simoniacal entry into religious life

from 1000 to 1260
Monastic Economic Problems
And the Reception of New Members

The gift at entry served the straightforward purposes of increasing the wealth and income of a religious house and of defraying at least part of the expense that a new member would require for clothing, food, and other necessities. As in the case of modern colleges and universities, there were vast differences among the various institutions comprehended under the rubric "religious house." One of the chief differences lay in the size of the income available to a given house. Many monasteries and nunneries did not receive an adequate initial endowment or else did not maintain an equilibrium between income and the number of religious in the community. At least since Carolingian times there had been sporadic attempts to balance numbers against resources. In 787 King Pippin of Italy ordered his missi to investigate the resources available to religious houses in his kingdom. In 811 Charlemagne met with some bishops and abbots to discuss problems, among which was the troublesome desire of some prelates to rule larger communities than was fitting or feasible. On 12 November 826 a Roman council under Pope Eugene II recommended that the modus discretionis be observed in receiving clerics of any kind, lest more be admitted than resources could support. Following initiatives taken by his ancestors, Charles the Bald in 853 ordered a financial inquest of canonries, monasteries, and nunneries, so as to fix the number of religious in each house relative to the resources of the house. This plan, as with so many other Carolingian...
ian attempts at reform, was aborted with the decline of the empire, and the problem of supporting religious houses remained. For many religious houses in the eleventh century, the gift normally received from new members was an important contribution to the maintenance of some proportion between numbers and resources.

However, the gift at entry served other less obvious purposes as well. Religious houses in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were endowed institutions that had their economic foundation in their status as possessors of men, of land, and of profitable rights. The religious houses were seigneuries, similar in many ways to their lay counterparts. In spite of certain obvious differences attributable to the contrast between an undying corporation on the one hand and a family with its dowries, inheritances, and pious donations on the other, these analogous seigneuries exercised similar practices over similar possessions for similar ends.

One of the key traits of these seigneuries, especially the richer among them, was the complexity of their structure and of their sources of income. Most religious houses drew revenues and services from their rights over their men and over the tenants of their domains. They also derived income from the normal appendages to agricultural life, such as mills, pasture rights, hunting rights, and forest rights. Many religious houses also participated, in varying degrees, in the practice of holding proprietary churches. Like other lords, they had benefited from the general breakdown of diocesan structures during the troubled ninth and tenth centuries. They had gathered into their patrimonies ecclesiastical sources of income, such as churches and the accompanying tithes, burial fees, and other parochial dues.

The reform movements of the eleventh century increased significantly the share of ecclesiastical forms of revenue received by religious houses. The reformers placed pressure on lay possessors of ecclesiastical rights to give them up, but they generally allowed ecclesiastical possessors of parochial rights to retain them. The reform propaganda began to have a significant impact in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries. For reasons rooted in contemporary piety, many of the
laymen influenced by reform sentiment offered their illicitly held ecclesiastical property to religious houses rather than to the dioceses and parishes from which it was originally alienated. The monasteries were favored recipients of such restitutions because a man whose conscience troubled him normally valued the prayers of monks higher than he did those of bishops or parish priests. Some bishops sought to reassert their general control over restored properties by insisting that a lay donor give the property to them, and they would hand it on to the monastery. In spite of these episcopal efforts to regulate transactions, the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries saw much ecclesiastical property flow by gift and purchase into the possession of religious houses.

In addition, the religious seigneury, like its lay counterpart, sought by purchase, by gift, and by usurpation to enrich its patrimony with various public rights, such as justice, tolls, and market dues. The resulting conglomerate of real properties, rights, and exemptions that constituted the patrimony of many religious houses was not radically different from that which formed the economic base of many lay lordships of comparable size in eleventh-century France. Of course, in addition to the similarities, religious houses often had sources of income unavailable to a lay lord, such as pious donations, entry gifts, and pilgrim offerings.

It is crucial to an understanding of the role that entry gifts played in the economy of most religious houses that this complexity of endowment be fully appreciated. Normally, the monastic patrimony was interspersed among the possessions of lay and ecclesiastical neighbors, and complexity meant that interaction with those neighbors was both common and necessary. It was a rare seigneury, ecclesiastical or lay, that held its properties and rights in a compact block. Scattered fields, divided rights, and shared revenues were the normal conditions of economic life. Not only were properties and rights subdivided, but the processes that led to further division continued to function in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There was, of course, no unified legal system in medieval France, and large differences were particularly evident between regions of written law and those of customary law. How-
ever, in spite of important variations, it was generally true that the property rights of an individual were limited seriously by the rights of his kin.\textsuperscript{14} Exclusive ownership of property by individuals, as had existed to a degree in Roman law, did not prevail in eleventh- and twelfth-century society. In that society families of property experienced a series of recurring events that demanded the transfer and subdivision of property within the kin group and, less often, outside it. The most prominent of these social “crises” were marriage, with its need for dowries; death, with its need for prayers, burial, and division among heirs; entry into religion, with its demand for a gift; and financial emergencies, which led to sales of, and mortgages on, property. Property could be parcelled out to a virtually unlimited number of individuals and institutions. Even when the custom of primogeniture developed, the process of fragmentation was merely slowed rather than ended.\textsuperscript{15} Because there were no firm limits to the subdivision of property, the process could go very far. In a region where the rhythm of life had not been violently interrupted for three or four generations, the natural evolution toward subdivision in response to family needs normally produced a complicated mix of shared rights, properties, and revenues.\textsuperscript{16}

Religious houses might seem relatively immune to these processes of subdivision, but in fact they participated actively in them, chiefly as buyers and sellers of properties, as mortgagers,\textsuperscript{17} and as recipients and givers of gifts. In due course, they accumulated patrimonies that included many subdivided rights and properties. For example, in about 1100-1102 the monastery of Gel­lone received one-half of a church dedicated to Saint Julian, along with the one-fifteenth of the tithe and the entire fief of the priest. The nunnery of Ronceray at Angers received an eighth share of the altar of Saint George, which included one-eighth of the offerings of money, candles, bread, tithes, rents, and first fruits.\textsuperscript{18} Secular properties too were subject to the social need for subdivision, and a religious house might come into possession of half a mill, a quarter of a toll, a quarter of an allodial field, or half a fief.\textsuperscript{19} The monastic cartularies make it clear that in the
eleventh century it became rarer for a religious house to receive gifts of land or of rights that were not shared or partitioned with others.\textsuperscript{20}

A complex endowment entailed considerable inconvenience for a religious house. A great portion of the religious' interest and energy was devoted to economic affairs, and a large number of the religious held positions in the economic hierarchy of the house. It has been estimated that in English Black Monk houses during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries about half the community, including the aged and novices, held offices, frequently with revenues attached to them.\textsuperscript{21} In addition, a complicated, scattered patrimony was difficult to manage. Considerable time and energy could be expended to collect relatively modest sums, e.g., one-eighth of the candle offerings of a distant church. Rather than attempt to collect such dues or to exploit distant possessions directly, religious houses often farmed them out, enfeoffed them to their men, and sold or exchanged them for more convenient possessions.\textsuperscript{22}

There is evidence that contemporaries were aware of the difficulties and annoyances inherent in a complex endowment. In the twelfth century, English Black Monk houses preserved the economically inefficient system of farming out properties on long-term leases because it was a secure, relatively bother-free technique when compared with the burdens of direct management.\textsuperscript{23} Many of the new religious orders of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were critical of the older monasticism because of its frequent contacts with secular persons and secular business. The new orders were apparently aware that complex endowments were a major cause of the imperfections of the older houses.\textsuperscript{24} In an effort to avoid such difficulties for themselves, the most successful of the new orders, the Cistercians, initially sought to exploit by their own labor large compact blocks of hitherto uncultivated land. They sought to buy out, or in some other way to remove, all others who possessed property and rights within the block. They refused to retain the tithes of other men, burial rights, churches, mills, serfs, and most other forms of property that might
have involved them in contacts with the secular world. In all of this the Cistercians were not unique; the Premonstratensians, Carthusians, and Grandmontines pursued comparable policies. Indeed, the fear of litigation about gifts and property was the expressed motive for certain elements of Grandmontine and Trinitarian legislation. If the Cistercians had adhered rigorously to this policy of economic isolation, they would have been spared the problems characteristic of the older, more complex patrimonies. However, the Cistercians began to accept forbidden forms of property in the second half of the twelfth century. The rapidity with which these forms of property were added to Cistercian patrimonies depended to a large degree on the zeal of abbots and the vigilance of visitors. By 1200 many Cistercian houses had endowments that included forbidden elements and fragmented properties. Although the proportion of such possessions might vary from house to house, it is nonetheless true that by the later twelfth century the White Monks faced problems in managing their patrimonies that were similar to those long familiar to the Black Monks.

Complex patrimonies gave rise to at least one additional serious problem for religious houses, that of litigation. Shared or subdivided properties were properties precariously held and peculiarly subject to encroachment, usurpation, and dispute. One need only thumb through several cartularies to see how frequently monasteries were involved in litigation about their possessions and claims to possessions. Such litigation was so much a part of life that the religious often anticipated it and attempted to forestall it.

Some of the reasons for the frequency of litigation are not difficult to discern. The rights of a seller or donor were limited by the legitimate claims of his kin or his feudal lord, and he could not with insouciance sell or give his property to a religious house. A charter from the monastery of the Holy Trinity at Vendôme, written about 1072, illustrated the difficulties inherent in transferring property. A married couple were impoverished, and they sought to trade their modest property for a life support. Initially
they approached relatives, who were unwilling to agree to the terms offered by the couple. Only then did the couple approach the monks of the Holy Trinity, who accepted the proposed arrangement. The woman declared explicitly that she did not want to offer any property that would be disputed after her death. Therefore, she gave or sold some property to relatives who had a claim on it, and "she gave to the Holy Trinity those allods of Listriaco which she received from her father, and which no relative or other person could legally claim." This couple, and the monks of the Holy Trinity who drew up the charter, were not being overly cautious in their attempts to guarantee the stability of this arrangement. The relatives of the sellers had rights, and the charter made clear that proper procedures had been observed and that those rights had been forfeited by the refusal of the kinsmen to give the couple a life rent in return for their property.

Repeatedly the charters reflect the insecurity of acquisitions made without the consent of kin. Religious houses that received gifts or that made purchases were aware of the crucial need to secure the assent of as many of the relatives of the owner as possible. Not only adult relatives actually present at the transfer of property were to be induced to agree, but also absentees and children under age were to be asked or forced to agree at the proper time. To arrange for the assent of kin was sometimes as expensive and often more laborious than the gift or purchase itself. In addition to the spouse and children of the owner, a wide variety of other relatives might have to consent, including in-laws, bastards, grandchildren, uncles, and cousins. Careful planning did not always prevent frustration of a gift or purchase. It was not unusual for relatives to refuse to agree. Even when they had agreed, such arrangements were unstable. More often than was comfortable for the monks, some kin repudiated their assent, denied that they had in fact agreed, or simply laid claim to the property in question.

Once litigation began it could drag on for years or even decades. The final settlement in such disputes was seldom a clear-cut victory for either party. The claims of kinship were very strong
in the eyes of contemporaries, and ordinarily had to have some satisfaction. In the common course of events, the religious house was obliged to strike a bargain in order to vindicate its claims. Indeed, it was not unknown to pay more than once for the extinction of claims against a disputed possession. A religious house could expect to be secure in its properties only after thirty or forty years of undisputed possession, if then.

It was not merely the relatives of the donor or seller who could threaten the stability of a transaction. There were others who might be in a position to lay claims against the acquisitions of a religious house. Much of the property offered to the houses was held in some form of feudal tenure. The feudal lord had rights and claims to be settled before he would sanction his vassal's sale or gift. Since the monastery was an undying corporation, the lord effectively lost his rights of escheat, wardship, and marriage, and understandably he expected some *quid pro quo* for his assent. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, feudal lords sought to exploit this right of assent as a way to raise money. A religious house might pay well for a feudal lord's assent, and even then it was not secure against further difficulties. In some charters a contingency plan was offered by the seller or donor in the event that a feudal lord refused to cooperate. On occasion religious houses received as a boon from a feudal lord the promise that he would allow it to accept freely any gift that his vassals might wish to make. Without such a guarantee, or its equivalent, the house's new possession was menaced by the lord's rights.

Whether a property was alodial or feudal, it might be mortgaged or otherwise burdened when it came into the monastery's possession. It is evident from the charters that many laymen found it a convenient and relatively inexpensive gift to offer an indebted property, since religious houses often had the cash necessary to settle the debt and gain full use of the property. If the monastery accepted such a gift, it was responsible for settling claims against it, often at considerable expense. Another common burden on property was a life interest in it guaranteed to some person, for example, the widow of the donor or seller. Only after the death
of the favored party at some indeterminate time in the future did the house come into full possession of the property. Innocent III dealt with a dispute arising from the fact that a man had given himself and his possessions to a religious house under the condition that he retain use of the property for life. He had lived so long that no one alive had witnessed his gift, and it was disputed by other claimants after his death. Such delayed gifts were a frequent source of litigation.

In view of the myriad opportunities for dispute arising out of complicated patrimonies and the web of those who might be able to raise a claim against a property transfer, it is not surprising that there were few religious houses that did not have a series of active or potential property disputes at any given time. The religious protected what they perceived as their rights by litigation, arbitration, and compromises worked out with their opponents. However, the religious houses also used recruitment and the traditional gift at entry as an opportunity to deal with litigation about their property. The great monasteries, like Cluny or Citeaux, might draw novices from far and wide, but most houses depended primarily on local families for new recruits. The recruit and his family were expected to make a gift at entry, and often that was simply what happened. But from a study of entry charters, it emerges that many of the very families that wished to place someone in a monastery were potential or actual litigants with the house concerning its property. With the exception of very poor or troubled houses, monasteries in the eleventh and twelfth centuries had a steady stream of applicants seeking admission; and consequently the religious houses were in a position to exercise choice and to reject recruits if they wished. When the opportunity presented itself, negotiations about entry and the gift at entry were used to end litigation and to correct the deficiencies of a complex patrimony.

Negotiations about Entry into Religion

In his commentary on causa I, questio II, of Gratian's Decretum, the canonist Rufinus, writing about 1157-59, faced the question,
"Whether for entrance to a monastery money ought to be demanded?", to which he replied in the negative. After citing authorities who condemned the insistence on money from those entering, he used the following case to illustrate one of the illicit forms of payment for entry:

Imagine that the Church of Saint Peter had a dispute with Scannabicus concerning a certain field, and when Scannabicus sought to have his son ordained in that Church the canons would not agree unless he offered ten pounds for his son or else gave up the dispute.  

Rufinus' creation of this example was not merely a school exercise. He was criticizing a widespread contemporary practice, which had fallen into disrepute in his day but which had borne no stigma a few generations earlier. The cartularies of religious houses reveal without equivocation that the reception of new members was frequently accompanied by conditions and agreements that were in intention and often in form similar to that criticized by Rufinus. When opportunity offered itself, the entry of a new member was perceived as an invitation to settle outstanding quarrels with him and his kin.  

A charter of Ronceray, dated about 1080, contains a full description of the negotiations that preceded the reception of the daughter of a local lord. At some time before 1080 Ascelina Cata entered the nunnery and gave as a gift the woods at Brain-sur-l'Authion and other forest rights. Her nephew Girorius of Beaupréau confirmed the donation. But such agreements were always unstable, and the nephew subsequently changed his mind and laid claim to the woods. The nuns settled with him for ten pounds. When Ascelina Cata died, her nephew renewed the claim. The charter makes it clear that the nuns believed he had revived the lawsuit in order to place a daughter in the house. He already had one daughter in the nunnery, and when the second was received, he returned the ten pounds, abandoned the claim on the woods, and added to the settlement ten arpents of meadow and the right for the nuns to buy things in the region without paying him any fees that they might otherwise owe him. Thus the entry of a new
member served to quiet claims against a piece of property that had itself been a gift at an earlier entry.

As the nuns of Ronceray implied about Girorius of Beaupréau, a person with a claim against the property of a religious house might seek a position in that particular house precisely because his claim was a reason for the house to consent and thereby extinguish the claim as part of the entry bargain. It was a common procedure, recorded in many charters, for one seeking a place for himself or for another person to make a gift and then to add to it a general renunciation of all claims that he might be able to raise. This was no idle gesture, since a potential claim was a threat that the religious house might be eager to end.56

The religious were of course in a favorable position with relation to someone who was seeking admission to their congregation. Contemporaries in the eleventh and twelfth centuries seldom criticized the use that the religious made of their position of strength to free themselves from litigation. Particularly when the reception was sought for a seriously ill person, ad succurrendum, the religious house could and would apply pressure for concessions. At Saint Aubin at Angers in the early twelfth century, Geoffrey de Carco asked that his dying father, Robert de Carco, be made a monk. Geoffrey was pursuing a claim against some vineyards belonging to the house, and in order to gain admission for his father he renounced his claim on the spot and subsequently made a modest gift for his father’s reception ad succurrendum.57

Thus recruitment offered an opportunity, perceived as legitimate by contemporaries, to allay at least some of the insecurity of, and litigation about, property. The monastic charters also reveal that the reception of new members served other purposes as well. Important lay and ecclesiastical figures at every level of medieval society had dependents for whom to provide. Some of those dependents wished to enter religious houses, but it was a social reality of the eleventh and twelfth centuries that there were individuals who had difficulty in finding a place without the aid of a patron. Retired soldiers,58 superannuated chaplains,59 children,60 and bastards were generally not perceived as attractive candidates
for the religious habit. To some degree, the prestige of an important figure was bound up with his ability to gain for his protégés and servants positions in religious houses that they could not gain for themselves. From the perspective of the religious house, the favorable influence of a friend at court or at Rome was useful to its interests and was worth seeking by favors.

The letter collections of twelfth-century churchmen, including the popes, contain numerous examples of requests for the reception of individuals in religious houses. Although the letters of such persons almost never mentioned the prospect of money or property from the entrant, they did promise explicitly or implicitly that the patron would show his appreciation for the favor by aiding the religious house at some future time. The reception of the recommended candidate was a sign of the friendship existing between his patron and the house. There was, of course, the implication that a failure to admit the person would be viewed as an insult to his patron. Religious houses too requested one another to receive new members, as a sign of their mutual fraternity and protection. A refusal to accept a person at the request of another house was a threat to continued cordial relations.

Many of the receptions made at the request of pope, bishop, or king were apparently tolerated without the clear assent of the monastic community, which might be more or less constrained to accept the nominee or else face unpleasant consequences. Far more illuminating for an understanding of the role that entry agreements played are the situations in which a religious house accepted the candidate of some locally powerful person. For when the two parties were more nearly equal in power, true negotiations about aid, favor, or property could take place. The monks of the Holy Trinity at Vendôme had a series of disagreements with a local feudal lord, Andreas of Alluyes. They came to a peaceful settlement in 1199 when Andreas offered the monks some revenues to compensate for others that he had seized and wished to retain. In addition he promised the monks full justice in his feudal court in a dispute over possession of a tithe. "The monks, as a recompense for this favor and because they have affection for me, created for me one monk whose name is Andreas Charrete."
In circumstances such as these the new monk was a symbol of the agreement; his entry into the monastery was almost incidental to the settlement of issues between his patron and the religious. In many situations it was the reception of a child that served as the cement for an agreement and as the living guarantee of its endurance. An early twelfth-century charter from the Breton monastery of Redon reenforces the impression that an individual’s entry into religion could be one element of a larger agreement that brought to the religious house something it wanted.

. . . Redoret, priest and lord of the church of Crossac, . . . came to Abbot Justin of Redon and to the other brethren. He handed over himself, all his possessions, his father, his mother, and his little son Restanet, with this agreement: they should take the religious habit, and he would retain the forenamed church by the leave of the monks until they ordered him to put on the habit. Thereafter the monks should possess all he owned. . . .

In this transaction the monks of Redon received two older adults and a boy, none of whom had an obvious religious calling, and agreed to receive the priest at some future time, in order to obtain a valuable possession, a church.

A charter of Saint Aubin at Angers illustrated even more pointedly how a patron could aid a man, in this case a soldier, who might not otherwise have been able to enter religion. A lord named Adam was disputing with the monks about the church of Bousse and the vicaria of l’Aleu:

It happened that a certain soldier of Adam, Hugo by name, who had served him well in secular subjection, wished to be a monk. Therefore Adam ordered Abbot Othbrannus and the congregation . . . for his sake to make of the aforementioned soldier a monk. By a friendly reciprocity he gave them the church and handed over the vicaria. It was agreed between the monks and lord Adam that the monks should satisfy him by receiving his soldier as a monk, and that lord Adam should do what he had promised before. . . .

Thus the negotiations that normally preceded entry into religion on occasion served as a form of diplomacy, in which important men were bound to the religious house by ties created when their friends and protégés were received into the community.
In addition to the termination of litigation and to the winning of favor from influential men, there was yet a third broad category of conditions under which new members were received. The religious were apparently aware that the complex collection of properties and rights constituting their patrimony often needed consolidation and, to use a modern term, rationalization. It was easier and more profitable to collect the whole of a tithe than it was to collect one-eighth of it. Religious houses also sought self-sufficiency, and they might need a meadow or a mill or some other element to meet a specific requirement. Some religious communities tried, as opportunity appeared, to round out their domains by purchase, exchange, and soliciting particular gifts. They also sought properties and rights that would complement their holdings and would meet their immediate or long-range needs. The reception of a new member presented important opportunities for this work of consolidation. The potential monk’s family expected to offer something for his reception, and it was in the religious house’s interest to pressure for a gift that would be useful to it. Since the properties of the house and the local lay world interpenetrated or were often parts of a subdivided whole, the religious must have found on occasion that their new member, born of a family often of local origin, could bring something particular that they wanted. If the family could not be induced to give outright a particular property, then at least it might agree to sell it to the religious, for there were rights and properties that might be difficult even to buy without some inducement. Entrance gifts and purchases alternated over a period of years until a monastery had reconstituted a more or less consolidated possession. A charter from the Cistercian house of Berdoues, dated 1181, reveals the details of one successful attempt at consolidation. Over a period of years the monks of Berdoues received a man as a monk, paid his niece and nephew 42 shillings, received both of them into the prayer confraternity of the house, and promised to receive the nephew if at some future time he wished to become a monk. The charter states clearly the net result of this mix of religious and secular payments:
And now the brethren of Berdoues possess in permanent right the entire villa of Lezian and the entire church, with all their appurte­nances, both as a result of these donors and as a result of Arnald of Lezian, their uncle, a monk of Berdoues.75

Although this charter is more explicit than most, it reveals a re­sult that is to be found in other charters as well:

Hugo Berlaius of Fay had a tithe in the parish of Saint Peter of Ce­tone, and the monks of Saint Denys of Nogent possessed a third part of the same tithe. He decided that he would make a monk of his little son who was a cleric, and he gave to the monks who received the boy as a monk two parts of the same tithe. . . .76

The monks also paid Hugo one hundred shillings and promised him an honorable burial. With this combination of a reception, cash, and spiritual benefits, the monks consolidated their posses­sion of a tithe.

In most cases it is difficult to know with certainty whether such consolidations took place by accident and luck or by plan­ning. The basic idea of consolidating property for the sake of spiritual isolation and economic convenience was well known in the twelfth century. The ascetic, separatist orders of that time, like the Cistercians and the Carthusians, sought as a matter of policy to own entire blocks of land. They systematically removed all outsiders possessing rights and properties within the bound­aries of their blocks. They did this primarily for the sake of separation from worldly affairs, but there were economic advan­tages as well, for such consolidated territories could be exploited effectively by conversi and granges. Furthermore, a religious house that had exclusive possession of a property stood less chance of being involved in litigation about that property.77 It seems clear that even in some of the houses of the older tradition, the entry of a new monk was seen as an opportunity to acquire in a rather non-systematic way needed or complementary additions to the monastic patrimony.

The conclusion is inescapable that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries reception of new members into religious houses had a
significance far beyond that of perpetuating a celibate community. Undoubtedly, many new members brought with them a modest, uncomplicated gift of land, money, or rights. But the monastic cartularies make clear that the negotiations about entry and the entry gift were used by the religious to protect or to advance their interests. Such negotiations about reception were expected, respectable, and legitimate in the eyes of contemporaries, and only in the 1120s and thereafter were serious questions raised about their propriety.


2. Capitula de causis, chap. 11, Capitularia 1:164. See also Capitulare missorum in Theodonis villa datum (805), chap. 12, Capitularia 1:122; Council of Aries (813), chap. 8, Concilia aevi Karolini, ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH, Legum sectio 3 (Hanover, 1908), vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 251; and Council of Reims (813), chap. 27, ibid., p. 256.

3. Chap. 9, Capitularia 1:373.


10. Constable, Monastic Tithes, p. 98, points out that episcopal attempts at control were generally a formality.

12. Rudolph, abbot of Saint Trond, reported that when the popularity of the shrine of Saint Trond was at its height in the eleventh century, it produced more revenue than all the rest of the monastery's income combined (Chronique de l’abbaye de Saint Trond, ed. C. de Borman [Liège, 1872], 1:18).

13. Monastic cartularies often contain inventories of income, particularly of revenues marked for support of the individual officials of the house. Such inventories reveal how diverse and scattered sources of income could be: see Conques, nos. 87, 372, 386, 457, 478, 529; St. Vaast, pp. 205, 215, 217.


15. M. Bloch, Feudal Society, trans. L. Manyon (London, 1961), 1:203-6. Duby, Rural Economy, p. 182, says that lay lands were in a state of flux and dissolution as a result of socially demanded division, as in St. Sernin, no. 7, 1158, a charter that records a family's sale of a portion of an honor in order to use the sale price to make a daughter a nun.


18. Gellone, no. 300, 1100-1102; Ronceray, no. 271, ca. 1100. See also Redon, no. 387, 1148: one-seventh of the tithe of half a villa; St. Maur, no. 18, ca. 1066: one-third of the income from five church feast days; Ronceray, no. 397, ca. 1105: one-twelfth of an altar and a tithe.

19. Ronceray, no. 343, before 1100: half of one mill and one-quarter of another; St. Aubin, vol. 1, no. 170, 1082-1106: one-quarter of certain fishing rights; St. Stephen, no. 240, 1083-98: one-half of a field; St. Pére, vol. 1, no. 61, 1035-63: one-quarter of a villa, a woods, a mill, and a meadow.

20. L. Genicot, "L'Evolution des dons aux abbayes dans le comté de Namur du x° au xiv° siècle," XXX° congrès de la fédération archéologique et historique de Belgique: annales (Brussels, 1936), pp. 139-42, traces the increasingly fragmented and condition-laden character of gifts to religious houses after the eleventh century. Genicot attributed the decline in number and size of gifts to the financial distress of the nobility. Duby, Rural Economy, pp. 182-86, notes that a decline in gifts was merely one of several steps taken by the nobility to protect its position. M.-J. LeCacheux, Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Amand de Rouen des origines à la fin du xve siècle (Caen, 1937), p. 140, detects a similar decline in number and size of gifts to Saint Amand in the thirteenth century. See also Ganshof and Verhulst, "Medieval Agrarian Society," in Cambridge Economic History, 1:300-301.

22. Duby, *Rural Economy*, pp. 175-76, 182, notes that distant or superfluous possessions were customarily granted out in various forms of tenure to powerful "friends" of a monastery to bind them more closely to it. *Aniane*, no. 46, 1097: the house regranted most of a gift to the giver, but retained control of a church; *Vaux de Cernay*, no. 37, 1170-96: a woman's gift was traded back to her son in return for some marl-bearing lands. When a property of Saint Trond had been re-integrated into the house's possession at great cost and then proved unmanageable, abbot Rudolph exchanged it for a more useful possession (*Gesta abbatum Trudonensium*, bk. 10, chap. 4, ed. R. Koepke, MGH, SS, vol. 10 [Hanover, 1852], p. 292).


24. I. Leclercq, "La Crise du monachisme aux xi\(^{\text{e}}\) et xii\(^{\text{e}}\) siècles," *Bulletino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 70 (1958): 19-41, finds that the recurring themes in the criticism of monasticism from 1050 to 1150 were the wealth and worldliness of the Benedictine houses.


29. *St. Pére*, vol. 2, no. 32, 1101-29: the family of a monk *ad succurrendum* was forced to agree that if its gift was not secure and free from litigation within two years, it would give another gift of comparable value; *St. Aubin*, vol. 1, no. 55, date uncertain: a man was promised entry if he settled all claims against his dwelling place and gave it as a gift; *La Chronique de Saint-Hubert dite Catinatorium*, ed. K. Hanquet (Brussels, 1906), pp. 58-65.

30. For a study of arrangements with religious houses to obtain life rents, see E. Lesne, "Une Source de la fortune monastique: les donations à charge de pension alimentaire..."


32. If a relative was absent, the charter might record that fact: St. Trinité, vol. 1, no. 134, 1060; St. Père, vol. 2, no. 24, 1109: an absent daughter was sought out for her consent, and the unexpected return of another absent relative threw the situation into turmoil. J.-G. Bulliot, Essai historique sur l'abbaye de Saint-Martin d'Autun (Autun, 1849), vol. 2, no. 34, 1218: a father promised to force his absent son to agree to a gift.

33. St. Denis, no. 67, 1160: donors promised explicitly that when an infant grew up, he would confirm a gift.

34. Redon, no. 363, 1095: a gift was made "cum consensu suorum aliorum filiorum et parentum."


37. Redon, no. 295, 1081-83.


39. St. Stephen, no. 67, 1100: donors promised explicitly that when an infant grew up, he would confirm a gift.


41. In theory, prescription should have given security to possessors; see R. Naz, "Prescription," DDC, vol. 7, cols. 178-94; but claims of kin could not be dismissed easily: E. Durielle de Saint-Sauveur, Recherches sur l'histoire de la théorie de la mort civile des religieux (Rennes, 1910), pp. 78 ff. Vigeois, nos. 118, 122, 306, 1092-1137: a dispute of forty-five years' duration was settled by a compromise favorable to the lay disputant; Vigeois, no. 322, 1147-64: an entrant confirmed a gift that had been made fifty years earlier; Redon, no. 295, 1081-83: a deadbed entrant confirmed gifts of his father and grandfather, which he had refused to confirm earlier; St. Victor, vol. 1, no. 449, 1079, and vol. 2, no. 702, 1156: the monks paid claimants who disputed a gift made seventy-five years before.


43. St. Père, vol. 2, no. 53, 1119-23: a lord was paid for his assent. On other occasions full or partial payment for a lord's assent included admission of some dependent to the monastery: St. Père, vol. 1, no. 3, 1079-88; Ronceray, no. 354, 1120.

44. St. Maur, no. 58, ca. 1140.


46. Génestal, Rôle des monastères, pp 73-81, notes that Norman monasteries used mortgages as a preferred way to obtain property in the twelfth century. Monasteries frequently received indebted properties as entry gifts: Conques, no. 572, 1060; Redon, no. 352, 1104; Berdoues, no. 135, 1208; no. 120, date uncertain; Vigeois, no. 338, 1165-71: in order to regain direct possession of one of its fiefs, the monastery received four male members of a family, gave a life rent to a wife, and paid large debts on the property in question.

47. Pott 252

48. Gellone, no. 206, 1062: a donor's mother retained lifetime use of part of a gift;
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St. Père, vol. 2, no. 172, 1130-50: a donor retained half of the revenue from a gift for his lifetime, and after his death a cousin litigated successfully for the donor's half; Vigeois, no. 169, 1096: a gift would pass to the monastery after the deaths of the donor's children; Cîteaux, no. 158, ca. 1160: a priest offered a gift but retained usufruct for life.


50. Saint Trond near Liège had suffered from disputed abbacies and the enmity of some neighbors who usurped its property. In order to increase its numbers, the house was compelled to receive some unsavory and unstable monks: Gesta abbatum Trudonensium, MGH, SS, 10:257. From 1098 to 1112 Cîteaux could attract no recruits because of its poverty: Exordium parvum, chap. 17, in J. Turk, "Cistercii statuta antiquissima," Analecta sacri ordinis cisterciensis 4 (1948): 34.

51. In twelfth- and early thirteenth-century sources, complaints about overpopulation in religious houses are common, and complaints about a shortage of recruits are rare: Statuta, chapitres généraux et visites de l'ordre de Cluny, ed. G. Charvin (Paris, 1965), vol. 1, no. 3, p. 55, 1205-6; no. 8, p. 43, 1200; and Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis cisterciensis, ed. J. M. Canivez (Louvain, 1933), vol. 1, no. 2, p. 118, 1190; no. 9, p. 225, 1198; no. 5, pp. 306-7, 1205; no. 12, p. 359, 1209. Charters confirm the view that the religious could and did refuse entry to some: St. Aubin, vol. 1, no. 328, 1060-67; no. 294, 1070; no. 45, 1092-1106. Caesarius of Heisterbach, Dialogus miraculorum, ed. J. Strange (Cologne, 1851), 1:43, 45-46, 224, indicates that in the first third of the thirteenth century the Cistercian houses with which he was familiar could afford to turn away recruits.

52. The frequency with which entry charters contained a renunciation of claims against monastic possessions is a sign that entry negotiations played a key role in stabilizing monastic possessions: St. Père, vol. 2, no. 29, 1101-29; Ronceray, nos. 93, 95, 96, ca. 1080; St. Aubin, vol. 2, no. 432, 1107-20; Gimont, vol. 1, no. 59, 1179; vol. 6, no. 61, 1173; Gellone, no. 206, 1082.

53. Rufinus, Summa decretorum, in Die summa decretorum des Magister Rufinus, ed. H. Singer (Paderborn, 1902), p. 224: "Puta ecclesia beati Petri habebat cum Scannabico causam de quodam predio, cumque Scannabicus filium suum in eadem ecclesia peteret ordinari, non aliter annuunt canonici, nisi ipse vel X libras pro filio offerat vel liti cedat." The same example was used by John of Faenza in his commentary on Gratian (BN lat. 14606, fol. 111'). In a twelfth-century collection of canonistic quaestiones, it was asked whether it was permissible for a child to be received as a canon on the condition that his father cease to seize and harass the property of the canonry (G. Fransen, "Les 'questiones' des canonistes: essai de dépouillement et de classement," Traditio 12 [1956]: no. 32, p. 576).

54. St. Aubin, vol. 2, no. 675, 1195: the monks and a priest named Robert disputed over certain properties and debts. An amicable agreement was worked out, which included: "Rursus, abbas monacabit nepotem Roberti, Johannem nomine, et vestiet eum in ingressu monasterii; exinde Robertus vestiet eum omnibus diebus vitae sue et habebit eum secum in predicta domo, etiam statim monachatum."

55. Ronceray, no. 95, ca. 1080. See also Aniane, no. 121, 1110: a man relinquished a claim against a tithe in order to be received ad succurrendum; Aniane, no. 327, 1204: a man compensated for the depredations of his parents, uncles, and other relatives in order to have a son received; St. Trinité, vol. 2, no. 586, 1188: a family dropped claims against a vineyard in order to have a member received.

56. St. Aubin, vol. 2, no. 432, 1107-20; Gimont, pt. 6, no. 3, 1162; no. 61, 1173.
57. *St. Aubin*, vol. 2, no. 432, 1107-20; *St. Trinite*, vol. 3, no. 671, 1107-20: the monks flatly refused to bury a dead man until his sons renounced a claim against the monastery.

58. *St. Aubin*, vol. 1, no. 328, 1060-67; vol. 2, no. 873, 1114; *St. Trinite*, vol. 2, no. 487, 1140; no. 528, ca. 1150; no. 619, 1199; no. 640, 1203.

59. *St. Père*, vol. 2, no. 6, ca. 1095.

60. Children almost invariably needed a patron or a gift, or both, to be received: *St. Trinite*, vol. 2, no. 335, ca. 1095; vol. 3, no. 649, 1207; *St. Aubin*, vol. 2, no. 659, 1096; *Ronceray*, no. 405, 1111-20; *St. Père*, vol. 2, no. 82, 1130-50; Odo Rigaud, *Registrum*, pp. 207, 310, 338.

61. Letter of Bishop Marbod to Vitalis of Savigny, Migne, vol. 171, cols. 1474-75: if Vitalis would receive a poor girl at Marbod’s request, the bishop promised he would “gladly favor you if you think something should be sought from my humility.”

62. From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, the papacy perfected a system of appointing to benefices (G. Barraclough, *Papal Provisions* [Oxford, 1935]). An analogous though less-developed movement went on with relation to religious houses (U. Berlière, *Le Recrutement dans les monastères bénédictins aux xiiie et xixe siècles*, Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques: Mémoires in 8°, vol. 19, fasc. 6 [1924], pp. 34-35). See JL 11316 and 13135; by 1196 papal letters requesting entry were common enough to be obtained under false pretenses (JL 17426a).

63. *St. Trinite*, vol. 2, no. 335, 1091: the monastery was given a gift on condition that the monks negotiate entry to a nunnery for the donor’s sister; *Ronceray*, no. 405, 1111-20: the cathedral chapter of Le Mans asked for the reception of a girl, the chapter gave the nunnery some revenues, and each house received the other in beneficium and fraternitas.

64. *St. Trinite*, vol. 2, no. 479, ca. 1137: a monk was received at the request of the bishop of Angers and of a subdeacon of Orleans. Innocent III ordered the bishop of Norwich to stop forcing the prior of the cathedral monastery to accept his nominees (*The Letters of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) concerning England and Wales*, ed. C. and M. Cheney [Oxford, 1967], no. 205, 1200).


67. *St. Père*, vol. 2, no. 35, 1101-29: a child was offered as a pignus and testimonium of a gift; *Ronceray*, no. 304, 1075: a man offered the house auxilium necessaribus rebus if it accepted his daughter; *Redon*, no. 356, 1086-91: the monks actively solicited the offer of a child in order to end enmity between the house and a local family; *St. Stephan*, no. 71, 1098-99: a child was offered in testimonio of the restitution of a church; *St. Derry*, no. 70, ca. 1100: a knight offered auxilium and consilium in return for a son’s reception. The Paris theologian Peter the Chanter defended such receptions to promote a public good, like peace (*Summa de sacramentis*, ed. J.-A. Dugauquier [Louvain, 1963], vol. 3, part 2a, p. 25: “Esto enim quod ecclesia desiderat favorem principis propter liberationem ecclesie, propter ejus tuitionem, et canonicali filium eius hac intentione. Videtur hoc licitum esse”).

68. *Redon*, no. 374, 1104(7): “... Redoret, prebyster et dominus ecclesiæ Croachac, ... ad ecclesie rothonensis abbatem nomine Justinum venerit, et ad religios fratres, et se et omnia suas necnon et patrem et matrem et parvulum filium suum Restante...
tradiderit, hoc tamen pacto ut illi habitum religionis sumerent, et ipse ecclesiam predicam. licentia monachorum, donec pannos sumere ammonerent, teneret, ita ut monachi . . . post hoc omnia sua, . . . possideret."


70. Sancti Benedicti Regula, chap. 66.
71. Genicot, "L’Evolution des dons," pp. 141-42, discusses examples of reconstitution of fragmented properties. W. Kurze, "Der Adel und das Kloster S. Salvatore all’Isola im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert," Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken 47 (1967): 518-20, discusses the economic policy of Abbot Hugh (1154-95), who consciously sought to increase and to round out the abbey’s holdings by shrewd purchases. Some houses brought back into direct control properties that had been given out on feudal tenure and that had become hereditary in the family of the lay holder: Gesta abbatum Trudonensium, MGH, SS, 10:292; St. Aubin, vol. 2, no. 884, 1127; Vigeois, no. 338, 1165-71.

72. In reaction against precisely such calculation, the Grandmontines forbade their members to choose or to ask for particular properties from patrons or entrants (Regula, chaps. 19, 21, in Becquet, Scriptores, pp. 80-81).
73. St. Aubin, vol. 2, no. 884, 1127: a sick man was received ad succurrendum in return for a modest gift. The monks sought for a mill from his wife, and when she balked at donating it, they purchased it from her.
74. Gellone, no. 293, 1079; St. Stephan, no. 296, 1084; Ronceray, no. 273, ca. 1100; St. Trinité, vol. 2, no 386, ca. 1100. Charters often noted when a new acquisition was near other possessions of the house: St. Pére, vol. 2, no. 24, ca. 1109; Citeaux, no. 158, ca. 1160. Charters likewise noted when claims against properties of the house were extinguished: St. Trinité, vol. 2, no 407, ca. 1140; vol. 3, no. 649, 1207; St. Pére, vol. 2, no. 108, 1120-50.
75. Berdoues, no. 197, 1181: "Et nunc fratres de Berdonis possident omnem villam de Lesiano et omnem ecclesiam cum omnibus pertinentiis eorum jure perpetuo tam ab ipsis donatoribus quam ab Arnaldo de Leciano, avunculo eorum, monacho Berdonarum."
76. St. Denys, no. 67, ca. 1100: "Hugo Berlaius de Faieto habebat decimam in parrochia Beati-Petri de Cetone, tertiam partem cujus decime habebant monachi Beati-Dionisii de Nogento, et placuit ei quod faceret monachum de quodam clericulo filio suo, et dedit monachis duas partes supradicte decime, qui puerum susceperunt in monachum. . . ."