

EPISCOPAL BENEDICTION AND MONASTIC AUTONOMY
IN THE TWELFTH-CENTURY BISHOPRIC OF
TOURNAI: THE CURIOUS BLESSING OF HUGO,
FIRST ABBOT OF SAINT-ANDRÉ (1188)*

From the final decades of the 12th century onwards, bishops throughout France began adapting their liturgical handbooks to include a formula for the benediction of newly elected abbots, which significantly altered the traditional implications of the ritual.¹ Until then, most pontificals had included either a short sentence invoking God's blessing on the candidate or,² most notably in the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical*, had instructed the *ordinarius* to verify the candidate's intention to observe his purpose (*propositum*) and the Rule of St Benedict, and to make sure his subjects did the same.³ As early as the middle of the 11th century, some handbooks extended the interrogation (or *scrutinium*) to include a promise of obedience, the meaning of which shifted over the next century from one instilled with a monastic meaning of self-renunciation to a secularised one, focusing on fidelity and service.⁴ Some bishops

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¹ Victor LEROQUAIS' *Les pontificaux manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, 4 vols., Paris, 1937, offers a comprehensive overview of the liturgical evidence preserved in French libraries. For a general discussion of the liturgy of abbatial benediction, see S. HILPISCH, *Entwicklung des Ritus der Abtsweihe in der lateinischen Kirche*, in *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige*, 61 (1947), p. 53-72; and R. REINHARDT, *Die Abtsweihe. Eine "kleine Bischofsweihe"?*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 91 (1980), p. 83-88.

² N.K. RASMUSSEN, *Les pontificaux du haut moyen âge. Genèse du livre de l'évêque*, Leuven, 1998, for example at p. 107.

³ C. VOGEL and R. ELZE, *Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique du dixième siècle. Le texte I*, Città del Vaticano, 1963, p. 62-63.

⁴ G. CONSTABLE, *Abbatial Profession in Normandy and England in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century, With Particular Attention to Bec*, in « *Ins Wasser geworfen und Ozeane durchquert* ». *Festschrift für Knut Wolfgang Nörr*. Ascheri, M.Edel a.o. eds., Köln, 2003, p. 105-120; A. GRÉLOIS, *La promesse d'obéissance de l'abbé à l'évêque et la question des ordres exempts*, in *Serment, promesse et engagement. Rituels et modalités au Moyen Âge*, F. LAURENT ed., Toulouse, 2008,