The Culture of Literate Power at Cluny, 910–1156 CE

by

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ABSTRACT

In order to illuminate the role written documents played within medieval monastic life, this project takes as a case study the monastery of Cluny and some associated houses during the central Middle Ages. I approach these documents as signs, drawing on anthropological and philosophical work on semiosis, and as media technologies, using history and cultural studies centered on orality and literacy, and conclude that the monastic use of texts was essentially *ritual*, and as such exerted an important influence on the development of literacy as a tool and a set of practices. Nor did this influence flow in just one direction: as monastic ritual transformed the use of documents, the use of documents also transformed monastic ritual.

To study the relationship between document and ritual, I examine what medieval documents reveal about their production and use. I also read the sources for what they directly report about the nature of monastic life and monastic ritual, and the specific roles various documents played within these contexts. Finally, these accounts of changing monastic scribal and ritual practice are laid alongside a third—that of what the monks themselves actually enunciated, both directly and indirectly, about their own understanding of semiosis and its operation in their lives.

Ultimately, my dissertation connects valuable theoretical and philosophical work on ritual, semiosis, and orality and literacy with manuscript studies and with a wide range of recent historiography on the complex transformations remaking society inside and outside the cloister during the Middle Ages. It thus serves to bring these disparate yet mutually indispensable lines of inquiry into better contact with one another. And in this

way, it approaches an understanding of human sign-use, carefully rooted in both material

and institutional culture, during a key period in the history of human civilization.

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INTRODUCTION

My goal in this project is to show how the material form of documents used in and around Cluny in the tenth through mid-twelfth centuries influenced the ideas they communicated and the power they exercised. From the view of research devoted to orality, literacy, and textuality, my work here is a case study, illustrating the play of these forces as it appears in a particular historical setting and thereby introducing a greater degree of attention to historical, institutional, and cultural vagaries to such approaches. Conversely, from the view of medieval history, where my actual training predominantly lies, I follow leading historians of medieval literacy in taking this period to be a decisive one for the development of literate modes in the West. Here, my historiographic goal is to draw attention to the monastic prehistory of later key medieval intellectual and cultural developments. In the historical setting in which I work, as I will show, monastic disciplinary practice vis-a-vis writing and text developed into a revolutionary paradigm for remaking the human individually as well as socially. Besides its obvious importance for our understanding of high medieval Latin monasticism, I suspect that this development was also a vital antecedent to scholasticism, to the explosion of later medieval lay spirituality, and even to the ideological and social paroxysms of the Reformation and early modern period. While this remains an argument for a future work, as a tentative early hypothesis it has arisen from and guided the current project.

The primary conclusion I have drawn from the present research is that the co-development of monastic ideas about writing and monastic uses of documents produced, by the turn of the twelfth century, a conception and a *practice* of behavior (*conversatio*)

as something coherent, discrete, legible, transcendental, and salvific. My work is devoted to the role played by cultural and intellectual—or, more properly, ideological—factors in this process, such as the history of the monastery as an institution in Francia and its mediation by the Carolingian project and subsequently by that of Cluny. Indeed, it is the special nature of the Latin monastery as an institution that has called my attention to it in the context of questions about literacy, praxis, and the revolutionary new *conversatio* arising from their combination therein.

Especially from the Carolingian period onwards, the Latin monastery slowly emerged as a closed and hierarchical institution that highlighted behavior within a disciplinary regimen of training. Crucially, moreover, this behavior was centered on written texts: the Rule of Saint Benedict as the community's constitution, and the book of Psalms as the heart of a dizzyingly complex cycle of daily prayer that it was the community's social—and Christian—duty to perform. While the rank and file members of these communities likely had rather minimal direct personal interaction with actual written documents, their behavior, with all its cosmological and soteriological ramifications, remained based on such artifacts as mediated to them through various specialists. Ideas and practices concerning the use of texts, some implicit and some explicit, thus inundated monastic life. It is these ideas and practices, at least as they appeared at Cluny, that my research excavates, examines, and relates to the parallel history of the documents' physical forms.

A vital concern of this project has always been to overcome facile distinctions between the "material" and "cultural"; accordingly much of my analysis is devoted to the physical form of written documents, which exerted its own decisive power in the

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processes under consideration. But the overcoming of such distinctions requires much more than injecting such obviously "material" (a term usually meaning only "available to the sense of touch; tactile") concerns into cultural and intellectual history. As a result I have also included in this work a relatively lengthy consideration of the metaphysics undergirding the rejection of these distinctions. This consideration focuses on the concepts of experience and practice, important to modern cultural history, and integrates them with the philosophical tradition of the semiotician and pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce (d. 1914), semiotic anthropology, and Peirce's modern disciple John Deely.

To functionally connect this preparatory philosophical work (my second chapter) with a project that will, eventually, appear broadly familiar to historians in its form and approach, as well as to make sense of the relevant aspects of monastic life, I employ the concept of ritual. As this term has rightly been the subject of much analysis and debate among both anthropologists and medieval historians, in my second chapter I review some of this discussion in the course of developing a clear definition of ritual and statement of how this concept operates in the present work. To whit, ritual at Cluny served to build community, to bridge a transcendental (and soteriological) gap, and to train its participants in the use of signs. As such it was one key locus where practice, semiosis, and institution combined, and thus it served as the crucible in which the new *conversatio* was forged. Following this chapter, I briefly survey the historiography of Cluny with a particular eye to the nature of monastic and church reform and provide an overview of some recent key studies on the history of medieval literacy and documentary culture.

In my fifth chapter, I analyze the so-called Cluny Bible as an ideological statement. As a codex made in the image of the famous Giant Bibles produced under the

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Carolingian scholar Alcuin of York, this artifact makes important statements about tradition and genre by its mere physical form. But it also includes a selection of short Carolingian and patristic texts as a kind of prefatory pamphlet, which I read as a consciously-created manifesto on medieval monastic semiotics, sociology, and, of course, Bible-reading. Its imposing size, Carolingian associations, and key role within the monastic liturgy all figure the document as a central point for the elaboration of core monastic principles. This fact, combined with its likely age—the manuscript probably dates from the early eleventh century and is thus one of the earlier documents I consider—makes it an excellent place to begin my analysis of the sources.

A short chapter discussing Ralph Glaber's *Historiarum Libri Quinque* follows. At first glance, this is a relatively idiosyncratic choice for my purposes, as such a chronicle (not even really focused on Cluny) is relatively far removed from the ritual and liturgical pragmatics of monastic life. But my reading of Glaber's chronicle pursues the author's stated devotion to omens and signs, and thus reveals a surprisingly detailed and even philosophically grounded sense of semiotics, at least as understood by one Cluniac monk in the early-mid-eleventh century. This analysis thus complements the similarly ideological investigation devoted to the Cluny Bible.

My analysis then shifts, with two closely-linked chapters devoted to the hagiography of Cluny's second abbot, Saint Odo. Here, I analyze the monk John of Salerno's *Vita prima et maior sancti Odonis*, revealing the often vexing text as a proto-customary: an early experiment at capturing in written form the local elaborations and variations on the Rule of Saint Benedict characteristic of a given monastery. Through a close reading of this text, comparison with the revised version of it produced in the 1120s

by the Cluniac monk Nalgod, and examination of the high medieval manuscript contexts in which it is found today, I chart the slow shift of emphasis from the life of an individual holy man to the customs of a true *community*, itself not reducible to any particular individual practice or ethic. In the process, we observe how genre itself operates as a functional form or technique, shaping expectations and uses. Similarly, we also see how the literary device of the persona of the holy man could serve an unexpected purpose, as the organizing principle for an emerging notion of codified and institutional behavior. These two chapters thus represent a perspective converse to that of my analyses of the Cluny Bible and Glaber's chronicle: while my consideration of those manuscripts dealt primarily with explicit ideology, semiotics, and so on, in the *Vitae Odonis* we observe instead the *functional* role and history of texts and written documents. From these two views—devoted respectively to the ideological and the practical, the explicit and the implicit, the cultural and the material—we may triangulate the development of *conversatio* at Cluny during the tenth, eleventh, and early twelfth centuries.

My final chapter brings these two perspectives back together in examining the great and revolutionary customary of the otherwise anonymous Cluniac monk Bernard, produced in the later eleventh century. This virtuoso compilation of Cluniac behavior, the culmination of a century of Cluniac customaries, is utterly unfettered by biographical framing, and elaborates more clearly than any earlier text the new sense of exhaustively detailed, legible, transcendental *conversatio* emerging at that time among the monks of Cluny. Bernard's text is examined through detailed analyses of two rituals related therein and then contrasted in its approach to human behavior with the Rule of Benedict, of which it is theoretically an elaboration. These readings reveal the development of a

flexible sense of ritual, which can move beyond communal performance to accompany

certain individual monks on dangerous extended forays into the fallen world beyond the

cloister walls. A short conclusion follows.

CHAPTER I: EXPERIENCE AND SEMIOTICS

This is a study rooted in the specific, asking about the use of documents to control people and behavior at Cluny and monasteries associated with it in the period between the great house's founding in 910 and the first tentative steps towards its transformation into a true order taken during the reign of Peter the Venerable (1122–1156). I foreground this use, rather than those who did the using, quite intentionally—for while concerned with such individuals, I lower them to the level of their tools and methods, studying all these together without prior metaphysical assumptions about who, or what, used who. Thus this topic yields three lines of inquiry: first, how did the human actors involved understand their tools and the ends to which they put them; second, how did all the particular technologies and forms of medieval documents make their irreducible material realities felt; third, what changes in these two sets of phenomena appear over my chosen period, and what correlations or disjunctions between these two sets can be observed?

As its title suggests, this project is one of cultural history, by which I mean that it is a history both of experience and of the structuring of that experience, in all their natural dialectical tension. Cultural history has sometimes suffered from a profusion of varying and idiosyncratic theoretical frameworks. But this formulation captures what is most useful about the field in all its breadth and, furthermore, invites integration with insights from other disciplines in an extremely useful way. Useful, that is, specifically in overcoming the broad gulf between scholars and approaches that seek to answer "material" or "objective" questions, on the one hand, and those that pursue discursive or

constructivist ones, on the other. The yawning of this gap is troubling, for it risks dividing

our understanding of a complex world into abstract notions of "cultural" and

"material/real," thereby precluding an understanding of the myriad, co-constitutive

interactions between these realms of human being. Hence, experience: an experience

which is always of something—an animal, a meadow, a building, hunger, poetry,

industrialization—and which integrates, far below the apprehension of consciousness, the

physical structures of the biological human sensorium with the cultural ones of language,

praxis, and convention.

   Much of the work of semiotician John Deely is devoted to closing this gap,

precisely by focusing attention on experience and its structuring. In his article

"Philosophy and Experience," Deely addresses the continuing philosophical debate

between realism and idealism by considering the history of Western philosophy.[1] He

argues that, if realism has focused on the role of sense data in inquiry about the world

while idealism has emphasized the role of purely mental concepts and processes (such as

rationalism), both have continued to aim ultimately at reality.[2] In doing so, they have

failed to grasp the true nature of experience, either invoking transcendental phenomena to

explain the enduring intelligibility of the world or falling into a Cartesian solipsism

incapable of explaining why and how it understands (as it unfailingly does). In response

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[1] John Deely, "Philosophy and Experience," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 66 (1992): 299–319.

[2] It is clear that Deely is not really interested in generally simplistic and polemical arguments about whether or not a real or objective world can be said to exist irrespective of humans, or of whether or not it can ever be apprehended and to what extent. Nevertheless, he adopts the—to my mind, incontrovertible—position that all inquiry *must* begin, and can never ultimately or finally depart, from the realm of experience. John Deely, *The Human Use of Signs, or, Elements of Anthroposemiosis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 11 and 82.

to this problem, Deely characterizes experience as a network of signifying relationships that integrates a person and the world of things, neither fully mind-independent nor wholly constituted by the knowing subject, that lies before it.[3]

This integration is made possible by the triadic account of the signifying relationship that Deely has taken over from Charles Sanders Peirce. Here, an object (signified) is represented by a sign (signifier) always for or by a third element, named by Peirce the "interpretant."[4] The import of this structure for the current discussion is that signifying relationships are indifferent to the status of their terms, and to relationships between their terms with which they may overlap, as either mind-dependent or mind-independent phenomena.[5] For example, a fire causes smoke, but smoke can only *signify* fire *to* someone; in so signifying, however, it operates in just the same way as the most artificial, man-made sign, such as a written word or a mathematical symbol. The experiencer is thus always a part of essentially the same kind of relationship with the entities encountered within his world, whether he is engaged in farming or debate, manufacture or song. Certainly, we may stipulate after the fact, so to speak, that these things here are independent of our experience of them in a way that those others over there are not, but on the fundamental ground where we always first and most fundamentally encounter anything, this distinction is never already made. It follows after the signifying. Therefore, in pursuing this most basic ground where everything human

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[3] Deely, "Philosophy and Experience," 309; "Then indeed the whole of experience . . . is a continuous network, tissue, or web of sign relations," ibid., 314.

[4] Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1955), 99.

[5] Deely, "Philosophy and Experience," 307–308.

and everything that can exist for humans must be found, we can neither bracket off some phenomena as cultural and others as material. Nor can we assume that what we find on that ground is distributed according to economic, or political, or physical, or discursive principles. Rather, what exists there is always first and foremost *signs*, and its distribution *semiotic*.

So, if cultural history is to ask about experience understood as a network of sign relations that completely precede the distinction between mind-dependent and mind-independent phenomena, it must also ask about signs and their operation, that is, about semiosis. In keeping with much of cultural history, this means practicing a historical inquiry that is heavily influenced by anthropological approaches to culture, specifically understood as a system of symbols or signs beyond and outside any particular individual. In his book, *The Human Use of Signs*, Deely works to ground anthropology and history in the study of human experience structured through signs—which he calls "anthroposemiosis." This use is both conventionalist and materialist, and therefore essentially historical. Experience is conventional in the sense that the structures of sign relations that comprise it have many possible variants, and that one of their primary determinants is the partially implicit system of assumptions within a given human group that always precedes every individual.[6] And it is material in the sense that the particular and mind-independent aspects of sign relations, such as the physical characteristics of particular sign-vehicles, also make their influence felt. Though not rigidly determinative, such characteristics are also not irrelevant to semiosis.[7]

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[6] Deely, *The Human Use of Signs*, 61–74 and 115–119.

[7] For a study examining the influence of material factors on material factors on semiotic processes, see John R. Skoyles, "Did Ancient People Read with Their Right Hemispheres?: A Study in

In this approach, Deely shares a great deal—most importantly, the commitment to Peircean semiotics—with semiotic anthropology. In an important series of articles and lectures, R. J. Parmentier has characterized semiotic anthropology as "the belief that, while the symbolic capacity is a human universal, the semiotic systems of particular cultures merit close study as necessary elements in understanding the nature of cognition and the variety of cultural products . . ."[8] To show just what semiotic anthropology offers to the study of human culture, Parmentier surveys the ways thinkers from Kant to Lévi-Strauss to Clifford Geertz have tried to make sense of human understanding and meaning-making. This tradition made many important advances: it recognized the role of understanding in shaping the human experiential world, the socially constructed nature of the terms available for that understanding, the cohesive force of such a shared culture, and the role of structure in making individual terms meaningful.[9] But at the same time this tradition maintained, and in some cases widened, the gap between the material and the cultural. With Lévi-Strauss, it even sublimated that divide into the structuralist distinction between the individually irrelevant term and the omnipotent, ahistorical structure. Against these shortcomings, Geertz grasped the extreme richness and complexity of signs in culture, and the corresponding importance of the particular and the

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Neuropalaeographoloy," *New Ideas in Psychology* 3 (1985): 243–252. For reviews of such studies, including many with firm experimental bases, see Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1–6; Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (New York, NY: Norton, 2011), 39–57 and 183–197; Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2007), 24–78.

[8] R. J. Parmentier, "Theoretical Foundations of Semiotic Anthropology," *Semiotica* 116 (1997), 2.

[9] Ibid., 2–15.

pragmatic in understanding their functioning.[10] He thus came close to the full insights of

semiotic anthropology. But Geertz's method remained impressionistic: he described and

analyzed episodes in the cultural life of his subjects with great insight, but outlined little

that could be specifically adapted or expanded, and no system of inquiry in which claims

could be compared or critiqued.[11]

In a sense, by asserting the particular and the hermeneutical, Geertz threatened to

render "culture" an opaque and indivisible term that would completely swallow the social

and even, perhaps, the material. This was an understandable response to the overweening

structuralism that in his time threatened to reduce culture to the level of social effluvia,

the mere dreaming of a subject constructed by other, deeper forces.[12] But a semiotic

approach offers the possibility of studying the make-up and functioning of culture with

the precision and detail lacking in the Geertzian method, while also maintaining a place

for the material and yet subordinating neither term to the other. To this end, such an

approach requires three moves, all of which are presented, whether by Deely or by social

anthropology, as readings and applications of Peircean philosophy: first, adoption of the

triad of object, sign, and interpretant, outlined above, that integrates the material and

discursive so well; second, a strong *and highly-articulated* emphasis on the particulars

(what Peirce would call the pragmatics), both social and physical/material, of specific

signifying relationships; third, a displacing of the metaphor of language from its ultimate

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[10] Ibid., 12–13.

[11] Ibid., 13–14.

[12] The most familiar example of such thought being the caricature or distortion of Marxism commonly called "vulgar Marxism," wherein economic or material "base" determines completely and absolutely the social or cultural "superstructure." This ignores Marx's continual tinkering with and appreciation for the manifold subtleties of the relationship between economic and cultural phenomena.

and commanding position within the modern study of culture and semiotics in general. I will expand upon each of these briefly before continuing to develop the insights of Deely and semiotic anthropology along specifically historical lines.

I have already described the basic outlines of Peircean semiotics (or, in Peirce's term, his "semiotic") above: a sign, commonly called a signifier, indicates an object, or signified, *to* or *in terms of* something else, the interpretant. This third term, interpretant, is the particularly unique and important innovation in Perice's semiotics, and can be understood as a stipulation of just how and in what regard a given sign signifies its object. Thus a very common example given of an interpretant is a specific individual's specific understanding of a sign. For, of course, a sign does not signify the same thing in the same way for any possible observer. But an interpretant does not necessarily have to be the mental content of a particular person; it could also be some established socio-cultural interpretation shared by many individuals and localizable to none of them. One might also think of certain interpretative tools, such as a dictionary or the *I Ching*, as interpretants. Another important aspect of Peircean semiotic is that a given phenomenon can function as different parts of this triadic structure in different situations: a dictionary might be a an interpretant, or it might be taken as representative of something else (thus a sign, in Peirce's usage), or it might be the object that is being represented, as in this case by the English word "dictionary."[13]

Also important is Pierce's famous division of signs into three types. These are the icon, index, and symbol.[14] An icon resembles what it signifies in some physical way,

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[13] Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic."

[14] Ibid., 104–115.

whether visually, as with a drawing of a dog, aurally, as with onomatopoeia, and so on. An index, in turn, signifies by actual and direct correlation with thing. This might be the smell of cooking food, or the use of various pronouns—"I" refers to something that is present in some sense, that is, whomever says or writes it, and *only* communicates identity by this correlation. Finally, symbols signify through convention. In general, words are symbols. For example, in English, "cat" is understood to mean the animal to which it refers through a kind of custom. Also important for symbols is the complex conventional web in which they are embedded, as thinkers such as Saussure and Derrida have emphasized. It is important that many of these definitions are broad, and not essentially exclusive.[15] There are many ways in which an icon may physically resemble its object, and the whole point of indexicality lies in its reference to the particular context in which it appears. Even besides the ability of a sign to signify in different ways depending on the particular signifying relationship at hand (yelling "fire" in the presence of a fire uses the word as index, often communicated by tone or volume, while the world is also obviously a symbol when people are merely discussing fire or mentioning it in passing), signs can easily be more than one of these categories. This is demonstrated by the fact that different languages often employ radically different onomatopoeia—"woof" is in one important sense an icon, but the very different onomatopoeia used in Russian for the noise a dog makes ("gav") shows the conventional, that is symbolic, aspect also present in such signs.[16]

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[15] Indeed much of Peirce's actual semiotic functions by combining them; ibid., 115–119.

[16] Ibid.

It clearly follows from this schema that semiosis is not exclusively or even primarily linguistic. Both Parmentier and Deely are at pains to make this point against those theorists who tend to reduce all human signifying to the model of language.[17] Obviously, much meaningful human (therefore cultural) signifying takes place without recourse to words in any form, and there is no reason to assume that such signifying must necessarily operate in the same way as that signifying that *does* resort to words. Such a mistake leads to "translation errors," wherein the researcher attempts merely to decode a ritual practice or other meaningful non-linguistic cultural phenomenon, substituting concepts for actions and images until he produces a garbled, overly rigid, syntaxless mess not unlike the output of automatic translation software. This approach can also facilitate the ahistorical assumption that meaning is generated in the same way at all places and times; this usually means reading the culture of the researcher into that of the object of research. Moreover, this *pars pro toto* fallacy is often taken a step further, when all linguistic signifying is reduced to the symbolic (that is, conventional equivalences between physical sign-forms and concepts).[18] Citing the work of linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein, Parmentier argues that, though most words can be *categorized* as symbols—that is, signifying through convention and representative equivalence—their *common use* is heavily dependent upon indexical and iconic modalities.[19] That is, their meaning relies less on generalized assigned equivalences and abstract grammatical

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[17] Parmentier, "Theoretical Foundations," 16–19; Deely, *Human Use of Signs*, 99–102. In both cases the work of Jacques Derrida and, to a lesser extent, Geertz is taken as representative of this approach.

[18] Parmentier "Theoretical Foundations," 17–18.

[19] Ibid., 18; Michael Silverstein, "Shifters, Linguistic Categories and Cultural Description," in *Meaning in Anthropology*, ed. K. H. Basso and H. A. Selby (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press), 11–55.

principles than on the tension present throughout the field of common uses (the customs of their use) and the particular situation in which they are encountered.[20] As Parmentier writes, words "are the pragmatic sediment of discourse presupposition."[21]

Together, therefore, Deely and Parmentier provide a sophisticated theory for the study of experience as a structure of signifying relationships. This is also a historical theory, or at least the beginning of one. As Deely writes, "among the human sciences, semiotics is unique . . . in revealing the centrality of history to the enterprise of understanding in its totality."[22] This is the case because, according to Deely, humans are unique among animals (all of which use signs) in their awareness of signs *as* signs, and moreover of the arbitrary nature of signs—of the fact that both a given sign-form and a given interpretant could always be different. As a result human beings are capable of making "codes," by which Deely means signifying relationships that are available to be shared between and reactivated by different individuals.[23] Because it is these relationships that ultimately make up experience, that experience is therefore shared to some partial extent between individuals. Moreover, codes are not dependent on any specific individual for their existence as structures of experience. They thus have a partially independent existence that outlives any and all particular individuals and, indeed, forms the basis for the initial creation of each newborn individual's lifeworld. Alongside this enormous influence, therefore, such codes themselves have a history.

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[20] Not so unliked Derrida's theory of *différance.*

[21] Parmentier, Theoretical Foundations," 18.

[22] Deely, *The Human Use of Signs*, 117.

[23] Ibid., 70–71.

These are the terms in which this study pursues the use of documents at Cluny:

these documents were assemblages of codes, as well as themselves codes, given a

particular type of physical embodiment (particular sign-forms) and placed within a self-

perpetuating and yet also mutable, historical, institutional culture of use. Because sign-

forms are weakly arbitrary, in that they could always take a different physical form, but

not absolutely arbitrary, in that whatever physical form they actually do take is relevant

as such to their semiotic functioning, I hypothesize that these particular forms exerted an

influence in the structuring of monastic experience, and one that was only increased by

the nature of the monastery as a total institution, wherein individuals often spent almost

their entire lives, and which governed most or all of their basic daily processes and

functions.[24]

The most explicit aspect of these documents as particular signs and codes begins

with their nature as language. According to Deely, language is "arguably equatable" with

the use of signs subsequent to the realization that signs, objects, and signifying

relationships are all distinct phenomena and that signs themselves are "stipulable," that is,

weakly arbitrary. Along these lines, Deely calls language "the species-specific human

Innenwelt," by which he means that language functions as a subjective map of an

Umwelt, the environment created by a particular organism's pattern of interaction with

the world.[25] As a complex system of codes, natural languages such as English, French, or

[24] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1961). See also C. A. McEwen, "Continuities in the Study of Total and Nontotal Institutions," *Annual Review of Sociology* 6 (1980): 143–185 and Christie Davies, "Goffman's Concept of the Total Institution: Criticisms and Revisions," *Human Studies* 12 (1989): 77–95. Refer also to my discussion of ritual in Chapter 2.

[25] Deely, *The Human Use of Signs*, 101–102.

Latin certainly exist independently of all individuals, thus already containing the germ of their own history and also of a determinative (partially, rather than totally) role in human history besides.

My project specifically aims at another distinction: not that between language and no language, but between language in one independent-of-individuals, historical, determinative physical form, orality, and another such form, literality.[26] The physical difference between these two forms is very great and of profound significance for the history of human experience (and therefore that of everything else human). This belief is based upon the work of scholars both outside the field of medieval history, such as Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and John Skoyles, as well as of a number of influential medievalists who have approached medieval Europe as a particularly decisive place and time for the mutual development of these two forms or modes.

Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong root the implications of these two different modes in their radically different physical forms and the ensuing physiology of their use. As spoken, language is aural, having a spatial aspect only in terms of the range of hearing. It surrounds the speaker and the hearer as an event, and therefore functions through extension in time—it does not persist, but appears and then is gone as soon as speaking has ended.[27] In contrast, writing is exclusively available to the visual sense, extends in space rather than in time, and thus is experienced not as an event but as an

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[26] Scholars usually use either "literacy" or "textuality" here—I reserve the former to refer to fluency in the use of written documents, and the latter for the mode of the "text" rather than of the written document (with which it is often confused or unfortunately combined).

[27] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 90.

object sitting in the world and waiting for the human to come and find it or go away and leave it.[28] McLuhan argues that between the two modes there is a shift in the "ratio" of the senses. Oral culture unites all senses in a kind of "tactile synesthesia" that draws individuals into "active participation" with objects of perception.[29] In this world, both people and objects are indivisible, possessed of a magical wholeness and significance.[30] But as this mode or ratio is replaced by writing with an increasingly visual focus, humans are "hypnotized" into experiencing the world as a "pictorial field" spread out before them, which they observe from a removed vantage point, and which has no coherency or even occupants beyond the play of disembodied forces and functions.[31] The literate mode reifies words and language in general, showing these to the human as inert physical objects. By extension, it does the same to those phenomena for which its written symbols stand: as it transposes the aural world of spoken language experienced as immersive event into the fixed, external, and clearly localized visual object of writing, it similarly creates a space between the human and that world, laying that with which the human was once inextricably bound up amidst out before it as something that can be approached, abandoned, summed up, rearranged, and plundered.[32] Thus the literate mentality

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[28] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 9–13, 31–36, 77–81; Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2011; first ed. 1962), 18–26.

[29] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 46–49.

[30] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 17–18, 26; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 38–39.

[31] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 16–26, 47–51, 58–64. According to McLuhan, "Hypnosis depends on the . . . principle of isolating one sense in order to anesthetize the others": thus the literate mode very literally hypnotizes by focusing on and overwhelming the visual sense, ibid., 29. McLuhan's discussion here holds interesting resonances with the historical account of mimesis found in Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelen Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002; first ed. 1947).

[32] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 100–104.

confronts a world of discrete entities, unproblematically fixed in self-identity and firmly

arranged within a constellation of other such entities. At the same time, such entities,

whether as "real" things or as words and symbols, may be pulled apart and analytically

investigated in their composition, and there exist numerous clear principles for creating a

stable, nested tree of subordination, contrast, and relation.[33]

These two scholars in particular have argued that the differing physicality of the

two modes drives major, even fundamental transformations in human consciousness.

McLuhan goes so far as to characterize the literate human as doomed to schizophrenia.[34]

As the literate mode increases and intensifies its sway, humans are more and more

presented with a world outside and independent of themselves and everything heretofore

"living," "human," or "real." This is very unlike the human living in a primarily or

exclusively oral culture, for whom virtually all semiosis indicates the real presence of

some entity to which it might respond and which it might influence.[35] Thus, the literate

mode throws a net of the regular, concrete, homogenous, and independent over the

seething mass of raw human experiencing. It introduces new principles of intelligibility:

spatial distribution, consistency in terms and modes of argument, logical procession and

grammatical subordination, adherence to highly complex and fully articulated code

standards.[36] The importance of this new phenomenon, the creation of an autonomous

discourse operating according to very different internal rules and based upon completely

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[33] Ibid., 90

[34] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 26.

[35] Ibid., 21–26.

[36] Ibid., 66–68; Ong, *Orality and Litearcy*, 97–99 and 102–104.

different social structures of authority, cannot be overstated. As this mode extends its

sway, it presents the first possibility for the human to recognize, to even *conceptualize*,

the possibility of "ultimate" (that is, abstract, unconditional) authority, power, and reality.

Autonomous discourse for the first time presents the experience of something that

determines without being determined. Though he deals with increases and changes in the

use of writing, rather than its first appearance, Brian Stock puts it best when he writes

> . . . a new type of discourse evolved for communicating between individuals. Like
>
> the economy, it was governed by a set of abstract rules, which, like prices, were
>
> largely independent of human control. Literacy, like the market, insured that an
>
> entity external to the parties in a given interchange—the text—would ultimately
>
> provide the criteria for an agreed meaning. Just as the market created a level of
>
> "abstract entities" and "model relations" between producer and consumer, literacy
>
> created a set of lexical and syntactical structures which made the persona of the
>
> speaker largely irrelevant.
>
> As a result, a formerly qualitatively structured society began to show signs
>
> of quantitative structuring. Moral, economic, and social decisions began to appear
>
> in separate contexts. . . . The power over the concrete which abstraction yields
>
> was visible in the new optimism of "conquering nature" as well as in the rise of
>
> logico-empirical rationalism in law, philosophy, and theology.[37]

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[37] Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 86.

Working in the context of medieval history and along these lines, Stock explores a number of changes in social organization and intellectual culture that, he argues, sprung from changes in the use of writing. But this is getting ahead of ourselves.

Within the development of written language and its implications for human experience, McLuhan and Ong emphasize two technological innovations in particular: the alphabet and the printing press. According to them, the alphabet, by representing individual sounds, rather than whole word-concepts or syllables, atomizes and instrumentalizes language to a significantly greater extent than logographic writing (of which Chinese is the most well-known example).[38] By showing words as divided into units that are, taken individually, virtually meaningless, alphabetic writing encourages the tendency of written language to analytically pull apart holistic concepts. Alphabetic reading and writing are also much easier to learn, as the reader can "sound out" a word he has never encountered in writing before, and in that way recognize it from spoken/heard experience. John Skoyles attributes a "democratic" tendency to alphabetic writing, as it degrades the exclusivity of a priestly or scribal class's access to the written word by making writing easier to learn.[39] Of course, one can just as easily emphasize the socially atomizing effects of this phenomenon: every individual is left alone before the text, without conjurers or intercessors. Indeed the logographic nature of classical Chinese script has often been cited as a factor in that civilization's tendency towards political

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[38] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 21–26; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 84–91. For a somewhat more empirical approach, see Wolf, *Proust and the Squid*, 61–69.

[39] John R. Skoyles, "The Origin of Classic Greek Culture: The Transparent Chain Theory of Literacy/Society Interaction," *Journal of Social and Biological Structures* 13 (1990): 321–353.

unity: speakers of mutually incomprehensible dialects could all use the same script for their different tongues.[40]

Especially for McLuhan, printing heralds a total revolution in all aspects of human being.[41] Both the consciousness of the individual and the nature of human social being are transformed, and with them all art, politics, science, philosophy, religion, and even basic sense perception.[42] The most important aspects of printing for driving these changes, for both McLuhan and Ong, is the increase in discursive autonomy that springs from machine production. "Writing" is now produced much faster and, moreover, by a machine rather than merely by the hand of another. The regularity of the text, too, is greatly increased, as machine precision replaces the variety of personal hands. The written word becomes ever more thing-like, even as it assumes the reliability and proliferation of a natural constant.[43] Another important element is the layout of the page identified with the book as it appears in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with wide and clear margins, regularized spacing between words, page numbers, running titles, and so on.[44] However, while McLuhan and Ong are convincing concerning the importance of this layout, it cannot be attributed to printing. Rather, it was developed over the Middle Ages in the context of manuscript culture.[45]

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[40] See, among many others, Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han*, History of Imperial China, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[41] Another major, if perhaps less influential, work along these lines is Elizabeth Eisenstein's massive *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[42] McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 41–54 and throughout; Eisenstein, *The Printing Press*.

[43] Eisenstein, *The Printing Press*.

[44] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 121–127.

[45] Saenger, *Space Between Words*.

This layout, which as this study will show is really a bundle of numerous independent or weakly related developments and innovations, greatly increases the ability of a reader to scan for relevant words or passages. The significance of this style of reading may be difficult for the modern reader to grasp, for it is such a common and fundamental aspect of modern reading as to appear the natural component of a universal practice. But this style requires a number of technological innovations in writing to be feasible; only a thousand or so years ago, writing, at least of any significant length, was constructed with a much slower and more meditative form of reading in mind, in which the point was less to rapidly extract particular information from a text and more simply to be reading it.[46] Thus, besides elaborating a new social world of methods and functions for reading and writing, this new layout, as it slowly developed, bit by bit, did much to increase the sense of distance and spatial precision already inherent in the development of written language.[47] It also did much to encourage the perception of writing as a container of information, a binary in which an outer form expressed an inner essence, rather than as a monist, single-tiered phenomenon.[48]

These scholars thus provide the next step in approaching the *history* of the structuring of human experience through semiotic codes with a particular eye towards the material aspects and relevance of such structuring: operating within the linguistic subset of Deely's anthroposemiosis, and the Peircean approach of semiotic anthropology, my study therefore takes this physical/material distinction between orality and literality the

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[46] Ibid., 6–14.

[47] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 102–107.

[48] Ibid.

fundamental one from which to proceed. This does not mean the imposition of a

totalizing or ahistorical binary, and this study will also build on the work of medieval

historians who have challenged or rejected this distinction, such as Patrick Geary and

Mary Carruthers.[49]

This intention necessitates a few brief remarks on the nature of the oral/literate

distinction and on the related question of continuity versus rupture, for if the former is a

central bone of contention in media and literacy studies, the latter is also for the

historiography of my chosen centuries. The central problem of the oral/literate split,

indeed the problem of any theoretical binary intended to guide research, is the tendency it

encourages to list a series of traits and broader social phenomena to be associated with

each of the two terms that make up the binary, and then to reify the dividing line between

these two lists into an impermeable barrier. This is what I mean by "totalizing": some

phenomenon conventionally associated with orality, such as, for example, a high

valuation of and frequent recourse to memorization, comes to be associated absolutely

and exclusively with its master term. As a result, scholars may seek to explain away or

even outright ignore evidence that complicates this simplistic equivalency, in this case

the extreme prestige and importance of memory as a learned technique particularly

practiced among the hyper-literate Greco-Roman elites of antiquity and carried into the

Middle Ages.[50] This particular example reinforces and is reinforced by the assumption

that "texts" and "literature" are, by definition, phenomena of "literate" culture.[51] Here,

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[49] See my discussion of these historians in Chapter 3.

[50] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 2008).

[51] Ibid., 11; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 10–15.

the very terminology works against grasping the irrefutable fact that texts and literature very much exist even in purely oral societies, as the adjective "literate," taken to mean "competent in the reading of written documents," seems to establish the closest possible possession of anything called "literature." This is why I have modified the relevant terminology, using "literality," rather than literacy, and "literalate," rather than literate.

I therefore approach the oral/literalate split first of all as a spectrum, and secondly as a necessary but not sufficient explanatory factor. As a spectrum, most of the mental and social phenomena associated with either oral or literalate culture are in fact present, at least to some extremely limited extent, at both ends, under both modes. To take a very basic example, Ong says that speech in an oral culture is experiential, that it functions as a transitory "modification of a total situation,"[52] while writing is always abstracted from such particulars and thereby habituates humans to the experience and conceptualization of absolute truth, power, meaning, and so on.[53] But even spoken language in a purely oral culture is an abstraction: the noise "dog," despite all the context it invariably coexists with in such a setting, still calls up a wide range of experience and association by a short and simple phonetic-cultural tag. It is less context specific, after all, than the act of seeing or pointing at some particular dog, and obviously includes at least the barest kernel of a definition as something ideal and not-actually-existing in all the range of meanings it encapsulates or invokes. At the same time, all writing *does* rely on context: the rules of genre, as will be particularly important in my study, whether followed or broken; the

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[52] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 99.

[53] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 129–132.

associations of words and phrasings, intended or not; practices of reading, contemporaneous with the original act of writing or otherwise.

As necessary-but-not-sufficient, the oral/literalate split represents the first branching in a complex and intertwined flowchart for categorizing and conceptualizing anthroposemiosis. It is a distinction between tags, the significance of which modifies and is modified by subsequent divergences between other characteristics. These other characteristics include a wide range of social, cultural, linguistic, and institutional factors, such as scriptural religion, sacred languages, monasteries, universities, writing materials, mercantile practices, and so. As medievalists who work on orality/literality and the history of literacy such as Michael Clanchy and Brian Stock, have noted, oral and literalate modes are *plural*. There are multiple kinds of each, and they always appear in hybrid array.[54] Ultimately, this distinction is never about limiting and closing off possible social dynamics and cultural/semiotic forms, but about providing a clear and flexible schema for grouping, relating, and analyzing a constantly proliferating range of variations and combinations.

One cannot really approach the oral/literalate split, and the broader question of the anthroposemiotic structuring of experience into which consideration of that split leads and from which it proceeds, without working out the relationship between change and continuity and without taking a position upon that relationship. Certainly, this is not a matter that is foreign to the modern scientific study of history. First-year university students are taught to approach historical inquiry with this most basic question: did

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[54] Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1993), 1–21; Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 3–11.

"things" change, or did they stay the same? The roots of modern history in the Enlightenment can be connected to the slow dawning realization in Europe of just how old and various human civilization truly is, making of change a rather more serious matter than it had previously been.[55] Great Man history localizes change to the actions of (and reactions to) powerful leaders and famous thinkers. Marxism updates the ancient practice of dividing human history into stages, and roots the transformation of consciousness, even the lifeworld, in changing material-social arrangements. Structuralism challenges whether the conventional notion of change even exists, arguing for an almost-paradoxical account of "real" change as that which takes place imperceptibly over centuries and millennia.

But to consider the issue only from within the tradition of modern scientific history is to miss its true scope; a wider view cannot miss that the issue of change versus continuity is present almost at the very opening of the Western tradition, and that this quandary may in fact constitute the fissure from which that tradition has been expanding ever since. According to Aristotle the distinguishing move made by Thales and the other "naturalists" (*physiologoi*), with whom the beginning of Greek philosophy around the turn of the sixth century BCE is conventionally associated, was to argue that explanations about reality and about things that happen are rooted in the *nature* (*physis*) of reality, rather than, as the older tradition of the "ancients" or "theologians" (*theologoi*) held, in

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[55] See Donald R. Kelly, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999) and, for related developments in the field of anthroplogy, George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1991).

the intentionality of a conscious and/or divine mind.[56] This debate was frequently

conducted in terms of common, what we would call natural, events. Does rain fall

because some god wills it or as a side-effect of some other action a god takes, or does

rain fall because of some property attached to whatever rain's fundamental (unconscious,

mechanical) nature may be? Such questions obviously include at least the potentiality for

making an issue of change versus continuity, an issue that became explicit with

Parmenides. Parmenides argued that it was logically impossible for entities to either

come into or go out of existence, and that any experience of such events was necessarily

a flaw located in human perception.[57] Atomists such as Democritus tried to solve this

problem by advancing the notion that reality was composed of the free play of

microscopic and indestructible particles, known atoms, grouping themselves into various

shapes and dissolving again randomly.[58] And philosophy proceeded from there.

　　All this is to say that the true nature of the issue of change versus continuity is

largely overlooked when historians, either dismissively or humbly, term it theoretical. It

is properly *metaphysical* in the truest sense, an issue on which we must take a stance

before we engage in the modern scientific discipline called physics, and which we must

take a stance on even when engaging in other disciplines far removed from that one, such

as history. With this in mind, I draw upon David Christian's valiant and, in my view

largely successful, effort to practice "big history" (his coinage) from a truly metaphysical

posture. Though Christian does not himself foreground this posture, his landmark *Maps*

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[56] Thomas A. Blackson, *Ancient Greek Philosophy: From the Presocratic to the Hellenistic Philosophers* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 13–18.

[57] Ibid., 19–23.

[58] Ibid., 24–29.

of Time surveys history from the Big Bang down to the present day and, pivotally, sketches from this account a rough developmental process that characterizes physical as well as chemical, biological/evolutionary, and cultural systems.[59] Were the term not so out of fashion, all would agree that such a process is best described as a metaphysical theory.

Accordingly, I summarize Christian's metaphysics as follows: across systems characterized by varying density, density differentials tend to increase; as density increases, so does complexity. Nodes of increasing density/complexity eventually reach a tipping point, past which new laws manifest as emergent properties.[60] Following Christian's account, we see that the Big Bang represented a system of extreme density transforming itself (by exploding outwards), generating the emergent group of laws we call physics and in fact the physical universe. This system was itself already characterized by uneven density, wherein the more dense regions slowly, through the operation of gravity, coalesced—increased in density—until they became stars. Past this tipping point, a new body of emergent laws appeared: fission, fusion, and the production of more complex elements associated with chemistry.[61] The density/complexity differentials produced by stars led to planets, where chemical complexity eventually produced life and the emergent systems studied by biology.[62] One of these, evolution, drove increasing

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[59] David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2005). For an important related work, see Daniel Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

[60] Much of this summary is my reading of Christian's whole work; for Christian's relatively more modest gesture towards an overview, see Christian, *Maps of Time*, 510–511 and his second appendix in general.

[61] Ibid., 17–56.

[62] Ibid., 79–138.

density/complexity so far that a system vastly exceeding in complexity any other ever observed by humans appeared: the human brain.[63] From the human organism and its singular brain came the latest emergent system: culture, and the emergent laws and processes in turn studied by the discipline of history.[64]

This metaphysics includes a number of striking dynamics. As my précis suggests, it can be subdivided into sets of systems characterized by the human discipline dedicated to studying the emergent processes and laws that govern them: physics, chemistry, biology, and history. Of course, each of these sets of systems are *also* governed by those from which they emerged and by those which emerged from them; dividing them into sequential order, based on the emergence of systems characteristic of each set (the universe for physics, stars and the complex elements they engender for chemistry, life for biology, culture for history) is only a rough conceptual tool that must not be allowed to escape its leash and distort the broader reality. The picture is only complete if our conceptual map of it juxtaposes a line with a pyramid. This nested nature includes the potential for events of subsequent levels and systems to transform those of prior ones, as when stars created new elements, or when the subset of human culture known as natural science unlocked the power of the atom for peace and war.

Most importantly of these dynamics, intensification—the tendency for density/complexity differentials to increase—accommodates both continuity and rupture. Quantitative change, the mere increase or decrease of what already exists by processes and in settings that also already exist, at least within certain bounds, can generally be

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[63] Ibid., 139–170.

[64] Ibid., 171–206.

identified with continuity. But Christian has shown how, at many levels of reality, sufficient intensification passes a tipping point, beyond which new phenomena (both entities and processes) appear. Essentially, enough quantitiative change *becomes* qualitative change. These tipping points can be identified with the ruptures observable, for example, in human history.

Within the domain of human culture, this framework also makes sense of the oral/literalate split. Language, according to our current best theories, emerged from the Baldwinian evolutionary pressures of early hominids.[65] The complexity of the human brain, and the increasing density of hominids in early groups, produced symbolic, that is, abstracted, communication. Language represented a new system produced by density-fueled complexity's move past a tipping point; but of course this new system also continued to operate through Christian metaphysics. Humans and thus the cultural system set continued to intensify, increasing in density and complexity until large cities appeared. Within these new urban systems—which Christian explicitly analogizes to stars, speaking of "social gravity"—density reached another tipping point (within, rather than transcending, the cultural system set), and through a kind of cultural or social fusion, written notation and eventually a comprehensive system for capturing the full range of symbolic language in writing appeared.[66] Reproducing in microcosm the Christian dynamic, writing represented a new system with its own emergent set of laws, and it set about retroactively transforming the systems, human, cultural, and linguistic, that had produced it. As it and the broader cultural system set with which it was intertwined

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[65] Ibid., 160–173; see also Smail, *On Deep History*, 112–156.

[66] Christian, *Maps of Time*, 245.

developed alongside one another, writing continued to transform the human through the development of and elaboration of notational systems, material technologies, and strategies of use, such as the vocalic alphabet so important to Skoyles, the regularized inter-word spacing so important to Saenger, and the printing press so important to McLuhan.

This notion of change and continuity thus reinforces my understanding of the oral/literalate split as a spectrum. From the broadest perspective, language can be seen as a system of human communication, therefore falling within the cultural system set. It operates according to the basic metaphysical process which I have drawn from the work of David Christian, wherein density-fueled complexity naturally intensifies, driving the emergence of new systems and laws as certain tipping or inflection points are passed. Writing and literalate culture in general are intensifications of tendencies already inherent in language from the most ancient prehistory, even from periods we are more inclined to approach in the context of evolutionary biology than in that of historical scholarship. This is not to minimize or ignore the very important differences between oral and literalate modes—those differences and their historical development after all being the central object of this study—but to properly contextualize them. Thus, as our view "zooms in" on language as an intensifying process within the cultural system set, differences too small to register from a cosmic perspective become first visible and then transformative.

Though the work on the oral/literalate split associated with McLuhan and Ong builds primarily upon the basic physical distinction between these two linguistic modes, it remains concentrated on the patterns of thought and experience that stem from this physical distinction, rather than upon the finer details of language's many, highly various,

physical manifestations. Ong oganizes these patterns or characteristics of thought and culture using a list of "psychodynamics."[67] He never precisely defines this term, though its meaning is fairly clear: a psychodynamic is a characteristic of language that stems from the physical nature of discrete linguistic semiotic units as oral, literalate, or, presumably, one of many possible hybrid forms. As a characteristic of language, however, pyschodynamics clearly have implications far beyond the brute material reality of particular signs or sign-vehicles; essentially, it is the concept of the psychodynamic that actually links the material forms of langauge with culture, language, and thought in such a way that, for example, writing may be said to "restructure consciousness."[68] Along these lines, Ong cites a large body of research from various fields to present a list of psychodynamics of orality. These usually contrast explicitly and obviously with psychodynamics of literality, such that, for example, orality is "additive rather than subordinative."[69] This means that oral language or text tends to use a relatively limited repertoire of grammar and vocabulary devoted to establishing precise, explicit, and hierarchichal syntactic relationships. Instead of, as in literalate modes, "If . . . then . . . but . . . thus . . . yet . . . ," one encounters "And . . . and . . . and . . . indeed . . . and . . . ."[70] Ong's individual psychodynamics, like the concept itself, is an intriguing one, which

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[67] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 31–76.

[68] Ibid., 77.

[69] Ibid., 37–38.

[70] Ibid. See also Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 89–91 and 99–106, where Auerbach points to very similar differences (syntactic versus paratactic) between Late Classical and Late Antique (or high medieval) narration.

takes an important step towards clarifying and systematizing the study of the history of concrete semiosis.

Despite this, Ong and McLuhan remain focused on very broad correspondences between linguistic physicality and consciousness/experience: they are concerned with the epoch-making literalate technologies of alphabet, printing press, television, and computer. As a result, they remain fundamentally unsatisfying to the modern, poststructuralist historian. If not necessarily a technological determinism, their proposed history nevertheless fits into a rather caricatured course of sudden, accidental technological innovations that transformed the human psyche almost on the model of revelation originating beyond the world of matter and history. This model does not really accord with the Christian metaphysics outlined above and the notion of rupture as a part of the continuity it implies, nor is much room left for the particular, incremental, or even properly cultural.

My work rectifies this problem by focusing on much smaller and more subtle physical changes in language than those emphasized by McLuhan and Ong. In this, I turn to the work of paleographers and codicologists, and especially of the historian Paul Saenger. In his *Space Between Words* (2000), Saenger, without specifically engaging either with the oral/literalate split in general or the work of McLuhan and Ong in particular, greatly challenges, revises, and advances this line of inquiry. First, Saenger identifies the modern style or practice of reading known as "reference reading," which he defines as "intrusive and rapid, silent perusal of text in the quest for specific

information."[71] This sober, untechnical definition has important resonances with several of Ong's psychodynamics: silent and exclusively visual rather than oral or aural, individual rather than social, "intrusive" and extractatory (even exploitative) rather than imbedded and participatory, focused on the abstract in its specific effort to pick out this information here while ignoring that there. Reference reading so defined is paradigmatic of the post-print consciousness of what McLuhan calls "Gutenberg Man." Therefore, when Saenger convincingly argues that this form of reading emerged at least a century *before* the invention of the metal mobile-type printing press in Europe, his research must be taken very seriously by anyone working honestly in the oral/literalate framework.

Saenger, citing a great deal of neurophysiological and sociological research, shows that what is truly necessary for reference reading is not, or not only, the specific homogenizing power of machine reproduction, but rather the creation of distinctive "Bouma shapes" for written words and the aid to the eye provided by regular, inter-word space of sufficient breadth.[72] Such shapes allow the brain to recognize a word as a full visual unit, rather than parsing it phonetically every time it is encountered, as novice readers must do, while the use of reliable spacing between words (and only between, rather than sometimes within, words) provides a guide to the eye that allows maximally efficient saccades (the muscular movement of the eyes involved in focusing the view on a particular point). These are, of course, mutually reinforcing, as distinctive word shapes

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[71] Saegner, *Space Between Words*, 4; see also Carr, *The Shallows* 68–76.

[72] Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 6–7 (word space as eye-aid), 26–27 (sufficient space), 18–19 (shape). The concept of Bouma shapes offers very interesting implications for Peircean semiotics, and indeed for Silverstein's account of words, normally understood as Peircean symbols, as icons or indices.

enhance the use of the parafoveal and peripherial vision, even further reducing the number of distinct saccades necessary to read a given bit of writing.

The complex history of the development of this kind of writing, which involves the combination of several distinct material traditions and techniques over more than a millennium, is beyond the scope of the present work.[73] For now it is sufficient to note Saenger's assertion that "scholastic Latin, when written by a professional scribe with complete word separation, allowed the medieval scholar familiar with its conventional abbreviations, preferred modes of construction, and vocabulary to read swiftly and skim easily in a fashion not readily distinguishable from the perusal of a modern printed book,"[74] and that

> when attention is focused on details of central importance to the study of the history of reading, such as space, abbreviation, *prosodiae* (signs that aided recognition and pronunciation of syllables and words), punctuation, terminal forms, and other related graphic innovations that enhanced word image, this period from the ninth to the eleventh century on the Continent emerges as an epoch of revolutionary changes. During this period . . . the Bouma shape first emerged on the written page, and as a consequence, Continental reading habits began to undergo a fundamental restructuring. So dramatic was this change that it

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[73] See the accounts presented in Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 6–17; Ong, *Orality and Textuality*, 83–91; Carr, *The Shallows*, 52–66.

[74] Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 18.

is unsurpassed by any other alteration in the act of reading between the patristic

age and the sixteenth century.[75]

In light of Saenger's far-reaching and exhaustively researched arguments, the oral/literalate split, as historically treated by McLuhan and Ong, is in need of some serious revision. I maintain, however, that it is certainly *revision*, and definitely not wholesale rejection, that is called for—after all, McLuhan and Ong have conducted and cited a great deal of research in developing their psychodynamics, and, more importantly, the basic outlines of the contrasts between the two linguistic physical modes they draw appear compatible with Saenger's comparisons between modern reference and ancient meditative reading. The issue is therefore one of bringing the broad theoretical framework I have been outlining by reference to McLuhan, Ong, Deely, semiotic anthropology, and even, at the ultimate remove, David Christian, into better contact with the detailed, material "facts on the ground" as apprehended by historical research and represented in the current case by Saenger and other historians. All these scholars agree that the use of oral and written texts is rooted both in the physical realities of those texts and in the socio-cultural nature of that use. They also agree that such uses are plural and hybrid. I will therefore, with Saenger's work as my guide, attempt to refit McLuhan and Ong's theories to better accord with the actual materiality and praxis of high medieval monastic documentary culture.

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[75] Ibid., 21.

This consideration of Saenger's work provides the major justification for the chosen spatio-temporal frame of my study. Perched atop a broader account of experience, semiotics, and historical change, Saenger's precise research relates these issues to the historical minutiate I follow him in pursuing. In the next chapter, I shift to exploring and justifying my use of the concept of ritual, which I have found useful in studying these particulars of monastic life, culture, and semiosis. This concept and the history of its use within the social sciences, however, are not simple, and indeed "ritual" has been the subject of sustained theoretical—some would say, polemical—assault. Some examination of these debates, on the way to the elucidation of my own understanding of the concept, is therefore both appropriate and necessary.

CHAPTER III: RITUAL

Ritual, not only in the academic study of history, anthropology, and religion, but also in

(Western) civilization generally, is a fraught concept. Like similar concepts, whether

slightly broader (religion, history) or more narrow (feudalism, the West), it is caught

somewhere between encountered phenomenon and scholarly analytical tool. In the field

of medieval history, Philippe Buc has argued forcefully that it tends much more towards

the latter, and moreover that historians would be better off abandoning it entirely.[1] Given

that I will spend some time and effort here explaining, defining, and defending this

analytic for my own use, then, perhaps it would be wiser to simply use some other term

(or even coin my own). But that would not be true either to the course of my own reading

and thinking or to my own experience of the source material. Instead, I will first review

some of the scholarly reflection and debate on ritual most relevant to my own work, then

offer up and explain my own ponderous definition, and finally relate this definition to the

earlier work—that is, to its own antecedents.

The beginning point for the modern debate over ritual in the context of medieval

historiography is Philippe Buc's *The Danger of Ritual* (2001). Buc outlined three goals

for this work: (1) to determine and explain what ancient and medieval authors thought

happened in what *we* have called ritual; (2) to examine why and how these authors wrote

about these "rituals"; and (3) to analyze the genealogy of the modern academic concept

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[1] Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory*
(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

of ritual.[2] Thus these first two goals are clearly historical, while the third is much more historiographical. Nevertheless, the three endeavors work together quite coherently to advance Buc's overall goal, that is, the substantial demolition of ritual as an acceptable scholarly analytic. First, Buc shows that the medieval authors who described (I again emphasize Buc's vital qualifier, "what historians have called") rituals depicted them as productions in which a community characterized by order, consensus, and some notion of transcendental knowledge and/or nature, was created, renewed, or displayed.[3] From the perspective of modern history, anthropology, and religious studies, this is about as conventional an account as could be imagined. It quickly emerges, however, that this is precisely Buc's point: this account of ritual, as a social mechanism intended to create and maintain order, obedience, and hierarchy, was adopted and developed by Reformation thinkers as a criticism of Catholicism. Reprising the older Christian account of Judaism, they divided people in ritual-performing societies into gullible masses and cynical choreographers. This account was further developed by secular Enlightenment thinkers and French revolutionaries, before being adopted by the roots of modern social science in the nineteenth century.[4]

At least since the fifties, anthropologists have diagnosed a number of major problems with this account of ritual. First, it proposes an objective divide between what a ritual appears or claims to do or communicate and what it actually does or communicates

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[2] Ibid., 3–5.

[3] Ibid., Part I, 13–158.

[4] Ibid., Part II, 159–247.

that is, in the most fundamental sense, impossible to prove and unjustified to assume.[5] Second, it positions the external observer—apparently but not actually by coincidence a Christian, Protestant, secularist, or white university-educated European, depending on the century—as the uniquely authoritative arbiter of this distinction.[6] And finally, as in some other cases of social science terminology, it takes a European Christian practice as the baseline manifestation of a universal human phenomenon, dooming other cultures to accounts of analogy and deviation.[7] Additionally, there is the danger of a "naive functionalism," which also is generally agreed to have grown out of Protestant critiques of Catholicism and their maturation under the aegis of social science. This approach, likewise much criticized in anthropological circles since at least the middle of the last century, understands society according to the metaphor of an organism, with rituals playing a key role in maintaining that organism's homeostasis by providing an outlet for antisocial or anarchic urges and reiterating community and hierarchy.

But even besides these broad criticisms, Buc's book also shows, in its second goal, how even in its own house (medieval Europe), this account of ritual is only a trope; throughout the whole first millennium of the Common Era, Buc shows how the authors who record rituals are quite careful in their depiction. These authors show rituals working when performed by their favored actors, whether kings or churchmen, and failing or even

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[5] Ibid., 203–247.

[6] Ibid.

[7] For excellent works on different elements and examples of this phenomena, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) and Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, IL: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 2005).

counterfeiting when performed by others.[8] In Buc's eyes, at least, this opens a large gap between the actual event recounted in whatever document and the representation of it therein, even besides the concatenation of that event and other disparate practices into the analytic, "ritual." It is not the ritual but the chronicler's gloss on the ritual that asserts the creation or affirmation of a special kind of transcendent community. In short, an ideological account of a range of practices has been mistaken by historians *for* those practices, and then been systematized into a social science term and widely exported.

Geoffrey Koziol, as a prominent historian whose work often centers on ritual,[9] and moreover as perhaps the flagship target of *The Dangers of Ritual*, offers a response to Buc in *Early Medieval Europe*,[10] to which Buc in turn later replied.[11] Besides criticizing Buc for going "beyond respectful professional disagreement," Koziol has two main points. First, Buc has failed to appreciate that the genealogy of the concept of ritual he advances is already well-known and has been the subject of much critical engagement by the very scholars Buc attacks.[12] To this point, Buc clarifies that his dispute was specifically with historians' use of the concept, and that recent anthropological work on ritual and rituals is acceptable, or at least not so fundamentally flawed as that of historians. Along these lines he rejects Koziol's claims that this work has been

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[8] Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*, Part I, 13–158, for example in Gregory of Tours' treatment, 100–102, 106–107, 110–118.

[9] Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon, Begging Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[10] Geoffrey Koziol, "Review article: The Dangers of Polemic: Is Ritual Still an Interesting Topic of Historical Study?," *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (2002): 367–388.

[11] Philippe Buc, "The Monster and the Critics: A Ritual Reply," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007): 441–452.

[12] Koziol, "Dangers of Polemic," 372–375.

sufficiently processed by medievalists: "But the accumulation of footnotes, perhaps to look *au courant*, is not tantamount to the integration of ideas, or exclusive of some functionalism. . . . [medievalists'] understanding is often that rituals, while conflictual, perpetuate order, and express and renew deep structures."[13] The debate here thus becomes a rather subtle and involved one that would need to be conducted in the context not only of individual medievalists but even of individual works. And ultimately it is less important to establish which historians have successfully integrated recent anthropology's critical approach to ritual than it is merely *to integrate*, and then proceed into the sources themselves.

Koziol's second point is that Buc himself does not actually dispense with the term—and more importantly, with the concept behind the term—"ritual." In a basic sense, this is obviously true. Buc sometimes uses words like "ceremony" or "solemnity," and sometimes "ritual" itself. Moreover, in pursuing his first two analyses, of what rituals did or were comprised and of how they were recorded, Buc just as obviously studies the same phenomena as medievalists working on ritual, and groups them the same way.[14] Moreover, Koziol makes the predictable, if fair, point that there are many other, even more fundamental, social scientific terms with just as much baggage as "ritual": society, culture, institution[15], and so on. As in the case of Koziol's first line of attack, Buc's response is convincing, or at least defensible, but also, to my eye, gains some of its

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[13] Buc, "The Monster and the Critics," 450.

[14] Koziol, "Dangers of Polemic," 375–377.

[15] Ibid., 375

cogency by retreating into a weaker formulation of the claims made in *Dangers*. Buc
writes:

> Granted, scholars cannot explain much without having recourse to concepts such
> as 'class,' 'culture,' 'institutions.' . . . But in reconstructions of the past some
> concepts yield more than others. And even the more fruitful among these
> instruments have to be used with caution and with full understanding of their
> ontological status, epistemological claims, and heuristic potential. . . . 'Ritual'—if
> medievalists still want to use it—necessitates the same caution.[16]

In the final estimation of this exchange, then, it seems that its substance lies in an
assertion that historians, and medievalists in general, ought to be more diligent, and more
up-to-date, in studying their anthropology and more aware of their analytics as
intellectual constructs of their own making. In the specific case of ritual, this means
developing an account of ritual that addresses the genealogy of the term and its frequent,
even constant, ideological uses, particularly in confessional or colonialist contexts.
Related to this is an appreciation that, for medievalists, what we call ritual is always
related in writing.[17] While noting this point may sometimes, erroneously, suggest that
being physically present at a ritual is a substantially more immediate and less fallible

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[16] Buc, "The Monster and the Critics," 442–443.

[17] Buc, Koziol, and others constantly use the word "text." Without writing a book-length polemic of my own, I will remark that this usage elides the distinction between writing and set, established discourse that is not the autonomous speaking of the speaker. Despite the improvisation in oral epic poetry, for example, a work such as *The Odyssey* or *The Illiad* certainly is a text, and was long before it was ever recorded in writing.

experience of it as a socio-cultural phenomenon, this fact of transmission is certainly

significant and requires serious engagement. Finally, Buc reiterates quite elegantly what

could be a warning for all social science, which can never be too frequently repeated:

"The risk lies in too fast an appropriation of the other, in a shortened, truncated

hermeneutic spiral. . . ."[18]

With all this in hand, then, let us dig a bit more into the nature of the analytic

"ritual," before stating out and out the definition to be used here and investigating it in

terms of the foregoing discussion. Christina Pössel has also contributed to the debate over

ritual conducted in *Early Medieval Europe*,[19] and her article provides a useful segueway

from debates over whether or not historians have considered "ritual" with appropriate

care and insight into actually considering it. Pössel situates the modern (since the 1990s)

historiographical turn towards ritual in an interesting way:

> [Ritual] was . . . an attractive subject because it offered an approach to think about
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> powerful actors' interactions, instead of institutions and structures; about social
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> practices and actual encounters rather than legalistic and normative descriptions
>
> of power. In particular (but not just) for Germanophone scholars, ritual was a
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> liberation, freeing us from the more traditional forms of analysis of constitutional
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> history, enabling us to move from the ideas of what imperial, royal, ducal,

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[18] Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*, 3.

[19] Christina Pössel, "The Magic of Early Medieval Ritual," *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009): 111–125.

aristocratic power *ought* to have been, to how it was demonstrated and negotiated in meetings between emperors, popes, rulers and their aristocrats.[20]

In this conception, the ritual turn is one towards what seemed irrelevant, or at least secondary, to a previous generation of scholarship.[21] On the one hand, there exist the "real," "material" forms of power: weaponry, riches, men, and enumerated legalistic prerogatives. On the other, up overhead in the superstructure, reside the effluvia of these phenomena: crowns and oaths, and the ceremonies in which crowns are bestowed and oaths sworn and witnessed. "No one's will is actually enforced on anyone else in a crowning," (our strawman of) the old guard says, to which we reply, *eppur si muove*.

For Pössel, therefore, ritual is a turn towards power, agency, and culture. In true poststructuralist—though neither Pössel nor her footnotes invoke this term—fashion, it revolutionizes the structuralist paradigm by asserting that the event, that is, the instantiation or manifestation of the structure's operation, also exerts its own influence back upon the structure that generates it. It re-centers our view on the border, the mediating field, between, to select one metaphor from the many available to us, *langue* and *parole*—or, to select another, between base and superstructure. This mediation is thus transformed from a direct and unambiguous process, the transmission of electrical current, for example, into the whole candle, the battlefield wherein many sides struggle and the outcome is, besides never finally settled, always some messy conglomerate of

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[20] Ibid., 112.

[21] In my limited experience, turns, like revolutions, exaggerate their departure from and censor their debts to their predecessors. And yet the distinction between them and those predecessors is often also real. From this perspective I engage in a bit of oversimplification for the sake of clarity.

force, intentionality, accident, and partial accommodation. Though some historians may grimace at such language, this is precisely what Buc and Koziol are debating: Buc accuses medievalists as regarding ritual as an objective phenomenon wherein society, as a self-reproducing structure, self-reproduces.[22] It is an *expression* of power, that is, power projected in one direction, from "society" or "culture" into or onto concrete human beings and their particular material relations at a certain time and place. In opposition to this, he and Pössel argue that ritual is really a site of contention and fallibility, both in the moment of performance and in the larger arena of recording, relating, and reinterpreting wherein historians eventually come to participate.[23]

Pössel also approaches the question of what ritual, either as an observed phenomena or as a scholarly analytic, actually *is* much more directly than Buc or Koziol. She does this first by arguing that one of the greatest problems with how medievalists have so far used the term is the assumption, unstated and sometimes denied even in its obvious presence, that rituals "worked then but not now."[24] In Pössel's view, despite scholarship delving into ritual in modern life, medievalists persist in identifying medieval ritual as part of an essential medieval otherness; this leads to the sense that while modern ritual is merely vestigial and ultimately unimportant/ineffectual, "medieval ritual is credited with the ability to have created community, consensus, or power."[25] Medievalists often *finish*, rather than beginning, their inquiries by identifying something as a ritual. So

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[22] Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*, 10.

[23] Pössel, "The Magic of Ritual," 118–121; Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*, 12.

[24] Pössel, "The Magic of Ritual," 114.

[25] Ibid., 112–113. For ritual in modern life, see Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh, UK: University of Edinburgh Press, 1956) and *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-To-Face Behavior* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

the concept becomes explanatory; it posits a certain kind of device or mechanism, the ritual, which, like a mousetrap, snaps forward when poked no matter where it might placed, operating predictably and perhaps even autonomously.[26] While turning increasingly towards the issue of power and agency, Pössel here repeats the critique of the concept as overly reified, and as proposing a doubled model of society in which the overly credulous unknowingly perform to the benefit of canny elites, with sufficiently rational onlookers in on the joke. But while the move towards power is quite useful for my purposes and these criticisms (again, still) well-launched, in my view Pössel missteps here in a way quite characteristic of modern positivist thinking. She writes that "The difference between ritualized and non-ritualized therefore has to lie in the framing of the event [so far so good]: ritual is not so much a category of action as of intention and perception. The real difference between an 'instrumental' and a 'symbolic' act . . . is in the mind."[27]

Pössel thus takes a different tack from Buc; where he has (at least initially) rejected the concept of ritual entirely as ideological and unexamined, she tries to rehabilitate it as an analytic by proceeding from this positive definition. Along these lines, she asks why medieval actors performed rituals. Given their cognizance of the "dangers of ritual"—that its meanings were unfixed and therefore open to interpretations tangential or contrary to any particular performer's intent—why did they take the risk?[28] This turns her attention to "the barrage of texts" produced, for example, surrounding the

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[26] Pössel, "The Magic of Ritual," 115–116.

[27] Ibid., 117.

[28] Ibid., 118.

momentous political events of the 830s, when Louis the Pious' rebellious sons challenged his rule. These various documents all sought to propagate partisan readings of the various "rituals" (anointings, public penances, etc.) at the core of these events. Pössel thus widens even further than Buc the gap between "rituals-in-texts" and "rituals-in-performance."[29] From this and other conflicts of Carolingian dynastic politics, Pössel builds on her conception of ritual (". . . a category of perception and intention . . . in the mind") to argue that the "meaning" of ritual acts is, contra many medievalists (who, again, appear victims of a generational lag in appropriating anthropological methods and theory), extremely underdetermined, weak, or general: actions are not *capable* of transmitting complex meaning, like language can, and so discussions of such meaning must remain rooted in the texts (preserved in written documents) that have survived into the present; similarly, that meaning is a product of those documents, and thus of events subsequent and ancillary to the ritual acts themselves.[30] The study of medieval ritual on this basis, then, is essentially the study of *post factum* partisan or ideological interpretations of medieval ritual.

I do not mean to completely reject this line of inquiry; not having plumbed it, I would not claim to know it is ultimately barren or misfounded. Moreover, even within the Middle Ages there are hugely divergent contexts for ritual; as will be clear, my own sense of ritual arises out of a post- or neo-Carolingian monastic milieu very different from the turbulent high politics of the ninth century. Yet Pössel's account seems to me to veer off into a problematic direction, beginning from her location of ritual essentially in the mind.

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[29] Ibid., 118–119.

[30] Ibid., 119–120.

This conception reproduces the quintessential modernist binary of mind against body, which besides being totally opposed to medieval anthropology and epistemology has also been challenged quite profoundly on its own grounds.[31] Predictably, from the perspective of critiques of this binary, it leads Pössel to drastically over-privilege mental content, and thus ultimately to reproduce the "two levels" account of ritual. Here, instead of gullible plebs, manipulative clergy, and snickering medievalists, we have kabuki theatre, in which no one's performance is sincere. Everyone is merely playing along in the hopes of later convincing some other, apparently more gullible, people somewhere else of their own preferred interpretation of the events. In emphasizing choice and intentionality, Pössel has multiplied cynicism to an absurd extreme.

I hope I have not been unfair to Dr. Pössel's argument. Medieval participants in and observers of ritual certainly did seek to advance their own interpretation while refuting or discrediting those of others; cynicism was undoubtedly at play *sometimes*, in some quarters. And Pössel certainly allows that there were other reasons for medieval actors to engage in rituals.[32] I find her account of how a ritual can be used to stage consensus by creating a venue in which it is impossible to dissent from a particular figure or policy without seeming to repudiate the broader social order itself quite convincing and useful.[33] But doesn't this invocation of the power of the "ritualized, ceremonial, solemn frame" to imbricate acceptance of particulars with acceptance of community in

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[31] See works by, among many others, Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault (some discussed below). John Deely, as cited above and below, also makes a strong, carefully organized, and well-read version of these arguments.

[32] Pössel, "The Magic of Ritual," 124.

[33] Ibid., 122–123.

general point up Pössel's failure to fully demystify ritual? Why did (does) such a frame

have this power—or *how* did the frame hold or exercise it? In effect, by downplaying the

agency of the *ritual itself*, which she unequivocally and universally denies,[34] Pössel

misses the fact that the ritual itself did make some demand on its performers; that is, there

was certainly some effort to get the ritual right. Without accepting the basic power of

such an effort, which might be conceived of on an individual basis as some kind of

ethical imperative, the category of ritual, as the performance of some at least partially

established schedule of specific actions and words, is completely incomprehensible: ritual

is something you do, not anything you do. In my view, this is tantamount to accepting

that rituals do indeed have some kind of agency, they *do*, in some sense, do things. As

Buc writes, "One has to allow for a more complex configuration of agency and

conviction. The medieval configuration allowed room for propaganda because authors

and actors thought they served some *bonum commune*. Sincerity and partisanship often

went hand in hand."[35]

  To my mind this misstep follows from a distorted or miscarried poststructural

turn: structuralism exaggerated the power of structures, certainly, but the primordial

event or instance, which it mistakenly regarded as determined by structure in a one-way

causal relationship, is *not* the thinking individual, the Cartesian soul-in-a-jar. Rather, the

primordial event is much closer to raw praxis—what I have called in the previous chapter

"experience"—as it exists prior to abstraction/socialization into (an) individual(s). The

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[34] ". . . a *ritual never does anything*—such a phrase is always shorthand for the agency of a ritual's participants. . . ," ibid., 116.

[35] Buc, "The Monster and the Critics," 444.

proper theoretical correction to structuralism's misallocation of agency is thus not to imagine shrewd and calculating individuals playing a bottomless game of chess through the medium of social mores and traditions, but to appreciate the power of habit, custom, and ritual in their own right, and to recognize the dynamic tension in which they exist both with broad structures and the coiling, irreducible rebellion of each immediately real moment. In considering and developing ritual as an analytic, the issues raised and insights offered by the medievalists considered so far are extremely important; but they concern predominantly the difficulty of building and deploying social scientific concepts. Located as we all always already are within culture, such concepts necessarily carry a range of assumptions along with themselves that are impossible to fully root out and disempower. But we can—and must—pursue at least the most overtly colonial of these stowaways, as Buc in particular has spurred us to do in the case of ritual. But for a *positive* conception of ritual, Koziol, Buc, and Pössel are more useful for their mistakes or oversights, for they have called attention to the problematic modernist dualism that still lurks within the notion of "ritual"—at least among many historians. My conception of this concept is aimed at a more detailed account of just *how* ritual mediates between raw, unindividuated praxis and the larger structures of civilization and reality generally.

The anthropologist Talal Asad provides a key step towards this account, particularly in his essays "On Ritual and Discipline in Medieval Christian Monasticism," and "Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual."[36] In both of these works, Asad

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[36] Talal Asad, "On Ritual and Discipline in Medieval Christian Monasticism," *Economy and Society* 16 (1987): 159–203 and *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55–82 (Chapter 2, "Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual").

suggests (without quite rejecting the term or criticizing other scholars' use of it) that

ritual might be better understood, at least in various particular contexts, as something like

"discipline," that is, training.[37] Significantly, both of these studies focus on the examples

provided by eleventh and twelfth century Latin monasticism: in "Ritual and Discipline,"

Asad focuses on (ritual) techniques for training in virtues, such as are found in the Rule

of Saint Benedict, the writings of the twelfth-century Victorines, and especially the

writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, while in "Toward a Genealogy," he discusses the

Rule of Benedict again and the liturgy as part of "the Benedictine program."[38] Especially

in "Toward a Genealogy," Asad distinguishes this idea of ritual-as-discipline not only

from modern (as in nineteenth- and twentieth-century professional anthropology) notions

of ritual but also from early modern (Renaissance, Elizabethan) training in manners. This

latter distinction is notable for my purposes here because Asad associates it with just the

kind of division between mind and body, or internal and external selves, that I have just

called a modern distortion or misunderstanding—or at least quintessentially modern.[39]

And he goes on to suggest that the change from medieval to modern ideas of ritual and

training may well be connected to the development of a textual metaphor for human

behavior (or even human being more broadly):

> Symbols, as I said, call for interpretation, and even as interpretative criteria are
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> extended, so interpretations can be multiplied. Disciplinary practices, on the other

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[37] Asad, "On Ritual and Discipline," 159–160; "Toward a Genealogy," 62–64.

[38] Asad, "Ritual and Discipline," 168–192; "Toward a Genealogy," 62–65.

[39] Asad, "Toward a Genealogy," 65–72.

hand, cannot be varied so easily, because learning to develop moral capabilities is not the same thing as learning to invent representations. This leads me to venture a final question: is it possible that the transformation of rites from discipline to symbol, from practicing distinctive virtues (passions) to representing by means of practices, has been one of the preconditions for the larger conceptual transformation of heterogeneous life (acting and being acted upon) into readable text?[40]

At the same time as he relates his new notion of ritual to specific elements of Western history, however, Asad clearly intends the idea of ritual-as-discipline or training to be applicable outside of Western contexts. Or, more accurately, he intends his examples of ritual-as-training to dissolve the conventional reduction of "the various domains of social life everywhere to two fundamental categories, ritual and non-ritual," and to dislodge the conventional definition of ritual as "symbolic activity as opposed to the instrumental behavior of everyday life."[41]

This notion of ritual as training is central to my definition for two reason, the first straightforwardly historical or historiographical and the second theoretical or, more aptly, philosophical. The first reason, of course, is that it accords so closely—indeed, is derived precisely from—my own particular object of historical study: Latin monasticism in the High Middle Ages. Here, Asad's reading of various important primary sources for monastic history is supported, in its main points, by a range of historians. He himself

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[40] Ibid., 79.

[41] Asad, "Ritual and Discipline," 194; "Toward a Genealogy," 55, respectively.

cites a number, some more famous or more venerable than others.[42] And there has also

been a great deal of recent work done on the transmission of the customs and liturgy,

particularly at Cluny as well as more broadly in "Benedictine" settings, during the tenth,

eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Though these works often focus on questions of

"literacy"[43] and the use of documents, in terms of the methods and aims of monastic

education they support Asad's use—or refiguring—of the concept of ritual. A current

leading historian of monasticism, Susan Boynton, writes that "the liturgy was in many

ways a school within the monastery, and its incessant rhythm made liturgical training a

constant preoccupation—the central focus of monastic education and formation."[44] In

another article, Boynton shows how important training and competence in the liturgy was

to the monastic self-conception, while again emphasizing the monks' continued efforts to

establish the correct forms of the liturgy specifically *as* ritual.[45] And Isabelle Cochelin's

essay, "Besides the Book: Using the Body to Mould the Mind—Cluny in the Tenth and

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[42] For example (not exhaustive): Christopher Brooke, "Monk and Canon: Some Patterns in the Religious Life of the Twelfth Century," in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W. J. Shields (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1985); C. van Dijk, "L'instruction et la culture des frères convers dans les premiers siècles de l'Ordre de Cîteaux," *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum* 24 (1964): 243–258; Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980); G. R. Evans, *The Mind of St. Bernard* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1983); Timothy Fry, "The Disciplinary Measures in the Rule of Benedict," in *The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981); Jacques Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1977); Barbara Rosenwein, "Feudal War and Monastic Peace: Cluniac Liturgy as Ritual Aggression," *Viator* 2 (1971): 127–157; Brian Stock, "Experience, Praxis, Work, and Planning in Bernard of Clairvaux: Observations on the *Sermones in Cantica*," in *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning*, ed. J. E. Murdoch and E. D. Sylla (Boston, MA: Springer, 1975).

[43] My sense of terminology calls for "literality" here, but as these scholars all use "literacy" I felt compelled to follow their lead, at least in discussing their own work.

[44] Susan Boynton, "Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, ed. George Gerzoco and Carolyn Muessig, 7–20 (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2001), 16.

[45] Susan Boynton, "Oral Transmission of Liturgical Practice in the Eleventh-Century Customaries of Cluny," in *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication*, ed. Steven Vanderputten (Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 67–83.

Eleventh Centuries" focuses on the Cluniac emphasis on the body as the medium through which oblates (children) could be educated by the monks in behavior, discipline, and ritual.[46]

Besides this basic congruence with modern historical research, this understanding of ritual also accords well with, to be frank, what I need the concept to do; that is, develop a resolutely poststructuralist account of just what "it" is that mediates between raw, unindividuated praxis and the larger structures of civilization and reality generally, and how whatever it turns out to be does so. The intellectual and bibliographical context of this account is truly immense, but a brief consideration of three important thinkers on this question will suffice for my purposes. These scholars—Heidegger, Bourdieu, and Foucault—have suggested that practice is, in some sense, the protean substance of reality, preceding such observable phenomena as individuals, ideas, communication, professions, tasks, skills, and so on. Heidegger's concept of Dasein described human being as a complex of means-and-ends that, by its essential activity as such, revealed a whole and continually transforming world, which of course played a reciprocal, that is, constitutive, role in suggesting various means and ends to Dasein. Time, as the perception and performance of the distance between all these various means and ends, was rendered possible by Dasein's essential *lack* of essence, and thus paradoxically unifies Dasein throughout its world by virtue of Dasein's very absence or emptiness.[47] Bourdieu

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[46] Isabelle Cochelin, "Besides the Book: Using the Body to Mould the Mind—Cluny in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, 21–35, esp. 26–30. Other important works on this topic include Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat à Cluny pour les Xe-XIe siècles?" *Revue Mabillon* n.s. 9 (1998): 17–52 and Boynton, *Shaping A Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[47] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1962).

developed this concept into his own of the *habitus*, a set of structuring structures embodied in or through the individual.[48] Foucault, too, proposed a worldview in which practice was organized *into* individuals of a certain type by non-individual institutions, be they prisons, hospitals, schools, or something more abstract and less overt, like a particular worldview, habit, or tradition.

Furthermore, each of these thinkers posits a *mediating arrangement* that, in effect, produces finished products (individuals) from raw materials (pure practice) in a highly-systematized fashion. In the course, and to some extent by the means, of doing so, these arrangements or structures *also* reproduced themselves. For Heidegger, it is *das Man* (the They or the One), something *like* (a) Dasein but far larger and far emptier. The They exists only when, where, and to whatever extent Dasein acts in the modes offered it by the They, as a kind of baseline, unthinking assumption about what Dasein *should* be/do. It is an arrangement of means-and-ends, like Dasein, that can reveal a world, but it is so empty of self-awareness, of real engagement with the world, that this "revealing" is in fact a hiding. The They *anesthetizes* Dasein, solving the troubling question of one's role in the world by showing that world only as obvious, uninteresting, and simple: in other words, as something that makes no demands or claim on Dasein.[49] Bourdieu, too, suggests the *habitus* is strongly determined by a wide range of institutions that come to fruition in it, while Foucault, for his part, considers modern disciplinarity as a new attempt to make people—bodies—into particular kinds of useful tools or conduits for a

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[48] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Standford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 52–66.

[49] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 163–168.

depersonalized power.[50] Indeed, he offers the ultimate metaphor for what all three of these thinkers suggest is the ultimate driver of their mediating, individual-producing arrangements: the panopticon, in which prisoners behave as though they are being watched but never actually are.[51] In a fundamental sense, *no* individual or group of individuals acts: there are only patterns which precede every individual and thus always act from behind, act through, people, in order to reproduce themselves.[52]

Bourdieu, and especially Foucault, in the course of elaborating their though, brought Heidegger into conversation with another unlikely tradition: that of Marxism. Marx suggested that the capitalist ultimately served not himself, but the abstract principle or phenomenon of *capital*. At the basis of Marx's thought were not capitalists as actors in control of history, exploiting the proletariat, pursuing their own ends, but the inhuman force of capital which used the bourgeoisie to increase itself no less than it used the proletariat for that same purpose. This idea would be developed more fully by such thinkers as Althusser, who served as a mentor to the young Foucault, and who attempted to thematize and describe ideology through his concept of Ideological State Apparatuses: cultural forms, habits of thought, and institutions of social training integral to reproducing the relations (means, conditions) of production. Althusser defined ideology as "a *representation* of the imaginary relations of individuals to their real conditions of

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[50] Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, ibid; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed., trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1995; Fr. original published in 1975), 135–141.

[51] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 195–230.

[52] Frits Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual," *Numen* 26 (1979), 2–22.

existence."[53] He further argues that ideology is in all senses material, in that it inhabits material institutions, individuals, practices, and objects, and that through its institutions it creates the possibility of agency in individual subjects. Literally, ideology is a set of embodied relations that, through their embodiment in individuals, recreate themselves continuously in new individuals—an individual being that which exists only to the extent that it serves as a conduit for (the) ideology in this way.

In summarizing these three thinkers on this topic, we have come across terms such as "professions," "tasks," "skills," "institutions," "disciplinarity/discipline," "cultural forms," and "social training." This nebulous terminological field refers primarily to prescribed behaviors, involving movements of the body, speech and discourse, the manipulation of non-linguistic signs, and mental or emotional states or postures. By "prescribed," I mean that their *forms*, the specific way-they-are-done/said/felt, is established and stipulated outside and independent of the individual. We are not to do this or that in whatever way we prefer or decide, but in a way that is given to us.[54] To include ritual, at least when understood as a form of training, rather than abstractly denotative or symbolic behavior, as a member of this category (this category carrying along with it all the broader theoretical context just discussed) is no particularly strange intellectual move. In doing so, we avoid the two-level, colonialist problem. We

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[53] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation," accessed at http://marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm on April, 27th 2012. Translated by Ben Brewster, first published in 1970. Emphasis my own.

[54] Obviously a veritable abyss of questions about free will and constructivism opens beneath us here; let us bridge it by saying these actions are *generally accepted*, quite consciously by many social actors, as prescribed. We *recognize* them as such. Thus even if we are truly and entirely determined puppets or whatever sort, we may distinguish between what we do and do not recognize as prescribed.

side-step the mind/body split. We begin to clarify what ritual is and how it works. And perhaps we approach Buc's "more complex configuration of agency and conviction."

There is one more body of work to discuss in the course of developing my definition of ritual as an analytic. Heidegger, Bourdieu, and Foucault all rejected the clean modernist splits between mind and body, spirit and matter, and subject and object. But though all seemed to grasp the major implications these rejections bore for the operation and use of signs, and for the philosophy of such, none devoted much work explicitly to developing and establishing these implications. For this, we should turn to the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, John Deely, and semiotic anthropology.

This development presents no great intellectual challenge, for R. J. Parmentier and Webb Keane, two major semiotic anthropologists, treat the concept of ritual quite openly. Parmentier, discussing the work of founding semiotic anthropologist Michael Silverstein in order to outline the approaches and assumptions of the subfield, first argues that, *as actually encountered in daily life*, language is much more, and much more often, indexical than it is symbolic.[55] This is to say that, while words considered abstractly are the main metaphor for Peirce's third type of signifying, that of the symbol, in that they refer by convention to some other concept, it is far more common for words to be used with a heavy or dominant indexical element. He quotes Silverstein as follows:

But it is precisely at the level of pragmatics that the coding of seemingly arbitrary chunks of referential 'reality' becomes clear. For *lexical items* are abbreviations

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[55] Parmentier, "Theoretical Foundations of Semiotic Anthropology," 16–19.

for *semantic complexes* made up of semantico-referential primes in grammatical

constructions . . . *together with* all of the *indexical modalities* of meaning that

make the functional result unexpected."[56]

There is a wealth of specialized terminology at work here, but the essential point is that

words and the longer discursive units they comprise, when instantiated in specific

speech-acts ("pragmatics" refers to the circumstances and nature of such instantiations)

rather than merely contemplated as examples in the linguist, semiotician, or philosopher's

study, depend so much upon the nested layers of context in which they necessarily appear

(of the individual speaker and listener, of immediate time and place, of social position

including race, class, gender, etc., of linguistic register as well as of language, of

historical period, and so on) that their signifying operation is always crucially indexical.

The saying imputed to Louis XIV, "l'état, c'est moi," presents a simple example: just as

"moi," a personal pronoun and thus obviously an index, could theoretically refer to

anyone but in fact (in context) refers quite specifically to Louis and Louis alone, so too

does "l'état," which, again theoretically, could mean "state" as referred to in, say, twenty-

first-century French political theory, in fact refers to "state" as conceived in the

seventeenth century, more specifically as conceived in seventeenth-century France, and

yet more specifically as conceived in the mind of Louis XIV himself. The point of all this

is not to deny, of course, a more general, abstract, symbolic meaning to words; rather, it

is that, while words do indeed possess the capacity for such meaning (and could not

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[56] Ibid., 18, quoting Silverstein, "Shifters, Linguistic Categories and Cultural Description," 51.

function if they did not), in the vast majority of cases in which any given word is actually encountered (in the street, in a book, at the movies), it is *not* intended in the full flowering of its potential for context-denying abstraction, but refers principally to some object correlated to it by the actual circumstances of its pragmatic use. In fact, this indexical aspect is vitally necessary as a winnowing of all the possible symbolic signification of words; it is my successful parsing of the indexical aspect of the word "cat" in the sentence "don't let the cat jump onto the counter" that communicates to me to not allow this particular, actually present cat to literally jump onto this very counter.

This point, so concerned with the pragmatics of speech and of semiosis more generally, leads naturally into Silverstein's distinction between pragmatics and semantics, on the one hand, and metapragmatics and metasemantics, on the other.[57] Metapragmatics, the most relevant term for the current discussion, refers to "talk about the pragmatics of speech."[58] Thus if I write something about where Louis XIV was when he said something, especially if that physical context relates to the semiotic act of saying, discuss the volume or tone of his voice, etc., I am discussing metapragmatics (conversely, if I gloss his speech content itself, that is metasemantics). Crucially, while metasemantics maintains a basic congruence with semantics (speaking about speaking is still speaking), the same is not true of metapragmatics, wherein I talk about an action (even though that action is itself using signs, I am discussing it *as an action*, rather than what the signs produced and manipulated in the action refer to or how they refer to it). It is from this conception of metapragmatics that Silverstein's conception of ritual arises:

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[57] Parmentier, "Theoretical Foundations of Semiotic Anthropology," 19–20.

[58] Ibid., 19.

Metapragmatic discourse can take advantage of built-in metapragmatic forms available in the linguistic code . . . or generate complex patterns of linguistic expression, often following specific genre rules, that have implicit metapragmatic force—ritual being the best-known example. Silverstein argues that these 'poetic' (in the Jakobsonian sense) constructions (chants, prayers, oratory, charms, proverbs, liturgies, etc.) often take the form of indexical icons, that is, of diagrammatic signs whose organizational arrangement either resembles the extra-linguistic realities of the situation (the hierarchical order of a ritual procession, for example) or reflexively mirrors the linguistic event, and signal some aspect of the performance context."[59]

Parmentier then quotes Silverstein at length to describe the "poetic function" at work in ritual:

'Poetic function' consists of a set of indexical relationships of utterance-segment to utterance-segment that emerge from a superimposition of cardinal (*not* ordinal) metricality onto denotational text: the denotationally entextualized event being measured out in countable units of specific linguistic characteristics—number of syllables, number of syntactic phrase- or expression-tokens of a particular type,

etc.—every such unit is locatable with respect to every other in the totality, and

the superimposition of many such principles of metricality determines an overall

architectonic structure of the text. . . . From the point of view of regimenting the

event-nature of language-in-use, nonlinguistic context tends toward zero

importance, and linguistic context—co-text—tends toward saturating the relevant

contextual presuppositions on how form-tokens occur in event-segments at this

lowest stratum of metapragmatic-pragmatic relationship. Denotational-text-

internal metrical cohesion of form-tokens thus becomes the determining

regimentation of their discursive event-status, serving in other words as an

implicit metapragmatic function through a special metapragmatic indexicality.[60]

Again, the full dizzying array of semitoic anthropology's Peircean terminology reveals

itself. But the essential point is not too hard to grasp. First, all the various concrete

sayings ("utterance-segments") that make up a given complex of prescribed behavior (a

ritual) as it is actually performed at any particular time bear indexical relations to one

another *because* of their explicit co-existence in the ritual as such.[61] The ritual thus

operates as a kind of map, charting the various (again, primarily indexical) interrelations

of the utterances. This particular observation builds on the basic structuralist or linguistic

point that statements take some of their meaning from the conversation or other extended

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[60] Parmentier, "Theoretical Foundations of Semiotic Anthropology," 20–21, quoting Silverstein "Metapragmatic Discourse and Metapragmatic Function," in *Reflexive Language: Reported Speech and Metapragmatics*, ed. J. A. Lucy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 50–51.

[61] Remember that indices signify through correspondence or correlation; in the example of a ritual, the various "utterance-segments" that make up the ritual are obviously indexical to one another in that they occur together as part of the ritual

unit of discourse in which they are encountered: in effect, though the *individual* texts

performed in the various utterance-segments of a ritual may have *originally* been

composed quite independently, merely by speaking these texts in close proximity, and

especially within the special realm of the ritual, they are posited as commentary on or

response to one another.[62] Through the carefully established distinctions between these

different segments (in the Latin monastic context, for example, between a psalm and an

antiphon or respond, or between a homily and a passage of scripture), as well as through

other particular aspects of their delivery (meter, melody, different speakers), the precision

of the ritual-as-map is increased many times over; the resolution is increased as

individual segments and subsegments and sub-subsegments become clearly

distinguished. Ultimately, then, the ritual not only functions as a map or guide to the

abstract arrangement of the texts that comprise it, but, as a complex of these texts, even

governs specifically the concrete saying (and doing) of the actual performers involved in

any (and every) particular instantiation of the ritual. That is, the ritual provides an

"implicit metapragmatic function": at least in the (theoretically authoritative, ethically

imperative) case of the ritual, it suggests or demands that each speaker and actor should

speak or act at a certain way and a certain time, perhaps with a certain mental state or

posture, and with a cognizance also of where their utterance/performance-segment should

emerge within a field of others.

Understood in this sense, ritual is not merely training, but training in the use of

signs, in metapragmatics. It can thus be taken also as instruction in what the

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[62] For an example/discussion of this process in monastic liturgical practice, see Boynton, *Shaping A Monastic Identity*, 64–105.

contemporary semiotic anthropologist Webb Keane has called "semiotic ideology." Over

the course of many works, but most systematically and straightforwardly in his

"Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things," Keane deploys Peircean

semiotics to develop both the *historicity* and plurality of semiosis.[63] In his view Peirce's

semiotics is particularly vital for this point because it brings semiosis or sign-functioning

into direct contact with the physical, material, historical world. It does this both by

concentrating much attention on the actual concrete situations in which signs operate, and

also developing a detailed account of *how signs signify*, one which, unlike the Saussurean

semiology that has been so influential in the twentieth century, does not bracket off the

particular function of individual signs in favor of an abstract account of *langue*.[64]

Keane begins by considering the qualisign. The qualisign is a "quality" as it

functions as a sign.[65] It requires embodiment, but the terms of this embodiment are *not*

essentially related to the signifying of the qualisign. The most common example is a

color. Red is obviously a quality objects might possess, and as a quality may signify (thus

becoming a qualisign) wide ranges of other objects or ideas; yet, of course, red is never

encountered entirely on its own, but must appear as paint on a house, the skin of an apple,

and so on. This means that the qualisign in itself is "unrealized potential," for because it

cannot even *exist* on its own it certainly cannot function as an actual sign on its own. It

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[63] Webb Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things," *Language & Communication* 23 (2003): 409–425.

[64] Ibid., 412–413.

[65] The qualisign is part of Peirce's trio of trichotomies of signs. The first concerns the relationship of the sign (or sign-vehicle) to itself, and includes qualisigns, sinsigns, and a legisign. The second, which I have discussed already, concerns how the sign relates to its *object*: an icon refers "merely by virtues of a characters of its own," while an idex refers "by virtue of being really affected by that Object," and the symbol refers "by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas" (i.e., convention). Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic," 101.

thus always requires some instantiation in—or "bundling" with—*other* qualities. This

means that there is always some semiotic bleed-through occurring, wherein the signifying

of the redness of the apple becomes bound up and even confused with the signifying of

the apple's edibility, its growing on trees, and/or its cultural association with the story of

Snow White. Moreover, the qualisign as a qualisign can only ever be an icon, never an

index or a symbol: the color red signifies, when it signifies, by appearing red. It thus

signifies by *resemblance*, itself an "underdetermined" mode that virtually always requires

"some degree of conventionality" (in Keane's words) to *actually* signify (that is, to refer

to something beyond just the color red).[66] The key point here is that

> Resemblance can only be with respect to certain features, and therefore usually
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> depends on some degree of conventionality. . . . To determine what features count
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> towards resemblance require some criteria. These involve the articulation of the
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> iconic with other semiotic dimensions—and thus, I would argue, become
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> thoroughly enmeshed with the dynamics of social value and authority.[67]

This is the essence of Keane's point: Peirce's semiotics, both through its highly-

developed account of how signs work in and through discrete events in the material

world, and of how they always refer not only to other signs but in fact consistently leave

an opening or potentiality that *demands* additional signs without stipulating exactly *what*

these signs should be, suggests a powerful role for historical cultural conventions, not

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[66] Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis," 414–415.

[67] Ibid., 415.

only in the operation of symbols, that is, in abstract contexts of intellectual reflection, but *also* in the operation of icons and indices, and thus in the myriad of unconscious, reflexive, momentary sign-uses that comprise day-to-day experience. Keane next uses an interesting comparison of Marx's concept of labor and Bourdieu's of connoisseurship, in Peircean terms, to develop this point in relation to indices: in both cases, objects (either of labor or of the connoisseur's appraisal/enjoyment) are shown to be most powerful in the phenomenon of naturalization. That is, rather than being commonly understood as products of habituated experience *mediated through* the individual as, for example, habitus, these objects are taken to be *expressions* of some innate quality of the worker or connoisseur. This is a certain stance on these objects as indices, then, which quite obviously supports specific notions of class and ideology.[68]

The meaning of "semiotic ideology" thus becomes apparent: Keane defines it as "basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world."[69] If this sounds like an issue only for intellectual elites, Keane is quick to point out the implications such a ideology possesses: "It determines, for instance, what people will consider the role that intentions play in signification to be, what kinds of possible agent . . . exist to which acts of signification might be imputed, whether signs are arbitrarily or necessarily linked to their objects, and so forth."[70] I would even go further; besides questions of intentionality, agency, and subjectivity and objectivity, which have immense impacts on all aspects of individual and social life, the way that we understand, especially

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[68] Ibid., 415–417.

[69] Ibid., 419.

[70] Ibid.

pre- or unconsciously, signs to operate will determine at the very most basic level how we collect and integrate information about the world. Such an ideology is the most immediate and intimate structure thrown over experience, and will echo upwards from the individual moment or event, through the individual itself, and into all manner of groups, traditions, and explicit ideologies. Therefore, the notion of semiotic ideology offers us a blueprint for studying material and cultural phenomena, through a fully historicist lens, in their fundamental and irreducible integration. If it is possible to move beyond the modernist epistemological paradigm of radically divided matter and spirit, without sacrificing all we have learned, and into a truly informed historical materialism, this is the way.

With all this said, it may seem presumptuous to call the following definition of ritual "mine"—I do so not to claim the insights that have informed it or whatever value it might have as my property, but only to take responsibility for my own readings and the analytic that has resulted. If my definition does truly offer anything of its own, it is likely a particular grouping and configuration of the various ideas and approaches I have just discussed. Without further ado, I present the following formal definition of ritual:

a complex unit of signifying behavior (or "sign-uses"), often involving multiple participants, set aside from the day-to-day business of living, which has the side-effect of distinguishing and (re)creating a community and, depending on the often adversarial interactions of various institutions and individuals, sometimes of communicating some message.

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This definition obviously involves some hedges and, in some ways, suggests certain problematic notions I have challenged in the foregoing discussion. I will address these briefly.

My discussions of Peircean semiotics and semiotic anthropology, hopefully, have made clear just how large the distinction is between, on the one hand, "signifying behavior" and signification in general, and, on the other, a symbolic message rendered in linguistic terms. The latter is but one small subset of the former. So it bears repeating that while my definition of ritual *can* accommodate the decoder ring approach to ritual, translating observed pageantry into axiomatic statements about reality, society, power, transcendence, etc., it does not assume that the event/behavior studied as ritual will be amendable to such an analysis—in fact it assumes that vanishingly few will be. At the same time, however, analysis of rituals in accord with my definition may often involve a great deal of what could be *mistaken* for such translation. Peircean semiotics are neither intuitive nor widely integrated into the perception and thinking of either laymen or scholars, and so discussing a certain element of ritual signifying behavior, for example, in its iconicity or as a dicent indexical legisign, may resemble translating the element into a new, "truer" formulation. But the essence of this analysis is not to say what a ritual means, but to expand and deepen our understanding of what it *does*, and of precisely *how* it signifies. And "complex" here means only that the ritual is divisible into many individually coherent and theoretically independent texts and acts; it does not establish any minimum bar of complexity, conventionally understood, for the identification of social phenomena as ritual.

This definition may also appear to contravene Talal Asad in its reference to behavior "set aside from the day-to-day business of living." I have not gone so far as to say that ritual behavior is not useful or pragmatic, that it does not accomplish anything or is not concerned with whether or not it accomplishes everything. Yet I am not comfortable completely rejecting the "opposition" of ritual behavior to "the instrumental behavior of everyday life." In most examples of ritual that spring to mind, from early medieval crownings to US presidents swearing their oath of office, there are some important behavioral elements that are not directly related to accomplishing pragmatic or instrumental tasks. Moreover, in various ways, participants in and observers of rituals often allow that what they are doing is not a common or everyday task. It is special, set aside as its own task, even if the precise nature of this setting aside is not really thematized by participants. It would be very interesting to observe and interview an elderly Russian woman, for example, as she goes out to the street market, does her shopping, and, on the way home, ducks into a small church to pray before a sequence of lavishly decorated icons, perhaps kneeling before them, kissing them, lighting candles, and making a monetary donation. How does her behavior reinforce or undermine the idea that one stop on this itinerary is not like the others? What would she say if the question were put to her? I do not claim to know, but I am willing to venture some trace of a distinction, at least, would suggest itself in her unreflective behavior, or in asking her to discuss that behavior, or both. Obviously this particular issue remains murky; it is probably the one about which I am the most undecided; so I have left this part of the definition, *to an extent*, underdetermined. I hope that my research and that of others can help to clarify the matter.

The question of the relationship between ritual and community, too, is interesting and not decisively answered. As in the case of pragmatic versus special or useless behavior, I am left with my general sense that most rituals gather people together within a specific, solemn event, and that most rituals involve special officiants, sometimes of several different types or ranks. I would not say that the *purpose* of the ritual is to establish or maintain (the) community, for this supposes too cynical and instrumental an intention for the actual people conducting the affair. It seems more likely that rituals require communities, and perhaps play some role in perpetuating and maintaining them. In this sense it would not be that the ritual does exists for the sake of the community, but that the community exists for the sake of the ritual.[71] Like the rest of my definition, these remain preliminary hypotheses. Finally, the last element of the definition, concerning conflicting efforts to propagate particular interpretations of rituals, whether roughly contemporaneously the their performance or not, should not require further comment. In including it, I agree essentially with Buc and Pössel about the contested, post hoc propagation of accounts of ritual and its conduct, success, and failure.

My definition of ritual, therefore, is based on a postructuralist conception both of society and reality generally. This account has been leavened with Peircean semiotics, especially as developed by semiotic anthropology and John Deely. This second tradition of thought, in my view, accords fundamentally with the metaphysics of postructuralism but has yet to be fully integrated with it; even today poststructuralism maintains at least a ghost or unconscious habit of the cultural/material distinction, as suggested by Webb

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[71] Though not precisely Staal's formulation, his article "The Meaninglessness of Ritual" was crucial to my own insight in this matter.

Keane and my own brief discussions above.[72] Peircean semiotics addresses this lingering modernist metaphysics by bringing the functioning of signs into contact with the material and the particular. Within this blend, ritual serves as a key example of the various types of processes by which raw praxis or semiosis is structured into what we more commonly recognize as individuals, communities, institutions, ideologies, and so on: into self-sustaining, structuring structures. To study ritual in this sense, then, is to study the elemental self-fashioning of everything human.

A final note: while this definition of ritual is intended to be broadly applicable, by which I mean I hope that other scholars will feel inclined to test or at least consider its value outside European, Christian, medieval, and monastic contexts, it is not strictly static. Human self-fashioning in its social totality is a highly complex process, and ritual is only one part of this fashioning; there is thus a range of variances within the different components of my definition that will have important effects on how rituals actually function in various contexts. The tension between these variances and the notion of a single analytic broadly applicable across historical contexts is an elemental one for human inquiry generally, and is to be sought and heightened rather than avoided. In the case of my project, a key part of this definition is its flexibility in particular as regards the *medium* of ritual. There are many ways of conceptualizing what the medium of ritual may be. I focus particularly on the dialectical and semiotic process whereby raw praxis or experience is synthesized into individuals, and specifically as mapped onto the spectrum that runs from orality to literality. As discussed previously, preliminary research from

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[72] Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis," 409–411.

several different fields has suggested—and to some extent substantiated—the idea that consciousness in a neurological sense may be restructured by movement along this spectrum; in short, that individuals and groups living in highly literalate societies may think and even behave, preconsciously as well as in reflective awareness, in a fundamentally different way from those living in primarily oral ones. What this means for my definition is that the media whereby ritual is transmitted, and moreover the role within ritual played by different media, may exercise a decisive effect in how ritual does what it does, that is, form communities and train both individuals and groups in the use of signs. My project is thus to relate the broader theoretical conception of ritual I have presented here to both the specific media technologies and institutional setting of Latin monasticism and to Christian theology and the understanding of text and of writing it included. I will demonstrate that many key elements of Christian theology, as developed in the Latin realm, were quite extensively bound up with written texts as such, and moreover that the Latin monastic tradition, at least by the tenth and eleventh century, explicitly understood itself as a discipline and training in the use of signs. This interplay between theology and ritual, sharing a basic conception of and approach to text and writing and, crucially, located within a specific institutional setting, produced a distinctive semiotic ideology. My suspicion, which for openness's sake I will share but cannot at this time even begin to substantiate, is that this particular semiotic ideology has been absolutely decisive for European, Christian civilization—that is, for the West— especially in the development of the complex of technologies, behaviors, and ideologies that we call modernity. Such grandiose claims obviously lie well beyond the scope of my project; my work here in describing this semiotic ideology and the specific history of its

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appearance and spread, wherein high medieval monasticism played a decisive role, is

merely a first step.

CHAPTER IV: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Because my project takes Cluny as a case study for the development of literate culture and power, in a certain sense Cluny itself is not really the subject. Nevertheless, a short consideration of the historiography of the great Burgundian monastery is certainly in order.[1] I first present what Dominique Iogna-Prat calls the "received history" of Cluny (this nomenclature evincing his caution or even skepticism towards the narrative), before surveying briefly some of the key debates into which that history has been drawn.

Cluny was founded in 909 or 910 by William III (the Pious), a great magnate of Auvergne, Mâcon, and Aquitaine, referred to in contemporary documents variously as count, duke, and prince. William gave the monastery a *villa* near Mâcon, renounced all rights over it, and gave it over to the protection of the pope. In addition to this, the community was to have the privilege of electing its own abbot upon the death of Berno, the holy man (already abbot of several communities) established as its first leader by William himself. The monastery was blessed with a series of prestigious and active abbots, who, benefitting from a succession of key papal privileges, became patrons of monastic reform throughout Francia, Italy, and Spain. These abbots also presided over a great run of donations in land that made the monastery, by the end of the tenth century,

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[1] For this consideration, I have found long essays by Barbara Rosenwein and Dominique Iogna-Prat surveying the vast body of Cluniac scholarship especially useful. See Rosenwein, "The Lineage of Cluniac Studies," in *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 3–29 and Iogna-Prat, "A Monastic Church within the Church," in *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000–1150)*, trans. Graham Edward Roberts (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002; Fr. original published 1998), 23–95.

the possessor of a truly immense estate as well as of numerous parish churches. In the early eleventh century, the monastery began to produce an increasingly coherent body of abbatial hagiography, which provided an ideological core for the nascent community while also embellishing and advancing the prestige of the office of its abbot. Additional papal bulls slowly expanded the sense of a juridically distinct *Ecclesia cluniacensis*, building on the foundation provided by decades of reform leadership exercised in and through other monasteries. Especially under the abbacy of Hugh I (the Great, of Semur), who served from 1049 to 1109, the property rights and observances of the community were codified in cartularies (collections of charters) and customaries (written elaborations on the Rule as observed at a particular house).

The expansion of Cluny's privileges, under the aegis of the popes, as well as of its territorial sway, driven by the prestige and charisma of its abbots, played a major role in the extension of reform ideas about the independence of church offices and property from lay elites, not to mention the independence of monasteries from bishops. Especially in the latter half of the eleventh century, the monastery's community grew vastly in size and its geographical reach—its role in the foundation and reform of other houses—extended beyond West Francia and Italy, into *reconquista* Spain, England, and the emerging Holy Roman Empire. The monastery also participated in reform in high politics (Hugh of Semur operated as an intermediary between Henry IV and Gregory VIII at Canossa), and provided many candidates for reform episcopacies, the new Gregorian *curia*, and even the papacy itself in the person of Urban II. During the abbacy of Pontius of Melgueil (1109–1122), Cluny underwent some kind of still poorly understood "schism," likely rooted both in the local politics of castellan families and the monastery's own

surrounding burg as well as in the grand intrigues of the papacy and continental reform. The monastery was also challenged in the early twelfth century by the lively counter-example—and criticism—of new reformed monastic orders, chiefly the Cistercians. These communities took exception to several aspects of the Cluniac life, including the richness and grandiosity of the monastery and its various churches and subordinates, its emphasis on the liturgy to the diminishment or omission of physical labor, and its strict use of silence and sign language. The Cistercians also presented a new model of organization for their many houses, based on councils (general chapters) of representatives from all their constituent communities meeting regularly, which contrasted sharply with the still rather ad hoc, personal, or even abbatial absolutist Cluniac model of leadership. Ultimately, however, especially under the abbacy of Peter the Venerable (1122–1156), Cluny returned to internal harmony, reorganized its finances and material base, and laid the foundations for a successful imitation of these new organizational innovations, to be itself realized only in the first years of the thirteenth century.

This account, the work of many hands over many decades, has more recently been called into question (as is the fashion of our times) as too pat, too self-assured, too teleological, accepting scattered polemical or ideological declarations from the period in question as unambiguous statements of fact and exaggerating innovations and uniqueness. A complete, systematic, "reformed" account of the history of Cluny during its first three centuries has not yet appeared,[2] and one might reasonably wonder if such an

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[2] Dietrich W. Poeck's *Cluniacensis Ecclesia: Der cluniacensische Klosterverband (10.–12 Jahrhundert)* (Munich, Germany: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998), which combines a nuanced discussion of the nature of Cluniac association with close analysis of the relevant papal bulls and a detailed catalogue of houses

account could possibly find acceptance among those who call for it, or at least whose work has problematized the older, retrograde narrative. For now, for my purposes—which are certainly not to produce such a reformed account, but rather to study the play and development of certain modes of thought, training, perception, and power observable within the nebulous context of "Cluny"—it is no great challenge to operate in this broken, fluid, fertile field.

This "received history" emerged through more than a century of professional historians grappling with the concept and source record of Cluny. These scholars often struggled over the validity and preeminence of various key distinctions, the stratigraphy of which remains illuminating. Sometimes, these distinctions center on the regional or even national identity of Cluny; along these lines historians have argued that the monastery, as part of the Catholic Church, brought light to the darkness and barbarism of the Middle Ages,[3] or that it hindered the consolidation of the Holy Roman Empire and, by extension, the German national state,[4] or that it and the Lotharingian monastery of Gorze represented alternate models of reform competing for influence and allegiance across the former Carolingian patrimony in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[5] Other debates have concerned Cluny's relationship to the predominant historiographical

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attached to Cluny, probably comes closest. Along these lines see also Joachim Wollasch, *Cluny—Licht der Welt: Aufstieg und Niedergang der klösterlichen Gemeinschaft* (Dusseldorf, Germany: Artemis & Winkler, 1996).

[3] Prosper Lorain, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Cluny depuis sa fondation jusqu'à sa destruction à l'époque de la Révolution française* (Paris, France: 1839); François Cucherat, *Cluny au onzième siècle, son influence religieuse, intellectuell et politique* (Mâcon, France: 1850); J. Henri Pignot, *Histoire de l'Ordre de Cluny depuis la fondation d'abbaye jusqu'à la mort de Pierre-le-Vénérable (909–1157)* (Autun, France: 1868).

[4] Albert Brackmann "Die politische Wirkung der Kluniazensischen Bewegung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 139 (1929): 34–47.

[5] Kassius Hallinger, *Gorze–Kluny. Studien zu den Monastischen Lebensformen und Gegensätzen im Hochmittelalter*, 2 vols. (Rome, Italy: Herder, 1950)

constructs of its age, primarily reform and the rise of the (Gregorian) papacy,[6] as well as the vexed question of feudalism, feudal culture, feudal society, and so on.[7] And still others have wrestled with the assumed tension between worldly engagement—primarily in politics, power, and property—and religious doctrine, culture, and spirituality at play in the history of the monastery.[8]

If many, or even all, of these distinctions seem crudely drawn to the postmodern historian, it bears remembering that they are the work of scholars who possessed real expertise and who worked closely with the source material, often over the courses of entire lifetimes. The key, therefore, sometimes lost in the essentially youthful blush of revisionism and deconstruction, is not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. In the spirit of the idiom, therefore, I will now review the most important of these distinctions (that is, those with the greatest enduring purchase on the existing scholarship), showing both their missteps and what they still contribute today to a study of Cluny—specifically, to *my* study of Cluny.

Because my project studies Cluny's institutional and cultural role in the history of media technologies and their application to the exercise of power, I focus here on Cluny's relationship to other monasteries and to the individuals it, as an institution, encountered

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[6] H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1970).

[7] Ernst Wener, *Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Kolsterreform im 11. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, Germany: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1953); Georges Duby, *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconaise* (Paris, France: Armand Colin, 1953).

[8] Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. M. W. Baldwin and W. Goffart (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977; Gr. original published 1935), esp. 68–72; Erdmann, "Das ottonische Reich als Imperium Romanum," *Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte des Mittelalters* 6 (1943): 412–441; Gerhart Ladner, *Theologie und Politik vor dem Investiturstreit. Abendmahlstreit, Kirchenreform, Cluni und Heinrich III* (Baden, Austria: R. M. Roher, 1936); Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State, and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*, trans. R. F. Bennett (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1966; Gr. original published 1936).

both within and beyond itself (that is, both monks and laymen). From this perspective, the greatest historiographical issue is obviously "reform," an immense term and concept that, particularly in terms of historiography, exists in an interesting parallel to the ultimate bugbear of medievalists, feudalism.[9] Both are ways of grappling with and categorizing social (as well as political, economic, and cultural) change or rupture. Both have provided key demarcations for the periodizing of the high Middle Ages.[10] Moreover, the two have often been related in various ways, sometimes as complimentary but more often as opposing trends at work across medieval civilization as a whole.[11] And both have been challenged, in recent decades, as overly systematic and as too credulous in the face of the polemic, ideology, and topoi purportedly at work in the primary source record.[12]

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[9] This concept was employed fruitfully and with relatively little controversy by an earlier generation of medievalists, most famously Marc Bloch in his *La société féodale*, 2 vols. (Paris, France: Albin Michel, 1939). Georges Duby inagurated a new understanding or use of the term, particularly as a revolution or major social rupture in south-central France during the later tenth century. See his *La société*, cited above. After a wave of regional studies supporting, qualifying, and expanding this account, the concept began to receive significant pushback. The two great counter-works in this regard are Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe," *The American Historical Review* 79 (1974): 1063–1088 and Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[10] See Dominique Barthélemy's insightful historiographical essay with which he opens his *The Serf, the Knight, and the Historian*, trans. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univeristy Press, 2009; Fr. original published 1997), 1–11.

[11] For a more nuanced account, and one focused on Cluny's role, see Rosenwein, *Rhinocerous Bound*.

[12] See chiefly Barthelemy's *The Serf, The Knight, and The Historian*. See also Elisabeth Mangou-Nortier, "The Enemies of the Peace: Reflections on a Vocabulary, 500–1100," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France Around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas F. Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 58–79. For the debate itself over feudalism, see the exchange in *Past & Present*: Dominique Barthélemy and Stephen D. White, "The 'Feudal Revolution,'" *Past & Present* 152 (1996): 196–223; Thomas Bisson, "The 'Feudal Revolution': Reply," *Past & Present* 155 (1997): 208–225; Timothy Reuter and Chris Wickham, "The 'Feudal Revolution,'" *Past & Present* 155 (1997): 177–208. Thomas Bisson's *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), a sometimes perplexing work that nevertheless demands (and greatly rewards) prolonged engagement, both defends and, to some extent, revises the notion of a feudal revolution or mutation.

The very entrance of Cluny into the realm of serious, modern historical study came through the question of monastic and especially Gregorian Reform. In the 1890s, the German historian Ernst Sackur became the first professional historian to write a history of Cluny making extensive use of the primary source material that had been first gathered in the seventeenth century by the Maurists.[13] For Sackur, Cluny had been the central force in the formation of a new culture, and even a "general renaissance," predominantly through its role in the reform of monasteries. This reform was primarily concerned with renewed or increased adherence to the Rule of Saint Benedict, and the general imitation of a "Cluniac model." In the later eleventh century, Cluny's role shifted from one of leadership to ideological (or "spiritual") support of the Gregorian papacy and its, in Sackur's view, essentially political reform of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Sackur also, driven by his commitment to the actual sources, argued that Cluny's influence in East Francia, the emerging Holy Roman Empire, had been greatly exaggerated. In making this point, he proposed the Lotharingian abbey of Gorze as an alternative or rival to Cluny, suggesting that it had led reform within the Empire and thereby created its own great network of affiliated monastic communities.

Though Sackur was immediately challenged by a number of more localized studies, his framework persisted into the middle of the twentieth century, when it was taken up and elaborated famously by Kassius Hallinger in his huge and controversial

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[13] Ernst Sackur, *Die Cluniacenser in ihrer kirchlichen und allgemeingeschichtlichen Wirksamkeit bis zur Mitte des elften Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Halle, Germany: 1892–1894). For the Maurist project, see Marc Saurette, "Excavating and Renovating Ancient Texts: Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century editions of Bernard of Cluny's *Consuetudines* and Early-Modern Monasti Scholarship," *From Dead of Night to End of Day: The Medieval Customs of Cluny*, ed. Susan Boynton and Isabelle Cochelin, Disciplina Monastica 3 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 85–108.

Gorze–Kluny.[14] Hallinger greatly expanded Sackur's sense of the two monasteries as alternate centers of reform and reform networks into a fundamental dichotomy determining a wide variety of social phenomena, including economic and material relations as well as liturgical, intellectual, and spiritual positions. He even suggested these two rival networks as evidence of or foundation for the divide between French West and German East. In his view, from the start the two centers had elaborated at least somewhat institutionalized reform programs, which were quickly adapted to the demands and assumptions of lay nobles and the reform parties ensconced within the territorial or secular church structure. Gorze and Cluny thus became potent ideological foundries, arsenals for the two great combatants in the Investiture Controversy, the Holy Roman Empire and the Gregorian Papacy respectively.

As in the case of Sackur, this thesis was quickly criticized as overly systematic and predicated on a far too rigidly drawn distinction. But it is only since the 1980s, that "reform," and especially large, well-defined monastic "orders" before the mid- or late twelfth century, have been brought under explicit and sustained assault as historiographic constructs out of touch with the evidentiary base.[15] Even today, new, important, and acclaimed works citing *Gorze-Kluny* uncritically in order to discuss high medieval monastic may be found.[16] Ironically, it was another monumental contribution to the

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[14] Hallinger, *Gorze–Kluny*.

[15] For good modern overviews of reform in medieval monastic historiography, see *Monastische Reformen im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. Raymund Kottje and Helmut Maurer (Sigmaringen, Germany: Jan Thorbecke, 1989); *Ecclesia in medio nationis. Reflections on the Study of Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. Steven Vanderputten and Brigitte Meijns (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2011); *Mittelalterliche Orden und Klöster im Vergleich: Methodische Ansätze und Perspektiven*, ed. Gert Melville and Anne Muller (Berlin, Germany: LIT, 2007).

[16] Jehangir Yezdi Malegam, *The Sleep of Behemoth: Disputing Peace and Violence in Medieval Europe, 1000–1200* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 33.

history of medieval monasticism by Hallinger that broke the ground for this *volte-face*. In 1963, Hallinger inaugurated a series of critical editions of monastic customaries, the *Corpus consuetudinem monasticarum*, with a collection of the earliest Cluniac texts.[17] His and subsequent editions of the customaries revealed a bewildering array of variations in monastic practice that did much to undermine the sense of two coherent, dueling traditions, while also revealing many of those variations to be relatively minor and hardly the ammunition for some ideological clash of the titans over the constitution and future of medieval civilization.

The essence of this challenge to reform has naturally precluded the rise of large, overall accounts of Cluny and the network of houses and communities in which it intervened and with which it had important relationships. Nevertheless, a great many scholars have engaged productively with the idea of reform in a high medieval or specifically Cluniac context; these studies, whether seeking to problematize or even overthrow the notion of reform have more, in my view, enriched it even while making it harder to fix. Some studies have challenged and reworked the accepted Cluniac relationship to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the Carolingian monastic reforms of the early ninth century, carried out under the aegis of Benedict of Aniane and Louis the Pious.[18] Others have taken aim in particular at the notion of Cluny and Gorze as coherent, opposed, politically motivated or inspired models of reform.[19] There has also been a

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[17] *Corpus consuetudinem monasticarum*, ed. Kassius Hallinger (Siegburg, Germany: Schitt, 1963–).

[18] Barbara Rosenwein "Rules and the 'Rule' at Tenth-Century Cluny," *Studia Monastica* 19 (1977): 307–320.

[19] Joachim Wollasch, "Neue Methoden der Erforschung des Mönchtums im Mittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift* 225 (1977): 529–571; Barbara Rosenwein, "Reformmönchtum und der Aufstieg Clunys. Webers

recent rash of new work on the customaries, often of Cluny in particular, with important

implications for the question of reform and its nature. These studies have challenged the

notion of customaries as straightforwardly normative or legislative documents, and, even

more importantly, done much to develop our understanding of this crucial monastic genre

in its various stages of historical development.[20] Also quite important to our

understanding of the pragmatic realities of actual instances of reform have been a number

of studies emphasizing local contexts and lay aristocratic involvement.[21] In my view, it is

particularly this last tendency in recent scholarship that has been developed to a very fine

point in the voluminous output of Steven Vanderputten.[22] Though not without alone in

making these points,[23] Vanderputten has developed an especially exhaustive and

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Bedeutung für die Forschung heute," in *Max Webers Sicht des okzidentalen Christentums: Interpretation und Kritik*, ed. Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt, Germany: Suhrkamp, 1988), 276–311.

[20] Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat," Cochelin, "Community and Customs: Obedience or Agency?," in *Obedientia: zu Formen und Grenzen von Macht und Unterordnung im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum*, ed. Sébastien Barret and Gert Melville (Münster, 2005), 229–253; Gert Melville, "Action, Text, and Validity," *From Dead of Night to End of Day*, 67–83.

[21] Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980–1198* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Bouchard, "Merovingian, Carolingian, and Cluniac Monasticism: Reform and Renewal in Burgundy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41 (1990): 365–388; Barbara Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); John Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia c.850–1000* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[22] Steven Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900–1100* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Vanderputten, "Monastic Reform, Abbatial Leadership, and the Instrumentation of Cluniac Discipline in the Early Twelfth-Century Low Countries," *Revue Mabillon* 23 (2012): 41–65; Vanderputten, "Abbatial Obedience, Liturgical Reform, and the Threat of Monastic Autonomy at the Turn of the Twelfth Century," *The Catholic Historical Review* 98 (2012): 241–270; Vanderputten, "How Reform Began: 'Traditional' Monastic Leadership and the Inception of Reform in Late Eleventh-Century Flanders," *Studia Monastica* 53 (2012): 261–281; Vanderputten, "Realities of Reformist Leadership in Early Eleventh-Century Flanders: The Case of Leduin, Arrot of Saint-Vaast," *Traditio* 65 (2010): 47–74, among other articles.

[23] Besides Bouchard and Nightingale, see Anna Trumbore Jones' "Pitying the Desolation of Such a Place: Rebuilding Religious Houses and Constructing Memory in Aquitaine in the Wake of the Viking Incursions," *Viator* 37 (2006): 85–102; Patrick Geary, "Monastic Memory and the Mutation of the Year 1000," in *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society*, ed. Sharon Farmer and Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 19–36.

systematic criticism of the received narratives of reform. Particularly in his *Monastic Reform as Process*, he has shown how careful reconstructions of monastic institutional history are possible. These reconstructions often draw heavily on charters and creative readings of various other sources, both roughly contemporaneous and far subsequent to instances of reform. And they reveal that narrative accounts of rupture, crisis, and intervention by charismatic individuals produced by reformed monasteries are often highly intentional and motivated justifications and defenses of reform.[24]

What understanding of reform have we arrived at, then? The first point should likely be that this term, while not unknown in the vocabulary of the time (*reformare*), was hardly the only or even dominant one used by medievals for the instances and events we moderns mean by it.[25] Thus (second), if we continued to accept this term—and I, while urging due caution and revision, think we should—this means also accepting that its referent is a truly immense phenomenon or series of phenomena, not only touching on a great many highly various aspects of medieval life but also extending throughout Latin Christendom and, temporally, at least from the seventh century onwards.[26] This attention to terminology and to the vast temporal and geographical scope both help to reorient reform not as a single ideological platform and institutional effort, or even as a range of

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[24] Building on these ideas, Vanderputten has also recently offered a detailed analysis of one key personality in early eleventh-century reform, Richard of Saint Vanne. See his *Imagining Religious Leadership in the Middle Ages: Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Politics of Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[25] Julia Barrow, "Ideas and Applications of Reform," in *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith, *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 345–362.

[26] Giles Brown, "Introduction: the Carolingian Renaissance," in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1–52, esp. 6–11.

competing platforms and efforts, but as large and complex set of issues, or even more vaguely, of concerns and assumptions, that remained both vital and contentious in Latin society for centuries. Within the almost anachronistically broad category of "reform," emphases, positions, and alliances shifted and transformed; what endured was the widespread currency of the idea that the culture and institutional arrangement of the church might, and often did, require conscious programs of change. These changes were usually, though not always, conceived of as returns to some superior, if not ideal, past state. And a key addendum here is the breadth and complexity of "the church." As the target of reform or reforms, primarily through its landed interests, the church often involved issues of central import to regional lay elites (the aristocracy), as well as kings, urban communes, and the peasantry.[27] Reform, too, often set bishops, monks, and popes against one another, creating shifting, partial networks of collaboration and competition across all these social and ecclesiastical lines.

Despite the obvious difficulties in doing so, in order to organize the various points and insights I have been reviewing into a rough chronological framework, and thereby contextualize my own project, I will venture a very tentative overall account of the course of reform in Western/Latin medieval history up to the thirteenth century. The key to this account, in my view, is its Carolingian foundations. Like any gesture towards origins, this key is in some ways a simplification, a way of bracketing off certain issues and questions

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[27] Geary "Monastic Memory"; John Howe, "The Nobility's Reform of the Medieval Church," *The American Historical Review* 93 (1988): 317–339; R. I. Moore, "Property, Marriage, and the Eleventh-Century Revolution: A Context for Early Medieval Communism," in *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform*, ed. Michael Frassetto (London, UK: Routledge, 1998), 179–208; Malegam, *The Sleep of Behemoth*; see also several of the essays in Head and Landes, ed., *The Peace of God*.

and of privileging some over others. Obviously Carolingian society had numerous, messily integrated influences. And just as assuredly, some subsequent developments important to high and late medieval history had deep roots not particularly attested by Carolingian sources. These caveats aside, I believe that the "widespread currency" of the idea of reform, as invoked above, took its main impetus from the quite explicit, central devotion of Carolingian elites to the idea that the church must be repaired, corrected, and renovated.[28] Moreover, this was not merely an explicit, that is, "intellectual" or "cultural" impetus; in my reading, several important scholars have shown that the composition of Carolingian society—and especially of Carolingian government power—set the stage for the definitive conflicts of the eleventh century. These were, especially in West Francia, those associated with the concept of feudalism (an analytic which, unlike reform, I do not favor) and, especially in East Francia, those associated with the so-called Investiture Controversy.[29]

Both of these great conflicts were the result of aspects of a Carolingian system that, over the course of that system's disintegration or devolution, had collapsed into schism and contradiction. Put simply, the poorly defined, or even perhaps largely nonexistent, distinction between laity and clergy in Carolingian times allowed the Karlings to direct and even reform "the church" from within. Lacking this strict distinction, it was perfectly acceptable for a king or emperor to appoint a bishop or abbot and for a bishop or abbot to lack holy orders and operate personally and professionally

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[28] Brown, "Introduction,"; Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[29] Maureen C. Miller, "The Crisis in the Investiture Crisis Narrative," *History Compass* 7 (2009): 1570–1580.

more as a warrior or landowner than as a monk or priest.[30] Use of church property for the

maintenance and defense of the realm, similarly, was no great transgression.[31] Similarly,

the Carolingian rulers themselves operated through a complex and subtle collaboration

with and manipulation of local elites and local politics.[32] This was neither a subjugation

of nor a delegation to local authorities, but a sophisticated network of consultation, often

making key use of written documents and specially-appointed representatives known as

missi, that mobilized pre-existing and at least theoretically independent local patronage

networks to accomplish imperial policy.

In the broadest sense, the break-up of the Carolingian Empire was hardly

accidental, let alone surprising. Charlemagne intended to divide his massive patrimony

among his descendants, and he did so.[33] This gave many local powers a choice between

multiple distant patrons, a freedom their own forebears had not known under

Charlemagne, which enabled them to play these patrons off against one another.[34] By the

tenth century, the dynasty itself was reduced to intermittent kingship in West Francia,

while in the east, in the emerging Holy Roman Empire, it had been entirely supplanted by

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[30] Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 7 vols. (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 2:622–653.

[31] Mangou-Nortier, "The Enemies of the Peace," Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight, and the Historian*; Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13–50.

[32] Innes, *State and Society*; Innes, "Charlemagne's Government," in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), 71–89; Rosamond McKitterick, "Charlemagne's *Missi* and Their Books," in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. Stephen Baxter et al. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 253–267; McKitterick, "Court and Communication in the Early Middle Ages: the Frankish Kingdom under Chalremagne," in *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: europäische Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser (Vienna, Austria: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2009). See also McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[33] McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation*, 96–105.

[34] Innes, *State and Society*, 202–251.

a series of capable local dynasties. Central power remained strong, or at least stronger,

there (not coincidentally through a closer integration of royal/imperial and

clerical/ecclesiastical power, which in turn set the state for the Investiture Controvery),[35]

while in the west it appears to have slowly atrophied and devolved rather naturally to

various powerful regional magnates forging ad hoc networks of patronage and aping what

they understood to be the Carolingian ideal. These magnates may well have seen

themselves as fulfilling their duty—again, understood in a basic if vague sense as public

and Carolingian—rather than as taking the opportunity for "independence."[36] This ideal

included both the patronage of the church and the use of monasteries as organs of power;

accordingly, one of these magnates, William the Pious of Aquitaine, founded the

monastery of Cluny. Like many of the post-Carolingian lords, he achieved a great power

and prominence in life that he proved unable (if he had ever even nurtured the ambition at

all) to pass on to any successor. This left Cluny, in the power vacuum of the mid-tenth-

century Mâconnaise,[37] more or less to its own devices.

The monastery, likely because of its independence, forged many important legal

and proprietary relationships with the landholders of the region.[38] It also, especially

around the turn of the millennium, increasingly enunciated its own particular self-

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[35] Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

[36] Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843–1180* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1985) 89–92; Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 22–39.

[37] Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, 58–60 and 98–100; Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor*, Amy Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[38] Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor*.

conception and ideology, including powerful emphases on virginity,[39] silence, imitation

of or similarity to angels,[40] veneration of Mary,[41] institutional independence, and a joint

Benedictine and Carolingian heritage—and, of course, on itself as a "reforming"

institution. Into the middle of the eleventh century, the locus of this special role in reform

resided primarily in the personages of Cluny's abbots, specifically as individuals; because

these men were regarded as holy, they were often invited by consortia of lay and

episcopal elites to reform this or that monastic house.[42] These reforms usually served the

more "material" (if also the spiritual, ideological) interests of these local coalitions. But

the extent to which they truly reorganized the internal life—represented for historians, at

least, primarily in the liturgy and customs—of the communities being reformed is at best

uncertain, and often appears fairly minimal or superficial.[43] Finally, these reforms rarely,

if ever, were understood to represent the formal institutional subjection or subordination

of one house to another; just because a Cluniac abbot played some role in reforming a

monastery, even being referred to in at least some documents as the (or an) abbot of that

monastery, did not mean that his successor at Cluny would also serve as such in the other

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[39] Isabelle Cochelin, "Le dur apprentissage de al virginitie: Cluny, XIe siècle," in *Au cloître et dans le monde: Femmes, hommes et sociétés (IXe–XVe siècle). Mélanges en l'honneur de Paulette L'Hermite Leclercq*, ed. Patrick Henriet and Anne-Marie Legras (Paris, France: Sorbonne University Press, 2000), 119–132; Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Agni immaculati: Recherches sur les sources hagiographiques relatives a Saint Maieul de Cluny, 954–994* (Paris, France: Cerf, 1988).

[40] Scott Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism: The Cluniac Tradition c. 900–1200* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[41] Meyer Schapiro, *The Parma Ildefonsus: A Romanesque Illuminated Manuscript from Cluny and Related Works* (New York, NY: College Art Association of America, 1964), 71–72.

[42] Vanderputten, "Monastic Reform, Abbatial Leadership, and the Instrumentation of Cluniac Discipline."

[43] John Nightingale, "Oswald, Fleury, and Continental Reform," in *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. Nicholas Brooks and Catherine Cubitt (London, UK: Leicester University Press, 1996), 23–45; Bouchard, "Merovingian, Carolingian, and Cluniac Monasticism."

community.[44] This dynamic slowly changed over the course of the second half of the eleventh century and Cluniac reform gradually came to possess a somewhat more institutional definition. In these years the great system of nested, branching priories appears to have formed, in which communities reformed by Cluny elected only priors, with the abbot Hugh of Semur remaining their head, at least nominally.[45] Even so, however, historians remain divided over whether this development perfected an older Carolingian model of association between monastic communities or presaged the well organized, hierarchical reform orders of the early twelfth century.[46]

Thus, balancing my own scholarly purposes with the great weight of Cluniac and reform historiography, I conceive of medieval monastic reform as a certain category of event of power-use. Such an event is an attempt to *intervene* within a pre-existing, somewhat institutionalized community from some position outside of it. There are both continuities and changes or even ruptures in the ideological or programmatic aspects of monastic reform in the Middle Ages. One of the main shifts was that which produced the more assertive and combative elements of the Gregorian Reform: the development of the idea of the independence or *libertas* of the church, specifically against lay—that is, aristocratic, royal, and imperial—power. But for my project the great continuity in medieval conceptions of reform, understood primarily as a Carolingian innovation, was

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[44] Nightingale, "Oswald, Fleury"; Bouchard, "Merovingian, Carolingian, and Cluniac Monasticism."

[45] Bouchard, "Merovingian, Carolingian, and Cluniac Monasticism," 382; Noreen Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh, 1049–1109* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1967); *Le gouvernement d'Hugues de Semur à Cluny: actes du colloque scientifique international, Cluny* (Cluny, France: Musée Ochier, 1990); Poeck, *Cluniacensis Ecclesia*.

[46] Bouchard, "Merovingian, Carolingian, and Cluniac Monasticism," 366. For a slightly different account, see Joachim Wollasch, "Monasticism: The First Wave of Reform," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (1999), 3:163–186.

the central role of written documents. Obviously the Christian concern for and emphasis

on literacy and documents is far older, and far more intrinsic to the religion, than the

Carolingian dynasty. But the Carolingians were the primary patrons and establishers, in

the West at least, of a notion that has since *become* central to the Western confessions:

namely, that right Christian practice and belief must be rooted in written text.[47]

Moreover, they also foregrounded the quintessentially literalate issue of the proper

reception of these texts, in the sense of acquiring "original" versions and correcting

corrupted ones as well as establishing schools to teach sophisticated understanding of the

key language of such texts, Latin.

The enduring presence of this central reform posture or concern can be easy to

miss in examining post-Carolingian monastic reform. It is not often the subject of

prolonged or detailed reflection and discussion. Nevertheless, I would suggest that the

numerous, even ad nauseam references to "true religion," "monastic life," "regular life,"

and so on in accounts of famous reformers and their efforts at various houses are

essentially reflections of this concern with texts, for they imply (and often state outright)

a central emphasis on establishing or restoring observance of the Rule of Benedict. As I

discuss elsewhere, this text was one of the key establishments (and likely innovations) of

the Carolingian reforms.[48] In this view such reforms and accounts of reforms are better

termed "Carolingian" or "neo-Carolingian" than "Benedictine." While invocations of

monastic decline in behavior or discipline as governed by the Rule were often rooted

more in the need for rhetorical or ideological justification for the specific intervention of

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[47] McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 306–320; Brown, "Introduction," 17–23.

[48] See my discussion in Chapter 6.

a reform than in the concrete realities of these communities, the fact remains that this concern for the careful rooting of Christian orthopraxy in canonical text was sufficiently widespread and sufficiently unimpeachable to play just this ideological, justificatory role. That is to say, despite all the vagaries of time, place, and politics, the conceptual world within which notions of reform functioned remained oriented along the Carolingian ideological axis.

But there is much more evidence that written documents played central, or at least important, roles in monastic reforms of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Without adopting overly systematic conceptions of such reforms, as earlier historians such as Kassius Hallinger did, and, on a related note, without adopting an anachronistically legalistic or legislative conception of how documents functioned in early and high medieval monastic contexts,[49] we may still readily observe that numerous documents and documentary innovations were produced as part of various reforms. For example, Diane Reilly has shown how the monastic production of Giant Bibles, especially in the eleventh century, was often an important part of reform. Such Bibles were both optimized for a certain kind of liturgical reading, the *lectio continua* specifically at night, during the office of Matins, and also frequently enunciated political or ideological programs relevant to reform contexts.[50] Isabelle Cochelin, in her extremely important article "Community and Customs: Obedience or Agency?" has shown that in some cases, particularly towards the end of the eleventh century, certain abbots sought to import the customs or way of life

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[49] Gert Melville, "Action, Text, and Validity,"; Anselme Davril, "Coutumiers directifs et coutumiers descriptifs d'Ulrich à Bernard de Cluny," in *From Dead of Night*, 23–28.

[50] Diane Reilly, *The Art of Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders: Gerard of Cambrai, Richard of Saint-Vanne, and the Saint-Vaast Bible* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006).

of prestigious houses (often, Cluny) into their own communities in order to reform them. This project generally found physical form in the production of written customaries describing the life (often selectively) of the house these abbots desired to emulate.[51]

There is also a substantial body of very impressive and important secondary historical work concerning the organization and reorganization both of individual manuscripts and of monastic archives towards the accomplishment of specific ideological aims. These aims commonly include rationalizing an abbey's record of its property (and justifying/reaffirming its possession of that property), creating or reinforcing a hagiographic tradition for the community's founder or patron, and organizing its repertoire of liturgical manuals. Perhaps the founder of this line of study on the creative (re)organization of monastic archives is Patrick Geary in his *Phantoms of Remembrance*, where he discusses chronicles, cartularies, and a wide variety of other monastic sources.[52] Geary figures this study as one of the two-sided process of social/institutional remembering and forgetting, a formulation that emphasizes the alternating strategies of forgery, destruction, commemoration, reproduction, and new (though often disguised) innovation.[53] Susan Boynton has also done a great deal of work along similar lines focusing on the imperial abbey of Farfa and especially on liturgical manuscripts.[54] These scholars do not really frame their research or their arguments in terms of, or even in relation to, questions of monastic reform. Yet I think that in light of some of Steven

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[51] Cochelin, "Community and Customs," esp. 232–233.

[52] Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the Millennium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[53] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 6–11.

[54] For example, in *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, 18–41.

Vanderputten's work, much of what Geary and Boynton have uncovered in the making

and remaking of medieval monastic manuscripts and libraries can be productively related

to such questions. In *Monastic Reform as Process*, Vanderputten devotes a chapter to the

"reform" of the community at Marchiennes, specifically under the abbot Leduin in the

second quarter of the eleventh century.[55] Vanderputten first reiterates the "model of

abbatial leadership" provided by the famous reforming abbot Richard of Saint-Vanne,

particularly important and influential in the early eleventh-century Flemish reform

context in which we find Leduin and Marchiennes, and specifically that this model

includes "the management of monastic book collections."[56] Vanderputten is choosing his

words very carefully for it is quite explicitly *not* his point that reformist abbots were

interested in "producing programmatic texts relating to internal discipline" or "a fully

formed program of disciplinary and institutional intervention, or . . . a top-down policy to

create a textual community of reformed institutions."[57] Rather, according to

Vanderputten, reforming abbots, at least those in the tradition of Richard of Saint-Vanne,

adopted flexible approaches to monastic communities and their scriptoria, libraries, and

traditions (or, in his terms, "accumulated investments").[58] Vanderputten considers (MS)

Arras Médiathèque 734, produced at Marchiennes under Leduin and including a *vita* of

Saint Vaast, in these terms.[59] He writes:

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[55] Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process*, 131–152.

[56] Ibid., 132.

[57] Ibid., 134.

[58] Ibid., 134–135.

[59] Ibid., 145.

Whatever the circumstances of its creation, the conclusion is clear: it is not the contents, the decoration, or even the very existence of the volume that is reformist about ms. 734. Rather, it is reformist because it was commissioned by an abbot with sufficient resources to replenish a poorly stocked library, a policy to strengthen the monks' sense of solidarity around the figure of their patron saint, and a willingness to intervene in hagiographic tradition to justify his institution's popularity with patrons and pilgrims.[60]

Vanderputten's goal is thus to define reform, at least in the early eleventh century, at least in Flanders (though I am confident his suspicion and critique of accepted reformist narratives is applicable far more widely), away from the implementation of a well defined and textual program and towards a highly tactical energy that blended a certain flexible model of leadership and activism with local realities and traditions.[61] The reformist approach to existing and newly commissioned manuscripts follows this paradigm. And in its careful balancing of existing traditions, which might, in some aspects, be shrewdly distorted, reworked, or covered over even in the same breath (or quill stroke) as other aspects were mobilized, emphasized, and reproduced, this approach sounds quite similar to that studied by Geary and Boynton.

We are obviously in some danger of broadening the notion of reform so far as to render it useless. Is any development or modification of monastic literary tradition and written record at all to be understood as reform? To a certain extent, yes; like any

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[60] Ibid., 146.

[61] For Vanderputten's programmatic statement to this effect, see ibid., 186–189.

tradition, that of high medieval Latin monasteries was continually re-formed, playing on concepts and outlines already imbued with social currency and disguising innovation as a return to venerable tradition.[62] And, as I have been at pains to emphasize, within the church (and often straddling its shadowy, uncertain borders), from the late eighth or early ninth century onwards, the explicit notion of reform was almost everywhere. In this sense, reform becomes only the most explicit, and most politically and socially fraught valence of the natural maintenance of traditions and institutions. Certainly stricter definitions will be more appropriate for some, likely many, other studies. The analytic and the scholarly community can easily bear the weight of these multiple, neither quite contradictory nor strictly compatible, senses. For my purpose, which is to study the slow development of the culture of power operative at Cluny and the crucial role within that development played by literate modes as such, this is definition is preferable.

A final word on the question of literacy and orality during and before the twelfth century, specifically as it has been asked and answered by medievalists, is in order. I will state outright what is likely easy to discern: in my view, the paradigm outlined by Michael Clanchy and Brian Stock remains the starting, as well as the dominant, one—and rightly so. The former, in his foundational work devoted to England from the Norman Conquest (1066) to the end of the reign of Edward I (1307) emphasized far more the pragmatic and institutional growth of the use of written record, and in particular from a royal, administrative perspective. This growth was thus rooted in the exertion of secular power and, moreover, distrust between conquerors and conquered. This is certainly not to

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[62] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

say that he ignored cultural perceptions of writing and memory as tools and practices; these he emphasized in examining the long-enduring resistance to and distrust of writing as a tool of record of knowledge. Clanchy's focus too on the distinction between producing a written record and establishing the institutional framework for its useful recall decades or centuries later was also illuminating.

In many ways, Stock's focuses were quite different. In the first place, where Clanchy devoted himself to "government" documents, mostly in the vernacular, Stock read Latin documents produced by various members of the church almost exclusively. Where Clanchy had given his account of practical literacy nuance by reference to culture and *mentalité*, the latter was Stock's overwhelming focus. In five massive divisions, Stock analyzed what he saw as the rise of a new orientation (or, to use McLuhan's term, "ratio") among literate and oral modes; while Stock, like Clanchy, saw both as plural and both as persisting strongly throughout their period of study, Stock in particular emphasized that something fundamental in their interrelationship(s) changed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Literalate and oral were now far more closely intertwined, and the forms of the former came, slowly but irrevocably, to rewrite the terms of the latter.[63] The new reason or rationality that arose in these centers was both caused by the new literalate modes and fundamentally *of* them.[64] These two authors, by virtue of the ambition, exhaustive research, and forceful argumentation of their flagship works, thus established both literacy *and* orality as historical in the practical sense: that is, not only conceptually historical (plural, acculturated, varying with time and space) but also

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[63] Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, 3–11.

[64] Ibid., 241–325, 326–454, 472–521.

studied widely by historians—for down to the present, virtually no study of medieval

literacy or orality passes without a reference to these two.

This is not to say that their work was unprecedented, even in the field of medieval

history. Malcom Parkes produced, in the early 1970s, an article discussing medieval

literacy as multiple, with historically significant differences between pragmatic,

recreational, and professional reading.[65] Nether were the insights of *From Memory to*

Written Record and *The Implications of Literacy sui generis*, for both drew heavily—and

quite openly—on the thought of Walter Ong and Marshall McLuhan, as well as on that of

anthropologists such as Jack Goody, who had pursued related questions.[66] One could

certainly also draw out differences of emphasis and, likely, at least a few contradictions

between the two, as Charles Briggs has done in his excellent essay on the historiography

of medieval literacy.[67] Least of all would I say that nothing substantial has been added by

their colleagues, including of course their critics. As causative of the rise of a new

rationality in the latter part of the Middle Ages, Alexander Murray's focus on the clerks

(whom he terms "knowledge workers") staffing Europe's nascent bureaucracies and, to a

slightly lesser extent, Franz Bäuml's on the development of vernacular literacy, have both

found broader acceptance among scholars than Stock's preference for almost

disembodied literalate modes.[68]

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[65] Malcolm Parkes, "The Literacy of the Laity," in *Literature and Western Civilization: The Medieval World*, ed. David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (London, UK: Aldus, 1973), 555–577.

[66] Among others, Jack Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1968) and Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organisation of Society* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[67] Charles F. Briggs, "Literacy, Reading, and Writing in the Medieval West," *Journal of Medieval History* 26, no. 4 (200): 397–420, at 403–406.

[68] Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978); Franz Bäuml "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 239–

Two other important medievalists, Patrick Geary and Mary Carruthers, come at the topic of orality and literacy a bit more obliquely. Rather than directly challenge the binary as proposed by Ong, Clanchy, and Stock, these scholars explain why, for their major studies, they have not found the binary particularly useful. But there is also a whiff of a broader criticism in their (brief) treatments of it as such. Geary writes that "both of these authors [Clanchy and Stock] are much more successful in describing the developments of the later eleventh and twelfth centuries than the point of departure for these developments."[69] In his view, these authors significantly underestimate the amount and, more importantly to Geary, the extent of literacy in early medieval western Europe. As part of this misappraisal, they also miss the extent to which the survival—and, especially important for Geary, the failure to survive—of early medieval documents was intentional, rather than accidental.[70] This leads into Geary's study of (social, often literate) memory *and* forgetting, as two sides of the same coin, in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Carruthers, also studying memory but this time primarily as an explicit classical and medieval virtue, faculty, and discipline, *memoria*, finds the oral/literate binary neither useful nor particularly convincing. This stems mainly from the fact that literature, despite its etymological similarity to literacy, neither implies nor requires the latter.[71] The obvious example (noted and discussed by Ong) of oral literature

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265. For direct criticism of literacy itself as a cause of cultural and social change, see Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[69] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 13.

[70] Ibid., 14–16.

[71] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 11–12.

would be epic poetry, such as that of Homer, West Africa griots, and so on.[72] Carruthers

also notes that her study challenges (really, demolishes) the notion that memory is

directly supplanted by an increase in literate modes.[73]

To my mind, while these criticisms and certainly the studies in which they appear

have a great deal of merit, both Geary and Carruthers seem to understand the

oral/literalate split much more simplistically than the voluminous and nuanced works of

Ong, Clanchy, and Stock posited it. Many of their points could be accommodated within

more sensitive treatments of the binary, which, again, for all three authors is more a

spectrum along which shifting assemblages of plural literalate and oral modes may be

ranged. Had Geary wanted to, for example, he could have sought to analyze the tactical

destruction, re-working, and new composition of texts and physical documents in his

period as manifestations of distinct-yet-interrelated assumptions about what text and

writing were and how they operated. To take one brief example, Geary concludes his

discussion of charters and cartularies by arguing that

> Arnold of St. Emmeram compared the process of sorting through the past to the
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> process of clearing the arable, cutting down groves once sacred to the gods so that
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> the land could be made useful for the present. The same pruning was going on in
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> archives across the continent. Both he and Paul of St. Père de Chartres
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> emphasized that not everything was to be preserved, only that which was useful. .

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[72] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 10–15; see also on oral literary traditions Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960) and Milman Parry, ed. Adam Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: the Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1971).

[73] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 11–12.

. . Regional needs and traditions had determined in what form the records of the

past would be transmitted. . . . When, around the millennium, western churchmen

became interested in organizing their past, they were faced with these collections

that they then used as the raw material for the creation of a new past. In the East,

more coherent records of the past often existed, but they had already been passed

through a different kind of grid, that of geographically organized collections. This

organization gave way to a chronological one as the same preoccupations with

bridging the chasm of past and present became more important than the

administration and defense of properties based on the written word.[74]

These are deep and important insights, and this particular process of "destroying,

revising, recopying, and especially reorganizing" is not one to which either Clanchy or

Stock devote much time or effort.[75] But there is nothing in particular about them that

prevents analysis through the interpretive lens of shifting cultures of orality and literality.

Ong (and Clanchy drawing on him) made special note of the fact that different such

cultures might have different aims, some more directly pragmatic, others more "cultural"

or symbolic, that is, social actions intended to communicate or accomplish something

other or beyond mere (re)transmission of discrete units of information.[76] One could

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[74] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 114.

[75] Though see Clanchy on the formation of archives and other dedicated, searchable repositories: Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 154–172.

[76] Ibid., 26–43. See also the work of Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, especially *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), esp. 9–37. For the basic linguistics of beyond mere conveyance of information, see John Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

examine this process as a certain reassertion of the oral in the face of the passage of time

and political decline, or at least quiescence, which had rendered the legalistic and

dispositive role of documents nonfunctional even at the same time the associative value

of the very same documents was increased, as the figures who had issued or guaranteed

them passed into the authority of increasingly distant history and tradition. The

destruction of Merovingian charters so that forgeries could be made using the now-scarce

papyrus associated with (and materially transmitted by) that lost dynasty by the monks of

Saint-Denis in particular offers a striking example of this.[77] Documents had gained new

status even as their importance specifically as receptacles of information ebbed from a

previous high, while that new status itself was the result of their association with

charismatic and increasingly legendary figures. In my view, this process suggests highly

intricate interplays among several of Ong's oral and literalate psychodynamics, with

these interplays, in the long view, in turn having important implications for the eventual

development of an extremely literalate Western civilization.

The possibility for an oral/literalate reframing of Carruthers' material, approach,

and conclusions also exists. To summarize her hefty and intricate work in *The Book of

Memory* rather more briefly than it deserves, we may say that Carruthers roots the

discipline and faculty of *memoria* deep in the Socratic philosophical tradition's account

of memory and signification. This account placed great emphasis on the use and recall of

functional, associational images made in the mind of things encountered in experience.

The use, recall, and formation of such images had both individual, perhaps "private," and

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[77] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 107–113.

public, that is, educational, valences, and was eventually elaborated into the distinctive and striking practice of self-designed mental maps used in the recall of, for example, the entirety of the *Aeneid* or even of a classical author's entire oeuvre. In this process, the individual seeking to memorize such corpora mentally constructed a great building (perhaps a cathedral) with many rooms. This mental construction involved a fixed and detailed floorplan, which the memorizer should be able to imagine himself moving through with as much confidence and reliability as he would in an actual, physical building. Into each of the many rooms, then, the memorizer placed a certain visually-accessed image that, to him, through close formal or objective—but much more often, associative—functioning, would call to mind one segment (perhaps a line, or stanza) of the text being memorized.[78] Medievals, in particular, might replace the building in this context with the actual memorized image of a particular document containing the text to be memorized. They could then use the mental image of that document, along with its various features (some designed, perhaps, for significant and mnemonic subdivision of the text contained therein) and the natural array of subtexts (stages in an argument, biblical subdivisions, etc.) to mentally search the text, just as someone using the mental floorplan model might.[79] Among the particularly adept or well-trained, this method thus allowed an astonishing level not merely of rote reproduction, but fluid movement within and even on-the-fly sophisticated sorting and recombination of memorized material, such as reciting every other verse of the Bible backwards, beginning in the middle of an epic poem and proceeding naturally, and so on. This functional capability thus aligned neatly

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[78] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 89–93 and 171–186.

[79] Ibid., 199–200.

with the pre-modern conception of memory or *memoria* as creative and insightful, in contrast to its modern characterization as dull and inert.

Carruthers' further point, that the undeniable increase in both quantity and complexity of written texts from the eleventh century onwards did not at all undermine the value imputed to and emphasis placed upon *memoria* in the latter half the Middle Ages, is well-taken.[80] In particular, she cites the work of the Rouses to the effect that the tradition of biblical gloss found in writing from the twelfth century onward must certainly have existed as a well-established oral tradition before—almost certainly well before— that time.[81] This tradition was not transcribed because it suddenly became possible, but because there suddenly arose a socially- and culturally-constructed *demand* for its transcription, that is, the university and its new, large public.[82] Carruthers points out that even then, the university classroom remained heavily oral, with students likely memorizing texts from individual written exemplars open before them while masters lectured before them.[83] But while all these points are cogent and convincing, they seem to me to demand, not obviate, consideration from within the perspective of the oral/literalate spectrum, for they clearly present not only the imbrication but indeed the *increasing* imbrication and mutual co-development of oral and literalate modes discussed by both Clanchy and Stock, in precisely the same centuries and contexts. Indeed, they seem to quite obviously mark the *advance* of literalate modes; glosses were written down, and

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[80] Ibid., 195.

[81] Ibid., 198.

[82] Clanchy makes the point that Gutenberg's press was within the technological reach of Europe for centuries before it was built; what was lacking was not the means but the (conception of the) need. See *From Memory to Written Record*, 309.

[83] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 199.

students memorized from individual exemplars—contrast this with Stephen Jaeger's account of schooling in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, a practice which is widely referred to in period sources but has left astonishingly few actually used within it behind.[84] Jaeger's discussion of a charismatic instruction in *litterae et mores* seems radically different from orchestrated mass mental reproduction of written texts that have themselves, in comparison to earlier times, also become the subject of mass reproduction.

More broadly, while Carruthers is right to point out that the expanding use of writing did not supplant *memoria* as a discipline in the Middle Ages, in the longer view, that is quite obviously *exactly* what it did. Not only do we no longer practice this discipline, but Carruthers is obliged to spend multiple chapters reconstructing and explaining an entirely different semiotic, psychological, and physiological conception of the mental faculty known as memory; isn't this quite convincing and sophisticated proof that an immense gap does indeed exist between memory, both as understood and as practiced, in the pre-modern and modern eras? The expansion of writing did not *immediately* supplant *memoria*, indeed it did not do so for several centuries. But ultimately, supplanting memory as discussed and analyzed by Carruthers is *exactly* what writing did. In this sense, her book is both a fascinating collection of ways in which oralities and literalities combined and recombined over time and a powerful reminder (appropriately) that the direct material realities of technological change do not, on their own, determine the course of social and cultural development, but rather that such influence is always powerful mediated through institutions, contexts, practices, and

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[84] C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

cultures. But it is a challenge only to a very vulgar account of the oral/literalate binary that, while real, is a very far cry from the one set forth by the main scholars of such an approach.

In short, while I would never fault Geary or Carruthers for writing their studies using their preferred analytics, rather than writing mine with my own, I think both imply, or state outright, a greater rejection of the oral/literalate binary than is necessary for their work, or even than their own research and argumentation actually support. This being said, Patrick Geary's point about the prevalence and sophistication of literacy and literalate modes in the early Middle Ages is a useful entree into the work on Carolingian literacy spearheaded by Rosamond McKitterick.[85] As discussed earlier, the Carolingians are foundational not only for important high medieval conceptions and strategies of power, authority, and monasticism, but also for the explicit and central role of documents and literacy in reform in general. Besides this, their government or administration represented a particular and highly sophisticated combination of oral and literalate modes.[86] This combination, its rise and decline, and its place in the longer development of literacy in/and Western civilization generally, is not the subject of this study. But I do wish to note that, as Carruthers' treatment of memory also attests, the roots of the rise of literalate modes are very deep, and if the eleventh and twelfth centuries do constitute a

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[85] See, in particular, Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and McKitterick, ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[86] Innes, *State and Society*; Innes, "Charlemagne's Government"; McKitterick, "Charlemagne's *Missi* and Their Books"; McKitterick, "Court and Communication."

decisive inflection point in this rise (as I agree with Clanchy, Stock, and Paul Saenger that they do), they still spring from these roots.[87]

These three introductory essays weave together my project and its methods, while also offering some basis and orientation in the existing scholarship of various fields and indeed in philosophical speculation, hypothesis, and assumption. Ultimately, I am pursuing the complex dialectical process by which institutions (monasteries) and individuals (monks) shaped one another; in particular, I observe this process as it occurred through—by means of—texts, which, in turn, existed in a startlingly parallel dialectics with *written iteration of themselves*. This is a, and perhaps the, decisive realm for such formation, in my view, because it was, in medieval monasteries as in many other historical contexts, one of the most explicit, intentional, and normative sites for the learning of interpretation and thus of the integration of raw lived experience. Monks learned to read the cultural signs found in texts as various as chronicles, *vitae*, and liturgy, and they learned to read the world—likely in that order. Because of the nature of medieval monastic life, I have also found ritual, despite some reservations about the term as an analytic, not only useful but unavoidable. Almost all the encounters of monks, individually and communally, with texts took place within the context of ritual as I have defined it above: achieving or offering transcendence through its "set aside" nature, performing and recreating a differentiated and hierarchical community, deploying signs in ways with normative implications for their subsequent redeployment. Thus, only after this voluminous introductory material, is it possible to say precisely *why monasteries*:

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[87] See my discussion of change versus continuity in Chapter 1.

because they foregrounded the explicit (re)fashioning of human beings; because they pursued this project with an intensity and stamina otherwise found only in (if even there) modern total institutions such as schools, armies, and prisons; because texts, whether oral, written, or lived, were explicitly taken as crucial in this process; and because they did all this precisely during and through a crucial period in the development of modern literalate modes. My goal is thus to shed light on monastic semiotics, and on how that culture combined with a parallel, not-entirely-distinct culture of power, in order to uncover the crucial mutual development of literalate modes and the medieval monastery. To do this, we now turn to the sources themselves.

CHAPTER V: THE CLUNY BIBLE AND ITS INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

Who produced the so-called Cluny Bible (BNF lat 15176) and for what purposes? These questions immediately place us at the center of several important issues. First, there is the question of the nature of the transition from a Carolingian culture and society to however we characterize what followed it, with the added difficulty that most such broad characterizations, such as "feudal" or "Romanesque" are themselves highly questionable. Next, we confront of course the key issue of this whole study, the spectrum (and tension) between oral and literate modes of culture and communication, which again pose various ancillary questions in the present context, cardinally that of public versus private reading and study. And finally, there is the question of monastic reform in the eleventh century. As with the previous two issues, due both to the nature of BNF lat 15176 and the wider state of the relevant historiography, this last issue quickly draws us to question both the very nature of "reform" and its valences in earlier (ninth, tenth) centuries. In what follows, I will hew as closely as possible to BNF lat 15176, touching on this issues only enough to properly contextualize our study of this manuscript.

The manuscript has long been an object of serious scholarly study, with most historians placing it somewhere in southern France and suggesting that it was produced roughly between 950 and 1050.[1] But it was only firmly localized to Cluny in 1979 by Monique Cécile-Garand, when she found the name "Franco," with which Alcuin of

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[1] Charlotte Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon et les débuts de l'enluminure clunisienne," *Rivista di storia della miniatura* 15 (2011), 55.

York's name has been replaced in a dedicatory poem, authored by the latter and copied into the first leaves of the Bible by the former, on a witness list in a Cluniac charter from 1004. She also found Franco's colophon in an act from either 1002 or 1011, though copied into Cluny's Cartulary B, rather than in autograph.[2] As was the norm for Giant Bibles of the Touraine type (discussed below), a number of scribes and illuminators collaborated in copying out this manuscript.[3] Both because of the generally high level of skill and the conscious effort to keep the script homogenous, distinguishing these is difficult. But it is clear that great care and resources were lavished upon the Cluny Bible; besides the generally even writing and skillful ruling, the parchment is of a fine quality (especially in comparison to a similar Bible produced around the same time, or a little earlier, at Saint-Martial of Limoges), and the craftsmen make use of much color and complex page layouts that include a number of huge and ornate illuminated initials.

Many features of the manuscript suggest that it was intended to evoke and even designed and executed on the model provided by the Carolingian Giant Bibles, specifically those produced at Tours under Alcuin around the turn of the ninth century and then on a "mass" (in early medieval terms) scale between 834 and 851.[4] Because the

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[2] Monique-Cécile Garand, "Une collection personelle de saint Odilon de Cluny et ses compléments," *Scriptorium* 33 (1979), 174. Walter Cahn notes the "general acceptance" of this identification, and agrees that "if these assumptions are correct, the manuscript has a good claim to be regarded as a product of the Cluny scriptorium," however, he cautions, "it should be noted that Odilo personally governed other monastic communities possessed by the Burgundian house, where he also bore the title *abbas*, given to him in the manuscript." Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 278. The various other scholars I cite regarding this manuscript tend to assume its Cluniac origin/identity.

[3] Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon," 52.

[4] On this connection between the Touraine Giant Bibles and the Cluny Bible, see Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination*, 98–101 and Diane Reilly, "The Cluniac Giant Bible and the *Ordo librorum ad legendum*: a Reassessment of Monastic Bible Reading and Cluniac Customary Instructions," in *From Dead of Night*, 178–179.

distinctive style of the Carolingian Touraine Bibles and its relationship to their intended use has been the subject of much fruitful discussion by historians already, I will first outline the Tours format, with special attention to the commonalities between it and that of BNF lat 15176. Then, I will reprise the argument over the use of Bibles of this type, both as it has appeared in Carolingian scholarship and in work on turn-of-the-millennium/reform monasticism. This will bring us, finally, to a consideration of the Cluny Bible in its own particular historical context, having prepared the ground for an appreciation of this how this manuscript reaches back as well as looks forward.

Alcuin of York was a very important scholar and courtier in Charlemagne's empire, and one of the most prominent of the emperor's reformers. He was one of several men involved in revising Jerome's Vulgate edition of the Bible, and in retirement served as abbot of the prominent regular community in Tours dedicated to Saint Martin. Under his guidance several Giant Bibles were produced, but it was only some decades after his death in 804 that Saint Martin of Tours' became a site of mass production for magnificent pandects—single-volume Bibles following, at least in theory, Alcuin's revised Vulgate text.[5] By its introductory material, the Cluny Bible immediately invokes both Alcuin and Jerome. It includes two hymns or poems by the former, as well as a letter from the latter to Paulinus of Nola. These compositions of Alcuin's are two of his most famous, and between them combine a typological and historical overview of the Old Testament,

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[5] David Ganz, "Mass Production of Early Medieval Manuscripts: The Carolingian Bibles from Tours," in *The Early Medieval Bible: Its Production, Decoration, and Use*, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology, Richard Gameson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 1994); Rosamond McKitterick, "Carolingian Bible Production: The Tours Anomaly," *The Early Medieval Bible*, 63–77; Herbert L. Kessler, *The Illustrated Bibles from Tours*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination 7 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

dedications to lay and clerical patrons, admonitions to read the text clearly aloud, and a

somewhat extended definition of the manuscript specifically as a pandect. The letter, in

turn, is a kind of treatise or meditation on how the Bible is to be read and studied and

who is qualified to interpret it, and was an extremely common opening text for Bibles in

the high Middle Ages. This introductory collection, in addition to presenting a kind of

treatise on the Bible and Bible reading, an analysis of which is the bulk of this chapter,

thus also established a specific authoritative (and textual) tradition, linking Jerome to

Carolingian, even particularly Touraine, reform.

Beyond this composite introductory treatise and its ideological valence, the

physical form and page layout of the Cluny Bible betray a skilled, technical, wholly

intentional imitation of the Carolingian Bibles produced at Tours.[6] Besides the distinctive

status of the pandect itself, a Carolingian innovation, the massive dimensions of the Bible

are those of the Touraine exemplars: the folia measure 500x380mm. Like the Tours

Bibles, the text of BNF lat 15176 is written in two columns of between fifty and fifty-two

lines each, with the manuscript comprising 439 surviving folia. Though the Bible is badly

damaged, missing the beginning of Genesis, the beginning of Exodus, and roughly seven

epistles from the New Testament, this nevertheless puts it at the usual length for a Tours

Bible—around 450 folia. Throughout, the Bible uses the double margin ruling scheme,

wherein a narrow column is ruled on each side of each main column of text. This is

useful for the placement of the initials often used to distinguish chapters within books,

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[6] Ganz, "Mass Production," 55.

and represents a development from the earlier Touraine Bibles.[7] The particular texts included with these Bibles could and did vary: the Cluny Bible places the Apocalypse/Revelations before the Pauline Epistles, like the Touraine Bibles preserved at Berlin and Saint Gall but differing from most others of this class. More conventionally for the Touraine type (as opposed to other Carolingian Giant Bibles), the Cluny Bible's books are arranged in (rough, theoretical) historical, rather than liturgical order: the Octateuch, followed by Kings and Chronicles, the prophets, and then the New Testament distinguished from and following the Old.[8] It also includes at least part of the "series of summaries and prefaces for the Gospels" begun at Zürich and widely dispersed thereafter.[9] Thus, while the homogeneity of Touraine Bibles and the rigidity of their outline as a genre can and sometimes has been overemphasized,[10] they do present a recognizable format—one the Cluny Bible unmistakably reproduces.

The most important aspect of identity in layout between the Cluny Bible and the Touraine model is, however, the "hierarchy of scripts" used not only to identify the different parts of the text, but also to make reading it (aloud) easier.[11] Though the Cluniac Bible does not use the full range of the hierarchy for the beginning of *every* book, it does appear in all its glory at the beginning of many books (usually the longer and more important, such as the Gospels, Kings I—IV, and so on), and some simplified version of

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[7] Ibid. 59; see also Pater Alban Dold, "Neuentdekte Blätter einer unbekannten Bibelhandschrift von Tours," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 48 (1931), 173.

[8] Reilly, *The Art of Reform*, 50–51.

[9] Ganz, "Mass Production," 57.

[10] Rosamond McKitterick, "Carolingian Bible Production."

[11] Ganz, "Mass Production," 59.

it is always present. Moreover, when it appears in full it follows very closely the summary of its appearance in Touraine Bibles given by David Ganz.[12] Distinctive square capitals, usually two or three lines tall, form the incipits of each book; these are usually red and black, either alternating by line or with black letters highlighted in red, or sometimes with red and black ink mixed together. Next comes some initial, often ornately illuminated with many brilliant colors and usually significantly larger than the incipit script, followed by a few letters in large capitals, sometimes more square and sometimes more rustic and usually close to the size of the incipit capitals, or at least noticeably larger than the main body text. Then, in some cases, comes a single line of one-line-tall text, usually in rustic capitals, before the Carolingian minuscule in which the main body of the text is written takes over. Explicits are usually also in one-line rustic capitals, often black, sometimes with a touch of red highlighting/rubrication.[13]

The range of this hierarchy is reduced and simplified in many places throughout the Bible. The most common of these is in the incipits for prologues, prefaces, and *capitulae*. These are generally not given illuminated initials (though they usually possess a large, simple initial done in red), and their incipits are sometimes done in a somewhat smaller script or at least given less space in the ruling scheme.[14] There are certainly practical reasons for this: the collective nature of such an immense artisanal undertaking as producing a giant Bible meant that, sometimes, one scribe, rubricator, or illuminator

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[12] Ibid., 58.

[13] The beginning of Luke in the Cluny Bible, 368r, is a good example of the full hierarchy. I have not discussed the ornate portrait of the evangelist present there because it was added towards the end of the twelfth century—almost two centuries after the Bible was copied. Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon," 55.

[14] The prophets, running from 123r through 210r in BNF lat 15176, are a good place to observe these principles.

working in a given section might not leave enough room for one of his comrades working in another role. Or, he could fail to leave *himself* enough room, as even when the same craftsman performed more than one of these tasks, the tasks themselves were usually broken up and done sequentially, with all the writing in a quire done before rubrication and illumination. Moreover, the Touraine exemplars themselves made perceptible efforts to begin and end books and other subdivisions at certain points on the page: Ganz writes that "this corresponds to the evidence of the script, where compressed passages of text show how the scribes collaborating in the copying of the Tours Bibles tried hard to fit the blocks of text which were assigned to them into a predetermined format, a fixed number of columns."[15] The purpose of this effort was to allow books to be begun on new pages, folia, or even quires.

Historians remain somewhat divided, or at least uncertain, about the role of Giant Bibles in the liturgy. Some have argued that the immense size of the Bibles precludes their use by individuals, and therefore that they *must* have been for public reading in the choir and refectory.[16] But most cautiously accept the idea that at least some of the Carolingian Giant Bibles (relevant studies mostly focus on the Touraine variety) were intended and used for public reading, in one form or another, at least some of the time. Rosamond McKitterick remains agnostic, but seems to lean rather distinctly towards some public role for Carolingian and Carolingian-inspired Bibles:

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[15] Ganz, "Mass Production," 59.

[16] Lawrence Nees, "Problems of Form and Function in Early Medieval Illustrated Bibles from Northwest Europe," in *Imagining the Early Medieval Bible*, ed. John Williams (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1999), 121–177.

We simply do not know enough about the process of reading aloud to discard

such indications as the manuscript itself may afford us of a scribe's intention as

far as oral communication of his writing was concerned. Given that the text is

didactic in its presentation and was easy to follow as far as its general structure

was concerned, it might be more plausible to suggest that the didactic function

was a public rather than a private one. . . . It was a Bible for communication, in a

context we cannot at present reconstruct. Analogy with the two Ceolfrith Bibles

housed in the chapels of Wearmouth and Jarrow may be helpful here. They acted

as definitive reference copies, so that anyone could find the passage he wanted,

but they were surely also used for public reading.[17]

On the other hand, Diane Reilly has argued forcefully that "most [Carolingian Giant

Bibles], including those manufactured at Tours following the instructions of Alcuin, were

designed to be used on a daily basis for the recitation of the Divine Office."[18] She cites a

wide variety of evidence to support this proposition. First, there is Charlemagne and

Alcuin's specific intent to correct the corrupted recensions of Jerome's Vulgate in

circulation, in order to improve the general understanding and observance of Christian

principles by both the church and the laity.[19] There is the ordering of some Giant Bibles

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[17] Rosamond McKitterik, "Carolingian Bible production."

[18] Reilly, *The Art of Reform*, 47–48. See also Reilly, "Lectern Bibles and Liturgical Reform in the Central Middle Ages," in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, ed. Susan Boynton and Diane Reilly (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 105–125.

[19] Reilly, *The Art of Reform*, 48–49.

according to liturgical, rather than historical or traditional, demands.[20] Reilly also

discusses at length the increased Carolingian emphasis on the *lectio continua*, the practice

of reading the Bible aloud in the church through much of the night, and the particular

suitability of the Giant Bible in general and the Touraine format in particular for this

purpose.[21] Finally, there is the fact that, while many Giant Bibles were indeed

commissioned by and given to prominent clerics and laypeople, many of these quickly

ended up being donated to ecclesiastical communities where they would presumably be

put to work.[22] David Ganz, too, has argued that the Touraine format is particularly suited

to public reading, by virtue of its distinctive, clear, regular script, the hierarchy of scripts

that allow a reader to quickly orient himself on the page, and Alcuin's admonition that

"Whosoever as reader in church reads in the sacred body of this book the high words of

God distinguishing the meanings, titles, cola, and commata with his voice, and let him

say with his mouth as he knows the accent sounds."[23]

For the Cluny Bible itself, consensus seems even stronger. Reilly begins more

cautiously, citing an eleventh- or twelfth-century Cluny booklist, which refers to several

manuscripts containing collections of biblical texts that have not survived. She notes that

> such manuscripts would have suited better than any of Cluny's surviving Giant
>
> Bibles the complicated program of reading for Matins. None of these manuscripts

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[20] Ibid., 50–51.

[21] Ibid., 52–63.

[22] Ibid., 65.

[23] Ganz, "Mass Production," 56–59.

can be dated using the paltry information provided by the library list, however. It is therefore very difficult to extrapolate from this list what Bibles might have been used for reading during the night office at Cluny during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[24]

Yet she also notes that the great Cluniac customary written by Bernard in the later eleventh century, and that prepared by Abbot William of Hirsau on the basis of Cluny's customs (chiefly as related to him by Ulrich of Zell), both make provision for rendering assistance to the lector in physically moving his book between the choir and refectory; the Giant Bible was "the only book used for public reading that was routinely this large."[25] So, perhaps not for the central night readings, but likely for some part of the liturgy. In a short article, Neil Stratford asserts that, despite "fewer indicators" (than for its use as "cultic object," such as in processions), the Cluny Bible was indeed used for refectory readings.[26]

We may also note that the Cluny Bible does *not* use an especially small minuscule for the Gospels or Psalms, as Ganz has noted in many of the surviving Carolingian Giant Bibles (including the most likely candidates for models for the Cluny manuscript).[27] Ganz suggests that this script was used to help insure an orderly layout of the text (so that

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[24] Reilly, "The Cluniac Giant Bible," 180.

[25] Ibid., 174–176. Reilly discusses Romanesque Giant Bibles and their relationship to/role in monastic reform specifically in Norman England in her article, "French Romanesque Giant Bibles and Their English Relatives: Blood Relatives or Adopted Children?," *Scriptorium* 56 (2002): 294–311.

[26] Neil Stratford, "La Bible dite 'd'Odilon,'" in *Cluny, 910–2010; onze siècles de rayonnement* (France: Editions du Patrimoine Centre des monuments nationaux, 2010), 95.

[27] Ganz, "Mass Production," 59. Similarly, there exist also a number of eleventh- and twelfth-century northern French Giant Bibles that leave these books out entirely. See Reilly, "Lectern Bibles," 113.

books could end and begin on new columns, folia, or quires), and allowed by the fact that

other copies of these scriptural texts would have been used for liturgical reading—if his

supposition is correct, it may follow that the *lack* of such "compression" in BNF lat

15176 implies that liturgical readings of the Psalms and Gospels used this very, and no

other, text. Finally, the Cluny Bible appears to contain some tonic accents of the kind

discussed by Leonard Boyle—several examples can be found in Genesis, though they

disappear for long stretches of the text otherwise.[28] Moreover, the Cluny Bible is

significantly older than Boyle suggests this practice to be. Perhaps, these marks were

added much later.[29]

Thus, the evidence seems rather more to support than to contravene the

supposition that at least some Giant Bibles, including that of Cluny at least for some

period in the Middle Ages, were used for public reading. From many of its layout

features, and from the inclusion of Alcuin's injunction to read aloud correctly, we may

suspect that it was *intended* for this purpose, if not only for it. From the references in the

customaries and the tonic accents, we may see that that use itself left some material

echoes available to the historian.

Yet as much as the Cluny Bible appears to look back towards the Carolingian

tradition, in form, function, and explicit efforts at self-association through its introductory

material, it is also separated from that tradition by a major caesura and, in other important

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[28] One customary dealing with Cluniac Bible reading, the *Liber Tramitis*, prioritizes the reading of Genesis in particular: *Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis abbatis*, ed. Peter Dinter, CCM 10 (Siegburg, Germany: Franz Schmitt, 1980), 48.

[29] Leonard Boyle, "Tonic Accent, Codicology, and Literacy," *The Centre and its Compass: Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor John Leyerle*, ed. Robert Taylor et al. (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University Press, 1993), 4–6. For more discussion of these marks, and of their presence in the Cluny Bible in particular, see Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 55–57 and 287.

ways, ahead of or at least very much of its own time, the early/mid eleventh century.

Indeed it was not alone in this Janus-faced orientation; such was typical of a whole class

of early Romanesque Giant Bibles (though most of these did not imitate the Touraine

Bibles, in particular, quite so closely).[30] Many of these Bibles were produced, as Reilly

has discussed in her book *The Art of Reform*, quite specifically as part of monastic reform

around the turn of the millennium.[31] Often, some cycle of illustrations and historiated

initials played an important role in enunciating some particular understanding of reform

and related issues,[32] and this trend itself was part of a larger and longer one by which the

relatively limited figurative principles of Carolingian art were expanded upon and

developed. This latter process, in particular, led to an explosion of such art within and

beyond biblical contexts by the end of the eleventh century.[33] It is particularly interesting,

therefore, that the Cluny Bible included virtually no figurative decoration when it was

first produced.[34] All the ornamentation it does possess is strictly aniconic, mostly

deploying foliate motifs. Perhaps some of its missing leaves, such as the beginning of

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[30] Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination*, 95–100; Reilly, *The Art of Reform*, 66–71 and 88–93. There is some reason to believe in a particularly close, almost institutional link between the scriptorium at Saint Martin's and that at Cluny, however. Odo, second abbot of Cluny (926–942), recieved both tonsure and "literary education" at Saint Martin, as reported in his *vita* by John of Salerno. The same source reports that Odo brought a hundred manuscripts from Saint Martin to Baume, the monastery where he served under Abbot Berno before both were transplanted to Cluny upon its foundation. *Being the Life of St. Odo of Cluny by John of Salerno and the Life of St. Gerald of Aurillac by St. Odo*, ed. and trans. Dom Gerard Sitwell (New York, NY: Sheen and Ward, 1958), 26–27. Jean-Pierre Aniel has suggested that this body of manuscripts includes a number of decorative features that "could be considered the antecedents of the ornamentation of Cluniac manuscripts." Jean-Pierre Aniel, "Le scriptorium de Cluny aux Xe et XIe siècles," in *Le gouvernement d'Hugues de Semur à Cluny*, 273.

[31] Reilly, *The Art of Reform*, 88–93.

[32] This is the central thrust of *The Art of Reform*; Reilly also summarizes some studies of later medieval illustration cycles in her introduction, 1–12.

[33] Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination*, 121–123 and 165–166.

[34] On impressive illuminations added later, see note 13 earlier in this chapter.

Genesis, once contained illustrations or historiated illumination, but this would be a marked departure from the hundreds of leaves that do survive.

In light of this, it makes all the more sense to figure the collection of introductory material as a statement on or interpretive guide to both the Bible as a whole and the ideological claims of Cluny as an institution: if we may read pictures in such a way, why not words? Thus it is my contention that the three introductory texts can be considered together, without too much violence to the mentality we are attempting here to reawaken and interrogate, as a kind of manifesto. That is, this specific combination of these texts presents, and would have presented to a medieval monastic reader or auditor of BNF lat 15176, a number of assertions about the nature of the Bible's content and of the act of reading (hearing) it.[35] Though the specific thought process that produced precisely this combination is almost certainly lost to us, and though it may well have involved ways of thinking so different from our own (perhaps in the play of authority and custom, or in the locus of institutional agency and initiative at work in the Cluny *scriptorium*) as to be almost untranslatable, nevertheless this combination is, on some basic level, intentional: though none of these texts are surprising to find in this context, the precise *combination* of them does not appear to have been itself copied from any individual source manuscript. At least, a brief survey of other surviving Carolingian and post-Carolingian Giant Bibles does not duplicate it.[36] Besides this specificity, the legibility of the

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[35] Here my point is similar to Reilly's argument in *The Art of Reform*, 1–10, that the illustrations in the Saint-Vaast Bible would be seen by the monastery's patrons and thus could ennunciate an ideological message.

[36] My impressionistic survey includes Gallen Stiftsbibliothek Cod. Sang. 75, Gallen Stiftsbibliothek Cod. Sang. 64, BNF lat. 9380, BNF lat. 1, Bern Burgerbibliothek Cod. 3, and British Museum Add. 10546, as well as some manuscripts that, because of damage, cannot really be considered evidence for traditions in

combination as a manifesto on Bible reading is further suggested by its authorship and

content. Alcuin and Jerome were both regarded as learned figures well worth reading,

even besides their special, even preeminent association with the Bible. Most obviously,

from the wide-ranging works of these two authors have been selected texts that do indeed

tell the reader or auditor specifically about the Bible. Here, relatively straightforward

summaries and glosses are accompanied by commemoration of patrons and pleas for the

memory of (and propitiatory prayers for) the authors. Finally, of great importance for my

project despite their comparative brevity and subtlety, there are also found in these works

some suggestive reflections on how to read the Bible—not only technically, as a

pragmatic skill, but also as a ritual and even as a transcendental, redemptive act—and on

how to *understand* it: that is, on *how it signifies*, its particular semiosis and the human

role therein. It is thus for an understanding of the biblical semiotics woven by the

copyists at Cluny from the diffuse Latin Christian tradition (and its increasingly dominant

Carolingian sub-branch) available to them that I now read these texts.

The first text is substantially that given as Carmen 69 in the *Monumenta*

Germaniae Historica: approximately 90% of its two hundred lines come from that work

(though not in precisely the same order), with the first nineteen corresponding to the

beginning of Carmen 68 (which in the *MGH* goes on for several more lines).[37] This is an

interesting wrinkle, and probably reflects the important role of orality in the transmission

of the *carmini* (which were, after all, poems, hymns, and songs, and thus essentially to be

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introductory/prefatory material. Many of these Bibles include letters from Jerome and dedicatory poems, but none reproduce the precise collection found in BNF lat. 15176.

[37] Together these poems appear in the *Antiquitates: Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 1, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 287–292.

performed aloud). But given the underdeveloped literature on the *carmini* of Alcuin, their

dizzying number and variety, and the fact that it lies outside the scope of the current

project, I will not substantially pursue this question.[38]

Despite its divergence from the modern edited edition, the poem as it appears in

the Cluny Bible is quite thematically coherent. The first eighteen or twenty lines, which

the *MGH* gives as the beginning of Carmen 68, are an extremely rapid survey-summary

of the books of the Bible, generally with a reference to their reputed author and/or their

semi-official grouping among the prophets, or wisdom books, or Gospels, and so on.

Next come four lines, taken from the very *end* of Carmen 69 as given in the *MGH*,

describing how Ezra, the fifth-century (BCE) Torah-reformer of contested historicity,

restored "these holy books burnt up in destruction by the enemy."[39] Following this

reference to Ezra, we encounter the first of several *figurae*, found throughout these

introductory texts, that offer salvation to the reader (often specifically to a *lector* reading

aloud to others) *specifically* through the act of reading scripture or, even more

specifically, the Cluny Bible in particular.[40] In this case, Alcuin alleges that, if one reads

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[38] D. A. Bullough, "Alcuin's Cultural Influence: the Evidence of the Manuscripts," in *Alcuin of York Scholar at the Carolingian Court*, ed. L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (Groningen, Netherlands: Egbert Forsten, 1998), 3.

[39] BNF lat 15176, 1r (the poem itself runs from 1r onto 2r), referencing the destruction of the First Temple and the dispersal of the Hebrews by the Neo-Babylonian Empire in the late-mid sixth century.

[40] The classic treatment of *figura* is found in Erich Auerbach's essay of the same name, included in the collection of his writings entitled *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 11–76. Here, Auerbach defines it as a combination of pre-Christian Roman rhetoric and Pauline thought brought to fruition among the Church Fathers. Essentially, the *figura* is the "fulfillment" of a prior historical event or episode by a subsequent one, such that the latter reveals the former as a sign or portent of the latter: "The relation between the two events is revealed by an accord or similarity . . . often vague similarities in the structure of events or in their attendant circumstances sufice to make the *figura* recognizable; to find it, one had to be determined to interpret it in a certain way," ibid., 29. Distinguishing *figura* from "most of the allegorical forms known to us," Auerbach emphasizes the "historicity both of the sign and what it signifies," ibid., 54. This method of interpretation played a key role in making the Old Testament component of the emerging Christian Bible, in particular, of interest to

in the proper spirit, they will be "drawn from the flames and blacknesses," just as was done to/with the "holy books" by Ezra after the Babylonian Captivity.[41] Besides the striking theological—more accurately, soteriological—implications of this *figura*, we may also note that it analogizes the reader of Alcuin's address *as writing, or scripture, itself*. The soul of the reader is plucked from the blackness and fire of damnation in just the same way that Ezra rescued the scriptures from temporal, historical destruction by the fires of the Babylonian conquest.

Next, the Cluny version follows the *MGH* Carmen 69 straight through to its end, with the sole curious excerption of the three lines describing the letters of Paul in the New Testament. The first thirty or so lines of this section place the divine revelation of holy scripture in the historical and soteriological context of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Here, scripture is figured as a kind of saving grace, a way back offered to man by God even at the moment (or shortly thereafter) of banishment from the primordial earthly paradise. Alcuin does not directly reference the incarnation and sacrifice of the Christ here, and neither does he specifically refer to any historically concrete act of scripture reading; to my mind, this means that this account of scripture as a divine dispensation of grace cannot be rightly called a true *figura*. Nevertheless, its equation or parallel with the incarnation of Christ, of God-in-man, seems not only obvious but inescapable. And it clearly builds on the earlier *figura*, in which Ezra's

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Western Romans and their Germanic successors, ibid., 52. But it was also crucial in elaborating a mode of historical thought that understood all earthly events as both concrete and real but also as emanations of a more ultimate, and more ultimately "true," divine reality, ibid., 58.

[41] From here on I cite the *MGH*: 292.

textual reconstruction is actualized by the modern reader's salvation-through-reading. Already, therefore, a striking, and even possibly heretical, equivalence is suggested.

Most of the remaining lines (around 170) are rather in the spirit of the first twenty: brief summaries of each book, relating the most famous stories and placing them in the broader context of the Bible as an assemblage. The last twenty to thirty lines proclaim the importance and beauty of scripture and assert an indispensable role for them in understanding God and Heaven, and (yet again) in achieving salvation. They also instruct a reader to make proper use of the classical/medieval system of punctuation for reading aloud, *cola et commata* and the various headings of the manuscript, and offer a blessing for Charlemagne.

The role of this text, therefore, is best thought of as a summary of and perhaps introduction to the Bible—not an introduction to studying and interpreting the Bible, a role fulfilled by the text that follows it, Jerome's letter to Paulinus, nor a devotional or ritual introduction to the Bible, reflecting on the spiritual and transcendental nature of Bible reading as an *act* (though, as we saw, this first hymn does express this idea in passing), as in the Alcuin poem that comes after Jerome's letter and closes out this introductory composite manifesto. Instead this poem tells, in brief, what writings are in the Bible and why, in the context of a Christian cosmology and historical narrative, this assemblage arose. As scholars of the Bible and Christians in general both today and a thousand years ago are well aware, the Bible is a complex and challenging collection of texts, whose origins (sometimes located, more likely than not, in primarily oral traditions) span centuries: whether one adopts a hard-nosed, academic, secular approach or one located fully and firmly within the religious tradition of the Abrahamic triad, all agree

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that the earliest texts of the Bible date from long before the sixth century BCE, while the most recent come from the mid or even late first century CE. On top of this, most individual books themselves spring from a complex, fragmentary, and contested textual tradition, and the decision of which to include in the Bible, like efforts at biblical translation, remained contested throughout the medieval period. On top of this temporal complexity, moreover, are wide divergences in genre—some books are law, some are poetry, some history, others letters, and so on.

These challenges were also appreciated in the early and high Middle Ages; in this light, I suggest that this poem, at least in the specific context of the Cluny Bible, was likely intended as a kind of basic orientation for one first approaching the Bible as a unitary, not to mention *written*, assemblage. Here we should note that this was most likely *not* how the average monk (let alone magnate or peasant) would have approached it; in general, monks would have experienced "the Bible" as but one source (albeit a very important one) from which some of the dizzying array of readings, constantly combined and recombined in complex and seasonally-varying patterns, that made up the liturgy were drawn. Inattentive, disinterested, dim, or new (whether *oblati* or *conversi*) monks probably had only a vague sense of "the Bible." To such a one, it likely seemed a diaphanous category under which those of their brothers more involved in the staging of the liturgy grouped some of the readings, experienced aurally by the hypothetical monk whose perspective we are currently imagining, that they continually ranged and rearranged before him. How well would our dunce, dullard, or novice grasp the difference between, say, a homily of Gregory the Great and a reading from Jeremiah, or between a reading from the *vita* of a medieval saint and a reading from Acts or Job?

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Certainly a more, or even only somewhat attentive member of the community could quickly build upon the distinctions between different parts of the liturgy—different hours in the daily office, the different sequences of readings and responses and of psalmody, the yearly cycle of the liturgical calendar and the commemoration of various feasts with special pomp and extended services—to aid a clear apprehension of Bible texts as such. He also would probably have been able to detect differing dictions, syntaxes, and even vocabularies, at least between the extremes of biblical texts and *vitae* written only a generation or two before his own.

Therefore, I suggest that this poem might have been intended (by Alcuin as well as the Cluniac copyists working around the turn of the millennium?), though perhaps not exclusively, as an introduction to a more active use and apprehension of the Bible by such an attentive monk. This introduction could have served as the first course for a brother being groomed at least as a lector, if not for some higher liturgical role such as hebdomarius, cantor, or armarius. Susan Boynton has discussed the pedagogical use of hymns and psalms in particular in a number of works, noting in particular that "monastic education combined learning the monastic life with the study of grammar, which was taught primarily through the liturgy. Given the degree of attention focused on 'Ut queant laxis' in the commentary tradition, it comes as no surprise that the hymn provides the ideal text for teaching the central themes of monasticism. . ."[42] Similarly, Alcuin's hymn,

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[42] Susan Boynton, "Orality, Literacy, and the Early Notation of Office Hymns," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 1 (2003), 112. For more on the pedagogical uses of hymn glosses, see also Boynton, "Glosses on the Office Hymns in Eleventh-Century Continental Hymnaries," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 11 (2001): 1–26 and Boynton, "The Didactic Function and Context of Eleventh-Century Glossed Hymnaries," in *Der lateinische Hymnus im Mittelalter: Überlieferung-Ästhetik-*Ausstrahlung, ed. Andreas Haug, Christoph März, and Lorenz Welker, Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi, Subsidia 4 (Kassel, Germany: Bärnreiter, 2004), 301–329..

here and in general, might have functioned as an introduction to the Bible as a collection of (sacred) history and literature. Besides its content, the verse form of the text would have functioned as a learning aid, making it easier to remember and, crucially, to remember in the order presented.[43] An oral tradition of this and other poems (of Alcuin and other monastic or clerical writers) is certainly plausible enough, and might explain the variance between the Cluny Bible text of the poem and that of the *MGH*—even if this poem were stitched together by Cluniac copyists directly from other *carmini* of Alcuin available to them in written form, this willingness and ability to combine and recombine texts in modular fashion is characteristic of an oral poetic tradition.[44]

The content of the poem is certainly introductory and expository. In the main body of the poem, the treatment of most individual books is quick and often includes reference to their ordinal number: "This fifth book [Deuteronomy] consists in a sermon [*sermo*; conversation, discourse] / Recalling to the mind God's gifts to the people [the wandering Hebrews/Israelites] . . . And in turn the sixth [book], Thomas, holds his deeds / Indeed thus is it named for him . . ." Many of the summaries are striking and memorable: "Indeed here are written the deeds of the Prophet Samuel / And Saul who destroyed the Philistine with the iron sword." They frequently put the book into a broader historical context, as when Alcuin writes that "Jeroboam took up the lineages of Samaria / A kingdom that cultivated vice above all," or group the books together by topic or genre: "Then there are the famous volumes of the prophets / Which sing of the coming

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[43] Certainly the author of the present study is not alone in having learned, as a child, the books of the Old Testament as a catchy little song in Sunday school. This is essentially the same principle, though of course in a very different context and at a much diminished level of complexity/detail.

[44] See Chapter 3, note 72, above.

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days of Christ / First are these twice eight booklets [chapters] of Jeremiah / Here the forerunner of Josiah and the people." These are the kind of quick, straightforward, and significant tidbits upon which one could begin to develop a finer appreciation for the range, variety, and typological subdivisions of the Bible; one who learned this poem would grasp, for example, the distinction between Leviticus as a book "describ[ing] the rite of the priests / And of the Levites . . ." and Kings as a history—specifically one describing a time after Joshua's wars and the rule of the judges. These distinctions, once made, would reinforce and be reinforced by each new reading from scripture; whatever impression an attentive listener (or *lector*) took from a given reading would become associated in his mind with the memorable account of the book in question given in Alcuin's poem.

Thus the key that the summaries in Alcuin's poem provide is *context*. Even the dullards must have sensed that some rational or semi-rational order governed the shifting array of innumerable and idiosyncratic texts they sang and listened to through the liturgical year; this poem is not an effort to apprehend that order in its entirety, but it did offer a window on one of the most important *sub*-systems of those ritual texts, that of "the Bible"—like the novel physical form of the pandect, this poem suggested that a large number of those texts were of a type, and that they might be not only gathered but also grasped, approached, viewed, and studied together. It is difficult for a modern reader, at least one coming from a Christian or Abrahamic tradition, to loosen the powerful conceptual unity of "the Bible" in their own mind, but doing so is necessary to grasp the role that this poem and the pandect in general played in monastic experience: for that modern conceptual unity springs from an ongoing, lifetime experience of the Bible,

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always (in English) with a singular, definite article, and always in a single, portable, ubiquitous volume. The experience of the Bible among the rank-and-file at Cluny in the tenth and eleventh century could hardly have been more different: today a chapter of Isaiah and a run of Psalms, a few months later, Jeremiah, all ensconced in reverberating layers of homily and hymn—and all completely oral and aural. Their counterpart to our mental effort at dissolution is embodied in the production and physical reality of BNF lat 15176, and in the didactic approach of this (composite!) poem of Alcuin's; theirs was an effort at agglutination, concatenation, and perhaps especially at internal ordering and rationalization.

A full accounting of all the pyschodynamical and semiotic-ideological implications of this process, by which one of the key signs of the Western tradition was totally transformed, is far beyond the scope of the present project. Nevertheless, this contrast between the rank-and-file monk's apprehension or experience of "the Bible" and that of the modern Christian offers a powerful example of the progression from orality to literacy/literality suggested by Walter Ong and Marshall McLuhan, which bears a passing comment. In this progression, a key set of texts is transcribed from an extremely complex communal performance and mapped onto a quite specifically spatial, *visual* field. Besides altering the "ratio" of the senses, with all the momentous and subtle results McLuhan emphasized, this move also transforms the social relationships that exist to and through the texts. Precisely the most sacred pinnacle of speech is pulled out of the transitory moment or event and set into a physical form. This physical form, quite obviously, has gone on to completely supplant the former embodied, aural, ritual, *communal* vessel as the primary experience of that speech-which-is-no-longer-speech. The psychological,

cultural, or, most accurately, semiotic-ideological consequences of this transformation are immense. The social, that is, *hierarchical* effects, too, have been discussed, most famously by Brian Stock, who coined the evocative phrase, "textual communities."[45] It is often overlooked that Stock coined this term specifically in an effort to conceptualize eleventh- and twelfth-century heretical and reform movements; this recollection has many important implications for how we understand precisely what Stock meant, as well as for our understanding of heresy and the effects on social hierarchy and community of changing media technologies and their attendant practices.[46] Stock's point in examining high medieval heresies as "textual communities" was to substantiate his thesis that "literacy influenced group organization."[47] In Stock's chosen examples (list them), it did so in that

> eleventh-century dissenters may not have shared profound doctrinal similarities or profound social origins, but *they demonstrated a parallel use of texts*, both to structure the internal behaviour of the group's members and to provide solidarity against the outside world. . . . What was essential to a textual community was not a written version of a text, although that was sometimes present, but an individual who, having mastered it, then utilized it for reforming a group's thought and action.[48]

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[45] Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 88–90.

[46] Ibid., 88.

[47] Ibid., 89.

[48] Ibid., 90, emphasis my own.

Though Stock does not quite go (explicitly) this far, I would say that the clear implication of this account of the textual community and the impact of literacy on group organization is the lengthening and strengthening of the hierarchical bonds within society or community. Those within the "inner core" of a textual community followed the interpretation of the text itself, generally presented by or mediated through the individual master.[49] This master thus ruled not through ethnic or kinship or social solidarity, and even less through the invocation of customary bonds and authority.[50] In joining the community in the first place, its members had rejected those modes of action, justification, and self-understanding, instead opting for "the acting out of specific roles," new "rituals of everyday life . . . a complex set of interactions between members of groups which were in large part structured by texts."[51] Structured, that is, by *the interpretation of texts by the master, agreement upon which is constitutive of the new (or reformed) community*. Whatever other effects resulted from this new "parallel use of text," then, and there were and are a great many, one of the most immediately apparent and momentous is the greatly increased power available to individuals who managed to establish themselves as authoritative interpreters.[52] And what could better illustrate precisely this process than the gathering of the very heart of the liturgy into a singular,

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[49] Ibid., 89–90.

[50] Ibid., 89.

[51] Ibid., 90. See also ibid., 101.

[52] As Stock notes, old-fashioned personal charisma of a kind not erroneously associated with pre-literate/legalistic forms of authority (desert holy men, conquering kings) often played an important role in this establishment. Ibid., 89.

material object, which might be possessed and physically controlled by an individual in a

way communal performance never could?[53]

Returning to Alcuin's poem, it is important to note that it offers not only historical

and bibliological context for each various book, but also a much broader, indeed

soteriological and transcendental, context for the Bible as a (singular) whole. Following

the reference to Ezra's project of scriptural recovery and reconstruction, Alcuin writes the

following lines:

When the first man was driven from the beautiful garden

Into this tragic state, that is, in sorrowful death,

Lamenting and accursed, with worthy propitiatory deeds of the flesh

Equally useless for his benefit as for all his offspring:

And yet, omnipotent, he [God] dispensed good to all,

Already in pity a work of great piety

But with overflowing tears, our mild solace,

He brought from heaven in his goodness.

For this he is to be praised always, loved

Equally by the breast, mind, and hand of all.

The mind conscious of right shall be able to have any good thing,

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[53] In the monastic context specifically, Steven Vanderputten and Isabelle Cochelin have pointed to the ways new written textual forms corresponded to, and possibly drove, the significant increase in abbatial authority observable from the late eleventh century onward. See Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 242–243 and 250–252 and Vanderputten, "Monastic Reform, Abbatial Leadership, and the Instrumentation of Cluniac Discipline."

Of this, the highest grace of all [that he] gave.

Accordingly, among these are the greatest gifts of the books

Which sing of things in turn through all time

And retain, with the saying from God, the origins of the world

And set forth as music holy Christ

In which the reason of man is given, fixed, and cultivated

As of God Himself, the truth of whom is the way, life, and salvation.

May he, pure in heart, read and hold these,

to live with Christ forever in the arc of the sky.[54]

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[54] "Dum primus pulchro fuerat homo pulsus ab horto

In hanc, pro, miseram morte dolore diem,

Infandi et gemuit condigna piacula facti

Cum tota pariter prole salutis inops:

Non tamen omnipotens bonitas dimiserat omne

In miseros magnae iam pietatis opus,

Plurima sed mitis lacrimis solacia nostris

Attulit e caelis in bonitate sua.

Illius ut semper pietas laudetur, ametur,

Cunctorum pariter pectore, mente, manu.

Quicquid habere boni poterit mens conscia recti,

Illius hoc totum gratia summa dedit.

Inter quae siquidem sunt maxima dona librorum,

Qui series rerum et tempora cuncta canunt,

Et dictante deo retinent primordia mundi,

Et christum saeclis praececinere pium,

In quibus et homini ratio est data certa colendi

Ipsa deum, vera est quae via, vita, salus.

Hos legat et teneat, placeat cui pectore puro

Vivere cum Christo perpes in arce poli," *MGH*, 288.

Here the scriptures are clearly presented as a dispensation of divine grace. They were given, "from Heaven," in response to humankind's expulsion from the Garden. They are contrasted with the "worthy propitiatory deeds of the flesh" that were "useless" both to Adam and his offspring. These lines also suggest that Bible reading (listening, study) can itself redeem humans, or at least play an important role in their redemption. Though, again, a proper historically-conscious theological investigation into the question of orthodox Christian soteriology is beyond the scope of my work here, to my mind this suggestion likely skirted heresy (or at least significant unorthodoxy) in the eleventh century as it does even today—the most straightforward reading of it would give rather too much efficacy in salvation to individual, mortal intellection and to ink on treated calfskin. It also fails to maintain the indispensable mediatory and interpretive role the Gregorian papacy would claim for itself. In the fullest account of the Orléans heresy of 1022, that provided by Paul of Saint-Père of Chartres, it is precisely the ability of individuals and groups to interpret scripture "for themselves," outside the confines of the territorial church's established institutions, which rears its head.[55] Though the account relating the heresy as such was only written down several decades later, and though heresy in the West oddly subsided until the mid-twelfth century, exactly this presumptive interpretation would be one of the central bones of contention in most of the major and minor heretical outbreaks of the high and late Middle Ages—not to mention of the Reformation.[56] How similar, and how much worse, to equate or even supplant Jesus Christ as incarnate dispensation of salvific grace with the scriptures?

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[55] Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 109–115.

[56] Euan Cameron, "The Waldenses," in *The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Medieval Period*, ed. G. R. Evans (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell), 269–286; Stephen Lahey, "Wyclif and

Along these lines, we may also note that Alcuin's poem goes into slightly more detail about the nature of the Bible's role in individual and collective salvation: "The mind conscious of right [*mens conscia recti*] shall be able to have any good thing / Of this, the highest grace of all [that he] gave." Here, "right" or "a mind aware of the straight [right, good]" is given as the key to unlocking the immense benefits and even divine power of scripture. This is certainly a very terse account of the requisite mental training for successful Bible study, but that is no excuse to pretend it does not exist. Again, it echoes the Orléansist heresy. As Stock summarizes, "The sect rejected the written traditions and dependent institutions of the official church. In their place it put a rationality based on simplified textual criticism and on one's capacity for reflection."[57] The Orléansians also believed that proper instruction in and interpretation of the scriptures' true meaning would bring unity with God, miraculous understanding of the scriptures, angelic visions, and a variety of other supernatural powers and benefits.[58] Not exactly salvation, but certainly divine or transcendental transformation. It seems likely that, if any monks of Cluny had, on the basis of Alcuin's poem, begun to claim unimpeachable or superhuman scriptural understanding, and especially a state of salvation, the response would have been similar to that the Orléansians faced. Of course, so far as we known, none did. And Stock even suggests that the lack of a strict "institutional framework" likely contributed to the Orléansians' subjectivization of the

Lollardy," in *The Medieval Theologians*, 334–356; Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002); Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996).

[57] Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 112.

[58] Ibid., 111–112.

experience of textual interpretation in a way that led to their rejection of various forms of traditional authority.[59] Certainly the monks encountering Alcuin's poem at Cluny did not lack for such a framework. In any case, the point is not that the monks of Cluny were secret heretics; it is rather to locate their developing literalate modes, and thus *even those represented by the poetry of Alcuin* (himself a highly literate reformer), among those that also drove the transformations in community Stock examined through reform and heresy.

Setting aside this issue—for ultimately what makes heresy is the explicit effort to change defined religious orthodoxy or suppress variation from it, neither of which is even remotely present in early eleventh-century Cluny—the poem also figures the Bible as the ultimate grounding of fundamental knowledge. It "retain[s][60] . . . the origins of the world," and within it "is fixed, given, and cultivated the explanation [*ratio*; reason, account] of man." This too is an introductory encapsulation of the essence of the Bible; key to the medieval, or at least medieval monastic, conception of the Bible was its role as the ultimate source of knowledge. This phrasing carries a trace of debates already so ancient at the turn of the eleventh century as to be forgotten, perhaps, even by members of the regular clergy, debates between the Church Fathers and the representatives of the classical pagan philosophical tradition about the ability of the Bible to answer the same kinds of ultimate questions as thinkers such as Aristotle had tackled.[61] But even to a

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[59] Ibid., 112.

[60] This grammatical editorial tweak neatly encapsulates the recent consideration of the differing modern and medieval conceptualizations of the Bible as unitary versus diffuse.

[61] Early Christian apologetics is an immense field, into which I have not really ventured. See *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. Mark J. Edwards et al. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1999); *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, ed. Jörg Ulrich et al. (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2009).

monastic reader (or hearer) totally unaware of such debates, this assertion would imply a certain approach to scripture: one that reinforced and expanded the figural drive to discover every line of the scriptures as a virtually infinite chain of signs, revealing answers about every aspect of life on earth. And, more importantly, it also implied an approach that mapped the world, humankind in general, and the individual onto the world of the page. To an attentive reader, at least, the central issues and mysteries of existence became increasingly rooted in the spatial field and discrete materiality of the heavy pandect spread before him.

This poem thus presents to its reader/auditor an image of the Bible as a single cohesive agglomeration, yet with various concrete subdivisions and with all its internal historical and typological variation intact. It is in large part a mnemonic guide to this unity-in-diversity. It also sets forth the Bible as itself a mechanism of salvation, with all the heretical implications a strict reading of this notion would discover, including the elevation of human reading—human semiosis, anthroposemiosis—to an active participant in transcendence. In a frustratingly terse movement with deep ties to ancient philosophy,[62] the poem suggests "a mind conscious of the straight/right" as the key to accessing the Bible in this fashion. And, finally, Alcuin declares the Bible the ultimate source of knowledge about the reason or purpose of man and the origin of the world.[63] These assertions, too, would be clearly recognized as positions on the central intellectual

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[62] I am thinking in particular of Plato's dialogue *Protagoras*, in which Socrates argues that virtue is essentially the art of "measurement," in that it allows one to evaluate perspective and avoid its inherent pitfalls. For a good introductory gloss and discussion of these issues, see Blackson, *Ancient Greek Philosophy*, 61.

[63] Ibid., 39–58 and 140–148.

questions of the day in pagan antiquity. Moreover, they encourage and even universalize the medieval figural tendency, wherein the Bible is taken to symbolically or analogically explain all things, on earth as well as in Heaven.

The second text is Jerome's letter to Paulinus of Nola, here introduced (via a massive incipit) as "concerning all the divine books of history." It is thus significantly older than the poems which precede and follow it: written in 394, the historical span between it and them is twice that which separated the copyists who made the Cluny Bible from Alcuin (to say nothing of the great cultural distance at play). But like Alcuin's poems, it owes its place in this turn-of-the-eleventh-century manuscript to the ideological and institutional project of Carolingian Bible reform—this letter obviously identifies the Bible with Jerome's Vulgate, with Charlemagne's *reformatio* claiming a place as mediator between the letter's composition in the waning years of the Western Empire and early church and its continued (or renewed) staying-power in the high Middle Ages.

Besides acting as a marker of this alignment, what is this letter doing here? Most immediately, it functions as an apologia for the Bible and for study of the Bible. It is also elaborates a certain conception of the Bible and, indeed, a certain practice of Bible reading and interpretation. In pursuing this elaboration, though he is not hostile to the great pagan philosophers here, Jerome clearly takes aim at those students of their tradition, opposed to or even disdainful towards the Bible and Christianity in his own day; in this regard he stands in an already-long tradition of Judeo-Christian self-justification and assertion before Greek philosophy. Moreover, he advances quite explicitly the figural practice of Bible reading, praises the pursuit of knowledge, and, incidentally or not, suggests a particular notion of Christian soteriological semiotics.

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Thus, though there are major differences in period, genre, and content between this letter and the poem of Alcuin's just discussed, they share not merely Christian belief, but also a subtle effort to establish and maintain a biblical semiotics at once distinct from (most crucially in its figural mode), superior to, and intelligible within the greater Greek philosophical tradition.

Jerome does not much explain the figural method or dynamic in his letter—he rather simply asserts it, primarily in the tumultuous outpouring, sometimes called a summary of the Old and New Testaments, that appears towards the end of the letter. Here we find only one or two clear examples of fully developed *figura*, as when Jerome writes of "Jonah, fairest of doves, whose shipwreck shews in a figure the passion of the Lord, recalls the world to penitence, and while he preaches to Nineveh, announces salvation to all the heathen."[64] The passage is much more a breathless list of the many Old Testament people, episodes, precepts, prophecies, words, and even "conjunctions of words" that are "mysteries," which "throw light . . . upon questions suggested by the Gospel," "illustrate all the laws of logic," and "convey one meaning upon the surface but another below it."[65] The treatment of the New Testament in this regard is shorter, though it does include a fascinating interpretation of the four evangelists as the cherubim from Ezekiel's vision of God:

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[64] I have made use of the translation found in Philip Schaff and Rev. Henry Wallace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, vol. 6 (New York, NY: Cosimo, 2007), 96–102, comparing it with both the Latin "original" in BNF lat. 15176 6r–4r and the *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 22 (1845), 540–549.

[65] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 100.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the Lord's team of four, the true cherubim or

store of knowledge. With them the whole body is full of eyes, they glitter as

sparks, they run and return like lightning, their feet are straight feet, and lifted up;

their backs also are winged, ready to fly in all directions. They hold together each

by each and are interwoven one with another: like wheels within wheels they roll

along and go whithersoever the breath of the Holy Spirit wafts them.[66]

Thus while Jerome's letter cannot really be taken as an explanation of the figural

approach to Biblical interpretation, it certainly assumes and presents that approach, both

in fully-formed *figurae* and in a general assertion that the Bible is filled with semiotic

units (words, characters, stories) that signify many different things on many different

levels, binding not only the New and Old Testaments but also the high intellectual culture

and complex social world of pagan (or at least not-specifically-Christian) antiquity

together in a web that reveals the truth of Christianity at all points simultaneously.

Perhaps more interesting is another, overlapping semiosis suggested by Jerome in

the letter. The core of this semiosis is, fittingly, Jesus Christ himself—specifically

understood as Logos. Jerome writes that this term "in Greek has many meanings. It

signifies reason [*ratio*] and reckoning [or "computation," *subputatio*] and the care of each

individual thing, through which every [one], which halts/maintains itself, is [*cura unius*

cuiusque rei per que[*m*] *sunt singula quae subsistunt*]. All of which things we rightly

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[66] Ibid., 101. "Matthaeus, Marcus, Lucas, et Joannes, quadriga Domini, et verum Cherubim, quod interpretatur scientiae multitudo, per totum corpus oculati sunt, scintillae emicant, discurrunt fulgura, pedes liabnet rectos et i nsublime tendentes, terga pennata et ubique volitantia. Tenent se mutuo, sibique perplexi sunt, et quasi rota in rota volvuntur, et pergunt quocumque eos flatus Sancti Spiritus perduxerit." *PL* 22:548.

predicate of Christ."[67] Christ as Logos is both the human faculty of reason that grasps and

understands things, and the essence or attracting force by which those things persist, in

the face of their fundamental finitude and mutability, on their own as things.[68] This dual

function suggests that the basis on which things are and the basis on which they are

known are both Christ Himself.

Jerome proceeds from here to emphasize that Christ is inaccessible to merely

human understanding; he is a "truth Plato with all his learning did not know," of which

"Demosthenes with all his eloquence was ignorant," a "true wisdom" that "must destroy

the false," and ultimately "the wisdom [of God] which is hidden [*absconditam*] in a

mystery."[69] In this characterization, Jerome subtly recalls the opening of his letter, in

which he described the virtuous seeking by postulants for wise men. This part of the letter

ended, perhaps somewhat mysteriously in a written communication about reading books,

with Jerome saying that, "the living voice possesses something of a latent/hidden

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[67] Here I depart somewhat from the English translation I have been using. First, this translation begins the
list of meanings of Logos, "It signifies word. . . ." The Cluny Bible recension does not include "word" here.
Much more significant is my clumsy attempt at a philosophical literalism for the latter part of the sentence
(I have kept/concurred with "reason and reckoning"): the translation gives "the cause of individual things
by which those which are subsist." Obviously *cura* here could by translated many different ways, and this
particular semantic field is of immense significance for the Western philosophical tradition. Rendering the
word as care, concern, anxiety, attention, management, or administration would immediately associate
Jerome's phrase quite particularly and intimately with a philosophical genealogy for which no single term
exists, encompassing Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and even Foucault. For his part, Jerome is likely
drawing on an Aristotelian or Neoplatonic framework here that would be quite obvious to any educated
reader. The last sentence of the quote ("All of which things. . . .") is again the translation's. For more on the
large and complex topic of Neoplatonism and early Christianity, see Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, "Origen, Patristic
Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism," *Vigiliae Christianae*
63, no. 3 (2009), 217–263. For a relatively complex introduction to Neoplatonism itself, with an eye on
historical development and its encounter with Christianity, see John Deely, *Medieval Philosophy
Redefined: The Development of Cenoscopic Science, AD 354 to 1644 (From the Birth of Augustine to the
Death of Poinsot)* (Scranton, NJ: University of Scranton Press, 2010), 54–81

[68] The question of essential mutability, persistence, and identity is one of the most central to the Greek
philosophical tradition, from which Socrates and to some extent Plato represent partial diversions and
Aristotle a marked return. Blackson, *Ancient Greek Philosophy*.

[69] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 98, with this last phrase quoted from 1 Corinthians 2:6–7.

[*latentis*] energy I do not understand. . . ."[70] There is thus an implicit parallel between the hidden power of the spoken word and Christ as the hidden wisdom of God, and the suggestion that both, in some mysterious way, simultaneously undergird and supersede the written play of knowledge or wisdom. This parallel is further substantiated by Jerome's meditation on disciples and masters.

After a few brief remarks about friendship in Christ, Jerome quickly proceeds to describe at some length various philosophers who either traveled in search of wisdom or were themselves sought out as purveyors of the same. Passing over a number of pagan figures, such as Plato, he comes at last to Paul, "doctor of the Gentiles," who claimed to have Christ speaking through him. Then follows his curious remark about the power of the living voice, before Jerome explains why he has recounted all this:

> I do not adduce these instances because I have anything in me from which you either can or will learn a lesson, but to show you that your zeal and eagerness to learn—even though you cannot rely on help from me—are in themselves worthy of praise. . . . What is of importance to me is not what you find but what you seek to find. Wax is soft and easy to mold even where the hands of craftsman and modeler are wanting to work it.[71]

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[70] Here again I have departed slightly from the translation I have been using. It gives "Spoken words possess an indefinable hidden power. . . ." (ibid., 97) for "*Habet nescio quid latentis energiae viva vox. . . .*" (BNF lat. 15176 2v).

[71] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 97. "Haec non dico, quod sit in me aliquid tale, quod vel possis, vel velis discere: sed quod ardor tuus ac discendi studium, etiam absque nobis per se probari debeat. . . . Non quid invenias, sed quid quaeras, consideramus. Mollis cera et at formandum facilis, etiam si artificis et plastae cessent manus." *PL* 22:542.

Here, Jerome suggests that the pursuit of knowledge is more important even than the actual attainment of it; in other words, that the journey is the destination. At first, the rest of the long passage seems to contradict this notion: Jerome describes the learning of, or esteem for, the law and the scriptures by various New and Old Testament figures, such as Paul, Timothy, Haggai, and David. He also decries "want of education in a clergyman." In seeming contrast Jerome interprets a verse from Daniel (12:3) to the effect that the righteous ignorant rank above those instructed in righteousness, but immediately demonstrates, by recourse to the original Hebrew, that the verse can also be understood to praise the learned exclusively. And Jerome ends this meditation on the value of the scriptures by reference to the learning of Paul, Peter, John, and the twelve-year-old Jesus that so astounded the Pharisees. But while the point of these various digressions is to show how much various seminal figures in the Judeo-Christian tradition valued the law and the scriptures—and thereby to praise Paulinus for his decision to pursue that same learning—the outcome is not really in doubt for Jerome's addressee; like wax, he will intrinsically pick up the scriptures by pressing himself against them: "It [wax] is already potentially all that it can be made."[72] The implication of this somewhat hazy distinction seems to be that *understanding* the scriptures is not necessary to receive the ultimate benefit (salvation) that they offer.

Jerome's letter thus exhibits a basic congruency with several parts of Alcuin's poem. Most obvious is their shared figural approach, by which the Bible is transformed into both the secret blueprint *and*, paradoxically, cipher of all things. But Jerome also

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[72] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 97.

seems to agree with Alcuin in the salvific power of scripture, and furthermore, by dint of

discussing the matter at greater length, suggests how it can be reconciled with the

Augustinian doctrine of man's helplessness in his own salvation,[73] the exclusivity of

Christ as savior expressed in John 14:6, and, further on, the church's claim of a unique

and indispensable intermediary role. First of all, as expressed through his wax metaphor,

Jerome removes the agency of the individual approaching the Bible in his own salvation:

"What is important to me is not what you find but what you seek to find"—the emphasis

here is quite specifically on the endeavor and not its result, outcome, or achievement.

Secondly, as I will now show, Christ himself is shown to animate or inhabit the scriptures

in some way. The foundation of this idea has already been provided in the implicit

parallel between the hidden power of the spoken word and Christ as the wisdom of God,

the ground of both being and knowing, hidden in a mystery. I will draw out the second

component of Christ-in/as-scripture, before addressing the mediatory role of the church

(which, appropriately, shares much of its basis with that of Christ-in/as-scripture).

  Immediately after introducing the idea that effort, rather than attainment, is the

important thing when approaching scripture, Jerome complicates this idea. While

pursuing the scriptures regardless of understanding may be sufficiently virtuous, Jerome

does offer advice on actually achieving that understanding; he tells Paulinus that "a

revelation is needed to enable us to comprehend it and, when God uncovers His face, to

behold His glory." In essence, and this is a complex religious epistemology that one

encounters constantly in medieval devotional writing,[74] God must grant the individual

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[73] John Rist, "Augustine of Hippo," in *The Medieval Theologians*, 3–21, at 9–11.

[74] Ibid., 9–11.

access to the scriptures through a specific act of grace; the Christian postulant alone is not even capable of accessing the already divinely-inspired scriptures as a stepping-stone towards God: God Himself must not only provide the path (the scriptures), but also set the human on that path. Indeed, this is the passage where Jerome provides his definition of Christ as Logos; just like the living voice of the philosopher, Christ is a mystery which contains a miraculous power to stir revelatory understanding in those who roam the world, or the expanse of scripture, to find him. And this mystery is, to some extent, in some way, contained in the text itself. In effect, God provides to the Christian reader access to the scriptures, wherein Jesus as savior lies concealed, ready not only to redeem but to active the correct semiosis, in reading or hearing, of the human.

Jerome also makes room for a layer of *human* revelatory intercession, in recounting the story in Acts of the Ethiopian eunuch[75] who read and loved scripture without it:

> Yet although he had the book in his hand and took into his mind the words of the Lord, nay even had them on his tongue and uttered them with his lips, he still knew not Him, whom—not knowing—he worshipped in the book. Then Philip came and shewed him Jesus, *who was concealed beneath the letter*. Wondrous excellence of the teacher! In the same hour the eunuch believed and was baptized; he became one of the faithful and a saint. He was no longer a pupil but a master. . . .[76]

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[75] Acts 8:26–40.

[76] *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 98, emphasis my own. "Et tamen cum librum teneret, et verba Domini cogitatione conciperet, lingua volveret, labiis personaret, ignorabat eum, quem in libro nesciens

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Thus, despite the nature of true scriptural understanding as essentially revelation, and despite Jerome's long warnings against all those who wrongly claim to understand and butcher with their misinterpretations the scriptures, *and* also despite the protestations of his own amateur status as biblical scholar, Jerome does allow for human teachers to (somehow) participate in the miraculous process of true biblical learning.

Here we have encountered, as we will many times in reading texts copied, preserved, and used at Cluny during its heyday, a semiosis involving not one but several mediatory layers between the individual Christian and the ultimate apprehension of the divine. The reader of the letter—Paulinus, or a monastic lector—is left with a nested hierarchy of transcendental exegesis. If we were to reduce this to a strict sequence, it might proceed from the instruction of human teachers to an appreciation of *figura* to an encounter with Christ as Logos to a profound (even revelatory) personal understanding of scripture (on the model of a Church Father or, as we will see, saint-abbot), and thence ultimately to God. Due to the nature of this semiosis (which might be identified with but not reduced to *figura*), I would not insist upon such a progression to the exclusion of various alternatives. There are vital similarities between each link in this chain such that, in a certain sense, each *is* all the others: the teacher functions as, is animated by, Christ in his human guise,[77] as the scriptures are by Christ as Logos or incarnate God, and so on.

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venerabatur. Venit Philippus, ostendit ei Jesum, qui clausus latebat in littera. O mira doctoris virtus! Eadem hora credit eunuchus, baptizatur, fiedlis et sanctus est; ac de discipulo magister . . ." PL 22:544. This again recalls quite closely Stock's analysis of Paul of Saint-Père of Chartres' account of the Orléans heresy: "Wisdom, so to speak, merely descended when the time was right; but this time coincided with the moment when the recruit, having absorbed scriptures through others' interpretations, suddenly began to understand them for himself. He was thereby led upwards in the fashion of all mystics towards a selfless identification with God," Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 112.

[77] An excellent example is Bernard's account of Hugh in the prologue to his customary (itself implicitly equated to the scriptures in revelatory/salvific power), see Chapter 8, below.

The nature of *figura* is to contain the greater within the lesser, and retroactively to reveal this identity upon apprehension of the greater in such a way that the lesser is utterly transported and transformed. The hierarchy or chain is thus essentially fluid, the links transposing themselves as they are traversed.[78]

That being said, there are good reasons for this particular order. First of all, human teachers, whether grammarians, exegetes, lectors, or those setting a good example for Christian living (*conversatio*), provide the most basic and immediate access to scripture. Next, *figurae* can come in many forms, some obvious and straightforward, others deeply esoteric. They thus progressively draw the reader into scripture and train him in digging ever deeper for signs of Christ's divinity and the ordered universe as evidence of a benevolent and omnipotent creator.[79] Ultimately, however, profound access to scripture, at least according to Jerome in this text selected as a preface to his Vulgate by the Carolingian and Cluniac traditions, requires the intervention of Christ as Logos, sometimes accompanied or preceded (indeed, prefigured) by a similar intervention on the part of some saintly human. This act of epistemological or hermeneutic grace neatly parallels that which is Christ's central function, which grants humans ultimate salvation. In his role as the redeemer, Christ rescues humankind from the ramifications of their disobedience in the garden by an act of selfless sacrifice. In so doing, he cures human being of sin and restores it from a fallen, bestial state to a truly human—that is, in some

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[78] I would suggest that this fluidity is itself the result, or at least nature, of a significantly more oral culture than that of modernity: increasingly literalate modes clarify and fix syntactic relations, erasing plural paratactic variability. This principle operates here, in Jerome's account of this transcendental exegesis, at a higher level (that of semiotic ideology), but remains rooted in the slow, material from orality to literality.

[79] On Christ as the ultimate signified of the scriptures and the ordered universe as evidence of God, see my discussion of Glaber, in Chapter 5.

sense, a divine—one. Similarly, in granting understanding of the scriptures to humans,

Christ is restoring or fulfilling their faculty of intellect or *ratio*. In the Cluniac monk

Ralph Glaber's chronicle, *Historiarum libri quinque*, written around the time of the

Cluny Bible and which we will shortly consider in its own right, Glaber identifies *ratio* as

the essential distinction between humans and animals, and suggests, as the primary

operation of this faculty—*the ability to correctly interpret signs*. Essentially, to be saved

is to be human is to be a user of signs, with Christ paradoxically, miraculously incarnated

both in flesh and in scripture (with the Latin *corpus* used for *both*) as the ground of all

three.[80]

So, Jerome's letter communicates a deeply Christian semiosis comprised of thick,

continually inter-penetrating layers of figural interpretation and intercessory, revelatory

exegesis. It also establishes a number of basic principles for what might adventurously be

called the religious sociology of Bible study: such study is virtuous merely as

unconsummated praxis—it does not require or depend upon any particular attainment or

achievement, it is best pursued in the company of others and severed from all worldly

wealth and involvement, and, recalling Jerome's equation of the hidden power of speech

with Christ as hidden divine wisdom, it requires a teacher or "guide" to progress. These

principles would clearly have been understood by the monks of Cluny to justify and

sanction their particular way of life.

It also demonstrates striking thematic cohesion with the Alcuin poem that

precedes it in the Cluny Bible but post-dates it by roughly four hundred years. In this

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[80] See Chapter 5.

arrangement, it appears to elaborate upon and clarify Alcuin's terse characterization of scripture as a miraculous intercessory dispensation of grace. Already as formulated in Alcuin's poem, this characterization would suggest a parallel with Christ to virtually any Christian; and while Jerome has still not quite openly asserted it, the parallel is yet more strongly implied by his discussion of the mysterious power of the physically-present teacher, Christ as Logos, and his passing reference to Christ as incarnated in the Bible. The other notable similarity between Alcuin's poem and Jerome's letter is that the claims of both concerning the Bible fit precisely into the classical philosophical tradition. In Alcuin's case, this may well have been the result of learning such claims—about the Bible as containing the truth of the origin of the world and the *ratio* of man—without being aware of their roots in pagan-Christian debates from the patristic age. But in Jerome's, it is a fully intentional effect, and also includes Jerome's use of a broadly Neoplatonic philosophical terminology.

The final prefatory text, Alcuin's Carmen 65, approaches the issue of Bible reading in a different way.[81] Rather than discussing different levels of meaning and stressing the importance of proper interpretation, Carmen 65 outlines the reading of the pandect as a devotional and commemorative *act*—the issue is not what is understood (and how) in reading, but the *acts* that the reading and writing of the text itself are. In this way, figural hermeneutics are not employed to bridge the historical or soteriological gap between the Old and New Testaments, nor that between the time of Christ and the fourth-, ninth-, or eleventh-century present. Rather, Alcuin's second poem emphasizes the

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[81] *Antiquitates: Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 1, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 283–285.

figural identity between the specific acts of reading and writing the pandect and several different events in Christian history, events taking place both before and after the earthly time of the text's composition, in both heaven and earth.

In the first place, Alcuin writes: "As many letters as are in this book / . . . may King Charles, who commanded him to write [them] / have so many rewards given by Christ through the ages."[82] In the Cluny Bible, "King Charles" has been replaced with "Abbot Odilo" (just as later on "Alcuin" has been replaced with "Franco"). Here a key figural comparison, that of works on earth and rewards in heaven, is mobilized to make the writing of the biblical pandect a devotional and salvific exercise. Though the emphasis is on the rewards of he who commanded, rather than of he who composed or wrote, the work, and though the historian should not ignore the vital clue towards the sociological *Weltanschauung* of the Carolingian and post-Carolingian intellectual elite here revealed, it is nevertheless impossible to imagine that Alcuin and his Cluniac readers did not believe that some measure of divine reward could be expected by the lowly copyist as well as the mighty patron.

Alcuin also includes a more explicitly figural passage within his poem. After recounting briefly the story of the old widow and her two little coins among the ostentatious display of wealthy donors at the temple,[83] he writes "I do not bring a poor little gift to your treasuries, master [unless] my poor self shall be permitted. But beautiful

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[82] "Codicis istius quot sunt in corpore sancto . . .

Mercedes habeat Christo donante per aevum

Tot Carolus rex, qui scribere iussit eum." *MGH*, 283.

[83] Mark 12:41–44.

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gifts, given of the Lord from the heavens, I bear to you, most excellent king, with full

hands."[84] This is a classic illustration of *figura* as a medieval literary device. The action

of Alcuin is identified with that of a praiseworthy biblical figure, thus allowing the

perfect and atemporal divine reality to unify and imbue with meaning disparate human

events, while also allowing a biblical text to inhabit the present, directing lived behavior

and finding (re)incarnation—and summation—within it. Whereas the previous example

focused on the heavenly rewards earned by the commissioning of the work, here the act

of copying the text, or at least of compiling and presenting it to the patron, is emphasized:

Alcuin is a holy conduit between God and Charlemagne. And, implicitly at least, the

comparison with the widow of the Gospel also draws the reader's attention to the specific

act of preparing the document: the widow's gift was sanctified not by virtue of its innate

qualities, but by virtue of being all she had to give; Alcuin, in turn, cannot (even) muster

a "poor little gift"—he can only transmit the Lord's gift of scripture. All he has to give is

this service of transmission, which, whether Alcuin himself copied (or oversaw the

copying) of the pandect or not, would most obviously be identified with the specific

technical and learned provision of the text as a physical, signifying object, given Alcuin's

status as a learned figure of imperial stature deputized by Charlemagne to restore

Jerome's Vulgate. This transmission also fits neatly into the chain of mediation and

intercession extrapolated from Jerome's letter. Thus the artisanal production of the

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[84] "Non ego parva tuis, rector, munuscula gazis

Infero, persona sit mea parva licet.

Munera sed domini caelestibus inclyta dictis

Porto tibi plenis, optime rex, manibus." *MGH*, 284.

document, as well as its commission by a patron, is rendered a devotional and sanctifying act—so too, as we will now see, is reading it.

The final figural episode of this brief poem is a direct address from its author to the anonymous reader. Alcuin writes "Remember to pray for me each verse you read, Alcuin I am called; be well, O You, forever."[85] As with the dedicatory verse invoking Charlemagne above, in the Cluny Bible the historical figure has been replaced with a contemporary one, so that it reads "Franco I am called." If the first of our three episodes drawn from this poem associated the commissioning and patronizing of this bible with the storing up of treasures in heaven, and the second equated the presentation (and, implicitly, copying) of the text with the humble donation of the poor widow of the Gospels, this third episode equates the *reading* of the text with an intercessory act executed by whomever might be reading the text for the original copyist. On the basis of this triad, one might venture a basic account of the socio-economics of the medieval text: a device that assumes patron, copyist, and lector and, at least in the archetypal case of the biblical text, unites the three in the execution of the core ritual upon which society is built, the transmission of scripture.

But this episode differs from the others in at least one important respect: whereas the former two concern individualized and temporally-specific acts associated with the text's creation (its commissioning by Charlemagne/Odilo and its production and presentation by Alcuin/Franco), this one is multiple, anonymous, and open to continual re-performance. A lector using the Bible at Cluny, a century or two after its production,

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[85] "Pro me, quisque legas versus, orare memento:
Alchuine dicor ego, tu sine fine vale!" *MGH*, 285.

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certainly could not inhabit the space of Alcuin/Franco, though reading and remembering this poem was likely intended to be edifying for such a one. Even less can he inhabit the role of Charlemagne. But Alcuin's poem, coopted by Franco, *does* offer that individual, as it does to all individuals (even a historian reading the work a millennium after its copying), participation in the transcendental relationship spanning God and man, heaven and earth. For it invites that reader to figure each verse *as* a prayer (specifically, *not* to accompany each verse with a separate prayer) for the memory of Alcuin. Alcuin's send-off to the reader maintains this aperture into an open-ended merging of present and future: "Be well, O You, without end." In this way, these humble two lines do something quite remarkable: they figure the text itself, *in the state of being-read*, as the ritual space, wherein transcendence is found, community formed, and the use of signs policed and diagrammed. Unlike in the classical Christian *figura* discussed and dissected by Auerbach, these lines make the Cluny Bible itself, as a specific, physical, *readable* object, the unifying field across which scattered and random human doings of the secular world find intelligibility and redemption. What makes the widow's donation and Alcuin's (or Franco's) preparation of the text *figurae* of one another is not anything involved in the physicality of either, but their status as actions that bear relationships to God and the human soul's state or pursuit of salvation. They are revealed as alike because in both cases a fallen human humbly gives all that they have to give to (a proxy of) God. The biblical text is certainly crucial here, for it both relates the story of the widow and gives the language in which the comparison is realized. But there it merely allows the *figurae* to be recognized; it is quite irrelevant to their actual nature as donative actions.

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Conversely, in the case of Alcuin's call for remembrance not just in the mouth of the lector but in the exact moment—in *every* exact moment—that the verses he has copied are read and read again, the text itself *as written and read* is drawn into the locus of the figural relationship. Here, the thing done is reading and writing, the making and use of signs, semiosis. There is thus the semiosis of recognizing the *figura* (as with all *figurae*), but *also* the semiosis that the *figura* in this case *is*. As a *figura*, the two sides of this (semiotic) act (writing and reading/hearing/understanding) are fused across time into an explicitly transcendental and even salvific whole, and the play of the sign as such draws the human towards God. Implicitly, this miracle, which parallels the philosophical account wherein reading and writing are two subdivisions of the single semiotic process as well as the incarnation of Christ as the vehicle for grace, operates not (or not only) by identity in an ultimate and divine Christianized Neoplatonic reality, but by the mechanical perdurance of words carved into parchment and the human practices and faculties that actualize them as communicative signs, by the transmission-and-reception of the biblical verses, renewed and reincarnated with every reading, accomplished through the document itself.

The whiff of heresy has returned, and strengthened besides. This is the subtle and explosive alchemy bubbling in the heart of millennial Latin monasticism, a more fundamental and more radical change than the reading of new texts or the practicing of new argumentation. It is a change in the posture adopted, largely unconsciously but nevertheless institutionally and normatively inculcated, toward the written word (and perhaps toward language itself), in the intimate economy of thought, behavior, and semiosis as inevitably social and trans-historical. Taken together, these three texts link

the Bible physically and *figura*-ly to a particular (Carolingian) heritage, develop a sense of it as a single and cohesive document, hold it up as the ground of all knowledge, and position it as a second form of Christ's incarnation and thus as a second holy mystery and a second dispensation of salvific grace. They spin an increasingly coherent thousand-year Christian tradition, rooted firmly in the concerns and vocabulary of a yet-older pagan philosophical one. But they also make of the Bible a kind of filter, a machine through which living human experience of and action within the world is to be fed, that it may be transformed into something meaningful and enduring in a truly transcendental sense. As we continue our investigation of Cluny and its documents, we will see that, while this posture, this process, this goal, was nowhere laid out nearly so explicitly as I have just done, it is nevertheless attested time and again by the efforts to elaborate from scriptural foundations and fix in writing a *ritualized* code of behavior capable of encompassing every moment and every contour of human life. And we will also see that the brute *form* of this machine—written text—left an indelible mark upon its output.

CHAPTER VI: THE SEMIOTICS OF RALPH GLABER'S *HISTORIARUM LIBRI*

QUINQUE

Ralph Glaber was a monk, given at the age of twelve (around 997) to the monastic life by

his uncle, a monk at Saint-Léger of Champeaux. Though expelled as a youth for

disruptive and insubordinate behavior, he later rejoined the regular life, becoming a

companion and hagiographer of William of Volpiano, a towering figure in turn-of-the-

millennium monastic reform, and moving through various houses associated to varying

degrees with Cluny. He likely spent much or all of the 1030s at Cluny itself, where he

began his great chronicle, and retired to Saint-Germain of Auxerre.[1] His chronicle, in

particular, remains one of the key documentary sources of the period, and has been the

subject of extensive research, analysis, and debate for generations of historians.[2]

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[1] See the introduction to Ralph Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories and the Life of Saint William*, ed. Neithard Bulst, trans. John Frace and Paul Reynolds (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1989). I have used this facing-page translation, with close reference to the provided Latin, for the following discussion. Subsequently cited as "Glaber, *Historiarum*," etc.

[2] Because both of its timing (written early in the eleventh century) and its explicit devotion to omens and portents, Glaber's chronicle has been perhaps the central locus of debates about the existence, extent, and intensity of apocalypticism concerning the end of the (first, Christian) millennium for almost two hundred years. For important recent publications on such questions, see Richard Landes, David Van Meter, and Andrew Sydenham Farrar, ed., *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003) and Michael Frassetto, ed., *The Year 1000: Religious and Social Response to the Turning of the First Millennium* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002). Richard Landes has written extensively on the question of apocalypticism around 1000, and exploring his CV will quickly introduce one to a great deal of the literature (in particular that in favor of the notion and existence of apocalypticism in this period). He has also published online a good review of the longer historiography of the question, "Giants with Feet of Clay: On the Historiography of the Year 1000," http://www.mille.org/scholarship/1000/AHR9.html (accessed 28 August 2015). Brian Stock devoted an entire section of his massive *The Implications of Literacy* to Glaber, "Rituals, Symbols, and Interpretations," 455–521, and Georges Duby also discussed Glaber's chronicle at length in his key work, *L'An Mil* (France: Julliard, 1974). For an important example of how debate about this apocalypticism is

My examination of Ralph Glaber's *Historiarum libri quinque* is a bit more curtailed than in the case of other works considered; I have not delved into how the document itself may have been used specifically or the precise physical nature of the text's production and dissemination.[3] Chronicles would seem to have no role at all in the liturgy of Cluny or even monasticism generally, thus likely remaining the preserve of relatively few of the more literate brothers and probably perused at their individual leisure and on an individual, ad hoc basis.[4] In this vein, the best attested use of chronicles is in the production of later chronicles.[5] This chapter, instead, therefore pursues a somewhat more convention intellectual historical view of Glaber, analyzing his *Historiarum* for what they reveal about his concerns, assumptions, and beliefs.

In particular, Glaber's history offers a wealth of information about medieval, Christian, and monastic notions of semiosis in the early eleventh century—unlike in the case of most of the other works considered here, therefore, we are not limited to interpreting the text for its implicit semiotics, but are offered many quite explicit accounts of just how signs work and what they are. As many commentators have noted, Glaber reports on a wide variety of omens and portents, frequently offering interpretations as to what these might mean; in this most basic emphasis, my study is not novel. On the other

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bound up in debate about feudalism and the feudal revolution or mutation, see Dominique Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight, and the Historian*, 245–301.

[3] Again, see the voluminous introductory material to France's edition of the *Historiarum*.

[4] Witness the idiosyncratic nature of several famous high medieval monastic chroniclers, such as Adémar of Chabannes and Bernard Itier.

[5] As merely one example, consider the numerous stages and branching adaptations of the *Historia Normannorum*, begun (or first gathered from oral traditions) by Dudo of Saint-Quentin and subsequently embracing generations of mostly monastic authors, including William of Jumièges, Wace, Robert of Torigni, Hugh of Fleury, and Orderic Vitalis.

hand, so far as I know, I am the first to mine or read Glaber's discussion of such signs in pursuit of a semiotics of his time and place as such. Thus, to an extent, my reading is an effort at synthesis and systematization, a derivation of Glaber's "doctrine of the sign."[6]

Such efforts at synthesis and systematization are often suspected of reading their conclusions into their sources, rather than discovering them there. But Glaber is hardly coy about his interest in and even focus on signs and their operation. In his *vita* of William of Volpiano, Glaber writes that his chronicle was intended to read the signs of Christ and his justice as they occurred around the year of the millennium.[7] In the *Historiarum* itself, he writes that "with truthful words [of the scriptures] and prodigies he [God] shows . . ." (*ueracibus uerbis et prodigiis ostendit*).[8] This direct statement that omens and written words, at least those of the Bible, signify in some basically similar way undergirds much of Gaber's chronicle, and also testifies to his own explicit awareness that he pursues a discussion of signs *in various forms*. The brevity, simplicity, and directness of this characterization should not occlude the fact that it does, indeed, represent an analytical and interpretive approach to the notion or category of the sign.

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[6] This is an expression used by John Deely, particularly in regards to Augustine, in his *Medieval Philosophy Redefined*. By deploying it here I mean to communicate an acceptance and adoption of Deely's conception of medieval (Latin) philosophy as centrally concerned with this issue (in fact Deely argues that the enunciation and consideration of this problem is the Latin period's chief contribution to Western philosophy), and, moreover, to place Glaber as a thinker, albeit of a type rather alien to the organized discipline and history of philosophy, within the tradition of semiotics.

[7] See France's translation of this *vita* in the volume cited above, and also the *Vita Sancti Guillelmi* in PL 142 (718).

[8] Glaber, *Historiarum*, 146. Unlike in some other sections, I have generally provided the Latin in my body text here. This is because I am frequently emphasizing Glaber's particular terminology to suggest the semiotic focus of his writing, so it is necessary to call attention to his references to nouns and verbs of interpretation and signification.

In fact is abundantly clear that the definition of a sign for Glaber is quite broad, and moreover that he is not at all disinterested in the role semiosis plays both in day-to-day temporal affairs and in the matter of humanity's relationship to God and the ultimate question of its salvation. When he asks "what indeed in this thing is signified to us, to whom nearly everything comes out in figure" (*quid igitur in hoc facto nobis innuit, quibus pene omnia in figura contingunt*), Glaber is not only admitting openly what his chronicle reveals (a mind eager and able to see signs everywhere, in everything, concerning everything); he is also offering a characterization of the Christian community—his "we" is those who believe in the age of the New Law or Covenant of Jesus Christ, and who wonder why God does not reveal himself directly as He did in Old Testament times.[9] According to Glaber, another important characteristic of this community is that it sees signs everywhere.

On what basis does Glaber assign semiosis such an important role for Christians and, by extension, humans, God, and the world in general? The best beginning place for answering this question is the discussion of (the) quaternity(s)[10] early in Book One[11] and the refutation of the Orléansian heresy Glaber offers in Book Three.[12] Both give essentially triadic accounts of God, the human, and the corporeal world, and both figure semiosis as the central mechanism by which the only truly significant movement in this cosmology—that of the human between God and the world—occurs. In addition to

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[9] Ibid., 228–229.

[10] Glaber varies in referring to these as singular and plural.

[11] Ibid., 4–8.

[12] Ibid., 142–148.

providing a certain basis for Glaber's conception of and focus on signs as such, they also

establish a speculative, systematic, and even philosophical bent for Glaber as a thinker

and writer. Let us see what we can draw out by a close reading of these passages.

Glaber provides his discussion of the "divine and abstract quaternity" (*divine et*

abstracte quaternitatis) because he wishes to describe events occurring throughout the

four parts of the globe—in other words, because of a correspondence which, when noted,

illuminates both its constituents. According to Glaber, God made the world and

everything in it "by many figures and forms . . . that through those things which the eyes

see and the spirit understands he might raise the erudite man to a simple [unadorned,

direct] perception of God" (*multiplicibus figuris formisque . . . ut per ea que uident oculi*

uel intelligit animus subleuaret hominem eruditum ad simplicem Deitatis intuitum).[13] By

parsing these quaternities and "(what) of these in themselves is returned/reflected"

(*earumque in sese reflexus*), humans achieve a better understanding of God, themselves,

and of the created world.[14] Among the quaternities considered by Glaber are the four

Gospels, the four elements, the four senses (with touch discounted as ancillary), the four

virtues, the four great rivers mentioned in Genesis, and the four ages of history.[15]

Throughout, Glaber elucidates correspondences (*convenientia*) such as that between the

element air and the virtue fortitude, wherein the former "in the corporeal world

invigorates all living things and strengthens the act in whomever moves to it [i.e., moves

to act]" (*qui cuncta uiuentia uegetans et in quemcumque actum promouens roborat*) just

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[13] Ibid., 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 4–8.

as the former does in the "intellectual world" (*Illud quoque quod aer in mundo corporali, id ipsum fortitudo in intellectuali*).[16] These correspondences, especially those between the elements and the virtues, are thus generally based on paired actions or functions—air and fortitude play analogous roles in different spheres of a fundamentally ordered cosmos, suggesting in the case of fortitude-air that Glaber understands some notion of an intellectual or mental act that is of a type with one that is physical or material. Glaber also makes use of etymological interpretations in some cases, as when he associates the river Tigris with fortitude because the Assyrians live near it: "who are understood/translated 'steersmen.' Through this indeed is signified fortitude, which certainly, having rejected prevaricating deficiencies [vices], directs men through the help of God to the joy of eternal reign" (*qui interpretantur 'dirigentes'. Per hunc nihilominus signatur fortitudeo, que uidelicet reiectis peruaricatoriis uitiis dirigens homines per Dei auxilium ad eterni regni augia*).[17] Thus, though the structure of Glaber's miniature treatise on the quaternities is rather disorganized, he not only groups individual members of each foursome into referential chains, but also draws out what may be called "metaphysical" accounts of each term: in the example of air-fortitude-Tigris, we learn that fortitude and air both provide some kind of general enabling power to the physical and intellectual worlds respectively, and also that fortitude provides not only force but direction and discernment as well.

Not only do these correspondences serve to expand and deepen one's knowledge of any particular term, but their totality itself speaks to God. Glaber writes that "therefore

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[16] Ibid., 6.

[17] Ibid., 8.

by these most apparent complexes of things is God patently, silently, and beautifully

proclaimed, since, while stable in motion, each thing in its place portends another, having

proclaimed their principle origin from which they proceed and to which they seek in

order to rest again" (*ab his igitur euidentissimis complexibus rerum patenter et

pulcherrime silenterque predicatur Deus, quoniam dum stabili motu in sese uicissim una

portendit alteram, suum principale primordium predicando a quo processerunt, expetutn

ut in illo iterum quiescant*).[18] Glaber elaborates slightly on just how this semiotic

cosmology evidences God later in the *Historiarum*, when he repeats the assertion in the

course of his refutation of the heresy at Orléans. There, Glaber argues against the

heretics, who hold that God is not the sole creator or "author" (*auctor*) of everything, by

saying that everything must have come from somewhere, and that all change presupposes

a more fundamental unchanging substrate.[19]

The concept of "divine quaternity" is thus a relatively strange, involved, and

distinctive one. For some years, historians searched for the "Greek fathers" and "Greek

philosophers" to whom Glaber attributes his ideas in this introductory section. It was not

until P. E. Dutton, however, that these efforts encountered any success.[20] Dutton first

shows that Glaber's source for his discussion of the four rivers comes from Ambrose of

Milan's *De paradisio*.[21] More strikingly, he is also able to establish that the source for

Glaber's larger conception and discussion of the quaternities almost certainly comes from

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[18] Ibid., 6.

[19] Ibid., 142.

[20] P. E. Dutton, "Raoul Glaber's *De Divina Quaternitate*: An Unnoticed Reading of Eriugena's Translation of the *Ambigua* of Maximus the Confessor," *Mediaeval Studies* 42 (1980): 431–453.

[21] Ibid., 437–438.

a translation of Maximus the Confessor's *Ambigua* made by John Scottus Eriugena.[22]

This is a very obscure source, but Dutton cites a twelfth-century Cluny booklist to

confirm the presence there of an extant manuscript of the translation, Arsenal 237, itself

likely from the ninth century.[23]

To my mind, there are two particularly important aspects of this point. First,

Maximus and his *Ambigua* were conduits for one of the most powerful Neoplatonizing

forces in the history of Christianity, the ideas of Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite.[24]

Secondly, Dutton also demonstrated that Glaber's use of the *Ambigua* was far from

simple repetition. Glaber altered word order when he preferred, and often left out and

simplified parts of Maximus' comparisons between the different members of the various

quaternities.[25] Maximus' work is difficult, and, as a result, Glaber's engagement appears

to have been limited. Yet I would argue that even such a limited engagement should be

conceived as essentially a work of philosophy, which so often consists in critical

summaries, re-workings, and selective appropriations of one's forbears in the tradition.

Certainly in making this use of the *Ambigua*, he had sought out an obscure work and

freely adapted it for his own ends.[26] Dutton has made a similar point: he notes that, while

Maximus' works are quite poorly attested in the surviving medieval source record,

nevertheless "a wide range of influence has been ascribed to Maximus by scholars. . . .

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[22] Ibid., 438–439 and 445–446. A translation from Greek to Latin, that is, by Eriugena, one of very few truly literate in Greek in the ninth century Latin West. On Eriugena, see Deely, *Medieval Philosophy Redefined*, 111–116.

[23] Dutton, "Glaber's *De Divina Quaternitate*," 440.

[24] Deely, *Medieval Philosophy Redefined*, 106–111.

[25] Dutton, "Glaber's *De Divina Quaternitate*," 448.

[26] Dutton also notes Glaber's use of another concept likely taken from the *Ambigua*: God's nature and goodness as paradoxically *immobiliter mobilis et mobiliter immobilis*. Ibid., 451–452.

here in Glaber's *Historiae* we have hard evidence of a clear and relatively early reading of Maximus in the West."[27]

The point here is that, as Dutton notes, the somewhat traditional claim that Cluny and some nebulous ideology or principle or culture that it represented was averse to either philosophy or the *orientale lumen*, the light of the more "intellectual" Greek Fathers, is misfounded.[28] Besides the case of overlooked direct engagement with philosophy and *orientale lumen*, there is also the possibility that liturgical performance and ritual in general could draw individuals into engagement with questions and postures not dissimilar to philosophical and theological questions: the relationship of the individual to himself and to the community, the nature of transcendence or agency, and of course the use of signs.[29] Or, as I have shown in the case of the Cluny Bible's introductory materials and now in a reading of Ralph Glaber's semiotic preoccupations, there is the possibility that works that, by their titles, genres, and subject matter do not appear as works of speculative or systematic theology or philosophy, when dug into at great length reveal prolonged engagement with questions quite familiar from such pursuits.

In this spirit, perhaps, Glaber posits a world that both *is* a sign in the full totality of everything it contains and at the same time that most or all of those things it contains are themselves individual signs. This allows the human intellect to climb, as it were, hand

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[27] Ibid., 450.

[28] Ibid., 450–451. For pushback against this idea particularly in the context of the Hirsau reforms and the Cluniac attitude towards pagan Roman literature, see also Felix Heinzer, "Hirsauer Buchkultur und ihre Ausstrahlung," in *700 Jahre Erfurter Peterskloster: Geschichte und Kunst auf dem Erfurter Petersberg, 1103–1803*, ed. Helmut-Eberhard Paulus (Regensburg, Germany: Schnell + Steiner, 2004), 99–100. Dominique Iogna-Prat has also traced Neoplatonic influences at Cluny. See his *Agni immaculati*.

[29] I have tried to suggest this perspective in my chapters on ritual (2) and on Bernard's customary (8).

over hand up these ladders of correspondence to a vision, knowledge, or experience of the divine. Of particular importance here are three points: first, these signs are intentional creations of God; second, the semiosis whereby humans approach God takes place in their own intellectual world; third, the ambiguous relation between these created things or signs in the absence of the perceiving human intellect—what does Glaber mean when he says these chains of correspondences "proclaim silently . . . while stable in motion"? How much of their nature as signs inheres in them independent of human observation? Also important is the possibility that the human mind may fail to operate correctly upon these signifying chains. Certainly those of the Orléansian heretics have so failed, in that they do not read the obvious existence of God in the correspondences between created things. This fallibility and the specific intentionality of God provide an obvious metaphysical basis for orthodoxy, as an authoritative interpretation from which there can be no licit deviation. Moreover, through the parallels Glaber draws between mental and physical action and his general formulation of reading the correspondences as a concrete *act*, this could alternately (or additionally) provide a basis for orthopraxy. Learning to interpret properly, to think and to read, is, at least for monks, very much learning to *behave* a certain way in order to approach through discrete acts a certain goal.

Glaber also offers a significant account of human being—and of scripture—in these passages. He calls human being "the middle of creatures/created things" (*in quodam creaturarum medio, uidelicet in homine*),[30] and "clearly better than all animals and inferior to heavenly spirits . . . [so that] if to one part it [human being] adheres the

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[30] Glaber, *Historiarum*, 148.

more, to that it is caused to conform" (*potius scilicet cunctis animantibus atque inferius celestibus spiritibus . . . si cui parti plus adheserit, illiefficitur conformis*).[31] The human thus mediates between the divine and the created as well as among the created—Glaber says that "all this is conceded [to humanity] in deference" (*cuius haec uniuersa concessa sunt obsequio*), and that "to these speculative connections, specifically of elements and virtues and gospels, man is united harmoniously" (*quibus etiam speculatiuis conexionibus, elementorum scilicet ac uirtutum Euangeliorumque, ille conuenienter sociatur uidelicet homo*).[32] Pivotally, it is the virtue of reason that sets human being apart from animals, and it is the exercise of this virtue that constitutes human being's fulfillment of its nature. Failing to practice it, that is, giving in to "concupiscence and madness" (*concupiscentia et furor*) nullifies its benefits.[33] Glaber suggests that the main way one can concretely practice *ratio* is by reading the signs of God that fill the world and that the world itself as a totality *is*.[34] God provides "prodigies" (*prodigia*) to raise humans up—these include, pivotally, the actual *writings* of the Bible, "which he certainly created by the office of his own omnipotence" (*que scilicet littere ipsius omnipotentis reperte magisterio*).[35] The course of this reading should move from first pursuing self-understanding to pursuing understanding of God (*is cuius hominis animus sui Conditoris agnitionem desiderat, expedit ut primum studeat qualiter sese*).[36] Given that the human is

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[31] Ibid., 144.

[32] Ibid., 6.

[33] Ibid., 146.

[34] Ibid., 144–146.

[35] Ibid., 144.

[36] Ibid., 144–146.

made in the image of God,[37] it is no surprise that correctly advancing along the chain of correspondences through knowledge of the self, one *uncovers* that image there and thus the contemplation of the self slowly *becomes* both the contemplation and imitation of God.[38]

It truly is, then, signs all the way down. Implicitly, as a sign, human being mediates between the created and eternal worlds, pointing from one to the other just as all things do and, more uniquely, revealing the image of God, temporarily covered over in created fallibility, in the human. This only heightens the intensity with which the passages we have already considered raise the question of just *where* the correspondences between things that human beings are supposed to climb to the Godhead are located—in the things themselves, in the human intellect, or somewhere else? Perhaps more importantly, it also blurs the distinction between reading/perceiving/interpreting/understanding, on the one hand, and acting on the other. The point of correctly parsing the signs that fill and comprise the world is not ultimately to know anything, in the sense of holding disembodied information in the mind, but to *move*, spiritually and intellectually, between concrete acts of perception. In this light Christian praxis becomes significantly or even wholly intellectual *while yet remaining praxis*. Despite the focus on *ratio*, the point is still to behave in a certain way.

Let us keep these questions in mind as we consider some characteristics of Glaber's semiosis as they emerge from his text. Immediately apparent is the emphasis upon sight (and to a much lesser extent, hearing) and signs that are apprehended through

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[37] Ibid., 148.

[38] Ibid., 146.

that sense. Almost every sign perceived in the *Historiarum*, whether a miraculous omen such as a comet or spectral army on the march, Jesus' arms outstretched in crucifixion, a menacing demon or mendacious apparition, or a new piece of imperial regalia made by humans, is one obviously grasped specifically through vision. This is not surprising after Glaber's clear statement during the discussion of quaternities that sight and hearing "which minister to the intellect and reason correspond to the superior aether, that stands more subtly among the elements, that is so much more sublime, noble, and brilliant than the others" (*qui intellectum et rationem ministrant, superiori conueniunt aetheri, quod constat subtilius in elementis, quodque quantum ceteris sublimius, eo honestius ac lucidius*).[39] In the few cases where hearing is given center stage—in the case of either angelic or demonic apparitions that communicate verbally with humans—sight is still of great importance, as the appearance of the visions plays an important part in understanding them. There are also Glaber's frequent justifications for including an account of this or that portent, namely, so that people may be instructed by them. This of course figures his text itself as a sign or at least the vector of signs, thereby making relevant for these purposes the question of which senses an audience would make use in order to perceive it—of course the answer is sight, if they are reading it themselves, or hearing, if they are listening to it being read. All in all, one suspects that the main importance of hearing and its inclusion with sight as senses that operate on and through reason and intellect stems from its important role in consuming linguistic and written texts.

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[39] Ibid., 6.

The result is that Glaber's text advances an exclusionary association of semiosis with those senses used in the consumption of language and most especially of written language. By extension, it also associates this limited semiotic range with rationality and with its entire cosmological and soteriological schema. These moves, in conjunction with the notion of *everything* as a sign, narrow the human window onto the world to the apertures of the eyes even as they emphasize the universal applicability of sight. Almost without the reader's notice, Glaber's text edits the world down to the seen while also setting the reader to the endless task of seeing the divine throughout that world—in effect, an intensification of semiosis is accomplished through the simultaneous reduction and enrichment of the potential semiotic field.

Also important is the recurring role of the personal or of persona in Glaber's semiosis. Individuals serve as signs in and of themselves, as reference points, and as authoritative interpreters of signs who thereby guide others. In the first case, Glaber spends some time telling the story of the treasurer (*archiclauo*) Hervé of Saint-Martin of Tours, of whom he says "concerning indeed the life and behavior of [this man], such from childhood up to exit from the end of this present life, if anyone had been able to record this, it would fully offer an incomparable example to the men of this age" (*de cuius etiam uita et conuersatione qualis a puericia usque at presentis uite terminum extiterit, si quis referre quiuisset, pleniter incomparabilem huius temporis ostenderet uirum hominibus*).[40] Similarly, Glaber relates the life and times of Odo II, count of Blois, as well as of his predecessors and descendants, in order to demonstrate God's punishment

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[40] Ibid., 116.

throughout the generations of a bad patrilineal line.[41] In both of these cases the lives,

behaviors, and fates of individual men are taken as highly useful examples or signs of

right behavior (in the latter case, negatively by egregious failure and punishment); the

reader of Glaber's text is invited to "read" these lives in particular. Glaber also makes a

space in both accounts for the importance of textual transmission, lamenting the lack of a

more detailed account of Hervé's *conversatio* (behavior, habit, conduct), and offering the

example of Odo II as an illustration of God's fulfillment of yet *another* text, the biblical

threat to visit the sins of the father upon his sons.[42]

  As for individuals as reference points, in the beginning of Book Two, Glaber

compares the role of great men in his history to that of mountain peaks in setting a course

while on a journey: both offer reference points that allow the reader or traveler to orient

themselves.[43] This figures the great man as a sign, of course, like so many other things,

but also sets him higher in an implicit hierarchy of signs—the persons (*personis*) of great

men serve as organizing principles, as unusually stable points in a world in flux around

which other, less stable signs may be arranged.

  Individuals may also assume a special social role in the Christian play of

semiosis. In his relation of an episode from the life of Saint Brendan, Glaber describes

how the holy man, passing the night with his community on what they thought was an

island, "cautiously investigated the force of the wind and the course of the stars . . .

[when] suddenly he realized that the promontory to which they had come specifically to

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[41] Ibid., 162.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 48.

rest, was carrying them to the east" (*explorabat cautius uim uentorum et siderum cursus . . . repente intellexit quoniam illud promuntorium, at quod scilicet hospitaturi diuerterant, ad orientalem illos eueheret plagam*).[44] This realization (based in part upon a *reading* of the stars) is quite specifically and uniquely Brandon's—his companions had gone to sleep, and when he explained his realization to them upon their waking, they were "hurled into a mental stupor" (*mentis stupore adacti*).[45] Thus, Brenden, the "ever-watchful guardian of the flock of the Lord," (*peruigil custos dominici ouilis*) led his followers not only in authority and virtue, but in interpretive ability. Glaber develops this into a more general role for the clergy when, in decrying simony and clerical avarice, he writes that "since the fog of most evil blindness crept over the eye of the catholic faith, that is, the ecclesiastic prelates, the people of this [faith], ignorant of the proper path of salvation, fell into the ruin of perdition" (*et quoniam catolice fidei oculum, uidelicet ecclesie prelatos, pessime cecitatis caligo obrepsit, idcirco plebs illius, proprie salutis uiam ignorans, in sue perditionis ruinam decidit*).[46] Thus he clearly assigns to the episcopate the function of *sight* and, by virtue of this, leadership over the community of Christian faithful in the process of salvation (which, as demonstrated, is one based upon the act of right interpretation).

Of course the ultimate individual-as-sign in the *Historiarum* is Jesus. In refuting the Orléansians, Glaber writes that Jesus "showed openly to those believing in him (a) sign/example/evidence to-be-fulfilled, hidden by the centuries, enveloped by hidden

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[44] Ibid., 52.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 72.

enigmas, a testimony concerning himself of expressing scripture" (*exhibuit plane sibi credentibus quibusque a seculis incognitum, occultis enigmatibus inuolutum, de se etiam testimonium perhibentium scripturarum, adimplebile documentum*).[47] Of course the notion that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament is a core Christian belief, but Glaber's phrasing is interesting—Jesus *retroactively* offers the "sign" of fulfilled biblical prophecy; the suggestion is that scripture was *not* a sign before Jesus fulfilled it, but that it has *become* such a sign because it has been fulfilled (the classic definition of a *figura*). In a sense, Jesus restores the proper functioning to the scriptures of their (ultimate, divine) author's intent: "in this [the scriptures] indeed by true words and prodigies he shows that he and his father and their spirit to be one and the same in three discrete parts and most-clearly-defined persons . . ." (*in quo etiam ueracibus uerbis et prodigiis ostendit seipsum et suum patrem atque eorum spiritum in tribus discrete certissimis personis unum idem esse*).[48] And his role vis-a-vis humanity is quite similar: the "median creature . . . having neglected the governance of its proper constitution, and more something other than what the will of the author [God] had decreed it should be, continued to deteriorate in proportion to its increasing presumption. Indeed to undertake the reformation of this one [humanity] the creator himself sent the person of the son of his divinity to take upon himself [Jesus] the image of himself [God] in this world he had previously made" (*neglecto proprie constitutionis moderamine, ac plus quippiam uel aliud quam Auctoris uoluntas illum decreuerat sese existimans fore, continuo tanto*

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[47] Ibid., 146.

[48] Ibid., 146–148.

deterior est effectus quanto presumptior. Ad cuius potiorem etiam reformationem isdem

Conditor personam filii sue deitatis misit in mundum sui preformatam sumere imaginem).

Jesus as Christ thus regenerates both scripture and humanity specifically in their

capacities as the signifying creations of God. Humans, made in the image of God, fell

away from their nature, just as scripture remained cloaked in impenetrable allegory.

Jesus, both man and god, bears the image, the representation, of God-in-man back into

the fallen world. In this schema, Glaber figures even the process of salvation itself as a

semiotic one, in which the repair, uncovering, or right interpretation of a sign or image is

the heart of the incarnation and ministry of Jesus and the specific, central mechanism by

which humanity is concretely saved, restored to its nature, and brought closer to God.

And in so doing, not only the biblical scriptures but the very life and person of Jesus

becomes a text the worshiper both reads and seeks to imitate, thereby restoring the

worshiper's *own* ability to semiotically indicate God.

Glaber offers an example of how a medieval Christian might imitate the text of

the living, physical Jesus in the story of the pilgrim Lethbaud, who travelled to

Jerusalem. Going to the Mount of Olives, the place of Jesus' final ascension, this man

first mimicked the position of being crucified, "extending himself in the fashion of the

cross" (*proiciens se in crucis modum*), and subsequently implored Jesus to let him die in

the Holy Land, saying "just as I have followed you in body, in that I come to this place,

so my soul, unharmed and rejoicing after you may enter into Paradise" (*sicut te secutus*

sum corporse, qualiter ad hunc deuenirem locum, sic anima mea inlesa et gaudens post

te sit ingressura ad Paradisum).[49] Here the physical performance of the bodily reality of the early life of Jesus is explicitly shown to be part of pursuing him in worship and achieving salvation—as was suggested above in the discussion of Glaber's quaternities, the semiotic processes and acts that play such an important role both in cosmological accounts and in the institutional and personal project of Christian salvation are often embodied in the most direct possible way, and so the human body, living and in motion, participates fully in Christian semioisis.

Along similar lines, Glaber offers a reading of the body of Jesus, once again as it appears in the shape of crucifixion. Glaber claims that the more extensive spread of Christianity to the west and north of the Holy Land, in contrast to southern and eastern regions, "was most truthfully presaged by that cross of the lord upon which the savior hung in the place Calvary" (*ueracissimus presagii index fuit constitutio illa crucis dominice dum in ea Saluator penderet in loco Caluariae*).[50] Glaber goes on to explain that the west and north were favorably positioned under the eyes of Christ and in the direction of his right arm, outstretched upon the cross, while the fact that his back and left arm were pointing towards the east and south indicated that Christianity would spread less there. These episodes suggest that Glaber's conception of Christ-as-sign was no empty theological precept, but rather that that conception had very concrete and immediate applications in the project of being a Christian—the very shape of Jesus' body at significant points in his life could be imitated to approach him soteriologically, or read interpretively for understanding of the human world and its history.

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[49] Ibid., 200.

[50] Ibid., 42.

Two other important considerations remain concerning Glaber's semiotics. The first flows quite clearly from the passages already considered in which Glaber discusses the nature of humanity in relation to God and the created world and the role of Jesus in human salvation, and appears at several points in the text of the *Historiarum*. Since the role of intellection, reason, and semiosis are so central to humankind in this cosmology—not only central to salvation, but also unique to human nature—it is no surprise that those who lose or forgo their reason are frequently described as insane or even inhuman. To begin with, Glaber constitutes both the Orléansians and heretics in general as those who have failed to understand or perceive Christ-as-sign: "though ultimately they ought have been able to grasp sufficient meaning of benefit in it [Christ's incarnation and ministry]" (*ut sic tandem in illa sue salutis sufficientiam putuissent intellectam repperire*).[51] Recall also his claim that the heretics do not accurately read or interpret reality, because they fail to discern the necessity of a single original creator of all. Later in the *Historiarum*, discussing other heretics, Glaber writes that "indeed they worshipped idols in the way of the pagans and with the Jews they relied upon making senseless sacrifices" (*colebant enim idola more paganorum ac cum Iudeis inepta sacrificia litare nitebantur*).[52] These characterizations continue to figure non-Christians as hapless users of signs: the pagans address their worship to a meaningless signifier, while the Jews fail to accomplish anything through their symbolic actions—actions that do not represent or refer properly. Glaber also calls the Breton peasant-heresiarch Leutard "mad" (*insanum*), and his sermons "empty of truth and utility" (*utilitate et ueritate uacuis*). And there is the case of

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[51] Ibid., 148.

[52] Ibid., 176.

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the heretic from the Lombard city of Monteforte, a woman who Glaber claims came

under the pretense of examining an ailing night to spread her cult. This woman, like other

non-Christians, is unable to "read" the world accurately. She examines the forehead and

pulse of the knight, and pronounces him on the mend, only for him to die later that same

day, after having successfully resisted the temptations of the devils that had secretly

accompanied his human physician.[53]

It is only a short step from these ideas for Glaber to openly dehumanize non-

Christians. He tells that one who gives free reign to the vices set against reason—

madness and concupiscence—is "like a beast" (*bestiis similis*).[54] And he also calls the

Orléansian heretics "lunatics" (*insanientes*) who "[bark] in the way of dogs] (*canum more*

latrantes).[55] And, just as humans who reject Christ lose their ability to use and decode

signs, the spirits (demons and devils) associated with evil who manifest themselves as

dreams or visions in Glaber's *Historiarum* often appear as vile non-human creatures –

corrupted signs for corrupted users of signs. In some cases these figures are vague in the

extreme: "someone loathsome" (*quendam teterrimum*)[56] or "an innumerable army in

black clothes and with loathsome faces" (*innumerabilem exercitum in nigerrimis uestibus*

faciebusque teterrimis).[57] But in one case, Glaber describes such a vision that appeared to

him personally in much more detail. The creature "was in stature middling, with a thin

neck, a skinny face, with black eyes, a rugged and contorted forehead, pinched nostrils, a

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[53] Ibid., 178.

[54] Ibid., 146.

[55] Ibid., 142.

[56] Ibid., 216.

[57] Ibid., 178.

wide mouth, bulbous lips, a recessed and pointed chin, a goatish beard, shaggy and

pointed ears, disorderly and stuck-up hair, dog-like teeth, a pointed head, a swollen

breast, a hunchback, agitated haunches, [and] filthy clothes . . ."[58] It is clear that such a

hideous apparition, rather than draw the human intellect upwards towards the divine by

association with various noble qualities and substances,[59] would exert the very opposite

effect on anyone not sufficiently guarded against dangerous and evil semiotic processes.

Ultimately this sign itself is too malicious even to be clear—Glaber prefaces his

description with the qualification "so much as I could judge" (*quantum a me dignosci*

potuit).[60] Thus Glaber develops the negative or evil end of his cosmological semiosis: just

as the nature of heresy and all non-Christian religion is ultimately an inability or

unwillingness to "read" the correct signs in the correct fashion, failure to exercise one's

nature as a rational consumer of signs leads to madness and bestiality. And, in turn, a

world of signs at once terrible, inhuman, and fundamentally uncertain ministers to these

barking man-beasts.

Last but not least, what does Glaber have to say about monastic observance and

the Rule that guides it? Perhaps surprisingly, relatively little. His most prolonged

consideration of custom and its transmission appears in the course of explaining and

describing the reforming work of his patron and abbot at Saint-Bénigne of Dijon, Saint

William of Volpiano. In a period in which many were seized with the desire to found and

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[58] Ibid., 218.

[59] Compare to Glaber's account of a more angelic apparition, "to him appeared a certain [one, person] standing beside the altar wrapped all about in a white cloth/garment" (*apparuit ei stans iuxta altare quidam candidis indumentis circumdatus*), 224.

[60] Ibid., 218.

refound, with all the donations and political/ecclesiastical maneuvering this entailed, churches and monasteries, Glaber praises William in particular for his association with the Cluniac abbot Mayeul, who appointed William to one of his greatest abbacies (that of Saint-Bénigne), the material success of his reforms and refoundations, evidenced in his splendid rebuilding of the church at Saint-Bénigne, his prudence, intelligence, and learning, and especially for the fact that "he was indeed no less famous in [for] the strictness of his rule and in his time he was an incomparable propagator of this order" (*regulari etiam districtione non minus effloruit atque incomparabilis huius ordinis suo tempore extitit*).[61] Then, by way of explanation, Glaber offers an account of why and how "the institution and use of this custom" came to Burgundy (*institutio ususque huius consuetudinis*).[62] According to the chronicler, these came "from the monasteries and rule of the holy father Benedict" (*ex sancti patris Benedicti monasteriis uel regula exordium habuisse*), and were transmitted through a series of exception individuals (Saint Maurus) and monasteries (Glanfeuil, Saint-Sabinus, Saint-Martin of Autun, Baume) to find a home at Cluny.[63] Despite being "almost exhausted" (*iam pene defessa*), this rule and custom was well-implemented, both at Cluny and elsewhere, by a succession of virtuous and wise abbots, running down to Saint William in his own day, whom Glaber holds above all the rest in reforming zeal and virtue.[64]

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[61] Ibid., 120.

[62] Ibid., 122.

[63] Ibid., 122–124.

[64] Ibid., 124–126.

Though the modern historian is left wanting much more detail, particularly as to the triadic relationship between written record, lived tradition, and authoritative institution in the transmission of the Rule, this short passage does provide some useful information. First of all, Glaber makes some kind of distinction between several different components and aspects of the whole monastic life. As cited above, he refers to the "institution and usage of this custom," clearly suggesting at least a rudimentary sense of a body of custom or practice on the one hand and the concrete implementation—perhaps "institution" can be read to imply the role of some authoritative individual or group (the abbot or monastic institution in general)—of that body on the other. Similarly, Glaber attributes this institution and usage to two seemingly-coequal sources: both the Rule of Saint Benedict and the monasteries founded by him. If we understand *regula* in this case to refer to a written document, or at least an established text, then Glaber has again laid an abstract statement of precepts alongside a living and basically indeterminate reality. And, by suggesting that the Rule and/or its institution (for we cannot impose a greater conceptual clarity upon Glaber than he actually provides) could be more or less strictly observed and implemented, and particularly that its implementation might vary with the passage of time and historical setting, Glaber again suggests that the Rule and monastic life fit into a complex, fundamentally iterative relationship: the Rule must always be *applied*, an action of reading and embodying which in turn generates a second text, written or simply practiced, which is authoritative in a way similar to the Rule and which, at least ideally, also guides the lived behavior of a particular community. Though Cluny will not, as of Glaber's time, produce a written customary for several decades, the principle behind it as an elaboration—one might even say commentary—upon the text of

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the Rule clearly exists. Indeed in a sense the customary exists already in the form of the monks' awareness that they have added a body of authoritative practice to the Rule, distinct from the Rule, that they teach within their communities and which can set those communities off from others, even others that follow the Rule in their own fashion.

Further evidence of these views is provided in one or two other brief passages. Recording a series of episcopal synods taking place in Italy and France around the turn of the millennium, Glaber notes that these councils ruled on the acceptability of a certain monastic deviation from the Roman custom (*morem Romane ecclesie*). When called to justify the singing of the *Te Deum* during Advent and Lent, the monks did so, winning the bishops' ultimate acceptance of the practice, on the basis of a precept (*preceptione*) of Saint Benedict, "the deeds and sayings of whom were indeed laudibly recorded and affirmed by the most excellent pontiff of the Romans, Gregory" (*cuius etiam actus simul et dicta a summo Romanorum pontifice, uidelicet Gregorio, haberentur descripta ac laudabiliter roborata*).[65] This brief account of conciliar debate and reform attests not only to the authority of Benedict as a historical and saintly figure, but also shows the use of the Benedict's *dicta* as texts, written down in general if not cited through a particular concrete document in this specific episode—after all, the monks not only invoke Benedict, but also speak specifically to the *recording* (*haberentur descripta*) of Benedict's *actus et dicta* by another authoritative (in both senses) figure, Gregory the Great. Again, the doubled sense of monastic custom as both decreed by Benedict and attested by/surmised from his personal life appears as presented both in the phrase *actus*

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[65] Ibid., 114.

et dicta and in the reference to Gregory's *vita* of Benedict. As with Jesus, the sayings/writings and the living, fully-embodied practice of the authoritative figure *both* provide texts to be read and imitated. The monks' usage is also confirmed through more supernatural semiotic processes—Glaber relates another controversy discussed by these synods, as to whether the feast of the Annunciation should be celebrated on March 25, as the monks of West Francia did, or on December 18, "in the way of the Spanish" (*Hispanorum more*).[66] Glaber does not record the ruling of the synods of this question, but tells of how, when some Spanish monks living at Cluny under the Abbot Odilo were permitted to celebrate the feast on their preferred date (though segregated, *segregati*, from the rest of the community), two of the oldest monks of Cluny dreamt that one of the Spanish monks had taken a young boy from upon the altar and fried him in a pan.[67] For Glaber, the meaning of this dream is quite clear: "What more is there? Among us the ancient custom, as was proper, prevailed" (*Quid plura? Apud nos antiqua consuetudo, uti decebat, preualuit*).[68]

Proper observance of the Rule and the difficult question of interpreting and implementing it could also be complicated by demonic influences. Glaber records an episode in which a fearsome apparition appeared to a monk, openly identified himself as associated with the forces of Hell, and tried to convince the monk that all the rigor and observances of monastic life were unnecessary to achieve salvation, supposedly because

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

every Easter Christ returns to harrow Hell and bear out all the faithful.[69] Glaber, however,

quotes scripture to reveal this creature's deception, writing

> the words of the Holy Gospel contradict what he had seductively invented
>
> concerning the resurrection of the Lord. They say: 'Many bodies of saints who
>
> had slept arose.' They do not say all, but many . . . although sometimes the
>
> Almighty in his prescience allows that demons may speak less than total and most
>
> simplistic nonsense, nevertheless, whatever of their own be included is lies and
>
> seduction[70]

These passages thus introduce new dangers into Glaber's Christian world. While

the Orléansian heretics had failed to accurately read/interpret the world as a whole, and

while the general root of heresy might be the misinterpretation of Jesus as Christ, *and*

while other heretics might mistakenly place other signs and texts (such as the pagan

classics) above the scriptures,[71] there also existed the possibility that those striving after

true Christianity could mistakenly combine counterfeit orthopraxy with the true

disciplines of worship and salvation. Though Glaber does not dwell as much on this

danger as later authors, he nevertheless demonstrates a real historical and cultural sense

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[69] Ibid., 216.

[70] "Illud sane quod de dominica ressurrectione seductorie confinxit uerba sacri redarguunt Euangelii, quae dicunt: "Multa corpora sanctorum quae domierant surrexerunt." Non inquiunt omnia, sed multa . . . Licet enim aliquoties, uera Omnipotentis prescientia disponente, fallacissimi omnino demones minus irrita prenuntient, tamen, quantum ex illorum deliberatione sit, perfunctoria ac seductoria constant," ibid., 216–218.

[71] Ibid., 92.

of the variations in Christian tradition and also a concern that these variations be navigated correctly.

What sense of Glaber's Christian semiotics are we left with? In general, we see that signs are everywhere, and that they are of fundamental importance for Christians. Exercising the rational faculty in recognizing and correctly interpreting these signs fulfills human nature, thereby uncovering the image of God that each person is while also drawing them towards Heaven; the alternative is a bestial and insane earthly existence, presumably followed by Hell. Though there are signs made by and for humans, such as the imperial regalia gifted to Henry II by Benedict VIII,[72] the large majority of specific, individual signs Glaber considers are naturally or supernaturally occurring: whales, comets, spectral armies, angels, demons, Jesus, and the ultimate totality of what exists as created. This, combined with the disinterest in or confusion concerning the capacity in which something is a sign—with where and how its signifying operates in relation to its total existence—suggests that Glaber has little sense of human *agency* in semiosis: it is not clear how humans consume signs, other than rationally or intellectually, and they rarely make signs for their own earthly purposes. Signs are therefore naturally occurring (for a value of "natural" that includes divine and demonic origins) and either point upwards, to heaven, or, by confusing or deceiving (that is, by *failing* to correctly or properly signify), paradoxically point downwards, into a fallen fleshy world and the Hell beneath it.

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[72] Ibid., 40.

Nevertheless, the germ of a fully human semiosis does suggest itself in Glaber's *Historiarum*. The scriptures, after all, are one of the most important signs in this Christian cosmology, and they were created—to say nothing of disseminated—through humans, or with human participation. Similarly, the life of Jesus offers a behavioral text that can be imitated, inhabited, and even adapted. In both cases, the divine has entered the earthy mundane (writing and flesh, respectively), and this hybridity offers to the Christians of Glaber's time something both authoritative and eternal in the ultimate sense *and* something fundamentally accessible to the limited capacity of living humans. One might even suggest, from within Glaber's account, that the divine irruption of right semiosis into the fallen world was a precondition for the human taking-up and employing of signs: not merely the particular dispensed signs of Jesus and scripture, but signs *in general*, elaborated from these primordial, transcendental models. In a religious tradition with deep paradoxes at its core—the triune godhead and the incarnation together standing first among them—semiosis operates for the majority of worshippers not as they contemplate or attempt to parse these mysteries, but by a far more instrumental imitation of and subjection to the most visible and earthly iterations of the divine: that is, the actual words-on-parchment of the scriptures and the human life and behavior of Jesus. At the risk of functionalism, one might that it was indeed the *purpose* of the central mystery of Christianity, the incarnation, to make God accessible in just this mundane way to the human creature. Glaber shows us the early (but not earliest) stages of a great medieval project, whereby every inch of scripture and every moment of Jesus' life became raw material for the edifice of an active and lived Christianity. It is not possible to know whether the emphasis on and concern for semiosis was a *sine qua non* for this historical

process, but it is possible to trace the actual role in that process semiosis played: in the *Historiarum*, the scripture and the life remain divinely dispensed signs, merciful aids. But it would not be long before an additional layer of intermediary and human-designed signs would be created to make scripture-and-life ever more accessible, both to laity and clergy—indeed the first kernel of this new intermediary set of signs is already suggested by Glaber: the Rule of Saint Benedict and the tradition of its institution and usage in the West that was Latin monasticism.

CHAPTER VII: THE *VITAE ODONIS*

How and why were *vitae* produced at and around Cluny? Given the importance of the

genre in the Middle Ages, in monasteries, and at Cluny especially, this is an immense

question. To reduce it to manageability and root its answer among the numerous other

lines of inquiry this project pursues, I focus here upon the *vitae* of the second abbot of

Cluny, Odo (927–942). Odo was the first of the four major early abbots of Cluny, whose

hagiographical commemoration, primarily in *vitae*, played an important role in the

elaboration and institutionalization of a Cluniac ethos and in the development and

expansion of its geographical reach and prestige.[1]

Indeed, in considering the social production and consumption of these *vitae*, this

is exactly the process we are considering and will unveil in all its complexity, richness,

and importance: how these individuals fashion—were fashioned into—an immensely

powerful and distinctive ethic. The efforts by the authors of these texts to capture and

retransmit this highly personal charisma lies at the heart of my research's central

questions: how did writing become authoritative, and how did it make its own material,

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[1] Besides Iogna-Prat, *Agni immaculati*, see also Isabelle Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale. Itinéraire et ecclésiologie de l'abbé Odon de Cluny (fin du IXe-milieu du Xe siècle)* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008); Franz Neiske, "Charismatischer Abt oder charismatische Gemeinschaft? Die frühen Äbte Clunys," in *Charisma und religiöse Gemeinschaften im Mittelalter*, ed. Giancarlo Andenna, Mirko Breitenstein, and Gert Melville (Münster, Germany: LIT, 2005); Gert Melville, "Geltungsgeschichten am Tor zur Ewigkeit. Zu Konstruktionen von Vergangenheit und Zukunft im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum," in *Geltungsgeschichten. Über die Stabilisierung und Legitimierung institutioneller Ordnungen*, ed. Gert Melville and Hans Vorländer (Cologne, Germany: Böhlau, 2002); Melville, "Brückenschlag zur zweiten Generation. Die kritische Phase der Institutionalisierung mittelalterlicher Orden," in *Religiöse Ordnungsvorstellungen und Frömmigkeitspraxis im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, ed. Jörg Rogge (Korb, Germany: Didymos, 2008), 77–98.

technological nature felt even as it also served as a medium for the experience of living persons and their behavior? For, as we will see, the goal of these authors was not only to set the whole, complete picture of this man in all the mobile complexity of life before their readers, but to help those readers process that complexity into discrete and manageable steps in the project of personal improvement that Latin monasticism was. Ultimately, though it would likely be anachronistic to impute the conscious design of a program of living—an orthopraxy—to these authors, that was very much what the result of their accrued efforts. Though Odo, Mayeul, Odilo, and Hugh remained important as saints to be honored and imitated, by the late eleventh century, their behavior, as that of the (Cluniac) ideal, was more and more intellectually available as a body of practice fully discrete from their persons, a "field," perhaps, full of discursive meaning explicitly understood as *legible* and therefore, we may say, as a text.[2] Accordingly, at Cluny we witness over the course of the eleventh century, and especially in its latter half, the development of customaries beyond their origins as liturgical manuals and ethical treatises to contain a dizzyingly complex and detailed account of the proper daily life and conduct of Cluniac monks in the dormitory, in the refectory, and even beyond the cloister entirely.[3]

One of the clearest witnesses to this gradual, uncertain process is John of Salerno's *Vita prima et maior sancti Odonis* and the textual tradition it inaugurated. Appropriately, this is also, so far as we know, the first *vita* composed for an abbot of

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[2] See, for example, Bernard's preface to his customary and his discussion there of Hugh of Semur's *conversatio*, Chapter 8.

[3] Cochelin, "Community and Customs."

Cluny. Like his predecessor, Berno, and as John's text attests, in his own day Odo was

not exclusively or, perhaps even primarily associated with Cluny over the several other

houses of which he was abbot. That since long before modern times he may be referred to

without further ado or qualification as "a Cluniac abbot" is evidence of the substantial

success of the very process of post factum, essentially literalate editing and revision we

are here studying.[4] My reading here is based on the main, full text of the *vita*, as mediated

through the early modern Cluniac tradition of Dom Marrier and André Duchesne, the

Bollandists, and Migne.[5] I have also made use of Dom Gerard Sitwell's 1958 English

translation, with introduction and notes.[6] But before presenting this reading, a brief

discussion of the manuscript tradition, drawing on the main modern philological studies

of Maria Luisa Fini and their analysis/summary by Dominique Iogna-Prat, will be used to

ground my arguments and hypotheses in the physical sources, as they themselves

survive.[7]

John, a personal companion and co-abbot/prior of Odo, wrote the *Vita prima*

shortly after Odo's death in 942. It has been excoriated at least since the early twelfth

century as overly long and diffuse, with a murky chronology and many irrelevant

digressions. The bulk of my analysis here centers on what specifically about the text

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[4] In this sense, the *vitae* tradition of Odo both manifests one of Ong's psychodynamics—the ability to edit and revise offered by writing—while complicating his claim that primarily oral cultures have a special ability to edit their collective memory to accommodate changes in social and political power, authority, and tradition. See Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 40–41.

[5] As found in the *Patrologia Latina* 133:43–86.

[6] Sitwell, *Being the Life*.

[7] Maria Luisa Fini, "L'editio minor della *Vita* di Oddone di Cluny e gli apporti dell'Humillimus. Testo critico e nuovi orientamenti," *L'Archiginnasio* 63–65 (1968–1970): 132–159; Dominique Iogna-Prat, "Panorama de l'hagiographie abbatiale clunisienne (v. 940–v. 1140)," *Beihefte der Francia* 24 (1992): 77–118.

creates these impressions, and on how a contrast between John's work and its substantial revision by the Cluniac monk Nalgod in the 1120s reveals both the changing conception and use of documents in the world of high medieval monasticism and the slow accumulation and clarification of a distinctively Cluniac tradition. It is really impossible to overstate the value of precisely this kind of rewriting for a project such as mine: these texts are excellent examples of the effort to capture lived experience in writing at (and around) Cluny, but Nalgod's revision also reveals the striving of individuals within that tradition to manage it, to mobilize it, or to contest and redirect its inertia.

But long before Nalgod, even in John's own day, there is some indirect evidence that his work was perceived as worthy of summary and simplification by an editor's hand. Fini's examinations of the manuscript tradition reveal a text very much in flux. She bases her analysis on a collation of nine manuscripts, all from the twelfth century, ultimately dividing John's text into two main recensions. The first, O^0, is the base, with T^1 and T^2 representing variations primarily in the ordering of the narrative and its various episodes. To this, Iogna-Prat adds a summary of work on a five other witnesses, three of which he suggests grouping as yet another variant of the second recension under the sign T^3.[8] Given the nature of my work here, I must repeat Iogna-Prat's summation of the implications of the manuscript tradition of the *Vita prima* for the main edited versions, such as that of the *Patrologia Latina*, which I have made much use of: "It is therefore appropriate to use the old edition that is currently available with the greatest circumspection since, as we have seen, the organization of the text provides variants."[9]

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[8] Iogna-Prat, "Panorama," 83–84.

[9] Ibid., 84.

Iogna-Prat's warning stems primarily from the varying *order* of the material presented in the *Vita prima*.[10] While I have made some reference in the discussion that follows to this ordering (whether the particular divergences in order found in Nalgod's revision that I discuss are truly the result of his modification of John's text or merely result from his use of a different ordering of that material, no one would dispute that changing the order of John's episodes was a common editorial practice), I am predominantly concerned with the content of the *Vita prima*; accordingly, I have forged ahead and rely on the attention and expertise of others to bring to light any major problems.[11]

Besides the manuscript variations in the *Vita prima*, there are two other alternate versions of John's *vita*, distinguished in the BHL and designated by Iogna-Prat as *Vita minor* (BHL 6297) and *Vita minor extensa* (BHL 6298). The first is represented chiefly by one manuscript (BNF lat 5386) from the twelfth or thirteenth century, discovered by Sackur. Sackur believed that this text, the *Vita minor*, was the work of John himself,[12] but Iogna-Prat, citing Fini, disqualifies this attribution due to variance in the "general spirit" of the text.[13] Nevertheless, he also calls the style close to that of John, and suggests that the this version of the *vita* might have been the result of an associate working with John or editing the *Vita prima* in accordance with John's intent after John's death—"perhaps a Frank working in a Cluniac atmosphere."[14] The other text, the *Vita minor extensa*,

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[10] Ibid., 83.

[11] I also note that Fini, Iogna-Prat, and others locate most of the fluidity in the ordering of the sections of the *Vita prima* in the second half of Book II and in Book III; the vast bulk of my examination concerns Book I and the first part of Book II. Ibid.

[12] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, xxiv; Ernst Sackur, "Handschriftliches aus Frankreich," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichte* 15 (1890): 103–116.

[13] Iogna-Prat, "Panorama," 84–85.

[14] Ibid., 85.

similarly survives in one manuscript (BNF lat 5566), also discovered by Sackur, this one from the end of the eleventh century.[15] This text is addressed to Hugh the Great. Sackur suggests that this second *Vita minor* is a revision of the first.

Summarizing Fini and Iogna-Prat, these texts share substantially their editorial approach to the *Vita prima et maior*. Many passages are reworked and simplified, making the text easier to follow. The ordering of the material is also changed, increasing thematic and chronological clarity. In what is a significant contrast with the later major revision of Nalgod, these texts do *not* make much effort towards focusing the narrative more clearly upon the person and biography of Odo, the aspect of John's *vita* that likely most strikes the modern reader as odd and confusing. Instead, they predominantly reduce or remove references to Saint Martin and the monastery dedicated to him at Tours (both of which play a prominent role in John's original)[16] and to Odo's reform work (the entire third book of John's text is devoted to his reforms, especially of Fleury).[17] Moreover, the *Vita minor extensa* also adds a few episodes to John's base text: the conversion of Berno, the foundation of Cluny, and the testament of Berno.[18] These variances are important; I will discuss their implications for my research, briefly here, before reviewing Fini's work on the manuscript tradition of Nalgod's *vita*, the text of which, in comparison to John's original, is the central concern of this chapter.

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[15] Ibid., 82.

[16] Indeed, Saint Martin was established as co-patron, with Benedict of Nursia, of Benedict of Aniane's monastic church in Ardo's *vita*. Albrecht Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule: Some Observations on the History of Monastic Normative Observance in the Early Medieval West," in *Western Monasticism* Ante Litteram, ed. Hendrik Dey and Elizabeth Fentress, Disciplina Monastica 7 (Turnhout, 2011), 76.

[17] Iogna-Prat, "Panorama," 84.

[18] Ibid., 85.

These revisions and rewritings are extremely useful because they provide a window onto the actual, concrete process by which the Cluniac tradition was built. By "tradition" here I mean a heterogeneous assemblage of ideology (much of which is essentially theological and/or ecclesiological) and religious praxis or ritual. The borders of this assemblage are not fixed, but rather produced and reproduced continuously through history by the various operations of numerous individuals and groups and not, in general, according to any single plan or vision. Thus, what we study when approaching these revisions from this perspective is the concrete application of semiotic and material power to something essentially *living* and *naturally occurring*, in hopes of bending it, channeling it, appropriating it, and so on. With this in mind, what do these textual fluctuations of John's texts, lesser precursors to Nalgod's immense project of rewriting, reveal about their authors' designs upon the great seam of meaning and authority represented by John's essentially contemporaneous account of Odo's life and *conversatio*?

In the first place, of course, they reveal that the uses and roles of John's text, as well as of Odo's life, were themselves highly fluid, variable, and multiple. While *one* aim of these texts was certainly to instruct a monastic community about Odo as an individual and specifically as an exemplar of Christian and monastic *conversatio*, John's text also indulges in a number of long digressions that have very little to do with Odo. Moreover, these first revisions make substantial edits to the *Vita prima*, without significantly re-centering the narrative on Odo's biography. Clearly, much more was at work in this textual tradition than mere concern with the person, role, and history of Odo himself. The early revisions especially are far more concerned with the place of Saint Martin and his

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foundation at Tours, both of which they diminish as general patrons of monasticism in Mediterranean Francia in favor of adding material about Berno and the foundation of Cluny. Far from strengthening and clarifying the role of *Odo*, these *vitae* are thus obviously concerned with that of *Cluny*. This is certainly understandable; John's *vita* is not particularly concerned with Cluny, mentioning it only quite rarely. Baume is given a bit more attention, but much of its importance comes from the supposed survival there of the tradition established by Benedict of Aniane under Louis the Pious.[19]

The intent, or at least the effect, of these revisions is to prune John's *vita*, and to a certain extent the career and legacy of Odo himself, in such a way that Cluny becomes the primary inheritor of the Carolingian monastic heritage (itself identified, as in Glaber's chronicle, with Benedict of Aniane). This calls for a certain finesse; Odo reformed and served as abbot at a number of monasteries, and there is scant indication in the *Vita prima et maior* that Cluny was particularly special among them. Moreover, Odo himself is closely connected with Saint Martin (being promised to the saint as an infant by his father) and the regular community devoted to Martin at Tours (where Odo first becomes a canon and where he discovers and adopts the Rule of Saint Benedict), while it is *Baume* and Berno that are figured as the essential conduits of right, (second) Benedictine monastic observance. Indeed John's *vita* does not explain how Cluny came to be founded, and even gives the impression, contradicted by the testament of Berno that is presented in the *Vita minor extensa* (the one addressed to Hugh of Semur and thus dating from the second half of the eleventh century), that Odo's abbacy there had nothing to do

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[19] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 26.

with Berno—there is not even any explicit connection made between *Berno* and Cluny! John writes that

> [following Berno's death] as soon as he [Odo] was elected and blessed as abbot his old persecutors, whom I mentioned above, rose up against him. But he, preferring to give way and to be happily at peace than to live in contention, left the monastery and the things which Berno had collected and bequeathed to him in the manner of a father, and going to Cluny finished the monastery which had been begun there.[20]

This makes it seem as though Odo has fled to some half-finished monastery that, so far, has only been referred to as a place to which Adhegrinus, a hermit and companion of Odo, would later be attached.[21] Conversely, the testament of Berno related in the *Vita minor extensa* claims that Berno bequeathed Cluny to Odo, along with two other houses, and moreover that Berno transferred some of the property from another house (one not left to Odo) to Cluny.[22] This revision also adds the foundation of Cluny, making the monastery seem far more important both by including this episode at all and also by praising William the Pious as a powerful and charitable magnate.

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[20] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 41. "Igitur pater Odo electus et abba ordinatur, mox contra eum pradicti veterani persecutores insurgunt. Ille autem malens locum dare et beate quiescere, quam contentiose vivere, derelicto eodem monasterio, et quaeque ibi fuerant a domno Bernone parata, alque ei paterno more tradita, abiit Cluniacum, et copetum pridem monasterium," PL 133:61.

[21] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 30.

[22] Ibid., 41.

The *Vita minor* and *Vita minor extensa* thus both modify John's text, not in focusing it on the actual life of Odo, but by building up and clarifying (if not exaggerating or even inventing) the place of *Cluny* in an essentially Carolingian, reform monastic tradition. By deemphasizing Saint Martin, Tours, and the other monasteries Odo reformed (such as Fleury, a prestigious foundation that might have been a prime competitor for this legacy), and by clarifying the relation of Baume and Berno to Odo and Cluny, a clear line of *translatio regulae Benedicti*—and of saintly, reforming, authoritative abbots—is established.

Having briefly surveyed these early revisions of John's work, I turn now to a detailed reading of that work itself, in preparation for a fuller consideration of the nature of Nalgod's far more radical revision. Establishing a precedent that would be followed by several of his successors, Odo spent much of his abbacy travelling, often widely.[23] He made several trips to Italy in his life, reforming (whatever we understand that to mean) a number of monasteries there. John claims to have met Odo in Rome in 938 or 939.[24] He tells us that he was a canon "involved in worldly interests," but that Odo took pity on him and led him to Saint Peter's in Pavia, where John was trained for a while by a certain Hildebrand, prior of Cluny at one time, in "monastic discipline."[25] We also learn later on that John served as a prior, probably of the monastery at Salerno; though the exact nature

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[23] Besides accounts of his many trips in the *Vita prima*, see broader discussions of itinerant reform abbots in Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*; Isabelle Rosé, "Circulation abbatiale et pouvoir monastique de l'époque carolingienne au premier âge féodal (IXe–XIe siècle)," in *Des sociétés en mouvement. Migrations et mobilité au Moyen Âge* (Paris, France: Sorbonne, 2010): 251–266; Phyllis Jestice, *Wayward Monks and the Religious Revolution of the Eleventh Century* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1997).

[24] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 7 (see Sitwell's note 1).

[25] Ibid.

of the office of prior and its relationship to that of abbot in this context is both murky

and, probably rather poorly defined for modern tastes, we may speculate that Odo himself

served as (an) abbot for Salerno, as he did for many houses he reformed during his life,

and that John, as prior, was as his foremost lieutenant in regards to Salerno and indeed

functioned as abbot in Odo's (frequent) absence.[26]

      As is often the case, John's prologue gives a more immediate personal (and

social, even institutional) context for his project. In the first line of his text, John

specifically addresses the *Vita* to "the fathers and brothers at Salerno."[27] He tells how,

upon completing the copying out of another work, he fell ill. While sick he was visited by

two men, one "our *confrere*" Adelrad, and another, John, treasurer of the Salerno

monastery. These men, knowing that John loved to narrate the life and behavior of Odo,

asked him to do so, and subsequently to record this "goodly inheritance for the benefit of

posterity." A little further along, John references the "exhortation" of his "dear brothers,"

in response to which he writes the *Vita*.[28] Whether he means by this these two named

visitors or the monks at Salerno more generally, then, we understand that the work is

addressed to and for the benefit of a monastic community, specifically the one at Salerno,

recently reformed by and operating under some kind of abbacy of Odo. The implication

is clearly that this text may serve as a kind of example for the monks, with John quoting

Ecclesiasticus 44, "The people show forth the wisdom of the saints. . . ."[29] Along these

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[26] Ibid., 44–45; for more on leadership positions in monasteries reformed by Odo, see Nightingale, "Oswald, Fleury."

[27] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 3.

[28] Ibid., 4.

[29] Ibid., 3.

lines we also note that John's previous writing project, a transcription of the *Lausiac History*, also carried out at the behest of the community at Salerno, is also a text setting forth biographical examples of the monastic ideal (in this case, accounts of the Desert Fathers). One should wonder if John's reference to this project here is entirely coincidental, or if it rather functions to contextualize and even imply a particular role and use for the *Vita*. For like the *History*, this is a text quite obviously intended to capture and transmit the lived example of a holy man, that is, to capture the very thing most difficult to put into words: the charisma of a striking individual. Let us bear this in mind as our eyes gloss over John's inclusion of the well-worn humility topos—"I feared that my literary talent would not sufficiently grace the style; nor did I seem worthy to narrate the life of this great man, even if I had the ability"—because this formula demonstrates John's cognizance of one of this study's central concerns, the historical effort to grasp and retransmit lived complexity through the use of both language and technology.[30]

One of the aspects of John's work, vital to understanding its place in a broader lived context, is thus that it is pitched to and for a very specific and special kind of community. Like his copy of the *Lausiac History*, it is intended not for the Christian faithful in general nor even for the clergy as a whole, but for the monastery at Salerno. This fact is important in making sense of the numerous strange digressions and bizarre chronology that characterize John's text. Crucially, these frustrating oddities have drawn comment not only from John's twentieth-century readers and editors, but also from Nalgod himself, who heaped striking abuse upon the *Vita prima et maior* in the prologue

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[30] Ibid., 4; see also sources cited in note 414.

to his twelfth-century revision. Perhaps John's approach to the text made sense to his contemporaries, or perhaps not. But it made sense, at least, to *him*, someone selected as a personal disciple and later co-abbot by Odo himself, confidant of kings and popes, and later begged by his brother monks to produce at least two substantial literary works. Why did he choose this strange structure that has so perplexed and even vexed subsequent readers? How should it be understood? Put differently: we well know that it fails to make sense to us, to make our sense, but what kind, whose, *does* it make?

I submit that John of Salerno's *Vita* is intended, centrally or primarily if not exclusively, to serve as what we now call a customary, a text recording the distinctive style or form of life—the best medieval Latin term is probably *conversatio*, though *ordo* and even, perhaps, *ritus* are also sometimes used for the concept at roughly this time—of a particular monastery, loose group of monasteries, or reform party. Exactly what this style or form (my favorite translation for *conversatio* in this context is "behavior") includes is one of the questions asked (or at least implied) by all the waves of reform that gripped Latin Christendom from the mid-eighth century at least through the twelfth, and grasping the mobility of the distinction between its purview and what lies beyond is crucial for any effort to understand how writing worked within monastic communities. The genre thus exists from the outset in complement to (and to some extent, in tension with) that of the monastic rule, which might be thought of as a kind of constitution for monasteries. Taking the most famous rule, that of Saint Benedict, as an example, we may say that a rule includes information about the offices and division of labor that the monastery as a normative and property-holding (or at least property-consuming) institution employs, about the proper behavior (ethics and praxis, *conversatio*) of monks

within and beyond the monastery, and about the performance of the cycle of prayers, readings, and rituals known as the liturgy. Customaries elaborated on rules in various ways, adding, explaining, and qualifying.

To understand how both rules and the various customaries actually worked in relation to real individuals and communities, and how and why they were defined, amended, propagated, and disputed, it is crucial to note that the earliest monasteries were probably older than rules as specific, written documents and had been founded without them. Albrecht Diem shows that Merovingian narrative sources (unlike Carolingian ones) almost never refer to *regulae* as normative documents or to their use in the settlement of disputes.[31] Moreover, Merovingian church councils (generally episcopal) never propagate *regulae*, while Gregory of Tours (d. 594) depicts the monasticism of his day as highly diverse and generally marginal.[32] A few bishops did produce *regulae*, and while these were important in the development of the genre and its conception/role, they were obviously intended as "individual attempt[s] to sustain a private project and to perpetuate its existence and discipline."[33] The most important of these for the long-term development of Latin monasticism was Caesarius of Arles' *Regula ad virgines*, written in the first third of the sixth century for a community of nuns.[34] Diem shows how this *regula*, though intended for one particular community, appears to have inaugurated three pivotal concepts: first, the duty of the community to intercessory prayer for the founder;

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[31] Albrecht Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule," 55.

[32] Ibid., 58–59. See also Diem, "Gregory's Chess Board: Monastic Conflict and Competition in Early Medieval Gaul," in *Compétition et sacré au haut Moyen Âge: entre méditation et exclusion*, ed. P. Depreux, F. Bougard, and R. Le Jan (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2015), 165–191.

[33] Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule," 60.

[34] Ibid., 60–61.

second, compete enclosure; third, the *regula* as holy (*sancta*) and thus completely inviolate for all time.[35] Diem emphasizes this third innovation in particular, stressing its departure from the more common conception of *regulae* at the time as diffuse and flexible "floating" collections of institutions—essentially, as *florilegia*.[36] Unlike the idea of strict enclosure, which was adopted about a century later by Jonas of Bobbio,[37] the idea of the inviolate *sancta regula* did not find much purchase in the soil of Merovingian monasticism. Significantly, it was only taken up by Benedict of Aniane himself, as part of his effort to establish one particular *regula*—that of Saint Benedict—as the sole, inalterable guiding norm of monasticism.[38]

Given that, by the time of Cluny's foundation and Odo's abbacy, the Rule of Saint Benedict had indeed become, at least theoretically, the exclusive and unchangeable constitution of Latin monasticism, we must also ask where this document itself came from. It is traditionally attributed to Benedict of Nursia, (fl. early sixth century), a founder of monasteries in Italy. However, as Diem points out, this attribution is so weakly supported by the source record that it cannot really be regarded as a serious theory, let alone established fact. The main source most proximate to Benedict of Nursia's life is the *Dialogi* of Gregory the Great, written at the turn of the seventh century—if it was indeed written by Gregory, for this too is a hotly disputed attribution.[39]

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[35] Ibid., 61–62.

[36] Ibid., 62.

[37] Ibid., 63; a supposition based on not seeing such an idea anywhere else before the *RC* began to appear.

[38] Ibid., 64. See also Rosenwein, "Rules and the 'Rule,'" 309–310.

[39] The authorship of the *Dialogi* is disputed in Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Greogrian Dialogues* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1987) and Clark, *The "Gregorian" Dialogues and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003). For more on the broader issue of the work's historicity see Johannes Fried, *Der Schleier der Erinnerung, Grundzüge einer historischen Memorik* (Munich, Germany:

This source describes Benedict in his deeds and character as a holy man, but makes only a passing reference to a *regula* written by him at the end of his life. Throughout the rest of his work, Gregory gives no indication of familiarity with the Rule of Saint Benedict or indeed that he regarded life under a rule as an integral part of monastic life.[40] Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*, written in the 790s, is the only source for most of the history of Montecassino between the time of Benedict and that of Charlemagne, and Paul himself was both a monk of Montecassino and a courtier of Charlemagne, with every motivation to link the newly prominent *regula* with the ancient pedigree of the *Dialogi*'s Benedict and with his own monastery.[41] Moreover, there is no explicit connection made between Benedict of Nursia and the Rule of Saint Benedict in any Merovingian charter or hagiography, or in any seventh-century Columbanian text (where references to a *regula Benedicti* first appear), or in the acts of any Carolingian council, *or* in any *capitularia*.[42] To the best of our knowledge, the first such connection between the Benedict of the *Dialogi* and that of the *regula* is made by Bede.[43]

Looking at practical references in contemporary sources to the *Regula Benedicti* leads therefore not to Montecassino but to what might be clumsily and unsatisfyingly referred to as the "Iro-Frankish" monastic tradition.[44] In episcopal charters produced for

Auflage, 2004), esp. 344–356 and Joachim Wollasch, "Benedikt von Nursia. Person der Geschichte oder fiktive Idealgestalt," *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerorderns und seiner Zweige* 118 (2007): 7–30.

[40] Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule," 72.

[41] Ibid., 73.

[42] Ibid., 72.

[43] Ibid., 75–76.

[44] Ibid., 64.

monasteries from the 630s through the 740s, references to the *Regula Benedicti et Columbani* first appear.[45] This is a strange term, duplicated neither in royal charters nor in the foundational texts of Columbanian monasticism. These latter do refer to a *regula Columbani*, though Diem argues convincingly that this should not be taken to refer to the texts that appear under this name in Benedict of Aniane's *Codex regularum*. Instead, these mid-seventh-century texts (predominantly Jonas of Bobbio's *Vita Columbani*)[46] most likely used *Regula Columbani* to refer not to a specific normative or constitutional document but to the fact of a monastery's foundation by and under the guidance and leadership of the Columbanians' main foundation at Luxeuil.[47] Diem ultimately suggests that the addition of the *et Benedicti* to *Regula Columbani* is meant to communicate, in true "floating" style (i.e., where the invocation of *regulae* refer not to full texts but to certain signature provisions, often relating to the foundation of a monastery), that, while a given house bears some foundational relationship to Luxeuil (Diem does not say what this might be but the most obvious idea would be that the house has taken one or more monks from the prestigious Columbanian foundation for the core of its new community), it retains the right to elect its own abbot. This right of election is not exclusive to the *Regula Benedicti*, but is specified with exceptional clarity therein, and moreover

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[45] Ibid., 67.

[46] In suggesting this identification of the original *Regula Columbani* with the *Vita Columbani*, Diem foreshadows my own argument here, that is, of the *Vita prima* itself as an effort at some of the key functions of the customary. For another example of this concept in Diem's work, developed at far greater length, see his "Vita, Regula, Sermo: Eine unbekannte lateinische Vita Pacomii als Lehrtext für ungebildete Mönche und als Traktat über das Sprechen (mit einer Edition der Vita Pacomii im Anhang)" in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik*, ed. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck (Vienna, Austria: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2010), 224–272.

[47] Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule," 65.

contravenes precisely a central implication of contemporary Columbanian references to the *Regula Columbani*, namely that Luxeuil appoints the abbots of its daughter houses.[48]

The suggestion is thus that the Rule of Saint Benedict was of a type with many of the rules of Merovingian monasticism; here the expression "of a type" almost erases itself, since these rules were highly various and fluid, open to the free addition, subtraction, and combination of material. In many cases, Diem argues that references in the contemporary sources to *regulae* should not be read primarily as indicating an established and fixed written constitution, but rather a particular foundation process (by the community at Luxeuil, for example) or individual distinctive institution (such as the *Regula ad virgines*' strict delineation of monastic versus non-monastic space, or the *Regula Benedicti*'s establishment of an individual community's right to elect its own abbot). To these two suggested interpretive glosses I would add that the term may sometimes have been used to mean the general behavior (*conversatio*), conceived as distinct but often left relatively vague, of a particular community. Ultimately, the point of Diem's article is that Benedict of Aniane, building on the general Carolingian movement towards the establishment of particular texts as authoritative, fixed, and complete, gathered together the Merovingian and Carolingian *regulae* in his *Codex* in such a way as to present a particular history of monasticism, "to show that the history of monasticism is a chain of textual observances," and to figure the *Regula Benedicti* itself as the "natural culmination" of this history.[49] But a close consideration of the *Codex regularum*, especially when laid alongside the contemporary Merovingian evidence, reveals that, at

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[48] Ibid., 67–70.

[49] Ibid., 54.

the same time Benedict of Aniane sought to establish the *Regula Benedicti* as the sole

authoritative text of Latin monasticism, *he was also seeking to establish Latin*

monasticism as based on authoritative texts: this is the sense of Diem's title, "Inventing

the Holy Rule."[50]

At this point, the specific origin of the *Regula Benedict* may be almost secondary;

Diem goes so far as to allow that the Rule of Benedict may have been first brought to

Montecassino, after it was refounded in the early eighth century, by the Anglo-Saxon

monk Willibald![51] Under its second founder, Petronax, Montecassino achieved status as

"a place of monastic pilgrimage and training," attracting especially Anglo-Saxon monks

who, following the *Dialogi*, understood it as the original font of Latin monasticism. Diem

then quotes from Hugeburc's *Vita Willibaldi*, which describes Willibald, as such a

pilgrim, arriving and finding nothing there

> except for a handful of monks and an abbot with the name of Petronax. He at once
>
> began to teach the happy group of brethren with a well-governed mind and with a
>
> keen sense for doctrine, using frequent admonitions and arguments. . . . In the
>
> course of the ten years, this venerable man Willibald tried to observe entirely—as
>
> far as this is possible—the holy institution of the regular life of Saint Benedict,

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[50] See in particular Diem's (ibid.) introduction, 53–55, and his conclusion, 76–77.

[51] Ibid., 74.

which he had striven for, for the salvation of his soul and for the work within his life. . . .[52]

Whether we believe that Willibald introduced the Rule of Benedict at Montecassino or not, it certainly seems much more likely that this *regula* operated there in the early eighth century (and, in the sixth century, if it operated there then at all) as a floating rule similar to those at work in Gaul before the Carolingian reforms, than as a normative, inviolate, and insoluble monastic constitution. Other than Caesarius' *Regula ad virgines*, which in this specific conception (but, significantly, not in others) was ignored by its contemporaries, it is not until the second half of the eighth century and especially the reforms of Benedict of Aniane decades later that we have any evidence of Latin *regulae* being used in this way.

This digression from tenth- and eleventh-century monasticism is necessary to accurately approach the question of what a customary is, for the genre of customary is only intelligible in comparison to a *sancta regula*—and *not* in comparison to the "floating" or "mixed" *regulae* of pre-Carolingian times, as Diem and others have revealed them. It was really the Carolingian efforts at reformation, as the rooting of behavior in canonical and inviolate texts, that make the genre of customary as distinct from that of rule comprehensible. In grasping the distinction in this sense, Dom Hallinger's efforts to define and analyze the customary as a genre appearing in his *Introductio Editoris Generalis* to the first volume of the *Corpus Consuetudinum*

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[52] Ibid., 74. I quote here Diem's translation; Diem editorializes that "the text is itself rather ambiguous (also due to its poor Latin), but it does not exclude the option that it was Willibald who brought the *RB* to the monks of Montecassino."

Monasticarum remain useful. He defines the customary as "a way of life of many people, having a binding character,"[53] further elaborating that "in a monastery, whatever is done by night or day and is performed with a certain order makes a custom."[54] But, while true, these points do not function to distinguish a customary from a definition of *regula* that includes the pre-Carolingian tradition of the concept. The distinction comes into light only when the *regula* comes to mean something fixed and unchanging, and moreover when Latin monasticism as such comes to be defined by the unique normative status of the *Regula Benedicti*—"a customary is normally thus not complete in itself but is complementary to a monastic rule."[55] Essentially, a customary is a kind of commentary or licit institutional (regional, local) variation on that which itself may *not* be modified, the *Regula Benedicti*. Thus, the genre itself has no distinct meaning before the specifically Carolingian innovation (or adoption of Caesarius' otherwise-ignored concept) of the *regula sancta*.[56]

The customaries that began to be produced or compiled in the Carolingian period, as part of the effort to standardize and correct—to reform—the church and Christendom as a whole were thus not codes to condition the establishment of *new* communities, arriving, as it were, alongside prospective monks and guiding them as they began to be

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[53] *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum*, vol. 1, xxxii. For more on the definition of the monastic custom, see Kassius Hallinger, "Consuetudo. Begriff, Formen, Forschungsgeschichte, Inhalt," in *Untersuchungen zu Kloster und Stift*, ed. Max-Planck-Institute für Geschichte (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1980), 140–166.

[54] Ibid., xxii.

[55] Giles Constable, review of Hallinger in *Speculum* 39 (1964): 531–534, at 531.

[56] On these grounds I would dispute calling several texts in the early volumes of the *CCM* customaries, just as many of the *regulae* in Benedict of Aniane's *Codex* operated in their own day neither as Benedict nor as modern historians usually understand the term "rule."

monks, but were intended to delineate correct and incorrect *conversatio*, affirming the former and relegating the latter to discontinuation and replacement. Because the liturgy was, according at least to Carolingian theology and ecclesiology, one of the most time-consuming and significant activities performed by monks, many early customaries deal primarily or even exclusively with it.[57] In twelfth century terms, these texts are sometimes closer to straightforward liturgical manuals such as ordinals, missals, and breviaries, or to such texts combined somewhat jarringly with *vitae* or treatises on virtues, than to what that age knew as a customary, which had come to include, if not exclusively refer to, an ever-increasing collection of strictures for eating, sleeping, working, dressing, and moving throughout the monastery as well as the wider world on a day-to-day, rising-to-lying-down basis. This shift in genre, at least Cluny, is best localized to the eleventh century, especially its last two or three decades.[58] Cluny neither inaugurated nor perfected this change-over, but by virtue of its size, reach, and prestige, nevertheless played a crucial role and attests particularly to it.[59]

John's *vita* should be understood as one in a long series of experiments and expedients, of local or even personal horizon, in fixing and communicating monastic *conversatio*. It this regard it developed the function of documents in general (and of *regulae*/customaries in particular) within Latin monasticism in two specific ways: first, it advanced the slow blooming trend of conceiving *conversatio* broadly, beyond and outside specific liturgical rite as something that might be fixed and transmitted, and also

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[57] Constable, review, 532; Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism," 647–653.

[58] Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat"; Cochelin, "Community and Customs"; Diane Reilly, "The Cluniac Giant Bible."

[59] Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 232–246.

specifically, as more than mere imitation of the exemplary individual; second, it pursued a *conversatio* specifically identified with . . . with what, exactly? From the perspective of historians today, or even of its subsequent Cluniac editors, one might say "the *conversatio* of Cluny," as indeed we are considering John's text as part of the foundation of the Cluniac nebula and, even later, order. But part of understanding how this edifice was built is appreciating that, in John's day, the Cluniac Order was but one potentiality his text laid open and advanced. History had not yet narrowed to Cluny's advantage, and the *conversatio* John transmitted might less anachronistically be identified with Baume, or Odo himself as the exemplar of a usage observable to varying, never perfect, extents in a whole network of (Carolingian, Benedictine, Martinian) houses, of which Cluny was only a single prominent member.

The essential chronology of the *Vita* is that of Odo's life. Following the prologue and a brief summary of Odo's childhood, education, and monastic career (essentially, an argument), John begins by describing how he came to become a monk and accompany Odo as a personal disciple and companion. This quickly leads into John describing the occasion upon which he "boldly broke out and did not hesitate to inquire diligently from him his origins and way of life. . . ."[60] The vast bulk of the text then follows, proceeding through Odo's life chronologically, though with several major (and several lesser) digressions, up to about the point where John meets him (towards the very end of his life, in Rome). Here, John writes, "Now having come as it were in a circle, let us return to former times, and let us look a little at some more important examples."[61] The work then

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[60] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 7.

[61] Ibid., 65.

includes some highly various episodes of difficult chronology, comprising in effect a loose treatise on the topic of reform, before abruptly recounting Odo's death and ending.

The basic form through which John presents Odo's biography will be familiar to anyone with much experience regarding *vitae*. The text is divided into numerous short episodes. Some of these possess a familiar dramatic logic characterized by establishment of setting, followed by rising action, climax, and resolution, appearing to the modern reader as quite compact and intelligible little anecdotes, fables, or parables. Take for example, the brief account of "a certain very excellent brother in the monastery who was beloved by all." On his death bed, he relates to his brethren, with much horror and alarm, a vision of the devil menacing him with a sack of breadcrumbs: all those left over from his meals in the refectory that, in breach of custom, he had failed to eat before the end of the reading. As they watch, he dies, his ultimate fate unknown. Rather unnecessarily highlighting the point of the episode, John concludes "From that day the breadcrumbs were collected with diligence."[62] Others are more puzzling to a modern reader, such as a very short account of how Odo refused "gifts and presents." After beginning the episode by asserting this in general terms, John offers the following: "But on one occasion the above-mentioned lord [Fulk] got the better of him, and whether he would or no he had to receive a hundred shillings which he sent. But the solider of Christ did not suffer them to remain with him for a moment, but immediately gave them to the needy."[63] To me, this seems a curious half-story, or even less. Either a single line asserting that Odo did not accept such gifts, with no reference to any specific instance of this virtue, or a longer

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[62] Ibid., 32–33.

[63] Ibid., 21.

treatment that relates precisely how Fulk tricked or otherwise maneuvered (as seems to

be the implication) Odo into accepting the money and perhaps goes into more detail on

its distribution among the indigent would make more narrative sense. But as it stands the

episode neither clarifies or expands upon its excruciatingly simple main idea, nor is it

particularly memorable or interesting. But many of these odd quasi-narrative moments

make more sense when approaching John's work as a customary as well as a biography.

John's efforts to bound what later ages would come to call a customary within his

vita are most explicit towards the end of Book I, where he writes: "For the moment it will

be well to put the story of Odo's life aside for a while that I may explain the customs of

the place a little and thus make the succeeding narrative clearer."[64] This line introduces

around five subdivisions in the text, comprising a few pages, concerned with the customs

of Baume. It is the essence of my point here that even this discussion of customs is both

fit into and, ostensibly, presented in order to better reveal the personal behavior and

virtue of Odo, such that it would be impossible to say exactly where *vita* ends and

customary takes over.

The first subsection of the proto-customary, beginning with the line quoted above,

briefly summarizes two customs observed at Baume in Odo's day. Their only apparent

connection is their relevance to episodes from Odo's life that John includes in his text.

The first of these is that

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[64] Ibid., 32. The *PL* titles this subsection "Cluniacenses ritus praestringuuntur," while Sitwell in his glosses
and footnotes suggests that John means to refer to Baume. The actual text names neither Cluny nor Baume
explicitly, though the ordering of the material (uncertain as it may be) and place of this episode within
Odo's unfolding biography makes Baume seem much more likely. There are also the questions of how
different the customs of Baume and Cluny would have been in the middle of the tenth century, and of
whether John would have preferred to emphasize or downplay their similarity, neither of which is strictly
relevant here.

the master of the school should never go with only one boy alone to any place

whatsoever, not even for the purposes of nature, also that no boy should presume

to talk with the master alone, but for the sake of good report he should always

take another of the boys or one of the brethren to accompany him or talk with

him. But if it was night and one of the boys wished to withdraw, he might not put

a foot out of the dormitory without the light of a lantern and another to

accompany him.[65]

And the second that

At meal times there was always reading at both tables; each one carefully

collected his breadcrumbs before the reading was finished, and consumed them,

giving thanks, for when the reading was finished no one might consume them or

any other food.[66]

These are obviously distinctive customs, as John refers to them as "of the place" and

specifically offers them to help his intended audience, the Salerno community,

understand the significance of ensuing events in the life of Odo. They are thus also, at the

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[65] Ibid. "Mors enim ejusdem loci fuerat, ut magister scholae solus cum solo puero nec quoquam iret saltem, nec ad naturae digestionem, sed nec solus puer secretius illi loqui praesumeret: sed et propter bonum testimonium alium e pueris, aut unum ex fratribus in comitatu, vel locutione semper assumeret. Si autem nox foret, et casu accidente secessum puer peteret, sine lucernae lumine et alio fratre extra dormitorium pedem non auderet protendere," *PL* 133:56.

[66] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 32. "Tempore vero refectionis nunquam deerat lectio utrisque mensis: micas vero quae ex sectione panum fiebant, unusquisque ante se diligenter recolligens, priusquam lectio finiretur, cum gratiarum actione sumebant. Finita itaque lectione, nec eas, nec cibum alium sumere ultra aliquis audebat," *PL* 133:56.

same time, very likely the kind of thing that monks interested in imitating the specific *conversatio* associated with Odo, his reforms, and Cluny (or Baume, or Francia) would hope to learn. In the mid-tenth century, they might hope to learn them from a man such as Odo himself, or from veteran monks transplanted from one house (Cluny, Baume) to another (Salerno) specifically for the sake of the habitual, praxical knowledge they embodied,[67] *or* from a personal companion of such people, like John himself. Or, of course, from a text produced by John, at their behest, specifically to communicate the *conversatio* of Odo as an example similar to those of the Desert Fathers, as he had also transmitted by copying out the *Lausiac History*. Here quite directly we observe how Odo himself, as a charismatic figure, in the context of a work like John's *vita*, serves as a vehicle for a broader, communal code of behavior. Whether John or his audience would have conceptualized it this way or not, an account of Odo's life, written by and for monks, necessarily draws an emerging Cluniac *conversatio* along with it.

The next subsection relates the deathbed vision of the monk who did not finish his crumbs in accordance with the second of the two customs. Its inclusion is interesting, because it has nothing to do with Odo but is wholly an elaboration on the custom itself and its origin. In explaining the custom concerning the crumbs, John writes that "It was said that these crumbs had more of a sacramental character than other food, because they had been the subject of a miracle about this time."[68] The story of this monk follows immediately, leading us to understand that this vision is the miracle. John is thus

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[67] Isabelle Cochelin, "Besides the Book"; Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book: The Bible and Monasticism, 6th–11th Centuries," in *The Practice of the Bible*, 61–83.

[68] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 32.

buttressing the legitimacy of the custom (while also providing a striking story to serve as an *aide-mémoire*),[69] rather than relating anything strictly relevant to Odo himself.

The next subsection is the heart of this proto-customary; it has nothing to do with Odo, nor even with either of the customs John has digressed to explain, ostensibly in pursuit of describing Odo's life and deeds. It begins by describing "the custom of silence" as practiced at Baume.[70] In describing this silence, John adopts the curious mixture of detail and vagueness concerning the liturgical order of medieval monastic life so familiar in customaries:

> At unsuitable times no one might speak or consort with another of the brethren in the cloister of the monastery, and on days when a twelve-lesson Office was celebrated no one might speak in the cloister before chapter on the following day. Within the octaves of Christmas and Easter there was strict silence day and night.[71]

This description is clearly for a monastic audience that knows through long training and habituation the basic course of both the daily office and the mass; it can thus use various

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[69] A glimmer of Ong's psychodynamic regarding the strange and bizarre; this common feature of miracles as related in hagiographic literature attests, perhaps, to their almost folkloric status. In their *Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn have even suggests the folkloric elements of the *miracula* of Saint Foy may have been consciously emphasized by their author, Bernard of Angers (19).

[70] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 33. Scott Bruce in particular has analyzed this custom, its significance, and its broader place in the high medieval reforms associated with Cluny. See his *Silence and Sign Language*.

[71] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 33. "Incompetentibus namque horis nemo intra claustrum ejusdem monasterii audet loqui, nec se cum alio fratre jungere. Quando vero duodecim celebrantur lectiones, nullus intra praedictum claustram, praeter ad capitulum, sequenti die loqui audet. Octava enim Natalis Domini et ejus Resurrectionis summum silentium die noctuque diebat in illis," *PL* 133:57.

parts of the liturgy as reference points, describing new practices within a field oriented by abbreviated gestures to a shared body of praxis. After commenting briefly on the existence of a system of sign language—"which grammarians I suppose would call the language of the fingers and eyes"—John adds more description of the liturgy:

> But on ferial days and in the other octaves of the saints there was this arrangement. On ferial days in the day and night Office together they sang one hundred and thirty-eight psalms, from which we subtract fourteen for the sake of the weaker brethren. But against this must be put the special prayers which our brethren say which are seen to exceed the psalter and also the two Masses and the litanies. At each of the canonical hours they knelt twice. During the other octaves which were mentioned, they sang seventy-five psalms only in the day and night Offices together, and they knelt once and rested twice.[72]

This discussion of the distinctive liturgy of Baume bears no strict relevance to the discipline of silence practiced there, and neither is directly linked to the events of Odo's life. They *are*, however, part of Odo's specifically monastic *conversatio*, since as a good monk he conducted himself according to the customs of his house. They thus become of interest for the community at Salerno through the personal medium of Odo, just as this

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[72] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 33. "At vero in quotidianis diebus diebus et reliquis octavis sanctorum talis discretio tenebatur. Etenim in quotidianis diebus, inter diei noctisque cursus, cxxxviii canebant psalmos: ex quibus xiv nos dempsimus propter pusillanimorum animos, exceptis peculiaribus orationibus quas nostri frequentant fratres, quae cidelicet modum psalterii videntur excedere. Similiter duabus missis identidemque litaniis. Per singulas vero horas canonicas bis flectebant genua. In octavis quas diximus, lxxv tantum canebant inter praedictos cursus, et semel flectebant genua, et bis reficiebant," *PL* 133:57.

community was joined to a larger monastic network primarily through Odo's personal

multi-abbacy. As a result, John's *vita* of Odo becomes an appropriate vehicle for both

liturgical and increasingly detailed extra-liturgical customs, presaging the trajectory of

the emerging genre of the customary.

From here, the proto-customary buried within the *Vita prima et maior* by John

returns to narrating specific episodes in Odo's life. In the following passages, the

synthesis of *vita* and customary achieves its greatest refinement. First, John relates an

occasion during Odo's tenure as master of the school when, helping a boy to the

bathroom in the middle of the night, Odo did not take a candle. John explains that Odo

reasoned doing so would have been unnecessary, as the bathroom was so close by the

dormitory that the dormitory lantern fully illuminated it. But a group of bad or false

monks who regularly bedeviled Odo seized upon this violation of the letter of the Rule

and indicted Odo before the abbot and the whole community in the following day's

chapter gathering. Odo was, accordingly, reprimanded most harshly, by the community

as well as the abbot (who, according to John, only went along with this pedantry in order

to provide Odo an occasion to demonstrate his virtuous patience before the brothers).[73]

But at the same time that this story represents a compact and narratively satisfying

episode from Odo's life, it *also* illustrates and clarifies a striking number of important

details about regular, licit monastic life in general, as well as the rituals of public

confession, reprimand, prostration, and forgiveness, all commonly treated in the great

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[73] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 34–35.

Cluniac customaries of the following century.[74] Moreover, John subtly emphasizes the text here as closely articulating the Rule and the customs of Baume. He notes in his narrative that the lantern in the dormitory was there "by rule," just as he notes that "the brethren came together in chapter according to custom," that "no one might set out his case before asking pardon, or defend his action afterwards," and that the abbot (Berno) "according to the custom of the rule healed his trouble by a blessing. . . ."[75] Four times in this short biographical episode, John takes special care to anchor key points in the proceedings in the institutional context created by the Rule and Baume's distinctive elaborations upon it.

This contextualization invites the reader to consider John's narration here not only as a personal account of Odo's *conversatio*, but also as a blueprint for both the proper behavior of *any* master of the school and for the important ritual of reprimand, confession, prostration, and forgiveness, itself taking place within the larger cultural space of the monks' regular chapter assembly. Along these lines, John relates that Odo woke one of the other boys before he took the first one to use the bathroom. He notes that Odo's accusers made their recriminations at the following day's chapter, thus waiting for the appropriate time and place, and adds that this was done "after the reading of the martyrology and the Rule," giving some indication of what other activities took place at the meeting and where this practice fit into their schedule. And, of course, Odo's response is to be taken as a model for any monk put in a similar situation: John allows

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[74] Ulrich of Zell, *Antiquiores Consuetudines*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Oxford, 1853) 149:706; Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis per Bernardum*, ed. M. Herrgott (Paris, 1726), 176–177.

[75] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 34–35.

that Odo did offer a justification of his actions, "stating that the dormitory light was sufficient," but emphasizes much more his patience and humility in seeking pardon and prostrating himself. Here, prostration should be understood as a specific kind of bowing, as the term is carefully deployed in later customaries, appropriate for accepting reprimand at chapter. It is also significant that John notes that Odo accepted his reprimand without "murmuring," as this is a significant term for inappropriate monastic behavior in the Latin tradition.[76] John's account also relates Berno's punishment of Odo, excommunication, "saying that he should no more ask pardon that day." In response to this, Odo goes "out" (i.e., out of chapter) and prostrates himself again, this time before his brother monks, requesting that they seek pardon of the abbot in his place.[77] Again, here John's precision in description, the intended audience and use of his work, and especially the eminence of the personalities involved, all work together to suggest the episode as a model for the conduct and organization of the monastic community itself. Salernitan monks, reading or listening to the *vita* for examples of appropriate personal *conversatio*, would learn not only about Odo's patience and humility and Berno's strict impartiality, but also details about the placement of lamps in the dormitory, the conduct of chapter and its sub-ritual of reprimand and prostration, and even appropriate punishments and responses to punishments.

The next subsection describes in general terms how the bad monks continued to harass Odo, often by "bringing false accusations against him."[78] Odo always met these

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[76] Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language*, 32.

[77] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 34–35.

[78] Ibid., 35.

partisan recriminations with humility and, as John particularly emphasizes, patience: he does not contest them, "although innocent," but throws himself at his accusers' feet and begs forgiveness. Odo remains a model of the ideal monk in this passage; the Salerno community is still intended to read and imitate his *conversatio* as related here. And John even notes that Odo's seeking the pardon of his enemies was conducted "not through human fear, but through fraternal charity, that his patience might correct those who he saw were incurring divine vengeance,"[79] thus figuring his behavior as instructive within as well as beyond the text and offering an ethical (internal, emotional) as well as legislative (external, pragmatic) standard.

Finally, John returns to the custom of the breadcrumbs. Here he tells a story that Odo himself was accustomed to relate, the experience of a "certain brother" who was so absorbed in the refectory reading that, though he had collected his crumbs, forgot to eat them before the abbot formally ended the reading, after which point no more food could be licitly consumed. The monk instead held the crumbs in one hand while the community went into the church to pray, and upon leaving again "immediately prostrated himself at the abbot's feet," offering up the "little heap."[80] This prostration is immediately recognized as doing penance (supporting the idea that *prostravit* here is a technical term), and when asked the reason for it, the monk opens his hand, revealing that the crumbs have been transformed into pearls. Like the story of Odo's false accusers, this episode fits perfectly into the *vita* as a genre. But, also like that story, this episode also goes one step further, and serves to relate an important issue about *generally* appropriate monastic

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 36.

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behavior, at least in the particular customs of Baume and Cluny: specifically, it clarifies the proper response to a complex and uncertain situation, wherein the demands of monastic life appear contradictory. The customaries are full of traces of conflict,[81] whether between individuals or, as here, between the strictures of custom itself and all the little variations and difficulties of actually living them. In this vein, this episode answers the hypothetical and entirely reasonable question—"What is a good monk who has forgotten to eat his crumbs during the time allowed for eating to do?" This is just the kind of naturally-occurring difficulty wherein life itself rubs up against the constraints of rule and custom, by which the customs of a house (and thus, later, its customaries) grow and expand.[82] In relating it, John again uses his *vita* to accomplish a certain kind of concrete task that will, in roughly a century, at least as far as Cluny is concerned, come to be the characteristic one of a new expansion of the genre of the customary. We also note, finally, that the specific solution is a recourse to abbatial authority; this is an authority whose purview and stature, especially in the area of custumal legislation was, very likely, at the beginning of a major period of expansion at this time, at least at Cluny and certainly aided by the introduction of new kinds of literate tools.[83]

Once we recognize this proto-customary for what it is, other parts of John's *vita* that had previously seemed entirely tangential to the explicit subject of the text begin to

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[81] Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat," 37.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Steven Vanderputten has argued that Cluniac reform, at least in the Low Countries around the turn of the twelfth century, frequently functioned less as the imposition of new, substantially-different liturgical and ritual observances and more as an opportunity to re-arrange power structures within and around a given institution, often to the benefit of abbots as allies and agents of regional lay and episcopal elites. See Vanderputten, "Monastic Reform, Abbatial Leadership, and the Instrumenation of Cluniac Discipline," 250–253.

make more sense. The foremost of these is another few subsections that I group together as another proto-customary. These are concerned primarily with one of Odo's companions, Adhegrinus, who had sought Odo out after hearing about him from the nobleman Fulk.[84] John first treats of Odo and Adhegrinus' ascetic life together, and their search for a monastic community of sufficient rigor. This led them to Baume, primarily because of its purported connection to Saint Benedict of Aniane. The *Vita prima* then presents a series of short episodes devoted exclusively to Adhegrinus, leaving behind Odo entirely.

From these episodes, we learn some basic details about Adhegrinus' way of life that confirm him as a hermit or anchorite, a kind of monk specifically sanctioned by Benedict in his Rule.[85] Crucially, each story reinforces the fact that Adhegrinus' life was a licit part of the monastic institution, pleasing to God and the saints. The first begins by telling us that "the venerable Adhegrinus . . . after he had received permission, sought out a deserted place and was there enclosed in a little cave."[86] This simple introduction establishes that Adhegrinus, even in physically separating himself from the monastic community at Cluny (a little earlier on, John notes that Adhegrinus lived in a small cell, again with the permission of the abbot, at Baume, but at the end of this group of episodes will note that Adhegrinus' cave was near Cluny) still maintained the crucial monastic principle of obedience. Even if he did not physically reside within the monastery, his

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[84] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 24.

[85] *RB 1980: The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. and trans. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981), 169. Not having deviated from this edition's English tradition, which is widely available, I have not provided the Latin.

[86] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 27.

person and way of life were bounded within a broader notion of the monastic community or institution. Similarly, in telling us that he was "enclosed" in a "little cave," John makes clear that Adhegrinus conformed to the specific definition of an anchorite given by Benedict: that he maintained stability of place.[87]

Beyond these important details, the episode is a little story about a day when Adhegrinus lay in the grip of despair, desperate to know if his "service" was pleasing to the Lord.[88] This obviously sets up quite neatly a justification for this particular form of life, which is of course provided both to the reader but also to Adhegrinus. Emphasizing his solitude, the text relates that "there was no one present who might bring him words of consolation or the examples of the Fathers." As Adhegrinus lies on the ground, "brought almost to desperation," a man "splendid in appearance" suddenly appears.[89] He asks Adhegrinus what is so troubling him, and subsequently reassures him that "you shall never be unworthy of the good things of the Lord." This figure is never further characterized or identified, though the use of implicitly-miraculous or angelic but otherwise anonymous figures in this way is not unusual.

The two following subsections are broadly similar in function; each justifies Adhegrinus' life as an anchorite through a miraculous visitor. However, in these accounts the figure is identified as Saint Martin of Tours. Martin is important partly because of his close association with Odo in the *Vita*: Odo's father secretly promises his infant son to the saint (probably this should further be understood as also promising him to the

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[87] *RB 1980*, 169.

[88] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 27–28.

[89] Ibid.

monastic life), and Odo enters Saint Martin at Tours as a canon or cleric at the age of eighteen.[90] But it is even more significant for the functioning of John's passage on Adhegrinus' life that Martin was something of a patron of monasteries, especially of monasteries in southern Francia, due to his founding of some of the very earliest and most famous houses in the region. In the first of these two episodes, Adhegrinus is grabbed suddenly while outside his cell by "the tempter" and almost thrown from a cliff. Martin intervenes suddenly, and "restored him [Adhegrinus] to his dwelling."[91] Here danger strikes precisely when Adhegrinus has left his sanctioned ascetic residence, and the very father of Frankish monasticism rescues him and then places him specifically back into that very place—the sanction of Adhegrinus' *conversatio* is as obvious and direct as it is divine. We also note that this story recalls Benedict's description of the anchorite as one who fights against the devil alone in the wilderness.[92]

The second of the two stories involves Adhegrinus being visited by Saint Martin, and the two engaging in "no small contention of a friendly sort" over which was worthy to and would give the other a blessing. The solution, unsurprisingly, is to bless one another. This passage, too, emphasizes Adhegrinus' stability of place, for Martin explains to him that "I come from Rome . . . and I am going to France, and as my journey brought me near you, I turned aside to visit you."[93] The reference is brief, but relates a journey that would obviously have taken him past Cluny and clearly presents the memorable

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[90] Ibid., 8–9 and 13.

[91] Ibid., 28.

[92] *RB 1980*, 169.

[93] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 29.

image of the saint stopping to visit a hermit whose location was reliable and predictable. Perhaps more important in outlining the nature of Adhegrinus' anchoritic life is his description of Martin's arrival: "On a certain day when I had finished the appointed psalms, Saint Martin suddenly stood before me. . . ."[94] Here, John clearly suggests that Adhegrinus maintains some schedule of psalmody, almost certainly based on that of Cluny or Baume. The life of an anchorite thus includes this central duty of monks living in communities, a key stipulation in debates about the reform and orthopraxy of regular life.[95]

The final subsection in this passage has no narrative thrust at all, and thus is the purest example of the proto-customary function here at work. Therein, John first notes that these episodes all occurred after Adhegrinus had been a hermit for more than thirty years. He also notes that Adhegrinus lived near Cluny, rather than Baume, making the first explicit reference to Cluny in the text. But particularly interesting are the few lines he offers by way of describing Adhegrinus' relationship to Cluny itself:

Only on Sundays and the principal feasts was he accustomed to come down to the monastery of St. Peter, which is called Cluny, because it lies about two miles from that place [where he lived]. When he had collected a little flour from which he used to make bread, and a few beans, he returned immediately to his solitude. He never took wine, and he did not season his food with fat or oil. In all seasons

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[94] Ibid.

[95] See Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 24–26 and 150. For more on monastic debates over ermeticism, see Vanderputten, *Imagining Religious Leadership*, 62–67.

he suffered cold and heat; heat between his shoulders, cold in his hands and arms.[96]

As with the passage on silence and the liturgy in the previous proto-customary gathering, it is the inclusion of this subsection that reveals the previous few as part of a general treatment of communal monastic life, such as would later become associated with the customary as a genre. While these communicate that Adhegrinus' life as a hermit accords with Benedict's definition of anchorites as those who, having been trained in a monastery, now fight the devil alone in the wilderness, and also that he maintains the key monastic virtues of stability of place and obedience and the key monastic duty of psalmody, they give little account of more pragmatic matters, such as what (and how) he eats, and no indication of what his ongoing relationship to any monastery might be. This last subsection, in its turn, addresses the question of his sustenance. This is important both because fasting and simple food are so important to monastic asceticism, but also because the issue of *getting* food at all obviously exposes the monk or hermit to the dangers of handling money and interacting with the world in general. As we see, Adhegrinus does neither, even limiting his intercourse with other monks to the absolute minimum. At least as important, this last passage also establishes that Adhegrinus was, in fact, connected to a particular monastery, an important issue in integrating hermits and anchorites into reform monasticism. The straightforward address of these issues here

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[96] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 30. "Dominicis tantum diebus aut praecipuis festivitatibus ad monasterium sancti Petri, quod Cluniacum dicitur, quia duobus fere millibus propre est, assuevit descendere: sumpta videlicet modica farina, ex qua sibi panem conficere solet, et fabae paucis granis, mox ad eremum revertitur. Vino nec aliquando utebatur: adipe vero vel oleo ejus cibus non conditur. Patitur omni tempore frigus et calorem: calorem inter scapulas, frigus inter manus et brachia," *PL* 133:55.

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encourages and supports my reading of the earlier episodes as illustrations not only of an individual holy man's *conversatio*, but also as delineations of a general model of living that, if not quite legislative-normative, were something more than a mere example.

In light of all this, we should briefly double back to consider how John introduces the gathering of episodes devoted to Adhegrinus. He does so with a typically-meta reflection on the course, content, and aims of his narrative:

> I confess that I expected to pass easily and swiftly over the life of our most holy father . . . along with his life I would describe the men who, I understand, were his companions. . . . I beg that, as I do not shrink from laboring under this burden, so it may not seem to you onerous to receive it. For it seems right and pleasing to God, and an added adornment of this narrative, that along with his life I should relate the example of those whom he conducted to their fatherland [presumably, heaven]. . . .[97]

The plural is odd here, since John gives no other figure (besides Odo, of course) the sustained narrative attention he devotes to Adhegrinus. More straightforward are his efforts to convince his readers that a short section devoted to this man is not too extraneous to his main project of relating Odo's life and *conversatio*. This relatively involved justification is evidence that the response John hopes to anticipate and turn

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[97] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 27. "Fateor, inquam, putavi vitam sanctissimi patris nostri simpliciter, cursimque transire . . . una cum ejus vita vult enarrare viros, quos intelligit habuisse socios. . . . obsecro, ut quem admodum me non piget sub tanto desudare labore, nec vobis videatur ad recipiendum onserosum vel grave. Justum namque et bene placitum coram Deo esse videtur, ut eorum exempla ad ornatum locutionis cum sua describantur vita, quos . . . transvexit ad patriam," *PL* 133:54.

away—annoyance at a prolonged and irrelevant digression—is a wholly conceivable and non-anachronistic one. That is, John knows well that he risks violating his audience's general (that is, genre-al) expectations for a *vita*. This, along with the use of the specific, individual *person* of Adhegrinus as a guiding and organizing principle, is especially interesting in combination with the passage's operation as a proto-customary: essentially, John knows that he has innovated, or at least deviated. Perhaps he even recognizes that his innovation is two-fold, both in digressing to relate some episodes from the life of a man who is not the subject of his *vita*, and in using these episodes, this small fragment of another man's otherwise-nonexistent *vita*,[98] to relate a body of accepted monastic praxis in no way limited or specific to Adhegrinus himself, but actually characteristic of a whole, clearly-delineated *class* of monks.

These are hardly the only instances in which John's description of Odo's *conversatio* seems to step beyond the mere presentation of an exemplary individual and gesture towards a relatively discrete code of behavior grounded in the scriptures, the Rule of Saint Benedict, and the established orthopraxy of monastic behavior at places like Baume and Cluny. There is a long series of episodes shortly after the beginning of Book II that John characterizes as descriptions of Odo's "generosity" and "mercy."[99] These they assuredly are, but they have another striking commonality upon which John does not comment at all: they are all stories of things Odo did on his numerous journeys (predominantly between Francia and Rome). And while they all focus on, or at least

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[98] Actually, a very rare *vita* of Adhegrinus (*BHL* 70) was subsequently produced on the basis of John's text. See Iogna-Prat, "Panorama," 82.

[99] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 46–53.

include, instances of Odo's personal charity, they also address in passing the matter of appropriate monkish behavior while travelling outside the cloister: John (citing both the Rule of Saint Benedict and the Bible) tells how Odo encouraged the monks to contain their laughter,[100] references the singing of psalms by the traveling abbot and brothers,[101] and (again citing rule and scripture in tandem) describes Odo's practice of keeping his head bowed and his eyes fixed on the ground "wherever he was, standing, or walking, or sitting. . . ."[102] This interest in supporting Odo's *conversatio* with the authoritative texts of Latin monastic life betrays the proto-legislative intent (or at least function) of John's text, and future customaries contain echoes both of some of these specific practices and of the concern for extending the monastic code beyond the cloister.[103] Moreover, this series of episodes itself leads into more discussion of the custom of silence, including a very long string of biblical citations justifying the practice, with no narrative frame all.[104]

Still more examples could be provided,[105] but the basic argument has been sufficiently well-established. John's *Vita prima et maior* digresses regularly from its

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[100] Ibid., 46.

[101] Ibid., 47.

[102] Ibid., 52.

[103] In Bernard's customary in particular there are many references to the delegation of duties when senior monastic obedientaries, and especially the abbot himself, are away from the cloister. See the provision for a welcoming procession for a returning abbot and the strictures for monks travelling on the road as regards the Daily Office and proper diet: Bernard, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 138. Bernard's description of the behavior and dress of Cluny's deans while these travel to and from the monastery is another example: Bernard, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 139–141.

[104] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 56–57.

[105] The largest concentration of such examples not discussed here are to be found in the first few subsections of Book III; see Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 71–77. Book III might be conceptualized as a kind of manual on reform, including justifications for it in general and accounts of Odo's reform of specific monasteries, primarily Fleury, and the conflict involved. Accordingly, these opening subsections, framed as Odo's responses to questions put to him by John and other disciples, discuss the importance of proper monastic dress, fasting, and obedience, making use of the familiar mixture of miraculous fables/parables, and citations of the Rule and of scripture.

ostensible subject, the life of Odo himself, and there is some evidence that these digressions were understood in their own day as unusual, innovative, and perhaps unwelcome. Certain passages of the *Vita*, considered closely, reveal by their citations of the Rule and of scripture and by their detailed depiction of various monastic customs that they were likely intended *not* merely to tell the life of Odo, but in fact to elaborate a whole code of behavior that he exemplified but of which he was not, ultimately, the source or even primary justification. Rather, it was a lived tradition that had grown up over the course of centuries, often in dialectical relationship with the Rule of Saint Benedict and other texts and documents of varying normativity, and in the present case were specifically mediated through the individual communities of Baume and Cluny. And while the most recent scholarship quite convincingly argues that medieval reform, especially in the tenth century, was not nearly so schematic and invasive (in terms of interfering in the day-to-day liturgy and customs of reformed houses) as has long been imagined, we might justifiably hypothesize that this broader institutional or communal *conversatio* itself was something that John wished to transmit to the monks of Salerno (a community that, after all, had been reformed by Odo), and that at least some of them might well have been eager to receive it.

Further weight is lent to this reading by the nature of Nalgod's revision of John's text, called appropriately the *Vita reformata* by Iogna-Prat and Maria Luisa Fini.[106] Written most likely in the 1120s, this *vita* was composed almost two hundred years after John's. By the time of Nalgod's work, Odo had become a saint and Cluny had become,

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[106] Maria Luisa Fini, "Studio sulla 'Vita Odonis reformata' di Nalgodo. Il 'fragmentum mutilum' del Codice latino NA 1496 della Bibliothèque Nationale di Parigi," in *Rendiconti dell'Accademia di Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna. Classe di scienze morali, Bologna* 63 (1975): 33–147.

under the reign of several more saintly abbots, the foremost monastic institution of Latin Christendom. Not only was its example widely known and admired, but the reform party associated with Gregory VII that had so radically remade the papacy included many members with connections to the Burgundian abbey,[107] and the abbots of Cluny also exerted some varying measure of authority or at least exemplary influence over a huge and diffuse network of houses spread (and still spreading) across Europe.[108] Cluny had also, slowly and often not as chief innovator, developed an increasingly sophisticated role for written documents within its culture and institution.[109] In terms of its customaries, they had developed from primarily recording liturgical usage, around the end of the tenth century, to include by the end of the eleventh more and more detail about monastic behavior beyond the schedule of psalms and readings and outside the church.[110] Perhaps more importantly, the production of these newly comprehensive customaries occasioned a greater role for abbots in the life and constitution of the community itself, and in particular more power in the establishment of customs themselves.[111] In the 1070s or 1080s,[112] under Hugh of Semur, a monk known only as Bernard had produced an

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[107] Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 58 and 78–79.

[108] Poeck, *Ecclesia cluniacensis*; Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 233.

[109] For important limits to Cluniac innovation along these lines, see Boynton, "Oral Transmission of Liturgical Practice"; Reilly "The Cluniac Giant Bible"; Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 231–232; Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 30.

[110] Reilly, "The Cluniac Giant Bible." In general, compare the earlier "Cluniac" customs (on the difficult of this term, see Cochelin, "Community and Customs") such as the *Consuetudines antiquiores* (*CCM* 7) with the later collections of Ulrich and Bernard, on any particular point, to see this unmistakable trend of elaboration.

[111] Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 239–243.

[112] Several theories for the precise dating of and composition relationship between the customaries of Ulrich and Bernard have been proposed. I have not waded into this debate, as it is not precisely relevant for the work at hand, but the key citations are as follows: Kassius Hallinger, "Klunys Bräuche zur Zeit Hugos des Grossen (1049–1109)," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung* 45 (1959): 99–140; Joachim Wollasch, "Zur Verschriftlichung der klösterlichen Lebensgewohnheiten unter

immensely detailed customary that dealt not only with the liturgy, the training of novices, and a range of rituals that took place outside the oratory, but also what can only be called the administration of the monastery as an immense nexus of property, resources, and people. Intended for use at Cluny itself, Isabelle Cochelin has identified this work as a crucial turning point in the history and role of the genre.[113] Fifty years later, Nalgod was writing during the early abbacy of Peter the Venerable, who would go on to hold a series of great Cluniac assemblies and promulgate an authoritative, revised body of statutes very much like a legislating, constitutional monarch.[114]

These great changes in the scope and status of Cluny as an institution, and especially of the role written documents played within it, provide key context for the striking prologue with which Nalgod introduces his *Vita Reformata*. Nalgod presents himself as forced by insolence as well as by "imperious charity" to produce this work "in my homely way of speaking."[115] But if this self-effacing humility is quite predictable, the extreme criticism Nalgod heaps on John (whom he mentions by name) surprises with its ferocity. He writes that he John "was found offensive," and that

> such was the confusion of words, so scattered the prolixity, indeed so disordered
> and preposterous in order of narration, that the series itself hardly cohered in
> reason or time to itself. It perturbed me greatly: and since the famous deeds of this

Abt Hugo von Cluny," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 27 (1993): 317–349; Isabelle Cochelin, "Évolution des coutumiers monastiques dessinée à partir de l'étude de Bernard," in *From Dead of Night*, 29–66, esp. 29–30.

[113] Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 240–243.

[114] Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*, 30; Melville, "Action, Text, and Validity."

[115] For the *Vita reformata,* I use Nalgod of Cluny, *Sancti Odonis vita altera*, *PL* 133:85–104.

most honorable man were covered over with an unfitting veil of obscurity, I was

fiercely vexed.[116]

Indeed, Nalgod was so disturbed that he felt compelled to "dig out the pure and simple

truth from that multitudinous run of words" and to "draw back the cloud of disordered

relation," ultimately describing his work by saying, "I reformed [or repaired] the

collection for the eyes."[117] We are left to imagine humble Nalgod, reading one day about

Saint Odo (whom he refers to here as the "founder of Cluny"), and growing progressively

more horrified at the confusion that threatens to obscure his crucial, even salvific

example. His anger and dismay is so powerful that it forces him to take the extreme

liberty of revising this venerable text, a process that he characterizes almost as one might

the gathering of wood from a forest or of stone from a quarry: he must excavate Odo's

life from the quagmire where he has discovered it, making it intelligible and available for

himself and his contemporaries. The historian may feel a pang of commiseration.

The key questions of what Nalgod removed, what he added, and how he

(re)organized the resulting combination of old and new material thus arise, and this effort

to excavate and clarify Nalgod's editorial process therefore reveals not only which parts

of John's text he valued and which he did not, but also how he understood written

material to be intelligible, both in general and specifically in contrast to John. At the

outset we note that the *Vita reformata* is significantly shorter than the *Vita prima et*

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[116] *PL* 133:85. "Tanta erat verborum confusio, tam dispersa prolixitas, ita inordinatus et praeposterus ordo narrandi, ut ipsa series relationis vix sibi aut ratione aut tempore cohaereret. Displicuit mihi valde: et praeclara dignissimi viri gesta quia indigne obscuritatis nebula praemerentur vehementer indolui."

[117] Ibid.

maior; in the *Patrologia Latina*, it occupies only nineteen pages (85–104) to the *Vita prima*'s forty-three (43–86). Evidently, Nalgod considered more than half of John's text to be superfluous.

In beginning his text, Nalgod reveals nothing about himself; he has no equivalent to John's frame narratives (first, concerning his sickness and the visitation by his friends that resulted in the *Vita prima et maior*; second, relating how John himself met Odo, toward the end of Odo's life, and eventually came to ask to hear the story of his life), and neither does he repeat John's brief argument summarizing Odo's life beforehand. Rather, he begins immediately with Odo's birth, and from there proceeds through the episodes of Odo's early life, essentially as John himself related them. The first major divergence between the two texts comes after Odo has been driven by visions and pains away from the worldly life of his late teens to become a cleric or canon at Tours. Both texts follow these events by describing a vision Odo had, in which pagan classical literature was revealed to him as a beautiful vessel filled with deadly serpents.[118] But in John's text, this story is followed by a lengthy discussion of Odo's virtues.[119] These pages are similar to the proto-customary gatherings: while personal virtue is certainly a conventional topic for a *vita*, John's treatment here is rather more systematic than episodic, with the *general* behavior of Odo characterized in such a way that it dominates what little narrative content is present; moreover, it is frequently undergirded by citation of scripture. John begins the section:

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[118] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 14; Nalgod, *PL* 133:88–89.

[119] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 15–21.

I shall now go on to describe briefly how much of the virtue of patience began to

shine forth in him. From this time onwards he left the songs of the poets, and

taught by the Spirit from on high, he turned his attention wholly to those who

expounded the Gospels and the prophets. Meanwhile almost all the canons began

to inveigh against him, croaking like so many crows. "What are you doing?" they

said, "Why do you wish to undertake this unaccustomed work? You are wasting

your labor, and the flower of your youth along with it. Spare yourself, and leaving

these inextricably involved writings, go to the psalms." But the same spirit which

had taught him to be silent from good things, now taught him to be silent from

evil. With bowed head and stopped heart, his eyes fixed on the ground, he

repeated in his heart that saying of David, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin

not with my tongue. I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood

against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence from good things."

Nor was he unmindful of that precept and promise of the Lord, "In patience you

shall possess your souls."[120]

As a customary, there is much that could be discussed here: the code of behavior

encompassing both the course of Odo's studies and his physical and social passivity, the

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[120] Ibid., 15. "Interea quanta in eum coepit postmodum emanare virtus patientiae, succinete describam. Deinde relictis carminibus poetarum, alti edoctus spiritu consilii, ad evangeliorum prophetarumque expositores se totum convertit. Coeperunt interea rabido latratu omnes pene canonici fuere contra eum. Quid agere velis, inquiunt? cur invadere quaeris opus alienum? hoc opus pretii perdidisti cum flore juventutis. Parce tibi, et relictis his inextricabiliter connexis litteris, ad psalmos abi. Sed idem spiritus qui eum pridem docuerat a bonus silere, tunc docebat eum a malis conticescere. Ille vero curvato capite et obturatis auribus, defixisque in terram aspectibus, illud in corde versabat Davidicum: *Dixi, Custodiam vias meas ut non delinquam in lingua mea. Posui ori meo custodiam* (*Psal.* xxxviii). Nec tamen erat immemor Dominici promissi: *In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras* (*Luc.* xxi)," *PL* 133:49.

implicit distinction between canons (as both worldly and unlearned, with the common bestial topos of the morally compromised) and monks, the scriptural support furnished for Odo's *conversatio*. And there follow several more subsections carrying forward this treatment of Odo's virtues. Another recounts Odo's discovery of the Rule of Saint Benedict, and his decision to live by some of its precepts without yet formally being a monk. Though making less reference to the particulars of communal monastic—or anchoritic—life than he does elsewhere, John is clearly enunciating an ethic, a *habitus*, a *conversatio*, which is supported by scripture and the Rule, and which is also contrasted with that of canons.

But what is most important here is that this gathering is one of the main targets of Nalgod's editorial scourge. Despite all his changes, it is ultimately possible to follow Nalgod's progression through John's text—the sequence of events leading up to this section is extremely similar, with the discussion of virtues immediately preceded in both texts by Odo's rejection of pagan literature and followed by the story of the composition of his summary of Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*. Between these passages, Nalgod has also reproduced the key *narrative* events related by John in the course of his treatise on Odo's virtues: first, Odo's vigils at the tomb of Saint Martin, during which he is attacked by demonic foxes and saved by a heaven-sent wolf, next, his ascetic life modeled on that of monks, whose ranks he has not yet joined, and finally, his ministry in Tours.[121] But from these events, Nalgod has entirely removed the discussion of Odo's

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[121] I use "ministry" here in an informal sense; John writes: "And many of those who came to Tours visited Odo; those who already knew him that they might meet him again, those who did not know him that they might make his acquaintance. And he, as an overflowing fountain, offered to all the cup they so much desired, and as from an open book gave fitting instruction to all. To one he disclosed the virtue of chastity, on another he imposed sobriety; this one he taught to despise the world, that one he admonished not to covet the goods of another. To each he gave abundantly whatever was necessary. . . .," *Being the Life*, 19.

virtues as such. And he has also clarified the troubled chronology, characteristic of John, which characterizes this section of the *Vita prima et maior*. First, he moves the brief description of Odo's time in Paris under the tutelage of Remigius from the end of this section to the middle. John has tacked this on to the very end of the discussion of virtues, with a rather confusing "About this time he went to Paris, where he studied dialectic. . . . When his studies were over, he returned to Tours. . ."[122] Nalgod also expands somewhat upon John's exceedingly brief treatment of Odo's studies. And he removes a jarring section in which John suddenly leaps to his own present day, and describes some of Odo's character during their travels together at the very end of Odo's life. This jump may make sense in John's conception of a treatise on general personal behavior, but is quite mysterious if his text is evaluated as a biography.[123]

Nalgod's revision here thus consists of reordering events to better serve the specific narrative of Odo's life, concentrating on discrete actions and episodes. In addition to this reordering, he removes much of John's generalized, almost philosophical discussion of Odo's virtue; the modern reader understands quite easily Nalgod's preference. But making the effort to understand why *John* put his text together the way he did reveals that Nalgod is not merely editing a poorly-composed work, but rather drawing the *Vita prima et maior* back within the confines of the *vita* as a genre. In John's hands,

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"Contigit interea ut plurimi ex ipsis ad eum introirent visitandi gratia, cogniti ut notum reviserent, ignoti ut notum eum sibi facerent. At ille, velut fons redundans, desiderantissima cunctis praebebat pocula, et, quasi ex aperta bibliotheca, omnibus congrua ministrabat exempla: huic castitatem indicens, illi sobrietatem imponens: hunc contemnere mundum docet, alterum ne alterius res concupiscat admonet. Unicuique enim quaeque erant necessaria affluenter ministrabat. . . .," *PL* 133:51. This section goes on at some length in this vein, maintaining the general feel of narrative submerged in a discussion of virtue more generally.

[122] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 21.

[123] Ibid., 18.

the *vita* (his in particular and the genre in general) had overleapt these bounds; it ended

up, like the character of Odo himself, serving as an awkward and unconventional vehicle

for a generalized code of behavior that might be studied, learned, institutionalized, and

policed under a communal paradigm fundamentally different from that of individuals

imitating an exemplar. Nalgod was not interested in this aspect of John's work, precisely

because by his own day the customary had come into its own (and was indeed on the

verge of being replaced by yet another advance in genre and documentary form): neither

did he expect to find customs related in a *vita*, nor did he want for a legible record of

Clunaic customs in particular.

The next section where Nalgod's text diverges most noticeably from John's, the

passages concerning Adhegrinus, comes almost immediately after the treatise on virtues.

Nalgod, like John, relates that Adhegrinus was a fighting man of Fulk's who, hearing

from Fulk of Odo's holiness, went to join Odo. Nalgod also tells how the two travelled

around looking for a monastery to join, with only Baume meeting their high standards.

And in reworking somewhat the story of Odo's introduction to Baume and his struggles

there with the party of false monks who persecuted him, Nalgod adds Adhegrinus where

John has not mentioned him.[124] But Adhegrinus' role here is quite minor; he is really only

an adjunct to Odo. And the several passages that John devoted to the description of

Adhegrinus' life as a hermit are completely absent. Here again, a very long digression,

entirely tangential to the story of Odo, has been removed. Even more clearly than in the

case of John's treatise on virtues, this digression served in the *Vita prima et maior* a

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[124] Nalgod, *PL* 133:92–93.

highly-refined proto-customary function, describing and justifying through miracles, scripture, and both implicit and explicit citation of the Rule of Saint Benedict the life of an anchorite, even giving basic logistical and liturgically-oriented instructions for the interface of this kind of life with that of an overseeing coenobitic community.

This is very much the form Nalgod's revision has followed when it comes to the heart of and key to John's aspirations to customary, the passages devoted explicitly to the customs of Baume. Again, Nalgod has stripped out a great deal of material that is not strictly necessary from a narrative or biographical perspective. This includes John's brief preamble where he justifies description of the customs of Baume. Nalgod has also removed entirely the discussion and justification of silence, and likewise John's partial description of the liturgy at Baume. The "matter of the crumbs," as he calls it, has been heavily reworked. First of all, the account of the monk on his deathbed has been excised; Nalgod is content merely to assert that this custom "was lawful [*legitimum*; meaning "licit behavior required that . . .," not "it was permitted to . . ."] in the church [*ecclesia*] of Baume, and as though for the sake of law [*quasi pro jure*] it was observed in that place. . . ."[125] It is significant that he does not regard the story of the vision as a necessary substantiation of the custom's weight; John, by contrast, gives not only an origin story, which *both* explains and justifies the custom, but also even a (very) brief theological gloss, in writing that the crumbs had "more of a sacramental character than other food."[126] But Nalgod can merely assert the custom as *legitimum* and move on.

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[125] *PL* 133:95.

[126] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 32.

As for the material concerning Odo's tenure as school master, Nalgod has moved it earlier in the text, away from the matter of the crumbs. Chronologically, these episodes are not meant to be distinct, and Nalgod has not truly altered the sequence of events from John's portrayal; both the matter of the crumbs and Odo's persecution by the pedantic false brothers are situated shortly or immediately after Odo and Adhegrinus together locate and enter Baume. But Nalgod does not put them together into their own little gathering because, for him, they are unified primarily by their relevance to Odo's life and career—so they appear in lived order, with Odo's persecution followed a bit later, at some more general point during his time at Baume, by the matter of the crumbs. For John, these two episodes belong together in a special section devoted to the customs of Baume, because it is the relatively systematic consideration of monastic custom and *conversatio* that unites them. And the narrative of Odo's actual transgression (failing to take a chaperone with himself and one young boy who had to use the bathroom one night) is likewise much streamlined.[127] Nalgod does not offer the prefatory summary of the custom itself that Odo violates, both because his audience can be expected to be familiar with the custom already, and for the related reason that describing the customs of Baume is not his aim. The account of the chapter at which Odo is reprimanded by his enemies in the community is similarly truncated: gone is the reference to the reading of the Rule and martyrology, gone is the reference to prostration, gone is the reference to Odo's punishment and his continued petition. None of this is relevant to Nalgod's purposes, which are those we today understand as typical of the *vita* as a form, as a

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[127] Nalgod, *PL* 133:93.

specific technique, artifice, *technology*—as a genre. So he does not include it. But this erasure reveals John's purposes: to capture not only Odo's *conversatio*, but the institution of Baume's.

This pattern of revision also holds for the gathering with which John opens Book II; again, this gathering, comprised of five subsections dealing with essentially the same events in both *vitae*, is, by conservative estimate, two or three times longer in John's text.[128] Nalgod has, characteristically, removed much of the material that could serve John's audience as a guide for appropriate monastic behavior on the road, focusing instead on the specific deeds of Odo. In the first subsection of this gathering, he gives a short, general statement on Odo's charity to paupers, omitting John's discussion of laughter, of Odo's humble comportment, of his disciplining of his travelling companions (especially that resulting if they "replied sharply" to any pauper), of his habit of seating any infirm person encountered on the road on his own horse, and of his guiding of his companions in singing psalms while walking or riding.[129] Various specific instances of Odo's charity and humility are included, but not these more general illustrations. In the next section, Nalgod removes a story included by John of Odo's charity towards an old man crossing the Alps with a reeking sack of onions and garlic. This excision seems strange: isn't such an episode exactly the kind of story Nalgod appears to favor? Perhaps the answer lies in the "point" of this story. John relates that Odo carried the foul sack of the man a ways, and that the stench forced all Odo's companions to hang back some distance from him. Eventually, John himself, feeling guilty, caught up to Odo, who

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[128] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 41–47; Nalgod, *PL* 133:98–100.

[129] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 46–47; Nalgod, *PL* 133:98.

exhorted him thusly: "Come on, for there are still some psalms we must recite." John, however, is too nauseated (until he is miraculously cured by Odo's ensuing reprimand).[130] The story thus serves as a vehicle for communicating the imperative to sing psalms while traveling, rather than for relating some particular moment in Odo's life (Nalgod has already treated of his charity, and the miracle of John's sudden loss of his olfactory faculties is rather underwhelming), and *this* is why Nalgod deigned to include it.

A particularly clear example of this editing process is observable just a little further on in the text.[131] John describes the following incident, which took place while Odo was attempting to mediate a peace between two feuding lords:

During this time, while he [Odo] was one day going past the monastery of St. Andrew which is called *ad clivum Scauri*, a yokel tried to kill him for a small jar of water. According to the saying of Scripture: He that walketh sincerely walketh confidently [Prov. 10:9], Odo was going along as usual without doing any harm to anybody, suspecting nothing, and with his head bowed. For to such an extent had the custom of the Rule [chapter 7] grown habitual to him, that wherever he was, standing, or walking, or sitting, he always had his head bowed and his eyes fixed on the ground. . . . When this yokel aimed a blow at Odo's head the bystanders with a loud cry seized him by the hands. Then our most gentle father borrowed—

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[130] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 48.

[131] It is hard to locate a definite end to this gathering dealing with Odo's travels for, despite some digressions concerned with Odo's deeds in Rome or some other place where he spent significant time while away from the several monasteries that he served as abbot, it constitutes the entirety of Book II.

lest I should make a mistake, I don't know how many—pennies and, rendering

good for evil sent him away as an ally.[132]

By contrast, Nalgod gives the following, extremely terse description of these same

events:

. . . blessed Odo, who put himself forth as mediator for holy peace between these

two tyrants, near the monastery of blessed Andrew, which is called *ad clivum*

Scauri, making the crossing, with head bent, went forward. A rustic with a thrown

rock attacked the man of God, but with the clamor of those surrounding, and

having been grabbed [by them], was held amidst them and the throwing [weapon]

removed. However, the man of God, conscious of scripture, accepting money,

borrowed to pay the undeserving that he might return good for evil.[133]

Most of what Nalgod has removed for the sake of clarity concerns Odo's general

behavior, and that it stems from a particular personal approach to the Rule of Saint

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[132] Ibid., 52–53. "Interea quadam die dum juxta monasterium beati Andreae apostoli iret, quod ad clivum Scauri dicitur ex nomine, quidam rusticus voluit eum propter lagunculam aquae occidere. Etenim, sicut Scriptura dicit: *Qui ambulat simpliciter, ambulat confidenter* (*Prov.* x, 9), more suo nulli nocens, nihilque suspicans curvato incedebat capite. Intantum enim apud cum usus inoleverat. Regulae (*Regula S. Bened.*, cap. 7), ut ubicunque esset, sive stans, sive ambulans, aut sedens semper curvato capite, defixisque terram luminibus incederet. . . . Factum est autem dum praedictus rusticus ictu caput illius appeteret, omnes qui juxta viam aderant, emissis vocibus percutientis attraxerunt manus. Tunc dulcissimus pater: Ne fallar, ingnoro quot denarios accepit mutuo, eique bonum pro malo reddidit, et foederatum dimisit," *PL* 133:66.

[133] Nalgod, *PL* 133:99. ". . . beatus Odo qui ad pacem evangelizandum inter duos tyrannos medium se praebebat, juxta beati Andreae monasterium, quod dicitur ad Clivum Scauri, transitum faciens, submisso capite incedebat. Rusticus jactu lapidis oppetierat virum Dei, sed clamore circumstantium et obtentu, libratus in ejus verticem jactus evanuit. Vir autem Domini denariis acceptis, mutuo muneravit immeritum, Scripturae conscentiens, ut redderet bonum retribuentibus sibi mala."

Benedict. Sitwell here suggests that John means in particular Chapter 7 of the rule, devoted to humility.[134] This is quite a long chapter, which, rather than describing some particular point of monastic order, outlines a detailed ethic springing from radical humility that all monks should seek to perfect in themselves. This is very much what Odo has done; his humility is not a simple matter of low self-estimation, or even of obedience and the absence of willfulness. Odo walks quietly, head lowered, eyes on the ground. His humility, internalized we would say, from the Rule, is manifested not only in conscious acts but in the most basic and minute comportment of his body—*conversatio* beyond even praxis, but as bearing. For John, the point of this episode is not merely, and perhaps not even primarily, to illustrate an instance of Odo's charity, but rather to suggest the ways the Rule may be lived, strictly and fully, so as to truly create a distinct, otherworldly bearing. In this, he went beyond the normal role of the *vita* to offer a specific understanding of the application of the Rule to daily life and comportment. But by Nalgod's time, such had become quite clearly the province of the well-defined and commonly encountered genre of the customary, and certainly *not* of *vitae*. Accordingly, he has neatly excised it, preserving this narrative episode as an appropriate matter for his text.

Another instructive example of Nalgod's editorial preferences comes immediately after this episode. Both authors follow it with one in which, during one of Odo's visits to Rome, a thief stole one of his party's horses. The minders of the horses (likely lay companions or servants, rather than brothers) were all asleep, but one monk who had

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[134] *RB 1980*, 190–203.

gone out to them saw the theft being committed. This monk, rather than breaking the

customary silence of Baume/Cluny, shook one of the minders awake and communicated

to him by signs what had happened. At daybreak, the thief was found sitting nearby on

the motionless horse, but upon being turned over to Odo was merely given some money

and sent on his way. Both authors treat the story itself in similar fashion; but John takes

the passing reference to the custom of silence here as an opportunity to discuss this

custom itself at far greater length:

> Since we have got on the subject of silence, without which the life of a monk is
>
> led to no purpose, it remains that we should go back and treat of it a little further.
>
> For the life of a monk is of value as long as he takes pains to keep silence. But
>
> when that is lost, whatever he thinks to do well will be nothing, according to the
>
> teaching of the Fathers.[135]

He follows this statement with a relatively detailed account of two esteemed brothers of

the community (probably Cluny rather than Baume) who were captured by Norsemen.

John notes that the brothers maintained their silence, attempting to finish the "appointed

psalms" so that "they might bring the time of silence to an end." They were interrupted

by one of their abductors, however, but maintained their silence even when threatened

with death. Ultimately, they are spared when their attacker is suddenly flung from his

horse and killed. The function of this story as part of John's efforts toward a customary is

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[135] Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 54.

further indicated, as is often the case, by his reference to the Rule: "But the monks, constant in spirit, remained unmoved in body, and this they did, not from any deceit, but in observance of the holy Rule, under which they desired to live and die, and from which they never wished to turn aside."[136] And following this story, which has nothing at all to do with Odo, John gives a relatively extended scriptural florilegium justifying silence—he begins with Paul, then quotes several Old Testament prophets, and then asserts that "these men were imitated by the Fathers of the New Testament; by Paul, Anthony, Hilarion, John, and lastly by our holy Father Benedict . . ."[137]—before continuing to cite support for silence as a practice from the gospels, and closing with a rather disparate selection of quotations from Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah.[138] These two or three pages of quotations abandon all pretense, not only of narrative, but also of Odo himself, while the placement of Benedict in a tradition of silence stretching from the Old Testament prophets through the evangelists and the Desert Fathers suggests a conscious effort to outline both a legitimate custom and its authoritative textual basis. Nalgod has summarily dispensed with all of this, both the story of the two brothers among the Norsemen, and of course the florilegium. By now, the reasons for this drastic editing are clear.

As before, further examples could be adduced—in particular, I have left undiscussed the fascinating pamphlet on the nature of and justification for monastic reform that John includes at the end of his text (which Nalgod has characteristically plundered for straightforwardly hagiographic, narrative elements)—but the point has

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[136] Ibid., 55.

[137] Ibid., 56.

[138] Ibid., 57.

been made. The strangeness of John's narrative structure (or lack thereof) in the *Vita prima et maior* stems from his innovative efforts to cram a customary into the outline of a *vita*. This is revealed by precise attention to just what appears superfluous to the modern reader; close reading reveals that it is usually details about the constitution of monastic life at the communities of Baume or Cluny, and the citations of scripture, Benedict's rule, and miracle stories that support them. Focusing on the most egregious deviations, such as the discussion of the custom concerning breadcrumbs, or the various justifications for silence, opens a fissure in the sense of the work as the story of Odo. This fissure, in turn, quickly opens out to present an wide range of references, short and long, subtle and obvious, to a program of monastic ethics, praxis, and *conversatio* quite distinct from Odo as a historical, even exemplary, individual. But this reading is also evidenced in a striking way by comparison of John's text with Nalgod's second, heavily revised edition. What is so interesting about Nalgod's complaints is how similar they are to that of readers today, almost nine hundred years later; he finds John's text meandering, confusing, and so full of unnecessary words and passages that "the famous deeds of this most honorable man were covered over with an unfitting veil of obscurity."[139] Whether John's experimental effort at producing a customary-*vita* was successful in his own day, by the early twelfth century its fruits had become vexing in the extreme. By that time, the customary was the well-established proper receptacle for monastic *conversatio* as well as specific, technical liturgical usage. Nalgod, accordingly, throughout the entire text, edits out everything the

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[139] Nalgod, *PL* 133:85.

modern reader perceives as extraneous, clarifying John's *vita* into a more conventional form, unified cleanly around the person of Odo and the narrative of his life.

As a story in the historical development of genera, the composition of John's *vita* and its revision by Nalgod reveals much about the role of documents in the Cluniac world, both functionally and conceptually. Both authors intended their documents to be *useful* in a very practical sense—that is, in having to do with the practice or praxis of concrete groups and individuals. They were to be used, not merely and perhaps not even primarily to relay historical information about the life of a person from one mind to another, but as guides to self-(re)fashioning. But, paradoxically, it was likely Nalgod's text that more closely approximated, for example, the *Lausiac Histories* in this function. Nalgod's revision of John's *vita* presented Odo's life as a series of episodes illustrating individual virtue, inviting the brothers who heard these stories in the refectory to strive for their example. John's text was very different, for it attempted, at least in part, to communicate a program for formalized monastic, that is, *regular*, life. It would be going much to far to attribute to the *Vita prima et maior* a legislative or truly normative role, but neither did it merely hold up Odo as an exemplar of virtue conceived on an individual, personal scale: John used his text as a venue for information about the placement of lamps in the dormitory, the proper conduct of confession and forgiveness in chapter, and the provision of food to hermits living near monasteries precisely because he aimed to communicate the institutionalized notion of monastic life that would, eventually, become known as an *ordo*.

How does this reading relate to what has gone before? Our analyses of the Cluny Bible's introductory material and of Ralph Glaber's *Historiarum quinque libri* revealed a

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monastic conception of semiosis that held up the world, the scriptures, and the life of Jesus as signs that, when understood—and, to some extent, even when merely imitated or retransmitted—elevated the human in some ultimate, salvific sense. The preface to the Cluny Bible combined two poems by Alcuin and one letter from Jerome to outline a complex conception and program of Bible reading, figuring this praxis as salvific semiosis. In this fashion, Bible reading (including Bible listening) played upon divine grace specifically as the dispensation of *signs*: scripture and Christ. Such a praxis/semiosis also implied a certain complex and expansive social or even institutional setting. This setting included humans as both teachers and exemplars, poverty, community, a range of specialized professions and roles (scribe, lector), and the patronage of ruling elites.

Glaber significantly develops both of these broad themes (the theological/soteriological account of semiosis-as-praxis and the nature of the complex, far-flung, highly differentiated community that accommodates it). First, he explicitly argues that man exists in God's image precisely in that he is rational, with the central example of this faculty being the use of signs. Glaber also argues that the nature of Jesus as savior is to bear the *image* of God back into the fallen world, thereby regenerating scripture as a sign and man as a reader of signs. In my view, these theological claims are implicit in much of Jerome and Alcuin's writing as found in the Cluny Bible: consider where Jerome discusses Jesus as Logos, *ratio* and *subputatio*, and the "hidden wisdom of God" who is revealed to the earnestly seeking postulant through grace mediated by scripture, or where Alcuin portrays scripture as a dispensation of grace, efficacious for salvation as no "worthy propitiatory deeds of the flesh" can be, waiting to be unlocked by

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the *mens conscia recti*. But it is Glaber who makes them explicit in this way, who sums up and develops and advances what Jerome and Alcuin (and the Cluniacs of the generation preceding Glaber, by gathering these texts together) have suggested. So too does he refine and further articulate the sociology of Bible reading suggested by the Cluny Bible's preface. Jerome emphasizes the importance of teachers and comradely communities devoted to this study by comparison with the great pagan philosophers and their students, and of course to scripture and Jesus Christ. Alcuin's contributions, unsurprisingly, go into much more detail about the nature of the particular monastic community that had, by his day, grown up around Christian Bible praxis. His first poem suggests itself as part of a training program for new monastic lectors, both by summarizing the books of the Bible in terms of contents and typology and by admonishing its audience with these words: "Whosoever as reader in church reads in the sacred body of this book the high words of God, distinguishing the meanings, titles, cola, and commata with his voice, and let him say with his mouth as he knows the accent sounds." His second poem invokes the patronage of a great king (reinscribed, literally, as abbot in the Cluny Bible), relating the monastic community specifically in its production and use of scripture to a broader external world of secular economy and temporal power. But it is Glaber who discusses the monastic implementation of the Rule of Saint Benedict (and the *Codex regularum* of Saint Benedict of Aniane) as a distinct, authoritative tradition of communal living—and, crucially, one which may be modified beyond the explicit text of these documents by monks and bishops together in council, and, moreover, which is threatened both by human fallibility and demonic corruption.

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Together, these two texts (the Cluny Bible's composite preface and Glaber's chronicle) present a gradual elaboration of Christian semiosis-as-praxis and the theology and sociology/ecclesiology that accompany it. This elaboration proceeded alongside the development of literate technologies such as page layout, script, annotation, and genre, most obviously in the example of the Tours Bible, just as it did with the practical constitution of communities centered on that praxis and their relationship to the broader world of power, authority, and economy. Thus we witness the adaptation of the page, and of educational (that is, disciplinary) apparatuses, to serve clear public reading. We see the Bible gain an increasingly coherent conception, unified both physically as an imposing pandect, and conceptually, as a second incarnation, a Christ accessible to, even physically produced by, human artifice. Moreover, as Christ, the Bible became also Logos—the ground according to which all things are known, an infinite sign whose diversity manifests the trans-historical unity of all things, and whose use imbues human activity with transcendental meaning.

I have revisited this material because, taken together, the *vitae Odonis* present a very different and illuminating view on this same process. In them, the holy man occupies the role of blessed exemplar. Like the Bible, even like Christ, he mediates between man and God. He is a vehicle for grace, dispensing advice, counsel, succor, and discipline, providing in effect a sign that may, like the Bible, be both read (that is, observed, contemplated) and written (imitated) as part of the individual's pursuit of salvation. But by the mid-tenth century, when John of Salerno walked with and then recorded the *conversatio* of Odo, there was already an awareness of this *conversatio*— and of the institutional strictures that inculcated it in man and sheltered it from a

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tumultuous, sinful world—as something distinct from the exemplary individual. John's *vita* is an effort, experimental to some extent, to communicate the *conversatio* and the *consuetudines* that bound it alongside, within, and through the example of Odo. By writing out the text with this goal, John plunged into the murky area between law and grace, between the codified behavior of the total community and the charismatic individual nature and personal experience of the holy man. In this effort, the person of Odo very much served as a vehicle for the practices of Baume and Cluny, at a time when the *other* possible vehicles—the other genres—for doing so remained comparatively underdeveloped. Very likely, his text contributed to that development, as we will examine in the following chapter. Certainly the various customaries identified with Cluny all postdate the *Vita prima et maior*, becoming increasingly complex as the years go by. So much so that, by Nalgod's day, in the 1120s John's *vita* had become wholly unsatisfactory, even vexing—perhaps because so much of what it was meant to convey now belonged, quite obviously, in a different kind of receptacle: the customary.

These *vitae*, then, do relatively little to expand our understanding of the theological and sociological/ecclesiological issues raised by our consideration of the Cluny Bible and the *Historiarum*; rather, they reveal, from the instrumental side, how the efforts to capture and fix the authoritative constitutional and behavior forms suggested by those texts proceeded, how those efforts influenced the development of literalate technologies, and how those efforts themselves elaborated the praxis as such. But if they temper and complicate the history of ideas we have wrested from Jerome, Alcuin, and Glaber, they also testify to the fact that certain of these key ideas—the relationship between charismatic holy individual and (at least potentially) legislative text, the

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importance of the proper social integration and historical transmission of monastic praxis,

and the key concern for semiosis and signification supporting the whole edifice—

manifested themselves also in pragmatic, material, flesh-and-blood contexts.

CHAPTER VIII: THE *VITAE ODONIS* MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

A consideration of the form in which various manuscripts of the *vitae Odonis* survive adds important confirmation and qualification to my analysis of their content and genre. I have not been able to scrutinize all the manuscripts of these texts, so the following discussion is necessarily impressionistic; moreover, I rely heavily on the paleographic and codicological work of others, which I have endeavored to consider critically and have cited fully. Nevertheless, I trust the reader will find my discussion and conclusions basically substantive and worthwhile.

The manuscripts in which we find today the *vitae Odonis* may be divided into two rough categories; the first I call the "customary" type, and the second I term the "legendary" type. As their names suggest, these types are primarily matters of genre, particularly with an eye to the intended function and use of their members within a monastic setting. The customary type is so named because, as I argued in the case of the *Vita prima et maior*, although they are not what most medieval historians imagine when using or hearing the word "customary," there is good reason for imagining that they performed *roughly* the function of those documents historians *do* understand when encountering the term—that is, they give some guide to the praxis that characterizes monastic life, and often that of a particular house or network/group of houses rather than of, or in addition to, monasteries in general. This guide might appear so vague as to be virtually useless, but one must always remember that the bulk of monastic practice and

the main vehicle for its instruction/social reproduction remained lived and oral

throughout my period (and probably well into the age of orders that followed); if the

monks of a given community did wish to change their behavior to adopt that of another

house, in many cases this might best be understood as the addition of certain feasts to

their liturgical calendar and of various "tweaks" to rituals and disciplinary practices both

within and beyond the liturgy itself. At least as far as this liturgical and para-liturgical

material (often including the *vitae*, which were read aloud in the rectory and perhaps also

the chapel) was concerned, documents transmitting it would probably have been aimed at

the cantor and/or armarius, who drew on a repository of such texts as well as on their own

extensive personal experience of the liturgy to oversee its choreography each week.[1]

While perhaps useful for citation in chapter or for individual study, these texts thus might

have been most centrally figured as the personal library of a monastery's literate ritual

specialists. A more "comprehensive" customary was thus not often necessary—nor

frequently conceived—before the later eleventh century.[2]

    To make these more ad hoc customaries, the monks usually combined texts

belonging to highly various genres in a way that may appear haphazard to modern

observers. These often include *regulae*, *vitae*, all kinds of liturgical material, canons,

letters, and sermons—all texts that can be understood as offering some guidance on how

monks should conduct themselves in general, the observance of particular feasts and

other significant modifications to the liturgy, and, in some cases, on why "reform" itself

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[1] Margot E. Fassler, "The Office of Cantor in Early Western Monastic Rules and Customaries: A Preliminary Investigation," *Early Music History* 5 (1985): 29–51.

[2] Cochelin, "Community and Customs."

might be necessary or justifiable. Such works were thus resolutely composite, at least from our perspective. But, crucially, in addition to the distinctive *content* of these proto-customaries, I also note a fairly distinct formatting of these manuscripts, at least of the several surveyed here. This is, in general, rather spartan: the manuscripts in question use simple full-page blocks of minuscule script (*lineis plenis*), without much illumination or a particularly extensive/complex rubrication, and often without additional finding aids such as running titles. Finally, there does appear to be a rough periodicity for these type: obviously none considered here will be older than the mid-tenth century (when the *Vita prima et maior* was first composed, though this format may well have antecedents with or without functional congruence), and, very roughly, they peter out around—or within a few decades of—the turn of the twelfth century, giving way to the second type.

This second type, the "legendary" style, is a bit less unusual in its nomenclature; in general, these texts are widely recognized by medievalists as legendaries, that is, collections of *vitae*, *miracula*, *passiones*, and sundry other episodic or narrative hagiography featuring important holy men and women. Similarly, these texts have a much more clearly-defined function within the monastery: in general, they are primarily (if not exclusively) intended for use by *lectors* reading to the brothers while they eat in the refectory, and perhaps also sometimes as part of the liturgy itself. Corresponding to this different functional role, page layout differs markedly from the customary type. These texts are written in even double columns, basically similar to those found in the Cluny Bible and its Touraine antecedents, usually in a gothic or proto-gothic hand (this due to their usually later dating), and include precocious finding aids such as running titles. In terms of dating, these manuscripts appear from the mid- and late-twelfth

centuries onwards. I will discuss these manuscripts in more detail before drawing some more general conclusions and relating this examination to the previous discussion.

I begin with the oldest manuscript, a liturgical miscellany of the Aquitaine monastery Saint-Martial des Limoges (BNF lat. 1240). A large part of the text is a tenth-century troper-proser with some other, more various and (likely contemporaneous) liturgical texts attached.[3] James Grier, over a career of careful work on liturgical manuscripts and musical notation, has managed to situate BNF lat. 1240 within a series of efforts by the scribes of Saint-Martial to document and transmit the liturgy in written form. This series runs from the second quarter of the tenth century, when the production of the core of BNF lat. 1240 inaugurated (or at least first attests) the tradition, a hundred years into the 1020s and 1030s, culminating, in a sense, with the career of Adémar of Chabannes. The series is comprised of roughly four generations of manuscripts. First comes BNF lat. 1240, produced either between 923–928 or 931–936.[4] Next come a pair of fragments, BNF lat. 1834 and a few lines of palimpsest text from BNF lat. 1085. Grier, building on work by Alejandro Planchart and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, locates these manuscripts to the first years of the eleventh century.[5] He even goes so far as to argue, on the basis of their similarities, high style, and incompleteness, that these two manuscripts were together intended as a major project of liturgical codification that was abandoned in

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[3] James Grier, "Roger de Chabannes (d. 1025), Cantor of St Martial, Limoges," *Early Music History* 14 (1995): 59–119, at 68–69.

[4] Ibid., 69.

[5] Alejandro Planchart, "The Transmission of Medieval Chant," in *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources, and Texts*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 347–364; Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *La Décoration des manuscrits à Saint-Martin de Limoges et en Limousin du XIe au XIIe siècle* (Paris, France: École Nationale des Chartes, 1969).

the midst of their composition.[6] Within a few years, however, as part of what I identify as the third generation, a new effort was made in this direction. This is evidenced in BNF lat. 1120 and the main bulk of 1085, evidently repurposed from its role in the earlier, second generation effort.[7] Grier proposes that both this second and especially third generation of texts were closely associated with Roger of Chabannes, suggesting Roger as a scribe participating in copying out of the former and, some years later, in his capacity as the monastery's cantor, overseeing and perhaps initiating the latter.[8] Finally, the fourth generation, represented in BNF lat. 909 and 1121, appears during the tenure of Roger's nephew and successor as cantor, Adémar of Chabannes in the second half of the 1020s.[9]

Immediately following the main liturgical material comes the *Vita Prima et Maior*, which is itself followed by eight more texts. These are a mixture of *vitae* and liturgical materials, such as sermons and individual offices/feasts. Interestingly, almost all are centered on particular, usually post-biblical individuals. Included are regional figures, such as Saint Foy of Conques and Saint William of Gellone, and those from further afield, such as Leodegar of Poitiers and Margaret the Virgin. There are two homilies, Bede's on Palm Sunday and Raban Maur's on Luke (this latter incomplete), and two sermons: Fulbert's sermon on the birth of Mary and Odo's sermon on Saint

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[6] Grier, "Roger de Chabannes," 81–82.

[7] Ibid., 73–80.

[8] Reliable facts about Roger of Chabannes' life and career are few but useful: Adémar, famous as an audacious forger but presumably lacking any real motivation to fabricate on this point, relates that Roger was both his uncle and his teacher at Saint-Martial by 1010, and that he died, as the monastery's cantor, in 1025. There is some potentially-independent confirmation of this latter fact in the manuscripts and tombstones of Saint-Martial, though these could also stem ultimately from Adémar. Grier builds on this chronology with some informed speculation, tentatively attributing a Saint-Martial charter dated 992 to Roger on the basis of the signature "Rotgerius scripsit," ibid., 53–59.

[9] Ibid., 117.

Benedict. This diffuse collection presents several suggestive themes. Both William of

Gellone and Margaret became important figures associated with crusading in the eleventh

and twelfth century, and Fulbert's sermon on the immaculate conception calls to mind

Cluny's promotion of Mary's cult, most prominently through the Ildefonsus tradition, and

its relationship to the burgeoning phenomenon of crusading.[10] There is also, of course,

the creation of socially- and culturally-significant networks attested by the weaving

together of locally important saints and those from further afield—here the inclusion of

the Burgundian bishop Leodegar alongside Foy and William of Gellone probably

demonstrates the important intermediary role between Cluny and Aquitaine adopted by

Saint-Martial, whether before or after its reform by Hugh of Semur in the 1060s.[11]

But more than these individual valences, I focus here on the overall effect of the

manuscript. We must walk a very fine line in this question, for the *libelli* supplementing

the troper-proser were most likely added significantly after its composition, in the

eleventh or even twelfth centuries. This overall effect, therefore, cannot be imputed to the

intention or conception of any individual, and especially not to the tenth-century

community at Saint-Martial. At the same time, I think it would be a mistake to regard the

collection as accidental or arbitrary—monks working in Saint-Martial's scriptorium fifty

or a hundred years after the original compilation of the troper-proser did not simply shrug

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[10] For Cluny and Mary, see Schapiro, *The Parma Ildefonsus*, 71–72. Iogna-Prat reviews the arguements for Cluny's "contribution to the ideological prehistory of the crusades," which he largely rejects, in *Order and Exclusion*, 323–332. See also Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, 68–72; H. E. J. Cowdrey, "Cluny and the First Crusade," *Revue Bénédictine* 83 (1973): 285–311; Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970–c. 1130* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[11] See Andreas Sohn, *Der Abbatiat Ademars von Saint-Martial in Limoges (1063–1114)* (Münster, Germany: Aschendorff, 1989); Cowdrey, *Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform*, 90–94

their shoulders and copy/sew these *libelli* into BNF lat. 1240 because it happened to be lying nearby. Keeping in mind the common monastic practice of reading *vitae* in the refectory (as well as my reading of the *Vita prima*), *all* these texts have a specific liturgical role, just like the tenth-century core of the manuscript. Moreover, this core itself remained an estimable repository of tradition at least into the early eleventh century: Grier shows how the scribes responsible for the "third generation" of liturgical texts, discussed above, in some cases recopied precisely those elements from BNF lat. 1240 that had been omitted in the production of the interceding second generation, even though the scribes doing this work appear not to have understood the precise use/role of these elements in the office.[12] This interest in historical completeness, even in the absence of pragmatic application, suggests a weak glimmer of normativity imported to the troper-proser; its contents ought to be preserved even if they have left the realm of strict utility due to historical drift and the communal, institutional loss of knowledge. And finally, we certainly know that these texts were bound together at least by the early thirteenth century, for an index written by Bernard Itier (d. 1225) on f. 194v lists them all. This overall manuscript is thus no post-medieval, haphazard assemblage of convenience.

Most important for my purposes along these lines, of course, is the inclusion of the *Vita prima et maior*. As I have suggested above, this text could certainly be used as a guide—normative, elective, or even devotional (though keep in mind John's hard-nosed attention to the details of chapter and other more "functional" or legislative concerns)— for houses (or even, perhaps, individuals) seeking to emulate the *conversatio* associated

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[12] Grier, "Roger de Chabannes," 109–110.

with Cluny or Odo. If this argument is accepted, then BNF lat. 1240 becomes quite close to what historians generally understand a customary to be: it includes some record, possessed of ambiguous normative status, both of the liturgy and of various forms of day-to-day conduct, community, and dispute resolution characterizing monastic life. The former concerns how the monk pray, and the latter how they eat, sleep, learn, and generally manage all the material issues naturally arising in the course of institutionalized communal life. Some of the other texts play a role in this function, too. Odo's sermon on Saint Benedict is certainly a statement on the proper conduct of regular life (indeed, in specifically advancing the importance of the *Regula Benedicti* itself, it undertakes one of the key tasks of Carolingian or post/neo-Carolingian reform). And the *passio* of Saint Foy includes notation for an office for that saint known from the eleventh century.

Without making broader claims about the specific nature or extent of this process, the combination of these texts must be considered within the context of Odo's "reform" of Saint-Martial, and also, for reasons which will become clear, of Fleury. Historians today understand monastic reform, especially that associated with Cluny and *especially* that associated with Cluny and preceding the twelfth or later eleventh century, quite differently from previous generations of scholars. Reform was not a neat or easy process; communities could and did resist it as a hostile takeover. Narrative sources that describe specifically the reform of this or that house, such as the *Vita prima et maior* in the case of Odo at Fleury, often operate as apologia or justifications, exaggerating the material poverty of a house or the laxity of its community's life. And, just as in so many other institutions throughout history, reform could easily be shrugged off over time, whether intentionally or not, as the inertia of communities asserted itself against the brief or

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symbolic action of lone charismatic individuals. Similarly, reform did not necessarily

imply a connection between two monasteries outside the lifetime or career of a particular

individual: just because Odo reformed Fleury and was even (if intermittently and

ambiguously) recognized as (one of) its abbots, Cluny itself as a community or institution

did not gain any particular rights or authority over that of Fleury.

One of the foremost figures in this revision of monastic history and our

understanding of Carolingian/post-Carolingian reform, John Nightingale, has devoted

some work in particular to the question of Odo's reform of Fleury.[13] He complicates the

main sources for this reform—John's *vita* and a papal privilege of 938 naming Odo abbot

at Fleury—through comparison to (later copies of) charters produced at Fleury and its

principle cell, Perrecy, in the 930s and 940s. These latter frequently (though not always)

fail to name Odo as the monastery's abbot. Nightingale also examines the papal

privilege's stipulations and the wider political context of Odo's reform, showing that

many issues of contention between the Fleury community and Odo remained, that the

community's rights and prerogatives received some papal protection and sanction, and

that Odo's tenure as abbot was probably limited to the late 930s, rather than spanning the

entire decade as has been widely assumed.[14] At the same time, however, it is not

Nightingale's point that Odo was never recognized as the (or more likely, an) abbot of

Fleury, or that he exerted no leadership or influence there during his service as such; his

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[13] Nightingale, "Oswald, Fleury."

[14] Ibid., 34–37.

study rather seeks to show that Fleury's prominence in tenth and eleventh century West Francia did not stem from its association with or reform by Odo or Cluny.[15]

This consideration of Odo's experience at Fleury is relevant to BNF lat. 1240 because, as pointed out by Grier, the system of musical notation used for much of the liturgical material in the first part of the manuscript is, in contrast to the subsequent three generations of liturgical texts produced at Saint-Martial, made in a style associated with northern Francia.[16] Further investigating this fact, John A. Emerson has forcefully argued that

> at least four notators from a northern French monastery were responsible for neuming scattered texts throughout Pa 1240; this was done in Limoges, not elsewhere. . . . I have attempted to provide evidence that these French scribes belonged to the great scriptorium at Fleury-sur-Loire, since it is known that Aimo, abbot of the monastery of Saint-Martial, and Géraud, abbot of the nearby abbot of Saint-Pierre de Solignac, had contracted an act of association with the monastery of Saint-Benoît before February 942. And, in my, view, this act of association is further manifested in the unusual ecumenical melding of two distinct notational systems—one from northern France, the other from southern Aquitaine—in one liturgical book.[17]

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[15] Ibid., 33.

[16] Grier, "Roger de Chabannes," 116; Paul Evans, "Northern French Elements in an Early Aquitainian Troper," in *Speculum musicae artis: Festgabe dur Heinrich Husmann zum 60. Gerburtstag am 16. Dezember 1968*, ed. Heinz Becker and Reinhard Gerlach (Munich, Germany: W. Fink, 1970), 103–110.

[17] John A. Emerson, "Neglected Aspects of the Oldest Full Troper (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 1240)," *Recherches nouvelles sur les tropes liturgiques* 36 (1993), 211.

And, to add the final piece, Joachim Wollasch, citing necrological documents from

Solignac, adds that, as part of his abbacy at Fleury, Odo himself sent four monks

religionis gratia to Saint-Martial and thence to Solignac for purposes of affirming just

this confraternity.[18] Is it any great leap to suppose that these four elite monks might have

been the very ones to assist in the creation of this liturgical manual, or to modify it

shortly after the completion of its first phase with their distinctive system of musical

notation? We need neither accept John's characterization of Odo's work at Fleury, nor

assert an anachronistically intensive sense of the word reform to advance this hypothesis.

And if such where the case, the manuscript may have gained a certain association with

Odo as a reformer, thus inviting the addition to it, sometime in the eleventh century, of

John's *vita*. The normative, or at least exemplary, nature of John's text could then have

found reinforcement from that of the earlier contents of the manuscript as a liturgical

guide, and given the same to them in turn.[19]

It is particularly interesting to view the presence of the *vita* besides this liturgical

material in the combined light of Stock's account of textual communities and of what we

know of the armarius/cantor's concrete duties in the monastery.[20] As discussed in detail

in the customary of Bernard, it was quite explicitly the job of the armarius or cantor to

prepare written "tables" for all liturgical performances detailing who performed what

role:

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[18] Wollasch, "Monasticism: The First Wave of Refrom," 176.

[19] It is interesting to view the presence of the *vita* besides this liturgical material in the combined light of Stock's account of textual communities and of what we know of the armarius/cantor's concrete duties in the monastery. It was quite explicitly the job of the cantor to prepare

[20] On the former, see above (Chapter 4) and Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 88–90; on the latter see Fassler, "The Office of Cantor."

Whoever reads in the church, or sings, he ought to heed/obey him [the armarius]; indeed of him [the armarius] it is to foresee the hour, that negligence concerning the work of God shall not arise in any way, and for Mass and for Matins and for all the remaining Hours, and for the whole Office that shall be in the house of the Lord. . . . Of this one [the armarius] it is to place all the brothers of the church in a table for the whole Office, not according to rank, or according to their desires, but only according to however it shall seem pleasing to him, for the edification and worthiness of those hearing, with exception for reading and Matins. There indeed he takes care only that a younger one does not sing, or read at Matins before his superior, unless for some reason it is necessary, that another asks him, or he wishes several beautiful responsories to be worthily sung; or he is absent, who is written in the table.[21]

This is a perfect illustration of Stock's concept of the leader whose authority stems from communal consensus on his authority in interpretation of a specified text. Under this schema, as Fassler has shown, the positions of armarius (librarian) and cantor rapidly converged, since the planner of the liturgy would naturally make regular, even constant use of liturgical manuals in planning the day's office.[22] The basic principle, that one of

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[21] "Quicumque legit in ecclesia, sive cantat, ab eo auscultare debet; ejus enim est omni hora providere, ne eveniat negligentia de opere Dei in aliquo, et ad Missam, et ad Matutinas, et ad caeteras omnes Horas, et ad omne Officium quod sit in domo Dei. . . . Ipsius est ponere omnes Fratres ecclesiae in tabula ad omnia Officia, non secundum ordinem, au voluntatem eorum, sed tantum secundum quod videbitur et libitum ei fuerit, ad aedificationem et honestatem audientium, excepto ad Lectiones etc. Matutinorum. Illud enim tantum providet ibi quod junior non cantet, au legat ad Matutinos super Priorem suum, nisi pro aliqua necessitate, ut aliquis roget eum, aut aliquod pulchrum responsorium velit honestius cantari; aut defuerit, qui scriptus in tabula fuerat," Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 161.

[22] Fassler, "The Office of Cantor," 46–47.

the most important and powerful positions within the monastic community would employ a manuscript such as BNF lat. 1240 in directing the behavior of the monks, is thus established. And given that the liturgical office of Prime crucially overlapped with the chapter meeting, in reading the martyrology and necrology, to which the conduct of which John's *vita* gave special attention, the *Vita prima* found within BNF lat. 1240 was clearly positioned to exercise a semi-, proto-, or at least potentially normative function. An armarius charged with overseeing the proper conduct of at least some elements of the chapter gathering, especially one in a community recently "reformed" by Cluny, may well have referred to John's text.

The case of another of the manuscripts relating John's *vita*, BNF lat. 18306, is more complex. BNF lat. 18306 is one quaternion of an otherwise-lost manuscript, and accordingly contains the prologue and first part of Book 1 of the *Vita Prima et Maior*. It was produced around the turn of the twelfth century at Saint-Martin-des-Champs, today within Paris but in the high Middle Ages in a field (hence its name) outside the city.[23] As with BNF lat. 1240, the broader context of this manuscript and its production and role at Saint-Martin is reform.

Saint-Martin has not yet been the target of the kind of revisionist historical attention that has been widely applied elsewhere, generally transforming our understanding of early and high medieval monastic reform. The received early history of Saint-Martin, therefore, relying primarily on nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century narratives, sounds both familiar and suspicious to those familiar with this more recent

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[23] Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon," 59.

work. First referenced in a charter, supposedly from 710 (Merovingian charters benefitting Saint-Denis, as this one does, are best treated with caution if not outright skepticism), of Childebert III, the monastery was substantially destroyed by Normans in the late ninth century. Henry I reconstituted the community as a group of regular canons in 1059 or 1060, and it remained important to his son and successor Philip I in the following decades. Eventually, in the summer of 1079, Philip gave the community over to reform at the hands of Hugh of Semur, whence it became an important node in the network of priories built during his abbacy.[24] Besides the possibility of forgery by the monks of Saint-Denis at work in the Merovingian charter,[25] one may also question the extent of the devastation inflicted by Norse raiders, which has been found to be exaggerated in order to justify reform in many other cases from West Francia during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.[26] The replacement of a community of canons with monks is also a common feature of such accounts, though rather than being invented may often merely be snidely invoked to assert the superiority of the latter. Thus, though I do not here embark on a true, sustained effort to unravel the actual early institutional history of Saint-Martin, there is good reason to be suspicious of some key elements of this pat narrative.

At the same time, however, Saint-Martin-des-Champs may well have maintained a closer relationship, or even subordination, to Cluny during the twelfth century than was

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[24] Charlotte Denoël, "La bibliothèque médiévale des Saint-Martin-des-Champs à Paris," *Scriptorium* 65 (2001): 67–108, at 67–68; Cornelia Heintz, "Anfänge und Entwicklung des Cluniazenser-Priorates St.-Martin-des-Champs in Paris (1079–1150)," dissertation, Münster, Germany, 1982.

[25] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 107–113.

[26] Jones "Pitying the Desolation"; Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons*; Nightingale, "Oswald, Fleury."

typical of houses reformed by the great Burgundian abbey during the preceding two centuries. From the mid-eleventh century, Cluny did begin to develop a more regular network of subordinate priories, even if this still did not approach the "fully constituted order" pioneered by the Cistercians from the mid-twelfth century onwards.[27] BNF lat. 18306 and some other manuscripts associated with it may well attest to this: whereas BNF lat. 1240 appears as a manuscript first created at the initiative of the Saint-Martial community for its own use, and subsequently supplemented on its own scribal terms by its own monks with the *Vita prima et maior* and modified in its musical notation by monks of a semi-independent Fleury on a mission sanctioned not only by Odo but also by Saint-Martial's own abbot and that of Solignac, BNF lat. 18306 is one of several complex and ornate manuscripts produced at Saint-Martin under an overwhelming Cluniac scribal and artistic influence.[28] This influence is paralleled by the immense role Cluniac abbots and liturgy occupy in these manuscripts. All this is to say that BNF lat. 18306 appears as part of a much more comprehensive, assertive, and even externally-directed scribal endeavor than BNF lat. 1240, in any of its various part or as a whole. Both projects are similar in advancing a proto- or semi-normative program testifying to some amount of Cluniac influence; but they differ radically in the extent of that influence, the terms on which it was received, its breadth, and its apparent clarity or specificity of intention.

The Cluniac scribal and artistic style of BNF lat. 18306 is readily apparent and well-known.[29] It is most obvious in the illumination of the manuscript, which, though

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[27] Bouchard, "Merovingian, Carolingian, and Cluniac Monasticism," 382.

[28] Denoël, "La bibliothèque médiévale," 85–86.

[29] Ibid.

short, includes two great initials, approximately ten lines tall. These demonstrate Franco-Saxon interlacing and a restrained foliage motif particularly reminiscent of the Cluny Bible (BNF lat. 15176), with some subtle developments in the treatment of branching "polylobes," quite similar to those found in the roughly contemporary Cluny lectionary (BNF NAL 2246).[30] The script of BNF lat. 18306, a heavily-abbreviated, skillful, squarish minuscule, also appears quite similar to that of the Cluniac lectionary. We also note a simplified hierarchy of scripts, as observed in the Cluny Bible; both the beginning of John's prologue and of the *vita*'s main text begin with large (two to three lines tall) square/rustic capitals.[31] The explicit of the prologue is treated in the same way. Finally, again as in the case of the Cluny Bible, many of the initials are highlighted in yellow. This script and decorative style also appears in two other manuscripts, Mazarine 2009 and 2012, produced, according to Charlotte Denoël, in the scriptorium at Saint-Martin around the same time.[32]

These two manuscripts are also interesting for our purposes. Their close similarity to BNF lat. 18306 and their Cluniac features, combined with their production following the time of Saint-Martin's reform—or acquisition—by Hugh of Semur, suggest the possibility of a major scribal and artistic project involving all three (and likely more) manuscripts occurring as part of that reform. They may also shed some light on the conceptualization and intended use of BNF lat. 18306 (and themselves/one another) by providing more content than the lone first quire of the *Vita prima et maior*. Both

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[30] Denoël, "La bibliothèque médiévale," 85; Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon," 59.

[31] See Chapter 4 for discussion of the hierarchy of scripts and its relationship to the Cluny Bible and Tours Bibles.

[32] Denoël, "La bibliothèque médiévale," 85.

manuscripts are, broadly speaking, miscellanies. Each gathers together relatively established individual texts, often with known and famous, at least within clerical circles, authors. The dates of completion/publication of these texts, whether fictive or reconstructed by modern historians, can span a century or more. None of this is to say, however, that these collections are arbitrary; indeed, unlike many miscellanies with a concrete thematic unity discernable to modern historians only with difficulty and insight,[33] these texts make very obvious and direct sense together. Mazarine 2009 is a collection of texts about Saint Martin, bishop of Tours and patron of (Frankish) monasticism, perhaps in some tension or rivalry with the Benedicts of Nursia and Aniane. Included is the *vita* of Martin by his contemporary, Sulpicius Severus, as well as several letters by this hagiographer to deacons, priests, and others about Martin. There is also a text called *De Trinitate* and attributed to Martin, a *vita* of Saint Brice, episcopal successor of Martin at Tours, and passion texts for Dionysius the Areopagite and Maurice and his companions.

Even more striking are the contents of Mazarine 2012. This manuscript is comprised of a series of texts concerning—and often authored by—Cluniac abbots. First comes a substantial fragment of the *Vita prima et maior*, missing the prologue and most of the first book but otherwise complete. Next the *Credulitas* of Odilo, then his *Ad crucem adorandam oratio*, his *vita* of Mayeul, and four hymns for the feast of Mayeul, again composed by Odilo. Following in turn comes Peter Damien's *vita* of Odilo, then a hymn for Odilo's feast, then, breaking the rough chronological order, a *vita* of Adelaide

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[33] For examples of modern readings of whole miscellanies for just such unity, see Karen Fresco and Anne D. Hedeman, eds., *Collections in Context: the Organization of Knowledge and Community in Europe* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012).

by Odilo and a collection of Odilo's sermons. These contents suggest that the manuscript was completed during or very shortly after Hugh's abbacy (which ended in 1109); otherwise why would works by and concerning him, who actually reformed Saint-Martin, not be included?

They also further testify to the intentional association of Cluniac abbatial literature and liturgical texts, specifically in the context of reform. Mazarine 2012 would have presented a useful modular addition to the lived traditions and customs of the community at Saint-Martin, facilitating the grafting of offices and *vitae* for prominent Cluniac saint-abbots onto the house's existing liturgical cycle. It also would have included, according to my reading, the proto-customary of John's *vita*. This text appeared first in the larger collection and the loss of its first gatherings (very roughly, the missing material might comprise ten to fifteen folia) suggests that frequent recourse was made to it.

Though it does not include the *Vita prima*, the manuscript BNF lat. 17742, the core of which is a copy of the ninth-century martyrology produced by the monk Usuard, is also relevant here. This manuscript was produced in the Cluniac scriptorium—or at least in its artistic and scribal style—most likely between 1087 and 1109 (shortly after Hugh's reform of Saint-Matin-des-Champs).[34] In addition to this text, the manuscript includes a selection of Gospel excerpts, which, together with the martyrology itself, likely constitute the core of the office of prime, as recited in chapter[35] and specifically

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[34] Jean Vezin, "Un martyrologe copié à Cluny à la fin de l'abbatiate de saint Hughes," in *Hommages à André Boutemy*, ed. Guy Cambier (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1976), 404–412, at 411–412.

[35] Ibid., 412.

referred to in John's *vita*. The Usuard copyist has also added a number of festivals to the

text's calendar; the greatest number of these concern Cluniac and associated Burgundian

figures, with the second greatest concentration devoted to Tours and Saint Martin. These

inclusions lead Jean Vezin to write that the manuscript "leads us yet again to invoke the

name of the abbot, Saint Odo," and his "influence" on the "redaction" of this

martyrology.[36] This becomes especially significant when we note the addition to

Usuard's text of an extensive necrology for Saint-Martin-des-Champs, including

additions throughout the Middle Ages. On this basis, Vezin and others have suggested

that the manuscript, sometime during the twelfth century, was transferred to Saint-Martin

and used there. This text would thus have facilitated the weaving together of the Cluniac

commemorative liturgy with that of Saint-Martin, but also, crucially, could have

functioned as a guide to performing, or reforming, the ritual of chapter at Saint-Martin

along Cluniac lines. We do not know if the monks of Saint-Martin were so inclined or

directed, and if they were directed whether or not they complied or how willingly. But

reading the *Vita prima et maior* as a customary suggests that John, at least, considered the

conduct of chapter, including both the ritual of public recrimination, confession, and

punishment and the reading of just such a document as BNF lat. 17742, something worth

relating to a community that had been recently reformed by Odo and was, at least

theoretically, interested in imitating his usage and *conversatio* to some extent. One also

notes that this manuscript includes the text of the Rule of Saint Benedict, likely added in

the early fourteenth century; the manuscript was thus regarded even that late as an

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[36] Ibid., 408–410.

appropriate context for such normative texts concerning the constitution of the monastery and the conduct of its members.

Another manuscript containing a fragment of the *Vita prima et maior*, currently preserved in Oxford's Bodleian Library (Bodley 817, formerly Madan 02690), sheds more light on the role of the *Vita prima et maior*. Strikingly, this manuscript's contents— and their order—are *identical* to that of Mazarine 2012! In my view, this is a rather astounding piece of evidence in support of the particular genealogy of the genre of the monastic customary I am attempting to suggest here, for this duplication both reinforces the appearance of Mazarine 2012 as intentionally composed by an individual or group of individuals working closely together, and also, crucially, indicates that the collection was considered appropriate for a range of circumstances or applications. Thus, rather than the slow, associational accumulation that produced BNF lat. 1240 as we possess it today (and as it confronted Bernard Itier in the early thirteenth century), Bodley 817 is a decisive and coherent statement. It stitches together works by and concerning a succession of major Cluniac abbots into a manual including liturgical material for feasts and offices whose performance would have attested—or even constituted—the most important kind of institutional linkages between high medieval monasteries. And to these it also adds narrative refectory readings that served as normative exemplars for the self-(re)fashioning of a monastic *conversatio*, which, like the liturgy, would have had a distinctly Cluniac character. Finally, it included the *Vita prima et maior*, itself a synthesis of these two former categories into a new kind of document.

I have not yet been able to examine Bodley 817, either in person or as an image file. But even the brief descriptions of it available in published works are suggestive.[37] These agree that the manuscript was produced in southern France around the turn of the twelfth century; according to Jean Vezin, it "possesses a decoration wholly in the Cluniac style of the beginning of the twelfth century."[38] The Bodleian catalogue description adds that the text possess "some elaborately drawn capitals, in one case illuminated," and also that John's prologue and much of Book 1, as in Mazarine 2012, are missing.[39] And the size given there for the manuscript, 11x7 5/8 inches (279.4x193.674mm), is similar to that of both Mazarine 2012 (259x184mm) and BNF lat. 18306 (260x190mm). It is thus likely that Bodley 817 conforms reasonably closely to the style of BNF lat. 18306 and Mazarine 2012, as outlined above.

I suggest these comparisons in order to contrast these three manuscripts—but not *too* strongly—with the *Vita prima* as it appears in BNF lat. 1240. The similarly between a Cluniac style and that of Saint-Martial is well-established (and certainly not the result of one-way influence, imitation, or imposition).[40] Particularly in the case of the Cluny and Saint-Martial Bibles, this similarity is not merely found in the artistic realm of illumination, but also in what might be called the artisanal or techn(olog)ical realm of page layout. Here, this is unquestionably attributable primarily to the two monasteries'

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[37] Iogna-Prat, "Panorama," 83; Jean Vezin, "Une importante contribution à l'étude du 'Scriptorium' de Cluny à la limite des XIe et XIIe siècles," *Scriptorium* 21 (1967): 312–320, at 317; Falconer Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, vol. 2 (Oxford, UK: 1922), 495–496.

[38] Vezin, "Une importante contribution," 317.

[39] Madan, *Summary Catalogue*, 495–496.

[40] Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon," 52–54.

efforts to ape—or, more fairly, to reproduce—the famous Tours Bibles of the early/mid-ninth century. But, at least in the "hierarchy of scripts," we find resonances of this Bible style in Mazarine 2012 and BNF lat. 18306. This is essential to the kind of distinction that should be made between the style and layout of the *Vita prima* in BNF lat. 1240, one the one hand, and these other manuscripts associated with Saint-Martin-des-Champs, on the other. In the former case, we find that John's text has been produced in a style quite similar to and yet markedly different from that of Cluny. This deviant similarity, to my eye, corresponds closely to that found between the two monasteries' Tours Bibles. The two were probably produced at similar times, with Saint-Martial's dating from the last decades of the tenth century and Cluny's from the first decades of the eleventh.[41] Their matrix of deviations and resemblances are best characterized as the result of two scriptoria of differing resources—in artisanal skill as well as in material—attempting a shared style. The most obvious illustration of this discrepancy appears in parchment quality: that of the Cluny Bible is significantly lighter and finer. But it appears in many other areas of the manuscripts as well. In general the Cluny Bible uses more color, rubricating the body text freely and deploying characteristic yellow shading or highlights. The grandeur of the most ornate illuminations in the Saint-Martial Bible is comparable to that of the best piece of such work in its Cluny counterpart, but the latter are more common. Similarly, the Cluny Bible usually has much larger and more striking incipits and explicits.

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[41] Cahn, *Romanesque Bible Illumination*; Gaborit-Chopin, *La Décoration*; Denoël, "La Bible d'Odilon"; Stratford, "La Bible dite d'Odilon."

Keeping in mind the differences between the layouts that are attributable to the distinct genres in question—most cardinally, the double columns and large margins of the Tours Bibles versus the single block of text and comparatively narrow margins of the *vitae*—this is a similar contrast to that which appears between Mazarine 2012 and BNF lat. 18306, on the one hand, and the *Vita Prima* in BNF lat. 1240, on the other. The former two manuscripts present huge, and hugely ornate, illuminated initials (as does Bodley 817, probably, given the descriptions cited); the *vita* in BNF lat. 1240 uses rather large red initials to begin both the prologue and book 1, but certainly includes no illumination whatsoever. Mazarine 2012 and BNF lat. 18306 use large, square capitals, red and black, blue, or yellow-highlighted, for their incipits, and either this same script or a slightly smaller rustic *capitalis* for their explicits. While the Saint-Martial text does differentiate its incipits and explicits with a special script (rustic capitals) in a different color (red), this script only fills a normal line (as opposed to the two- or even three-line size of its Cluniac counterparts) and gives a much less grand impression. It also uses virtually no color at all in the body of the text, while the other two manuscripts employ both highlighting and colored initials therein. And the parchment of the Saint-Martial text is much darker and coarser than that of Mazarine 2012.

But as with the Bibles, these differences should not be overstated; they appear, rather, as the result of variance in resources available for tasks of similar conception and intent: thus, while the Saint-Martial text lacks illumination and imposing square capital incipits, it nevertheless does employ very large initials and does gesture towards the hierarchy of scripts. The page layout is also basically similar, presenting a single large block of text written in relatively large, even, roundish minuscule across BNF lat. 18306,

lat. 1240, and Mazarine 2012. This results in a similar number of lines on each page, too: the Cluniac manuscripts associated with Saint-Martin-des-Champs each present thirty-one lines per page, while the Saint-Martial text gives twenty-eight. These commonalities are significant; after all, nothing dictates such shared features. And as we will soon discuss, when the *Vita prima* appeared in legendaries of the mid- and later twelfth century, it did so not only in a modern, gothic or proto-gothic script, but also in neat doubled columns and shed of elaborate illuminations and the more elaborate iterations, at least, of the hierarchy of scripts.

Finally, the formal characteristics shared by BNF lat. 18306, Mazarine 2012, and the *Vita prima* as found in BNF lat. 1240 can also be contrasted with the two other *vita* texts appearing in the Saint-Martial manuscript. First there is the *Vita Leodegarii episcopi*, occupying folia 155–168. This text uses no illumination or color, nor even any glimmer of the hierarchy of scripts; its incipit and explicit are in the same minuscule, in the same ink and the same size, as the body text. It also begins in the middle of folio 155, rather than at the beginning of one, as in BNF lat. 18306 and the Saint-Martial *Vita prima* (and, mostly likely in the missing first folia of Mazarine 2012 and Bodley 817). Its irregular minuscule, sharp and with a heavy right-ward slant, is quite distinct from that of the *Vita Prima*, and results in only twenty-three lines per page. The other *vita* in BNF lat. 1240, that of William of Gellone, approaches the form under consideration somewhat more closely. It, at least, sets off incipits and explicits for both the text as a whole and the prologue and main body with a different color scheme (red, or alternating red and black). But the text of these incipits and explicits are not really distinguished by size or script. Space has been left at the beginning of the body text for a large (or sparsely illuminated)

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initial, but this has not actually been added. And the text itself varies markedly from that

of the various versions of John's *vita*: the minuscule is very small and narrow, rather than

the more rounded, larger, open script found in the other texts. This gives the *Vita

Guillelmi* noticeably larger margins on the top, bottom, and outsides of each page, even

while allowing *fifty* lines of writing per page.

The implication is thus that the *Vita prima* found in BNF lat. 1240, when

originally created, was based in some sense on a Cluniac model of what this *vita*—of an

abbot of Cluny, after all—should look like in the most straightforward sense. This (more

than merely artistic/decorative) style, in its use of the hierarchy of scripts, drew, at least

indirectly, on the model of the Tours Bibles, as received at Cluny (in fact, as received at

Cluny very likely at the same time and in consultation with this form's reception at Saint-

Martial itself), yet was here employed in the production of a very different kind of text.

Together, this text and this particular physical form were apparently considered useful in

the reform (however else this kind of action or project was conceived at the time) not

only of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, but almost certainly of at least one other monastery—

hence the identical Bodley 817. The copy of John's text found in BNF lat. 1240 almost

certainly began its career as an independent *libellus*, later to be bound into the old

liturgical collection that made up the core of the modern codex.[42] And it is definitely an

eleventh-century manuscript, with a deviation, as I have argued, from the Cluniac model

provided by BNF lat. 18306, Mazarine 2012, and Bodley 817 that corresponds to that

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[42] Recall that this core itself had already experienced quite directly "Cluniac reform," in the addition of
northern French musical notation to some of its material, as discussed above. For the *Vita prima* as a
libellus, see Emerson, "Neglected Aspects," and P. A. Robinson, "The 'Booklet,' A Self-Contained Unit in
Composite Manuscripts," *Codicologica* 3 (1980): 46–69.

observable between the Cluny Bible (BNF lat. 15176) and the first Saint-Martial Bible (BNF lat. 5). Perhaps the *Vita prima* found in BNF lat. 1240 was produced according to a similar conception of form and content and as part of a similar project, namely, the second, more substantial Cluniac reform of Saint-Martial, which took place in the 1050s and 1060s, again under Hugh of Semur? Along such lines, Felix Heinzer has argued in his work on book culture in the Hirsau reforms that

> Specifically in the context of reform, where books take on normative functions, they transport with their contents also aesthetic aspects: certainly the forms of writing to some extent, the typical composition of page layout, and the composition of decoration. These formal components constitute a certain weight, and so also do the authority and the normative character of the contents exert, for their part, the effect of a model.[43]

The Hirsau reforms did draw to some extent on Cluniac models, particularly in the production of a new customary by the abbot of Hirsau, William, based on the customs of Cluny as related in Ulrich of Zell's work.[44] They also took place during the abbacy of Hugh of Semur, in the last quarter of the eleventh century, and Heinzer is at pains to assert that these "aesthetic" aspects in relevant manuscripts—page layout as well as decoration and illumination—were in fact understood as a *functional* part of reform,

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[43] Heinzer, "Hirsauer Buchkultur und ihre Ausstrahlung," 101.

[44] Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 233–235.

intended to contribute concretely to the accomplishment of that process.[45] Much of my

argument, therefore, is by analogy and considered supposition. But the rough dating and

almost certain original independent production of the *Vita prima* in BNF lat. 1240, its

basic formal resemblance to texts used in the reforms by Hugh of Semur at Saint-Martin-

des-Champs and, probably, at least one other house (Bodley 817), and its combination

with liturgical, proto-normative texts as would be included in fully developed

customaries all suggest that this copy of John's text, too, can be understood as playing a

particular and intentional role at Saint-Martial in the mid- or late eleventh century.

My claim concerning this handful of manuscripts must not be overstated. It is, in

its essence, a rather weak one: these compilations—for they are essentially compilations

in the way those manuscripts of the second, legendary type are not—are an important

parallel development to the emergence and expansion of the clearly-defined and clearly-

apprehended genre of customary. There is a great contrast between them and the

customaries of Ulrich and Bernard, produced around the same time or slightly earlier, in

the 1070s and 1080s, which are, as much as they draw on earlier records of various kinds,

essentially unified and wholly novel compositions, single-author texts composed all at

once, identified by all contemporaries as such. In contrast, the "customaries" here

considered are stitched together, sometimes over years or decades, from various texts that

either have an author clearly defined as someone other than any of the individuals

specifically involved in the production of the manuscript in question (such as John of

Salerno), or might reasonably be regarded as more or less authorless, as in the case of

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[45] Heinzer, "Hirsauer Buchkultur und ihre Ausstrahlung," 101–102.

technical efforts to transcribe important elements of the liturgy itself as an ancient communal tradition well beyond the composition or invention of any individual. And yet these proto-customaries do seem to evidence, through their uneven, haphazard compilation and all their varying constituent texts, some unifying notion, however vague, of weaker or stronger normativity. They are guides for behavior, however they might have been used, even *whether* or not they *were actually* used as such, and their compilers and transcribers understood them as such. Moreover, they include, broadly speaking, the kinds of information that characterize a full customary: a mixture of theological or philosophical ethical instruction specifically intended for monks, drawing on scripture and the patristic tradition, of constitutional directives for the management of the monastery as a large and property-holding institution, and of technical records for the principle activity of Benedictine monasticism, the performance of a staggeringly complex cycle of group prayer and worship.

This survey, therefore, limited though it is, reveals a specific typology for manuscripts including the *Vita prima et maior*; in considering a few more manuscripts that also include John's *vita*, we will now discover a clear break from this type, observable (very) roughly in the early or early mid-twelfth century. Around this time, we begin to discover the *Vita prima* in a different type of manuscript, what I have called the legendary type and briefly characterized above. But before considering two clear exemplars of this type, BNF lat. 17007 and BNF lat. 3788, I will first examine a manuscript that does *not* fully and unambiguously display this typology; this manuscript, BNF lat. 5290, rather presents an intermediate point between the customary type to the legendary type, reveling elements that suggest both classifications.

BNF lat. 5290 is a collection of passion texts and *vitae*, also including the story of a translation and a fragment of Bede's *tractatus* on Proverbs. Though the manuscript may include as many as ten different scribes working across five distinct sections and even in two separate monasteries,[46] the overall effect is relatively harmonious. In the first place, page layout is roughly similar across the various sections. The entire manuscript uses the straightforward block of minuscule script I have identified above with the customary type; thus the vast majority of the folia present between twenty-six and thirty-two lines, with the last ten leaves noticeably shrinking the script size in order to accommodate thirty-four. Every text in the manuscript save one makes use of a specially-ruled marginal column for both larger illuminations and simpler, generally-rubricated initials, and the one that does not is copied into a section, with which it shares its ruling scheme, that does, so that even here the marginal column is merely ignored rather than absent. The use of the hierarchy of script is more ambiguous: all told, texts comprising 68 of the manuscript's 160 folia include this device. In none of these cases do we find anything like the hierarchy as it appears in Tours or "Neo-Tours" (such as that made at Cluny under Abbot Odilo) Bibles, where a square capital incipit made up of text two or even three lines tall may run for almost half a page. In some cases, the hierarchy found in a BNF lat. 5290 text is so slight that I term it "token," meaning that it appears a scribe or scribes intended only to nod in the direction of the hierarchy, calling it to the mind of a reader without going to the full trouble. To do so in this manuscript, they either employed just one line or even only one word at the text's beginning written in distinctive square

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[46] Betty Branch, "The Development of the Script," PhD dissertation, Duke University, 1974, 96–99.

capitals, or, more often, used two different *capitalis* scripts for the incipit,[47] but very little (again, just one line or a word in each) of them. Similarly, the manuscript includes a number of very large and ornate illuminations, but these are somewhat unevenly distributed throughout; not every text includes them, and they are even entirely lacking from at least one major section of the text—save, again, for what I think of as token efforts to call to mind illumination without actually producing any.

At this point we should delve more precisely into the composition of the manuscript. The term "section" I have taken from Betty Branch's examination and description of BNF lat. 5290, from which I have learned much. According to her analysis, the manuscript is composed of five such sections, composed and produced as individual units and then combined into the form which confronts us today. In all but one of these sections Branch identifies more than one scribal hand, and, again, in all but one section, more than one text appears. The contents of BNF lat. 5290 are all, with one exception, narrative texts centered on saints. Several are *passiones*, accounts of martyrdom, several are *vitae*, and one is an account of Saint Nicholas' translation to Bari and a collection of miracles associated with him and his relics. The content then, like the layout, is relatively homogenous, save for four pages of Bede's *tractatus* on Proverbs, attached to the very end of the manuscript.

There is some evidence that the constuent sections of this manuscript were all produced within a fairly short window of time, around the turn of the twelfth century. In

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[47] If pressed to provide a strict and unambiguous definition for the hierarchy of scripts, I would suggest this one: the presence of at least two different scripts in the title, incipit, and/or first lines of a given text. The script of the main body text does not "count" for these purposes, and the two scripts, at least in my limited, post-Carolingian, Western, monastic experience, are virtually always capital scripts (usually square and rustic).

the first section, encompassing the first thirty-four folia of the manuscript, a scribe has copied eight *passiones*, all roughly the same length (two or three folia) and all concerning early Christians martyred in Roman persecutions. In the same section, using the same ruling (but without the hierarchy of scripts, marginal capitals, or impressive illuminations of the earlier texts), another scribe has copied a *Vita sancti Barsanorii abbatis* in an insular hand. This is a text about the sixth-century Palestinian hermit/ascetic more commonly referred to as "Barsanuphius" and know primarily through a suspiciously-large collection of surviving letters (over 800!) he purportedly exchanged with another companion, John the Prophet, in the desert.[48] His relics were brought to the Italian town, Oria in Apulia, in 850. The *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, at least, lists the copy of this *vita* appearing in BNF lat. 5290 as by far the earliest surviving version—the *BHL* dates it to sometime in the twelfth century, while Branch suggests it be located "somewhere within the last quarter of the eleventh century."[49] Compared to this, the *BHL* gives one other manuscript for this *vita* (BHL 0998), Rouen BP U 20, supposedly from the fourteenth century, and several variant texts surviving from fifteenth-century manuscripts. Following Avril, who asserts that the script and illumination of the first scribe's portion of this section are of the appropriate style, Branch suggests that this gathering was copied at Mont-Saint-Michel.[50]

The next section includes a single work, the *Vita beatissimi Nicholai confessoris atque pontificis*, copied out by a single scribe. It provides token illumination, in the form

[48] Alexis Torrance, "Standing in the Breach: The Significance and Function of the Saints in the Letters of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 459–473.

[49] Branch, "The Development of the Script," 99.

[50] Ibid., 97.

of a single large "B," which has some detailing or adornment (a kind of banded pattern in its bows), but is nothing like the several huge and impressive illuminations in other parts of the manuscript. Similarly, the incipit is done in largish (perhaps 1.5 lines tall) square capitals. The text itself very much follows the general layout already discussed, and includes a fairly developed system of rubricated initials to aid the reader in finding and keeping his place. The manuscript also includes marginal Roman numerals, likely indicating sections for reading aloud. The text thus parallels the form and function of the manuscript as an overall unit: a collection of narrative hagiographic material for reading aloud in the refectory. There are two other key facts to note about this section: first, the opening folio shows no particular sign of wear, such being a common indicator that a given booklet or gathering has enjoyed some period of independent life, with its beginning not shielded within a larger binding; second, the section that follows this one begins immediately with the story of Saint Nicholas' *translatio* to Bari, as originally written by the archdeacon of that town, a certain John—this text, too, shows no wear or particular soiling on its opening folio. Finally, the origin of this section is uncertain; not recognizing its script in any of the known Fécamp manuscripts, Branch again suggests that it was produced at Mont-Saint-Michel during the last quarter of the eleventh century.

The third section is by far the longest, running from folio 55 through 139, and, if the first section (the second-longest) appears to have a Roman, early Christian, or Mediterranean "theme," this one is very much Cluniac in nature. Again following Branch, this section includes work by three scribes. The first of these, a scribe whose

hand Branch has identified in a manuscript known to have been produced at Fécamp,[51] has copied John of Bari's *Translatio* and *Miracula beatissimi Nicholai confessoris et episcopi* into the section—the only text without an immediately obvious connection to Cluny. This scribe is particularly important for dating and locating this section; his hand is also found in BNF lat. 2401, and *this* manuscript was illuminated by another artist who also worked in BNF lat. 2403 and Rouen BM 489 (A 254) (and who also provided the large initial on f. 139r of BNF lat. 5290), which have both been, by their contents, dated to shortly before the Norman Conquest in 1066.[52] On these grounds, Branch dates this third section to the third quarter of the eleventh century and Fécamp. This, however, cannot be right, since Saint Nicholas' relics were not translated to Bari until 1087, with John's account likely written within the next two years.[53] Moreover, John's text in BNF lat. 5290 ends in the middle of f. 65v, where the next *vita* picks up immediately, using the same ruling and presenting thirty-one lines per page, just as in the *Translatio* (even if it does not continue the illuminations and hierarchy of script used in John's narrative). While it is always possible for a text to be copied onto unused folia in a gathering already hosting another self-sufficient work, the suggestion that scribes and binders may have appended a significantly-later text (the *Translatio*) onto the *front* of this other *vita* (beginning for some reason in the middle of the page) and adopted the latter's ruling for their new text is rather ridiculous. Without having interrogated the paleographical

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[51] Ibid., 98 (BNF lat. 2401).

[52] Branch, "The Development of the Script," 99; F. Wormald, "An Eleventh-Century Copy of the Norman *Laudes Regiae*," *Historical Research* 37 (1964): 73–76.

[53] Paul Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage in Medieval Southern Italy, 1000–1200* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 118–119; Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 94–99.

attributions and the dating of BNF lat. 2401, BNF lat. 2403, and Rouen BM 489, however, I would only suggest this as a relatively minor adjustment to Branch's schema; of course efforts to estimate the date of a manuscript based on hands and styles shared with other manuscripts is always a process of estimation. It is obviously not at all impossible that a given scribe or illuminator worked on one manuscript in the early 1060s and another in the early 1090s. Thus I suggest that this section of BNF lat. 5290 is more likely from the last decade of rather than the third quarter of the eleventh century (or even a little later).

Next, copied by a scribe Branch does not recognize from any other Fécamp manuscript, comes the *Vita sancti Leonardi confessoris*. This is Leonard of Noblat, traditionally an early sixth-century Merovingian saint and associate of Clovis. However, Steven Sargent has pointed out that the cult of Saint Leonard is only attested from around the second or third decades of the eleventh century.[54] The earliest reference to it appears in Adémar of Chabannes's *Chronicon*, in a somewhat ambiguous context that suggests this date range.[55] Moreover, in the mid-1020s, Jordan of Laron, former provost of the church of Saint Leonard in Noblat and current bishop of Limoges, deputized Hildegar of Chartres to write to Fulbert of Chartres to request a copy of Leonard's *vita*.[56] Obviously, therefore, Jordan did not possess one, which suggests that one did not exist in either Limoges or even the church at Noblat. Though Fulbert's reply has not survived, Sargent, as well as Poncelet and Krusch, all conclude that no *vita* actually existed at that time, and

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[54] Steven Sargent, "Religious Responses to Social Violence in Eleventh-Century Aquitaine," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 12 (1985): 219–240, at 228–229.

[55] Adémar de Chabannes, *Chronique*, ed. Jules Chavanon (Paris, France: Picard, 1897), 179–180 (3:56).

[56] Hildegar of Chartres, *Epistola 134*, *PL* 141:273.

that Jordan subsequently had one composed.[57] Sargent supplements this interpretation

with the lack of any manuscript text of the *vita* from before the early/middle eleventh

century, the lack of reference to Leonard in church calendars before the eleventh century,

and the presence of archaeological evidence from Noblat, also no older than the eleventh

century.[58] Sargent also presents internal evidence from the *vita* itself: first, he notes that

the text refers to Saint Martial, patron of Limoges, as *pontifex* rather than *apostolus*,

giving a *terminus ad quem* of 1031, when a council at Limoges promoted Martial from

third-century founder of the see of Limoges to companion of Christ and deputy of Saint

Peter in Aquitaine; second, the text speaks of Duke William the Great of Aquitaine as

though dead,[59] providing an *a quo* of 30 January 1030. In fact, the *vita* is likely even

younger than this tight range would suggest. The 1031 council, or at least its recognition

of Saint Martial as an apostle, is almost certainly one of Adémar's many fabrications;

while Martial was eventually accepted in Aquitaine as an apostle, this was only towards

the end of the eleventh century.[60] If we continue to assume that Jordan eventually

commissioned, or even, as has been suggested, himself composed the *Vita Leonardi*, our

new *terminus ad quem* is his death in 1051. I am not aware of a direct link between Cluny

and Noblat, such as an episode of reform, but given the close proximity of the monastic

community there to Saint-Martial, its increasing importance as a stop on the pilgrimage

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[57] Sargent, "Religious Responses," 230.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 231; in BNF lat. 5290 70v: "tempore viviente magno Willelmo duco aquitaine."

[60] Anna Trumbore Jones, "Discovering the Aquitanian Church in the Corpus of Ademar of Chabannes," *The Haskins Society Journal* 19 (2007), 88; Daniel Callahan, "Adémar de Chabannes et la paix de Dieu," *Revue Bénédictine* 101 (1991): 32–49; Richard Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 15–16 and 177–178.

route to Compostela, and the growth of its cult in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, the presence of this *vita* here among more clearly Cluniac texts is not strange.

Less ambiguous is the *Vita Tetbaldi*, the life of Theobald of Provins. Unlike the other texts from BNF lat. 5290 so far discussed, Theobald is both fully historical and virtually contemporary with the various gatherings of the manuscript. Theobald was born into a comital family in the Île-de-France, but refused marriage and a military career to become a pilgrim, ascetic, and hermit. He travelled the Compostela route, and eventually became a hermit and leader of hermits near Vicenza, becoming a Camaldolese monk shortly before his death in 1066.[61] His *vita* was probably written, again, within a year or two of his death, most likely by Peter of Vangadizza, abbot of a monastery near Theobald's community in northern Italy.[62] Theobald was canonized in 1073 (and the text in BNF lat. 5290 certainly refers to him as *sanctus*). Saint-Thibault-en-Auxois, a Cluniac priory near Vitteaux, was one of Theobald's cult centers.[63]

These three works comprise only twenty-one of the third section's eighty-four folia. The rest is taken up with a trio of *vitae* of the important early abbots of Cluny. Branch attributes all of these texts, along with the *Vita Tetbaldi*, to a single scribe, otherwise unknown at Fécamp, who writes in "a rather large and squarish hand."[64] To my

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[61] René-Paul Bernard, "Saint Thibault de Provins. Vie, culte, iconographie," *Provins et sa région* 131 (1977): 89–104. See also Catherine Vincent, "Les mutations de la sainteté de l'ermite Thibaut de Provins aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles: la promotion d'un modèle pastoral séculier au temps des ordres mendiants" *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France* 100 (2014): 279–300 and Dominique Iogna-Prat "La place idéale du laïc à Cluny (v. 930–v. 1150): d'une morale statutaire à une éthique absolue?," in *Guerriers et moines. Conversion et sainteté aristocratique dans l'Occident médiéval (IXe–XIIe siècle)*, ed. Michel Lauwers (Antibes, France: CEPAM, 2002), 291–316.

[62] Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum Junii Tomus Quintus*, 588–606.

[63] Bernard, "Saint Thibault."

[64] Branch, "The Development of the Script," 98.

eye, this script is very similar to that of the copies of the *Vita prima* found in BNF lat. 1240, BNF lat. 18306, and Mazarine 2012. These three *vitae* include, of course, the *Vita prima*, and also Odilo's *Vita Maioli* and Peter Damian's *Vita Odilonis*. We might also note that these three texts, in this order, would be identical to those texts I have posited as "reform manuals"—Mazarine 2012 and Bodley 817—if one were to remove all the non-narrative (mostly liturgical) material (in a process of editing not unlike Nalgod's on John of Salerno), and also the *vita* of Empress Adelaide, from these latter. This similarity in content and script poses the possibility that these texts might have been copied from a work similar to these reform manuals, which might well have been present at Fécamp, (re)founded in 1001 by the Cluny-associated reformer William of Volpiano.[65] On the other hand, this abbatial sub-section uses only token illumination and virtually no hierarchy of scripts.[66] Simple sloth, changing formatting practices moving in parallel to

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[65] This supposition must be treated with some care, however, as based on my exceedingly small sample size I am inclined to, tentatively, associate these manuals with Hugh's priory reforms of the second half of the eleventh century, as opposed to earlier, more individually-driven, associative, and transitory efforts, such as those of Odo's lifetime or of William's. Still, even if no such manual was used at Fécamp during William's lifetime or in William's reform of Mont-Saint-Michel (which, given its association with William and its occurrence in the early eleventh century, I would of course not suggest grouping with Hugh's priory reforms), one might possibly have been employed by the "second generation" of abbatial leadership at Fécamp. Such epigones often turned to documents as tools for navigating the challenges of abbatial succession (see Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process*, 102–130). William's successor at Fécamp was his nephew, John, who served from 1028 to 1079 and presided over a prosperous period in the abbey's history. But even if no such manual was ever made or used at Fécamp, one could easily have been borrowed or otherwise acquired from another Cluny-associated house. For the basic history of the monastic institution of Fécamp, with particular emphasis on William's tenure there, see Véronique Gazeau et Monique Goullet, *Guillaume de Volpiano, un réformateur en son temps* (Caen, France: CRAHM, 2008), 101–104. The authors of this study, which is concerned primarily with Ralph Glaber's *vita* of William, cite much of the relevant work, but the contours of the history provided thereby—a Merovingian foundation about which almost nothing can be firmly stated, Viking ravages, and degeneration into a lax community of canons regular followed by Benedictine reform—should obviously be regarded with skepticism.

[66] Curiously, the only exception is a relatively pronounced square capital explicit to the *Vita Maioli* on 121r.

changing convetions of genre, or some other concern of time or resources, might explain this—or perhaps the abbatial *vitae* were copied from some other source.

This third section thus comprises a heavily Cluny-focused dossier, and also one significantly more present-oriented than the Roman martyrs and early churchmen (Saint Nicholas of Myra) included in the first two. Even the two saints from significantly earlier than the tenth and eleventh centuries that appear here, Saint Nicholas and Saint Leonard, are really rooted in the eleventh century: Leonard, or at least his developed cult and written *vita*, is almost certainly an eleventh-century innovation, while the Saint Nicholas text concerns his translation to Bari in 1087 and the miracles thereafter associated with his relics. Again, like the second section, the beginning of the third section shows no signs of the wear historians associate with the career of a gathering as an independent, unbound *libellus*. Moreover, this third section itself was obviously conceived as a gathering of narrative hagiographical literature; its various constituent texts are closely intertwined, often transitioning in the middle of a page or across the rector/verso of an individual folio. Its content is thus internally quite coherent, being almost entirely a collection of Cluniac texts, and also, in an only somewhat broader sense, coherent with the previous two gatherings. This gathering was also likely produced at roughly the same time as the prior two; Branch and others have dated these former, on a paleographic basis, to the last quarter of the eleventh century. She has suggested the third quarter of the same century for this third section, but given the date of Theobald's canonization (1073) and of John's composition of the *Translatio* (late 1080s), this must be adjusted back a bit, to closely overlap with these other sections.

The last two sections of BNF lat. 5290 are quite short. The first of these, and the fourth overall, is eleven leaves long, and includes one complete *vita*, the beginning of another, and the end of a third text that I have not identified. The first of this is a life of Saint Alexius, a figure purportedly of the fourth and fifth centuries whose cult emerged in the West only in the late tenth century from a combination of Greek and Syrian traditions.[67] Then follows a life of Saint Eustachius and his wife, second-century Roman martyrs. The end of this text is missing, as is the beginning of the next (which lacks an explicit for easy identification, but does end with the "amen" found at the close of many other texts in the manuscript). Thematically, this section thus continues the emphasis of the first on early Roman martyrs and on the Mediterranean world, though perhaps a distinction should be made between Eustachius, whose name may be draw from an older Carolingian tradition of martyrologies and Alexius, whose cult developed outside of the Latin West and spread there late in the Carolingian period.[68] The layout of this section is broadly similar to that of the others; though lacking in the hierarchy of script, it includes one particularly immense illumination at its beginning and another substantial one to introduce the life of Eustachius, uses a marginal column, and presents thirty or thirty-one lines throughout. There is a slight bit of smudging on the first page of this section, but overall it appears basically clean and unworn, suggesting that this section did not spend significant time as an independent *libellus*. Both this section and the next, final one

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[67] See, among others, E. Gordon Whatley's entry for Alexius in "Acta Sanctorum," *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, ed. Frederick M. Biggs et al., vol. 1 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001): 67–69.

[68] Ibid.

include hands identified in other Fécamp manuscripts by Branch.[69] As with the third section, because one of these hands appearing in the fourth section also appears in BNF lat. 2401, Branch dates this gathering to the third quarter of the eleventh century.

The last section is also quite short, at nine folia. It includes two texts in two different hands, which Branch dates to "probably right around 1100."[70] The first of these, like the rest of the manuscript's contents, is a *vita*. It is devoted to Saint Romanus, the at least semi-legendary seventh-century archbishop of Rouen. The feast and cult of this figure underwent a major expansion, and "frenzy of text composition," during the last third of the eleventh century, offering some support for Branch's dating.[71] But the second of this section's contents is more unusual: it is only the first two leaves of what appears to be a longer copy of Bede's *tractatus* on Proverbs. Though it does maintain the single block of minuscule familiar from earlier sections, this final gathering presents a subtly different impression from much of what has come before. The script is notably smaller, fitting thirty-four lines on each page. The ruling also appears significantly straighter, and the enlarged initials appear more regular: almost all are precisely two to three lines tall. Finally, the first page of this gathering shows a great deal of wear and mess, suggesting that this gathering spent some time on its own, or at the beginning of a manuscript, exposed to the dangers of independent existence and heavy use. Branch recognizes the hand of the very last text, the *Tractatus*, rather than that of the second-to-last, the *Vita sancti Romani*, as one of Fécamp.

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[69] Branch, "The Development of the Script," 98.

[70] Ibid., 99.

[71] Felice Lifshitz, "The Dossier of Romanus of Rouen: The Political Uses of Hagiographical Texts," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1988, 96–97.

The layout of this *vita* is also relatively distinctive. The most immediately apparent difference from the earlier texts is the greater number of lines per page, but the system of initials also, upon closer inspection, stands out. The text of this *vita* makes a sparing use of rubricated initial capitals in the body text; some pages have four or five, but many have only one or two. Moreover, the *vita* uses only its strictly regimented initial capitals in the margins. For the first two folia of the text, these are about two and a half or three lines tall, with a slight semi-illuminated form of the kind I have termed "token." Afterwards, they become slightly larger, around three lines, and simpler, in many cases approaching just large rubricated initials, though sometimes also with nodules or tails. Most strikingly, in comparison to the other texts of BNF lat. 5290, initials of a size appropriate to the body text—that is, one full line tall—*never* appear in the margins of the *Vita sancti Romani*. And most of the marginal initials in the *vita* introduce individual words written in a *capitalis* that differs from the minuscule of the main body text. No other work in BNF lat. 5290 is so clear and disciplined in its use of this device. Many include quite large and ornate illuminated initials, and almost all employ a large number of one-line-tall initial capitals both in marginal columns and in the main body of the text. Only a few use mid-sized, decorated-but-not-truly-illuminated initial capitals in their margins, and, with one exception, always also employ single-line capitals in the margin and body text. The system of capitals used in the *Vita sancti Romani* is most similar to that found in the *Vita Odilonis*, which does not use normal-sized capitals in either its margin or body text (like the bulk of the other Cluniac abbatial *vitae*), but its marginal capitals are rather irregular in size, with some as large as four or five lines and others the same two or three of the *Vita sancti Romani*.

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BNF lat. 5290 thus presents a relatively homogenous layout and a quite coherent thematic. This coherency combines a substantial collection of narrative hagiography building on Roman and Carolingian martyrologies with a body of Cluniac abbatial literature that, in view of this Cluniac mini-collection's attestation in manuscripts such as Mazarine 2012 and Bodley 817, probably owed much of its coherency and dissemination to its role in the priory reforms of Hugh the Great's abbacy in the second half of the eleventh century. Most of this older and more general collection, found in the first two sections, probably came from Mont-Saint-Michel, while the Clunaic collection was almost certainly produced in the scriptorium at Fécamp itself, which enjoyed a relatively direct connection to the broader Cluniac nebula by virtue of William of Volpiano's (re)foundation of the community at the beginning of the eleventh century. Neither the second or third sections, at least, appear to have existed on their own for any significant period, or at least not to have seen much wear during such a career. To these main components of the manuscript is added a short text, reinforcing the prestige of the archiepiscopal see at Rouen. Virtually all of these texts, building on and in the case of the third section, modifying, Branch et al.'s analysis, most likely come from the last decade or two of the eleventh century. The one exception would be the fourth section, which includes a Fécamp hand Branch has dated by its appearance in *another* manuscript to the third quarter of the eleventh century—though we note that she has dated the third section to this period on the same grounds, and that this section may be confidently re-dated on the basis of texts it includes that are firmly datable to after 1073 (the *Vita sancti Tetbaldi*, canonized in that year) and after 1087 (the *Translatio sancti Nicholai*, made in that year).

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Of all these sections, only the opening page of the last one shows evidence of the wear we would expect of an independent *libellus*.

In fact, BNF lat. 5290 has a particularly interesting compositional history; as Felice Lifshitz has revealed, this manuscript was likely cobbled together by monks working at Fécamp sometime during or after the thirteenth century.[72] These monks removed the sections surveyed above from several other manuscripts, including one with a table of contents (written in a thirteenth-century hand) listing a *vita* of Romanus followed by Bede's treatise on Proverbs. These manuscripts were generally quite various, including a variety of non-hagiographical works (some of which suggest a re-dating of the sections to the early or mid twelfth century) such as Hugh of Saint-Victor's *De arche noe* and epistles of Saint Paul and Seneca.[73] The intent of this recombination, therefore, was quite obviously to assemble a lectionary from a variety of other texts, removing narrative hagiography from combination with other, potentially devotional or meditative texts to create a rationalized liturgical handbook.

What, therefore, about BNF lat. 5290's position between the customary and legendary types? The page layout is very much that of the former. Despite their variety, the scripts are all minuscule and of a fairly consistent size, such that all the sections present between twenty-seven and thirty-one lines per page. This layout, moreover, is that of one simple block of text, rather than the two neat columns found in BNF lat. 17007 and 3788. Again, despite some variations, there is usually some glimmer of the concept of the hierarchy of scripts, and several large illuminations recalling broadly the

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[72] Lifshitz, "The Dossier of Romanus of Rouen," 454–455.

[73] Ibid.

Franco-Saxon style of the Saint-Martin manuscripts also appear across the various

sections. But in terms of content, BNF lat. 5290 leans markedly towards the legendary

typology. Besides the *vitae* and *passiones* as para-liturgical texts themselves, it includes

nothing conventionally identified as liturgical material; no chants, no offices, no musical

notation, all of which are found in the Saint-Martial troper-proser (and among its attached

libelli, where the *Vita prima* is found) as well as in the reform manuals Mazarine 2012

and Bodley 817. This may seem a fine distinction, but it is in some ways the most crucial

one to make between the customary and legendary types as I discuss them here: the point

is that the customary type combines prose narrative efforts to relate the broader

constitutional *conversatio* of Cluny with straightforward liturgical resources speaking

directly to the office of the hours and mass in a way that clearly parallels the main period

of development of the customary, from the late tenth through the eleventh centuries. The

legendary type is very different; it gathers only narrative (almost exclusively prose)

accounts of saintly lives, martyrdoms, miracles, and translations. These kinds of texts,

and thus the manuscripts that gather them together, certainly have a place in the liturgy or

the *consuetudines* of a monastery (generally being read in the refectory in accordance

with the progression of the Sanctorale). But they are manuals of a particular type, like an

ordinal, or a breviary, and so on. They are homogenous in internal composition, clear in

function, and limited in scope. They play a role in monastic life but do not—and do not

seek—to generally encompass it in all its various aspects. In this aspect, BNF lat. 5290,

which so much resembles the customary type in its layout, is quite clearly a member of

the legendary group. Even more, it is a perfect illustration of the transition from the

former to the latter, being literally several proto-customary type manuscripts radically edited and recombined to form a legendary.

Two other manuscripts fit the legendary type, in form as well as function; indeed, they are commonly recognized as legendaries. Both are generally considered in terms of the Cistercian *Liber de natalitiis*, a particularly important and widely disseminated legendary that first appeared in northern France and Flanders towards the end of the twelfth century.[74]

BNF lat. 17007 is one volume of one copy (comprising, in addition, BNF lat. 17003–17006) of this immense collection, which often took up as many as five or six such volumes. This manuscript encompasses 210 folia, and has been suggested to come from, or at least served its medieval career in, Val Abbey (Val-Notre-Dame), the oldest Cistercian community in the Île-de-France.[75] Going by the description and dating provided by the BNF entry, this text is made up of three sections: one (including folia 2–9 and 198–202) from the fourteenth century, another (the vast bulk, folia 10–197) from the third quarter of the twelfth century, and the third (folia 203–210) from the last quarter of the twelfth century.[76] Despite this range, the page layout found within BNF lat. 17007 is far more regular than any we have observed save the reform manual of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (Mazarine 2012). Here, all sections use double columns of equal width. The

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[74] François Dolbeau, "Notes sur la genèse et sur la diffusion du Liber de Natalitiis," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 6 (1976): 143–195; Henri Rochais, "Un légendier cistercien de la fin du XIIe siècle: le Liber de natalitiis et de quelques grands lègendiers des XIIe–XIIIe siècles," in *École pratique des hautes études. 4e section, sciences historiques et philologiques* (1976): 1111–1116; Cécile Lanéry, "Nouvelles recherches sur le légendier de Clairvaux," *Analecta Bollandiana* 131 (2013): 60–133.

[75] Isabell Rosé, "La *Vita Gregorii Turonensis* d'Odon de Cuny. Un texte clunisien?" *Memini. Travaux et documents* 9–10 (2005–2006), Annexe 1.

[76] Charlotte Denoël, catalogue entry, BNF lat. 17007.

quinternion that makes up the third gathering uses forty-seven lines of text in these columns, while all the other sections present forty-six. This double column appears in no manuscript we have considered so far; indeed, as far as the course of my project goes, this feature is most associated with the Carolingian Tours Bibles and the reform Bibles produced in their image throughout West Francia over the course of the eleventh century. In these works, characteristically, the double columns helped a small and tightly-controlled script to contain an immense text (the Bible) in a single codex. This would obviously have been a concern in the production of a work such as the *Liber de natalitiis*, an encyclopedic collection of narrative hagiography intended to bound the entire liturgical year. And there is another device aimed at establishing control over such a mass of material, also found in the Tours Bibles and BNF lat. 17007 but in no others so far considered: running titles written in the top margins of the manuscript. In the Tours Bibles these identify the various books making up the Bible; here, they identify the particular *vita*, *passio*, *translatio*, or *miracula*.[77] These are readily apparent in the first three sections of BNF lat. 17007, but appear at first to have disappeared from the fourth; a closer inspection reveals that they have mostly been cut away, and are visible only in the very bottom of the titles that have survived and the *recto* of folio 210, the last leaf of the manuscript. Finally, all the sections use the same scheme of capitals and initials found in the *Vita sancti Romani*, in the last section of BNF lat. 5290: sparse in-text capitals, no marginal "normal" (one-line) capitals, and larger marginal initials. These initials are sometimes partially illuminated or adorned with tails or other modest decorations, and are

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[77] It is important to note here that I am not claiming that either of these techniques (double columns or running titles) were specifically or consciously adapted for these texts/genres from the biblical exemplars (though this is of course possible).

almost always two or three text lines tall (though letters with ascenders or descenders, such as "H" or "P" may extend several more in height).

Also important is the extreme difference between the nature of BNF lat. 17007's composition—that is, the circumstances and intentionality behind the gathering and combination of its sections—and that operative in the other composite manuscripts we have considered, chiefly BNF lat. 1240 and BNF lat. 5290. Unlike in BNF lat. 5290, the different sections of 17007 do not correspond to divisions between texts, produced at different scriptoria as part of a collective project. Unlike in BNF lat. 1240, the span of time stretching between these sections is not the mark of independently conceived and produced works, later combined because of a broadly shared (proto-)normative role or tentatively emerging archival sensibility. Rather, at least in the case of the first two sections of BNF lat. 17007, their most likely role or relationship is the repair of damage arising from heavy use. This also addresses the odd combination of these sections, with the "first section" actually being two collections of leaves appended to the beginning and end of the second. The breaks between the first and second parts of this first section and the much longer second section that they bookend fall in the *middle* of the manuscript's constituent texts. In the first case, the *Passio sanctorum quatuor coronatorum* runs from ff. 8v to 12r, while in the latter the *Passio sanctorum Saviniani et Potentiani* from ff. 197v to 202r. This suggests that these later additions to the main body of the manuscript were repairs.

The last section, ff. 203–210, is more puzzling. It probably dates from the end of the twelfth century (thus close to the likely date of the main body of the manuscript but long before fourteenth-century additions of the first section, the latter of which it

follows). This gathering is a straightforward quaternion, beginning on its own leaf and ending with the latter half of its second column empty. It also contains only one text, the *Vita sancti Katherinae virginis*,[78] and uses a slightly different ruling style (continuing its guidelines through the center margin between its two columns, which the rest of the manuscript does not include). This gathering also shows extensive damage and mess on its first recto leaf, suggesting that it may have spent some time outside of any larger gathering or codex. But even more strangely, the first leaf of this gathering begins with an explicit for the *Passio sancti Petri episcopi*. This, along with the layout and dating, suggest that this text was originally part of another legendary, a conclusion reinforced by the inclusion of a feast day for Saint Katherine, given as the 24 November. Moreover, Peter of Alexandria, a full *passio* text of whom is also found in its proper place in BNF lat. 17007 (ff. 114–115v), is generally commemorated, too, on 25 November—what then is this *Vita sancti Katherinae* doing *following* it? Besides this issue of dating, which is most likely explicable by regional variation, this explicit greatly complicates matters; it suggests that this gathering was taken from another legendary rather than conceived from the outset as a supplement or repair to BNF lat. 17007. But if so, why the empty latter half of the final column, which would certainly be filled in were the text part of a legendary? Regardless, it does seem probable that this text/gathering, whatever its origin, was added to BNF lat. 17007 sometime after the fourteenth-century additions of ff. 2–9 and 198–202, almost certainly so that the legendary might gain a valued text for use in an

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[78] The prologue incipit for this text refers to it as a *vita*, while the main text incipit and explicit call it a *passio*.

observance its community had not previously maintained, or at least for which it had had to make use of another document theretofore.

Finally, we note that the placement of the *Vita sancti Odonis prima et maior* (ff. 68v–82v) within BNF lat. 17007, like the rest of the texts in the manuscript (except that concerning Katherine, as just observed), is governed by the place of its subject's veneration within the liturgical year. Again, the manuscript deviates slightly from the modern Catholic schedule, giving Odo's feast day as 19 instead of 18 November. This places it between the *Passio sanctorum Romani et Baralis pueri*, martyred by Diocletian, and the *Epistola passionis sancti Eadmundi regis*, killed by the Great Heathen Army in 869 or 870. Significantly if unsurprisingly, BNF lat. 17007 thus breaks the agglomeration of Cluniac abbatial literature found not only in overtly Cluniac reform manuals (Mazarine 2012 and Bodley 817), but also in BNF lat. 5290. We have no reason to assume this latter manuscript was specifically associated with reform or even with Cluny itself. Indeed, it appears to have shared and to some extent anticipated the function of BNF lat. 17007, as a kind of reference repository for narrative hagiographic texts having a role in the liturgy; nevertheless, a grouping of Cluniac abbatial literature such as appears in the reform manuals had survived transmission into this new context. Thus we note an important development of the true legendary type: the organization by date, rather than by either thematic connections between individual texts or by the arrangement of these texts in earlier manuscript sources from which they were copied or more generally known. In this we see that the makers of BNF lat. 17007, and of legendaries in general, were breaking free of the earlier traditions that had governed the composition and re-composition of

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such composite texts, and in fact subjecting those texts to what we can call, confidently if also critically, pragmatic or even rational organization.

In examining this manuscript, we have for the first time crossed the divide, treacherous as it may be, between "Benedictine" and Cistercian communities.[79] In doing so, the attentive reader may have wondered if the innovation (or, more rightly, innovations, as we have seen) the legendary type represents might not be considered a Cistercian one. After all, the Cistercians do appear to have been innovators over the Cluniacs in some important uses of written documents, as well as in the development of *ordo*. However, we do have examples of Benedictine precursors to the legendary type in general and the *Liber de natalitiis* in particular. By way of example, I will consider one— which contains a fragment of the *Vita prima*—here: BNF lat. 3788. To better understand this manuscript and its relation to BNF lat. 17007 and the *Liber de natalitiis* in general, we must consider briefly some of the work already done on the "genesis and diffusion" of the great Cistercian legendary.

The current account of the *Liber de natalitiis* as a collection originating in northern France and Flanders among Cistercian communities in the late twelfth century, is based on the work of Henri Rochais.[80] Rochais stipulated that the *Liber* was not the first Cistercian legendary and is better understood as a major expansion of the oldest surviving legendary of Cîteaux itself, which dates from the first half of the eleventh

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[79] "Benedictine" is a questionable, or at least anachronistic, term, either in opposition to Cistercian or as a general characterization of early and even high medieval monasticism.

[80] Rochais, "Un légendier cistercien," 1111–1116.

century.[81] This new text, the *Liber*, first appeared at the monastery of Pontigny, one of

Cîteaux's four great daughter houses, and then spread rapidly along an axis uniting Dijon,

Troyes, and Senlis.[82] Given its suggested origin (Val Abbey in the Île-de-France) and

dating (primarily, the second half of the twelfth century), BNF lat. 17007 fits perfectly

into this model of the initial diffusion of the text.

The story of BNF lat. 3788 is much more confusing. Rochais, somewhat

contradictorily as François Dolbeau points out, both identified another manuscript, Rouen

BM 1381, as a witness of the first volume of the *Liber* and dated it to the middle of the

eleventh century—a hundred years or more before the appearance of the *Liber* at

Pontigny and even several decades before the foundation of what would become the

Cistercian Order![83] Rochais goes on to identify this manuscript as the root of a sub-family

of six *Liber* witnesses, including BNF lat. 3788.[84] Dolbeau suggests, as a way of making

better sense of these manuscripts and their similarities and differences, that they

"represent not a certain family of the [*Liber de natalitiis*], but a type of source collection

reproduced and enriched by the compiler of the Cistercian anthology."[85] That is to say,

these manuscripts attest an anthology that began independently of—even significantly

earlier than—the *Liber* and the Cistercian Order itself and was later incorporated into the

Cistercian efforts along these lines. Concurring with Rochais, Dolbeau, on the basis of

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[81] Ibid., 1112. For a recent important reconsideration of the development of the *Liber de natalitiis* and its relationship to other Cistercian legendaries, see Lanéry, "Nouvelles recherches," 65–68.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Dolbeau, "Notes sur la genèse," 151–152.

[84] Rochais, "Un légendier cistercien."

[85] Dolbeau, "Notes sur la genèse," 152.

the particular saints and texts included, considers this collection best identified with the

regions of Maine and Anjou.[86]

Setting aside at present such important questions as the layout of Rouen 1831 and

Montpellier BU Médecine 30, and keeping in mind the pre-Cistercian roots not only of

the *Liber de natalitiis* but of the legendary in general, we turn to BNF lat. 3788. The

modern codex appears to include three sections, each of unique provenance.[87] Dolbeau

dates the first two of these, comprised of ff. 1–39 and 180–229 (first) and 48–179

(second), to sometime in the twelfth century, and the third (ff. 40–47) to the thirteenth.

Moreover, he asserts that the second gathering's collection of saints "is more

characteristic of and oriented towards" Le Mans, whereas the third section suggests Sées

or Angers. He also suggests that these gatherings were bound together quite late,

probably in the late seventeenth century when they passed through the library of Colbert.

Certainly even a cursory survey of the manuscript confirms the impression that these

texts' creators did not intend their combination, and that whoever *did* bind these texts

together did so with virtually no concern for their future rational employ. None of the

divisions between the constituent gatherings correspond in the slightest with those of the

individual texts contained therein; at these junctures, one text merely ends, half finished,

while a totally different one "resumes," also in the middle. This post-medieval binding

thus differs completely from all the other "miscellanies" we have considered so far, for

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[86] Rochais, Dolbeau, and Levinson all regard pre-Cistercian collections from Burgundy and Franche-Comté as the most important immediate predecessors for the *Liber de natalitiis*. Rochais in particular identifies legendaries from Saint-Bénigne of Dijon (Montpellier BU Médecine 30) and the (Benedictine) monastery at Montiéramey (Troyes BM 7) as important influences on the first Cistercian legendary, which went on to be incorporated into the *Liber*. Rochais, "Un légendier cistercien," 1112; Dolbeau, "Notes sur la genèse," 143.

[87] Dolbeau, "Notes sur la genèse," 155–156.

while those collections may have appeared arbitrary at first glance, various thematic congruencies—and, in some cases, traces of unified conception and intentionality— quickly suggested themselves.

However, on the other hand, these disjuncts in the contents of BNF lat. 3788 make the formal cohesion observable across its various gatherings all the more striking. For the consistency found in the page layout of all this codex's sections is comparable to that found in the most unified and coherent manuscripts considered so far (Mazarine 2012, BNF lat. 17007). In all three sections of BNF lat. 3788, we find the two columns of small, even minuscule (or gothic, for the seven leaves of the third section, ff. 40–47). Across the sections, the number of lines per page varies from as few as forty to as many as forty-five; a greater range than in BNF lat. 17007 (only one line!), but smaller than that of BNF lat. 5290 (a range of eight). Even more distinctive is the use of running titles, which so far have been found *only* in the fully-developed legendary type (BNF lat. 17007) and appear in every section of BNF lat. 3788. So too with the particular system of capitals noted earlier in the *Vita sancti Romani* at the end of BNF lat. 5290 and throughout 17007. Though there is some significant variation in the size and embellishment of BNF lat. 3788's larger initials, there are no truly illuminated letters to be found. Moreover, while the text does use "normal-sized" (one line tall) rubricated initials in the body text and slightly-enlarged marginal initials, often with slight or moderate decoration, we find *none* of these normal-sized initials in the margins, as was common in many examples of customary-type texts.

This manuscript thus represents a very interesting early or even pre-stage in the development of the legendary type. It shows many layout features of this type, perhaps

most precociously running titles, and obviously shares its special function. On the other hand, it is a pre-Cistercian creation; moreover, it only infrequently provides the dates for its feasts and is written in minuscule. It also includes some sermons. While the functional place of these here in a collection of texts to be read for particular feats is no mystery, such an inclusion does represent a tendency towards a looser and more flexible standard for inclusion that would later be surpressed or abandoned in the production of collections such as the *Liber de natalitiis*. To my mind, then, BNF lat. 3788 both further substantiates my typologies and rough periodizing of their development and transition, while also serving as a powerful reminder or illustration that the reality of this schema is always messier than its theoretical conception. Various features—in layout, in organization, and in which texts and kinds of texts were or were not included—are discovered in all sorts of combinations. It is only with an eye to their total effect within a gathering or manuscript, and to that manuscript's place within the wider field of genre and relevant institutional contexts, that crucial patterns emerge.

Here, the overarching story of these two typologies is that of the individual or persona as a literary device that, at least in the case of Odo and Cluny and its associated houses, operated for a while as the vessel and vehicle of monastic *conversatio*. In this role it could, potentially, help to sustain the reform of some house beyond the immediate presence and lifespan of the charismatic historical figures who often leave a large mark on the historical record down to the present. In a sense, perhaps, the modern historiography that overemphasizes such individuals and ascribes too much enduring success to their reforms has understood texts such as the *Vita prima* exactly as they were supposed to: the persona of the great man in its presence at this or that monastery is the

substance of reform. By the dual power of his example and authority, he, the individual, institutes a new *conversatio*. But while recent research has very rightly undermined this kind of narrative, showing how the reforms of these individuals were more limited, more conditional, and rather less lasting in their effects than had been previously thought, it is important to note that these *vitae* were, as texts and physical tools, themselves intended to do what we have mistakenly attributed to their subjects: to perpetuate the charismatic presence of these individuals in pursuit of reform. Thus we find the *Vita prima* to contain not only many stirring examples of Odo's virtue, devotion, austerity, and rectitude, but also a barely-hidden account of formalized monastic *conversatio* that overflows the limits of the individual, deforming the biographical aspect of the text and even, in Nalgod's view, threatening to cover over the very deeds of its supposed protagonist. The proper conduct of rituals such as chapter or meals or of the liturgy itself, which is essentially communal and thus actually quite strictly *impossible* for any individual to perform, is imbricated with the episodes of Odo's life, such that a monk who contemplates and studies his example learns them as well, thereby not only perpetuating but actually *creating*, slowly, a Cluniac ethic, code, or praxis.

Even the limited and impressionistic consideration of the manuscript tradition of this *vita* presented here provides important insights into the history and nature of this tool. In John of Salerno's day, it was likely used on its own as an exemplar for monks. Like the *Lausiac History*, John copied it for his own community at Salerno, which Odo had reformed in collaboration with John himself, at the behest of his brothers. The work may have been read aloud in refectory or in chapter, perhaps on a liturgical cycle. It may have been perused by individuals. And it may even have been consulted during chapter

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discussions of reprimand and custom.[88] Later, we find an eleventh-century copy of the *vita*, which almost certainly began its life and enjoyed some career as an independent booklet, has been bound into a tenth-century liturgical collection at Saint-Martial of Limoges. As a liturgical resource, this manuscript, BNF lat. 1240, had been superseded several times over by the mid-eleventh century; yet it continued to gather *libelli* into itself, and was known more than a century later to the chronicler and armarius Bernard Itier. We also know that more up-to-date liturgical collections continued to be checked against it, and in at least one case that material it included, even though imperfectly grasped by the copyist/liturgist in question, was recopied into one of these later collections despite having been skipped over in previous generations of liturgical manuals.[89] Perhaps then the *vita* here was conceived as some kind of normative or proto-normative resource, and for this reason combined with the older troper-proser?

The idea that this booklet may have corresponded to a second, more intensive, mid-eleventh-century Cluniac reform of Saint-Martial by Hugh the Great is supported by circumstantial, but not insignificant, evidence. Another copy of the *Vita prima*, with similar layout features and *very* similar script, is found in what I have called a "reform manual," associated with Hugh's reform of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in 1079. Here the *vita* appears as part of a quite unified collection of Cluniac lives and liturgical materials,

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[88] I have not presented—nor discovered—any particular evidence of this. If some citation of the text did occur in this kind of context, it is probably more likely that it would have been cited from memory by individuals who had studied the text on their own or recalled it particularly well from para-liturgical communal reading/recitation. On the other hand, the Rule of Benedict was read in chapter, and customs themselves were discussed, debated, modified, and instituted by the community in such a setting, suggesting at least the conceptual possibility that normative or semi/proto-normative documents such as John's *vita* or the reform manuals considered above may have been consulted there. Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 242–243.

[89] Grier, "Roger de Chabannes," 109–110.

Mazarine 2012, of a type that is duplicated perfectly in yet *another* manuscript (Bodley 817) of uncertain provenance (but, again, very similar script, layout, decoration, and probably age). This trajectory towards standardization and even the medieval version of mass production suggests that the role of the *Vita prima* in communicating a specifically Cluniac *conversatio*, particularly in cases of reform, was gaining in clarity and intentionality. Perhaps, over generations, some monks had slowly noticed that offering this text to zealous brothers frequently served not only individual but communal reform. Is it so unreasonable to suggest that monks, who intended and used *vitae* for didactic purposes, might notice which such texts worked best for this purpose, and accordingly focused their efforts on those in particular? Certainly, by the late eleventh century, the monks of Cluny had developed the *Vita prima* as the core (or, at least, bulk) of a composite document that not only displayed the prestige of Cluny through a series of abbatial *vitae*, but also instilled certian, perhaps particularly Cluniac, forms of chapter and reprimand, of silence and sign language, of individual ethos, and, in combination with liturgical texts, communal worship.

But as the monks came to understand the *Vita prima* and reform manuals such as Mazarine 2012 or Bodley 817 in these terms with increasing clarity, the *biographical* framing presented by John's text in turn became less necessary, and even began to seem strange; thus Ulrich of Zell and Bernard of Cluny were able to produce huge compendiums of Cluniac usage with no reference to biography or, in the latter case, with no recourse to framing individuals and narratives at all. A few decades later, the monk Nalgod, reworking the early abbatial hagiography under the abbacy of Peter the Venerable, when confronted by John's *vita*, was horrified at its, to his eye, impossibly

tangled and disorienting narrative structure.[90] And how did he repair the text, to better

reveal the deeds and person of Odo? By removing precisely the material that addressed

and related the communal ritual codes that made the *Vita prima* such a useful teaching

text in reform contexts. Having delivered its cargo, the individual as literary device found

its position vis-a-vis monastic *conversatio* precisely inverted: where once it had stood

over and above these communal codes, governing their dissemination by presenting itself

for the contemplation of monks, now those codes deployed *it*, as merely one illustration

or iteration among many.

At the same time—indeed, in the very same *space*, on the flesh of the page—that

the role of the individual, of the persona, was changing, the *technology* of its

reproduction and retransmission was changing as well. The reform manual had already

superseded the lone booklet as the receptacle of John's *vita*, and now this manual in turn

was followed by encyclopedic collections of narrative hagiography. In the slow formation

of this new genre, numerous, far-flung scribes were making new choices, possibly

influenced to some extent by the example of the Tours Bible, about how to usefully and

appropriately arrange words on the page: two narrow columns instead of one block, forty

or forty-five lines instead of around thirty, running titles, less or no illumination, and a

new system of capitals. *None* of these numerous changeovers are neatly paired; again and

again the manuscripts discussed above straddle the relevant inflection points. The *Vita*

prima as independent *libellus* is only evidenced in an older liturgical collection. The

reform manuals are highly composite texts, yet seem mass produced, carefully organized,

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[90] Iogna-Prat, "Panorama," 88.

and aimed at the function of customaries. BNF lat. 5290 clearly attests the role of the legendary, yet includes virtually none of layout features found in what I have taken as more typical or characteristic examples of that type, BNF lat. 17007 and 3788. But from this cauldron of experimentation and innovation, the legendary did emerge as a distinct and novel form.

Is it a coincidence that, as the *physical position of words on pages* was—in the most literal possible sense—reoriented, so too was the *role of the individual within the text*? The persona or character of Odo, just as obviously and explicitly a sign to John of Salerno or Nalgod as it is to the eye of the early-twenty-first-century historian, did different work in the eleventh-century *libellus* that was later bound into BNF lat. 1240 than it did in the *Liber de natalitiis*. The arc of the Odo character's functional development from the proto-customary through the legendary is a progression from the trace of a charismatic presence, which not only "reforms" but indeed conducts the aspirant to God by its mere proximity, towards an illustration, an episode, or a facet of something much larger. In Peircean terms, Odo has developed from an icon or index of the divine to a mere symbol of proper behavior; where once he evidenced salvific transcendence and the power of God by his actual presence, or even *resembled* God in some way,[91] now he is just the liturgical observance of a particular day. This progression parallels, in its relationship to wider social and material contexts, an Ongian account of movement from orality to literality: Odo no longer embodies a total situation or event (the life of a monk or even of an entire community of monks), but has been translated

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[91] For Hugh of Semur discussed in such terms, see Chapter 8.

into and fixed in one, clear, detached realm. In this role he remains basically "important," worthy of veneration, and certainly retains some sense of the individual. Yet he is also fundamentally relegated to the cell of his one feast day, a cell he shares with many other observances, signs, and texts, and a cell that is essentially identical to those of all the days preceding and following it, which contain in their turns Saint Leonard, Saint Katherine, Saint Gregory, and all the rest, who each when their time comes round illustrate the same ultimate principle as Odo, and in essentially the same fashion.

The station of this development attested in the legendary type displays a basic congruence with, and certainly invites in a way its manifestation in the customary type did not, the practice of reference reading. For reference reading dissolves and atomizes, as it were, the previously whole conglomerated text as it is approached by a reader practicing the meditative *lectio divina*. A monk sitting down with the *Vita prima* in *libellus* form would be confronted with a great block of text, difficult to search for a particular point or theme within a single page as it would be throughout its whole length, with the only readily discernable distinction being made between the prologue and main text. In that form, it would invite the reader into a prolonged and involved reading, wherein the biography and character of Odo would offer an organizing principle through which a depiction of rigidly-ordered communal life might also be unfolded and, indeed, *remembered*. And if this text ever was used for consultation on particular elements of proper monastic *conversatio* (that is, for reference reading), as I have suggested it might, tentatively, sometimes have been, the person of Odo himself would not have been the object sought, but the search aid, and the course of his biography the index. On the other hand, a volume of the *Liber de natalitiis* virtually begs for "intrusive and rapid, silent

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perusal of text in the quest for specific information."[92] Running titles, ordering based on

feast day, narrow columns, and regular marginal capitals all help a reader search both for

and within the text of the *Vita prima*. And in this case, it is very much Odo, in all his

completeness and individuality, who would be pursued by the reference reader.

Do this correlation and its trajectory have implications even beyond the page?

Though their suggestion must be tenuous and hypothetical, I will venture them. As I

argued earlier, ritual can be understood as a kind of training in the use of signs: not

merely in interpreting or translating them, but in the pragmatics of their use even on a

mundane, habitual, preconscious level. One example may be of a man who, in learning to

read words on a page, is provided with a pragmatic cognitive model of how signs are

grasped and integrated, such that he subsequently comes to read the world—that is, the

flow of sensory experience—*as though it were a book*, perhaps even without realizing

that he now applies a particular model beyond its original purview.[93] In terms of the

current investigation, we can certainly recognize that there are important ritual elements

at work in many of the contexts wherein an eleventh-century monk at Cluny or an

associated house might encounter the *Vita prima et maior*: while eating in the refectory,

conferring in chapter, or even in private meditative reading. And we have just observed at

length the various normative and exemplary valences of the *vita*.

In light of these insights, and within the theological (and, again, ritual) space

outlined by the Cluny Bible's introductory material and by Glaber's chronicle, which

together emphasize salvific semiotics, the co-mediation of text and holy individual, and

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[92] Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 4.

[93] See Carr, *The Shallows*, 39–52 for more on this idea.

(orthopraxic, historical) institutional context, I suggest that the self-conception of sensitive and committed monks, at least, may have developed with and through the development of such literary devices as the Odo character. If the goal was to model oneself on the examples of the saints, how could they not? That is to say, if John might have experienced himself and considered his brothers primarily as complex individuals embarked on personal journeys towards God, loosely banded together for mutual support and protection and the spiritual benefits of training in obedience, perhaps Nalgod felt himself a cog precisely integrated into the vast machine of monastic life through the application of minute, detailed, externally directed strictures. Personal salvation remained a vital goal, but the twelfth-century brothers of Cluny were also key motivators in a vast engine of socially integrative, intercessory prayer and citizens in an emerging, constitutional, conciliar *ordo* that spanned the continent and bridged the divide between living and dead, fallen and saved. Like the Odo character, their relationship to the monastic life had fundamentally changed over the course of two centuries: once they had governed its dissemination, but now it deployed them in a regimented economy of praxis and semiosis.

CHAPTER IX: RITUAL IN THE CUSTOMARY OF BERNARD

I have already briefly discussed the nature of the genre of the customary, in particular

emphasizing its relationship to the Rule of Benedict. Next, I sketched one genealogy, or

one part of the genealogy, of this genre, connecting it to the *Vita prima et maior sancti

Odonis* and the emerging Cluniac abbatial literature of the tenth and eleventh centuries

that played such an important part in the development of Cluniac ethos and prestige. The

essential points here were three: first, genre, in this cultural and institutional context, was

to some important extent a specific material and semantic form, in fact a technology, that

could be deployed towards various, potentially conflicting tasks; second, John of

Salerno's *vita* fulfilled some of the functions that would *later* come to be regarded as the

preserve of the genre of customary, and specifically not of *vita*; and third, observation of

the changing material forms of *vitae* (especially page layout and manuscript context), and

of the specific revisions made by an editor such as Nalgod to John's *vita*, sheds light on

the changing role of documents within monastic/Cluniac ritual, normativity, and

institutional power.

Another important line of descent in the genre of the customary, also centered on

Cluny, has been developed particularly by Isabelle Cochelin. This account focuses on the

four customaries that sought to gather and fix Cluny's *consuetudines*, from the first such

document's appearance at the end of the tenth century to the culminating works of Ulrich

of Zell and especially of the mysterious Bernard, known only in his authorship of the

customary that bears his name.[1] Cochelin has argued that virtually all surviving

customaries prior to Bernard's, and, referring to Cluny or not, there are not many, were

intended to record the usages of a prestigious house or the Carolingian reform program

for transmission *elsewhere*. That is, there is extremely little evidence that any Latin

monastery produced a specific written record of its own customs for its own use before

the late eleventh century—indeed, before Bernard's itself.[2] Consequently, Bernard's

customary "is an exception among the monastic customaries, and constitutes a stage by

itself or more exactly a turning point in the production of monastic customaries."[3]

As such a turning point, Bernard's customary represents a particularly interesting

object for my study. Like the tension between John of Salerno's *vita* and Nalgod's

furious rewriting, like the shift from the customary style of the *vita*'s manuscript context

to the lectionary style, and like the Cluniac effort to adapt and reproduce Alcuin's re-

imagination of the scriptures as a mighty pandect, this customary is a document that

grapples with the need, or at least the desire, for stability and continuity in a fluid and

changing world. In observing it scrabbling for purchase therein, we catch it in the act, and

can observe the strategies Bernard—and the document itself—deploy to establish and

maintain and communicate meaning and authority, as well as the assumptions that

supported the whole project. Moreover, by its very nature, Bernard's customary offers a

unique opportunity to observe the decisive Gordian knot of semiosis, ritual, and literality

my study foregrounds. Accordingly, I begin by considering how Bernard himself

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[1] Cochelin, "Community and Customs.".

[2] Ibid., 239–249.

[3] Ibid., 239. Compare also to our discussion of Diem's work in Chapter 6.

conceives and justifies his work, before turning to a detailed examination of ritual at

Cluny as attested in this document, and then close with a consideration of the relationship

between that ritual and the customary as a certain kind of tool: namely, a written one.

Much of Bernard's explicit understanding of what he is making and why appears

in the customary's prologue, which is addressed to Hugh of Semur (1049–1109). In this

short introduction, Bernard refers to the customary as a "work" (*opera*), a "little work"

(*opusculus*), and something "in one volume . . ." (*in unum volumen*) "with letters quite

diligently marked" (*litteris diligentius annotatam*).[4] Throughout the work he frequently

refers to the arrangement/order (*ordo*) and way of life/behavior (*conversatio*) of those

living at Cluny—often in distinction to visitors, servants, or others who come into contact

with the monastic community but are not (full) members of it. While these terms had long

before the late eleventh century come to operate as specific ones for regular monastic life,

Bernard clearly did not consider the document itself as an *ordo*, but rather as a vessel for

or witness to an *ordo*/*conversatio* that existed primarily as a body of lived custom(s):

when describing what has gone into his document, Bernard speaks of customs

(*consuetudines*) and opinions, judgments, or ideas (*sententias*). Moreover, the document

is explicitly figured as a receptacle when it calls it "one volume" into which he has

gathered (*redigerem*) these *consuetudines* and *sententias*, and again through biblical

allusion, when he compares the customary to a "wooden vessel" and a "lead pipe" (*ex

ligneo vase . . . plumbeam fistulam*).[5]

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[4] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 134–135.

[5] Ibid.

Bernard explains the purpose of his work by referencing controversies arising among the monks of Cluny. As the older monks die and novices succeed them, disputes and uncertainties arise about the proper customs of the monastery. In response to this problem, Bernard has sifted through both written and oral testimony to determine the proper customs of life at Cluny.[6] In this way, the document is explicitly figured as a bulwark against the passage of mortal time. Bernard's evocative phrasing—"with those previously living at the Cluniac place entering bit by bit the way of all flesh, and with new men/novices succeeding, certain controversies concerning the most wise customs have been arising"—suggests that human lives ebb and flow, like the tides, churning a sea that threatens to wash away the wisdom of established tradition. Towards the end of the prologue, he continues this loose metaphor by imploring his brothers to lean upon or be supported by (*inniti*) the customs contained in his work, that they may not recede (*recedant*) from this true way. For Bernard, valid traditions are something that can be clung to against the flux of the corporeal world, and his customary provides the necessary purchase.

The concern for the maintenance of an elaborate and particular standard, in this case, of monastic life, offered the opportunity to Bernard to notice the distinction between the physical object he helped make, on the one hand, and, on the other, what it might contain in a way that the goals of other medieval documentary types may not have. The charter, for example, at least up to the time of Bernard's work, often seems to have

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[6] "Quoniam, Pater Glorissime, prioribus loci Cluniacensis viam universae carnis paulatim ingredientibus, ac Novitiis succedentibus, quaedam de Consuetudinibus saepissime oriebantur controversiae, diversis civersa sentientibus . . . diligentia ipsam veritatem investigarem, et sive ex his quae scripta reperirem, sive ex his quae didiceram et discere possem," ibid., 134.

commemorated or even symbolically reproduced the charismatic event of a donation.[7] Alternately, though more in earlier periods of powerful Carolingian rulership than in the context of its more somnolent Capetian variety, charters could well be dispositive. In none of these cases, however, was the document's role as a container of information particularly important—the realities of the exchanges and agreements suggested by these documents were closer to a coherent and self-sufficient oral, lived experience. An important reason for this difference lies in the objects of representation aimed at by charters as opposed to those pursued by the customary. The former sought to suggest clusters of rights over land and the labor of people, while the latter aimed at the behavior of a community of humans in a far more exhaustive and absolute way. In a sense, who was allowed into chapter assemblies and who controlled the wine cellar and how assiduously the brothers lived up to their vows *was* Cluny; where a lord might prefer to receive as many dues and privileges as possible, he did not risk loss of his essential lordly status by failing to maximally exploit his holdings. Merely some observable exploitation was generally sufficient.[8] Moreover, the cultivation of land and the collection of dues from mills, mints, mines, and so on are radically simpler and more reliable systems than that represented by an individual human being, let alone a community of them hemmed in by a thick web of forbidden and mandated behaviors. Ultimately, because his work's object was many times more complex and resistant to control, Bernard and those sharing his general task of monastic reform had many more opportunities to notice disjunction between their ideal and its contact with lived material reality than did those concerned

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[7] Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 26–43; Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago*, 9–37.

[8] Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 68–83.

primarily with performing lordly dominance or dynastic expansion and secondarily with enjoying the concrete fruits thereof. The greater difficulty of their task drove the creation of more detailed documents, which only sharpened the contrast and, in the end, increasingly articulated a norm and called attention to the fact that this norm was nowhere fully in evidence.

But the development of this distinction in the customary should not be exaggerated. Changes in use and conception of documents proceeded slowly, and the historical record shows more hybrids and half-way points than it does paradigmatic benchmarks. Gert Melville, in particular, has discussed the slow changing normative function of Cluniac documentation.[9] Surveying the progression from the eleventh-century customaries through the statutes of Peter the Venerable, produced in the second quarter of the twelfth century, to the thirteenth-century, conciliar *ordo* statutes, Melville argues that the customaries themselves held no particular normative power. Rather, they recorded lived, traditional praxis, wherein actual normativity lay.[10] Perhaps Melville overstates the customaries' his case a bit. Bernard frequently employs a seemingly normative subjunctive mood and both positive and negative usages of the verb *debere* (to ought). And he clearly intends his document to resolve disputes about proper praxis. Thus, I would qualify Melville a bit: it is, as he says, the actual lived traditions of the Cluniac *conversatio* that are normative. But Bernard's text, as a detailed representation of those traditions, could potentially reflect, imply, or even exploit that normativity.

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[9] Melville, "Action, Text, and Validity."

[10] Ibid., 80.

Along these lines, the hybridity of Bernard's customary, its ghostly proto-normativity, can be interestingly compared with that of William the Conqueror's Domesday Book, which was produced around the same time. Both these works tried to fix huge and varied objects of representation in writing—one the behavior of a rapidly growing community, the other a whole new-won kingdom—in order to create reference works when the documentary order of the day was more commonly commemorative or symbolic. Yet at this time it was still very difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to imagine a document that was authoritative in what it said *as a document*, rather than as the decree or revelation of an authoritative *person*, or as the commemoration or symbol of an authoritative event. So these documents awkwardly straddle normative and positive accounts of their objects.

Thomas Bisson has suggested comparison of Domesday Book and Peter the Venerable's efforts to survey and reform Cluny's holdings around the second quarter of the twelfth century. According to Bisson, Domesday responded to the perception that customary rents and dues were falling badly behind the increasing productivity of the eleventh-century English economy. It attempted to capture this change over time by providing records of output for each area surveyed in the time of Edward the Confessor, again when the Conqueror re-distributed the lands after his invasion, and at the time the Book was written. Bisson argues that this proves the new problem of customary rents and dues failing to keep pace with a growing eleventh-century agrarian base was noticed "earlier there than anywhere else in Europe."[11] But Bernard had clearly recognized a

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[11] Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 331.

similar problem in the community at Cluny—not fifty years later than Domesday Book, but contemporaneous with it. Though his concern was an incredibly complex and extended mass orthopraxy rather than lordly surplus extraction, and though his customary aimed to stand firm against the tide of changing times rather than rise smoothly (and, more importantly, proportionally) with it, in both cases we observe the deployment of documents in response to the perception of temporal drift and its destabilizing effects on the world of humans. And within the cloister, Bernard certainly had every opportunity to experience the general growth of eleventh-century society: the number of monks at Cluny increased from between sixty and eighty in 1049, when Hugh's abbacy began, to more than 300 by 1122, and it is likely servants and other non-monks associated with the abbey, with whom Bernard's customary is no less concerned, grew proportionately.[12]

But Bernard gives a second reason in the prologue for compiling his work, one very different from a concern for preserving tradition in changing times. Further on in the prologue, Bernard relates that Hugh has commanded him to set down the Cluniac *ordo*. Accordingly, this writing fulfills the command accepted by Bernard from Hugh (*vestra mihi auctoritas imperaret . . . a vobis accepta iussione impleto*). We may rightly question how much Bernard's experience of this command and his work in fulfilling it differed from that of a secular tenant or sworn free man under his own lord—it is common, in this customary as in many other period sources, to refer to abbots as *dominus* or *domnus abbas*. Bernard's prologue is addressed to "most revered . . . preeminent lord abbot

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[12] Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 89–90; for more on the documentary relationship between Cluny and its surrounding lay population, see Constable, "The Abbot and Townsmen of Cluny in the Twelfth Century," in *Church and City, 1000–1500: Essays in Honour of Christopher Brooke*, ed. David Abulafia, Michael Franklin, and Miri Rubin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 151–171.

Hugh" (*reverendissimo . . . praecipuo domno hugoni abbati*), and both medieval and modern observers have highlighted similarities between regular-clerical and lay lordship.[13] Obedience to one's superior is a universal bedrock of Christian monasticism, then as now, and Bernard writes in his prologue that he will persevere in obedience to Hugh his whole life (*vobis obediendo usque ad moretem perseveravero*). Moreover, the customary itself admonishes monks to prostrate themselves "with their whole body" (*prostrato toto corpore*) and seek indulgence or mercy if they should so much as sense anger or indignation from the abbot.[14] Indeed, Bernard appears to perform this self-abasing subordination in (and through) his prologue itself; much of what remains of it is concerned with emphasizing his own smallness (*meae parvitatis*) in contrast to Hugh's greatness and attributing whatever measure of success he has achieved to Hugh himself.[15]

Though these two motives (creation of a material tool to preserve right orthopraxy in changing times and obedience to the command of a superior) are not contradictory, they are distinct. And the relationship between them Bernard establishes is somewhat perplexing. He begins the body of the prologue with the word *quoniam*—"since." Then follows his description of the coming and going of generations within the community and the controversies that have been arising; finally, Bernard writes that "supposing your authority commanded me, that with as much diligence as I could muster I should investigate this very truth . . ." (*operae pretium judicavi, si vestra mihi auctoritas imperaret, ut cum quant possem diligentia ipsam veritatem investigarem*). The reader is

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[13] Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 197–212.

[14] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo cluniacensis,* 137.

[15] Ibid., 135.

thus presented first and foremost with Bernard's own understanding of the necessity and worthiness of his task, and the suggestion that he embarks upon it to address problems he himself has noticed and found worrisome. The *quoniam* with which the text begins strongly suggests a causative role for Bernard's observations about the controversies besetting the Cluniac community—since he has seen these things, he judges this labor valuable. Meanwhile the *si* which first introduces the notion of Hugh's command is both odd and weak, making a command that in just a few lines will become that of a towering lord (a lord explicitly described as a personal mediator between Bernard and God and even as a figuration *of* God) into something hypothetical.

This doubling-of-purpose and the uncertainty which results are significant. Modern readers may be inclined simply to understand that *Hugh* was motivated to resolve once and for all the controversies concerning custom arising in the monastic community as a result of its growing size and increasingly complex orthopraxy, so that he commanded a monk, Bernard, who understood this motivation perfectly well, to compile the customary. While this is certainly a plausible, understanding, it nevertheless adds something significant to the text, establishing a complex subordination of purpose and even a chronology not actually present in the historical document. In so doing, this move occludes important features of Bernard's distinctively medieval diction. Recall the tendency towards additive rather than subordinating syntactic structures, which Ong suggested as characteristic of oral discourse or writing in a still heavily-oral culture. Ong used a comparison of the 1610 Douay Bible's version of Genesis 1:1–5 with that of the 1970 New American Bible—the former, closer to the Hebrew original (mediated through Latin), begins sentences and independent clauses with "and" nine times, while the latter,

"adjusted to sensibilities shaped more by writing and print," replaces most of these with more specific connectors such as "when," "then," "thus," or "while," thereby orienting clauses and phrases in a much more precise web of causal, logical, and narrative relationships.[16] The case of Bernard's two purposes presents a similar kind of additive redundancy. The modern reader is left uncertain as to the relationship of these two seemingly independent motivations because that reader is located more deeply in literate culture; but despite Bernard's literacy, his life is lived in a more oral social world, one in which language has not been so extensively reorganized along literate lines.

Most historians have simply regarded the customary as the product of Hugh's command, ignoring or discounting the suggestion of Bernard's own initiative. Cochelin, however, has taken notice and suggested that Bernard began the customary on his own and later sought Hugh's permission or blessing, or that Bernard's reference to Hugh's command was otherwise "more laudatory than reliable."[17] In addition to harmonizing both suggested motivations, this explanation also fits with Cochelin's sense of this customary as a key turning point: virtually all of the older customaries she discusses give no indication of an abbatial participation in their production; Cochelin suggests that Bernard's customary is also tied to a rise in abbatial leadership and authority vis-a-vis customs. This would be a feature not merely of Bernard, Hugh, or Cluny, but of the second type of customaries outlined by Cochelin, of which Bernard's is the first, or a transitional, example.[18] This second type, in addition to being intended for the use of the

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[16] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 37.

[17] Cochelin, "Community and Customs," 241–243.

[18] Ibid., 242–243 and 250–252.

monastery where it was produced and on whose *conversatio* it was based, also figured a far larger and more powerful, authoritative role for the abbot, specifically in the establishment of licit and correct custom.[19]

Finally, we consider the depiction of Hugh himself in the prologue. For Bernard has made Hugh an integral part of the process of creating—and, implicitly, of using—the document. The passage dealing with Hugh begins with Bernard declaring that his work fulfills Hugh's command, as cited above, and that he has drawn upon Hugh's *excellentia* in compiling it.[20] Bernard then figures Hugh as a vital intermediary between himself and God: "Certainly your grace to me, after God, is the greatest mercy: because I trust in his compassion, if I persevere in obedience to you up to my death, that led by your [unspecified] I will be able to come up to the very one [God or Christ], in place of whom I recognize you, and of whom I receive the person."[21] Thus Hugh, for Bernard, operates as a kind of stand-in for God: not only is Hugh's grace greatest after God's, not only will obedience to Hugh lead Bernard to God, but Bernard recognizes, acknowledges, or even discerns God in Hugh. This semiosis is quite important, and I do not think it would be too far a stretch to suggest that Bernard "reads" Hugh. For he continues:

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[19] Ibid. See also Cochelin, "On the 'Path' to Salvation: Writing Down, Making Up, and Keeping Customs in Eleventh-Century Cluny," in *Rule Makers and Rule Breakers: Proceedings of a St. Michael's College Symposium*, ed. Joseph Goering, Francesco Guardiani, and Giulio Silano (New York, NY: Legas, 2006), 25–41; Vanderputten, "Monastic Reform, Abbatial Leadership, and the Instrumentation of Cluniac Discipline."

[20] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 135.

[21] ". . . vestra quippe gratia mihi post deum est merces maxima: quia confido in eius misericordia, si vobis obediendo usque ad mortem perseveravero, quod ducatu vestro ad ipsum pervenire potero, cuius vicem in vobis agnosco, cuiusque personam recipio," ibid., 135.

. . . For whatever I learned concerning the order, whatever I grasped concerning the path of religion, was more of your gift of God's inspiration than of my industry, and little would my zeal have profited me, had not your paternity subjected me to rule and institution, in which gift from God it was as though I saw with my finger the expression of God, [that] whatever I read in sacred books of virtue, I might be able to touch in some way what I understand concerning what is written, if I attend vigilantly to the lines of your way of life.[22]

Bernard is offering here a complex account of the work of research and editing that went into his customary. First, he reads sacred books of virtue. But these writings are not intelligible to him on their (or his) own; rather, Bernard proposes a two-stage process of understanding: he must touch, feel, or even caress what he understands from reading. This tactile apprehension of the virtue he finds in books is provided by his own regular, monastic life, and by his perception of Hugh's unrivaled example of that same way of life. This perception, too, can be understood as a reading, not least since Bernard refers to the "lines" (*lineas*) of Hugh's *conversatio*, and because he finds "as though [seeing] with [his] finger" in "rule and institution" the "expression" of God. Without this layered semiosis, reading texts by reading lives, which includes eyes-on-parchment research as much as the experience of right orthopraxy as much as mystical revelation, all Bernard's zeal and effort would have come to naught.

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[22] ". . . quidquid enim de Ordine didici, quidquid de Religionis tramite apprehendi, vestri potius muneris ex Dei inspiratione, quam meae fuit industriae, parumque mihi studium meum profuisset, nisi vestra me regendum et instituendum Paternitas suscepisset, in qua Deo donante quasi digito Dei expressum video, quidquid in libris sacris virtutum lego: ut palpare quodammodo possim, quod de scripturis intelligo, si vestrae conversationis lineas vigilanter attendo," ibid.

What does this account of Bernard's process suggest about how Bernard, for his part, imagined the customary itself was to be used? Perhaps Bernard imagined his document could not stand without the lived example of *conversatio* that Hugh had provided for him, and thus that the customary was understood as one component in reforming or spreading the Cluniac *ordo*—the other being actual monks well-experienced in truly living that *ordo*. And this is how reform often operated in this period, by monks coming along *with* a customary, as opposed to sending it off unassisted.[23] But perhaps Bernard also understood that his own experience of living this *conversatio* and his contemplation of Hugh and of God through orthopraxy was vital specifically in that it allowed *him* to discern among the presumably incomplete and even contradictory written record upon which he drew which customs were holy, more true, or more discriminate (*sancta*, *verior*, *discretior*) and which were mere accretion.[24] Thus, by this process of layered experiential reading, he had produced a single volume which may be trusted throughout (*in unum volumen redigerem, sicque aequitatem confideratam*), that his brothers might know which opinions to lean upon (*ut sciant quibus sententiis inniti debeant*). In that case, the document would be conceived quite clearly as one which could take the place even of the holiest of monks: if not an artificial intelligence, perhaps an artificial praxis. Rather than a reference work, the customary was a dialectical partner for the continual process of monastic training, operating in chapter just like a brother monk, alternately reproving and forgiving.

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[23] Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book."

[24] Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 169–173; Rosenwein "Rules and the 'Rule.'"

Bernard's prologue thus presents a hybrid work. Like the most advanced secular administrative documents of its day, it responds to the perception of the passage of time and the disorder with which this passage threatens earthly institutions. Moreover, the prologue reproduces an ambiguity fundamental to the structure of medieval society, for it shows both a sense of official or institutional duty, in Bernard's concern for monastic harmony and orthopraxy, and a more personal and affective sense of power and obligation, in Bernard's relationship to Hugh. Grammatically as well as conceptually, the relationship and relative domains of these two notions of authority is not clear. Rather, they tumble over one another, sometimes reinforcing, sometimes undermining. Finally, while perhaps recommending itself for a process of reference reading in chapter, the customary was not understood, by Bernard at least, as a mere innate repository, but as a living assemblage that reproduced the ideal monk precisely in the place he was most needed: chapter.

We now move to consider how the customary represents what it is concerned with: namely, the customs of the Cluniac *ordo* or *conversatio*. Bernard's customary is divided into two parts (*pars prima* and *secunda*), each in turn divided under numerous sub-headings that range from a paragraph to several pages in length. The first part receives no subheading, but the second does: "Concerning the ministry of the church through the year" (*de ministerio ecclesiae per annum*).[25] And indeed, the second division betrays a much more obvious organization. Each sub-heading deals with a certain point in the liturgical year and the ceremonies, feasts, and other observances that the monks carry

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[25] For the presence of this heading in a medieval manuscript of the customary, see BNF lat. 13875 122r.

out at that time. These begin with the weeks of Advent, and continue in order through Christmas, Lent, Pentecost, and so on. The first part is much more eclectic, in this way recalling Benedict's Rule itself, with sub-headings dealing with a variety of official and semi-official positions held by monks within the community, with the operation of the infirmary, the instruction of novices and boys, burial practices, and in general a dizzying range of topics. The order of these treatments seems random in the extreme to the modern reader, with many of the most important offices appearing first but several remaining to be scattered throughout the rest of the first part, among a number of sections concerning liturgical matters such as masses and communion that might seem to belong in *pars secunda*. Though this disorganization is unlikely to have appeared as such to medieval readers and listeners, it is nevertheless significant that the liturgical calendar appears to have offered the only truly stable organizing principle for monastic practice. Bernard grouped his descriptions of the various offices concerned with the operation of the monastery *itself* at the beginning of *pars prima*—he begins with the abbot, and follows with the greater prior, the prior of the cloister, the circuitors (*circuitores*) responsible for enforcing basic discipline (mainly silence) on the brothers, the chamberlain, the cellarer, the grainer, the custodian of wine, the hospitaller, the gardener, the manager of the refectory, the constable, the eleemosynarius, the almoner, and the head librarian. Those that appear later in *pars prima* are sextons and cantors associated with the operation of churches included in the larger Cluniac burg, as well as the regular cook (*coquinae*

regularis).[26] But after this first grouping of these officers—which receives no intermediary division as such—the full eclecticism of *pars prima* is on display.

To make my way in this dense forest, I focus on the notion of ritual. Studying ritual in Bernard's customary is particularly complex because I am aiming at the object of Bernard's own quite conscious and motivated representation. Whereas in the case of the *vitae* of Odo I could compare one text to another in order to see how different authors grappled with the object of representation, bearing different assumptions and reaching towards different ends, here the effort is to study two different objects—ritual at Cluny and the literate practices deployed to fix and retransmit it—through observation of only one of them. In the context of medieval ritual, both Buc and Pössel place special emphasis on this difficulty, of distinguishing between "ritual-in-performance" and "ritual-in-text," calling for researchers to consider carefully the specific relationship between (written) text and ritual event.[27] Fortunately, this is a task to which Peircean semiotics is well-suited. Therefore, to pursue this doubled inquiry, I will closely analyze two passages from Bernard's customary that deal with individual rituals. In the case of each, I will first consider the ritual specifically as an assemblage of concrete signs and sign-uses. Next, I draw some intermediate conclusions about that ritual as it relates to semiotic ideology and the other theoretical concepts I have discussed. Upon finishing with these examples, I will consider them in comparison to one another, before bringing this analysis into conversation with Bernard as author and his text as a document. This encounter will yield larger conclusions about monastic ritual in its key semiotic valence

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[26] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 236.

[27] Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*, 10–11; Pössel, "The Magic of Ritual," 124.

and about the nature of the customary and its relationship to lived monastic experience

and concrete ritual performance.

I begin with Chapter 32 of Bernard's customary, "Concerning Processions due

to/for the sake of Tribulation" (*De processionibus pro tribulatione*). As the title indicates,

this chapter describes how a procession, specifically in response to some difficulty or

tribulation, is conducted: "When there shall be a procession anywhere on account of/for

(a) tribulation. . . ." (*Quando sit processio pro qualibet tribulatione*).[28] Bernard's account

contains few surprises, at least concerning what we would regard as "the ritual itself."

The monastic community assembles in a church, gathering to itself relics (*reliquiae*),

reliquaries (*filacteria*), feretory or bier (*feretrum*), as well as holy water, a cross, a

candelabrum, and (implicitly) a censer.[29] Certain hymns, songs, antiphons, and prayers

are performed there, and then the procession sets out, still singing. Bernard gives no

information at all about what kind of route it takes, only referring to "the church to which

the procession goes," (*veniatur prope ecclesiam, ad quam vadit processio*) in such a way

that makes it clear this is not, or at least not necessarily, the same church from which the

procession set out.[30] Upon reaching this church, another set of hymns, songs, psalmody,

and prayers occur. The procession then "goes back" (*recedit processio*). This terse *recedit*

essentially ends the description of the ritual, though Bernard adds several rather

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[28] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 216. An argument could be made for translating *qualibet tribulatione* as "any kind of tribulation," though this seems unusual to me. As will be examined shortly, Bernard's description includes a modular approach to location, suggesting that he intends to describe a ritual that may indeed be performed more or less "anywhere."

[29] Bernard does not refer directly to a censer, but only writes "this same bier ought to be administered with incense" (*debet ipsum feretrum incensari*). A more classical translation would render this "this same bier ought to be set on fire," but this is obviously not correct.

[30] Ibid., 217.

disconnected and puzzling lines about the general provision of rods or staves (*baculi*) to

the monks and their dress in processions, labor (*opera manuum*), the litany, and mass.

Thus, like much of monastic life (particularly as viewed through the prism of Bernard's

voluminous customary), this ritual is a dizzying welter of texts, special objects and

equipment, and choreographed actions, all tying together various points in mundane and

sacred time and space. It is a ritual *par excellence*, where the semiosis comes thick and

fast.

The complex of texts referred to in this description clearly recall the liturgy,

certainly the central experience of monastic life. Some texts, such as *vitae* or various

patristic works could play an important role in monastic life without necessarily invoking

or referring to the liturgy. But while a precocious monk might read, for example, the

Confessiones of Saint Augustine on his own, a text with no direct connection to his daily

participation in the divine office and mass, the assemblage of texts in the procession for

tribulation Bernard describes suggested the liturgy in various ways. First, the kinds of

texts were very much those of the liturgy: sung psalms and antiphons, more general songs

(*cantus*), at least one introit (*intoritum*), and the *Pater Noster*. The arrangement of these,

too, corresponded broadly to how the liturgy deployed its constituents: psalms paired

with antiphons, hymns accompanying the procession (literally, "processionals") as they

would the entrance of the celebrants during mass, and the introit sung when entering the

destination church are obvious correlates. Overall, there is no element of the ritual to

which Bernard devotes more attention and detail than the careful pairing of these clearly

liturgical elements with points in the performance of the (other) physical acts that make

up the procession (gathering, carrying the relics and other equipment, marching to the

destination church). To what extent such a procession would have been distinct from the liturgy itself in the minds of its participants is an interesting question; one can easily imagine its psalms and hymns bleeding into those of the office of the hours, at least among the *conversi*, *infantes*, or less engaged brothers. Surely its greatest distinguishing features would have been the use of relics, its place beyond the monastery compound, and, above all, its unscheduled and singular nature.

These important elements will gain greater clarity as we uncover more of the ritual's semiosis; first, I consider the texts prescribed by Bernard for processions of this kind. The first set of these are sung in the choir of the church from which the procession begins (the assumption would be that this is the monastic church, though Bernard does not specify any particular one, either because the one to be used is so obvious, because any of several could be used, or because he intends his description to be entirely modular and thus allowing the use of *any* church), and are immediately followed by its departure therefrom. These texts obviously relate in very important and direct ways to the ritual as a whole: Bernard refers specifically to the antiphon *Exurge* (which follows an unspecific *oratio*) and the psalm *Deus in adjutorium* (69 in the Clementine Vulgate, henceforth CV). Here we find further confirmation of the possibility that the singing of this psalmody threatened to "bleed into" the liturgy more broadly: Bernard is careful to note that, having finished singing the *Deus in adjutorium*, the psalm *Deus misereatur* (69, CV) is *not* sung (*facta, sicut mos est, oratione, et finita antiphona Exurge; et psalmo, Deus in adjutorium, sine Deus misereatur . . .*), suggesting that some might wrongly assume this psalm would

naturally follow *Deus in adjutorium*—presumably because it does so in some part of the constant cycle of psalms that comprise the liturgy.[31]

     Exurge, assuming that this terse designation is an incipit, is likely expanded and translated "Arise, O Lord, (and) help and liberate us through your name" (*Exsurge domine adjuva nos et libera nos propter nomen tuum*).[32] This antiphon is obviously appropriate for such a ritual/procession, and the imperative in particular is striking, for it specifically addresses and calls God, even giving Him a command. In a certain intentional and semiotic sense, this text reaches out and *touches* God, implicitly drawing the monks and God closer together, and making the divine more immediately present in the proceedings. Moreover, this antiphon does not merely call on God to help, as the *Deus in adjutorium* does with imperatives of its own ("intend towards," *intende*, and "hurry," *festina*), but actually seeks to stir the almighty from an implied quiescence of whatever nature: "Arise!" This imperative thus not only calls for aid in the face of tribulation, but also demands a particular kind of action *that the procession itself then immediately performs*. Bernard continues that, with this psalmody completed, incense applied to the feretory, other objects (holy water, cross, etc.) gathered up, the procession's participants properly ordered, and "some song of the saint begun" (*incepto aliquo cantu de sancto*), the feretory is, of course, carried out of the choir: the saint has arisen![33] This potent interplay between imperative (quoted, biblical) text and direct

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[31] Ibid., 217.

[32] *Corpus antiphonalium officii*, ed. René-Jean Hesbert, nr. 2822.

[33] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 216.

physical action thus creates a powerful event, wherein the divine itself not only erupts

into action but, in crossing the threshold of the church, invades the mundane world.

With this first phase of the ritual completed, we encounter the significant fact that

Bernard names some specific texts for certain parts of the ritual, while in other cases he is

specifically general, offering a kind of "modular" paradigm for much of the procession

("with some [*aliquo*] song of the saint begun"). There are several such modular textual

moments (or opportunities) in Bernard's description: first, when leaving the church as

just related, then, with this song finished, "antiphons concerning tribulation are begun"

(*incipiuntur antiphonae de tribulatione*), and finally several texts at the entrance to

whatever church (here a spatial module) the procession culminates in. In this last case,

Bernard seems to assume that any destination church will be dedicated to Saint Mary and

also to some other saint. Both of these saints, as well as that whose relics are being

carried, must be acknowledged with song:

> . . . then if the church in honor of two saints is dedicated, that is [*videlicet*] in
>
> honor of Saint Mary and any/some other [*alicujus*] saint, first will be sung an
>
> introit of Saint Mary, then of this saint in whose honor is the church. With these
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> finished, the priest follows with prayers [*orationes*] concerning the saints, sent
>
> forth from the headings [*praemissis Capitulis*], just as the song preceded. . . .[34]

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[34] ". . . tunc si ecclesia in honore duorum Sanctorum est dedicata, videlicet in honore sanctae Mariae, et alicujus Sancti; in primis cantabitur ad introitum de Sancta Maria, deinde de illo Sancto in cujus honore est ecclesia; his finitis, Sacerdos Orationes prosequitur de Sanctis, praemissis Capitulis, sicut cantus pracessit. . . .," Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 217. I remain puzzled by this *praemissis capitulis*, which Herrgott has set off as its own clause or appositive. Perhaps it means these prayers have been set out in advance, possibly using the kind of written guides or *tabulae* that the armarius/cantor prepared each week to guide the choir monks in the liturgy. Or perhaps it somehow clarifies that these prayers should concern

What these various songs, antiphons, and prayers—these texts—might have been is beyond the scope of the present examination, but, for Bernard at least, their relevant character was their relation to tribulation itself (in the case of the antiphons following the song devoted to the saint whose relics were being employed) or to the specific saints encountered by the procession. These songs and prayers may or may not have specifically addressed (as opposed to merely concerning) the saints in question (I think it likely they often did), and they may or may not have employed the imperative (again, it would be surprising only if they never did); their main function was clearly to correspond to the complex of physical objects (relics, churches) that themselves, in turn, corresponded to the saints. And for this function, these texts drew relatively little on what we think of as their primary feature or power: the communication of denotative or symbolic signs, of linguistic statements to or about their subject. In that regard, perhaps it would have been enough for them to merely be "about" (*de*) their subjects; building on this very basic semiosis then, what this part of the ritual offered would be the ability for the procession's members to perform and participate—participate *physically*, by singing and hearing—in this about-ness (not merely in the procession more generally), and to extend the rich semiosis of the whole production into the aural range. The main work of the sign here is incorporative, not communicative.[35]

This complex of modular texts brings the procession to the destination church, though Bernard suggests, by omission, that the procession does not actually *enter* this

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the saint whose relics are carried, as I think the last clause "just as the song preceded" (*sicut cantus praecessit*) also suggests.

[35] In this it calls up again the idea of the textual community, which highlights the formation of a community over the communication of information.

church. In any case, with these texts completed, the procession comes to the last

assemblage of texts. In contrast to those just finished, and in complement to those

performed in the choir and church where the procession began, this last group is fully

fixed by Bernard. First comes the *Pater Noster*, made by the whole "convent either on

knee or bowing towards the ground, if the authority of the day requires (it)."[36] I do not

attempt here to determine the exact recension of this prayer intended by Bernard, if he in

fact meant to insist on a particular one.[37] But even without delving into this question, we

may say that the Lord's Prayer directly invokes not only the Bible but the personal and

direct instruction of Jesus Christ. It, moreover, communicates a strikingly clear and direct

set of propositions and requests; these are submission to God and then three

supplications: for basic sustenance, divine grace or forgiveness with the promise to

forgive in turn, and deliverance from evil and temptation. The theology implicit in this

prayer and the whole huge range of its history and orthopraxy are well beyond the scope

of this study, but, again, this prayer as a sign or set of signs plays a powerful role at this

point in this ritual not only because of the specific claims and statements it makes. It also,

I think, can be understood to circumscribe an even more special and holy ritual space

within the larger elaborate production of the procession. For the prayer both bares the

individual and the community before God in a direct sense (not through invocation of or

address to some intercessor), comprising total submission, total confession, and abject

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[36] ". . . facit conventus breven orationem, aut ad terram super genua, aut acclinis, di diei auctoritas expostulat, expectato vero a Priore quod *Pater noster* possit finiri," ibid., 217.

[37] In the Gospels, this prayer appears in two different forms: Matthew 6:9–13 gives a longer version as part of the Sermon on the Mount, while Luke 11:2–4 presents a shorter version as part of an exchange between Jesus and the disciples. This does not, of course, even begin to consider the immense issue of the manuscript tradition or, indeed, the possible for variations stemming from the prayer's participation in various semi-independent, semi-oral monastic and clerical communal traditions.

supplication for sustenance and protection, and also draws the individual/community

back before Christ himself, whether on the Mount or in private conversation with the first

Christians. Saying it directly repeats the words of Christ and then immediately fulfills his

injunction: "Pray then in this way. . . ."[38]

The idea that the *Pater Noster* here initiates a new sub-ritual, high within the

larger ritual of the procession, is further substantiated by the return to psalmody that

follows it. Bernard calls for the psalm *Lauda anima mea Dominum* (CV 145). This psalm

begins with a declaration of lifelong praise to God, followed by a contrast between the

weakness and finitude of earthly princes and the eternal, all-creating power of God. Next

comes a list of those God will help, elevate, or heal: the wronged, the hungry, the

enslaved or imprisoned, the blind, the just, strangers, orphans, widows, etc. And finally

the psalm ends with an affirmation of God's eternal rule. This psalm, therefore, does not

involve an imperative or even any address to God at all.[39] In its symbolic operation, it

merely declares a variety of propositions; the closest it comes to concrete action is in

stating the speaker will do something (praise the Lord), specifically in the future

(*laudabo*, *fuero*). Nevertheless, these propositions in their symbolic valence offer an

appropriate point of culmination for the procession ritual: (re)affirmation of the eternal

omnipotence and omnibenevolence of God is a fitting (perhaps the *only* fitting)

conclusion to any Christian ritual, and doubly one that seeks relief in the face of some

tribulation.

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[38] Matthew 6:9.

[39] Actually there is one imperative, aimed at earthly audiences: "Put not your trust in princes" (*nolite confidere in principibus*). Though this could be discussed in the terms of my investigation here, I do not consider it particularly important for my line of argument.

An appreciation for the semiotic forces at work through the whole ritual, however, deepens this point significantly. I speak particularly of the shifts in grammatical tense and mood, above all from the antiphon to Psalm 145, *Exurge*, which opens the ritual by summoning (even commanding) God and the relevant saint(s) to action. The semiosis of the *ex(s)urge* and *libera*, as imperatives, refers explicitly and inescapable to an entirely present and concrete moment, a moment (seemingly) inextricably mired in the mundane world. Affliction reigns. So the monks martial their forces (in a variety of non-textual ways, as we will examine) and call upon God to stir Himself. This they then quite openly perform, or even we might say *cause to actually happen*, by carrying the relics of the saint out of the church and along whatever course to the destination church they might chart. Along this route the saint him or herself is acknowledged in song, and then in turn Mary and whichever *other* saint is associated with the destination church. This being done, the assembled community places itself both before and even *as* Jesus Christ in praying as he specifically instructed them to do, this prayer also placing them in a position of total submission and abject supplication appropriate for semiotic approach to the divine itself. This account offers a firm retort to the accusation of saint-worshipping polytheism: the procession has carried in reverence the relics of the saint and sung songs concerning him or her, yes, but the antiphon *Exurge* is addressed only to God, and the culmination of the ritual itself, Psalm 145's assertion of divine omnipotence, omnitemporality, and omnibenevolence, is demarcated from commemoration of the various saints by the individually ritualized and re-enacted *address of the divine to itself* (Christ praying to God).

And this culminating psalm is *also*, above all, demarcated from the rest of the preceding ritual by its temporal shift, reflected grammatically: in marked contrast to the here-and-now of the *Exurge*'s imperative, Psalm 145 offers up present- and future-tense verbs (*laudabo*, *fuero*, *custodit*, *inluminat*, *regnabit*) paired with adverbial prepositional constructions that evoke eternity (*in sempiternum*, *in aeternum*, *in generationem et generationem*). These two grammatical points, embodied and linked by the corporeal pumping and contortion of numerous human bodies, quite literally express the stirring of the divine, and perhaps the mortal along with it, up out of fallen and concrete temporality into perfect and unchanging eternity. Therefore, in this transition Psalm 145 erases and obviates the specific pleas for relief from whatever transitory earthly tribulation has provoked the ritual; rather than actually calling down the hand of God to smite some persecutor or distribute mana (or fish and loaves), what the ritual accomplishes is the communal, triumphant enunciation of the proposition that justice *will* be done, that the princes of the earth *will* be overthrown, and that the faithful *will* be protected and rewarded.[40]

Following this triumphant psalmody, Bernard calls for the prayer *Deus cujus misericordia* to be said by a priest. I have not established the text of this prayer, but it

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[40] With this in mind, one could further assert that the *Pater Noster* functions as a gatekeeper in another more sense: in giving the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus specifically enjoins against specific requests in prayer: "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6:7–8). The ritual of procession for tribulation described in this chapter of Bernard's customary itself could plausibly be taken as such a specific request, and thus perhaps itself constitutes a transgression that must be confessed and forgiven, through the *Pater Noster*, before culminating in a *statement* of God's grace and justice that erases all requests for those same through its strength and lack of condition or qualification. In Luke 11:1–4, Jesus does not precede the giving of the prayer with this injunction, though later on in that same chapter appears a famous passage, which evokes "the lilies of the field" to make much the same point (11:22–30).

clearly concerns and possibly evokes the mercy of God ("God, whose mercy . . .").

Moreover, Bernard specifies that it is said "for the souls of those resting in the cemetery"

(*pro animabus in coemeterio quiscentium*). This is an extension of the supplicatory act of

the procession to encompass the dead, structured intercessory prayer being a particular

feature of Cluny, especially in the minds of the laity.[41] Depending on actual text of the

prayer, it likely either figured the dead as part of the group seeking mercy (the

procession) or as the targets of the intercession of the living. It would be interesting to

know which, as this would deepen and clarify our understanding of just how the much

studied Cluniac networks that spanned the abyss of death worked. Bernard writes that the

litany (*litania*) is to follow this prayer immediately, but gives no further details of exactly

what this includes. Nevertheless the presence of these highly formalized petitions is not

surprising.[42] This is not only the last text used in the ritual but essentially its end;

Bernard, tersely concluding his description of the procession's itinerary, writes ". . . the

litany is begun and, with Saint John the Baptist named, the saint of this same church and

monastery is named twice, and the procession goes back" (. . . *incipitur Litania, et*

nominato sancto Joanne Baptista, nominatur bis Sanctus ipsius ecclesiae et Monasterii,

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[41] Dominique Iogna-Prat, "The Dead in the Celestial Bookkeeping of the Cluniac Monks Around the Year 1000," in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 330–339.

[42] Many of the most famous elements of the litany or the various litanies, such as the *Kyrie elesion* ("Lord, have mercy"), are extremely general in their requests; I thus regard their position here after Psalm 145 as no particular difficulty for my suggestion of that text as the infinitive culmination of the ritual. One could even suggest that the extremely unspecific nature and extensive repetition of the elements of the litany further develop this move towards the atemporal: that is, away from the particular and situated supplication of the *Exurge*. On the other hand, it is interesting to wonder if this (or other) parts of the procession ritual might in some cases have provided a venue for more spontaneous outbursts and petitions on the part of either members of the procession or onlookers, which might in turn attract the attention and ire of reformers, or at least "sticklers" formally educated in rule, custom, and liturgy, such as Bernard. Comparison to the dynamics of other, culturally and geographically far-flung "rituals" (always a fraught endeavor) might make this seem more likely, but for now it can be nothing but largely ungrounded speculation.

et recedit Processio).[43] The invocation of John the Baptist here seems to require some

explanation: accepting the idea that Psalm 145 forms the core or culmination of the ritual,

the reference to John thus comes to parallel or reflect, across the ritual center of Psalm

145, the introit devoted to Mary performed by the community upon reaching the

destination church. Mary and John are, of course, two of the most important figures in

Christianity, but their juxtaposition is especially ensconced in the traditional image of the

Deisis. This depiction of Christ flanked by Mary on the (viewer's) left and John on the

right was widely produced in Eastern Christian icon painting throughout the Middle

Ages, though it failed to widely penetrate Western art. If we read the *Pater Noster* as a

sign of Christ, could the ritual procession here be taken as a trace or echo of the Deisis, or

at least as sharing some tangled, sunken genealogy with it? After all, the term *deisis* itself

is Greek for "prayer" and, more specifically, "supplication," and the outstretched,

upraised hands of Mary and John in the image signify their intercession with Christ on

behalf of humanity.

  Texts and language are thus clearly very important in the complex semiosis that

animates the procession ritual. Many moderns, whether specialists in history or

anthropology or not, notice these elements first and are inclined to devote the bulk of

their attention to them. But, while I also began by considering these and have obviously

given them great weight, the crucial caveat of semiotic anthropology and Peircean

thought in general bears repeating: language is *not* the fundamental or ultimate form of

semiosis, but rather merely one among many kinds of sign-functioning. It is to the other

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[43] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 217.

valences of semiosis, equally vital for the functioning of the ritual of the procession, that I now turn.

The necessity of the Peircean caveat is proven by the fact that it is at all conceivable that one might consider the ritual of the procession without devoting significant attention to its most brute physical fact: a crowd of people carrying objects along some route. This fact is vitally necessary in order for the texts considered above to function the way I have argued they do. A full semiotic consideration of the relic in medieval Latin culture is well beyond the scope of this inquiry, but the idea that not only the saints associated with relics but even the relics themselves might move and act as though alive, and even that in a true theological sense they *were* alive, or at least animate, was widespread and is well-documented.[44] It is this principle that operates so crucially and in such close conjunction with the *Exurge* antiphon above: the relic, with all its cultural significance, and the fragment of liturgy work together to show not merely a saint rising to life in testament to the central Christian promise (resurrection), and not merely the sacred invading the fallen corporeal world, but indeed all this occurring *specifically at the command of the assembled monastic community*.

This community, its command, and the results of its command all appear and operate, of course, through signs. Some of these signs are the texts discussed above, and they operate in important and distinct respects both through the actual symbolic, linguistic statements of the texts *qua* texts (the "Arise!" being a key example) and the physical sign-*vehicles* (in this case, the singing or speaking voices of the priest, prior, and

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[44] Geary, *Furta Sacra*; Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*.

community as a whole). As above, the communal act of singing is essentially an integrative, participatory act disguised as a communicative one. The physical fact of the group singing, in conjunction with the simple "about-ness" of a given text, (re)creates the community around and within reference to a saint. This creation is much more significant to the ritual than whatever propositions are actually enunciated by the text that enables it (at least in the case of the *cantus* sung for the saint during the procession's transit to the destination church). Similarly, the *group* enunciation of the *Exurge*, paralleled by the communal carrying of the feretory, places the locus of power to mobilize the sacred quite specifically with the monastic community as a community—not, that is, with any individual or office-holder within that community.

This is not to say, however, that gradations within the community are denied or concealed; on the contrary, they are offered up for ready comprehension to even the most dim or uninformed lay observer. For Bernard stipulates quite unambiguously the marching order of the procession as follows: "the brothers [*fratres*] exit the choir, at the head of the procession. . . . The oblates [*infantes*] follow with their teachers, [and] after these all the lay brothers [*conversi*], and the cantors [*cantores*], just as is the order of these."[45] This established order would have complemented certain obvious physical differences, mainly that the *infantes*/oblates would be children between two groups of adult men, to communicate the distinct sub-groups comprising the procession. This order would likely suggest some sense of rank and status to onlookers; full brothers occupying the prestigious front position and bearing various important ritual objects (not least the

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[45] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 216.

feretory itself), children placed before *conversi*, and those doing—or at least leading—the

singing at the rear.[46] It certainly would have to the members themselves: when Bernard

writes "just as is the order of these," he is referring to a hierarchy with many resonances

inside the monastery and numerous manifestations in the course of its daily rhythms.

Conversi were generally full members of the monastic community at Cluny, including in

wearing the habit. Perhaps paradoxically, however, they generally did not participate

directly in the liturgy (that is, sing or read), since they did not have the extensive training

from boyhood in these areas possessed, rather, by the oblates. This was their chief

distinction from the oblates: they entered the monastery as adults, with all the advantages,

disadvantages, and dangers this entailed. Within the monastery, therefore, there were

special rules for the *conversi* during the liturgy, special rules for new adult novices, and

special rules for young boys.[47] Given that these rules focused primarily on who could go

where, and who could talk to whom, in the monastery when and under what

circumstances, the expression of this rank in marching order would have followed very

naturally from the actual experience of such status distinctions.[48]

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[46] Issues surrounding the relations and distinctions between oblates, *conversi*, *famuli*, and full or senior brothers are some of the most interesting and important in the history of Cluny in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For more on these issues, see Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat"; Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 77–80; Giles Constable, "Famuli and Conversi at Cluny," *Revue Bénédicte* 83 (1973): 326–350.

[47] Principally but not exclusively, Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 164–169. See also Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat."

[48] For more on monastic regimes of surveillance and control, see Hugh Feiss, "Circatores: from Benedict of Nursia to Humbert of Romans," *American Benedictine Review* 40 (1989): 346–379; Scott Bruce, "Lurking with Spiritual Intent: a Note on the Origin and Functions of the Monastic Roundsman (Circator)," *Revue Bénédictine* 109 (1999): 75–89; Nira Gradowicz-Pancer, "Le 'panoptism' monastique. Structures de surveillance et de contrôle dans le cénobitisme occidental ancien (Ve–VIe siècles)," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 216 (1999): 167–192.

The gathering together, while yet maintaining internal divisions of status and rank, of the whole monastic community thus suggested that the monastery itself was on the march, like a hermit crab abandoning its shell or a besieged garrison making a sally. Not only God and His saint, through the medium of the relic, but the Church itself had arisen and erupted out of the sacred space provided by the buildings devoted to them, crossing into the fallen world outside. This move would be underscored by the presence of key devotional objects carried by the monks. In these ways the sacred space of the monastery and the church was gathered up by the monks and heaved out into the world beyond. The procession could then deploy this newly mobile sacred space wherever it was needed: to a troublesome lay or episcopal opponent or a space associated with one (perhaps there to humiliate the saint's relic), to a blighted field or dried-up well, or on some route around or through an area meriting special protection from some imminent threat. Whatever the route might be, this would be associated with the specific petition of the *Exurge* and drawn into the culminating assertion of divine power, Psalm 145.

The ritual of procession for tribulation, then, as related by Bernard, presents to its monastic practitioners a certain fairly customizable template or frame. Several core elements, the frame, are always the same: most of the texts that open and conclude the procession, the constitution and arrangement of the participants, the carrying and presentation of certain special objects, and the origin and destination of the procession in churches. These elements make sure that a certain course of events takes place every time the ritual is performed. God, and by extension the saint whose relics are being deployed, is always commanded to arise, to stir Himself to action in response to the suffering and supplication of worshipers. These worshippers are always the monastic community,

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whose distinctive nature is highlighted in their dress and marching order, which reproduces the internal gradations of the monastery. Similarly, their privileged command of the sacred is evidenced by their carrying of a range of sacred objects, not least the feretory and relics themselves. When this whole production reaches the destination church, the monks first invoke Mary, then assume the place of Jesus and perform his command by saying the *Pater Noster*. Besides charting a progression of the procession itself from Mary to Jesus (and thus implicitly towards God), this prayer also apologizes for and thus erases the transgression of having selfishly and willfully presumed to seek God's help for some transitory earthly concern. The community thus makes its final approach to the divine both ritually confessed and absolved and even having explicitly rejected the particularity of worldly interest, an act that finds its culmination in the triumphant *declaration*, rather than invocation, of God's eternal, unchanging power and justice. This summit is then followed by a prayer for the dead, thereby drawing these as well into the ritual community as it makes its passage, and finally by a torrent of repetitious, unspecific supplication for simple mercy, the litany, perhaps suggesting the only possible response of the fallen human encountering the infinite divine.

At the same time, the ritual varies depending the saint whose relics are actually carried, the saint to whom the destination church is dedicated, and the route taken by the procession itself. Songs about the saint whose relic was carried would offer the opportunity for the community to participate more directly in the process, even to inscribe themselves, through the proxy of their holy patron, therein. Whether members of the procession other than the *cantores* sang is unknown, and doubtful, but they could at least listen (as could lay onlookers). In this way, the experience of the saint was extended

from the merely visual (observing the feretory and reliquaries), to include the aural range.[49] And though Bernard gives no detail about what kind of itinerary a procession for tribulation might make, it seems extremely likely that, in many cases, the course of the procession would correspond to and invoke in some way the specific tribulation that had provoked the procession. In this way temporal and spiritual or sacred matters would be brought into contact with one another; a lord or bishop demanding some concession in matters of authority or property from the monastery might be confronted personally by a marching, singing army, bearing the saint him or herself. The monastic community and the furnishings of its church, indeed of *any* church, would leave their accustomed setting and suddenly be found out in the world, threatening to work their power upon the immediate physical reality of field or palace.

Ultimately, however, or at least in most cases, the ritual did not actually "work" by summoning up the magical powers of the relic or calling down the observable wrath or mercy of God. These particular elements, above all the concerns and struggles of the monastic community against others and the general difficulty of medieval life, were gathered into the signifying nexus of the procession and carried along to the destination church. There, with the specific petition that had given rise to the procession, they were expunged through a series of invocations ascending through the saints, Mary, and Jesus towards God. In the process, both the legitimacy and even the necessity of the petitions were rejected. This was a ritual that used the liturgy, in the texts that comprised it, the objects that accompanied it, the space in which it took place, and the community that

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[49] The ritual is even extended into the olfactory range; Bernard's concern that the feretory be carefully perfumed with incense is likely aimed at evoking the "odor of sanctity," the sweet smell believed to emanate from the corpses of saints in denial of the corruption of death.

performed it, to frame and enunciate a concrete petition. Through the mobility of those performing the ritual, the petition incorporated the physical situation that gave rise to the petition and carried both to the place of asking, the destination church. But there the ritual quite concretely rejected and released its petition, instead seeking forgiveness for the temerity of asking, of willing any particular situation on earth. Textually, the community performed an ascent to the divine presence, and there gave over to self-abnegating praise and a simple request for mercy verging on glossolalia.

The ritual thus can be regarded as training its participants in a quintessentially Christian *habitus*: that of striving despite, and perhaps with full knowledge that, the assurance both of personal failure and of its overcoming through dispensation of unearned grace. Such a *habitus* or posture can be found in many places within the Christian tradition. Indeed, only a few verses after giving the Lord's Prayer, Jesus tells his disciples:

> So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him![50]

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[50] These famous verses appear not infrequently without those concerning the child (11–13); they are crucial, however, in emphasizing the helplessness of the seeker (Luke 11:9–13).

This theme also appears in Jerome's letter to Paulinus, considered in my chapter on the Cluny Bible. There Jerome praises Paulinus' interest in the Bible quite specifically *not* because of what Paulinus might learn, that is, because of the potential results of Paulinus' own action (reading and intellection): "What is of importance to me is not what you find but what you seek to find. Wax is soft and easy to mold even where the hands of craftsman and modeler are wanting to work it."[51] Even Bernard himself, in the prologue of his customary, reiterates this fruitless-striving-culminating-in-grace; addressing Hugh the Great, he writes:

> . . . For whatever I learned concerning the order, whatever I grasped concerning the path of religion, was more of your gift of God's inspiration than of my industry, and little would my zeal have profited me, had not your paternity subjected me to rule and institution, in which gift from God it was as though I saw with my finger the expression of God, [that] whatever I read in sacred books of virtue, I may be able to touch in some way what I understand concerning what is written, if I attend vigilantly to the lines of your way of life. . . .[52]

The crucial difference between these citations and the ritual of the procession for tribulation, of course, is that these are mere words. The procession was performed. These texts, though likely read by some monks and, at least in the case of the Bible verse and *perhaps* Jerome's letter, might have been sometimes read aloud to the community as a

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[51] See Chapter 4, note 70.

[52] See Chapter 8, note 22.

whole, still operated under serious limits to their dissemination. In the procession, however, all would experience in the most direct way possible, by *being* and *doing* the signs at work—carrying the feretory, singing, kneeling or bowing before the destination church—the specific petition and then the rejection and overcoming of fruitless human striving, its giving way in joyous assertion of divine power. Reading or hearing Jerome or Luke would be *instruction* in this core Christian doctrine; the procession was *training* in it.

Bernard's account of the procession for tribulation possesses a particular discrete quality; that is, it has a clear beginning and end. And rather than stemming from any particular authorial intervention or re-framing, this is clearly because the ritual itself presents relatively little ambiguity in what it includes and what it excludes. No observer now, and probably few observers of processions in the eleventh century, would be confused about which actions are part of the procession and which are not. Bernard's description is able to hew cleanly and easily to the contours of the ritual itself. This recalls part of the definition of ritual given here, as set apart or aside from the broader, all-encompassing scope of day-to-day living. But much of Bernard's customary is given over to rituals, which, if they can ultimately be distinguished from non-ritual behavior, do present more of a challenge to doing so. We might say that these rituals are more closely integrated into daily monastic life and experience, and that they threaten to bleed through into mundane behavior.

Take, for example, Bernard's discussion of Cluny's deans (*decani*). From the outset, this account presents striking contrasts with that of the procession. Rather than appearing in its own delineated section or chapter (*caput*), as the latter does, Bernard's

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description of the deans is subsumed within the chapter ostensibly devoted to the greater

prior (*prior major*). This chapter appears very near the beginning of the whole customary.

It follows only the prologue and the chapter concerning the abbot, and thus falls within

the collection of chapters devoted to the senior offices of the monastery. Despite its

incipit, at least half of the text is given over to the responsibilities and especially the

conduct of the deans. Accordingly, it is not centered on one or two complexes of

actions/semiosis. The cohesive pageantry of the procession, or of a mass, or of the

dedication of a church is nowhere to be found; rather, Bernard presents only a very

loosely connected series of short strictures for deans: how to dress, how to ride a horse,

how to interact with property and various individuals or classes of individuals.

Nevertheless, as we will see, very many of these are recognizable as rituals, or perhaps

micro-rituals.

The first part of the chapter discusses the process by which the greater prior is

chosen and invested with his office, and gives some general statements about his

responsibilities and rank in the monastic community. These establish that the prior is

second to the abbot in all things, and that the other officers of the monastery should obey

him. They also bar him from receiving any kind of gifts from anyone (at least while he is

outside the refectory), but also suggest that he may well maintain "obediences" or duties

to people and interests beyond the monastery itself (*Si perrexerit ad obedientias quae

sunt prope in circuitu. . . .*).[53] This somewhat puzzling pair of directives makes more

sense in light of Bernard's discussion of the deans. Bernard writes "Moreover those

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[53] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 139.

brothers (set) to temporal matters (are) suffragans of his [the greater prior's], who are the overseers of villas/villages, and who according to our custom we call deans . . ." (*Ejus autem suffraganei ad temporalia sunt illi tratres, qui villarum sunt provisores, et quos pro more nostro decanos appelamus*).[54] Given that much of Bernard's discussion of the deans concerns their intercourse with the world beyond the cloister, we may conclude that the primary area of the greater prior's responsibility is the supervision of these special monks who manage the various properties and temporal rights of the monastery. The prior would thus need to frequently, or at least regularly, travel outside the monastery and, moreover, maintain authority over those brothers best-placed to offer him bribes.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the overwhelming majority of the various micro-rituals prescribed by Bernard for the deans seem focused on mediating this dangerous intercourse with the outside world that their duty requires. The first discussed of these is, like key parts of the procession ritual, para-liturgical—or, rather, not a separate performance that resembles the liturgy, but a set of minor addenda or modifications to certain parts of the normal liturgy itself. Bernard stipulates that all deans who live within half a day's journey are to come to the monastery every Saturday before Vespers (the evening prayers conventionally taken as the beginning of the liturgical day). There they participate in some, seemingly variable, number of the hour services throughout "that day" (*eo die*),[55] performing also the special monastic bow.[56] Bernard also lists a number

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid. Bernard writes that they are to "go through each hour" (*redeunt per singulas horas*), but later seems to suggest that the deans may leave at various times, whenever they might decide to and having received the permission of the abbot or prior.

[56] Bernard refers to this at many points in the customary, calling it "to make the back and forth" (*faciunt ante et retro*). He describes it in detail in the sixteenth chapter, "Concerning novices taken beyond the monastery." Bernard writes "therefore with no little study is any novice to be instructed, that he shall know

of versicles said for the attending deans (*dicenda est pro eis*) at these hour services. These are sung as some part of (perhaps following) the collect "Omnipotent eternal God, pity your servants" (*Omnipotens sempiterne Deus miserere famulis tuis*).[57] The first half is always the same, "Make saved your servants" (*Salvos fac servos tuos*), with one of several options following in response: "Turn, O Lord, how long, [and be entreated in favor of thy servants]" (*Convertere Domine usquequo*, the first part of CV Psalms 89:13, which I have completed here), or "Behold how good [and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity]" (*Ecce quam bonum*, the first part of CV Psalms 132:1, which I have completed here); or "Blessed are they that dwell in your house, O Lord" (*Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine*, the first part of CV Psalms 83:5, which I have not completed, as Bernard does not write *etc.* after this incipit as he has in the other cases). There are also special versicles for when the deans indicate to the abbot or prior that they should depart, and receive permission to do so, via hand signs. These include *Salvos fac*

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to bow regularly [correctly], specifically not with back arched, as is customary with certain negligent ones, but thus that the back shall be laid as the thighs/waist, and the head laid as the back [i.e., all straight, on the same level]; this bow we call according to this very use *ante et retro*, since it begins facing the east, and finishes facing the west; which we do first before Nocturns, and after Compline, specifically after three prayers" (igitur non pravo studio quilibet novitius est instruendus, ut regulariter sciat inclinare, scilicet non dorso arcuato, ut quibusdam negligentibus est familiare, sed ita ut dorsum sit submissus quam lumbi, et caput submissus quam dorsum; quam inclinationem nos per ipsum usum ante et retro appelamus, quia incipit contra orientem, et finit contra occidentem; quam et agminus primo ante nocturnos, et post completorium, scilicet psot tres orationes), ibid., 168–169.

[57] The Latin here is a bit uncertain. The complete passage, parts of which I have already discussed, goes as follows (my translation): "On this day when they go through the hours one by one, they make the back and forth, and for together as one is to be said as versicles here from the collect 'Omnipotent eternal God, pity your servants, etc.' The versicles which are permitted are two, of which one is always first: . . ." (Eo die quo redeunt per singulas Horas, ante faciunt et retro, et dicenda est pro eis una simul cum versiculis de his collecta; *Omnipotens sempiterne Deus miserere famulis tuis, etc.* Versiculi qui praemittuntur sunt duo, quorum semper unus est primus. . . .), ibid., 139. This description is confusing and appears to leave some important elements unstated. When exactly in the collect were the versicles to be sung? Do the deans participate in singing the psalmody, the collect, or the versicles? Since many may well have been *conversi*, it is quite possible they did not sing, but perhaps they could have been expected to manage a few simple versicles, the responds of which were, in general, sometimes sung by the choir and sometimes by the entire congregation. Bernard also does not specify the actual physical location or position of the deans.

servos tuos again, but also "Send help to them, etc." (*Mitte eis auxilium, etc.*) and "Attend to [our, their?] supplications, O Lord, etc." (*Adesto Domine supplicationibus, etc.*).[58]

While some elements of Bernard's description remain unclear (again, relying heavily on lived experience transmitted orally and through training even in this innovative and comparatively exhaustive document), the central conceit of this addendum to the massive, complex, and continuous ritual of the liturgy quickly suggests itself. Those deans who are posted in close proximity to the monastery return to it frequently and regularly, every week, for they are based there in a profoundly important spiritual—and more specifically, soteriological—sense. Weekly participation in the liturgy, for a (liturgical) day, or at least a fraction of one, rejuvenates, sustains, and protects them in their monastic rejection of the world. They are all the more in need of this replenishment precisely because they live out beyond the cloister, and even are required to concern themselves to a significant extent with the management of the monastery's property. A military metaphor, such as foragers for an army on the march, forward pickets, or even commandos working far behind enemy lines, would not at all be out of place. After all, the Rule of Saint Benedict itself describes anchorites or hermits in such terms: "Thanks to the help and guidance of many, they are now trained to fight against the devil. They have built up their strength and go from the battle line in ranks of their brothers to the single combat of the desert. . . . they are ready with God's help to grapple single-handed with the vices of body and mind."[59] And while the deans are not hermits, their position is

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[58] I have not identified from which, if any, psalms these versicles are drawn.

[59] *RB 1980*, 168–169. We have encountered this quotation before, in discussing John of Salerno's description of the *conversatio* of the hermit Adhegrinus, companion of Odo. For an introduction into

similar in that they must exist out beyond the relative safety and support of the cloister, taking on extra challenges not in the form of solitude but in intercourse with the world.

Moreover, all the liturgical elements stipulated for performance during the dean's weekly attendance at the hours seem thematically linked to the role and position of the deans. The collect, the first part of the versicle pairs (*Salvos fac servos tuos*), and one of the possible versicle responses all feature imperatives directed to God specifically for the sake of "servants" (*servi*, *famuli*) and their state of salvation. These quite clearly refer both to the deans' duty as administrators of monastic properties, while also expressing a particular concern for their spiritual well-being. *Ecce quam bonum*, in turn, emphasizes the benefits of community and the ties between the "brethren," while *Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine* asserts the spiritual benefit of living in the house of the Lord. In context, this obviously suggests the monastery, and like the *Ecce quam bonum* serves to reassure and reiterate that even those brothers who spend much of their time physically beyond the walls of the monastery are indeed members of the community that dwells within. These versicles thus address the deans both by explicitly referring to servants, members of a community, or inhabitants of the Lord's house *and* by corresponding to them in a physical and temporal sense (that is, as indices): they are sung when the deans are present and, at least according to Bernard's gloss of the practice, "for" (*pro*) them. Perhaps also the deans themselves may have sung the responds of the versicles.[60] Through this correspondence, the liturgy itself performs or parallels integration, or

Cluniac militaristic or violent conception of prayer, see Barbara Rosenwein, "Feudal War and Monastic Peace."

[60] See note 57 earlier in this chapter.

regular re-integration, of the deans into the monastic community based within the cloister. Just as the deans return each week to physically participate in the liturgy, so are special verses that refer and correspond to them and their particular situation integrated into the liturgy. In the most direct way, this ritual or annex to the ritual of the office of the hours encompasses the formation and maintenance of a particular community, and here in an area where that community's cohesion is most threatened. Meanwhile, the versicles that accompany the departing deans, besides repeating the imperative concern for their ultimate salvation, also deploy imperatives that refer to their special and dangerous advance duty, admonishing God to pay special attention to their entreaties and send them, in particular, help. Again, the imperative directed at God serves as an index of His correlation to or posture towards particular earthly supplicants, making of indexicality a conduit of grace.

Special provisions for the liturgy concerning these deans extend beyond the choir, too. Bernard stipulates that, if a dean who has left the church or refectory and is preparing to make the journey back to his post should hear the "sign" (*signum*, generally taken in such contexts to refer to a bell tolling or gong being struck) for any regular hour while he is yet within the walls of the monastery, he is to dismount, set aside his travelling equipment, and return to participate in the hour.[61] Bernard offers no explanation for this custom, as usual. But I would suggest that to leave *during* an hour service, rather than between completed services, would be experienced (perhaps only unconsciously) as a threat to the ceremony's power to integrate the deans into the monastic community and

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[61] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 140.

thus, even more alarmingly, to the salvific power of the liturgy, vis-a-vis the deans, itself. A monk not present at the monastery is one thing. The deans' regular trips to the monastery and their special liturgical addenda performed their membership in the community even in the face of their absence during the weeks; but leaving in the midst of the ceremony would be, by the same token, to perform their separation. Bernard's invocation of the monastery's walls as the relevant boundary may provide some support to this reading.[62] The issue is not strictly whether the dean can hear the *signum*, which presumably he can hear just beyond the walls as well as just inside them, but whether he has traversed the key spatial demarcation between the monastery and the world beyond.

This carefully policed departure from the monastery also manifests in Bernard's insistence that the deans not leave without obtaining permission from the abbot or prior, which they do by means of a hand sign at the end of whichever hour they last perform in the choir.[63] This invocation of abbatial authority/monastic obedience lays the command of the abbot alongside the physical border between the sacred, transcendent space of the monastery and the temporal world outside, reproducing and reiterating one of the abbot's key functions (especially in post/neo-Carolingian monasticism): mediating between the community and the world beyond.[64] Crossing this border without the proper permission would, therefore, threaten the constitution of the community and the salvation of the individual in just the same linked way as doing so in the midst of an hour service. That is, by rejecting the necessity of the mediating institution (abbatial authority/monastic

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[62] ". . . and if he should be located within the enclosure of the walls. . . ." (*et adhuc sit positus intra septa murorum*), ibid., 140.

[63] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 139.

[64] Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, 561; Jestice, *Wayward Monks*, 172–173.

obedience or the liturgy itself), the radical distinction between the two spheres, and thus the transcendental potentiality of the monastic one, is itself challenged.

Further developing this complex intersection of sacred and profane space/community and its maintenance through prescribed and carefully choreographed semiosis, Bernard also relates special monkish practice for travelling on the road (*in via positus*). Deans—and presumably all monks—are expected to observe the liturgy of the hours with special abbreviated performances: they "seek indulgence" (*veniam petit*), remove caps and gloves, sing the hours "as they may" (*quamlibet horam cantaverit*), make the sign of the cross, and say the Lord's Prayer.[65] However, Bernard writes that they are *not* to make the *ante et retro* unless they are in a monastery or church; apparently this particularly reverent bow is reserved for the closer proximity to God found in such sacred spaces.[66] This adaptation of the full liturgy thus took on a doubled significance. On the one hand, it signified *like* the liturgy: through the performance of psalms, confessions, and prayers, it invoked God and various saints, while also making claims about the individual enacting it, the fallen and heavenly worlds, salvation, Christ, and various other theological concepts. But it also referred *to* the liturgy *itself*. It was a fragment or abbreviation of the full liturgy, which normally encompassed a whole community located within special buildings and mobilizing a nexus of ritual equipment— none of which would be present with the lone monk kneeling on the side of the road. Like

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[65] Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 140. Note also that John of Salerno's *Vita prima et maior sancti Odonis* included accounts of Odo leading his travelling companions in the singing of psalms.

[66] And therefore, perhaps, to perform the bow outside the cloister would be to undermine the key distinction between sacred and mundane space, thus threatening the monks' access to the former and its special proximity to the divine or to soteriological power.

the procession, this portable mini-liturgy carried sacred space out into the mundane world. But it also shifted the locus of ritual, with its signifying and transcendental behavior, from the community to the individual. Crucially, it did this not through a new ritual specially designed for the individual, but through the adaptation of a communal one.

This strange liminal position of the dean produces the odd and contorted snippets of ritual found throughout the rest of Bernard's account of his distinctive *conversatio*.[67] Our chief example is the attention devoted to the deans' clothing.[68] There are special rules for dress while travelling on horseback: "Before ascending onto his horse [to leave the monastery], he dons a little cape which shall/may encircle his frock with a cord. He ought not to ride without little bindings/wrappings [on his legs] more than one league. . . ." (*Super caballum ascensurus prius cappam induit quam froccum corrigia praecingat. Non debet equitare sine fasciolis plusquam una leuca. . . .*).[69] Obviously clothing while travelling may well have a pragmatic function, yet if Bernard refers to a cope by the term *cappa*, he means a garment that generally holds significance as a marker of basic clerical or regular status and often plays a liturgical role. The reference to *fasciola*, wrappings worn on the legs, too, is more likely included here *against* pragmatic concerns; on warm days monks might well prefer to ride much further than one league without wearing them—to counter this natural desire, Bernard deploys his preferred normative verb,

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[67] The term in this context is mine; I mean it in the sense I understand Bernard to use it, but he does not do so here specifically.

[68] Others, such as the prohibition on causing a horse to gallop, information about the dean's servants, the way he takes his meals, and so on, could be provided, but most of these take up only one or two lines and so I focus on the extended treatment of the deans' clothing.

[69] Ibid.

debet. Along these lines, he notes further on that "For no time in summer does he ride without a frock, only in his hood" (*Pro nullo aestivo tempore equitat absque frocco, in sola cuculla*).[70] As referenced above, monks are also ordered to remove their gloves and hoods when performing the liturgy on the road, further attesting to the *ritual*—signifying, non-useful—concerns attached to their dress. These concerns follow the dean into his day-to-day life and business during the week:

> In the place of the deanery, where he [unspecified] administers food and drink to him [the dean], never is he [the dean] only in [his] hood, or only in underwear, unless indeed a tunic or covering and leather boots shall be worn, or some other vestments, which are placed over the undershirt.[71]

And they also play a special role when he encounters women. Bernard discusses a number of special rules for deans who are approached in their residences by women "to whom it is not possible to deny hospitality" (*cui hospitium negara non possit*).[72] Some of these concern where he sits when they eat or their movements around the deanery, but, again, they focus primarily on his dress:

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[70] Ibid.

[71] "In ispo loco Decaniae qui ei cibum et potum administrat, numquam in sola camisia est, vel in femoralibus solis, nisi etiam tunica vel pellicio sit indutus et caligis amictus, sive alia veste, quae camisae superponatur. . . ." ibid.

[72] Ibid.

> . . . He neither eats nor drinks in his hide without a frock and [with] naked feet. . .
> . If his hood is removed in the day as in the night, [he or she?] makes no word;
> [he] observes indeed that [he] should place it where it shall not be separated from
> him more than a cubit. If due to the heat he should go out from his frock, then he
> should be able to sit in his hood, but so, that unless he should work, neither cloak,
> nor hide shall he have underneath, nor anything other than his undershirt.[73]

The material here is difficult. Bernard assumes a basic familiarity not only with monastic living but even with the *conversatio* and circumstances of the deans themselves. But some of the difficulty also seems to come from the grasping pursuit Bernard makes after many minute contours of the deans' lives and persons. Ritual, as I have defined it and as it is often understood more generally, and as it fits so neatly the event of the procession, is challenged by Bernard's goals in this realm. Its relevance cannot be doubted: clothing was often taken as a highly significant medium in monastic or regular living.[74] Moreover, Bernard is obviously pushing against what basic pragmatism and comfort would dictate in many of these situations (above all, wearing layers of heavy garments in hot weather). And the situations on which he focuses—travel beyond the cloister, performance of the liturgy, eating, encounters with women, and labor—all concern key elements of monastic praxis and identity. Perhaps Bernard conceives, or even understands unconsciously,

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[73] ". . . nec comedit, nec bibit in pellicia sua sine frocco, et nudis pedibus. . . . Si est cuculla exutus tam in die quam in nocte, nullum verbum facit; observat etiam ne quoqum ponat eam, ubi a se longius separata sit quam cubito uno. Si pr calorem froccum exerit, in cuculla sedere poterit, sed ita, ut nisi opera faciat, nec gunellam, nec pellicium subtus habeat, nec aliud quam stamineum suum," ibid.

[74] John of Salerno spends some of the *Vita prima* relating teachings of Odo, and miraculous visions, on the importance of proper monastic dress. Sitwell, *Being the Life*, 71–74.

clothing as the last line of distinction (signification) between the dean, as a monk, and the fallen world where he spends most of his time. Along with his performance of the liturgy, the conduct of his meals and his conversation, and the commands to avoid profiting by his post or labor, clothing forms a specialized *conversatio* that adapts and summarizes the Cluniac way of life, making it portable for the individual sent beyond the cloister on a special mission.

The dean thus represents a very different ritual paradigm from that of the procession, extrapolating the millennial reform principle of monk-in-the-world beyond the role of the abbot.[75] This paradigm ultimately grapples with a situation that demands extensive and radical revision of what ritual means and does. As defined above, ritual is, first, a discrete act that, second, manipulates signs in order to, third, traverse and thus reaffirm *significant* boundaries (social, ontological, etc.) and provide a normative guide to semiosis, thereby—or coincidentally—fourth, (re)producing community or communities. The procession is a perfect example. It begins and ends cleanly and unambiguously, comprising distinctive, not-directly-useful semiotic acts: the enunciation of pre-established texts, the enactment of an unnecessary—and ultimately reversed, self-erasing—itinerary, the brandishing of useless objects. It performs the irruption of sacred presence and power into the mundane world, a performance that both requires and re-inscribes key spatial and social distinctions: between sacred and mundane spaces, of course, but also between the monastic community and society at large, between churches as social and physical demarcations of the divine, and even between subsets of the

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[75] Jestice, *Wayward Monks*.

monastic community itself. And, ultimately, it trains the monks in the central Christian *habitus* and approach to experience.

Crucially, the deans' rituals subvert and overturn many of these key elements, while remaining almost entirely cloaked in just the same words and gestures. The dean's behavior is highly purposive and completely pragmatic: he is a crucial link in the exchange networks that provision the monastery not only with resources needed for ritual purposes, like oil and perhaps metalwork, but also with those needed for sustenance in the most basic sense. He uses no special objects, other than his clothing (which is ritually policed, as recorded/reiterated by Bernard). And he operates largely alone—or, not alone, but merely adjoined to, rather than constitutive of, the distinct communities maintained by the rituals he performs and in which he participates. For he is neither the lay member of the village-family conglomerate whose productive work he oversees and expropriates, nor is he a regular or permanent member of the monastery; he lives beyond its walls, and not even, like the hermit, within the walls of a hermitage or cave, at some basic distance from the laity. The liturgy, whether in the form of his addenda performed weekly during his presence within the monastery or in the modular form alone on the road/beyond the cloister, sets him apart. In the latter case, of course, he is only some lone monk, already distinguished in dress, kneeling in the dust. And in the former the community calls upon God to direct the divine's special attention and assistance to him, specifically—and not to all of them together. For the pragmatic reality of the dean's role has fundamentally reshaped ritual; perhaps the key, overarching difference between his and the procession's or the congregation's is that his must be chopped up and parceled out, distributed throughout his days and years, constantly and intimately, minutely reapplied precisely

because his work removes him from communities and sets him fundamentally *between* them. Thus his proper analogue is neither the celebrant or the member of the procession: they *use* ritual to mediate between. He, rather, mediates between. In some sense, he *is* ritual.

Moreover, if the procession (and much of Latin monastic life in general) is an example of training in the renunciation of will and intentionality, *without* the concomitant renunciation of action or striving itself, the dean is again trained in something very different. The veins of ritual with which his life is, ideally, shot through, are less training and more talisman. They protect him from what he must do, they sanctify his life, which otherwise in so many ways resembles that of the secular lay tenant or overseer. They allow him to move in the world while still renouncing it, reinscribing his activity rather than replacing it. In this, casting a far glance over dimly-lit territory, I see the forerunner of the modernist, Cartesian account of the self and the yawning, protective chasm it opens between the soul and the body/world. Here the spatial metaphors of the eleventh century do not yet mobilize a language of interiority; the monk's soul is not hidden in a jar, but rather anchored within the cloister. But unlike the monks who dwelt there also in body, for the dean, ritual and ritualized behavior served as a spectral tether, like the air hose of a nineteenth-century diving suit. This allowed him to move beyond the cloister safely, inhabiting with ultimate intimacy the contours of worldly life while paradoxically maintaining the essential monastic denial of the world that so many of his actions contravened. The point here is two-fold: the essential self (the mind, the soul, or even one's state of salvation itself) and the (mundane, fallen, fleshy) world/body are increasingly distinguished and contrasted, relative to the differing understanding of their

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respective periods, by Descartes and by reform monasticism; yet at the same time, this emerging distinction, in both cases, serves as the grounds for an increasingly-developed articulation of the way in which it is bridged and overcome.[76] For Descartes, the chasm was bridged by a hybrid of biology and theology, the soul working through the pineal gland in the brain. For eleventh-century monasticism, it was mediated a body of ritual praxis that played on distinctions of dress and institutional space. The actual shared genealogy of Descartes and the (crisis of the) early modern self and of reform monasticism is obviously only hypothesized and proposed here. But the transformation or radical refiguration of Cluniac ritual between its appearance in the procession for tribulation and in the *conversatio* of the dean is well-established.

Finally, as it relates specifically to the rituals it describes for us, what are we to make of the customary itself? What of the document? One very important difference between it and the records of rituals studied by Koziol, Buc, and Pössel is that it purports to describe the programs or forms of various rituals, rather than the actual event of any particular, individual ritual. Bernard's description of the tribulation procession is intended as a description of the ideal tribulation procession, of any and every tribulation procession. This is quite different from the various polemical accounts of ninth-century Carolingian political rituals (crownings, public penances, and so on) that have played such a prominent role in the debate on ritual among medieval historians.[77] Part of the

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[76] My thinking on this matter, particularly as regards Descartes and the early modern (1500–1700) period, owes a great deal to Paul Monod's discussion of it in his excellent *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), esp. 47–54, 81–88, 193–204, 279–287.

[77] Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State*; Buc, *Dangers of Ritual*; Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor*; Pössel, "The Magic of Ritual."

difference is that tenth- and eleventh-century monastic ritual was, in most cases, more

frequently and more regularly performed than the kinds of events that surrounded, for

example, the struggle between Louis the Pious and his turbulent sons. Monastic ritual

enjoyed a concrete existence in the living tradition of the community, precisely by virtue

of the fact that, even besides the regular performances, it was always in the midst of

being passed on to the next generation. But another important aspect of the difference,

once that relates more directly to the question of Bernard's customary as a document, was

that the monastic community was essentially defined by its basis on written documents.

This is not to suggest that the monks constantly glanced at the written word to guide them

through every minute of every day, or even that documents played a primary role in their

education in monastic living.[78] But the principle was certainly that the nature of monastic

life and the constitution of the monastery as a community was set forth in the Rule, and

that it was this fact that made monks and monasteries monks and monasteries. That this

definitive conception was largely a Carolingian innovation had probably been forgotten

by the time of Cluny's foundation, let alone by that of Bernard—"forgotten," that is, as a

rather intentional part of the broad ideological project of the Carolingians itself.[79] In this

basis lay already, more than two hundred years before Bernard wrote his customary, the

profound setting-aside of rituals and ritual behavior that made both so powerful in

monastic life: the things that make monks monks by virtue of doing them are done, and

are done the way they are done, because they have been instituted by unimpeachable,

ancient individuals of exceptional holiness, indeed sainthood. They are *not* done because

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[78] Boynton, "Oral Transmission of Liturgical Practice"; Cochelin, "Peut-on parler de noviciat."

[79] Diem, "Inventing the Holy Rule."

the monks have decided so for themselves. Such would be an unacceptable assertion of

individual will, and ultimately an abrogation of the category of monk.[80]

In its overall character and intent, then, perhaps Bernard's customary was not

much of an innovation over the (Carolingian conception/recension of) the Rule. As we

saw when considering Bernard's prologue, he understood the document as a vessel that

contained customs and, ultimately, an *ordo*. His specific language of materiality and

containment is interesting, but what first set forth the customs of Cluny to him, such that

they might be placed in some receptacle, was the Carolingian establishment of

orthopraxy as rooted absolutely in written text and the essential setting-aside this

establishment engendered. From this viewpoint, the most immediate difference between

Bernard's customary and the Rule of Benedict (whatever its origin) is the former's

length: Bernard's customary is vastly longer than the Rule.[81] And this is a case in which a

difference in *quantity* is so great that it spills over to become one in quality as well. For a

great deal of this extra length stems from Bernard's pursuit of a vastly more minute,

detailed, and intimate grasp of the living bodies of his subjects. We observed some

measure of this pursuit in the case of the deans. Along similar lines, Bernard's customary

has no analogue for Benedict's chapters on "Obedience," "Restraint of Speech," and

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[80] *RB 1980*, 169–171.

[81] My estimation here is exceedingly rough, but the difference is so immense as to overwhelm such concerns. In the 1980 edition of the Rule edited by Timothy Fry, the Rule itself runs from page 156 to 297, in facing-page translation. It is thus seventy pages long, each usually comprising around thirty lines in Latin. Herrgott's edition of Bernard's customary, on the other hand, runs from page 134 to 364, *without* facing-page translation, thus totaling 230 pages. Moreover, the print is markedly smaller than in the 1980 Rule, with section headings and footnotes taking up much less space. As a result, most pages in the customary edition include about fifty lines. By these rough measures, Bernard's customary is almost certainly at least four or five times the length of the Rule.

"Humility." In these chapters of the Rule, we find brief and rather general ethical treatises. For example:

> Let us follow the Prophet's counsel: 'I said, I have resolved to keep watch over my ways that I may never sin with my tongue, I have put a guard on my mouth. I was silent and was humbled, and I refrained even from good words' (Ps 38[39]:2–3). Here the Prophet indicates that there are times when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence. For all the more reason, then, should evil speech be curbed so that punishment for sin may be avoided. Indeed, so important is silence that permission to speak should seldom be granted even to mature disciples, no matter how good or holy or constructive their talk, because it is written: 'In a flood of words you will not avoid sin' (Prov 10:19); and elsewhere 'The tongue holds the key to life and death' (Prov 18:21). Speaking and teaching are the master's task; the disciple is to be silent and listen.
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> Therefore, any requests to a superior should be made with all humility and respectful submission. We absolutely condemn in all places any vulgarity and gossip and talk leading to laughter, and we do not permit a disciple to engage in words of that kind.[82]

This is the *entirety* of the Rule's "Restraint of Speech" chapter.[83] Compare it to the introduction to Bernard's account of the sign language used at Cluny:

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[82] *RB 1980*, 191.

[83] The other main treatments of silence in the Rule occur in the chapter concerning "The Reader for the Week," (236–239) that is, during mealtimes, and in that entitled "Silence After Compline" (242–243). In

He [the novice] also has the work that he shall learn diligently the signs, with which it is possible to speak silently, in a certain fashion, since after he shall be together with the Convent, it is permitted to him most rarely to speak; and so in the cloister as for the Office, in which it is given and fixed by our fathers, that a perpetual silence ought to be maintained, that is, in the church, dormitory, refectory, and regular kitchen; in these each, both in day and in night, if even one word spoken is heard by anyone, one does not deserve easy indulgence without judgment; and if any antiphon or *responsorium*, or anything else without leave is enunciated, being absent in a book, and in a book at the same time the emission of [that] word is not seen, concerning this nothing other than complete silence is considered.[84]

Or compare the Rule to another place in the customary, also concerning novices and silence, where Bernard writes: "While speaking moreover if he should hear the regular sign [the bell for the regular hour], and if he is in the cloister, the very word which he has

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these passages, the rule of silence in the specific times and places that the chapters concern is reiterated but not given much consideration beyond that.

[84] "Opus quoque habet ut signa diligenter addiscat, quibus tacens quodammodo loquatur, quia postquam adunatus fuerit ad Conventum, licet ei rarissime loqui; et tales in claustro Officinae sunt, in quibus traditum est a Patribus nostris et praefixum, ut perpetuum silentium teneatur, id est, ecclesia, domitorium, refectorium et coquina regularis; in his singulis, tam in die quam in nocte, si vel unum verbum quoquam audiente loquitur, non facile veniam absque judicio meretur; et si vel unam antiphonam, vel responsorium, vel aliud quid tale absque libro nominavit, et in libro simul cum emissione verbi non viderit, de hoc non aliud quam plane silentiu, censetur fregrisse," Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 169.

in his mouth, he does not complete, but immediately he is silent, and hurries off to be

present at prayer."[85]

These passages from the customary are striking not only in their strictness but

also in their detail. Bernard lists all the specific places within the monastery where

speaking is not permitted, forbids the speaking of even one word, and even goes so far as

to prohibit the *finishing* of a word begun before the summons to the office. More

strikingly still, he directs his reader's attention to the liturgy precisely as it is given in

(other) liturgical books: singing some part, even a single word, of the liturgy out of its

proper place is as much a violation of monastic silence as frivolous talk in the dormitory.

Bernard thus weaves a nexus of increasingly normative written texts around monastic

life, which even penetrate the borders of the sacred speech of the liturgy. Within that

sacred vocal/linguistic space, speech is policed no less and by the exact same means. Part

of this strictness and specificity stems from the extreme implementation of monastic

silence at Cluny, a practice that even in the tenth and eleventh centuries was sometimes

criticized as opposed to the Rule.[86] But there is something else at work here too; it is not

only that the customary adds strictures not included in the Rule, but that the whole

approach of the Rule to the people and behavior it aims to regulate is different. The

chapter on "Restraint of Speech" cites scripture for the value of silence, even over, in

some cases, virtuous speech. This is a simple ethical precept, the suggestion of a basic

personal posture directed at the reasoning and intentionality of the individual. It is

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[85] "Inter loquendum autem si signum audierit regulare, et si est in claustro, ipsum verbm quod habet in ore, non persicit, sed continuo tacet, et occurrit ad orationem interesse," ibid., 178. There are several other references to silence in the customary, but these are the primary treatments.

[86] Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language*, 152–157.

emphatically *not* the minute dictation of practice on a moment-by-moment, motion-by-motion scale. It is concerned with the whole person of the adherent or reader, with guiding him towards a general appreciation of silence through citation of general proverbs (literally, Proverbs): "Here the Prophet indicates that there are times when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence." Bernard's customary, on the other hand, bypasses the whole self, even the agency and intentionality of the monk, to legislate the movements of the body directly. And crucially, when it does direct the reader towards another (written) text, here a liturgical manual rather than scripture, it is in order to precisely delimit the exact contours of what is enunciated, to remove the ambiguity inherent in leaving the adjudication of which times are the times "when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence" up to the individual. Convincing the mind or soul of the value of the ethical practice of silence generally has been set aside for simply telling the individual exactly when and how to speak.

Was the introduction at Cluny of regularly separated writing, so crucial to the fast scanning and intrusive searching of reference reading, incidental to this development? Paul Saenger has convincingly argued that this innovation appeared at Cluny around the end of Abbot Odilo's reign, in the 1030s or 1040s.[87] And Bernard certainly seems to suggest, in his prologue when he frames the customary as a solution to the disputes breaking out in chapter over various particular customs, that his work is to be combined with the practice of reference reading.[88] Moreover, if Bernard, as some have

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[87] Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 215–221.

[88] In that he implies monks will refer to his customary in case of dispute or confusion, Bernard of Cluny, *Ordo Cluniacensis*, 134–135. See note 6 earlier in this chapter.

hypothesized, was an oblate who became armarius before beginning his customary, he would have entered the monastery as a child during or soon after the introduction there of separated writing, and thus perhaps have been raised in the use of this new form of page layout.[89] And there does exist a certain practical or pragmatic parallel between the regularized and clear distinction of individual words on the page, on the one hand, and a formulation of monastic behavior so precise as to grasp the individual movements of individual bodies, on the other. In learning to apprehend and integrate a welter of individual words, Bernard, the central ritual choreographer of the massive Cluniac community, may well have learned also to apprehend individual *humans* with a new power, discernment, and confidence. To seize the individual movements of individual bodies, Bernard needed some more precise tool than the long semantic blocks of aerated script employed by preceding generations: he needed the individual word and the regularity of its Boolean shape. These atomized fragments of meaning and action, in turn, could be smoothly reassembled into a vast *ordo* that sacrificed none of its harmony for the sake of complexity and comprehension.

From this perspective, perhaps the most decisive development of the customary was its role in the formulation of behavior as a text, even as sacred and written text. True, it was only one key inflection point in an ambiguous, fitful, long-churning trend. John of Salerno's *Vita prima et maior* posited the *conversatio* of Odo as readable, indeed as comprising a kind of proto-customary. And the gathering of Cluniac abbatial literature into reform manuals, to be distributed to the priories reformed by Hugh the Great, too,

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[89] Boynton, "Oral Transmission of Liturgical Practice," 80.

suggested that the lives and deeds of men might be read as salvific examples. Jerome and especially Ralph Glaber positioned Jesus Christ himself as a sign that, once read, could decode the scriptures (or vice-versa) and thereby nudge the human closer to God. Bernard himself had figured Hugh the same way, in even more explicit terms, in his prologue to the customary. But Bernard's customary went a step beyond all these, because it dissolved this salvific *conversatio* to an unprecedented extent, to the level of the individual act. In doing so, perhaps by accident, it combined the set-aside-ness of the principle of the Rule under a neo-Carolingian paradigm with the living tradition of Cluniac praxis. As a result, it subsumed *all* monastic behavior into one giant ritual, imbuing every act with transcendental meaning and salvific power. In this combination of precision, integration, significance, and transcendence, the ritualized life of the monk perhaps came to approximate the fundamental text, the Bible.[90] And in this way, all the transcendental power that might have remained locked within the cultic object of the giant Bible or the ritual performance of the Eucharist was diffused across the body of the individual and even into every nook and cranny of the wider, fallen world.

Drawing on a long, heterogenous Latin, Christian, and monastic tradition that had always suggested a close relationship between semiosis and salvation, and mobilizing a crucial new literate technology, the customary doubled or even tripled down on the Rule's normative pursuit of the Christian soul or self, so intensifying the drive to fix and organize praxis on the basis of right texts that was the essence of the Carolingian reforms that it ended up in entirely new territory. In attempting to capture and fix the Cluniac

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[90] For another conception and treatment of this idea, see Cochelin, "When Monks Were the Book."

ordo that had sprung up as a kind of lived commentary on the Rule, specifically in response to the new influx of *conversi* into the great Burgundian house, Bernard transformed the loose and open structure of the Rule, with its passages on virtues based on biblical verses, into an almost Taylorist account of the body. It increased the resolution at which an emergent and comprehensive Latin Christian normativity viewed the human, or even viewed raw praxis, and as a result produced a far more precise and complete set of strictures about the body as well as the soul or whole self. And through this process, *unlike* in the development of Cartesian mechanics or Hobbesian political ethics, the ritual—which, as we have seen, was joined under the aegis of Latin Christianity so intimately to transcendence, salvation, and signification—was developed and extended rather than dispelled. If those early modern intellectual developments *decreased* the significance (moral and soteriological, as well as semiotic) of behavior, thereby opening it up to an increased pragmatism and helping to smooth the rising primacy of political over confessional community, under the neo-Carolingian, or reform, or Cluniac paradigm, the trend was precisely the opposite: the transcendental significance ritual brought to human behavior first spread from the performance of the liturgy and of the Eucharist, from (the reading of) the Bible, into the full scope of lived monastic experience, and then far beyond, into the wider lay world, manifesting itself in phenomena as diverse as crusading, Waldensianism, and, in the ultimate paradox, the preaching, itinerant monks of Saints Dominic and Francis.

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CONCLUSION

Over the preceding pages, we have traced a complex ideological and practical co-development. Keeping the introductions in mind, the reader will recognized this dual or parallel development as essentially *one*, two-sided, process: an evolution of the primordial (human) activity, (anthropo)semiosis, which as such cannot help but take influence from and find expression in the whole range of subsidiary human practices and abstracted fields of concern. In the fifth and sixth chapter, we examined primarily the ideological facet of this process as attested in, respectively, the Cluny Bible's introductory material and Ralph Glaber's chronicle, the *Historiarum libri quinque*. The Bible's composite preface combines writings by Jerome and Alcuin of York to outline a sophisticated conception of the Bible and Bible study; from this follows the key identity of Christ as Logos as well as a complex account of the social context in which Bible study is best pursued. Over the course of his chronicle, Glaber develops both of these principles much further. He foregrounds man's rational capacity as the use of signs, and then places semiosis as such at the heart of Christ's incarnation and the dispensation of grace he represents. Together, these two sources even posit the Bible as a second incarnation. Glaber also develops much further Jerome's relatively terse and disorganized reflections on the proper social context of Bible study, promoting a specifically monastic context and even outlining the trajectory of a crucial historical tradition, that of the Carolingian reformation and Benedict of Aniane.

In chapters seven and eight, this explicit ideological, intellectual, or literary approach was abandoned. Instead, we developed an analysis of genre and physical (that

is, manuscript) context as an entree into the history of the actual social, monastic use of texts. This revealed the rise and fall of the literary device of the individual persona as organizing principle and direct vehicle for proto-normative monastic behavior. John of Salerno's *Vita prima et maior sancti Odonis*, with its billowing digressions and confusing chronology, was revealed as something, functionally, rather like the customaries produced at Cluny more than a hundred years later. That is, it included both liturgical directives and increasingly detailed instructions for the proper conduct of institutionalized communal life. This latter in particular is striking, for while there was already a long tradition of ethical or "virtue" literature in monastic exemplary writing (narrative hagiography), the hint of legislative, rather than revelatory or contemplative, and communal, rather than individual, tone in John's text presaged the particularly distinctive nature of the later customaries. John delivered all this information through the character and biography of Odo, and this reading found some circumstantial support in the manuscript context of what I have called "reform manuals," collections of hagiographic literature and technical treatments of individual feasts. But over the course of the twelfth century, especially from its middle decades onwards, we found John's *vita* more and more commonly spun into encyclopedic legendary collections typified by the Cistercian *Liber de natalitiis*. These texts preserved, even perpetuated, the celebration of Odo, but they stripped him of his status as vehicle for normative accounts of communal behavior. The persona was no longer needed in this capacity.

Finally, the ninth chapter synthesized these two different tacks, bringing their alternate emphases on content and form together to contextualize and examine the remarkable novelty of Bernard's customary. Here, not quite a century and a half after

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John of Salerno's work but still roughly seventy years before the take-off of the legendary type, Bernard still nodded towards the ghost, at least, of the crucial role of the individual person. Echoing Jerome's letter to Paulinus as well as John, he posited Hugh of Semur as a revelatory guide to and confirmation of the body of monastic custom that he, Bernard, had learned from both literate study and daily training in the monastery. He even went so far as to figure Hugh's *conversatio* specifically as legible text. But Bernard also—and first—gave as his motivation for producing the great document the confusion and discord increasingly found in Cluny's chapter room, as proliferating novices clashed with a dwindling (if only relatively) core of older, veteran, perhaps primarily oblate brothers. Like Domesday Book, and unlike John of Salerno's *Vita prima*, Bernard's customary was an attempt to preserve or rebuild stability and right order (even hierarchy) in the face of social and temporal change. To do this Bernard translated his extensive, even exhaustive knowledge of the customs of Cluny the institution onto the page, creating a dizzyingly literalate, precise account of a ritualized tradition of daily living and training that had been elaborated for almost two hundred years. His account of a procession ritual is highly interesting, but even more so his description of the conduct of the Cluniac deans. There, we found ritual, which I defined as set aside from daily living and constitutive of communities, disassembled into small, modular components and parceled out to individuals on the road.

A new fluency in literalate modes, perhaps contributed to significantly by the introduction of canonical word spacing at Cluny, encouraged and enabled this process. It was hardly the only important cause. Also vital was the ideology that set monks apart from the social and ultimately even corporeal world, that established and ratified a

Carolingian and Benedictine tradition, and that obsessed them with signs and right semiosis just as a drowning man is obsessed with a raft. So too the transformations, broad and deep, making themselves felt across eleventh-century Europe: increasing wealth, increasing population, and an increasingly assertive and puritanical church. But while changing "material realities," changing ideas or ideologies, and even the quantitatively increasing use of documents have all received their due in recent historical scholarship, I have tried to highlight something subtly different here: changes in the nest of unexamined assumptions about documents—and about humans and human behavior—that undergirded every interaction involving them, in the semiotic ideologies at play within the cloister, in the *posture towards* or *culture of documents*. What can be said, in summation, about these topics?

First, there is the development of the text, or more properly the document, as its own organizing principle. We see this most clearly in the progression from *Vita prima* to its three offspring: the legendary, the customary, and the *Vita reformata*. In each of these three lines, Odo is reduced in his importance and, if we may speak of such in terms of literary characters, in his agency. In the first, he becomes merely one among many, called up in his turn and set aside when that turn is over. He is indicative only of himself as an individual and of the grace and power of God in a very general way. From the second he has disappeared. There he is no longer needed at all; newer and more efficient—more literalate—tools, the customaries, do the same job better. In the third, we find him thoroughly domesticated, in his proper proportions, moving as expected and right, as it were, on schedule. But we may also observe this assertion of the text or document in the great Reform Bibles, of which the Cluny Bible is an early example. Alcuin's poems,

reproduced there, speak to the newness of the form of the single volume, all inclusive

biblical pandect, and even perhaps, in the poems confident assertion of the pandect as a

new form, to the potential for its reticence and rejection by Alcuin's contemporaries.

These poems also instruct in the nature of the Bible *and* of its various, multitudinous

parts. No longer Chronicles and Kings here in this volume, a work of divinely guided

history, the Gospels, organized according to the liturgical calendar and so essentially a

service book, over there in that one, with the Psalter besides. A more convenient,

intuitive, guided-by-concrete-use format has been supplanted by the majesty and special

significance of a single massive tome. Living people had to make their peace with it; they

accorded themselves to the text.

But more important, and far more subtle, is the extremely fine and extensive

synthesis of behavior and text these developments produced, the "explosive alchemy"

referred to earlier. I used this gaudy coinage to characterize the development of the Bible

as a filter or a machine through which experience may be fed and so transformed into

something possessed of transcendental significance and even eternal life. My point here

might be taken as perhaps the inversion of McLuhan or Ong (or, for that matter, Weber):

magic may dwell primarily in the realm of the oral, but the truly supernatural or

otherworldly only becomes possible once sufficient literality has opened the horizon of

some other plane. Magic in the oral world of the flesh can only be natural. The

foundational principle in this development in the Middle Ages is that of *figura*, which we

found attested, in varying detail, throughout the Cluny Bible's prefatory material, for it is

this principle that draws the concrete and worldly into rarefied, transcendental spheres.

But the carrying capacity of the Bible machine, when limited to deploying the classical

figura, is rather limited. One must take a whole act or event, usually in full social context, and translate it into a similar context in the scriptures. A donation, a wedding, a dream, a battle—there are many examples of *figura* in medieval literature that seem like rather dubious interpretative stretches to the modern reader, but all must grapple with the essential fact that *figurae* are complete events, virtually always with a germ of narrativity and an implicit sociology contained within. Moreover, they are usually comprised of parallels between two discrete and specific events: Alcuin's (or Franco's) production of the Giant Bible for Charlemagne (or Odilo) resonates with the poor widow's donation of two coins, as related by Jesus in the Bible. Drawing on the examples considered from Bernard's customary, the procession for tribulation is a ritualized form of the classical *figura*. It unfurls a whole narrative. The saint, and God Himself, is called up, and taken or accompanied on a particular earthly itinerary corresponding to the particulars of the fallen, temporal situation. But the culmination of this ritual, as in any proper *figura*, is the rejection or negation of precisely these fleshy particulars: all stories are in fact the only story, and God's power and goodness are so absolute that even petition becomes an effrontery in need of forgiveness.

The Cluny Bible's preface pushes against this early limitation of the machine somewhat when Alcuin figures the reading of each verse of the Bible as a prayer for him (Alcuin). Even if this is not properly a *figura* (since it does not play on any biblical episode), it seems to appropriate the basic principle of the device, that is, on the assertion of an esoteric similarity and unity in the face of seeming distinction and individuation, for a novel and open-ended ritual task. Yet other than this tentative step, the Cluny Bible's preface remains conservative from our perspective. It is the *Bible* that is the secret

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blueprint and cipher of all things; anything may be accessed through it (just as the fallen Christian may be saved through it), but this passage is strictly one-way. Glaber advances the process a bit further, crucially (re)injecting the ghostly Neoplatonic tradition into Cluniac thought to posit the order of creation *in general* as evidence of God as its creator and man as essentially a user of signs, and going so far as to imply a connection between right semiosis, humanity, and salvation. The scriptures are important here, but not the fundamental locus of signifying and signification. Rather, Glaber's most important contribution to the development of this machine, this alchemy, is his treatment of the monastic institution as such. In this realm, Glaber posits a licit tradition (essentially the Carolingian one), distinguishes between rule and custom (or between principle and implementation), and shows that seemingly minor variations in this tradition (celebrating the feast of the Annunciation on the wrong date) could have dire and indeed transcendental consequences. In effect, therefore, the twinned issues of proper implementation of the Rule of Saint Benedict and proper maintenance of the monastic tradition as a tradition begin to, implicitly or analogically, at least, take on the characteristics of Bible study and reading as outlined in the writings of Alcuin and Jerome: they are signs, whether literalate (the Rule) or lived/oral (the tradition, the customs), which must be properly interpreted for the sake of basic humanity and, indeed, salvation.

These issues remain largely absent from the *vitae Odonis*, at least as my readings have examined them. This may be an index of the relatively worldly focus of these texts, especially John of Salerno's. Whether in the older register of miracles performed and virtues exemplified by Odo, or in his more innovative practice of relating institutional

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praxis through the person of the abbot, John aimed to provide concrete and practical models for monks living in *this* world. Archetypes of these models that themselves guaranteed the possibility of salvation through their essential and explicitly transcendental nature—Christ and the Bible—already existed; for this Odo was not needed. Working him into Jerome's sociology of Bible study, Odo served an intermediary between individuals (in this case, monks) and those larger, miraculously incarnated divine dispensations—themselves still ultimately intermediaries. In fact, this is precisely the place given to Odo's late eleventh-century successor, Hugh of Semur, by Bernard in the preface to his customary. Or, rather, Bernard goes a step further, suggesting Hugh as a more direct intermediary: without reference to the Bible or Jesus, Bernard makes Hugh a conduit of divine revelation and grace.

This promotion of Hugh, as it were, charts both the synthesis of behavior and text and the rising soteriological importance of monastic *conversatio* as such; and indeed, by this point Bernard has also greatly increased Glaber's emphasis on the monastic life and institution. He suggests, in the course of his praise of Hugh, that either "rule and institution" are tools Hugh has used to conduct Bernard eventually to God, or that Hugh and the monastic way of life are co-equal and complimentary in their salvific function. The point is less the specific place of Hugh in this hierarchy and more that Bernard has accorded such a prominent place to *conversatio*, to a code of behavior he is in the very midst of gathering, organizing, and stipulating to an unprecedented extent. Here the two different approaches, one pursued in the fifth and sixth chapters and the other in the seventh and eighth, come to a point. For Bernard both offers the most precise account of charismatic leadership as legible and of the code of monastic *coversatio* as transcendental

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encountered so far. In this he develops radically the ideological lines of all the texts surveyed here, and also codifies that *conversatio* in a document that, if not quite completely novel, remains more or less unprecedented and transformative in its role and comprehension. In his work, in other words, form and content are both together summed up and decisively advanced.

By imparting such importance to the details of daily monastic life and also by setting those details down in written representation, for each suggests or perhaps requires outright the other, Bernard makes of general monastic behavior—*conversatio*—a text of transcendental significance. Not of some behaviors in some contexts, but of each and every minute deed. Like the deans, thrust into the dangers of the world by the duties that call them beyond the cloister, for the monks of Cluny ritual becomes a constant companion, a thick coating laid over every move and thought, a performance of distinction, identity, and community that never ceases. So the long germinating seeds of a new and revolutionary spirituality, their fruits best recognized at present in the paroxysms known as the Reformation, are laid. For even in Bernard's customary, with such events centuries in the future, the bridge between the fleshy and heavenly spheres is less and less restricted to particular events, places, individuals, or even rituals as generally understood. Discrete moments of orchestrated communal transcendence increasingly give way to a supersaturation of individual, daily life with eternal and absolute significance. The monk, and eventually the Christian, will perform himself every day, revealing by the most minute and humble contours of his *conversatio* just what kind of person he is. And in this, the lasting influence of the technology of the document, employed as just one ritual implement among many by generation after generation of monks, reveals itself. Like a

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written text, behavior now becomes a code laid out before the observer, who stands back like a diviner to interpret it. It is increasingly distinct from the individuals, whatever we understand them to be, who instantiate it—or are instantiated by it. And it rests within a vast but ultimately navigable field, the subject of a relentlessly developing discipline of record and interrogation and optimal rearrangement: the monastery, perhaps, as the blueprint for all Foucault's modern disciplinary institutions, which made meaningful, as he said, by distribution in space—just like writing.[1] In this we have run well beyond the scope of the present study. The long, slow, and intensive progression of this posture, this culture, beyond the cloister walls is not the subject of this project; my goal has rather been to show its prehistory and development therein.

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[1] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 141.

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Abbreviations

CCM   *Corpus consuetudinem monasticarum*. Edited by Kassius Hallinger. Siegburg, Germany: Schitt, 1963–.

MGH   *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Berlin, Germany.

PL   *Patrologia Latina*. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, France: 1841–1855.

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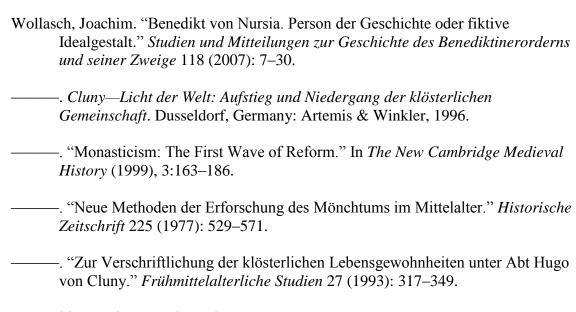———. "Semiotic Dimensions of Cultural Processes." *Semiotica* 116 (1997): 24–42.

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