NOTES AND STUDIES

THE RELATION OF CLUNY TO SOME OTHER MOVEMENTS OF MONASTIC REFORM¹

IN 910 William, Duke of Aquitaine, gave his town of Cluny with the chapel of St Mary and St Peter, and all other appurtenances, chapels, serfs of either sex, vineyards, fields, meadows, woods, waters and wastes, to Berno, Abbot of Baume, to found and rule over a monastery for monks who should live a regular life according to the Rule of St Benedict.² A regular life according to the Rule of St Benedict is a statement which lacks precision. The observance of the Rule, in the words of St Benedict himself, was only 'the beginning of a good religious life', and he counselled those who would seek perfection to study 'the Collations of the Fathers, their Lives, and the Rule of our Holy Father Basil'. In the main, St Benedict dealt with general principles, and many necessary details concerning the 'Opus Dei', and the daily life and government of a monastery, are not found in the Rule. The need of supplementing the Rule resulted in the growth of Customs. To know how the Rule was observed in a monastery is to ascertain what were the Customs.

The Customs which the monks of Baume brought to Cluny were those of Benedict of Aniane.³ This was the testimony of the monk, John, the biographer of Odo, second abbot of Cluny, and the written Customs bear the same witness. Baume had been reformed by monks from the monastery of St Martin at Autun⁴, Autun, when restored, had received monks from St Savin near Poitiers, and St. Savin was one of the twelve monasteries of Benedict of Aniane's own congregation.⁵

The Customs of Benedict of Aniane were the fruit of much study and research. He went from Aniane to other monasteries to find monks who might explain whatever he did not understand in the Rule

¹ A paper read at the International Congress of Historical Studies on April 5 1913

² Bernard et Bruehl *Recueil des Chartes de Cluny* i p. 124.

³ Migne *Patrologia Latina* cxxxiii p. 53

⁴ E. Sackur *Die Cluniacenser in ihrer kirchlichen und allgemeingeschichtlichen Wirksamkeit bis zur Mitte des elften Jahrhunderts* i pp. 36, 37

⁵ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* ciii p. 383.

of St Benedict,¹ and he collected the texts of other Rules of Eastern and Western Monasticism for his great work, the *Codex Regularum*.² Afterwards, in the monastery of Inde, near Aix-la-Chapelle, which was founded for him by Louis the Pious, he questioned monks who had been at Monte Cassino, and could tell him not only what they had heard but what they had seen.³ In 817, Louis the Pious summoned a great council of abbots and monks to meet in July at Aix-la-Chapelle. They sat with Benedict for many days, and accepted the Capitula which he had drafted. His biographer, Ardo, summed them up as 'the judgements of the Rule, doubtful matters and Customs which are not described therein'.⁴ The chief source was the Commentary on the Rule of St Benedict, written by Paul the Deacon, the author of the *History of the Lombards*.⁵ Benedict also made use of the letter which Paul wrote for the Abbot of Monte Cassino, when he sent the correct text of the Rule of St Benedict to Charlemagne.⁶ In addition to the Capitula, Benedict also adopted, with trifling differences, a document known as the 'Ordo in monasterio qualiter a fratribus religiose ac studiose conversari vel domino militari oportet'.⁷ This was written by an unknown Benedictine monk either in Italy or in Provence, and gives a clear account of the monastic day with its round of services, reading and manual labour, and moreover it contains the detailed procedure of the daily chapter which is not to be found in the Rule of St Benedict. Lastly, he accepted a model of liturgical observance, a Directorium Chori, as Dom Albers calls it, which was most probably written at Monte Cassino in the eighth century.⁸ To sum up, the Capitula of 817, the Ordo Qualiter, and a Directorium Chori represent the written Customs of Benedict of Aniane, which the monks of Baume took to Cluny. An important piece of evidence in support of this view, which has been ably put forward by Dom Albers, is the presence of the Capitula of 817 and the Ordo Qualiter in four English manuscripts of the second half of the tenth century.⁹ There is little doubt that these were obtained from the Benedictine monastery of Fleury on the Loire, which had been reformed by Odo of Cluny before 930.

The history of the growth of the Cluniac Customs is full of interest. In his preface to his own Statutes in 1132, Abbot Peter the Venerable observed that his predecessors, the great abbots from Odo to Hugh,

¹ *Ibid* p 365

² *Ibid* pp. 393-702.

³ *Ibid* p. 380

⁴ *Ibid* p 377, *Consuetudines Monasticae*, ed Albers, III pp 115-144

⁵ *Bibliotheca Cassinensis* IV 1-173

⁶ *Consuetudines Monasticae* III pp. 50-64.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp 26-49, cf p xiv.

⁸ Albers *Untersuchungen zu den ältesten Mönchsgewohnheiten* pp. 124-126

⁹ *English Historical Review* IX pp 693-699

had changed many Customs as need arose¹ We owe it to the researches of Dom Albers that the texts of three versions of the Customs in the tenth century have been printed² These consist solely of liturgical observances and the order of the monastic day. A much more interesting version³ was written, between 1009 and 1048, during the rule of Abbot Odilo Until quite recently these Customs were invariably accepted as those of the monastery of Farfa near Spoleto, which derived its Customs from Cluny, but Dom Berlière and Dom Hildephonse Schuster have shewn conclusively that they are the Customs of Cluny and not a compilation intended solely for Farfa.⁴ The calendar is that of Cluny, the relics are those at Cluny, and the names of the monks are among those who witnessed charters at Cluny during the rule of Odilo. The first book of these Customs consists of the liturgical order for the year It agrees, often verbally, with the earlier versions, and it contains much supplementary matter. There are many chapters concerning the observance of all the feast days which were then kept at Cluny.

The second book mainly concerns the daily life and organization of the monastery. The first chapter is a detailed and measured description of the buildings of Cluny. Seventeen chapters have titles corresponding with those of chapters in the Rule of St Benedict, and are in fact supplements to them. Fifteen chapters concern the 'Opus Dei', arrangements for Mass, the altar lights, processions, prayers and services for rain and fair weather and against adversities, and the duties of three important obedientiars, the camerarius, secretarius, and granarius. One chapter has a list of the relics, another the schedule of the books which were given out one Lent, and a third the diplomatic form of the letters of commendation given to a monk on a journey. The book ends with twelve chapters about the care of the sick brethren and services for the burial of the dead, monks, bishops, and laymen.

As the first Customs of Cluny were those of Benedict of Aniane, it is natural to find that some of the additions in the second book are taken from the Capitula of 817 Others are based on passages in the Commentary⁵ of Paul the Deacon, in which he wrote of the duties of the keeper of the infirmary, of the guest master, of the circas and of the masters in charge of the boys, of the division of guests into three classes, each with its own hostel, viz abbots and monks, bishops and the rich, and the poor, of the infirmary cloister with its own chapel, the calefactorium or warming-house, and the auditorium or parlour. In

¹ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* clxxxix p. 1025

² *Consuetudines Monasticae* II

³ *Consuetudines Monasticae* I, cf. also Migne *Patrologia Lat.* cl pp. 1193-1300.

⁴ *Revue Bénédictine* xvii pp. 164, 165, xxiv pp. 374-385

⁵ *Bibliotheca Cassinensis* iv 1-173.

the Commentary, too, the Cluniacs found that reading or psalmody might take the place of manual labour. They made use of that slightly later version which is known as the Commentary of Hildemar, because about 845, as Dr Traube has shewn, a French monk of that name dictated Paul's Commentary to his scholars in the monastery of Civite.¹ Hildemar, too, added comments, and he alone described the interesting ceremony of collecting and distributing books at the beginning of Lent, so well known in later Customaries.

Half a century after this last compilation of Cluniac Customs a new edition was needed, and the work was undertaken by a monk named Bernard. In a charming preface he told how the older monks of Cluny had passed away, and disputes frequently took place between their successors about the Customs, there was great diversity of opinion and novices often went out from the chapter more uncertain than when they came in.² He resolved to search out the truth with his utmost zeal, both from the written Customs, and from what he had learnt and might be able to discover, and to leave a record for those who should come after him. The result of his labours was a most detailed compilation which bore the simple title '*Consuetudines cenobii Cluniacensis*'³ He besought his brethren, when they thirsted, not to despise the draught of truth from a wooden vessel, nor to scorn the cold clear water because it flowed through a leaden pipe. His description of the Order of Divine Service throughout the year is very closely related to the first book of the Customs compiled in the time of Odilo. The more original and much longer part of his work concerned all the officers of the monastery, its finance, organization, and daily life.

These Customs of Bernard were printed in 1726 in that rare book, the *Vetus Disciplina Monastica*, edited by Marquard Herrgott, a monk of the Benedictine monastery of St Blaise in the Black Forest. Two passages in Herrgott's text have puzzled some modern critics.⁴ These mention Abbot Henry, elected in 1308, and Abbot Stephen, elected in 1163. I was glad to find, when I consulted the manuscript in Paris, MS Latin 13,875, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, that these difficulties disappeared. In the first only the letter H occurs, and it obviously refers to Bernard's own abbot, Hugh. In the second passage in which Herrgott printed '*Dominus Stephanus Abbas "Deus auribus" rescidit his tribus diebus*', the manuscript reads '*Olim "Deus auribus" dicebatur post primam in his tribus diebus*'. It seems probable that these

¹ *Consuetudines Monasticae* i p 59, iii p 120, Traube *Textgeschichte der Regula S. Benedicti*, Königlich Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften xxi pp 640-643.

² Herrgott *Vetus Disciplina Monastica* p 134.

³ MS Latin 13,875, Bibliothèque Nationale.

⁴ Helmsdörfer *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Abtes Wilhelm von Hirschau*, p 76.

variations were in the text which had been privately printed by the Cluniacs for their own use some years before Herrgott published his own. Herrgott wrote that he collated that printed text with the manuscript, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, then in the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés¹. He claimed to have purged it from an infinite number of errors, but apparently these escaped his notice.

The history of Cluny in the first two centuries, from 910 to the death of Abbot Hugh I in 1109, explains the importance of studying the growth of the Cluniac Customs. There is a striking parallel between the work of the first abbots of Cluny and of Benedict of Aniane. Twelve monasteries were founded or restored by Louis the Pious, bishops, and others, and were put under the rule of Benedict of Aniane, who sent to them monks and abbots whom he had trained. His Customs were adopted in many other monasteries not only in Aquitaine but throughout the empire. The abbots of Cluny were called upon by kings and princes, dukes, counts, and bishops, to send monks to new foundations, and to restore monasteries which had fallen into decay, a far harder task, as Peter the Venerable observed in a letter to St Bernard. In 937 there were seventeen monasteries dependent upon Cluny, in 994 the number had increased to thirty-seven, in 1049 five new monasteries and twenty-three old foundations had been added. Under the rule of Abbot Hugh (1049-1109) the congregation consisted of two hundred monasteries, and of these many had a number of dependent priories². The several abbots and monks of Cluny had reformed many other Benedictine monasteries which had adapted the *Customs of Cluny for their own use, but had remained independent*, and in their turn they had reformed other monasteries³. The Customs of these monasteries are closely akin to those of Cluny, but there are interesting variations in France, Germany, Italy, and England. Some of these have already been published by Dom Albers,⁴ others are promised. The English Customary, which was sanctioned at the Council of Winchester in the reign of King Edgar, is usually known as the *Concordia Regularis*⁵. It was the work of Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester⁶. It shews a singular agreement with Cluniac Customs, which were adopted indirectly through Fleury, and there is also in some points an agreement with older Customs of Monte Cassino.

¹ Herrgott *op. cit.* p. 133

² Heimbucher *Die Orden und Congregationen* i pp. 243-245

³ Sackur *op. cit. passim*

⁴ *Consuetudines Monasticas* iv, v.

⁵ Dugdale *Monasticon* i pp. xxvii-xlv, *Migne Patrologia Lat.* cxxxvii pp. 475-502, W. S. Logeman *Anglia* xii 365-454, xv 20-40.

⁶ *Compositus Rolls of the Obedientarius of St Swinburn's Priory, Winchester*, ed G. W. Kitchin, Appendix vii, ed Mary Bateson, p. 173 (Hampshire Record Society)

It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the Customs of Bernard in England, France, and Germany. In 1077 Lanfranc sent for Henry, a monk of Bec, to be prior of his cathedral monastery of Canterbury, and for his guidance he wrote the monastic constitutions.¹ These are divided into twenty-two chapters. Chapters II-XXII concern the daily life and administration of the monastery, with the exception of a few trifling additions, they are only a much abridged version of the Customs of Bernard. Chapter I, the Order of Divine Service throughout the year, was more difficult for Lanfranc to compile and it is difficult now to disentangle, the sources were the Customs of Bernard, the earlier Customs of the time of Abbot Odilo, and Customs of the tenth century edited by Dom Albers. Lanfranc stated that he had added a few things, and changed some, especially in celebrating some festivals.² In a few points the Order agrees in substance, but not verbally, with a Use of Bec. Too much prominence has been given to the Customs of Bec as a source for the Constitutions of Lanfranc.³ It is interesting to discover the origin of this misconception. In the catalogue of the library at Canterbury, which was made in the time of Prior Eastry, between 1285 and 1331, the Constitutions of Lanfranc are described as 'Consuetudines Ecclesie Beccensis'.⁴ Lanfranc's nephew, Paul of Caen, introduced the Constitutions at St Albans. Ralph de Diceto, Dean of St Paul's, wrote that Paul of St Albans 'ibi ordinem Becci instituit sicut usque hodie est'.⁵ A copy of Ralph's works was then at Canterbury. If the monks who made the catalogue sought for any evidence beyond the fact that Lanfranc came from Bec, this identification was convincing. But Ralph took this from a parallel passage in the Chronicle of Robert of Torigny, elected abbot of Mont-St-Michel in 1154.⁶ Robert of Torigny quoted verbatim from the *Vita Lanfranci*⁷ of Milo Crispin, precentor of Bec, and Lanfranc's own pupil. Robert had been a monk of Bec for many years, and in this passage he chose to interpolate the word Becci, which he did not find in his authority, Milo Crispin. There was no tradition at St Albans in the earlier years of the thirteenth century that the Constitutions of Lanfranc were the

¹ *Lanfranci Opera*, ed J. A. Giles, I pp. 85-191, Migne *Patrologia Lat.* cl pp. 443-513, *Journal of Theological Studies* x pp. 375-388.

² *The Bosworth Psalter*, ed Gasquet and Bishop, pp. 27-34.

³ *Journal of Theological Studies* x p. 379, E. L. Taunton *English Black Monks of St Benedict* I p. 24.

⁴ M. R. James *Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* pp. 49, 51.

⁵ R. de Diceto *Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series), I p. 215.

⁶ *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed R. Howlett (Rolls Series), IV p. 49. 'ibi ordinem Becci et ecclesiastici officii usum instituit, sicut est cernere usque hodie'.

⁷ *Lanfranci Opera*, ed J. A. Giles, I p. 308.

Customs of Bec, Matthew Paris describes them as the approved Customs of monasteries beyond the seas¹. Though he used the works of Ralph de Diceto and Robert of Torigny, he ignored the interpolation of Bec, and relied on Lanfranc's own very weighty words, in which he described his Constitutions as 'the written Customs of our Order which we have excerpted from the Customs of those monasteries which in our time are of pre-eminent authority in the monastic Order'². M le Chanoine Porée has discovered that Abbot Roger II of Bec (1188-1194) revised and re-edited the Customary, and that the sole surviving manuscript containing Customs of Bec was written between 1290 and 1310.³ This contains either Roger's version or a yet later one. The main portion of it is liturgical. Owing to the agreement in substance between certain passages of the Customary and the first chapter of the Constitutions of Lanfranc, M le Chanoine Porée infers that the liturgical part of the Bec Customs was the work of Lanfranc.⁴ This is a most reasonable conjecture. If it be accepted, it follows that the Customs of Bec of that date were closely akin to earlier Customs of Cluny, and that they were probably derived from those brought by William of Dijon to Fécamp and other Norman monasteries at the beginning of the eleventh century.⁵ Lanfranc left Bec in 1063 to be Abbot of St Stephen at Caen.⁶ The probable date of the completion of the Customs of Bernard was 1067.⁷ Therefore Lanfranc could not have had access to the main source of his Constitutions for Canterbury until after he left Bec. Dr Armitage Robinson has shewn that the misleading title under which Lanfranc's Constitutions have been printed, 'Decreta pro ordine S. Benedicti', occurs in no single manuscript.⁸ It appears in the first edition by a mischance. The Constitutions were gradually adopted in a number of other monasteries.

Through the influence of William, who was abbot of Hirsau from 1068 to 1091, Customs derived from those of Cluny were very widely adopted in Germany at the end of the eleventh century and in the early years of the twelfth.⁹ William had received a text of the Customs of Cluny which his friend Ulrich of Cluny abridged and rearranged from Bernard's Customs.¹⁰ Not content with this, William sent monks from

¹ Matthew Paris *Historia Anglorum*, ed F. Madden (Rolls Series), i 23, 37, *Monasterii S. Albani Gesta Abbatum*, ed H T Riley (Rolls Series), pp 53, 58, 61.

² *Lanfranci Opera*, ed J A. Giles, i p 85.

³ A A Porée *Histoire de l'Abbaye du Bec* i p 476.

⁴ *Ibid* i 477.

⁵ H Boehmer, *Kirche und Staat in England und in der Normandie* pp 6, 7, Sackur *Die Cluniacenser* ii 45-54.

⁶ Porée *op. cit* i pp 118, 119.

⁷ *Histoire littéraire de France* vii p 596.

⁸ *Journal of Theological Studies* x p 388.

⁹ Heimbucher *Die Orden und Congregationen* i pp 253-256.

¹⁰ *Migne Patrologia Lat* cl pp 635-678.

Hirsau to Cluny in search of fuller knowledge. With their help he made a digest of the Customs into two books corresponding with the second and third books of Ulric. These were mainly copied from Ulric, but often supplemented verbatim from Bernard. They were first printed by Herrgott and have been reprinted by Migne.¹

Hermann, Abbot of St Martin at Tournay from 1127 to 1132, wrote that it was then hardly possible to find a monastery in France or in Flanders in which the Customs of Cluny were not observed.² In less than thirty years, between 1092 and 1120, they were adopted by one monastery after another in the provinces of Reims and Sens, and in the diocese of Liège.³

The Cluniacs appear also to have been influenced by Benedict of Aniane's view that nothing was too splendid for the worship of God. His first church at Aniane was a rude and humble building, the altar vessels were of wood, glass or tin, for he then rejected silver and forbade the use of silk chasubles.⁴ But five or six years later, in 782, with the help of dukes and counts, he built a vast and splendid church, and cloisters with colonnades of marble.⁵ The vessels were of the finest workmanship, the seven-branched candlestick with its knops, its bowls and flowers, was designed to be like that which Bezaleel made for the Tabernacle. There were seven lamps for the altar of the Trinity, the silver lamps of the quire were in the form of a corona, and there was a multitude of service books, costly vestments and chalices. The building was to be the head of all churches and an example for others. It would seem that Benedict had come under the influence of the school of art fostered by Charlemagne, he was clearly convinced that wealth might be rightly used in the service of God. The first Church of St Mary and the Church of St John in the burial-ground were also within the precincts. There were vast monastic buildings, and as the monks grew too numerous even for these, Benedict founded cells dependent on the mother-house. The first church at Cluny was soon too small, and a great church was built and dedicated in 981.⁶ Abbot Odilo rebuilt the whole of the monastery, and for the cloister marble columns were brought by water along the Rhone and the Durance.⁷ The third church of Cluny was begun in 1089, when consecrated in 1132 it was the largest church of the age, having double aisles, a double transept, and an ambulatory with radiating chapels.⁸

¹ Herrgott *op cit* pp 375-570, Migne, cl pp 923-1146

² *Spicilegium*, ed Luc d'Achery, II p. 913 (ed 1723)

³ *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique* II pp. 258-263.

⁴ Migne *Patrologia Lat* ciii p. 360

⁵ *Ibid* pp 363-365

⁶ *Consuetudines Monasticae* I p 137, Sackur *op cit* II p 372

⁷ Migne *Patrologia Lat* cxlii p 908

⁸ Viollet-Le-Duc *Dictionnaire de l'architecture française* I pp 257-259

It has been shewn that there was no special school of Cluniac architecture¹ Nevertheless it is clear that the Cluniac ideals of vastness and splendour in building, of costly ornaments and magnificent ritual, were followed wherever monastic revivals were related to the Cluniac Customs It is interesting to note that the great seven-branched candlestick of Cluny, made like that of Amiane from the description of Bezael's work, was the gift of Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I, King of England² There was a seven-branched candlestick at Winchester, the gift of King Canute in 1035, one at Canterbury given between 1107 and 1126, one at Bury St Edmunds of about 1200, and the Durham candlestick was so immense that it was of the same breadth as the quire and reached almost to the vault³

It was against this ideal of splendour that St Bernard inveighed in the famous Apologia to William of St Thierry⁴ After denouncing idleness, luxury in food and drink, and in dress, he wrote, 'These are small matters. I pass on to greater ones which seem less only because they are more common I will not speak of the immense height of the churches, of their immoderate length, of their superfluous breadth, costly polishing and strange designs, which, while they attract the eyes of the worshipper, hinder the soul's devotion, and somehow remind me of the old Jewish ritual' He charged the Cluniacs with investing money in costly ornaments that it might return multiplied many times 'By the sight of wonderful and costly vanities, men are tempted to give rather than to pray . . . In the churches are suspended, not coronae, but wheels studded with gems, and surrounded by lights which are scarcely brighter than the precious stones which are near them Instead of candlesticks we behold great trees of brass, fashioned with wonderful skill and glittering as much through their jewels as their lights'

Cluny was at the height of its power and fame at the end of the eleventh century, at the time of the rise of several new monastic orders in different parts of France These were the Orders of Cîteaux, Fontevraud, Tiron, Savigny, Grandmont, and the Carthusians They had their origin in a wave of asceticism, and the early success of some of them was due to the magnetic influence of great preachers.

Cîteaux owed its foundation in 1098 to dissensions within the

¹ Anthyme St Paul *Viollet-Le-Duc, ses travaux d'art et son système archéologique* pp 172-175

² *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*, ed Marrier and Duchesne, p. 1640

³ *Inventories of Christchurch, Canterbury*, ed J W Legg and W H St John Hope, pp. 44, 47

⁴ *Migne Patrologia Lat* clxxxii pp. 914, 915, J Cotter Morison *Life and Times of St Bernard* pp. 130, 131, ed 1868.

monastery of Molesme¹ In that year Robert, Abbot of Molesme, went with some of his brethren to the papal legate, Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons, seeking for permission to go out from Molesme and found a monastery in which they could order their lives wholly according to the Institutes of the Rule of St Benedict They complained that their Customs at Molesme were at variance with the Rule² Within a few years a Book of Customs was written at Cîteaux This 'Liber Usuum'³ consists of the order of divine service throughout the year, of regulations for the details of the daily life of the monastery, and of provisions for its administration by the obedientiars. It is at once apparent from the structure, and from the headings of many of the chapters, that the compilers had before them some version of the Cluniac Customs, most probably that of Bernard or an abridgement. Before Robert became the first Abbot of Molesme he had been Abbot of St Michel at Tonnerre,⁴ a monastery which had been reformed by Cluny⁵ It is therefore natural to suppose that the Customs of Molesme were related to those of Cluny, and that when Robert left for Cîteaux he took a copy of the Customs as well as of the service books When he was compelled by Pope Urban II to go back to Molesme early in 1099, it was agreed that everything which he had brought to Cîteaux should remain except the Breviary⁶ This the monks might keep for a few months longer to make a copy of it. The compilers of the 'Liber Usuum' accepted the Customs of their Fathers in France in so far as they did not conflict with the strict observance of the Rule⁷ But often the Customs of Cîteaux offer an absolute contrast with those of Cluny, e.g. in simplicity in the use of ornaments, in the shortening of services, in financial and economic organization. Orderic Vitalis⁸ and others were justified in representing the Cistercians as innovators on Gallican monasticism, for in their determination to keep the Rule, 'as the Jews kept the law of Moses,' they rejected much of the tradition of monastic observance which Benedict of Aniane had derived from Paul the Deacon and other sources Their writings shew that they were influenced by the lives of the Egyptian monks Cluny had received churches, tithes, and serfs amongst other gifts of property from the earliest years of its history

¹ J. Laurent *Cartulaires de Molesme* i pp 111-128, 146-152, *Monuments primitifs de la règle Cistercienne*, ed Ph Guignard, pp 61-66, *R Hist Soc Trans.* (new series) xix pp 169-207

² Migne *Patrologia Lat* clxxxv, *Exordium Magnum Cisterc* p 1008

³ Guignard *op cit* pp 85-245, *Nomasticon Cisterciense*, ed Sejalon, pp. 84-211

⁴ Laurent *op cit* i p 147

⁵ Sackur *op cit* i p 269

⁶ Guignard *op cit* p 66

⁷ Migne *Patrologia Lat* clxxxviii p 637, clxxxv p 1011, Guignard *op. cit* p 71

⁸ Migne *Patrologia Lat* clxxxviii pp 935, 936.

⁹ Bernard et Bruel *op cit* i, ii, iii *passim*

When Abbot Robert urged the monks of Molesme to give up churches and tithes, the opposition party replied, 'So long as the Cluniacs and the monks of Marmoutier and others have obtained these things, we will not give them up, nor will we be condemned by our brethren far and wide as rash discoverers of new things.'¹ Churches and tithes were renounced by the first Cistercians. But the great innovation of the Cistercians was the system of government of their monasteries as set forth in the 'Carta Caritatis', the new Orders followed them in adopting a yearly general chapter and an organized system of visitation. It may be argued that Stephen Harding and the first Cistercian abbots found a precedent for the yearly general chapter in the practice of St Pachomius and St Basil. On the other hand Dom Berlière points out that the summoning of such an assembly as a general chapter was not unknown in the history of Benedictine monasteries, and he suggests that the Cistercians followed their precedents. But as the study of the lives of the Egyptian monks so strongly influenced the Cistercians, it seems more probable that the idea of a general chapter was derived directly from Eastern monasticism.

The ideals and Customs of Cluny and Cîteaux had a strong influence on the Canons Regular. In the second half of the eleventh century successive popes made efforts to reform the lives of the clergy.² The result was a rapid growth of the number of communities in which priests bound themselves to live a regular life, and were known as Regular Canons. This involved the adoption of Customs or Statutes. An earlier reformer, Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz from 742 to 766, had drawn up for priests living in common a Rule which was in great part derived from that of St Benedict. Owing to various causes that movement was a failure. Dr Frere has pointed out that these new communities of the eleventh century began on various lines and spread widely before they accepted the Rule of St Augustine.³ He writes, 'There was a need of uniformity among the different houses of Canons, and there was also the need of some patron and some formula of life which would enable the canons to hold up their heads in rivalry with the monks'. The so-called Rule of St Augustine was adapted from a letter written by St Augustine, when Bishop of Hippo, to a convent of nuns. It is very brief and touches the spirit of monastic life rather than its details. For this reason the origin of some of the Customs of Canons Regular is of special interest.

Among the most important of the Canons Regular in France were the Canons of St Victor at Paris. Their founder was the famous scholar, William of Champeaux, who withdrew with a few other scholars

¹ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* clxxxviii p. 640.

² *Fasciculus J. W. Clark dicatus* pp. 186-188.

³ *Ibid.* p. 208.

to the hermitage of St Victor in 1108¹. In 1113 William became Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, and was afterwards one of the well-known friends of St Bernard. The Customs of St Victor² are ascribed to his successor, Gilduin, who was abbot from 1114 until 1155³. A number of the chapters are derived from the Customs of Bernard of Cluny, parts of them being copied absolutely verbatim, a few other details were borrowed from the Cistercian 'Liber Usuum'. Some passages may be the original work of Gilduin and his canons, of these the most interesting treats of the library, the care of books and the writing of new ones which made a special appeal to men who were scholars before they were canons. The house of St Victor became an important centre of reform, the canons were sought out as heads of other communities, a number of other houses entered into relations with St Victor, and in this way a congregation was gradually formed⁴. Although these Customs were in the main derived from Cluny, there is some evidence to suggest that the system of government within the congregation was that of Cîteaux. Independent communities of Regular Canons adopted the Customs of St Victor of Paris and varied them according to their needs in the same way as independent Benedictine monasteries treated the Customs of Cluny. The Customs of the house of Augustinian Canons at Barnwell, Cambridge, are a most interesting example.⁵ On the whole the Augustinian Canons were as loosely related to one another as were the Benedictines.

On the other hand, the Regular Canons of the Order of Prémontré were organized as an Order in the same strict sense as the Cistercians. Their founder was St Norbert (1080?-1134). Having failed to induce the Secular Canons of Xanten to lead the regular life, he left them to become a poor wandering preacher⁶. After a time he settled with a few companions in a desolate valley in the forest of Coucy, near Laon, which received the name of Prémontré. Some months later there were nearly forty clerks and many laymen who had been attracted by his eloquence. His biographer records that he talked much with them about a Rule and the Institutions of the Fathers. The conflicting counsels of many bishops and abbots perplexed him greatly, for some advised that they should live as hermits or anchorites, others that they should follow the Cistercian way of life. But Norbert shrank from choosing a monastic Rule because it seemed to him that he would thereby detract from the

¹ Fourier-Bonnard *Histoire de l'Abbaye royale et l'Ordre des Chanoines Réguliers de St Victor de Paris* 1 p. 5.

² Martène *De Antiquis Ecclesie Ritibus*, ed. 1783, iv pp. 253-291.

³ Fourier-Bonnard *op. cit.* p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 141-190.

⁵ *Customs of Augustinian Canons*, ed. J. Willis Clark.

⁶ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* clxx pp. 1254-1344.

canon's way of life to which he and some of his companions had been vowed from childhood. He sent for the Rule of St Augustine and approved of it so strongly that on Christmas Day, 1119, all the community agreed to adopt it. The Rule appealed to Norbert because it could be interpreted in various ways, and he added precepts for a strict observance. His statutes were confirmed by Honorius III in 1125. Yet within a few years the abbots of the several monasteries which Norbert had founded practically agreed upon the Cistercian way of life. Norbert became Archbishop of Magdeburg in 1126, and shortly after the election of his successor, Hugh de Fosse, several abbots met at Prémontré to make provision for the future of the Order, which they believed to be in peril, and they agreed that, after the example of the Cistercians, they would hold a general chapter every year. It seems that either then or before the first general chapter they wrote a Book of Customs. These '*Institutiones Rerum Premonstratensium*'¹ were divided into four parts, and the last contains some provisions which were added by the advice of the general chapter. The writers took the Institutes about the general chapter in the fourth part and the greater part of the first two divisions concerning the daily life and the officers of the monastery almost verbatim from the Cistercian '*Carta Caritatis*', Customs and Institutes. The third part consists of an elaborate table of penalties for offences which are more minutely classified than in other Customs. In one important particular, the Premonstratensians departed from the Cistercian practice, viz in their system of visitation. The Order was divided into provinces, and two abbots were appointed each year as circators to visit all the houses in their province and report to the general chapter.

The revival of the double monastery is another instance of the influence of Cluny on later developments. About 1061, with the help of his brother Geoffrey, Count of Semur, Abbot Hugh founded and endowed a priory at Marcigny because there was then no refuge for women within the Order of Cluny.² The movement for monastic reform associated with Benedict of Aniane was hostile to double monasteries. The foundation of new double houses had been forbidden by the Council of Nicaea in 787.³ In his Rule for Nuns, written about 816, Amalarius of Metz ordered that the priests, deacons, and subdeacons who celebrate Mass for nuns should have a dwelling-place and a church of their own outside the nunnery.⁴ I have as yet come across no instance in the tenth century of a double monastery which was

¹ Martène *op cit* iv pp 323-336

² Migne *Patrologia Lat.* clix p 949, *Gallia Christiana* iv pp 486, 487 (ed. 1728)

³ Labbe *Sacrorum Conciliorum Collectio*, ed Cossart, xiii p 755 cap xx

⁴ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* cv p. 972 cap xxvii.

associated with the Cluniac reform. It was to ensure the most strict enclosure of the nuns that Abbot Hugh created a double monastery. At Marcigny the buildings of nuns and monks were remote from one another, but they had one common church in which a wooden screen separated the quire of the nuns from that of the monks.¹ At an early stage in the history of Marcigny the nuns were limited in number to ninety-nine and the monks to thirteen including the prior.² The prioress ruled over the nuns, the prior was their spiritual ruler and heard confessions. Both were appointed and removed by the Abbot of Cluny. Property was held in common. Two monks were appointed as procurators to manage the temporal affairs of the priory, in which the nuns had no share whatever. In the ordinary Benedictine nunnery of that age the abbess and her convent managed their own temporal affairs, and they were therefore not strictly enclosed. Marcigny attracted many women of noble birth, among them were Spanish and Scotch princesses, Adela Countess of Blois, a sister of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and great ladies from Northern Italy as well as from many parts of France.³

The vocation of women for monastic life had a strong influence on the rise of some of the new Orders in France. Of these the most original was the Order of Fontevrault, which was founded by Robert of Arbrissel.⁴ When at Angers in 1096 Pope Urban II bade Robert give his life to preaching. He spent the next four or five years as a wandering preacher in Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, in company with two of his disciples, Bernard of Ponthieu and Vitalis of Mortain. Men, and still more women, of all ranks were attracted by him, and left their homes to follow him wherever he went. The throng became so great that Robert realized the need of a permanent dwelling and the discipline of a regular life for his community. He parted with Bernard and Vitalis and the majority of the men, and they afterwards founded the monasteries of Tiron and Savigny, the mother houses of new Orders. Robert conceived the idea of founding a double monastery in which a large number of women should be served by priests and lay brothers. This was the origin of the famous house which he founded at Fontevrault in 1101. Before half a century had elapsed there were over fifty daughter-houses in France. The cloisters and buildings of the women were remote from those of the men.⁵ The great Church of St Mary

¹ Cucherat *Cluny au onzième siècle* pp. 86-98, 219-251, 262-275.

² *Bibliotheca Cluniacensis*, ed. Marrier and Duchesne, Notae pp. 86, 87.

³ Cucherat *op. cit.* pp. 86-98.

⁴ *Migne Patrologia Lat.* clxii pp. 1043-1078, Walter *Die ersten Wanderprediger Frankreichs* 1.

⁵ L. A. Bosseboeuf *Fontevrault, son histoire et ses monuments* pp. 48-85.

was that of the nuns, to which the priests came only to celebrate Mass and to hear confessions. The monks had a separate oratory dedicated to St John. There can be little doubt that Robert gave the Rule of St Benedict to both monks and nuns, he added statutes defining the relations between the two communities. In these there was a striking contrast with the arrangements made by Abbot Hugh at Marcigny. By Robert's advice a woman was chosen to succeed him as head of the Order and Abbess of Fontevrault, one who had lived in the world and was skilled in the management of temporal affairs, for he feared that a virgin who was cloister-bred would wreck his work through ignorance. The duty of visiting the other houses of the Order devolved upon her, she rode abroad accompanied by two nuns, two monks, and two servants. Stores of all kinds, money, and books were under the charge of the nuns.¹ This last provision was adopted by St Gilbert for the English double Order of Sempringham,² which owed much to the model of Fontevrault. Robert of Arbrissel had feared opposition to the rule of a woman. Not long after his death there are signs that the monks resented their subjection, and Pope Calixtus II insisted on their obedience.³ St Gilbert set up two communities with a Master as supreme ruler, but three of the nuns from each house were summoned to Sempringham to take part in the election of the Master and to attend the yearly general chapter, and the women were visited each year by nuns appointed for the purpose.⁴

But the example of Marcigny was followed in the priories dependent on Molesme,⁵ and in the first Cistercian nunneries,⁶ and in those dependent on Savigny.⁷ The Abbot of Molesme appointed a prior who acted as chaplain to the nuns, under him were three monks who managed all the temporal affairs of the priory with the help of lay brothers. The Abbot exercised supreme jurisdiction over the nuns, and granted the right of election of a new prioress. All the nunneries attempted at some time to gain independence in one direction or another. Of these the most successful was Crisenon. The ruler of the women became an abbess, and when an annual general chapter was instituted, she secured the right of attending either in person or by proxy, whereas the other nunneries were represented by their prior.

¹ Walter *op cit* pp 189-195, Migne *Patrologia Lat* clxii pp 1079-1086

² Dugdale *Monasticon Anglicanum* vii pp. xxi, xlii, xlvii, ed. 1846.

³ Walter *op cit* pp 166-171

⁴ Dugdale *op cit* pp xx, xxi, lvii

⁵ Laurent *op cit* 1 pp 253-261

⁶ *Gallia Christiana* iv p 572, Instr. p. 158 (ed. 1728), *Nomasticon Cisterciense*, ed Sejalon, pp 360, 363, Guignard *op cit* pp 407-584.

⁷ *Auvry Histoire de la Congrégation de Savigny*, ed Laveille. Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, 1 pp 312, 313.

The first Cistercian nunnery was founded from July, the first nunnery of Molesme, and it is therefore natural to find that their affairs were managed by a chaplain and procurators. No Cistercian abbess had the right to attend the general chapter of the Order, but there is some evidence to shew that both in France¹ and in Spain² the Cistercian nunneries sent women representatives to attend a general chapter at the head nunnery of the province.

The conflicting influences of Cluny and Cîteaux on Benedictine monasteries in France have been most carefully traced by Dom Berlière in the *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*.³ Before 1131 the Benedictine abbots in the province of Reims agreed to hold yearly general chapters, to shorten their services, to enforce the keeping of silence, and to increase their fasts. Matthew, Cardinal of Albano, sent a strong letter of remonstrance to the abbots, as prior (1117-1126) of the Cluniac house of St-Martin-des-Champs at Paris, he had been very active in promoting the reform of Benedictine monasteries through the adoption of the Customs of Cluny.⁴ In the proposed changes he saw a reaction against the Customs of Cluny 'which have made you glorious and noble and have borne your names to the stars, and have taken away your bad and most evil name, and have given you a good and famous name'. The abbots made a vigorous defence, and reminded the cardinal that they had not been professed to keep the Customs of Cluny but the Rule of St Benedict.⁵ Robert of Torigny observes that the result of the new monasticism was a revival in the Benedictine monasteries of Normandy, and that monks from Cluny, Marmoutier, and Bec were chosen as abbots.⁶

Lastly, there is the influence of Cîteaux on Cluny. The Cluniac way of life, which St Bernard attacked in his famous *Apologia*, written about 1125, to William of St Thierry, had degenerated in the fifteen years after the death of Abbot Hugh in 1109. He was succeeded by Ponce of Melgueil, but his rule belied the promise of his earlier years.⁷ In 1121 he agreed to resign and set out for Jerusalem. But in Lent 1125, when Abbot Peter the Venerable was in Aquitaine, Ponce suddenly returned, seized Cluny, and held it for six months by force of arms, spoiling the treasures of the monastery to pay his soldiers. Abbot Peter the Venerable was bent on reform. In 1132 he summoned the heads of

¹ Guignard *op cit* pp. lxxxviii-xc, 643-648

² Auvry *op cit* i 209

³ *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique* II pp 253-264, *Mélanges d'Histoire Bénédictine*, ed Berlière, 1902, pp 1-58 (4^e série)

⁴ Berlière *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique* I pp 93-102

⁵ *Ibid* pp 98, 103

⁶ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* ccii pp. 1313-1320

⁷ Pignot *Histoire de l'Ordre de Cluny* III pp 1-46

all the Cluniac houses to come to Cluny on the third Sunday of Lent, and to hear 'precepts of monastic life more austere than those which they had hitherto observed'¹ Orderic Vitalis was present, and he told how Peter added fasts, took away times for speaking, and deprived the sick of some of their comforts. He wished to emulate the Cistercians and others who followed after new things. But in the face of opposition Peter dropped some of his most rigorous precepts. In his Statutes,² which were approved by the general chapter, he cut off luxuries in food and extravagance in dress and display. St Bernard rejoiced over the reforms which Peter introduced at Cluny.³

Hugh V, who was summoned in 1199 from the English monastery of Reading to be Abbot of Cluny, promulgated statutes for the reform of various abuses in 1200.⁴ He adopted the general chapter to be attended yearly by the priors of the Order. Imitating the visitation of Cîteaux by the abbots of the four daughter-houses, he decreed that once a year, on the octave of St Peter and St Paul, two abbots and two priors should make inquisition about the Abbot of Cluny, and the condition of the monastery in temporal and spiritual affairs, and correct everything and notify it to the general chapter. Priors should not be deprived except for some manifest reason, and this by the judgement of the general chapter. In each province one or more camerarii should be appointed to visit and correct under the Abbot of Cluny and to notify the results to the general chapter. This was a complete surrender of the former autocracy of the abbots of Cluny in favour of the constitutional government which had been initiated by the Cistercians.

In this paper I have attempted to sketch the origin and growth of the Customs of Cluny and their widespread influence. I have tried to shew that this body of Customs represented a growth of monastic tradition and to some extent a common measure of monastic observance. Although I have emphasized the resemblance between the Customs of the several monasteries and orders, I am not forgetful of the differences between Cluniacs and Cistercians, Augustinians and Premonstratensians, which I hope to set forth in their due proportions in a longer work.

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¹ Migne *Patrologia Lat.* clxxxviii pp 935, 936

² *Ibid.* clxxxix pp 1025-1048

³ *Ibid.* clxxxii p 483

⁴ *Ibid.* ccix pp 882-896.