

A TIME OF GREAT CONFUSION

SECOND-GENERATION CLUNIAC REFORMERS AND RESISTANCE TO MONASTIC CENTRALIZATION IN THE COUNTY OF FLANDERS (c. 1125-1145) ⁽¹⁾

The introduction of Cluniac customs into Flemish monasteries at the turn of the 12th century is a well-studied phenomenon. ⁽²⁾ Besides a sincere belief in the spirit of the Cluniac movement and a desire to revitalize Benedictine monasticism, this study has revealed a strategy on behalf of secular and ecclesiastical leaders to disentangle and rearrange the complicated social networks around some of the largest and richest institutions in the county. ⁽³⁾ The fact that the methods of the reformers varied according to the specific social context in which a community found itself, as well as the fact that the reforms were managed entirely by Flemish actors without the involvement of Cluny, effectively prevented the creation of a homogeneous network of monasteries, both in terms of internal

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(2) A basic bibliography on the reforms includes E. SABBE, *La réforme clunienne dans le comté de Flandre au début du XII^e siècle*, in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 9 (1930), p. 121-138; E. DE MOREAU, *Histoire de l'Église en Belgique des origines aux débuts du XII^e siècle. II*, Brussels, 1940, p. 89-99; J.M. DE SMET, *Quand Robert II confia-t-il Saint-Bertin à Cluny?*, in *R.H.E.*, 44 (1951), p. 160-164; A. KOHNLE, *Abt Hugo von Cluny (1049-1109)*, Sigmaringen, 1993, p. 186-191, and G. DECLERCQ, *Van 'Renovatio ordinis' tot 'Traditio romana'. De abdij van Egmond en de Vlaamse kloosterhervorming van de 12^{de} eeuw*, in G.N.M. VIS and J.P. GUMBERT (ed.), *Egmond tussen Kerk en wereld*, Hilversum, 1993, p. 163-181 (169-173). Interesting parallels for a different region can be found in G. CONSTABLE, *Monasticism, Lordship, and Society in the Twelfth-Century Hesbaye: Five Documents on the Foundation of the Cluniac Priory of Bertrée*, in *Traditio*, 33 (1977), p. 159-224.

(3) A discussion of the significance of the chronology of the reforms and of their socio-political backgrounds is found in S. VANDERPUTTEN, *Fulcard's Pigsty. Cluniac Reformers, Dispute Settlement and The Lower Aristocracy in Early-Twelfth-Century Flanders*, in *Viator*, 38 (2007), p. 1-25 (in the press).