

**PHYSICAL WORK IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL MONASTIC COMMUNITIES ON
THE BASIS OF THE RULES OF AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, BENEDICT OF NURSIA,
CAESARIUS OF ARLES, COLUMBA THE YOUNGER, AND ISIDORE OF SEVILLE**

SUMMARY

This article aims to describe how the manual labor looked like in the first monastic communities. Such founders as Augustine of Hippo, Caesarius of Arles, Benedict of Nursia, Isidore of Seville, when creating their rules for monks, took into account both the local conditions of the area, and the personal predisposition of monks. The physical work was dependent on health and strength as the natural capacity of man. Therefore, only certain hours a day were dedicated for physical activity, the others were for reading. The types of works and their schedule depended also on season, climate, and the length of day and night. Work was not a value in itself, and was strictly subordinated to the needs of a monastery. There might have also been some discharges from the work in the case of an urgent necessity, as those described by the Rule of St. Benedict. Against the background of other European monastic rules, the Rule of St. Columban was an exception, as it was characterized by rigid regulations. Physical activity, for example, was of paramount importance for St. Columban, while it was never more important than the office for St. Benedict. A completely different approach to physical work was represented by St. Isidore of Seville, whose Rule recommended light works which did not interfere with prayer.

KEYWORDS: physical work, monastic community, monastic rules, the office of God, chronobiology, spiritual life, monasticism.

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