High Medieval Monastic Reform and Society II: Church reform and crusades, monastic economies, and twelfth century spirituality (c. 1050-1200 AD)

Gregorian Reform

The Gregorian Reform

- A papal-led reform movement aimed at the whole of the Church that became very powerful in the second half of the 11th century (1050-1100 AD)

- Key focuses of activity:
  - Restricting lay influence over church appointments (i.e. who becomes a bishop etc.)
  - Imposing clerical celibacy: married priests / priests with children still common

- More broadly, the movement can be seen as an attempt by the papacy to expand significantly its power over church institutions in the Latin West at the expense of the post Carolingian kingdoms and what remained of the 'Empire'.

- This causes some major arguments and even wars, especially with the German Emperors: the latter called themselves Holy Roman Emperors from the mid-12th century, and presented themselves as having the same rights of Christian leadership as the Carolingian emperor Charlemagne or the Roman emperor Constantine I before them.

- It is called the 'Gregorian Reform' due to its association with Gregory VII (real name - Hildebrand of Savona – Italian), who reigned 1073-1085, but the movement began somewhat before his reign. Leo IX who reigned 1049-1054 (real name, Bruno of Toul – French) was also critical: he employed Hildebrand of Savona, and other reformers as key advisors

Gregorian Reform and Monasticism

Thinking back to last week's lecture, Gregorian reform can be seen as having a relationship with the monastic reform that had already begun to emerge in the post-Carolingian era

- Inspiration: **Cluny** and its daughter houses had pioneered a model of religious life that aimed to be simultaneously freer of lay control and better devoted to serving the needs of society

- Pressure: Monastic reformers were actively involved in pressing tougher moral codes on secular clergy, especially around celibacy, which had long been important to monks: e.g. **Peter Damian**

- Acceptance: monastic reformers were sought out by papal reformers to assist in their efforts: e.g. **Bruno of Cologne**, the founder of the Carthusians, is brought to Rome by a former student (Bruno was a teacher at the cathedral school in Reims) who became pope Urban II (reigned 1088-1099)

At a time when the papacy began to impose a greater sense of independence and identity on the secular (i.e. non-monastic) Church - marking churchmen out from laypeople and lay authorities in the process - it is little surprise that they looked to monks and that monks had something to say about the process.

New monastic reforms/orders – Regular Canons

At the same time as papacy pressed reform on the secular clergy, new monastic movements continued to emerge.

Regular Canons and Canonesses

- As mentioned in lecture 3, some members of the non-monastic clergy (priests, deacons, sub-deacons), especially in cathedral chapters and schools, had long drawn from elements of monastic practice. Usually organised by their bishop, such men lived together in an obedient community, while still engaging in public clerical duties and being allowed private property: monks/nuns by contrast were supposed to be more enclosed within monasteries and all property was supposed to beheld by the monastery as common. Communities of "canonesses" – female canons – also emerged, imitating this life, but not taking on clerical duties or much of a public role.

- Encouraged by the papal reform synods of 1059 and 1062, however, some existing canons and other clerics took this a step further. They **renounced individual property, like monks/nuns**, and came to take up the **Rule of Saint Augustine** (derived from codes written in the 5th century by Augustine of Hippo, mentioned in lecture 3): they became known as "Regular Canons". Communities of Regular Canonesses followed in their wake.

- Houses of Regular Canons/Canonesses become commonplace in Western and Central Europe in the 12th century. The house of Saint-Victor, near Paris – founded by the former archdeacon of the cathedral chapter of Notre Dame – also possessed an eremitic influence and became very influential, leading a congregation of other houses.
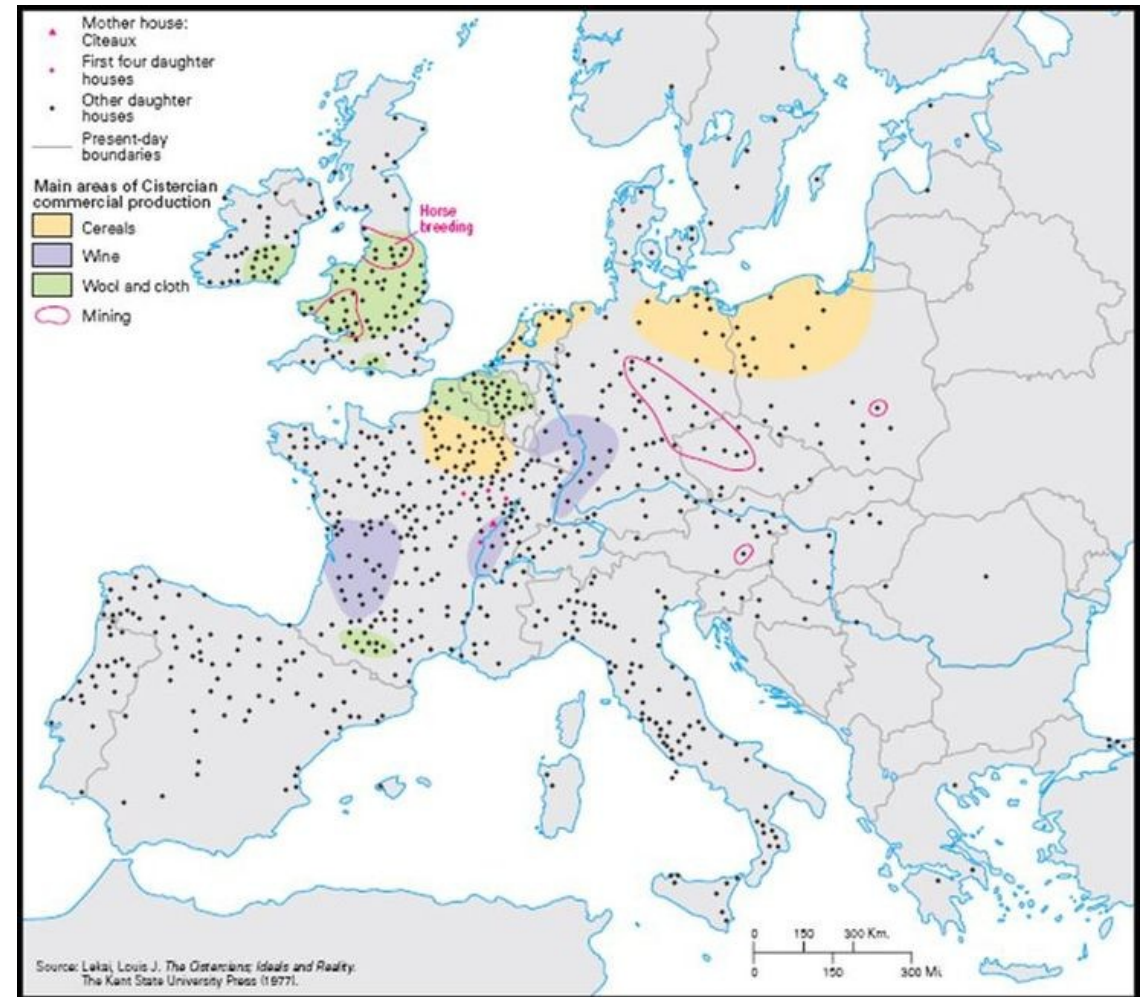
New monastic reforms/orders – Regular Canons

Regular canons and canonesses vs Benedictine monks and nuns

- Regular canons and Benedictine monks have some important distinctions, even if some canons in fact lived very similar lives to Benedictines
  - As part of their vows, both live permanently attached to a community (they cannot easily leave and/or go join another house) with common property (individual possessions not allowed) and live a stricter religious life following a rule (of Benedict or Augustine) and under obedience to an abbot.
  - BUT Regular canons are always ordained clerics (i.e. priests, deacons). A male Benedictine community traditionally has priests as members of the community (to say mass and take confession for other monks), but being an ordained cleric is not a requirement.
  - Benedictine monks were also more strictly "enclosed": they were expected to very rarely leave their monasteries. Canons often have more latitude, since their clerical duties could be external.
- Regular canonesses and Benedictine nuns are far less easy to distinguish:
  - Women cannot be ordained as clergy – so no difference there. For both canonesses and nuns, a priest is brought in from outside to say masses, take confessions etc., but does not live with the nuns.
  - All women leading a vowed religious life were expected to be quite strictly enclosed (to better protect their chastity): even before the rise of the Augustinian rule for such communities, this was the expectation for canonesses as much as nuns.
  - The main distinction is nuns follow the Rule of Benedict; canonesses do not. In the case of "regular canonesses", they follow the Rule of Augustine.

New monastic movements - Cistercians

The Cistercians - arguably the most influential monastic reform of this period (and perhaps the entire Middle Ages!)

- Founded by **Robert of Molesme** (1028-1111), a monk from a noble background. Robert had been an abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Montier-la-Celle. Wanting to live more rigorously, he left with a few followers to live in a collection of hermitages at Molesme in Burgundy in 1074, which evolved into a monastery that lived according to Robert's strict interpretation of the Rule of Saint Benedict

- With the growth and success of Molesme, Robert of Molesme apparently became dissatisfied with the discipline of some of his new recruits. He thus left with some followers to found a small community, truer to Robert's interpretation of Benedictine life, at nearby – but more isolated – Cîteaux in 1098, supported by Renaud, Vicomte de Beaune, and Odo I, Duke of Burgundy.

- The house flourishes in a manner more pleasing to Robert and, in the course of the 12th century, becomes the centre of a flourishing – and very distinctive – Benedictine reform movement: **c. 500 male and female monasteries by 1200**

- **Like the Cluniac reform, the Cistercians became a centralized congregation, with all other houses under the abbot of Cîteaux and the general chapter meeting that was regularly held there.**

Main areas of Cistercian commercial production:
- Cereals
- Wine
- Wool and cloth
- Mining

Mother house: Cîteaux
First four daughter houses
Other daughter houses
Present-day boundaries

Source: Lekai, Louis J. *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality.* The Kent State University Press (1977).

New monastic movements - Cistercians

The **Cistercians** attempted to move closer to what they saw as the original observance recommended by Benedict of Nursia. Above all:

- they reject the Cluniac-style expansion of the liturgy, preferring the simple daily 'office' recommended by Benedict (see lecture 4)

- With fewer liturgical duties, monks and nuns were left freer to the other monastic tasks described by Benedict: reading, contemplation and manual labour

- In line with their focus on Benedictine manual labour, they insist on farming their own land with the aim of self-sufficiency, rather than depending on payments in cash or goods from tenants on their lands (like other Benedictines)

- In order to help the monks provide for themselves in this way, however, they needed to recruit lots of "lay brothers" (and "lay sisters" for female houses) to assist their monasteries. Such men and women were often of a lower status social background and / or deemed less intellectually capable. Among the Cistercians, they promised obedience and chastity like the monks, but did not tend to live in the monastery itself, but rather on its estates (called "granges").

- Despite being Benedictines in one sense, Cistercians aim to preserve a different identity from all others. They wear a white habit, as opposed to the black habit traditionally worn by other Benedictines. The Cistercians thus became known as the "**White Monks**", the Benedictines, the "**Black Monks**"

New monastic movements

The Regular Canons and the Cistercians greatly influenced the character of other monastic reforms in this period.

Premonstratensians

- Founded by **Norbert of Xanten** (c. 1075-1134), a man from a high noble background in the Empire (Rhineland) and well educated

- Norbert is a secular priest who becomes interested in a more monastic life. The form he proposes is based on that of the **Regular Canons.** It is designed for priests and other clerics: the celebration of mass is particularly central to their life.

- But he is also influenced by the **Cistercians**: Norbert and his clerical followers retreated to seclusion in the countryside to found an abbey at Prémontré (Picardy, Northern France) in 1120, becoming more strictly enclosed and taking less of a role in public ministry. His followers wore white, like the Cistercians and become known as the **White Canons** (as opposed to the **Black Canons,** who are the normal Regular Canons)

Fontevraud - not a large monastic group, but worth noting due to their combination of canonical and monastic life (as well as male and female monasticism)

- Founded by the itinerant preacher **Robert of Arbrissel** (c. 1045 – 1116), who had been a regular canon. Having left his house to found a new community – in part due to his popularity as a preacher –, he decided to minister to female nuns, living with them in the same house at Fontevraud in Western France (founded 1101). This cohabitation upset the Church authorities, so he separated the communities, while keeping them on the same site, with the canons ministering to the nuns when required: this type of house is called a "double monastery".

- He wrote a new Rule, adapted from the Rule of Saint Benedict to govern this community and those inspired by it.

Gilbertines - Another smaller group (this time in England), similar to Fontevraud, but with a more marked Cistercian influence

- Founded by **Gilbert of Sempringham** (c. 1085-1190), a parish priest in Lincolnshire, England

- Originally establishes a small monastery of contemplative nuns in 1131, who would follow a Cistercian-style interpretation of Benedictine life, to be looked after by himself and male colleagues, who lived in a separate house as canons following a variant of the Augustinian Rule. On the advice of the Cistercian abbot of Rievaulx, he added lay sisters, and then lay brothers.

- His monastery, and the other foundations it inspired, thus consisted of four connected but separate communities: a house of canons, a house of nuns, a community of lay sisters, and a community of lay brothers.

New monastic movements and society

Such groups usually appear as capturing the mood of papal reform – for the most part, they perpetuated the Cluniac example of (at least technical) independence from lay rights over church institutions, and took the lead in pressing for higher standards that separated them from society. In many ways, we can also see such groups as popularising this idealism beyond the Church. If papal ambitions provoked quite regular conflict with kings and princes in this period, these monastic institutions clearly had a powerful appeal to the same class and external donors.

What was this appeal? It differed for different groups of course, but we can see some of the same features discussed in lecture 4:

- Beyond their appeal to reform-minded bishops (who founded quite a few houses), Augustinian Canons offered a strong emphasis on prayer and the saying of masses, which lay benefactors found very appealing. Their houses did not have a minimum number of residents either (unlike the Benedictines, who usually wanted 12 and an abbot): they were often considered a cheaper foundation.

- The Cistercian appeal was not entirely dissimilar to Romuald and his followers (albeit they were less eremitic in outlook): i.e. proving their holiness by emphasising the separation of their locations and their austerity over other Benedictines, while still engaging heavily on a personal level with high status benefactors (e.g. Robert of Molesme impressed the Viscount of Beaune and Duke of Burgundy). The early Cistercian preference for wasteland also perhaps made it easier for benefactors to accommodate them.

- The very simple Cistercian liturgy could be seen as a limiting factor on their appeal to benefactors: the Cistercians provided a lower volume of prayer for them, and especially less individual commemoration). As Emilia Jamroziak has shown, however, there were exemptions for the very powerful: by 1200, the Cistercian General chapter had granted the exceptional privilege of individual commemoration to 50 individuals (e.g. Louis VII of France, Richard I of England). Such exclusivity perhaps enhanced the Cistercian's appeal to some: getting men as otherworldly as the Cistercians to pray for you in this way was hard, and thus all the more valuable!

The Crusades

The rising power and influence of the papacy amid the Gregorian Reform efforts can also be connected to another aspect of this period: the **Crusades** – a series of campaigns by Western (i.e. Latin) Christian armies in the Holy Land and Near East against the Muslim rulers of these regions. Why?

- The papal desire to define matters of theology brought the Roman Church into open conflict with Eastern (Greek language) Christians, who looked to the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople, under the protection of the Eastern Roman (also called Byzantine) Emperors. This led to a permanent split in 1054.

- As a result – and despite the split - the papacy's focus had been turned eastward. The popes felt a duty to the East, not only to re-establish correct theology, but also to free Christians from Muslim rule. When, in 1095, the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos sought Western help against the Seljuk Turks that had greatly reduced his Empire, Pope Urban II seized on the opportunity and called for a campaign.

- Furthermore, pilgrimages to Jerusalem had long been popular with Western Christians, and ever more so. If the Roman Church sought to be the "universal church", it followed that they should claim this city.

- Finally, one can also see the papal promotion of crusades as way of exercising and enhancing papal authority vs. that of lay rulers. Popes and papal agents appealed not only to rulers, but directly to the faithful, which increased pressure on kings and princes to fall into line behind the papal effort.

The Crusades and Monasticism

Monasticism had a role within the crusading movement too

- Monastic and crusader mentalities had something in common: religious fervour that called for people to give up their old life and devote it to God as penance, perhaps even to the point of (or in order to emulate) martyrdom.

- The first 'army' to arrive in the Near East perhaps looked more like an ascetic movement than an organised military force: inspired by Peter 'the Hermit', a priest from Amiens who took on an ascetic appearance and gathered an army of common people in 1096 in response to the pope's call

- Once Western armies were more firmly established in the Holy Land, we see the formation of "military orders". The Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller: both formed in Jerusalem as orders of knights, who lived in semi-monastic communities to protect holy sites. Templar and Hospitaller houses spring up throughout Europe, to provide both recruits and funding.

- The papacy also pro-actively deployed notable monks to inspire people. **Saint Bernard**, abbot of Clairvaux (1090-1153) – one of the most famous Cistercians – was asked by Pope Eugenius III, himself a former Cistercian – to leave his monastery at Clairvaux temporarily in order to publicly preach in support of the Second Crusade in 1146.

The development of monastic economies

By this period, monastic institutions had become very important economic forces.

- Monasteries had already accumulated significant amounts of land from kings, aristocrats and powerful churchmen, on which they drew rents and fees etc., just like a feudal lord.

- The Cistercian model – where monks/nuns, and above all the lay brothers and sisters were devoted to manual labour - however, made monasteries an economic force in a different way: as producers of agricultural goods and produce.

- Scholars have often remarked on apparent Cistercian efficiency in clearing land for farming and their success in selling their goods produced by their granges, sometimes yielding good profits. Their efforts in this regard have even been cited as a precursor of capitalistic modes of production.

- More recent studies (Constance Hoff Berman and others) have suggested that that the Cistercians were not always so wildly successful as commercial farmers, and often had to resort to renting out land (for instance, since the celibacy of lay brothers and sisters made it harder to maintain a workforce) in the manner of other Benedictines.

Right: the barn of a Cistercian "grange" near Colchester, England

New directions in monastic spirituality

This period was also a particularly vibrant period for monastic spiritual thought and writing. Two reform-minded Benedictine monks in Normandy of Italian origins are particularly important for this development.

John of Fécamp (d. 1079): born near Ravenna and conversant with the circle of Romuald. Had also spent time in Burgundy with his friend and had some familiarity with the Cluny reforms. His uncle William of Dijon was invited to reform the abbey of Fécamp Abbey in 1017. John succeeded William as abbot there in 1028.

Anselm of Aosta (d. 1109): from Aosta in north-western Italy. He went to Normandy due to the intellectual prestige of his countryman Lanfranc and the monastic school the latter had founded at the abbey of Bec: Lanfranc had previously been invited to the house for this purpose the founder (and first abbot) of Bec, Herluin (who had previously been a knight, then a hermit). Anselm became a very able student and teacher and was appointed abbot when Herluin died in 1078. He succeeded Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury in England (which the Normans had conquered in 1066) in 1093 – his official seal is on the left.

Their writings (e.g. John's "Meditations", and Anselm's "Why God was made man" are noted for their largely unprecedented **"affectivity":** i.e. their focus on the emotional aspects of the spiritual life, as modelled by Christ's own life and passion on Earth. Above all, they focus on love - the love between man and God and the love, inspired by God, between humans.

While they had connections to (and respect for) Romualdian and Cluniac monasticism, their own innovation was to focus on these deep, emotional spiritual connections as a key part of the purpose of monastic life.

Twelfth-century affective piety

If John and Anselm had planted the seeds of this highly meditative, affective approach to monastic life and purpose, it became very widespread in the twelfth century:

- **Cistercian** spirituality was particularly infused with this current. **Saint Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090-1153, French: e.g. *On Loving God; Sermons on the Song of Songs*) and **Aelred of Rievaulx** (1110-1167, English: e.g. *On Spiritual Friendship; The Mirror of Charity*) were two of its most famous exponents.

- The **Canons Regular** – especially those of the influential house of Saint-Victor near Paris – were also heavily influenced: **Hugh of Saint Victor** (1096-1141. German: e.g. "*On the Substance of Love*") and **Richard of Saint-Victor** (d. 1173, Scottish: e.g. "*On the Four Degrees of Violent Love*")

Monastic reform thus became frequently idealised as a culture of "love". If God was love, the deepening of the loving connection between monks/nuns and God, and the love lived out between brothers (or sisters) in monasteries was a critical part of their monastic identity – it could be seen as another way of setting themselves apart from the life of the world.

"Crisis" and the "Golden Age"

It is worth taking a moment to reflect on what we have seen in the last few lectures concerning **monastic reform**.

Monastic historians often tend to see monastic reforms as responses to "decay" or "crisis". In the most traditional accounts – e.g. those written by later monks – this crisis is usually seen as a decline in discipline and fervour, corrected by the reformers. But modern historians have also echoed the idea of crisis as the prime mover in monastic reform.

Thus: the coming of orders like the Cistercians has been frequently presented as a reaction to a 'crisis' of other Benedictines – including even the Cluniacs. This crisis came from the combination of too great an "absorption into society" with a simultaneous decline in some of the social purposes they filled (e.g. rising importance of cathedral schools vs monastic education). Norman Cantor (see bibliography), citing such causes, found "the ending of the Benedictine centuries" in the years 1050-1130.

There are some merits to this analysis:

- As discussed in Lecture 3, the Carolingian era had perhaps seen Benedictine monasticism become a very normalised of society, thus losing some of its counter-cultural edge.

- Even the Cluniacs, who forged a different part (see Lecture 4) soon ended up appearing very well embedded in society, despite their independence: they were usually high-status foundations offering prayer for the great and the good in return for grand estates.

In turn, monastic historians often cite the 12th century as such a golden age for cenobitic monasticism, with the flourishing Cistercian order at its epicentre. There are some good reasons for this too:

- Growth rates: the Cistercians found or reform over 500 monasteries

- Important spiritual works of lasting influence: Cistercian authors (Saint Bernard, Aelred of Rievaulx) and Regular Canon authors (Hugh and Richard of Saint Victor) go on to possess a staggering influence over monastic life for centuries to come: their works are particularly frequently copied.

- Taking a broader perspective, monasticism in the Cistercian age appears to have escaped some of the problematic dynamics of the Carolingian era, regaining a greater sense of religious and social distinction from the outside world while still – as the support they received proves - remaining very relevant to it.

"Crisis" and the "Golden Age"

But we can also see things differently:

- It is important not to lose sight of the fact that many older Benedictine houses remained very healthy in terms of recruitment and benefaction in this period (Van Engen). The emergence of new social fashions does not completely efface older ones (or stop them evolving in some more subtle way).
    - The successful abbey and school at Bec were run on a more traditional Benedictine model, outside of the Cluniac or Cistercian networks, despite reformist influences.

- The reforms of the twelfth century were far from immune to questions and critiques
    - E.g. how "humble" and "otherworldly" did the Cistercians really appear? St Bernard, the most famous Cistercian constantly involved himself in the affairs of others and spent much time outside the monastery. We have seen similar with slightly earlier monks (Romuald, Peter Damian), but Bernard is a particularly extreme example in many respects. He and his order certainly made enemies as well as friends: Bernard's attacks on the Cluniac approach to monastic lands prompted strong rebuke from Peter the Venerable (1092-1156), the abbot of Cluny, who, perhaps not unfairly, critiqued Cistercian 'arrogance' for creating this dispute.
    - And what about monasteries becoming successful agricultural enterprises: were Cistercian monasteries really big businesses? And didn't this represent a form of greed? Gerald of Wales (d. c. 1223, a secular priest) and others criticise this at the time.

- More broadly: is the story one of crisis and reform, or a slower process of social adaptation?
    - In the course of the last few lectures we have arguably seen a number of new forms emerge, over the three centuries that followed the division of the Carolingian Empire, each providing new ways of going beyond existing monastic norms in ways that interacted with the fashions and needs of the outside world.

Looking ahead…

Especially with the benefit of hindsight, we can also see that the norms of twelfth century monasticism were always likely to be challenged themselves and require adaptation, regardless of any "decay" or "crisis" that might occur.

- The outside world was also changing. Monasteries had up until now relied on receiving great rural estates from the aristocracy. How long could this continue, especially as the mercantile world of towns and cities grew in importance as centres of wealth and social importance? And what further adaptations would monks and nuns have make due to the ever increasing loss of dominance in the field of education?

- Affective piety would ultimately prove popular not only with monks, but also outside the monastery. While this piety set reformist monks and nuns apart in the twelfth century, the emphasis on love would prove more easily imitable beyond monastic institutions than, for instance, hardline asceticism, raising questions for the future. If pure religion was about intimate connections of love between God and man, and humans amongst each other, were monastic institutions strictly necessary to fulfil this? The danger of monks being victims of their own success and of imitators in the outside world emerges again.

Sources – *Exordium Cistercii/Exordium Parvum*

The *Exordium Cistercii* (the 'Beginning of Cîteaux' and the *Exordium Parvum* (the 'Small Beginning') were text that were distributed among Cistercian monasteries by the late twelfth century at the latest

- Unknown authors, and dating has been much debated.

- *Exordium Parvum* was originally considered to have been the earliest, with the suggestion it was written by Stephen Harding, a follower of Robert of Molesme who had come with him from Molesme to Citeaux; *Exordium Cistercii* was considered a later abridgement.

- Now, dating for both ranged between 1123/4 and the 1160s for the *Exordium Cistercii* and 1134 and the 1170s for the *Exordium Parvum*

- The purpose of the texts, however, seems clearer: they were circulated with the Cistercian order's supplementary statutes, and gave the readers of the young congregation an idealised history – or perhaps even a mythology (as Constance Berman has argued) – of the order.

- The Exordium Parvum – a longer text – is often regarded as more of a combative, defensive text – perhaps a response to criticisms of the order that began to emerge in the second half of the 12th century.

Reference: *Exordium Cistercii:* https://www.cistercian.org/abbey/our-life/pdf/Exordium%20Cistercii.pdf; Exordium Parvum: https://www.klastervyssibrod.cz/_d/Exordium-Parvum.pdf [I have simplified both translations a little]

Sources – *Exordium Cistercii/Exordium Parvum*

Exordium Cistercii: In the diocese of Langres there lay, as is well known, a monastery by the name of Molesme; it was of great renown and outstanding in religious fervour. Within a short time of its foundation, God in his goodness enriched it with the gift of his graces, raised it to honour with the presence of distinguished men, and caused it to be as great in possessions as it was resplendent in virtues. But, because possessions and virtues are not usually steady companions, several members of that holy community, men truly wise and filled with higher aspirations, decided to pursue heavenly studies rather than to be entangled in earthly affairs. […] After common deliberation, together with the father of that monastery, Robert of blessed memory, twenty-one monks went out to try to carry out jointly what they had conceived with one spirit.

Eventually, after many labours and extreme difficulties, which all who wish to devote their life to Christ must endure, they reached their goal. They came to Cîteaux, which was then a place of horror, a vast wilderness. Realizing that the hashness of the place accorded well with the strict design they had already conceived in their minds, the soldiers of Christ found the place, almost as though divinely prepared, to be very alluring.

Exordium Parvum: In the year 1098, Robert of blessed memory, first abbot of the church of Molesme, founded in the diocese of Langres, and certain brethren of that monastery came to the venerable Hugh, who was then legate of the Holy See [the papacy] and archbishop of the church of Lyon, declaring their intention to order their life under the custody of the Holy Rule of our Father Benedict and to carry this out more freely. They were steadfast in asking him him to provide them with firm support […] Gladly giving favour to their request, the legate approved their foundation with the following letter:

"It should be known […] that you and certain sons of yours, brethren of the monastery of Molesme, stood in our presence at Lyon and professed that you wished from then on to follow more strictly and more perfectly the Rule of the most blessed Benedict, which until now has been observed lukewarmly and negligently in that monastery. Because it is clear that this cannot be fulfilled in the aforesaid place for a number of impeding causes, we concluded that it would be best for both parties – you who wish to leave there, and those who will remain – that you should turn elsewhere, to some other place that God will mark out, and serve the Lord more effectively and more peacefully there." […]

[They] eagerly headed for the desert-place called Cîteaux. This place, situated in the diocese of Chalon, and rarely approached by men back in those days because of the thickness of vegetation and thorny bushes, was inhabited only by wild beasts. Understanding on arrival that the more despicable and unapproachable the place was to seculars, the more suited it was for the monastic observance, […] the men of God […] began to construct a monastery there with the approval of the bishop of Chalon and the consent of the owner of the place.

Sources - *The Journey of Louis VII to the East* by Odo of Deuil (c. 1150s)

Odo of Deuil (1110-1162)

- A Benedictine monk from the royal monastery of Saint-Denis near Paris

- Became chaplain of Louis VII, King of the Franks (France), and accompanied him to the Holy Land on the Second Crusade between 1147-49

- The Second Crusade formed in response to pope Eugenius III's call in 1145: it was aimed at pushing back Muslim gains against the crusader states established by the First Crusade (1096-1099).

The Journey of Louis VII to the East (*De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*)

- Written in the aftermath of the crusade, which ended in a failed siege of Damascus. Odo of Deuil pins particular blame on the Byzantine Empire for the lack of success

- As well as dealing with the crusade itself, Odo also describes its background and the preparations made in France.

- Becomes the most frequently copied Latin description/history of Second Crusade in the Latin West

Reference: Odo of Deuil, "The Journey of Louis VII" in James Brundage, *The Crusades: A Documentary History*, (Milwaukee, 1962) – somewhat simplified.

Sources - *The Journey of Louis VII to the East* by Odo of Deuil (c. 1150s)

The King, meanwhile, continued to press the undertaking [his support for the Second Crusade] and sent emissaries on this matter to Pope Eugenius [III] at Rome. They were joyfully received and were sent back with gladness: they brought back a letter sweeter than any honeycomb [...] It also contained a promise of the remission of sins for those who took the sweet burden of Christ [...] The Pope hoped that he could be present in person in order to be the first to lay his hands on such a holy enterprise, but he could not, since he was hindered by the tyranny of the Romans [Eugenius III was not currently in possession of Rome, which was ruled by a Commune which looked to the authority of the German Emperor]. He therefore delegated this task to Bernard, the holy Abbot of Clairvaux.

At last the day which the King hoped for arrived. The Abbot, armed with the apostolic authority and with his own sanctity, was there at the time and place appointed, together with the very great multitude which had been summoned. Then the King received the insignia of the cross which the Supreme Pontiff [the pope] had sent to him and so also did many of his nobles. Since there was no place in the fortress which could hold such a multitude, a wooden platform was built for the Abbot in a field outside of Vezelay, so that he could speak from a high place to the audience standing around him. Bernard mounted the platform together with the King, who wore the cross. When this heavenly instrument had, according to his custom, poured out the dew of the Divine Word, the people on all sides began to clamour and to demand crosses. When the parcel of crosses which had been prepared had all been taken, he was forced to tear his clothing into crosses for others to take. He laboured at this task as long as he was in the town. I shall not attempt to write about the miracles which occurred there at that time and by which it appeared that the Lord was pleased, since if I write about a few of them, it will not be believed that there were more, while if I write about many of them, it may seem that I am overlooking my subject. Finally it was decided that they would start out in a year and everyone returned home rejoicing.

The Abbot indeed concealed his robust spirit with a frail and almost moribund body. He went everywhere to preach and in a short time, the number of those who wore the cross had multiplied many fold.

Sources: *The Journey through Wales* by Gerald of Wales (1191)

Gerald of Wales (c. 1146 – c. 1223)

- A secular (i.e. non-monastic) cleric, of mixed Norman and Welsh descent and to an aristocratic family.
- Well educated: taught at first by a Benedictine school in Wales, then travels to the excellent schools associated with Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris (these schools were evolving into the University of Paris at this time).
- Does well in the church, and almost becomes a bishop on several occasions. Also serves as chaplain to Henry II, king of England.
- Alongside this, Gerald becomes a noted writer on a variety of subjects: history, geography, theology, and hagiography (i.e. saint's lives)

The Journey through Wales *(Itinerarium Cambriae)* (1191)

- Describes Gerald's journey with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Baldwin of Forde, in 1188: their purpose was to recruit men for the Third Crusade.
- Gerald, however, is less concerned with that story than in describing the landscape and Church institutions of Wales
- Not a very popular work (three known manuscripts), but an important document: a careful record of an intelligent observer's view of his homeland.

Reference: English translation by R. C. Hoare (1806):
https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/contents_page.jsp?t_id=Cambrensis_Tour [simplified by me]

Sources: *The Journey through Wales* by Gerald of Wales (1191)

The Cistercian order [...] at first deserved praise and commendation for adhering voluntarily to the original vows of poverty and sanctity [of the Rule of Saint Benedict]: until ambition, the blind mother of mischief, unable to place limits on prosperity, was introduced.

The mountains [in the Cistercian lands] are full of herds and horses, the woods full with pigs and goats, the pastures with sheep, the plains with cattle, the arable fields with ploughs; and although these things are in great abundance, they seem too thin and lacking due to the insatiable nature of the mind. Therefore lands are seized, landmarks removed, boundaries invaded. As a result, the markets are full of merchandise, the courts of justice full of law-suits, and the senate full of complaints.

So that the scripture seems to be fulfilled concerning these men, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." But I am inclined to think this avid desire for more does not come from any bad intention. For the monks of this Order (although they are themselves very modest in what they eat and drink), , more than any others, incessantly perform acts of charity and beneficence towards the poor and strangers; and because they do not live as others upon fixed incomes, but depend only on their labour and forethought for subsistence, they are anxious to obtain lands, farms, and pastures, which may enable them to perform these acts of hospitality. However, to repress and remove from this sacred Order the detestable stigma of ambition, I wish they would sometimes call to mind what is written in Ecclesiasticus, "Like one who kills a son before his father's eye is the man who offers a sacrifice from the property of the poor;" and also the sentiment of Gregory, "A good use does not justify things badly acquired;" and also that of Ambrose, "He who wrongfully receives in order to give well is more burdened [i.e. with sin] than assisted." Such men seem to say, as the Apostle described, "Let us do evil that good may come."

With respect to the two Orders, the Cluniac and the Cistercian, this may be relied upon; although the former possess fine buildings, with ample revenues and estates, these are soon reduced to poverty and destruction. To the latter, on the contrary, if you give them a barren desert and a solitary wood, in a few years you will find them in possession of sumptuous churches and houses, and encircled with an extensive property.

Sources – *On Spiritual Friendship*, by Aelred of Rievaulx (1164-1167)

Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-1167)

- Aelred, from Northumbria in England, was the son of a priest, who was himself the son of another priest: this well-to-do family held sway over the Church in Hexham: such priestly lineages were an affront to Gregorian reform in two ways: they breached clerical celibacy and allowed for the inheritance of ecclesiastical offices.

- Given such papal pressures, Aelred had to pursue a different path. He received a good education at the cathedral school in Durham, and ended up an official at the court of King David I of Scotland.

- Left the court in 1134, however, to become a Cistercian monk at the newly founded monastery of Rievaulx (founded by the English nobleman Walter Espec in Yorkshire and 12 monks from the French Cistercian monastery of Clairvaux). Becomes Abbot in 1147.

- Despite this apparent retreat from worldly affairs – and the authorship of many religious works – he remains involved in political affairs throughout his life, not least as a trusted intermediary between the English monarchy and the papacy.

On Spiritual Friendship (*De spirituali amicitia*)

- One of Aelred's most copied works.

- This text was partly inspired by his reading of Cicero's *On Friendship*, a work from classical antiquity that still circulated in monastic libraries.

- Aelred sought to write a Christian work on the matter of friendship, drawing influence from the Church Fathers (esp. Augustine of Hippo), John Cassian, but also the new, affective piety of his time

Reference: Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*, trans. L. C. Braceland, ed. M. L. Dutton (Collegeville, 2010), p. 126 [III, 131–4].

Sources – *On Spiritual Friendship*, by Aelred of Rievaulx (1164-1167)

When you have assured yourself that a friend so selected and proved desires neither to seek from you anything shameful nor, if asked, to offer you anything shameful, and when you are satisfied that your friend considers friendship a virtue, not a bargain, and that he abhors flattery, detests adulation, and has been found frank but discreet, patient under correction, and strong and constant in affection, then you will experience this spiritual sweetness: *how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to live in unity* (Ps 132: 1). What an advantage it is, then, to grieve for one another, to work for one another, to bear one another's burdens. […] Meanwhile, how delightful do friends find their meetings together, the exchange of mutual interests, the exploration of every question, and the attainment of mutual agreement in everything.

[…] Thus praying to Christ for a friend and desiring to be heard by Christ for a friend, we focus on Christ with love and longing. Then sometimes suddenly, imperceptibly, affection melts into affection, and somehow touching the sweetness of Christ nearby, one begins to taste how dear he is and experience how sweet he is. Thus rising from that holy love with which a friend embraces a friend to that with which a friend embraces Christ, one may take the spiritual fruit of friendship fully and joyfully into the mouth, while looking forward to all abundance in the life to come.

Select Bibliography

Beyond the general reading, the following are very useful and easily available:

John Van Engen, 'The "Crisis of Cenobitism" Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050-1150.' *Speculum* 61, no. 2 (1986): 269-304.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2854041

Norman Cantor, 'The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130.' *The American Historical Review*, vol. 66, no. 1 (1960): 47–67.

www.jstor.org/stable/1845706