Death as a Symbolic Arena: Abbatial Leadership, Episcopal authority and the 'Ostentatious Death' of Richard of Saint-Vanne (d. 1046)

Steven Vanderputten

When Richard, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Vanne, passed away on 14 June 1046, life in the episcopal town of Verdun ground to a halt.[1] Throughout his abbacy, which had lasted more than four decades (1004–1046), he had been one of the city's most important religious leaders, actively nurturing connections both to the ecclesiastical and secular elites, and to the urban population. But his passing resounded much more widely. As principal proponent of a monastic reform movement known to scholars as the New Monasticism of Lotharingia, Richard from the early years of the eleventh century was responsible for initiating a 'wave' of interventions which, through his own actions, and those of several 'disciples' plus a host of reform-minded ecclesiastical and secular leaders, impacted on the discipline and organization of dozens of religious institutions situated in the archbishoprics of Reims, Metz and Cologne. The way in which the reforms were

This paper was written in the context of the FWO-funded research project 'Monastic leadership in the post-charismatic age: constructing a new paradigm for the study of reforms before the emergence of the great Orders (Western Europe, tenth-early twelfth centuries)'. My thanks to Tjamke Snijders, Helena Vanommeslaeghe, Koen Vanheule and Melissa Provijn for their comments on the draft version.

[1] Richard's life, his activities as reformer and the Lotharingian reform movement are discussed in H. Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard, abbé de Saint-Vanne de Verdun † 1046* (Louvain and Paris, 1946); K. Hallinger, *Gorze-Kluny. Studien zu den monastischen Lebensformen und Gegensätzen im Hochmittelalter,* 2 vols. (Graz, 1971), 1, 282-316; F.G. Hirschmann, *Verdun im hohen Mittelalter. Eine lothringische Kathedralstadt und ihr Umland im Spiegel der geistlichen Institutionen,* 3 vols. (Trier, 1996), 1, p. 135-144; P.G. Jestice, *Wayward Monks and the Religious Revolution of the Eleventh Century* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), p. 170-209; F.G. Hirschmann, Klosterreform und Grundherrschaft. Richard von St. Vanne, in: *Grundherrschaft - Kirche - Stadt zwischen Maas und Rhein während des hohen Mittelalters,* A. Haverkamp and F.G. Hirschmann ed. (Mainz, 1997), p. 125-170; and D.J. Reilly, *The Art of Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders. Gerard of Cambrai, Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Saint-Vaast Bible* (Leiden and Boston, 2006).

implemented, and the reformers' own outlook on the societal embedding of monasticism, ensured that the impact of these interventions was not restricted to the world inside the cloister walls. As a reformer Richard was able to forge new links between monks and their patrons, in part by energetically promoting the remembrance of the dead and the cult of relics. He also actively promulgated new religious attitudes among laypeople by taking part in the proclamation of the Peace of God, and by being closely involved in bishops' promotion of the sacraments, penance, and episcopal authority. Finally, by relying on a vast network of religious and secular leaders, he was able to mobilize significant intellectual and material resources for building and canalization projects, the rationalization of monastic economies, the production of new manuscripts and works of art, and so on. Little wonder, then, that his death, and his funeral the next day, disrupted the liturgy at Verdun's cathedral and monasteries, and stirred immense interest from aristocrats and townspeople alike.

Eleventh- and twelfth-century commentators attest that Richard's passing was considered symptomatic of a fundamental challenge facing reformed monasticism in the middle decades of the eleventh century.[2] By 1050, the majority of first-generation reformers and their closest associates were gone. Roderic of Saint-Bertin had died in July 1042, Richard himself in June 1046, Leduin of Saint-Vaast in January 1047, Poppo of Stavelot in January 1048, and Olbert of Gembloux in July 1048.[3] As a vast body of scholarship shows, such leadership transitions have always been of

[2] See S. Vanderputten, Identité collective et mémoire des réformes "Lotharingiennes" dans l'historiographie bénédictine en Basse Lotharingie et au Nord-Est de la France (11ième-12ième siècles), *Le Moyen Age,* 117 (2011), in press and Id., Individual Experience, Collective Remembrance, and the Politics of Monastic Reform in High Medieval Flanders, *Early Medieval Europe,* 20 (2012), in press.

[3] For Roderic, see K. Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 34 and Vanderputten, *Individual Experience;* for Richard, see the bibliography in note 1; for Leduin, see 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), p. 47-74; for Poppo, see P. George, Un réformateur lotharingien de choc: l'abbé Poppon de Stavelot (978-1048), *Revue Mabiilon, NS* 10 (1999), p. 89-111 and Id., Un moine est mort: sa vie commence. *Anno 1048 obiit Poppo abbas Stabulensis, Le Moyen Age,* 108 (2002), p. 497-506; for Olbert of Gembloux, see A. Boutemy, Un grand abbé du Xle siècle: Olbert de Gembloux, *Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur,* 41 (1935), p. 43-85 and T. Gießmann, Olbert von Gembloux, in: *Die*

particular significance – both in perception and in reality – to the development of reformed monasticism in the Middle Ages.[4] But in the case of the New Monasticism of Lotharingia, their impact was made even greater by the fact that the focus of the movement lay not on a radical change in monastic customs – the reformers' disciplinary outlook being firmly grounded in Carolingian interpretations of St Benedict's *Rule* – or, as previous generations of scholars have thought, on the creation of a semi-institutionalized network of reformed houses, but rather on a new vision of abbatial leadership. In the reformers' conception, abbots were responsible for creating worlds of strict monastic observance, smooth-running communities of ascetic monks focused on the service of God and the commemoration of the dead, shielded from the influences of secular society and framed in relatively autonomous institutional contexts. To guarantee that these aims were achievable, abbots had to be selected on the basis of their capacity to resist the temptations of the world and their penchant for ascetism and prayer, for these qualities entitled them to renounce separation from the world in order to seek support for the institutional development of their communities, and to assume an active role in the Christianization of secular society.[5]

This centrality of abbatial leadership in reformist ideology and practice explains why the reformers' management of transitional moments in the leadership of monastic institutions, in particular the abdication, removal or death of an abbot and his replacement by a new one, deserve scholars' close attention.[6] One way to demonstrate this is to look at how first-generation reformers

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deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon, W. Stammler a.o. ed., 13 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1978-2007), 7, col. 33-35.

[4] See the volumes *Charisma und religiöse Gemeinschaften im Mittelalter,* G. Andenna, M. Breitenstein and G. Melville ed. (Münster, 2005) and *Institution und Charisma. Festschrift für Gert Melville,* F.J. Feiten, A. Kehnel and S. Weinfurter ed. (Cologne, 2009). Also Gert Melville, Brückenschlag zur zweiten Generation. Die kritische Phase der Institutionalisierung mittelalterlicher Orden, in: *Religiöse Ordnungsvorstellungen und Frömmigkeitspraxis im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter,* J. Rogge ed. (Korb, 2008), p. 77-98.

[5] See Jestice, *Wayward Monks,* p. 170-209.

[6] For the appointment and installation of new abbots, see the study by H. Seibert, *Abtserhebungen zwischen Rechtsnorm und Rechtswirklichkeit. Formen der Nachfolgeregelung in lothringischen und schwäbischen Klöstern der Salierzeit (1024-1125)* (Mainz, 1995); also, on the ritual of abbots' benediction by the local bishop, S.

organized their own passing. While death rituals used in monastic contexts have been intensively studied from spiritual and normative viewpoints,[7] they have failed to attract much attention from scholars interested in the reality and representation of monastic leadership.[8] When we accept, however, that death rituals – like other rituals – had no agency or meaning of their own, and that they functioned not as a category of action but as a one of intention and perception,[9] then an analysis of actors' motivation in using particular modes of symbolic behaviour, the contexts in which they did so, and the extent to which meanings attributed to a particular act were shared by others, is likely to provide new insights into the way the continuity of reformed monasticism was managed. In the case of the Lotharingian reformers, we know that abbots staged 'ostentatious deaths' to symbolically enact their views on monastic spirituality and abbatial leadership, but also to manage the ways in which they, once dead, would continue to impact on life within and around their institutions.[10] To understand the intended meaning of these enactments and others' reaction to

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Vanderputten, Abbatial Obedience, Liturgical Reform and the Threat of Monastic Autonomy at the Turn of the Twelfth Century, *The Catholic Historical Review,* XCVI (2012), in press.

[7] See in particular P. Binski, *Medieval Death. Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996); J. Sonntag, *Klosterleben im Spiegel des Zeichenhaften: symbolisches Denken und Handeln hochmittelalterlicher Mönche zwischen Dauer und Wandel, Regel und Gewohnheit* (Berlin, 2008), p. 469-472 and *Last Things. Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages,* C.W. Bynum and P.H. Freedman ed. (Philadelphia, 2000).

[8] One exception is J. Dalarun, La mort des saints fondateurs. De Martin à François, in: *Les Fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (IIIe-XIIIe siècle). Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome avec le concours de l'Université de Rome "La Sapienza", Rome, 27-29 octobre 1988* (Rome, 1991), p. 193-215. In the introduction to Dalarun's study *L'impossible sainteté. La vie retrouvée de Robert d'Arbrissel (v. 1045-1116), fondateur de Fontevraud* (Paris, 1985), Pierre Toubert argues on p. 13 that hagiographical accounts of the deaths of founders (be it of monasteries, reform movements or orders) are often defined by 'the problematic search for an institutional meaning one would wish to give to the life of a founder and to all symbols accorded to it.' This statement foregoes the realities of reformist leadership of the first and second generations; see the discussion in Vanderputten and Meijns, *Realities.*

[9] I refer to C. Pössel's assessment of the current state of ritual studies in The Magic of Early Medieval Ritual, *Early Medieval Europe,* 17 (2009), p. 111-125.

[10] On the notion of 'ostentatious death', see Dalarun, *La mort,* p. 199. For the example of Odilo of Cluny (d. 1049), see P. Henriet, *La parole et la prière au Moyen Âge. Le verbe efficace dans l'hagiographie monastique des XIe et XIIe siècles* (Bruxelles, 2000), p. 335-352.

them, we have to study them in relation to the specific contexts in which they took place. This paper will reconsider the evidence relating to one such case, the 'ostentatious death' of Richard of Saint-Vanne, to support two arguments. First, that rituals and other forms of symbolic behaviour associated with the passing of reformist leaders deserve analysis as a repertoire of acts and statements which derived their multiple meanings from the institutional and ideological contexts in which they were applied. And second, that Richard himself, his followers, and the bishop of Verdun turned Richard's passing into a symbolic arena for the enactment of competing visions on abbatial leadership, monastic autonomy, and episcopal authority.

Representing and remembering an abbot's death

Three accounts exist of Richard's failing health, his death, the subsequent handling of his remains, and his eventual burial.[11] The earliest, and least detailed, is that by the anonymous continuator of the Deeds of the bishops of Verdun (henceforth Deeds), a monk of Saint-Vanne who probably wrote just a few years after the events.[12] It is part of a more extensive account of the death of Bishop Richard of Verdun (1040–1046) a few months later, and focuses entirely on the latter's involvement in the death rituals – not on the rituals per se – and subsequent handling of Abbot Richard's corpse.[13] Written some three to four decades later, Hugh of Flavigny's chronicle includes a significantly more detailed description of Richard's preparations for his own death, his comportment on his actual deathbed, the bishop's behaviour, the reaction of the lay elites and the urban population of Verdun,

[11] For a summary description of Richard's death and funeral, see Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 309-319.

[12] M. Borgolte, Fiktive Gräber in der Historiographie. Hugo von Flavigny und die Sepultur der Bischöfe von Verdun, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16.-19. September 1986,* 5 vols. (Hannover, 1988), 1, p. 205-240, at p. 208.

[13] *Gesta episcoporum Virdunensium (continuatio),* edited in G. Waitz, *MGH SS IV* (Hannover, 1841), p. 50; see Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 66-67.

and the manner in which Richard's post-mortem handling was organized.[14] It is certain that Hugh used the aforementioned Deeds; but he also relied on a number of other sources, including oral accounts of eyewitnesses and third parties.[15]. Finally, a Life of Richard, written probably in the 1130s, relies heavily on the Deeds and adds little of note.[16]

Hugh's account of the ritual organization of Richard's death begins on 13 June 1046, when Richard sensed that death was near. In accordance with monastic custom, he ordered all of his monks to gather around his deathbed.[17] Having confessed and taken Communion, he was administered unction by the bishop, and was placed on a bed inside the abbatial church, lying on ash and a sackcloth (*cilicium*). The bed was then placed inside the chapel of St Nicolas, in such a way as to make it possible for him to always see the altar dedicated to this saint. Once installed, he spoke to the monks, admonishing them to serve God and observe their abbot's memory, and he blessed them. Then he ordered for relics that had been given to him by the patriarch of Jerusalem to be brought, and he kissed and blessed them; he then instructed that the relics he had worn around his neck be placed at his feet. Following this, he implored the protection of the saints, and with his outstretched hand blessed the monks and all present, and asked to be blessed himself. Once this part of the ritual was finished, he sent away most of the monks and, looking up and with outstretched hands, focused on God. The passion accounts by the four evangelists were read to him,

[14] Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronicon,* edited in G.H. Pertz, *MGH SS VIII* (Hannover, 1848), p. 288-502, at p. 404-405; see P. Healy *The Chronicle of Hugh of Flavigny. Reform and the Investiture Contest in the Late Eleventh Century* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2006) and M. Lawo, *Studien zu Hugo von Flavigny* (Hannover, 2010).

[15] Hugh certainly met monks of Saint-Vanne, who had fled to Flavigny in 1085 to escape the bishop of Verdun's wrath; see among others Borgolte, *Fiktive Gräber,* p. 216. Hugh's version of Richard's life, while colored by his own position in the then-current debates over the purpose of cenobitical life, cannot be dismissed; see the discussion in Ibid., p. 208-209 and Healy, *The Chronicle*.

[16] *Vita Richardi abbatis S. Vitoni Virdunensis,* edited in *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti saec. VI, I* (Paris, 1701), p. 519-534. See Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 27-34 and Hirschmann, *Klosterreform,* p. 128.

[17] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 404-405.

as were a few lections from the fourth book of Gregory's *Dialogues*.[18] When Richard sensed that his lower limbs were growing numb, he sat upright and slowly let the relics ascend alongside his body. He then put the relics on his chest, reclined, placed his hands on the relics, and cast his eyes to the heavens. Present at this moment were a handful of individuals, 'as much as the smallness of the place could hold', while the monks were praying and chanting in the main church. Those present continuously prayed and psalmodized, and in the early morning of 14 June, Richard expired.[19]

Following Richard's death, the bishop closed the abbot's eyes, and he and four other abbots also present prepared the body. The bishop dressed the corpse, not with the garments the abbot had selected, but with more luxurious ones; the relics were then placed back on his chest. Richard's body was placed on a stretcher or *feretrum*, the abbatial staff by his side, and brought before the altar of St Peter, where mass was said in the presence of the bishop. The doors of the abbatial church were opened, and the people were allowed to greet the deceased abbot. Then, the bishop ordered for the body to be brought to the cathedral, where vigils and psalms were recited. The next day, the canons said mass, and the body was transferred again to the other monasteries in the city of Verdun, namely Saint-Maur and Saint-Paul, where vigils were held and mass was said. In the evening, Richard was brought back to the abbatial church of Saint-Vanne. The next day, the bishop again said mass, preached a sermon to the people about the vicissitudes of human existence and Richard's life and precious death (*mors preciosa*), and oversaw the funeral, which was attended only by those officiating and a few servants and was held in the crypt of the abbatial church dedicated to Our Lady. Bishop Richard kissed the deceased on the head and the chest, and arranged for Richard to be laid to rest in a tomb situated before the altar of Mary and John the evangelist, below which rested St Madelveus. In honor of Richard, a small monument was erected at the site of his grave.

[18] The biography of Poppo alludes to Gregory's *Dialogues* in relation to Eccl. 34,7 (see George, *Un moine,* p. 498); also Henriet, *La parole,* p. 307, at note 73.

[19] The Deeds add that the bishop celebrated mass before the altar of St Laurent and finished in time to attend Richard's iast moments (*Gesta episcoporum Virdunensium,* p. 50).

A comparison of Hugh's account with some of the contemporary monastic death rituals used at Farfa and Cluny shows that it is lacking a significant amount of information that would have given us an insight into how the reformers of the early eleventh century organized their passing and succession.[20] This lack of detail is not unusual, for it is well known that most hagiographical and biographical accounts of the time do not focus on the details of the death ritual.[21] But whereas in the older accounts of the deaths of contemporaries and disciples of Richard's, most notably Poppo (written probably in the 1060s), Olbert (1070s) and Thierry of Saint-Hubert (shortly after 1087), the dominant discourse is that of holy death,[22] in Richard's case it is not, despite the reference in the text itself to the abbot's *mors preciosa.* Hugh's focus is shared between elements referring to Richard's exemplary death and a more elaborate discussion of the precautions Richard had taken to perpetuate his vision of monastic institutional identity and leadership, as well as on key players'

[20] It is by no means certain that it was still possible for Hugh to verify which death ritual had been used at Saint-Vanne over half a century earlier. In the mid-eleventh century the codification of monastic death rituals was still in its infancy, and even at Cluny prior to the 1030s–1040s there seems to have been no consensus on how to organize such rituals. On the earliest codified death rituals for monastic use, see Henriet, *La parole*, p. 319-320; Frederick S. Paxton, Death by Customary at Eleventh-Century Cluny, in: *From Dead of Night to End of Day. The Medieval Customs of Cluny,* S. Boynton and I. Cochelin ed. (Turnhout, 2005), p. 301-303; S. Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy & History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000 – 1125* (Ithaca, 2006), p. 135-143 and Id., A Monastic Death Ritual from the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, *Traditio,* 64 (2009), p. 57-84; on this and the Cluniac customaries of Bernard and Ulrich, see Paxton, *Death,* p. 297-318 and Sonntag, *Klosterleben,* p. 473-481 and 494-501.

[21] For the lack of attention given by hagiographers and biographers to the details of the death ritual, see also Henriet, *La parole,* esp. 299 and the material presented in V. Gazeau, *Normannia monastica. Princes normands et abbés bénédictins (Xe-XIIe siècle)* (Caen, 2007), p. 135-137.

[22] For Poppo, see the *Vita Popponis,* edited in W. Wattenbach, *MGH SS XI* (Hannover, 1854), p. 310-313 (death scene recounted in H. Platelle, La mort précieuse. La mort des moines d'après quelques sources des Pays Bas du sud, *Revue Mabillon,* 60 (1982), p. 151-174, at p. 163-166 and George, *Un moine,* p. 499); for Olbert, see Sigebert of Gembloux, *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium,* edited in G.H. Pertz, *MGH SS VIII* (Hannover, 1848), p. 541-542; and for Thierry, see the *Vita Theoderici abbatis Andaginensis,* edited in W. Wattenbach, *MGH SS XII* (Hannover, 1856), p. 54-57. On holy death, see in particular Dalarun, *La mort*, p. 193-194.

reaction to these precautions.[23] This is remarkable, for in Hugh's own recounting of the death of Abbot Robert of Flavigny (d. 1099), an event which he probably witnessed himself, the theme of holy death is very much in evidence.[24]

The most likely explanation for the fact that holy death is only present in Richard's death scene as a secondary literary theme is that Hugh was working from an oral or written account that was contemporary to Richard's death and which underscored the unusualness of the way in which the great reformer and his survivors staged his passing and funeral. The fact that there are not traces of such an account in the Deeds is not an argument against its authenticity: as we shall see below, relations between the monks of Saint-Vanne and the local bishops became increasingly troubled in the mid-eleventh century. It is likely that the author of the Deeds, who wrote in a context of rapidly deteriorating relations, skirted around the subject because contemporaries still vividly remembered the episode of Richard's death and funeral as one in which the bishop and the abbot not only interacted as religious allies, but also as political adversaries, competing for symbolic power. In addition, the few details Hugh gives on Richard's death ritual match death practices which pre-date customs of the late eleventh century, in particular those found in the Cluniac customaries of Ulrich and Bernard.[25] Certain parts of Hugh's account, like the abbot's blessing of the monks, also match

[23] P. Henriet, Les paroles de la mort dans l'hagiographie monastique des Xle et Xlle siècles, in: *Moines et moniales face à la mort. Actes du colloque de Lille, 2-4 octobre 1992* (Villetaneuse, 1993), p. 75-86, at p. 76-77 underscores the uniqueness Richard's death account.

[24] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 497-500.

[25] See the evidence presented in L. Gougaud, Anciennes coutumes claustrales. La mort du moine, *Revue Mabillon,* 76 (1929), p. 281-302; D. Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort dans l'église latine des origines à la réforme carolingienne* (Münster, 1978), p. 3-4; F.S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death. The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1996); and Sonntag, *Klosterleben,* p. 473 onwards. A customary from the latter half of the eleventh century, which may or may not originate from Saint-Vanne, gives brief instructions on how to prepare deceased monks for funeral. Among these instructions, the sole relevant variant to Hugh's description is that monks should be washed by their equals; *Consuetudines Sancti Vitonis Virdonunensis,* edited by M. Wegener and K. Hallinger, in; Hallinger, *Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum VII/3. Consuetudinum saeculi X/XI/XII, monumenta non- clunlasencia* (Siegburg, 1984), p. 375-426, at p. 424. Regarding the dating of the

reports of the deaths of some of Richard's contemporaries, including Poppo and Olbert.[26] A final, and perhaps most persuasive, argument against an invented account by Hugh is the fact that the acts and gestures carried out by Richard, his monks and the bishop of Verdun can only be adequately understood when framed in a mid-eleventh-century political and ideological context. As we shall see further, Hugh either failed to understand all the implications of the symbolic behaviour he described or, more likely, because of the still-problematic relations between the monks of Saint-Vanne and the bishop of Verdun he declined to fully elucidate their meaning to his readership. In the next two sections, I will look at how Hugh's chronicle can still be used to argue that Richard's death was framed in a discourse that derived from, a) Richard's conception of his abbatial leadership, and b) Saint-Vanne's position as a centre of reform, the abbey's role in the city of Verdun, and its position in relation to the local bishop.

Separation and communal sanctification: Richard's death and his self-conception as abbot

In accordance with the French sociologist Arnold Van Gennep's concept of *rites de passage* or rites of transition, Frederick S. Paxton distinguishes three phases in the Cluniac death ritual of the later eleventh century.[27] A first phase is preliminal, where the dying monk is brought to a state of separation from the community. The second is liminal, and represents the dead monk's achieved separateness, not only from the community, but also in terms of the relation between body and soul. In Paxton's interpretation, social life in the monastery is temporarily suspended to allow for the liminality of the ritual. The third and final phase is one of incorporation, where the monk is re-integrated into the community by means of a record in the *liber vitae*, thereby undoing the effects of an 'antisocial act in a highly socialized environment'. Paxton's argument has been repeatedly

customary, see S. Vanderputten, *Oboedientia.* Réformes et discipline monastique au début du onzième siècle, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale,* 53 (2010), p. 255-266, at p. 256.

[26] Sonntag, *Klosterleben,* p. 477; also Dalarun, *La mort,* p. 197.

[27] Paxton, *Christianizing Death,* p. 5-9.

criticized, most recently by Jorg Sonntag. While Sonntag accepts the tripartite division of the ritual as useful for analysis, he argues that the ritual categories (process of separation – state of separation – reintegration) are not as distinct as Paxton suggests, and that several symbolic acts in the first and second phases of the rite of transition were by no means antisocial. For instance, the participation of the entire community in the rites of penance, the declamation of the *Credo*, and the kiss given by all members to the dying monk, should not simply be considered steps towards a separation of the individual from the community, but as acts that contributed to communal purification and sanctification. The placing of the dying monk on ashes and sackcloth carried multiple meanings which referred not only to penance and remorse, but also to inner sanctification and the hope of resurrection (the reference to Lazarus being explicated in some texts). These acts too appear to have had a communal significance.[28]

A look at some of the elements in Hugh's account confirms this nuanced approach to Paxton's model. Acts of separation are certainly present in Richard's dying behaviour, but the separation effected is either incomplete or ultimately reversed. We can observe this in the way he staged his death in order to reflect his position with regard to communal sanctification, succession, internal discipline, and commemoration. In the introduction to this paper we have seen how reformist ideology conceived of abbots' authority as legitimized by their capacity to interact meaningfully with the outside world without compromising their ascetic identity. It is well known that Richard maintained close relations with the aristocratic and ecclesiastical elites of Lotharingia, and that he adopted a strong apostolic stance in relations with urban and other populations. In the early 1020s, he was involved in the Peace of God, and in 1026, he embarked upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, visiting several key places of the life and passion of Christ. These activities he apparently conceived as quite separate from relations with his monastic subjects.[29] As a result, it is perhaps not surprising that he considered at least some of the relics he brought back from his pilgrimage (a piece

[28] Sonntag, *Klosterleben,* p. 482-488.

[29] Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 281-296; Poppo also had a considerable collection of relics in his private ownership.

of rock from the Holy Sepulchre and a piece of wood from the Holy Cross, among others) as his private property. The death scene as described by Hugh shows him clutching these relics in his final moments; the significance of this act surpassed the use of these objects as personal talismans, for according to Gougard the slow passing of the relics over his entire body mirrors, both in act and in meaning, the salvatory unction.[30] The fact that the relics used were associated with Christ himself and with the events surrounding his death and resurrection, suggests that Richard considered himself in a position which allowed him to self-administer a ritual act of cleansing and spiritual and corporeal salvation. Richard, in other words, turned himself into Lazarus. To make this possible, he did not need or ask the assistance of the monastic community of Verdun, which was involved in none of the steps in this process (acquisition of the relics, ownership, ritual use). But as we have seen, penitential acts of cleansing, regardless of who administered them, also sanctified the community. In addition, Richard was well aware of the fact that the use of the relics was a pregnant reminder, most likely even a confirmation, of the fact that he was likely to become a subject of veneration himself. One of his closest followers, Poppo, on his own deathbed expressed fears that the integrity of his body would be compromised by those seeking to obtain relics;[31] the subsequent handling of Richard's corpse and the fact that he chose a location which was associated closely with the cult of holy bishops in the abbatial church of Saint-Vanne, indicates that Richard did not resist, and probably even nurtured, the idea of his dead body being used as a relic. By taking such a course of action, Richard was able to guarantee the sanctification of the abbatial church of Saint-Vanne, and of the monastic community itself.

Another example of the somewhat perplexing combination of separation and connection with the monastic community is found in the arrangements Richard made for his succession. In the years leading up to his death, probably around 1040, Richard had abandoned his monastery for an

[30] Gougaud, *Anciennes coutumes claustrales,* p. 285-286. See the comments in Henriet, *La parole,* p. 300 : 'Le caractère systématique du procédé [i.e. of the handling of the relics] nous situe dans une logique qui, bien qu'elle ne suive aucune norme écrite, reste celle de l'assurance rituelle'.

[31] George, *Un moine.*

eremitical existence in the south, near Remiremont.[32] It is clear that, while remaining fully in function as abbot, near the end of his life he tailored his behaviour to reflect his self-conception as an ascetic. As we have seen, a particular inclination to ascetism was one of the properties that qualified a monk for abbatial leadership. But rather than choosing to die an eremitical death, as William of Volpiano and others had done, Richard opted to return to Saint-Vanne and stage an 'ostentatious' one.[33] Exactly what he aimed to achieve, apart from the communal sanctification of his monks, becomes clear if we look at how he transmitted power to his successors. Prior his death, Richard was abbot of Saint-Vanne, Saint-Pierre in Chalons, Beaulieu, and Saint-Urbain. For all of these institutions, he appointed disciples and collaborators as his successor;[34] and thus effectuated a separation from his subjects. The one exception was the abbey of Saint-Vanne, where he remained in office until his hour of death. It is very likely that Waleran, then prior of Saint-Vanne, was already being readied for the succession; in Hugh's account he appears as one of the five individuals (the others being the abbots of Saint-Pierre, Beaulieu, and Saint- Urbain, and the bishop of Cambrai) who prepared Richard's body for the funeral.[35] But apparently Richard declined to formally appoint Waleran as his successor. One could interpret this behaviour as a way of leaving the monks of Saint-Vanne free to elect their own leader; but surely no member of that community would have been foolish enough to believe that a free election was truly an option. An alternative view would be that Richard deliberately eschewed arranging for a smooth succession in order to leave the community while in function as abbot. Such behaviour was not unusual. His disciple Poppo, who died just over six months later, at the end of his life diligently arranged for his succession at Sankt-Maximin in Trier,

[32] Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 302-303.

[33] Regarding the secluded deaths of eleventh-century hermits, see Henriet, Silence, ascèse et *caritas*: morts érémitiques dans l'Italie du Xle siècle, in: *La parole,* p. 353-378.

[34] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 404; Hugh commits an error in claiming that Thierry of Saint-Hubert (1055-1087) was appointed successor there in 1046; however, there can be little doubt that Richard, who was particularly fond of Thierry, had destined him for an high position (see Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 314).

[35] Hugh, *Chronicon*, p. 405; Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard*, p. 317.

but declined to do so for his main institution of Stavelot.[36] And another of Richard's contemporaries, Odilo of Cluny (d. 1049), referred his monks to God when they enquired about a candidate to succeed him.[37] Thus, Richard, Poppo and Odilo, all three individuals who throughout their abbacies had shown particular interest in the appointment of monastic leadership at reformed institutions and in managing their succession, declined to do the same for their own home institution. The consequences of this were double: on the one hand, it effected the cleanest, but also most radical, possible rupture in that abbey's leadership; on the other, it also consolidated and strengthened the connection between the abbot's person and his principal institution.

Significant also is the fact that Hugh fails to mention Richard's concerns over the continuity of reformed discipline at Saint-Vanne, whereas such concern is attested for several contemporaries, figuring as part of their final admonishment to their monks. According to his Life, Robert d'Arbrissel admonished his monks that 'they should never become lax in the observance of the good institutions' (*hortabatur ne umquam tepescerent a bonis institutis*); Etienne d'Obazine and Hugh of Lacerta did much the same; Geoffrey of Chalard more prosaically asked his designated successor to amplify his foundation.[38] Closer to the circle of the reformers, Olbert of Gembloux admonished his monks to remain secluded from the secular world.[39] Richard may have done the same; but Hugh, even though he was a fierce defender of Richard's reformist agency, does not mention any such comments or concerns in Richard's final speech act. At the same time, and again not surprisingly, Richard did not dissociate himself entirely from his subjects. A significant part of Richard's allocution

[36] *Vita Popponis,* p. 310; also George, *Un moine,* p. 499.

[37] P. Henriet, Saint-Odilon devant la mort: sur quelques données implicites du comportement religieux au 11e siècle, *Le Moyen Âge,* (1990), p. 227-244, at p. 231.

[38] See the evidence presented in Henriet, *Les paroles de mort,* p. 81 and 86. More examples in Dalarun, *La mort,* p. 200.

[39] Sigebert, G*esta abbatum Gemblacensium,* p. 541: 'Et congregatis filiis suis, prolixe et pie sermonicatus est eis, et quantum poterat facundia diserti doctoris et pietas affectuosi patris, monebat eos, ne ab aratro dominici operis ocuius averterent, ut a fermento secularium caverent, ut non solum coram Deo sed etiam coram hominibus bona providerent, et caetera id genus, quae pii et sapientis viri eructabat pectus.'

to the monks, and one rarely mentioned in other narratives of abbatial death, is his request to be included in the community's memorial practices. Richard, who had only recently introduced a *Liber vitae* at Saint-Vanne,[40] may not have wanted to abandon his position at the abbey and thereby secure the smoothest possible transition to the new leadership, or even give direction to his potential successor by outlining the disciplinary course to follow. He did, however, make arrangements for an everlasting connection with the community and its patron. In Paxton's model, the integration of a dead abbot in liturgical commemoration is placed in the postliminal phase of death rituals, where the initiative is with the surviving monks. But if Hugh's account Is truthful, Richard actually participated in it.

What little we know of Richard's intentions at the end of his life and the way he intervened in his death rituals suggests that he thought of them as crowning gestures to his reformist leadership and its salutory merits. Like all that pertained to his behaviour during his active life as an abbot, this involved acts of separation from, close interaction with, and sanctification of, the monastic community. Thus, the paradox inherent to the reformist ideal of abbatial leadership expressed itself subtly, but unmistakably, in Richard's death rituals. But the tensions played out in the ritual were not limited to Richard's position as abbot, for they extended to Saint-Vanne's relation with episcopal power, its historical position in the city of Verdun, and the centrality of the cult of saints' relics to monastic self-defence and self-promotion.

Death: an arena for symbolic competition

To Richard and like-minded abbots, the possession of saints' relics was central to monastic institutional stability and autonomy. A potent means of self-defence in times of adversity, it allowed the monks to interact in positive and in negative terms with secular society, to attract pilgrims and

[40] Healy, *The Chronicle,* p. 34.

patrons, and to utilize them as a weapons in conflict situations.[41] Himself a hagiographer of St Vanne and St Rouin, Richard promoted the conception of new texts celebrating saints and their relics, carried out elevations and translations of relics, and actively pursued the acquisition of new ones, not only for himself as we have seen before, but also for the institutions in which he was involved.[42] Individuals like Leduin of Saint-Vaast and Poppo of Stavelot demonstrated similar conduct, which was focused on the fostering of communal identities through saints' cult and the use of relics as instruments of religious and material exchange with the outside world.[43]

The problem at Saint-Vanne was that the abbey's reputation rested first and foremost on the presence in the abbatial church of many of the city's former bishops. The church's origins went back to late Antiquity, long before the Benedictine monastery was founded. Until 451, it had served as the city's cathedral, and up to the death of Bishop Berenger, the prelate who converted the local community of canons into a Benedictine one in 951, it had served as the necropolis for the city's bishops. Following the reform, the presence at the abbatial church of these august bodies remained a particular asset for the church and for the monks, and it has been suggested that it was Richard's principal reason for entering the relatively inauspicious community when he abandoned his life as a

[41] In his Life of St Vanne, Richard himself argues that saints' patronage of religious institutions is the latter's prime weapon against the monks' enemies; *Vita Sancti Vitoni Virdunensis Episcopo,* edited in Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 361-370, at p. 361.

[42] P.J. Geary, *Furta sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990; rev. edn. 1974), p. 68-69; Healy, *The Chronicle,* p. 47-49 and A. Wagner, Les collections de reliques à Verdun. Essai d'organisation d'un espace urbain au XIe siècle, in : *Reliques et sainteté dans l'espace médiéval,* J.L. Deuffic ed. (Saint-Denis, 2005), p. 497- 524, at p. 504-510. Also M. Goullet and A. Wagner, Reliques et pouvoirs dans le diocèse de Verdun aux Xe-XIe siècles, *Revue Mabillon,* NS 10 (1999), p. 67-88 and M. Gaillard, Dans ou hors la cité: quelques réflexions sur ies lieux de sépultures des évêques de Metz, Toul et Verdun, au IXe siècle et au début de Xe siècle, in: *Sépulture, mort et représentation du pouvoir au moyen âge. Tod, Grabmal und Herrschaftsrepräsentation im Mittelalter. Actes des 11es Journées Lotharingiennes, 26-9 septembre 2000,* M. Margue ed. (Luxembourg, 2006), p. 171-184.

[43] For Leduin, see R. Gameson, 'Signed' Manuscripts from Early Romanesque Flanders: Saint-Bertin and Saint-Vaast, in: *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools,* M. Gullick ed. (Walkern, 2006), p. 48-65 and Vanderputten and Meijns, *Realities;* for Poppo, see George, *Un réformateur* and *Un moine,* esp. p. 502.

secular cleric in the archiepiscopal town of Reims.[44] Once appointed abbot, Richard actively promoted the abbey's reputation as a *Grabkirche*, and literally completed the monks' collection of episcopal bodies by acquiring, whether surreptiously or not is unclear, the body of Verdun's first bishop Sanctinus.[45] Besides the institutional advantages he pursued through promoting the cult of episcopal saints resting at the abbey, Richard also cultivated a particular affinity with Bishop Madelveus (d. 776): although the dating of a Life of the saint is uncertain (it may be from slightly before Richard's appointment), Richard was certainly responsible for having the saint's remains placed inside a new tomb under the altar of St Mary and St John in the newly reorganized crypt.[46] In Hugh of Flavigny's chronicle, the Life of Madelveus is reprised to suggest that the saint had been both bishop and abbot, and it is evident from Hugh's account that he at least (and possibly Richard himself) sought to demonstrate the parallels between Madelveus' life and that of Richard.[47] Likewise, Richard's own authorship of a Life of St Vitonus or Vanne, himself also bishop and abbot, indicates that the cult of saints at Saint-Vanne revolved, by necessity but also by intent, entirely around holy bishops.

Richard regarded the abbatial church's role as episcopal necropolis and the abbey's claim to prominence, both as a sanctuary in the city of Verdun and as a centre of monastic reform, as closely interconnected. As leader of a community that had previously lived in the shadow of Verdun's bishops, however, Richard no doubt knew that his active promotion of the abbey's relic treasure was a recipe for trouble. An often-overlooked passage in Hugh's chronicle recounts how, during a time of famine in the early 1040s,[48] the bishop expressed a desire to stimulate the cult of St Vanne and display his relics in Verdun's cathedral of St Mary. Abbot Richard showed great reluctance to allow

[44] Geary, *Furta sacra,* p. 68-69.

[45] Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 149-167 and Healy, *The Chronicle,* p. 46-47, among others.

[46] Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 98-99 and 110-112.

[47] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 340-342 and 344-350. See p. 349 for Madelveus' death scene, which again is very different from Richard's.

[48] Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 66; see also F. Curschmann, *Hungersnöte im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte des 8. bis 13. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 116.

for the relics to leave the abbatial church, relenting only after being pressured.[49] It is interesting to observe how Hugh associates this incident with Richard's unwillingness at that stage of his life to leave the monastery, fearful of dying outside of its walls.[50] This passage hints at a struggle for symbolic power between the bishop and the abbot, and suggests that Richard was trying to safeguard all of his abbey's saintly assets, including his own dead body, by keeping them quite literally inside the monastic compound of Saint- Vanne.

As for Bishop Richard, Hugh and the author of the Deeds both indicate that he was especially keen to participate in Richard's death ritual, the *circuitio* of the body in the town of Verdun, and his subsequent burial in the crypt. Both authors try to explain this by referring to the bishop's emotive reaction to Richard's passing. There are indications that his interventions can also be framed in the growing tensions between the local episcopacy and the monastic community of Saint-Vanne. Hugh, in his chronicle, does not dwell on tensions between the two major ecclesiastical leaders in the city, eager as he was to represent relations between the bishops of Verdun and Richard of Saint-Vanne as cordial. But a closer look at the evidence shows that, over the course of Abbot Richard's government, relations had gradually deteriorated. Following a period of ill fortune in the later tenth century, the abbey's case had been championed by Bishop Haimo (988–1024), who appointed Richard in 1005 and favoured the community in such a way that it was able to compete with the newly founded monastery of Saint-Paul in the same city.[51] In the decades following Haimo's death relations became increasingly tense, for several reasons. One was Saint-Vanne's growing significance as a centre of monastic reform, and the monks' resulting self-confidence, expressed, for instance, in the aforementioned promotion of the cult of holy bishops and the conception of a cartulary.[52] Although Hugh claims that Richard and the incumbent Bishop Richard were on excellent terms, the

[49] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 404; see Dauphin, *Le Bienheureux Richard,* p. 313-314.

[50] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 404. In doing so, he emulated famous predecessors like Antony and Benedict of Aniane; but that does not negate the sincerity of his desire, or the fact that it may have been inspired by other motives than the purely spiritual; Dalarun, *La mort,* p. 200-201.

[51] Healy, *The Chronicle*, p. 30-31.

[52] Ib., p. 34-37 and 49.

former having arranged for the appointment of the latter,[53] evidence of real interactions is rare, and relations with the episcopacy may have grown cooler as early as the appointment of Bishop Rambert (1026–1040).[54] The second reason was the close association between both Abbot Richard and the abbey and the comital house of Verdun, a fierce competitor to the bishops for influence in the region and in the town. One of Richard's earliest supporters had been Herman of Verdun. A relative of the counts, he had entered the monastery with Richard. His support for the abbot laid the foundations for an association which expressed itself in various ways, including significant donations and the fact that the abbey soon came to serve as a dynastic necropolis for the count's relatives, thereby creating a sort of 'necropolic competition' with the former bishops of the city.[55] We know that the abbatial church had not lost symbolic significance for the current bishop: shortly before his death in November 1046, Bishop Richard expressed the wish to be buried in the crypt; had the canons of the cathedral not resisted his intentions, he would have been the first bishop of Verdun since the mid-tenth century to be buried at Saint- Vanne.[56]

The bishop's objective clearly was to bring an increasingly autonomous Saint-Vanne back under episcopal control, at least symbolically. But the competition between the bishop and the counts exceeded this, for the two parties were diametrically opposed over the issue of loyalty to the emperor. In 1044–1046 and 1047–1049, Count Godfrey the Bearded, a member of the house of Verdun, rebelled against Henry III over the emperor's refusal to grant him two Lotharingian duchies that since the 1030s had belonged to his deceased father, Gozelo I. Bishop Theoderic, Bishop Richard's successor from c. 1046 onwards, refused to acknowledge Godfrey's claims, and the city of

[53] When Henry III attempted to appoint Abbot Richard as the new bishop of Verdun in 1040, it was the latter who suggested as his replacement Richard, son of Count Hildrad of Grandpré (Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 66 and 139).

[54] Ib.*,* p. 139.

[55] Ib.*,* p. 153-156.

[56] The final bishop to be buried at Saint-Vanne was Berengar, the founder of the Benedictine monastery there. Subsequent bishops from the later tenth and early eleventh century would choose to locate their graves in newly founded sanctuaries; Borgolte, *Fiktive Gräber,* p. 214-215 and Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 156.

Verdun was devastated by Godfrey's troops. One institution to suffer particularly was the cathedral, the heart of episcopal power and a representative institution for imperial influence in the city and the region.[57] Even though Godfrey was forced to perform public penance in 1049, his family continued to exert considerable influence on the abbey of Saint-Vanne.[58] By 1060, the monks came under increasing pressure from the local episcopate, whose vision of ecclesiastical reform combined the affirmation of episcopal authority with loyalty to the imperial crown, and in 1085, they were actually forced to flee the monastery for fear of the bishop's attacks.

The inflammatory political situation turned Abbot Richard's passing, which happened right in the middle of these conflicts, into an event of the highest symbolic importance. No doubt the counts of Verdun claimed a prominent position in the ceremonies surrounding Richard's death. But as Patrick Healy has shown, for reasons relating to the delicate position of the monks of Saint-Vanne in the late eleventh century, Hugh of Flavigny was reluctant to comment on the conflicts between the house of Verdun and the bishop in the 1040s.[59] This explains why he (and, for that matter, the author of the Deeds too) makes no explicit statement regarding the involvement of the comital family, merely mentioning that Richard upon his deathbed was visited by many prominent aristocrats and ordinary townspeople, and that his body was subsequently greeted by a crowd of laypeople.[60] In contrast, much of what we know about Richard's death and funeral revolves around Bishop Richard's behaviour. As we have seen, Bishop Richard was closely attached to the emperor, and thus, perhaps in spite of his personal sympathies, had to pursue a policy aimed at reinforcing his own authority to the detriment of anti-imperial agents and their beneficiaries, like the counts of Verdun and the abbot of Saint-Vanne. For instance, the aforementioned anecdote regarding the disputed translation of St Vanne in the early 1040s suggests a strategy by the bishop to gain a stronger foothold at Saint-Vanne. Such behaviour would certainly be consistent with the current

[57] Ib., p. 32-36.

[58] Ib., p. 37-38.

[59] Healy, *The Chronicle,* p. 36-38.

[60] Hugh, *Chronicon,* p. 404-405.

political situation at Verdun and the key position of the abbey in the power struggle with the count of Verdun; but it is also consistent with the ways in which bishops throughout Lotharingia were seeking to gain firmer control over centres of reform.

Not surprisingly, the corroborative evidence for this relates to the deaths of monastic leaders. For instance, Hugh's account is mirrored quite nicely by that of Poppo's biographer, who describes how his subject frantically attempted to keep his remains out of the hands of the bishop of Liège. In January 1048 Poppo died at the abbey of Marchiennes of Flanders, whose leadership he had been given by Count Baldwin V; before expiring, he carefully prepared his body's itinerary to Stavelot, insisting that he did not wish to be buried elsewhere.[61] Bishop Wazo of Liège ignored Poppo's last wishes, and arranged for a solemn *circuitio* of the dead reformer to all monastic institutions in Liège; during the journey, Wazo distributed alms to the poor.[62] Clearly Wazo's objective was to instrumentalize Poppo's personality and his near-saintly status in the construction of his own authority as bishop, most notably in relation to the region's monastic institutions (nearly all of which had been under the direct or indirect control of Poppo), and to associate his own person with the saint by using the public transferal of the body as a means to display the Christian virtue of charity. According to Poppo's biographer, the abbot had expressly intended 'that this abbey, which was so strenuously [observing] the monastic institutions, would not be deprived of his burial'.[63] Poppo, and most likely Richard, realized that the actual location of their graves – like those of the patron saints resting at their principal institutions – would be symbolically crucial to the survival of reformist leadership. But the real place of their death was, of course, also significant: for Poppo it was too late to travel the 260 or so kilometres from Marchiennes to Stavelot. But for Richard, in the final years of his life an uncharacteristic change of behaviour in strictly observing the *stabilitas loci* made sense: after his return from Remiremont, Richard became entrenched in his monastic fortress,

[61] See Dalarun, *La mort,* p. 201.

[62] *Vita Popponis,* p. 313; also George, *Un moine,* p. 501.

[63] *Vita Popponis,* p. 310: 'ut locus ille, qui se artius sub monastica habuit institutione, sibi in sua non deesset depositione'.

anxious to preserve the sanctifying powers of his death ritual and burial site for his principal monastery. The objective was to safeguard the abbey's status in the city of Verdun and to avoid a symbolic overrunning by the bishop.

Judging by the accounts given in the Deeds' and in Hugh's chronicle, Bishop Richard overruled Richard's attempt to make his death of symbolic benefit primarily to the monks of Saint-Vanne. For instance, the parallel between Poppo's *circuitio* along the monasteries of Liège and that of Abbot Richard's body across the principal ecclesiastical institutions in Verdun is striking.[64] Even though the procession organized for the body of Abbot Richard does not entirely match the other attested itineraries of living dignitaries,[65] it is clear that the transportation of Richard's remains was a highly significant act, and that it related to the bishop's desire to indicate a position of authority in the city of Verdun. This impression is strengthened by the fact that several of the institutions visited by the procession had been given key roles in the urban economy and (through fortifications) the protection of the city from episcopal adversaries by Bishop Richard's predecessors.[66] Therefore, the *circuitio* of the deceased abbot's remains may be regarded a political statement, underscoring Bishop Richard's ambitions not only to symbolically affirm episcopal presence in the city, but also to control the monastic sanctuaries (in particular the episcopal necropolis at Saint-Vanne) and to appropriate some of Abbot Richard's charisma. The abbot himself seems to have been aware of this

[64] In both cities, bishops at the end of the tenth century redesigned the urban topography to create a sacred landscape of New Testamentic inspiration; J.L. Kupper, *Liège et l'église impériale 11e - 12e siècles* (Bruxelles, 1981), esp. p. 326; Id., L'évêque Notger et la fondation de la collégiale Sainte-Croix de Liège, in: *Haut Moyen Age: Culture, éducation et société. Etudes offertes à Pierre Riche,* M. Sot ed. (La Garenne-Colombes, 1990), p. 419-426; also Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 81-85, esp. 84-85 and Wagner, *Les collections,* p. 498-503. On the topography of episcopal cities in this period, and the use of space in the exercise and representation of episcopal power, see among others F.G. Hirschmann, *Stadtplanung, Bauprojekte und Grossbaustellen im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert. Vergleichende Studien zu den Kathedralstädten westlich des Rheins* (Stuttgart, 1998); J.S. Ott, Urban Space, Memory, and Epicopal Authority: The Bishops of Amiens in Peace and Conflict, 1073-1164, *Viator,* 31 (2000), p. 43-77; and the forthcoming article by A. Wagner, L'évêque et la sanctification de la ville; my thanks to the author for kindly sending me a manuscript version of her paper.

[65] Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 87-90.

[66] Hirschmann, *Verdun,* p. 91-92.

strategy, and to have resisted it in different ways. Not only did he try to avoid dying anywhere other than Saint-Vanne and had previously avoided attempts to perform a similar translation of St Vanne's body across the city, but according to the author of the *Vita Richardi* he also resisted Bishop Haimo's plans to build a fortified wall around the abbey and include it in his fortification plans for the city as a whole.[67]

Despite all the rhetoric in the Deeds and Hugh's chronicle regarding the bishop's friendship with Richard, it is clear that the seeds for the dispute between the monks and the local episcopacy had been sown several years before Richard's death, and that this transitional moment was used as an arena where both parties' competing visions of the position of Saint-Vanne were symbolically enacted. Strikingly, but not remarkably given his character, Abbot Richard actively participated in this struggle for symbolic dominance, and in a course of action which may seem strange to the modern observer, he and the bishop perpetuated this struggle even beyond death.

Conclusions

As we have seen at the beginning of this paper, abbatial leadership was central to the ideology of the New Monasticism of Lotharingia. Ascetic abbots with an apostolic mission were regarded as key to the creation and maintenance of a monastic model, in which secluded groups of monks could strive for spiritual perfection while still interacting in a meaningful way with secular society. The disappearance of such individuals jeopardized the continuity of the reformist movement and thus required special attention, not least from the abbots themselves, who staged their own deaths in such a way that their specific vision of monastic discipline and abbatial leadership would survive. An analysis of Hugh of Flavigny's account has shown that Richard of Saint-Vanne's death on 14 June 1046 and his subsequent burial were designed to mark at least four transitions. The first related to his identity as monk and abbot. The second was both spiritual and institutional, and concerned the

[67] See the discussion in Ib., p. 137-138.

monastic community of Saint-Vanne. The third related to other monastic institutions directly affected by his disappearance and, in a broader sense, also to Lotharingian 'New Monasticism' as a whole. A fourth concerned his own and his institution's relationship with the outside world, in particular their position with regard to the bishop of Verdun, other ecclesiastical institutions, the regional aristocracy, and Verdun's urban population. The competitive intentions of these acts are made evident when we look at Bishop Richard's response. Like other members of the episcopate eager to capitalize on the personality cult enjoyed by reformist abbots, and wishing to assert their spiritual and political status and contain an abbey's growing autonomy, Bishop Richard saw in these dramatic events an opportunity to achieve this by intervening in the ritual organization of Abbot Richard's ostentatious death.