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Zum Geleit


Keine geringere Freude aber bereitet es, darüber hinaus zu beobachten, wie es dem Autor in diesem Band auf filigrane Weise gelingt, seinen klostergeschichtlichen Ansatz so herauszuarbeiten, dass dessen innovativer Kern unangefochten bestehen bleibt: Forschungsmethoden und eine erhebliche reale konventionellen Themenetik glänzend hervortreten.

Liest man nur die Titel der versammelten Aufsätze, so erwartet man wohl vor allem regionalgeschichtliche Abhandlungen über Flandern – eine Landschaft, die schon im Hochmittelalter von monastischem Leben tief bis in das 17. Jahrhundert und bis heute unter recht unterschiedlichen Beurteilungsmethoden eine intensive Erforschung fand. Steven Vanderputten reiht sich mit Qualität in diese Kette ein, aber er tut eben auch wesentlich mehr.

Betrachtet man nämlich den Gesamttitel des Bandes – "Reform, Conflict, and the Shaping of Corporate Identities. Collected Studies on Benedictine Monasticism, 1050-1150" –, so kann man sich hinwiederum des Eindruckes nicht erwehren, dass er augenscheinlich so gar nichts mit einer klostergeschichtlichen Perspektive zu tun hat, die unumgänglich einer regionalgeschichtlichen Einbindung bedürfe. Der Autor indes verdeutlicht durch seine Abhandlungen, dass gerade Fragen nach Reform und Konflikt und vor allem nach der 'Corporate Identity', die scheinbar so übergeordnet und abstrakt dargestellt, zumindest wesentlich präziser, aber auch in vielen Fällen auch ausdrücklich in Bezugnahme auf regionalgeschichtliche Gegebenheiten zu beantworten sind. So hebt er schon in seiner programmatischen Einleitung ausdrücklich hervor, dass er sich durch die vorliegende Aufsatzsammlung gerade nicht weiter als ein Regionalhistoriker profilieren möchte, sondern dass es ihm darum geht, solche Strukturen in einer verfeinerten, differenzierter Weise sehen zu lassen.
Gewiss, Klöster sind wie alle organisierten Vereinigungen immer auch eingebunden in ihr soziales, politisches, wirtschaftliches und intellektuelles Umfeld. Das ist wesensbedingt, und Marie-Dominique CHENU hat diesen Sachverhalt auf den Punkt gebracht mit folgenden, an Augustinus gemahnenden Worten: "Le monastère est en même temps la cellule d'une cité terrestre".

Doch Steven Vanderputten begnügt sich nicht mit der Feststellung, dass es so ist, und fügt nicht einfach weitere regionalgeschichtliche und sich selbst genügende Details hinzu, sondern er sucht zu ergründen, was eine solche Verwebung in regionale Verhältnisse für die Entwicklung, für die Gestaltung und für die Eigendefinition des Monastischen bedeutet hat. Darin liegt Vanderputtens Stärke. Seine Perspektive ist analytisch, nicht deskriptiv und damit ermöglicht sie, ja fordert sie geradezu auf, vom Regionalen paradigmatisch auf das Ganze zu blicken.


Gert Melville
INTRODUCTION

The beginnings of scholarship on Flemish monasticism during the central medieval period lie in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when antiquarian historians such as François DE BAR († 1606),1 Jean BUZELIN († 1626)2 and Albert LE MIRE († 1640)3 compiled (and in some cases published) monographic studies relating to the monastic history of the region. In addition to reflecting new methods of historical research, several of these works explicitly celebrated the Benedictine order’s historical contribution to the Catholic Church’s triumphant self-understanding. Similar methodological interests and ideological concerns motivated several campaigns to edit large numbers of primary evidence. For hagiographical material, there were the Acta Sanctorum, published by the Bollandists from the early seventeenth century onwards and based upon the initial work of the Antwerp Jesuits Heribert ROSWEYDE and Godfrey HENSCHEN.4 For library catalogues and book collections, there was the Bibliotheca Belgica Manuscripta of Antonius SANDERUS, whose Bibliotheca Belgica Manuscripta continues to hold great interest for scholars.5 And for diplomatic texts and historiographical sources, the most notable example are respectively Jean MABILLON’s De re diplomatica and MARTÈNE and DURAND’s Thesaurus novus anecdotorum.6 Many of these early studies and editions, nearly all of which continue to be relevant in some way or other, were relied upon by the compilers of the multi-volume, ground-breaking Gallia Christiana, a survey of all religious institutions and their leadership in the then-current territory of France.7

1 DE BAR was prior of the abbey of Anchin; all of his works remain unpublished, and are mainly preserved at the Bibliothèque Municipale in Douai and the Royal Library in Brussels; see E.A. ESCALLIER, L’abbaye d’Anchin 1079-1792 (Lille, 1852), pp. 263-566.
2 J. BUZELINUS, Annales Gallo-Flandriae (Douai, 1624) and IDEM, Gallo-Flandria sacra et profana (Douai, 1624-1625).
3 A. MIRAEUS, Origines coenobiorum Benedictorum in Belgio (Antwerp, 1606); on this and other works, see C.B. DE RIDDER, Aubert Le Mire, sa vie, ses écrits: mémoire historique et critique (Brussels, 1863).
5 A. SANDERUS, Bibliotheca belgica manuscripta (Lille, 1641-1643); on this and other works, see C. DE VLEESCHAUWER, De Flandria Illustrata van Antonius Sanderus (Brussels, 1978).
6 J. MABILLON, De re diplomatica (Paris, 1681).
7 E. MARTÈNE / U. DURAND, Thesaurus novus anecdotorum, 5 vols (Paris, 1717-1765); relevant to the region are vols 3 and 10.
The work of these compilers and editors was facilitated significantly by the efforts of local archivists and chroniclers, who since the later medieval period had been saving substantial amounts of primary evidence from oblivion through transcriptions in chronicles, cartularies, and other documents, and through the composition of historiographical narratives summarizing the medieval past of their institutions. Much of their work was intended in the first place to serve internal purposes (part administrative, part commemorative), and only secondarily to inform a wider public. Surely the most ambitious enterprise of all was Dom DE WITTE's († 1807) massive, eleven-tome *Grand Cartulaire* of Saint-Bertin, which compiled all known diplomatic material for this monastery up to 1600. This project, which began in the 1770s and was originally intended as preparation for a printed publication, was cut short by the French Revolution, when the monastic community was dissolved and many of the original charters disappeared.

10 While the French Revolution marked a profound rupture in the study of the region's ecclesiastical past, the Catholic restoration movement of the middle decades of the nineteenth century gave a new impetus to regional monastic studies. As early as 1833-1835, excavations took place on the site of the ruined abbatial church of Saint-Bertin, and in 1854-1855, a two-volume monograph was published on the abbots of that institution. Now less than satisfactory from a scholarly viewpoint, these two publications signaled the interest taken by scholars and the wider public in the history of Flanders' Benedictine past.

11 The abbey of Saint-Bavo, abolished in 1536-1537, in the mid-nineteenth century was rediscovered as a major site for the history of medieval monastic architecture and recognized as a significant *lieu de mémoire* for the history of the city of Ghent and the county of Flanders. Similarly, the historical, textual and artistic legacies of Saint-Peter in Ghent, Anchin, Marchiennes, and a host of other abbeys, were rediscovered and studied in the nineteenth century.

9 Many of these archives and historical narratives are referenced in Monasticon Belgica, 9 vols. (Leuven, 1890-1993) and BECQUET's *Abbayes et prieurés*, see further, at note 33.


11 Previous generations of monks at Saint-Bertin had been less open about their institution's medieval legacies. Scholars with an outstanding reputation (including DU CANGE, DU CHESNE, MALBRANCQ, MABILLON, and the Benedictines of Saint-Maur) had been allowed access to the diplomatic material from the abbey's archives only through the heavily manipulated versions found in cartularies, not the originals or loose copies thereof; HAIGNERÉ, *Les chartes*, I, p. V.


13 See in particular A. VAN LOKEREN, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Bavo et de la crypte de Saint-Jean, à Gand* (Ghent, 1855).
other institutions were treated, more often than not in a celebratory way, in antiquarian and semi-scholarly publications throughout the nineteenth century. The quality of these publications varied widely, and their contents appealed primarily to an audience that either appreciated authors’ romantic outlook on the medieval past or lamented the Revolution and its impact on the Church.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Benedictine monk Ursmer Berlière almost single-handedly revolutionised the study of contemplative monasticism in the Southern Low Countries by publishing an impressive series of case studies, text editions, and in particular the first volumes of the Monasticon Belge, in which he offered scholars a comprehensive overview of the textual and archival material that was still known to be available from these institutions. The instant disclosure with the publication of each volume of the Monasticon Belge of large parts of regional monasticism’s written memory, as well as shifts in historical methodology taking place around the turn of the century, allowed for the composition and publication of ground-breaking studies approaching the monastic evidence from different angles. Most notable for the Central Middle Ages are those on gift-giving, the monastic familia, the management of monastic economies, and a handful of monographic treatments of individual institutions. These studies represented a clear, often explicit, rupture with the approach to the monastic past taken by previous generations.

While in the nineteenth century many institutions situated in non-Flemish regions of the Southern Low Countries had been treated a great deal more amateurishly than the Flemish ones, this new, scientific approach to the

14 Many of these publications are cited in the articles collected in this volume. See for example the aforementioned study by ESCALLIER, L’abbaye d’Anchin; A. De Cardevacque / A. Terninck, L’abbaye de Saint-Vaast. Monographie historique, archéologique et littéraire de ce monastère, 2 vols (Arras, 1866); A. De Cardevacque, Histoire de l’abbaye d’Auchy-les-Mânes (Oignies, 1873); A. De Cardevacque, Histoire de l’abbaye de Marchiennes (Marchiennes, 1876); and J. Dewez, Histoire de l’abbaye de Saint-Pierre d’Hasnon (Hainaut, 1890).


17 U. Berlière, La “familia” dans les monastères bénédictins du Moyen Âge (Brussels, 1931).


20 A notably prolific author was Chanoine Toussaint, whose booklets on the monastic history of the current Belgian Ardennes must have appealed only to an audience with a very specific ideological agenda. See, for instance, his Histoire de Saint Gérard fondateur de l’abbaye de
Benedictine past initially hardly registered with scholars working on the history of Flanders' monasteries. A significant part of medieval Flanders lay in French territory, and thus remained outside of the focus of the Monasticon’s compilers; in addition, those parts that were in Belgian territory were recorded in the series only from the 1960s onwards. Hence, the progression of monastic studies in Belgium, in particular areas of investigation which concern institutional, economic, prosopographic, cultural, and codicological analysis, took on a regional aspect, and one could argue that medieval Flanders became a backwater in this particular field. Eminent specialists in the political, economic and sociological history of Flanders, among them Jan DHONDT,21 and Hans VAN WERVEKE,22 both of whom received their education from the famous group of Ghent scholars in the early twentieth century (Henri PIRENNE and François-Louis GANSHOF in particular), continued to look at monastic documents primarily as repositories of historical information relating to the wider political, socio-economic and (to a much smaller extent) cultural development of the region.23 The devastating and much-criticised dismissal by Otto OPPERMANN of much of the diplomatic evidence from institutions such as the Ghent abbeys did not help generate interest in their history;24 nor did the publication of the early charters of the counts of Flanders by Fernand VERCAUTEREN lead to a renewed interest in monasteries' documentary production.25

Brogne (Saint-Gérard) et réformateur de l'ordre de Saint-Benoît en Flandre et en Lotharingie (Namur, 1884).


22  H. VAN WERVEKE, Het bisdom Terwaan, van den oorsprong tot het begin der 14e eeuw (Ghent, 1924). VAN WERVEKE published sporadically on monastic history in his later career.

23  A significant amount of primary evidence was published since the mid-nineteenth century by the Royal Historical Commission <http://www.crhistoire.be>. A non-exhaustive list of other editions are B. GUÉRARD, Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-Bertin (Paris, 1841), with additions and corrections in F. MORAND, Appendice au cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-Bertin (Paris, 1867); A. VAN LOKEREN, Chartes et documents de l’abbaye de Saint-Pierre au Mont Blandin à Gand depuis sa fondation jusqu’à sa suppression (Ghent, 1868); A. PRUVOST, Chronique et cartulaire de l’abbaye de Bergues-Saint-Winoc de l’ordre de Saint-Benoît, 2 vols (Bruges, 1875-1878); E. VAN DRIVAL, Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-Vaast d’Arras rédigé au XIIe siècle par Guimann (Arras, 1875); IDEM, Nécrologe de l’abbaye de Saint-Vaast publié pour la première fois au nom de l’Académie d’Arras (Arras, 1878); C. PIOT, Cartulaire de l’abbaye d’Ename (Bruges, 1881); A. FAYEN, Liber traditionum Sancti Petri Blandiniensis: livre des donations faites a l’abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Gand depuis ses origines jusqu’au XIe siècle, avec des additions jusqu’en 1273 (Ghent, 1906).


It is perhaps not surprising that real advances in the study of monastic institutions' development and societal positioning in medieval Flanders were largely due to outsiders. From the late 1920s onwards, archivist Etienne SABBE published a series of articles in which he looked at the reforms of the tenth to early twelfth centuries, critiquing the then-common notion that monastic reform was a phenomenon driven by supra-regional forces, prefiguring as it were the centralising tendencies in eleventh- and especially twelfth-century secular society. His work, and that of the German historian Heinrich SPROEMBERG, remained underappreciated, in part because of the fact that they put the monastic institutional phenomenon centre stage in their research. Another reason is that they were against a trend in monastic scholarship that would culminate in the publication of Kassius HALLINGER's Gorze-Kluny, in which the monastic world of north-western Europe during the tenth to twelfth centuries was represented as coalescing into two large, semi-institutional networks, focused on the two reformist centres mentioned in the title of his monograph. Nevertheless, some of SABBE's and SPROEMBERG's views, and insights gathered by generations of scholars preceding them, were synthesised in Edouard DE MOREAU's Histoire de l'Eglise en Belgique, the second volume of which dealt with period that concerns us here. His account, published first in 1940 and then in a second, much-expanded version in 1945-1946, remains a standard reference for scholars, even though it is not difficult to make out an apologetic subtext in his treatment of the tenth to twelfth centuries, the 'golden age' of Benedictine monasticism. Likewise, Hubert DAUPHIN argued against an all too systemic view of reformist networks in his 1946 biography of the reformer Richard of Saint-Vanne, a chapter of which dealt with Flanders' monasteries; but the hagiographic discourse in which he framed much of his carefully collected evidence cost the work much of its deserved impact.

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29 E. DE MOREAU, Histoire de l'Eglise en Belgique des origines aux débuts du XIIe siècle, II (Brussels, 1940; second edn, 1945).

Post-World War II, the persistence of a deep divide between Catholic and non-confessional historiography caused the study of Flanders' Benedictine institutions to split into two distinct, rarely communicating fields. Dom Nicolas-Norbert HUYGHEBAERT, monk of the abbey of Saint-André near Bruges, from 1947 until his death in 1982 published a stream of case studies dealing with institutions situated primarily in the current Belgian province of West Flanders and the French Département du Nord-Pas-de-Calais.31 HUYGHEBAERT also acted as editor, and principal author, of the volume for West Flanders of the Monasticon Belge.32 Across the border, Jean BECQUET provided rudimentary surveys of archival material and bibliographies for institutions relevant to the region in Abbayes et Prieurés de France, published periodically in the Revue Mabillon.33 By the mid-twentieth century, the ways both repertories presented the evidence fell short of scholarly expectations, both for those specialising in the history of monasticism and in particular that of reform, and for those interested in a more general sense in questions about institutional development, spirituality, artistic production, economic management, and so on.34 In many cases, the volumes of the Monasticon did not prove, but indeed followed, a period of intense interest in the institutions they covered. Among the specialists involved in this research, engagement with new trends in historical studies remained muted at best.

One of the problems was that scholarly agendas had changed, and profoundly so. This is not the place to detail the evolution of historical scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century, or that of monastic studies in that same period. Let it suffice to say that a talented generation of historians born between ca. 1920 and the 1940s became interested in the study of monastic economies and the institutional, in particular legal, history of

31 See the complete bibliography in: In memoriam Nicolas-N. Huyghebaert O.S.B. (Steenbrugge, 1983).
monasticism in the Early and Central Middle Ages. These authors typically declined to write linear histories of their subject, choosing instead a systematic or thematic approach.35 In the early 1960s, Henri PLATELLE published two monographs dealing with evidence originating from the abbey of Saint-Amand, one on the management of the abbey’s economy, the other on its judicial prerogatives.36 Both volumes, which remain of particular importance to our understanding of the societal embedding of that institution, show the author focusing on questions relating to the deeper processes that drove institutional development and to the way in which monastic groups adapted themselves to the changing circumstances of secular society. Later on in his career PLATELLE would publish several ground-breaking studies which looked at monastic and non-monastic sources to understand modes of conflict management,37 hagiographical discourse and its role in the societal positioning of monastic groups,38 and the use of biographical sources for the study of emotions and psychological disorders.39 Other scholars of note are the Ghent historian Adriaan VERHULST, who in 1958 published an influential monograph on the economy of the Ghent abbey of Saint-Bavon;40 and Albert D’HAENENS, whose

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40  A.E. VERHULST, De Sint-Baafsabdij te Gent en haar grondbezit (VIIe-XIVe eeuw). Bijdrage tot de kennis van de structuur en de uitbating van het grootgrondbezit in Vlaanderen tijdens
1961 monograph looked at the economy and finances of the abbey of Saint-Martin in Touraine in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.41 In 1969, Ludo Milis, another historian of the 'Ghent school' and a specialist of the order of canons regular of Arrouaise, published an edition of the until-then unedited charters of the Benedictine monastery of Ename.42 As with so many scholars of his time, Milis' narrowly focused work in institutional history was subsequently replaced by broader research interests, including social behaviour, the development of belief systems, and various other subjects relevant to the histoire des mentalités.43

Research that continued to focus on the institutional, socio-economic and other aspects of Benedictine monasticism in Flanders became increasingly marginal in terms of its relevance to contemporary scholarly debates. Already in the 1940s and 1950s Huyghebaert had chosen to ignore Sabbe's and spronck's publications, on several occasions presenting wholly different views on the reforms of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.44 As late as 1980, the various catalogues and volumes published on the occasion of St Benedict's 1500th birthday, in particular those that originated in the region, left an impression of growing irrelevance, both in societal and in scholarly terms.45

Not surprisingly, more than a few of these publications looked at medieval Benedictinism through the eyes of members of the Church wondering about...
the future of Benedictine monasticism.46 One of the few exceptions to this rule, the excellent collection of papers published at the time in the journal Sacris erudiri, nevertheless shows that most of the contributions were similarly unbothered by current debates in international monastic scholarship. While in the 1980s research into the institutional development, societal embedding and cultural production of Benedictine institutions for other regions in the Southern Low Countries was the subject of a small renaissance informed by new methods of historical enquiry and new questions, rooted often from other disciplines in the Humanities,47 the study of Flemish Benedictinism remained marginal to treatments of regional society and politics.48

One of the factors that propelled innovations in research in the later 1980s through 1990s was the increasing accessibility of the primary evidence. A significant step forward in this sense was taken with the publication of Narrative Sources, an online database which aims someday to cover all known narrative texts originating from the Low Countries.49 Likewise, the development of the database Thesaurus Diplomaticus,50 and the digitising of the Acta Sanctorum, Patrologia Latina, Corpus Christi, and Monumenta Germaniae Historica, made it possible to achieve in a few days what would previously have required many years of patient scanning through published and unpublished documents. The downside was that sources were often being retrieved and analyzed with little consideration for the context in which they had originated. Thus a new

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46 While highly sentimental, A. HOSTE, De geschiedenis van de Sint-Pietersabdij te Oudenburg (Oudenburg, 1984), could have been written at any time in the twentieth century.
48 Some recent studies of regional political history, while they are outstanding pieces of scholarship, are relatively insensitive to new evidence that has been produced, and give little credit to monastic leaders in terms of their ability to develop their own social and economic agency. See, for instance J.F. NIEUS, Un pouvoir comtal entre Flandre et France. Saint-Pol, 1000-1300 (Brussels, 2005); and H.J. TANNER, Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879-1160 (Leiden / Boston, 2004).
49 The Narrative Sources from the Medieval Low Countries, online database accessible via <http://www.narrative-sources.be>.
50 Thesaurus Diplomaticus (cd-rom), eds P. TOMBEUR / P. DEMONTY / W. PREVENIER / P. LAVIOLETTE (Turnhout, 1997).
generation of scholars began looking at these questions specifically. Georges Declercq's studies of charter and archival management at the Ghent abbeys of Saint-Bavon and Saint-Peter have corroborated Patrick Geary's claim that the Central Middle Ages were a period in which institutional memories were intensely manipulated. Likewise, Laurent Morelle's doctoral dissertation on the archives of Saint-Bertin, and his subsequent publications on texts from that abbey and (among others) Saint-Amand, have shown that accepted notions on the development of these institutions often stand in need of reconsideration. In the meantime, a renewed interest in providing new, critical editions of primary sources, both narrative and diplomatic, provided much-needed insight into texts that for generations had been consulted in less-than-ideal transcriptions. Of particular note are those of the charters issued by the bishops of Arras and Cambrai, the so-called Register of Bishop Lambert of Arras, the charter collections of the abbeys of Saint-Bavon in Ghent, Anchin and Denain, the polyptych of Marchiennes and the fascinating Liber Traditionum of the priory of Saint-Georges in Hesdin, all of which have contributed significantly to our understanding of archival legacies. New editions of Herman of Tournai's Liber...
de restauratione Sancti Martini Tornacensis, of various hagiographical texts originating from Benedictine institutions in Flanders, and of booklists, reading lists and library catalogues did likewise for the memorial culture of medieval Benedictine communities.

These developments galvanised ongoing research attempting to rewrite the history of the region’s ecclesiastical institutions based upon new insights into the primary evidence. For hagiography and its relation to monastic institutions, there are Bernard Delmaire’s study of the diocese of Arras and a recent volume on the little-known diocese of Thérouanne; likewise, Brigitte Meijns’ doctoral dissertation on the secular canons of Flanders and her subsequent publications on this and similar subjects are of great value to anyone interested in the development and societal embedding of Benedictine institutionalism.

Similar things can be said of studies involving literary evidence with monastic origins. For the hagiographical production of the region, we now have Charles Mériaux’s exhaustive study, which covers the period up to ca. 1050; Jeroen Deploige’s analysis of hagiographical discourse in texts from ca. 900 to ca. 1300; David Defries’ treatment of the hagiography of Bergues-Saint-Winoc; and Tjamke Snijders’ analysis of over two hundred hagiographical...
Reform, Conflict, and the Shaping of Corporate Identities


My own doctoral dissertation from 2000 took a broad, quantitative approach to historiographical narratives from the Southern Low Countries. In subsequent years I adopted a more qualitative one, asking questions about the use of monastic texts in the shaping of collective identities, the function and purpose of rituals, the management of conflict, and so on. At the same time, I became fascinated by the paradoxical situation, which constituted the apparent popularity of sources originating from Flemish institutions with scholars' comparatively poor understanding of, and the even poorer state of current research into, the context in which they originated. Even though specialists of topics ranging from societal development to art history were liberally using the primary evidence originating from monasteries of this region, those that look at ecclesiastical and religious history were missing tremendous opportunities to contextualize this material. A striking example is the use made of the aforementioned liber traditionum of Saint-Georges, which contains over 500 individual notitiae concerning mostly minor transactions between a small priory and the rural population of the tiny county of Hesdin, one of Flanders' satellite.

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states', between 1094 and the mid-1180s. In the introduction to the edition, Robert FOSSIER discusses the relevance of this exceptional collection for the study of the rural economy of that period, of local aristocratic networks, and so on. But the actual institution that produced these documents, and was always a key participant in the transactions that led to their creation, is completely left out of sight in his and other studies; in FOSSIER's understanding, the monks of Hesdin recorded the transactions in the same passive and objective way as they apparently participated in them. Having cast his analysis of primary evidence originating in medieval monasteries on such an assumption is, of course, fundamentally wrong. By no means were monks other-worldly, selfless operators of society, they were active participants, competing with other groups and with each other for status, power and influence, and this realization should alert us to the fact that monks' interests and objectives impinged in a major way on how they represented themselves and their surrounding society in their literary and archival production. Understanding these interests and motives is vital to an adequate understanding of what such literary and archival productions tell us about people's behavior and attitudes in that period.

A lack of reflection on the self-representational strategies and social positioning of monastic groups also prevents clear understanding of their internal development. As I mentioned earlier, from the mid-twentieth century onwards, specialists of the region's monastic history with few exceptions developed an aversion to linear narratives. While refreshing, such a position undermined the possibility of re-evaluating former narratives, and tended to invite scholars to adopt these without much critical consideration. A more fundamental reason underlying the enduring lack of interest in framing the evidence from monastic institutions is Flanders' perceived irrelevance to a European history of Benedictine monasticism in the central medieval period. Following the rebuttal of Kassius HALLINGER's theory of large, semi-institutionalised reform networks, notion that monasteries in the Southern Low Countries belonged to a reform movement following the "Lotharingian mixed observance", Flanders and its surrounding territories fell off the monastic map of Europe. Since then, this position has remained essentially unchanged, and...
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has gained added strength by virtue of the scholarly realization that Flanders did not become part of a supra-regional ‘system’ of supervision and legislation, at least not formally so, and that there is plenty of evidence that abbots and rulers actively resisted any trends towards incorporation. This has often been interpreted as a sign of monks’ inability to liberate themselves from the clutches of local lords, in particular the counts, and their unwillingness to give up some of their autonomy in exchange for a more efficient, more progressive, and more emancipated cenobitic existence. Such accusations of misguided particularism have helped perpetuate the paradoxical situation where the written and artistic legacy of these institutions is widely considered of great interest for the study of medieval society and culture, but where the actual institutions and communities that produced them are largely ignored.

The purpose of this book

The purpose of this collection is to show that a regional approach to Benedictine monasticism is useful, provided it is informed by broader questions currently debated in monastic studies. It challenges the view that an area like Flanders, which did not contribute to the emergence of supra-regional ‘movements’ is essentially irrelevant to the general study of the Benedictine monastic phenomenon, in particular in the period between ca. 1050 and 1150. My intention is not to profile myself as a specialist of regional history, or to argue that Flanders is a region of particular importance to the history of Benedictine monasticism. Instead, I want to use the case of Flanders to make several points regarding the ways in which scholars’ preconceptions have misshaped our understanding of Benedictine monasticism in this period, in particular our assessment of the value of looking at single institutions.

Given all the interest of the last half-century in reform movements, confraternities and other types of formal and informal networks between monasteries, it is all too easy to forget that, until well into the twelfth century, the fundamental paradigm of institutional organisation in traditional monastic contexts was the independent monastery. Many monastic networks of the time (for example, involving Cluny, Gorze, or Siegburg) to name

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But a few are now considered to have worked in significantly less institutional ways than previous generations of scholars have thought. Even contemporaries, long considered the most reliable indicators of the coalescing of individual monasteries into ‘movements’ based on a shared normative framing of monastic life, are gradually revealing their use, and perhaps even their true nature, as instruments of abbatial government and education rather than as


Historians, in trying to identify general trends in monastic history, have shown a distinct tendency to think of fundamental changes at the level of single institutions as being the result of “exogenous shocks”, for instance the intervention of charismatic reformers. But as I recently argued, change at the level of single institutions was much more determined by each institution’s “accumulated investments” (social networks, cults of saints, and so on) than has been generally recognised.87 Monastic leaders and their ecclesiastical and secular patrons did not think of these accumulated investments as impediments to their policies; instead, they considered them as their main tools in steering an institution’s development. The diversity that emerges from the primary evidence is not so much a problem, but an opportunity to see how these confrontations between agency and structure worked.


88 Over the past two decades, several attempts have been made to review the state of the art in monastic studies and identify future research lines. See Le monachisme à Byzance et en Occident du VIIIe au Xe siècle. Aspects internes et relations avec la société. Actes du colloque international organisé par la Section d’Histoire de l’ULB en collaboration avec l’Abbaye de Maredsous (14-16 Mai 1992) (Revue Bénédictine, 103), eds A. DIERKENS / D. ROBERT (Brussels/Milan, 1994), pp. 203-274.
Cluny was embedded in local secular networks, suggesting an approach to institutional development that takes into account elements previously considered too prosaic or too ‘secular’ for mention in the greater narrative of monasticism’s past. In his seminal paper from 1986, which helped debunk the notion of a ‘crisis of cenobitism’ in the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries, John Van Engen also argued that regional studies of the development of monasticism are necessary to determine if assessments of general trends in the evolution of monasticism are valid. In the discussion of the so-called ‘crisis’, these regional studies are needed “to determine when such ruinations multiplied into an irreversible trend, as the ‘crisis’ interpretation suggests it did during the years 1050-1150, or when these represented isolated cases that existed the next reforming abbot, bishop, or lord”. But to look at the evidence on the level of single institutions is useful not just to verify to what extent general trends in monastic history are valid, but also to demonstrate the complexity of monastic development. Finally, in a recent paper Isabelle Rosé has suggested that the tenth and early-eleventh-century reforms in Burgundy and Lotharingia were not distinct ‘movements’ directed by monastic centres from which the reform of other institutions was propagated and managed. Instead, such developments derived from informal associations of reformist agents, for whom the homogeneity of life in the reformed houses was less important than was expanding the application of
ideals of asceticism and solitude, from a handful of holy men to entire communities of "super-monks". In this context, virtually each monastery retained an independent place in the social field.

Regional monastic studies should not function as instruments for debunking general accounts of the monastic past, but for refining them. Such studies should also integrate the agency–structure problem more satisfyingly into the general interpretations of the development of the Benedictine phenomenon. In the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, monastic development, except perhaps that of literary culture and spirituality, was grounded in regional identities, regional institutions, and regional networks, in other words was essentially regional. In the articles included in this collection, these main points of interest can be identified.

A first is the embedding of Benedictinism in society, in this case comital, politics. Shaped by contemporary accounts of reform, and by the historiographical tradition regarding the formation of the county of Flanders and the role played in this process by ecclesiastical institutions, the idea that monasteries' development was fully controlled by these lords is simply false. A close look at the evidence shows that monastic leaders for considerable periods of time, most notably between reforms, had to fend for themselves, and did not enjoy the patronage or even informal support of the counts. Monastic groups were players in a political, social and institutional field of action that was far less stable in terms of the monks' relation to members of the ecclesiastical and lay elites than scholars have so far been willing to admit. While the secular context of the county functioned as the constant backdrop of these institutions' development, it did not provide any security or stability.

A second point is the problem of the institutional and societal development of Benedictinism, and issues of monastic leadership and autonomy. Despite appearances, the leadership of Benedictine communities in this period was fraught with episodes of institutional instability, uncertainty regarding patronage and lay protection, and fierce competition with other Benedictine institutions, other ecclesiastical agents, and local aristocrats. Being an abbot involved constantly competing with others. To make this is to open the way for new interpretations, not only of the development of these institutions, but also of the contexts in which the primary evidence originated and the many conflicts the sources describe, both in and outside of the cloister. Flanders in the

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93 Aristocratic patronage is of course a classic topic of monastic scholarship; see, among many others, H. JAKOBS, Der Adel in der Klosterreform von St. Blasien (Cologne, 1968); and C.B. BOUCHARD, Sword, Miter and Cloister. Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198 (Ithaca, 1987). I also refer to the magnificent overview for France by F. MAZEL, Monachisme et aristocratie aux Xe-XIe siècles. Un regard sur l'historiographie récente', in: Ecclesia in medio nationis, eds. VANDERPUTTEN / MEIJNS, pp. 47-76.

94 The study of conflict management within the cloister has developed immensely over the last decade and a half. See T. FÜSER, Mönche im Konflikt. Zum Spannungsfeld von Norm, Form und Inhalten, Fribourg, 1997. I also refer to the magnificent overview for Flanders by F. REINHARD, "Mittelalterliche Klosterkonflikte in der Region Flandern" in: Flandern im mittelalterlichen Europa, eds. VEGAS / MÖLLER, pp. 47-78.
eleventh and twelfth centuries was a highly competitive monastic environment, a point that is too often missed in discussions of this subject. Contrary to what is frequently assumed, the weapons employed by monks in the pursuit of their interests were used as much in an offensive manner as in a defensive one.

A third point deals with the subject of reform.95 In contrast to what is often implicitly argued in treatments of monastic history, reform was not a phenomenon with universal characteristics, affecting monastic groups simultaneously, or in similar ways. Nor is it a phenomenon that was in any sense inevitable, or always preceded by disciplinary or institutional decline. From ca. 1100 onwards, monastic groups from the Southern Low Countries were subjected to a 'wave' of reforms, several institutional and disciplinary aspects of which scholars have identified as 'Cluniac'. While the broader socio-political background of the reforms is now reasonably well established, scholars have yet to present a coherent account of how and in what circumstances Cluniac practices and customs were introduced, the implications of this for the communities concerned, and what it tells us about the reformers' intentions.

The causes of this lacuna, apart from the challenging nature of the primary evidence, is that scholarly discussions have been based on the notion that the "Clunisation" of Benedictine monasticism was a phenomenon deriving from the desires of monastic leaders and their patrons to make life in these institutions conform to the Cluniac customes. As I argue, the reforms of the early twelfth century were less about bringing to an end laxity in internal discipline, than about resolving ongoing crises of abbatial authority, and reorganising the secular networks around each monastery. A second reason for the lack of scholarly attention to the introduction, and implications, of Cluniac practices is that reform is often represented as a phenomenon bringing sudden, and rapid, change in various aspects of life within and around the monastery. This notion can be shown to derive from the apologetic discourse of reformist commentators from the early to mid-twelfth century, and from that of modern scholars seeking to explain the reform movement by referring, on the one hand, to the "Cluniacisation" of Benedictine monasticism and, on the other, to

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instances of disciplinary laxity prior to the reforms. But as I have been able to demonstrate, long before there was talk about introducing the Cluniac customs in any of Flanders' institutions, abbots were initiating processes of renewal and change which may well be described as "reform between the reforms". This campaign, which so far has eluded scholars' close attention, paved the way for a restoration of former associations with highly placed patrons, the counts of Flanders in particular, and for a return to a leading role in regional monasticism several years before the Cluniac reforms of the early 1100s.

The contents of this book

This book consists of ten previously published papers, divided into three sections. The first section, "Abbatial leadership, institutional competition and the solution(s) of reform", looks at the development of Flemish monasticism between ca. 1050 and the first two decades of the twelfth century. The opening article, "Crises of Cenobitism", introduces the discussion that is developed in the next papers by focusing on the evidence for the institutional development of Benedictinism in Flanders in the second half of the eleventh century. Its central argument is that the now-abandoned notion of a "crisis of cenobitism" in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries should be replaced by one in which endemic institutional processes and increased competition among Benedictine institutions led to a profound shift in the societal position and government of "old-style" monasticism. As an analysis of evidence relevant to the abbey of Saint-Bertin shows, a series of events and setbacks had a significant effect on the abbey's prominent position in Flanders in the middle decades of the eleventh century. Unable to compete effectively with the recently founded Bergues-Saint-Winoc, Saint-Bertin was hindered by its own historical legacies when trying to adapt to changing economic, political and other circumstances. Yet towards the end of the eleventh century, these same historical legacies, which effectively made the abbey's leadership less dynamic than that of younger institutions, allowed the abbots of Saint-Bertin to reclaim a prominent position, and to actively intervene in the institutional development of its immediate competitors. The second article, "How Reform Began", uses a case study of the abbacy of Lambert of Saint-Bertin (1095-1123) to propose a new understanding of the way in which reform was initiated. As evidence relating to the early phase of Lambert's government shows, he both organised and participated in a number of public performances which preceded any formal announcement of reform but were instrumental in its success. What makes it hard to distinguish the reformist subtext of these performances is the fact that the instruments used to stage them were typical examples of "traditional" abbatial government, and that the principle of investing them with reformist meaning pre-dated Lambert's abbacy. In Flanders' Pigsty, Cluniac Renewal, Diptych Antiquarian
and 'The Lower Aristocracy'. I show how monastic leaders and the secular and ecclesiastical elites used the reforms of the early twelfth century as a means to reassess secular networks around the monasteries. Even though the rhetoric of the reformers in dealing with lay officers suggests a strategy to rupture privileged relations going back several generations, its application was in fact integral to the management of structural 'conflict-relations', in which social tensions were managed by means of regular, more or less controlled episodes of conflict.

The two papers in the second section, Managing reformed Benedictinism, look at how the 'Clunisation' of Benedictine institutions, once initiated, was managed by the lay and ecclesiastical elites of the region. In 'Abbatial Obedience, Liturgical Reform and the Threat of Monastic Autonomy', I look at an exceptional set of liturgical and archival sources from the newly founded bishopric of Arras that relate to Bishop Lambert's attempts to retain control over the monastic leadership of his territories. Even though the introduction of a written promise of obedience made by abbots to the local bishop was consolidated in liturgical manuals only in the late twelfth century, the Arras evidence shows how, in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, reformist bishops were experimenting with a ritual repertoire which included references — be they intended or inferred — to both the monastic profession and secular homage. In the second paper, 'A Time of Great Confusion. Second-generation Cluniac Reformers and Resistance to Centralization', I show that the years between ca. 1125 and 1145 witnessed an attempt on behalf of a number of abbots and ecclesiastical leaders from the archbishopric of Reims to homogenise, and subsequently reorganise, the supervision of Benedictine monasteries on a regional basis. To achieve this end, second-generation reformers devised methods of supervision rooted in a Cluniac understanding of internal life but formally inspired by the Cistercian model. Central to the development of this new model of reformed monasticism was the leadership of Alvisus (d. 1146), abbot of Anchin and subsequently bishop of Arras. As sources relating to his interventions in monastic communities at various stages in his career show, the outcome of second-generation reforms constituted a compromise, involving the creation of some form of regional supervision but failing to organise the Benedictine monasteries into a well-structured, hierarchical network. Key in convincining the reformers of the necessity of compromise was the fact that their objectives repeatedly clashed with the political interests of various ecclesiastical and secular leaders, determining the practical implementation of the spirit of reform.

The third section, Societal discourse, warfare, and the shaping of corporate identities, concerns monks' interactions with secular society, and the ways in which they relied on rituals both as a means to introduce more peaceful modes of exchange and as real 'weapons' in disputes with lay adversaries. Though method
by a high degree of violence. Flemish society emerges from these case studies as having had far more complex interactions than contemporary monastic discourse leads us to believe. Most dispute situations were managed by means of encoded public performances based on a discourse in which the exercise of power was legitimised by the implementation of a shared system of rules designed to prevent unbridled violence. That the enactment of this system was associated with the exercise of power meant that society could be organised in the absence of a strong institutional system of government, but also generated considerable tensions. In ‘Monks, Knights, and the Enactment of Competing Social Realities’, I show how socially mobile individuals from the lower lay elite ‘performed’ their ambitions concerning the management of local communities by enacting them. In many cases they used forms of violence that were highly charged with meaning, although these meanings may have meant something entirely different to their peers as opposed to their adversaries. Such methods hardly rank as the result of a process of acculturation, as they appear to have been implicitly embedded in the lower lay elite’s behavioural strategies. Monks for their part used various forms of symbolic violence to retaliate against the ‘attacks’ of their adversaries, while attempting to contain the fragmentation of lay power by stalling or even obviating the negotiation process. The castration of Alberic of Saint-Bertin represents a rare event in which it is possible to observe the concrete expression of a lay advocate’s long-term ambitions and his short-term behavioural adjustments, triggered by the monks’ public denial of his assumed status. ‘A Compromised Inheritance. Monastic Discourse and the Politics of Property Exchange’, further explores the possibilities of assessing the social discourse of monastic groups in early twelfth-century Flanders. Through the examination of a dispute over property given by a dying noblewoman to the priory of Hesdin, it argues that both the way in which the monks and their benefactors dealt with the politics of property transfers and the discourse of the written account of these events may be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand they may be seen as deliberate attempts to impose a monastic understanding of property and relations with the laity upon the rural communities around Hesdin. They can also be interpreted, however, as the reflection of a struggle for power and status involving members of several levels of the lay elite. ‘Itinerant Lordship, Relic Translations and Social Change’, investigates the relationship between the changing nature of secular power in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Flanders and the discourse of monastic translation rituals. Central to its argument is the hypothesis that the monks’ behaviour in dealing with the relics of patron saints was influenced simultaneously by the expansion and consolidation of secular institutions and the realisation that a possible breakdown of secular government in Flanders would not only threaten the safety of monastic communities and the integrity of their relic treasures, but would also jeopardise the status of their patron saints as ‘lords’ of the monastic estate. ‘A Miracle of Saint Jonatus’ provides...
Introduction

Additional documentation, presenting a complete edition of the Translatio Sancti Jonati, a narrative written by Gualbert of Marchiennes in the years 1127-1128. Besides complementing the modest hagiographical corpus devoted to this saint, the narrative also documents some of the strategies employed by Abbot Amand of Marchiennes to defend his abbey’s interest in the aftermath of the murder of Count Charles the Good. Finally, ‘Monastic Literate Practices’ discusses how the increasing impact of the written word in society was not the result of a straightforward process, but rather one that met with significant resistance and whose nature depended to a great extent on how it was applied at a micro level and its role among particular communities in a particular region. Evidence from reformist monasteries from the early twelfth century presents a unique opportunity of establishing a long-term assessment of the way in which the monks dealt with the possibilities and limitations of written media, and how the transition from static, normative literacy to a more dynamic approach of documentary evidence was successfully concluded in the late twelfth century. Deeply involved in local and regional politics, the monks of Saint-Amand and Marchiennes responded to the uncertainties of their age by producing and receiving an impressive number of documents, all of which were created, used and stored in very specific contexts.

Much of the work published in this volume was carried out in the context of various research projects funded by the Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO) and the Special Research Fund (BOF) of Ghent University. Some of the research, and some of the writing, was done during fellowships at Clare Hall (Cambridge) in 2003, the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton) in 2005, the Forschungsstätte für Vergleichende Ordensgeschichte (Eichstätt) in 2008, and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Wassenaar) in 2009-2010. This introduction was written during a research fellowship at the Flemish Academic Center in Brussels in 2011-2012. I am grateful to the original reviewers of the articles collected here for their comments, and to the many colleagues who commented on drafts or otherwise provided assistance with my research. While they are too numerous to cite here, I want to make an exception for Giles Constable, Barbara Rosenwein, Susan Boynton, Gert Melville, Elisabeth Van Houts, Brigitte Meijns, Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld and Diane Reilly. Melissa Provijn, my most consistent proof-reader, deserves special mention for her unrelenting support. As does my son Hugo, for providing me with demonstrations of single-mindedness so typical of many of the leaders mentioned in this book.

Although coherently thematically, the papers in this volume are not intended to be read sequentially, since they were not conceived with that purpose in mind; this is one of the reasons why I decided not to include an index. They also represent a certain evolution in my thinking about monastic institutional
development, social embedding and culture, and that at places contain points that I now think require nuanced, or correction. I have not intervened in these passages unless I found it absolutely inevitable. Whether this has been a wise decision I cannot say, but it is unquestionably an honest one.
CRISES OF CENOBITISM
Abbatial Leadership and Monastic Competition in Late Eleventh-Century Flanders

Monastic institutions made a significant contribution to the emergence and consolidation of the mighty county of Flanders in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Following the division of the Frankish empire in 843, more than a dozen *pagi* situated in the extreme north-eastern part of the Western Frankish kingdom began progressively integrated into the patrimony of one family, the first historically attested head of which was Count Baldwin I, also known as Baldwin Ironarm (861-879). Although formally he only controlled the *pagi* of Ghent and Waas, Baldwin sought himself into a privileged alliance with the Western Frankish dynasty by abducting and marrying Charles the Bald's daughter Judith. As a result, in 864 he was entrusted by the king with the *pagi* of Ternois and Flanders, as well as the lay abbacy of Saint-Peter in Ghent. Baldwin's position was not hereditary, and his son Baldwin II (879-918), who must be considered the real founder of an actual comital dynasty, was forced to conquer the lands previously controlled by his father. His expansion was kept in check by various ecclesiastical and secular allies of successive Western Frankish kings, even though he managed to find powerful allies in the kings of Wessex. The abbeys of Saint-Bertin near Saint-Omer, Saint-Vaast in Arras and Elnone/Saint-Amand, all institutions straddled in the southern parts of Baldwin First published in The English Historical Review, 127 (2012), pp. 259-84. Copyright Oxford University Press, reproduced with permission.1 On the early history of Flanders, see among others A.C.F. KOCH, *Vier masten van de Noorse eeuw* (1957), re Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden, Band 5 Middelleeuwen, ed. G. DE RICHTER (Haarlem, 1962), pp. 101-16, and E. DE MOREAU, *Histoire de l'église en Belgique*, II, revised edition (Brussels, 1946); B. MEIJNS, *Aken of Jeruzalem? Het ontstaan en de hervorming van de kanonikale instellingen in Vlaanderen tot circa 1155* (Louvain, 2000); and K. UGÉ, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (Woodbridge, 2005).

By territories, played a key role in a decades-long struggle for political supremacy over the region, with the first two of these institutions doubling as fortifications against the Norman invaders. By the 990s, however, Baldwin II had gradually taken control of the Ternois, Artois and Vermundois, and in 990 he obtained the lay abbacy of Saint-Bertin, where his father lay buried. When Baldwin II died in 999, the Ternois and the lay abbacy of Saint-Bertin passed to his son Adalulf, while the Flemish heartland and the lay abbacy of Saint-Peter in Ghent were given to Adalulf's older brother Arnulf I (918-965). The Artois, which included the strategically important city of Arras, would remain a bone of contention until Arnulf conquered the region in the 930s. Immediately after taking over Arras, he assumed the title of lay abbot of Saint-Vaast.

Just how crucial these institutions were to the Flemish dynasty – in symbolic, economic and political ways – became evident when Arnulf reformed all of the male monasteries in his territory (including the abbeys of Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavo in Ghent, Saint-Bertin, Saint-Vaast and Saint-Amand) in the 940s and early 950s. Not only did the reforms allow him to turn these institutions into efficient ‘prayer machines’ serving the spiritual and memorial interests of the comital dynasty, but they also enabled him to consolidate his de facto control over the monasteries. One of the principal results of the reforms, the abolition of the lay abbacy, has recently been interpreted as a clever means of abolishing all royal prerogatives as regards these institutions, and (through the right to appoint newly elected abbots and to hold the advocatus) to transfer all forms of secular control to the count himself. The close relations between the Flemish dynasty and the abbeys can be best witnessed in the emergence of Saint-Peter in Ghent as the county’s religious centre. For more than a century, this institution would serve as a comital necropolis and as a symbolic point where the county’s secular alliances converged. Other institutions, notably Saint-Bertin, acted as intermediaries in the counts’ diplomatic relations with foreign rulers.

The ruthless way in which the successive counts of Flanders used the abbeys’ intellectual, financial and other resources shows to what extent their power and status depended upon these institutions. Thus, it comes as no
I. Crises of Cenobitism

The surprise that, throughout the second half of the tenth and early eleventh centuries, third parties tried to counter these quasi-regal ambitions by infringing on the counts’ virtual monopoly over Flemish monasticism. When Count Baldwin IV (988-1035) agreed to let the Lotharingian reformers, led by Richard of Saint-Vanne († 1046), reform Flanders’ monasteries, he did so, among other reasons, to regain control over a number of institutions situated in the recently re-conquered southern border regions of the county. The counts’ support of a third ‘wave’ of reforms, which began with that of Saint-Bertin in 1095/1096 and spread across the whole of Flanders during the following decades, was being inspired at least partially by a desire to intervene in the local aristocratic networks that had recently claimed the lay offices of these institutions. While the history of Flemish monasticism up to and including the reforms of the early eleventh century is now relatively well documented, scholars’ lack of attention to the period between ca. 1030-1040 and the reforms of the early twelfth century has left a significant gap in our understanding of institutional development in that region. To non-specialists of Flemish history, this may seem rather surprising, for it is exactly this first period which has been the subject of intense debates relating to the so-called ‘crisis of cenobitism’. To summarise these debates briefly, scholars such as Germaine Mérimée, Jean Declercq and Norman Cantor argued that the sudden emergence of new forms of religious community in the mid- to late eleventh century was due to ‘traditional’ monasticism both losing its ability to meet the changing expectations of secular society and being unable to impose on its members a way of life that corresponded to the norms of...
Benedict’s Rule. But, as John Van Engen has persuasively demonstrated, part of this argument derives from criticism by representatives of the new orders regarding the real and supposed excesses of ‘traditional’ institutions. Under the influence of various factors, including the reform movement within the Church, demographic growth, the changing nature of the economy and of political power, and new expectations regarding the laity’s involvement in religious practices, monastic groups successfully adapted their recruitment policies, changed their attitudes towards making connections with lay society, and began looking for ways to create supra-institutional networks. Overall, society’s response to these innovations was positive, and traditional monasticism grew dramatically, both in terms of new foundations and recruitment. While the initial success of alternative forms of religious organisation drew far more attention from contemporary commentators, and the voices of the critics of traditional monasticism were often much louder than those of its defenders, Benedictinism reached the pinnacle of its expansion in the decades around 1100. The county of Flanders is a good case in point: in 1020, the region counted six monasteries, all of which had been founded in the second century: Saint-Bertin, Saint-Vaast, Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavo in Ghent, Saint-Amand, and the nunnery of Marchiennes. In the 1020s, the former community of canons at Bergues-Saint-Winne (1022) and Donay (1026–75) were converted into a male and a female community of Benedictines, respectively, while Marchiennes (1024) was turned into a male house. Then, between the years 1050 and 1100, the religious landscape of Flanders was completely transformed. As the number of houses of secular and regular canons and other types of religious institution exploded in the latter half of the

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12  On Bergues-Saint-Winne, see below. For the other two monasteries, see respectively J.-P. Gerzaguët, L’abbaye féminine de Denain des origines à la fin du XIIIe siècle. Histoire et chartes (Paris, 2007), and Vanderputten / Meijns, ‘Realities’ (with extensive references).
eleventh century,13 so too did that of Benedictine institutions, which doubled in just half a century.14 There are certainly numerous examples of difficult phases in the mid- to late eleventh-century histories of individual monasteries that belonged to the ‘traditional’ strand of cenobitism. As VAN ENGEN argued, regional studies of the development of traditional monasticism are needed “to determine when such ruinations multiplied into an irreversible trend, as the ‘crisis’ interpretation suggests it did during the years 1050-1150, or when these represented isolated cases that awaited the next reforming abbot, bishop, or lord”15. This paper, while subscribing to the need for regional studies, adopts a somewhat different perspective, arguing that the challenges faced by the ‘older’ Benedictine institutions were due to a combination of structural factors, which related to the general situation of traditional monasticism in Flemish society, and endemic ones, which related to the institutional dynamics and historical legacies of each specific institution. Focusing on the leadership of one Flemish abbey, Saint-Bertin, and how it dealt with challenges inherent to the abbey’s long-term development and the issue of intersecting institutional interests, in particular with the abbeys of Bergues-Saint-Winoc and Saint-Sulpice, I seek to show that the expansion of traditional monasticism in the region was preceded by, and partly coincided with, institutional crises affecting single monasteries. Such crises, in which the loss of former patron played a determining role alongside other factors, became evident as early as the third and fourth decades of the eleventh century.16

13 I. Crises of Cenobitism 7


century, long before alternative forms of religious organization became significant social and institutional phenomena. When the 'wave' of new Benedictine foundations gained momentum in the second half of the eleventh century, abbots in older houses had already initiated a slow, incremental process of restoration and "reform between the reforms" which so far has eluded the closer scrutiny of scholars. This paved the way for a restoration of former associations with highly placed patrons, the counts of Flanders in particular, and for a return to a leading role in regional monasticism several years before the Cluniac reforms of the early 1100s.16

A failed foundation that lasted eight centuries: Saint-Sylvin in Auchy

In the middle of the eleventh century, the tiny county of Hesdin emerged as one of several smaller principalities bordering the western limits of the powerful county of Flanders. Throughout his long reign, Count Enguerran (ca. 1067-ca. 1102) showed himself to be a faithful ally of the counts of Flanders, providing a buffer against the rival lords of Saint-Pol and Guînes.17 Like these rulers, Enguerran harboured the ambition to consolidate his status by creating a sanctuary to serve as a personal necropolis, where his memory could be celebrated in perpetuity.18 Thus, in 1072 he founded the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Sylvin, in the village of Auchy.19 To establish the new monastery,
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Enguerran enlisted the help of Heribert, abbot of Saint-Bertin (1065-1082). As far as we can tell, the entire original community of Saint-Sylvin was recruited from that abbey, and likewise its leaders – Abbots Sulger (1072-1074), German (1074-1077) and Norbert (1077-1100/1) – had all made their professions at Saint-Bertin.20

For Enguerran, to enlist the help of Heribert was a natural course of action. Saint-Bertin was one of the larger and most influential monasteries in the region, and, after Saint-Peter in Ghent, was also the most significant representative institution of the Flemish dynasty.21 Crucially, it also held the body of St Sylvin,22 which the Flemish Count Arnulf I had stolen from the sanctuary in Auchy, a former monastic church.23 From the 980s at the latest, St Sylvin was venerated by the monks of Saint-Bertin as a secondary patron to St Bertin, along with St Winnoc and St Folcuin. A splendid hagiographical manuscript, made during the abbacy of Odbert (986-1007) and containing the lives of the four saints, showed, in no uncertain terms, how the monastic community of Saint-Bertin considered them to be fundamental to its institutional identity.24 By the early eleventh century, episcopal and papal charters began referring explicitly to the abbey as the place where the four saints were venerated, and the names of the more obscure ones (St Folcuin and St Sylvin) began appearing in liturgical manuals belonging to ecclesiastical institutions of the region and beyond.25 It was obvious that the keepers of St Sylvin’s body were required to sanction the foundation of a new monastery dedicated to the saint, if only to demonstrate the legitimacy of Saint-Bertin’s association with that saint.

Heribert and his successors conceived their abbey’s involvement in the affairs of Saint-Sylvin to be all-encompassing. When, in 1079, Bishop John of Thérouanne issued a charter to formalise the foundation, he stipulated that the community was to elect its abbots without interference from outside.26

20 Gallia Christiana, X (Paris, 1751), c. 1599.
21 See UGÉ, Creating, pp. 30-6.
22 On the life of St Sylvin and his early hagiography, see MÉRIAUX, Gallia Irradiata, pp. 249-50.
23 Folcuin, Gesta abbatum Sancti Bertini, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XIII (Hanover, 1881), p. 630.
25 MÉRIAUX, Gallia Irradiata, p. 366.
charter also stated that if the monks failed to find a suitable candidate in their own ranks they were required to select one from the community of Saint-Bertin. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the latter clause was included to consolidate Saint-Bertin’s control over the community’s leadership. Some accounts of the early history of Saint-Sylvin claim that, two years before the 1079 charter was issued, Heribert of Saint-Bertin had deposed Abbot German, presumably because the latter had resisted interference in his abbey’s affairs. According to an early twelfth-century account, Norbert, German’s appointed successor, was made in particular for being a man of “great simplicity and innocence.” While these were considered to be outstanding monastic virtues in their own right, their use to describe an abbot may be a veiled reference to the fact that he was selected for being a candidate unlikely to object to his abbey’s de facto position as a dependency of Saint-Bertin. Heribert’s successors were certainly not taking any chances in this respect. When Norbert died in 1091, Abbot Lambert skipped the formalities of an election procedure and simply appointed Odo, a Cluniac monk, as abbot of Saint-Sylvin. And in 1107, the monks of Saint-Bertin sought, and obtained, a privilege from Pope Paschal II which stated that the monks of Auchy would henceforth have to elect their abbot from the community of Saint-Bertin. These two events, which left little to the imagination as far as Lambert’s intentions were concerned, sparked a controversy between the two institutions that lasted well into the early modern period. The monks of Auchy continually appealed to the papal court to obtain the right to elect the candidate of their own choice, but failed at every attempt. In the meantime, the monks of Saint-Bertin rewrote the history of their own institution to support their course of action: in a twelfth-century copy of Folcuin’s tenth-century Deeds of the abbots of Saint-Bertin, the reference to Count Arnulf’s theft of the relics of St Sylvin was

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27 FROMENTIN, Essai historique, p. 55.
31 FROMENTIN, Essai historique, pp. 56-7.
erased. Various allegations were also made regarding the supposed ownership of the sanctuary at Auchy by the early medieval abbey of Saint-Bertin.

These controversies did little to conceal the fact that Saint-Sylvin had already begun a steep decline into obscurity. Even though Enguerran did find his final resting place at the abbatial church sometime around 1099-1102, as early as 1094 he and his vassals had started a new religious entity for the county by founding the priory of Saint-Sylvin to the west of Hesdin.

Quite possibly the count himself had gradually wearied of the tight Flemish control over Auchy, and of the fact that it was situated, both literally and figuratively, too close to where Flemish and Hesdinian interests met. Besides being located more conveniently in the heart of the county and subordinated to the monastery of Anchin (then in the county of Hainaut), as an institution Saint-Georges was much better suited to the scale of Hesdin's relatively closed society, attracting the patronage of a large cross-section of the rural population. In 1100 or shortly thereafter, the abbot of Anchin arranged for the priory to receive a relic of the arm of St George, further stimulating donations.

While Saint-Georges was thriving, Saint-Sylvin slipped off the Hesdinian elite's agenda. Around the year 1100, the flow of donations of properties and rights to Saint-Sylvin almost completely dried up. It certainly did not help that the abbots of Saint-Bertin had refused to transfer to it the body (or, for that matter, any relics) of St Sylvin, as this had prevented the new monastery from developing a sustained local cult and an institutional identity likely to generate substantial patronage. The available documentation does not allow us to see whether or not alternative transactions, including purchases, compensated for this. Judging by what we know about the monastery's situation at the end of the twelfth century, it seems that in any case the value of such acquisitions would have been minimal.

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have been small. Shortly after Enguerran’s death, Walter, his nephew and successor, confiscated Saint-Sylvin’s properties, only to be chased from his own territories by the Flemish Count Robert II (1093-1111). In 1112, Robert’s successor Baldwin VII (1111-1119) reinstated Walter under strict conditions, but proclaimed himself protector and advocate of the abbey. Saint-Sylvin was now effectively a Flemish institution, and a very minor one at that.

In discussing Saint-Sylvin’s decline as an independent institution, scholars have generally paid little attention to the determination with which the abbots of Saint-Bertin set out to effect, and then consolidate, the subordinated position of the new abbey, preventing it from gaining prominence in the region. When, in 1088, Abbot John of Saint-Bertin (1082-1095) transferred St Sylvin’s relics to a new shrine, his colleague from Auchy was given the humble role of a mere witness to the proceedings. The publicity given to this performance of inequality was deliberate, and made it quite obvious to all concerned that Saint-Bertin would not tolerate Saint-Sylvin as a rival, let alone an equal partner. How this policy originated, and what made the abbots of Saint-Bertin pursue it so aggressively can be ascertained by looking at the abbey’s turbulent history over the previous half century.

Saint-Bertin in crisis

Nearly everything that is known about the history of Saint-Bertin in the eleventh century derives from an account written in the first years of the twelfth century by a monk named Simon of Ghent. Simon’s discourse revolves entirely around showing how, for the previous eight decades, abbatial government had continued along the lines of Abbot Roderic’s reformist leadership (1021-1042). It was Count Baldwin IV who, upon gaining control over the nearby town of Saint-Omer, had called in Roderic, a monk of the abbey of Saint-Vaast in Arras and a disciple of Richard of Saint-Vanne. According to Simon, Roderic encountered much resistance from the monks of Saint-Bertin, who were apparently unwilling to accept his interpretation of St Benedict’s Rule. Eventually, he claims, thanks to divine intervention, the...
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Abbot Roderic overcame these challenges and the community flourished under his leadership. In reality, Roderic’s reformist government suffered a number of setbacks, which hindered its progress. In 1033, the abbatial church burned down, and shortly after, an epidemic killed eleven monks. Over the next few years, tensions with the abbey’s lay advocate would erupt into a full-blown crisis, necessitating an intervention by the Count Baldwin IV (1035-1067). There is no question that the community was profoundly affected by these events. According to Roderic’s successor Bovo (1042-1065), the abbey subsequently turned into a “thieves’ den”, and internal discipline lapsed.

Not all of the origins of Saint-Bertin’s crisis were specific to the institution. All of the Benedictine monasteries in Flanders experienced at some point in the 1030s-1040s, the consequences of the tendency of the counts of Flanders to become less involved with their former ‘Eigenklöster’ and to focus increasingly on the patronage of secular chapters and new Benedictine houses. Under the government of Baldwin IV, the Ghent abbeys continued to function as principal centres of monastic life in Flanders. But their privileged relationship with the central dynasty was sustained not so much by the mutual recognition of interdependence, as by tradition. At Saint-Pierre, the count showed little inclination to intervene in Abbot Rodbold’s (995-1029) struggle against usurpations and various disputes with the abbey’s lay officers. In 1037, Baldwin V made one final donation for the soul of his father and mother, after which the abbey would receive no such gifts for more than a century. At Saint-Bavo, Abbot Othelbold (1019-1034) sent a somewhat desperate missive to the countess asking for greater comital involvement in restoring the abbey’s temporal goods. For the most part, the counts appear to have been particularly interested in establishing and maintaining their legal and financial rights as high advocates of these monasteries as institutions, rather than in maintaining or renewing a privileged association (or amicitia) with the monks themselves. A central change from 1038 explains the advocacy of Marchiennes, while another, from 1044, is the rare confirmation of the same
There are several reasons for this alienation. Since the late tenth century, Baldwin IV had actively pursued the foundation of secular chapters as a means of supporting the construction of a network of castellanies in Flanders.57 Another reason was the fact that members of the comital family abandoned the tradition of using one particular institution as their familial necropolis.58 Rather than focusing on dynastic identity in their burial practices, they now shifted to a mode of conduct in which their individual personality and achievements became the focus of attention. Not only did Saint-Bertin lose its former status as a comital necropolis, but members of the comital family also began creating personal sanctuaries, which evidently enjoyed their special protection and benevolence. The older monasteries were often involved in this process, but rarely beneficially, as the example of Saint-Amand, a monastery located on the much-disputed south-western border of the county, shows. In the mid-1050s, Abbot Malbod (1018-1062) was asked by the count’s son, the future Baldwin VI (1067-1070), to oversee the restoration of the abbey of Hasnon, at a strategically important point along the River Scarpe.59 On 3 June 1070, the abbatial church of Hasnon was dedicated,60 and when Count Baldwin VI died on 17 July of the same year, he was buried there.61 In the meantime, Saint-Amand itself was struggling. When the abbey was devastated by a fire in 1066, the monks were forced to organise a translation of the body of their patron saint in order to collect funds for the construction of a new church.62 Along with the abbey’s privileged political status, lay patrons’ inclination to bestow the abbey with gifts evaporated. Following the death of Malbod, donations almost ceased completely,63 and the new abbot was unable to prevent a surge of...
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alienations that would trouble the community for decades to come. From experience, the abbots of Saint-Amand knew that the support of the count was not automatically forthcoming. Even though Malbod himself had been on cordial terms with the count, the latter had shown little inclination to support the abbey if this failed to serve his own interests in equal, if not greater, measure. Thus, in 1042, he intervened in his capacity as high advocate to resolve a dispute over a usurped allod, but also to demonstrate his overlordship in the secular management of monastic institutions. In cases where the opportunities to assert his status were less evident, the count simply refused to intervene.

The downturn in Saint-Bertin's fortunes created unexpected opportunities for the subject of another of Roderic's reforms, the abbey of Bergues-Saint-Winneke, to emancipate itself from the former institution. Bergues' origins dated back to the late seventh century, when the abbot of Saint-Bertin had founded a small monastery dedicated to St Winnoc on an estate his abbey had recently acquired in the village of Wormhout. In 846, Winnoc's relics were brought to Saint-Bertin to safeguard them from the Normans; in 899, Count Baldwin II had them transported for deposition in a new church built in Bergues, to the north of Wormhout, where he also installed a secular chapter. Around 1020, Baldwin IV then built a new church dedicated to Winnoc, to which he had the relics transported from the collegiate church of Saint-Martin and Winnoc. According to a charter issued by Baldwin VI in 1067, the canons who were granted ownership of the new church soon succumbed to the temptations of wealth and "voluptuousness." That may have been one of several reasons that...
caused the count to expel them and to replace them in 1022 with a community of Benedictine monks led by Roderic. It is unlikely that Roderic personally managed the day-to-day affairs of his second community – he probably received the assistance of a monk named German, who eventually succeeded him in 1029. German died after a four-year abbacy, and was succeeded by Rumold, another monk from Saint-Bertin.

Count Baldwin VI’s 1067 charter for Bergues-Saint-Winnoc provides a vantage point from which to assess the situation of that abbey and of Saint-Bertin. Both institutions were situated on major trade routes and in or very near to centres of commerce, where large numbers of potential patrons and pilgrims gathered. At Saint-Bertin, the cult of relics at the abbey since the late tenth century had been a significant source of revenue – apparently, even a minor saint such as Folcuin of Thérouanne attracted pilgrims coming from as far away as England. Since St Winnoc had formerly been represented as one of the four main saints of Saint-Bertin up to the reform of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, the monks of the latter institution, who now served that saint as their patron and – crucially – actually preserved the saint’s body in their own institution, could look forward to sharing some of the lay attention that Saint-Bertin had enjoyed. Even more importantly, the count had bestowed sufficient property on them to sustain an independent monastery. According to the 1067 charter, Baldwin IV had replaced the properties supposedly squandered by the canons with extensive donations of tithes, altars, and several churches in the coastal area of Flanders.

Then, little more than a decade after the reform, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc suddenly found itself in a position where it could gain considerable advantage over Saint-Bertin. As we have seen, the beginning of Rumold’s abbacy (1033-1068) coincided with the first of a series of disasters that struck Saint-Bertin and effectively forced Roderic into a government of restoration and damage control. In the meantime, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc flourished. The abbey obtained the right from Baldwin IV to hold a yearly market in Wormhout. As a result of its key position in both regional and inter-regional trade, the abbey soon began striking its own coins. All of this allowed Rumold, in the second...
half of his abbacy, to begin construction work on the new church, which he also had decorated. The construction work was part of Rumold's efforts to stimulate pilgrimage to the abbey, offering lay society an opportunity to venerate the relics of St Winnoc, as well as those of Oswald, the seventh-century king of Northumbria, and, from 1058 onwards, Lewinna, the Anglo-Saxon martyr whose relics had been stolen from an English monastery by a monk of Bergues. A veritable campaign of soliciting for arguments to enhance even further Bergues' own institutional identity and the reputation of its patron saint culminated in the 1060s, when the pre-reform narrative known as the Miracles of St Winnoc was complemented with a new series of miracle accounts. The intended application of these stories – to stimulate pilgrimage – is revealed in a sermon-like text, probably written in the third quarter of the eleventh century, on the healing of a blind girl by St Winnoc. In effect, the monks of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc were aiming for exactly the same audience of potential patrons and pilgrims as those of Saint-Bertin. Even Saint-Bertin's special connection with England was not exempted from competition, as is shown by the monks' special attention to St Oswald and Lewinna.

Whereas Rumold's efforts yielded significant wealth from donations and other gifts, Bovo of Saint-Bertin's simultaneous attempts to encourage the veneration of relics at Saint-Bertin were less successful. In 1046, Bovo initiated the restoration of the abbatial church. During construction works on the site of the main altar, the body of St Bertin was allegedly discovered in a coffin made of lead. On 2 May 1052, the Sunday of the market held for foreign tradesmen in the town of Saint-Omer, the saint's body was retrieved and given a formal elevation. Bovo ordained that henceforth this day would be celebrated each year as a feast. Then, on returning from an unspecified mission to Rome, he brought with him relics of St Denis which he had received as a blessing at the royal abbey of Saint-Denis. After taking part in a procession with his community, he placed

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76 As attested in Drogo's Liber miraculorum Sancti Winnoci, pp. 275-84. At the time of Rumold's death only the choir was in use.
80 The starting date of the work is attested in Bovo's Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini, pp. 527-8. At the time of his death, the work was still under way.
81 Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini; discussed in Unger, Creating, pp. 72-90.
the relics with Bertin’s body. As Karine Ugé has shown, the rediscovery of St Bertin’s body was a highly disputed affair. The reasons for this was that the abbey already had relics of this saint; yet the newly discovered body was claimed to be complete. Bovo, who wrote an account of the discovery, indicated that ignorant laypeople (vulgus minus intelligens) reacted badly to the news, and that the response from the ecclesiastical authorities as well as the abbey’s main lay patrons was at best muted. Members of the ecclesiastical elite delayed the elevation of the body several times, and when it finally took place the count was absent, sending the countess in his place. In the wake of the ceremony, neither the count nor any other of the abbey’s main lay patrons made any significant donations or accorded any privileges to the abbey; nor did it have any significant impact in the longer term, for the abbey’s archives contain no record of significant donations from the period between ca. 1050 and the beginning of the 1090s. Perhaps indicative of the meagre material rewards of the enterprise is the fact that the construction of the new church – although a project of considerable magnitude – proceeded slowly. Bovo died leaving an unfinished church, and construction was further delayed when, in 1079, even before the roof was constructed, the new church burnt down. For several years, nothing happened until work was resumed under Abbot John. When the new church was eventually consecrated in 1106, it was the first time in seventy-three years that the monks of Saint-Bertin had at their disposal a completed abbatial church.

Like Malbod’s successor at Saint-Amand, Bovo was actually quite successful in safeguarding, restoring and expanding the monastic estate, as well as guaranteeing the abbey’s institutional integrity. But patronage in the shape of substantial donations was not forthcoming, and his misguided dealings with St Bertin’s relics created further ruptures in an already traumatised community.
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The monks' reaction to the discovery of the saint's body was tepid to say the least, and at least one member of the community, a monk named Folcard, actually tried to counter Bovo's self-serving dealings with their patron saint by composing a hagiographical narrative that focused on St Bertin's childhood. This apparently failed to make much impact, and Folcard was eventually forced to leave the abbey. He sought patronage from the Anglo-Saxon Queen Emma or, possibly through the intermediary of the exiled Flemish Godwin clan, from Queen Edith. Folcard was eventually introduced to Ealdred, Bishop of Worcester (1047-1061) and York (1061-1069), who managed to have him elected as abbot of Thorney around 1068.

Goscelin, another monk from Saint-Bertin, also left the abbey sometime between 1058 and 1064, and went on to produce a significant body of hagiographical work for, among others, Ely. Some scholars have considered these authors and their work as witness to Saint-Bertin's status and efflorescence, but there are just as many reasons to consider their departure from the Flemish abbey as a brain drain caused by a deep institutional crisis.

Perhaps most painful to Bovo and his monks was the fact that the controversial elevation of St Bertin had, quite publicly, demonstrated Saint-Bertin's fall from grace with the counts of Flanders and the ecclesiastical and secular elites. And all the while, the Bergues-Saint-Winnoc community was in excellent shape, thanks in no small part to the promotion of the cult of a saint whom the monks of Saint-Bertin had previously considered to be theirs. The Monasticus, the Sermo, and Baldwin's 1067 charter all suggest that, by that time, Rumold had successfully transformed the modest community of the early 1030s into one thriving on self-confidence, wealth and popularity with pilgrims and mighty patrons. It was possibly Rumold himself, shortly before the issuance of the 1067 charter, who prepared a manuscript that contained an interpolated Vita antiqua Sancti Winnoci, the new version of the Miracula and the Sermo.

According to Huyghebaert, the original Vita antiquiora was written at Saint-Bertin, and was interpolated in 1060-1063/4 by Rumold in order to claim the saint definitively for Bergues-Saint-Winnoc. Probably around 1064, a manuscript

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91 UGÉ, Creating, p. 86.
95 Rumold, Vita antiqua interpolata Sancti Winnoci, ed. W. LEVISON, MGH SS rerum Merovingicarum V (Hanover / Leipzig, 1910), pp. 769-75; the Sermo was edited ibid., pp. 785-6.
96 HUYGHEBAERT, 'L'abbé Rumold', pp. 5-28.
from Ghent who had left his community of Saint Peter, possibly because of the simoniac appointment of Abbot Everhelm (1059-1068/9),97 composed yet another Life of Winnoc98 and, at an undetermined time after 1064, a Genealogy of the saint was constructed.99 The monk Drogo also conceived a Life of St Oswald as well as two sermons devoted to this saint,100 and an account of the translation of St Lewinna.101 Lewinna's arrival in Flanders had been publicised by a circuitio with her relics, similar to that of St Ursmer by the monks of Lobbes who, in 1064, had actually stopped at Bergues for a meeting with the count and his spouse.102

The publication of the 1067 charter was not just a symbolic marker of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc's prosperity—it was a watershed event in the region's monastic history. Not only did it confirm the abbey's economic and social situation, but it also encouraged the community to complete its journey towards independence. In 1068, for the first time, the monks chose an abbot from their own ranks rather than from the community of Saint-Bertin. All ties with Saint-Bertin established at the reform in 1022 were thus severed, and the abbeys now entered into open competition. Shortly thereafter, the hagiographer Drogo...

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99 Ibid., pp. 267-8. This text was possibly part of the original Life.


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Once again updated the miracle collection of St Winnoc\(^1\) and conceived a Life of St Godolph\(^1\). A lavish manuscript for liturgical use from the latter half of the twelfth century (now preserved as Bergues, Bibliothèque Municipale, 19) still bears witness to the community's self-confidence. Nearly all of Drogo's hagiographic works are included, and some of the Lives and sermons are divided into eight lections for use in the office. Also included are hymns for the office of St Winnoc and a partly versified office,\(^2\) indicating that this collection of texts was central to the legitimisation of Bergues' identity. But more importantly, it also signified the completion of the community's emancipation from Saint-Bertin.

Reform before the reforms: late eleventh-century abbatial policies

The shock impact of the process that culminated in the 1068 election at Bergues-Saint-Winnoc should not be underestimated. In his account of the election of Bovo's successor Heribert (1065-1082), the chronicler Simon emphasises the latter's previous experience (acquired as a cleric before he entered the monastery) in the administration of the abbey's temporal goods, and explicitly states that the monks allowed this argument to determine their decision.\(^3\) Heribert's abbacy appears to have focused almost entirely on re-establishing Saint-Bertin as a major religious and political centre. Crucial to that process was the resumption of building work on the abbatial church, which he was able to advance sufficiently to make possible the celebration of offices. Heribert also provided it with a sumptuous gold and silver candelabrum.\(^4\) Without doubt, these investments were considered essential to recreating the necessary environment for the celebration of Saint-Bertin's hagiographical legacies.\(^5\) In addition, measures were taken to promote a stronger sense of identity amongst the monks, as indicated by the completion of the community's emancipation from Saint-Bertin.


\(^{4}\) Simon, Chronicon Sithiense, p. 639.

\(^{5}\) Passage edited in GUÉRARD, Cartulaire, p. 189.
solidarity and historical continuity within the formerly disrupted community. In 1073, Aethelward created a prebend to commemorate his two predecessors and himself as well as the deceased monks. Nevertheless, the situation remained precarious as major donations are recorded for this period, and when the church burnt down a second time, building activity came to a sudden halt.

Like the crisis of the 1030s-1040s, the modest resurgence of Saint-Bertin during this period shows striking similarities with that of other monasteries in the region, in particular Saint-Peter in Ghent. Abbot Everhelm's removal from that abbey in 1069 had prevented the conflict over his simoniac appointment from escalating into a full-blown institutional crisis. Upon his canonical election, Abbot Folcard (1069-1088) immediately took action to reorganise the monastery's temporal goods and to affirm its historical claims on legitimacy. In 1070, he issued a regulation charter for the advocacy of Harnes, and in 1081 obtained from William the Conqueror confirmation of the abbey's properties in England. New life was also injected into the old rivalry with the abbey of Saint-Bavo, also in Ghent. Since the latter tenth century, both abbeys had engaged in a battle of words over their historical primacy. In a move to assert his abbey's claims, Folcard elevated and translated the body of Florbert who, according to tradition, was the first abbot to govern a monastery in Ghent. In addition, new hagiographical narratives were written relating to St Amalberga and Bertulf, and yet another pamphlet was issued to demonstrate Saint-Bertin's historical primacy.

Abbeys, institutionalised and modernised economic organisation such as other monasteries elsewhere. See above, note 87. Upon his canonical election, Abbot Folcard (1069-1088) immediately took action to reorganise the monastery's temporal goods and to affirm its historical claims on legitimacy. In 1070, he issued a regulation charter for the advocacy of Harnes, and in 1081 obtained from William the Conqueror confirmation of the abbey's properties in England. New life was also injected into the old rivalry with the abbey of Saint-Bavo, also in Ghent. Since the latter tenth century, both abbeys had engaged in a battle of words over their historical primacy. In a move to assert his abbey's claims, Folcard elevated and translated the body of Florbert who, according to tradition, was the first abbot to govern a monastery in Ghent. In addition, new hagiographical narratives were written relating to St Amalberga and Bertulf, and yet another pamphlet was issued to demonstrate Saint-Bertin's historical primacy.
Peter’s claims to the title of the original foundation of St Amand.116 Here, too, charter evidence suggests that the immediate results of this policy were modest. The policy of Heribert and Folcard of investing heavily in their abbey’s resurgence was helped by their careful navigation of the county’s political waters – not that they were hoping initially to get much direct return from a renewed association with the Flemish counts. For instance, the 1067 charter for Bergues-Saint-Winne undoubtedly crushed the hopes of the Saint-Bertin monks regarding a renewal of privileged relations with the then-current dynasty. But when Robert the Frisian, the future Count Robert I (1071-1093), initiated a campaign to overthrow the underage Arnulf III (1070-1071), a unique opportunity presented itself to turn the tide. As early as 1070, Folcard and his monks expressed their support for Robert’s rebellion,117 without question hoping to benefit from this early sign of allegiance to the new ruler. And the rewards, although still not comprising any significant donations, were considerable.118 Whereas at Saint-Bavo, Abbot Siger (1066-1073) was ousted by Count Robert I and replaced by Stephen of Egmond (1073-1076), an intervention which marked the beginning of a period of internal tensions and institutional instabilities;119 relations between Saint-Peter and the count were far more cordial. In 1072, Robert issued a privilege confirming the abbey’s possessions that had been acquired by donation from his predecessors.120 Similarly, Heribert and his monks almost immediately benefited from a renewed association with the comital court. Unlike Saint-Peter, no comital privilege from this period is recorded for Saint-Bertin. But when Robert’s political interests converged with the competitive ones of Saint-Bertin, on the occasion of the foundation of Saint-Sylvin the following year, he vindicated Abbot Heribert for the humiliating events of 1067-1068. From the count’s viewpoint, Saint-Bertin’s dominance over Auchy reflected the political relations between the two counties. For Heribert and his monks, the entire operation consisted, at least in part, of a form of damage control, a way of undoing the disastrous impact of Bergues’ emancipation. Their involvement in Auchy’s so-called ‘restoration’, Saint-Bertin’s tight control over the new institution’s potential to attract pilgrims and patrons, and the regulation of abbatial elections, all guaranteed that the new abbey would not emerge as yet another significant competitor to Saint-Bertin’s interests.

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116 De certissima sancti Florberti translatione, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XV/1 (Hanover, 1887), pp. 642-3, and XV/2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 1317-18.
118 For an overview of comital privileges from the reign of Robert I and his policy regarding the nobility, see E. VERLINDEN, Robert Ier le Frison, comte de Flandre. Etude d’histoire politique (Antwerp / Paris / The Hague, 1935), pp. 132-3.
120 Ed. VAN LOKEREN, Les chartes, no. 150, p. 101.
Following his victory at the battle of Cassel in 1071, the new count showed little inclination to favour the Benedictine houses in the county through donations or – with the exception of Saint-Peter – special privileges. But Robert was also a Realpolitiker who favoured those abbots who steered clear of becoming embroiled in the Investiture dispute, either by adopting a moderate stance or by providing some kind of guarantee that reformist interests would be pursued in a way so as not to harm comital interests. For instance, there are no indications of comital resistance when, in 1075, Wederic, a monk from Saint-Peter, was mandated by the Pope to spread the Gregorian reform in Flanders and Brabant. He also allowed the abbey to become an asylum for at least one anti-simoniac monk from Saint-Trond. The accounts for Saint-Bertin are more ambiguous. In 1069, so the chronicler Simon claims, Heribert became abbot of Saint-Germain in Auxerre by royal appointment. Apparently concerned about being accused of simony, and unwilling to end up on the wrong side of the debate in a time of ecclesiastical reform, he is said to have resigned from the latter abbey in 1072. While the story itself appears to be apocryphal – no abbot of that name is attested in sources from Saint-Germain – it may be a reflection of Heribert’s cautious attitude at the time. Exactly how destabilising taking a position in the Investiture dispute could be is made evident in the turbulent developments at Bergues-Saint-Winnoc. In January 1078, the council of Poitiers found Abbot Rumold’s successor Ermenger guilty of simony and removed him from the abbatial see.

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124 Ed. GUÉRARD, Cartulaire, p. 197. V.B. HENRY has speculated that the king appointed Heribert following his dissatisfaction with the election of Walter, a former monk of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire (Histoire de l’abbaye de Saint-Germain d’Auxerre, ordre de Saint-Benoit et de la congrégation de Saint-Maur (Auxerre, 1853), pp. 173-4).
126 Letter from Bishop Hugh of Die, legate of the papal see, to Pope Gregory VII, included in Hugh of Flavigny’s Chronicon, ed. G.H. PERTZ, MGH SS VIII (Hanover, 1848), p. 419: ‘Abbas Bergensis ecclesiae de Flandria fuisse simoniacus comprobatus est, et depositus’; see also VERLINDEN,
campaign of defamation against Ermenger later turned out to be a monk of high birth named Ingelbert who, according to tradition, may have been Count Baldwin IV's grandson by one of his daughters.127 Comital interest in the matter was certainly high, for Count Robert himself intervened and appointed Manasses, prior of Saint-Airy in Verdun, as the new abbot. Apparently, he did so at the suggestion of Otfrid, prior of the community of regular canons in Watten (founded in 1072 on a former property of Bergues-Saint-Winoc), at that time the hub of the Gregorian reform movement in Flanders.128 According to the fourteenth-century chronicler John of Ypres, the appointment of Manasses divided the community, and some monks left the monastery.129 Apparently, Manasses’ credentials as a reformist abbot were not universally acknowledged either. Some of the insurgent monks went to Bishop Hubert of Thérouanne (1078-1081), who refused to ordain him,130 as did Hugh of Die, the papal legate and himself a major agent of the movement in France and Burgundy. Eventually, Robert successfully sent a mission to Rome to obtain the right for Manasses to carry the pontifical insignia.131 But in 1083, he forced Manasses out of the abbey, thereby responding to accusations made by the abbot’s own brethren that he had led the abbey into ruin. When questioned by the count, the abbot reportedly “argued manfully that not the count, but he himself was abbot, and that he, and not the count, would determine what he could and should do.”132 Indignant, Count Robert sent him away and appointed the aforementioned Ingelbert (1083-1096/1106) as the new abbot. Although Ingelbert assisted in several high-profile ceremonies and received at least one donation,133 his abbey had clearly slipped into a state of crisis. In the first year of his abbacy, a fire also destroyed many of the abbey’s buildings and...

127 Ed. PRUVOST, Chronique, p. 77. HUYGHEBAERT posits a different relationship between Baldwin IV and Ingelbert: in his interpretation, Ingelbert was the grandson of Gisla of Luxemburg, daughter of Count Frederic of Luxemburg and sister of Ogiva, the wife of Baldwin VI (See PRUVOST, Chronique, p. 77).  
131 Ed. PRUVOST, Chronique, p. 74.  
132 Iperius, Chronicon, cols 584-5: Respondit viriliter non comitem, sed se esse abbatem et de suo, non comitem, sed se disponere posse ac debere.  
133 Ed. PRUVOST, Chronique, pp. 78-82.
consumed thirty-four manuscripts. The crisis probably deepened even further when upon his deathbed Ingelbert confessed to having been the one who had defamed Abbot Ermenger. Half a century after the community of Saint-Bertin had reached its lowest point in terms of credibility and internal cohesion, the same fate now befell Bergues-Saint-Winnoc. The time was ripe for Saint-Bertin to reclaim its prominent position in Flanders' Benedictine landscape. Upon first inspection, the material rewards the monks had reaped from their renewed association with comital power may seem small, but the process involved was undoubtedly one of estranged partners acknowledging their shared interests. While Baldwin VI had stayed away from the disputed translation of St Bertin in 1052, in 1088 Robert I did attend the rather less controversial — but politically significant — deposition of the body of St Sylvain in a new shrine. The translation initiated a resurgence of the cult of saints whose relics were preserved at the abbey. Robert I or II also intervened, probably to mediate, in a dispute between the abbey and a man who claimed the right to fish in a lake called Mera. Abbot John found these interventions particularly helpful in his continued attempts to diminish progressively the involvement of certain members of the lower lay elite in the abbey’s affairs. In 1087, he was able to reclaim from Gerbold the Oosterzele allod which had been donated by their uncle and aunt in 1054. In 1092 or 1093, the abbey further reclaimed its rights to Arques by buying back part of the village’s comitatus from a layman called Baldric. In December 1092, we find the count in retreat at Saint-Bertin. During his stay there, the Flemish clergy, then assembled at the provincial council of Reims, confronted him with a written complaint about his exercising regalia on the property of deceased clerics. Among those who carried the letter were Arnulf, provost of Saint-Omer, Abbot John of Saint-Bertin, Abbot Gerard of Ham, and Bernard, provost of Watten. No doubt the reformers considered John an ideal representative in negotiations, who could be relied upon to support their interests but who was also sufficiently in the count’s favour to make change in the latter’s policies a realistic prospect. Shortly before his death

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134 Ibid., pp. 77-8.
135 Simon, Chronicle Ileens, p. 650.
136 Ed. HAIGNERÉ, Les chartes, p. 33, no. 86. Count Enguerrand is not mentioned as being among those who attended the ceremony.
137 In 1097, Abbot Lambert also translated the relics of St Folcuin; the solemn charter made to document this occasion and originally included in the new shrine can be found in Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque d’Agglomération de Saint-Omer, 819, pp. 150-2.
138 Ed. GUÉRARD, Cartulaire, p. 207.
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid., pp. 202-3.
141 Ibid., p. 205.
142 VERLINDEN, Robert Ier, pp. 125-7.
in October 1093, Robert bestowed Saint-Bertin's rights and privileges over the village of Arques in a solemn charter. This charter marked the beginning of a series of privileges and donations, of which the first important one was that issued by Pope Urban II confirming the abbey's possession of its altars. Robert's son, Robert II, equally favoured the older monasteries' interests. At Saint-Peter, even though real comital donations would not be granted for a long time, in 1102 Robert II issued a charter to Abbot Siger (1088-1108) stating that he would no longer intervene in the election of abbots. Under Siger's leadership the abbey also received a series of papal, royal, comital and episcopal privileges that consolidated the community's temporal goods. Thus, Heribert and John of Saint-Bertin and Fulco and Siger at Saint-Peter initiated an effective restoration policy, coupled with a desire to become actively involved in a broader movement of religious and institutional renewal. It is a credit to their abilities as monastic leaders that, while pursuing these policies, they also successfully worked towards reanimating the primitively strong relationship that the abbey had previously enjoyed with the counts of Flanders. But the newly restored association with comital power was also easily disturbed. In 1099/100, John's successor Lambert almost fatally overplayed his hand when he attempted to subject his monastery to the abbot of Cluny. The turbulent transition to a reformed regime has been discussed at length elsewhere, and it will suffice to say here that Lambert's initiatives led to much resistance both from within the community and from various ecclesiastical and secular leaders who had initially agreed with it. Eventually, the Cluniac customary was adapted to local standards, Cluniac monks were allowed to intervene in other monasteries only through Lambert's intermediary action, and no abbey was formally attached to the Cluniac network.

Scholars have acknowledged the significance of the reforms to the count's ecclesiastical policies, and to the shaping of a Benedictine 'movement' with a regional character which, in later decades, would lead to attempts to create an institutional network of reformed monasteries. But, as in the discussion over the 'crisis of cenobitism', they have neglected to look at what the initial phase of the reforms did to relations between the Benedictine monasteries of Flanders. Without question, Lambert's motivation to reform derived in part from his dissatisfaction at a certain lack of internal discipline and the reported fact that the monks of his abbey had too many personal properties and servants.
at their disposal. But, considering what is known about Saint-Sylvin's fate in the first decade of the eleventh century, it seems that the competitive advantages of heading a reformist movement also played an important role in shaping his behavior. Surely it is no coincidence that the first institutions to be reformed from Saint-Bertin were precisely Saint-Sylvin and Bergues-Saint-Winoc, the abbey's foremost competitors, and that these reforms targeted not only the modification of internal discipline, but also the effective subjugation to Saint-Bertin's leadership. At the beginning of this article we saw what happened to the economically weakened and politically isolated community of Saint-Sylvin from 1101 onwards. And in 1106, at the instigation of Bishop John of Thérouanne and with the support of his wife Clementia, the count was convinced to permit the reform of the ailing community of Bergues-Saint-Winoc by Hermes, prior of Saint-Bertin. In later decades, an anonymous monk from Bergues would comment that this event marked "the first reform of this monastery, even though it had been begun by Ermenger". Precisely what the author of this text wanted to imply is unclear, but it is possible that this remark is our only evidence of a 'reformist' policy on the part of Ermenger — similar perhaps to that of his contemporaries Heribert and John of Saint-Bertin and that Ingelbert's defamatory campaign had been intended to quash any policy which might have infringed on the count's interests. Three decades later, and with the support of both the count and the ecclesiastical elite, Saint-Bertin was allowed to use reform as a means of regaining control over Bergues. The chronicler Simon, one of Lambert's foremost partisans, commented on this situation somewhat maliciously, saying that "since the reform of Bergues-Saint-Winoc in 1022 these two abbeys had been bound by a familiarity based on mutual love, so that, when it was appropriate, one would be corrected by the other". But surely no one was fooled into thinking that Saint-Bertin was not using the reforms to reclaim its prominent position amongst Flanders' Benedictine houses.

Conclusions

As I argued at the beginning of this paper, at a regional level of analysis the notion of a 'crisis of cenobitism' should be replaced by one of many 'crises', involving individual institutions looking for ways to deal with endemic...
institutional problems and the significantly increased competition within the Benedictine sphere. Evidence relevant to the abbey of Saint-Bertin in Flanders shows that a series of events and setbacks significantly affected the abbey's prominent position in the region in the middle decades of the eleventh century. Unable to compete effectively with the recently founded Bergues-Saint-Winoc, Saint-Bertin was hindered by its own historical legacies in trying to adapt to changing economic, political and other circumstances. Yet towards the end of the eleventh century these same historical legacies, which in effect made the abbey's leadership less dynamic than that of younger institutions, allowed the abbots of Saint-Bertin to reclaim a prominent position in Flanders, and actively to intervene in the institutional development of its immediate competitors. The renewed association with the count of Flanders was essential in this process. If nothing else, this shows the remarkable dynamics of institutional development during a period, which has long been represented as an intermediary phase between two 'waves' of reform.
II

HOW REFORM BEGAN

"Traditional" Leadership and the Inception of
Monastic Reform in Late Eleventh-Century Flanders

One of the least understood aspects of the reforms of monastic institutions in
the central Middle Ages is that of its inception. Apologetic accounts by
contemporary authors tend to represent reform as a sudden rupture with
customs of the recent past, and a return to a more 'authentic' experience of the
monastic ideal. Central to this discourse is the notion, whether supported by
reliable evidence or not, that a given community had previously found itself in a
state of moral and institutional crisis caused by, among other things, lax
discipline, abbot's bad leadership, and interference from secular society. A
revelation of scholarship published over the last two decades has shown that
there is reason to be critical of these accounts, and that reformist government was
often marked by deliberate continuities with the institutional past. To name but
two examples, this commitment to the "accumulated investments" of previous
generations is particularly evident in the management by reformed communities
of hagiographical legacies and other traditions relating to the cult of patron
saints, and also in relations with secular society. As a result, in recent years
scholars have opted, fairly radically, to focus on the societal embedding of monastic reform, in particular the role played by the lay and ecclesiastical elites in promoting and bringing about reform, and on the involvement of reformist abbots in elite networks. One of the consequences of this shift is that the behavioural aspects of reformist agency have become less evident in scholars' analyses. The study of how reform made the transition from a theoretical objective into a concrete institutional and disciplinary reality now comes a poor second to that of who promoted it, why they did so, and in what kind of social constellations they operated. Paradoxically, this shift has been taking place almost simultaneously with the growing attention being paid in medieval scholarship towards the performative aspects of the secular and ecclesiastical exercise of power. As these latter studies have shown, social and institutional change was accomplished not through juridical acts of transition, but via a series of public performances, where the change itself was 'enacted' and a consensus was established between the parties involved in its execution. The shaping of a consensus among the potential supporters of a monastery's reform is likely to have occurred in a similar fashion, as it is now clear that in many respects monastic reform was linked to the ways in which contemporary elites managed and distributed power and status. It is therefore justified to ask if it is valid to think of reform not as a sudden transition in an otherwise static institutional context (as, for instance, Paul Pierson calls it, an "exogenous shock"), but as a process prepared, initiated and driven by various performances charged with reformist meaning. If this understanding of reform...
proves to be accurate, a significant part of this process must have taken place in a public setting, for it was the public nature of these performances that made them valid and effective.9

A good case in point is the early abbacy of Lambert of Saint-Bertin (1095-1123), a Benedictine monastery in the northern French diocese of Thérouanne.10 In 1099/1100, Lambert secretly solicited Abbot Hugo of Cluny (1049-1109) to accept his monastery as a new member of Cluny's monastic network. He did so with the support of Countess Clementia of Flanders (ca. 1065-ca. 1135), who was leading the county of Flanders in place of her crusading husband Robert II (1093-1111).11 What followed was a period of intense disputes, both within and outside the monastery, which eventually resulted in Lambert successfully introducing new customs, but failing to integrate his institution into the Cluniac network and to exempt his monastery from the fiscal and juridical authority of the local bishop. Such had been the resistance to Saint-Bertin joining the ecclesia Cluniacensis, most notably from the count himself upon his return in spring 1100, that the subsequent reform movement in Flanders took on a distinctly regional character.12 Given the interest of Lambert's actions to the history of Flemish monasticism in general, it is striking to observe how scholarship has neglected the study of his government prior to the events of 1099/1100 and the way in which it related to his agency as a reformer.13 As is the case for many other noted reformers of the

9  See VANDERPUTTEN, 'Monks'.
time, traditional accounts of Lambert’s abbacy downplay the continuities in his policies with those of his predecessors. In addition, they represent his behavior as administrator of Saint-Bertin and his private contacts with other reformist agents as two distinct aspects of his early years as abbot. However, a closer look at the evidence relating to his government between 1095-1099 yields an altogether more complex understanding of his attitudes as a monastic leader. Contrary to common assumptions, we may hypothesize that in the early phase of his government Lambert organized, or participated in, a number of public performances that were instrumental to the process of reform, both of his own institution and that of the church of Thérouanne. What makes the reformist symbolism of such performances so hard to distinguish is that the instruments he used to stage them were typical examples of ‘traditional’ abbatial government, and the principle of investing them with reformist meaning actually pre-dated his election as abbot.

The ‘restoration’ of Saint-Bertin in the late eleventh century

When Lambert was elected abbot of Saint-Bertin in the summer of 1095, Saint-Bertin was re-emerging as one of the leading monastic institutions in the county of Flanders. Beginning in the late ninth century, the abbey had been one of the main places of worship associated with the Flemish dynasty; for much of its tenth-century history, members of the comital family acted as lay abbots there. In 1021, Count Baldwin IV (988–1035) ordered the reform of the abbey by Roderic, a monk from Saint-Vaast in Arras, a house led until recently by the Lotharingian reformer Richard of Saint-Vanne. However, about a decade into the governance of Roderic (1021–1042), the abbey suffered a series of setbacks that profoundly affected its social and economic situation. Over the course of the 1030s, a fire destroyed the abbatial church; an epidemic probably halved the community; and Gerbodo, the abbey’s lay advocate, began harassing the monks to the point that the count had to intervene to mediate a settlement. Of a more structural nature was the growing competition for lay
patronage among the region's ecclesiastical institutions. As early as the 920s, the counts had moved their dynastic necropolis from Saint-Bertin to the abbey of Saint-Peter in Ghent; the counts' loss of direct control over the region around Saint-Bertin half a century later led to a further loosening of ties with the monastery.19 The reform of 1021 did little to change the tide, and from the 1030s-1040s onwards, members of the count's family all but stopped patronizing Benedictine monasteries, shifting their attention to houses of secular canons, the numbers of which would explode over the next half century.20 In the meantime, the neighbouring abbey of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, a former house of canons, which Abbot Roderic had reformed in 1022 and whose first three abbots had been monks from Saint-Bertin, gradually dissociated itself from its former mother house.21 Whilst Saint-Bertin was struggling, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc prospered, thanks to its involvement in the local economy (the abbey had market rights and struck its own coins), its aggressive pursuit of the promotion of local saints' cults, and the support of the Flemish count, who issued a major privilege to the abbey in 1067.22 In 1068, the monks broke with tradition by electing a member of their own community as abbot.

Abbatial leadership at Saint-Bertin throughout the second half of the eleventh century was determined by attempts to tackle the abbey's competitive disadvantages. Bovo (1042-1065), Heribert (1065-1082) and John (1082-1095) all pursued a policy of restoration, settling disputes with laymen over properties and gradually reducing the impact of the abbey's lay officers. They also invested massively in the promotion of the cult of saints whose relics were kept at the abbey (most notably through a controversial elevation of the body of St Bertin in 1052),23 in the restoration and refurbishment of the abbatial church, and (in the case of John at least) in the production of new manuscripts, ostensibly to enhance the abbey's attraction to potential patrons and to inspire the community with a renewed sense of self-confidence.24 But the real turning

23  See UGÉ, Creating, pp. 72-88.
24  On Bovo’s policies, UGÉ, Creating, pp. 72-88; for those of Heribert and John, see Simon, Chronicon Sithiense
point in the abbey's fortunes came in 1070-1071, when an insurrection against Count Arnulf III ended in the latter's death on the battlefield at Cassel, and the subsequent installation of his adversary Robert I the Frisian (1071-1093). After decades of indifference on the part of the counts, abbots of several Benedictine houses saw the civil war in Flanders as a major opportunity. We know, for instance, that the abbots of Saint-Pierre in Ghent expressed their support for the future count even before the battle of Cassel took place.25 It is likely that Abbot Heribert was also among Robert's early supporters. Certainly he did something to attract Robert's positive attention, for in June 1072, while preparing to issue his first charter as count (a privilege to the canons of Watten), Robert chose to stage this politically significant event at Saint-Bertin.26

The new count's interaction with the monks of Saint-Bertin reveals an awareness of how the judicious use of places, objects and personal connections charged with symbolic meaning was instrumental to the construction of his comital authority. Several occasions are documented of him applying this strategy. The first was the aforementioned issuance of his first charter in June 1072, an act which formally restored the abbey to comital favor and allowed Robert — without making any donations substantial enough to require the drafting of a written document — to benefit from the abbey's historical connection with Flanders' first counts. Another occasion presented itself when, in the same year, Enguerran, head of the neighboring county of Hesdin, took the initiative to found a monastery dedicated to Saint Sylvin at Auchy-les-Moines.28 In 951, Arnulf I of Flanders (918-965) had taken Saint Sylvin's relics from the church of Auchy-les-Moines, and had brought them, along with those of several other saints from various sanctuaries in the region, to Saint-Bertin where he was more certain of keeping them under his control.29

29 Folcuin, Gesta abbatum Sancti Bertini, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XIII (Hanover, 1881), at p. 630. On the management by Arnulf and his successors of Flanders' relic treasures, see in the first place E. BOZÓKY, 'La politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre (fin du...
II. How Reform Began

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foundation in 1072, Hesdin's de facto subordinate position to Flanders was projected on to the relationship between the new monastery and that of Saint-Bertin. Albert of Luxemburg's refusal to hand over any of St Sylvin's relics, and when, in 1088, the body of St Sylvin was re-enshrined, the abbot of Auchy himself, like all of his successors, recruited from Saint-Bertin, was only invited to act as a witness to the ritual. Count Robert attended the ceremony, effectively demonstrating his approval of Saint-Bertin's control over Auchy and relating it to his own authority.

A third, especially significant event took place in December 1092, when the ageing Count Robert was in retreat at Saint-Bertin. While there, he was confronted by the Flemish clergy, at that time assembled at the provincial council of Reims, bearing a written complaint about his exercising regalia on the property of deceased clerics.

The delegation sent out to Saint-Bertin comprised Arnulf, archdeacon of Thérouanne (1070-1112) and provost of the cathedral chapter of Saint-Omer, Bernard, provost of the regular canons of Watten, Gerard, abbot of Ham (1080-before September 1107), and John of Saint-Bertin. The first three of these individuals belonged unquestionably to the reformist party. Archdeacon Arnulf had a history of confrontations with Robert over the count's involvement in ecclesiastical matters, and in 1081 he was among a large number of Flemish clergymen and abbots who (with the count's support) had protested against the simoniac appointment of Lambert of Bailleul as bishop of Thérouanne. The regular canons of Watten...
The Benedictine monastery of Ham, an institution founded in 1079 as a priory of the abbey of Charroux but immediately converted into an abbey, is likely to have originated in the context of the bishop of Thérouanne's attempts to diminish the influence of Saint-Bertin (and indirectly that of the count of Flanders) on the diocese's monastic landscape. As for Abbot John, nothing is known about his previous attitude towards the ecclesiastical reform movement, and there is no evidence that he ever purported to be one of its main propagandists. The fact that he apparently approved of, and actually participated in, the delegation indicates that he must have been sympathetic to the reformers' cause. Yet, the way in which the confrontation was staged suggests that John was hardly taking any chances. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that Robert and the reformers had actually agreed to stage the negotiations at the abbey. Saint-Bertin was more or less neutral ground in the disputes over ecclesiastical reform and, because of its historical association with the counts of Flanders, provided a setting in which Robert would be able to make concessions without compromising his authority, and the reformers could ask for concessions while acknowledging the legitimacy of his position. John's involvement in this reconciliatory meeting enabled him to enhance both his own standing and that of his institution, turning Saint-Bertin into one of the geographical and institutional reference points of the ecclesiastical reform in Flanders. Thus, Saint-Bertin became charged with a reformist symbolism that reflected compromise rather than antagonism between the clergy and the count, and the political and status-related implications of this process undoubtedly contributed to Saint-Bertin's subsequent dominant position in Flanders' monastic landscape.

Abbot John died in March 1095. While the abbey's standing had recovered significantly over the previous two decades, apparently the situation looked far worse for the clergy in the diocese of Thérouanne at the Turn of the Twelfth Century', in: The Catholic Historical Review, 96 (2012), 241-70.

35 MEIJNS, De pauperes christi, esp. p. 63 onwards.
36 As argued in A.E. VERHULST, 'La fondation des dépendances de l'abbaye poitevine de Charroux dans le diocèse de Thérouanne: Andres, Ham et La Beuvrière', in: Le Moyen Âge, 69 (1963), pp. 169-89, at pp. 188-9 (where it is pointed out that dependencies were created almost simultaneously for the monasteries of Fécamp, Marmoutier and Charroux, all of which were situated outside Flemish territory).
37 Robert issued two charters to Saint-Bertin during John's abbacy; ed. VERCAUTEREN, Actes, pp. 46-7, no. 14 (charter regarding the abbey's ownership of the domain of Arques and rights of pasture in the woods of Ruhout), and pp. 52-3, no. 16 (charter regarding part of the jurisdiction of Arques).
from rosy on the inside: the monks had divided the incomes from the monastic estate amongst themselves, each disposing of a retinue of servants. Part of the new Abbot Lambert’s solution, his chronicler Simon claims, was to initiate the restoration of the abbey’s “exterior situation”, by which he essentially means the consolidation of its estates and rights, before moving on to the monastery’s internal affairs and, ultimately, to those of other monasteries of the region. To prove his point, Simon quotes two papal privileges confirming the abbey’s possession of its altars that were issued in the first year of Lambert’s abbacy, the first in December 1095 and the other in March 1096. These two documents would certainly make a good case for Lambert’s agency as a reformer working ‘on the outside’, were it not for the fact that his predecessors, Heribert and John, had been paving the way for this kind of initiative by acquiring from the local episcopacy privileges relating to the ownership of altars. In fact, for several other policies which Lambert pursued in the early years of his abbacy we could argue that he was capitalising on those initiated by his predecessors. One such policy concerns the regulation of relations with the local laity. A striking example of this is a charter from 1096 that records the sale to Lambert of an allod owned by the brothers Arnulf and Gerbodo in the village of Roquetoire. Arnulf and Gerbodo were the descendants of a line of lay officers who had been involved in the abbey’s government since the mid-980s, and who, in the mid-eleventh century, had caused the abbey a great deal of trouble. Over the next decades, the abbots would oversee the gradual dismantling of their association with Saint-Bertin. The 1096 deal with the two brothers, whose power base lay in south-eastern Flanders, was one of the concluding steps in that process. Another policy is evident in the re-enshrinement of the relics of St Folcuin († 855), performed by the Carolingian bishop of Thérouanne on 5 September 1097. Like the 1052 elevation of St

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39 Ibid., p. 645: Multa quippe, quae antecessorum suorum incuria vel ablata vel pessumdata et depravata fuerant, suo labore et benivolentia aecclesiae sunt restituta, reparata et emendata. Quae cuncta suo in loco convenientius patebunt, cum scripto apparuerit, quibus et in quibus et a quibus huius loci melioration monachorumque ... ad interiora usque ad nostros descendamus; a quibus iterum exeuntes, ad corrigenda aliorum coenobia expeditius proficiscamur.

40 Ed. Haigné, Les chartes, pp. 35-6, no. 92 and p. 36, no. 93.

41 I refer to charters regarding the abbey’s altars from 1075 (ibid., p. 32, no. 83) and 1093 (pp. 34-5, no. 89).

42 Ibid., p. 38, no. 96. Other relevant charters from Lambert’s early abbacy are in ibid., pp. 36-7, no. 94 and p. 38, no. 95.

43 See Vanderputten, ‘Monks’.

44 The original protocol of that ceremony is now lost, but the author of the report of a re-enshrinement in 1618 did make a transcription, now in Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque d’Agglomération de Saint-Omer, 819, pp. 150-2 (where it is introduced with a note on the original place of preservation: ‘ex diplomate feretro incluso’); a copy of this version is in Dom de Witte’s late eighteenth-century Grand Cartulaire (Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque d’Agglomération de Saint-Omer, 803/1, p. 140). On St Folcuin and his cult, see Mériaux, Gallia...
Bertin and the 1088 re-enshrinement of St Sylvin, that of St Folcuin was intended to reaffirm the abbey’s hagiographical identity and to restore its appeal to both patrons and pilgrims. There can be little doubt that Lambert’s intentions in so doing were to represent himself as a monastic leader who was profoundly aware, and respectful, of the hagiographical legacy of his institution. In addition, it showed him employing the instruments his predecessors had used to strengthen their institution’s competitive position. Simon himself actually admits, albeit implicitly, that Lambert’s early successes were due in large part to the achievements of his predecessors, even though he continues, albeit on the few instances of internal discipline, the chronicler avoids making any negative judgment on John’s government, praising him for his personal qualities and achievements. No wonder, since any contemporary observer would have remarked that Lambert’s early policies were essentially the same as those of his predecessors.

This same observation has led scholars to disregard Lambert’s early government in light of his subsequent agency as a reformer. This is particularly evident in Etienne SABBE’s still essential article ‘La réforme Clunisienne dans le comté de Flandre au début du XIIe siècle’. SABBE, in his discussion of the years leading up to the events of 1099/1100, interprets Simon’s comments as indicative of Lambert’s failure to bring about change within his monastery. In his interpretation, the watershed event in Lambert’s evolution towards the decision to offer his monastery to Cluny was the arrival in November 1097 of the exiled Anselm of Canterbury. Although it seems likely that there had been some previous contact between Anselm and Lambert or his predecessor John, the archbishop’s intermittent residence at Saint-Bertin in the years 1097–1099 enabled him not only to establish a deep friendship with Lambert, but also to actively promote the idea of an adhesion to the ecclesia Cluniacensis, of which he was a fervent admirer. SABBE concludes that it was actually Anselm who inspired and gave Lambert the impetus to reform, and implicitly suggests that Lambert’s “external” policies were essentially irrelevant to this process. Alternatively, Laurent MORELLE has recently suggested that Lambert’s interest in a Cluniac conversion may have originated as early as November or December 1095 – more precisely, either at the Council of Clermont (which was closed on 28 November) or at the dedication of the Cluniac priory of Sauxillanges (3 December), two significant events both he and Hugo of Cluny attended. But MORELLE’s understanding of Lambert’s actual policies during

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45 Simon, Chronicon Sithiense, pp. 641-3.
46 SABBE, La réforme, pp. 21-3.
47 MORELLE, Par delà, pp. 71-2.

these years is essentially the same as SABBE's: they are not relevant to the reform as such.

However plausible these hypotheses regarding Lambert's attraction to the Cluniac model may seem, they forego two essential points in the discussion. The first is that, prior to the 1099/1100 reform, Lambert (like his predecessor John) was involved with a network of reformist agents operating at the regional level, more specifically that of the diocese of Thérouanne. The second is that Lambert had already expressed his reformist intentions through seemingly 'unremarkable' acts of abbatial government. A key piece of evidence in this respect is the protocol of the re-enshrinement of St Folcuin, a ceremony held about two months prior to Anselm's arrival in Flanders. Following a formal dating clause, the text of that little-known document briefly notes that Lambert transferred the body of St Folcuin from the old shrine into a new one. The remaining text is devoted to recording the names of those present at the ceremony: Countess Clementia of Flanders, Archbishop Arnulf of Thérouanne, the abbots of the Benedictine monasteries of Jaux, Montreuil and Hun, the prior of the regular canons of Watten, several monks of Saint-Bertin (including the one who actually made the new shrine), the abbot of Thérouanne, and the abbot of the abbey of Saint-Omer. With such prosaic contents, one could hardly blame scholars for looking at the 186-word protocol as little more than a legal notice of a routine re-enshrinement or even an elaborate cedula, a tag used to identify relics. From a diplomatic perspective, the protocol's interest is dwarfed by that of several major privileges awarded to the monks in the years around 1100. From an institutional viewpoint, the re-enshrinement of a relatively minor saint seems to bear no relationship to Lambert's subsequent efforts to reform his monastery and, in a later phase, to spearhead reform in many of the region's Benedictine houses. Strikingly, even Lambert himself considered it not sufficiently significant to be included in Simon's chronicle, the semi-official account of his own early leadership. And when the monk replaced Lambert's shrine with a new one in 1181 (and thus must have seen the protocol and re-enshrined it along with the relics), Simon's anonymous successor failed to make any reference to the 1097 ceremony. It is almost as if the event itself was irrelevant to Lambert's achievements as abbot, and without doubt his own contemporaries and later generations considered it insufficient to how they wished to remember him as a reformer.

48 See above, note 44.
50 Ed. HAIGNERÉ, Les chartes, no. 89 onwards.
51 Continuatio Simonis, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XIII, II. (Hanover, 1881), p. 670. On the 1181 re-enshrinement, see also VANDERPUTTEN / SNIJDERS, 'Stability'.
In reality, Lambert's position as a 'traditional' leader of Saint-Bertin and his reformist activities are intimately connected in this document, and in the event it describes. As we have seen, when Lambert came to power, the abbey of Saint-Bertin was embedded in the elites' collective consciousness as a place of mediation, a public stage where ecclesiastical reform was negotiated through compromise. The 1097 ceremony extended the implications of that embedding, and demonstrated how rituals with a seemingly non-reformist meaning were capable of investing places, objects, and even connections between people with a reformist overtone. Present in September 1097 were two individuals who had joined Abbot John during his mission to confront Count Robert: the abbot of Ham, but more importantly the prior of Watten, an institution whose previous history made it unquestionable that the participants in the ritual looked favorably upon ecclesiastical reform. The reformist overtone of the ritual was compounded by the presence of Countess Clementia and Arnulf, archdeacon of Thérouanne. We have already observed that Arnulf supported a reformist agenda. Countess Clementia's motivations for becoming involved in the region's reformist networks are complex to say the least, and the lack of thorough study of the chronology and the sources of her government during Robert's absence does not make it any easier to understand her behavior. Clementia had effectively taken over the government of Flanders in September or October 1096 following the departure of her husband Robert II on crusade, and her subsequent public actions were geared towards affirming the legitimacy of her position. She also pursued a policy which was less obviously focused on herself, but which aimed to consolidate, and if possible expand, Flemish power along the border of the counties of Guînes and Boulogne. Both intentions were corroborated by the presence of several high-ranking dignitaries, in particular Wenemaer of Ghent, who would appear frequently in the charters of both Clementia and her husband. Thus,
Clementia’s presence at the re-enshrinement resulted primarily from her traditional role as head of the county and the comital dynasty’s historical association with the monastery. But the fact that she allowed herself to be surrounded by a reformist group of ecclesiastics at the ceremony, and her actions in favour of reformist institutions, reveals that she was a key presence in that sense, too. Her subsequent support of the Cluniac reform of Saint-Bertin,55 but also her personal friendships with Anselm of Canterbury56 and Bishop Lambert of Avesnes (1098-1115),57 and her successful intervention in the election of John of Warneton as bishop of Thérouanne (1099-1130), all bear witness to this.58 The fact that she was the niece of the future Pope Calixtus, himself a fierce advocate of ecclesiastical reform, was also probably germane.59

The presence of such a strong delegation of reformist agents allowed Lambert to transform an apparently traditional ritual into a statement of sorts regarding his own intentions. Evidently, links between his institution and several of these individuals and groups already existed. Yet the fact that he involved them in staging a ritual act in his monastery, particularly an act that vested his leadership in a legitimising past, demonstrated that the shared ideology of these people was of relevance to Saint-Bertin’s future direction. Whether he used the re-enshrinement of St Folcuin as an occasion to rally support for the impending Cluniac reform, or simply to frame his ongoing efforts to reform Saint-Bertin in the broader context of the ecclesiastical reform movement, remains unclear. And surely there must have been other occasions, before or after the ritual, when he met with these and other representatives of the ecclesiastical reform movement. Whether he used these meetings to ascertain the extent of their support, or simply to frame his ongoing efforts to reform Saint-Bertin in the broader context of the ecclesiastical reform movement, remains unclear. And surely there must have been other occasions, before or after the ritual, when he met with these and other representatives of the ecclesiastical reform movement.

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55 Between 1099 and 1101, Clementia herself wrote a letter to Hugo of Cluny in support of the reform; ed. J.P. MIGNE, Patrologia Latina 159, c. 939-40.
56 A letter from 1102 by Anselm regarding Clementia’s role in making her husband accept the free election of abbots is edited in F.S. SCHMITT, Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, Opera Omnia 4 (Edinburgh, 1949), letter 249, pp. 159-60.
59 B. SCHILLING, Guido von Vienne. Papst Calixt II. (Hanover, 1998), pp. 31-2 and passim.
supporters of reform, in particular with Clementia. But it is worth considering how instrumental were rituals, especially public ones, in the shaping of institutional realities. Deals may have been struck behind closed doors, alliances and friendships may have been established in a discreet fashion, but the way in which these elements were turned into effective instruments of social change was through their enactment in a public, often highly choreographed, setting.

As was the case in secular contexts, change in an ecclesiastical context was implemented through a succession of performances. Just a month and a half after the re-enshrinement, on 8 October 1097, Clementia and Bishop Lambert of Arras officiated at the priory of Watten, handing over relics of the Virgin, St Matthew and St Nicholas that Count Robert had received from his sister Adela and her husband Duke Roger of Apulia, and had sent over to Flanders.60 To this high-profile ceremony, the canons of Saint-Omer brought the relics of St Omer himself; the canons of Thérouanne brought the relics of St Maximus; and the monks of Saint-Bertin brought the relics of St Folcuin. At the equally high-profile dedication of the church of Hasnon in 1070, no fewer than twenty-six ecclesiastical institutions from the region had brought the relics of their patron saints to add lustre to the ceremony, as had the monks of Saint-Bertin.61 The fact that Lambert now chose to select Folcuin’s relics rather than those of his abbey’s patron saint is significant, for it shows beyond question that the re-enshrinement of 1097 had conferred a special significance on them. What exactly this significance implied is hard to tell, but once again the reappearance of the relics in a ritual context, saturated in reformist meaning, suggests where to look. Lambert of Arras, who replaced the suspended Bishop Gerard of Thérouanne at the dedication, was known to be a staunch supporter of the ecclesiastical reform movement.62 Among those who accompanied him to the ceremony were John, archdeacon of Arras and a former monk of Mont-Saint-Éloi, and his namesake John, abbot of that same institution. Mont-Saint-Éloi, a community of regular canons founded in the late 1060s by Bishop Lietbert of Cambrai/Arras, was among the earliest institutions in the archdiocese of Reims to have adopted the new standards for regular canons, and functioned, like Watten, as a hotbed of reformist propaganda.63 One of the products of the

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61  BOZOKY, La politique, pp. 273 and 282.
62  A charter issued to Saint-Bertin by Gerard of Thérouanne, which is dated by HAIGNERÉ as 18 October 1097, seems to contradict Lambert’s presumed involvement with the reformist party (ed. B. GUÉRARD, Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-Bertin (Paris, 1841), p. 212); however, as MORELLE has argued, the indiction in the dating clause of the charter suggests that the document may actually originate from 1096 (Par delà, pp. 70-1).
63  See O. BARUBÉ, L’abbaye du Mont-Saint-Éloi des origines au XIVe siècle (Poitiers, 1977), esp. pp. 53-76; and MEIJNS, Aken of Jeruzalem, pp. 719-26. Also E. VAN MINGROOT, Les...
environment was the later Archdeacon John, also known as John of Warneton, originally a member of the central chapter of Lille, who had left there to pursue a more sober existence at the abbey.70 Between 1096 and 1099, John spent considerable time at the court of Lambert, first bishop of the newly founded diocese of Arras (1093/4) and a co-disciple of Ivo of Chartres; apparently, at Anna he studied the latter's writing and other texts relating to ecclesiastical law.71 Contemporary testimonies of John's life indicate that he belonged to a circle of reformers including, perhaps not surprisingly, Anselm, papal legate Hugo of Dijon, and the aforementioned Ivo of Chartres.72 During his time at Anna, he continued to be involved in the reformers' movement's public engagements, which included, just a fortnight after the Watten dedication, the formal confirmation of the foundation of the abbey of Arrouaise.73 These ceremonies heralded an explosive growth in the number of houses of regular canons in the region,74 a process driven by John himself.75 Returning to the 1097 dedication at Watten, we can conclude that, while the translation of the relics of Sts Omer and Maximus may have carried no specific reformist connotation, that of St Folcuin probably did. A reformist symbolism had been invested in the ceremony of the re-enshrinement, and indeed in the relics themselves, and it is unlikely that this went unnoticed by Lambert's contemporaries. The above interpretation of the 1097 re-enshrinement of St Folcuin does not negate Anselm's supposed decisive impact on Lambert's orientation towards the Cluniac example and his ultimate decision to join the Cluniac system. But it is worth remembering that Saint-Bertin had been involved in networks pursuing ecclesiastical reform in the region since at least the government of John, and that Anselm and Hugo of Cluny had actually participated in these networks. Anselm is known to have corresponded with John of Warneton, while we know that Hugo was asked specifically by Gregory VII to occupy himself with the situation in Flanders during the troubled episcopacy of Lambert (1079-1083).76 The conclusion must be that agents of [insert reference here].
traditionally held responsible for inspiring Lambert of Saint-Bertin to instigate a
Cluniac reform of his institution were, at the time, pursuing a reformist agenda
that was much broader – both in time and in implications for the Church –
than scholars of Flanders’ monastic history have previously acknowledged.

Why Folcuin?
The re-enshrinement of St Folcuin was part of, and effectively concluded, a
campaign to reaffirm Saint-Bertin’s hagiographical identity. For the first two
episodes of that process, the direct incentives are clear: St Bertin’s disputed
elevation in 1052 can be framed in Abbot Bovo’s (1042-1065) attempts to
stimulate patronage and pilgrimage;71 whilst that of St Sylvin, in 1088, can be
framed in the abbots’ desire to create opportunities to reconnect with the
counts (Robert I being present at the ceremony) and to consolidate the de facto
subjugation of Saint-Georges. In the case of St Folcuin, it would seem that
the saint himself was considered of little consequence, and that his cult and the
re-enshrinement were merely instrumental in the context of the abbey’s
hagiographical policies and Lambert’s reformist networking. However,
Lambert’s move of the shrine at the dedication of the church of Watten one
month later suggests that St Folcuin’s relics and the monastery holding them
had become charged with a reformist symbolism. This symbolism may, in fact,
have rested not only upon the involvement of reformist agents at the
inauguration, but also on the symbolic and even personal connection of these
agents with the saint himself.

The first symbolic argument is dynastic. St Folcuin’s cult originated in the
early tenth century, when two of his great-grandnephews approached Adalolf,
lay abbot of Saint-Bertin (918-933), to request permission to elevate the body
of the bishop from his grave, which was situated next to that of St Bertin in the
abbatial church.72 The elevation confirmed the saint’s links not only with the
two noblemen, who originated from the diocese of Liège, but also with the
count and his kin. According to tradition, Folcuin was the son of one of Charles
Martel’s illegitimate sons,73 and thus related not only to the Carolingian
dynasty but also to the counts of Flanders, who claimed kinship with the
Carolingians through Baldwin I’s marriage to Judith, daughter of Charles the
Bald. Baldwin (862-879) had been buried at Saint-Bertin and, in 899, his son

71 See above, note 23.
72 Folcuin, Gesta, p. 627. Folcuin’s account of the 928 elevation is translated into English in L.
MORELLE, ‘Diplomatic Culture and History Writing: Folcuin’s Cartulary-Chronicle of Saint-
(University Park, PA, 2010), pp. 53-66, at p. 64.
73 Folcuin, Gesta, p. 627; see MÉRIAUX, Gallia Irradiata, p. 180, with further references.
II. How Reform Began

Baldwin II (879-918) succeeded in obtaining the lay abbacy of that institution.74 Adalolf, the younger Baldwin's second son and brother of Count Arnulf I of Flanders, undoubtedly welcomed the proposed elevation as an opportunity to symbolically consolidate his family's claims on Saint-Bertin. Thus, when in 928 the body was exhumed and an altar was constructed in honour of the saint, the cult took on a distinctly aristocratic character. In the latter half of the tenth century, this character largely evaporated under the influence of the region's changing political alliances; and when ca. 980 the chronicler Folcuin conceived a Life of the saint, the emphasis on the latter's family background was toned down in favour of a stronger connection with Saint-Bertin as an institution.75 From that point onwards, St Folcuin was venerated as one of the abbey's 'house saints'.

When Robert the Frisian overthrow his nephew Arnulf III in 1071, bypassing the rights of Arnulf's brother Baldwin II and leaving him only the territory of Hainaut, the new comital house eagerly began looking for means to connect with former icons of Flemish dynastic identity.76 Given the fact that in hagiography St Folcuin had been associated with the comital dynasty through a shared Carolingian ancestry, the countess' presence at the re-enshrinement may have been a way of asserting, and ritually consolidating, the current regime in Flanders. It is tempting to hypothesise that, for the monks of Saint-Bertin, this reuniting with St Folcuin was a means of re-establishing historical links with the early members of the Flemish dynasty as a means of meaningfully. What had been going on for nearly three decades between the counts of Flanders and the abbey was a process in pursuit of the renewal of a privileged relationship which, in essence, had been lost since the third quarter of the tenth century. Whereas Robert I had made it evident from the beginning of his government that he was willing to accord a more prominent role to Saint-Bertin than his predecessors had, the re-enshrinement of St Folcuin – if the above hypothesis is correct – formally signified the affirmation of the legitimacy of the new line of rulers and their historical connection to Saint-Bertin. Not directly related to these events, but perhaps not insignificant, is the fact that one of the children of Robert and Clementia, a young boy named William, was buried in the abbatial church in 1109, yet a further reconnection with the situation of the early tenth century.77

75 Vita Folquini episcopi Morinensis, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XV/1 (Hanover, 1887), pp. 424-30. See VANDERPUTTEN and SNIJDERS, ‘Stability’.
77 DECLERCQ, Entre mémoire dynastique, pp. 344-5.
A second argument relates to the reformers' position in Thérouanne. It is worth bearing in mind that, at this time, Gerard, bishop of Thérouanne, had been suspended from his office following an accusation of simony, and that Clementia and her supporters were actively campaigning to bring Thérouanne entirely under the reformers' control. The re-enshrinement was an excellent opportunity to appropriate the relics as a symbolic weapon both in the battle for control over the diocese and in the campaign to justify the course that the reformist movement had taken. Given that Folcuin's relics were present once again at the dedication at Watten, where (or more reformer agents, turning from Lambert of Saint-Omer, the current superior of John of Warneton, and perhaps even the latter himself) were present, the reformist significance of the use of his shrine at that ceremony may have had an added meaning, directly related to the position of the bishop and the legitimate exercise of ecclesiastical power in the diocese. Unfortunately, a lack of evidence relating to the spread of St Folcuin's cult in Thérouanne prevents us from verifying whether or not the saint had previously been the subject of symbolic competition. We only know that Abbot Roderic of Saint-Bertin (1021-1042) acquired from the bishop of Thérouanne the church in the coastal village of Gravelines, which according to a charter from 1040 was dedicated to St Folcuin.78 This information, however, seems to bear no relevance to the tense situation in Thérouanne from the 1070s onwards. Substantial evidence relating to the ownership of places of worship dedicated to the saint only becomes available from the early twelfth century onwards, which once again prevents it from being directly relevant to this discussion.79

A final argument relates to the competition between Saint-Bertin and Bergues-Saint-Winne. As we have seen, from 1022 onwards Bergues had been able to generate significant patronage thanks to the active promotion of the cult of Winnoc, a former saint of Saint-Bertin, and of several other saints venerated at the abbey. In 1088, the Saint-Bertin monks managed to prevent Auchy from doing the same with St Sylvain. However, with Folcuin, although his relics were preserved at Saint-Bertin and there was no formal connection between the saint and any other monastic institution, the situation was rather complicated. Even though the saint's grave was situated in Saint-Bertin and pilgrims were supposed to have visited that particular site, it appears that Enquinqueux, the village where he actually died, also developed as a place of worship, in particular for the local population. The altar of Enquinqueux, mentioned for the first time in Folcuin's Gesta as Bishop Folcuin's place of death, appears from 1107 among the properties of Saint-Bertin's archrival, Bergues-Saint-Winne.80 Even if we

78 Ed. HAIGNERÉ, Les chartes, pp. 23-4, no. 70.
79 See M. CARNIER, Parochies en bidplaatsen in het bisdom Terwaan vóór 1300. Een repertorium van de dekenijen Veurne en Ieper en een overzicht van alle bidplaatsen van het bisdom (Brussels, 1999), passim; and VANDERPUTTEN / SNIJDERS, 'Stability'.
80 Ed. PRUVOST, Chronique, pp. 86-7.
do not know exactly when the latter institution came into possession of this altar, it is worth considering that Folcuin's re-enshrinement may have been inspired by a similar motivation to that which led to St Sylvin's translation of 1088 – to prevent a potential rival from further depleting the abbey's saintly patronage. Auchy and Bergues were certainly targeted among Lambert's primary targets when it came to neutralising competition; both abbeys would be the first of a series of institutions to be reformed from Saint-Bertin (respectively in 1101 and 1107), and both would thenceforth assume a position of subordination.

Conclusion

Analysis of the protocol of the 1097 re-enshrinement of St Folcuin reveals that the analysis of a seemingly minor event in the early abbacy of Lambert of Saint-Bertin can tell us a great deal about the ways in which a group of reformist ecclesiastics and ambitious secular lords used rituals as a means of overlapping their ambitions and interests. The idea behind such a strategy was that it increased the chance of each ambition proving successful, a process rendered even more effective when those involved were able to organise a succession of public events, each of which enacted those ambitions in a different social or institutional context. In Lambert's own case, the primary objective was to consolidate the ongoing process of reform.

Appendix

Protocol of the re-enshrinement of St Folcuin, 5 September 1097

After Saint-Omer, Bibliothèques de l'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, 819, pp. 130-2 (transcription of the original by Guillelmus de Whitte, ca. 1618).

Anno dominicae incarnationis MXCVII, indictione quinta, nonis septembris, die scilicet depositionis sancti Bertini, Francorum regnum obtinente rege Philippo, in Flandria inclyto marchione Roberto iuniori principante, eo videlicet tempore quo contra paganorum incursus ex iussu apostolica Hierosolymam ipso comite profecto, coniunx eius nobilis Clementia comitissa Flandriam gubernabat, anno quoque regiminis domini abbatis nostri Landberti tertia, translatum est venerabile corpus beati Folquini Morinorum episcopi de scrinio veteri et in novo reconditur, adstante ipsa comitissa, et domno Arnulpho Tarvanensi archidiacono cum aliis spectabilibus personis quas hic pro testimonio annotari placuit: domnus abbas Landbertus qui hanc translationem fecit; domnus Norbertus abbas monasterii Alciacensis et professus huius loci;
Nortmannus abbis Monasterii; Girardus abbis Hanoveri; Bernoldus praepositus ecclesie Wattinensis; Gerardus prior nostri; Guennarus secundus prior; Furuius abbas qui hoc scrinium renovavit; Gotmarus; Regemarus; Drogo; Balduinus castellanus Sancti Audomari; Winetmarus castellanus Gandensis. His et aliis quam pluribus assentiens manum est ut diximus hoc sanctissimum corpus, et infra sancta sanctissima coelestia per omnia bendictis Deus. Amen.
III

FULCARD'S PIGSTY

Cluniac Reformers, Dispute Settlement and the Lower Aristocracy in Early Twelfth-Century Flanders

In 1930 Etienne SABBE published a pioneering article in which he showed how the monks of Cluny failed to gain direct influence in the Cluniac reforms of monastic communities in Flanders around the year 1100.1 His descriptive analysis of the reforms showed that the county's ecclesiastical and lay leaders were favourably inclined towards reform, but fiercely resisted the incorporation of the Flemish monasteries into Cluny's institutional network. Principles and methods of reform were thus transmitted from one Flemish monastery to another without interference from Cluny, and although this failed to create a "family" of monasteries, it did ensure that the introduction and transmission of Cluniac customs were managed entirely by Flemish actors.2

SABBE's observations provided a template for scholars such as Jacques STIENNON and Anne-Marie HELVÉTIUS, who came to similar conclusions for Lotharingia and Hainaut, while others refined his observations regarding Flanders itself.3 The present consensus is that Cluny was at best only marginally

2 As SABBE himself trenchantly argues in 'La réforme', p. 121.
involved in the entire process of reforms and that institutions in Flanders and neighboring territories merely adopted the Cluniac customary, exchanged their (often highly individual) interpretations, and actively sought to associate themselves in fraternities or prayer communities with other monasteries.4

Concentrating on the apparent paradox between the absence of Cluny's representatives and the introduction of Cluniac customs from the late 1090s onwards, the aforementioned scholars explored the genesis of 'informal' networks on the periphery of the Cluniac system and drew attention to the fact that the call for religious renewal in the second half of the eleventh century expressed itself in many diverse incarnations of the monastic ideal.

Significant as they may be, neither the above paradox nor the valid but ultimately unsatisfying argument that the reforms were the result of a new attitude towards the monastic ideal fully explain the interest taken by regional authorities in supporting monastic reform and the fact that they deliberately turned it into a matter of regional interest. Given the resources invested in supporting the reforms, it is not easy to understand why the counts of Flanders failed to stimulate Cluny's efforts to 'infiltrate' their territories with an organised effort to homogenise their monasteries; in other words, to set up a regional network. Sources relating to the reforms in Flanders indicate instead that the involvement of the counts, members of the higher aristocracy and members of the ecclesiastical elite could vary widely from one institution to another.

Understanding the agendas behind the reforms thus requires an interpretative model in which the 'failed' attempt to substitute Cluny's model with an institutionalised movement is explained as a goal that never existed in the first place. It is beyond doubt that the direct and indirect interventions of the counts' supporters indicate that a tendency to favour the introduction of Cluniac customs went hand in hand with the political advantages of reformed monasticism. What these advantages were is not easy to tell, but if setting up a centralised system of monastic government was not a direct goal of the reformers and their supporters, the primary motive was not that closely inspired by the Cluniac model, but rather that of renewing or revitalizing their own situation, in the concrete socio-political situation of individual monastic communities.

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This hypothesis has never been properly verified. Since the local communities of monks themselves often played a secondary role in studies dealing with the reforms in Flanders around the year 1100, it seems time to focus on the specific circumstances that made these communities eligible for reform and made the idea of reform acceptable to a number of key actors. In this paper, I focus on this local context and argue that members of the highest secular and ecclesiastical elite, reformers, and the monastic communities themselves found a common goal in their ambitions to contain the growing influence of the local aristocracy in these institutions. Some of the religious and social motives behind the reforms might have transcended the local level, yet the methods used to put the social agenda of the reformers into practice and the intended results of such actions could be very different from one monastery to another.

In an introductory section, I discuss how the fragmentation of power over the course of the eleventh century deeply disturbed the balance of power in relations between monastic institutions and the local aristocracy and how these changes determined the setting for the reforms. The main body of this article, however, is devoted to a case study of how local circumstances determined the nature and methods of reform. In these pages, I look closely at the relation between the abbey of Marchiennes, a community situated at the southernmost border of the county of Flanders near the town of Doorn, and the family of Landas, who were involved with several monastic communities in the region. First, I argue that the problems surrounding the abdication of Abbot Fulcard (himself a member of the Landas family), his initial refusal to step down, and the terms on which he finally agreed to do so were all the result of diverging notions of the purpose and social status of monastic communities. Second, I show how these tensions were an example of what Patrick Geary has called ‘structural conflicts’, long-term relations between groups marked by violent confrontations that occurred at regular intervals and whose purpose was to reassess the balance of power between the parties concerned. In a

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conclusion, I argue that the ultimate purpose of Fulcard’s deposition was not to eliminate the influence of his relatives in the abbey, but merely to ensure that their relation to the abbey was one of dialogue, not domination. From the perspective of the counts and their supporters, such reassessments were also beneficial in reshaping vertical power relations in the county. Both perspectives are essential to an understanding of the variety in the Cluniac reform movement in Flanders.

The advocacy and the fragmentation of power

With the abolition of lay abbacy in the tenth century, the leadership of male monasteries became a central point of interest and conflict in the county of Flanders. It was in particular Count Arnulf I (918-965) and the reformer Gerard of Brogne who set out to create a network of monastic communities subjected to a single standard of evaluation and benefiting from the protection of the count. The reformers appear to have been particularly successful in transforming the major Carolingian monasteries in the heart of the county into well-organized supports of central power, providing the monasteries with a durable economy and, though to a lesser extent, transforming them into units of a vast administrative network.

In reformed houses such as Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavo in Ghent, Saint-Bertin, Saint-Baaf, Saint-Wandrille, and Saint-Amand, the monks were now free or less free to elect their own abbot, although their close relations with the comital party and the constant scrutiny of its representatives ensured that they always carefully considered the count’s preferences. The counts’ constant influence in these institutions also manifested itself through the

References


9 Ibid., p. 120, lists Hautmont, Marchiennes, Crespin and Maroilles as plausible subjects of reform.
advocacy, a lay office that had been called into existence to protect the legal interests of the abbey and to provide a lay buffer against the outside world.10 In exchange for such services, the advocate could claim part of the income deriving from the exercise of justice and, in some cases, part of the revenues of the abbey's estates.11

Besides the fact that no hierarchical system of supervision was created, the implications of the reforms for the internal affairs of the monasteries were limited and calls for a second wave of reforms soon arose.12 In the first decades of the eleventh century, Abbot Richard of Saint-Vanne and his collaborators faced the difficult task of setting up a system of monastic government that was acceptable to the count and the major ecclesiastical players in the region while guaranteeing a large degree of economic and internal autonomy for the monks. Richard's vigorous efforts to convince Count Baldwin IV (988-1035) that his personal fate would be determined by his involvement in an ambitious project of monastic reform ensured that the count helped to initiate such enterprises. The count's motives, however, were not exclusively spiritual. Jan Dhont has shown how he increasingly set out to establish administrative footholds in important commercial centres, thus enhancing his control over an increasingly wealthy region.13 To ensure that the reforms would firmly take root, Richardian


11  G. CONSTABLE, The Reformation of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 249-54, argues that the advocacy as an institutionalised expression of lay influence in monastic communities was typical of the empire, where Familienklöster were quite common. This does not appear to have been the case for the kingdom of France, where many monasteries did not have advocates. B. MEIJNS, 'L’ordre canonial dans le comté de Flandre depuis l’époque mérovingienne jusqu’à 1155. Typologie, développement et institutionnalisation', in: Le comte de Flandre et le Saint Empire, 1130-1515 (Paris, 2005), pp. 101-113; and D. WILLOWEIT, 'Vogt, Vogtei', in: Handwörterbuch zur Deutschen Rechtsgeschichte, V (Berlin, 1998), pp. 932-46.


13  J. DHONDT, 'Développement urbain et initiative comtale en Flandre au Xle siècle', in: Revue du Nord, 30 (1948), pp. 141-153. For comments and further evidence, see B. MEIJNS, 'L’ordre canonial dans le comté de Flandre depuis l’époque mérovingienne jusqu’à 1155. Typologie,
Over the course of the eleventh century, the relation between the counts of Flanders and the abbeys evolved in various directions. Whereas large parts of the county quickly recovered from a brief crisis of comital power in the early part of the eleventh century, some areas (imperial Flanders, some southern counties and the south-western parts of Flanders in particular) witnessed a redistribution of power from the regional to the local. This was the immediate result of the decline of the principality as the basic unit of power, with the local seigneur gradually gaining in importance. Simultaneously, those who occupied the seigneuries and their extensive network of vassals began competing for power and lordship in increasingly small areas. The consequences of this shift deeply affected local life, as power became more fragmented and its social impact more direct.

Monastic communities were among the first to experience the effects of these changes, particularly when the advocacy was transformed from an office and token of comital protection into a social commodity. In many cases, the count gave the under-advocacy of an abbey as a fief to one of his vassals, usually a member of the local aristocracy. Besides the financial implications of being bestowed with such an honour, vassals understood that it constituted the first step in a slow process of assimilation with the Flemish lay elites, as it associated them with the count and a monastic institution, both reference points of social significance. Lay offices thus became trophies of social upward mobility for the aristocracy and, by virtue of their juridical prerogatives, generated a considerable amount of revenue for their holders. From the count's point of view, the creation of under-advocacies allowed him to acknowledge the fact that the political landscape was turning into a patchwork of small, family-led estates while maintaining his position at the head of the feudal pyramid.

16 PLATELLE, 'La violence', pp. 114-16.
17 Ibid.
18 CLAUSS, Die Untervogtei, pp. 22-4, dates the earliest explicit references to the under-advocacy to the first half of the eleventh century. For a discussion of vasallitic law in Flanders, see D. HEIRBAUT, Over heren, vazallen en graven. Het persoonlijk leenrecht in Vlaanderen, ca. 1000-1305 (Brussels, 1997); and IDEM, Over lenen en families: een studie over de vroegste geschiedenis van het zakelijk leenrecht in het graafschap Vlaanderen (ca. 1000-1305) (Brussels, 2000).
Sensing that their newly acquired positions were a significant step upward on the social ladder, local families jealously guarded their titles and newly won claims on territory and (in their interpretation) lordship.19 The fact that lay officials associated with the count’s authority were honored upon powerful local families meant that the count and the monks often had little choice but to acknowledge that these honours were, at first informally but soon also officially, hereditary.20 The creation of hereditary titles, informal or otherwise, in itself constituted a way of establishing a paternal form of lordship for these aristocratic families21 and generated a “heightened dynastic consciousness”.22 Besides the fact that the counts were thus losing control over the monastic institutions, all parties soon realized that hereditary transmission was slowly transforming the meaning of the advocacy from an office into a property title.23 Similar objectives were reflected in the largely ineffective creation of new lay offices such as that of villici and ministeriales, who were supposed to act as a buffer between an abbey and its advocates.24

With many of the count’s vassals eager to create their own networks of feudal relations, the advocacy itself also became increasingly fragmented. Some

19 BOUCHARD has argued that the early eleventh century marks the slow transition of the vaguely defined Sippe to patrilineal families, adding that the Peace of God and other efforts to stabilize social and ecclesiastical life allowed families to hold certain positions for longer periods of time and to become more visible in the sources; ‘Family Structure and Family Consciousness Among the Aristocracy in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries’, in: Francia, 14 (1986), pp. 639-58, esp. p. 650. For a critical discussion of DUBY’s argument that armed retainers assimilated with the higher nobility, see T. EVERGATES, ‘Historiography and Sociology in Early Feudal Society: The Case of Harulf and the “Milites” of Saint-Riquier’, in: Viator, 6 (1975), pp. 35-68. The latter (p. 62) notes that in many cases, “the status of the knights was not only determined by their loyalty to a lord but also by the quality of the military service they provided.”


22 ibid., p. 71.


might argue that the castellans, who had originally been appointed to represent the count’s judicial power in the larger secular centres of the county, strengthened the count’s grip on local jurisdiction by appointing subordinate officers in smaller circumscriptions. While the intentions and the effects of this policy are subject to debate, the under-advocates chose for a less ambiguous option by distributing parts of their fief to their own vassals. In the space of a few years, monastic communities were confronted with several under-advocates at the same time, many of whom had no direct relationship with the count, who theoretically continued to act as (what is known for other regions as) upper-advocate (Hochvogt or haut-avoué). The situation was further complicated by the fact that under-advocates were involved in a wide range of overlapping social networks involving conflicting allegiances. By the end of the eleventh century, some of them were themselves having trouble controlling their own under-advocates and many monasteries, quite literally, found themselves with advocates for neighbours. In a society whose power was essentially local and based on a complex system of feudal relations, properties and offices, the advocacy had developed into a heterogeneous amalgam of private and public rights. In these circumstances, the formerly conditional nature of the relationship between monks and local aristocracy faded into distant memory.

Noblemen and monks had very different conceptions of how important private and public rights were in outlining the rights and duties of the advocate. To the generation that inherited the advocacy from their fathers in the second half of the eleventh century, it simply stood for their hereditary right to co-manage an abbey’s estates and to reap the benefits therefrom. In the minimalist interpretation of the monks, the count of Flanders and other sovereigns had given up the Eigenkirchentum and replaced it with the advocacy to protect the abbeys from attacks perpetrated by members of lay society. Given these conflicting interpretations, it is not surprising that relations between the monks and their advocates quickly deteriorated and petty conflicts with local families surfaced as major problems in the relations between the monks and the local community. The next few pages focus on the nature of such tensions and their significance for the reform movement of the late eleventh and early

25 Examples from around 1077 in the Gesta abbatum Lobbiensium, ed. W. ARNDT, MGH SS XXI (Hanover, 1869), p. 309; and from the early twelfth century in Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680), p. 105.
26 PLATELLE, Le temporel, p. 137. For a view of the situation in the empire, see BOSHOF, ‘Untersuchungen’, p. 90.
27 Gualbert, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 134.
28 CLAUSS, Die Untervogtei, p. 120.
29 Charles PERGAMENI fittingly noted that “le pouvoir de ces princes … est un assemblage bigarré d’alleux, de terres féodales, de taxes, de prestations et d’avoueries”; L’avouerie ecclésiastique belge. Des origines à la période bourguignonne (Ghent, 1907), p. 54.
30 HELVÉTIUS, Abbayes, p. 301.
31 See, for example, R. NAZ, L’avouerie de l’abbaye de Marchiennes (1038-1262) (Paris, 1924).
twelfth century through an analysis of the election, abbacy and abdication of Fulcard of Marchiennes.

Fulcard’s election: crystallising formal and informal relations

With the Landas family

When Alardus II, seventh abbot of Marchiennes, died on 22 September 1103, the monks convened to elect a successor.32 Their candidate was Fulcard, a monk of Hasnon who belonged to the family of Landas, a clan named after a small village situated just a few miles from the village of Marchiennes.33 The origins of the Landas family are largely obscure. The first known individual is Amaury, count of Valenciennes from 957 to 973,34 but no other member of this family can be traced before Amaury I, whose leadership of the clan is verified for the years 1077-1085. He was succeeded at the latest in 1096 by Amaury II, who stood at the head of the family until 1121/4. According to W. WARLOP, Amaury II had two brothers named Gerard and Stephen. If one is to believe contemporary sources, and there seems little reason not to, Fulcard should be added to the genealogy as a third brother.35

The Landas family came to prominence during the final quarter of the eleventh century. Over the course of two decades, they became involved with most major monastic communities in the valley of the River Scarpe.36 Whether these associations took the form of lay offices depended on specific circumstances.37 In 1085, Alard Bono I of Saint-Amand (1077-1085)


33 BOUCHARD has argued that the heads of monastic houses in Burgundy were also recruited from the middle or lower aristocracy; Sword, pp. 77-8.


37 In 1105, Emma, Amaury’s mother, freed the church of Landas on condition that the canons would celebrate her anniversary and regard her as their founder; charter issued by Bishop Baudry of Noyon-Tournai, facsimile published in J. DUMOULIN, Les évêques de Tournai,
substantially rewarded Amaury I for protecting the abbey and its estates from the incursions of other lay lords. The transaction included a yearly rent of one hundred shillings and forced Bovo to sell several items from the church’s treasure: a silver crown that hung before the cross in the abbatial church, a silver shrine from the altar of St Cyr, a reliquary of that saint, and other goods.

While the immediate implications of this type of association often remain undocumented, a rare account of a dispute between the abbots of Saint-Amand and Hasnon over a mill on the Scarpe reveals that the Landas family did indeed help to protect the abbey’s interests. When the abbot of Saint-Amand made an appeal to Count Robert I of Flanders († 1093), it was at the latter’s instructions that Auman, lay provost of Saint-Amand, and Amaury of Landas were sent out to destroy the mill which the monks of Hasnon had built. Some years later Abbot Bovo II (1107-1121) gave a piece of land and some revenues to Amaury II in exchange for his protection of the abbey from the attacks of Radbod of Rumez. And yet, despite these substantial financial rewards, members of the Landas family never occupied any formal lay offices relating to the abbey of Saint-Amand.

Another way for a family to gain influence in monastic institutions was to have relatives join them as part of a settlement or as a mutual acknowledgement of previously informal relations. Fulcard’s presence in Hasnon, for example, might have been one of the consequences of the dispute with Saint-Amand. Although they enjoyed the protection of the count of Hainaut, it might have been advantageous for the monks of Hasnon to count in their number a souvenirs et documents (Catalogue de l'exposition des archives du chapitre cathédral: Ier Octobre-2 Novembre 1966) (Tournai, 1966), p. 1, no. 1.

38 PLATELLE, Le temporel, pp. 125-6.

39 In 1116, Count Baldwin VII came to Saint-Amand to condemn the behaviour of, among others, provost Auman; ibid., p. 129.

40 De lite abbatiarum Elnonensis et Hasnoniensis anno 1055-1091, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XIV (Hanover, 1883), pp. 158-60. There is also a letter from the years 1071-1093 in which the count urges his eldest son to intervene; Epistola ad Robertum filium, ed. G. WAITZ, MGH SS XIV (Hanover, 1883), p. 578, note 6. For a discussion of these events, see PLATELLE, Le temporel, pp. 130-1.


42 The count remained advocate of this abbey for a longer time than he did in Marchiennes; PLATELLE, Le temporel, p. 128.


III. Fulcard's Pigsty

member of a strong local clan, whose impact on local society they thereby acknowledged, especially when this particular family had a relationship with the count of Flanders.45 Given these precedents, it is hardly surprising that members of the family of Landas also turn up in the sources as holders of formal honours relating to monastic communities. This is particularly evident in Marchiennes.46 During the second quarter of the eleventh century, most likely in 1038, the count gave up direct control over the abbey by appointing Hugo Havet, lord of Aubigny-en-Artois and castellan of Douai,47 as advocate.48 This fragmentation of power


46  See Gualbert, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 134. Bernard DELMAIRE has suggested that Judith de Warlaing, who led the female community of Marchiennes at the end of the tenth century, might have been related to the Landas family, as some of its twelfth-century members are mentioned in the sources as lord of Warlaing; L’histoire-polyptyque de l’abbaye de Marchiennes (1116/1121). Etude critique et édition (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1985), pp. 18 and 84.


48  This legal act is described in a charter of Baldwin V from 1038 (Lille, Archives Départementales du Nord, 10 H 56/960). The authenticity of this document is disputed. Not only is its clerical signature from 1038, but it is also addressed to the monk Hugo Havet, who is described as advocatus in the sources. The authenticity of this charter has also been questioned by николай MIK locker and E. AMADIN in their study of the counts of Flanders and their court, XXXVI. Narcisse Monin (1811-1891) expressed his doubts on the authenticity of this document without offering arguments to support his assumptions, and this view has been maintained by J. GOYON, Yves Goyon, La monarchie de Flandre au XIe siècle (Paris, 1989), pp. 274-275. Despite these doubts, the charter has been considered authentic by some scholars, and it is included in the charters of the count of Flanders in the late eleventh century. For example, in 1075, the count granted Hugo Havet the right to collect taxes in Douai and Hainaut, and he was also given the responsibility to collect taxes in the county of Flanders. This suggests that the charter was issued to Hugo Havet as a means to maintain control over the abbey of Marchiennes. H. BAL, De onuitgegeven oorkonden van de Sint-Salvatorsabdij te Ename voor 1200 (Brussels, 1965), pp. XXIV-XXVI.

49  In a reply to HUYGHEBAERT's article, MILIS uses paleographic and diplomatic evidence to argue that the 1038 charter either constitutes an authentic document or a forgery which dates from the middle of the eleventh century at the latest; 'De voogdijregeling voor Ename van 1064 opnieuw onderzocht', in: Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Société d'Emulation de Bruges, 103 (1966), pp. 125-6. The subsequent edition by Michèle COURTOIS, Chartes originales antérieures à 1121 conservées dans le département du Nord (Nancy, 1981), pp. 62-3, indicates that MILIS had failed to convince some scholars of the document's authenticity. In his survey of seals from the southern Low Countries, René LAURENT mentions the charter, with no specific comments regarding its authenticity (le sceau du premier comte belge de Liége a une histoire complexe de collection et d'identification). For a more recent study, see B.-M. TOCK / M. COURTOIS / M.-J. GASSE-GRANDJEAN, La diplomatie française du Haut Moyen Âge. Inventaire des chartes ecclésiastiques antérieures à 1050 conservées en France (Turnhout, 2001), I, p. 242, and II, p. 243. Although more recent research has been conducted, the authenticity of the 1038 charter remains uncertain. It is not a forgery, none of MILIS’ new paleographic arguments for the forgery, possibly added to the charter as late as 1064,2000, judging the edition of Anselm de Canis, whose strategies to recover his manuscripts included an extensive programme of archival reorganization. According to a charter issued by Count Henry the Lion to Lambrecht in 1058, the charter from 1038 was presented to him before he confirmed the

number of a strong local clan, whose impact on local society they thereby acknowledged, especially when this particular family had a relationship with the count of Flanders.49

Given these precedents, it is hardly surprising that members of the family of Landas also turn up in the sources as holders of formal honours relating to monastic communities. This is particularly evident in Marchiennes.46 During the second quarter of the eleventh century, most likely in 1038, the count gave up direct control over the abbey by appointing Hugo Havet, lord of Aubigny-en-Artois and castellan of Douai,47 as advocate.48 This fragmentation of power
With so little resistance to his ascent to power, it is quite understandable that Amaury II was tempted to see the abbey of Marchiennes as part of his patrimony, and the election of his brother as abbot effectively brought the two leading offices relating to the abbey into the hands of one family.53 Such eagerness to gain even more control over the abbey of Marchiennes might have been inspired by the family’s recent loss of influence in another institution, that of the collegial community of canons of Saint-Saulve in Hainaut.54 In the spring of 1103, Count Baldwin III of Hainaut donated Saint-Saulve to the monks of

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Chery, abolishing all secular claims of ownership. One of the parties affected was the aforementioned Gerard, Amaury's younger brother, who held the institution as a fief from the family of Chièvres-Audenarde and had infeodated it himself to Almandus, a member of the local aristocracy. Although Baldwin refused to grant the newly established community of Cluniac monks exemption from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Cambrai, it appears that a feudal construction entirely similar to the one observed in Marchiennes was swept away in one legal act, which Baldwin claimed was inspired by repentance over the horrible crimes of Almandus. Quite possibly, Gerard's involvement was also implied in the court's cryptic explanation.

The election of Fulcard took place only a few months after the Landas family had been brought to realize that being the advocate or fief-holder of an ecclesiastical institution by no means guaranteed a secure financial and social future. In order to limit the damage to his family's social status, Amaury must have thought it prudent to put forward another of his brothers as a candidate to succeed Abbot Alard of Marchiennes.

A wolf in sheep's clothing

Fulcard's election took place in the fall or early winter of 1103. Despite the plausible assumption that the monks acted under a certain degree of pressure from Amaury, there are no indications that their choice had actually been forced, and the election was never challenged on canonical grounds. Fulcard's former status as a monk of Hasnon hardly made him suspect as a candidate, and during the first few years of his abbacy, he was accepted by the higher ecclesiastical authorities. One group of manuscripts of the Gesta Atrebatensium, an account of the foundation of the bishopric of Arras in 1093/4, includes an oath of obedience to Bishop Lambert (1094-1115) sworn, among others, by Fulcard upon his election as abbot of Marchiennes. Shortly thereafter, he joined a group of ecclesiastical leaders who assisted Lambert in the exercise of

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55 A fairly common practice, described with a certain degree of pathos in U. BERLIÈRE, Les élections abbatiales au Moyen Âge (Brussels, 1927), p. 15.
57 Oaths sworn by Abbots Gelduin (1102-1110) and Alvisus (1111-1131) of Anchin, Henry of Saint-Vaast (1104-1130), Fulcard of Marchiennes (1103-1115), and Richard, provost of the canons of Mont-Saint-Éloi; Formulae quibus usi sunt abbates diocesis Atrebatensis promittentes obedientiam Lamberto episcopo Atrebatensi (Paris, BNF, MS. Lat. 12827, fol. 123r-v (ca. 1590); and Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 841, pp. 85-6 (eighteenth century)). Gelduin only is mentioned as ordinatus, while the others are still ordinandus; this dates Fulcard's oath to before his episcopal confirmation in late 1103 or early 1104. His oath includes a formal promise of obedience and reverentia, indicating the juridical character of the relationship between the abbot and his bishop.
In the spring or early summer of 1108, the bishop invited him to join several other abbots for a session of the episcopal court at the castle of Cappy. Fulcard accepted the invitation and is mentioned in the bishop’s charter of 17 July of that year.

Before the end of 1110, however, news had reached the episcopal court that something was amiss with the abbey of Marchiennes and its leadership. According to the bishop’s informers, Fulcard had adopted a secular lifestyle and was behaving as if he had never abandoned his role in his brother’s clan. The cohesion of his flock and its internal discipline was of little concern to him, and most of the monks had left the abbey amidst deep discordance. The few who remained could witness their abbot transferring properties into the hands of his relatives. Hamage, a priory of Marchiennes, was abandoned and given to a relative of Fulcard, a knight who suffered from leprosy, with only a peasant and his wife remaining to take care of the estate.

Quite apart from the disgraceful nature of such behaviour, its timing was also most inappropriate for Bishop Lambert. Richard of Albano, the pope’s legate, had ordered a council at the abbey of Fleury, to be held on 1 October 1110 and to be attended by the archbishops of Sens, Reims, Tours, and Bourges, and several other bishops and abbots. Besides the need to show himself as the strong leader of a young bishopric, Lambert was aware of the fact that the council would focus on issues of reform and monastic observance. Along with Bishop John II of Thérouanne, Count Robert II, his wife Clementia, and several other lay and ecclesiastical figures, Lambert had been promoting Cluniac reforms throughout Flanders, the first of which had taken place shortly before Fulcard’s election. In 1111, the community of Anchin was the first in the valley of the Scarpe to adopt the customs of Cluny, and its new

59 The purpose of the session was to end the litigation between the canons of Tournai cathedral and the monks of the newly founded Benedictine monastery in that same city; ed. E. Chambiges, Miscellaneorum liber quintus (Paris, 1700), p. 369.
60 Ed. B.-M. Tock, Les chartes des évêques d'Arras (1093-1203) (Paris, 1991), pp. 21-3, no. 13. The results of this meeting were confirmed in a bull issued by Pope Paschalis: ed. J. Depoin, Recueil des chartes et documents de Saint-Martin-des-Champs monastère Parisien (1053-1270), I, pp. 191-2, no. 120.
61 Annales Marchianenses, p. 615.
63 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, pp. 101-2; and Miracula Sanctae Eusebiae, ed. AASS Martii II (Antwerp, 1668), p. 459.
leader Alvisus assumed a particularly active role in propagating the reforms in other monasteries. In these circumstances, and with Richard of Albano himself also a supporter of Cluniac reform, Lambert clearly did not think he would make a good impression at the council by leaving Fulcard’s case unresolved. He duly summoned the abbot to his court at Arras to discuss the state of the abbey. Fulcard, for his part, demonstrated just how much he cared about his oath to Lambert by simply ignoring the bishop’s missive. In a second message, Lambert again summoned Fulcard to present himself at the episcopal court, and suspended him from his office until he did so.

Negotiations and ruptures

Whereas the events leading up to Lambert’s letter from 1110 are known through several independent and mostly contemporary sources, all the events that took place between late 1110 and Fulcard’s final abdication in 1115 were only described with the benefit of hindsight. In addition, all information has a single origin: the abbey of Marchiennes itself, which by the time of writing had been thoroughly reorganised by Abbot Amand de Castello (1116-1136). Unsurprisingly, authors who were writing under Amand’s lasting influence took a dim view of Fulcard’s behaviour.

The most important, if stylistically challenging, of the two surviving accounts of the later years of Fulcard’s abbacy is the *Patrocinium* by Gualbert of Marchiennes. Written in 1124-1127, the work comprises a brief history of the abbey, including notes on its foundation, autobiographical segments, a biography of St Rictrudis and a number of contemporary miracles. Its primary function was to support the cult of Rictrudis as protector of the monastic
community and as the original proprietor of the abbey’s estates. Nevertheless, a large part of the narrative is devoted to Fulcard’s troubled abbacy. This particular phase in the abbey’s recent history is represented as one of decline necessary to the ‘Renaissance’ of the monastic community under Amand.69 It is important to note that Gualbert was not an eye witness to at least part of Fulcard’s abbacy. Even before Fulcard ran into trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities, Gualbert had left the abbey to lead a wandering life in northern France, England, and the Low Countries. His return to Marchiennes post-dates Amand’s election and his first recorded activity in Marchiennes is from 1124 or later.70 It is, however, quite obvious that he knew at least one oral witness who gave him a reliable account of what had happened in the intervening years.

The second account was written in 1164-1166 by the hagiographer and historiographer Andreas of Marchiennes. It offers a number of additional comments which complement Gualbert’s story, especially regarding some episodes which might have been too delicate for Gualbert to touch upon in detail so soon after they took place. Andreas’ version of events is included in his *Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis*,71 which again was written to portray the saint as the protector of the monastic community and to emphasise the abbot’s relentless efforts to restore the abbey to its original state and to confront its enemies.

Despite a strong penchant to dramatise their accounts, Gualbert and Andreas agree that by 1110 the community of Marchiennes had completely disintegrated.72 In the *Patrocinium*, Gualbert states that the only remaining member was a conversus who, somewhat confusingly, was also known as Fulcard.73 Fulcard the conversus had been unable to prevent the disintegration of the monastic community and the dispersion of its material wealth, but continued to guard the relics of the local saints and the charter treasure. His persistence in preserving the most sacred assets of the abbey forced him into an ascetic existence, deprived of foodstuffs, housing and clothing, and perpetually

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73  Gualbert, *Patrocinium*, p. 151. On the origins and name of the conversus, see CONSTANT, *Reformation*, pp. 77-82.
plagued by visions of Satan.74 According to Andreas, the locus oratorii of the abbey had turned into a pasture with walls and roofs crumbling and the entire complex diminishing to collapse.75 Andreas’ account also includes a story of how the abbot of Saint-Amand sent two of his monks to Marchiennes around the feast of All Saints, ordering them to spend the night there while chanting psalms, hymns and performing other rituals appropriate for the time of year. Since he knew that no victuals would be available to his monks, he gave them one day’s rations, just enough to complete the liturgy and return to Saint-Amand.77 Whether this story is apocryphal or not, the general context allows the conclusion that what had happened to the priory of Hamage was also happening to the abbey itself: conversion into secular territory and the abandonment of all monastic functions.78

What happened to Abbot Fulcard and the Abbey of Marchiennes between Lambert’s second letter and the advent of Amand de Castello is only known through Gualbert’s and Andreas’ accounts. Their version of events becomes particularly interesting when they describe a meeting between Lambert and Fulcard at the episcopal court, where the bishop reprimanded his abbot in no uncertain terms.79 Andreas adds that the abbot’s temporary deposition was extended during the meeting and that when his pleas for mercy failed to have the desired effect,80 Fulcard flew into a rage and threatened to call upon his relatives to exact revenge.81 Switching back to Gualbert, we learn that, in the presence of many of his accusers and of those who had attempted to persuade him to adopt a more docile stance, Fulcard furiously returned his abbatial staff to the bishop by flinging it to the ground.82 Although this was accepted as a token of resignation, Fulcard returned to Marchiennes with the intention of

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74 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 99.
75 Ibid.
76 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 99.
77 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 99, contains a description of Lambert’s speech heavily inspired by Luke 16.2:


80 See G. KOZIOL, Begging Pardon and Favor. Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France (Ithaca / London, 1992), esp. pp. 185-7, for comments on the strategic nature of such behavior.
81 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 99. It is interesting to note that Gualbert does not mention this, although the circumstances of his election give us every reason to believe Andreas’ version.
82 Gualbert, Patrocinium, p. 149.
Revealing more of the socio-political background of the events than Gualbert was willing to do, Andreas remarks that Fulcard had his reasons for being so bold: through his brother, he counted on the support of Count Robert II and his successor, Baldwin VII, both of whom maintained close relations with Amaury.84

For his part, Fulcard the conversus apparently continued to live through all the hardship that befell his abbey. Few, if any, of his peers shared his fate. His lone resistance, however, was a token of far greater power that slowly coalesced into an organized opposition to the ambitions of the family of Landas. Not only was the deposed Abbot Fulcard unable to persuade the dragged conversus to hand over a number of essential charters relating to the abbey;85 he also found Bishop Lambert’s anathema and the wrath of Countess Clementia of Flanders, who, according to Andreas, had relinquished all her rights over the abbey and continued to protect it.86 Meanwhile, the abbey had been informally adopted by other monastic communities from the region. After a brief spell under the supervision of the monks of Saint-Bertin (most likely during the years 1110-1111),87 the monks of Anchin appear to have taken a particular interest in the near-deserted abbey.88 Although Gualbert’s account at this point is difficult to compare, it appears that the conversus resented the excessively harsh lifestyle imposed on him by Hugo, a monk of Anchin and former custos of Cambrai.89 The association was ended, and Fulcard
continued to live in extreme destitution, deploring the fact that the intervention of the monks of Saint-Bertin had done little to improve life at Marchiennes. The bishop consented, but Amand did not take up his position until 1115.90 Abbot Fulcard, for his part, was not deterred from attempting to recover his title. An appeal to the count and his wife failed. Accusing the bishop of simony was apparently not a realistic option, since Lambert was one of the strongest advocates of the anti-simoniac movement.91

Exactly how long the conversus struggled on is not clear, as the sources make no further mention of him.

A few years later, possibly in 1113, four monks of unknown origin occupied the abbey's remaining buildings and elected Amand, a prior of Anchin, as their new abbot.92 The bishop consented, but Amand did not take up his position before 1115 at the earliest.93 In the end, he returned to Lambert's court in Arras to beg for his rehabilitation. Lambert's extended account of this meeting can hardly be taken at face value, but it does reflect the situation of the abbey at this point. Lambert took the opportunity to denounce publically the dispersion of the community, the neglect of the abbey's buildings, the loss of precious objects (ornamenta), the lack of food and other necessities, and the loss of properties. In Lambert's account, the monastery was described as a pigsty94 where cattle roamed unhindered and the common people had access to the inner sanctum of the abbey's buildings. Fulcard duly admitted his errors and repeated his request for rehabilitation, which Lambert denied.95 At that point, the link between Fulcard and the reform party, including all its supporters, was definitively broken.

On 16 May 1115, Lambert of Arras died.96 Robert, his successor, intervened with the archbishop of Reims to arrange a public meeting between Fulcard and the newly elected Abbot Amand in the presence of many honest and wise people.97

90 Gualbert, *Patrocinium*, p. 150:

91 That would have already constituted a small community similar to the one in Tournai, where the community of Saint-Martin counted a mere five members at its foundation; see *The Reformation*, p. 91.


93 Gualbert, *Patrocinium*, p. 150.

94 Ibid., p. 150.

95 Ibid., pp. 150-1.

men, fellow bishops, abbots, monks, clerics and laymen of good reputation.”

Until that time, Amand had declined to take up his office, according to Gualbert because he was reluctant to do so in the midst of litigation and dissent. In a resolution that was typical of so many conflicts between monastic groups and their lay opponents, Fulcard finally agreed to step down in exchange for a life estate of two villages belonging to the abbey. He immediately took up his claim, which had been given to him out of mercy (per misericordiam), and used it for his own benefit and that of his family. The arrangement apparently left a bad taste in some people’s mouths, and the fire that destroyed the hospital of the abbey shortly afterwards was said to have been instigated by one of Fulcard’s supporters. How long Fulcard occupied the role and what happened to them afterwards is unclear, but the pressure which this arrangement must have exerted on the monastic economy is obvious.

While he initially appeared unwilling to reject his former lifestyle, Fulcard’s imminent death ensured that he eventually confessed his sins “as befits a Christian and a monk.” Fulcard died on his way to or back from Saint-Gilles, a centre of pilgrimage in the Gard and was buried in a village called Miliacum, not far from Saint-Gilles.

Deposing Fulcard: issues at stake

Upon Fulcard’s final removal in 1115, Amand occupied the abbey along with a number of monks and converse monks from Anchin and immediately set out to restore the abbey to its former glory. At least, that is how the authors from Marchiennes described his policy. In reality, Amand’s actions were less of a restoration of a situation that had existed before Fulcard than a revision of the
monastic community’s relations with outsiders and a new interpretation of internal customs.

To ensure that his policy was successful, Amand used several tactics: a gradual introduction of Cluniac reforms (completed around 1131), initiation of prayer communities with other monastic communities, increasing reliance on the written word, initiation of court cases with a view to settlements with the aristocracy, and an intensified use of the saints’ own personae as players in the social field. His policy is documented in a series of settlement charters, the conception of the Poleticum Marceniensis, a chronicle-polyptych subsequently used as evidence in court cases, and a hagiographical corpus aimed at demonstrating the patron saints’ participation in feudal disputes. Close relations were established with Anchin, Saint-Martin in Tournai and Saint-Amand, enhancing the possibilities of exchanging technical know-how and socio-political expertise (as the century progressed, these monastic communities would become increasingly involved with each other). However, strong his own determination to change the internal and external relations of his new community, Amand could not have done so without the support of outsiders. To understand who helped him to achieve his goals and why they did so, it is necessary to look at the different issues at stake.

Contemporary efforts to introduce Cluniac customs in Flemish abbeys show that it was not Fulcard’s eventual abdication that led to the idea of introducing a new regime in Marchiennes. If one looks at the chronology and the geography of reforms in Flanders, it becomes apparent that the reformers had been at work in the immediate surroundings of the abbey in the months before Bishop Lambert sent his first letter to Fulcard. In 1099-1100, Abbot Lambert of Marchiennes and Abbot François de Montierneuf (formerly of Saint-Martin in Tournai) sent letters to the monks of Anchin and Marchiennes, encouraging them to adopt Cluniac customs. These letters were written in Latin and were accompanied by a list of reforms, including the establishment of a new monastic community and the introduction of Cluniac customs. The confusion over the authorship of a number of genealogical and historical texts from the late twelfth century reflects the close collaboration of the monks of Anchin and Marchiennes. Abbot Amand de Castello originally came from the abbey of Saint-Martin in Tournai, as did Abbot Hugo of Marchiennes (1148-1158). Significantly, manuscripts of the Vita Hugonis Marchianensis were made for the libraries of both monasteries: H. Plateelle / R. Godding, ‘Vita Hugonis Marchianensis (†1158). Présentation, édition critique et traduction française’, in: Analecta Bollandiana, 111 (1993), pp. 301-84, esp. pp. 301-4; and H. Plateelle, ‘La vie d’Hugues de Marchiennes († 1158). Les différentes facettes d’un document hagiographique’, in: Académie Royale de Belgique. Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 6th series, 3-4 (1992), pp. 80-1.

107 GERZAGUET, ‘Les confraternités’.
109 This strategy is discussed in some detail in VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Monastic Literate Practices’.
110 Ibid.
Saint-Bertin, with the support of Countess Clementia of Flanders, the bishop of Thérouanne, the local advocate, the castellan and a number of local lay aristocrats, was the first to reform his community.113 Cluny’s involvement was rejected, yet the reforms pressed on with remarkable speed. In 1101, the monks of Saint-Bertin themselves introduced the customs at Bergues-Saint-Étienne.114 Despite fierce resistance from within his community, the abbot of Saint-Vaast in Some himself initiated reforms in 1109, aided by monks sent from Saint-Bertin.115 When the abbot of Châlons tried to gain control over the abbatial election at Saint-Bertin in 1109, the monks of Saint-Bertin were able to count on the support of the count of Flanders, his wife, the castellan of Saint-Omer and the bishop of Thérouanne.116 The election in 1111 of Alvisus, a former monk of Saint-Bertin and prior of Saint-Vaast, as abbot of Châlons, equally met with much resistance, and a number of monks who resisted the reforms made attempts to move to the priory of Haspres and to have the pope recognize it as an independent monastery.117 By 1110, Fulcard had been cornered into a position where he would have to accept or reject reform in his own abbey.118

114 SABBE, ‘La réforme’, pp. 132-4. Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavo in Ghent were reformed in 1117.
115 Ibid., pp. 136-7.
118 The failure of the mission from Saint-Bertin is reflected in its omission from the Tractatus de moribus Lamberti abbatis S. Bertini, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XV/2 (Hanover 1888), p. 951.
these initial attempts failed to have the desired effect, the core of a new community and a new leadership was imposed on the abbey by the introduction of the four monks and by Amand's arrival. It is quite likely that these efforts to reorganise the abbey were engineered by the individuals whose inputs are either implicitly or explicitly mentioned in Gualbert’s and Andreas’ accounts: Abbots Lambert of Saint-Bertin and Alvisus of Anchin, Bishop Lambert of Arras, and Countess Clementia.

The comital family of Flanders took a great deal of interest in overseeing the introduction of the new customs, partly for pious reasons, but undoubtedly also to tighten their grip on the ecclesiastical system and their lay subordinates throughout the county.119 At the time of Bishop Lambert’s confrontation with Fulcard, Countess Clementia had gained a reputation as one of the most enthusiastic promoters of the Cluniac movement. Her support undoubtedly strengthened Lambert in his resolve to confront Fulcard, depose him, and bring the abbey of Marchiennes under the influence of reformed monks. Although Fulcard appealed to the count through his brother, it turned out that Robert II (†1-2 October 1111) was sympathetic to the reformers’ cause: after all, he had supported the foundation of Saint-Bertin and had assisted progressive ecclesiastical action generally. Another motivation for Lambert and his supporters to take action against Fulcard was that Robert had been the instigator of the founding of the bishopric of Arras and its separation from the bishopric of Cambrai (an action taken in order to weaken the emperor’s influences in the region).121 As the first bishop of Arras, he had evidently been elected with the express consent of the count.122 A further reason why Lambert was prepared to take the risk of confronting a relative of a vassal of Count Robert and his successor Baldwin VII (1111-1119) may be detected. Although, as their charters show, they continued to count Amaury of Landas among their vassals, the counts were actively seeking to restrain the Flemish aristocracy by regaining control over the feudal courts.122 One way of pursuing that policy was to encourage reformed monastic communities to confront their adversaries and strive for a revised relationship with the regional nobility. Although it was impossible, and even undesirable, for monastic leaders to try and eradicate the influence of those families who were, at one and the same time, their worst enemies and their closest allies, political mentalities had changed sufficiently for them to reject the abuses that resulted from it. This indirect response to the fragmentation of comital power through support of the reform movement and of monastic institutions allowed the

119 ADAIR, ‘Ego et uxor mea’, p. 126
120 Ibid., p. 143
121 Ibid., p. 128
122 This explains the aristocracy’s violent response to the count’s murder in March 1127; PLATELLE, ‘La violence’, pp. 118-21; also ‘Crime’, pp. 174-5.
count to restore the conditional aspects and, hence, the feudal nature, of the lower aristocracy's relation to abbeys and the count himself. Some of the families, most importantly the family of Landas, were rewarded for their acceptance of this shift in local power with the consolidation of their position and a close involvement in the count's exercise of power.

Structural conflicts in action

While the attempted and successful reforms all reflect a desire to deconstruct a hereditary system of lay offices relating to the abbeys and to restore direct relations with the comital family, at a local level there was no question of eliminating the power of local families. In assessing relations between a newly reformed monastery as a feudal institution and the local lower aristocracy, monastic leaders quickly understood they would not be able to ignore the importance of former 'aggressors' in the local social network. From a strictly horizontal perspective, it can be seen that none of the monastic parties ever strove to destroy their opponents. By calling for public confrontations and through court cases, the abbots and their supporters tried to restore the balance of power by means of compromise. These confrontations, usually heavily charged with emotions, are in fact the consequences of GIAMO'S structural conflicts. In the majority of cases, there was simply no question of eliminating the opposing party.

Abbots publicly bemoaned the fact that local families had gained too much influence on monastic affairs. They relied on ecclesiastical or secular courts, and on the charters of lay and clerical lords, as platforms to expose the perverse nature of their opponents' strategies, a tactic which obviously met with much resistance. However, monastic groups hardly ever severed relations with local power-holders. On two occasions in 1116-1117, Count Baldwin assisted the abbot of Saint-Amand in liberating the abbey of its advocates, whose malpractices had put the monastic economy under severe pressure. Baldwin had his feudal court condemn "evil men" (the lay provost, advocates, and the castellan of Tournai) and confirmed an oral agreement that his predecessors had witnessed between the abbot and Geoffroi, the city's advocate. The main purpose of the count's visit, however, was to prevent the function of lay

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125 Charters from 5 October 1116, ed. V鲁迅, Actes, pp. 179-80, no. 80; and 6 October 1117, ibid., pp. 191-2, no. 85.
126 Quoted from Abbot Bovo's charter of 1117, Lille, Archives Départementales du Nord, 12 H 119, fol. 103r-v, n. 157.
Although the abbey's finances were seriously affected by this visit, Abbot Bovo II (1107-1021) issued a charter arguing the necessity of these expenses in the light of his rationalisation of the abbey's administration.\textsuperscript{127} In the years 1121-1123, Abbot Walter I of Saint-Amand issued a charter denouncing Bovo I's (1077-1085) offer of money and land to Amaury of Landas in exchange for his protection.\textsuperscript{129} Although Abbot Hugo II (1085-1107) had attempted to retrieve the money, Amaury had refused to return it, since to do so would have negated a contract which he obviously wished to continue, so that he could perpetuate this privileged relationship with the abbey to his son. In exchange for continued protection, Hugo's successor, Bovo II, was compelled to heap even more benefits on Amaury II. According to Walter's charter, Amaury eventually returned the one hundred shillings and the rent to the abbey and publicly denounced his own "crime". His wife and sons confirmed the donation by oath on the altar. In exchange the abbey supported his handicapped son Gerald with forty shillings annually. Despite the strong words to denounce Amaury's crimes, Walter did not intend to break off relations with the Landas family, nor had his predecessor Bovo II intended to use the count's court to have Amaury ousted from power.\textsuperscript{130}

The continued presence of the Landas family in many settlement charters throughout the twelfth century and their continuous ascent up the social ladder is sufficient evidence to assume that structural conflict-relations formed an integral part of the fabric of society. In 1133, Abbot Amand performed a translation of Saint Eusebia's relics to Hamage, indicating that the ownership of the villa had been recognised by the relatives of the handicapped miles who had received it from Fulcard.\textsuperscript{131} Two years before, in 1131, he had reached an agreement with two of Amaury III's brothers, Roger and Stephen, who had been accused of usurping lands in Brillon and Beuvry-Nord.
agreed to take the lands in fief from the abbey and to recognize the abbey's status as owner.132

In the second half of the twelfth century, the monks of Marchiennes continued to argue and make settlements with Amaury's descendants over fishing rights and mills along the Scarpe. With equal regularity, the validity of these settlements was questioned.133 The family's subsequent claims on Marchiennes, however, were rarely challenged. In 1165, advocate Stephen of Landas installed himself and his family in the village of Marchiennes, which was supposed to be exempt from the advocacy. It took the intervention of Count Philip of Alsace before Stephen finally abandoned his plans to reside permanently in the village.134 Not until 1262 did the monks buy the advocacy back from one of Stephen's relatives.135 By the time of Stephen's eviction from his temporary residence in Marchiennes, the head of the family had become one of the major aristocratic figures in the county of Flanders and also that of Hainaut.136 Shortly thereafter, Arnulf of Landas confirmed his family's reputation as troublemakers and was excommunicated by the archbishop of Reims for continuous harassment of the clergy, although Pope Alexander III had him withdraw the sentence at the request of Louis VII of France.137 Nothing indicates that the Landas family ever became pariahs of Flemish society because of these disputes. Nor did they find themselves become persona non grata in relations with monastic communities.138 The intended effect of the disputes was not the destruction of the other party but some form of

135 The chronicler Gislebert of Mons mentions that Arnoul and Gerard I of Landas joined the army of the count of Hainaut in 1172 to support the count of Namur in his military campaign against Henry III of Limburg. Arnoul, presumably Gerard's son, was Hainaut's haut-échanson from 1171 onwards; ed. L. VANDERKINDERE, La chronique de Gislebert de Mons (Brussels, 1904), pp. 108 and 112. Meanwhile, Gerard I (1168-1190) became heir of Eine and joined the Knights Templar. His son Arnoul I (1180-1245) became lord of Eine, Esne, Landas, and Peer of Flanders; WARLOP, The Flemish Nobility, II, pp. 787-8.
137 The obituary of Anchin, for example, contains the names of Amaury III and his successor Amaury IV († around 1170), indicating some connection, close or otherwise, with the monks of that abbey; GERZAGUET, L'abbaye d'Anchin, pp. 328-9.
compromise which would redefine and re-establish relations between the two for the time being. Relations between groups were punctuated by these confrontations, which defined and supported the social network. Without these disputes and compromises, inherent tensions would have led to a society constantly engaged in warfare. It is hardly surprising then, that lay and ecclesiastical parties chose to engage in semi-ritualised, small-scale warfare, with the lowest degree of violence possible, in order to remedy a perceived imbalance in relations. In the case of Marchiennes, Amaury’s growing influence on the abbey through the election of his brother, the hereditary nature of lay offices and so forth, merely reflected a disturbed balance of power. The ambitions of the Landas family were checked by a combination of public denouncements, ritualised display of power on behalf of the united ‘reform party’, and compromise which involved the exchange of goods. Fulcard’s case was finally settled through increasing pressure from Lambert and his supporters, but the fact that he received two villae as compensation shows that disputes between Marchiennes and the Landas family were settled by gift and counter-gift, though in this case it is clear the reformers had won and received the larger compensation the abbey itself. Furthermore, larger compensations were required to check lay parties’ ambitions. In Saint-Riquier, the elderly Abbot Angelran was nearly ousted from power by Fulco, the count’s son, who had given weight to his claim to the abbatial throne by holding a large banquet for a number of knights in the abbey’s refectory. When Angelran threatened Fulco with anathema, the plot fell apart and Fulco was bought off with a priory. His subsequent attempts to acquire the throne through money, relations, and appeals to the King of France ultimately failed, and after Angelran’s death a new abbot was canonically elected.

For his part, it would appear that Abbot Fulcard was thinking in terms of compromise and settlement as well. When seen in the light of Gerd ALTHOFF’s interpretation of early medieval rebellion, and assuming that the reports regarding his behaviour at the meeting with the bishop are accurate, the fact that he both resorted to threats and begged for mercy becomes quite comprehensible. ALTHOFF has argued that rebellion against the king’s power was a functional and fully legitimate constituent of power relations, and that it did not constitute an attempt to overthrow the king, but rather resulted from a desire to return to a status quo in power relations that had been disturbed by

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139 Barbara ROSENWEIN has argued that such “enmity … must be seen as part of an ongoing relationship which, in due course, produced a renewed friendship”; To Be The Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny’s Property, 909-1049 (Ithaca, 1989), pp. 58-9.

140  Hariulf, Chronique de l’abbaye de Saint-Riquier (Ve siecle-1104), ed. F. LOT (Paris, 1894), pp. 204 and 207.

141  Such ritual warfare was hardly uncommon; GEARY, ‘Vivre’, pp. 1118-19.
the king himself. With these motives in mind, the oft-used option of reconciliation does not appear to be illogical or irrational: in return for some kind of compensation from the king, the aristocracy often proved to be perfectly willing to subordinate itself publicly to his authority. In view of their respective associations, whereby Lambert enjoyed the support of the count's party and Fulcard was closely involved with his aristocratic relatives, Fulcard appears to have been using the same kind of strategy with Lambert. 

Throughout these conflicts, many of those who presided over the confrontations and negotiations did little more than offer suggestions and possible scenarios for restoring relations between the parties. The essentially private nature of these disputes explains why the archbishop of Reims finally arranged for Fulcard and Amand de Castello to reach an agreement between themselves, and why he did not impose any legal judgment. The exchange of goods, rents, and feudal offices at the conclusion of such compromises confirmed both parties' acceptance of their redefined relation and guaranteed that neither would consider themselves humiliated. Many restitutions of usurped estates, for example, were thinly disguised as gifts (elemosinae) in order to emphasize the newly restored relations rather than the problems that had caused them to break down in the first place. In Fulcard's case, it is quite likely that the deposed abbot received the two villages as a token of continued relations with the Landas family as a clan, relations further manifested in the fact that Amaury stayed firmly in place as the monks' foremost advocate. In that sense, the monks' gift to Fulcard closely resembled renunciation charters from this period, in which counter-gifts were often explicitly mentioned. According to Weinberger, a number of such counter-gifts betrayed transactions in which usurped goods were partially restored and partially sold to the original owners. Counter-gifts from monastic communities also indicated that these
of the other party were (re-)installed as members of the spiritual community of the monastery, which in itself could give rise to claims of greater influence.149

Conclusions

Over the course of the eleventh century, the counts of Flanders abandoned direct ownership of ecclesiastical institutions and acknowledged this redistribution of power by appointing local aristocrats as lay officers. When it became clear that obligations of vassalage were being fragmented and that the local aristocracy was managing and distributing the estates at its own discretion, the count attempted to regain his grip on the social network in his territories by re-establishing direct links between himself and local communities. The Cluniac reform movement of the final years of the eleventh century offered the ideal opportunity to disentangle and rearrange the complicated social networks around some of the larger and richer institutions of his county. By the early twelfth century, both the count and monastic reformers deployed a strategy that combined a genuine interest in the spirit of the Cluniac movement with an active policy of removing some of the feudal associations that lay at the basis of the links between the monastery, the lower nobility, and the count. As socio-political interventions, the Cluniac reforms in Flanders were essentially local in nature and should be studied as such.

In this article, I have used the case of Marchiennes to show how the Cluniac reforms were partially inspired by political motives and offered an ideal (if indirect) means of social rearrangement. Sensing the pressure from the comital party on his effective (if not legal) independence and having experienced how his position as an advocate was in jeopardy, Amaury of Landas saw great benefit in the election of his brother as leader of the community in 1103. Although the sources from Marchiennes indicate that the election had been canonical and that the monks had freely chosen Fulcard, it seems quite obvious that they did so in order to avoid a confrontation with Amaury. Fulcard’s resistance to Cluniac reforms and the turbulent nature of his relationship with the bishop indicate that, even after his election, his family continued to fear the loss of their position as lay officers. Although the authors from Marchiennes do not interpret the events explicitly in this sense, it is clear that Fulcard’s abdication, the election of Amand and the gradual introduction of Cluniac customs at the abbey were part of a deal with the Landas family, who in return benefited from the continuation of their position as the abbey’s lay advocates until well into the thirteenth century.

149 BOUCHARD, Sword, pp. 217-18.
Contemporary sources show that episodes of conflict rarely ended relations between the monks and their opponents. It is important to note that comital authority and justice, ecclesiastical justice, the feud and various other methods of dispute settlement were in competition with each other throughout the entire eleventh century and well into the twelfth. Since the prevailing notion in society of such disputes was that they were essentially private, however willing the counts may have been to intervene their jurisdictional power was limited, and grew only slowly over the course of several decades. It is hardly surprising, then, that the count played a seemingly low-key role in the exercise of justice and dispute settlement. Neither is it difficult to acknowledge the deeper reasons for his interest in the reform movement.\(^{152}\)

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\(^{152}\) Ibid., p. 289.
The ritual behaviour of medieval people has recently become the subject of significant methodological and epistemological debate, transforming its study into one of the most dynamic domains of medieval scholarship. As a result, historical analysis is now more attuned to the need to cleanse the anachronistic discourses of the modern (archaeological, iconographical and documentary) evidence before attempting to access the realities of public and ritual behaviour itself. Research into these practices also has moved away from a descriptive type of analysis to one in which rituals and other forms of encoded behaviour are regarded as the principal instruments in the management of social relations.

Thanks to the ‘performative turn’ in the humanities, an increasing number of scholars now subscribe to the notion that public behaviour externalised certain ideas on how society should be organised, and that, through the ‘performance’ of encoded gestures and rituals, these ideas could become part of a social habitus.

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2 Two notable examples are G. Koziol, Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France (Ithaca, 1992); and J.F. Romano, Ritual and Society in Early Medieval Rome (Harvard, 2007).


Arguably just as problematic in terms of documentation and interpretation is a third line of inquiry that looks at the use of written documents in ritual practices. Studies on gift-giving and dispute management in the central Middle Ages have, for instance, shown that the act of laying a legal document on the altar was sometimes considered a significant part of the staging of public acts of reconciliation and transfer of property between laymen and ecclesiastical institutions. While many such documents are still preserved as charters or informal notices, theoretical or normative evidence—which could shed more light on the formal and ideological antecedents of these practices—has been lacking. Other applications of the written word in ritual contexts are well known through the study of normative texts, but little 'applied' evidence remains. For instance, St Benedict of Nursia stipulates in his Rule that any novice or oblate, upon making his profession, is required to place a petition or written version of his vows on the altar.5 Many thousands of such documents must have been produced from the sixth century onwards, yet very few have been preserved. Information appears rare and lost to keep a monk's prayer after his death, particularly if his name and the donations made during his profession had already been memorialised in other types of texts.6 Although the use of petitions is thus well known to scholars of monastic history, it is difficult to verify to what extent customaries and monastic rules were followed in the letter.

Finally, there are examples of public behaviour in which the use of the written word was introduced into ritual practices as a result of gradual processes taking place, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes not, in normative and in applied contexts. This paper will examine one such instance, namely that of the written promise (promissio) of obedience submitted...
IV. Abbatial Obedience

to the abbot by newly elected abbots at the time of their benediction. Although it has been argued that the practice was only widely adopted in French bishoprics in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, direct and indirect evidence suggests that its introduction was a long-term process beginning more than a century earlier. So far, this process has received little attention, and its chronology is not well established.

By looking at an exceptional set of liturgical and archival sources from the northern French bishopric of Arras and framing them in their appropriate canonical, liturgical, and political contexts, I will show how reformist bishops of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were experimenting with a ritual repertoire – perhaps inspired by, but in any case reminiscent of, elements of the monastic profession and secular homage – as part of their attempts to contain monastic autonomy. The considerable role of local circumstances in determining bishops' decisions to introduce these controversial liturgical innovations explains the seemingly fragmentary and disjointed nature of the evidence from the period between ca. 1070 and ca. 1130.

Lambert of Arras and abbatial obedience

When, in 1093-1094, the Bishopric of Cambrai/Arras was divided into two independent entities, motivations of the principal actors were primarily political. Vigorously supported by Count Robert I of Flanders (1071-1093) and his brother Count Philip II of Flanders (1094-1096), the new bishop Lambert of Arras (1093-1115) decided to introduce these controversial liturgical innovations.
and his son and successor Robert II (1093-1111), the division transferred the southern part of the ancient diocese (the future diocese of Arras) from an ecclesiastical circumscription that belonged to the German empire, to a new one that was part of the kingdom of France. This enabled them to divide the influence of both sovereign powers more equally over their own territories.14 For his part, Pope Urban II also supported the division as it offered him the prospect of creating a new centre of ecclesiastical reform in a former bishopric that, because of its allegiance to the empire, had been ill-disposed to accept the principles of ecclesiastical reform. Following prolonged negotiations with the archbishop of Reims, Lambert of Grises was elected the first bishop of Arras.

As a student of canon law and a former disciple of Evrard of Chartres, and thus a true if somewhat subdued supporter of ecclesiastical reform, Lambert (1093/4-1115) invested much effort in documenting the legitimate foundation of the bishopric, but even more so the legal nature of his own appointment and the moral and juridical rectitude of his reformist policies.15 The Gesta Abbatijianum, also known as the Register of Lambert, provides us with a wealth of evidence regarding the creation and earliest history of the bishopric.16 The first part of the Register, most likely compiled in or shortly after 1095 and arranged in a roughly chronological fashion, assembles sources (papal privileges, episcopal mandates and letters, and other types of text) relating to the creation of the bishopric.17 The second part comprises documents issued and received by Lambert during his later years as bishop.18 It is no coincidence that the latter part of the Register devotes so much attention to the bishop’s relations with monastic institutions. Lambert, whose bishopric lay in one of the regions with the highest monastic occupation of western Europe, desperately needed their support to implement his policies and

14 GIORDANENGO, Le registre de Lambert, pp. 10-11.
16 The full text of the Register, or at least the ‘first state’, is edited and translated in French in GIORDANENGO, Le registre de Lambert. For an exhaustive discussion of its conception and manuscripts, see KÉRY, Die Errichtung.
establish his juridical authority and fiscal autonomy. The creation of the bishopric of Arras and his own appointment had both been hotly contested by anti-Gregorians, not least by the bishop of Cambrai, whose relations with a number of monasteries now in Arras had been excellent. Gaining the SEE—last by no means a priori guaranteed—cooperation of the leaders of his monastic houses was therefore vital if Lambert was to maintain his position. Despite presiding over a bishopric that was poorer than many of its monastic institutions, he made donations to several of these houses, assisted in founding new chapters of regular canons, and supported—or at least tolerated—the introduction of Cluniac customs in his monasteries.20 In return, he demanded the support of monastic leaders in imposing his authority and consolidating, as well as financing, the bishopric’s new institutions.

Lambert’s charters and letters bear witness to the fact that he incessantly reminded his monastic subjects of their obligation to show him obedience (oboedientia) and reverence (reverentia).21 A series of privileges issued by Lambert between 1097 and 1111/12 reveal that he methodically set out to ensure his abbots formally recognised these obligations, and to preserve the memory (and hence, the legal evidence) of such agreements in writing. A recurrent—and by no means exceptional—reference to these concerns is his insistence on the monasterial duty to pay a yearly sum either to him or to his archdeacon,23 and to assist him in the exercise of his office. Charters issued among others to the abbeys of Saint-Amand (1097) and Denain (1113) added that it was the obligation of all the male and female leaders of these houses to attend the synod and sessions of the episcopal court.22 In 1110, the prior of Abbeville was reminded of his duty to obey the bishop,23 as was the future head of the priory


22 Ed. B.-M. TOCK, Les chartes des évêques d’Arras (1093-1203) (Paris, 1991), no. 17 (Saint-Amand), and no. 20 (Denain).

23 Ibid., no. 16.
of Ambrines, given to the abbey of Sainte-Trinité in Rouen in 1111.24 Privileges granted to the abbeys of Saint-Denis of Reims (1097) and Saint-Amand (1097) to confirm the possession of a number of altars and rights, indicated that the appointment by the monks of all priests to these altars had to be confirmed by the bishop.25 Lambert also used his experience of canon law to ensure that he could influence the recruitment and fidelities of future monastic leaders. Thus, his insistence that, although monks had the right to freely elect their abbot, they had to request a licentia eligendi upon the death of the current abbot, is understandable.26 Lambert reserved the right to refuse newly elected abbots, and several texts in the Register refer to the legal necessity of his approval.27 When Abbot Gelduin of Anchin in 1110 resigned from office, the monks sent a letter to Lambert notifying him of Robert’s election as abbot and requesting his approval.28 Since Robert, for his part, resigned from office before he had received the bishop’s benediction, the fact that this essentially redundant letter was included in the Register bears witness to Lambert’s preoccupation with this prerogative. Finally, two charters from 1097 confirm the right of free election respectively to the canons of Mont-Saint-Éloi and Arrouaise, but stipulate that the prior-elect must pay a visit to the bishop to receive the beneficium loci, the cura animarum and the abbot’s blessing.29 The Register thus gives the impression that Lambert was reluctant to stray outside the boundaries of canon tradition in his attempts to subject his monastic subjects to his authority. Contemporary liturgical evidence, however, suggests otherwise, and is revealing in terms of his attitudes towards both monastic autonomy and the potentially far-reaching implications of the use of the written word in the benediction ritual.

24 Ibid., no. 18. Similar stipulations were included in contemporary charters of the bishops of Thérouanne, Thérouanne. DEREINE argues that, even when they were left unmentioned, such obligations were taken for granted (‘Les limites’, p. 48).
25 Ed. TOCK, Les chartes, nos. 1 and 5. See also nos. 4 (Saint-Vaast), 7 (Marchiennes), 11 (Marchiennes), 13 (Vire), 14 (Saint-Pierre in Lille), and 15 (Ormes).
27 Ed. TOCK, Les chartes, no. 4; also GIORDANENGO, Le registre de Lambert, E 74, E 101, E 102, E 110, E 112 and E 113.
28 Ed. GIORDANENGO, Le registre de Lambert, E 102.
29 Ed. TOCK, Les chartes, no. 3 and no. 4. A charter of 1090 issued by Bishop Radbod of Tournai confirming the foundation of the abbey of Oudenburg explicitly mentions the necessity of episcopal benediction (ed. M. GYSSELING / A.C.F. KOCH, Diplomata belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta (Brussels, 1950), pp. 287-8).
The five abbatial promises

At least two copies of the ‘second state’ of the Register include several miscellaneous sections, which have escaped the scrutiny of scholars. One of these is entitled “Formulas used by the abbots of the diocese of Arras, in which they promised obedience to Bishop Lambert of Arras” ([Formulae quibus usi sunt abbates dioceses Atrebatensis promittentes obedientiam Lamberto episcopo Atrebatensi]). What follows is the text of five promises, only the first of which is reproduced in its entirety, by four abbots and one prior. Seemingly unremarkable for their brevity and formulaic nature, and almost identical to those found in late twelfth-century ordinals, these are of particular interest for different reasons. First, as transcriptions of actual promissiones, and certainly as a series of such documents, they are the only find among the episcopal archives of northern France. Second, because of the preservation of a contemporary formula for the benediction of abbots, the promises may be compared and analysed in light of adaptations to the liturgy of abbatial benediction. Thirdly, because they are preserved as a small collection, hypotheses may be formulated about the circumstances under which the practice itself was introduced.

Before the place of these written promises can be assessed in the development of canon legislation and liturgical practice, they must be dated, and their protagonists must be identified. As the title indicates, Lambert was the bishop taking the promises of all five abbots, which narrows their dating to ca. 1093/4-1115. The abbots in question are (in order) four Benedictines, Alvisus (1111-1131) and Gelduin (1102-1110 and briefly 1111) of Anchin.

30 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France [hereafter BnF], Ms. Lat. 12827, fols 123r-v (ca. 1590); and Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale [hereafter BM], 841 (eighteenth century), pp. 85-6. The promises were also transcribed on a loose sheet of paper now preserved in Paris, BnF, Ms. Picardie 60, fol. 11r (eighteenth century; see Ph. LAUER, Collection manuscrites sur l'histoire des provinces de France. Inventaire, II (Paris, 1911), pp. 103-4. My thanks to Benoît-Michel TOCK for kindly pointing out the existence of the second Paris manuscript and providing me with his notes on its version of the five promises.


33 On Gelduin, a former monk of Anchin, see GERZAGUET, L'abbaye d'Anchin, pp. 75-9 and 302.
Henry of Saint-Vaast (1104-1130),
Fulcard of Marchiennes (1102-1115),
and one regular canon, Richard of Mont-Saint-Éloi (1108-1134). Of these five men, only Gelduin is designated as ordinatus, 'ordained', while the others are ordinandus, 'to be ordained'. This, and the fact that Alard II of Marchiennes (who briefly held office in 1102-1103) is not included, suggests that the list covers promises pronounced in a period which falls roughly between the latter half of 1103, around the time of Fulcard's benediction, and sometime in 1111, when Alvisus was confirmed as abbot of Andlau. The table below provides a sum of monastic leaders and promises potentially submitted during Lambert's time in office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Founders/Reformed</th>
<th>Abbots/Abbeses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchin</td>
<td>Benedictine monks 1079</td>
<td>Haimeric (late 1088-October 1102); Gelduin (late 1102-July 1110; 1111); Robert (1110-1111); Alvisus (1111-1113)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denain</td>
<td>Benedictine nuns Seventh or eighth century/reformed ca. 1024</td>
<td>Heldiardis (ca. 1113)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Étrun</td>
<td>Benedictine nuns 1085 (?)</td>
<td>Fulgendis (ca. 1088-before 1119)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Évreux</td>
<td>Benedictine nuns 1080 (?-?)</td>
<td>Héloïse (ca. 1115)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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35 VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.  
36 A. DE CARDEVACQUE, L’abbaye du Mont-Saint-Éloi 1068-1792 (Arras, 1859), pp. 20-3; O. BARUBÉ, L’abbaye du Mont-Saint-Éloi des origines au XIVe siècle (Poitiers, 1977), pp. 121 and 172. Mont-Saint-Éloi was the first institution in the bishopric to have made the transition from a relatively loose, secular set-up to a form of communal life inspired by traditional monasticism: BARUBÉ, L’abbaye, pp. 52-76; and, on the earlier history of this institution, B. MEIJNS, ‘Deux fondations exceptionnelles de collégiales épiscopales à la frontière du comté de Flandre: Maroeuil et le Mont-Saint-Éloi (milieu du Xe siècle)’, in: Revue du Nord, 88 (2006), pp. 251-74.  
37 J.-P. GERZAGUET, L’abbaye féminine de Denain des origines à la fin du XIIIe siècle. Histoire et chartes (Paris, 2007), p. 120.  
38 Gallia Christiana, III (Paris, 1725), c. 419; also DELMAIRE, Le diocèse d’Arras, I, p. 201; B.L. VENARDE, Women’s Monasticism and Medieval Society. Nunneries in France and England,
IV. Abbatial Obedience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Founded/Reformed</th>
<th>Abbot/Abbess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hasnon</td>
<td>Benedictine monks</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>Albert (1091-21 April 1109); Boniface (1109-13 September 1118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes</td>
<td>Benedictine monks</td>
<td>Seventh century/reformed 1024</td>
<td>Richard (1091-1102); Alard II (1102-22 September 1103); Fulcard (1103-1115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Vaast</td>
<td>Benedictine monks</td>
<td>Seventh century/reformed 1021</td>
<td>Adlold (1068-1104); Henry (1104-1130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mont-Saint-Éloi</td>
<td>Regular canons</td>
<td>Reformed 1067</td>
<td>John I (ca. 1068-1098); Robert de Watrellos (before 17 July 1108-1130)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As far as we can tell, for the male institutions only Robert of Anchin and Boniface of Hasnon are missing from the list. Robert resigned so quickly from office that he probably did not receive the bishop’s benediction. Boniface’s absence is less easy to explain, as his monastery was not exempt from the usual obligations to the ordinarius. For instance, one of Lambert’s letters from 1108 calls for the assistance of the abbots of Saint-Vaast, Marchiennes, Hasnon and Anchin at a session of the episcopal court. Nevertheless, Boniface’s name is conspicuously absent from the Register and from the lists of witnesses of charters issued by Lambert, suggesting perhaps that this abbot was less involved in the exercise of episcopal authority than some of his colleagues. For all we know, he may have refused to promise obedience. Alternatively, the


original of his promise may have been lost at an early date, and the list may have been incomplete from its inception.

In any case, the list of promises comprises all but one (or, less likely, two) of those potentially made by the newly elected heads of communities of Benedictine monks and regular canons in the diocese of Arras between 1103 and Lambert's death in 1115. For those abbots, priests and abbesses from the diocese who had held office at the time of Lambert's election, there had been no formal need for such a promise as they had evidently been consecrated by one of his predecessors. To accommodate the juridical problem caused by the fact that they had previously promised obedience to the bishop of Cambrai/Arras, on 25 or 26 March 1094 Pope Urban II had issued a letter liberating all abbots (Adlold of Saint-Vaast, Richard of Marchiennes, Albert of Hasnon, and Haimeric of Anchin) and abbesses (unnamed heads of Denain and Étrun) of the diocese and their subjects from their obligations to the bishop of Cambrai, and ordaining them instead to obey the new bishop of Arras.42 When a new generation of abbots was elected, Lambert complemented this document of juridical significance with written records of the actual promises as they had been pronounced, thus creating a body of evidence that clearly attested to his belief that the survival of the bishopric itself depended on the continued collaboration between himself and these powerful men. Whether or not such documents were ever made for the two missing heads of female monasteries can not be verified.

Liturgical innovation in Arras

In his charters, letters and other documents, Lambert only refers to ecclesiastical legislation regarding the obligation of abbatial obedience, and not to the fact that abbots were actually expected to make a formal, and personalised, promise to that effect at the time of their benediction. In the privileges of Abbeville and Sainte-Trinité, he traces its origin to canon 8 of the Council of Chalcedon, just as his master Ivo of Chartres had done in his writings,43 and to its confirmation by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont.

42 Ed. GIORDANENGO, Le registre de Lambert, G 29.
43 His master Ivo of Chartres’ comments on this subject in his Panormia, presumably written in the early years of Lambert’s episcopacy, are based precisely on canon 8 of Chalcedon (Panormia, Book III, ch. 147; the best current edition is a provisional one by B. BRASINGTON/M. BRETT, at <http://wtfaculty.wtamu.edu/~bbrasington/panormia.html>, accessed 2 March 2010). In his Decretum, which preceded the Panormia, he also included a chapter entitled “That abbots must be under the power of bishops” (Ut abbates in potestate episcoporum consistant), quoted from canon 42 of the Council of Arles (<http://project.knowledgeforge.net/ivo/decretum/ivodec_7_1p4.pdf>, accessed 2 March 2010).
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in 1095.44 Such arguments could be expected of a man trained as a specialist in ecclesiastical legislation. The Collectio of Arras, a canonical manuscript dated after 1078 but before 1096/9, may have originated under his supervision and carries some resemblance to two of Charters’ work.45 Lambert certainly encouraged, or at least allowed for, intensive study of its contents during his first years in office. The Collectio 9 librorum, another manuscript written by his former fellow student (and future bishop of Thérouanne) John of Warneton, was partially based on the Collectio of Arras, and was presumably written during John’s time as abbott of Arras.46

Lambert and his abbot undoubtedly also knew that his predecessors in Cambrai/Arras had reshaped liturgical tradition to focus attention on abbatial obedience. These interventions can be witnessed in the Cambrai ordinales, a liturgical handbook written around the middle of the eleventh century for use by either Gerard I (1012-1051) or his successor Lietbert (1051-1076) of Cambrai/Arras.47 Based for the most part on the Romano-Germanic pontifical and Regino of Prüm’s handbook of canon law, the manuscript added significant sections and formulæ sourced from other traditions, an important one being formulated originally by Gennadius of Marseille in the late fifth century and pertaining to the scrutinium or interrogation of newly elected abbots before they


were blessed by the local bishop. According to a crucial passage in the
ordinale's lengthy benediction formula, the bishop was to ask the abbot: "Do
you wish to show your submission and obedience to the holy Church of
Cambrai, to me and to my successors, as prescribed by canonical authority and
the decrees of the holy pontiffs?" The abbot's answer then had to be "I do"
(or, locally, "I wish") (volo). This was a significant shift in meaning from
previous traditions regarding the benediction of abbots, where "in contrast with
secular fidelity and obedience, [the promise of obedience] expressed the monk's
renunciation of will rather than the superior's power or authority." The tenth-
century Romano-Germanic Pontifical, for instance, in its benediction formula did
not refer in any way to abbatial obedience; instead, it focused on the newly
elected abbot's willingness to observe his purpose (propositum) and the Rule of
St Benedict, and to instruct his subjects to do the same. Other pontificals
from the ninth century up to the middle of the eleventh include, for the most
part, very brief blessing formulae. None of these refer to any meaning of
obedience other than those traditionally attributed in monastic culture itself.

Thus, in its description of abbatial benediction, the Cambrai ordinale broke
with tradition. It also is the earliest known example of a spoken promise which
– sometimes with slight variations in the word order – would find broad
acceptance more than a century later. Various histories of monastic
rituals in French monastic collections include at least two dozen examples of
such formulae, the earliest of which originates from Chartres and dates from
the second half or end of the eleventh century. By that time, bishops had
developed an even more complex scenario for the benediction ritual, and this
trend is reflected in the pontificals. Having been interrogated, and having replied

48 Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, 141, fols 135r-140r; on the origins
of the scrutinium, see GRÉLOIS, 'La promesse', p. 308.
49 Vis sanctae [Cameracensi] ecclesie et michi meisque successoribus subiectionem et oboedientiam
exhibere secundum canonicam auctoritatem et decreta sanctorum pontificum? Respondat: "Volo".

50 Ed. G. CONSTABLE, Three Treatises from Bec on the Nature of Monastic Life (Toronto /
51 Ed. C. VOGEL / R. ELZE, Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique du dixième siècle. Le texte, I
(Vatican City, 1963), p. 62.
52 N. KROGH RASMUSSEN'S study of pontificals from the ninth to early eleventh century, Les
pontificaux du haut Moyen Âge. Genèse du livre de l’évêque (Louvain, 1998), has shown that
abbatial benediction formulae were very succinct. In the early tenth-century sacramentary of
Saint-Petersburg, originating from Sens, the benedictio ad abbatem faciendum vel abbatissam
is as follows: Concede quaesumus omnipotens Deus ut famulum tuum ill. vel illam nostra electione
placeamus. Per Dominum (ibid., p. 107). More elaborate, but still lacking the interrogation of the
abbot, is the pontifical from Sherborne Cathedral, dating back to the second half of the tenth
century (ibid., pp. 311-13).
53 V. LEROQUAIS, Les pontificaux manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, II (Paris,
1957), pp. 19. Another valuable example is an early twelfth-century ordinarium from Cambrai
(ibid., pp. 58-9).
to the bishop’s questions in the affirmative, the abbot according to some handbooks was expected to read aloud a document (promissio) in which he proclaimed his subjection (subiectio), reverence (reverentia) and obedience (obedientia) to the ordinarius. Following this, the promissio was placed on the altar and “written [i.e. subscribed] by the abbot”. Following this, the promissio was placed on the altar and “written [i.e. subscribed] by the abbot”. From the late twelfth century onwards, there also exist dozens of actual promissiones, preserved either as loose documents (chartulae or scedulae) or annotated in the margin and on the end leaves of cartularies and pontificals.

The introduction of the written promissio in the benediction ritual should not be interpreted as the result of efforts to accommodate the growing impact of the written word in twelfth-century government and jurisdiction. In fact, the earliest references to the use of the written promissio in the benediction ritual are contemporary to the Cambrai ordinale. On the flyleaf of the ordinale used by the bishops of Lyon, we find a promise made by the abbot of Saint-Martin-d’Ainay to the Archbishop Humbert of Lyons (1046–1052). In the Anglo-Norman kingdom, Archbishop Lanfranc (1070–1089) probably was responsible for the introduction of a similar formula in the 1070s. In 1088, the Norman Bishop Odo of Bayeux demanded a written promise from Abbot Audouin of Tournel, while the following year, Abbot Aubert of Saint-Remi refused to give a similar document to Bishop Guibert of Auxerre. As early as ca. 1124, the ‘definitive’ version of the promissio formula as found (with minor variations) in the late twelfth- and thirteenth-century ordinals was used by Matthew, abbot of Saint-Savin, to promise obedience to Bishop Gauvin of Langres. This evolution towards the use and fixed formula of the promissio text by no means linear or universal. In a pontifical from Avranches that is contemporary to Herbert’s promise, the formula for the benediction of abbots contains no reference at all to a promise of obedience, let alone to a written promissio.

These fragmentary indications leave us in the dark as to when and where the liturgical formula that included the written promissio emerged, and in what circumstances the actual text of the promissio, in what would later become its standard form, was concocted. It is, however, possible to identify several periods when evidence for the attempted introduction of the promissio converges. As Giles Constable has shown and as Herbert’s promise suggests, the years 1120–1130 are one such period. In a treatise on the profession of abbots, an anonymous monk from Bec, presumably writing in the 1130s, to the bishop’s questions in the affirmative, the abbot according to some handbooks was expected to read aloud a document (promissio) in which he proclaimed his subjection (subiectio), reverence (reverentia) and obedience (obedientia) to the ordinarius. Following this, the promissio was placed on the altar and “written [i.e. subscribed] by the abbot”. From the late twelfth century onwards, there also exist dozens of actual promissiones, preserved either as loose documents (chartulae or scedulae) or annotated in the margin and on the end leaves of cartularies and pontificals.

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fulminated against the introduction of the written promissio, calling it an 'unmerited novelty' (inmerita novitas) and arguing that to complement the oral promise with a written version transformed the canonical promise into something akin to the secular homage and an obligation of service. His arguments were by no means the product of an overactive imagination: bishops were indeed pushing towards a definition of obedience as an obligation of service, finding support within the First Lateran Council of 1123, which formally acknowledged a 'secular' interpretation of monastic obedience by arguing that monks were obliged to show the bishops obedience and subjection in all. The thirteenth-century pontifical of the Roman Curia even replaces the promise of obedience by an oath of fidelity.

This intended shift in meaning is reflected in the few written promissiones that are preserved for the period up to the middle of the twelfth century. That made to Halinard of Lyon had made the abbot "promise in front of God and his saints and the present altar … honourable 

promitto coram Deo et sanctis eius et hoc presenti altare …

subiectionem domini Halinardi et eius 

successoris … et eius authority". The model for a promise found in a late eleventh- or early twelfth-century ordinale for Châlons was more explicit, but at least the promise was still made to the episcopal see, and not to the bishop in person: "I N., now to be ordained, promise that I shall show in perpetuity and sign with my own hand the subjection and reverence established by the holy Fathers and obedience according to the precept of the holy Bishop Augustine in the holy chapter of the see of Châlons in the presence of the lord bishop N." Finally, the form eventually adopted in many manuals of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries was more far-reaching in including the promise of "subjection and reverence … and obedience … to this holy see … and to you, father bishop, and your successors". In some cases, abbots were happy to accept these implications, but not for reasons that were necessarily identical to those of their ordinarius. Competition between monasteries could be one of these: in 1134, the Abbot of Le Pin claimed that the newly founded Cistercian monastery of Mortemer should recognise its dependency on his own institution. Abbot Alexander of Mortemer, clearly seeking to establish his authority as an independent monastic leader, argued before the archbishop of Rouen that the abbot of Le Pin had "liberated me in the hand of the archbishop" and that he himself had "done the profession [to the latter] in
writing and in speech, according to ecclesiastical custom." Yet while he and
Hedulf of Saint-Seine agreed to produce a written promissio, several of their
contemporaries strongly resisted the practice because of the aforementioned
implications. In 1118/24, the abbot of Montmoreau and the archbishop of
Tours reached an agreement that the abbot would be blessed "without
investigation, without writing, without profession". Pope Calixtus II probably
supported this agreement, and in 1122 issued a privilege freeing Saint-Florence
in Sancerre from the profession, but without referring to written practices.

These indications allow us to conclude that the third and fourth decades
of the twelfth century were by all accounts a decisive phase in the use of written
promissiones, even if it would take at least half a century before these changes
became apparent in liturgical handbooks. The five examples in Lambert's
Register, however, push the first attested use of the 'definitive' formula nearly a
quarter of a century back in time, thus helping the notion that the new meaning
of the promise was only consolidated in the 1120s-1140s. This in itself is not
surprising, as debates over monastic autonomy had been ongoing since the final
decades of the eleventh century. CONSTABLE's contextualisation of the
introduction of the written promise — as an instrument of episcopal control —
therefore continues to hold water.

For a man well versed in the study of liturgical and canonic traditions, it
would be surprising to find that Lambert had not anchored the practices of
which there are the five concrete examples in a liturgical formula, as had been
the case at Châlons. An Oriu ad monachum abbatem faciendum at the end of a
contemporary copy of the Rule of St Benedict made for use at Arras cathedral
confirms his interest in changing liturgical tradition.

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66 Edited by C. BOUVET, "Le récit de la fondation de Mortemer", in: Collectanea ordinis
Cisterciensium reformatorum, 22 (1960), p. 156. A similar episode occurred in 1188, when
the community of Saint-André near the Flemish town of Bruges attempted to relinquish its
status as a priory of the abbey of Affligem. A contemporary account of its new leader's
frantic quest around the episcopal courts of the region to receive abbatial benediction is
edited by C. VAN DEN HAUTE, "Une chronique inédite de l'abbaye de Saint-André-lez-Bruges
du XIIe-XIIIe siècle", in: Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges, 59 (1909), at pp. 284-
285; and C. VAN DEN HAUTE, "La coutume de l'abbaye de Saint-André-lez-Bruges du XIIe-

67 Quoted in CONSTABLE, Three Treatises, p. 27, note 85.

68 CONSTABLE, 'Abbatial Profession', p. 114.

69 Ibid.

70 Arras, Médiathèque, 745 (olim 1031), fols 21r-23v, with the promise on fols 22r-v; see
REILLY, The Art of Reform, pp. 117-20. Besides the Rule and the
ordo ad monachum faciendum,
the manuscript also contains an
ordo for the consecration of abbesses. Since only twenty-nine
folios remain of what originally would have been a volume of at least seventy, we can only
guess at what else the manuscript in its original state might have contained: see H. LORIQUET,
Rapport présenté à M. le ministre de l'instruction publique sur l'identification de fragments
de manuscrits trouvés à Calais, en 1884 suivi d'un tableau des déprédations commises en
1816 sur les Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque d'Arras (Arras, 1886), p. 27.
from the lengthy rule in the Carolingian order (which, it should be noted, was kept at the time at the abbey of Saint-Vaast, in the city of Arras), the new ordo contained relatively few choreographic instructions, focusing instead on the recitation of prayers and hymns and on the interrogation of the candidate-elect. Once that part of the ritual had been completed, the candidate had to read aloud from a document (scedula) that contained his promise. The prescribed contents of the scedula are identical to the five abbatial promises. We can therefore conclude that this is not only the earliest documented appearance in a liturgical handbook originating from a French bishopric of the written formula as it would later be widely adopted, but that the fact that it can be verified against the five actual promises pushes back by several decades the opportunity to study both a normative source and its concrete applications.  

Such innovations, even for a bishop considered by scholars to be a man of moderate attitudes as regards his monastic subjects, were neither innocent nor insignificant.

Ideological and formal implications of the promises:

Of course, the early appearance of the extended benediction ritual and the written promissio in Arras does not necessarily mean that they were conceived there. The contemporary ordo from Châlons suggests that others were working with similar formulae, and until new evidence emerges to prove the safest option it is probably to assume that at the time several models were circulating among bishops keen to take action against monastic autonomy.72 The inspiration for its contents and physical format certainly derived from various sources. While scholars have sometimes argued that the consecration of bishops inspired the ritual of the benediction of abbots,73 the use of the written word in the context of these rituals is, by contrast, reminiscent of the monastic petitio. Like St Benedict who had instructed those novices wishing to enter the monastic life, the benediction ordo instructs the candidate to confirm the promise “by his own hand”.74 It certainly does not seem too far-fetched to imagine a scribe working at Arras cathedral preparing the document for the
The kinship between the monastic vows and the abbatial benediction was in fact not new. As we have seen, benediction formulae from before 1050, even though they do not refer to the juridical position, are more akin to the monastic vows with respect to ideology than the one found in the *Cambrai* ordinale. Although Lambert was not inclined to abandon the more secular interpretation of abbatial obedience of his immediate predecessors, his decision to use a formula inspired once again by monastic liturgy makes sense. Rather than subscribing to a nuptial or baptismal interpretation of obedience, his benediction formula referred to the formal implications of the *professio*, which St. Benedict himself had indicated embodied the irreversible nature of the candidate’s vows.

The contents and the formal appearance of these documents thus indicate that Lambert intended to endow them with a legal and memorial value and a potential for concrete use that is comparable to that of the *petitio*. The fact that he insisted on such written practices can be interpreted as an effort by him and his clerics to preserve the memory of these promises and, more importantly perhaps, to ensure that the abbots in question and their superiors could be confronted with evidence of their acknowledgement of subordination to the bishop. Perhaps the argument was put to use when Fulcard, abbot of Marchiennes, refused to come to the episcopal court between 1108 and 1110 to answer accusations of misconduct. Lambert’s letter from 1110 convoking Fulcard to the Council of Reims, rather than focusing on accusations about his behaviour, emphasized his duty of obedience. Looking at the list in which these promises are preserved, it is worth also noting that the compilers found it useful to keep the record of Gelduin’s promise even after Alvisus’ election. Considering the methods of preserving monastic *petitiones*, this is not at all surprising. Given the turbulent history of Anchin in recent years (Gelduin resigned in 1110 and was replaced by Robert, who himself resigned almost immediately), and given the fact that Gelduin died only in 1123, we may interpret this as proof that the latter’s promise was considered to be formally valid beyond his resignation. This suggests that such records were intended to be kept in the episcopal archives for as long as any of the previously elected

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75 GRÉLOIS, ‘La promesse’, pp. 312. Good examples of late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century promissiones, with texts signed off by at least four witnesses were subscribed by several monasteries, even those abbatial, hands.

76 See, among others, PATRICK, *Le promesse*, pp. 58 f.

77 Ed. GIORDANENGO, *Le registre de Lambert, E* 111; regarding Fulcard, see VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.

78 The list roughly corresponds with the order in which the heads of local monasteries were listed as witnesses to episcopal charters. According to TOCX, *Les temoins*, this order reflects the status of the different institutions.
abbots could take office in one of the bishopric’s monasteries and, indeed, for as long as the person in question – just like a monk who had made his vows – lived. This leads us to the conclusion that, in all likelihood, the list of promises in the Register comprises complete (in the case of Alvisus) or partial (all others) transcriptions of loose documents not dissimilar in use and purpose to the monastic petitio, and that these were kept in the bishop’s archives at least until the promise-giver had died.

To make this resemblance work, however, the bishop and his collaborators possibly inserted references to contemporary diplomatic practice into the actual promise documents. The intention behind the confirmatory cross at the end of Alvisus’ promise (although only attested in two copies of the list) was presumably to show its origins as a real, legally significant, diplomatic document.79 Later references to the subscriptio of these documents and the actual evidence found on the original promissiones from late twelfth-century Troyes indicate that it is indeed likely that the abbots from Arras had been asked to physically sign the document. Therefore, the introduction of the promises into liturgical practices, their preservation in the episcopal archives, and the composition of the list itself, can be used as evidence in current debates about medieval ‘cartularisation’, or the application of broader textual strategies embedded in the social objectives of its makers.80 So, regardless of the question of whether or not the list of promises was included in the original version of the Register or even if it was actually compiled during Lambert’s lifetime, this suggests that both the bishop’s administration and the bishop himself insisted on recording the promises made by the local abbots in order to retain the message conveyed by the formal characteristics of the texts. The fact that these were then kept in the bishopric’s archives and most likely (if implicitly) referred to when abbots subsequently refused to assist him in the exercise of his office, attests to their significance not only as memorial and juridical tools, but also as real instruments of episcopal government. In this respect as well, Lambert is an exceptionally early example of a bishop keeping systematic record (be it in their original form or as copies) of abbatial promises.

79 A good example is Lambert’s charter from 1111 for the canons of Saint-Pierre in Lille (ed. TOCK, Les chartes, no. 19); quoted in TOCK, Scribes, p. 357, with further discussion of the use of crosses on pp. 351-60. According to TOCK, there are indications that some crosses found in the episcopal charters of Lambert and Alvisus (the latter was bishop of Arras in 1131-1146) were drawn by the bishops themselves: TOCK, Une chancellerie, p. 99, with references to TOCK, Les chartes, nos. 1, 9, 14, 19, 61, 71, 77 and 79. Further reading in M. PARISSE, ‘Croix autographes de souscription dans l’Ouest de la France au XIe siècle’, in: Graphische Symbole in mittelalterlichen Urkunden. Beiträge zur diplomatischen Semiotik, ed. P. RÜCK (Sigmaringen, 1996), pp. 143-56.

The threat of monastic independence

The insistence of Lambert and some of his contemporaries on preserving these records reveals his determination to use the written word as a warranty of his authority. Yet, as we have seen, the formal recording of promises may not have begun until 1103, and Lambert may have consecrated at least one abbot without using the new formula. This raises the question as to whether the timing of the earliest pieces is a coincidence, and whether it can tell us something about the timing of the introduction of the written promissio itself. As the evidence and Lambert’s own antecedents suggest, he may have been part of a broader movement which considered this an appropriate instrument of episcopal authority, although if, when, and how he would apply it remained essentially his decision. After all, this required important adaptations to the liturgy, but more importantly would provoke reactions from his monastic subjects. The aforementioned examples of abbots who, already resentful of having to perform a spoken promise, refused to sign a written promissio, are telling in that respect. In light of Lambert’s still fragile authority, introducing such new formulae and risking an open confrontation with one of his newly elected abbots, even if it potentially could strengthen his public authority, was a decision not to be taken lightly. The fact that the promissio did turn up in the diocese of Arras therefore suggests that Lambert, pressured by circumstances, felt compelled to make a public gesture that emphasised his canonical authority but, at the same time, jeopardised the stability of his government.

According to Diane R. EILLY, the ordo in the Arras manuscript can be dated to ca. 1093-1115. This terminus ante quem is based on palaeographic grounds and on the assumption that the introduction of Cluniac customs in the Benedictine monasteries of the bishopric subsequently nullified the relevance of the benediction ritual as described in this particular manuscript. Saint-Vaast was reformed in 1109. Anchin, previously under the influence of Cluny, certainly adopted the customs following the election of Alvisus, a former monk of Saint-Bertin who was involved as prior in the reform of Saint-Vaast, in 1111. Marchiennes was reformed in 1115-1116. However, to claim that the ordo – as it was included in the Arras manuscript – had lost its relevance with the reforms is to disregard the specific nature of Cluniac reform in the county of Flanders and its neighbouring regions. Although most Benedictine institutions in the southern Low Countries were indeed reformed during the first decades...
of the tenth century, no independent monastery was ever formally transferred to the authority of the abbot of Cluny, and territorial lords and bishops insisted on negotiating a legal status for the reformed houses that ensured their continuing involvement in these institutions. The dating of the promises does confirm, however, that the ordo was written at the latest in the latter half of 1103, long before any of the institutions in the bishopric were reformed.

If the ordo can therefore be dated to ca. 1093-1103, the question remains as to why the earliest evidence of its actual application, the written record of Gelduin’s promise, apparently indicates that the latter had promised obedience after receiving his benediction. The answer to this question has to be hypothetical, as the relevant narratives and archival sources are scarce and allow only for ambiguous interpretations. As a Church leader, Lambert took part in a broader trend among bishops from the region – including those of Amiens, Cambrai, Châlons-sur-Marne, Chartres (with Ivo of Chartres still holding on firmly to the tuition episcopalis), Paris, Thiers, and Thérouanne – of growing vigilance with regard to the defense of episcopal prerogatives and of resistance towards growing monastic autonomy, both in juridical and in financial terms. Pope Urban II supported at least some institutions that were looking to expand their exemptions from episcopal authority, and was instrumental in freeing a number of monastic houses from the abbatial profession; such privileges are already known for the years 1096 and 1098. Lambert, as might be expected from any bishop, did not miss any opportunities to assert his episcopal rights and indicated in his early charters that he intended to hold on to the obedience of his ecclesiastical subjects. Yet, by the look of these and subsequent documents, the canonical basis of his policy hardly gives the appearance of being in a state of transition. Despite his pro-reformist stance, Ivo of Chartres, in his canonical writings from the final decade of the eleventh century, essentially held onto the same ideas and principles as the authors of the Cambrai ordinale, as did the anonymous writer of the Collectio of Arras (ca. 1078-1096/9) and John of Thiers in his Collectio 9 librorum (1096-1099).


85 On Ivo, see ibid., p. 108.
Soon, however, several of Lambert’s colleagues from the region became aware that monasteries were being thrown into a real state of turmoil. In 1101, in the nearby diocese of Thérouanne, Count Robert II and his wife Clementia, members of the Flemish nobility, and Bishop John of Thérouanne had, after several years of uncertainty, reached an agreement over the Cluniac reform of the abbey of Saint-Bertin.86 From there, the abbey of Auchy-les-Moines, in the same diocese, was reformed in the same year.87 Although such reforms were to spread over the entire region, none of the reformed houses would subsequently be formally associated with the Cluniac network. In 1103, however, Count Baldwin of Hainaut and his wife Ida became responsible for the sole exception to this rule by donating the priory of Saint-Saulve, in the diocese of Cambrai, to Cluny.88 Although Archbishop Manasses II of Reims stipulated in his confirmation charter that the priory was still subject to the authority of the ordinarius,89 the transferral did disrupt the political and patrimonial networks of the local lay elite,90 and undoubtedly alerted the bishops from the region to the future possibility of similar events.91 Even the status of the other reformed houses was no longer entirely certain. In 1111, Abbot Pontius of Cluny would disturb the reformist movement by challenging Saint-Bertin’s claims to independence, and it would take a papal privilege to prevent the annexation of the abbey by the Burgundian monastery and its network.92

One of those whose authority, legal standing and fiscal security was most critically at risk was Lambert himself. Presiding over a controversial new bishopric containing well-established monasteries, he hardly would have welcomed monastic wealth and the selection of the monastic leadership falling into alien hands. The prospect of reforms and their consequences for the juridical and fiscal position of the ordinarius also loomed large as a risk to episcopal authority because of previous tensions with monastic leaders as well.

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87 Ibid., p. 132.
89 Charter edited in A. MIRAEUS / J.F. FOPPENS, Opera diplomatica et historica, II (Louvain / Brussels, 1723), pp. 957-8, no. 38; see DEREINE, ‘La donation’. When Pope Paschalis II issued a privilege confirming the properties and rights of the abbey of Affligem, he also stipulated that the abbot had to show the bishop canonica reverentia (ed. J. RAMACKERS, Papsturkunden in den Niederländen (Belgien, Luxemburg, Holland und Französisch Flandern). II. Urkunden (Berlin, 1934), pp. 92-4).
90 VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.
91 This does not mean that Lambert was averse to reform. In 1110, he brought the priory of Saint-Pry under the authority of Saint-Pierre in Abbeville, a Cluniac monastery (GERZAGUET, L’abbaye d’Anchin, p. 128), and the Register itself contains two letters indicating that Lambert intervened to facilitate the appointment of Alvisus as abbot of Anchin. When he wrote these letters, he was fully aware of Alvisus’ reformist intentions (ed. GIORDANENGO, Le registre de Lambert, E 113 and E 114).
92 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge, pp. 105-13. Conflicts with Cluny would last into the 1130s.
as attempts, particularly by Abbot Haimeric of Anchin (1088-1102), to expand their institutions and temporal wealth beyond the borders of the bishopric. As early as 1088, Anchin, which had only been founded as a monastic institution in 1079, acquired the new priory of Aymeries in the bishopric of Cambrai,93 and another one in 1094 in the town of Hesdin in the bishopric of Thérouanne.94 The political opportunities created by these foundations, and the ensuing close tie between the abbot and several territorial rulers of the region (Count Enguerran of Hesdin (ca. 1067-ca. 1102), in particular), would likely not have been in the interest of the nascent bishopric.95 Abbot Haimeric's death, the subsequent emergence of the reformist movement and the notes of the creation of Cistercian institutions in the region, all of which occurred in the space of just two years, may therefore have spurred Lambert to take a proactive stance in laying down ground rules for his relationship with the abbeys of his bishopric. And not without reason: in 1104, Pope Paschalis would confirm Anchin's extensive properties, while referring to the canonicareverentia the abbots were obliged to show to their local bishop.96 For its part, Gelduin's abbacy would turn out to be a difficult one, marked by his own struggle with the worldly demands of his office, concerns over the monks' discipline and the protection of the abbey's properties, but more importantly (as may be inferred from Paschalis' charter) by internal discord.97 Aware of the risk that the instability of such an important monastic institution posed for his own authority, Lambert may have intervened at this point to at least bind the abbot to himself in his capacity of ordinarius. Considering what would happen at Marchiennes (the disastrous abbacy of Fulcard) and Saint-Vaast (attempted secession of the priory of Haspres) just a few years later, such precautions were not only necessary, but probably vital to the survival of the bishopric's fragile institutions. Even when helping to consolidate the stability of his abbeys, Lambert had reason to be suspicious of their strategies. Whereas his privilege charter for the canons of Mont-Saint-Éloi had explicitly stipulated that they were free to elect their leader "with the council and authority of the bishop", DELMAIRE has remarked that all references to the bishop's right of approval

95 The abbey of Marchiennes would seek, and receive, in 1123, exemptions from episcopal authority (FALKENSTEIN, La papauté, p. 232).
97 IDEM, L'abbaye d'Anchin, pp. 76-9.
were omitted in Pope Paschalis' 1104 bull for the same monastery. The existence of a promise made by a later prior of the same institution suggests that the impact of this omission may have been minimal; however, it seems beyond question that the bishop and his monastic subjects (aided perhaps by papal institutions) were acting in the midst of a fairly tense climate.

Although we can no longer verify if the ordo ad monachum faciendum originated in this critical yet comparatively ill-documented period of Lambert's episcopacy, the introduction of a new liturgy for the benediction of abbots and the emergence of the promise as written documents with a charter-like appearance at least suggests that he stepped up measures to ensure that he could fall back on the promise of obedience whenever his authority was challenged. It is not inconceivable that, like the monk from Bec, Lambert and his abbot did see in this implication of the written promise and the secular homage, something which the Gregorian reformers had been trying to abolish from the relations between ecclesiastical and lay rulers for a generation at least.

Perhaps this is taking the argument too far. Suspecting Lambert of an anti-monastic attitude would certainly be erroneous; after all, his master Ivo of Chartres had been a former monk of Bec. Yet while the anonymous monk from that same abbey strongly objected to the written promissio, Ivo himself had suggested that a spoken promise was not particularly less binding than a written one, and essentially had the same implications. Either way, to intervene in the ways a new generation of abbots was linked to episcopal authority certainly was a clear political statement, and perhaps the dating of the pieces in the list attests to the urgency with which Lambert introduced this new way of preserving the legal memory of the abbatial promise of obedience. At the same time, it may explain why his relationship with subsequent monastic leaders was troubled – whether competent or not, these abbots may have experienced the change in ritual formula as a way of coaxing them into engaging in a personal bond of allegiance with their bishop. Given these circumstances, as well as the uneasy relationship in subsequent years between Lambert and several of his abbots, it might be worth revisiting some of the stories of monastic decadence and bad monastic leadership, and reframing them in a broader struggle between episcopal authority and monastic freedom. In the light of these reflections, it also might be useful to reconsider the significance of Lambert's own silence on the introduction of new, and potentially controversial, liturgical formulae.

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Conclusion

The list of abbatial promises in Lambert of Arras’ Register of Lambert is more than a mere instrument for guaranteeing the memory and legal pertinence of a ritual speech act. In comparison with those texts with contemporary liturgical and other evidence, they are among the few fragments of concrete evidence that indicate that Lambert was concerned about the impact of monastic autonomy, in particular – but more hypothetically – Cluniac reform in the early years of the twelfth century. An analysis of the dating of the promises suggests that, like several of his contemporaries, Lambert autonomously, and at considerable risk, decided to introduce a new liturgy for the benediction of abbots. The seemingly fragmentary and at times contradictory evidence, plus the difficulty of identifying the origin of the formulae can therefore be attributed not so much to a loss of source material, but to the fact that its introduction met with considerable resistance and was considered one of several options for addressing the tense relationship between bishops and monasteries during the ‘Gregorian’ age.

Appendix I

Ordo used for abbatial benedictions in the diocese of Arras (ca. 1100)

Arras, Médiathèque (formerly Bibliothèque Municipale), 1031 (olim 745), fols 21r-23v.

Ordo ad monachum in abbatem faciendum

Indico: Iste universus faciatque contumelios postea eligatique secundum

concordem concordi et bona voluntate secundum regulam beati Benedicti. Deinde

episcopo in cuius dyocesi abbas est ordinandus ipsa electio per scriptum et

testes presentetur, quatinus per episcopum si digne facta fuerit confirmetur et

statuto tempore electus ab illo consecretur. Si autem electio in presentia epi-

scopi facta et confirmata fuerit, dicatur: Antiphona « Confirma hoc Deus ».

Psalma « Exurgat Deus ».

Et sic pergant ad ecclesiam cantando; episcope vero ducat electum. Cum

autem venerint in chorum prosternat se electus. Finito psalmo episcope dicat

capitulum: « Salvum fac servum tuum. Mitte ei auxilium de sancto. Esto illi

Domine turris fortitudinis. Nichil proficiat inimicus in eo. Memor esto congre-

gationis tu. Omnipotente sempiterne Deus qui facis mirabilia magna solus

pretende super famulum tuum ill

et super cunctam congregationem illi com-

mittendam spiritum gratie salutaris et ut in veritate tibi complaceant perpetuum

eis rore tuę.

benedictionis in funde per dominum noster Ihesu Christi filium
IV. Abbatial Obedience

Ut eum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate eiusdem spiritus sancti Deus per omnia » Anteponam versus evangelia legitur alicubi episcopi ad electum abbatem: » Euchéri nostri, fuisse hactenus, de titulo sancti de praetereuntem et ad unum humum quemque deo dedere comminuimus. » Respondat: » Volo. » Anteponamus dicens: » Eiusque pater sancti illum positum auctore examinandum si velit ipsum observare aliqua subjecta et id ipsum faciendam diligentiam infirma. 


Tunc in scedula scriptam legat professionem hoc modo: » Ego ill. nunc ordinandus abbas ad titulum ill. subiectionem et reverentiam ad sanctos patres constitutam, et obedientiam secundum preceptum et regulam sancti Benedicti, huic sancti Atrebatis ecclesie tibi et successori et mihi et mihi et mihi et mihi perpetuo me exhibiturum promitto, et propria manu confirmo. 


Post benedictionem autem abbatis accipiat eum presul per manum dexteram unus vero ex ceteris episcopis vel abbatibus per sinistram, et per campanas ecclesiasticas occipebantur in loco et in loco interdum, et per cantum cantum, vivere et congregacione eis et omnia quae ad eam
Appendix II

Abbatial promises made to Lambert, bishop of Arras (ca. 1103-1111)

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Lat. 12827, fol. 123r-v; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Picardie 60, fol. 11v; and Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 841, pp. 85-6.

Formulae quibus usi sunt abbates dioceses Atrebatis promittentes obedientiam Lamberto episcopo.

Ego Alvisus nunc ordinandus abbas ad titulum sancti Salvatoris Aquicinensis, subiectionem et reverentiam a sanctis patribus constitutam, et obedientiam secundum preceptum et regulam sancti Benedicti, huic sedi sanctae Atrebatis ecclesiae, tibiique pater Lamberti episcopo, tuisque successoribus, perpetuo me exhibiturum promitto, et propria manu confirmo. (signum crucis)

Ego Gelduinus ordinatus abbas ad titulum Sancti Salvatoris, etc.

101 Preceded by one erased letter.
102 Diocesis, BnF, Picardie 60.
103 For this and all further appearances of the word, Cambrai 841 uses subjectionem.
104 Cambrai, BM, 841 and BnF, Picardie 60 both give the ae-form whereas BnF, Lat 12827 retains the original form.
105 Not in BnF, Lat 12827.
106 Etc. only in BnF, Picardie 60.
Ego Henricus nunc ordinandus abbas ad titulum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et sancti Vedasti Atrebatensis, subiectionem, etc.\footnote{As above, note 106.}

Ego Fulcardus nunc ordinandus abbas ad titulum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et sanctae Rictrudis Marcianensis subiectionem et reverentiam. etc.\footnote{As above, note 106.}

Ego Ricardus, nunc ordinandus præpositus sive abbas canonicorum ad titulum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et sancti Vindiciani de Monte Sancti Eligii subiectionem et reverentiam a sanctis patribus constitutam.

Additional comments (2015)

Research for this paper was carried out over a number of years, most of it in 2007-2009. During that period, I missed out on one key publication, namely R. G赠送on’s, ‘The Earliest Books of Arras Cathedral’, in: Scriptorium, 61 (2007), pp. 255-83. One of the manuscripts studied in G赠送on’s article is Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale, 84, a volume of canonical texts and orders for use by the bishop of Arras that was made, so it seems, within the first two years of the existence of the new bishopric. This manuscript (which, incidentally, is not mentioned in LEROQUAIS’ Les pontificaux) contains, at pp. 82-5, a lengthy ordo for the benediction of abbots which appears to represent an intermediary phase in the development of the definitive text as found in Arras, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1031. The key passage, that regarding the text of the promissio on pp. 83-84 (except for a few insignificant variants, most notably ‘sedi Atrebatensis’ instead of ‘Attrebatensi’) matches the one edited here. This shows conclusively that this section of the ‘new’ ordo was ready for use as early as early-to-mid-1095. However, the chronology of abbatial successions in this area allows concluding that its application remained a theoretical concern until the early 1100s. The suggestion that Lambert changed his attitude to the legal implications of the abbatial promise in late 1105 is also not contradicted by this new evidence.

\footnote{As above, note 106.}
\footnote{As above, note 106.}
A TIME OF GREAT CONFUSION

Second-Generation Cluniac Reformers and Resistance to Monastic Centralisation in the County of Flanders (ca. 1125-1145)

The introduction of Cluniac custom into Flemish monasteries at the turn of the twelfth century is a well-studied phenomenon. Besides a sincere belief in the spirit of the Cluniac movement and a desire to revitalise Benedictine monasticism, this study has revealed a strategy on behalf of secular and ecclesiastical leaders to disentangle and rearrange the complicated social networks around some of the largest and richest institutions in the county. The fact that the methods of the reformers varied according to the specific social context in which a community found itself, as well as the fact that the reforms were managed entirely by Flemish actors without the involvement of Cluny, effectively prevented the creation of a homogeneous network of monasteries, both in terms of internal discipline and in terms of a hierarchical system of government. By the early 1130s, the majority of Benedictine houses in Flanders, although one would be hard-pressed to delineate them as 'Cluniac' in the strict sense of the word, were observing an adapted version of the Cluniac customary.1

1 First published in Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, 102 (2007), pp. 47-75. Copyright Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, reproduced with permission.
The sustained success of the reforms was due in no small part to strong-willed abbots such as Lambert of Saint-Bertin (1095-1123), Hugo II of Saint-Amand (1085-1107), and his successor Bovo II (1107-1121), Alvisus of Anchin (1111-1131), Amand of Marchiennes (1116-1136), and Henry of Saint-Vaast (1104-1130). These individuals represented a particularly active group of reform-friendly leaders who stamped the government of their abbey with the mark of individual policies designed to restore their community’s patrimony, reassess its relations with the local aristocracy and promote the intellectual culture in their houses. Fiercely protective of their community’s independence, they exchanged interpretations of Cluniac customs through the channels created by the fraternities, thus establishing bonds that extended over many centuries.

The liberties enjoyed by this long-standing first generation of reformist abbots were challenged for the first time when their successors came to power. In the following pages, I argue that the years between ca. 1125 and 1145 witnessed an attempt on behalf of a number of abbots and ecclesiastical leaders from the archbishopric of Reims to homogenise, and subsequently reorganise, the supervision of Benedictine monasticism on a regional basis.

To achieve this end, these second-generation reformers (not to be confused, as we shall see, with the second generation of reform-friendly abbots) controversially devised methods of supervision rooted in a Cluniac understanding of internal life but formally inspired by the Cistercian model of monastic organisation (and echoing their initial lack of interest in exemption from episcopal jurisdiction). Central to the development of this new model of reformed monasticism was the leadership of the aforementioned Alvisus (ca. 1070/80-6 September 1146),
V. A Time of Great Confusion

Although Alvisus became an abbot too late to belong to the original group of
leading reformers,12 he did play a crucial role in the first phase of Cluniac
reforms in Flanders.13 First on record as a novice and then a monk of the
abbey of Saint-Bertin, he was a first-hand witness to the earliest institutional reform of
a monastic community in Flanders in 1099-1100, as instigated there by Abbot
Lambert. And when in 1109, after a number of successful introductions of
Cluniac customs in other monasteries (most notably in Auchy-Saint-Michel in
1101 and Béguin-Saint-Vaast in 1106), Lambert sent out a new delegation to
the abbey of Saint-Vaast, it was Alvisus who assisted Abbot Henry as the newly
appointed prior there.14 This appointment undoubtedly marked out Alvisus for
a prominent career, and in 1111 he was elected abbot of Anchin.15 Once there,
he immediately set out to impose the Cluniac customary upon his new
community.16 Well known in his own age for his stern manner and his
uncompromising attitude towards those unwilling to comply with his principles

12 See SPROEMBERG, Beiträge, pp. 96-101.
13 See ALVISUS, vitae.
14 Alvisus’ life up to his election as bishop of Arras in 1131 is discussed in Alvisus d’Anchin, Beiträge, which unfortunately does not cover his final years (1131-1146). A succinct
biography up to Alvisus’ death is in IDEM, ‘Alvisus’, in: Biographie Nationale, XXXIII
(1965), p. 27-35.
siècles’, in: Publications de la section historique de l’institut G.-D. de Luxembourg, 106
16 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge and IDEM, Alvise’.
18 The monastic community of Anchin was founded in 1079 by Bishop Gerard II of Cambrai
and Anselm of Ribémont, the latter of whom saw the creation of a new institution in a region
already dense with monastic houses as a means to consolidate the influence of the counts of
Hainaut. See J.-P. GERZAGUET, L’abbaye d’Anchin de sa fondation (1079) au XIVe siècle.
Essor, vie et rayonnement d’une grande communauté bénédictine (Villeneuve d’Ascq, 1997).
19 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge, pp. 96-101.
of monastic government, he dealt with internal resistance in the same way as he had treated an attempt by some monks from Saint-Vaast to relocate to the priory of Haspres and obtain papal recognition of its independent status.

A staunch supporter of Lambert's methods, Alvisus' involvement in 1111-1112 in liberating the abbey of St.-Bertin from its institutional association with Cluny and his appeals to the papal court to that effect, show that he wished to remain involved with other reformed communities and that he was resistant to Cluny's ambitions in Flanders. Universally recognised for his talents as an administrator and a fervent advocate of the reforms, Alvisus subsequently managed not only to include a number of new institutions from Flanders, Lotharingia and northern France in the reform movement (either by introducing the customary of Anchin or by sending a small group of monks to reform their current house, more importantly, emulated his former abbot in placing many of his collaborators in key positions as abbots or priors of communities recently brought under the reformers' influence. One of the first, if not the first, to be sent out was Gerland, who became abbot of Cambrai in 1115, followed shortly thereafter by Amand de Castello, a prior of Anchin, who occupied the nearly abandoned monastery of Marchiennes in 1116. By the year 1130, Alvisus had secured the appointment of former collaborators in other houses such as Saint-Vincent in Laon, and Saint-Sépulchre. Whilst thus setting up an informal network of abbeys, he also engaged his community in fraternities with neighbouring houses. His relations extended far beyond the monastic world, and throughout his career he established contacts with the papal court and with some of the major

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20 The entry for 1131 in the Anchin auctarium to Sigebert of Gembloux’s world chronicle illustrates the impression Alvisus left on his subjects in Anchin: “Defuncto domno Roberto Atrebatensi episcopo, successit ei in pontificatu domnus Alvisus, Aquicinensis ecclesiae sextus abbas, vir magnae religionis et singularis severitatis” (ed. L.C. BETHMANN, MGH SS VI (Hanover, 1844), p. 595).


22 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge, pp. 104-14.


24 VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.

25 GERZAGUET, L’abbaye d’Anchin, p. 191.

26 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge, pp. 122-5, and IDEM, ‘Alvise’, c. 29. Alvisus’ disciple Fulbert was quickly removed from the abbacy of Saint-Sépulchre in Cambrai on charges of bad management, and Bernard of Clairvaux designated him as “monasterii sui manifestus destructor” (Beiträge, pp. 124-5). SPROEMBERG correctly argues that many of the appointments formerly attributed to Alvisus took place during the abbacy of his successor Gosuinus of Anchin and related to the latter’s collaborators.

27 GERZAGUET, ‘Les confraternités’.
international figures, like Louis VI and then Louis VII of France, Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis and Bernard of Clairvaux.28

A catalysing agent to Alvisus’ determination to extend the significance of these formal and informal networks was the renewed attempt by the abbot of Cluny to claim the leadership of Saint-Bertin after the death of Abbot Lambert, leading to a conflict severing all relations between the reformers in Flanders and the Cluniac institutions.29 The recurring nature of such disputes, which essentially related to the question of whether all monastic institutions in Flanders that observed a version of the customary of Cluny should be incorporated into the Cluniac system, undoubtedly4 convinced Alvisus of the necessity of coming up with a definitive, preferably institutional, solution. The growing impact on the monastic landscape of the Cistercian movement, not only in terms of its popularity with the outside world but also of its attraction to Benedictine communities, did nothing to diminish the perceived urgency of a plan to reorganise reformed monasticism. Judging from his subsequent actions, Alvisus was looking for answers that assimilated elements from both forms of monastic government while holding on firmly to the Cluniac core of internal customs, so he allowed himself to be inspired by Bernard of Clairvaux’s ideals of monastic government and the Cistercian model of filiations between monasteries.30 The intended result of this second phase in the reforms was an association of more or less homogenised Benedictine communities, whose policies and internal organisation were to be arranged in mutual agreement between the abbots.31

Before these plans could be implemented, the reformers’ initial objective was to streamline monastic leadership and customs in a number of key institutions in order to facilitate the creation of a strong, semi-institutional network. Over the next few years, roughly between 1125 and 1130, Alvisus and his network of reformist abbots began lobbying at the episcopal courts of the region to gain support for his plans to inspect and, if necessary, reform monastic houses.32 The handful of sources that make an exception to the rule of silence in these matters by describing the reformers’ interventions reveal that the idea of homogenisation of monastic life was not universally welcomed. One of the more complete accounts on the episode comes from the anonymous continuation of Folcuin’s Gesta abbatum Lobbiensium (written ca. 1162), who

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28 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge.
29 Ibid., p. 130.
30 One aspect of Cluniac government that particularly appealed to Alvisus was the holding of yearly chapters (A.M. PIAZZONI, Guglielmo di Saint-Thierry: il declino dell’ideale monastico nel secolo XII (Rome, 1988), p. 100).
31 Around the same time, similar plans for the regular canons of Arrouaise and Prémontré were implemented; see, among others, Studien zum Prämonstratenserorden, eds I. CRUSIUS / H. FLACHENECKER (Göttingen, 2003).
32 SPROEMBERG, Beiträge, p. 138.
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noted that the late 1120s were a time of "great confusion and reform of the old customs", affecting all monastic communities in the archbishopric of Reims.33 His particularly anguished account of Alvisus' interventions in the abbey of Lobbes show how the monks, in one of the last remaining communities in the region to have resisted the adoption of a Cluniac customary, were deeply distressed by the reformers' aggressive methods. Alvisus (having no formal authority over Lobbes) arranged for Archdeacon Herlebald of Cambrai, the monks' judicial superior and a close acquaintance of his, to urge them to depose Abbot Walter (1108-1129) "as if he had committed unreligious practices" and to elect Alvisus' candidate. Writing nearly a generation after the events, the chronicler argued that the accusation of unreligious practices was a reaction to Walter's refusal to impose the Cluniac customary upon his monks. Giving expression to some of the monks' bewilderment at what they perceived as an invasion of their internal affairs, the chronicler conceded that they did not strictly observe Benedict's Rule (thereby possibly revealing the reformers' preferred way of representing the Cluniac lifestyle), but then asserted that no other community did either, including those that adhered to the customs of Cluny. Walter and his monks were, however, familiar with the reformers' methods and anticipated that they would send a small group of monks from a reformed house to join the community and try to reform it from within.35 Instead of allowing their "ancient customs" to be assessed by "strangers" from Cambrai,36 the monks of Lobbes invited two monks from the abbeys of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Jacques, both reformed houses in the city of Liège.37 Unsurprisingly, the two delegates failed to persuade the monks to abandon their old customs. Finding nothing fundamentally wrong with the latter's faith, they returned to their monasteries.

Frustrated by this circumvention of their self-assumed authority, the reformers soon resumed their attempts to depose the abbot and change the observancy in Lobbes. At a meeting held in Reims in 1128 or 1129, Archbishop Raymond of Reims summoned Walter to present himself before papal legate Matthew of Albano and answer to the accusations of "the crime of..."
irreligiosity. When Walter refused to attend the meeting, the legate, himself a former prior of the Cluniac monastery of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris, placed an interdict on him. Eventually, after many visits of reformist abbots, Walter returned his abbacy to the archbishop, exhausted by their “petty machinations.” The reformist party (namelessly designated as “abbots” by the chronicler) lost no time in urging the bishop of Cambrai to call upon the monks to elect a successor. Aware that the reformers had already selected a candidate but were legally unable to impose him upon the community, the monks deliberately delayed elections for nearly two years.

Three tested methods of reform had thus failed entrenching the present abbot to accept the Cluniac customary, introducing members of reformed houses into the community and, most radically, replacing its current leader. To end the impasse, the bishop sent the abbots of Saint-Denis-en-Brescarnonce and Saint-Ghislain, both reformist houses, to exert pressure on the monks. Upon their arrival, they were received with courtesy and invited to the refectory. When the monks realized that the abbots were waiting for mealtime to be over before addressing the community, the senior and sanior pars of the community and the local canons quickly withdrew to elect Liezo, the former head of Lobbes’ priory of Herly, near Laon, whose name the two abbots saw as an alternative to avoiding involvements in the community and leaving. Anticipating a fierce backlash, a monk named Gerard then travelled to the episcopal court in Cambrai to present papal privileges that supported the monks’ right to freely elect their leaders. After arguing that the bishop and his supporters were contravening papal authority, he also obtained written confirmation of his claims from Pope Honorius II. Meanwhile, Liezo had sought and received the investiture from his feudal lord, Bishop Alexander of Liège, but died on his way to receive the...
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Discouraged by this unfortunate turn of events, the monks finally agreed to send a delegation to the abbey of Bonne-Espérance, where they met with representatives of the reformist party. Resigned to their fate, they agreed to elect an abbot from a list of candidates considered suitable by the reformers. When they chose Leonius, the residing prior of Hesdin and one of Alvisus’ closest associates, the reformers immediately went for him and called for Abbot Absalon of Saint-Amand to speed up the election. Resenting this invasion of his authority, Alexander refused to acknowledge the candidate, prompting the warm-blooded Alvisus to reply that the bishop of Liège, as the abbey’s feudal lord, “should be guarding the cows and goats of the abbey”, while his colleague in Cambrai was to “look after the monks’ souls”. While he had no authority whatsoever over the monks of Lobbes, Alvisus thus manifested himself as the driving force behind the reformers’ actions. The monks themselves, the election of Leonius indicated that they were no longer willing to humour the reformist party. Although tensions with their new father would remain until his election as abbot of Saint-Bertin in 1137, he did manage to introduce Cluniac customs without notable incident.

The episode relating to the replacement of Walter as abbot in Lobbes shows that although Alvisus and Alexander were both supporters of the reforms, this did not mean that they pursued the same goals. Later events would reveal that Bishop Alexander was not just dealing with some over-zealous advocate of reformed monastic ideals and had good reason to be worried. It soon became evident that the reform movement was about to be institutionalised. Held between 18 and 29 October 1131, the first General Chapter of Benedictine abbots from the archbishopric of Reims (comprising the dioceses of Reims, Cambrai, Arras, Thérouanne and Tournai) marked the first formal gathering of the reformist party. Sessions took place either in the city itself or in the abbey.
of Saint-Thierry, where William of Saint-Thierry was responsible for further elaborating on Alvisus' ideas. Alvisus himself was unable to attend: in April or May of that same year, the French monarch had arranged for him to be elected bishop of Arras. Presiding over the sessions was none other than the newly elected Leonius of Lobbes, who evidently made sure that the new bishop's agenda would be implemented. The explicit support of the pope and Archbishop Raynaud of Reims undoubtedly also derived from lobbying in which the bishop of Arras was at least partly involved.

The decisions of the General Chapter, which by no means united all abbots from the archbishopric, let alone Flanders, but merely those linked to Alvisus and his reformist movement, caused widespread commotion. Most notably, some of the reformers' former supporters were taken aback by the explicit way in which the abbots collectively distanced themselves from the 'original' Cistercian custom, even though many monastic communities had been tacitly revising and complementing it for decades. By the second meeting in Soissons, presumably held in 1132 and presided over by Odo of Soissons, papal legate Matthew of Albano had written a letter to the abbots present at the first meeting to denounce a rumoured tendency among the reformers to reduce liturgical prayers and ceremonies, extend the vow of silence and enforce stricter rules of abstinence, all of which were inspired by the Cistercian interpretation of the Rule. The abbots' reply, composed at the session of Soissons, fiercely advocated the righteousness of their interpretation. By this time, the reformers not only felt confident enough to confront the resistance to their
work from within the archbishopric, but also demonstrated to the papal legate that their interpretation of monastic observance and organisation was superior to what they considered to be the watered-down customs of Cluny. Whether or not this fierce attack was a strategy to avoid once and for all being forcibly incorporated into the Cluniac system is open to debate. Regardless of their deeper intentions, it certainly had that effect and helps to explain why the reformers made such desperate efforts to broaden their ranks and incorporate the important house of Lobbes before the abbots convened in Reims.

Unlikely to abandon his prominent role in the reforms, Alvisus promptly reinvented his episcopal authority to continue his close involvement with the reformist party. Since the General Chapter had failed to create institutions to enforce its own decisions, it was up to the individual abbots to implement them in their own houses. As subsequent events would show, Alvisus considered it his duty to oversee their activities in his own diocese and continued to see himself as a model of monastic homogenisation. His new goal thus became the creation of a model region of reformed monasteries excelling by its exemplary homogeneity, its stringent adherence to Cluniac customs and its well-oiled mechanisms of supervision – to be headed by the bishop himself. Yet he also became aware of the prerogatives of his new function and of its specific institutional and juridical needs, as the bishopric was still quite young and needed affirmative action to consolidate its juridical and fiscal stability. As the pope himself had instructed Alvisus to act in this manner, Bernard of Clairvaux's arguments against excessive monastic claims to exemption found a welcome audience at the episcopal court in Arras.

The bishop set out to implement his new objectives in his own, by now familiar, manner. Over the next few years, monastic, episcopal and papal administrations began recording a number of disputes, which by the late 1130s turned into crises. Two case studies of the reformers' strategies and objectives...
and of the reactions of abbots, monastic communities, the papacy and the lay aristocracy, show how radical the movement was in its attack on heterogeneity and how badly this attitude fitted with accepted notions regarding life in Benedictine institutions and the organization of the ecclesiastical system in Flanders. The first case study concerns Saint-Vaast in Arras, where a dispute with the abbot was caused as much by a long-standing power struggle between the bishop and the monks as by Alvisus’ personal involvement in reorganizing life within the monastery. In the second, the monks of Marchiennes themselves were targeted for their seemingly ill-advised choices in selecting a new leader.

An enemy to himself, his subjects and his church?

The case of Saint-Vaast, situated at the hub of the important commercial centre of Arras, was a particularly thorny one. The seventh-century abbey, which owned all but a small part of the city, had a long history of confrontation with the bishops of Cambrai over the monks’ claims to exemption from episcopal jurisdiction. On several occasions since the late tenth century, the count of Flanders (who also acted as the monks’ advocate) had at least not prevented the monks from distancing themselves from episcopal authority, and in many cases even assisted them. With the creation of the new but relatively poor bishopric of Arras in 1093 and with the town developing into a burgeoning commercial centre, antagonism was guaranteed to resurface at regular intervals. Meanwhile, the count’s interest in using the city as a political centre resulted in his officers taking over the abbey’s prerogatives regarding the exercise of justice.

61 DELMAIRE, Le diocèse d’Arras, I, p. 59, categorises the problems regarding the election of a new abbot in Marchiennes as a “banal conflict”.
62 The medieval city of Arras was divided into two parts by the River Crinchon. One bank was occupied by the ‘ville’ with the cathedral and the chapter, while the other held the ‘cité’, a small settlement that engendered around the abbey of Saint-Vaast. See A.C.F. KOCH, ‘Continuité ou rupture? De la justice domaniale et abbatiale à la justice urbaine et comtale à Arras’ in: Revue du Nord, 40 (1958), p. 290; and especially DELMAIRE, Le diocèse d’Arras, I, p. 75.
63 Since the late ninth century, the monks had defended their case with a forged charter presumably issued by seventh-century Bishop Vindicianus, exempting the monks from all obligations towards the bishop: J.F. LEMARIGNIER, ‘L’exemption monastique et les origines de la réforme grégorienne’, in: A Cluny, Congrès scientifique 9-11.7.1949 (Dijon, 1950), pp. 335-40.
64 A notorious example is the rebellion of Abbot Falrad around the years 988-1004, which was actively supported by the count: see VAN METER, ‘Count Baldwin IV’; some additional evidence in S. VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Canterbury and Flanders in the Late Tenth Century’, in: Anglo-Saxon England, 33 (2006), pp. 219-44.
Although the abbey had adopted Cluniac practices in 1109 and Alvisus had been its prior from that year until his election as abbot in 1111, these tensions continued to exist beyond his election as bishop in 1131. His new political identity, combined with his own interpretation of monastic government, soon gave cause for fierce disputes with the monks. The documentation regarding relations between Alvisus and his former abbey starts innocently enough with a letter from Pope Innocentius II from 18 June 1131, in which the latter ordered Abbot Walter (1130-1147) to obey the bishop in accordance with previous papal ordinances, and pointed out that Saint-Vaast was not exempt from episcopal jurisdiction. There was nothing unusual about the pope's request, as he had recently enjoined the clergy and the people of Arras to be faithful and obedient to the new bishop. One of Alvisus' predecessors, Lambert (1093/4-1115), had even taken oaths of obedience and fidelity from several of his abbots. Although documentation regarding such oaths is sparse from the early twelfth century onwards, it is likely that Walter did at some point demonstrate his obedience to the bishop and was certainly expected to acknowledge the latter's juridical prerogatives.

Such an act, however, would not have diverted attention from the background of lingering tensions against which other issues relating to life in the monastery began to surface in the late 1130s. Early in 1138, Abbot Parvin of Saint-Sépulchre sent a letter to Innocentius II denouncing Abbot Walter's violent behaviour at a diocesan synod recently presided over by Alvisus. Parvin describes how Walter had disturbed the proceedings as he "forced his entrance into the synod without modesty, and even less honesty, along with a multitude of monks, armed men, and laymen and immediately, without sitting..."
...72 began to argue his case. Before he had been able to speak more than a few words, a monk from Saint-Vaast named Robert stood up and began to denounce his abbot, using written evidence to support his case. Walter's supporters became greatly agitated by this, and one of the abbot's armed men grabbed Robert and tore his habit. Another drew his knife and began to threaten Robert and other monks who had joined him. Abbot Seth of Saint-Laurent, one of two men who had been sent by papal decree to assist the reformers, was thrown to the ground by another monk named Robert from Bruges73 and trampled on by many of those present. When the castellan of Amin attempted to gain entrance to the church where the synod was taking place, armed men had to be called in to protect the bishop.74

It is unfortunate that we do not know what kind of evidence Robert of Saint-Vaast used to denounce Walter, although later sources suggest an accusation of simony.75 However well-founded Robert's arguments, it is quite obvious that the dispute was not only about the abbot's personal behaviour. Indeed, the presence of a papal representative and the explicit mention of the purpose of his visit in Parvinus' letter indicates that Alvisus was using his synod as a forum through which he could continue to supervise monastic policies in his own bishopric, denouncing leaders of monastic communities who, for various reasons, were reluctant to comply with the directives drawn up at Reims. Walter's formal absence from the synod at least suggests a refusal to comply with the bishop's aggressive methods of monastic government, which he undoubtedly considered intimately connected to the latter's legal and financial ambitions with regard to the abbey.

Walter's reasons for rejecting the new direction which the reform was taking are not difficult to guess. After several centuries of dispute (and, at irregular intervals, reconciliation) with the bishops of Cambrai and Arras, it would have been a bold move indeed for the newly elected abbot of Saint-Vaast to condone the bishop's attempts to centralise the reformed monastic

72 Which in itself constituted a violation of Cluniac customs of debate.
75 See below.
movement in his bishopric and to acknowledge the latter's informal leadership of a supervising body. Feeling that to join the reformist party would be to admit the bishop's supremacy over his abbey, Walter must have felt that all further initiatives taken to homogenise internal customs were a direct assault on his community's independence (which, in turn, explains his absence from the General Chapter of 1131). Although some monks at Saint-Vaast became convinced of the necessity of such a form of controlled government, and were obviously mainly indebted to the synod, the abbot was most likely thinking not only of the autonomy of his monastery, but also of his role as the leader of a powerful feudal institution which enjoyed the support of the counts of Flanders. Like his predecessors, he represented a network of social relations around the abbey that included lay offices for members of the local aristocracy and a powerful alliance with the castellan, the local representative of the counts. In the event of the abbey coming under the more or less formalised supervision of the bishop, the castellan's (and, hence, the county's) influence on the city would be severely curtailed. Bearing in mind that Alvisus had already been appointed by the king of France as a counter-move against the count's influence in the area, Walter's fierce resistance to the bishops' plans is not as shocking as it may have seemed to the recipients of Parvinus' letter. This also explains the violent anger of the armed laymen who entered the synod together with the abbot, not to mention the castellan's near-confrontation with the bishop. Despite the mistreatment of Serlo of San Luciano, the pope was not easily convinced of Walter's faults. If Parvinus' account is reliable, the behaviour of the abbot's supporters was violent indeed, but with an irate character like Alvisus as an opponent, brute force might have been the only effective way of making one's point. In addition, it is well documented that the popes of the second quarter of the twelfth century were deploying various strategies to gain more influence over local churches and to curtail the bishops' virtual independence from the papal court. Pope Innocent's response to Parvinus' account is also worth mentioning. Relations between Alvisus and Count Thierry of Flanders appear to have been excellent. Countess Sybilla in particular was supportive of Alvisus' efforts to take action against usurpations of ecclesiastical properties and abuses in relation to the advocacy of monastic houses. His ideas of reform inspired by Cîteaux were also received favourably: 

76 Despite such resistance, relations between Alvisus and Count Thierry of Flanders appear to have been excellent. Countess Sybilla in particular was supportive of Alvisus' efforts to take action against the count's enemies, and in particular Serlo of San Luciano. Her support was instrumental in the success of the bishops' plans to homogenise internal customs and to establish a more controlled government. Alvisus' ideas of reform inspired by Cîteaux were also received favourably. T. De Hemptinne, 'Thierry d'Alsace, comte de Flandre. Biographie et actes', in: Annales de L'Est, 43 (1991), pp. 90-105, note 38; T. De Hemptinne, 'Women as Mediators between the Powers of Comitatus and Sacerdotium. Two Countesses of Flanders in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in: The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West. Selected Proceedings of the International Conference, Groningen 20-23 November 1996, eds M. Gosman / A. Vanderjagt / J. Veenstra (Groningen, 1997), pp. 297-8; K.S. Nicholas, 'Countesses as Rulers in Flanders', in: Aristocratic Women in Medieval France, ed. T. Evergates (Philadelphia, 1999), p. 122. 

77 The count's interests in this dispute are also mentioned by Sproemberg, 'Alvise', cols 30-31. 

78 On the strategy of twelfth-century popes to support monastic claims against episcopal power, see Falkenstein, 'Monachisme', pp. 403-6.
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Sommerville, dated 3 July 1138, was to send Archbishops Hugo of Rouen and Jocelyn of Sensons, Bishop Milo of Châlons-sur-Marne to investigate the accusations against Walter, in particular those of simony.79 The mere act of sending these four individuals was a signal that Innocentius saw no immediate reason to uphold the bishop’s actions against monastic exemption,80 if only for the time being. It was perhaps at their insistence that Walter came to the archiepiscopal court of Reims, where he “promised to correct his life without delay” or pain of deposition.81

Sometime in 1140-41, the conflict further escalated, and Alvisus travelled to Rome to plead his case. In a letter to the pope, Abbot Godfrey argued that Walter had failed to change his ways and requested that the pope listen to Alvisus’ arguments.82 When Walter also made the long journey to Rome, Alvisus entrusted Bernard of Clairvaux to see if the latter could arrange for opinion to turn in his favor. In a letter sent before February 1142, Bernard mentioned the abbot’s visit to the pope and denounced Walter as “a man that is clearly an enemy to himself, his subjects and his church, a man who accepted the title of abbot as an act of vanity”.83 The letter’s somewhat perfunctory style indicates, however, that he was simply doing yeoman service to one of his relations and was not directly involved in campaigning against Walter. Whatever the initial reaction at the papal court, it was decided that Alvisus’ call for the deposition of Walter was either unjustified or, quite possibly, a potential hazard for the political stability of the city and the bishopric of Arras. The pope had supported the first General Chapter of 1131 and other efforts to organise monastic life, but the prospect of a bishop taking over the leadership of the reformist party and grounding the organization of monastic supervision in his own bishopric directly contravened papal policies. A privilege issued by Innocentius on 5 March 1142 to the monks of Saint-Vaast, in which he did not fail to address the abbot in standard vocabulary as “my beloved son”, indicates that the pope had taken Walter’s side.84 Although he fell short of granting an exemption, Innocentius confirmed papal protection over the abbey, forbade attacks on its estates and granted the monks the right to submit their own candidates to the bishop for ecclesiastical functions in their own lands. An exemption would have been the clearest possible way for the pope to assert his

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80 SCHREIBER, Kurie, p. 123. A permanent exemption would only be granted in the third quarter of the twelfth century (ibid., p. 68).
81 Ed. Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France, XV, p. 403.
82 Ibid.
84 Ed. E. VAN DRIVAL, Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Saint-Vaast d’Arras rédigé au XIIe siècle par Guimann (Arras, 1875), pp. 78-80.
authority over the bishop. Nevertheless, the timing of this particular privilege and its somewhat ambiguous declarations regarding episcopal authority indicated that the pope was actively trying to check Alvisus’ post-1131 plans.

“Speaking against the law to the deaf”

Whereas Saint-Vaast’s dispute with Alvisus disrupted harmony among its monks, the sources relating to the conflict with the monks of Marchiennes indicate that the community was targeted as a whole and that the entire episode was little short of traumatising for all of those involved. Following the turbulent deposition of Abbot Fulcard (1103-1115), a member of the local aristocracy who had abandoned monastic life and had let the abbey fall into ruins, Abbot Alvisus had sent his prior Amand de Castello, together with a number of monks and converses monks, to re-occupy the near-deserted abbey. Amand and his successor Lietbert (1136-1141), also a former monk of Anchin, both welcomed their former abbey’s influence on internal discipline, on intellectual life and artistic culture, and on the practices of abbatial government. A charter issued by the bishop of Arras from 1122, for example, indicates that Amand worked closely with Alvisus to recuperate some of his abbey’s former estates.

Gualbert’s *Patrocinium*, a hagiographical narrative devoted to St Rictrudis and dated to 1124-1127, contains references to visitations by monks of Anchin. There is also mention of the exchange of books, which seems to fit in well with manuscript evidence that at least one artist from Anchin was working in the scriptorium of Marchiennes around 1130. It is, however, interesting to note that the monks of Marchiennes only fully adopted the Cluniac customary in 1131, apparently copied from an exemplar kept at Anchin, and that Marchiennes, Anchin and a number of other houses in the region also only joined in a prayer community at around this time.

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85 As Georges DECLERCQ has shown, such ambiguous tokens of papal support were part of a slow process towards exemption (‘Van renovatio ordinis’, p. 179). Also FALKENSTEIN, ‘Monachisme’, p. 406, on the fact that contemporaries made little distinction between exemptions and other privileges.

86 It is interesting to note that, at some point between 1192 and 1228, the abbey of Saint-Vaast was included in the *Liber Censuum*, a list of abbeys paying contributions to the papacy in return for juridical and fiscal exemptions (ed. P. FABRE / L. DUCHESNE, *Le Liber Censuum de l’Eglise romaine publié avec une introduction et un commentaire*, I (Paris, 1910), pp. 59 and 195).

87 VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.


Despite indications that the monks of Marchiennes did not immediately embrace Alvisus' brand of reformed monasticism, there is no question that relations between them were far more cordial than between Alvisus and the monks of Saint-Vaast. Yet Abbot Lietbert had undoubtedly witnessed Alvisus' severity and these methods in confronting the leaders of houses which did not comply with his conception of monastic life. According to the typically dramatic account of the Miracles of Saint Rictrudis, Lietbert found himself incapable of fulfilling his office, anticipated "strict examinations" and resigned in 1141. Whether these examinations were to be like those performed by Alvisus' legates in Lobbes or whether this phrase refers to internal disputes is not certain. Neither is there certainty about the relation between the abbot and his community, but ensuing events suggest that he wanted to avoid a confrontation with the bishop and his supporters.

Troubled by these developments, the monks decided to call upon their bishop, who ordered the election of a new abbot. Alvisus' reaction to their choice, Odo, was typically violent: he insulted the monks, issued an interdict on them (forbidding them from celebrating divine office) and generally frightened them with his reputation for "vivid and efficient language". Soon after the Marchiennes delegation's departure, the bishop and some of his clerics rode on horseback to the abbey of Anchin, where Alvisus found the monks and again forbade them to take Odo as their abbot. Abbot Gosuin, Alvisus' successor in Anchin, tried to intervene, but to little avail: the bishop ordered the monks to reinstate Lietbert. When the monks fearfully responded that all their actions had been justified, the irate bishop promptly excommunicated the entire community.

The monks' reaction was to send out two senior members named John and Andreas with a letter of supplication to the papal court, where they received Pope Innocentius' benediction. His letter to the monks, dated 1 November 1141, stated in no uncertain terms that he was deeply irritated by Alvisus' maliciousness (*malitia*) and that the monks were free to elect their own abbot in accordance with the Rule and the privileges issued by Calixtus II and himself.

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91 Amand is not mentioned in the statutes of the General Chapter of 1131 (CEGLAR, 'Guillaume', p. 316).
92 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680), p. 110: *laborem coepit abhorrere, et stricti examinis futuri timere discussionem*. Perhaps the abbot had been told about the 'strict examinations' at the translation of the relics of Rictrudis to the village of Reninge in 1140, an event attended by Alvisus (ibid., p. 109).
94 Calixtus' privilege from November 1123 does not mention the right to appeal to the papal court (SCHREIBER, *Kurie*, p. 206).
95 Ed. E. MARTÈNE / U. DURAND, Amplissima collectio, I (Paris, 1724), p. 720; and Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France, XV, p. 403. See L. FALKENSTEIN, La papauté et les...
The interdict was annulled and the monks were called upon to elect a new abbot to manage the abbey in its spiritual and temporal needs. A second letter, apparently from the same date, condemned Alvisus for his contempt for the Roman Church and ordered him to present himself at the papal court on 3 May of the following year. In a course of action similar to that case he would shortly take in the case of Saint-Vaast, Innocentius issued a bull on 1 December affirming the protection of the papal authority of the abbey's estates and privileges. In this well-timed document, the pope's attitude towards Alvisus' prerogatives and his intention to weaken the bishop's grip on monastic houses was made even clearer, as this was the first time the monks of Marchiennes had engaged in a fiscal relation with the papacy. As papal protection came in return for an annual payment of four Byzantine gold coins, the privilege effectively relocated large portions of the bishop's authority to Rome.

Even before the pope's message reached the monks of Marchiennes, Alvisus had lifted the excommunication over the monks and presented them with three candidates from whom they could choose their new abbot. After consulting several other abbots and religious men, the monks decided to replace the irascible bishop by electing one of his own candidates named Hugo. On the day of the new abbot's solemn reception by the monks, a messenger came to announce the return of John and Andreas. While the monks of Marchiennes rejoiced, the two men changed their itinerary and went directly to Alvisus' court, where they presented the papal letters. They then returned to the abbey, where the pope's letter was read aloud before the community. Despite the fact that the monks would remember him as an honest and capable man, Hugo immediately resigned, only to be elected abbot of Saint-Rémi in Reims (1141-1165) shortly thereafter.

Hugo's resignation came at a time when the dispute with Saint-Vaast was reaching a crisis. In the same letter which Bernard of Clairvaux sent to Pope...
Innocentius to denounce the actions of Walter of Saint-Vaast, he also wrote: "The monks of Marchiennes have come to you in a mind that consists of lies and spiritual errors against the Lord and his Christ. They have made unjustified claims against the bishop of Arras … Who are these people, who speak against the law to the deaf and show offensive things to the blind?"

Whether or not Alvisus then journeyed to Rome is unclear, and in contrast to the case of Saint-Vaast we have no direct evidence regarding the pope's immediate reaction to Bernard's comments regarding the monks of Marchiennes.

A curious episode in the *Miracles of Saint Rictrudis*, written almost twenty years later, attempts to fill this lacuna in an otherwise highly dramatic series of events. The Council of Lagny, held in May 1142, is primarily known for its dealing with Radulf of Vermandois' illegitimate repudiation of his wife Eleonore, niece of the count of Champagne, which had brought tensions between King Louis VII and the pope to new heights. But there was also an ecclesiastical part to the council, in which bishops, abbots and clerics were presented with the pope's new policies regarding the organisation of ecclesiastical institutions. While there exist some independent sources that indicate that the council did settle at least one dispute involving a monastic community, the hagiographer of Marchiennes is the only one to mention that the case relating to his own house was also on the agenda. In his account, the absence of the monks of Marchiennes at the council was noted and denounced as proof of their false claims, until three monks on their return from a mission to Rome presented themselves at the meeting. Papal legate Ivo of San Lorenzo recognised the monks from a previous meeting in Rome and allowed one of them to present his case. Upon hearing the monks' arguments and the legate's words of support, Alvisus was greatly embarrassed, apologised for a number of "infelicities" and admitted that he had gone too far in his role as corrector. Following these words, the legate turned to Bernard and questioned him on the purpose of his letter to the pope. Bernard then publicly admitted his mistake in believing the false claims of Alvisus' messengers. Finally, Ivo decided that the
monks were free to reinstate Odo, their original candidate to succeed Lietbert. To conclude the proceedings, all parties were reconciled and the monks’ right to elect their own candidate was acknowledged by the assembly.

The story of Bernard’s public penance is wholly uncharacteristic of his usual behaviour in such matters, and the uniqueness of the report by the hagiographer of Marchiennes invites suspicion of the authenticity of the entire episode. Nevertheless, a pardon issued to Alvisus by Pope Innocentius II in December 1142 does indicate that the bishop’s excessive ambitions had indeed been checked by papal intervention. Some form of reconciliation between the bishop and the monks of Marchiennes also took place around this time, as Odo was recognized by all as the new abbot. Curiously, Odo came from Saint-Martin-des-Champs, one of the foremost centres for the dissemination of Cluniac customs in France, which suggests that the monks, who had been mostly concerned with retaining their independence in abbatial elections, had already been seeking to elect a compromise candidate. Alvisus’ initial reaction to Odo’s election suggests either that he was infuriated that he had not been consulted beforehand or that his own candidates had been deliberately bypassed by the monks. An interesting hypothesis, albeit difficult to verify, would be that Alvisus questioned the choice of an abbot who came from a monastery that belonged to Cluny’s vast network and that considered the selection of a new candidate to be an assault on their autonomy. In this case, the bishop’s resignation with regard to Odo’s election might have stemmed from an undocumented promise that no attempt would be made to associate the abbey of Marchiennes with Cluny, although this has to remain as pure speculation.

In 1143, Odo resigned to take up the abbacy of Saint-Martin-des-Champs. The author of the Life of the later abbot, Hugo II (written ca. 1158-1163), maliciously remarks that Odo’s decision to leave did not go unpunished, “as he could maintain his position for only a brief period and had to abandon it against his own wishes.” Although he was later described as “a reasonably capable man who trusted too much in his own judgement,” his memory was preserved in the liturgy of the monks. His successors Ingran (1143-1148), a former prior of Corbie who later resigned to become abbot of Saint-Martin in Soissons (1148-1177), and Hugo II (1148-1158), prior of Saint-Martin in Tournai, also came from well-known centres of reform. Ingran’s departure

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“inspired great sadness to those from whom he was taken away and great joy to those to whom he was given”.110 The author of the Vita Hugonis noted that the monks were greatly distressed by the coming and going of three abbots in seven years: “the first was an illegitimate invader, the second abandoned his position without due deliberation and the third only left on the pope’s express order”.111 Some form of stability returned with the election of Hugo II, who maintained a close relationship with Gosuin of Andlau and guaranteed the continued observance of Cluniac customs.

Conclusions

In the decades after his death, Alvisus was remembered by the monks of Marchiennes as a great man with many virtues, albeit one who suffered errors of judgement in his methods of dealing with monastic communities.112 What the monks of Saint-Vaast thought of him is lost to the ages, but it would be misguided to assume that the parties involved in these conflicts were unaware of the fact that several strategies of power had been in play. As an abbot-reformer, Alvisus had responded to the continuing pressure from Cluny by creating an informal network of like-minded communities from the archbishopric of Reims, which served to obscure a version of the Cluniac casuistry’s graspings subjection to Cluny. In the years leading up to the first General Chapter of 1131, Alvisus used deftful methods to centralise and expand his network of reformed houses and cultivated a mode of thought that expressed itself in his bold rebuke of Matthew of Albano’s criticism. Once appointed bishop, his actions became more complex, as his reformist objectives became entangled with attempts to gain more control over the monasteries in his diocese. New papal privileges in some cases checked his ambitions and reduced his juridical and fiscal grip on monastic communities, but the episodes discussed above indicate that the communities targeted by Alvisus eventually had to settle for a compromise in which they allowed for the election of second-generation reformers as abbots and for centralisation to take hold in their midst. Although crucial aspects of monastic government had thus been

110 Vita Hugonis, p. 348: magna omnium merorum quibus ablatus et gaudio quibus donatus.
111 Ibid. Ingrain was appointed abbot of Saint-Médard in Soissons during the council of Reims (21-28 March 1148) at the insistence of Pope Eugene III.
112 Ibid. The illustrated cartulary of Marchiennes includes a particularly severe portrait of Alvisus (A. DE LOISNE, ‘Les miniatures du cartulaire de Marchiennes’, in: Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (1903), p. 482). According to P. PIÉTRESSON DE SAINT-AUBIN, a remarkable clause in Pope Calixtus’ forged bull of February 1123 (which he considers a forgery from the years 1167-1172) forbidding bishops and archbishops to interfere with the election of abbots is a distant echo of the violent confrontation of the monks with Alvisus (Une bulle fausse du pape Calixte II pour l’abbaye de Marchiennes (Lille, 1937), pp. 5-6).
unquestioned, to say that the new generation of abbots enjoyed a much more limited latitude in devising their own policies is something of an understatement.

Additional comments (2013)

An additional copy of the statutes of the 1131 General Chapter can be found in a near-contemporary volume from Marchiennes now preserved at Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 56th, fol. 69r-v. For comments and bibliography on this manuscript, and for thoughts on its significance as witness of Marchiennes relation to Alain’s reformist movement, see S. VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Monastic Reform, Abbatial Leadership, and the Instrumentation of Cluniac Discipline in the Early Twelfth-Century Low Countries’, in Revue Matillon, 23 (2012), pp. 43-65.
SOCIETAL DISCOURSE, WARFARE, AND THE SHAPING
OF CORPORATE IDENTITIES
VI

MONKS, KNIGHTS, AND THE ENACTMENT OF COMPETING SOCIAL REALITIES IN ELEVENTH- AND EARLY TWELFTH-CENTURY FLANDERS

One of the more challenging paradigms in contemporary medieval studies views public behaviour as a lever of political life rather than as its mere by-product. Since the early 1980s, scholars have argued that rituals, gestures, facial expressions, and other verbal and nonverbal means of communication functioned as potent transmitters of values in medieval politics. Enacting elementary principles of human organisation, such as authority, hierarchy and social differentiation, these forms of behaviour helped to establish a habitus or shared understanding of how power should be exercised.

Largely inspired by ethnological studies, this approach to medieval public behaviour emerged several years before the 'performative turn' in the humanities. As researchers from other disciplines (most notably linguistics and...
theatre studies) started to take a strong interest in culture as an ongoing performance, however, several influential scholars in medieval studies seized the opportunity to fine-tune their own arguments. Their work reflects a growing awareness of the problems involved in looking at public behaviour as a means of systematically restoring a social status quo. As a result, the discussion has shifted to the function of this behaviour as an instrument of social change, enabling individuals and groups to enact shared values in order to advance their own interests. In addition, these scholars are now making significant contributions to the wider field of performance studies by probing the tenability of such problematic notions as rationality and deliberation in the analysis of concrete instances (or “snapshots”) of public behaviour as found in a wide range of medieval sources.

This paper evaluates the significance of these debates for the study of public behaviour as a vehicle of social mobility by taking a closer look at a number of landholding disputes between Benedictine monks and the lower lay elite in the county of Flanders during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. As the rich monastic archives in this region attest, many of these disagreements ended in a peaceful settlement that effectively helped the lay individuals involved to achieve a higher degree of material security and status, or at least consolidate, their status among the local and regional aristocracies. Petty noblemen could, for example, be appointed lay officials to the monks and reap the financial and status-related benefits of a long-term association with an abbey, in return for their assistance in the government of a particular monastic estate. Likewise, these noblemen, as well as other individuals whose new alliance with the abbey did not yield any material privileges, could gain significant social status and political influence when invited to engage in a spiritual friendship with the monastic community and its patron saint.

9 Indeed, many laymen deliberately...
tried to create such opportunities for self-promotion, despite great reluctance on the monks' part.

Central to my argument will be the proposition that it was not so much the settlement itself as the preceding negotiation process that to a large extent determined the social outcome of a dispute. Monks and their adversaries, including members of the presumably 'uncultured' lower elite, used encoded behaviour to enact their own ambitions, to curb the success of each other's enactments, and to determine the future nature of their relationship. Even so, it is unlikely that adversaries from another section of society would not grasp at least some of their meaning, although that these meanings were consistently singular and unambiguous is also improbable. Structures and shared values probably played a central role in the evaluation of individual acts.

As my examination of a confrontation between the monks of Saint-Bertin and a member of the lower elite will show, however, the strategic behaviour of both parties by no means involved a mechanical implementation of planned action sequences. On the contrary, public behaviour in medieval dispute contexts very much depended on short-term strategies and timing. My interpretation of these clashes will therefore focus on the political rather than the structural aspects of public behaviour.

What makes these behavioral processes so difficult for us to understand is the peculiar way in which monastic houses dealt with adversaries from the lower lay elite. In case of a conflict, monks often went to great lengths to demonstrate that the value system of their opponents did not enable these actors to invest their public performances with social and symbolic meaning.11 The monks demonstrated this not only through their written sources (more


11  One of this paper's chief aims is "to integrate the problem of authorial agendas into an analysis of actual political events in their contemporary context" (S. MACLEAN, 'Ritual, Misunderstanding, and the Contest for Meaning: Representations of the Disrupted Royal Assembly at Frankfurt (873)', in: Representations of Power in Medieval Germany, 900-1500, ed. B. Wills, S. Maclean (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 207-27, at p. 209).
often than not the only record of such events) but also through their actual behaviour, which often relied on heavily scripted rituals. To understand how the surviving evidence of these disputes constructs an enacted reality surely is one of the major challenges of future research.

The purpose of this paper, then, is twofold. First, it aims to demonstrate, through a number of case studies, the invalidity of an understanding of performance that associates function in public behaviour with a compulsive desire to return to a social status quo. Second, it illustrates the shortcomings of approaches that focus on written monastic discourse without acknowledging the importance of public behaviour as a means used by opposing parties to enact competing visions of society.

Violence, ambition, and monastic discourse
Over several decades around the turn of the twelfth century, a monk by the name of Simon of Ghent (d. 1148) compiled a cartulary-chronicle of Saint-Bertin, one of the major monastic houses of Flanders. The finished work comprised a revised edition of Folcuin's mid-tenth-century cartulary, supplemented with a new section that brought the text up to date. Like his predecessor, Simon worked in the context of internal reforms. His activities as a writer and compiler largely coincided with the abbacy of Lambert of Saint-

12 Since it is difficult to know the extent to which laymen managed the negotiation process, we can only guess whether the actual evidence has been collected in the text. Most evidence for monastic consultations to deal with smaller issues, for example, is preserved in manuscripts that record the activities of specific monastic communities. For such smaller issues, see, for example, B.H. Rosenwein / T. Head / S. Farmer, 'Monks and Their Enemies: A Comparative Approach', in: Speculum, 66 (1991), pp. 764-96; and L.K. Little, Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France (Oxford, 2000).


14 Compare again with Kiser / Hechter, 'Debate', pp. 801-2, although I find myself in disagreement with the notion that "individual [goals] … have straightforward behavioral implications".

15 For a brief overview of Saint-Bertin's first centuries see K. Uge, Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders (Woodbridge, 2005), esp. pp. 30-6.

VI. Monks, Knights, and the Enactment of Competing Social Realities

Bertin (1095-1125), one of the spearheads of Cluniac reform in Flanders and a controversial figure in his own community. In the first part of the text, which was started sometime after Lambert's election and finished at the latest in 1116, Simon shows himself a fervent partisan of reformist policies. His introductions to charters dealing with relations between the monks and their lay officers in particular reveal a keen interest in attempts to reduce or at least contain lay involvement in the government of their institutions. The reformers' primary target was the advocacy, an office created in Carolingian times to dispense secular justice on behalf of a religious community, to protect its legal interests, and to act as a buffer against the outside world. In exchange for these services, advocates had the opportunity to dispense justice, to protect the legal interests of the religious community, and to act as a buffer against the outside world. By the end of the eleventh century, the role of advocates as protectors of justice had been largely phased out. Simon reduced his analysis of the office to its contemporary essence by stating that "the office of advocate lies in the protection of the possessions of the church and its estates from the attacks of depraved men". He made sure to add, however, that reality was very different. Because of the advocates' avarice, advocacy often turned out to be "more of a burden than something useful to ecclesiastical interests". These harsh comments served as an introduction to a charter issued by Count Baldwin V of Flanders in 1042.
which involved a settlement between Abbot Roderic (1021-1042) and Gerbodo, the monks' lay advocate in the nearby villa of Arques. It paints an equally bleak picture of the monks' relationship to their advocates:

Some men are usurping the title of advocate and have the obligation to protect the abbey in every possible manner and as much as in them lies, but instead have the desire to oppress it. They claim to hold the right to be accommodated once or twice a year in the aforementioned villa and to demand for themselves and their men anything they need from the men of this same village. Furthermore they ... as if it was due to them and to make other [exactions], which until now they have been unable to justify in any way.25

23 Regarding Roderic, see H. De Laplane, Les débats de Saint-Bertin d'après les anciens monuments de ce monastère, I (Saint-Omer, 1854), pp. 137-43; and UGé, Creating, pp. 34-5. Roderic, a former monk of Saint-Vaast in Arras, was appointed by Count Baldwin IV in an attempt to restore Benedictine observance after several decades of decline. The reform of Saint-Bertin was part of a larger movement initiated by Richard of Saint-Vanne, who had reformed Saint-Vaast in 1008 (see, among others, D.C. Van Meter, 'Count Baldwin IV, Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Inception of Monastic Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders', in: Revue Bénédictine, 107 (1997), pp. 130-48).

24 The charter, presumably issued on 6 January 1042, is briefly discussed in J.-B. Lourdault, Histoire d'Arques (Arques, 1904), pp. 82-6; and UGé, Creating, p. 35. The only extant copy of what appears to be the original text (see the Appendix below for more thorough information) is found in the first volume of Dom De Witte's Grand Cartulaire from 1775-1776 (Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer [referred to hereafter as BASO], 803, I, pp. 93-5, no. 70). All available editions are based on interpolated and re-dated versions of the charter: Guérard (in Cartulaire, pp. 184-7) used an early sixteenth-century version by Dom Tassard and dated the charter to 1056. Daniel Haignére looked at De Witte's manuscript and published extracts from his transcription of the 1042 version, referring, however, to Guérard's corrupt edition for the parts that appeared to correspond to the 1056 version (Les chartes de Saint-Bertin d'après le Grand Cartulaire de Dom Charles-Joseph Dewitte, I (Saint-Omer, 1886), pp. 24-5, no. 71). Finally, the CD-ROM Thesaurus diplomaticus, ed. P. Tombeur / P. Demonty / W. Prevenier / M.-P Lavolette (Turnhout, 1997), ref. W6804/D5586, presents a collation of the two editions that corresponds to none of the medieval versions of the charter. For quick reference purposes I will refer to Guérard's edition, although the reader is advised to turn to De Witte's manuscript for any serious investigation of the text. Regarding Arques and its disputed origins as an estate of Saint-Bertin, see F.L. Ganshof, 'Saint-Bertin et les origines du comté de Guînes', in: Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire, 10 (1931), pp. 542-55.

25 Unde notum facio omnibus presentibus et futuris me in villa sancti Bertini quę dicitur Arkas pravas et nimis injustas quasdam exactiones quae violentia et oppressione malorum quorumdam advocatorum videbantur surrexisse humili et obnixa postulatione abbatis Roderici penitus extirpasse. Quidam enim advocati nomen usurpantes et ecclesiam quam quia in D E WITTE tuei et defendere omnimodo deberent quantum in ipsis erat versa vice opprimere volentes dicebant se in prænominata villa Arkas semel vel bis in anno debere hospitari et quaecumque sibi suisque necessaria essent ab ejusdem villq hominibus procurari. Insuper vera ibidem volebant petitionem annuatim quasi ex debito facere et adbuc quidam alia quq mdla ratione poterant vera comprobare (Saint-Omer, BASO, 803, I, p. 93-4, no. 70; edited in a slightly different reading in Guérard, Cartulaire, p. 184).
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While those accusations may well have been justified, the charge of usurpation was undoubtedly a controversial way of describing social reality. A man presumably identifiable as Gerbodo's father is already attested as advocate of Arques in a charter of 986, while Gerbodo himself is on record as a witness to a charter from 1026. So, the remark probably springs from the monks' resentment at having to accept both the family's long-term involvement in the monastery's affairs and Gerbodo's emphatic presence (as the holder of a seigneurial estate in Arques) on or near the monastic properties. The allegation probably also suited the count's own political agenda, since it coincides with a campaign on his part to gain, or regain, some control over lay leadership in his territories and to regulate the advocacy in favour of various monastic houses. Nevertheless, the charter indicates that some kind of understanding existed prior to the settlement between the monks and Gerbodo's family, as it explicitly refers to what was expected from the local advocate. Apparently the monks tolerated Gerbodo's involvement in the government of their properties, as long as he protected their interests and represented some form of secular authority in the village. By the end of the 1030s, however, this arrangement had clearly become unsatisfactory to both parties. With increasing regularity, "serious disagreements and frequent disputes erupted between the advocates and the abbots of Saint-Bertin".

The inevitable tensions over this uncomfortable relationship came to a head around the winter of 1041, when Abbot Roderic found out that Gerbodo had been demanding taxes from the villagers. Claiming "a right that was not his," Gerbodo had apparently also insisted on being accommodated there along with his retinue. Most likely because he suspected seigneurial ambitions towards the monks' property, the abbot sent the monk Alberic to confront Gerbodo and remind him of the abbey's rights. Gerbodo's men promptly captured the...
Both the settlement and the 1042 charter reflect one of the major challenges to monastic government in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. In most regions in northern France, local forms of lordship were gradually replacing territorial principalities as the hubs of political life.37 The counts of Flanders managed to keep this process in check largely through the creation of administrative centres, the appointment of judicial representatives, the foundation and reform of religious houses, and the brokering of formal and informal alliances with local power holders.38 In the western and southern

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33 *Cum vero tanta injuria* Abbas nullatenus vellent adquiescere novissime tempore predicti abbatis Roderici et Gerbodonis advocati eo usque hac de causa scandalum processit ut dum homines illius in vindictam ac gratiam domini sui quendam ipsius

34 *Quo circa ut omnis controversia et querela inter abbatem et advocatum quod de prefata villa orta est in perpetuum sopiatur me mediante et utriusque assensu super hoc concordante predicti videlicet abbatis et advocati statui …*

35 Most of these concern payments owed when Gerbodo was required to render military service to the king on behalf of the abbot. On such occasions he was to be given one salted pig (*baco*), one pound of cheese, a spare horse, and twenty shillings (*solidi* – later versions of the charter change this to one mark of silver as substitute for all that preceded). He could also claim the right to half a measure of wheat yearly in exchange for aid in defending the village (*et ut opportunum suę defensionis auxilium non subtrahat*).

36 De submanentibus autem et servientibus abbatis et monachorum qui in oppido Sancti Audomari et in comitatu advocati hospitantur dispositum atque stabilitum est a me ut omni anno in natale Domini modium frumenti ab abbate persolvatur et sic liberi et quieti ab omni infestatione maneant nisi aliquis eorum palam invenitus fuerit vim faciens vel furti reus sive quemlibet percutiens aut similium legum prevaricator:


38 See, among others, J. Dhondt, 'Développement urbain et initiative comtale en Flandre au Xle siècle', in *Revue du Nord*, 30 (1948), pp. 133-56; B. Meijns, 'L'ordre canonial dans le
regions of the county in particular they were nevertheless unable to prevent the transformation of their territories into a patchwork of estates governed by petty noblemen and armed retainers.39

Driven by immediate material gain rather than long-term prospects and security, a number of these local leaders posed a real threat to monastic institutions and undoubtedly contributed to a great deal of anxiety among the monks and their subjects. The more far-sighted leaders sought to guarantee themselves lasting legal and fiscal prerogatives by establishing strong, ongoing ties with ecclesiastical institutions.40 Monastic communities grounded in need-handling thus became a target for ambitious laymen, who demanded formal recognition of their involvement in the administration of local communities.41 More often than not, they also wished to ensure the longevity of their relation to the monks by passing on any such privileged relations to their heirs.42 In some cases these were the same people who had previously occupied subordinate positions to members of the established Flemish elite. Their ability to claim lay offices previously held by their superiors reflected the increasing impact of local clan leaders on rural communities.43 Others, who already

40  For a critical discussion of Duby’s argument that armed retainers assimilated with the higher nobility see T. EVERGATES, ‘Historiography and Sociology in Early Feudal Society: The Case of Hariulf and the “Milites” of Saint-Riquier’, in: Viator, 6 (1975), pp. 35-50, at pp. 35-6 and 47-8.
belonged to a second generation of non-hereditary lay officers, demanded that the de facto hereditary nature of their function be acknowledged and that their privileges be extended and formally recognised in accordance with the changing political landscape. Their underlying ambition was often to gain recognition not only as permanent lay officers to the monks but also as secular lords of a given estate.

Through this convergence of secular and ecclesiastical networks, and because they generated a considerable amount of revenue for their holders, lay offices became trophies of upward mobility. The financial, political and status-related rewards meant that individuals were prepared to use considerable force to acquire them. Many often had no choice but to acknowledge a layman’s presence on their estate and to regain some control over the situation by accepting him as a lay officer, granting him a portion of the estate’s income, and sometimes integrating him and his family into the spiritual complex of the community. Eleventh- and early twelfth-century abbots frequently entered into privileged associations with the most powerful layman in a particular locality in order to fend off others and to concentrate secular power in one family’s hands. The entire process was accelerated by the fact that members of the higher aristocracy – including the count – often honoured these ambitions in order to create feudal ties with local noblemen, and allowed lay offices to mutate into hereditary titles.

42 This situation is mirrored by the growing number of lay officers and their increasingly modest origins from the middle decades of the eleventh century onwards (M. CLAUSS, Die Untervogtei: Studien zur Stellvertretung in der Kirchenvogtei im Rahmen der deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts (Siegburg, 2002), esp. pp. 22-4).
43 VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.
47 One such example is that of Abbot Bovo I of Saint-Amand (1077-1085), who sold part of his abbey’s treasure to pay the lord of Landas in exchange for the latter’s protection against other laymen (H. PLATELLE, Le temporel de l’abbaye de Saint-Amand des origines à 1340 (Paris, 1962), pp. 125-6). Bovo II (1107-1121) renewed the agreement with the lord’s successor (ibid., p. 209, and La justice, p. 98). For a discussion of the involvement of the lord of Landas with monastic communities in the Scarpe region, see VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’.
48 VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Fulcard’s Pigsty’, with relevant bibliography.
All these associations and agreements were negotiated. However, to
investigate the actual negotiation process is not easy, since we must rely on a
discourse that often criminalises the monks' adversaries. Monastic authors
showed a particular fondness for referring to their communities as living "at the
centre of a perverted nation". Although the threat of violence was real and its
effects were felt acutely, there is no doubt that the monks represented social
reality in a way that entirely suited their political agenda, omitting much of the
nuance necessary to understand the background to their interactions with
laymen. The sources are unambiguous about the purpose of symbolic violence
performed by monastic communities, but they often deny the possibility that
their enemies behaved in ways likely to be decoded as meaningful. Even when a
resolution that evidently followed negotiations ended a dispute, many of the
charters documenting these instances imply that it was the formal setting in
which these settlements were brokered (such as episcopal or seigneurial courts)
and the possible threat of divine retaliation, and not the negotiation itself, that
decided the dispute's outcome.

To consider whether such strategies were at play in the text of Baldwin's
charter, it is necessary to understand why the monks put such emphasis on the
violence and performative shortcomings of their adversaries. The significant
body of scholarly literature on the subject of dispute management suggests that
at the heart of their insistence was the desire to deny their adversaries access to
a "technology of power".

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49 A.-J.A. Bijsterveld, "Appealing to the Mighty Vindicator: Canons and Laity in Conflict", in:
Do ut des: Gift Giving, 'Memoria,' and Conflict Management in the Medieval Low Countries
(Marburg, 2007), pp. 230-46.
50 ecclesia nostra in medio nationis perversae sita est (Andreas of Marchiennes,
51 H. Platelle, 'Crime et châtiment à Marchiennes: Étude sur la conception et le
fonctionnement de la justice d'après les Miracles de Sainte Rictrude (XIIe s.)', in: Sacris
52 See C. Dupont, 'Violence et avouerie au Xle et au début du Xlle siècle en Basse-Lotharingie:
Note sur l'histoire des abbayes de Saint-Hubert et de Saint-Trond', in: Publications de la
120.
53 The liturgy of excommunications and clamores is described in Little's Benedictine
54 These arguments inherent to monastic discourse were first subjected to critical analysis by
The function of conflict: stabilizing and competitive arguments

In a modern edition, the episode relating to the dispute between the monks of Saint-Bertin and Gerbodo would take just a few lines. As with many other incidents recorded in this period, no more rely on a single representation of events deeply rooted in monastic discourse. With no central administration or chancellery, and with the charters issued in the town of Saint-Omer, there can be little doubt that the monks themselves either composed the text or at least heavily influenced its contents. This is important since, aside from the striking episode of the monk’s mutilation, the document does not indicate how the parties behaved in each other’s presence. There is also no reference to Gerbodo actively participating in negotiations at the count’s feudal court, although it does indicate that he was consulted and agreed with the proposed settlement. These elements in themselves may already indicate that the monks found it irrelevant or undesirable to elaborate on the nature of the exchanges between the parties and to make any reference to meaningful behavior on Gerbodo’s part unless an external force imposed it on him.

The question, then, is why this inability to negotiate was so crucial. Political life in the early eleventh century was to a large extent determined by local power holders who based their authority on their actual military impact and on their role in various formal and informal networks. It has long been held that this was the result of a “feudal revolution” or “mutation”, a process during which political structures from Carolingian times gradually lost their grip on local communities. According to this hypothesis, the local lay elite...
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appropriated titles and functions associated with former, mostly inoperative, institutions of government and justice, while exercising "personal and coercive forms of local lordship". The currently prevailing view, however, is that it is impossible to dissociate the Carolingian state from the types of lordship that prevailed from the eleventh century onwards. Many institutions continued to function during this period; and, although government was primarily of a local nature, it did follow certain behavioral modes that corresponded with the way past forms of lordship had been represented and enacted. Others have rejected the notion of mutation itself as an example of misguided borrowing from structuralist anthropology or have argued that the notion of mutation and of an "anarchic" eleventh century is due to a discursive shift in the written evidence.

With mutation now largely out of favor as a paradigm for the study of social relations in the post-Carolingian period, scholars are attempting to reconstruct a "technology of power" that transcended, and indeed survived, institutional change. In his influential article on the typology of conflict management in France, Patrick Geary contends that social order was continuously contoured through controlled forms of conflict. While carefully avoiding uncontrollable violence, families, clans and other peer groups relied on regular, highly orchestrated episodes of violent confrontations to deal with changing socioeconomic and political conditions. Such "conflict..."
relations" between groups did not have a fixed beginning or ending, as their
constant presence guaranteed their availability as a means of re-enacting both
social cohesion and social distinction. A repertoire of gestures, facial
expressions, and other means of nonverbal expression made these enactments
possible by referring to a set of shared meanings that indicated both parties'
intention to resolve a given conflict and to avoid feuding. The constant public
performance of these meanings in itself created a habitus relating to the
organisation of society and determined people's understanding of how power
and authority were exercised. Public behaviour, in other words, both embodied
the exercise of power and fed the collective mind with ideas on how and by
whom it should be practised. Consequently, political culture need to be
defined as performative (hence the emphasis on the "technology" of power)
rather than prescriptive. Because of the crucial importance of public
behaviour to the organisation of society, Gerd ALTHOFF adds, we can be
certain that the public behaviour of members of the ruling classes always
resulted from rational and goal-oriented deliberation.

67 BROWN / GÓRECKI, 'What Conflict Means', pp. 16-18. G. KOZIOL fittingly rephrased
GEARY's arguments: "simply because the society was so contentious, order, community, and
consensus become the problem, not the explanation" ('The Dangers of Polemic: Is Ritual
Still an Interesting Topic of Historical Study?', in: Early Medieval Europe, 11 (2002), pp. 367-
388, at p. 383).

68 S. WHITE, for instance, shows how many examples of public anger can be tagged as
belonging to a decodable discourse inherent to feuding culture ('Politics of Anger', pp. 139-
144). See also G. ALTHOFF, 'Satisfaction: Peculiarities of Amicable Settlements of Conflicts in
the Middle Ages', in: Ordering Medieval Society: Perspectives on Intellectual and Practical

265-8.

70 ALTHOFF, 'Variability', p. 75.
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GEARY’s model and ALTHOFF’s interpretation of public behaviour, though influential, have been severely criticised. Public behaviour, it has been argued, cannot be conceptualised as a mechanical implementation of social conventions but as regulated improvisation, its meaning determined by the context in which it was performed. According to Philippe BUC’s harsh critique in *The Dangers of Ritual*, any other view represents a homeostatic understanding of medieval society, implicitly rejecting the possibility of social change and dictating a view of medieval society in which the participants in public performances shunned ambiguity. This, he argues, is the result of a discursive construction inherent to the clerical authorship of the sources: what we know about the meaning of public behaviour derives exclusively from what these authors have decided to tell us about its effect. Among other things, they avoided suggesting that encoded performances were likely to be the subject of diverging interpretations and that these interpretations represented different, and competing, world-views. By falling into the trap of medieval discourse, BUC concludes, medievalists remain convinced of the inability or reluctance of individuals and groups to manipulate the execution and intended meaning of public behaviour.

In addition to these and other theoretical objections, some argue for a distinction between the public conduct of the established elites and that of what they perceive to be an untrained section of society. This is exemplified by the ways in which some ‘read’ violence on the part of petty noblemen such as those whom the monks of Flanders regularly confronted. Examining the violence used by castellans and knights to stake their claim on rural communities, Thomas BISSON argues that the eleventh century saw the emergence of a form of lordship that was “unpolitical” and “arbitrary” and that “violence … was a method of lordship … based on the exploitation manipulation of powerless people.” Lester LITTLE, like BISSON, does not consider the possible impact of monastic discourse in the representation of lay behaviour (and implicitly rejects the necessity of doing so). In his view, non-established members of the lay elite enjoyed far greater liberties than monastic groups in giving vent to their feelings, and the explanations for this divergence lies in a difference in cognitive
development. Although such propositions may seem intuitively true, Barbara Rosenwein and others have recently exposed their theoretical undercurrents as the witting or unwitting progeny of ontogenic theories. Taking the idea of cognitive inequality at face value denies these laymen the mental ability to devise sophisticated plans or to adopt patterns of strategic behaviour, which by all accounts seems unlikely.

Over the last two decades, and thanks partly to these theoretical disputes, the meaning of medieval public behaviour has become more closely associated with its changeable context. It has, for example, become clear that performance both gives feedback to, and receives it from, the social tensions that make a society an organism. The fact that social relations become concrete when enacted does not mean that the encoded performances reflected a shared desire to return to a status quo, as that would essentially have contradicted the purpose of conflict relations. Instead, the participants in a dispute tried to revise their relation to their adversary, sharing only a discourse based on a repertoire of encoded meanings subjected to long-term evolution. In a recent discussion of Merovingian dispute behaviour, Stephen White contends that medieval people used vengeance as one of the mental schemes to organize and evaluate their social experiences. Given the importance of motivations, strategies, and timing in determining the nature of people's actions in response to calls for vengeance, White suggests that public conduct was essentially political rather than structural or functional in nature. Others have investigated the role of emotions in public behaviour, stressing their function as agents of social change. William Reddy explores this theme by coining the term "emotic" to designate deeply ingrained emotional habits enacted by individuals with a common set of values and a common social context. The primary purpose of these emotics lies in their power as performatives, which release a group's "suffering" over a situation and transform things or statutes. Rosenwein further develops Reddy's ideas by creating a paradigm based on "emotional communities", taking as her main focus the origins, values and
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For ROSENWEIN, much of the behaviour previously considered brutal and inexplicable in dispute records points revealingly to the competing nature of simultaneous sets of emotional norms. In addition, she argues that social change derived from the tension generated by their confrontation.

We do not have to probe so deeply into theories of public behaviour and emotions to see that something is amiss with the monastic way of representing the seemingly unbridled violence of the lower lay elite. Timothy REUTER, for instance, suggested that the vignettes of violence found in monastic records are in fact illustrations of how a recently emerged section of the lower lay elite practised aristocratic feud, and how their attacks on the countryside were in fact deliberate attempts to establish control over their immediate neighbourhoods. It may not even be necessary to assume a practising aspect in their behaviour: according to Stephen WHITE, their common methods of exercising power and authority were neither very different from, nor especially more brutal than, those of the established aristocracy. Many (but certainly not all) techniques of dispute management were socially neutral, and problems only arose when they were used indiscriminately in disputes involving individuals and groups of different social status.

Since encoded performances in a dispute context referred to a technology of power, the enactment of their meaning was associated with the exercise of power and its corresponding social status. The use of dispute management techniques by individuals and groups who were not considered members of the elite in confrontations with the aristocracy and with the ecclesiastical elite thus disrupted a perceived status quo. WHITE has argued that it also challenged them to respond in a way that either acknowledged or rejected their adversary’s attempt to behave in accordance with the social norms of the elite.

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84 ROSENWEIN, Emotional Communities.
85 Ibid., pp. 20-31. In the same vein, WHITE’s discussion of public anger concludes that the public display of emotions as expressions of a political disposition does not exclude their function as communicative instruments of an evaluative nature (Politics of Anger, p. 151).
86 ROSENWEIN, Emotional Communities.
89 IDEM, ‘Debate’, p. 211.
90 ALTHOFF, Spielregeln.
91 IDEM, ‘Freiwilligkeit’, p. 150.
93 See ALTHOFF, ‘Freiwilligkeit’, p. 150.
with the status he desired. This explains why abbots, aware of the strategies behind the disputes initiated by members of the socially ambitious section of society, initially showed great reluctance to engage in a negotiation process. Monastic sources are reflective of this attitude and often go to great lengths to emphasize the irrational nature of public behavior on the part of members of the lower lay elites. It appears that their primary reason for doing so was that acknowledging these people in the context of disputes as legitimate partners for negotiations would have changed the social order and the management of behavioral modes that embodied the legitimate exercise of political power. We may therefore justifiably view the sources as carriers of a discourse intended to deny these laymen the ability to transmit signals, indicating that the latter's intentions were fundamentally irrational.

The issues above adumbrate new perspectives for further research. In light of recent discussions about an 'occasionalist turn' in performance studies, we can study disputes between monastic groups and their adversaries from the lower lay elites to see if and how public behavior was used by both parties to enact competing interpretations of social reality. As I shall show, the best way for them to achieve their respective aims was to convey their interpretation of normality in a public performance, using competing sets of encoded gestures and other signals that corresponded with how each party envisioned their future relationship. It was these performances, and not just the settlement of a dispute, that created new or revised terms of conduct between two parties.

Castration as political performance?
The dispute between Gerbodo and Roderic of Saint-Bertin is an ideal test case for the aforementioned hypothesis. Even if one rejects the reference to consultations in the charter itself as evidence of Gerbodo's ability to negotiate, there are clues that suggest meaningful behavior on his part. Finding one such instance is not difficult in the section of the charter describing Gerbodo's extortions in Arques. As noted above, the deeper motives behind this kind of behavior have been well documented, and the current consensus is that many such episodes were intended to force an adversary into negotiations. Equally important, but seemingly too obvious to warrant much attention, is the congruence between what Gerbodo ostensibly wanted and the way in which he set the negotiation process in motion. We understand that gaining formal

95 IDEM, ‘Debate’, p. 216.
98 See also ALTHOFF, ‘Regeln’, p. 163.
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recognition of his role as advocate and an extension of his rights over the village would in the long term be more profitable and socially advantageous than simply raiding the village at regular intervals. Consequently he used a form of controlled violence to behave as if he already held the right he claimed, focusing his behaviour on enacting the social reality he desired: to gain a stronger foothold in the village and ground his wealth and power in an extension of his existing seigneurial rights.

A related account in an eleventh-century miracle collection devoted to St Bertin, a genre typically more candid about laymen’s motives, sheds further light on Gerbodo’s thinking. During the abbacy of Rodericus’ successor Bovo (1043-1065), a dispute arose between the monks and Bodora, a subministerialis of the mayor of the village of Caulmont. Bovo had ambitions to become the monks’ advocate in the village and had imposed heavy taxes on the villagers in a simultaneous attempt “to please [the mayor] and bring fear [to the villagers and the monks]”. Heribert, a monk permanently dispatched to Caulmont to oversee his community’s affairs, thrice admonished Bodora and eventually travelled to see the mayor. When the mayor subsequently alerted Bodora to the monk’s complaints, Bodora stole some cattle, which he returned only after repeated warnings from the mayor. Although typically short and open-ended, this episode reveals the overlapping social networks that complicated relations between the monks and their lay officers. The collection of miracles also shows that laymen such as Bodora used violence not to destroy or to enslave, but to enact a new relation between themselves and the monastic community that formally owned the estate. In Bovo’s and Gerbodo’s understanding, the grounding of their actual power in land controlled in direct association with the monks signified their ability to maintain themselves, their family, and their social status on a long-term basis. This in itself constituted an argument in a discourse aimed at social promotion. Unlike Bovo, however, Gerbodo achieved his goal, one that established him in a position much more rewarding than the short-term gratification of levying illegitimate taxes or even of plundering a village.

Since Roderic and Gerbodo eventually agreed to avoid feuding by using a formal setting for negotiation, we may infer that the charter omits a great deal of information on how they arranged their meeting at the count’s feudal court.

99 Hagiographers and chroniclers were often more inclined to reveal the complexity of the motives behind disputes than the authors of superficially objective sources like charters: see B. STODDARD TUTEN, ‘Politics, Holiness, and Property in Angers, 1080-1130’, in: French Historical Studies, 24 (2001), pp. 601-19, esp. p. 619.
100 Miracula Sancti Bertini, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS XV/1 (Hanover, 1887), p. 520: una et timeri ac placere desiderabat.
and subsequently proceeded to broker a settlement. The monks, once engaged in a negotiation process, undoubtedly made efforts to enact their preferred interpretation of social reality. On first inspection, however, the 1042 charter appears to contain no significant evidence that the monks did indeed acknowledge Gerbodo’s behaviour as such an enactment, as there is no suggestion of a counter-enactment on their part. What little we know of Gerbodo’s behaviour in direct confrontations with the monks is also problematic. Some might indeed argue that Alberic’s castration merely reflected the brutality of the lower lay elite when dealing with conflict. Yet although physical aggression of this kind serves well the case of those who assert that social exchanges between the ecclesiastical elite and the lower elite were marked by sheer brutality, this example of it was ineffectual (perhaps deliberately so) with regard to the economic wealth and social interests of the monks in Arques. Taking Gerbodo’s threats to the villagers as evidence of his desire to initiate negotiations with the monks and as an enactment of what he desired to achieve, we have to consider the possibility that he was subsequently able to avoid acting in a way that would have eliminated all hopes of a socially rewarding settlement. Since his initial acts against the village were inspired by long-term goals, interpreting a priori all of Gerbodo’s behaviour as inspired by ‘unbridled emotions’ thus seems misguided. Instead, we need to see how far his ability to convey encoded meanings stretched and ask ourselves whether the castration itself, however brutal, did not also carry meanings designed to further his cause. It is the specific expression of violence that calls for clarification. Castration of adversaries, if rare in the context of property disputes and power struggles, occasionally turns up in sources from the high medieval period. As Klaus Van Eickels has shown, a gendered subtext runs through the accounts of castration practices in Normandy. Members of the military elite used it to deprive adversaries of their manly characteristics, effectively removing them from the political scene.


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Disputes is rarely attested, although a letter written by Ivo of Chartres to Pope Paschalis II in the years 1103-1104 helps bridge the gap between the Gerbodo incident and Norman castration practices. In the letter Ivo describes how the “unheard of” crime of castrating a monk-priest was perpetrated at the behest of a former crusader who had been embroiled in a dispute with the monastic community of Bonneval. The monk, whose name is not revealed, had apparently beaten some of the knight’s men after finding that they had stolen hay from the monastic estate. Elucidating some of the background to this remarkable episode, Bruce Brasington suggests that these events were laid to be just one episode in a protracted dispute over the monastic estates of Bonneval. Furthermore, he maintains that the monastic estate was intended to draw attention to the knight’s claims and, so it is implied, not completely to eliminate the role of the monks. If these events are looked at from a gender perspective, it seems valid to contend that taking away the monk’s sexual identity effectively removed him as a valid adversary in a context of disputed lordship, an interpretation corroborated by the feuding practices of the Norman nobility. Since monk-priests who resided in local communities or who served on disputed estates effectively represented their abbots in their capacity as secular lords, the application of this meaning may also have been intended to affect the abbot and, by extension, the entire monastic community of Bonneval. Attractive though such a hypothesis may be, the possibility of emasculation by proxy remains mere conjecture.

As I have argued, the choice of this unusual form of violence and the specific context may indicate that its perpetrator and his supporters thought that it was invested with an effective meaning. It probably even carried different meanings to different audiences. In terms of a lay lordship defined by masculinity and physical power, Gerbodo had now demonstrated his superiority over the monks, an achievement that undoubtedly raised his profile among his peers. If nothing else, this was an increasingly important trait in a society that was reorganizing its familial power structures along patriarchal lines. Removing Alberic’s masculinity effectively eliminated him as a problem.


105 Ibid., p. 370.

106 Ibid., p. 372.

107 A point recently made by R. Mazo Karras, Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others (New York, 2005); and Murray, ‘Sexual Mutilation’, p. 264.

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legitimate adversary in the lay understanding of competitive lordship. Since
the majority of the monks must have been familiar with Gerbodo’s values by
virtue of their own familial history, the monastic community may also have
perceived the castration as an attempt to deprive their representative of the
prerogatives to participate in lay disputes over landholding. However, it seems
likely that Gerbodo’s values and his most beloved that the monks would no long
matter; since the castration of Alberic hardly deprived him of his fellow
monks of their integrity as members of the monastic order. Nearly a hundred
years earlier, in 935–936, John, a monk of the abbey of Gorze in Lotharingia,
had been sent out in similar circumstances to confront Boso, the king’s brother,
to demand that Boso relinquish his hereditary claim on a piece of land in
Champagne. According to John’s biographer, a heated discussion followed.
When Boso threatened to emasculate him, John replied, “It is easy for you to do so. What will bother me greatly is that I will never suffer
enough. If you take away my sight, you will rid me of worries and sufferings,
for I would be able to remain quietly seated and devote myself entirely to the
prayer and prayer.” When Boso threatened to emasculate him, John replied,
“It would be through your care that I would be given back my sight.”

Castration did not constitute a form of violence that touched upon the very
essence of a monk’s identity, as the vow of chastity was an essential part of his
religious creed. The testimony of John’s biographer with regard to monastic attitudes to
violent castration gave credence to the hypothesis that Gerbodo, rather than
wanting to remove the monks completely, had instead intended to force on the
village a shared leadership. He thus respected the monastery’s rights as an
ecclesiastical institution but wanted to establish himself as lay lord of the entire
estate and ground his military power in land, or at least in official fiscal
prerogatives. Although such motives appear to explain why Gerbodo felt it
necessary to demonstrate his gendered superiority over the monks, the question
remains why he was not satisfied by Alberic’s visit, which might be interpreted
as a tentative first step toward negotiations.

HUMMER, ‘Reform and Lordship in Alsace at the Turn of the Millennium’, in: Conflict, eds
BROWN / GORECKI, pp. 69-84, at pp. 69-71, 71-72.

109  TUCHEL, Kastration, pp. 94-5.

110  On the practice of directing physical aggression at an adversary’s subjects see WHITE,

111  Vita Johannis abbatis Gorziensis, ed. and trans. M. PARISSE, La vie de Jean, abbé de Gorze

112  On the role of nuntii, see ALTHOFF, ‘Schranken’, pp. 16-17.
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Castration as liminal performance

The potential of symbolic performances to convey multiple meanings simultaneously is well established among anthropologists and is commonly designated as “condensation.” However, to assert that the notion of condensation is applicable to the incident between the monks of Saint-Bertin and Gerbodo does not mean that Gerbodo and his men failed to adapt their behavior in direct response to Alberic’s visit. Nor is there any certainty that the various meanings inherent to Gerbodo’s acts were fully understood by all participants or that Gerbodo himself made any effort to elucidate them. Nevertheless, the parallels between this case and the one documented by Ivo of Chartres suggest that the castration of Alberic was intended as an enactment, if not necessarily a premeditated one, of a shifting power relation between Gerbodo and the monastic community of Saint-Bertin.

The failure of Gerbodo’s initial attempts to successfully enact his social ambitions most likely became evident when he discovered that the abbot treated his claims as a marginal incident, which did not require his personal intervention. It was common practice for monastic houses of the eleventh and twelfth centuries to deputise members of their communities to important villages and estates, where they would live alone or in small groups. Such individuals quickly familiarised themselves with the social organisation of these rural communities and with the local elite’s attitudes regarding the monks and their interests. In the event of disputes with individuals of undetermined or low status, abbatial policy usually dictated that a member of the monastic community rather than the abbot would approach the offending party. Such a strategy was as much the result of common sense as of monastic reluctance to acknowledge the changing composition of the lay elite. Personal encounters were, after all, performances in themselves. Therefore, for an abbot to journey to an adversary’s home territory was likely to be understood as an act intended to demonstrate that he recognised the adversary as a legitimate partner for negotiations.

besides the practical issues involved in travelling, Roderic may

114 ibid.
115 See Koziol, Begging, p. 308.
117 In a discussion of the abbacy of Amand of Marchiennes (1116-1136), a local hagiographer commented that the abbot was often forced to leave the monastery to regain what was properties were threatened by secular violence (Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680) p. 104).
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well have thought Gerbodo’s case one in which he should avoid making a personal appearance.

These considerations were heightened by the fact that missions such as Alberic’s were intended primarily to give the monks’ adversary an admonitio, or reprimand, which concentrated largely on his moral shortcomings. This was very different from a performance inviting negotiation, as it put all the blame for the dispute on one party and invited him to repent and show humility in correcting his faults. A passage in the eleventh-century Miracles of St Bertin makes this clear. When an unnamed nobleman attacked and sacked the aforementioned village of Caulmont, Rodericus sent out a monk named Winrad to confront him. According to the hagiographer, Winrad spoke “with great temerity (audacius):”

“...This booty that you are taking from the villa of our holy father Bertin is one that you are unrightfully leading away. Give it back, so that you would not rightfully incur the wrath of God for the temerity of your injustice and the severity of your wrongdoings.”

For monks like Winrad, the aforementioned John of Gorze, and Alberic, to challenge a nobleman and his heavily armed retinue undoubtedly required great courage. But from the perspective of an abbot or an entire monastic community, such actions may be seen as acts of aggression, aimed at maintaining a status quo that ignored a layman’s social ambitions. Such strategies have often escaped scholarly attention. Henri Plateille’s famous analysis of a number of disputes found in twelfth-century hagiographical narratives of Marchiennes gives little attention to the fact that the unwillingness to engage in peaceful negotiations did not always come from the lay side. One such case is that of Ibert, mayor of Ecourt-Saint-Quentin, who, during the abbacy of Fulcard of Marchiennes (1103-1115), claimed the hereditary right to collect the “final straws” of each harvest on the monks’ estate. PLATEILLE focuses on the abbot’s eventual organisation of a court session presided over by “religious men” who dictated a settlement. Moreover, he ensures that the outcome of the session was determined by Ibert’s false oath, which was later punished by divine intervention.

118  KOZIOL, Begging, p. 197.  
119  Predam hanc a villa sancti patris Bertini abripiens iniuste ducis. Redde igitur, ne ob iniusticie temeritatem, ne propter iniurie severitatem iram Dei digne incurras (from the eleventh-century Miracula Sancti Bertini, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XV/1 (Hanover, 1887). p. 519).  
120  The degree of audacia required from such messengers is attested in the Vita Johannis abbatis Gorziensis, ed. and trans. PARISSE, La vie, pp. 132-3.  
121  PLATEILLE, ‘Crime’.  
122  IDEM, ‘Crime’, pp. 188-90; KOZIOL, Begging, pp. 188-90.  
123  Alternatively, the local échevins might have held a court session, although some of the disputes with local aristocrats dealt precisely with the problem that the local lord had usurped the exercise of justice and its revenues (PLATEILLE, ‘Crime’, pp. 176-7; and see IDEM, La justice, pp. 65-67 and 88-95, on the evolution of the “plaids généraux” and their slow decline from...
harassed the monks’ servants at the village, engaging in heated discussions, insulting them, and threatening them. Yet the abbot’s initial refusal to discuss
the matter with Ibert or to organise a session of his feudal court is mentioned
only in passing, even in the hagiographical narrative itself. Although it is
difficult to reconstruct Ibert’s full range of motives, it is clear that he intended
to ground some of his wealth in revenues deriving from his function as mayor of
Exceut-Saint-Quentin, to which he felt entitled by inheritance. The mere act of
allowing him to voice claims in a formalised setting would already have
indicated the monks’ acknowledgement of his status as a valid partner for
negotiation and would thus have legitimised at least some of his arguments. By
harassing the villagers, thus not only demonstrated his aims but also measured
out the degree of socially charged “suffering” (to use REDDY’s word) that had
been inflicted by the abbot’s refusal to take him seriously.124
To argue that the monks of Saint-Bertin did not grasp the significance of
Gerbodo’s acts125 would be an underestimation of their ability to decode lay
behaviour. Since they were able to do so in the dispute over the advocacy of
Caulmont, it is safe to assume that they understood Gerbodo’s oppression of
Arques as an enactment of what he wanted to claim as part of a settlement.
Even more than nine centuries after the events, it is still possible to infer much
about Gerbodo’s motives from other documents associated with him and his
direct relations. If Ernest WARLOP’s suggestion that Gerbodo can be identified
as Gerbodo of Oosterzele (near Alost, in the county of Flanders) is correct,
some light can be shed on his social background and thereby his motives for
establishing himself firmly in Arques. As early as 986, a list of witnesses in a
donation charter to Saint-Bertin includes a man named Gerbodo, who is also
mentioned as advocate.126 WARLOP argues convincingly that the Gerbodo of
986 passed on the advocacy to his son and namesake, which would explain
why the count’s charter mentions several individuals as having assumed the title of
advocate. The later Gerbodo, identified by WARLOP for convenience as
Gerbodo II and most likely the layman mentioned in the charter of 1042,
appears to be the brother of Arnold, lord of Oosterzele, who is attested for the
years 1063-1067 and designated by contemporary documents as a man of great
wealth and nobility.127 Arnold shared the ownership of the estate of Oosterzele
with his brother, keeping two-thirds for himself. According to a charter issued
after 1065, Gerbodo II gave his allodium in Oosterzele as a dowry to his wife

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124 ALTHOFF, ‘Regeln’, p. 159.
125 A possibility suggested by KOZIOL, Begging, p. 196.
126 WARLOP, The Flemish Nobility, IV, p. 1024. The charter was edited by HAIGNERÉ, Les
chartes, pp. 20-1, no. 64. On the advocacy of Saint-Bertin in the ninth and tenth centuries see
127 WARLOP, The Flemish Nobility, IV, p. 1024.
Ada, after which the two decided to donate the estate to the abbey of Saint-Bertin. Following Gerbodo's and Ada's deaths, Abbot Bovo issued a charter to notify both Count Baldwin and King Philip of France that he had struck a deal with Arnold over the latter's claims to Gerbodo's third part of the estate in Oosterzele. After Arnold's childless death, Gerbodo's eldest son succeeded as the head of the family, while his younger son Gerbodo III became lord of Scheldewindeke and for a certain period succeeded his father as advocate of Saint-Bertin. All these sources, the combined reading of which indicates that the Gerbodo of the 1042 charter may be identified with Gerbodo II of Oosterzele, suggest that the advocacy of Arques was part of the inheritance of the younger son of a recently emerged member of the lower Flemish nobility. With two sons as heirs, Gerbodo II was probably trying to establish a separate dynastic line from that of his brother and so tried to enlarge his father's involvement in the village of Arques. Given this background, it seems most unlikely that the monks were unaware of his long-term motives.

The upward social mobility of a layman was determined by the extent of his own willingness to adopt a public behaviour in the preceding course of disputes processing among the elite. It also depended upon the willingness on the part of the advocates to acknowledge his behaviour as reflective of the elite understanding of the world. For a man like Gerbodo to achieve recognition of his ambitions, he had to behave according to his desired position, with the difficulty that he had to find a way to make his adversaries accept him as a valid partner for negotiation. If such a strategy was successful, the interplay of their respective performances constituted a liminal phase, where the performances...
themselves not only facilitated but also embodied the transformation of an individual's social identity. The castration of Alberic was primarily aimed at demonstrating a shifting power relation between Gerbodo and the monks but, because of the specific geographical and human context, was also relevant to his claims on the village. This undoubtedly made it difficult for Roderic and his monks to ignore the implications of Gerbodo's acts, pushing them towards the necessity of evaluating his demands.

Despite those considerations, Gerbodo's assumed status still depended on the monks' response. It is possible, even likely, that further performances took place in the wake of Alberic's castration of which we are unaware. However, one reason why it is so difficult to reconstruct the negotiation process is that the monks ensured that the charter recorded only those episodes that gave evidence to a representation of Gerbodo as a brutal man acting without regard for social convention. A typical monastic discourse is applied in the deliberate juxtaposition of reason (Alberic acting "according to his duty of obedience" to his abbot) and insanity (Gerbodo allowing for the monk to be "caught in an extremely cruel manner"). One can imagine that the monks, like their colleagues in Marchiennes, had selected the appropriate rituals and meaningful public behaviour from the arsenal of their disposal; their disposal of unmarked, unremarked, unremarkable public behaviour, their disposal of riled, reformed, reconstructed public behaviour, their disposal of the rites of their patron saint. Given the long history of confrontations between Gerbodo and the monks, such rituals may also have been put to use in a more distant past.

Because of the limitations inherent to the sources, we can deduce even less about Gerbodo's behaviour and his reaction to any of the monks' hypothetical acts of controlled counter-violence. There is no evidence that the monks, or Gerbodo for that matter, sought to create opportunities for negotiation with the local scabini or the abbot's feudal court or called upon an ecclesiastical dignitary to mediate between the parties. The charter also remains almost silent as to what exactly happened at the count's feudal court, which was more of an arena for negotiation than an actual judicial body with the power to

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132 On liminality see SCHECHNER, Performance Studies, pp. 57-8.
134 PLATELLE, 'Crime', pp. 169-70. When a local warlord usurped the advocacy of the village of Marchiennes, the local monks' initial response was to pronounce a clamor, ring the bells of the abbatial church, and announce the man's excommunication (Gualbert of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, pp. 138-9).
135 PLATELLE, 'La violence' and IDEM, La justice. See also H. KAMP, 'Vermittler in den Konflikten des Hohen Mittelalters', in: La giustizia nell'alto medioevo (secoli IX-XI), II (Spoleto, 1997), pp. 675-714.
impose an end to the dispute.\textsuperscript{136} Later accounts of what happened during sessions suggest that discussions could be rather lengthy\textsuperscript{137} yet none of this is even hinted at in the charter. At least we know that Gerbodo and the abbot were consulted, that they agreed to the proposed settlement, and that new terms of conduct were defined by mutual agreement. Gerbodo's ability to negotiate was now clearly acknowledged, most crucially perhaps because it was preceded by a conscious act by the abbot to induce negotiations.

For Gerbodo, the settlement with the monks heralded a significant step forward in his strategy to achieve and consolidate social status. It appears that he, like many other layman in his situation, was untroubled by being described as one of the many usurpers, brigands, and insane men that ravaged the monasteries of Flanders.\textsuperscript{138} Such attitudes even extended beyond scholarly texts: the Miracles of St Bavo, the patron of the abbey of the same name in the city of Ghent, includes a brief account of the monks' dispute with Gerbodo's brother.\textsuperscript{139} Having usurped the monks' property adjacent to his own estate, Arnold refused to respond to an excommunication and a translation of the relics of St Livin to the disputed estate.\textsuperscript{140} Arnold died before the dispute was terminated. When his relatives came to the abbatial church to arrange for his funeral, they restored the disputed property and Arnold was posthumously rehabilitated.\textsuperscript{141} Even then, the author of the Miracles did not hesitate to describe Arnold at the beginning of the dispute as "a rich and noble man, but one that like Ahab was profoundly corrupted by his longing for Naboth's vineyard."\textsuperscript{142} The settlement itself, in which Arnold's relatives had traded the safety of his soul for the restitution of the monks' lands, hardly did anything to his social status, but it did rename him as a good Christian. Just a few years previously, Abbot Bovo of Saint-Bertin had struck a deal with the same Arnold 136 On mediation see WHITE, 'Feuding and Peace-Making'; IDEM, 'Inheritances and Legal Argu-

\textsuperscript{ments in Western France, 1050-1150', in: Traditio, 43 (1987), pp. 55-103, at pp. 64-70, reprinted in Feuding, article 6; and ALTHOFF, 'Regeln'.

\textsuperscript{137} Such negotiations should be looked at as a combination of extra-legal and legal arguments (WHITE, 'Inheritances', pp. 84-5). For a mention of lengthy debates see Gualbert, \textit{Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis}, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{138} When the castellan of Diksmuide returned half of the revenues of a mill to the Cistercian nuns of Bourbourg, the charter of the bishop of Thérouanne mentioned that the count of Flanders had forced the castellan "to abandon falsehood, acknowledge the truth, and keep to it" (charter of 31 May 1138; ed. C. DUVIVIER, Actes et documents anciens intéressant la Belgique, I (Brussels, 1898), pp. 239-40).


\textsuperscript{140} On the fact that the Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke family owned lands north of Ghent see VAN HOUTS, 'The Warenne Chronicle', p. 243.

\textsuperscript{141} For further reading on this subject see S.D. WHITE, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The 'Laudatio parentum' in Western France, 1050-1150 (Chapel Hill, 1988).

Thus, hidden among the common terms of a settlement was the monks’ prerogative of condoning to a mutually accepted memory a moment’s judgement, the enactment of which had caused so much anger for not being a performance conducive to negotiations. In some instances, such ex post facto name-calling may betray the monks’ awareness that they had entered into a ‘conflict relation’ with their former adversary that was bound to reach another boiling point in the future.

Blocking enactments: the monastic angle

‘Borderline’ behaviour on the part of members of the lower lay elite marked their struggle to come to terms with an understanding of social interaction that encouraged the avoidance of feuding and warfare. While monastic leaders theoretically welcomed, indeed encouraged, peaceful dispute resolution, they sometimes showed the hint that their adversaries had to show flexibility in order to bring their struggles to a satisfying conclusion. Alvisus of Anchin (1111-1131), a man famous in his own time for his diplomatic talent as well as for his inflammable character,145 is one such abbot. When Rayner, a local knight, invaded Auberchicourt, a curtis of the monks of Anchin, and illegally erected a fortress (castellum), Alvisus excommunicated him and publicly barred him from the threshold of the church.146 When the abbot learned that Rayner refused to change his ways, he visited the villa to confront him in the presence of the local population and his peers. Incensed by this public humiliation, Rayner drew his sword, aimed it at the abbot’s back, and threatened to kill him. The monks and some of Rayner’s own men were “deeply shocked” by such behaviour and tried to dissuade him from further violence. However, the abbot remained...
The monks then returned to the abbey, where the abbot took the crucifix from its stand and placed it in spinis, on a bed of thorns. According to the account of these events, Rayner soon came to a miserable end.

The episode of Raynerus’ outburst is not, as one might think, a mere anecdote illustrating the violence of an early twelfth-century knight. Rather, it lies at the heart of a strategy on the part of Alvisus to deprive his adversary of every means of achieving recognition as a valid partner for negotiation. By moving so calmly and by invoking divine intervention in the face of a direct threat, the abbot intended to convey his social and moral superiority. The chronicler of Anchin who recorded this confrontation followed the abbot’s example of denying Rayner the elite status he coveted by deliberately neglecting to mention several steps in the negotiation process: for example, it is likely that the excommunication was preceded by an admonitio or by other attempts to convince Rayner to abandon his claims. The omission is important and tells us much about how monastic discourse modified the representation of disputes. Rather than providing a full account of the negotiation process, the chronicler of Anchin focused on the central themes of the monastic discourse of dispute processing: the stubbornness of the monks’ adversary in admitting his error, the monks’ ability to appeal to a higher order through rituals, and the possibility of divine intervention.

It is difficult through the chronicler’s report to gauge the actual reaction of those present at the encounter. But it is significant that the text explicitly indicates that members of both parties reacted in shock to Raynerus’ threat. Whether or not Raynerus’ followers actually were shocked is less relevant than the implication that Rayner was violating conventions of confrontation and negotiation. In this respect, the setting of the confrontation is also significant. It took place in Auberchicourt, the heart of Raynerus’ power base, and thus constituted an important moment in which the disputed ownership of the village was embodied in the presence of the two claimant parties. For Rayner himself, all hope of a formal association with the monks and its attendant social promotion evaporated instantly and very publicly, as he had inadvertently demonstrated that he was not worthy as a valid partner for negotiation with the monks. Understanding the unique opportunity created by Raynerus’ outburst, the otherwise irascible Alvisus showed no sign of emotion and thus publicly demonstrated his capacity for restraint and non-violent behaviour. Not only did the entire performance show that the abbot was morally superior, but it also played out the dividing line between those who had mastered non-feuding...
social interaction and those who had not. The clue to this revelation was not Raynerus’ violence, for that may turn out to be equally meaningful if interpreted in its proper context, but Alvisus’ restraint. As Little has shown, monastic tradition prescribed that rituals of cursing could only be performed under the condition that its executor felt no personal animosity. Whether all those present interpreted the abbot’s calmness in this way is subject to debate. What did become clear, however, was that Alvisus’ refusal to react impulsively to Raynerus’ threat demonstrated the two men’s incompatibility regarding methods of dispute processing and firmly placed the layman outside an elite with legitimate access to power.

This analysis of the Gerbodo incident proposes that encoded performances in dispute situations were not mere mechanical processes of restoring a social status quo. Rather, they were manifestations of the ongoing struggles of individuals and groups to enact their own visions of how society should be organised and also to influence the success of their adversaries’ enactments. The Rayner incident illustrates that this applied as much to monastic groups as it did to ambitious laymen: Alvisus turned what functionalists might consider a performance aimed at demonstrating Raynerus’ moral shortcomings into one that revealed the basic flaws in his social repertoire. The performance of competing social strategies thus served the ultimate purpose of determining power relations during the negotiation process, but in some cases it also created possibilities for preventing that process from reaching a conclusion that was socially advantageous to one’s opponent.

Conclusion

Though marked by a high degree of violence, Flemish society emerges from the case studies considered here as having far more complex interactions than contemporary monastic discourse leads us to believe. Many dispute situations were managed by means of encoded public performances based on a discourse in which the exercise of power was legitimised by the implementation of a shared system of rules designed to prevent unbridled violence. That the enactment of this system was associated with the exercise of power not only ensured that society could be organised in the absence of a strong institutional system of government but also generated considerable tensions.

The dispute between Gerbodo and the monks of Saint-Bertin shows how socially mobile individuals from the lower lay elite demonstrated their ambitions concerning the management of local communities by enacting them. In many cases they used forms of violence that were highly charged with
meaning. Such methods hardly rank as the result of a process of acculturation, as they appear to have been implicitly embedded in the lower lay elite’s behavioural strategies. Monks for their part used various forms of symbolic violence to retaliate against the ‘attacks’ of their adversaries while attempting to contain the fragmentation of lay power by stalling or even obviating the negotiation process. The castration of Alberic of Saint-Bertin represents a rare occasion at which it is possible to observe the concrete expression of a layman’s long-term ambitions and his short-term behavioural adjustments, triggered by the monks’ public denial of his assumed status.

‘Meaningful’ violence thus emerges from high medieval sources as the prerogative of an established elite seemingly striving to maintain a balance of power within their own circles. However, it also had a political function at times when social boundaries were fading. That, I believe, is what makes the confrontations between the lower nobility and groups of Benedictine monks an ideal testing ground for the problems of function, emotion and discourse currently under investigation in this field of study.

Appendix

Count Baldwin’s charter for the monks of Saint-Bertin (1042)

The presumed original of Count Baldwin’s charter regarding the advocacy of Arques has not been attested since the late eleventh or early twelfth century, when Simon of Ghent transcribed it in his revised edition and continuation of Fulcher’s tenth-century cartulary of Saint-Bertin. In 1775-1776, Dom Charles DE WITTE transcribed large sections of Simon’s now-lost manuscript (also known as the Simon Vetus) in the first volume of his Grand Cartulaire. He duly included Baldwin’s entire charter, thereby carefully replicating Simon’s drawing of the count’s seal. The text of his transcription is dated 6 January 1042 and identifies Roderic (1021-9 July 1042) as the then-current abbot of Saint-Bertin.

During his research in the abbey’s archives, DE WITTE also found what appeared to be the originals of two significantly longer versions of the charter.

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153 Saint-Omer, BASO, 803, I, p. 93-5, no. 70. According to a note by DE WITTE, the text of the charter in the Simon Vetus could be read on fols 5v-6r. In the 1780s, DE WITTE made a summary of the charter for his Index chronologicus traditionum, chartarum, possessionum atque privilegiorum Bertinianorum, including very brief excerpts from the original text (Saint-Omer, BASO, 815, fol. 27r).

dated 6 January 1056, during the abbacy of Rodenric’s successor Bovo (1042-1065). Failing to recognize them as interpolated forgeries, he included them in the Grand Cartulaire and suggested that the 1042 text was nothing more than an unissued draft. Since then, Pierre BERNARD has shown that both versions from 1056 date from the latter part of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. According to his analysis, the interpolated sections in the dispositio of both forgeries reflect legal issues alien to an eleventh-century context, while the lists of witnesses also compromise their authenticity.

While researching these charters, BERNARD found yet another version dated 1056 in a mid-twelfth-century copy of the Simon Vetus. He identified it as another forgery, from the years 1167-1174, and as the template for the two other 1056 versions. Comparison of the three versions also led him to believe that even the first 1056 forgery was based on yet another twelfth-century forgery dated 1042. This later rendering already showed extensive interpolations to the presumed original, as can be verified in a fragment recently published. However, BERNARD’s chronology of the forgeries is incorrect. The first version, from 1167, can be dated between 1167 and the end of the twelfth century and is preserved in several manuscripts. DE WITTE’s transcription is in Saint-Omer, BASO, 803, I, p. 101-5, no. 75. Other copies are a late twelfth-century fragment (Saint-Omer, BASO, 735, fol. 11r-v) and a thirteenth-century copy (Brussels, Archives générales du Royaume, Manuscrits Divers, 5162, fols 194r-195r, by the genealogist Hannedouche DE REBECQUE, transcribed in the twentieth century in Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Collection Rodon). The second version, from 1200-1227, is preserved in Saint-Omer, BASO, 803, I, p. 105-9, no. 76, and another copy is in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 144, fols 17r-18v (Cartularium Bertinianum, twelfth-fifteenth centuries). Other fragmentary and undetermined versions are in Brussels, archives Municipal, MS 1122 (fourteenth century), and others, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1123 (fourteenth century). A fourth version is in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1124 (fourteenth century), and another in Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Collection Rodon. More copies of this charter will undoubtedly turn up in the notes of early modern historiographers.

155 BERNARD, ‘Etudes’. 156 DE WITTE’s transcription is in Saint-Omer, BASO, 803, I, p. 101-5, no. 75. Other copies are a late twelfth-century fragment (Saint-Omer, BASO, 735, fol. 11r-v) and a thirteenth-century copy (Brussels, Archives générales du Royaume, Manuscrits Divers, 5162, fols 194r-195r, by the genealogist Hannedouche DE REBECQUE, transcribed in the twentieth century in Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Collection Rodon). The second version, from 1200-1227, is preserved in Saint-Omer, BASO, 803, I, p. 105-9, no. 76, and another copy is in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 144, fols 17r-18v (Cartularium Bertinianum, twelfth-fifteenth centuries). Other fragmentary and undetermined versions are in Brussels, archives Municipal, MS 1122 (fourteenth century), and others, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1123 (fourteenth century). A fourth version is in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1124 (fourteenth century), and another in Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Collection Rodon. More copies of this charter will undoubtedly turn up in the notes of early modern historiographers.

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159 Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 146A, fols 17r-8v. Variants to GUÉRARD’s edition based on this manuscript are in MORAND, Appendice, pp. 6 and 77-8.

located in a seventeenth-century genealogical manuscript. According to Laurent MORELLE, the monks of Saint-Bertin may have offered this version of the charter to Count Thierry of Alsace in 1147, when he was preparing a charter to confirm the abbey’s privileges and possessions. He also notes that the 1056 version of the charter in the mid-twelfth-century copy of the Simon Vetus was probably written over an erased version transcribed directly from Simon’s original manuscript. This suggests that the monks used the forgery dated 1042 for only a limited period of time, which may help to confirm MORELLE’s assumption that it was produced for one specific occasion.

While the contents of the forgeries are all coherently associated with a number of legal disputes taking place throughout the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the monks’ reasons for re-dating the three later versions of the charter to 1056 are less obvious. Clues may be found in the forgery dated 1042, which was the first to describe how the count recognized the monks’ sole ownership of a piece of land between two branches of the River Aa. On this occasion he supposedly ordered the relics of saints to be placed on a boat and arranged for Bishop Drogo of Thérouanne to sprinkle holy water on the monks’ estate from the same boat, navigated for that purpose to the middle of the stream. Bernard has argued that this section of the charter is relevant only in light of an early twelfth-century property dispute and that the original charter could not have contained such a clause. All three 1056 versions have an additional section identifying the saints whose relics were used during the ceremony at Omer, founder of the abbey, and Bertin, its first abbot. St Bertin came to prominence during the abbacy of Bovo, who oversaw the disputed discovery of his relics and arranged for their translation as part of his strategy to rally support for his government. With Bovo’s leadership and his promotion of the cult of the two aforementioned saints widely credited in the monks’ memory, twelfth-century forgers may have preferred to re-date the events and the charter itself to the 1050s.

Ignoring what may be found under the rewritten version in the twelfth-century copy of the Simon Vetus, DE WITTE’s Grand Cartulaire thus contains the only usable transcription of a late eleventh- or early twelfth-century copy of the presumed original. Unfortunately, the version is neither complete nor entirely above suspicion. First of all, DE WITTE did not copy the words “abbati si

161 The fragment, copied ca. 1660 by HANNEDOUCHE DE REBECKE, is lacking the beginning of the charter (Brussels, Archives générales du Royaume, Manuscrits Divers, 5162, fol. 193r).
162 I am very grateful to Laurent MORELLE for sharing the results of his unpublished research.
163 GUÉRARD’s edition makes available this specific passage (Cartulaire, pp. 183-4).
164 UGÉ, Creating, pp. 72-90.
indiguerit" found in later versions but simply noted a lacuna in the text. Possibly DE WITTE, being no expert in paleography, either wished to indicate that the words were illegible in his exemplar or deliberately omitted them. Although the latter possibility may seem unlikely, it is impossible to verify whether the interpolated version may in fact be used to complete the text. The second problem concerns the datatio, which has puzzled scholars for more than two centuries. With a formula apparently consistent with contemporary originals, the count’s charter identifies King Robert the Pious (996-1031) as the reign. According to BERNARD, this is insufficient evidence of a forgery, although it remains unclear how such an error ended up in a charter issued by one of the king’s foremost vassals.

Further diplomatic research is thus in order. It is, however, important to note that, in contrast with other sections of the charter, the events discussed in this article were never questioned or altered by later generations of archivists and forgers. The survival of this unadulterated and remarkable ‘snapshot’ of eleventh-century dispute management may be explained by the fact that not only the disagreement with Gerbodo itself but also the nature of the monks’ relations to their advocates had become an irrelevancy by the middle of the twelfth century. This left forgers free to focus on interpolating property claims for which they were seeking confirmation, and gave credence to their interventions by preserving what may have already seemed like the bewildering testimony of a bygone age.

165 BERNARD, ‘Etudes’, p. 5.
A significant number of sources left by the monastic communities of the high
medieval period reveal the ways in which monks and their adversaries dealt
with conflict. Some of these texts concern disputes arising from the internal
dynamics of these groups or those involving matters of discipline or belief; but
the majority deals with conflicts over property titles, fiscal and jurisdictional
purposes, and with the degree of involvement of the laity in the government
of monastic institutions. Their significance for the study of medieval society
has not been lost on scholars, who from the 1970s onwards have accorded a
constructive meaning to long-term "conflict relations" as a means of managing
social change in the absence of a stable system of centralised government.4
According to this view, evidence from monastic documents gives credence to
the hypothesis that a controlled form of conflict allowed people to deal with
social change on condition that it followed certain patterns of behaviour
designed to ensure that inter-group tensions resulted in a new (if often very
temporary) equilibrium.4 Thanks to the work of, among others, Gerd ALTHOFF
Cambridge University Press, reproduced with permission.

1 See, for example, T. FÜSER, Mönche im Konflikt: zum Spannungsfeld von Norm, Devianz
und Sanktion bei den Cisterziensern und Cluniazensern (12. bis frühes 14. Jahrhundert)
(Münster, 2000).
2 For two assessments of the study of property transfers and property management see B.H.
ROSENWEIN, 'Property Transfers and the Church, Eighth to Eleventh Centuries: An
Overview', in: Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome: Moyen Âge, 111 (1999), pp. 563-75; and A.-J. B
IJSTERVELD, Do ut des: Gift Giving, Memoria, and Conflict Management in the
3 Of particular note is P.J. GEARY's 'Living with Conflicts in Stateless France: A Typology of
Conflict Management Mechanisms, 1050-1200', repr. in IDEM, Living with the Dead in the
Middle Ages (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 125-60. Given the mass of publications on this subject the
following review articles are useful: S.D. WHITE, 'From Peace to Power: The Study of
Disputes in Medieval France', in: Feuding and Peace-making in Eleventh-Century France
(Aldershot, 2005), article 8, pp. 1-14; W.C. BROWN / P. GÓRECKI, 'What Conflict Means:
States', both in: Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture,
4 See, for example, G. ALTHOFF, 'Satisfaction: Peculiarities of Amicable Settlements of
Conflicts in the Middle Ages', in: Ordering Medieval Society: Perspectives on institutional
and
and Geoffrey Koziol, there is now a better understanding of the ways in which people ‘performed’ their disagreements in public and invested such performances with encoded meaning. Using much the same body of sources, various authors have recently raised questions regarding the validity of the ‘conflict relations’ model and the impact of monastic discourse, not only on the written representation of social relations, but also on their management. Best publicised have been warnings against the dangers of regarding strategies of conflict management as a means used to restore a status quo. Although charters in particular indicate that many disputes ended in a compromise or settlement, careful reading shows that they do not imply that the disputing parties were fundamentally content with each other’s status or that their disagreements revolved around minor disruptions of an otherwise stable relationship. Although they allowed it to be controlled by conventions, people used conflict to change rather than merely adjust their relation to other. A second point has been made regarding the competitive nature of the ways in which people enacted their disputes. While many techniques of dispute management were socially neutral, they could not be used indiscriminately in disputes involving individuals and groups of different social stature. At times when the boundaries between social groups were fading, individuals demonstratively violated them to enact their social aspirations. Third and finally, monastic discourse itself has been brought into


9 Althoff, Spielregeln, passim.

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focus. Stephen White for one has argued that what is known about the strategies behind dispute management on the part of all parties involved largely depends on what monastic authors have decided to record about them.\textsuperscript{11} The inattentive reader is also guided by these same authors in deciding who was eligible to enter into a meaningful 'conflict relation' with monastic communities.\textsuperscript{12} Even more alarming is the fact that this caveat not only applies to the discourse of written sources, but also to the monks' behaviour itself. Contrary to what the sources often suggest, ritualised gestures and other discursive strategies on the part of monastic groups to counter and in many instances criminalise\textsuperscript{13} laymen were part of a dialectic process involving meaningful behaviour from both sides.\textsuperscript{14} Although monks liked to represent their behaviour in dispute contexts as a last resort against the rising tide of anarchy and brutal violence, their actions were meant to be just as competitive and as much directed towards social change as those of their enemies.\textsuperscript{15}

To comprehend these written and behavioural strategies nine centuries after the events requires a great deal of effort.\textsuperscript{16} It is becoming increasingly apparent that the most promising approach is one that allows for the analysis of individual cases, where the relations between those involved in a dispute can be placed in a well-defined context free of unverified, or unverifiable, generalisations.\textsuperscript{17} The exceptional instances in which this is possible deserve closer scrutiny, as they show not only how monks and their adversaries dealt with social tensions and conflict, but also how different arguments of status, ...
property and authority were simultaneously operative on different, and competing, discursive levels. This paper explores the possibilities of assessing the impact of monastic discourse on both the written sources and the actual behaviour of monks and laymen by focusing on a dispute over property given in the early twelfth century by a dying noblewoman and her husband to the priory of Hesdin, situated not far from the southern border of the county of Flanders. The difficulties that arose from this gift were rooted in the shared assumption on the part of the monks and their patrons that the transfer of property into saintly hands was sufficient to dissuade disgruntled heirs from claiming what could arguably have been considered theirs by custom or law. However, by placing all parties involved and the donation itself in their proper socio-political context, it is possible to argue that both the way in which the monks and their benefactors dealt with the politics of property transfers, and the discourse of the written account of these events, may be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, as deliberate attempts to force a monastic understanding of property and relations with the laity upon the rural communities around Hesdin; on the other, as the reflection of a struggle for power and status involving members of several levels of the lay elite.

Mathilde’s gift

In 1094 Enguerrand of Hesdin, lord of a small county in the valley of the River Canche, gave, together with his vassals, an abandoned sanctuary situated in the vicinity of his castle to the monks of Anchin, who converted it into a priory dedicated to St George.18 The abbey of Anchin, situated on the south bank of the River Scarpe in the county of Hainaut, had been founded in 1079, and had originated as an eremitic settlement established a few years earlier by three knights.19 Once turned into a monastic community, Anchin gained priority for its pioneering role in adopting Cluniac customs and became involved in the reform of other houses in Flanders and its neighbouring territories.20 The monks’ actions attracted considerable interest from both lay and ecclesiastical...
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dignitaries, and over three decades the monastery grew to be one of the most powerful and wealthy of such institutions in the region. Attesting to the abbey’s importance and that of the county of Hesdin as a key region between the counties of Ponthieu, Saint-Pol, and the mighty Flanders, Enguerrand’s donation and its conversion into a priory was approved by no lesser dignitaries than the count of Flanders, the archbishop of Reims and the bishop of Thérouanne.21 Reaping the obvious benefits from the association with its parent abbey, the modest community of Hesdin soon became a significant institution in its own right. By the year 1131 it housed no fewer than thirty monks, more than many independent houses.22

During the twelfth century the monks of Hesdin acquired (either by purchase, trade or gift) an important patrimony of estates, mills, tithes and other properties, taking care that many of the transactions were documented in writing. These records were added to a growing archive consisting of a small collection of charters and a substantial one of informal notices.23 At several stages during the century, the monks transcribed these into what eventually became known as the Chronicon Sancti Georgii de Hesdinio, a roughly chronological collection of 473 charters and notices largely devoid of formal diplomatic characteristics, giving the cartulary the superficial appearance of a chronicle.24 Ending in 1187, the Chronicon not only retraces the origins and development of even the smallest fractions of the priory’s wealth, but also reveals the close-knit rural society in which the monks had embedded themselves over the previous century.

Because of its modest status as a priory, Hesdin’s most frequent partners in property transactions were what the editor of the cartulary describes as “a mass of simple layfolk” and members of the local lay elite.25 Among the latter feature the count of Hesdin, a dozen individuals referred to as his “men” and linked to him by personal vassalitic ties, and a motley collection of seneschals, castellans, 21  DEREINE, ‘Les limites’, pp. 43-7. See also GERZAGUET, L’abbaye d’Anchin, p. 246, and NIEUS, Un pouvoir, p. 68. The count’s involvement perhaps derived from his strategy of supporting the counts of Hesdin against his rivals in Saint-Pol: DEREINE, ‘Les limites’, p. 46.
22  GERZAGUET, L’abbaye d’Anchin, p. 247.
24  Ed. R. FOSSIER Cartulaire-chronique du prieuré Saint-Georges d’Hesdin (Paris, 1988). According to FOSSIER (p. 36), the collection (but perhaps not the manuscript) was compiled diachronically between 1090 and 1187. TOCK dates the first phase of work to 1094-1120: ‘La diplomatique sans pancarte’, p. 154.
advocates and other members of the local nobility. Several of these thirty-odd individuals held important patrimonies and became benefactors of the priory. In addition, most property transfers effectively pertained to Hesdin's neighbouring villages, where it is known that at least part of the local aristocracy had gained most of its wealth. As a result, many transactions involving the gift, trade or sale of lands or rights had an effect on the social and economic status and the social networks of the county's lay elite. This explains why the compilers of the *Chronicon* underscored the necessity of understanding these networks and (uncharacteristically for the time) incorporated a large number of notices that relate to transactions which, though they look at first sight insignificant, explain the intricate politics of these property transfers. In some cases they also document instances of petty disputes between the monks, who upon closer inspection were usually of a new community of monks breaking into their fragile and highly competitive networks. This inevitably led to the conclusion that for the monks to establish themselves as property holders in this area must have been a precarious exercise.

In theory, the priory's rich archives should make it possible to observe what kind of social networks were mobilised when property was transferred into the monks' hands. Unfortunately, a great deal of information contained in the *Chronicon* remains for the most part obscure because of its fragmentary nature. Even in cases where it is possible to identify those involved in gifts, trades and sales and to learn something about their motives, many questions relating to socio-economic and discursive contexts remain unanswered. However, by looking closely at the handful of notices relating to disputes over gifts to the priory, clues can be found to a better understanding of the ways in which monks, their patrons and their lay enemies handled such delicate transactions. It is in these same sources that it is also possible to infer the aggressiveness with which the monks not only legitimised the withdrawal of property from existing lay networks, but also criminalised any members of the elite who rejected their invitation to accept the terms on which such transactions were negotiated.

One such instance is that recorded for the years 1111–1119, when Mathilde, the wife of a prominent nobleman named Wido of Herly, called the...
monks of Hesdin to her deathbed and gave them parts of her estates for the redemption of her soul and, later events allow us to hypothesise, a burial in the priory's cemetery. 30 The notice records her gift in appropriate detail: a mill in Aubin-Saint-Vaast with adjacent lands, a third of the tithe of the village of Fontaine-l'Etalon, half an arable field and a piece of woodland in Agincourt. 

"Deeply saddened" by the illness of his wife, but "rejoicing over her act of recognition towards God", Wido added to the donation a fourth of the villa of Lesin for the benefit of his soul and that of his wife. Shortly afterwards, Mathilde died, and the next day her body was brought to the priory church of Saint-Georges in Hesdin, where her funeral service was held. 31 When it was time to honour her grave, Wido and a loud voice began to enumerate Mathilde's donations and his own to the priory and "to other churches", demanding that all those present, in particular those related to his wife, express their consent. After he had spoken, all give their consent, the notice specifically mentioning Mathilde's aunt, Beatrice, and her husband Robert of Belebrone. 32 Only Robert of Fillièvres, Mathilde's heir through his mother's side, made no effort to hide his displeasure at the loss of his inheritance and refused to accept the proposed arrangement. In response to Robert's attitude, Wido fell at his feet, begging him tearfully to relent. Embarrassed by this scene and exhorted by those attending the funeral, the disgruntled heir found that he had no other option but to declare his assent. He could not, however, be persuaded to conclude the transaction by ritually placing Mathilde's and Wido's gifts on the altar. Wido eventually proceeded to do this himself. Afterwards, several abbots attending the ceremony exhorted all those present to respect the donation on pain of

30 It has to be noted that the only indication that Mathilde was buried in close proximity to the priory is that her grave was honoured immediately after the funeral service. The cartulary usually denotes a bench which is located near a church, while another more right individuals: ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 99. The cartulary of the Cluny monastery in France: ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 83. See also C. BRITTAIN BOUCHARD, Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198 (Ithaca / London, 1987), p. 134.

31 In some cases dying donors were transported to the church: ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 83. See also C. BRITTAIN BOUCHARD, Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198 (Ithaca / London, 1987), p. 134.


33 Mathilde's father is identified in the notice as Walter, son of Baldwin: ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 99. Beatrice is misidentified in Fossier's index as daughter of Wido and Mathilde, but in reality she was probably Mathilde's aunt on her father's side. The list of witnesses at the end of the notice includes an unnamed son of Beatrice and Robert of Belebrone, but further information regarding their identity and social status is lacking.
Reform, Conflict, and the Shaping of Corporate Identities

Monastic archives from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, including that of Hesdin, show a sharp upturn in the number of donations pro anima and ad sepulturam. This phenomenon is particularly evident among communities under the influence of Cluny, which appears to have catalysed an oral discourse aimed at promoting the rewards that monastic communities could offer in return for such gifts. For obvious reasons, it is difficult to assess the strategies, rhetorical or otherwise, that they employed to convince members of the local lay elite to engage in such transactions. But the bare evidence of notices relating to gifts in articulo mortis found throughout the Chronicle shows that they must have been persuasive enough to convince patrons to make substantial donations soon after the priory's foundation.

Property transfers such as these quickly came to play a key role in the monks' relations with the local elite. By accepting gifts in articulo mortis and pro anima as allodial properties, monastic houses were able to support themselves amidst a rural society where lands had been previously compromised by a form of ownership that tied up lands within vassalitic or familial networks. In the monastic perception, gifts of land underwent a transformation from earthly goods (temporalia) into spiritual ones (spiritualia). Among other strategies of property acquisition, this way of representing things enabled the monks to engage with the lay elite and to embed themselves in local and regional communities without having to resort to a system of compensation whereby the patron, his or her heirs, or fief-holders could continue to demand involvement in the exploitation of a particular estate or right. But monastic discourse also asserted that the benefits for patrons were equally alluring. Previous generations of scholars have given much significance to exchange in property transfers to monastic institutions, whereby monks reciprocated a gift by means of prayers for a patron’s soul.

34 See WHITE, Custom, p. 36.
37 Of a total of 350 donations recorded in the Hesdin cartulary, no fewer than 70 were made in articulo mortis: ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 22.
38 IOGNA-PRAT, 'Des morts', pp. 82-3.
39 POECK, Laienbegräbnisse, pp. 71 and 79; O.G. OEXLE, 'Memoria und Memorialüberlieferung im früheren Mittelalter', in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien, 10 (1976), pp. 70-95, at p. 87.
40 NIEUS, Un pouvoir, p. 243; MAZEL, 'Amitié', p. 89 onwards.

A gathering of laymen subsequently acted as witnesses to the written record of the events, including Robert and four of his brothers.
Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, however, have shown that memoria only played a minor role in a donor’s motive for bestowing wealth on religious institutions. Instead, they argue, those who gave pro anima sought redemption and the intercession of the monks’ patron saint at their time of death. Just as important was the gift as an agent of social bonding. Laymen and monks actively sought to establish a privileged “friendship,” bringing two aristocracies together and creating the conditions as well as the symbolic means for a reinforcement of each other’s status.

As documents relating to Mathilde’s previous relations with the priory illustrate, donations pro anima were but one part of a chain of transactions through which ties of friendship were fed by gifts and other property transfers at important intervals in the existence of either party. In this instance, mention is made that Mathilde, together with her unnamed daughter, had given away property and parts of a tithe to the monks “a long time ago.” The decisive moment, however, in the forging of lasting ties in this case had taken place shortly before her death, at which point she was joined by her husband in this privileged relationship with the priory. When the church of St George was dedicated in 1111, Mathilde and Wido had jumped at the chance to “buy into saintly power.” Their offering to the monks’ saints included the tithe of Agincourt, a small estate there and one in the forest, and a small estate and the lands appended to it in the village of Vaulx. A gift bestowed in such auspicious circumstances and in the presence of notables and ecclesiastical dignitaries undoubtedly generated a great deal of prestige, both for the couple and Mathilde’s daughter and also for the monks themselves, whose undertaking in Hesdin now enjoyed the public support of one of the most powerful and wealthy couples of the local lay elite. The fact that St George was at this time being promoted as the patron saint of the nobility may also have been an added incentive for the local elite’s attention to the priory.
The significance of Mathilde's and Wido's gift at the church's dedication may have been the greater because of the political circumstances in which it took place. The first two decades of the twelfth century saw the near disintegration of the county of Hesdin and of the vassalitic network around the count. Following the death of Count Enguerrand in the early 1100s, his heir Walter had plunged the county into anarchy, organizing an uprising against Enguerrand's sister Mathilde and confiscating goods belonging to the monastery of Auby-la-Moigné, a former foundation of the count.50 In 1111 Baldwin VII of Flanders annexed the county, and although he restored it to Walter the following year, he retained Auby and Walter was forced to accept the increasing influence of Flanders. In these times of political turmoil, Wido and Mathilde most likely saw an opportunity in the solemn dedication of the church to distinguish themselves from other members of the local aristocracy. This they did not only by demonstrating their wealth and power in the absence of a strong head of the county, but also by strengthening a privileged association with a previous foundation of the count.

Mathilde's gift pro anima and her subsequent burial near the sanctuary of St George soon after its dedication marked another transition in the couple's relationship with the monks.51 Because Mathilde was giving from her own patrimony rather than the one she shared with her husband, Wido insisted on adding a gift of his own, underscoring his active participation in Mathilde's association with the monks and demonstrating his intention to continue to derive status and power from the couple's ties with the priory. Both spouses' behaviour not only corresponded with a desire to win status and divine redemption for themselves, but also to prevent the access of at least one of Mathilde's relatives to a similar status. It was this latter objective, and the fact that the monks played a crucial role in its implementation, that sparked great controversy in the aftermath of her death.

A reversal of human order

Property transfers in a rural society where most landholding was tied into a complex network of vassalitic relations, familial and inter-familial networks, and other forms of shared property management, naturally entailed a great deal of effort on behalf of donors and recipients to maintain the peace. Because of this, it was considered a token of common sense to involve all those affected by a donation (either as heirs, lords or otherwise). As Stephen White has shown for

50 NIEUS, Un pouvoir, p. 82.
western France, the _laudatio parentum_ or formal approval by the close relatives or associates of a donor, if not obligatory in any legal sense, constituted a crucial moment in the transfer of property to religious institutions. The same can be said of those pertaining to communities in northern France, and Hesdin is no exception. Many instances are recorded in the _Chronicon_ of relatives being consulted before a donor's death, or at least before a gift was made public. Wido and Mathilde themselves had previously given their assent to one gift made by a woman named Mathilde of Albin, who, on the day of her husband's funeral, gave away a tithe that belonged to them. In the notice regarding Mathilde's gifts, Wido's gift was also compromised, as he had previously given Lesin as a fief to a man named John, son of Wauzelin. John, no doubt after some debate, consented to his lord's donation and gave up his claim to the _villa_ in return for a payment of thirty shillings. If the chronology of the events as described by the monks of Hesdin is to be trusted, this may have happened even before Mathilde drew her last breath. In contrast, declining to secure the assent of heirs, vassals and other individuals involved before it was publicly requested, reflected either a good deal of faith in the others' inclination to comply or a deliberate challenge to their status and claims to future ownership. In this particular case, there are arguments that the second possibility, while not necessarily excluding the first, applied.

Before assessing the behaviour of Wido and Robert at the funeral, the networks in which Mathilde's gifts were embedded needs to be understood. In the notice detailing Mathilde's gift and in another one that follows it in the _Chronicon_, the monks briefly recorded the details of disputes that arose in the immediate aftermath of her death. From these it is clear that several individuals who had received lands and rights as tokens of their alliance with Wido and/or Mathilde or their relatives, or considered themselves heirs to these properties, saw no reason to respect the monks as the new owners of properties that had been donated without their previous consent. One such party was Waldric of Beaurain, who had been given the mill of Aubin as a bail by Mathilde's father. After negotiations involving the monks and most likely Wido himself, Waldric agreed to settle for six pounds of silver, while his oldest son Gerard received five pounds from the monks and five pounds from his own father for renouncing his inheritance. Waldric's younger son Hugo received two pounds. Wido's gift was relatively small and compromised the position of only one fief-holder, with no mention of heirs. In contrast, the dispute with Waldric shows that at least part of Mathilde's gift was tangled up...

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53 Ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 95.
54 Ibid., p. 98.
55 Ibid., p. 99.
56 There is a similar example, ibid., p. 121.
in an association between two families, stretching over at least two generations. Mathilde had cancelled the bail her father had given to Waldric, one that she had allowed to continue beyond her father’s death and which Waldric himself had clearly intended to pass on to his son. Hence the compensation for both father and son, who obviously considered the gift to the monks a direct intervention in their material security and, more important perhaps, in their ability to pass down wealth and status from one generation to another.

Given the importance of the gift, and given that Robert of Fillièvres was universally recognised as Mathilde’s heir, it is no wonder that he also voiced his displeasure. Even though to be an heir constituted less of a legal categorisation than a notion touching upon the status of an individual, his protests could hardly have been unexpected in light of Wido’s behaviour. Instead of indicating a willingness to negotiate or to compensate his wife’s heir, the latter had resorted to self-humiliation and had begged Robert to consider the implications of Mathilde’s gift. This put Robert in an awkward position, as he sensed that his peers would consider his not responding to such a plea unacceptable, or at least inappropriate. Exactly why this was so is not clear. Perhaps Robert resented to Wald and Mathilde’s elevated status among the lay elite and was keen to bring an end to Wald’s ritualised reversal of rank. It is also possible that at this point, proceeding in the way he did was considered inappropriate in the canonical setting in which Mathilde’s funeral was taking place. Wald’s calling out for the assent of the bystanders at his wife’s solemn funeral, although common practice at the time, here clearly served the purpose of defusing the likelihood of public confrontations and forcing a solemn jurament upon those involved. Much as in the case of relic translations, a discourse relating to the supremacy of divine law reigned over these ceremonies. The presence of Mathilde’s body and that of a relic of St George, but also the social pressure at a gathering of her relatives, noble cognates, members of the Church and of the saint himself, emboldened Wald’s announcement in an atmosphere not likely to be disturbed by the faint-hearted. Finally, the events in the aftermath of Mathilde’s death also suggest that Robert

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57 This is attested in two separate notices, ibid., pp. 99, 100, although their relationship is otherwise unclear.
60 BIJSTERVELD, Do ut des, p. 67.
was weary of Wido himself and keen to avoid a feud. He may well have experienced all three sentiments at once. There is, however, no question that his refusal to perform the ritual of laying the donation on St George’s altar was understood by all those present as a harbinger of trouble, as it was considered the decisive moment for such transactions. For Robert, participating in this ritual performance would have signified a capitulation to the attempt to remove Mathilde’s gift from the conventions of human order: in other words, to acknowledge the gift’s new status as *spiritualia* and to renounce his rights as heir.

The fear of a feud and the extraordinary context in which the dispute had arisen are likely to have provoked Robert from seeking immediately after the funeral. When Wido left on a journey to Jerusalem, however, Robert, according to the monks “with devilish jealousy”, felt free to carry out the threat of retaliation that he had made by refusing to ritually confirm the donation. Seven months after the death of Mathilde, he rushed his claim to the mill of Aubin-Saint-Vaast, undoubtedly the most valuable part of her bequest, and took parts of previous gifts to the priory which belonged to his heritage. To pressure the monks into negotiating a settlement, he stole the tithes of Agincourt and Fontaine-l’Étalon and destroyed the mill, so that they would see no income from it for at least a year. His timing was well chosen: the attacks took place in the month of August, the time of harvest when tithes were collected and one of the mills was economically critical.

Robert’s motives for acting in the way he did appear to have been different from, and more complex than, those of Wauzelin and his two sons. Evidence scattered throughout the *Chronicon* suggests that he was a wealthy man, and by no means dependent on the disputed estates for the maintenance of his standard of living. The problems also extended beyond his worries about losing the prospect of a feudal relationship with local bail-holders and an economic foothold in and around these properties, although the failed prospect of establishing his own social network, however small, in the village of Aubin may not have been easy for him to accept. There are, however, indicators suggesting that the behaviour of Mathilde and certainly of Wido as benefactors was at least partially inspired by other motives. A look at these shows that the
critical issue at stake was status, or the loss of it, deriving from an amalgam of socio-economic and symbolic arguments. In persuading potential patrons to give property to their priory, the monks undoubtedly laid great emphasis on the gift as an agent of redemption and as a token of a privileged relationship with their institution. But various authors have argued that gifts to ecclesiastical institutions equally constituted a means by which members of the aristocracy could prevent the fragmentation of their territories into smaller units and thus retain some control over their erstwhile property. The transferral of wealth into monastic hands, beside spiritual and direct economic motives, reflected a desire to contain the number of families possessing their land, to minimize the risk of competitions, and to manage demographic expansion in a way that preserved the economic viability of noble families.

In her analysis of women's gifts pro anima to the abbey of Cluny, Maria Hillebrandt suggested that the reduction over the course of the eleventh century in the numbers of individuals mentioned as taking part in a gift from the extended group of relatives to the 'nuclear' family may be associated with the changing organization of aristocratic families and their attitudes to succession. Giles Constable explained this transition by arguing that aristocratic families evolved from clans of "related contemporaries … all taking their names from their individual landed holdings", to ones "based on lineal descent … of which the members took their names from a single centre of power", which led to a tightening of modes of access to positions of prominence in the lay elite.

In the case of Mathilde and Wido, the situation, although more complicated, is not incompatible with this interpretation. Mathilde, who inherited her wealth from her father, had one daughter from a marriage that probably preceded that with Wido. Her subsequent union with him saw no traceable offspring, and there is no evidence that Wido had any living children from a previous union. His only direct relative appears to have been a nephew named Bernard, who is mentioned immediately after Wido in the list of witnesses to the notice.

Although it thus seems that Wido and Mathilde's families were quite distinct, there are strong indications that Wido had been preparing the assimilation of
the two partners' wealth and status even before Mathilde's death. Although her gifts to the priory suggest that Mathilde managed her father's inheritance independently, the deed in giving property to the monks at their church's dedication in 1111, amid together with her husband. At the time of her death, Wido demonstratively marked his claim on the couple's privileged relationship with the monks by adding a gift of his own, thus rectifying some of the prestige that he feared he might have lost. Despite the apparent absence of a son, the fact that he wished to exclude Robert from the transaction strongly suggests that he may have also been concerned about maximizing some of the couple's prestige to his closest relative (perhaps the aforementioned Bernard), and kept to prevent his male peer from upping some of the wealth and status Mathilde had accumulated. Robert was thus blocked from obtaining Mathilde's inheritance because of the perceived necessity of preventing competing members of the lay elite from obtaining and, catastrophically for Wido, fragmenting accumulated symbolic and actual power. Wido was protective of Mathilde's wealth and status in order to manage his own and that of his presumed successors.

Little more is known of the reason for Wido being so anxious to prevent Robert's access to his wife's wealth. As FOSSIER has suggested, at least part of the lay elite in the county of Hesdin could be divided into two distinct groups. The first grounded its wealth and power in a unitary entity based on direct or semi-direct exploitation of land concentrated mostly in the village of origin. Robert, who was based in the village of Fillières, belonged to this first category. Wido (and, most likely, Mathilde's father) belonged to a second, whose property was dispersed throughout the region and consisted of an amalgam of tithes, rents, mill rights and mills, tolls and landed property. As far as can be ascertained, and there is a definite margin of error based on a lack of relevant sources, Robert missed out on expanding his wealth, not so much of a linear kind (since he already was one of the largest holders of allodial lands in the region), but in a way which would have provided him with an entry into a group of owners like Wido. The latter are likely to have enjoyed greater wealth and higher status because of the nature of their property and the ways in which they exploited it. Obtaining Mathilde's inheritance would have been crucial to achieving this goal.

But Robert's loss extended beyond that. While being denied his right to be Mathilde's heir and acquire some of her status and crucial property, his loss increased another local aristocrat's status. Régine LE JAN has shown that the argument of hereditas became particularly urgent in the case of donations to saints, because of the prestige, power and social status that accrued to the donor. Wido was protective of Mathilde's wealth and status in order to manage his own and that of his presumed successors.

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72 Ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 28.
73 For references to Robert's wealth see ibid., no. 84.
and his family. For Mathilde to present such large gifts to the monks signified a strengthening of the ties between herself and the monks, and a guaranteed increase of status for her direct relatives, particularly her husband, in light of a continued friendship that had originated at the church's dedication. The 'buying into saintly power' of Mathilde and especially Wido directly affected Robert's position in the lay community. Robert was sensitive to relatives and political rivals gaining political and symbolic advantage in an environment that had recently been the scene of political turmoil.

'Meaningful' violence and monastic retaliation

Although the written record suggests that Robert's attacks on the mill marked the first time that the monks became involved in the dispute, they had undeniably played a crucial part in setting up the conditions for a transfer of property that was beneficial both for themselves and for their patrons. It was, for example, under the influence of a monastic discourse advocating the benefits of gift-giving that Mathilde and Wido had given away parts of their wealth. From the same monastic repertoire originated the ritual setting in which Wido declared his wife's and his own intention to do so and in which their relatives and associates were asked to give their consent. As keepers of relics, the monks played a key role in creating the right conditions for, and rallying consensus regarding, a transferral of worldly goods into saintly hands. Whereas the _laudatio parentum_ was habitually preceded by discussions and negotiations and usually reflected the desire to defuse potential disputes, its rituals were now being put into use as a means to pressure members of Mathilde's family and prevent status from being transferred in ways considered undesirable.

Robert, for his part, showed his awareness of the role of monastic discourse by intervening in the monks' rituals to enact his disapproval of the transition of his claimed heritage into saintly hands and prevent the transaction from being completed. It is worth remarking, though, that the documents left to us by the monks of Hesdin remain silent about the emotional and practical meaning of Robert's refusal to lay Mathilde's gift on the altar, and falsely suggest that Wido's act sufficed to indicate the full transferral of the property. In addition, the descriptions of Robert's behaviour avoid making reference to any other than his direct claims on Mathilde's property, suggesting that he had only been interested in immediate material gain. As if such descriptions were not

74 LE JAN, 'Malo', pp. 960-1.
75 It is significant that Robert had previously had no objections to a gift made by Mathilde to the monks of Auchy: charter of 1122 by Bishop John of Thérouanne; ed. DE CARDEVACQUE, Histoire de l'abbaye d'Auchy-les-Moines, pp. 189-91.
VII. A Compromised Inheritance

sufficient to underscore his inability to interact in a meaningful way with members of the ecclesiastical aristocracy, the monks also offhandedly rejected Robert’s subsequent attempt to pressurize them into negotiations and compensation as criminal and insane.76

In the past few years, scholars have drawn attention to the fact that many instances of brutality on the part of the lower lay elite deserve to be read as the result of a desire to gain recognition as a valid party in negotiations, rather than as acts of irrationality or insanity.77 Less a madman than one determined to make his claim in a forceful manner, Robert had prepared his ‘audience’ – that is, the monks of Hesdin, the ecclesiastical elite in general, and also his lay peers – for his behaviour by leaving the ceremony at Mathilde’s funeral unfinished. He subsequently chose to use common feuding techniques, not with Wido or his relatives, but with the recipients of Mathilde’s and Wido’s gifts. Aware of monastic propaganda, he undoubtedly considered the monks to be the instigators, or at least the enablers, of a property transferral scheme much to his disadvantage. He also understood that a successful attempt to induce negotiations would eventually lead to a compromise and possibly a privileged association with the monks, thus regaining some of his lost status. Nor were his attacks random, as they targeted exactly those estates and rights that Mathilde had given away, not just any of the priory’s properties. For him to destroy the mill of Saint-Aubin constituted not only a means of affecting the monastic economy, but also demonstrating what exactly he had been claiming. Given the high incidence of behaviour such as Robert’s among the lower lay elite,78 it is also likely that Wido, his relatives and associates, and also the monks themselves had more or less known what to expect. In addition, it is also hardly a matter of doubt that all those parties understood that Robert’s acts were not the result of desperation or insanity, but belonged to an arsenal of common, if highly violent, means to pressurize one’s adversary.

Sensing that Robert would continue to refuse to accept the unconditional transfer of wealth into saintly hands, the monks began publicly to criminalize their adversary, using a degree of aggression similar to his own. Their practical and discursive involvement in the events that preceded Robert’s violence and the latter’s choice to target them as feuding partners, explain why they set a typical monastic, highly aggressive ‘vengeance script’ in motion as soon as Robert took action against them. They first decided to appeal to the Court of the bishop of Thérouanne. He responded to their clamor by summoning Robert; when two attempts failed, the bishop excommunicated him and imposed a ban on his native village of Fillièvres. In the meantime, the monks tried to enhance their case by bringing forward a number of charges against Robert for his previous violence.79

76 Ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 100: hanc desparatam insaniam videntes.
77 WHITE, ‘Garsinde’; VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Monks’.
78 BIJSTERVELD, Do ut des, chs 8-9.
the impact of the excommunication by using the rituals proper to the monastic practice of marginalizing enemies. For as long as Robert refused to restore order, they persisted in the daily habit of laying down the crucifix super spinas, a variant on the common practice of humiliating a saint’s relics by laying them on spines before the altar. The monks also prostrated themselves three times a day, making a simulacrum while the bells of the church were tolled, “so that justice would be done to them from heaven.”80 By means of these last two rituals, they indicated the crucial nature of their recourse to the argument of divine order, invoking God and his saints to take action against their enemy. In other words, Robert was now at war with God. Despite such violent attacks, the lord of Fillières was not inclined to relent. His position as heir to Mathilde had been challenged by the community of Hesdin, by the bishop of Thérouanne, and most likely by Mathilde and Wido themselves, who had all appealed at some point to divine order as a justification for bypassing his customary right.81 They had all used a discourse expressed in ritual and verbal form which avoided all references to the relevance of Robert’s claims, beginning with the fact that he was not consulted before Mathilde’s funeral, that no attempt was made to strike a deal with him, that he was forced to give his assent in exceptional circumstances, and that his subsequent behaviour was publicly branded as the acts of a man struck down by insanity.82 When the bishop’s appeal arrived, Robert undoubtedly feared another incident in which he would be required to recognize his ‘errors’ and again renounce his rights in favour of repeated humiliation, based principally on the argument that Robert had failed to subordinate his own interests to the divine83 carried in itself the risk of marginalisation. This was not an exercise that he would care to repeat.

The count’s anger

Sensing that Robert was unwilling to comply with their demands, even if they included the threat of divine retaliation, and understanding the peril in which the dispute placed the credibility of their socio-economic strategies, the monks, now supported by the abbot of Anchin, decided to register a clamor against Robert at the court of Count Baldwin VII.84 When Baldwin sent one of his

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81 WHITE, ‘Inheritances.’
83 WHITE, Custom, p. 76.
84 Ed. FOSSIER, Cartulaire-chronique, p. 100.
servants to summons Robert to a session of his feudal court, the latter refused to come, prompting the count’s anger (vehementer iratus) and an immediate threat that his troops would destroy Robert’s home and all his possessions in Fillièvres. “Frightened by the bannum of the bishop, the threats of the count and the prayers of the monks”, Robert finally relented, and besides returning most of his usurpations (with the exception of the tithe of Fontaine) to the abbey of Anchin, he also promised to maintain peace with the abbot and the estates of Hesdin for the rest of his life. To demonstrate the binding nature of his promise, he swore an oath on the relics of the saints, and his example was followed by the monks themselves and by the men who attended the pax. Afterwards, Robert renewed his oath to the count to ensure keeping the tithe which he should have returned to the priory, he gave the usufruct of another piece of land from his estates. According to the notice, Robert only refused to return the disputed tithe because of discord among his brothers.

The Hesdin notices mirror a contemporary trend witnessed in the joint efforts of monastic houses and the counts of Flanders to contain the fragmentation of lay power and the courts of Flanders to curtail the government of ecclesiastical institutions, and to establish or re-establish strong links between the monasteries and the higher aristocracy. This policy is particularly evident in the support the count gave to the reforms of Benedictine houses in the first two decades of the twelfth century, a movement inspired as much by the desire to harmonize the observance in these houses as by a joint policy of ecclesiastics and lay leaders to reassess the nature of the monks’ alliances with members of the local elite. Counts and abbots often entered into privileged relations with the most powerful laymen in a given region to contain the rise of others. This often took the form of the recognition of lay offices as more or less hereditary titles, though formulated on a conditional basis. The reward promised to members of the lay elite for accepting negotiations often consisted of a spiritual and material association with the monks.

At the same time, the count also aimed to regain his position as legislator and, most important, highest juridical institution in the county. In the case of older monastic institutions, he resumed his role (which for several decades had been largely nominal) of upper-advocate. From the time of Robert II (1093-1111), the counts were also willing to perform their divinely ordained duty of
bringing justice to the monastic communities that appealed to their court, although one has to keep in mind that in many cases the counts acted as mediator rather than judge. The fact that they too were tied up in a complex network of mediating relations that involved lordship, vassalage and interlocking relations that involved lordship, vassalage and landownership also ensured that they showed little inclination to alienate any of the major players, be they ecclesiastical institutions or members of the lay aristocracy. Nevertheless, the highly staged performances that accompanied sessions of the comital court were effective insofar as they allowed the counts to test whether or not members of the lay elite were willing to subordinate themselves to their authority. Aristocrats who showed their readiness to do so quickly became associated with the counts’ court circle, while the others were cornered into acknowledging their refusal.

Robert's son Baldwin VII, although a minor at the time of his father's death, especially pursued a strategy of profiling himself to his subordinates as the bearer of justice and as president of the highest court of appeal. The monks were aware of the count's willingness to intervene and to test his subordinates' attitudes, especially so because the dispute with Robert coincided with, or came shortly after, the interventions of the Flemish in the county of Hesdin. Abbot Alvisus of Anchin (1111-1131), a man of fierce determination and one of the main protagonist of Cluniac reforms in Flanders, may also have played a decisive role in taking the dispute to the count's court. Eager to promote disciplinary reforms and to rationalise the government of his institution, he took particular interest in the priory's position, especially as it had greatly expanded over the preceding decade but still lacked much regulation.

In 1112, around the time of the dispute with Robert, Alvisus called upon Bishop John of Thérouanne to confirm the priory's rights, to return a number of usurped goods, and to describe in detail the mutual obligations of the monks and the bishop. This increased supervision of the priory apparently did much to harden the monks' attitudes towards their lay adversaries. The coincidence of Baldwin's first public appearances as president of the count's court and the election of Alvisus created favourable conditions in which to test Robert's resistance. A dispute that had arisen from the latter's refusal to accept the supremacy of divine order over its human counterpart now quickly turned into a political test case for his attitude with regard to the changing organisation of secular society. In this context, it is important to underscore the...
fact that the count’s ‘anger’ did not stem from the troubles between Robert and the monks, but from the man’s refusal to obey the count, and was basically unrelated to arguments referring to the divine. Baldwin’s newly won authority had been rejected, and to maintain his position credibly the count had to respond with strong threats.

Although Robert may have harboured suspicions with regard to Baldwin’s impartiality, it was in this setting, where the monks did not completely control the discourse, that he finally agreed to negotiate. While retaining most of his inheritance to the monks, he benefited from the settlement in that he was accepted as one of the priory’s ‘neighbours’. This explains the relative ease with which he accepted the settlement once he felt that the monks were forced by circumstance to accept him as a partner for negotiations and could no longer dismiss his behaviour offhandedly as the ravings of a frustrated nobleman. Robert was lucky, perhaps even happily so, to accept a settlement that signified a near complete restitution of stolen property but elevated him to a place among the privileged partners of the monks. The compensation itself also indicated that the battle between arguments of divine and human order had not ended in a clear victory for either side, but in a settlement. Ostensibly the foundation upon which social order was based, an arrangement such as this was undeniably satisfying to all, if perhaps only for the time being.

For a newly established priory, Hesdin managed to associate itself with important members of the local aristocracy and accumulate a considerable amount of property in a short amount of time. Its success in achieving these aims depended in large part on the monks’ own efforts to convince the lay elite of opportunities to seek redemption for their souls and to distinguish themselves from their rivals and peers. Their discourse was catalysed by the introduction of Cluniac customs, which at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries radicalised the attitude of monastic communities with regard to the laity and caused them to seek out opportunities to intervene in lay networks to their advantage. Understanding the status and political advantages that could be derived from associations with groups of monks, a particular section of the lay elite in the county of Hesdin actively nurtured such privileged friendships, as it allowed them a degree of management of their family’s wealth and enabled them to control the extent to which members of their extended family network could share in their accumulated wealth and status. This meeting of minds made it possible for the monks to engage in privileged relationships with the foremost members of the local elite and to insinuate themselves as proprietors into a society in which all manageable property had already been not only divided, but quite often subdivided, fiefed or promised as part of an inheritance. Relations of this kind, albeit intended to be durable, warranted

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revalidation at critical junctures in either party's existence but allowed for cohesion between the two elite cultures.

While monks liked to represent themselves as the mere recipients of pious gifts, it is evident that they played an active role in convincing their patrons of the utility of such transfers. It would probably be going too far to assume that the monks actively encouraged people like Mathilde and Wido to follow a carefully scripted scenario designed specifically to manage the socio-economic status in and around Hesdin. It may, however, be confidently argued that rituals and other performances associated with the monastic worldview provided laymen with the appropriate circumstances to represent their transactions as a withdrawal of property from the conventions of human order and to avoid the division of wealth and property and the dissipation of status. The close involvement of the monks in fulfilling Wido's and Mathilde's spiritual and political goals helps explain why Robert of Fillièvres, as an heir bypassed by his own relatives, so purposefully aimed to force the monks, and not Wido, into negotiations. The events leading up to Robert's attacks on the monks' properties were preceded by an aggressive discourse aimed at forestalling any attempts to block the monastic acquisition of material wealth, an acquisition that did not take into account pre-existing social and familial networks. This explains the monks' fierce determination to continue referring to divine order as a justification for their actions and as a rejection of the equally justifiable arguments of their enemy. When this strategy eventually failed to pacify Robert, the monks found an ally in the count, who at the time was striving to confirm his position as the highest lay authority. Finding that his arguments would not stand up against military action, but also understanding that the monks had failed to end the dispute by emphasising the material into saintly hands, Robert agreed to negotiate a settlement in which he exchanged the disputed inheritance for a spiritual association. For the monks of Hesdin, and undoubtedly for many of their peers, seemingly banal compromises such as this generated material and symbolic returns far greater than has previously been assumed. Paradoxically, it was the enactment of a seemingly anti-social discourse that helped them to pursue their objectives most efficiently.
ITINERANT LORDSHIP

Relic Translations and Social Change in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Flanders

For the monastic communities of the central Middle Ages, relic translations were an effective means of enacting their privileged relationship with the divine. Typically staged on important days in the liturgical or secular calendar, these performances entailed the temporary or permanent removal of sacred relics (be it a saint's body or body parts) or any objects associated with sanctum from their usual resting place, thereby offering lay audiences a glimpse of the monks' ritual prowess. Inherent to translation rituals was a discourse that referred not only to the moral and thaumaturgical implications of the use of relics, but also to the monks' self-assumed position as intercessors with God and his saints, to the universal validity of divine law, and to the saints' active participation in human society.

Both the practice and the description of translations were especially popular in the region between the Rivers Loire and Scheldt. Both the practice and the description of translations were especially popular in the region between the Rivers Loire and Scheldt. From the middle of the First published in Papal History, 25 (2011), pp. 143-63. Copyright Oxford University Press, reproduced with permission.

1  A selective bibliography on this subject includes N. HERMANN-MASCARD, Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit (Paris, 1975), esp. pp. 175-89; M. HEINZELMANN, Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes (Turnhout, 1979); T. HEAD, Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200 (Cambridge / New York, 1990), pp. 135-201; and E. BOZÓKY, La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis: protection collective et légitimation du pouvoir (Paris, 2006). Patrick GEARY's Furta Sacra: Theft of Relics in the Central Middle Ages (Princeton, 1990) also merits attention for being one of the first major publications in English to treat relics and relic translations with the attention they deserve.


4  An indicative list of translations from ca. 1060 onwards was published in P. HÉLIOT / M.L. CHASTAING, 'Quêtes et voyages de reliques des églises françaises du Moyen Âge', in: Revue...
tenth century onwards, the county of Flanders and its neighbouring territories in particular constituted a core region in which translations were relatively common and monastic communities produced a significant number of translation reports either as autonomous narratives or as part of chronicles, hagiographical narratives and other types of text. Whereas these sources and the practices they describe are still rarely studied for what may be termed the ‘classic period’ of translation reports up to ca. 1060, few scholars have addressed the later period, up to the end of the twelfth century. These seem to be two main reasons for this. First, translation reports and practices up to the middle decades of the eleventh century have been intensively studied in relation to the attempts of the secular and the ecclesiastical elite to establish public order in Flanders. Lay lords (the counts in particular) and bishops appealed to monastic groups to sanction and support such endeavours by bringing the relics of the monks’ saints to major public gatherings where the Peace of God was proclaimed, physically manifesting the primacy of divine law. In conjunction with these objectives, monks defended their own, mostly domanial, interests by confronting their adversaries and supporters with the physical presence of their patron saint and allowing the latter to participate quite literally in the management and defence of monastic property. Second, sources that provide an insight into the practice of relic translations from the 1060s onwards suggest that, while translations continued to be an integral part of the rituals associated with the veneration of saints and the forming of a sense of community centred on a saint’s cult (evidence for which can be found for instance in the references to ostentationes and processions), their significance became increasingly detached from the management of social order and, more gradually, of notions such as ownership and representation in the management
of the monastic estate. Secular and ecclesiastical lords no longer relied on the divine immaturity conveyed through itinerant saints, trusting instead on their own, still largely itinerant authority and institutions to exercise justice and organise society. Monks for their part began to adopt a more low-key approach to the transportation and displaying of their patron’s relics when claiming disputed property, and gave priority to other social and religious interests when deciding upon the necessity of a translation.

Henri Plateille has already suggested that this way of representing attitudes with regard to relic translations does not entirely correspond with reality. In the minds of early twelfth-century abbots at least, relic translations as a means to defend monastic property regained, or had indeed retained, their former effectiveness and validity, and there is substantial evidence that the counts of Flanders among others responded favourably to this attitude. However, Plateille’s reading of the sources does not explain why monastic groups continued to rely on such symbolism when seemingly more effective – mostly legal and written – instruments of self-defence became available. It seems as if for a number of decades the monks continued to battle with outdated arms, finding themselves in a position where they needed to call upon an ever-growing arsenal of other instruments to maintain a certain credibility.

This article attempts to explain this apparent contradiction, and argues that the changing nature of secular power and institutions of late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Flanders is the key to a proper understanding of the changing discourse of monastic translation rituals. Central to my arguments is the hypothesis that the monks’ changing behaviour in dealing with the relics of patron saints was influenced both by the expansion and consolidation of secular institutions and by the realisation that a possible break-down of secular government in Flanders would not only threaten the safety of monastic communities and the integrity of their relic treasures, but would also jeopardise the stability of comital government. Paradoxically, one of the causes of this precarious situation was that the counts’ attempts to gain recognition as purveyors of peace and justice was supported by propaganda focusing on their divinely ordained role as peacemakers and bringers of justice, and that they found a welcome ally in saintly lords and their monastic servants to implement this discourse.

10 See note 7 above.
In an influential article on the public demonstration of power in the feudal era, Edina BOZÓKY argued that, from the tenth century onwards, relics of saints were invested with a twofold symbolism. The first relates to the notion that the patron saint of an abbey was also considered to be its lord, both in a spiritual and a legal, or seigneurial sense. Besides more direct objectives, such as the placement of relics in a new shrine or in a newly dedicated house of worship, Flemish monks performed translations as a means of manifesting both a saint's presence among the living and the physical reality of his or her lordship over the monastic community. Examples of such performances which were considered to be worth recording in narrative forms mostly coincided with important moments in a community's existence, when the support and presence of its head were required most: the founding or reform of an abbey, the acquisition of property and, most importantly, attempts to establish or re-establish the saint's authority over disputed estates. In addition to enacting a saint's lordship, translations also visualised its itinerant nature, thus reflecting the elite's prevailing technique for managing authority and government. Reports of _quêtes itinérantes_, during which the saint was allowed (or, in some cases, forced) to visit each of his estates in succession and claim ownership of them, contain ample evidence of the social reality and perceived effectiveness of these practices.
The second type of symbolism brought forward by Bozóky relates to the translation of relics as a substitute for the failure of secular leaders to bring peace and justice. At the meetings organised in the early eleventh century to proclaim the Peace of God, relics brought along from various monastic and other ecclesiastical institutions occupied, physically and ideologically, a central position, signifying, on the one hand, the validity of a divine law of order for which no earthly substitute existed, while prefiguring, on the other, the coming of Christ and his saints. In Flanders, the count became involved in the organisation of such meetings in 1024, 1030 and 1042-1043, clearly hoping to benefit from the prestige that was bestowed on the protagonists of these meetings and the divine sanctioning of their actions.

Although large peacemaking gatherings became less frequent around the middle of the eleventh century, monastic groups did not abandon this double discursive agenda. Contemporary reports of quêtes itinérantes by the monks of Lobbes in 1060 and Saint-Amand in 1066 are revelatory in this respect. Travelling several hundreds of miles across Flanders and its neighbouring territories, the monks' primary aim was to collect money for the construction of abbatical churches and to reclaim some of the more distant estates of the abbey from the hands of usurpers. But they were also actively seeking to intervene in...
communities designed by feuding,25 using the thaumaturgical virtue of the relics to stage carefully prepared denunciations of violence.26 With central justice inoperative, but with the monks enjoying the moral support of the count and his castellans,27 these interventions offered an opportunity for feuding parties to end their disputes in a context of reconciliation governed by divine law and uniquely dissociated from aristocratic honour.28

For the monks themselves, the rewards were great. By successfully endowing their saint with such unparalleled peacemaking abilities, monastic groups not only obtained a recognised status as intermediaries with the divine, but also created a great deal of goodwill towards their own claims and causes. Such meetings thus became an ideal opportunity for them to present their saint in his role as lord, to assert his claim to disputed estates, to collect money and to inspire potential patrons to contribute to the monastic community.29 It seems hard, then, not to agree with Geoffrey KOZIOL’s suggestion that ‘political cunning and self-interest, psychological tension, a sincere desire for peace … are not mutually exclusive explanations of the monks’ success’.30

While monastic groups had been the predominant force behind efforts to instil the idea of peace into the minds of the Flemish population in the mid-eleventh century, episcopal and, most importantly, comital policy in time made their involvement in such initiatives largely redundant. In the early 1080s, Bishop Arnulf of Soissons embarked on a tour of Flanders to proclaim the peace, trying to enforce it by virtue of his own authority.31 When the count of Flanders began raising a renewed interest in restoring the peace only a few years later, he increasingly strove to do so without ecclesiastical or even divine involvement. Enjoying the support of a growing network of representatives and reaping the benefits of decades of aggressive campaigning against the disintegration of feudal power, he could now rely on his leadership of secular society to impose the peace. The earliest signs of this process were communal oaths sworn under the authority of the count, regulating social behaviour in the

25 The context of these practices appears to have been what Dominique BARTHÉLEMY has identified as the onset of feudalisation and decentralisation; Chevaliers et miracles. La violence et le sacré dans la société féodale (Paris, 2004), p. 45 onwards.
26 HEINZELMANN, Translationsberichte, p. 39.
27 It was hardly a coincidence that the monks of Lobbes also went to Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, where Count Baldwin V was residing (SIGAL, ‘Les voyages’, p. 78).
Itinerant Lordship, Relic Translations and Social Change

emerging commercial centres of Flanders and protecting their inhabitants from the abuses of local lords. As a new proclamation of the peace at Soissons in 1093, Count Robert II himself not only guaranteed the peace, but also carefully defined his prerogatives in maintaining order in his county. In 1099, at a local eyred held in Saint-Omer, the count for the first time publicly challenged the bishops’ prerogative to proclaim the peace. Finally, in 1111, the young Baldwin VII felt confident enough to proclaim a new peace in the presence of all of his most prominent lords, with the notable (and most likely deliberate) exception of the bishops. In doing so, he followed the precedent set by his father, who had not bothered to invite any abbot to the sessions of Saint-Omer. The key argument in the management of Flemish society had thus definitively shifted from the primacy of divine law to the concrete achievements of the counts in claiming their place at the head of the secular pyramid.

Monastic groups undoubtedly perceived the declining popularity of the use of religious symbols, in particular relics, in public ceremonies of peace-making as a step backwards with regard to their status and social impact. The few recorded translations by monastic communities for the period between ca. 1070 and ca. 1100 either involved the gathering of saints at the dedication of new churches or monasteries or served direct financial goals, while quite numerous largely disappeared from the monastic agenda. Several cautionary remarks are found in contemporary reports, clearly alerting their audience to the risks of translations. When the church of the newly founded monastery of Anchin was consecrated in 1079, the monks of Marchiennes brought their patron Rictrudis to the gathering of saints that had been summoned to provide divine sanction to the ceremony. However, translations, however, took place at the

37 The exception to these practices confirmed the new rule: when Count Robert II was away on crusade (1096-1100) and unrest broke out in Bruges, the canons of the church of St Donatian brought out the relics of their patron to restore the peace (from the Miracula Sancti Donatiani, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS XV/2 (Hanover, 1888), p. 858, and discussed in BOZÓKY, ‘La politique’, p. 275).
39 HÉLIOT and CHASTAING have argued that the main incentive for translations in this period was the impoverishment of the abbeys, caused by the decline of central government and the ‘spoliations’ of the lower nobility: ‘Quêtes’, p. 800.
40 See DE GAIFFIER, ‘Les revendications’, esp. p. 135, on indications that the translation of relics had been largely abandoned in Marchiennes since the late eleventh century.
bequest of ecclesiastical and secular authorities,42 and the rewards for the monks consisted of little more than a confirmation of their status among the ecclesiastical institutions of the region. Andreas of Marchiennes, who described the proceedings at Anchin in the mid-twelfth-century edition of the Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, may have hinted at the increasingly problematic meaning of relic translations when he noted that the monks, knowing that the patroness did not like being transported for lucrative purposes, quickly brought her relics back to the abbey once the ceremonies had been completed.43

While Andreas obviously disregarded the symbolic purpose of Rictrudis’ journey to Anchin, his brief statement echoes criticism aimed at translations performed for purely financial reasons or that did not immediately concern the monastic community itself. Such criticism did not necessarily originate exclusively in ecclesiastical circles. Sometime during the next few years, the hard-pressed monks of Marchiennes decided to bring the relics of Eusebia, the daughter of their patron saint, to England, “where the people were very rich and devoted to saints”, which they thought would inspire them to make large donations.44 A delegation made the journey to translate the relics, but was met with the general apathy of the English population, who were not at all familiar with Eusebia.45 The monks soon ran out of financial reserves for transportation and food, and were forced to sell off the silver shrine that held the relics. A hasty and shameful return followed. Whether these events are authentic or not can no longer be verified, but the fact that the story of a failed translation is included in a miracle collection otherwise devoted to the glorious interventions of Eusebia and her mother Rictrudis indicates that the author considered it useful to warn his fellow monks against the potentially disastrous effects of exposing relics to an audience unconcerned with a particular saint. If monastic communities intended to maintain the credibility of relic translations for purposes other than the dedication of new houses of worship or new shrines, a discursive shift was urgently needed.

43 Although Andreas’ comments date from shortly before 1174, his attitude is reflected in that of the early twelfth-century townspeople of Saint-Riquier, who also disapproved of the use of their patron for fund-raising: R. KAISER, ‘Quêtes itinérantes avec des reliques pour financer la construction des églises (XIe-XIIe siècles)’, in: Le Moyen Âge, 101 (1995), p. 224.
44 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, rev. edn., p. 456.
45 While translations by other communities to England and even Denmark did take place in the course of the twelfth century, but only when the monks could lay claim to specific estates: HÉLIOT / CHASTAING, ‘Quêtes’, p. 810.
As the eleventh century drew to a close, the notion of itinerant lordship again became central to monastic discourse about the translations of relics. When a monk from Saint-Amand described a translation of his patron in June 1107, he noted that "the precious body was transported across the land, everywhere malicious men had done injustice to him, through woods and farmland, which they had unjustly invaded, and the saint (whose relics had been placed on horseback) would subject them, encountering no resistance". He also recorded for posterity what happened each time the monks halted at a previously fixed place: "in the presence of the holy body, and with the consent of the monks who were fighting together with the saint and of all spectators, all of those who from now on would have the insolence of bringing damage to these lands and woods were excommunicated in a loud declamation". The contemporary Miracula secunda Bavonis Gandensis, dated around 1108, elaborates on the fact that relic translations were usually part of a series of attempts to put the monks' adversaries under pressure. When the monks of Saint-Bavo in Ghent took action against the usurper of an estate in the village of Houtem, they first warned him privately on two separate occasions, then publicly denounced him in front of St Bavo's church before finally pronouncing a malediction. Having failed to convince him to repent, the monks then performed a translation of Bavo's relics to the village. Once there, they undoubtedly denounced the usurper once again amid his neighbours and peers.

Paradoxically, and in contrast with the early to mid-eleventh century, this renewed interest in the itinerant lordship of saints was not inspired by a lack of other means to combat anarchy and to settle disputes, not even in the south-western parts of the county, where the count had been unable to put an end to the fragmentation of power. Quite the contrary was true: although the two hagiographers of Saint-Amand and Saint-Bavo do not suggest that the monks were relying on other means to defend their interests than the ritual ones explicitly mentioned, other sources give us clues as to the fact that relic translations were part of a broader strategy rather than a final option for desperate abbeys.

For some years before the translation of 1107, Abbot Hugo

46 Miracula in itinere Bragbantino, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XV/2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 852-3.
47 Houtem, near Veurne (Belgian province of West Flanders). The text is edited in M. COENS, 'Translations et miracles de Saint-Bavon au XIe siècle', in: Analecta Bollandiana, 86 (1968), pp. 61-2.
50 BOUGARD ('La relique', p. 46) claims that such appeals to the 'irrational' were in fact a final resort in disputes.
II had been negotiating settlements with several of his lay adversaries. Actively pursuing a policy of literate government, he requested written confirmation of the abbey's rights from his patrons and protectors, and kept record of settlements with members of the local aristocracy. Charter evidence indicates that when Hugo ordered the translation of St. Amand mentioned above, he intended it to ritually confirm, or indeed celebrate, his successes in obtaining privileges and support from the count of Flanders and the papal administration.

This policy was no exception among monastic leaders, who, preceding and coinciding with the introduction of Cluniac customs in Flemish monasteries in the first years of the twelfth century, had been pursuing an aggressive strategy aimed at reassessing their institutions' relations with members of the lay elite. Hagiographers working under the supervision of abbots like Hugo continued to suggest that relic translations were necessary because of the lack of public structures. Yet, for a large number of disputed estates for which the intervention of a saint in the form of a translation was recorded, documentary evidence of protracted legal battles before episcopal and comital courts can easily be traced. Hence, Hugo's decision to perform a translation was not so much a final option as a demonstration of the fact that the saint's lordship was backed not only by divine sanction, but also by worldly institutions.

In the meantime, the counts of Flanders, recovering from a period of weakened authority, were pursuing strategies that allowed them to proclaim pax and bring iustitia, the two cardinal tasks of the divinely ordained ruler. In this early phase of institutionalisation and centralisation, however, their concrete behaviour corresponded to a position halfway between the ideology of the early eleventh-century peace meetings and a contemporary trend towards political pragmatism. This is particularly noticeable in a number of cases in which they intervened in disputes between the abbeys of Saint-Vaast in Arras, Saint-Amand, and Marchiennes and their lay officers during the second and third

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52. H. PLATELLE, Le temporel de l'abbaye de Saint-Amand des origines à 1340 (Paris, 1962), pp. 126-7; and VANDERPUTTEN, 'Monastic Literate Practices', pp. 110-11. BOUGARD ('La relique', p. 45, note 32) claims that the translation was little more than a "tournée triomphale" and thus not considered to be an effective instrument for defending the monks' interests.
54. VANDERPUTTEN, 'Monastic Literate Practices'.
55. BOUGARD, 'La relique', p. 47.
58. See Andreas of Marchiennes' account of relations with the count in the Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680), pp. 104-5, and two charters issued by Charles
This page contains a discussion on the use of relic translations by counts in Flanders during the 12th century to assert their position as purveyors of justice. It highlights the use of intermediaries and the preference for acts that did not strictly belong to legal discourse. A specific example is provided involving Count Baldwin VII and the monks of Marchiennes. The counts' reputation as protectors of monastic communities influenced Abbot Amand's decision to appeal against disputing laymen. The counts preferred to seek the consent of the local community rather than relying on formal legal procedures. This approach allowed them to fulfill their duty to bring justice without risking an open conflict with powerful laymen. The page also references several sources for further reading on the topic.
Although they offer but glimpses of early tenth-century social practices, these examples show that the relic translations from this period do not testify to the decay of public institutions, but, on the contrary, to the delicate process of their expansion and consolidation. Monks deliberately summoned the power of their patrons as lords to work in tandem with secular justice and other methods of formal and informal dispute settlement. This explains why relic translations in the final decades of the eleventh century, when there appears to have been a less tight connection between the count’s policies and the monks’ translation initiatives, focused less on the lordship of patron saints than on their thaumaturgical powers. The counts’ behavior in the first decades of the twelfth century suggests, on the other hand, that they had quickly become aware of the benefits of incorporating translations into the strategy of expanding their authority. In the early eleventh century, they had used monastic relics and relic translations as a means of bringing peace to the county. While the part of central authority over time became thoroughly secularized, their role as bringers of justice in the early twelfth century underwent a similar process of association with the saints and their relics.

Relic translations functioned in a complementary relationship with other means of exerting pressure and creating opportunities to resolve disputes, all of which were intended to benefit the count’s grip on his territories. He thus acknowledged the role of the patron saints of an abbey as secular lord for pragmatic reasons, and used this particular aspect of the symbolism attached to relics to deal with the potentially disastrous impact of open conflict on his own ambitions.

III

Close reading of translation reports from the early twelfth century shows that the monastic use of relic translations as tools for demonstrating the itinerant lordship of saints was intimately linked to the monks’ increasing options to defend their interests through other means, in particular the support of the count. When Count Charles the Good was murdered in March 1127, this delicate situation was disturbed. In the wake of the count’s death, members of

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64 For similar comments, see BOUGARD, “La relique”, p. 47.
65 Translatio Sancti Jonati in passing mentions Count Charles’ interest in the patron saints of Marchiennes and his conversations with the monks regarding this subject: VANDERPUTTEN, ‘A Miracle’, pp. 75-6.
66 The bibliography on the murder of Charles the Good and its impact on Flemish society is extensive. The events themselves are famously recounted in the two contemporary accounts of Galbert of Bruges and John of Thérouanne, respectively ed. J. RIDER, Galbertus notarius Brugensis, De multro, traditione et occisione gloriosi Karoli comitis Flandriarum, CCCM 131 (Turnhout, 1994), and IDEM, Walteri Archidiaconi Tervanensis Vita Karoli comitis Flandrie et vita domni Ioannis Morinensis episcopi: quibus subiunguntur poemata aliqua de morte comitis Karoli conscripta et quaestio de
the aristocracy threatened local communities throughout Flanders by using the temporary power vacuum to claim a number of disputed estates, many of which belonged to monastic houses.67 The latter, however, showed great reluctance to perform translations during this troubled period, preferring methods that avoided the loss of precious relics. Excommunications, the ritual clamor and other public denouncements were legion, but the relics of patron saints remained under lock and key.

A unique account of a translation of relics that did take place before the peace was restored appears to corroborate the hypothesis that the appeal for the saints’ status as lords was temporarily abandoned as a means of managing conflict. In the late summer of 1127, the monks of Marchiennes were informed that members of the local lay elite threatened Sailly-en-Ostrevant, a small village belonging to the abbey through the heritage of St Eusebia.69 Described in the contemporary translation report as ‘hungry wolves’,70 these individuals had been taking advantage of the political anarchy to demand taxes from the inhabitants. Desperate for help and most likely at the suggestion of a converse who was residing locally as the monks’ representative,71 the villagers turned to Abbot Amand to request a translation of Eusebia, patron of their parish church and nominal owner of the village. Because of Eusebia’s status in the cult of saints at Marchiennes and because of the dangers involved in sending such...
precious relics to a conflict zone, the abbot declined to comply. To compensate for his refusal, he offered them a small relic of St Jonatus, which they accepted. After a procession around the village, the shrine holding the relic was placed under a canopy of branches that allowed the population to view it without entering the church.72

According to the author of the contemporary Translatio Sancti Jonati, Jonatus’ powers became evident when on Sunday, 14 September, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, a sudden gust of wind blew out the candles in the parochial church. While the villagers were still looking for fire, a heavenly light shone out from under the construction that protected the relics from the elements, and the candles were miraculously relit. As soon as the news of the miracle reached the monastery, Amand decided to quietly retrieve the relic from the village church and to bring it back to Marchiennes. Despite the strong protests of the villagers, who claimed that the rumour of the miracle was holding their enemies at bay, it was decided that all relics were to remain safely at the Abbey, where they could be venerated in an appropriate liturgical context.

To conclude his story, the author of the report made the observation that the villagers were once again exposed to the threats of their enemies.74 Apart from this somewhat unsettling finale, the translation report and the events it describes are remarkable in two respects. First, the translation itself and the enemies’ alleged reaction to the miracle show that the physical presence of a saint at disputed locations and the impact of fabricated or spontaneous rumours regarding his or her powers were still considered an effective (if not always conclusive) argument in conflict situations. Second, the story’s unusualness lies in the fact that it explicitly describes Jonatus’ protection as a substitute for the count’s legal powers.75

Notes:

72 KOZIOL, ‘Monks’, p. 253. On the role of processions in translation rituals, see DE WIT, Translatio, pp. 163-4, 253-4; LECREN, Loc. cit.; and LEBLANC, Histoire de nos reliques, p. 59. A contemporary description of a procession in honour of St Peter and St Paul can be found in the Annulaires of the monastery of Fleury, See HEAD, Hagiography, p. 139. Other examples can be found in SIGAL, ‘Les voyages’, p. 87.

73 In eleventh-century Fleury, the monks erected a tent outside the monastery each time new relics arrived, so that the population could venerate them under their watchful eye: HEAD, Hagiography, p. 139. Other examples in SIGAL, ‘Les voyages’, p. 87.

74 In 1104, the monks of Lobbes were asked by Liezo, a monk who oversaw their priory in Herly, to perform a translation of the relics of Ermin in order to deter the militia of the nearby castle of Montaigu. Fearing that the population would want to keep the body, the monks, according to the local Deeds of the Abbots of Lobbe, chose to translate Theodulph, a saint without a miracle record. When translating Theodulph’s body, they pretended it to be Ermin and only revealed the saint’s true identity when he failed to perform miracles: Gesta abbatum Lobbiensium (continuatio), ed. W. ARNDT, MGH SS XXI (Hanover, 1869), p. 318.

75 Ed. VANDERPUTTEN, ‘A Miracle’, pp. 76-7: igitur simulac breviter attigimus vel potius deflevimus casum inmeritum, repentinum interitum patroni ac defensoris nostri, Karoli videlicet comitis excellentissimi, reflectamus interius ad merita sancti Ionati gloriosi confessoris Christi exequenda, nobis a Domino pio previsore nostro vice Karoli protectoris nostri vigilantissimi ad tutelam rerum nostrarum deputati, quem Deus, ut credimus, ad maiorem terrorem incutiendum hostibus undique sevientibus declaravit signo subsequent...
convincing because the text itself was probably written before the restoration of stable central government in Flanders.76 Yet the Translatio does not conceal the fact that Jonatus was the patron of neither the village nor the abbey. What is more, it suggests that the villagers were not at all familiar with this saint. While Eusebia's loss would have caused irreparable damage to the abbey's long-term interests, there was little risk involved in sending a small sample of the relics of Jonatus,77 whose cult was only in the process of being revived at the time of the count's death.38 However, once rumours of Jonatus' thaumaturgical powers had proven their impact on power relations in a local community, the monks reconsidered their interest in the relics, especially now that it was harvest time and many other of their estates became vulnerable to pillagers.39 Perhaps wisely, Amand decided to concentrate his saints' powers at the abbey and not to perform any further translations for as long as the anarchy lasted.40

With the restoration of peace in July 1128 came an end to the status awarded to St Jonatus, as if the restoration of secular hierarchies ran parallel with a restoration of the lordship of saints. Revealing in this respect is the fact that Jonatus' role in the episode of 1127 was probably erased from the monks' official memory: whereas the revised Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis (1164-1166/7) includes an abridged account of the 1127 miracle, the author simply omitted Jonatus' name, merely mentioning the translation of 'the relics of saints, which were kept in the monastery'.41 As some form of law and order returned to the land, the monks of Marchiennes also returned to the tried and trusted formula of translating the relics of their estates. Whereas Eusebia had been kept away from the public eye in 1127, she once again manifested herself shortly after peace was restored. When two advocates of the abbey began incarcerating the villagers of Abscon, a former estate of Eusebia, and oppressing them with extortion,42 the monks followed a procedure similar to that executed at Sailly-en-Ostrevant. After the local representative of the abbey had failed to convince the advocates of their crimes, Amand sent for them and exhorted them to change their behaviour. When the men indignantly refused on the grounds of their hereditary claims to the village,
owner Eusebia to the parochial church. In a ceremony held to force the saint into assuming her responsibilities, the relics were ritually handled over (super spinas) in the middle of the church, so that the entrants had a clear view of the ritual.84 The monks then refused to remove the thorns before justice was done. Around harvest time, the men finally repented before the abbot, and the thorns were removed in a public ceremony.85 Around that time, it was also decided that the body of Eusebia would be imprisoned once a year to the village of Haringue, her former abbey, for a number of monks would perform nightly services and the abbot or his dean would do the same during daytime. After a day of services, the inside would return to their village.86

Despite their formal differences, each of the three types of translation of Eusebia's relics was based on the fundamental notion that she was associated with certain estates by virtue of her ownership and that she was responsible for looking after the monks' interests.

IV

Around the time of the restoration of saintly lordship, abbatial government was slowly transforming under the influence of changing practices of secular and ecclesiastical government. Whereas Amand of Marchiennes and his contemporaries had been relatively free to deploy a wide range of strategies of self-defence, their successors were put under increasing pressure by the episcopal authorities and a group of second-generation reformers to associate themselves with a centralised system of monastic government under the supervision of the bishop.88 Potent witnesses to these tensions are the fierce disputes regarding exemption from episcopal authority and the free election of abbots. The outcome of these disputes often amounted to a compromise, which by its very existence shows that by the early 1140s bishops had a much greater say in Flemish abbatial politics than before.89

84 GEARY, Living, pp. 98-10, esp. pp. 97-99 and 103-5.
85 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, p. 107.
86 IDEM, Miracula Sanctae Rictrudis, rev. edn., p. 457.
87 Ibid., p. 459.
89 VANDERPUTTEN, 'A Time'.


quickly gaining in importance and the legal weight of written evidence growing exponentially, leaders of monastic houses in Flanders were also losing fewer opportunities to defend their interests or to overawe their adversaries.

The miracle collections of Marchiennes show that these and other processes profoundly affected monastic attitudes towards relic translations. In the work of the monk Andreas, who was writing in the 1160s but had certainly witnessed events at the abbey as early as the 1130s, an interesting episode is found relating to the economically significant village of Reninge, between the Flemish towns of Veurne and Ypres.90 Reninge had a long history of conflict. Interest in its ownership was strong, owing to the fact that the rapid urbanisation of the region had caused the extensive woods of Reninge to be cleared and replaced by small farms, on which the serfs produced highly lucrative, commercialised crops. Over a short period of time, the value of the tithe of Reninge increased immensely91 and became the subject of prolonged disputes between the monks of Marchiennes, the canons of Voormezele and a number of laymen of various statures.92 In 1135, Daniel of Termonde, who claimed to hold part of Reninge in fief from the count, bowed to the pressure of excommunication and denounced his previous claims to the estate in the presence of the relics of Rictrudis,93 who was considered by the monks to be the owner. The translation described by Andreas took place just five years later, when the monks brought the body of Rictrudis to one of her estates in the village, apparently at the request of the villagers, so that she could "easily reclaim [it] in her own right"94. In Andreas' version of the events, a new shrine just happened to be finished and,95 in accordance with liturgical prescription, it was decided that Milo,
bisp of Thérouanne, would perform the ritual of transferring the body from one shrine into the other and that this ceremony would take place in Reninge itself. Bishop Alvisus of Arras, with whom the monks were not on the best of terms, also attended the ceremony. It is obvious from Andreas' account of the translation that the new shrine and the liturgy of transferring the relics to that shrine were of more interest to him than the socio-political context. Not mentioned is the crucial fact—attested in a charter from 1163, around the time Andreas was actually compiling his collection of miracle stories—that the lord of Termonde had been threatened with excommunication at the time, which allows concluding with near certainty that the translation included a public denouncement of the usurpers. The same charter also indicates that Count of Flanders had only recently (i.e. sometime before 1163) renounced his rights to the tithes, which could be added to the count's own donation in 1161 of one-tenth of the newly won land and of some land to erect a church and a few cellulae. On 2 August 1164, the relics of Marchienne were placed in yet another shrine. To underscore the significance of these events, the ceremony took place in the presence of the archbishop of Rheims, the brother of the king of France, Bishop Andreas of Arras and a large number of other ecclesiastical dignitaries. This indicates that the disputed status of Reninge was still an ongoing concern when Andreas was writing, even though he avoided commenting upon it in a way that associated it with the translations.

In 1140, the monks of Marchienne had used the relics of their saintly lord as their predecessors had done for the past half-century. In Andreas' 1160s account, however, the political nature of the translation was acknowledged, but minimised by the attention given to the formal act of translating the relics. His attitude, which derives from at least three different causes, is reflected in the sharp decrease of instances of itinerant lordship in contemporary sources. First, Andreas' own comments regarding the translation to Anchin in 1079 might indicate that the monks were aware of the potential danger of overexposure to a public increasingly weary of translations for what appeared to be prosaic reasons. Indeed, one may assume that the abandonment of quêtes itinérantes in favour of an increased rate of translations to individual, disputed estates and the abbot's fairly aggressive discourse to justify such actions in the early twelfth century was not in the monks' long-term interest. Although it is beyond question that monks and the broader population in general did accord significant spiritual meaning to the use of relics, the specific, prosaic nature of
the disputes in which these translations were sometimes performed may have created the impression that they were using their saint exclusively to gain proprietary and financial advantages, especially since rights and revenues (rather than direct exploitation) were becoming increasingly central to the monastic economy. It also might have created a good deal of resentment among the lay elites, who were the monastic regular adversaries but often also held monastic offices and thus were inextricably, and permanently, involved in the monks’ social network. If nothing else, ill-judged interventions by a patron saint might have antagonised potential and actual benefactors of an abbey, thus affecting the monastic economy for generations to come. Whether or not Guibert of Nogent’s comments on the abuse of relics for such purposes apply to some of the Flemish monasteries from this period,101 Andreas’ own approach to the events described above in any case suggests that some monks were indeed more aware of the necessity to show restraint in organising translations than their predecessors.

Second, a number of reports of translations from the 1130s onwards devote significant space to acknowledging the presence and involvement of ecclesiastical dignitaries, most notably bishops. The growing involvement of the ecclesiastical hierarchy certainly originated from a desire to control the number of “wild” translations and various related abuses,102 but the increasing impact of episcopal power on the internal life of monastic communities should also be taken into account. For example, the presence of Bishop Alvisus of Arras at the translation of Eusebia in 1140 most likely constituted an explicit declaration of intent with regard to his plans to subject the monks to a visitation and to gain more control over the abbatial election.103 In the translations that were still being performed, the presence of so many ecclesiastical dignitaries, especially those belonging to the episcopal ranks, indicated that the translations were now at best an officially sanctioned apotheosis of the abbots’ rallying for support instead of a first-hand means of confronting their adversaries.

Third, the increasing impact of juridical institutions and the changing attitudes towards evidence clearly influenced the place of translations in the monks’ arsenal of arguments.104 This was made clear to the monks of Saint-
Amand as early as 1152, when they became embroiled in a dispute over the appointment of their lay provost with the deceased provost's widow and son. After fruitlessly arguing that the monastic community could freely elect its provost as stipulated in Count Baldwin's charter of 1116, the monks had ritually humiliated their patron's relics. This evidently made little impression on their adversaries, as the latter promptly rejected the validity of the ritual, demanding a judgment of the feudal court to terminate the dispute. While relics remained powerful objects of veneration and important assets in the strategic toolkit of religious communities, their role in representing the patron saints' seigneurial status was clearly on the wane. The itinerant lordship of saints was increasingly supplanted by the written word, a stronger feudal network and the growing impact of centralised jurisdiction. This does not necessarily mean that saintly lordship was rejected, merely that it lost much of its impact on the process of negotiation between monks and their adversaries.

In 1183, when the bishop of Arras issued a charter to proclaim that the abbot of Marchiennes and a man named Stephen of Breuille-lez-Marchiennes had reached a settlement regarding a tithe in Aniche, the restitution took place during a solemn ceremony in the presence of the body of Eusebia. Crucially, however, the relics had remained at the abbey during the dispute and negotiations, and only resumed their mobile qualities to attend the confirmation of the agreement.

By the third quarter of the twelfth century, the county of Flanders had not merely witnessed a great number of relic translations, but had also seen how, over the course of two centuries, these translations had undergone significant changes with regard to scale, participants and immediate purpose. Relics of saints continued to be seen as evidence of the monks' singular relation with the divine, but the itinerant lordship of a patron saint no longer functioned as a valid argument in the monks' disputes with outsiders. Relic translations and processions remained a familiar sight, but had lost much of their meaning in a dispute context. As far as Flanders and its immediate surroundings were concerned, the emphasis on patron saints' itinerant lordship was gradually replaced by that of the saints' role as intercessors with the divine, providing solace primarily in moral, medical and other, personal, matters. Although more research is needed to verify the validity of such observations on the decline of translations, it certainly seems true that the lordship of saints as an

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105 Plateelle, ‘Deux chartes’, p. 107. Herrmann-Mascaré argues that the monks of Saint-Amand were among the last monastic communities on record to use the humiliation of saints as a means of exercising pressure in the mid-twelfth century: ‘Les reliques’, p. 227.


107 On the increasing interest of ecclesiastical authorities in translations, see Hélio / Chastaing, ‘Quêtes’.

108 The lords of Ninove used relics whenever they went into battle (Bijsterveld, Do ut des, pp. 230-46).
instrument in the management of disputes was increasingly supplanted by legal, institutional and other "worldly" arguments.  

In this article, I have argued that changes in the monastic practice of relic translations as an instrument in the management of disputes between ca. 1050 and ca. 1150 were closely related to the changing nature of secular power. Looking at evidence for the county of Flanders, I have shown how the public display of relics was initially considered useful in demonstrating the validity of a universal law of divine origin. After a brief interval in the late eleventh century, however, saintly lordship increasingly became central to monastic discourse regarding the significance of translations and to their concrete applications. Paradoxically, the appeal to such arguments did not derive from the absence of other means of self-definition, but from the counts’ policy of expanding their jurisdictional powers and from the increasing availability of such instruments. During this transitional phase, for strategic reasons the counts supported abbatial policies to combine ritual, legal, and written arguments in their conflicts with the laity. Although the bureaucratization of society and the growing pre-eminence of episcopal and secular institutions on monastic government would in subsequent decades curtail the initiatives of abbots, such strategies reveal the uncertain outcome of processes we perceive as inevitable. However, with secular and ecclesiastical courts gaining in influence in the course of the twelfth century, translations lost their decisive impact as they were slowly phased out, initially becoming complementary instruments to legal procedures, but eventually also because those who used them as political tools recognized that documentary evidence and legal action were more effective and reliable in the longer term.  

Equal importance should be given to "internal" reasons for the growing reluctance of monastic leaders to use relic translations as an instrument of dispute management from the mid-twelfth century onwards. Among these, the most important surely are the decreasing impact of translations due to overexposure (itself caused in part by the growing complexity of the disputed issues, which automatically heightened the need for multiple translations), the regulation of translation rituals by the ecclesiastical authorities, and the increasing importance of institutional means of dispute resolution. 

109 Jean-Pierre Gerzague’s analysis of a dispute over the head relic of the apostle James between the monks of Saint-Vaast, the bishop of Arras and the count of Flanders in the years 1166-1172 shows how the underlying issues at stake were, on the one hand, the abbey’s claims to episcopal exemption, and, on the other, competition for the prestige of owning the relics of a popular saint and being able to place them in one’s own house of worship: ‘Tempête pour un crâne. Conflit pour une relique à l’abbaye Saint-Vaast d’Arras. Péripéties et enjeux (1166-1194),’ in: Revue du Nord, 87 (2005), pp. 727-51.  

management. In a sense, the itinerant lordship of patron saints had become too familiar and too much steeped in outdated practices of social management to make the same impression that it had made in the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth.
The hagiographical corpus pertaining to the cult of St Jonatus († ca. 690) reflects its modest impact on medieval religious practices. As far as we know, Jonatus first emerged as a hagiographical subject in the female monastery of Marchiennes, more precisely in the homiletic Lectiones in commemoratione et transitu sancti Ionati confessons qui celebratur kalendis Augusti (BHL 4447-4448).1 The Lectiones consist of two distinct parts. The date of the first part, essentially a Vita of Jonatus (BHL 4447), remains uncertain, but can be placed between the early tenth century and the second quarter of the eleventh.2 Judging by its biographical contents, it seems that the author was unable to extract much meaningful information from his sources. This lack, however, did not prevent him from sketching a role model for the edification of his audience and establishing 

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1 The partial edition in AASS Augusti I (Antwerp, 1733), pp. 73-5 is complemented in the Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Bibliothecae Regiae Bruxellensis. Pars I: Codices latini membranei, II (Brussels, 1889), pp. 273-5. 
2 Hucbald was at least familiar with Jonatus, as his Vita sanctae Rictrudis (BHL 7247) refers to the latter's grave and its location; see K. UGÉ, Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 101. In 1995, Yves CHARTIER included BHL 4447 in his survey of Hucbald's authentic works and dated it to ca. 909: 'Clavis Operum Hucbaldi Elnonensis: Bibliographie des œuvres d'Hucbald de Saint-Amand', in: The Journal of Medieval Latin, 5 (1995), pp. 211-12. Fr. DOLBEAU earlier suggested that the entire Lectiones (BHL 4447 and 4448) can be attributed to Hucbald: 'Le dossier hagiographique de S. Amé, vénéré à Douai. Nouvelles recherches sur Hucbald de Saint-Amand', in: Analecta Bollandiana, 97 (1979), p. 92 (reprinted with addenda in Sanctorum societas. Récits latins de sainteté (IIIe-XIIe siècles) (Brussels, 2005), p. 234). This hypothesis was rejected in A.-M. HELVÉTIUS, Abbayes, évêques et laïques. Une politique du pouvoir en Hainaut au Moyen Âge (VIIe-XIe siècle) (Brussels, 1994), p. 330, note 97, where she dates the Lectiones to "not before the year 977". More recently, she has offered a revised dating of "not before the year 1000", possibly after the reform of 1024; 'Réécriture hagiographique et réforme monastique: les premières Vitae de saint Humbert de Maroilles (Xe-XIe siècles)', in: La réécriture hagiographique dans l’Occident médiéval. Transformations formelles et idéologiques, eds M. GOULLET / M. HEINZELMANN (Ostfildern, 2003), p. 218. While she agrees with DOLBEAU that both parts were written by the same author, her arguments to date the Lectiones all derive from an analysis of BHL 4448 (see below note 4).
Jonatus’ place in history as first abbot of Marchiennes. The second part of the narrative (BHL 4448), which describes the invention of Jonatus’ relics and a fairly uneventful elevation, most likely dates from shortly after 1024, when Leduin of Saint-Vaast reformed monastic life at the abbey and replaced the entire female community with a group of Benedictine monks. By the middle of the eleventh century, Jonatus was established in the canon of saints with particular, if not necessarily exceptional, significance to the monastic community.

Throughout the second half of the eleventh century, the description of Jonatus’ life and actions failed to have much impact on the cult of saints or the practices of historical remembrance at Marchiennes. Despite his status as first abbot of the community, the traditions regarding Jonatus seem to have consisted of little more than a name. It is also impossible to verify if the Lectiones continued to be recited at the saint’s feast (on 1 August) or on the day of his translation (8 April),

but at least the monks remained familiar with the site of his grave in the abbatial church. Jonatus’ third (or second, depending on whether one considers the Lectiones as one narrative or not) and final appearance as the subject of a hagiographical narrative occurred during the first decades of the twelfth century. The Translatio sancti Jonati in vilia Saliacensi (BHL 3 847 Codex 4 [after 1050]).

Regarding what little was known of Jonatus before the end of the tenth century, see D. Misonne, 'Jonat', in: Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques, 27 (Paris, 2000), cols 1483-4. On the reform, see Ugé, Creating the Monastic Past, pp. 112-13. The elevation of Jonatus’ relics is dated by the author of BHL 4448 to the late tenth-century abbacy of Judith (see above), but it seems more likely to have been a later event (see the previous note). The oldest two manuscript copies of the text allow the terminus ante quem of the Lectiones as a coherent narrative to be established as ca. 1050: Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 849, fols 61r-68r (from the abbey of Marchiennes); and Mons, Bibliothèque de l’Université, R4/G 847 Codex 4 (after 1050). See also Ugé, Creating the Monastic Past, pp. 129-30. The idea that the female community had already been replaced at the time of writing (see in the first place Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 849, fol. 66v) was based on the assumption that the miniatures in the Marchiennes manuscript of the Lectiones were painted after the reforms. For a more detailed discussion of the miniatures, see P. Ó hEirný and M.P. Dion-Turkovics, ‘Les manuscrits à peinture de l’abbaye de Marchiennes jusqu’à la fin du 12e siècle’, in: Bulletin de la Commission départementale d’Histoire et d’Archéologie du Pas-de-Calais, 11 (1981), p. 52, and catalogue notice 19 in: La représentation de l’Invisible. Trésors de l’enluminure romane en Nord-Pas-De-Calais (Valenciennes, 2007), p. 48. Finally, P. Ó hEirný and M.P. Dion-Turkovics date the Marchiennes manuscript to the abbacy of Leduin (1024-1033): ‘Les manuscrits à peinture de l’abbaye de Marchiennes jusqu’à la fin du 12e siècle’, in: Bulletin de la Commission départementale d’Histoire et d’Archéologie du Pas-de-Calais, 11 (1981), p. 52, and catalogue notice 19 in: La représentation de l’Invisible. Trésors de l’enluminure romane en Nord-Pas-De-Calais (Valenciennes, 2007), p. 48. The Marchiennes manuscript was conceived after the reforms, which the monks in 1033, analogous entry 57 in La France romane au temps des premiers Capétiens (Bruxelles, 1979), p. 154.

Jonatus’ place in history as first abbot of Marchiennes. The second part of the narrative (BHL 4448), which describes the invention of Jonatus’ relics and a fairly uneventful elevation, most likely dates from shortly after 1024, when Leduin of Saint-Vaast reformed monastic life at the abbey and replaced the entire female community with a group of Benedictine monks. By the middle of the eleventh century, Jonatus was established in the canon of saints with particular, if not necessarily exceptional, significance to the monastic community.

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A twelfth-century revival of Jonatus' cult

The first indications of an increased interest in Jonatus as a historical figure date from around 1116-1120, when the *Lectiones* claim regarding his status as first head of Marchiennes was replicated in local historiography. Whereas the early hagiography of Amandus (who was presumed to be Jonatus' abbot and mentor) and the earliest historiographical sources from Saint-Amand and Marchiennes do not mention Jonatus,8 his name appears several times in early twelfth-century historical narratives from both monasteries. The anonymous author of the *Poleticum Marceniensis cenobii* (ca. 1116-1121) for example confirms Jonatus' abbacy,9 while a roughly contemporary chronicle from Saint-Amand adds that he had been functioning as abbot of Marchiennes for some time when he was appointed as third abbot of Saint-Amand.10 This version of events was accepted as fact in subsequent historical narratives.11

Jonatus' first reappearance in a hagiographical context can be dated to the years 1124-1127. In the *Patrocinium* (BHL 7249), which was devised as an introduction to a miracle collection devoted to Marchiennes' patron saint Rictrudis, the author Gualbert quoted the *Lectiones* to remind his readers of the

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11 The anonymous *Chronicon brevis de fundatoribus et abbatibus Elnonensibus* (twelfth-thirteenth century) adds that a monk named Andreas succeeded to Jonatus as abbot of Elno before Amand's death, supposedly while the latter was preparing for his third journey to Rome; partial edition in F. DE REIFFENBERG, Chronique rimée de Philippe Mouskès, I (Brussels, 1836), pp. 518-20, with additions in MGH SS XIII (Hanover, 1881), pp. 387-8; the best manuscript is Brussels, Archives Générales du Royaume, Archives Ecclésiastiques, 16961ter, fols 1r-[4]r. See L. VAN DER ESSEN, Étude critique et littéraire sur les Vitae des saints mérovingiens de l’ancienne Belgique (Louvain / Paris, 1907), pp. 270-3; and H. PLATELLE, Le temporel de l’abbaye de Saint-Amand des origines à 1340 (Paris, 1962), pp. 48-9.
punishment of an incredulous monk called Malgerus, who had ignored Jonatus’ repeated urgings to perform his elevation.12 Gualbert did not date the miracle, but its inclusion in the Patrocinium along with the reference to Jonatus’ burial site indicates that the saint had recently received the attention of those who oversaw the cult of saints and their relics at the abbey. The first concerted attempt, however, to reinstate Jonatus as an important hagiographical subject is to be situated in the aftermath of the murder of Count Charles the Good in Bruges on 2 March 1127. The resulting narrative, now known as the Translatio sancti Jonati in villa Saliacensi, is less of an account of a translation (or, rather, a temporary transfer of relics) than a discussion of the monks’ attempts to promote Jonatus to a more prominent position among the saints venerated at the abbey and use his relics as a token of divine protection.13 Much as was already the case with the contemporary hagiography of Rictrudis, the primary reason for producing new hagiographical work relating to Jonatus resided in his potential role as a defender of the monastic community against those who wished to impinge on its spiritual or material integrity.

A brief summary shows how these strategies are woven into the Translatio sancti Jonati. The narrative opens with a discussion of the circumstances of the count’s murder, the punishment meted out to his assassins and the political anarchy in the months following the events of March 1127. His excellent political and spiritual relations with the monks of Marchiennes are discussed at length, with particular emphasis on the fact that his authority had prevented the local aristocracy from violating the abbey’s integrity. The disastrous effects of his demise are illustrated by the example of what happened to the small villa of Sailly-en-Ostrevant.14 Realising that they would have no chance of escape from the attacks of their enemies, the villagers had sent a delegation to Abbot Amand de Castello (1116-probably 27 May 1136) to request that the relics of St Eusebia be brought over to their village.15 According to hagiographical tradition, this daughter of Rictrudis had been the first abbess of Hamage, and Sailly-en-Ostrevant was considered part of her estates.16 By the early twelfth

12  AASS Maii III, p. 154. A description of the incident and of the translation itself can be found in the Lectiones van AASS Augusti I, p. 74.
13  BETHMANN erroneously claimed that the Translatio was a history of the abbey following the murder of Charles the Good; see his comments in Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde, 8 (1843), p. 427.
14  Département Pas-de-Calais, Arrondissement Arras, Canton Vitry-en-Artois.
15  Regarding the dates of Amand’s abbacy, see DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 123.
16  From the publication of the Patrocinium onwards, the hagiographers of Marchiennes assumed that Rictrudis was the sister-in-law of Erchinoald, mayor of Neustria (641-657). Erchinoald himself was related to Dagobert through his mother: K. UGÉ, ‘The Legend of Saint Rictrude: Formation and Transformations (Tenth-Twelfth Century)’, in: Anglo-Norman Studies, 23 (2000), pp. 293-4; also published in a slightly revised version in Creating the Monastic Past. According to the Translatio sancti Jonati, Sailly-en-Ostrevant had been donated to Eusebia by King Dagobert, although the latter’s identity is only implied by a reference to Eusebia’s royal origins.
IX. A Miracle of Jonatus in 1127

century, Hamage had become a priory of Marchiennes, but the villagers still saw Eusebia as their protector.17 Because of her importance to the cult of saints at Marchiennes, however, abbot Amand refused to take the risk of losing her relics to the enemies of the village or, worse still, to the villagers themselves. Instead, he offered them a small relic of St Jonatus, which they accepted and brought back to Sailly-en-Ostrevant. The majority of the villagers welcomed Jonatus' relics, although some expressed their disappointment at receiving the relics of an obscure saint in place of Eusebia.

Soon after the relics were deposited in the village, Jonatus' powers were made apparent by the sole miracle described in this narrative. The miraculous reignition of candles which had been extinguished by a sudden gust of wind became the subject of fierce debate between a number of witnesses and Helduinus, the pious but sceptical uncle of the local villicus.

Finally convinced

17  For a discussion of Hamage's early history, see H. PLATELLE, 'Hamage', in: Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques, 23 (Paris, 1990), cols 199-200; B. DELMAIRE, Le diocèse d'Arras de 1093 au milieu du XIVe siècle (Arras, 1994), p. 198; and UGÉ, Creating the Monastic Past, pp. 111-12. It remains unclear at which point Sailly-en-Ostrevant became part of the estates of Marchiennes. A charter of Charlemagne from 813 in which he donates the village to the monks of Marchiennes is a forgery; see T. DE HEMPTINNE, 'Un prétendu diplôme de Charlemagne pour l'abbaye de Marchiennes', in: Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire, 146 (1980), pp. 1-13. The first reliable document to describe the village with its name is a charter of King Baldwin I (972-989) in which he grants the village to the monastery of Saint-Quentin (ibid., cols 199-200). The first reliable document to mention the village with its present name is a charter of King Philip I (987-1029) in which he transfers the village to the monastery of Saint-Quentin (ibid., cols 199-200).

18  Candle miracles were fairly common in hagiographical literature: see J. GAGÉ, "Fackel (Kerze)", in: Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, VII (Stuttgart, 1969), c. 154-217, esp. c. 211. Several contemporary hagiographers from the region describe candle miracles. The Vita Gudilae Bruxellensis (BHL 3684; ed. AASS Ianuarii I (Antwerp, 1643), p. 516) includes a candle miracle that occurred during the lifetime and by intercession of Gudule. The Vita secunda Waldedrudis (BHL 8777; ed. AASS Aprilis I (Antwerp, 1675), p. 841) includes a similar miracle, originally described in the ninth-century Vita prima Waldedriidis (BHL 8776; ed. J. DARIS, 'La Vie de sainte Waudru, patronne de la ville de Mons, d'après un manuscrit du XIe siècle', in: Analectes pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique, 4 (1867), p. 228; see also Fr. DE VRIENDT, 'Le dossier hagiographique de sainte Waudru, abbesse de Mons (IXe-XIIIe s.)', in: Mémoires et publications de la Société des Sciences, des Arts et des Lettres du Hainaut, 98 (1996), pp. 1-37, and 'La tradition manuscrite de la «Vita Waldetrudis» (BHL 8776-8777). Les mécanismes de propagation d'un récit hagiographique régional (IXe-XVe siècles)', in: Analecta Bollandiana, 117 (1999), pp. 319-68). Perhaps closer to this account is a candle miracle in the Vita Aldegundis secunda (BHL 245-246; ed. AASS Ianuarii II (Antwerp,
of its authenticity and having discussed its meaning with some of the monks, Heldadinus publicly announced the miracle, causing great fear among the village’s enemies. One of the monks then reported the events to his community, lamenting the absence of a liturgy devoted to Jonatus and arguing that the absence of a collection of miracle stories did not reflect the latter’s lack of power. Abbot Amand then decided to retrieve the relics and to bring them back to Marchiennes in a solemn procession. Despite the strong protests of the villagers and the knowledge that they would be forced to offer protection money to members of the local aristocracy, the abbot decided that the relics were to remain safely at the abbey, where they could be venerated in an adequate liturgical context. The Translatio concludes with a brief statement that echoes the closing sections of the Patrocinium, naming Rictrudis, Eusebia, Jonatus and Chrodobaldus as the four main protectors of the abbey.19

Authorship and dating of the Translatio

The Translatio is commonly thought to have been written by the aforementioned Gualbert of Marchiennes, the prolific hagiographer whose activity is documented for the years 1124 to ca. 1130.20 Gualbert’s writing is idiosyncratic, often highly complicated and at times even opaque. Except for

19  Gualbert, Patrocinium, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680), p. 154. In hagiographical tradition and in the Poleticum Marceniensis Cenobii, Chrodobaldus or Credeboldus was identified as prior of Saint-Amand during the lifetime of St Amand (ed. DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 78). In the AASS, he is listed under the praetermissi section.
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The contents of Gualbert's known works give further clues as to his authorship of the Translatio. His interest in Jonatus is attested in the Patrocinium, which is also the only other narrative from this period in Marchiennes' history to draw attention to the obscure Chrodobaldus and to designate the latter as a saint. A more reliable indicator is the fact that Gualbert was particularly interested in the political history of the county of Flanders following the murder of Charles the Good. His authorship of the Huc ades, Calliope, a poem written in May 1127 as a lament on the count's death, is considered an established fact.24 In a letter to Saswalo, canon of Arras, Gualbert also claims to have gathered oral and written reports from witnesses as soon as the events became known,25 which might explain why the Translatio contains such detailed and, so it seems, original information regarding some of the most dramatic episodes of the murder and its aftermath.26 With these arguments in mind, it seems justified to designate Gualbert as the most likely author of the Translatio.

21 Patrocinium (BHL 7249), Epistola ad Saswalonem (BHL 7250), Miracula sanctae Rictrudis (BHL 7251).
22 Gualbert's distinctive style makes his work easily identifiable. One might also refer to some minor indications such as wordplay with Abbot Amand's name, commixtus in the Patrocinium (p. 151), and in the Translatio on fol. 90r of Ms. D (see the end of this article for a full reference); tam re quam nomine Amandus on fol. 97r; and the use of the adjective meritus to describe Jonatus (Patrocinium, p. 154) and in the Translatio on fol. 91r in particular.
23 See below for a discussion of the manuscripts.
25 See his letter to Canon Saswalo, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680), p. 120: Audio revera et teneo cum multa aviditate quicquid novi scriptum in eius honore sive de iustissima comitatus et vitae suae dispositione, sive de eius iniustissima et plena lamentis interfectione.
26 It is tempting to suggest that the similarities between the accounts in the Translatio and that in Walter of Thiron's Vita Karoli cannot be coincidental, but there are no formal matches and both works have been based on different or conflicting sources with similar contents. According to Walter, the news of Charles' murder travelled thirty miles on the same day (ed. RIDER, Walteri archidiaconi Tervanensis Vita Karoli, p. 69). Regarding this author, see N.-N. HUYGHEBAERT, in: Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques, 20 (Paris, 1984), cols 115-16. Compare with Galbert of Bruges' account: ed. J. RIDER, Galbertus notarius Brugensis. De multro, traditione, et occisione gloriosi Karoli comitis Flandriarum, CCCM 131 (Turnhout, 1994), esp. ch. 2.
Most scholars agree to date the Translatio sometime in 1127 or 1128.27 The **Translatio** puts most of the events described in the text should allow for a certain amount of time to pass after the murder of Charles the Good.28 This is corroborated by the Translatio itself, which repeatedly refer to the summertime setting of the events. The account of the miracle itself includes what may be interpreted as a description of the liturgy on the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross, celebrated on 14 September.29 The written report of the transfer of the relics and of the miracle itself should be dated not long after the events: the attention to detail and the references to some of the local aristocrats who had been threatening the villagers since the count’s murder show that certain names and events were still fresh in people’s memories. Furthermore, the fact that the author does not mention Count William Clito’s death on 27 or 28 July 1128 or Thierry of Alsace’s claim to the title in March 1128 supports the hypothesis that the transfer itself took place in the summer of 1127 and that its description was produced soon after the events, possibly in the fall of 1127 or the winter of 1127-1128.30 The stylistic clumsiness of the **Translatio**, especially in the final section, might even suggest that the text as found in the surviving manuscripts was little more than a draft which never saw completion. As we shall see, there is no evidence that the attempt to revive Jonatus’ cult met with any success following the restoration of the peace in the summer of 1128, and Gualbert’s work may well have been left to gather dust immediately after it was finished.

These observations notwithstanding, there is also a possibility that the short time between the events described and the point of writing is a rhetorical device. Establishing an absolute **terminus ante quem** is difficult: Gualbert’s date of death is unknown (other than that it was 29 September or 7 December of an unknown year),31 but he is probably on record as present at the translation of

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28 While the introductory letter of the **Miracula sanctae Rictrudis** contains references to the Paschal liturgy, making it dateable to the beginning of May 1127, this is not the case with the **Translatio**; DE SMET, ‘Bij de latijnsche gedichten’, p. 420.

29 Ms. D, fols 91r-91v: *ab cancellis ecclesiasticae sanctionis elevato vexillo vivifice crucis, pluribus luminaribus accensis, turibolo manantefumum pretiosi odoris…*

30 DELMAIRE has argued that the text might be of a later date than is usually assumed, since there is mention of a local mayor who had acted as an eyewitness and who had died since. He also points out that Gualbert refers to an uncle of the current mayor Walter, who was not in office at the time of the miracle. A closer look at the **Translatio** reveals what appears to be a misinterpretation on DELMAIRE’s part; L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 9, with reference to fol. 91v of Ms. D (see below).

31 Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 889, fol. 100v (III Kal. Octobris) or fol. 108r (VII Id. Decembris).
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Eusebia on 27 May 1133.32 Since the passages that mention Abbot Amand allow no inference that the latter was no longer alive at the time of writing,33 it is possible to date the text between the summer of 1127 and May 1136, most likely early in the nine-year period.

Politics and hagiography: the social context of Jonatus’ intervention and the Translatio

While all major narratives by Gualbert were edited in the Acta Sanctorum, the editors of the first volume for August did not have a high opinion of the Translatio sancti Jonati.34 They argued that its contents were not especially relevant to the study of this saint and referred to Andreas of Marchiennes’ revised and abridged account of the miracle instead of editing the entire Translatio.35 This, and the opaque style of the narrative, appears to be the reason why it has been largely ignored as an object of study. Upon closer inspection, the Translatio turns out to be an exceptional document in that it offers a rare glimpse into the interaction between the monastic community and the villagers of Sailly-en-Ostrevant. On the one hand, it describes how the monks and the villagers negotiated the conditions for an acte de présence of a saint in Sailly-en-Ostrevant in order to fend off the increasingly violent intrusions of the local lay elite. On the other, the narrative provides conclusive evidence that the actions of the monks can be regarded as an attempt to promote Jonatus’ cult by linking its fate to its effectiveness in a contemporary social context.

In the decade before the events of 1127-1128, Abbot Amand de Castello initiated a series of measures intended to restore the abbey’s estates and to create a more favourable situation for his community in their relations with the outside world. This policy was devised as a response to the problems that had beset the community during the abbacy of Fulcard, a member of the powerful family of Landas, who had abused his position to turn the abbey into what could be described as an Eigenkirche. After a series of confrontations with the bishop of Arras, Fulcard abdicated in 1115 and left the abbey in ruins.36 The subsequent appointment of Amand, a former prior of Anchin, was aimed at

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32 As described in of Marchiennes’ revised edition of the Miracula sanctae Eusebiae (BHL 2738a; after 1160-1164); edition of the relevant phrases in: Analecta Bollandiana, 20 (1901), p. 461.
33 See above, at note 15.
34 Severe judgement by J.B. DU SOLLIER: Voces sunt bombisonantes; ampullae et sesquipedalia verba (AASS Augusti I (Antwerp, 1733), p. 75).
35 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula sanctae Rictrudis, ed. AASS Maii III (Antwerp, 1680), p. 106. See further for a discussion of this revised version of the miracle.
restoring order. To ensure that his policy would be successful, Amand deployed several strategies: the introduction of Cluniac customs, associations with other monastic communities,\(^37\) increasing reliance on the written word, initiation of court cases with a view to settlements with the aristocracy,\(^38\) strong emphasis in religious propaganda on the direct relationship between ownership of the abbey's estates and its patron saints,\(^39\) and intensified use of the saints' persona as players in the social field. His actions can be witnessed through a series of settlement charters,\(^40\) and also through the conception of the aforementioned Poleticum (subsequently used as evidence in court cases), and a hagiographical corpus – including Gualbert's Patrocinium (1124-1127) and Hil. Miraculi sancte Rictrudis (ca. 1130) – aimed at demonstrating patron saints' protection of the abbey's estates. The aforementioned brief passages in the Patrocinium also indicate that the abbot was trying to revive the cult of Jonatus and Chrodobaldus in order to expand his abbey's range of saintly protectors and stimulate the veneration of their relics.

The murder of Count Charles the Good and the temporary dissolution of secular justice only exacerbated the need to find ways of managing the monks' relations with the local aristocracy. The Translatio itself, the poem He, the poets He elec, Calypso and various other sources indicate that the monks of Marchiennes had invested a great deal of faith in the count, especially when it came to the protection of their estates.\(^41\) Although problems with the local lay elite had been rife for several decades, the events of March 1127 had removed all constraints and allowed petty noblemen and other armed individuals to increase the pressure on monastic communities and their estates. In the best of cases, their intention was to establish a stronger position for themselves in future negotiations with the ecclesiastical institutions. More often, however, it was to claim or re-claim revenues and lands that they considered theirs by custom or law.


\(^40\) Compare with Andreas of Marchiennes' discussion of relations with the count (Miracula sanctae Rictrudis, pp. 104-5), and with two charters, issued by the count in 1125 (ed. F. VERCAUTEREN, Actes des comtes de Flandre (1071-1128) (Brussels, 1938), respectively pp. 269-71, no. 118 and pp. 272-5, no. 119). See the remarks on comital interventions at Saint-Amand in: PLATELLE, Le temporel, pp. 185-8. From the time of Charles' predecessor Baldwin VII (1111-1119), comital jurisdiction was increasingly managing social relations in Flanders. The aristocracy's reaction after March 1127 was aimed at reducing the count's influence: H. PLATELLE, ‘La violence et ses remèdes en Flandre au XIe siècle’, in: Sacris erudiri, 20 (1971), pp. 118-21.
ancestry. In the Translatio, a few such individuals are identified: a dipart or sometime6 a mayor and a cura; the usual set of adversaries monastic communities and their villae or curtes had to deal with.61 As the text reveals, the villagers had been forced to gather large sums of money to pay off members of the local aristocracy, of which Hugo II of Oisy was certainly the most important. It would, however, be inappropriate to describe Hugo as a mere brigand: he was castellan of Cambrai between 1111 and 1131 and nominally represented the count’s authority in the city.62 But despite his position as a public officer, he had gained quite a reputation for disputing before the bishop of Cambrai a large number of his father’s donations to ecclesiastical institutions. Many of these disputes had been settled by compromise, and monastic communities over time had grown accustomed to, and indeed stimulated, this kind of peaceful dispute management.

Since the usual mechanisms of negotiation and compromise had become ineffective in the wake of the count’s death, the monks of Marchiennes responded favorably to a request to bring the relics of one of their saints to the beleaguered community of Sailly-en-Ostrevant.63 The sensation caused by their arrival at the village was undoubtedly enhanced by the monks’ continuous preaching and by impressive samplings of the monastic liturgy, most notably on the feast of the Elevation of the Cross.64 The transferral itself65 showed that the physical presence of a saint at disputed locations was considered an effective (if not always conclusive) argument in conflict management.
situations. Yet it is important to note that sending the relics of Jonatus to the village was considered an unusual decision. The Translatio itself mentions that
the villagers had asked for the relics of St Eusebia, whom they expected to protect them, because of her status as original owner of the village and patron of the local church. In the troubled circumstances of the summer of 1127, however, sending out a patron saint of the abbey was a decision not to be taken lightly. According to the Translatio, Abbot Amand himself pressed the villagers to accept Jonatus as a substitute. Even if one takes into account topical elements in the narrative, it is not difficult to see that he had good reasons to do so. There was relatively little risk involved in sending a small sample of Jonatus' relics: En-Ostrevant was already inhabited by its original patron saint, and there was no written record of any of Jonatus' miracles. Losing a small portion of his relics to the village's enemies or to the villagers would have only minor consequences, whereas a demonstration of his powers (miraculous or otherwise) would expand the monks' range of protective arguments. This explains Amand's eagerness to recover the relics once Jonatus' powers as an intercessor with God had been demonstrated. It had, of course, always been the monks' intention to bring the relics back to the abbey. But the speed with which this happened and the fact that the desperate villagers were not consulted indicate that Amand in these special circumstances may have decided to put his own abbey's interests before that of the villagers, even if this meant that the estate of Sailly-en-Ostrevant itself was again at risk of being lost.

While there had been previous indications of a revival of Jonatus' cult, the chaotic circumstances of the latter half of 1127 provided an ideal opportunity to test the impact of the use of his relics in dispute contexts. Perhaps it was Amand's intention to initiate a series of interventions that would eventually constitute evidence strong enough to add the saint on a permanent basis to the abbey's protectors. The explicit reference to the absence of a collection of miracles associated with Jonatus and the lengthy argumentation of his powers in the Translatio may, in fact, indicate that this narrative was intended to form the first part of a larger project similar to the Patrocinium and the Miracula sanctae Rictrudis, where the saint's miracles could be recorded as they were reported. In these narratives, most of Rictrudis'
IX. A Miracle of Jonatus in 1127

227 miracles were explicitly described as contemporary, as their primary function was to show Rictrudis' interventions in situations that immediately affected the current community's integrity. Given Gualbert's ambitions as a hagiographer and given those of Amand as a reformist abbot, to suspect similar strategies behind the transferral of Jonatus' relics to the village and the creation of the Translatio does not seem too far-fetched.

Despite the author's claim that the community of Marchiennes was overjoyed by Jonatus' miracle, there exists no concrete evidence that the events of 1127 or any other contemporary efforts to promote him as a third patron of the abbey met with any success. While the relics were probably kept at the abbey until the Revolution, the Translatio was never complemented by the description of further miracles and most likely never became part of the local passionale or lectionarium. In his revised edition of the Miracula sanctae Rictrudis (BHL 7252, 1164-6/1168), Andreas of Marchiennes condensed Gualbert's lengthy account into a single paragraph, omitting Jonatus' name and merely referring to the transferral of "relics of saints" to the village of Sailly-en-Ostrevant.

49 For a discussion of Jonatus' cult in later centuries, see AASS Augusti I, pp. 70-2. Various breviaries from the first half of the twelfth century until the end of the Middle Ages show that both feast days of Jonatus (8 April and 1 August) continued to be celebrated at the monastery: V. LEROQUAIS, Les breviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, II (Paris, 1934), p. 61 onwards. A thirteenth-century psalter from Marchiennes also includes a series of prayers to various saints, including Jonatus (Brussels, Royal Library, 14682, fol. 31v).

50 The presence of Jonatus' relics at Marchiennes is attested in a letter from 10 July 1730 by M. Roelans, a monk of Saint-Amand, to Philippe Lorthoir, the librarian at the abbey of Saint-Martin in Tournai (Brussels, Bibliotheca Bollandiana, Ms. 127, 35-36).

51 A thirteenth-century manuscript of BHL 4447-4448 (Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 151, respectively vol. II, fols 76v-77v and vol. I, fols 154r-155r) from Marchiennes faithfully reproduces the early eleventh-century copy from that same abbey (Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 849, fols 61r-68r) and contains no references to the episode of 1127. Finally, a breviary of Marchiennes from the second half of the thirteenth century contains an office for the feast of Jonatus' elevation (Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 138, fols 66v-67v; see LEROQUAIS, Les breviaries, II, pp. 49-50), but this is little more than another copy of BHL 4448 up to, but excluding, the description of Malgerus' negligence and punishment.

52 Andreas of Marchiennes, Miracula sanctae Rictrudis, p. 106: Tunc abbas, miseriis eorum et clamoribus valde compatiens, initio consilio accepit de reliquiis sanctorum, quae in monasterio conservabantur, et eos per manus monachorum, apud villam suam Saliacum destinare curavit.
Andreas simply copied the passage devoted to Jonatus from the Poleticum. As for Sailly-en-Ostrevant itself, Jonatus did not make a lasting impression there either: there are no indications that Eusebia lost her status as patron saint, although documents from the sixteenth century show that the church was no longer devoted to her but to St. Albinus.

From a long-term perspective, the miracles of the candles constituted one of the least significant and quickly forgotten interventions in the impressive corpus of twelfth-century miracle stories that were recorded by the monks of Marchiennes. The Translatio sancti Jonati can, however, be seen as one of the most explicit testimonies to the way in which monastic communities in Flanders tried to deal with various problems that marked their existence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: the instability of secular justice, incident-ridden relations with the aristocracy and, finally, the problematic balance between popular devotion and monastic policies regarding the cult of saints. While Jonatus had clearly been the subject of previous attempts to promote his cult, the narrative’s importance as a historical document lies in the fact that it is contemporary, and relevant, to the strategies deployed by Abbot Amand de Castello to deal with the death of the count and its political consequences. In that sense, the socio-political background of the events described in the Translatio should be considered as significant as its subject’s cult and the subsequent fate of the narrative itself.

Manuscripts and editions

D. DeCae, Bibliothèque Municipale, B30 (olim 799), fols IV-99v is the sole known manuscript of the Translatio sancti Jonati produced and preserved at the abbey of Marchiennes. The volume as it exists today consists of two distinct parts. The pages with hagiographical content, which include besides the Translatio sancti Jonati, Gualbert’s Patrocinium and Miracula sanctae Rictrudis, appear to have been written during the third quarter of the twelfth century. The remaining pages with the Chronicon Marchianense and the Poleticum cenobii were produced shortly after the year 1200.  

54  DELMAIRE, Le diocèse d’Arras, II, p. 548.
55  Middle of the twelfth century, according to Delmaire, L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 9.
56  FOR A COMPLETE CODICOLICAL DESCRIPTION, SEE A. PONCELET, ‘Catalogus codicum hagiographorum latinorum bibliothecae publicae Duacensis’, in: Analecta Bollandiana, 20 (1901), p. 405; and DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, pp. 3-9. The manuscript’s contents are as follows: fols 1-39r: Patrocinium (BHL 7249); fols 39v-86r: Miracula sanctae Rictrudis (BHL 7251); fols 87v-99v: Translatio sancti Jonati (BHL 4449); fols 99v-102r: Epistola ad Saswalonem (BHL 7250).
Perhaps with the exception of a handful of lines on fol. 87v-88r, a single scribe copied the entire text of the *Translatio* in a somewhat angular hybrid of Carolingian minuscule and gothic. The text is heavily rubricated, especially the names of saints (which are mostly transcribed in capitals), while all paragraphs are introduced by large initials in red ink. Except for a number of emendations, the handful of contemporary marginal notes bear no relation to the contents of the text. Finally, some has medieval and early modern historical annotation by two different hands contain indications as to its reception.

B. BRESSE, Bibliotheca Bollandiana, 127, fol. 37v-49r, is part of a miscellaneous volume that belongs to the Caesonia Bollandiana, the collection of transcriptions of hagiographical texts assembled by the Bollandists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The manuscript can be dated to the seventeenth century and relates to various saints including Jonatus. A contemporary note on fol. 37r indicates that the *Translatio* was transcribed from a manuscript of Gualbert’s hagiography of Rictrudis, which can be positively identified as Ms. D. Aside from a small number of emendations, the transcription faithfully replicates the twelfth-century manuscript, even to the extent of fitting exactly the same text as in Ms. D on each page. Marginal annotations were likewise transcribed. Since there is no indication that Ms. D left the library of Marchiennes permanently before the Revolution, it can be assumed that Ms. B was either made at the abbey itself or that Ms. D was loaned for a limited period of time for copying purposes. No Bollandist worked on Ms. B, except for fol. 49r, which was written by Piponius. The most likely explanation for this anomaly is the fact that Piponius had received a bundle of transcriptions of texts relating to different subjects (including the *Translatio sancti Jonati*) and that he recopied the final page pertaining to Jonatus in order to include the verso of the original page with a file regarding another saint.

[B2] In the first volume for August, the editors of the *Acta Sanctorum* published brief excerpts of the *Translatio sancti Jonati* from a large in-folio manuscript.
script of twenty-four pages, which also contained other works by Gualbert (presumably *Patrocinium* and the *Miracula sanctae Rictrudis*). Du Sollier gives no indication as to the age of this manuscript or its relation to Ms. D (which measures only 23 x 16 cm), and the handful of variants do not allow us to assess its relationship to the preserved manuscripts.

Although the Bollandists may have simply referred to Ms. B as their source for the edition, there is a possibility that they were aware of a third manuscript, hypothetically designated here as Ms. B2. Bollandus' handwritten notes contain a description of a manuscript from the library of Marchiennes, the first part of which had the same contents as Ms. D. Although the number of pages devoted in Bollandus' copy to the *Translatio sancti Jonati* corresponds exactly with those of Ms. B, the latter does not contain a number of hagiographical narratives mentioned in Bollandus' description. This leads to the conclusion that Ms. B2 may have existed as a separate volume of roughly the same size as Ms. B. Although it seems likely that the Bollandists ultimately edited excerpts from the latter manuscript, it is possible that they erroneously identified Ms. B2 as the exemplar.

In 1890, Sackur edited some folios' worth of text from Ms. D. The same manuscript has also been used as the primary source for this edition, and unless indicated otherwise, all notes in the edition refer to it. Most of the spelling characteristics have been retained, while the cedilled *e* has been systematically transcribed as *ae*. It should be noted that providing a critical edition of this particular narrative poses significant challenges. Because of Gualbert's convoluted style and because this hagiographical project was (for reasons cited above) probably aborted fairly shortly after its inception, amending all passages...
that seem obscure, corrupt or grammatically unsound may not be in the interest of historical accuracy. Consequently, while a number of passages may still be eligible for emendation, the debate on the desirability of such interventions remains open.

Edition

Prologus super miraculum quo Dominus illustravit confessorem suum Ionatum abbatem sanctissimum

Letetur nichilominus plebs Marceniensis tot caelestium luminum circumfusa fulgoribus, tot candelabrorum, vel, ut ita dixerim, aureorum illustrata splendoribus. Quorum miro interventu, vel, ut ita dixerim, interventionum murali ambitu, intrinsecus tetras hostium elidit machinas insurgentes, infestantes, sevientes malignum piceas depellit tenebras, iccirco terrribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata (malignis spiritibus). Quotiens vero bellica resonant extrinsecus classica, raptim pia collotenus sanctorum elevata sarcina hostium catervas securitate audaci penetrat; minas terribiles, impetus feroces, furores debachantes nigro intimorem prospexit, vire candelabrorum prospitio acceperit virtutem Dit et sanctorum splendere essentiae. Si quis tamen obiciat me terminos veritatis excessisse nec nostris semper sacrarum reliquiarum ex collatione victoriam cessisse, et nos e contra. Necque enim nos legimus filiorum Israelis millenos exercitus semper victores extitisse, sed quandoque peccatis exigentibus ad instar partitumi continent statura formidabili, minima divina altius efficiens, formidabili invidiosa insipientibus iniuriae repressos esse. Sicurque quod omnino est nos e magis quid maius pert saepe pendit quod penditam sanctorum nec interim delibarat victoris gratia illustratum Heli et similium ubique subvenienti et parenta omnia ob sensum hostium, constamus tales radices stabilem esse tabula omnium sanctuariorum nostorum civitatis, dilectionemque validitatem sancti quod nos quassantem, claret elius et Dominus nostra Christi gloriae et sanctitatis eorum praeclaritatem, in possessione sanctae Ecclesiae, quam constat sine dubio filiam fuisse Austrebensem...
numine sacratissimae, in villa necem Saliacum nuncupata, per sancti Ionati praetiosi confessoris Christi et abbatis merita designaverit, diligentius pervideamus.

Tractatus ipsius miraculi de candelis extinctis sed caelesti lumine reaccensis

1 Sub ea igitur tempestate, qua miserabili fraude suorum seu proditione cecidit, periit subiitque repentinum ictum, quasi reus capitalis sententiae, Karolus illustris comes Flandriae, necessitate ingenti fratres compulsi Marcenienses sevientes Bellonae sanctum de secretioribus abditis eduxerunt Ionatum eumque cum honore decenti premiserunt ad tutelam possessionum sustentationis corporis viris Dei necessariarum, ne forte paterent ex toto predam faucibusque luporum avidius incendiis, rapinis, exuviis bonorum inhiantium, virga, baculo, immo columpna immobili, non tam patriae quam sanctae matris ecclesiae, videlicet Karolo, utriusque sexus qui erat refugium et maxime pauperum, nusquam apparente, non iam latenter sed aperte sevientium. Contendebant enim ac miseri misere congaudebant, se licenter ac cupide exire de cavernis suis, in quibus hactenus et diu latuerant, quoad ordinem et amorem hostes, terror et violentus oppressor malorum, cuius probitati liberalitati animositati viri sanguinum et dolosi nimis invidebant, quo substituit longum manus partemque et maius aegro cupidum timorem. Quorum eum ad modo, ad tempus, dicere habeat praeterea nullum admodum, in tempore pacis sanctae et a sanctis partibus instituta, in sollemnibus ieiunis, in quadragesimatis silvis, in professionibus religiosis, sanctissimus Brugensis Deus iniquos et consortes inimicos tuos, tunc in aequulis Karoli comitibus, quam in eum rasumque pontifex, depudrante in perpetuum et confusionem. Dust eum pro rebus eis in filios non sine hujus nominum illos Karoli inveniuntur superioribus, dixit etsi deinceps eum esse Dominum effundit et animam aequam cum distributione numerorum fratrum postremiorem veniam ipsumque suum, se adhuc non tam tautos quam tradidisse provinciam et Factum forensi consentiendum quoque ipsumque a uxoruerunt, se recipere a suum postremiorem veniam ipsumque suum, se tradidisse provinciam et Factum forensi consentiendum quoque ipsumque a uxoruerunt, se recipere a suum postremiorem veniam ipsumque suum, se tradidisse provinciam et Factum forensi consentiendum quoque ipsumque a uxoruerunt, se recipere a suum postremiorem veniam ipsumque suum, se tradidisse provinciam et Factum forensi consentiendum quoque ipsumque a uxoruerunt, se recipere a suum postremiorem veniam ipsumque suum, se tradidisse provinciam et Factum forensi consentiendum quoque ipsumque a uxoruerunt.
X. A Miracle of Jonatus in 1127

233 audacis pre aliis cuiusdam Bulcardi et insanientis ad mortem usque infeliciter sibi et ipsi, qui hoc idem scelus perpetravit, sicut non longe postea claruit, illinivit. Sed quoniam non est mortui propositus per singula evolvere quomodo propter iniquitatem facti in stuporem et sibilum et in omnimodam plebis abiectionem condigna et exquisita multati sunt ultione, quidam confixi in pariete abstracta prius cute, continuato a capitis vertice usque ad inguina vulnere, parum minus hostilia tuo de sordine, quod compararentur conglobati factiones suas contueri, inmensa Brugensis arcis altitudine, quomodo etiam plures eorum mancis sive truncatis manibus cum lacertis, tibiis cum pedibus perforatis, poplitibus traiectis, sudibus suspensi in immundis locis capite deorsum versus turpi morte periere, iecircorro rem in medio derelinquimus, necnon de substitutione subsequentis comitis Guuillelmi, videlicet filii Roberti praedecessoris comitis Normannie, a Ludovico rege Francie facta, Flandrigenarum climata post mortem Karoli sub ditione sua cuncta redigente, conatu frustrato Henrici regis Angliae, qui felicibus actibus nepotis a se exheredati, ut iniquus patruus, non cessabat invidere, cuius patrem eundem et fratrem suum diurnis nexibus captivitatis addictum regni sui iura seu monarchiam Normannicam metuebat amittere. Haec, inquam, et similia non enodamus, potius aliis tractanda proponimus. Sed et quomodo sustinuerit idem iuvenis, scilicet Wilelmus comes substitutus, non solum finitimas, verum etiam alienas congressiones et tam procul positas quam proximas et crebras phalanges, turmas atque legiones in subversionem sui sui et totius provintiae sibi commissae properantes, concertantes et absque fere intermissione novis rebus insistentes, reticemus. Non tamen preterire debuimus casum, non tam rectoris principisque excellentis, quam casum amici familiaris nostrique protectoris, qui ex quadam industria et singulari diligentia nichil ferme detrimenti patiebatur in esse rebus, quas noverat famulari beate Rictrudi eiusque filiae, Deo consecrate virgini Eusebie. Qui prudens vir atque disertus, ut nichil supra tam pie tamque benigne responsa proclamantium religiosorum virorum rebus ipsis prefectorum accipiebat, quod non sine gemitu ac merore possunt et ipsi referre, multaeque ac multiplices alibi, ejusque amici, parentes et intermoves ad alia sogtit sui viso, humiliter Maximianorum presentia diovolonitatis, angae auidae quandam doceriorem aliquem privas causas indicantes vel statim institutis omni vel certum aliquem iurisdiccionem. Seepemani etiam presentium non quis illudibus solitudinibus atque cum eundem sibi, si tantum instarum fundamenta de necessario negatis seconnerent cumuerat, tuncque aequo originis ac

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75 illinivit
76 ir sup. lin. D.
77 ac sup. lin. D.
78 intendans D.
79 iudiciariis sup. lin. D.
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progenies vel metra sanctorum Marceni aputomantium et precipue beatae
Rictrudis sancteque Eusebie, eius videlicet natae inquisitioni, qua nobilitatem
nobilis seque avido pectore reponebat et tenaci memoriae conmemorabat
suaeque sollerti inquisitioni de praecipuo et primo fundatore nostri coenobii
sub beato Amando, de sancto videlicet Ionato confessore Christi egregio et
monialibus sibi subrogatis pro castigatae vitae merito in abbatem
ministro sibi satis fieri deposcebat. Demum omnem diligentiam suam abbati
nostro, tunc temporis venerabili atque amabili Amando (5), quem valde
venerabatur et diligebat, pariterque fratribus sub eodem karissimo patre
religioni dantibus affuturam procul dubio spondebat. Igitur simulac breviter
attigimus vel potius deflevimus casum inmeritum, repentinum interitum patroni
ac defensoris nostri, Karoli videlicet comitis excellentissimi, reflectimus interius
ad merita sancti Ionati gloriosi confessoris Christi exequenda, nobis a Domino
pio previsore nostro vice Karoli protectoris nostri vigilantissimi ad tutelam
rerum nostrarum deputati, quem Deus, ut credimus, ad maiorem terrorem
incutiendum hostibus undique sevientibus declaravit signo subsequenti.

2. Haie destaque sancto viro confessori et abbati Ionato fratres unanimes
sollicitudine non pigri spiritu
iuxta apostolum
ferventes
plebeculam
villamque Saliacum nuncupatam commiserunt asservandam, ubi sciebant
affuturum maiorem impetum hostium, ubi etiam putabant maiora confinia
malorum vixque aut nullum effugium. Saliacenses vero predictae villae Marceniensi ecclesiae subiecti, hospites valde perterriti contra luporum
ingluviem insatiabilem tam nocturnis quam diurnis insidiis ovili Dominico
inhiantem et auxilium ferri sibi rogaverant et diu obnixeque desideraverant, sed hoc potius exposcentes fieri per magis sibi notam, sanctam videlicet
Eusebiam virginem, vix confessorem (6) Christi egregium a patre monasterii
religioso et bonae memoriae Amando (7) valde pertimescente de sevitia aut furtiva
subreptione hostium, ne forte traditi in reprobum sensum cum ceteris rapinis
corriberent et diriperent aut etiam conculcarent et inhoneste pertractarent
sacrarum insignia reliquiarum, sanctum Ionatum abbatem luculentissimum, nondum quantus erat in meritis ad unguem notum, impetraverant Saliacenses);
inquam, in sanctum Ionatum utpote sibi commissum adservandum iugiter
respicientes, qua diligentia ei magis possent obsequi diligenter observabant et maxime simulac animaverunt se securiores ac tutiores degere, hostium
cuneos impacatos ac frementes adventare, sed pacatos, mitesque
adorantes sanctum et inclinato capite cum reverentia sibi exhibita ad sua redire.

Ut etiam ostenderent in effectu quanto gestirent gaudio de concesso sibi
sanctissimi confessoris collegio, de ramis ac foliis arborum scenas quasdam, id

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est quae contra auctum solis, cognita omnium, qua solis volucri
maugrando foliis de ipsa foliatae ethologia, in antis dominus Dei fortunae
consecutum, quaque altus quae poterant adjuvantes tuae salutis
conservavit utque in certarum saeculorum eum maxima et ceteri, eumque incerti
et belli acta cuius passum si lamentabulerae et alibi Isaii
libro, partis quædam et veritatis, sol de thesaurum quod genuit, magno suis et
permittens, aliquam momenta una in tabula, ut videtur, ut vidit solis et
foliatae, foliatae faciens, in atriis domus Dei forinsecus
contexuerant, unaque alios quos poterant adipiscendi apparatus cum eisdem
conexuerant atque in statutis sollemnis cum crucibus et cereis cumque incensi
et boni odoris copia premente, etiam sepedicti confessoris et abbatis Jonati
lipsano, parvo quidem et vetusto, sed de thersarium quod gestabat, magno satis et
pretioso, diligenter circumueit, ut vulgo verba sequar, foliatam faciebant, ibidem contione
favores populi de verbis Domini consueto excitare ad hoc etiam in altiore gradu
eminente, ex multa devotione et
fletuum ubertate ad aliquod vas in auro et argento pro bona voluntate eorum
coaptandum ubi sacratissima ossa locarentur, impendia certatim et ultra vices
videri, saepe in saecula saecula omnes
nunc iubentes et iubentes, ipsis communiorum sub ipsis assumpsit amicis
quaque sunt in thesaurum quod pro bine.
Emergerunt conveniant ad spectaculum sollemnis etiam de exteris locis
diversi sexus, diversae aetatis, diversae conditionis plebes innumerae, congregant
sibimet binas seu triduanas aut eo plures stationes spontaneas continuant,
tamen in evolvi ad iura sequae desinuere pertinentis diligentiam, contrabari animos non medici de salute acti permutationes, sed minime quidem quod sanitas existere Domini Jonati vel ad portionem temporis, hactenus habuit, in presentiam ubi sui rei sequens curum luminis. Qua propter sine illud differentem existentiam spectaculum curiosum, quae conscribit indocilis hic inquit mysticum operum insuecere ab alios conspicuas domus, sanctius significativus luminis magis auctoribus intimis mutis expressae de deo-Dominus filii-Iesu. Sed in eum absente curum, quae non invento pro quo securi ignis, nova instanter se mutat tamen nullum spectaculum fuisse spectatum quoddam [76r°] scriptis, in eum auctoribus legitimatos defini providentem, descripte solitudo latius intra emisit, quae dominus de non perfidis conspicuis conscribit, consensu mortales pliebus mutatis emitisse illumae ignes lucem perpetuas et aliae solitudinem esse uniam iterum legatione deferri proclamaret, derepente celeste lumen intra umbra, quae diximus de ramis arboreae contexta, commorante in eisdem plebeae statione emicuit radiusque ignotae lucis permaximus et ultra solitam lucem et assuetam, splenditum de supernae occurrence ibi disseratubile autem tenetem alium hactenus praebuit clarissimo luminis permaximo. Gratias tamen tanti luminis, que securi legiit o. a. eos etea [92r°], perpetuam spectaculum intimo spectaculum multitudine, quae etiam dignata est defini facere terrigenis quanta claritate meritorum fulgeret in caelis egregius confessor sanctus et abbas Ionatus, multa veneratione plane non indignus, quatuor multae probitatis et intimae veritatis de eadem villa scilicet Saliacensi viri, perspicatius rem celitus factam attendentes, plurima eademque tacita collatione verborum ad invicem conserta venerabant merita sancti Jonati. Si quis vero voluerit nominatim eosdem ceris vel scedis inprimi, in promptu poterunt denotata repertur in promptu poterunt denotata repertur ut propter poterunt denotata repertur in promptu poterunt denotata repertur.
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237 tantopere vacatis ociis et anilibus, ut dicitur fabulis, nec attenditis pro incuria Dominis quae vestris insonant auribus presentibus verbis? Si vobis non vacat, nec admittere vel exaudire vultis, melius nobis paulo infirmioribus operam audiendi verbum salvitatis relinquitis. Exite, obsecro, quantotius qui non gustatis nec pervidere desideratis quam suavis est Dominus, ut canit, sicut paulo ante predicator noster intimavit, psalmographus: « Gustate et videte quam suavis est Dominus » (12). 

Exeuntes ergo date locum divinis preconiis, ne frustretur vestris ineptiis et malis exemplis devotio tantae celebritatis, nam usitatius vobis in vicis vel plateis ad hoc institutis causas solitatem aliquid ageritis. « Non est », subitiunt unanimiter continuo supradicti viri, « non est ut vos estimatis, Domine mi, non sumus vacantes inutilibus figmentis vel scurrilibus commentis, sed potius agimus de recentibus pretiosissimi confessoris meritis, signis ac prodigiis sacrosanctis, non ab eo, ut sint, dissonantes de ludibris inuisientes falsis, quae super nos indigna familiae et, pro deo!, incredulis presentantur ac misericorsque pulchere amabile datibus pietati consilis. Ego congruam autem qui assistent quaerant Dominum de caelo propugnac super filia hibernae quem quaerunt sanctius sanctum noster de claritate quem ostensa est, ac token ad sit mitsam suscepisse esse regnum Domus (13), sanarum praecipue licentem seminum descensam et ostendit aversum populi super irritated sanitatem confessoris domini sancti Jonati (14), hodierna praecipue sanctus populus qui propter sanctum sancti confessoris Dominus sanctum sancti aestimatur, quoniam qui hodie est Deus, qui ante non erat, et non erit, et futurus est, et non est, et non est. Nostrae autem asserunt qui hodie divitiae sanctae non describunt, in tantum non ignaram instar, nam ignara est et ignara est et ignara est. Ego autem infirmos nostram non annuntiam. Ignotus praecipue qui dictat super amicitia quando amicitia est, sive, sedulius populus sancti (13) et expectantes oportet in sanctam et sanctum in Dominus vir imperium quem, cum imperaverit, laude et a quo une dum quidem non una dum quidem (35) etiam in manibus suis reddere posse. Nostrae vero est debir autem Dominus sine nostro labore, et consummat e patri planum septem et sanctumstit (16) maria libertam convexitur. 

5 Hilduinus autem super his admirans, iterum iterumque effectum rei ordinemque considerans, iterum iterumque utpote favens nobis et nostris quae audierat revolvere atque audire gestiens, confestim fratres qui illi aderant in unum evocavit atque in secretiorem ediculae partem de ramis contextae segrevavit, quibus tanta tam manifesta, totiens veraci testimonio relata praeclara luminaria, quasi rudibus et huius rei ignaris indicavit. Et additur: « Nuncque atque et dominus ignotius notarius nisi quos dioecetor evocaverit ad singulam victi, ad discordiundam maximam praedicationem confessoris et abbatis dominus? Noi respondere distitudinem posse ignoturas et eisdem nisi experitis de insigni reliquidantur? Non opus est, fames
mei. Cui positum fratre lett de divinae vocatio* nostros de sancti viri Ionati
sacrificii immenso propter suos subimtissent: 'Nec ignoravimus, nec
divinatorem fecisse, nec divinatorum, sed expectancy omnes nostrae et praeceps
assertiones qui contenentur et cruciament omnia gloriae Dei videre quae se
falsae esse habebat (17). [547] cfr. eundem textum Maxime se eligentem ab
hinc et eundem teirum substutisse (18). Alii non ubique illam, sed
omnem bivalentem subitum subserient paratum, 'et nos praeceps Olympos nostram et in
Rudolfi. Putei barani cernentur, hanc igni a cerle sigillum devinum
habent. Ad hoc Hildukus: 'si dicebam habere, scis, sed nunc timore
impescantur, non debebant incurrere virum altissimi nostrum, sed hoc
convenit nuncum manum cibitatem adae partum nostram. Et hic adhuc,
semiam de quae significaverit, nescio nescio omnem sertam versus eorum
confessit ac unde omnes (19). Seque effinor mansuris indicium satisfaci, non
ultum nihil, nec est pueri plaes de qua praeceps nostros praecipit et
ante omnes est mandati inserere, nisi est quod se alienum a mores adoratoris
scilicet illum adducere quod valuebat, quod aliis commelir, quod praecipuus
investigatorum versus sese veluti et reliqui deferri. Et controvers ad
nuncupatione domini illum Hildukus: 'Deo, iniquus1, 'et, quod velis, quod
de speculae (20) fides eorum nuncupatione omnem pronostraris, quod
scilicet de chresta eorum semper restantibus (16) semperque pueri, veluti
veluti veluti veluti astantes spiritum vestrum et sanctum sanctissimum
occupans primum extra nos fuentibus simpliciter, sed quod ad nos revocaret diam et
quassat et eum eventus sufficient dicit sincerius. Coniugia in timore et
(21) soperit quisque praeceps eorundem tempore repositurum, exhas
velut flamma fulmine absque candellame mea ligne singue occupans initium, alius
sacerdos simulacrum meum in eum revocaret semper praebente valde presentem.
Quae timere nulli aulae praeceps videat eam angustiamentum equo nostro,
pastuel mens, ne ille locum simpliciter, simulacrum. Hie veluti simpliciter
venit subscivantibus et accepit. Hildukus igitur, 'si hodie illud
attente et [(22)] tenui venisse ait, et postea opus eum praeceps domino eloquentia
nunc immittit vocem indolet. 'Cui a, manum, 'et quasi et quasi et
simulacrum meum sanct Britannia et sancti sui sancti Ionati, praecipitavit
sanctorum profectum, non uninam? Lapis nova securum non
excussa esse, congruatem non esse, sed et populo apostolico adhuc
sancitati actionis personae Domini novo nunc, aeternum cunctis et
adornati ione esse domina illustriam 1512 (19) etiamque mox
concessione sui domini sanctissimi.1520 Sanctissimi sollicitudo: 'Ego, divinus
et illudum praeceps eorum et in libris sanctum annuntiavit puerum, 'et
Hic igitur, impat., 'eodem praecipit, quod puder amant personam sanctissimam
sacram et magorum vinorum dominorum eundem

17 h. a. p. 25a, 15
18 in aliquem partem 12
19 in aliis, non in alibi spi. de I5
20 a. p. 26v, 15
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Ecclesia Marceniensis, sicut in presentiarum cernitis in sacris reliquiis, quas Deus claritate sua, immo nos per ipsarum merita procul dubio illustravit. Et sic, quasi a novo exorsus predicationis principio de eadem re aliquandiu plebi applaudenti peroravit et ut inde benedicerent et collaudarent Dominum diligenter ammonuit. Quibus cum diligentia retractatis, cerneres divinis laudibus insistentes et sese in eadem ad invicem eadem re operantur. Quae Deus in paginis sancti Davidi psalmi proponebat: «Quis loquetur potentias Domini auditas faciet omnes laudes eius» (21). Ipse primum sese inspicientes a Deo laudibus salutariis illustres, Deo vero populis acclamanti laudes Domini, quibus inclusis tota die ad Dominum, aetatem et munus illius comprehendit et eum in oratione sequitur: «Sanctus, noster, sanctus Ionatus se pedicendus confessor Dominii et abbas egregius non unum solum miraculum, immo multa cotidie operatur miracula in continuum sui et Domini nostri Iesu Christi apud vulgus praebente, quia eo immo Domino agente praeclara sua per merita quae possimus non unum sed unum et alterum, genere et sexu alius alius remittere in corpora illorum sanctam et divinam, qui in cordibus suis habent deum et sanctum.»

Sic Dominus Iesus sanctum Ionatum abbatem et confessorem suum in oratione se ipsum ad Dominum Jhesum et universam gentem aeternam per merita suas praebuit. Qua circiter diebus hostes qui audierant de eo sive Dei magnalibus. Unde requisitus a ceteris quid de sancto vestro ? Quod modo operatur miraculum ? Intra se fauces conprimens substitit paululum et paulopost ora in huiusmodi resolvi eloquium: «Sanctus, noster, sanctus Ionatus se pedicendus confessor Dominii et abbas egregius non unum solum miraculum, immo multa cotidie operatur miracula in continuum sui et Domini nostri Iesu Christi apud vulgus praebente, quia eo immo Domino agente praeclara sua per merita quae possimus non unum sed unum et alterum, genere et sexu alius alius remittere in corpora illorum sanctam et divinam, qui in cordibus suis habent deum et sanctum.»

6. Eadem sancta Ionatis confessor et abbas provinciae maior navigabat qui audirent de eo sive de Dei magnalibus. Unde requisitus a ceteris quid de sancto vestro ? Quod modo operatur miraculum ? Intra se fauces conprimens substitit paululum et paulopost ora in huiusmodi resolvi eloquium: «Sanctus, noster, sanctus Ionatus se pedicendus confessor Dominii et abbas egregius non unum solum miraculum, immo multa cotidie operatur miracula in continuum sui et Domini nostri Iesu Christi apud vulgus praebente, quia eo immo Domino agente praeclara sua per merita quae possimus non unum sed unum et alterum, genere et sexu alius alius remittere in corpora illorum sanctam et divinam, qui in cordibus suis habent deum et sanctum.»

Exhinc sanctus Ionatus confessor et abbas praecipuus maiori terrori erat hostibus qui audierant de eo sive de Dei magnalibus. Unde requisitus a ceteris quid de sancto vestro ? Quod modo operatur miraculum ? Intra se fauces conprimens substitit paululum et paulopost ora in huiusmodi resolvi eloquium: «Sanctus, noster, sanctus Ionatus se pedicendus confessor Dominii et abbas egregius non unum solum miraculum, immo multa cotidie operatur miracula in continuum sui et Domini nostri Iesu Christi apud vulgus praebente, quia eo immo Domino agente praeclara sua per merita quae possimus non unum sed unum et alterum, genere et sexu alius alius remittere in corpora illorum sanctam et divinam, qui in cordibus suis habent deum et sanctum.»
nostro huc usque, et maxima de antiquo tantaeque apud, et dictum in Apocalipsi, ut sibi, ea cadit (26) servitio, possessor in ecce futurum sanctum deposici Hebraeis, ut dicitur in Apocalipsi, nec frigido, nec calido, praesertim in eius festivo sacre depositionis anniversario, carente proprieta lectionum et miraculorum eius frequenti eventu necnon perstrepente tripudio et tempore, quare suo quidem potestate, ab antiquis tam tepido atque, ut dicitur in Apocalipsi, sed qui ex se habet superior (25), qui non dormit neque dormitat (25), qui conterit molas iniqui et defraudat de dentibus illius, ut ait Iob (26), auferendo peccantes Israelitas, cuius supra dorsum contestante psalmista (27), tociens delinquentes, fraudulentes fabricaverunt machinas, distulit adhuc tot admissas incontra confessorem suum negligentias, in cuius sollemne et solemnne promptissime adest depositurus piis precibus peccatorum sarcinas qui depositis omnigenis criminum monstris secum victurum virum sanctissimum et abbatem Ionatum evexit in arces ethereas. Ea quippe sacra die mortalitatis deposuit trabeam temporalem et una quam a Domino pro omnibus patris, salutis caputque corona pretiosi lapidis innexa, iuxta psalmistam (28), vestitus enim immortalitatis indefitientem clamidem, haec delectatur iam tantum in Domino, qui complevit peticiones cordis sui pro voto, qui eum satiat in patria de conspectu suo novo nomine inscriptione rutilante calculo, cuius expositionis enuclationem nemo digniter novit nisi qui exarandus est in aeternae vitae libro. Hac siquidem festiva luce milibus confessorum quadam iunctus in acie gaudet supra modum de triumpho regis gloriae, videt pericula quae evasit, quibus adhuc subiacent menbra in terris peregrinantis ecclesiae, cessat dolor, luctus, meror, lacrimae, nichil restat nisi Dominum caelestium et humerum satorem collaudare. In cuius sacra sacrae depositionis seu tumulationis feria, et si desunt lectioni scripta miracula pro eius memoria artius cordibus imprimenda quae non est incredibile eum fecisse plurima, sed delituerunt perpetrata nimirum ob scriptorum inertia studia - tamen iners non debet apparere fidelium opera sed cum devotione intima celebrativi denominata certa quae solutum et impetraturus est domino in salutatione Augusti consecratas de vinculis beati Petri apostolorum primi sub oculis decet initiari quae denotant felicem eius transitum ad paradisiacae amenitatis gaudia et tam sublimia quam...
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ineffabilia. » Talibus atque aliis verbis fratris in causam sancti Ionati piissimi
confessoris Christi pie persurrit, sua coelo frumentum partim explitum,
partim metra, utrumque sibi obscura, pulchraeque-destine homineque
de sanctitatis confessoris se consulitatis, disputatione, lectorum utque
apice prematuri et quae superioribus Dictatur et juxta motum septemjulii, sepulchrali
socii sancti magnae. Qui eorum in consilio Sedilliciabat Dominus, qui
nunc ac tanta sua divina perspicacia, qui in tantam terrae mandato
mari sanctissimo confessore suum poterit [193°] consentiunt ineptaculis, qui
fervidae apud inertios
socii partis terrae conscius socii quamvis muni ad regendos quosque, si
falle, devitae utque multa excelsitatem etiam unsus unius activitatis
aprie associata dulcius conspectum sanctissimi Iosephini exspectando non
ineptaneo conspectum nuncidiile.
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Ionato, contra furorem tirannice inquietudinis crudelis exactionis seu debuchantis persecutionis obice vel obstaculo, ceu de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum, videlicet spirituum, atrociora ferocibus ursis, avidiora rapacibus lupis, fractis repagulis patefactis in quibus latuerant cavernis, exierunt multimoda genera hominum, diversis generibus armorum pectora munitorum, oves et boves quas invenerunt universas, necnon et pecora, gramina, campi superficietenus attondentia de villa Saliacensi diripientium. Nec his tamen contenti, pro dolor !, pessima pestis homo homini, homines non ut homines, immo ut apri, tauri vel leones seu quaelibet ferae insanae et silvestres aggressi, quosdam illorum compadibus affigerunt, manibus autem affligebant. Necnon etiam, quosdam vulneribus inflictis crudeliter affecerunt et terram de cruore eorum effuso infecerunt, quosdam vero verberibus diutinis vexatos, stilfa sanguinis artus perfusos multisque dehonestamentis certamini male addictos, viriliter tamen agentes et tam pro animabus, quam pro rebus fortiter dimicantes longe a se non sentiment tam aliorem. Quis vero non fuerat, vere amator victor, devastatus et captivatus Subclamabant se nos caris inflictores et minores omnina calamitates tenebantur ac subeamundo, quos dehiscentem se se se sequente incendio religiosa, contentores minimum quae obseruerant metuendos quae repellentes aut propinques inter locorum insaniae maxime infecerunt. Proinde iterum et iterum inclamabant conquerentes, flentes et eiulantes auxilium Domini et sanctissimi confessoris sui Ionati, sed praecipue sanctissime virginis Eusebiae, cujus amicorum et coniungendae in villa Saliacensi ex antiqua predecessorum regum donatione, eorum scilicet, qui sanctam sacra baptismatis unda virginem sponsamque spectabilis Deo initivere. Dicebantque ad alterum: « Quid igitur faciemus ? Paulo ante dapifero Balduino, vices patrocinii usurpanti super nos, pondera argenti probati igneque examinati aequa trutina marcarum bissena libravimus; nunc de preda reducenda eidem forsitan maiore parte iam consumpta centenarium numerum in bis quinquagenis solidis integrum exsolvemus et totidem aut eo amplius patrono antecessori, Hugoni scilicet Hoisgiensi, ad hoc nos in sua cogenti, facturum pacem in proximo cum Wilelmo recens comite substituto, velimus nolimus, nec, ut remur, accepturo, immo dedignaturo parva de nostris sumere deferemus. Minatur enim tormenta, cruces et verbera si non remetiamur quantotius eandem et maiorem summam, quam et dapifero, cupide locatam in interiori cordis eius area. Si sic futurum est, caelorum Rex et
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Sancti confessor Christi Ionatus consultus iuris per aliquod spatium temporis aequum executus est rationem. Quoc. supramemorati [99r°]

Saliacenses magis et magis instabant et a precibus sanctum invocantes Ionatum, ut ad se referretur, non cessabant. Crescebant enim mala cotidie, quibus ultra modum resolvebatur cor eorum, praeceps sancti cum quosdam neque indulgere quadragesime cernerent, quin arma contra se et in sui perniciem deferrent, bella seditiose atque insidiose commoverent, trinae qua [119v°]

divisi climatis Flandriae trium comitum dominationem praetereunt salutem instituerunt. Verum haec et alia mortis stipendia, malorum dispendia, incommoda perplurima consecuta sunt de iniusta nece Karoli Flandriae comitis egregii, cuius meminisse continue praece, summo cum favore decet conventum, quacumque diffusus est per orbem terrarum fidelis populi. Sed de his hactenus, quae implendo fuerit paucitas multis sanctorum meritorum scriptoribus.

Ex eo igitur tempore in frequentiori cultu necnon in maiori veneratione fratres sanctum habuere Ionatum, cuius in presentia nullus vel rarus apud eos quos defendebatur jactum haruscitum. Quod et juxta bonum placidum fundamentum et firmum et perennis sancti praesentis sanctus ac vehementer consecratus in alvam mundam avertit. Unde, cum tam diligentis, processus de somni subtilibus inflatus gloriae, magnificavit et colloquent Domine, qui omnium turpium fere ministrae circumducerunt et eorum viribus aequo decetur, existere quin intervallum temporis sancti evenerit sanctorum.
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precibus admodum devinæaret. Ipsi itaque domestici nostri vicini, nostri in-
teriores amici et propinqui, ipsi, inquam, duo patres eximii, columpne
quidem et munimen huius loci, sanctus videlicet confessor Christi et abbas
Ionatus, et cum eo in eodem requiescens secreto confinio sanctissimorum meritorum sacer vir Deoque proximus, discipulatu, ut fertur, condignus beati
Amandi Chrodobaldus, necnon sanctae continentes, utpote in viduitate bona
sanctam vitam peragentes, sancta scilicet Rictrudis et beata Gertrudis, avia
notissimi ac de Francis progeniti sancti Adalbaldi cum filia eiusdem sanctissima
Eusebia virgine, sponsaque nichilominus devotissima superni sponsi unigeniti
filii Patris altissimi, ipse itaque utriusque sexus vigiles excubiae incolatus nostri, nos unanimes,
sobrios ac iuste viventes
(35) paci et sanctimoniae operam dantes in
domo Domini diu habitare faciant, veniam delictorum omnium optineant, suis
meritis et intercessionibus ad caelestia regna perducant, iustum iudicem in
tremendo examine Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum placatum ac
benignum exhibeant, cuius singulare imperium, indicibile conciliabulum,
inresolubile domicilium hic et in evum permanet, id est in secula seculorum. AMEN.

Endnotes:
(1) Cant. 6, 3.
(2) 1 Sa. 3, 13.
(3) 2 Tim. 4, 2.
(4) William Clito († 27 or 28 July 1128).
(5) Amand de Castello (1116 - probably 27 May 1136).
(6) Rom. 12, 11.
(7) Rom. 1, 28.
(8) Cfr. Mc. 12, 43.
(9) Lc. 1, 78.
(10) A monk by that name is mentioned under 1 May in the thirteenth-century
necrology of Marchiennes (Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 889, fol. 82v°).
(11) Ps. 33, 9.
(12) Ps. 13, 2.
(13) Ps. 13, 2 sqq.
(14) Ps. 12.
(15) Ps. 12, 2 sqq.
(16) Ex. 3, 2 sqq.
(17) Ex. 4, 31.
(18) Mt. 9, 35.
(19) Lc. 17, 10.
(20) Lc. 17.
(21) Lc. 17, 10.
(22) Ex. 3, 2 sqq.
(23) Mt. 9, 35.
(24) Mt. 9, 35.
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(25) Ps. 120, 4.
(26) Job 29, 17.
(27) Ps. 228, 3.
(28) Ps. 31, 9.
(29) Marchiennes became a double monastery with Jonatus’ appointment.
(30) Ps. 116, 3.
(31) Irenaeus, Against Heresies XIII, 194.
(33) Cont. 4, 8.
(34) Hugo H. of Oisy.
(35) Tt. 2, 13.
In 1164, Bishop Godofric of Amiens issued a charter in which he notified “all our faithful, present or future”, that magister Ghislain of Arras had usurped and eventually returned the altar (or, rather, the revenues that derived from it) of the small village of Mazingarbe, which belonged to the monks of Marchiennes. To show his concern, Godofric noted that “it should be known... that the abbey of Marchiennes, which is situated in our diocese, has long suffered from carelessness on the part of its prelates and its subordinates, and finds itself in such an advanced state of decay, that it is almost reduced to nothing.” This gloomy description takes some liberties with reality, since the estates of Marchiennes were by no means in a total state of neglect. Nevertheless, it does reflect the communicative intent of the bishop, who wanted to use this document as a silent but lasting witness to the social tensions that marked his age.

Paradoxically, Godofric’s charter referred to social interactions, but did not really participate in them: in recording the settlement, it did little more than acknowledge the existence of a previous, oral agreement between the monks, Ghislain and possibly Godofric himself.

The case mentioned above is but one of many examples from the eleventh and twelfth centuries in which documents play an ambiguous role in the settlement of disputes, the dissemination of opinions, and the defence of properties or even identity. Patrick Geary and Stephen White have noted that, as far as society in northern France is concerned, monastic groups often chose to settle their disputes with the local lay elite by oral compromise rather than by court action. More often than not, the disputes had no precise beginning or end but...
belonged to "structural conflicts" (often lasting for several generations), while
the parties involved usually performed temporary truces and settlements in
public. For these performances, neither court cases in the modern sense of the
word nor written documents could provide a satisfying alternative. The func-
tion of any ensuing charters was mostly to assist the parties' and witnesses'
memory of events until the tensions between them had reached a new boiling
point and the nature of their relation had to be reconsidered in the context of
recent developments. It would, however, be misguided to assume that those
groups who had mastered the written word merely created documents to use
them as aids-mémoires to the social process. Although groups and institutions
still mostly functioned and interacted by means of unwritten forms of commu-
nication, this period witnessed an explosive growth in the number of charters,
cartularies, letters, chronicles and hagiographical narratives. Practically none of
these were new types of written communication, and the fact that they were
conceived from group-specific viewpoints was also hardly innovative. How-
over, the enormous investments made by groups and individuals to transmit
information in written form shows that documents were, in effect, being used
as levers for achieving political, social and economic goals. As a result of this,
the composition and contents of each type of text could change very quickly, as
authors honed their discursive skills in pursuit of a form of textual transmission
that would be considered an objective and universally accepted benchmark for
social interaction. The main problem was that those who tried to use written
documents for this purpose did not know which, if any, type of written dis-
course would ultimately prove to be the most effective.

The emphasis in the previous paragraph on the strategic use of the written
word reminds us of certain trends in literacy studies, the most recent of which
has become known as New Literacy Studies. Since the early 1990s, there have
been attempts to reconcile the "autonomous" or mechanical interpretation of
written language with a view of literacy as a social practice. In this context,
the written word is seen as a tool for the construction of social identities and
capacities. The emphasis on the strategic use of written communication is
therefore seen as a way of understanding how individuals and groups use
written texts to negotiate power relations and construct social identities.

References:

1. R. Stock, The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in
written behaviour and its ‘ideological’ or social counterpart. Although the written word carries in itself certain technical, non-contextual properties with cognitive implications for human communication, NLS scholars claim that its use is “always embedded in constructed epistemological principles” and that ‘literacy’ (rather than ‘literacy’) is an appropriate term to describe the use of the written word in a given society. As a result, the concepts of literate practices and literate behaviour have found their way into scholars’ vocabulary, the first one depicting the flexibility of groups in using the written word in many specific, goal-oriented ways, the other stressing the necessity of associating literate practices with social contexts. It has also led to the idea that the written word is an instrument of distinction: literate behaviour by social groups always reflects a particular outlook on society and a desire to make it dominate over alternative views.

From the perspective of historical research, the ethnographers’ attractive surveys of literate practices and literate behaviour in small, well-defined and well-documented communities can rarely be replicated for past societies. Occasionally, however, literate practices and, in the best of cases, literate communities, can surface upon close inspection of the preserved corpus of texts, and this is particularly the case with a number of monastic communities. In the context of this article, I intend to use the example of two twelfth-century monastic communities from the valley of the Scarpe, a small river currently situated near the current Franco-Belgian border, to show how the increasing impact of the written word in society was not the result of a straightforward process, but rather one that met with significant resistance and whose nature depended to a great extent on how it was applied at a micro-level and its role among particular communities in a particular region. The case of Saint-Amand is interesting as a well-documented example of how literate behaviour was transformed in the early twelfth century as a response to new, functional needs.

That of Marchiennes is exceptional because of the possibility it affords of establishing a long-term assessment of the way in which the monks dealt with the...
possibilities and limitations of literate media, and how the transition from static, normative literacy to a more dynamic approach of documentary evidence was successfully concluded in the late twelfth century. Deeply involved in local and regional politics, the monks of Saint-Amand and Marchiennes responded to the uncertainties of their age by producing and receiving an impressive number of documents, all of which were created, used and stored in very specific contexts.12

Eleventh-century monasticism and the politics of reform

The River Scarpe plays a major role in the history of the Ostrevent, a small region situated in the French Département du Nord.13 Running its course over 102 kilometres from Berles-Monchel in the west to Mortagne in the east, it ultimately feeds the waters of the River Scheldt.14 From a monastic perspective, the history of the Scarpe valley began in the seventh century, when members of the regional aristocracy agreed to donate considerable estates to the foundation of Amandus, a popular missionary from Aquitaine.15 The dense woods and the inhospitable morasses on the south banks of the Scarpe had kept population numbers relatively low, although the river apparently lent itself to some commercial traffic towards the end of the first millennium and a number of Roman trade routes crossed the region from the Mosan area into Douai. As far as the aristocracy was concerned, the foundation of monasteries constituted a significant investment in their own financial, social and spiritual future. As well as funding institutions where the dead would be forever remembered and prayed for by ‘professionals’, patrons effectively protected parts of their estates from being distributed among the local nobility. Although the history of all of these communities is rather obscure until the turn of the first millennium, they certainly suffered from the Norman invasions at the end of the ninth century and, 12 Two examples of studies that deal with these problems are W. BROWN, ‘Charters as Weapons. On the Role Played by Early Medieval Dispute Records in the Disputes They Record’, in: Journal of Medieval History, 28 (2002), pp. 227-48; and D. IOGNA-PRAT, ‘Les lieux de mémoire du Cluny médiéval (v. 940-v. 1200)’, in: Au cloître et dans le monde. Femmes, hommes et sociétés (IXe e XVe siècles). Mélanges en l’honneur de Paulette L’Hermite-Leclercq, eds P. HENRIET / A.M. LEGRAS (Paris, 2000), pp. 103-17.
consecutively, from the unstable political climate in the tenth century. Few details of these events are known, although it is certain that the destructions by the Norsemen and by civil war caused the loss of many an abbey’s archives and material assets, and that the increasingly violent attacks of the lower aristocracy on the abbeys caused the monks’ efforts to be fragmented and their incomes to be diminished.15

It was around the year 1000 that the political situation in the region began to change.17 Over the course of more than a century, the counts of Flanders had gradually taken over the area north of the River Scheldt, the sparsely populated but extremely fertile coastal region that had been occupied by the Carolingian nobility only very slightly. In the south and the east, they attempted to expand their territories as far as the Scheldt, which would then constitute a natural boundary. At the same time, they were looking for strong, preferably urban, footholds in the west. Count Baldwin II (879-918), and especially his successors Arnulf I (918-965) expanded the county to the bishopric of Arras-Cambrai. The counts were very keen to establish their influence in this region, although the city Valenciennes was at one point transferred into the hands of the west Frankish Lothair, this was only for the purpose of ensuring that the succession of the grandson of Arnulf, the future Arnulf II, would not be an occasion for others to intervene. He had to regain indirect control over the region, Baldwin IV (988-1035) chose to undermine the authority of the bishop of Cambrai by forging an alliance with the castellan of the city of Arras, technically a vassal of the bishop. At stake was the abbey of Saint-Vaast in Arras, whose abbot was nothing short of a fully-fledged warlord, with a considerable troop of armed forces at his disposal, lucrative incomes from the vast estates of the abbey and a major interest in the city, which, after all, had originated as an abbatial burgus.

The death of Otto III in 1004 inspired the count to recapture Valenciennes, which in turn incited Henry II to destroy the city of Ghent and the French king to occupy Valenciennes and Arras under the pretext of a royal peragratio. In return for his loyalty, the bishop received comital powers over the abbey of Saint-Vaast, which he then set out to reform.

The count, but with what degree of enthusiasm it is now difficult to assess, consented to this initiative, and invited the noted reformer Richard of Saint-Vanne to Saint-Vaast. Richard cleverly chose to secure both episcopal and

comital support for his efforts to consolidate the abbey's social and economic position. The ensuing years (1012-1015) would see Baldwin expanding his territories definitively to the west (Valenciennes) and the north-east (Walcheren and other islands in the Scheldt delta), thus increasing the need for stronger institutional support in these regions. In his article on comital policy in Flanders in the early eleventh century, Jan DHONDT has shown how the count increasingly set out to establish administrative footholds in important commercial centres, thus enhancing his control over an increasingly wealthy region. This policy, and the vigorous efforts of Richard to convince Baldwin that his personal fate would be determined by his involvement in an ambitious project of monastic reform, ensured that the count would actively help to initiate such enterprises. After the deaths of the abbeys of Saint-Amand (1013) and Saint-Bertin (1015), new, Richardian abbots were appointed. In 1024, the monastery of Marchiennes was likewise reformed and staffed with a group of male Benedictines instead of the female community that had occupied it for centuries.

By the middle of the eleventh century, all of the monasteries mentioned above were occupied by Benedictine monks and enjoyed the protection of the count. Despite these changes, the monks remained as potentially subject to the attacks of the local nobility as they had been before. Regional politics were severely disrupted by the growing boldness of the local aristocracy, but also by a broader evolution in society, which involved strong demographic growth and resettlements, thereby vastly changing the nature of lordship and government. Although the Flemish counts succeeded in keeping the fragmentation of feudal power at bay throughout the French kingdom from the 1020s to the 1060s, the Ostrevant witnessed a redistribution of power and shifting tensions between two levels of seigneurial elites. It would take at least until the third quarter of the twelfth century for a group of 'knights' (milites) and clans of local warlords (some of whom were descendents of the lower nobility) to assimilate with the established aristocracy and to pursue actively a more or less peaceful redistribution of lands. Meanwhile, the established regional

19 GERZAGUET, 'Les communautés', p. 56.
noblility abandoned its claims on lay abbacy, and instead chose to retain a high degree of control on the monastic institutions by claiming the role of advocates. The position of advocate had originally been created as a means of regularising relations between a monastery and the lay aristocracy, who protected and assisted the monks in exchange for certain revenues or services. In most cases, however, the title of advocate fell into the hands of individuals and families who considered the monastic communities to be members of the feudal system like any other or even potential adversaries, rather than venerable institutions.

Monasteries offered the role of high advocate to the highest secular authority in the region, in this case the Flemish count, in the vain hope that the other advocates would be stopped from usurping the abbey's estates.

By the late eleventh century, the need felt by monastic communities to redefine their relations with neighbouring lay clans had become even more urgent for three reasons. First of all, as generation followed upon generation, it became clear that the lay offices, associated with the abbey had become hereditary. Lay provosts of abbey, fiscal and advocate simply inherited their position and the income from their fathers, which meant that the conditional nature of the agreement between the monks and the local by-elite was brought under severe pressure. Secondly, the 1070s saw a schism in the family of the counts of Flanders whereby the heir of the deceased count was kept from power by his uncle and chose to establish his authority in the county of Hainaut, which they had inherited from their mother. As it happened, the region south of the river Scarpe came under the immediate control of the counts of Hainaut, who obviously fostered good relations with supportive lay clans. This caused a regional power vacuum, which encouraged local "brigands" and the lower nobility to try and establish small fortifications and territories for their own families. The erection of illegal fortifications and the occupation of im-

Incentives for a strategic reassessment of literate practices

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25  C. WICKHAM, in his contribution (pp. 196-208) to T. REUTER / C. WICKHAM, 'Debate. The "Feudal Revolution"', in: Past and Present, 155 (1997), pp. 177-208, argues that the shifting balance of power enhanced the lower nobility’s desire to make clear statements regarding what they considered theirs and not (pp. 205-7).
27  BARTHÉLEMY does not subscribe to the idea of a new underclass of milites in the late tenth and early eleventh century, arguing that many of the so-called "brigands" in contemporary documents may have actually made use of many more legal arguments to support their claims.
important mills on the Scarpe by what the sources refer to as soldiers (milites) or local warlords severely disrupted the trade routes and deeply affected the abbeys’ economies. From the third quarter of the eleventh century onwards, the counts of Hainaut also sought to establish their power by favouring religious houses that were not under the control of their Flemish rivals. Initiatives such as the foundation of Honoré’s and Anchin’s quickly gained support from the most powerful noblemen and clergy in the region, who took advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the count of Hainaut. By the first decades of the next century, the monastic community of Anchin had become a major player in regional politics. The ensuing competition between abbeys by no means made it easier for monastic leaders to maintain a transparent or even a more or less neutral stance towards other groups in society.

Finally, monastic communities tried to settle disputes and minimize tensions with local noblemen by imitating the latter’s preferred methods of reconciliation. The abbacy of Bovo I of Saint-Amand (1077-1085) was considered a failure by his twelfth-century successors because he had sold part of the abbey’s treasure and paid a rent to the lord of Landas in exchange for the latter’s fidelity. In the context of Bovo’s own time, however, this must have been a fairly uncontroversial decision, as it temporarily consolidated the relations with the local nobility. We know of at least one of Bovo’s charters from 1082, in which he explicitly condemned the usurpations of the abbey’s lay provost. It seems reasonable to assume that his pact with the Landas clan was an attempt to correct what their opponents would have been willing to admit (see ‘Debate. The “Feudal Revolution”, in: Past and Present, 152, pp. 203-5).

29  A vivid account of the political tensions that preceded the foundation of Hasnon can be found in the *Historia monasterii Hasnoniensis*, a contemporary account by an anonymous monk whom STRACKE identifies as a secretary of the count of Hainaut: ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, MGH SS XIV (Hanover, 1883), pp. 149-58; A. STRACKE, ‘Over de Historia Hasnoniensis monasterii’, in: Ons Geestelijk Erf, 19 (1945), pp. 173-95, esp. p. 190; and L. SERBAT, ‘Un historien imaginaire du XIe siècle: le moine “Tomellus”’, in: Mémoires de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France, 8 (1934), pp. 108-44.
34  IDEM, La justice seigneuriale de l’abbaye de Saint Amand. Son organisation judiciaire, sa procédure et sa compétence du XIe au XIVe siècle (Louvain / Paris, 1965), pp. 419-21, no. 3.
ned the inevitable interference of this mighty clan in the abbey's affairs. In the long term, however, this strategy did nothing to stop local lords and brigands from pursuing their aggressive, but not necessarily wildly violent, policy with regard to monastic institutions. The best example comes from the abbey of Marchiennes, where the monks tried to placate the Landas family by electing Fulcard, the brother of the clan leader, to the abbatial see in 1103. Fulcard immediately adopted the lifestyle of an aristocrat and began to distribute parts of the abbey's estates and revenues to members of his family. As a result, most of the monks left the abbey. What followed was a curious and violent episode that culminated in Fulcard abdicating as abbot but remaining in place as a local potentate. Through the intercession of the bishop of Arras, he eventually abandoned his claims, but his relatives or clan members set fire to the monastery's hospital and caused disturbance in and around the abbey. This episode made clear the intentions of Fulcard's relatives: the Landas clan were not interested in the abbey itself, but in its wealth, and quite happily gave back the abbacy in return for control over its estates.

In the perception of the most energetic of contemporary monastic leaders, these three problems that troubled monastic life in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were caused by the instability of social relations and the volatile nature of oral agreements. The endless cycle of conflict and reconciliation with neighboring clans was detrimental to the continuity and the institutional stability of abbeys and other ecclesiastical institutions, and the risks involved in the oral settlement of disputes called for a permanent, if initially hesitantly applied, solution.

Changing attitudes towards the written word

Although our vision of contemporary monastic behaviour is undoubtedly distorted by the poor state of preservation of tenth- and early eleventh-century archival material, there are strong indications to support the assumption that literate groups from the second half of the eleventh century gradually began to...
handle the written word in a different way as a result of the aforementioned tensions. Dominique Barthélémy has made a point in claiming that changes in eleventh-century society should rather be defined as a mutation documentaire than as a mutation féodale, implying that it was not the basic institutions and juridical mechanisms but rather the discursive instruments of its participants that were subject to major changes.39 It would, of course, be grossly exaggerated to claim that pre-1100 institutions did not use the written word systematically for administrative or communicative purposes.40 However, the production of pragmatic literary texts seem to be one that lacked what Hagen Keller has described as “techniques of ... text-supported government”.41 Firstly, the documents that were used before that time in many cases reflected a normative concept of government and estate management rather than a dynamic one. Secondly, the validity of legal documents such as charters and contracts depended largely on the testimonies of the interaction itself, with the document itself occupying a secondary status.

Over the course of the eleventh century, different regions in north-western Europe witnessed a trend towards homogenising and objectifying evidence in charter material. Michael Clanchy has argued that the interest in written law and written instruments of government on the part of secular and ecclesiastical institutions was inspired by a desire to enhance their control over administrative and intellectual networks.42 Whereas during the tenth and early eleventh centuries witnesses had been the most important validating feature of a legal transaction (and thus were mentioned explicitly in otherwise informal charters known as notitiae), the intellectual authors of the charters now began to look for trans-temporal, depersonalised validation marks. The authority of the documents, which had previously been lacking in notitiae, derived from the authority that issued them (a king, a count, a pope, and so on) in decreasing social status as the twelfth century progressed and a number of formal semiotic character-

42  M.T. CLANCHY, From Memory to Written Record, England, 1066-1307 (Oxford, 2000), passim.
such as seals, a specific formula and such like.43 Once these validation marks came to be accepted, a large number of charters from the previous century or so lost much of their credibility, as their authors had not cared about validation arguments other than witnesses.44 The return to formulaic diplomatics in the second half of the eleventh century and the problems with notitiae as a legal genre were compensated by the emergence of pancarts, in which the contents of older, less formalised notitiae were incorporated in new, properly formalised charters.45

Advocates of the "autonomous" model of literacy might claim that this change of attitude towards the use of the written word and its implications for administration and social life gradually forced all participants in the social game to comply with its new, objectified rules.46 There are, however, indications that this did not result in a dramatic changeover in the nobility's attitude towards communication and legal procedures, at least not in the initial stages of this process.47 In day-to-day interactions and especially in conflicts, documents could hardly be used, as no (written) standard for how to deal with them existed.48 Conversely, documents were not the exclusive expressions of attempts to introduce new forms of normative media in contemporary society: Timothy Reuter argued that the truce of God movement reflects this ambiguity.49 Despite assertions of a general trend towards rationalisation and documentation,50 periods of increased use of documents for legal and administrative pur-

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45 The subject is discussed in great detail in: Pancartes monastiques des XIe et XIIe siècles. Table ronde organisée par l'ARTEM, 6 et 7 juillet 1994, eds M. Parisse / P. Pégot / B.-M. Tock (Nancy / Turnhout, 1998).
48 At Saint-Amand, there is evidence of an increased interest in charter production from the 1060s onwards; many of the documents appear to have been discarded in the course of the twelfth century (Plateelle, Le temporel, pp. 7-8). On the subject of charters being reused in other (manuscript) contexts, see the remarks by L. Morelle in 'Original mis au rebut ou acte manqué? Lecture et critique d'un parchemin mutilé issu de l'abbaye de Saint-Amand (1105)', in: Retour aux sources. Textes, études et documents d'histoire médiévale offerts à Michel Parisse, eds S. Gougenheim / M. Goulet / O. Kammerer et al. (Paris, 2004), pp. 927-41.
50 See, for example, Goody, 'The Implications', pp. 32-3.
poses in the late eleventh century often coincided with the government of ambitious leaders, who were looking for new means and arguments to compensate, or at least to counter their opponents, without being certain of their tactics’ eventual success. It appears as though only the most energetic sought to enhance the written word’s force as an argument and that only the highest of authorities possessed an aura that was strong enough to be conveyed through a document of their hand rather than through their actual presence. Groups and individuals who used the written word had to do their utmost to convince the other party that their arguments were legitimate and socially objective (whatever that may have meant in an eleventh-century context). The result was that literate communities sought to obtain written confirmation of their claims from those authorities who commanded the respect of the regional lay elite on the grounds of their feudal power.

The inherent legal validity of written agreements and normative documents was not generally acknowledged as a benchmark for social interaction, and this would remain the case until late into the twelfth century. Exactly how monastic communities dealt with the ambiguous status of the written word will be discussed in the next sections.

Literate government and its limitations at Saint-Amand (late eleventh to early twelfth centuries)

Both in Saint-Amand and in Marchiennes, the first three decades of the twelfth century were a transitional period in which strong-willed abbeys tried to re-establish the relationship between their institutions, rival monastic communities and other ecclesiastical institutions and, most important of all, the neighboring lay elite. At Saint-Amand, Abbot Malbod (1018–1062) had already issued a cursory description of some of the abbey’s estates, but it really was Hugo II (1085–1107) who began using the written word systematically as an instrument of government. Before a dispute with advocate Anselm II of Ribémont and his seneschal Renier over illegitimate exactions and usurpations of the abbey’s es-

In a letter from 1096 to the bishop of Arras, Bishop Radbod II of Tournai expressed his concern regarding the usurpations of Anselm and Renier: “Allow your piety to be moved by the sorrowful row of the monks of Saint-Amand and by the extremely unfair and horrible injustices that have been inflicted upon them by our subjects”, he pleaded. It is difficult to imagine this letter being drawn up without the involvement of Hugo himself, who had already requested the intervention of the Flemish Counts Robert le Frise and Robert II. When he finally agreed to conclude an oral _pax_ with Anselm, Hugo issued a lengthy chirograph to record the details of the dispute, the terms of the agreement, and the names of no fewer than eighty-two individuals who had given their guarantee that the agreement would be respected.

The result of Hugo’s literate policy was a slowly growing archive of texts that documented the current state of affairs in the abbey and provided a template for further relations with the outside world. In 1107, Hugo’s policy of reassessing relations with the local aristocracy through conflict and fixing newly defined relationships through the use of the written word was crowned by two major events: the granting of two privileges by Pope Paschalis II and the translation of the relics of St Amandus in Brabant. One bull confirmed the possession by the monks of several altars, while the other listed the entire estate of the abbey and confirmed the community’s liberties. The translation of Amand’s relics, however, showed that the documents Hugo obtained were not regarded as sufficient arguments in dealing with outsiders. The report of the monks’ triumphant journey betrays how it was necessary for the owner of an estate, in this case the patron saint of the abbey, to manifest himself as a physical presence before being recognised by the estate’s occupants and potential usurpers.

The abbot’s increased reliance on the written word was by no means exclusive and its success was by no means guaranteed, even if looked at from a long-term perspective.

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56 PLATELLE, Le temporel, pp. 126-7.
The actions of Hugo's successor Bovo II (1107-1121) also showed that he was mostly interested in the correlation between the document as a memory-keeper, its function as a communicative object, and the authority of those who promulgated it. In other words, Hugo acknowledged the potential power of the written word as evidence, but he also knew that it was the authority of the author and the witnesses that mattered, much less so the legitimacy of the claims or of the documents themselves. Bovo maintained the paradox by simultaneously using documents and honouring the power of face-to-face relations to confront his adversaries. In 1116-1117, for example, Count Baldwin VII of Flanders visited the abbey on two separate occasions, had his feudal court condemn "evil men" (the lay provost, the advocates, and the castellan of Tournai) confirmed an oral agreement that his predecessors had witnessed between the abbot and Geoffrey, the advocate of the town of Saint-Amand, and issued two charters to provide the monks with a record of the two sessions.

To indicate how important these personal appearances were, Bovo also issued a charter to defend his decision to spend the large amount of money required to organise these visits and placed them in the context of his rationalisation of the abbey's administration.

Simultaneous with these events, Bovo ordered the compilation of the abbey’s oldest known cartulary by a monk named Walter. Although its daily use would have been problematic because of the strict chronological order of the transcribed charters, the cartulary reflects a dynamic conception of institutional government through the selection of documents: estates in Frisia that had recently been sold were not mentioned in the cartulary, nor were any legal actions that were no longer immediately relevant. The timing of Bovo’s cartulary also reflected a ambition to use it as part of a strategy of rationalisation of the abbey’s government. The remaining years of his abbacy were devoted to the acquisitions of lucrative altars and tithes and the concentration of the estates by exchanging and selling isolated patches in distant territories. In other words, it

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61 Quoted from Bovo’s charter from 1117 (Lille, Archives Départementales du Nord, 12 H 1, fol. 103r-v, no. 157).
62 The main purpose of the count’s visit was to prevent the function of the lay provost (given as a fief to one of the abbey’s vassals) from becoming hereditary; see Bovo’s charter from 1121 (Lille, Archives Départementales du Nord, 12 H 2, fol. 14r-v, no. 1). See PLATELLE, La justice, pp. 62-3.
63 Charters from 5 October 1116 (ibid., pp. 179-80, no. 80) and 6 October 1117 (ibid., pp. 191-2, no. 85).
64 Lille, Archives Départementales du Nord, 12 H 1, fol. 103r-v, no. 157.
is likely that the cartulary served as a template for future policies regarding the material wealth of the monastery.\(^{68}\)

Regardless of the cartulary’s internal use, Bovo acknowledged the fact that the lower elite would only be inclined to comply with the cartulary’s claims if some authority had corroborated them to quote Walter’s preface, it was his intention to show “with what reverence and with how much generosity the kings and sovereigns honoured [Amandus] and bestowed upon him their prop-


Literate practices and abbatial initiative in Marchiennes

Around the time of the making of Walter’s cartulary, the monks of Marchiennes initiated a similar but far more aggressive policy of written govern-


\(^{68}\) PLATELLE, Le temporel, pp. 212-13.

\(^{69}\) Ed. IDEM, ‘Le premier cartulaire’, p. 318.

\(^{70}\) MORELLE, ‘The Metamorphosis’, p. 181; see also the example of Saint-Riquier as described on p. 189.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 182.


Another strategy was to confront the abbey's "natural" adversaries. Amand's long abbacy was punctuated by a large number of disputes over estates and revenues, mostly with the lower aristocracy and especially the abbey's advocates, who by this time were more or less in control of local jurisdiction. Although contemporary reports convey an image of an abbey that was in little short of total ruin after Fulcard's disastrous abbacy, Amand found the means to initiate a campaign to strengthen the monks' social position. Significantly, he considered the written word to be an important instrument in this strategy. Between the years 1116 and 1121, an anonymous monk was commissioned to write the "Poleticum Marceniensis cenobii", a polypych that included extracts and paraphrases from a handful of charters and a selection of hagiographical and historical texts. Confronted with the monks' ambivalent attitude towards the past, dismissing it for its incompetent leaders and degenerated discipline but cherishing it as the basis of their identity and the legitimacy of the abbey's material claims, the author of the "Poleticum" devised a narrative concept that ignored recent social developments and presented the monks' aggressive attitude towards their advocates as fully legitimate. The author's unreserved antipathy with regard to the advocates' position must have sounded quite absurd to members of the local aristocracy, unless they understood these allegations as part of a discursive strategy devised to influence current opinions and to undermine the advocates' standing in future negotiations:

"because of the malicefulness, filthy uncleanness, recurred law, and detestable хорошее, wretched individuals, the peace of the land was disturbed. As a result, the attractive region, having seized a healthy climate, fertile fields and abundant harvests of all kinds of fruits of the field, become an unproductive desert, the cultures lying best desolate and the inhabitants having fled." 78

Besides such violent rhetoric, the contents of the polyptych itself were also intended to feed controversy. Contrary to what Jean-Pierre Gerzague has argued, the "Poleticum" did not constitute a status quo question of the monastic estates around 1120 and could never have remained fully valid as an instrument of abbatial government until the end of the twelfth century. At the time of writing, some of the described estates indeed belonged to the monks, while others...
were merely presumed to have once been part of their estates. A large portion of the claims on lost property were justified by references to hearsay, unidentified oral witnesses or even more suspect references to ‘old traditions’, and although it would be misguided to dismiss these claims offhand, it is clear that they did not look good on parchment. Amand and his author were fully aware of these problems and tried to allow for them by suggesting that the abbey’s estates had originated as a homogeneous collection and that these estates had been handed down legitimately over the generations since the foundation of the monastery. One of the key, the author of the Poleticum devised a testament of the patron saint Rictrudis, in which it was claimed that she had bequeathed the majority of the abbey’s estates to the community from her personal property, so that the abbey’s leaders could freely dispose of such estates until the end of time. The new textual reality of Rictrudis’ testament ensured the possibility of projecting the monks’ claims over what they considered to be theirs onto a distant and sanctified past. Simultaneously, they tapped into the common practice of representing the patron saint of the abbey as the actual lord and owner of the institution. Even within the Poleticum itself, literate and non-literary arguments coalesced into what the monks considered to be the most effective statement they could make at this point.

The author of the Poleticum also deliberately relied on some of the few remaining privileges and charters in the abbey’s archives in order to ignore the reality of recent social developments. The first, and oldest, legal document to be known in relation to the abbey is a charter issued by Charles the Bald in 877, which listed the properties of the mensa conventualis and donated all of the lands, rivers and woods around the monastery to the community of Marchiennes. A second document of which the contents are echoed in the polyptych is the charter issued by Count Baldwin V in 1038 to record the terms of the advocacy of the abbey of Marchiennes and to hand the office of advocate over to Hugo I Haroy, lord of Aultpreux. Understanding the relationship between both charters and the Poleticum is complicated by the fact that the charters appear to have been interpolated or forged at some point in the twelfth century, perhaps even during Amand’s abbacy. At the end of the preserved original of Charles the Bald’s privilege, a twelfth-century hand added two sentences, one of which expressly forbade the intervention of outsiders in abbatial elections. Consider-

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81 Ed. DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, pp. 65–6.


83 Lille, Archives Départementales du Nord, 10 H 56/960; ed. DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 82.
ing his efforts to avoid a repetition of the abbacy of Fulcard, the sentence fits in well with his policy, and if it was not added around this time, it is certainly in the spirit of his actions against the advocates and their presumptions with regard to the abbatial throne. As for the charter from 1038, at least some of the contents seem authentic, but the doubtful formal characteristics of the original, the anachronism of the unusually minimalist understanding of the advocacy, and the representation of the abbey and its subjects as victims and the advocates as aggressors, suggest interventions typical of the attitude of Amand and his successors. The deception lay in simultaneously respecting authentic written traditions regarding ownership of estates and aggressively adjusting written memory with regard to relations with the local aristocracy. With the creation of a detailed overview of what the abbey's estate should have looked like in 1116-1120, Abbot Amand proposed an agenda to be implemented by himself and by future leaders. Rather than merely serving the memory of the monastic community, the Poleticum and its “satellite documents” comprised the first step in changing disputed and vague territorial and financial claims into manageable parts of the monastic economy and turning the monks’ specific interpretation of how local society should be organized into reality. In order to achieve his aims, he used the Poleticum and the few charters from before he was elected in two different but equally functional contexts. Firstly, the Poleticum and the charters served as templates for subsequent documents, either directly or indirectly. In November 1123, Pope Calixtus II issued a privilege to the monks, which included a list of estates that was drawn up with the polyptych as a model. Although the list of witnesses appears to be interpolated,

84 The presence of Hugo’s son in the list of witnesses of a charter issued by Count Charles the Good in 1125 allows us to conclude that those parts of the 1038 charter that relate to Hugo Havet’s involvement in the advocacy can be trusted: ed. VERCAUTEREN, Actes, pp. 272-275, no. 119.


86 Ed. U. ROBERT, Bullaire du pape Calixte II 1119-1124. Essai de reconstitution. Tome second: 1122-1124 (Paris / Besançon, 1891), pp. 220-3. The influence of the Poleticum is argued in DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 27. A bull which purports to be from February of the same year contains significant additions to the list of estates and a clause regarding the advocates: P.-N.-E. PIÉTRESSON DE SAINT-AUBIN, Une bulle fausse du pape Calixte II pour l’abbaye de Marchiennes (Lille, 1937), pp. 1-16. If PIÉTRESSON DE SAINT-AUBIN is correct in
the remainder of the document is generally accepted as authentic and thus demonstrates the powerful impact of Amand’s literate policy. Other documents that played an essential role in the organisation of archival memory were equally exploited. In 1125, Count Charles the Good took Baldwin’s charter of 1038 as a model when he issued two charters to define the role of the abbey’s advocates.88 In Charles’ second charter, it was argued that the abbey had been free from the advocacy for more than 400 years following its foundation, thus showing how the historical memory created around 1120 was already permeating the discourse of the monks when they argued their case with the count.

Indirectly, the documents were used as evidence in the context of the settlement of disputes. In or shortly before the spring of 1124, the monks of Marchiennes presented to the papal court their case in a title dispute with a knight known as Thierry.89 Another example dates from around 1130, when before Bishop Robert of Artois the monks of Marchiennes and those of Anchin settled a dispute concerning fishing rights in the Scarpe. The bishop’s charter vividly describes the discussion between the abbots on the occasion of their meeting at the episcopal court: after the abbot of Anchin had pleaded his case, Amand pointed out how public opinion (vox populi) and written documents (antique descriptiones nostri monasterii) concurred in according the monks of Marchiennes their fishing rights.90 The only available description at that point would have been the Poleticum, which Amand (publicly but not exclusively) used as an argument to make his point at the bishop’s court.91 According to the charter, the abbot went on to paraphrase dating the forgery to the years 1167–1172 and in claiming that the clause echoes a dispute of the monks with Bishop Alvisus of Arras from 1141–1142, the interpolation in the 877 charter regarding episcopal approval most likely does not originate from the same campaign of archival overhaul.

88  Ed. VERCAUTEREN, Actes, respectively pp. 269-71, no. 118 and pp. 272-5, no. 119.
89  The papal mandate is lost, but its contents and the fact that the pope had seen and heard the 877 charter are mentioned in a mandate (dated after 1142) from papal legate Boso of S. Anastasia to Bishop John of Thérouanne; ed. J. R AMACKERS, Papsturkunden in den Niederländen (Belgien, Luxemburg, Holland und Französisch Flandern). II: Urkunden (Berlin, 1934), p. 107, no. 16.
90  Ad hec domnus Amandus abbas Marceniensis respondebat, dicens: ‘Certe iuxta vocem populi testimonium perhibentis et sicut habetur in antiquis descriptionibus nostri monasterii, meatus Scarpi fluminis et omnimoda piscatio a Wasconis curva usque ad Brachiorum locus proprie est Marceniensis ecclesie, cuiuscumque sit litus ex utraque parte, sed nullam iure licet ei cum retibus exercere piscationem per decurrentes aquas’ (ed. T OCK, Les chartes, pp. 66-7, no. 49, dated 1129; and GERZAGUET, Les chartes, p. 150, no. 54, dated between 25 May 1130 and 22 April 1131).
91  The abbot might have used copies of individual charters or even entire texts, although this seems unlikely since it took time after the creation of the Poleticum.
the text of the Politicum. One can only guess to what extent the text of the charter is a description of what the abbot actually said at the meeting: either he used the Politicium itself or notes with excerpts pertaining to the fishing rights, or he paraphrased the text, only to bring out the Politicium itself when the charter was drawn up. In any event, it seems very probable that Amand had taken with him the manuscript of this important document and had used it as evidence, even if it lacked the formal characteristics of legal documents. The Politicium and its "satellite documents" also provided the template for the abbot's policy of confronting his adversaries and integrating the formal and informal relationships between the monks and their neighbours. Amand himself continued to initiate negotiations with the monks' local opponents and used the court of the bishops of Arras and Cambrai to reach new settlements, often fixing the terms of each new agreement in writing.92 To use Laurent MORELLE's expression, the Politicium and the slightly but significantly readjusted charter collection of Marchiennes served as the monks' weapons, while the new charters took the place of the annulment that filled the empty spaces.93 Although many of the charters from this period reveal a complex and highly ritualised negotiation process, and although in their documents the authors chose to describe oral performances rather than neutral legal acts, the mere existence of these charters and their careful preservation by the monks shows that the latter wanted to achieve a firmer position by referring to them in future negotiations.94

Ultimately, the growing charter collection itself was to become a new weapon that replaced the old. This would turn out to be a successful strategy, although the contents of twelfth-century charters show that it would take several decades before any members of the local nobility acknowledged the power of the written word over oral agreements. It serves the 'ideological' model of literacy that there are many ways in which the documents themselves reflect a model of social interaction that continued to be based on non-written modes of

92 In a charter from 1121, the bishop of Arras describes how Roger, castellan of Lille, has been persuaded to make restitution of the monks' usurped grounds in Lorgies, in the document, the transfer is confirmed, but the bishop also notifies that the abbot has returned the grounds immediately after the settlement: ed. TOCK, Les chartes, pp. 45-7, no. 31. For a general discussion of this problem, see B.H. ROSENWEIN, To be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049 (Ithaca, 1989); D. MÉHU, Paix et communauté autour de l'abbaye de Cluny (Xe-XVe siècle) (Lyon, 2001); and BERKHOFER, Day of Reckoning, pp. 143-7.

93 MORELLE, 'The Metamorphosis', p. 199.

94 According to GERZAGUET's survey of preserved charters from the abbey of Marchiennes, the monks received more charters during Amand's abbacy than during the next twenty-two years (1136-1158), which is quite remarkable considering the fact that the impact of the written word was rapidly increasing. Only John I (1158-1181) left thirty-nine charters issued to the monks during his abbacy. In total, his abbacy covers twenty-five per cent of all known charters for Marchiennes from its foundation until 1199 ('Les communautés', p. 217).
The reason why some documents were initially considered effective was because they had been issued by authorities that were recognised by both parties involved in a legal transaction, regardless of the parties' attitude towards the use of the written word as such. The formal legality of charters, issued by the higher secular and ecclesiastical authorities, such as the counts of Flanders, the local bishops, and the pope, came second in the arguments of effectiveness. It can, for example, be assumed that the abbots of Marchiennes themselves issued more reconciliation charters than the six that have been preserved as originals or as copies in the late twelfth-century cartulary. An even more potent argument to support the idea that written evidence was not automatically accepted as an absolute benchmark for social interaction can be found in the impressive collections of miracle stories that were drawn up by the monks of Marchiennes between the 1120s and the 1170s. Just like in Saint-Amand, the monks demonstrated that the power of their patron saint was sufficient to assist them in their attempts to control their opponents and perhaps even more importantly to convince themselves and public opinion of the legitimacy of their struggle. As it turned out, the monks did not embark upon a whole series of translations involving each contested piece of land but came to terms with the incessant disputes and conflicts involving their abbey and its estates by incorporating these disputes in miracle stories of Rictrudis and her daughter Eusebia. But the recording of a number of such miracles, set in the context of disputes between the local nobility and the community of Marchiennes, is reflective of the fact that interaction in society was still very much dictated by face-to-face communication, especially at times when the legal apparatus was not functioning. When Count Charles the Good was murdered in his private chapel in Bruges on 2 March 1127, the local nobility in the Ostrevant took immediate actions to gain control over as much ecclesiastical territory as possible. The miracle stories also show how the

97  MORELLE argues that many abbatial charters might have been left out of the cartulary of Saint-Amand because of their sensitive contents ('sordid' deals with local advocates and provosts); 'The Metamorphosis', p. 182.
98  References to the narratives in PLATELLE, 'La religion populaire', pp. 369-70.
100  Gualbert of Marchiennes' Translatio Sancti Jonati in villa Saliacensi reveals the monks' anxiety at this situation: S. VANDERPUTTEN, 'A Miracle of Jonatus in 1127. The Translatio Sancti Jonati in
interventions of the counts of Flanders, the supreme advocates of the abbey, could not prevent some disputes from dragging on for several generations. In the second miracle collection of Runicard, dated 1160-1164, the author complains about the loss of property or revenues in Orchies, Douai, and the tithe of the small village of Reninge, near Ypres (Fig. 101). In the second miracle collection of Runicard, dated 1160-1164, the author complains about the loss of property or revenues in Orchies, Douai, and the tithe of the small village of Reninge, near Ypres.101 In 1140, the archbishop of Reims issued a charter of the agreement between the monks and the canons, leaving the monks with two-thirds of the tithe.106

The eagerness of lay parties to gain access to the revenues of the parish of Reninge was inspired by the fact that arable land was gradually replacing the woods around the village, which meant that the tithes of the parish were increasing. The lord of Termonde, although he had been excommunicated, appears to have given two-thirds of the tithe to Gerard of Reninge, an obscure figure who is likely to have been little more than a local miles. In 1163, Gerard was forced by the count to return the usurped goods, although in 1191 Countess Mathilda would redistribute the part of the tithe that had not been...
explicitly mentioned in the charter of 1133, with two-fifths being given to Gerard and three-fifths to the abbey.\footnote{The charter describes the matter as one of longa discordia et contentio: ed. C. Duvivier, Actes et documents anciens intéressant la Belgique, II (Brussels, 1903), pp. 161-4, no. 79.}

Other than showing that the monks did not invest all their strategic resources in court cases and in the drawing up of charters, the stories also reveal that the aggressive policy of Marchiennes' abbots and the monks' disregard of the social status quo deeply shocked the established lay clans in the region. One miracle story relates how a local nobleman, who had been urged by the monks to abandon his claims on part of their estates, exclaimed that his family would not allow itself to be disinherited by the monks (non se exhereditari passurum\footnote{PLATELLE, 'Crime', pp. 188-90.}).\footnote{Around this time, the contrasts between the notion of hereditary offices and conditional associations were becoming acute, evolving into what T.N. BISSON has called an "exceedingly feudal society": 'Lordship and Tenurial Dependence in Flanders, Provence, and Occitania (1050-1200)', in: Il feudalesimo nell'alto medioevo 8-12 aprile 1999, I (Spoleto, 2000), pp. 392-402 (quote at p. 401).} It is not difficult to imagine that the idea of such an action being committed to writing (and thus recorded for future generations) was even more abhorrent to members of the elite.\footnote{If the monks' literate methods were not entirely effective, the arguments they used to defend their interpretation of social order were often very questionable, if not entirely false.}

Sixty years of collecting charters in Marchiennes (ca. 1120-1170/80)

Despite the problematic effectiveness of written communication in disputes, the series of documents created in Marchiennes from the 1120s onwards reveals an increasing tendency on behalf of its users to rely on written evidence. In many ways, the polyptych of Marchiennes had been conceived in order to be made redundant by successive abbots' efforts to turn its legal claims into reality. In the Poleticum, one could find only a description of what the monks considered their own, whether they could prove it in writing or not. What little legal evidence was offered consisted mostly of very generally formulated charters issued by high secular and ecclesiastical authorities that confirmed the integrity of the abbey's estates and its liberties, and it is clear that the Poleticum was used subsequently as an aid to the abbot's attempt to gain more detailed and unambiguous confirmations of claims that were explicit, but only in the oral tradition fostered by the monks themselves. If they wanted their version of the situation to gain common currency, they would have to look for ways to get it approved by others. With the creation of a detailed overview of what the abbey's estates...
should have looked like in 1116-1120, Abbot Amand de Castello proposed such an agenda, to be implemented by himself and by future leaders.

Over the course of six decades, the polyptych was superseded in two ways. Firstly, the abbots of Marchiennes sought and received detailed confirmations of their rights and possessions in the form of papal privileges (which undoubtedly required significant financial investment on behalf of the monastic community) while the conditional nature of the advocacy was repeatedly defined in charters issued by the counts of Flanders.113 The series of papal bulls reflect the perceived necessity of updating the description of the abbey’s estates in the Poleticum, although they also show how the monks were keen to associate these updates with the highest ecclesiastical authority.115 Secondly, by creating and keeping a record of ever successful attempts on behalf of the abbots to re-establish new relations with the local elite, the static, normative perspective of the Poleticum and the papal bulls was complemented by charters that provided detailed descriptions of what the parties involved had negotiated and how this affected the abbey. From the middle of the twelfth century, the counts of Flanders and Hainaut began to accept this growing backlog of documents as evidence in disputes and court cases, and the terms on which new negotiations opened would from now on be increasingly dictated by a well-defined, written precedent.116 One could be tempted to assume that the creators of these documents were convinced that conflicting interpretations would be ruled out by recording the agreements in writing. Legal history has, of course, proved them fundamentally wrong.

By the late twelfth century, the contents of the Poleticum were in need of an almost complete overhaul. Marchiennes’ abbots, Amand de Castello in particular, had initiated a continuous policy of, on the one hand, trying to recuperate
what supposedly belonged to their community and, on the other, establishing new, written grounds on which the new standard of relations with the regional elites was to be based.117 The result was a significant number of charters, most of which were important because they dealt with the abbey’s relations with the local nobility rather than because of their relatively minor interest as legal documents. Although these documents had been conceptualized in a social climate that still favored oral agreements, the fact that these documents consolidated a certain state of affairs in writing reflected an attempt to intervene decisively in current developments in power and ownership.

Whether these attempts were always entirely successful is difficult to verify, but it appears that over the course of the twelfth century judges became more responsive to a fixed, written understanding of ownership and rights. It is not difficult to find examples of a transition from what B. DANET and D. BOGOCH have called “the constitution of legally binding acts in oral ceremonies, as it characterized of pre-literate societies”, to “their constitution via writing”, which characterizes literate and post-literate societies. This transition, therefore, was the slow – and ultimately incomplete – movement towards “a view of writing as a form of constitutive social action, and the products of writing, written documents, as autonomous material objects having a life of their own”.118 This would explain the monks’ motivation in replacing the Poleticum with artefacts, or rather, several artefacts that reflected the changed attitude towards written documents and social life in general. In the final quarter of the twelfth century, the monks drew up a lavishly illustrated cartulary,119 which contained transcriptions of a large portion of the abbey’s charter collection.120 Its structure, with charters organized hierarchically according to their author, and its luxurious illustration reveal that the makers of the volume were not exclusively thinking in strictly functional terms. Twenty-two transcripts of charters were preceded by a large initial, in which the intellectual author, mostly a high-placed lay authority or ecclesiastical officer, was represented. The high artistic quality of these portraits was the result of several decades of manuscript decoration in the abbey’s scriptorium,121 the images also show how the monks acknowledged the authority of the charters’ commissioners and the personal nature of their relationship.

117 Interestingly, the abbacy of the pious but troubled Hugh of Marchiennes (1148-1158) is the least documented in charters.
121 [ERNÝ], ‘Les manuscrits’. 
with the community of Marchiennes. By its placement at the head of the series of illustrated charters, Calixtus' forged privilege of February 1123 can be identified as what the monks of Marchiennes considered to be a quintessential document. Calixtus literally reaches out of the initial to give his precious confirmation of the abbey's privileges and altar rights to the monks of Marchiennes, three of whom can be seen on the right side of the image. Subsequent initials show Carolingian sovereigns, regional bishops, and the counts of Flanders. Just one member of the lower nobility, Simon of Oisy, castellan of Cambrai, is represented. As Appendix 2 shows, a broad selection of charters from the previous century that touched upon the conflicts of the abbots with the surrounding aristocracy are included in the cartulary.

How deeply the monks' conception of the transmission of information from the past had changed is further demonstrated in the Chronicon Marchianense. Written between 1199 and 1202 by the hagiographer and historiographer Andreas of Marchiennes, the chronicle eliminated all of the information from the Pastiens regarding the estates of the abbey and amplified the story of the abbey's first five centuries with material that served to demonstrate the founders' close tie to the Merovingian kings. Although the chronicle adds little to the Pastiens in terms of historical content, the preface conductively shows how the initial chronicle-polyptych was already considered anachronistic. "One day," Andreas relates, while he was discussing items that were necessary [to the monastic community], lord Simon, the twenty-first abbot of the monastery of Marchiennes casually asked if we had a gesta or a written list of the abbots of this house. One of the monks answered that this did not exist in writing, but that he knew certain things by heart … from the accounts of the elderly, some chronicles and histories.


X. Monastic Literate Practices

Although the unfinished nature of the chronicle might have been caused by the author’s death in 1202, the description of events indicates that he had no wish to replicate the lengthy comments of his predecessor on the evolution of the estate in his own time. Just a few brief but pessimistic comments, most of them quoted literally from Andreas’ own miracle stories of Rictrudis, served to demonstrate the poor state of the abbey at the end of the twelfth century. Andreas’ chronicle disconnected the glorification of the abbey’s past from the social agenda of the Politicum by doing so, it lost much of its appeal.

The functional nature of the Politicum, the cartulary and the chronicle, not only in terms of their use in disputes, but also as a manifesto of changing attitudes towards written and oral evidence and the purpose of historiography in general, cannot be underestimated. The original manuscript of the Politicum was lost at some point, and the only known copy is one at the end of an early thirteenth-century collection of hagiographies and historical narratives, where it appears to have been included because of its merit for the remembrance of the founder of the monastery and for its obvious literary qualities. In any event, the timing of this transition from administrative document to literary curiosity should not be considered a coincidence. Combined with the comprehensive lists of sources and litigants in the papal bulls and the counts’ charters relating to the role of the advocates, these documents constituted the core of a collection that reflected a profoundly different approach to estate management and social relations than the one depicted in the Politicum or even in the cartulary of Saint-Amand. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which the thirteenth century would herald new developments in the monks’ literate behaviour, their literate practices of the twelfth century were as much the result of abbots’ ad hoc strategies and internal long-term perspectives, as of a general trend towards formalization of juridical practices and legal evidence.

Conclusion

Although it appears that changes in legal and administrative literate behaviour affected western European society from the second half of the eleventh century onwards, this does not mean that the input of local communities can be disregarded. In truth, much can be said in favour of a hypothesis which claims that literate practices on a local level did not merely constitute an imitation of what happened at, say, the royal, comital or papal courts, but should be studied as an ambitious yet cautious exploration of options to strengthen a party’s arguments 124 125

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124 Ed. DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, p. 65; and VANDERPUTTEN, ‘Compilation’, p. 413.
125 Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 850. See DELMAIRE, L’histoire-polyptyque, pp. 2-3 for a detailed description.
in disputes. It is likely that local literate groups such as the monastic communities discussed in this article fully understood the organizing powers of the written word. Instead of relying on documents that could not take the changing political situation into account, ambitious abbots cautiously walked the tightrope between supporting oral conventions and promoting a new way of recording agreements that had the benefit of reducing the possibility of unpleasant confrontations. In a society where modes of social interaction were determined by local customs, and where status derived from ancestry (or, in the case of the monks, a saintly predecessor), the impact of the written word as a fixative of categories of social convention was very limited indeed. The increasing formal homogeneity of charter material, however, helped to replace the witness as the main and, in some cases, only source of legal evidence. Gradually, the charter also became an integral part of the transaction. Although the local aristocracy was slow to pick up these initiatives, or even to recognize them, the fact that higher authorities like the local bishops and counts of Flanders provided the documents as intellectual authors gradually forced the use of charters upon the local courts. By the second quarter of the twelfth century, abbeys like those of Marchiennes set out to acquire a charter for every significant settlement they had reached with rival lay clans, and to press it on the local courts.

Although the process was slow and not without its setbacks, monastic groups succeeded in exploiting the authority of the powerful just as they had long been in the habit of exploiting that of their patron saints, insinuating upon this authority the advantages of the written word as a legal and a memorial tool. This, I believe, should be taken into account when assessing the literacy process as a general phenomenon: although the written word did increase its impact on social relations in a general sense, a closer look at how it was applied at a local level shows that the success of the written word was not due to its technical efficiency or its immediate, unquestioned validity in court cases. Rather, it derived from a willingness on behalf of local communities and higher authorities to collaborate in their efforts to control and regulate social interaction. Their motives for doing so might not have been the same, but the outcome of their strategies was very similar.

126 STOCK, The Implications, p. 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of disputed right(s)</th>
<th>Date of conflict(s)</th>
<th>Party in conflict with the monks of Marchiennes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Haisnes</td>
<td>1033-1048</td>
<td>Advocate Osbert (Platelle 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes and Gouy-sous-Bellonne</td>
<td>1091-1122</td>
<td>Advocate Alberic (Platelle 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes?</td>
<td>11th-early 12th c.</td>
<td>Advocate Hiluin (Platelle 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes?</td>
<td>11th-early 12th c.</td>
<td>Advocate Hubert (Platelle 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marchiennes?</td>
<td>11th-early 12th c.</td>
<td>Advocate Denis (Platelle 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes?</td>
<td>11th-early 12th c.</td>
<td>Advocate Pannon (Platelle 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abscon</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Flemish ravagers in the Ostrevent (Platelle 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abscon and Gouy-sous-Bellonne</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Two unidentified advocates (Platelle 23)</td>
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<td>Alnes</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Maire Robert (Platelle 16)</td>
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<td>Ferrars-Sainte-Osmond</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Thomas, brother-in-law of Robert (Platelle 15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gouy-sous-Bellonne</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gouy-sous-Bellonne</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Oldest brother of Main Gauthier (Platelle 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Main Anselme (Platelle 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchiennes</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>Godfried, father of Anselme of Flandre (Platelle 15) who had become a monk (Platelle 15)</td>
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<td>Location of disputed right(s)</td>
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<td>Ostrevent</td>
<td>early 12th c.</td>
<td>General unrest caused for transit between Hainaut and Flanders (Platelle 26).</td>
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<td>Légerai/Hainaut</td>
<td>1103-1115</td>
<td>Private Forque, subject to the abbot of Lie (Platelle 9).</td>
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<td>La Bassée region</td>
<td>1116-1119</td>
<td>Gap between Lille and powerful men. (Platelle 19).</td>
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<td>Légerai</td>
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<td>1116-1133</td>
<td>Mile Enguerrand Pey (Platelle 1).</td>
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<td>1116-1133</td>
<td>Maire Etienne (Platelle 2).</td>
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<td>Marchiennes</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>General unrest in Flanders following the murder of Charles the Good (Platelle 25).</td>
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<td>Usurpations (Platelle 25).</td>
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<td>Boisy-Sainte-Rictrude</td>
<td>Around 1168</td>
<td>Theft of crop (Platelle 27).</td>
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## Appendix 2

Important charters relating to the settlement of disputes between the monks of Marchiennes and third parties, from the abbacy of Amand de Castello (1116-1136) to the end of the twelfth century (charters listed in: Thesaurus diplomaticus (cd-rom), ed. P. TOUBEUR / P. DEMONTY / W. PREVENIER / M.P. LAVIOLETTE (Turnhout, 1997)).

Abbreviations: AB = abbot; AE = archbishop; CO = count; CP = chapter; EP = bishop; PA = pope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of right(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Intellectual author</th>
<th>Mentioned in Politicum (chapter)/ Copy in cartulary of Marchiennes</th>
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<td>Battignies</td>
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<td>Oberviere, Givonne</td>
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