

THE DATE OF THE MERGER OF SAVIGNY AND CÎTEAUX RECONSIDERED

Scholars have long recognized that the incorporation of previously independent reform communities was a significant element of Cistercian growth in the 12th century, (1) and one of the most notable examples was the merger of the Norman monastery of Savigny and its affiliates with the Order of Cîteaux. The Savigniac congregation had, within four decades of its establishment in 1113, grown to include more than thirty houses on both sides of the English Channel, and the addition of so many existing foundations to the Order at a single stroke was an event of signal importance — though perhaps one that brought difficulties in its wake. (2) Although writers agreed that the union was a significant milestone, however, they disagreed about the date and place of the event. The issue appeared simple enough: did the merger occur in 1147, at the Cistercian General Chapter held regularly in September at Cîteaux, or in 1148, either at the Council of Rheims or at the Chapter of that year? From the 17th century onward, many respected authors—including Manrique, Meschet, Lenain, Tissier and Du Monstier

(1) See, for example, L. LEKAI, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality*, Kent State, University Press, 1979, p. 36; H. LEYSER, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe, 1000-1150*, London, 1984, p. 87-97, 113-18; C. BERMAN, *Medieval Agriculture, the Southern French Countryside, and the Early Cistercians*, Philadelphia, 1986, p. 31-33.

(2) Works dealing with the growth of the Savigniac congregation include V. DE BUCK, "De BB. Gaufrido et Serlone, abbatibus, Guilelmo, novitio, et Adelina abbatissa, Saviniaci in Normannia," *Acta sanctorum* Oct. 8, Brussels, 1863, p. 1019-41; D. SAMMARTHANUS (ed.), *Gallia Christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa* (hereafter *GC*), corr. P. Piolin 11, Paris, 2¹⁸⁷⁴, cols. 552-55; L. JANAUSCHEK, *Originum Cisterciensium tomus 1*, Vienna, 1877, p. 97; L. GUILLOREAU, "Les fondations anglaises de l'abbaye de Savigny," *Revue Mabillon*, 5 (1909), p. 290-335; J. BUHOT, "L'abbaye normande de Savigny, chef d'ordre et fille de Cîteaux," *Le moyen âge*, 46 (1936), p. 15-16; and B.D. HILL, "The Beginnings of the First French Foundations of the Norman Abbey of Savigny," *The American Benedictine Review*, 31 (1980), p. 130-52. B.D. HILL, *English Cistercian Monasteries and Their Patrons in the Twelfth Century*, Urbana, 1968, p. 80-105, argued that the Order as a whole was later corrupted by special economic privileges allowed to the Savigniac houses following the union.