dominican law of 1228–1236 and 1241 likewise differentiated between faults and prescribed different disciplinary procedures.[24] For Humbert, therefore, this manner of dealing with transgressions was customary and more 'natural' than Augustine's. In this context, the adjustments made to the Rule can be understood as reflecting broader developments in the legal organisation of religious orders.

Humbert's approach reveals another important feature. As we have seen, the Rule prescribed admonition as an obligatory procedure. Humbert, however, dispensed with admonition altogether in cases of public faults and insisted instead on public correction. In cases of hidden faults, he also allowed the brethren to choose between the two procedures. He thus relativised the importance of admonition while increasing that of the public forum.

This attitude was shared by other friars. Humbert confirms that many of them neglected private admonition and proceeded directly to public denunciation.[25] Such practice should not, however, be regarded as a flagrant deviation from the Rule. Rather, it reflects the adaptation of the traditional disciplinary system within the Dominican Order. Like other religious orders, the Dominicans regularly practised the *capitulum culparum*. This was a penitential rite in which all the brothers were required to confess their faults before the community and to denounce the faults of others.[26] The chapter of faults was therefore a public event and, as such, accorded with the idea of a public forum prescribed by the Rule. Whereas the Rule envisaged public correction only when necessary, however, medieval religious orders made the chapter of faults a routine practice. Depending on the order, it was held between once and several times a week.[27] In Dominican monasteries, it was observed every morning.[28] It thus provided the brethren with frequent opportunities for penitential correction

[22] Cf. Füser 2000, 71–90 (for the Cistercian and Cluniac orders); Lefèvre–Grauwen 1978, 35–44 (for the Premonstratensian Order); Jerković 2026, 59–60 (for the Carmelite Order).

[23] Jerković 2025, 15.

[24] *Lib. Consuet.*, 331–339; *Lib. Const.*, 42–47.

[25] *Expositio regulae*, 304.

[26] Schmitz 1953, 483–488.

[27] Füser 2000, 69–70.

[28] *Lib. Const*., 54.

and made private admonition less necessary. Rather than dealing informally with one another's faults, the brethren could simply await the institutionalised communal correction of the following day.

Through repeated participation in the *capitulum culparum*, the Dominicans became accustomed to this procedure. It became a standard disciplinary practice and, importantly for the present discussion, one that was also familiar to Humbert. His understanding of discipline was shaped by the importance of a ritual in which he himself participated and which constituted a regular means of acting upon the conscience. The routinisation of this ritual consequently contributed to a more flexible understanding of the Rule's prescriptions.

Humbert justified the frequent omission of admonition by means of another argument. He stated that the Rule 'does not bind in every case, but only in appropriate circumstances':

> *Ad illud quod in contrarium dictum est, quod denunciationem praecedere debet charitativa admonitio, dicendum est quod hoc, licet sit verum in genere, tamen habet exceptiones in casibus, sicut et aliae multae regulae generales, quia praecepta affirmativa non obligant in omni casu, sed in casu opportuno*.[29]

This shows that Humbert understood the Rule as a normative framework that could not only be adopted but, in certain circumstances, even set aside. This should not, however, be misunderstood. The author's intention was neither to diminish the Rule's authority nor to ease the brethren's consciences by dispensing them from discipline. This relativisation of the Rule's binding force did not apply to its prescriptions concerning the public forum, but only to admonition. Humbert was, in fact, rationalising some norms, namely those concerning admonition, in order to strengthen the practical value of others, particularly those relating to the public forum, which, as we have seen, he regarded as highly important.

Humbert then turns to denunciations. Unlike the Rule, which provides for a single procedure, he distinguishes three different procedures involving *denunciatio* in the public forum.

1) The first concerns denunciation before the community, supported by the testimony of several witnesses.

2) The second concerns denunciation before the community, supported by the testimony of a single witness.

3) The third concerns denunciation before the community without witnesses, in cases of public faults, and sometimes even without evidence, in cases of exceptionally grave faults.[30]

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[29] *Expositio regulae*, 306.

[30] *Expositio regulae*, 317–318.

The first procedure is especially revealing. Humbert regarded it as a formal charge against the offender and as the beginning of a judicial process. At this point, he moved away from Augustine's model of charitable correction towards a formalised judicial procedure involving investigation, hearings, the establishment of guilt, and the identification of credible witnesses.[31] This development can be considered in the light of Piero Bellini's thesis. Bellini argued that the Christian disciplinary system underwent a profound transformation during the High Middle Ages. Whereas ancient and early medieval Christian authors promoted the *denunciatio evangelica*, understood as fraternal warning and a personal call to repentance, authors of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries increasingly favoured formal judicial procedure before ecclesiastical courts. Bellini demonstrated that this shift occurred under the influence of the developing canon law.[32] Humbert's views suggest similar developments within the Dominican Order, particularly since they accord closely with the prescriptions of the canonists.[33]

While the first procedure accords with Bellini's thesis, the second indicates Humbert's desire to preserve a more traditional form of correction, namely denunciation leading directly to penance at the chapter of faults. Humbert explicitly maintained that this procedure was in accordance with the Gospel.[34] Moreover, by allowing denunciations without witnesses or evidence, as in the third procedure, Humbert rejected even more clearly the complete judicial transformation of the chapter of faults. His commentary therefore points to a more flexible disciplinary system in which the public forum could function either as a court, in accordance with developments in canon law, or as a traditional penitential institution.

Humbert then turns to the justification of denunciation. Such justification was necessary because, as he himself acknowledged, some brothers were reluctant to denounce others. They believed that by denouncing their fellow brothers they committed the sins of insult and curiosity.[35] To persuade them otherwise, Humbert invoked numerous scriptural and patristic authorities intended to demonstrate the necessity of denunciation.[36]

Humbert also maintained that denunciation was fully justified so long as it arose from the virtues of love and compassion.[37] The appeal to love is unsurprising, since love occupied the highest place among Christi-

[31] *Expositio regulae*, 315–320.
[32] For a detailed analysis, see Bellini 1986.
[33] Cf. *Liber extra*, 239–448, 733–749.
[34] *Expositio regulae*, 318–319.
[35] *Expositio regulae*, 316, 322–323.
[36] *Expositio regulae*, 323–326.
[37] *Expositio regulae*, 316–317, 321, 344. Here Humbert gives the 'general rule' for dealing with sins: *... quod caveatur ne fiat aliquid circa hoc ex personae odio, sed 'ex dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum'.*

an virtues. It was closely connected with the supreme law of the Gospel and enabled the individual to follow Christ more fully.[38] In Humbert's conception, however, love acquired an additional function. He argued that love could justify even a Dominican disciplinary procedure that dispensed with witnesses and evidence, as in the third procedure discussed above, and that therefore stood in evident tension with both the Rule and canon law. [39] Here Humbert echoes the position of the famous Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux, who maintained that love could dispense from any rule.[40] Humbert thus not only legitimised the use of denunciation but also accorded the virtues and dispositions of the individual greater weight than written norms.

The second virtue, compassion, was also highly valued in Dominican hagiography. It was promoted as a virtue that demonstrated the capacity of a pastorally oriented preacher to relate emotionally to his neighbours and, consequently, to work more effectively for the salvation of their souls.[41]

Finally, Humbert also assigns a role to 'discretion', understood by medieval authors as the virtue of sound discernment,[42] within the disciplinary process. This virtue was to be exercised by the brothers in cases of hidden faults, enabling them to decide when to admonish and when to refer the case to the chapter of faults.[43] Such discernment was also clearly necessary in determining the binding force of the Rule, since Humbert allowed the brothers to judge when the Rule was binding and when its prescriptions could legitimately be set aside.

Denunciation was thus presented as an expression of personal virtue. In other words, Humbert's validation of *denunciatio* rested heavily on the idea that such an act could contribute to the attainment of greater Christian perfection. Yet this appeal to virtue did more than validate a disciplinary procedure; it also conceptualised the relationship between the individual and the Rule. As indicated above, Humbert allowed the individual to exercise judgement in applying the Rule and even, in certain circumstances, to regard a human norm as non-binding when his actions were guided by love as the highest divine norm. The individual was therefore presented not merely as subject to the law, but as a moral agent whose virtues could legitimise a critical and flexible application of it. In this sense, the individual himself became a normative point of reference.

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[38] On the use of love in the *vita religiosa* more generally, see Melville (ed.) 2011..

[39] See *Expositio regulae*, 333.

[40] On this, see Cygler 1999, 402.

[41] Cf. Wesjohann 2012, 442–446.

[42] Melville 2018a, 31.

[43] *Expositio regulae*, 298–306, esp. 306.

The value of denunciation was further reinforced by a juridical argument. Humbert states emphatically that every brother was under a strict obligation to denounce and that dispensation from this obligation was possible only in exceptional circumstances.[44] This is particularly striking in light of the general Dominican approach to dispensations. Whereas in other orders dispensations were exceptional, the Dominicans granted them routinely whenever observance would hinder study or pastoral work.[45] Humbert himself strongly supported this position in his *Expositio super constitutiones*.[46] When it came to denunciation, however, he adopted a more restrictive stance. In this case, dispensations were not to impede the operation of public discipline. In doing so, Humbert not only safeguarded the privileged position of the public forum but also made clear that, despite the Order's more flexible approach to dispensations, it was to preserve its identity as a community strongly committed to correction.

Admonition

What, then, became of private admonition, which had been a fundamental norm for Augustine? Humbert's commentary shows that it acquired several new functions. He explains that, despite the Order's emphasis on public procedures, admonition should remain part of Dominican life because it preserved the sense of brotherhood.[47] By appealing to this communal value, Humbert was evidently seeking to reconnect his interpretation with the Rule's underlying conception of community. He defended the usefulness of this disciplinary practice not primarily by stressing its corrective efficacy, but by showing how it contributed to the realisation of Augustine's essential vision of communal life. Humbert further maintained that the preservation of admonition helped to foster a collective awareness of sin and made the brothers more cautious in the future.[48] In other words, admonition was presented more as a preventive disciplinary instrument than as an executive one.

Humbert further strengthened the communal significance of admonition by emphasising its capacity to preserve friendship.[49] Although it might be assumed that he employed this motif merely as a rhetorical device demonstrating his familiarity with the ancient literary tradition, his argument had a further foundation. *Amicitia* became an important theme in twelfth-century monastic literature. It came to be understood as an emo-

[44] *Expositio regulae*, 319.
[45] For further details, see Hinnebusch 1966, 130; Fieback 1996, 136–138; Cygler 1999, 400–405.
[46] *Expositio super constitutiones*, 28–31.
[47] *Expositio regulae*, 299–300.
[48] *Expositio regulae*, 303.
[49] *Expositio regulae*, 300.

tional bond through which the presence of Christ was manifested.[50] Humbert explicitly refers to this value of friendship,[51] and, in this light, his incorporation of *amicitia* can be understood as an attempt to make Dominican communal ideals and disciplinary practices more explicitly Christocentric.

Humbert also attributed greater spiritual significance to admonition. He saw in it the working of the Holy Spirit and indicated that the Spirit did not dwell in those who never rebuked others.[52] Here Humbert invoked the standard theological conception of the Spirit as 'the gift in which God bestows Himself upon man'.[53] Admonition was thus presented as an opportunity for divine agency to become manifest within the community.

This idea had a further spiritual implication. It should be borne in mind that the experience of God and the *conversio* of the individual in accordance with divine law constituted the ultimate goal of monastic life.[54] To practise admonition, in which the Spirit was understood to be present, therefore implied the successful formation of the individual in accordance with these fundamental monastic aims. Humbert thus presented admonition as a functional means of proper spiritual formation.

Humbert further maintained that admonition led to a state of greater spiritual purity.[55] It liberated the soul and expelled the 'enemy', namely the Devil, both of which were fundamental preconditions for the attainment of a more perfect spiritual state.[56] Humbert thus emphasised the capacity of discipline to improve the inner condition of the individual. Continuing this spiritual line of argument, he encouraged the brethren to practise admonition by presenting it as an obligation arising from the sanctity of the community as a whole.[57] In this way, admonition also became a means of preserving the community's conception of itself as a sanctified body.

Finally, Humbert discusses the manner in which admonition should be administered. He states that it should be carried out with mildness, since the offender is comparable to a sick person.[58] By invoking Augustine's

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[50] See the exemplary work of the Cistercian monk Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spirituali amicitia*, cols. 661–670 and following. On monastic friendship more generally, see McGuire 2002.

[51] *Expositio regulae*, 300.

[52] *Expositio regulae*, 300–301.

[53] Rahner 2008, 191. This also echoes the biblical image of God chastising those whom he loves and receives as sons: *Quem enim diligit Dominus castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit* (Heb. 12:6).

[54] Meier 2016, 21–44; Melville 2018, 39–60.

[55] *Expositio regulae*, 303.

[56] *Expositio regulae*, 303.

[57] *Expositio regulae*, 300.

[58] *Expositio regulae*, 301.

medicinal argument, Humbert reaffirmed his conceptual attachment to the foundations of the Rule. Admonition should also be accompanied by the virtues of humility and compassion.[59] By incorporating these virtues into the *Expositio*, Humbert once again promoted the ideal of a virtuous community among the brethren and enhanced the acceptability of admonition within it. Admonition was also to be governed by discretion and moderation.[60] This meant that the admonishing brothers were expected to take into account the circumstances in which the transgression had occurred and to exercise prudent judgement when assessing the degree of guilt. Humbert thus followed Augustine's conception of a participatory brotherhood, while adding to it an image of the disciplining brother who made fuller use of his capacity for sound judgement, just as in the case of denunciation discussed above.[61]

Thus, while public discipline was regarded as the most effective practical means of dealing with transgressions, admonition acquired a more conceptual, spiritual, paraenetic, and communal significance. This does not mean that Humbert, or the Order more generally, neglected it in practice. On the contrary, the reconfiguration of its significance suggests an effort to find an appropriate place for admonition and to preserve it within communities whose disciplinary practices had become profoundly shaped by the ritualised custom of public correction. Humbert's commentary shows that an operative disciplinary norm such as admonition could be transformed into a more didactic principle of self-improvement and a means of preserving the sense of *communitas*. Common to both public discipline and admonition were appeals to virtue and to the medicinal effects of correction. Virtue and the idea of the community as a place of healing thus constituted stable underlying principles that gave broader meaning to the Order's disciplinary system.

The Prior and Punishment

Humbert then turns to the question of the prior's participation. Following the Rule, he states that the brothers should inform the superior after repeated admonitions have failed, but before the matter is made public through denunciation.[62] Beyond demonstrating Humbert's desire to preserve the Rule's system of correction, however, his discussion of the prior's role is significant for several further reasons. Outside the *capitulum culparum*, the prior was expected to encourage the offender to correct himself and to perform a mediating and advisory role. In the latter capa-

[59] *Expositio regulae*, 301.
[60] *Expositio regulae*, 301–302.
[61] See above.
[62] *Expositio regulae*, 328–329.

city, he was to counsel the brethren on how to handle the case and advise them in selecting the 'witnesses' for the public forum.[63]

The disclosure of guilt before the prior served another function. According to Humbert, it was intended to arouse shame in the offender.[64] Shame, in turn, was expected to deter the transgressor from repeating the sin.[65] Within this conceptual framework, psychological and emotional disturbance thus functioned as an inhibitory mechanism. By incorporating affective distress into the system of correction, Humbert once again extended the implications of the Rule. Whereas the Rule, as we have seen, emphasised merciful correction, Humbert went further by requiring the brothers to make use of the prior's authority in order to bring the offender's conscience into a more troubled and uncomfortable state. Correction was therefore also expected to operate as a powerful form of internal pressure.

Humbert further explains the benefits of involving the prior. He indicates that such involvement protects the individual's *fama*.[66] More specifically, Humbert regarded the prior's discretion as a form of verification, enabling him to assess the accusations and prevent further denunciation if they proved unfounded. The prior thereby protected the community from the sin of damaging a fellow friar's honour.[67]

In discussing the prior's role, Humbert thus sought to balance fidelity to the Rule with the need for greater flexibility. On the one hand, he preserved his attachment to the Rule by presenting the prior as the mediator and overseer of its procedures. On the other, he supplemented the Rule by emphasising shame as an effective disciplinary instrument, by involving the prior in a more inwardly oriented process of correction, and by presenting him as an assessor of the credibility of accusations.

These additions were not intended to alter the foundations of the Rule. Rather, by elaborating on the prior's role, Humbert sought to remain faithful to one of its central corrective principles: correction before public disclosure, despite the growing importance of the *forum externum*.

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[63] *Expositio regulae*, 329. As noted above, the 'witnesses' were fellow monks assembled *ad hoc* who could testify concerning the transgressor's misdeeds in the public forum. See *Regula Augustini*, 426–427.

[64] *Expositio regulae*, 331–332.

[65] *Expositio regulae*, 331. On the significance and use of shame in Christian culture, see Burrus 2008; on the relationship between reputation, punishment, and shame, see Hill 2022.

[66] *Expositio regulae*, 329.

[67] Cf. *Expositio regulae*, 330. It should be noted that the Dominicans generally paid close attention to ensuring that accusations against brothers were supported by evidence and appropriate testimony. This is clearly attested both in the 1241 codification of Dominican law (*Lib. Const.*, 55) and in the *acta* of the Order's General Chapter. See *ACG* I, 92, 176.

In this context, the prior was presented, even more explicitly than in the Rule itself, as an agent capable of promoting effective self-correction before the fault was made public. Humbert's discussion of the prior's role should therefore be understood less as an attempt to readjust Augustine's prescriptions than as an effort to determine how they could be realised within a changed disciplinary context.

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The prior also played a crucial role in the penal system. Humbert followed the Rule in affirming that punishment was to be imposed by the prior alone, rather than by the brothers.[68] He explained this by equating the prior's role with that of a judge.[69] In doing so, Humbert supplemented the wording of the Rule in accordance with the broader conception of the monastery, discussed above, as a setting in which judicial procedures could take place. In explaining the meaning of punishment, Humbert again remained broadly consistent with the Rule. He described punishment as a form of medicine. He nevertheless made its dual function more explicit: punishment not only prevented the spread of contagion within the community but also expiated past sins.[70] It was important for Humbert to articulate this understanding because it confirmed his adherence to the Order's conception of punishment. As the *Liber constitutionum* indicates, Dominican punishment was conceived as both a preventive and a reactive disciplinary instrument.[71] Here Humbert used the Rule as a normative framework through which the Order's own understanding of punishment could be affirmed.

Finally, Humbert addresses exclusion from the community. Whereas the Rule requires such punishment when a transgressor refuses to perform penance,[72] Humbert adopts a more cautious position. He proposes alternative measures: excommunication from the community and imprisonment.[73] The former should not be confused with ecclesiastical excommunication, which entailed exclusion from the sacraments and restrictions on participation in Christian society.[74] Excommunication from the community instead involved a prohibition on communication with the offender within the monastery, together with exclusion from the refectory, choir, common liturgy, and similar communal activities.[75] The offender

[68] *Expositio regulae*, 336–337.
[69] *Expositio regulae*, 334–338.
[70] *Expositio regulae*, 336–338.
[71] Jerković 2025, 15.
[72] *Regula Augustini*, 427.
[73] *Expositio regulae*, 339.
[74] Hill 2017, 37–54; Clarke 2022, 550–570.
[75] *Expositio regulae*, 339.

thus remained a member of the community, but one excluded from active participation in its common life. The second alternative, imprisonment, entailed not only exclusion from routine communal activities but also physical separation from the community, together with additional restrictions imposed upon the imprisoned brother, such as the loss of certain rights, including the right to use material goods.[76] Both alternatives, however, allowed the offender to remain within the religious community. Humbert's aim was therefore to make definitive exclusion more difficult and to preserve effective means of reintegrating the offender into communal life.

Humbert's views arose not only from his desire to preserve the communal spirit that was an important characteristic of Augustinian observance, but also from contemporary understandings of religious profession. Authors of the period increasingly emphasised that *professio* entailed not merely the formal act of entering a religious community but also a lifelong process of conforming one's life to the norms embodied in the religious vows.[77] A system that facilitated easy expulsion was difficult to reconcile with such an understanding. Monastic legislators therefore increasingly favoured rehabilitation and came to recognise *incorrigibilitas* as the only valid ground for permanent exclusion.[78]

Humbert's flexible interpretation of the Rule in this respect was therefore part of broader developments in the understanding of religious profession. It derived its legitimacy from a transformation within the *vita religiosa* that placed increasing emphasis on the permanent and lifelong character of profession.

The role of the community was by no means insignificant. Although the prior possessed executive authority in matters of punishment, the community participated by providing the social framework within which the brother's rehabilitation was to take place. By denying communication with the offender, the brethren were intended to make him experience the consequences of exclusion. The Dominican *Liber constitutionum* confirms this function and adds that, until penance had been performed, the offender was also excluded 'from the fellowship of Christ's sheep' (*a consortio ovium Christi*).[79] Fraternal discipline therefore operated not only through admonition and denunciation, but also by mobilising the offender's desire for reintegration into the community and its more perfect spiritual state.

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[76] On imprisonment in the Dominican Order, see Hoyer 2018, 323–347.

[77] For further discussion, see Melville 2018, 39–60; Füser 2000, 20–25.

[78] See, for example, Lefèvre–Grauwen 1978, 43–44.

[79] *Lib. Const*., 44.

Jordan's Commentary

Jordan of Quedlinburg composed his commentary in the 1350s. He conceived the work as a compilation of exemplary lives of brothers belonging to the Order of Augustinian Hermits and entitled it *Liber vitasfratrum*.[80] The work, however, developed into a complex, multi-genre text combining commentary on the Rule, references to the general law of the Church and of religious life, and sections offering moral and didactic guidance for the cultivation of a virtuous life. It also draws upon examples of ancient hermits and Christian saints as models of conduct, incorporating them into an imagined historical development of the Order. Structurally, the work consists of two introductory sections explaining its purpose, followed by four extensive chapters.[81]

Unlike Humbert, who substantially rationalised Augustine's prescriptions and defended the Order's flexible interpretation of the Rule, Jordan adopted a more rigorous approach, warning his brethren not to neglect the prescribed procedures.[82] To encourage his fellow friars to remain faithful to the Rule, Jordan first reproduced verbatim and in full the passage concerning fraternal correction.[83] He then defended his adherence to the Rule by arguing that its prescriptions were fully consistent with the Gospel teaching on *denunciatio evangelica* (Mt 18:15) and with Pauline disciplinary instruction (Gal 6:1).[84] For Jordan, therefore, the authority of the Rule derived from its conformity with authentic Christian teaching, and for this reason its prescriptions were to be followed closely.

Jordan then turns to denunciation. He explains that there are three types of denunciation: evangelical, canonical, and religious. The first concerns fraternal warning and aims to move the offender to repentance. The second concerns public offences and requires at least three warnings. Its purpose is punishment in accordance with law rather than repentance prompted by conscience. The third form is practised by religious within monasteries. It is the most complex type of denunciation, since it combi-

[80] Jordan explains the title in the Prologue: *Denique circa titulum operis propter iuniores est sciendum quod hic li "Vitasfratrum" stat pro una dictione, sicut et "Vitaspatrum", qui est liber beati Hieronymi; est enim nomen compositum ex duobus obliquis, et ideo manet indeclinabile per omnes casus secundum grammaticos iuxta hanc regulam: Si componantur obliqui, non variantur. Secus de nominibus compositis ex uno recto et altero obliquo sicut paterfamilias; illa enim declinantur ex una parte, composita vero ex duobus rectis declinantur ex utraque parte ut respublica*. *Liber vitasfratrum*, 5–6.

[81] For information on the *Liber vitasfratrum*, see Wesjohann 2012, 558–561.

[82] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 130–132, esp. 132.

[83] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 130–131.

[84] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 131.

nes both a call to repentance at the chapter of faults and a public denunciation that may lead to punishment in accordance with the law.[85]

Jordan's conception of religious denunciation corresponds closely to Humbert's. He likewise envisaged a dual disciplinary system in which public denunciation could result either in public penance or in formal punishment. This is unsurprising, given that the Augustinian Hermits experienced developments similar to those found among the Dominicans and other religious orders. Their codification of 1290 indicates that the *capitulum culparum* had become an established form of correction. It was held at least twice a week and followed standardised procedures.[86] Moreover, the new codification of 1345–1347 confirms that the chapter of faults had also begun to function as a judicial forum. This second codification provided for hearings, granted the brothers the right to defend themselves, and permitted the calling of external witnesses.[87] As in the Dominican case, therefore, the disciplinary system of the Augustinian Hermits combined the routinisation of public ritual with the development of judicial procedures.

Yet, whereas Humbert was aware that the Order had moved beyond a strict observance of the Rule and sought appropriate ways of reconciling the Rule with contemporary practice, Jordan omitted any discussion of the impact of disciplinary developments on normative standards. He simply implied that religious denunciation, including the form practised by his own Order, was fully consistent with the Rule.[88] Moreover, he gave no indication that private admonition might have been neglected in practice. Instead, he stated laconically that denunciation in the public forum required three prior private warnings.[89] Jordan's treatment of the issue, however, should not be understood as resulting from a lack of interest or from an unwillingness to explain contemporary practice. Rather, it reflected his desire to align the Order conceptually as closely as possible with the Rule. Whereas Humbert sought to explain rationally how changing disciplinary practices could be reconciled with the Rule, Jordan's strategy was to present an image of faithful adherence by leaving practical adaptations of its prescriptions largely unacknowledged at the textual level. In this way, he promoted an image of the Order as a community possessing a particularly strong Augustinian authenticity.[90]

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[85] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 132–133.

[86] *Const. Ratisb*., 35–39.

[87] *Const. Ratisb*., 37.

[88] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 132.

[89] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 132: *... in hac autem regulari debet intervenire triplex monitio, antequam fiat denuntiatio publica in Capitulo, ut dictum est.*

[90] On the ways in which various authors, including Jordan, employed the image of Augustine in constructing the identity of medieval religious communities, see Saak 2012; Wesjohann 2012, 566–671.

Jordan further reinforced the legitimacy of the Order's disciplinary practices by stressing that religious denunciation, like the other two forms, evangelical and canonical denunciation, was in accordance with Church law.[91] Fraternal discipline was thus grounded not only in the Augustinian tradition but also in a broader ecclesiastical and juridical framework.

Jordan also turned to hagiography in order to validate the Order's disciplinary practices. He provided several examples from the lives of ancient hermits to demonstrate their conformity with contemporary Augustinian practice.[92] In doing so, he constructed a textual link between the Order and the authentic eremitical tradition. Moreover, by showing that the same practices had been followed by exemplary hermits of the past, Jordan presented the principles of the Rule as timeless and authoritative. This, in turn, strengthened the normative force of the principles that his own fellow friars were expected to observe.

Like Humbert, Jordan connected fraternal discipline with virtue. He emphasised love and instructed the brethren: *Ad caritatis etiam officium correptio fraterna pertinet*.[93] Moreover, Jordan insisted that correction itself should be received charitably: a brother who was denounced or punished was likewise expected to accept his correction in a spirit of love.[94] Yet whereas Humbert, as we have seen, invoked love as a virtue that could enable the brethren, in certain circumstances, to move beyond the written norm, Jordan employed it as a means of binding the brethren more closely to the Rule. He argued that by exercising discipline charitably, the Augustinians remained faithful to Augustine's conception of gentle care for a neighbour's soul.[95]

In addition to love, Jordan emphasised humility and endurance. These virtues appear particularly in the hagiographical *exempla* concerning the ancient hermits. Jordan selected precisely those *vitae* that described a willingness to endure penance patiently and to bear correction humbly.[96] In doing so, he sought to show his fellow friars how virtuous conduct connected them with the eremitical ideal and with an authentic form of *vita religiosa*. Thus, whereas Humbert's use of virtue tended more towards the affirmation of individual moral judgement – the capacity of the

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[91] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 132: *Est autem advertendum, quod secundum iura triplex est denuntiatio, videlicet evangelica, canonica et regularis.*

[92] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 133–136.

[93] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 130.

[94] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 135: *Sicut autem huiusmodi fraterna correptio in caritate facienda est ex parte corripientis, sic etiam ex parte correpti est in caritate suscipienda.*

[95] Jordan supported this argument not only by relating it to the wording of the Rule, but also by invoking the authority of Saint Paul, Hugh of Saint Victor, the well–known twelfth–century commentator on Augustine's Rule, and Augustine himself, through a reference to the sermon *De iustitia ad fratres eremitas*. *Liber vitasfratrum*, 130, 133–134.

[96] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 133–136.

individual, in certain circumstances, to assess and qualify the application of norms[97] – Jordan employed virtue primarily to shape a more perfect, norm-oriented Augustinian friar and hermit.

Jordan's understanding of punishment, however, corresponded closely to Humbert's. In commenting on the Rule's prescription that an offender who refused punishment should be expelled, Jordan likewise displayed considerable reluctance to apply this principle directly. Instead, like Humbert, he instructed the brethren to resort either to excommunication from the community or to imprisonment. He reserved expulsion for irreformable offenders.[98] Jordan's views on punishment were therefore consistent with those of contemporary monastic authors, who increasingly emphasised the lifelong character of commitment to religious vows, as well as with the ideas of monastic legislators, who placed growing emphasis on the corrective and reintegrative functions of discipline.

When discussing punishment, Jordan thus showed his greatest willingness to interpret the Rule flexibly. To support this flexibility, he again drew upon the *vitae* of the ancient hermits, showing that expulsion was not always beneficial to the offender. He selected *exempla* that emphasised abbatial care for the sinner rather than exclusion, as well as cases in which expulsion resulted in the offender's spiritual ruin.[99] The eremitical tradition therefore functioned for Jordan as an authority not merely for edification but also for supplementing and refining the meaning of the Rule.

Finally, Jordan addresses the binding force of the Rule. He maintains that the Augustinians must observe everything contained in the Rule,[100] and does not discuss circumstances in which they might be exempt from its observance. He does, however, distinguish between different degrees of binding force among its prescriptions. Jordan explains that the Rule contains three fundamental principles whose violation entails sin: obedience, chastity, and poverty.[101] This is unsurprising, since these constituted the three foundations of religious life,[102] and formed the core of the Augustinian formula of profession.[103] All other prescriptions contained in the Rule bind the brothers either as ordinances or as counsels, and their violation does not, as a rule, entail sin.[104] Jordan nevertheless identifies two

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[97] See above.

[98] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 133.

[99] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 133–135.

[100] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 179.

[101] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 177.

[102] Kehnel 2005, 72; Melville 2005, 181; Andenna 2005, 189.

[103] *Lib. Const*., 61. See also Andenna 2005, 383–408.

[104] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 178.

exceptions. First, a brother sins if he refuses to obey a direct command of his superior concerning an observance prescribed by the Rule. Second, he commits a mortal sin if he transgresses the Rule out of contempt.[105]

Jordan's discussion should be understood within the context of a broader debate concerning the binding force of normative texts. This debate was initiated by the Dominicans in the early thirteenth century. Whereas older religious communities generally drew no clear distinction between violating a norm and committing a sin,[106] the Dominicans adopted a more flexible position. In the *Liber consuetudinum* (1228–1236), they declared that their constitutions did not bind under pain of sin, except where a transgression arose from contempt for the law or from disobedience to an explicit command.[107] The Dominicans adopted a similar approach even towards the Rule. In his *Expositio super constitutiones*, Humbert recounts a story concerning the Order's founder, Dominic of Caleruega, who instructed the brethren that not every transgression of the Rule was sinful.[108] Humbert accordingly felt able to go further and, as we have seen, to state that the precepts of the Rule *non obligant in omni casu, sed in casu opportuno*.[109] In other words, Humbert not only maintained that violation of the Rule did not necessarily entail sin, but also held that its prescriptions were not unconditionally binding in every circumstance.

Jordan clearly adopted the Dominican principle that disobedience to the prior and contempt could render a transgression sinful. He was, however, unwilling to accept the Dominican approach to relaxing the Rule's binding force.[110] The consciences of Augustinian friars could therefore be relieved with regard to the sinful character of particular transgressions, but not with regard to their obligation to observe everything prescribed by the Rule. Accordingly, Jordan did not allow *discretio* to serve as a means of determining when a norm could legitimately be disregarded.

In practical terms, Jordan's adherence to the Rule meant that the omission of private admonition would not in itself constitute a sin, unless it resulted from contempt or disobedience, but it could still constitute a disciplinary offence. Whether this conception affected the consciences and everyday practices of the friars cannot be determined. We do not know

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[105] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 176–179.

[106] Cf. Füser 2000, 64–65.

[107] *Lib. Consuet.*, 312: *... volumus et declaramus ut constitutiones nostre non obligent nos ad culpam, sed ad penam, nisi propter contemptum vel preceptum.* For further discussion, see Cygler 2001, 387–401.

[108] *Expositio super constitutiones*, 46.

[109] *Expositio regulae*, 306. See the discussion above.

[110] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 179.

whether brothers employed admonition, at least formally, before the chapter of faults in order to fulfil the prescribed requirement and avoid punishment. Jordan's text nevertheless suggests that there was a tendency within the Order to bind the Augustinian friars more closely to the Rule by maintaining their obligation to observe its prescriptions even where their violation did not entail sin.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to demonstrate two different approaches to the same normative source. Humbert of Romans interpreted the Rule of Augustine with considerable flexibility, whereas Jordan of Quedlinburg devoted substantial effort to maintaining close adherence to its prescriptions. These contrasting approaches are particularly evident in their treatment of Augustine's disciplinary principle of mutual correction among the brothers. In Humbert's interpretation, disciplinary obligations were to be applied rationally and with due regard for the historical and institutional development of the Order. Jordan, by contrast, was more inclined to leave practical adaptations unacknowledged and to affirm textually the continuing authority of the Rule within the life of the Augustinian Hermits.

Humbert departed from the strict wording of the Rule by differentiating disciplinary procedures according to the category of transgression. He shifted the emphasis from private admonition to public correction, thereby accommodating contemporary developments within the *vita religiosa*. Moreover, he maintained that, in certain circumstances, particular prescriptions of the Rule could even be set aside. His aim, however, was not to abandon the Rule. On the contrary, he sought to reconcile established disciplinary practice with the Order's normative foundations and to render Augustine's ancient prescriptions applicable and meaningful within the contemporary life of the brethren.

An important element of Humbert's discussion is his emphasis on virtue. He stresses that the proper correction of a brother should arise from love, compassion, and *discretio*. In this way, he presents his Order not only as a disciplinary community in which the mutual correction of brothers constituted an obligation, but also as a virtuous community within which individuals could attain a more perfect Christian state. Virtue was also significant because it could provide justification for moving beyond the prescriptions of the Rule. As we have seen, by placing love and sound judgement at the forefront, Humbert allowed his fellow friars to exercise their own judgement in applying the Rule, that is, to determine when and how its provisions should be observed.

Nevertheless, the most important aspect of Humbert's commentary is his affirmation of public correction, which, through the institution of the *capitulum culparum*, came to dominate the Order's everyday disciplinary practice. Sinfulness was to be made visible to the entire community on a regular, indeed daily, basis, and the community as a whole was expected to address it either through a judicial procedure involving the examination of evidence or through a penitential procedure intended to purify the conscience.

It was precisely this strong emphasis on the public character of discipline that contributed to a transformation in the function of private admonition. Whereas Augustine regarded it as a primary means of correction, Humbert increasingly presented it as an opportunity to preserve internal cohesion and a sense of fraternity. He thus treated admonition less as an operative disciplinary mechanism than as a paraenetic instrument capable of sustaining the quality of communal and spiritual life.

Finally, Humbert sought to employ the authority of superiors not only by assigning them oversight of disciplinary procedures, but also by making them figures before whom an offending brother would experience shame. In matters of punishment, moreover, Humbert advocated alternatives to definitive exclusion. Whereas the Rule envisaged the removal of an offender who persistently refused correction, Humbert advised priors to employ such a drastic measure only in cases of serious incorrigibility. His position reflected contemporary developments among religious authors, who placed greater emphasis than their predecessors on the permanent and lifelong character of religious profession.

Jordan, by contrast, did not explicitly address discrepancies between normative prescriptions and contemporary practice. His approach remained strongly oriented towards the Rule itself. His argument frequently consists of brief assertions that everything prescribed by the Rule must be observed. Jordan grounded this position by connecting fraternal discipline with scriptural precepts and with monastic and ecclesiastical tradition. He also provided numerous examples from the lives of ancient hermits in order to reinforce the authority of the Rule. In doing so, he suggested that the principles contained in the Rule had already been embodied in the lives of the earliest monks of the desert.

The most substantial similarity between Jordan and Humbert appears in their understanding of punishment. Jordan was clearly influenced by the same broader developments as Humbert and likewise preferred excommunication from the community and imprisonment to expulsion. When addressing the binding force of the Rule, however, Jordan placed greater pressure on the consciences of his brethren. He allowed some relief with regard to sin, since he did not regard every violation of the Rule as sinful in itself. Unlike Humbert, however, he permitted no comparable

relaxation of the Rule's obligatory character. Augustine's prescriptions were to be observed in their entirety, and Jordan did not envisage circumstances in which the brothers might simply dispense themselves from them.

Jordan also attached considerable importance to virtue. Like Humbert, he regarded fraternal discipline as a means of creating a virtuous community. He nevertheless assigned virtues a different function. For Jordan, love was not a principle that could justify moving beyond the Rule, but rather a means of bringing its prescriptions to fuller realisation. Moreover, his discussion placed less emphasis on compassion and *discretio* and more on humility and endurance. In this way, he connected the observance of his Order with the eremitical tradition, which he presented as an authentic form of monastic life.

The two approaches resulted not only from differing authorial perspectives but also from distinct understandings of religious profession and of the respective missions of the Dominicans and Augustinian Hermits. It should be stressed that the Dominican *Liber consuetudinum* likewise proclaimed the need to preserve uniform observance of the Rule as a defining feature of the Order's identity.[111] Yet the Order's principal earthly mission was formulated in the following terms:

> *... cum ordo noster specialiter ob predicationem et animarum salutem ab initio noscatur institutus fuisse, et studium nostrum ad hoc principaliter ardenterque summon opere debeat intendere, ut proximorum animabus possimus utiles esse.*[112]

Scholars have already demonstrated that the comparatively flexible Dominican approach to religious life, and the Order's greater willingness to adapt its observances, was closely connected with this principle: the explicit assertion that the Order had been founded above all for preaching and the care of souls. In other words, Dominican institutional organisation and spiritual life were structured around the aim of fulfilling this pastoral mission as effectively as possible.[113] Humbert's commentary lends further support to this interpretation. In the Prologue to his *Expositio*, Humbert suggests that everything contained in the Rule is particularly suited to the formation of a preacher.[114] The purpose of the commentary is accordingly to explain how a preacher, through observance of the Rule, might edify both himself and others. The Rule thus functions as a norma-

[111] *Lib. Consuet.*, 311.
[112] *Lib. Consuet.*, 311.
[113] See Melville 2010, 377–38.
[114] *Expositio regulae*, 43–53.

tive framework for the preacher's spiritual formation and for the outward expression of love through pastoral activity.[115]

The book of constitutions of the Augustinian Hermits likewise contains an injunction to maintain a uniform life in accordance with the Rule. Its introductory section, however, does not give comparable prominence to the Order's pastoral mission. Although the constitutions repeatedly address preaching and other pastoral obligations, their explanation of the purpose of the Order's norms centres instead on fidelity to the Augustinian and apostolic ideal of living as 'one heart and one mind in God'.[116] Thus, whereas the Dominicans accorded particular importance to the fulfilment of their pastoral mission, the Augustinian Hermits placed primary emphasis on the realisation of Augustinian observance. This orientation is clearly reflected in the introductory section of the *Liber vitasfratrum*, where Jordan states:

> *Quod quidem opusculum Vitasfratrum idcirco appellaverim, tum quia in eo vita fratrum describitur, tum quia eius lectione frater quilibet, an sit verus filius Patris nostri sanctissimi Augustini ac per hoc verus frater Ordinis sui, ex vita propria sua cognoscere valebit supererogationis operibus plurifariis in eodem contentis nihilominus circumscriptis.*[117]

The *Liber vitasfratrum* was therefore intended to enable brothers to determine whether they were true sons of Augustine. Unlike Humbert's commentary, which emphasised the usefulness of the Rule for the formation of a preacher, Jordan employed his work to instruct his fellow friars in aligning their lives as closely as possible with Augustine's prescriptions. This purpose was further reinforced by his presentation of the ancient hermits, who, although they had not observed the Rule of Augustine itself, were portrayed as embodying the same fundamental principles of virtuous religious life.

The contrast is therefore significant. Humbert's commentary reflects the Dominican emphasis on adapting normative observance to the Order's pastoral mission, whereas Jordan's reflects the Augustinian Hermits' concern to present themselves as true sons of Augustine. The treatment of Augustine's disciplinary prescriptions consequently illustrates how different understandings of earthly mission and of the *vita religiosa* could shape medieval authors' approaches to an ancient normative text. Humbert interpreted the Rule as a normative framework whose application had to be reconciled with contemporary institutional practice, while

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[115] *Expositio regulae*, 56–60.
[116] *Const. Ratisb.*, 31.
[117] *Liber vitasfratrum*, 2.

Jordan sought to minimise the significance of historical change in order to maintain the closest possible connection with the Augustinian ideal.

Finally, the analysis of these commentaries may contribute to a better understanding of what might be termed the 'anthropology of the individual' within medieval religious life. Both authors wrote in order to explain to members of their communities how normative prescriptions should be observed. Their commentaries therefore sought to inculcate in individual friars a set of cultural and religious values regarded by their respective Orders as conducive to spiritual progress. In doing so, they participated in shaping the inner dispositions and forms of self-understanding expected of the religious individual. The contrasting approaches to the Rule – Humbert's more flexible interpretation and Jordan's more rigorous adherence to its prescriptions – accordingly contributed to the construction of two different ideal types of medieval religious personality. The first, emerging from the Dominican context described here, may be characterised as more rationally or pragmatically oriented, in the sense that the individual was expected to exercise judgement in applying normative prescriptions to changing circumstances. The second, reflected in Jordan's Augustinian context, may be described as more tradition-oriented, since the individual was expected to bring his life into the closest possible conformity with inherited normative ideals. Both developed within the same broad category of religious life, the mendicant orders, yet they reveal different ways in which religious subjects could be formed despite their shared canonical status. This distinction provides a useful starting point for further comparative study of the formation of religious individuals across the wide range of communities that developed from Late Antiquity onwards.

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