

Accepted for publication in The Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies 10 (2021). Not for distribution.

*Against the Custom. Hagiographical Rewriting and Female Abbatial Leadership at Mid-Eleventh-Century Remiremont**

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential of a recently identified campaign of hagiographic writing from the mid-eleventh-century monastery of Remiremont to reconstruct how this female convent positioned itself at a time when clerical resistance to the lifestyle and autonomy of 'non-Benedictine' communities was gaining momentum. In a first stage it looks at the three hagiographies from this campaign and how they reveal a cohesive strategy to drastically review the abbey's narrative of origins. In a second it reconstructs how their argument fits into Abbess Oda's (before 1045–1065/70) governance strategy and how that strategy was influenced by historical leadership choices at the nearby male houses of Luxeuil and Lure. And in a final one it considers memories of abbatial agency and discourses of communal identity at Remiremont, and how these influenced the abbess and her associates. In doing all these things, this study reveals that the abbey's leadership deployed a multi-faceted strategy to secure Remiremont's independence, taking ownership of its identity narrative at a critical juncture in its existence.

Keywords: women's monasticism, female abbatial leadership, hagiographical rewriting, Remiremont, Luxeuil, networking, exemption, memory cultures

The solemn translation of the relics of Sts Amatus, Romaric, and Adelphius on 11 November 1049 was an event of great symbolic importance for the convent members at Remiremont, a prestigious institution of women religious in the Vosges region of present-day France.¹ According to a note that was enclosed in the new shrine of St Amatus, Pope Leo IX (1048–54) had deputized Archbishop of Besançon Hugo of Salins, and *primicerius* (head of the lower cathedral clergy) Udo of Toul, to assist Abbess Oda of Remiremont and Abbot Gerard of Luxeuil with the ceremony.² Leo's intervention (we can tell from a now-

* This paper was written in the context of the research project 'The Quest for Otherness. Uncovering Narratives of Religious Distinction in the Long Tenth Century', which is sponsored by the Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO). I should like to thank Melissa Provijn for her helpful remarks.

¹ Marot, 'L'élévation'. Only the translation of St Amatus is attested in a contemporary document (see the next note); that of the two other saints is first mentioned in a late twelfth-century breviary from Remiremont (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (henceforth BnF), Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines (henceforth NAL), 349, p. 317).

² Paris, BnF, NAL, 2547, nr. 6, edited in Bridot, *Chartes*, nr. 18, pp. 58-59. On Hugo, see de Vrégille, *Hugues*, esp. 1, pp. 184-185; and on Udo, Michel Parisse, 'L'entourage', pp. 440-41.

lost privilege he issued at some point during this tenure)³ was designed to be understood as a public endorsement of an ongoing effort to style the abbey as exempt from any juridical, fiscal, or other interference by the local bishop of Toul and to directly subject it to the authority of the Holy See.⁴ And he surely also intended to once again relay that message on 15 October 1050, when he visited Remiremont to consecrate the new abbatial church and possibly also to recognize the sainthood of Remiremont's first three abbots and of the first abbess, Gebetrudis.⁵ Through all of these actions he helped to drive forward a transformative phase in the history of the abbey, which retained its special relationship with the papacy until it was dissolved in 1791.⁶

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians acknowledged the momentous implications of Leo's interventions, despite subsequent attempts by the bishops of Toul to

³ Bridot, *Chartes*, nr. 21, p. 64. Leo's privilege is referenced in several papal documents from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, including one by Urban II from 1099 (Ibid., nr. 29, pp. 77-79) and another by Paschalis II from 1099-1104 (nr. 33, pp. 83-86).

⁴ On Leo's monastic policy and its embedding in aristocratic, episcopal and papal politics, Oberste, 'Papst Leo IX'.

⁵ Lanfranc, future archbishop of Canterbury, was an eyewitness to the dedication and wrote about it in a 1070/77 letter to Archbishop John of Rouen; *The Letters of Lanfranc*, ed. by Clover and Templeton, pp. 84-85. On that ceremony, Marot, 'L'élévation', p. 24; Crozet, 'Etude', p. 22; Iogna-Prat, 'Léon IX', p. 381; and *Regesta Imperii Online* <http://www.regesta-imperii.de/id/1050-10-15_1_0_3_5_2_497_825> (accessed 1 December 2020). And on Valdenaire's account of the 'canonization' and the additional reference to Gebetrudis, Goullet, 'Les saints', p. 43.

⁶ The abbey's immunities were curtailed in the sixteenth century; on this, see most recently Boquillon, *Les chanoinesses de Remiremont*.

bring Remiremont abbey within their orbit of power.⁷ But, in contrast, these same historians typically declined to comment on the agency of local actors at Remiremont, in particular Abbess Oda (before 1045–c. 1065/70).⁸ Probing her governance strategies and the communal narratives of institutional and religious identity on which these strategies rested, they implied, is next to impossible. This is because the abbey's *Liber memorialis*, which is famously rich in information on these topics for the ninth century,⁹ over the course of the 900s shifted to consist almost entirely of dry, business-like descriptions of donations and property transfers.¹⁰ It is also true that these scholars had few other types of sources at their disposal (charters, hagiographies, or letters, to name but three) that would have allowed them to compensate for the lack of relevant evidence on Oda's rule.¹¹ Furthermore, they mistrusted the testimony by the early modern cleric Sébastien Valdenaire (d. 1592), who claimed to rely on now-lost documents from that period when he stated that Abbess Oda had played an active role in planning the above-mentioned sequence of ceremonial events; had launched a new hagiographic campaign and organized the relic translations; and had solicited the pope's support for her efforts to keep the local

⁷ Choux, *Recherches*, pp. 145-46; Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 68 and 77-78; and Bönner, *Die Bischofsstadt Toul*, pp. 174-75.

⁸ Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 63-71 (esp. pp. 67-68).

⁹ Gaillard, *D'une réforme à l'autre*, pp. 41-55; Butz and Zettler, 'Two Early Necrologies'; and Jakobi, 'Der Liber Memorialis'.

¹⁰ Parisse, 'Les notices'.

¹¹ Many of the abbey's papers were lost in a fire in 1057; Calmet, *Histoire*, 1, c. 1106-7 and Durand, *L'église*, 1, p. 77.

bishop at bay.¹² As a consequence of the methodological difficulties and historiographical silences, most older studies on Remiremont in the tenth to mid-eleventh centuries looked strictly at practices of estate management and the profile and family connections of successive abbesses and other leading figures at the abbey. Aligned with this, they considered also the involvement of prominent aristocratic families, typically as lay abbots or advocates.¹³

This picture of pre-2000 research is of course not specific to Remiremont. Except for a number of studies that looked at a select group of elite institutions in Saxony,¹⁴ most of the older scholarship on women's monasticism in the Long Tenth Century (roughly the years between 880 and 1050) implicitly built on the assumption that the self-understanding and governance strategies of female religious leaders were neither very relevant nor very feasible subjects for research. That assumption grew out of three key arguments that used to dominate scholarly discourse. The first asserted a precipitous decline in the institutions and spirituality of female religious due to a range of factors: reforms that had curtailed the agency of women religious; warfare and invasions; lay encroachments of monastic properties; and a shift in women's observance from a monastic lifestyle to a 'secular' one.

¹² Sébastien Valdenaire, *Registre des choses mémorables de l'église de Remiremont*, the autograph of which is now preserved as Nancy, Bibliothèque Municipale, 358. For scholars' negative judgement of his work, see in first place Abbé Didier-Laurent, 'L'abbaye', pp. 260-66; (by the same) 'Le mariage', pp. 219-37; and Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 9-12.

¹³ Perrin, *Recherches*, pp. 141-69; Hlawitschka, 'Herzog Giselbert'; (by the same) 'Zur Lebensgeschichte'; (by the same) *Studien*; Constable, 'The 'Liber Memorialis''; Parisse, 'Les notices'; and Gaillard, 'Le 'pays de Remiremont''.

¹⁴ Parisse, 'Die Frauenstifte' and Althoff, 'Ottonische Frauengemeinschaften'.

The second argument rested on the notion that abbesses were recruited to represent political and representative interests of their aristocratic relatives, guarantee the financial welfare of individual convent members, and create an environment for their subjects that resembled the domestic comfort of their former households. As a result, scholars assumed the commitment of these women to their task as religious leaders tended to be very limited. And the final argument was that the source record for many institutions is so fragmented, typologically one-sided, or unreliable (due to later forgeries and other interventions) that it presents insurmountable challenges to those who wish to study the women's leadership attitudes and strategies.¹⁵

Scholarship from the last two decades has nuanced this negative picture of spiritual and institutional decline and of the abbesses' lack of commitment to their role as religious leaders.¹⁶ And it has also pointed at the opportunities that reside in carefully reviewing the attribution, dating, and contextualization of sources that have been known to specialists for decades and in some cases even centuries. This also applies to mid-eleventh-century Remiremont. In a 2001 study, Monique Goullet submitted substantive evidence to argue that the 1049 translation was linked to a hagiographic campaign that yielded at least two rewritten saint's *Lives* and a collection of miracles and translation reports, all of which had been previously dated to the later eleventh or twelfth centuries and had never been studied in relation to each other. Furthermore, she suggested that these narratives offer us an inner view on how the abbey's narrative of origins was reworked as part of an attempt to free

¹⁵ Refer to the discussion in Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*.

¹⁶ Jarrett, 'Power'; Müller-Wiegand, *Vermitteln – beraten – erinnern*; Althoff, 'Zum Verhältnis von Norm und Realität'; Andenna, 'San Salvatore di Brescia'; Greer, *Gandersheim and Quedlinburg*; Thibaut, 'Female Abbatial Leadership'; (by the same) 'Intermediary leadership'; and Edwards, *Superior Women*.

Remiremont from episcopal interference and to anchor its female identity in hagiographical memory. And finally, she made a case to rehabilitate Valdenaire as a reliable commentator of Oda's tenure, suggesting among other things that the abbess had played a far greater role in organizing the transformative sequence of events in 1049–50 and in crafting its underlying discourse than scholars had been willing to admit.¹⁷ Yet despite the significance of Goullet's findings, so far this small cache of 'new' sources from mid-eleventh-century Remiremont has eluded detailed scrutiny.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to do two things. One is to explore the potential of this hagiographic campaign to add to our understanding of the self-positioning and (especially) the leadership strategies of the Remiremont convent members. Another is to add substantial new evidence to a small body of literature that looks at how women religious positioned themselves at a time when clerical resistance to the lifestyle and autonomy of 'non-Benedictine' female communities was gaining momentum.¹⁸ It presents an analysis in four stages. First we look at the three hagiographies, their relationship to earlier such texts from Remiremont, and how they reveal a cohesive strategy to review the abbey's narrative of origins. We then turn to the arguments in favour of dating the hagiographies to around the time of the relic translation of 1049. The next stage reconstructs how their discourse fits into Oda's governance strategy and how that strategy was influenced by historical leadership choices at Abbot Gerard's institutions of Luxeuil and Lure. And finally, we focus on local memories of abbatial agency and discourses of communal identity, and how these influenced Oda and her associates. In doing all these

¹⁷ Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 42–69.

¹⁸ E.g. Görich, 'Der Gandersheimer Streit'; Crusius, "Sanctimoniales quae se canonicas vocant."; Vanderputten, 'Debating Reform'; Greer, *Gandersheim*, pp. 100–04; and Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, pp. 135–54.

things, this study reveals that this female leader and her associates deployed a multi-faceted strategy to secure Remiremont's independence, taking ownership of its identity narrative at a critical juncture in its existence.

Hagiographic Réécritures at Remiremont

For such a prestigious institution, Remiremont's hagiographic output in the early medieval period (a mere three *Lives*, of Sts Amatus, Romaric, and Adelphius) was surprisingly modest.¹⁹ While scholars used to situate the creation of these anonymous texts broadly between the later seventh and ninth centuries,²⁰ according to Anne-Marie Helvétius and Michèle Gaillard all three of these were probably written in the years 675–80. Their redaction, the two scholars argue, most likely stemmed from a single literary effort to demonstrate the orthodoxy of Remiremont's inmates in the aftermath of a dispute between Luxeuil's Abbot Eustace (who had succeeded founder St Columbanus as the second abbot there) and his follower Amatus, Remiremont's co-founder and first abbot. This effort also sought to reconcile the two communities, and to style Remiremont's identity as a legitimate blend of Luxeuil's legacy and that of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune (now in Switzerland), from where it had sourced the practice of the *laus perennis* or perennial prayer service.²¹

¹⁹ On the abbey's foundation and early history, see now Helvétius and Gaillard, 'Production de textes'.

²⁰ Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 53-55, 57-58, and 63-64.

²¹ The two authors argue that the texts sought to correct the highly negative assessment of Remiremont and of second abbot Romaric in Jonas' *Vita Columbani*, which was written during Romaric's lifetime; Helvétius and Gaillard, 'Production', pp. 384-87.

These three narratives anchored the convent's hagiographical memories for centuries to come, including when the convent became implicated in the Carolingian reforms and adopted a Benedictine identity in the 820s.²² The earliest of them was the *Life* of Amatus (d. c. 630).²³ It recounts how the saint began his religious career at Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, then became a hermit, and finally entered Luxeuil, where he served under Abbot Eustace. Eventually he was sent out on a conversion mission in Austrasia and met and converted the nobleman Romaric. The two men subsequently collaborated to establish a female monastery at Romaric's private estate of *Habendum* (later Remiremont), where they installed twelve *turmae* (cohorts) of seven women each to carry out the *laus perennis*, and appointed a woman named Macteflidis as the first abbess. The second narrative is a *Life* of Romaric (d. 653), which deals with the conversion of the Merovingian courtier, his association with St Amatus, their joint foundation of *Habendum*, his ascension to the abbatial throne of Remiremont, and his saintly death, interspersed with miracle stories.²⁴ The third text and by far the shortest is a *Life* of the third Remiremont abbot

²² Ibid., p. 390 and Gaillard, *D'une réforme*, p. 82.

²³ Edited in *Acta Sanctorum (henceforth AASS) Septembris* 4, pp. 103-08 (BHL 358) and discussed in Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 51-56 and Philippart and Wagner, 'Hagiographie Lorraine', pp. 659-60.

²⁴ Edited by d'Achéry and Mabillon in *AASS Ordinis Sancti Benedicti* 2, pp. 416-20 (BHL 7322) and discussed in Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 56-58 and Philippart and Wagner, 'Hagiographie', p. 660.

Adelphius (d. after 665), which strictly consists of a description of the saint's withdrawal to Luxeuil to prepare for his death, his saintly demise, and his solemn burial at *Habendum*.²⁵

This triad of *Lives* were read and regionally disseminated into the high and later Middle Ages.²⁶ But following the turn of the millennium drastically rewritten versions of the *Lives* of Romaric and Adelphius were issued.²⁷ The first of the two *réécritures*, the *Life* of Romaric, is nearly three times longer than the original.²⁸ Following a discussion of the merits of the cenobitical and the eremitical life and the political wrangling that inspired Romaric to abandon his secular existence, it spends considerable time describing Columbanus's arrival in Gaul, his foundation of Luxeuil, the succession as abbot of Eustace, and ultimately Columbanus's departure from Luxeuil and subsequent conversion mission. After that the narrative switches again to Romaric, from which point it matches the original *Life* except for three things. The first aligns the contents of the text with the

²⁵ Edited by Krusch in *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* 4, pp. 225-28 (BHL 73) and discussed in Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 62-64 and Philippart and Wagner, 'Hagiographie', p. 660.

²⁶ Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 52-53, 56-57, and 62-63.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 58-61 and 65-66 (including a discussion of style and literary discourse). Also (by the same) 'Vers une typologie', pp. 122-24.

²⁸ An abridged version from a 1425 legendary for liturgical use was edited in Guinot, *Etude*, pp. 377-88 (BHL 7323). Most of the omitted sections in that manuscript can be reconstructed from copies of the text in a Cistercian legendary known as the *Liber de natalitiis*; Goullet, 'Les saints', p. 58. The version in Serarius, *Comitum*, pp. 91-144 is a collation of various translated excerpts on the saint from Valdenaire's *Registre* and is not representative of the medieval appearance of the text; Didier-Laurent, 'Le mariage', pp. 238-46.

Life of Amatus, by stating that the saint installed both seven groups of twelve women religious who performed the *laus perennis*, as well as a sizeable male community. In the second difference it adds that Amatus had obtained a privilege from Pope John IV (640–42) that awarded the convent members the right to freely elect their abbess and remain free from interference by the bishop. And the third point of departure is its assertion that the abbey's entire estate had been the property of Romaric.

For its part, the new *Life* of Adelphius massively amplifies the scope of the original text by adding a family dimension to the abbey's narrative of origins.²⁹ It opens with an account of how Romaric intended his three daughters to enter the monastic life and how one of them instead got married to a nobleman and was disinherited by her father. When she later sent her daughter Tetta to Remiremont to claim her inheritance Romaric baptized Tetta, made her enter the monastic life under the name Gebetrudis, and eventually made her abbess of Remiremont. When her mother sent Gebetrudis's brother to Romaric to protest against his saintly uncle's actions, he too was baptized, given a new name Adelphius, and entrusted to the care of St Arnulf; meanwhile Romaric had reconciled with his son-in-law in order to protect his foundation's estate. And following Amatus's death, Romaric made Adelphius the new abbot of Remiremont alongside his sister Abbess Gebetrudis. The text (which like the second *Life* of Romaric insists on Remiremont's status as a private foundation) closes with an account of Adelphius's old age and saintly death.

Pre-2001 studies made little use of these rewritten hagiographies. Scholars considered them irrelevant for reconstructing the origins and early history of Remiremont abbey.³⁰ Furthermore they indicated that early modern editors had been too naïve when they relied on Valdenaire's *Registre des choses mémorables de l'église de Remiremont* to

²⁹ Edited in *AASS Septembris* 3, pp. 818–20 (BHL 74).

³⁰ Didier-Laurent, 'Le mariage'.

reconstruct passages that medieval compilers had omitted when they inscribed the two *Lives* in a 1425 legendary.³¹ And most importantly, scholars struggled to get a sense of the circumstances in which the two *Lives* had been written. In the early twentieth century Abbé Didier-Laurent ruled out a connection with the 1049 translation on account of the fact that Sts Adelphius and Gebetrudis do not feature in the martyrology of Hugo of Salins (whom we saw attended the ceremony) and because the revized *Life* of Adelphius does not allude to this event.³² Instead, he speculated, the two narratives referred to certain developments in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. One was the convent's transition under Abbess Gisela (c. 1070–1114) from a cloistered regime to one of secular canonesses. And the other was a move (which specialists suspected had emerged during Gisela's tenure and had continued under Judith (c. 1114–after 1157)) to claim the abbey was exempt from episcopal control.³³ Since the abbey's leadership was known to have commissioned

³¹ Paris, BnF, NAL, 2288, fols 47^r-55^r and 57^r-59^r (extracts from the *Life* of Romaric) and NAL, 2289, fols 165^v-168^v (*Life* of Adelphius). Valdenaire's most vocal critic, Didier-Laurent, suggests that the cleric's interventions in medieval hagiographical tradition were simultaneously due to his imaginative mind, his ineptitude at working with medieval sources, and his desire to flatter Abbess Barbe Salm of Remiremont (1580-1602); 'Le mariage', p. 220.

³² Didier-Laurent, 'Le mariage', pp. 206-07.

³³ Ibid., pp. 208-14 and Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 72-94. For a view that does not consider the supposed 'secularization' of the abbey as the reason behind these conflicts, Choux, *Recherches*, pp. 145-46.

forgeries of papal and royal privileges to support its case,³⁴ it seemed plausible to the French scholar that the new *Lives* were also created in that general context.

However these observations did not allow specialists to propose a dating that was more specific than between the end of the eleventh century and that of the twelfth.³⁵ Didier-Laurent was reluctant to rule out the possibility that the legend of Gebetrudis as the sister of Adelphius and as a woman of royal blood went back to the abbacy of Oda, or even that of her ninth-century predecessor Thiathildis (before 833–after 862).³⁶ And he even implicitly allowed for the possibility that the *Life* of Adelphius was written in the decades before Gisela's tenure.³⁷ These uncertainties about authenticity, dating, and context kept him and other scholars from studying this text or the rewritten *Life* of Romaric in any detail.

Uncovering a Mid-Eleventh-Century Hagiographic Campaign

Monique Goullet's study aimed to put an end to these speculations. Her analysis of the transmission of the *Life* of Romaric and that of Adelphius showed that only a small

³⁴ Bridot, *Les chartes*, nr. 2 (pp. 32-36, forgery of a bull by John IV) and nr. 24 (pp. 66-70, another forgery of a 1070 privilege by German King Henry IV).

³⁵ The *terminus ante quem* for the *Life* of Adelphius is established by an allusion to Romaric's daughters in the above-mentioned late twelfth-century breviary (BnF, NAL, 349); Folz, 'Remiremont', p. 17.

³⁶ Didier-Laurent, 'Le mariage', pp. 213-14.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 169, 174, and 204. The Bollandists found the hypothesis that the *Life* of Adelphius was created under Oda plausible but did not rule out a later redaction either; *AASS Novembris* 3 (Paris: Palmé, 1910), p. 412.

fraction of the two texts is no longer available in medieval manuscripts, and that the missing parts in Valdenaire's *Registre* (even though they are translated from Latin into French) give an accurate picture of the contents of the passages that are missing in the early fifteenth-century legendary.³⁸ And she offered three arguments in support of Valdenaire's claim about a dating in the mid-eleventh century. The first concerns the second *Life* of Romaric and its linkage of the abbey's origins to the figure of Columbanus, a monastic focus which (she argues) would only have been deemed appropriate before the community transitioned to the non-monastic observance of secular canonesses in the 1070s.³⁹ Her second point is that the statement in this same *Life* that bishops have no right to intervene in the abbey's affairs was an issue that (we already saw) was central to Pope Leo's 1048–54 privilege, and to a contemporary forgery of a similar privilege by Pope John IV (640–42).⁴⁰ Third, Goullet reasons that the 1049 translation of the bodies of Sts Amatus, Romaric, and Adelphius was the sort of context in which campaigns of hagiographic (re)writing frequently took place. The *Translations and Miracles of Sts Romaric, Amatus, and Adelphius*, a narrative that includes descriptions of three earlier such ceremonies from the ninth and early tenth centuries, bears witness to the fact that such a campaign did take place at some point in the late 1040s or shortly afterwards.⁴¹

³⁸ Goullet, 'Les saints', pp. 42-44 and 58.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

⁴⁰ The forgery of Pope John's bull features formal elements that strongly resemble those in authentic documents by Leo; Bridot, *Chartes*, nr. 3, pp. 37-41. Another forgery from the later eleventh or early twelfth century is edited Ibid., nr. 2, pp. 32-36.

⁴¹ Paris, BnF, NAL, 2288, fols 172^r-176^r is the only manuscript copy. It was edited, interspersed with Latin translations of missing sections of the text as given in Valdenaire's

Some of Gouillet's arguments could be nuanced. In particular the idea of a 'hard' transition to a secular regime in the 1070s is somewhat doubtful given that the Remiremont women's observance had been ambiguously situated between the monastic and 'canonical' models long before that time.⁴² And one could also say more than she does about what the *Translations and Miracles* tells us about the scope and date of Oda's hagiographic campaign. In its first paragraph, we find a condensed version of the abbey's revised narrative of origins that brings together elements that are unique to the *Lives* of Romaric and Adelphius: among other things it mentions the forged bull of Pope John and the abbey's exempted status; argues that Romaric's two daughters had entered the abbey; and indicates that his granddaughter Gebetrudis had ruled over the abbey alongside Adelphius.⁴³ In doing so, the *Translations and Miracles* reveals to us that the complementary nature of the two *Lives* was indeed intentional. Since none of the three texts contains a description of, or even an allusion to, the 1049 translation, this potentially means that all of them were crafted in preparation for that major event.

These observations compel us to return to Valdenaire's evidence, so casually dismissed by modern scholars. According to the cleric, Abbess Oda had visited Pope Leo when he was at Toul in 1049, in order to request his permission for the translation and his agreement to declare the sainthood of Amatus, Romaric, Adelphius, and Gebetrudis. Following that, he added, she arranged to have *Lives* of the abbey's patrons redacted, at least one of which (the *Life* of Adelphius) included a prologue that dedicated the work to

Registre, in *AASS Septembris* 3, pp. 829-37. See further at note 76 for a discussion of the complex transmission history of this text.

⁴² Hlawitschka, *Studien*, p. 77; also the discussions in Bodarwé, 'Eine Männerregel' and Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*.

⁴³ *AASS Septembris* 3, p. 829.

her.⁴⁴ While it is unclear if Valdenaire meant to say that the hagiographies were written before or after the translation, it is hard to imagine that Oda would have let go to waste a major opportunity to mould the public discourse of these events to reflect her institution's narrative of self. In other words, the exact dating of the three hagiographies is less important than the fact that their account of Remiremont's origins matches objectives and arguments that were central to her leadership strategy in the run-up to the 1049 translation. This hypothesis gains added strength when we look for further clues about context. We already saw that when earlier scholars tried to make sense of the references in the Remiremont hagiographies to exemptions from episcopal power, they traditionally looked at the confrontations and litigations between, on the one side, the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century abbesses Gisla and Judith, and, on the other, Bishop Pibo (1069–1107). However as Leo's 1048–54 privilege indicates, tensions between the Remiremont leadership and the Toul bishops had been a likely scenario for quite some time.

In order to understand where those tensions came from, we must consider two opposite trends in the stakeholdership of religious institutions in the Toul diocese. Beginning in the later tenth century the local episcopate began to incorporate as many monastic and canonical houses (including a number of former royal institutions) as possible in their lordship. One such example is that of the abbey of Bouxières, a 938 foundation by Bishop Gozelin (922–64) which on its creation had received an episcopal privilege that awarded the sisters the free election of abbesses and exempted it from his own or future episcopal interference. However, by 1027 a privilege by Conrad II referred

⁴⁴ Sébastien Valdenaire, *Registre des choses mémorables de l'église de Remiremont*, Nancy, Bibliothèque Municipale, 358, fols 188^{r-v}, partially quoted in Goullet, 'Les saints', p. 43, note 45. Leo IX had arrived in Toul on 14 September 1049.

to this institution as ‘belonging to the Church of Toul’.⁴⁵ And new foundations, too, were quickly incorporated. Such was the case with the abbey of Bleurville, a 1050 aristocratic foundation by a relative of Oda's, Count Rainald II of Toul, that was handed over to the bishop of Toul.⁴⁶ Remiremont was the exception to this rule, in the sense that members of the aristocratic house of Alsace in the late tenth century had gained a tight grip on its key offices and institutions. By the second quarter of the eleventh century, they had their relative Oda elected as abbess and positioned her nephew Gerard, who was count of Alsace and duke of Upper Lotharingia, to take the leading lay role. Not long afterwards Gerard managed to strike a deal with King Henry III of Germany in which he formally obtained the title of lay advocate, after which he and Oda struck another deal that awarded to Gerard twenty-five of the abbey's estates as his private property.⁴⁷ And according to eighteenth-century commentaries, he had also attended the 1049 translation ceremony.⁴⁸ Further actions from later in Oda's tenure show how aunt and nephew consolidated the abbey's status as a family institution, among other things by preparing Gerard's daughter Gisela to succeed her great-aunt and by arranging for Gerard to be buried at Remiremont.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Bautier, *Les origines*, nr. 40, pp. 122-23 (p. 123): ‘quod proprie pertinet ad praefati praesulis ecclesiam’. Episcopal charters of the late eleventh and early twelfth century insist on the abbey's status as an episcopal institution; Ibid., nr; 41, pp. 124-26 (1073); nr. 42, pp. 127-28 (1101-07); and 46, pp. 131-33 (1136). Also the commentary Ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁴⁶ Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, p. 115.

⁴⁷ Bridot, *Chartes*, nr. 20, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Picard, *L'origine*, p. 80 and Calmet, *Histoire*, 1, c. 1106. Bridot finds these statements implausible; *Les chartes*, p. 59.

⁴⁹ Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, pp. 125-26 and (specifically on Gerard's burial) Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 66-67.

Pope Leo's position with regard to these opposite trends (increasing episcopal control on religious institutions in the Toul area and growing aristocratic power over Remiremont) strikes us as ambivalent. At the time of his election to the Holy See he had been bishop of Toul for twenty-two years. Once he was made pope (a position he combined with the episcopate of Toul until 1052), he may even have issued a privilege to secure his episcopal successors' control over previously incorporated institutions.⁵⁰ But he was also an aristocrat with deep roots in the Alsace region, and as such he was inclined to consider the interests of his lay connections.⁵¹ This attitude was no doubt reinforced by the fact that Oda and Gerard were distant relatives of his, and by indications that their mutual kin in the house of Alsace were willing to negotiate with him to safeguard Remiremont's status. This is what we can infer in the case of Bleurville, for which Leo issued a charter on 6 December 1050 which dictated that the spiritual leadership of this institution would nearly certainly be a member of the founders' extended family. More specifically, it arranged that the Bleurville sisters would choose an abbess either from their own ranks or (lacking a suitable candidate) from those of Remiremont.⁵² It may not be a coincidence that this document was issued a mere few weeks after the pope had visited Remiremont.⁵³

Based on these observations we can make the following reconstruction. Leo's 1048 election as the new pope and the fact that he stayed in his position as bishop of Toul provided a unique window of opportunity for Oda and her associates, enabling them not only to subject Remiremont abbey to the Holy See and keep it definitively out of the hands

⁵⁰ A forgery of a bull dated 25 March 1051 is edited in Choux, 'Les bulles', pp. 5-19 (pp. 17-19); also see the discussion in Choux, *Recherches*, pp. 23 and 29.

⁵¹ Oberste, 'Papst Leo IX.'

⁵² Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, p. 115.

⁵³ Edited in Bridot, *Chartes*, nr. 19, pp. 59-63.

of the local bishop, but to achieve these things without offending the incumbent officeholder. It makes sense to follow Valdenaire's account and assume that Oda approached Leo to seek his aid for the planned translations and to negotiate the terms under which he would be willing to grant an exemption privilege. Likewise, it makes sense that around the same time she launched a major effort to rewrite her institution's hagiographical narrative of origins. This brings us to the question of where Oda found the inspiration for her strategy and its corresponding discourse.

Connecting with a 'Luxovian' Partner

The drastically revised discourse of the two rewritten *Lives* along with the *Translations and Miracles* fits the high stakes attempt by Oda and her associates to obtain an exemption privilege from the pope. In contrast, its narrative approach seems unremarkable. The insertion of a 'genealogy' of charismatic leaders and lengthy historical arguments were common features of hagiographic *réécriture* in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.⁵⁴ And the emphasis on the abbey's links with the prestigious monastic centre of Luxeuil and its charismatic founder Columbanus similarly echoes a contemporary trend in hagiography to situate local founders and their work in prestigious institutional and spiritual filiations. Yet if we look more closely at the texts, it becomes obvious that they were anything but a mundane assemblage of common literary tropes. Various of their arguments strikingly mirror a discourse on the origins and status of two other institutions, namely Luxeuil and Lure, to the point that suggests there was a transferral of 'reformist' attitudes and leadership expertise from these places to Oda's Remiremont.

⁵⁴ Goullet, 'Vers une typologie', p. 122 and (by the same) *Écriture*, pp. 195-96.

To understand the content and nature of that transferral we must go back to the third quarter of the tenth century. At that time hagiographers at a number of institutions in the Vosges region began to take advantage of the plasticity of memories of St Columbanus and his legacy at Luxeuil and other places, using this adaptability to address then-current questions on the organization and spiritual identity of monastic communities. The most striking example is the 970s/80s *Life* of St Deicolus of Lure, a small institution some thirty kilometres to the south-east of Remiremont.⁵⁵ In 959 King Otto I had taken advantage of a power vacuum in the region to force the noble clan of the Etichonids, who had formerly controlled much of Alsace, to give up control over an estate that had formerly been owned by a monastic community. After having appointed an abbot named Baltramn to lead a new community of Benedictine monks, Otto issued a privilege in which he proclaimed his protection over their institution; transferred its ownership to the Holy See; awarded the monks the right to freely elect their abbot; and prohibited any bishop or archbishop from making undue claims over it.⁵⁶ One or two decades later the second abbot, Werdolph, commissioned a cleric named Theoderic to address the abbey's unusual status. In response, the hagiographer crafted an elaborate but entirely fictional account that discussed the context and key events of Lure's imaginary 620s creation by Deicolus, a follower of Columbanus. He also submitted to his readers a highly biased version of the abbey's tenth-century refoundation.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ On the origins and early history of this institution, Moyse, 'Les origines', and de Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia pontificia*, pp. 165-71.

⁵⁶ Hummer, *Politics*, pp. 234-236.

⁵⁷ *Vita Deicoli*, edited in *AASS Januarii* 2, pp. 200-10 (BHL 2120). On the author's identity and the dating of the text, see now Hoffmann, 'Theoderich von Fleury/Amorbach/Trier'. I intend to publish a separate, more detailed analysis of the *Vita Deicoli* and its discourse.

Theoderic tailored his account of Lure's origins in two major ways, both of which strikingly remind us of the approach in the Remiremont hagiographies. In the first, he justified Lure's post-959 status by claiming that Deicolus had obtained a royal privilege from the Merovingian King Chlotarius that was similar to the one issued by Otto. Secondly, he indicated to his readers that there existed a spiritual filiation between the abbeys of Lure and Luxeuil, by submitting a long argument about the origins of Luxeuil as a Columbanian foundation, about Columbanus's relationship with Deicolus as one of his foremost disciples, and that Lure had been established as a direct consequence of the departure of Columbanus and his disciples from Luxeuil. And Theoderic also extended that spiritual filiation to the present, by celebrating late tenth-century Luxeuil as a place that was 'spiritually called the light of the (Lord's) sheep' (*lux ovium*).⁵⁸

In order to understand the hagiographer's insistence on this long-term relationship between Lure and Luxeuil, we must now turn our attention to what was happening at the latter. Although the decades around the turn of the millennium are ill-documented, we do have enough evidence to argue that the abbots there were working to restore Luxeuil's estate. They also sought to acquire an exempted status that was similar to that of Lure, and to regain their institution's early medieval prestige as a spiritual and cultural centre.⁵⁹ And while these leaders did not commission any new hagiographies, we do know that they promoted the idea of an 'imagined community' of spiritually affiliated monasteries that

⁵⁸ *AASS Januarii* 2, p. 201: 'Est [...] in territorio antetactae ciuitatis locus admodum spiritalis [...] appellatur quippe spiritaliter lux ouium'.

⁵⁹ De Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia Pontificia*, p. 175; also the commentaries and evidence in Baumont, *Etude*, pp. 8-9; the introduction in *Adso Dervensis opera hagiographica*, ed. by Goullet; and Vecchi, 'Il 'planctus''.

were historically linked to Luxeuil as foundations by Columbanus or one of his followers.⁶⁰ Although the full implications of this latter policy are unknown, by the early eleventh century the destinies of Lure and Luxeuil were definitely converging. In 1016 Lure received a privilege from the German king Henry II that confirmed Otto's 959 charter, and in doing so further consolidated its exceptional status.⁶¹ And two years later Luxeuil obtained a major papal privilege in which Pope Benedict VIII declared the abbey exempt from episcopal interference and subject to the Holy See, which brought its free status very close to that of Lure.⁶² Each of these documents was addressed to an Abbot Milo, which leads scholars to believe that the two institutions were implicated in a personal union.⁶³

There is little doubt that Abbess Oda was privy to these developments. Thanks to the note from Amatus's shrine (mentioned in the introduction of this paper), we know that one of her partners in the 1049 translation was Abbot Gerard of Luxeuil, whom scholars

⁶⁰ The key evidence for this is an early eleventh-century manuscript from Luxeuil (London, British Library, Add. 21917) that contains a unique collection of older and very recent hagiographies on the origins and early history of Columbanus's foundation of Luxeuil and those of several monasteries that were created by his followers; Jones, 'Dom Victor Perrin', pp. 174-78; *Adso Dervensis opera hagiographica*, ed. Goullet, pp. 65-67; and Hoffmann, 'Theoderic', p. 483.

⁶¹ *Die Urkunden Heinrichs II. und Arduins*, ed. by Bresslau, nr. 353, pp. 451-52.

⁶² *Papsturkunden, 896–1046*, ed. by Zimmermann, vol. 2, nr. 521, p. 988; see the commentary on the disputed authenticity of this document in de Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia Pontificia*, p. 181.

⁶³ De Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia Pontificia*, p. 166.

suspect also held the abbacy of Lure.⁶⁴ And if we compare her leadership strategy in the 1040s–early 1050s with eight decades' worth of accumulated expertise at these two institutions, it becomes obvious that Gerard must have given her detailed insight into his predecessors' tactics. More specifically, we can suspect that he was able to offer her a case study of how to pursue her abbey's exemption, and, in view of this objective, how to rewrite local hagiographical tradition (insisting on Remiremont's connection to Columbanian monasticism and to Luxeuil as a spiritual 'mother house'). He was also able to guide her in the production of the forgery of Pope John IV's charter for submission to Pope Leo. The first two of these strategies (we already saw) had been key to his own institutions' development since the 970s/80s. And regarding the forged bull, we know that his predecessor Milo had relied on another forgery of a privilege by the same seventh-century pope to secure the 1018 privilege by Benedict VIII.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Gerard would

⁶⁴ Ibid. A later copy of Pope Leo's privilege for Luxeuil from 18 November 1049 refers to the abbot of that institution by the initial *H*; Ibid., p. 182. This has led to some confusion among scholars over the identity of the abbot who attended the translation ceremony. However, Gerard of Luxeuil is explicitly referenced by that name in the translation notice of St Amatus (cited in n. 2) and in a famous evangeliary he offered to his abbey (now Paris, BnF, NAL, 2196).

⁶⁵ The most accessible edition is that in de Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia Pontificia*, pp. 180-81. Specialists are in disagreement regarding the authenticity of this document; Ibid., p. 181. On the abbey's relationship with the papacy, generally Moyse, 'Luxeuil'.

use this strategy again when, on 18 November 1049, he sought Pope Leo's confirmation of Benedict VIII's privilege.⁶⁶

The coordinated nature of Oda and Gerard's strategies in the late 1040s becomes obvious if we consider that Gerard obtained the above-mentioned papal confirmation for Luxeuil a mere seven days after the translation ceremony at Remiremont, when Leo was travelling from that abbey to Basel, and may well have stopped at Luxeuil.⁶⁷ And another fifteen months later, on 10 February 1051 to be precise, Leo consolidated Lure's privileges and protected it from excessive demands by the lay advocate, by issuing a major privilege: the contents of this document, we may suspect, were negotiated when Leo visited Remiremont for the dedication of the abbatial church in November 1050.⁶⁸ All of this indicates that the two monastic leaders had realized that their respective policies could be mutually beneficial. On the one hand, Gerard must have viewed the distant family relationship between Leo and Oda, and Leo's connection to former Remiremont *hebdomadarius* Hildebrand, as a means to leverage the pope's cooperation with Gerard's own policies for Lure and Luxeuil. And on the other hand, Oda must have realized that Gerard's leadership experience at these two institutions provided her with the adequate legal and discursive tools to secure and justify her abbey's exempted status. Furthermore

⁶⁶ *Papsturkunden*, ed. by Wiederhold, vol. 1: nr. 2, p. 20; commentary in Moyse, 'Luxeuil', pp. 182-91 (in which he casts doubt on the authenticity of the preserved version of the bull) and de Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia Pontificia*, p. 182.

⁶⁷ De Vrégille, Locatelli, and Moyse, *Gallia Pontificia*, p. 182.

⁶⁸ *Papsturkunden*, ed. by Wiederhold, vol. 1: nr. 3, pp. 21-22. Leo was hardly the proponent of radical monastic emancipation that he was once made out to be, which makes his generosity towards Lure, Luxeuil, and Remiremont all the more significant; Oberste, 'Papst Leo IX.', pp. 430-31.

she must have known that Lure abbey held a special significance for the pope, as Leo was a descendant of the Etichonid family that had owned Lure's estate in the later ninth and early tenth centuries, and even after the restoration had been prominent patrons and members of the abbey community.⁶⁹ This, alongside his expertise and alongside all the things she could bring to the table, must have been yet another reason for Oda to forge a mutually beneficial connection with Gerard.

Gendered Memories of Remiremont's Past

The matches between Oda's leadership approach and that of Gerard of Luxeuil/Lure should not mislead us into thinking that hers was a mere carbon copy of his policies. Indeed, as head of a women's monastery she faced additional challenges that were specific to her cohort. Female communities throughout the Lotharingian region had been attacked by episcopal agents for more than a century on the grounds of their alleged lack of interest in practising individual poverty, claustration, and chastity, and on their refusal to strictly observe the *Rule of St Benedict*.⁷⁰ And beginning in the latter decades of the tenth century we have a growing number of reports of tensions between female convent members and the clerics who supported them regarding who had custody of the relics and the cult of a patron saint, who was entitled to income from which parts of a monastic estate, and whether abbesses were capable of leading these complex institutions. Against this background of

⁶⁹ On Leo's family, Legl, 'Die Herkunft'. And on the friendly connections between his close relatives (not his more distant ones, who continued clashing with the Lure monks into the early eleventh century) and the abbey, see the commentary by Leo's biographer in *Die Toulser Vita Leos IX*, ed. by Jasper and Lukas, pp. 88 and 90.

⁷⁰ Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, pp. 88-110.

external and internal clerical pressures, a host of institutional and aristocratic rivalries played out, including ones in which the convent members were implicated through their family relationships.⁷¹

On account of its wealth, prestige, and powerful connections in the regional aristocracy, Remiremont was less vulnerable than smaller places to attempts to dismantle its institutional structures and estate, or (as happened in some places) to extinguish its identity as a female institution. But it was vulnerable nonetheless. Regarding its spiritual identity, we know that the members had kept practising the non-Benedictine *laus perennis* after the transition to a Benedictine observance in the early ninth century. And beginning in the tenth century, the *Liber memorialis* hints at arrangements where the members received personal endowments from the monastic estate.⁷² These and other 'ambiguous' features of convent life were sustained into the eleventh century, which likely exposed the convent members to criticism by clerical agents inside and outside the institutional context of Remiremont.⁷³ And regarding the abbey's female identity too, developments in recent centuries were a likely source of controversy. After the transition to a (quasi-)Benedictine regime in the early ninth century, the abbey had featured a considerable number of in-house clerics that were headed by a provost, who co-led the monastery alongside the abbess.⁷⁴ But beginning in the later ninth century, references to these personnel and that

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 131-32.

⁷² Butz and Zettler, 'Two Early Necrologies' and Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 44-54.

⁷³ On prebends for the Remiremont women in this period, Parisse, 'Les religieuses', p. 218.

⁷⁴ On the clerics at Remiremont, Hlawitschka, 'Beobachtungen' and Butz and Zettler, 'Two Early Necrologies', pp. 202-04. And on Theoderic, who is attested as *prepositus* under Abbesses Imma (fl. 810s-before 833) and Thiathildis (fl. before 833-after 862), Schmid, 'Auf dem Weg', pp. 91-93; Gaillard, *D'une réforme à l'autre*, p. 181; and Vanderputten,

leadership model fade in the abbey's documentation and are replaced by mentions of clerics who acted in an individual capacity for the sisters.⁷⁵ This dismantling of clerical influence must have exposed the abbey's female leadership to criticism by the local episcopate.⁷⁶ And it also had the potential to trigger an intervention, once a bishop came to power who was less inclined than Leo to respect their internal arrangements. Indeed, in the late eleventh century the above-mentioned Bishop Pibo would try to relocate the Remiremont clerics to one of the Remiremont's properties in Chamousey, attempting to detach that property from the abbey's estate and recognize the new settlement as a separate institution.⁷⁷

Oda's hagiographic campaign addressed these issues, alongside the abbey's quest for exemption, by inserting arguments about the abbey's predominantly female identity and by submitting female leadership as a prominent focus of attention. Earlier in this paper we already saw the revized *Life* of St Romaric aligned that tradition with the early medieval biography of Amatus, which stated that Romaric had installed seven times twelve women religious to perform the *laus perennis*. And we also saw that the new *Life* of Amatus expanded the original account to postulate a fictional family relationship between Romaric and Abbess Gebetrudis, who (the text claims) governed the abbey alongside the third

Dark Age Nunneries, p. 43 and pp. 164-65.

⁷⁵ Parisse, 'Les notices' and Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, p. 58.

⁷⁶ Regarding internal criticism, we know of some local clerics who in the latter part of the century sought permission to stop their provision of service for the convent members and instead take up a hermit-like existence on the Saint Mont, see Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 77-78.

⁷⁷ Hlawitschka, *Studien*, pp. 77-78, to be complemented with the evidence in Bridot, *Chartes*, nrs. 29-43, pp. 77-101.

abbot, Adelphius. To this the text also added an implicit statement about her role as co-custodian of her grandfather's estate. This same message was further included in the first section of the contemporary *Translations and Miracles of Amatus, Romaric, and Adelphius*.⁷⁸ On first inspection this text does not add anything further that is relevant to our understanding of the convent's positioning under Oda. While its complex transmission history makes it difficult to determine the narrative's original scope,⁷⁹ it seems that the author did not do much creative work beyond writing a now-lost prologue that dedicated the text to Oda, and crafting the above-mentioned introduction on the abbey's origins.⁸⁰ In order to compile the rest of the narrative, he or she either stitched together a number of ninth- and early tenth-century translation accounts and miracle stories, or used an already existing assemblage of such texts. However, precisely because the author spent so little

⁷⁸ *AASS Septembris* 3, p. 829.

⁷⁹ Paris, BnF, NAL, 2288, fols 172^r-176^r is an abridged version of a longer text that Valdenaire apparently saw and translated into French for his *Registre*. The Bollandists translated parts of Valdenaire's text back into Latin and used those translations to fill the missing parts in the manuscript text for their edition in *AASS Septembris* 3, pp. 829-31 (chapters of the edited version that are not represented in the manuscript are 8-9, 12-21, part of 22, and 23-53). Didier-Laurent rejected Valdenaire's translation as a travesty of the original medieval text and dismissed the reconstruction by Jean Pérrier (d. 1762) in the *Acta Sanctorum* (which Pérrier had based on notes by Pierre-Jacques Chifflet (d. 1682)) as the work of an overly credulous novice editor; 'Le mariage', p. 162. However Goullet sees no reason to doubt Valdenaire's version and states that the Bollandists' reverse translation is a plausible (if still somewhat problematic) reconstruction of the storyline as it would have been submitted to Oda; 'Les saints', pp. 66-69.

⁸⁰ On Valdenaire's testimony, Goullet, 'Les saints,' p. 68.

effort on redacting these older sections and turning them into one cohesive narrative, their content still offers suggestive evidence of a deliberate attempt to represent Remiremont as an exclusively female convent. This attempt, we may suspect, preceded Oda's tenure as abbess by more than a century.

The first older part of the *Translations* may well be the only evidence we have of hagiographic activity at ninth-century Remiremont. It reports on the discovery of the bodies of Sts Amatus, Romaric, and Adelphius on the Saint Mont (the hill on which the abbey had originally been founded prior to its relocation to a valley site in the ninth century), their elevation, and their burial in the church of the newly established valley monastery.⁸¹ There then follows a lengthy account of the construction of a new church in honour of the Virgin Mary, which is the introduction to the report of a second translation of the saints' relics to the newly built sanctuary.⁸² Strikingly the narrative is written entirely from a cleric's perspective and pays no regard to the presence at Remiremont of a major female convent, with two small exceptions where reference is made to individual women

⁸¹ *AASS Septembris* 3, pp. 828-29 (chapters 5-7); this section is in the manuscript on fols 173^v-174^v. A few additional miracles are on pp. 829-30 (chapters 8-11); of these only chapters 10 and 11 are in the manuscript on fol. 174^v. The *Translations and Miracles* claim that the translation took place during the reign of Louis the Pious. Gouillet relies on scholars before her to propose a possible date of 818 ('Les saints', p. 67), but Gaillard offers as possible dates 823, 828, 834, 851, 856, and 862 and indicates that the transportation of the bodies to the valley might have taken place in that last year (*D'une réforme à l'autre*, p. 82).

⁸² *AASS Septembris* 3, pp. 831-32 (chapters 12-21); this section does not feature in the manuscript.

religious.⁸³ This male outlook fades in the second section, a small collection of miracle accounts, that appears to be from around the time that references to the clerical community likewise fade from the *Liber memorialis*. The miracle stories, which mostly feature laymen and -women who visit the saints' graves at the local sanctuary, contain a few odd mentions of the religious women as a community; no mention at all is made of the local clerics.⁸⁴

The gendered perspective of the narrative then abruptly switches to focus on the Remiremont women's experiences and agency. The third section describes a third translation, in 917–18, and is set in the troubled context of Magyar invasions in the Lorraine and Vosges regions.⁸⁵ It begins with a dramatic description of how the convent women escaped in possession of the relics of the three saints, leaving their valley convent and being pursued by a band of attackers. The sisters were able, so the story states, to bring the relics to safety in a fortress on the Saint Mont and to return them festively to their

⁸³ One is a fairly mundane healing miracle (*AASS Septembris* 3, p. 832 (chapter 21) and the other is a remarkable anecdote in which St Romaric appears three times to an elderly convent member, tells her to instruct the abbey's provost Theoderic to bury the bodies of the three saints together, and eventually brands her forehead when she for the third time declines to alert Theoderic (*Ibid.*, p. 831 (chapters 10-11); this section features in the manuscript on fols 174^v-175^r).

⁸⁴ *AASS Septembris* 3, pp. 833-34 (chapters 22-38); of this section only chapter 22 is partially represented in the manuscript, on fol. 175^r.

⁸⁵ *AASS Septembris* 3, p. 835 (chapters 39-42); this section does not feature in the manuscript. The dating of these events is based on the analysis in Kellner, *Die Ungarneinfälle*, pp. 28-30. Several notices in the *Liber memorialis* to abductions and killings of laypeople by 'pagans' may or may not refer to this episode; Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, p. 109.

valley cloister on 20 August 918. Throughout this account not a single cleric is mentioned. And neither is a cleric mentioned in the fourth section, which brings female abbatial leadership and more generally women's agency into focus. One of the events reported is dated to the time of King Lothar (855–69), and describes how the king visited the abbey and called on the abbess to help heal one of his courtiers. Another of the episodes presumably took place in 913, and has the abbess and her sisters investigating the healing of a blind man.⁸⁶

The two themes of leadership and agency are even further developed in the fifth and final section, which tells the story of how the convent members dealt with the fallout of the Magyar invasions.⁸⁷ During the reign of King Charles the Simple (who was king of Lotharingia in 911–23), a man named Walo usurped a number of vineyards that belonged to St Romaric. Alerted by a number of locals from the village of *Milciaca*, the abbess consulted the entire community and decided to send a few of the convent members ‘against the custom’ (*contra morem*) to Count Richard of Burgundy. He accepts their claim but takes no action. The sisters then go to the vineyard, order the grapes to be brought to a cellar next to the church, and are confronted by one of Walo's soldiers. One of the sisters takes Romaric's sandal and key and threatens the soldier, who recoils, falls, and dies. While the oxen start bellowing the population return home; Walo dies shortly afterwards. On this dramatic note the *Translations and Miracles* abruptly ends.

The reasons behind the *Translations'* shift in gendered outlook are difficult to unpick. On the one hand the text suggests that the Remiremont women's self-reliance as

⁸⁶ *AASS Septembris* 3, p. 836 (chapters 43–54); only chapter 54 features in the manuscript, at fol. 175^r.

⁸⁷ *AASS Septembris* 3, p. 837 (chapters 55–56); this section is featured in the manuscript at fols 175^v–76^r.

custodians of the abbey's relic treasure and its estate was forced upon them by the troubled circumstances of the early tenth century. But on the other hand, we may need to offset this apologetic interpretation against a number of indications that something quite fundamental had happened, *against the custom* as the text states, to the gendered identity of the convent. One such indication is a late ninth- or early eleventh-century ritual for the ordination of abbesses that contains notable excerpts from the ordination ritual for clerics. This may suggest that the Remiremont women were reconsidering the distribution of sacramental roles at the abbey.⁸⁸ And another is a reference in the *Liber memorials* to a 920s abbess named Ida, which calls her *abbatissa et diacona*. Again, this may suggest that some of the women at the abbey were taking on ritual roles that were usually reserved for men.⁸⁹ Furthermore, we have circumstantial evidence that an effort was made around this time to give the abbey a more distinctly female identity by introducing a woman saint to the abbey's cultic traditions. Following the dramatic episode where the convent members crossed the Moselle River to take refuge on the Saint Mont, the text states that shortly afterwards the grave of St Gebetrudis was discovered and that the next year she was taken back down to the valley cloister with the abbey's three patron saints.⁹⁰ We need to at least

⁸⁸ Vanderputten and West, 'Inscribing Property', pp. 307-11 (commentary) and 320-21 (edition).

⁸⁹ Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries*, pp. 83-84.

⁹⁰ *AASS Septembris* 3, p. 835 (chapter 41). A late twelfth-century martyrology places the discovery of Gebetrudis's remains on 17 September of an unknown year; Paris, BnF, NAL, 349, p. 320. It also mentions the translation of her remains; Ibid., pp. 308-09.

allow for the possibility that the current abbess had taken advantage of the situation to extend her abbey's patronage with a female saint.⁹¹

The scope of these shifts and discourses remains difficult to ascertain. And the same is true for the longevity of the late ninth- and early tenth-century phase in which strong-willed abbesses apparently styled their monastery as a religious institution that was run by women who acted as capable and dignified custodians of their saintly founders' legacy. But clearly the written memories of this phase lived on until Oda's lifetime, when she had them inserted in the *Translations and Miracles*. It is possible that she picked up on the reference to St Gebetrudis and was inspired to revive that saint's cult. And perhaps she and her associates had also taken note of the drastic shift in the gendered focus of these ninth- and tenth-century traditions, and realized that the female outlook of the more recent ones fitted their current purpose of resistance against clerical interference. Finally, these memories may also have appealed to Oda on a personal level, as they address themes of female leadership and the agency of convent members in both friendly and hostile interactions with the laity. But exactly to what extent such local memories shaped her leadership strategy and self-understanding will remain forever unknown.

Conclusions

In this paper we saw how Pope Leo's actions advantaging Remiremont in the late 1040s and early 1050s were the result of a determined effort by Abbess Oda and her associates to

⁹¹ Hlawitschka thinks that the *Translations and Miracles* conflates two separate events (on the one hand the women's escape and return with the three patron saints, and on the other the discovery of Gebetrudis's body on the Saint Mont and its translation to the valley); *Studien*, pp. 30-32.

gain his favour. And we also saw how her agency as a leader in this effort consisted of a number of simultaneous and interlocking strategies. These included commissioning diplomatic forgeries and hagiographic texts, intervening to solicit the legal and symbolic support of Pope Leo, and undertaking negotiations in person. A crucial aid in each of these high-stakes endeavours was the mutually beneficial relationship she established with Abbot Gerard of Luxeuil/Lure and the resulting exchange of know-how. But as this paper has also argued, Oda's leadership involved more than mere emulation of Gerard's approach as abbot of Lure and Luxeuil. In the *Translations and Miracles of Amatus, Romaric, and Adelphius* we find plausible indications of a self-conscious attempt to commemorate the agency of later ninth- and early tenth-century abbesses and their subjects. They had taken their destiny in hand 'against the custom', just like she was doing. Whether Oda used those memories as a direct inspiration for her own conduct is of course impossible to tell. But they almost definitely bolstered the self-styling of the convent as a prestigious, legitimate, and above all self-sufficient female institution.

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