

THE SUCCESS OF THE ORDER OF SAINT VICTOR

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PATRONAGE OF CANONICAL FOUNDATIONS IN THIRTEENTH CENTURY FLANDERS AND HAINAUT

In 1248, the Augustinian canonesses of the abbey of Saint Trond officially withdrew from the congregation of Arrouaise and, with the aid of Marguerite, countess of Flanders and Hainaut, affiliated instead to the congregation of Saint Victor. This episode is intriguing for several reasons. First and foremost, it involves the order of Saint Victor, which, although considered one of the most successful of the reform congregations of Augustinian canons, remains one of most neglected religious orders of the middle ages. Little scholarship has been devoted to these dynamic canons and canonesses, and they have subsequently remained rather elusive figures in the historical record ⁽¹⁾. Scholarly neglect of Victorine foundations is particularly pronounced in regard to women's communities,

(1) Charles Giroud describes Saint-Victor as « La fondation qui donne son lustre à l'Ordre Canonial en cette période ». Ch. GIROUD, *L'Ordre des chanoines réguliers de Saint-Augustin et ses diverses formes de Régime Interne*, Martigny, 1961, p. 41. The dearth of studies devoted to the Victorines seems to be symptomatic of the general scholarly neglect of the Augustinian canons. The exceptions would be John Compton Dickenson's work on Augustinian canons in England, Ludo Milis's study of Arrouaise, Charles Dereine and Norbert Backmund's work on the canons of Premontré, Fourier Bonnard's study of the abbey of Saint Victor, and the collection of articles regarding Saint-Victor edited by Jean Longère. Despite the contributions of these scholars, the number of studies of the Augustinian canons pales in comparison to the extensive corpus of work devoted to other monastic or religious orders. See J. C. DICKINSON, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction in England*, London, 1950; L. MILIS, *L'Ordre des Chanoines Réguliers d'Arrouaise. Son Histoire et son Organisation de la Fondation de l'Abbaye Mère (vers 1090) à la Fin des Chapitres Annuels (1471)*, Brugge, 1969; Ch. DEREINE, *Vie Commune, Règle de Saint Augustin et Chanoines Réguliers au XI^e siècle*, dans *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 41 (1946), p. 365-406; N. BACKMUND, *Monasticon Praemonstratense, id est Historia circariarum atque canoinarum candidi et canonicis ordinis Praemonstratensis*, 3 vol., Bayern, 1949-1956, and F. BONNARD, *Histoire de l'Abbaye Royale et de l'Ordre des Chanoines Réguliers de St. Victor de Paris*, Paris, 1904-1908.