

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COUNCIL

Application for  Regular,  Major Grant

Name: Susan A. Keefe

Rank: Assistant Professor of Church History

Department/School: The Divinity School

Title/Subject of Project: The Education of a Christendom:  
Clerical Instruction and Popular Belief in Ninth-Century Europe.

Type of Project:  Pilot project in preparation for  
outside funding application  
 Self-contained project of 1 year's  
duration or less  
 Part of long-term study  
 Finalizing a study in preparation  
for publication  
 Other (please describe briefly)

Have you received previous URC funding for this project:

yes  no

Outside funding for this project is:

Unavailable  
 Probably unavailable without preliminary study  
 Available but inconvenient/difficult to obtain  
 Available but applicant has not applied for support  
 Available but applicant will not apply for support  
(if this item is checked, please explain in body of  
application)

Signature Juan A. Keefe Date: Feb. 19, 1991

Amount of this application: \$ 5,000.

APPLICATION OF SUSAN A. KEEFE  
FOR MAJOR GRANT PROGRAM, 1991

**INTRODUCTION**

I am applying for a Major Grant in order to meet the expenses of manuscript research in European archives with a view to publication of a book on creeds and creed commentaries in eighth and ninth-century manuscripts. My request for the full limit of the Grant is necessary to cover travel to and in Europe, living expenses, and the cost of microfilming manuscripts I will be examining, from June 1 to August 1, 1991.

I have no alternative but to apply for a Major Grant, given the fact that even minimally estimated expenses for two months of intensive research in Europe come to well over the full amount available from a Regular Grant, as I will outline in my Proposal. I have applied for outside funding for this project, both from the NEH and the ACLS, but I have no guarantee that these fund-applications will come through. Even if one of them should, it would not be sufficient to cover my estimated budget.

The "Type of Project," a "self-contained project of one year's duration or less," refers to the actual visitation time of manuscripts in Europe. The microfilm purchased after seeing the manuscripts will permit the research to go on, and the book to be written, here at Duke over the next several summers. At this stage, to initiate the project, actual visitation of the holdings of many poorly-catalogued libraries is essential in order to establish the contents of the extant Carolingian manuscripts.

**TITLE OF PROPOSAL:** The Education of a Christendom: Clerical Instruction and Popular Belief in Ninth-Century Europe: A Study of Creeds and Creed Commentaries in Carolingian Collection Volumes.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

I am applying for a Major Grant in order to meet the expenses of research at European archives from June 1 to August 1, 1991. This research is aimed at the publication of a book with the title of this proposal.

In the broadest sense my project deals with the history of education. Across western Europe at the time of Charlemagne (ca. 800) reforms sought to unite his empire through a common faith, common forms of worship, and a single religious law code. Such unity of belief and practice could only be brought about in a lasting way through education. For the rural population, the bishops and their parish priests were its only contact with the world of learning. Yet, we know almost nothing about the education of the parish priest at the time of the so-called "Carolingian Reform."

Is it possible, today, to remove this ignorance: to confirm or reject **on the basis of actual evidence** (not reform laws) the importance of the Carolingian era in the history of popular education? The closest we will ever come to knowing how and what the people at the grass-roots level of society were taught are the manuscripts containing instruction for the clergy. My introduction to these manuscripts came about through my long interest in baptismal expositions (commentaries or instructions on the rite of baptism), and the ninth-century volumes in which they are contained. My finds have now been summarized in a forth-coming book on baptism in the Carolingian empire.

But the book, rather than completes, only opens up more imperatively the inquiry about the true nature and importance of the Carolingian Reform (or "Renaissance") for western civilization. It is only one study among dozens scholars are recently generating on the Carolingian era, based on

manuscript research. (These include studies of genres of literature such as canon law collections, penitential books, sermon collections, bishops' diocesan statutes, church inventories and library catalogues, and charters.) The answers to questions regarding the transmission of classical education, the understanding of the Christian faith and its interpretation to a pagan world (pagan in all but name), the existence of schools, the method and means of teaching, the extent of the use of books, the use of Latin vs. the vernacular, to the degree they can be had, lie in the surviving manuscripts.

These precious volumes, astonishingly enough, have been far from fully examined by scholars. Many contain texts that have never been identified or published. The reason for their neglect has been due, in part, to the lack of paleographic expertise needed to identify these manuscripts as Carolingian, before the time of Professor Bernard Bischoff (Munich) in the second half of this century. Only with his secure identifying of hundreds of manuscripts lying in European monasteries and archives, scholars now are permitted an interest in anonymous texts which do not need a known author to be labeled Carolingian.

Together, the work of scholars is building an impressive new picture of the literary activity of the Carolingians and their contribution to western thought. Our textbooks now need to be revised that call the Carolingians mere copyists, and that neglect the diversity of ideas and difficulty of standardizing belief or thought across Carolingian Europe. Diversity has been true of Europe down to today. Indeed, regard for indigenous customs may be stronger than the economic lure toward complete uni-culture in the EC.

In my recently completed book I describe the contents of over sixty ninth-century manuscripts. While I focused in these manuscripts on baptismal

expositions, which taught the priest how baptism must be celebrated and explained to the people, now I wish to launch into a new area of investigation and thought: the creeds and creed commentaries which appear in ninth-century manuscripts intended for the instruction of the clergy and people.

No one has as yet systematically collected the texts pertaining to the definition of the faith and identified them. Yet they reveal what the baptized people of the ninth-century European countryside were actually taught about the Christian faith, and how much diversity of belief existed from one area to another. In the late eighth and ninth century, Europe, while nominally orthodox Christian, was still struggling with widespread paganism and with Arianism, Adoptionism, Pelagianism, and other less well-defined mis-constructions of Christianity. Part of the story of the Christianization of Europe is wrapped up in the creeds which every male and female parent or sponsor was required to memorize and recite at baptism.

My preliminary investigations have revealed the use of variant wordings of the Nicene, Apostles, Athanasian, and other Creeds. Particularly intriguing are the variations among glosses, or explanations, of the phrases of the Creeds. Why do they vary? Do the variations reflect a wide range of understanding of Christianity regarding almost everything from the concept of a God who is Three **and** One, to a resurrection of the body, a judgment, and a reward for one's good or bad deeds?

The need to establish a list of the extant Carolingian creed material has been voiced by numerous scholars. It will help to sort out anonymous texts in the Carolingian collection volumes (defined as a large number of diverse texts all bound together in a single volume) and enable us to link manuscripts now scattered in many archives over eastern and western Europe and even the United States. By such links we have been able to date,

locate, and sometimes establish the author of anonymous texts.

My book on the creeds will also aim to shed some light on another problem area in the current manuscript research: no one has yet made an attempt to appreciate the Carolingian collection volumes as books each with an intended purpose or recipient. We need to consider the volume **as a whole**. How was it intended? As a schoolbook? a bishop's manual? a library exemplar for copying? a clerical instruction-reader? a missionary's vade me-cum? There are numerous possibilities, but we must begin to establish some criteria by which to define the intended destination of these volumes, so that we do not overlook the actual purpose or function of any individual text found in them. This is absolutely key to evaluating accurately the true nature and success of the Carolingian Reform regarding whom it effected.

Thus, in order to write this book it is first necessary to show for whom the manuscript volumes were intended that contain the creed commentaries. I must describe their entire contents, a neglect of scholars in the past. Because catalogue descriptions often fail to give complete descriptions of the contents of these Carolingian collection volumes, I must go to the libraries and read them, take notes and order microfilm (where permitted) of any finds.

Some efforts are underway to microfilm the extant medieval manuscripts in Europe. The Hill Monastic Manuscript Library at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota has filmed a large number of libraries in Austria and Germany, and scattered libraries in Spain, Portugal, and England, which has saved me time and expense. But their project has yet to cover many of the libraries containing manuscripts I wish to see, especially in northern Italy and Spain. I have already established a fairly substantial list of manuscripts that do or probably do contain creeds or creed commentaries.

## PLAN OF PROPOSAL

Specifically, my plan is 1) to continue gathering manuscript information between now and June 1, 1991, as well as write to the libraries I plan to visit (a courtesy that helps me when I arrive); 2) from June 1 to August 1, 1991 to see manuscripts in the following cities: in Germany: Berlin, Merseburg, Munich, Wolfenbüttel, Regensburg, Freising, Stuttgart, Fulda, Würzburg, Bamberg, Frankfurt/M, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Eichstätt, Düsseldorf. In Italy: Monza, Turin, Padua, Ivrea, Novara, Vercelli, Milan, Verona, Florence, Rome, Montecassino, Naples. In Spain: Barcelona, Vic, Tortosa, El Escorial. In France: Montpellier, Verdun, Albi, Paris, Orléans, Tours, Laon. This is only an initial list. I will be accumulating more cities after writing this proposal as I do more research in the catalogues available to me in this country and after speaking to some of my colleagues now in Europe.

## BUDGET ESTIMATE OF PROPOSAL

Because of the necessity of working in Europe and the nature of the project involving manuscripts of which I must purchase microfilm in order to transcribe their contents for publication, I am requesting the full \$5,000 limit, to be spent as follows: estimated round trip airfare to Europe, \$1100; Eurorail pass for two months of unlimited travel, \$840; lodging and meals (\$35.00 per diem x 60 days), \$2100; microfilm (approximately \$50.00 per film x 30 manuscripts), \$1500.

I have no current support for this project, although I am pending the outcome of applications for a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend and an American Council of Learned Societies Grant-in-Aid.

Both of these awards are very difficult to obtain.

In conclusion, I feel that I am in a good position to tackle the creed commentaries because of the list of manuscripts I have already been able to assemble due to my work on baptism, because of my known association with liturgical commentaries and the Carolingian period by others who can alert me to new manuscripts, and because I have been able to gain some sense of the type of manuscripts most likely to contain Carolingian instructions on the creeds. In the past I have been received most graciously at European libraries and monasteries, and have found librarians only too eager to help me in my research.