

*Crises of cenobitism: abbatial leadership and monastic competition in late-eleventh-century Flanders**

Monastic institutions made a significant contribution to the emergence and consolidation of the mighty county of Flanders in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.¹ Following the division of the Frankish empire in 843, more than a dozen *pagi* situated in the extreme north-eastern part of the Western Frankish kingdom became progressively integrated into the patrimony of one family, the first historically attested head of which was Count Baldwin I, also known as Baldwin Ironarm (861-879). Although formally he only controlled the *pagi* of Ghent and Waas, Baldwin forced himself into a privileged alliance with the Western Frankish dynasty by abducting and marrying Charles the Bald's daughter Judith. As a result, in 864 he was entrusted by the king with the Ternois and Flanders, as well as the lay abbacy of Saint-Peter in Ghent. Baldwin's position was not hereditary, and his son Baldwin II (879-918), who must be considered the real

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¹ On the early history of Flanders, see among others A.C.F. Koch, 'Het graafschap Vlaanderen van de 9de eeuw tot 1070', in D.P. Blok, ed., *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden 1: Middeleeuwen* (Haarlem, 1981), pp. 354-383, and H.J. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in northern France and England, c. 879-1160* (Leyden, 2004). On the monastic history of Flanders in the central middle ages, see E. De Moreau, *Histoire de l'église en Belgique*, II (Brussels, 1946, revised edition); B. Meijns, *Aken of Jeruzalem? Het ontstaan en de hervorming van de kanonikale instellingen in Vlaanderen tot circa 1155*, 2 vols. (Louvain, 2000); and K. Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (Woodbridge, 2005).

founder of an actual comital dynasty, was forced to conquer the lands previously controlled by his father. His expansion was kept in check by various ecclesiastical and secular allies of successive Western Frankish kings, even though he managed to find powerful allies in the kings of Wessex.² The abbots of Saint-Bertin near Saint-Omer, Saint-Vaast in Arras and Elnone/Saint-Amand, all institutions situated in the southern parts of Baldwin I's territories, played a key role in a decades-long struggle for political supremacy over the region, with the former two institutions doubling as fortifications against the Norman invaders. By the 890s, however, Baldwin II had gradually taken control of Ternois, Artois and Vermandois, and in 900, he obtained the lay abbacy of Saint-Bertin, where his father lay buried. When Baldwin II died in 918, the Ternois and the lay abbacy of Saint-Bertin passed to his son Adalulf, while the Flemish heartland and the lay abbacy of Saint-Peter in Ghent were given to Arnulf I (918-965). The Artois, which included the strategically situated city of Arras (and the prestigious and wealthy abbey of Saint-Vaast) would remain a bone of contention until Arnulf conquered the region in the 930s. Immediately after taking over Arras, he assumed the title of lay abbot of Saint-Vaast.

Just how crucial these institutions were to the Flemish dynasty – in a symbolic, economic and political sense – became evident when Arnulf reformed all male monasteries on his territories (including the abbey of Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavon in Ghent, Saint-Bertin, Saint-

² On relations between Flanders and England, see in the first place Ph. Grierson, 'The Relations between England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, 23 (1941), pp. 71-112; and B. Meijns, 'The Policy of Relic Translations of Baldwin II of Flanders (879-918), Edward of Wessex (899-924), and Aethelflaed of Mercia (d. 924): A Key to Anglo-Flemish Relations?', in D. Rollason, C. Leyser, and H. Williams, eds., *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 473-493.

Vaast and Saint-Amand) in the 940s and early 950s.³ Not only did the reforms allow him to turn these institutions into efficient 'prayer machines' serving the spiritual and memorial interests of the comital dynasty, but they also enabled him to consolidate his de facto control over them. One of the principal results of the reforms, the abolition of the lay abbacy, has recently been interpreted as a clever tactic to abolish all royal prerogatives as regards these institutions, and (through the right to approve newly elected abbots and the advocacy) to transfer all forms of secular control to the count himself.⁴ By the mid-tenth century, the former royal monasteries of Flanders had become comital monasteries, and the close relations between them can be best witnessed in the emergence of Saint-Peter in Ghent as the county's religious centre. For more than a century, the abbey would serve as a comital necropolis, attracting major gifts from members of the higher regional elite and serving both as Flanders' religious centre and as a symbolic point where the county's secular alliances converged.⁵ Other institutions, most notably Saint-Bertin, acted as intermediaries in the counts' diplomatic relations with foreign rulers.⁶ The

³ See most recently S. Vanderputten and B. Meijns, 'Gérard de Brogne en Flandre. Etat de la question sur les réformes monastiques du dixième siècle', *Revue du Nord*, 385 (2010), pp. 271-295 (with extensive bibliographical references).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ G. Declercq, 'Blandinium rond het jaar 1000. Twee eeuwen monastieke bloei en uitstraling in de Gentse Sint-Pietersabdij', *Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde van Gent*, 58 (2004), pp. 59-82.

⁶ Grierson, 'The Relations'; S. Vanderputten, 'Canterbury and Flanders in the Late Tenth Century', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 35 (2006), pp. 219-244, and Id., 'Individual Experience, Collective Remembrance, and the Politics of Monastic Reform in High Medieval Flanders', *Early Medieval Europe*, 19 (2011), in press.

ruthless way in which the successive counts of Flanders used the abbeys' intellectual, financial and other resources shows to what extent their power and status depended upon these institutions. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, throughout the second half of the tenth and early eleventh century, third parties tried to counter these quasi-regal ambitions by infringing on the counts' quasi-monopoly in controlling Flemish monasticism.⁷ When Count Baldwin IV (988-1035) agreed to let the Lotharingian reformers, led by Richard of Saint-Vanne (d. 1047), reform Flanders' monasteries, he did so, among other reasons, to regain control over a number of institutions situated in the recently re-conquered southern border regions of the county.⁸ The counts' support of a third 'wave' of reforms, which began with that of Saint-Bertin in 1099/1100

⁷ The Ottonians were instrumental in the resurgence of the abbey of Saint-Bavon in Ghent (Declercq, '*Blandinium* rond het jaar 1000'); the same abbey and those of Saint-Peter and Marchiennes also benefited from the support of the Western Frankish King Lothar (charters edited respectively in Gysseling and Koch, *Diplomata belgica*, n. 15, pp. 228-230; *Ibid.*, n. 62, p. 158-160, and L. Halphen and F. Lot, *Recueil des actes de Lothaire et de Louis V, rois de France (954-987)* (Paris, 1908), n. 34, pp. 93-94), while Saint-Bertin also sought, and obtained, a privilege from Emperor Henry II in 1015 (J.F. Böhmer and T. Graff, *Regesta Imperii II. Sächsisches Haus 919-1024. 4: Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Heinrich II. 1002-1024* (Vienna, Cologne and Graz, 1971), n. 1500; also Vanderputten, 'Individual Experience').

⁸ H. Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard, abbé de Saint-Vanne de Verdun † 1046* (Louvain and Paris, 1946), pp. 172-197; P.G. Jestice, *Wayward Monks and the Religious Revolution of the Eleventh Century* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), 170-209; F.G. Hirschmann, 'Klosterreform und Grundherrschaft. Richard von St. Vanne', in A. Haverkamp and F.G. Hirschmann, eds., *Grundherrschaft - Kirche - Stadt zwischen Maas und Rhein während des hohen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1997), pp. 125-170; and S. Vanderputten and B. Meijns, 'Realities of Reformist Leadership in Early Eleventh-Century Flanders. The Case of Leduin, Abbot of Saint-Vaast', *Traditio*, 65 (2010), pp. 47-74.

and spread across the whole of Flanders during the following decades, has once again been interpreted as being inspired at least partially by a desire to regain control over the wealthy monasteries and establish closer ties with those local elites who had claimed the lay offices of these institutions.⁹

While the history of Flemish monasticism up to and including the reforms of the early eleventh century is now relatively well documented, scholars' lack of attention to the period between c. 1030-40 and the reforms of the early twelfth century had left a significant gap in our understanding of institutional development in that region. To non-specialists of Flemish history, this may seem rather surprising, for it is exactly that period which has been the subject of intense debates relating to the so-called 'crisis of cenobitism'. To briefly summarise these debates, scholars such as Germain Morin, Jean Leclercq and Norman Cantor argued that the sudden emergence of new forms of religious communal life in the mid- to late-eleventh century was due to 'traditional' monasticism losing its ability to meet the changing expectations of secular society and to impose on its members a way of life that corresponded in both spirit and practice with the norm of Benedict's *Rule*.¹⁰ But as John Van Engen has persuasively demonstrated, part of this argument derives from criticism by representatives of the new orders

⁹ As argued in S. Vanderputten, 'Fulcard's Pigsty. Cluniac Reformers, Dispute Settlement and The Lower Aristocracy in Early-Twelfth-Century Flanders', *Viator*, 38 (2007), pp. 91-115.

¹⁰ See G. Morin, 'Rainaud l'ermite et Ives de Chartres: Un épisode de la crise du cénobitisme au XIe-XIIe siècle', *Revue bénédictine*, 40 (1928), pp. 99-115; C. Dereine, 'Odon de Tournai et la crise du cénobitisme au XIe siècle', *Revue du moyen âge latin*, 4 (1948), pp. 137-154; J. Leclercq, 'La crise du monachisme aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo*, 70 (1958), pp. 19-41 ; and N. Cantor, 'The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130', *American Historical Review*, 66 (1960-1), pp. 47-67.

regarding the excesses of a traditional Benedictinism which had grown explosively during that very period.¹¹ Under the influence of various factors, including the reform movement within the Church, demographic growth, the changing nature of the economy and of political power, and new expectations regarding the laity's involvement in religious practices, monastic groups successfully adapted their recruitment policies, changed their attitudes towards making connections with lay society, and began looking for ways to create supra-institutional networks. Overall, society's response to these interventions was positive, and traditional monasticism grew dramatically, both as new foundations and in terms of recruitment. While the initial success of alternative forms of religious organisation drew far more attention from contemporary commentators, and the voices of the critics of traditional monasticism were often much louder than those of its defenders, Benedictinism reached the pinnacle of its expansion in the decades around 1100. The county of Flanders is a good case in point: in 1020, the region counted six monasteries, all of which had been founded in the seventh century: Saint-Bertin, Saint-Vaast, Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavon in Ghent, Saint-Amand, and the nunnery of Marchiennes. In the 1020s, the former communities of canons in Bergues-Saint-Winnoc (1022) and Denain (1024/5) were converted into a male and a female community of Benedictines, respectively, while Marchiennes (1024) was turned into a male house.¹² Then, between the

¹¹ J. Van Engen, 'The Crisis of Cenobitism Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050-1150', *Speculum*, 61 (1986), pp. 269-304, reprinted in *Religion in the History of the Medieval West* (Aldershot, 2004), at pp. 269-304.

¹² On Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, see below. For the other two monasteries, see respectively J.-P. Gerzaguët, *L'abbaye féminine de Denain des origines à la fin du XIII^e siècle. Histoire et chartes* (Paris, 2007), and Vanderputten and Meijns, 'Realities' (with extensive references).

years 1050 and 1100, the religious landscape of Flanders was completely transformed. As the number of houses of secular and regular canons and other types of religious institution exploded in the latter half of the eleventh century,¹³ so did that of Benedictine institutions, which literally doubled in just half a century.¹⁴

There are certainly numerous examples of difficult phases in the mid- to late-eleventh-century history of individual monasteries that belonged to the ‘traditional’ strand of cenobitism. As Van Engen argued, regional studies of the development of traditional monasticism are

¹³ See B. Meijns, ‘L’ordre canonial dans le Comté de Flandre depuis l’époque mérovingienne jusqu’à 1155. Typologie, chronologie et constantes de l’histoire de fondation et de réforme’, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, 97 (2002), pp. 5-58, and ead., ‘La réorientation du paysage canonial en Flandre et le pouvoir des évêques, comtes et nobles (XIe siècle-première moitié du XIIe siècle)’, *Le Moyen Âge*, 112 (2006), pp. 111-134.

¹⁴ Important foundations include Hasnon, Messines, Bourbourg, Ename, Saint-Jean-au-Mont in Thérouanne, Oudenburg, Saint-Martin in Tournai, and Geraardsbergen. The lay elites in some of Flanders’ satellite counties were involved in founding the monasteries of Affligem, Anchin, Andres, Auchy-les-Moines, Etrun, Ham, Hesdin, La Beuvrière, Pommeroeuil, Saint-Denis-en-Broqueroie and Saint-Sépulchre in Cambrai. See De Moreau, *Histoire de l’église*, especially Map 1; B. Delmaire, *Le diocèse d’Arras de 1093 au milieu du XIVe siècle. Recherches sur la vie religieuse dans le nord de la France au Moyen Âge*, 2 vols. (Arras, 1994), *passim*, and J.-P. Gerzaguët, ‘Crises, réforme et renouveau du monachisme Bénédictin dans le diocèse de Thérouanne aux XIe et XIIe siècles’, in J. Rider and B.-M. Tock, eds., *Le diocèse de Thérouanne au Moyen Âge. Actes de la journée d’études tenue à Lille le 3 mai 2007 (Mémoires de la Commission Départementale d’Histoire et d’Archéologie du Pas-De-Calais*, 39 (2010)), pp. 53-79. On Anchin, see J.-P. Gerzaguët, *L’abbaye d’Anchin de sa fondation (1079) au XIVe siècle. Essor, vie et rayonnement d’une grande communauté bénédictine* (s.l., 1997). The date and circumstances of the foundation of Affligem are disputed; for a *status quaestionis*, see E. Van Mingroot, *Les chartes de Gérard Ier, Liébert et Gérard II, évêques de Cambrai et d’Arras, comtes du Cambrésis (1012-1092/93)* (Louvain, 2005), pp. 231-238, and the introduction of the forthcoming edition of the charters of the dukes of Brabant by A. Dierkens and D. Guillardian.

needed “to determine when such ruinations multiplied into an irreversible trend, as the ‘crisis’ interpretation suggests it did during the years 1050-1150, or when these represented isolated cases that awaited the next reforming, abbot, bishop, or lord”.¹⁵ This paper, while subscribing to the need for regional studies, adopts a somewhat different perspective, arguing that the challenges faced by the ‘older’ Benedictine institutions were due to a combination of structural factors, which related to the general situation of traditional monasticism in Flemish society, and endemic ones, which related to the institutional dynamics and historical legacies of each specific institution. Focusing on the leadership of one Flemish abbey, Saint-Bertin, and how it dealt with challenges inherent to the abbey’s long-term development and the issue of intersecting institutional interests, in particular with the abbeys of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc and Auchy, I show that the expansion of traditional monasticism in the region was preceded by, and partly coincided with, a period of institutional crisis. Such a crisis, in which the loss of former patrons played a determinant role alongside other factors, became evident as early as the third and fourth decades of the eleventh century, long before alternative forms of religious organisation became significant social and institutional phenomena. When the ‘wave’ of new Benedictine foundations gained momentum in the second half of the eleventh century, abbots in older houses had already initiated a slow, incremental process of restoration and “reform between the reforms” which so far has eluded the closer scrutiny of scholars. This paved the way for a restoration of former associations with highly placed patrons, the counts of Flanders in

¹⁵ Van Engen, ‘The Crisis of Cenobitism’, p. 275.

particular, and for a return to a leading role in regional monasticism several years before the Cluniac reforms of the early 1100s.¹⁶

A failed foundation that lasted eight centuries: Saint-Sylvin in Auchy

In the middle of the eleventh century, the tiny county of Hesdin emerged as one of several smaller principalities bordering the western limits of the mighty county of Flanders. Throughout his long reign, Count Enguerran (c.1067-c.1102) showed himself to be a faithful ally of the mighty counts of Flanders providing a buffer against the rival lords of Saint-Pol and Guines.¹⁷ Like these rulers, Enguerran harboured the ambition to consolidate his status by creating a sanctuary to serve as a personal necropolis, where his memory could be celebrated in perpetuity.¹⁸ Thus, in 1072, he founded the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Sylvin, in the village

¹⁶ S. Vanderputten, 'A Time of Great Confusion. Second-generation Cluniac Reformers and Resistance to Centralization in the County of Flanders (circa 1125-45)', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 102 (2007), pp. 47-75.

¹⁷ C. Dereine, 'Les limites de l'exemption monastique dans le diocèse de Thérouanne au XIe siècle: Messines, Saint-Georges-lez-Hesdin et Saint-Bertin', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire de Comines, Warneton et de la Région*, 13 (1983), pp. 39-56, esp. p. 40, and J.-F. Nieus, *Un pouvoir comtal entre Flandre et France. Saint-Pol, 1000-1300* (Brussels, 2005), pp. 65-68.

¹⁸ G. Declercq, 'Entre mémoire dynastique et représentation politique. Les sépultures des comtes et comtesses de Flandre (879-1128)', in M. Margue, M. Uhrmacher and H. Pettiau, eds., *Sépulture, mort et représentation du pouvoir au Moyen Âge* (Luxemburg and Gasperich, 2006), pp. 323-372. The foundation of Saint-Sylvin followed a successful military campaign in aid of the future Flemish Count Robert I (1071-1093); see Nieus, *Un pouvoir comtal*, p. 68.

of Auchy.¹⁹ To get the new monastery off the ground, Enguerran enlisted the help of Heribert, abbot of Saint-Bertin (1065-82). As far as we can tell, the entire first community of Saint-Sylvin was recruited from that abbey, and likewise its leadership - Abbots Sulger (1072-4), German (1074-7) and Norbert (1077-1100/1) - had all made their profession at Saint-Bertin.²⁰

For Enguerran, to enlist the help of Heribert was a natural course of action. Saint-Bertin was one of the largest and most influential monasteries in the region, and after Saint-Peter in Ghent, was also the most significant representative institution of the Flemish dynasty.²¹ Crucially, it also held the body of St Sylvin,²² which the Flemish Count Arnulf I (918-65) had stolen from the sanctuary in Auchy, a former monastic church.²³ From the 980s at the latest, St Sylvin was venerated by the monks of Saint-Bertin as a secondary patron to St Bertin, along with

¹⁹ The new monastery was created on the site of a former nunnery which had ceased to exist in the late ninth century; see C. Mériaux, *Gallia Irradiata. Saints et sanctuaires de la Nord de la Gaule du Haut Moyen Age* (Stuttgart, 2006), p. 250. Further reading on Saint-Sylvin in Bétencourt, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Silvain d'Auchy-en-Artois* (s.l., s.d. (late eighteenth century)); F.J. Parenty, 'Etude sur le cartulaire d'Auchy-les-Moines', *Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences, lettres et arts d'Arras*, 36 (1864), pp. 113-122; A. De Cardevacque, *Histoire de l'abbaye d'Auchy-les-Moines*, Arras, 1875; Fromentin, *Essai historique sur les abbés et l'abbaye de Saint-Silvin d'Auchy-les-Moines, ordre de Saint-Benoît, au diocèse de Boulogne* (Arras and Paris, 1882, revised edition); P. Hélot and R. Rodière, 'L'église abbatiale d'Auchy-les-Moines', *Bulletin de la Commission Départementale des Monuments Historiques du Pas-de-Calais*, 2nd series, 6 (1935), pp. 304-325 and M. Delecroix, 'Etudes sur le cartulaire d'Auchy-les-Hesdin', 2 vols., Université Lille 3 Phil. thesis, 1974.

²⁰ *Gallia Christiana*, X (Paris, 1751), c. 1599.

²¹ See Ugé, *Creating*, pp. 30-36.

²² On the life of St Sylvin and his early hagiography, see Mériaux, *Gallia Irradiata*, pp. 249-250.

²³ Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Sancti Bertini*, edited in O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS XIII* (Hannover, 1881), p. 630.

St Winnoc and St Folcuin. A splendid hagiographical manuscript made during the abbacy of Odbert (986-1007) and containing the lives of the four saints showed, in no uncertain terms, how the monastic community of Saint-Bertin considered them fundamental to its institutional identity.²⁴ By the early eleventh century, episcopal and papal charters began referring explicitly to the abbey as the place where the four saints were venerated, and the names of the more obscure ones (St Folcuin and St Sylvin) began appearing in liturgical manuals belonging to ecclesiastical institutions of the region and beyond.²⁵ It was obvious that the keepers of St Sylvin's body were required to sanction the foundation of a new monastery dedicated to the saint, if only to demonstrate the legitimacy of its association with that saint.

Heribert and his successors conceived their abbey's involvement in the affairs of Saint-Sylvin to be all-encompassing. When, in 1079, Bishop John of Thérouanne issued a charter to formalise the foundation, he stipulated that the community was to elect its abbots without interference from outside.²⁶ But the charter also stated that if the monks failed to find a suitable candidate in their own ranks they were required to select one from the community of Saint-

²⁴ Boulogne-Sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale, 107; see R. Gameson, 'Signed' Manuscripts From Early Romanesque Flanders: Saint-Bertin and Saint-Vaast', in M. Gullick, ed., *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools* (Walkern, 2006), pp. 43-44 and S. Vanderputten and T. Snijders, 'Stability and Transformation in the Cult of an Early Medieval Saint: the Case of Bishop Folcuin of Thérouanne († 855)', *Studi Medievali*, in press.

²⁵ Mériaux, *Gallia Irradiata*, p. 366.

²⁶ Edited in De Cardevacque, *Histoire*, no. 1, pp. 173-175; see also N.-N. Huyghebaert, 'Les origines de l'abbaye de Saint-Jean-au-Mont près de Thérouanne', *Bulletin trimestriel de la société académique des antiquaires de la Morinie*, 18 (1956), p. 471, note 9, where it is argued that the surviving copies of this charter are probably all interpolated versions.

Bertin. Circumstantial evidence suggests the latter clause was included to consolidate Saint-Bertin's control over the community's leadership. Some accounts of the early history of Saint-Sylvain claim that two years before the 1079 charter was issued Heribert of Saint-Bertin had deposed Abbot German, presumably because the latter had resisted interference in his abbey's affairs.²⁷ According to an early-twelfth-century account, Norbert, German's appointed successor, was noted in particular for being a man of "great simplicity and innocence".²⁸ While these were considered outstanding monastic virtues in their own right, their use to describe an abbot may be a veiled reference to the fact that he was selected for being a candidate unlikely to object to his abbey's de facto position as a dependency of Saint-Bertin. Heribert's successors were certainly not taking any chances in this respect. When Norbert died in 1101, Abbot Lambert skipped the formalities of an election procedure and simply appointed Odo, a Cluniac monk, as abbot of Saint-Sylvain.²⁹ And in 1107, the monks of Saint-Bertin sought, and obtained, a privilege from Pope Paschal II which stated that the monks of Auchy would henceforth have to elect their abbots from the community of Saint-Bertin.³⁰ These two events, which left little to the

²⁷ Fromentin, *Essai historique*, p. 55.

²⁸ Simon Gandensis, *Chronicon Sancti Bertini*, edited in O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS XIII* (Hannover, 1881), p. 649: 'Primo igitur Alciacensis aecclesia pastore destituitur proprio, magnae simplicitatis et innocentiae viro nomine Norberto'.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 649-650. In 1104, Lambert of Saint-Bertin tellingly chose the church of Auchy as the location to conclude an agreement with a cleric over a piece of property; notice edited in B. Guérard, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Bertin* (Paris, 1841), p. 241.

³⁰ The charter is edited in Guérard, *Cartulaire*, p. 217, with emendations in D. Haigneré, *Les chartes de Saint-Bertin d'après le Grand Cartulaire de Dom Charles-Joseph Dewitte*, I (Saint-Omer, 1886), no. 109, p. 42.

imagination as far as Lambert's intentions were concerned, sparked a controversy between the two institutions that lasted well into the early modern period. The monks of Auchy continuously appealed to the papal court to obtain the right to elect the candidate of their own choice, but failed at every attempt.³¹ In the meantime, the monks of Saint-Bertin rewrote the history of their own institution to support their course of action: in a twelfth-century copy of Folcuin's tenth-century *Deeds* of the abbots of Saint-Bertin, the reference to Count Arnulf's theft of the relics of St Sylvin was erased.³² Various allegations were also made regarding the supposed ownership of the sanctuary at Auchy by the early medieval abbey of Saint-Bertin.³³

These controversies did little to conceal the fact that Saint-Sylvin had already begun a steep decline into obscurity. Even though Enguerran did find his final resting place at the abbatial church sometime around 1100-02,³⁴ as early as 1094, he and his vassals had created a new religious centre for the county by founding the priory of Saint-Georges in the burgeoning commercial town of Hesdin.³⁵ Quite possibly the count himself had gradually wearied of the tight Flemish control over this institution, and of the fact that it was situated, both literally and

³¹ Fromentin, *Essai historique*, pp. 56-57.

³² Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale, 146, fol. 51v° (the erased part concerns the words *furtim ablatum*); see Mériaux, *Gallia Irradiata*, p. 182.

³³ Fromentin, *Essai historique*, p. 52; later authors conveniently ignored Enguerran's role in the eleventh-century foundation of Saint-Sylvin.

³⁴ The church of Auchy still houses Enguerran's thirteenth-century gravestone; see *Epigraphie du Département du Pas-De-Calais. Tome VI – 1^{er} fascicule. Canton du Parcq* (Arras, 1908), pp. 3-4.

³⁵ The preferred edition of the foundation charter is in Gerzaguet, *Les chartes*, no. 10, pp. 99-101; see also Dereine, 'Les limites', pp. 46-47 and Gerzaguet, *L'abbaye d'Anchin*, p. 246.

figuratively, too close to where Flemish and Hesdinian interests met. Besides being located more conveniently in the heart of the county and subordinated to the monastery of Anchin (then in the county of Hainaut), as an institution Saint-Georges was much better suited to the scale of Hesdin's relatively closed society, attracting the patronage of a large cross-section of the rural population.³⁶ In 1100 or shortly thereafter, the abbot of Anchin arranged for the priory to receive a relic of the arm of St George,³⁷ further stimulating donations.³⁸

While Saint-Georges was thriving, Saint-Sylvin slipped off the Hesdinian elites' agenda. Around the year 1100, the flow of donations of properties and rights to Saint-Sylvin almost completely dried up.³⁹ It certainly did not help that the abbots of Saint-Bertin had refused to transfer the body (or, for that matter, any relics) of St Sylvin to the new monastery, as this had prevented the new monastery from developing a sustained local cult and an institutional identity likely to generate substantial patronage.⁴⁰ The available documentation does not allow us to see whether or not alternative transactions, including purchases, compensated for this. Judging by what we know about the monastery's situation at the end of the twelfth century, it

³⁶ See Nieus, *Un pouvoir comtal*, pp. 65-67; S. Vanderputten, 'A Compromised Inheritance. Monastic Discourse and the Politics of Property Exchange in Early-Twelfth-Century Flanders', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61 (2010), pp. 219-251.

³⁷ *Historia monasterii Aquicinctini*, edited in G. Waitz, *MGH SS XIV* (Hannover, 1883), p. 586.

³⁸ The *liber traditionum* of Saint-Georges is edited in R. Fossier, *Cartulaire-chronique du prieuré Saint-Georges d'Hesdin* (Paris, 1988).

³⁹ Delecroix, 'Etudes', esp. p. 248.

⁴⁰ Mériaux, *Gallia irradiata*, p. 250.

seems that in any case the value of such acquisitions would have been small.⁴¹ Shortly after Enguerran's death, Walter, his nephew and successor, confiscated Saint-Sylvin's properties, only to be chased from his own territories by the Flemish Count Robert II (1093-1111). In 1112, Robert's successor Baudouin VIII (1111-9) reinstated Walter under strict conditions, but proclaimed himself protector and advocate of the abbey.⁴² Saint-Sylvin was now effectively a Flemish institution, and a very minor one at that.

In discussing Auchy's decline as an independent institution, scholars have generally paid little attention to the determination with which the abbots of Saint-Bertin set out to effectuate, and then consolidate, the subordinated position of the new abbey, and to prevent it from gaining any prominence in the region. When, in 1088, Abbot John of Saint-Bertin (1082-95) transferred St Sylvin's relics to a new shrine, his colleague from Auchy was given the humble role of a mere witness to the proceedings.⁴³ As this episode shows, the publicity given to the pursuit of these goals was deliberate, and made it quite obvious to all concerned that Saint-Bertin would not tolerate Saint-Sylvin as a rival, let alone as an equal partner. How this policy originated, and what made the abbots of Saint-Bertin pursue it so aggressively can be ascertained by looking at the abbey's turbulent history over the last half a century.

Saint-Bertin in crisis

⁴¹ Delecroix, 'Etudes', p. 267.

⁴² Charter edited in F. Vercauteren, *Actes des comtes de Flandre, 1071-1128* (Brussels, 1938), pp. 137-139. See Nieuws, *Un pouvoir comtal*, p. 82.

⁴³ Haigneré, *Les chartes*, no. 86, p. 33.

Nearly everything that is known about the history of Saint-Bertin in the eleventh century derives from an account written in the first years of the twelfth century by a monk named Simon of Ghent.⁴⁴ Simon's discourse revolves entirely around showing how, for the last eight decades, abbatial government had continued along the lines of Abbot Roderic's reformist government (1021-1042).⁴⁵ It was Count Baldwin IV (988-1035) who, upon gaining control over the nearby town of Saint-Omer,⁴⁶ had called in Roderic, a monk of the abbey of Saint-Vaast in Arras and a disciple of the well-known Abbot Richard of Saint-Vanne († 1047).⁴⁷ According to Simon, Roderic encountered much resistance from the monks of Saint-Bertin, who were apparently unwilling to accept his interpretation of St Benedict's *Rule*.⁴⁸ Eventually, he claims, thanks to divine intervention the abbot overcame these challenges and the community flourished under his leadership. In reality, Roderic's reformist government suffered a number of setbacks which hindered its progression. In 1033, the abbatial church burned down, and shortly after, an epidemic killed eleven monks.⁴⁹ Over the next few years, tensions with the abbey's lay advocate

⁴⁴ Simon, *Chronicon*, pp. 635-663.

⁴⁵ Vanderputten, 'Individual Experience'.

⁴⁶ Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies*, pp. 76-78.

⁴⁷ Vanderputten, 'Individual Experience'; also H. De Laplane, *Les abbés de Saint-Bertin d'après les anciens monuments de ce monastère* (Saint-Omer, 1854), I, pp. 145-150.

⁴⁸ Simon, *Gesta*, pp. 636-637.

⁴⁹ *Vita et miracula Sancti Bertini falso adscripta Folcardo*, edited in W. Wattenbach, *MGH SS XV/1* (Hanover, 1887), p. 518 and Bovo, *Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini*, edited in *Ibid.*, pp. 517-518.

would erupt into a full-blown crisis, necessitating an intervention by the count of Flanders.⁵⁰

There is no question that the community was profoundly affected by these events. According to Roderic's successor Bovo (1042-1065), the abbey subsequently turned into a "thieves' den", and internal discipline lapsed.⁵¹

Not all of the origins of Saint-Bertin's crisis were endemic. All of the Benedictine monasteries in Flanders experienced how, sometime in the 1030s-1040s, the counts of Flanders became less involved with their former *Eigenklöster* and focused increasingly on the patronage of secular chapters and new Benedictine houses. Under the government of Count Baldwin IV (988-1035), the Ghent abbeys continued to function as principal centres of monastic life in Flanders. But their privileged relationship with the comital dynasty was sustained not so much by new alliances and exchanges, but by tradition. At Saint-Peter, the count showed little inclination to intervene in Abbot Rodbold's (995-1029) struggle against usurpations and various disputes with the abbey's lay officers.⁵² In 1037, Baldwin V (1035-67) made one final donation for the souls of his father and mother, after which the abbey would receive no such gifts for more than a century.⁵³ At Saint-Bavon, Abbot Othelbold (1019-34) sent a somewhat desperate

⁵⁰ The dispute with Gerbodo, advocate of Arques is discussed in S. Vanderputten, 'Monks, Knights, and the Enactment of Competing Social Realities in Eleventh- and Early Twelfth-Century Flanders', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), pp. 582-612.

⁵¹ *Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini*, pp. 517-518.

⁵² A.C.F. Koch, 'Diplomatische studie over de Xe- en Xle eeuwse originelen uit de Gentse Sint-Pietersabdij', in M. Gysseling and A.C.F. Koch, *Diplomata belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta* (Brussels, 1950), pp. 91-92.

⁵³ Declercq, 'Entre mémoire monastique et représentation politique', p. 357.

missive to the countess asking for more comital involvement in restoring the abbey's temporal goods.⁵⁴ For the most part, the counts appear to have been particularly interested in establishing and maintaining their rights as high advocates of these monasteries, rather than in maintaining or renewing a privileged association with them. A comital charter from 1038 regulates the advocacy of Marchiennes,⁵⁵ while another, from 1046, is a rare confirmation of the same abbey's possessions and rights.⁵⁶ At Saint-Bertin, Baldwin V intervened once, in 1042, to assert his status as high advocate,⁵⁷ but following that there is hardly any evidence of interaction between him (or his immediate successors) and the abbey.

There are several reasons for this alienation. Since the late tenth century, Baldwin IV had actively pursued the foundation of secular chapters as a means of supporting the construction of a network of castellanies in Flanders.⁵⁸ Another reason was the fact that members of the comital family abandoned the tradition of using one particular institution as their familial

⁵⁴ Edited in L. Voet, *De brief van abt Othelbold aan gravin Otgiva, over de relikwieën en het domein van de Sint-Baafsabdij te Gent* (Brussels, 1949).

⁵⁵ R. Naz, *L'avouerie de l'abbaye de Marchiennes (1038-1262)* (Paris, 1924), pp. 20-22; see S. Vanderputten, 'Monastic Literate Practices in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Northern France', *Journal of Medieval History*, 32 (2006), pp. 101-126. In 1064, the count issued a charter regulating the advocacy of the recently founded abbey of Ename; edited in C. Piot, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye d'Ename* (Bruges, 1881), no. 3, p. 5. The authenticity of this document is disputed, see Vanderputten, 'Fulcard's Pigsty', note 49.

⁵⁶ Edited in B. Delmaire, *L'histoire-polyptyque de l'abbaye de Marchiennes (1116/1121), Etude critique et édition* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1985), pp. 97-99.

⁵⁷ See note 50.

⁵⁸ Meijns, *Aken of Jeruzalem?*, p. 433 onwards.

necropolis.⁵⁹ Rather than focusing on dynastic identity in their burial practices, they now shifted to a mode of conduct in which their individual personality and achievements became the focus of attention. Not only did Saint-Peter lose its former status as a comital necropolis, but members of the comital family also began creating, and thus founding, personal sanctuaries which evidently enjoyed their special protection and benevolence. The older monasteries were often involved in this process, but rarely beneficially, as the example of Saint-Amand, a monastery situated at the much-disputed south-western border of the county, shows. In the mid-1050s, Abbot Malbod (1018-62) was asked by the count's son, the future Baldwin VI (1067-1070), to oversee the restoration of the abbey of Hasnon, at a strategically important point along the River Scarpe.⁶⁰ On 3 June 1070, the abbatial church of Hasnon was dedicated,⁶¹ and when Count Baldwin VI died on 17 July of the same year, he was buried there.⁶² In the meantime, Saint-Amand itself was struggling. When the abbey was devastated by a fire in 1066, the monks were forced to organise a translation of the body of their patron saint in order to collect funds for the construction of a new church.⁶³ Along with the abbey's privileged political status, lay patrons' inclination to bestow the abbey with gifts evaporated. Following the death

⁵⁹ Declercq, *Blandinium*, p. 371.

⁶⁰ *Historia monasterii Hasnoniensis*, edited in O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS XIV* (Hannover, 1883), pp. 154-155; see Platelle, 'Hasnon', col. 482-483 and Id., *Le temporel de l'abbaye de Saint-Amand des origines à 1340* (Paris, 1962), p. 125.

⁶¹ *Historia monasterii Hasnoniensis*, pp. 156-157.

⁶² Declercq, 'Entre mémoire monastique et représentation politique', p. 362.

⁶³ Platelle, *Le temporel*, pp. 124-125; the journey was reported in the contemporary *Miracula Amandi in itinere Gallico*, edited in AASS *Februarii I* (Antwerp, 1658), pp. 895-900.

of Malbod, donations almost ceased completely,⁶⁴ and the new abbot was unable to prevent a surge of alienations which would trouble the community for decades to come.⁶⁵ From experience, the abbots of Saint-Amand knew that the support of the count was not automatically forthcoming. Even though Malbod himself had been on cordial terms with the count,⁶⁶ the latter had shown little inclination to support the abbey if it failed to serve his own interests in equal, if not greater, measure. Thus, in 1042, he intervened in his capacity as high advocate to resolve a dispute over an usurped allod, ostensibly to demonstrate his overlordship in the secular management of monastic institutions.⁶⁷ In cases where the opportunities to assert his status were less evident, the count simply refused to intervene.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Platelle, *Le temporel*, p. 150.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 123-125.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 122-123, 137, 146-148 and 153. Saint-Amand's abbatial church in 1041 had hosted the highly politicised burial of Walter, castellan of Lens, one of the count's allies against the Bishop Gerard of Cambrai (1012-1052); see T. Riches, 'Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai-Arras, the Three Orders, and the Problem of Human Weakness', in J.S. Ott and A.T. Jones, eds., *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 133-134 and L. Morelle, 'Mémoires d'un crime: l'assassinat et l'inhumation de Gautier, châtelain excommunié de Cambrai (1041)', in J. Claustre, O. Mattéoni and N. Offenstad, eds., *Un Moyen Âge pour aujourd'hui. Mélanges offerts à Claude Gauvard* (Paris, 2010), pp. 468-477.

⁶⁷ Drogo, *Liber miraculorum Sancti Winnoci*, pp. 280-281.

⁶⁸ As reported by the monk Drogo in his *Liber miraculorum Sancti Winnoci*, edited in *AAAS Novembris III* (Brussels, 1910), pp. 275-284. Up to the second decade of the twelfth century, Malbod himself and his successors actively pursued a policy whereby deals were struck with members of the local elites to protect the interests of Saint-Amand against usurpers and other rivals; Platelle, *Le temporel*, pp. 125-126 and 209.

The downturn in Saint-Bertin's fortunes created unexpected opportunities for the abbey of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, another of Roderic's reforms, to emancipate itself from the former institution. Bergues' origins dated back to the late seventh century when the abbot of Saint-Bertin founded a small monastery dedicated to St Winnoc on an estate his abbey had recently acquired in the village of Wormhout.⁶⁹ In 846, Winnoc's relics were brought to Saint-Bertin to safeguard them from the Normans; in 899, Count Baldwin II had them retrieved for deposition in a new church built in Bergues, to the north of Wormhout, where he also installed a secular chapter. Around 1020, Baldwin IV then built a new church dedicated to Winnoc, to which he had the relics transported from the collegiate church of St Martin and Winnoc. According to a charter issued by Baldwin VI in 1067, the canons who were granted ownership of the new church soon succumbed to the temptations of wealth and "voluptuousness".⁷⁰ That may have been one of several reasons for the count to expel them and to replace them in 1022 by a community of Benedictine monks led by Roderic.⁷¹ It is unlikely that Roderic personally managed the day-to-day affairs of his second community – he probably received the assistance

⁶⁹ See B. Meijns, *Aken of Jeruzalem?*, pp. 326-333 and D.J. Defries, 'Constructing the Past in Eleventh-Century Flanders: Hagiography at Saint-Winnoc', Ohio State University, PhD diss., 2004, pp. 83-86.

⁷⁰ Edited in A. Pruvost, *Chronique et cartulaire de l'abbaye de Bergues-Saint-Winnoc de l'ordre de Saint-Benoît*, I (Bruges, 1875), pp. 57-62. A small part of the charter was interpolated; see N.-N. Huyghebaert, 'De meier van Zwevezele in de 'Miracula S. Winnoci'', *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis*, 108 (1971), p. 220, note 24.

⁷¹ This passage from Simon's *Gesta* was omitted from the MGH edition and can only be found in Guérard, *Cartulaire*, at p. 187.

of a monk named Germaine who eventually succeeded him in 1029. Germaine died after a four-year abbacy, and was succeeded by Rumold, another monk from Saint-Bertin.⁷²

Count Baldwin V's 1067 charter for Bergues-Saint-Winnoc provides a vantage point from which to assess the situation of that abbey and of Saint-Bertin. Both institutions were situated on major trade routes and in or very near to centres of commerce, where large numbers of potential patrons and pilgrims gathered. At Saint-Bertin, the cult of relics at the abbey since the late tenth century had been a significant source of revenue – apparently, even a minor saint like Folcuin of Thérouanne attracted pilgrims coming from as far away as England.⁷³ Since St Winnoc had formerly been represented as one of the four main saints of Saint-Bertin up to the reform of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, the monks of the latter institution, who now served that saint as their patron and – crucially – actually preserved the saint's body in their own institution, could look forward to sharing some of the lay attention Saint-Bertin had enjoyed. Even more importantly, the count had bestowed sufficient property on them to sustain an independent monastery. According to the 1067 charter, Baldwin IV had substituted the properties supposedly squandered by the canons with extensive donations of tithes, altars, and *bodia* in the coastal area of Flanders.⁷⁴

⁷² N.-N. Huyghebaert, 'Rumoldus van Sint-Winoksbergen', in *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, VII (Brussels, 1977), col. 830-832.

⁷³ Vanderputten and Snijders, 'Stability and Transformation'. Also Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 94-95 and V. Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries. Cultural, Spiritual, and Artistic Exchange* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 32-39.

⁷⁴ Pruvost, *Chronique*, pp. 57-63.

Then, little more than a decade after the reforms, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc suddenly found itself in a position where it could gain considerable advantage over Saint-Bertin. As we have seen, the beginning of Rumold's abbacy (1033-68) coincided with the first of a series of disasters that struck Saint-Bertin and effectively forced Roderic into a government of restoration and damage control. In the meantime, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc flourished. The abbey obtained the right from Baldwin IV to hold a yearly market in Wormhout.⁷⁵ As a result of its key position in both regional and inter-regional trade, the abbey soon began striking its own coins.⁷⁶ All of this allowed Rumold, in the second half of his abbacy, to begin construction work on the new church, which he also had decorated.⁷⁷ The construction work was part of Rumold's efforts to stimulate pilgrimage to the abbey, offering lay society an opportunity to venerate the relics of St Winnoc, Oswald, the seventh-century king of Northumbria and, from 1058 onwards, Lewinna, the Anglo-Saxon martyr whose relics had been stolen by a monk of Bergues from an English monastery.⁷⁸ A veritable campaign of scrabbling for arguments to enhance Bergues' own institutional identity and the reputation of its patron saint even further culminated in the 1060s, when the pre-reform narrative known as the *Miracles* of St Winnoc was complemented with a

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 63; D.M. Metcalf, 'Coinage and the Rise of the Flemish Towns', in N.J. Mayhew, ed., *Coinage in the Low Countries (880-1500). The Third Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 1-23, at p. 9, expresses reservations about the attribution of these coins to Rumold's abbacy.

⁷⁷ As attested in Drogo's *Liber miraculorum Sancti Winnoci*, edited in AASS *Novembris III* (Brussels, 1910), pp. 275-284. At the time of Rumold's death only the choir was in use.

⁷⁸ See D.J. Defries, 'The making of a minor saint in Drogo of Saint-Winnoc's *Historia translationis s. Lewinnae*', *Early Medieval Europe*, 16 (2008), pp. 423-444.

new series of miracle accounts.⁷⁹ The intended application of these stories – to stimulate pilgrimage – is revealed in a sermon-like text, probably written in the third quarter of the eleventh century, on the healing of a blind girl by St Winnoc.⁸⁰ In effect, the monks of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc were aiming for the exact same audience of potential patrons and pilgrims as those of Saint-Bertin. Even Saint-Bertin's special connection with England was not exempted from competition, as is shown by the monks' special attention to St Oswald and Lewinna.

Whereas Rumold's efforts yielded significant wealth from donations and other gifts, Bovo of Saint-Bertin's simultaneous efforts to encourage the veneration of relics at Saint-Bertin was – to use an understatement – unsuccessful. In 1046, Bovo initiated the restoration of the abbatial church.⁸¹ During construction works on the site of the main altar, the body of St Bertin was allegedly discovered in a coffin made of lead. On 2 May 1052, the Sunday of the week when a market was held for foreign tradesmen in the town of Saint-Omer, the saint's body was retrieved and given a formal elevation. Bovo ordained that henceforth this day would be celebrated each year as a feast.⁸² Then, on returning from an unspecified mission to Rome, he

⁷⁹ *Miracula Sancti Winnoci recentiora*, edited in W. Levison, *MGH SS rer. Mer. V* (Hannover and Leipzig, 1910), pp. 782-785; see N.-N. Huyghebaert, 'L'abbé Rumold de Bergues, auteur de la vie interpolée de S. Winnoc?', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 68 (1973), pp. 5-28, at pp. 8 and 24-26. On the hagiography of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, see also Defries, *Constructing the past*.

⁸⁰ *Rumoldus Bergensis, Miraculum Winnoci (sermo)*, edited in W. Levison, *MGH SS rer. Mer. V* (Hannover and Leipzig, 1910), pp. 785-786; see Huyghebaert, 'L'abbé Rumold', pp. 24-26.

⁸¹ The starting date of the work is attested to in Bovo's *Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini*, at pp. 527-528. At the time of his death, the work was still under way.

⁸² *Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini*; discussed in Ugé, *Creating*, pp. 72-90.

brought with him relics of St Denis which he had received as a blessing at the royal abbey of Saint-Denis. After taking part in a procession with his community, he placed the relics with Bertin's body.⁸³ As Karine Ugé has shown, the rediscovery of St Bertin's body was a highly disputed affair.⁸⁴ The reason for this was quite simple: the abbey already had relics of this saint, yet the newly discovered body was claimed to be complete. Bovo, who wrote an account of the discovery, indicated that ignorant laypeople (*vulgus minus intelligens*) reacted badly to the news,⁸⁵ and that the response from the ecclesiastical authorities as well as the abbey's main lay patrons was at best muted. Members of the ecclesiastical elite delayed the elevation of the body several times, and when it finally took place the count stayed away, sending the countess in his place.⁸⁶ In the wake of the ceremony, neither the count nor any other highly placed secular lord made any significant donations or accorded any privileges to the abbey; nor did it have any significant impact in the longer term, for the abbey's archives contain no record of significant donations from the period between c.1050 and the beginning of the 1090s.⁸⁷ Perhaps indicative of the meagre material rewards of the whole enterprise is the fact that the construction of the new church – admittedly, a project of considerable amplitude – progressed slowly. Bovo died leaving an unfinished church, and construction was further delayed when, in

⁸³ De Laplane, *Les abbés*, at p. 154 also mentions nails from the holy cross.

⁸⁴ Ugé, *Creating*, pp. 72-88.

⁸⁵ *Relatio de inventione et elevatione sancti Bertini*, p. 531.

⁸⁶ Ugé, *Creating*, p. 87.

⁸⁷ In 1065, the monks received an allod in the county of Guines from two brothers named Roger and Stephen (Haigneré, *Les chartes*, no. 81, p. 31), and the following year they received a piece of land from Lidbert of Cosebronne (*Ibid.*, no. 82, p. 32).

1079, even before the roof was constructed, the new church burnt down. For several years, nothing happened until work was resumed under Abbot John.⁸⁸ When the new church was eventually consecrated in 1106, this was the first time in seventy-three years that the monks of Saint-Bertin finally had at their disposal a completed abbatial church.⁸⁹

Like Malbod's successor at Saint-Amand, Bovo was actually quite successful at safeguarding, restoring and expanding the monastic estate,⁹⁰ as well as guaranteeing the abbey's institutional integrity.⁹¹ But patronage in the shape of substantial donations was not forthcoming, and his misguided dealings with St Bertin's relics created further ruptures in an already traumatised community. The monks' reaction to the discovery of the saint's body was tepid to say the least,⁹² and at least one member of the community, a monk named Folcard, actually tried to counter Bovo's self-serving dealings with their patron saint by composing a hagiographical narrative which focused on St Bertin's childhood.⁹³ This apparently failed to make much impact, and eventually Folcard was forced to leave the abbey. He sought patronage

⁸⁸ Simon, *Gesta*, pp. 199-200.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 224.

⁹⁰ Haigneré, *Les chartes*, no. 73, pp. 26-27; no. 75, pp. 27-28; no. 78, pp. 28-29 and no. 80, pp. 30-31.

⁹¹ His successes were consolidated in 1057 when he obtained a papal privilege confirming, among others, the abbot's free disposition of the abbey's properties and the right of free abbatial election, and restricting the local bishop's access to the monastery. The privilege is edited in Guérard, *Cartulaire*, pp. 180-183. See L. Morelle, 'Par delà le vrai et le faux: trois études critiques sur les premiers privilèges pontificaux reçus par l'abbaye de Saint-Bertin (1057-1107)', in R. Große, ed., *L'acte pontifical et sa critique* (Bonn, 2007), pp. 51-86, at pp. 53-65.

⁹² Ugé, *Creating*, p. 86.

⁹³ *Vita quarta Sancti Bertini*, edited in AASS *Septembris II* (Antwerp, 1748), pp. 604-613.

with the Anglo-Saxon Queen Emma or, possibly through the intermediary of the exiled Flemish Godwin clan, with Queen Edith. Folcard was eventually introduced to Ealdred, Bishop of Worcester (1047-61) and York (1061-9), who managed to have him elected as abbot of Thorney around 1068.⁹⁴ Goscelin, another monk from Saint-Bertin, also left the abbey sometime between 1058 and 1064, and went on to produce a significant body of hagiographical work for, among others, Ely.⁹⁵ Some scholars have considered these authors and their work as witness to Saint-Bertin's status and efflorescence, but there are just as many reasons to consider their departure from the Flemish abbey as a brain drain caused by a deep institutional crisis.

Perhaps most painful to Bovo and his monks was the fact that the controversial elevation of St Bertin had, quite publicly, demonstrated Saint-Bertin's fall from grace with the counts of Flanders and the ecclesiastical and secular elites. And all the while, the Bergues-Saint-Winnoc community was in excellent shape, thanks in no small part to the promotion of the cult of a saint the monks of Saint-Bertin had previously considered theirs. The *Miracula*, the *Sermo* and Baldwin's 1067 charter all suggest that, by that time, Rumold had successfully transformed the modest community of the early 1030s into one thriving on self-confidence, wealth and popularity with pilgrims and mighty patrons. It was possibly Rumold himself, shortly before the issuance of the 1067 charter, who prepared a manuscript that contained an interpolated *Vita*

⁹⁴ See E.M.C. Van Houts, 'The Flemish Contribution to Biographical Writing in England in the Eleventh Century', in D.R. Bates, J.C. Crick and S.M. Hamilton, eds., *Writing medieval biography, 750-1250: Essays in honour of Professor Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 115-116; also H. Clover, 'Folcard, moine de S.-Bertin, à S.-Omer, puis de Thorney, en Angleterre, auteur de vies de saints (XIe s.)', in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, 17 (Paris, 1971), col. 741-743.

⁹⁵ Van Houts, 'The Flemish Contribution', p. 115, note 24.

antiqua Sancti Winnoci, the new version of the *Miracula* and the *Sermo*.⁹⁶ According to Huyghebaert, the original *Vita antiquiora* was written at Saint-Bertin, and was interpolated in 1060-1063/4 by Rumold to claim the saint definitively for Bergues-Saint-Winnoc.⁹⁷ Probably around 1064, a monk from Ghent who had left his community of Saint-Peter, possibly because of the simoniac appointment of Abbot Everhelm (1059-68/9),⁹⁸ composed yet another *Life* of Winnoc⁹⁹ and, at an undetermined time after 1064, a *Genealogy* of the saint was conceived.¹⁰⁰ The monk Drogo also conceived a *Life* of St Oswald as well as two sermons devoted to this saint

⁹⁶ Rumold, *Vita antiqua interpolata Sancti Winnoci*, edited in W. Levison, *MGH SS rer. Mer. V* (Hannover and Leipzig, 1910), pp. 769-775; the *Sermo* was edited in *Ibid.*, pp. 785-786. See Huyghebaert, 'L'abbé Rumold', pp. 5-28.

⁹⁷ Huyghebaert, 'L'abbé Rumold'.

⁹⁸ In 1064, Pope Alexander III (1061-73) asked Archbishop Gervasius of Rheims to intervene, arguing that Everhelm had ejected several monks, dispersed the monastery's properties and "polluted his life through adulteries and various crimes" (A. Van Lokeren, *Chartes et documents de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre au Mont Blandin à Gand depuis sa fondation jusqu'à sa suppression* (Gand, 1868), no. 140, p. 98: 'Everelmus monasterium ille simoniace invaserit, ipsiusque bona, ejectis monachis, ad nihilum redegerit, vitamque suam adulteriis, variisque criminibus ultra humanam consuetudinem polluerit'). Also E. Sabbe, 'Deux points concernant l'histoire de l'abbaye de St.-Pierre du Mont-Blandin (X^e-XI^e siècles)', *Revue Bénédictine*, 47 (1935), pp. 62-71; Huyghebaert, 'La 'Vita secunda S. Winnoci'', pp. 247-254; and G. Berings and C. Van Simaey, 'Abbaye de Saint-Pierre au mont Blandin à Gand', in *Monasticon Belge. Tome VII. Province de Flandre Orientale*, I (Liège, 1988), p. 105.

⁹⁹ *Vita Secunda Winnoci Bergensis*, edited in *AASS Novembris III* (Brussels, 1910), pp. 267-274. N.-N. Huyghebaert attributes this text to Werric of Ghent, the author of the *Vita Bertulfi Rentiensis*; see Huyghebaert's 'La 'Vita secunda S. Winnoci' restituée à l'hagiographie gantoise', *Revue Bénédictine*, 91 (1971), pp. 216-258, esp. pp. 237-240. Huyghebaert hypothesises that this may be the monk Wederic who would later act as a major propagator of the Gregorian reforms in Flanders and Brabant; see below.

¹⁰⁰ Edited in *AAAS Novembris III* (Brussels, 1910), pp. 267-268. This text was possibly part of the original *Life*.

and St Winnoc,¹⁰¹ and an account of the translation of St Lewinna.¹⁰² Lewinna's arrival in Flanders had been publicised by a *circuitio* similar to that of St Ursmer by the monks of Lobbes who, in 1060, had actually stopped at Bergues for an encounter with the count and his spouse.¹⁰³

The publication of the 1067 charter was not just a symbolical marker of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc's prosperity – it was a watershed event in the region's monastic history. Not only did it confirm the abbey's economic and social situation, but it also encouraged the community to complete its journey towards independence. In 1068, for the first time the monks chose an abbot from their own ranks rather than from the community of Saint-Bertin. All ties with Saint-Bertin, established at the reform in 1022, were thus severed, and the abbey now entered into open competition. Shortly thereafter, the hagiographer Drogo once again updated the miracle collection of St Winnoc¹⁰⁴ and conceived a *Life* of St Godeliph.¹⁰⁵ A lavish manuscript for

¹⁰¹ *Vita sancti Oswaldi*, edited in AASS Augusti II (Antwerp, 1735), pp. 94-102; *Sermo primus in festo pretiosi regis et martyris Oswaldi*, edited in N.N. Huyghebaert, 'De twee sermoenen van Drogo van Sint Winnoksbergen over de koning-martelaar St. Oswald', *Ons geestelijk erf*, 56 (1982), pp. 97-108, at pp. 105-107; and *Sermo secundus in festo pretiosi regis et martyris Oswaldi*, edited Ibid., pp. 107-108.

¹⁰² *Historia translationis sanctae Lewinnae*, edited in AASS Julii V (Antwerp, 1727), pp. 613-627.

¹⁰³ *Miracula Sancti Ursuari in itinere per Flandriam facta*, edited in O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS XV/2* (Hannover, 1888), pp. 837-842. See P. Charruadas, 'Principauté territoriale, reliques et Paix de Dieu. Le comté de Flandre et l'abbaye de Lobbes à travers les Miracula S. Ursuari in itinere per Flandriam facta (vers 1060)', *Revue du Nord*, 89 (2007), pp. 703-728.

¹⁰⁴ *Liber miraculorum Sancti Winnoci*, edited in AAAS Novembris III (Brussels, 1910), pp. 275-284; see N.-N. Huyghebaert, 'Un moine hagiographe: Drogon de Bergues', *Sacris Erudiri*, 20 (1971), pp. 191-256, at p. 201 and 205.

liturgical use from the latter half of the twelfth century (now preserved as Bergues, Bibliothèque Municipale, 19), still bears witness to the community's self-confidence. Nearly all of Drogo's hagiographic works are included, and some of the lives and sermons are divided into eight lections for use in the office. Also included are hymns for the office of St Winnoc and a partly versified office,¹⁰⁶ indicating that this collection of texts was central to the legitimisation of Bergues' identity. But more importantly, it also signified the completion of the community's emancipation from Saint-Bertin.

Reform before the reforms: late-eleventh-century abbatial policies

The shock impact of the process that culminated in the 1068 election at Bergues-Saint-Winnoc should not be underestimated. In his account of the election of Bovo's successor Heribert (1065-1082), the chronicler Simon emphasises the latter's previous experience (acquired as a cleric before he entered the monastery) in the administration of the abbey's temporal goods, and

¹⁰⁵ *Vita Godeliph*, edited in N.-N. Huyghebaert and S. Gyselen, *Drogo van Sint-Winnoksbergen. Vita Godeliph* (Tielt and Bussum 1982), pp. 34-70; see M. Coens, 'La vie ancienne de sainte Godelive de Ghistelles par Drogon de Bergues', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 45 (1926), pp. 102-137; D.J. Defries, 'Drogo of Saint-Winnoc and the Innocent Martyrdom of Godeliph of Gistel', *Mediaeval Studies*, 70 (2008), pp. 29-66; and Id., 'Godeliph of Gistel and the Politics of Innocent Martyrdom in Eleventh-Century Flanders', *Hagiographica*, 15 (2008), pp. 31-62.

¹⁰⁶ Edited in P. Bayart, 'Les offices de Saint-Winnoc et de Saint Oswald d'après le manuscrit 14 de la bibliothèque de Bergues', *Annales du Comité Flamand de France*, 35 (1926), 132 pages and 36 plates. Also *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France. Départements XXVI : Lille, Dunkerque, Bergues, Roye, Péronne, Roye, La Chatre* (Paris, 1879), p. 662-663.

explicitly states that the monks allowed this argument to determine their decision.¹⁰⁷ Heribert's abbacy appears to have focused almost entirely on re-establishing Saint-Bertin as a major religious and political centre. Crucial to that process was the resumption of building work on the abbatial church, which he was able to advance sufficiently to make possible the celebration of offices. Heribert also provided it with a sumptuous gold and silver candelabrum.¹⁰⁸ Without doubt, these investments were considered essential to recreating the necessary environment for the celebration of Saint-Bertin's hagiographical legacies.¹⁰⁹ In addition, measures were taken to promote a stronger sense of solidarity and historical continuity within the formerly disrupted community. In 1075, Heribert created a prebend to commemorate his two predecessors and himself as well as each deceased monk.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the situation remained precarious: no major donations are recorded for this period, and when the church burnt down a second time, building activity came to a sudden halt.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Simon, *Gesta*, p. 639.

¹⁰⁸ Guérard, *Cartulaire*, p. 189.

¹⁰⁹ The pursuit of these policies appears to have been an incremental process. Heribert's successor John invested massively in the resumption of construction work on the abbatial church, refurbished it, and oversaw extensive construction work on other monastic buildings (Guérard, *Cartulaire*, pp. 200-201). He also revived the scriptorium; in his chronicle, the monk Simon mentions the production of several manuscripts, including a passionnal "of immense weight". Less than half of the manuscript now survives as the severely mutilated Boulogne-Sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale, 715/1 and as various fragments pasted in more than twenty different codices. Even in its present state, the manuscript weighs over eleven kilograms; see S. Staats, 'A partial reconstruction of Saint-Bertin's late-eleventh-century legendary: St-Omer 715, vol I, and its *membra disiecta*', *Scriptorium*, 52 (1998), pp. 349-364.

¹¹⁰ Guérard, *Cartulaire*, pp. 194-196.

¹¹¹ See note 88.

Like the crisis of the 1030s-1040s, the modest resurgence of Saint-Bertin during this period shows striking similarities with that of other monasteries in the region, in particular Saint-Peter in Ghent. Abbot Everhelm's removal in 1069 had prevented the conflict over his simoniac appointment from escalating into a full-blown institutional crisis.¹¹² Upon his canonical election, Abbot Folcard (1069-88) immediately took action to reorganise the monastery's temporal goods and to affirm its historical claims on legitimacy. In 1070, he issued a regulation charter for the advocacy of Harnes,¹¹³ and in 1081 obtained confirmation of the abbey's properties in England from William the Conqueror.¹¹⁴ New life was also injected into the old rivalry with the abbey of Saint-Bavon, also in Ghent. Since the later tenth century, both abbeys had engaged in a battle of words over which institution was the oldest foundation in Ghent and could thus lay claims to historical primacy.¹¹⁵ In a move to assert his abbey's claims, Folcard elevated and translated the body of Flobert who, according to tradition, was the first abbot to govern a monastery in Ghent. In addition, new hagiographical narratives were written relating to St Amalberga and Bertulf,¹¹⁶ and yet another pamphlet was issued to demonstrate Saint-

¹¹² See above; also Berings and Van Simaey, 'Abbaye de Saint-Pierre-au-Mont-Blandin', p. 105.

¹¹³ M. Gysseling and A.C.F. Koch, *Diplomata belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta* (Brussels, 1950), no. 116, pp. 213-214.

¹¹⁴ Van Lokeren, *Les chartes*, no. 156, pp. 104-106.

¹¹⁵ See J. Deploige, 'Twisten via heiligen. Hagiografische dialogen tussen de Gentse abdijen van Sint-Pieters en Sint-Baafs, 941-1079', *Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, 31 (2007), pp. 31-82 (including further references).

¹¹⁶ *Vita Sanctae Amalbergae*, edited in *AASS Julii III* (Antwerp, 1723), pp. 90-102; this was followed shortly afterwards by an *Inventio, elevatio et translatio sanctae Amalbergae virginis*, edited in *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104. The *Vita*

Peter's claims to the title of the original foundation of St Amand.¹¹⁷ Here, too, charter evidence suggests that the immediate results of this policy were modest.

The policy of Heribert and Folcard to invest heavily in their abbey's resurgence was helped by their careful navigation of the county's political waters, not that they were hoping initially to get much direct return from a renewed association with the Flemish counts. For instance, the 1067 charter for Bergues-Saint-Winnoc undoubtedly did little to raise the hopes of the Saint-Bertin monks regarding a renewal of privileged relations with the then-current dynasty. But when Robert the Frisian, the future Count Robert I (1071-93), initiated a campaign to overthrow the under-age Arnulf III (1070-1), a unique opportunity presented itself to turn the tide. As early as 1070, Folcard and his monks expressed their support for Robert's rebellion,¹¹⁸ hoping to benefit without question from this early sign of allegiance to the new ruler. And the rewards, although still not comprising any significant donations, were considerable.¹¹⁹ Whereas at Saint-Bavon, Abbot Siger (1066-73) was ousted by Count Robert I and replaced by Stephen of Egmond (1073-6), an intervention which marked the beginning of a period of internal tensions

sancti Bertulfi Rentiensis was written shortly after the translation of this saint in 1073 and is edited in AASS *Februarii I* (Antwerp, 1658), pp. 677-687.

¹¹⁷ *De certissima sancti Florberti translatione*, edited in O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS XV/1* (Hannover, 1887), pp. 642-643, and *XV/2* (Hannover, 1888), pp. 1317-1318.

¹¹⁸ Berings and Van Simaey, 'Abbaye de Saint-Pierre-au-Mont-Blandin à Gand', p. 106.

¹¹⁹ For an overview of comital privileges from the reign of Robert I and his policy regarding the advocacy, see C. Verlinden, *Robert Ier le Frison, comte de Flandre. Etude d'histoire politique* (Antwerp, Paris, and The Hague, 1935), pp. 132-133.

and institutional instability,¹²⁰ relations between Saint-Peter and the count were far more cordial. In 1072, Robert issued a privilege confirming the abbey's possessions had been previously acquired by donation from his predecessors.¹²¹ Similarly, Heribert and his monks almost immediately benefited from a renewed association with the comital court. Unlike Saint-Peter, no comital privilege from this period is recorded. But when Robert's political interests converged with the competitive ones of Saint-Bertin, on the occasion of the foundation of Saint-Sylvin the following year, he vindicated Abbot Heribert of the humiliating events of 1067-8. From the count's viewpoint, Saint-Bertin's dominance over Auchy reflected the political relations between the two counties. For Heribert and his monks, the entire operation consisted, at least in part, of a form of damage control, a way of undoing the disastrous impact of Bergues' emancipation. Their involvement in Auchy's so-called 'restoration', Saint-Bertin's tight control over the new institution's potential to attract pilgrims and patrons, and the regulation of abbatial elections all guaranteed that the new abbey would not emerge as yet another significant competitor to Saint-Bertin's interests.

Following his victory at the battle of Cassel in 1071, the new count showed little inclination to favour the Benedictine houses in the county through donations or – with the exception of Saint-Peter – special privileges.¹²² But Robert was also a *Realpolitiker* who favoured those abbots who steered clear of becoming embroiled in the Investiture dispute, either by

¹²⁰ G. Berings and C. Lebbe, 'Abbaye de Saint-Bavon à Gand', in *Monasticon Belge. Tome VII. Province de Flandre Orientale*, I (Liège 1988), pp. 36-37; also Verlinden, *Robert Ier*, p. 131.

¹²¹ Van Lokeren, *Les chartes*, no. 150, p. 101.

¹²² Declercq, 'Entre mémoire monastique et représentation politique', p. 364.

adopting a moderate stance or by providing some kind of guarantee that reformist interests would be pursued in a way so as not to harm comital interests. For instance, there are no indications of comital resistance when, in 1075, Wederic, a monk from Saint-Peter was mandated by the Pope to spread the Gregorian reform in Flanders and Brabant.¹²³ He also allowed the abbey to become an asylum for at least one anti-simoniatic monk from Saint-Trond.¹²⁴ The accounts for Saint-Bertin are more ambiguous. In 1069, so the chronicler Simon claims, Heribert became abbot of Saint-Germain in Auxerre by royal appointment. Apparently concerned about being accused of simony, and unwilling to end up on the wrong side of the debate in a time of ecclesiastical reform, he is said to have resigned from the latter abbey in 1072.¹²⁵ While the story itself appears to be apocryphical – no abbot of that name is attested to

¹²³ Later, Wederic would be involved in the foundation of Affligem; see C. Dereine, 'La spiritualité 'apostolique' des premiers fondateurs d'Affligem (1083-1100)', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 54 (1959), pp. 41-65; and Ibid., 'Les prédicateurs 'apostoliques' dans les diocèses de Thérouanne, Tournai et Cambrai-Arras durant les années 1075-1125', *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, 59 (1983), pp. 171-189. Dereine's observations on the apostolic nature of Affligem's foundation have been criticised and are now regarded as misjudged; see Despy, 'Fulgence', pp. 173-175.

¹²⁴ Huyghebaert, 'La Vita secunda S. Winnoci', pp. 253-257; and Declercq, 'Blandinium rond het jaar 1000', p. 81 (with references).

¹²⁵ Guérard, *Cartulaire*, p. 197. V.B. Henry has speculated that the king appointed Heribert following his dissatisfaction with the election of Walter, a former monk of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire (*Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain d'Auxerre, ordre de Saint-Benoit et de la congrégation de Saint-Maur* (Auxerre, 1853), pp. 173-174). Local traditions at Saint-Germain, including the *Deeds* of the abbots, do not mention Heribert or his supposed appointment. As Noëlle Deflou-Leca points out, the only individual of that name who can be associated with the abbey in the eleventh century is Heribert II, Bishop of Auxerre (1041-1054), who died many years after his

in sources from Saint-Germain – it may be a reflection of Heribert’s cautious attitude at the time. Exactly how destabilising taking a position in the Investiture dispute could be is made evident in the turbulent developments at Bergues-Saint-Winnoc.¹²⁶ In January 1078, the council of Poitiers found Abbot Rumold’s successor Ermenger guilty of simony and removed him from the abbatial see.¹²⁷ The instigator of a campaign of defamation against Ermenger later turned out to be a monk of high birth named Ingelbert who, according to tradition, may have been Count Baldwin IV’s grandson by one of his daughters.¹²⁸ Comital interest in the matter was certainly high, for Count Robert himself intervened and appointed Manasses, prior of Saint-Airy

resignation and thus is likely to have been a contemporary of Heribert of Saint-Bertin (communicated to me by e-mail).

¹²⁶ On this episode in the abbey’s history, see the *Chronica monasterii Watinensis*, edited in O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS XIV* (Hannover, 1883), pp. 173-174; also Arthur Giry, ‘Grégoire VII et les évêques de Têrouane’, *Revue historique*, 1 (1876), pp. 395-398; Verlinden, *Robert Ier le Frison*, pp. 115-119; N.-N. Huyghebaert, ‘Un légat de Grégoire VII en France: Warmond de Vienne’, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, 40 (1944-45) p. 187-200; Id., ‘Le sacramentaire de l’abbé Manassès de Bergues-saint-Winnoc’, *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges*, 84 (1947), pp. 40–51; and B. Meijns, ‘De *pauperes Christi* van Watten. De moeizame beginjaren van de eerste gemeenschap van reguliere kanunniken in Vlaanderen (vóór 1072–ca. 1100)’, *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis*, 3 (2000), pp. 69-71.

¹²⁷ Letter from Bishop Hugh of Die, legate of the papal see, to Pope Gregory VII; included in Hugh of Flavigny’s *Chronicon*, edited in G.H. Pertz, *MGH SS VIII* (Hannover, 1848), p. 419: ‘Abbas Bergensis ecclesiae de Flandria fuisse simoniacus comprobatus est, et depositus’; see also Verlinden, *Robert Ier*, p. 131. Pope Gregory VII revoked several of the council’s decisions but did not intervene in the deposition of Ermenger; see Huyghebaert, ‘Le sacramentaire’, pp. 43-44.

¹²⁸ Pruvost, *Chronique*, p. 77. Huyghebaert posits a different relationship between Baldwin IV and Ingelbert: in his interpretation, Ingelbert was the grandson of Gisla of Luxemburg, daughter of Count Frederic of Luxemburg and sister of Ogiva, the wife of Baldwin VI (*Vita Godeliph*, p. 76).

in Verdun, as the new abbot. Apparently, he did so at the suggestion of Otfrid, prior of the community of regular canons in Watten (founded in 1072 on a former property of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc), at that time the hub of the Gregorian reformist movement in Flanders.¹²⁹ According to the fourteenth-century chronicler John of Ypres, the appointment of Manasses divided the community, and some monks left the monastery.¹³⁰ Apparently, Manasses' credentials as a reformist abbot were not universally acknowledged either. Some of the insurgent monks went to Bishop Hubert of Thérouanne (1078-81) who refused to ordain him,¹³¹ as did Hugh of Die, the papal legate and himself a major agent of the movement in France and Burgundy. Eventually, Robert successfully sent a mission to Rome to obtain the right for Manasses to carry the pontifical insignia.¹³² But in 1083, he forced Manasses out of the abbacy, thereby responding to accusations by the abbot's own brethren that he had led the abbey into ruin. When questioned by the count, the abbot reportedly "argued manly that not the count, but he himself was abbot, and that he, and not the count, would determine what he could and

¹²⁹ Meijns, 'De pauperes Christi', pp. 44-91.

¹³⁰ Johannes Iperius, *Chronicon Sancti Bertini*, edited in E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, III (Paris, 1717), col. 584.

¹³¹ On the troubled situation of the bishopric of Thérouanne in the late eleventh century, see Giry, 'Grégoire VII', pp. 387-409; H. Van Werveke, *Het bisdom Terwaan, van den oorsprong tot het begin der 14e eeuw* (Ghent, 1924); Dereine, 'Les prédicateurs 'apostoliques''; and B. Meijns, 'Without were Fightings. Within were Fears. Pope Gregory VII, the Canons Regular of Watten and the Reform of the Church in the Diocese of Thérouanne (c. 1075-c. 1100)', in P. Andersen, M. Münster-Swendsen and H. Vogt, eds., *Law and power in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the fourth Carlsberg Academy Conference on medieval legal history 2007* (Copenhagen, 2008), pp. 73-96.

¹³² Pruvost, *Chronique*, p. 74.

should do".¹³³ Indignant, Count Robert sent him away and appointed the aforementioned Ingelbert (1083-96/1106) as the new abbot. Although Ingelbert assisted in several ceremonies and received at least one donation,¹³⁴ his abbey had clearly slipped into a state of crisis. In the first year of his abbacy, a fire also destroyed much of the abbey's buildings and consumed thirty-four manuscripts.¹³⁵ The crisis probably deepened even further when upon his deathbed Ingelbert confessed to having been the one who had defamed Abbot Ermenger.¹³⁶ Half a century after the community of Saint-Bertin had reached its lowest point in terms of credibility and internal cohesion, the same fate now befell Bergues-Saint-Winnoc.

The time was ripe for Saint-Bertin to reclaim its prominent position in Flanders' Benedictine landscape. Upon first inspection, the material rewards the monks had reaped from their renewed association with comital power may seem small, but the process involved was undeniably one of estranged partners acknowledging their shared interests. While Baldwin VI had stayed away from the disputed translation of St Bertin in 1052, in 1088, Robert I did attend the rather less controversial – but politically significant – deposition of the body of St Sylvin in a new shrine.¹³⁷ The translation initiated a resurgence of the cult of saints whose relics were

¹³³ Iperius, *Chronicon*, col. 584-585: 'Respondit viriliter non comitem, sed se esse abbatem et de suo, non comitem, sed se disponere posse ac debere.'

¹³⁴ Pruvost, *Chronique*, pp. 78-82.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹³⁶ Simon, *Gesta*, p. 650.

¹³⁷ Haigneré, *Les chartes*, no. 86, p. 33. Count Enguerran is not mentioned as being among those who attended the ceremony.

preserved at the abbey.¹³⁸ Robert I or II also intervened, probably to mediate, in a dispute between the abbey and a man who claimed the right to fish in a lake called Mera.¹³⁹ Abbot John found these interventions particularly helpful in his continued attempts to diminish progressively the involvement of certain members of the lower lay elite in the abbey's affairs. In 1087, he was able to reclaim from Gerbodo and Arnulf, the nephews of former advocate Gerbodo II, the Oosterzele allod which had been donated by their uncle and aunt in 1054.¹⁴⁰ In 1092 or 1093, the abbey further reclaimed its rights on Arques by buying back part of the village's *comitatus* from a layman called Baldric.¹⁴¹

In December 1092, we find the count in retreat at Saint-Bertin. During his stay there, the Flemish clergy, then assembled at the provincial council of Reims, confronted him with a written complaint about his exercising *regalia* on the property of deceased clerics. Among those who carried the letter was Arnulf, provost of Saint-Omer, Abbot John of Saint-Bertin, Abbot Gerard of Ham, and Bernard, provost of Watten.¹⁴² No doubt the reformers considered John an ideal figure for compromise, who could be relied upon to represent their interests but who was also sufficiently in the count's favour to make change in the latter's policies a realistic prospect. Shortly before his death in October 1093, Robert bestowed Saint-Bertin's rights and privileges

¹³⁸ In 1097, Abbot Lambert also translated the relics of St Folcuin; the solemn charter made to document this occasion and originally included in the new shrine can be found in Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque de l'Agglomération de Saint-Omer, 819, pp. 150-152.

¹³⁹ Guérard, *Cartulaire*, p. 207.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁴² Verlinden, *Robert Ier*, pp. 125-127.

on the village of Arques in a solemn charter.¹⁴³ This charter was the first of a series of privileges and donations, the first important one of which was that issued by Pope Urban II to confirm the abbey's possession of its altars.¹⁴⁴ Robert's son Robert II (1093-1111) equally favoured the older monasteries' interests. At Saint-Peter, even though real comital donations would not be granted for a long time, in 1102 Robert II issued a charter to Abbot Siger (1088-1108) stating that he would no longer intervene in the election of abbots.¹⁴⁵ Under Siger's leadership the abbey also received a series of papal, royal, comital and episcopal privileges which consolidated the community's temporal goods.¹⁴⁶

Thus, Heribert and John of Saint-Bertin and Folcard and Siger at Saint-Peter initiated an effective restoration policy, coupled with a desire to become actively involved in a broader movement of religious and institutional renewal. It is a credit to their abilities as monastic leaders that, while pursuing these policies, they also successfully worked towards resuscitating the privileged relationship their abbeys had previously enjoyed with the counts of Flanders. But the newly restored association with comital power was also easily disturbed. In 1099/1100, John's successor Lambert almost fatally overplayed his hand when he attempted to subject his monastery to the abbot of Cluny. The turbulent transition to a reformed regime has been discussed at length elsewhere,¹⁴⁷ and it will suffice to say here that Lambert's initiative led to

¹⁴³ Guérard, *Cartulaire*, pp. 203-204.

¹⁴⁴ Haigneré, *Les chartes*, no. 92, pp. 35-36. Further texts are listed from no. 93 onwards.

¹⁴⁵ Sabbe, 'Deux points', p. 61.

¹⁴⁶ Berings and Van Simaey, 'Abbaye de Saint-Pierre-au-Mont-Blandin à Gand', p. 107.

¹⁴⁷ E. Sabbe, 'La réforme clunisienne dans le comté de Flandre au début du XIIe siècle', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 9 (1930), pp. 121-138.

much resistance both from within the community and from various ecclesiastical and secular leaders who had initially agreed with it. Eventually, the Cluniac customary was adapted to local standards, Cluniac monks were allowed to intervene in other monasteries only through Lambert's intermediary action, and no abbey was formally attached to the Cluniac network.

Scholars have acknowledged the significance of the reforms to the count's ecclesiastical policies, and to the shaping of a Benedictine 'movement' with a regional character which, in later decades, would lead to attempts to create an institutionalised network of reformed monasteries.¹⁴⁸ But as in the discussion over the 'crisis of cenobitism', they have neglected to look at what the initial phase of the reforms did to relations between Flanders' Benedictine monasteries. Without question, Lambert's motivation to reform derived in part from his dissatisfaction at a certain lack of internal discipline and the reported fact that the monks of his abbey had too many personal properties and servants at their disposal.¹⁴⁹ But considering what is known about Saint-Sylvin's fate in the first decade of the eleventh century, it seems that the competitive advantages of leading a reformist movement also played an important role in shaping his behaviour. Surely it is no coincidence that the first institutions to be reformed from Saint-Bertin were precisely Saint-Sylvin and Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, the abbey's foremost competitors, and that these reforms entailed not only the modification of internal discipline, but also their effective subjugation to Saint-Bertin's leadership. At the beginning of this article we have seen what happened to the economically weakened and politically isolated community of Saint-Sylvin from 1101 onwards. And in 1106, at the instigation of Bishop John of Thérouanne

¹⁴⁸ Vanderputten, 'A Time of Great Confusion'.

¹⁴⁹ Simon, *Gesta*, pp. 648-649.

and with the support of his wife Clementia, the count was convinced to permit the reform of the ailing community of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc by Hermes, prior of Saint-Bertin.¹⁵⁰ In later decades, an anonymous monk from Bergues would comment that this event marked "... the first reform of this monastery, *even though it had been begun by Ermenger*".¹⁵¹ Precisely what the author of this text wanted to imply is unclear, but it is possible that this remark is our only evidence of a 'reformist' policy on the part of Ermenger – similar perhaps to that of his contemporaries Heribert and John of Saint-Bertin¹⁵² – and that Ingelbert's defamatory campaign had been intended to quash any policy which might have infringed on the count's interests. Three decades later, and with the support of both the count and the ecclesiastical elite, Saint-Bertin was allowed to use reform as a means of regaining control over Bergues. The chronicler Simon, one of Lambert's foremost partisans, commented on this situation somewhat maliciously by saying that "[since the reform of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc in 1022], these two abbeys had been bound by a familiarity based on mutual love, so that, when it was appropriate, one would be corrected by the other".¹⁵³ But surely no one was fooled into thinking that Saint-Bertin was not using the reforms to reclaim its prominent position amongst Flanders' Benedictine houses.

Conclusions

¹⁵⁰ Simon, *Gesta*, p. 650.

¹⁵¹ Pruvost, *Chronique*, p. 82: 'Haec prima fuit hujus monasterii reformatio, licet ab Ermengero fuerit inchoata'.

¹⁵² Huyghebaert, 'Le sacramentaire', p. 44.

¹⁵³ Simon, *Gesta*, p. 650: 'A quo tempore tanta confederabantur mutuae dilectionis familiaritate hae duae aeclesiae, ut par esset, unam corrigi ab altera'.

As I have argued at the beginning of this paper, on a regional level of analysis the notion of a 'crisis of cenobitism' should be replaced by one of many 'crises' involving individual institutions looking for ways to deal with endemic institutional problems and the significantly increased competition within the Benedictine sphere. Evidence relevant to the abbey of Saint-Bertin in Flanders shows that a series of events and setbacks affected the abbey's prominent position in the region significantly in the middle decades of the eleventh century. Unable to compete effectively with the recently founded Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, Saint-Bertin experienced hindrance from its own historical legacies in trying to adapt to the changing economic, political and other circumstances. Yet towards the end of the eleventh century these same historical legacies, which in effect made the abbey's leadership less dynamic than that of younger institutions, allowed the abbots of Saint-Bertin to reclaim a prominent position in Flanders, and to actively intervene in the institutional development of its immediate competitors. The renewed association with the count of Flanders was essential in this process. If nothing else, this shows the remarkable dynamics of institutional development during a period which has long been represented as an intermediary phase between two 'waves' of reform.